Morristown Rotary Has Rockin’ Good Time at Camp Merry Heart

Submitted by “Top Dog” Frank Alai
Photos by David Shapiro

Another Camp Merry Heart Carnival is a wrap. Let me tell you about what YOUR CLUB accomplished this year

We came in force. We had Susan Alai & Dolores Bagish & Joan Berkeley & Umut Bitlisi (computer and electronics expert extraordinaire) & Harvey Gilbert & Doug Greenberger & Terry Gallagher & Bob Miller & Jimmy Mongey & Lou Meyers & Austin Neary & (Morristown Rotary Photographer of Record) David Shapiro. We had prospective Rotarian Steve Lerit. We also had “Rockin’” Julia (the Wonder Girl) Alai, Collette Mongey, Terri Gilbert, Rockstar Tyler Gilbert and his main squeeze Colleen Dunn, Kim Welch (guest of your correspondent), Morristown Madams (the Roller Derby Team) Elizabeth Vlandingham (Lawless Lizzie) and Kimber Shannon (Sophia Low-Rent) & Jo-Zee the Clown. We had four footed friends Leo and Max and Ollie. We brought salad and a ton of karaoke equipment and a ton of energy and an extra ton of good will.

The Board had authorized the rental of a professional grade karaoke set-up. I wanted it to be BIG and REAL and ATTRACTIVE. What is more attractive to a bunch of kids than a BIG stack of equipment and giant speakers that play LOUD?

We started off by having the adults sing a few tunes. We did alright. We’d all best keep our day jobs. Then the plan started to work. The big noise we were making attracted campers like moths to a flame. The kids were ecstatic. Everybody near the equipment received a mountain of hugs. They were squealing and jumping and dancing. They started to sing. The singing thinking and set up the equipment under the shelter behind the main building. Just as we got the last of the equipment under the shelter, the skies opened up. There was still some running back and forth in the rain, but we were able to protect the equipment.

We arrived at the Camp, a look at the sky told us that protection from the sun would not be needed that day. We did some quick thinking and set up the equipment under the shelter behind the main building. Just as we got the last of the equipment under the shelter, the skies opened up. There was still some running back and forth in the rain, but we were able to protect the equipment.
Berlitz Offers Rotarians Discounted Language Instruction

It’s been said that:

"Through learning language, we learn about culture.
Through learning about culture, we learn respect for others.
Through learning respect for others, we can hope for peace."

If you’re interested in learning a new language, Rotary International and Berlitz have teamed up to offer Rotarians and their families a substantial discount on Berlitz’s online language-learning products.

Courses use fully interactive technologies to help you speak, write, and understand new languages. And each purchase benefits The Rotary Foundation.

Visit the Rotary offer page at the Berlitz Website (www.rotary-berlitzonline.us) to get discounted Berlitz language instruction products now.

COVER STORY, continued from Page 1

There are a hundred stories to be told. The one that sums up the whole day has to do with a young African American boy in a wheelchair. I do not know this young man’s real name, though I intend to learn it, so I’m going to call him James. James was severely disabled. He was attached to his chair by an elaborate harness contraption to keep him from sliding down. With the help of a counselor he tried to tell me what song he wanted to sing. He had a speech impediment and I could not understand what he was trying to say.

Julia the Wonder Girl shooed me away and scolded me that she knew EXACTLY what James was trying to say. He wanted to sing “High School Musical”! Julia negotiated exactly what song he wanted to sing and we cued it up.

For those of you who may not know how karaoke works, the audio system plays the musical track and you sing the words. Since most of us know only a few words from every song, the karaoke system has a monitor (much like a computer monitor) that displays the lyrics.

James DIDN’T NEED NO MONITOR, my friends. James grabbed that microphone and held onto it for dear life. He was turned TOWARD the crowd with his BACK to the monitor.

The music played and James bopped and swayed with that microphone in his hand. He held it so tightly I thought he’d crush it or, at least, leave indentations from his hands. Then James began to sing. He didn’t get even one note right but HE KNEW EVERY WORD TO THE SONG! Not just a verse – he knew the entire thing. His diction was almost unintelligible, but if you read the words on the screen, yes, that was what he was singing.

Right before our eyes a miracle occurred. James was no longer at Camp Merry Heart. He was no longer a child with disabilities. There was no more wheelchair. There were no more harnesses; no more counselors; no more Rotarians. James’s spirit soared into the sky and chased away the clouds.

James was on stage in a sharp, snazzy costume. There were sequins and lights and maybe thirty other singers and dancers on the great Art Deco stage at Radio City Music Hall before a packed house. And James was dancing and singing the lead and the orchestra and the rest of the cast was following his every move. The song went through verse after verse building to a crescendo and a BIG FINISH! “GIVE IT TO ‘EM, JAMES. FINISH BIG AND LEAVE ‘EM CLAMORING FOR MORE!”

The song finished to thunderous applause. James lowered the microphone from his face. There really was thunderous applause, but James was back in his wheelchair, back in the harness, back at Camp Merry Heart.

Another camper was waiting for her turn at the mike; her turn at leaving her issues behind her and waiting to mount the big stage in her mind and heart; her chance for three or four minutes of immortality.

This is what your club accomplished on August 5, 2009. A final thank you to Joe Accardi at StarWeb in Verona for making the karaoke equipment available to the Club at a special rate.

These photos and more available online at: http://shappy.smugmug.com/Rotary
First Annual Kickin’ Picnic!

Mike Moore, our newly appointed “Sports Czar” (Pres. Scott bestowed that title, don’t shoot the messenger), has scheduled a new event for us this year. On August 23rd, starting at 11:30am we will be enjoying our first ever Club Kickball Game and Picnic; held at Lewis Morris Park’s Sugarloaf picnic site (up on top of the hill).

We will cook-out during and after the game; burgers, dogs and all the usual picnic suspects; beverages will be served (our Czar splurged for the $20 alcohol permit just in case someone should show up with a 6 pack, case or keg; but we will have sodas and water as well). We need players and picnickers so please RSVP to mikemoore4@verizon.net ASAP. This is a very family friendly event, so gather the spouse and kids, a few friends and that guy that just moved in down the street and bring ‘em! We’re certain Coach Alai will be using this as an opportunity to scout out some ringers for next year’s Kickball Tournament, and will be handing out nicknames accordingly. More details are sure to follow as we get closer to the event, but for now mark your calendars and let Mike know you’re coming!

Quote of the Week

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not “Eureka!,” but “That’s funny…”

--Isaac Asimov

Morristown Rotary Dinner Group

Submitted by Joan Berkeley

The Morristown Rotary Dinner Group is being organized for the 2009-10 year. Joan Berkeley has taken over the control of this committee with the assistance of David Shapiro. Registrations are now being accepted and are due by August 14th. Even if you have been a Dinner Group member in the past, you must register again.

For those new to our Club, the Dinner Group is an opportunity to get to know your fellow Rotarians outside of our regular Rotary meetings. We meet in small groups of 3-4 couples for dinner at one Rotarian’s home. The cost of the dinner is split amongst those in attendance. New to the program this year, participants have the option of hosting their group by acting as liaison in organizing a night out together at a restaurant with their group. Contact jberkeley@ehorizons.com for more information and registration forms.

Rotary E-Clubs

In this, the 21st Century, it is entirely possible for every Rotarian to have 100% attendance. How? Rotary E-clubs! If you miss a meeting, and can’t make an actual make-up at another physical Club meeting, you can make-up online. Point your favorite internet browser to www.rotaryeclubny1.com and follow the simple instructions. At the end of your “online meeting makeup” you can either print off a report to submit to the Club Secretary, or have a make-up confirmation emailed to you and forward it in.

Help Fill These Pages!!

Please send stories, news, jokes, photographs, and gossip for The Rambler to:
P.J. Thurkauf at turk11042@hotmail.com or 973.538.2040 (fax)

Calendar of Events

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