

LAKE PLACID NEWS

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Celebrating 40 years of 'Service Above Self'



Gene Genegal (Photo provided)

On May 15, Gene Genegal celebrated his 40th year of service to Rotary.

In a recent interview, we discussed what keeps him involved with this prominent international service organization.

Q: What was your initial incentive to join Rotary?

A: At the time I was working for Highland Telephone Company in Goshen, New York. My boss was about to retire and asked if I could take his place at the local Rotary club to represent the company. Soon after joining I became involved and took charge of the club newsletter which I produced for three years.

I was then transferred as the general manager to a branch of the Rochester Telephone Company based in AuSable Valley. And that's what brought our family to the North Country over 30 years ago.

Q: Over the last 40 years as a Rotarian, what are some of the highlights of your membership?

A: Early on I was interested in the Rotary Foundation, the charitable arm of Rotary International. Monies raised through the Foundation go towards grants to build wells, latrines, and support community efforts both overseas and in the U.S.

Q: What is it about the Foundation that attracts you?

A: It's the sense of giving millions of dollars to needy communities whether it's New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina or to a worthy project in Zimbabwe, Africa. It's the idea that we are able to extend ourselves and help, no matter who it is and where in the world they are.

Q: In addition to the Rotary Foundation, what else keeps you involved in Rotary?

A: As I get older, it's definitely the camaraderie at the local level, and being able to work together with my fellow Rotarians on various community service committees. Again, it's that sense of purpose that I find extremely fulfilling. For example, being able to accomplish things like building a

storage shed at the Shipman Youth Center and getting a grant to erect the bicycle parking spots throughout the village.

I feel that I can be a small part of doing some good in the world, which is what I find extremely fulfilling.

Q: What responsibilities have you had in the local Lake Placid chapter?

A: Since I joined the local club in 2007, I've held multiple positions. I was President twice, once at the club in Goshen, and from 2010-2011 and I was club president here in Lake Placid. During my presidential tenure, I was instrumental in helping achieve the club's greatest membership growth, which went from 21 to 50 members.

I was secretary for many years, and now I'm executive secretary and the club's liaison to the Rotary Foundation. Because of my progressive degenerative illness, which affects my eye-hand coordination, I'm somewhat limited in what I can do physically. However, I like to stay involved and contribute in whatever way I'm able.

Q: Are your children involved in Rotary?

A: Although John and Stacy wholeheartedly support the organization, their busy and hectic personal and professional lives restrict them from currently getting involved.

However, they are both Paul Harris fellows, which means that they have made a significant financial contribution to the Rotary Foundation.

Q: What words-of-wisdom would you give people about Rotary and why they should get involved?

A: The Rotary motto is "Service above Self." The most important aspect of Rotary is to provide service to the Community, to the world, and to your individual neighbors before you think of yourself.
