

Thanking Long-Time Sebring Elks Leader Bert Horwitz

As we begin our final stages of preparation for the Sebring Elks Lodge's 100th Year Celebration, we find it only fitting to recognize our Past Exalted Ruler, Bert Horwitz. He is very active around the lodge and participates in many events and programs. Bert is recognized as the Sebring Lodge's oldest "living" Past Exalted Ruler. His dedication and work is seen all around the lodge. Just visit on a Tuesday or Friday evening and you will pick him right out of the crowd.

Bert's 56-year association with the Sebring Lodge began in 1970 when he and his wife, Kathy, moved to Sebring, Florida. Bert had just retired from a 23-year career in the Navy and had been stationed in Newport, Rhode Island. When asked what brought him to Sebring, he replied that he and his wife had relatives in Sebring. He joined and became a member in September of 1971. He said that he wanted to find a place to frequent for a drink and the Elks Lodge fit the bill! Ronna Mason shared that even to this day, Bert makes a "mean" margarita. During the first four years as a member, he hit the road running and held many officer positions by rotating through the chairs and then being elected as Exalted Ruler in 1975. After serving one year as ER, he then was elected as a Trustee for the lodge. Two years later, in 1978 he was elected as the District Deputy Vice President and then the following year as District Deputy President for the Southwest Central District. During that time, he traveled around the state as part of the Florida State Elks Association entourage visiting districts and representing the mission of the Elks. He shared that he even served as the Sebring Lodge Secretary for one year when the lodge was in need of a secretary. He shared that was probably the hardest year of all his years at the lodge.

During the Sebring Lodge's 50th year celebration, he was instrumental in planning the event and preparing the booklet "50 Years of Elkdom". On April 1, 2020 he was voted as an Honorary Life Member. His wife, Kathy, was also very active in the auxiliary aspects of the lodge and served as Sebring Florida Ladies of the Elk President in 1982. In January 2024, Bert created the BEKA Endowment Scholarship with South Florida State College in honor of his wife, Kathy, to provide scholarships to students entering career and trade schools at the college.

Just a few things to mention on how Bert has continued to help the lodge after all these years. In February of 2021, Bert worked with other lodge members to hold a successful yard sale at his home to raise money for the lodge. In 2023 he was recognized as Sebring Lodge's Veteran of the Year by the Veteran's Council of Highlands County. He then, along with long-time Elk member, Ron Schilffarth, rode in a convertible representing the Sebring Lodge during the Veteran's Parade. He represents the Elks

Past Exalted Ruler Association in filling Leading Knight and ER positions for special lodge meetings and programs.

So, as you can see, Bert has certainly taken his oath as an Elk with seriousness and commitment in demonstrating what "True Elkdom" is all about. Thank you, Bert, for your continued loyal service to the lodge and helping to make the Sebring Lodge what it is today..."A Shining Example in our Community". When you are at the lodge on a Tuesday or Friday evening, stop and thank Bert for all he has done and continues to do for our lodge.

