



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Grand Lodge Convention coming up quickly

This year Flag Day is on Sunday, June 14. This is an important mandatory service for the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

It is also a great way to involve local Scout groups and JROTC teams. Invite veterans to attend and participate during the ceremony. As a token of the day, the Lodge could distribute lapel flag pins. Our respect and reverence of the flag is precious to us as Elks, and we need to display the flag with dignity.

Father's Day is on Sunday, June 21. My father is an Elk, and he started the legacy for me and my sons. I am proud to say that I got my dedication to service from what I saw my father do. On this day, if



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler
BRYAN R. KLATT

possible, thank the dads in your life.

Next month will be our Grand Lodge Convention! The convention will take place from Sunday, July 5, until Wednesday, July 8, in Chicago, Illinois. Are you planning on attending? We hope you are!

If you are attending, take advantage of

all the wonderful seminars, meetings, and ceremonies. Visit the exhibit hall with vendor booths, and/or spend time talking with the State Major Project booths who provide information on their proposals.

Better yet, you could just meet and talk to Elks from across America and Members who are coming together to discuss and swap their best ideas to *Be The Difference* in promoting *Elks Care—Elks Share*.

It feels like last week I was installed, but this has been an amazing honor and privilege to serve you and our great Order as Grand Exalted Ruler, and Susan as your First Lady, for 2025-2026. Thank you and God bless all.

Utilize resources

Exalted Rulers and Secretaries, with two months now under your belts, you've got this! I hope you are off and running and enjoying what you are doing. No one said it would be easy, and as my friend PGER Val Bates used to say—if it was easy, anyone could do it! Please use your extended access to resources on elks.org.

GRAND SECRETARY
Carl T. Seibert

I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Chicago for the Grand Lodge Convention this summer. Remember if the ER is unable to attend, please send to grandlodge@elks.org the name and Member number for the Alternate Delegate so they can be registered and credentialed. They will still need to register and pay the \$70 pre-registration fee.

A few words on the use of email, websites, and social media:

Lodges may NOT publish their bulletins or newsletters on websites or social media platforms open to the public. This includes notices meant for Members only.

Please see **SECRETARY**, Page 3

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

DAP, ENVSC spread PTSD awareness

By **FRANK J. BURR**
Drug Awareness Program

The DAP expects to be very busy this month. Plans are underway to provide annual training. The training is limited to State DAP Chairs, and will include program updates and information materials to help the State Association's effort in strengthening communities and keeping youth informed. The training will begin on Saturday morning and run through Sunday, right up until the Opening Session of Grand Lodge.

We would like to invite all attendees to the Grand Lodge Session to visit us at our booth in the Exhibit Hall. Come see what's new and have a free picture taken with Elroy.

Although veterans are not our target audience, we are ever mindful of the struggles veterans often have to deal with. We join with the Elks National Veterans Service Commission in reminding all Elks that June is PTSD Awareness Month.

It's estimated that as many as 8 percent

of U.S. citizens suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. This condition is the result of being a victim of, or even a witness to, a traumatic event such as violence, tragic accidents, sexual assault, and abuse, among others. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is among the many organizations that teach people how to seek help for this serious disorder. You can learn more about PTSD through your Lodge's Veterans Chair.

June 26 has been set aside to raise awareness about the consequences of substance misuse and illicit drug trafficking.

On this day, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publishes its annual World Drug Report. If you would like a copy of that report, simply go to their website at unodc.org.

We look forward to seeing you all next month. We encourage all new Exalted Rulers to have your Lodge Drug Awareness Chairs to contact your State Association's Drug Awareness Chairs for all the updated news. We owe it to the children in our communities.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Essay Contest results impress

By **MARK E. EATON**
Committee Member

This year's theme for the Americanism Essay Contest was "*What does service to your country mean to you?*" There were so many great essays submitted this year. Every one of these kids is a winner!

Division 1: 5th grade

First: Maico Swartz, Veraitas Classical Academy, submitted by Cambridge, OH Lodge No. 448

Second: Ramrapann Gupta, Barnard Elementary, submitted by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169

Third: Lena Senneville, Fallbrook Elementary, submitted by Leominster-Fitchburg, MA Lodge No. 1237

Division 2: 6th grade

First: Theo Dursih, Broad Rock Middle School, submitted by South Kingstown, RI Lodge No. 1899

Second: Ava Pulaski, Jonas Salk Middle School, submitted by Old Bridge, NJ Lodge No. 2229

Third: Jude Waked, Worcester Preparatory School, submitted by Ocean

City, MD Lodge No. 2645

Division 3: 7th grade

First: Blessing Harvier, Coolidge Junior High, submitted by Coolidge-Florence, AZ Lodge No. 2350

Second: Davin Notarianni, Saint Joseph School, submitted by Tri-City, RI Lodge No. 14

Third: Bransyn Harper, Prairie City School, submitted by John Day, OR Lodge No. 1824

Division 4: 8th grade

First: Chloe Booth, Freedom Middle School, submitted by Nashville-Franklin, TN Lodge No. 72

Second: Kia Dino, Shea Middle School, submitted by Phoenix, AZ Lodge No. 335

Third: Irsia Ball, Smith Middle School, submitted by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169

All winners will receive monetary awards after convention. Lodge representatives should pick up certificates for winners at the Fraternal booth on Tuesday.

Next year's theme is "*Explain a constitutional right or privilege and how it affects you and your family.*"

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Lodges shine in Projects Contest

By **WILLIAM J. MACK**
Committee Member

Throughout the 2025-26 Lodge year, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee called on Elks to step forward and showcase their dedication to service through the annual Community Projects Contest. Lodges from across the nation submitted, sharing amazing examples of hard work, dedication, and devotion to serving youth, veterans, and community members in need.

Award plaques for the Community Projects Contest winners will be on display at the Activities information booth at Convention in Chicago. Entries were divided into six membership divisions. Please congratulate the winners:

Division I (1-150 Members)

First: Hackettstown, NJ No. 2331

Second: Mid Westchester, NY No. 535

Third: Holbrook, AZ No. 2450

Division II (151-225 Members)

First: Waukesha, WI No. 400

Division III (226-300 Members)

First: Gallatin, TN No. 2547

Division IV (301-450 Members)

First: Goldsboro, NC No. 139

Second: Jacksonville, FL No. 221

Third: Fairfield, IA No. 1192

Division V (451-700 Members)

First: Hickory, NC No. 1654

Second: Elmira, NY No. 62

Third: Wethersfield-Rocky Hill, CT No. 2308

Division VI (701+ Members)

First: Middleboro, MA No. 1274

Second: Greensboro, NC No. 602

Third: Vestal, NY No. 2508

Thank you to all the Lodges that participated in the contest. I look forward to seeing the entries for the 2026-27 contest. I challenge all Lodges across the country to participate in this annual event, proving once again that *Elks Care—Elks Share*. For more information and to download contest forms, visit elks.org/grandlodge/activities.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

See you in Chicago!

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**

ENF Communications Coordinator

Convention is right around the corner, and while it's impossible to see everything, you won't want to miss all ENF has to offer.

While you're at the ENF booth in the Exhibit Hall, pick up a special ribbon for your badge and ask any ENF-related questions you have!

You'll have the chance to interact with our programs, like the 2026 Elks Hoop Shoot Getty Powell Award winners and members of the Scholar Advisory Board. ENF will also host seminars.

The Community Investments Program session will cover grants and best practices for using them (including the \$500 increase to the Spotlight Grant); the Hoop Shoot team is hosting a session about the upcoming season and how the program unleashes gritty kids; and the Development team will teach you how to implement fundraising techniques to help your Lodge exceed the per-Member-giving goal.

The ENF can't wait to see you!

VETERANS From Page 4

Prioritize: Focus on the needs of veterans who are most in need of assistance.

Be specific: Have a clear plan before you apply. Connect with local veterans, nonprofits, VAs, or other project partners to identify needs and find a way to help.

Then, go to elks.org/vets to read instructions and apply for a Freedom Grant! It doesn't have to be complicated. Remember, your time is one of the greatest gifts you can give.

GOVERNMENT From Page 4

Take a meal to your local fire station. Talk about your concerns and listen!

Participate in town meetings and sessions as appropriate. Ensure all interactions with local and state government are conducted in a factual, composed, and respectful manner.

What additional steps can be taken to achieve our new goal for the coming year? Every Elk doing their part and recording every detail and all events that have happened in your State Associations and Local Lodges.

Working together, we can *Be The Difference!*

Livestream planned for Memorial celebration

Excitement is building as we prepare to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Elks National Memorial Building! While this historic event will take place in person during the convention, we're pleased to share that the program will also be simulcast, allowing Members across the country to be part of this special occasion.

Details on how to watch will be shared soon, so be sure to keep an eye on elks.org/memorial/Anniversary.cfm for updates and access information.

Lottery Winners

If you were selected through the lottery, don't forget—you must pre-register for



the Convention by June 17 to confirm your attendance at the 100th Anniversary celebration. Please also continue to monitor your email for updates and detailed information as we get closer to the celebration.

Support the Legacy

As we honor 100 years of history and

service, we invite you to be part of preserving that legacy. Consider making a contribution to the Elks Veterans Memorial Restoration Trust, helping ensure this iconic building is maintained for future generations.

You can also participate in honoring those who served by supporting the Veterans Tribute Wall, a meaningful way to recognize and remember our nation's veterans.

We look forward to celebrating this incredible milestone together—whether in person or online. Thank you for your continued support of the Elks and our mission.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Our true mission is growing the legacy

By RICK GATHEN

Membership Marketing Director

Being Exalted Ruler isn't just about calling meetings to order—it's about calling people to something greater.

It's about building more than just programs and events. It's about building people. Building heart. Building a future.

Growing your Lodge is not a side task. It's **the** task.

Because every new Member who walks through your doors brings something special: a spark of energy, a fresh idea, a set of helping hands, and the potential to be tomorrow's leader.

And here's the best part—new Members bring more new Members. Excitement is contagious. When people see a Lodge that's alive, growing, and welcoming, they want to be part of it. They want to contribute. They want to belong.

So what's the mission? Initiate, initiate, initiate.

Bring them in. Get them involved. Make them proud to be an Elk. Don't wait for someone else to take the lead. You are the someone.

Invite. Encourage. Inspire.

Be the reason your Lodge grows—in numbers, in strength, in impact.

Because when you grow membership, you don't just fill a room.

You grow momentum. You grow the legacy of the Elks.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Many ways to connect with your community

By DAVID C. FOSTER

Committee Member

As leaders of Elksdom, we should continually strive to reach out to local youth. By investing our time, talent, and energy in our young people today, we will yield positive returns for both Elksdom and our great country.

Youth programs such as the Antlers, Dictionary Project, Hoop Shout, Soccer Shoot, Junior Golf, Scouting, JROTC Awards program, Teenager/Student of the Month & Year, and National Youth Week all to help build character and enhance skills in a positive and safe environment.

To help fund these projects, the Elks National Foundation offers several grants, including the Beacon, Gratitude, Freedom, and Spotlight Grants.

To recognize those Lodges that have undertaken a community project, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee sponsors a Lodge Community Project Contest. The contest recognizes the top three Lodges in each of the six membership categories. Certificates will be awarded to the winning Lodges at the Elks National Convention. To enter the contest, the Exalted Ruler of the Lodge

must complete an entry form, available on the Grand Lodge Activities Committee webpage on elks.org. The deadline for the contest will be March 31, 2027.

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee encourages Lodges to support local Scouting organizations, recognizing children who reach the Eagle Scout Rank and the Girl Scout Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels. We would also like to thank all the Lodges that sent in nominations for the Marvin M. Lewis Award.

Every Lodge and State Association is encouraged to participate in the Soccer Shoot Program. It's a great way for young people to have fun showing off their skills, and possibly become a National Soccer Shoot Champion.

The Activities Committee also encourages Lodges to recognize our fire, police, and emergency medical responders through the Medals of Valor and Service.

One purpose for all these programs and projects is for Elks to become visible in their communities. Lodges need to publicize their efforts so that the community can learn about all the good works that we do.

SECRETARY From Page 1

Every Member of your Lodge must receive a copy of anything published dedicated to the interests of the Order, whether by electronic delivery or by regular mail.

The Lodge Bulletin may be sent electronically to any Member without written authorization from them, unless otherwise requested by the Member.

SA Committee Chairs have a reporting deadline approaching. Submit Association Info for the Directory by July 31.

How to start a Freedom Grant application

By **MARY MORGAN**
Program Director

It's Freedom Grant season! This year, we'll award \$1,000 Freedom Grants to 1,000 Lodges to meet the needs of local veterans. Applications are online now and available all year.

We're always excited to hear about the creative and responsive projects that Lodges carry out. Sometimes, it's the little things that make a big difference. For example, Douglas, GA Lodge No. 1286 used their Freedom Grant to partner with the Dublin VA Medical Center. Elks purchased clothes, hygiene supplies, and

snacks. They separated the supplies into bags that unboxed veterans could easily take with them when they leave.

Elks didn't just drop off the supplies though. They stayed to talk with the veterans, a lesson learned from one of their own Members.

"Our Lodge Members were eager to get started with this project," shares Project Manager Lavern Altman. "They also understand the importance of showing up and having conversations with the veterans. We had a Member of the Lodge that was a POW from the war in Vietnam. He's the one

that got our Lodge going to the VA . . . he would say, 'you just got to be there for them. Listen if they want to talk, but be there.'"

If your Lodge wants to be there for veterans, start planning your Freedom Grant today! Here are a few recommendations to get you started.

Make an impact: Projects should serve at least four veterans.
Think local: Find a way to serve veterans in your Lodge community.

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 2

Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
**Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS**
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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Timely, organized reporting remains essential for Elks

BY **RICHARD L. SHEPARDSON**
Committee Member

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is committed to providing guidance to the Grand Lodge, its State Associations, and Local Lodges in safeguarding their status as private, nonprofit, and charitable organizations.

Our goal this past year was \$600 million in charitable reporting.

As the Lodges begin their third month into the Elks year, it is essential to assess the key requirements for sustaining Elkdom in a constructive and positive

manner.

Charitable Documentation: Secretaries by now should have properly recorded Lodge meetings, events, workdays, and related activities.

Do not forget to have each committee within your Lodge report on their meetings and events in a timely manner. It is imperative that all committees are required to report details on dates, attendance, hours worked, miles traveled, and cash/non-cash donations.

Consider requesting that Lodge committees submit their charitable report

alongside their event reimbursement vouchers. Doing this will ensure each event is recorded and not forgotten. (Please refer to the "Charity Records Workbook" which can be downloaded at elks.org/leadership/manuals.cfm.)

Make friends out of your local leaders and essential workers in your community. Invite your city, state, and government officials to your events! Why not host an event to gather your essential workers in your community and say thank you?

Please see **GOVERNMENT**, Page 2