Grand Exalted Ruler Visits Florida

Ronald L. Hicks, was born and now lives in Fredericksburg, VA. He graduated High School in 1964, a graduate of Chowan Junior College and received his law degree from the University of Richmond, VA in 1972.

He married his high School sweetheart, Nancy Jeanne Camper, in 1969 and they have three children, Joseph a PER, Jason a PER and Anne Kathryn, and eight grandchildren. They are lifelong members of the Fairview Baptist Church.

He is an avid golfer and sports fan and played baseball throughout his college years. Ron was initiated into Fredericksburg VA Lodge 875 in February 1972, served on numerous committees and was Exalted Ruler in 2002-03; served as Chairman and Co-Chairman of numerous construction projects. He is also an Associated Member of Orlando 1079 Lodge. He was Vice President of his district, District Deputy, a Ritual Judge and eventually elected as Virginia State President in 2009. He was instrumental in resolving significant issues in the successful sale of the Elks National Home in Bedford VA.

Experts from his Indianapolis acceptance speech is as follows;

Today, we stand at approximately 790,000 members, substantially fewer than thirty years ago, but in many ways, we are stronger today and have more to offer than ever before. And we should rejoice, be loud and be proud, about who we are and what we do.

However, membership growth remains essential to the success of any organization, and it should be the priority of every Lodge. I’d like to think that we turned a significant corner last year with membership. Now, what must we do to continue that trend? This brings me to my theme for the year: “Elks Pride-Community Focus.”

“Elks Pride” represents our dignity, our joy, and self-respect. It is easily achieved when you develop a positive attitude and can-do spirit within your Lodge. Lodge leaders, find a reason to be positive and believe you can make a difference. Be enthusiastic in all you do, learn to share your pride and energy, to listen, to take time for others, to overlook faults, and not dwell on the negative. Be optimistic, get excited, let others feel your excitement, look for the best in others, and be quick to compliment and show appreciation. Expect success, celebrate your success, and build on your successes.

When communicating, be constructive and choose your words carefully. The words you use have the power to put a spring into a member’s step and give them confidence. Members are easily drawn to an enthusiastic leader, and your positive attitude and confident spirit will become infectious and encourage other Elks to follow your lead- I’ve seen it happen.

Do not treat orientation as an afterthought or as something that simply must be done before initiation. Orientation is one of the most important programs in your Lodge. You have already caused the candidate to want to join your lodge. Orientation is where you “seal the deal” and set them on the road to becoming a faithful member for life. Orientation is your first, and best, opportunity to explain what it means to be an Elk and the benefits and rewards of membership. Candidates for membership will never be more attentive or receptive, so use this time wisely to motivate them to become more than they may have imagined they would become when the Lodge is concerned.

Begin to think of orientation as the first step in member retention, and make it a process that begins with the application and does not end until you get your new member into the lodge and quickly involved in their very first lodge activity, program, or event.

If you deliver a positive program that inspires candidates, they will embrace the opportunity to get quickly involved and jumpstart their career in Elkdom.

Success in Florida Elkdom

Mike, Bob and I hope that all Florida Elks and their families had a very blessed and merry Christmas and we wish everyone great success and happiness in 2016. Florida Elksdom is poised to make this one of the greatest years in our 100 plus years existence:

Lynn Warburton, our Camp Director and his able staff hosted another memorable New Years Eve celebration; the planning of an addition to the Elks Holiday Classic Youth Camp is well under way; we plan to make the summer camp available to even more campers this year.

We are striving to expand our Therapy Services under new Director Bill Hughes, and Suzie Simonelli in a “scorched earth” mind set as she and her Membership Committee strive to put Florida Elks back in the PLUS category for the first time in quite awhile. She and her Committee have impressed the staff at Elk Headquarters in Chicago with our great strides in membership gains this past year. When you get the word to come together and thank her for the Committee’s hard work this year.

Florida Elks under the able direction of PSP Mike Phillips, Eustis Lodge ER Ron Locke, Sports Committee Vice-Chairman Tony Demarzo, and other ambitious and dedicated Elks hosted an inaugural Elks Holiday Classic Christmas Basketball Tournament for local High Schools near the Youth Camp. It was a wonderful success thanks to elaborate advance planning and attention to detail. Once again, we can all be proud that Florida Elks continue in our efforts to support our youth and are not content to rest on our many laurels.

I would be remiss if I did not commend the following Lodges for obtaining much sought after Elks National Foundation Community Investments Program Impact Grants totaling $40,000: Vero Beach Lodge 1774, Tampa Lodge 708, Bradenton Lodge 1511, Florida Keys Lodge 182, and Viera Lodge 2814. Congratulations to these Lodges for showing us just how relatively easy it is to obtain an ENF Grant and help establish your Lodge’s rightful place as a treasure in the community.

Florida Elks welcome our National President and First Lady Ron and Nancy Hicks to our February Quarterly. Ron is a true Southern Gentleman, and there is no requirement for an interpreter to help understand his message of Elksdom. They have been our guests in Florida before and we will all take great pleasure in again making them feel right at home. After all, Florida is located way South of Virginia!

As I write this message we have just learned of the sudden and tragic passing of Kay “Angel” Harris on January 5. All Florida Elks wish to offer what comfort we can to VPAL John Harris who, as you would expect, is devastated by the loss of this wonderful lady. We will all miss her great big smile and jolly laugh. Please keep John and the Harris family in your prayers.

Thanks to all of you for your generous spirit and big hearts. Those qualities are what make the members of the FSEA the very best in our Order.
2015–2016
OFFICERS OF THE
FLORIDA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION, INC.

PRESIDENT
Carl Ledig — “Dolly”
2517 Bluebell Place
Tallahassee, FL 32308
2805 Forest Run Dr.
Melbourne, FL 32935-7121

VICE PRESIDENT AT LARGE
John C. Harris - “Angel”

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FSEA Secretary.............Carl T. Seibert, PDD.............Eustis Lodge 1578
Treasurer..................Joseph B. Bryant, PDD.............Sebring Lodge 1529
Tiler.........................Harry P. Symons PER........Tallahassee Lodge 937
Historian...................Truman A. Bass, PDD........Deep Creek Lodge 1763
Historian Emeritus Lowell P. Tyler, PER........West Palm Beach 1352
Curator of Museum Donald Sansoussi, PSS........Lake Placid Lodge 2661
Chaplain .....................Carl Gerace, PDD........Port Charlotte Lodge 2153

Tsg-at-Arms: Frank J. Maltesa, Jr. PDD............Lakewood/Rt/Sarasota Lodge 2855

DISTRICT VICE PRESIDENTS
Northwest.............Paul Palmer, PER..................Warrington Lodge 2108
Northeast.............Barbara L. Hollingsworth, PER......Lake City Lodge 893
North Central........Ronald W. “Ron” Locke, PER........Eustis Lodge 1578
East Central............Robert “Bob” Swink, PER...........TinCanisville Lodge 2113
Central...................Mary Crossler, PER..............Zephyrhills Lodge 2731
Southeast Central...........Joseph D. “Joe” Pepe, PER......Port St. Lucie Lodge 2658
West Central.............Jeanne Reinhart.....................Largo Lodge 2159
Southwest Central...Thomas M. “Tom” Crews, PER........Plant City Lodge 1727
Southwest...............Kenneth “Ken” Davis, PER.........Manasota Lodge 2734
South Southwest.....Thomas C. “Tom” Johnson, PER.....Rotonda Lodge 2710
Southeast...............Leonard “Lenny” Di Lorenzo, PER.....Jupiter Lodge 2469
South Southeast...Linda D. Barie, PDD....................Boca Raton Lodge 2166
South...............Dennis A. “Denny” Tarbell, PER........Florida Keys Lodge 1872

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David B. Lake PSS..............4-Year .....................Mt. Myers Lodge 1288
Frank D. Hayes, PSS........3-Year.......................Crestview Lodge 2624
Don Sansoussi, PSS........2-year........................Lake Placid Lodge 2731
Vincent P. Como, PSS........1-year ................................Boca Raton Lodge 2166
Danny E. “Dini” Tabor, PSS......Immediate PSS........Bradenton Lodge 1511

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North...............Leroy “Bill” Nichols, PDD.............Lake City Lodge 893
Northeast.............Raymond D. Murphy, PDD.......Orange Park Lodge 2605
North Central.........Martin J. DeCarlo, Jr., PDD........Apopka Lodge 2422
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West Central.............Michael Pierso, PDD.............Seminole Lodge 2519
Southwest Central......Linda Bailey, PDD..............Lake Wales Lodge 1974
Southwest...............Frank Maltesa, PDD.............Sarasota Lodge 1519
South Southwest........Phillip J. Gersbach, PDD........Mt. Myers Lodge 1288
Southeast...............Gary Casperson, PDD..............Jupiter Lodge 2469
South Southeast.....Denise E. May Carter, PDD...........Boca Raton Lodge 2166
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FLORIDA ELKS YOUTH CAMP, INC.
Gary Breakfield, PDD, President
Zephyrhills Lodge 2731
Pat Hether-Jackson, PDD, Vice President
Port Orange Lodge 2723
Lynn Warburton, PDD, Director
Palm Coast Lodge 2709

FLORIDA ELKS CHILDREN’S THERAPY SERVICES, INC.
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Winter Park Lodge 1830
Betty Clark, Vice President
Crestview Lodge 2624
Bill Hughes, Administrator
Eustis Lodge 1578

PAST GRAND EXALTED RULERS
Robert Grafton, PGER, Florida Co-Sponsor
10253 SW 12th Terrace - Micanopy - 32667
C. Valentine Bates, PGER Florida Co-Sponsor
1511 NW 6th Street - Gainesville - 32601
Michael F. Smith, PGER Florida Co-Sponsor
P.O. Drawer EE, Plant City - 33564

STATE PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Carl Ledig
President Florida State Elks Association

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

May you have a wonderful New Year and meet all your New Year’s resolutions!

December was a month of multicultural holiday celebrations. Whether you celebrated Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Three Kings Day, St. Lucia Day or Boxing Day, I hope you celebrated in style with friends and family and had a wonderful holiday season.

In January we start with a clean slate and new personal goals. May we accomplish them all and then some. Let’s get started and achieve what we hope to accomplish as Elks, insuring BE THE CHANGE is achieved. Don’t forget to contribute to your favorite charities. How much and to whom is a highly personal decision, often influenced by financial circumstances, life experiences or personal connections to a particular cause. As Elks, we are committed to the Harry-Anna Trust Fund and its two major projects that benefit the children of Florida:

1. Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services
2. Florida Elks Youth Camp

We have developed an easier system to connect your spirit of giving and the Elk’s commitment to our Florida children and I am reaching out early this year for your support.

I am asking each of you, when you finish reading this article, or stop reading now and go to the Florida Elks website http://floridaelks.org and click the *Donate* button in the upper right hand corner of any page. Fill out the form, give your credit card information and donate $25.00 before the end of the first quarter of 2016. Consider selecting the annual donation option and automatically donate $25.00 every year!

Next and equally important I ask you to email or call everyone in your address book and ask them to do the same. Don’t just ask fellow Elks, ask your family and friends who may not be Elks but are looking to support such a worthy cause.

http://floridaelks.org

The *Donate* button is on all FSEA website pages. Choose your own giving amount and schedule. The $25.00 annual donation is just a suggestion to keep it simple and within everyone’s budget.

Do you shop on Amazon? Do you know that Amazon donates 0.5% of purchases to charities? It does not cost you a thing and only requires one small change in the way you shop at Amazon. Instead of shopping at amazon.com, shop at smile.amazon.com, same username, same password. You only need to choose your charity once. This small change is an opportunity to easily get more money flowing into our charity account. Go to:

http://www.smile.amazon.com

Sign into your Amazon account. Select the Florida Elks Charities as your charity and 0.5% of your purchases will accumulate and be transferred into the established FEC bank account.

Of course, there are other ways to give:

Make a donation to HATF through rachael@floridaelks.org and she will mail you a Harry Anna Trust Fund pin that you can mate with my State President pin.

Join me at a State President District Visitation and give your donation to the HATF State Chair, Phil Gerbsch, and receive a Harry-Anna Trust Fund pin.

Purchase a Harry-Anna Trust Fund certificate with a one-time or memorial donation:

- $50.00 State President HATF pin
- $100.00 Bronze Pin
- $500.00 Silver Pin
- $1,000.00 Gold Pin
- $5,000.00 Your name on Donor Wall in the main lobby of the state office at the Florida Elks Youth Camp

Participate through the FSEA Wills and Bequests, Planned Giving Program via the Florida Elks Charitable Trust.

You can leave a permanent legacy during your lifetime:

- Gift from your Will or Trust
- Gift from your Retirement Plan
- Gift of Stock and Appreciated Assets
- Gift of Life Insurance
- Gift of Real Estate
- Gift of Personal Property

Small Business Initiative

Corporate Giving – Many of you will have experienced Small Business Saturday by the time you read this. Corporate Saturday encourages holiday shoppers to patronize brick and mortar businesses that are small and local. We encourage each of you to go out into the community and introduce yourself to local business owners and Corporate executives. Start a discussion with them about Elk community involvement and good works and how much Elks give back in support of Florida children and veterans.

Ask for their donation and send it with their contact information (name, phone and email) to Rachael King at the Florida State Elks Association.

Continued page 4
Greetings and a very happy new year to all! Speaking of a new year, the start of a new year in our lodges is right around the corner, April 1. Will your lodge once again elect qualified leaders for the lodge, members who are not doing the lodge a favor with their service? Or, will your lodge continue a trend of electing only self-serving members of the clique who will make sure to keep the bar and food prices low and the dance bands on stage? Exercise your right to vote in the lodge officer elections. Take the time to meet the candidates and ensure that they have every member’s best interests at heart. When evaluating the leadership potential of a candidate, go back and read my article in the last issue of Florida Elks News or online and hold them to some very high standards.

When electing a Lodge Secretary, make sure they have office-related experience and are capable of operating a computer and working in the new cloud-based membership program that all lodges are required to use. When electing a Lodge Treasurer, make sure that person has financial knowledge beyond just balancing a checkbook and make sure they have electronic bookkeeping experience and are experienced in the computer program used by your lodge. The year flies by so rapidly that we cannot afford to spend the first three months allowing someone to be trained. Should your lodge be replacing someone in the Secretary or Treasurer position who is not yet ready to leave the job, assume that person will be rather reluctant to train their successor. This is not the time to put someone new to the Elks or the job into that position! When electing a Trustee or Director for the board, make sure you are electing someone with business experience. This person needs to be able to read and interpret the financial reports provided to them by the Treasurer and must be able to hold the lodge officers accountable for timely reports and information crucial to the board’s decision-making.

So much to learn and no time to learn it: there’s an answer for that. It is the state-sponsored officer training, this year being held March 11-13 in Orlando. It is not everything an officer needs to know but it’s a far cry from no training at all.

When electing your leaders this year, demand that they attend at least this one program but please don’t require them to personally foot the bill to attend. Hold a fundraiser or two in the lodge to raise the necessary funds to send all your key people to the training. This event is operated as a break-even activity for the FSEA; no profit is made from it and we exhaust every effort to see that the training is informative and useful. Even if your officers attended last year, this training is invaluable and is constantly evolving. There is much to gain from attending. If your leaders are unwilling to devote this one weekend to spending it with their peers, are they really worth electing?

Get a commitment before they are elected! If they are not just doing the lodge a favor, they will do whatever it takes to attend!

Take pride in your lodge! Commit to the future of your lodge! Prepare a roadmap for this future, and elect leaders this year who will lead much-needed change, who will commit to producing a profit in the lodge, and who will continue your winning ways or start you back on a road to recovery! Let me know what you think! E-mail me at carl@floridaelks.org

History of the Elks Veterans Memorial

www.elks.org/memorial/

The Elks Veterans Memorial is closed for the season. We will re-open April 18 2016

Construction

Construction of the Elks Veterans Memorial began in 1923, after the Order unanimously agreed on a spacious site for the building, looking out over Chicago’s Lincoln Park and within a stone’s throw of Lake Michigan. The Elks War Relief Commission, which was put in charge of finding the site and supervising the building’s construction, wrote in its 1921 recommendation to the Grand Lodge that:

A large crowd gathered at the then-under construction Memorial on June 7, 1924 for the laying of the cornerstone.

Cornerstone laying ceremony

“The suggested building be made definitely monumental and memorial in character; that the architectural design be so stately and beautiful, the material of its construction so enduring, its site and setting so appropriate...that the attention of all beholders will be arrested, and the heart of every Elk who contemplates it will be thrilled with pride, and that it will for generations to come prove an inspiration to that loyalty and patriotism which the Order so earnestly teaches and has so worthyly exemplified.”

Workers laid the memorial’s cornerstone on June 7, 1924 amid impressive ceremonies conducted by officers from the Grand Lodge.

Two years later, on July 14, 1926, the Annual Convention of the Order was held in Chicago and the building was officially dedicated to the memory of the more than one thousand Elks lost in World War I in front of a massive crowd of Elks and their families that stretched across the street and into the park.

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE SECRETARY

Carl T. Seibert, PDD
Dear Florida Ladies of Elks and Elks,

Our first meeting of our new year, held in conjunction with the Elks Mid-Year Convention, was Friday, November 13, 2015. This was a change from our usual Saturday morning meeting time. The change was made to allow all FLOE members to be able to attend the Major Projects meeting on Saturday morning. Please let us know your thoughts and comments on this change. Our 3rd Ladies Morning Out Activity was a huge success thanks to the hard work of our Vice President Connie Poage and to Claudia Bates, wife of Val Bates, PGER. Claudia provided a wonderful class of flower arranging. All 43 participants made a beautiful fall arrangement for our door or table.

A big thank you to Claudia for providing this class and encouraging us to seek out our local Garden Club to continue our skills and interest in flowers and gardening.

Immediate Past State President Jane Moon and her committee chairladies gave their wrap up of the 52nd annual FLOE Conference held in Melbourne Beach September 24-26, 2015. It was a great Conference and you really missed a great time to meet with friends from all over our state and help contribute to the Elks two major projects. Jane will proudly present a check for $9,000.00 in February to State President Carl Ledig to be split equally between the two major projects. Great job Jane and ladies!

We are off and running preparing for our next major fundraiser. The FSEA Silent Auction, sponsored by FLOE, and our FLOE Luncheon/Chinese Auction, held at the Elks State Convention, May 28, 2016. This is the third year FLOE has taken over the job of organizing the Silent Auction. All proceeds will be credited toward your Lodge’s contribution to Harry-Anna, so let’s have some great items donated to the auction! Linda Rittenhouse from St. Augustine Elks club is our Chairlady. She can be reached at lindarritt1@att.net or 904-940-2830. Please give her a call if you have any items to donate or questions. The FLOE Luncheon Chairlady is Marlene Evans from St. Petersburg Lodge. Watch the website for ticket information.

Judy Reyes, PSP, is our Nominating Committee Chairlady. All delegates interested in being considered for a position on the Advisory Council or as a FLOE Officer should submit their letter of interest to Judy no later than January 15, 2016. Voting will take place at our meeting in May.

Our State Elks website (www.floridaelks.org) is a great source of information about FLOE and what’s happening. The Elks Facebook page is another avenue that all of our Ladies groups need to take advantage of. Please send pictures/videos of your events to Greg@floridaelks.org and he will post them. I know there are plenty of cell phone pictures or videos being taken at your events!

My colors are red, white and blue to symbolize our veterans and active duty military. I would like to highlight a soldier from an Elk family in each of my articles.

**Dakota Wyatt-Casalaspro**

signed up for the Navy in June 2012 and left for Great Lakes boot camp November 1, 2012. He completed the eight week training course and graduated December 28, 2012 from Division 13-040 with his parents Pat and Elizabeth Casalaspro proudly watching.

Pat is our current ER at my Ocala Lodge 286. Dakota then attended A school, graduated and received his certificate for HM Basic (Hospital Corpsman). From there he went on to C school and graduated with his certificate as a Dental Assistant. Both schools were located in Fort Sam Houston, TX. His 1st orders were to Okinawa, Japan as a Dental Assistant at Camp Courtney. He is nearing the end of these orders and has put in an application for re-enlisting with the Navy for another four years. His rank is currently an E3, and he is working on passing his test to become an E4, which would put him at his first Officer ranking. Dakota is 22 years old, and is planning on getting married sometime in 2016. Thank you Dakota for your service to our country! If you would like to write or send a care package, his address is:

Wyatt, Dakota J
Camp Courtney
Unit 37452
3D Dental BN
96382 FPO AP

Let’s all work together to “Build a Fence of Hope Around A Child.”

I hope to see everyone at our next meeting in February on Saturday February 6, 2016 at 9:00 am.

God Bless,

Becky Long, FLOE President

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**State Presidents message continued from page 2.**

When you ask for a donation remind them of their donation is tax deductible.

The HATF is 501(c)(3), an approved IRS tax-deduction. Many businesses have set aside a certain amount of money for reinvesting in the local community for the common good and for charitable causes. Ask for this money!

Regardless of how you choose to give, please choose to support the Florida Elks Charities. In the words of Master Po, “Choose wisely, Grasshopper.”

In closing, don’t forget our upcoming February Quarterly Meeting 4th – 6th. GER Ron Hicks and his wife Nancy will be visiting the FSEA Youth Camp and I invite you to come for the Major Projects Meeting on Saturday the 6th. Please bring a non-member friend or two to visit the camp and tour the facilities, as well hear the GER’s message at the meeting. You may be surprised at the impression made on a non-member.

Again, happy New Year and please remember to “Be The Change!”

Fraternally,

Carl Ledig
State President FSEA
SOCCER SHOOT FINALS

First Place Girls

Girls Division, Under 14
1st Place Hannah Arnold Ormond Beach
2nd Place Paige Cormier Dunedin/Clearwater
3rd Place No Entry

Girls Division Under 12
1st Place Rhiannon Fahey Sanford
2nd Place Anna Marie Haverty Deland
3rd Place Jensen Redish Sebastian

Girls Division Under 10
1st Place Ally Jules Fugate Eustis
2nd Place Ava Hall Punta Gorda
3rd Place Cele Hopwood Dunedin/Clearwater

Girls Division, 8 & Under
1st Place Itzel Angeles-Valdovinos Arcadia
2nd Place Hannah Hall Punta Gorda
3rd Place Mira Nutakki Sanford

On Saturday, January 9, soccer kickers in the state came with their family and friends to the grand finale of the Florida State Elks Soccer Shoot at the Youth Camp in Umatilla. These competitors were the top scorers in their class from the 645 youngsters who entered the competition state wide. Two of the contestants received ribbons for their 4th place wins. Past State President Dan Tabor and wife Rachel watched the first few kickers but they followed other dignitaries that had left earlier because of a recent death to attend the memorial of Angel, the wife of VPAL John Harris taking place in Melbourne FL in the early afternoon.

PDD Phil Watercutter, assisted in the awards ceremony and Florida Elks Youth Camp Assistant Camp Director Nick Miller, gave a through presentation of the Youth Camp opportunities in camping and employment to the attending crowd of parents and contestants. Also attending were Raleigh Whiteman, Florida Elks News Editor and his wife Joya; Ron Locke State Chairman, of the Soccer Shoot Program, had committee members, Vice Chairman, Raymond Haverty, III; South Region Chairman-Nicholas A, “Nick” Miller, PER, North Regional Soccer Chairman; Susan Locke (Eustis Lodge) Registration and Scoring Table.

First Place Boys

Boys Division Under 14
1st Place Robert Treur Ormond Beach
2nd Place Sean Silva Lehigh Acres
3rd Place No show

Boys Division Under 12
1st Place Kai Leavy St. Petersburg
2nd Place Julian Cendetjas Arcadia
3rd Place Phillip Roloff Ocala

Boys Division, Under 10
1st Place Oliver Dobson Sebastian
2nd Place Cody Locke Eustis
3rd Place No Show

Boys Division 8 and under
1st Place Francisco Trevino Clewiston
2nd Place Elijah Moriano Sebastian
3rd Place Elias Johansson Ormond Beach

The van of FSEA President Carl Ledig and wife Dolly, is parked outside the Gymnasium the morning of the soccer shoot but they and several other State dignatories had to leave early.

Susan Locke gets registration info from Sean Silva’s mom, Glenda Flores, as Ron Locke in background checks his roster of contestants.

The contestants gather in a group photo with Soccer Chairman Ron Locke, right rear, with his assistants in back.
Elks National Foundation

How the ENF Works

Since inception, the ENF has contributed more than $429.6 million toward Elks charitable projects nationwide. These funds enable programs that support youth, honor veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. Our programs continue to grow each year, allowing Elks to do even more to build stronger communities. Click here for details on all ENF programs.

This year, the ENF allocated $9.77 million to fund the Community Investments Program, investing in Elks communities through grants for Elks Lodges. Community Investments Program grants—which include Beacon, Gratitude, Promise and Impact grants—offer your Lodge an opportunity to serve your community in ways that will raise the Lodge’s profile, energize the membership, encourage former members to return to the fold, and gain the notice of people who want to be part of an organization that’s doing great things.

The ENF is able to help Elks build stronger communities thanks to contributions from our generous donors. Since inception, we have received more than $234.2 million in contributions and bequests. Today we boast more than 100,000 active donors and an endowment fund valued at $588.4 million.

A board of seven trustees, who are all past national presidents of the Order, governs the ENF, which is located at the Elks national headquarters in the Elks Veterans Memorial in Chicago. The director, Jim O’Kelley, oversees the administration of the ENF’s day-to-day operations. Click here to meet O’Kelley and his staff. The ENF also has volunteers at the Lodge, district and state levels who help coordinate our fundraising strategy and implement our programs.

Thanks to the ongoing support of our donors, the ENF continues to expand on Malley’s vision, mobilizing Elks across the country into a force for positive change.

Join your local Lodge in service to your community.

Our fate will be defined by March

By RICK GATHEN

The next months will determine our place in Elks history. Every delinquent Member we collect dues from and every new Member initiated and reinstated in January, February and March takes us one step closer to a gain in membership. That makes it important for you to refrain from setting limits on what you can change and influence.

When doctors are sent into the middle of a battlefield to rescue injured soldiers, they never give up - and neither should you. This same leadership and attitude is needed to achieve a gain in membership and end the 35-year losing streak.

Roll up your sleeves, work even harder and get excited. We are in the home stretch!

Every Member matters! I’ve previously challenged our Lodges and Members to ask themselves, “What If?”

“What if” your Lodge Membership Committee calls or visits your remaining delinquent Members in January, February and March?

“What if” you use your best judgment to consider Members in distress who are deserving of dues assistance?

“What if” your Lodge Secretary uses personal notes on late dues notices in an effort to save your delinquent Members in January, February and March?

“What if” your Lodge Secretary provides a list of all former Members who were dropped for non-pay over the past five years to increase reinstatements? (Use the sample reinstatement letter from the Membership Manual.)

“What if” you begin 2016 with a membership drive and ask every Member to sponsor a friend and family member into your Lodge?

“What if” if you schedule dates to initiate new Members into the Order in January, February and March?

How we answer those questions, indeed, will determine our place in Elks history.

While all of our programs are important, one that deserves much attention is our National Veterans Service Committee. This committee helps to fulfill our long-standing pledge, “So long as there are Veterans the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them,” and thus deserves strong budgetary support. Our Veterans served our country well and allow us to live and worship freely. Therefore, we should continue to do all we can to make their lives more comfortable and productive.

There are many ways to achieve this goal. Your Lodge can bring veterans from local hospitals and using homes to the Lodge for a dinner or party, or bring the event to the hospital when possible.

Purchase ‘comfort care kits’ or small gifts for hospitalized veterans during the holiday season (or any time). Participate in a VA sponsored ‘Stand Down’ for homeless and at-risk veterans by collecting clothing and other necessities. Work with local military bases and family assistance centers to discover the needs of our troops at home and abroad and their families.

It is very important to take the time to plan your programs and to make sure your budget is sufficient to carry out your programs. If your Lodge does not have a budget large enough to carry out a veterans’ related program, be creative. Turn a Lodge dinner or other event into a fundraiser, or apply for grants from the Elks National Veterans Service Commission and the Elks National Foundation.

Each year, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission awards 100 ‘Freedom Grants’ of $2,000 each to Lodges which create programs designed to assist veterans, the active military, and their families. The Elks national Foundation offers Beacon Grants of $1,000 each, Gratitude Grants of $2,000 (for Lodges meeting the GER per capita donation goal of $4.50) each, and Impact Grants of up to $10,000. Your Lodge can also enlist the aid of local businesses by working with the Elks National Foundation to obtain a Lodge Assistance Grant. Lodge Assistance Grants allow Lodges to secure donations from local businesses for specific Lodge charitable projects through restricted monetary donations to the ENF. With this opportunity, the Foundation extends the benefits of our charitable status to both the business and the Lodge.

Our Veterans are everywhere today and need our help. They are homeless in our communities, they live in assisted living facilities, and they live in State veterans homes and in VA medical centers. It is important to plan activities and a sufficient budget to support these programs, thus showing our Veterans that “So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.”

Push for membership enters stretch run

By JOSEPH C. BASIL
Committee Chairman

With many months to go in the Lodge year, I sincerely hope your Lodge is on target to meet it goals.

Are you managing your delinquency list with the Membership Committee?

Looking at Membership/PR Manager Rick Gathen’s numbers, we are on track to improve upon last year’s results. The effort has taken a lot of hard work, but is really worth it.

I have listened to Rick speak at various venues, and he can really get people charged. He has been a tremendous shot in the arm for our Order.

A couple of things about membership have worked for me over the 15 years I have been a Lodge Secretary.

Billing notices are great but nothing works as well as personal contact with a delinquent Member. Use the telephone to your advantage and please make certain when making calls, you have someone who can get the message across.

You need to convey the reasons membership is important and how those dues you collect allow the Lodge to provide the services and programs to your area. Your diligence is needed to keep your membership solidified. Enlist those Members who have the power of persuasion.
Brandon Lodge 2383

The Brandon Elks have been raising money to buy a 10-12 passenger van to transport the homeless veterans of Liberty Manor a home to assist homeless, honorably discharged, developmentally and socially veterans. Initially it provides them transitional, supported housing, helping them regain self-sufficiency.

George Scribner, Brandon Elk’s Veterans Chairman, learned of Liberty Manor about a year ago when some of its residents attended an Elk function.

“The more he learned, the more he believed Liberty Manor to be a great fit with what Elkdom is all about — serving and supporting our Veterans,” said Scribner’s wife, Mary Lou Scribner, an Elk Trustee and Past Exalted Ruler. When George Scribner discovered the difficulties the Liberty Manor residents endured trying to get to the Brandon Elks events, he began soliciting donations and hosting fundraisers to buy a van to give to Liberty Manor.

Brandon Elk member Craig DeMask learned about Liberty Manor at one of the Brandon Elks Lodge’s first-Wednesday veterans’ dinners. He offered to help George Scribner organize a golf scramble tournament, along with William L., manager/professor of Linkster’s Tap Room in Brandon. The tournament took place Nov. 14 at Pebble Creek Golf Club. Final figures aren’t in yet, but they have already tallied more than $4,500, increasing their donations-to-date to about $10,000.

Brandon Elks appreciate veterans because “they gave so much that we might enjoy our freedoms,” said Mary Lou Scribner. “They are our unsung heroes. Many come back from giving their service to our country with broken hearts and spirits. With Liberty Manor we saw the need and an opportunity to reach out personally and be involved.”

Thanksgiving came early for MacDill AFB active duty heroes and their families at the Lodge. This annual tradition which has been done for 15 years. The Altivia Group providing the food and the Elks preparing it. Many volunteers came together for this special evening, providing lots of entertainment, photo keepsakes and fun, along with a great dinner.

Lakeland Lodge 1291

Lakeland Lodge fed over 350 meals to Veterans at the Tampa VA in October. Members brought donations of socks, t-shirts, underwear, toiletries, pajamas, slipper, magazine and books for the Veterans.

On Sunday, November 8th, Lakeland Lodge kept to the Elks Pledge, “So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.” There was a special event where hamburgers, dogs, or brats, corn on the cob, beans, potato salad, dessert along with a cake auction. Veterans ate for free. Mary Allphin, Veterans Chairperson expressed, “If it wasn’t for our Veterans and the sacrifices they gave, life wouldn’t be as we know it now.”

The Lodge received a $2,000 Grant that is being used for the Boys and Girls Club annual Christmas Party.

KIDSPACK is a non-profit organization supported by Lakeland community leaders and corporate sponsors dedicated to feeding disadvantaged children by giving them a backpack of nutritious food each Friday to sustain them on weekends when they don’t have access subsidized school meals. Polk County has 3,793 homeless hungry children and KIDSPACK feeds 1,145 children per week in the public schools. Lakeland Lodge has partnered with KIDSPACK to help fight child hunger. The lodge members donate weekly into a barrel to help fight hunger with our children.

Lake Placid Lodge 2661

Lake Placid Elk Lodge’s annual Children’s Christmas Party just got four times larger this year then years past. Along with the members, children, grandchildren and the Lodge’s sponsored needy children, this year we were able to go out into our community thanks to the generosity of this Towns Businesses, it’s residents, and our own ELK Family for the children at RCMA.

RCMA (Redlands Christian Migrant Association) provides quality child care and early education for children of migrant farm workers and rural, low-income families throughout Florida who are a leader in high-quality early childhood services. Jim Lind, Elk Trustee and Chairman of this event states, “we were able to put smiles on the faces of approximately 300 children! Today the Clowns came and painted faces to already happy faces. Broward County residents came up and also donated and volunteered their time.

Lady’s of the Elks sponsor needy families in the community. The Lodge’s card players (Texas Hold’n and Euchre) The Lodge members every year come together to reach out to our sponsored families by donating non perishable food and toiletries. Many of the Elk members privately donate monetarily while our card players will donate each time they play thru the holiday season. These donations help the many items we all take for granted. Families in need have food stamps but soap, toothpaste, toilet paper and every non-food item we all use are not included. Then there are Christmas toys which go out to the children. Evelyn Cresse, Chairlady of the Lady Elks Needy Buckets states, “I receive family referrals from members, schools or churches. There are also times thru the year that one of these families may come and ask for a little help and we are there to help.” Card players and private donors have also been supportive in helping children from Porter’s House or STR8UP to go to the Elks Youth Camp in the summer by donating items to enable a child that can’t supply some basic camping items. Evelyn states “These are one of the many times we love being Elks.”

Plant City Lodge 1721

Thank you for the Lodges $2,500 Promise Grant. Christmas shopping was in the future for the Boys and Girls Club. Plant City Elks members had a Christmas wrapping party and then had Christmas party at the Lodge. Elks Cared and Elks Shared by giving these boys and girls and great members from the Plant City Elks Lodge.

Plant City Firemen and Policeman were honored at the Lodge’s annual dinner. Dinner was served by Plant City Elks members to 70 Plant City’s first responders followed by awarding the Policeman and Firemen of the year.

Plant City Elks spent two days prior to Thanksgiving frying 329 turkeys for their fire departments, community and members as a fundraiser. Their local fire department received half of the turkeys as a donation while members purchased the fried turkeys for their own Thanksgiving dinner.

Plant City Elks hosted a Veterans Dinner evening paying tribute to our Members who have served our great country’s military branches. It was also fitting to remember those who did not return from their tour of duty and some remain unaccounted for. As long as there are Veterans, the Elks will not forget them.

Sebring Lodge 1529

Since 2003 players at the Sebring Elks Lodge 1529 been winning a bit of cash for themselves but they have been sharing a percentage of their wins helping the community.

Elk member Howard Allen calling Bingo.

Lodge member Wainetta Holmes says, “No matter how much goes into the scholarship pot, it’s all put to good use, it’s for good organizations and it’s used locally for good causes.”

The upcoming fiscal year, the Lodge has budgeted about $8,950 to be donated through Bingo games.

Sebring Elks 1529 participated in the Sebring Christmas Parade on December 4th. Over twenty Elks and Helpers walked the route passing out over 80 “Just say No to Drugs” bags containing literature on the subject and 50 lbs. assorted candy. Elk Mascot Eloy- aka Dan Negron was a “Big Hit” as he walk along passing out candies to the young and old. Everyone was in the Christmas Spirit despite the threat of rain.

Starting in November, six Sebring Elk volunteers came forward to support the community project of “Back Packs” for kids. Their volunteering help with the Back Pack program for kids lunches on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Sebring Elks also started back on their canned and boxed food drive. Again, donations are supplied by the players from the Sunday and Monday Bingo players bringing in a donation a “Free Harry-Anna” game. The Monday prior to Thanksgiving was their first delivery to the Food bank.
**Apopka Lodge 2422**

The Lodge held their Third Annual Breast Fest to benefit the Debbie Turner Cancer Resource Center raising $2,000 for this most worthy charity. The activities included a Bike Run that ended at the Lodge, a spaghetti dinner and auction. Lodge members purchased and delivered food to five Apopka Elementary Schools to help families through the Thanksgiving Holiday.

**Inverness Lodge 2522**

*Inverness Lodge used their Beacon Grant for the second year to host a three day Dirt Bike Course for at-risk youth.*

They partnered with Inverness-based Filter Youth Development which works through the Citrus County Schools in selecting the youth in an effort to turn their lives around through mentoring and motivation. In cooperation with Honda, a total of 30 students finished the course this year.

They are taught the responsible and safe handling of dirt bikes and must maintain certain goals in order to complete the course. Riders receive expert instruction, fantastic catered lunches, a riding shirt and tons of added self-confidence. Parental support is required and the students must maintain a passing average in school, stay out of trouble and avoid truancy. They learn, not only how to ride a dirt bike, but also the care and maintenance of the equipment. Inverness Elks Lodge is able to offer all of this plus the use of top-notch safety gear.

**South Marion-Villages Lodge 2730**

A Lodge member known as “The Sock Lady” Carol Relyea, donates her time to makeing Christmas stockings for less fortunate children. During the past two years, she furnished over seventy stockings each year for the Lodge’s annual Children’s Christmas Party. Many of the happy kids receive Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services. Carol also donates to other special needs kid’s organizations such as Kid’s Central Inc. and Weirsdale Middle School. Carol says “the kids wanted and needed socks so I just cut, cut, cut.” To date she has sewn 1,000 socks which take her about 15 minutes each to make. Carol will continue to do what she loves as long as there is a need for her contributions to needy children.

Just before Thanksgiving, a team of Elks participated in two food giveaway programs made possible by a grant from the Grand Lodge. One program was at the Leesburg Food Bank, where 238 baskets consisting of turkeys, cranberries, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, butter, eggs, bread, pies and cakes were distributed to local needy families. The other giveaway was the Veterans Helping Veterans program, where the team of Elks distributed 26 holiday dinners strictly to veterans. Each recipient left with blessings and good wishes from the Elks team and each team member was grateful to be part of this special activity.

**Winter Park Lodge 1830**

Pushing the envelope of Government Relations, the Lodge was honored to have U.S. Congressman John Mica and his wife Patricia, attend our Veterans Day Celebration.

**Eustis Lodge 1578**

Taking the advice of Rick Gathen (Grand Lodge Membership), the Lodge used their road sign to post what they do for their community – see their sign

Of photographs of our Lodge’s military veterans and military memorabilia adorned the room.

During District Deputy Colleen Gallant’s homecoming visitation, the Lodge was honored to have an unexpected visit from Grand Exalted Ruler Ron Hicks. He was vacationing in Orlando and decided to stop in. The spirit of Christmas was evident as GER Hicks received a standing ovation by members and their guests from the NC District and volunteers from Lake Howell High School. He thanked us for being dedicated Elks and wished all Elks a Merry Christmas. Also attending the visitation were newly appointed North Central District Leader, PSP Victor McClellan, Vic’s wife Peggie and Central District Leader, PSP Charlie Trinowski and Charlie’s wife Mary Ann.

**From right: Debbie Edmiston, Ron Goluba, Sue Jovi, Barbara Rozanski, Janice Stolarski as “Elroy T. Elk”, Demi Wilson, North Central District Deputy Colleen Gallant, Katie Torres, Al Gallant, June Lett and Mick Ellis while John Campbell, Susie Brown and Howard Weidman cooked hundreds of pancakes and sausage for spectators.**

The members were so happy to drop off donations from our Thanksgiving Pet Food Drive. The Pet Alliance could not believe the amount of stuff we had. An entire SUV was packed to the top with dog and cat food, dog and cat treats, cat litter, bowls, toys, leashes and checks!!! All of the homeless pets thank us and we are so happy to make their Christmas better!!!!!
Jacksonville Lodge 221

On September 9, the Lodge participated in the Jacksonville Beach Drug Awareness program “Get Hooked on Fishing not Drugs.”

Elroy the Elk is pictured with a family who attended the program. The Lodge held a fund raiser Barbecue Chicken Dinner on October 24th. Raised $2,400 which will be used for Youth Activities.

Jacksonville Lodge held an Oyster Roast at the Lodge on November 14th. Raised $500 to be used for Veterans Services programs.

Gainesville 990

On September 19th, Gainesville Lodge held bingo for Veterans at the Veterans Auditorium.

On September 26th, the Lodge held the quarterly Barbecue. Funds raised at the barbecue will go toward charity projects.

On November 11th, the Lodge held a Veterans Appreciation Day and served hamburgers, hot dogs and fries free to all veterans and children who attended.

Green Cove Springs Lodge 1892

Green Cove Springs Lodge Co-sponsored the City of Green Cove Springs’ annual Christmas Parade. Lodge members packed goody bags full of books, toys, and treats that were handed out to over 200 children after their visit with Santa.

The Lodge presented checks totaling $4,100 to FSEA President Carl Ledig to support the HATF. The funds donated were from the charity bingo program.

On December 2, 2015, the Lodge hosted Eagle Scout Tyler Danson and his family for dinner to learn about and provide financial support for Tyler’s Community Service Project.

Also joining us that night was Tyler’s physical therapist, Stephanie Haynes, of the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services.

The annual Wild Game Feast was held with this year’s theme, Gone Country! The event was open to the public. Approximately 200 people enjoyed a day of delicacies such as duck sliders, rabbit stew, gator tails, oysters, and a low country boil along with macaroni and cheese, beans, and many other side dishes and assorted desserts. Money raised at this event will support the charity projects of the Lodge.

Mandarin/St. Johns Lodge 2866

In October, a Monte Carlo night was held to raise money to support the charity projects of the Lodge.

A Turkey provided funds to help provide Thanksgiving Baskets to five needy families in the community.

On November 14, a Pie Raffle to raise funds was held to benefit the Clyde Lassen Nursing Home.

In December, the Lodge provided items for the Wish List of the Divine Mercy Home, an organization that assists and supports unwed mothers and their children.

Orange Park Lodge 2605

In September, Orange Park Lodge held a “Meet and Greet” with the resident Veterans of The Windsor.

Lodge Member Bob Watson and his wife, Hazel, are among the residents. Bob is a WWII Veteran and is a member of our Lodge. He is 101 years old and has been an Elk for 70 years. 25 Lodge members and guests participated.

In December held the 12th annual Christmas Pizza Party at the Lake City Domiciliary. The Lodge provided the pizzas and baked goods for the residents. Lodge member, Ray Lackey, provided the musical entertainment. The Ladies of Orange Park Elks purchased Christmas gifts to be distributed to the residents. Lodge members and guests helped serve the pizzas and desserts to the residents.

Pictured from left to right is Gene Rittenhouse, Esteemed Leading Knight, children who attended the event and Lodge Member Russ Brummer.

The Lodge raised funds to purchase 200+ dictionaries for 11 third grade classes at the Plantation Oaks Elementary School. Lodge secretary, Bob Morse PER, and Trustee Peggy Anderson PER, presented the dictionaries to the classes.

In December held the 12th annual Christmas Pizza Party at the Lake City Domiciliary. The Lodge provided the pizzas and baked goods for the residents. Lodge member, Ray Lackey, provided the musical entertainment. The Ladies of Orange Park Elks purchased Christmas gifts to be distributed to the residents. Lodge members and guests helped serve the pizzas and desserts to the residents.

Far left are Hazel and Bob Watson with the Lodge members, guests and children who also attended.

From left: Al Findley, Pat Chaney, Ray Lackey, Roseann Lackey, Richi Broaddus, Betty Napier, Faith Elliott, Bob Morse and Cathy Morse.

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St Augustine Lodge 829

An ENF Grant to help hosted the ninth Annual St. Johns County Homeless Veterans Stand Down. Over 40 volunteers from every local veteran’s organization in the county let the 29 veterans and over 100 other homeless people know that they are not forgotten. The ENF Grand along with donations from local merchants helped to provide showers, haircuts, toilet items, and clothing. Medical personnel from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the local Wildflower Dental Clinic, and Job Source were on hand to address any needed care. The Veterans were also given surplus military equipment and entered into a drawing for a half dozen new bicycles. George April, PER, and Lodge volunteers fed everyone hamburgers and hot dogs prior to their leaving. Lodge members and veterans participated in the Stand Down.

$1,000 was donated to the Empty Stocking Fund. The Empty Stocking Fund is a registered 501C organization for those in need, also $300 was donated to a local three year old child who has terminal brain cancer.

On December 5th, in cooperation with the Greater Jacksonville Area USO St. Augustine Lodge hosted the 58th annual “Pal Day” lunch. Over 500 visiting service men and their families enjoyed a meal of hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, baked beans and soft drinks.
On Saturday, September 26, 2015, the members of the Zephyrhills Elks welcomed 20 new members into the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. After the initiation, many Elk members of Zephyrhills Lodge welcomed the new members and their guests with a dinner and dance. It was a wonderful evening and a great chance for the new members to get acquainted. 

Zephyrhills Elks presented a $1,000 donation to the Zephyrhills High School Spirit fund, a $2,500 donation to Everyday Blessings, a not-for-profit organization serving foster care children and participated in a festival at the local city fire department to promote Drug Awareness. Several members handed out drug awareness coloring books and other materials to local children and parents.

On October 29th, a Halloween party was hosted by the Lodge for the mentally and physically challenged children and young adults in the Hudson Community. Donations from the bingo community and membership, in addition to a $2,000 Beacon Grant, provided the funding for this event. The Halloween party included a “Trick or Treat” village, constructed by our members, where the children go from house to house to collect their candy. Members hosted numerous games, with face painters dressed as clowns and McGruff from the Pasco County Sheriff’s Department and dinner for all to where they wanted to go. The evening was tipped off with a dinner of hot dogs, pizza, chips, soda and ice cream for all. In addition to candy, every child in attendance left with a self-selected gift, appropriate to their age, interest and ability level. This party not only provides children with a fun and safe activity, it also increases the awareness of the dedication and compassion that these parents and caregivers and Elks Club members provide the children in our community.

On October 29th, a Hurricane party was hosted by the Lodge for the mentally and physically challenged children and young adults in the Hudson Community. Donations from the bingo community and membership, in addition to a $2,000 Beacon Grant, provided the funding for this event. The Hurricane party included a “Trick or Treat” village, constructed by our members, where the children go from house to house to collect their candy. Members hosted numerous games, with face painters dressed as clowns and McGruff from the Pasco County Sheriff’s Department and dinner for all to where they wanted to go. The evening was tipped off with a dinner of hot dogs, pizza, chips, soda and ice cream for all. In addition to candy, every child in attendance left with a self-selected gift, appropriate to their age, interest and ability level. This party not only provides the children with a fun and safe activity, it also increases the awareness of the dedication and compassion that these parents and caregivers and Elks Club members provide the children in our community.

On November 7, the Lodge held an Indoor Yard Sale to promote membership and make money for the charity fund. Tours of the facility were given to those who showed interest. A Singles Dance, which was open to the public to once again bring in potential members. Two applications for membership were received and two participants asked about renting the balcony. Both events were considered a success for the Lodge and we look forward to opening our doors to the public again soon.

On October 28th, the Lodge celebrated the traditional Veteran’s Day Ceremony. The opening ceremony took place outside at the flagpole with the Air Force JROTC lowering the flag to half-staff in honor of deceased veterans of all U.S. wars while 100% disabled veterans from V.A. Hospital, Community Living Center at Lake Nona with Elks, their families and guests looked on. Once inside the ballroom Lee Horn directed a volunteer drill team made up of seven Lodge members who are Veterans. Lunch was served after the ceremony to approximately 75 people.

On November 14 we celebrated again at the Lake Nona facility with a cookout. Eighteen volunteers from the Orlando Lodge barbequed for a total of 180 veterans and staff at the Veteran’s Hospital. Local school children made hand-written thank you cards for the Veterans. They were most appreciative of both this event and the cards.

The Orlando Elks Guys and Dolls put on another Lodge fund raiser Christmas Show which brought over $2,000 into our Lodge! Fourteen loyal members of our Lodge dedicated many hours in the production of this show; spending their own money and putting many hours into dance and singing rehearsals. This is what brotherhood is all about, putting the Lodge before our own personal life for the betterment of the Orlando Elks. Over 100 Elks and family members attended this event in support of our Lodge! A great time was had by all and the Guys and Dolls are already looking forward to their summer show!

In other news, On December 9, the Lodge put on a luncheon for the visually impaired. Approximately 35 guests enjoyed a luncheon that was prepared and served by our members! Everyone had a great time! The Lodge also continues to hold monthly Saturday Night Singles Dances with the hope of bringing in more members. Applications have been received and interest has been shown in renting our ballroom for family events. That’s a big plus for our Lodge. This month will be our third dance and we are hoping the Christmas holidays and the fact that our Lodge is decorated so beautifully will bring even more participants.

West Citrus Lodge 2693

West Citrus held its annual Beach Bash in September at the Ahu Tiki Inn in Daytona Beach. The net profit from this event of $2,166 will be donated to ENF. The Hoop Shoot hosted the Cub Scouts for a sleepover providing them with pizzas to enjoy. The Food Pantry was provided with 150 turkeys along with the Lodges’ generous members, our local WalMart was kind enough to discount them for us. Thanksgiving dinner was also held at the Lodge for members and their guests.

The Veterans Committee held its annual dinner/dance to benefit the areas local veterans.

The Lodge is grateful for the $2,000 Freedom Grant received from ENF. This money will be used primarily to help our homeless veterans. The committee as always visited many assisted living facilities. They have adopted 124 veterans for the holiday season – a Christmas tree has been set up with donation envelopes to fund this.

Members have again been very generous with HATF donations. Thanks go to the Reinholz Foundation for their wonderful $3,000 donation to Elks Charities via members Butch and Dianna O’Kelley. We also wish to congratulate Eileen Flannery who was presented with a copper HATF pin having donated over $250 in support.

The Memorial Service recognized the lost 35 of our members this last year.

Many entertainment functions were held including dinner/dances for Oktoberfest and Halloween along with several special functions.
On November 8, the Lodge held a Flag Retirement at the Lodge. The retirement service was conducted by Troop 475 of the Boy Scouts of America. The Lodge provided a great meal to all Veterans who attended. Members also donated Toys and cash in the amount of $3,500 to the Fort Pierce Police Department to be distributed to needy children. Member JoAnn Peterson is the Toy Drive Chairman and started collecting toys the last of October. Merry Christmas to all. Elks Care Elks Share. The Lodge is proud we have the best Ladies Auxiliary in Elkdom. The Elkettes adopted 29 families to help this Christmas, and have worked very hard to raise money and collect donated toys for the families and children. God Bless for the good work.

**Stuart-Jensen Lodge 1870**

In October, the Lodge held an “Operation Thank You” where we invited 42 Law Enforcement officers along with Firefighters and Paramedics. ER Joey Simonelli, recognized an outstanding first responder from the four departments, Martin County Sheriff’s Office, Martin County Fire Rescue, Stuart Police Department and City of Stuart Fire Rescue. We were honored as the Fire Chiefs and Police Chiefs were also in attendance and assisted with reading the bios of the award recipients.

Red Ribbon week was again a huge success with visiting four schools with Elroy the Elk played by Debbie Wilson and Suzi Simonelli, PDD. With the help of ENF Promise Grant Funds, the schools could purchase additional training materials for their Drug Awareness classes.

In November we honored our Veteran of the Year, Douglas “Robin” Barker of United States Marines. There were seven WWII Veterans in attendance and they all had their picture taken with Robin along with our ER Joey.

The Lodge marched in the Stuart Veteran’s Day parade, a Lodge tradition! Before Thanksgiving, we hosted a Spaghetti Fund Raiser for the Martin County HS Wrestling Team. Coach and Members Don Knauff along with Jay Cianciola organized the event and the youth made $3,000 for their team.

December we had our first Hoop Shoot in years at the Stuart YMCA. Betty Tewksbury, PDD was our Lodge Chairman and she along with all her volunteers had a great turnout of 40 kids.

One of the annual events is our Children’s Christmas party for underprivileged children. This year with the support of the ENF Promise Grant and our FSEA Therapists, Diane Corson and Chrisny Nathan, we invited the kids they treat each week, along with siblings and their parents to the Lodge for games, lunch and a chance to see Santa, played by member Mike Foley and get a toy that was specially purchased by our Therapists with funds and donations from the Promise Grant and the Lodges Charity Bingo. Some of the kids were also on our “Angel Tree,” where members took a card and bought and wrapped gifts for the child to go under the tree for Christmas morning.

**Vero Beach Lodge 1774**

The Lodge thanked veterans for serving our country and protecting our freedom. This year’s program got special thanks to the veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars. There were 300 members and guests present, all decked out in red, white and blue. Ninety Elks veterans were individually called and received a framed certificate of thanks for their service to our country.

The Lodge held its annual PER Lobsterfest to raise funds for their annual scholarship to a deserving high school student. Over $1,000 was raised.

The Elks National Foundation has awarded the Lodge with another $10,000 Impact Grant for 2016 to continue their community outreach program, ‘Elks Love Kids of Character.’ The grant will supply the Vero Beach Elementary School with school supplies and incentives for the Elks Love Kids of Character Store. Students will be able to earn Wampum by doing one of the six Pillars of Character, Trustworthiness, Respect, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship, Responsibility, Good Grades or Patriotism, and then be able to spend their wampum at the school supply store. The Elks will also be able to provide 200 new school uniforms and sneakers to underprivileged students there.

**Viera Lodge 2817**

This fall has been a busy one for the Lodge. Raising funds for Elks charities and the Lodge, as well as the on-going focus on Veterans have been at the center of all events.

Trustee Tom Carns hosted the annual poker run, raising $800. Tom also cooked his special spaghetti dinner on Veterans Day. Forty five dinners were provided to veterans and their families.

Seven members, led by Chiffone Sandberg, helped the local ‘Children’s Hunger Project’ by stuffing backpacks with snacks to carry the children through the weekend. This project aids children whose primary source of food is the food provided at school. In addition, member Rick Leonhart hosted the Miss Viera Elk event, won by member Don Dahlstrom portraying Sophie Tucker. The event raised $222 for the Lodge.

The Lodge celebrated with two of their veteran/members Eugene Greene, a veteran of WWII and Frank Johnson, a veteran of the Korean War and Vietnam, who were recognized by the non-profit Honor Flight. Both fine gentlemen were provided an all-expense paid trip to Washington DC to see their battle memorials, and other significant sites around the U.S. Capital with military honors on departure and return. It was quite a day for both.

**West St. Lucie Lodge 2823**

The members of our Lodge have been extremely busy. The Lodge purchased $1,000 in food for the needy children at Oak Hammock and West Gate Schools, partnered with the Boys & Girls Club for our Hoop Shoot Contest, aided a needy vetern with a donation for a new roof, held our annual Veterans Dance and Christmas Party, purchased over $500 in toys for the Toys for Tot’s program, and held a Christmas party for the children in the Grace Pack food program through our Promise Grant.

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**Cocoa Lodge 1532**

September opened with the return of an old standard as the Lodge hosted a Labor Day Picnic and Ice Cream Social for members and guests. Highlights of the event included homemade ice cream and a hotly contested round of musical chairs.

FSEA State President Carl Ledig presented Lodge Secretary Michael Schodlbauer, PER with the SEC District Elk of the Year award during his District Visit and dinner.

The month closed with nearly 50 riders participating in the Lodge’s Charity Poker Run and Steak Dinner which raised $500 for Veteran’s programs and the Wounded Warrior Foundation.

In October, the Lodge held its Annual Golf Tournament at the Rockledge Country Club. Nearly 100 golfers took to the greens and helped raise $2,000 for ENF and Harry-Anna.

Using Beacon Grant matching funds from the FSEA, the Lodge partnered with Archaeologists for Autism to support their annual outreach event designed to allow children with Autism spectrum disorders and their families to experience archaeology in a fun, low-stress environment. 100 children attending the event and their families were provided lunch.

November started with a visit from Elroy the Elk as he dropped in at the Annual Buddy Walk fundraiser for Brevard Families Exploring Down Syndrome. The Lodge has provided support for this event for several years now and again helped provide lunch for participants, their families and other volunteers.

Using its ENF Beacon Grant funds to prepare and deliver a full Thanksgiving meal to local Veterans and children. Dinners were provided for the residents at the Volunteers of America Veteran’s Village and to the Crosswinds Youth Services Robert E. Leighton Children’s Shelter both located in Cocoa. In all, over 120 dinners were prepared, packaged and delivered.

**Ft. Pierce Lodge 1520**

The Lodge applied for and received a Beacon Grant from the Elks National Foundation. The money will be used to help support the community boxing program.

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The Lodge presented an ENF Beacon Grant of $2,000 to the Fort Pierce Police Athletic League (PAL) boxing program.

The program motto is “Filling Playgrounds, Not Prisons.” Joelterrea (JoJo), Alford and Darrion Henry are seven time champions, and Justice Henry is rated 4th in the Nation. All the children are on Honor Rolls at their respective schools. The Lodge is very proud of the accomplishment of PAL.
**Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Lodge 2855**

On December 5th, Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Lodge held a luncheon for 36 veterans from all branches of the service. After a turkey lunch, served by the “Ranch Hands,” each Veteran gave a brief bio of his time in the service. The guest speaker was Linda Craig from M.O.T.S. (Manasota Operation Troop Support). They are a nonprofit organization serving military Troops deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait with ties to Manatee and Sarasota County and their families. Each month MOTS sends between 35 and 50 care packages to troops, who are serving our country. In addition MOTS supports the troops and families back home by helping them with cash or gift cards depending upon their needs.

**Manasota Lodge 2734**

The Manasota Elks and The N.U.B.S (Never Underestimate Brave Students) began in the Spring of 2015. Their mission Statement is “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” The N.U.B.S. were recognized by Keep Manatee Beautiful for the “Green School Award” because of their hard work over the summer planting and cleaning up the school grounds from funds presented to the N.U.B.S at the Annual Keep Manatee Beautiful where the Lodge was also recognized for their outstanding recycling program.

**Palmetto Lodge 2449**

On December 3rd, The Lodge held their Hoop Shoot Free Thrown Contest at the Palmetto Boy’s and Girl’s club. This year, 18 boys participated.

**Sarasota South Lodge 2495**

The Sarasota South Lodge recently donated $2,000 to the Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center to be used for vital necessities for their shelter program. The Lodge decided that they could go above and beyond the original numbers and purchased food items, toiletries, baby diapers and other necessities including 60 brand new pillows.

**South Hillsborough Lodge 2672**

The Lodge hosted a children’s Christmas party with music, food, face painting for over 100 children who got to see Santa, Rudolph, Mrs. Claus, Santa’s Elf and a special visit from Mickey and Minnie Mouse using a ENP Promise Grant and generous donations from their members.

**Venice – Nokomis Lodge 1854:**

The Venice-Nokomis Lodge on September 23rd, a Thursday night and it went extremely well. This year, 27 young people participated with water and treats provided. Thanks to all the volunteers including one from the Palmetto Lodge and two from the Bradenton Lodge. Roy and Bobbi Gardner were the chairmen.

The Lodge held a Pig Roast/Halloween party on October 31st and raised $2,411.10 for Elks National Foundation.

**Pictured from L to R:** Larry Hildebrand, PER, Lois Harmes, ER, Joe Lipson, Edina Jones, Red Malone, and Doreen.

The Lodge, utilizing a Beacon Grant, provided 70 Thanksgiving Dinners.

**Pictured L to R:** Carolyn Reichard, Rose LaSorsor, Laurel Nokomis School, Donna Lindner, Ken Bird, ER and Sheryl Cutrona, Laurel Nokomis School.

The Lodge, thanks to a $2,000 grant, purchased 30 duffle bags and 10 diaper bags for The Coalition for the Safe Children. With each bag, the Lodge supplied a blanket, stuffed animal, toiletries, a game, and coloring books. Doreen from the Coalition said these suitcases will give the kids some dignity when they are forced to leave their homes. Counselors, when moving these children from home to home, will make sure that their suitcases go with them.
A special event was planned at the Lodge to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the End. Lodge member Janet Kingsley as they coupons. The Lodge has continued to cut and sort coupons to children and parents visiting their booth at City of St. Petersburg Lodge 1224.

**St. Petersburg Lodge 1224**

The Lodge held its annual Halloween Carnival with the Drug Awareness Mascot, Elroy handing out goodies for the 160 children and family members present. There was food and games, prizes and candy; petting zoo, pony rides, a bounce house, spook house, and pumpkin decorating before the costume contest. This was a free community event chaired by Sherry Masi and her vast crew of volunteers to keep these kids entertained and fed during this fun-filled event.

The Lodge took 17 Veterans from Bay Pines to the Big Cat Rescue in Tampa in October. Upon arrival, the morning started off with the veterans being instructed how to make “Big Cat” toys and treats before the tour got started. Once the tour guide got the group started, they went, on foot, into the cat sanctuary where the guide fed the animals and shared the toys and treats that the Veterans had made. The guide was able to give the Veterans a history on each of the animals as they went from area to area. All of the Veterans questions were answered and much was learned that day. On the return bus trip to Bay Pines the veterans were comparing pictures that they had taken while on the 2-hour walk. The veterans were able to take some remarkable pictures that were shared with those veterans who were unable to attend. The veterans will be talking about that trip for a long time to come. They were so grateful for that day trip, as they had never seen anything like that, up close as they were able to get, for fantastic photo opportunities.

The Lodge donated Thanksgiving food baskets to 23 needy families to enjoy a nice festive dinner. There was enough food in those baskets to feed each of the families for 6 or 7 days. The Lodge donated Thanksgiving food baskets to 23 needy families to enjoy a nice festive dinner. There was enough food in those baskets to feed each of the families for 6 or 7 days.
**Lake City Lodge 893**

The Lodge held its Moonlight & Martinis dance and gala on November 21. Live music was provided by the South Bound Highway Band, which includes a few new Elks as band members. This event is a fundraiser to help meet the Lodge’s ENF quota, as well as a donation to the HATF. A big thank you goes to Mike Lydick, Dave King, Don Roush, Stephanie Bennett, Beverly Gjoen, and the Griffiths: Phil and Stephanie, for attending and helping the Homeless Veteran Stand Down event held at the Lake City National Guard Armory on October 23. Over 100 veterans were there and received duffel bags and backpacks filled with useful items.

For over 75 years, Lake City Elks have been providing Christmas dreams for the less fortunate in the community. This year, thanks in part to strong partnerships with the Lake City Rotary Club, First Federal Bank of Florida, S&S Food Store, and American Pawn, the Lodge once again had a spectacular Christmas Extravaganza. The fun began on December 23 when Elks gathered at Marion Street Pub for “Let’s Talk Turkey 2.0!” Members brought frozen uncooked 15-18 pound turkeys to Marion Street from 5 pm-9 pm and received a complimentary drink, courtesy of Ron Robbins and all the staff of Marion Street Pub.

The Christmas food baskets and toy giveaway program was set for December 24. Christmas Eve morning was a busy time at the Lodge. Members gathered from 8-11 am to construct food baskets for 50 needy families in our community.

These baskets not only provided a Christmas feast but also food and supplies for the next week. Many of these families receiving baskets have school aged children who do not receive a nutritional meal away from school. The highlight of the Christmas Extravaganza was Santa’s arrival at our Lodge, Christmas Eve evening, on top of a fire truck, courtesy of the Lake City Fire Department and escorted by the Lake City Police Department and Columbia County Sheriff’s Office.

**Live Oak Lodge 1165**

Live Oak’s smoked chicken dinner was a huge success in September, with the food gone in thirty minutes. Much of the food was donated and therefore the revenue to the Lodge was substantial. A BBQ competition later that month went well and the best chicken award went to Randy McManaway; best ribs to Cookie Cook; best Boston butt to Don Garrison and Randy McManaway (tie); and best overall score to Randy McManaway.

The Lodge had a work day on October 17, spend-

- **Best Overall Score**: Randy McManaway.
- **Best Boston Butt**: Don Garrison and Randy McManaway.
- **Best Ribs**: Cookie Cook.
- **Best Chicken**: Organized clean up and thanked those who helped.

A Halloween party on October 31 was great fun. Prizes were awarded for the best costume and the most outrageous costume.

The Lodge was very pleased to receive a letter from a newly hired FECTS therapist, Valerie Edmonds, who has offered to come visit the Lodge, write an article for the newsletter, or bring her van for an event. Valerie lives in High Springs, which is not far from Live Oak.

A luncheon on November 11 for all veterans was well attended by about 250 persons. The brisket was put on the grill the night before to make sure it would be ready. The Life South Blood Mobile got a good workout collecting 18 pints which broke last year’s collection of 17 so it was a great day for them as well. The Lodge was pleased with its Veterans Day celebration.

A second BBQ/smoked chicken dinner on November 20 was another successful event. Grills were fired up around 6 am to get the chicken on. Passersby were stopping to see when the food would be ready for pick up. The Lodge sent out over 400 plates and raised $3,200 for the lodge.

The Lodge assisted the Community Outreach Ministry organization on Saturday, November 21, in feeding more than 1,000 needy folks in the area.

A New Years Eve dance is planned and attendees are encouraged to bring finger food to share. The Willow Creek Band will play and breakfast will be served after midnight.

**Tallahassee Lodge 937**

The Lodge sponsored its annual trip to the local Gretchen Everett school kids and their families on October 1-4. Nearly 80 Elks made the trip and had a great time for that weekend. Seven Elks from the Lodge attended. A big tip of the hat goes to Lynn Warburton and his staff for making that visit to the camp so memorable for the kids and their families.

Later in October, the Lodge’s Halloween Party was great fun with many of those attending in costume and others who came to enjoy the festivities in everyday attire.

Tallahassee Elketts held their annual Autumn Dinner and Arts & Crafts auction on November 5. The wares offered are always fabulous and many choose items to be given as Christmas gifts in December. In December, the Elketts December Social brought a crowd to the Lodge on the first Saturday of the month. The food was great, the company even better, and the music was enjoyable for all.

The Lodge co-sponsored a Murder/Mystery Show in conjunction with the local Theater Tallahassee, a community theater group. There were three performances: two matinees and a dinner show. The Lodge assisted in providing the venue for the performances as well as helping prepare the meals for the theater guests.

Another volunteer breakfast team has been added to the Sunday cook teams: Danny McElroy and his team have picked up the second Sunday of each month. Breakfast is now offered on each of the first three Sundays. Go Danny!

PSP Larry Henley rounded up a cadre of volunteers to help lay new PVC pipe to the Lodge’s RV park.

The existing piping developed a leak under a concrete slab and had to be abandoned. Larry handled the project as well as taking charge of the trencher himself to get the pipe in the ground so that a plumber could make the final connections. The RV park is once again watered.
DeLand Lodge 1463

DeLand Elks held their 3rd Annual Soccer Shoot at Sperling Sports Complex on October 28, 2015. There were seven contestants and 11 Elks to help conduct the Shoot Out.

DeLand’s Annual Children’s Halloween Party was held October 24. More than 100 children along with their parents arrived to be spurred while traveling through the Tunnel of Terror, where they encountered members dressed in Halloween garb.

From left: Anna Marie Haverty, John Mott, C.J. Haverty, and Margie Mott with grandkids.

At the end of the adventure, everyone enjoyed hot dogs, chips and a juice box. As they exited the Lodge, until next year, each child received an assortment of treats donated by the members. The extra left over candy and treats were donated to the “Neighborhood Center”.

Members of DeLand Lodge 1463 donated their time to help the community. Among those who were involved in the “Pick up City Park Clean up” are: Rachel Sieg, Randy Long, Mark Thompson, Chip Haverty, Phil Watercutter, Bob Sari and Brenda Johnson.

On November 7, 2015 the winners of the Hoop Shoot competition who competed on October 28 in DeLand returned for the District Hoop Shoot which was held at Lake Sylvan Recreation Facility in Sanford, FL. The contestants from DeLand Lodge 1463 who competed in the District are; Age 7 and Under Girls Division: Jessa Watercutter - 3rd Place, Age 10-11 Boys Division: Tyler Figanscher 1st Place and Cadin Anderson 5th Place. In the Girls Division Age 10-11 Anna Marie Haverty 1st Place and Age 12-13 Boys Division: Colten Davis 5th Place. Anna Marie and Tyler will compete December 12th in the Regional Soccer Shoot at the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

On Sept. 26, DeLand Lodge 1463 held their Annual Departed Members Golf Tournament, headed by Phil Watercutter PDDGER from DeLand. Golfers from the EC District, friends and businesses either participated in or sponsored this event. Many area businesses, restaurants and individuals donated gift certificates, food and other items for this worthwhile cause. Money earned from this tournament are used for DeLand Elks Charitable Works: money was raised for $2,500 in scholarships for the graduating seniors from one of the local high schools, Elks National Foundation per capita, Harry Anna per capita, Camper scholarships for underprivileged students in the community, sponsorships of DeLand Little League Baseball teams, the DeLand High School Football Century Club, Emory L. Bennett Veterans Nursing Home, Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot and Army of Hope. The food left over after the golf event, was donated to the Neighborhood Center.

This Year’s turnout for the 2015 Hoop Shoot was sponsored by the DeLand Elks 1463 and held at DeLand Middle School. Children, both boys and girls, from schools across Volusia County tried out for this annual event.

Sponsored by the DeLand Elks, The Rain gutter Regatta is a racing event for Cub Scouts in the Boy Scouts of America that is the sailboat equivalent of the pinewood derby. The sailboat kit consists of a seven-long balsa wood hull, a 6-1/2 inch mast, plastic sail, plastic rudder, and metal keel. Within the basic design rules, Scouts are free to paint and decorate their sailboats as they choose. This is our 2nd Annual Raider Regatta race. There were about 30 boys in the race.

From left: Timmy Briedigam – 3rd Place, Keegan Harrison – 2nd Place, David Finigan – 1st place.

On Sunday, November 22, the DeLand Elks served their Annual Family-Style Thanksgiving dinner for members and their families. Organized by Donna Nott with the assistance of Barbara Thompson, Randy Long, Marissa Ackerman, Stephanie Lilly and other volunteers. The turkeys and hams and desserts were donated by members. The food was delicious as we all came together to give thanks.

The First Sunday in December is set aside each year to remember our departed members. This year in addition to the Service, departed members families were invited to the unveiling of the Engraved Name Memorial plaques of their departed family member. It was a beautiful service and a light lunch was served after.

Edgewater/NSB Lodge 1557

Marci Skates, ENF Chair sold pumpkins for $5 and turkeys for $10 during ENF month of October. She sold $549 worth to top off their total and make President Carl’s goal of $4.65 per member.

From left: Nancy Turkali, PDDGER from DeLand. Golfers from the EC District, friends and businesses either participated in or sponsored this event. Many area businesses, restaurants and individuals donated gift certificates, food and other items for this worthwhile cause. Money earned from this tournament are used for DeLand Elks Charitable Works: money was raised for $2,500 in scholarships for the graduating seniors from one of the local high schools, Elks National Foundation per capita, Harry Anna per capita, Camper scholarships for underprivileged students in the community, sponsorships of DeLand Little League Baseball teams, the DeLand High School Football Century Club, Emory L. Bennett Veterans Nursing Home, Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot and Army of Hope. The food left over after the golf event, was donated to the Neighborhood Center.

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Miami Lodge 948
The PER Association and officers hosted a successful Labor Day Picnic with hot dogs, hamburgers, sides. Elkettes added a bake sale and jewelry sale.
The Activities Committee, Chaired by Marta Cruz, were a busy bunch. Their Yard Sale netted about $300 for ENF.
Marta Cruz and Ron Simpson also continue to host successful Karaoke nights twice monthly, and John Martin is calling the Thursday night charity bingo.
The Lodge held a Blood Drive on October 13th.
The Halloween party was a great success with standing room only in the lounge, “spooky” was the theme drink special, a basket raffle for charity, a costume contest with Gift Card’s for prizes.
On November 7th, PER Barry Wake, Charity Ball committee chairman, staged the Lodge’s 61st Annual Charity Ball, with a “Saturday Night Fever” theme. The committee raised about $1,800.
The annual Thanksgiving Veterans’ Lunch was canceled because of this year’s frugality measures. However, Miami 948’s Rosalie Wallfish still faithfully attends VA meetings, and continues to see to the needs of the veteran patients, and continues the laundry program for homeless Veterans; she acquires laundry center vouchers near the local VA and detergent pods that enable them to launder their clothes weekly.
The Lodge Hoop Shoot was held on December 5th at the Boys & Girls Club of Kendall.
Because Miami 948 is now closed Sundays, the Lodge received permission to hold its Memorial Service on Tuesday, December 8th.
The annual Children’s Holiday Party was held on Saturday, December 18th. Zoo Miami’s Ron Magill provided the entertainment for all of those in attendance, a drum exhibition was also provided.

Florida Keys Lodge 1872
The Florida Keys Elks Lodge 1872 was super busy with member parties, find raisers, benefits, kids sports activities and Thanksgiving Dinner.
Our Veterans on the Water Program sent 15 vets on many different water activities plus fun days at the Theater of the Sea, thanks to grants. September was Surf and Turf.
34 new members were initiated due through our membership drive. Many of the new members have brought many new ideas and are becoming new volunteers.
October was the Oktoberfest and Halloween parties. The spaghetti dinner proceeds donated to the scouts. The annual Rummage Sale brought many people to the Lodge who donated items and shopped, making it super profitable.
The rain did not keep all the kids away from our Soccer Shoot and Hoop Shoot.
The annual MARC benefit including the silent auction and fish fry was well attended with proceeds going to help those in need.

East Central continued from previous page

Sanford Lodge 1241
The Inaugural Sanford Elks Lodge Brewery Pub Tour Poker Run took place on October 10, 2015. Lodge members guided a total of 50 motorcyclists through 125 mile predetermined route that featured some of Central Florida’s Best Craft Breweries. Participants got to meet and speak with the Brew Masters themselves and learn some of what makes these breweries legendary.
During the trip, the group also got to stop into the Titusville Elks Lodge and enjoy the Army Of Hope Picnic’ fundraiser, while contributing to the wonderful bake auctions & silent auctions that were held in the afternoon. Our group landed back to our home Lodge where there was delicious beef brisket, french fries and fresh coleslaw awaiting the hungry masses, prepared by our own Danny Horn, Robert Brinkerhoff and Janice Van Castern. To enhance the meal, easy listening music was being played by Island Cowboy Keith, who incidentally completed the 125 mile ride before sitting down to play for two hours.
By the time the dust had settled, the initial figures look as though the group raised a total of $500 for the Lodge. Every rider was happy and excited to participate in our Spring Rally scheduled for May. All in all a fabulous day of great riding, fun and fellowship all for a good cause.
Ken Martin gives special thanks for an amazing day to Steve Smith, Bart Peterson, Darrell Bartz, Debra Martin, David Doudney, Linda Palmer, Joe Rodgers, Linda Silva, Lisa Lindstrom and Bo Lindstrom for helping get all this moving down the road as smoothly as could ever be expected.

Ormond Beach Lodge 2193
For the past three years, members of the Lodge come together for 2-3 hours every afternoon to sort coupons for military families, serving abroad, to be used in the many commissaries. Each week, John Georgoudiou, Coordinator of the Troopons Program, sits down with the group to sort new and expired coupons by food groups, baby products, household and pet products, and more.
They sort 15-20 pounds of coupons, each week, with boxes weighing 10 pounds each, at a dollar value of $35 - $50.00. Just recently, the group was informed they sorted 1,087.75 pounds of coupons and the program got a donation of 500 pounds of cookies from Figi. Letters from the military families are sent, routinely, expressing their thanks and appreciation. Joseph Anania, Director of Troopons congratulated the group for doing a fine job. Joe is a WWII veteran and a member of the lodge. The group may change from week to week, but their sole purpose is to continue to support our military by dedicating their time to this worthwhile program.

Pictured: Top Row from left: Wes Getchell, Joseph Anania, Director of Troopons, Pat Hubert, John Georgoudiou, Coordinator of Troopons; second row: Marilyn Lauzon, Gin Getchell, Billie Owens and Catherine Hickey.

November 11th was a day to honor and thank our men and women in our armed forces for their service to our great nation. One such veteran, George Dokes, a member of the Lodge for 16 years and a resident of Ormond Beach for 18 years, stopped by. George served as a Boson’s Mate in the US Navy. George was a carpenter by trade. After raising two sons, he and his wife did a lot of traveling. Thank you, George, for your service.
Bonita Springs Lodge 2753

December marked the 25th Anniversary of the Lodge’s original charter. A gala was held to celebrate the milestone with great food, music, and fellowship.

Thanks to an ENF grant, the members were able to provide Thanksgiving baskets to the elderly, Veterans and those in need in their community.

Cape Coral Lodge 2596

Cape Coral has been busy recruiting new members. Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce, the Elks were able to set up a booth at the local Farmer’s Market at no cost. This successful effort gained approximately 85 new members; 72 of them were initiated at the November meeting.

Deep Creek Lodge 2763

Deep Creek Elks partnered with Rotonda Elks 2710 to purchase a three-wheel therapeutic bicycle for a deserving disabled Veteran. The bicycle, valued at $1,200, is used for rehabilitation purposes.

Englewood Lodge 2378

Englewood Elks presented fully cooked Thanksgiving dinners to thirty families who needed a little help this year. In addition to the complete dinners, each family received a $25 Publix gift card.

A “Yard Sale” was organized by Trustee Barbara Gordon and $1,600 was raised for charity.

A luncheon was held at the Lodge on Veterans Day to thank veterans for their service to our country. Invitations were extended to veterans residing in area nursing homes as well as those in the Lodge. Approximately 75 people attended the event.

Empty shoe boxes were wrapped in Christmas paper, “adopted” by members, filled with gifts, returned to the Lodge. This year 70 filled boxes were sent to the Veterans Committee for distribution. This very successful project has been ongoing since 2011.

The “Give-A-Child-A-Book” program has been completed again this year. This program allows children in the 3rd grade at Myakka and Englewood Elementary Schools to choose a book from the Scholastic Book Fairs held at their schools for their very own. The teachers are given labels with a place for the child’s name and also stating that the book was a gift from the Englewood Elks. The thank you notes received from these children were priceless!

Fort Myers Lodge 1288

It was with great excitement when the Lodge recently relocated into a new and remodeled home. It has been an exhaustive one-year project accomplished by the loyal members.

In November, the Lodge manned the SSW District Drug Awareness Trailer for the Boy Scouts of America Panther District Show, held in Fort Myers. There were 16 units (300 Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts) in attendance.

It was a great experience and as the Exalted Ruler said “if we can reach only one child it is worth our effort”.

North Cape Coral Lodge 2874

North Cape Coral Lodge is a relatively new Lodge in the SSW District. The members are active and enthusiastic about all they have accomplished during this year. Recently they held their first annual Hoop Shoot Contest.

Punta Gorda Lodge 2606

The PER Association of the Lodge raised $2,150 during the recent PER Oktoberfest. The proceeds go to the association’s Elk charities. Also, the PERs gave $500 to the Lodge’s Wounded Warrior Program to assist with the aid being provided.

Punta Gorda Elks, along with Trunk & Treat at Muscle Car City, provided candy, hot dogs and cooking equipment to the Burnt Store Presbyterian Church for their Halloween party. Over 1,200 people, all eating hot dogs, attended.

Thirty children participated in the annual Soccer Shoot Contest in November.

Thanks to an ENF grant, the Lodge was able to help the Head Start Program at Bakers Center by donating $1,000 for Christmas gifts for the kids.

The Lodge participated in the Punta Gorda Veterans Day Parade. Candy and flags were handed out.

The annual Christmas party at the Lodge was a successful event with the proceeds going towards gift cards for senior citizens at St. Vincent De Paul.

Rotonda Lodge 2710

Rotonda Elks, led by Chairman Mary Filleti, handed out over 600 Drug Awareness bags, coloring books, bookmarks and ribbons at the Spooky Walk in Englewood. In addition, the Boys and Girls Club of Englewood was presented soccer balls and basketballs along with bookmarks, coloring books, red ribbons and Halloween treats.

Recently, the Lodge presented a $500 donation to FAME, an organization that promotes the education of young musicians and provides musical instruments as well.

Though the generosity of the members, the Lodge was able to provide Thanksgiving turkeys and large boxes of non-perishable food to over twenty families.

At Christmas, the Lodge members bought, wrapped and provided requested gifts to over sixty worthy children via the Angel Tree Program.

The Lodge is working with Lee County to provide housing and supplies for homeless Veterans, using funding provided by an ENF grant. Pictured is the first veteran to receive bedding.

Presenting the bicycle are Deep Creek ER Len Wenzel, SSW District VP PER Tom Johnson and PER Lady Pat Johnson and Rotonda ER Wayne Legris.

The Lodge was recognized by the Charlotte County School Board for sponsoring a field trip to the Veterans Cemetery. Letters of appreciation for the trip were received from 20 students.

Deep Creek Elementary School was the recipient of the Lodge’s Promise Grant for $2,000. Additionally, $840 Drug Awareness Bags were given to the school for Red Ribbon Week.

Veterans from the Jacobson Home were treated to Thanksgiving dinner at the Lodge. The group comes every month for lunch and bingo. During the season, 15 turkeys were donated to local families in need.

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Twin Cities Lodge 2747

Following a delicious dinner sponsored by Crestview Lodge 2624, Ron Powell, the PER Association Elk of the Year Committee Chairman, presented Rosie Bolton with the Association’s NW District PER Association “Elk of the Year” plaque.

Tom Casey, Lodge Tiler, was selected to present the Twin Cities Elks Veterans Memorial Wreath at the annual Twin Cities Veteran’s Council “Veterans Day Ceremony” held on November 11th at the newly renovated Doolittle Park, Valparaiso, FL. Lodge member Rick Woelfl was elected Chairman of the Twin Cities Veterans Council for 2016. The Twin Cities Elks have been a member of the Twin Cities Veterans Council for more than 15 years.

The Twin Cities Elks Lodge and the Crestview Lodge joined together for their annual Elks Memorial Day service. Lodge Officers from both Lodges participated in this moving service. PSP Frank Hayes honored the ceremony with his inspiring rendition of the “Eleven O’clock Toast.”

Destin Lodge 2688

Exalted Ruler Sid Potter extends his thanks to all the Lodges in the Great NW District for helping make “Elks Kid’s Day on the Water” a monumental success. Sid reports that all the Lodges participated with volunteers, materials and/or money, with volunteer hours totaling 900! Total donated items had a value of over $10,000 and included several boats for the kids to ride on, entertainment and of course, plenty of food. Total attendance was 134 kids and their families, with some of the children being sponsored by NWD therapist Elizabeth Maina from her Florida Children’s Therapy program. Sid stated that one of the upsides to the event was the non-Elk volunteers that signed up to become members of the various NWD Lodges. Notably, new members Danny & Kathy Bilger of Aloha Pontoons have offered their boats again for next year’s event.

Fort Walton Lodge 1795

On December 5th, the Lodge held its annual Kids Christmas Party. It was an overwhelming success with over 60 children getting some very nice gifts from Santa. Thanks to all of the Elks and volunteers for making this a great evening!

Making some kids Christmas a little merrier!

Pensacola Beach Lodge 497

The last few months has been a busy and exciting time for Pensacola Beach! A Spring golf tournament allowed us to present checks totaling $21,598.44 to FSEA President Carl Ledig during his visit to the NW District on October 15-16. Also during that visit, our Ladies of the Elks presented a check for $2,000.

Working with local charities, Fort Walton identified children that needed a little help to have presents under their Christmas Tree. The Lodge created an Angel Tree, then members selected an ornament with the name of a child and purchased gifts accordingly. This year, 35 kids had a very Merry Christmas.

Holley Navarre Lodge 2787

The Santa Rosa Kids House is a Child Advocacy Center that has been serving abused and neglected children in Santa Rosa County since June 2008. The Santa Rosa Kids House has served child victims and additional family members using the National Child Advocacy Center service model. The mission of Santa Rosa Kids House is to establish efficient alliances to lessen the trauma and encourage prevention of abuse for children and their families.

From left: FSEA VPAL John Harris, NWD VP Paul Palmer, and FSEA President Carl Ledig.

Pensacola Beach Exalted Ruler Jeff Dykes presents a check for $10,000 to HATF.

On Thanksgiving Day, Maj. Jim Knell arranged transportation for 50 Marines from NAS Pensacola to the Lodge for Thanksgiving dinner. For many of these Marines, it was their first time away from home during the holidays. Generous Elks donated, prepared and served turkeys, desserts and all the trimmings.

With the benefit of the Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant, the Lodge hosted the 4th Annual Christmas party for Teen Foster Children on December 12th at a local community center. Many thanks to all of our volunteers that made this event possible, especially Jim and Rosemary Fish, Pete and Sandy McGahon, Stuart Milburn, Nancy Wyse and Hollie Bell. By working with the Families First Network, this year’s event was attended by 54 children who enjoyed dinner with a portion of the food being donated by Cactus Flower Café, a hot chocolate bar, assorted desserts, a photo booth and entertainment provided by Aardvark Entertainment.

Pictured from left is Exalted Ruler Ray Yantch of Holley Navarre Elks 2787 presenting Sheriff Wendell Hall, Chairman of the Board for Santa Rosa Kids’ House, a check for $500 to help support this great facility.

Along with the check, Holley Navarre Elks Lodge donated several thousand dollars worth of gifts of toys and books that were donated by Books-A-Million in both Fort Walton Beach, Florida and Destin, Florida, in the name of the Harry-Anna Trust Fund.
**SOUTH SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

*Reporters, Andrea M. Fernandez andreamf51@gmail.com

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**Boca Raton Lodge 2166**

The Lodge held its annual Golf Tournament at Boca Lago Golf course on October 11, 2015. Fifty-three golfers enjoyed a day of golf and fun. A full dinner and prizes were awarded at the Lodge following the tournament. $5,584.44 was raised for Veterans and other various charities.

The Lodge continued to support other worthwhile projects. $1,000 was donated to Island Dolphin Care, a facility in the Florida Keys that uses dolphin therapy for children with disabilities as well as Veterans suffering from PTSD. The Lodge donated 200 decks of playing cards to the Miami Veterans Hospital for use by the residents.

In honor of our WWII Veterans, the Lodge purchased six luminaries for the walk way near the memorial in Washington, DC.

This Thanksgiving, the Lodge opened its doors to firefighters, police officers, and EMTs who were on duty so that they could have a nice Thanksgiving dinner. Members, without families close by, were also in attendance. Volunteers manned the kitchen all day long and members were generous with their donations for the dinner. This free dinner was a great success.

**Pompano Beach Lodge 1896**

The Lodge recently hosted the Broward Children’s Center annual “Miles for Smiles” Charity Walk. The lodge Pavilion was used as a staging ground, registration, and rest stop as the participants made the 4.2 mile walk around the Pompano Beach Air Park. $60,000 was raised for the Broward Children’s Center, a nonprofit providing medical, developmental and therapeutic services to infants, children and young adults with developmental and cognitive special health care needs.

**Delray Beach Lodge 1770**

Delray Beach Police Department presented the Lodge with a Community Service Award for our participation in the 1st Annual Delray Beach National Night Out. Over 3,000 people were in attendance.

Gold Coast Down Syndrome and Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse held their Annual Race’s which the Lodge was proud sponsors for.

A large donation was given to Atlantic High School for their “Get your Kids to College” campaign to help pay students college application fees.

The Labor Day Picnic in the Park was a great success as usual. Over 110 members and friends enjoyed the weather, horse shoes and BBQ by beautiful Lake Ida.

The annual Golf tournament had over 100 golfers and raised $3,500.

**Hollywood West Lodge 2365**

Look who’s the latest Superhero! Hollywood West 2365 partnered with Davie Elementary School to bring Drug Awareness materials to students and staff. Over 850 students celebrated Drug Awareness Week with coloring books, stickers, and ribbons.

Elroy (Exalted Ruler Rick Freeman) participated in the costume parade of Superhero’s and joined in the dance party.

Elroy also presented Principal Robert Schneider and Intern Principal Monica Chlosser with a plaque recognizing Davie Elementary partnership with the Elks Drug Awareness Program.

**SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

*Reporters, Joy A. Booth wpb1352@gmail.com*

**Lake Okeechobee Lodge 2871**

The Lodge sent six children to the Youth Camp the past summer. Before they left, the Lodge treated them and their families to a special dinner. The local newspaper ran a wonderful and informative article on the Youth Camp.

On October 24th, the Lodge held a benefit for Jeff Gammons, who lost all his professional photography equipment in a mishap in Miami. They had Chinese auctions, a lottery tree, games, silent auctions, raffles, and a BBQ chicken dinner. The event raised $2,750 to help him replace his equipment.

November 11th, found the Lodge doing the annual Flag Day Ceremony at the Rock in Okeechobee. Chairman Steve Bredlove explained the history of each flag as it was presented. The audience consisted of 300 high school student and many local Veterans.

November 12th found the Lodge busy with their Hoop Shoot Contest. The Board of Education agreed to pass out flyers to the students in each age group. The event was held at the Osceola Middle School gym. It was a tremendous affair. Last year, they had about thirty-six children enter. This year they had over 130 participants. The winners will advance to the District competition in Jupiter.

**Clewiston Lodge 1853**

The Lodge hosted the first District Visititation Dinner/Dance on December 5th. This idea was the brain-child of PDDGER Jimmie McDuffie who was concerned that each Lodges’ visitation night was being poorly attended. He presented his idea to the District Advisory Committee and it met with a positive reaction. Instead of five different visits, it was decided to try just one overall dinner at the home of the District Deputy for that year with a rotating schedule, if it proved to be successful. And boy, was it a success! Over 100 attended the prime rib dinner, whereas, in the past we were

**Clewiston Lodge 1853**

On November 21st, the Lodge hosted the District Beauty Pageant with only

**West Palm Beach Lodge 1352**

On November 21st, the Lodge hosted the District Beauty Pageant with only

**Jupiter Lodge 2469**

The Lodge held its Fourth Annual Haunted House on Halloween. The Lodge room was converted into a maze that was staged and directed by 13 groups of students, scouts, and sports teams. Each group was charged $50 for their participation which they could use as they saw fit including school supplies, school uniforms, field trips, etc.

Five hundred spectators voted on the best booth with $500 for first place, $250 for second and $100 for third. Everyone who brought a can good was given $1.00 off the general admission fee. The can goods were used to supply Thanksgiving baskets to 66 local needy families.

The annual Christmas Angel Tree was a success, accepting the donation of toys and clothing from members, guests and the community. These items were then dispensed to the needy in the community. At the Jupiter Farms Christmas parade, the Elks’ float had members passing out drug awareness materials, candy, red ribbons, and Lodge activity flyers to the spectators watching along the parade route.

The Lodge hosted the District’s Army of Hope picnic under the SEDVP Lennie Dilorenzo’s chairmanship with the assistance of PDDGER Patti Phillips. The event raised $3,000 for military personnel and their families.

In early November the Lodge hosted two bus loads of Veterans from the VA Hospital in West Palm Beach for a complete Thanksgiving dinner. The Lodge’s Boy and Girl Scout troops assisted with the serving and the vets were entertained by a 4th and 5th grade chorus from a local school along with a cello club.

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“Be the Change”
Carl Ledig

Summer is Almost Here!
get your apps in now...

Summer Camp 2016

Week 1 June 19th - 25th
Week 2 26th - July 2nd
Week 3 July 3rd - 9th
Week 4 10th - 16th
Week 5 17th - 23rd
Week 6 24th - 30th
Week 7 July 31st - Aug. 6th

Dependents of Military/Army of Hope Week

Each Lodge now has 6 free Camperships!