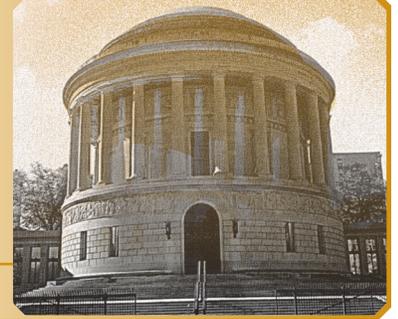




Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Elks keep moving forward and Meeting the Challenge

Wow, what a fantastic opportunity to serve our great Order. I would like to first thank my wonderful wife, Amy. Without her love, support, and commitment this experience would not be possible. We both are very grateful to have been chosen to take this incredible journey. I would also like to thank my other family members. Knowing they are helping take care of our personal obligations at home during this time is a huge help to both of us.

My theme this year is *“Meeting the Challenge.”* This past year was like no other in the history of our Order. With the ongoing COVID-19 situation, I want to congratulate local Boards of Directors and members for their



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

**T. KEITH
MILLS**

efforts in continuing Lodge operations and remaining active in their community. Thank you for taking and showing pride in our Order. Not only could we not meet regularly, but we all experienced a crash course in virtual meetings.

Summer is still upon us, but fall is closing in. Now is the time to begin

planning Lodge fall activities. For example, begin working on a school supply program, or start one if one is not available in your community. This is an opportunity to engage with your schools, help children who need it by providing critical school supplies, and lay the groundwork for other Elks youth programs (e.g., Hoop Shoot, scholarships, drug awareness).

This year, my goal for Elks National Foundation will remain at \$4.80 per Member. I know this goal is easily obtainable since we have more than doubled this number for many years now. The stronger your Lodge, the greater benefit to your community.

Please see GER, Page 2

Elks donate \$208.8 million despite Covid-19 pandemic

The 2020-2021 Membership Report was filed online via CLMS2. As of March 31, the Order ended the year with a total membership of 729,112 with a **significant loss compared to last year** of 39,814 (-5.17%). As we slowly recover from the pandemic, membership remains the principal focus.

Totals from the Annual Charity Reports show the Order donated \$208,880,238 in time, mileage, and in-kind gifts. This dollar amount would have been larger, but 64 Lodges failed to file a charity report. Again, with everyone's help, during the 2021-2022 Lodge year we will strive to reach that elusive 100% reported.

I would like to thank the Tampa Host Committee, their volunteers and Past Grand Exalted Rulers Robert Grafton and Michael F. Smith for all the work they did to ensure a successful convention.

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

Elks Care — Elks Share

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Soccer Shoot program reaches goal

By **WAYNE D. COTTERLY**
Committee Chairman

The Elks Virtual National Soccer Shoot is in its third year and is now working under the third and final phase of its implementation, which means only regional scores will be used in the competition going forward.

There are currently four established multi-state regions: Area 1, Area 3, Mid-Atlantic, and Mid-America. Contestants in these regions will compete in the Lodge, district, state, and regional contests, and the winners of the regional contests will earn the right to advance to the national contest.

For those states that are not currently part of a multi-state region, we will use the scores of the winners of their state contest. Those state scores will become part of a “virtual region” with only the top scores in each age and gender group advancing to the national contest.

If two or more states wish to form a multi-state soccer region, a form is available for download from the Activities Committee page of elks.org. These can be found under the Soccer Shoot program

link. Each state that is part of the new region must complete this form. Once formed, the new region will need to hold a regional soccer shoot event, where the winning scores will advance to the national level.

We strongly encourage states that are not part of an established Soccer Shoot region to form one with another nearby state so the contestants can compete in the Lodge, district, state, and regional levels. While we offer the national level as a virtual contest, it is always best to allow the contestants to compete head-to-head.

The Elks Soccer Shoot Program is a great way to support our nation's youth and to become actively involved in the community. The program is easy to run, and young people get the opportunity to exhibit their skills and strive for excellence as they work their way toward becoming a national champion.

If you are interested in starting a Soccer Shoot Program in your Lodge or State Association, the best place to start is to download the manual. If you have further questions, please contact the Activities Committee Soccer Shoot Coordinator.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

It's not too early to think about Red Ribbon Week

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**
Assistant National Director

It's never too early to plan your Lodge's Red Ribbon Celebration for the month of October. There are many ways to celebrate Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31) and every part of your community can get involved. Here's 10 easy tips for your Lodge to have a successful program.

1. Contact your elected officials about issuing a proclamation declaring Red Ribbon Week in your community. You can obtain PDF copies of proclamations from your State Chair.
2. Invite elected and government officials to participate in Red Ribbon Week activities.
3. Display a basket of red ribbons in the reception area of your Lodge for visitors and Members to take, along with copies of the Red Ribbon Week fact card, which are available from your State Chair.

4. Display red ribbons on the interior and exterior surfaces of your Lodge's building.
5. Sponsor a special drug abuse prevention seminar for the community. Invite a speaker who is an expert on drug prevention and invite the community to attend.
6. Submit a public service announcement about Red Ribbon Week activities to your local radio station. These can be found in the DAP section of the Elks webpage.
7. Sponsor an in-service educational program for your Members and community leaders.
8. Organize a drug prevention awareness fair. Invite local nonprofit organizations to participate by staffing exhibit booths, distributing educational materials, offering free health screenings, and much more. The Elks are leaders in this area and your Lodge will stand out!

9. Set up and staff an exhibit table at a local hospital, doctor's office, community center, or shopping center to promote Red Ribbon Week and to distribute drug prevention information and materials.
10. Post fact sheets and Red Ribbon Week event notices and other materials on community webpages, and on bulletin boards in libraries, hospitals, local churches, synagogues, gymnasiums, grocery stores, parks and recreation departments, health clinics, universities, and other public places.

Some of these ideas take little effort, while others take more of a commitment. What are you waiting for?



GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Empathy and Charity make better Elks

By **ROBERT L. BOHNSACK**
Committee Member

Do you ever feel a bit insecure? Do you ever just want to crawl under a blanket and block it all out? Many times people find themselves searching for security. Like Linus in the *Peanuts* cartoon, many people carry a security blanket. Sometimes that blanket is a bit dingy and dirty, yet they hang onto it tightly.

So, how can we as Elks help with that security blanket? If we were Snoopy, we'd grab hold of that blanket and pull it away, like he did to Linus. Well, Elks are not Snoopy. We don't grab hold onto that blanket. We don't want people to feel that their security blanket is being taken away. Rather, we wash it for them or give them a new blanket. That's called charity. If your Lodge is like mine, it is involved in many charitable programs designed to help those in need, and you have probably shed a tear or two while helping those people. That's what Elks are all about. *Elks Care—Elks Share!*

In the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch says to his daughter, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from their point of view, until you climb into his skin and

walk around in it." Or to put it another way from an old song, "Walk a Mile in My Shoes."

It's true isn't it? We can't climb into someone's shoes who is in need. It's also hard to walk a mile in their shoes. They would probably pinch our feet or give us a blister or two. However, if we could walk in those shoes, we may understand a bit more completely what charity really looks like.

We see these people everyday. We hear the painful cries. We attempt to "feel" their pain, by immersing ourselves in their experiences, but we can't. We can, however, continue our charitable programs, and expand those programs to include more people in need. And just as importantly, we need to keep track of those events and the people we help, and those Members who share their time and talents.

Report those charitable hours. Let others in your Lodge know of the charitable programs available so they too can become involved. And let your community know about the charitable programs you have available, and your desire to share.

We as Elks hold the answer in our hands—it's called charity. And as Elks, we choose to be charitable.



Linus and his blanket.
Image: Charles Schulz

GER From Page 1

With the various grants from the Elks National Foundation, we can readily add to existing Community Service Projects. Today, our communities need us more than ever. There are always projects that could use our help to strengthen the charitable works we do. For some ENF Grants, your Lodge just needs to apply. Others are competitive. However, ENF personnel are there to assist you with these proposals.

The Elks Most Valuable Student applications are now open and online. Create a little explanation sheet or download one from elks.org. Then call your high school counselors to inform them of our program and where they can direct their seniors for the eligibility requirements and application. Follow up that call with a small letter. Remember we also have the Student/Teenager Month and Year Program. This is one way for your Lodge to recognize high school students for their work and volunteerism. Look into this program within the Grand Lodge Youth Activities Program Manual.

Finally, this week, visit Elks.org. Under the Fraternal Committee, print off the "Patriotism Week Proclamation." Have your city mayor sign it to proclaim September 6-12, 2021 as National Patriotism Week in your town. Then, use this opportunity to encourage new Members to join our great Order.

VETERANS From Page 4

program; we had a veterans blackjack night. And I learned how to be a blackjack dealer. It was the same kind of thing, Elks serving to provide veterans some entertainment. Forget about your troubles for a little while and enjoy yourself.

On his role in starting the Welcome Home, the newest ENVSC program:

PGER Amen: When I was a Grand Exalted Ruler on the national tour in 2014 to 2015, one of my stops was Washington, DC. I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting with the [Secretary of Veterans Affairs], Robert MacDonald. He said he wanted us to join with the VA on eradicating homelessness in America. That was the trigger in 2015 to the agreements between the Elks and the Veterans Administration that continues to this day where we work to keep veterans out of homelessness.

We have the Welcome Home Kit program that serves our veterans when they are being brought out from a homeless situation into an apartment or some other kind of home facility. We provide the essentials to make that situation livable again. Local Elks do all the legwork in acquiring the necessities of life for our veterans. It's such a worthy, worthy program. We will continue to work on homeless veterans projects until every single veteran in America is housed.

On the next 75 years and more:

PGER Amen: The ENVSC helps facilitate the Elks motto that as long as there are veterans, the Elks will be of service to them. And we will continue that as long as there is Elkdom, which in my mind is going to be forever!

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

The history of Patriotism Week

By WILLIAM J. LINDSEY
Committee Member

A battle over the Pledge of Allegiance led to the creation of a week-long commemoration of patriotism.

In the late 1970s, 16-year-old Lori Cox of Scottsdale, AZ led a fight to re-institute the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at her high school. She met quite a bit of resistance but won a short-lived struggle with the local school board to recite the Pledge daily on a volunteer basis. However, after five months, the decision was rescinded due to pressure on the school board from disgruntled students and teachers. The Pledge was limited to a voluntary once-a-week event.

Cox pushed to have a state law to allow the recitation of the Pledge. She wrote to the President and 100 other leaders across the nation to support her idea that would expand to involve all Americans. She then wrote to every congressman and senator in the United States to recognize National Patriotism Week. Part of what she said was "we will be a better people because of pride, and by transmitting those attributes to one another."

Because of Ms. Cox's efforts, the week commencing with the third Monday in February 1981 would be known as "National Patriotism Week." It requested the President to issue a proclamation that called on Americans to recognize the week with appropriate celebrations and observances.

In December 1980, President Jimmy Carter declared a resolution calling for the observance of the week, calling upon all primary and secondary schools to adopt

a curriculum which should include such elements as the Pledge of Allegiance; the national anthem; national symbols, seals and mottos; and national monuments, heroes, and accomplishments. He also requested each federal agency recognize that week. President Reagan would also make official proclamations for National Patriotism Week.

At the 1982 Grand Lodge Convention, the Elks enthusiastically endorsed a resolution calling for a National Patriotism Week, citing Lori Cox's influence.

Patriot Day was made an American national observance in 2002 by President Bush in memory of those killed in the September 11 attacks. President Obama rededicated it in 2009 as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. This day is not a national holiday but the national flag is flown at half-mast on all US government buildings. National Patriotism Week was moved from the third week in February to the second week in September in 2008.

So what is Patriotism? It is commonly defined as the love of and attachment to one's own country. It also encompasses devotion and robust support for the nation. Patriotism promotes peace and harmony.

How do we promote or demonstrate Patriotism? This can be as simple as holding a moment of silence for our departed or the heroes of our nation. It can be a complex event such as a flag waving parade and speeches. Simply flying our nation's flag, holding a ceremony, or standing during the playing of our national anthem are other examples of patriotism. There is no limit except for your imagination.

Closing the book

The COVID-19 pandemic was just a whisper when the 2020 Hoop Shoot season tipped off in the fall of 2019, with children from 8 to 13 years old toeing the line in gyms all over the country. Then, on the eve of the regional competitions, the wheels came off. The Hoop Shoot completed four regional contests; the other eight were canceled, along with the National Finals.

A year later, in March 2021, the 2020 Hoop Shoot season bounced back. The eight suspended regional contests resumed with the semi-finalists shooting in small pods or individually, their shots witnessed by Elks volunteers.

With a full slate of 72 National

Finalists, the National Finals commenced in April. On Friday, May 14, 2021, the Elks closed the book on the longest season in the program's history with the virtual Finals Reveal show.

Six champions were crowned at the 2020 Finals Reveal. All six will have their names and images displayed in a new exhibit at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass. They'll have the chance to visit the Hall as guests of the Elks when it's safe to do so.

Here are the six champions. (*Denotes Getty Powell Award winner)

- 8-9 year olds: Jackson Ramirez, sponsored by Walnut Creek, CA Lodge No. 1811; Ellison Graham*, sponsored by Great Falls, MT Lodge No. 214.

- 10-11 year olds: Thomas Goodelle,

sponsored by Utica, NY Lodge No. 33; Kayla Stidham, sponsored by Greenfield, IN Lodge No. 1720.

- 12-13 year olds: Caden Thompson*, sponsored by Claremore, OK Lodge No. 1230; Logan Busby, sponsored by Durant, OK Lodge No. 1963.

On May 15, the ENF celebrated the National Finalists in a virtual awards banquet. Former NFL player Israel Idonije addressed the Finalists, and the Elks recognized the National Champions and other award recipients—including a record 10 Emile Brady Awards for achieving a perfect score of 25.

You can watch the Friday Finals Reveal show on the ENF's YouTube channel. Visit enf.elks.org/2020FinalsReveal to watch!



ENVSC celebrates 75 years of serving veterans

By **JOHN D. AMEN, PGER**
ENVSC Commission Chairman

This July, we're kicking off the 75th anniversary celebration of the Elks National Veterans Service commission. We started by interviewing ENVSC Commission Chair John Amen about his volunteer work for veterans, from the time he joined to his time as GER to his work as Commission Chair.

On his inspiration for serving veterans:

PGER Amen: Service to veterans is, I believe, our most valuable program, both for our country and for veterans who deserve the best. My father served in

European third theater in four different campaigns during World War II as a combat medic. He came back a very different person.

It's such a worthy and fulfilling service when you visit with and serve veterans, even if you helped wash dishes or something like that. It provides a feeling of service that you can't obtain anywhere else.

On how he became involved in serving veterans with the Elks:

PGER Amen: In Colorado, we have a very active program. We partner with the state National Guard and we seek

the families out. We help the families, particularly when national guardsmen are deployed. I have been a Member of two different Lodges in the Denver area. We were blessed to have a large VA hospital, the Northern Colorado VA. In connection with that medical center, they had a veterans nursing home. We had a program of providing entertainment for the patients at the nursing home. We would do bingo and bring food and it was a lot of fun for the veterans.

After I transferred, we had a similar

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BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
Benevolent and Protective
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August 2021

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GRAND LODGE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Ten tips for a successful year as an Exalted Ruler

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

If you do these 10 things, the next generation of Elks will have better Lodges than we have today. And what we started here will indeed change our Elks future for the better.

1. Start every day with one task to complete to help your Lodge succeed.
2. Find people in your Lodge with the heart to help you succeed.
3. Respect everyone. Every Member matters.

4. Remember, life is not always fair. Move forward and quickly get over hurt feelings.
5. Don't be afraid to fail—and you will fail often. But that often means you are working hard.
6. All great leaders take risks. Go make history.
7. Step up when the times are the toughest in your Lodge.
8. Face down the Lodge bullies and stand your ground.
9. Lift the downtrodden Members of your Lodge. The spreading antlers of protection means charity begins at home.
10. Never give up making your Lodge better. Remember we Grow By Change—Not by Chance.

