



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Final stretch of Lodge year starts in January

Wanda and I want to wish each of you a very happy new year as we welcome in 2024. New Year's Day is a time when we reflect upon the events of the past year and plan for the upcoming year. New resolutions are made to improve health, diet, and other ambitions. For us as Elks, it should be our resolution to improve our Lodge and our Order.

January is the beginning of the last quarter of the Lodge year. Get your membership retention and arrears program into full stride. Have your committee reach out to delinquent Members. This personal contact could very well bring that Member back into our folds. Remind them of why they joined and how much they mean to the Lodge. It would be great for your Lodge to have a +1 membership gain in 2024.

You and your Lodge Officers should



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

RANDY P. SHOOK

be reviewing how and where you stand with your Local Lodge goals for the year. Should you see you are falling short, make January, February, and March your last big push to meet those goals. Your Lodge has all the assets needed to meet those goals with the right plans. Use your Past Exalted Rulers Association, Board of Directors, and Lodge committees to analyze what is needed to declare victory.

This is also a great time to review your

hard-working Members and decide who deserves an award for the great work done for your Lodge. Some of the awards you can present to a Member and Officer who has done so much to promote the Order are Elk of the Year, Officer of the Year, and Citizen of the Year. There is no better way to say **thank you** for the hard work and dedication they have demonstrated. You may involve other Members to promote the good work that your Lodge does in your community.

Finally, the Auditing and Accounting Committee should review Lodge books and report at the last meeting of the month.

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

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

Deadline nearing for Transfer Dimits

Secretaries: Transfer Dimits must be processed in a timely manner. Currently, there are nearly 1,000 incomplete Transfer Dimits.

The CLMS2Web program automatically transfers the Member's information from the outgoing Lodge computer to the incoming Lodge computer, with no typing required.

Keep in mind, a Transfer Dimit started during the current Lodge year must be approved by the accepting Lodge before March 31. If not, that Member

GRAND SECRETARY

Bryan R. Klatt

remains on your membership roll.

Any variance from this procedure will

cause your membership total to become out of balance.

Reminder: Year-end membership information must be updated and completed in CLMS2Web by 11:59 p.m. Central time on March 31.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Pace set for another membership gain

By RICK GATHEN

Membership Marketing Manager

The Order can make history by achieving membership growth for the third consecutive year—a milestone not seen in 45 years!

While the final numbers for 2023–2024 won't be confirmed until March 31, optimistic projections indicate we are on our way. Central to this projected growth is the goodwill generated by our impactful charitable efforts. The Elks National Foundation's substantial philanthropic support, totaling over \$43 million for 2023–2024, plays a pivotal role in supporting local communities nationwide.

Equally important is the power of word-of-mouth marketing, amplified through social media, e-mails, and cell phones. Elks who proudly share their personal experiences and accomplishments not only strengthen the Order's reputation

but also form deeper social ties with neighbors, peers, and friends. To facilitate this, the Public Relations and Membership Marketing Committee has curated a collection of shareable images, available at virtualmanuals.elks.org/shareables/.

As we continue to provide generous support to our communities and promote our achievements, the Elks stand on the precipice of accomplishing *"Three in a Row—Let's Grow!"*



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Top Lodge difference makers deserve recognition

By THOMAS W. FRAKER
Committee Member

With only three months left in the Lodge year, Exalted Rulers are looking at their successful year and the team that helped them. Rewarding the team builds on the established framework and ensures continued support to our communities, our veterans, and our youth.

Exalted Rulers have many avenues at the Grand Lodge level to achieve this. The most common are the Elk, Officer, and Citizen of the Year. Requests for these certificates must be sent to the Grand Secretary's Office prior to March 31.

Each year our Grand Exalted Ruler establishes goals for each Lodge to strive. To recognize the achievements of the Exalted Rulers and Lodges in reaching those goals, Grand Lodge has "Making A Difference" citation awards. These may be awarded to Exalted Rulers who participate in six of the nine required programs during the year and to each Local Lodge that participates in six of 11 required programs during the year. The



required programs are outlined in the Grand Lodge Program booklet on page 38. The criteria for each award is specific and requires supporting documentation.

These awards are available through your area Grand Lodge Committee member. Entry forms are listed in the Fraternal Committee area on elks.org. Go to "Forms and Contests" and find the link for "Outstanding Members – Certification Request for GER Special Commendation Award." The forms were also made available to each ER on the thumb drive distributed during the Grand Lodge Session. All awards can be submitted for approval starting

January 1 and must be postmarked by March 31.

Other certificates are available to each Exalted Ruler. The "Grand Exalted Ruler's Outstanding Service Commendation" certificates are used to recognize two persons performing good works for their Lodge. These team members are always on hand and make the ER's job easier.

Every Lodge that shouts out GER Shook's motto "*We Are THE Elks*" should have more than enough Members to recognize. Your Area Fraternal Committee member is ready to assist and make it simple to pat them on the back.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Building character, community spirit through Antlers

By RONALD A. MANGONE
Committee Member

Community service plays a key role in building strong, connected, and vibrant societies. In today's fast-paced world, it is imperative to get our youth actively involved in serving their communities. Encouraging our young people to participate not only benefits the community, but it also has an impact on their growth and development.

Today more than ever, our youth are bombarded with everyday distractions. Encouraging them to engage in their community helps to instill a sense of responsibility and belonging. It is an excellent opportunity for our youth to develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving. In addition, they are exposed to many diverse backgrounds.

This is why the continuation of our Antlers Program is so important. Our Antlers bring a new energy and a fresh perspective in recognizing and addressing the issues in their community while keeping with Elks' traditions and virtues active.

New Antlers Lodges have been instituted, and several more have been reinstated. Welcome and congratulations to the following new Antlers Lodges:

- Amarillo, TX No. 923
- Berwick, PA No. 1138
- Hanford, CA No. 1259
- West Covina, CA No. 1996
- Paramus, NJ No. 2001
- Greenwich, NY No. 2223
- Cocoa Beach, FL No. 2387
- Zephyrhills, FL No. 2731

I continue to offer assistance in establishing Antlers Lodges. I encourage your Members to check out our Lodge Activities website at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/.

I would like to thank everyone who stopped by the Lodge Activities Booth in Minneapolis, especially those who I had spoken with prior to going to Grand Lodge. I was happy to put a face with your name and to hear about your Antlers Lodge. Please continue to let me know the types of events your dedicated

Antlers have planned and share photos with me. At next year's Grand Lodge Convention your Antlers photo might be featured on our wall.

Finally, I leave you with these words: Empowering our youth can create a society where the spirit of service is ingrained in their hearts. Our involvement with our youth is just another example of who we are and what we stand for, because "*We Are THE Elks.*"



DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM



Actress Jodie Sweetin and clinical social worker Amy McCarthy lead the discussion in season 3 of *Awkward Conversations*. The hosts bring on guest experts to talk about parenting and substance abuse prevention.



**Hoop Shoot National Finals
April 18-21, 2024 • Chicago, IL**



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.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

New SAB members form connections, empower peers

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**
ENF Communications Coordinator

Service is at the heart of what it means to be an Elks scholar. Whether it's serving locally or across the country, Elks scholars are dedicated to building stronger communities. Through the Scholar Advisory Board, the SAB, this commitment to service is embodied every day. Meet a few of its newest members.

Marisol Cruz Velasco, a 2022 Most Valuable Student scholar sponsored by Gilroy, CA Lodge No. 1567 and sophomore at University of California, Berkeley, received an Elks Service Grant to make an impact on her campus. According to a study done by the University of California Global Food Initiative, 39% of undergraduates at UC Berkeley experience food insecurity. To combat this, Cruz Velasco used the grant to organize food funds and deliver food sacks, while also teaching students how to budget.

In addition to her Elks Service Grant, Cruz Velasco gives back by using social media to provide information on scholarships and college access to other students. With more than 14,000 followers on TikTok, Cruz Velasco feels a responsibility to help others on their academic journeys.

"As an Elks Scholar," Cruz Velasco said, "I understand the importance of

investing in the education of young people, empowering them to reach their full potential and make positive contributions to society, which is why I make engaging videos on my TikTok page."

Cruz Velasco is excited to use her skills to serve her fellow scholars as a SAB member.

"I am grateful for the impact the Elks National Foundation has had on my life," Cruz Velasco said, "so I hope to use my creativity and voice to truly demonstrate that I care for my Elks family."

After Tanner Christensen, a 2020 Most Valuable Student scholar sponsored by Provo, UT Lodge No. 849 and senior at Stanford University, attended the virtual 2020 Top 20 Leadership Weekend, he knew he could find connection in the #ElksFamily. He immediately got involved in the Elks scholar virtual programming, from hosting clubs to meet-ups, and attended the 2022 Summer Service Trip in Atlanta. When he was asked to serve as a scholar leader for the 2023 Leadership Weekend, he was excited to convey to a Top 20 what it means to be a part of a community of changemakers who are motivated to give back to the community.

"Despite everyone's different interests and backgrounds," Christensen said, "Elks scholars share so many beliefs and passions, like serving others and making the world a better place."

The relationships Christensen made during the 2023 Leadership Weekend, especially with former SAB President Kat Nakamura, represent the bond that Elks scholars share.

"I will forever cherish the bond between Kat and me," Christensen said. "It exemplifies how Elks scholars share an almost unspoken, built-in friendship and connection with one another."

In 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation will award nearly \$4.2 million in college scholarships, ensuring a bright future for our nation's youth. As important members of the Elks family, Elks scholars receive many social and service opportunities with the Elks and one another. For more information about our scholarship programs and ways Lodges can get involved with Elks scholars, visit elks.org/scholars.

JOIN THE CLUB!

Start a monthly gift to the Elks National Foundation at enf.elks.org/FC or learn more by scanning the QR code.



Nomination time for Veteran Volunteer of the Year

By **HANNAH GRABER**
ENVSC Programs Coordinator

Each year, ENVSC recognizes outstanding volunteers from each state who have demonstrated their commitment to veterans and military members in need with the Veteran Volunteer of the Year.

Last year, Kentucky presented this award to Michelle Anderson for leading monthly interactive events for veterans. Anderson took flowers to the VA hospital, organized supply distributions, delivered beds to Fisher House, hosted meals, and provided entertainment for veterans. Her contagious attitude and passion for service have engaged other Elks Members

in veterans' service.

In Alabama, the Veteran Volunteer of the Year award was given to John Ray. As a Voluntary Service Representative, Ray visits veterans at the Bay Minette VA every month, hosting bingo, providing games and fishing equipment, and being there to give support. He was described in his nomination as steadfast and second to none.

Do you know volunteers like these in your community? Now is the time to nominate fellow Lodge Members for this award. Eligible nominees may be active in the Elks Voluntary Service program, as

Lodge Veterans Chair, as State Veterans Chair, or in another volunteer capacity serving veterans in need. Both Elks Members and their spouses are eligible for this award.

Please submit nominations for this award to your State Veterans Chair no later than January 31. Individual states may have earlier deadlines to submit a nomination. Once the

State Veterans Chair receives all the nominations, two winners from each state will be selected.

The nomination form is available at elks.org/vets/volunteerawards.cfm.



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

Online manual assists with crucial reporting process

By **VICTOR E. McCLELLAN**
Committee Member

The holidays are over and a new year is beginning. I hope everyone had a wonderful break. But now, it's time to get back to work.

Over the holidays our Lodges had many events and community projects. While the information is fresh in our mind, we need to record our time and efforts into our Government Relations report. Your reports are key to the survival of our Order. The information we receive from you helps us make sure local, state, and federal officials are aware of the

tremendous positive impact the Elks make in their states and communities.

To assist you with your reporting, our Government Relations Manual is now available on the Grand Lodge website. It is easy to follow and provides a guide of what activities must be reported. It also gives you tips on writing letters to your public officials. It is necessary that you are constantly aware of any changes in laws that would affect the work we do.

The mission of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee has not changed. We will continue to use your reporting and assistance to maintain our

status as a non-profit, tax exempt, private charitable organization. We cannot do this alone. We need you to meet our goals and protect our Order. Your state and Lodge committee chairs stand ready to help and answer any questions you may have. *We Are THE Elks* and we want the world to know the charitable works we do in our communities. **You** make that happen.

