Camper Extraordinaire:
How the Florida Elks Youth Camp Inspired, Connected and Expanded Bo Cooper's World

West Palm Beach Elks Celebrate 100 Years

Punta Gorda Lodge Holds Record-Breaking Initiation

2018 Brotherhood Ride
MICHAEL F. SMITH, PNP, STATE SPONSOR

As we return from the Past State Presidents workshop along with co-sponsors Bob Grafton and Val Bates, it is very apparent that it is great to be a Florida Elk. We had a chance to witness camp in progress with hundreds of children enjoying our facility. Our Camp Director, Nick Miller, and the entire staff are incredibly talented and certainly enjoy the fruits of their labor. Summer camp hosted 2,335 children; that is a record! If that is not enough excitement, how about Colleen Gallant, our Therapy Services Director, and our 27 (soon to be 28) therapists treating 510 children! Compound our major projects with Dana Beatty, Meeting and Events Coordinator, growing our Smith Conference Center to a premier corporate destination. Put all our superior programs together and add the outstanding work COO/State Secretary, Carl Seibert, and his staff achieve in administering our projects. We need to thank Rachael King and Laz Suarez for this publication. We should all be proud of our membership and the FSEA. If you share our story with others, we will grow beyond expectations. Give your friends and neighbors the opportunity to feel good by making them a member and share our story.

Our amazing Florida Ladies of Elks celebrated their 55th convention in September. The continued support from FLOE seems to have no limits. They are a vital part of the Florida State Elks and we congratulate and thank them for all their efforts and generosity.

Our midyear convention at the Plantation Resort in Crystal River is upon us and we hope you have made plans to come share fellowship with other Elks. There is much to learn while at the convention and have fun while learning about our opportunities. Come meet, greet and learn.

Mark your calendars and pay tribute to our veterans who made it possible to enjoy what we have in the United States of America. Make your lodge's Veterans Day celebration a special event. The memorial service is the first Sunday in December. This is a dedicated time to remember our absent members and their families.

As we move into the holiday season, Bob, the Bateses and the Smiths wish you and your families a safe and joyful experience. This would be a perfect time for your lodge to schedule a membership appreciation drive and have a goal of your lodge be at least a plus one net after delinquents going into the new calendar year. What a great way to celebrate the season by having positive growth with positive members. Set the goal and make the commitment.

Michael F. Smith, PNP,
State Sponsor
Florida State Elks Association

Welcome in 2019

Overnight accommodations at FEYC include:
- Cabin lodging or RV site (5 members per cabin)
- Heavy appetizers 7-11 p.m. New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day Brunch 11 a.m.

Elks are encouraged to bring their own favorite adult beverages.

All payments must be received by Dec. 27, 2018.

Tickets:
$60 per Adult
$25 Kids 13 & younger

Reservations:
352-431-8701
Make checks payable to:
Florida Elk Youth Camp
24175 S Highway 450
Umatilla, FL 32784

Entertainment by:
Southern Style Vocal Band
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*** ALL address changes, requests for only one magazine per household and cancellations MUST be done through the member's lodge, not the Florida Elks Magazine Editor.

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: Facebook.com/floridaelks.
FRANK MALATESTA, STATE PRESIDENT

Time is really flying by for Sally and me and VPAL Tom and Joyce Ludwig! What an honor it is for us to travel our great state and meet so many new friends and rekindle many friendships from the past. Visiting so many lodges and seeing firsthand all the wonderful things you are doing for your communities, our children and our veterans is very rewarding. We do have so many lodges and members that are practicing the Elks motto, “Elks Care – Elks Share.”

Since the summer magazine, we have been very busy. We attended the Grand Lodge convention in San Antonio and we have visited four more districts and had the pleasure to attend the FLOE conference at Lake Buena Vista Resort.

It was truly my pleasure to represent the Florida State Elks Association as your state president at the 150th anniversary of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in San Antonio. I was proud to have the honor to carry and present the Florida state flag on Sunday at the opening ceremony.

Congratulations go to our 14 District Deputies who were installed by the new Grand Exalted Ruler, Michael T. Luhr.

Soon after returning from San Antonio, we traveled to the Southwest Central District. Friday night at Plant City Lodge #172 was enjoyed by all. On Saturday we toured the American Victory docked at the port of Tampa. This floating museum is really a treasure. We had a delicious lunch at Jackson’s Bistro. Saturday evening’s visit to Brandon Lodge #2383 was great. We were greeted at the door by Florida Brass that played before and during dinner.

DVP George Scribner and his wife, Mary Lou, made Sally and me feel at home with their warm hospitality.

On our visit to the Southeast District, we had the privilege of attending the 100th anniversary celebration of West Palm Beach Lodge #1352 Friday evening. What a great accomplishment! PGER Bob Grafton was there to tell those in attendance a lot about the history of the lodge and West Palm Beach. It was truly a memorable evening. On Saturday, we went to Lion Country Safari and were able to feed the giraffes. Then we were off to Jupiter Lodge #2469 for a fantastic lunch. All the volunteers did a great job welcoming us to their lodge. Dinner was at West Palm Beach Lodge where everyone wore their favorite baseball team attire and the room was decorated in a baseball theme. DVP George Zocchi and his wife, Esther, were great hosts for the weekend.

Our next visit was to the South Southeast District where we were greeted by DVP Frank Sellers and Charlotte Burrie. Friday evening dinner was at Hollywood West Lodge #2365. All in attendance witnessed a room full of baseball memorabilia. We enjoyed a marvelous meal and lots of fun. We had a wonderful breakfast at Boca Raton Lodge #2166 Saturday morning. We then went on a city tour on the Pompano Water Taxi, and thanks to Pompano Beach Fire Department, we had a very safe outing. Our lunch Saturday afternoon at Delay Beach Lodge #1770 was fantastic thanks to the many volunteers. We had an awesome dinner Saturday evening at the Westin Hotel. I was presented with a key to the city of Pompano Beach and a lot of baseball souvenirs. Again, DVP Frank Sellers and Charlotte Burrie were wonderful hosts all weekend.

Our next visit was to the West Central District. Our hosts for the weekend were DVP Tony Fratello and his wife, Marilyn. Friday evening dinner at New Port Richey Lodge #2284 was awesome.

We started Saturday with sightseeing and shopping at the sponge docks in historic Tarpon Springs. It was a beautiful day for the boat tour and we were able to stroll on the beach at Anclote Key and watch dolphins. The Saturday evening dinner at Tarpon Springs Lodge #1719 was great. We were entertained by Levendia Dance Troupe before dinner. Mayor Chris Alahouzos presented me with a sponge diver statue from Greece. The weekend was capped off by a big win by the Tampa Bay Rays. I was honored to be able to throw out the first pitch to start the game. It was especially satisfying to see our therapy services CHAMP, Jackson, call “Play Ball!” to start the game.

The FLOE conference at Lake Buena Vista Resort was very informative and a great celebration. We listened to reports about all the wonderful accomplishments of the ladies organizations throughout Florida. We saw Felicia Vuletich installed as president along with all the new officers, and we watched as Mary McCoy received her new title of Past State President. Thank you, ladies, for all your dedication and your donations to our major projects and the support of your lodges.

My motto is “Make the Best Better.” I hope that every Exalted Ruler in our great state thinks that their lodge is the best and that they work every day to make their lodge better. This can be achieved by making your Harry-Anna Trust Fund goal and initiating all candidates on hand as soon as possible.

Sally and I want to thank everyone who has made us feel so welcome and special on our visits. We are looking forward to seeing you on the remainder of our visits and at the midyear convention at the Plantation on Crystal River in November. God bless our troops, God bless the Florida State Elks Association and may God bless America.

Frank Malatesta, State President
Florida State Elks Association
Quit trying to do so much and do fewer things better. Everyone wants to be a part of a good thing, and fewer things done well go a lot further to attract others. We are all familiar with the elevator pitch: a brief, persuasive speech used to spark interest in what we do. It lasts no longer than a short elevator ride of 20-30 seconds, hence the name. We must each work to craft our elevator pitch, and we must make it work right, we will improve our opportunity to grow our membership.

Stop using the statutes book as the “book of law” and use common sense to solve problems. Anyone can interpret most any statute to read the way they want it to read. Most are not lawyers and should quit trying to play one. Statutes remove the role of whites and fancifulities of a few individuals. They provide framework to our organization and are tools to assist in the management of the lodge. Law is developed around the “reasonable man” theory. We should ask what a reasonable person would do in a situation and guide our actions accordingly in our dealings with our members.

Change the focus from Elks as fundraisers to Elks as everyday people doing extraordinary things! We are fooling ourselves if we think others don’t see us this way. As much as we try to sell new members on the impact we are making on those we help, once they do join, they realize quickly that it’s all about the fundraising, hence number 6 above! Our membership door is revolving because we attract members for all the wrong reasons, chief of which is to be a glorified fundraiser. It might work for a couple years but the fun in fundraising wears off and the member moves on. Our membership chairman has statistics which prove that many of our lapsed members have been members four years or less. We are burning them out and this is not how to create sustainable membership growth!

Each of us has a why, a “why-did-you-join-the-Els?” story, but often we don’t share it! Is it because our why is no longer relevant in today’s Elks because of the shift we have made toward it being all about fundraising? What is wrong with just joining to belong – to be a part of something larger and more impactful than just one person? The why is the secret to our membership growth. Our why must be more about social interaction and the impact we have on others and less in bodies to raise the money. Our why must be about working together toward a focused cause! How’s this for the why and not just the what we do?

The Elks are THE premier social/civic/patriotic organization in the country. We are everyday people doing extraordinary things for children and veterans and those less fortunate than ourselves. We are larger than just one person or thing and we are successful because we work well together. We work hard, we play hard, and we maintain lodge buildings where we meet, socialize and plan our activities. We are all about our communities and want to be known as the place the community goes for volunteers.

Would you like to belong? I would love to invite you to our lodge to learn more!

Officer elections occur in February and the decisions made could be the difference between success or failure. Don’t just use the current job descriptions for officers unless you are one of those extremely rare lodges that is excelling on all fronts (membership, financial, community impact). Inform your members what offices are open and about the obligation required. Make sure your candidates want to move up and not just do the lodge a favor. Don’t just look for robots to those in charge. Seek self-starter, free-thinking members with new ideas and give them the freedom and latitude to work in the lodge. A lodge is not one person; it is all members represented by elected officers. The lodge is no place for selfishness, arrogance or self-promotion. We must get rid of everything but selfless, humane actions in service of those in need, our communities and our fellow members. We must stop any insanity and focus on saving this organization.

Carl Seibert, COO/State Secretary
Florida State Elks Association

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.
MARY MCCOY, PRESIDENT, FLORIDA LADIES OF ELKS

Chinese auction which was a huge success this year due to the efforts of Diane Sharp and Barbara Carroll from the West Central District. Thank you so much, ladies!

Finally September came and we headed to our 55th annual FLOE conference at the Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort. Although this conference was not as well attended as some others, those who were there enjoyed it immensely. The accommodations and the food were excellent and everything managed to run on schedule. As you know, a successful event like this is not achieved through the work of one person. I cannot thank my conference committees enough; Pam Snyder from Punta Gorda who ran registration, Carol Milroy and her Punta Gorda Ladies who organized a fabulous fundraising shop, Susie Harlow from Tampa who handled a successful raffle in spite of personal challenges, Janice Mackenzie from Punta Gorda who did table setup, Mary Gail Phillips from Punta Gorda who did banquet seating, and PSP Judy Reyes from St. Augustine who jumped in at the last minute to set up and organize the dignitary tables for lunch and dinner and assisted in greeting my guests at the cocktail reception.

A beautiful and emotional memorial service was flawlessly presented by our Chaplain, Melanei McHale, and the ladies of Fort Pierce. Thank you so much!

One special lady from Fort Pierce painted giraffes on rocks and scattered them all over the hotel and on the lunch and dinner tables. Thank you so much for this unique gift. Many of us including myself took them home and they will forever remind us of this conference.

My thanks would not be complete without mentioning Heather Scott’s awesome centerpieces. She not only made most of them single-handedly but she transported them back and forth to the convention and then back again to the conference. I don’t think she will ever want to see another giraffe! PSP Becky Long arranged for my beautiful pin which I will treasure forever, and Secretary Adella Ashton took care of all the badges and trophies needed for the conference.

Our 365 Club committee chairlady, PSP Carol Deresh, presented a check in the amount of $3,464.79 to Nick Miller, Director of the Florida Elks Youth Camp, and a check in the amount of $3,714.79 to Colleen Gallant, Director of Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services. This brings the total 365 Club funds donated since 1977 to $424,170.75.
Therapist Yvette Lambert speaks to the audience about one of her patients at the 2018 FLOE conference.

VA facility and suggested that if the ladies organizations were interested, they could make these kits and give them to their local VA centers, too. My guest speaker was Leonard E. "Lenny" Smallacombe, PDD, past State Coordinator for the FSEA Presidential Memorial Certificates program. His presentation was very informative, as he explained how easy it is to obtain these certificates for a deceased friend or family member who served in the armed forces.

In closing, I would like to say that there are no words to say how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to serve as State President of FLOE. I wish 2018-2019 President, Felicia Vuletich, a successful year, and be ready for an exciting time!

Mary McCoy, 2017-2018 President
Florida Ladies of Elks

Twenty-three Punta Gorda Elkettes attended the 55th annual Florida Ladies of Elks conference and brought with them a $5,000 donation for Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services, a $600 donation from the Elks bocce league for the Florida Elks Youth Camp wish list, and bed pillows and linens for the camp cabins.

New FLOE officers are installed at the 2018 FLOE conference. Pictured are Felicia Vuletich, President; Adella Ashton, Vice President; Marlene Evans, Secretary; Linda Rittenhouse, Treasurer; Susie Harlow, Parliamentarian; Betty Orcutt, Chaplain; Laura Sandell, Historian; Mary McCoy, PSP, 4-year Advisor; and Pam Snyder, 4-year Advisor.

I am very honored to be the FLOE President for 2018-2019. I am so grateful for all the support from the FLOE members as well as the FSEA. Thank you, Mary McCoy, officers, advisory board, delegates and members for a job well done for the 2017-2018 year. I am looking forward to working together to help support the FSEA charities. I have chosen the colors for my year because they have a special meaning to me. Aqua represents the beautiful waters of our great state and copper to remind us that every penny we earn to support our charities is important. I am striving to inspire us all to work together again this year to “Brighten a Child’s Future.” With your continued support, dedication and hard work, we can have another awesome year as we support the FSEA major projects. Thank you!

– Felicia Vuletich
COLLEEN GALLANT, FLORIDA ELKS CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES DIRECTOR

W

OW. Here we are and it is already fall. We had a great summer with so many things going on at Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services.

Our 150th anniversary celebration in San Antonio was incredible. There were so many more people at the convention this year than last year which helped us tremendously with the raffle we had at the major projects booth. We sold chances on a men’s .5 carat diamond ring, a black onyx ring and two Elk bolo ties. We raised more than $5,400 for our major projects. I thank all who participated in the raffle.

I am happy to report that we now have 28 therapists working for Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. Our 27th therapist started in September and our 28th therapist will start with FECTS Oct. 29. Since the beginning of the year, we have hired Samantha Yox, DPT who covers the North Central and Central districts; Camille Arevalo, OT/RL who covers the South District; Rebecca Fenner, OT/RL who covers the North Central, Central, West Central, and Southwest Central districts; and Tina Morris, RPT who will cover the South Southeast District.

After we returned from the national convention, we started our travels once again with our state president. At each visit, a therapist speaks, and in some cases, a family member speaks on behalf of a child being treated. It is so amazing to hear a parent tell their story of how much their lives have improved because of the treatment our therapists provide. We heard a retired veteran tell us how helpless he felt when he could not help his newborn son and had to depend on our therapist to help his son get strong and healthy like his twin brother. Each time I hear one of these stories, I am even more grateful to be a part of such an amazing organization that cares so deeply for our children, especially the ones who cannot help themselves.

Our FECTS CHAMP of the year, Jackson Barth, was featured in the summer edition of our magazine, and on Sept. 19, he had surgery at Arnold Palmer Children’s Hospital. On my way to the FLOE convention, I stopped to visit Jackson and he was doing amazingly well. What a trooper he is. Our COO/State Secretary, Carl Selbert, sent out a blast email and I am so happy to tell you that many of our members, lodges and districts sent cards and goodies to Jackson. He was so excited to hear from so many Elks and ladies organizations. I have seen the joy on Jackson’s face when he sees and hears from his newly found Elk family. I am extremely grateful to all who made Jackson our special little guy.

We recently returned from the FLOE convention and the ladies continue to amaze us all with their fundraising activities. Last year at convention, we distributed certificates recognizing $30,576.90 in donations, and this year, I am so pleased to tell you that the certificates that we distributed were for $44,689.11, which is a difference of $14,112.21. Wow. Mary McCoy’s motto was “Stick your Neck out for a Child,” and I would say that they more than accomplished the FLOE president’s goal over the past year. Thank you, all, for your hard work. We sincerely appreciate all you do for us at Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. Yvette Lambert, PT of the Southwest and West Central districts was a guest speaker. As always, she did an excellent job of speaking as well as interacting with everyone in the audience.

As we all know, our therapists are therapists and not public speakers. However, they do a great job of making presentations anytime we ask them to speak. Remember, if you would like to have a therapist at your lodge for an event, visit floraidaels.org, go to the Therapy Services section and complete a therapist participation form. We are always happy to be at your events when possible.

The weekend of Oct. 5-7 is family camp for our therapists and for our therapy families. It is a time where each child is treated just like every other child attending the Florida Elks Youth Camp. On Friday night, we will have a dance party in the gym after dinner. On Saturday morning, there will be time on the ropes course, arts and crafts, lunch, and pool time. Their open time includes archery, lake time, coloring, gym and leisure time. After dinner there will be a bonfire and then a movie. The weekend concludes with Sunday’s breakfast. Siblings who are typically able will have separate events where they can interact with other children who have a brother or sister being treated by FECTS and are in a similar position. There will be camp counselors there for those children so they can have the full camp experience. This event is the highlight of the year for our therapy families and they are very grateful for the opportunity to go to camp.

Just a reminder: so many lodges are very generous at Christmastime when it comes to our therapy families. If you want to be sure that the therapist in your district gets the special donations you make at Christmastime, please do not make checks payable to the therapist. Making a check payable to a therapist can look like additional income if they deposit it in their personal accounts. Please make your check payable to Harry-Anna Investment Fund and send it to my attention. I will make sure that the therapist in your district knows how much has been donated from each lodge or district. This will also enable me to send a thank-you note to each lodge. The therapists sincerely appreciate any donations that you make for them to purchase Christmas presents for their many patients whose parents cannot afford them.

The new brochure for Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services is now available. Be sure to contact our offices to order new brochures.

The state president’s motto is “Make the Best Better.” After what I have seen throughout the state in support of Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services, I must agree that the Elks of Florida and all the ladies organizations do indeed make the best better!

Thank you for your continued support of Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Colleen Gallant, Director
Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services
Summer camp 2018 has come and gone, and thanks to your diligence, we again set records for the number of campers attending. This year we filled 2,335 of the 2,352 available beds. This is not only a record number of total campers, but it is also a record number of beds filled from our wait list. Over 400 campers from our wait list made it to camp. Jen Miller, our registrar, worked tirelessly to ensure that as spaces opened due to cancellations, they were filled with campers still hoping for a chance to attend. So, thank you for sending us the campers!

Registration for summer camp 2019 will begin early this year. We have already begun registration for the handful of campers who did not make it off the wait list from last year and for any camper who will be too old to attend after next summer. We will have more details about early registration for all other campers by our midyear convention, so be on the lookout.

Finally, I want to tell you about a wonderful group that we've partnered with this year. Up until last year, the Muscular Dystrophy Association had four separate locations across Florida where they hosted a week of camp for children diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. The organization wanted to consolidate these into a single location, but not many camps are designed to host 300 or more people and to be 100% accessible for groups with special needs. After much searching and frustration, the Florida MDA camp directors heard about the Florida Elks Youth Camp (from one of our therapy patients) and reached out to us.

They were blown away after their first site visit. They couldn't believe the vision and foresight the Florida Elks put into designing this facility. In return, we were amazed at the scope of MDA's dedication to the children diagnosed with muscular dystrophy in Florida. We quickly realized what a good match this would be, and a week after summer camp 2018 finished, we hosted the first Camp MDA at the Florida Elks Youth Camp. With their four sites consolidated at your camp, Florida became the largest MDA camp in the country!

Over 125 campers and 175 volunteers from all over the state attended. Campers enjoyed a one-to-one ratio with a volunteer camp counselor and were treated to an incredible week of activities ranging from swimming to climbing on the ropes course to partying at a dance in the gym. No activities were off-limits due to limited mobility or special needs. These kids were able to celebrate a week of just being kids. One of the most incredible things about the week, however, was how this experience impacted the volunteers as much as the campers.

For instance, many of the high school volunteers were players from the Plant High School football team in Tampa. Their coach, Robert Weiner, has been part of Camp MDA for over 37 years, and he typically brings the boys in as volunteers. This year, however, with the move to FEYC, the camp dates were pushed a week later than normal. This coincided with the first week that the team could practice in pads, which is a big part of the high school pre-season. Coach Weiner canceled this incredibly important week of practice to allow the boys to volunteer at Camp MDA. The full story can be read in the Tampa Bay Times online at tampabay.com/sports/high-schools/2018/08/20/the-reason-powerhouse-plant-missed-a-full-week-of-practice-in-pads/.

What an incredible lesson it was for these young men! Considering the dedication of this coach, his players and all the volunteers of Florida's MDA, we will be doing something unprecedented for FEYC. Starting with summer camp 2019 and in partnership with the MDA, we will be adding an eighth week to our summer camp program. We will commit to hosting Camp MDA at the Florida Elks Youth Camp the week after our seventh session for as long as they need us.

There will be more information about the details of this partnership at both the midyear convention in November and at our February quarterly meeting at camp.

As always, thank you for all you do as Elks and for making your youth camp the best!
WEST PALM BEACH ELKS LODGE CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

West Palm Beach Elks Lodge celebrated a milestone recently – their 100th anniversary! For 100 years, the lodge has been serving the West Palm Beach community, veterans and youth. To recognize this achievement, the lodge hosted a three-day celebration during State President Frank Malatesta's visit to the Southeast District July 27-29. Some festivities included a formal dinner Friday, the state president's dinner Saturday and a family picnic Sunday. The turnout was exceptional and the lodge was honored to have Past Grand Exalted Rulers Robert Grafton and Michael Smith in attendance.

Congratulations, West Palm Beach Lodge, and thank you to your entire membership for all your hard work and dedication giving back for the past 100 years. Here's to another 100 years!

During the celebration, Exalted Ruler, Ed Morey, and Harry-Anna Trust Fund Lodge Chairman, Mimi Cain, presented a check for $1,700 and $900 in cash to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund State Chairman, Sven Nelson (left).

Pictured at West Palm Beach Lodge's 100th anniversary cake-cutting ceremony are State President, Frank Malatesta; Esteemed Loyal Knight, Elaine Mues-Morey; Robert Grafton, PGER; Michael F. Smith, PNP; and Esteemed Lecturing Knight, Ruth Lee. Grafton is a former Exalted Ruler of West Palm Beach Lodge and was in attendance at the lodge's 50th anniversary as well.

BPOE HISTORY

The Birth of West Palm Beach Lodge
by Lowell P. Tyler, PER, State Historian (now Emeritus)

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon in November 1916, but then every day was quiet in West Palm Beach, Fla., an infant town of some 8,300 persons if you counted the population at the height of the winter season. By now, the sizzling heat of summer had given way to a perfect fall day. Two men, Richard L. Ray and R.W. Cooper, were seated in Cooper’s modest Prosperity Farms real estate office. With only six incorporated towns in Palm Beach County, no roads linking the lower east coast to the farming communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee, and the Florida land boom some eight years into the future, it was a lone existence in this small city.

Lying along the beautiful shores of Lake Worth and what is now the Intra-Coastal Waterway, boats were the most common form of transportation. Homes were spaced miles apart and in this small world, residents had to make their own entertainment. Sandlot baseball, fishing and picnics were the most popular forms of entertainment.

Life was idyllic and Woodrow Wilson had promised peace and prosperity during a successful campaign which led to his election as President of the United States. Ray and Cooper had been members of Elks lodges in the north and they had met a number of West Palm Beach residents who had also been Elks in their home states. “What we need,” said Ray, “is an Elks lodge of our own here in town. We are a growing community and I believe it would go over.” Although previous efforts at founding a lodge in the area had failed, this did not discourage Ray and Cooper. They agreed to call a meeting of all the Elks residing in the vicinity.
Soon others had caught the enthusiasm of the two organizers and they met at the office of Judge Edgar Thompson to discuss the procedure for chartering a new Elks lodge. Ray was appointed as chairman of the meeting and Cooper acted as secretary.

Ray explained the benefits of forming a lodge and informed the group that the community met the Grand Lodge requirement of a population base of at least 3,000. City Clerk, A.M. Lopez, was sworn in and verified the accuracy of the town census.

On May 7, 1917, just days after President Wilson signed the declaration of war against Germany, Cooper dispatched a letter to the Grand Lodge seeking dispensation for a lodge in West Palm Beach.

On Dec. 25, 1917, the organizing committee elected the charter officers who would be installed at the institution ceremony. Judge Edgar Thompson was named Exalted Ruler and Richard Ray became the Leading Knight. On Dec. 28, O.M. Eaton, District Deputy from Lakeland Lodge #1291, notified Judge Thompson that he had been instructed to institute West Palm Beach Lodge Jan. 23, 1918. Elks from Miami, Tampa, Lakeland and other lodges gathered to institute the state's 21st lodge.

West Palm Beach Lodge #1352 was formed in the midst of World War I and eight of its members served in the war along with 70,000 other Elks throughout the country. West Palm Beach charter members Leo E. Williamson and A.H. Marion were among the 1,000 Elks killed in action during the war.

By 1926, neighboring Lake Worth, only some 10 miles south of West Palm Beach, began a campaign to organize their own lodge. South Florida was booming as a result of the notorious land boom. People were moving in; they were making big money on land deals and sometimes sold several times a day, each deal bringing the buyers and sellers large profits on the transactions.

West Palm Beach Elks joined in the efforts of the organization committee to form Lake Worth Lodge #1530. On Feb. 2, 1927, 600 Elks from throughout the state and county gathered to celebrate the 59th birthday of Elksdom and the institution of Lake Worth as the 31st Florida lodge. West Palm Beach was its mother lodge.

The timing of the establishment of the new lodge couldn't have been worse. The land boom was beginning to show that most of the profits were paper profits and the bottom dropped out of the market. People who once had collected great speculative land deals were hit and many banks failed. The Lake Worth Elks, then only a few months old, lost all their money in one of those bank collapses, but the Lake Worth members were a persistent group of mostly professional people, politicians and businessmen and they managed to hang on.

Before they were able to enjoy a full recovery, tragedy hit again in the form of the stock market crash of 1929 which triggered more bank failures and resulted in the loss of all lodge funds again. This catastrophe was followed by the greatest depression in American history. Lake Worth Elks prevailed, and the two lodges often combined efforts to bring relief to many of the unfortunate. In the early days, they also visited each other on a regular basis. At one time, they competed opposite each other in a spelling bee that was aired on WPBR Radio. They often worked as a team during World War II.

During those boom years of the mid-1920s, the West Palm Beach Elks prospered. The year following their charter, membership under the leadership of Exalted Ruler, H.A. Bennett, grew from 119 to 203. They continued to grow until the land bust but were able to sustain themselves as an influence in the community.

The impact of those years on the citizenry was often devastating, and both the Lake Worth and West Palm Beach Elks were major influences in bringing aid and relief to those in need.

In 1933, the West Palm Beach Elks instituted the lodge of Antlers, a group for youths ages 15-21.

Attorney Phil O'Connell, a member of West Palm Beach Lodge for more than 50 years and who became Florida Attorney General, related one of his fondest memories to me before his passing. One day following World War II, a woman came into his law office seeking advice. Although a resident of a northern state, she had traveled to Florida to retain him as her attorney because the West Palm Beach Elks had provided food, clothing and financial assistance to her family during the land bust of the late 1920s and depression of the 1930s when they lived there. When she became prosperous later years, she vowed to do business whenever possible with men who were members of West Palm Beach Lodge and kept her word by consulting O'Connell.

Richard Ray, the charter Leading Knight, became the second Exalted Ruler of the lodge and went on to become the South District Vice President in 1921-1922.

Two members of West Palm Beach Lodge have become Grand Exalted Rulers. William Wall, who was initiated in 1931, became Exalted Ruler in 1934 and District Deputy for 1936-1937. Wall was appointed District Deputy by Grand Exalted Ruler Dave Shultz who was also governor of Florida at the same time. In 1939, Wall was elected South District Vice President and in 1942 was elected President of the Florida State Elks Association. Because of the effects of World War II and the many Elks serving in the armed services, Wall served two consecutive terms. After a term as Grand Loyal Knight and two years as chairman of the Board of the Grand Trustees, he became Grand Exalted Ruler in 1961. Wall died in 1991.

Robert Grafton is a third-generation Elk whose father and grandfather were members of East Liverpool, Ohio Lodge #258. Grafton started as a member of the Antlers. He was initiated at West Palm Beach in July 1948 and became Exalted Ruler in 1957. In 1958 he helped form Riviera Beach Lodge which later became North Palm Beach Lodge #2069. In 1961, he transferred his membership to that lodge. He was elected State President for 1971-1972 and served as Grand Exalted Ruler in 1979-1980.

In 1990, tragedy struck Lake Worth. As they were preparing for their annual PER night, a fire of unknown origin enveloped the lodge, destroying the facilities and many of its historic artifacts, memories and dreams. The struggle to survive with an aging membership became increasingly difficult, and finally it seemed to make more sense to merge with West Palm Beach Lodge. In February 1997, Florida's 21st and 31st lodges, the two oldest in the Southeast District, merged. The membership of Lake Worth Lodge automatically became members of West Palm Beach Lodge. Life and honorary life memberships continue to enjoy their status.
On Aug. 23, Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606 initiated the largest single membership group in Elks history – 432. Due to the size of the group, the event took place at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center.

The large number of prospective new members was due to an enormously successful $1 membership drive campaigned by the lodge. They were also able to reach a larger audience with continued community involvement and engagement with local law enforcement and first responders.

Elks from around the state were in attendance to be part of the historic event including Michael Smith, PNP; Carl Gerace, PSP; Laz Suarez, Florida Elks Marketing Manager; and Dan Masi, Florida Development Director. In addition, Rachel Keesling, Punta Gorda mayor, was present and gave some welcoming remarks.

Rick Gathen, national Elks Membership and Marketing Manager, attended the event with additional staff members to record the event and to administer interviews with lodge officers and candidates.

The lodge’s present membership stands at 4,962 and they have 55 candidates awaiting initiation. The lodge should exceed 5,000 members by the end of the year. They have the largest membership in Florida and second largest in the nation.

Congratulations, Punta Gorda Lodge, on your grand achievement!
2018 ELKS DAY AT THE RAYS

The 11th annual Elks Day at the Rays was held Sunday, Sept. 9. This year saw 174 attendees including 30 veterans from Bay Pines VAMC. More than 20 lodges had members in attendance with at least 10 districts represented.

Tampa Bay Rays Baseball will donate a portion of each ticket sale to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund; this year’s total will be $870. Over the last 10 years, this event has raised $23,865 for the trust fund.

Florida Elks gained exposure from this event as well. State President, Frank Malatesta, threw out the first pitch, and Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services CHAMP of the year, Jackson Barth, officially started the game by making the “Play Ball” announcement!

Pictured above are State President, Frank Malatesta, with his grandchildren. Pictured at the right, top, is Jackson with a Rays representative announcing “Play Ball!” (Photos/Rays organization)
Pictured at the right, middle, are FECTS therapist Nikki McAney with Jackson in the stands. (Photos/Nikki McAney)

2019 Officer Training Seminar
March 15-17, 2019
Orlando World Center Marriott
8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

All members are encouraged to attend, especially 2019 candidates for Exalted Ruler, Secretary, Leading Knight and Treasurer.

Attendance is also encouraged for Secretary and Treasurer Office Assistants, Board of Director Members, Trustees, and House Committee Members.
2018 BROTHERHOOD RIDE

After riding for 92 miles on a hot day, Arcadia Lodge #1524 welcomed the riders with open arms and American flags in hand. The riders were provided a hot meal, showers at the nearby campground and a place to rest for the night. The following morning, the Elks served a hot breakfast and participated in pre-ride prayers before the riders rode off toward Lakeland.

After riding a relatively short 58 miles, Kissimmee Lodge #1873 welcomed the riders late in the afternoon. They were supplied a place to shower and dinner was served in the early evening with the usual Elks smiles and hospitality before giving them a place to sleep. The riders departed the next morning after a delicious breakfast and customary pre-ride prayer.

The Brotherhood Ride is a nonprofit organization established in 2007 to raise awareness and funds for families of fallen first responders. Firefighters, law enforcement officers and EMS personnel ride bicycles tremendous distances to honor emergency first responders who have died in the line of duty. Its mission is to provide emotional and financial support to the families. The Florida Elks have supported their cause financially as well as with equipment to make their rides possible.

It's always been a point of pride for lodges throughout Florida to welcome and adopt these riders and their support staff into their lodges as they travel the Sunshine State. Typically, the riders arrive late in the afternoon at pre-designated lodges for a hot meal, showers, a floor to sleep on and a hot breakfast the next morning before they depart once again on their trek.

This year, the Florida Elks went a step further and embedded their marketing manager in the Brotherhood Ride support staff. Lee Suarez traveled the 600 miles with the riders and staff of 50 not only to see firsthand how the riders perform this incredible task but also to see the interaction of the lodges with the riders and the preparation and care that go into each stop. Seven lodges participated this year and it should come as no surprise that the outpouring of love and support the Elks displayed to the Brotherhood Ride genuinely reinforced the Elks motto: Elks Care – Elks Share.

**Day 1: 9/9/2018 - Arcadia**
Dedicated to: Battalion Chief Michael Coonen from Fort Myers Beach Fire Department and Deputy Michael David Ryan from Broward County Sheriff's Office

**Day 2: 9/10/2018 - Lakeland**
Dedicated to: Deputy Sheriff Julie Bridges from Hardee County Sheriff's Office, Sergeant Joseph Osman from Florida Department of Corrections, and Captain James Jablonsky from Polk County Fire Rescue. Brett England, Deputy Bridges’ brother, rode with the group to honor his sister.

The team pedaled 71 miles and finally made it to Lakeland Lodge #1291 where they were met with a piece of steel from the Twin Towers that was brought in by trailer by Nami Knight’s Westside MC. Once again, the Elks hospitality and love of the riders’ cause was apparent. The team enjoyed dinner and some well-deserved drinks at the bar before going to bed. After breakfast and prayers, the riders rode off into the sunrise.

**Day 4: 9/12/2018 - Brooksville**
Dedicated to: Lts. Franklin Dorminy from Reddi Creek Emergency Services, Firefighter Steven Perry from Hernando County Fire Rescue and Officer Joshua Sanchez Montando from Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement

The 93-mile day in the hot sun ended at an elevation of 1,144 feet at Chinsegut Hill Manor Museum Retreat in Brooksville. The riders showered at the beautiful cottages and were quickly

Riders and Kissimmee Elks commemorate the day with a group picture at the lodge, Sept. 11, 2018.
shuttled via bus to nearby Brooksville Lodge #2582 where the riders enjoyed a delicious dinner and desserts donated by Hernando County Fire Rescue and Hernando County FOP's. The group had the privilege of meeting with the parents and coworkers of Firefighter Terry and Officer Montaudo.

Day 5: 9/13/2018 - Gainesville
Dedicated to Master Sgt. William Trampas Bishop from Florida Highway Patrol, Special Agent Rickey O'Donald from the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation and Capt. Garland Smith Jr. from Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

The team pedaled 85.5 miles that included 1,932 feet in elevation. Inverness Lodge #2522 was honored to provide a rest stop for the Brotherhood riders on their way to Gainesville.

Day 6: 9/14/2018 - Perry
Dedicated to Paramedic Paul Besaw and Paramedic Lahiri Garcia from American Medical Response Ambulance as well as K9 Diesel from Sebastian Police Department

The team pedaled 92 miles in the sun with temperatures in the 90s as they rode to Perry Lodge #1851. The local Patriot Riders group in Perry placed flags around the driveway to welcome the riders.


Riders stop for a rest at Inverness Lodge, Sept. 13, 2018.

After a grueling day, they reached Gainesville Lodge. Local government officials and Elks welcomed the riders as they arrived late in the afternoon. Dinner was served, the bar was open and a good time was had by all before they retired for the evening. In the morning, the riders were provided a great breakfast and a pre-ride prayer before they headed back on the road.

Day 7: 9/15/2018 - Tallahassee
Dedicated to Engineer Jeffery Atkinson from Tallahassee Fire Department, Correctional Officer Joe William Hefley Jr. from Escambia County Department of Corrections, Capt. Charles Frank Scavuzzo from St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office and K9 Freckles from the Florida Department of Corrections

Leaving Perry, the riders stopped to honor Deputy Williams from Taylor County Sheriff's Office who was one of the 2017 ride's honorees.

The riders pedaled 65 miles on their last day and climbed 1,522 feet as they rode into Tallahassee toward the state Capitol where they honored comrades at the Fallen Firefighter and Law Enforcement memorials.

Riders arrange their helmets and hats at the Fallen Firefighters memorial in Tallahassee, Sept. 15, 2018, to show their solidarity to the fallen.

They ended their day at Tallahassee Lodge #597 where they were greeted by lodge members and Engineer Jeff Atkinson's family. Yet again, the Elks prepared dinner, offered a place to sleep and served breakfast the following morning before the riders boarded a tour bus for a well-deserved, chauffeured journey home.

After seven days and 620 miles, the Elks will continue the support of their cause. The brotherhood, sincerity and love the riders have for their fallen comrades go beyond jurisdiction and geography. It is that same bond that draws Elks together from around the corner, state and country. The way each lodge embraced this group really shows what Elks are all about. Our motto is so much more than a slogan; it's a way of life. Elks Care - Elks Share!

Riders pose with Gainesville Lodge Exalted Ruler, Bill Senerfitt; Mayor of Alachua, Gil Coerper; Gainesville Police Chief, Tony Jones; Florida State Representative, C. Travis Watson; and Alachua County Sheriff, Sadie Darnell, (middle row) at Gainesville Lodge, Sept. 13, 2018.

Ride staff delivers cold drinks to keep the riders hydrated on the way to Perry Lodge, Sept. 14, 2018.

Once again, the Elks' generosity was instinctual as they welcomed the riders and prepared and served dinner. The Taylor County sheriff and several deputies as well as other first responders and firefighters escorted the Brotherhood Riders out of town after breakfast as they headed to Tallahassee, the final leg of their journey this year.

Brotherhood Ride founder, Jeff Morse, presents Perry Lodge Exalted Ruler, Tommy Mauldin, a thank-you card and plaque, Sept. 14, 2018. All participating lodges received a plaque and a card signed by the riders.

2018 riders and ride staff pose on the last day of the ride in Perry, Sept. 15, 2018.
**COVER STORY: BO COOPER**

**Camper Extraordinaire:** How the Florida Elks Youth Camp Inspired, Connected and Expanded Bo Cooper’s World  
*By Rachael King*

While the Florida Elks Youth Camp (FEYC) is well prepared to outfit underprivileged campers with shoes, clothes and other needed items during their stay at camp, it is equally well equipped to impact kids who come to camp with all their necessities. Regardless of their backgrounds, camp exposes kids to new situations and allows them to interact with kids who are different than themselves. The FEYC mission is to mold the next generation of kids into adults who they would be proud to have as American citizens. Their motto is “Inspire. Connect. Expand.” They inspire kids through the quality of their facilities, the quality of their staff and of their programming. Without electronics, they help kids connect with their peers, counselors and nature. Through all this, they can expand their compassion for others, their self-confidence, and their ability and desire to make a positive impact on the world around them. This has been the case for Bo Cooper, a four-time summer camp attendee who has come away from FEYC with wonderful life experiences and lessons.

Bo, who will turn 13 in November, also happens to be the son of Joe and Allie Cooper who have been Elks members since 2008; they are charter members of Lakewood Ranch Sarusota Lodge #2855, Joe Cooper is the current Southwest District Vice President as well. Frank Cooper, Joe's father, introduced him to FEYC.

Bo’s sister, Alexandra, now 15, attended camp for six summers, so when it came time for Bo to attend, he was already somewhat familiar with the basics of FEYC and knew how much fun she had there. She even shared some pointers with him such as which bunk bed is better and tips for water day. While he was excited to go to camp, he was hesitant at the same time because it would be his first sleepaway camp experience and the longest amount of time he had been away from home. He had attended a golf day camp before but never for overnight.

His parents wanted Bo to go to FEYC as well, but “even with sending our second camper, we had our reservations, but as his parents we knew it'd be good for him and also felt it was an amazing and, quite honestly, a necessary rite of passage as a kid.” They weren't worried about his safety because they knew FEYC has a pristine safety record and has small ratios of counselors to kids. In addition to stringent background checks and training, policies like the “rule of three” ensure that campers remain safe by never being alone with another camper or adult.

Reality set in for Bo when he first arrived at camp and realized he wouldn’t be home for a week and wouldn't be able to see or talk to his parents. He had a rough first night; “I was a little afraid of that, but I overcame that after the first night and I had a lot of fun,” he recalls.

Sunday afternoons are check-in day at FEYC. The first thing campers do is break into their cabin groups so they can meet their cabinmates as well as other members of their camp track. (Tracks are the groups of cabins that attend daily activities together; each track has three girls’ cabins and three boys’ cabins and all campers in a track are relatively the same age.) After introductions, campers go to their cabins to unpack and review cabin and camp rules.

Even when kids come to camp the same week as their friends or family members, it is FEYC policy not to place kids who already know each other in the same cabin. Many kids and parents balk at this rule at first, but there is a very good reason
for it – it forces kids to meet new people and make new friends. Bo concurs. “It did help me make more friends because when you have your friend as your cabinmate, you may not try to make new friends.” He was still able to see friends from home during meals, and if they were in the same track, they spent most of the day together doing the same activities.

Meeting new people and making friends can be a challenge at any age. Some kids Bo met came from very different backgrounds than he did, so his method of making friends was simply to ask them questions to see if they had anything in common. It was harder to make friends with kids he didn’t have much in common with, but he still met new people and learned about others in the process. Bo’s mom says that FEYC gives kids “the chance to see, meet and become friends with other kids outside their bubble of a world, maybe from a different walk of life or group of kids they’d never have a chance to talk to.” It allows kids to step out of their safe and familiar world.

For the most part, Bo got along with his cabinmates, but as is the case in most situations in life, there were some who were more difficult to get along with. Bo’s father remembers that “there were some who were a little meaner than others. I remember him telling us about that and I thought that was good exposure for him to learn to deal with people on his own without Mom and Dad around. You don’t like everybody in life so that was a big lesson for him as well as people who have more than you, people who have less than you – being exposed to some of that... was really great for him to learn while he’s young – how to get along and how to work together.”

Bo’s mom believes that camp helps kids find their identity as well. It allows you to “learn a lot about yourself – what you can handle and what you need to work on, and it just opens your eyes.”

When asked how camp most impacted Bo’s life after his first year at FEYC, his parents have an easy answer; he is much more appreciative of what he has at home. To explain why, Bo says, “I saw other kids wearing clothes that didn’t fit them. I heard stories of what other kids’ homes were like, and I realized how lucky I am to have what I have.”

“I heard stories of what other kids’ homes were like, and I realized how lucky I am to have what I have.”

- Bo

FEYC is also a place to have fun with new adventures as well as to learn. Many activities are ones that the campers haven’t been exposed to previously, and even if they have been, they’re usually on a grander scale at FEYC. Some of Bo’s favorites are the slip ‘n slide, ropes course and archery. Oftentimes, the campers are not only having fun with these activities; they are also overcoming obstacles and reaching goals. One such example for Bo was conquering the zip line. Looking back, he can’t believe it could be possible. While he was climbing the power pole to reach the zip line, it was wobbling below him the higher he went, so he was climbing slowly. He also used ropes to advance across a cable wire. He eventually made it up to the top and slid down the zip line. This is quite an accomplishment for anyone, let alone a 12-year-old!

More adventures and learning ensue in nature at FEYC. At the lake, campers can explore their surroundings in canoes or paddleboats as they learn to
paddle or to trust a canoe. There is always the possibility of seeing turtles, fish, ducks and alligators as well. The nature trail at FEYC promises thrills and education, too. Campers learn about Florida’s different trees and plants and what is native and invasive. They can spot birds, scorpions, snakes, and bugs as well as tracks of animals such as raccoons or bears.

Summer camp wouldn’t be complete without some arts and crafts, and a staple at FEYC for the last 15 years has been lanyard-making. Campers learn to braid plastic string into key chains and paracord bracelets which can be a soothing activity, so it’s no surprise that many homesick campers choose to make more of them in their spare time. Bo even makes them at home now because it helps him relax. “Bo has even put his weaving skills to use by making paracord collars for dogs at our local Humane Society,” says his mom. It’s such a wonderful feeling when something learned at camp transfers to a camper’s everyday life, but it’s even more fulfilling when that skill is used to help others.

As a culmination of his new camp experiences, Bo’s mom adds that “Bo has become an ambassador at his school to help show new students around school as they get settled in.” Camp has a special way of pulling the best out of kids.

FEYC is a no-electronics camp, meaning campers go a week without using any electronic devices. Counselors refrain from using any devices in front of the campers, too. Whenever Bo and Alexandra were picked up by their parents at the end of their camp week, they didn’t immediately ask for electronics. Instead, they conversed with their parents about all their wonderful camp stories. Of course, they went back to using their devices not long after they returned home, but for a short time, their world was unplugged which allowed them to have so many rewarding experiences.

Bo points out a final trait he picked up at camp. “When I came home, I was used to a schedule because we had one at camp. If we didn’t follow the schedule, then we would possibly be messing up other peoples’ schedules. I prefer a schedule because then I know what to do and when to do it.”

Respecting others’ time will serve him well throughout life.

Bo hopes to attend one more year of summer camp, become a CIT (counselor-in-training) and counselor, and then attend college. After that, he doesn’t know what he wants to do, but whatever it is, he will do it backed by the skills, awareness and appreciation he acquired during his time at FEYC. In just four weeks at summer camp over the course of four years, he has tested his courage, improved his social skills, experienced empathy, increased his appreciation for what he has, gained exposure to diversity, heightened his self-confidence, broadened his understanding and respect for nature, tried new activities, and now volunteers his time helping others. By all accounts, the Florida Elks Youth Camp truly is changing the world for the better, one inspired, connected, expanded camper at a time.
## A Day in the Life of a Camper

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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MEET DAN MASI, FLORIDA ELKS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Children's Therapy Services are the two major projects we support along with the many activities we do in support of our youth and veterans. Wow, there are so many great things offered by one organization! Florida Elks need to be loud, proud and visible! We are planting the seeds today that will turn into major gifts in years to come.

My first year in this new position has been very successful. Below is a list of some major accomplishments that were made.

- Launched a successful campaign with Walgreens for the Walgreens/Elks Community Care Toy Drive. It was implemented in 88 stores in the West Central District and is expanding this year to 115 stores and will include the Southwest District. Lodges benefited by receiving toys for their community Christmas parties.
- Launched a statewide member benefit program with Jiffy Lube.
- Attracted the first corporate event to the Smith Center at the Florida Elks Youth Camp hosting the state leadership of Ducks Unlimited.
- Sold two advertisements in Florida Elks Magazine and made 11 sales calls to different area vacation destinations hoping to get on their budgets next year.
- Grew the sustaining (monthly) donor program for Harry-Anna by developing a red T-shirt campaign to better establish brand awareness.
- Conducted a very successful Harry-Anna silent auction at the 2018 state convention.
- Spoke at 25+ speaking engagements with area community groups and lodges growing awareness for who the Elks are and what we do.

The following are some of the key objectives I will be focusing on moving forward.

- Continue to grow the Walgreens/Elks Community Care Toy Drive and expand it statewide.
- Continue to grow the sustaining (monthly) donor program for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund through the red T-shirt awareness campaign (everyone needs one). The long-

Support Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp by becoming a monthly sustaining donor!

ONLY $19 A MONTH

www.floridaelks.org

CHANGING THE LIVES OF FLORIDA KIDS

Supporting the Harry-Anna Trust Fund is easier than ever! Donors can now conveniently do a one-time sign-up on our website, floridaelks.org, and the same amount will be automatically deducted each following month. Receipt of each online donation will be automatically emailed for tax purposes. Your lodge will still receive trust fund credit and donor recognition pins will be issued. This is the preferred way of supporting the trust fund.

Become a sustaining donor today with a monthly donation of only $19 (that’s only $475 a week) or an amount of your choosing. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are making an ongoing difference in your community and to the lives of others in need.
range goal is $1 million annually.

- Expand follow-up and communication with lodge and individual donors.
- Continue to grow advertising support for Florida Elks Magazine.
- Continue meeting with groups to grow community awareness of the Elks and our projects and show them the difference we make in the community.
- Continue to grow the Harry-Anna silent auction at state conventions.
- Establish new corporate relationships to net in-kind donations for our projects.
- Grow the solicitation of foundations for their financial support of our programs.
- Grow the solicitation of individual and corporate sponsorships and donations.
- Promote golf tournaments and other fundraising events.
- Grow solicitation of corporate groups and team-building events for the Smith Conference Center at the Florida Elks Youth Camp.
- Grow our direct mail campaign for giving support.
- Continue to market and distribute Elks therapist-authored “Advance My Baby” book to generate funds for Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services.
- Promote a new branding initiative to expand the focus of our therapy services branding on the many children we treat within the autism spectrum.
- Plan and implement a gala event in the greater Tampa/St. Petersburg area focused on our successful work with children with autism.
- Begin to plan for expansion of the development team in other areas of the state.

According to the National Philanthropic Trust, here are the top five reasons people give:

1. They are asked.
2. They have compassion for those in need.
3. They personally believe in the cause.
4. They have been affected by the cause.
5. They believe in giving back to their community.

I am available to assist lodges with fundraising. If you are interested, please email me at dan@floridaelks.org.

Florida Elks are proud of what we represent, especially in making a difference in the lives of children and veterans. Please join me in growing our ability to enrich the lives of many while thinking outside the four walls. Continue to be loud, proud and visible as Elks!

Dan Masi, Development Director
Florida State Elks Association
COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS PROGRAM: Merritt Island Lodge #2650 Uses Gratitude Grant for School Uniforms

Merritt Island Elks Lodge #2650 has been helping Emma Jewel Charter School for the past four years. Wendy Watters has been a driving force of this.

Like all schools, some pupils have more than others. Schools should be about learning, not about who's wearing the latest fashions. Uniforms are an equalizing aspect to keep the focus on learning. This year, the lodge applied for and received a $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant. When asked what students at Emma Jewel needed the most this year, the answer from the counselors was uniforms for about 30 students who could not afford them.

Merritt Island Lodge members handed out the uniforms June 28. Did these students appreciate them? Just look at those smiling faces!

Students from Emma Jewel Charter School pose with their new uniforms June 28. Adults in the back are Johnny Jordan, Dean of Students; Wendy Watters and Bill Hazlelett Sr., lodge members; Mustapha Husain, Physical Education Assistant; and Tremain Gills, Assistant Dean of Students.

**Student Pledge:**
As a dedicated member of the Emma Jewel Charter Academy, I pledge my commitment to achievement and service.
I pledge to make healthy choices, personally and socially, because I respect myself, other people and my environment.
My choices reflect my character.
I pledge to nurture myself so that I am capable of nurturing my family, my friends and my community.
By helping others, we help ourselves.
I pledge to value the opportunity to learn and to respect and support the efforts of my teachers.
Education is the gatekeeper to success.
I pledge to recognize that each day is a new opportunity to better myself and the world I live in.
This is my choice.
This is my pledge.

About Emma Jewel Charter School
Emma Jewel Cole was born in Camilla, Ga., in 1937. She was deeply rooted in her Christian values and dedicated to serving her family. She left formal school at an early age for work in the cotton fields of Georgia to support her family. Despite not having a formal education, she was very wise. She always stressed the importance of a quality education to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She often said, "Once you receive a good education, no one can take that away from you."
BUSINESS PRACTICES

Queen of Hearts Rules

You must be an Elks member.

Tickets can be purchased by any Elks member in good standing (dues paid).

A valid Elks membership card will be required to purchase tickets and will be required prior to payout of any winnings.

Ticket cost: one ticket for $____ or five tickets for $____.

A new, standard 52-card deck, plus two jokers, for a total of 54 cards will be used.

Cards will be kept inside a locked case that will be displayed in the lodge.

The card case will be secured with two locks and the two keys will be held by two different lodge committee members. An alternate will be designated in the event that one of the primary key holders cannot be present at the drawing.

Each ticket purchased must include the name as it appears on the membership card, member’s phone number and card number picked if the person is not present.

Tickets sales will stop at _____ p.m. on the drawing afternoon and the drawing will be at _____ p.m. on every ______.

In the event of an unforeseen event, e.g., hurricane, fire, etc., the drawing will be the next available day at the same time.

Payouts are as follows:

a. Joker $____.
b. Any queen (other than the queen of hearts) $____.
c. Any ace $____.
d. Any face card $____.

Queen of hearts: If you are present, you win 100%. If you are not present for the drawing, you win _____%.

The jackpot winner will be paid, by check, the following workday.

There will be one ticket drawn each week. The remaining tickets will be discarded after each drawing each week and the game will continue the next week with the remaining cards and new tickets.

The lodge will retain _____% of each weekly ticket sales. _____% of each weekly sale will go to the progressively increasing jackpot.

The payout jackpot will be posted by the card case before the drawing.

When the queen of hearts is pulled, the game is over. Cards in the box will be discarded and a new set of cards will be placed in the case by a minimum of three committee members.

The game committee members are not allowed to play the Queen of Hearts game.

Invalid ticket means:

a. The name is not as stated on the membership card in full (do not use nicknames, abbreviations or initials).
b. The phone number has not been provided on the ticket.
c. If the number has already been picked.
d. Any number higher than 54.
e. If the ticket does not have a listed number that you chose.

If an invalid ticket is found, there will be no award made, and another ticket will be drawn.

The game will end when it reaches $____.

Two tickets will be pulled. The person whose name is on the ticket must be present. The first ticket will receive $____. The second ticket will receive $____. When the queen of hearts is selected, the winning player shall be awarded the grand prize as described herein above.

Note: Any prize winner over $600 will receive a W-2G to report the winnings. Taxes on any prize over $5,000 will be assessed and federal withholding transferred to the IRS by the lodge to conform to all federal, state, and Grand Lodge laws and policies. The winner must provide photo identification, a valid Elks membership card and tax information so all appropriate Internal Revenue Service documents (including IRS Form W-2G & Form 5754) can be issued by the lodge. The assessed tax is currently set at 26% of the jackpot. A winner from an out-of-state lodge may also have state taxes withheld in accordance with the laws of his or her state of residence.

Florida State Elks Association

State Golf Tournament
April 6-7, 2019

Save the Dates

State Softball Tournament
April 26-28, 2019

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DISTRICT NEWS

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

The 2018 Northwest District Past Exalted Ruler golf tournament was held Sept. 9 at Regatta Bay Golf and Country Club and was a great success. This district event had 21 teams from all seven district lodges and their local communities and raised over $6,098. In addition, local community leaders, businesses, the PER Association, district lodges and individual Elks provided 26 hole sponsorships that raised $4,600 for a total of $10,698. Tournament staff included Ann Moore (District VP), Scott Turner, Carolene Swanson, Gary Pelham, Patti McAndrew, Tammy Kuhn, PER Kim Sayer, Jerri Jones, Marilyn Roach, Kim Cauley, Linda Turner, Debra Wolfenden, Paul Palmer, David Cagle and Jim Wright.

Warrington Lodge provided school supplies at no cost to local teachers July 10.

Destin #2688

Members of Destin Elks Lodge #2688 donated supplies to Destin Elementary School using an Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant for children whose families cannot afford school supplies.

Destin Elks Lodge distributed 334 dictionaries to Destin Elementary using funds from an Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant Sept. 21.

The Northwest District PER golf tournament held Sept. 9 raised more than $10,000.

On Sept. 22, the Northwest District annual Kids on the Water event was held at Fort Walton Elks Lodge #1795 for the fifth consecutive year. Pensacola Beach, Destin, Crestview, Warrington and Twin Cities lodges participated as well. Members Danny and Karen Bilger donated the pontoon boats that toured Choctawhatchee Bay. Entertainment was provided by Reid Soria and Captain Davy the Pirate. Face painting, rock art, gifts for all and food made for an enjoyable day. There were 64 volunteers, 169 guests and 86 military guests for a total of 319 participants.

The Northwest District Kids on the Water event was held at Fort Walton Lodge Sept. 22.

NORTH DISTRICT

Lake City #893

On Sept. 19 at the Vice President/District Deputy visit, Trustee Jay Swisher announced that Lake City Elks Lodge #893 had been awarded an Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant of $2,000 for a reading program begun more than five years ago by the lodge in concert with Columbia County Schools. The school district has a grant matching incentive that added $2,000 to the lodge’s initiative, and another $2,000 was added by the Florida State Elks Association’s practice of matching Beacon grants.

Live Oak #1165

In a continuing effort of fundraising, Live Oak Elks Lodge #1165 conducted its annual golf tournament Aug. 11. The event netted $12,000 for the lodge charity account and is another example how lodges can generate income from an advertised event that provides entertainment as well as community visibility. The funds will be used for the lodge’s Veterans Day event for veterans and family members as well as for 200 Christmas dinner baskets to help needy families.
Perry #1851

Perry Lodge #1851 sent eight kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp this summer. Two lodge members assisted with transportation to get the kids to Umatilla and back. Volunteer Todd Ratliff is pictured with Perry's campers.

Perry Lodge also awarded scholarships to four local students at a presentation ceremony that included a meal for the students and their parents. Several officers and members attended and wished the students well.

On Aug. 3, Perry Lodge held its annual charity auction, a fundraising event for building its charity fund. Members and their guests took part in a social hour, dinner and the auction.

Tallahassee #937

Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937 organized a back-to-school supplies drive for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. Two schools were chosen as recipients – Astoria Park and Ft. Braden – both in the Leon County school district. More supplies than could fit in one car were collected.

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Green Cove Springs #1892

Green Cove Springs Elks Lodge #1892 used its Promise Grant to provide guitar lessons for students throughout the summer. Ten students met every Tuesday for seven weeks for group lessons and lunch and then treated the lodge members to a recital. Project coordinator, Jeannie Calhoun, used the grant to provide the lessons and outfit each of the students with a guitar, music stand, tuner and book.

Instructor, Curt Trowers; Green Cove Springs Exalted Ruler, Lucie Barnett; and project coordinator, Jeannie Calhoun, are pictured with the guitar students preparing for a lodge recital.

On Saturday, Sept. 8, Green Cove Springs Lodge hosted over 200 people for the Green Cove Springs Police Department's annual art auction gala. The very enjoyable evening consisted of a dock party, live music, gift baskets, and a lively auction of art created by city employees and police officers as well as several pieces donated by Elks family members. This event raised funds for the police department's annual Halloween Trunk or Treat event which is expected to be attended by approximately 2,000 community members.

Eustis #1578

On Saturday, Sept. 8, Green Cove Springs Police Department’s art auction gala hosted by Green Cove Springs Lodge.

Pictured at the Green Cove Springs Police Department’s art auction gala hosted by Green Cove Springs Lodge.

Ten Eustis Anna Miller members and seven Eustis Elks met Sept. 23 to pack 5,619-worth of donations for The Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties. This included 332 welcome kits of travel-sized toiletries, 10 birthday cake kits, a child’s bike, children’s books, toys, children’s and adult clothes, and many more items which filled three SUVs. This collection put their combined contributions to The Haven at over $66,000.

Domestic violence is a serious problem. It affects millions of people and their children every year. The Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties has served 3,070 survivors/children in 2017-2018 via shelter and hotline services. The Eustis Anna Miller members are honored to continue to be of service to them.

Eustis Anna Miller members and Elks packed donations for The Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties Sept. 23.
Eustis Lodge presented the Tri-City Ballers with a check for $1,500 Aug. 4. Leader/coach Walt Canady accepted the check from Exalted Ruler, Patsy Despain, and in turn gave the lodge a beautiful thank you trophy.

Eustis Lodge hosted a breakfast the Saturday before school started to honor 40 teachers and principals from nine area elementary schools. The lodge used the Anniversary Grant to provide 750 pounds of school supplies to the schools. Lake County Sheriff, Peyton Grinnell, was the keynote speaker. Mark Cunningham made the drug awareness table available, and Trustee Ron Locke and Exalted Ruler, Patsy Despain, made presentations to the group. The lodge also cooks dinner to feed the Eustis High School junior varsity football team and their coaches before each game.

The Eustis Anna Miller Ladies donated $2,000 to Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and donated $500 in school supplies to a local school.

Inverness #2522

Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 provided 85 backpacks loaded with school supplies to foster children served by the Citrus County Foster Parent Association and 75 backpacks to 14 area schools. The program is funded by the Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant.

Inverness Lodge donated $500 to Find-M’ Friends, a local nonprofit organization pursuing ways to find every person who is missing. The lodge donation will be used to assemble 250 scent kits to help make children and the elderly safer. The organization trains bloodhounds to track a scent using the kits.

Inverness Lodge used their Elks National Foundation Anniversary Grant to help fund a new project for the Citrus County Education Foundation, Supplies 4 Success. This program is designed to provide a central location for county teachers to pick up school and special project supplies for their students. The $1,500 grant was presented to the CCEF at their new facility located at the Withlacoochee Technical College in Inverness.

Pictured at the Inverness Lodge check presentation for Supplies 4 Success are Anthony Kopka, Inverness Lodge board chairman; Paula Pombler, lodge grant coordinator; Richard Grosnick, Leading Knight; Shandra Burdett, CCEF Executive Director; and Susan Franipani, CCEF Associate Director.

Ocala #286

Ocala Elks Lodge #286 hosted a Marion County Sheriff’s appreciation night. Sheriff Billy Woods and Exalted Ruler, Mike Miller, honored two deputies for outstanding community service. Off-duty K-9 Deputy Jeremy Nix was flagged down by the mother of an unresponsive three-month-old baby. He performed several lifesaving measures and then rushed him to the hospital, and the baby, Kingston, made a full recovery. Corp. Jim Long responded to and took control of the school shooting at Forest High after a student brought a sawed-off shotgun in a guitar case. Thankfully, only one student was injured.

Recently, Deputy Ryan Owens was involved in a serious accident after a truck crossed the center line and hit his patrol car head on. After several surgeries, he faces many months of rehab before he can return to duty. Ocala Exalted Ruler, Mike Miller, encouraged members to donate money to help Deputy Owens, and in one night, the lodge raised $2,500.
Winter Park #1830

Winter Park Lodge's dictionary chairman, PER Ron Goluba; member Sue Jovi and volunteers distributed over 2,700 dictionaries to third-graders at 21 elementary schools in Seminole and Orange counties. Lodge Elks and Does turned out to help put bookmarks and drug-free red ribbons in each dictionary. The Dictionary Project was founded in 1995 and the Elks joined this movement in 2004. The Elks nationwide have donated more than 1.2 million dictionaries to third-grade students. The lodge has received hundreds of handmade cards from the children and are posted on the hallway bulletin board.

PER Vivian Thomas, Charlie Thomas, PER Ron Goluba, Fran Hendricks and Jim Esposito shopped for hours purchasing back-to-school supplies. The supplies were delivered to Casselberry, East Brook, Winter Springs and English Estates Elementary schools. Funding for the supplies was possible through a $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant.

Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach #1557

When the BIG RED BUS shows up at your lodge, what do you do? GIVE, of course! Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Lodge members donated blood Saturday, July 21. Along with the Elks members, the Polar Inlet Corvette Club also came to donate. Pictured is Lodge Trustee, Sandra Wagner.

Savannah Cantrell and Destinee Bailey received scholarships from Titusville Lodge earlier this year.

Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Lodge's Exalted Ruler, Shirley Baker, introduced 2018 scholarship winner Taylor Young and her family at the Aug. 10 buffet dinner. She is one of the 159 scholarship recipients who attended the Elks national convention in San Antonio this summer.

Titusville #2113

Titusville Elks Lodge #2113 presented $1,000 scholarships to two very deserving area high school seniors earlier this year, and the students have now begun their studies.

Savannah Cantrell carried a full academic schedule at Astronaut High School and participated in a number of extracurricular activities. She also served as president of the local chapter of the Anchor Club (subsidiary of the Pilot Club) and organized field trips to the Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation (aka "Joe's Club") and a clothing drive for homeless children. She has begun courses at the University of Florida targeted toward a career as a child oncologist.

Destinee Bailey also carried a full class schedule at Titusville High School. She earned varsity letters in orchestra, chorus and the gifted students program. She has been a volunteer grief counselor at St. Francis Hospice for several years working with children coping with the death of parents. She is attending Florida State University to pursue a career in social work.

Kissimmee #1873

Kissimmee Elks Lodge #1873 sponsored the annual scout camping week. They opened their lodge grounds to 80 Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. Each day the scouts met for outdoor fun including a bounce house, target shooting, archery and various craft projects. The lodge sponsors this event as a continuing effort to be involved in the community.

On Sept. 15, Kissimmee Lodge hosted a public safety night to honor first responders of the year from Kissimmee PD, Kissimmee Fire, Kissimmee Fire & Rescue, St. Cloud PD, St. Cloud Fire, St. Cloud Fire & Rescue, Corrections, and state police.
Zephyrhills #2731

Zephyrhills Elks Lodge's Gratitude Grant was presented to East Pasco Meals on Wheels which delivers meals to homebound veterans and the elderly. With this donation, they purchased a meat slicer and a seven-cup food processor. The lodge also gave them a check for $635 to purchase food and supplies.

Pictured at Zephyrhills Lodge's check presentation to East Pasco Meals on Wheels are Judy Osgood, ENF chairman; Tracy Stock; Ken Fabiani, Exalted Ruler; Lee Anne Starcher; Michelle McKay; and Beth Aker, Executive Director of East Pasco Meals on Wheels.

SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Stuart-Jensen #1870

At the Grand Lodge convention in San Antonio, Stewart "Stew" Smith, PER from Stuart-Jensen Elks Lodge #1870 was presented the Marvin M. Lewis award for his significant contributions to the scouting program. The late Marvin M. Lewis, PGER was very involved in the scouting program and this award was started in his honor. Smith was one of four recipients and represented the southern region. He has been involved with scouting for over 20 years and is the fourth in his lodge to receive this honor. Suzi Simonelli, PDD received it in 2005, Ken Tolve received it in 2006 and Beth Snyder, PER received it in 2016.

Vero Beach #1774

Vero Beach Elks Lodge #1774 sponsored a week of summer camp at the Florida Elks Youth Camp for 28 underprivileged and homeless children. They boarded the bus to Umatilla, Fla., and brought back happy smiles and fervent wishes to return next year. There was no cost to the children's families. Pictured with the campers are Exalted Ruler, Jim Rinnocenti, and Lodge Secretary, Kathy Miller.

West St. Lucie #2823

West St. Lucie Lodge members Trish Dietz, DIOER; Marge Spora and Diane Zak pack boxes of school supplies for Oak Hammock Elementary School Aug. 7. The supplies were provided through the generous donations of members and guests at the lodge charity bingo games.

Largo #2159

Nick Verhunce earned the Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout award earlier this year. Nick is a member of Troop 417 with the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council and was sponsored by Largo Elks Lodge #2159. His Eagle Scout project honored the heritage of the 11 original families who settled in Seminole, Fla., and is located at the entrance of the Seminole Historical Society Museum. The scouts installed engraved pavers and built a monument pedestal including a plaque commemorating these families and their importance for generations to come. They completed the project area with a park bench and landscaping. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the project site as Mayor Leslie Waters and the city of Seminole kicked off their third annual Arts in the Park event. Nick's accomplishment was also celebrated at his court of honor ceremony with his troop at the Elks lodge.

Largo Lodge sponsors Boy Scout Troop 417 of which Nick Verhunce is a member. Nick completed his Eagle Scout project earlier this year.

In July, Largo Lodge purchased backpacks using the Elks National Foundation Promise Grant. Ponce De Leon Elementary School provided lists of required items per grade, and with the support of lodge members, enough donations of school supplies were received to fill over 100 backpacks. The backpacks were delivered to the school Aug. 21. The lodge also purchased and delivered 300 dictionaries to the school.

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Pictured with Stew Smith, recipient of the Marvin M. Lewis scouting award at the national convention, are PSP David Lake, Grand Lodge Activities Committee chairman; Dale Nellson, Grand Lodge Activities Committee Area 6 member; Joey Simonelli, PDR; Suzi Simonelli, PDD; Marty Harrick, Stuart-Jensen Lodge Exalted Ruler; and Barb Harrick.
In August, Largo Lodge presented a check to Largo Fire Department for the benefit of the Burn Center. A check for $180 was from this year’s pool tournament proceeds, and $1,000 was donated from the lodge charity fund. These donations will help send young burn survivors to the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

For St. Petersburg Lodge’s Aloha-themed lodge visitation July 14, the servers were members of the Lady Outlaw softball team accompanied by lodge member Theresa Sims. The Lady Outlaw softball organization is a travel team based in Pinellas County, Fla., that is dedicated to teaching girls the enjoyment of the fast-pitched game as well as the physical, mental and sportsmanship aspects of the game. For the season, the organization will field teams at the 12U, 14U, 16U and 18U age divisions.

All Elks and friends who attended the visitation hosted by Exalted Ruler, Cathy Shriver, were impressed with the young ladies’ attention to detail and great communication skills and donated $407 to these hardworking young ladies for their upcoming season.

St. Petersburg Lodge #1224

On July 14, St. Petersburg Elks Lodge #1224 donated $750 to Music Sweet Music Inc. (MSM Inc.) to help them keep providing music therapy to children and adults in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. The donation will pay for contracted board-certified music therapists. MSM Inc. currently provides music therapy at three Tampa Bay-area children’s hospitals, one group home and several participants’ homes. Veterans and members of the military have also been participants in the program. There are positive effects and healing abilities for soldiers with invisible wounds of war such as PTSD. MSM Inc. has also been called by families to use their music for patients in hospice for their end-of-life journey.

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age for summer campers.

St. Petersburg Lodge held their annual back-to-school pool party Sunday, Aug. 5, and it was a positive start to the new school year. The families cheered as their children played games to earn school supplies. More than 145 guests attended including 65 children ranging from kindergarten to high school. All school supplies were donated by lodge members with an approximate value of $700. About $500 worth of the school supplies were given to the kids during their games and activities. The remaining supplies valued at $200 were donated to Walsingham Elementary to be given to their students.

Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 has used the $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to help the Humane Society of Highlands County for the past two years. Last year the donation was used to buy supplies for their Primary Care Clinic. This year the donation will be used to help fund a new cooling system for the dogs housed outside. Due in part to Hurricane Irma in 2017, the society has an unusually high number of animals to care for — 39 cats and 27 dogs.

The Elks contacted local radio station WWOJ 99.1 and asked that the check presentation be done at the station. The station went one better, and on Saturday, June 9, they aired an on-air for two hours, not only making the community aware of the various needs of the Humane Society but also interviewing several Sebring Elks members about what the lodge does.

As a result of this on-air presentation, two women immediately responded: Linda Mohrdieck brought in a check for $250 as well as food, and Betty Hurlbut, co-owner of Central Security, matched the grant with another
$2,000. Sebring Elks and the Humane Society are grateful to John Meder from WWOJ for a fantastic job.

On Sept. 11, Sebring Lodge presented a $500 check to Woodlawn Elementary for their afterschool program. This program, Leaders in Arts, will be an eight-week program for 80-100 students in third and fourth grades who will attend each week for an hour.

Manasota Lodge #2734 and Maritime Eagles Sea Cadets participate in a flag retirement ceremony at Oneco Elementary School earlier this year.

South Hillsborough #2672

South Hillsborough Elks Lodge #2672 sponsored 22 young boys and girls to participate in the county’s summer day camp program held at E.G. Simmons Park. This year, with the Gratitude Grant and in cooperation with the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation Department, the lodge was able to support two camp periods: July 2-13 for children ages nine to 11 and July 16-27 for children ages 12-15. The camp teaches conservation, kayaking, fishing safety, fishing techniques, catch and release procedures, species identification, and arts and crafts. Two field trips were conducted including a visit to the Florida Aquarium in Tampa and the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center in nearby Apollo Beach. Local charter captains lectured on the fishes of Tampa Bay. At the conclusion of each camp period, awards were given to the camper who caught the biggest fish, the camper who caught the most fish and the camper who showed the most improvement in fishing capabilities. As part of the program, on the last day of camp, every camper receives a rod and reel, some lures, and other tackle and leaves the program with new friends and fond memories.

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855 held their inaugural first responder dinner and dance July 28 with over 67 in attendance. Rick Thorson, PER presented the award to honoree Chief Lee Whitehurst of the East Manatee Fire District. The award is for any first responder including EMTs, firefighters, police officers, state highway officers, sheriff’s deputies and others who meet the qualifications.

On Saturday, Sept. 15, 38 members of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Lodge came by bus to the Florida Elks Youth Camp in Umatilla. They also escorted a busload of relief supplies for victims of Hurricane Florence to be distributed to Elks lodges in the affected areas.

Manasota #2734

Manasota Elks Lodge #2734 participated in a flag retirement ceremony at Oneco Elementary School earlier this year. The ceremony was performed by Maritime Eagles Sea Cadets and included folding the flag and raising the new replacement flags – American, state and POW/MIA. A portion of their Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant was used for this purpose. All students and faculty members of Oneco Elementary School attended the event.

South Venice-Nokomis #1854

Venice-Nokomis Elks Lodge #1854 has given much support to local children. They donated 20 bicycles to a local elementary school for a reading incentive program. The bicycles were presented by Dave Gillum, Exalted Ruler, and Sherie Gillum, Leading Knight. With the help of the Promise Grant, they donated $1,300-worth of food to the Sandra Terry Civic Center.
for the afterschool snack program that feeds 75 homeless children weekly. The lodge also used the Anniversary Grant to purchase and deliver 150 dictionaries to two local elementary schools, and school supplies were delivered to Laurel Nakomis Elementary School for needy children.

Englewood #2378

On Aug. 24, Englewood Elks Lodge #2378 participated in the Shipwreck Dance, a pre-Labor Day youth dance held at Sky Academy, an Englewood school. Their booth exhibited information on Elks programs and they distributed drug awareness material to approximately 200 youngsters ages 8-12.

Greater Pine Island #2781

Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge #2781 used its Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant of $2,000 to support the Beacon Bites program. In November 2016, the Beacon of Hope created a program, Beacon Bites, to deliver freshly made lunches to low-income and disabled seniors on Pine Island. Island Café is preparing the meals for this program and community volunteers deliver the meals and check on the seniors during the week. Frozen meals are delivered on Saturday for the weekend meals.

"The Elks National Foundation through its Gratitude Grant is providing us with the opportunity to give back to our community," says Exalted Ruler, Judy Hopkins. "It is our way of helping to build a stronger community. By partnering with the Beacon of Hope, we can provide additional meals to those in need on the island. We want to serve our community in ways that will raise the lodge's profile, energize our membership, encourage former members to return to the fold and gain the notice of people who want to be part of an organization that is doing big things."

Naples #2010

Naples Elks Lodge #2010 presented a check for $1,350 to PAWS Assistance Dogs of Naples using their Elks National Foundation Anniversary Grant. PAWS provides dogs to veterans and disabled children. The PAWS volunteers attended a lodge luncheon in their honor. After a brief presentation of the services they provide, two service dogs in training and their trainers gave a training demonstration. The Elks and guests were so impressed that they made additional donations totaling over $675, providing PAWS with over $2,000.

Punta Gorda #2606

The South Southwest District Past Exalted Rulers sponsored a spaghetti dinner hosted by Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606 Sunday, Sept. 10, to benefit Ron Rehner who has been afflicted with a life-threatening ailment. He is the son-in-law of Don (deceased) and Colleen Roll. Don Roll was the first Exalted Ruler of Punta Gorda Lodge and his daughter is Jacqueline Rehner, SWC District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler and ENF grants coordinator. In addition to proceeds from the dinner,
raffles and donations including $250 from the Punta Gorda Elkettes, a check in the amount of $4,500 was presented to help with medical bills.

Volunteers are pictured with Jackie Renhe, whose husband was the recipient of a benefit dinner sponsored by the South-Southwest District Past Exalted Rulers at Punta Gorda Lodge Sept. 10.

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Clewiston #1853

The Clewiston Elks Soccer Shoot was held Thursday, Sept. 13. The medal winners from each age group advanced to the Southeast District Soccer Shoot in Clewiston Saturday, Oct. 13. High scorers were Sebastian Aragus and Nicole Chantang, each with 44 points. Sebastian Aragus and Katelin Aragus are both past state champions.

Rotonda #2710

On Saturday, Sept. 12, Rotonda Elks Lodge's property once again evolved into a large playing field for their third Special Olympics event. Elkette President, Ginny Perry, hosted this event for 55 children and young adults. Before the games began, the American Legion 113 Honor Guard presented the flag. The athletes enjoyed soccer, track, softball toss, bocce, putting golf balls and a beanbag toss. After the competition, volunteers served lunch to some very hungry athletes. Exalted Ruler, Phil Sommers, conducted the award ceremony and distributed medals to all the hardworking athletes. At the closing, one young adult mentioned that he would be back next year. The lodge members were proud to be a part of the 50th year's celebration of Special Olympics.

Clewnston Christian School students: Wides Redish, Paisley Bell, Britney Casique, Brooklyn Serre, Landon Bell, Grey Redish and Sean Daniels participate in the Clewiston Lodge Soccer Shoot Sept. 13.

Rotonda Lodge's Bob Humphreys, PER raised the flag with one of the athletes competing in the Special Olympics at Rotonda Lodge Sept. 12.

college of their choice.

Jupiter #2469

Members of Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 recently played in the Tony Boisclair golf invitational in memory of one of Jupiter's dedicated members who passed unexpectedly earlier this year. A portion of the event proceeds will help fund scholarships for local high school students.

Jupiter Elks donated more than $2,000 worth of school supplies to local schools for their classrooms. Representatives from Jupiter Farms Elementary, Jupiter Elementary, Jerry Thomas Elementary and Loxahatchee Groves Elementary recently attended a lodge meeting to pick up the supplies.

Lake Okeechobee #2871

Lake Okeechobee Elks ran an information booth at a local festival over Labor Day weekend. They held a Soccer Shoot and joined local groups at a back-to-school event. With a donation of school supplies, members attended the backpack program hosted by Our Village Okeechobee. On the first day of school, Elks met at an elementary school and welcomed students back to school and cheered them on to success.

Lake Okeechobee Lodge members attend the backpack program hosted by Our Village Okeechobee during Labor Day weekend. They brought with them donations of school supplies.
SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Boca Raton #2166

Boca Raton Elks Lodge #2166 has been busy preparing for their annual charity golf tournament and many members are actively involved. The lodge continues to hold blood drives and has received the Beacon Grant and the matching FSEA grant, Freedom Grant, and Anniversary Grant. The lodge also hosted a CPR class for members and friends. Boca Raton Fire Department supplied the instructors and gifted the lodge with a new AED.

Delray Beach #1770

Since mid-June, Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770 has made donations to 18 nonprofit organizations totaling $11,275. They have also received the Elks National Foundation Promise, Gratitude, Beacon and Anniversary grants as well as the FSEA matching grant totaling $10,000.

After Delray Beach Lodge’s memorial golf tournament, they had 129 golfers back to the lodge to enjoy lunch and prizes and raised over $5,000.

Florida Keys #1872

The Elks National Foundation Anniversary Grant helped make possible a fantastic community event to benefit Keys Strong for Hurricane Irma recovery. Many people in the Florida Keys are still without homes and other essentials. Local musicians donated their time and talent to entertain during the complimentary community dinner July 14 at Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872. Approximately 200 people attended and $1,022 was raised. Eight new applications for membership were submitted as well because of this event.

Miami #948

At their meeting Sept. 5, Miami Elks Lodge #948 honored Hunter Reker as its Student of the Month for September. He is currently a junior at Terra Environmental High School in Miami. TERRA Environmental Research Institute is a secondary public school and is a LEED certified high school. The school has three magnet academies: Biomedical Research, Robotics & Engineering, and Environmental Research. Hunter's field of study is engineering. This past summer he worked at the Florida Elks Youth Camp as a counselor-in-training after attending many previous summers as a camper. Hunter's grandfather is Albert Reker, PDD, Lodge Advisor.

SOUTH DISTRICT

Hollywood West #2365

On June 22, members of Hollywood West Elks Lodge #2365 manned their Elks drug awareness station at the Davie Youth Rodeo. Members handed out Elks drug awareness education literature, school supplies and toys to 3,000 students from local summer camps, their teachers and chaperones attending the rodeo. The children were overwhelmed when Elroy the Elk made a guest appearance.

Miami Lodge’s Student of the Month, Hunter Reker, is pictured with PDD Al Reker, Tim Reker, Barbara Reker, Kelly Reker and Milton Muller Sept. 5.

PHOTO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The pictures you take during lodge events are vital to the success of this magazine and enrich its content. If you submitted photos along with your district news but they did not make it into the magazine, they were submitted in the wrong format or at too low of a size or resolution. Please use the following photo guidelines:

SEND THE ORIGINAL FILE
There is no need to crop or edit the photos. Send the full-resolution picture directly from the camera files, or upload your photos into a Google Images or Dropbox account and send a link to the gallery. The bigger the file size, the better!

SEND ONLY IMAGE FILES
Please send only files with a .jpg or .jpeg extension, not PDF or .png files.

DO NOT SEND A WORD DOC
Images embedded in a Word document are not suitable for print. Email each photo file directly from your camera files.
NORTH DISTRICT

Lake City #893

Lake City Elks Lodge #893 reports that the local VA hospital's adaptive golf tournament is off to a good start. The lodge donated $600 to help kick off this program. Crafts continue to be popular at the local VA Domiciliary and a field trip is being planned to visit Jacksonville Zoo. Board games donated by the lodge and community are a great source of entertainment for the domiciliary residents as well.

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Ocala #286

Each month, Ocala Elks Lodge #286 donates food and personal items to Vets Helping Vets. In July, Veterans chairman, Pam Kinard, told the crowd during bar bingo that they were in desperate need of supplies. Members responded with a total of $1,500.

Winter Garden #2165

Winter Garden Elks Lodge #2165 used the Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to serve 100 veterans, family and staff a barbecue lunch at the VA center. The lodge gave them all t-shirts that say, “Winter Garden Elks Love our Vets.” They also gave out goodie bags with various items and provided karaoke for them.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Kissimmee #1873

Kissimmee Lodge sent volunteers to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games Tuesday, July 31. According to wheelchairgames.org, the games are sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America. “The games serve veterans with spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, amputations, and other central neurological impairments with the goal to increase their independence, healthy activity, and quality of life through wheelchair sports and recreation. Veterans are being exposed to wheelchair sports at their home VAMC or PVA chapters as part of their rehabilitation to improve function, independence and getting

them active in their home communities in sport and fitness.” Some events included basketball, softball, swimming, cycling and power lifting.

West Citrus #2693

Each year, West Citrus Elks Lodge #2693 hosts a breakfast for the Arron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart. This year, the lodge was proclaimed a Purple Heart lodge. Designation as a Purple Heart entity is reserved for organizations that have exhibited noteworthy patriotic support of our nation’s armed forces, its veterans and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Winter Garden Elks gather to provide lunch and gifts to veterans, family and staff at their local VA.

Presenting the Purple Heart lodge proclamation and plaque to West Citrus Lodge are Cmdr. Richard Allen (left) and Sergeant at Arms, Rick Allen (right). Accepting the proclamation and plaque are Jean Buck-Newhouse and Joann Hepner, co-chairmen of the Veterans Committee, and Brian Estru, Exalted Ruler.

On Saturday, Sept. 22, the West Citrus Lodge Veterans Committee donated an American flag to Crystal Gem Manor Assisted Living Facility. Many of the residents gathered outside to
watch the Elks take down the faded and tattered old flag and replace it with a bright new one. As the new flag was raised, they all joined in with the Pledge of Allegiance. Many residents were excited and thanked the committee members.

Zephyrhills #2731

On behalf of Zephyrhills Elks Lodge #2731, Judy Osgood, ENF chairman, and Kori Fabiani, Exalted Ruler, presented $1,000 from their Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to Mark Van Trees, Director of Support the Troops, for mailing packages to active military.

West Citrus Lodge Veterans Committee members Jack McKowen, Jack Stewart and Bill Dennington replace Crystal Gem Manor Assisted Living Facility's flag.

St. Petersburg #1224

On Saturday, July 14, St. Petersburg Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, Cathy Shriver, presented a check from the lodge for $5,000 to PDD Rudy Masi Sr., Historic Programs Liaison for the Florida State Elks Association. St. Petersburg's Ladies of Elks Auxiliary President, Sharon Literski, also presented a donation of $4,000 to the ladies. Historic Programs is a not-for-profit organization committed to remembering people, places and events that have shaped the world. One of their events is the Parade of Heroes, an annual event held in Washington, D.C., during the week of Veterans Day. This event features outstanding bands, choirs and JROTC cadets from around the country paying a special tribute to veterans of WWII and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

On Tuesday, Sept. 18, St. Petersburg Lodge donated the use of its hall to Bay Pines VA Healthcare System to hold their Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PPRC) graduation program. Two veterans graduated from the program while 54 guests watched in the audience. There were 46 veterans and a staff member present from Bay Pines VAHS for this special occasion along with seven Elks who attended this event to witness the achievements of these two graduates. PPRC assists veterans who have significant functional impairment such as PTSD and other persistent mental illnesses with developing the skills needed to be successful in living, working, learning or socializing in the community once they are out of the military. Their recovery will be an ongoing journey.

Largo #2159

Members of the Largo Lodge Veterans Committee recently delivered the 11th welcome-home kit to the C.W. Bill Young VAMC. The kits are designed for veterans leaving the VA to live independently in their own residences and include small appliances, kitchen utensils, towels, bathroom accessories, bedding, paper products, lamps, dishes and any other items that might be necessary to set up a household. Some items are purchased and some are donated by lodge members. This project is supported by the National Elks Veterans Service.

Veterans from James A. Haley VA Domiciliary enjoy dinner at Tampa Lodge July 20.

The veterans were also treated to a free thrift store where they could fill bags of items they can use when they are rehoused. The lodge's Veterans Committee, chaired by Patricia Jankiewicz, hosted the event.

Tampa #708

On July 20, Tampa Elks Lodge #708 hosted 10 veterans for dinner from the James A. Haley VA Domiciliary, a transitional facility for veterans experiencing homelessness. They enjoyed selecting their made-to-order specialty sandwiches from PER Shelagh Gombarciak and Laura Jones and listening to live music from Limestone Cowboy.

Angel is an Army veteran who needed a little help getting her new apartment ready in time for her child's arrival from D.C. Tampa Elks were able to come through for her in a big way. First were the bags of items and the microwave that Angel chose from the lodge's free thrift store for the domiciliary veterans. Then there were school clothes provided by several members. Towels, linens, accessories such as purses, some energy-efficient

Jeanne Reinhart, PDD delivers a welcome-home kit from Largo Lodge to C.W. Bill Young VAMC in St. Petersburg, Fla. Nathan Witt, Chief of Voluntary Service at the VAMC, accepts the donation.
light bulbs, and other items found their way to her doorstep as well. She also received the extra school supplies from the lodge’s children’s party. When it was time to go shopping, Angel knew what her biggest remaining need was – a television for her 17-year-old’s bedroom. She also picked up some laundry supplies, paper goods and even a few candles.

The Elks’ Welcome Home program of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission is really making a difference to some previously homeless veterans in the Tampa community.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Sebring #1529

New member Lisa Celentano arranged the dirty dozen canoe race held at Sebring Lodge’s water’s edge Saturday, Sept. 1. The lodge made money on parking and pulled pork sandwiches. Setup was in full swing by 7:30 a.m. with the first of three races starting at 10 a.m. Lodge members volunteered with parking, cooking, working in the dining room, setup and cleanup, and the ROTC from Sebring High School helped with setup and parking. Vendors attended the event as well, and there was a tent that displayed Elks information. Music was provided by a DJ and the national anthem was sung as PER George Quel presented the flag. Approximately 90 canoeists, both new and experienced, participated. Proceeds were given to Folds of Honor, an organization that provides educational scholarships to the children and spouses of fallen and disabled service members while serving our nation.

Sebring Lodge holds a canoe race to benefit Folds of Honor Sept. 1.

Plant City #1727

On Jan. 13, Matthew Smith, a single father and U.S. Navy veteran, was involved in a motorcycle accident. While attempting to make a left turn, the driver of the vehicle behind him failed to properly maintain control of his vehicle, striking Smith from behind and totaling his bike. Over the last seven months, he has endured four neck surgeries, a knee surgery, and many physical therapy sessions and doctor’s appointments. Due to the demand of his treatment, he has been unable to provide for his daughter, Shayla, and his son, Braiden. The battle still continues for the next few months and there is a real need for help and support for a man who has fallen on hard times due to circumstances beyond his control.

On Sunday, Sept. 2, a fundraiser on his behalf was held at the Strawberry Patch in Plant City. Elks Ron Johns, Kenny Goodwien and Mark Edelman attended the event and presented him with a $500 check from Plant City Lodge. An additional $1,100 was donated out of their pockets for a 50/50 raffle and auction. Ron Johns won the 50/50 raffle and donated his proceeds back to Smith. Donations will be used for monthly expenses (rent, bills, food), medical supplies that are not otherwise provided, fuel for trips to and from doctor’s appointments, and physical therapy.

Jennifer Slaughter, an Army wife who was told about the Army of Hope by the Florida Army National Guard, reached out because her family is experiencing a hardship. She is the mother of Daphne, three, and Sophia, 12. Her husband is currently on deployment in Kuwait. As she explains, “Sophia was born with a chromosomal anomaly which presents many difficulties for her including severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone and the growing potential for seizures as she matures. She also has dyspraxia, a lifelong neurological condition which impairs her executive functioning, coordination, balance, and abilities to read, write and count, among many other things. Lastly, she has moderate autism.”

Her husband, Chief Warrant Officer Todd Slaughter, has been deployed to Kuwait since January 2018. “His absence at home has made raising Sophia very challenging. She cannot ever be left alone and does not engage in typical activities such as sleepovers, childcare, etc. Our days are always spent together,” she explains.

Recently, they decided to take Sophia out of public school. Though she was given a vast amount of accommodations, the system was still unable to provide a curriculum for her that worked and that she could access. Sophia even had a one-to-one aid throughout her school day, but it was not enough. This past year, in fourth grade, her abilities regressed back to that of a first-grader. It broke their hearts to see her falling so far behind her peers. She was of the age where social interaction was challenging. She was bullied and called names.

District Army of Hope Chairman, Spike Jones, referred Jennifer Slaughter to PDD Jim Lamb who interviewed her. He shared her story with Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services therapist Mark Edelman, Kenny Goodwien, Ed Lefler (Strawberry Patch owner), Matthew Smith and Ron Johns are pictured at the Matthew Smith fundraiser at the Strawberry Patch in Plant City Sept. 2.
Margo Baker to see if she could help. In a week, Sophia was approved and is now receiving therapy from Baker. At the same time, he requested financial assistance from the Army of Hope to help them get caught up on some bills. The Army of Hope wrote a check for $1,500. Lamb received a phone call from Todd Slaughter in Kuwait thanking him and all Elks for their help.

**SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

**Punta Gorda #2606**

Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606 held a country and western dance Sunday, Sept. 17, to raise funds to support the Parade of Heroes. Each year for Veterans Day weekend, the lodge sends veterans to Washington, D.C. This year, plans are to send five former service members, including two World War II veterans, for three days. The dance raised $3,712.57.

**SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

**Jupiter #2469**

Jupiter Elks have been working tirelessly with Home Depot employee volunteers to fix up the lodge building with new interior and exterior paint, new baseboards, chair railings, and ceiling tiles all made possible through a $19,700 grant from the Home Depot Foundation for the work that the Elks do for veterans. Jupiter members have also sent dozens of handwritten letters to military personnel in Syria along with gift cards. They continue to serve dinners to veterans, their families and caregivers every quarter at the Renewal Coalition, a local nonprofit that assists wounded service members and their families in their transition from military to civilian life or back to active duty.

**West Palm Beach #1352**

West Palm Beach Elks Lodge #1352 recently hosted Quilts of Valor. A local quilting guild, Quilts by the Sea, awarded 16 veterans, including three members of the lodge – ER Ed Morey, PER Herb Loreti and Bob Josephberg – Quilts of Valor, comforting and healing quilts to cover service members and veterans touched by war. The lodge also hosted blind veterans from the West Palm Beach Veterans Administration Medical Center for karaoke.

**SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

**Pompano Beach #1898**

Pompano Beach Lodge donated crocheted lap blankets to veterans. Pictured are Pompano Beach member Else Oshima, PER Marily Truss and SSE VP Frank Sellars.

**FLORIDA KEYS #1872**

On July 30, 15 veterans from the VA hospital in Miami visited Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872 for lunch and bingo as one of their recreational outings. Elks volunteers provided a tasty lunch and prizes for bingo. Local Girl Scouts gave gifts of sun catchers, thank you posters and cards which they had made. The veterans also received T-shirts donated by an Elks member.

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855

On Aug. 11, 140 people celebrated veterans at a special dinner and dance. Veterans were treated to a free dinner and a goody bag consisting of a t-shirt and hat. The dinner was catered by Dickies BarBQue and entertainment was provided by Lynn’s Spins.
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