



Elk Tracks & Tidbits of Rice Lake Lodge #1441

May 2026



New Lodge Year – New Officers!

On Sunday April 12th, Rice Lake Elks Lodge #1441 installed officers for the year.

Front Row:

Sunni Bliese- Treasurer
Marla Gygli- PER, Secretary
Jody Richter-Leading Knight
Peter Olson-Exalted Ruler
Sherri Shipman – Esquire
Don Putnam – PER Chaplain
Beverly Kramer-Chaplain Emeritus

Back Row:

Scott Bliese – Trustee
Anne Gallagher – PER, Loyal Knight
Kristin Brown – Inner Guard
Barb Miller – Lecturing Knight
Jeff Miller – PER, State President
Linda Brunette-Tiler
Rita Gronski-PER, Trustee
Kyle Birkenmeier – Trustee



Lodge Updates

If you have visited the Lodge over the past week, you may have noticed that we are now using a new Point of Sale (POS) system. This new system is designed to make order entry easier for our staff and to improve the efficiency of payment processing. We appreciate your patience as our team continues to learn and adapt to this new system.

You may also notice that your bill shows different totals depending on whether you pay with cash or a card. The higher total reflects a small service fee applied to card payments, which helps offset the credit card processing fees we incur.

Additionally, we are currently working on finalizing Membership and Non-Membership pricing within the POS system. In accordance with Elks Grand Lodge guidelines, non-members are required to pay a different price than members. To receive member pricing, simply present your membership card at the time of purchase. If you have any questions in regard to this, please ask any officer or trustee.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of the Lodge.

May Happenings

May 1st-3rd – WEA Conference CLOSED **May 14th – Open 5 pm Youth Baseball Fundraiser**

May 4th – BOD Meeting 6:30 p.m.

May 6th – Open at 5 pm Bargo 6 pm

May 7th – Petunia Banquet 5 pm

May 8th – Open at 4 pm Friday Dining 5-8 pm

May 9th – Camp Wawbeek Clean up

May 11th – Activity meeting @ 6 p.m.

May 13th – PER Meeting @ 5 p.m.

May 13th – Open at 5 pm Bargo @ 6 p.m.

May 15th – Open 4 pm Friday Dining 5-8 pm

May 16th – Purse Bingo @ 12 pm

May 18th – Women’s DU Banquet 5 p.m.

May 19th – LODGE MEETING @ 6:30 P.M.

May 20th – Open at 5 pm Bargo 6 p.m.

May 21st – Open 5 pm Game Night @ 6 p.m.

May 22nd – Open 4 pm Friday Dining 5-8 pm

May 26th – New Member Initiation 5:30 pm

May 27th – Open 5 pm Bargo 6 p.m.

May 28th – Open at 5 pm BINGO @ 6 p.m.

May 29th – Open 4 pm Friday Dining 5-8 pm

May 30th – Veterans Lunch 11:30-12:30 p.m.

June 7th – Family Fun Day 11 a.m.

June 9th – Flag Day Ceremony 6 p.m.

Thoughts From The Exalted Ruler

Hello Rice Lake Elks,

April is flying by, and as we approach May, we are all hopeful that April showers will indeed bring May flowers. The green grass beginning to appear is a sure sign that spring has arrived.

Our Officer Installation went very well, with approximately 30 members in attendance. Thank you to the Past Exalted Rulers who participated in the ceremony—your continued involvement and support are greatly appreciated.

I have been involved with the Lodge leadership team for the past eight years, during which time I've become increasingly aware of the challenges facing not only our Lodge, but Elks Lodges across the country. After thoughtful consideration, I have decided to focus my efforts over the next year on three key areas: **debt, membership, and volunteers.**

The Lodge has been carrying nearly **\$100,000 in debt** for many years—so long that it is unclear when or why the debt was originally incurred. Most members currently volunteering to keep the Lodge operating were not members when the loan or loans were taken out. I have explored several ideas to develop a plan to reduce this debt, but more work remains. Please stay tuned as we continue to evaluate our options.

Membership continues to be an ongoing challenge, both here and nationwide. Lodge leadership works hard to retain current members while recruiting new ones, but an aging membership and community population make this task difficult. In March, leadership made the tough decision to allow **37 memberships to lapse**, members who had been kept on the rolls in hopes they would return. Combined with member deaths and transfers, this resulted in a total loss of **47 members.**

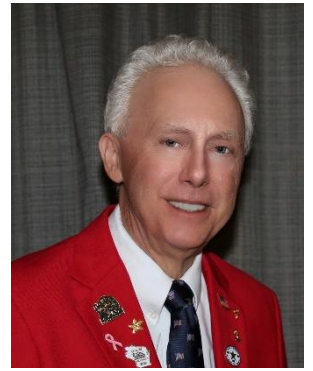
My goal for the year is to achieve a **net gain of one member.** While modest, it is not an easy goal. For example, if we lose 12 members over the course of the year, we will need to initiate 13 new members. Last year, we initiated eight. I will need everyone's help to reach this goal.

My final focus for the year is increasing the number of **active volunteers.** Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Lodge. They keep the kitchen, restaurant, bar area, and banquet hall operating. Volunteers also make it possible for the Lodge to support Lunch Bunch, Hoop Shoot, numerous Veterans' programs, and the Bloodmobile. Unfortunately, as our membership has aged and declined, so has our volunteer base. If you are not currently volunteering, I ask you to please consider giving your time to support the Lodge and its many worthy charitable activities.

In closing, I encourage you to attend the **Lodge Mother's Day Celebration on Friday evening, May 8,** and the **next Lodge meeting on May 19.** Your participation makes a difference.

Fraternally Yours,

Pete Olson, Exalted Ruler



May Birthdays

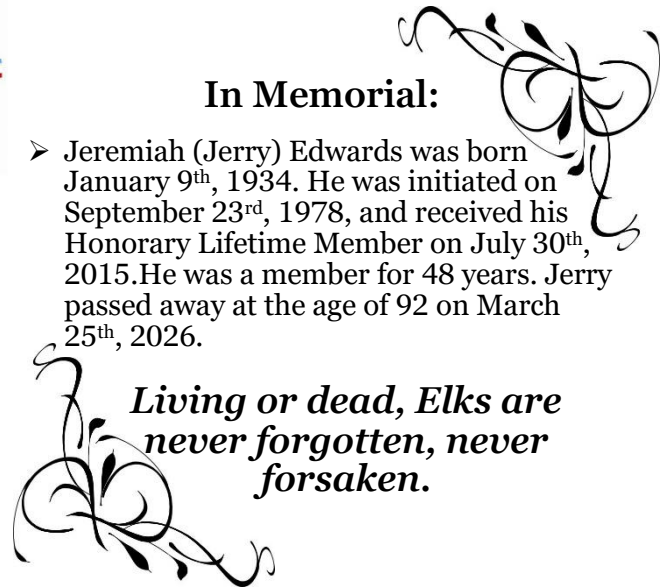


Robert Anderson	Charles Harrison	Sharon Shipman
Eulee Benavides	Patrick Havenor	Barbara Sievers
Michael Carrol	Karen Holmstrom	James Stoll
William Cocciante	Dean Johnson	Alan Sykes
James Darflinger	Edward Knutson	Steve Tangwall
James DeYoung	Gerald Lisi	Thomas Twining
Stephan Dolak	Larry McDonald	Maynard Voelker PER
Gary Fields	Brian Miller	Casey Watters
Daniel Fitzgerald	Donald Nielsen	Donn West
Mickey Gabriel	Harold Olsen	John Wick
Margaret Garey	James Rausch	Adam Wooldridge
James Gargulak	Sarah Rohde	Dennis Zwart


In Memorial:

- Jeremiah (Jerry) Edwards was born January 9th, 1934. He was initiated on September 23rd, 1978, and received his Honorary Lifetime Member on July 30th, 2015. He was a member for 48 years. Jerry passed away at the age of 92 on March 25th, 2026.

Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken.



May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 26 Closed	April 27 Closed	April 28 Closed	April 29 Open at 5 pm <i>Meatloaf w/mashed potatoes</i> BARGO	April 30 Open at 5 pm BINGO Starts at 6 pm	1 Closed – WEA Conference	2
3 Closed	4 BOD Meeting 6:30 pm	5 Auto Trade Show 5:00 p.m.	6 Open at 5 pm Nacho Grande BARGO & KIDS BINGO & PIZZA (West Wing)	7 Petunia Banquet Open at 5 pm <i>Nacho Grande</i>	8 Open at 4 pm Fish Fry Friday with Salad Bar Live Music SPECIAL DELIVERY Greeter: Heidi Olson; Sherri	9 Closed Camp Wawbeek Cleanup Day Starts @ 10 am
YOUTH WEEK						
10 Closed <i>Mother's Day</i>	11 Closed Activity Meeting 6:00 pm	12 WAQE Digital Workshop 5:00 p.m.	13 <u>PER meeting 5 pm</u> Open at 5 pm Brat & Potato Salad BARGO	14 Open at 5 pm Youth Baseball Fundraiser	15 Open at 4 pm Fish Fry Friday with Salad Bar Greeter: Need	16 <i>Community Referral Agency Purse Bingo</i> OPEN @1p.m - ? Bar Only
17 Closed	18 Closed Newsletter Deadline	19 Lodge meeting 6:30 pm	20 Open at 5 pm Grilled Chicken Salad BARGO	21 Open at 5 pm <i>Grilled Chicken Salad</i> GAME NIGHT	22 Open at 4 pm Fish Fry Friday with Salad Bar Greeter: Need	23 Kotz Graduation OPEN @1p.m - ? Bar Only
24 Closed 31	25 Closed <i>Memorial Day</i>	26 New Member Initiation 5:30 p.m.	27 Open at 5 pm <i>Rueben w/Salad or Slaw</i> BARGO	28  Starts @6 p.m.	29 Open at 4 pm Fish Fry Friday with Salad Bar Greeter: Need	30 Veterans Lunch 11:30 – 12:30 pm OPEN @1p.m - ? Bar Only

Rice Lake Elks 1441 2026-27 Officers

Exalted Ruler	Peter Olson 715-637-5719	Trustee	Kyle Birkenmeier 715-790-2325
Leading Knight	Jody Richter 715-719-4553	Trustee	Rita Gronski 715-642-2566; ritagronski@vistaprairie.org
Loyal Knight	Anne Gallagher-PER 715-296-0839	Trustee	Scott Bliese
Lecturing Knight	Barb Miller	Esquire	Sherri Shipman
Secretary	Marla Gygli-PER 715-205-0911	Inner Guard	Kristin Brown 715-296-9027
Treasurer	Sunni Bliese 715-418-3899	Tiler	Linda Brunette
Contact us if you have Questions or to Volunteer		Chaplain	Don Putnam



Elks' 1441 National Youth Week

BINGO

EVERYONE is welcome to join us for Bingo at the Elk's.

This is a FREE event to all kiddos.

Pizza and drinks will be available for the kids.



PRIZES | PIZZA | FUN

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026

6:00PM

RSVPs requested, but not required

715-234-2951



RICE LAKE YOUTH BASEBALL

Spaghetti Fundraiser Night!

Join us for a great meal and support a great cause!

Thursday, May 14th

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Rice Lake Elks Club

36 Eau Claire Street, Rice Lake

Free Will Offering Spaghetti Dinner
Bring your appetite and your support!

Raffle Tickets Available!

Players will be selling our 2026 Raffle Tickets.

\$10 per ticket or \$100 per book

Drawing will be June 2nd, need not be present to win!

All proceeds benefit Rice Lake Youth Baseball



Mother's Day Tribute

May 8th Open 4 p.m.

A Special Gift for Mom's

PER Meeting

May 13th

5:30 p.m.

If you are a PER, please come to this important meeting.

Questions?

Contact Rita

715-642-2566



Live Music!
May 8th
6-8 p.m.



Limited Seating
Call for Reservations
715-234-2951





NEW! Lodges Through the Lens

A FUN photo scavenger hunt featuring participating in Wisconsin Elks Lodges! Ready for an adventure? Here's how it works:

🔍 How to Play

- Pick up your **Lodges Through the Lens** book at your Lodge for **\$5**.
- Visit participating in Wisconsin Elks Lodges and hunt for the mystery item pictured for each Lodge.
- When you find it, get your book **stamped**.

🎉 Celebrate & Win

On **October 17th**, join us at the **Wausau Lodge** for the big PARTY. For **every stamp** you've collected, you'll receive **one entry ticket** for prize drawings.

🌟 Why Join?

It's a great way to explore our beautiful state and visit Elks Lodges you may have never seen before.

? Questions

Contact any Lodge Officer for more information.



Why Join the Fidelity Club?

Ease: The ENF Fidelity Club recognizes automatic, regularly scheduled donations through your bank account or credit card. These donations occur monthly (minimum \$5).

Eco-Friendly: Save a tree and save time with paperless donations!

Convenience: No need to purchase stamps or mail a check. It takes just five minutes to sign up, and you're good to go!

Flexibility: You can increase, modify or cancel your gift at any time.

Security: It's safe, reliable and allows the ENF to spend less time on administration and more time on our charitable mission.

Ready to Join?

Becoming a member of the Fidelity Club is simple! Enroll online at enf.elks.org/recurring and start your gift today!

**WE ARE
HIRING**

**COOK
WAIT STAFF
BARTENDER**

Part time position
Contact Rita or Sunni
715-234-2951

2025-2026 Youth, Community & Lodge Banquet

On April 23rd, 2026, we held our annual Youth, Community & Lodge Banquet in which we honored the following:



Citizen of the Year Kim Randall



Community Service Award
Birchwood Area Food Pantry



Elks Officer of the Year – Jody Richter



Scholarships: Ryanne Nykanen, Marissa Andersen,
Jody Richter (presenter), Daniel Broker and Katherine Hegg



Community Service Award
Rice Lake Parks and Recreation



Elk of the Year – Sherri Shipman



Outstanding Elk Member
Anne Gallagher – Public Relations



Outstanding Elk Member
Kyle Birkenmeier – Elroy



Outstanding Elk Member
Don Thompson – Ritual



Outstanding Elk Member
Ed Kramer – Photographer



Elk Hero of the Year – Jack Cline



Community Business Partner Support
Nuto Farms



Outstanding Community Support – Flag Day, Veterans Day
Rice Lake Honor Guard



Chetek/Weyerhaeuser Wrestling – State



Rice Lake Warriorettes – State



Chetek/Weyerhaeuser – FCCLA State



Rice Lake Tennis - State



St. Joseph Robotic Team – State



Elks Couple of the Year
Donn and Anita Wedin – accepting
In their absence, Scott & Sunni Bliese

B.P.O. ELKS

Rice Lake Lodge #1441
36 E. Eau Claire Street
Rice Lake, WI 54868
Lodge Phone (715) 234-2951
Forward Services Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 3
Rice Lake, WI 54868

We are looking for Friday night door greeters. It is two hours of fun welcoming members and guests to our Lodge. Also, by greeting that night, you will receive a voucher for a FREE MEAL. Contact Rita at 715-642-2566 or any officer.



**Veterans Soup & Sandwich
Saturday Luncheon**

**Rice Lake Elks Lodge #1441
May 30th**

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

**Enjoy Lunch, Fellowship &
Camaraderie**

**Free to All Veterans and Active-
Duty Personnel**



Meetings in May

BOD Meeting May 4th 6:30 p.m.

Activity Meeting May 11th 6:00 p.m.

PER Meeting May 13th 5:00 p.m.

Lodge Meeting May 19th 6:30 p.m.

New Member Initiation May 26th 5:30 p.m.