



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Elks remain committed to serving veterans in need

November brings to mind a couple of very special days. On November 11, Veterans Day, we honor our veterans, past and present. There are so many ways to say **thank you** to our nation's veterans. Hosting dinners in our Local Lodges, sending care packages, and participating in events at Veterans Administration hospitals are just a few ways.

The Elks are committed to their mission *"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."* The Elks National Veterans Service Commission takes that pledge one step further and promises to render aid to our nation's veterans and military members with a special focus on those in need. The ENVSC empowers local communities by giving them the resources to directly serve



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler**

**RANDY P.
SHOOK**

veterans, military members, and their families.

The ENVSC supports a vast network of Voluntary Service Representatives, providing local outreach support to our veterans in need all over the country. This network is only successful because of the hard work performed by individual Lodge Members.

In 1946, the Commission formalized a commitment that was evident since

the earliest days of Elkdom to serving veterans. Though much has changed since then, the Elks' dedication to serve veterans and military members in need has never wavered. In VA Clinics, veterans' homes, USOs, homeless shelters, and elsewhere, thousands of Elks volunteers generously give their time, energy, and resources to serve veterans and military members each year. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, who are reminding our communities, **"We Are THE Elks."**

November 23 is Thanksgiving, a day for us to thank God for all the blessings that have been bestowed on each of us, our family, our friends, our Order, and our great country. It is also a day we ask for the blessings of God to guide

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Elks Memorial perpetual care

Originally dedicated in 1926 to the memory of our fallen Elks of World War I, the Veterans Memorial Building is at the heart of Elkdom. Magnificently constructed in Chicago, the Memorial is

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

a breathtaking structure representing the values Elks cherish.

Through the years, the Memorial has been rededicated to honor the memory of American veterans who have died for our great nation. Our duty is to ensure this Memorial remains an extraordinary symbol of the bravery and patriotism of these veterans.

By making an individual or Lodge 501(c)(3) donation, you will assist in the perpetual care and continued restoration of this beautiful Memorial. Go to elks.org and click "Veterans Memorial" on the home screen. Take a virtual tour, read about the history, plan a visit, make an online donation, or mail a donation today.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Thank those who contribute to DAP

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**
National Director
Elks Drug Awareness Commission

As Elks, we certainly have a lot to be thankful for. As the Director of the largest all-volunteer drug education program in America, I am thankful for the hard work of all our State Association Chairs, their District Chairs, and all the Lodge Chairs. Without these fine Elks, the work of the Drug Awareness Program would be impossible.

One only has to take a close look at the figures in CLMS to see the many hours these folks have put in to educate our kids and make our communities safer. Please take the time this month to let these ladies and gentlemen know how very much you appreciate their efforts—and if you have the time, volunteer to work alongside them!

As a reminder, the deadline for the Enrique S. Camarena Award is rapidly approaching. Has your Lodge nominated

someone? Is there a law enforcement officer in your community who has gone "above and beyond" to make your community better? It's not too late to submit a name. If you're not sure of the criteria, check with your State Association's Drug Awareness Chair for the details.

Thanksgiving is a time for celebration and reflection. For some, it is a time of stress because of the terrible effect drugs are having on a loved one. Always remember your work to educate children is worth every minute you spend! Thank you.



GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Be sure to report all the volunteering done this month

By **ROBERT E. WAMBACH**
Committee Member

November is here and once again our Lodges will be honoring our veterans throughout the month. With 20 million veterans living within our communities, we know every Lodge will be holding functions and dinners to say thank you to our heroes who have fought to protect our way of life. For 155 years the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has provided support to the 340 VA Medical Centers across this great land.

The work being done is extremely important, so it is essential we continue to report it in our Charity Reports. The meetings that are held to discuss our activities, the meals that will be provided, and the clothing and other necessities that will be purchased must be diligently tracked for

these reports. The miles traveled to and from the Lodge and VA facilities must also be included in your reports. Remember to keep a list of all participants as well as the non-Elks volunteers. Every hour, dollar, and mile contributed is vital in order to keep our non-profit status!

During the month of November there are many other activities including Thanksgiving dinners where many Lodges will feed not only our veterans but also our seniors and those less fortunate than ourselves. These dinners take a great amount of our time and money to plan, and it becomes even more important that it is reported properly. Again, please be sure to include everyone involved: the cooks, servers, and the participants.

November also becomes a bit busier with the planning and execution of our Hoop Shoot Program, which has been

developing and reinforcing grit with our youth in our communities for over 50 years. This program should come with many hours and miles traveled which needs to be logged as you travel through your local, district, and state contests.

We must continue to share our charitable giving through social media, local newspapers, radio and TV stations, or by simply hanging a banner on the front of your Lodge with total contributions to date for all to see. The reporting of our good deeds remains vitally important to all Lodges in the Order to keep our status. It also gives us a great way to showcase that **"We Are THE Elks"** in our communities, with our candidates and government leaders.

"Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."
— Anonymous.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Awards honor Scouting standouts

By **DAVID C. FOSTER**
Committee Member

Although the Elks Lodges had to end their official relationship with the Boy Scouts as charter or sponsors of a scout unit, Lodges may continue to support scouts by providing use of the Lodge facilities after obtaining a "Facilities Use and Indemnity Agreement" from the local scout unit or council.

Here are some ways the Lodge can be supportive of Scouting:

- Assist with items and materials as needed.
- Formally recognize the Americanism training of Eagle Scouts by the presentation of a certificate and an American flag. The Scout Court of Honor should be strictly a scout function, not infringed upon by Elks. Grand Exalted Ruler Shook will send a letter and a pin to the Eagle Scout. Grand Lodge will print an attractive certificate. You will need to let the Activities Committee member know so they can get the proper information to Grand Lodge.
- Recognize Girl Scouts with Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards. The Gold Award, for high school Girl Scouts, is similar to the Eagle Scout Award for young men. The Silver Award is for cadets

in grades 6-8 who have completed the eight-step program. The Bronze Award is for grades 4-5 who complete a seven-step program. Certificates are available at elks.org/grandlodge/activities then click on Forms/Certificates.

• Recognize individuals working in Scouting with a nomination for the Marvin M. Lewis Scouting Award. This recognizes Elks in good standing who contribute significantly to the youth of their communities by volunteering in the programs of the Boy Scouts of America. It is named for PGER Marvin M. Lewis, one of Elkdom's strongest proponents of Scouting. Each Lodge may nominate one candidate for this award. A Grand Lodge selection committee will review the candidates and choose up to four winners. This application, which is due March 1, 2024, is available at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/marvinlewis.cfm.

Become familiar with the Elks and Scouting Managing Guidelines and the Grand Lodge Youth Protection Guidelines, both available at elks.org/leadership/manuals.cfm.

Supporting the youth of the communities we serve remains an important part of the mission of the BPOE. For any help, please contact me at dcwhitail72@hotmail.com.



Eagle Scout certificate



Girl Scout Gold Award



Marvin M. Lewis Scouting Award

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Essay Contest participants will consider Bill of Rights

By GWENDOLYN B. PARKER

Committee Member

The topic for this year's Americanism Essay Contest is *"What the Bill of Rights Means to Me."*

This is the second year to have the new divisions and monetary prizes. The contest has separate divisions for fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. For each division, first place wins \$1,000, second place earns \$500, and third place gets \$250.

There are some very important dates to remember. If you miss your deadline, your essay will be ineligible to win. Keep in mind that all initial essays should go to the **Local Lodge** first for judging. It is important to communicate this information to your schools and teachers.

Keep in mind that you should send your essay to the Elks Lodge nearest your home, and only to one Lodge! Each level of judging will send the top three in each division to be judged on the next level.

Deadlines

- Student/teacher sends essays to Local Lodge: No later than **December 15, 2023**.

- Local Lodge sends to District Chair: No later than **January 31, 2024**.

- District Chairman sends to State Chair: No later than **February 28, 2024**.

- State Chair sends to Contest Administrator: No later than **March 31, 2024**.



U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, DC. Photo: Tim Mossholder/Unsplash.

Rules

1. No more than 300 words. Essays must be typed or legibly printed in ink (by the entrant).

2. Must be submitted to the Lodge nearest their address.

3. The participant must be identified by name, grade, school attending, and the sponsoring Elks Lodge on the essay itself.

4. The cover page provided on our website must be attached to the essay. This cover sheet will follow the essays through every level of judging.

Judging and scoring

1. **Originality.** Avoid the use of clichés and worn-out words and phrases. *30 points.*

2. **Development of the theme.** Stay focused on ideas and thoughts. Don't ramble. *40 points.*

3. **Mechanics and neatness.** Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. *30 points.*

Publicize your contest via social media, newsletters, and e-mail blasts, as well as through local newspapers and radio. Prizes at the local level are also a good idea for increasing participation.

National winners of first, second, and third place in each division will be announced in our spring newsletter. Awards can be picked up at the Fraternal Committee booth at our next Grand Lodge Session in Austin, Texas on July 3, 2024.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Topics to discuss with your Lodge

Fast track Initiations

- Use metrics to help Lodges understand the length of time it is taking them to bring in Members
- elks.org/leadership/reports/clmsMembershipReports.cfm
- Grand Exalted Ruler Months: September and October

Membership Tools

- Why do people join?
- Tools useful for membership retention
- Membership Guide virtualmanuals.elks.org/membership-guide/

Marketing Tools

- Marketing Guide virtualmanuals.elks.org/marketing-guide/
- Sharables virtualmanuals.elks.org/shareables/
- Mobile app my-elks.com

Don't forget to join the Grand Lodge Marketing & Membership Facebook Group

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.



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us and show us ways to help those who are less fortunate so we may make their life better, proving *"Elks Care — Elks Share."* Happy Thanksgiving.

Remember: *"We Are THE Elks."*

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

Volunteers, donations help to fulfill Elks' pledge

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

Thanks to all of you, that pledge is as true today as it was in 1918, when the Elks built a 700 bed hospital in Boston and donated it to the government, helping to create a precursor for today's VA Medical Centers.

It's good to recognize our impressive past. This Veterans Remembrance Month, be sure to also celebrate the amazing things Elks Members do to serve today's veterans.

Elks have been actively involved in the VA Voluntary Service since shortly after the program began in 1946. Today, through the Elks Voluntary Service Program, we have 607 Elks Representatives and Deputy Representatives stationed in more than 360 VA Medical Centers, State Veterans Homes, veterans shelters, and clinics across the country. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars each month in support of these veterans, hosting activities, buying supplies, improving access to healthcare, and offering friendship and support.



Since we launched the Welcome Home program in 2015, we've helped more than 11,000 veterans exiting homelessness and moving into new homes by providing them with beds, furniture, dishes, and other needed home supplies. We've served thousands more veterans in shelters and in communities by offering wraparound support like food, job training, educational assistance, and other needed services.

In partnership with VA social workers,

Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
**Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS**
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614-1889

November 2023

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From Above

we've granted more than \$6.1 million in emergency financial assistance to 3,719 veterans to help them exit or prevent homelessness. Each of these veterans received an average of \$1,656 in assistance with rent, security deposits, or utilities, demonstrating that a relatively small amount of money at the right time can make a world of difference to a veteran in need.

For nearly 75 years, Elks have been partnering with hunters across the country to collect hides for veterans through the Veterans Leather Program. The finished leather is then used for wheelchair gloves, craft kits, and recreation therapy programs. Last year, Elks collected 16,229 hides. We distributed 1,378 pairs of wheelchair gloves to veterans, often at Elks-sponsored adaptive sports events. We also donated more than 64,587 square

feet of leather to our partner Help Heal Veterans, which turns this leather into craft kits to help recovering veterans.

Altogether, the value of Elks service to veterans last year was more than \$36 million, which is an incredible number. Our past is impressive, but so is our present-day service. This Veterans Remembrance Month, let the Elks' history of service inspire you to continue the tradition into the future.

VETERANS DAY Saturday, November 11 *Show your appreciation* **THANKSGIVING** Thursday, November 23