



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Look backward and forward to build Elkdom

As was the case with most people who have joined our great fraternity over the years, it never occurred to me that someday I might become its National President. It is the culmination of a long journey, with many twists and turns. I have met and developed relationships with fine and dedicated men and women whom I am very happy to call my friends. At its core, friendships are what Elkdom is all about, and I am very proud to have been given this wonderful opportunity to serve our Order.

I see the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks as an organization dedicated to doing good works while having a good time doing them. From the countless projects our Lodges engage in within their local communities, to the help they extend to those in need, to our scholarship programs, to the support of our veterans, to supporting the values



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

ROBERT L. DUITSMAN

and causes that have made our country the greatest in the world, the Elks have a long tradition of service in a wide variety of areas. I've lost track of how many times new Members have said they wanted an opportunity to get involved, to give back, and to be part of something greater than themselves. At its best, Elkdom gives its Members all of those opportunities.

My motto for this year is *"Honoring the Past—Embracing the Future."* Its

significance to me is that, as Elks, we need to be mindful of the many great works we have accomplished over the last 150 years, and with a spirit of optimism, move forward together to grow our membership, work our programs, and promote our brand.

By "Honoring the Past" my goal is to emphasize the richness of our traditions, the things we have accomplished, the importance of our rituals, and the quality and character of our Members, that together have made the Elks the premier fraternal organization in the United States. There is a lot of history for every Elk to be aware of and take pride in; it is what makes us special.

By "Embracing the Future" I want to share my optimism that our Order is capable of great things. As a result of

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Gain is official

The 2018-2019 Membership Report was filed online via CLMS2. As of March 31, the Order ended the year with a total membership of 771,033 for a **gain** of 94. **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!** With more attention to membership, the Order can show a larger gain for years to come.

Totals from the Annual Charity Reports show the Order donated \$460,704,157 in time, mileage, and in-kind gifts. This amount would have been larger but 56 Lodges failed to file a charity report. Again, with everyone's help, during the 2019-2020 Lodge year we will strive to reach that elusive 100% reported.

The St. Louis Grand Lodge Convention has come and gone. Thanks to the Missouri Host Committee, their volunteers, and PGER F. Louis Sulsberger for providing the manpower for another successful convention.

GRAND SECRETARY

Bryan R. Klatt

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

FAQ: Opioid pain reliever prescriptions

By **JACKI SCARPINO**
Special Contributor

Used appropriately, medicines improve our lives. When misused and abused, however, the consequences can be devastating. The overprescribing and misuse of prescription pain relievers has been a major cause of today's epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths, with four out of five heroin users reporting that they misused prescription opioids before using heroin.

This overview is intended to help you know what questions to ask when a healthcare provider recommends or prescribes a pain reliever for your child, and how to be sure that your child takes the medication as prescribed without misusing it or sharing it with others.

Why would a young person be prescribed an opioid pain reliever?

Opioid pain relievers are most often prescribed following surgery or to treat

cancer pain — so many young people will not be in a position to be prescribed opioids. But opioids may be prescribed for young people in the event of accidental injury, such as a sports-related injury, an accident in which a fracture or even a severe sprain occurs, or oral surgery to remove wisdom teeth. Additionally, there are other ailments for which opioids may be recommended.

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ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

MVS winners are future forces

By TAYLOR ODISHO
ENF Communications Assistant

Twenty-five thousand applicants entered. Only two won.

This year's Top Most Valuable Student scholarship winners are Tabitha Escalante, sponsored by Maumee-Bowling Green, OH Lodge No. 1850, and Victor Ramirez, sponsored by South Miami/Coral Gables, FL Lodge No. 1676. These are their stories.

Escalante's mother worked three jobs to save enough money to move her family to a small town with a better public school system and the promise of more opportunities. But switching to a new school proved difficult. Escalante was different.

"I desperately wished to be seen as more than an extraordinary product of my unfortunate circumstances," Escalante said.

She missed living in a city where seemingly everyone was working to overcome a disadvantage and no one was defined by the way they lived, the structure of their family, or the color of their skin. But she turned lemons into lemonade.

"It gave my dream to empower struggling communities a new sense of focus," Escalante said.

Escalante plans to study political science at Harvard University. In the future, she hopes to become a lawyer who speaks for disenfranchised families and marginalized groups.



Elks
National
Foundation, Inc.



Tabitha Escalante (left) and Victor Ramirez volunteer with other finalists during the 2019 MVS Leadership Weekend

Like millions of others who came before them, the Ramirez family immigrated to America to give their children more. They left Cuba and resettled in Florida to raise their son, Victor.

"My family came to this country to give me a chance they never had," Ramirez said.

And now, he's the top male Most Valuable Student.

"I believe I've made the most of that chance," Ramirez said.

He will pursue a doctorate in experimental physics at Princeton University this fall.

For 2019-20, the Elks National Foundation allocated \$2.9 million to fund the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, which includes 500 four-year scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$50,000. For more information about the Most

Valuable Student scholarship program, including eligibility and deadlines, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

How Activities make a difference

By DAVID B. LAKE
Committee Chairman

Your Grand Lodge Activities Committee is here to assist you in your Lodge's Youth Activities Programs and Community Projects.

There are eight committee members each representing a Grand Lodge Area. The contact information on each member and his or her area of responsibilities can be found online at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/roster.cfm. Please feel free to contact us when you have a question or need assistance.

The information on all our programs, along with manuals and printable certificates, can be found online at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/default.cfm.

Our Youth Programs include Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, Junior Golf, Antlers, Scouting, Dictionary Project, National Youth Week, Teenager/Student of the Month and Year, and JROTC Recognition. In the community area, our focus is on promoting Lodge Community Projects, Disaster Relief, and the Medal of Valor and Service Recognition Awards.

We hope that your Lodge participates in these programs and reaches out in your community with a Lodge Community Project. Remember that an active Lodge is a successful Lodge, and a successful Lodge is one that makes a difference in their community, showing that "Elks Care – Elks Share."

FAQ From Page 1

What questions should be asked of the healthcare provider when an opioid pain reliever is recommended or prescribed?

- Is a prescription opioid necessary to treat my child's pain?
- How many pills are being prescribed, and over how long a period?
- What are the risks of misuse?
- Should my child be screened to determine risk of substance use disorder before this medication is prescribed? (Common risk factors include ADHD, mental health disorders such as depression, a family history of addiction, and a recent trauma such as a death in the family or divorce.)

What should you do if an opioid pain reliever has been prescribed for your child?

- Safeguard medication at home. Don't leave it in the medicine cabinet where anyone, family or visitors, can access it.
- Supervise the dispensing of the medication, counting the pills in the bottle to be sure they are being taken as prescribed. Clearly document when the prescription was filled and when a refill will be needed, and be suspicious of any missing medication.
- Communicate with your child about the risks of misuse, and be very clear that the medication is not to be shared with others.
- Communicate regularly with your child about the level of pain he or she is feeling. Make sure the pain is diminishing with time and stay alert for any signs that your child is growing dependent on the medication.

What signs of misuse or dependence should a parent be alert for?

- Signs of misuse can include drowsiness, nausea, constipation, slowed breathing, and slurred speech.
- Be concerned if your child is asking for pain medication more frequently than prescribed, or if he or she is insistent on refilling the prescription.
- Signs of withdrawal, which would occur if a child has become dependent on an opioid and then stops taking it, include anxiety, irritability, loss of appetite, craving for the drug, runny nose, sweating, vomiting and diarrhea.

If you are concerned that your child may be dependent on pain medication, consult the prescriber.



GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Social media gaffes sully Lodges' public image

By **TONY MARKARIAN**
Committee Member

Your Government Relations Committee's goal is to help advance important and pending information that can impact our Order. In our work, we seek to be the leading voice that you can rely on; however, each state has their own legislation, and our state chairmen help keep us updated by doing their part.

There might be an upcoming local city or county change that does not favor the nonprofit way of doing business. Stay focused and keep your eyes open for any changes that can alter the way your Lodge operates.

Now that your charity records are in order, you can let your city and county officials know how much your Lodge does in your community, state, and nation. Trust me, you will be taken seriously. Keep those charity books full of everything your Lodge does to stay afloat. Remember, if your Lodge

is having a function, there are volunteer hours and miles somewhere and it most likely needs to be added to your charity book! Last years charity report was down substantially, so let's try and do a better job at reporting this Lodge year.

Social media is becoming more prominent every year, and the way we share information can be compromising. Often times we share events, birthdays, and other personal information from someone without realizing—it only takes one photo to sully a Member, guest, or Lodge's reputation.

We need to police the information being posted. Your social media chairman should be aware of what we want and do not want to be shared. The committee should know anything posted might be shared publicly (outside the Lodge) and always keep in mind *"One man's trash is another man's treasure."* A Member might want to post something they feel is a moment to treasure, but others could be

embarrassed to be associated with the posting.

As expected, I say that those types of comments and pictures should not be posted or shared. It is important that pictures of children must be approved by parents, with written approval, before posting on social media. Exalted Rulers, I suggest you think wisely here and don't just go to a young Member because they know computers. It takes a special person who can see both sides of the story, appeal to all crowds, and has a good sense of judgment to be your social media chairman.

Choose carefully! If you pick no one then you might be subjected to random uncontrolled comments about your Lodge and membership. Claim your Lodge's social media page and govern it!

Much more attention needs to be placed on your charity reports and your Lodge's social media. Let's work together to make sure our Lodges are taken seriously.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

What is Patriotism and why is it important?

By **JAMES R. ARNOLD**
Committee Member

Patriotism is not something that can be simply defined. It is something that people feel inside of themselves, and this feeling is different for each person.

I believe that patriotism can be characterized by intense love for one's country and the desire to see it thrive in whatever way is best for the country. America is truly the greatest country in the world and I'm so thankful I was blessed enough to be born here.

Two of America's greatest ideals are freedom and equality, and I'm sure most will agree that these are wonderful ideals to have. I love America because of all the opportunities that it has given me, because of its wondrous ideals, and because it is a nation of virtue. I believe I am a true patriot because of my undying support and devotion for America.

Patriotism lies in our actions. It is the zeal with which we work towards the betterment of the nation. It is the pride that we feel in representing our nation. One who is ready to actively support his or her country and is ready to do anything for it is a patriot. It is the natural attachment and the feeling of respect for the land where we are born and grow.

Patriotism motivates people to work

hard for the progress of the nation. It is to never let go of the unity in diversity and to dutifully stand in the face of any kind of tyranny. It is the desire and passion to serve the nation in any way one can.

Patriotism involves love for the citizens and the urge to live in harmony with all regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, and religion. We cannot love our country without loving its people. The unity and oneness among people can only lead to the progress and development of the nation.

Patriotism also involves serving the nation. It is about volunteering to help people whenever need be. It is about abiding by the laws and acting responsibly. We owe our freedom to the patriots who fought for our country.

If we do not have patriotic feelings or develop patriotic feelings in our children, then who is going to step forward to eradicate social evils or fight for the country? The youth want the country to be a safe and better place where they can live freely. They want their voice to be heard, understood, and accepted in society. They love their country and want to work in the favor of the nation and its people. Love for the country is the feeling that naturally develops like the love for family. I love my country very much and am proud of it.

Modern day patriotism is about acting responsibly for the welfare of the nation and its citizens. It is not just to accept ideas but also to take a stand for your own ideas and opinions. Patriotism can be practiced by doing small deeds to serve our nation every day. The progress and development of community, city, state, and nation depends on its people.

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our history, the benefit of our experience in so many areas, the good-hearted men and women who are involved in their Lodges and care so deeply for their success, and with the financial support of our Great Heart of Elkdom, the Elks National Foundation, we will continue the journey together toward an even greater future.

To our friends, Mike and Barbara Luhr, Beth and I extend our sincere appreciation for your friendship and year of service, and your steady leadership that has seen our Order achieve many successes. You both are truly the best Elkdom has to offer.

Beth and I look forward to the coming year as we travel around the country, hearing about and sharing in the great works being done every day by Elks. Again, thank you for this unique opportunity.

Famous advice for veterans service volunteers

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

President Harry S. Truman reportedly said, “It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” That’s particularly good advice for volunteers looking to serve veterans.

According to the IRS, there are more than 45,000 non-profits in veterans service in the United States today. Working together may be the only way to solve problems for our nation’s veterans.

For advice on how to start and build good partnerships, we sought advice from Darrell Quinley, a Member of Grandview-Hickman Mills, MO Lodge No. 2088. As a representative at both the Kansas City

VA Medical Center and the St. Michaels Center (which provides veterans with safe, stable housing), Quinley knows that partnerships are key to accomplishing goals.

Here is his wisdom, gleaned from years of volunteering for veterans and working as a funeral director.

- Smile. Be upbeat. Find as much common ground as you can with family, children, activities, veterans in the family, etc.
- Don’t take up a great deal of their time at the onset. Ask for their business card and follow up a few days later.
- Don’t give up! First or even second

impressions may not be a true indication of future working relationships.

- Be truthful, be consistent, and be prepared.
 - Try to always take the high road on any contentious discussion, or better yet, avoid it completely.
 - Be complimentary. Thank them for what they do. Find no fault in their operation.
 - Tell them you have Elks Members just waiting to help veterans.
- Above all, go in with a positive attitude. Your heart shares their heart in the love of service to veterans.



BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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August 2019

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GRAND LODGE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING

Time to celebrate a national gain in membership

By **RICK GATHEN**
PR and Membership Marketing Manager

Over the past few years, the Order has sought to reverse nearly four decades of declining membership. The Grand Lodge Public Relations and Membership Marketing Committee has crisscrossed the country encouraging Lodges to embrace its motto: *Grow by Change, Not by Chance.*

We have embraced technology and

introduced new ways to improve our processes. Little things can make a big difference. Minor alterations, carefully conceived and adeptly enacted, have produced major results nationwide.

We have made a convincing case that, contrary to the previous decades of negative trends, our positive changes have profoundly altered our culture and our future.

One of the most interesting aspects

of our membership turnaround is the way we use social media. This reaffirms that humans are profoundly social beings influenced by and influencing other human beings.

The Elks are our nation’s premier patriotic and charitable organization. By properly and passionately applying these great strengths, the Elks have enormous growth potential. After all, when Elkdom Shines—Elkdom Grows!

