

THE ELKS MAGAZINE

In these post-war years, another growing problem in Elklodm was that of communication. Until 1922, there were only three ways Grand Lodge could get messages to the thousands of Elks. These were personal reports carried home by Lodge delegates from Grand Lodge sessions, official mailed circulars to be read at Lodge meetings and news printed in privately funded regional periodicals. These periodicals would pop in and out of existence as either their editors or Lodge of origin ceased to exist. The number of periodicals varied from between a handful and several dozen.

None was a very efficient means of communication. Then, as now, Elks might miss meetings. And the various Elk periodicals around the country likewise could not guarantee that an announcement would be seen by every member of the Order. To improve communications, a monthly magazine, called *The Elks Magazine*, was proposed to be issued and mailed as a paid-up subscription to each Elk in good standing.

The magazine was to be financed through advertising and by a nominal subscription fee included in the members' annual dues. The fee then, as today, was far below the subscription cost for a periodical of this caliber outside the Order. Added to this was the cost of maintaining the Elks National Home and National Headquarters. *The Elks Magazine*, which began publication in June 1922, was an immediate success. National advertisers were eager to have their message read by the kind of people who composed Elks families.

The Elks' official publication remains one of the most respected magazines of its kind. It includes not only Elks news but articles of general interest to any U.S. family. It features many of the best writers and artists of America, not only serving its first purpose of bringing the vast Elk community into closer communication, but giving thousands of hours of information and pleasure to households all across our country.

Shortly after the birth of the official Elks journal, Congress adopted a resolution in 1924 to restore the frigate U.S.S. *Constitution*, or "Old Ironsides," which had served during the War of 1812. In this era of government economy, Congress failed to fund the project. The Secretary of the Navy was merely authorized "to gather monies" for this work.

Secretary of the Navy Curtis D. Wilbur conferred with President Calvin Coolidge. Both agreed that, for educational purposes, the money should be raised through school children. This left the secretary with mobilizing the children, which was definitely out of his line. His solution was to call upon the B.P.O. Elks.



Things moved quickly. Commander Marion Eppley, USNR, a member of Newport Lodge No. 104, donated funds for medals, to be given to school children within each Lodge area for the best essay on "Old Ironsides" and the traditions of the U.S. Navy. The president himself selected the topics for the essays, and Elklodm prepared to carry the message forth.

In October 1925, GER William Atwell of Texas spoke over 28 radio stations in one of the earliest American broadcasts. The Navy made the arrangements. Four million school children in the nation took in both writing essays and collecting pennies, nickels and dimes from their classmates.

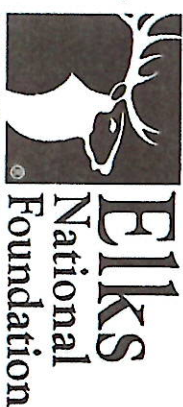
Without the Elks, the effort would have failed. The Order was instrumental in raising \$150,000, almost a third of the total needed. The Elks' contribution was the largest single addition to the fund from any one agency.

THE ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

It had now been firmly established that ordinary local charitable and patriotic activities were delegated to Local Lodges, and projects of larger scope to the state associations. But many Elks still believed that there was room for assistance by the national organization. In 1927, John F. Malley, past chairman of the Judiciary Committee and later a GER, presented a plan that had long been dear to his own heart: creation of a permanent trust fund under the supervision of Grand Lodge. Income from this fund would be used to help Local Lodges and state associations with good works that at times exceeded their resources, and also for any independent worthwhile purpose Grand Lodge might be called upon to support.

Adopted in 1928, the Grand Lodge started the program with a "core" deposit of \$100,000. This, together with future contributions, was placed into safe income-producing investments. Only the interest earned would be expended in charitable work while every dollar contributed remained in the fund, perpetually generating benevolent funds without depleting the principal.

The Foundation was a new and important step. It created a permanent fund, supported entirely by voluntary gifts — not levies or taxes, direct or indirect, upon Elks. Last but not least, the entire income of the Foundation was available for distribution for philanthropic purposes. No income was used for "overhead" or consumed in other ways. Operating expenses were paid by Grand Lodge from regular funds. The millions of dollars worth of expertise and personal service to the Foundation came free, from men like Malley, who acted as trustee chairman for many years.



Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities

Elks support the National Foundation in several ways. Those who contributed \$1,000 became Honorary Founders. More than 12,000 over the years received such certificates. Those who gave more than the initial \$1,000 became Permanent Benefactors. Participants were those who donated \$100, usually in annual \$10 increments.

Over the years, the Elks National Foundation has become a major part of Elk benefactions. It supports National Foundation scholarships to the various states, through the Most Valuable Student Awards. These permit deserving young men and women, who could not otherwise afford it, to attend college. Although the Foundation sponsors principally educational work, over the years, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been allotted to regional and state charitable or patriotic activities and to fighting scourges such as cerebral palsy and drug abuse.

Foundation funds grew slowly at first, then multiplied. Many Elks began to feel the National Foundation was a proper beneficiary to be mentioned in their wills.

DEPRESSION

Then in October 1929, the Great Depression began. Property values fell and money became scarce. Soon, millions of Americans were unemployed.

The Elks felt the impact. By 1932, thousands of members were forced to leave our rolls. Membership declined from 779,973 in 1929 to 466,520 at the end of 1936. The number of Lodges dropped from 1,401 to 1,346 in 1937.

But while membership dropped rapidly in the early years of the Depression, charitable expenditures rose. True nobility shines its brightest in the world's darkest hours, and those still on our rolls reached out to the troubled Americans around them. Elks spent \$2,449,179 in 1928-1929; \$2,640,701 in 1929-1930; and \$2,677,855 in 1930-1931. Only in 1932-1933, when banks were closing everywhere and the financial panic was at its deepest, did Elks' efforts decline. In 1936, the B.P.O.E. spent \$1,304,869. This was a remarkable figure considering that in the 1930s, after depression and deflation, Americans on average had about half of what they had enjoyed before. The Order was too strong to fold or even to halt its efforts for a better country. Leaner and wiser, like the rest of the nation, the B.P.O.E. carried on.

Prosperity was not just around the corner, as all who survived those years know. It did not return until the eve of World War II. There were still millions unemployed in 1939. But 1936 marked the Elks' low ebb. Things stabilized somewhat, and shortly afterward the Order again began to grow.

Elkdom gained 12,000 members between 1936 and 1937. By 1940, the Order stood at 490,000 — almost exactly where it had stood 22 years before, when the era between wars began. But the Order had survived on a steadier and more even keel. Lodge rooms were filling up again, and a better era seemed to be approaching. Instead, war fears once again gripped the world. In Europe and Asia, militaristic powers

were threatening the peace. Most thinking people realized that the worldwide conflict was rapidly approaching the coasts of the United States. Not prosperity, but yet Elkdom's finest hour in the nation's service, was at hand.

WORLD WAR II

At the beginning of 1941, United States air power was almost nonexistent. The government, now realizing the importance of air power in modern defense, began a crash program to recruit for the Army Flying Cadet Corps. Again, the War Department requested the Elks to help with the "Keep 'em Flying" program by finding and qualifying candidates to enter the Aviation Cadet Training Course.

Elkdom entered into this program enthusiastically. More than 400 Lodges conducted special "refresher-course" schools to assist recruits in passing the educational tests and requirements of the aviation cadet program. Thousands of young Americans went through these Elks schools. A very high percentage of Elks-trained recruits passed their examinations, and the military was tremendously pleased with the results.

Then, suddenly, Japanese planes flew from the sun at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The United States was at war. The noise of the bombs at Pearl Harbor had scarcely died when Grand Exalted Ruler McClelland telegraphed the President of the United States to put the entire strength of the Order at the country's call. A few days later in New York City, the Elks War Commission came into existence.

In the early weeks of the war, the War Commission began an inventory of the personnel and resources available to the Order. Throughout Elkdom, as throughout America, there was wholehearted determination that America must survive.

In ceremonies at the White House in January 1941, President Roosevelt mentioned the work of the Elks in national defense. He referred with pride to his own membership in Poughkeepsie, New York, Lodge No. 275.

In 1942, the War Department asked the Order to assist in recruiting 45,000 enlistees for Air Corps ground crews. In a few months, 97,000 skilled recruits were brought into the Air Corps to the astonishment and delight of the Army Adjutant General.

The Navy, meanwhile, suddenly realized it was overlooking the Elks. The Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, wired the Elks for help with its own Naval Air Corps program. Again, the Local Lodges responded magnificently.

The Elks had one final outstanding achievement in military recruiting. Before the war, the need for skilled construction workers had been overlooked by both the Army and Navy. Now, for the first time in history, both services conducted a joint program to obtain special volunteers for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Navy Construction Battalions — the famous Seabees. These units could take and use those who were overage, or otherwise unsuitable for regular combat service, although

their services and duty were anything but easy. Again, Washington turned to the Elks — the only organization in the United States whose aid was sought. Again, the Lodges went to work locating workers, explaining the program both personally and through media.

The Army Engineers and Seabees got all the recruits they asked for three months ahead of schedule.

In fall 1943, the Army and Navy each sent a special tribute to the Elks. The Army letter stated the B.P.O.E. was entitled to "full credit for the success obtained" in the recruiting programs.

These were only some of the *national* programs, in which the Grand Lodge assisted. Each of our 1,409 Lodges, from coast to coast, supported the war effort in its own way. Lodge homes were turned over to the Red Cross in many areas. Most Elks helped collect blood plasma. Lodges bought thousands of dollars of War Bonds and strongly supported all patriotic fund drives: War Bond, Red Cross, United Service Organizations. Last, but hardly least, 100,000 Elks donned the various uniforms of the United States. Eighteen hundred never came back.

In 1946, the Elks National Memorial was rededicated to the memory of these now-forever absent members.

From 18 months before Pearl Harbor to the surrender of Japan, the patriotism of the Order was once again indelibly proven.

But, perhaps, when war ended, the Elks in their own way served best. Again, as after World War I, thousands of disabled Armed Services personnel filled government hospitals. Some veterans would spend years or the rest of their lives in institutions. After a moment of gratitude, postwar America tended to put these men and women out of mind. But thousands of Elks never stopped work when Japan surrendered.

The government took care of the disabled in a physical way. But there were things even the government could not do. One was to let the unfortunate know that someone cared. Elks visited hospitals. They brought radios, phonographs, books, magazines, cards, games, hobby materials and musical instruments with them.

Lodges pooled their efforts and provided athletic equipment and a wide assortment of expensive tools to wounded veterans who could use them. More importantly, many Elks leaders saw beneath the brave faces the maimed presented. They recognized the continuing problem of rehabilitation.

Grand Lodge asked that Rehabilitation Committees be set up in every Lodge, to make certain that no man or woman who had served the nation would ever be forgotten or forsaken by its people. *"The care, comfort and entertainment . . . of those who fought the war and made the sacrifices that preserved our country is an obligation that will rest upon the Order until the last veteran is served."* In 1946, the

Elks National Veterans Service Commission came into existence. In its first year, the commission staged 2,000 programs in 152 hospitals in 41 states.

ELKS & VETERANS

True peace did not come to America or the world at the end of World War II. By 1948, the United States and its allies were deeply engaged with the Soviet Union in the bitter conflict that became known as the Cold War. There were still Americans in uniform standing on guard around the world. From time to time, there were small but dangerous and deadly shooting wars, as Communist and American ways of life clashed across the globe.

By 1949, the B.P.O.E. was again assisting the armed forces in recruiting. Fraternal centers — near Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Knox, Kentucky — had been reopened, and more were on the way. The Order was helping sell U.S. Savings Bonds in continuing programs.

When the Korean Conflict erupted in 1950, again the government sought aid. This time the project was to collect 3 million pints of blood for the wounded in the Far East. Grand Exalted Ruler Howard R. Davis pledged the Order to find 1 million pints — one third the total. The program was a success by July 1952, and the director of the National Blood campaign gave full credit to the Elks. The blood was used for the desperately wounded in Korea.

The war in Korea ended in 1953. The Elks National Veterans Service Commission went on, now serving the suffering and broken patriots left from another conflict.

But from 1945-1967, while the Elks National Veterans Service Commission kept up what now seemed permanent programs, its greatest work went largely unheralded and unseen, except for the men and women whose lives it touched. By 1952, the Elks veterans service was operating in hospitals in 48 states. Hides, leather, clocks, electrical equipment and all types of useful or repairable articles were collected by Elks and distributed to veterans hospitals. Elks local committees everywhere cooperated and worked with professional occupational therapists.

Nor did care stop at the hospital door. Often, the most critical time comes later during the terrible readjustment to a competitive world. Elks followed through. In a thousand cases, they found the vital jobs or encouragement when needed most.

Over the years, it is hard to describe a program so broad, so diffuse and so little boasted by the men and women who take part in it. Elks have defended their country and their flag in many ways. But nothing they have done in the nation's service is more important than the pledge by which the Order lives:

"So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

POSTWAR CHANGES

From its low point in the Great Depression in the 1930s, Elksdom rebounded strongly. It was gaining members rapidly in 1939.

Elks in the nation's service won new laurels between 1940-1946, which the Elks National

Veterans Service Commission continued. In 1946, 89,796 new members were initiated into the Order. By the end of 1948, total membership climbed to 925,679. Visionary George F. McDonald's old dream of one million Elks, delayed by two world wars and a national economic disaster, came true in 1950.

In 1968, Elksdom's Centennial anniversary, the Order had 1,452,187 members. It was now one of the largest organizations of any kind in the United States and still growing.

The postwar years, like the early ones of the Order, were a time of explosive change in America. New industries replaced old, from plastics to pharmaceuticals. A restless population was again strongly on the move. Millions of people left farming and rural areas. Some smaller towns withered, city suburbs expanded and the swelling metropolitan centers grew to almost unmanageable size. Two-thirds of all Americans made some kind of major move after 1945. Parts of the East and South lost people. The coastal cities and the Southwest gained. By the 1960s, *The Elks Magazine* was recording 400,000 address changes a year by its subscribers.

Shifts in population caused many new lodges to spring up, while in other areas, such as small towns and downtown metropolitan centers, old lodges struggled to stay where they were. The surge was greatest in the newer suburban areas and in the rapidly growing states. The emergence of new lodges was a striking feature of the era. The Order had established a total of more than 2,100 lodges by 1968.

Family life in the United States was changing too. Families began to do more things together, from the backyard cookout to the annual vacation. Tending to decline everywhere were the night-time lodge meeting and get-together away from home.

These changes affected American lodges and clubs. The downtown club was fine for a business lunch but it was harder and harder for one who had moved to the suburbs to drive back to the city for a night meeting or even find a place to park. TV exploded across the nation, offering new forms of entertainment and relaxation right at home.



More and more lodges became genuine youth centers, something unheard of in the old days before World War II.

The average age of Elks dropped several years between 1945 and 1968, to just over 46.

Elksdom was still adaptable. It retained a loyalty to valued traditions and survived essentially unchanged. But in some ways it moved with the times and grew. *Significantly, in the 1960s the B.P.O.E. was one of only two Orders that continued to grow, and the Elks had the lowest lapse rate of any comparable organization.*

The new age presented crossroads and controversies as well as problems. Elks, with rare exceptions such as the National Home and National Veterans Service Commission, never ascribed to nationwide activities under centralized control. Each lodge and voluntary State Association picked its own field of work without dictation by the Order. Thousands of local projects had been splendidly carried out.

Meanwhile, no national "Elk image" had emerged, but there were two thousand local images built up over the years coast to coast.

The Elks lacked focus and image only on the national scene. They did not beat the drums for a single national charity year after year. They were not identified in the public's mind with any particular project. But Elks had a vivid presence in hundreds of cities and towns, which was not just seen or heard on radio or TV but intimately felt. Local governments, local charities and local service organizations knew the Elks, and knew they could depend on them year after year.

No American Order, certainly, did more to hide its light under the proverbial bushel basket. A permanent public relations program was only begun in 1940. Elks liked to do things, but they did not like to brag about it. Only gradually was it realized that Elks programs could be more successful if more Americans heard about them. Industry, commerce and even government carried its story to the people, and in the modern world, Elksdom had to do the same. A little knowledge cast upon the waters of public information would bring a manyfold return. After World War II, the Elks' public relations program was put under an experienced director, and Americans heard more about Elks and what they were doing.

Thus the peculiarity of Elks, who had hid their lights under natural modesty, was changing too. This change, though, was slow ... perhaps too slow. During the 1970s, the Order still made significant gains in membership and growth in charitable expenditures. Initially, resistance came from the membership itself, who felt that an act of charity should not bring any fame to the donor. Years of clarification were required to differentiate to every Elk between personal anonymity and letting justifiable honors redound to Elksdom at the lodge, State and National levels.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AWAKEN

America's leaders may have known for generations about the Order of Elks as a valuable resource whenever volunteerism and good citizenship were required to solve a problem that government agencies could not. But in the comparatively tranquil periods between national emergencies, these administrators of the greatest nation on earth refocused on the application of its laws for the good of all citizens. In a task of such magnitude, decisions understandably can be made that overlook the impact on a particular segment of the population, including organizations such as ours. The Elks, recognizing that democracy must have constant interaction between those governing and those governed to remain productive and progressive, decided on a new course that would go far beyond providing information on our outpourings of assistance.

From the same adaptive spirit that had brought us through a century of changes, the Elks spearheaded the formation of a multi-organizational coalition to monitor national and state bills, which, if passed, would hamper the internal processes of each of the member organizations. Called the Conference of Private Organizations, this agency since 1977 has spoken out to government officials and agencies to clarify the role of America's community-service associations, as well as alert its member societies, religious and veterans groups to the need for write-in campaigns to legislators from the full memberships of each.

In response to recommendations from this agency, the Elks additionally created their own Government Relations Committee in 1979 to guide monitoring of legislation at the Lodge/community level. In 1981, a new national committee was created to train members in public relations and also carry the Order's true nature to the public. But time marches on, and already the next test of Elksdom's durability was looming.

Although the economic downturn of the 1980s and '90s was measurably less traumatic than the 1929 Depression, its effect on the Order's membership was nearly as distressing. While the passing of elderly Elks was beyond anyone's control, the younger Elks, who had taken up the torch of supporting our programs, faced bitter prospects. Many of them — caught in the wave of downsizing that carried tens of thousands of employees off the payrolls of heretofore solid companies — had little choice but to forsake their memberships. The lot of many potential members was just as chaotic. Our ranks lost large numbers with no replacements to balance the outflow. The future seemed uncertain.

TOMORROW'S PROMISE

Despite this maelstrom of shrinking memberships surrounding all service organizations, the Elks continued their agenda of charity with increased dedication throughout the 1980s. The Order passed the \$1 billion milestone in benevolent expenditures as of 1990. Through 2010, expenditures topped \$4.9 billion. Through 2021, expenditures topped \$11.7 billion.

A unique example of the Elks' spirit, the restoration of the Statue of Liberty — a gift of the French people in 1886 — occurred during this period. A centennial program was forming for October 1986. The Statue and Ellis Island around it were in great need of repairs, far beyond the scope of available government funds. President Ronald Reagan announced the formation of the Statue of Liberty Foundation in May 1982 and appointed Lee Iacocca as national chairman. Before fundraising had officially begun, the Order of Elks was the first organization to pledge support by telegram to the White House. At the national convention in Honolulu shortly thereafter, GER Marvin Lewis requested the help of the assembled Elks. Incoming Americanism Committee Chairman Vincent R. Collura (later to become a Grand Trustee and Grand Exalted Ruler himself) presented a resolution authorizing a donation of \$1 million. It passed with a resounding ovation. Collura was appointed as the Order's national contributions coordinator, and under his guidance more than \$1½ million was handed over to the Statue of Liberty Foundation on behalf of the Order.

This modern testament to the true nature of Elksdom markedly increased the respect held for our Order in the non-Elk world. Then several factors affecting our destiny occurred.

Problem: The developing global economy placed America in a new era of industrial competition, which tightened purse-strings from the mid-1980s onward and resulted in government cutbacks in a broad spectrum of assistance programs.

Answer: The need for more volunteer programs to supplant them, an area in which Elksdom had pioneered since 1868. President Reagan and his successors called the Nation's attention to our example with ever-increasing frequency.

Problem: The growth of a world-wide drug abuse problem was endangering the youth of every American community beyond the power of any government agency to single-handedly eliminate or even slow down.

Answer: The Elks Drug Awareness Program, started in 1983, grew phenomenally with the full support of our members. Joined with other groups as the vanguard of a nationwide non-abuse task force, the Elks won the gratitude of millions of concerned parents and teachers. But most importantly,

the Elks and the rest of the task force also taught millions of youngsters to avoid substance abuse, giving them the opportunity for happy and productive lifetimes.

Problem: While officers and Lodges of our Order had been instructed from the beginning on keeping track of internal operations and finances, no systematic approach had ever been devised for tabulating the full picture of Elksdom's contributions. Only sketchy guesswork at the end of each year had been utilized.

Answer: The introduction of the Charity Record Book in 1992 permitted each Lodge to know exactly what impact it had had on surrounding communities. This clearly showed that the just-achieved \$1 billion mark was only a fraction of the good we really had done. Results in 1992, although incomplete, tallied \$166 million in cash, hours and miles, compared to \$86 million the year before. In 1993, \$204 million worth was produced. By 2010, total annual charitable contributions stood at \$307 million, a 50 percent increase from 1993, despite a 34 percent decline in membership from 1,353 million members in 1993 to 892,887 in 2010. By 2020, total annual charitable contributions stood at \$381 million, a 20 percent increase from 2010, despite a 24 percent decline in membership from 892,887 members in 2010 to 768,926 in 2020.

America and Elksdom are continuing to build the new millennium together. But we are both mature partners, having survived great wars and natural disasters through cooperation. Our destinies are linked by respect. Countries around the world, including those of the now-dissolved Soviet bloc, are looking to our Nation to teach them the power of Democracy and to Elksdom to teach them the power of volunteerism and caring, both vital building blocks for the future of human civilization. Whatever obstacles may arise, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, believing firmly in our Creator, the strength of the American family and the capabilities of our youth and the limitless potential of our Nation, will grow in charity and thrive in bonds of mutual friendship.



IV Structure of Grand Lodge

Following the time-proven structure of our federal governmental, the Order of Elks has three distinct branches — legislative, judicial and executive.

THE GRAND LODGE

The supreme legislative body of the whole Order is the Grand Lodge. It is permanently composed of all Past Exalted Rulers who are Grand Lodge Members in good standing with their respective Lodges, its chosen leaders, plus the Exalted Rulers of the Local Lodges who are the representatives to the sessions of the Grand Lodge held during their tenure of office.

The Grand Lodge elects all elective national officers of the Order; proposes amendments to the Constitution and Laws of the Order to be ratified or rejected by the Local Lodges; provides for institution of Local Lodges; prescribes the rituals of the Order, its paraphernalia, emblem and jewels; and enacts all legislation for administering the affairs of the Order, including the raising and appropriation of revenues for Grand Lodge needs and purposes.

The Grand Lodge meets annually, customarily in July at such place and date as determined by Article III, Section 6 of the Constitution: "The Grand Lodge shall meet annually in regular session. The Grand Exalted Ruler, with the approval of the Board of Grand Trustees, shall fix the time and place of holding the regular session."

GRAND FORUM

The supreme judicial power of the Order is vested in the Grand Forum, composed of five Justices, each serving a term of five years, one member being appointed each year by the Grand Exalted Ruler, subject to ratification by the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Forum has appellate jurisdiction over cases instituted in the Local Forums of the local Lodges. Original jurisdiction in all other cases arises under the laws of the Order.

GRAND EXALTED RULER

The Chief Executive Officer of the Order is the Grand Exalted Ruler, elected by the Grand Lodge at its annual session, for a term of one year. The Grand Exalted Ruler presides over the sessions of the Grand Lodge; appoints all its non-elective officers, the District Deputies and the members of all Grand Lodge Committees; grants dispensations to organize new Local Lodges; and is vested with broad powers in the administration of the Order's affairs, including the supervision of all Local Lodges and State Associations, and their activities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Once an individual has held the unique position of Grand Exalted Ruler, our Order's chief executive officer, and dealt with the myriad details pertaining to Elksdom's vast operation, such a person acquires singular and irreplaceable experience that cannot be permitted to go unused in guiding the destiny of our organization through the uncertainties of each new tomorrow. For this all-too-apparent reason, each national leader achieving the status of Past Grand Exalted Ruler at the end of the term of office, is automatically given membership in this austere body. Collectively, this body extends its invaluable counsel to all Grand Lodge officers, commissions, committees and agencies. Their continuing dedication, service and recommendations supply our Order with a living treasury of Elks wisdom, which has proven to be a key ingredient to our success.

BOARD OF GRAND TRUSTEES

The Board of Grand Trustees is the general fiscal agency of the Order with authority over all its funds and property where not otherwise provided by the Grand Lodge. It consists of eight members, two of whom are elected for four years at the annual assembly of the Grand Lodge. The board also submits a budget of the Order's estimated receipts and disbursements for the coming year, and its report for the year just ended.

The board is required to meet at least twice a year between the Grand Lodge Sessions. Among the matters that board members discuss at such meetings is determination of the boundaries of the Districts into which the Order is divided, subject to the approval of the Grand Lodge. It is only with their approval that Lodges may merge or that a charter of a Lodge may be suspended by the Grand Exalted Ruler. Their yearly report also includes a list of all Lodge charters granted, surrendered or revoked, and changes of Lodge names.

GRAND SECRETARY

The Grand Secretary is one of the most important officers of the Grand Lodge and is required to perform the duties of office full-time.

This office is maintained in the Memorial Headquarters Building in Chicago, where the records of the Grand Lodge and all reports and data relative to the Local Lodges are preserved. All Grand Lodge dues and assessments are remitted here, and all forms and paraphernalia needed in the Local Lodges starts at this distribution.

The Grand Secretary is the recording officer at all sessions of the Grand Lodge and is required to keep accurate minutes of its proceedings, and to preserve the same in a permanent record, and in addition also serves as the Clerk of the Grand Forum, preserving and distributing the files, records and documents required by their duties.

The Grand Secretary is the general accounting officer of the Grand Lodge, with this office being the clearinghouse for all Grand Lodge business and information relating to its activities and those of the Local Lodges.

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

The officers of the Grand Lodge are the national officers of the Order. Their respective titles are the same as those of the officers of the Local Lodges with the prefix "Grand" added thereto.

All national officers, unless otherwise noted, are elected by the Grand Lodge for a term of one year, and serve without salaries, with the exception of the Grand Secretary.

All standing committees of the Grand Lodge (except for the Grand Lodge Advisory Committee) are appointed by the Grand Exalted Ruler. They cover the full range of programs carried on by our Lodges, Districts, State Associations and nationally in service to our fellow citizens, youth, veterans and communities, as well as the necessary operational guidelines so that we may continue our existence as a benevolent organization.

DISTRICT DEPUTIES

A District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler is appointed annually for each district of the Order.

District Deputies are personal representatives of the Grand Exalted Ruler and are required to perform such duties as may be assigned.

Their particular duties, prescribed by Statute, are to visit each Lodge at least once annually or as often as necessary, to attend a regular session of each; to inspect its records; to investigate its condition and activities; and to report to the Grand Exalted Ruler, with pertinent recommendations.

They are also specifically empowered to institute new Lodges for which dispensations have been issued and to install the officers of Lodges on or about April 1 of the year.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

The Elks National Foundation Trustees total seven in number. One trustee is nominated each year by the Grand Exalted Ruler, subject to confirmation by the Grand Lodge, for a term of seven years.

Trustees have plenary powers in the administration of the Elks National Foundation and are charged with receiving contributions, depositing them in interest-producing investments and applying the available income for promoting charitable, educational, patriotic and benevolent programs.

ELKS NATIONAL MEMORIAL & PUBLICATION COMMISSION

The Elks National Memorial and Publication Commission has five members who have plenary powers in managing *The Elks Magazine*. They oversee its editing, publication and distribution.

The commissioners work closely with Grand Lodge staff to make sure *The Elks Magazine* provides current information and pictures of Local Lodge Members in action, rendering community service all across the nation and territories. The Grand Exalted Ruler appoints a new member to a five-year term each year at the annual convention, subject to confirmation by the Grand Lodge. These commissioners also do double duty as Trustees for the Veterans Memorial Building.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL RESTORATION TRUST

The Elks Veterans Memorial Restoration Trust has supervision of the Veterans Memorial Building in Chicago, which also houses the Elks National Headquarters. The Trustees are responsible for the building's contents and maintenance. The Trust was created in 1990 because repairs became necessary due to the effects of harsh weather and is maintained by the voluntary contributions from Elks Members.

The Memorial Building is open to the public from noon to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday from April 15 to November 15 each year. Tours can be arranged by calling or e-mailing the Grand Secretary's office. Virtual tours are easily accessible on the elks.org/memorial website where extra features include help planning a visit and driving and public transportation directions.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

Holding fast to its pledge that the Order of Elks will never forget our American Veterans, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission continues work on behalf of veterans as its major endeavor. But the activities of the commission have broadened in scope to lend the strength and support of the entire Order to patriotic programs of our government. Sustained by the loyal cooperation and support of individual Elks, Local Lodges and State Associations, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission works for our country's betterment.



V Conclusion

The Obligation assumed by every Member of the Order, as an essential part of Initiation, involves certain duties that are implied, as well as those expressed outright. An Elk is as much subject to the Statutes of the Order as to the bylaws of the Lodge where membership is held.

By taking that Obligation, you became not only a member of your Lodge but of the entire Order of Elks. The privilege conferred upon you includes the opportunity to attend meetings of other Lodges and to avail yourself of the social facilities maintained by other Lodges, in accordance with their rules and regulations.

You are entitled to participate in the planning and decision-making in your own Lodge. It is your duty to attend its meetings for that purpose, unless your other commitments to family, faith and such similar matters take precedence on a given day. You share the responsibility for your Lodge's acts and should, by your vote and influence, attempt to have those acts reflect your own viewpoint. But once the will of the majority has been made known, you are required to accept it with levelheadedness and maturity.

The charitable and community-service acts of your Lodge will require the personal energies of more than just its officers. Each member should be ready to cooperate with a request for volunteer service within reasonable capabilities.

Only by continuing such a spirit of cooperation can your Lodge maintain itself as the source of community service and harmony it is designed to be. And only by generously dedicating yourself to the work of your Lodge and association will you gain the greatest satisfaction and happiness possible from your membership in the Order of Elks.

Abundantly clear, in retrospect, is that the contributions of the Order of Elks to modern American society are major influences in the quality of life for all our citizens today. We have become, in effect, the bedrock upon which all that is good in our Nation is built . . . and will continue. Other segments of our population may weaken or falter in the years to come. We cannot and will not. This is now your sacred trust as an Elk.