



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Community service builds foundation for our future

After being elected Grand Exalted Ruler at the convention in Minneapolis, Wanda and I are humbled and honored to represent our great Order this year.

We have truly been blessed by the aid and support of so many people throughout the years. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our family, friends, and to you, our Elks family. We say thank you, one and all, for everything.

My slogan for 2023–2024 is *“We Are THE Elks.”* I am sure you will be hearing more about this at your District Deputy Clinic this month.

As we travel the country, Wanda and I are committed to promoting our Elks programs like never before. It is our belief this will make our Lodges stronger and improve our image throughout our great Order.

We will be promoting community



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler**

**RANDY P.
SHOOK**

service programs throughout our travels. These programs build stronger communities while stimulating a response that motivates worthy members of the public to seek Elks membership. In this way, our community service builds the foundation for our future.

Successful Lodges of the future will create and develop local projects that will become signature accomplishments in the eyes of the community. In turn,

members of the community will see these projects mature over time and want to become involved.

If we work together toward our charitable pursuits and remain faithful to our programs, I’m confident we will soon see an increase in membership—not mere temporary gains, but a new era of growth where participation becomes commonplace.

A great source of funding for some community projects is the Elks National Foundation, known as the *“Great Heart Of Elkdom.”* The ENF helps build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans, and meet the needs in areas where we live and work.

The Foundation has allocated almost

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Report: Membership, donations moving up

The 2022-2023 Membership Report was filed online via CLMS2. As of March 31, the Order ended the year with a total membership of 774,923, a net gain of 19,558 (a +2.59% increase).

Likewise, the Annual Charity Reports show the Order donated \$423,703,822 in time, mileage, and in-kind gifts, an increase of over \$118 million from last year. Also,

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

only 5 State Associations failed to file their charity reports this past fraternal year. A major improvement from last year.

We will continue to encourage every Elks Lodge and State Association to report their successes so that our communities will plainly see that **We Are THE Elks!**

I would like to thank the Minneapolis Host Committee, their volunteers, and Past Grand Exalted Rulers Dwayne E. Rumney and Paul R. Ryan for providing the manpower for another successful convention.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Hours, dollars, time add up quickly

By **STEVEN L. JOHNSON**
Committee Member

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee involves more than monitoring and lobbying legislation in our states and districts. Do you know tracking and reporting all of the hours and money donated to our charitable programs has many benefits to our organization and is an integral part of this committee?

Sustaining our vital programs is not optional. By retaining our current tax status we are able to operate at a much better rate. A much higher percentage of every dollar ends up going to our charity programs rather than taxes. Yes, it does take some time to fill out the Charity Reporting form, but not submitting these reports can result in service and funding cuts, and make our programs more difficult to sustain.

Sadly, estimates indicate only about half of the work being performed by

our Members actually get reported. Do not assume your state and its Lodges are tracking your events. You might be missing your chance to contribute to the reports. To share the reporting task, have each committee chairperson and/or officer fill out a report on every event at your Lodge, then give it to the Lodge Government Relations Chairperson or Lodge Secretary for monthly reporting. Charitable reporting includes volunteer hours and travel as well as monetary donations. Hours add up quickly no matter how many Members and guests help at an event. Share with your Members and volunteers and explain the importance of logging their hours. A few minutes of their time after an event will help immensely.

Lodge Secretaries and State Committee Chairpersons are great sources for the forms necessary to complete. The Charity Records Workbook can be accessed here: elks.org/leadership/manuals.cfm.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Abundance of Activities info can be found on Elks' site

By **MICHAEL B. BRYANT**
Committee Chairman

Participating in your local community helps meet needs that may not otherwise be met and demonstrates how valuable a partner we are. This raises our image and leads to a better understanding of who Elks are, and what our true purpose is. This can lead to membership growth as we become more visible within our community.

Your Grand Lodge Activities Committee is here to assist you as you develop plans for your Lodge's Youth Activities programs and Community Projects. There is a wealth of information to assist you in starting new programs and projects or improving ongoing ones.

Information is available for the Antlers, Dictionary Project, Soccer Shoot, Public Safety Medals of Valor & Service, Junior Golf, Youth Recognition Program, JROTC Award, Youth Week Proclamation, and Scouting.

As you complete these programs and projects, why not participate in our Community Projects Contest that rewards your hard-working Members and volunteers with recognition from the Grand Lodge? Information on these programs is located on our committee



website, elks.org/grandlodge/activities.

On our website, you will find plenty of information on each program, including videos and brochures outlining the focus of the individual programs and how to plan and implement them. The manuals give a wealth of more specific information and direction.

You can also find preformatted forms and certificates to use in your programs that simply need to be filled in and printed. These are available for Soccer Shoot (including posters and forms used to conduct an event and certificates), Scouting certificates, Student/Teen of the Month/Year certificates, and Youth Recognition Week documents, including sample letters to local officials, news releases, and posters. There are Certificates of Participation for Hoop

Shoot, Soccer Shoot, and Junior Golf. Information on ordering JROTC and Public Safety Medals of Valor & Service medals and printable certificates are available. A Certificate of Appreciation can be awarded to those who have provided service to your Lodge and an Honor our Flag Certificate can be awarded for participation in services that bring honor and respect to the United States flag. These certificates and forms can be found at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/downloads.cfm.

We have eight committee members, each representing a geographical area and Activities Committee program. Every member is assigned a specific project that they are experts in and can assist with questions on those specific projects. The contact information for each member is online at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/roster.cfm. Please contact your area committee member if you have a question or need assistance. We are there to assist you in any way we can.

We encourage your Lodge to participate in these programs and support your community with a needed Lodge community project. Remember that an active Lodge is a successful Lodge, and a successful Lodge makes a difference.

GER From Page 1

\$16 million for Lodge Community Service Grants. This grant program allows your Lodge to complete more for your communities. This is once again a way for you to show your communities that *Elks Care—Elks Share*.

Make the Elks presence felt in your community by using these grants. What is your Lodge known for in your community? What reputation would you like to have? Find that need in your community and get it done. This will ensure people in your community know that *"We Are THE Elks."*

The support we provide makes the Foundation's work possible. The goal we have established for the 2023–2024 fraternal year is \$4.80 per Member. That is not much when you consider the outstanding achievements of this program.

Remember *"Elks Care—Elks Share"* and *"We Are THE Elks."*

God bless our great Order, our troops, and the United States of America.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Setting an effective meeting agenda

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

Follow these 12 steps to establish an effective Membership Committee meeting agenda.

1. Must meet regularly — we suggest weekly April through June, then monthly.
2. Set goals to initiate 10% more Members.
3. Set goal of 5% dropped for non-payment of dues.
4. Review and study the membership manual.
5. Discuss initiatives to publicize membership efforts.
6. Use bulletins, social media, and websites to encourage Members to bring potential candidates to the Lodge.
7. Publicize membership classes.

8. Discuss incentives and contests.
9. Discuss reinstatement opportunities and strategies.
10. Review stray Elks and delinquents.
11. Review and evaluate the Orientation program.
12. Review membership numbers and compare to goals.



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Award winners announced at Grand Lodge Convention

By **WILLIAM J. LINDSEY**
Committee Chairman

Now that the 158th Grand Lodge Session in Minneapolis is in the history books, we would like to present the winners of two of the Fraternal Committee's top contests that were announced at the session general information.

ALL-AMERICAN LODGE CONTEST "A" WINNERS 2022-23**Division I (1-150 Members)**

First: Pendleton, SC No. 2861
Second: San Angelo, TX No. 1880
Third: Green Bay, WI No. 259

Division II (151-225 Members)

First: Santa Monica, CA No. 906
Second: Cedar Grove, NJ No. 2237
Third: Wheeling, WV No. 28

Division III (226-300 Members)

First: Kearny, NJ No. 1050
Second: Grand Island, NE No. 604
Third: Page, AZ No. 2498

Division IV (301-450 Members)

First: Gilroy, CA No. 1567
Second: Sierra Vista, AZ No. 2065
Third: East Stroudsburg, PA No. 319

Division V (451-700 Members)

First: Rensselaer, NY No. 2073
Second: Dover, DE No. 1903
Third: Casa Grande Valley, AZ No. 1957

Division VI (701 Members or more)

First: Phoenix, AZ No. 335
Second: St. Louis, MO No. 9
Third: Manasquan, NJ No. 2534

**AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS 2022-23****Fifth Grade**

First (\$1,000): Cameryn Boots, Joy Miller School, Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Sponsored by Egg Harbor Township, NJ Lodge No. 2563.

Second (\$500): Marcus D'Amico, St. Monica-St. Michael School Barre, VT. Sponsored by Barre, VT Lodge No. 1535.

Third (\$250): Ruby Lopez, Johnson Elementary, Richmond, VA. Sponsored by Richmond, VA Lodge No. 45.

Sixth Grade

First (\$1,000): Kaleb Hill, Cody Middle School, Cody, WY. Sponsored by Cody, WY Lodge No. 1611.

Second (\$500): Justin Jones, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary, Port Jervis, NY. Sponsored by Port Jervis, NY Lodge No. 645.

Third (\$250): Dalton Puckett, CDA Charter School, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Sponsored by Coeur d'Alene, ID Lodge No. 1254.

Seventh Grade

First (\$1,000): Lily Strode, Thomas Metcalf Laboratory School, Normal, IL. Sponsored by Bloomington, IL Lodge No. 281.

Second (\$500): Jhansi S. Rapeti, West Middle School, Ponca City, OK. Sponsored by Ponca City, OK Lodge No. 2002.

Third (\$250): Maria Mircuta, St. John's Catholic School, Hot Springs, AR. Sponsored by Hot Springs, AR Lodge No. 380.

Eighth Grade

First (\$1,000): America Velazquez, Comfort Middle School, Comfort, TX. Sponsored by Kerrville, TX Lodge No. 2081.

Second (\$500): Jasi Sheriff, Norfolk Junior High School, Norfolk, NE. Sponsored by Norfolk, NE Lodge No. 653.

Third (\$250): Abby Schickedanz, Sandpoint Christian School, Ponderay, ID. Sponsored by Sandpoint, ID Lodge No. 1376.

The Americanism Essay Contest Theme for this past year was *"What is Your American Dream?"* For 2023–2024, the prompt will be *"What the Bill of Rights Means to Me."*

Congratulations to all of our winners and their sponsoring Lodges and all of the Lodges that entered!

If you have any questions or wish to make any suggestions regarding our GL Fraternal Committee Awards or processes, your Area Committee members are available for you to contact. We are here to assist you and your Lodge.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Reliable charitable reporting comprises a big picture

By **W. J. BRYAN**
Committee Chairman

Here we are back from Grand Lodge, and what a great conference that was. So much sharing of ideas and information by all the committees and leaders.

Congratulations to Grand Exalted Ruler Randy P. Shook. We all look forward to working with you this year to gain Members and fulfill our charitable mission. Thank you to him and the Advisory Board for their confidence in me

as the new chairman for this important committee.

These go hand in hand. So, as we begin this new Elks year with DDGERS out and about doing training and audits, I urge everyone to see that big picture. Just as a part of the visit is financial and statute compliance, Members want wholesome Lodges and they want to be proud of their Lodges. Proper charitable reporting accomplishes this goal by giving Members credit for all they do and getting that

message out to the community.

Charitable reporting has become something of a, "Do I have to?" Yes, I too get tired of "doing for the IRS." But that is so small in the big picture. Having a banner outside your Lodge with your charitable accomplishments gets you recognition. That recognition leads to Members who want to be a part of this fantastic organization that does so much.

Look at the big picture and put all these pieces together this coming year!

Beneficial partnerships stem from preparation, trust

By NADEZH MULHOLLAND
ENVSC Programs Associate

Elks are great at making connections and bringing people together. This skill can be put to good use building partnerships that allow Elks to help even more veterans in need.

Check out our tips for forming strong, lasting relationships with community partners, such as HUD-VASH departments at the VA, Community Resource and Referral Centers, national and local nonprofits, and veterans' shelters.

1. Come prepared. Before meeting with a partner for the first time, take

some time to polish your metaphorical resume. Think about ways to showcase the services your Lodge can provide for veterans. Have you planned other veterans projects in the past? Be ready to talk about those experiences, which can demonstrate your follow-through and commitment. You can also describe what you've learned from service projects for other groups, such as children and families in the community.

2. Build trust. When beginning a new relationship, it takes time and effort to build trust. That's okay! Sometimes,

it's better to start small. This approach can help your Lodge get started and demonstrate that your Lodge can be relied upon. If things go well, you can always expand your project and partnership in the future.

3. Be responsive to community needs. It shows initiative to arrive with ideas of how you can help veterans—just be sure you also take time to listen! Social workers and other staff at community partners have a lot of insight into the needs of local veterans.



Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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From Above

Be open-minded to suggestions from community partners. They might have some ideas for serving veterans who you haven't thought of yet.

4. Be upfront about your needs and limitations. When talking about project ideas with a potential community partner, communicate what you can and can't do. Keep any relevant grant guidelines in mind and be realistic about your capabilities. This will help keep you and your partners on the same page and minimize feelings of disappointment.

5. Take some credit. Many nonprofits

are eager to partner with Elks Lodges to gain access to passionate volunteers and support. This is a good thing. There's a difference between writing a donation check and being an involved project partner. Know your role and be sure it's communicated clearly. For example, if your Lodge hosts monthly food drives with another group and Elks are regular volunteers, it would follow that the Elks receive credit as a project partner in e-mails and articles about the endeavor. Don't keep your work a secret—spread the word!

Together, we can achieve more and make a difference in veterans' lives.



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