

# LAKE PLACID NEWS

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## **ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Rotary gives out 3 ‘Service Above Self’ awards**



Dr. Karen Cooper receives the “Service Above Self Award” on behalf of her late husband, Denny Allen, from Rotarian Harris Sememgram. (Photo provided)

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Every year the Rotary Club of Lake Placid awards a non-Rotarian in the community the “Service Above Self Paul Harris Fellowship Award” at the end-of-year changeover event.

Club members submit names of people they feel exemplify the true spirit of Rotary’s motto “Service Above Self” and then vote to select a winner. This year, it was hard to choose between the three suggested candidates. Instead, the club decided to honor all of them: Ruth Hart, Valerie Rogers and Denny Allen (in memoriam).

The “Service Above Self” motto reminds Rotarians to think of how they can help others instead of selfish thoughts. The motto originated from Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, and was officially adopted at the 1950 Rotary Convention.

Rotarian, Harris Semegram nominated Denny Allen and with great emotion, his wife, Dr. Karen Cooper, graciously accepted the award on behalf of her late husband.

In his short presentation speech, Semegram alluded to the numerous accolades Denny received during his 40-plus years of service to the Lake Placid community, as well as the enormous outpouring of love and respect for him.

“Denny was a valuable member of our community,” he said. “The interest he showed in his primary work for ORDA and all the additional ice-related work he did, contributed to help make, and keep, Lake Placid as a world-class venue. As such, his many accomplishments epitomized how he placed the value of service above self.”

Rotarian, and immediate past president Martha Spear nominated and presented the award to Valerie Rogers.

In her short presentation speech, she praised Valerie as an unsung hero.

“She has worked with the National Volunteer Week, Lake Placid/North Elba chapter since 2007, making sure our community’s finest volunteers are honored, yet never receiving accolades herself,” Spear said. “She is a

charter committee member, board member, and treasurer of Songs at Mirror Lake Music Series. Valerie has coordinated volunteers to make wreaths to be sold at Joy to the Children since 2007. She was a member of the Adirondack Singers, and is currently a choir member of the Northern Lights Choir.

“In 2018, she spearheaded the inaugural Lake Placid Community Day in coordination with Volunteer of the Year Awards. She does this as a result of her work with the Lake Placid/North Elba Community Development Commission. She is also involved with the Lake Placid farmers market revitalization, and transient rental forum. As part of the Ausable Valley Grange Farmer Market Committee, Val proposed changes of venue and hours. She worked with the committee chair to request the use of Jewtraw Park from the Lake Placid Village board for the new market location. She just recently received approval for the 2019 season. She then worked closely with the historical society to provide parking and support. In addition to revitalizing the market, the hope is to increase traffic to the museum and that general area of town.”

Rotarian Bob Hanna nominated and presented the award to Ruth Hart. In his short address, he said, “Rotary awards the Paul Harris Fellow as a recognition of exceptional service.”

The \$1,000 donation made in her name will go towards a much needed humanitarian projects that the Rotary International Foundation is concerned with. Their primary focus is on the eradication of polio around the world.

“Ruth Hart has spent over 50 years doing service to our community,” Hanna said. “She has been a leader on both the planning and appeals boards, the Essex County and Lake Placid Garden clubs, the Citizens for Responsive Growth and Strategic Planning process, the Center for the Arts and several Church organizations. Last year she was named Volunteer of the year, which in my opinion, should have been Volunteer of the century.

“In addition, Ruth’s extensive community volunteer resume includes her service as president of the Lake Placid and the Essex County Garden Clubs,

chair of the Lake Placid Center of the Arts, chair of the North Elba Zoning Board and the Lake Placid Village Zoning Boards, service on the Lake Placid Olympic Organizing Committee, and the boards of the St. Francis Academy at Camelot, St. Eustace Church and WCFE Mountain Lake PBS.”

The Rotary changeover event also marked the end of one presidential year and the beginning of the next. As outgoing Rotary Club president, I handed the reigns over to this year’s co-presidents, Mary Liz Alexander and Randy Quayle, both long-time members who, like many members, contribute countless hours to community projects.

Mary Liz started and continues to spearhead the bi-annual Rotary Trivia Night. This is one of the club’s major fundraisers and donates proceeds to community literacy projects.

Randy, as a former school psychologist, devotes much of his time to Lake Placid school-related projects, such as finding worthy candidates for the annual Kate Smith Music Award and the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy.

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid is part of a global network of 1.2 million people who come together to make positive, lasting changes in communities locally, nationally and internationally. The club meets every Thursday at 7:20 a.m. at the Marriott Courtyard. For more information, go to [rotarylakeplacid.org](http://rotarylakeplacid.org).

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