

# LAKE PLACID NEWS

---

## **ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Rotary Club passes the baton in style**



From left, Rotary Club of Lake Placid members Kate Thompson, Stephani Pianka and Martha Pritchard Spear pose June 29 at the Mountain Pass Lodge during the club's annual Changeover Dinner. (Provided photo)

---

July 1 is an important date in the Rotary calendar, as it marks the official “*changeover*” when the incumbent club president officially hands leadership over to the incoming president.

It is an opportunity for the club to celebrate accomplishments, acknowledge service, share fellowship, and look forward to the year ahead. The Rotary Club of Lake Placid held its Changeover Dinner on Wednesday, June 29.

The setting was sublime. The event was hosted at Mount Van Hoevenberg's Mountain Pass Lodge, surrounded by glorious summer views of the ski trails and beyond. Organizers Kate Thompson, Stephanie Pianka and Martha Pritchard Spear created a fabulous atmosphere with Rotary banners joyfully hung, a cocktail reception to kick off the celebrations, and an elegant dining area to which we adjourned for a delicious buffet served up by executive chef Matthew Decicco. A huge thanks to Chef Matthew, MVH Food and Dining manager Santos Chaparro and Kristin Maxwell from the state Olympic Regional Development Authority for their help in organizing the event.

Outgoing co-presidents Heather Perkins and Harris Semegram passed the baton to incoming president William Flederbach and vice president Kate Thompson. Heather and Harris steered the club through an incredibly successful year despite the challenges of COVID-19; acknowledgement was given to their accomplishments as well as special appreciation to others who have gone above and beyond to serve the community.

The Paul Harris Fellow Award acknowledges individuals who make outstanding contributions to the club; recognition was given this year to Martha Pritchard Spear and Bridget McKillip.



From left, Rotary Club of Lake Placid members Debbie Erenstone, David Balestrini and Chandler Ralph pose June 29 at the Mountain Pass Lodge during the club's annual Changeover Dinner. Ralph was named Rotarian of the Year, and Balestrini was given the Service Above Self award. (Provided photo)

---

Chandler Ralph was named Rotarian of the Year — known in our club as the “*Eagle Award*,” given the tradition of handing a statue of the symbolic eagle from one recipient to another. Chandler works tirelessly behind the scenes on many club projects, such as gift giving for the Elderwood nursing home and chairing the International Committee. She is founding board chair of the Lake Placid NY Rotary Foundation to support local projects, which to date have included the Lake Placid Community Ski Program and the Rotary Club Bus Shelters Project.

The “*Service Above Self*” award was given to Dr. David Balestrini, DMD from Lake Placid Family Dental. He serves as the Lake Placid Outing Club Board chair and has shown unwavering support for many community programs over the years, volunteering where needed. It was wonderful to recognize him for all he does for the community.

Underpinning the entire evening was a feeling of great happiness at being able to catch up with so many folks in person — the first opportunity to do so since COVID. There was a large turnout, as members brought their spouses and other guests, including Lake Placid Mayor Art Devlin, the family of departed member Tina Leonard, and Elizabeth Cooper of the Adirondack North Country Association.

This was an opportunity for newer joiners to get to know their fellow members better, and for new connections to be made, to maintain a wider circle of friendship that the Club sets great store by. For every conversation in the room, it felt as though a hundred more could have taken place.

Our Rotary Club plays an important role in bettering our community. While club leadership changes annually its mission is steadfast, and we look forward to developing some interesting new projects over the upcoming year. We are always keen to hear ideas from the community.

Visit our website, [www.rotarylakeplacid.org](http://www.rotarylakeplacid.org), or our Facebook page, Rotary Club of Lake Placid, NY. Come join us at an upcoming meeting, or send us your thoughts to [rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com](mailto:rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com). Meetings are held at the Courtyard by Marriott, 5920 Cascade Road, at 7:20 a.m. each Thursday.

---