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Brotherhood Ride:
Florida first responders pay tribute to their fallen comrades.
p. 15

Best Practices:
Guidelines for Keeping Lodge Records
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As I write this article for our new Florida Elks Magazine, Florida Elks have just concluded one of our most successful and most noteworthy Grand Lodge conventions in many years, and wouldn’t you know that I had to sit this one out for health reasons. I kept in touch with the happenings, and PNP Mike Smith and PSP and past Grand Lodge Ritual Committee Chairman, Brian Burns, acted as my on-site reporters and I thank them for reporting our many successes so I could brag about them in this article.

First and foremost are the membership awards. Florida Elks placed first in the nation in recognition of significant membership improvement and second in the nation in membership growth with a gain of 352. Thank you, Suzi Simonelli and all Florida Elks, who worked tirelessly to achieve this goal! Please continue our tremendous successes with membership growth!

PDD Pete Vaphiades came in second in Area 3 in the number of new members proposed; that’s quite an accomplishment and honor. All Florida Elks thank you.

Tallahassee Lodge won the Grand Lodge ritualistic competition and had three All-Americans: John Bozeman, All-American Leading Knight; Ron Brown, All-American Inner Guard; and Adrienne Bellflower, All-American Candidate. All-American Coaches were Jan Thorburn and Tracey Austin.

Achieving this great honor came at just the right time as Past State President Larry Henley, also from Tallahassee Lodge, had the honor of being sworn in as Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight. Florida Elks can be very proud of Larry and the officers of Tallahassee Lodge for keeping Florida Elks in the forefront on the Grand Lodge national stage.

Both the major projects booth and the Florida Elks News won five-star awards yet again. As always, our major projects shine due to the dedication, enthusiasm and generosity of Florida Elks.

The legislative session resulted in a few changes. The requirement that the initiatory ritual be performed at the visit of the District Deputy was eliminated. The short form of the initiatory ritual is no longer an option. Lodges are permitted to have a minimum of just one meeting per month. The Lodge Treasurer now has more latitude in paying lodge bills via electronic transfer or debit card use. I’m sure the Exalted Rulers of the various lodges will give a full report on all the legislative changes.

Mike, Bob and I wish everyone a safe summer. Don’t forget to attend the official visit(s) of our State President, Carl Gerace, and Cathy, along with VPAL Frank Malatesta and Sally. These two couples will represent us well. We all thank John Harris for a job well done.

On a personal note, I thank all of you for your calls, emails, cards and prayers. This is just a blip on the health radar screen and all will be well by the midyear meeting of the FSEA in Crystal River.

We look forward to seeing you there.

C. Valentine Bates, PGER
State Sponsor
Florida State Elks Association
Cathy and I would like to thank you for this great honor of being your State President and First Lady, and we look forward to seeing you as we visit each district. Our motto for the year is Excellent Leadership through Kindness and Service, or simply put, ELKS. Each one of us has a duty to be a leader in our lodges, district and state association. We have a commitment to make life better for all – to offer a hand in kindness and to give back through service for the great life we live. We need to build long-lasting relationships and make a strong Elks for everyone so we can continue helping our children, veterans and order. We need stronger relationships with our members, both to keep members and to bring in new members. We need to build better relationships between our lodges to work together instead of against each other, and we need to build better relationships between the districts in getting the word out on what we do and who we help.

Once again, Cathy and I are so very proud to be traveling the state meeting all the great Elks, hearing your stories and seeing your lodges. We look forward to talking with as many great Florida Elks as we can.

Take care and God bless.

Fraternally,

Carl Gerace, State President
Florida State Elks Association

The Florida State Elks Association is working hard to help your lodges get new members and helping you get the word out on all the good works we as Elks do.

One of our new programs is the president’s grant program. From our state association we have been given $2,000 per district to give out at the Saturday evening dinner during the president’s visit to your district. It can all go to one lodge or be broken down to go to a few lodges. How to qualify is on the state website on the president’s page. Please take some time and check it out.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

To share lodge news in between Florida Elks Magazine issues, please email articles and photos to 
rachael@floridaelks.org.

They will be posted to the Florida Elks News Online section of the state website and to the state Facebook page.
Attraction versus Pursuit of Money and Members

Do we expect too much of too few when it comes to the operation of our lodges? Is there any wonder why we burn people out? This concept changed in our lodges about 20 years ago as membership dropped and we pivoted toward an all-volunteer business model, but is this model sustainable? It might be sustainable if we have a steady supply of new members to run things, but what happens when we the boomers are played out (the youngest are now 51) and we must then seek new members from Generation Y, the millennials? I guess we will have our answer in about 10 years, won’t we? So, do we just ride out what we are doing today and hope for the best, or do we plan, posture our lodges for the next generation, control what happens and have a say so? The latter will require a little work and the former a bit less. Will we watch what happens and be proud or will we watch what happens and then wonder what happened?

Two things that will always matter are money and members, neither of which we seem to ever have enough of. The business philosopher Jim Rohn once said, “money is usually attracted, not pursued.” The same could be said for our members; they too should be attracted, not pursued. Think about this a minute: our money and our members being attracted, not pursued.

Now let’s look at our business practices and apply the attracted versus pursued test to them starting with our members. Let’s see, we award members for being top recruiters. Are these gained members attracted or pursued? We offer financial discounts to former members who reinstate their membership during certain times of the year. Are these gains attracted or pursued? We rush people to a commitment to meet a deadline for number counts. Isn’t this also pursuit? When was the last time your lodge held an open house to attract and educate potential members about membership in the Elks? I’m not talking about handing out brochures at a community event and hoping someone will call or about obtaining a one-time open-to-the-public liquor license for the day to hold an event at the lodge to pursue customers for our cheap drinks. What I’m talking about is a planned event held at the lodge where pre-qualified prospects have been invited to learn more about being an Elk, where the orientation videos are played (yes orientation videos – why is this reserved for an indoctrination-type event after they have already decided to join?) and prospects are exposed to the obligation they will be asked to make to their lodge and community. I’m talking about an activity held to attract new members with like minds and attitudes who are willing to give of their time and who understand there is a financial commitment to supporting the lodge with more than just their lounge and restaurant dollars.

The next generation is all about quality of life and lifestyle. What are we doing in our lodges to attract these types of individuals? They will not be interested in drinking our deeply discounted (ok, cheap) wines and yesterday’s beers. If we want to attract them, they are going to want options. They are not going to come to the lodge and be the same people week after week tasked with doing all the work. They are going to be up at 6 a.m. to do a charity fun run, catch their grandchild’s Little League activity at 10 a.m. and then come to the lodge to assist with the latest lodge project while socializing with others who too have already had a busy day! We must share the burden equally among many and not the few as we do today! We do this by attracting members to what we have and not what we want them to build!

Then there is money and I am not talking about the cash flow that barely supports our bar and restaurant operations. In fact, it could probably be argued that most of the time it does not! I’m talking about the attraction of money as an investment in the proliferation of the lodge. Money to cash flow the operations will forever be pursued until such time that we operate as a business. This would mean pricing, service and quality all on par with those we compete against every day! There is a reason drinks are priced the way they are in a restaurant. That doesn’t mean our prices need to be that high but they could sure stand to be higher! Then we could focus more on attracting customers, our members, and we could then compete with our nicer facilities and even be open more! Our forever focus on fundraising is a turnoff to many and often keeps them out of the lodge. This is because they feel pursued. Our focus should be more on attracting those who wish to give and participate!

My aim in these articles is to inform, educate and instill a sense of responsibility in our success. I do this by sometimes offering ideas that are not your normal run-of-the-mill thoughts and ideas. We are not perfect and sometimes we have to look at ourselves as others see us before we realize the need to improve. So, how am I doing? Let me know what you think! Email me at carl@floridaelks.org.

Carl Seibert, COO/State Secretary
Florida State Elks Association
That an Elks convention it was this past May. As much as there was to do, the ladies helping with the FLOE activities were so amazing and awesome. The weekend for FLOE was a huge success because of our committee chairladies, committee members and every volunteer. A million thanks go to you! Chairladies Felicia Vuletich, Judy Fournier and Judy Reyes, PSP, along with Jane Moon, PSP and a few other ladies worked endless hours in preparing for the activities and worked their hearts out at convention. The words thank you just don’t say it all for everything everyone did. To the gentlemen who helped beginning Wednesday, thank you. We were so lucky to have you.

Felicia Vuletich, the FLOE Chairlady for the FSEA silent auction, and I started our stay at the hotel Wednesday to be there to accept early Chinese and silent auction donations. Many thanks go to everyone who helped Thursday and Friday prior to the opening of the two auctions. Setup of the two auctions took several volunteers. Saturday at the Elks convention was not only for the FLOE business meeting and the operation of the two auctions. There was some fun, too. The afternoon events in the FLOE pavilion were well attended. I thank everyone who participated in the activities at our location. If you didn’t get to sample the strawberry shortcake in the evening, you missed a good dessert.

The FLOE organization, May’s committee chairladies and I thank the FSEA staff for all they did before and during the weekend of the Elks convention. They worked very hard and put in very long hours at the convention. They were wonderful to us. Teamwork does make a dream work. Many thanks go to Steve Harmon for working with the auction chairladies and me to the very end.

To all the ladies’ organizations and individuals who donated to the FLOE fundraising event, the Chinese auction, thank you so much. FLOE raised $1,900 for its charities. The proceeds will be given to the Elks Charities at a future date. If you aren’t aware, this Chinese auction was Judy Fournier’s 10th year as chairlady. Thank you, Judy, for your years of service to this worthwhile event.

The FLOE hospitality suite was open Thursday and Friday evenings. Many enjoyed our signature strawberry frozen drink. To the many people who visited us, thank you for coming. We were glad you came and spent time with us.

Saturday morning was the FLOE business meeting. FSEA dignitaries have come to the previous FLOE meetings this FLOE year, and this meeting was no exception. In attendance were Larry Littell, outgoing LOE State Chairman; Marty Wierzbicki, incoming LOE State Chairman; Steve Carruthers, incoming Vice Chairman; John Harris, outgoing FSEA President; Carl Gerace, incoming FSEA President; and Frank Malatesta, incoming Vice President at Large. It is obvious to the ladies they care about and support FLOE. The business meeting had a packed agenda. Bylaws Committee Chairlady, Becky Long, PSP, read the proposed recommended changes to the current bylaws. At the September conference, they will be read again and the voting will take place. Nominating Committee Chairlady, Jane Moon, PSP, read the committee’s recommendations for the 2017-2018 officers. The elected new officers are President, Mary McCoy; Vice President, Felicia Vuletich; Secretary, Adella Ashton; and Treasurer, Marlene Evans. Linda Rittenhouse and I will join the Advisory Council with four-year terms. Congratulations, ladies! The 2017 FLOE conference packet was distributed to everyone present and reviewed. The Sheraton Orlando North Hotel in Maitland, Fla., is accepting reservations through Aug. 21. The block of rooms is limited so reservations should be made as soon as you can.

Remember bringing glow sticks to conference last year? Before Saturday’s meeting, I spoke with FEYC Director, Nick Miller, to see if ladies could bring something for the campers to the upcoming conference. As new business in our meeting, I presented for discussion the idea he gave me: water balloons and water guns. The ladies in attendance were in favor of FLOE doing this for a project for the conference. After the meeting, I notified Nick Miller, gathered specifics about the items from him and followed up in writing with the ladies to help me get the word out about this project.

The conference packet is on the FSEA website. Please contact me at 813-754-2240 or by email at ckalel@verizon.net if you want a paper copy of it. Note the deadlines on the packet contents sheet. The conference committee chairladies are working very hard. Please come to the 54th FLOE conference.

Congratulations go to the new FSEA officers. I look forward to working with President Carl Gerace; VPAL Frank Malatesta; LOE State Chairman, Marty Wierzbicki; and LOE Vice Chairman, Steve Carruthers, the last few months of my term as FLOE President.

Our next meeting will be Saturday morning, Sept. 23, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. at the Orlando Sheraton North. I am looking forward to this conference and seeing everyone. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have a question about the conference or want more information about the water balloons and water guns project. Have a great summer and I will see you in September.

Connie Kalel Poage
President, Florida Ladies of Elks
A s a member of Winter Park Lodge #1830, I am proud to be the new Director of Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. As an Elk in the great state of Florida, I know how easy it is to brag about Florida’s major projects, and now, as the new Director, I cannot tell you how proud I am and what an honor it is to be a part of such an amazing program.

We as Florida Elks have so much to be proud of when it comes to Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. Our 18 occupational therapists and eight physical therapists are among the best in their field. Every day they go into the homes of their patients to work with the patients in a familiar setting, and, just as importantly, with the parents and other family members. They truly make a difference in the lives of these young patients and families.

Our State President, Carl Gerace, has requested a therapist speak at each of his district visits. Each therapist when asked to speak at an Elks function is very happy to do so. Hopefully by doing this, our members will hear firsthand from the therapist about the amazing work they do for the children of Florida, and we as Elks need to continue our support of both our major projects.

I have a couple stories I would like to share with you. As you know, we could not do this without the help of you, the Elks of Florida.

While in Miami a few weeks ago for State President Carl Gerace’s visit, I met Dr. Carlos H. Olaechea and his wife Marie. Dr. and Mrs. Olaechea, working with Miami Lodge #948, donated tables full of educational toys to Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. All the items donated were picked up by our therapist in Miami, Chantal Salnave, and delivered to all our therapists. As you know, we depend not only on individual members like Dr. and Mrs. Olaechea but our lodges as well. Dr. Olaechea, who is a six-year member at Miami Lodge, has been a physical therapist for more than 30 years. He has a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Boston University and a Bachelor of Science in physical therapy from San Marcos University in Lima, Peru. Dr. Olaechea is an expert in neurologic rehabilitation and physical therapy management of neurological patients. All of us at Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services are very grateful to Dr. Olaechea and his wife for their kind donation and for them spreading the word in Miami about the amazing work we do for the children of Florida. Dr. Olaechea genuinely appreciates and understands the great work our therapists do.

On June 26, FSEA COO, Carl Seibert, and I were invited to attend the annual VolutEARS of the Year celebration at Disney's Coronado Springs. Disney awards $2,500 to the VolutEARS' favorite charity. This particular award went to a family of three who, as a family, completed 15 volunteer projects in 2016 totaling 330 hours. They chose Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services to receive a check for $2,500. This young mother had been treated in the Harry-Anna Children's Hospital when she was young and the Elks also helped with her surgery co-pay. She has never forgotten what the Elks did to help her. When she first met her husband, she told him the story of what the Elks did for her and her family and they made it their mission to volunteer their time to worthy causes and maybe someday they could do something for the Elks. A special thank you goes to Kristian Berning and her family for remembering Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services.

From June 1-23, we received 94 applications for therapy services in our office. That does not count the requests for speech therapy and the work that our contract therapists do for us. As you can see, the need is real; we cannot do this without the help of you, the Elks of Florida.

On Sept. 17, 2017, please join us for the 10th annual Florida Elks Day at the Rays fundraiser. For the first time, we will have a child who is currently being treated by one of our therapists in the Tampa area, Yvette Lambert, at the game. Please plan to join us and celebrate with our young patient and his family as he throws out the first pitch of the game. This is a great way to show Florida that the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services is one of the finest mobile therapy services in the nation. Our therapists are incredibly dedicated to this program and the children they treat.

At the state convention in May, I challenged each Exalted Ruler to hold a special fundraiser for Children’s Therapy Services. If your lodge decides to hold an event, please let me know and we will have a therapist available to speak, and if you would like, we can invite one of our therapy families to attend your fundraiser so that your members can see firsthand the great work our therapists do in the name of Florida Elks.

So, please help me by making this a great year for fundraising for Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services!

Colleen Gallant
Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services
Director
cgallant@floridaelkscts.org
352-445-0070

Dr. Olaechea, PDD Al Reker and PDD Milton Muller of Miami Lodge #948 are pictured with Dr. and Mrs. Olaechea’s donation of educational toys.
Greetings from camp!

Man, what an incredible time it is to be an Elk – in particular, a Florida Elk. In May, I announced the success of your online registration system for campers, and how despite the challenge of such a new system, you broke all previous records in getting kids signed up for camp. Since then, we’ve completed our first three weeks of summer camp, and the news just keeps getting better. The new registration software has made it easier than ever to keep our camper families updated and for them to update us. Due to this, we can pull from our waiting list to fill the beds of campers who drop out last minute better than ever before. The software has also proven to be more accurate at check-in and checkout. For parents and chaperones, this shortens our processing time. For camp staff, this ensures that all camper information is correct and instantaneously available to staff management.

All this was made possible due to your tireless efforts! Thank you!

We’re not done, though. I think the single, biggest concern we’ve received from our Elks involves lodges remaining in the loop. Our goal this coming year is to modify the system to automatically notify lodges once a camper enrolls. Any child who enrolls using your lodge as his or her sponsor will trigger an email or text to any Elks your lodge designates. This will give you unprecedented ability to interact with the campers and families from your community. If you would like to have input on this change or any other changes you’d like to see, please stay tuned. I will provide details on how you can become part of this process in the next issue of this magazine.

Throughout the years, a staple of your support of the camp has always been donations to our wish list. Whether equipment for grounds-keeping, clothing for needy campers, or supplies for arts and crafts, these donations always helped us afford items that were needed but outside our normal operating budget. This has always been a huge help to us.

However, when you donate to a specific item on the wish list, that money can only be spent on that particular item. Over time, we inevitably build up donations toward items that have already been purchased or are no longer needed. Without further action, these donations will remain dormant within our account, unable to be used to help our programs or campers. So, over the next three months, we will be gathering as much information as we can from those of you who may have donated to these obsolete items. With your permission, we will be able to redirect your donation to a more current project. For now, please take a look at the following items. If you have donated specifically toward one of these items, not just a donation in general, I’d really appreciate it if you would reach out to me to discuss our options. The final phase of this process will be a formal letter to all Florida Elks, likely in my next article.

Here are the obsolete items and donations for consideration:

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUTTERFLY GARDEN</td>
<td>$677.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIRDHOUSES</td>
<td>$2,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUMPING JACK</td>
<td>$900.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>BASEBALL GLOVES</td>
<td>$1,550.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANTS FOR NATURE TRAIL</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLF BALL RETRIEVER</td>
<td>$4,100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The generosity of Florida Elks never ceases to amaze me, and I look forward to working with you over the next few months to ensure your donated time and money make the most impact on our youth! Thank you for all you do as Elks, and thank you for the humbling opportunity to serve as your director for the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

Fraternally,

Nick Miller
Florida Elks Youth Camp Director
PSP John Harris watches a video of his year as State President. Angel Harris is on the screen.

Then-VPAL Carl Gerace and his wife, Cathy, watch the nomination demonstration.

PGER Val Bates presents the past state president pin to John Harris.

PGER Val Bates presents the ceremonial gavel to newly elected State President, Carl Gerace. Cathy Gerace and PSP John Harris look on.

DVP Len Wenzel accepts his Elk of the Year award from 2016-2017 State President, John Harris.

Brotherhood Ride founder, Capt. Jeff Morse, presents a Brotherhood Ride plaque to 2016-2017 State President, John Harris.

PSP John Harris watches a video of his year as State President. Angel Harris is on the screen.

PGER Val Bates presents the past state president pin to John Harris.

Their VPAL Carl Gerace and his wife, Cathy, watch the nomination demonstration.
This year’s state convention, FECON ’17: A Celebration of Florida Elkdom, was unlike anything members have ever experienced. The FSEA team put together an agenda that was full of activities and events that kept everyone busy and entertained throughout the convention.

For starters, the Friday opening ceremonies saw the nominations and elections of our 2017-2018 state officers and president with the memorial service taking place immediately after. Saturday was the big one! We celebrated Florida Elkdom with a spectacular array of activities and events that engaged the convention attendees throughout the day. Some of the more notable activities included the main stage presentations honoring scholarship recipients, state contest winners, first responder awards and a special initiation ceremony by members of the winning state ritual teams. Thirty-two exhibitors and vendors also participated.

One special award that was presented honored the first responders of Orlando Fire Station No. 5 who were the first on the scene of the June 12 Pulse nightclub shootings that claimed 49 victims.

Special thanks go to our major Florida Elkdom sponsors: Florida Atlantic Securities Corp., Sysco Food Services of Central Florida and the Harry-Anna Investment Fund.
LODGE PLANNING CALENDAR

AUGUST 2017

NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES

8/15  Form 990 to U.S. Treasury
8/15  Form 990-T – report UBI to U.S. Treasury (Form 990-T is required when gross income from unrelated business income is $1,000 or more.)
8/15  Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
8/20  Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue

AUGUST DEADLINES

8/31  All 2016-2017 Beacon, Freedom, Gratitude & Promise Grant final reports due

STATE PRESIDENT VISITS

8/4 - 5  South Southeast Central District – Boca Raton #2166
8/18 - 19  Southwest Central District – Lakeland #1291

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

8/15  Contest criteria and entry info available on FSEA website for the Lodge Website Award
8/24 - 26  PSP Retreat – Florida Elks Youth Camp – Umatilla, Fla.

SEPTEMBER 2017

NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES

9/1  Form F-1120 – report UBI to Florida Department of Revenue (Form F-1120 is required when Form 990-T is required.)
9/15  Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
9/20  Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue

STATE PRESIDENT VISITS

9/8 - 9  East Central District – Merritt Island #2650
9/15 - 16  West Central District – Tampa #708
9/29 - 30  North Central District – South Marion-Villages #2730

SEPTEMBER DEADLINES

9/8  Lodges to submit ENF Impact Grant online applications to ENF
9/15  Lodges to register for FSEA Lodge Website Award with FSEA Director of Marketing
9/25  Submissions to Florida Elks Magazine – Fall Edition to Managing Editor
9/30  State Lodge Activities Chairman to register for GL State Association Website Award with GL Fraternal Committee Member

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

9/1  Contest criteria and entry info available on FSEA website for the FSEA/GL Drug Awareness Poster Contest
9/17  Elks Day at the Rays – Tampa, Fla.
9/21 - 23  FLOE Conference – Sheraton Orlando North
9/30  Midyear Membership winners announced on FSEA website

OCTOBER 2017

NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES

10/15  Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
10/20  Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue
10/31  Form 914, report wages for prior quarter to U.S. Treasury
10/31  Deposit FUI (Federal Unemployment Insurance) tax for prior quarter to U.S. Treasury (Quarterly deposits of federal unemployment insurance tax are required when cumulative amount owed exceeds $100.)

STATUTES

• Secretary Report to Lodge ($12.050)
• Trustee Report to Lodge ($12.070)
• ER Reports on GL Sessions ($12.120)
• Lodge’s Auditing & Accounting Committee to review lodge books and report at last meeting of month ($13.040)

STATE PRESIDENT VISITS

10/6 - 7  Southeast Central District – West St. Lucie #2823
10/13 - 14  Central District – West Citrus #2693
10/20 - 21  Northwest District – Twin Cities #2747

OCTOBER DEADLINES

10/15  Lodges to complete FSEA online committee reporting for the quarter ending 9/30
10/31  Submit ENF Emergency Education Grant applications to ENF

District Deputy to submit request to Grand Secretary for GER Special Citation to Lodge for New Officers & Chair Progression (DD must verify and confirm the full slate of officers)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

10/1  Contest criteria and entry info available on FSEA website for the FSEA Best Lodge Bulletin Contest
10/17  Contest criteria and entry info available on FSEA website for the FSEA Americanism Essay Contest
10/23 - 27  Red Ribbon Week
10/31  ENF Impact Grant recipients announced

October is ENF Month
The members and lodges of Florida’s Northwest District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of **Sid Potter** as a candidate for the office of **Northwest District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler** of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

**Sid Potter** was born in Kittery, Maine, Jan. 25, 1953. His father was in the Air Force and so he grew up in New England, Europe, Ohio and Maryland. In 1973 he moved to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He attended Annapolis High School from 1969-1971, Anne Arundel C.C. from 1971-1973, Broward C.C. from 1973-1975 and the Culinary Institute in 1976. Potter spent 35 years in the marine industry and as a merchant marine officer (captain). He also owns Custom Home Improvements.

In 1982, Potter joined Fort Walton Elks Lodge #1795 but in 1984 demitted to Destin Lodge #2688. He has served as Tiler, Inner Guard, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight (four times), Exalted Ruler (three times), Trustee, Chairman of the Board of Directors (twice), Head of the House Committee (twice), District Membership Chairman, PER Association VP and PER Association President. In 2016-2017 he served as Northwest District Vice President.

Along with Elks activities, Potter enjoys fishing, cooking, gardening and hunting. He is also a member of the American Legion.

His significant other is Carole Burger; they have been together 15 years. Potter has an older brother and two sisters.

The members and lodges of Florida’s North District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of **Julia Montford Ferrell** as a candidate for the office of **North District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler** of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

**Julia Montford Ferrell** was born April 15, 1953, in Blountstown, Fla. She graduated from Blountstown High School in 1971. She attended Tallahassee Community College in 1991 and earned a BS in public administration from Florida State University in 1994. She retired in March 2016 with 43.8 years of service with the state of Florida in the office of the Auditor General.

Ferrell joined Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937 in 2002. She has served as Inner Guard, Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. She was the editor of the lodge newsletter for many years. She has been District Chairman for Drug Awareness Education, Elks Training, Government Relations, Officer Attendance and Elks National Foundation Scholarships. She was Vice Chairman and State Chairman for Government Relations. In 2016-2017, she served as the North District Vice President. Ferrell is a life member of Tallahassee Elketts; she joined in 1979.

The members and lodges of Florida’s Northeast District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of **Glen C. Gardner** as a candidate for the office of **Northeast District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler** of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

**Glen Gardner** was born in 1978 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He grew up in Pompano Beach and moved to Gainesville in 2006. He graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale in 1996. He attended the University of Central Florida in Orlando from 1996-1998 and Santa Fe College in Gainesville from 2008-2013.

From 1994-2002, Gardner held various positions with Publix Supermarkets. He has been a geographic information systems analyst with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in the division of plant industry since 1999.

Gardner is a third-generation Elk. He joined Gainesville Elks Lodge in 2008 after moving to Gainesville for work and needing to expand his social circle. He was immediately asked to be the Inner Guard and it has since become his new family. He has also served as Loyal Knight, Esquire, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. In addition, he has been State Vice Chairman and State Chairman of the Ritual Committee. He served as the Northeast District Vice President for 2016-2017.

In addition to Elks activities, Gardner enjoys fishing, scuba diving and traveling. He is single and has never been married. His brother lives in Margate, Fla., and his parents live in Pompano Beach. His parents met...
Nick Miller was born in Columbia, Mo., in 1979. He grew up in Moberly in central Missouri and moved to Florida in September 2006. He graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 2003.

Miller taught ninth-grade and 10th-grade English from the fall of 2003 to the spring of 2010. He then began working at the Florida Elks Youth Camp full-time.

While working at FEYC during summer break as a teacher, he realized what the Elks were doing for kids and joined Gainesville Elks Lodge in November 2009. He has served as Treasurer, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler, Trustee and Board of Directors Chairman for Eustis Elks Lodge. He has also been the North Regional Soccer Shoot Chairman. He was Assistant Director for the Florida Elks Youth Camp and is now the FEYC Director. In 2016-2017, he served as North Central District Vice President.

Nick and Emily have been married for 3.5 years. His parents retired in Moberly, Mo., and his brother, Dan, is a dentist in St. Louis.

Bob Swink was born in Greensboro, N.C., in 1947. He grew up there and moved to Florida in 1994. He graduated from Page High School in 1965 and earned a bachelor's degree in economics and business administration from Methodist College in 1969.

Swink was a manager at Lowe’s Home Centers for 15 years and retired in 1998. He worked part-time since 2001 at Ron Norris Ford, retiring in June 2017.

In 2006, Swink’s golfing buddies got him interested in the Elks and asked him to join. He was a trustee in 2012-2013 and was bar manager from 2012-2014. He served as Exalted Ruler two terms, from 2013-2015. In 2015-2016, he served as East Central District Vice President. He currently serves Titusville Lodge #2113 as Esquire and Lodge Advisor.

Along with the Elks, he is a member of Miller Golf Group, and he has been a member of Trek Golf Group since 1998.

He has been married to Cheryle for 20 years. He has three children, four stepchildren (and one deceased), 22 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Bob Swink has previously been a volunteer with the rescue squad. He was president of Jaycees in Buchanan, Va. He has also been a Little League coach and a scoutmaster and played Santa Claus at his lodge.

William Misczak was born born in Chicago. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in applied behavioral science in 1988 from the National College of Education at National Louis University. In 1993, he earned a Master of Science degree in corrections and criminal justice from Chicago State University.

Misczak is a program specialist with the Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC). He has been employed with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for 27 years, the last nine in Orlando, Fla. Prior to joining the VA, he served in the United States Marine Corps from 1985 until he was honorably discharged in 1989.

In March 2011, Misczak joined Kissimmee Elks Lodge #1873. He has served as Inner Guard, Lecturing Knight, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. He has served on numerous lodge committees including House, Hoop Shoot, Americanism, Government Relations and Elks Training. In 2012 and 2013 he was the editor for the lodge newsletter. He has been District Chairman for Americanism and Soccer Shoot and State Vice Chairman for Veterans Services. In 2016-2017, he served as the Central District Vice President.

Misczak joined the Knights of Columbus Assembly 3202 (Celebration, Fla.) in 2011. He is a fourth-degree knight and served as the public relations officer. He is also an active member in his Corpus Christi Catholic Church where he serves faithfully as a hospitality minister.

When not working, Misczak enjoys scuba diving, U.S. history and art.
The members and lodges of Florida's Southeast Central District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of Barbara Smallacombe as a candidate for the office of Southeast Central District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Barbara Smallacombe was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and grew up in Cheshire, Conn. She moved to Florida in 1999. She graduated from Cheshire High School in 1975 and earned an associate degree from Southern Connecticut State College in 1977.

Smallacombe worked in retail and accounting and held various management positions. She retired after 24 years with Kmart. Currently she works in management at Burlington Coat Factory.

In September 2001, Smallacombe was initiated into the Elks. She has served in all officer positions through Exalted Ruler. She was named Officer of the Year for 2005-2006. Also in that year, she won All-District Loyal Knight and District Outstanding Officer in the ritual competition. During her year as Fort Pierce Exalted Ruler, the lodge was named State All-American Lodge and finished second in the national Elks All-American Lodge contest. She has served as host for two national conventions held in Florida. She has been chairman for many lodge and district committees and was State Chairman for Ladies Organizations. She was also chairman of the lodge board of directors. She served as the Southeast Central District Vice President for 2016-2017. For the past three years, Smallacombe has served as co-chairman of the Fort Pierce Lodge’s food backpack program. It started with providing food for six children; now they provide weekend meals for 150 children.

Barbara and Lenny Smallacombe have been married for 32 years. Her parents live in Port St. Lucie, Fla., and her brother lives in Vero Beach, Fla., with his family.

The members and lodges of Florida’s West Central District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of H. Thomas “Tom” Shriver as a candidate for the office of West Central District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Tom Shriver was born and raised in Hanover, Pa., in 1948. In 1966 he graduated from South Western High School. From 1967-1971, he completed an IBEW Local 126 apprenticeship for the outside electrical industry. He then worked distribution and transmission utility power and maintenance line construction for various companies in five states. In 1986 he joined Florida Power Corp. and retired from Duke Energy in October 2014.

Shriver joined Ridgeway Elks Lodge #872 in Pennsylvania in January 1977 and demitted to St. Petersburg Lodge #1224 in September 1985. He was awarded an honorary life membership in September 1999. He has served as Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler and Trustee. He has been chairman of the kitchen and the House Committee. He was twice named Elk of the Year. He has been Lodge Chairman for Hoop Shoot and Lapsation. He was President of the PER Association and Chairman of the Elks Memorial Restoration. He served as District Esquire for the DDGER. For two years he was Drug Awareness Education State Chairman. In 2016-2017 he served as West Central District Vice President.

In addition to belonging to the Elks, he is a member of the Moose and Sons of the American Legion.

He and his childhood sweetheart, Cathy, have been married 51 years. They have two daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

The members and lodges of Florida’s Southwest Central District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of Donald Moon as a candidate for the office of Southwest Central District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Donald Moon was born in Indianapolis in 1934. He moved to Florida in June 2002. He attended Butler University, Indiana University and Indiana University School of Dentistry. He received a doctorate in dental surgery and a doctorate in biochemistry. From 1959-1962, he did research in the biochemistry department at IU Medical Center. From 1962-2002, he had a private dental practice in Whiteland, Ind.

Moon was initiated into Franklin Elks Lodge #1818 June 23, 1966, in Indiana. On Oct. 8, 2001, he demitted to Brandon Lodge #2383. He has been Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Exalted Ruler, Lodge Trustee, District Visitation Chairman, State Membership Chairman and FSEA Director of Membership Development. In 2016-2017, he served as Southwest Central District Vice President.

He has been married to Jane for 28 years. He has two daughters and a son. In his spare time, he enjoys relaxing with Jane, traveling in their RV, boating and fishing.

The members and lodges of Florida’s Southwest District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of Robert W. “Bob” Erwin as a candidate for the office of Southwest District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Robert W. “Bob” Erwin was born in Burlington, N.J., on Oct. 28, 1934. He moved to Iowa in 1958. He attended the University of Southern Illinois and graduated from the Illinois School of Dentistry. He has been a practicing dentist in Ottumwa, Iowa, since 1960. He has been married to his wife, Jane, for 51 years. They have two daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Erwin was initiated into Ridgeway Elks Lodge #872 in Illinois in 1965. He has been a member of the Elks for 50 years. He has been an active member of the Elks, serving in many capacities. He has served as District Vice President, State Treasurer, State Membership Chairman and FSEA Director of Membership Development. In 2016-2017, he served as Southwest Central District Vice President.

Erwin has been married to Jane for 51 years. They have two daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

In addition to belonging to the Elks, he is a member of the Moose and Sons of the American Legion.

He and his childhood sweetheart, Cathy, have been married 51 years. They have two daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandson.
Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Bob Erwin was born Sept. 5, 1949, in Dunkirk, N.Y. He grew up in Frewsburg, N.Y., and moved to Florida in 2000.

In May 1975, he earned an Associate of Arts degree in business administration from Monroe Community College in Rochester, N.Y. In May 1978, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in business management from State University of New York in Albany. In November 1988, he attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Carlisle Barracks, Pa. In November 1989, he earned a Master of Arts degree in public administration/civil affairs from Webster University in St. Louis, Mo. He also studied divinity and theology for two years at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta.

Erwin served in the U.S. Army from 1969-1996. From December 1969 to August 1976, he was a Private through Sergeant First Class, and from August 1976 to November 1996, he was a Second Lieutenant through Lieutenant Colonel.

Erwin is now retired, but he has been owner and CEO of a custom-home builders company and a marketing company. He was also owner of a vending machine company and was a Florida state representative for a merchandising group.

In October 2001, Erwin was invited to join the Elks by his brother-in-law who was chaplain at the time. He has served in positions from Chaplain to Exalted Ruler. He has been chairman of various lodge committees including Entertainment, Publicity and Public Relations, Investigations, Orientation, Elks Training, Audit, Budget, Youth Activities, Veterans, Harry-Anna Investment Fund, and Ritual. He was District Chairman for New Lodges and was the chairman of the New Lodges Organizing Committee that instituted and initiated 125 members of Lakewood Ranch Lodge #2855. Other District Chairman positions include Harry-Anna Investment Fund and Ritual. Later he served as Vice Chairman and State Chairman for Ritual. He was the 2014-2015 State Tiler. He has served as Secretary and President of Bradenton Lodge PER Association. He is currently Chaplain of the Southwest District PER Association and was also President. He was named Bradenton Lodge Elk of the Year for 2015-2016. He served as the Southwest District Vice President for 2016-2017.

In addition to Elks activities, Erwin is the hospital/nursing home coordinator for Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles Church and also serves as sacristan, altar server and lector. He is also a member of the Military Officers Association. In his spare time, he enjoys golf, reading and cooking.

He married Susan in 2009. He has one daughter, Michelle, and three grandchildren. Susan has two sons, both Elks at Bradenton Lodge. Both Susan and Bob are Eucharistic ministers and active in church activities.

Ronald Heldebrandt was born in Libertyville, Ill., in 1947. He grew up in Gages Lake, Ill. In 2004 he moved to Florida. He attended Warren Township High School in Gurnee, Ill., and graduated in 1965. He also took classes from Louisiana State University in Shreveport, La. After many years of night school, he graduated in May 1990, Magna Cum Laude, with a BS in computer science.

Heldebrandt served in the U.S. Air Force from 1965-1969. He then worked 33 years in electrical public utilities; 15 years were as a journeyman electrician and 18 years were as a professional until he retired at 55. Following this, he spent one year as a high school math teacher before moving to Florida and becoming a realtor.

In 2007 he joined Naples Elks Lodge #2010. Friends took him to the lodge for dancing and socializing. He liked the people, environment and the Elks projects. He has served as Trustee, Chairman of the Board, Lecturing Knight and Leading Knight and twice as Exalted Ruler. He was District Chairman of Government Relations and Interlodge Visitation. He has also served as State Chairman for Youth Activities. In 2016-2017 he served as South Southwest District Vice President.

In addition to the Elks, he enjoys golf, dancing, the beach, fishing and boating. He is also a member of the American Legion and Moose. He plans to finish visiting every state in the union in the future.

He has one son, Ronald Heldebrandt II; one daughter, Tammy; and one stepson, Tim Ganey. His son and his wife, Daphne, have two children, Haley and Cody. Tim has four children: Linzie, Danyel, McKinzie and TJ.

Greg Westberry was born in Arcadia, Fla., in 1967. Later the family moved to Pahokee, Fla., where he grew up before moving to Clewiston, Fla., in 1981. He graduated from Clewiston High School in 1986 and went to work for the United States Sugar Corporation shortly after. In 1999, he started his own business, Everglades Tree Service. He since earned his general contractor license and expanded his business to include the WW Companies Incorporated.

Westberry joined the Elks in December 1999 when a friend from Clewiston...
Lodge asked him to help on a community project. He quickly became involved and served on the House Committee before moving through the chairs from Esquire to Exalted Ruler and subsequently serving as Trustee and on the board of directors. On the district level, he has been chairman of multiple committees. He has been State Vice Chairman and State Chairman of Interlodge Visitation. In 2016-2017, he served as Southeast District Vice President.

He has been married to Dana for 28 years and they have two sons, Brandon and Derek, who work with him in the family business. In addition to serving the Elks and spending time with his family, Westberry is also a member of the Clewiston Fire Department. He enjoys the outdoors and loves to spend time airboating on Lake Okeechobee.

Linda Barie was born in Binghamton, N.Y., in 1958. She moved to Boca Raton, Fla., in 1968 and graduated from Boca Raton High School in 1976.

Barie worked for Winn-Dixie as a bookkeeper and a general merchandise manager for 12 years and for Hallmark Cards as installation leader and display manager for the past 25 years.

She became an Elk in 2008. She was brought in by her neighbor, Francis “Tom” Thomason. She served on the House Committee and has been Tiler, Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight and Leading Knight. She served two consecutive terms as Exalted Ruler. In 2010, she was named Officer of the Year. She was District Chairman for Officer Attendance and Elks National Foundation Certificates. In 2015-2016 she served as South Southeast District Vice President. She was Vice Chairman of Elks National Foundation Scholarships and now serves as the state chairman for the committee.

Barie was a Girl Scout leader for eight years and a new troop organizer for five years. She was also a chaperone and coordinator for her daughter’s dance team.

She has been married to James for 36 years. Her daughter, Erin, is married to Denis. Their daughter, Natalie, is 10 years old, and their twin sons, Logan and Gavin, are five years old.

The members and lodges of Florida’s South District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of Linda Barie as a candidate for the office of South Southeast District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Carol Reed was born in Dallas and was raised in Fort Worth, Texas. She had her daughters, Nugget Moses and Dr. Cache Reed, in Alaska while prospecting for gold. She became a teacher through the auspices of the University of Arkansas. She raised her daughters on their ranch in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas. She baled hay, pulled calves, trained horses, and taught and ran various programs like the 4-H club. She saw her daughters through university and then spent the next 13 years sailing around the world, spending time in 59 countries. Reed says that was without a doubt the best education she’s ever received. She spread the wealth by having her daughters travel to some of these countries for extended periods of time.

Reed left the ocean to take care of her ailing mother, and after she passed away, Reed came to Marathon in the Florida Keys. The sense of community not only shown but felt there has kept her in Marathon for the last nine years.

She joined Marathon Elks Lodge shortly after establishing herself there and was elected to serve as Loyal Knight in the next election. She held this position for two years and received an award for Officer of the Year while also serving as Head of House and managing to help turn their finances around including making a profit on the lounge and galley. She served as Exalted Ruler for two consecutive terms. During that period, she continued to help the lodge make a profit, eliminate dissension, increase membership, and establish the Elks as a community boon through its many programs. In 2016-2017 she served as South District Vice President. She is quite proud of everything that has transpired with the Elks in Marathon and the South District since she has been participating and looks forward to the challenges and rewards her new position will afford.

The members and lodges of Florida’s South Southeast District are honored to present to the 2017 national convention in Reno, Nev., the name of Carol Reed as a candidate for the office of South District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Elks Day at the Rays Annual Fundraiser

FLOE Conference
Sept. 21-23, 2017
Sheraton Orlando North

Fall Fest Softball Tournament

Midyear Convention
Nov. 9-11, 2017
Plantation on Crystal River
He found the left-behind shoes of the station’s men and women who had donned their fire gear and were responding to a local emergency. However, for nine Charleston firefighters, their shoes would never be worn again. They would forever be left at their fire stations representing nine fathers, husbands, brothers, friends and loved ones who would never return.

As Morse and a small group of firefighters gathered at the station after the Charleston tragedy, they started to discuss the selfless acts of emergency first responders. Eventually the concept of the Brotherhood Ride was conceived. It was at this time that the firefighters decided to honor the nine members of the Charleston Fire Department. They wanted to help the families of these brave professionals by providing financial and emotional support. Most importantly, they wanted the families to know that their loved ones would not be forgotten in the days, months and years ahead.

Morse and his comrades also did not want these unsung heroes to become just a statistic of being part of the single deadliest disaster for firefighters since 9/11. They knew that whatever they did to honor these heroes should not be easy. To represent the pain and loss that those remaining family members were feeling, 19 firefighters from around the country decided to ride bicycles nearly 600 miles from Naples, Fla., to Charleston, S.C., nine days for nine heroes. It would not be an easy ride, but then again, it would be nothing compared to the ultimate sacrifice the Charleston nine made. The training and ride would be grueling, time-consuming and challenging. “It shows the families, the local police and fire departments who may have lost a member that we haven’t forgotten and we’re honoring those guys every day and their community gets to see it,” said Morse.

Today, the Brotherhood Ride continues the tradition of honor, dedication and pride. Over the past nine years, the ride has honored the memory and sacrifice of 511 emergency first responders which includes firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel. The team has traveled on bicycles over 7,700 miles through 16 states. The riders have been hosted by over 40 Elks lodges nationwide and assisted by countless emergency first responders who have shown the true meaning of brotherhood.

One memorable trip included a 1,734-mile, 22-day ride from Florida to Ground Zero in New York City to commemorate the 10th anniversary memorial services of the September 11 attacks. When the 39 riders made a stop at Jacksonville Elks Lodge, they were welcomed with a ceremony, dinner, overnight lodging and breakfast the next morning. Past Exalted Ruler Dick Maloney recalled, “the emotions were unbelievable. As the bicycle riders approached our lodge after a complete day’s ride with motorcycle police escort not to mention our firefighters’ participation, the crowd’s applause was heartbreaking. Their support staff was genuinely surprised with the reception.”

Brotherhood founder, Jeff Morse, added that the lodge’s preparation “greatly exemplifies the importance of 9/11 and displays in full the great generosity of the Elks organization.”

Each year a ride is dedicated to
Florida’s fallen responders. This year’s 600-mile ride honoring seven Florida law enforcement officers and three firefighters began in north Naples July 23 and traveled 600 miles up the west coast, crossing over to the central part of the state before heading down the east coast and ending July 29 in Miami. Thirty-four riders and 19 support team personnel participated.

In addition to Charleston and Florida, past Brotherhood Rides have honored fallen responders from Texas, New York, Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and Maine. In all, more than $359,000 has been donated to the families left behind.

As Jeff Morse states, “thank you to everyone who sponsors and supports us. With your help we are able to show the families and friends of those who have died in the line of duty that their loved ones will not be forgotten.”

The Brotherhood Ride is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) public charity organization comprised entirely of volunteers. Other than the cost of conducting the rides, all donated proceeds go directly to the beneficiaries designated. No one is compensated for their time in order to maximize the impact of donations. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, go to their website, brotherhoodride.com.

Contact Candy Morse: candy@brotherhoodride.com 239-633-7098

WHY WE RIDE

When I heard of the news that one of my brothers had died, I felt so low.

We had never met, I never shook your hand, our wives did not know each other, nor did your kids call me uncle, but I knew I had lost a brother.

You were a total stranger to me, but there was a lump in my throat and a hole in my heart.

Why did it bother me so much? Why could my wife tell that I had lost another friend?

Why did I feel I needed to show how firefighters, police officers and emergency responders are all brothers?

You had worn the same uniform as mine, that of an emergency responder. You had taken the same oath to protect lives and property, to serve and protect, and to care for the sick, and you knew that the oath was more than a bunch of words or just a job.

You knew from the day that you repeated those words that you would have to put your life on the line to save others. You knew that if you had to, you would risk everything to save someone you never met.

We are not like other workers; we expect to be in danger from the start of our shift until we are relieved by another emergency responder. We will defend and protect anyone who calls us without hesitation.

I wonder what you thought as you made the ultimate sacrifice. I can only hope that as you lay in the darkened smoke-filled hallway or on the dark lonely street, you knew that your brothers were coming to get you.

We know that they were unable to get to you in time, but rest assured, brother, they finished the job you started; they made your community safe again.

So, my brother, I was not able to be with you when you paid the ultimate price, but my brothers and I have come here to honor you. We know that you gave your life to protect their community.

So why do we train so hard to ride for a total stranger? Why do we ride in all different kinds of weather: rain, wind, cold and heat? Why do we sleep wherever we can find space on a floor? Why would we do this for a total stranger? We wouldn’t, but we will for our brothers.

We always say NEVER FORGET, but time moves on and people will forget about that day. Rest assured we will remind them that there are families and coworkers who still have a hole in their heart that will never be filled.

We are not heroes, but we are proud to wear the names of the heroes on our back for all to see.

So, stand down, my brother; you have completed your shift. Let our legs carry your memory and remind all who will listen that you gave your life to save a total stranger.

Captain Jeffrey Morse, Founder/President, Brotherhood Ride
Crestview #2624 & Twin Cities #2747
In May, Crestview Elks Lodge #2624 hosted its annual Exceptional Children’s Day with Twin Cities Elks Lodge #2747. Using a Beacon Grant, they were able to create a memorable day for about 80 children and 40 adult volunteers. In attendance were Reid Soria from Autism Sings, Great Gains Behavioral Solutions, Spectrum House Autism Center, Captain Davy Magic Show, Crestview Police Department and Crestview Citizens Police Academy Alumni.

Destin #2688
Destin Exalted Ruler, Terri Griffin, left, presented a check to Pamela Sparks of Special Olympics of Northwest Florida. Destin Lodge also contributed to the American Association of Retarded Citizens of the Emerald Coast and the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life.

Holley-Navarre #2787
In recognition of Holly-Navarre Elks’ support of the 2017 season, Exalted Ruler, Bob Harlow, was presented with a Navarre Cardinals Little League team plaque by Coach Matt Newgent and player Brody Powers. The Navarre Cardinals, made up of seven- and eight-year-olds, ended the regular season 13-2 and finished third place in the season tournament.

Holley-Navarre Lodge donated $2,500 to the Billory Bread of Life Food Pantry. During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the lodge provided over 5,000 pounds of food to help support this Navarre food pantry. The Billory Baptist Church graciously provides the space and volunteer support to run the day-to-day activities. The facility plays an important role in the Holley-Navarre community by supporting between 60 and 100 families every month. Holley-Navarre Lodge obtains all its support through local fundraisers, member contributions, food drives, and state and national grants.

Warrington #2108
Warrington Elks Lodge #2108 held its annual Flag Day ceremony. The parading of the colors and the presentation of flags was provided by the Naval Air Technical Training Center Color Guard comprised of students attending their “A” School at Naval Air Station Pensacola. It was a very somber ceremony and provided the audience not only with a fine example of our youth but the history of our great symbol of this country.

Lake City #893
Lake City Elks Lodge #893 awarded four scholarships to local high school seniors. Among the recipients were children and grandchildren of some lodge members. The scholarships were presented at the Columbia High School awards ceremony by PER Jay Swisher and ER Christopher Williams.
Lake City Lodge performed the Flag Day ceremony and the ceremony of traditional disposal of old flags with members and guests helping burn more than 20 flags they had collected for this special day. PER Chris Lydick conducted the ceremony.

Live Oak #1165
Live Oak Elks Lodge #1165 awarded $3,600 in scholarships to seniors from Suwannee, Branford and Lafayette high schools. Receiving scholarships were Dillon Harrell, Tiffanie White and Andrew Perry. The scholarship chairman was John David Dill.

Live Oak Lodge held a fundraising event selling 300 plates of food to raise money for a local family in need. From food sales and donations, the lodge was able to present a check to the family for $3,000.

On June 3, Live Oak Lodge was at the Wellborn Blueberry Festival passing out drug awareness materials for the kids and parents. The lodge also set up as a vendor for two days at the Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park selling food and beverages. The lodge earned $989 for their charity account.

Perry #1851
Travis Dawson was named Officer of the Year for Perry Elks Lodge #1851. He served several years as Trustee and rarely misses a meeting. He is the computer tech on call, electrician on call, volunteers his time as DJ for lodge functions, does karaoke in the dining room and helps serve events booked in the banquet room.

Perry Lodge hosted its scholarship winners, Caleb Wentworth and Kate Whiddon, along with their parents for dinner and scholarship presentations.

Tallahassee #937
An Easter egg hunt complete with games and fun for the kids was held April 9 at Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937. Easter Bunny/Inner Guard, Danny McElroy, greeted the kids and their parents. Face painting was done by member Margo Rosa, and Carol Dobson, Julie Jansen, Karla Jones and Sarah Smith were on hand to help with the festivities.

Tallahassee Lodge-sponsored Boy Scout Troop #123 spent several hours on a Saturday with shovels and other yard equipment cleaning up some landscaping that was intruding into the lodge parking lot.

Green Cove Springs #1892
Green Cove Springs Elks Lodge #1892 hosted its annual veterans pier fishing event May 7. Residents of Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home and their family members were invited to the lodge for fishing and lunch. Veterans, family members, caregivers and lodge volunteers totaled 75 in attendance. The event was funded by an Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant.

On June 5, Green Cove Springs Lodge honored the sixth-grade class of Clyde...
E. Bennett Elementary School with a recognition luncheon for successfully completing elementary school. One hundred students along with school staff were greeted at the lodge by 25 Elks. The luncheon concluded with the presentation of two lodge citizenship awards. Kaitlyn Scherer and Brandon Vazquez were selected by their teachers for the award based on their deportment, ability to work well with others, grades and helpfulness.

The luncheon was sponsored by the PER Association’s Elks charity bingo. The luncheon chairman was PER Gene Rittenhouse, bingo vice chairman. This first-time event was so successful that the school has asked the lodge to do it again next year.

On June 13, Green Cove Springs Lodge used an Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant to promote the Green Cove Springs Public Library’s opening of the summer children’s program. This was the lodge’s second year of promoting this program. The event’s purpose was to encourage children of all ages to sign up for the special library programs. Along with registering for summer programs, children also received a free age-specific book. There were also crafts, a corn hole game, someone who made toy balloons and a face-painter. There were 140 children accompanied by 53 adults in attendance. Services were provided by 23 volunteers.

Eustis #1578
The Eustis Anna Miller Circle met April 1 to pack for The Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties. They had 10 ladies and three Elks to tackle the massive task. The in-kind contribution equaled $4,170. Included were 222 adult welcome kits and 72 children’s welcome kits. The one-quart bags contain travel-sized toiletries, toothbrush, toothpaste and mouthwash. Hand sanitizer and tissues are added to the children’s kits. The collection also included suitcases, clothes and toys. The Haven provides a safe harbor for abused women, teens and children including food, shelter and clothing as well as counseling, advocacy and safety planning.

In addition to the adult services,
the counselors provide children's school advocacy, school supplies, and individual counseling between students and teachers and court accompaniment. While the mother is making so many adjustments, the children's lives are also greatly impacted and the incredible services provided by The Haven can and do change their lives.

Eustis Elks Lodge was focused on helping kids this past quarter. The Anna Miller Circle and the lodge hosted an Easter egg hunt. The lodge gave four of the therapy services patients' families $100 gift cards to Aldi for groceries. Exalted Ruler, Herman Strauss, donated $100 to buy clothes and items for one of the therapy patients to use at camp and the Anna Miller Circle sponsored another therapy patient to go to camp. The membership recently voted to raffle the quilt as a lodge fundraiser.

Eustis Elks Lodge was focused on helping kids this past quarter. The Anna Miller Circle and the lodge hosted an Easter egg hunt. The lodge gave four of the therapy services patients' families $100 gift cards to Aldi for groceries. Exalted Ruler, Herman Strauss, donated $100 to buy clothes and items for one of the therapy patients to use at camp and the Anna Miller Circle sponsored another therapy patient to go to camp. The membership recently voted to raffle the quilt as a lodge fundraiser.

Inverness #2522
What began as an idea about two years ago has come to fruition. Gary Jones, an Inverness Elks member and avid quilter, along with his wife, Marilyn, agreed to put together an Elks quilt. Unfortunately, shortly after starting the project, Gary was diagnosed with lung cancer. He would not quit; he worked as much as physically possible and put the final stitches to the face of the quilt shortly before passing. The quilting portion of the project was completed by Karol Kuzmaul. This beautiful, one-of-a-kind quilt depicts the pillars of the Elks foundation and collateral items for which Elks stand. The membership recently voted to raffle the quilt as a lodge fundraiser.

South Marion-Villages #2730
South Marion-Villages Elks Lodge #2730 held a drug awareness and safety program. Guests of the day included anti-drug Sprint car driver, Keith Butler, who brought his car; Elroy the Elk; representatives from the Belleview Police, Marion County Sheriff and Marion County Fire; and the head of Security for Marion County Schools. On display were tactical vehicles and the mobile jail. Security topics included internet safety, bullying and the dangers of drugs. Sadly, lightning prevented the use of golf carts for various tasks with "drunk goggles" to demonstrate drunk driving, but an indoor obstacle course with wheelchairs was improvised. Pizza was served as well.

South Marion-Villages Lodge held a yard sale where members and community were asked to donate items to sell. The sale raised $980 for the Elks National Foundation. Also, the lodge awarded the winners of the Drug Awareness poster and essay contests $100 and a pizza party for their class.

Winter Park #1830
Mysteriously over 400 Easter eggs appeared on the Winter Park Lodge lawn, in the bushes and in the trees behind the lodge. Fortunately, about 50 egg-loving children from the community came equipped with
baskets for the annual Easter egg hunt. They and their families had fun and gave the lodge members a hand in cleaning up. In addition to Easter candy, stuffed animals were given to all children who participated. The Easter Bunny was there as well to the delight of the children and adults.

Winter Park Lodge Chairmen Ron and Kathryn Cunningham developed 41 camperships to send kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. They received funds from the lodge, DOES and parents.

Winter Park Lodge officers performed the annual Flag Day ritual for members and guests. The event was followed by a cookout at the lodge. Assisting in the flag presentations were members of the Lake Howell High School JROTC. Members of the DOES Auxiliary performed their flag ceremony which was selected to be performed at the DOES state convention and the national convention led by Supreme President, Karen Trachsel, from the local drove.

On April 22, DeLand Elks held their second annual car show and barbecue. Over 20 vehicles were present to be shown off by their owners. Robert Knight prepared the barbecue of pulled pork and chicken with baked beans and potato salad. It was a perfect day to listen to the ’50s and ’60s tunes played by DJ Warren Kerswill.

Mothers young and old turned out Sunday, May 14, for the annual Mother’s Day flower ceremony at DeLand Lodge. Exalted Ruler, Rachel Sieg, and her officers were in full regalia as each read their inspiring verse. Flowers were given to the oldest mother, youngest mother, mother with the most children and mother with the most grandchildren.

Forty boys of Cub Pack 531 and Scout Troop 531 and their parents joined together at DeLand Elks Lodge for their annual pinewood derby. The event was comprised of an awards ceremony and a luncheon. The pinewood derby is the final event for the Cub Scouts before they move on to the Boy Scouts. This gives the pack one last event with the current group of boys. Each scout is given a kit which contains a block of pine, plastic wheels and nails for axles. Their car cannot weight more than 5 ounces; the boys are encouraged to
design and build their own car. Each car races eight times and four cars per race, and the times are recorded. All races are randomly picked by the track software. The scout with the lowest cumulative time wins. The top three racers win a medal and all boys receive a participation ribbon. They also like to include siblings to join in the fun. They too can race their own pinewood derby car in a separate race. This is an exciting way to include the whole family before the summer break.

Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach #1557
My Angels with Paws is committed to expanding public understanding and knowledge of the needs of children and adults with physical disabilities through the breeding, training, placement and continuing education of service and therapy dogs. Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Elks Lodge #1557 has been saving aluminum pull tabs and has collected over 184 pounds of aluminum which equals about $100.

On April 22, Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Lodge hosted a luau in partnership with BELONG, a Christian Women’s Outreach. During the event, Elliott Gilbert, program director for the Florida Elks Youth Camp, and Elizabeth Thiers, occupational therapist with Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services, gave presentations about their projects. Through the generous donations from many local businesses, over $2,300 was raised for the Florida Elks Youth Camp and Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services.

Ormond Beach #2193
Thanks to the generosity of Ormond Beach Elks Lodge member donations to Elks National Foundation for 2016-2017, the lodge has been awarded $6,000 in grant money. The $2,000 Beacon Grant is being shared with four causes. Ormond Elementary School was presented with $500 at the end of the school year. Boy Scout Troop 403 was given $500 at the lodge Flag Day ceremony. Emory Bennett Nursing Home veterans received $500 for the annual Christmas-in-July visit. The Girl Scouts were presented with $500 at the VP dinner in July. Finally, the lodge is eligible for a $2,000 Promise Grant which will be used for their annual children’s Christmas party for less fortunate children ages 5-12.

Fifth-grade students at Osceola Elementary School recently participated in the Americanism Essay Contest sponsored by Ormond Beach Lodge. The class was invited to submit writings on the topic, “Why is it Important to Vote?” Winners were presented with a plaque and the first-place winner was awarded a $50 Visa gift card.

Palm Coast #2709
Palm Coast Lodge held their Day at the Races Saturday, May 6. It was an afternoon full of fun and action where you were able to win prizes, place wagers (with funny money) and show your skills. There were 10 races of 10 horses and a daily double. The day finished with the running of the Kentucky Derby. There was a buffet available for a donation of $15. This event was open to Elks and their guests.

On Saturday morning, May 13, the lodge hosted a classic car cruise-in for critters. Whether you wanted to show off your classic car, admire your neighbor’s car or if you knew someone looking for a furry companion, it was the place to come. Even those who were not able to adopt an animal came and gave them some attention. Some
found their new best friend. Admission was free and open to the public.

**Titusville #2113**

Titusville Elks Lodge #2113 is proud to announce that Raquel Ellis won the 2016-2017 Drug Awareness essay contest for all of Florida. Her winning essay was selected by Len Wenzel, State Drug Awareness Education Chairman. Raquel’s essay will now compete at the national level. The award was presented in front of her teacher, classmates and principal. Also in attendance were Exalted Ruler, Ron Allen, and Lodge Drug Awareness Education Chairman, Lynn Barnette.

Kissimmee #1873

The Kissimmee Elks continue their commitment to helping kids. The lodge committee that serves breakfast at Give Kids the World based in Kissimmee, Fla., made three recent visits serving 1,476 guests staying at this facility from all over the world. On May 19, the lodge also honored students who were winners of the Elks National Foundation Most Valuable Student scholarship contest and the Hoop Shoot contest.

**Orlando #1079**

On June 11, Orlando Elks Lodge #1079 held a Flag Day ceremony. Flag Day falls within National Flag Week, a time when Americans reflect on the foundations of the nation’s freedom. The flag of the United States represents freedom and has been an enduring symbol of the country’s ideals since its early days. During both events, Americans also remember their loyalty to the nation, reaffirm their belief in liberty and justice, and observe the nation’s unity. Orlando Lodge and the lodge drill team did this in conjunction with Boy Scout Troop #290, who presented the flags through the years. Following this event, approximately 40 members enjoyed a potluck dinner that members had provided.

**West Citrus #2693**

For Flag Day, the Veterans Committee of West Citrus Lodge presented the flags during the ceremony. The Ladies of West Citrus Lodge presented a flag-folding ceremony. The event was attended by a near-capacity crowd including veterans from a local nursing home. Everyone enjoyed the ceremonies and the light lunch that followed.

At the 2017 Florida Elks convention (FECON ’17) in May, Tony Schiappa, Exalted Ruler, accepted a plaque awarded to West Citrus Elks Lodge #2693 for an increase in membership for the past 13 consecutive years.

**Stuart-Jensen #1870**

Stuart-Jensen Lodge #1870 held the Mother’s Day ritual and named Jackie Pearson Mother of the Year. They also had pancake breakfasts for Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. For their Gratitude Grant, Chairman, Betty Tewksbury, PDD, worked with the Hope Rural School in Indiantown and got them $2,000 in school supplies and equipment. Along with the lodge’s six camper scholarships, they sent 12 additional kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp thanks to their charity bingo.

**Vero Beach #1774**

Vero Beach Elks Lodge #1774 held its annual Easter event at Wabasso School. The school is a children and kids in need at Lakewood Park Elementary School. Thanks to lodge members and Elks National Foundation Community Grants, they are hoping to make the summer better for the kids. This is the fourth year for their program.

**CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Fort Pierce #1520**

Fort Pierce Elks Lodge’s pantry and backpack team delivered a truckload of new summer clothes for homeless
a special education center school serving students ages 5-22. Within a safe and supportive learning environment, the children develop their academic and independent living skills to meet post-secondary goals and successful community integration.

Vero Beach Lodge sent 37 children to the Florida Elks Youth Camp in beautiful Umatilla, Fla., for a fun-filled, carefree week packed with swimming, boating, campfires, movies, archery, a ropes course, aquatic center and much more. This was a child’s camping vacation dream come true and they could just be kids without having to deal with any of the countless family issues they live with daily. The Elks contributed money to pay for the bus to transport the children to and from the camp and to pay for their week at the camp. This annual program will continue.

Vero Beach Lodge awarded college scholarships of $1,000 each to two students from Vero Beach. Elizabeth Tuite is the daughter of Elks member Robert Tuite. She will be attending the University of Florida. She is an honor student and graduated from Vero Beach High School. Sarah Coveny is the daughter of Elks member Pat Coveny. She will be attending the University of South Florida. She graduated as an honor student at Vero Beach High School with a GPA of 4.44.

The Elks Love Kids of Character Impact Grant project continues to push the Vero Beach Elementary School students forward. Their wampum reward system has been a driving force behind the school’s success in getting the students on track for positive behavior by raising the awareness that character counts and getting good grades are important for success. Teachers are using the wampum reward system in the classroom to redirect behavior and focus. Students are rewarded for good grades, politeness, sharing, following directions, focus and good behavior. The lodge goal has been to help the school with behavior problems, morale and grades by funding their positive-behavior store, named Elks Love Kids of Character Store, with meaningful rewards that also help struggling households by providing school supplies, engaging toys and snacks.

The Impact Grant also provides 200 free uniforms for underprivileged students. This school has 90% of its population living in poverty. The lodge feels the children are victims of circumstance and new uniforms lift their spirits to do well and take the financial pressure off the parents struggling to pay bills.

In May, they added free books to the program. Books are a rare commodity in a household where money is tight. The Elks collect children’s books at the lodge and distribute them to the children as they exit the store. So far this year they have collected and distributed over 300 children’s books.

This is the lodge’s third Impact Grant and they are finally seeing significant results:

- Grades have gone up in math 16% and 10% in reading this year.
- Behavior has improved; there is an overall 92% decrease from last year.
- The school grade is now rated a high C; three years prior it was rated F.
- Teachers were leaving the school because of behavior issues but now they are staying.
- Elk volunteers are really stepping up to help the school more than ever.
- Students know the community cares about them because of this program.
- Morale is up and students like coming to school.

Vero Beach Lodge uses their Impact Grants to assist Vero Beach Elementary School.

Viera #2817
On Saturday, June 10, Viera Elks Lodge #2817 hosted a crafting and painting day for approximately 60 autistic children from S.O.A.K. The S.O.A.K. organization provides support, resources, training and events for individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. This disorder affects approximately 1 in 50 people. For the younger group, Home Depot
of West Melbourne, Fla., donated wooden kits and paints along with some of their associates to help with these activities. Painting with a Twist of Cocoa, Fla., donated their time and supplied the lodge with easels, canvases and paints for the older group. Parents and siblings sat in on the sessions as well. Volunteers from the lodge helped as needed, and lunch was provided to everyone in between the sessions. Funding for the event came from a Gratitude Grant.

Troop 417 tackled projects to help maintain and improve the lodge that supports them, Largo Elks Lodge. Led by its youth leaders, the troop trimmed trees on the property and along the fence lines and raked leaves from the front of the lodge. Some scouts cleaned out the trash can washing-station behind the kitchen, and other scouts repaired the lattice work below the Tiki bar. Around the base of the flagpole, they cleaned out the leaves and dirty rocks and replaced them with bright blue stones, greatly improving its appearance.

Largo Lodge supports Fuguitt Elementary School’s color guard.

chaperones. The luncheon was to honor the color guard’s achievements throughout the school year. Fuguitt Elementary is the only elementary school in the county with a color guard unit. The school’s unit promotes patriotism, hard work, manners and discipline. Their motto is “your success is your country’s success.”

West St. Lucie #2823
The Elk year at West St. Lucie Lodge #2823 started out with a sellout crowd for the ER/officers ball. They held their Mother’s Day ritual and Memorial Day barbecue. They also continue to serve a complimentary pancake breakfast to veterans the first Tuesday of the month and provide food items for food-insecure children at two local schools.

West Central District

Holiday Isles #1912
Holiday Isles Elks Lodge #1912 donated $2,000 to World T.E.A.M. Sports. The nonprofit organizes athletic events for disabled and able-bodied citizens. These events include mountain climbing, whitewater rafting, bicycling and more.

Largo #2159
Largo Elks Lodge #2159 supported the Fuguitt Elementary School color guard ceremony held at Frankie’s Patriot BBQ. The lodge supplied the transportation and paid for the lunch of the color guard and their

Largo’s ER Gerard Milot and PER Aurora Griesler Jones presented a donation of $1,000 to Coleen Comey, Director of Pinellas County Foster Care & Adoptive Children. A special friend also attended the presentation. To reinforce their commitment to service,

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From left, PER Joe Fischer, Shari Samples, Chuck and Annette Watts, Beth Behrendt (school secretary), Mary Lou Hughes, and Jenny Naegele represented Largo Elks Lodge at Fuguitt Elementary’s volunteer appreciation day May 9.

Shown at Viera Lodge are S.O.A.K. participants Carolyn Mayes, Anthony Cancel and Jade Bailey. Lu Silber from Painting with a Twist is in the background.

Troop 417 held a cleanup day for Largo Lodge.
New Port Richey #2284
New Port Richey Elks Lodge #2284 presented a check in the amount of $2,000 to New Port Richey Police Chief, Kim Bogart. The city plans to use this donation to purchase high-tech equipment that will further promote the safety of its police officers and the safety and welfare of the community. The money the lodge donated was from a Gratitude Grant.

On Saturday, April 8, the bunny trail led to St. Petersburg Elks Lodge’s annual Easter egg hunt for the kids in the community. Over the years, the lodge has experienced a good turnout; this year, 65 children and their extended family showed up for the event. Chairman, Donna Gross, and her team of volunteers created a wide variety of Easter baskets to be given away as prizes. Music was provided by DJ Johnny Miller. Kids were excited by the surprise visit of a very tall Easter Bunny (PER Phil Davies) who had kids joining him in an energetic bunny hop dance. Besides the traditional egg hunt of large egg-shaped candies, activities included a bounce house, assorted games and the coloring of T-shirts instead of eggs. Everything at the event was free to the kids, including refreshments, hot dogs, chips and beverages.

St. Petersburg #1224
On Saturday, March 25, after the St. Petersburg Elks installation of new officers, Joanne Matos received the distinct honor of receiving the Kelley pin, a tradition that dates to the late Charles A. Kelley, a Past Exalted Ruler (1898-1899) of Boston Lodge No. 10 who later served as Grand Esteemed Leading Knight. He had the idea of giving a distinctive Elks pin to friends who were members of the Grand Lodge. After Kelley became less active, he gave the die for the pin to Past Grand Exalted Ruler James R. Nicholson who then passed it to the next GER and so forth. It became a tradition that the pin could be received by a Past Exalted Ruler who is a fully paid member of the Elks National Foundation. The pin cannot be self-obtained; it has to be presented to the wearer. The cast is now over 100 years old and on behalf of Grand Exalted Ruler Michael Zellen, the pin was presented to Joanne Matos, PER by PER Philip Davies.

PER Marilee Mills, New Port Richey Lodge Secretary, left, and Margaret Smith, Loyal Knight, presented a $500 scholarship to the Most Deserving Student at Gulf High School JROTC, Ohna Clark, during an awards program.

Julliette “NiNi” Davenport, sponsored by St. Petersburg Lodge #1224, was one of the national Hoop Shoot finalists who went to the Chicago finals the weekend of April 21-23. She was one of 72 of the nation’s best free-throw shooters for...
St. Petersburg Lodge was one of many lodges that sponsored the Americanism essay contest this year. The topic was “Why is it Important to Vote?” The winning essays picked by the lodge advanced to the district level and if they were successful, they moved forward to the state competition. Americanism Chairman, Anne Compton, received over 120 essays. The lodge sponsored one of the state winners, 13-year-old Rafael Salaman. Rafael won in the Division II category for seventh and eighth grade. His family attended FECON ’17 where he read his winning essay to the attendees. A check was presented on behalf of the Florida State Elks Association to Rafael in the amount of $1,500 on April 25 at the lodge. He also received $200 from the lodge as a treat for him to attend any of the Disney attractions while in Orlando, Fla.

On Tuesday, May 9, St. Petersburg Lodge awarded two scholarships each valued at $1,500 for fall tuition. Alyssa Kyle is majoring in biological sciences and will be attending the University of South California. Taylor J. Ballard plans to double major in criminology and psychology and will be attending Florida State University. Joan Vignoul, scholarship chairman, followed Elks National Foundation judging criteria when choosing the candidates who not only demonstrated superior scholastic achievement but also leadership and citizenship.

Alyssa Kyle and Taylor J. Ballard, scholarship recipients, pose with Joan Vignoul, scholarship chairman for St. Petersburg Lodge.

The seven-day trip which set sail June 2 was the sixth Cabot Community Celebrity cruise since the program began in 2009. Cabot partners with organizations such as Points of Light, AARP/Create the Good, National Cooperative Bank and many other sponsors that help make these awards a reality. Not only did Wagner and his wife, Nuala, enjoy a beautiful, relaxing and scenic cruise, they attended workshops and seminars to enhance their volunteer efforts.

After volunteering at a local children’s hospital, he wanted to help more children not only in the hospital but also after they returned home. In 2001, he founded Music Sweet Music, a nonprofit that provides instruments and music therapy to treat children with illnesses, diseases and disorders. Currently the nonprofit contracts three board-certified music therapists and has over 1,500 interventions with hospitalized children annually. If you wish to learn more about Music Sweet Music, please visit musicsweetmusic.org.

St. Petersburg Lodge member Ted Wagner, top row, center, is pictured with other Community Celebrity nationwide volunteers.

St. Petersburg Lodge’s newest members were initiated Saturday, May 28, at FECON ’17. They were initiated along with others from all over the state. Rey Garcia, 21, is the grandson of Rudy Masi, PD, and Dolly Masi, PER. Also initiated was Melissa Gifford, 38.

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were treated to pizza followed by an extreme ice cream sundae bar which was the hit of the day. Patty Elkins chaired this event with the assistance of 21 Elks and non-Elk volunteers.

For the second year in a row, Tampa Lodge participated in Robinson High School’s Club Chivalry’s Relay for Life which was held this past spring. Other area schools and community groups participated at the event. Students working the event earned community service hours and other awards based on their donations and participation. The Club Chivalry sponsor is fellow Elk Kristina Chowning. In addition to overseeing students walking the track all night, she sold French fries to over 100 customers, and with the student participants meeting their individual goal of raising $100, the club exceeded its goal of raising $1,000.

Five Tampa Elk chaperones and 32 Club Chivalry students attended a Career Fest sponsored by Hillsborough County Schools and the Technology Department at Hillsborough Community College. The bus for the field trip was provided for free by the Hillsborough County Schools. Kids from numerous high schools attended Career Fest; the students moved around freely through the areas at their own pace. A boxed lunch was provided by Chick-fil-A and at the end of Career Fest, the lodge provided chips and sodas for students as they

On June 13, a framed picture was presented to St. Petersburg Lodge by Phil Davies, PER of Brookline, Mass. Lodge #886. The picture is of a young John F. Kennedy being initiated into Boston Lodge #10 June 26, 1950. At the time, he was in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was elected by the working-class of Boston district in 1946 and was reelected in 1948 and 1950.

Quincy, Mass. Lodge #943 provided a copy of the photo to Ronald Davies, brother of PER Phil Davies. Both men decided to give it to St. Petersburg Lodge. Phil Davies is originally from Boston and was a snowbird for many years and St. Petersburg Lodge was his home away from home. He now lives full-time in St. Petersburg but continues to be a member of his lodge in Boston. However, he volunteers quite a bit for St. Petersburg Lodge.

Tampa #708
Tampa Elks Lodge #708 held a bowling tournament for children ages 9-17; 39 attended. The children, volunteers and parents bowled two full games. Upon returning to the lodge, trophies were distributed and participants...
boarded the bus.

Tampa Lodge partnered with Hyde Park United Methodist Church which opens its doors to their fellowship hall at 7:30 a.m. every Sunday to the homeless. During the month of May, the lodge spent over $1,300 to assist in the funding of this ministry. Besides a great meal, the homeless are offered the opportunity to fill their backpacks with bags of fruit, loaves of bread, peanut butter sandwiches and anything left over after everybody has been through the breakfast line once. Each week the church also offers a different service like a clothing store, hairstyling service, bicycle repair and dental work to name a few. You will find many of the lodge members volunteering during these services and on the third Sunday of each month. Courtney Weil, PER takes on the kitchen manager job, arriving at 6:30 a.m. and serving at 8 a.m.

SOUTHWEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Brandon #2383
Through the efforts of Bob Blair, founder and director of the Bags of Brotherly Love project, Brandon Elks Lodge #2383 continues to help bring comfort and dignity to the lives of those less fortunate or those taking a breather from society. The Brandon Elks are trying to help make their transition back in to mainstream life a bit easier. They have many lodge volunteers assisting with everything from filling bags to making PB&J sandwiches to feeding the homeless.

On April 22, Brandon Lodge hosted the 14th annual Hooked on Fishing – Not Drugs tournament for children ages 3-13. There were 72 community children in attendance and more than 300 fish were caught. Prizes were awarded for biggest fish and most fish in specific age categories as well as a grand prize. Everyone in attendance, including the parents, enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs and pizza. The

Lake Placid #2661
Lake Placid Police Department notified the community that many local children rely on school meals for proper nourishment and called on the community to assist with donations. Lake Placid Elks Lodge #2661 donated through a special account at the lodge called the Children’s Charity Fund. The charity fund was set up by donations from members, Past Exalted Rulers, Ladies of the Elks and Past Lady Presidents. This fund helps with sending children in need to the Florida Elks Youth Camp, Christmas for kids, and food baskets for the needy during the holidays.

Members PER Jim, Richard and Karolyn Lind went shopping and delivered 200 boxes of cereal, Pop-Tarts®, breakfast bars and oatmeal to the Lake Placid Police Department for their Cereal for Summer program. Exalted Ruler, Bob Johnston, said, “this is what the Elks are all about, helping our community! Elks Care and Elks Share.”

Flag Day was honored by Lake Placid Lodge Sunday, June 11. Exalted Ruler, Bob Johnston, introduced and spoke of the history of each of the flags while the Ladies of the Elks presented past and present flags of the United States. The ceremony was followed by a brunch for an early Father’s Day celebration.

Tampa Elks volunteer at Hyde Park United Methodist Church with programs that offer assistance to the homeless.

Lake Placid Elks member Karolyn Lind delivers donations to Lake Placid Police Chief Fansler for their Cereal for Summer program.

Lakeland #1291
On June 3, Lakeland Elks Lodge #1291 used their Beacon Grant to pack 350 meals at the lodge for homeless, hungry children in their area of Polk County. They had 27 Elks volunteer.
Plant City residents gathered at Plant City Lodge to celebrate Flag Day. Attendees watched as nine flags representing different periods of American history were carried to the front of the lodge while Tom Ludwick, PDD read the background of each flag. The ceremony marked the symbolism surrounding each flag and their role in their respective periods of history. Members of the lodge stated different significances of the flag and led the audience in “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the Pledge of Allegiance and “My Country 'tis of Thee.” A dinner followed the ceremony.

The meals were given to the kidsPACK organization which distributes them to local schools and school summer programs. Due to confidentiality with the children, only the school principal and guidance counselor know which children receive the meals.

With their 2016-2017 Gratitude Grant, Lakeland Lodge made a donation to Play It Forward Polk at their fundraising event. This organization helps underprivileged children with the purchase and repair of musical instruments. Exalted Ruler, Bob Fuschetti, presented the check.

Lakeland Elks put their Beacon Grant to good use; they packed 350 meals for homeless children in Polk County.

Sebring #1529

Conner and Jack Kennedy watched their father and grandfather, both flag bearers, during Plant City Lodge’s Flag Day ceremony.

PLANT CITY Elks #1727

Helping children is a priority for Plant City Elks Lodge #1727. Earlier this year, the lodge donated $285 to Marshall Middle School to bring unpaid lunch debts current. If charges aren't paid, the debt follows the child, and if the debt isn't paid by the time of the student’s high school graduation, the student is not allowed to graduate. With that in mind, the lodge rallied around the goal to pay off all student lunch debt for all Plant City’s schools. On May 3, the lodge hosted a dinner for Area 6 Superintendent, Sharon Morris; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Larry Sykes; and a representative from each of the 17 schools in Plant City. A check was presented to each school representative. A total of $2,691.26 was donated. Exalted Ruler, Marty Carroll, hopes the project will be an annual event. “Helping kids and helping the community is what the Elks are all about.”

Plant City Elks presented checks to representatives from all Plant City’s schools to pay student lunch debts.

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Plant City Elks presented checks to representatives from all Plant City’s schools to pay student lunch debts.

Leading Knight, Ron Schilffarth, presented a $1,000 check to Jamie Bateman, Executive Director at South Florida State College, for the Sebring Elks Scholarship Trust Fund.
South Hillsborough Lodge held their Flag Day salute June 11 at the lodge. The flags were presented by BSA Scout Troop 661 and Terry Ricket was chairman. In 1907, The Grand Lodge adopted June 14 as Flag Day. In 1908 at a Grand Lodge session in Dallas, a Flag Day ritual was presented and adopted. In 1911 in Atlantic City, it was made mandatory for all Elks lodges to hold a Flag Day ceremony. In 1949, the Elks were instrumental in getting June 14 declared a national holiday. President Truman signed the order in 1949.

Venice-Nokomis #1854
Venice-Nokomis Elks Lodge’s Hoop Shoot contestants, Ellie DiGiacomo, made it to the national championship. She has qualified for the last five years to go to the nationals in Valdosta, Ga. Venice mayor, John Holic, presented Ellie with the city of Venice pin.

Venice-Nokomis Lodge donated $1,500 to the Laurel Civic Center.
SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Englewood #2378
A luncheon was hosted by Englewood Elks Lodge #2378 to honor Students of the Month and Students of the Year. Sixteen students received $100 and two students received $300. The lodge also awarded $15,000 in scholarships to the students at Lemon Bay High School.

Greater Pine Island #2781
Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge #2781 used a Gratitude Grant for the Beacon Bites program. This program was known as Meals on Wheels. The name changed to indicate a refocusing of resources to combat issues facing Pine Island seniors. The Beacon Bites program delivers meals to people unable to purchase or prepare food on their own.

Naples #2010
There is not a more compelling duty for Naples Elks Lodge #2010 than to take care of the members of its community. More than 100 friends and family met at the lodge to come to the aid of Golden Gate resident Jim Kurth whose residence was completely destroyed in the recent brush fires. The lodge provided the venue free of charge for the benefit to raise money to help him begin rebuilding his life. Additionally, at the May lodge meeting, they voted to give Kurth a $300 donation.

On Thursday evenings, Naples Lodge holds a wing night where 10% of the proceeds is given to pediatric cancer. The lodge also donated $250 to the Special Olympics.

One of this year’s Americanism essay contest sponsors was by Naples Lodge, Almira Pratasenia, placed third in the state competition for Division I for fifth and sixth grade. This year’s scholarship recipients were Sophia Torres who was awarded $1,000 and Mellissa Gallo who was awarded $500.

Punta Gorda #2606
Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606 held their 10th annual bocce tournament and their 14th annual golf tournament which raised $1,294 and $5,578 respectively for Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services. The lodge also sent 88 kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

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SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Belle Glade-Pahokee #1716
Belle Glade-Pahokee Elks Lodge #1716 hosted the annual Glades Day School Prom and after-prom from 12-2 a.m. providing the students a safe night of games and entertainment in an alcohol- and drug-free environment.

Belle Glade-Pahokee Lodge also held a money drawing in May. It was a huge success with a great turnout where they served steak dinners. Members also donated barbecue dinners the same day to the local food bank and shelter.

Clewiston #1853
PDD Les Baucum, also a PER of Clewiston Lodge, had the honor of installing his son as the incoming Exalted Ruler at their officer installation ceremony. Carlton Baucum became a member of the lodge in 2013 as soon as he turned 21. Upon graduation from the University of Florida in 2014, he moved back to Clewiston and was installed as Lodge Esquire where he promptly learned and delivered the long version of the initiatory ritual. At 24 years old, he is the youngest member to serve as Exalted Ruler of the lodge.

Clewiston Lodge hosted their annual community Easter egg hunt. Children enjoyed hunting over 400 eggs as well as the face-painting, games and prizes. They all were given a lunch of hot dogs, chips and drinks. The Easter Bunny showed up on a fire engine which made lots of faces happy.

The annual Mother’s Day ceremony was also held. All mothers who attended were given a red or white corsage. The oldest and youngest mothers were given a bouquet of flowers. All mothers who attended the ceremony were given steak dinners.

Clewiston Lodge held their annual community awards ceremony for the local police, fire and sheriff departments as well as for teachers and local citizens. PDD Jimmie McDuffie was named Citizen of the Year for his many years of involvement and dedication to the community through his personal life, his business and the Elks.

Clewiston Lodge hosted the Southeast District Barbecue Cook-Off. First-place and third-place winners were from Clewiston Lodge and the second-place winner was from Jupiter. All proceeds went to the district projects.

A barbecue benefit luncheon was held in June to assist a member in need who is battling cancer. All proceeds went to the cause, which was approximately $3,000.
Clewiston’s 13th annual golf tournament was a big success. Challenged with the rain, everyone had a fun time and completed the course. They then met at the lodge for fellowship, awards and lunch. The event raised $9,000 for the scholarship funds.

**Jupiter #2469**

It has been a very active first quarter at Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469. They served the annual Breakfast with the Bunny, where local families had breakfast and the kids enjoyed the Easter Bunny’s garden patch with crafts, coloring and cartoons. At the Good Friday fish fry, they served 144 dinners, recruited new members and provided meals for the local fire department.

The Cinco de Mayo celebration offered authentic Mexican entrees and homemade flan, with ER Dave Desmond and First Lady Janet donning a festive look. The next day, members and guests gathered for the Kentucky Derby and enjoyed a delicious assortment of food, ice-cold mint juleps, a ladies’ hat contest and their own Elk races. All moms received a red rose and a free meal at the Mother’s Day brunch that was open to all local families.

Jupiter and Lake Okeechobee Elks celebrated the order’s Flag Day ritual. Their local Police Honor Guard opened the ceremony while the Boy and Girl Scouts admirably assisted with the parade of flags. The highlight of the day was the cake auction that raised over $800 for charity.

**West Palm Beach #1352**

On June 10, the Eagle Scout Court of Honor took place at West Palm Beach Elks Lodge #1352. The Eagle Scouts were awarded an Exalted Ruler Eagle Scout certificate, plaque and American flag. One percent of Boy Scouts attain the level of Eagle Scout, so the Elks were proud to honor three at the ceremony: Joseph Burton Jiampetti, Dylan Conner Adams and Austin James Williams. Boy Scout Troop #199 was also presented with a check from the lodge for $500.

**Jupiter #2469**

Joseph Burton Jiampetti, Dylan Conner Adams and Austin James Williams were recognized at West Palm Beach Elks Lodge as Eagle Scouts.

A touching interaction was captured during Boca Raton Lodge’s Kids Day of a young veteran with a student.

**Boca Raton Lodge**

Boca Raton Lodge held their fourth annual Kids Day at the Broward Children’s Center’s Preschool for developmentally impaired children Monday, June 12, as their Beacon Grant project. Lodge members and four young FAU veterans participated.

Boca Raton Lodge held a Flag Day ceremony and dinner dance at the lodge. The Boca Raton High School Navy Junior ROTC participated in the ceremony.

Boca Raton Lodge assisted Busch Wildlife Sanctuary with reinforcing their red fox enclosure by moving piles of dirt and installing an underground wire mesh floor. In the bottom row from left are Janet Desmond; Busch Wildlife Director, Amy Kight, and fox; and Teresa Snider. In the middle row are Iris Paul, Tammy Matsuo, Jim Johnson, Steve Snider, Bill Sheets and Vicky Doubleday. In the top row are Stephanie Craig, Chuck Hamlin, Bobby Paul, Mike Vota and ER Dave Desmond.

**SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

**Boca Raton #2166**

Boca Raton Elks Lodge #2166 held a successful blood drive and continues to serve breakfast to members and their guests each month. They held a Mother’s Day ceremony at the lodge and enjoyed lunch afterwards. The lodge donated 246 pounds of food to Boca Helping Hands for distribution to needy local families. They donated $500 to Island Dolphin Care to help them continue their dolphin therapy program for adults and children. They also donated $1,500 to the Boca Raton High School Navy Junior ROTC.

Delray Beach #1770

Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770 held its annual country western dinner dance. Members and guests enjoyed bull rides...
Florida Keys Lodge held its biggest fundraiser of the year for Elks charities, namely the Harry-Anna Investment Fund, Elks National Foundation and veterans programs. The fifth annual ladies dolphin tournament was held June 9-10. The awards ceremony was fit for the queens of the fishing world with awards presented to the top 10 teams. A record number of 43 members volunteered. They had 37 boats and 83 anglers participate. Area businesses donated silent auction items and sponsorships to ensure a huge success. The biggest dolphin caught was 45.6 pounds and the junior angler won with an 18-pound dolphin.

Florida Keys Elks sent six kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp this summer. The boy in front is waiting his turn to attend when he is old enough, but this year he tagged along on the bus. Members Roger and Terry Gormley drove them safely to Miami.

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Other donations made were $3,000 to Elks National Foundation, $500 to Cruiser Palooza, $500 to Santiago Kids Fund, $1,000 to the Special Olympics Bowling League, $1,000 to the Kids Rule Golf Camp, $2,000 to Delray Beach Children Boxing, $1,500 to victims of domestic abuse and $1,000 to the city of Delray campaign for grade-level reading.

Hollywood West #2365
Hollywood West Elks Lodge #2365 and its members were featured in a local newspaper chronicling the lodge’s 50 years of service to the community. The article informed readers of the programs that support youth and veterans, emphasizing the Hoop Shoot and the lodge’s very active involvement with the Sandy Nininger Veterans Nursing Home and with the Honor Flight.

Member Benny Stravato organized a motorcycle ride to benefit the Harry-Anna Investment Fund. Several dozen bikers from the Elks and neighboring lodges made a roundtrip ride to Okeechobee, Fla., stopping several times along the way. Upon their return, they enjoyed a barbecue dinner. All proceeds from the ride were donated to the Harry-Anna Investment Fund.

South District Elks took a bus trip to tour the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872 held two fun craft nights with Girl Scouts from Troops #92, #461 and #448. Elks members taught the girls how to make pretty flower arrangements using paint and plastic bottles of various sizes. Each scout completed a vase of flowers tied with ribbons for Mother’s Day gifts. For Father’s Day gifts, they made a pencil and pen holder from a soup can decorated with felt to look like a man’s shirt and tie.

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South District

On Saturday, April 29, members of the South District ventured on a bus trip to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. Jeff Muehfeld, PDD of Miami Lodge #948 organized the trip. It was the first time to the camp for 31 of the members. On the return trip to Miami, the members stopped for dinner at Stuart-Jensen Lodge #1870 which was hosted by Exalted Ruler, Beth Snyder, and Joey and Suzi Simonelli.

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Green Cove Springs #1892
Green Cove Springs Elks presented each of the 10 female veterans at Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home with Mother’s Day bouquets May 12. For the past three years, a small group of members has gone to the home to show the lodge’s gratitude to these veterans for their service. This year was extra special because Heath, a service dog in training for K9s for Warriors, came along to the delight of all. Heath was an immediate hit with the residents and service providers. The event was funded by a Gratitude Grant.

Many Tallahassee military veterans participated in an Honor Flight to Washington Saturday, May 6. There were 168 veterans and guardians on the flight and six of the veterans were from Tallahassee Lodge. Secretary Wayne Harrell was a guardian on the trip. Four nurses, 8 EMTs and local physician Dr. Michael Forsthoefel accompanied those traveling.

Inverness #2522
A luncheon was hosted by Olive Garden for the local veterans and mental health services, HIV/AIDS and mental health services, HIV/AIDS and counseling, legal services, employment and educational services, VA benefits counseling, housing, haircuts, meals, showers, free local bus transportation, and driver’s license assistance. The lodge provided breakfast and lunch to the 300 or so veterans in attendance using an ENF grant.

Perry #1851
This is the second year that the Perry community has welcomed the Combat Marine Warriors, a group of wounded military veterans, and their guests. The M.A. Rigoni Inc. Foundation in Perry spearheads the weeklong event along with the support of several other business and personal sponsors. Many of those involved are members of Perry Elks Lodge #1851. The Combat Warriors were welcomed upon their arrival at Tallahassee Airport by several of the local Patriot Guard Riders from Perry along with a host of others, and they were escorted more than 50 miles to Perry. Their week included guided fishing and hunting excursions, airboat rides, skeet shooting and more. The closing celebration dinner for the warriors was held at Perry Lodge with over 100 in attendance, including sponsors and volunteers.

Tallahassee #937
Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937 was pleased again this year to participate in the North Florida Veterans Stand Down April 21-22. Some of the services provided for veterans were medical, dental, veterinary, vision and glucose testing, 12-step and PTSD/TBI counseling, housing, haircuts, meals, showers, free local bus transportation, and driver’s license assistance. The lodge provided breakfast and lunch to the 300 or so veterans in attendance using an ENF grant.

Inverness residents welcomed the Honor Flight contingent home at the end of the day.

From left are Dr. Michael Forsthoefel and Honor Flight event coordinators, Tom Napier (Tallahassee Lodge member) and Mac Kemp.

Heath, a K9s for Warriors service dog in training, helps deliver flowers to veterans with trainer, Penny Kunze; PER Kathy Thompson; PER Richard Kunze, Veterans Committee Chairman; and Lucie Barnett, Leading Knight. Not pictured are Linda Rittenhouse and PER Gene Rittenhouse.

Korean War veteran John Holgan and his guardian explore Washington on the day of the flight.

A local Boy Scout welcomed a veteran home to Tallahassee.

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In Washington, D.C. After lunch, Kathy Bogess and Rose O’Toole of the West Central Florida Honor Flight presented a quilt to each veteran and thanked them for their service. Representing Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 were PER Mike Orndorff, Rose O’Toole, George McElvy, Grover Good, Nathan Cyr, Richard Johnson, Kathy Bogess, Barbara Mills, and Virginia Lesser, Olive Garden manager. Orndorff presented a donation to Barbara Mills, guardian coordinator for the West Central Florida Honor Flight.

Kissimmee #1873
Since October 2016 when the USO opened a station at Orlando International Airport, three Kissimmee Elks have been volunteering every Sunday. Kay and Bruce Almquist and District Deputy, Bill Misczak, have put in approximately 144 hours. Lodge members have contributed over $3,600 to this project. These funds buy drinks and snacks and other items to entertain the service men and women during their layover in Orlando, Fla.

Orlando #1079
Orlando Lodge #1079 celebrated Kentucky Derby Day by hosting an event in their ballroom to raise money for the Army of Hope. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America has long been a supporter of veterans and was the first organization to build veterans hospitals in World War I. The Elks have made a promise that “so long as there are veterans, the Elks will never forget them.” One of the many programs to ensure that we keep that promise is the Army of Hope program; its mission is to provide aid assistance to the families of deceased, disabled and deployed members of the military. With the help of 50 loyal lodge members who attended this event, $300 was raised for this charity.

Orlando Lodge catered a Memorial Day luncheon at the veterans Lake Nona facility. Seventeen lodge members served 175 residents and family members pulled pork, baked beans, and macaroni and cheese. A balloon artist provided entertainment and balloon hats. Members also continue to go to the veterans hospital to play bingo and provide snacks for the residents on a monthly basis.

Orlando Lodge member Lisa Ann Leighty is a longtime volunteer at both the Lake Baldwin and Lake Nona Veterans Administration hospitals. She has taken the courses required by the Veterans Administration to make her a more valued volunteer and able to provide better care and assistance to the veterans. In her position, she organizes activities for the residents and coordinates with lodge members to help conduct some of the programs. These events include monthly bingo parties, luncheons and Veteran’s Day barbecues. Leighty takes the veterans on shopping trips, to restaurants for lunch and on fishing trips to local lakes. She has helped with the Wounded Warrior golf tournament and with the annual Christmas luncheon at the lodge for the visually impaired veterans in the central region. She volunteers over 20 hours a week and was recently recognized with a plaque from the Veterans Administration for contributing over 1,000 hours of service to the residents of the Lake Nona facility.

Orlando Lodge member Lisa Ann Leighty was recently recognized for her tremendous amount of service to local VA hospitals.

Port St. Lucie #2658
Port St. Lucie Elks Lodge #2658 hosted the annual Memorial Day picnic for 60 members and guests showing proper flag etiquette and patriotic fervor. The flag was displayed at half-staff until noon, at which time the Exalted Ruler, Arlene Dailey, and Veterans Chairman, Teresa Rahrig (USAF retired), raised the flag. Members and guests enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs from the grill along with salads and corn on the cob. Handheld flags and decorated cupcakes were given out for donations to the Elks Lodge Grace pack and Veterans Charities. Enthusiastic members sent over 15 email messages of support and encouragement to soldiers which demonstrated a little love from home. Everyone enjoyed the patriotic music which was played by Treasurer, Ralph Annuzziata, PER. Many members were impressed with the veterans display which included photos of veterans and highlights of the many veterans programs that are available within the Elks organization. Handouts included information on President Kennedy’s Presidential Memorial Certificate program originating in 1962. These certificates honor discharged and deceased veterans. The parchment certificate bears the signature of the current president. We will not forget the high price of freedom or our veterans and soldiers overseas.

Stuart-Jensen #1870
Stuart-Jensen Elks Lodge officers along with their BSA Venture Crew #2832 and Cub Scout Pack 832 marched in the Stuart Memorial Day parade. Afterward, they all came back for a fun picnic at the lodge. Members also made a $1,000 donation to the Honor Flight to help a veteran attend this great event.

A Blue Star Memorial Marker was placed at Bay Pines Veterans Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Fla., and was
made possible by the Florida State Elks Association Inc. and the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs Inc. The marker is to remind us of the sacrifice made by veterans who have served and continue to serve in the military to assure our continued freedom. A memorial marker will be placed in all VA national cemeteries in Florida.

A memorial marker will be placed in all VA national cemeteries in Florida. The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (T.A.P.S.) partnered with several Elks lodges this year to help the families of fallen veterans. We cheer on the veterans returning home but often forget about the grief-stricken families who suffer alone. T.A.P.S. is a charity that provides financial and emotional support with paying living expenses and grief counseling for loved ones in their time of need. The program also helps families who have lost a veteran from suicide.

A fundraising event was held at the Military Museum in Largo, Fla., March 28. Holiday Isles, St. Petersburg, Largo and Tarpon Springs Elks donated $2,200 for this event. A total of $14,500 was raised. For the 2016-2017 Elk year, a total of $23,600 was raised for the T.A.P.S. families. Gene LaPouttre of Holiday Isles Lodge #1912 was a co-chairman for the year’s events.

**St. Petersburg #1224**

On April 7, St. Petersburg Elks Johnny Miller and Liz Ramsburg were part of a large group of volunteers who were honored at C. W. Bill Young VA for their determination and dedication to help veterans. Miller received a certificate for volunteering a collected 3,496 hours for the center over the last nine years. Ramsburg received a certificate for having volunteered a total of 1,296 hours during the last six years. The Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program is currently the largest centralized volunteer program in the federal government. The success of the VAVS program is due to the enthusiastic efforts on the part of...
many organizations such as the Elks and volunteers like Johnny Miller and Liz Ramsburg.

On Saturday, April 8, Anne Compton and Kat Chaplin represented St. Petersburg Lodge at the Stand Down for homeless veterans at C. W. Bill Young VA Medical Center. The purpose of the event was to provide resources to local homeless veterans to assist them in bettering their circumstances. The lodge had a table where they gave blankets made by lodge volunteers to homeless veterans.

St. Petersburg Lodge believes in our veterans and fun! The lodge goal is to contribute in ways that enrich the lives of veterans residing at C. W. Bill Young VAMC. The lodge donated $420 to provide monthly bowling outings at Seminole Lanes for the veterans from the domiciliary.

Seminole #2519
On April 9, Seminole Elks hosted bingo at C. W. Bill Young VAMC for the veterans. In addition, the lodge Veterans Services Committee had a fundraiser on Flag Day for the VAMC. There was a drawing for several baskets and more than $350 was raised to purchase over 60 bus passes for the veterans.

Seminole Lodge donated over 170 razors to Pinellas Hope which assists homeless veterans and homeless persons. The donation was well received since their inventory was low. The lodge also sponsored 15 veterans from the Homeless Empowerment Project to enjoy a lodge dinner and karaoke June 25.

Seminole Lodge’s Freedom Grant is being used to assist Heaven on Earth for veterans. Heaven on Earth provides quality living spaces for veterans in need. The lodge has been delivering bedding and cleaning supplies to eight transitional homes in the program.

Tampa #708
Penny, a 10-year veteran of the Air National Guard who was deployed during Desert Storm, is the latest Athena veteran Tampa Elks Lodge has assisted. Penny has successfully transitioned into her own apartment where she is thriving despite having broken her foot right before she moved. Penny works in a therapeutic work program for the VA on a part-time basis to supplement her pension. Although Penny was very resourceful in getting her apartment furnished, there were a lot of items she needed which the lodge was happy to provide for Penny’s new home, including everyday basics such as a microwave oven and a clock.

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855
Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855 held a veterans lunch June 27 for lodge veterans and local veterans from assisted living facilities. From left are Joe Barbera, Ralph Uhlenburg, Darrell Cope, Charles Simmons, Murray Silver, Jerry Cosentino and Bob Deam. Veterans Chairman, Jack Ogren, is in the back.

Sarasota South #2495
Sarasota South Elks Lodge #2495 hosts a luncheon every other month for veterans who are in local nursing homes. This month 85 veterans attended. The guest speaker was from the Sarasota National Cemetery. The speaker explained what veterans should do in advance to make it easier on their loved ones and discussed some unique situations that a few of the veterans had and what they needed to do to take care of the issues. At the end of the luncheon, lap blankets were given to any veteran who wanted one.

Tarpon Springs #1719
More than 15 members of Tarpon Springs Elks Lodge #1719 participated in the city’s Memorial Day service at Craig Park War Memorial on Spring Bayou. The lodge provided hot dogs, hamburgers and lemonade to a crowd of 100 citizens who participated in and attended the ceremony.

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Plant City #1727
On Memorial Day, Judy Wise, Plant City Lodge Veterans Chairman, and her husband, Ed, presented the Plant City Elks Lodge memorial wreath at the American Legion to honor the fallen. Between 200 and 250 guests attended the ceremony.

Rotonda #2710
Rotonda Elks Lodge #2710 once again hosted the Army of Hope picnic. With the help from all lodges in the South Southwest District, over $27,000 was raised in an afternoon filled with music, food and family.

Jupiter #2469
A contingent of Jupiter Elks prepared and served approximately 30 lasagna dinners for the Renewal Coalition, an organization supporting veterans and their families.
West Palm Beach #1352

On June 11, the George E. Sheldon Gold Star and Blue Star Memorial Garden dedication took place at West Palm Beach Elks Lodge #1352. Past District Deputy, Carl Williams, was the main speaker of the dedication and spoke of Sheldon’s 25 years in the U.S. Marine Corp as well as his 41 years as a dedicated Elk. The Patriot Guard Riders were part of the dedication. Alan Cole, Patriot Guard Riders Assistant State Captain and fellow Elk, presented Cyndi Jones, daughter of George Sheldon, a Patriot Guard Riders Challenge Coin and Eagle pendant necklace.

SSE PER Association

The South Southeast PER Association sent donations to two veterans programs. They donated to the Women Veterans Baby Shower to be held in November at the Miami VA Hospital. They also sent a donation to allow six to eight paraplegic veterans to attend the Veterans Paraplegic Games in Los Angeles this summer.

Boca Raton #2166

The members of Boca Raton Elks Lodge #2166 held a special recognition dinner for the FAU student veterans at the lodge and hosted over 30 veterans and members. The FAU veterans support the Elks by distributing food, personal hygiene items and clothing to homeless veterans in the area. The dinner was to celebrate their involvement in the lodge and community. The lodge also helped a homeless veteran acquire dormitory housing at FAU so that he could continue his studies. Rick Haradon, Lodge Chairman of the Veterans Committee, works with these young veterans every day to help them find their way while serving their country.

On Memorial Day, Boca Raton Lodge was once again represented at Boca Raton’s annual Memorial Day ceremony at the local cemetery. The Exalted Ruler was one of the guest speakers.

Hollywood West #2365

Hollywood West Elks Lodge #2365 holds monthly flea markets for veterans and they also bring in veterans from Sandy Nininger Nursing Home once a month to participate in their monthly brunch. The members recently participated in the welcome-home Honor Flight celebration at Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport. A color guard and bagpipers led the procession and veterans were warmly welcomed home from their trip.

Veterans Chairman, George Caffrey, presented a Purple Heart flag to Frank Ortis, the mayor of Pembroke Pines, Fla. The flag will be flown at City Hall proclaiming that the city of Pembroke Pines is a Purple Heart city committed to honoring America’s combat wounded veterans.

Florida Keys #1872

Florida Keys Elks Lodge’s Vets on the Water program made it possible for four veterans to have a day of fishing in the beautiful Florida Keys. The lodge’s Impact Grant and one of the lodge’s partners, Takedown Charters of Islamorada, provided this very successful fishing day.

Oakland Park #2407

The members of Oakland Park Elks Lodge #2407 continue to support veterans by hosting dinners for them which are served by a local Girl Scout troop. They have held meetings with Honor Flight and have shared all information about them with their veterans. They are now working on recruiting more volunteers to continue their project of reading to residents at the Miami VA Hospital.

Pompano Beach #1898

Pompano Beach Elks Lodge #1898 has been supporting Sand and Spurs, a local 501(c)(3) charity that helps veterans and children learn how to ride and care for horses. Children enjoy riding Jade and Libby. Lodge members also support the Adopt-a-Vet program in their community. One veteran they have worked with is now nicely recuperating from surgery and will be with his family soon. Two new veterans are also being helped. An anonymous member provided a donation to allow local high school juniors and seniors to volunteer at the Bill Kling VA Clinic in Sunrise, Fla. The experience will allow them to assist veterans and learn about their sacrifices for our country.

For more news in between magazine editions, visit the Florida Elks online.

www.floridaelks.org facebook.com/floridaelks
DISTRICT REPORTERS

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Midyear Convention
Plantation at Crystal River
November 9 - 11, 2017
Henry O’Neil, Exalted Grand Architect: The Father of Elks Structure

Henry O’Neil was a member of New York Lodge #1. He served as Grand Treasurer at the first meeting of the Grand Lodge Feb. 12, 1871, and as Exalted Grand Ruler, as it was then called, from 1875-1876.

The distinctive features which make our fraternity unique in the group of similar fraternal organizations are due to Henry O’Neil. He gave it its first laws, its ritualistic formulae in extenso and its odes. His intellect for years directed the organization’s policy. It is due to him that this association of men under the title of Elks became an order. It was O’Neil’s suggestion that caused the formation of Elks jurisprudence. Its development from there has been an evolution in accordance with the needs of the order itself, various laws being since framed to meet requirements.

He conceived the application of the newly established principles of Elkdome: charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity. He elaborated the esoteric work of the order and made laws which are still in force and effect except such changes as the latter-day requirements of the order demanded.

O’Neil worked incessantly to spread the doctrine of fraternity in the particular form with which we are familiar, divesting an association of bigotry, dogma and an attempt to paraphrase religious rites. As Exalted Grand Ruler he suggested the enlargement of the boundaries of the order, then confined to two lodges, and he provided the laws requisite to grant dispensation for No. 3 and granted such dispensation.

He originated the ritual for the annual Lodge of Sorrow and the Decoration Day service. He collated and put the words to many of the odes, copywriting the same in his own name and presenting them to the order. He also selected the amaranth and ivy as funeral emblems.

In short, O’Neil left a legacy of his own personality which pervades the entire system that goes so far to make up the order.

His funeral was largely attended by members of New York Lodge #1 and his casket was covered with amaranth and ivy. He was buried in Cavalry Cemetery in Long Island City, N.Y.

Best Practices for Running a Successful Lodge: Guidelines for Keeping Lodge Records

The length of time a lodge should keep a document depends on the action, expense or the event the document records. Generally, you must keep your records that support an item of income or deductions on a tax return until the period of limitations for that return runs out.

The period of limitations is the period of time in which you can amend your tax return to claim a credit or refund or that the IRS can assess additional tax. The information to the right contains the periods of limitations that apply to income tax returns. Unless otherwise stated, the years refer to the period after the return was filed. Returns filed before the due date are treated as filed on the due date.

The following questions should be applied to each record as you decide whether to keep a document or throw it away:

Are the records connected to assets?

Keep records relating to property until the period of limitations expires for the year in which you dispose of the property in a taxable disposition. You must keep these records to figure any depreciation, amortization or depletion deduction and to figure the gain or loss when you sell or otherwise dispose of the property.
24th Annual Florida State Elks Softball Tournament

April 28-30 in DeLand, Fla.

Proceeds of $5,000 will benefit the Harry-Anna Investment Fund.

OVER 50 – A DIVISION
First Place: Port St. Lucie
Second Place: Fort Pierce
Third Place: Delray Beach

OVER 50 – B DIVISION
First Place: Delray Beach #1
Second Place: Delray Beach #2
Third Place: Green Cove Springs

UNDER 50 DIVISION
First Place: Winter Garden
Second Place: DeLand
Third Place: Cocoa

Port St. Lucie won first place in the Over 50 – A Division.

Delray Beach #1 won first place in the Over 50 – B Division.

Winter Garden won first place in the Under 50 Division.

Chris Chatham, tournament chairman, and State President John Harris, present Joseph Pepe with his award for winning the Over 50 Batting Contest.
The 10th Annual Florida Elks Day at the Rays Fundraiser

SUNDAY, SEPT. 17
VS. BOS

Start Time: 1:10 p.m.
GATES OPEN: 11:10 a.m.
(subject to change)

DON’T MISS
• Free parking for cars with 4 or more people
• Hooded Bath Towel and Elks Tote Bag Giveaway
  (while supplies last)
• Kids run the bases post game
• Ted Williams Museum

LOWER CORNER TICKETS ARE $29 (up to $40 value)
A portion of each ticket sold will benefit the Harry-Anna Investment Fund.

Tickets are subject to availability.
Discounted ticket price is not available after the deadline.

SAVE THE DATE

This exclusive offer includes a Florida Elks personalized Rays tote bag.
Participating lodges that purchase 20 or more tickets will be enrolled in the Rays Group Leader Rewards program.

For questions please call your Harry-Anna Chairman or Richard Jacobs at:
727-430-1584 or CEJEMJ0205@aol.com

DEADLINE TO PURCHASE IS MONDAY, SEPT. 4, 2017