Best Practices for Running a More Successful Lodge:
Improving profitability through better business practices and management
p. 9

Bags of Brotherly Love:
A Brandon Elks Project for the Homeless
Inspired by 10-year-old Edwin Font
p. 16

Endorsed State Officers
p. 10
We hope you are planning to attend the 111th annual convention of the Florida State Elks Association known this year as FECON '17, May 25-28!

A special feature at this year's convention is the Saturday Celebrate Florida Elkdom festivities from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Main stage awards and major projects presentations, officer installation, vendor exhibits, free food and beverages, FEYC KidZone, live entertainment, special events, and MORE will take place throughout the day. The best part is you get all this for just $20 per person (adults and children). It's the best deal in town! For more information, please visit the FSEA website at floridaelks.org. See you there!
Spring into the Excitement of 2017

Welcome, all new officers and committee members, to an exciting year in our order. We have a new location for our FSEA state convention and officer training seminar at the beautiful Marriott World Center in Orlando, Fla. We have a new slate of officers and our membership is growing in numbers each year. Be sure to make arrangements to attend our convention May 25-27. We will once again feature a guest speaker, attorney Mark Vazzana, to discuss some lodge legal issues and information on the responsibility of your lounge employees/volunteers for overserving. You will not want to miss this session.

Our officer training seminar was held March 10-12 and had a record attendance. Our COO/State Secretary, Carl Seibert, and his team prepare all year to provide your lodge officers the most up-to-date information on lodge management to enhance your lodge.

Grand Exalted Ruler Mike Zellen and his wife, Donna, joined us at our February convention and delivered a moving address. We had a ribbon-cutting celebration at the newly remodeled FSEA offices and the Smith Conference Center was dedicated and marks a new era in the opportunities we offer our communities. We are developing a corporate team seminar to offer businesses to assist in management development. This will allow us to show our facility and enhance our membership, revenue and corporate donations.

The FSEA annual golf tournament was another successful and fun event for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund and our members. Chairman, John Holbrook, PDD, and Secretary/Treasurer, Jim Lind, PDD, work diligently all year to see that this event is fun for all. The FSEA annual softball tournament was held April 28-30 under the supervision of chairman, Chris Chatham, assisted by PDD Joe Rogers, Co-chairman Emeritus. This tournament provides fun for fans and players and raises funds for our major projects.

The summer camp schedule is rapidly filling up and camp director, Nick Miller, and his staff are looking for the best camp season ever recorded. They have many new programs to offer the children of Florida.

Your registration for the Elks national convention in Reno, Nev., in July is available online. Come join other members of the order for an informative convention along with a vacation.

The state sponsors continue to meet with the management team on a monthly basis to discuss ways in which we can continue to support the lodges and members and continue to be the flagship state association for our nation.

We look forward to seeing you in Orlando in May and hopefully in Reno in July.

HERE ARE SOME THOUGHTS TO REFLECT ON AS WE BEGIN OUR NEW ELK YEAR:

- **BENEVOLENT:** Well-meaning (charitable)
- **PROTECTIVE:** Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken (brotherly love)
- **ORDER:** We have rules, regulations, statutes, the Constitution and oath
- **ELKS:** Unconditionally protective of their own and live in groups
- **USA:** We are strictly American. We took an oath to honor and obey the Constitution of the United States. We honor and pledge our allegiance to the flag.

No USA – No B.P.O.E.! (fidelity)

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**BE LOUD**
**BE PROUD**
**BE VISIBLE**

Michael F. Smith, PGER, State Sponsor
Florida State Elks Association
CONTENTS

State Sponsor p. 01
State President p. 03
COO/State Secretary p. 04
FLOE President p. 05
FECTS Director p. 06
FEYC Director p. 07
Lodge Planning Calendar p. 08
Business Practices p. 09
Endorsed State Officers p. 10
Feature Story p. 16
Hoop Shoot p. 17
District News p. 18
Veterans/Military p. 29
Golf Tournament p. 33

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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

To share lodge news in between Florida Elks Magazine issues, please email articles and photos to rachael@floridaelks.org. They will be posted to the Florida Elks News Online section of the state website and to the state Facebook page.
Hello, Florida Elks!

I am still in shock and cannot believe how fast this year has gone by. Actually, I can’t believe I had this great opportunity to be serving as your Florida Elks state president. When I received my new membership card 50 years ago, who would have thought I would have had this great honor? I thank you all for having the confidence in allowing me to spread the great work of Florida Elkdom. Florida Elks rock!

This year I tried to be a little different. As a team, endorsed state president, Carl Gerace, and I spread the word of Florida Elkdom across the state. It was a pleasure and honor traveling with him and Cathy this year. I know that Carl will make a great state president. Congratulations go to endorsed VPAL, Frank Malatesta, and Sally. We have been waiting a long time to see him here.

Our travels and activities took us to all 14 districts. I attended the FLOE conference, the Grand Lodge convention in Houston, and the state conventions in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. I had a super time in Houston and was honored to carry our state flag to the stage; it was an awesome feeling. It was also great meeting with the other states’ members and learning how things run there. I brought back some really good ideas.

Now it’s time to offer my thanks to those many individuals who made my year as state president possible. First, a big thank you goes to all our Florida Vice Presidents. Each of you exceeded the expectations of your position. I thank you for this. This year has been a bittersweet one due to the passing of my wife, Angel. At each district visit, they acknowledged that they missed her and that she will never be forgotten. I want to thank my District Vice President, Barbara Smallacome. She and her district members, lodge members, friends and everyone associated with Fort Pierce Lodge went out of their way to make my homecoming visit the best in the state. I could not have asked for anything better.

Special thanks go to COO/State Secretary, Carl Seibert, and the entire FSEA staff; Treasurer, Joe Bryant; Tiler, Bill Orblych; Historian, Truman Bass; Sergeant-at-Arms, Jack Houlihan; Chaplain, Suzi Simonelli; and Museum Curator, PSP Don Sansoussi. Thanks also go to Nancy and Paul Miller, Mary Ducharme, Michael Schodlbauer, Betty Foster, Betty Tewksbury, Ronnie and Bill Orblych, and Angelo Cretella.

It was a thrill traveling the great state of Florida attending special events. I thank everyone at the FLOE conference and the ladies who do a super job supporting the children. I also had the opportunity to attend and throw out the first pitch at the Rays baseball game organized by the West Central District and Jake Jacobs. I didn’t bounce it in! Great job, all. I also attended the state Hoop Shoot and Soccer Shoot finals in Umatilla, Fla., and the regional Hoop Shoot contest in Valdosta, Ga. Additionally, I attended the Harry-Anna Investment Fund board meetings, the Gala of Hope and the state softball tournament.

I want to thank all our Florida members for supporting the Harry-Anna Trust Fund and our membership efforts. Harry-Anna State Chairman, Dave Manning; Harry-Anna Vice Chairman, Susan Avis; Membership State Chairman, Suzi Simonelli; and Membership Vice Chairman, Rod O’Connor, have done an outstanding job.

Last but not least, I would like to recognize a very special person who has been my friend since 1989. I would not be here if it wasn’t for him. Thank you, PSP Michael Phillips, and your lovely bride, Kathy.

In conclusion, please don’t forget to Blast Elkdom into the Future by being Loud, Proud and Visible!

Florida Elks Rock!

Fraternally,

John C. Harris, State President 2016-2017
Florida State Elks Association

“Blast Elkdom into the Future” by being Loud, Proud and Visible.”
Ask Not What You Can Do for Your Lodge but What Your Lodge Can Do for You

The lodge elections are done, the chairs are filled, the new officers attended the officer training seminar, and the lodge is off to a rousing start! Whew! Now comes filling committees and seeing to the business of running a member-centric Elks lodge! Before we move on, though, let’s examine how we filled the chairs and committees. In the process, did you have to twist a few arms and did you possibly even have to recruit a new member or two just to get a position filled? In doing so, we asked not what was in it for them (what the lodge could do for them). Instead, we asked what they could do for the lodge! In keeping with my tradition of sometimes turning things upside down, I propose today that we begin recruiting members not for what they can do for the lodge but what the lodge can do for them! In sales, aren’t we taught to emphasize the benefits to the buyer of the new product or service? We ask new home buyers to picture themselves in the new home. The golfer is asked to visualize the shot. It’s selling 101. So why are these the first questions we ask a new member: serve on a committee, give of your time, financially support our projects and get involved? We tell them they have joined the greatest fraternal organization in the country but we don’t tell them why we are the greatest. Really, if you think about it, the only real benefit we tell them about is our cheap food and drinks!

So, what do I believe is the greatest thing we have to offer a new member? How about the Elks lodge being the place where leaders are created and trained? That’s right, we are a training ground for leaders! What other civic organization in the country has the training tools that we have? We have our organization structure from Grand Lodge to state to lodge. We run sophisticated business operations. We manage everything from employees to volunteers. We have expectations that require adherence to principles and traditions, and because our members are active every single day and not just on meeting day, we expose our members to the challenges of leadership every single day!

Think of a new police officer straight out of the academy who takes a low-paying job in a small but crime-ridden town. The limited force allows this new officer to be exposed to things he or she might never see in a highly populated city where the force is highly specialized and segregated. It’s no different than a new doctor serving a rotation in a very busy emergency room. They are exposed to a lot of situations in a short amount of time. So too are our Elks lodges. They are not your average little league concession stand! Our leaders see a lot and confront it all in a short amount of time and after navigating the challenges successfully, they come out on the other end feeling accomplished, motivated and ready to take on the world!

Is this a benefit we have EVER sold to a new member? A leader in an Elks lodge does a whole lot more than just run meetings or chair activities. A leader in an Elks lodge develops skills that make them better leaders, better role models, better negotiators and better people!

Our organization trains leaders for business, leaders for the community and leaders for life! Why can’t we be proud of this fact and use this benefit to our benefit? Doesn’t this sound more enticing to a prospective member than what we do today?

I can already anticipate your next thought and it is look at the average age of our members and new members; many are past their prime and are retired. How is this a benefit to them? Well, I believe you are never too old to lead or learn, but even if you think you are, I am sure you have something to offer! If you have been in the workforce I am sure you have much in the way of wisdom to share. How about becoming a mentor to a new leader? Teach them what you had to learn the hard way! I know, no one gave you a leg up, but remember, it’s for your lodge! Not everything has to be a teaching moment. Allow our leaders to lead with dignity and respect them enough to help them. If nothing else, advise; don’t divide. It may not be the way you would have done it but unless you are going to step up and lead, please don’t get in the way of someone who is!

Ask not what that new member can do for the lodge but what the lodge can do for that new member!

My aim in these articles is to inform, educate and instill a sense of responsibility in our success. I do this by sometimes offering ideas that are not your normal run-of-the-mill thoughts and ideas. We are not perfect and sometimes we have to look at ourselves as others see us before we realize the need to improve. So how am I doing? Let me know what you think! Email me at carl@floridaelks.org.

Carl Seibert, COO/State Secretary
Florida State Elks Association
Dear Florida Ladies of Elks and Elks,

As I am writing this article, six months have gone by in the FLOE year and the FSEA staff, FLOE officers and committee chairladies are finalizing the plans for the FLOE events that will be held at the 111th Florida Elks state convention. It is so exciting to have a new hotel along with new things for FSEA and FLOE!

This past February’s quarterly was another one for the history books. The dedication ceremonies and tours of the new FSEA offices and the Smith Conference Center were well attended. Although there was no ladies luncheon, there were opportunities to meet the Grand Exalted Ruler’s wife, First Lady, Donna Zellen. In the FLOE meeting, many topics were covered including the upcoming FECON activities. Here are highlights of the meeting. The Nominating Committee presented its recommendations for the 2017-2018 FLOE officers and four-year advisory board members. At the meeting in May, nominations will be accepted from the floor followed by voting. The Bylaws Committee received proposed changes to the current bylaws. The first reading of the proposed changes will be at the May meeting, and the second reading and voting will be at September’s conference. Vice President, Mary McCoy, presented the report of potential hotel sites for the 2018 FLOE conference. The Sheraton Buena Vista Orlando was selected by vote and will be Sept. 20-22, 2018.

There was a recommendation by the advisory council and it was approved to give $6,000 to the major projects to complete the FLOE donations for the 2015-2016 year. With this additional donation, the 2015-2016 donation grand total is $22,460.46. Immediate FLOE PSP, Becky Long, presented the $6,000 check to FSEA President John Harris at the Saturday morning major projects meeting. In addition to the formation of a committee for the FLOE pavilion on Saturday at FECON, two other committees were formed after the November meeting: one to organize FLOE’s archives at the youth camp and the other to review the awards given at FLOE conferences. Reports will follow. Thank you, ladies, for serving on these committees. Information about the FSEA silent auction, FLOE Chinese auction and other activities for May was presented. An overview was given about the 2017 FLOE conference.

Our meeting was attended by some special guests: Kathy Lake, Cathy Gerace, Sally Malatesta and Georgia Elks First Lady, Linda Robinette. It was an honor to have Elk dignitaries drop by for a visit and say a few words: FSEA President, John Harris; VPAL, Carl Gerace; endorsed VPAL, Frank Malatesta; Alabama State Elks President, Mike Thrasher; Mississippi State Elks President, Rachael Cook; Georgia State Elks President, Gary Robinette; and the Elks national president, Grand Exalted Ruler Michael Zellen. It was a very nice surprise, President Harris.

I hope all lodges and ladies organizations have received the May FLOE packet. It was distributed at the February meeting and is on the state website. The packet has detailed information about the FSEA silent auction and the FLOE Chinese auction. Both auctions will run concurrently Friday and Saturday at FECON and the winners will be announced Saturday afternoon. Your generous donations are what will make the auctions successful. One hundred percent of money raised from the two auctions will go to the two major projects. Regarding the silent auction, your lodge will receive per capita credit based on the purchase amount. Ladies, if you can help at FECON with any of the FLOE activities or in the FLOE hospitality suite, please contact the chairlady of the committee or me. FLOE has a packed weekend and will need a lot of help to make all the events successful. Please see the state convention agenda for the times and locations of the FLOE activities.

Packets for the Sept. 21-23, 2017, FLOE conference will be available at the May FLOE meeting. It is not too early to make hotel reservations. The hotel, Sheraton Orlando North in Maitland, Fla., is accepting reservations now. When making the hotel reservation, identify yourself with Florida Ladies of Elks. The deadline to make a reservation will be 30 days prior to your arrival date. The block of rooms is limited so make your reservation as soon as you can.

The lodges’ new Elk officers have begun their duties. I encourage each ladies organization to work with their newly elected lodge officers. FLOE has lost another ladies organization; an Elkettes group disbanded before April 1. I continue to be thankful for the Elks lodges that have ladies organizations and support them in their mission, goals and charity work.

Since my last newsletter, there have been no additional district delegates, so a few districts still have no representation. Some FLOE officers and advisory council members are also delegates. Whether you are a delegate serving for the first time or a returning delegate, thank you. Your role is so very important all year round.

To all ladies, thank you for all your yearlong hard work and dedication for our organization. You are the reason the Florida Ladies of Elks organization shines and its dreams come true.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, May 27, at 8:30 a.m. I hope you can attend. It will be another packed agenda meeting. Please contact me if you have a question about FLOE activities at FECON in May.

Connie Kalel-Poage
President, Florida Ladies of Elks
Hello, Florida Elks!

I would like to tell you about the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services (FECTS) program. Before I do, however, I want to invite you to attend the state convention, FECON ’17, and ask that you stop by the FECTS pavilion and check out the educational and heartwarming opportunities that will be presented! I’m sure you will walk away with a better understanding of how our program changes the lives of the children and families we serve.

For those who don’t know, I have been employed by FECTS for 10 years. I knew at once that this program was a true gem for offering free services to families that could not otherwise obtain therapy services. Unlike my 20+ years of prior professional service, with the Elks, children and families were getting help without regard to arbitrary rules set forth by a third-party payer based solely on payment. After attending an Elks national convention, the even deeper benevolence of the Elks organization was illuminated. My husband, Martin, and I came home from the convention, contacted our local Elks lodge and became active members.

Now allow me to tell you about our program. We have 25 (soon to be 26) occupational and physical therapists who work throughout the state. Therapists drive to the homes or day care settings of children in Elks vans wrapped in a beautiful design depicting the adorable children we treat and the amazing Florida Elks who make it possible. Our therapists are devoted, well educated, extremely skilled and licensed professionals who dedicate their talents to improving the function and independence of a child.

One newly hired occupational therapist, Maria Enlow, states, “It warms my heart to provide children with therapy that will enhance their lives! I am so happy to have joined this wonderful organization. I am a better therapist because of this program and the Elks desire to offer top quality evidence-based interventions to children who would not have access to therapy.”

Enlow and another member of our FECTS team, physical therapist Erica Aberman, are working together to help 12-year-old Jody gain strength and coordination after a stroke paralyzed her right arm and leg and further complications led to the amputation of her left leg. Jody’s personal goals are to hang out with her friends at the mall, use both hands so she can text and play video games, use the bathroom without assistance from her mother, stand and try on new clothes in front of a mirror independently, and swim again without fear of drowning. Our Elks therapists combine neuroscience, anatomy, kinesiology, psychology and play to tailor therapy sessions for a child’s improvement in muscle strength and coordination. A team is created including therapist, child, parents, siblings and grandparents to successfully improve the quality of life for the child and family.

Jody’s mom calls the Elks “a lifeline for our daughter. When our insurance declined further speech, physical and occupational therapies, Elks sent the best physical and occupational therapists in south Florida: Erica Aberman and Maria Enlow. They became part of our family and went above and beyond our expectations. They make therapy fun and exciting for our daughter.”

Over 400 families in need, like Jody’s, receive weekly therapeutic intervention, exercise, training and education from a licensed therapist with the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services. Children born with physical, neurological, or genetic issues; children injured through car accidents or other trauma; children who have learning or behavioral difficulties in school; and more are the children we want to help. All children can grow, learn and gain strength, but some require the specific training and care provided by a qualified occupational, physical or speech therapist.

Florida Elks never turn away a family in need. Our services are provided free to families that do not have the income, insurance or means to travel to a therapy clinic or hospital. These services are possible because of the generosity of the Florida Elks, Florida Ladies of Elks, Elks National Foundation, the Harry-Anna Investment Fund and private donors. My heartfelt thanks go to all the Florida Elks members and the ladies organizations for making a difference in a child’s life.

Diane Corson
Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services Director
were assigned two different cabins. His mom had pleaded with the assistant director, but the camp’s rules would not allow the friends to be moved. Jake couldn’t understand how a place that was supposed to be fun could be so cruel. Even worse, he couldn’t understand why his own mother had agreed to it! He had been sure that she would let him go back home with her once they couldn’t get his cabin switched, but to his surprise, she’d finally agreed with the assistant director that this would be okay. How could she abandon him to this? How was he going to make it a week without her or Daniel? He had no one. He was on his own. With these thoughts, Jake sobed even harder, the heavy weight on his chest making it hard to breathe.

That night, Jake lays in his top bunk and stares at the wall. The light switch clicks as it’s flipped down and the glow of joy he feels at having just beat his counselor at Connect 4 fades as quickly as the light. He tries to fight it and think about the fun he’d had so far.

He had intended to refuse to participate in any activity until his mom came to get him, but his counselor had made a deal with him to try at least one game before Jake gave up on camp. Jake had played grudgingly and had met Jason. Jason had seven brothers and didn’t mind being away from them at all. As the two played the games with their cabinmates, the boys realized they had the same favorite superhero, they both were left-handed and they shared the same fear of heights. Later, Jake had won the respect of his entire cabin when he used a cup and a piece of paper to fearlessly capture the giant wolf spider in their cabin and transport it outside. He never would understand why people were afraid of them.

Jake thinks of all these good things, but it’s no use. His mind turns to his mom and how far away she is. The weight falls back onto his chest, and tears again fill his eyes. He’s been through a lot for one day, though, and the after-dinner game had been capture the flag. He and Jason had run nonstop for almost an hour defending their team’s flag, and so, even as he begins to cry, nature steps in and demands that his body rest. Before the first tear hits the pillow, Jake’s breathing steadies and slows. The rest of the week is a blur.

It was not all easygoing, but Jake learns that he’s a lot more capable than he imagined.

He doesn’t consciously understand what’s happening, but deep down he’s always assumed that what he accomplished was due to Daniel helping him. Yet, on Tuesday, it was Jake who climbed the tower despite his aversion to heights. Jason was too scared to try, and Daniel was with another group. So, without help from anyone else, it was Jake who gritted his teeth, refused to look down and climbed to the first platform. He’d never felt anything so good as being belayed back to the ground to the cheers of his counselor and cabinmates. On Thursday, it was Jake who hit the most bullseyes at archery and who taught the trick to another cabinmate so that he also hit a bullseye. On Saturday morning, it was Jake who was selected to raise the flag at the last flag ceremony.

So, Jake sits laughing with Daniel and his new friends, waiting for his mom to arrive. He is happy that he stayed, but he doesn’t understand the full impact of this experience. He doesn’t know that his new self-confidence will allow him to function even after Daniel’s family moves away next year, that it will lead him to become senior class president, or that it will spark him to attend a prestigious out-of-state college. Jake will not be another warm body just making it through life. Jake will be the competent, outgoing leader from next door you are proud to sponsor as an Elk.

Membership matters for your lodge and for our country. Start now. Send your “Jake” to camp.

Fraternally,

Nick Miller
Florida Elks Youth Camp Director
### May 2017

**MAY DEADLINES**
- 5/1: ENF Emergency Education Grant Applications Available at GL website
- 5/1: Lodges to Submit Annual Membership & Charity Report with Dues Payment to Grand Secretary
- 5/5: Campers to Submit Summer Camp Camper Applications to the FEYC
- 5/15: DDGERs to Submit Checklist to Grand Secretary for GER’s Certificate of Appreciation for DDGER

**NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES**
- 5/1: Annual Report listing officers to Florida Secretary of State
- 5/15: Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
- 5/20: Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
- 5/25-27: FECON ’17 Orlando World Center Marriott

**JUNE 2017**

**JUNE DEADLINES**
- 6/14: Flag Day (Mandatory Service – Sec. 2.030)
- 6/15: Postmark deadline for Lodges to Submit request form for GL GER Award Pins – 3 new or reinstated Members – to Grand Secretary (7/1/16 to 6/15/17)
- 6/25: Submissions to Florida Elks Magazine Summer Edition to Managing Editor
- 6/30: Lodges to Submit Annual Financial Report (Audit) to GL Auditing & Accounting Member

**NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES**
- 6/15: Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
- 6/20: Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue

**STATE PRESIDENT VISITS**
- 6/9-10: Southwest District – Sarasota South #2495
- 6/23-24: South District – Miami #948

**STATUTES**
May - Lodge Annual Membership & Charity Report Due with Dues Payment to GL May 1 ($16.010 – Subject to $100 Fine)

**JULY 2017**

**JULY DEADLINES**
- 7/15: Lodges to Complete FSEA Online Committee Reporting for the Quarter ending 6/30
- 7/28-29: Southeast District – Jupiter #2469

**NON-GL REPORTS & TAXES DUE DATES**
- 7/15: Deposit payroll taxes for prior month to U.S. Treasury (Lodges may be eligible to pay quarterly if certain conditions are met.)
- 7/20: Sales tax for prior month to Florida Department of Revenue

**STATE PRESIDENT VISITS**
- 7/7-8: Central District – West Citrus #2693
- 7/22-23: Summer Camp Week 6
- 7/23-29: Summer Camp Week 7 (Dependents of Military/Army of Hope Week)

**STATUTES**
- 7/28-29: July - Lodge’s Auditing & Accounting Committee to Review Lodge Books & Report at Last Meeting of Month ($13,040)
Len Wenzel Named National Elks Drug Awareness Chairman of the Year

Len Wenzel of Deep Creek Elks Lodge #2763 was named National Elks Drug Awareness Chairman of the Year by the directors of the Elks National Drug Awareness Program. To win this award, the chairman must make sure the state and lodges participate in everything including the essay, poster and Enrique Camarena contests. All the orders that are filled, the national speaking program and Red Ribbon Week show that Florida is active in the drug awareness program. Every year, the directors pick a Rookie Chairman of the Year who is the best overall new chairman, which Wenzel won in 2013, and the Chairman of the Year.

Best Practices for Running a Successful Lodge:
Improving Profitability through Better Business Practices Management

Operating social quarters within our lodges and raising monies for our charities is a business. For a business to survive and to grow, it must operate at a profit. For a business to operate at a profit, it must be properly managed, and quality management leadership in any organization must start at the top. Within an Elks lodge, Exalted Rulers are the president of the lodge, the Chief Executive Officer of the corporation, the captain of the ship, the quarterback of the team.

The No. 1 factor that will determine whether most lodges will earn a profit or lose money is the gross margin that is earned on the sale of food and beverage products in your club operations. Pricing, pouring, portioning and procurement are paramount to your club’s gross margin.

Most importantly, you must have proper internal controls and balances in effect. Remember, an employee will be as honest as you require them to be and as dishonest as you tempt them to be! The following are some poor internal controls: allowing bartenders, waiters, cashiers, etc. access to the cash register tape when counting their cash at the end of their shift; not keeping assets under lock and key with limited access by authorized personnel only; lodge records being maintained by members outside the lodge premises; bank reconciliations not being independently completed on a timely and accurate basis each month; vouchers or other means of approving payment of all bills against the lodge not being properly handled; allowing vendor delivery personnel to store your goods in your stocking area; and coding transactions incorrectly.

Internal controls are largely a matter of common sense. The whole idea is to mitigate the possibility of putting a member or an employee into a position of temptation.

FSEA Business Development Committee
2017-2018 ENDORED STATE OFFICERS

The members and lodges of Florida’s South Southwest District and Port Charlotte Lodge #2153 are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of Carl Gerace as a candidate for the office of State President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Gerace also volunteers with other organizations in his community. He has been involved with the Kiwanis Club and served twice as their president. He is a Past Lieutenant Governor for Florida Kiwanis Zone 18, is currently on the board of the Kiwanis Foundation of Charlotte County and is a current member of the Port Charlotte Sunrise Club. He has been involved on the board of the Saint Vincent de Paul free pharmacy, Good Sam’s Club and the Council on Aging. When not volunteering, he enjoys boating, scuba diving, fishing, riding motorcycles, shooting, coin collecting, visiting with family and friends, hanging out at the lodge, traveling, and working on old cars. He is a longtime fan of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Gerace was initiated into Sarasota Lodge #1519 Feb. 23, 1972. He served as Inner Guard, Esquire, Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight and Leading Knight. He was Exalted Ruler in 1977. He served in many lodge and district chairmanships. He was State Chairman of Elks National Foundation Certificates in 1979-1980. He was 1982-1983 Elk of the Year. He served as Southwest District Vice President in 1984-1985 and as District Deputy in 1985-1986. He became a certified ritual judge in 1987 and judged at the Grand Lodge convention in Charlotte, N.C., in 2007. He served as Sergeant-at-Arms in 1988-1989. He was Southwest District Director of the Florida State Elks Association from 1994-1996 and from 2006 to the present. He served as State Tiler in 2007-2008, State Chaplain in 2014-2015 and Sergeant-at-Arms in 2015-2016. He was outstanding Elk of the Southwest District in 2014-2015. He continues to serve his lodge, Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota #2855, as Esquire and co-lodge advisor.

He married Sally Smith June 28, 1969. They have two children, Kim and Frank III, and five grandchildren.

In addition to the Elks, he is a member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus. He is also a member of the Sarasota 9/11 remembrance committee. He has enjoyed coaching Little League baseball and now enjoys watching his son coach baseball and the grandchildren play baseball, volleyball, soccer and crew. He also enjoys...
The members and lodges of Florida’s Northeast District are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of Patrick Shipley as a candidate for the office of Northeast District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Patrick Shipley was born in Bloomington, Ill., Jan. 9, 1943. He had five brothers and two sisters. He attended the University of Arizona for 2.5 years for an education major. In 1978 he moved to Florida. Shipley spent 25 years in the restaurant industry. He retired from Northrop Grumman after 23 years. Shipley joined Tucson, Ariz., Elks Lodge in 1969 and has been a member of St. Augustine Lodge #829 since 1983. He served in all chairs including Exalted Ruler twice. He was State Chairman of Elks National Foundation Scholarships and was Ritual State Chairman twice. He was married to Melodie for 45 years; she is now deceased. He has a daughter, two grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

The members and lodges of Florida’s Northwest District are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of Scott Turner as a candidate for the office of Northwest District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Scott Turner was born in San Antonio in 1963. He grew up in a military family that moved every three or four years; they moved to Florida in 1978. In 1981 he graduated from Niceville Senior High School. He obtained his AS degree in 1986 from Cerro Coso Community College in California. He continued taking classes at Troy State University.

From 1983-1986, Turner worked in civil service as an electronic technician for the Navy at NSWC in China Lake, Calif. He was hired by the Air Force in 1986 to work for the research laboratory conducting research on conventional and next-generation munitions.

In 2005, Turner joined Twin Cities Elks Lodge #2747 after a coworker introduced him to Elkdom. He has served as Lodge Esquire, Leading Knight (three times) and Exalted Ruler (twice). He served on the House Committee and Board of Directors and was bar manager. He has also served on the Government Relations, Lodge Activities, Membership, Orientation and Soccer Shoot committees.

In addition to the Elks, Turner is also a member of AMVETS Post 78. He has been married to Linda for 11 years and she is also an Elk; his mother and sister are members, too. He has two daughters.

The members and lodges of Florida’s North Central District are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of John Dill as a candidate for the office of North District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

John Dill was born at Fort Benning, Ga., in 1965 and moved to McAlpin, Fla., in 1974. He graduated from Suwannee High School in 1984 and served in the U.S. Army. He currently works for Mayo Fertilizer Inc. as logistics manager and has been in the transportation industry for 25 years.

In 2001 Dill joined Live Oak Elks Lodge #1165 but dropped when he moved to Georgia in 2003. After returning to Florida in 2010 he reinstated with Live Oak Lodge and became active with the Veterans Committee. Being an Elk is a matter of family pride for Dill. His father was a member of Live Oak Lodge and his oldest son serves as Lodge Scholarship Chairman. Dill has served as Leading Knight, Exalted Ruler (three times), Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chairman of the Lodge PER Association and Chairman of many other lodge committees. He was named Officer of the Year in 2015. In addition to his lodge, Dill has served as District Army of Hope Member, District Orientation Chairman and State Vice Chairman of Accident Prevention.

He married Shelly in 2002 and has two sons and three granddaughters: John David and Kelli (Makayla and Reagan) and Aaron and Victoria (Ariel).
Central District Vice President was a candidate for the office of O'Connor as a candidate for the office of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

George Sevast was born and raised in Lancaster, Pa., in 1942. He graduated from McCaskey High School in 1960 and completed two years of advanced trade school for HVAC. He served in the U.S.M.C. for 13 years and moved to Florida in 1992. He worked in heating, A/C and refrigeration for Immaculata College in Pennsylvania and Coca-Cola in Orlando, Fla.

Sevast joined the Elks in 1984 in West Chester, Pa. He demitted to Apopka Lodge #2422 in 1992 and to Silver Springs Shores Lodge #2730 (now named South Marion-Villages) in 2000. He has been Chaplain, Trustee, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. He has served on the Board of Directors and House Committee. He has been District Chairman of Government Relations and Vice Chairman and State Chairman of Elks National Foundation Certificates.

In addition to the Elks, Sevast is a member of the American Legion, Moose, VFW and DAV. He is a charter member of Vietnam Veterans, Marine Corps League and PVA. He also volunteers his time at soup kitchens and Salvation Army.

He and Fran have been married since 1984. He has five children and seven grandchildren.

The members and lodges of Florida’s East Central District are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of Rod O’Connor as a candidate for the office of East Central District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Rod O’Connor was born in Torrance, Calif., in 1964. In 1970 he moved to Cocoa Beach, Fla., and in 1991 he moved to Merritt Island, Fla. He attended Cocoa Beach High School, Brevard Community College, UCF and Keiser University with a focus on industrial psychology and business administration.

He began his career at Sea Ray Boats in 1990 and was tasked with developing an engineering department for the new yacht facility. He transferred to product development and engineering in 1998. Throughout his career, he served in various management positions.

O’Connor rented a building from the Merritt Island Elks in 2010 and was immediately recruited after showing interest in their various programs and agreeing to be Lecturing Knight and Americanism Chairman. He has also served as Leading Knight, Esquire and Exalted Ruler (twice). He served four years on the House Committee with one year as Chairman. He was District Chairman of Interlodge Visitation, Vice Chairman of Membership, and Regional Chairman and Vice Chairman of Hoop Shoot.

He has been married to Carrie for 16 years. He has two children and nine grandchildren. He enjoys water-related activities and appreciates all types of music, especially blues, reggae and, most of all, hard rock.

The members and lodges of Florida’s Southeast Central District are honored to present to the 2017 Florida state convention in Orlando, Fla., the name of Marge Spera as a candidate for the office of Southeast Central District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Marge Spera was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and grew up in Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island, N.Y. She went to Port Jefferson High School and attended Molloy College and Suffolk Community College. In 1984 she moved to Florida.

Edwin James was born in 1953 in Wadena, Minn. He grew up in an Air Force family and lived all over the world. He moved to Florida in 1970. He graduated from Daytona Beach Community College in 1980 and attended the University of Central Florida from 1980-1981. He also served in the Army Reserve from 1972-1978. James joined the Florida Highway Patrol in 1975. He worked in Orlando and Daytona Beach and was promoted to Corporal in 1983 and transferred to Miami. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1984 and transferred back to Daytona Beach. He transferred to Madison in 1989 and retired in 2000.

James joined Madison Elks Lodge #2205 in 1994. For Madison Lodge, he served as Chaplain, Loyal Knight, Esquire, Exalted Ruler and Trustee and on the Major Projects Committee. For West Citrus Lodge #2693, he served as Esquire, Trustee, Flag Day Committee Chairman, Memorial Day Committee Chairman, Lodge Bylaws Revision Committee Chairman, Harry-Anna Trust Fund District Chairman, and Youth Activities Vice Chairman and State Chairman.

James is also a member of the Florida Masons and enjoys golf and scuba diving. He has been married to Dana for 29 years. They have two children. Their daughter, Jennifer, and her husband live in Tucson, Ariz., with their three children. Their son, Kristopher, and his wife live in Tallahassee.
Spera taught parochial school for several years. She owned and operated a seafood business for 19 years with her late husband. For 25 years she was in banking/financial services as a mortgage loan officer, processing manager and area marketing manager.

In 2010, Spera joined the Elks. She has served as Lodge Esquire, Leading Knight and Secretary and was Exalted Ruler for three years. She has been Lodge Chairman of Community Activities, Hoop Shoot and Membership. She served as District Chairman of Community Activities and Orientation and was District Auditor for three years. She was State Vice Chairman of Lodge Activities and served as a Membership Liaison.

Spera has three grown children and five grandchildren. Her son Nate is a district fire chief for St. Lucie County. Her daughter, Lisa, is Director of Rehabilitation at Palm Gardens Nursing Home in Orlando, Fla. Her son JJ works for Publix as a front-end clerk.

Matthews has been a member of the Elks for 21 years. Her father was an Elk and was the House Committee Chairman for many years, so if she wanted to see him, she had to have dinner at the lodge. He later suggested she join. She has served as Exalted Ruler, House Committee Chairman, President of the Ladies organization (twice), Board of Directors Chairman, President of the Lodge PER Association, and District Chairman and Vice Chairman of Community Projects & Activities.

Along with Elks activities, Matthews has been involved in PTA, scouting, her children's many activities, South Tampa Chamber of Commerce and Champions for Children.

She is in a relationship with Carl Seibert. She has three children: Logan (22), Courtney (19) and Hailey (13). She initiated Logan as an Elk and is now waiting on Courtney to turn 21 and come home from college. Her parents, brother, and aunt and uncle are all Elks, too.

In her spare time, Matthews is an avid reader. She also enjoys traveling, mostly with Carl, and attending Elks functions across the state.

Central District Vice President of the Florida State Elks Association for the ensuing year.

Jacquie Rehner was born in Amherst, Ohio, in 1964. The family moved to Punta Gorda, Fla., when she was four, and she moved to Lakeland, Fla., in 1992 for work. She graduated from Charlotte High School in 1982 and earned an AS degree in network systems engineering technology from Polk State College in 2000.

Rehner started at Publix Store 116 in Punta Gorda in 1980 and transferred to corporate in Lakeland in 1992 and has held various positions within information systems. Her current position is Windows architect.

Her father, Don Roll, PDD, was very active in the Elks. He helped start Punta Gorda Lodge in the early 1980s. She has helped with many events and attended many conventions over the years. At the Elks state convention in 2001, her father and Larry Copperman, PDD decided it was time she joined and an application was filled out. She is a member of Lakeland Elks Lodge #1291. She was part of the House Committee Communications from 2008-2015. She was House Committee Chairman and Exalted Ruler and has served as Orientation Lodge Chairman since 2012. She has been District Chairman for various committees since 2009. She served as State Chairman of Ladies Organizations and has been State Coordinator for ENF Grants since 2013. She was named Officer of the Year in 2009-2010 and Southwest Central District Outstanding Elk of the Year in 2014-2015.

In her spare time, Rehner enjoys traveling and helping others. She has been on the local United Way Community Investment team since 2013 and is serving as vice chairman of the team this year. She has headed a program for the Salvation Army Christmas Angel Tree program since 2002. For the 2016 Christmas season, 995 children had a better Christmas.

She has been married to Ron for four years. Her mother, sister and brother are members of Punta Gorda Elks Lodge.
Larry Hildebrand was born Feb. 4, 1938, in Davenport, Iowa. He graduated from Davenport High School. He served in the Army National Guard from 1956-1986 and trained in heavy truck and equipment repair.

In 1978 Hildebrand began working for the Iowa Department of Transportation Highway Division as a heavy truck and equipment mechanic and later became a district fleet manager. He retired in 1998 and moved to Florida in January 1999.

Hildebrand was initiated into Palmetto Elks Lodge #2449 in 2000. He served as Inner Guard and Lecturing Knight and was a Trustee for three years. He helped start Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota Lodge #2855 and was a Trustee for two years. He later transferred to Sarasota South Lodge #2495 and served as Lecturing Knight, Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler. He has also been Lodge Chairman, District Chairman and State Chairman of various committees.

In addition to the Elks, he is a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose and the American Legion.

He was married to Maggie in June 1958. She passed away in 2009 after a lengthy illness. He has two daughters and one son and three grandchildren.

Len Wenzel was born Aug. 9, 1958, in Ramapo, N.Y. He grew up in Stony Point, N.Y., and graduated from North Rockland High School in 1976. In 1980, he graduated from the Orange County Sheriff’s Police Academy in New York.

Wenzel worked in the Stony Point Police Department from June 1982 until his retirement Aug. 1, 2000. That same year, he moved to Port Charlotte, Fla.

Wenzel was initiated into Haverstraw Elks Lodge #877 in 1985. He is now a member of Deep Creek Elks Lodge #2763. He has served as Inner Guard and Loyal Knight and served six consecutive years as Exalted Ruler. He was Chairman of the Board of Directors and the House Committee for three years and also served on numerous lodge committees. He has been District Chairman for Orientation, Public Relations and Sports. He served as District Deputy Esquire in 2013-2014. He was District PER Association Vice President for two years and is their incoming President. He was a member of the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Committee for two years and a Lodge Liaison for four years. He has served as State Chairman of Drug Awareness since 2013 and has been a Special Representative since October 2013.

In 2013-2014, Wenzel was Exalted Ruler of Deep Creek Lodge when they received the All-American Lodge award. He was the South Southwest District Elk of the Year for 2016-2017. He was voted Drug Awareness Education Committee National Rookie of the Year in 2013-2014 and was named Elks National Drug Awareness Chairman of the Year in 2016-2017. On Feb. 16, 2017, he was granted honorary life membership.

Len and Kathy have been married 22 years and enjoy traveling the country in their RV. He also has collected sports memorabilia for over 25 years. Their son and his wife live in Maryland with their four sons. Their daughter and her husband live in Seattle with their three children.

David Monsour was born in 1946 in Butler (Pittsburgh), Pa., and graduated from Butler High School in 1964. He earned his BS in education in 1968 and his MS in education in 1971 from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. In 1987 he earned his doctorate in education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He attended Capital University Law School in 1999 and Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service in 2004 for labor relation seminars.

Monsour was a public school teacher, assistant principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent and university instructor. He is currently employed as a federal labor arbitrator, realtor and property manager. He moved to Florida in 2005.

His uncle, an active Elk, encouraged him to join the organization. Monsour has served as trustee, kitchen manager, Lecturing Knight, Veterans
Services District Chairman and Exalted Ruler (twice). He also served on the Membership Committee and House Committee.

In addition to Elks activities, Monsour is a member of the Knights of Columbus. He was a federal program monitor, president of Brookville Chamber of Commerce and Brookville Kiwanis, Vice President of Butler ARC, United Way and Special Olympics volunteer, Vice President of PA Association of Rural and Small Schools, president of Midwest Region, and state board member of PSEA.

He has a son, David Monsour II, an 18-year Elk, and a sister, Linda Bodesheim, past treasurer and current auditor of Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469.

Monsour has authored or coauthored several publications: Legislative Implications: Professional Self-Governance and Career Ladder Concepts, Student Teacher Effectiveness and Job Satisfaction: An Analysis of Personality and Cognitive Variables in Relation to Performance (unpublished doctoral dissertation), and Successful Facility Planning (a school construction handbook).

Honors received include the 2015-2016 Grand Exalted Ruler’s Making a Difference Special Citation, 2013-2014 Grand Exalted Ruler’s Service Commendation, 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 Jupiter Lodge #2469 Hardest-working Elk of the Year, and 2004 Service Award for the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools.

**Patricia Maher** was born in Scranton, Pa., and grew up mainly in Pennsylvania. In 1979 she earned a degree in in human services and psychology from the University of Scranton. In 1997 she graduated summum cum laude from Florida Atlantic University with a degree in elementary education. She moved to Florida in 1979.

Maher has been a middle school social studies teacher for the past 18 years at Silver Lakes Middle School in North Lauderdale, Fla. Before that, she was a pediatric nurse. She has also been the musician and music director for the past 32 years at St. Vincent’s Catholic Church.

In 2001 she joined the Elks. She has been Chaplain, Treasurer, Secretary, Exalted Ruler and organist for her lodge. She has been District Chairman of Elks National Foundation Scholarships and Americanism and State Chairman of Americanism, Elks Training and Lodge Activities.

In addition to the Elks, Maher has been part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at her church for the past three years. She served on the Board of Adjustments and the Planning and Zoning Board for the city of Margate. She also coaches volleyball at her school.

Maher was married to Jerry for six years and they were together for six years prior to marriage. He has since passed away. She has two sons, Josh and Jeremy, and two grandsons, Dominic and Anthony. Her 93-year-old mother also lives with her.

**Barry Wake** was born in London, Great Britain, in 1952. He grew up in London and Kent, South England, and emigrated to Canada in 1985. He won his green card for the United States in the immigration lottery in April 1989. He went to Miami, Fla., in June 1989 and has been there ever since.

Wake graduated from senior school in 1968 when he was 15 years old; their education system is different than ours. He attended the University of London from 1979-1983 and studied gemology and geology. In 1968 he started a five-year apprenticeship in jewelry. From 1973-1985 he worked as a diamond mounter (jeweler) for Graff Diamonds in London’s Hatton Garden. All jewelry is handmade including the Jubilee necklace for HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1977; the Idol’s Eye Necklace, a 72-carat diamond, in 1979 and the Marlborough diamond necklace, a 20-carat diamond. In 1985 he worked in Buffalo, N.Y., at what is now United Refinery. He lived in Canada while there. After winning the lottery green card, he worked at Mayors Jewelers and is now QC at Diamonds International Miami.

In 2012, PER Delfin Mule brought Wake in to the Elks and signed his petition that first night. Wake has been Leading Knight and Exalted Ruler.

In addition to the Elks, Wake is also a member of the Shriners. He is an ambulance driver and takes the children from Miami to the Shriners Hospital in Tampa, Fla., for their procedure and drives them home that same night. He is also a member of the Freemasons and Knights Templar.

He and Pamela have been married 40 years. He proposed on their third date. They have two children, Nikki and Pete, and three granddaughters, Priscilla, Abigail and Sarah.
FEATURE STORY: HOMELESS OUTREACH

Bags of Brotherly Love: A Brandon Elks Project for the Homeless
Inspired by 10-year old Edwin Font

Brandon Elks Lodge #2383, with the cooperation of several other outreach programs in the Brandon and Valrico areas, started a program called Bags of Brotherly Love.

This initiative was inspired by Edwin Font, a 10-year-old from Palatka, Fla. When he was just nine years old, he saw several homeless people in his neighborhood and told his mother that he wanted to feed them. He prepared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and Edwin’s Happy Bags program was started. His program took off and it wasn't long before he was given donations from several private citizens, local churches, business owners and the city of Palatka. Edwin goes out once a week and hands out his signature bags of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches along with bottled water and a proverb to give the homeless some spiritual uplifting.

Robert Blair, a member of Brandon Elks Lodge, is an acquaintance of Edwin's uncle. Blair and his wife met Edwin's family at dinner, and during the evening, Edwin started telling Blair about his project. After hearing his story, Blair and his wife, Elisa, a Brandon Ladies of Elks member, thought they could expand on this endeavor and knew this program was something the Elks could do, and they created the Bags of Brotherly Love program.

They first introduced the program at an Elks meeting and Joyce Dominick Schaefer, grants coordinator, was tasked with writing a proposal for funds to finance the program. The Blairs didn't stop there. They contacted the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Community Outreach Organization and the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County and met with Josh Boyer, Hillsborough County Homeless Coordinator. Several businesses in the area – Lori Boatright of Chick-Fil-A (Valrico), GFS, Sysco, Aldi and Bob Conigliero of Casper Corporation McDonald’s (Valrico) – contribute on an ongoing basis to the program. Brandon Lodge and the Brandon Ladies of Elks have donated to the program and several private donations were also made. The program has since received the Elks National Foundation Impact Grant of $10,000.

Blair contacted several other programs in the area to find out what services were available to the homeless and what needs his program could meet. This is how they formed a partnership with the Salvation Army. Bags of Brotherly Love supplies their canteen truck with the food they serve at the monthly clinics.

Blair knows firsthand what it's like to be hungry. Thirty-eight years ago he was living out of his car and is fully aware of how hard it is to make ends meet during troubling times. He had a low-paying job and a car but couldn't afford a home. He lived in his car for six months until a coworker offered Blair a room in his home. That was the help he needed to get his life back on track. Now Blair is paying that kindness forward.

There are over 400 homeless women, men and children living in the immediate area. On a monthly basis, Brandon Elks volunteers fill the bags at the lodge and distribute them. The bags contain a hot sandwich, coupons from fast food restaurants, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a snack, two bottles of water, liquid soap, hand sanitizer, toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, deodorant, razors, and socks. Playing cards are included when they are available to help keep their minds stimulated. The volunteers go to areas where the homeless congregate to deliver the bags along with information where they can get help with both physical and mental needs. They also bring smiles and conversation because Elks Care – Elks Share.

The outreach clinics are held the second Tuesday of each month, with a large outreach clinic held quarterly by each compass point (north, south, east and west) in the county region. At each clinic, the homeless register at the beginning of the line of organizations that have set up to offer assistance. They are given a passport that they get initialed at each station. Once they check in to see what other help they may need, they receive food, clothing and toiletries. Bags of Brotherly Love is also a liaison to the Hillsborough County Homeless Coalition, Sheriff’s Department, Community Outreach Organization and the Veterans Support Organization in helping those who are eligible get the assistance to which they are entitled.

The first outreach clinic in the area was held Jan. 31 in Seffner, Fla. Many organizations were in attendance including local churches and civic organizations designed to help the homeless in and around the county. It was a milestone for Blair as he had been striving for this since his first gathering at an outreach clinic last year. They registered 39 women, 76 men, six children under the age of seven, two infants under the age of two, four dogs and one goat. They
handed out 115 Bags of Brotherly Love along with 39 bags designed specifically for women. An additional 85 bags that the Sheriff's office put together were also dispersed. There were 240 blankets handed out along with linens and roughly 100 sets of towels. The volunteers were busy clothing each individual as they made their way through the lines, and at the end of their shopping they had a hot meal of hamburgers and hot dogs awaiting them. Bags of Brotherly Love provided the food and beverages along with dessert. The Salvation Army brought their food truck and cooked the hot meals for everyone that day. Funds for this came from their Impact Grant. Over 150 hot meals were served including to the volunteers and law enforcement. Fifteen bicycles that were donated by the impound department at the Sheriff’s office were also raffled. Health services were set up for anyone needing them. Brandon Elks Lodge partnered with Brandon Moose Lodge to make the day a success.

Blair was pleased that Bags of Brotherly Love would be showcased in the Florida Elks Magazine. In his own words, “it’s not a pat on the back that we are looking for but to better inform the Elks and the public as to the need for an organization such as ours. The volunteers we have on this project each play such a vital role in ensuring that everyone we come across out in the field is helped not only with some type of nourishment but also met with compassion and a true willingness to help in any way we can. Our message is getting out and we have more and more homeless coming into our folds each month. I would like nothing better than to see this grow statewide to all the Elks lodges in Florida, to see one of the Elks mantras come to fruition: Brotherly Love. There is a lot that we can do and a lot that still needs to be done to help the plight of the homeless. It would be a wonderful thing to be able to pass our success along to other lodges.”

For more information, please email Robert Blair at str8up777@verizon.net or call Brandon Elks Lodge at 813-654-2968.
**Crestview #2624**
James Wright recently received a plaque recognizing his seven years of service as charter organization representative to Crestview Cub Scout Pack #530. Presenting the plaque is Christopher Foster who will replace Wright as representative to the pack. They are both members of Crestview Lodge.

**Destin #2688**
Destin Elks Exalted Ruler, Terri Griffin, recently presented a check to members of the Emerald Coast ARC that will allow 15 children with special needs to visit Rish Recreational Park in Port St. Joe. ARC provides services that work to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community. ARC also focuses on abilities, respect, choice for all, and encourages active citizenship and inclusion in every community. Rish Recreational Park is a 100-acre recreational park located on Cape San Blas near Port St. Joe in the Florida panhandle. The park is a fabulous getaway with beautiful sugar-white sand, sea oat-covered dunes, refreshing sea air and shimmering turquoise water on the Gulf of Mexico. The uniqueness of Rish Park affords individuals with disabilities a safe beach experience that is completely ADA accessible.

**Fort Walton #1795**
Fort Walton Elks Lodge #1795 recently held their Americanism essay contest. The two winners were each presented with a $50 check rewarding their efforts. Both winners will move on to the next level.

**Lake City #893**
Lake City Lodge’s second annual cruise was a success. A total of 58 members and guests went this year. Every age group was accounted for and it was great for the younger members to get to know some of the more seasoned members. Most rode the chartered bus for extra Elk time together. They left out of Port Canaveral Feb. 3 and returned Feb. 6. Ports of call were Nassau in The Bahamas and Royal Caribbean’s private island, CocoCay. There were visits to the rum factory, rum cake factory, local drinking pubs and the round-a-about. Between the buffets, scheduled dinners, karaoke, pool, casino, Super Bowl viewing and night strolls, the groups all saw each other throughout the four days. It was a time to get to know other members and guests. Since the cruise, several people who went as guests have joined the lodge. The lodge has already begun scheduling the third cruise and this year they will be headed to Mexico.

**Live Oak #1165**
Live Oak Elks Lodge #1165 held a dinner fundraiser for baby Grier Goodson born Jan. 9 weighing just one pound eight ounces. Robert Dees and William Beasley led the event. The lodge treated the family to dinner and presented them with a check for $3,000 March 31.

**Perry #1851**
Perry Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, Hinano Yon, presented Taylor Technical Institute with $1,000 to provide students additional financial aid in acquiring their GED/high school diploma and other fees associated.
with career classes. The lodge also assisted the Rotary Club in its annual father-daughter dance Feb. 10.

**Tallahassee #937**

Tallahassee Elks Lodge #937 formed a partnership with the Leon Wakulla County Retired Teachers Association. The lodge provides an in-kind donation of kitchen use and eating space at the lodge; on Jan. 24, 200 guests came to the lodge for dinner. A silent auction helped the association raise nearly $4,000 for its scholarship program.

Tallahassee Lodge was the food purveyor again this year at the reenactment of the Battle of Natural Bridge south of town in the Woodville community March 4-5. It is a great opportunity to exemplify the organization and their camaraderie. They make and sell some great sandwiches and net several thousand dollars in fundraising revenue.

**Gainesville #990**

Gainesville Elks Lodge #990 established a monthly rubber duck race. The duck entrance fee is $5 with a goal of 100 ducks being sold each month. The first five ducks to reach the finish line each win a small cash prize starting at $10 and going to $50 for first place. Those five ducks are placed back in the water to race for the grand prize of $100. The remainder of the money collected will be used for lodge charity projects.

**Mandarin-St. Johns #2866**

Mandarin-St. Johns Elks Lodge #2866 hosted the Arrow of Light ceremony for Cub Scout Pack 484. The lodge partners with this troop and allows them to hold their meetings and other events at the lodge.

**Orange Park #2605**

Orange Park Elks held a birthday party to celebrate the 102nd birthday of longtime Elk member Bob Watkins. He has been an Elk for over 70 years. Lodge members visited with him at the assisted living center where he currently lives with his wife, Hazel, and brought cake and ice cream to share with the other residents.

**Eustis #1578**

Eustis Elks Lodge #1578 held their annual fire and police officer appreciation dinner where they honored 12 departments including the Lake County Sheriff, Highway Patrol, Lake County Fire and Rescue, and K-9 unit. The lodge donated $1,400 to the Mount Dora High School ROTC to help the cadets make a summer trip to the Citadel. The lodge also held a charity barbecue and served 632 dinners. At the Florida Elks state barbecue, the Eustis Anna Miller Circle held a cake auction and raised $800 for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. The ladies also held a Chinese auction that raised $1,000 to send kids to the Florida Elks Youth Camp.
Inverness #2522
Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 hosts a biannual art show to raise funds to help their community. Members and artisans contribute many hours and beautiful art to make this a successful event. The Hernando Elementary School Music Department was the recipient of a $500 donation from the show’s proceeds. The children made a beautiful card to show their appreciation of the donation for equipment and instruments. The card was signed by each student and is full of pictures of them playing instruments and enjoying their favorite class.

South Lake #1848
South Lake Elks have found a new lodge building. They held an open house with live music and over 200 people attended. An overflow was anticipated so space was created on the lawn.

Winter Park #1830
Exalted Ruler Ron Goluba and First Lady Sue Jovi represented Winter Park Elks Lodge in the 39th annual Winter Park St. Patrick’s Day parade where they greeted thousands. Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services district occupational therapist, Diane Norton, walked the parade route speaking to members of the community and handing out brochures. Member Tom Norton drove the therapy van. Also walking the parade route was Elks drug awareness mascot, Elroy, escorted by lodge member Barbara Rozanski. Six Lake Howell High School students also volunteered by distributing hundreds of “Elks Stay Drug-Free” red ribbons promoting the Elks drug awareness program.

Winter Park Lodge awarded 13 scholarships to high school seniors in the amount of $1,000 each. The students and their families joined lodge members for dinner. A live band as well as Irish dancers provided the evening’s entertainment. The lodge donated the use of its ballroom to Walden Community School. The students performed the play “The Magic Ukelele” for students, families and friends. Students from International Christian High School were at the lodge to perform a half day of community service. The students cleaned the outside area of the lodge and were then treated to pizza.

DeLand #1463
On Jan. 28, 2012, the first ME STRONG Linda’s Run for the Dream took place in historic DeLand, Fla. The race
was initiated when four women, Kim Winters, Barbara Underhill, Kim Martin and Kathy Guyer, wanted to honor their friend Linda Ryan who was diagnosed with recurrent cervical cancer at the age of 43. The inaugural run was an overwhelming success with nearly 1,000 participants of all athletic abilities and ages. The funds raised from the event went toward assisting community members battling cancer and cancer research.

Together the five women behind ME STRONG then took their message and charitable donations to a larger stage, a charitable organization dedicated to assisting the friends, families and individuals battling cancer and supporting groundbreaking research. In May 2016, after four years of no evidence of disease, Linda Ryan learned her cancer had returned. She continues to be open and candid about sharing her personal journey in hopes of supporting others who are also in this situation.

This was the second year the DeLand Elks formed a team and participated in the run.

Desiree Templeton is the chartered organization representative for the Lodge's Cub Scout Pack 531. The Elks now serve as liaison between the scouts and the chartered organization under the Exalted Ruler. DeLand Elks Lodge has never had a Boy Scout troop; they have only hosted troops from other organizations. Troop 531 is an entirely new Boy Scout troop within the Tuscarora District under the Central Florida BSA Council.

On Feb. 18, DeLand Lodge held their annual PER steak or lobster dinner fundraiser for the Florida Elks Youth Camp scholarship program. Over 70 members and their guests attended. Dinner was followed by entertainment of karaoke and music by Tom Pollard, PDD. On March 18, the lodge held their annual St. Patrick's Day fundraiser. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Florida Elks Youth Camp to send kids to camp this summer. Kirk Haskell sang for over four hours nonstop and members sang along.

Desiree Templeton is the chartered organization representative for the Lodge's Cub Scout Pack 531. The Elks now serve as liaison between the scouts and the chartered organization under the Exalted Ruler. DeLand Elks Lodge has never had a Boy Scout troop; they have only hosted troops from other organizations. Troop 531 is an entirely new Boy Scout troop within the Tuscarora District under the Central Florida BSA Council.

Late last year, Exalted Ruler, Bob Sari, and scout leader, Dave Templeton, discussed bringing a Boy Scout troop to DeLand Elks Lodge #1463. At that time, another troop was having issues with its sponsoring organization and was looking for options. Templeton was contacted by a scoutmaster interested in starting a new scout troop. A meeting with the ER was set for Jan. 13, and it was referred to the House Committee and the lodge voted to sponsor a new scout troop. Troop 531 was formed and met at the end of January 2017. Currently

Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach #1557
Every year, Edgewater-New Smyrna Beach Elks Lodge #1557 supports and sponsors a T-ball team. This year, the Athletics played at the sports complex in Edgewater, Fla. In memory of one of their beloved coaches, Dave Fernandez, a ballfield was named in his honor. The turnout is great every year.
of the best show cars. The lodge also hosted their annual awards spaghetti dinner for Cub Scout Pack #72 and their families.

**CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Orlando #1079**

Orlando Elks Lodge #1079 hosted the Cub Scout pinewood derby which was attended by approximately 30 children along with their families. The derby is a racing event for Cub Scouts of the Boy Scouts of America. Cub Scouts, with the help of parents, build their own cars from wood, usually from kits containing a block of pine, plastic wheels and metal axles.

The first pinewood derby was held May 15, 1953, at the Scout House in Manhattan Beach, Calif., by Cub Scout Pack 280C, presently called Pack 713. The concept was created by the pack’s Cub Master, Don Murphy, and was sponsored by the Management Club of North American Aviation. Murphy’s son was too young to participate in the popular Soap Box Derby, so he came up with the idea of racing miniature wood cars. The cars had the same gravity-powered concept as the full-size Soap Box Derby cars but were much smaller and easier to build. The pinewood derby had a sensational first year. Murphy and the Management Club of North American Aviation sent out thousands of brochures to anyone who requested more information. The idea spread rapidly and competitions were held across the country, mainly with recreation departments and nonprofit organizations including the Los Angeles County Department of Recreation. Of all that early enthusiasm, however, only the Boy Scouts of America made it part of an official program. The national director of Cub Scouting Service, O. W. Bennett, wrote to Murphy and said, “We believe you have an excellent idea, and we are most anxious to make your material available to the Cub Scouts of America.” Within the year, the Boy Scouts of America adopted the pinewood derby for use in all Cub Scout packs.

**West Citrus #2693**

On March 18, West Citrus Elks Lodge #2693 held its annual bus trip to the Florida Elks Youth Camp. The camp hosts more than 325 campers per week during the seven weeks of summer. Campers are welcomed regardless of ability to pay thanks to the generous donations from the Florida Elks. On this trip, the West Citrus Elks donated more than $10,400 in support of the campers.

Presenting checks totaling more than $10,400 for the Florida Elks Youth Camp are Bill Coke, West Citrus Elks Harry-Anna Trust Fund chairman; Nick Miller, camp director; Carolyn Hoskins of the West Citrus Ladies of Elks and Doreen Vaughan representing the Vaughan Family Trust.

**SOUTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Stuart-Jensen #1870**

Stuart-Jensen Elks Lodge #1870 finished the year strong with a gain in membership. They had a very busy season. In January, Linda Elliott and the Veterans Committee hosted a veterans luncheon for disabled veterans from the VA hospital. There was a Rod Stewart impersonator show in February with 200 in attendance as well as a Sweetheart ball. At their St. Patrick’s Day celebration, the Lodge Chaplain, Mike Foley, dressed in his kilt and played the bagpipes. They also held a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for their BSA Venture Crew 2832 in March to help the scouting unit. The lodge has also used all six Florida Elks summer camp scholarships and they have sent 12 additional kids to camp from their charity fund.

**WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Dunedin/Clearwater #1525**

On Feb. 5, Dunedin/Clearwater Elks Lodge #1525 held a classic car and truck show. The top 40 vehicles received awards. Proceeds from the show will be donated to Elks charities. The lodge was open to the public and gave free coffee, hot dogs and beverages to participants.

Dunedin/Clearwater Lodge also continues to collect Box Tops for Education to distribute to local schools. School supplies were also collected.

**Largo #2159**

Largo Elks Lodge #2159 held its annual Boy Scout spaghetti dinner. The lodge sponsors Troop 417, and this event is the largest benefit they do all year. The money raised will help the troop with equipment upgrades and assist scouts who can’t afford the total camping fees. Corporal Michael L. Jernigan, USMC (retired), a third-generation Marine, was the guest speaker at the fundraiser. On Aug. 22, 2004, the Humvee he was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device. Jernigan lost both his eyes and suffered a crushed cranium and severe trauma to his right hand and left leg. He recovered at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and then completed the traumatic brain injury program at James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa, Fla. He also completed a 16-week blind rehab program in Augusta, Ga., and was medically retired Dec. 29, 2005. He received the Combat Action Ribbon and Purple Heart while in Iraq. He later attended Georgetown University in 2008-2009 and graduated from the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg with a major in history. After his graduation, he became the community outreach coordinator for Southeastern Guide Dogs.

Corporal Michael Jernigan, USMC (retired) gives a speech during the Largo Elks Boy Scout fundraiser.
of army-style food. Members were dressed to impress as their favorite M*A*S*H characters such as Hot Lips, Klinger, Trapper John and Hawkeye. All proceeds from the event are being sent to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation for research on diabetes.

On Saturday, Feb. 18, the FSU Bull Buds Sting Ray students served the meals and cleared the tables for the attendees of the Ladies of Elks annual variety show fundraiser dinner. The FSU Bull Buds Sting Ray Program is a transition post-secondary education program for students with special needs. The program was created to connect the students with mentors and advocates who assist these young men and women in developing vital communication and independent living skills. Attendees of the variety show were impressed with these young men and women and donated $350 which they'll use to assist them with their summer on-campus living program.

On March 25, members from the Lady Rebels softball team at Dixie Hollins High School served the dinner and cleared tables under their coach’s supervision after the lodge’s 2017-2018 installation program. Lodge members appreciated these young ladies’ friendly and efficient service and donated $246 that they will use to purchase much needed equipment. After the Lady Rebels finished their duties, they stayed for a while to enjoy the dance and interact with the new officers and Elks in attendance.

St. Petersburg Lodge has partnered with several local schools so students can learn to volunteer in their community and fundraise for their needs at the same time. These kids serve at lodge dinners and the members collect and donate money that same evening to the kids. They rotate the schools so they all have a chance to earn money for their programs while learning to volunteer.

On Jan. 14, the St. Petersburg Ladies of Elks Association sponsored a M*A*S*H 1224 Bash to bash juvenile diabetes. Members and supporters, many of them diabetics, walked through the mess hall line to pick up their tray and its complications of juvenile diabetes, a metabolic disease in which viruses kill the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. The event was hosted by Jan Giallourakis and her sister, Dawn Lieber. Over $1,500 was raised.
On Jan. 27, St. Petersburg Elks Lodge donated $750 to the Suncoast Safe Kids Coalition. The coalition was established in 1991 and is led by Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg that serves five counties in the Tampa Bay area. It is an affiliate of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global organization dedicated to preventing injuries in children, the No. 1 killer of kids in the United States. The coalition unites health and safety experts, first responders, educators, local agencies, civic groups, businesses and volunteers from each community served. The program teaches car seat safety, water safety and bike safety.

Marshall Middle School to help defray the lunch money owed by some of the students. Students start receiving an alternative lunch after being unable to pay for lunch five times in a row. In many cases, it is their only hot meal for the day. John Guarino, Leading Knight, presented the check for $285 to Vice Principal, Mary Mathis, and school employee, Susie Kimbel. Mathis explained how the debt follows the students through school and when it is not satisfied, it prevents them from receiving their high school diploma. After hearing this, several lodge members gave more donations to the school for these children.

Volunteers from Plant City Lodge, led by Loyal Knight, Ron Johns, participated in the annual Carefest in Plant City, Fla. The project they adopted was to help two disabled seniors catch up on some needed home repairs. The project included pressure washing, painting the house and shed, reroofing the shed, replacing rotted wood, and trimming trees. Volunteers worked on the project for two full days completely transforming the exterior of the property and lifted a burden for the women living there.

Sebring #1529
Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 has received the Beacon Grant for the past four years and used the money to work with children in the Highlands Little Theatre. Nala Price, a 17-year-old senior at Sebring High School,
participated in all four events which promoted self-esteem and confidence in public speaking; she also learned about various behind-the-scenes theatre activities. Price auditioned for “The Voice” (a television reality series) and after impressing two judges, she selected Adam Levine as her singing coach. Sebring Elks are proud to see how the Beacon Grant played a role in helping Price reach for her dreams.

The school board identifies the children in need and EFELT provides six full meals of nonperishable food through a discreet process where the child’s name and whereabouts is not revealed. Food and snacks are processed by more than 120 volunteers at two sites in Manatee County, Fla., placed in backpacks and delivered to the schools on Fridays for distribution.

On Jan. 6, 2011, they started by providing food to 60 children in two elementary schools, and by January 2017 they have expanded to 850 children in 13 schools. Since the program’s beginning, they have provided 113,576 children between the ages of 5 and 12 with 681,456 meals containing 1,303,060 items which equate to 227 tons of food. Since Jan. 6, 2011, their 125 volunteers including the EFELT Board of Directors have spent 38,337 hours and have driven 144,774 miles (including delivery of the backpacks). That is $1,143,592.71 in-kind wage and $84,014.90 in-kind mileage at IRS allowable.

They are aware of 65 lodges in 20 states that are emulating the EFELT project or participating with other community backpack projects. The Elks have also assisted five lodges in five different states start a similar program. The program has brought in 48 new members in both lodges.

The problem of poverty is pervasive and can be overwhelming. Around the world, more than one billion people are malnourished. An estimated 1.4 billion people live on less than $1.25 a day and every day children are dying just because they don’t have enough food to eat. One out of every five children in the United States lives at or below the poverty level and the USDA estimates that 17.8% of all children in Florida are food-deprived. That’s a tragedy that should not occur. Unfortunately, the children suffer the most. No child should suffer from hunger, especially when Elks can do something about it!

To learn more about this important work, please visit efelt.org.

Bradenton Lodge Americanism essay contest winners in the fifth and sixth grade division, left to right, are Lyia Lester, second place; Gary Klein, third place and Jakob Ibragimor, first place.
Bradenton Lodge Americanism essay contest winners in the seventh and eighth grade division, left to right, are McKenna Gunn, third place; Emma Craig, second place and Anusha Singh, first place. Pictured with them is ER Susan Erwin.

Bradenton Lodge was also busy fundraising. The lodge held their annual charity ball in January and raised over $6,000 for their children’s and veterans’ programs. They also held a St. Patrick’s Day event that was open to the public. Over 600 meals were served with attendees enjoying various musicians and a Scottish Highlanders program. Over $4,300 was raised for Elks charities and 29 new members were a result of the day.

South Hillsborough #2672
South Hillsborough Elks Lodge #2672 held a membership drive March 18 with Elroy the Elk and the Elk drug awareness trailer. Hot dogs, chips and soda pop were served. Two new members were signed up with many prospects for the future.

South Hillsborough Lodge also had booths at the Apollo Beach Manatee Festival of the Arts & Music at Simmons Park March 11-12 and March 30 at the Sun City Center Community Spring Expo in Sun City Center, Fla. Their mission was to spread the word about Elkdom.

Deep Creek #2763
Deep Creek Elks Lodge #2763 held a fundraiser for Addie, a four-year-old who has lung cancer. She is the granddaughter of one of their members. Both of Addie’s lungs are covered with tumors. She goes to Tampa General Hospital for treatments and the family needed help with medical bills. Deep Creek Elks have raised $17,000 so far and are still accepting donations.

Englewood #2378
Englewood Elks Lodge #2378 hosted a luncheon and fashion show with 160 guests. Lodge officers prepared and served lunch. All tips received as well as money raised from raffles totaled over $1,000 which was given to various community charities and will be used to help pay for buses to send children to the Florida Elks Youth Camp.

Naples #2010
Naples Elks Lodge #2010 had a Valentine’s Day dance Feb. 11 with 125 people in attendance. They also held the annual Americanism essay contest Feb. 18 with 168 essays entered from six local Naples schools. This year’s theme asked why it is important to vote. Winning essays were forwarded to state and national levels for consideration for awards. Membership has risen significantly since January; they have added more than 150 new members.

North Fort Myers #2742
North Fort Myers Elks Lodge #2742 donated $300 to the North Fort Myers Babe Ruth Baseball League. The mission of the league goes beyond just teaching baseball. The players learn the importance of being part of a team and that with hard work, dedication and commitment will come pride, satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. The lodge has a banner in the outfield.

Rotonda #2710
Mary Filetti received the President’s Lifetime Volunteer Service Award for helping address pressing needs in the Rotonda Elks community. She has volunteered over 4,000 hours in her nine years. She has been Chaplain and Chairman of Drug Awareness and Hoop Shoot. She is an amazing volunteer and has a true passion to help others.

Clewiston #1853
Clewiston Elks Lodge #1853 joined in the local parade and fair this year. A group of kids and members walked in the parade and handed out drug awareness ribbons and candy. They also had a booth at the fair representing the lodge community involvement with brochures and posters. They handed out drug awareness bookmarks, ribbons and balloons. Elroy, the Elks drug awareness mascot, was a hit!

Clewiston Lodge hosted the annual Southeast District golf tournament
Jan. 14. There were 87 players in a three-team modified scramble. The tournament raised $9,300 for the Southeast District.

Jupiter #2469
The last quarter of the year at Jupiter Elks Lodge #2469 is always filled with lots of fun activities. Many traveling snowbird members frequent the lodge and activities. This year included a chili cook-off, a one-day gambling cruise, a Super Bowl party, and live music and dinners every Saturday. There’s always something going on in Jupiter: bingo on Mondays, line dancing on Tuesdays and a game of chance on Thursdays with your chance to win the jackpot. They also have a celebrity chef member cook dinner of their choice and serve it to the members. DD Lenny DiLorenzo took a turn and cooked his New York grandma-style pizza.

Lake Okeechobee #2871
Lake Okeechobee Elks Lodge #2871 continues to make a difference in their local community for students and veterans, all while on the search for a lodge building. The members currently utilize the local American Legion to host events, one of which is the monthly pancake breakfast to benefit the Elks National Foundation. Another year has ended for the 26 Week Club, a charitable fundraiser, and it surpassed all previous years with ticket sales. On the grand finale night of the fundraiser, they had a dinner dance with live music and members and guests were dressed patriotically. An award for best dressed male and female was also given.

This year’s Beacon Grant project was a huge success for Lake Okeechobee Elks benefiting local second graders. Lodge members assisted by young adults in the Okeechobee Brahman JROTC battalion provided books to the second graders of the Okeechobee County School District. Those students who read their book over spring break were treated to an ice cream party once they returned to school and passed a test on it.

Delray Beach Elks have been quite charitable this quarter. They donated $1,000 each to the Boy Scouts of America #301 and #308 to help with their summer camp expenses. Proceeds of $725 from a fundraiser were given to S. D. Spady Montessori Elementary. They donated $1,200 to the Miracle League for the 2017 handicapped baseball team and $500 for their tennis fundraiser. The annual chili cook-off raised $1,000 for the Harry-Anna Trust Fund. Delray Beach Fire Rescue won first place for their five-alarm chili.

Delray Beach Lodge now has three generations of Elkdom! The newest members, Charlie Stravino and Nick
Garito, join their grandfather, Larry Garito, and Timothy Garito, Nick's father and Charlie's uncle. Larry and Tim have been members for over 20 years and are both an integral part of the lodge.

**Hollywood West #2365**
On Jan. 7, Benny Stavato, a Hollywood West Lodge member, coordinated a motorcycle fundraiser ride to raise money for friend Steve Vanpelt's wife, Maria, who is battling cancer. Stavato and lodge volunteers distributed donation jars to various establishments and neighboring lodges throughout the area. The ride raised over $1,000.

On Feb. 7, Hollywood West Lodge received a surprise visit by Grand Exalted Ruler Michael Zellen who was in town visiting his sister-in-law who was hospitalized. GER Zellen spoke about Elkdom with a group of eight who were at the lodge to attend orientation.

Florida Keys Lodge sponsored two state soccer shoot winners. Drake Fowler won first place in the U-14 division and first place for overall points. Jonathan Mesa won first place in the U-10 division. Lecturing Knight, Larry McNamara, and his wife, Paulette, Youth Activities Chairman, volunteered to spearhead the local soccer shoot for this year.

In February, Florida Keys Lodge was decorated like a cruise ship for their annual Cruise and Casino Night. Everyone attending had a chance to play in the casino and local businesses donated prizes for the winning members. There were 225 people who attended the event. There was music and dancing and the dinner buffet was purchased, prepared and served by Monday night chef, Tom Hallock, and his volunteers. A total of $8,000 was raised for various Elks charities from the event.
Green Cove Springs #1892
The third annual K-9s for Warriors Bingo was held at Green Cove Springs Elks Lodge #1892 Feb. 7. Elks charity bingo raised $2,500 for the K-9 program of providing service dogs to veterans with PTSD. The veterans and dogs train together for 16 weeks at no cost to the veterans. The highlight of the evening was a chocolate lab puppy in training named Lilly. Her volunteer trainer, Marie Massie, and grants coordinator, Michele Tucker, came along to inform the bingo players about the program. Exalted Ruler, Gene Rittenhouse, and Lodge Veterans Coordinator, PER Rick Kunze, presented Tucker with an additional check for $1,000 from the lodge's Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant.

Kissimmee #1873
On March 5, Kissimmee Elks Lodge #1873 dedicated a Veterans Memorial Star. The five points on the star represent the five branches of the military. The project was created and made by Eagle Scout Nicholas Jeminez from Kissimmee Scout Troop 240 as his Eagle project. Jeminez has military in his blood and has been accepted at the Coast Guard Academy. His project is the fourth Eagle Scout project erected on the lodge property. Present at the ceremony was a representative from each branch of the military as well as 150 members and guests. Immediately following the dedication was a new member celebration with all the new members initiated since April 1, 2016. Diane O'Brien coordinated both events.

West Citrus #2693
Representatives of the Veterans Committee of West Citrus Elks Lodge #2693 made a surprise visit to the Nature Coast Woodworkers meeting at the Inverness Library recently to personally thank the carvers for their dedication and support of the committee's mission to uplift area veterans in assisted living facilities. For years, the woodworkers have supplied the committee with uniquely carved patriotic plaques honoring veterans for their service in the armed forces.

Holiday Isles #1912
Holiday Isles Elks Lodge #1912 received an Impact Grant; only 74 lodges nationwide received one. The money will be used to buy supplies to make the homes of veterans comfortable, patient-friendly and handicapped accessible when they are discharged from C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center. The lodge will be working closely with the homebound care department at the VA Medical Center to identify veterans who need help.

On March 11, using a Beacon Grant, Holiday Isles Lodge sent a bus of 20 veterans to Myakka City, Fla., to watch the Herrmann's Royal Lipizzan Stallions of Austria who winter there. The veterans visited their stables and met their newest eight-month-old addition. On their way home, the veterans were treated to lunch.

Tampa #708
Tampa Elks Lodge #708 had its first Welcome Home Project; they helped a veteran transition from homelessness into a new apartment. Gigi, a veteran from the Athena House, contacted the lodge requesting assistance in getting the necessities for turning her apartment into a home. She
provided the lodge with a list of items she needed which ranged from a nightstand and microwave to a bathtub and sink plugs. The lodge distributed her list to members who bought the items. In addition, the lodge took her shopping and spent $200 for her everyday necessities.

The lodge also hosted a dinner show featuring the Re-Creation USA troupe. Nine veterans from James A. Haley Veterans Hospital and six veterans from the Athena House joined members for this occasion. The proceeds from that event will be used to enhance the middle school experience for the military dependents at Tinker K-8 on MacDill AFB.

**Lake Placid #2661**
On Jan. 4, Lake Placid Elks Lodge #2661 welcomed home four World War II veterans and their caretakers who traveled to Hawaii for the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The veterans shared their adventure with smiles. Their beaming faces displayed a warm and friendly bond between the veterans and their caretakers. In Hawaii, there were parades and ceremonies to honor the veterans and the veterans who never made it home. They were treated as VIPs on tours. There was a parade with marching band members who thanked the veterans for their service. Many parade attendants and active service members asked to take pictures with the heroes. After the parade was over, a teenager took off his high school band shirt and gave it to veteran Phil Margetts who also received a Quilt of Valor made by three women in Iowa. He was honored to be one of only two recipients. The veterans and their companions were grateful to the Elks for sending them on the trip. Margetts noted that “it was a once-in-a-lifetime trip. We owe a debt of gratitude to all who donated.”

“We couldn’t have gone without the Elks,” said veteran Sam DeFrees.

The Elks held many fundraisers to finance the trip for the veterans and their companions. PER Marge Holbrook was the organizer and had an amazing drive for their trip and their care.

**SOUTHWEST CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Lake Placid Elks Riders**
The Lake Placid Elks Riders, who are heavily involved in their community and in fundraising for special projects, organized all local motorcycle clubs to help escort the World War II veterans to Tampa Airport.

**Lakewood-Sarasota #2855**
Lakewood-Sarasota Elks Lodge #2855 held a veterans lunch Feb. 7. There were over 70 veterans and three were World War II veterans. The local VFW also honored the veterans who served between 1955 and 1975 with a Vietnam War veteran lapel pin.

**Manasota #2734**
Manasota Lodge’s Veterans Committee and lodge volunteers have helped take care of Veterans Monument Park, located between Manatee Memorial Hospital and the Bradenton Riverwalk. Carl Hunsinger, chairman of the Manatee County Veterans Council, presented a certificate of appreciation to the lodge for pressure-cleaning the park. He also expressed his gratitude to the Elks for repairing their sign at no cost to the veterans.

**SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

**Punta Gorda #2606**
At Punta Gorda Elks Lodge #2606, Elks care and share, especially when it comes to cooking. The lodge Veterans Committee and lodge volunteers have helped take care of Veterans Monument Park, located between Manatee Memorial Hospital and the Bradenton Riverwalk. Carl Hunsinger, chairman of the Manatee County Veterans Council, presented a certificate of appreciation to the lodge for pressure-cleaning the park. He also expressed his gratitude to the Elks for repairing their sign at no cost to the veterans.
Committee chairman rounded up volunteers and prepared meals for the Veterans Village. They also presented Vietnam veterans with a 50th-year commemorative partner pin and provided Valentine goodies for each resident of the Veterans Village.

**West Palm Beach #1352**
West Palm Beach Elks Lodge #1352 hosted a veterans barbecue picnic that was well attended with veterans, their families, friends, volunteers and members. It was a great outdoor day with live music, a barbecue competition, horseshoes and more.

West Palm Beach Lodge held a beautiful dedication ceremony for the installation of Blue and Gold Star markers in the front of the building on both sides of the flag pole. The event was attended by many members, veterans, and Gold and Blue Star families. One guest speaker was Congressman Brian Mast, a double amputee after an IED blast during his final tour took both of his legs in 2010. The Blue Star Memorial Program honors all men and women who serve in the United States Armed Services and the Gold Star represents families who have lost a loved one in service to our country in the United States Armed Forces.

**The South Southeast District PER Association** hosted a PER dinner with all donations going to the Army of Hope. After the dinner, over 170 members and guests were entertained by an outstanding performance by Re-Creation. The event, held at Pompano Beach Elks Lodge, was a huge success.

**Delray Beach #1770**
Delray Beach Elks Lodge #1770 donated $5,000 to the local Fisher House. Fisher House Foundation is best known for a network of comfort homes where military and veterans’ families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment. The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center Fisher House has been in operation since 1995 and has accommodated approximately 10,100 families. The house is an eight-bedroom facility situated on the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center campus.

**Hollywood West #2365**
On March 4, the Hollywood West Elks Veterans Committee, under the direction of chairman, George Caffrey, hosted their monthly flea market at the lodge. This was followed by a quarterly auction March 12. The proceeds from these events support Wounded Warriors, Honor Flight, Army of Hope and the Alexander “Sandy” Nininger State Veterans Nursing Home. Lodge members make monthly visits to the nursing home to play bingo and entertain numerous disabled veterans. The Veterans Committee also hosts a monthly birthday celebration with cake at the nursing home. On March 19, veterans of the nursing home were transported to the lodge for the monthly complimentary brunch where they were honored for their service.

**Oakland Park #2407**
Members of Oakland Park Elks Lodge #2407 are very active with monthly veterans dinners. A couple members donate over 80 hours weekly at the Miami VA reading to veterans, taking them to appointments and helping them with their mail. Also, over 40 gift bags full of toiletries are given monthly to veterans in need. Their lodge may be small but they are dedicated to veterans.

**Pompano Beach #1898**
Pompano Beach Elks supported Re-Creation, a group of young people that tours the country performing for veterans. Re-Creation performed at Pompano Beach Lodge during the district Army of Hope event. Elks volunteers helped in the kitchen and with decorations, tickets and setup. Their next adventure will be linking veterans in Pompano Beach at the VFW and American Legion to bring together a greater bond in the community.

**Florida Keys #1872**
Disabled USN veteran David Taylor swam with Stormy the dolphin at Theater of the Sea. He was sponsored by Florida Keys Elks Lodge’s Vets on the Water. A Gold Star marker was installed at West Palm Beach Lodge #1352.
The Naming of the Jolly Corks
How Charles Vivian was named Imperial Cork

The Jolly Cork trick was a prank introduced by Charles Vivian to uninitiated people while gathering as a group at Mrs. Arnold Geisman’s boarding house. It was a prank that had been popular in England.

On Nov. 23, 1867, Dick Steirly had gone over to the American Theater where Vivian was performing for the purpose of taking notes to enable him to orchestrate some of his songs. After the show, Vivian took Steirly over to Sandy Spencer’s place which was located at Broadway and Fulton Streets. They met up with Hughey Dougherty, Cool Burgess and Henry Vandemark. Vandemark suggested that they shake dice to determine who would purchase the drinks. Vivian told them he had never played dice but he would show them a game popular in England. He then asked for three corks. Steirly received one of them, Vandemark received the second and Vivian held the third. Burgess was the judge and Dougherty did the 1-2-3 count. Then they rehearsed the game, each dropping his cork on the bar and picking it up as rapidly as possible. They repeated this several times and the idea was conveyed that the last man to lift his cork was to buy the drinks. The game commenced and Dougherty gave the count. Vivian and Steirly passed their hands over the corks while Vandemark quickly lifted his cork from the bar, anxious not to be the last one to pick up, but Vandemark was both the first and last to pick up and was made to buy the drinks. The game then became popular whenever they initiated new members into the group. The trick amused him so much that he began to call their organization the Jolly Corks, a name which stuck and lasted until the forming of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

This became a regular part of initiation into the Jolly Corks. The candidate would give Vivian his name and a fee of fifty cents. Each man would produce a cork and put it on the table and the new member would be presented with his cork. The Imperial Cork would then count to three, whereupon the cork game was executed on the new candidate.

The rules were that each member was to carry a cork at all times. Failure to do so carried a penalty of buying a drink for the challenger when unable to produce the cork. When drinking at a bar, they were required to always have the cork displayed in front of them. This led to a trick of diverting the attention of a companion at the bar, stealing his cork and sticking him for drinks for all.

FLORIDA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES FLORIDA ELKS HELPING HANDS

Florida Elks are leading the way in transforming Elks lodges into training grounds for leaders and the place the community goes to find volunteers. Volunteer opportunities abound and with luck, our membership rolls will soon begin growing once again!

Not to be left behind in the quest to engage volunteers, the Florida State Elks Association recently announced a new program entitled Florida Elks Helping Hands!

Florida Elks Helping Hands is a volunteering program promoting “Elks Making a Difference” in our association and major projects. COO/State Secretary Carl Seibert commented, “This is our contribution toward growing a volunteer movement.”

Florida Elks Helping Hands seeks Florida Elks who wish to contribute their time and talents to the state association and our major projects by volunteering at our state office in Umatilla, Fla., to assist our staff with special projects and other activities operated by the state association.

Select volunteers will spend from one to three days at a time, (mostly Tuesday through Thursday) volunteering. Our helping hands will be provided with lodging at the youth camp while participating and will be afforded meals when available. The volunteer opportunities will develop over time but to get things started, we will be looking for volunteers to assist us with documenting, digitalizing, inventorying and otherwise cataloging the contents of our Florida Elks Museum.

Seibert commented, “These projects have been on my to-do list for 15 years now and I believe would still be there in the next 15 without this type of effort." He added, “Come work side by side with the staff of the state association knowing that the hands you will be volunteering will be much appreciated and that your work will stand to serve our members for many years to come!”

Interested individuals should email Seibert at carl@floridaelks.org and provide a brief statement of your expectations and qualifications. His staff will then seek to match you with an activity and time that would best suit your needs!
2017 GOLF TOURNAMENT WINNERS

36th Annual Florida State Elks Golf Tournament

April 8-9 at Spring Lake Golf Resort, Sebring, Fla.

Sponsored by Lake Placid Lodge #2661 and Sebring Lodge #1529

Proceeds of nearly $7,500 will benefit the Florida Elks Children’s Therapy Services and Florida Elks Youth Camp.

First Place A Flight Winners with scores of 59/59-118 were Tom Ludwick, Gary Poekert, Peter Maltese and Rick Orwig.

First Place B Flight Winners with scores of 69/59-128 were Dan Sullivan, Pat Graesch, Tim Glick and Bob Warke.

First Place C Flight Winners with scores of 73/63-136 were Paul Perl, Butch Chen, Bill Murphy and Bob Dealy.

Longest Drive Day 1 Winner - Scott Collins

Longest Drive Day 2 Winner - Jim Kieffer

NOT PICTURED:
Closest to the Pin Day 1 was Tony Rieck.
Closest to the Pin Day 2 was Tim Glick.

Tourney Volunteers and Assistants L-R: Sandra Smith, Dolly Ledig, Rachel Tabor and Mary Kay Burns

Putting Contest Winner - Endorsed VPAL, Frank Malatesta

Tournament Officers - Florida State Elks Golf Tournament Chairman, John Holbrook (left); FSEA State President, John Harris (center); and Tournament Secretary / Treasurer Jim Lind (right).
The dedication of the Michael F. Smith Conference Center took place Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017.

The old Building 9, also known as the Educational Building, has been expanded and transformed into a first-class conference center with the ability to serve as a corporate business training retreat. Its expansion has doubled the accommodations to 32, expanded to a full-service kitchen and provided for better meeting spaces.

Pictured from left are PGER Michael F. Smith and his wife, Sandra, and PGER C. Valentine Bates and his wife, Claudia.