

LAKE PLACID NEWS

Rotary keeps up Kiwanis' Teddy Bear Picnic tradition



Three-year-old Grand Marshall Gabby Hudak and Rotarian Joseph McAvoy lead the Teddy Bear Picnic parade Sunday. Photo for the News — Diane Chase

LAKE PLACID – Teddy bears and their owners came by wagon, stroller and foot for the annual Teddy Bear Picnic Sunday at Teddy Bear Park on

Hillcrest Avenue.

The free event welcomed more than 50 participants and their favorite stuffed friends as well as siblings, family and community members for an afternoon of fun.

Laughter and excitement were the theme as children of all ages came to enjoy the sun while running around the park or playing on the nearby playground. Upon registering, each child was given a number for the parade as well as “Bear Bucks” to spend at the nearby General Store set up by the Lake Placid Rotary Club.

This is the first year that the Rotary Club of Lake Placid took over the 25-year tradition since the Lake Placid Kiwanis Club disbanded almost a year ago. According to Rotarians and event co-organizers Martha Spear and Cynthia DeMars, it was important that they keep the tradition the same. DeMars worked closely with Kiwanis President Kelly Conway throughout the year to obtain the structure and format of the much-loved event.

It was Tara Wright’s first time bringing her daughter Juliet to the Teddy Bear Picnic. Three-year-old Juliet came in her Winnie-the-Pooh costume and willingly shared hugs with the Northwood School husky mascot. It was then a quick escape to spend her Bear Bucks at the nearby Bear General Store.

“The Kiwanis Club did so much for the community. When it disbanded, the Rotary Club knew this was one event we wanted to keep going,” Spear said. “Rotarians are great volunteers, so we were able to make it happen.”

This year’s event was dedicated to Reg Clark, a Kiwanian who died July 30 and whose lifetime commitment to community service was acknowledged. Also noted was that his children and grandchildren had always attended the Teddy Bear Picnic.

Three-year-old Gabby Hudak was named the grand marshall and led the parade with Rotarian Joseph McAvoy. The parade route was a quick jaunt around the block before returning to complementary hot dogs, apples,

water and ice cream served by student volunteers from Mountain Lake Academy. Free books were available from the Lake Placid Public Library.

DeMars commented on how happy everyone was and that the weather was perfect. She and Spear moved through the event making sure that everything ran smoothly. Families picnicked near the tents and enjoyed the sunshine. Newly acquired teddy bears enjoyed snacks along with their owners.
