



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Pause to pay tributes during joyous December

There are so many ways to reflect during the month of December.

As Elks, on Sunday, December 3 we pay a just tribute of affection and honor to all of the Members who no longer answer when their names are called. The Elks Memorial Service is a very solemn day when we hear the chimes of Eleven ring in honor of our deceased Members. The Members we honor on Memorial Sunday spent many hours of service to their Lodge. It is a fitting tribute to them to have their families with us at this ceremony as their names shall endure forever in our tablets of love and memory. *“An Elk is never forgotten, never forsaken.”* May all of our deceased Brothers and Sisters rest in peace.

Pearl Harbor Day is a time to remember and honor all who died in



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler
RANDY P.
SHOOK**

the horrific attack on December 7, 1941. President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in a speech to congress that the bombing of Pearl Harbor was a date which will live in infamy. Please take the time to lower the flag to half staff on Pearl Harbor Day in honor of all who perished in this horrific attack.

We will all be very busy with family and friends, shopping, sending cards and waiting for Santa to bring those very

special gifts. The Christmas season brings out the best in Elks. Christmas baskets will be distributed by our great volunteers spreading goodwill and cheer during this season. Needy families will have presents under their trees and food on their table because of the efforts of Elks throughout the country. While we should always be aware of those in need, this is a time when we seem to have a greater sense of family and those who need our assistance. It is this time of the year Elks really show their communities *“We Are THE Elks.”*

Wanda and I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas. May the joy and happiness of the Christmas season be with you always. Have a very safe holiday season.

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

Per capita and fees set for 2024-2025

For the 2024-2025 fraternal year, on April 1, 2024, the following per capita and fees will be due from each Member: Grand Lodge per capita—\$6.50; Insurance assessment—\$22.00*; and the Elks Magazine assessment—\$5.50, for a total of \$34.00.

**This amount represents a \$5.00 per Member increase from last year.*

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

Attention must continue to be given to retaining our delinquent Members as well as attracting new or reinstated Members. Involvement in Lodge activities should be encouraged to help keep Members interested.

If you, or someone you know, plan to visit Chicago over the winter, call the Grand Secretary’s office to set-up a time, and staff can give you your own personal tour of the National Headquarters.

Season’s Greetings and Happy Holidays from your Grand Lodge staff.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

No holiday break for drug awareness

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**
National Director

The last two months were very busy months for the Elks Drug Awareness Program, with Red Ribbon Week activities, Drug Take Backs, the DEA’s 50th anniversary celebration, and Lodges nominating law enforcement officials for the distinguished Enrique Camarena Award.

This month seems to be equally busy. While most of us center our thoughts around the holiday season, this is no time to relax. Drugs don’t take holidays! Don’t take my word for it.

“Fentanyl is the single deadliest drug threat our nation has ever encountered. Fentanyl is everywhere. From large metropolitan areas to rural America, no community is safe from this poison. We must take every opportunity to spread the word to prevent fentanyl-related overdose death and poisonings

from claiming scores of American lives every day.”—DEA Administrator Anne Milgram.

That’s why Elks must and will do their part.

Our podcast series *Awkward Conversations* Season 3 is well underway. If you’ve not had a chance to do so, please take a look by going to YouTube and search for “ElksDAP.” While our podcasts are lengthy, they are worth listening to. Our experts have a great deal to offer. Why not check it out?

On behalf of the directors, the commissioners, State Chairs, Lodge Chairs and all those involved in the Elks’ effort to educate our kids and strengthen our communities, we want to wish you all the very best during this holiday season.

We look forward to 2024, and we remain mindful of the dangers young people face. We thank you for all that you do.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Elks share meaning of ‘benevolence’ to students

By **TRACY LEOPOLD**
Committee Member

In Elkdom, we offer many programs for our youth because we believe they are our future. When I think about the young kids today, I am reminded of a classic quote by Francis Bacon which states “knowledge is power.”

As Elks we have an opportunity to provide third-grade students with a dictionary to expand their knowledge and give them a chance to excel in their studies. I know there has been the argument that kids can just look everything up online now, but having a book in their hand can prove to be more beneficial than one would think. It has been said we retain more information when reading from a physical book versus reading online.

Some positive things to remember with the Dictionary Project are that we are providing a source of knowledge to kids who may not have the ability to research things online when they are at home. Not every household has access to the internet, but by providing these kids with a dictionary, we are giving them an opportunity to still learn. This dictionary is theirs to keep, and I haven’t found one child who doesn’t enjoy getting a book. In some instances, this is the first book they have ever received.



Bellefonte, PA Lodge No. 1094 provided dictionaries to local students. Photo: The Dictionary Project.

Another great thing about this program is that you can get your Lodge’s name out into the community to people who may not be familiar with your Lodge.

When reaching out to your local schools, if they are already receiving a dictionary from another organization, I suggest asking if they would be interested in receiving a thesaurus. The Dictionary Project has a couple different options to supplement the dictionary they are already receiving. Also, make sure you inform your schools of the other youth activities that your Lodge does, such as the Americanism Contest, Soccer Shoot, the scholarship program, and others. Make sure they know what we are about and that “*We Are THE Elks!*”



Students thank Vestal, NY Lodge No. 2508 for donating dictionaries. Photo: The Dictionary Project.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Momentum builds for membership gain

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

Last year we attained a 19,958 net gain in membership. This has generated remarkable momentum for this fraternal year.

We are now in the homestretch of the year—the final numbers for the 2023–2024 Lodge year will be recorded on March 31. We are projecting more than 100,000 new Members will be added to the rolls this fraternal year. We are also trending towards lower than average cancellations.

Membership retention is the key to sustainable membership growth. If this all pans out, we will be in a strong position for another robust gain. This success is owed to Elks around the country, who have been louder and prouder in their

service to their communities than ever before. The Membership and Marketing Department helped by providing recruitment resources such as the join.elks.org website, which gives prospective Members information on how to apply to join the Elks and provides inspirational messages explaining why it is great to be an Elk. Make sure you initiate all your candidates before March 31, 2024.

All Gas. No Brakes!



More than 100,000 new Members are projected to be added to the rolls this fraternal year.



This dictionary was generously donated by the _____ Elks Lodge # _____

Our Elks Lodge is built upon the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

Lodges can include a label in the reference books they distribute. Participating in the Dictionary Project is an effective way to get your Lodge’s name out into the community. Photo: The Dictionary Project.



Elks share their thoughts

Want to discuss the Elks? Check out the Membership Forum (elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm). Members use the message board to share constructive information every day.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Little-known facts, legends about the American flag

By RONALD A. BROOKS

Committee Member

- The flag is normally flown from sunrise to sunset. If flown at night, it should have a light shining on it.

- The U.S. flag always flies at the top of a staff above any other flag.

- An American flag should never touch the floor or the ground.

- When displayed on a wall or window, the blue field should be in the upper left corner.

- The designer of the American flag was Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence as a delegate from New Jersey.

- The first time the flag was flown after being adopted was August 3, 1777.

- The United States flag has been changed 27 times. The final star for Hawaii was added in 1960.

- The design of the current 50-star flag is commonly credited to Robert G. Heft, a 17-year-old high school student.

- Fifty flags fly 24 hours a day around the Washington Monument.



Fifty flags encircle the base of the Washington Monument. Photo: Falkenpost/Pixabay.

- Pennsylvania is the only state that observes Flag Day as a state holiday.

- Six American flags have flown on the moon, and five are standing. Neil Armstrong's fell over.

- 95% of U.S. flags are made in the United States.

- The military folds the flag with 13 folds, each with a symbolic meaning.

- The gold ball on top of a flagpole is called a "truck" in military terms

and a "finial" in civilian terms. The ball keeps rainwater out and serves as ornamentation. Balls won't catch and tear the flag if it blows up over the pole.

- Military lore claims the gold balls contain razor blades, matches, and bullets, which can be used to prevent an enemy from capturing a flag during an attack.

- When your flag is old and has seen better days, retire it. Old flags should be burned or buried.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Symbolic ENF gifts make everyone feel good

By PATRICK ROELOFS

ENF Communications Coordinator

As the holiday season approaches, so does the dread of coming up with gift ideas for your loved ones. Are you tired of giving trinkets or pairs of socks every year? Would you rather give a gift that has the power to change lives? This year, consider giving the gift of a symbolic donation to the ENF.

Symbolic gifts are donations to the ENF that represent the difference your donation makes. By choosing to give a symbolic gift, you can feel good knowing you are helping build stronger communities.

The symbolic giving program allows you to choose what you want your donation to represent. First, start with our programs: Community Investments, Veterans Service, Scholarships, or Hoop Shoot. From there, choose a specific action, like putting Elks volunteers in the field, providing a Welcome Home Kit, covering the cost of a college textbook, or creating trading cards for the Hoop

Shoot National Finalists.

Once you have chosen the cause you are passionate about, you will have the option to send an e-card to someone you love to let them know you have given this gift in their honor. If you would rather give a physical card, you can print out the e-card and give it to them that way. No matter what you choose, the recipient of your card will feel good knowing this gift is making a real difference in someone's life.

While the power of a donation is reason enough to give, you can rest assured in knowing that every symbolic gift is credited to your personal recognition levels and your Lodge's per-Member giving total, too.

No more socks for Christmas! Feel good about giving gifts this holiday season with our symbolic giving program.

A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Elks National Foundation helps Elks build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information on the ENF, visit elks.org/enf.



Instead of socks, give a loved one a symbolic gift to the ENF this holiday season. A donation to an ENF program can make a difference in someone's life. Photo: Pixabay.

VETERANS From Page 4

you to Lodges with similar ideas and projects.

Freedom Grants have all been awarded for this year, but don't forget to apply for Community Investments Program Grants online at elks.org/cip to fund projects for veterans, military members, and the community in the coming months.

Veterans grant projects can be community specific

By **RENE VILLALOBOS**
Programs Associate

The great thing about Freedom Grants and Community Investments Program Grants is that Lodges can tailor their projects to meet the unique needs of local veterans. Sitka, AK Lodge No. 1662 is a great example of a Lodge doing just that.

For the past four years, Sitka Lodge has planned and hosted safety classes for Coast Guard members and their families stationed in the area, with a focus on topics including bears, boating, and weather.

Military families stationed near Sitka at the local Coast Guard base come

from all over the nation, and many have never had to deal with things like brown bear encounters or shallow rocky waters when boating. The Elks give these families the knowledge they need to feel secure and prepared in their local environment. At the same time, the Lodge was able to provide a safe space for military family members to enjoy food, resources, and connection. Elks even provided arts and crafts for the children while the parents were taking classes from the instructors and speakers.

This year's project was a big success,

with more than 80 Coast Guard members in attendance, nearly double what they have seen in the past. The success of the project has inspired the Lodge not just to continue the project in future years, but to plan other events to support veterans and military members.

If your Lodge is seeking to help veterans in your community, reach out to the Elks National Veterans Service Commission. We're happy to answer your questions, exchange ideas and connect



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BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Include local officials in your Lodge's charitable outings

By **WALTER S. ICE**
Committee Member

December is a busy month for a Local Lodge's charitable events. When planning your events, always remember to invite your local elected officials.

Politicians love to attend events that help children, people with special needs, and veterans. Do not be afraid to think beyond only inviting your town's mayor. If you are preparing food baskets for the needy, invite your local food and agriculture officials. If planning an event for special needs individuals, invite someone from local agencies and commissions that

provide services in that area.

The holiday season is a busy time for everyone, so please try and reach out to your honored guest as soon as possible. Make sure to provide an article and a picture to your local newspaper after the event. You should send a thank you letter to your invited guest for their time.

Having a close relationship with your local leaders is a huge advantage in attracting new Members, putting the Elks name out to the public, and getting the support of those politicians when the occasion should arise.

Last, but certainly not least, the three

most favorite words in Government Relations during the holiday season is not *ho, ho, ho*, but *report, report, report*. On behalf of the entire Government Relations Committee, we wish all Elks and their families a happy and safe holiday season and best of luck in all your charitable events!

