



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



May holidays salute moms, service members

The winter months are well behind us now. It is time for us to focus on our Elks spring and summer activities.

May has many events that we as Elks are proud to recognize and participate in. Let's start with Mother's Day, which this year falls on Sunday, May 14. Thank you to each Lodge that has a Mother's Day celebration. You may want to consider assembling a committee and starting an event if your Lodge has never had one. Mother's Day is a very special day to spend not only with your mother but your grandmother, your great-grandmother, sister, or your aunt. Take a moment to call your relatives, and send flowers or candy. Make them feel as special as they are. **Happy Mother's Day!**

During the month of May, we celebrate Armed Forces Day, which will



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler **BRUCE A. HIDLEY**

occur on Saturday, May 20. This is a day for all of us to say thank you to all of the men and women in all branches of service in the military. Each of these individuals are the ones who have taken time to defend this great country of ours and protect the liberties we enjoy today. What a better way for our Lodges to recognize Armed Forces Day and show them *Elks Care* about their service to our country.

May is also when we remember our departed service members on Memorial Day. This year Memorial Day falls on Monday, May 29. There are so many ways that we as Elks can take the time to reflect on our departed service members. You can place flags at the graves of deceased military veterans. Participate in or host a Memorial Day parade. Please take part in this very important way to honor the deceased veterans in your community. I remember the day when my community opened our first veterans park. It was during a Memorial Day ceremony. There was nothing more heart wrenching to see all the names of the people who served our country with distinction.

Each year, I proudly walk with

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Pre-register and acquire badges for Minneapolis

Pre-registration for the Minneapolis Grand Lodge Convention is available at <https://www.elks.org/convention/prereg.cfm> through June 28.

The online pre-registration fee is \$50 for all Members, while the on-site registration fee will be \$60. A current credit card for PayPal will be needed. There is no fee for a non-Elk spouse or guest.

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

On-site registration will open on Friday, June 30, from noon to 4 p.m. When you arrive at the Minneapolis convention center, go to the designated pre-registration line in the Registration area. You will need your e-mail confirmation and current membership card to receive credentials (and voting credentials, if qualified) for you and your spouse or guest. A registration badge will

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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Timely reporting makes big impact

By W.J. "BILL" BRYAN
Committee Member

This is the month where we total all your charitable reporting submissions. Last year, our Order contributed \$368,368,264.17 and I am optimistic that we will do much better this year.

When I say "do much better," I am not referring to our vast array of programs throughout this country or the hundreds of thousands of wonderful Elks who work tirelessly to put them on.

I say "do much better" as we simply do not accurately and timely report all we do. This year there was a concerted effort to harp on it all year, so we will see if we have made a difference with our training and messages!

One such effort was the creation of a 3-year summary for your Lodges and districts. It's a tool where you can see if your Lodge is ahead or behind last year and compare your Lodge to others.

Some states have a friendly competition with this. Three-year summaries can be found at [elks.org/leadership/reports/CharitableAnnualReportingSummary.cfm](https://www.elks.org/leadership/reports/CharitableAnnualReportingSummary.cfm).

New (and returning) Lodge Secretaries: Don't forget you can appoint a Local Charitable Report Coordinator. They can take that load off you and save you some time.

Charitable Report Coordinators are responsible for submitting local charitable event data. Charitable Report Coordinators are not allowed access to CLMS and cannot perform any other secretarial functions.

And for the coming year, it is not too soon to start. There is no waiting period, and you can submit new reports immediately, unlike past years where it was not cleared out until June.

Thanks for all you do.

ELKS Do!

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

11 States win Bulletin Contest awards

By THOMAS W. FRAKER
Committee Member

The Contest I – State Bulletin Contest recognizes the best State Association bulletins.

Judging is based on four categories: **Content, Layout & Typography, Pictorial, and General.**

Judging was an exciting process. The reader learned what other State Associations across the nation are doing.

Thank you to the many editors who entered and earned the 4 Star and 5 Star ratings.

5 Star ★★★★★ Awards

State	Editor
Arizona	Shawnee Carlile
Florida	Rachael King
Georgia	Lynda Lewis
Kansas	Carl E. Lindsey, Jr.
Louisiana	Buddy Hartle
MD, DE, DC	Janie Swigert
Missouri	Joy Clarkson
New Jersey	Joyce Powell

4 Star ★★★★ Awards

Michigan	SP Dave Sladek
North Carolina	Ashley Buckwell
Pennsylvania	Glen Klein

Essay Contest theme announced

By GWENDOLYN B. PARKER
Committee Member

To rekindle our youth's regard for patriotism, the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee is pleased to offer the Americanism Essay Contest to fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students.

The 2023-24 theme is *"What the Bill of Rights Means to Me."* It is aimed at providing our youth with an appreciation of the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution and their importance to every citizen.

The deadline for submitting entries to your Local Lodges is December 15, 2023. All essays must go through the judging process through your Local Lodge first, then to your States District

Lodge Activities Chairman, then on to your State Chair.

This is the perfect time to communicate with your local schools to place the contest in their curriculum and provide them with pertinent information about the contest. Grand Lodge will award \$1,000 to the first-place winners in each age division, \$500 to second place, and \$250 to third place. Winners will be announced at the Grand Lodge Session in Austin, TX in July 2024.

Contest details can be found at elks.org/grandlodge/fraternal/files/americanismEssayContest.pdf.

Contact your Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee Member for assistance.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

'Zombie' drug raises alarms

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN
Acting Director Elks Drug Awareness Commission

While I would much rather talk about what the Elks are up to this month, I feel obligated to speak about what the drug traffickers are up to.

A veterinary sedative, xylazine, is being mixed with fentanyl and has found its way to America's streets. For several years, the Elks' DAP has been teaching kids about the dangers of fentanyl, and now it has become even more dangerous. Fentanyl, as we all know, is already 50 times more powerful than heroin.

Xylazine has been found laced in illicit injectable drugs, especially fentanyl. It's often referred to as "tranq" or "tranq dope" on the street. People who use it tend to slip into a state of unconsciousness for hours. The sedative effects of xylazine are so powerful that, for example, a person can suffocate if lying face down on a pillow!

The drug has also been linked to reports of skin abscesses, not unlike cases seen in other injectable drug users. In some instances, the wounds are so severe that amputations are necessary. Thus it is also known as a "zombie" drug.

Perhaps most alarming, this new cocktail of drugs is less resistant to Narcan, the nasal spray used for the treatment of a known or suspected opioid overdose emergency.

Just when we think it's time to relax, we realize that those traffickers bent on destroying our youth keep us on guard. The Elks' DAP will always counter the bad with the truth.

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be required to enter the exhibit hall and all business sessions.

All non-Elk guests, including widows and widowers of Elks, **must** register at the Guest Registration Station at the convention center to obtain registration badges. Guests need a badge to enter the exhibit hall, see the Installation of Grand Lodge Officers, or attend any other events where they are permitted. Be advised Exhibits/Vendors will not open until 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

Grand Lodge registration and its required fee are **not** included in any State Association's "package" arrangement.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Elks grow again

By RICK GATHEN
Membership Marketing Manager

Congratulations to everyone throughout the Order on another terrific year in membership!

In 2020–2021, the BPO Elks showed great resilience in surviving through the pandemic year, and in 2021–2022 our membership numbers bounced back as we grew by nearly 26,000 Members.

This past year, we managed to take things even further, **gaining more than 11,000 Members.** By recording another year of growth, we've achieved back-to-back membership gains for the first time since the two-year period ending in 1980—43 years ago.

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veterans in our local Memorial Day parade. It makes you proud to be an Elk knowing that you stand behind our pledge, *"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them"* and we never will. Take the time to hold some type of ceremony or participate in a community remembrance for the veterans who fought so hard to enjoy the freedoms all of us enjoy today. There is no better way we as Elks can continue *"Promoting Elkdom With Enthusiasm"* than to remember our veterans.

Helen and I would like to say thank you for all that you do during the month of May, and for the very special events that are so important to us as Elks. God bless all of you. God bless our troops, past and present. And most of all, God bless America.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Leave your Lodge's thumbprint on your community

By **TERENCE P. FORD**

Committee Member

Congratulations, and thank you, to the slate of Lodge Officers who were recently installed to lead their 2023 – 2024 Lodge Year. Now that you have gotten the first month or so under your belts and established some plans for your Lodge, there is no better time to start planning on what new project you are going to bring to your community so they know *“Elks Care – Elks Share.”*

Here are some projects that you could implement in your Lodge.

The **Dictionary Project** promotes literacy to children in third grade as they transition from learning how to read to identifying and comprehending information. A dictionary could be a great gift for children: it is a book they could own for years. Obtain a sample kit and work with your local school(s) to determine what is best suited for them.

The **Youth Recognition Award** recognizes outstanding young men and women for achievements in school and community life—fine arts, hobbies, athletics, church, school, club and community service, industry, and farming.

Recognizing student success is significant, powerful

By **LANCE C. KNIGHT**

Committee Member

Congratulations to all recently installed Exalted Rulers and Lodge Officers! You should be proud that the Members of your Lodge selected you to serve in a leadership role for the 2023-2024 Lodge year. All of you possess attributes, which when blended together, will help you to work as a team for the coming year in making a difference in your Lodge and in your community.

As the school year is coming to an end, now is the right time to contact your local schools to review or start a youth recognition program such as the Student of the Month/Year and/or Teenager of the Month/Year. The Lodge Activities Committee would work with your local school officials to administer the youth recognition program so it's ready to kick-off with the new school year. The point of this program is to seek out students and teenagers whose accomplishments deserve public recognition and praise. If you have this program in place, honor those award winners in all categories



How about an **Antlers Program**? Do you have many young families in your Lodge? It is a chance for young people in our communities to get involved with the Elks in the many service-related projects your Lodge sponsors. It is also a great way to gain future Members of your Lodge.

Look to start a **Junior Golf Program**, a drive, chip, and putt contest. Like Hoop Shoot and Soccer Shoot, this program helps participants build self-esteem, connect with peers through competition, and maybe gain some new friends. Reach out to your local golf course's pro for assistance with introducing and promoting

with a special recognition activity at the Lodge.

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee has been relying on the elks.org website as the source of all the materials needed to implement a successful Youth Recognition Program. All the certificates, guidelines, nomination forms, posters, and news releases are available to download for all Local Lodges, Districts and State Youth Activities Chairs. The certificates are made “fillable” for you to type in the recipients' names to create a more professional-looking product.

Also, at our webpage under the Student Recognition program, is the “Recognize America's Outstanding Youth” pamphlet, which contains an important message from our Grand Exalted Ruler on the value and direction of our youth programs. It includes the contact information for all Grand Lodge Activities Committee Members and their areas of responsibility, plus those states they are assisting during the fraternal year.

The GL Activities Committee is proud

the sport of golf to local youth.

How about recognizing the first responders in your community? Consider the **Medal of Service** and the **Medal of Valor** programs. For a small fee, your Lodge Secretary can order both Medals of Service and Valor. The Service medals are to be awarded to local EMS, firefighting, and law enforcement representatives deemed worthy by your membership, for exemplary service in the performance of their work. The Medal of Valor is intended to be given to the families of those same first responders who have lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

These are just a few programs your Lodge can implement and keep going for years to come. By starting one or more of these programs, you could end your term with a sense of pride. Before you leave office, do not forget to submit an entry for the Community Project Contest. Be proud of your Lodge's accomplishments—others should know it, too.

For more information on these programs and other programs Lodges could consider implementing, please go to the Activities Committee page on the elks.org website.

to bring you the new multimedia videos covering each one of the programs offered within the Youth Recognition Program. They are: The Activities Committee, Community Projects Committee, Antlers Program, Student Recognition Program, Junior Golf Program, JROTC Award Program, Public Safety Medals of Valor/Service, The Dictionary Project, Soccer Shoot Program, and Youth Activities Program Seminar. Promoting these programs will make your community more aware of what the Elks stand for. Be sure to watch these videos to gain valuable information about these programs.

Your GL Activities Committee looks forward to assisting you and your Lodge to promote and work all of the GL Activities Committee Programs in your community. Be sure to visit the Activities Committee booth at the 2023 Grand Lodge Convention in Minneapolis. The *“Elks Care and the Elks Share”* the commitment to our Youth and we will continue in *“Promoting Elksdom with Enthusiasm.”*

Florida Lodge Welcomes Home dozens of veterans

By **RENE VILLALOBOS**
ENVSC Programs Associate

The Welcome Home Kit program grows in popularity every year, and this year we're providing Lodges with even more funding to help welcome veterans into the safe, stable homes they deserve.

Lodges can now apply for up to \$600 in reimbursement for kits that include a bed. Lodges will continue to receive up to \$300 in reimbursement for standard kits that do not include a bed.

We checked in with Linda Califf of Gainesville, FL Lodge No. 990 to hear about how she and her Lodge got started with the program a few months ago.

As Lodge Secretary, Califf is constantly reviewing elks.org for new programs, which is how she came across articles about other Lodges using the Welcome Home Kit program.

"I was so excited to find this and couldn't wait to get it started!" Califf said. She explained the need for funds to the grant committee and they were on board. "I was authorized to use \$1,400 from her state's matching funds to get the Welcome Home Kit Program up and running," she said.

With those funds and the help of enthusiastic Members who were ready to

donate items, including a Member who works in a furniture store, the Lodge had more than enough for their first kit.

Since then, Gainesville Lodge has delivered kits to 33 veterans.

"Our community has a very large population of homeless individuals, a lot of whom are veterans," Califf said. "Most of the homeless veterans who complete the re-entry program through the HUD-VASH/HONOR Center need everything to establish their homes. Many move in with simply the clothes they own."



Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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It's no CIP-rise

By **MICHELÉ STRACHOTA**
ENF Communications Associate

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, the Community Investments Program helped Elks address the unique needs of their communities with 4,266 Beacon, Gratitude, and Spotlight Grants—the most in the program's history.

Eighty-three percent of Lodges received at least one grant, on average receiving 2.8 grants per participating Lodge.

Louisville, KY Lodge No. 8 used its grants to assist flood relief efforts, build beds for children in the foster care system, and fight hunger due to the pandemic. Rock Hill, SC Lodge No. 1318 used its

grants to provide beds and mattresses to a men's shelter and support a local soup kitchen. The Lodge helped the kitchen serve food for eight weeks, assisting more than 170 daily visitors.

More than \$5.5 million in CIP grants was used to fight food insecurity. Beacon Grants alone accounted for 671 projects aimed at increasing food access.

Roughly 78% of Spotlight Grants were used to respond to the impacts of COVID-19, and more than half of Beacon Grants were used to support youth.

A record-breaking number of grants creates an impact that can't be quantified. CIP grants are now open for the 2023-24 year. Ask your Secretary or Grants Coordinator how you can help make a change in your community.

From Above

Since most veterans don't have a means of transportation, the Lodge delivers each package. "This gives us the opportunity to get to know them more personally and learn the stories about their service to our country," Califf said. Each trip is different, and some are more emotional, but all are grateful for what Elks do for the veteran community.

Califf said other Lodges should participate in the program. "It only takes a little to start it up, and it doesn't cost a penny as you are reimbursed that money by ENVSC. You can roll the funds over and over again to help even more veterans in need."

For more information on the Welcome Home Kit program, visit elks.org/vets.