



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



New leaders stress communication, education

March is an exciting month in the life of every Lodge. The installation of officers must be held after March 15 and no later than April 15. This is the time for new leadership to assume responsibility for the governance of the Lodge.

A challenge that may exist is the failure to properly train new officers for their duties. Many Lodges have their practices and traditions in some respects, but there are fundamental responsibilities provided in our statutes that all officers should be familiar with. Are you holding an officer training program within the Lodge or district that gives new officers the knowledge and tools to help them do their jobs? Knowing what to do must be learned, and new officers may not know where



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

ROBERT L. DUITSMAN

to look to get the best information.

And please, don't forget to get your committees appointed and provide committee members with the information they will need to do their jobs. I've often thought how helpful it would be for every committee chair to be asked to attend a Lodge meeting every month or at least every quarter to give a report on the activities of the committee. It will provide

meeting attendees with updates of committee activities, and it will instill in committee chairs an understanding that the activities of their committees have value and their reports are appreciated.

All eyes are also on Lodge finances. Budget preparation should be underway, with serious thought being given to rightsizing Lodge spending plans to keep them within anticipated receipts. Too often budgets are prepared just because they have to be without serious consideration of what will be needed to maintain long term Lodge viability.

Please take your budgeting responsibilities seriously to make sure your Lodge will remain a welcoming home for your Members for many years to come.

Deadline nears for Secretaries

Local Lodge Secretaries are reminded that they must have all membership records for 2019-2020 ready for year-end closeout finalized by 11:59 p.m. on March 31. Failure to have the records current can, and probably will, cause membership totals out of balance in the Chicago Lodge Membership System (CLMS2Web).

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

Also, the Financial Reporting System (FRS) must be mapped and ready to accept financial data by April 17, then the third Friday of every month thereafter. A Lodge's failure to comply with the new FRS program will result in fines being assessed.

The input of required data for the yearly charity report must be provided and submitted by, on, or before May 1 via CLMS.

GRAND LODGE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING

The guide to processing candidates

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

Grand Lodge hopes that 2019-20 will be again another plus year with an outright gain in membership. But we need you to get all your candidates processed and onto our Lodge rolls by March 31.

Processing those candidates calls for sure-handed Lodge Secretaries who know their way around the Chicago Lodge Membership System2Web. Here's a step-by-step guide to processing membership candidates:

- In CLMS2Web, click on "Process Membership"
- Select "Applications Ready for Initiation."
- Click "Initiate" next to the candidate's name.
- Click on "Calculate Candidate Dues" to determine the amount of prorated dues for the remainder of the current Lodge year.
- To exit, click on "Previous Page" twice.
- Click the "Initiate" button.

• Enter initiated date (or date to be initiated up to two weeks in advance) and click "Submit."

• Click on "One Year Dues Payment."

• Enter prorated dues payment and click "Submit." Congratulations, your candidate is now a Member with notice of "dues paid to date through current Lodge year."

• Use drop-down Wizard and select "Submit Dues Payment."

• Select "One-Year Dues Payment," and process dues for the next Lodge year as you would for any Member.

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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Charity reporting protects our valuable status

By **CARL R. LEDIG SR.**
Committee Member

The ability to operate as a nonprofit, tax-exempt, charitable organization is a blessing and a right worth protecting. It allows the Elks to increase disposable revenue for its charitable programs rather than pay taxes.

Who monitors and protects this nonprofit status for the Elks?

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee's primary mission is to guide the Grand Lodge, its State Associations, and its Local Lodges, in protecting and preserving the right to exist as a private, nonprofit, charitable organization.

Where do the Elks get the right to exist as a private, nonprofit, charitable organization, and what do we have to do to keep that right?

Years ago the Grand Lodge filed with the IRS to become a 501(c)(8) tax exempt organization and qualified. To maintain tax-exempt status, first the Elks must continue our charity programs. We have

to give time, give money, give services, and give what we can. Second and equally important, we must record every act of charity that we can identify, including details such as number of people; number of Elks; number of hours, mileage, and money spent; and value of items and/or services donated for each and every charity act in which we engage. We then report the details of these programs to the IRS, using the appropriate forms.

What can you do to help the process?

1. It is important to know what should be reported and where to report it.
2. Start by being sure that you are giving all new and existing Members a charity reporting form so they can track their charity work and contributions. (Find the forms here: Government Relations Manual — Code 511000 at <https://www.elks.org/grandlodge/manuals>, page 18, Appendix page 7.
3. Make sure Members know what to do with this information once it is on the form and the deadline for doing it.
4. Assign a Lodge Member the task to remind other Members to report.

5. Ensure the Lodge Secretary correctly handles the recording and reports timely to the Grand Lodge.

6. Be sure your Lodge has a system in place for accountability to be sure the correct forms are filed with the IRS.

All of this information can be found in the Government Relations Manual and Charity Records Workbook in Chapter 2, pages 2-5.

The lifeblood of the Elks is charity so it is critical that each Lodge ensures it has the proper forms available and procedures in place together with the people to handle charity reporting. Without it, we cannot maintain our tax-exempt status, and without that, we cannot continue to do the amazing work we do as Elks.

You can change a life with your charity, but you may find that the life changed is your own!

For official IRS rules and more details, see: <https://www.stayexempt.irs.gov/home/existing-organizations/maintaining-501c3-tax-exempt-status>.

GRAND LODGE RITUALISTIC COMMITTEE

National Eleven O'Clock Toast Contest announced

By **MICHAEL W. IDDINGS**
Committee Member

Ninety-one years ago at the Grand Lodge session held in Atlantic City, NJ, Wilmington, OH Lodge No. 797 won the very first Grand Lodge Team Ritual Contest. Since then there have been changes in the Ritual but no new contest.

This coming Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore, the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee has introduced The Eleven O'Clock Toast Contest. This is an individual contest open to all Exalted Rulers and Past Exalted Rulers. The contest will allow those individuals to show their ritual proficiency.

The Eleven O'Clock Toast Contest at Grand Lodge will feature the winners of the State Association's Toast Contests. The very best contestants in all of Elksdom will meet to compete for The Callicott Award, named in memory of PGER Ted Callicott, a true Ritual member and Past Chairman of the Ritualistic Committee. Your Lodge does not have to perform in the Team Ritual Contests for your ER or PER to compete



and become eligible to perform at the first ever Grand Lodge Toast Contest.

Toast Contests are held at District and State levels throughout Elksdom, so the Ritualistic Committee decided to bring these individuals together to find the very best. The contestants will first perform in either the Eastern or Western Division according to the location of their State Association. The top two individuals in each division will perform in the Final Four Toast Contest, to be held immediately following the final performance of the Final Four Team Ritual Contest on Monday afternoon.

What we now know as the Eleven O'Clock Toast did not start out as the Toast we now recite. The fixed and official version was created back in 1906-1910, but the

Toast had its beginnings before the Elks came into existence. Charles Richardson, the stage name of Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian and founder of the American branch of the Jolly Corks, brought a form of the Toast with him from England. Some say the Elks first known Toast was the Jolly Corks Toast.

No matter the Toast, the previous or the current one, it recalls and remembers those Members who came before us and have "passed into the light which is beyond the valley of the shadow of death".

We honor this old custom by creating a Grand Lodge Ritual Contest for the Toast.

VETERANS From Page 4

from even more Members.

Appreciation can be expressed by an article in your Lodge newsletter, website, or through social media; delivering a simple heartfelt, handwritten note; or holding a special event for your volunteers. Your Lodge can even nominate that very special volunteer for the State and National Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award, one of the most prestigious awards in all of Elksdom.

All Elks have a desire to help others, and another meaningful way to show your appreciation is by finding your own passion and volunteering to join the cause. Sometimes the first step is the hardest, but it is never too late to express your interest, reach out, and get started. Whatever your interests or talents, your involvement will be more than welcomed.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Marijuana, nicotine use rises as cool kids vape

By **FRANK SCARPINO**
Special Contributor

Findings from the National Institute on Drug Abuse's (NIDA) 2019 "Monitoring the Future Survey" demonstrated the appeal of vaping to teens, as seen in the increased prevalence of marijuana use and nicotine vaping.

The self-report survey is given annually to a nationally representative sample of eighth, 10th, and 12th graders who respond to questions about their drug use and attitudes. Last year, 42,531 students from 396 public and private schools in the U.S. participated in the survey, and while declines in use of prescription drugs, alcohol, and cigarette smoking were observed, vaping and marijuana use among teens increased significantly.

Vaping of marijuana, which has more than doubled in the past two years, was reported at 20.8% among 12th graders, with 10th graders not far behind at 19.4%

and eighth graders at 7.0%. Marijuana vaping among 12th graders nearly doubled in a single year to 14% from 7.5% – the second largest one-year jump ever tracked for any substance in the history of the survey. For the first time, the survey measured daily marijuana vaping, which was reported at 3.5% among 12th graders, 3.0% among 10th graders, and 0.8% among eighth graders.

Marijuana continues to be the most commonly used illicit drug by adolescents. After remaining mostly stable for many years, daily use of marijuana went up significantly since 2018 among eighth and 10th graders – now at 1.3% and 4.8% respectively. However, overall past year marijuana use rates remain steady among teens (35.7% among 12th graders; 28.8% among 10th graders; and 11.8% among eighth graders).

Rates of any illicit drug use other than marijuana remain relatively low among

12th graders; past year use was 3.6% for LSD, 3.3% for synthetic cannabinoids, 2.2% for both cocaine and MDMA (ecstasy), and 0.4% for heroin. Other drug use, including the misuse of prescription medicines and the use of alcohol as well as tobacco cigarettes, continues to decline.

"We are heartened to see the continuing decline in the use of many drugs, particularly non-medical use of prescription opioids," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow. "However, teens are clearly attracted to vaping products, which are often concentrated amounts of drugs disguised as electronic gadgets."

Hopefully, with the passage of the federal law which now makes it illegal for anyone under 21 in the United States to purchase vape products and e-cigarettes, as well as more traditional tobacco products, teen vaping rates will decline.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

\$10K grant puts food on the table

Saratoga-Wilton, NY Lodge No. 161 wants to end food insecurity among seniors in their community. With the help of a \$10,000 Impact Grant, the Lodge is achieving greater community awareness and expanding its dedicated food delivery program.

The Lodge's Seniors in Need Food Delivery Program started in September 2017 when Ben Buffa, the chair of the Lodge's Senior Outreach Committee, moved into a senior apartment complex and noticed some of his neighbors struggled to meet their needs.

"A lot of people in their 80s and 90s were having a hard time and were living close to the poverty line, maybe even below," Buffa said. "A lot of them didn't have transportation, and they didn't have family members around to support them."

Buffa reached out to a local food pantry, filled bags of groceries for eight residents, and delivered the groceries directly to them. But, he saw a greater need beyond his apartment complex and decided to get the Elks involved. Today, 20 volunteers pack and deliver groceries to more than 120 seniors.

Twice a month, Elks volunteers call each senior to remind them to place their food order. Volunteers pick up the order forms and pack reusable grocery bags with goods, then deliver them directly to

the program's community partners. They place follow-up calls to ensure seniors have their needs met with each delivery.

"This program has made a huge impact in our community," said Deborah McCabe Reedy, PER of the Saratoga-Wilton Lodge and a volunteer with the program. "Not only has it brought our Members closer together, but it has also brought our community closer together. It's an incredible feeling packing the food and delivering to those who really need it."

The Saratoga-Wilton Lodge was one of 17 new Impact Grant projects in 2019. The Lodge uses the \$10,000 grant to purchase "senior-friendly" food, fresh produce, and personal care items. The Impact Grant is just the start for the Lodge's long-term vision for the program.

"To accomplish our goals we need [to] recruit additional volunteers, partner with a fourth food pantry, partner with at [least] two more senior apartments, and reach out to other Lodges to help them understand the critical need to reduce food insecurity," Buffa said. "We also look forward to working with any Elks Lodge interested in creating a similar program in their community."

To find out more about Impact Grants and the Community Investments Program, visit enf.elks.org/ImpactGrants.

Civil engineer reps Elks well

Nearly a decade after he was named a 2010 Most Valuable Student scholarship recipient by the Elks National Foundation, Sean Pringle earned another award: 2019 Alum of the Year.

While earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering at Cal Poly, Pringle embraced the Elks and his fellow Elks scholars. He joined the Scholar Advisory Board and began building a bridge between Elks scholars and Lodges, leading to his next journey into Elkdom.

"After serving on the advisory board, going on service trips, and seeing all the projects the Elks were doing, it really inspired me," Pringle said. He joined Oceano/Five Cities, CA Lodge No. 2504 soon after.

The Elks helped make Pringle's dream of becoming a civil engineer come true: he's currently a Journey Engineer at the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. In turn, Pringle is a vocal supporter of the Elks and the Order. He serves as the Scholarship Chair for his Lodge and District, and he also gives back to the ENF as a member of the Fidelity Club.



Have you thanked your Lodge's volunteers today?

By **RONALD L. HICKS, PGER**
ENVSC Secretary/Treasurer

When it comes to serving America's veterans, the Elks have a long and cherished history of always being there to meet their ever-changing needs and to honor our pledge that, "So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

Our pledge has proven successful because of the thousands of Elks volunteers—just like you—who continue to find significant ways to give back to our veterans and active military members through the programs established and funded by the Elks National Veterans Service Commission and the activities

and events supported by all Elks Lodges. Each of our volunteers is finding purpose making a difference and realizing the satisfaction that comes from working to help meet the needs of more than 636,000 veterans in 343 VA medical centers, veteran's homes and hospitals, USOs, and other care facilities. Our volunteers also work to assist military families and to help er homelessness for the nearly 40,000 homeless veterans through our "Welcome Home Project."

With so many volunteers contributing their time, talents, and energy, as well as their hearts, to this worthy cause,

appreciation should be made an important part of the volunteer experience in every Lodge.

Please take the time to recognize and thank the volunteers who demonstrate the passion and commitment to provide outstanding service to our veterans and military members. These expressions of gratitude will help boost self-esteem and confidence in your volunteers and make them feel all the more valued by the Lodge. It is also a great way to build new relationships within your Lodge and encourage involvement



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Elks remember the titans on any given Sunday

By **MIKE CHAMERNIK**
Publications Coordinator

The talking heads on the dozens of NFL pregame shows can learn a thing or two from Daniel Markus.

Markus, of Staten Island, NY Lodge No. 841, won the Elks Football Pick'Em contest with a correct prediction percentage of 70.14%, the only Elk above 70%.

Pick'Em players predict the winner of each regular season NFL game without factoring in a point spread. Players don't

need to make picks each week but must make selections in more than half of the 17 NFL weeks to reach the ranked leaderboard. The contest has no official prize, aside from bragging rights.

Markus, who had 148 wins and 63 losses, said Pick'Em is a fun way to compete with Elks across the nation, but that he never kept track of how he was faring against his competition.

"I was shocked when I saw the final rankings and my name was first against 1,700 other Elks," he said. "It made me proud to see my name and my Lodge

finished first."

The three players who finished seventh—Ted Hommert (Alameda, CA No. 1015), James Martin (Hot Springs, AK No. 380), and Ben Valverde (La Junta, CO No. 701)—tied for the most wins, with 174. They participated every week.

Bremerton, WA No. 1181 topped the Lodge leaderboard at 65.43% (492 wins and 260 losses). Orange, CA No. 1475 was the most active Lodge, with around 50 Members participating each week, racking up 7,017 wins.

5 STAR WINNERS ★★★★★ Connecticut Washington Pennsylvania Louisiana New Jersey MD-DE-DC Florida		2019-2020 Grand Lodge State Association Website Contest		4 STAR WINNERS ★★★★★ Georgia Missouri Mississippi Arkansas Wisconsin	
<small>Submitted by Duncan Thompson Jr., Fraternal Committee</small>					