

# Houston 151 Elks Tracks

April 2026

10150 West Airport, Stafford TX, 77477 - 832-828-1151



## Message from the Exalted Ruler (ER)



This is my 7th year as an Elk and they say that 7 is a number that promotes excitement, well it is surely true.

I am very excited to represent Houston 151 this year as your Exalted Ruler. This coming year is going to be full of fun, excitement and learning about our community and what we can do as an Exceptional Example of Elkdom.

I have a lot to learn about HOUSTON 151, so please bear with me as I go through this wonderful journey.

If you have an idea or would like to help me in any way that you are interested, please feel free to contact me (connielisembee@gmail.com).

Most importantly, If You Think About It – Be About It

Save the date

[April 4](#)

Easter Egg Hunt – open to the public – 10:00 a.m.

[April 18-19](#)

Gulf Coast District Interlodge at Galveston Lodge

[April 25](#)

Tom Player Celebration of Life – 6:00 p.m.

[May 16](#)

Sweetheart Charity Ball – Katy Lodge

[June 4](#)

[Texas Elks State Convention, Mesquite](#)

[See Upcoming events for more info.](#)

Welcome new members!



Jose Alvarez and Carrie Otto



# Prayer requests

Please keep these members and friends in your prayers:

Ken Boyd

Frank Duffy

George Eggleston

George Gomez

Beverly Juranek

The family of Deb Thomas (Deb's daughter passed away)



Many veterans moving from the street or a shelter enter their new homes with nothing. Elks can help by providing Welcome Home Kits of supplies to help these veterans establish their homes.

There is no single reason why a veteran is homeless. In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness – shortage of affordable housing, unemployment or job insecurity, health or family emergencies – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks.

A kit is supplies provided to a veteran moving into a new home, to help them with day-to-day living. Generally, a kit will include kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and cleaning supplies, items like bedding, dishes, pots, pans, towels, toiletries, cleaning supplies, laundry baskets & detergent, etc. Our lodge was able to deliver 30 welcome-home kits in the fiscal year 2025-26.

Remember – YOU make it possible to deliver welcome-home kits to veterans through your donations to the [Elks National Foundation](#) (ENF).



## April Birthdays

- 2 Sarah Suminski
- 4 Darwin Campbell Jr  
Brenda Chavez  
Richard Novak
- 08 Fred Ballard  
Ken Boyd  
Terry Dole
- 09 John Brewster  
Velia Stroud
- 10 Michael Cooper
- 11 Chuck Dingas  
Kori Fitzgibbons
- 12 Jeffrey Bauer
- 15 Jeannie Nissen
- 17 Michael Whitten
- 22 Edward Buchanan
- 29 Luciano Lopez



# Elks National Foundation updates

The mission of the ENF is to help Elks build stronger communities. We fulfill this pledge by investing in communities where Elks live and work. We help youth develop lifelong skills, send students to college, meet the needs of today's veterans, support the charitable work of the state Elks associations, and fund projects that improve the quality of life in local Elks communities.

[Help Elks build stronger communities with a tax-deductible donation to the Elks National Foundation](#), a public, non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. Donations are payable by check, Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or American Express. You can also make a pledge to donate to the ENF on an annual basis.

## Volunteer of the Month



Al Olmos

## Congratulations to our 2025-26 Honorees

Elk of the Year – Theresa (Terri) Finch

Officer of the Year – Charles (Chuck) Dingas

Distinguished Citizen - Connie Lisembee

Distinguished Service Awards Robert Beaver and Scott Gillentine



Dues for the 2026-27 year (\$141) were due by March 31. You can pay your dues at the bar, online, or through Jim Grissom.

You must pay your dues to get a new access card. The yellow cards expired on April 1.

## New playground equipment

Thanks to all of the volunteers who gave up their Sunday – and Monday – to install the new playground equipment:



## Message from the outgoing ER

To all the Members of Houston Elks Lodge 151, I want to say that it has been an honor and a privilege to have served as your Exalted Ruler for 2025-2026. I want to say thank you to everyone who has encouraged and supported me during this past year.

When I was asked by two of our Past Exalted Rulers if I would run for Exalted Ruler, that showed respect to me, and that meant a lot to me. After accepting the nomination for Exalted Ruler, I knew that I had a lot of work to do. With the efforts of my officers, both elected and appointed, and my committee chairs and committee members, and all our volunteers, our Lodge accomplished a lot of good things that we as Elks are tasked to do.

At my last meeting as your Exalted Ruler, I was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by our Area Special Representative Jim Grissom for my efforts as Exalted Ruler for 2025-2026. I had absolutely no idea that would occur. Thank you, Jim, for that.

May we all look forward to a very good 2026-2027 Elk year.

Fraternally, Mike Betenbaugh, Past Exalted Ruler



# Message from the Sweetheart



I stand before you with a heart full of gratitude, pride, and reflection as I look back on my journey as your Sweetheart and Elk of the Year. This year has been more than just a title—it has been a mission, a challenge, and a true labor of love. From the very beginning, my goal was clear: to raise as much money as I could to support the children at the Texas Elks Camp for Special Needs Children and our veterans. That purpose stayed with me every step of the way. And what a journey it has been.

There were moments of excitement, moments of exhaustion, and yes, moments where I wondered how everything would come together—but somehow, it always did. Whether I was cooking, cleaning, decorating, organizing, or simply making things happen behind the scenes, I gave it my all. And I can

honestly say... I wouldn't change a single thing.

One of the highlights of this journey was participating in the CASI chili cook-off. Not only was it an incredible event filled with energy and dedication, but I also had the honor of placing third, all while multitasking at the fundraising table at **Gonzalo's Children's camp**. Now, let me tell you—that was no small task. While keeping the fundraising efforts going, I was also making sure our CASI cooks were taken care of—serving breakfast and lunch and welcoming each of them to our lodge. Because **that's what we do here—we show up, we serve, and we make people feel at home.**

**And then there's steak night...Steak night became more than just a dinner—it became an experience.** By organizing raffles, planning activities, decorating the space, and adding surprise giveaways, I always aimed to create an atmosphere filled with fun and excitement. Because when people come together, enjoy good food, share laughter, and support a cause bigger than themselves—**that's where the magic happens.**

But I want to be very clear about something ...**None of this was done alone.** There is no way I could have accomplished everything this year without the incredible people who stood beside me, supported me, and lifted me up when I needed it most, especially Dennis Finch, who supported me through thick and thin. I would like to recognize a few individuals who played a huge role during our busiest nights in the kitchen: Jack, Greg, Noley, Charles, David, Romona, Andy, Mike, Frank, and BY. Thank you for your dedication, your time, and your willingness to step in whenever needed. You made the impossible feel possible, especially during those very busy steak nights. **And while I've named a few, there are so many more who deserve to be recognized.** If I were to name everyone, it would fill this entire newsletter—but please know that your efforts did not go unnoticed, and I am deeply grateful for every one of you.

A very special thank you goes out to everyone **who helped with the kids' barbecue cook-off contest.** All the donations and had work putting pits together. That event holds a special place in my heart. Watching those kids participate, learn, and shine—it reminds us exactly why we do what we do. I truly hope to continue that event for as long as I am able, because investing in our youth is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

**As this chapter ends, I'm excited to share that my journey doesn't end here.** I plan to continue working in drug awareness and mental health—causes that are deeply important to me. And I'm grateful to have Jenn by my side as we move forward in that mission together. **Who knows... You might even see me back here** again as your Sweetheart next year—or working alongside whoever steps into this role next. For now, my focus will be on supporting and guiding the next Sweetheart in the best way I know how. Because I truly want everyone to succeed in their own journey, just as I was given the opportunity to succeed in mine.

Before I close, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to our secretary, Jim, for ensuring that every dollar raised, every receipt turned in, and every detail was handled with care and accuracy. Your work behind the scenes kept everything running smoothly, and I appreciate you more than words can express.

Being part of lodge activities and large events is not always easy. There are moments when things get stressful, emotions run high, and challenges arise. But what makes this lodge so special is that, in the end, we always come together as one. We support each other. We stand by each other. And we continue to move forward—together. And that is something truly worth celebrating.

As I reflect on this year and accept the honor of being named Elk of the Year, I can honestly say that I have never been prouder of the hard work, dedication, and emotions that went into this journey. Every drop of sweat, every long night, every challenge—it was all worth it. Thank you, Mike, for having me as your sweetheart this year. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for standing by me. And thank you for allowing me to serve.



# Message from the Secretary



Here we go. Off to the start of another great year of Elkdom. Here are your Officers for 2026 - 2027

- Exalted Ruler – Connie Lisembee
- Leading Knight – Susan Midyett
- Loyal Knight – Troy Lynn Betenbaugh
- Lecturing Knight – Robert Marshall
- Secretary – Jim Grissom
- Treasurer – Renay Bennett
- Esquire – Andy Mishaga
- Chaplain – Mike Betenbaugh
- Inner Guard – George Gomez
- Tiler – Al Olmos
- One Year Trustee and Board of Directors (BOD) Chair - Sally DiPalma
- Two Year Trustee – Ann Grissom
- Three Year Trustee – Chuck Dingas
- Four Year Trustee – Ramona Mishaga
- Five Year Trustee – Joy Olmos

Many thanks and congratulations to all the outgoing officers for a job well done.

Our Lodge is well represented in the leadership in State and District positions. We have Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler John Atwood, Area Special Representative Jim Grissom, Gulf Coast District Leader Sally DiPalma who also serves as a Texas Elks Children's Services Director and East District Leader Renay Bennett all from Houston 151. This is a good reflection of our Lodge and the leadership within.

When you see these dedicated Elks around the Lodge, show them your appreciation.

We have many activities and events coming up soon. Watch the calendar and the **what's** happening notices and please come out and support your Lodge and the new lineup of Officers.

Thanks for all that you do for our Lodge and our great organization. I hope to see you at the Lodge soon.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Jim Grissom  
Lodge Secretary  
Area Special Representative  
Texas Gulf Coast District



# Elks 101

Each month, we'll provide information about the Elks organization. This month, we look at the Standing Relief Committee. This committee is comprised of the Exalted Ruler (ER), the knights (the officers in the chairs), the secretary, and the treasurer. This committee provides financial relief to members who need help covering their dues or who have extreme financial needs. The Esteemed Leading Knight reports on the committee in the regular lodge meetings.

[Please let us know](#) what topics you would like to for us to cover in this section.

•

## How you can help

“Elks care, Elks share” are words that we live by. Volunteering is essential to the health of our lodge. In other words, WE NEED YOU.

We can use help is every area. Do you have mad kitchen or gardening skills? Do you want to help with charity projects? Would you like to take photos of events to be published in this newsletter or even the national magazine? What would you like to do to help your lodge?

Our success depends on all of us.

## [Elks.org](https://www.elks.org)

The [Elks website](#) provides a wealth of information for members. Here are just a few examples:

- [Programs, including scholarships and Hoop Shoot](#)
- [Documentation for officers, members, and lodges](#)
- [The Elks Magazine](#)
- [Licensed vendors](#) – where you can a wide variety of Elks-branded products
- [Monthly newsletters from Grand Lodge](#)
- And much more



# Spotlight on a member – Robert Marshall



What made you become an Elk?

I was invited.

How long have you been an Elk?

I joined in November 2024, so it has been about a year and a half.

What do you do at the lodge?

I was the Esquire for the 2025-26 year.

Have you been an officer for the lodge, district, state, or Grand Lodge? If not, are you interested in being an officer?

I will be the Esteemed Lecturing Knight for the 2026-27 year.

What do you do outside the lodge (job, hobbies, etc.)?

I have owned a sign company (Big Nose Signs) for 19 years. I enjoy outdoor activities and photography

What would you like other Elks to know about you?

I have been a professional photographer for over 40 years. I'm a licensed commercial-rated pilot, a SCUBA diver, and an aircraft mechanic.

If you would like to be profiled, or if you have suggestions for members to profile, contact [Kathy Klimpel](#).

The Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks was founded "To promote and practice the four cardinal virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American Patriotism and cultivate good fellowship."

The Elks are

- A fraternal order with hundreds of thousands of members and a 150+ year history
- A network of nearly 2000 lodges in communities all over the country
- A generous charitable foundation that each year gives millions in scholarships, an inspiration to youth, a friend to veterans and more

## Riddle of the month



What kind of room has no door and no windows?

[Click here for the answer.](#)



# State projects

Our main state project is the [Texas Elks Camp](#).



The Lodge Sweetheart raises money throughout the year to support the Texas Elks Camp, which provides children with special needs and children in foster care an opportunity to try new things, meet new friends and make memories that will last a lifetime. Campers are encouraged to make their own decisions, become more independent and accept new challenges.

Any child with special needs or in foster care age 7 to 21, who is a resident of the state of Texas is eligible for admission to the Texas Elks Camp. No child is denied acceptance on the basis of his or her income level, ethnic origin, race, creed, color or religion. There is no fee. Campers are accepted on a "first-come, first-served" basis. in

Texas Elks Camp is nestled next to Palmetto State Park in the heart of Texas on 10 rural acres between Luling and Gonzales. Campers live in the 20,000 square foot air-conditioned building, which is handicap accessible. The property includes a saltwater swimming pool, turf grass sports field, playground, pavilion, archery range, paintball target shooting range, basketball court and much more!



In March, some people from 151 participated in a work day at the camp. This included removing old washing machines in a basement, painting, and general clean-up.

While we have many lodges in Texas, only 13 volunteers were present to help update the lodge. Over half of those were from 151!

[Click here for more information](#). And remember – every time you attend Steak Night or support a Sweetheart-sponsored event, you are supporting this worthwhile charity!

## Friends of 151

The Friends of 151 is a group of volunteers who raise money to support the Lodge. The group was originally a women's auxiliary, but they are now a vital part of the lodge.

The Friends of 151 provide dinner on the fourth Friday of each month. The money they raise from dinners and special events like the Valentine's Day Casino Night support the lodge. For example, they donated \$400 from the Casino Night to the Elks National Foundation (ENF).

Membership in this group is open to lodge members and non-members. If you'd like more information, please contact Karen Schulz or Sue O'Neil.



# Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A.

## A Fraternal Organization

Mission statement: To inculcate the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to recognize a belief in God; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its Members; to quicken the spirit of American patriotism; to cultivate good fellowship; to perpetuate itself as a fraternal organization, and to provide for its government, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America will serve the people and communities through benevolent programs, demonstrating that Elks Care and Elks Share.

## Silver Award



Anora Guistwite recently received a Silver Award.

The Silver Award is for Girl Scouts in grades 6-8 who have completed a rigorous 8-step program.

## This is YOUR newsletter

What do you think of the new Tracks format? You can click links (underlined and blue) to reach websites or send emails.

What would you like to see in future editions?

What would be helpful in the weekly emails and Facebook posts?

Please send any suggestions and comments to [Kathy Klimpel](#).



# Officers

Exalted Ruler	Connie Liseabee
Leading Knight	Susan Midyett
Loyal Knight	Troy Lynn Betenbaugh
Lecturing Knight	Robert Marshall
Secretary	Jim Grissom
Treasurer	Renay Bennett
1 Year Trustee	Sally DiPalma
2 Year Trustee	Ann Grissom
3 Year Trustee	Chuck Dingas
4 Year Trustee	Ramona Mishaga
5 Year Trustee	Joy Olmos
Esquire	Andy Mishaga
Chaplain	Mike Betenbaugh
Inner Guard	George Gomez
Tiler	Al Olmos

## Committee chairs/coordinators

Accident Prevention	Ramona Mishaga
Americanism	David Rawlins
Auditing & Accounting	Andy Mishaga, George Eggleston, Earline Grabbe
Community Activities	To be announced (TBA)
Bar Manager	Connie Liseabee
Bingo	Joy Olmos
Board of Directors	Sally DiPalma
Dinner Committee	TBA
Drug Awareness	Terri Finch
Elks Memorial Day	Ramona Mishaga
Elks National Foundation	Susan Midyett
Elks Special Services	TBA
Flag Day	Lowell Neinast
Fraternal Committee	Jim Grissom
Friends of 151	Sue O'Neil, Karen Schulz
Government Relations	John Atwood
Hoop Shoot	Ramona Mishaga, Ken Bond
Kitchen manager	Jim Grissom
Lodge bulletin	Kathy Klimpel
Lodge sweetheart	Serena Goetsch
Membership	Jim Grissom
Past Exalted Ruler (PER) Association	Jack Grabbe
Public Relations	Ramona Mishaga
Ritual	Mike Callahan
Scholarship	Cindie Pridy, Earline Grabbe, Susan Midyett
Ritual	Lowell Neinsast
Standing Relief Committee	Susan Midyett
State Major Project	Sally DiPalma
TECSI Grants	Sally DiPalma
Veterans Service	Chuck Dingas



# Need more information?

[Contact any officer](#)

Call the lodge – 832-328-1151

Facebook pages

[Elks Lodge 151](#)

[Texas Gulf Coast District](#)

[Texas Elks](#)

[Grand Lodge](#)

Websites

[Elks main page](#)

[Texas Elks](#)

## Lodge hours and standing activities

Lodge meetings	Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Balloting for new members on the third Tuesday of each month Initiations on the last Tuesday of each month
Lodge hours	Closed Monday and Saturday (except for special events) Open Tuesday – Friday at 4:00 Open Sunday – 12:00 noon
Activities	Wings and Things –Wednesday 5:00 – 6:00 (on the second Wednesday, a blue-plate special replaces the regular menu) Bingo Thursday – open to the public – 7:00 (gates open at 6:00) Steak Night – first Friday of the month – 6:00

Lodge hours are subject to change for special events. The Lodge will close at the discretion of the bartender.



# April calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Easter Egg Prep 4pm Wings n Things 5-6pm Friends of 151 Mtg 5:30pm	2 BINGO 7pm	3 Good Friday  Steak Night 6pm \$10	4 Children's Easter Egg Hunt 10 am  Huntsville Lodge CASI Cook Off
5 HAPPY EASTER Lodge Closed 	6 Lodge closed	7 Lodge Meeting 7pm w/ PER mtg to follow	8 Wings n Things 5-6pm Blue Plate Special (instead of usual menu)  Board of Directors and House committee meetings 6:30pm	9 BINGO 7pm	10 Capt. Grabbe's Fish Fry 6pm \$12	11 Lodge closed
12	13 Lodge closed	14 Dinner 6pm – \$13 PER Spaghetti  Lodge Meeting 7pm	15 Wings n Things 5-6pm	16 BINGO 7pm	17	18 GC Interlodge Mtg @ Galveston  Hall Rental – School Mtg 3-5pm
19 GC VP & DD Clinic @ Galveston	20 Lodge closed	21 Lodge Meeting w/ Balloting 7pm	22 Wings n Things 5-6pm	23 BINGO 7pm	24 Friends of 151 Mexican Dinner 6pm \$13  Galveston Blessing of the Fleet Pull Crawl	25 Tom Player's Memorial Service 6pm  East Dist. Interlodge  Galveston Blessing of the Fleet Gumbo Cook off
26  Galveston Blessing of the Fleet Boat Parade	27 Lodge closed	28 Lodge Meeting w/ Initiation 7pm	29 Wings n Things 5-6pm	30 BINGO 7pm		

## Upcoming events

Date	Event	What you need to know
Friday, April 3	Steak night 6:00 p.m. - \$10	The Sweetheart will have raffle items.
Saturday, April 4	Easter Egg Hunt 10:00 a.m.	Open to the public. Candy donations needed. No chocolate, please.
Friday, April 10	Captain Jack's Fish Fry 6:00 p.m. - \$12	Try some trout caught by our very own Jack Grabbe – and prepared by his better half, Earline
Saturday April 18 - Sunday, April 19	Gulf Coast District Interlodge - 2:00 p.m.	Galveston Lodge. All members welcome! 1518 23 <sup>rd</sup> St, Galveston
Saturday, April 25 – Sunday April 26	Hoop Shoot National Finals	Chicago
Friday, May 1	Steak night 6:00 p.m. - \$10	The Sweetheart will have raffle items.
Saturday, May 2	Kentucky Derby Day	Activities to be announced
Saturday, May 2 – Sunday, May 3	Veterans' Retreat	Texas Elks Camp on Texoma (TECOT)
Saturday, May 16	Gulf Coast District Sweetheart Charity Ball 6:00 p.m. - \$35	Support our sweetheart at this annual event. Tickets are \$35 In advance. Contact Terri Finch for tickets. 1050 Katy Ft. Bend Rd, Katy



Saturday, May 30	Painting activity	Details coming soon
Thursday, June 4 – Saturday, June 6	Texas Elks State Convention	<a href="#">Texas State Convention (TESA) – Mesquite</a> – all members welcome. Click link for more information
Friday, June 12	Steak night 6:00 p.m. - \$10	The Sweetheart will have raffle items.
Sunday, July 5 to Wednesday, July 8	Elks National Convention	<a href="#">Elks National Convention, Chicago IL</a> – all members welcome; registration begins April 1. Click link for more information.

## Gulf Coast District

Houston Lodge 151 is part of the Gulf Coast District of the Texas Elks. The other lodges in our district are Clear Lake, El Campo, Galveston, and Katy. We rotate among the lodges for activities with these fellow Elks including quarterly inter-lodge gatherings, the sweetheart charity ball, and lodge-specific events like cookoffs. Several members of 151 are officers for the district.

## Elks National Convention



Chicago, IL - July 5 - July 8, 2026

Join us in Chicago for the 2026 Elks National Convention as we celebrate one of the most powerful moments in our Order's history-the 100th Anniversary of the Elks National Memorial. Experience a week filled with inspiring events, Grand Lodge sessions, exhibits, and unforgettable celebration honoring a century of service, unity, and Elkdom pride.

A ticketed ceremony celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Elks National Memorial Building will be held on the morning of July 4.

Opening ceremony is July 5th @ 4 p.m. at the McCormick Place - West Building. General sessions will be held July 6 - 8, 2026 starting at 8 a.m. at the McCormick Place - West Building. The full schedule will be available May 1, 2026.

[Pre-registration](#) opens online on April 1, 2026. The cost is \$70.

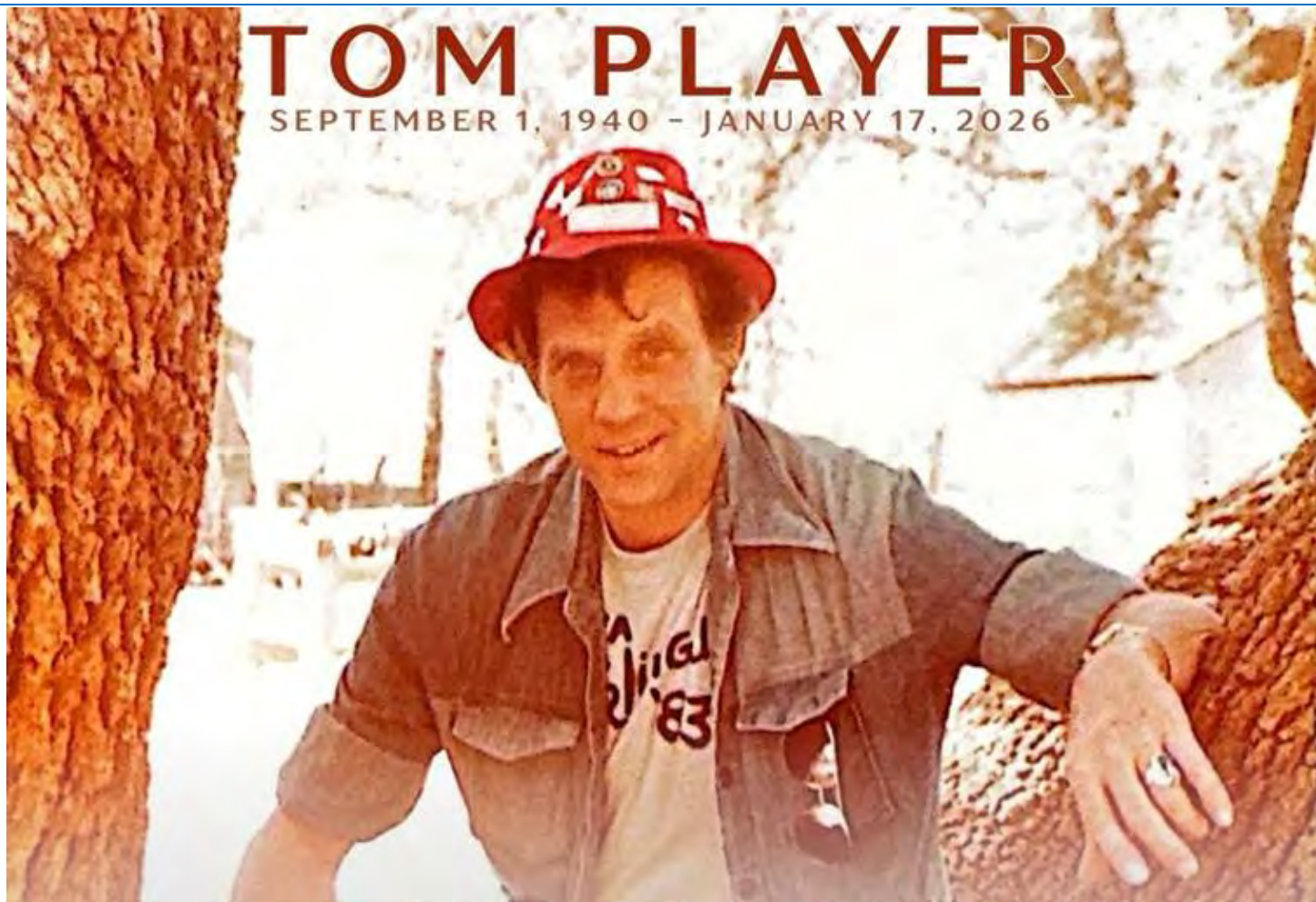
### Answer to riddle of the month

A mushroom



# TOM PLAYER

SEPTEMBER 1, 1940 - JANUARY 17, 2026



Friends, family, and all who loved him are invited to a

## *Celebration of Life*

**5PM Saturday, April 25, 2026**

Elks Lodge #151 - 10150 West Airport, Stafford TX, 77477

join us to share memories, music, and a meal in honor of our beloved Piano Man

Group rates are available for the "Tom Player Celebration of Life" at Courtyard by Marriott Houston Sugar Land/Stafford & Homewood Suites by Hilton Houston Stafford Sugar Land





*Texas*  
*Gulf Coast District*  
*Run for the Roses*  
*Sweetheart Charity Ball*

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026  
COCKTAIL HOUR 6:00 PM  
DINNER 6:30 PM  
DANCING 8:00 - 11:00PM  
SWEETHEART PROGRAM 9:00  
KATY ELKS LODGE #2628  
1050 KATY FT BEND RD KATY, TX 77493

*Derby and Southern Glam Attire encouraged*  
*Ask your Lodge Sweetheart for tickets*

TICKETS \$35 PER PERSON DINNER INCLUDED  
ONLY 180 TICKETS AVAILABLE

