

## **Elk of the Month**

### **January-December 2023**

The December 2023 Elk of the Month for Sebring Elks #1529 is Brett Bernardo. Brett is one of our newer members and has been with us for the past couple of years. He was born in Sarnia, Ontario Canada and moved to Sebring at the age of twelve where he grew up and went to school. He started a window tinting business in 1986 after graduating high school and has added home and auto electronics to his business offerings. Brett has two children and recently celebrated his 30th wedding anniversary to his lovely wife Sandi. When we were in need of help reworking and upgrading the Bingo System in the Lodge room, Brett stepped up big time and recruited the help of other members to tackle the job. Brett has only been a member for a couple of years now, but he is making a positive impact. Thank You, Brett.



### **November 2023**

Once again, a very deserving Elk member has been chosen Elk of the Month for November by the Sebring Elks. Brenda Walton is a fairly new member who is committing her time and talents in a big way for the betterment of this Lodge. On Monday evenings you will find her at the Charity Bingo where she volunteers as the cashier. When Brenda heard that the Lodge's Veterans Committee needed a Chairman, she agreed to take over. Because of her enthusiasm and personality, this committee is growing and is making a big difference in the Lodge as well as in the Community.

Brenda was born in Caribou, Maine. Upon graduation from high school, she enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corp., and achieved the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant. As you can expect through her thirty years of service she has held many ranks and duties; Drill Instructor at Parris Island, S.C.; and Academics Staff Non-Commissioned Officer at Quantico's Senior Enlisted Academies. Her final tour was as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Kansas City, Mo.

After retirement, Brenda moved to Sebring to be closer to her elderly parents who lived in Stuart, Fl. She is a lifetime member of AMVETS and the Woman Marine Assoc. She and Terri, her partner of 35 years, love to take Carnival Cruises with friends and enjoy crafting and woodworking. Thank you, Brenda, for your enthusiasm and work ethics. The Sebring Elks are proud to have you as a member.



### **October 2023**

Dynamic, friendly, dedicated, and take charge, are four adjectives to describe Sebring Elks Elk of the Month for October 2023 Bonnie Lennox. Bonnie joined the Lodge a couple of years ago and has been helping with decorations and baking for Friday night meals and special events. Most recently she became an integral part of the Lodge's annual golf tournament by volunteering to be the committee's secretary. Not only has she sent out numerous emails to past players, she has done a great job in obtaining teams and prizes. This fundraiser will be a success due in part to her efforts.

Bonnie was born and raised on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, in Cambridge. She relocated after graduation to the Western Shore where she began her career with State Farm Insurance. She retired after 23 years service as a Worker's Compensation Claims Adjuster. State Farm is where she met her hubby, Ron, who became a State Farm Agent and she worked part time in his office. They have been married 33 years. Their family is spread out over Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Montana and Florida. They have two daughters, a son, five granddaughters, two grandsons, twin great granddaughters and a great grandson.

Bonnie was nominated to serve on the Maryland State Golf Association's Women's Executive Committee and volunteered in various capacities for 7 years, before moving to Florida. She also served as Team Leader on the Maryland State Women's Sloping & Rating team in the Western Maryland Division for 16 years. When she is not playing golf at the Country Club of Sebring, she is busy crafting, decorating or baking. Thank you Bonnie for all you do at the Lodge.



### **September 2023**

Wainetta Holmes has been chosen Elk of the Month for September 2023. It is hard to put into words what she has done for this Lodge. Her love for the Elks, Sebring Lodge #1529, and its members has no limits! Wainetta was our First Lady in 2011/2012 when her husband Dick was the Exalted Ruler and she "represented our Lodge with grace, laughter, and sincerity." She served as the Exalted Ruler for two years (2021/2022 & 2022/2023), and had a profound impact on the Lodge's success.

Volunteerism is a great way to stay active and reduce stress. With this in mind, she should be in excellent health! She volunteered throughout the years as bartender, runs Charity Bingo, works special events, has worked in the dining room, and as a Past Exalted Ruler she attends all meetings and is currently working on the committee for our annual Golf Tournament. When not working, she enjoys all the social benefits of the Lodge. She and Dick have been married 54 years. They have a son in California and a daughter in Michigan, three grandchildren and one great grandchild. In 2001 they started wintering in Sebring and we are happy to say, they are permanent residents now.



### **August 2023**

The Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 got its Charter in 1927, and throughout the years it has been blessed with great leadership. This month's Elk of the Month is Jim Mason. His accomplishments this month are no different than the previous ones. However, Jonathan Spiegel, the Exalted Ruler, wished to spotlight him by showing appreciation for his leadership. Jim is an Honorary Life Member, Past Exalted Ruler, Past District Vice President, Past District Deputy, Past Special Rep, and Lodge Advisor, but as he likes to point out "all these titles and \$2.00 will get him a draft beer at the bar".

Jim and wife Ronna were born and raised in Virginia. He graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a business degree, and served in the U.S. Marine Corp. They have been married 59 years, have three children and six grandchildren. In 1978 he was transferred to Ft. Lauderdale and retired as Vice President of Human Resources for a construction materials company, moving to Sebring in 2001. He has been an Elk member for 23 years.



### **July 2023**

The Sebring Elks #1529 is truly blessed to have such a dedicated, hardworking, and creative member as we have in Brenda Richards. Brenda has taken on the responsibility of keeping the Lodge decorated beautifully, keeping the hall menu board up to date, helping out in the dining room and special events, and most recently ordering and displaying the Lodge Elk shirts. For these reasons and for the obvious love for the Lodge and its people, Brenda has been chosen as Elk of the Month for July 2023.

Brenda and Buddy Richards have been married 32 years and share their love of boating, going to Tampa Rays games (home & away), their faith in God, and their dedication to the Sebring Elks Lodge. Brenda is very much a "people person" which explains her success as a teacher, hotel supervisor, retail salesperson/manager and being Past President of both the Avon Park Breakfast Rotary and the Sebring Jaycees. She has spent most of her life in Florida with a few years in Virginia, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Thank you, Brenda, for all you do for the Lodge and thank you for just being you!



### **June 2023**

The Sebring Elks is proud to award the Elk of the Month to Brenda Cormier. Even though she is not an Elk, she is the spouse of our Elk member Tee Cormier and has worked very hard for the Lodge since 2020. Brenda makes the soup for the Friday night meals each week from October to April. The most delicious soups come from her kitchen (6 gallons each week) and this summer she will be providing soup once a month. Tee says he helps - he's the taste tester! Brenda is also a part time volunteer as a server for the meals. They both love cooking together and have dinner parties for family and friends.

Brenda has two daughters and two grandchildren. She was raised in Columbus, Ohio; met Tee in 1986 and they moved to Ft. Lauderdale, FL., where they became certified scuba divers and also enjoyed deep sea fishing. She worked 48 years in the medical management field (Pediatric Physicians Offices in Columbus and Ophthalmology Physicians Offices in Ft. Lauderdale). Brenda and Tee love to travel and have taken 50 plus cruises. She loves to dance, and you can see her on the dance floor on Friday nights. Brenda says she "loves hanging out with all the amazing Elk Lodge #1529 members". Brenda, the Lodge thanks you for all you do!



### **May 2023**

In February 2020, our Elk of the Month for May, Diane Morse, joined our organization. It was right after COVID-19 became a worldwide concern, and in her typical fashion, she took charge and volunteered to take the required temperatures of our Charity Bingo players and saw to it that everyone wore masks. As a retired schoolteacher, she volunteered to chair our Americanism and Scholarship committees and continues to chair Americanism while assisting in Scholarships. From Sebring Middle School, she was able to get 12 Americanism Essays to send to the District and then to the Florida State Elks Americanism Committee. It has just been announced that Julia Hartt, an eighth grader from Sebring Middle School, won third place in the State and will go on to the Elks National Contest. Diane is also active in cochairing our Monday night Charity Bingo and shares responsibility cashiering on Tuesday and Friday nights. Diane is the Lecturing Knight for the Lodge and a member of the Board of Directors.

Diane was born and raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Bridgewater State University with a degree in education. She has two children and two grandchildren. She loves to travel and takes many trips with her grandchildren. Thank you, Diane, for sharing your talents with Sebring Lodge #1529



### **April 2023**

Marilyn Patno has been chosen Sebring Elk of the Month by Exalted Ruler Jonathan Spiegel. Throughout the years she has consistently given her time and talents for the betterment of the Lodge and has previously been awarded this honor in December 2016, by Exalted Ruler Ronna Mason and in July 2020, by Exalted Ruler Wainetta Holmes. All three ERs have repeatedly mentioned what a great asset she is both working in the kitchen and for her generosity.

Marilyn was born and raised in Lumberton, N. C. She and her deceased husband, Gene (who was also a Sebring Elk member), moved to Avon Park in 2010 where they continued pursuing their love of boating and fishing. Marilyn has one daughter, two granddaughters, one great granddaughter, and one great grandson. Thank you, Marilyn, for all that you do!



### **March 2023**

Christie Spiegel has been chosen Elk of the Month for March 2023. Christie has been such an asset to this organization by her dedication, energy, and talents. She took over as kitchen manager last year and along with her devoted crew, she manages to feed an average of 25-30 people on Tuesday nights, and 70-80 people on Friday nights. Her most popular meals on Fridays are the Fish Fry and Steak night (both can range from 100-150). With the food costs skyrocketing, she has done an excellent job with purchasing and inventory and has recently taken on the Chairmanship of the Lodge outside events. She also oversees the renting of the Lodge rooms and caters when requested.

Christie is a third generation Elk, was born and raised in Sebring, and has a lot of family and friends in the area. She is married to Jonathan, and they have two children: John David and Lauren. Amazingly she juggles being a mother, wife, and business owner (Russell Reeves Fine Leather Goods) and donates so much time to the Elks. She recently retired after 21 years as the Pageant Coordinator for the Highlands County Fair. When time permits, she loves saltwater fishing, wakeboarding and skiing. Thank you, Christie, for all you do, and you do it with a smile.





## **February 2023**

One of the reasons the Sebring Elks is not only a fun place to be but is successful in its growth and the many things it does for the community is because of its diversity in its members. Each member shares their wealth of information and experiences. The Elk of the Month for February is such a person - Bill Shelton. Bill graciously shares his talents with us by helping out in our weekly Charity Bingo on Monday nights as substitute cashier and most recently chairing it.

The following profile gives us a view of his amazing career. He moved to Hollywood, FL from a Dairy Farm in Connecticut in 1955; High School in Hollywood, College at Stetson University majoring in Accounting. After college he worked for the Broward County Sheriff's Office; In 1965 he entered the Peace Corps and went to Afghanistan for over 2 years implementing a government accounting system for the Ministry of Finance; Returned from Peace Corps and worked for the US State Department in finance while living in Maryland. Bill continued his 32+ years of Federal Government service as Head of Grant Accounting at the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and eventually became Director of Finance for all HHS. He was appointed by the President as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance at the Department of Veterans Affairs. He was a consultant for Citibank on VISA and Master-Card for 4 years; he was a FIFA Soccer Referee for 15 years; 20+ years with the Boy Scouts as a leader and Vice President on the Board of Directors. For the past 21 years he has provided financial management and accounting services on a pro bono basis to the elderly and businesses. Bill and Linda have been married 48 years and have two sons. Since his retirement, they spend the winters in Sebring and the summers in Maryland. He has been an Elk for 62 years!



## **January 2023: Tim Baker**

The Sebring Elks #1529 has once again chosen a well deserving member for the Elk of the Month for January. Tim Baker is a fairly new member and was not well known by many at the Lodge. All this quickly changed when he agreed to head up our annual golf tournament last November. With his winning smile, positive attitude, and direct approach, he quickly won over the membership, and many were willing to help with this event. The Lodge is very grateful for the time and expertise Tim gave and the event was a tremendous success.

Tim is a lifelong resident of Sebring and has been married to his bride Jodi for 30 years. He has three sons and two daughters in law: Tyler (Amanda), Jordan (Alexa) and Dalton. He is a US Navy veteran having served in the Desert Shield and Desert Storm campaigns. Tim has been a financial advisor with Equitable Advisors for over 25 years. He is an active member in the Sebring Firemen Inc., Highlands County Fair Board, Sebring Elks and is the Lead Deacon at Grace Bible Church Sebring. Thank you, Tim!

