Last year’s summer article featured many exciting things that happened at our national convention. The national convention was cancelled this year due to the coronavirus. On an upside, the next scheduled Elks national convention is in Tampa, Florida, with the theme of “A Sunshine State of Mind.”

The Florida State Elks did hold a state convention in mid-June at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, Florida. Our State Secretary and COO, Carl Seibert, and his talented staff hosted an excellent convention. It certainly had some changes that were unique due to the concern of the virus – masking, social distancing and limited hospitality rooms – and yet it appeared that everyone enjoyed themselves. We installed our new state officers, including Rudy Masi, as our new State President, and his wife, Dolly, presented him with the state president’s pin. Suzi Simonelli was elected as Vice President at Large and was accompanied by her husband, Joey. “Past State President” Tom Ludwick presided over the convention and he and Joyce were congratulated by the members present for an outstanding year of service to the Florida State Elks Association. Another change we experienced was the District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler designates were installed by me since we had no national convention. During our memorial service, we witnessed eulogies for Past State President Thomas Ryan and Past National President and State Co-Sponsor, C. Valentine Bates. We were honored to have Claudia Bates attend the service.

The newly installed District Deputies from Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi came to our camp for an intense training weekend on their duties and additional training on the financial reporting system which all lodges are mandated to implement. The two main instructors for this event were Mark Thompson, DDGER Trainer, and Carl Gerace, Area 3 Grand Lodge Auditing and Accounting member. This training is usually held at the national convention.

The coronavirus has affected all of our lives to some degree and has required many adjustments. Nick Miller, Florida Elks Youth Camp Director, and his staff had to cancel our summer youth camp for safety reasons which impacted many young children who had made plans for camp. It had a negative impact on the camp counselors who had planned to work. Colleen Gallant, Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services Director, and her staff had to discontinue house calls to treat the children. They had to adapt and accept virtual therapy treatments for safety reasons. The Florida State Elks Association office staff had to work from their homes while the shutdown was in force. As we continue to monitor we will continue to adapt.

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PNP Bob Grafton, Co-Sponsor, and I, along with Sandra, hope all of you and your families are well and continue to stay safe and healthy. Be Loud, Proud and Visible!

Michael F. Smith, PNP, State Sponsor
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Cover photo: Emily Bulson in Stuart, Florida, March 1, 2020
Photo credit: Alaina Bulson, sister

Many thanks go to Tom Walden, Dick Bardsley, Donna Gudavich, Courtney Weil and Craig Abbott for their service as District Reporters. We welcome the incoming District Reporters.

TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS OR TO CANCEL YOUR MAGAZINE MAILING, YOU MUST NOTIFY YOUR LODGE SECRETARY, NOT THE FLORIDA ELKS MAGAZINE EDITOR.

The Florida Elks Magazine mails one copy per address to multi-member households according to Elks national magazine distribution and GL 4.280(f)2. Questions may be directed to The Elks Magazine Circulation Department at 773-755-4742 or magcirc@elks.org.

To share lodge news between Florida Elks Magazine issues, please email articles and photos to r.king@floridaelks.org. They will be posted to the Florida Elks News Online section of the state website, floridaelks.org, and the state Facebook page, Facebook.com/floridaelks.
During our state convention demonstration, there were photos of family – our personal family and our Elks family. Some of you belong to both families. Family bonds are rooted deep in Dolly’s and my hearts. As we visit you throughout the state, we look forward to getting to know you better as the lines between our personal family and our Elks family blend to become one.

We are living in unprecedented times. The coronavirus, protests and riots are changing the face of our nation. For many years, our members and lodges have paid it forward by donating their time, talents and money to support our many projects and community charities. It is the intent of our team to do what is necessary to help Florida Elks rebound and come back strong. During Officer Training, your District Vice Presidents; your VPAL, Suzi Simonelli; and I put together a culture statement on how we were going to right the wrongs and helping moving forward, manning the sails, sometimes with the wind, sometimes against it. But we must not drift or lie at anchor.” Strong leaders are not happy with the status quo. I am asking you to join with us to be focused on moving forward, manning the sails, righting the wrongs and helping make the best better by adopting the following action items.

- Accept constructive criticism and be willing to change.
- We promptly make amends and move on when wrong.
- Stay on task, we keep calm and we move forward.
- Delegate, trust and advise.
- Be innovative and provide good leadership.
- Lead by example, being “Warm, Friendly and Active.”

We ask you to hold us accountable to do what we say we will do in adhering to our District Vice President culture. Your leaders are human; we will make mistakes. It is how we respond and recover from our errors that matters.

Our members living our motto of “Florida Elks – Warm, Friendly and Active” is key to helping our lodges rebound. I am asking you to help me by ensuring your lodges are warm so members will see their lodge as their second home. Our lodges should be friendly and hospitable to all of our members and guests. An active lodge full of life providing social and service opportunities is key. This tripod of warm, friendly and active lodges will result in happy members and guests wanting to join.

The BPOE has a storied history of which Elks are and should be proud. Having said that, our nation and our world is constantly evolving and changing. “If you do what you’ve always done, you are going to get what you’ve always got” is a true idiom. If Florida Elks are going to continue to grow and be a light of good in our state, I believe we must not stand still relying just on past practices to help us move forward. We must challenge ourselves to take measured risks for the growth of our order.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes advised, “To reach a port, we must sail, sometimes with the wind, sometimes against it. But we must not drift or lie at anchor.” Strong leaders are not happy with the status quo. I am asking you to join with us to be focused on moving forward, manning the sails, righting the wrongs and helping make the best better by adopting the following action items.

- Renew and live each principle we swore to adhere to when taking our Elk obligation.
- Encourage and help our lodges provide a welcome, friendly and warm environment all of our members consider their second home.
- Promote growth of our order by recruitment and retention of quality members willing to share their time, talent and treasure benefiting our major projects and other programs.
- Be proactive supporting our vision of being prominent service providers fostering care and treatment of children with autism while continuing to support our major projects, scholarships, Historical Programs, veterans and other charities.
- Apply strong business acumen when selecting individuals as committee chairs and lodge officers.
- Be willing to mentor, coach, hold accountable, and, when needed, remove individuals who are not fulfilling the responsibilities of their office. The best legacy of a strong leader is to have the person following in their footsteps do even better.
- Praise, recognize and show gratitude to individuals, lodges and districts for a job well done.

Last year during visitations, I learned much from listening to you. As a result, this year when visiting our districts, my preference is to see resources spent on helping lodges recover from the effects of the pandemic assisting Elks in action and/or doing what we do best – Elks charitable works.

Harry-Anna Trust Fund Chair, Theresa Seibert; Vice Chair, Dayna Miller; and Development Director, Dan Masi, are holding fast to what is good while changing their fundraising strategies, keeping in mind the financial impact the coronavirus is having on our members and our lodges. You will see a major emphasis on enrolling sustaining donors. Elks donating a little monthly will yield great results. Just 3,089 additional members donating $19 a month would achieve our Harry-Anna fundraising goal and take the burden off the lodges. Many of you have asked me what you can do to help me. The best help you can give is to pray for us and to become a sustaining donor as it will take away much stress.

We will build on Past National President Mike Smith’s vision of Elks being “Loud, Proud & Visible.”
T he events of the last few months have indeed been challenging as we have endured prolonged closures of our lodges and our club operations. Fortunately, the good deeds we do for others were not as affected and we were able to continue them albeit with some minor content and delivery adjustments. Through it all, our Elks lodges hung on to hope and are now beginning to reemerge. We used the downtime to revisit our operations, create new business plans, and strengthen our own sense of community within our lodge and among our members. This internal strengthening was especially important since through it, we improve our effectiveness at serving the greater community of others.

A common misconception throughout this ordeal has been the role our state association plays in the oversight of lodges. Many of our members are also members of other fraternal organizations and as such were privy to their communications. Oftentimes I was forwarded information from a state adjunct of another organization accompanied by a request for similar direction from the Florida State Elks. Regrettably, that is not how it works for the Elks. You see, Elks lodges are chartered by the national organization, the Grand Lodge. Executive orders to Elks lodges would come only from the Grand Exalted Ruler and through his District Deputies. Because the pandemic affected areas of the country differently, we did not receive a national one-size-fits-all mandate. The response from the Florida Elks was always to be governed by the direction of your local authorities and enforcement officials. It was frustrating, I know, and it would be so much easier to just be told what to do, but it was essential in allowing individual lodges a say in how they look and how they are perceived in their individual communities. It was a little more work for lodge leaders, yes, but it was also an opportunity to hone leadership skills and guide the lodge through turbulent times, lessons we can all carry forward to future generations.

So, let us talk more about community perception. Another popular question asked by many lodges in recent months has been whether we are a restaurant or a bar. This question does not have an easy answer, as we all well know, and is based on whatever criteria is used to evaluate such at the time. Allow me to share with you why the answer should not matter to us. Take the local country club. They usually have a pool and a tennis court and oftentimes a golf course. They usually have a pro shop and snack bar as well as a restaurant and dining room. It is also usually known if they are open to the public or private. Everyone for the most part understands a country club, so we therefore do not force them to conform to the label of a restaurant or bar. The basis for this is in what is seen and perceived. Then there is the actual restaurant and bar operations. It is a little harder to know the difference sometimes, but it is easily defined once the state of Florida added percentage of food sales to the mix. Then there is the fraternal that is clearly not a restaurant as they do not have a kitchen or the fraternal that has a kitchen but it is only used for special events. These did not fit under the restaurant label, so it was either/or for them and most fell under the definition of a bar. Then there is the hybrid of all three, a private membership club, oftentimes serving food from a restaurant-style kitchen that also serves alcohol in a bar-style setting. We know it as an Elks lodge. It is much trickier for the public to understand so it is generally subject to public perception. Do we seriously want to be known as a restaurant or bar? Or would we prefer to be perceived as an organization that does good for the community and provides its members dining and lounge privileges in a private club setting?

Community Perception and a Pandemic
Our localized approach to managing this crisis allowed many of our lodges to reopen with mainstream restaurants as we benefited from the lack of clarity in defining what we were. Others were not so fortunate and were bars or were perceived as bars. We are in control of how others see us. Are we happy with what they see? How do potential members see us? If our weekly restaurant and bar promotions dominate what others see when they look at us, how ever will we be anything but a restaurant or bar? Do we WANT our new members volunteering just for the good of the club or do we NEED them to volunteer for the good of the community? When our club operations take priority over our lodge operations, we will have a difficult time changing public perception.

A member’s need to belong to something bigger than themselves drove them to our doors. Our lodge traditions create stability and contribute to that sense of belonging. The latest bar or restaurant promotion contributes to a sense of belonging, but it is the things we do as a lodge and for our community that create stability and appeal to their need to belong to something greater. We must become known for something other than just being a restaurant and bar. We are so much more; we just must sell it. The public knows we do good. The public knows we give back to our communities. Where we fail is connecting the dots for why to join. How do we connect perception to what we do? Who we assist needs to be on the front page of all we do – not what is for dinner!

Our model stands alone because it should, but can it maintain that status if we are forced into a category created for us by others and based on their perceptions? Shouldn’t we strive to be different and desire to be perceived differently? I believe we should never allow public perception to label our lodges a bar or a restaurant and if that is the perception others have of us, well, we have some work to do to change that perception. It has been suggested that we lobby the state of Florida for a “private club” status like how they do it in Georgia. Are we prepared to demonstrate how we are different from the others so as not to be labeled just another restaurant or bar?

Please visit https://floridaelks.org/carls-corner and join the conversation by logging in and posting your comments.

Carl T. Seibert, COO/State Secretary
Florida State Elks Association
ADELLA ASHTON, PRESIDENT, FLORIDA LADIES OF ELKS

Unfortunately, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel our FLOE hospitality suite. We did not make this decision lightly. We were very disappointed as Linda and I were looking forward to celebrating with our veterans, FLOE and Elks. We chose to host the Chinese auction, FLOE luncheon and fashion show. I would like to thank everyone who donated to the Chinese auction and I give a special thanks to Chairlady Diane Sharp who did an exceptional job in every aspect of setting up the tables and donations. Special thanks go to Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the children they treat who shared their artistic talents drawing angels that Diane strategically placed around the donations; they were beautiful and added a special touch. Thanks also go to Barbara Carroll who co-chaired along with Diane. The auction raised $2,240 that FLOE will donate to the Florida State Elks Association major projects. Our 50/50 winner, Jan Giallourakis, President of the Ladies Auxiliary from St. Petersburg #1224, won $460 and donated part of her winnings back to FLOE.

On Friday, June 19, we held the FLOE luncheon with a patriotic theme. Many thanks go to all Elks, PSP wives, FLOE members and guests for attending. Special thanks go to Judy Reyes, PSP-FLOE who did an incredible job taking care of registration, luncheon tickets and coordinating the dignitary seating along with Sandra Smith, wife of Michael Smith, PNP. Our patriotic theme included an entrance to the luncheon with flags and flowers. The tables had red, white and blue centerpieces with bricks of each branch of the service. Thanks and praise go to Linda Crawford of Ocala Lodge #286 and the ladies of OLEO (Ocala Ladies of Elks). Judy Reyes, PSP-FLOE designed our table signs and place cards which added the special touch to the table. Tiffany of Resort Fashions presented a fashion show prior to lunch. Many thanks go to Tiffany and our models, Becky Long, PSP-FLOE; Theresa Seibert, PDD; Linda Rittenhouse, FLOE Vice President; and Trisha Hyatt of OLEO. They all looked lovely walking the runway.

Our business meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, June 20. Present was our outgoing State Chair, Tom Carns, PER, who introduced and proudly handed over the reins to the incoming State Chair, Tom Moran, PER. Outgoing State President, Tom Ludwick, and Vice President-elect, Suzi Simonelli, PDD, later visited us. We always appreciate and look forward to their inspiring words. Mary McCoy, PSP-FLOE, Nominating Committee Chairlady, read the recommendations for FLOE officers for the upcoming year and elections were held. I am very pleased to announce the following officers for the Florida State Ladies of Elks year 2020-2021: President, Linda Rittenhouse; Vice President, Debbie Farris Mortka; Secretary, Laura Sardella; Treasurer is open; and four-year Advisory Council members, Adella Ashton and Susie Harlow. Congratulations, ladies. I look forward to your year and know that FLOE will flourish in the upcoming year. ByLaws Committee Chairlady, Felicia Vuletich, PSP-FLOE, read the proposed changes to the current bylaws and standing rules. At the September conference, we will read the bylaws once again, followed by voting. We spent the balance of our meeting on the upcoming FLOE conference. The president’s gift of a patriotic angel, USA pillow and caftan was won by Betty Orcutt from the West Central District.

FLOE implemented a new program, FLOE’s Angel, and it has been a year in the planning. At the awards luncheon, we were honored to present our first FLOE’s Angel family award, a four-day weekend to a Disney resort including room for four nights, meals, memory-maker package, magical extras and parking. The D’Angelo family was selected as our first recipient. Congratulations go to Jeff, Katis, JJ and MiaBella D’Angelo! As you may remember, JJ was the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services CHAMP last year.

I want to thank Tom Carns, PER for his support as our State Chair of Ladies Organizations. We welcome Tom Moran, PER as our new State Chair and Bonnie Barnes, PER as our Vice Chair for the upcoming year.

Our next FLOE event will be our 57th annual conference Sept. 24-26 at the Lido Beach Resort in Sarasota, Florida. We will begin with the opening of our fundraising shop which will include crafts, raffles and other surprises; we will be open to the public each day. This year we will be adding a Chinese auction. On Friday evening, we will have entertainment by Act III - Motown music. Dress attire is business casual or dress the era of Motown. A cash bar will be available. On Saturday morning we will have our business meeting (closed meeting) followed by our luncheon (all invited). The FLOE packet which includes the menus for the dinner and luncheon are available at floridaelks.org. Our afternoon session will begin with our memorial service honoring our departed sisters presented by FLOE Chaplain, Tracy Howell, PER. We will announce our usual FLOE award winners, present donations and conclude with the installation of the 2020-2021 officers.

Remember, aside from the beautiful beach and other amenities at Lido Beach Resort in Sarasota, there are many places to visit and enjoy such as the Ringling Museum of Art, aquarium, opera house, Jungle Gardens, Siesta Key Marina and Marina Jack, and if you like to shop, there is St. Armand’s Circle and University Mall. You have a choice like to shop, there is St. Armand’s Circle and University Mall. You have a choice to register online or via mail as well as purchasing meal/dinner show tickets. I hope to see you in September!

In the meantime, may God bless and watch over all of Elkdom.

God bless America and all first responders!

Adella Ashton, 2019-2020 President
Florida Ladies of Elks
Welcome to summer!

Wow. What can I say about the last few months? I don’t think any of us could ever have imagined what we would go through when we left Officer Training at the Marriott Orlando in mid-March.

It was like entering “The Twilight Zone,” and here we are several months later and things have only gotten worse – over 10,000 people a day testing positive for COVID-19.

As of today, we continue to be in Phase 2 and we are making plans for the therapists to be able to go back in homes and treat our patients. During our management meeting in June, it was decided that we would wait for Phase 3 to allow therapists to go into homes. Obviously, we do not want to do anything to put our therapists or their families in harm’s way. We have taken the steps to prepare them, including the purchase of masks, hand sanitizer and disinfectant. Many are purchasing smocks to wear since it would be impossible to supply everyone with surgical-type gowns. We have also asked them to purchase inexpensive tools and toys that they can leave in the home rather than taking them in and out of several homes. They already do a great job of keeping their equipment sanitized. Before going into any home, they will ask the COVID questions and then once they go into a home, they will take everyone’s temperature.

Over the last several months, therapists have done their best to stay in touch with their families and have provided families with exercises and items they can use during therapy. The therapists have used Zoom, FaceTime and other electronic avenues available to them to continue teaching and working with our patients.

We certainly understand that parents who are out of work or working from home helping children with their home schooling assignments as well as working with them on their therapy are overwhelmed.

Argie Criner, our therapist from the Central and Southwest Central districts, spoke at the state convention and provided our members with the 2020 therapy goals as well as information on the effects of acute stress because of the global pandemic. We all enjoyed hearing what the therapists have been doing since they cannot see patients in person.

In addition to the treatment plans provided to families, they have taken this time to get all of their continuing education so that when they start treating patients in-home, they can hit the ground running.

At the state convention, we said goodbye to last year’s CHAMP, JJ D’Angelo, and welcome to summer! his family. Adella Ashton, President of FLOE, presented the family with a mini Disney World vacation for four nights with meals included as well as presents for both JJ and his sister, MiaBella. Thank you very much, FLOE, for this amazing gift to the family.

We introduced our new CHAMP of the year, Emily Bulson, who is 16 years old and lives in Hobe Sound, Florida. We were so pleased to have Emily in attendance with her mother, Talitha; father, Merrill; sister, Alaina; and brothers, Brett and Blake. The family was so pleased to meet so many fine Elks and have agreed to go to various events, particularly in south Florida. If we are able to go to the Rays game in August, the family will join us there.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support as we proceed in these uncharted waters. Please know that the therapists, Deborah Hall and I are so pleased to be able to continue to do this very important work in the name of Florida Elks.

Please take care and stay safe.

Colleen Gallant, Director
Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services
For those of you who have not yet heard, we cancelled summer camp 2020. For the first time in 25 years, we didn't have any kids at the camp during June and July. Just writing this breaks my heart all over again. These are unprecedented times, though, and while I am saddened at the loss of camp this year, I am certain that we made the right decision.

I know that opinions on the seriousness of this pandemic have been divided – a Florida Elk actually accused me of being a coward – but we have a duty to the children of Florida to provide a physically and mentally safe environment anytime they come to our property. This fact remains, regardless of a family's willingness to take the risk. And the truth is, despite all of our preparations, we could not unequivocally ensure that. There were, and still are, simply too many unknowns.

So, as early as March, we were preparing for just this type of worst-case scenario. We built the basis for a virtual summer camp program where our counselors and counselors-in-training would reach out to their "cabin" of kids via streaming video services, email and social media. It was a good plan. Unfortunately, we were not able to get the required number of children to sign up for virtual camp and were only able to support a single trial week. This single week, however, taught us a lot about running a camp of this style, and the positive reviews of the kids and parents who participated validated its potential efficacy. Obviously, virtual camp can never replace the in-person experience of camp at camp, but it may provide the means to supplement our normal program.

One of my priorities over the last few years has been to find the means to allow our amazing summer camp counselors to continue to mentor their campers throughout the school year. However, to do this, two major hurdles must be overcome. The first is distance. How can we transport counselors all across the state to meet with their campers from the summer? The second is accountability. If we provide mentors – paid or volunteer – to work with children, how do we ensure that every interaction is 100% in line with our rules and standards?

It turns out that the online platforms which allow our staff to interact with kids for virtual camp tackle both issues. Creating an online setting removes the need for counselors to physically travel, allowing them to connect with a camper anywhere in the state from their college dorm. Also, the services that provide the video/audio streaming provide incredible accountability! First, administrators from the camp can log in and observe directly at any time. Second, the software digitally records both video and audio for each session, so there's always an unbiased record of the interaction. What more could we ask for? So, while this summer may have been a loss in that we were not able to bring kids to camp, I feel that we have made great strides in expanding our year-round outreach to Florida's youth.

I'd like to thank the Florida Elks Youth Camp's (FEYC) Jen Scott, Elliott Gilbert and Krys Ragland for all of their efforts in preparing for any eventuality of this summer. They never backed down from any challenge I threw their way. I'd also like to take a minute to thank several people outside of FEYC who worked to make our abbreviated virtual camp possible and who have been instrumental for me in maintaining whatever sanity I had prior to 2020. First, Carl Seibert has been an inspiration through his mentorship, his patience and his support as we went into completely uncharted waters for FEYC. Second, Dan Masi worked his backside off rounding up potential vendors, donors and other collaborators to help us get organized for a virtual camp. His efforts and support kept us motivated throughout. And last, but definitely not least, Laz Suarez once again pulled off miracles in maintaining same-day changes to our website (while being swamped with hundreds of other tasks already on his plate) and in helping us manage our message to families via social media. Thank you, all!

As I wrap this up, I'd like to update you on some of the major maintenance and construction projects we've been working on. Phase II of the Smith Conference Center kitchen has been completed and is now ready for use. It's been a major undertaking, but it is now ready to push out 600-plus meals a day as we bring in corporate retreats for extended stays at the camp. With it, we also completed a connecting patio between the Smith Center and the Bates Aquatic Center. Although we didn't realize it at the time, this new patio may be essential to much of how we do business moving forward. It provides outdoor seating and even cooking for groups who may not wish to dine indoors due to coronavirus concerns. Additionally, we have completed the renovation of the first seven cabins in the Oaks cabin area. These 25-year-old cabins were stripped down to the original slab, concrete walls and trusses. They then received a much-needed overhaul that includes a larger, more ADA-friendly restroom, permanent dehumidifiers, updated HVAC systems, new electrical panels and new floors. These 21 cabins have served our campers well for over two decades, but it was definitely time for an update.

It's been a crazy year so far, and while we don't know what the rest of this year holds for us, I remain hopeful that we will find a light at the end of the tunnel, and I can't wait to have you and our kids back to camp.

Nick Miller, Director
Florida Elks Youth Camp
2020 UNMASKING AUTISM GALA HAS BEEN CANCELED

The Florida Elks Charities Unmasking Autism Gala had to be canceled for Oct. 17, 2020. The new date is April 24, 2021. The gala is still being held at the Carillon Hilton in beautiful St. Petersburg, Florida, and is an event you do not want to miss! The theme is Unmasking Autism, An Evening Under the Stars, presented by Florida Elks Charities. All monies from this gala will go to Florida Elks Charities to benefit Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services to expand and enhance the treatment of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Our therapists have found that 50% of their patients are within the spectrum or have ASD and they have cases that range from mild to severe. With early intervention being the key for these children while developing, it will help them reach their full potential, whatever that may be for each child. All tickets already purchased will be honored at the 2021 gala. If you have questions regarding tickets you’ve already purchased or sponsorships, please reach out to me.

This year we wanted to create a way for all lodges to be able to participate in the statewide gala in some way as we know that sometimes schedules conflict and you cannot attend the gala. The Star Campaign was launched with all lodges receiving 20 stars at the end of January to sell to members for $5 each to honor someone with ASD or just to show their support for ASD. Members can put their name or the name of someone they are honoring on the star and lodges have come up with many creative ways to display them. Many lodges have requested more stars and have challenged other lodges to see which lodges will sell more! We know of two districts that have challenged one another with the loser having to give each lodge of the winning district something that is known from their community. Since COVID-19 disrupted our daily lives and schedules, we are pleased to say that this campaign will continue and will give lodges the chance to sell their stars. If you need more stars, contact me at dan@floridaelks.org or 352-805-0823. The deadline has been extended to Sept. 25, 2020, and we will keep you informed as the deadline nears. This has turned into a “Star Wars Campaign,” but in the end it is all for one purpose – the children it will help. It also shows your support for one of our major projects, Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services. If you wish to send money already collected, please send to Florida Elks Charities, Attention: Amanda Frosch, P.O. Box 49, Umatilla, FL 32784. Thank you for being an Elk!

I want to give a shoutout to thank the awesome committee that has helped Unmasking Autism become a premier fundraiser. They are very dedicated and believe in the cause and want to help make a difference in the lives of children with ASD. The committee and I were disappointed with the postponement of the gala due to COVID-19. They knew that I was down as there was so much momentum going for the gala and at that time it was only six weeks away. Some members of the committee knew that April 18 could not pass without the realization that it was the date of the gala and they needed to make it known that they did not forget! Michael, Patty and Amy Pounders; Cindy Sunseri; and Michael and Nicole Masi set up in our front yard while distancing being practiced. We are so fortunate to have a committee that is dedicated and believe in the cause and want to help make a difference. The committee and I were disappointed with the postponement of the gala due to COVID-19. They knew that I was down as there was so much momentum going for the gala and at that time it was only six weeks away. Some members of the committee knew that April 18 could not pass without the realization that it was the date of the gala and they needed to make it known that they did not forget! Michael, Patty and Amy Pounders; Cindy Sunseri; and Michael and Nicole Masi set up in our front yard while distancing being practiced. We are so fortunate to have a committee that is dedicated and believe in the cause and want to help make a difference.

Florida Elks, we hope to see you at the Unmasking Autism Gala, An Evening Under the Stars, presented by Florida Elks Charities April 24, 2021, at the Carillon Hilton in beautiful St. Petersburg, Florida. Visit UnmaskingAutism.com and register to attend a fun and informative event! Know that you are an important
part of Florida Elks Charities and the Unmasking Autism Gala and we sincerely appreciate your support and understanding. This was a tough decision made by the Unmasking Autism Committee but they felt it was the right one to make. We wish you safety and good health as we pray for a great 2021 Unmasking Autism Gala.

ONLINE AUCTION

We are currently working on an online auction to continue to raise money for our major projects. We will be posting items on social media and Facebook on which you will be able to bid. Stay tuned for more details!

STATE PRESIDENT’S VISITATIONS

At Officers Training I was told by many attendees that they had learned a lot and really enjoyed the open conversations about leadership, event planning and fundraising ideas. Casey and I will be attending most of the State President’s visitations talking about what it means to become a sustaining donor, event planning, fundraising and the Unmasking Autism Gala. Please join us for a fun Q&A session.

The Florida State Elks Association makes a positive impact on many children, veterans and communities. No truer words have been spoken than We’re Loud, We’re Proud, We’re Visible, We are the Florida Elks – Warm, Active and Friendly. Florida Elks Strong!

Dan Masi, Development Director
Florida State Elks Association

WALGREENS-ELKS GIFT DROP

We are working with Walgreens on how the 2020 collection may be affected by COVID-19. We have grown to 139 locations in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco and Manatee counties. Walgreens has also redesigned the logo for the donation boxes. This is our fourth year and we have grown from 88 stores to 139. This is advertisement that money cannot buy. Each store averages 1,000 customers per day. Over a 28-day period that is 3,892,000 customers who had a chance to see the Florida State Elks Association doing good for the community. We are also working on other possible regions for the toy drop. There may be some other opportunities with Walgreens for other fundraisers, but details and information are still under discussion. We will keep you posted.

State President article continued from page 03

enhancing our impact and image inside and outside our lodges by promoting our good works and fun events. Florida Elks viewed by the public as paying it forward while having fun social activities will attract outside donations and recruit members. Traveling around our 14 districts, I see much good that makes me proud to be an Elk. I also see lodges being decimated by bickering and infighting. Frequently, members are not willing to forgive and forget for the good of the lodge. This should not make any of us proud. If we are to grow and move forward, I will be reminding our members that we must be willing to change our attitudes. We must be willing to make amends and to ask for and give forgiveness.

Winston Churchill stated, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; the optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” I am asking you to adopt a positive, make-it-happen attitude. This change begins with me. My commitment to you as your President is to do my best to practice what I ask of our members. Change does not mean forgetting those who made sacrifices laying the foundation for Elksdom. It does mean being flexible enough to take the necessary steps needed for Florida Elks to not just survive but to move forward and thrive!

I share my favorite quote from President Theodore Roosevelt’s speech entitled “Man in the Arena,” but I have adapted it to “Elk in the Arena.”

“It is not the critic who counts; not the bar stool barrister who points out how lodge and other Elk leaders stumble, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the Elk who is active in our order, whose face is marred by dust and sweat from volunteering time and again; who strives valiantly to pay it forward; who errs, who comes short again and again, but never gives up because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but the Elk who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotion; who spends himself or herself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he or she fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his or her place shall never be with those cold and timid Elks who don't step up for the betterment of our order. They know neither victory nor defeat. I ask you to join with me to be the Elk in the arena serving without hesitation and taking risks to try something new for the good of our order as we pay it forward to those who need us and those who may not know they need what we have to offer.”

Please join me in adopting our motto, “Florida Elks – Warm, Friendly and Active,” inside and outside our lodges, in words and actions toward one another, in our communities, and throughout our order.

Dolly, Suzi, Joey and I very much appreciate the opportunity to represent Florida Elks. We look forward to seeing and sharing with everyone in our travels! Thank you! May God smile upon and bless our Florida State Elks Association!

Rudolph J. “Rudy” Masi Sr.,
State President
Florida State Elks Association
This list reflects monthly sustaining donors as of June 30, 2020, of the Florida Elks major projects: Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. With donors’ ongoing support, these projects can continue their missions of changing the lives of Florida’s children. Won’t you please join them? Visit floridaelks.org to become a supporter. To our donors, we sincerely thank you!

### Individuals

**Judith Abbott**  
**Joseph Arthur**  
**Susan Avis**  
**Eugenia Baile**  
**Erika Barger**  
**Frederick Barth**  
**Leslie Baucom**  
**Doris Becraft**  
**Wayne Becraft**  
**Barbara Blanchard**  
**Jim Blanchard**  
**Phyllis Bonser**  
**Amy Bovair**  
**William Bowdish**  
**Jan Brennan**  
**Terry Brennan**  
**Dorothy Brown**  
**Nicholas Brown**  
**Helen Bruns**  
**Jeannine Buckley**  
**Stacey Buckley-Burnett**  
**Carole Burger**  
**Brian Burns**  
**Lori Callis**  
**Jack Cantwell**  
**Thomas Carns**  
**Wendy Carns**  
**Tracy Carroll**  
**Steven Carruthers**  
**Matt Carter**  
**Katharine Casey**  
**Thomas Casey**  
**Mary Childs**  
**Edward Ciecirski**  
**David Clayton**  
**Paul Clayton**  
**Kevin Clemons**  
**Tim Collins**  
**LiseldaComo**  
**Vincent Como**  
**Richard Conley**  
**Michael Cook**  
**Allie Cooper**  
**Joe Cooper**  
**Angelo Cretella**  
**Kevin Crus**  
**George daCosta**  
**Ernest DalleMolle**  
**Mark Daniels**  
**Brett Davis**  
**Kelly Dean**  
**James Decker**  
**Paul DeWitt**  
**Paul Diaz**  
**James Diefenderfer**  

- William Dryburgh  
- Peter Dulley  
- Rebeka Edge  
- Barbara Edyburn  
- Deborah Farris Mortka  
- Carla Fox  
- Anthony Fratello  
- Marilyn Fratello  
- Colleen Gallant  
- Janet Gens  
- Carl Gerace  
- Philip Gersbach  
- Robert Grafton  
- Holly Hamilton  
- Irene Harlow  
- Steven Harmon  
- Barbara Hartrick  
- Martin Hartrick  
- Chris Hayes  
- Robin Haywood  
- Joseph Hennessy  
- Bruce Henry  
- Alfred Higginbotham  
- Nancy Higginbotham  
- Keith Hilken  
- Thomas Hopp  
- Patricia Hubert  
- Alice Hurd  
- Richard Jacobs  
- Diane Jethwa  
- David Kelsey  
- Tony Kisielewski  
- Wayne Klick  
- Virginia Kollath  
- John LaBella  
- David Lake  
- Kathy Lake  
- Mary Lavengood  
- Linda Lee  
- Dawn Lieber  
- Laurence Littell  
- Ronald Locke  
- Tom Ludwick  
- Christopher Lydick  
- Bruce Lyon  
- Frank Malatesta  
- Mary Malatesta  
- Dave Marcinkowski  
- Kirk Martin  
- Wilton Martin  
- Dan Masi  
- Dolly Masi  
- Richard Masi  
- Rudy Masi Sr.  
- Joanne Matos  
- Peggie McClellan  
- Victor McClellan  
- Tony McGhee  
- Alex McKibbin  
- Beverly Messerschmidt  
- Delores Milhausen  
- Dayna Miller  
- Johnny Miller  
- Kathi Miller  
- Nicholas Miller  
- Richard Miller  
- Marilee Mills  
- David Monsour  
- Thomas Mortka  
- Melony Moss  
- Earline Neeley  
- Sven Nelson  
- Lynnette Newberry  
- Judith Nuetzel  
- Joseph Ortiz  
- Toni Palmer  
- Geraldine Park  
- Wendell Parker  
- Garieth Pelham  
- A. Bart Peterson  
- Dolores Peterson  
- Mary Ann Piner  
- Stephen Piner  
- Michael Pounds  
- Donna Powers  
- Martin Propst  
- Nick Pusta  
- S. James Rannazzisi  
- Michael Rathmann  
- Carol Reed  
- Jeanne Reinhart  
- William Reynolds  
- Stanley Rittenhouse  
- Moshoji Rolls  
- Duvane Ross  
- Cristin Rumer  
- Jeff Rumler  
- Ron Sagarino  
- Kelli Santos  
- Brian Sayre  
- Henry Schaus  
- Michael Schodlbauer  
- Mary Lou Schreck  
- Carl Seibert  
- Theresa Seibert  
- Frank Sellers  
- Susan Senterfitt  
- William Senterfitt  
- Diane Sharp  
- David Shaw  
- Barbara Shepard  
- Emery Shepard  
- Patrick Shipley  
- Cathy Shriver  
- Joey (Augustus) Simonelli  
- Susan Simonelli  
- Michael Sinneck  
- Larry Skates  
- Marci Skates  
- Michael Smith  
- Rhonda Smith  
- Martha Sninchak  
- Richard Snyder  
- Phil Sommers  
- Marge Spera  
- Dee Spivey  
- Wesley D. Stanaland  
- Katherine Stanley  
- Laura Stewart  
- Lynne Stockinger  
- Laz Suarez  
- Robert Suhrreinhich  
- Noreen Super  
- Robert Swink  
- Danny Tabor  
- Rachel Tabor  
- Daniel Talbott  
- Dennis Tarbell  
- Rick and Kay Thorson  
- Craig Tyler  
- Robert Vaughn  
- Doris Waddell  
- Thomas Walden  
- Alice Wallace  
- Linda Watson  
- Samuel Wenzel  
- Greg Westberry  
- Shannon Wheatley  
- Doris Wildrick  
- Christopher Williams  
- Renee’ Williams  
- Hugh Williamson  
- Ed and Judy Wise  
- Dorothy Woehr  
- Richard Woelfl  
- Stephanie Wood  
- Richard Wright  
- Michael Taz Wright  

### Lodges

**Gainesville Lodge**
A Word from your Harry-Anna Investment Fund Board of Directors and Investment Trustees

Members all,

We are definitely in uncharted water in our current climate worldwide. Certainly everyone who has retirement funds or investments realizes the volatility of our financial markets. The Florida Elks are so fortunate to have our longtime relationship with Florida Atlantic, our investment advisors. We have been and continue to be in it for the long run. Our fund has recovered nicely from the COVID-19 drop. The fund continues to perform and your trustees and advisors are in constant touch with any problems that may come up.

As you know in your lodges with the closures and present atmosphere of worry by members, our lodge finances have suffered, but the bills continue. We have adapted with creative ways to stay afloat – takeout, barbecues and giveaways. We do what is necessary to keep moving.

So it is with our Florida State Elks Association programs. Our world-class Florida Elks Youth Camp, our awesome Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services, our scholarships, and our commitment to veterans and those in need continue. If you have not made arrangements to donate to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund, please do. There are many ways to give. Become a sustaining donor for any amount each month. Give a one-time donation. Purchase a certificate including the Harry-Anna Trust Fund pin to honor our current President, Rudy Masi Sr. Don’t forget the memorial gift. What a tribute it is to your departed friend to put their name on the tablets of love and memory that fund so many great programs.

Stay safe and strong.

Brian Burns, PSP, HAIF President
Harry-Anna Investment Fund
Board of Directors and Investment Trustees

ANNUAL DONORS

This list reflects annual donors who have given $228 or more between July 1, 2019, and July 20, 2020, to the Florida Elks major projects: Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. This amount equals $19 or more per month. We graciously thank these donors and hope you will consider becoming an annual donor as well.

Denise Anderson  Thila Gerber  Frank Johnson  Mary Reinicke
James Barie  Wayne Godsey  Melissa Klavon  Richard Reynolds
Linda Barie  Tina Goodwin  Joyce Kraut  Richard Rock
Tony Blanchard  Robert Greenberg  Catherine Lannon  Sandra Scott
Michael and Patricia Bohan  Debora Greenhow  Benjamin Madey  David Sheib
Tony Christian  Marlene Hammer  James Mancuso  Stephen Smith
Gary Christopher  Charlotte Healy  William and Linda Marshall III  Helene Sovich
James & Sonja Coggins  Pat Heller  Benjamin Mazzaconi  Scott Stroup
Jodie Crews  Jeanette Hernandez  Kenneth McStravic  Betty Tewksbury
Julia Crutchfield  Robert Hewitt  Jeffrey Muehlfeld  David Veshia
Carol Deresh  Teresa Horn  Karen and Winston Needham  Mark Walters
Walter Elliott  Stuart Howitt  Alice Perry  Jay Wrightstone
Marlene K. Filer  Richard Huey  Bill Rauh
Richard Florance

SAVE THE DATE

2nd Annual
UNMASKING AUTISM GALA

An Evening Under the Stars

Presented by.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021
6-11 p.m.
CARILLON HILTON, 950 LAKE CARILLON DRIVE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716
For more information, please contact Dan Masi at 352-805-9823 or visit www.UnmaskingAutism.com.
The award winners from the 2020-2021 Florida Elks contests were recognized at the awards celebration and major projects luncheon during the Florida Elks state convention at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida, June 20.

Top row: C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship winners, Thomas Michael Costello III and Chandler Jules; Elks National Foundation Most Valuable Student Scholarship Top female winner - Florida, Zina J. Ahn; and Ben Brown Scholarship Recipient, Alyssa Harris

Middle row: Drug Awareness Education Poster and Essay Contest winners, Cason Davis and Morgan Cyr; State Soccer Shoot winners, Arely Salgado and Gianni Jeronimo; and Americanism Essay Contest winners, Nathan Register and Andrew Bickel

Right: For the second year in a row, St. Petersburg Elks Lodge #1224 won first place in the national All-American Lodge contest in the Division V membership category for 2019-2020. Dawn Lieber, PER accepts the certificate because the honor was earned for the year she served as Exalted Ruler. Much effort was put forth by the All-American Lodge Committee – Dawn Lieber, PER; Rudy Masi Sr., State President; Toni Goodrich, PDD; and May Graci. Some of the lodge’s veterans’ projects included a bowling program; dinner/karaoke nights; donations of blankets, clothing and gift cards; and donations to C.W. Bill Young VAMC programs. Its youth programs included drug awareness programs held at the lodge; donations to community youth activities such as softball, baseball and soccer; and its commitment to its own youth and adult life skills programs. The lodge also participated in the Elks national Hoop and Soccer Shoots and scholarship programs. Donations were made to Bike MS: The Citrus 2020 Tour, NW Youth Baseball and Softball, Southeastern Guide Dogs, Music Sweet Music Inc., foster care programs and St. Petersburg hospitals. They recognized 16 first responders, had large toy and food drives at Christmastime, sponsored kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp; and donated school supplies and monies to area schools.

Right: Enrique Camarena Drug Awareness Award winner, Officer Jessie Richards of the Punta Gorda Police Department
First Responder of the Year – Law Enforcement, Detective Jay Welbaum of the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office
First Responder of the Year – Law Enforcement, Deputy Matthew Hanlin of the Clay County Sheriff’s Office
First Responder of the Year – Telecommunicator, Jennifer Daniels of the Polk County Sheriff’s Office
Toni M. Palmer was born in Metairie, Louisiana, and moved to Florida in 1958. She graduated from Plantation High School. She worked for morale, welfare and recreation at NAS Pensacola for 28 years; for 11 years she has been working part time.

Palmer joined Warrington Elks Lodge #2108 11 years ago after she was involved with the ladies organization for nearly 20 years and was president three times. She felt she could do more and get more involved by becoming an Elk. She has served as Inner Guard, Esquire, Chaplain, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. She served as District Chair of several committees and served as the Northwest District Vice President for 2019-2020. She has also been Vice Chair and State Chair of Orientation and State Chair of Sports.

In addition to the Elks, she is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

She has been married to Paul Palmer, PDD for 31 years. She has one daughter, Angie Lynn Cecil, who is also an Elks member.

Christopher M. “Chris” Lydick was born Sept. 25, 1979, in Jacksonville, Florida. He grew up in Jacksonville Beach, Florida; Washington, D.C.; Baltimore; and Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

He graduated from Allen D. Nease High School in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1997. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in both anthropology and classical civilizations from the University of Florida in 1997 and a Master of Science degree in anthropology/archaeology from Florida State University in 2006.

From 2002-2006, Lydick was an archaeological technician for the United States National Park Service (NPS) at the duty station of the NPS Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. From 2006-2007, he was a deputy forest archaeologist for the United States Forest Service (USFS) at the duty station of the National Forests in the Florida supervisors’ office, also in Tallahassee. From 2007 to the present, he has been the USFS District Archaeologist at the duty station of Osceola National Forest in Olustee, Florida. Since 2007, he has collaterally served as a USFS wildland firefighter and has been called for duty on hundreds of wildfire missions during that time both in Florida and nationally as ordered by the government.

In his free time, Lydick enjoys restoring their 1906 historic home. He also enjoys camping, hiking, canoeing, and participating in Civil War reenactment and living history events throughout the state and country. He currently serves as the 1st Sgt. of the 17th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, Company H, which is a reenactment group headquartered in Florida.

Stanley E. “Gene” Rittenhouse was born in Highland, Kansas, in 1946. He grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, and moved to Florida in 1997 upon his and his wife’s retirement from the U.S. Army.

Rittenhouse graduated from Ozark Academy in Gentry, Arkansas, in 1964 and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1968. He earned his Master of Divinity degree from
Russell J. “Russ” Smith was born Dec. 23, 1956, in Youngstown, Ohio. He grew up in Berlin Center, Ohio, and moved to Florida in 1980.

He served in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1975 and in the U.S. Army from 1975-1980. He also took classes at Liberty University from 2001-2005.

During his career, Smith was a machinist and manufacturing production manager. He is semi-retired as of 2018; he owns R.J. Smith & Associates Home Inspections.

In 2011, he was proposed by Denise Kalman; they later married Jan. 7, 2012. He is a member of South Lake Elks Lodge #1848 and served as Lecturing Knight and Exalted Ruler for 2011-2012. He was chair of the board of directors for 2012-2013, Leading Knight for 2016-2017, and Exalted Ruler for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. He served on the Florida Elks Youth Camp Board of Directors for 2018-2019 and he was the North Central District Vice President for 2019-2020.

Jeff Rumler was born in Sanford, Florida, in 1982. He attended Seminole Trinity Christian School until 2000. In 2001 he began working in the HVAC/refrigeration industry and is currently the manager at Tropic Supply Inc. in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Rumler was invited by a friend to join Sanford Elks Lodge #1241 in 2007. In his second week of membership, he was elected chaplain. In 2008 he became Lecturing Knight and was awarded Officer of the Year. He served as Loyal Knight in 2009, Leading Knight in 2010 and 2011, and Exalted Ruler in 2012 and 2013. 2020 will be his seventh year as Lodge Secretary. On the district level, he has been Treasurer of the East Central District PER Association for six years and the District Harry-Anna Trust Fund Chair for five years. He was the East Central District Vice President for 2018-2019. He served as the State Hoop Shoot Chair for 2014-2018.

He has been married to Cristin for six years, and they have a daughter, Zoe, who was born in November 2016.

John L. Gudavich was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1947 and grew up in Rhode Island and New Hampshire. He moved to Florida in 2006.

He attended St. Leo University from 1977-1981 and earned a bachelor’s degree in criminology. From 1997-1999 he attended the University of Baltimore and earned a master’s degree in law and ethics.

Gudavich served in the U.S. Army from 1965-1985. He was an infantryman, military police officer and special agent criminal investigator specializing in white-collar fraud.

He also worked for Sanders Associates in Nashua, New Hampshire, as a security manager supervising classified and black world U.S. government
contracts. For the U.S. Army CID, he was a special agent in charge of the civilian white-collar criminal investigation agency. For the U.S. Department of the Treasury, he was a senior criminal investigator conducting criminal investigations of national importance. For the U.S. Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office, he worked in the criminal division in Concord, New Hampshire, as a criminal investigator and conducted criminal investigations in support of criminal prosecutions. He retired in 2006.

In 2007, Gudavich joined Aripeka Elks Lodge #2520 after a friend sponsored his application. He has served as chair of the board of directors, Exalted Ruler for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, and District Chair of Government Relations for 2018-2019. He also served as Central District Vice President for 2019-2020.

In addition to the Elks, he is a certified fraud examiner. He served as Grand Knight in St. Michael the Archangel Knights of Columbus and a District Deputy for the Knights of Columbus.

He has graduated from numerous specialized law enforcement courses. He served as a volunteer guardian ad litem for foster children and a volunteer civilian law enforcement officer in Pasco County, Florida.

He and Donna have been married 52 years. He has two adult children and five grandchildren.

Nancy L. Miller was born in Plainfield, New Jersey. She lived in New Jersey until 2006 when she moved to Melbourne, Florida. After graduating from North Plainfield High School, she attended night school while working. She attended Middlesex County College and Rutgers where she majored in business management. She also attended Carnegie Mellon for engineering courses supported by the Telecom Industry.

At the age of 16, Miller started working part time for NJ Bell and four years later she started her management career there. She stayed in the telephone marketplace holding various management jobs in engineering and data center management. She continued working in the telephone industry for Bellcore as a lead consultant for the telephone industry in North America. She is considered an expert in force administration with extensive experience in contact centers and network engineering. At the age of 47 with 31 years of service, she retired from Telcordia. Within 24 hours of retirement, she started a new career as the Director of Professional Services for ISC Consultants in New York City and still works with ISC even as she lives in Florida thanks to technology.

Being new to Melbourne, she and her husband, Paul, were fortunate to meet great neighbors who took them to the Elks Lodge in Melbourne. Both Paul and she wanted to join, so 14 years ago they became members at Melbourne Elks Lodge #1744. Being new to the area and not knowing anyone there, they made Melbourne Lodge their extended family. She has been a Lodge Chair for Drug Awareness Education, Membership, Public Relations, the dictionaries program, the House Committee and the PER Association. She has served as Loyal Knight and Leading Knight and twice as Exalted Ruler. In 2008-2009 she was named Citizen of the Year. In 2009-2010 she was named Officer of the Year. In 2010-2011 she received the Grand Exalted Ruler's Outstanding Service Commendation. For 2014-2015 she served as Southeast Central District Vice President and for 2015-2016 she served as Southeast Central District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler. She is now a member of Viera Elks Lodge #2817 and recently served as Treasurer and is currently the Lodge Advisor. On the state level, she is a member of the Business Practices Committee and serves as the Florida State Elks Association Southeast Central District Director. Her husband is chair of the board and is a cook.

Along with her Elks activities, Miller's love for animals includes her passion for showing dogs and horses at a national level. She has had the honor of owning and showing some of the top performance pintos/paint horses in the nation.

She and Paul will be celebrating 31 years of marriage this year. They are still having fun and trying to decide what they want to be when they grow up. He supports her in her involvement with their lodge, district and state.

Tom Mortka was born Aug. 26, 1954, in Philadelphia. His family moved to Bellmawr, New Jersey, in 1959 because of his father's business, a sheet metal manufacturer for kitchen equipment. He graduated from Camden County Vocational and Technical High School and earned a degree in commercial baking as well as a high school diploma. He was also a member of the National Honor Society. He then graduated from Glassboro State Teachers College in Glassboro, New Jersey.

He purchased a neighborhood bakery when he was 18 and spent two years as owner, manager and baker and oversaw everyday operations. He accepted a teacher position at Camden County Vocational and Technical High School in Sicklerville, New Jersey, and spent the next 10 years teaching commercial baking to students in ninth through 12th grade. At night, he taught adults baking and cake decorating.

In 1983, Mortka moved to Sebastian, Florida, and worked for numerous local bakeries. He secured a position with Hilton Hotels in Orlando, Florida, as a pastry chef. He then returned to
Vero Beach, Florida, working for Publix Corporation as a bakery manager and was in charge of new Publix store openings for their Florida east coast bakeries in Indian River County to Miami-Dade County.

In 1999 he relocated to the west coast of Florida. In 2013 after being a guest of his friend Bert Bouvier at some West Central District lodges, he was sponsored and joined Largo Elks Lodge #2159. This is where he met Deborah Farris who is now his wife. She was serving as Exalted Ruler and conducting initiation of new members. They were married Dec. 30, 2016. As a member of Largo Lodge, he served as Loyal Knight, Harry-Anna Trust Fund Chair and Elroy the Elk. He was a member of the House Committee, the board of directors and the Monday night bingo committee. He then joined Seminole Elks Lodge #2519 and served as Loyal Knight and Exalted Ruler. He was also a member of the House Committee and the board of directors. He served as Lodge Chair of Elks Training, Elks National Foundation Fundraising and Drug Awareness Education and was Elroy the Elk. In addition, he was chef for Wednesday and Thursday bar bingo and line dancing and was bar inventory control chair. In 2019, he joined Dunedin-Clearwater Elks Lodge #1525.

On the district level, Mortka has performed as Elroy the Elk since 2013. He is an active member of the West Central District PER Association and was District Drug Awareness Chair for 2017-2019. He served as District Deputy Esquire for 2017-2018 and as West Central District Vice President for 2019-2020. On the state level, he served as Vice Chair of Elks Training for 2018-2019.

In addition to the Elks, Mortka is a member of the Sons of the American Legion #273 in Madeira Beach, Florida. He attends St. Raphael's Catholic Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, and is an avid saltwater fisherman and gardener.

Nancy Higginbotham was born in Sebring, Florida, in 1949 and grew up in Zolfo Springs, Florida. She graduated from Hardee County High School in 1967 and attended Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Florida, majoring in commercial banking and accounting. Her banking career started during her senior year of high school and continued after she moved to Fort Myers in 1971. She retired from SunTrust Bank after 28 years. She moved to Arcadia, Florida, while she was working at Farm Credit of Southwest Florida and retired from her banking career and started bartending at Arcadia Elks Lodge.

In March 2007, she joined Arcadia Elks Lodge #1524 after she was approached to become a member to serve as Secretary. She was in this position until 2018. She was Exalted Ruler for 2018-2019. She served as District Chair of Lodge Activities for 2013-2014. She was also the Southwest Central District Vice President for 2019-2020.

In addition to her Elks membership, Higginbotham is a member of the Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo Association.

She has been married to Alfred for 49 years. They have one son, Tate, who is married to Julie, and two granddaughters, Landyn, 14, and Piper, 10.

Steven G. “Steve” Carruthers was born in Grove City, Pennsylvania, in 1948; three months later, the family moved to Coral Gables, Florida. He graduated from La Salle High School in Miami in 1966 and attended two years of college at Miami Dade Junior College.

From 1966-1970, Carruthers served in the USMC as a sergeant and served one tour in Vietnam. He was also a sergeant in the Army National Guard.

He worked his 40-year career with FPL managing the construction and maintenance of high-voltage transmission lines.

Twelve years ago at the suggestion of a Past Exalted Ruler from Miami Elks Lodge, Carruthers looked into joining the Elks. He was initiated into Venice-Nokomis Elks Lodge #1854 but is now a member of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855. In his Elks career, he has served as Inner Guard, Esquire, Lecturing Knight, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler and five-year trustee. On the district level, he served as the Southwest District Vice President for 2019-2020.

In addition to the Elks, he is a member of the DAV (Disabled American Veterans), VFW, American Legion, Eagles and Moose. He has also volunteered with Toys for Tots for seven years.

Carruthers has a sister, Sandra, who lives in Westville, Florida, and two nephews who each have three children.

Nancy Higginbotham Southwest Central District

Steven G. “Steve” Carruthers Southwest Central District

District Deputies are installed at the 2020 state convention in Orlando, Florida. They would have been installed at the national convention, but that was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.
Bill Dryburgh was born in Pittsburgh in 1941. After graduating from Turtle Creek High School, he joined the Air Force and served all his time at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.

When Dryburgh was discharged from the Air Force, he moved to Orlando, Florida, and lived with his aunt and uncle while he worked at a number of jobs until a chance meeting with a member of the fire department changed his life. He joined the fire department in 1964 and moved to south Orlando in an area called Pine Castle. One of his friends from the fire department asked him if he wanted to help at a golf tournament, and it was there that he met Arnold Palmer. Later, when the tournament was moved to Bay Hill, Dryburgh was made chair of the front nine. Five years later he was asked to serve on Arnold Palmer's board of directors, a position he held for 15 years. Each year in October, Palmer had a golf outing with his board. "I was so nervous I thought I was going to pass out," remembers Dryburgh of his first time golfing with Palmer. The next year, Disney contacted the board and asked them to help set up their golf tournament. Dryburgh worked as the on-course tournament director for Disney for 42 years. Somewhere along the way, he learned to call alligators and liked to demonstrate this skill on the golf course. His friends refer to him as the gator whisperer.

Dryburgh retired from the fire department and started his real estate career. He became the president of the Punta Gorda-Port Charlotte Board of Realtors and vice president of district 13 of the Florida Realtors Association.

In 2011, Dryburgh joined Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606 after he was introduced to the Elks by PDD Don Roll. He served as Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler, audit chair, and president of the PER Association as well as on the board of trustees and the big band weekend committee. He was the South Southwest District Vice President for 2019-2020. On the state level, he served as State Veterans Services Chair.

He and Cathi have been married 10 years and they have four children and eight grandchildren.

Laurence “Larry” Littell was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1952. He attended elementary school in several towns in central New Jersey before moving to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1961. He graduated from Cardinal Gibbons High School in 1970 and studied two years at Catholic University's schools of business and music in Washington, D.C. He also studied one year at Broward College.

Early in his career, Littell worked in finance. He was a bond trader for a Bear Stearns firm and a bond broker and VP for managed programs at Prudential Securities until 2001. He then worked as a consultant and a yacht captain covering most of the North Atlantic until 2005. Following this, he was a marine consultant and project manager until 2017. Currently, he is a technical service support manager for Brunswick Corp.

Laurence "Larry" Littell
Southeast District

Originally a member of the now-closed Fort Lauderdale Elks Lodge, he joined Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 in 2005 after moving to the area in 2004. He has served as chaplain, Esquire, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler and bar manager. He has also been Lodge, District and State Chair of Ladies Organizations. He served as the Southeast District Vice President for 2019-2020 as well.

In addition to the Elks, he is a member of the ABYC, NMEA and MIAPBC, all marine trade organizations. He is a retired licensed officer for USCG offshore towing and sailing for 200 tons. He is the founder and past director of the Fort Lauderdale Sailing Foundation and was a 30-year member of the Gulfstream Sailing Club of Fort Lauderdale.

His spouse of 25 years, Mary Jeanne Baldwin Littell, passed away in April 2009. He has one daughter and one son who live in Hollywood, Florida, and a daughter and three grandchildren who live in Apopka, Florida. He has a brother in Hingham, Massachusetts, who is a member of Clear Lake (Kemah), Texas, Elks Lodge #2322.

Donna L. Powers was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, and grew up in New Jersey. After being a snowbird, she moved to Florida permanently in 2011.

Powers earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education in 1972 and a Master of Arts degree in educational technology in 2004. She was an elementary teacher for 25 years and a computer applications teacher in middle school for three years, both in New Jersey. She is a past president of the Rutherford, New Jersey, teachers’ union and the New Jersey retired educators of south Florida.

In 2006, Powers was initiated into Hollywood West Elks Lodge #2365; her husband, a New Jersey Elk at the time, sponsored her. She served as Lodge Secretary for six years and as Exalted Ruler for 2017-2018. She was also the lodge grant coordinator. She has served as the South Southeast District President for 2019-2020 as well.
reporter for four years, was a drug awareness trailer manager and served as the South Southeast District Vice President for 2019-2020. On the state level, she has been a member of the Officer Training staff, a CLMS coordinator and State Elks Training Chair.

She has been married to Charles for 46 years. They have three children – Charles, Kelly and Brianne – and five grandchildren – Maxwell, Katherine, Aiden, Abigail and Michael.

Milton Muller was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1957 and grew up in Orlando, Florida. He graduated from Papa Juan XXIII High School in Puerto Rico when his parents relocated to Bayamon, Puerto Rico. He has an associate degree in general studies, a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice administration, a master's degree in management and a master’s degree in public administration.

Muller served in the U.S. Army from 1978-1995 as an infantry soldier. His basic training was conducted at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and his advanced individual training was done at Fort Benning, Georgia. His service has included assignments at Fort Knox, Kentucky; Fort Myer, Virginia; Fort Ord, California; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He has also been an academy instructor, operations sergeant and recruiter.

Upon retirement from the Army, he worked for Circuit City Stores Inc. from 1995-1997 as a retail sales manager. From 1997-2018, he worked for Miami-Dade County Public Schools as a JROTC instructor. Since 2018 he has worked as a human resources director, international courier and court bailiff; he has also worked in upscale security.

Muller joined Miami Elks Lodge #948 in 1998 after he was asked to join by a lodge member and co-worker. He has served as Esquire, Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight and three terms as Exalted Ruler. He has been involved in the writing of and obtaining lodge grants for the benefit of veterans. He has served twice as South District Vice President and twice as South District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler. He has been State Chair of Sports, Vice Chair and State Chair of Orientation, and Vice President and President of the Florida Elks Youth Camp Board of Directors. He is also a Special Representative for Miami Lodge.

He is a Fourth-Degree Knight of Columbus and Third-Degree Knight of Peter Claver. He is also a member of the American Legion, Lion’s Club and Wiley Wright Military Lodge #705.

He and Barbara have been married 20 years and reside in Miami, Florida. They have two daughters, Janelys and Jocelyn, and one son, James. They also spend a lot of time with their four grandchildren – Mia, Jayden, Noah and Maurice.
EMILY BULSON: THE STRENGTH OF A CHAMPION

By Rachael King

Each year, the therapists of Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services (FECTS) meet to determine which of their patients will be the new CHAMP of the Year (Child Having Achieved Magnificent Progress). Qualities that the therapists consider, according to this year’s CHAMP’s therapist, include “medical diagnosis impacting physical function, emotionality and activities of daily living, strength of character to deal with adversity, compliance with therapeutic intervention at every level, positive outlook with challenges, ability to adapt, shows progress with rehabilitation, and supportive environment to thrive.” The new CHAMP wholeheartedly embodies all these characteristics. Her name is Emily Faith Bulson, 16, of Hobe Sound, Florida. She lives with her parents, Talitha and Merrill; her sister, Alaina, 20; and her brothers, Blake, 9, and Brett, 6. Her FECTS physical therapist is Tina Morris.

Emily and her family were introduced to the Florida Elks at the state convention in Orlando, Florida, June 20. Emily told the audience how much she appreciated being the new CHAMP of the Year. The membership was very moved hearing about her journey and her relationship with Morris. Colleen Gallant, FECTS Director who introduced Emily, reflects that “We know how much our therapy means to the patients and their families. This family made sure we knew how much they appreciated not only the therapy but what it has done for her emotionally.”

Prior to Emily’s health diagnosis, she was a volleyball player and she enjoyed practicing yoga, singing, and being at the beach with her family and friends. Emily began having health issues in 2018. She experienced episodes of syncope which caused her to pass out up to eight times a day. This is usually caused by a lack of blood flow to the brain when blood pressure is low, causing the heart to pump an insufficient amount of oxygen to the brain. Her cardiologist diagnosed her with POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome) which means that when a person stands up, the majority of their blood remains in the lower part of their body which in turn makes their heart beat faster, by 30 beats or more a minute, to pump blood to the brain. Emily had additional complications including cognitive changes; a diagnosis was finally made after countless appointments. Emily’s mother explains that she “had been experiencing worsening symptoms of crushing fatigue, fevers, joint pain and swelling, frequent fainting, and weakness.”

After Emily tested positive for Lyme disease and other tickborne infections, she was prescribed two antibiotics by her infectious disease MD. Within hours of starting the antibiotics, Emily experienced an unusual reaction including severe muscle spasms and significant weakness in her upper and lower extremities. Emily was able to regain the use of her arms over time but still has significant weakness in her legs and is unable to walk.”

Because of the cost and lack of providers, the family was unable to secure physical therapy services for Emily and instead was doing simple range of motion exercises with her.

At this point, Emily’s pediatrician suggested applying to FECTS, and her patient advocate from Martin Health System who coordinates all of Emily’s specialists, equipment, medications and referrals gave them the application.

Morris evaluated Emily in February 2019 and found “deficits in strength and endurance, and she required total assistance for all movements into and out of her wheelchair. She was dependent on her family to assist her in all areas and was now homebound as she could not tolerate sitting up for any length of time.” The use of her arms was also limited which did not allow her to complete tasks such as dressing herself.

They began weekly therapy sessions Feb. 22, 2019, which lasted 60-90 minutes. One of the therapy goals has been to increase Emily’s independence. Morris explains some methods they use to address this. “Emily relied on another person to transfer her into and out of her bed to a wheelchair or into and out of her bathtub. I trained Emily and her family to use a sliding board that Emily positions herself where she does not require any additional physical assistance from another person to perform safely. We incorporated activities to improve her trunk strength and balance to be able to slide the board underneath her and then practiced the technique with emphasis on arm strength to support her body to move along the board. It is a challenging activity, but it allows her to perform her activities of daily living with greater independence. Although walking is the ultimate goal, we agreed that a custom power wheelchair would be appropriate to facilitate more independence with Emily’s mobility skills. Emily received her custom power wheelchair and received training to use it independently. The ability to use the wheelchair without asking someone to push her from one place to the next has also produced more confidence and independence with her mobility skills.”

Another goal of therapy has been to increase Emily’s leg strength. According to Morris, “We have been focusing on strengthening her legs to assist with transfers and standing with the eventual goal of taking steps. Emily’s father built parallel bars to assist with this process. Additionally, I have used electrical stimulation, a therapeutic modality, to provide muscle re-education to the larger muscles in her legs to assist with stability with standing. I incorporate the use of therapy balls with Emily sitting on one with my assistance to maintain her balance and safety while playing games with her younger brothers, specifically ball toss or board games. The dynamic surface of the therapy ball challenges Emily’s muscles in her trunk and pelvis to activate and...
respond to small movements during play.”

As with all FECTS patients, Emily and her family were continuing her therapy throughout the week between sessions. Emily’s mother notes that Morris “gives us printouts of strengthening exercises and links to websites with creative therapy ideas and allows us to borrow therapy items to add variety and interest.”

Morris also has Emily and her family carry out some daily activities, such as “practicing transfers out of her wheelchair with physical assistance to a standing position while measuring the amount of time that Emily can stand with assistance, participating in specific yoga poses for relaxation and for strengthening, aqua therapy activities in the pool, and using the therapy ball for balance activities in multiple positions.”

In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic brought a temporary halt to in-person visits of FECTS therapists with their patients and families to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Throughout the pandemic, Morris and Emily have been speaking about once a week, and they have text and email conversations to discuss how she is doing. Because they cannot have their regular sessions, Morris prepared a home program for them to execute which she describes as consisting of “exercises and activities that focus on the areas that will support the next step in rehabilitation. If the ultimate goal is to stand or walk, even with assistance, we have to focus on the building blocks to establish the appropriate strength for stability. For example, there are many components to walking which include and are not limited to strength, coordination, proprioception (internal feeling within the joint to know where your body part is in relation to your body), kinesthetic sense (ability to feel your body in space during movement), intact vestibular system (maintaining equilibrium/balance with movement), visual perception and sensation. Different activities are created to activate these areas, and not just in isolation. The home program, with the family’s support, is completed three to five times per week depending on many factors. Emily has migraines and vertigo along with fluctuations in her blood pressure which impact her ability to participate at times. We have developed a home program that targets the different muscle groups and paired it with different activities to address coordination, vestibular, visual perceptual and sensory systems. The family uses parallel bars to stand and utilizes therapy balls to sit while engaging in turn-taking games or board games to encourage movement and strengthening. Although the present situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way that in-home therapy is administered for the time being, it has helped to develop connections with the family to truly train them to understand “how” to support the patient’s therapeutic needs. Through phone calls and video conferencing, the therapist is available to analyze and update the program activities as necessary while maintaining the important and sacred relationship with the patient and the family. It is also a time for the therapist and the family to discuss medical changes and any setbacks or successes. The therapists look forward to returning to in-home therapy once the climate changes and it is safe for everyone involved, but for now, we have the ability to cautiously provide services to our at-risk, medically fragile population.”

It is believed that Emily contracted Lyme disease from a possible tick bite while staying on a family member’s farm in the Midwest. The initial loss of the use of her arms and legs was due to Lyme disease and then it was made worse after the reaction to the antibiotics, which is rare. “Lyme disease is caused by specific bacteria transmitted through an infected tick bite. Although most cases of Lyme disease can be cured with a two- to four-week course of oral antibiotics, patients can sometimes have symptoms of pain, fatigue, weakness or difficulty thinking that lasts for more than six months after they finish treatment. The bacteria can trigger an ‘autoimmune’ response causing symptoms that last well after the infection itself is gone. At this point, it is difficult to differentiate the symptoms from the original Lyme disease infection and Emily’s adverse reaction to the antibiotics. As a physical therapist, I am treating the resulting deficits from both occurrences, but Lyme disease is the main culprit in Emily’s need for therapeutic intervention,” explains Morris.

While partial use of her arms returned before therapy, her abilities have increased after receiving FECTS therapy. Although her legs are not strong enough yet to move them, there is some muscle contraction in them. However, Morris declares that Emily “demonstrates much improvement with her overall endurance with less fatigue during physical activity. Additionally, she is more independent overall with her ability to perform self-care activities and to propel her power wheelchair inside and outside of her home.” Emily’s mother adds that she has shown slight movement in her feet after receiving therapy, too.

When asked to describe her relationship with Emily, Morris says, “Emily and I truly look forward to seeing each other every week. We laugh a lot and we respect each other’s roles as patient and therapist. There is a mutual admiration because I know that she is facing many physical challenges and she knows that I am there to provide the best therapy in my ability to help her meet her goals, thus we are both working hard together.”
Because I include the family in each of the sessions, it truly is entertaining and fun, and we almost forget that it is work."

The feeling is clearly mutual, because when asked the same question, Emily responded, “Well, to sum up my opinion of my amazing therapist, Tina, I once had a horrible nightmare and I was rescued by Tina and Brad Pitt – my two favorite stars! Even my subconscious brain knows that Tina is my hero!”

Naturally, Emily’s life-changing diagnosis has affected many facets of the family’s lives. Emily is now homeschooled. Her mother says that “Emily’s diagnosis and the ongoing search for underlying conditions that contribute to her symptoms have impacted our family financially, emotionally and in almost every area of our lives. Emily is not able to get out much, so the entire family is often homebound with her. This has been challenging for her little brothers who miss the active lifestyle we previously enjoyed as a family. However, Emily’s illness has brought our family even closer together and we strive to celebrate every good moment that comes our way.”

Emily’s mother expresses what FECTS and Morris have meant to the family. “The FECTS program and our therapist, Tina Morris, have been a monumental blessing to Emily and our entire family. The opportunity to have physical therapy in our home setting has been so helpful since Emily gets fatigued/exhausted very easily. Tina’s smile, warm personality and infectious giggle never fail to brighten Emily’s day and make therapy sessions so enjoyable! As a mom, I especially appreciate how Tina is incredibly perceptive of Emily’s nonverbal cues and is adept at challenging her yet taking care to not over-exert her during a therapy visit. Emily loves Tina dearly and said she cannot imagine life without her!”

Emily’s champion-like attitude is a testament to why she was chosen as this year’s CHAMP. Morris observes that “Emily has a strong, supportive family and even though she struggles daily, she maintains optimism with a happy disposition. The weekly physical therapy sessions are always productive, even when Emily is having a bad day.” It is remarkable that this young woman has taken an unfortunate event and faced it with strength, dignity and determination. Everyone should be so lucky as the Florida Elks to have Emily set this example for them, now more than ever.
The 39th annual Florida Elks State Golf Tournament was held May 30-31 at Spring Lake Golf Resort in Sebring, Florida. There were 62 golfers who participated and proceeds of approximately $6,300 will be given to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund which supports Florida Elks' two major projects: Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. John Holbrook, PDD and Jim Lind, PDD serve as co-chairs and Michael Smith, PNP serves as advisor. All pictures are taken with Holbrook, left; Tom Ludwick, State President, second from right; and Lind, right.
Fiscal Year-end Update and Ways to Give

At the writing of this article, the headquarters office of the Elks National Foundation (ENF) is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. They hope to begin reopening July 1. However, the pandemic did not stop all the great work that ENF and you, the members of the Elks, accomplished! For fiscal year 2020, you helped set a record for ENF fundraising which totaled $6,697,176.55! Florida raised $387,846.65 or $6.954 per member, exceeding the per-member goal of $4.75. A big thank you goes to all the Florida Elks who supported the ENF this past year. Let’s help set another record this year!

Until the ENF headquarters can reopen, Lodge ENF Chairs and/or Secretaries are encouraged to submit donations received through their lodges online instead of sending checks by visiting enf.elks.org/LodgeRemit.

For individuals wishing to donate to the ENF, there are many ways to do it:

Fidelity Club – The best way is to sign up for the Fidelity Club monthly giving program. When you enroll in the Fidelity Club, you schedule either recurring monthly donations ($5 minimum per month) or quarterly donations ($15 minimum per quarter). By supporting the Fidelity Club, you are saving trees, stamps and checks. In addition, the funds are more readily available to the ENF for all the great programs they support. It also saves the ENF staff valuable administrative time and allows them to concentrate on supporting the mission of ENF – being the “Great Heart of Elkdom!”

All donations are credited to your personal giving account and your lodge’s ENF per-capita goal. Fidelity Club members will receive a special sticker for their membership card. In addition, after 12 recurring gifts, you will receive an ENF fidelity pin and will continue to receive subsequent pin attachments as additional recurring gift levels are achieved. Sign up today at enf.elks.org/recurring.

One-time Online Giving – You can make a one-time online donation by going to https://www.elks.org/enf/OnlineGiving.cfm. You can also make these donations in honor or memory of a friend or loved one. A memorial gift donation acknowledgement letter will be sent to the donor and a memorial card (without donation amount) will be sent to the person specified on the online form. For honor gifts, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to the honoree and a certificate will be sent to the donor that can be presented to the honoree.

Workplace giving – Many employers make giving easy through payroll deductions and some may even match your donation. Check with your employer’s human resources department to see if they participate.

MVS Named Scholarship Program – If you pledge to give a total of $4,000 within a four-year period to the ENF Scholarship Fund, you can choose to name a runner-up Most Valuable Student (MVS) scholarship. In addition to naming the scholarship, the ENF will pair you with the winner and you will receive regular updates from the ENF and the student on their progress.

Planned Giving – By including the ENF in your estate planning through bequests of money or other assets like appreciated stock, life insurance, etc., you can join the John F. Malley Society. For more information, please visit elks.gifllegacy.com.

Amazon Smile – Every time you shop with Amazon, you can support the ENF by heading to amazonsmile.com instead of amazon.com. Once there, choose Elks National Foundation as the charity you wish to support and that is it! A portion of the purchase price for every item you buy will be donated to the ENF by Amazon at no cost to you!

October Lodge Fundraiser for ENF Month – Hopefully your lodge is planning an October fundraiser for ENF month. Volunteer to help, plan to participate and be sure to donate toward the event. Show your support for both the ENF and your lodge!

Thank you for your continued support of the ENF and the order. If you have any questions or need help, please contact me at darrin@theranchflorida.com or 941-626-2656.

Darrin Simone, Sr., PER, State Chair ENF Fundraising Committee
Florida State Elks Association

A Message from Jacquie Rehner, Elks National Foundation Grants State Coordinator

Florida Elks, there is free money waiting for you!

All you need to do is plan a project, apply for the grant, complete the good works in your community and fill out the final report. The Elks National Foundation (ENF) has been responding to the current situation we are in. They have loosened the requirements for many of the grants to allow more donation-type grants and less activity-type grants to help ensure the safety of everyone involved.

The Florida State Elks Association will match the Beacon Grant, so you have double the money for your planned project. Once you get the approval email from the ENF for the Beacon Grant, forward it to carl@floridaelks.org and a check will arrive shortly.

Currently there are two of the six grants open to apply for. Spotlight and Gratitude grants are available to the lodges. Freedom Grants have all been awarded for this year. The Beacon, Promise and Impact grants are tentatively set to open Aug. 1. There is a wealth of info at elks.org. Simply sign in and search the Community Investments Program (CIP) page. The following came from this area.

Shelter-in-place mandates. Social distancing. New normal. Since the COVID-19 pandemic became reality in March 2020, we’ve seen our lives change in unfathomable ways. Project...
Even with the ongoing pandemic, the Zephyrhills Elks Lodge #2731 Feed the Kids program has been in full swing since June 1. Using the lodge’s $7,500 Elks National Foundation Impact Grant, the program has served well over 500 meals a week to the children in the area. This is the fifth year the lodge has been providing meals to children and the third year of the Impact Grant. Jay Klamer, Exalted Ruler, and a committee met early in the year to develop a safe drive-thru program instead of having the children and parents come into the lodge for lunch. The committee developed “Lunch on the Go.” Elks volunteers give each driver a number of the children in the car and the driver goes to the next station and shows the number. A volunteer hands out the lunches that are already bagged and ready to go. Two teams of 10-15 volunteers come to the lodge daily and work in shifts two to three days a week to cook, pack and hand out the meals. Meals are packed in to-go containers, frozen and added to every bag along with fruit, milk and snacks. Every Wednesday, Ilene Nutting, chair of the craft committee, hands out packets of books and crafts for the week. The children are very excited to get the packets. In fact, one of the mothers reported that she and her children take their lunches to the local park and have a picnic while doing their craft projects. This program will continue through Aug. 7.

For more information including guidelines, restrictions, applications and report forms, visit elks.org/cip/.

IN EACH ISSUE OF THE FLORIDA ELKS MAGAZINE, A LODGE WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED USING ONE OF THEIR ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION GRANTS.

To be considered, please submit a description of the project and several pictures to Rachael King, editor, at r.king@floridaelks.org.

Send in your submission so the state can see the fantastic impact your lodge is making in your community!
very Elks lodge is under the umbrella of the Grand Lodge and is exempt from paying federal income tax on income legally earned by the lodge. Just try to comprehend how much money a lodge is saving every year by not having to pay taxes on all income earned. Where does the exemption come from and what does the exemption mean?

In order to qualify for an exemption, an organization must meet certain Internal Revenue Codes (IRC) which are broken down into sections. Refer to chapter 4 (Other Section 501c Organizations) of IRS Publication 557 (Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization) to review a few of the many sections that are available and to what type of organization. Fraternal Beneficiary Societies (501c(8)) are included in chapter 4.

In 1981, the Internal Revenue Service District Director confirmed that all Elks lodges are under Section 501(c)(8) as long as each lodge is, according to Federal Section 501(c)(8) Tax Exempt Status, “(A) operating under the lodge system or for the exclusive benefit of the members of a fraternity itself operating under the lodge system, and (B) providing for the payment of life, sick, accident or other benefits to the members of such society, order or association or their dependents.” An additional paragraph states, “The Grand Lodge and the subordinate lodges will continue to be recognized under section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code if they meet the requirements of (A) and (B) as mentioned above.” Please note: in item (A), “exclusive benefit of the members” and in item (B), all Elk lodges are under “other benefits,” as all lodges receive benefits from the Grand Lodge.

In accordance with the IRS Publication 598 (Tax on Unrelated Business Income of Exempt Organizations) in the Introduction on page 2, “An exempt organization isn’t taxed on its income from an activity substantially related to the charitable, educational or other purpose that is the basis for the organization’s exemption. Such income is exempt even if the activity is a trade or business.” In chapter 4 (Unrelated Business Taxable Income), “the term ‘unrelated business taxable income’ (UBTI) generally means the gross income derived from any unrelated trade or business regularly conducted by the exempt organization less the deductions directly connected with carrying on the trade or business.” There are a few exceptions and the main one for all Elks lodges to use is “volunteer workforce.” On page 9 of IRS Publication 598, there are two good examples of how to turn Unrelated Business Income into non-taxable income. To do this, you must document each event and a good form to use is the Report of Special Event on the Business Practices Committee website. It is very important to have the names of each volunteer and hours worked by each volunteer attached to the Report of Special Event.

The general rules of the Auditing and Accounting Manual in chapter 10, page 23 should be required reading for all lodge officers and House Committee members. Use this information in conjunction with chapter 6 for all fundraising committees as the Report of Special Event is the document to use to record the event.

If the lodge is doing a breakfast as a membership drive, it must be well documented and you must be able to prove to the IRS to their satisfaction that the income is not taxable.

Each lodge must ensure all rules and regulations of the Grand Lodge as well as state and federal rules are followed.

By using the above information properly, every lodge can produce income for their lodge. Remember, there must be an exception to sell anything to the general public and the best one to use is “volunteer workforce” with proper documentation.

Richard D. Martin, PDD, Chair
FSEA Business Practices Committee

References:
IRS Publication 554
IRS Publication 598
Federal Section 501(c)(8) Tax Exempt Status
Grand Lodge and Subordinate Lodges of Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America
Auditing and Accounting Manual, Chapter 6 and Chapter 10

Disclaimer: The Business Practices Committee of the Florida State Elks Association (FSEA) has prepared this information to assist the lodges of this fraternal order. The FSEA Business Practices Committee is neither responsible nor empowered to be responsible for the establishment of such procedures. The Business Practices Committee acts as a resource to assist lodges. You should always consult your lodge’s tax and legal advisors before engaging in any endeavors or transactions to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws.

State Grants Coordinator article continued from page 23

The grant year launched April 1 with $37 million available to eligible lodges through the Gratitude Grants, delaying the opening to June 1 for all other grant components. Now, we are ready to wade back in, but with caution, due to the continued uncertainty. On June 1, we will release $37 million for the Spotlight Grants. These $2,000 grants are available to every lodge to shine the light on COVID-19 relief. For there is no more pressing issue facing American communities than the response to the pandemic. But the needs will look different in different communities, so we’ve built in more flexibility this year.

Since the Community Investments Program began in 2005, we’ve funded more than 27,000 grants to help lodges build stronger communities. Elks use grants to combat food insecurity, support people experiencing homelessness, serve veterans and military members in need, and promote youth community service.

When the program began in 2005 with a budget of $350,000, we never imagined that budget would nearly quadruple in just over a decade. This year, the ENF will invest $37 million in the Community Investments Program to help Elks build stronger communities. If the past 14 years are any indication, this is only the beginning of our combined impact.

As lodges are able to host more active projects, the health and well-being of the community is the top priority. Please follow all suggested safety precautions when hosting a grant project, and only do an active project when it is safe in your community to do so. Prior to planning an active project, determine the local rules and regulations regarding COVID-19 so that you can be sure to carry out the safest event possible.

Please contact me at rehnerjacquie@gmail.com or 863-838-9018 for assistance.

Jacquie Rehner, PDD, Grants Coordinator
Because there was a surplus after the lodge delivered the food from the Bread of the Mighty to the City of Waldo, they donated the extra food to the St. Francis House, a homeless shelter in Gainesville. Pictured April 22 at the lodge is member Saudia Bradley loading food to deliver to the St. Francis House in Gainesville. The lodge members have been anxious to reach out and help their community in these times of need.

Gainesville Elks Lodge #990 helped with the transport of food from the Bread of the Mighty Food Bank in Gainesville to the City of Waldo. The initial goal was to be able to offer enough food to feed over 50 families. The lodge helped every Wednesday for four weeks, and now it has changed to once a month. Pictured April 22 are members Breed Jumpp, president of the Gainesville Elks Riders 990; Linda Califf, Lodge Secretary; and Gary Parker. Additional members not pictured are Saudia Bradley and Rita Puentez, coordinator of this event. The following is a thank-you letter received by the lodge from the mayor of Waldo dated April 28.

As the Mayor of Waldo, I would really like to thank you and your lodge members for your help with feeding Waldo. As you may or may not know, Waldo does not have a food bank, so our residents must go to Gainesville or Starke to get food. Many residents do not have the ability to do that. This has been a huge blessing for the City of Waldo, and we are grateful for your role in that giveaway.

You all have made a difference in Waldo and for that we thank you!

Sincerely,
Louie Davis, Mayor

Each Saturday in April, East River Smokehouse in Navarre, Florida, and the Central Waterside Church in Pensacola Beach, Florida, combined to provide food to those in need via a drive-thru system at the Smokehouse’s parking lot. During their third and fourth days of providing this service, members of Holley-Navarre Elks Lodge #2787 volunteered their time to assist in the sorting and delivering of food and directing and speaking with those in line as they awaited their turn. Ernest “Skip” DalleMolle, Leading Knight, had seen a request for volunteers on Facebook and sent out a notice to members trying to get them involved. DalleMolle; Thomas “TJ” Carey, Exalted Ruler; Stephen Hogan, Lecturing Knight; and Charles Mussari, former lodge officer, helped the third day. (Dave and Lynn Piech were there, also. Though Dave is an Elk, he was there as Santa Rosa County Commissioner.) Members Connie Mussari; Michelle Whitehart; and Libby Blackwood, club manager, joined TJ Carey, Charles Mussari and Skip DalleMolle the last day. Generally 10 vehicles (two lines of five) had food loaded into them at the same time. The event had vehicles line up in the emergency lane on U.S. 98 and flow into two lines. Charles Mussari and Skip DalleMolle guided the vehicles to split into two lanes and ensure their trunks or back ends were open and ready for the next station where other volunteers placed the food. This way, nobody got out of their vehicle and safety was maintained without contact. Approximately 500 vehicles were serviced the third day and approximately 450 were done the fourth day, but this is probably because there was another drive taking place locally. Picture 1: Michelle Whitehart, Connie Mussari and Libby Blackwood. Picture 2: Connie Mussari, third from right, helps pack half a semi worth of bagels into bags. Picture 3: Volunteers including TJ Carey and Stephen Hogan sort and prepare food for delivery. Pictures 4 and 5: Skip DalleMolle and Charles Mussari direct traffic.

Gainesville Elks Lodge #990 helped with the transport of food from the Bread of the Mighty to the City of Waldo. The initial goal was to be able to offer enough food to feed over 50 families. The lodge helped every Wednesday for four weeks, and now it has changed to once a month. Pictured April 22 are members Breed Jumpp, president of the Gainesville Elks Riders 990; Linda Califf, Lodge Secretary; and Gary Parker. Additional members not pictured are Saudia Bradley and Rita Puentez, coordinator of this event. The following is a thank-you letter received by the lodge from the mayor of Waldo dated April 28.

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Eustis Lodge gave an additional donation of $2,000 to The Carpenter’s House June 1 to purchase food for those living at the home. Pictured are Mike Schwellinger, Esquire; Bo Borwegen, Exalted Ruler; Dan, resident; Linda and Pat Manfredi, directors; and Hannah, resident.

On May 28, $500 from Eustis Lodge’s Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant was given to The Carpenter’s House in Leesburg, Florida, to help them during the pandemic. Directors Patrick and Linda Manfredi take care of up to 17 children from infancy to age 18 who have been orphaned, some from third-world countries. Most are from Nigeria and New Guinea. Normally they return to their homeland where they continue to help and educate others in need. Pictured at the donation presentation are Mike Schwellinger, Lodge Esquire; Patrick and Linda Manfredi, directors; and Patsy Despain, PER, presenting a check for $500 to help defray expenses due to the pandemic. Residents pictured from the bottom to top on the stairs are Lydia, Hanna, Tiana, Juliana, William and Dan. Directors Patrick and Linda Manfredi are pictured in front of the house.

Also on May 27, Eustis Lodge gave $500 from its Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to help community members affected by the pandemic. Pictured are JoJo Myhr, member; Bill Myhr, trustee; Ruthie Hoffner, pantry director of development; and Patsy Despain, PER. In 2019, Lake Cares Food Pantry in Mount Dora, Florida, served 51,720 people approximately 904,000 pounds of food. They have been doing this since 2009 and the need increases every year. There are five mobile sites for availability. Their clients mostly consist of senior citizens and those who are disabled, but during the pandemic, many younger people with children are also being fed.

On May 21, Green Cove Springs Lodge donated $1,000 from the lodge PER/charity bingo fund on behalf of lodge members to the Green Cove Springs Food Pantry. Cheryl Royal, Lecturing Knight, is pictured presenting the check to food pantry volunteer Wynema Lovell. Throughout May and June, lodge members brought nonperishable food to the lodge and members Gale and Nancy Klopfenstein, who are also volunteers at the food pantry, helped coordinate and deliver the items each week to the food pantry. Pictured organizing food donations at the lodge are members Gale Klopfenstein, Patsy Weston and Nancy Klopfenstein.

On May 30, Green Cove Springs Elks Lodge #1892 donated more than 100 boxes of cereal bars to Charles E. Bennett Elementary School to help supplement their take-home lunch program for students that has been instituted during the pandemic. Pictured are Mary Bolla, member and local school board member; Dr. Sheree Cagle, principal; Tracy Carroll, PER; Gene Rittenhouse, District Vice President; Ed Weston, Exalted Ruler; and Marcia Mainer, assistant principal.
Inverness #2522

Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 happened to be the sponsoring lodge for both this year’s state winners of the Drug Awareness Education poster and essay contest. Fifth grader Cason Davis won the poster contest and eighth grader Morgan Cyr won the essay contest. This year’s theme was Life Does Not Rewind – Choose Life, Not Drugs. Both winners received a $50 Walmart gift card and a $50 Dominos gift card from the lodge. They each also were given a television from the Florida State Elks Association. James Manos, Lodge Drug Awareness Education Chair, presented these to Morgan May 20 (with her mother, Kelli Hutton) and Cason May 28 (with his parents, Shay and Jimmy Davis) at their respective homes.

DeLand #1463

During the coronavirus pandemic, DeLand Elks Lodge #1463 has partnered with Neighborhood Center of West Volusia in DeLand, Florida, by providing grant money to stock their pantry. The lodge donated its $2,500 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant, its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant and $1,500 of its Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant to the center. Members also donate nonperishable items. The Neighborhood Center provides an emergency food bank, food pantry, emergency bill assistance, emergency housing, counseling, referral services and living skills groups. Another service the center provides is the delivery of food to seniors who are homebound.

Watercutter, Lodge Secretary, volunteered to be a driver on behalf of the lodge. She delivered canned goods, meat, bread, desserts and other dry pantry goods to seniors who could not afford food or who could not go out in public due to transportation or medical reasons. Watercutter describes her volunteering. “As secretary of the lodge, I felt that I needed to lead by example what Elks are all about. We have many new members and they need guidance. What better way to show them and possible new members what we do for our community? Delivering to these seniors made a difference in their lives as it did mine. Many of them have no money. What was even more amazing was I would deliver the food and they in turn would share their food with neighbors!” Watercutter is pictured April 21 in her vehicle on a delivery day.

DeLand Lodge donated $1,000 of its Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant to the Pregnancy Center of Deltona which provides services such as pregnancy tests and referrals to OB offices to females who are homeless or who have low incomes. They also supply new mothers with diapers, formula and other newborn needs.

DeLand Lodge was closed from March 27 through June 3 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many lodge officers called to check on elder members and the general membership to let them know their DeLand Elks family was there for them and that they were not alone. They even asked for their grocery list and went shopping for elder members. In some instances, they were able to visit them in person socially distancing in their driveways. Members did not forget about their staff, either. When the lodge closed, payroll stopped, so the members passed a virtual hat for their three bartenders and janitor. They created a link online to receive donations for them in addition to accepting checks in the mail. Because of this, DeLand Lodge was able to keep the staff “paid” via donations while they were closed.

Merritt Island #2650

On May 2, Merritt Island Elks Lodge #2650 presented certificates, medals and checks to the lodge’s Americanism essay contest winners. Ken Hill, Lodge Americanism Chair, is pictured with the winners. Top row: Kate Kennedy of Lewis Carroll Elementary, Division I first place; Shyanne Horton of Brevard Private Academy, Division II first place and state Division II third place; and Jaxon Meyers of Lewis Carroll Elementary, Division I second place. Bottom row: Seth Elston of Lewis Carroll Elementary, Division I third place; Christopher Lancaster of Brevard Private Academy, Division II second place; and Victoria Tonhauser of Brevard Private Academy, Division II third place.

Ormond Beach #2193

Ormond Beach Elks Lodge #2193 awarded three lodge scholarships in the amount of $750 each to local high school seniors June 26 at the lodge. Recipients were Ana Sanchez and Logan Stewart of Seabreeze High School and Ryan Waddell of Father Lopez Catholic High School. Students were presented with scholarship certificates following a steak dinner for the recipients and their families. Most of the schools these students attend did not host an in-person senior awards ceremony. Pictured are Michael Chandler, PDD, Scholarship Committee member; Ana Sanchez; Ryan Waddell; and Erika Barger, Lodge Scholarship Chair and Vice President of the East Central District. Logan Stewart was unable to attend the presentation.

Port Orange #2723

Port Orange Elks Lodge #2723 provided an update on one of their 2016 Elks National Foundation Most Valuable Student scholarship winners – Dalton Price – who went on to be the highest-scoring male applicant from Florida, later giving a speech at the Florida Elks state convention in which he expressed his gratitude to the community. A graduate of Spruce Creek High School, he began his freshman year at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in August 2016 studying anthropology and infectious disease biology. Working in a variety of health care sectors over
the years, he has been able to develop his interest in infectious disease outbreaks and public health responses. Domestically, he has worked with Aetna, The Microbiome Coalition, The diaTribe Foundation, and four research institutes and has received funding to write a book about the U.S. health care system. Over time, he has become more interested in international contexts and worked with the World Health Organization, Partners in Health, and other groups in Malaysia, Egypt, Jordan, and Peru. For his work, he was awarded the Future Global Leaders Fellowship, Jack Kent Cooke International Award, Gateway Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Fellowship, John F. Kennedy Memorial Award, Forbes Under 30 Award and nearly 10 research grants. Additionally, he has published opinion pieces with HuffPost, Common Dreams, Daytona Beach News Journal and the Cornell Daily Sun.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Price has returned home early from his senior year at Cornell and is now working with the Florida Department of Health on the Volusia response. He will travel to the United Kingdom in October to begin his doctorate degree in medical anthropology at the University of Oxford. For his graduate research, he will spend three to four years traveling between the UK and Venezuela studying how political climates and forms of government impact the trajectory and spread of infectious disease. After completing his doctorate, he plans to move to New York City and start medical school at Mount Sinai’s Icahn School of Medicine. After completing his doctorate degree, he plans to move to New York City and start medical school at Mount Sinai’s Icahn School of Medicine. After completing his doctorate degree, he plans to move to New York City and start medical school at Mount Sinai’s Icahn School of Medicine.

As a physician-anthropologist working in global health, Price hopes to move the field of infectious disease research forward with new perspectives. Though creating healthy populations raises many medical questions, he believes there are also countless social, political, economic, cultural and environmental concerns that must also be addressed.

In the long term, he hopes to one day become Florida’s Surgeon General. After his tenure there, he hopes to move into more international spheres and work in a high-level capacity with the World Health Organization. He is deeply grateful for the amount of support he has received from the Elks community, especially Port Orange Lodge. He wholeheartedly believes in the African proverb “it takes a village” and considers the Elks part of his village, one that is deeply invested in his success and one he plans to give back to along the way. Pictured at Spruce Creek High School in 2016 are Dr. Todd Sparger, principal; Price; Frank Kuczkowski, Exalted Ruler; and Paul Leonard, Lodge Scholarship Chair.

**SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Titusville #2113**

Titusville Elks Lodge #2113 split its Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant between three food pantries in Titusville, Florida, during the coronavirus pandemic. Mike Anderson, Exalted Ruler, and Bob Swink, board of directors chair, delivered the checks. Pictured May 18 at Hummingbird Pantry are Anderson and Gina Stanford, director. Pictured May 19 at the First United Methodist Church Food Pantry are Ken DeTorres, director, and Anderson. Also pictured May 19 at Grove Church (Walkabout Recovery) are Kyle Richie, director; Anderson; and Dustin Sams, pastor.

Viera Elks Lodge #2817 continued their support of Genesis House, a facility in Melbourne, Florida, which provides transitional shelter for women and their children who are homeless, long-term housing for student mothers and their children, and shelter for pregnant women and their children who are homeless. Funding for Genesis House support is provided by an Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant. On March 21, the lodge provided them with a new document shredder. They also donated $825 for a mother and her child to attend parent-child therapy classes at the Florida Institute of Technology. These classes are still ongoing.

On March 23, Viera Lodge provided Family Promise of Brevard County a gift of $1,500 from an Elks National Foundation Promise Grant. Family Promise is an organization that collaborates with the community to provide families who are homeless with the support and resources they need to put themselves on a path toward long-term housing. They also provide emergency shelter, homeless prevention and stabilization services. The assistance was given when they were going to have to suspend their emergency housing program due to lack of funding.

Viera Lodge donated $1,000 from an Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant March 22 to the Children’s Hunger Project, a community project which provides for children who are at risk and who depend on meals provided at school but who are now homebound. An additional $1,000 donation was made from the same grant May 13 as well.

**WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**St. Petersburg #1224**

On April 3, St. Petersburg Elks Lodge #1224 donated Easter basket supplies to Sallie House and Children’s Village which are part of the Salvation Army. Items included candy, yo-yos, trucks, balls, bubbles, earbuds, cellphone holders and more. The items were delivered so baskets could be put together for the 36 children and teenagers housed at these facilities. Pictured are Michael “Doc” Cook, Exalted Ruler; Nicole Brown from Sallie House; and Kirk Martin, Inner Guard.

On April 14, St. Petersburg Lodge donated $2,000 to The Kind Mouse which will cover the cost of 330 mouse nibble sacks for kids who do not have food sources outside of their school lunch program. The sacks include milk, juice boxes, cereal, tuna snack packs, pasta and meat snack packs, fruit cups, and more. The lodge used its Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant applied for by PER Dawn Lieber, lodge grant writer, to make this donation. The Kind Mouse Productions Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in St. Petersburg, Florida, that assists families and children in Pinellas County with food insecurities and chronic hunger. According to thekindmouse.org, “more than 7,000 children in Pinellas County live with chronic hunger and more than 36,000 live every day with food insecurities.” With schools closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, food demand at The Kind Mouse is at its peak. Before the pandemic, children in the program received one bag each weekend with an additional three to five bags for Thanksgiving, spring break and the Christmas vacation. Now, these children and additional children need fed seven days a week. Pictured are Dan Masi, Leading Knight and the Florida State Elks Association Development Director, and Gina Wilkins, Founder and CEO of The Kind Mouse.
Tampa Elks Lodge member Christina Sanchez committed to preparing and giving out 200 hygiene bags a month during the pandemic. During April, May and June, 632 bags were dispersed along with food to those in need in the community – veterans, struggling families and those who are homeless. The bags included hand sanitizer, face masks, toilet paper and other essential items. They were packed at Tampa Lodge and were handed out at Open Arms Ministry Hyde Park Tampa and First Presbyterian Church in downtown Tampa. Some of the Florida State Elks Association matching funds from the Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant were used, but the majority of the items were funded by community and individual Elks donations. Pictured in May are members Rita Smith and Sanchez packing bags, Sanchez handing out bags alone and with helper Capriana Sanchez, and masks and other items included in the bags.

St. Petersburg Lodge member Penny Rase has also shared her sewing skills by making more than 600 face masks since the pandemic started in an attempt to lessen the impacts of the shortage of masks. It takes her at least 30 minutes to make the double-sided 100% cotton mask with comfortable elastic banding to go around the ears. The fabric masks can be used by non-medical personnel such as patients and the general public. They can also be used to cover medical-grade face masks to keep them clean. She sells the masks for $10 each and uses half the monies to buy all the materials and she donates the other half to Pet Pal Rescue in St. Petersburg. As of June 30, Rase has donated $800 and 12 masks to Pet Pal Rescue whose mission is to rescue dogs and cats from shelters who may otherwise be euthanized due to time limitations, illness, injuries, or lack of socialization and training. The organization is dedicated to educating the public about the pet overpopulation crisis, the importance of spaying and neutering, and responsible pet ownership. She is also making 100 masks with patriotic colors and designs to donate to veterans at C.W. Bill Young VAMC at Bay Pines. “When I started making the masks, it was such a great feeling. I just love volunteering, and by doing this I feel like I’m giving back to our community and our veterans,” says Rase. Pictured are Rase and some of the masks she has made.

As of June 19, St. Petersburg Lodge member and Americanism Chair, Katherine “Kat” Chaplin, has made and given away 900-plus face masks for free to friends and Elks. The masks are located in a bin in the lodge lobby and are also available for pickup at her residence. Chaplin lives in a mobile home park and gives them out there and has left word at their clubhouse. The lodge also posts the information on Facebook to contact the lodge or Chaplin for a mask and it is also posted in the lodge bulletin. Each mask takes her 15 minutes to make; that’s more than 225 hours of Chaplin’s time. She donated all the material and labor to contribute to the St. Petersburg, Florida, community during these trying times. The masks are made of 100% cotton and are to be worn to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Pictured April 17 are Delaney Hall, Kat Chaplin and Geneva Hall, Delaney’s mother and a lodge member. Not only did they receive free masks from Chaplin but they were also picking up masks for volunteers who were working on Wednesdays for the Pinellas County school system making sure kids from families with low-incomes had meals during the weekends.
On March 31, Bradenton Elks Lodge #1511 donated $2,000 from the Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to The Food Bank of Manatee (located in Manatee County) which is run by Meals on Wheels PLUS. Maribeth Phillips, CEO of Meals on Wheels PLUS, accepts the donation from Mike Eymann, PER, Exalted Ruler, as he uses a grabber to abide by social distancing. In the second picture, Phillips is pictured with Cindy Sloan, director of The Food Bank of Manatee. This food bank happens to be where the Bradenton Lodge program Elks Feeding Empty Little Tummies purchases the majority of its food. The site of the donation presentation is the Bradenton office of Meals on Wheels PLUS.

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855

On April 28, Plant City Elks Lodge #1727 donated $5,679 to the United Food Bank of Plant City. The lodge used $4,000 from the Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant ($2,000 from 2019-2020 and $2,000 from 2020-2021) and the lodge members added $1,679 to the donation. The lodge normally uses this grant to pay off unpaid school lunches in their district public schools. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the schools closed and were unable to calculate the number of unpaid student lunches. With a proactive call by Shelly Carroll, Lecturing Knight, to the Elks National Foundation in Chicago, permission was granted to donate to the food bank. Schools even started distributing free lunches in their parking lots. The business closings and layoffs have put a terrible strain on the food banks. The Plant City food bank was already dipping into summer and fall budgets to meet the tremendous demand. The presentation was made with masks on for safety. Pictured are Judy Wise, chaplain; Mary Heysek, food bank director; Shelly Carroll, Lecturing Knight; and Kenny Goodwien, Exalted Ruler.

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Tampa Elks Lodge #708 voted to give its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to Hope on the Horizon, a charity based in Tampa, Florida. The President, Lisa Chesser, says they deliver groceries to 28 families every week and make sure those who are homeless and living in the woods eat every day. She can and does accept, store, and transport furniture for those who are transitioning from homelessness. Hope on the Horizon also provides clothing, showers and laundry bimonthly for those who are homeless who attend the free dinner at the Gandy Civic Center each Thursday. They also provide school uniforms and school supplies to families who need them. They even donated a refrigerator and stove to a family without them. If there is a desperate need in south Tampa, they find a way to fill that need. Regarding the grant, Chesser commented, “We get a few cash donations here and there, but I’m used to having to pay for most things out of my paycheck! To me, it’s like hitting the lottery.” In addition to the grant, the lodge donated 40 bags from member Christina Sanchez’s project to be distributed to those assisted by Hope on the Horizon. Chesser, middle, receives the donation April 30 at the Gandy Civic Center presented by Paul Deland, Loyal Knight, and Shelagh Gombarcik, PER, trustee and Public Relations Chair. Chesser is also pictured giving a haircut to someone in need and delivering meals to those who live in camps in the woods.

On June 19, Marissa Ciesla, a 2009 Brandon Elks Lodge $1,000 scholarship recipient, successfully defended her thesis to obtain her doctorate. She will graduate in August turning 21, she joined Brandon Lodge and became the youngest member of the lodge at that time. She is also the only scholarship recipient to have ever joined the lodge. She graduated from Brandon Senior High School in 2009 where she was president of her senior class. In 2012 she received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Florida in biomedical sciences with minors in psychology and biomedical physics. In 2014 she continued her education at the University of South Florida obtaining a Master of Science degree in medical sciences with a concentration in neuroscience. In 2015 she entered the College of Medicine’s graduate program in biomedical sciences at the University of Florida. During her doctorate research, she studied therapies to enhance serotonergic reinnervation of motor nuclei after cervical spinal cord injury which is a way of improving the breathing ability of people with a damaged spinal cord in their neck. She also authored and published five papers in support of her research. Other achievements include the McKnight Brain Institute Fellowship, the Bryan Robinson Endowment, the Toffler Leadership Award, the Caroline tum Suden Opportunity Award, the International Symposium on Neural Regeneration Travel Award and the Respiration Section Trainee Poster Presentation Award. Her father is an officer and is on the lodge board and her mother was last year’s and is this year’s president of the Brandon Ladies organization. Her father notes, “Terri and I (Ed) became members of the lodge because of the scholarship. When we walked into the event hall for the scholarship banquet, it just felt like home to us. So we asked PER Kim Martinez about membership and she sponsored us. The scholarship program is the whole reason we are involved as Elks.”

Plant City #1727

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Brandon #2383

On June 19, Marissa Ciesla, a 2009 Brandon Elks Lodge $1,000 scholarship recipient, successfully defended her thesis to obtain her doctorate. She will graduate in August with her doctorate in biomedical sciences with a focus on neuroscience. Each year the lodge hosts a banquet recognizing outstanding high school seniors in their area and awards students with scholarships. Usually the lodge receives thank-you letters and never hears from these students again. Ciesla was the exception. In 2011 upon
In the past fiscal Elks year, New Horizons of Southwest Florida has been the recipient of Elks National Foundation Beacon and Gratitude grants from Bonita Springs-Estero Lodge totaling $4,500. It is an independent faith-based organization in Lee and Collier counties in Florida dedicated to improving education of children in grades K-12 who are at risk and below the poverty level by providing after-school volunteers who serve as tutors, mentors and aides at local churches. Funds from these two grants have been used to purchase computers, provide internet access at local sites so the kids can complete their homework, and purchase materials for a literacy reading summer camp. Lodge members are among the dedicated volunteers for the program that starts in June with reading camp and continued through mid-March when it went online due to the pandemic. Pictured Nov. 21, 2019, is Mr. Omar helping students at a computer lab.

Getting off to a quick start in the new lodge year, Bonita Springs-Estero Lodge applied for an Elks National Foundation (ENF) Gratitude Grant April 1, the day the ENF opened applications. The Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida received the donation of $2,000 that was approved within hours of the grant application. This was a new offering by the ENF to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Because of the ENF’s visibility and community support, they have even gained three schools in Sarasota, Venice and Bradenton came to the Elks’ store room near the lodge to pick up the toys and books. They take them to their schools to hand out to the students as they pick up their lunches. The teachers handle this because they know which children are in need and their reading levels. To date, approximately 2,900 toys and 3,500 books have been donated, and each student receives a book and a toy. This project was supported by lodge members and members of the community as well as by businesses, Toys for Tots, a book company and Venice-Nokomis Elks Lodge. Because of the lodge’s visibility and community support, they have even gained new members. Pictured June 10 at the lodge store room are Jim Lamb, PDD, Sarasota South Lodge member and coordinator of Toys for Tots, and Marie Mueller of Oneco Elementary School.

During the last two weeks in April on four occasions (April 21, 24, 28 and 30), a combination of 13 lodge officers from Cape Coral Elks Lodge #2596 spent $2,300 of their Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant on food and other necessities at several stores including Walmart, Publix, Winn-Dixie and Restaurant Depot. They then delivered the items to the Cape Coral Caring Center, a food pantry, for distribution. They also stayed to assist in handing out the food to those in need. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the lodge members put food in trunks of cars for the recipients so there was no contact that way. The pantry weighed the food that the Elks delivered as a matrix for their inventory; the total was more than 2,800 pounds of food. The main group of shoppers each trip included Rich Kampf, Exalted Ruler; Ken Kovach, board of directors chair; Kathleen Kovach, Treasurer; Ed Broderick, Secretary; Jim Fraser, Leading Knight; and Mary Ellis, PER. Pictured in the first picture April 21 at the pantry are Julie Ferguson, Cape Coral Caring Center director, and Rich Kampf, Kathleen Kovach, Ken Kovach and Jim Fraser. The second picture is also from April 21 and shows Rich Kampf; Patti Kampf, House Committee member; and Julie Ferguson.

**SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

**Bonita Springs-Estero #2753**

Our Mother’s Home was the recipient of an Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant of $2,000 from Bonita Springs-Estero Elks Lodge #2753. This organization is a shelter located in Estero, Florida, for girls ages 12 to 19 who are pregnant through abuse, rape or trafficking. The lodge held a community shower luncheon Feb. 17 to coincide with a school holiday so the young ladies could attend with lodge members and friends who brought baby supplies and toys. Grant funds were used to purchase larger items, carriers, bedding and other supplies. In addition, a literacy program conducted by the education director from Estero’s public library was included in the event.

**Cape Coral #2596**

Englewood Elks Lodge #2378 awarded seven scholarships to high school seniors which were announced May 20 at a virtual awards presentation by the high school. Normally, lodge members attend the senior award night to present the scholarships, but due to the coronavirus pandemic, the scholarship committee informed the school of the winners and the school handled the distribution. Carly Brzostek and Austin Scheetz will each receive $3,000 per year for four years. Brzostek will be attending Marymount Manhattan College and majoring in the film industry, and Scheetz will be attending Florida Southern College and majoring in computer and informational sciences. The winner of the Bill Wellbaum Memorial Scholarship in the same amount is Aidan Moore. Moore hopes to attend the University of South Florida and plans to major in civil engineering. Four students were awarded $1,000 vocational scholarships – Etienne Beaugrand will study nursing at Suncoast Technical College, Adam Berry will study to become an emergency medical technician at Charlotte Technical College, Caleb Joyce will pursue automotive studies at Charlotte Technical College, and Abigail Parker will study cosmetology at Charlotte Technical College.

**Deep Creek #2763**

On April 1, the Elks National Foundation made applications available for the Gratitude Grant for 2020-2021. This money was to be used to directly address community needs during the coronavirus pandemic. Deep Creek Elks Lodge #2763 knew who to contact as their recipient – Tina Figliuola, Chief Executive Officer for the Homeless Coalition in Charlotte County, Florida. For years, they have run a program that provides a hot meal every evening for anyone who shows up. When they talked to her, the program was feeding 125 people every night. By the time the lodge was able to present her with the $2,000 grant April 8, the numbers had grown so large that they had partnered with Jesus Loves You Ministries to be able to feed all who came. Lodge members Ron Steelman and Patrick McCarthy delivered the check.

**Englewood #2378**

Getting off to a quick start in the new lodge year, Bonita Springs-Estero Lodge applied for an Elks National Foundation (ENF) Gratitude Grant April 1, the day the ENF opened applications. The Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida received the donation of $2,000 that was approved within hours of the grant application. This was a new offering by the ENF to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Because of the ENF’s visibility and community support, they have even gained new members. Pictured June 10 at the lodge store room are Jim Lamb, PDD, Sarasota South Lodge member and coordinator of Toys for Tots, and Marie Mueller of Oneco Elementary School.
On June 25, David Lake, PSP and Roger Spencer, Fort Myers Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, presented the lodge’s Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant of $2,000 and 100 face shields to Lee Health Foundation to benefit three Lee Health facilities. Accepting the check and face shields are Ken Shoirak, Chief Operating Officer, and Jason Powella.

Naples #2010

On April 29, Naples Elks Lodge #2010 presented their $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to St. Matthew's House, a charitable organization in Naples, Florida, that houses those who are homeless, provides food to those in need, and assists those who are addicted and suffering. Pictured are Paul Martella, Exalted Ruler; Van Ellison, St. Matthew's House CEO; and Robert Cedar, Lodge Elks National Foundation Fundraising Chair. Earlier that month, Cedar had filed to use the grant for pandemic relief, which was honored.

North Fort Myers #2742

North Fort Myers Elks Lodge #2742 awarded $1,000 scholarships to two high school students who are family members of lodge members – Guillermo Paquian, grandson of Teresa Peel, who plans to attend Towson University in Maryland, and Brady Keough, grandson of Richard Wood, who plans to attend Michigan State University. Certificates with their names were mailed to their high schools and were to be presented to them at their awards night, but with schools being closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, a replacement certificate was mailed to them at their home address. The students were notified in April. The lodge sent a check to each university with an explanation of its intended use.

Rotonda #2710

Using its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant and $1,000 from the lodge charity account, Rotonda Elks Lodge #2710 donated $1,500 each May 9 to two food banks in Englewood, Florida, run by churches – St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and St. David’s Jubilee Center of St. David’s Episcopal Church. St. David’s Food Bank provides food to over 200 families consisting of 400 adults and 180 children per month and continued to distribute food during the pandemic. Families also have access to the clothes closet of gently used clothing for free. When school resumes, the backpack ministry will again provide kid-friendly nutritious food to students attending Englewood elementary schools every two weeks throughout the school year. Pictured at St. David’s Jubilee Center are Roger Redman, Exalted Ruler, and Jeff Smith, Trustee, presenting a check to Ruth Hill (center), administrator of St. David’s Food Bank. The other check was presented to St. Francis in front of Rotonda Lodge.

Clewiston #1853

On June 2, Clewiston Elks Lodge #1853 awarded two $2,500 scholarships to local graduating seniors Anthony Perez and Juan Luna. Both students plan to attend the University of Florida in the fall. The lodge holds an annual golf tournament to continue to fund their scholarships each year.

Jupiter #2469

On May 27, Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 and the scholarship committee honored three local high school students with $1,000 scholarships to help with their future education. The students were chosen according to their commitment to learning. They all had fabulous academic scores, took higher level courses and donated many hours to their communities. Pictured are recipients Doug Wingert, Fatimah Jaber and Alex Dawkins and Jupiter Lodge Scholarship Committee members Jill McDaniel and Amanda Murphy.

West Palm Beach #1352

West Palm Beach Elks Lodge #1352 used its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to hold a food distribution event June 8 for seniors 60-plus. Food for 100 seniors was either picked up or delivered to them. The lodge placed a notice of the event in the Century Village newspaper. Members and family members pictured volunteering are Tim and Kathy Nelen; Andrea Wallace and son, Aiden Harter; and Vicky Frey loading cars. The smiles on the seniors’ faces made the day for all 17 Elks members participating.

Boca Raton #2166

Boca Raton Elks Lodge #2166 was a designated polling place for the elections held in March. Members worked the polls and will do so again for the August primary.

Delray Beach #1770

Two social media-savvy members of Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770, Iain Paterson and John Brewer, and their socially distanced supper club were featured May 9 on the “Today” show. Reporter Kerry Sanders spotlighted the pop-up dining concept the two launched to boost takeout restaurant business in Delray Beach, Florida, and several surrounding towns during the coronavirus pandemic. When restaurants were only serving curbside meals. The restaurants would feature a special menu as part of the promotion and it was advertised on social media to reach
more supporters. The club has more than 30 participating restaurants, and according to Sanders, the Facebook group has more than 10,000 members. As it gained more traction, the supper club offered hats and other swag and the proceeds from those sales, over $10,000, were given to Trinity Delray Lutheran Church and School, a nonprofit organization that provides food to those in need. Pictured are Paterson and Brewer in front of Tim Finnegan’s, a participating downtown restaurant in Delray Beach, Florida, in April 2020.

On June 14, Hollywood West Elks Lodge #2365 held its Flag Day ceremony, observing correct social distancing. Following the ceremony, members and guests moved to the yard area to retire tattered flags. Members and guests were invited to take a flag to retire in flames in memory or honor of a loved one. Following the retirement ceremony, lunch was made available to those who chose to stay. Pictured are a guest; Sal Grilli, PER; and Jim Blanchard, PER.

Oakland Park #2407

The lodge had a Cinco De Junio celebration dinner June 5 with music while practicing correct social distancing. A total of $211 was raised for the Elks National Foundation.

Pompano Beach #1898

Pompano Beach Elks Lodge #1898 sponsored two Elks National Foundation scholarship winners. Daniel Ardity placed second nationally in the 2020 Top 20 Most Valuable Student Scholarship and has been awarded $40,000 for his college career. Alyssa Howitt, granddaughter of members Jennie and Stu Howitt, PER, is a recipient of the Legacy Award, receiving $4,000. She is required to participate in three service events and submit a detailed report. She is attending the University of Florida.

Hollywood West #2365

Bud Legere, Pompano Beach Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, has applied for the Gratitude Grant to provide nonperishable supplies for St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry which is sponsored by St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church. There has not been any activity since they closed out the Beacon Grant March 31 due to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, though, Legere and his wife, Sandy, spent many volunteer hours purchasing nonperishables and replenishing and distributing food from the pantry. The pantry serves families in need and those who are homeless in the depressed area of the city. This will be the third year the lodge has supported the pantry. “Bud and Sandy Legere have served as volunteers for over seven years, including a three-year term as Treasurer and Vice President, respectively. Even though they “retired” about a year ago, they continue to help us, especially with obtaining the generous grants they have gotten from the Elks club. They have been invaluable and reliable volunteers throughout these years,” says Joseph Maloney, president of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

Florida Keys #1872

Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872 awarded $12,000 ($2,400 each) in scholarships to Coral Shores seniors Jennifer Setchell, Windley Hagood, Luke Gutterez, Olivia Bentacourt and Vaclav Cernosek. All recipients have been active volunteers at the lodge serving at Soccer Shoot dinners, the fish tournament and the Friday fish fry. They are also active in the community while maintaining good grades. They visited the lodge May 28 to introduce themselves.

On June 14, Florida Keys Lodge held a Flag Day ceremony with member Robert Spencer singing the national anthem and “God Bless America.” Afterward, a lunch was served while music was provided by Lee Kibbey who donates her time and music throughout the year for various charitable events.

Miami #948

On May 24, a food distribution event was held on the grounds of Miami Elks Lodge #948. Cornerstone Miami Church which rents space from the lodge for Sunday services was the main sponsor of the event. Members of the church as well as seven volunteers from the lodge distributed approximately 300 boxes of food. Miami-Dade Police also provided assistance with traffic flow.

At the regular lodge meeting June 17, Miami Lodge members approved a donation of $1,000 to Feeding South Florida. Feeding South Florida is south Florida’s leading domestic nonprofit hunger-relief organization serving 25% of the state’s food-insecure population. The organization serves Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties. Their outreach extends to children, older adults, veterans, single parents, the working poor and other needy members of the community. Their mission statement is as follows: “Feeding South Florida’s mission is to end hunger in south Florida by providing immediate access to nutritious food, leading hunger and poverty advocacy efforts, and transforming lives through innovative programming and education.”
**Veterans’ & Military News**

**North District**

**Lake City #893**

The Lake City Elks Lodge Veterans Committee chaired by Captain Michael Lydick has been helping residents of the Lake City VA Medical Center and the Robert H. Jenkins Veterans Domiciliary Home for many years. While the facilities provide the necessities, the lodge provides the additional things that help to elevate daily life. Prior to the pandemic, the lodge would also provide outings to football, baseball and hockey games; rodeos; zoos; and truck shows. With the new restrictions, entertainment must now be provided within the facilities. Using lodge funds of about $2,000 and a $5,000 grant obtained by Lydick from the Suwannee Valley Community Foundation whose mission is to help worthy causes in the community, the lodge provided the VAMC and domiciliary a variety of recreational items and materials requested by residents including several arcade games, an Xbox One S game console with multiple controllers and games, board games and a 65” TV. Craft rooms in both facilities were provided leather crafting supplies and leather hobby kits and plastic model car, boat and airplane kits. Batteries were provided for residents’ personal devices, and a wide range of personal hygiene products were also donated. Pictured June 24 at the VA hospital entrance since visitors were not allowed inside are Michael Lydick, Lodge and District Veterans Chair; Michael Carey, Assistant Chief of Voluntary Services at the Lake City VA Medical Center; Karie Yates and Ben Givens, hospital employees in the recreation department; and Daniel Crapps, lodge member and Suwannee Valley Community Foundation representative.

**Southeast Central District**

**Viera #2817**

Viera Elks Lodge #2817 continued its support of local veterans by providing furniture to six veterans – four in March and two in June – transitioning to permanent housing. The program is VOA/SSVF (Volunteers of America/Supportive Services for Veterans Families) Transitional Housing Program. The $600 was from the lodge’s Elks National Foundation Focus Grant. In addition, the lodge spent $933 from its Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant for crockpots and food for another 25 veterans in the same time period. Additionally, the lodge used funds from its Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant to further support local veterans by purchasing a mattress June 4 for $200 and providing rental assistance of $325 June 16.

**Central District**

**Aripeka #2520**

Aripeka Lodge’s Veterans Committee has a container by the lodge entrance for members to drop off clothing that will be donated to the Vietnam Veterans of America Association. Their local chapter is in New Port Richey, Florida. On May 21, Tom Carlo, Lodge Committee Chair, delivered approximately $3,000 worth of clothing that had been collected.

**West Central District**

Even though Aripeka Elks Lodge #2520 has been closed since March, the Veterans Committee reached out to Steps to Recovery to see if they needed anything. Ken Clark of Steps to Recovery indicated they were short on food supplies since their VA funding had been drastically cut. So, with funds from the lodge’s veterans’ program, they provided $585 worth of groceries from Sam’s Club. Pictured in early May is Tom Carlo, Chair of the Veterans Committee, with the load of food he delivered.

**St. Petersburg #1224**

St. Petersburg Elks Lodge #1224 used its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant to purchase 500 backpacks plus 25 cases of body lotions for veterans who are homeless. The backpacks were originally intended for the Stand Down, but because of the coronavirus pandemic and stay-at-home order, all special events at the VA hospital have been canceled. So, instead, they are disbursing the backpacks out of the Elks office at Bay Pines VAMC which remains open with a limited number of volunteers to help veterans needing assistance with hygiene products and other personal items. One of these volunteers is member Johnny Miller, Grand Lodge VA representative, who serves two days a week at the VAMC. Pictured April 7 are Nathan Witt, Bay Pines VAMC Chief of Volunteer Services, and Miller.

**West St. Lucie #2823**

West St. Lucie Elks Lodge members and a few non-members went to work during the pandemic and made 150 blankets for the new Ardie R. Copas State Veterans’ Home which is set to open later this year in the Port St. Lucie community of Tradition, Florida. Approximately 12 people participated and everyone purchased their own supplies. Others donated money for supplies as well. Pictured June 27 at the lodge are members Vanessa Murtaugh and Betty Quinn, Wayne Teegardin from United Vets, member Rose Taynor, and member and veteran Danny Bogan.
Barkalow, HOEV co-founder and Lodge Esquire, along with the assistance of concrete and block mason, Mark Walsh. The lodge enlisted him to ensure everything was done according to code and to pour the concrete. A successful home accessibility project requires careful planning to be certain that the ramp meets the occupant’s needs, complies with local building requirements and is safe for use in all types of weather. Founded in March 2013, Heaven on Earth for Veterans Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides quality living spaces for veterans in need. These homes are spread out throughout St. Petersburg, Florida, and each home houses four or five veterans depending on the size of the home. Veterans rent a room and the rest of the home is a common area. All that they need including furniture, plates and sheets are provided to them for $400-$600 per month. That includes their water and electric, also. Pictured on the previous page are St. Petersburg Lodge members Wayne Simpson; Al Literski, Lecturing Knight; Gary Stedham; Sharon Literski, Loyal Knight; and Jan Musgrave begin cleaning and marking the ramp area using stakes and string after clearing the area. Pictured at the left, top, are St. Petersburg Lodge members Jan Musgrave; Gary Stedham; Sharon Literski, Loyal Knight; Al Literski, Lecturing Knight; and Wayne Simpson. At the left, middle, are members Wayne Simpson and Jan Musgrave in the project’s before stage, and at the left, bottom, is the project in its final stage.

A group of St. Petersburg Lodge volunteers spent all day May 19 beginning to build a wheelchair ramp at a resident’s home at Heaven on Earth for Veterans (HOEV). Old concrete walkways had to be dug up before they could be framed. Dawn Lieber, PER was instrumental in getting this project organized and gathering volunteers to complete the project Memorial Day weekend. The concrete was poured May 25. This project was funded by the lodge’s Elks National Foundation Freedom Grant of $2,000. Sharon Literski, Loyal Knight, and Al Literski, Lecturing Knight, worked under the direction of Carol

Brandon Elks Lodge #2383 came through once again for the veterans living at Liberty Manor for Veterans in Tampa, Florida. Because there are 18 veterans who reside here, only those who wake up at 6 a.m. were lucky enough to get some ice for the day, or they would have to put some in a bag labeled with their name and store it. Because lodge members cook often for the veterans, they saw the need for an electric ice maker and purchased one for them using $856.95 of their Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant. The ice machine was delivered and Dave Lindsay, husband of founder Connie Lindsay, installed it. The veterans can now access ice any time of day. Pictured May 18 with the new machine are veterans Art Gardiner and David “Wolf” Peacock. The mission of Liberty Manor for Veterans Inc. is “to promote the developmental and social needs of disabled and honorably discharged veterans who have fallen victim to homelessness providing transitional supported housing and establishing objectives designed to attribute to self-sufficiency.” Brandon Elks have also purchased all new pots and pans and a lot of other kitchen gadgets at a total of $500 because they come out and cook dinner at the property and noticed these needs.

In May, Judy Wise, Plant City Elks Lodge member and District Veterans Services Chair, was contacted by the local National Guard which is aware of the Elks support of and dedication to veterans. The National Guard was asking for help through the Elks Army of Hope for veteran Sergeant Danial Windspirit. Ironically, they were requesting financial support for one of the soldiers previously in Plant City Lodge’s adopted unit that was commissioned to Afghanistan two years ago. Sergeant Windspirit returned home safely from Afghanistan and was successful in starting an excavation business in Ruskin, Florida, and was living a great life with his wife, Rebecca, and their three children. On May 16, he was in an accident while driving home on his motorcycle. An uninsured motorist pulled out in front of him, causing him to lose his left leg. He has since gone through seven operations. Fortunately their bills were current; however, June was going to be a challenge. Nancy Lay, Military and Family Readiness Specialist for the Florida National Guard Family Programs, contacted the lodge asking for financial help on the family’s behalf. They needed $2,948.34 to cover their June living expenses and bills. Wise, who was just presented the Veterans Volunteer of the Year award at the Florida Elks state convention, jumped in and prepared all the necessary paperwork, as this is what the Army of Hope is all about – supporting veterans in financial times of need. Wise requested and received approval for $3,500 to cover other expenses. In the interest of time and so that the check could be deposited immediately to their account to cover their automatic withdrawals for June, Wise presented the check to Rebecca in the parking lot of their credit union in Ruskin, Florida, June 3. Sergeant Windspirit had previously purchased an insurance policy through the National Guard which will also help take care of the family, but the required paperwork and delays due to the pandemic presented a real problem and time was of the essence. Sergeant Windspirit is home and receiving outpatient rehabilitation every day, and they are very thankful for the Florida Elks’ assistance.
Bradenton Elks Lodge #1511 donated a new wheelchair to World War II veteran Joe Hennessy after neighbor Joel Radovich contacted the lodge for assistance. The 96-year-old veteran was a member of the 101st Airborne Division and was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. He and his wife, June, have been married 71 years. When expressing his gratitude, Hennessy said, “Now I’ll be able to take my wife out to dinner.” The wheelchair was purchased with funds from two sources—a Southwest District Veterans Grant (the district created a $300 grant for each of its seven lodges from the district veterans’ fund to assist them in their veterans’ efforts) and the lodge’s veterans’ star program which is part of the lodge’s Veterans Committee. Members purchase a paper star for $20 for a drawing in which half the proceeds go to the member whose ticket is drawn and the other half funds the Veterans Committee programs. Pictured Feb. 20 with Hennessy are June Hennessy; Bill Rauh, Lodge Veterans Chair; Jack Cantwell, PER; and Radovich.

On April 13, Bradenton Lodge donated the $700 remaining balance of its $2,000 Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant to the veterans’ outreach program of Turning Points, a local charitable organization in Bradenton, Florida, that helps those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The lodge used the first $1,300 in support of a Manatee County veterans’ Stand Down event. Pictured with social distancing are Edwin Robinson, veterans’ caseworker, and Mike Eymann, PER.

Southwest District Army of Hope Coordinator, for a story printed in the Spring 2020 issue: On Feb. 23, the South Southwest District held its annual Army of Hope fundraiser at Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606. Each of the 10 lodges in the district donated a keg of beer and supplied all the items including paper products, water, soda, and all the food and trimmings that were sold that day to raise money. Six bands from the district donated their playing time and the music lasted eight hours. Throughout the day, lottery ticket boards were raffled and there were 50/50s and silent and Chinese auctions. All these items were also donated by the 10 lodges. The event raised $17,200 for the Army of Hope. This event was a total success as the 10 lodges worked together the entire day as a team to raise this money for a very important charity of the Florida State Elks Association, and each lodge should be proud of its contributions.

Bradenton #1511

Jupiter #2469

Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872 presented a Purple Heart reserved parking sign to Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 in memory of Dennis Kroll, a member of Key West Elks Lodge #551 and a veteran who had two Purple Hearts. Ruth and Lee Huenniger, members of Florida Keys Lodge, purchased two signs in his honor and donated one to Jupiter Lodge and one to Florida Keys Lodge. Pictured May 22 are Lee Huenniger; Bill Jackson, Jupiter trustee; Dave Ventullo, Jupiter Lodge Exalted Ruler; Ruth Huenniger; Donald Shedlock, Jupiter trustee; and Steve Brancatlo, Jupiter Leading Knight.

On June 18, West Palm Beach Elks Lodge members James (Rabbi) King and Elaine Maes-Morey, Exalted Ruler, met with Morningday Community Solutions representative Bruce Bussard and Operation120 representative Ronette Verhaeghe at the Morningday Community Solutions warehouse in West Palm Beach, Florida, to purchase items for homeless female veterans transitioning to new homes. Funds spent were from the lodge’s Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant of $2,000 at $250 per client. Morningday Community Solutions provides essential items to local nonprofit organizations for the underprivileged, youth and veterans. Operation 120 is an organization that serves female veterans.

West Palm Beach #1352

On May 8, Elks Riders from Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770 raised $500 for charity from their curbside pickup dinner. The group paid for the food and cooked some of it as well. The proceeds will go to veterans’ organization of their choosing but they are waiting until the lodge reopens to make the decision. Pictured are Janelle Antoine; Patrick Keegan; Crystal Cimriniello; Jeff Cimriniello; Chris Aiello, Loyal Knight; and Roger Cope, Leading Knight.

Delray Beach #1770

On June 20, U.S. Navy veteran Ron Czarnick swims with Stormy the dolphin at Theater of the Sea in Islamorada, Florida. He was sponsored by the Florida Keys Elks Lodge Vets on the Water program; the lodge used some of its Elks National Foundation Impact Grant. Vets on the Water has sponsored 422 active military, veterans and reservists to date. Theater of the Sea is the second oldest marine park in the United States.

Florida Keys #1872

SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Update submitted by Samuel “Len” Wenzel, PDD, South Southwest District

SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

In May, the lodges of the South Southeast District came together to assist U.S. Navy veteran Kenneth Mueller. Mueller, who served on the destroyer USS Conyngham, uses a wheelchair and had difficulty getting in and out of his home. Boca Raton Lodge member John Allsopp met with him and approached the district for help. The lodges in the district—Boca Raton #2166, Delray Beach #1770, Hollywood West #2965, Oakland Park #2407 and Pompano Beach #1898—pooled resources of over $1,000 to fund and build him a ramp. Boca Raton Lodge members John Allsopp and Tim Hallman built and installed the ramp. Mueller thanks the efforts of the lodge members.

Delray Beach #1770

SOUTH DISTRICT

On June 18, West Palm Beach Elks Lodge members James (Rabbi) King and Elaine Maes-Morey, Exalted Ruler, met with Morningday Community Solutions representative Bruce Bussard and Operation120 representative Ronette Verhaeghe at the Morningday Community Solutions warehouse in West Palm Beach, Florida, to purchase items for homeless female veterans transitioning to new homes. Funds spent were from the lodge’s Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant of $2,000 at $250 per client. Morningday Community Solutions provides essential items to local nonprofit organizations for the underprivileged, youth and veterans. Operation 120 is an organization that serves female veterans.
August 2020

FYI:
8/9 • CANCELED – Elks Day at the Rays – St. Petersburg, Florida
8/15 • Lodge Website Award Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website
• EnF MVS Scholarship applications available at elks.org/scholars
8/27-29 • Elks PSP Advisory Committee Workshop – Florida Elks Youth Camp (SCC) – Umatilla, Florida
8/31 • Participants will be notified if they have been selected to fill out the full ENF Impact Grant application between 9/1 and 10/31

Due Dates for Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:
8/3 • Form F-110 – report UBI to Florida Department of Revenue (Form F-110 is required when Form 990-T is required.)
8/17 • Form 990 to U.S. Treasury
• Form 990-T – report UBI to U.S. Treasury (Form 990-T is required when gross income from unrelated business income is $1,000 or more.)
• Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
• Deposit withholding to U.S. Treasury from gambling winnings if more than $2,500 cumulative for the year
8/19 • Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m.)

State President’s Visits:
8/14-15 • Southwest District – Bradenton #1511
8/21-22 • Northwest District – Twin Cities #2747

Notes for Due Dates for Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:
Florida sales taxes, if filed and paid by paper, are due the 20th day of each month. Many, if not all, lodges are required to pay and file electronically. Due dates for electronic payments are moved back to ensure that funds are received by the state on the tax due date. See each month’s due date reflected.
Quarterly reemployment tax returns (Form RT-6), if filed on paper, are due the last day of April, July, October and January. If electronic filing is required, the due dates are reflected.
Depositary dates of taxes to the U.S. Treasury are noted. An earlier date may apply depending upon whether your payment is directly deposited through your bank or through a bank funded by the payroll program of your lodge’s choice. PLEASE DETERMINE FROM YOUR BANK OR YOUR PAYROLL PROGRAM HOW SOON BEFORE THE DUE DATE YOU NEED TO AUTHORIZE PAYMENT.

September 2020

FYI:
9/1 • Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website for the FSEA/FL Drug Awareness Poster Contest
• Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website for the FSEA/FL Drug Awareness Essay Contest
• FSEA C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship applications available on FSEA website
9/4-5 • DD/VIP Workshop – Florida Elks Youth Camp (SCC) – Umatilla, Florida
9/11 • Patriot Day
9/24-26 • FLOE Conference – Lido Beach Resort – Sarasota, Florida
9/30 • Lodge Website Award winners announced on FSEA website
• Midyear CLMS membership totals are recorded by GL
• September to December – District Deputy visits and inspections

Deadlines:
9/1 • Legacy Scholarship applications available at elks.org/scholars
9/15 • Lodges to register for FSEA Lodge Website Award with FSEA Marketing Manager
9/25 • Submissions for fall issue of Florida Elks Magazine to Editor
9/30 • State Lodge Activities Chair to register for GL State Association Website Award with GL Fraternal Committee Member

Due Dates for Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:
9/15 • Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
• Deposit withholding to U.S. Treasury from gambling winnings if more than $2,500 cumulative for the year
9/18 • Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m.)

October 2020

FYI:
10/1 • Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website for the FSEA Best Lodge Bulletin Contest
• Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website for the FSEA Lodge Scrapbook Contest
• Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website for the FSEA Americanism Essay Contest
10/17 • CANCELED – Florida Elks Charities Unmasking Autism Gala – St. Petersburg, Florida
10/28-30 • Fall Trust Fund Seminar – Florida Elks Youth Camp (SCC) – Umatilla, Florida
10/23-31 • Red Ribbon Week

Deadlines:
10/15 • Lodges to complete FSEA online committee reporting for the quarter ending 9/30
10/31 • Submit ENF Emergency Education Grant applications to ENF
• District Deputy to submit request to Grand Secretary for GER Special Citation to lodge for new officers and chair progression (DD must verify and confirm the full slate of officers)

Due Dates for Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:
10/15 • Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
• Deposit withholding to U.S. Treasury from gambling winnings if more than $2,500 cumulative for the year
10/19 • Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m.)
10/30 • Form RT-6 – report wages for prior quarter to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m.)

Statutes:
• October – Secretary Report to lodge ($12,050)
• October – Trustee Report to lodge ($12,070)
• October – ER Reports on GL sessions ($12,120)
• October – Lodge’s Auditing & Accounting Committee to review lodge books and report at last meeting of month ($13,040)

State President’s Visits:
10/2-3 • South Southwest District – Punta Gorda #2606
10/9-10 • Southeast Central District – Viera #2817
10/30-31 • Central District – Zephyrhills #2731

2020-2021 ROSTER OF LODGES & OFFICERS
AVAILABLE at floridaelks.org

Unlike our print edition, this online version is updated throughout the year as information changes. Simply log in at floridaelks.org, click Member Resources, and select Officers & Committee Lists. This page will provide the link to the online roster.

Current Information is always at your fingertips!
Florida State Elks Association

2020 MIDYEAR CONVENTION
Nov. 20-22, 2020