

Area 1 Crew undertake clean-up at Luzerne Music Center

At PETS in Syracuse in March 2008, the five incoming Area 1 club presidents agreed to seek to put on a joint event, as had been done in 2007. During the fall of 2008 various events were considered; train ride, boat ride, theater outing, prominent speaker and so forth. However no conclusion was reached before poor weather approached, and so the event was postponed until May or June of 2009.

When planning restarted in January, Phil Santasiero of North Creek, put forward the thought that while socializing is fine, you really only get to know people through working on a project, which in any event is very much in a Rotary spirit. Accordingly a clean-up and painting session at the Luzerne Music Center was proposed, and endorsed by all five clubs.

Luzerne Music Center is a summer performing arts center and music camp located on the shore of Lake Luzerne. It was founded by the late Bert Phillips (cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1959-1990, and cellist emeritus from 1990 – 2008) and his wife, Steinway Artist Toby Blumenthal Phillips, in 1980. The Center offers two- and four-week sessions for talented and deserving music students, ages 11 – 18, taught by 25 resident faculty members.

Mike Ferguson and Bob Walter (Glens Falls), Sandy Abbenante, Denny Galloway and Dave Matthews (Lake George), Frank Boos and Jim Posluszny (North Creek), Chip Devenger and Bob Johnson (Northern Lake George), Steve Williams (AG Area 1) and Audrey Seaman, past Luzerne Music Center student, met at the Center at 9.00 a.m. on May 16th prepared to go to battle. Chores fell into two categories; a big sweep up of detritus from the surrounding pine trees, and a paint up of practice rooms. Blowers brought by Mike Ferguson and Bob Walter were a big help on the clean up; with rakes handled by others, both aided by tarpaulins on which to drag the leaves, pine cones, pines needles and fallen branches off to a nearby ravine. While this was proceeding, Bob Johnson and Steve Williams, later assisted by Frank Boos, took off for their wall painting work, not exactly a high-level paint job, but nevertheless one which much improved the Spartan wallboards used in the practice rooms construction.

The Center staff kindly provided coffee and other goodies at 9.00 a.m., and then welcome soup, tuna and egg salad and more goodies at noon.

Did the group do a useful bit of service to the community? Yes. Did it provide an opportunity for those involved to get to know each other better? Yes.

Janet Curry, the Center Administrator, expressed the thanks of the Center for the Rotary work.

As further support to the Center, why not look at their website (www.luzernemusic.org) and find a summer concert to attend? There are 32 scheduled concerts in all from July 3 – August 24, some by students, some by faculty, and two concerts, on August 10 & 17, by Philadelphia Orchestra members, including the entire cello section in tribute to Bert on August 17, as well as Paul Arnold, violin, Yumi Kendall, cello, and Jeffry Kirschen, horn.