

ELKS TO CELEBRATE MILESTONES

During 2016 the Watertown Lodge of the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks (B.P.O.E.) will be celebrating the 115th year as an Elks Lodge and the 100th anniversary of being at their present location in the historic Concordia Opera House, in downtown Watertown.

The building was originally built in 1888 by a German singing group, The Concordia Musical Society, and its estimated cost to build was \$11,000. Under the Concordia Society ownership many elegant balls, concerts, and other performances were held at the hall. In the early 1900's the facility housed two theaters, the Empire and the Colonial, featuring both film and vaudeville acts-admission 10, 20 & 30 cents. The names and dates of some of the performers still can be found carved unto the roof of the attic.

On March 22, 1901 the Watertown Lodge was granted its charter and became the 666th Elks Lodge in the United States. For a number of years the members met at various locations in Watertown and on January 5th 1916 they purchased the Opera House. Remodeling of the building was completed and the Lodge opened its facilities to its members on December 31, 1916. Through the years the Elks have made many changes and updates, making it the beautiful building it is today.

On the Lodge's 100th anniversary as a chartered Lodge, a major remodeling project was started for an addition to the building. With the dedicated and generous support of its membership an elevator serving all three floors, remodeled ballroom, additional bathrooms, A/C in the entire building, and other improvements were made. In 2007 the Lodge hosted the Wisconsin Elks Association State convention and once again with the hard work, generosity, and dedication of its membership, improvements were made to both to the interior and exterior of the building. It currently is home to a Grand Ball Room, dining room, kitchen, fireplace room, meeting room, and two bars.

The B.P.O.E. is a very philanthropic organization throughout the community and nation. It supports many youth activities, veterans programs, and, locally, implements two major community projects. As we celebrate our anniversaries this year we hope to share more insight on the Elks and our commitment to Watertown with an article each month about the Lodge and its programs. This will culminate with our anniversary program in November featuring an open house and dinner. Watch for more details later this year.

You can check out our virtual web page at elks.org (type in 666 in the search box near the top right of the page) or like us on face book at Watertown Elks Lodge 666.

ELKS CARE-ELKS SHARE