IMPACT GRANTS

C. Valentine Bates, PGer

Dear Florida Elks:

We are well into our 2008-2009 Lodge year and I congratulate all of you on the tremendous successes we have had with our various programs. The Mobile Therapy vans are rolling to treat our disadvantaged children, and the Youth Camp has experienced another banner year thanks to your support and contagious enthusiasm.

As Treasurer and a Trustee of the Elks National Foundation, I know first hand the generous commitment our Florida Elks make year after year to this most worthy endeavor. Of particular interest to our Florida Elks are the outstanding returns we get from the Elks National Foundation to reward our fund raising for that positive program. For example, fifteen Florida Lodges applied for Impact Grants from ENF (competitive grants of up to $10,000.00 awarded to Lodges that are taking the lead in meeting their communities needs). Six of our Lodges were selected to receive one of 45 ENF Impact Grants awarded this year. They are:

- Tampa, Florida Lodge No. 708: Elks will work with a local transitional home for homeless female veterans to provide the women with ample opportunities to continue their relationship with their children. ($10,000)
- St. Augustine, Florida Lodge No. 829: Elks will help create the Kids Fit Club to introduce high-risk, low-income children to a healthier lifestyle. ($8,500)
- Milton, Florida Lodge No. 2377: Will provide transportation for veterans who cannot or should not drive to the new Veteran’s Affairs clinic in the neighboring county. ($10,000)
- Cocoa Beach, Florida Lodge No. 2387: Elks will continue to provide veterans with care packages of essential items to help them through the rehabilitation process and during key transition periods. ($10,000)
- Jupiter, Florida Lodge No. 2469: Elks will provide 200 Holiday Dinners to local needy families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. ($7,800)
- Lake Placid, Florida Lodge No. 2661: Elks will continue to deliver meals five days a week to homebound and disabled citizens. ($3,120)

Continued on Page 13

FLORIDA WELCOMES

GRAND EXALTED RULER

Paul D. Helsel

The National President of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is visiting Florida to meet with the Florida State Elks Association officers and members.

He and his wife, Jane, will arrive in Daytona Beach aboard Delta Flight 1592 at the Daytona Beach Airport on Wednesday, February 4, 2009, at 11:17 a.m. They will be met at the airport by Florida State Elks Association President Joe Ortiz and his wife, Rita; Past Grand Exalted Ruler Robert Grafton and his wife, Pat; C. Valentine Bates and his wife, Claudia; Vincent P. Como, State Vice President at Large, and his wife, Lisa; Past State President Victor McClellan and his wife, Peggy; Past State President Michael Phillips and his wife, Kathy; and Past State President Michael Smith and his wife, Sandra.

After lunch at the Hatch restaurant they will be given a tour of the Ponce De Leon Inlet Lighthouse and then return to the Shores Resort and Spa to prepare to attend the 100th Anniversary of the Daytona Beach Elks Lodge #1141. They will have dinner and he will address those attending the 100th Anniversary celebration.

On Thursday morning the party will go to the Daytona Beach Speedway and will be given a tour of the NASCAR Track and its attractions. After lunch everyone will depart Daytona Beach to go to the Florida Elks Youth Camp a few miles west of Umatilla. They will stay at the Youth Camp in one of the cabins for visiting dignitaries.

On the evening of February 5 there will be a casual dinner and cocktails where Grand Exalted Ruler Helsel is expected to give a brief hello to those attending.

Friday will be spent touring the massive 400 plus acres of the Florida Elks Youth Camp and the Museum of Florida Elks History as well as having a Lake Cruise followed that evening with cocktails and dinner at the Youth Camp.

There will be numerous board meetings Saturday morning, many of which he will attend. The General Membership Meeting is at 11:00 a.m. where he will address several hundred Florida Elks in the Grafton Center.

During their year in office the Grand Exalted Rulers travel to almost all of the states visiting with thousands of leaders of more than 2,000 Elk Lodges and State Associations.

He continues spreading the motto of his year, “Growing Elkdom,” by getting the members to get more involved in their Lodges and practicing the principles of Elkdom’s Order: Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity.

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At the writing of this message I know that everyone is preparing for the holidays but I am well aware that by the time you receive this issue of the Florida Elks News the holidays will be long gone and we will be halfway through the first quarter of 2009 getting ready to welcome our Grand Exalted Ruler, Paul D. Helsel, and his lovely wife, Jane, to our Youth Camp for our February Quarterly meetings.

Rita and I hope everyone had a fantastic Christmas with your families and friends and that the New Year has found everyone happy, healthy, and ready to continue our work in the final five months of our Florida State Elks Association year in reaching our goals.

Since my last message Rita and I have completed three more visits starting with the Central District on October 3 where on Friday night we had a wonderful dinner at the Brooksville Lodge #2582. On Saturday morning after breakfast at the Holiday Inn we traveled to the center of Pasco County where we enjoyed a historic Trolley Tour of Florida History through Dade City. After the tour we enjoyed a delicious lunch at “A Matter of Taste Café and Tea Room.” Saturday night festivities including music and dancing were held at the Aripeka Lodge #2520.

On October 10 we traveled to the South Southwest District arriving at the Hampton Inn at 4:00 p.m. to the largest group of greeters so far this year with nearly 100 Elks, spouses, and friends present to welcome us. That evening we traveled to Cape Coral Lodge #2596 for refreshments, dinner, and dancing. On Saturday morning after breakfast the men left the hotel for a day of golf at the Royal Tee Golf and Country Club followed by lunch at the Clubhouse Restaurant. The ladies were treated to a shopping and lunch outing on Sanibel/Captiva Islands. Rita enjoyed the many specialty shops and a very good lunch at the Bubble Room on Captiva Island. Saturday night’s official event was held at the Fort Myers Lodge #1288.

The following weekend, October 17, Rita and I visited the Southwest Central District with accommodations at the Holiday Inn Express in Brandon. On Friday evening, the dinner was hosted by Plant City Lodge #1727 where we were able to order from the Lodge’s regular Friday night menu. On Saturday morning we experienced a very interesting and educational visit to the Florida Aquarium in Tampa with a guided “Behind the Scenes” tour. Everyone then enjoyed lunch at the Aquarium deli. That evening the official visit and dinner was held at Brandon Lodge #2383 followed by music and dancing.

On Sunday morning Rita and I drove 1,100 miles to the north to New York to visit our son, Matt; our daughter-in-law, Brooke; and two of our grandkids, Mikey and Claire. We arrived in Staten Island on Monday, October 20. While in New York we also had a chance to visit Rita’s uncles, aunts, and cousins.

We departed for Florida on the 28th for our Harry-Anna Trust Fund meetings at the Youth Camp. The meetings with our investors were very interesting and informative. We left the Youth Camp on November 1 and that evening we attended the Miami Lodge #948’s Fifty-Fourth Annual Charity Ball where we enjoyed a wonderful evening with our friends from our South District.

We then began preparations for the Mid-year Convention which was held at the Wyndham Resort in Orlando.
A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE SECRETARY

Carl T. Seibert, PDD

The November Mid-year meetings were held at the Wyndham Orlando Resort November 13-15. There were 461 Elks and guests in attendance which was a 9% decline from our record attendance last year. Thank you, everyone, who attended and helped to make our Mid-year meetings a success. Also a big thank you goes to Carl Rehling and his entire Credentials Committee for all of their hard work during the convention.

The 2008 convention proceedings and annual reports books were received and distributed this year at the Mid-year Convention. We still have a supply of the books available; however, we are trying to save on postage costs. The books will next be available at the February Quarterly.

The February Quarterly meetings will be held at the Youth Camp February 5-7, 2009. Information went out around the first of the year. Hotel reservations are sometimes hard to come by in February in the Eustis area, so you might want to go ahead and make your hotel reservations if you have not already done so. A list of area hotels is located on our website at www.fleks.org.

The 2009 State Convention will be held May 20-23 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center. Reservation information will soon be available on our web site at www.fleks.org.

The 2009 State Convention will be held May 20-23 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center. Reservation information will soon be available on our web site and was also mailed out in early January.

Please make your reservations as early as possible and please understand your room assignment has nothing to do with when you make your reservation. Your room is not selected for you until you arrive at the resort and then it is chosen from those rooms ready and available. Last year 205 of our 785 rooms checked in on Wednesday and 524 were occupied by Thursday. Since there are approximately 200 rooms in each of the five buildings we are normally housed in, the closest buildings (1, 2, & 3) are full by Thursday. If you arrive on Friday, chances are you will be housed in one of the farther buildings. It is no guarantee, but if you arrive by Thursday, you probably have a better chance of being assigned a room in one of the closer buildings. Our reserved block will sell out so please plan accordingly and do not wait until the last minute to make your reservations for the 2009 State Convention!

This month our Lodges will be electing new leaders for the coming year. I believe that one of the best investments of time and money a Lodge can make is in seeing that their new leaders are properly indoctrinated about their jobs. To assist in that endeavor, the Florida State Elks Association will be holding seminars for all Exalted Rulers Elect and all Secretaries Elect. The dates and locations of these seminars are as follows:

- March 7th & 8th – Lake Mary, FL – Lake Mary Marriott
- March 21st & 22nd – Lake City, FL – Holiday Inn

Again this year, the Harry-Anna Trust Fund will be sponsoring a breakfast on Sunday morning. Several presentations will be made during the breakfast so all attendees will be expected to attend. We will also again offer dual tracks for a portion of the Secretaries seminar. This will allow us to offer more targeted training for the new versus experienced Secretaries. In addition, we will again offer the popular “Chicago Lodge Management System” (CLMS) training on Friday night.

The seminars will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday and conclude by noon on Sunday. If the distance prevents you from traveling Saturday morning, you will want to plan to arrive for the seminar on Friday evening. If you are honored to be elected the Exalted Ruler Elect or Secretary Elect this month, I hope you will make every effort to attend one of these training seminars. Information has already been sent to your Lodge, and it is also available at our web site at www.fleks.org. Our goal for this training is 100% participation, and each year we come very close to attaining this goal. Let’s make 2009 the year we reach it!

Incidentally, a seminar for Lodge Treasurers, Trustees, and House Committee Chairmen is held each year at the Mid-year Convention. Please keep this in mind when preparing your Lodge budgets for next year and see that these officers and committeemen are afforded the ability to attend this very important training.

The 2009 Grand Lodge Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon July 5-9. The Florida delegation will be housed at The Nines Hotel which is located about 1.8 miles from the Convention Center. Hotel registration information and order forms for event tickets will be mailed in January/February and will also be available at our web site. All hotel reservations for the Florida delegation must be made through the State Association office. There is no pre-registration for the Grand Lodge Convention as it takes place onsite at the convention center. If you will be attending the Grand Lodge Convention and will be making your own lodging arrangements, and if you would like to be informed of the activities and events of the convention, please notify the State Office so we may add you to our attending list.

As in the Lodges, the next few months will be especially hectic at the State Association offices as we prepare for conventions, seminars, and the new slate of officers, directors, and committeemen. Please be timely, prompt, and accurate in your responses to our requests for information and assistance. Most everything we do is now published on our web site so please get in the habit of checking these first when looking for the latest event information and updates. Also, if you would like to be notified by e-mail when new event information is posted on our web site, please e-mail us with the address or addresses you would like to have added to our database. Please remember, if we have your e-mail address, you will not receive information by regular mail.

The staff of the Florida State Elks Association is here to serve our association and its members. We value your opinion and recommendations always. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at (800) 523-1673 extension 230 or by e-mail at carl@mpinet.net.

You could be here in 2009!

The Florida State Elks Association is proud to announce that plans are in progress for a post convention Alaska Cruise following the 2009 Grand Lodge Convention in Portland, OR. More information will be available as soon as 2009 cruise rates are established. If you would like to receive more information, please complete and mail the coupon below to FSEA, P.O. Box 49, Umatilla, FL 32784.

Please send more information about the FSEA 2009 Alaska Cruise.

Name: ________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________
City: __________________________ State _______ Zip __________
E-mail Address: ________________________________

Assistance for worthy and needy Members

Grand Lodge Statutes Section 5.070 states that the Order will provide up to $10,000 annually for the assistance of worthy and needy Members of the Order who are suffering from diseases of incurable character or from total disability, and who are without funds for them.

Any Member who meets those qualifications may apply for assistance.

Any Member who desires to apply, or another Member on his/her behalf, should submit an application to his/her Subordinate Lodge by letter setting forth request for this assistance, and providing details to show qualification.

The Sickness and Distress Committee of the Lodge will examine the application and facts to confirm qualification, and if found to exist, forward the request to the Grand Exalted Ruler with recommendation.
Dear Florida Ladies of Elks and Elks,

The Mid-year Convention on November 13-15 at the Wyndham Resort and Convention Center in Orlando was like a fall back to the dog days of summer. The temperatures were in the low 90s and most of the guests didn’t bring swim suits.

PSP Beverly Messerschmidt was unable to be at the meeting. She was home taking care of "Smitty" recovering from recent heart surgery. In her absence, I did the wrap-up portion of her year. Beverly had a wonderful year and should be very proud of it. I hope my year can be as inspiring. "Unity and Friendship, Together We’re Better" was a good motto that paralleled Beverly and Smitty’s lives. PSP Dolores Casella, on behalf of Historian B. J. Black, presented me with Beverly’s yearbook which I accepted on her behalf and gave it to a delegate from her district to present to her. B. J. did a beautiful job putting it together.

Sam Casella, Ladies Organizations State Chairman, introduced FSEA Vice President At Large, Vince Como. State President Joe Ortiz was unable to visit due to a family medical emergency. Sam and Vince complimented the ladies on our contributions to our Lodges, state projects, and Grand Lodge Programs.

Rita Ortiz, wife of FSEA President Joe Ortiz; Lisa Como, wife of VPAL Vince Como; Kathy Lake, wife of FSEA PSP David Lake; Gail Sansoussi, wife of FSEA PSP Dan Sansoussi; and Mary Ann Trinowski, wife of FSEA PSP Charlie Trinowski; all had time to join us at the meeting. Also joining us were Faye Bryant, wife of FSEA Treasurer Joe Bryant; and FLOE Past Presidents Elizabeth Wise, Betty Pickenpaugh, Lee Weigel, and Dolores Casella.

Every FLOE President for the November meeting loves to be able to say, "All committees for the May Luncheon and Chinese Auction and the 2009 Conference are filled." Thank you, delegates, and an extra thank you is given to the districts doing two committees and the districts doing ones they wish they weren’t.

Mark your calendars. The Red, White, & Blue 2009 Conference will be at the Orlando Marriott in Lake Mary from September 24-27, 2009. My symbol is the American flag and fun symbol is the lighthouse. My theme is, "Old Glory Will Light Your Way."

On November 30, 2008, my husband, George, and I traveled with the Elks’ entourage on President Joe Ortiz’s Elks Fundraising Cruise. Despite the fact that we both came down with a virus on Tuesday morning (contracted before we left Florida), we thoroughly enjoyed the outing. Ports of call included Nassau, St. Thomas, and St. Marten, and we had three enjoyable days at sea. Our dining room table included new Elks friends (I don’t know last names): Lou & Buzz from Tallahassee, Gene & Paul from Naples, and Betty & Bill and June & Ray from Seminole. On Tuesday we attended the Elks auction results show which netted more than $500 for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. Friday evening we attended President Joe’s Cocktail Party followed by an impressive Elks Memorial Service conducted under impromptu circumstances. Wrapping up the cruise, the ship was fine, the weather was good, the food was great, and the company was excellent. All in all we had a very good time. I hope to see you all in Umatilla. If I can be of assistance to anyone please feel free to contact me.

Christmas Time at the Elks National Home

By Tom Elmore, PSP

On December 12 the lighting for the Christmas season took place at the Elks National Retirement Center in Bedford, Virginia. For the first time since its inception, a Grand Exalted Ruler’s schedule allowed Paul D. Helsel to deliver the speech for the season and push the big red button to turn on thousands of lights and displays for all to see and enjoy. Over twenty-five thousand vehicles will circle the driveway to view the hard work of the staff and residents.

It was an honor to attend this wonderful event on behalf of all Florida Elks. Many dignitaries attend this special event that starts the real Christmas season in Virginia. State President Joe Ortiz, Rita, Pep, and I met with the Florida residents at our annual Christmas gathering to discuss Florida Elkdom and their Lodges where they belong and to deliver gifts from Florida Elkdom. As usual the appreciation of being remembered is evident by the smiles and thanks given to all for the fruit, gifts, cards, and attendance at this special time of the year. Director Ron Plamondon, the staff, and residents extend to everyone involved a big thank you.

Once again the Florida Ladies of Elks sent the beautiful stockings filled with gifts. Exalted Ruler Julia Ferrell had her friend, Sandy Nagy, of Tallahassee Lodge hand make lap blankets for our Florida residents. The fruit sent by the Florida State Elks Association had arrived on time and added gifts were included in the Christmas bags for presentation to the residents. As Florida National Home Chairman for sixteen years, this visit is a highlight of the year and I thank everyone for the help and ask that we remember the National Home with donations all year long showing that "Elks Care – Elks Share.”
Gainesville Lodge 990

The Annual Halloween Party for the kids was held; it included bingo, great costumes, and pumpkin decorating, with some very creative pumpkins.

A Christmas Bazaar was held allowing individuals to display their crafts, goods or wares. A Children’s Christmas Party was held with none other than Santa there to pass out gifts to all the good girls and boys.

Orange Park Lodge 2605

An AUCE fish fry was held to say Thanks to Our Veterans for serving our Country and providing us the Freedoms we have. Residents from The Robert H. Jenkins Domiciliary in Lake City were honored. The Annual Christmas Pizza Party was held at the Domiciliary jointly with the Lady of Elks.

Jacksonville Lodge 221

Bob Morgan, Americanism Chairman, is conducting a comfort items drive for our deployed troops overseas. The monthly barbecue proceeds go to support the veterans.

Eva Sumrall aka “Mother Teresa” of Veterans’ Services continues to make her journey to the Lake City Domiciliary monthly. She brings food, clothing, ditty bags, and books and entertains the patients with bingo.

St. Augustine Lodge 829

Members have been contributing to their Local Food Bank Drive by collecting non-perishable food items.

There were 125 people who attended the Second Annual Public Safety Ball at St. Augustine Elks Lodge on October 18.

Green Cove Springs Lodge 1892

A Fish Fry was held with all proceeds going to the Elks Children’s Charities. The 3rd Annual “Turkey Golf Classic” was held and thanks to the efforts of Clyde Mixon and Helen Cemer, the Lodge was able to feed 100 families a complete turkey dinner. Tournament Chairperson and longtime Elk member, Clyde Mixon, thanked all the supporters and sponsors of the event that has accomplished so much for so many families in two short years. Each family received a huge brown paper bag containing a large turkey, canned goods, and baked goods. The turkey bags were distributed by the Green Cove Springs Police Department and the clergy of area churches.

Charles Michael Bates, 21, is a fourth generation Elk. He was initiated September 18 into the Green Cove Springs Lodge 1892. His other grandfather is a PER of Lodge 272 and both of his great grandfathers were life members. His mother, Lisa Valentine Bates-Lester, and Grandmother and Grandfather Bump are also members of Elks Lodge 1892.

National Conventions

July 6-10, 2008  Anaheim, CA
July 5-9, 2009  Portland, OR
July 4-8, 2010  Orlando, FL
July 10-14, 2011  Phoenix, AZ
July 1-5, 2012  Austin, TX
July 14-18, 2013  Reno, NV

CORRECTION

Due to an editing error the Ladies of the East Central District donations to the Florida Elks Charities was not reported in the last issue.

The Editor apologizes for the mistake.

LADIES OF THE EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Daytona Beach Emblem Club #204  $ 160.00  204
Deland Elks Ladies  $ 100.00
Ladies Of The Island Elks-M.I.  $ 610.00  620
New Smyrna Beach Elks Ladies  $ 783.79
Ormond Beach Emblem Club  $ 1,100.00
Palm Coast Ladies Auxiliary  $ 1,650.00  1,000
Port Orange Elks Hearts  $ 1,315.00  2,000
Sanford Lady Elks  $ 1,220.00
Titusville Does Drove No. #183  $ 567.00  850

DISTRICT TOTALS:  $ 7,505.79  4,664
Dunedin-Clearwater Lodge 1525

The Chairman of Community Social Affairs, Clarence Rolsin, PER, presented Janine Munn, Family and Community Relations Liaison at San Jose Elementary School in Dunedin, with fifty $20 Sweet Bay Market gift cards to help families enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner.

Holiday Isles Lodge 1912

Holiday Isles ER Ann Williams, West Central District Drug Awareness Chairperson, and Gene LaPoutre, West Central District Drug Awareness Vice Chairperson and a member of Pinellas Park Lodge 2217, took 3,000 pieces of Drug Awareness material, including red ribbons, coloring books, bookmarks, etc. to the Pinellas County School Administration Building. These materials were distributed to some schools on October 10, 2008. In addition, ER Ann Williams gave Lodge member Brett Volland, a teacher at Madeira Beach Middle School, an additional 1,500 pieces of Drug Awareness material to hand out to his school and Madeira Beach Elementary.

On November 8, the Lodge and American Legion Post 273 sponsored the Veterans’ Boat Parade. After a flyover by the National Guard, the 32 decorated boats went in and around the canals and waterways in Madeira Beach.

At the conclusion of the parade, all of the boat captains and their crews were treated to lunch at the Lodge. Lunch was followed by the presentation of the trophies for the winners in the various categories. There were 223 meals served. Thanks go to all the Elks who volunteered to help our nation’s treasures, our veterans.

Pearl Harbor Day was remembered by the Lodge on Sunday, December 7. This program was put on by Lodge Veterans’ Services Chairman, Stan Azevedo, himself a Pearl Harbor survivor. This year there were only three Pearl Harbor survivors present. Each year their numbers decrease. It is an honor and a privilege to honor them every year.

During the annual Memorial Service, twelve members were honored who had passed to realms on high this past year. Thanks go to all who participated in this service.

Lodge Treasurer, Marcy Parsons, in conjunction with three veterans from VFW Post 9272 in Seminole, packed and shipped many boxes of needed items for our men and women serving in Iraq.

The Lodge had thirteen couples from the Lodge participate in the Harry-Anna Cruise, including Harry-Anna Trust Fund Chairman, Bob Pitney, and his wife, Joanie.

Largo Lodge 2159

A Court of Honor was held by Troop 417, sponsored by Largo 2519, in which eighteen scouts received 52 merit badges that had been earned. Jacob Fritz and Lee Fritz, the two Eagle Scouts, were honored to accept the Gold Eagle Palm and Double Bronze Palm badges.

Youth Activities Chairman, Jan Rodgers, delivered two boxes and a backpack full of assorted school supplies to Fuguit Elementary School. Principal Michael Moss and Assistant Principal Diane Allen accepted the supplies and expressed their gratitude and thanked Jan for the Elks’ generosity and continuing support of the school.

Leon Synder, Veterans’ Activities Chairman, recently hosted the annual picnic at Bay Pines VA Medical Center for the disabled veterans who reside at the center. At least 100 veterans and their caregivers joined the Elks out on the patio area for grilled burgers, hot dogs, and lots of lemonade.

The captain of the dining room recently had a superhero. During the entertainment break, Ms. Captain America took the floor to make everyone aware of what the Harry-Anna Trust Fund is and to get donations and pledges. She had a very successful evening, raising $420.

New Port Richey Lodge 2284

On Sunday, December 7, after the Memorial Service, New Port Richey Lodge held a service to honor Anthony Menna. Mr. Menna, a WWII Marine, was on duty at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked.

The Lodge contributes to many charitable and community service projects. Recently $200 was donated to PAWS, $300 was donated to the Salvation Army, $200 was donated to Boys Town, $500 was donated to Special Olympics, $500 was donated to Volunteer Way, and $570 was donated to purchase dictionaries for schools.

Pinellas Park Lodge 2217

Pinellas Park Lodge 2217 donated 75 food baskets within the community. Most of the recipients were families of children who attend Pinellas Park Elementary School. This is the fourth year the Lodge has distributed Christmas baskets. Last year fifty baskets were given out. However, due to the hard economy, this number was increased this year. The Lodge was honored by the message displayed on the sign outside the school.

Tampa Lodge 708

Congratulations go to Tampa. The Lodge took the 2nd place award for its website. Please visit them at www.TampaElks.com.

Tampa Lodge has also been chosen as one of the recipients of the ENF 2009 Impact Grant for $10,000. The grant is to allow the Lodge to support their community project, Athena Homeless Women Veterans Transitional Housing Project.

On Saturday, December 6, the Lodge held its annual Children’s Christmas Party. The day was filled with a hula hoop contest, Christmas caroling karaoke, cookie decorating, a clown, Christmas face tattoos, magic show, and of course Santa Claus. Approximately 128 children received a gift especially chosen for their sex and age. Lunch was provided and a joyous time was had by all.

Seminole Lodge 2519

The Lodge is proud of Enid “Sam” Simpson, recently installed Vice President of FLOE. Sam is a Past Lady President of Seminole Lodge and remains active.

Lodge Drug Awareness Chairman, Ann “Dolly” Lang, made sure everyone was aware that October was Red Ribbon Month. She made her rounds during Lodge functions pinning everyone who came through the door.

On Saturday, November 22, Gordon Hoffman, ENF Chairman, and his wife, Jean, hosted the Lodge’s annual ENF Dinner Dance. Over $2,400 was submitted to ENF.

Under the supervision of Lodge Veterans’ Chairman, Marge DeLevante, clothing and personal items valued at over $400 were donated to Bay Pines VA Medical Center. The Lodge also continues to host veterans from Bay Pines on the second Friday of the month for dinner and homemade desserts. Five cases of Girl Scout cookies are being shipped to our troops for a special “thank you.”

Through the Foster Adoptive Parent Association, five children will have their Christmas wishes fulfilled, valued at $100 each.

Seminole Ladies of Elks, under the Friendship & Welfare Committee Chairperson, Jean Hoffman, distributed six baskets for Thanksgiving providing a wonderful bounty for families to enjoy.

Tarpon Springs Lodge 1719

The Lodge was nominated by Tarpon Springs Elementary School as a Business Partner of the Year. Kathy Conrad, Americanism Chairman, and Nancy Goryb, Est. Lecturing Knight, attended the banquet in honor of the Lodge sponsored by the Pinellas Education Foundation.

The Lodge, along with help from Tarpon Springs Elementary School and New Horizon Day, donated over twenty baskets of food and turkeys to needy families in the area. Members Bill Lang and Kathy Conrad chaired this event.

Jack Campbell chaired the annual golf tournament which is held to help send children to camp this upcoming summer. Last year the Lodge was able to send 33 children to the Florida Elks Youth Camp.
Daytona Beach Lodge 1141

Memoriam
Ronald R. Kunz
August 22, 1928-November 19, 2008

Ronald was a retired USAF Major. He was initiated as an Elks in 1977 at the Melbourne Lodge 1744 and served as their Exalted Ruler. He demitted to Daytona Beach Lodge in 1989 and became a Life Member in June 2008. He served as the Lodge Secretary from 1991 until his death. A memorial service was held at the Central Baptist Church in Daytona Beach and given full military honors by the Port Orange VFW Post 3282.

He will be missed by family and friends.

Leading Knight Linda Behnke helped distribute Drug Awareness material at the Daytona State College for October Red Ribbon Week.

The Highway Pickup was held on Sunday, October 4 with fourteen volunteers on hand including DDGER Sonny Armstrong.

Lodge Veterans’ Chairman, Art Wilson, has been in charge of the Lodge’s “Wall of Honor.” He ensures all new members who are veterans are added to the “Wall of Honor.” On November 6 the annual Veterans’ Spaghetti Dinner honoring veterans from the Emory Bennett Nursing Home and Indigo Manor in Daytona Beach was held with the Am Vets Post 911 as the Honor Guard.

The Lodge hosted a champagne 100th Anniversary kickoff toast on November 13. Attending the celebration were Exalted Ruler Mary Johnson, DDGER Willis Armstrong, PDDs Emma and Leland Becton, PER Roger Johnson, ECD Reporter Mary Ann Bucci, and members and guests of the Lodge.

Cub Scout Pack #141 is very active in the Lodge; they recently held a food drive and sold flavored popcorn to help raise money for the Lodge’s charities.

This year’s Ride for Kids Poker Run raised over $1,200. Elroy the Elk and the Drug Awareness trailer were on hand at the Recovery Month Event held at the Daytona Beach Bandshell. The Lodge is looking forward to celebrating their 100th Centennial Anniversary in February 2009. They are extremely honored to have Grand Exalted Ruler Paul Helsel and his wife, Jane, join them for this event.

Deland Lodge 1463

During the month of October the Lodge reached out to help those in need and held the first Kids’ Halloween Party. PDD Phil Watercutter organized an outside cleanup on November 8-9. The Lodge held its third annual “Remembering our Veterans Breakfast” on November 9. As part of the “Sock it to Me” program, Lodge members were asked to donate lap blankets and socks for the veterans at the Daytona Beach Emory Bennett Nursing Home. Thanks go to Dean Yeager, PER for designing an award winning web site - www.delandelks.citymax.com.

On December 6 the Jaycees held their annual Christmas Parade where the Lodge was represented with a parade float. The Lodge is proud of its 37 year commitment in helping local schools with scholarships.

Merritt Island Lodge 2650

The Lodge and AmVets Post 893 and the Eagle Aeries 4257 helped to raise over $11,000 for Leading Knight Patrick Barber, who is suffering from cancer, and his family. It was a great outpouring of compassion and love from our members who supported this worthy benefit.

The Lodge prepared a meal for the senior citizens at the Anderson Center on November 15. On November 23, veterans from the Transition Station in Melbourne were invited to a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner. The Ladies Auxiliary held a Rummage Sale on November 6 and raised approximately $1,300. Some clothing and toys were taken to the Domestic Violence Shelter and some of the money raised will be used for the children at the shelter.

On December 14 members enjoyed a Country Christmas at the Kiwanis Park to help benefit the developmentally disabled persons in Brevard County.

New Smyrna Beach Lodge 1557

On October 8 the Lodge held a blood drive for the Florida Blood Center, a nonprofit organization to provide an adequate and safe supply of blood to more than seventy hospitals and healthcare facilities throughout the state.

Marilyn Bader and her many volunteers of the Gifts of Love pantry have been busy gathering canned foods for more than 400 families every month.

On October 1 the members voted to change the name of the Lodge to Edgewater/New Smyrna Beach Lodge 1557 reflecting the new location and the old location.

Ladies of the Elks donated $2,000 to the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services Committee, continues to do a fine job informing veterans on VA healthcare issues.

ER Dave has started work on growing another $2,000.

On November 7 to send these packages to our troops.

The Lodge held its 3rd annual Santa Claus Breakfast on December 21. Children from Country Acres and Christ Aid attended the breakfast.

members and guests of the Lodge.

On October 11 to welcome back all the snowbirds. On October 4-5, the Lodge held its annual Port Orange Family Days at the City Center in support of Drug Awareness. Angelo Cretella, Chairman, supplied over 700 plastic bags of Drug Awareness information and red ribbons that were handed out by Lodge volunteers. Elroy the Elk was on hand (John Faile from Daytona Beach Lodge 1141). Joe Lent, Lodge Americanism Chairman, and his wife, Susan, were also on hand to hand out applications to enter the 2008-09 Americanism Essay Contest for middle school students.

Students from Atlantic and Spruce Creek High Schools were presented with the Student of the Month Award for the months of October, November, and December. Congratulations to all of them.

Congratulations go to Joan Fritz on becoming President of the Florida Ladies of Elks. Joan was installed as President in September. Joan is Past President and Treasurer of the Port Orange Elkshearts. She became a Senior Delegate to FLOE representing the East Central District in 2002 and in 2004 she was appointed Chaplain. Joan’s colors for 2008-09 are red, white, and blue. Her prime symbol is the American flag and her motto will be “Old Glory Will Light your Way.” As FLOE President, Joan expects to continue the good works of the organization and its Past Presidents and Advisory Board by raising funds for the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

The Lodge congratulates Dr. Ram Nayar, Professor of Microbiology at Daytona State College, for being part of a program that benefits young men of color to achieve their goals in obtaining a higher education. Ram has been a member for the past seven years and the Lodge is proud to have him as a member.

Sanford Lodge 1241

The Lodge is helping the United States Marine Corps “Toys for Tots” drive by asking its members to donate toys for needy children.

On November 11 Lodge veterans were honored for their service to our country.

Exalted Ruler Bill Magner and PER John Colbert presented school supplies to Missy Jones, a teacher at Goldsboro Elementary School in Sanford.

Titusville Lodge 2113

With the help of Santa and Mrs. Claus, the Ladies held their annual Santa Breakfast on December 21. Children from Country Acres and Christ Aid attended the breakfast.

Members of the Lodge enjoyed a Youth Camp Dance and a Chinese & Silent Auction fundraiser which were held on November 7 to help send a child to camp. The event raised $2,000.

The “Shave Dave” was a great success raising $1,045 for the Florida Elks Youth Camp. ER Dave has started work on growing another beard for the next event.

Jim Harnish, Chairman of Veterans’ Services Committee, continues to do a fine job informing veterans on VA healthcare issues and the changing government issues for veterans. On Veterans’ Day this year, the Lodge invited troops from the Titusville WINET organization to dinner. The guest speaker was Master Sergeant (ret) Gilbert M. Berg, a Distinguished Honorary Member of the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame; he was present to tell tales of the Rangers and to answer questions concerning that famous unit. Thanks go to Bob and Irene DeSoudry for their efforts in contacting troops and helping them get what they need.

A donation of $435 from the Bar Bingo players was presented to help with postage to send these packages to our troops.
**Lodges of the SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

**Reporter: Joy A. Booth, PER**

Mr. Basil and Mr. Mozzocci were held at the door and not permitted to enter until they were properly summoned by Mr. Tyler himself. When allowed to enter, they were greeted with the Secretary sitting smugly at his desk with two very large henchmen, dressed in black, wearing dark glasses and holding rather large baseball bats in a threatening position.

Before the audit got started, the visitors were told that under no circumstances would Secretary Tyler put up with any shenanigans from them or they would have to answer to his personal henchmen, and guess what? This year’s audit went very smoothly!

**West Palm Beach Lodge 1352**

The Lodge held its second Flag Retirement Service on November 7 under the direction of Americanism Chairman Bruce Cook, PER and Gary Stirling, PER. Over 250 flags of all sizes were given the proper farewell. After the ceremony, the guests were treated to ice cream and cake.

On December 7, the Lodge held its Memorial Service as required as eleven past Elks were remembered. After the official ceremony, the Lodge held a celebration for its 90th year in existence. All PERs from West Palm Beach and those Lodges that merged with WPB (Lake Worth, Palms West, and Lantana/Boynton) were invited and recognized. Each were called to the podium and allowed to say a few words in remembrance. PER Gary Murphy came all the way from Georgia to join in the celebration. Several PERs living in North Florida also came. A roast beef dinner was prepared by SEDVP Les Sziribik and his crew. Music and great conversation along with many PER stories were enjoyed by those present.

On December 14, many children from Wynebrooke Elementary School were treated to breakfast with Santa (beautifully done by Kenny Allfrey). The families were treated to a breakfast buffet and all children received a gift from Santa. Special thanks go out to Christine and Kenny Allfrey for organizing such a great event. It was wonderful to see the smiles of those children as each was called to Santa’s lap to receive their gift.

PER Mike Orlando and his wife, Jan, are the proud grandparents of their granddaughter, Nina. She is a former Legacy Scholarship winner who graduated from college with an Art Degree. She won a contest for creating a Christmas ornament for the White House Christmas tree representing the state of Maryland. Her ornament was a ball that was covered with small mosaic tiles depicting the state’s bird, flower, and other Maryland landmarks. She, along with 49 other artists, was invited to dinner at the White House and a meeting with Mrs. Bush.

**Jupiter Lodge 2469**

Jupiter Lodge was very lucky to receive an Elks National Foundation Impact Grant this year valued at $1,800. This allowed the Lodge to distribute 100 Thanksgiving and 100 Christmas dinners to the needy families in the Jupiter area. Each family received a turkey and all the trimmings to feed a family of five two days before the holiday.

PER Lil Ma Leish organized a Day with our Veterans; veterans were treated to a dinner and enjoyed Elks races as entertainment. Special wheelchair blankets were distributed also. The local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were also on hand to help.

The Lodge was greatly saddened at the death of member Nonnan E. Minne. He was a close friend and sponsor of DDGER Paul Mozzocci and his wife, Mary.

The Lodge held its first Soccer Shoot at the Jupiter Community Park on October 25. Over fifty boys and girls participated with the winners advancing on to the District competition.

**Belle Glade/Pahokee Lodge**

First of all, congratulations go to PDD Barbara Heffernan and her family on the marriage of her daughter.

A large Christmas party was celebrated on December 14.

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**South Miami/Coral Gables Lodge 1676**

On October 18 the Annual Charity Ball was held with the theme as Election, Selection, and Celebration. The main theme was to get out and vote and in keeping with the theme they held a vote for President of the Charity Ball! The votes were counted and some were counted twice. The hands were greased and after a long night of counting votes it was announced the winner was J. Frost Walker, III. The Lodge Head of the Trustees now has another title and that is President of the Lodge.

As this year’s audit approached, Secretary Tyler got his brain in gear and came up with a way to get even. When it was time for the audit to start, the visitors were told that under no circumstances would Secretary Tyler put up with any shenanigans from them or they would have to answer to his personal henchmen, and guess what? This year’s audit went very smoothly!

**Miami Lodge 948**

Miami Lodge honored veterans by putting up a new wall of valor. This wall lists the members who have served the country and their branch of service.

A meal that featured the standard fare for the military “SOS” and then everyone went to the ballroom for a program.

The flags of the various branches were brought in, presented by Felix Varela high school honor guard presented the U. S. flag. After the singing of the national anthem, taps was played for the ones who have fallen. A continuous slide show featured members in their military day.

The lodge is now looking forward to participating in the Jr. Orange Bowl Parade along with North Miami and South Miami Elks. Featured will be the drug awareness trailer and passing out goodies to the children.

**Marathon Lodge 2139**

The Sock Hop Fundraiser was a great success. Danielle Lebo did a fabulous job of transforming the meeting hall into a soda shop. They raised $3,100 including a check to the Elks National Foundation for $1,500.

The Lodge per-capita for the Elks National Foundation has reached $8.1081, exceeding the Grand Exalted Ruler’s goal of $4.50. The Lodge is now eligible for an ENF Gratitude Grant of $500.

The Lodge has reached the goal in the month of December for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. They are third place in the state with a total of $5,420.

**North Miami Lodge 1835**

On Tuesday, November 11, North Miami Lodge 1835 attended the dedication of the City of North Miami Veterans Tribute Tower. During the ceremony the Air Force had a minute of silence in honor of the veterans at 11:00, reminding us of the Elks Hour of Recollection.

Medical Foster Care held the Children’s Medical Services Christmas Party on December 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Barbara Ortiz is program supervisor of this organization.

On Tuesday, December 13, the “Needy Children Christmas Party” was held to meet the needs of many children in the community and the Lodge’s Annual Charity Ball and Raffle will be held in February.
Cocoa Lodge

On October 10-12, the 12th Annual Bill and John Sr. Fletcher Memorial Winter Classic Softball Tournament to benefit the Florida Elks Youth Camp was held. There were fifteen teams present representing Lodges from all over the state of Florida. Congratulations go to the winning Lodges and those who participated. A check in the name of the winning Lodges was donated to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. Again, the Lodge was proud to host this tournament to benefit the Major State Project. Photos are at www.cocoaelks.com.

 Participating Lodges: Brandon 2383 - 2 teams; Cocoa 1532 - 2 teams; Deland 1463 - 1 team; Delray Beach - 3 teams; Punta Gorda 2060 - 1 team; Rotonda 2710 - 1 team; St. Petersburg 1224 - 1 team; Tarpon Springs 1719 - 2 teams; and Winter Garden 2165 - two teams. Winning teams: A Division - Winter Garden – 1st Place; Delray Beach - 1st Place; Punta Gorda - 2nd Place - Deland; and 3rd Place – Cocoa. B Division – Brandon – 1st Place. Senior Division - Rotonda/Punta Gorda – 1st Place and Brandon – 2nd Place.

Ft. Pierce Lodge 1520

When DDGER Bill Fricke and District Esquire Marie Fricke investigated the Lodge, sixteen new members were installed. DDGER Fricke addressed the meeting, extending greetings from Grand Exalted Ruler Paul D. Helser and State President Joseph Ortiz. He welcomed the new members, instilling in them the pride and privilege of being a member of the greatest fraternal organization in America.

Leslie Mims of Jai Alai presented a check and three big boxes of food to PDD J. J. Johnson and ER Nila Reitz. The Jai Alai management hopes that this starts an annual project with the Lodge and their organization.

The Fort Pierce Jai Alai and the players of its Crystal Card Room donated money and food for distribution to needy people in Fort Pierce.

The Lodge held a Law & Order Day on Sunday, October 12. It was attended by over 100 Elks and guests as well as local dignitaries from their law enforcement community. Sheriff Ken Mascara, Public Defender Diamond Liddy, Fort Pierce Police Chief Sean Baldwin, and State Attorney Bruce Colton were among the attendees. A highlight of the afternoon was an outstanding performance by the Avenue D Boys Choir. Under the direction of Mary Hendricks, the boys performed for over an hour, and the short stories from some of the boys who told about their history with the choir and how it helps keep them looking in the right direction was delightful.

Leading Knight Miki McMurtry and Chairperson of the ENF Committee hosted an ENF Fundraiser which raised over $2,000.

Melbourne Lodge 1744

This is the Lodge’s first year of supporting the National Foundation “Project Dictionary” which supplies 3rd graders with their own personal dictionary. The Lodge also contacted fellow Lodges for support in this project; over twenty responses were received. Lodge officers are studying them one at a time to see how many can be served. An initial appointment with the schools to show them the dictionary samples that they could choose from was made and they selected a Webster’s Student Dictionary. This was the Elks’ way of getting the schools involved.

The dictionaries were distributed in November to the first elementary school. The Lodge is starting this project with the Dr. W.F. Creel Elementary School, and the school has received 115 dictionaries, one for each of the 3rd grade students.

Several children indicated that this would be the first English dictionary in their house as well as the first dictionary that they owned. This was a most rewarding experience for the Lodge because the children are so appreciative of so many things that are taken for granted. Publicity from the local newspapers and school newspapers was published on Project Dictionary.

Port St. Lucie 2658

A Halloween Costume Dance was a great success with 175 people in attendance and over fifty people in costume. The third prize winner of the evening was Pirate Esquire Jack DeBell, PER and his Pirate Lady, Joan.

The Lodge hosted its annual 9-11 Appreciation Luncheon with 200 attending.

In November, the Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner was prepared by the House Committee with 300 people attending.

There were six Thanksgiving baskets given to needy Iraq veterans’ families in the area, and the baskets were prepared by Theresa Byrne, Dolores O’Connor, and Bill Nilsson.

The Lodge sent six Christmas baskets to needy families in their neighborhood. Bill Nilsson is collecting DVDs to send to troops while he and his crew prepares the boxes going to Iraq. During the past three months, Bill and his “Desert Elk” crew have prepared and sent fifty boxes to troops in Iraq.

Stuart-Jensen Lodge 1870

In October, DDGER William Fricke visited the Lodge for his annual inspection, and nine new members were initiated.

Stuart-Jensen Lodge was honored to have the Endorsed State President, Vincent Como, visit the Lodge to see his sister, Josephine Destasio, initiated as an Elk.

The Lodge Drug Awareness program was in full swing as Elroy the Elk came to town and visited three elementary schools for Red Ribbon Week and handed out over 5,000 bags, coloring books, and bookmarks! On October 25, the Lodge welcomed home DVP Betty Tewksbury in a “spooktacular” Halloween theme. Over 200 were in attendance and most were in costume, including the DVP dressed up like a nurse handing out “samples” and “shots.” The Holiday season started early with a Harvest Ball to welcome the new Exalted Ruler, Suzi Gordon.

On November 8, veterans were honored with a special program, and Veteran of the Year Harold Snook, LM was honored. On November 11, a group of volunteers marched in the Stuart Veterans’ Parade. The Lodge held its annual Thanksgiving dinner and also collected over 300 lbs. of food for the Jesus House of Hope.

Sebastian Lodge 2714

The winter season opened with the ELDOEs’ attendance at the FLOE Convention on September 25-28. It was attended by Joan C. Fritz, the new President. Sebastian’s Betty Groff was installed as Treasurer and Mary Fox was moved to Senior Delegate.

The Annual Golf Tournament was held at the Sebastian Municipal Golf Course on October 25 and was a great success.

On October 26, two new Lodge members, Ethel and Ted Palumbo, and their able helpers, prepared a lasagna dinner for 48 people and did a wonderful job.

On November 8, Elvis was in the house. Dan Cunningham, an Elvis impersonator, did a wonderful job singing and intermingling with the audience.

On November 15, the Elks Ladies held a Flea Market which was extremely successful. It was co-chaired by Madeline Walsh and Carol Weiss. Leftovers were donated to the veterans and local churches.

Vero Beach 1774

Ruth Hoey, the past Secretary of Vero Beach Lodge, has been undergoing chemotherapy treatment for ovarian cancer. During treatment, she made a quilt that showed the Ovarian Cancer Awareness Alliance color (teal). September was Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, so Mike Milot and Ruth, Treasure Coast Ovarian Cancer Alliance members, appeared on local TV Station WTCE-21 of Fort Pierce to discuss ovarian cancer facts and symptoms and to display the quilt. The Lodge then held a raffle for the quilt and raised $200 to donate to the support group and women’s awareness activities of the Alliance.

The Lodge purchased 105 thesaurus dictionaries and presented them to 3rd graders of Rosewood Magnet School of Vero Beach. The students who received the dictionaries will be able to take the book with them to aid their education as they progress through to their high school graduation. The students were led by their Principal, Deborah Dillon, to give an arousing thank you to the Lodge. Distributing the dictionaries were Trisha See, Media Specialist at Rosewood School; Jack Houlihan, PER; and Christina Ferrari, Physical Education Teacher at Rosewood School as well as a member of the Lodge and the Elks Chairperson for the program.

The Lodge hosted a Spaghetti Dinner which raised $11,000 from dinner tickets, door prizes, and raffles. The money was donated to the Vero Beach Rosewood Magnet School. This money will be used to send approximately 62 fifth grade students, at a cost of $520 each, to attend a three-day camp at Sea Camp at Newfound Harbor Marine Institute in Big Pine Key.
Harry-Anna Trust Fund
Eastern Carribean Cruise

The Harry-Anna Trust Fund Caribbean Cruise on the Carnival Valor ship left the Port of Miami on Sunday Nov. 30 shortly after sunset for its first destination of Nassau, Bahamas, arriving at dawn Monday. Almost everyone endured a brief rain shower while awaiting a $5.00 taxi ride to the beautiful Atlantis resort, aquarium, and casino for an afternoon of sight-seeing. Leaving Nassau that afternoon the 900 foot ship left for a long cruise to St. Thomas, enjoying the Captains formal dinner that night. St. Maarten was the next destination where a lot of diamond and jewelry shopping was accomplished, while others refreshed at a Pirates pub.

In all it was a great 7-day trip with plenty of entertainment. The ships crew was more than friendly and seemed to know everyone’s name shortly after leaving port. The cabin stewards decorated each cabin nightly with a mysteriously created towel pet.

The dining and food was plentiful and superb whether formal or relaxed. There was plenty of fun to be had at either of the two swimming pools and/or two hot tubs.

The Harry-Anna Trust Fund received $100 for each of the 138 passengers who enjoyed the Eastern Carribbean Cruise. In addition, another $487 raised in the JK Cruise & Travel charity auction and Jeff Cabaniss, JK Cruise & Travel’s owner, put in an additional $713 to make it an even $15,000. Each Lodge will be credited with their share of the $13,800 at $100 per person who sailed. Eleven of Florida’s 14 Districts had passengers represented.
2009 Florida State Soccer Shoot

The year has been exceptional with our endeavors achieving a 12% increase in participation at the Lodge level with current participation numbers logging 870 hours of service; more than 675 miles of travel; and involved more than 1000 spectators, 400 Elks and over 200 kids.

On Saturday, January 10th the best of the best came with their family and friends to the grand finale of the Florida State Elks Soccer Shoot at the Youth Camp in Umatilla.

Dignitaries attending were State President Joe Ortiz and wife Rita, VPAL Vincent Como and wife Lisa, and recently endorsed Vice President at Large Jim Hurst and wife Julia. There were more than 150 family, friends and Elks in attendance for the very well run Shoot-Out.

Boys Division U-8, Ages 7 & Under
1st Place Ryan Svopa Jupiter Lodge #2469
2nd Place Matthew Rivers Kissimmee Lodge #1873
3rd Place Corey Rhoads Orange Park Lodge #2605

Girls Division U-8, Ages 7 & Under
1st Place Kaitlin Helton Holiday Isle Lodge #1912
2nd Place Summer Locke Eustis Lodge #1578
3rd Place Miranda Giddens Clewiston Lodge #1853

Boys Division U-10, Ages 8 & 9
1st Place Matthew Dobson Orange Park Lodge #2605
2nd Place Spencer Ross Kissimmee Lodge #1873
3rd Place Kyle Custer Orange Park Lodge #2605

Girls Division U-10, Ages 8 & 9
1st Place Stephanie Tieu Rotonda Lodge #2710
2nd Place Alison Bean Ocala Lodge #286

Boys Division U-12, Ages 10 & 11
1st Place Cristian Cobb Ocala Lodge #286
2nd Place Andrew Magrane Sebastian Lodge #2714
3rd Place Brady Rhoads Orange Park Lodge #2605

Girls Division U-12, Ages 10 & 11
1st Place Carley Hall Orange Park Lodge #2605
2nd Place Ciara M. DeBell Ocala Lodge #286
3rd Place Hang Luo Jupiter Lodge #2469

Boys Division U-14, Ages 12 & 13
1st Place Brock Ramer Clewiston Lodge #1853
2nd Place Nick Yeager St. Petersburg Lodge #1224
3rd Place Hever Ramirez Ocala Lodge #286

Girls Division U-14, Ages 12 & 13
1st Place Katelyn Henderson Sebastian Lodge #2714
2nd Place Isabella Napolitano Deland Lodge #1463
3rd Place Shannon Fletcher Jupiter Lodge #2469

North Central District

Silver Springs Shores Lodge 2730

Silver Springs Shores Lodge had an all around good time enjoying the Vets Christmas Party with dinner, entertainment and gift stockings for all at Ft. McCoy. Lots of food was donated to fill our annual Charity Baskets. There is also a Veterans’ Luncheon the 4th Saturday of each month so be sure to mark your calendar to come out and spend some quality time with the Veterans.

Inverness Lodge 522

If you did not attend the Harvest Charity Ball at the Inverness Lodge, you missed a good time, good food and fellowship. The local therapist, Jacintha Griffith was here with a great presentation of slides and stories about some of the children and families for which she provides. She brought the mobile van, which was donated by the Aripeka Lodge, to show us the various tools and toys used for therapy. She treats newborns to nine years of age.

Santa & Mrs. Claus came to visit the Inverness Elks Lodge with gifts, a Magic Show, balloons, face painting and good cheer for everyone who attended. Santa had gifts for over 50 kids. The annual Christmas Charity raffle raised over $2,500, distributed to such local charities as Citrus United Basket and Hospice of Citrus County.

Apopka Lodge 2422

The fifth annual C.M. “Mac” Walters Memorial Golf outing was a rousing success! Over $3,000 was donated to the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and the Make a Wish Foundation of Central Florida. Over the past five years the event has raised over $16,000. Keep up the good work!

The Apopka Elks Lodge participated in the annual Apopka Christmas Parade Dec. 6th sponsored each year by the Apopka Sertoma Club. Once again a great time was enjoyed partnering with local Cub Scout Pack 357. It was followed by a Christmas party for the Antlers and Scouts at the Lodge.
The North District will enjoy the visit in late January of State President Joe Ortiz and his wife, Rita. The visit was in Marianna Lodge 1516 in the west end of the district. The hosts for the weekend of events are District Vice President Tom Sanson and his wife, Juanita.

Lake City Lodge 893

DDGER Janet da Silva made her official visit to the Lake City Lodge in November, emphasizing the importance of Veterans’ programs. It was an enjoyable evening and included a great meal.

Lake City Lodge had “Toy Night” on December 5, collecting donations and toys to be used for holiday gift giving. The Lodge continued its tradition this past year by preparing Christmas baskets of food for needy families. Baskets were delivered on December 20. Santa was at the Lodge on Christmas Eve to greet children. Funding for these events was due in part to the Lodge’s Christmas Charity Raffle. The drawing for winners was on Christmas Eve, and members were invited to bring snacks and come join in the fun. At the end of December, a New Year’s Eve party was held.

The Lodge held its Elks Memorial Service on December 7 at 2 p.m. preceded by lunch in the dining room. The Lodge lost six members this year, including PDD James Hollingsworth. James had been a trusted leader in the district during his years of membership in the Order.

Upcoming events in 2009 include a performance at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Lake City by the group, Recreation, to be held on February 16.

Live Oak Lodge 1165

Live Oak Lodge sponsors a Boy Scout Troop in the local community. ER Charlie Walker and his wife were fortunate to attend the 25th anniversary of the troop on October 18. The Lodge gave the troop a $200 check. These are the kind of events that give any Lodge visibility and accolades.

The Anna Miller Circle again sponsored its annual fishing tournament in Steinhatchee on the Gulf of Mexico. The event was held on October 4 and seventy entries were pre-registered. First and second place winners in the redfish category were Richard Marable and Andrew Williams. In the trout category, first and second place winners were Duke Hawthorne and Michael Arnold. The ladies appreciate the participation by the registrants and the help of men of the Lodge in helping to run the event.

In December, Christmas baskets were assembled by the Lodge and its ladies’ organization. These baskets were delivered to needy families in the community. Another holiday event was bell ringing that Lodge volunteers do to help the Salvation Army staff the collection baskets. Each year the Lodge provides sixteen volunteers to help in this effort.

December 13 was the homecoming of DDGER Janet da Silva. The Lodge prepared its district famous fried catfish dinner for all attending. Fried chicken was available for the landlubbers. Earlier that same day the Lodge conducted its annual Hoop Shoot contest at the local middle school gym.

A New Year’s Eve party is planned for December 31.

Madison Lodge 2205

Madison Lodge focused its efforts this past fall on maintaining the integrity of its Lodge, trying to keep officers in the chairs, and providing a social outlet for its membership. There has been limited success realized and the Lodge is facing tough times proceeding along with a small membership.

The District believes a tip of the hat is appropriate to the Lodge’s officers and the active members for the last several years who have made a magnanimous effort to keep the Lodge afloat. There have been several noticeable community projects that gave Madison Lodge visibility, touting the good works of the Elks organization. The Lodge made nursing home visits and sponsored a sanctioned Soap Box Derby contest. The Lodge has always been gracious to visitors, especially for VP and DDGER visits, and served some of the best food in the district.

Marianna Lodge 1516

Marianna Lodge is pleased to brag a bit on its new 100” TV screen. It is a blast to watch NASCAR racing or a favorite football game on the big, big screen.

The Lodge held a Low Country Boil in late September which was headed up by ER Pat Hollis. It was a grand time for those who came to socialize and to eat. The week after the Boil, the Lodge was graced with a visit from DDGER Janet da Silva. A meal was served, and Janet conducted her official duties as the visiting DDGER.

Member Allen Harkins accepted the chairman position for the Lodge’s Soccer Shoot committee this year. He and his crew held the contest on September 27 at a local athletic field. Winners will move on to the district competition.

The Lodge conducted the Elks Memorial Service on Sunday, December 7; the guest speaker at the service was Jim Hart. Cake and coffee were the refreshments served afterwards.

A New Year’s Eve Party was held December 31; it included a band, food, refreshments, and fellowship. Following New Year’s, StatePresident Joe Ortiz and his wife, Rita, will travel to Marianna for their visit to the North District. Accompanying them will be VPAL Vince Como and his wife, Lisa. The Lodge is looking forward to hosting this annual event in the North District.

Perry Lodge 1851

Perry Lodge was pleased to host DDGER Janet da Silva’s visit to Perry on October 28. A wonderful meal was provided prior to the Lodge meeting. Several visitors from other district Lodges attended the visitation.

The Lodge sadly had to cancel its weekly Bingo game this fall due to lack of attendance. Nonetheless, the Lodge had donated charitable dollars to the local Relay for Life, Taylor County High School Sports, local scholarships, Boy Scouts, Drug Awareness, and a local veterans’ program. The Lodge also donates to the Youth Camp, Harry-Anna Trust Fund, Elks National Foundation, and the Elks National Home.

Perry Lodge has a new flag retirement box and has already received fifteen flags. Perry’s Boy Scout Troop #600 aids in the disposal of flags collected in the box.

An annual event, Breakfast with Santa, was held on Saturday, December 6. ER Tim Stanton, PER Lee Bennett, and Club Manager Mary Reams cooked up a hearty breakfast of grits, eggs, sausage, and pancakes for over 300 that Saturday. A total of sixteen Elks members and helpers assisted the 200 children in navigating through “candy cane lane” for their visit with Santa. All children received a plush holiday penguin. Toys were donated by Fairpoint Communications, Milk, orange juice, and eggs were donated by Bassett’s Dairy.

Lodge 1851 held its annual Memorial Service on December 7, serving lunch afterwards to the widows and others in attendance. Food was served by the officers to approximately seventy guests.

Tallahassee Lodge 937

In September, Tallahassee Lodge was fortunate to witness the naturalization ceremony of the husband of a member. Robert (Bob) Thorburn, formerly a citizen of Canada, became a citizen of the United States of America on September 23. Bob is thrilled to be an American citizen and has joined the Tallahassee Lodge. He was initiated into the Order and installed as the Lodge Esquire at the same Lodge meeting.

There are now three married couples in the chairs in the Lodge. Exalted Ruler Julia Ferrell and her husband, Ralph, who is Treasurer; Leading Knight Jan Thorburn and her husband, Bob Thorburn, as Esquire; and Chaplain Dorothy Brown and her husband, PDD Ron Brown, who is Lecturing Knight.

The Lodge sponsored a trip to the Florida Elks Youth Camp, allowing a number of kids and their families from the local Gretnah Everhart School to once again attend the Youth Camp for a three day weekend of fun and activities. The families had a great time. A number of Elks and spouses from the Lodge went along to help with the activities at the camp and to be on hand to assist the special needs kids of Gretnah Everhart.

The annual Chili Cook-off contest was conducted on Saturday, October 11. The event brought a nice crowd of folks to sample the chili cooked up by the various competing teams. Once again the event was for the benefit of HOOAH (Honoring Our Own American Heroes), an arm of the Florida National Guard. HOOAH helps the families of deployed soldiers if something needs repaired at home while one of the parents is overseas. Trustee Denise Mick chaired this event and ensured that it ran smoothly and raised more than $2,000 for HOOAH.

The Lodge was pleased to host a state ritual clinic on October 18, followed that evening by the Harvest Ball, a dinner and dance sponsored by the Lodge’s PER Association. The ritual clinic picked up again the next morning, and a number of Elks were certified or re-certified as floor judges, word judges, or computer judges.

One of the community efforts that the Tallahassee Lodge makes is supporting the Refuge House, a home for women who need some help. The Lodge collects items for the thrift store run by the House as well as personal items for the House’s residents. The theme changes from month to month, and Loyal Knight Tracy Austin has been kind enough to haul the collections to the House.

Tallahassee Lodge held a Memorial Day program, followed by snacks on November 11. The service was well organized and overseen by Leading Knight Jan Thorburn. Guest musician Joe Ashcraft played the bagpipes during the service which was a special treat. Refreshments were served afterwards in the Lodge’s dining room. Chips, dip, salsa, finger sandwiches, meatballs, cookies, brownies, and punch were available while folks who attended the service were able to socialize.

The Lodge has organized a pool tournament held weekly on Thursday. Inner Guard Jeff Jansen came up with the idea. Member Bobbie Turner heads this up, blasting out instructions, arranging for an entry fee, and setting up the blind draw teams; he uses double elimination to determine the team winners. The winner collects the cash entry fees. It brings quite a crowd to the Lodge on Thursdays and has been a huge success. Note that this is a huge event.

On Sunday, December 21, Santa visited the Lodge bringing goodies for kids and grandkids of members. Mrs. Claus is there too, providing whatever assistance Santa needed. Later that day, the Lodge held its annual Eggnog Social where members and guests stopped by for a bit of camaraderie in preparation for the holidays. There were several varieties of eggnog and a great selection of nibbles to go along.

The last event of 2008 was the New Year’s Eve party, with party favors, heavy hors d’oeuvres, and then breakfast at midnight.
Hi, my name is Bailey

Meet Bailey; she is three years old and lives in Sarasota. She has been receiving individual OT in her home with Margot Baker, Occupational Therapist, through the Southwest District for the past four months.

Her diagnosis is floppy muscle tone due to deletion of the long arm of chromosome #14.

Meet Bailey: a feeder chair and a shower chair. The family was not able to afford these items and therefore a fundraiser was developed that asked each Lodge in the Southwest District to contribute to the fund to purchase these items.

These are some of the many volunteers who help on a regular basis to work for the benefit of the kids. From left, Clare Brickner, Lois Harmes, Vic Kobialka, Dave Fielding, Susan Karr, Ralph Zambri, Barbara Cristofaro, Pauline Lipps, Barbara Kelly, Lori Person, and behind them you can see the Doo Wop guys, Ron (hidden from view), Larry, and Doc.

Bradenton Elks Lodge 1511

Bradenton Elks Lodge awarded $500 scholarships to five local students.

The Elks Lodge 1511 in Bradenton is humbled that they can contribute to the well-being and quality of life for our veterans and families who have given of themselves for all the citizens of this great country of ours.

Delivery of these items was arranged by the Saramana Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution working in concert with the Veterans’ Home and the Elks Lodge.

The Elks Lodge encourages anyone who would like to donate funds to the “Army of Hope Program” in support of your dedicated troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to participate in this program. Checks in any amount will be welcome. Please make them out to: Florida State Elks Charities and mail to Elks Lodge 1511 Secretary; 2511 75th Street West; Bradenton, Florida 34209.

Donald Murphy, Charles Shoudy, and Harry Knarr salute as Sonny Bywaters and Phil Futch prepare to properly dispose of one of the American flags by the American Legion Post 30 Honor Guard, part of the Observance Day at the Sarasota Elks Lodge 1519.

The official Remembrance Ceremony began at 11 a.m. and featured Nanette White, 12, singing the national anthem.

“Today falls in between September 11 and the National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is September 19, so we decided to combine the two for a day of observance,” Edwards explained. “We also wanted the youth of the community to participate, so Saturday seemed the perfect day.”

Edwards added, “This lodge is a big supporter of youth programs throughout the year.”

Rob Crane with the Youth Service Unit of the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office shows Sarah Allen and Makenna Calkins, both 8, how fingerprinting is done.

Val Bates continued from page 1

Again, I congratulate your hard work, ask for your continued support for the good work we do for our children, our Veterans, the less fortunate and our Country’s future leaders. I look forward to seeing many of you at our February Quarterly where State President Joe Ortiz and Rita will be hosting our GER, Paul Helsel and his lovely wife, Jane, and showing off two of the crown jewels of Elksdom - our Florida State Children’s Therapy Services and the Florida Elks Youth Camp. God Bless our country and the BPOE.
**SOUTH SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

**Punta Gorda Elks Lodge 2606**

On November 1, the Punta Gorda Elks Lodge, represented by Joe Tuhill, PER and Bob Hahn, PER, participated in the Charlotte County Veterans Homeless Standdown. Many needed articles of clothing, shoes, and toiletries were provided to the homeless. Additionally flu shots were available along with dental and medical services. This event was the start of a week of events which are a part of Veterans Appreciation Week and ended with a Veterans’ Parade hosted by the Punta Gorda Elks on November 8.

**North Fort Myers Lodge 2742**

On Veterans’ Day the Lodge served hot dogs and hamburgers, baked beans, and macaroni salad along with soda. Alan Stanch from the DAV #94 was present to say a prayer and help serve. A 2006-2008 Participation Veterans Award was presented to Alan for DAV #94’s continued commitment and support to North Fort Myers Elks Lodge. A New American flag and POW flag were hung just in time to celebrate Veterans’ Day.

**Rotunda Elks Lodge 2710**

Rotunda Lodge made a $6,000 commitment to the Charlotte County Education Dept for their homeless children program. The Lodge entertained 100 members of the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Department and Fire Department at a free picnic with awards being made to outstanding employees and deputies. Dozens of dinners to employees were sent to those who were on duty and unable to attend.

Ron Bupp, PDD and the Lodge Boy Scout Troop conducted the Flag Day service with a record attendance.

The Lodge awarded two $1,000 scholarships to graduates of Englewood High School, a Goofy Golf outing was held to raise money for Elk charities, a CPR clinic was given at the Lodge for members of Rotunda Lodge, two separate Eagle Scout Courts of Honor for the Lodge Scout Troop were held at the Lodge, and a $1,000 contribution was made to the Englewood High School ROTC program.

The Americanism Essay Contest was a success with more than 200 essays being submitted. Veterans’ Committee Chairman Ray Perry delivered numerous boxes of books, games, and personal toiletry items to the local veterans’ home.

The Rotunda Lodge Boy Scout Troop along with Lodge members celebrated Thanksgiving by collected nearly 1,000 pounds of canned and dry good stuffs for distribution to St. Francis and Helping Hand food kitchens for the needy. They also delivered Thanksgiving dinner to thirty needy families in the Rotonda area.

The second annual Rotonda Elks Christmas parade was held on December 6 with fifty floats and 150 participants. Once again hundreds of pounds of food was collected and distributed to needy families. The Lodge Christmas program distributed toys and food in the amount of $14,000 to seventy families and 130 needy children. On Christmas Eve, ER Jay Smythe entertained Lodge members with an eggnog party.

**Lehigh Acres Lodge 2602**

This year Lehigh Acres Elks through the generosity of its members was able to sponsor 19 children to go to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. The Lodge Thanks the three elementary school personnel who drove the children 400 miles to the camp at their own expense.

The Lodge gave out three $500 dollar scholarships and the Ladies of Elks gave one scholarship to these deserving students: Mary Meador, Kelsie Conrad, Catherine Begley, and Brian Zutovich.

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**Writing a press release that commands attention**

**By Edwin C. Geishert, Jr.**

**P & PR Committee Member**

One of the most frequent complaints that the Public Relations Committee gets is that Lodges cannot get press releases put in the newspaper. Let me tell you how to get your news printed and alert you to some pitfalls.

First, the press release of old generally will not work. Newspapers are digital and expect to receive material press ready, in proper form and proper format. Many of the good old United States postal delivered press release goes straight to the shredder. Proper format means email. But not just any email. In this age of hackers and computer viruses, newspapers have taken means to guard against unwanted intrusions.

Your news must be in the body of the email and not sent as an attachment. Many papers have email programs that delete any message with an attachment, automatically, never seen, never read, never printed.

The following are editorial guidelines provided by a newspaper publisher:

- DO NOT send any text as an attachment.
- All of your text must be included in the body of the email that you send to the paper.
- The top line is the name of your column followed by the date you sent it.
- Line 2 is the story title or headline.
- Line 3 is the byline (the name of the person who wrote the article).

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- Line 3 is the byline (the name of the person who wrote the article).

. Line 4 is the photo caption if you have a photograph. do not send any photos without full identification photo captions.
. Write your text exactly as you want it to appear in the paper.
. Use Courier font. This is Courier font.
. DO NOT use color, bold or italic on the font.
. Send as Plain Text or RichText.
. Do not make any comments on the document. If additional comments are needed, send them as a separate document with the title: NOTES TO THE EDITOR.
. E-mail Florida Elks News Editor rwwhitman@comcast.net if you need an example.
Warrington Lodge 2108

In case you missed the December meeting, you may not realize that the Lodge voted to support the U.S.O. for the charity of the month. A $2,000 check was presented by the Veterans’ Committee on December 20. Heidi Balier, Regional Director of the U.S.O., accepted the contribution on board Naval Air Station, Pensacola. It should make every member of Warrington Lodge extremely proud to know the young troops on active duty are being supported.

PDD Joe Walsh, right, returns patient/client Brian Moore to his car from the new VA Mega-Medical Center that recently opened in West Pensacola, Florida.

Walsh is a volunteer driver of the carpool vehicle donated to the Medical Center by Warrington Lodge 2108 through its very active Veterans’ Services program chaired by Wanda Wigley. Elks logos and lettering are courtesy of Warrington’s House Committee. Pensacola served 6,000 sailors, marines, and army personnel stationed at N.A.S. in October. The average age of these young troopers is 18 to 25. The Lodge is honored to be part of this effort to provide the active duty personnel a great place to “hang out.” Most of them seldom leave the base while in school. WAY TO GO ELKS! Remember when it was you! Many thanks go to everyone who made this possible.

The V.A. Clinic visit was exciting. U.S. flags, juice, fruit, and doughnuts were handed out to over 250 veterans that day! Thanks go to Ed Gallagher, Linda Beckstrom, Jack DeGarmo, and Virginia Cowie.

Milton Lodge 2377

Milton Elks to start “Connect Vets” Project.

With some help from the Elks National Foundation, the charitable arm of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Milton Elks help veterans receive the medical treatment they need.

Through their new project, Connect Vets, members of the Milton Elks will arrange transportation for veterans who are unable to drive to the new Veterans’ Affairs clinic and will provide escorts for this trip.

Connect Vets will be funded by a $10,000 Impact Grant awarded to the Milton Elks by the Elks National Foundation. Impact Grants are the newest addition to the Elks National Foundation’s Community Investments Program. They are the competitive grants designed to help Elks make a difference in their community. This year, Milton Elks Lodge No. 2377 is one of the 46 recipients nationwide to receive an Impact Grant. The grants range from $3,000 to $10,000.

Crestview Lodge 2624

Things are starting to move along in preparation for the construction of a new Lodge. The storage shed has been moved to the pavilion property and bids are being received on removal of the damaged tree out back, as well as demolition of the existing building; shortly floor plans should be completed.

As the plans continue to move forward, the Lodge will remain open Wednesday through Friday until the building will have to be empty for its removal. Please come by the Lodge as often as possible so that you can keep up with the progress. The newsletter will continue even after the Lodge closes and it will have updates on the reconstruction and locations where the regular meetings will be held.

During the 4-5 months it takes to complete the Lodge, it will be very important for members to read the newsletter. All members will need to be informed of all matters concerning the reconstruction of the new facilities.

Pensacola Beach Lodge 497

Fifty-two Marines were recently treated to holiday meals at Pensacola Beach courtesy of Pensacola Beach Elks Lodge No. 497. “The big goal was to treat fifty Marines and have them interact with the community,” said James “Doc” Knell, a retired Marine Corps helicopter and Harrier jet pilot who helped coordinate the event.

Most of the Marines were Privates under the age of 21 who had been in the Pensacola area less than a month. “They were very, very well behaved,” said Knell. Besides eating, the Marines socialized and watched football with the Elks volunteers.

While the Elks have provided holiday meals to service members in the past, Knell said this year’s crowd was the largest ever. The Elks are planning to hold the event again next year, but Knell said he would like to expand the invitation to include the other service branches also.

Panama City Lodge 1598

The holidays have come and gone and the crisp cool weather is making everyone frisky. The Exalted Ruler hopes the members will come to the Lodge on its open nights and help to keep the Lodge moving. It is a busy time for all and everyone needs a break from the hustle and bustle, so check your calendar and come visit your fellow Elks and give them your best wishes for the holidays and for 2009.

WANDERING ELKS AND DOES

Rustic Sands RV Park in Mexico Beach was home to the Wandering Elks and Does on November 7-9. Joe and Lydia Trawick hosted with a Santa Fe Soup for Friday night. Members furnished trimmings and desserts. It was so good, and it was obvious that the group was hungry. On Saturday, a fabulous sausage fest, card playing, and sometimes just visiting led up to the “grand buffet” in the evening. The weather cooperated beautifully and Charlie Myers manned the fire pot both nights.

Although the Wandering Elks and Does group is not formed as a benevolent organization, the need is very great in the area at this time. During the Thanksgiving/Christmas season donations were made to the Panama City Rescue Mission, Sims Veterans’ Home, and the Council on Aging. There was no camping in December but were back on the road in January.

Holley-Navarre Lodge 2787

The Shrimp Fest that was sponsored by the Trustees was a great success. Loads of shrimp and many side dishes were enjoyed by 26 club members and friends. Thanks go to all who made this event a winner. Another social will be sponsored by the Trustees in February. Look for details in the newsletter. All food is served in the Lodge Room which is a non-smoking area. We hope that many of you will take advantage of these socials in the future. Your participation in Lodge activities is important to the success of the Lodge.

Thanks go to everyone who donated the money for the needy family dinners. Through everyone’s generosity, $576 was collected. That money bought dinners for twelve families in Navarre that would have otherwise have gone without.

Please stop by the Lodge and pick out your Angel for this year’s Angel Tree. With everyone’s help this will be another successful year. The Angel Tree is for children in Santa Rosa County. Last year fifty angels were picked out of 250 in the county. Please come to the Lodge for details; it’s very simple.

Twin Cities Lodge 2747

At the Northwest District PER Awards Dinner in Warrington, the coveted “Traveling Lapsation Trophy” was brought back to the Lodge. This award is given to the Lodge that has the lowest percentage of members dropped from the roles due to non-payment of dues during the previous year. This was the 4th time it has been awarded to Twin Cities Lodge and the 3rd consecutive year. The Membership Committee must be doing something right!!! Let’s keep it going.

If you know someone who would like to be an Elk, please bring them by the Lodge or have them fill out an application and drop it off.

Destin Lodge 2688

Destin Lodge has a wish for everyone to try to follow: Share your talents, your time, and yes, even money. Please remember the ones less fortunate as some families need more help from us than ever before.

Be kind to each other. Try to set an example to others by what you do. Don’t pass along gossip and rumors; they hurt others, they hurt the Lodge, and they hurt you. Smile and show others that you care. Be involved in some, if not all, of the activities that are happening this year. People are trying to do what they can. Show your support and give your suggestions, but please do so at the meetings and not in the lounge.

Last but not least, be ever mindful of the cardinal principles of our order: Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity.
Aripeka Lodge 2520

In October, Aripeka Lodge was honored to be the hosts for State President Ortiz and his entourage’s visit to the Central District. The event was well attended and everyone enjoyed it. One of the most important events held all year is the Handicapped Children’s Halloween Party. Everyone in the Lodge looks forward to this event. Approximately 200 handicapped children and their families enjoyed pizza, hot dogs, soda, and candy. This event is hosted every year by PDD Hal Steffes and PER MaryAnn Steffes who as usual did a fantastic job.

Bill Borrusch, Chairman of the Lodge’s “Adopt-A-Road Program,” and seven of his volunteers collected twelve large bags of rubbish along a 2-mile area of U.S. 19; it weighed 470 lbs. PER John Nejedlo, Chairman of the Lodge’s Youth Program, presented three male students from Hudson High School “Student of the Month” awards which consisted of a check for $25.00 each. At the same time, Barbara Benson, President of the Ladies of Aripeka Elks, presented $25.00 checks to three female students. These awards were for the months of September, October, and November.

Lorraine Lovette, Chairperson of the Lodge Drug Awareness Program, gave 1,000 children at Gulf/Highlands Elementary School and the Pasco Safety Town “Just Say No to Drugs” plastic bags, coloring books, and red ribbon stickers. Aripeka Lodge served free hot dogs and beer to thirty veterans. The Lodge honored Mary E. Ford, Vice President of the Central District, with a dinner dance for homecoming. Exalted Ruler Wayne Getz presented her with a gift from the Lodge, and President of the Ladies of Aripeka Elks, Barbara Benson, also gave her a gift.

Through the auspices of their bingo charities, $260 was donated for a Pizza Party to Baldomero Lopez Veterans’ Nursing Home, $750 was given to the Pasco County Sheriffs Dept. for Christmas food baskets for the needy, and $1,000 from the Lodge’s Charity Fund was donated to The Angelus Home (residence for severely handicapped) for Thanksgiving.

Brooksville Lodge 2582

Brooksville Lodge 2582 took 2nd place nationwide in the Scrapbook Contest. Thanks go to the hard work of Sylvia Stark, the Public Relations Chairperson for the Lodge, who contributed the articles and PER Paul Stark who did the pictures and put the book together. This was the first time that the Lodge entered the Scrapbook Contest. State President Ortiz and his entourage visited Brooksville Lodge in October for dinner and entertainment on October 2.

The Brooksville Lodge has many volunteers but one lady really stands out; she is Dusty Schelvelin. This little lady has been a volunteer for twenty years; she has been in charge of collating and making sure the Lodge newsletter, “The Herd,” gets mailed out to over 967 members. Dusty is 91 years old and is an inspiration to all.

Brooksville Lodge had a gala show called “The Del & Gary Show” in November and was well attended by over 185 people. This show was put on to benefit the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. Brooksville Lodge’s Veterans’ Committee invited veterans to join them for lunch on November 11 from various nursing homes. The theme of the luncheon was “thank you for keeping us free,” hosted by Veterans’ Chairperson, Gail Cleaves.

Brooksville Lodge held the Memorial Service on Sunday, December 7 to honor eighteen members who had passed away this past year; only seven widows attended. Exalted Ruler Clem Merola explained the significance of flowers placed on the altar by Lodge officers who also lit a candle for each deceased member.

On December 2 the Lodge hosted a Christmas Party for approximately 100 Key Training Center mentally challenged residents.

Kissimmee Lodge 1873

On November 16 Kissimmee Lodge had their Veterans’ Day Barbeque; State President Ortiz and his wife, Rita, along with VPAL Vincent Como and his wife were in attendance. The net proceeds from this event were sent to the Orlando Vets Health Care Center.

West Citrus Lodge 2693

The Annual Halloween Party for all children under the age of twelve was held in October with clowns, lunch, gifts, and face painting, and each child was given a “Say No To Drugs” bag with a coloring book and crayons. Everyone had a great time. Through the efforts of Bingo Charities the Lodge donated $1,000 to Citrus Abuse Shelter Association for battered women and children. The Veterans’ Committee is very active in this area when they visit 128 veterans with pizza parties, birthday get-togethers, or just stop by to cheer them up. Also, the Annual PER Lobster Dinner and Dance was held which is very popular and garners money for charitable work.

In November, West Citrus Lodge participated in the Citrus County Veterans’ Day Parade with three vehicles representing the Lodge. Members also attended a local church for the Massing of the Colors; it was a wonderful experience. Through Bingo Charities the Lodge donated $1,000 to Citrus United Basket to help feed the needy. Under the direction of Jim Dean the Lodge collected over 900 pounds of turkeys which were given to the Salvation Army to distribute.

In December, West Citrus again collected enough money to give 900 lbs. of turkeys to the Citrus United Basket for Christmas. The Memorial Service was well attended on the 6th which was followed by a light lunch. The Annual Children’s Christmas Party for the local children saw Santa was here with gifts for everyone. The kids also had lunch. The Lodge hosted the annual Citrus County Foster Parents Association Christmas Dinner; there were over 105 in attendance.

Zephyrhills Lodge 2731

In November the Lodge held a Veterans’ Day program and luncheon. Members also did Thanksgiving baskets for the needy families and held the Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for members.

In December Christmas Baskets were distributed and a Christmas Party was held on December 9. The Handicap Luncheon was on December 10 with Santa. Zephyrhills Lodge 2731 participates in the “OurTroopsOnLine.com” program which pays postage for boxes for the troops.

MEMBERSHIP

By William J. Hopkins III
Committee Member

Action and promotion needed for growth

Today’s Elks must be the ones who make the difference in our Order so it will continue to flourish. Membership growth is an issue which requires ACTION and PROMOTION, not just LIP SERVICE.

One highlight, in my opinion, of what we have been doing correctly is our charitable donations for Elks-sponsored youth programs, Veterans, and senior citizens. Record numbers continue to be achieved. Why? It’s because we care, we know what our organization can do and we want to leave a legacy for generations to follow.

Elks continue to “glow internally” about our achievements, but it is extremely important that we keep the public informed, especially through the media. Leveraging the press is like mass production in manufacturing. It is a lot more efficient and many more of the public will get the benefit. Even with record numbers of Elks related activities in the media, many members have spoken about their inability to get articles in their local newspapers. We learned at the Grand Lodge Public Relations Seminar in Anaheim that there have been many changes in the printed media industry which can be leveraged to our advantage.

How can this be applied in your area?

Take the time to call your local newspaper editor, schedule an appointment, and meet at a convenient time to discuss the editor’s expectations (what is being looked for) and how you can better provide worthwhile event information in the proper format with photos. There are “before-the-event” submissions which are crafted differently from “after-the-event” input. Learn how many traditional press releases find their way directly to the garbage. Learn how electronic press releases are favored and why (less work for the understaffed publication).

Let the Editor or his or her representative tell you all about it.

DO NOT BE NEGATIVE.

DO NOT IMPLY BLAME ON THE NEWSPAPER’S PART.

DO NOT INDICATE YOU HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING, because you haven’t.

LISTEN-LEARN-SUCCEED.

This better understanding will greatly assist the Lodge with its Public Relations.
HOMELESS VETERANS

By Art “RT” Mayer, PGER
Past NVSC Commission Chairman

America’s homeless veterans have served in World War II and the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom, or the military’s anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America. Forty-seven percent of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. More than 67% served our country for at least three years and 33% were stationed in a war zone.

Although accurate numbers are impossible to come by because no one keeps national records on homeless veterans, the VA estimates that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and nearly 400,000 experience homelessness over the course of a year. Conservatively, one out of every three homeless who are sleeping in a doorway, alley, or a box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country and account for 23% of all homeless people in America.

With an estimated 400,000 veterans homeless at some time during the year, the VA reaches only 25% of those in need, leaving 300,000 veterans who must seek assistance from local government agencies and service organizations in their communities.

Each year, 2.3 million to 3.5 million people have experienced homelessness in America. By taking 23% of that range for veterans, that would indicate there are between 529,000 and 840,000 Veterans who are homeless at some time during the year.

What services do veterans need
Veterans need a coordinated effort that provides secure housing and nutritional meals, essential physical health care, substance abuse aftercare, mental health counseling, personal development and empowerment, job assessment, training, and placement assistance.

What seems to work best
The most effective programs for homeless and at-risk Veterans are community-based, nonprofit groups of Veterans helping Veterans. Because government money for homeless Veterans is currently limited and serves only one in ten of those in need, it is critical that “WE, THE ELKS” reach out to help provide additional support, resources and opportunities.

What can you do?
Determine the need in your community. Visit with homeless Veteran providers. Contact your local mayor’s office for a list of providers.

· Involve others. If you are not already part of an organization, pull together a few people who might be interested in attacking this issue.

Participate in local homeless coalitions. Chances are there is one in your community. If not, this may be the time to start bringing people together around this critical need.

Send a financial donation to your local homeless Veteran provider.

Contact your elected officials, and discuss what is being done in your community for Homeless Veterans.

Remember our Pledge, “So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.”

This is an integral part of it.

Alaska Cruise Raffle
Tickets - $10.00 each
To Enter

Send $10.00 per ticket to FSEA at P.O. Box 49, Umatilla, FL 32784-0049 along with your Name, Address, City, State, & Zip, your Lodge Name, and your telephone number. Once received we will send you your tickets!

One ticket will win a cruise for two to Alaska
A trip valued at over $7,500

Join other Florida Elks on a cruise of a lifetime to Alaska. One lucky winner and a guest will sail free on a deluxe Princess Cruise departing from Seattle, WA on July 11, 2009.

The cruise is part of a group tour being assembled for the Florida Elks that will take place after the Grand Lodge Convention which is being held in Portland, Oregon July 5-9, 2009.

The trip includes round trip coach airfare for two to the port of embarkation. A one night stay and meals for two at a deluxe hotel in the port city the night prior to the cruise, a cash allowance to cover incidental expenditures while in transit, a deluxe cabin on a top-rated Alaskan cruise line, and $1,000 in spending cash!

And $1,000 in spending cash!

Drawing by the Grand Exalted Ruler
February 7, 2009 at Florida’s February Quarterly Meeting.

Need not be present to win!

Winner is not required to attend the Grand Lodge Convention.

Dates, cruise line, and ports are estimates only and are subject to change.

Harry-Anna Trust Fund Recognition Certificates & Pins
Awarded October 10, 2008 through January 6, 2009

Gold Pins for Paid-in-Full $1,000 Certificate
Alice Hurd Stuart-Jensen #1870
John LaLander Fort Walton #1795
Robert C. Noll Titusville #2113
Allan Wood Pompano Beach #1898

Silver Pins for Paid-in-Full $500 Certificate
Ronald F. Birou Naples #2010
Ronald Konrath Marathon #2139
Carol McCarthy Stuart-Jensen #1870
Jack McCarthy Stuart-Jensen #1870
Julius Miller Titusville #2113
Charles Utz Titusville #2113
Charles R. Bugbee Zephyrhills #2731
Note to all Lodge Exalted Rulers and Secretaries
The preceding articles about the District Lodges is information taken from Lodge bulletins or information sent to the District Reporters. If your Lodge is not represented in the district report, it is because the reporter did not receive your Lodge bulletin or other information from anyone about your Lodge. Please put the following District Reporters on your Lodge Bulletin mailing list.

It would be helpful to the reporters if you would write about Lodge accomplishments and other items of interest in each of your monthly bulletins.

Northwest DistrictKaren S. Knight; 62 Narrow Lane Ct.; Pensacola, FL 32506; 850-455-8831
karensknight@msn.com

North District PDD Tom Walden; 1067 Merritt Dr. Tallahassee, FL 32310; 850-877-9110
twalden@psc.state.fl.us

Northeast District “Kathie” Thompson; 123 Kingfish Ave.; Palatka, FL 32177; 386-325-9469
tomsonkb@bellsouth.net

East Central District Mary Ann Bucci; Apt 395, 1400 South Nova Rd.; Daytona Beach, FL 32114; 386-323-9865
maryannbucci@hotmail.com

No. Central District Walt Mabie, PDD; P.O. Box 840; Hernando, FL 34442-0840; 352-726-4732
elks2522@earthlink.net

Central District Adrienne J. Martin; 1879 N. Betty Point; Lecanto, FL 34461-9767; 352 270-3894
ajmartin66@hotmail.com

Southeast Central District Carol M. Heintz; 474 SE Walters Terrace; Port St. Lucie, FL 34983; 772-879-4318
c_m_heintz@yahoo.com

West Central District Doris Ward-Jacobs, PER; 5581 95th Terrace North; Pinellas Park, FL 33782; 727-544-7773
cjemj0205@aol.com

Southwest Central District Raleigh Whiteman, PER; 109 Eventide Ave.; Lake Placid, FL 33852; 863-699-2487
rwwhiteman@comcast.net

Southwest District Chuck Stolteben, PER; 11410 3rd Ave. East; Britadenton, FL 34212; 941-747-6093
papacandmimi@msn.com

So. Southwest District PER Carl Rehling; 5750 Almar Dr.; Punta Gorda, FL 33983-8777; 941-639-1960
crehling@embarqmail.com

Southeast District PER Joy A. Booth; 2100 Springdale Bvd. Y107; Lake Worth, FL 33461; 561-967-6024

So Southeast District - A dependable reporter is needed, to apply send a 300+ word article about your Lodge or district to; rwwhiteman@comcast.net

South District PER Don Queralto 11455 SW 57th Terrace; Miami, FL 33173; 305-595-8303
donaphoto@msn.com

Sebring Elks Lodge is pleased to present
The 29th Annual Florida State Elks Golf Tournament
to be held on
Saturday, April 4th and Sunday, April 5th, 2009
at the Spring Lake Golf Resort.

The tournament is open to all Elks and their guests.

Ladies are also encouraged to participate. The tournament will be a four person scramble.

Teams will be flighted after Saturday round.

Awards will be presented as follows:
Low Gross and 1st & 2nd place in flights. A thru F
First 260 entries received prior to March 15th will be accepted and processed in the order received. Late entries will be accepted, placed on file and processed if opening occurs.

NOTE: Sebring Lodge will be open at 2:00 PM on Friday with dinner from 5-7 P.M.

Entries will be received and accepted only as follows:

a. As a single accompanied with check totaling $110.00
b. As a twosome accompanied with check(s) totaling $220.00
c. As a Threesome accompanied with check(s) totaling $330.00
d. As a foursome accompanied with check(s) totaling $440.00

Make checks payable to: Florida Elks State Golf
d. As a foursome accompanied with check(s) totaling $440.00

Entries will be received and accepted only as follows:

· Drawing for prizes Saturday night at the Sebring Elks Lodge
· Complimentary cold drinks both days on the course
· Mail entries to Dave Switzer; 641 S. Lakeview Rd.; Lake Placid, FL 33852
· Ph: 863-465-0632---Email; dswitzer6@msn.com

Saturday dinner will be at 7:00 p.m. at the Lodge, and Sunday lunch after golf at the resort. Tickets must be presented for both dinner and lunch.

Registration: 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. each day with an 8:45 a.m. start.

Official score cards which will be issued at check-in.

Note: Scores must be recorded on official score cards; filled out properly and totaled. Cards not in compliance will not be considered.

Practice rounds: Tee Times as available the week of the tournament at a cost of $24, which includes 18 holes with cart. For reservations call Spring Lake Golf Resort one week in advance at 1-800-635-7277, local call 655-0101.
On November 8, the Lodge hosted the final VP/DD visitation dinner with the Homecoming of Vice-President Art Yanni.

**Sebring Lodge 1529**

The Annual Memorial Service was held on December 7 with Avon Park High School Show Choir sharing their gift of music, the Rev. George Neel was the guest speaker.

The Sebring Lodge Board of Directors has voted to issue “Non-American” cards to any non-American wishing to attend the Lodge social activities. They will not have voting privileges, nor will they be able to attend Lodge meetings. This card will cost $50.00 starting November 1, 2008, and will be valid through October 31, 2009. The card holder will be allowed to use the dining facilities as well as buy drinks from the bar. They will not be allowed to bring a guest, as they are guests, and a guest cannot bring a guest. This is a move to legitimize Canadian Elks.

In November Exalted Ruler Joanne Croniser and Lodge members visited the James Haley Veterans’ Hospital in Lakeland; this is one of the three veterans’ facilities that the district supports ever year. Larry Spears chairs the committee and has done an outstanding job. ER Croniser hand fed one of the veterans and stated that it was the most enjoyable and enlightening experience she has ever had.

The Annual Christmas Ball was held on December 6 with many in attendance. The next day was the Annual Memorial Service with the names of fourteen departed members read on the floor as the candles were lighted.

After the ceremony members and others gathered together, put on Santa hats, and traveled to the several area nursing homes to sing Christmas carols to the patients. The veterans were honored at the Lake Placid Health Care Center with a program put on by Lodge Chaplain Nellie Hammond.

**Brandon Lodge 2383**

Brandon Lodge hosted a banquet for Florida State Elks President Joe Ortiz and his wife Rita, on October 18. Thanks go to Duane Perry and his crew for the wonderful dinner and to Brandon Ladies for the decorations and setup.

The Second Annual Tony Scotch Memorial Golf Tournament held on November 1 at the Diamond Hills Golf Course was another successful event. The proceeds, approximately $2,500, will be given at the February Quarterly to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. Larry Oliver and Art Yanni are to be congratulated for making this such a great event.

**Winter Haven Lodge 1672**

Two Winter Haven High School students were presented scholarships from Winter Haven Elks Lodge in the amount of $25 each. Sharon Bremer and Armour Johnston, III, representing the Elks, presented the awards to Kayleigh Ray and Daniel O’Leary for their demonstrated leadership skills: Kayleigh as senior class president and Daniel as co-captain of the football team. Winter Haven Elks provide these scholarships each school month to deserving students chosen by Principal Gail Williams for various student qualities. The Elks will invite the fourteen students, along with their parents, to a dinner at the Lodge in March. One of those students will be chosen to receive a $500 scholarship.

Winter Haven Elks participated in the Bay Pines Veterans’ picnic on November 16 and gave donated items to the veterans.

A special Veterans’ Day program was held for all who served on the Armed Forces.

**Wauchula Lodge 1700**

All Wauchula Elks members are requested to attend all meetings in the near future because of discussions regarding the selling of the building and the possibility of acquiring another building. Results of the meeting on December 16 are not available at press time. The Lodge lunches and dinners are now catered on Wednesdays and Fridays.

A special fundraiser for the Lodge is now in progress called the Queen of Diamonds. Come to the Lodge to get the details.

The Wauchula Kids’ Christmas Party was held on December 14. A special visit was made to Bay Pines Veterans’ Hospital on December 14 to take collected Christmas gift items to the veterans.

**Arcadia Lodge 1524**

Twenty members and volunteers donated almost 700 hours in getting the Lodge social quarters remodeled. Special Thanks goes to Lou’s Paint Stop for their donations of paint and supplies. Thanks also goes to all the members whose donations made it possible to get a new beer cooler.

Arcadia Lodge was the location of the Peace River Valley Citrus Growers gathering to hear the U. S. Department of Agriculture October citrus crop production forecast.

Cub Scout Pack 39 and members of TARC assisted the Arcadia Elks in presenting the history of the American Flags on Flag Day.

On September 11, Arcadia Elks Lodge honored the 9/11 victims and hero’s with a Special Ceremony. Assisting the Lodge was the Desoto County Fire Department and Cub Scout Pack 39. Desoto County High School senior Toviana Ousley read a poem she wrote about 9/11.

**Lake Wales Lodge 1974**

A total of five people traveled from Lake Wales on November 16 to participate in the Southwest Central District’s Annual Veteran’s Barbecue held at Bay Pines Medical Center sponsored by Winter Haven Lodge. There were 40 volunteer hours donated from Lake Wales Lodge. Twenty different types of gifts valued at more than $163 dollars were delivered to the Veterans.

The blue barrel in the lounge had been collecting gifts to put into Care Packages and sent to the troops in the 356th National Guard in Iraq in time for Christmas.

The LakeWales Christmas parade was on December 13. The theme was Santa’s Workshop. Elks, mons and dads, children, grand children and other kids rode Lodge float in the parade through Lake Wales.

**Lakeland Lodge 1201**

The Lakeland House Committee has made sure there is have plenty to do: Saturday dinner dances; Wednesday and Friday meals and Sund copy. The Exalted Ruler wants to thank all of the members for their support of all of the lodge functions.

There was a great turnout for Ron Bennett on September 16th, or was it the great meal the Ladies prepared? We had a great response to last month’s Antler’s article about our decrease in membership. There were numerous members asking for applications.

The Lodge now has an electronic dart board, golden tee golf game for the golfers, video poker player at the bar and a juke box with a very good selection of favorite music, country, rock oldies and classical.
Hello Elks:

I have the BEST update to give you! Ryan went trick or treating for his first time on Friday night and was PERFECT! He had the best time and was so good. In years past we haven’t dared to take him because we thought he would run or freak out. Not our Ryan…he walked right up to folks and said trick or treat and then thank you! He was Batman. The other fantastic news is that he is starting to READ! He is so excited, pointing out all the letters, dragging his finger on the words and memorizing simple books and “reading” them to us. His teacher was almost in tears the other day because they had got a new toy for the classroom that Ryan loved. During circle time one of the other kids got the toy and the behavior specialist let the other boy keep it. Ryan’s teacher said she was waiting for an explosion but instead his eye’s got wide, he took a deep breath and just kept singing the alphabet! She also told me that he has a special bike on the playground that he used to have a tough time sharing but now if he sees someone waiting, he actually gives up his turn. Oh and his teacher told me this story that I thought was just incredibly precious…there is a little boy in his class who has an especially tough time. Ryan’s teacher saw him with one of Ryan’s food items and give it back to Ryan. She turned around and Logan had it again. She was lecturing Logan and Ryan said “No, I gave it to him. He’s sad.” If anyone ever wants to see Listening Therapy, RDI and Neuronet exercises in action…thy name is Ryan!!!! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!! Ryan is ready to go to school every morning and on the weekends asks to go to school!!! He is doing fabulous!

Thank you so much for all you did for my child.

Ryan’s Mom