

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: BYO joy and good company

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Columns

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Lake Placid Rotary Club



From left, Rotary Club of Lake Placid members Susan Friedmann, Chandler Ralph and Martha Pritchard Spear pose at their table in the North Elba Show Grounds pavilion during Lake Placid Community Day on Sunday, June 4. (News photo — Andy Flynn)

I always have such a nice time with other Rotarians, wherever we are. At Lake Placid Community Day on Sunday, June 4, there was a group of a half dozen or so of us staffing the Rotary table in the Pavilion of Nonprofits. We had the great pleasure of connecting with three Lake Placid residents (part- or full-time) who are interested in learning more about our club. Not every Lake Placid Rotarian is a year-rounder.

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid has been around a long time, and in those years, hundreds of individual Rotarians have collaborated to create lasting benefits to our community, such as the recent bus shelter project, and the bike racks some years ago. Perhaps most significantly, the Shipman Youth Center stands as a testament to what service-oriented Rotarians can do when they get together with other community-minded people.

Recently I was at a District Conference in Montreal. Rotary International is so very large that it has global zones, within which are massive continental districts. Our district goes from the sea isles of Nunavut, Canada in the north, where approximately 85% of the population is of Inuit descent, to Watertown in the west, to the Rotary Club of Au Sable Valley in the south and Plattsburgh's two clubs in the east. Ottawa and Montreal are part of our District. There are over 46,000 member clubs worldwide, with a membership of 1.4 million individual Rotarians.

One of the Rotary District conference speakers was a disability rights scholar and advocate who uses a wheelchair. Dr. Marjorie Aunos' specialty is Parenting by Persons with Disabilities. The conference center said they did not have a ramp to the dais, where the speaker was to make her presentation and receive an award. Well, when it comes to equity and inclusion, you do not say "no" to a Rotarian. I can imagine the organizing committee raising their eyebrows and glancing at each other. Suffice to say, Dr. Aunos rolled up to the dais on a brand-new, handmade ramp, and the conference center now has that ramp for future use.

Rotarians are people of action. We create positive change. We are motivated by a desire to do good in the world. Our motto is "Service Above Self," and we are guided by the Four-Way Test, which says, "Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?" American and Canadian Rotarians embrace our relative privilege as being two of the wealthiest, safest countries in the world, and each year we dedicate resources to service projects in areas of the world where an American dollar goes very, very far compared to here in the USA.

All of this is to say, when Rotarians volunteer together we have a lot of fun and sometimes deep conversations, because we have this profound ethic of service in common.

Camaraderie, companionship and friendship are enormous benefits of being a Rotarian in Lake Placid and around the world. When a new Rotarian is welcomed into our club, we say, "In this place you will find joy and good company, provided you bring them with you."

If you are curious about Rotary Lake Placid, please check us out at www.rotarylakeplacid.org, email rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com, or find us on Facebook.

(Martha Pritchard Spear is a member of the Rotary Club of Lake Placid.)

