



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



September: Start of fall, halfway point of Lodge year

Labor Day, the “unofficial end of summer,” is observed on the first Monday in September. In addition to marking the beginning of fall activities and sports, the holiday pays tribute to the contributions and achievements of American workers. In honor of this national holiday, please accept my thanks for all you do for Elksdom. Your dedication truly exemplifies that *“Elks Care – Elks Share.”*

Our Lodge activities will once again move at a very fast pace. It is time to take a look at what the fall season means to us as Elks. September is the beginning of the District Deputy Lodge visits. These visits will provide a look into your overall Lodge operations. Be sure to plan for the visit with your Lodge board of directors by completing the audit items, building a self-inspection



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler
RANDY P. SHOOK

checklist and all the other information needed by the DD. This will give you ample time to prepare your Lodge for a successful visit.

The end of this month will bring an end to the first half of this Lodge year. This is an excellent time to see how you stand with your goals for the year. Are you on track to meet those goals or are adjustments needed? By evaluating where you are now, you will be better prepared

to make those decisions.

The reopening of schools in your communities presents us excellent opportunities to encourage our youth. Supporting local sports programs and any youth-related activities are great ways to show your Lodge support and community spirit! Look into and apply for the many Elks National Foundation program grants. These grants are available to financially assist in your community partnerships with our youth. Remember, *“We Are THE Elks”* and we take pride in helping the youth of today grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

It is also a time to seek out your school guidance counselors and provide them with the applications to

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Permanent records must stay permanent

Each year, many of our Local Lodges have new and inexperienced Lodge Secretaries. As such, there is a learning curve every new and continuing Secretary must navigate in order to manage this important responsibility, as well as the continuing education of our Constitution, Statutes, plus our CLMS2Web and PC membership programs.

A word to the wise: NEVER destroy or discard paper membership applications and records unless you have made a digital copy and have those records stored electronically. Those documents are the only records available. It is the responsibility of the Local Lodge to maintain the records indefinitely.

Sure, there is CLMS2, but the majority of the pre-2008 membership records were never entered into the program. Those records need to be maintained in case a former Member requests a Reinstatement, a Certificate of Release, or other membership information.

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Good work spurs membership growth

By W. J. BRYAN
Committee Chairman

Here we are back from Grand Lodge. What a great conference that was. All the committees and leaders shared so many ideas and so much information. Congratulations to our Grand Exalted Ruler, Randy P. Shook.

I had the pleasure of speaking to the new District Deputy Grand Exalted Rulers while at Grand Lodge. Along with financial and statute compliance, I encouraged them to take a minute and review charitable reporting during their visits.

It’s important to keep in mind that Members want wholesome Lodges they can be proud of. Proper charitable reporting accomplishes this goal by giving Members credit for all they do and getting that message out to the community.

How about a banner outside your Lodge with your charitable dollars for the

year, or even since the Lodge has existed? This can drive community awareness and membership! Reports are available on elks.org. The Government Relations Committee can assist you with this.

Last year we were just short of half a billion – yes billion, with a “B” – dollars, but I know that together we can cross that major milestone this coming year.



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GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Recognize future leaders with JROTC Awards Program

By **LANCE C. KNIGHT**
Committee Member

Introduced in 2018, the purpose of the JROTC Awards Program is to allow Local Lodges to recognize our future leaders by focusing the public's attention on outstanding cadets from their communities.

Does your Lodge participate in this program? If not, get involved by following the suggested procedure for setting up a JROTC Awards Program for your Lodge:

1. Locate your JROTC schools by state at the national level through the following websites:

US Army

<https://www.usarmyjrotc.com/u-s-army-jrotc-locations/>

US Navy

<https://www.netc.navy.mil/NSTC/NJROTC/>

US Marine Corps

<https://www.mcjrotc.marines.mil/Schools/JROTC-Schools-by-State/>

US Air Force

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Holm-Center/AFJROTC/>

US Coast Guard

<https://www.uscg.mil/Community/JROTC/JROTC-Units/>

2. Contact the schools in your area that have a JROTC program. Ask to speak to the senior instructor to see if they would be interested in participating in the Elks program. If so, request that the instructor select a cadet whom they feel has proven him or herself to be a true leader in academic achievement as well as community service projects, and one who maintains the highest standards of performance in all fields of endeavor. Be sure to coordinate your efforts with other Lodges in your district. You may want to consider making it a district program with all Lodges in your district participating.

3. Inform the instructor that your Lodge will provide them with a certificate and a medal to present to the cadet they select. Your Lodge may want to have

Lodge Officers or Members attend the ceremony to make the presentation to the cadet, if permissible.

4. If your Lodge holds a dinner to recognize outstanding youth in your community, you should consider inviting the cadet and their family.

5. A printable and fillable JROTC certificate is available on the Grand Lodge website under the Activities Committee at: elks.org/grandlodge/activities/files/JROTC Awards Program.pdf. The JROTC Medal can be ordered from the Grand Lodge Supplies/Shipping Department by using CLMS. The item number is 575300 and the cost is \$10.00 plus shipping and handling. The JROTC medal makes a terrific companion gift to the JROTC certificate. Any cadet will be proud to receive both awards.

The Activities Committee encourages your Lodge to be an active community partner and promote our youth programs. Let's increase our efforts to recognize America's outstanding youth in our communities by truly demonstrating that *"Elks Care - Elks Share."*

Digital pins program allows Members to collect, connect

By **MIKE CHAMERNIK**
Publications Coordinator

The long-standing Elks tradition of pin collecting now has an online companion.

In April, the Elks' website added Digital Lodge Pins that can be obtained and swapped at elks.org/games/.

Elks Members can scroll through the list of Lodges and request a digital pin from other Members. To give pins, users can either accept the pin requests they receive, or search a Member by name to give a pin. Every user has a page that displays their digital pin collection.

Users can accumulate or distribute as many pins as they want, without limit. The site has leaderboards that show who has given and received the most digital pins.

Much like trading lapel pins at convention or through the mail, the digital pin program is designed to spark connections.

"We're hoping to increase Member engagement with the website, and also to help Members forge relationships with Elks from other Lodges," said Frederick Mensch, Director of Internet Operations for the Elks and the creator of the pin program. "The feature has caught on way



faster than we expected. In less than two months, Members have already exchanged more than 280,000 digital pins!"

The Digital Lodge Pin program is the latest addition to the Fun 'n' Games section of elks.org. It joins Hello, Bill! Messenger, where users can greet old and new friends, and Magical Mystery Lodge, where players guess letters to reveal the name of a Lodge.

Pauline Talbott of Sebastian, FL Lodge No. 2714 has collected nearly 400 digital pins. She started participating after seeing a post on the Elks message board about it.

"Shortly after starting, I was reading the message boards again and there were

more people talking about the digital pins so I began requesting and sending more and more pins," Talbott said. "I started messaging on 'Hello Bill,' introducing myself and requesting they send their digital pin."

The purpose of the pin program has worked as intended for Halbott. She and the leading pin collector, Ronald Holm from Kerrville, TX No. 2081, have started a correspondence and even met in person at the Elks convention in Minneapolis.

"I have been collecting lapel pins but the digital [ones] are much easier to collect countrywide," Talbott said. "It really is a lot of fun."

In addition to swaps, other pins can also be obtained through certain achievements, including passing training or chair quizzes and reaching benchmarks in other Elks online games.

Each Lodge was given a default pin design, but Exalted Rulers can change the shape, emblem, and color of the pins using the Digital Lodge Pin Update Wizard. Or, they can contact the webmaster to create a pin to their specifications.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Give new life through organ donation

By MARK E. EATON
Committee Member

Let's talk about organ donation. It sounds scary to most of us.

Organ donation is a hard choice to make when a loved one has passed. Oftentimes, the decision should have been made by the donor beforehand, but in some cases, sudden death happens and no plan is in place. Organ donation may be the most difficult decision relatives will ever have to make.

No one has to donate, but it's a wonderful gift—the gift of life—that you can give someone else and their family.

Most of us don't tend to realize how these donations can help others.

Donation of organs, tissue, and eyes can be used for those who are afflicted by muscular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma.

Tissues are also used for stem cells, grafts, and bladder slings.

The lungs and liver are the most sought after and needed. There are more than 113,000 people in the United States waiting for kidneys, livers, and heart transplants.

An average of 20 people a day die because there wasn't a donation that could get to them fast enough.

Another factor is that not having enough donations creates illegal harvesting, buying and selling of organs. When people are dying and desperate, they will do just about anything. These operations with illegal organs are very rarely done in hospitals or clinics, cutting their success rate to less than half.

Many people don't consider the ramifications of organ donation until a family member, loved one, or friend has to find a solution.

I hope this makes you think about how important donating actually is, and sign that organ donor card today.

Elks need quality websites, bulletins

By THOMAS W. FRAKER
Committee Member

Communication is vital to the success of any organization, let alone one that is built mostly of volunteers. Grand Lodge wants to recognize the efforts of the Local Lodges and State Associations that have outstanding websites.

Starting with the **State Association Website Contest**, sites will be judged on five areas: Content, Layout, Design, Graphics, and Effectiveness in telling the Elks story. Each area has a possible total of 20 points. Send your entries to Dennis J. Gerleman, Contest Administrator. **States must register for the contest by October 1, 2023.**

The same judging criteria applies to **Local Lodge Website Contest**. Those who wish to participate must have competed in their respective state contest and having won, should be **submitted by their State Association before October 1, 2023**, to Ronald A. Brooks, GL Fraternal Committeeman.

Local Lodges in states not holding a State Website contest can submit an application to their Area Representative on the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee. The Area Rep will then select a website winner from that state and submit it to the Website Contest administrator.

Another important piece of



Mississippi won a 5-Star award in the 2022 State Association Website Contest.

communication is the **Contest I: State Bulletin Contest**. Just as Lodge bulletins communicate to Members, state publications can communicate what other Lodges are doing and provide ideas for activities.

Submission of two (2) issues of your state bulletin published between January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 must be submitted to Contest I Administrator Thomas Fraker by January 15, 2024.

The judging format is similar to the website contests, with the addition of a Typography category under layout with a table of contents, captions, or headlines. Pictorial is added with good use of photographs or graphics. The General or Effectiveness includes the overall usefulness to the Members and effectiveness in telling the Elks' story and **"Elks Care - Elks Share"** to non-Members.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

September, October initiations honor GER

By RICK GATHEN
Membership Marketing Manager

Candidates initiated during the months of September and October in honor of Grand Exalted Ruler Randy P. Shook are recorded separately in the November 1 Mid-Year Membership Report on line 21. We will honor the GER and candidates with gold frames and a new Lodge video program.

Membership retention begins with a welcoming atmosphere in the Lodge. Be sure to reach out to new Members and let them know their presence is appreciated. It's also important to give new Members the chance to be actively involved. Let them know about volunteer opportunities and encourage them to become active in strengthening the Lodge and assisting the community. People who volunteer to help others will usually also find themselves more deeply attached to the Elks.

ELKS Do!

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apply for grants that can aid students with much needed financial support. Please follow the Elks website for deadlines to apply for these grants. Don't wait; act quickly.

The Elks support Patriot Day on September 11 each year in memory and honor of all those who lost their lives during those horrific attacks, including the first responders and community members who sought to help the crash victims. The Elks have developed a Patriotism Week Proclamation that I encourage all Lodges across our great country to embrace. The proclamation is located in the Fraternal Committee section of elks.org/grandlodge/fraternal/files/patriotismWeekProclamation.pdf.

Please take the time to download this very important proclamation. Have your local government officials place it on their agenda to recognize our freedom and to honor our nation.

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

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

'Passion creates passion' for top ENVSC Volunteer

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

Drumroll please...

Announcing Thomas Kramin of Willmar, MN Lodge No. 952 as the 2023 Elks Veterans Service Volunteer of the Year!

At the ENVSC, we are blessed to have a remarkable group of volunteers. Anyone who follows our Welcome Home Kit program knows that Minnesota Elks are always working to help veterans in need.

Having served as the Minnesota State Veterans Chair for more than 15 years, Kramin helps keep those volunteers motivated and inspired. His motto?

"Passion creates passion."

His passion for serving veterans is evident to all who work with him, and it's part of what makes him such a great leader. As chair, he oversees 21 voluntary Service Representatives and Deputy Representatives at 15 facilities throughout the state. He volunteers with the State Major Project. He delivers Welcome Home Kits to veterans exiting homelessness. And he keeps recruiting more volunteers to the cause.

Volunteer recruitment can be a challenge for all of us, but Kramin has

a trick up his sleeve.

"When it comes to getting the community involved," Kramin said, "my experience is: If you don't ask, the answer will always be NO. Ask for assistance."

Though he spends his time supporting programs for veterans from all walks of life, one of his main focuses is recreation therapy. Nearly every month, he plans and hosts a large-scale recreation therapy event, some of which serve hundreds of veterans



Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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From Above

at a time. From ice fishing for veterans and their families to turkey hunts in partnership with the DAV to Gold Star Family weekends and fishing trips for female veterans, Kramin is always planning something to improve the lives of those who served.

"The dedication, time, money and talent he puts in all year to serve veterans can hardly be measured," said John Miller, Executive Director of the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp. "It is my honor to nominate him for this national award."

Kramin himself isn't interested in

measuring it. His goal is something larger: to have an impact.

"Helping veterans is more addictive than any drug available on the market," he said. "The sense of life accomplishment and self-worth you feel in your soul afterwards is so overpowering that you want to do more. You search for things to expand on, and you realize that volunteering pays more than any paycheck you will ever receive in your work career."



Thomas Kramin

Even though he's not in it for the accolades, we're proud to recognize him for his remarkable service to our nation's veterans. Congratulations, Thomas Kramin!

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.



Elks Care — Elks Share