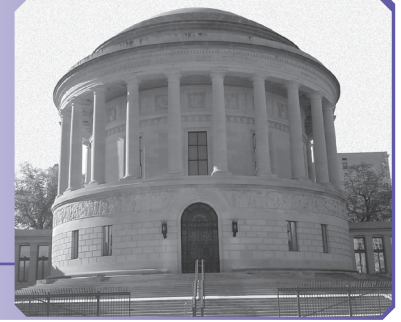




Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Thanks to the Elks for everything they do

Happy Independence Day, the Fourth of July. Happy America 250!

We live in the greatest country on the face of the earth.

We as proud Elks uphold the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity in order to honor our great nation and organization.

Did the last twelve months fly by for you as they did for me and First Lady Sue? My, weren't we in Kansas City last week?

The old adage "time flies when having fun" is fitting.

The easy part of staying enthused week



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler
BRYAN R.
KLATT**

after week was visiting each state and the Members thereof.

Sue and I want to thank each and every one of you for your assistance, hospitality,

and support during our year as Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady.

Each of you are the reason we are 800,000 Members strong with more than 1,780 Local Lodges who form the greatest charitable organization in the United States of America.

We are strong and mighty, and we are blessed to be citizens in our great country.

God bless each and every one of you. God bless the BPOE, and God bless the United States of America. Always remember my motto, *Be The Difference*, as we are 158 years young!

Opportunities arise for Elks over summer

Summer is often associated with vacations, but the needs of our communities remain constant. For Elks Lodges, it also presents an excellent opportunity to engage the community and host events that attract new Members. Now is an ideal time

GRAND SECRETARY
Carl T. Seibert

to strengthen your volunteer teams with fresh perspectives and renewed energy.

State Secretaries: Please submit your State Committee Chairs & Association Information for the Directory by July 31.

District Deputies will be installed at the Grand Lodge Convention and will begin their duties immediately. July is an ideal time to prepare your Lodge for their visitation and inspection.

Their first clinic, expected in August or September, will outline expectations for the year, including a focus on membership growth, financial stability, and effective planning.

For those who will attend the Chicago convention, I hope you take the opportunity to visit our magnificent Memorial Building and celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Please see **SECRETARY**, Page 3

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Contest 'A' winners announced

By **MICHAEL L. KENNEDY**
Committee Member

We are excited to announce the top ten Lodges in each division in this year's All-American Lodge Contest "A." Overall Grand Lodge received 145 entries from 30 states and we consider all Lodges that entered winners. Here are the top ten leaders in no particular order.

Division I (1-150 Members)

Mahanoy City, PA Lodge No. 695
Green Bay, WI Lodge No. 259
Elmwood Park-Paterson, NJ Lodge No. 60
Duarte, CA Lodge No. 1427
Pendleton, SC Lodge No. 2861
Berea, OH Lodge No. 1815
Norfolk, NE Lodge No. 653
Bedford-Lynchburg, VA Lodge No. 321
Norfolk, VA Lodge No. 38
Anchorage, AK Lodge No. 2868

Division II (151-225 Members)

San Angelo, TX Lodge No. 1880
Kearny-Belleville, NJ Lodge No. 1050
Cedar Grove, NJ Lodge No. 2237
Golden, CO Lodge No. 2740
Wheeling, WV Lodge No. 28
Hastings, NE Lodge No. 159

Los Banos, CA Lodge No. 2510
Elk Grove, CA Lodge No. 2577
Santa Monica, CA Lodge No. 906
Tri-Cities, WA Lodge No. 2755

Division III (226-300 Members)

Gardiner, ME Lodge No. 1293
Bridgeport, PA Lodge No. 714
Texarkana, TX Lodge No. 2771
Danbury, CT Lodge No. 120
Winchester, KY Lodge No. 2816
Loudoun, VA Lodge No. 2406
Gardena, CA Lodge No. 1919
Arcadia, CA Lodge No. 2025
Benton County, MO Lodge No. 2783
Negaunee, MI Lodge No. 1116

Division IV (301-450 Members)

Calvert, MD Lodge No. 2620
Severna Park, MD Lodge No. 2482
Derby, CT Lodge No. 571
Rutherford, NJ Lodge No. 547
Golden Spike, UT Lodge No. 719
Middletown, NJ Lodge No. 2179
Huntington, WV Lodge No. 313
High Ridge, MO Lodge No. 2455
Homer, AK Lodge No. 2127
Oak Harbor, WA Lodge No. 2362

Please see **FRATERNAL**, Page 3

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Virtual Soccer Shoot Contest winners announced

By **TERENCE P. FORD**
Committee Chairman

The Soccer Shoot Program continues to grow. This past year 30 states submitted results for consideration to the National Virtual Contest via area or regional contests or direct state report submittals.

Based on the Charities Records Report as of March 31, 2026, the Soccer Shoot Program had a little over 27,300 youths taking part this past year.

This is an increase over last year! Thank you, all the Lodges that held a Soccer Shoot, and to the 30 State Associations for hosting at least a state-level contest.

Once again there for four area/regional contests; Area 1, Mid-Atlantic, Area 3 and Mid-America. More state and area/regional contests are needed for us to take the next

steps for a potential true national contest.

The 2025-2026 National Virtual Soccer Shoot Contest first place results:

U-8 Boys: Cody Crunk, sponsored by Jackson, CA Lodge No. 2426

U-8 Girls: Aubrey Doyen, sponsored by Waterville, ME Lodge No. 905

U-10 Boys: Adrian Figuera, sponsored by Lake Elsinore/Wildomar, CA Lodge No. 2591

U-10 Girls: Hannahlise Pacheco, sponsored by Bristol County, RI Lodge No. 1860

U-12 Boys: Caius Steely, sponsored by Tri-County, KY Lodge No. 2826

U-12 Girls: Milana Vesely, sponsored by Tri-County, KY Lodge No. 2826

U-14 Boys: Austin Mauk, sponsored by Bellefonte, PA Lodge No. 1094

U-14 Girls: Aileen Caples, sponsored by Sanford, ME Lodge No. 1470

U-16 Boys: Chase Gombocz, sponsored by Sayre, PA Lodge No. 1148

U-16 Girls: Jaiden Dobson, sponsored by Calhoun, GA Lodge No. 1883

Want to start a Soccer Shoot Program? Please visit the Activities Committee website where one can find the Soccer Shoot manual, contest and report forms, downloadable editable flyers, and posters as well as downloadable certificates for use at the local, state and area/regional contests. We are always available to answer your questions.

Reminder: When a Lodge holds a Soccer Shoot, it needs to properly report this event in their respective Charity Records Book under line 1103 – Soccer Shoot Program.

ENF events bring the heat at convention

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**
ENF Communications Coordinator

July may bring scorching temperatures, but at the Elks National Foundation, things have been heating up for several months!

In April, the ENF hosted 72 of the best youth free-throw shooters in the nation for the 2026 Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals. Capped off by an awe-inspiring keynote speech from Olympic gold medalist Erin Jackson, the weekend of the National Finals was one for the record books.

From April 30-May 3, the Top 20 Most Valuable Student scholars traveled to Chicago for the 2026 Most Valuable Student Leadership Weekend. These brilliant high school seniors bonded through service, leadership programming, and fun, but they left Chicago with much more than memories—they left as members of the #ElksFamily.

“Leadership Weekend was truly a life changing experience,” said Krish Kumar, sponsored by Frisco, Texas, Lodge No. 2890. “I was unsure of what to expect at first, but I was immediately met with support and kindness. Throughout the weekend, I was taught things that will help me forge my future. I am so grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

The fun didn’t stop there, though. For



a week in May, a dozen Elks scholars participated in an Elks Scholar Service Trip in Milwaukee. Offered three times per year, these trips give scholars the opportunity to learn about innovative social impact initiatives, bring lessons back to their own communities, and connect with their #ElksFamily from around the country.

To top it all off, at the Elks National Convention, the ENF will host seminars, answer questions in the convention hall, and present on its programs at the Opening Ceremony!

With so many events, it may have been easy to miss something. Don’t worry—the ENF has you covered! On YouTube, you can find the 2026 Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals and 2026 Most Valuable Student Leadership Weekend highlight videos, the Community Investments Program video that debuted at convention, and so much more. Head to Facebook and Instagram to see additional content, and follow the ENF to make sure you never miss an update from these special events.

AWARENESS From Page 4

Hidden Mixtures: Substances are frequently mixed into counterfeit pills or fentanyl powder without the user’s knowledge.

Reduced Reversal Effectiveness: Drugs like xylazine and medetomidine are not opioids, meaning naloxone may not fully reverse their effects, complicating overdose response. Other synthetics, such as nitazenes and cychlorphine, might require several doses of naloxone to be effective.

Health Impacts: Xylazine has been linked to soft tissue damage, infections, and prolonged sedation, while other synthetics can cause rapid respiratory depression and death.

Public Safety Guidance

- Never take a pill that wasn’t prescribed to you and wasn’t dispensed by a licensed pharmacy.
- Assume all illicit drugs may contain fentanyl or other deadly additives.
- Carry naloxone and be trained in how to use it, but understand it may not fully reverse all substances present.
- Call 911 immediately in any suspected drug poisoning or overdose. Time is critical.
- Stay informed and spread awareness. This threat is evolving rapidly.

BE THE DIFFERENCE

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE**Unlock the future of growth at seminars**By **RICK GATHEN**

Membership Marketing Director

Join us in Chicago for two Membership & Marketing seminars designed to equip Lodge leaders with fresh ideas, proven strategies, and the tools for success.

Sunday, July 5, 10–11:30 a.m.,**The Journey Toward****World Class Customer Support Begins at the National Convention**

We will focus on raising standards across Elksdom. Two World Class Customer Support seminars will be held during the convention, designed to strengthen retention, improve renewals, and reinforce pride in membership.

These seminars are practical and actionable, focused on what matters most:

keeping Elks connected, committed, and proud to belong.

**Monday, July 6, 2:30–3:30 p.m.,
The Journey Toward World Class
Customer Support Part Two**

Strong customer service begins with leadership. This seminar will feature presenters bringing real-world experience and proven strategies that Lodges can implement immediately, regardless of size or budget.

The Exalted Ruler and District Deputy leadership track will focus on leading with intention, consistency, and pride, creating environments where Members feel valued, guests feel welcome, and communities clearly understand who we are and what we stand for.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE**Positive interaction with elected officials**By **JOHN L. JONES**

Committee Member

The Government Relations Manual states, “Another important function of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is to assist Lodges and State Associations in promoting positive interaction and ties with federal, state and local officials and agencies.” Why is it important? How do we go about this?

Legislation, whether it is federal, state or local, can affect our Lodges and State Associations and our ability to carry out the vital community charity work that we do so well.

There could be times when we need to ask our elected leaders to support or not support legislation.

Before we do that, it is best if these officials know exactly what the Elks do and the effect that is made with all of our programs.

Local Lodges should invite their elected officials to events such as Flag Day,

award ceremonies, youth and veterans’ events, and other community service activities. Let them see firsthand all of the wonderful work that Elks do. Give them an opportunity to speak to Members.

State Associations are also encouraged to invite elected officials to their conventions and events. Show them what each State Major Project is contributing to their constituencies.

We constantly talk about and encourage charitable reporting. Consider sharing your local, state, and national year-end charity statistics with your elected officials.

This will show the tremendous amount of work we do, with the numbers to back it up. Seeing the actual cash value of the work Elks do in their jurisdictions can be astounding.

Do not just contact elected officials when you need something. Make sure to thank your legislators for working on behalf of the Order, regardless if they are successful.

celebrate your state’s Veteran Volunteer of the Year winners.

Don’t forget to take some time to look around Chicago! From live music and excellent food to beautiful parks and great museums, there’s so much to see. We hope you love this city as much as we do.

FRATERNAL From Page 1**Division V (451-700)**

Chandler, AZ Lodge No. 2429
Allegheny, PA Lodge No. 339
Newport, KY Lodge No. 273
Danielson, CT Lodge No. 1706
Hickory, NC Lodge No. 1654
Ashland, OH Lodge No. 1360
Falls City, NE Lodge No. 963
Roseville, CA Lodge No. 2248
Thousand Oaks, CA Lodge No. 2477
Lynnwood, WA Lodge No. 2171

Division VI (701+ Members)

Cape Henlopen, DE Lodge No. 2540
Vancouver, WA Lodge No. 823
Manahawkin, NJ Lodge No. 2340
Lake Hopatcong, NJ Lodge No. 782
St. George 'Dixie', UT Lodge No. 1743
Littleton, CO Lodge No. 1650
Orange, CA Lodge No. 1475
Santa Ana, CA Lodge No. 794
Blue Springs, MO Lodge No. 2509
Festus-Crystal City, MO Lodge No. 1721

Congratulations to these 60 Lodges from 22 states that made the top ten in their division this year.

The announcement for the first, second, and third place will be made at the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago during the Business Session.

We hope to see you there. If not, the winners will be announced in a later publication of this newsletter.

SECRETARY From Page 1

Those of us who work there each day are continually inspired by its beauty. We all share a responsibility to help preserve this landmark and ensure it remains a part of our legacy for the next century.

Please remember the impression it left on you and the importance of sustaining it for future generations.

100th Anniversary Simulcast

Get ready to celebrate history in the making! Join us for the 100th Anniversary Simulcast as we honor a century of the Elks National Memorial Building.



We encourage every Lodge to gather their Members, decorate your Lodge rooms, plan a watch party, and make it a celebration to remember! Whether it's snacks, fellowship, patriotic décor, or a full community event, let's come together across the country to share in this unforgettable milestone. Don't just watch the celebration—be part of it!

VETERANS From Page 4

All convention: Saturday through Tuesday, stop by the ENVSC Booth to meet with staff and expert volunteers. Sign your name to our Wall of Service, pick up your “I’m a Veteran” ribbon, and

ENVSC team to host several convention events

By **MARY MORGAN**
Program Director

The ENVSC team is so excited to welcome everyone to Chicago for the convention this year! If you're lucky enough to be joining us, we have some interesting events planned for you to fit in between all your adventures.

Sunday, July 5, at 2 p.m.: Join us at McCormick Place - West Building in Room 187W for a presentation about PTSD in the veteran community. Attendees will gain an understanding of how PTSD affects veterans, and how Elks and community members can better serve people

dealing with it.

Monday, July 6, at 1 p.m., Room 179W: Celebrate with us as we present the National Veteran Service Volunteer of the Year award to an outstanding Elks volunteer!

Then stay for the Elks Voluntary Service Volunteer panel to learn how this longstanding program adapts to all the communities where Elks serve veterans. Did you know that these Elks volunteers host lobster fishing trips, go to monster truck events, and rescue birds? From bingo and baby supplies to emergency

housing and mentoring veterans through the court system, the Voluntary Service program ensures that veterans have the support they need, no matter their location.

Monday, July 6, at 2:30 p.m., Room 179W: Get involved with the Veterans Leather Program! Learn how you can start this program at your Lodge and in your state. Program Chairs will share their expertise, review program requirements, and offer instructions on how to participate.

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 3



Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
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DRUG AWARENESS COMMISSION

DAC warns against emerging synthetic drugs

By **FRANK J. BURR**
Drug Awareness Commission

While most Elks are celebrating the birth of our nation this month, we at the DAC want to advise you all that we continue to face an unprecedented and evolving drug threat driven by fentanyl, which is increasingly being mixed with a dangerous array of synthetic substances emerging in the illicit market.

These combinations make an already-deadly drug supply even more unpredictable and lethal.

Law enforcement and public health officials are seeing fentanyl combined with highly potent substances such as xylazine, nitazenes, cychlorphine, and medetomidine.

Many of these are not approved for human use and are often undetectable to the user. Xylazine and medetomidine are used by veterinarians to sedate animals. Nitazenes and cychlorphine are potent, unregulated, synthetic opioids.

New nitazenes tend to be introduced when regulatory actions, enforcement, and

drug scheduling put pressure on existing analogues.

The DEA has reported 22 unique nitazenes compounds since 2020, 21 of which are listed as Schedule I controlled substances.

Why This Matters

Extreme Potency: These emerging synthetic drugs can be significantly more powerful than fentanyl and greatly increase the risk of suffering a fatal overdose.

Please see **AWARENESS**, Page 2