



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

*Elks Care — Elks Share*



## Big June weekend celebrates the US flag, fathers

It's Grand Lodge Convention time! We will be getting together from June 29 to July 2 in Kansas City, Missouri. I hope to see you at the convention.

Please take advantage of all the wonderful seminars, meetings, and ceremonies. Visit the exhibit halls and booths and spend time with other states' gatherings and events to meet Elks from across America. States come together to discuss and swap their best ideas. *Elks Care — Elks Share* is our motto.

Flag Day on Saturday, June 14, is an important mandatory service for Elks. It's a great way to involve local Scout groups



### Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

**DOUGLAS A.  
SCHIEFER**

and JROTC teams to participate in your ceremony. Invite veterans to attend and participate during the ceremony. Pass out flag pins. Our flag is precious to us as Elks, and we need to display it with reverence

and dignity.

Our fathers are also precious to us. Father's Day is on Sunday, June 15. My father and my grandfathers were Elks, and they started the legacy for me and my son and sons-in-law. I am proud to say that I got my dedication to service from what I saw my father and grandfathers do. Thank the dads in your life.

It's been an amazing honor and privilege to serve you and our great Order as Grand Exalted Ruler for 2024-2025. Thank you all.

God bless you, God bless our troops, and God bless America!

## USPS vs. e-mail, private vs. public

Grand Lodge often receives inquiries about **Section 16.150, Opinions 1-4**, of the Laws of the Order, pertaining to Lodge bulletins/newsletters being e-mailed or posted on publicly accessed Elks' websites.

**Opinion 02 states:** "To preserve the privacy of the Members and applicants for membership in the Order, Lodges may not publish their bulletins or newsletters on a website open to the public, including by use of the Grand Lodge or State Association websites."

**GRAND SECRETARY**  
Bryan R. Klatt

**Opinion 03 states:** "If a Lodge publishes any magazine, newspaper, bulletin or other periodical devoted to the interests of the Order, every Member of that Lodge is entitled to receive a copy of each such publication, whether by electronic delivery or by regular mail."

Per **Opinion 04**, "The Lodge Bulletin may be sent electronically to any Member without written authorization from that Member, unless otherwise requested by the Member."

To clarify, do not publish or post Lodge bulletins/newsletters, or notices meant for Members only, on any websites or other social media platforms that are open to the public.

## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### Keep in mind the 'why' of what we do

By **ROBERT E. WAMBACH**  
Committee Member

As leaders in this great organization, we must always remember we need to be teachers as well.

Far too often we find ourselves forgetting the importance of that role and we don't realize we have many new Members getting involved quickly and without explanation of why we do what we do. In setting expectations, we must always remember the "why." We cannot just ask someone to fill out a Charity Report without explaining to them why it is important that we report the great charity work that we are doing every day.

Lodges are now required to have a Government Relations Committee consisting of no less than three members. Since this is new, Lodges are teaching the significance of our job to those who are being appointed to these committees. Do these members know that one of the primary reasons for our reporting is to protect our status as a 501(c)(8) organization? Have they been provided with a copy of the Government Relations Manual and, if not, do they know where to find it at Elks.org? Has the Exalted Ruler met with

this committee to present them with goals and expectations?

We need to take advantage of every opportunity to teach the importance of the Government Relations Committee. State meetings and District Deputy clinics are the perfect opportunity to provide training on the proper reporting of our charitable works. We should also be holding discussions on the importance of developing relationships with our local lawmakers so we can keep informed on any legislation that will affect our Lodges. District Deputies should be having conversations with the Exalted Rulers during their pre-visits to the Lodges inquiring on the progress of their Charity Report and the activities of their Government Relations Committee.

Let's make the work of the Government Relations Committee important through teaching what our expectations are and never forgetting the "why." Never lose sight of "why" we do what we do as Elks!

**Grow  
Elkdom**

## GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

## Contest winners filled key needs

By **MICHAEL B. BRYANT**  
Committee Chairman

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee is proud to announce the divisional winners of the Community Projects Contest for 2024-2025.

This contest provides national recognition for Lodges that have been actively supporting their community by engaging with it and providing needed resources it might not otherwise receive.

The points system for the contest factors in total volunteers, man-hours, event duration, attendance, and media coverage and promotion.

The committee awards first, second, and third place in each of the six divisions based on the size of your Lodge. The contest is easy to enter, and a copy of the form is available by clicking [elks.org](https://elks.org/grandlodge/activities/files/communityProjectsContest.pdf) and going to the Grand Lodge Activities Committee. The link for the form is [elks.org/grandlodge/activities/files/communityProjectsContest.pdf](https://elks.org/grandlodge/activities/files/communityProjectsContest.pdf).

This is a great way to reward your Members and volunteers for their dedication and hard work. We appreciate each Lodge's participation in the program this year and look forward to seeing other Lodges showcase their programs next year.

This year's winners are:

### Division I

1st: Islip, NY No. 2533  
2nd: Hackettstown, NJ No. 2331

### Division II

1st: Waukesha, WI No. 400  
2nd: Webster-Fairport, NY No. 2396  
3rd: Southern Pines, NC No. 1692

### Division III

1st: Massapequa, NY No. 2162

### Division IV

1st: Goldsboro, NC No. 139  
2nd: Cynthiana, KY No. 438  
3rd: Bridgeport, CT No. 36

### Division V

1st: Hickory, NC No. 1654  
2nd: Wethersfield-Rocky Hill, CT No. 2308  
3rd: Sanford, NC No. 1679

### Division VI

1st: Las Cruces, NM No. 1119  
2nd: Middleboro, MA No. 1274  
3rd: Westbrook, CT No. 1784

## Activities make all the difference

By **ROGER McQUEEN**  
Committee Member

It's still early in the Lodge year, so it is an opportune time to review the materials provided from Grand Lodge.

The Activities Committee produces a great Youth Activities Programs Manual that can help your Lodge plan for this year. The Grand Lodge Activities Committee includes Junior Golf, Scouting, Soccer Shoot, public safety medals, the Antlers Program, Dictionary Project, Community Projects, student/teenager of the month or year, and the JROTC Award Program. As you can see, there are many ways your Lodge can participate in showing it is making a difference in the community.

Each Lodge should have committees with appointed chairs. This is so very important to make sure these programs and projects are offered to the membership and to promote what the Elks are doing.

The Activities Committee was established around 2010 when the Grand Lodge consolidated committees to increase community presence. Each Lodge is required to have an Activities Committee per Statute 13.021. The committee is charged with implementing and supervising all matters pertaining to activities of a civil, social, and community interest, including one Elks-sponsored

Community Project. This committee should also be responsible for community outreach and involvement through youth activities and community projects.

Funding for these projects can be done with local funds, but ENF grants, particularly Community Investment Program grants, are ideally suited for many Community Projects. The grants available are the Beacon, Spotlight, Gratitude, Freedom, and Impact. Assess your community needs, plan a charitable project that fits the needs, harness your Lodge support, and make it happen.

In an effort to make sure the public is informed, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee has instituted a contest on a national level called the "Community Projects Contest." Each Lodge is urged to adopt, implement, and promote a Community Project to inform the people of their communities about what the Elks do for them. Since each Lodge is different and each location has its own specific needs, it is important to share as much information with the public as possible.

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee is happy to help your lodge with information and guidance. Log on to [elks.org](https://elks.org) and check out the Activities Committee page to find more information.

## G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

## Take initiative and grow your Lodge

By **RICK GATHEN**  
Membership Marketing Director

Being Exalted Ruler isn't just about calling meetings to order—it's about calling people to something greater.

It's about building more than just programs and events. It's about building people. Building heart. Building a future.

**Growing your Lodge is not a side task.** It's *the* task.

Because every new Member who walks through your doors brings something special: a spark of energy, a fresh idea, a set of helping hands, and the potential to be tomorrow's leader. And here's the best part: new Members bring more new Members. Excitement is contagious. When people see a Lodge that's alive, growing, and welcoming, they want to be part of it. They want to contribute. They want to belong.

So, what's the mission? **Initiate, initiate, initiate.**

Bring them in. Get them involved. Make them proud to be an Elk. Don't wait for someone else to take the lead. **You are the someone.** Invite. Encourage. Inspire.

Be the reason your Lodge grows—in numbers, in strength, in impact.

Because when you grow membership, you don't just fill a room. You grow momentum. You grow the legacy of the Elks.





## GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

# Essay contestants explore meaning of patriotism

By **MARK EATON**  
Committee Member

We are proud to recognize the outstanding achievements of our Americanism Essay Contest winners. The theme for the contest in 2024-25 was *What Does Patriotism Mean To Me?*

Through their thoughtful and inspiring essays, these students have demonstrated a deep understanding of the values that define our nation—freedom, patriotism, and civic responsibility. Their words reflect not only their passion for America but also their commitment to shaping a brighter future. We commend each of them for their hard work, insight, and dedication, and we celebrate their success in keeping the spirit of Americanism alive.

This year, 41 states participated in the contest. One state alone reported more than 5,400 participants! This was a great response to our essay contest and we hope to continue to grow its participation further.

I'd like to congratulate this year's winners who showed out with some impressive essays:

## EIGHTH GRADE

*1st Place:* **Azalea Snowmassara**. Sponsored by Tacoma, WA Lodge No. 174.

*2nd Place:* **Jace Simonds**. Sponsored by Wolcott, NY Lodge No. 1763.

*3rd Place:* **Luca Capalbo**. Sponsored by South Kingstown, RI Lodge No. 1899.



Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Photo: Tomasz Zielonka/Unsplash

## SEVENTH GRADE

*1st Place:* **Rachel Liu**. Sponsored by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169.

*2nd Place:* **Kayleigh Kim**. Sponsored by Greater Palisades, NJ Lodge No. 2475.

*3rd Place:* **Anna K. Montgomery**. Sponsored by Summerville, SC Lodge No. 2719.

## SIXTH GRADE

*1st Place:* **Palmer Revier**. Sponsored by Clark Fork Valley, MT Lodge No. 2757.

*2nd Place:* **Navee Gupta**. Sponsored by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169.

*3rd Place:* **Brisa Avila**. Sponsored by Irving, TX Lodge No. 2334.

## FIFTH GRADE

*1st Place:* **Salina Jajo**. Sponsored by Macomb, MI Lodge No. 2292.

*2nd Place:* **Sterling Lunde**. Sponsored by Winston-Salem, NC Lodge No. 449.

*3rd Place:* **Samuel J. Lambson**. Sponsored by Coquille Valley, OR Lodge No. 1935.

I would like to thank all the Lodges and states for their participation in this program.

The winners' plaques will be displayed at the Fraternal Committee booth during the Elks National Convention in Kansas City and can be picked up after the session on Tuesday. The winning essays can be read in a later issue of Elks Magazine.

The theme for the 2025-26 American Essay Contest is: *What Does Service to Your Country Mean?* We feel there will be a wide variety of opinions, and we look forward to reading each one.

We will also be checking for artificial intelligence technology used in the essays so please encourage your students to avoid the use of AI.

## DRUG AWARENESS COMMISSION

# DAC Open House, training session scheduled for KC

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**  
National Director

We certainly hope to see you at the end of this month at the Grand Lodge Convention to be held this year in Kansas City, Missouri. If you are coming, please stop into the exhibit hall and visit the DAC booth—we'll have a surprise for you. If you know of any kids who will be there, make certain they stop by as well.

On Tuesday, July 1 in Kansas City, the Elks Drug Awareness Program will host an Open House for the Members of our organization. You are all welcome to attend. Information regarding the time and place of this Open House will be published in the convention program.

State Chairs from all over Elksdom will participate in a two-day training in Kansas



City just prior to the Opening Session of Grand Lodge. These folks deserve thanks and recognition for what they do. If you get the opportunity, please reach out to them as they provide a lot of information to our Lodges in keeping our young people informed and safe.

In other news, we can all rest a little easier knowing that the architect of the murder of slain DEA Agent Enrique S. "Kiki" Camarena is safely in custody here in the United States after nearly 40 years!

June 26 is the United Nations' International Day Against Drug Abuse and

Illicit Trafficking. If you are interested in recognizing this day, simply put notice of it in your bulletin and every Member of your Lodge will know about it. Just some things to keep in mind:

- More than 300 million people worldwide between ages 15 and 64 have used drugs in the past year.
- Cannabis use has increased by 25% in the last decade, with rising concerns over synthetic opioids like fentanyl and methamphetamine.
- 1 in 8 people with substance use disorders receive treatment, highlighting the urgent need for improved healthcare access.
- The global drug trade generates over \$400 billion annually, fueling organized crime, corruption, and violence.

# Fighting veteran homelessness with Elks grants

By **EMILY CRUZ**

**ENVSC Programs Associate**

Is your Lodge still planning what to do with grant funds this year? Take a cue from these Focus Grant Lodges and plan a project to serve veterans experiencing homelessness.

Many veterans facing homelessness are in dire need of food, bedding, hygiene supplies and first aid kits. Thankfully, veterans in need can easily obtain these necessary supplies with the help of Lodges like Merritt Island, FL Lodge No. 2650.

Merritt Island Elks have been working with their local Volunteers of America housing facility for eight years to provide

the onsite veterans' pantry with basic necessities. Members also had their annual "Burger Burn" at their local VOA transitional facility for resident veterans to enjoy a warm meal and companionship.

For some veterans facing homelessness, having consistent companionship with others within their community can help embolden them as they transition out of homelessness. Elks of Westchester, CA Lodge No. 2050 have been a longtime partner with U.S. VETS Inglewood and have established a strong relationship with the veterans by attending social outings, such as a South

Bay Lakers basketball game, put together by the Lodge.

Project Manager Fiona Engler said "The veterans really enjoyed not just the trip but the time with the Elks. This has led to an invitation to the Veterans Day activities at US VETS Inglewood as well as an invitation to the graduation of eight of the veterans from the program!"

Lodges in the 13 areas with the highest number of unhoused veterans are eligible for Focus Grants. (Denver is a new addition this year) You can read Focus Grant guidelines, FAQs, and access the grants dashboard by visiting [elks.org/vets](https://elks.org/vets).



**BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary**  
**Benevolent and Protective**  
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**June 2025**

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## Donations at convention can earn your Lodge a bonus

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**

**ENF Communications Coordinator**

The Elks National Convention is right around the corner, and the Elks National Foundation hopes to see you there!

Before you hit the road for Kansas City, add a new pack of socks or a new or gently used children's book to your bag for the 2025 Spotlight on Service supply drive. If you or your guests donate one of these items at the ENF booth in the exhibit hall on Saturday or Sunday, your Lodge will be entered into a raffle to win a bonus CIP grant worth \$2,000. In honor of the CIP's 20th birthday, we will be giving 20 of these bonus grants away!

While you're at the ENF booth, pick up a special ENF ribbon for your badge and ask any ENF-related questions you have. You may be able to finally put a face to the name of an ENF staff member you've communicated with, and the staff is always eager to do the same with Elks.

You will also have the chance to interact with all your favorite ENF programs, including the 2025 Elks Hoop Shoot Getty Powell Award winners and members of the Scholar Advisory Board, who want to show their appreciation to the people who have made their awards possible.

Convention is a jam-packed event, and while it's impossible to see everything, you don't want to miss the ENF's seminars.

The Community Investments Program is presenting two sessions all about grants and the best practices for using them; the Hoop Shoot team is hosting a session about the upcoming season and how the program unleashes gritty kids; and the Development team will teach you how to implement broad-based fundraising techniques to help your Lodge exceed the per-member-giving goal.

The ENF can't wait to (K)see you in KC! *A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Elks National Foundation helps Elks build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information on the ENF, visit [elks.org/enf](https://elks.org/enf).*