



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Elks continue to honor longtime Flag Day connection

June 14 is Flag Day—a mandatory service for the Elks. In 1907, the Elks became the first fraternal body to adopt by Resolution that June 14 be designated as Flag Day in our Order. President Woodrow Wilson established a national Flag Day in 1916 by presidential proclamation. In 1949, President Harry Truman, himself an Elk, signed an act of Congress designating June 14 each year as Flag Day.

The American flag symbolizes the “land of the free and home of the brave” for all Americans. As we pay tribute by proudly displaying our American flag, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals of patriotism and freedom.

On Sunday, June 16, we observe Father’s Day. We recognize fathers and grandfathers for their contributions to fatherhood. The first Father’s Day was



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler
RANDY P.
SHOOK**

celebrated June 19, 1910, in the state of Washington. However, it was not until 1972 that President Richard Nixon made the third Sunday in June a nationwide holiday to honor fathers in the United States. We as Elks do not have a special ceremony to celebrate our dads; however, I would suggest you hold some type of event at the Lodge to make them aware their wisdom and love was and is much appreciated. Happy Father’s Day.

With a short time to go, Wanda and I are beginning to end the adventure of a lifetime. It has been a great honor for us to serve as your First Lady and Grand Exalted Ruler. We have met so many great Elks and their families. We renewed old connections and made new ones. It has been great to see the many charitable works accomplished across the country. We are extremely proud. Thank you.

As we traveled from state to state you have made us very proud by letting the communities know who we are: **“We Are THE Elks.”** We look forward to seeing you in Austin, TX.

Finally, remember the deadline for GER Award forms, for bringing in three new or reinstated Members, is June 12.

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

Lodge bulletins: USPS vs. e-mail, private vs. public

Grand Lodge often receives inquiries about **Section 16.150, Opinions 1-4**, of the Laws of the Order, pertaining to Lodge bulletins/newsletters being e-mailed or posted on publicly accessed Elks’ websites.

Opinion 02 states: “To preserve the privacy of the Members and applicants for membership in the Order, Lodges may not publish their bulletins or newsletters

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

on a website open to the public, including by use of the Grand Lodge or State Association websites.”

Opinion 03 states: “If a Lodge publishes any magazine, newspaper, bulletin or other periodical devoted to the interests of the Order, every Member of that Lodge is entitled to receive a copy of each such publication, whether by electronic delivery

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G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

This year’s slogan: Soar with Four!

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

As we embark on this new chapter, I want to plant a seed of inspiration within each of you—a vision that transcends mere accomplishment, a vision that propels us towards unparalleled success. The word on everyone’s lips as we ride into Austin, TX: **Soar with Four!**

Yes, you heard it right—**Soar with Four**, as we work towards four consecutive years of membership gains! A feat so extraordinary, it would etch our names in the annals of history, marking a milestone not seen in half a century. But this isn’t just about numbers or records; it’s about the collective strength of our Lodges, the synergy of our efforts, and the steadfast commitment to our mission.

Three-peat has guided us thus far, serving as a beacon of motivation amidst challenges and triumphs alike. Now, as we stand on the precipice of greatness, it’s

time to amplify our efforts, to elevate our membership program to unprecedented heights. Let’s harness the power of collaboration between Grand Lodge, State Associations, and Local Lodges, fueling the momentum that propels us towards our shared goal.

Imagine the impact we can make, the lives we can touch, and the communities we can uplift. Together, we can redefine what’s possible, break barriers, and write a new chapter in the storied history of the BPOE.

Let’s not merely traverse through the year—let’s infuse every moment with purpose, with passion, and with the unwavering resolve to grow, evolve, and excel. Let’s make history together, not for the glory it brings, but for the profound difference we can make in the lives of others.

As Elks, we stand proudly as the

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GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

An organization for young leaders

By **RONALD A. MANGONE**
Committee Member

Today's youth have the greatest potential to make and enhance more positive impacts in our communities than ever before. Students today are more diverse, more tolerant, and more accepting of others, as well as more tech savvy than past generations. They are resilient and able to easily adapt to situations and needs. With their values and fresh perspectives, they are worthy prospects to carry on the values and beliefs of Elkdom.

This new generation of Antlers are our future leaders. They will be the change-makers of tomorrow equipped with dreams, aspirations, and a desire to shape the world around them. It is important that we recognize their invaluable role. Their fresh approaches for tackling challenges push the boundaries of possibilities. As Elks, we need to continue to encourage them to show their leadership, to share their voices, and to give them the tools necessary to succeed in today's rapidly changing world.

These young people have grown up in a digital age and are fluent in technology. They navigate the digital landscape; they communicate and collaborate faster than my generation. Harnessing their technological proficiency can and will propel not only our communities forward, but it will ensure that the Elks' values and beliefs will continue. Collaborating with them, we can help support their new causes and address pressing issues facing our diverse communities. Remember, they face a constantly changing world, more than any of us have had to endure. Involving them in solving a need in your community will enable them to branch out and relate to others outside of their immediate family,



school, and social group.

In the past year, Antlers have shared with me how they have met with other Antlers lodges. They have come together and shared ideas and joined forces to promote an activity. They have served at community food banks, hosted lodge events, and swapped fundraising ideas. Together, they have adopted grandparents at a local retirement facility, and shared letters of appreciation at local restaurants and Lodge events where veterans were invited during November.

I would love to hear about some of the events your Antlers are involved in. Also, remember that I would love to have pictures of your Antlers events that could be shared at our national convention.

Antlers programs across America have continued to grow since my last newsletter. I would like to welcome Mission Viejo-Saddleback Valley Antlers No. 2444 in California. There have been a few Antlers programs that have been reinstated after a decline in their membership. Congratulations to those Lodges that have opened their doors to encourage their children and grandchildren. A reminder to check out the Lodge Activities website at elks.org/grandlodge/activities if you are interested in starting an Antlers program in your Lodge. There you will find how to apply for a charter and examples of a Ritual for Instituting a Lodge and Installing Lodge Officers.

The future of Elkdom belongs to our youth—our Antlers in particular. It is incumbent upon us to help them with guidance, support, and opportunities. Collaborating with them and encouraging them through our Antlers program will only enrich the future of Elkdom. After all, “*We are THE Elks*” and this is what Elks do.

with unwavering determination. Let's dare to dream, to strive, and to achieve the extraordinary. Let's embark on this journey toward **Soar with Four** success, not as individuals, but as one indomitable force—the Elks.

Together, we can move mountains, transcend limitations, and leave an indelible mark on the nation.

16 Lodges garner praise for helping their communities

By **DUANE D. HELDENBRAND**
Committee Member

On behalf of the entire Activities Committee, it is my pleasure to announce the winners of the 2023-24 Community Projects Contest. These Lodges and their respective Members have worked diligently and are actively improving their communities.

Division I

1st: Mid Westchester, NY No. 535
2nd: Webster-Fairport, NY No. 2396
3rd: Pendleton, SC No. 2861

Division II

1st: El Paso TX, NM No. 187
2nd: Mount Airy, NC No. 2061

Division III

1st: Madisonville, KY No. 738
2nd: Kearny-Belleville, NJ No. 1050
3rd: Jackson, TN No. 192

Division IV

1st: Goldsboro, NC No. 139
2nd: Tampa, FL No. 708
3rd: Cynthiana, KY No. 438

Division V

1st: Hickory, NC No. 1654
2nd: Alamogordo, NM No. 1897

Division VI

1st: Ashland, KY No. 350
2nd: Bristol County, RI No. 1860
3rd: Brattleboro, VT No. 1499

Congratulations to all the Lodges that participated in this and all the other Grand Lodge Activities programs this committee administers. Always remember if your Lodge and Members have questions regarding the Community Projects program, the Soccer Shoot, Scouting, Antlers, or any of the other fantastic contests, awards, and programs the Activities Committee handles, the information is easily found on elks.org or by contacting your local area committee member.

Elks share their thoughts

Want to discuss the Elks? Check out the Membership Forum. Members use the message board to share constructive information every day.

elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm

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nation's premier charitable, patriotic, and social organization. But let us also stand as beacons of hope, as catalysts for change, and as architects of a brighter tomorrow.

So, my dear friends, let's rally our spirits, unite our strengths, and march forward

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Students hone critical thinking skills with essay contest

By GWENDOLYN B. PARKER

Committee Member

The annual Americanism Essay Contest provides young Americans with an opportunity to reflect upon their country's values, history, and future. This contest has been a tradition for generations, nurturing a sense of patriotism and civic engagement among the youth.

The essay contest is open to students in fifth through eighth grades. It prompts students to think critically about various aspects of Americanism, such as the principles of democracy, freedom, and civic responsibility. This encourages students to delve into their nation's history, exploring the sacrifices made by countless individuals to safeguard the American way of life.

One of the primary objectives of the Americanism Essay Contest is to instill a sense of patriotism and civic responsibility in the next generation. As students research and write their essays, they come to understand the significance of actively participating in the democratic process. They learn that their voices and

actions can shape the future of their country.

Beyond patriotism and civic engagement, the contest also helps students develop crucial skills. Research, critical thinking, and effective communication are all essential elements of writing a compelling essay. Through this process, participants build character and gain confidence in expressing their ideas.

The Fraternal Committee is proud to announce the 2023-24 winners of the Americanism Essay Contest:

EIGHTH GRADE

1st Place: **Isabelle Beeson**, Argos Junior High School. Sponsored by Plymouth, IN Lodge No. 2548.

2nd Place: **Samantha Wainhouse**, Fieldstone Middle School. Sponsored by Park Ridge, NJ Lodge No. 2234.

3rd Place: **Oliver Hill**, Enterprise Middle School. Sponsored by Tri-Cities, WA Lodge No. 2755.

SEVENTH GRADE

1st Place: **Adam Malik**, Merritt School. Sponsored by Arlington-Fairfax, VA Lodge No. 2188.

2nd Place: **Arya Gordon-Mitchell**, Cony Middle School. Sponsored by Augusta, ME Lodge No. 964.

3rd Place: **Mallorie Larson**, Saint Matthew School. Sponsored by Omaha, NE Lodge No. 39.

SIXTH GRADE

1st Place: **Lucia Aldeman**, Fairhill School. Sponsored by Arlington-Fairfax, VA Lodge No. 2188.

2nd Place: **Mae Clarity**, Monsignor Clarke School. Sponsored by South Kingstown, RI Lodge No. 1899.

3rd Place: **Reese Rasmvssr**, Holloman Middle School. Sponsored by Alamogordo, NM Lodge No. 1897.

FIFTH GRADE

1st Place: **Halle Snell**, Flora Elementary School. Sponsored by Flora, IL Lodge No. 1659.

2nd Place: **Kalaiyah Rhodes-Dingle**, Lemira Elementary School. Sponsored by Sumter, SC Lodge No. 855.

3rd Place: **Paige Heimbuch**, Cole Valley Christian School. Sponsored by Boise, ID Lodge No. 310.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Teamwork needed for DAP success

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN

National Director

Recently, I heard from a Lodge DAP Chairperson who said, "You can't expect a few hardworking Elks to do it all." And do you know what? That chairperson was correct.

For years we have been preaching the shared responsibility aspect of the DAP. A few hard-working Elks can't do it all, and Lodges don't have to do everything. All we ask is that whatever you do, you do it well—and bring along a helper.

Lodge DAP Chairs and volunteers should familiarize themselves with the wealth of printed materials that are available at no cost to them, but they also need to know that this information is age appropriate. Warning kindergarten kids about the dangers of drugs is not appropriate; nor is giving high school kids a coloring book! Know what's available and know who the intended audience is.

Help is also available through the DEA as they establish more Community Outreach specialists. The DEA's goal is to have a specialist in each state, and

they now have several in place. Some cover more than one state, but they are not far off from reaching their goal. In April, I met with all the COSs over the internet and they are ready, willing, and eager to work with Local Lodges. For more information about the DEA's Community Outreach Section, or more drug prevention resources, call (202) 307-7936 or send an e-mail to Community.Outreach@dea.gov.

We hope to see many convention goers at the DAP booth at Grand Lodge in Austin, Texas. Stop by and take a picture with Elroy, browse the latest in DAP printed materials, and find out about the latest drug trends. Also, check the signs for our annual open session, which will take place on Tuesday. Who knows what kind of swag we will give out? And come and meet this year's recipient of the Elks National Enrique S. Camarena Award. Hope to see you there.



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Learn more at enf.elks.org/FC



Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities

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or by regular mail."

According to *Opinion 04*, "The Lodge Bulletin may be sent electronically to any Member without written authorization from that Member, unless otherwise requested by the Member."

To clarify the main point, do not publish or post Lodge bulletins/newsletters, or notices meant for Members only, on any websites or other social media platforms that are open to the public.

A Boost does wonders for Voluntary Service programs

By **HANNAH GRABER**
Programs Associate

A few years ago, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission began offering Boost Grants to Voluntary Service Representatives who planned projects that go above and beyond their typical monthly activities. This grant was created to build on the experience that current Elks volunteers have and the relationships they have formed with the veterans they serve every day.

When the VA in Manila, Philippines requested blood pressure monitors to help veterans maintain their health after their appointments, Voluntary Service Deputy

Representative Aaron Key stepped up to provide them. He continued the project this year with funding from a Boost Grant.

In addition to the monitors, veterans are included in an educational event where they learn how to use the monitors and discuss the importance of tracking their symptoms. Key said that this type of project is important because it can extend and improve veteran lives.

At the South Orange County Vet Center in Mission Viejo, California, Voluntary Service Representative David Perry decided to apply for a Boost Grant to

provide therapeutic archery lessons. This activity makes a great addition to other recreational and social programs

Perry hosts, like lobster fishing trips, football watch parties, axe throwing, and other activities.

Dennis Carmack is the Voluntary Service Representative at the VA hospital in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. During his visits at the hospital, he noticed that veterans loved spending time looking at photos he had taken of their activities. This led him to apply for a Boost Grant to start a photography program.



Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Invite elected officials to your events

By **RICHARD E. STONE**
Committee Member

June is the start of summer, when Elks, families, and friends gather to celebrate Flag Day, Father's Day, and graduations. As we recognize the achievements of these graduates, take a moment to make it special by asking one of your elected officials for a proclamation and invite him or her to read it and be part of your celebration.

If your Lodge has a family picnic, a barbecue, or a Father's Day gathering, invite some of your elected officials to attend. Let them see your Lodge Members

having a good time. It's an opportunity for them to mingle with the Members and learn what your Lodge is doing in your community. They may ask about joining your Lodge.

When your Lodge puts on its Flag Day celebration, invite your elected officials to witness one of the Elks rituals and even be a part of the ceremony by having him or her read a part or give an address to those in attendance. Make your Flag Day celebration special and let everyone see that **"We Are THE Elks,"** and that the Elks have a long history of honoring our country with a Flag Day celebration!

From Above

Veterans in Poplar Bluff will be able to take their own photos, print them, and display them on their wall of accomplishments. In addition to giving them a chance to enjoy their creations, the photography program is also intended to improve coordination, capture memories, and get veterans outside enjoying nature.

Projects like these display the dedication of Elks who get involved in Voluntary Service. Not only do these volunteers show up on a regular basis, but they also get to know personally the veterans they serve and tailor activities to their specific needs. If you'd like to learn more about Elks Voluntary Service or to find out who the Representatives are in your area, visit elks.org/vets/vavs.cfm.