



Summer 2026

Florida Elks

Magazine

**Georgia on
Our Minds:
Georgia
Stemann is
Florida Elks
Children's
Therapy
Services
CHAMP of
the Year**

Also in this issue:
State Convention
District Deputies
National Convention



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MICHAEL F. SMITH, PNP, STATE SPONSOR & ROBERT GRAFTON, PNP, STATE SPONSOR EMERITUS



Congratulations go to Past State President Mike Chandler and his wife, Caroline, along with his officers and committee members for a great year! We all need to extend a warm welcome and congratulations to our newly elected State President, Lenny DiLorenzo, and his wife, Lauren, along with the new officers and committee members. I look forward to another great year for the Florida State Elks Association under their direction. They have a big challenge to exceed this past year's accomplishments. However, they have the talent to set a new benchmark.

What a fantastic time it is to be an Elk. The Florida State Elks Association ranked 45th in membership growth two years ago and this past year we catapulted to No. 6 in our order. That is amazing! We all need to thank State

Membership Chair Jim Rodriguez and Vice Chair David Clayton and their team for an exceptional year! Our Harry-Anna Investment Fund almost reached \$1 million in donations this year. We all need to thank our Harry-Anna State Chair, Jeff Rumler, and his Vice Chair, Tony Fratello, and their team for a remarkable year.

The Florida Elks Youth Camp is at full throttle and we filled up your camp with hundreds of happy kids. A close friend of ours had a first-year grandson attend and his request to them was that he wanted to come to all five weeks next year. Thank you, FEYC Director Elliott Gilbert, and your staff for fulfilling dreams. Our Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services program continues to grow and provide valuable therapy services to approximately 650 children per week under the guidance of FECTS Director, Colleen Gallant, and her very capable team. Thank you for everything you provide to help our youth in need. State Secretary Nick Miller oversees all the operations of the FSEA and directs our future along with his Operations Director, Shannan Kellogg. What a talented group of people we have assembled.

For those who attended our Elks national convention in Chicago, welcome back, and I hope you enjoyed it as much as Sandra and I did. We had the 100th anniversary celebration of our Elks Memorial Building and the



250th anniversary of our nation all in the same week! We also got national recognition for our gain in membership. I want to ask for your help in contacting our members who have not paid this year's dues to please do so now so we can continue to offer assistance to our veterans, youth and communities. This is the time to ask, not in December or January. Help us grow, please.

Bob Grafton, Sandra and I wish all of you good health and happiness. God bless all of us.

**MAKE THE
FLORIDA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION
LOUD, PROUD AND VISIBLE.**

**Michael F. Smith, PNP, State Sponsor
& Robert Grafton, PNP, State Sponsor
Emeritus**
Florida State Elks Association

SUBMIT LODGE NEWS TO YOUR DISTRICT REPORTERS:

Submission deadlines:

Spring: March 25

Summer: June 25

Fall: Sept. 25

Winter: Dec. 25

Northwest

Michael "Taz" Wright Reynolds, PER
Fort Walton #1795
PERFortWaltonLodge1795@gmail.com

North

Earline B. Neeley
Perry #1851
ebneeley1851@fairpoint.net

Northeast

Deborah M. Reedy, PER
Jacksonville #221
deborah.elks161@gmail.com

North Central

Carolyn Robbins, PER
Winter Garden #2165
carolynrobbins14@gmail.com

East Central

Debra "Debbie" Brozyna
Ormond Beach #2193
dbbrozy@gmail.com

Central

Brian A. Estus, PDD
West Citrus #2693
jupiterper@gmail.com

Southeast Central

Susan D. Janes
Cocoa Beach #2387
suze711@hotmail.com

West Central

Holly Ludwig, PER
Dunedin-Clearwater #1525
hludwig2010@gmail.com

Southwest Central

Billie Porche
Lakeland #1291
billieporche@gmail.com

Southwest

JoAnn Reddy
Bradenton #1511
reporterforsw@gmail.com

South Southwest

Holly Balante
Naples #2010
hbalante@comcast.net

Southeast

Edward J. "Ed" Morey Jr., PDD
West Palm Beach #1352
morey8638@comcast.net

South Southeast

Barbara G. Blanchard
Hollywood West #2365
barbaragblanchard@yahoo.com

South

Glenn J. Tekerman
Miami #948
glennzo24@gmail.com

We thank **Becky Wills** for her service and we welcome Susan Janes to the team!

Florida Elks

Magazine

Summer 2026



Rachael A. King
Editor / Writer / Layout
Design / Artwork / Advertising
r.king@floridaelks.org

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A five-star publication, awarded by the Elks Grand Lodge

To learn more about the Florida Elks, please visit floridaelks.org.

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Front cover: Georgia Stemann at Da Ru Ma Hibachi June 2025, celebrating her birthday

Photo credit/Julie Stemann

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Email Rachael King, Editor, for more information at r.king@floridaelks.org.

LEONARD “LENNY” DILORENZO, STATE PRESIDENT



It is truly an honor to serve as your State President of the Florida State Elks Association. Lauren and I are humbled by the confidence you have placed in us, and we look forward to representing Florida Elksdom throughout the coming year as we travel our great state, visit our lodges and witness firsthand the incredible work being accomplished in our communities.

At our state convention in May, I introduced my motto for the year: “Florida Elks: United & Driving Forward.” Those words represent more than a theme; they define who we are and where we’re going. We honor the strong foundation built by those who came before us while embracing the opportunities ahead. Together, united by our values and driven by service, we will continue building an even stronger

future for Florida Elksdom.

One of the greatest privileges of serving as your State President is seeing that every district has its own personality, traditions and strengths. What remains constant is the dedication of our members and their unwavering commitment to helping others. That spirit of fellowship, volunteerism and compassion is what makes our organization so special.

The year began with the tremendous honor of being installed as your State President before the Florida Elks membership. Shortly thereafter, I had the privilege of representing Florida at the 161st Grand Lodge convention in Chicago, where I proudly carried the Florida state flag during the opening ceremonies. Lauren and I also attended the special celebration recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Elks National Memorial Building, met the outstanding Elks National Foundation scholars and Hoop Shoot champion, and had the pleasure of hosting the Florida dinner, which was attended by several Past Grand Exalted Rulers, including outgoing Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and first lady Susan along with incoming Grand Exalted Ruler Timothy Jaeger and first lady Sandy. It was a memorable week that reflected the pride, fellowship and traditions that make our order so special, and I extend my sincere appreciation to State Secretary Nick Miller, our state staff and the many volunteers who once again represented Florida with distinction.

As we begin this year together, I ask every member to focus on two important priorities.

The first is membership. Our members are the fuel that powers everything we do. Without members, nothing moves. I challenge each of you to invite a passenger — a friend, neighbor, coworker or family member who shares our values and a desire to serve. Good people make great Elks,

Florida Elks State President Leonard “Lenny” DiLorenzo carries the state flag at the national convention opening ceremonies.



and today's passenger may become tomorrow's leader.

Our second priority is supporting the Harry-Anna Investment Fund through our sustaining donor program. These monthly gifts provide dependable funding for our Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services, Florida Elks Youth Camp, autism initiatives and other programs that improve lives across Florida. Every sustaining donor helps ensure these life-changing programs continue serving children and families for generations to come.

Lauren and I look forward to meeting members across our great state, witnessing the incredible work taking place in our lodges and strengthening the friendships that make Florida Elksdom such a remarkable organization. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. We are excited for the journey ahead and all that we will accomplish together.

**Florida Elks:
United & Driving Forward**

**Leonard “Lenny” DiLorenzo,
State President**

Florida State Elks Association

State President's Grant Recipients through June 2026

Central District

Brooksville #2582	\$900
Orlando #1079	\$600
Kissimmee #1873	\$500





Florida Elks,

I hope you had a wonderful Fourth of July for America's 250th anniversary. I was fortunate enough to be at your Florida Elks Youth Camp July 1 for the camp's celebration. It was one for the history books. After having to cancel last year's fireworks due to weather, our contractor doubled up for this year. The fireworks and music lasted about 25 minutes, and neighbors for up to 6 miles away left notes of awe and thanks on local social media. Feel free to reach out if you'd like a digital copy of the full show.

The morning after the show, I headed to Chicago with our FSEA team for the Grand Lodge's 161st national convention. The Windy City was a great host, and despite early rainstorms, the entire week went very well — finishing with Tuesday night's traditional Florida dinner. For more than 75 years, Florida has been hosting this dinner, honoring our Grand Lodge dignitaries. This year, State President Lenny DiLorenzo and first lady Lauren Dowd-Shedlock hosted 330 people in honor of Mike and Sandra Smith. The night included a wonderful meal, live music and decorations, with personalized thank you's once again provided by Amy and Snuffy Smith. It was a wonderful conclusion to an amazing convention.

If you didn't get a chance to attend and you'd like to see more, this would be a great time to download the Florida State Elks Association application from your Google or Apple app store. Simply go to your store and search "Florida State Elks." Our app should be the first result. For most events, you'll have to attend the event to get access to it on the application. However, for the national convention, we opened it to all Florida Elks to get a chance to join in the experience. So, just download

the application, log in with your email, create a password and select "2026 National Convention" from the home screen. You'll get a feel for how the personalized calendar works, see maps of the hotel and convention, and (most importantly) see all posts made to the "Wall." This is our very own posting zone where all attendees had the opportunity to post and share their experiences in Chicago. Long term, we'll be creating an "Everlasting" event that allows all Florida Elks to share and interact 365 days a year. So, download it today and stay in touch!

I'll close out this article by saying, thank you. Thank you for all you do as Florida Elks. Thank you for serving your communities. Thank you for supporting our major projects. And thank you for supporting our veterans. I know that we all struggle in various ways at our individual lodges, but I'd ask that you always remember how much good is done because we persevere.

Nick Miller, State Secretary
Florida State Elks Association

2026 Elks Day at the Rays vs. Houston Astros at Tropicana Field

Sept. 13 at 1:40 p.m.

**** Tickets available in all sections for Elks and non-Elks ****

Fans can purchase a special ticket package that includes a seat to the game and a Florida Elks Association-Tampa Bay Rays hat.

The hat can be picked up by scanning your ticket before the sixth inning at the Redemption Center, located behind section 108.

Visit floridaelks.org/rays to purchase tickets!

PAM SNYDER, FLORIDA LADIES OF ELKS PRESIDENT



The spring of 2026 was both productive and rewarding. I extend my sincere appreciation to all who volunteer their time and continue to support our dedicated Ladies organizations.

The Florida Elks state convention in May was a collaborative success for Florida Ladies of Elks. Special thanks go to the hardworking Winter Haven Ladies — Carolyn Robbins, Pam DePriest and Erin Pagliuca — for their efforts in setting the luncheon centerpieces and to Judy Reyes, PSP-FLOE for the beautifully designed place cards.

A longstanding tradition of the luncheon is the fashion show. This year's showcase featured selections from Jasmine Boutique of Ocala, modeled by FLOE members.

The annual FLOE silent auction, chaired by Marilyn Fratello and Semone Caron

of Tarpon Springs Lodge, was another highlight. Proceeds will benefit the Florida Elks Youth Camp and Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. We are deeply grateful to the Ladies organizations, individuals and Elks lodges whose generous donations made this success possible.

During the FLOE general meeting, the 2026-2027 FLOE officers were elected. Congratulations go to the incoming officers and advisory council members.

The pink flamingo FLOE hospitality suite provided a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere. Partnering with the South Southwest District allowed guests to enjoy karaoke entertainment and a festive Hawaiian-themed setting. The popular FLOE slushy machine was once again a highlight. Special thanks go to the Punta Gorda Elkettes and Elks for their support with raffle donations, room setup, ticket sales and hospitality service.

In July, FLOE hosted the third Ladies of the Elks workshop at the 2026 Elks national convention. This event brought together members from across the country to exchange ideas and best practices for events and fundraising. Pauline Talbott, PSP-FLOE served as host.

The 63rd annual FLOE conference will be held Sept. 24-26 at the Hard Rock Hotel in Daytona Beach. Registration and hotel information are available on the Florida Elks website at floridaelks.org/floe/conference.

We have an exciting FLOE conference ahead! This special weekend will include the installation of our 2026-2027 officers, recognition of the wonderful work done by our Ladies organizations and a heartfelt solemn memorial service. You'll also enjoy our fundraising shop, where FLOE always knows how to put the fun in fundraising. If you or your organization would like to reserve a table, it's a great opportunity to support children, veterans and local charities. Our luncheon and dinner will feature delicious meals, desserts, a special guest speaker and entertainment you won't want to miss. Gentlemen attending can kick off Friday morning with an 8:15 "Best Ball" golf outing. And of course we'll have drawings for the Reverse Angel Draw and the FLOE raffle. Please consider joining us at the Daytona Beach Hard Rock Hotel for a weekend of friendship, laughter and memories.

Remember, every lady Elk, wife of an Elk and widow of an Elk is already a member of FLOE — no dues, no applications — just fellowship and fun. Come see what FLOE is all about! I look forward to seeing many of you at the September FLOE conference.

Pam Snyder, 2025-2026 President
Florida Ladies of Elks

63rd Annual Florida Ladies of Elks Conference



Sept. 24-26, 2026

Daytona Beach

floridaelks.org/floe/conference



COLLEEN GALLANT, FLORIDA ELKS CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES DIRECTOR



I am pleased to tell you that our 32 therapists treated 639 children each week in May and our contract speech therapists treated an additional 48 children, for a total of 687 children in May. Great job, FECTS therapists, and great job, Florida Elks, for your continued support of our program.

We have completed two full years of testing through Florida Elks for Autism, where FECTS patients will receive priority when it comes to the testing schedule. We test two children each day — one in the morning and one in the afternoon — for a total of 10 children every other month. Testing takes place at the Florida Elks Youth Camp. The families I have spoken with are absolutely amazed at what the Florida Elks are doing to help

their children with testing that they sometimes have waited years for, and the Florida Elks paid 100% of their testing. To date, we have tested 110 children.

May was a busy month. As we have done for the past 10 years at the state convention, we introduced our CHAMP (Child Having Achieved Magnificent Progress). Georgia Stemmann and her mother, Julie, were our guests at the Friday night awards banquet and the major projects luncheon Saturday. Our Elks always enjoy meeting our new CHAMP and visiting with them. Georgia's occupational therapist, Jeanne Martin, shared Georgia's journey with our members at the major projects luncheon. Georgia's mom, Julie, thanked our members and I believe there was not a dry eye in the room. Great job, Julie!

PSP Sean Maguire introduced our Ben Brown Physical and Occupational Therapy Scholarship winner, Avery Carrick, who spoke to everyone at the major projects luncheon about her goals after graduation.

Tressy Guadagno, Assistant FECTS Director, and I attended the national convention in Chicago along with occupational therapist extraordinaire, Althea Montgomery. Special thanks go to Laz Suarez, Florida State Elks Marketing Director, who designed everything in our booth, and to Snuffy and Amy Smith for driving the trailer

with all our equipment. Once again, Florida's major projects booth was a five-star winner! A special thank you goes to all the Florida Elks who donated some of their time to help in our booth. This gives our members an opportunity to greet Elks from other states while bragging about our major projects.

Finally, while at the national convention, we got to see what Elks do around the country. While each state has their own major project, everyone is proud of what they do. I can assure you that Florida stands out as one of the leaders in Elkdom with two amazing major projects — Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services, which includes Florida Elks for Autism, and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. It is a result of your hard work that Elliott Gilbert, Camp Director, and I, along with all the employees of FECTS and FEYC, are able to work with so many children in Florida. So, with all my heart, I thank you for your support of our major projects.

Colleen Gallant, Director
Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services

Pictured are FECTS booth volunteers at national convention: Erminia Cain, PDD of West Palm Beach #1352; Tressy Guadagno, OTR/L, FECTS Assistant Director; Laz Suarez, FSEA Marketing Director; and Amy Hoffmeyer & Bob Hoffmeyer, Exalted Ruler, both of Inverness #2522



ELLIOTT GILBERT, FLORIDA ELKS YOUTH CAMP DIRECTOR



Two hundred fifty years as a country, 158 years as Elks, 135 years as Florida Elks and 30 summers as a camp. What began as an idea has rapidly grown into one of the best camps in the country — a camp that puts the development of our future generations at the forefront of what we do, forever adapting to the needs of the youth of today.

Change is constant and comes quicker with every milestone achieved. In 1946 the first electronic computer was created. Thirty-one years after that, it finally made it into a size that could be in the home. Five years after that, it could be folded in half to be brought on the go. While it's easy to see that the creations of the past are prehistoric by today's standards, it's sometimes harder to see that child development is more prehistoric today than it ever was.

This is the battle we fight every week during summer camp. To be successful we begin fighting it before campers even arrive. With the introduction of themed weeks in 2025 we have subsequently given our campers opportunity to show their autonomy by picking the week they'd like to attend. It's a minor detail, but by providing this opportunity it allows parents to also soften their role as a parent. No parent wants to force their child to go do something they may not enjoy, but it comes with the territory of being a parent. Having themes helps parents with having to say, "you are going to camp," as it allows them to give a little bit of power back to their

camper, as they may be getting to pick the week.

This year in 2026 we have already experienced three of our seven weeks of camp. We began with Superhero Week, where our campers were challenged not just to celebrate their favorite superhero but to step up and create their secret identity and become a superhero themselves, creating their mask and identity to determine how they would help their communities.

Week 2 was Fantasy Week, a time when campers competed in games, performances and scavenger hunts to be the best realm in all the land. During this time, Mythic Adventures, an adult organization that comes out to the camp during the school year, had a few of their members come and participate in different activities to bring the world of fantasy and adventure right to our campers' experience.

Currently in week 3 we are celebrating 250 years of America with our very own FEYC Olympics. Campers in every track are competing for gold during their activities, developing strong sportsmanship and unity as a cabin with performing chants, sharing responsibilities and having opportunities for every camper to make a difference in their quest for gold.

With four more weeks of camp left, including our week of campers going up to 14, we have many more memories to be made, lives to be changed and growth to be done the prehistoric way, with the campers leading the way. Come back for the next issue to hear some of the stories from this summer and from past campers and staff over the past 30 years.

Elliott Gilbert, Camp Director
Florida Elks Youth Camp



**FLORIDA ELKS
YOUTH CAMP
& CONFERENCE CENTER**

DAN MASI, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



As we move through the hot summer months, let's continue finding innovative ways to strengthen our lodges, engage our communities and support the incredible charitable work that defines the Florida State Elks Association. Every fundraiser, volunteer hour, sponsorship and act of kindness helps us fulfill our mission of serving those who need us most.

While many members are enjoying vacations and spending time with family, summer is also the perfect opportunity to begin planning for a successful fall season. Developing creative fundraising events not only supports our charitable programs but also brings our communities together. Every lodge has its own unique talents and traditions. Whether you host car shows, bingo nights, seafood festivals, golf tournaments, poker runs, trivia nights, concerts, holiday craft fairs or community dinners, successful fundraising begins with member involvement and community engagement. Small events held consistently throughout the year often build lasting relationships with donors while providing much needed financial support for our major projects.

Mark Your Calendars!

**Navigating Autism Gala —
South Florida — Oct. 17, 2026**
Embassy Suites Hotel — West Palm Beach

Planning is well underway for another inspiring evening at the Navigating Autism Gala — South Florida. This elegant black-tie event will raise critical

funding and awareness for the Florida Elks for Autism program, helping children and families throughout our state receive early evaluations, diagnoses and connections to life-changing therapy services. For sponsorship opportunities, tickets and event information, please visit navigatingautism.com.

Third Annual Florida Elks Concert Series — Nov. 7, 2026

Join us at the OCC Road House at 10575 49th St. N. in Clearwater, Florida, for an unforgettable evening featuring The Rock Show performing your favorite hits from the '60s, '70s and '80s. Gather your friends, meet Elks from lodges across Florida, enjoy great music and help raise funds for our major projects. Visit occroadhouse.com for ticket information and reservations.

Thank You for Supporting the Unmasking Autism Gala

A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who supported the Unmasking Autism Gala April 25 in beautiful St. Petersburg. We would also like to recognize the top three lodges that raised the most through our hearts and pins fundraiser:

1st Place: Deep Creek Elks Lodge #2763
(proudly finishing in the top three every year!)

2nd Place: St. Petersburg Elks Lodge #1224

3rd Place: Fort Pierce Elks Lodge #1520

Congratulations, and thank you to every lodge that participated. Your generosity is helping expand the Florida Elks for Autism program and changing the lives of children and families throughout our state.

Because of You

Everything we accomplish is possible

because of our dedicated members. Your generosity, volunteerism and unwavering commitment allow us to continue serving our communities and supporting our major projects.

If you are not yet a sustaining donor, we encourage you to consider making a monthly gift. Even a small monthly contribution, when combined with the generosity of thousands of fellow Elks, creates an extraordinary impact.

Thank you for everything you do to make the Florida State Elks Association one of the strongest and most respected state associations in the nation. Together, we are making a difference — one lodge, one member and one community at a time.

As our State Sponsor and Past National President, Mike Smith, proudly reminds us: "Florida Elks are Loud, Proud and Visible!"

Dan Masi, Development Director
Florida State Elks Association



NAVIGATING
AUTISM
— GALA —

Oct. 17, 2026

6-11 p.m.

**Embassy Suites by
Hilton West Palm Beach**

elksnavigatingautism.com

HONOR ROLL OF SUSTAINING & ANNUAL DONORS

The Florida State Elks Association thanks its monthly sustaining donors and annual donors (as of June 30, 2026) for supporting Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. To join them, please scan this QR code.



SUSTAINING:

Individuals

Craig Abbott
Judith Abbott
Donald Adams
Kathleen Ahrens
Gina Albright
Ronald Allen
Robert Alphonse
Anna Alvarez
Charles Anderson
Nils & Cindy Anderson
Sharon Anderson
Robert Andreu
Susan Avis
Nora Baker
Holly Balante
Amanda Baldwin
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Joseph Knowles
Sherri Kramer
Marilyn Kronenberg
Edward Kuhel
Thomas Kuhn
Barbara Kunze
John LaBella
David Lake
Kathy Lake
Kathryn Lancaster
Robert Landt
Suzanne Larente
Mary Lavengood
Sandra M. Lavigne
Thomas Lawrenson
John Lazo
Carl Ledig

Dolly Ledig
Larry Lee
Linda Lee
Ronald Legere
Sandra Legere
Pete Lehnertz
Jessica Leon
Robert Leto
Wayne Levchik
Donovan Lewis
Matthew Lightfoot
James Lindstrom
Lisa Lindstrom
Najwa Liscombe
Laurence Littell
Frederic L'lorens
Ronald Locke
Michel Loisselle
Wendy Lombard
John Long
Rebecca Long
John Louhier
Joyce Ludwick
Tom Ludwick
Holly Ludwig
Isabella Lunderman-Stoneham
Mary Ann Lynch
Sheri Torres Lynch
Susan Lynn
Scott Mackeil
Sherry Mackeil
Sean Maguire
Pat Maher
Mike Maiocco
Ryan Maker
Frank Malatesta
Normand Malboeuf
Sandra Mansfield
Ann Marks
Kati Marosites
Elaine Marr
Margaret Marte
Greg Martel
Keitha Martel
Jd Martin
Kirk Martin
Randolph Martin
Frank & Gail Mascari
Dan Masi
Roberta Masi
Rudy Masi
Wayne Mason
Lara Mathis
Joanne Matos
Robert Matos
Jack Mattheus
Denise May-Carter
Linda Mayfield
Kathy McAllister
Karen McArthur
Regina McCann
Lara McCleary
Peggie Sue McClellan
Vic McClellan
Dana McCranie
David & Suzie McCranie
Jill McDaniel
Pam McDowell
William McDuffie
Joseph McHugh
Suzanne McHugh
Alex McKibbin
Ann McKibbin
Thomas McLaughlin

Sarah McLevy
Serenity Meacham
Kristen Meadows-Crane
Kathleen Medley
Brandy Meeks
Janet Meyer
Christopher Miles
Johnny Miller
Kathi Miller
Lucelly Miller
Mike Miller
Nancy Miller
Nick Miller
Paul Miller
Robert Miller
Jerold Mills
Marilee Mills
Janet Mitchell
David Monsour
Ann Moore
Brad Moore
Tommy Moore
Cynthia Moran
Thomas Moran
Leonard Mordell
Ed Morey
Jose Morin
Bonnie Mott
Susan Mulligan
Elizabeth Muntz
Ronte Murphy
Curt Myhre
Fonda Neel
Tom Neeley
Lester Nelson
Sven Nelson
Debra Nordgren
Gerard O'Gara
Paul Orvosh
Charmaine Ostrom
Michael Ostrom
Suzanne Pabst
Matthew Pac
Kathy Pacheco
Michelle Packham
Donald Padgett
Lisa Padgett
Maria Pagan Russe
Erin Pagliuca
Barbara Pailley
Christopher Paliki
Paul Palmer
Toni Palmer
James Pardee
Jennifer Parker
Wendell Parker
Gwen Parker-Downs
Sherman & Marilyn Patton
Jacqueline Pearson
Russell Pelaquin
Garieth Pelham
Kate Pemberton
Francesca Pepe
Joseph Pepe
A. Bart Peterson
Dolores Peterson
Stephen Petrie
Henry Pfister
Joyce Pfister
Patti Phillips
Carol Pickels

Loretta Pico-Keim
Christine Pierson
MaryAnn Piner
Stephen Piner
Adrienne Pion
Beverly
Pittman-Pardee
Lois Place
Charles Plante
Etta Platt
Jim Platt
Diana Plumeri
Ronald Plumeri
Henry Poage
Katharina Poerschke
Timothy Pohlman
Cynthia Pohto
Jerry Polk
Barbara Pomeroy
Ingrid Pomeroy
Billie Porche
Chris Porche
Michael Pounders
Donna Powers
Patricia Pratt
David Prosser
Craig Pugatch
Nick Pusta
Lea Pyka
Julio Quesada
Angela Quick
Brad Quick
Larry Quick
Carlos Quiles
Christopher Ragusa
Jim Rannazzisi
Joseph Reames
Linda Reardon
Brenton Reedy
Deborah Reedy
Jacquie Rehner
Jeanne Reinhart
Karen Renzi
Judy Reyes
Wayne Reyes
Bruce Richard
Buddy & Brenda
Richards
Stanley & Linda
Rittenhouse
Carmen Rivera
Karen Roach
Wayne Roberts
Bill Roberts Jr.
Daniel Robinson
Megan Robinson
Rebecca Rodeman
Roderic Rodeman
William Rodgers III
James Rodriguez
Susan Rodriguez
Sharon Rogers
Shannon Ross
Cristin Rumler
Jeff Rumler
Hans Russell
James Rylander
Chris Samson
Jose L. Sanchez
Scott Sandersfield
Kathleen Sanford
Roxy Santiago
Kelli Santos
Greg Sapp
Donn Sardella
Ian Sardella
Laura Sardella
Sophia Sardella
Mark Savitt
Judy Schall
Eric Schlaack
Michelle Schlaack
Steven Schlamb
Michael Schodlbauer
Mary Schreck
John Schultz
Margie Schulz
Frank Schumacher

George Scribner
Mary Lou Scribner
James Seay
Nancy Seeley
James Sekelsky
Clarence Sellers
Frank Sellers Jr.
Marie Sellitto
Susan Senterfitt
William Senterfitt
Gilbert Serein
Frank Severance
Jeanette Sexton
Deana Sharland
Joseph Sharland
Diane Sharp
Donald Shedlock
Aimee Shepard
Barbara Shepard
Emery Shepard
Patrick Shipley
Jeff Silver
Judy Simmel
Jason R. Simmons
Susan Simonelli
Joey Simonelli
Michael Sinneck
Lesley Sittle
Larry Skates
Marci Skates
William Smeltzer
Al Smith
Amelia Smith
Ann Smith
Charles Smith
Danielle Smith
Michael Smith
Paul Smith
Rhonda Smith
Richard Smith
Roselyn Smith
Russell Smith
Snuffy Smith
Tasha Smith
Aimee Snelgrove
Chris Snelgrove
Elizabeth Snyder
Pamela Snyder
Diane Solana
James Solana
Bobby Soles
Becky Spence
Marge Spera
Michael Spiegel
Ingo Starke
Dale Steinke
Robin Stevens
Thomas Stevens
Laura Stewart
Deborah Stillwell
Mark Stillwell
Lorinda Stover
Robert J.
Suhrheinrich
Michael Sujkowski
Noreen Super
Nicholas
Surprenant
Carolyn Sutherland
Robert Szollosy
Danny Tabor
Rachel Tabor
Pauline Talbott
Frank Tamberelli
Robbin Tamberelli
Dennis Tarbell
Daniel Taylor
Gregg Taylor
Alise Taylor-Sindab
James Thimm
David Thomas
Kimberly Thomas
Maria Thomas
Robert Thorburn
Marcie Tingle
Gloria Todd
Richard Tolfa
Sheila Tortorigi

Linda Trawle
Maurice Truss
Wayne Tucker
Tyrone Tvedten
Cindy Vaillancourt
Dennis Vaillancourt
Lou Valencia
Alicia VanOpdorp
Pamela VanTilburg
Larry VanTilburg
Peter Vaphiades
Kim & Paul Voeller
Felicia Vuletic
Doris Waddell
Ronald Wade
Thomas Walden
Alice Wallace
Mark Wallick
Cathleen Walsh
Kevin Walsh
Louis Walter
Sandra Wallworth
Peggy Warren
Robert Warren
Davina Watercutter
Kristine Watson
Linda Watson
Althea
Weatherspoon
Sharon Weiss
Nicholina Wells
Ryan Wentworth
Elizabeth West
Edward Weston
Kimberley Whalen
Mike Whalen
Kevin Whitney
Darlene Wilder
David Wiley
Dianne Wilhelm
Christopher Williams
Dayna Williams
Larry Williams
Martin Williams
Hugh Williamson
Charlie Wilson
Sheryl Wilson
Tammy Wilson
Frederick Wirth
Sandra Wirth
Carl Wise
Deborah & Donald
Wise
Judith Wise
Martin Wisgerhof
Megan Wright
Beverly Wohlrab
John Wohlrab
Fred Wright
James Wright
Richard Wright
Michael "Taz"
Wright Reynolds
Michael Wujcik
Rose Wujcik
Marie Yagoda
Dean Yeager
Kim Youngblood
James Zellmer
Jason Zimmerman
George Zocchi
Dara Zuckerman

Businesses
Bookkeeping
Services by Linda
Quick Pool
Safety LLC
VEMA Property
Inspections

Lodges
Boca Raton
Delray Beach
Fort Pierce
Fort Walton
Hollywood West
Jacksonville

Jupiter
Lake City
Ocala
Palm Coast
Port Saint Lucie
South Miami/
Coral Gables
Stuart-Jensen
Tallahassee
West Citrus
West Palm Beach
Winter Garden
Winter Park

Lodge Groups
Bradenton
PER Association
Gainesville Knights
Ocala PER Association
Viera PER Association
West Palm Beach
Elks Riders
West Palm Beach
PER Association

Districts
Northeast District
Southeast Central
District Advisory
Council
Southeast District
South Southeast
District PER
Association

Ladies of Elks
Saint Petersburg
Ladies
West Palm Beach
Ladies

ANNUAL:

Individuals
Linda Diane Barie
Melissa Bertoch
Stanton Bessey
Michael & Patricia
Bohan
Scott Borrer
Mary Brisky
Mark & Brenda
Cavanaugh
Walter Cooksey
Michael Dellwo
Mark & Francine
Freeman
Frank Gingras
Jill Grignani
Charlotte Healy
Pam Henley
Herman Heydinger
John Huot
Joseph Kapczynski
Paul Krisher
Mark Lake
Michael Long
Herbert Loreti
Bruce Lyon
Barbara Mangold
Carla Moore
Diane Norton
Toni & Paul Palmer
Barbara & Al Pareira
Karl Rietter
Barbara Roduner
Larry Roduner
Charles Sikes
Nancy Slate
Terri Strayer
Scott Stroup
Phillip Vivolo
Marty & Betty
Wanielista
Anthony Yazzetti

Lodges
Apopka
Bradenton
Brandon
Brooksville
Clewiston
Cocoa Beach
Cocoa
Deep Creek
DeLand
Dunedin-
Clearwater
Edgewater-New
Smyrna Beach
Englewood
Eustis
Florida Keys
Fort Myers
Fort Walton PER
Association
Gainesville
Green Cove
Springs
Holiday Isles
Inverness
Kissimmee
Lake Placid
Lakeland
Lakewood Ranch-
Sarasota
Largo
Live Oak
Manasota
Marathon
Merritt Island
Miami
New Port Richey
Oakland Park
Orange Park
Orlando
Ormond Beach
Pensacola Beach
Perry
Plant City
Pompano Beach
Port Orange
Punta Gorda
Rotonda
Saint Augustine
Saint Petersburg
Sanford
Sarasota South
Sebastian
Sebring
Seminole
South Lake
Tampa
Tarpon Springs
Titusville
Vero Beach
Viera
Warrington
West Palm Beach
Zephyrhills

Districts
Northwest District
PERs
South District

Ladies of Elks
Brandon Ladies
Deep Creek Ladies
Dunedin-
Clearwater
Ladies
Florida Ladies of
Elks
Fort Myers Ladies
Palm Coast Ladies
Ocala Ladies
Pensacola Beach
Ladies
Plant City Ladies
Punta Gorda
Elkettes
Southshore Lady
Elks

Southwest Central District
Ladies
Tampa Ladies
Winter Garden Ladies

**Businesses/Trusts/
Funds/Foundations**
American Capital
Management Inc.
American Online Giving
Foundation
Bill Fraser Construction Inc.
Claude & Linda Hutson
Family Living Trust
Coconut Grove Bankshares
Inc.
Community College of the
Air Force Graduation
Planning Committee
Community Foundation of
Tampa Bay Inc.
Diane M. Kazi
Charitable Fund
Eagletree Capital
Florida Atlantic Securities
Corp.
Genesis Construction &
Management, Inc
GFWC Mount Dora
Women's club
JMC Electric LLC
OCC Road House &
Museum LLC
Osaic Foundation
Palm Beach Capital
Parks of Gainesville
Plant City Garden Club
Purchase Smart
RCM Utilities LLC
Shockley Heights
Community Club Inc.
Socially Funded
Spinal Solutions Health
and Wellness PLLC
Tangerine Community
Church
The Garner & Connie
Koons Charitable
Gift Fund
The Miami Foundation
Todays Properties
United States Sugar
Corporation
Variety - The Children's
Charity of Florida Inc.

**** To update your
lodge affiliation,
please notify us at
fsea@floridaelks.org
so your new lodge
will receive credit. ****

2026 FLORIDA LADIES OF ELKS RV RALLY

The fourth annual Florida Ladies of Elks RV Rally was held May 1-3 at Champions Run RV Resort in Ocala. There were 53 RVs, more than 100 attendees, and 10 districts with 26 lodges represented.

FLOE thanks everyone who donated and volunteered to make this event a huge success! They also thank their sponsors: Apopka Lodge #2422, \$1,000; Ocala Lodge #286, \$500; RecPro, Edgewater-New Smyrna

Beach Lodge #1557, and Stuart-Jensen Lodge #1870, \$250 each; and Plant City Lodge #1727, \$100. With registrations, raffles and more, the total amount donated to the Florida Elks Youth Camp was \$8,635, which is an increase of \$3,335 from 2025!

Plans are already in the works for the fifth annual FLOE RV Rally, which will still be in the Ocala area. Make plans to go camping for the Kids!



2026 Annual Florida Elks State Golf Tournament

The 45th tournament was held May 2-3 at Sun 'N Lake Golf Club in Sebring, with 124 players on 32 teams. The event raised \$12,500 for the Florida Elks Youth Camp and Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services.



**Putting contest winner:
Matt Norman**



**Longest drive, Day 1:
Matt Gordon**



**Longest drive, Day 1:
Laurie Prescott**



**Longest drive, Day 2:
Doug Jenkins**



**Longest drive, Day 2:
Elaine Fisher**



**Flight 1: Team Titusville 2X
Champs Donnie Wilson, Joey
Arena, Mark Hametz & Bob
Merrow**



**Flight 2: Bradenton Suncoasters: Matt
Gordon (spouse of Bradenton Elk) and
Bradenton #1511 members PJ White, Paul
Hollingsworth & John Wayne Greenwell**



**Flight 3: Three Yankees & a Rebel
— all members of Inverness #2522
— Doug Kline, Michael Edmondson,
Richard Cody & Mark Savitt**

Photo
credit/
Laz Suarez

2026 State Convention



Lauren Dowd-Shedlock & Leonard "Lenny" DiLorenzo, **2026-2027 first lady and State President**



Heidi K. Green, PER, Veterans State Chair, center, with **Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service Volunteers of the Year**, Kim Hamlin of Rotonda #2710 and John M. Wilson, PER of Holiday Isles #1912



Ben Edgemon, Soccer Shoot State Chair, center, with **highest-scoring Soccer Shoot winners**, Sirhani Perez-Garcia of Bradenton #1511 and Jesus Salmeron of Plant City #1727

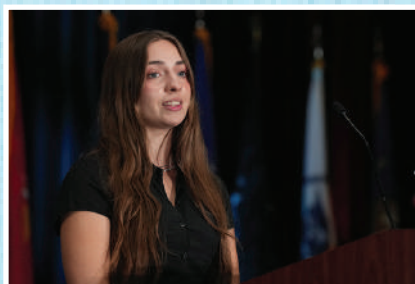
Dean Yeager, PER, Hoop Shoot Vice Chair; Benjamin Beverly, **highest-scoring Hoop Shoot boy**, of Plant City #1727; and Eric B. Johnson, PDD, Hoop Shoot State Chair



Dee Pico-Keim, PER, Drug Awareness State Chair; **Drug Awareness video, essay and poster contest winners**, Garrett Gomila of Florida Keys #1872, Bryanna Nieves of Naples #2010 and Celestia Lee of Orlando #1079; Steve Conrad, Drug Awareness Vice Chair; and Celestia Lee's father



Americanism essay contest winners, Malia Nekomoto of Twin Cities #2747, Emery Hartley of Tarpon Springs #1719 and Jake Revette of Fort Walton #1795, with Michael G. Hoffstetter, PER, Americanism State Chair



Van Duren Scholarship winner, Piper Huard



Eleven O'Clock Toast winner, Davina Watercutter of Sanford #1241, and **Flag Charge winner**, Frederick Wright of Ocala #286

Photo credit/
Laz Suarez



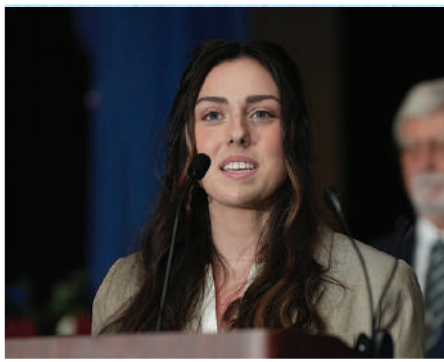
C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship winner, Kayla Hatcher of Palm Coast #2709



Ron Locke, PDD with **JROTC Scholarship winner**, Thomas Kitts of Pompano Beach #1898



Civil Air Patrol Cadet Scholarship winner, Molly Marshall of Bradenton #1511



FECTS CHAMP of the Year, Georgia Stemmann, waves to the audience as her mother, Julie Stemmann, addresses members and guests.

Ben Brown Physical & Occupational Therapy Scholarship winner, Avery Carrick



Above left: First Responders of the Year Committee members Bill Dryburgh, PDD and Kevin Clemons, PDD with **Law Enforcement Officer of the Year**, Police Officer 1st Class Jack Grahling, Homeless Outreach Team of the Sarasota Police Department. **Above right:** First Responder of the Year Committee member Jeff Morse, PER; **Firefighters of the Year**, Lt. Mitchell VanTine and Firefighter Martin Lawrence of the Immokalee Fire Control District; and Dryburgh and Clemons



First Responders of the Year Committee members Chris Samson, PER and Kevin Clemons, PDD with **First Responder of the Year — Support Services**, Detention Deputy Mitchell Maddox of Nassau County Sheriff's Office and

Paramedic of the Year, Paramedic Joseph Favia of Citrus County Fire Rescue



LODGE AWARDS

Membership

Highest Percent Membership Gain Of All Florida Lodges

Place	Lodge	% Gain
First	Orlando #1079	18.10%
Second	Palmetto #2449	16.00%
Third	Dunedin-Clearwater #1525	15.70%
Fourth	Saint Augustine #829	12.50%
Fifth	Parrish #2889	11.30%

Highest Percent Membership Gain By Division

Division	Place	Lodge
I (0-150)	First	Parrish #2889
	Second	Key West #551
	Third	Oakland Park #2407
II (151-225)	First	None
	Second	None
	Third	None
III (226-300)	First	South Hillsborough #2672
	Second	Cocoa #1532
	Third	Plant City #1727
IV (301-450)	First	Orlando #1079
	Second	Palmetto #2449
	Third	Greater Pine Island #2781
V (451-700)	First	Tampa #708
	Second	Jupiter #2469
	Third	Sebastian #2714
VI (701+)	First	Dunedin-Clearwater #1525
	Second	Saint Augustine #829
	Third	Port Saint Lucie #2658

Orientation

Best New Member Orientation

First	Pensacola Beach #497
Second	Merritt Island #2650
Third	Palm Coast #2709

Elks National Foundation

Highest Per Member Donations By Division

Division	Lodge	Per Member
I (0-150)	Crestview #2624	\$56.999
	Oakland Park #2407	\$18.564
	Boca Raton #2166	\$18.007
II (151-225)	Sanford #1241	\$22.557
	Warrington #2108	\$18.020
	Fort Myers #1288	\$17.402
III (226-300)	Hollywood West #2365	\$27.276
	Live Oak #1165	\$21.376
	Plant City #1727	\$18.930
IV (301-450)	Tampa #708	\$35.218
	Greater Pine Island #2781	\$31.467
	Pompano Beach #1898	\$27.853
V (451-700)	Brandon #2383	\$40.690
	Venice-Nokomis #1854	\$17.861
	Ormond Beach #2193	\$15.758
VI (701+)	Fort Pierce #1520	\$14.484
	Fort Walton #1795	\$13.445
	Eustis #1578	\$12.856

Highest Per Member Donations Of All Florida Lodges

Crestview #2624	\$56.999
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Highest Total Dollar Donations Of All Florida Lodges

Fort Walton #1795	\$19,562.31
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FSEA ENF Incentive Program By Division

Division	Lodge	Per Member
I - III (0-300)	Crestview #2624	\$53.801
	Hollywood West #2365	\$20.855
IV (301-450)	Greater Pine Island #2781	\$30.266
	Pompano Beach #1898	\$24.379
V (451-700)	Brandon #2383	\$23.269
	Venice-Nokomis #1854	\$17.199
VI (701+)	Fort Pierce #1520	\$14.336
	Fort Walton #1795	\$12.550

Harry-Anna Investment Fund

Highest Per Member Donations

Division	Lodge	Per Member
I (0-150)	Boca Raton #2166	\$59.2333
II (151-225)	Tallahassee #937	\$40.7101
III (226-300)	Live Oak #1165	\$39.2418
IV (301-450)	Port Orange #2723	\$26.5475
V (451-700)	South Lake #1848	\$53.6538
VI (701+)	Saint Augustine #829	\$23.2968

Sustaining Donor Program

Highest Percent of Goal Met All Florida Lodges

Place	Lodge	% of Goal Met
First	Twin Cities #2747	202.21%
Second	Fort Myers #1288	185.92%
Third	Sanford #1241	128.20%

Highest Percent of Goal Met By Division

Division	Lodge	% of Goal Met
I (0-150)	Twin Cities #2747	202.21%
II (151-225)	Fort Myers #1288	185.92%
III (226-300)	Plant City #1727	80.99%
IV (301-450)	Merritt Island #2650	67.67%
V (451-700)	Winter Park #1830	100.05%
VI (701+)	West Palm Beach #1352	67.47%

Ritual

Best Opening & Closing

NE District	Gainesville #990 DVP Alise Taylor-Sindab
EC District	Merritt Island #2650 DVP Dean Yeager
SE District	Clewiston #1853 DVP Lauren Dowd-Shedlock

Division II Ritual Contest

First	East Central District	94.3283
Second	PSP Dream Team	93.7936
Third	North Central District	93.2430

The highest scores in each position made up the 2025-2026 All-State Division II Drill Team:

Position	All-State	Drill Team	Score
Exalted Ruler	Frederick Wright	North Central District	94.022
Leading Knight	Cheryl Collins	North Central District	93.548
Loyal Knight	Frank Malatesta	PSP Dream Team	95.081
Lecturing Knight	Ken Doster	North Central District	93.525
Esquire	Rod O'Connor	East Central District	90.864
Chaplain	Jimmy Solana	PSP Dream Team	93.707
Inner Guard	Duane Deardurff	East Central District	89.436
Candidate	Lisa Lindstrom	East Central District	8.50
High Scorer	Frank Malatesta	PSP Dream Team	95.0813

Lodge Activities

State Website Contest

Independent Website

First	Jupiter #2469
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Grand Lodge Virtual Website

First	Jacksonville #221
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Facebook Page

First	Saint Petersburg #1224
Second	Jacksonville #221
Third	Holley-Navarre #2787

Lodge Bulletin Contest

Division	Place	Lodge
I (0-150)	First	Oakland Park #2407
IV (301-450)	First Second	Pompano Beach #1898 Jacksonville #221
V (451-700)	First Second	Ormond Beach #2193 Ocala #286
VI (701+)	First Second Third	Green Cove Springs #1892 West Palm Beach #1352 Bradenton #1511

Ritual

Eleven O'Clock Toast

Place	Winner	Lodge
First	Davina Watercutter	Sanford #1241
Second	Clarence Sellers	Miami #948
Third	Frederick Wright	Ocala #286

Flag Charge

Place	Winner	Lodge
First	Frederick Wright	Ocala Lodge #286
Second	William Senterfitt	Gainesville #990
Third	Cheryl Collins	Eustis #1578

BUSINESS PRACTICES:

Best Practices for Bank Reconciliations

A bank reconciliation is the process of matching the incoming and outgoing financial transactions in an organization's records to those on the bank statement for a given period. Doing this ensures that both sets of records agree with each other and accounts for every difference between the two.

This isn't just a record of what matched. Instead, it's a formal schedule showing balances, reconciling items, adjusted balances and supporting notes.

Performing bank reconciliations monthly provides the following benefits:

1. Investigates variances such as errors, missing transactions, identification of possible fraud, and timely resolution and corrections
2. Allows the organization to understand how much cash is available for operations
3. Confirms cash accuracy for financial reporting
4. Creates a documented control artifact that holds up to reviewer scrutiny and audit requests

Treasurers and/or bookkeepers involved in the reconciliation process must understand what they are reviewing and why. Training should include what to look for, the purpose of reconciliations and how to resolve discrepancies.

Transactions should be recorded as they occur based on source records, not from the bank statement of activity at the end of the month.

How to Perform a Bank Reconciliation

Items needed:

1. Bank statements
2. General ledger of all cash activity for the month being reconciled, e.g., checkbook, deposit slips and/or general ledger activity if using accounting software
3. Balance per your general ledger "expected balance" as of the bank statement date

Using QuickBooks software, Excel spreadsheet or paper, perform the following steps:

1. Compare the deposits — record any deposits on the bank statements missing from your general ledger to add the amount to the expected balance. Identify any deposits in the general ledger missing from the bank statement. Subtract the amount from the expected balance and investigate the reason why the transaction is missing.
2. Compare the withdrawals — record payments missing from the bank statement and subtract the amount from the expected balance. Investigate discrepancies between your records and the bank statement.

3. Compare the new expected general ledger balance to the bank statement — do they match? If not, start the review again for deposits and withdrawals. Any discrepancies must be resolved.

Periodically review and update the reconciliation procedures. Updates might be necessary due to changes or new accounting software; changes to receipts or payment processes, such as electronic funds transfer; staff turnover; or to detect/prevent future issues that can provide for improved reconciliation.

Periodically review bank accounts and authorized signers. For each account, verify mailing addresses, account numbers, signers and online access. Update due to staff turnover. Close accounts that are no longer in use. The periodic review can optimize and speed up the reconciliation process.

An area that is sometimes overlooked is the debit card bank statement. A lodge can have many debit card transactions in a month, and each transaction must have a voucher and receipt. If there has been a transaction and missing paperwork, the discrepancy must be resolved.

The same applies for electronic funds transfers. A vendor submits a delivery slip for goods purchased and perhaps the delivery slip is lost or misplaced; the discrepancy must be resolved.

Recently, a lodge wrote a check and placed the check in the outgoing mailbox. The check was stolen from the mailbox, washed and rewritten to a different vendor for three times the original amount. The check was presented to the bank and paid out. This fraudulent transaction was discovered during a monthly bank reconciliation. The lodge instituted a program with the bank (for a monthly fee); all checks presented to the bank had to have the Treasurer's approval.

The bank reconciliation process is similar to how you balance your personal checkbook. Perhaps it is a little more involved, but the process is the same.

Edward "Ed" Toth, PER, Vice Chair
Business Practices Committee

Disclaimer: The Business Practices Committee of the Florida State Elks Association 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.

Spotlight on the Elks of the District

At each of the 14 district visits, the State President recognizes an Elk of the District. It is the Exalted Ruler's responsibility to see that a member is nominated and to submit that name to the district leadership team, made up of the District Leader, District Vice President and District Deputy. The team chooses one name for the district and submits it to the State President to announce at the district's State President's visit.

Below is the first 2026-2027 Elk of the District. We hope these profiles throughout the year not only help you get to know members in your lodge and district but also inspire you to get more involved — there is no shortage of ideas here! Perhaps you will be the next Elk of the District!



Central District — June 19-20 Visit
Linda Hoagland — Zephyrhills #2731
Nominated by Paul Nutting, Exalted Ruler

Our nomination for Elk of the District for this year is a lady who always seems to be at the lodge doing something. Linda is a recently retired nurse and is very active in everything concerning our veterans. She purchases supplies for the

Welcome Home Kits we hand out and she helps organize the delivery of furniture we donate to our vets. She is active in Wreaths Across America and also in the Stand Down program held in Florida. She heads up a program where we partner with Culver's once every couple of months to help serve dinners and bus tables. Our lodge receives 15% of the proceeds and to date has raised more than \$3,000 for the lodge.

Linda also does our new member interviews and arranges for the new members to attend orientation along with initiation. In most cases, she is the first person from the lodge new members encounter other than their proposer while on their way to becoming a member of our order.

She is also a three-year member of our House Committee as well as serving as the lodge Inner

Guard. Linda also helps Thursday night at the kitchen for bingo, Wednesday night for dinners and Friday for dinner raffles.

Linda does all this for the Elks while being sole caregiver for her 95-year-old mom still living at home with her. Linda truly exemplifies what being an Elk is all about and I am proud to have her as a member of our lodge.



State President Leonard "Lenny" DiLorenzo presents the Elk of the District award to Linda Hoagland of Zephyrhills Elks Lodge #2731. Also pictured is Wilmer C. "Carr" Hussey, PER, now District Deputy.

2026-2027 District Deputies



NORTHWEST DISTRICT DEPUTY — James "Jim" Rodriguez

was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1970. He grew up in Fairfield, Connecticut, and Exton, West Chester and Pottstown in Pennsylvania. He graduated from Bishop Shanahan High School in 1989 and attended Penn State University from 1989 to 1992, studying computer science. He moved to

Florida in 2007.

Rodriguez was a volunteer firefighter from 1987 to 1999. He started with McKesson Corp in computer administration in October 2000. He moved to project management in 2007

NORTH DISTRICT DEPUTY — Andrew F. Hillhouse was born in 1971 in Live Oak, Florida, and grew up there. He graduated from Suwannee High School in 1989 and Lake City Community College in 2006.

Hillhouse served in the U.S. Army from 1991 to 1993. He is now a small-business owner, as a landscaper.

In December 2015, he joined Live Oak Elks Lodge #1165 after he saw the work they were doing with veterans. He has served as Lecturing Knight (2016-2018), Exalted Ruler (2018-2020 and 2023-2024), trustee (2020-2023 and 2024-2025), Orientation District Chair (2024-2025), a variety of lodge chairs, and Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services



NORTHEAST DISTRICT DEPUTY — Alise Taylor- Sindab

was born in Conway, South Carolina, in 1952, and grew up there. She graduated from Whittemore High School a year early in 1969 and graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1973. She earned a Master of Business Administration degree, specializing in

business management, in 2002 from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri.

As a Navy wife, she lived in multiple places, including three years in Greece, where her daughter was born. After divorcing, she lived in Waukegan, Illinois, 27 years and worked at Naval Training Center Great Lakes. She transferred to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in April 2007 because she wanted to retire in Florida.

Taylor-Sindab spent 38.5 years as a DOD federal employee.

and worked there until 2018. Then he moved into people management in 2018 to the present, managing technical project managers.

In 2008, Rodriguez was initiated into Pensacola Beach Elks Lodge #497. He was new to Florida and had one friend and he was an Elk and was running for Exalted Ruler. He asked Rodriguez to join and be his Esquire, which he did. He has served as Exalted Ruler twice, Esquire for more than nine years, Lecturing Knight, Leading Knight, trustee and board chair. He has been the Membership State Chair since 2024.

He and Kristina "Kristi" Renfroe have been married 15 years. They have two girls from her previous marriage and two boys from his previous marriage. He also has one older brother he's trying to get to join the Elks and one younger sister who is an Elk.

His hobbies include boating, cooking, playing or watching golf, and tinkering around the house.

District Director (2023-2026). He also served as the 2025-2026 North District Vice President.

He and Sandra have been married 11 years. He has a daughter, Kaylee; a stepdaughter, Mara; and two grandchildren, Adleigh and River.



She retired from NAVSUP at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in April 2017. She worked four years in human resources, 16 years in accounting and as an accounts payable supervisor, and 19 years as a contracting officer in facilities and construction contracts and a division director for the expeditionary and husbanding division.

In June 2022, she joined Orange Park Elks Lodge #2605. She had taken time to focus on herself after her retirement but decided it was again time to get involved. She is still a member of her five Masonic houses in Illinois, which includes the Eastern Stars. She was a member of Eureka Temple #1172 D.O.E. (Daughters of the Elks, the women's auxiliary of Little Fort Elks Lodge #1359 of the IBPOE) from 1990 to 2012. At Orange Park Elks Lodge, she immediately became the Membership Chair. She also served as Exalted Ruler for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. For 2025-2026, she was the Northeast District Vice President.

Her daughter, Charity, is married to Carlvell and they live in Braselton, Georgia, with their 13-year-old son, Cameron. Her brother and sister-in-law live in Fayetteville, Georgia.

Her hobbies include working out, scuba diving, line dancing and golfing.

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY — Michael R.

Edmondson was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1958. Because he was in a military family, he was raised all over America. He graduated from East High School in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in 1976. He attended Navy A Schools in Great Lakes, Illinois. In 1992 he earned an Associate of Arts degree from Florida Community College in Jacksonville. In 2002 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Florida in Tampa/St. Petersburg.

Edmondson served in the U.S. Navy from 1976 to 1980 as an E-5 Machinist Mate 2nd Class Petty Officer. From 1980 to 1984, he was a McDonald's general manager. From 1984 to 1986 he was a sales manager for Hague Water Conditioning. From 1986 to 2019, he worked in leadership positions at PepsiCo.

In 2015, Edmondson joined Winter Garden Elks Lodge #2165 and transferred to Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 in 2017. The ability to stay at lodges overnight in his motorhome made him want to join the Elks. Since joining, he and his wife have traveled to 49 states and visited 35

lodges. As a member, he has served as House Committee Chair, Lodge Secretary, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. He was also the 2025-2026 North Central District Vice President.

In addition to his Elks membership, he is a member of American Legion Post 237, Inverness Moose Lodge, University of South Florida Alumni Association, University of South Florida Bulls Club and Inverness Elks Golf League.

He and Debi were married in 1977. They have two children — Michael, 44, and Sarah, 40 — and three grandchildren — Aubree, 14; Ashtyn, 13; and Stetson, 11.



EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY — Dean Yeager

was born in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, in 1959, and grew up in Waterloo, Iowa. He graduated from Cedar Falls High School in 1977.

Yeager worked as a manager at Quick Trip until 1990, when he moved to Florida. He got a job as a manager at Gate Petroleum

and worked there until 2002. During that time, he was transferred in 1995 to DeLand, where he has been since then. He started working at Circle K in 2002 and retired in August 2024. He began as a store manager and then became district manager, overseeing 15 stores. He finished as an audit supervisor, responsible for ensuring 232 stores get merchandise and cash audits every 65 days.

In 2002, Yeager joined DeLand Elks Lodge #1463. He had several friends who joined and they had been talking about all the good work and charities that the Elks were involved in. One of his friends saw that he was interested and asked him to join. He transferred to Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Elks Lodge #1557 in March 2011, where he served as Treasurer (2011-2012) and Exalted Ruler (2012-2013), but he transferred back to DeLand in 2014. At DeLand, he has served as Leading Knight (2004-2005

and 2006-2007), Lecturing Knight (2005-2006 and 2019-2020), Exalted Ruler (2007-2008), PER Association president (2008-2010 and 2021-2023), trustee (2008-2011, 2014-2017 and 2022-current), social media chair (2008-2011 and 2021-current), board of trustees chair (2010-2011), PER Association treasurer (2016-2018), Inner Guard (2018-2019), and PER Association Secretary/Treasurer (2023-current). Yeager was on the DeLand team that won the East Central District ritual competition (2007-2008) and competed at the state ritual competition. He competed as the Exalted Ruler on the team. He also handles lodge IT and POS issues. He was named Officer of the Year (2006-2007 and 2009-2010) and Past Exalted Ruler of the Year (2016-2017) and earned the Roscoe Anderson Award (2021) and the Elks Distinguished Citizenship Award (2022).

For the East Central District, Yeager was Elks Training District Chair (2008-2010), District PER Association treasurer (2011-2013), Orientation District Chair (2014-2017), and C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship District Chair (2023-2025). For 2025-2026, he served as the East Central District Vice President. On the state level, he has been the Hoop Shoot Vice Chair (2020-current) and State Tiler (2022-2023).

Now that he is retired, Yeager looks forward to traveling across the United States visiting iconic sites and spending time with his brothers, nephews and nieces.

He and his partner, Myra, have lived together 18 years. His two older brothers live in Missouri and his parents live in Deltona, Florida.



CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY — W. Carr Hussey was born in Waterville, Maine, in 1942. He graduated from Thomas College in Waterville in 1963 with a Bachelor of Science degree in business.

Hussey started a trucking company in 1964, a brokerage business in transportation in 1970, and a wholesale watermelon company supplying chain stores along the east coast in 1982. In 1987 he built a travel plaza on I-95 in Maine and incorporated all business at that location. In 2006 he sold the travel plaza to Pilot Travel Center and retired. He moved to Florida in 2010.

In March 2015, Hussey joined Brooksville Elks Lodge #2582 after attending a membership drive. He served eight years on the House Committee, one year as Leading Knight and three years as Exalted Ruler. He was also the 2025-2026 Central District Vice President.

In addition to the Elks, he is actively involved in charities in Hernando County, including People Helping People, New Beginnings and The Life Center, and he is a member on these coalitions' boards. He is also a member of the Hernando County Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of the Nature Coast.



He and Jane have been married 63 years, and they have one son, Daniel, who is married to Melissa; three grandchildren; and a new great-granddaughter.



SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY — Margaret R. "Marge" Spera

Spera was born in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island, New York. She graduated from Port Jefferson High School in Port Jefferson, New York, and attended Suffolk Community College in Farmingville, New York, and Molloy College of Education in Rockville Center, New York. She moved to Florida in 1984.

Spera taught second grade prior to getting married. She and her husband owned and operated a seafood restaurant on Long Island for 20 years. After his passing, she went into banking and worked her way up from teller to mortgage loan officer and a VP of financial services.

In 2010, Spera joined West Saint Lucie Elks Lodge #2823 for the social activities and involvement in the community. In 2022 she transferred to Port Saint Lucie Elks Lodge #2658. She has served as Esquire, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler three times and Lodge Secretary four years. She has been State Chair of Lodge Activities, Vice Chair of the C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship, a member of Business Practices, and an Officer Training instructor for seasoned Secretaries.

She was the 2017-2018 Southeast Central District Vice President and the 2018-2019 District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler.

Spera is also a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

She has three children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Spera enjoys working at her present job — Boys & Girls Club — and Sunday dinners with her family.

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY — Diane C. Sharp was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1957 and grew up there. She graduated from high school in 1975, attended the University of Kentucky from 1975 to 1977, attended Ashland Community College in 1992, and attended the University of Maryland and Strayer University from 2000 to 2002. She also completed courses in the Postal Service Advanced Leadership Program. She moved to Florida in 2022.

Sharp began working for the U.S. Postal Service in 1977 and retired in 2009. She held numerous management positions while working for the USPS in Kentucky; North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; and Florida. Her last position was postmaster of Clearwater, Florida. After retiring from the USPS, she worked for the Combined Federal Campaign for six years, serving most of that time as the director of the Suncoast CFC. The CFC is a charitable campaign for federal and postal employees and military personnel. They raised \$12 million during her tenure.

In April 2014, Sharp joined Dunedin-Clearwater Elks Lodge #1525. She had been a member of the lodge's Ladies auxiliary when a friend, Barbara Pailley, invited her to help with the auxiliary's Taco Saturday. She did that for several months and was invited to join the lodge as an Elk. She served as Lodge Secretary from July 2018 until April 2020.

During that time, she was invited by Carl Seibert, COO/ State Secretary, to be a member of the Think Tank, which met several times at the Florida Elks Youth Camp and at a



midyear convention to brainstorm ideas to improve lodge operations. In June 2020, she demitted to Largo Elks Lodge #2159 to accept the Lodge Secretary position. She served as Leading Knight for 2022-2023, Exalted Ruler for 2023-2024, and Treasurer for 2024-2026, where she was also called on to assist other Treasurers. She was named the 2023 Lodge Officer of the Year. She has been District Chair of Drug Awareness and the Harry-Anna Investment Fund and was District Esquire. She served as the Florida Ladies of Elks State Chaplain for 2021-2022. For the last two years, she has been a trainer for the Officer Training annual seminars, training new Treasurers in QuickBooks and efficient methods to perform their duties. For 2025-2026, she was the West Central District Vice President.

Sharp is also a Rotarian, serving as her club's president, District Global Grant Chair, Area 3 Assistant Governor and board member for Rotary's Camp Florida. She is a member

of Good Samaritan Episcopal Church, serving as treasurer since 2015 and two terms on the church vestry. She was a Guardian Ad Litem for seven years. She's worked with numerous charities making blankets for children in foster care, making dresses for Dress A Girl Around the World and serving on the planning committee for Pinellas County Meals of Hope. She also works a few hours each week with the Bay Area Pregnancy Center in Clearwater.

She and Wayne Roberts have been married 26 years. They have one granddaughter, Addison, who lives in Tallahassee with her parents, Terry and Kristin. They have other family members who live in Orlando and Merritt Island, Florida, and Pennsylvania.

Sharp's hobbies include traveling with her husband and friends and sewing.



SOUTHWEST CENTRAL DISTRICT DEPUTY —

John Guarino was born in 1959 in Kansas City, Missouri, where he was raised and spent his early years. He graduated in 1978 from St. Mary's High School in Independence, Missouri.

He began working for his father's produce business in 1976 and became president/CEO in 1986. When his father sold the business, Guarino worked as VP of sales until 2001, when he moved to Florida. He is currently the logistics manager at Wish Farms and recently celebrated 50 years in the produce industry.

In 2011, Guarino joined Plant City Elks Lodge #1727 after being brought in by a friend who had been an Elk for more

than 50 years. He has served as Tiler, Inner Guard, Chaplain, Esquire, Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. As ER, he turned a monthly negative profit and loss statement into a positive one. He has served on the board for nine years and currently serves as trustee and has been board chair for the past seven years. He has been a key player in raising more than \$500,000 from fundraising events during his time as chair or co-chair of the turkey fundraiser and the wild game committee. He was Lodge Activities Chair for six years and worked on every event planned. He chaired the monthly newsletter for four years and won second place in the state contest for 2023-2024. He has also served as the Elks National Foundation Fundraising Lodge Chair. He was named Officer of the Year four times and received an Outstanding Service commendation award for 2023-2024. For 2022-2023, he served as Grand Esquire for Gordon Ellery. He was also the Ritual District Chair from 2023 to 2025. He served as the Southwest Central District Vice President for 2025-2026.

He and Bette were married in 1986 and are celebrating 40 years this November. They have one child — Laura, 33.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT DEPUTY — Elsha Duquet was born in California in 1972 and moved with her family to Massachusetts in 1975, where she spent her childhood. Over the years, she lived in both Massachusetts and Florida before settling permanently in Florida in 2015. She graduated from Bridgewater-Raynham High School in Massachusetts in 1990 and later earned her nursing degree from SCTI Nursing School in Florida in 1995.

Duquet began her nursing career at Sarasota Memorial Hospital before transitioning in 2000 to HealthDrive Corp., where she served as operations manager and currently as payment cycle manager.

In January 2008, Duquet was initiated into Largo Elks Lodge #2159 and was sponsored by her mother. She later transferred to Taunton Elks Lodge #150 in Massachusetts in 2009, and then to Bradenton Elks Lodge #1511 in 2016. Throughout her years of service, she has held nearly every officer position — except Esquire and Treasurer — across three lodges and has remained active on numerous lodge

committees. An Elk for 20 years, she has served in an officer role for all but one of those years. At Bradenton Lodge, she served as Exalted Ruler for 2022-2023. She was the Harry-Anna Investment Fund District Chair, Drug Awareness Education State Chair and 2025-2026 Southwest District Vice President.



She met her husband, Ronald, a fellow Elk, at Taunton Lodge in 2009. They were married in October 2015 on Bradenton Beach, Florida. She has a daughter and a 9-year-old granddaughter.



**SOUTH SOUTHWEST
DISTRICT DEPUTY —
Vincent Primavera**

Jr. was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1948. He graduated from Bishop Neumann High School in 1966 and La Salle University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1985, both in Philadelphia. He earned his master's degree in federal

taxation from Philadelphia University in 1994. He moved to Florida in 2004.

Primavera started and owned various businesses, including a tax preparation business, a real estate business, a title insurance business, a notary public business, an industrial

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT DEPUTY — Lauren Dowd-Shedlock was born in Syracuse, New York, and moved to Jupiter, Florida, at age 10. She graduated from Dwyer High School in Palm Beach Gardens, earned an associate's degree from Palm Beach Community College, completed a bachelor's degree at Florida State University, and furthered her studies in film and television production.

She began her career in New York City, specializing in video production; graphic and web design; communications; and coordinating high-profile events, mergers and acquisitions. Returning to Jupiter in 2011 to be closer to family, she now oversees marketing and communications for BallenIsles, a premier private country club community in South Florida; manages the community's television station; and supports the BallenIsles Charities Foundation, which, since its inception in 2011, has awarded more than \$11 million to Palm Beach County nonprofits.

In 2011, Dowd-Shedlock joined Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469, where her parents, Colleen and Don, remain active members, and where she met her husband, Lenny DiLorenzo. She has served in numerous leadership roles, including Lodge Secretary, House Committee chair, bar manager, board of directors chair, lodge trustee, Leading Knight and two terms as Exalted Ruler. She has coordinated more than \$120,000 in lodge grants, built and maintains the lodge's award-winning website, and oversees its weekly email and social media communications. She also coordinates community initiatives, including an annual drug awareness rally; a care package program for unhoused veterans; and Jupiter's Haunted Lodge fundraiser, which has awarded more than \$30,000 to local students. She served as Southeast District Reporter for 11 years and was the 2025-2026 Southeast District Vice President. She is also secretary of the South Florida Elks Navigating Autism Gala Committee. At the state level, she served as Vice Chair of the Harry-Anna Investment Fund in 2023-2024 and State Chair in 2024-2025, helping lead record-breaking fundraising efforts, exceeding \$900,000. She traveled statewide with the State President during district visitations, promoting the fund and enrolling

and commercial hazardous abatement company, and an industrial and commercial thermal insulation company.

In 2015, he and his wife joined Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge #2781 to get their friend to stop nagging them to join! In 2018 he demitted to North Fort Myers Elks Lodge #2742. He has served as Treasurer three years, Exalted Ruler two years, District Auditor three years and trustee one year. He was the president of the South Southwest District Past Exalted Rulers Association and has been a Special Representative twice. He served one year each as Lodge Activities Vice Chair and State Chair and is the current Business Practices State Chair. For 2025-2026, he served as the South Southwest District Vice President.

Primavera is a member of the National Association of Enrolled Agents and the Florida State Enrolled Agents.

He and Donna have been married 25 years and he has two children and two grandchildren.

sustaining donors. She previously served on a Past State President's hospitality team and co-chaired numerous State President celebration parades alongside her husband, who served as parade chair.



Her background in video production and communications has supported numerous Elks initiatives, including the Harry-Anna Legacy Video, the Florida Elks membership recruitment video, and Jupiter Lodge's mission and 50th anniversary videos. She has been honored as Jupiter Lodge Elk of the Year (2014), Southeast District Elk of the Year (2015 and 2024), Florida State Elks Association Elk of the Year (2025) and a Jupiter Lodge honorary life member (2017). Today, Dowd-Shedlock proudly serves alongside her husband, State President Lenny DiLorenzo, as first lady of the Florida State Elks Association for 2026-2027, championing his theme, "Florida Elks: United & Driving Forward."

Together she and her husband share a family with his four children — Nico, John, Lenny and Jessica — and their Labrador retriever, Ted. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, growing orchids, and weekend cruising with the Elks Riders in their classic Chevrolet Camaros.



SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT DEPUTY —

Stuart Howitt was born in New York City, New York, and he grew up in Lenox, Massachusetts. He attended the University of Miami from 1960 to 1961, Michigan State University from 1961 to 1965, and Florida Atlantic University from 1988-1989. In 1983 he moved to Florida.

Howitt worked in hotel restaurant management from 1967

SOUTH DISTRICT DEPUTY — Harold W. "Bill" Bang was born in Iowa in 1957 and moved to Miami, Florida, in 1965. He earned his degree in chemical engineering from Miami Dade College in 1997.

From 1976 to 1988, Bang worked as a mechanic. In 1988, he earned his State of Florida Certified Building Contractor's license and has remained active in the construction industry ever since. His projects span high-rise buildings, fine dining establishments, commercial spaces, museums and displays, and high-end residential projects.

In 2007, Bang joined Miami Elks Lodge #948 because his son was a Boy Scout and their troop met there. He has served as Lecturing Knight, Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler twice and board chair twice. He was the first ER at Miami to be elected back to back in 115 years. He served on the House Committee for three years and as interim chair in 2026. He has served on the yard crew since 2012. He has also served on the activities committee, the charity ball committee and the bylaws committee. He is currently the five-year trustee. He also served as the 2025-2026 South District Vice President. On the state level, he is the Orientation State Chair and he serves on the Van Duren Scholarship Committee and the Florida State Elks Association Board of

to 1989. Since 1991, he has worked in accounting.

In 2008, Howitt joined Pompano Beach Elks Lodge #1898 after he was recommended by a friend. He has served as Exalted Ruler, House chair, board chair, lodge audit chair, District Auditor, District Past Exalted Rulers Association chair, Special Representative, Business Practices member, Officer Training presenter to Treasurers, State Audit Committee member and Lodge Activities State Chair. He was also the 2025-2026 South Southeast District Vice President.

Howitt is also a member of the Masons.

He and Jennie have been married 23 years. He has two sons, Alan and Eric; one stepson, Mark Kreitz; and six grandchildren.

Directors. He is a Special Representative to South Miami-Coral Gables Lodge #1676 and is the South District Leader.

In addition to his Elks membership, he has also been a member of the Moose since 2018.

Bang has three adult children. His youngest daughter is an accountant, his son is an actor and writer, and his elder daughter is an emergency room physician.

In his spare time, Bang is an avid sailor and races yachts as crew on a friend's C&C 99 with the Biscayne Bay Yacht Racing Association. He is a member of the Upper Keys Sailing Club and has his own 36' cruiser. He also volunteered with a conservation organization dedicated to protecting the Florida Everglades for public use for 24 years, serving in office for 14 years.



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Georgia on Our Minds: Georgia Stemmann is Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services CHAMP of the Year

By Rachael King

Each year, the therapists of Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services select one patient to represent the program as the CHAMP (Child Having Achieved Magnificent Progress) of the Year. This child and their family attend multiple state Elks functions, educating members about FECTS while meeting the members who make the program possible. This year's CHAMP is 12-year-old Georgia Stemmann.

It is often said that "the third time is the charm," but in the case of Georgia Stemmann, all three times have been the charm. That's because she has made significant progress in each of her three rounds of occupational therapy with Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services occupational therapist Jeanne Martin. Martin began treating Georgia in March 2022, when Georgia was 7. They continued in September 2023, when Georgia was 9, and her third round began in May 2025, when Georgia was 11. Now 12, Georgia has completed her third round of OT.

Georgia lives with her parents in Fort Myers. She is homeschooled and will be starting seventh grade soon. Martin shares why the FECTS therapists chose Georgia as this year's CHAMP: "Georgia is a friendly, social girl, always happy and smiling. When she is not homeschooling, she's enjoying activities and events that the area has to offer. Mom and Dad provide a lot of love and support of Georgia's needs. They are super grateful for FECTS. They are eager to learn how they can help her and carry over therapeutic recommendations to help her meet her highest potential. They also have her partake in various external sports opportunities such as yoga, swimming and baseball to help her develop her motor skills, showing their support in her development. Georgia enjoys her therapy time and looks forward to it every week. She and Mom work hard on the home activities that I provide and practicing them really makes a difference in her progress."

Julie Stemmann, Georgia's mom, describes their journey before finding help from FECTS. At around 10

months, they noticed that Georgia was having challenges, especially when she wasn't trying to crawl. "To be honest, it was devastating," recalls Stemmann. Getting a diagnosis, though, was not easy because the specialists did not agree on one. Georgia had occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. "We would travel 50-60 minutes for each session. We would do this 2-3 times per week. It was extremely difficult and stressful for Georgia. We have private BCBS insurance, which only covered seven visits yearly, so we were out of visits in the first month of the year. We would pay roughly \$500 weekly for therapy," shares Stemmann. Despite this, she says the quality of the providers and care Georgia received "was just OK. There was always a huge staffing turnover so Georgia would get new therapists frequently. Until Jeanne we saw very little progress." Then the family heard about FECTS from a friend who had received services through them.

"We would travel 50-60 minutes for each session. We would do this 2-3 times per week. It was extremely difficult and stressful for Georgia. We have private BCBS insurance, which only covered seven visits yearly, so we were out of visits in the first month of the year. We would pay roughly \$500 weekly for therapy."

— Julie Stemmann describing Georgia's treatment before FECTS

Enter Jeanne Martin, OTR/L. She explains that "Georgia has most difficulty with motor coordination. She has a diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder (dyspraxia), which affects multiple areas of development and daily life. This



Georgia at Great Wolf Lodge in Naples, Florida, in February 2026 for a fun weekend

means the brain has difficulty in planning, organizing and executing coordinated movements, which can lead to difficulties with writing, balance, fine motor tasks, performing self-care tasks, clumsiness, and difficulty participating in sports or playground activities. Coordination difficulties can be accompanied by attention problems, making it harder to focus on tasks for extended periods. Attention and focus have become increasingly difficult

for Georgia over the past few years, and she was recently diagnosed with ADHD."

In each round of therapy, Martin and Georgia worked on a different set of goals.

In 2022, Georgia's goals included putting her clothes on herself, with standby assistance as needed, instead of her mom doing it for her; using a fork and spoon to pick up food and keeping it on the utensil without it falling off; coloring 95% of the surface area of 1-2" shapes while not coloring outside the lines more than 1/3" instead of just coloring a few long lines before stopping; using scissors to cut across a 3" paper, remaining within a 1" wide path three out of five tries instead of just making random cuts here and there; and improving handwriting legibility by 50% compared to her initial assessment.

In 2023, building on her progress, Georgia's goals were enhanced to include improving bilateral hand skills to use 1/2" buttons, with standby assistance, to improve fine motor skills using two hands together while also working on the self-care skill of dressing herself using fasteners; cutting out a 3" paper square within a 1/4" of its 1/2" thick lines, two out of four tries, with verbal cues to improve visual motor skills and bilateral motor skills (holding the paper with one hand

and cutting with scissors with the other hand); and coloring 95% of a 2" round space within a 1/4" of the boundary while using a variety of strokes, such as circular ones, two out of four tries to work on finger isolation and control and to improve visual motor skills.

In 2025, the goals were set at a higher skill level because Georgia had made steady progress. This round of therapy's goals included tying shoelaces in a bow, which in turn improves her visual perception and bilateral hand skills to be able to dress herself more. Martin notes, "When focused, Georgia can complete this challenge with verbal prompting. This is a skill that requires continued practice for refinement of the bows." Another goal was to gain more independence with daily skills, including opening 50% of packages and bottles to improve fine motor skills while using finger and hand strength as well as two-handed coordination. Her cutting goal was to cut out a 3" circle within a 1/4" of its 1/2" thick line two out of four tries, with verbal cues as needed, to improve bilateral hand skills. "Curves and circles are

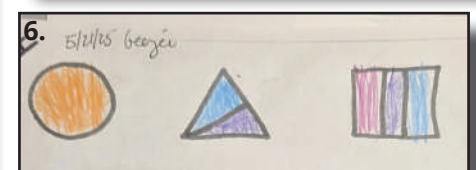
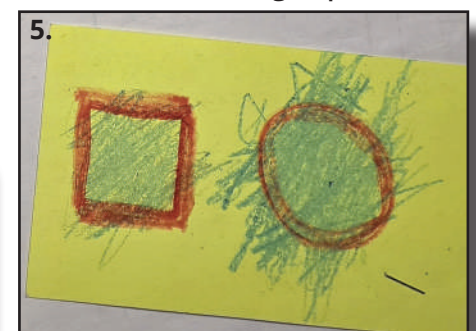
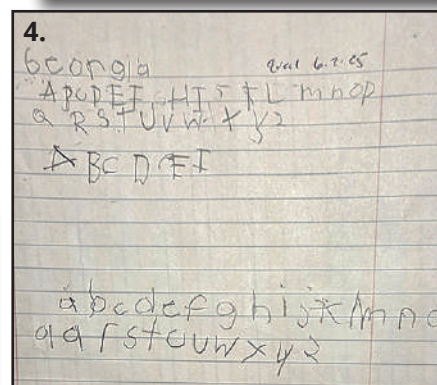
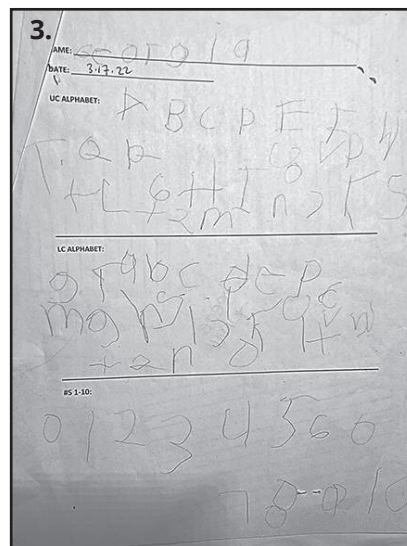
more difficult than straight lines, as it is a complex fine motor task involving two-handed coordination, eye-hand coordination, hand strength and motor planning. She has improved with cutting and has met her goal," adds Martin. An additional goal was writing her full name legibly in lowercase cursive without a sample to refer to and with verbal cues as needed. She has succeeded with her first name and is working on her last name. This skill works her visual motor skills. A final goal was skipping, which Martin explains "is another complex skill that has many core areas required before skipping can come together." She says the goal was skipping for 10 feet "without hesitation, demonstrating improved motor planning and coordination. The skill areas include bilateral coordination (using both sides of the body), balance, rhythm/timing, leg separation and motor planning. So far, she has improved with her balance on one leg and continues to work to motor plan the leg separation and the hop jump between right and left sides."

Martin details how occupational therapy works and how it helps Georgia.

1. Jeanne Martin, OTR/L describes what she works with Georgia on in this photo: "Bilateral hand use to stabilize her paper, elicit more digital control while stabilizing her forearm and wrist, and pencil grasp"

2. Paper circles cut out by Georgia

3-6. Georgia's printing and coloring samples from March 2022 and June 2025, showing improvement



"When working toward a specific skill, there are many underlying areas to address before actual progress can be made. For example, tying shoelaces requires a complex combination of physical, cognitive and perceptual skills. The core areas of development needed include fine motor control (finger isolation, pinch strength and dexterity), bilateral coordination (using both hands at the same time for different tasks), visual-motor integration (hand-eye coordination to track the laces), and cognition and motor planning. Under each of these developmental areas are more specific required skills for shoe tying.

"With fine motor skills, a pincer grasp is required to grip and manipulate the laces with the tips of the thumb and fingers, along with the ability to move individual fingers (like when wrapping a lace around a 'bunny ear') without moving the whole hand. Having a steady wrist and good finger strength is required to pull and tightly secure the laces.



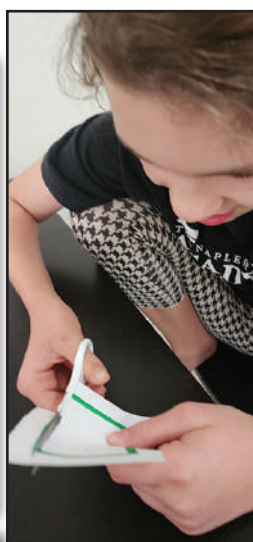
"With bilateral coordination, the use of both hands to do the same exact motion simultaneously is needed (e.g., pulling both laces tight or crossing them), as well as using both hands to do completely different, complementary motions (e.g., one hand holds a loop still while the other wraps the second lace around it).



"With visual motor and perceptual skills, the ability to move the eyes or hands across the middle of the body to the other side is necessary when working with both laces. One also needs good hand-eye coordination and memory to guide your hands into making small loops or openings while remembering the multistep sequences involved in the knots and loops.

"With cognition and motor planning, one needs the ability to sequence the multistep actions in the correct, uninterrupted order; have directionality and spatial awareness to understand the concepts like 'over,' 'under,' 'through' and 'around' as they apply to three-dimensional space; and have focus and attention to maintain concentration long enough to finish a multistep tying method.

"Georgia has a plethora of goals to consider and choosing goals provides a clear roadmap to help her, her family and therapist stay focused on what matters most, while tracking tangible progress and keeping treatment focused to achieve meaningful,



Georgia practices tying shoelaces, cutting with scissors and managing buttons

lasting change. Although we pick and choose specific goals, it does not mean all of the other skills that she has difficulty performing will go by the wayside. Progress and attainment with Georgia's specific goals are the long-

term objective, but they are not the first thing that we work on because there's always underlying issues or reasons why she is unable to do them, as seen with tying laces. As we focus on attaining the goals set for therapy, we also work on the core problems

toward the functional outcomes. Then, not only do we see progress with her goals, but we also see that she has progressed with various other skills that were not specifically targeted. For example, if she has motor planning difficulties, and skipping is her goal, we will be subsequently working on and seeing improvement with ability to cut, color, write, get dressed, brush her hair, run, play video games, execute jumping jacks, kick a ball, do yoga, swim, etc.

"Besides working on the core problems, we can also work on specific motor planning activities by using structured repetition; breaking tasks into smaller steps; and using a multisensory practice, which allows the brain to build lasting muscle memory and sequencing skills that are seen without them being a specific therapy goal.

"In her therapy sessions, she participates in different activities that target the core areas that will help improve her functional skills toward her goals. These include:

- Activities that use the right and left sides of her body together to stimulate connections of the right and left brain
- Multisensory activities, including motor planning, rhythm and timing, visual motor, and vestibular input
- Primitive reflexes for integration, as this is a necessary foundation for all development
- Vestibular movement, like swinging, as vestibular input to the brain is important, being it is the precursor to function
- Joint and muscle awareness activities, such as bouncing, jumping and motor planning new movements
- Motor refinement activities to help with hand strength, writing tool grasp and self-care skills

To begin each weekly therapy session, Martin asks about the previous week to learn of any struggles or progress. During the session, she works with Georgia while Georgia's mom watches and takes videos of the activities. Martin explains the activities and why and how they help. At the end of each weekly session, Martin assigns homework for Georgia and her mom



Georgia participates with Surfers for Autism in Fort Myers Beach, Florida, in July 2025. Surfers for Autism is a nonprofit organization that provides surf lessons at no cost for children and adults with

autism and other related developmental delays.

to work on during the week until the next therapy session. She chooses one or two skills from the current session for them to practice throughout the week to continue building on the skills rather than losing them before the next session. She also gives them written and illustrated instructions and activity sheets to use during the week.

When asked what Georgia is like during the sessions and what kind of patient she is, Martin answers, "Georgia is usually happy in therapy. She looks forward to me coming and she likes to give me the lowdown during her session on all the things she did in the week prior. I have learned that sometimes she makes that a distraction from focusing on her therapy activities. When something presented to her is tough, or if she perceives it will be a challenge, she can push back and resist giving it her all. So, I typically will amend the activity and break it up in steps to allow for her comfort and success. I will demonstrate or do the activities with her and talk her through them while we work through things together. When she is focused, likes what she is doing and puts forth effort, you can see her abilities and the progress that she's made."

Georgia's mom affirms that her daughter "loves her sessions with Jeanne and looks forward to them each week. She absolutely adores Jeanne, even when Jeanne makes her work hard." She also confirms how much progress Georgia has made. "I can't even begin to tell you how much progress she has made since starting with Jeanne. In almost every area, she has made significant progress —

writing, tying her shoes, dressing herself, being able to jump and skip. Those are just the tip of the iceberg. We have seen improvements in almost all areas of Georgia's life — coordination, strength, mobility, flexibility and most of all in her confidence in herself!" She adds that even though their family dynamics have always been good, she says they have only improved after having Martin's help because since Georgia is doing more daily skills by herself, she is less frustrated and so too are her parents.

When questioned how Georgia likes being this year's CHAMP, her mom replies, "Georgia LOVES being your CHAMP and is so proud of herself. This recognition is more than just an award. It is a recognition of the countless hours of therapy, the challenges she has overcome, and the determination and courage she shows every day. It reminds her that hard work deserves to be celebrated. Being the CHAMP is a reminder that every milestone matters!"



The family is enjoying the experience, too. At the state convention in Orlando in May, Stemmann notes, "Our experience was amazing. Everyone we met was so kind and welcoming. It felt really good to be able to thank so many people for what the Elks have done for Georgia. This honor reminds us how far Georgia has come and recognizes her many victories that often go unseen. We are so grateful that others see in her what we see every day: a remarkable young lady whose joy and spirit inspire others

around her. I always say her little soul is full of joy!"

Stemmann wants the Florida Elks to know how much FECTS has meant to her family. "The therapy provided through FECTS has meant so much more to our family than just appointments and exercises. It has given Georgia opportunities to grow, gain confidence and achieve milestones that once seemed out of reach. It has brought hope during difficult times and helped us celebrate so many victories. As parents, we are incredibly thankful for the encouragement, support and belief the Elks and Jeanne have shown Georgia." ■

Julie & Georgia Stemmann on stage at the state convention

Georgia at the state convention with the program opened out to her feature page

Jeanne Martin, OTR/L & Georgia May 23, 2026, at Citywalk's Hard Rock Cafe in Orlando after the state convention



2026 National Convention: Celebrating 100 Years of the Elks National Memorial & 250 Years of America



Florida awards announced at the national convention:

- Community Projects Contest — Division IV — Second place — Jacksonville #221
- Three-star Lodge Website Award — Jupiter #2469
- Membership — Most Improved State — 509 gain this year after a 611 loss last year, for an 1,121 member improvement over last year
- Five-star State Association Major Project Booth Display
- Five-star State Association Website — Laz Suarez, Website Administrator
- Five-star State Bulletin Contest — Rachael King, Editor



Photos: Elks National Memorial; Grand Secretary Carl T. Seibert makes remarks outside the Elks National Memorial; a veterans' display inside the Elks National Memorial; Timothy F. Jaeger is installed as 2026-2027 Grand Exalted Ruler; elk statue with Elks National Memorial in background; Frederick Wright and Davina Watercutter, who placed seventh and third in the nation for the Eleven O'clock Toast and Flag Charge ritual contests, respectively; and 2025-2026 State President Mike Chandler, PSP Rudy Masi & State Membership Chair Jim Rodriguez react to the Most Improved State in Membership announcement

Photo credit for all except ritual photo/Laz Suarez



Request from Florida State Elks Association Museum Curator

As the curator of our Florida Elks museum, which is housed in the Grafton Center at the Florida Elks Youth Camp, I am trying to add a pin or small piece of memorabilia from every lodge that was ever chartered in Florida. Below is a list of the defunct and merged lodges. If you have a pin or other small piece of memorabilia from any of these lodges that you are willing to part with for the sake of preserving history, please mail it to me or the state office for inclusion in the museum.

My address is 9671 Crescent View Drive N., Boynton Beach, FL 33437.

Thank you!

Vincent P. Como, PSP, Florida State Elks Association Museum Curator
ddger2463@aol.com

Memorabilia Needed from the Following Defunct & Merged Lodges:

Belle Glade 1716
Boynton Beach 2676
Charlotte County 2153
Clearwater 1525
Coral Gables 1676
Daytona Beach 1141
DeFuniak Springs 2612
Deltona 2739
Dunedin 1525
Fernandina 795
Fort Lauderdale 1517
Hialeah 2352
Hollywood 1732
Homestead 1754
Jacksonville Beach 1901
Lady Lake 2793
Lake Wales 1974
Lake Worth 1530
Land O' Lakes 2600
Lehigh Acres 2602

Madison 2205
Mandarin-St. Johns 2866
Margate 2463
Marianna 1516
Miami Beach 1601
Miami Springs-Hialeah 1775
Miami West 2479
Milton 2377
North Miami 1835
North Miami Beach 2341
North Palm Beach 2069
North Tampa 2745
North Port 2632
Okeechobee 2558
Pahokee 1638
Palatka 1232
Palm Beach Gardens 2718
Panama City 1598
Pensacola Beach 2256
Pinellas Park 2217

Plantation 2273
Port Charlotte 2153
Quincy 1111
San Juan, Puerto Rico 972
Sarasota 1519
Silver Springs Shores 2730
South Broward 2830
South Dade 28xx
South Marion 2730
South Miami 1888
South Orlando 2694
Southside Jacksonville 2014
Southwest Palm Beach County 2741
(renamed Sandalfoot in 1990)
St. Lucie West 2823
Starke 1802
Sunrise 2273
Tampa Bay 2255
Wauchula 1700

LODGE NEWS

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Fort Walton #1795



On April 16, Bruner Middle School students received awards for their winning Americanism essays from Fort Walton Elks Lodge #1795. **Pictured are Tom McLaughlin, PER, Lodge and District**

Chair; eighth grader Aiden Calkins-Goodwin, second place lodge and third place district; eighth grader Jake Revette, first place lodge and second place district; sixth grader Koryn Higdon, third place lodge; and seventh grader Ciara Hawkins, first place lodge and second place district; and Heather Williams, principal.



Fort Walton Lodge donated \$400 May 5 to the Chocatawhatchee High School weightlifting team. Team members build physical strength, boost self-confidence, foster mental resilience, and learn discipline and goal-setting. **Pictured with team members are Coach Addison Kendrick and Kathy Pacheco, trustee.**

Holley-Navarre #2787



On May 6, Holley-Navarre Elks Lodge #2787 awarded the Elks JROTC medal and certificate at Navarre High School to Navy JROTC Cadet Gianna Scheno for her academic achievement, leadership, patriotic work and community service. **Pictured are Tom Stevens, PDD, Esquire; Navy JROTC Cadet Gianna Scheno; and Bill White, PDD, Exalted Ruler.**

Pensacola Beach #497

On May 1, the Pensacola Beach Elks Lodge Past Exalted Rulers Association donated

\$2,400 to Florida Elks for Autism to evaluate one child for autism. In the past two years, more than 100 children have been tested. The funds were raised by the PERs with the raffle of a pellet grill and a pistol.

Twin Cities #2747

On May 30, Twin Cities Elks Lodge #2747 held a district-wide dart tournament and raised \$3,000 for charities. The first place winners were Carl Nielsen and Kyle Horton from Twin Cities Lodge, the second place winners were Chris Snelgrove and Pat Wrathell from Crestview Lodge, and the third place winners were Forest Gay and Harold Wallace from Fort Walton Lodge.



On April 24, Jacksonville Elks volunteered at the prom for Alden Road Exceptional Student Center. Members served dinner and ensured everyone felt welcome. Students enjoyed music, laughter and celebrating together. ARES is a school that provides students with specialized support, life skills, and opportunities to grow and thrive. **Pictured are Principal Joey Blitch and members Pam Haley; Cheryl Kehl, Exalted Ruler; Brent Reedy; Deborah Reedy, PER; Kelly Paulson; and Stephen Wilson.**

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Gainesville #990



On June 9, Gainesville Elks Lodge #990 donated \$5,000 to the Xtraordinary Joy Foundation to support their summer day camp in July for children with intellectual and physical disabilities who would otherwise be unable to attend camp. Children play games, worship, do crafts and activities, and more to grow in community and build confidence in themselves. **Pictured are Betty "BJ" Sullivan, member; Tony Meacham, Xtraordinary Joy co-founder; Moria Meacham, Amy and Tony's daughter; Max Danford, Exalted Ruler; and Amy Meacham, Xtraordinary Joy co-founder.**

Green Cove Springs #1892



To recognize National Police Week, Green Cove Springs Elks Lodge #1892 delivered 50 snack bags May 13 to the Green Cove Springs Police Department to show their appreciation for their service to the community. **Pictured delivering the snacks are Jennifer Parker, PER, trustee; Pat Buerhaus, kitchen manager; Chief of Police Shawn Hines, GCSPD; Princess Leia, GCSPD station therapy dog, Officer Josh Lee, GCSPD; Ray Rosam, Lecturing Knight; and Diane Watson, Lodge Secretary.**



On May 18 and June 3, Green Cove Springs Elks presented three high school seniors with \$1,000 scholarships. **Pictured in the front are students Khalon Franklin of Fleming Island High School and Megan Moran of Clay High School. In the back are Kristine Watson, Exalted Ruler; Pam Fore, lodge scholarship chair; and Sally Thorsen, lodge volunteer. Also pictured is student Abigail Turner of Clay High School (with Megan Moran).**



On June 13, Green Cove Springs Lodge held its first of three summer readings at Spring Park, funded by the Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant. Volunteers distributed books and snacks to 22 children and their families. Officers from Green Cove Springs Police Department read aloud the book "Summer Vacation Here I Come," distributed safety coloring books and let families explore their vehicles. **Pictured in the back row are Kristie Watson, Exalted Ruler, and GCSPD Sergeant Whitney. In the middle row are Tracy Carroll, PER, Lodge Grants Coordinator; Greg Hughson Sr., PDD, trustee; GCSPD Officer Heard; and Ed Weston, Treasurer. In the front row are Laura Elgin, member; Wendy Hughson, youth activities chair; and Laquetta Willimon, trustee.**

Jacksonville #221



On June 13, members of Jacksonville Lodge's Community Activities Committee assisted Riverwood Nursing Home residents in playing bingo. They had a great time with the 15 residents who played and they enjoyed getting to know them. This is a monthly activity for the lodge. **Pictured are members Kelly Paulson; Carole Shapley; Cheryl Kehl, Exalted Ruler; Pam Haley, Chair; Tony Langhals; Joan Langhals (spouse); Anne Pauliszczak; and Jack Pauliszczak. Not pictured is Deborah Reedy, PER, who took the photo.**

Saint Augustine #829



On April 19, Saint Augustine Elks Lodge #829 donated \$10,000 to the Saint Augustine Council on Aging. These funds will help continue their efforts in offering lifelong learning centers, Meals on Wheels and the ability to enrich the lives of local senior citizens. The lodge also honored 50-year member Wayne Reyes, PDD for his more than 30 years of service to the Council on Aging. **Pictured are Wayne Reyes, PDD; David Everhart; Denelle Everhart, Exalted Ruler; A. Joseph Smith Sr., PER; John Doering, trustee chair; and Carolyn Karger of the Council on Aging.**



On May 29, Saint Augustine Lodge donated \$2,000 to West Augustine Youth Development Program to assist students with registration fees, travel expenses and lodging when they competed in the national flag football tournament in July. The 10u SJC Legends team qualified after winning the Miami regional in Fort Lauderdale. **Pictured with the students are Denelle Everhart, Exalted Ruler; Nathan Otter, team coach; and Marcus Owens, program director.**

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Eustis #1578



On April 4, Eustis Elks Lodge #1578 hosted its annual Easter party for 95 children and 50 adults, including about 25 Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services client families. There were games, a balloon-making vendor, face painting and craft making. Dozens of plastic eggs filled with cash were spread over the backyard for the kids to collect. The Drug Awareness program set up its basketball game and gave out Drug Awareness rulers, pencils and coloring books. Twelve Elks made the event possible. **Pictured hugging are the Easter Bunny (member Mike Schwellinger) and Cadence Blyler, 5, member JoAnn Daly's granddaughter.**

Ocala #286



Ocala Elks Lodge #286 used the Harry-Anna Investment Fund matching Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant to purchase specialized collars and leashes for the Marion County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit. **Pictured April 14 in the front are Sgt. Justin Tortora, K-9 Pike, Cpl. Michael Stringer, K-9 Doc, Dep. Jett Bloom, K-9 Krypto, Detention Deputy Brandon Goosey and K-9 Copper. In the back are Sheriff Billy Woods; Carlos Quiles, Exalted Ruler; George Griffin III, PER; Michael Miller, PER; Pat Miller and Linda Moulton.**

EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Ormond Beach #2193



On May 15, Ormond Beach Elks Lodge #2193 held a dinner to honor their scholarship recipients from Seabreeze High School. The lodge awarded two \$1,000 lodge legacy scholarships to Isabel Mazelow, daughter of Shanan Mazelow, and Britton Prewitt, son of members Wendy and Michael Holly and grandson of members Cheryl and David Askew. The lodge also awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to Maggie Harris and Lucky Boren. In addition, the lodge presented a \$3,000 C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship on behalf of the Florida State Elks Association to YeNile McCoy. **Pictured are Erika Barger, PDD, Lodge Scholarship Chair; Mike Chandler, State President; recipients YeNile McCoy, Maggie Harris,**

Isabel Mazelow, Lucky Boren and Britton Prewitt; and Steve Searle III, Exalted Ruler.

Palm Coast #2709



Palm Coast Elks Lodge #2709 donated 200 sandwiches to the Flagler County Sheriff's Office for its law enforcement memorial service May 16. **Pictured are member David Valinski, Sheriff Rick Staly, Exalted Ruler Pete Lehnertz, member Jerry DiMenna and Deputy Chief Mark Strobridge.**

Port Orange #2723



On April 29, Port Orange Elks and Port Orange Lions sorted 1,017 pairs of glasses collected in the Daytona Beach area for reuse by those unable to afford them. The glasses were sent to the Oviedo Lions Club to be processed with optical readers to determine the magnification and will be stored until requests come from clubs and missionaries overseas. Port Orange Elks Lodge provided the space for the sorting. **Pictured are volunteers sorting glasses.**

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Orlando #1079



On May 17, Arriba El Son LLC conducted its 2026 Youth Art & Music Scholarship ceremony at Orlando Elks Lodge #1079. The lodge donated \$1,000 to the scholarship program. Through scholarships, lessons, instruments and supplies, this program helps talented young students continue pursuing their dreams while keeping the arts alive for future generations. Leading Knight Carmen Rivera, co-founder of the scholarship, and her husband, Eduardo Rivera — musical director of the 11-piece Latin band Arriba El Son — continue to encourage youth involvement in music and the arts throughout Central Florida. **Pictured are Carmen Rivera, Leading Knight; Dr. William Badillo; Emily Lorne; Alejandro Rosa-Marcia; Anabella Urdaneta-Leon; Xavier Tomas-Alvarado; Christina Pichardo; Dalia Jervasi; Ariana Marquez; and Eduardo Rivera, lodge member and CEO of Arriba El Son LLC.**

SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Cocoa Beach #2387



On May 18, Cocoa Beach Elks Dean Rosenquist, scholarship chair, and Gene Phillips presented three \$2,000 vocational scholarships and nine \$1,000 academic scholarships to Cocoa Beach High School graduates. Funds for the scholarships were raised through bingo, Show Me the Money and other lodge fundraisers. **Dean Rosenquist and Gene Phillips are pictured with the three vocational scholarship recipients, and Gene Phillips is pictured with the nine academic scholarship recipients.**

Port Saint Lucie #2658



On June 19, Port Saint Lucie Elks shopped for items to stock the Village Green Environmental Elementary School's food bank. **Pictured shopping are members Sally Hanson, Joanna Albrecht, Lorraine Ruvio and Art Lander, Exalted Ruler.**

SOUTHWEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Brandon #2383



On May 12, three Brandon Elks and one member of Brandon Ladies of Elks joined the Willis Peters Exceptional Student Education Center staff to celebrate their graduates with a pancake breakfast. The team helped with prepping, cooking, serving and cleaning up. Approximately 70 students, parents, caretakers, teachers and staff members attended. The school is in Dover and serves students from ages 3 to 22 with a wide range of disabilities, offering specialized programs for visual impairments, physical handicaps, emotional/behavioral disabilities and intellectual

disabilities. Pictured are Ed Ciesla, PER; Debbie Rhines; Beverly McMahon; and Terri Ciesla, Past Lady President.

Lakeland #1291



On April 11, Lakeland Elks Lodge #1291 hosted a glow-in-the-dark bingo fundraiser at the lodge to benefit the lodge scholarship fund. The event chairs were members Doug and Rhonda Thomas and Chris Fisher. The hall featured glow-in-the-dark "Alice in Wonderland" themed decorations, and pulled pork sandwiches were served before the games began. A costume contest was also held, with members Kristen Francks and Carl Hutchcraft winning the contest. The event raised \$3,300. **Pictured are members and guests.**



John Hedricks, Treasurer.

Sebring #1529



Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 awarded \$1,250 scholarships to two high school seniors April 27 and April 29. Avon Park High School student My'Kariah Harris plans to attend South Florida State College, and Sebring High School senior Kinston Ridgeway plans to attend the University of Florida. The scholarships were funded through the Harry-Anna Investment Fund's matching Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant. **Pictured are Sandi Whidden, member; My'Kariah Harris; and Diane Morse, scholarship chair. Also pictured are Mason Whidden, member; Kinston Ridgeway; and Diane Morse.**



On June 5 during a dinner with the public, Sebring Lodge hosted a Drug Awareness program presented by Tri-County Human Services. Representatives gave attendees the opportunity to learn about opioid prevention and safe medication practices. Tri-County Human Services received an opioid prevention grant to educate the community about safely storing and disposing of opioid medications. Through additional grants, they provide medication lockboxes to help residents secure prescriptions in homes with children or grandchildren or in shared living arrangements, reducing the risk of accidental access and overdose. They also offer medication disposal bags to safely dispose of unused medications at home without traveling to a drop-off location. Free lockboxes and disposal kits were distributed. **Pictured are Cleo Pyatt, Tri-County staff member; Terry Oakley, Exalted Ruler; and Halle Robinson, Tri-County staff member.**

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Bradenton #1511



On April 12, members from Bradenton Elks Lodge #1511 and Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855 attended a Bradenton Marauders baseball game. The Marauders are a minor league baseball team of the Florida State League and the Single-A affiliate of the Pittsburgh Pirates. **Bradenton Lodge Exalted Ruler, John Louhier, threw out the ceremonial first pitch.** The Marauders have been longtime supporters of the lodge's annual golf tournament, which supports Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp.



Pictured with John Louhier is Bayshore Elementary School's assistant principal, Bryan Baker.

On April 15, John Louhier, Bradenton Lodge Exalted Ruler, right, presented \$500 from the lodge to Bayshore Elementary School for their 2026 walkathon. The school is raising money to support staff and student initiatives.

Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855



On April 25, Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855 held a vendor fair and food drive for EFELT (Elks Feeding Empty Little Tummies) and was open to members and their guests. Vendors paid a fee to set up booths, and the fees were donated to EFELT. There was a 50/50 raffle to benefit EFELT, too. The EFELT truck was stationed in the parking lot to collect food and monetary donations. The event raised \$1,500 in donations and donated food. Two vendors were children of a new member.

Ezequiel, 16, has a small business making 3D printed items.

He would love to be a camp counselor at the Florida Elks Youth Camp. He also loves photography and has volunteered his time at events taking photos. **His sister, Alessandra, 12, also has a small business sewing various items.** She has been a recipient of a youth camp sponsorship and she will be going again this summer. She has also volunteered her time face painting at the lodge's Miracle League Easter event.

Palmetto #2449



On April 3, Palmetto Elks participated in the DeSoto children's parade and community event by distributing "Say No to Drugs" information to parents and children. They gave out candy, pencils, coloring books and pamphlets. Elroy the Elk was also available for photos. **Pictured are lodge members Theresa Wendell, Dee Gowarty, Elroy the Elk (Kelly Jacobson), Estrellita Moore, Bruce Wolfe and Leesia Wolfe.**

Parrish #2889

On April 14, 43 Parrish Elks volunteered at the second annual Autism Acceptance Extravaganza at the Florida Railroad Museum. The event featured sensory activities, an autism resource corner, vendors, food trucks, train rides, arts and crafts, a quiet zone, touch stations, and basket raffles. Special guest Courtney Hersch, a Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services physical therapist, was also available in the resource area to answer questions. More



than 770 people attended the event. The lodge raffled more than 35 baskets donated by members, raising more than \$1,000 for Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services.

Pictured are Matt Carter, Exalted Ruler, and Kim Bahlke, Loyal Knight, at the cotton candy machine.

SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Englewood #2378

On May 11, Englewood Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, Patti Griffith, presented Lemon Bay High School seniors scholarships totaling \$40,000. A trust was set up 41 years ago by William Wellbaum, PSP to provide funds for students bound for college and trade schools. Pam VanTilburg, PER, chair, and members Lori Wellbaum, Sue Wellbaum, Alice Bailey and Jack Donovan chose the recipients.

Fort Myers #1288



On June 13, Fort Myers Elks distributed American flags to visitors at the Downtown Fort Myers Farmer's Market. Each flag included a note explaining the Elks' role in establishing Flag Day as a national observance. Several people stopped to share their own Elk or flag memories, including a young lady who was excited to let the members know that she attended the Florida Elks Youth Camp as a child. **Pictured with her is Irma Spencer, Loyal Knight.**

On June 14, officers of Fort Myers Lodge joined members of the Vietnam Brotherhood at Salterra of Fort Myers Senior Living & Care to perform a Flag Day ritual for the seniors and their guests. Residents received miniature American flags from the Elks as a keepsake. Members also donated \$500 to the Brotherhood for their scholarship fund.

Greater Pine Island #2781



On April 10, Greater Pine Island Elks Lodge #2781 presented an Aqua Eye Pro to the Pine Island/Matlacha Fire Department. This is a handheld sonar device for first responders and water rescue teams to swiftly and accurately locate missing persons underwater. It merges advanced sonar technology with artificial intelligence to detect human bodies beneath the

surface. The Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant and Harry-Anna Investment Fund matching grant were used. The Aqua Eye Pro can significantly reduce the time and resources needed for rescue missions and increase the chances of a successful recovery. **Pictured are C. Simmer, Captain; Benjamin Mickuleit, Fire Chief; Judy Hopkins, PDD, Exalted Ruler; Donna Trusik; Jack Rovaldi, PER; Lorree Theibault; Lee leMay; Donna Stone; Lisa Wade; Ron Wade; Laura Larson; Terry Smayda; and firefighters Loring and Arias.**

Naples #2010



On April 23, Naples Elks awarded checks to students for the Drug Awareness essay contest. Students from Manatee Middle School received awards of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place and \$100 for third place. The first place winner's essay was chosen as the state winner as well. **Pictured in the front are Jay Fike, principal; Denise Holmes, Lodge Chair; Milken Cadet, second place winner; Bryanna Nieves, first place winner; and Riley Gibson, third place winner. In the back are Melissa Caponera, member; Ron Heldebrandt, PDD; Ron Caponera, Leading Knight; and Erica Torres, literacy teacher.**

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Jupiter #2469



On June 13, Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 hosted its annual Flag Day event and celebrated America's 250th anniversary. Participants included the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard and local scouts. The event also featured live music, patriotic vehicles, games, raffles, food and fun for the whole family. **Pictured are members of Scout Troop 109 assisting with the flag ceremony.**

West Palm Beach #1352



The West Palm Beach Elks Lodge Past Exalted Rulers Association presented five \$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors April 26. The lodge also recognized Makenzie Williams, a \$7,500 C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship winner sponsored by the lodge. The students spoke about how they would make the country a better place and where they are attending school. **Pictured are Paulency Merove, Grace Crompier, Cali Anderson, Makenzie Williams and Gabriela Avila. Not pictured is Chance Song.**



On June 6, the West Palm Beach Elks Riders held the Down Syndrome Summer Blast event and donated \$1,000 to the Gold Coast Down Syndrome Foundation. Dinner and music were provided. **Pictured are Bob Miller, PER; Angel Cruz; Brad Hoffman, lodge trustee; Brad Quick, Elks Riders vice president; Angela Quick, Elks Riders president; Kathy Traniello, Elks Riders Treasurer; Darrell Clayton, Elks Riders sergeant-at-arms; Ralph Traniello; and Anne Dichele, GCDS representative.**

SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT



On May 24 and May 30 at JROTC awards ceremonies, Elks from the South Southeast District lodges recognized cadets from 22 Broward County Public Schools' JROTC programs with ribbons and medals. The awards honor students who exemplify leadership, citizenship, academic achievement, and dedication to their schools and communities. Representing the Florida Elks were members Serenity Meacham of Hollywood West Lodge; Matthew White and Luis Gonzalez of Oakland Park Lodge; and Robin Haywood, Heike Tetzner and Ryan Maker of Pompano Beach Lodge. The program was coordinated through the Pompano Beach Elks Lodge Youth Activities Committee. The district lodges collectively contributed \$550 to fund the awards. **Pictured are Ryan Maker, PER and Boyd H. Anderson High School ELMA Battalion Cadet Private First Class Chayanee Hanson. Also pictured are First Sergeant Anthony Clark, Cadet Captain Heily Sanchez Chavez and member Serenity Meacham.**

Boca Raton #2166

On April 18, Boca Raton Elks donated more than \$650 worth of new sneakers to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. On June 10, members donated more than \$4,000 worth of hygiene items and gently used clothing to Deerfield Community Cares, a local outreach organization for residents of Deerfield Beach who need assistance.

Delray Beach #1770



On June 20, the Elks lodges of the South Southeast District used their camperships from the Florida Elks Youth Camp to send 48 kids to summer camp. Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770 was the departure location for the bus transportation, which was provided by the camp. Members of Delray Beach Lodge donated eggs and bacon to serve breakfast to the kids before leaving. They also provided juice packs and snacks for the bus ride. **Pictured with the campers is Joe Civitano, Delray Beach Lodge Exalted Ruler.**

Hollywood West #2365



On June 14, Hollywood West Elks held their annual Flag Day ceremony. Officers conducted the ceremony, which involved the presentation of the nation's flags by members of the Scouts of America, followed by a retirement flag ceremony. Tattered flags that are no longer a fitting emblem of display were donated to the lodge throughout the year by members of the lodge and community for proper retirement. **Pictured are members of the Scouts of America.**

Pompano Beach #1898



On April 9, Ryan Maker, PER, chair of the Pompano Beach Elks Lodge youth activities committee, presented the lodge's annual Tornado Battalion awards during the Pompano Beach High School JROTC awards ceremony. The awards program honors one cadet from each Leadership Education and Training (LET) level who has completed at least 10 volunteer hours with the lodge. The youth activities committee provides \$1,050 in annual awards to four cadets. The recipients were Cadet PFC Kiera Fletcher,

LET 1 (freshman), \$50; Cadet SGT Alana Pugatch, LET 2 (sophomore), \$200; Cadet SGT Isabella Alves, LET 3 (junior), \$300; and Cadet MAJ Grayson Kitts, LET 4 (senior), \$500. Also recognized was PBHS JROTC Cadet Major Thomas Kitts for receiving the \$5,000 Florida State Elks Association JROTC Scholarship. Since 2023, he has contributed more than 200 volunteer hours to Pompano Beach Lodge. Kitts will attend the University of Central Florida to major in computer science and participate in the Air Force ROTC program. **Pictured are retired Lt. Col. Gregory Johnson, senior Army instructor; Ryan Maker, PER; Cadet MAJ Grayson Kitts; Cadet SGT Isabella Alves; Cadet SGT Alana Pugatch; Cadet PFC Kiera Fletcher; Cadet 1SG Jaenelly Ramos (FSEA JROTC Award recipient); Cadet MAJ Thomas Kitts (FSEA JROTC Scholarship recipient); and retired First Sergeant Cynthia Chevrestt, Army instructor.**



The Antlers of Pompano Beach Lodge hosted an "Alice in Wonderland" tea party fundraiser April 26. Members and guests enjoyed a selection of fine teas, finger sandwiches, pastries, traditional scones, and other sweet and savory treats, all inspired by Lewis Carroll's tale. The tea party raised funds for the pageant and the Florida Elks' Southeast Navigating Autism Gala. **Pictured at the tea are Antlers Arturo deAlmeida, Nicholas Pacheco, Grayson Kitts, Alana Pugatch, Rafaela deAlmeida, Kai Foley, Lyla Marienthal and Isabella Alves.**



On May 17, Pompano Beach Elks and Antlers supported the Miss ARC Broward Pageant, held at The Parker in Fort Lauderdale. The lodge was a \$500 sponsor. Based in Sunrise, ARC Broward provides programs and services that empower children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities and other life challenges to achieve their full potential. The pageant allows them to showcase their personalities, talents and accomplishments while building self-esteem and confidence. Members and Antlers formed cheer squads for contestants, wore their contestants' favorite colors and created signs. **Pictured in the front are Antlers Kai Foley; Thomas Kitts; Alana Pugatch, first vice president; Grayson Kitts, president; and Isabella Alves. In the middle are Jaenelly Ramos, L.J. Long, Judy Pugatch and Samantha Maker. In the back are Ryan Maker, PER; Craig Pugatch, PER; Bob Manko; Marianne Manko; Heike Tetzner; Louisa Tetzner; Andrew Long; Ryan Julian; Yasmin Maker; and Tatiana Maker.**

SOUTH DISTRICT

Florida Keys #1872



On April 30, Florida Keys Elks Lodge #1872 held an awards presentation for students who submitted entries to the lodge for the annual Florida State Elks Association Drug Awareness video contest. First place lodge and district winner, Garrett Gomila, was selected as the first place state winner and was honored at the state convention awards luncheon. All the students and their parents were treated to a pizza party after the awards presentation at the lodge. **Pictured are the second place team winners, students Spencer Connolly, Addison Grady, Genesis Garcia, and Audrey Ewald and Denny Tarbell, PDD.**

Marathon #2139



On April 11, Marathon Elks assisted during the 7 Mile Bridge Run. Seven members helped with traffic control. "Volunteering at the 7 Mile Bridge Run is just one way we can give back and help ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved," said Exalted Ruler Matthew Rowell. Funds raised from this event are donated to the local youth of the Middle Keys, both to schools and to youth groups that promote athletically oriented activities. Since the run's inception, Middle Keys' kids have benefited from donations totaling more than \$500,000. **Pictured at the lodge in the front are Patti Colletti, a member's friend; Sue Bacon, trustee; and members Maryann Still and Joann Bunting. In the back are members John Still; Matthew Rowell, Exalted Ruler; and Randee Barnell.**

On June 14, Marathon Lodge had more than 30 members, guests and residents attend the Flag Day celebration. Flag Committee Chair, Gina Fredrick, gave the history and significance of the American flag. Afterward,



attendees enjoyed complimentary hot dogs, chips and apple pie while spending time with fellow members and guests. **Pictured are Gina Fredrick and her grandson, Trey Gonzalez.**

VETERAN NEWS

NORTH DISTRICT

Tallahassee #937



Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937 participated in the annual veterans' Stand Down held at FAMU campus May 16. Using the Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant, the lodge purchased breakfast and lunch for those attending the event. Attendees included veterans who are experiencing homelessness or who are disadvantaged. They were fed and afforded services available through city, county and state agencies. Other services included legal advice, dental care and veterinary care for pets. **Elks shown serving lunch are Jeff Dorband, PER; Ricardo Scruggs, Exalted Ruler; Harris, a friend; and Tom Walden, PDD.** At each end are event volunteers.

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Gainesville #990



Elks Riders of Gainesville Elks Lodge #990 participated in an event at Evergreen Cemetery to honor veterans ahead of Memorial Day. On May 23, nine riders volunteered to place flags at the graves of veterans, helping ensure their service and sacrifice are remembered. Their section of the cemetery had 42 flags to place. **Pictured are Darrin Roberts, president; Kriste Mennella; Ken Bateman, road captain; Pete Hamilton; Charles Britt; Cathy Britt, liaison; Dave Kaufman, vice president; Kerstin Roberts, secretary; and Bernie Porterfield.**

Jacksonville #221



Jacksonville Elks delivered their 48th Welcome Home Kit April 20 to USMC veteran Santay. He relocated to a studio apartment, so members were mindful of selecting appropriately sized furniture and new bedding to optimize the available space. He was very happy with what they delivered and was looking forward to fixing dinner in his own place that evening. Items

included a toaster, coffee maker, Crock-Pot, new bed and frame, pillows, new set of dishes, pots and pans, towels, household items, groceries, table and two stools, lamp, and a handmade patriotic quilt. Member David Graham helped load the furniture and deliver his kit. **Pictured are Karen Tracy, Veterans Lodge Chair; Melanie Reid, lead case manager with Five STAR Veterans Center; and Santay.**



When the Jacksonville Lodge community activities committee found out that member Kelly Paulson's son was coming home from serving overseas, they gave him and his friend Dalton a welcome home party May 15. Both Marines served together for more than three years. Many members showed up to support them and thank them for their service. The lodge gifted them both with bags of goodies, which included snacks, lip balm, wipes and fun things. **Pictured are Beth Clark, Pam Haley, Anne Pauliszczak, Dalton, Kelly Paulson, Jake, Brent Reedy and PER Deborah Reedy.**

In celebration of the nation's 250th birthday, Jacksonville Lodge hosted a veterans' appreciation dinner May 16. Invitations were extended to veteran members of the lodge as well as members of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter #1046, which meets monthly at the lodge. Lodge members were also invited so they could join in thanking veterans for their service. Guests were encouraged to visit, share stories, and enjoy good food and music together. Entertainment was provided by Kent Kirby. Veterans attended free of charge, while others paid a nominal fee. Fifteen veterans were recognized, with an additional 29 guests attending in support. Pins were given to veterans from Cheryl Kehl, Exalted Ruler. Leslie Watson provided a beautifully decorated patriotic cake. Volunteers Robin Pipkins, John Pipkins, Susan Harrell and Brent Reedy prepared the meal and the NAS Jacksonville FDR Sea Cadets served the dinner.



On June 4, Jacksonville Elks delivered 223 nonperishable food items to Women Veterans Ignited. Kayla Zeringue, lodge chaplain, also created 12 prepackaged nonperishable meals with a recipe along with six hygiene kits designed for women. The food, meals and hygiene items were valued at \$943.50. WVI serves dozens of women veterans in the Jacksonville community each month and is devoted to helping women veterans improve their health and well-being, secure employment or permanent housing, and ensure a successful transition from the military to

civilian life. **Pictured are Tony Langhals, U.S. Navy, retired; Karen Tracy, U.S. Navy, retired, Veterans Lodge Chair; Cheryl Kehl, U.S. Navy veteran, Exalted Ruler; and Sierra Allman, USA/USAF veteran, WVI receptionist/program assistant.**

CENTRAL DISTRICT

West Citrus #2693



In 2019 a group of West Citrus Elks who enjoy quilting and who are members of the Veterans Committee formed the Sewing for Veterans group. The group started making walker caddies and adult bibs for veterans in care centers and continue to make these items for veterans in need. In 2024, the Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart asked if the group would make Quilts of Honor for some of their veterans, so the group made and presented six quilts. The group is now making an additional five Quilts of Honor to be presented to veterans this year. **Pictured April 1 are lodge members Ruth Sharpin, Sue Adams, Roxie Bartozek, Joyce Haskins, Jeanne MacBurnie, Pat Lehman and Linda Goretzki working on the next quilts.**

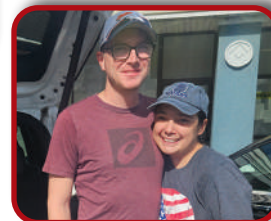
Zephyrhills #2731

On April 15, Zephyrhills Elks Lodge #2731 donated 12 cases of pretzels to veterans at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital. As outpatients were arriving to and leaving their appointments, Ken Fabiani, PER, Veterans Chair, shared the snacks with them. **Pictured are Fabiani, right, with James and Helen Stilwell. She is his wife and caregiver and a hospital staff member.**



SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Cocoa Beach #2387



Cocoa Beach Elks used their Elks National Foundation Spotlight Grant to buy 10 microwaves and bedding for veterans transitioning into permanent housing. **These pictured veterans were given their \$400 Elks National Veterans Service Commission Welcome Home Kit shopping spree April 22 and then were given their additional gifts.** Mary Ladwig, Veterans Chair, organized this event.

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Tarpon Springs #1719

On May 25, Memorial Day, members of the Tarpon Springs Elks community came together at Craig Park to remember those who gave their lives in service to the country. Veterans, families and residents attended the ceremony, taking time to reflect and pay their respects. After the ceremony, Tarpon Springs Elks hosted a barbecue for those who attended. It gave everyone a chance to stay, talk and connect, something that always feels important on a day like this. "Events like this may not be large, but they matter. They keep the memory of our fallen service members alive and bring the community together in a way that feels genuine and heartfelt. The Elks lodge is proud to be part of it each year," shared Kathy Conrad, Lodge Secretary. **Pictured are Pete Kolnicki, Exalted Ruler; Jeff Caron, PER; and Bob Gorbey, PER.**



SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Parrish #2889



On May 25, the third annual Parrish Elks Lodge Memorial Day ceremony was held at the Parrish Cemetery. There were more than 75 people in attendance, including members, members of the Parrish Cemetery Association Board of Directors, Parrish Boy Scout Troop leaders and members, and family and friends of veterans buried at the cemetery. Frank Loviglio, Veterans Lodge Chair and trustee, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem. Sharon Atkins, chaplain, wrote and recited the invocation and benediction. Retired Air Force Colonel Richard Tatem was the guest speaker and introduced Sarasota's retired Air Force Captain Terry Gruters. Terry Gruters is the younger brother of retired Air Force Captain Guy Gruters, whose plane was shot down in Vietnam and he spent five years in a POW camp. Terry was actively involved as an Air Force pilot during the December 1972 Linebacker II air raids, which were instrumental in bringing North Vietnamese forces to the negotiating table and ultimately freeing his brother and other POWs. Terry told stories of fellow Americans who lost their lives in war. He then gave all who wanted one a CD titled "Surviving with God in a Communist POW Camp," by Captain Guy Gruters. A.J. Parmer, Boy Scout senior patrol leader, read what the POW/MIA Remembrance table is about, and Patricia Knight read the "Remembrance Poem." Family members of veterans placed flags into the more than 100 blue PVC pipes at the veterans' gravesites. Other attendees then placed flags at the remaining veterans' grave sites. **Pictured are lodge members and members of the scout troop.**

On May 7, Fort Myers Elks Lodge #1288 donated \$1,000 from the Elks National Foundation Freedom Grant to Hearts and Homes for Veterans, a southwest Florida nonprofit dedicated to ending veteran homelessness and helping those who served regain stability through housing, employment and essential support services. On June 28, the lodge hosted a dinner for 12 board members and volunteers of Hearts & Homes for Veterans to present them with a \$14,000 donation from the Elks National Foundation Beacon, Gratitude and Spotlight grants. The Elks also gave them a closer look at who Elks are and what they stand for while helping the 26 Elks and guests in attendance see firsthand how ENF grants are being used to support veterans in crisis in the community. **Pictured are Roger Spencer, PER, Exalted Ruler, and Diane Hendrick, board chair, presenting one of the donations to Hearts & Homes board members Dale Spain, CEO; David Zammit and Eric Evans.**

SOUTHWEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Brandon #2383

On June 13, Brandon Elks Lodge #2383 hosted the Tampa Bay Chapter of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. in the lodge hall for a chapter meeting and to pack 100 snack bags for Gold Star mothers attending the organization's 98th national convention June 18-21 in Tampa. Robin Rutzke, Exalted Ruler, purchased and donated \$355 in snack items to fill the bags, giving attendees snacks to enjoy throughout the convention weekend. The lodge also donated \$1,000 to provide refreshments and food for attendees arriving June 19 and for the reception following the evening memorial service honoring Gold Star mothers and family members lost during the past year. **Pictured are Gold Star members filling snack bags.**



SOUTHEAST DISTRICT



During the Florida Elks state convention in May, Southeast District lodges Clewiston #1853, Jupiter #2469 and West Palm Beach #1352 presented \$26,467.46. for the Army of Hope. The funds were raised from the Southeast District Army of Hope poker run, raffle, auction and cake raffle Feb. 28. **Pictured are Michael Chandler, State President; Connor Pulver of West Palm Beach Lodge and the newest Elk member at 21 years old; and Jeff Buhrman, West Palm Beach Lodge Exalted Ruler.**

SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Hollywood West #2365



On April 13, the Hollywood West Elks Lodge Veterans Committee organized a petting zoo at the Sandy Nining State Veterans' Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines. Veterans Committee members Mike Maiocco, Chair, and Sharon Wolf set up the event for the nursing home resident veterans. **Pictured is a veteran with some of the animals.**

SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Fort Myers #1288



Lakeland #1291

On May 16, Lakeland Elks Lodge #1291 hosted an armed forces dinner and dance fundraiser with 94 members attending. **Members Rhonda and Doug Thomas cooked fish and chips for the event.** Proceeds from the event, raffles and 50/50 ticket sales totaled \$2,737 for the lodge veterans fund.



LODGE PLANNING CALENDAR

August 2026

- 8/1 • ENF MVS Scholarship applications available at elks.org/scholars
- 8/15 • Lodge Website Award Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org)

Deadlines:

- 8/21 • Every third Friday, monthly Financial Reporting System (FRS) upload due

Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:

- 8/14 • 8/14 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 withholding to U.S. Treasury from gambling winnings if more than \$2,500 cumulative for the year
- 8/17 • Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
- 8/19 • Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m. EST)

September 2026

- 9/1 • Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA/GL Drug Awareness Poster Contest
- Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA/GL Drug Awareness Essay Contest
- Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA/GL Drug Awareness Video Contest
- ENF Legacy Awards Scholarship application available at elks.org/scholars
- 9/8 • Van Duren Scholarship applications available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org)
- FSEA C. Valentine Bates Memorial HOPE Scholarship applications available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org)
- 9/11 • Patriot Day
- 9/30 • Lodge Website Award winners announced on FSEA website (floridaelks.org)
- Midyear CLMS membership totals are recorded by GL
- Sep to Dec • District Deputy visits and inspections

Deadlines:

- 9/15 • Lodges to register for FSEA Lodge Website Award with FSEA Marketing Director
- 9/18 • Every third Friday, monthly Financial Reporting System (FRS) upload due
- 9/25 • Submissions for fall issue of Florida Elks Magazine to Editor (r.king@floridaelks.org)
- 9/30 • 9/30 State Lodge Activities Chair to register for GL State Association Website Award with GL Fraternal Committee Member

Non-Grand Lodge Reports & Taxes:

- 9/2 • Form F-1120 — report UBI to Florida Department of Revenue (Form F-1120 is required when Form 990-T is required.)
- 9/15 • Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
- 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. EST)

October 2026

- Oct • October is Elks National Foundation Month
- 10/1 • Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA Best Lodge Bulletin Contest
- Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA Lodge Scrapbook Contest
- Contest criteria and entry information available on FSEA website (floridaelks.org) for the FSEA Americanism Essay Contest
- 10/23-31 • Red Ribbon Week

Deadlines:

- 10/15 • Lodges to complete FSEA online committee reporting for the quarter ending 9/30
- ENF Impact Grant Renewal applications open
- 10/16 • Every third Friday, monthly Financial Reporting System (FRS) upload due
- 10/31 • 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)

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
- 10/16 • Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue (electronic payment and filing no later than 5 p.m. EST)
- 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. EST)
- Form 941 – report wages for prior quarter to U.S. Treasury
- Deposit FUTA (Federal Unemployment Tax Act) tax for prior quarter to U.S. Treasury (Quarterly deposits of federal unemployment insurance tax are required when the cumulative amount owed exceeds \$500.)

Statutes:

- Oct • Secretary report to lodge (\$12.050)
- Trustee report to lodge (\$12.070)
- Exalted Ruler reports on GL sessions (\$12.120)
- Lodge's Auditing & Accounting Committee to review lodge books and report at last meeting of month (\$13.040)

NOTES: 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.

Effective Jan. 1, 2024, anyone filing 10 or more 1099 (entire series 1099 NEC, 1099 Misc., 1099 Int., etc.) forms combined is required to electronically file.

Depository dates of taxes to the U.S. Treasury are reflected. An earlier date may apply depending upon whether your payment is directly deposited through your bank or through a bank utilized 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.

Photo credit/Rosen Centre Hotel



Florida State Elks Association
P.O. Box 49
Umatilla, FL 32784-0049



Florida Elks Midyear Convention

Nov. 12-14, 2026



ROSEN
CENTRE
ORLANDO