



**BENEVOLENT PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS  
RIO RANCHO LODGE #2500  
RIO RANCHO, NEW MEXICO**



**10TH ANNIVERSARY 1984**

## HISTORY OF RIO RANCHO B.P.O.E. LODGE 2500

A group of twenty nine American gentlemen headed by Ernie Drews, Harry Hagen and Jack Wakeford, met in their home and petitioned the Grand Lodge to establish an Elks Lodge here in Rio Rancho.

The day was Saturday, March 23, 1974 and a proud group of gentlemen were gathered at the gymnasium of Our Lady of Sorrows school in Bernalillo, NM, for the first or 'charter' institution of the Elks Lodge 2500 of Rio Rancho. This happy evening was the culmination of much hard work and dedication of these distinguished Elks, headed by Howard Medlin, DDGER, North.

The original 'charter officers' installed this night were Exalted Ruler—John Milosevich, Leading Knight—John Wakeford, Loyal Knight—Robert Surovic, Lecturing Knight—Richard Bartlett, Esquire—Howard Davidson, Chaplain—Rev. Thomas Keane, Inner Guard—Eugene Mulvihill, Tiler—Harry Hagen, Secretary—Carl Astifan, Treasurer—Marion Murphy. Trustees were 5 year—Philip Scopettuolo, 4 year—L. Tony Santillanes, 3 year—Timothy Woolston, 2 year—Clarence King, 1 year—Angelo Juliano. Organist was Robert Kingsnorth.

The first monthly bulletin, for July 1974, was published by E.R. John Milosevich and Tony Santillanes. After an absence of the Bulletin for August and September, while awaiting Grand Lodge approval of our format, James McMillan was designated the editing chore.

Subsequent to our institution and for several months after, we met at the Secretary's Vista Grande apartment Building. Thereafter, we met at the Rio Rancho Auditorium. There were a total of 339 Charter Members in our Lodge.

Exalted Ruler, John Milosevich and his wife, Hazel, attended the Elks National Convention at Miami Beach in July. Ken Stuart was selected as our first "Elk of the Year".

Our second year into Elkdom with Richard Hagen as Exalted Ruler, saw the bulletin officially named "Wapiti Bugle". The selection was agreed upon by the members after its submission by Leading Knight Hy Brofsky.

At our meeting of May 21st, an overwhelming approval was given to our site, or the Lodge building, at Barbara Loop and Sara Rd. Ground breaking ceremonies were held on Saturday, March 27th, 1976.

Exalted Ruler Richard Hagen and his wife, Dorothy, attended the Elks National Convention in Dallas. Our second 'Elk of the Year' selection was Robert O'Neil.

Our third year into Elkdom coincided with our National Bicentennial and saw Hyman Brofsky as Exalted Ruler. Shortly afterwards, work was started on the new building and by June 7th, it was entirely enclosed. The cornerstone was laid on July 24th and the building was dedicated on September 11th under the guidance of Willis Claus, DDGER North and other Grant Lodge State Elk dignitaries. Our first meeting held in our new Lodge was the first week in September. As the baby Lodge at the Spring Convention, held in Tucumcari, we received the Sportmanship Award.

Exalted Ruler Hy Brofsky and his wife, Elaine, attended the Elks National Convention in Chicago. Our third 'Elk of the Year' selection was Clarence King.

Our fourth year began with Allen Lowell as Exalted Ruler and a new Wapiti Bugle Editor, Tom Ladonsky. Exalted Ruler Allen Lowell and his wife, Vivian, enjoyed the Elks National Convention in New Orleans. Richard Vellon was selected as our fourth 'Elk of the Year'.



For our fifth year we had Herman Deutsch as Exalted Ruler. He and his wife, Blanche, attended the Elks National Convention in San Diego. While attending the convention, our Exalted ruler was presented with a plaque for National *First* Place recognition for our National Service Committee. The Chairman was Henry Bagley. Richard Hagen, PER attended the Grand Lodge session where he was appointed District Deputy, G.E.R., Northeast District. Henry Bagley was selected as our fifth 'Elk of the Year'.

Our sixth year into Elkdom was with Walter Johnson as Exalted Ruler. During this year, plans were put into motion for an addition on the east side of the present building. Exalted Ruler Walter Johnson and his wife Joan, attended the Elks National Convention in Dallas. 'Elk of the Year' for 1979-80 was James McMillan.

Exalted Ruler Fred Welsh took us into our seventh year. During this time the slab was poured on the east side of the property for the new Lodge room. This was finished in August by many volunteers. The option on the property to the North of the present building was exercised and purchased from Amrep. The entire property was then enclosed with a chain link fence with gates on the Barbara Loop side. Additional parking spaces were provided with the paving on the north side of the Lodge building.

At the Spring Convention held in Farmington, the officers of the Rio Rancho Lodge competed in the Class "A" Ritual Contest, and made a clean sweep of all the awards. The winning team was, Inner Guard Keith Dennison, Chaplain Charles Orgass, Esquire Charles Osborn, PER, Lecturing Knight Phil Scoppettuolo, PER, Loyal Knight Fred Welsh (then E.R.), Leading Knight Richard Hagen, PER, PDDGER, Exalted Ruler Walter Johnson. The coach of this team was Herman Deutsch. Each was awarded an individual Elk statuette and a large trophy was awarded to the Lodge. Rio Rancho Lodge also received honors with a first place trophy for the best monthly bulletin, the Wapiti Bugle. The 1980 Spring Convention was a great one for Rio Rancho!

Ground was broken in February 1981 for the lounge on the south side of the present Lodge building. All the work was done by volunteers.

Exalted Ruler Fred Welsh and his wife, Ruth, attended the Elks National Convention in New Orleans. The 1980-81 'Elk of the Year' was Victor Chernauskas.

Our eighth year into Elkdom saw Philip Scoppettuolo, PER as Exalted Ruler. The new lounge was completed by our able volunteers under the guidance and supervision of Thomas Murphy-General Contractor, Walter Johnson-General Foreman and Howard Heerdt-Electrical Superintendent. Exalted Ruler Phil Scoppettuolo and his wife, Evelyn, attended the Elks National convention in Las Vegas, NV. The choice of 'Elk of the Year' for 1981-82 was Eugene Fabiani.

Our ninth year into Elkdom started with Charles Orgass as Exalted ruler, but since he was unable to finish his term, the unexpired term was filled by Richard Hagen, PER, PDDGER. Herman Deutsch, PER and his wife, Blanche, attended the Elks National Convention in Chicago, representing our Lodge as Grand Lodge Representative and was appointed as District Deputy, GER Northeast. 'Elk of the Year' for 1982-83 was Joseph Salamon.

For our tenth year into Elkdom, Thomas Connaughton was elected Exalted Ruler. Following the attendance, with his wife, Patricia, at the Elks National Convention in Hawaii, he was unable to complete his term. The unexpired term was filled by Herman Deutsch, PER, PDDGER. 'Elk of the Year' 1983-84 was Frank J. Catalano, Sr.

We are in the process of constructing an addition on the east side of the present Lodge building. This will house our very own Lodge Room as well as a new dining room and assorted accoutrements.

Exalted Ruler William Conner and his wife, Susan, attended the Elks National Convention in Houston, Texas.

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary, the P.E.R. Association, with the permission of the Lodge, printed this Journal and sponsored this gala dinner and dance, on this September 15, 1984. The date selected is also the anniversary week of the Dedication of our original building into Elkdom in the year of 1976.