Gain is official

The 2018-2019 Membership Report was filed online via CLMS2. As of March 31, the Order ended the year with a total membership of 771,033 for a gain of 94. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL! With more attention to membership, the Order can show a larger gain for years to come.

Totals from the Annual Charity Reports show the Order donated $460,704,157 in time, mileage, and in-kind gifts. This amount would have been larger but 56 Lodges failed to file a charity report. Again, with everyone’s help, during the 2019-2020 Lodge year we will strive to reach that elusive 100% reported.

The St. Louis Grand Lodge Convention has come and gone. Thanks to the Missouri Host Committee, their volunteers, and PGER F. Louis Sulberger for providing the manpower for another successful convention.

Drug Awareness Program

FAQ: Opioid pain reliever prescriptions

By JACKI SCARPINO
Special Contributor

Used appropriately, medicines improve our lives. When misused and abused, however, the consequences can be devastating. The overprescribing and misuse of prescription pain relievers has been a major cause of today’s epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths, with four out of five heroin users reporting that they misused prescription opioids before using heroin.

This overview is intended to help you know what questions to ask when a healthcare provider recommends or prescribes a pain reliever for your child, and how to be sure that your child takes the medication as prescribed without misusing it or sharing it with others.

Why would a young person be prescribed an opioid pain reliever?

Opioid pain relievers are most often prescribed following surgery or to treat cancer pain — so many young people will not be in a position to be prescribed opioids. But opioids may be prescribed for young people in the event of accidental injury, such as a sports-related injury, an accident in which a fracture or even a severe sprain occurs, or oral surgery to remove wisdom teeth. Additionally, there are other ailments for which opioids may be recommended.

Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

ROBERT L. DUITSMAN

As was the case with most people who have joined our great fraternity over the years, it never occurred to me that someday I might become its National President. It is the culmination of a long journey, with many twists and turns. I have met and developed relationships with fine and dedicated men and women whom I am very happy to call my friends. At its core, friendships are what Elksdom is all about, and I am very proud to have been given this wonderful opportunity to serve our Order.

I see the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks as an organization dedicated to doing good works while having a good time doing them. From the countless projects our Lodges engage in within their local communities, to the help they extend to those in need, to our scholarship programs, to the support of our veterans, to supporting the values and causes that have made our country the greatest in the world, the Elks have a long tradition of service in a wide variety of areas. I’ve lost track of how many times new Members have said they wanted an opportunity to get involved, to give back, and to be part of something greater than themselves. At its best, Elksdom gives its Members all of those opportunities.

My motto for this year is “Honoring the Past—Embracing the Future.” Its significance to me is that, as Elks, we need to be mindful of the many great works we have accomplished over the last 150 years, and with a spirit of optimism, move forward together to grow our membership, work our programs, and promote our brand.

By “Honoring the Past” my goal is to emphasize the richness of our traditions, the things we have accomplished, the importance of our rituals, and the quality and character of our Members, that together have made the Elks the premier fraternal organization in the United States. There is a lot of history for every Elk to be aware of and take pride in; it is what makes us special.

By “Embracing the Future” I want to share my optimism that our Order is capable of great things. As a result of
**ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION**

**MVS winners are future forces**

**By TAYLOR ODISHO**  
ENF Communications Assistant

Twenty-five thousand applicants entered. Only two won.  
This year’s Top Most Valuable Student scholarship winners are Tabitha Escalante, sponsored by Maumee-Bowling Green, OH Lodge No. 1850, and Victor Ramirez, sponsored by South Miami/Coral Gables, FL Lodge No. 1676. These are their stories.

Escalante’s mother worked three jobs to save enough money to move her family to a small town with a better public school system and the promise of more opportunities. But switching to a new school proved difficult. Escalante was different.

“She missed living in a city where seemingly everyone was working to overcome a disadvantage and no one was defined by the way they lived, the structure of their family, or the color of their skin. But she turned lemons into lemonade.

“It gave my dream to empower struggling communities a new sense of focus,” Escalante said.

Escalante plans to study political science at Harvard University. In the future, she hopes to become a lawyer who speaks for disenfranchised families and marginalized groups.

**GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

**How Activities make a difference**

**By DAVID B. LAKE**  
Committee Chairman

Your Grand Lodge Activities Committee is here to assist you in your Lodge’s Youth Activities Programs and Community Projects.

There are eight committee members each representing a Grand Lodge Area. The contact information on each member and his or her area of responsibilities can be found online at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/roster.cfm. Please feel free to contact us when you have a question or need assistance.

The information on all our programs, along with manuals and printable certificates, can be found online at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/default.cfm.

Our Youth Programs include Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, Junior Golf, Antlers, Scouting, Dictionary Project, National Youth Week, Teenager/Student of the Month and Year, and JROTC Recognition. In the community area, our focus is on promoting Lodge Community Projects, Disaster Relief, and the Medal of Valor and Service Recognition Awards.

We hope that your Lodge participates in these programs and reaches out in your community with a Lodge Community Project. Remember that an active Lodge is a successful Lodge, and a successful Lodge is one that makes a difference in their community, showing that “Care – Elks Share.”

**FAQ From Page 1**

**What questions should be asked of the healthcare provider when an opioid pain reliever is recommended or prescribed?**

- Is a prescription opioid necessary to treat my child’s pain?
- How many pills are being prescribed, and over how long a period?
- What are the risks of misuse?
- Should my child be screened to determine risk of substance use disorder before this medication is prescribed? (Common risk factors include ADHD, mental health disorders such as depression, a family history of addiction, and a recent trauma such as a death in the family or divorce.)

**What should you do if an opioid pain reliever has been prescribed for your child?**

- Safeguard medication at home. Don’t leave it in the medicine cabinet where anyone, family or visitors, can access it.
- Supervise the dispensing of the medication, counting the pills in the bottle to be sure they are being taken as prescribed. Clearly document when the prescription was filled and when a refill will be needed, and be suspicious of any missing medication.
- Communicate with your child about the risks of misuse, and be very clear that the medication is not to be shared with others.
- Communicate regularly with your child about the level of pain he or she is feeling. Make sure the pain is diminishing with time and stay alert for any signs that your child is growing dependent on the medication.

**What signs of misuse or dependence should a parent be alert for?**

- Signs of misuse can include drowsiness, nausea, constipation, slowed breathing, and slurred speech.
- Be concerned if your child is asking for pain medication more frequently than prescribed, or if he or she is insistent on refilling the prescription.
- Signs of withdrawal, which would occur if a child has become dependent on an opioid and then stops taking it, include anxiety, irritability, loss of appetite, craving for the drug, runny nose, sweating, vomiting and diarrhea.

If you are concerned that your child may be dependent on pain medication, consult the prescriber.
A Member might feel a special bond where we are born and grow. The feeling of respect for the land is a patriot. It is the natural attachment to one's country and is ready to do anything for the betterment of the nation. It is the pride for America. I believe that patriotism can be well defined. It is something that people feel inside of themselves, and it is their way of expressing their love for their country.

What is Patriotism and why is it important?

Patriotism is not something that can be simply defined. It is something that people feel inside of themselves, and this feeling is different for each person. I believe that patriotism can be characterized by intense love for one's country and the desire to see it thrive in whatever way is best for the country. America is truly the greatest country in the world and I'm so thankful I was blessed enough to be born here.

What is Patriotism and why is it important?

Patriotism also involves serving the nation. It is about volunteering to help people whenever need be. It is about abiding by the laws and acting responsibly. We owe our freedom to the patriots who fought for our country.

If we do not have patriotic feelings or develop patriotic feelings in our children, then who is going to step forward to eradicate social evils or fight for our country? The youth want the country to be a safe and better place where they can live freely. They want their voice to be heard, understood, and accepted in society. They love their country and want to work in the favor of the nation and its people. Love for the country is the feeling that naturally develops like the love for family. I love my country very much and am proud of it.
Famous advice for veterans service volunteers

By MARY K. MORGAN
Commission Director

President Harry S. Truman reportedly said, “It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” That’s particularly good advice for volunteers looking to serve veterans.

According to the IRS, there are more than 45,000 non-profits in veterans service in the United States today. Working together may be the only way to solve problems for our nation’s veterans.

For advice on how to start and build good partnerships, we sought advice from Darrell Quinley, a Member of Grandview-Hickman Mills, MO Lodge No. 2088. As a representative at both the Kansas City VA Medical Center and the St. Michaels Center (which provides veterans with safe, stable housing), Quinley knows that partnerships are key to accomplishing goals.

Here is his wisdom, gleaned from years of volunteering for veterans and working as a funeral director.

• Smile. Be upbeat. Find as much common ground as you can with family, children, activities, veterans in the family, etc.

• Don’t take up a great deal of their time at the onset. Ask for their business card and follow up a few days later.

• Don’t give up! First or even second impressions may not be a true indication of future working relationships.

• Be truthful, be consistent, and be prepared.

• Try to always take the high road on any contentious discussion, or better yet, avoid it completely.

• Be complimentary. Thank them for what they do. Find no fault in their operation.

• Tell them you have Elks Members just waiting to help veterans.

Above all, go in with a positive attitude. Your heart shares their heart in the love of service to veterans.

Time to celebrate a national gain in membership

By RICK GATHEN
PR and Membership Marketing Manager

Over the past few years, the Order has sought to reverse nearly four decades of declining membership. The Grand Lodge Public Relations and Membership Marketing Committee has crisscrossed the country encouraging Lodges to embrace its motto: Grow by Change, Not by Chance.

We have embraced technology and introduced new ways to improve our processes. Little things can make a big difference. Minor alterations, carefully conceived and adeptly enacted, have produced major results nationwide.

We have made a convincing case that, contrary to the previous decades of negative trends, our positive changes have profoundly altered our culture and our future.

One of the most interesting aspects of our membership turnaround is the way we use social media. This reaffirms that humans are profoundly social beings influenced by and influencing other human beings.

The Elks are our nation’s premier patriotic and charitable organization. By properly and passionately applying these great strengths, the Elks have enormous growth potential. After all, when Elkdom Shines—Elkdom Grows!