



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Elkdom shines during unprecedented times

This will be my final newsletter message as your Grand Exalted Ruler. Given the ongoing concerns for the health and safety of our Members, together with that of their families and friends, the Grand Lodge Session in Baltimore has been cancelled. It is unclear as of the time of this writing what alternative arrangements will be made. Whatever happens, I can assure you that some very good people have been working to develop contingency plans.

History will remember these as extraordinary times in the history of our nation and the world. While many previously felt secure in the belief that the world's problems were always in far off places and there was little for us as Americans to worry about, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed that. Who had heard of social/spatial



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

ROBERT L. DUITSMAN

distancing and the use of face masks in common areas?

We've been experiencing some challenging times, but here as in all throughout our history, the Elks have stood tall and worked through problems. Through creative new means of handling the business in our Lodges and looking after each other as best we can, we have done well and can be proud of what we have accomplished together.

It has been deeply moving for both Beth and I to have had the opportunity to travel around our country and meet so many wonderful people, to make new friends, and to learn about the truly remarkable charitable works being done in so many ways. While our travel was cut a bit short (a dozen of our visits were canceled due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions), we saw that Elkdom is clearly shining bright, building on the work and traditions of those who have gone before and moving forward together toward a brighter future.

That was the essence of my slogan, **"Honoring the Past-Embracing the Future"** and it is ringing true in our Lodges and State Associations all across the nation. There is a lot to be proud of with Elkdom.

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Net new Members with online invites

Has your Lodge promoted the online Membership application for signing up new Members?

A current paid-up Member of the Order, using the Elks website, can forward a membership invitation to family and friends. Invitees can complete and submit the application online.

Lodge Secretaries will be notified of these applications via the "Alerts" screen of CLMS2, then can process the electronic version the same as a paper application. All data provided by the applicant will be imported into the Lodge's CLMS2 database with the simple click of a button.

What better way to gain a Member than by using technology to its fullest?

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt



Notice: Convention canceled

Every year, we look forward to connecting with our fellow Members at the National Convention. Given the continued concerns about COVID-19, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 156th Grand Lodge Session in Baltimore, Maryland, which was scheduled to be held from July 5 to July 8.

Following increased and overwhelming concerns about the coronavirus and COVID-19, we felt this was the best way to proceed during such an unprecedented global situation. We are very disappointed that we are unable to hold the National Convention for our Members, but we know it is the right decision based on the information we have at the moment.

This was a tough call to make. The Grand Lodge Sessions are incredibly important to the Order because they are where we elect and install the Grand Lodge Officers and vote on legislation and budgets for the ensuing year. But, we need to prioritize the health and safety of our Members, our employees, and everyone who helps at the

Grand Lodge Sessions. The Convention Commission is exploring other ways and means of completing the tasks that need to be accomplished during a Session.

We remain committed to the city of Baltimore, where we are now planning to hold the 2028 convention. The dates and details will be worked out with the city and the hotels in the months to come.

In the meantime, thanks for your patience and understanding. We look forward to seeing you all in Tampa, Florida, for next year's Grand Lodge Session which will be held from July 4 to July 7, 2021.

Stay Safe and Stay Healthy!

Fraternally,

James L. Nichelson, PGER

Elks National Convention
Commission Chairman

Tina M. Haran

Convention & Meetings Director

MVS scholars virtually meet face-to-face

This year's Top 20 Most Valuable Student finalists came together virtually for the first time on April 24.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MVS Leadership Weekend looked different this year. Instead of gathering in Chicago to share their stories and interview for the top six awards, the new Elks scholars gathered on video chat. The socially distanced atmosphere couldn't stop the scholars from connecting with one another and forming new friendships with their Elks family.

After bonding with their #ElksFamily on Friday evening, the scholars met Saturday morning to virtually interview with a panel of three national judges for the top awards of \$30,000, \$40,000, and \$50,000.

The virtual programming continued after the interviews when the scholars met for Elks trivia, a final reflection of the weekend, and an optional game night hosted by 2003 MVS top winner Sean Loosli and 2015 MVS top winner Mark Ansell.

"This weekend was reaffirming that I'll be able to rely on the Elks family for a long time," said Santiago Alvillar, sponsored by Montebello, CA Lodge No. 2051. "If [meeting] was this amazing through this virtual weekend, imagine how amazing it would have been if we were to meet in person."

We're pleased to announce the 2020 Top Winners.

In third place, Madison Johnson, sponsored by Selbyville, DE Lodge No. 2173, and Tanner Christensen, sponsored by Provo, UT Lodge No. 849, will each receive \$30,000 toward their college education.

In second place, Irissa Machetta, sponsored by Clear Lake (Kemah), TX Lodge No. 2322, and Daniel Ardity, sponsored by Pompano Beach, FL Lodge No. 1898, will each receive \$40,000.

And in first place, the recipients of \$50,000 scholarships are Sarah Harper, sponsored by Athens, TN Lodge No. 1927, and Santiago Alvillar, sponsored by Montebello, CA Lodge No. 2051.

To learn more about the MVS scholarship, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.



DAP introduces online training

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN
Assistant Director

Usually by this time we would be looking forward to the National Convention and a two-day training for State Chairs. Then along came COVID-19 and the world of Elkdom changed.

Although the mission of the Elks Drug Awareness Program has not changed, our delivery of the program certainly has. In place of our traditional two-day training and our very popular Open House Session at Grand Lodge, the directors of the DAP will be conducting smaller and shorter online interactive training via video conferencing.

We will offer four regionalized trainings, which will highlight many of our traditional programs and roll out our exciting online educational program for schools.

The training will not only showcase this new innovative program for teachers and schools, but will educate State Chairs and directors alike in how to introduce this program to schools. The best part of this new aspect of the DAP is that



it will be provided to them at no cost to the taxpayers.

This is also a challenging time for Exalted Rulers. As we struggle to re-open our Lodges and try to figure out how we can do so in a safe manner, ERs are going to be faced with issues never before experienced.

The Elks have always been in the forefront of problem solving. One way to eliminate stress around Drug Awareness is to appoint a Lodge Chair that is willing to roll up his or her sleeves and get to work. The first thing your Lodge Chair will want to do is contact the State Chairman (directory can be found at elks.org and go to Our Programs) and let them know they are on board.

We will get through this together. The key, as always, is communication.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

How Lodges can help Scouting

By MICHAEL T. OHREN
Committee Member and Scouting Coordinator

For more than a century, both the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of America have helped shape our nation's future leaders by combining leadership skills and educational activities, setting them up for a lifetime of success.

Each year, hundreds of our future leaders are honored with either the Boy Scouting Eagle Scout Award or Girl Scout Gold Award. These two awards are the most distinguished awards in Scouting and are the most difficult to earn.

The Scout Law states "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." As Elks, we should be ready to assist troop members in obtaining their goals. Your Lodge can do this by working with your local Scouting councils, which can give you many ideas to support the troops in your community. This support could be financial assistance or just providing a safe meeting place.

Lodges can help their local Scouts by donating their facilities for special events such as hosting the Cub Scout Pinewood Derby, father/daughter dance, mother/daughter brunch, Arrow of Light ceremony, Eagle Scout Court of Honor,

or Girl Scouts Gold and Silver Award ceremony.

Grand Lodge provides many Scouting Awards, which can be obtained by visiting elks.org—click on Grand Lodge, Committees, Activities, and then Forms/Certificates. Grand Lodge also provides a special Eagle Scout Award and Gold Award certificate, available by e-mailing grandlodge@elks.org. You will need to provide the following information: full name of the scout, troop number, date the ceremony will be held, and address where the award should be mailed. Each award will be accompanied with a signed letter of congratulations from the Grand Exalted Ruler.

We as Elks should stand ready to assist our local Scouts in obtaining their goals.

What's on your mind?

Visit the Membership Forum to discuss Elkdom. Dozens of Members use the message board every day to share constructive information.

elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Do your homework before meeting local reps

By **GLENN E. FOSTER**
Committee Member

It is vital for the local Lodge Government Relations chairperson to know who the local and state political leaders are in their Lodge area.

Before you make an appointment to meet with the representative that covers your Lodge area, learn as much about him or her as you can. Study the representative's campaign material, website, voting records, etc. Ask for whatever time amount you feel you will need to talk with them to promote all the charitable work your Lodge does for the community. Go with statistics (reports) that you feel comfortable leaving for him or her to look over after your meeting concludes. Do not expect to spend hours at this meeting, as they usually have a very busy schedule. If your time allotment is for 10 minutes, be prompt with your arrival and departure.

The purpose for this meeting is to make the representative aware of all the good deeds we as Elks do. As a charitable

organization, we must continue to promote ourselves so that we may remain a not-for-profit fraternity in the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service. We must continue to promote ourselves so that when a bill is before the local or state legislature that may have consequences for the Order, we will have already established a good rapport with our political leaders.

You must be certain that all charitable giving is reported after every event, whether it is volunteer hours, miles driven, or anything to do with charity. These reported amounts are what gives the Order the continued not-for-profit status. Report everything you do. Your Lodge Secretary has the forms you should use.

When meeting with your local or state political leaders, you may give them the year ending State and National Charity Reports so that they may review our great works throughout the Order.

Ways to meet and greet your local political leaders can vary since each Lodge does things differently. Invite them when

you hold a Youth Activities banquet or an awards night to honor your officers or youth scholarship winners. It would be most appropriate to invite them to your Flag Day service in June, and when you honor veterans. Ask if they would like to speak, and be sure to ask them several days prior to the event. Be mindful that they may have a short time frame to visit your Lodge. If they are attending an awards banquet, ask if they would like to speak first as they may need to leave early.

Be sure to thank them when they support a bill that would benefit the Order, even if it did not pass.

If your Lodge is in or near the state capital, try to meet with them in their office. Do not go as a large group as some offices will not accommodate more than two or three guests.

Ask them to join your Lodge. Take at least one membership application with you. If they are already a Member, thank them and invite him or her to attend meetings more often. This could have enormous benefits for your Lodge.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

All-American Lodge winners named

By **ROBERT R. HINKLE**
Committee Member

Winners have been announced for the 2019-2020 Contest 'A' — All American Lodge Contest, which recognizes the best administered Lodges in the Order. One-hundred and fifty-six (156) Lodges participated and the top three finalists in each of six membership divisions were awarded the title of "All-American Lodge."

Division I (300 Members or fewer)

1st Place: Cedar Grove, NJ No. 2237
2nd Place: Roxboro, NC No. 2005
3rd Place: El Paso, TX No. 187

Division II (301-500 Members)

1st Place: Hot Springs, AR No. 380
2nd Place: East Stroudsburg, PA No. 319
3rd Place: Sierra Vista, AZ No. 2065

Division III (501-700 Members)

1st Place: Casa Grande Valley, AZ No. 1957
2nd Place: Ferndale, MI No. 1588
3rd Place: Calabash, NC No. 2679

Division IV (701-1,100 Members)

1st Place: Fayetteville-Springdale, AR No. 1987

2nd Place: Phoenix, AZ No. 335

3rd Place: Manasquan, NJ No. 2534

Division V (1,101-1,500 Members)

1st Place: St. Petersburg, FL No. 1224

2nd Place: Mission Viejo-Saddleback Valley, CA No. 2444

3rd Place: Wallingford, CT No. 1365

Division VI (1,501 Members or more)

1st Place: Sun City, AZ No. 2559

2nd Place: Lake Havasu City, AZ No. 2399

3rd Place: Orange, CA No. 1475

How do successful Exalted Rulers have a good Lodge year? They start with a guideline that contains important and impactful activities. They assemble officers and committee members to organize and implement the activities. And, they often use the All-American Lodge Contest as their guideline!

Congratulations to the Exalted Rulers of the Lodges listed as winners for 2019-2020! Thank you for your many efforts. Thank you to the District Deputies who encouraged and assisted and thank you to the State Lodge Activities Chairpersons who conducted their state contests.

VETERANS From Page 4

creative projects focused on helping veterans recover.

Every year there's a competition to see which states can contribute the most hides. Missouri came out on top again this year, contributing 8,742 hides. Arkansas came in second place with 3,274 hides, with Iowa on their heels in third place at 2,927 hides. Congratulations to these states!

Thank you to all the Veterans Leather Program volunteers who make this program a success, especially Veterans Leather Program Chair Dennis McAleese, and Vice-Chair Chuck Mudge.

Are you interested in participating in the Veterans Leather Program? Visit elks.org/vets to learn more!

GER From Page 1

This has indeed been the ride of a lifetime, and I take this final opportunity to thank you all for the warmth, caring, and hospitality shown to Beth and me along the way. Elks are a truly special breed of people, and worthy of the title Best People On Earth!

By the way, don't forget that the Auditing and Accounting Committee is to be looking at the Lodge books and report at the last meeting of the month. Just doing my job.

Best wishes to all, and may God bless.

Elks donate 17,000 hides for gloves, craft kits

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

The Elks ensure that veterans everywhere have the support of the Order and a connection to the community. It may be hard to do that directly right now, but rest assured that the work of Elks volunteers throughout the past year is helping veterans right now.

A perfect example is the Veterans Leather Program, which had another stellar year in 2019-20.

This program brings Elks and community volunteers together to collect hides for veterans. The finished leather is then used for wheelchair gloves, craft kits, and recreation therapy programs.

This past year, Elks and volunteers in 12 states donated 17,234 hides to the Veterans Leather Program.

Volunteers helped to collect these hides and transport them to our partners, who turned them into leather.

That leather is turned into wheelchair gloves, and Elks across the country distributed 3,075 pairs of these gloves to veterans. In fact, every year Veterans Leather Program volunteers attend national adaptive sports events to meet with veterans personally and distribute these gloves.

Finished leather is also turned into craft

kits, with a little help from our partner Help Heal Veterans (HHV). This year,

Elks donated more than 83,870 square feet of leather to HHV to make craft kits for veterans.

In return, HHV helped Elks volunteers in State Veterans Homes and elsewhere hand out 10,620 craft kits directly to veterans in their community.

With so many activities canceled this year, these craft kits are more popular than ever!

Finished leather is also donated directly to VA Medical Centers, which recreational therapists use to plan

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BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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GRAND LODGE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING

Don't just give up; Think about what's possible

By **RICK GATHEN**
PR and Membership Marketing Manager

"It is what it is"—Ever hear this one? These are the words of those who have surrendered themselves to losing membership and have written off the possibility of changing it. Instead, leaders replace this with, "What if?"

• **What if** you appoint the right size Membership Committee to get the job done?

• **What if** you take a business approach selecting your Lodge Membership Committee?

• **What if** you implement an effective Membership Committee meeting agenda?

• **What if** you implement an effective Orientation agenda?

• **What if** you implement an effective Lodge Relief Committee meeting agenda?

• **What if** you implement an effective reinstatement campaign?

• **What if** you implement an effective recruitment campaign?

• **What if** you begin with a membership drive and ask every Elk every month to sponsor a friend and family member into your Lodge?

• **What if** you schedule dates to initiate new Members each month on a weekend and make it a celebration instead of a chore?

• **What if** you implement an effective billing and collection campaign?

• **What if** you implement the membership checklist on day one?



Over the last 152 years, millions of Elks have risen to meet challenges that were unique to their generations, and we will be no different.

**"Unifying America by
Charity & Patriotism"**