



December 5, 2022

'A privilege to help Arc clients develop skills'



Friend-raising and heightened awareness are important to Arc Oneida Lewis, program speaker and

Rotarian Heather Evans related at last Thursday's Rotary meeting. *PAGE 3.*

The tingle of Rotary service

December's service project is the annual bell ringing for Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. Utica Rotary will be at Chanatry's, 485 French Road, Utica

on Saturday, December 10, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **And the good news is that all shifts are covered,** President-elect Michelle Brandstadt announced.



WEDNESDAY, DEC. 7, 6-7:30 PM
72 TAVERN & GRILL, 400 ORISKANY ST W

Celebrate in holiday cheer while raising \$\$ for *Sleep in Heavenly Peace*. Donate a gift or basket worth at least \$50 for Emcee Jerry Kraus to auction off. Wrap it in disguise to make it fun, possibly adding a clue or riddle as to what it is. This event is always full of surprises! If you can't attend but would like to donate a basket or gift, you may drop it off at Tina Pavlot's office at M&T Bank at Consumer Square.

Deadline for next newsletter (12/12) is Sunday, December 11, at noon; submit to news@uticarotaryclub.org.



Rotary Club Of Utica Annual Ski Trip!

- Wednesday January 25th, 2023
- Bus leaves Utica 7:00am
- Returns approx. 9:00pm
- \$175 Per Person - Includes:
 - Gore Mtn. Day Pass
 - Bus transportation
 - Guaranteed good time!



RSVP @ uticarotary.org by 1/13/23

GORE MOUNTAIN SKI TRIP

The Utica Rotary annual ski trip consists of a day at Gore Mountain Ski Resort in North Creek.

Cost includes one all-day lift ticket and transportation. Bus loading starts at 6:45 a.m. at Friedel, Williams & Edmunds at 13 Oxford Road, New Hartford.

Contact Jim Friedel at jim@fwefh.com or 315-525-3551 to sign up or for more information. You can sign up and purchase tickets at uticarotary.org (by 1/13/23).



NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM

Small business services

The next regular program for Rotary Club of Utica will be at noon on Thursday, December 15, at Mid-York Library.

"We will hear from Associate Business Advisor **Chris Hanrahan** on all that the Small Business Development Center has to offer our business community," noted Club President Tina Pavlot.



Calendar of Events

- 12/07 Not So Silent Night Gift Auction
6 p.m., 72 Tavern & Grill
- 12/10 Bell Ringing | Chanatry's
9-5 in one-hour shifts
- 12/15 Program | Small Business
Development Center
Noon, Mid-York Library System
- 12/21 Board Meeting
Noon, Greater Utica Chamber
- 1/05 Program | 4 Elements Studio
Noon, Mid-York Library System
- 1/18 Board Meeting
Noon, Greater Utica Chamber
- 1/19 Program | Bosnian-American
Community Association (BACA)
Noon, Mid-York Library System
- 1/25 Ski Trip | Gore Mountain
Bus leaves 7 a.m.

LAST WEEK'S PRESENTER

'A privilege to help Arc clients develop skills'

Heather Agricola Evans likes to meet people so much that Arc Oneida Lewis decided to take advantage of her friend-raising talent in order to create awareness about Arc and attract funding.

"I started out as a grant writer and was promoted to vice president of development because I think they realized my gift for gab was never-ending," she said, laughing.

Her "gift for gab" also led the Arc to ask her to start a podcast called Arc Waves a little over a year ago. It already has 30 episodes, which spotlight Arc programs or services and feature interviews with community and business leaders locally and beyond.

Heather gave an overview of Arc, which serves 114 clients in Oneida and Lewis Counties and has business enterprises that provide paying jobs for people with developmental disabilities while



providing products and services for businesses large and small. She mentioned the Utica operation that provides kits for businesses and the Red Cross, the semi-automated production lines in Marcy that package flavored and specialty beers for Matt Brewery, and the Chef Express store in Utica that sells and caters freshly baked goods.

What she finds as a great privilege is being able to help clients

reach new skill levels, build self-confidence, collect a pay check, and, for some, prepare them for employment out in the marketplace.

Asked what are the Arc's most pressing needs, she offered a wish list of awareness, donations, volunteers, and businesses being open to hiring people with developmental disabilities – which is why her focus is on friend-raising as well as seeking major gifts.



From sunny beach to mountainous rainforest

Costumed young and adult dancers dashed across the plaza in front of the Capitol building in San Juan, twisting and turning and leaping, cloth banners flowing with them. Music blared across the grounds, fading into the sea. It was like watching choreography of an off-broadway musical – except they wanted the attention of government officials; they wanted better treatment of a minority community. It was an LGBTQ protest.

We came upon the scene on our way to Old San Juan to see historic sites and enjoy a meal at one of its eateries. It was our last full day in Puerto Rico.

A week earlier, when we arrived at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport on Sept. 22, 2021, we found ourselves going through a COVID check-in station. There was also a COVID testing and vaccination station. Good thing we had our vaccination cards. And our surgical face masks.

It was late evening so we were grateful for the couple who met us outside the airport and whisked us away to the Verdanza Hotel.

The next morning we walked out of the hotel into a wall of heat. It enveloped us, wanting to press us down. It took a few minutes for our bodies to adjust as we sauntered down the street to the dazzling

beach of Isla Verde. The waves washing up were cool on our feet as we stood there, breathing in the wide sunny vista of sand and ocean.

That scene would be a sharp contrast to the mountainous rainforest in the center of Puerto Rico, in an area called Utuado, where my wife would preside over the election of a new “national council” of Puerto Rican Secular Franciscans.

The mainland of the archipelago measures some 110.5 miles by 40.3 miles, so no matter which way your drive, you are bound to come across lovely coastal views in short order – except that as you inevitably drive toward the mountainous areas, you can’t help but notice the lingering hurricane damage, and I’m speaking of Hurricane Marie of 2017. Villages and towns still in disrepair. Damaged infrastructure. And back in San Juan, a few tall water-front hotels still boarded up.

We passed Arecibo Observatory, way in the distance on our right. Marie also damaged the famous telescope, and following the effects of earthquakes in 2020, the telescope came crashing down on Dec. 1 that year.

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***Isla Verde
Beach.***

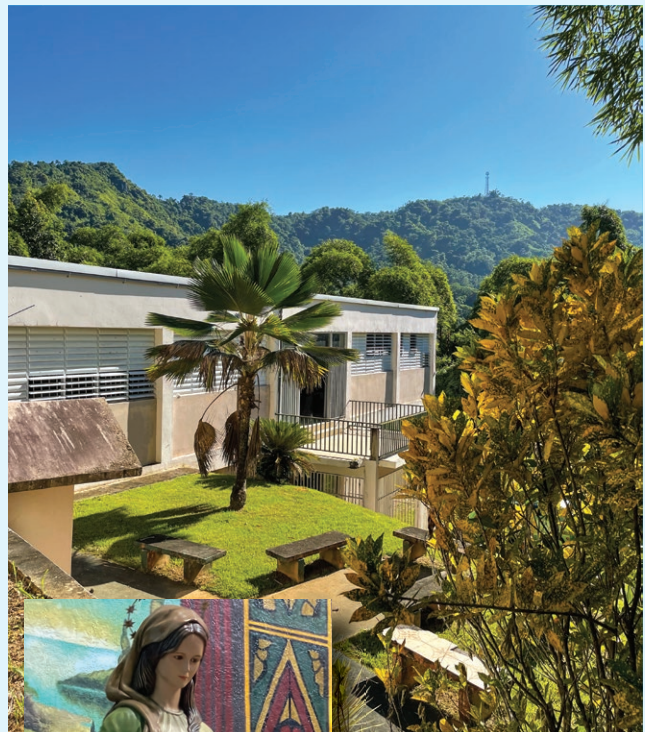
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Soon we were winding higher into the mountains, enjoying views of rainforest valleys from above, and finally reached our destination, La Casa San José de la Portiuncula. It's a national retreat and event center, operated by Secular Franciscans. Built into a hillside, it features 34 bedrooms, classrooms, dining hall and chapel.

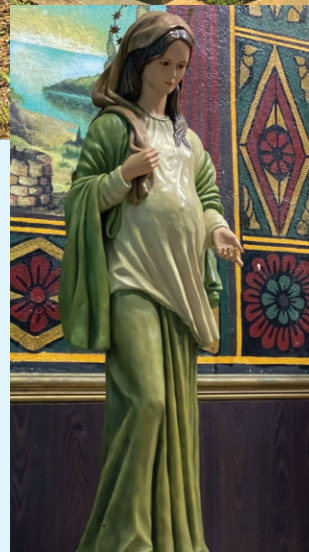
It was our first time in a rainforest. As night fell the darkness of the forest was impenetrable and appeared to want to envelope us. And the sounds were much more ominous than nighttime in a forest like the Adirondacks. The creatures and critters issued ceaseless calls – both a symphony and cacophony of screeching, whistling, clicking.

In daylight La Casa showed some lingering scars of Hurricane Marie, which had severely damaged the facility. They had recently completed restoring it, thanks to the labor of the Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters themselves, and donations from the States and a gift from the Capuchin friars, which in itself is an interesting occurrence, and it has to do with the heritage of the Franciscan movement on the islands. Over several centuries, friars came and left multiple times, but the people kept the Franciscan charism alive, and took over care and ownership of churches and sanctuaries. The gift from the friars was prompted by a gift from the Secular Franciscans – who turned over the deed to the historic Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Old San Juan so that the friars, who have been staffing and running the hurricane-damaged church, could apply for FEMA funds.

We eventually got to visit the church, with a friar meeting us in Plaza San Francisco and letting us in. The hallways



*La Casa in
Utuado.*



*Statue of Mary in
Old San Juan.*

were replete with artifacts and artwork. It was like walking into a museum.

One thing we took note of was the cultural difference in portraying the sacred. The historic European or western view tends to paint saints and other holy personages with halos or as if they're having beatific visions. Especially someone like Mary, the mother of Jesus. But an artist in Puerto Rico saw a young woman embarking on a life of joyous yet sacrificial motherhood, and his work occupied a prominent spot in the sanctuary of the church. It was a statue of a pregnant Mary.