



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Continue Promoting Elkdom With Enthusiasm

It is hard to believe that July is here already. A year ago, Helen and I embarked on an incredible journey in representing all of you as your Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady. I can honestly say that this was something that we never envisioned, but we're so very glad to have been given this tremendous opportunity.

The commitment and care that we witnessed in each Lodge in each state throughout our travels was truly remarkable. Each of you has been a source of inspiration to your Lodge and your community through your involvement with the programs of our great Order. We saw you warmly and heartily *"Promoting Elkdom with Enthusiasm."* Every state promoted our program. We developed a renewed sense of pride in each and every state.



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

We saw Members working together; smiles on the children; the fruits and rewards of hard work of our youth as they received a scholarship; a proud thank you from our veterans; and an utmost sense of patriotism and loyalty to our nation's flag. We cannot express our gratitude for your fine work and continued growth to your Lodge and to our Order.

It was enlightening to meet new Members and friends as well as renew

time with old friends. Please continue to ask that relative or friend to join you in becoming a Member of this great Order. It was fantastic to spend time at state conventions, youth camps, Major Project events, veterans' ceremonies, flag celebrations, and much, much more. The Elks we met reminded us that we indeed have a huge family out there.

Helen and I promise to continue to serve you as we move forward into this next Elks year and for many more. We will continue in *"Promoting Elkdom with Enthusiasm"* as we know that you will too. We absolutely look forward to serving this organization and the people who we love and enjoy: You, the Elks!

Please see GER, Page 2

Net new Members with online invites

Has your Lodge promoted the online Membership application for signing up new Members?

Using the Elks website, a current paid-up Member of the Order can forward a membership invitation to family and friends. Invitees can complete and submit the application online.

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

Lodge Secretaries will be notified of these applications via the "Alerts" screen of CLMS2, then can process the electronic version the same as a paper application. All data provided by the applicant will be imported into the Lodge's CLMS2 database with the simple click of a button.

What better way to gain a Member than by using technology to its fullest?

ELKS Do!

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Staying safe during Youth Activities

By WILLIAM M. WISEMAN
Committee Member

Summer is here. The kids are out of school and looking for something to do. Now is the time to make the community aware of all the Activities Committee programs available.

Our organization sponsors fun youth activities that help all participants to become better individuals. These include such programs as Junior Golf, Youth Recognition, Youth Week Proclamation, Elks JROTC Awards Program, Soccer Shoot, and the Antlers Program. Always keep in mind the Community Projects Contest with your youth programs.

With this in mind, it is extremely important that each Member involved in our youth programs have in their possession a copy of the Grand Lodge *Youth Protection Guidelines*. The Activities Committee has spent considerable time in the development of these guidelines to benefit the Lodges and their volunteers.

All volunteers working with youth should read and understand the youth protection recommendations of the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks in this booklet. Lodges are encouraged to have Members sign the "Acknowledgement of Youth Protection Guide" form, a sample of which is at the back of the booklet.

It is strongly recommended that the Exalted Rulers appoint a committee of his or her choosing for the implementation and oversight of youth protection policies. The Youth Protection Committee would be responsible, at minimum, for:

- Developing youth protection policies and procedures.
- Developing a screening program for volunteers working with youth.
- Developing and conducting an ongoing training program on youth protection.
- Developing procedures to follow in a crisis or emergency.

Please see ACTIVITIES, Page 2

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The 5 main functions of the Gov. Relations Committee

By DAVID NITZE SR.
Committee Member

Hope everyone is enjoying the warm weather and getting ready for an exciting National Convention in Minneapolis.

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee has made some changes to their Government Relations Manual. I hope you read through them and do what you can to educate your Members on what is considered reportable and support your Lodge in reaching these goals.

There are five main functions of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee.

1. Charitable Reporting. Each year our Lodges and State Associations account for more than \$350 Million of documented charitable work nationwide. Only half of the work done by our Members gets reported. We do the work—let's get the credit!

2. Monitor legislation and laws. Laws against discrimination and harassment; U.S. postal regulations as they affect postage rates; sales tax and exemptions; alcohol beverage control; bingo, raffles, and games of chance; and property tax exemption laws, to name a few.

3. Advocate for or against legislation when necessary. All contact with public officials should be factual, calm, and considerate.

4. Promote programs for positive interaction between Lodges and their elected officials. It is more effective if your elected officials know about the Elks, what we stand for, and the charitable work we do, before we request their support for legislation.

5. Educate Members on public accommodation and other laws. Educate our State Associations and

Lodges about existing laws that affect daily operations and how to comply with these laws and regulations.

The Local Government Relations Chairperson needs to make sure that event organizers are provided with a copy of the reporting form to be filled out after an event and turned in so the information can be recorded.

This is extra work for the Secretary and it is suggested that the Secretary grant rights in CLMS to the Government Relations Chairperson to enter the Lodge's charitable reporting for them.

Grand Lodge Government Committees job is to preserve the right to exist as a private, nonprofit, charitable organization. Every Member's assistance is needed to meet these goals so please do what you can at your Local Lodge to assist the Secretary and Committee Chair to sustain these goals.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Change starts now for top scholars

By MICHELÉ STRACHOTA
ENF Communications Associate

Interviewing for one of the top six Most Valuable Student scholarships is a breeze compared to the challenge the judges face when selecting the winners.

Sponsored by Frederick, MD Lodge No. 684, Diya Jha was one of two students awarded a \$50,000 scholarship. She plans to attend Yale University and major in computer science.

At her high school, Jha developed Let's TALC (Teach, Access, Learn, Choice), a program that educates students on the dangers of opioids while helping them find alternative passions. The program encourages students to share their experiences and participate in skill development courses and other community-building activities.

"I am a person who believes in putting in the work to make things better," Jha said.

Agam Igwe, sponsored by Towson, MD Lodge No. 469, also won the \$50,000 scholarship. On September 11, 2001, Igwe's parents were headed to the Twin Towers for an appointment when his mother became sick, causing them to stay home. That life-saving sequence became a focal point of Igwe's youth.

Learning about the heroic actions of

first responders that day inspired Igwe to join the Junior Firefighters program. By third grade, he was lifting 150-pound dummies onto his shoulder during rescue drills.

Igwe plans to attend Stanford University and study engineering. His career dreams include working with surgical robotics, so entire surgeries can be performed remotely. This summer, Igwe will intern at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory & Children's Hospital, where he will turn data into model representations.

For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$2.9 million to fund the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, which includes 502 four-year scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$50,000. For more information about the program, including eligibility and deadlines, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.

GER From Page 1

We look forward to this convention in Minneapolis. It will be a fun and exciting time. Together we can, we do, and we will continue to make a difference in our Lodges and in our communities.

God bless all of you, God bless our troops, past and present, and most of all, **God bless America.**

ACTIVITIES From Page 1

- Maintaining documentation of each volunteer's acknowledgement of the Youth Protection Guidelines, incident reports, consent forms, and background checks
- Establishing an observation schedule of youth activities to identify potential youth safety issues, and if found, to resolve them immediately.
- Developing ways for volunteers and participants to provide feedback on whether policies and procedures are being followed.
- Reviewing any proposed youth activity programs and determining the training or experience that would be required to conduct such a program safely.

The details for performing these responsibilities along with the necessary forms can be found in the Youth Protection Guidelines. By following these guidelines we can maintain safe youth programs and provide maximum protection for our youth. The Youth Protection Guidelines can be found on the Grand Lodge website through the following link: elks.org/leadership/manuals.cfm.

Make this summer fun, safe, and successful by promoting the Elks through our many youth programs.

Elks Care — Elks Share

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Finalists named for All-American Lodge

By **SANDRA C. BRANTNER**
Committee Member

The 2022-2023 fraternal year has ended but the great charitable works of our Lodges never end.

This past year, 229 Lodges from 38 State Associations were forwarded to me to be judged in the Contest 'A' - All American Lodge Contest.

Here are the top 10 in each division in alphabetical order.

Division I (1-150 Members)

- Cushing-Drumright, OK No. 2712
- Elmwood Park-Paterson, NJ No. 60
- Fayetteville, NC No. 1081
- Grangeville, ID No. 1825
- Green Bay, WI No. 259
- Mount Airy, NC No. 2061
- Norfolk, NE No. 653
- Norfolk, VA No. 38
- Pendleton, SC No. 2861
- San Angelo, TX No. 1880

Division II (151-225 Members)

- Cedar Grove, NJ No. 2237
- Greater Spokane, WA No. 228
- Katy, TX No. 2628
- Loudoun, VA No. 2406
- Milwaukee, WI No. 46
- Newport News, VA No. 315
- Ridgecrest, CA No. 1913
- Santa Monica, CA No. 906
- Tri-Cities, WA No. 2755
- Wheeling, WV No. 28

Division III (226-300 Members)

- Bridgeport, PA No. 714
- Forks, WA No. 2524
- Grand Island, NE No. 604
- Jackson, TN No. 192
- Kansas City (Northland), MO No. 2376
- Kearny, NJ No. 1050
- Mena, AR No. 781
- Page, AZ No. 2498
- South Bend, IN No. 235
- Tucson, AZ No. 385

Division IV (301-450 Members)

- Calvert, MD No. 2620
- East Stroudsburg, PA No. 319
- Eveleth, MN No. 1161
- Gilroy, CA No. 1567
- Kearney, NE No. 984
- Middletown, NJ No. 2179
- Provo, UT No. 849
- Putnam, CT No. 574
- Salem, IL No. 1678
- Sierra Vista, AZ No. 2065

Division V (451-700 Members)

- Chandler, AZ No. 2429
- Chattanooga, TN No. 91
- Dover, DE No. 1903
- Ferndale, MI No. 1588
- Hickory, NC No. 1654
- Lake Hopatcong, NJ No. 782
- New Braunfels, TX No. 2279
- Newport, KY No. 273
- Rensselaer, NY No. 2073
- Saratoga-Wilton, NY No. 161

Division VI (701 Members and up)

- Bremerton, WA No. 1181
- Casa Grande Valley, AZ No. 1957
- Fayetteville-Springdale, AR No. 1987
- Manahawkin, NJ No. 2340
- Manasquan, NJ No. 2354
- Manchester, CT No. 1893
- Phoenix, AZ No. 335
- St. George 'Dixie', UT No. 1743
- St. Louis, MO No. 9
- Sun City, AZ No. 2559

The announcement of the first, second, and third place winning Lodges in each Division will occur during the Tuesday morning Business Session at the Grand Lodge Convention in Minneapolis.

Thank you to the Lodges for your entries and I hope we see many more next year!

Hope to see you in Minneapolis. Stop by the Fraternal Committee booth!

VETERANS From Page 4

projects focused on helping veterans recover. In 2022-23, Elks distributed 5,982 square feet of leather directly to facilities for use in therapeutic crafting.

This program requires the time and energy of so many. Every year, there's a battle to see which states can contribute the most hides. This year, Missouri came out on top, contributing 6,637 hides. Iowa came in second place with 4,514

hides, and Arkansas came in third place with 2,870 hides. Congratulations to these states!

Thank you to all the Veterans Leather Program volunteers who make this program a success, especially Program Chair Dennis McAleese, and Vice-Chair Chuck Mudge.

Are you interested in participating in the Veterans Leather Program? Visit elks.org/vets to learn more!

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Special exhibit mourns deaths from fentanyl

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**
National Director

Elks Drug Awareness Commission

The DEA has created a special exhibit, *The Faces of Fentanyl*, to commemorate the lives lost from fentanyl poisoning. If you would like to submit a photo of a loved one lost to fentanyl, please send their name, age, and photograph to fentanylawareness@dea.gov, or post a photo and their name to social media using the hashtag #JustKNOW.

By submitting photographs and sharing your story, you'll have to authorize the DEA the right to use these materials without limitations.

The DEA Faces of Fentanyl Wall exhibit is located at DEA Headquarters, at 700 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202. Visitors can view the wall Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

According to the CDC, 107,375 people in the United States died of drug overdoses and drug poisonings in the 12-month period ending in January 2022. A staggering 67 percent of those deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Some of these deaths were attributed to fentanyl mixed with other illicit drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin, with many users unaware they were actually taking fentanyl. Only two milligrams of fentanyl is considered a potentially lethal dose; it's particularly dangerous for someone who does not have a tolerance to opioids.

The Elks Drug Awareness Commission, through the Drug Awareness Program, are consistently teaching the youth of America regarding the dangers of fentanyl and other illicit drugs. Please consider joining us in this effort by volunteering to help your Lodge and State Drug Awareness Chairs.

For more information regarding the work of the Commission, please visit our many websites along with our YouTube page. If you like what you see, please consider hitting the subscribe button.



Donated hides become gloves, craft kits for veterans

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

The Elks Veterans Leather Program is a unique one, providing services and support that are hard to find elsewhere. It brings Elks and community volunteers together to collect hides for veterans. The finished leather is then used for wheelchair gloves, craft kits, and recreation therapy programs.

In 2022-23, Elks and volunteers in 11 states donated 16,229 hides to the Veterans Leather Program. Volunteers helped to collect these hides and transport them to our partners, who turned them into leather.

That leather is turned into wheelchair gloves, and Elks across the country distributed 1,378 pairs of these gloves to veterans last year. In fact, every year Veterans Leather Program volunteers attend national adaptive sports events to meet with veterans personally and distribute these gloves. Each of these pairs of gloves is emblazoned with the Elks logo, so veterans can appreciate the hard work Elks put into running the program.

Finished leather is also turned into craft kits, with a little help from our longtime partner Help Heal Veterans

(HHV). This past year, Elks donated more than 64,587 square feet of leather to HHV to make craft kits for veterans.

In return, HHV helped Elks volunteers in State Veterans Homes and elsewhere hand out 8,800 craft kits directly to veterans. We know these kits are appreciated because we receive postcards in our office every week thanking the Elks for supporting this program.

Finished leather is also donated directly to VA Medical Centers, which recreation therapists use to plan creative

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 3



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

July 2023

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
CHICAGO, IL
Permit No. 5244

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Motto for upcoming Elks year: '3 in a Row, Let's Grow!'

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

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

In 2022–2023, the BPO Elks grew again by about 19,000 Members. The past two years, we managed to grow our membership by about 45,000. In working to sustain the momentum from our two consecutive years of growth, our first order of business is to keep the 775,374 Elks nationwide in the herd.

Growth also involves us attracting new Members—about 198,000 in the last two years alone, or about 276 new Members every day. Our greatest asset in attracting new Members is our existing Members and the warm welcome people receive at an Elks Lodge, as well as the great opportunities for service that the Order provides.

We in the Membership and Marketing Committee have worked to help you leverage those assets with a series of media campaigns and participatory activities that bring Elksdom's positive

aspects to the fore. By recording another year of growth in 2023-2024, we can achieve three consecutive membership gains in a row for the first time in more than 40 years. **3 in a Row, Let's Grow!**

