



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Youth programs build character and Elks spirit

It's hard to believe that Pat and I are already more than halfway through this journey. We have met so many Members of this outstanding organization and are constantly moved by the great work that you're doing in your states and local communities on behalf of Elks.

As we continue down the road, I want to take another moment to recognize an important part of Elkdom—our youth. As you might know, I got my start in the Elks at a young age, and I hope to inspire others to get involved early and build a foundation for the future.

With the Hoop Shoot National Finals happening in Chicago this month, there's no better time to remind ourselves that the young people in our communities are the future of Elks. More than a free throw basketball contest, the Hoop Shoot



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

MALCOLM J.
McPHERSON JR.

challenges kids both mentally and physically and is a constructive way to teach kids that hard work and practice can lead to reward—qualities that will help kids grow both inside and outside of the Elks. Likewise, the growing Soccer Shoot program is another way to instill these values in our children.

As the school year winds down, I encourage high schoolers to remain focused in their work and to consider applying for the many

scholarship opportunities available through the Elks on the national, state, and local levels.

To our youngest Elks Members, it is your fresh perspective, positive outlook, and determination to succeed that will carry this organization into its next 150 years. I encourage all young Elks to get involved in their Lodges as much as possible and actively recruit new members. I can't wait to see the great things they will accomplish.

How will your Lodge invest in your youth this year? From scholarships to Hoop and Soccer Shoots to Antlers and the Youth Recognition Program, there are already so many wonderful national programs in place to support our young people. I look forward to seeing all the new ways you'll do so in your communities. See you out there!

Unaffiliated Spouse of a Member

Questions have arisen about a spouse who chooses to take an Absolute Dimit or has been dropped for non-payment.

The spouse may enter and stay in the Lodge based on Section 14.190 Opinion 03 of the 2017 Statutes Annotated, which states: *"The exception permitting visitation of a Lodge by a non-suspended spouse, or a delinquent Member spouse, means that the non-suspended or unaffiliated spouse is treated as if he or she were never a Member."*

GRAND SECRETARY

Bryan R. Klatt

Your annual Membership Report was filed on April 1, but has the Lodge submitted the Annual Charity Report and paid the Grand Lodge per capita and assessments? April 30 is approaching.

To answer another question, when will the Grand Lodge-calculated membership total be lowered to coincide with the Local Lodge total? This will take place when the Lodge Secretary sends the proper paperwork to the Grand Secretary after the 2017-18 Grand Lodge year closes on June 1.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Contest rewards community work

By STEVEN A. DAVIS
Committee Chairman

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee encourages Lodges to become involved in their communities with a community project that focuses on a need in the community and makes a difference to those it serves.

The goal is to enhance community awareness of the good work we do as Elks and to have the community associate that good work directly with the local Elks Lodge. These projects can help the community better understand who we are and what we do as a fraternal organization and as such, develop membership in our Lodges.

To recognize and reward the great community work done throughout Elkdom, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee sponsors the Lodge Community Project Contest. The winning Lodges will be recognized in all six Divisions for their outstanding community project at the Grand Lodge Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

It's easy to enter the contest. After logging on to elks.org, click on Grand Lodge, then Committees, then Activities Committee, then Community Project Contest, where you will find the application. Complete the entry form and e-mail or mail it to David B. Lake, Area 3 Member of the Grand Lodge Activities Committee at the e-mail or postal address shown on the application.

Be proud of your Lodge's Community Project and enter this important contest. Please remember that the deadline for entries is May 1, so don't delay. Send in your entry today.

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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Guides give crash course on effective relations

By **BRUCE A. HIDLEY**
Committee Member

Another fraternal year has quickly come and gone. During March and April our Lodges pass the torch of authority to a new Exalted Ruler and slate of Officers.

It is very important that our Exalted Rulers appoint an active Chairperson for Government Relations. Your Lodge Government Relations Chairperson will play a vital role when it comes to informing your local legislative leaders and the public on the tremendous amount of hours and contributions that Elks provide for their communities.

It is crucial for our Exalted Rulers to provide the Government Relations Chairperson with what we call our Bible, the Government Relations Manual. You may download the manual at elks.org/grandlodge/manuals/default.cfm. The Government Relations Manual has all the information to assist your Lodge regarding the programs with which the Government Relations

Committee is involved. The manual contains the committee mission statement, program details, and tips on contacting legislators along with sample letters.

It is also important to provide your Government Relations Chairperson with the Charity Records Workbook. This workbook contains all of the necessary information to assist with the survey of volunteer, youth, charitable and community service programs. The information compiled in the Charity Records Workbook is extremely valuable. The statistics are a tremendous way to show your community just how much “*Elks Care – Elks Share.*”

Share the statistics through your Lodge bulletin and carefully and selectively post the information on social media. The more we can educate our communities and local, state, and federal elected officials, the more they will know about how much we care for and contribute to our communities.

Each Lodge should want to beam with Elks pride. Try to get the Elks Magazine to your local library or city hall. More publicity

yields better awareness.

The enormous amount of great work being done by Lodges, Members and their families cannot be overstated and must be reported. It is essential that we all remember to track our charitable work and report our contributions to our Lodge Secretary. It takes all of us to do the job. We need to know that we can count on everyone's help. Please be sure to make that extra effort in tracking our time. We will meet our goal!

The Annual Report is a perfect fit to our Grand Exalted Ruler's motto, “*Strengthening Elkdom through Community Awareness.*” Let us all live this motto by working as a team to once again achieve our goal of \$365 million in reporting.

The Government Relations Team offers each of you a heartfelt thank you for your continued hard work in making this happen. Together, we will continue to better the lives of others in our communities. Let's make the Elks' 150th Anniversary in San Antonio, Texas, a special one by achieving this impressive goal.

150TH ANNIVERSARY

Gary Sinise's band to perform at 150th

Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band will headline the Elks' 150th anniversary celebration in San Antonio.

Named for Sinise's memorable character in Forrest Gump, the Lt. Dan Band has played hundreds of concerts over the past 15 years to raise spirits, funds, and awareness for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. The band is a program of the Gary Sinise Foundation, which serves defenders, veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need through unique programs designed to entertain, educate, and inspire.

“While we can never do enough to show gratitude to our nation's defenders,” Sinise said, “we can always do a little more.”

The band will perform on Sunday, July 1, after the Convention's Opening Ceremony. The performance is sponsored by the Elks National Foundation through a generous donation to the Gary Sinise Foundation.

“Gary's work for veterans and military families aligns so well with the mission and values of the Elks,” said PGER Lou Sulsberger, the chairman of the ENF Board of Trustees. “We're happy to support what he's doing, and I can't wait to hear the band!”

For more information about the Gary Sinise Foundation, visit GarySiniseFoundation.org. For more information about the anniversary celebration, visit elks.org/150.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

States and Lodges that win the 'net

Submitted by William J. Schran and Robert R. Hinkle, Committee Members

Results of the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee's two 2017–2018 website contests have been announced.

The winners of the State Association Website Contest are:

Five ★★★★★

Arizona: arizonaelksassociation.org

California/Hawaii: chea-elks.org

Colorado: coloradoelks.org

Idaho: idahoeelks.org

Iowa: iowaelks.org

Louisiana: laelks.org

New Jersey: njelks.org

Wisconsin: wielks.com

Four ★★★★★

Arkansas: arelks.homestead.com

Connecticut: ctelks.org

Georgia: gaelks.org

Illinois: illinoiselks.org

Kansas: kselks.org

Kentucky: kyelks.org

Maryland-Delaware-DC: mddedcelks.org

Michigan: mielks.org

Minnesota: mnelks.org

North Carolina: ncelks.org

Ohio: ohioelks.org

Pennsylvania: paelks.com

Texas: texaselks.org

Virginia: virginiaelks.org

West Virginia: wvelks.org

Wyoming: wyoelks.org

The winners of the Local Lodge Website Contest are:

Five ★★★★★

Anchorage, AK No. 2868:

anchorageelks2868.org

Mission Viejo-Saddleback Valley, CA

No. 2444: mvelks.com

Vero Beach, FL No. 1774: veroelks.com

Mt. Vernon IL No. 819: elks819.org

Burlington, IA No. 84: elks84.org

Annapolis, MD No. 622: elks622.com

Traverse City, MI No. 323: elkstc.com

Silver City, NM No. 413: silvercity.com

Poughkeepsie, NY No. 2868: bpoe275.org

Lebanon, OH No. 422: lebanonelks.com

Connellsville, PA No. 503:

paelks.com/elks503.html

Morgantown, WV No. 411: bpoe411.org

Four ★★★★★

Dalton, GA No. 1267: daltonelks.org

New Castle, IN No. 484: elks484.com

Frankfort, KY No. 530: frankfortelks.org

Middlesex, NJ No. 1488: middlesexelks.com

Ballard, WA No. 827: ballardelks.org

Three ★★★★★

Mountain Home, ID No. 2276: facebook.com/MountainHomeElksLodge2276

Houlton, ME No. 835:

facebook.com/HoultonElksLodge835

Congratulations to the State Associations and Local Lodges that participated. We encourage all webmasters to look at other websites to get new ideas for your own sites.

GRAND LODGE AUDITING & ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

Deadline approaches for the Annual Financial Report

By **RICHARD TECHAU**
Committee Member

With the end of the 2017-18 Lodge year, it is time to review the plans for submitting the Lodge's Annual Financial Report. By now the Lodge's Auditing and Accounting Committee should have negotiated the Lodge's engagement with its licensed accountant, as discussed on pages 18 and 19 of the Auditing and Accounting Manual, and agreed to the terms as outlined in the sample contract on pages 37 and 38. Engagement of the accountant should never be postponed beyond January of the Lodge year. The proposed contract should be presented to the Lodge for its approval.

Please make sure the accountant is aware of all the report filing deadlines: June 15 for submission to the Lodge for approval and June 30 for submission to Grand Lodge. All

tax forms filed for the Lodge are required at the same time. All records necessary for the accountant to meet these deadlines should be delivered to them by April 30.

To meet this timeline, the Lodge Secretary and Treasurer must have all bookkeeping entries kept current so that after March 31, all they have to do is reconcile bank accounts before turning the records over to the Auditing and Accounting Committee for review prior to presenting them to the accountant.

Please note that extensions of time to file the report and tax forms are two different procedures. Filing for one does not extend the other. The Area A&A Committeeman can give you a one month extension to file the AFR, but additional extensions have to be requested from the State Sponsor. All tax extensions have to be filed with the appropriate governmental entity.

The Annual Financial Report form is not mailed to the Lodge. Instead, each Lodge is required to download from the Grand Lodge website the current Excel version of the AFR. The form and very detailed step-by-step instructions will be available in the Auditing and Accounting section of the Elks' website (elks.org/grandlodge/auditing/). Lodges are required to electronically file the report through the same site and only PDFs are accepted. (Important: Do not password protect your submission without supplying the password.)

The current year's form is required for filing. Old versions will be rejected by the committee and the report will be considered as not having been filed. A separate upload for any and all tax forms (990/990-T, etc.) will be necessary. Please feel free to contact your Area Committeeman for assistance if needed. Here is to a successful submission.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Time to trash old prescription drugs

By **FRANK SCARPINO**
Special Contributor

Too often, unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong hands. That's dangerous and often tragic. That's why it is great to see thousands of folks from across the country clean out their medicine cabinets and turn in—safely and anonymously—a record amount of prescription drugs at each take-back event.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications. The next National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is Saturday, April 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Isn't it time to get rid of those prescription drugs you have around the house? You certainly don't want to flush them down the drain or toilet. Though you can "take back" medications any day in most areas, this event provides a unified opportunity to the public to surrender expired, unwanted, unused prescription drugs and other medications to law enforcement officers for destruction. This one-day effort brings national focus to the issue of prescription drug abuse. Check the DEA website (dea.gov) for take-back sites in your community. Check with your local police department and encourage your Lodge Members to help spread the word to dispose of old or unused medications.

On another note, congratulations to all newly elected Lodge Officers! It is a new Elks year, so it is time to plan and budget for your Lodge's activities. Be sure to include

Drug Awareness in your plan. The Elks National Drug Awareness Program strives to teach all children and parents about the dangers of illegal drug use and prevent the abuse of legalized and prescription drugs.

As the largest volunteer drug awareness program in the United States, the program relies on state, district, and Lodge volunteers to promote a drug-free lifestyle through youth events such as Youth Week, Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, and Kids Fishing Derby. A drug awareness activity should always be included: It illustrates the Elks' commitment to education against youth drug use and creates stronger activities and greater communication with local schools.

One of the first events of the new Elks year is the Elks National Youth Week, held annually during the first week of May. What a great opportunity to promote drug awareness. Lodges could utilize an Elks Drug Awareness Trailer not only as a billboard, but as an information center by distributing drug awareness brochures, coloring books, and bookmarks. If you hold a Youth Day event, include a visit from Elroy the Elk and perhaps hand out drug awareness items such as pencils, balsa airplanes, and yo-yos. If your Lodge has access to a pair of fatal vision goggles, these make for a great activity for the older kids: try to walk a straight line, bounce a tennis ball, or even pick up a set of keys.

Have you started to plan your drug awareness event for Youth Week? It is only a month away. For further DAP information go to elks.org/dap or Elks Kids Zone at elkskidszone.org.

Eager new Member competes for USA

By **TAYLOR ODISHO**
ENF Communications Assistant

When she turned 21 and graduated from Antlers, the Junior Elks Program, Courtney Muns asked her father, Robert, "When can I become an Elk?"

But before she could join, Muns participated in the 2017 Special Olympics Winter Games in Austria last March. She placed second in the 100-meter and fourth in the 200-meter snowshoe competition.

"I worked very hard to make the team, and it was an honor competing for Team USA," Muns said. "I was very happy to get a silver medal while my mom, dad, and sister cheered me on."

After Austria, Muns was welcomed to the Elmwood Park-Paterson, NJ Lodge No. 60 with her father, who has been a Member for eight years. Muns looks forward to returning to the Winter Games again as an Elk.

Muns and her father are members of the Fidelity Club, the Elks National Foundation's monthly giving program. They appreciate that they're helping their Lodge, community, and the Foundation.

"The greatest thing in giving is the feeling in our heart," Robert Muns said. "We might not give a lot of money, but it feels like millions in our hearts."

Donors who join the Fidelity Club have their names listed on the ENF's website and receive a special pin. For more on the Fidelity Club, visit enf.elks.org/FidelityClub.



Beyond the VA: Help those in State Veterans Homes

By **MARY K. MORGAN**

Commission Director

There are nearly 20 million veterans in the United States, but only a little more than 9 million of them are registered with the VA.

In other words, more than half of veterans in the United States do not receive services at their local VA.

But where can you find these veterans?

State Veterans Homes are a good place to start. There are 162 State Veterans Homes in the United States, all of which are independent of the VA. These facilities are state-run, and often are in need of volunteers and support. Consider expanding any VA-based activities to local State Veterans Homes as well.



Additionally, if your Lodge holds ceremonies for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day or other events, think about holding them at a State Veterans Home so the residents can attend.

Reach out to local nursing homes and senior residences. These facilities usually have a recreation director who can connect

you to veteran patients and help plan events.

Don't forget about the younger veteran population. Younger vets are not only less likely to join traditional veterans groups but also less likely to use VA services.

Consider connecting with local groups like The Mission Continues and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. These two fast-growing groups cater mostly to post-9/11 veterans. Their mission of service aligns closely with the Elks. Check their websites to find the local contact in your area.

You can also reach out to student veterans. Community colleges and universities often have student veterans groups or staff members responsible for outreach.

It may take extra effort to reach these veterans, but it is worth it.

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS

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GRAND LODGE MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING

Ensure long-time Members remain on our rolls

By **RICK GATHEN**

Membership and Marketing Manager

Many of us understand the role of taking care of aging family members, or helping friends who are struggling financially or are in poor physical health. As charity begins at home, please give consideration to delinquent Elks Members who may be facing hardships. Remember "Living or dead, an Elk is Never Forgotten...Never Forsaken."

Let's stand by these words and review Lapsation rolls, especially emphasizing

those Members with many years serving our Order. Some have been loyal dues-paying Members for decades. Discuss the loss of these at-risk Members with your Lodge's Standing Relief Committee.

Per GLS, Statute Section 13.010: "*The Exalted Ruler, Esteemed Leading Knight, Loyal Knight and Lecturing Knight, Secretary and Treasurer shall constitute the Standing Relief Committee of the Lodge, which shall examine the merits of all cases suggesting the necessity of aid or relief.*"

Upon committee recommendation, your Lodge may vote on assisting with their dues. Any Member present at a Lodge meeting may make that motion. Because this process is often overlooked, the Lodge Secretary is forced to cancel memberships of those worthy of assistance. Instead, allow your Lodge the right to vote before cancelling.

Make sure your Lodge Standing Relief Committee performs this important responsibility. Only then are we acting with Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

Elkdom

Spring into action. Spread Elkdom this April!