During the Civil War concern at home for the safety of loved ones permeated households throughout the North. The slowness with which accurate details and casualty lists reached home after a major battle aggravated their distress. In this way distance from the seat of war bred anxiety as well as security. The pain of loss often found expression in popular culture. Two Civil War composers, George F. Root and Henry Clay Work, depicted it in their songs.

One of these was “Vacant Chair.” It first appeared in the *Worcester Spy* around Thanksgiving of 1861 and was written to commemorate the death of Lt. John William Grout of the 15th Massachusetts Infantry who was killed at the Battle of Ball’s Bluff.

Although it had been set to music at least once, it enjoyed no success until George F. Root wrote a popular tune to accompany it.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was born in 1868, just three years following the Civil War. Many of the early members of the Elks fought in the Civil War and “Vacant Chair,” remembered by many of these actors, became a part of their Lodge of Sorrow.

The lyrics were written by Henry Stevenson Washburn.

**Lyrics**

We shall meet, but we shall miss him
There will be one vacant chair
We shall linger to caress him
While we breathe our evening prayer;
When a year ago we gathered
Joy was in his mild blue eye,
But a golden chord is severed
And our hopes in ruin lie.

**Chorus**

*We shall meet, but we shall miss him*
*There will be one vacant chair*
*We shall linger to caress him*
*While we breathe our evening prayer.*

At our fireside, sad and lonely,
Often will the bosom swell
At remembrance of the story
How our noble Willie fell;
How he strove to hear our banner
Through the thickest of the fight,
And uphold our country’s honor
In the strength of manhood’s night.

**Chorus**

True, they tell us wreaths of glory
Ever more will deck his brow,
But this soothes the anguish only
Sweeping o’er our heartstrings now.
Sleep today, Oh early fallen,
In thy green and narrow bed,
Dirges from the pine and cypress,
Mingle with the tears we shed.
Vacant Numbers

Since the order first began some of the early Lodges through factional strife and dissension went out of existence, and as new Lodges were instituted thereafter, when the old members became defunct they dropped out of the list. A factional fight in San Francisco early in 1879 caused a group from Lodge No. 3 in that city to pull out and start a new Lodge known as California No. 12. Two Lodges of Elks, therefore, existed in that city for about six years when they were finally merged or consolidated into one Lodge and given a new number, No. 6, the old number of Sacramento Lodge which previously had its charter declared forfeited.

In 1882 a similar disagreement sprang up in Chicago Lodge No. 4 and caused a disgruntled element to endeavor to disrupt the Lodge and an attempt was made to organize a new Lodge to be known as Illinois No. 16, but the project died and was speedily abandoned.

These two unfortunate occurrences were the direct cause of a specific law being enacted by the Grand body that only one Elks Lodge should exist in any one city with a single exception of the special provision in New York City occasioned by heavy population and borough lines of demarcation.

Van Demark, Henry

Henry Van Demark was the fourth man initiated into the Jolly Corks and was treasurer of that social gathering; he was also the first treasurer of the first set of officers of the infant Lodge of Elks.

Van Demark was born in Ulster county of New York on October 10, 1843. He came to New York City with his parents in early life and received a common school education and was engaged the greater part of his business life in New York City. In the latter part of the 1860s, about the time that the Jolly Corks were formed, he was quite a successful singer, appearing very often in public in what were called the free and easies such as Ireland’s Clifton’s, etc. During the day his business occupation was agent of the Swift Shore Line, a towing line which ran up the Hudson River as far as Athens, NY.

Van Demark was a paid singer in Johnny Ireland’s The Star when Vivian made his first appearance in that place. Upon becoming a member of the Jolly Corks he remained with the organization until June 14, 1868 when the division came in the ranks of the young Lodge and he dropped out. He afterwards held responsible positions in the freight department of the Pennsylvania, West Shore, and New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroads.

He was one of the organizers of the Benevolent Order of Buffaloes, Herd No. 1, which originally met at the Village House, Abingdon Square, NY. During the last years of his life he occupied a clerical position with a large chemical manufacturing concern in New York City. He died at the New York Hospital, New York City, on April 28, 1904 and was interred in the cemetery at White Plains, NY.

Bourbon on the Brain

A parody on “Just Before the Battle Mother”

As originally sung with great applause by Harry Van Demark

Just before the battle mother (hic)
I was thinking least of you (hic)
While upon the field we’re spreeing (hic)
With the enemy in view.
Comrades (hic) drunk around me lying,
Filled with bitters made by Dod;
For well they know that on the morrow,
Some will lie drunk on (hic) the sod.

Chorus – Farewell, mother, you may never, (hic) never,
See me sober home again;
But oh! you’ll not forget me, mother,
If dead with “bourbon on the brain.”
Oh, I long to have, dear mother,
    A demijohn sent me from home, (hic)
First thing at morn I like my bitters
    Ere to picket post I roam, (hic)
Tell the sutlers all around you,
    That their (hic) cruel deeds we know,
In every instance, kill our soldiers
    With their stuff called (hic) “Kill Me Slow.”

Farewell, mother, etc.

Hark! I hear the fish horn sounding,
    Tis the signal (hic) for a muss;
May I get no bruises, mother, (hic)
    As I join into this fuss,
Hear the battle cry of “bourbon,” (hic)
    How it smells upon the air;
Oh yes, I’ll rally round the bottle,
    And get blind drunk (hic) while I am there.

Farewell mother etc.


A. C. Van Horn was born on July 27, 1907 in Washington, D. C. and received his education there. After living in Pensacola a few years, he moved to Panama City in 1934. He was a civil engineer and a forester by profession and worked with the Laird Lumber Company in Panama City many years before retiring.

Van Horn joined Panama City Elks Lodge 1598 in March of 1945. He served as Exalted Ruler in 1949 and in all district offices. He was elected State President in Jacksonville in 1962. He served as a director and a trustee of the state association. He also served on the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee as Chairman.

He passed away in the 1987-1988 Lodge year.

The following officers served for the 1962-1963 term:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>A. C. Van Horn, Jr., Panama City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>William Lieberman, Leesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Frank J. Holt, Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiler</td>
<td>Clyde H. Brown, Fort Lauderdale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historian    William Partain, Jr., Palatka
Sergeant at Arms    J. C. Faircloth, Jr.
Chaplain    G. P. LeMoyne, Fort Myers
Organist     Eugene J. Mahlmeister, Boynton Beach

Vice Presidents:

Northwest     Grady Albritton, Pensacola
Northeast     M. F. Brunson, Gainesville
East Central  Jules A. Morris, Winter Park
West Central  J. Wesley Lyons, Tarpon Springs
Southwest     Richard A. Robinson, Sebring
Southeast     Joseph H. Coggin, Fort Pierce
South         Fuller M. Richardson, Fort Lauderdale

The state is now divided into eight districts. The State Association Scholarship Fund was set up by the Southwest District Vice President, R. Edward Royal.

Plantation Lodge 2773 was instituted on February 23, 1963 and Dunedin Lodge 2775 was instituted on March 9, 1963.

Previous convention proceedings give no indication of a Ladies organization or activities thereof. Records supplied by the Florida Ladies of Elks indicate the first conference was hosted sometime in 1963. Orlando won the state ritual contest.

Vann, James W., President, Florida State Elks Association, 1966-1967
Motto: As you will it my brothers; as you will it.
Mayor Joe Turner of Clearwater declared May 16-22 as Florida State Elks Week.

The following officers were elected to serve for the 1966-1967 term:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>James W. Vann</td>
<td>Pahokee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>William Lieberman</td>
<td>Leesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Frank J. Holt</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiler</td>
<td>Leon Spooner</td>
<td>Pahokee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>L. M. Strickland, Sr.</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant at Arms</td>
<td>Earl Sapp</td>
<td>Fort Lauderdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>R. Lamar Johnson</td>
<td>Vero Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organist</td>
<td>Robert O. Lampi</td>
<td>Pahokee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District Vice Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>C. S. Oliver</td>
<td>Panama City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Abe Shashy</td>
<td>Ocala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central</td>
<td>Henry D’Amico</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Alvin A. Ehrlich</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central</td>
<td>Al Barthelette</td>
<td>St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>Bedford Prescott</td>
<td>Wauchula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Clyde Brown</td>
<td>Fort Lauderdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>James N. Gooding</td>
<td>Homestead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Florida Elks News won second place in the Grand Lodge State Association Bulletin Contest.
Milton Lodge 2377 was instituted on October 15, 1967. Englewood Lodge 2378 was instituted on November 5, 1967. Brandon Lodge 2383 was instituted on February 16, 1968. Cocoa Beach Lodge 2387 was instituted on May 11, 1968.
Orlando Lodge 1079 won the state ritual contest.

Varenhorst, James C., Past Grand Exalted Ruler & Past Grand Secretary
Vaughn, Carl, Past Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight & President, Florida State Elks Association, 1982-1983

Born March 20, 1928, in Blakely, PA, Carl Vaughn graduated from Blakely High School and attended Hunter College in New York City. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and received an honorable discharge from the Naval Reserve in 1946. His business experience with Arnold’s Bakers, Inc., Oroseat Foods Company, and his ownership of a restaurant and lounge in North Palm Beach, FL and later another restaurant in West Palm Beach was a gain for Elkdom. His leadership ability and guidance was very valuable to Elkdom.

He was initiated into North Palm Beach Lodge 2069 in 1964 where he served as an officer from 1965-1968 and Exalted Ruler in 1968. He served as DDGER in 1973-1974, Florida State Convention Chairman in 1971, a member of the Florida Elks Children’s Hospital Board of Directors from 1978-1981, Vice President at Large for the Florida State Elks Association in 1981-1982, and State President in 1982-1983. He was a certified ritual judge for 23 years. He served a second term on the Florida State Elks Association Board of Directors in 1985 and served as Chairman of the Florida Land Use Committee which was instrumentally responsible for the Florida Elks Youth Camp location. He helped organize the Florida Elks News and served as its Chairman for six years. He served as Secretary to Grand Exalted Ruler Robert Grafton in 1979-1980, served on the Grand Lodge Activities Committee with one year as Chairman, served on the Grand Lodge State Association Committee, and was a Special GL Representative to San Juan, Puerto Rico Lodge 972. He served as a Special Deputy GER in Florida where his expertise of Elkdom was valuable to many Lodges. He was a member of Jupiter Lodge from 1991 until his death. Sadly, prior to his death, he suffered from Alzheimer’s Disease.

Becomes Grand Loyal Knight

On November 2, 1992 Vaughn received a letter from Grand Lodge proposing him as Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight for the 1993-1994 Grand Lodge years.

His home Lodge, Jupiter Lodge 2469, submitted a resolution to the Lodge membership endorsing his candidacy and submitted the approved resolution to the Grand Secretary’s office which was subsequently printed in the Elks Magazine.

Resolution for Carl Vaughn

Jupiter, Florida Lodge presents Carl Vaughn for Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight.

Whereas: Carl Vaughn has been a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks since 1964, serving North Palm Beach Lodge 2069 in most areas of leadership and elected offices, as Exalted Ruler in 1968-69, and was elected to honorary life membership in 1974; and
Whereas: He has served the Florida State Elks Association as a member of Directors of their major project for three years, Vice President at Large 1981-1982, State President 1982-1983, Board of Directors of the State Association for twelve years and currently as Chairman of that board, Chairman of the Land Use Committee for six years, Chairman of the Publication Committee of the Florida Elks News since 1988, and:

Whereas: Brother Vaughn has served the Grand Lodge as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler 1973-1974, Secretary to then Grand Exalted Ruler Robert Grafton 1979-1980, Grand Lodge Ritual Contest Judge 1984, Grand Lodge Activities Committee for four years with the last year as Chairman, Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler for five years, and currently serving as a member of the Grand Lodge State Associations Committee as well as Special Representative to Puerto Rico Lodge 972;

Now therefore be it resolved that Jupiter, Florida Lodge 2469 is honored and privileged to present to the Grand Lodge convention the name of Carl Vaughn as a candidate for the office of Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

John Fryman, Exalted Ruler
Ray Proserpi, Secretary

At the 129th Grand Lodge session he was nominated to Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight by Thomas Elmore, Past State President of the Florida State Elks Association, serving 1993-1994.

President
1982-1983

Motto: “Let’s Communicate”

Seventy-Sixth Annual Session
Florida State Elks Association
May 20-23, 1982
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

State President Richard M. Shasy gave his annual report.
Attendance at the convention was 2,307.
North Port Lodge 2632 was instituted January 31, 1982 and Merritt Island Lodge 2650 on December 11, 1982.
Ocala Lodge 286 won the state ritual contest.

The following officers were elected to serve for the 1982-1983 term:

President: Carl Vaughn, North Palm Beach
Vice President at Large: George Dominianni, Green Cove Springs
Secretary: Ben S. Brown, Jr., Eustis
Treasurer: Frank J. Holt, Miami
Tiler: Charles A. Murphy, New Smyrna Beach
Historian: David C. Riley, Port St. Lucie
Sergeant at Arms: Ed York, Jupiter
Chaplain: Claude Brown, North Palm Beach
Organist: Norman D. Right, DeLand

District Vice Presidents
Northwest: Herman Flowers, Milton
North: Warren C. Harris, Lake City
Northeast: Prime A. Beaudoin, St. Augustine
East Central    Robert L. Patton, Merritt Island
North Central    John F. Wickham, Ocala
Central      Dan Noda, Aripeka
West Central    Tom Karns, Clearwater
Southwest Central    Dexter L. Barkley, Wauchula
Southwest    Richard A. Merz, Venice-Nokomis
Southeast    Thomas E. Elmore, Okeechobee
South Southeast    Donald Burrie, Pompano Beach
South    Ted Cohen, Miami Beach

Tampa was selected as the site for the 1983 convention.

A testimony was given PSP Vaughn in the year 2000. Some of the dignitaries present at the Jupiter Elks facility were Past Grand Exalted Rulers, Robert Grafton and Val Bates; Past State President Tom Elmore; and State President Tom Ryan. At this testimonial Vaughn was presented with an honorary life membership by his Lodge.

Venice-Nokomis Lodge 1854

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida’s 58th Lodge</th>
<th>Southwest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Dispensation:</td>
<td>March 28, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Installation:</td>
<td>April 12, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally Opened By:</td>
<td>P. E. Winsted, DDGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributor:</td>
<td>Ira E. Spiess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Members:</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1995 Membership:</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1996 Membership:</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1997 Membership:</td>
<td>702</td>
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<td>Year 1998 Membership:</td>
<td>614</td>
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<td>Year 2001 Membership:</td>
<td>512</td>
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<td>Year 2004 Membership:</td>
<td>374</td>
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<td>Year 2005 Membership:</td>
<td>389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2006 Membership:</td>
<td>469</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2007 Membership:</td>
<td>554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2008 Membership:</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2009 Membership:</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets:</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Wednesdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>1021 Discovery Way, N. Venice, FL 34275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>941-486-1854</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following officiated:

Grand Exalted Ruler   P. E. Winsted
Grand Esteemed Leading Knight  W. J. Mathelly
Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight  Charles I. Campbell
Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight  Victor W. Kuhl
Grand Secretary      R. B. Curry
Grand Treasurer      Charles W. Walpole
Grand Trustee        Victor Wehle
Grand Tiler          Lloyd Hicks
Grand Chaplain       J. J. Fernandez
Grand Organist       Jules Brazil
Grand Esquire        M. A. Rosin
Grand Inner Guard    Lester Crook
The following officers were elected and installed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exalted Ruler</td>
<td>Clarence Coffman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteemed Leading Knight</td>
<td>George N. Robinett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteemed Loyal Knight</td>
<td>Chidester Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteemed Lecturing Knight</td>
<td>Geo. E. Youngberg, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Herbert H. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>B. B. Dunn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiler</td>
<td>T. S. Eddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees</td>
<td>Dean Zook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are charter members: Maurice R. Acheson; Harry D. Alber; H. S. Bowden; Harry H. Birton; Clarence Coffman; E. D. Dawso; Baxter J. Dye; L. F. Gardner; Wm. A. Hamman; Thos. E. LaByer; George B. Lee; Jack C. Lenhart; Fred T. May; W. R. Nance; Robert Ripley; Ferrell Robinett; George N. Robinett; Louis Siegel; George C. Steele; James V. Taylor; Dr. L. W. Thompson; Raymond S. Wilson; H. H. Wimmers; Carl H. Wolf; Dean Zook; Stuart Anderson; C. Harold Bates; Robert S. Baynard; Albert E. Blackburn; Dr. James E. Blades; James T. Blalock; Geo. W. Botts, Jr.; Kenneth E. Brown; Wallace W. Bryce; Quentin R. Burke; W. M. Cook; Gerald A. Curwood; Samuel C. Cutler; Chas. Czorwinski; James M. Dick; Vincent B. Dixon; B. B. Dunn; Anthony Dyseven; Thomas S. Eddy; Aladar Feinsod; Charles A. Finley; George Gibbs; Robert L. Gregory; Herbert Hanchev, Jr.; Clyde V. Higel; K. R. Higel; H. James Ingle; John A. Johnston; Chidester Johnson; Alvin P. Jones; Dr. S. E. Kaplan; Thos. LaByer, Jr.; Ralph D. Lanius; Lester R. Luckey; Robert D. Mahon; Herbert H. Meyers; W. L. Miles; George R. Mitchell; A. W. Moreman; D. R. Murphy, M. D.; Fritz R. Nelson; C. H. Obenchain; Robert F. Oatman; Elliott Paul; Raymond T. Peterson; Richard Pitman; James W. Ponder, Jr.; Victor Retty, Sr.; Albert H. Rich; Frank D. Roebuck; Robert J. Rouis; Donald W. Shrode; John A. Sleasman; W. C. Spencer, Jr.; Martin S. Stancik; Leslie L. Steckley; J. D. Tate; Elwood Taylor; Edgar S. Thompson; William L. Trahan; Sam W. Vance; William R. Ward; Carter Warren; Horace E. Weltz; Beverly M. White; W. A. Wright; James Young; and G. E. Youngberg, Jr.

Past Exalted Rulers:

- Clarence Coffman 1952-1953
- Hoke S. Bowden 1953-1954
- John A. Sleasmen 1954-1955
- John A. Johnston 1955-1956
- William R. Ward 1956-1957
- Edward S. Raymond 1957-1958
- Warren S. Henderson 1958-1959
- Thomas M. Wrede, Jr. 1959-1960
- Leslie H. Simmonds 1960-1961
- John P. Wright 1961-1962
- C. Allen Pattison 1962-1963
- Howard B. Morrow 1963-1964
- James W. Leighton 1964-1965
- Roger O. Ishphorning 1965-1966
- Donald A. Pattison 1966-1967
- James W. Leighton 1967-1968
- J. Wayne Freeman 1968-1969
- C. Bruce Jones 1969-1970
- George W. Egglefield 1970-1971
- M. M. Dalton 1971-1972
- Tom Ewing 1972-1973
- Bill Steinman 1973-1974
- Allen Winebrenner 1974-1975
- William R. Ward 1975-1976
- Skip Berg 1976-1977
- John Kirvin 1977-1978
- Steven Sommerfield 1978-1979
- Walter Woods 1979-1980
The city of Venice lays sixteen miles south of Sarasota and on the Tamiami Trail. Around 1925, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers chose Venice as its retirement community. The designing city planner introduced an Italian Renaissance style. Its Gulf frontage is known for its fossilized shark teeth.

Venice Nokomis Lodge 1854 was instituted April 12, 1952 and chartered July 17, 1952. Clarence Coffman was the first Exalted Ruler and served from 1952-1953. Hoke Bowden who was the first two-year trustee became the second Exalted Ruler and served from 1953-1954. John Sleasman who was the first Chaplain was Exalted Ruler from 1954-1955. The Lodge was started with 92 total charter members. There were 67 initiated and 25 were by demit. Bruce Jones, PER served 1972-1973 and Richard Merz, PER served 1983-1984. He was also District Vice President in 1982-1983 and District Deputy in 1983-1984.

In February of 1989 the Lodge gave a reception and dinner for the crew of the newly arrived Coast Guard Cutter Point Countess. Wives and family members were also invited to attend. Also included was the crew of the Cutter Point Thatcher. The Lodge had also been engaged financially in supporting the L.I.F.E. (Life is For Everyone) program in Sarasota County. L.I.F.E. is a drug awareness and treatment center.

They have an active scholarship awards program which is awarded annually to students who live in the jurisdiction of the Venice-Nokomis Elks Lodge regardless of what school they attend. A committee formed by Elks members and counselors from Venice High School make the selection from the top students in the senior class. Their being chosen is dependent upon three things: scholarship, leadership, and need. The number of students picked varies each year due to the monies available. In 1989 seven students were picked and a total of $7,500 was awarded.

Every Mother’s Day hundreds of carnations are distributed to mothers in Venice Hospital and various nursing homes in the Venice area. The Exalted Ruler heads this project with help from officers and members. Foodstuffs are collected periodically for the food pantry which in turn gives to needy families. At Christmastime they give food baskets to indigent people.

Ladies organization: The Benevolent and Patriotic Order of Does Drove 141
Organized: November of 1956
Chartered: December 8, 1956
Names on petition for dispensation: 67
Instituted by: B. P. O. Does Drove 66 of Orlando, FL
Meet: 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month
Dave was born on September 28, 1935 in Johnson City, NY. As a youngster he was active in his church’s youth group and the Boy Scouts of America, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. After graduating from his hometown high school he attended New York University at Delhi and completed numerous Air Traffic Control related courses and held a Control Tower Operations Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration. He later received supervisory and management training which was provided by the University of Oklahoma at Cameron College in Lawton, OK.

He is a five-year veteran of the USAF. While in the Air Force he worked at the Strategic Air Command bases in Thule, Greenland and Albany, Georgia with FAA. He worked in the Flight Service Station in Melbourne, FL, the control tower at West Palm Beach International Airport, and the Tampa tower and radar facility, first as a controller, then supervisor, and later as operations officer for ten years. He worked in Oshkosh, WI during the world’s largest and busiest fly in and served as the manager of the temporary control tower in Lakeland, FL for fourteen years during the Annual Experimental Aircraft Association’s Sun ‘n Fun Fly In. Dave is listed as one of the pioneers of this event and was the Air Traffic Control Chairman emeritus. He also completed special assignments at FAA Headquarters in Washington, D. C. and at the Southern Regional Offices in Atlanta, GA. He was the manager of Sarasota-Bradenton, FL International Airport Traffic Control Tower from 1983 until his retirement in May of 1994, completing nearly 39 years of service to those who fly.

His federal service was marked by many awards and honors including outstanding performance awards for twelve of the last fifteen years; he was nominated by the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing at MacDill Air Force Base for the Wilbur Wright Trophy which is kept at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D. C.; the Air Traffic Division Award from the Southern Region of the FAA; the Air Traffic Service award from FAA Headquarters; and the Air Traffic Control Associations Chairman’s Award.

Vergason became an Elk in 1970 as a charter member and was the first Loyal Knight of Palmetto Lodge 2449. Despite being assigned shift work with rotational days off, he was an active Elk. He served as chairman of many Lodge committees and in most of the chairs becoming Exalted Ruler in 1977. He served as the District Chairman for the National Trust Fund and was the State Americanism Chairman in 1978-1979. When the Southwest Central District was formed in 1981, he became its first Vice President, served his Lodge again as Exalted Ruler in 1982-1983, and was installed DDGER at the Grand Lodge convention in Honolulu, HI in 1983. As DDGER he instituted South Hillsborough Lodge 2672. He served five years and completed a three-year term as the Southwest District’s Director on the Florida Elks Children’s Hospital Board. He served as Chairman of the Trustees of his Lodge, VPAL in 1994-1995, and President of the Florida State Elks Association in 1995-1996.
He was married to Ardith for over thirty years. He then married Judy. He enjoyed woodworking, home restoration projects, and restoring a vintage automobile. He passed away in 2007.

Motto: “Catch the Feeling”
Nominated by: Frank J. Spadafora, PSP

The following officers were elected to serve for the 1995-1996 term:

- **President**: David E. Vergason
- **Vice President at Large**: Winston M. Needham
- **Secretary**: Frank D. Willis, Jr.
- **Treasurer**: Joseph B. Bryant
- **Tiler**: Joseph G. Klotz
- **Historian**: Joseph E. Schirmer (deceased in office), Lowell P. Tyler (appointed to finish Schirmer’s term)
- **Sergeant at Arms**: Robert W. Quinn
- **Chaplain**: Byron P. Hills
- **Organist**: Larry E. Myers

**District Vice Presidents**

- **Northwest**: Roger E. Beausoleil, Crestview
- **North**: Bob Peters, Tallahassee
- **Northeast**: Louis C. Wise, St. Augustine
- **East Central**: Michael W. Chandler, Holly Hill
- **North Central**: Martin J. DeCarlo, Apopka
- **Central**: Okey Ryan, Homosassa
- **Southeast Central**: Bart Campbell, Barefoot Bay
- **West Central**: Allen Miller, Tampa
- **Southwest Central**: Fred Putney, Winter Haven
- **Southwest**: William Neal, Sun City Center
- **South South Central**: Fred Tvrdik, North Fort Myers
- **Southeast**: William H. McDuffie, Clewiston
- **South Southeast**: Norman Mandel, Margate
- **South**: Richard H. Rutzke, Homestead

**Quotations:**

“With all the distractions and problems you are having here tonight, your Lodge members are very enthusiastic and well focused on the main function. If this is what it takes to run a successful Lodge, I won’t forget it.”

*Spoken by Dave Vergason to Frank Spadafora at the visitation of State President Bob Grafton at Englewood Lodge 2378 when everything seemed to be going wrong with air conditioning, overheating, etc.*

“In Elks you do not seek the office; the office seeks you. When the office does seek you it’s your responsibility to fill it and to do it to the best of your ability.”

*Earl Enos, Palmetto Lodge 2449*

“As volunteers with the Elks there have been times when we felt mistreated and even insulted. We have learned to get beyond these times by remembering the great things that have been accomplished and that these things were not done to us by the B. P. O. Elks but by just people.”

*Dave Vergason in acceptance speech for State President*

“The Air Force Precision Flying Team, The Thunderbirds, think about teamwork this way: TEAMWORK - coming together is a Beginning, keeping together is Progress, and working together is Success.”

*Dave Vergason in acceptance speech for State President*
“Older members bring us great knowledge from their life experience and they are vital. Our younger members bring new ideas and vitality.”

_Dave Vergason in acceptance speech_

“Sure people are busy trying to earn a living and raising families. My experience is that you can make time for what you want to do.”

_Dave Vergason in acceptance speech_

**His Year**

There was a decline in membership of 3,156.
North Tampa Lodge 2745 gave up their charter.
Lady Lake Lodge 2793 was instituted.
President Vergason sent a letter to every member of Congress representing the state of Florida and both senators requesting support of a pending house bill preventing the desecration of the American flag. Both senators and several members of Congress responded.

Early in October of 1996 the Panhandle of the state suffered from the effects of Hurricane Opal. Early reports indicated that an Elks relief effort would be appropriate. One of the first things that the Ladies did at their convention was to pray for the victims of this natural disaster and solicit donations on their behalf. They started the efforts with $1,450. Others donated a total of $10,410 to the Florida Elks Hurricane Relief Fund. Past State President Aubrey Callaham volunteered to head up the effort. He took care of the details that resulted from collecting and accounting for the money and distributing the dollars to the Lodges and members who were in the greatest need.

**Youth Camp**

Vergason appointed the first Florida Elks Youth Camp Board of Directors. The district sponsors recommended these directors.

Florida Elks Youth Camp doubled their summer sessions from the previous year. Three times as many children attended this year over the last year. This year the camp began a grant writing endeavor sending out 137 letters seeking assistance. There were fourteen responses in which the directors were pursuing. Two foundations were already contributing to this summer session with camper scholarships and counselor in training funding.

Construction was almost complete on phase 7. The camp store, infirmary, and storage area were almost complete. Phase 8 included the softball complex, well, irrigation system, perimeter sodding, and sprigging. The architect completed phase 9, drawings and plans for a gym and conference center.

There were eleven college or university programs on the ropes course so far in 1996.

The board of directors followed by the membership approved the formation of a new nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation to be known as the Florida Elks Youth Camp, Inc. This action converted the youth camp committee and district directors to a separate corporation to operate the youth camp.

**Hurricane Erin & Opal**

Just a month before President Vergason and his party visited the Northwest District, Hurricane Opal, just two months on the heels of Hurricane Erin, hit the area. It wreaked devastation on several of the district Lodges, particularly Pensacola Beach and Milton Lodges. Fortunately due to the strong leadership and the determination of the members, both Lodges were back in operation with a minimum delay.
Florida’s 49th Lodge
District: Southeast Central
Date of Dispensation: March 23, 1949
Date of Installation: April 27, 1949
Formally Opened By: J. Alex Arnette, PDD
Charter Members: 66
Year 1995 Membership: 876
Year 1996 Membership: 917
Year 1997 Membership: 923
Year 1998 Membership: 859
Year 2001 Membership: 583
Year 2004 Membership: 376
Year 2005 Membership: 362
Year 2006 Membership: 339
Year 2007 Membership: 399
Year 2008 Membership: 457
Year 2009 Membership: 531
Meets: 1st & 3rd Wednesday
Location: 1350 26th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32961
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 158, Vero Beach, FL 32961-0158
Telephone: 561-582-8450

The following officiated:

- Grand Exalted Ruler: Charles Peckelis
- Grand Esteemed Leading Knight: Otis Parker
- Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight: Donald Hunt
- Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight: Broward Poppell
- Grand Secretary: Ed Schmidt
- Grand Trustee: Unknown
- Grand Tiler: J. R. Walker
- Grand Chaplain: Howard Barnes
- Grand Esquire: Charles Wilson
- Grand Inner Guard: Neal Bird

The following officers were elected and installed:

- Exalted Ruler: H. L. Wasson
- Esteemed Leading Knight: Joe Masury
- Esteemed Loyal Knight: Earl Roberts
- Esteemed Lecturing Knight: George Schardt, Jr.
- Secretary: A. V. Lill
- Inner Guard: Robert Young
- Chaplain: Charles Pinson
- Esquire: Gayle L. Smith
- Tiler: Charles Toole
- Trustees: Sherman Smith, William Fitts, Ben Bailey, William Wodtke, Roland Miller

The following are charter members: H. L. Wasson; A. V. Lill; Anthony Locke; Geo. J. Hammond; Ralph C. Bacon; Evan F. Wilson; J. R. Mallock; Robt. W. Graves; Wm. M. Launius; H. J. Paulsen; B. F. Bailey; Gayle L. Smith; Wm. L. Fitts, Jr.; W. S. Hague; Cecil Babcock; P. B. Johnston; B. Bartlett; Jack Kobberup; Lawrence Cole;
A man by the name of John T. Gifford moved to this area in the late 1800’s. Gifford obtained permission from the U. S. Postal Service to establish a post office here and named the community after his wife, Vero. It lies in Indian River County.

PSP R. Lamar Johnston (1969-1970) was a member of the Lodge.

Significant Events of Lodge

2007 Donated $200 to the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center toward the cost of purchasing new TV sets for the veterans.

Ladies organization: Kles Club

Veterans Day

In 1921, an American soldier, his name “known but to God,” was buried on a Virginia hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the city of Washington. The Arlington National Cemetery burial site of this unknown World War I soldier became the personification of dignity and reverence for America’s veterans.

Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation’s highest place of honor. In England, it was Westminster Abbey; in France, it was the Arc de Triomphe.

These memorial gestures all took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I hostilities at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918 (the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month). The day became known as Armistice Day. Armistice Day officially received its name in America in 1926 through a Congressional resolution. It became a national holiday later by similar Congressional action.

If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was the war to end all wars, November 11 might still be called Armistice Day, but shortly after the holiday was proclaimed, World War II broke out in Europe and shattered the dream. Sixteen and a half million Americans took part and 6,400 died. The families and friends of these dead longed for a way to honor their memory. Thus it was changed to Veterans Day to honor the veterans of all wars.

Veterans Golden Age Games

The Veterans Golden Age Games are the largest veterans-only sporting event in the world. It has been supported since 1986.
Veterans Remembrance Month (November)

November begins the season of remembering and giving thanks for all of the freedoms, rights, and privileges we enjoy as citizens of this great nation. Many of these freedoms, rights, and privileges are being enjoyed because of the sacrifices made by our veterans of military service.

It is because of their sacrifices, that the order of Elks recognizes the month of November as Veterans Remembrance Month. We as American citizens owe a never ending debt of gratitude to every veteran who served to defend and preserve our way of life.

In 1946 the order pledged, “So long as there are veterans in our hospitals, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.” We never have and we never will.

Over the last seven years the VA healthcare system has changed drastically. There is no longer a readymade constituency warehoused at VA Medical Centers. Because of downsizing and consolidating of VA Medical Centers and the opening of outpatient clinics as well as other volunteer organizations, the Elks have been forced to reassess their mission of service.

With veterans being dispersed, we must now seek out these individuals and try to meet their needs whether it be in nursing homes, private homes, domiciliary, assisted care living facilities, and the homeless veterans wandering our streets.

To continue meeting this challenge and continue our legacy of Elks “Serving our Nation’s Veterans,” the delegates at the 2001 annual convention in Philadelphia unanimously voted on July 10, 2001 to change our slogan.

Our pledge now reads, “So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.”

By moving the words “in our hospitals,” we have become more inclusive in our outreach to these deserving American patriots. Our mission is still the same, to enhance the level of comfort of those who need our help and to brighten their days.

November 11, Veterans Day, is the day our entire nation pays tribute to our veterans, the men and women of our armed forces who have given so much for us. Every Elk is encouraged to participate in the Adopt a Veteran program and to visit veterans’ hospitals and nursing homes on a regular basis. To see a veteran smile, laugh, and enjoy another’s company on an otherwise lonely day must be experienced to truly understand the feeling of pride and warmth one receives.

Veterans’ Services Committee

The purpose of the Veterans’ Services Committee is to be certain that as long as there is a veteran, the Elks shall never forget him or her. This should be accomplished by raising funds to assist each of the veterans’ hospitals in Florida and by securing appropriate donations of time, talent, and useful articles so as to make the hospitalized veterans’ lot a better one.

In times of war and international conflict the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has made considerable contributions to the nation’s armed forces. The order considers its work done to aid in defense of the nation as one of its proudest and most lasting achievements.

A toll free number to assist veterans and their dependents and questions about life insurance: 800-422-8079
The American Legion insurance staff can also help with any insurance claims:
American Legion c/o VA Center
P.O. Box 13399
Wissahickon Road and Manheim Street
Philadelphia, PA 19101
(612) 725-3178

Elks Support of National Veterans Administration:
Supports veterans at the VA Hospitals
National Rehabilitation Programs and Special Events
Veterans Golden Age Games
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
Veterans Student Volunteer Service Program

Student volunteers are an important part of the VA medical centers’ treatment team. The students receive valuable experience and training which will benefit them in applying for college and for jobs. Qualified student volunteers have the opportunity to compete for the prestigious James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award which provides scholarships to students who volunteer at VA medical centers. Student volunteers are liaisons with their communities and provide a valuable element of caring in the medical centers.

They can add an extra dimension of kindness, the human touch, to VA and the veterans’ VA services. As leaders of tomorrow, they are accepting the challenge and opportunity to help make the world a better place.

The most important part of being a volunteer is the personal attention, care, and warmth that add so much to the comfort and well-being of the patients who look forward to seeing them each week.

A wide variety of assignments are available. Volunteers are selected according to the needs of the medical center, assignment preference, and skills. Training is provided through the voluntary service office and the supervisory of the department to which they are assigned. Orientation is conducted to acquaint them with services available at the medical center where they serve.

The VA voluntary service program offers excellent opportunities for:
- Exploring health care career opportunities
- Gaining experience in a health care environment
- Learning new skills
- Making new friends
- Qualifying to apply for college scholarships through the James H. Parke Award

It is an opportunity for these volunteers to say thank you to a special group of men and women who are cared for each day in VA medical centers nationwide.

Among the many opportunities and specialties open to student volunteers are:
- Patient Admissions
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Extended Care
- Laboratory Medicine
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Outpatient Therapy
- Patient Escort
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Recreation Therapy
- Research
- Social Work
- Information Technology
- and many others

Information is available at local VA medical centers or through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Voluntary Service Office, (10C2), Washington, D. C. 20420.

July 2005
Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award

Starting in 1994, the Grand Lodge National Veterans Service Commission began conducting the Veteran Volunteer of the Year contest. There are two awards per year for each state association, one Elk and one spouse of an Elk. Nominations must be made in a narrative form and 300 words or less. Previous winners are not eligible. List the nominee’s name plus Lodge name and number in the upper left hand corner of the paper. Entries must be submitted to your State Veterans’ Services Chairman who will work with the State President and their committee to pick the deserving winners.

Criteria for the Veteran Volunteer of the Year

1. Work with hospitalized veterans
2. Work with veterans at outpatient clinics
3. Work with veterans in nursing homes
4. Work with homeless veterans
5. Work with veterans’ functions and veterans’ groups within the community
6. Host veterans’ functions in the Lodge Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veterans Day observances; Thanksgiving; Christmas party; etc.
7. Host veterans’ functions outside the Lodge (fishing trips, day at the races, baseball games, etc.)
8. Visit veterans confined to their families
9. Adopt a Veteran

Those eligible for the award are Elks and their spouses with emphasis on VAVS Representatives; Deputy Representatives; members who visit the VA medical centers, nursing homes, etc.; or members work at Lodge veterans’ functions either within or outside the Lodge.

Winners will be presented plaques, watches, and pins at state meetings. Their names will be prominently displayed in the Elks National Veterans Service Commission booth during the next year’s national convention. Entries must be received by the State Veterans’ Services Chairman before January 31 so that the committee will have time to judge the applications, select the winners, and send them to the commission.

Deadline for winners in the Elks National Veterans Service Commission office is February 28.

2007 Male Volunteer of the Year Jim Lamb, PER Sarasota South Lodge 2495
2007 Female Volunteer of the Year Phyllis “Scotti” McAllister Fort Pierce Lodge 1520

Vice President at Large, Florida State Elks Association

The Vice President at Large (VPAL) under the direction of the President assists in the promotion and implementation of the program of the association amongst the Lodges. Upon request of the President, the VPAL, in concert with the Secretary, coordinates the activities of the state chairpersons with the district chairpersons, and the appropriate officers and committees of the Lodges.

At the direction of the President, the VPAL serves as a liaison officer between the President and the District Vice Presidents and is available for special assignment for visitations, addresses, and related duties.

The VPAL is expected to attend meetings of the Florida State Elks Association Board of Directors and the boards of each corporation controlled by the association. The attendance at these meetings serves to familiarize the VPAL with the functions of those various organizations.

Viera Lodge 2817

“New Millennium Lodge”
Instituted: October 21, 2000
Year 2007 Membership: 253
Year 2008 Membership: 319
Year 2009 Membership: 332
Institution ceremonies were held at Airport Hilton, 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL at 3:30 p.m. Chairman of the Organizing Committee was Michael Phillips, PDD who was later State President.

The Organizing Committee consisted of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Michael Phillips, PDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairman</td>
<td>Paul Bonville, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary/Treasurer</td>
<td>Bob Coker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committeeman</td>
<td>Ron Di Prato, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committeeman</td>
<td>John Carroll, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committeeman</td>
<td>Mo Schill, PER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present at the installation ceremonies were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past Grand Exalted Ruler</td>
<td>Robert Grafton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State President</td>
<td>Bill Wellbaum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPAL</td>
<td>Mike Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 PSPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following Grand Lodge officers conducted the ceremony of institution of the Lodge:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Exalted Ruler</td>
<td>Mike Phillips, PDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Leading Knight</td>
<td>Merle Sebald, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Loyal Knight</td>
<td>Winston Needham, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Lecturing Knight</td>
<td>Ben Brown, Jr. PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Secretary</td>
<td>Anthony DeLuca, Jr., PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Treasurer</td>
<td>Pete Naranjo, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Esquire</td>
<td>Jim Solana, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Chaplain</td>
<td>Tom Elmore, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Trustee</td>
<td>George Dominianni, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Tiler</td>
<td>Dave Luikart, Sr., PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Inner Guard</td>
<td>Dave Vergason, PSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initiation of candidates was conducted by Melbourne 1744 1999-2000 district ritual champions. They were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exalted Ruler</td>
<td>Howard Drexler, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Knight</td>
<td>Lyman Boyd, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal Knight</td>
<td>Judy Oyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing Knight</td>
<td>Gordon Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esquire</td>
<td>George Evelyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>Ken Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Guard</td>
<td>Eugene Abt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiler</td>
<td>Madison Scherrer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following officers were installed for Viera Lodge 2817:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exalted Ruler</td>
<td>Paul Bonville, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Knight</td>
<td>Bob Coker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal Knight</td>
<td>Larry Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing Knight</td>
<td>Curt Barger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Bill Orblych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Chuck Whigham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiler</td>
<td>Ginny Everett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Year Trustee</td>
<td>Ron DiPrato, PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year Trustee</td>
<td>Felix Liberti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Year Trustee</td>
<td>Joe Armao</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following installed the officers of Viera Lodge 2817:

- **Exalted Ruler**: Edward R. Christensen, DDGER, Cocoa Beach 2387
- **Leading Knight**: Bart Campbell, PDD, Sebastian 2714
- **Loyal Knight**: Harvey Holmgren, PDD, Sebastian 2714
- **Lecturing Knight**: Les L. Lisenbarth, PDD, Cocoa Beach 2387
- **Esquire**: Don Coble, PDD, Fort Pierce 1520
- **Chaplain**: William H. Fricke, PDD, Melbourne 1744
- **Trustee**: Paul Testa, PDD, Fort Pierce 1520
- **Secretary/Treasurer**: George T. Wolfe, PDD, Melbourne 1744
- **Inner Guard**: Albert Youdboulis, PDD, Vero Beach 1774
- **Tiler**: Lawrence W. Cline, PDD, Cocoa 1532

**Virtual Home Page**

A Virtual Home Page (VHP) is a fast, simple, and inexpensive way to put the Lodge on the Internet. No special expertise is required. Simply submit a few simple online forms and the Lodge can have an effective presence on the World Wide Web. Each Virtual Home Page includes space for:

- **Lodge Facilities**
  You can post your lounge, restaurant, RV hookups, golf course, etc. on the Virtual Home Page. Traveling Elks can find the services they need when they are on the road.

- **Lodge News**
  You can post your newsletter on the internet. With a Virtual Home Page you can publish your news immediately, no more waiting for printers or the U. S. Post Office. Your news will be available to all of Elkdom, not just those on your mailing list.

- **Lodge People**
  Publish your Lodge directory online. Each directory listing can include a name, spouse, current office, past offices, address, telephone number, and e-mail address if wanted.

- **Lodge Calendar**
  Lodge events can be posted in a familiar calendar format with a hot-linked detail screen where you can include a full description of the event, contact information, etc.

Virtual Home Pages can be updated by the Lodge Secretary or an authorized Cyber Assistant. To register as a Cyber Assistant, you'll need to submit a letter of authorization on Lodge letterhead signed by the Exalted Ruler or Lodge Secretary. You’ll also need to submit a $25 access fee for the current Lodge year. Checks are sent to:

BPO Elks Internet Department  
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue  
Chicago, IL  60614

A Virtual Home Page may not be as flexible as a regular home page but it’s much easier to create and maintain. Although you cannot control the look and feel of the site, you will be able to post information quickly and without any sort of programming expertise. If you can browse the internet, you’re qualified to create a Virtual Home Page. All you have to do is submit the address of the offsite home page and a link will appear automatically on every one of your Virtual Home Pages. The Virtual Home Page exists automatically for every Lodge. To update your page, select the Secretary or Cyber Assistant option from the blue online resource menu bar at the bottom of the Elks Home Page. If you’re a Cyber Assistant, you’ll be taken directly to the local Lodge control panel where you can edit your Virtual Home Page. If you’re a Secretary, you’ll be taken to the Secretaries resource area where you’ll find a link to the control panel.

(Source: B. P. O. Elks Online)
Visitations, Lodge (District Deputy & District Vice President)

As the District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler and District Vice President make their official visits to each Lodge within their jurisdiction, the various Lodges within that district attend those official visits.

These visitations bring to the Lodges of each district the message from the Grand Exalted Ruler and the State Association President. Additionally, they inform the Lodges of Grand Lodge and State Association programs and objectives.

During the official visitation of the District Deputy, inspections are made relative to the overall strength and condition of the Lodges, whether they are complying with the statutory rules and regulations, that they are following sound accounting practices and recordkeeping, if they are supporting the programs of Grand Lodge, the maintenance of the physical facility, and judging the rendition of the initiatory ritual and opening and closing.

A benefit to the members in attending these various Lodge visits is that they learn more about the Grand Lodge programs and the State Association programs, get to meet other members, learn how other Lodges function, and see the ritual as performed in Lodges that can be an example of proper rendition.

Visiting Committee

The Visiting Committee shall visit members of the Lodge or other members of the order reported to be ill and report at the first meeting after making a visitation.

(Laws of Order, Section 13.160)

Vivian, Charles Algernon Sidney

Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian is the founder of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

Exeter, Devonshire, England was made famous for the number of sieges which it sustained as a chief town in southwest England. On October 22, 1842 it became known for another event, the birth of Charlie Richardson, the youngest son of an Anglican Church clergyman. His father died when Vivian was still in his teens. He then set out on his own. Drawn to London, he frequented various music halls of that city, possessed a good voice, and a natural instinct for mimicry. He had a natural desire and love for the stage and theater. His sense of the humorous made it easy for him to drop into comedy roles.

He had a zest for life and a warm personality which endowed it with an attractive and enduring attribute, good fellowship, as distinguishing an Elks tradition as their warmhearted and generous philanthropy. He was charming, witty, gay, and lighthearted.

While still in London, he attended a lecture by Charles Dickens, the novelist, on the “Benevolent and Provident” on February 14, 1866. Vivian was so moved that he soon joined the fraternal organization in London known as the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, a royal fraternity that had a long and illustrious history with kings and queens upon its rosters. The occult mysteries of that order, with its wealth of allegory and archaic symbolism, seemed to fascinate him and he became an ardent and enthusiastic buff. It had a direct influence on his later forming of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

There was a place called the Old Tavern at the foot of Westminster Bridge in London. In the 1850s and 1860s the theatrical profession held informal gatherings every Sunday at the Old Town Tavern. They gathered for companionship and discussed various topics pertaining to their vocation, the latest play, gossip, and hopes and aspirations and prospects for the next season. It was during this time that Vivian experienced the cork trick. They eventually and appropriately became known as the Jolly Corks. Vivian brought this to America.

Charlie Richardson was later better known for his stage name, Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian.

Growing up in England, Vivian developed a talent for comedy which he combined with a fine light baritone voice and dance routine. Entertaining local residents, friends, and family, his abilities led naturally to his appearance in various London music halls as a comic singer and dancer. He had a charming wit and vibrant and warm personality but also an adventurous spirit and seemed to live for each day giving little thought to the next.

By 1867 the young performer had become well-known and met several United States performers who were touring the music halls of London. These performers told Vivian of the rapidly expanding opportunities in America, particularly those in American entertainment.
The great Civil War in America had ended with the defeat of the Confederacy less than two years before. It left a nation binding up its wounds and an expanding industrialized country. The great general, Ulysses S. Grant, was running for the Presidency on the Republican ticket, an election he won in 1868.

America was conquering the last frontier, expanding into the Indian Territory, the plains of Montana, Oregon country, and the Pacific Northwest, from the Dakotas to Texas.

The U. S. Congress had authorized a transcontinental railroad in 1862 and they subsequently issued a charter to the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad to build that system. The Union Pacific was to build westward and the Central Pacific was to build eastward from Sacramento, CA.

These stories stirred Vivian’s adventurous spirit and his quest for fortune, so in November of 1867 he boarded a commercial trading vessel out of Southhampton bound for New York. He left behind his England, itself going through great changes. The Reform Act of 1867 had been passed granting the vote to virtually every adult male resident in a borough. From that time on elections in England gradually became a judgment on what the government of the day had accomplished and an assessment of the promises of the future made by the two parties. He left at a time when the rivalry of William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli were dominating British politics for many years. He chose a time when both countries, England and America, were going through changes.

It was a long and stormy voyage over rough seas and he endured bitter cold November winds that raked across its decks. Finally, on Friday, November 15, 1867, Vivian stepped ashore in his new land of opportunity. Wrapping a scarf around his neck in an effort to find some degree of comfort from the chilly air, he surveyed the scene. The realization came to him that at age 25 he was in a strange land, alone, and faced with the problem of food, lodging, and employment.

While still in this thought, a small, grimy faced boy approached him and thrust into his palm a handbill advertising John Ireland’s Star Hotel and Chop House. Clearing customs, Vivian headed out into a strange city quite uncertain as to what lay ahead. As much as anything because he knew nowhere to go or no person to make some contact with, he began his search for Ireland’s Chop House. He was hungry and had not had a good meal since leaving Southhampton, not that the sea voyage created any appetite while at sea. Perhaps he could find a good steak, a cool beer, maybe even a night’s lodging and companionship. Vivian was not a loner; he enjoyed comradeship and storytelling over a few good drinks.

Stopping for directions, he was amused at the strange dialect of these Americans even though he had heard it in his contacts with U. S. touring groups performing in London. Eventually, he found his way up to 5 Lispenard Street and the brightly lit Star Hotel. As he approached the Chop House, he could hear voices from inside. Pushing through the door, he was immediately reminded of his favorite pub back in England. There were several round tables about the room which seemed fully occupied with each table engaged in serious, gay conversation and at times loud. The large planked board floors were covered with sawdust. Along one wall was a large mahogany bar extending its entire length. There was a brass foot rail and large mirror along the entire back side of the bar.

Finally finding some warmth from weeks of chilling cold, he removed his scarf and eased his way up to the bar. Looking much like a sailor just off a boat with his pea jacket, he leaned against the bar resting one foot on the brass rail, removed his derby, and scanned the patrons about the room. It was obviously a place where people met regularly, relaxing in friendly conversation while enjoying good food and ale.

Ireland’s Chop House and Hotel was known as a free and easy, a thoroughly respectable institution quite popular at the time. The Chop House specialized in steaks, chops, rarebits, and ale. Customers were entertained while they enjoyed their meals by paid singers, dancers, and other acts, although they were often given performances by volunteers, many of whom were New York performers who frequented Ireland’s. This type of entertainment was a forerunner of the later day cabarets.

Surveying the crowd his eyes rested on a mustachioed piano player who at the present time was engaged in a serious conversation with a gentleman with large thick brows who periodically removed his watch from the pocket of his flowery vest pointing to the time.

Approached by a friendly bartender, Vivian ordered a schooner of ale which he had gone so long without and began to sip at it before the foam had settled. Among his concerns at the moment was how he would be able to stretch his meager funds until he had meaningful income.

Feeling a movement at his elbow, he was interrupted in his thoughts. Turning he found the bushy eyebrowed man who had been engaged in conversation with the piano player. With an unpleasant scowl he addressed the bartender, “Dere’ll be a mountain of ice in Hades ‘fore I iver let that low life warbler, Billy Martin, talk me inta lettin’ him sing on Friday evenin’! Now I’m stuck widda no show’n a full house gittin’ ready ta walk!”

Vivian smiled as he became amused with the man’s irritation. This smile did not escape the big man’s notice and he turned to Vivian and in an ominous tone said, “And jist what are ya findin’ so funny, little man?”
On the spot, Vivian had to use his best known charm and manner to defuse what could have been a serious encounter in his first few hours in America. Vivian was known for his likable personality and after some smooth talking was able to defuse the encounter. The big man turned out to be Big John Ireland, a man with obvious quick temper, and owner of the establishment. Vivian however grasped at the opportunity before him and after a conversation with Ireland and Dick Steirly, the piano player, convinced Ireland that they might be able to come up with a mutually beneficial arrangement.

(See Steirly, Richard)

Barely a few hours in America, Vivian made his debut. His mirthful smile, an almost endless repertoire of new songs, and his rich baritone voice captured the audience at the Star that night as they responded with enthusiastic applause to his rendition of “Jimmy Riddle, Who Played upon the Fiddle” and “Who Stole the Donkey?” No longer was he in a new land with no people to call his friends. No longer would he have to worry about how to make his meager funds last. His personality had captured the audience; his charm would continue to gain his acceptance wherever he went.

Robert Butler, Manager of the American Theater, caught Vivian’s performance and the thunderous enthusiasm that followed. Recognizing a winning entertainer, Butler signed the young Vivian for a three-week run at his theater at a sum of $50 per week. This was later extended for an additional six weeks.

New York papers described his first night’s appearance:

Charles Vivian, a comic singer from the principal music halls of London, England, made his American debut at Butler’s American Theater on the 18th instant. He possesses one very necessary attribute of a comic singer . . . that is, he speaks with singular distinctness and makes himself heard in the most remote parts of the hall. He is practical, and, knowing precisely what his audiences require, he gives it to them to their hearts content. He not only knows how to sing a song but seems determined to rely upon songs the words of which shall convey some kind of sense, and the music shall possess some distinctive character.

Gaining himself a friend in the piano player, Richard Steirly, who turned out to be of English descent also, the latter arranged lodging for Vivian at Mrs. Arnold Geisman’s boarding house located at 188 Elm Street, today known as Lafayette Street in the block between Broome and Springs Streets. Steirly even guaranteed his first week’s rent because he had little money and no possessions. W. L. Bowron, a tenant at Geisman’s, loaned Vivian a suit of clothes for his first stage appearance. Geisman’s was a popular boarding house for theatrical people, musicians, and singers, so Vivian felt quite at home.

In 1939 the council of the City of New York passed the following resolution: “Be it resolved that the two blocks remaining on Elm Street be known as Elk Street to pay tribute to the famous Order of Elks which was founded on that street in the year 1867. (Actually it was the Jolly Corks that were founded at this address in 1867.) While at Geisman’s Vivian proved to be a magnet to other actors and entertainers. It became quite common for them to meet on Sundays in happy social sessions in the attic of Mrs. Geisman’s Boarding House.

Vivian had a taste for fun and good company but the strict blue laws of New York forced public establishments that were suitable for gatherings to be closed on Sundays. This was a day when those in the theatrical business were free to relax. New York was a very dry town.

Vivian was quite unhappy with this restriction and the fact that it caused Sunday to be a day of extreme tedium. Gathering his new American friends about him, they arranged to meet at the boarding house on Sunday evenings for supper and whatever other diversions came up. The affairs grew in attendance and it became apparent that they would need some planning and preparation to guarantee that food and beverage would be on hand. A stock of beer was brought in the night before to circumvent the blue laws.

They also found the need for a loose organization to make sure that stocks were on hand and whatever else needed attention. The group called themselves the Jolly Corks, a name derived from a trick that Vivian introduced to uninitiated persons.

(See Jolly Cork Trick)

As the sessions grew, Mrs. Geisman began to receive complaints of noise from other tenants of her boarding house and so she informed the group that they would have to cease their meetings. Considering this only a minor setback, the Corks searched out another meeting place and found an unused storage loft over Paul Summers’ saloon on Delancy Street and the group was able to resume their social activities.

After a short period at Summers’ saloon, they met one night enjoying dinner at Mother Geisman’s and discussing what to name their new organization. Tragedy hit. Summers entered bringing the news that a fire had
erupted in the building next door to the saloon and severely damaged their upper floor meeting room. Now the Jolly Corks were homeless again. Summers assured them that wherever they were able to find a new meeting place, he would continue to supply their beer.

Gloom now settled over the group, which the day before had been enthusiastically discussing a new name for their organization around Mrs. Geisman’s dinner table. Sometimes disaster brings people closer, creates stronger ties with one another, and focuses them with greater determination on the intended objective and to refuse to accept defeat and to muster their abilities to solve the problem at hand. Events began to unfold that would keep them on their intended path.

Mother Geisman, in spite of her asking the Jolly Corks to refrain from loud gatherings, and eventually holding meetings elsewhere, was always a supporter of the group. She loved them and they loved her. Her boarders were more like family and Mrs. Geisman was like a mother to them. The gatherings around the dinner table were like family dinners. She pined for their success, both in their careers and in the existence of the Jolly Corks and ultimately the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks.

Entering the room where gloom had settled to replace the enthusiastic discussion of what to name their new organization, Mother Geisman learned of the disastrous fire. In her usual cheery voice she told them, “never mind my boys, you can use the garret, if you don’t bring those hams home and keep us all awake. And listen! If you are all good boys, I will let you invite the Corks to our Christmas lunch, and by golly, as many as you like! As you probably know, Christmas is my birthday, and you can help me celebrate it.”

The fire at Phil Summers’ place had continued to pose a problem for their meetings. The boarding house was providing very limited space and the group was growing. Talk now ensued of using their fine money to rent a place. Prior to this their meeting places had been donated to them. The need for action was discussed at the dinner table and in the attic of the boarding house. Thompson and Riggs were neglecting their businesses while engaged in the problems of organizing. Although most of them were so wrapped up in the effort neglecting other business and their performances, Vivian and Steirly were not distracted. They were of such a happy-go-lucky disposition that nothing ever seemed to bother them no matter how important it might be.

One night around midnight, Billie Carleton, Jim Glenn, and Harry Bosworth burst into the room and loudly announced that through the kindness of Phil Summers and Fritz Schumann, they had a chance to secure Military Hall, located at 193 Bowery, for at least one meeting. Bedlam ensued and Mrs. Geisman brought out the beer saying, “Drink my boys and I drink with you for your good luck!” A final round was poured and a toast was given to Summers and Schumann with a final one given “To our absent brothers!”

The next meeting, presided over by Charles A. Vivian, was held at Military Hall with a capacity attendance. Five members of the London Theater Orchestra were engaged for the evening and together with the Geisman’s, Henry and Arnold, they supplied an evening of music. A cheer of approval went up for the Corks and William Carleton presented Charles Vivian with a gavel. Carleton was appointed secretary and ordered to put the first fifty cents in the treasury. A beer committee of ten was appointed and each one fined a dime before they assumed their new position. Vivian as chairman used his new gavel to maintain order.

Returning from a visit to the sick “Big John” Robinson, Hugh Eagan entered with Father Ducey who had accompanied him. The group requested a few words from the Reverend Ducey. Ducey praised them for the charitable work they had done for the needy, poor, and crippled children and volunteered his services anytime they were needed by the group. That of course (any excuse seemed appropriate) called for a rousing cheer of thanks and a toast for the Reverend Ducey.
George McDonald eventually rose to make some remarks and a historical motion. He said:

“Mister Chairman, and my good fellow Corks . . . never before in my recollection has so much real fellowship among our profession been demonstrated. In a practical manner we have been brought together, and in such willingness we have given material aid to each other. This importance has no doubt occupied your minds as it has mine, and to delay the instrument for prolonging the good principles fostered by us would be cruel, to say the least.

“Now, my brother professionals, in order to accomplish the desired end I do propose and move that the good brother chairman Charles Algernon Vivian appoint a committee consisting of seven or more to consider and decide upon a proper name together with suitable rules of order, substance of a workable ritual, and a constitution for the permanent organization.

“And be it understood, that findings shall include the principles of Benevolence, Charity, Protection, and Brotherly Love as exemplified by this group of fun-loving Corks.”

With a second by Thompson, the above motion passed with a resounding cheer.

Vivian appointed a committee consisting of George F. McDonald, Chairman; William Sheppard; Richard Steirly; Charles A. Vivian; Edgar N. Platt; and Thomas Riggs. Vivian instructed the committee to formulate rules and regulations for its government and prepare a suitable ritual as well as a new name. The names of the members of this committee would appear on the first Constitution. Five hundred copies of the Constitution and Rules were printed and used for a few years. Later this same committee with the addition of George M. Thompson continued their work in putting together the ritual. Evidence points to the actual work of the committee being performed by George W. Thompson, Thomas G. Riggs, and William and Lloyd Brown.

With the instructions received from Vivian, the committee became focused on the adoption of an organization with a more serious policy than mere conviviality. It was a desire for companionship that had brought these men together originally, and it was that same intimacy that gave them the impetus to form a fraternal organization. In addition to good fellowship, though, they needed an enduring organization that would serve a more noble purpose of aiding those in need. The seeds for one of America’s greatest fraternities were about to be planted.

William Carleton took minutes of this organizational meeting. However, they were lost when Edgar Platt took them home to his boarding house. Members of the Doodworth Band also resided at the boarding house and when they suddenly moved, they took Platt’s trunk and the minutes to this session, neither to be found again.
Finding a Name

One of the main issues remained, that of a new name. Of course as a result of Vivian’s familiarity with the English Order of Buffaloes, he still leaned to the name Buffalo. The English order had been named after the African buffalo, a name that Americans popularly called their North American bison. Vandemark felt that as they made their living in America they should not attempt to borrow or purloin the means of their desired purpose from any foreign source.

The elk’s head at the museum continued to interest the group still coming up with ideas for the name of their organization. It was impressive and they decided that it deserved doing a little research at the institute. Their name was not to be taken lightly. It must fit the principles of their new organization.

For three weeks severe snow and sleet storms crippled the city. The attic of Mother Geisman’s became the headquarters of the committee as the theater district was likewise crippled. Grattam Riggs continued to be very enthusiastic regarding the Elk and was constantly reminding his companions that he was born on Elk Street in Buffalo and advocated that the name of the organization should be the Elks. Riggs felt that the elk seemed to defend the qualities they were looking for, admirable qualities that the members could emulate as members of a benevolent fraternity.

Facing the blinding snowstorms, Bowron, Thompson, McDonald, and Fulgora (who Myers called a pest) visited the library. They came upon Goldsmith’s *Animated Nature*, where they found extensive space on the buffalo and the elk. Goldsmith was considered the world’s authority as a historian on animal life.

Goldsmith’s description of the elk seemed to fit all that the committee was looking for. Goldsmith wrote that without rival an elk was “keen of perception,” “timorous of doing wrong,” “protective for the helpless,” and “fierce in battle for the young.” This description so impressed Riggs that he could see no other animal as representative of the order.

T. R. Fehrenbach stated in his *Elkdom U.S.A.*:

> Being fast and avoiding evil, the elk also avoided aggressive combat. The elk attacked no other species and destroyed nothing . . . but it would fight valiantly in defense of its own life and those of its females and young. The idea of an animal that lived in peace but would fight to defend its rights and to protect the weak and helpless appealed strongly to the Corks. The elk with its spreading antlers was not only a beautiful animal, but it seemed to symbolize the ideas and values these men most wanted to stand for and perpetuate.

By now it was 3 p.m., they were hungry, and in the continuing driving storm that was increasing in intensity they headed back to the boarding house. Myers described their appearance on making it home as deplorable and dinner was delayed for them to get into dry clothes. After the usual great meal placed on the table by Mrs. Geisman, the committee reported on their findings at the library.

Vivian and his close friends continued to favor the Buffaloes, mainly because of the influence of Vivian, who they still admired.

Myers said that the arrival of Charles Vivian and the introduction of the Cork trick not only opened a haven of feast and refreshments but resulted in an undenied fellowship that had not existed before. Vivian, Myers wrote, “was the object of their indescribable admiration. He was gifted with rare conviviality, full of humorous stories, flowing in mirth. Each new victim added more refreshment. To all these admirers he was wont to extol the virtues and pleasures of the ‘Buffaloes’ of his native country and naturally when that subject was mentioned they considered naught else.

> “Most of all who came with misgivings left with faces that plainly evidenced a conviction of new and brighter future for the performer, both socially and beneficial.”

Other names were considered. The bear was thought to be a rather savage and surly animal, beavers were an industrious animal but also known as a destructive pest, foxes seemed an even greater pest, and the moose was considered a magnificent animal but lacked the sheer grace and beauty of the North American elk.

Meeting on February 16, 1868, the committee recommended that the Jolly Corks be merged into a benevolent and protective order. Vivian supported by most of his friends still favored the Buffaloes. The first ballot as to whether to merge as Buffaloes or Elks was a tie vote, but on the second ballot the Elks passed by one vote, 8-7, when William Bowron changed his vote to break the tie.
The seven who voted for the buffalo were:

   Charles Vivian  
   Richard R. Steirly  
   M. G. Ash  
   Henry Vandemark  
   Harry Langhorne  
   E. W. Pratt  
   Harry Bosworth

The eight voting for the elk were:

   George F. McDonald  
   George W. Thompson  
   Thomas G. Riggs  
   William Carleton  
   William Sheppard  
   George Guy  
   Hugh Dougherty  
   William L. Bowron

Later Achievements

In the fall of 1869, Vivian went to California where he played under the management of Sheridan Corlyn and later with Thomas McGuire. He became a great favorite there, remaining on the coast until the middle of 1876 when, on June 9, he married Miss Imogene Holbrook who was doing dramatic recitals there. Vivian and his wife then started east, playing Eureka, Nevada, Salt Lake City, and Ogden. They then went up to Helena, Virginia City, and Butte, MT. Afterwards they moved on to Bismarck and Fargo and then up to Winnipeg. From there they went to St. Paul and Minneapolis and on down to Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. They spent the season of 1877-1878 in New York City.

Wherever Vivian went, in most of the larger cities and with road companies, he achieved popularity and success. One such company with which he was playing the admiral in *Pinafore* and the judge in *Trial by Jury* was stranded in Denver. Following this, he and Imogene formed a small company of their own and played through the New England towns. It did not prove a financial success and the tour was abandoned.

They returned to New York City where he was engaged by James Duff to play the admiral in *Pinafore*, which had its premier in Chicago at McVickers Theater in 1879. From Chicago they went to St. Louis and Ben De Bar’s Opera House where he played until the season closed. After a summer engagement at Uhrig’s Cave in St. Louis, he signed with another opera company playing in some of the same locations. They went west playing in Kansas City, Topeka, Lawrence, and Leavenworth, KS and then on to Denver. Here they were stranded. The rest of the company returned to New York and Vivian sent on by stage to Leadville.

They fixed up the Amphitheater in Leadville, CO, center of a gold mining boom, and offered a repertoire of legitimate productions. In Mrs. Vivian’s biography of her husband, she wrote that they opened with *Oliver Twist* but were soon forced to close for lack of patronage from the rugged character in Leadville.

Vivian Dies

Shortly after they closed the Amphitheater in Leadville, Vivian was stricken with pneumonia and on March 20, 1880, at the age of 34, he died in his rooming house at 110 East Second Street in Leadville. Funeral services were held at Tabor’s Opera House and, owing to his popularity, it was very largely attended. Rev. T. J. Mackay conducted the services on the stage of the opera house and the entire town turned out. Vivian was so well loved and revered that thousands were unable to get inside the theater but followed the funeral procession to the cemetery. Every band in town led the mourners to the gravesite playing with muffled drums. Afterward they struck up Vivian’s favorite tune, “Ten Thousand Miles Away.”

In those days no hearses were used and so those attending the funeral procession to the cemetery did so in buggies, heavy wagons, or any kind of vehicle available. The only one on horseback was Bill Langdon who had supervised the whole affair as a member of the Knights of Pythias.
He was buried in Leadville while Bill Langdon supervised the original interment there. Langdon got up a benefit for Imogene from which was realized over $600. Some conflicting sources say that the Forty Niners of which Vivian was a member from a Frisco Camp had charge of the funeral and not the Knights of Pythias. The casket cost about $150, not $600 as had previously been stated.

On March 17, 1889, the Honorable W. C. Van Derlip, Chairman of the Board of Grand Trustees, called attention to the Boston Lodge that Vivian’s grave was in neglected condition and rudely marked by a wooden slab on which his name had been scratched with a nail. That same year, under the auspices of Boston Lodge 10, his remains were interred in Mt. Hope Cemetery, in Boston, MA. His casket cost $150. A suitable monument was erected in his memory.

A drama critic for the *Chicago Times* delivered a eulogy for Vivian: “No man in the profession had so wide a circle of admiring and warmly attached friends among the younger men of this city . . . . He was a storyteller without equal, a wit, and a songster. His fund of anecdote was rich and inexhaustible as his power of repartee was strong . . . at once a brilliant humorist, a man of feeling, a scholar, and a wit. With Vivian’s last breath went out a life that should have been illustrious.”

A member of the Denver Lodge and W. F. Bechel of Omaha Lodge helped in moving the remains of Mrs. Vivian, who died in 1931. She received a pension from the order that her husband had founded.

Revolt to Expel Vivian from the Order

On June 4, 1868, a revolt had been gathering in the wings. While out of town performing at Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Vivian, even though he was Right Honorable Primo of the First Degree, was removed from their first ball, a method used for raising money for the treasury. Vivian was left entirely off the program. When Vivian returned to New York for the benefit he found that he had been ignored and even worse was that he had been left out of the entertainment program. He became quite angry. Most of his friends felt the same way. A storm was brewing.

At the next regular session on June 14 there was an unseemly altercation. A motion was made to expel Charles Vivian from the meeting. There were violent objections and the session broke up with no action. Vivian was hurt when he left that night and he never again sought entry into an Elks Lodge.

The feud continued at the next session. Vivian was not present but Steirly, Kent, Bosworth, and other of his close friends were refused entry at the Lodge room door. They were told that they could not enter unless they could give the password of the day, but none of them knew it. It had changed secretly by the dominant group only to those members who were against Vivian.

Kent demanded an explanation from McDonald who told him that in the future, “none but professionals” would be permitted to enter the order. Some of the brothers were expelled with Vivian.

Vivian never claimed to be an Elk and had never taken the degrees of the order but he was one of the organizers. He objected to the newfound virtues of the group he had helped to create, and the feud ensued. Four months later Vivian and other members of the faction were expelled from the order, losers in a struggle to determine its purpose.

**Vivian, An Elk Myth**

By Caryl Coleman, PER of New Rochelle Lodge 756 and Past District Deputy of New York Southeast

This is a myth believed by Coleman. However, earlier research has Elkdom agreeing that Vivian was the founder of Elkdom and very popular among that circle. To me it’s a myth which one finds difficult to give any credence to when all evidence points to the accepted belief to the contrary. I include here for your own examination. (Editor - Lowell Tyler)

It is conceded the world over that every thinking man is not merely interested in all that relates to his fellow man, but also, as a rule, he is especially interested largely to the exclusion of all else, in some one line of thought or specified human endeavor or specific problem. In other words, every intelligent man has a hobby. The writer of this article is no exception to the rule, as in very truth history and biography have always, from his earliest youth, been to him of far greater importance than any other subjects of study. It is not surprising, therefore, that upon his joining the order of Elks that his attention was particularly directed to its history and the biographies of its founders.
After his initiation and upon becoming acquainted with the historical traditions of the order, his mind was filled with wonder that so much of intrinsic worth could have come out of so slight a beginning, that such an aimless, haphazard convivial club as the Jolly Corks could have possibly given birth to the organization, one destined to bring sunshine into the lives of hundreds of men, proving to them a veritable elixir of a joyous life. As time went on and becoming more and more familiar with the daily life of earnest Elks and its far-reaching happy results, his wonder increased, but with the wonder came doubt, and finally this distrustfulness ended in a total misbelief in the truthfulness of the current history. This skepticism was further strengthened by a searchful inquiry among the older members of the order as to the origin of some of the traditions, and by more careful scrutiny of the so-called documentary evidence in their favor, but above all upon studying the organic structure of the organization, where he found under its apparent simplicity a subtle governing, compelling and enabling statutory power of great vitality and pregnant force, in union with ethical teachings of the utmost directness and value, accompanied with a sincere spirit of toleration, and all dominated by a generous good fellowship, a guileless brotherly love. The writer coming to this knowledge very naturally, and of logical necessity, concluded that the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was an offspring, not of the Jolly Corks, but of intellects far above the average of hearts unusually tender and charitable, of men with farseeing minds; ones while keenly alive to the faults and weaknesses of human nature, nevertheless believing they could make the stumbling blocks of life stepping stones to a full, loyal, and loving appreciation of the fundamental virtues of charity, justice, brotherly love, and fidelity.

Traditions said the writer was wrong, that the order was the creation of one man. His reply was, if this is true, he must indeed have been a veritable genius, a man of consummate ability, whose charity was so great and unusual that he could only write the faults of his brothers on the sand. He then asked the following questions. Who was this remarkable man, this creator of the only fraternity in existence that has succeeded in holding its members together in the sweet bonds of brotherly love in spite of their various beliefs, opinions, and racial antipathies? The very things which had heretofore held men apart and often divided the world amid tears and bloodshed. The current tradition answers one “Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian,” an Englishman of good family, the son of a clergyman of the Established Church, born at Exeter, in Devonshire on the 22nd of October, 1842 and emigrated to the United States at the end of October in 1867, where he remained until his death, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, at Leadville on the 20th of March, 1880. This statement sounded well, but the inquirer was in doubt as to its truth, and upon investigation found, brief as it was, that there was very little he was then directed to an amplified biography of the alleged founder of the order, only to find it bristling with errors, a pure fiction.

If this avowed founder had any right to his three surnames, the most aristocratic ones in the British peerage and landed gentry, he was at least by descent a gentleman, if he was the son of an Anglican clergyman his boyhood would have been passed in an atmosphere of culture and refinement, but in truth he had no right to any one of these patrician names, he was not the son of a clergyman and was devoid of gentlemanhood even in the roughest form. His true name was Charley Richardson, the son of a small shopkeeper, and underbred, a common place, lower class Englishman of very limited education and doubtful morals; a music hall singer of some ability, but devoid of all originality, and whose highest aspirations in life were circumscribed to put it poetically, by “wine, woman, and song.” Such, at least, is the testimony of all who knew him. Truly, it is inconceivable that this man could possibly have founded the order of Elks. A claim he himself never made; moreover, he did not even claim membership, but on the contrary, he told his brother that he could have been a member of the order when it was first established, but did not. There was a reason, which he did not tell, why he failed to be an Elk, for, in fact his application was rejected by New York Lodge No. 1, on Sunday evening, June 14, 1868.

Charley Richardson’s relation to Elkdom can be briefly, yet fully stated as follows: In his twenty-fifth year he deserted his wife and family in England, drifted to
New York, arriving there on or about the end of October, 1867, and almost at once obtained an engagement at Butler’s American Theatre, 472 Broadway. Forming the acquaintance of a number of show people he introduced to their attention and played upon them the now well-known English cork trick. Later on some of the victims of the trick, together with Richardson, agreed to buy their beer in common on Saturday, so that they might have it to drink on Sunday in spite of the excise law, which at that time prohibited the sale of intoxicants on that day. This drinking club, it can be called a club, had no other object, it never had a constitution, bylaws, or ritual, no higher aim than mutual amusement, and its members, few in number, by mere chance, not of set purpose, called themselves, among themselves, Jolly Corks. Among its members there were a few clever men, led by one George F. McDonald, an actor of no mean ability, to whom this little weekly gathering suggested a thought of value, and they were led to believe that upon that thought and their mutual association there might be built something in the way of an organization of permanent and lasting benefit. Richardson, with some of his friends of like, at once opposed the movement, but they were outvoted and McDonald’s motion: “We resolve ourselves into a benevolent order and that a committee be appointed to draft rules and a ritual and to select a name,” prevailed.

At a meeting of the Jolly Corks, held on Sunday, February 2, 1868, the committee reported, but the same was laid over until Sunday, February 16th. After a long discussion the report was adopted by a vote of 8 to 7. Vivian voted with the minority. The committee was continued with the same chairman, George McDonald, and directed to prepare a ritual, which he did, and it was approved at the meeting on Sunday, May 31, 1868. Vivian was not at this meeting. From this time the whole matter drifted without any definite action, probably because the membership was about equally divided: one side holding for the change, while the others were satisfied to let things remain as they were, but on Sunday, June 14, 1868, a division took place, those in favor of the new organization held a meeting on that day at 193 Bowery, with George W. Thompson in the chair, and then and there instituted the Mother Lodge of Elks. On the same day the opposing party held a meeting at their old place, 17 Delancy Street, with Charlie Richardson (alias Charles Vivian) preceding. The above date and these two meetings mark the permanent separation, each set of men thereafter going their own particular way, the Jolly Corks to a short and useful life, the Elks to a wonderful future, gathering to its ranks men of the broadest minds and liberal thoughts and everywhere practicing unostentatiously the virtues of charity, justice, brotherly love, and fidelity until it became a permanent and glorious American fraternity with thousands of members.

The writer, finding he was right in his doubt as to the reliability of many of the traditions of the order and that Charles Richardson, alias Charles Vivian, was not the founder of Elkdom, but bitterly opposed to its inception, he again asked the question: who was its creator? On further study he found it was not the creation of any one mind, but the outcome of a number of minds, an evolution of a composite thought, whose history is yet to be written.

Why this Vivian story should have lived so long in the face of the evidence against its authenticity is hard to understand. It is, indeed, time that this myth was laid in its grave forever.

Vivian, Charles, a Myth

What Fools these Mortals Be!

(By Arthur C. Moreland, Past Grand Secretary, B. P. O. E., 1881-1890)

This is another myth which one finds difficult to give any credence to when all evidence points to the accepted belief to the contrary. I include it here for your own examination. (Editor - Lowell Tyler)

The caption of this article to the writer’s mind upon receiving, the other day, a pamphlet entitled “Forty-four Years in Elkdom,” purporting to be written by John G.
Wilton, a member of the Corks, a mythical association which never had an organization in New York.

The other names assumed by the author were apparently John F. Burton and his real name, John F. Norris. In his book the writer claims that he is the second oldest Elk in the world, he very kindly condescending to admit that Bro. William Lloyd Bowron, No. 1, precedes himself.

On investigating the following facts were disclosed regarding the author of the pamphlet: First, that he was initiated in Providence, RI Lodge No. 14 on December 18, 1881, as John F. Norris, stage name John F. Burton, and that his membership in the organization in which he is in good standing, dates from that period. It is possible that as his number is 45 he is regarded as a charter member, though the charter was issued on December 18, 1881, at the order of the late Grand Exalted Ruler Thomas F. Garrett, by the present writer, then Grand Secretary.

According to the best information obtainable Bro. Norris was born in Erie, PA in 1845, and at the time of the Corks in 1867, was in the neighborhood of twenty-two years of age. He claims in his remarkable history to have worked as a wood turner under the name of John G. Wilton, and this is the first time in the writer’s recollection that any individual assumed a nom de plume for the purpose of engaging in a mechanical occupation. I have never heretofore intruded my own personality into this discussion regarding the formation of the order but it becomes necessary in order to avoid the possibility of doubt that should make a clear statement of fact based upon actual investigation and experience.

For many years I was familiar with all those who claim to be originators, founders, inventors, and pioneers of Elksdom; with most of them I held a most intimate acquaintance. I was the first Grand Secretary who ever collated any records regarding the Grand Lodge and the subordinate Lodges from whose membership it was drawn. The Grand Lodge never had a habitat or even an office; its entire records were kept in a wooden box that might have passed for a writing desk bound together with a leather strap with a small brass padlock to hold the buckle and staple together. I became Grand Secretary on December 11, 1881, and as I was inspired with the idea of making money, I accepted its magnificent salary of $100 per annum and devoted 365 days in the year to putting into effect what is now the system under which the Grand Lodge is controlled in the administrative functions of the Grand Secretary’s office. I sought out and obtained from every known authority, personal and documentary, all the data regarding the evolution of this order and of the men composing the original coterie who produced such evolution. Among other sought was John G. Wilton, who was a cabinet maker, as described by his reincarnated second self, but whom I found to have been an Englishman at the time of the Corks, born in the year 1834, and who occasionally sang in free and easies. He drifted away from New York and died in obscurity or at least no trace of his whereabouts was obtainable. John F. Norris whose stage name is John F. Burton was one of the three Burtons, John, Lottie, and Clarence, well-known in the theatrical world but whose stage advent was not for some years after the Corks had passed into the scrap heap and the Elks were already a prominent figure in fraternity life.

I am in a position to deny and have done so under affidavit, that Charlie Vivian ever was an Elk. He and I were intimate acquaintances, and on several occasions he assured me not only that he was not an Elk, but that he disliked the order for destroying a good party who liked their bread and cheese and beer, by turning it into a benevolent organization. The growth of imposture is rabid, if not denied, and I will stake my membership in this, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, upon the assertions here made, viz., that Vivian was not an Elk and never founded it; that there never was in the city of New York an organization of Jolly Corks, but that there was a number of men who used a club name of that description to defeat the excise regulations of the period regarding the sale of intoxicants on Sunday, and their only title to existence was a self-assumed one, they having neither officers, records, fixed place of meeting, nor any of the adjuncts required to constitute an organization.
I also deny he can prove it by Bro. John F. Norris, that he is not John G. Wilton, and that he cannot tell even with a close examination of the books from which he has quoted, where John G. Wilton was employed, his residence, or why the said Norris assumed his name, except to give an impression that he was capable of narrating events of which he knew nothing. Even if he was John G. Wilton, he could have known nothing of the order of Elks from June 14, 1868, until December 18, 1881, and his book is largely made up narrating events of that intermediate period.

This is a harsh criticism, but I trust the brother will not require me to go deeper into details; otherwise, I may do violence to the principle of brotherly love in the interests of justice.

**Volunteer Protection Act - Florida**

An act relating to civil immunity; creating the Florida Volunteer Protection Act; limiting civil liability for certain volunteers; providing for application providing an effective date. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1 (1) Any person who volunteers to performance service for any nonprofit organization, including an officer or director of such organization, without compensation, except reimbursement for actual expenses, shall be considered an agent of such nonprofit organization when acting within the scope of any official duties performed under such volunteer services. Such person shall incur no civil liability for any act or omission by such person which results impersonal injury or property damage if: a) Such person was acting in good faith within the scope of any official duties performed under such volunteer services and such person was acting as an ordinary reasonably prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances; and (b) The injury or damage was not caused by any want on or willful misconduct on the part of such person in the performance of such duties.

For purposes of this act, the term “nonprofit organization” means any organization which is exempt from taxation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. x. 501, or any federal, state, or local government entity. (2) Except as otherwise provided by law, if a volunteer is determined to be not liable pursuant to subsection (1), the nonprofit organization for which the volunteer was performing services when the damages were caused shall be liable for such damages to the same extent as the nonprofit organization would have been liable if the liability limitation pursuant to subsection (1) had not been provided. (3) This section may be cited as the “Florida Volunteer Protection Act.” Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law and shall apply to causes of action accruing on or after that date.