



Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia

ELKS ASSOCIATION *News*

A Fraternal Organization - Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

www.mddedcelks.org

JANUARY 2024



State President
Renee' Rivituso
Waldorf Elks #2421

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STATE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Renee' Rivituso

"Soar to Greater Heights"

Here's hoping all of you had a happy and safe Christmas. I wish everyone health and prosperity in the New Year. Join me in making your New Year's resolution to help those less fortunate through the Elks. ENF Community Investments Program Grants allow each Lodge to help improve the community, assist veterans, and feed the hungry, to name a few.

Thank You to those who joined us in Ocean City for the Fall Conference. We were fortunate to regain the use of the atrium for our hospitality area, and some Elks had beautiful newly remodeled rooms. The food at our State Dinner was excellent, and Comedian Frank Vignola's group knocked it out of the park. Joseph Pedone, NJ State President, and Beverly were our guests for the weekend. I hope you heard his stories of the Billboard Elks signs-publicity at its best! Thank you to everyone on the Convention and Conference Committee for a wonderful weekend.

Before and after the Fall Workshop, Jeff and I made 13 official visits to the Lodges. We have enjoyed spending time with our extended Elks Family. Thank You for the hospitality and kindness shown to us during our visits. I have attended Elks Camp Barrett Executive Committee, Camp Barrett Representatives, and State Trustees Meetings. Unfortunately, my recent hospitalizations kept me from participating in the Boy Scout Camporee and our most recent visit of the Oklahoma Antlers from Broken Arrow Elks Lodge #2673. My sincere thanks go out to all the volunteers who helped make both these events successful. A special shout-out goes to the North Central District. Thank You,

Bowie Lodge, Essex Lodge, and Broadneck Lodge, for going above and beyond! I am proud to be the State President of the remarkable group of 37 Lodges in our Elks Association doing wonderful charitable works.

As the Lodge year continues, remember my motto, "Soar veterans, children, and membership programs to Greater Heights." Many Lodges are already showing a +1 or more in membership. Membership is the key to our Fraternal Order, initiate—initiate—initiate from now through March 31st. Now is the time to start thinking about next year's regime. During each visit, I discussed the importance of rotation through the chairs. February Lodge nominations and elections will be here before you know it. Will you be the next ER? If so, build your team and the Lodge year now; don't wait until April 1st. Two days of Leadership Training will be made available to any association member. This training will be focused on helping the incoming leadership of the Maryland, Delaware & District of Columbia Elks Association succeed in their Lodge business, bring awareness to committees, and outline information available to them. Also, contact your District Vice President if you are interested in becoming a Vice President, State Trustee, or serving on Camp Barrett's Executive Committee.

Our next stop is at Pocomoke City Lodge #1624 for our Spring Conference. We will host Grand Exalted Ruler (GER) Randy P. Shook and his lovely wife, Wanda. Come out and give GER Shook a warm welcome. Make your reservations now. "We Are The Elks"

Fraternally,

Renee' J. Rivituso

**MD, DE & DC ELKS
ASSOCIATION NEWS 2022
-2023 OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION**

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**GRAND EXALTED RULER'S
MESSAGE**

RANDY P. SHOOK , GER

Lawrenceburg, TN 38464

Final stretch of Lodge year starts in January. Wanda and I want to wish each of you a very happy new year as we welcome in 2024. New Year's Day is a time when we reflect upon the events of the past year and plan for the upcoming year. New resolutions are made to improve health, diet, and other ambitions. For us as Elks, it should be our resolution to improve our Lodge and our Order.

January is the beginning of the last quarter of the Lodge year. Get your membership retention and arrears program into full stride. Have your committee reach out to delinquent Members. This personal contact could very well bring that Member back into our folds. Remind them of why they joined and how much they mean to the Lodge. It would be great for your Lodge to have a +1 membership gain in 2024.

You and your Lodge Officers should be reviewing how and where you stand with your



STATE SPONSOR'S MESSAGE

PAUL D. HESEL, PGER

P.O. Box 8173, Newark, DE 19714
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At the time of writing, we are amid the 2023 Holiday Season, which runs from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day 2024, almost seven weeks in length. While this is always a most festive time on a personal level, when we individually and collectively give thanks for our many blessings, observe our various religious events and activities, and enjoy time with our families, it is also a time when our Lodges have many events and activities for their members to celebrate this joyous time of the year, as well as provide needed charitable giving for those in our communities that need assistance.

This 2023 Holiday Season also found us, once again, in the 8th and 9th month of this 2023/2024 Lodge year, and at its conclusion on January 2nd, there will be just three months remaining – 3 months to make that

Local Lodge goals for the year. Should you see you are falling short, make January, February, and March your last big push to meet those goals. Your Lodge has all the assets needed to meet those goals with the right plans. Use your Past Exalted Rulers Association, Board of Directors, and Lodge committees to analyze what is needed to declare victory.

This is also a great time to review your hard-working Members and decide who deserves an award for the great work done for your Lodge. Some of the awards you can present to a Member and Officer who has done so much to promote the Order are Elk of the Year, Officer of the Year, and Citizen of the Year. There is no better way to say thank you for the hard work and dedication they have demonstrated. You may involve other Members to promote the good work that your Lodge does in your community.

Finally, the Auditing and Accounting Committee should review Lodge books and report at the last meeting of the month.

Remember "Elks Care – Elks Share" and "We Are THE Elks." God Bless our great Order, our troops, and the United States of America.

final push to achieve our annual goals and objectives. During these seven weeks or so, there will be a variety of distractions and reasons to focus on other things. However, over this time, we must all try to keep our eye on the ball, on our goals and objectives for this entire Elk year. If we can do that successfully and keep all our endeavors moving in a positive direction, this 2023/2024 year will be another outstanding year for the MD DE & DC Elks at all levels, and the likelihood that we will continue to set new records and enjoy accomplishments not encountered in previous years.

As always articulated in all my messages and as an Elks-wide continuing effort and goal of achievement, please be reminded, once again, that membership growth is the number one priority for our Lodges, the Association, and our Order. Continuing growth in membership is a basic and practical goal at all levels. Growth in membership means continued growth in financial income from member dues and participation in Elk

Continued on page 3

STATE SPONSOR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

activities, as well as a larger/growing pool of members and talents to draw officers, committee personnel, and workers from. Membership growth also equates to growth in what we can do for our members and the communities we serve at all levels - it is truly the lifeblood and driving force of our Lodges, our Association, and our Order.

The past two Elk years were outstanding years for the MD DE & DC Elks in membership growth – a plus 483 in 2021/2022 and a plus 543 in 2022/2023 – proud to say that, unlike most Associations, we have had state-wide membership gains in 6 of the last 7 years. 28 of our Lodges had a gain in 2021/2022, and 20 had a gain in 2022/2023 – we need some work at the Lodge level to get this number up – now we are looking for a three-peat with another growth in statewide membership for 2023/2024, as well as an increase in the total number of Lodges achieving a growth in membership.

Current membership statistics show us having added 1,850 members this year and losing 511 – a net gain of 1,339 or about 7% with 1,590 delinquents (7.8% vs. an 8% national average.) We have 308 candidates waiting for initiation. If the year were to end right now, we would have a net loss of 251; if we had added the 308 candidates waiting for initiation, we would be at a plus 57. While our Membership Committee and most of our Lodges are working hard to make this a positive year, we need to keep our eye on the ball and work hard over these next 3 months to be sure that more than 20 Lodges and our Association end up with positive membership growth. While delinquency is at about 7.8% overall against an 8.0% national average, it Needs Work – continue to work on those 1,590 delinquents and get them back on the rolls as paid-up members. And for the 308 candidates waiting for initiation and all those who will be proposed over the next 3 months - INITIATE, INITIATE, INITIATE!!! We are on the threshold of a three-peat in membership growth – keep up the good work, and let's get that gain in membership once again this year - help to make achieving a membership gain the new norm for our Association and each of our individual 37 Lodges – I know we can do it!!!

The Elks National Foundation (ENF) annually directly provides about \$136,000 toward the operation of the Association's Major Project – Elks Camp Barrett, plus an additional \$157,000 for the programs of the Association. In addition, our Lodges enjoy individual grants (CIP Grants) from ENF in the amount of \$200,000 to \$250,000 annually, plus individual scholarships and Veterans Service dollars over and above what the Association awards directly. All in all, ENF provides the MD DE & DC Elks Association, Lodges and individual recipients \$450,000 to \$500,000 every year. The monies received annually from the ENF are predicated on the individual and Lodge donations made to the ENF over the years and in recent years.

To date, this year, Lodges, and individuals have donated about \$164,000 to ENF; last year, the total donation for the year was \$250,000. That puts us today at 65% of last year's donations, with about 67% of the year behind us. We are on track to match or exceed last year's accomplishments, and that's GREAT. While the GER donation goal is \$4.80 per capita, we

are already at \$8.10. We need to keep working at the individual Lodge level to raise monies and make donations to ENF – our goal is to grow our total donations each and every year to at least maintain or hopefully exceed the return dollars we receive from ENF, helping to fund our Major Project, our Youth, and Veteran's Programs, and our Community Investment Activities and Programs.

On a low note - unfortunately, our Major Project, Elks Camp Barrett, is experiencing a decline in campers. We are perhaps at an all-time low in the number of campers attending our traditional 4 to 6-week camping season. COVID devastated our ability to operate the Camp for a couple of years, and we simply don't seem to be getting the numbers back up to where they once were. Elks Camp Barrett depends on our 37 Lodge to provide financial support, but most importantly, provide campers to attend the annual camping season – currently, the latter isn't happening, at least in sufficient numbers. Every one of our 37 Lodges must be active in this effort and provide and pay for campers. Historically, the goal was for each Lodge to budget and provide 1 camper for every 25 members on their rolls. In today's world and with a goal of providing a camping experience for about 600 youth each summer, each Lodge should be providing about 1 camper for every 35 members on their tolls. If Lodges do not get on board and provide enough campers each year, we may have to reevaluate what we are doing and make significant changes in our Major Project. Once again, like all the programs of Elkdom we need involvement and participation from Lodges to be able to operate successfully. I am confident that the Elks and Lodges of MD DE & DC will not fail in making our Elks Camp Barrett the program and Camp we once so proudly enjoyed.

In just a few months, over the March 22-24, 2024 weekend, we will be at Pocomoke City Lodge 1624 for our Spring Conference. GER Randy Shook and First Lady Wanda will be with us as well, making their annual visit to our MD DE & DC Elks Association. Information about this weekend's Conference and GER visit was handed out in Ocean City at our Fall Conference and is also available on the Association Website. If you have not already done so, please make your reservations to be there and enjoy our Spring get-together. We would like to see Officers and members alike in attendance from each and every Lodge of our Association – you'll find it a learning and fun experience.

Jane and I extend our best wishes to each and every MD DE & DC Elk and their families for continued good health, prosperity, and joy during this holiday season and into the new 2024 year. I hope you all had a most enjoyable holiday season. Happy New Year to all!

And finally, THANK YOU for your unwavering and dedicated support and efforts on behalf of your Lodge, our Association, our Order, and all those we serve. MD DE & DC Elks continue to be shining stars within our Order. Thank you!

Sincerely and fraternally,



Paul D. Helsel, PGER & Sponsor



PRESIDENT-ELECT ANGELA MEYER

Kent Island Lodge #2576
ecbsecretary@outlook.com
Cell 410-739-5575

New Year's Greetings to All. A new year brings us new opportunities to continue our great work as Elks. From what I've witnessed over the years, the massive number of charitable activities that our Lodge members do regularly in our communities leads me to say that our Association is well on the way to accomplishing even more in 2024.

Since my last report, I've made a few visits to Lodges having their DDGER official visits in various Districts. I've worked on committee chairs lists for next year and sat in on the State Trustees meetings.

In addition, I have sent out correspondence to the Lodge Exalted Rulers and Secretaries inquiring if a Lodge may be interested in hosting the March State meeting, where we will proudly host the 2024-2025 Grand Exalted Ruler. Responses from Lodges interested in hosting that weekend will be appreciated before January 15th. I am happy to answer any questions about serving as hosts for this great honor.

Thank you to all the Lodge members who went above and beyond to offer help in their communities during this holiday season. I give my warmest appreciation to every member who continues supporting their Lodge and fellow Elks with brotherly love.



Pictured above is the Chestertown Elks Lodge PER Association. They are one of the most active PER Associations in our State Association. They meet once a month with their current Exalted Ruler. They help to set schedules, plan fundraisers for their Lodge, and keep the Lodge well networked with their community. This is what an active PER Association looks like! What great support for their Lodge.

Angela

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 15 March Newsletter Deadline**
- February 24 State Hoop Shoot Competition: Brunch at Camp Springs Elks Lodge 11am & Shoot at Oxon Hill High School @ 1 pm
- March 3—Training @Kent Island Elks Lodge #2576 9:30 am
- March 9—Training @Washington-Rockville Lodge #15 9:30 am
- March 21-24, 2024 Spring Conference Pocomoke City Lodge #1624 (*Exalted Ruler Visits*)
- June 7—9, 2024—State Convention, location TBD
- June 30—July 3, 2024 Grand Lodge Convention in Austin, TX



GRANT PROGRAM WARREN H. JOHNSON

Grant Program Chair
Frederick Lodge #684johnson684@comcast.net

In the 2022-2023 Association year, our Sponsor, Paul Helsel, initiated a program that allowed our Lodges to apply for a grant that would then be used within the community where their Lodge is located.

As of December 12, 2023, 17 of our Lodges have applied for this Grant to make a difference in their community. A reminder that once your project is completed, a final report is to be submitted to the Committee. This form was included with the application sent to each Lodge by their District Vice President.

If you have not determined a project, here are a few that Association Lodges have supported: Clothing for Head Start students, Books for Pre-K-12th grade students, building a handicap ramp for a Veteran, hats, and gloves for elementary school students, gift baskets of hygiene products for low-income seniors, and Adopt a Family with clothes and food for the holidays. There are several ways to make a difference in YOUR Community. Pick a project, shop, set up a presentation, and take photos. Please take a few minutes to send your information to the Grand Lodge Magazine and our State Newsletter.

Sandy Brantner, Kathy King, and I are happy to approve your request for a share of the remaining \$20,000 for this year.

Warren H. Johnson, PSP, PGT

Grant Program Chair



DEWAYNE WILCHER

Hoop Shoot State Chair
 Camp Springs Lodge #2332
 240-882-8785 | dewaynewilcher@yahoo.com

Lodges, we are down on the number of you who intend to participate in Hoop Shoot for the upcoming year (in green). Please see the list below of Lodges that intend to participate and your District dates and locations.

Congratulations to Oakland, Chestertown, Wilmington, and Bowie Lodges on completing their contest over the past two weekends.

If locations are tough to come by, I recommend partnering with a Lodge nearby or adopting a school to get a reasonable amount of participation.

As always, I am available to support your needs in conducting a successful shoot.

State Hoop Shoot Competition Brunch at Camp Springs Elks Lodge 11am Oxon Hill HS Saturday February 24, 2024 1pm

Name	Dist.	Online Calendar Date	Online Results
Oakland, MD #2481	3840	12/2/2023	
Wilmington, DE #0307	3720	12/9/2023	Not submitted online.
Bowie, MD #2309	3680	12/10/2023	
Severna Park, MD #2482	3680	12/12/2023	Not submitted online.
Chestertown, MD #2474	3720	12/16/2023	Not submitted online.
Ocean City, MD #2645	3760	1/6/2024	Not submitted online.
Broadneck, MD #2608	3680	1/7/2024	Not submitted online.
Selbyville, DE #2173	3760	1/13/2024	Not submitted online.
Deale, MD #2528	3800	1/14/2024	Not submitted online.
Cape Henlopen, DE #2540	3760	1/14/2024	Not submitted online.
Towson, MD #0469	3680	1/20/2024	Not submitted online.
Camp Springs, MD #2332	3800	1/21/2024	Not submitted online.

Name	Dist.	Online Calendar Date
Washington-Rockville, MD #0015	3800	Not submitted online.
Hagerstown, MD #0378	3840	Not submitted online.
Frostburg, MD #0470	3840	Not submitted online.
Annapolis, MD #0622	3680	Not submitted online.
Frederick, MD #0684	3840	Not submitted online.
Salisbury, MD #0817	3760	Not submitted online.
Crisfield, MD #1044	3760	Not submitted online.
Cambridge, MD #1272	3760	Not submitted online.
Havre De Grace, MD #1564	3720	Not submitted online.
Easton, MD #1622	3760	Not submitted online.
Pocomoke City, MD #1624	3760	Not submitted online.
Prince Georges County, MD #1778	3800	Not submitted online.

District 3680 North Central
1/27/2024
Location: Pick-up USA Fitness 8855 Orchard Tree Ln., Towson, MD 21286
Contact: Peter Cline
Contact Phone: (410)-371-2232
Contact Email: clinep33@yahoo.com

District 3720 North East
Date: 01/13/2024
Location: Saint Edmond's Academy, 2120 Veal Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810 Lower Gym
Contact: Bill Leonard
Contact Phone: (302)584-3012 Cell
Contact Email: bleonard51@verizon.net

District 3760 South East
Date: 02/03/2024
Location: Mariner's Bethel Hope Center 97 Central Ave Ocean View, DE 19970
Contact: Loren Evans
Contact Phone: (302) 841-1033
Contact Email: elkcarxi@gmail.com

District 3800 South West
Date: 02/04/2024
Location: Oxon Hill HS 6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD Event in the main gym. Best access is via Clipper Way on Oxon Hill Rd (see Top Golf and Harbor-side Hotel) Event will start at 10 am
Contact: DeWayne Wilcher
Contact Phone: 240-882-8785
Contact Email: dewaynewilcher@yahoo.com

District 3840 West
Date: 02/03/2024
Location: THIS DATE IS TENTATIVE
Contact: Ian Mc Nitt
Contact Phone: (240) 409-4010
Contact Email: imcnitt@gmail.com



ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

Mary Underwood

State ENF Chair PER Laurel Lodge #228
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WE ARE THE ELKS, and this is ENF

Reporting to you live (well in the warmth of my happy abode) from the MD DE DC State Association ENF office. HOT OFF THE PRESS – WE HAVE A NEW FIRST PLACE DISTRICT in my special competition. Will this District hold on, or will another District sneak in at the end of the year and raise more funds? Let's see what's been happening behind the scenes throughout our great Association.

Happy New Year from ENF! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday with your family and friends. Winter is now upon us, so lots of cold weather is headed our way. What a great way to promote ENF in your Lodge – while everyone is inside during your events! Ensure you have plenty of ENF brochures for these events and pass that donation jar around.

We are just a few months away from finding out how well our outstanding State Association has been donating to ENF. As of the writing of this report, the following ENF numbers are in: Our Association has donated over \$161,000 to ENF with all Districts reporting. All but 9 Lodges have met Grand Exalted Ruler Randy Shook's goal of \$4.80 per member. If you are one of these nine Lodges, please contact me or your District ENF Chair so we can discuss ways to reach this goal. My goal for our State Association is to have all 37 Lodges meet this goal by the time the Grand Exalted Ruler visits us in March. We are here to assist in any way and want to make sure that you meet that goal. Our donations to date have us at 12th place overall in the nation. Let's see what we can do to get those donations in and move up to the top!

REMINDER: Donations for the current year MUST be received at the Chicago office no later than March 31, 2024. If you need assistance in submitting funds, please let me know. Any funds received after this date will be counted towards the 2024-2025 Lodge year – no exceptions. With that date in mind, please remember that the March conference (to be held at Pocomoke City Lodge) scheduled for March 22-24 only leaves us a few days to mail in donations. I am asking any Lodge that is planning on providing donations to ENF at the March conference to do so but forward your donations directly to ENF prior to the conference. You can always have your donations read on the floor at the conference (I'm sure GER Randy Shook would like to hear!). Again – please reach out if you need help with submitting donations.

When receiving dues for the 2024-2025 Lodge year and you have members who elect to donate towards ENF with their dues renewal, please make sure that you hold off on

updating your records with this information. If you submit it prior to the new Lodge year, those funds will count towards this year and not next year. There is no way to transfer that from one year to another. Please be mindful as to how you have this set up in your accounting system.

As stated in previous articles, I am currently holding a competition between the districts in regard to meeting the Grand's goal. The numbers continue to climb and change. Most Lodges have stepped up to the plate and have met the goal already! As of this report compilation, North Central "rolls" into first place in this competition with an average of \$9.48 per member; Southeast is holding in at 2nd place with \$8.43 per member; the "beasts" from North East are at 3rd with \$7.40 per member; the "best" in the West is hanging in at 4th place with \$7.31 per member; and South West is "flying" in 5th place with \$5.95 per member. A special thank you and a fantastic job to Selbyville Lodge, with an average of \$22.13 per member at the time of this writing! Let's see if your Lodge can meet or exceed Selbyville's donations. Thank you for all you do, and I ask that you continue your ENF support. Let's finish out this year with huge numbers!

As I wrap up this special report, please remember to submit your donations before March 31, 2024. I look forward to seeing you in Pocomoke City and letting the Grand know how well we fare with giving to ENF. Set those donations jar out at your Lodge, enroll those members in the Fidelity Club, and donate away! We are almost at the end of our Lodge year, so let's finish this year with higher-than-ever ENF numbers! Keep up the great work, and I can't wait to see which Lodge(s) shine this year. WE ARE THE ELKS! (with Enthusiasm)

Fraternally yours,

Mary Underwood, State ENF Chair



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

LYNN EVANS, State Scholarship Chairperson
Kent Island #2576 (C) 410-598-1225

The MVS District Judging is continuing and will be completed on January 10, 2024. The judging at the state will be held from February 1 - 20, 2024.

The Skilled Trades Scholarship application is available now on the state website. It is fillable or may be completed on paper and submitted by March 15, 2024. Any high school graduate who graduated between 2020 and 2023 or will graduate in 2024 is eligible. We are funded to give ten scholarships each year.



ACCIDENT PREVENTION REPORT

MIKE FORD

NE State Chair
Abington Lodge #2354
410-977-8230 | rinklrgod26@yahoo.com



“WINTER HAZARDS. WHO KNEW?”

Well, we’ve made it to the end of another year, and we are in the home stretch in our Elk year. I’m sure all the Lodges in our Association jumped on the insurance bus before November first to get some kind of credit against our new \$10,000 insurance deductible. That’s enough depressing news for now.

I hope your year has been a productive and rewarding one, at home and at the Lodge. I know we all have been on top of our safety. Now that we are settling into Winter, we need to be aware new hazards of the season. I would like to share some research I looked up on Maryland Poison Control Website.

I figure we all have smoke detectors in our homes and Lodges, but are they carbon monoxide detectors too? CO is a colorless, odorless gas. Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu. Common sources of carbon monoxide are gas and oil furnaces, wood and gas stoves, fireplaces, generators, and heaters. Also, charcoal / gas grills and vehicles. Never use grills or generators indoors or near windows!

Another winter danger, believe it or not, is cough and cold medicines. Always make sure you follow directions exactly, and if you are taking more than one medication, that none of the active ingredients are the same. Keep meds away from kids and pets. Same with Ice Melt, window washer fluid, and antifreeze. First Aid for Poisoning:

Swallowed: Wipe out mouth and take small amounts of water. Do Not make patient vomit! Call Poison Control.

Skin Contact: Remove contaminated clothing and jewelry. Rinse skin with warm water for 10 minutes. Call Poison Control.

In Eyes: Flush eyes with warm water via cup, faucet, or shower for 15 minutes. Do Not force eyelid open! Call Poison Control.

Inhaled: Get person to fresh air immediately, open all windows and doors. Call Poison Control.

Hence, this brings my report to an end. On behalf of Colleen and Myself, we hope you had a great Christmas, and we wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

Mike OUT!!

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

ANGELA M. MEYER

State Chair Drug Awareness Programs
ecbsecretary@outlook.com | Cell 410-739-5575



MD, DE, DC Elks Continue Annual Drug Take Back Efforts

Drug Take Back Day is still a major tool used by DEA and Elks Drug prevention programs to help eliminate drug abuse opportunities in our communities. Thank you to those Maryland and DC Lodges who held a Drug Take Back event or national night out events in their communities.

Locally, the DEA Washington Division, which includes the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV), reported collecting over 27,656 pounds between 303 locations. Our local Elks Lodges proudly share in collecting a sizeable portion of that take-back number. We collected roughly 600 pounds Association-wide.

Jarod Forget, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Division, commented, "our team is grateful for the collaboration and hard work demonstrated by our local and state partners in successfully establishing and managing more than 300 collection sites. Their efforts have significantly created a safer and healthier environment for everyone. By disposing of these substances responsibly, we are taking a crucial step towards preventing them from being misused or ending up in the hands of those who could use them for illegal activities."

For more than a decade, DEA's National Prescription Take Back Day has removed almost 17.9 million pounds of unneeded medications from communities across the country. Elks Drug Awareness Programs are front and center in those efforts and continue to be out in front as an all-volunteer asset to national drug abuse prevention organizations and the DEA.

Removing unnecessary medications from the home can help prevent situations involving not taking medicines as intended or dosed, taking someone else's prescription, and taking the medicine for euphoric effects rather than medicinal purposes.

DEA continues to expand opportunities to make safe disposal of medications more accessible nationwide. They encourage people to remove unnecessary medications from their homes regularly and dispose of them at one of the nearly 17,000 permanent drug drop boxes located in communities across the country. Safe medication disposal receptacles and DEA Take Back events provide families with accessible, no-cost opportunities to eliminate unnecessary medicines stored in the home. Please get in touch with your District or State Drug Awareness Commission Chairpersons.

Reminder: District and Lodge DAP Chairs – Please Don't Forget to encourage participation in the Drug Awareness Contests - Essay, Poster, and Video.

AUDITING AND BUSINESS PRACTICES COMMITTEE



BOB JORDAN, CHAIRPERSON

Ocean City Lodge #2645 | C) 410-908-2434 |
K9118@aol.com

Since my last newsletter article, there have been a lot of changes with Lodges in the State Association Lodges filing their reports on time with Adaptive and FRS.

Since my last report and the State Conference, we have had seven (7) Lodges that have not submitted a budget for FY 23/24. The total is now only one (1) Lodge.

We had six (6) Lodges at least 4 months or more behind on filing their monthly actuals with Adaptive and FRS.

At present, there is only one (1) Lodge that is far behind. This Lodge has asked the State Association to assist, and I have been in contact with them. Work is in progress to get the reports up to date. Thank you to the Lodges that have filed their reports since the last newsletter, and please continue to do so.

There are only three (3) Lodges that are presently two

months behind for September and October and only one (1) Lodge that has not filed for October.

The November reports were due on December 15th.

Each month, I send a report and Excel spreadsheet showing the Lodges that are not up to date with their filings to all District Deputy, State Officers, the State District Chairs on the committee, our State Advisor of our committee, and, of course, our State Sponsor, PGER Paul Helsel.

I hope, by this time, all Lodges have filed their 990's and, if contacted by Area 2 A&A John Neetz to make corrections, have done so.

I must acknowledge our District Deputies, their auditors, our State District chairs on the committee, and especially to our State Sponsor for your support and help in this change in getting the Lodges to comply with the Grand Lodge Statues, in filing their reports.

I understand that sometimes delays do happen, but they should be caught up when able.

If I, or anyone on the Committee, can be of any assistance, please contact one of us. I can be reached at 410-908-2434 (C) or at email: K9118@aol.com.

**Chocolate
Bar Fundraiser**

“Meet It or Beat It”

Do you happen to remember how many candy bars you ordered last time? Now is the time to “Meet or Beat” your previous orders!

Place your candy bar orders and pay today! It helps support Elks Camp Barrett and raises money for your Lodge.

Your order will be ready for pick up at the Pocomoke City Lodge Workshop in March.

Order & Payment Deadline February 1st

**Contact John Meyer jmeyer59@live.com
443-250-1301**

**We're bringing back the World's Finest®
Chocolate fundraiser to benefit
Elks Camp Barrett**

\$60.00 per box - choose:
\$1.00 Bars 60 per box or
\$2.00 larger Bars 30 per box
All boxes contain a variety

Deadline to place your orders and pay February 1, 2024
Contact John Meyer - jmeyer59@live.com - 443-250-1301
Pick up candy at the Spring Conference March 22, 2024
Pocomoke Lodge #1624



ELKS CAMP BARRETT

ANGELA M. MEYER

Director of Operations Elks Camp Barrett
ecbsecretary@outlook.com

Everyone believes that Elks Camp Barrett slows down in the wintertime, and in some ways, this is true. No grass needs mowing, and what leaves haven't yet fallen to the ground will probably stay attached until the spring rains come. While activities and chores in winter slow down, the camp is still amazingly active. We have winter camping just about every weekend with local scout troops staying on the property. A couple of local churches and local non-profits come by to hold training and seminars in preparation for their new year. Mostly, we are in planning mode. Permits and inspections are to be scheduled, camp staff is to be hired, and the summer camp program is being planned. Our Caretaker is working on winter projects and repairs that couldn't have been completed in the busy summer and fall months.

This past month, ECB hosted a group of Antlers (an Elks-supported youth group) from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. This is the first time in current history that the camp has hosted weeklong overnight guests in the winter months. These "Elks-to-be" demonstrated their giving nature by helping to distribute wreaths at Arlington Nation Cemetery and visiting with their Senators in Washington, DC. While visiting and sightseeing, this group spread the good news of Elkdom and showed off their active Antlers program. They held a meeting while here and initiated a new member (the quality of their meeting ritual was equal to that of many Elks Lodges). Our own State Sponsor, Paul Helsel, PGER, was the guest speaker for the evening. Thank you, Bowie Lodge, for hosting this event. The dinner was fantastic.

Thanks to Lodges from Essex, Laurel, Kent Island, the Mekovsky family. for donating bedding and towels for 32 visi-

tors. All the donated items will be used for summer camp and given to children who do not have or cannot afford them when they come to camp. The response to this need was so quick and kind. We had most of the items we needed about half an hour after calling for help. Thanks to Broadneck Elks for providing a Christmas Pizza party for these worthy travelers.

Holding true to our mission of helping youth and the community, we hosted many camps and non-profit groups this past year. But, sadly, our own five weeks of summer camp were not well attended. Some of the problems lie in society and the public's current view of summer camps. But no matter what the cause, the Executive Committee, ECB Representatives, and staff have been working together to find ways to increase attendance at our Elks youth summer camp. You will see some large-scale changes in programming as we add a day camp option to the schedule. There will also be some changes to the registration process and activities program. Look for the registration package to come out around the end of January.

The camp will need a great deal of help with the re-vamp of this program. During this particular time of planning and preparation, we ask that Exalted Rulers please see that your appointed ECB Representative attend the camp meeting and share each month at your Lodge meetings. Please ensure your Lodges add ECB camper fees to your annual Lodge budget. Also, please advertise in the Lodge that paid staff positions are open for counselors (must be at least 18 years old), a camp nurse (RN), and a camp cook. We have added a volunteer registrar position that will be responsible for both online and paper registrations that position is filled.

As always, the Staff and Leadership at ECB thank you, the members, for all your support.

Angela



Elke Camp Barrett hosted a group of Antlers (an Elks-supported youth group) from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION AND ARMY OF HOPE

LOUIS B. SCHMELTZER, JR.

Annapolis Lodge #622 | 410-627-5179 | louschmeltzer@gmail.com



Army of Hope
VAVS

The Army of Hope has been actively assisting Veterans suffering financial difficulties. Since the middle of September, we have helped Veterans to the tune of \$13,900.00. This aid comes in many forms, but mainly utilities & rent. We have given many Vets peace of mind in return for their sacrifices to keep us safe. As you may or may not know, the Army of Hope is supported solely by donations from the Lodges and the fundraisers that they run. I ask that you add this worthwhile endeavor to your budgets and also consider planning some fundraisers to assist us in keeping our Veterans out of homelessness.



The E.N.V.S.C. has been busy serving our Veterans in the VA hospitals and the USO facilities. These efforts are pretty much back in full swing with a few restrictions. The

volunteers have donated many dollars and hours giving back to our deserving Veterans. Some of the ways that the volunteers give back are snack food, birthday parties, bingo parties, gift cards, toiletries, haircuts, pizza parties & much more. The Veterans appreciate the efforts of the Reps and the donations.

We still need a Rep to serve the Vets at the Baltimore VA Hospital on Greene St. If you are interested, please get in touch with me for further information.

Lou Schmeltzer

WANTED

A FEW GOOD MEMBERS

At the June Convention, I will announce the recipient of the Maryland, Delaware, and District of Columbia Elks Association Elk-of-the-Year award. I need your help in finding this person. The criteria for this award are very much like your Lodge Elk-of-the-Year award. It is someone who has shown exemplary efforts in furthering the work of Elkdom but on the State Association level. This is someone who has gone "above and beyond" in performing their duties.

A couple of classes of our members are NOT eligible: any currently serving District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler. Any presently serving State Association Vice President. And any Past State President. The thinking is that in the first two cases, they are basically doing their job and should not get special recognition. And in the case of the PSPs, this is a group of Elks who have "been there, done that" and have already been recognized for their efforts.

Your nomination for Elk-of-the-Year must be sent to me in writing. I prefer e-mail (elkrrivituso@gmail.com) or Snail-mail (43410 Browns Lane; Leonardtown, MD 20650) but NOT by phone. It does not have to be elaborate. Not how long they have been an Elk or a list of all their past positions. Just a simple "who" and "why."

Thank you for helping me make this decision, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Renee Rivituso, President

Elks Camp Barrett 2023 Improvement Fund Raffle



Louis B. Schmeltzer, Jr.

Annapolis Lodge #622 | 410-627-5179 | louschmeltzer@gmail.com

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday season and is joining me in hoping for a very healthy & prosperous 2024.

Initial preparations are being made to get the raffle for 2024 underway. The tickets will, as usual, be mailed out in March, and they will be the same as in previous years: \$10 a piece or six for \$50.

We will draw the winners at the Family Picnic in May. I am hoping for another excellent year for collections, even better than last year, which was a great year due to your devotion to one of our basic tenants, Charity.

I look forward to opening many envelopes and depositing large amounts of donations. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Fraternally,

Lou Schmeltzer, PDD

Chairperson

E.C.B.I.F.R.

**Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia Elks
Association Spring Conference
Hosted by Pocomoke City Elks Lodge #1624**

March 22nd (Friday)

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM Registration (Main Entrance)
 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM Lunch (Lounge)
 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Scheduled Meetings (Ballroom)
 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Social Hour / Dinner (Lounge)
 8:00 PM – until? "Keith White Duo"

March 23rd (Saturday)

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM Registration (Main Entrance)
 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM Breakfast Buffet
 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Elks Camp Barrett Meeting (Ballroom)
 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Regular Meeting called to Order (Ballroom)
 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Ladies Entertainment (TBA)
 12 noon – 2:00 PM Lunch
 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Committee Meetings (Ballroom)
 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Social Hour (Lounge & Ballroom)
 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Dinner in honor of GER Randy Shook (Coat & Tie)
 8:30 PM – until? Dawn Williams (70's & 80's Rock, Pop, Country)
 Vocals / Guitar / Sax / Flute

March 24th (Sunday)

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM Registration (Main Entrance)
 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM Breakfast Buffet (Lounge)
 9:00 AM – 12 noon Meeting called to Order (Ballroom)
 12:00 noon – 2:00 PM Lunch (Lounge)



WORKSHOP MEALS

Friday, March 22, 2024

Lunch (Lounge) Bar Menu
 Dinner (Lounge) **\$22.00 pp**
Prepared by member Noah King

Menu: Smoked Pork BBQ, Eastern Shore Seasoned Brisket, Dublin Farms BBQ Chicken Breast, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, Green Beans, Rolls

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Breakfast Buffet (Lounge) \$12.00pp
 Sausage, Scrapple, Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, Hash Browns, Sausage Gravy, Biscuits, Cut Fruit

Lunch (Lounge) \$15.00pp

Menu: Pocomoke Elk's Fried Chicken, Butter Poached Shrimp, Macaroni and Cheese, Green Beans, Seasoned Diced Potatoes

Dinner (Ballroom) **\$35.00pp**
Prepared by member Tom Wall

Menu: Herb Crusted Prime Rib, Saxis Island Crab Cake, Baked Potato, Seasoned Green Beans, Salad, Rolls

Sunday March 24, 2024

Breakfast Buffet (Lounge) \$12.00pp
 Sausage, Scrapple, Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Hash Browns, Sausage Gravy, Biscuits, Cut Fruit

Lunch (Lounge) \$12.00pp
 Prime Rib Sandwich w/ Fries (Bar Menu also available)

Please contact our House Manager Lexi McNeel (757) 894-8501 with any special dietary needs.

Any questions? Call / email C.L. Marshall 410-251-7341 or Wade Taylor 443-783-2870 or email secy1624@comcast.net

Lodging information is on page 20

**MEAL RESERVATIONS
DEADLINE FOR RESERVATION
AND PAYMENT MARCH 8TH, 2024**

Dinner \$22.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____

Saturday:
 Breakfast \$12.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____

Lunch \$15.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____
 Dinner \$35.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____

Sunday:
 Breakfast \$12.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____
 Lunch \$12.00
 #of meals: _____ TOTAL _____

Total payment enclosed based upon selections: \$ _____

**Enclose payment with reservation
and check payable to:**

Pocomoke City Elks Lodge 1624
 P.O. Box 174
 Pocomoke City, MD 21851

NAME(S): _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Lodge: _____



MEMBERSHIP

John Opitz

Abingdon Lodge #2354
410-591-6123 | mtlian@comcast.net

Greetings to all, and I sincerely hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Here is a brief report on membership thus far this year.

We started this year with 20,222 members; we currently have 21,558. We still have 1,603 delinquents. That would leave us with a loss for the year of 267. I am confident we can get more of our delinquent members back into the Lodges. We also have 308 candidates waiting. If we get them all in, we can be positive again for the year. We have three more months left in the Lodge year; let's get after this! Initiate, Initiate, Initiate!

Our Order added 78,382 new members last year, a new record for us. We have had positive growth for two years in a row, and we are now going for three years in a row, which has not happened since 1977. Three in a row, let's go!

Grand Lodge has a goal for each State to add 10% of its starting number as new members. For MD, DE, & DC, that would mean adding 2,022 new members for last year. We added 1,845 new members for the year, so we are well on the way to beating that goal again.

A reminder for social media users: Just because it's on the internet doesn't mean it's true. Recently, I have seen things on social media challenging our published membership numbers. These posts have failed to account for basic math and cause unnecessary strife. If you see something online and have any questions, feel free to email or call me.

There is no substitute for an active membership committee. As mentioned in the Grand Lodge "Plus Membership" program, we need our committee to be a "team." Lodge Secretaries, you can give "read" access to CLMS to your Lodge membership chairs, making it easier for them to stay current on who needs to be contacted. Membership committee folks should become familiar with the Membership and Marketing guides, which are part of the "members only" part of Elks.org.

Keep in mind the availability of group photos of your new initiates. Take a picture of the group of new members, and either email it to Rick Gathen at rickg@elks.org or get to the Jolly Cork Facebook page and upload through there. You will receive an emailed digital photo of your group with the Grand Exalted Ruler added in, giving his enthusiastic cheer, "We are...The Elks".

Please be aware that an initiation does not have to be part of a Lodge meeting; it can be held as a stand-alone event at any time. You can invite family members of the candidates to attend and witness the initiation. Have a social event afterward for the group, if possible. There are many ways to schedule the initiation as part of a fun day or evening.

Congratulations are for our leaders in recruitment and initiations. Our current leaders are Cape Henlopen, Ocean City, Frederick, and Salisbury. I will report with up-to-date numbers when we meet. Many Lodges are also getting reinstatements and transfers, easy additions; these folks are already Elks.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need assistance. My contact information is in the title above, and in the directory.

John Opitz



TRAINING

ROBERT ENNIS, State Chair

Washington-Rockville Lodge #15
Cell: 301-538-8243 | rennis51@verizon.net

The Elks Training Committee has planned Leadership Training Clinics to assist the upcoming Officers in local Lodges. All Elks members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Training will be focused on helping the current and incoming Lodge officers of the MD, DE & DC State Association succeed in their Lodge business, bringing awareness to committee rules of the order, and outlining information available to them. Breakout sessions will be held in the afternoon for Exalted Rulers, Secretaries, Treasurers, Trustees/ Board of Directors, Knights, and House Committee. Continental breakfast (8:30 am) and lunch will be provided.

Reservations are needed by February 17, 2024 Exalted Rulers, RSVP to rennis51@verizon.net with

1. the number of attendees
2. the date they will be attending
3. the breakout sessions they will be attending

The times and locations are as follows:

Sunday, March 3, 2024, from 9:30 am – 3:00 pm - Kent Island Elks Lodge #2576, 2525 Romancoke Rd, Stevensville, MD.

Saturday, March 9, 2024, from 9:30 am – 3:00 pm - Washington-Rockville Elks Lodge #15, 5 Taft Ct. Rockville MD.

Our committee looks forward to working with your Lodge leadership team. At any time, you have a

If you have any questions, please get in touch with your district chairperson or me.

Bob Ennis



SOUTH EAST DISTRICT VP

NICOLE EVANS

Selbyville Lodge #2173
Phone: 302-236-5093 nireland0326@gmail.com

Greetings from the South East District. I hope the holidays treated you well and everyone enjoyed the time with family and friends. I know the time around the holidays can be hectic, but our members haven't let that stop them! It is so amazing to see the good work that we do. From adopting local families, ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, participating in Wreaths Across America, and other charitable events for the holidays make me proud to be an Elk!

Veterans across our district were honored in many ways. It was nice to see how each Lodge respects those who have served in different ways but still in a sincere manner, from special dinners and breakfasts to Selbyville's first-ever Flag Retirement Ceremony. It goes to show that so long as there are Veterans, the BPOE will never forget them.

In November, I volunteered at the Scout Camporee. Wow! If you haven't had the opportunity to volunteer at that event, you are truly missing out on an experience! South East had a great representation of volunteers which was awesome! It was cold, and the scouts earned their polar bear patch; luckily, I had my heated camper! We even had a future Elk, Kinsley Evans, volunteer from Selbyville Lodge #2173 that weekend. Please put it on your calendars to try to volunteer an hour or the whole weekend in November.

ENF is still going strong in the South East. We currently have three Lodges in the top five in the state association. Selbyville Lodge #2173 is on top at \$22,049, with Kent Island Lodge #2576 and Cape Henlopen Lodge #2540 being numbers 4 and 5, respectively. Our district has donated over \$62,000 to ENF! Wow, what an accomplishment! Cape Henlopen, Kent Island, and Salisbury Lodges are in the top five for money contributed! SOUTH EAST!! Keep up the momentum!

Membership is a key to the success of any Lodge. As the Lodge year ends, getting those delinquents up to date is essential. Salisbury Lodge #817 held a phone blitz, bringing their lapsation down to 6.19%!! Way to go!

It has been a pleasure visiting the Lodges across our district so far. I will be visiting Seaford Lodge #2458 with State President Renee Rivituso at the beginning of January, and my last official visit is to Crisfield Lodge #1044 at the end of January. I cannot express my gratitude for the hospitality shown to Loren and me as we visited your Lodge. Thank you so much for the amazing food and even better company.

At the next DD Clinic, I will be hosting a VP caucus, which includes nominating and voting on a Vice President, State

Trustee, and Camp Barrett Executive Representative. If you are interested in any of these positions, please let me know and forward your intent to your Lodge secretary so it can be forwarded.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the March conference, which will be held in our very own district, Pocomoke City Lodge #1624, where we meet Grand Exalted Ruler Randy Shook.

Fraternally,

Nicole

SE LODGE NEWS



Pictured left: On September 19th, SE VP Nicole Evans, State President Renee Rivituso visited with ER Joy Schrek and members of Cape Henlopen Lodge #2540.

Pictured below: SE VP Nicole Evans visited with officers and members of Pocomoke City Lodge #1624.



Left: Selbyville Member and Veteran Gerald Pepper places an American Flag into the burning pit during the Flag Retirement Ceremony held on November 11, 2023, while Troop 2173 looks on.



Right: Selbyville Lodge officers Leading Knight Bill Ireland, Loyal Knight, Eleanor Ireland, Secretary and SE VP Nicole Evans, ER Loren
Continued on page 14

SOUTH EAST CONTINUED

Evans, and Esquire Darlene Harmon Getzel volunteered the weekend during Scout Camporee at Camp Barrett.



Above: Kinsley Evans (future Elk, age 9) and Darlene Harmon-Getzel of Selbyville Lodge #2173 pose for a picture while filling fruit cups for the scouts during the Scout Camporee weekend.



Above: Selbyville ER Loren Evans, Loyal Knight Eleanor Ireland, School Counselor at Phillip Showell Elementary, Jessi Ford, and Secretary Nicole Evans pose with gifts and food boxes for local families adopted during the holiday season.

Rescue Fire Company's ladder truck with Old Glory flying welcomed Veterans and their guests to the **Cambridge Elks Lodge #1272** Second Annual Veterans Clinic and Picnic in November. Numerous Veterans agencies were present to help Vets with any problems or questions. A Federal Claims Clinic was held on-site for Veterans to check on or file any claims. Two specialists filed 14 claims, with numerous other problems being solved by other volunteers.

Thanks to a generous Cambridge community, every Veteran went home with a door prize and plenty of party favors. Over 100 people enjoyed an extensive lunch buffet and music by the Elks's very own DJ. Also available was a children's activity table many youngsters enjoyed. Cornhole boards were set up outside for the enjoyment of all. Many thanks to all of our donors and volunteers. Elks pledge, "So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."



Cape Henlopen Elks #2540 donated a \$2,500 check to Delaware Technical Community College. Using funds from the Lodge's Veterans Committee, this contribution will assist in the college's scholarship drive for veterans and first responders. The Lodge has made previous donations to DelTech for the Veterans Resource Center and routinely for student-veteran scholarships to help scholars recognize their academic dreams.



Pictured above from Cape Henlopen are Bob Trafton, Chairman, Elks Veterans Committee; Bobbi Barends, VP and Campus Director, Delaware Tech; Joy Schreck, Elks Exalted Ruler; Eric Eldridge, Campus Veteran and First Responder Coordinator.

The Cape Henlopen Elks Veterans Committee presented Frets4Vets with a scholarship check for \$1,400 toward one 16-week program of guitar instruction for veterans diagnosed with PTSD and/or depression. The Veterans Committee of Cape Henlopen Elks regularly donates to the Frets4Vets program, as it is specifically designed to help local veterans focus their minds in a positive direction and prevent soldier suicide by teaching coping mechanisms through music instrument instruction.

Cape Henlopen Elks Winter Coat Drive was once again a success! A grand total of 56 coats, and over 100 assorted hats, scarves and gloves were dropped off in the Lodge vestibule. These critical winter items were delivered to Milton Elementary for those families in need.

Continued on page 19



NORTH EAST VP

KATHY KING

Dover Lodge #1903
Cell: 302-331-5986 | kking114@comcast.net

I hope everyone enjoyed celebrating the holidays with family and friends. I wish all of you a very happy and healthy New Year. I have visited most of our Lodges in the Northeast and want to thank them for their hospitality during my visits. It has been nice meeting our brothers and sisters in Elksdom. With each visit, it was great to share ideas and experiences. It motivates me to see what dedication our Elks have to our causes. During my visits, I shared our state president's goals and stressed that we are here to help them in any way possible.

The Northeast is commended for promoting Grand Lodge programs, increasing membership, and publicizing their good work. Our veterans have benefitted from the good work of our Lodges, from our annual dinner and ritual for Veterans Day to a Veterans Standdown held in September.

During the Stand Down, veterans can get all types of information, have dental checkups, and even get haircuts. We have taken our veterans to ball games and invited them to our Lodges to enjoy football and food. All our Lodges have actively promoted our drug awareness program and Americanism programs.

Local Lodges had their Soccer Shoots. The District Soccer Shoot was held on December 4th in Abingdon where 20 children participated. During the holidays, it was heartwarming to see our members prepare dinner for people experiencing homelessness, wrap and give presents to needy children, and host breakfast with Santa for our children. This is what we are about – Caring and Sharing what we have to offer others.

As we begin this new year, let us continue to do the great work.

Fraternally yours,

Kathy King

NE LODGE NEWS



Pictured left: During the Veteran's Dinner at **Dover Lodge #1903**, Sgt. Major Brian Clark of the Delaware National Guard explained the CASH program Canines Assisting Service Heroes.



Photo Left: **Wilmington Lodge #307** hosted Drug Take Back Day

NE News continued on page 20



Above: **Dover Lodge #1903** Veteran's Dinner from left to right Richard Heisler, chaplain, VP Northeast Kathy King, Exalted Ruler Connie DeYoung, Treasurer Melissa Clarke and Sgt. Major Brian Clarke



AMERICANISM

ERIN MUSCARELLA

State Chair Americanism | Laurel Lodge #2283
Cell: 301-922-5453 | elm.95@verizon.net

The deadline for all essays and posters to your local Lodges has passed. The district chairs will be judging your submissions and getting them to me by the end of January. The themes this year are sure to be good ones and I cannot wait to see what our young people have drawn and written.

Thank you to all the district chairs for getting the information to your Lodges and into your communities.

I anticipate the annual banquet will be held in March 2024, the location to be determined. I am working on the details and will get the word to all as soon as I've got them.

Remember, from poster contest and thank you cards for our veterans to get out the vote banners and welcome home signs for our service men and women, paper and crayons are all you need! I look forward to seeing you in Pocomoke City.



NORTH CENTRAL VP

KEVIN ROSE

Glen Burnie Lodge #2266
Phone C) 410-984-0079
littlebratzdad@yahoo.com

I hope everyone has had a great couple of holidays over the past few months. I also hope everyone is looking at 2024 as being even bigger and better than 2023. We had a ton going on in the North Central.

I want to start with Essex Lodge; there was a call from ECB about a group of Antler Elks coming from Oklahoma and the need for bedding and toiletries. Essex came through and supplied 24 sleeping bags, pillows, and towel sets for these youngsters. This is a fine example of what we do. I also want to thank all the other Lodges that contributed. Broadneck stepped up and is hosting a dinner, and Bowie is also doing a dinner and ceremony. I am so proud of my district!

I had the pleasure of attending Bowie's Veterans Dinner; it was a fantastic night. Dinner was excellent; they did a great presentation, raised some money, and had all the Armed Services represented. ER Boots and his team did an excellent job.

Santa Claus showed up in Annapolis for a wonderful children's Christmas party. All the kids had a great lunch, did some fun crafts, and had a gift under the tree. There are a lot of smiling faces and happy kiddies.

Laurel has been cranking it up with a successful Toys for Tots Drive. PER Donna Curp presented a check to Laurel PD for \$1,500 for their Santa with a Badge Program. A lot of fantastic work is coming from this group.

Big news from Severna Park Lodge: Thanks to tons of hard work and dedication, they are mortgage-free. This is great news. They also held a wonderful Veteran's Day Dinner to honor our heroes. ER Hicks and his staff work tirelessly in their community to strive for great things.

Towson is working hard for their Veterans Charities. In February they are having their Wine and Dine for Warriors fundraiser. 100% of the proceeds will go to their Veterans Fund. They have also done a tremendous job raising \$6,400 in gifts for the Assistance Center of Towson Churches Christmas tree program for Children. They are also doing incredible job raising funds for the ACTC food drive and Hat and Mittens Program.

Glen Burnie is working hard, as always. They are working with 3 of the CIP Grants for two food banks and a book center for a local school. They are also using state grants for a Crock Pot program where you give a crock pot and some food needs to a family that could use this, and dinner is waiting when the child comes home from school. They

also have 20 food baskets going to needy families in the area. They also gave \$1,000 to a local family that lost everything in a house fire.

Broadneck came and took the traveling gavel back from Glen Burnie. They have been working hard to get their Hoop Shoot Program back up and running. They are bringing in new members. They have a great breakfast, so you should come and give it a try. They also raised \$1,200 in donations for Fisher House from their annual bike run. They have also teamed up with their local volunteer fire dept and provided 32 food baskets to those in need. ER Jolinda and her Team are doing great work on the peninsula.

Elks Riders held a large fundraiser bull roast and collected PJs and Toys for Casey Cares, an organization for kids with cancer. This group of riders does a lot of charity work with children; they have also adopted a Jernick family to help support this Christmas. (Pictured below)

I have visited 6 out of the 8 Lodges along with State President Renee'. I have to say I am impressed by the hospitality I have been shown. It has been unbelievable; the programs, the leadership, the member's participation, and the overall work you do are outstanding. As I stated earlier, I am proud to represent this district as your Vice President.

I have two more visits left in Essex and Towson. I am looking forward to hearing what they have going on. I am that guy that likes to go to meetings. It inspires me to work harder and do better.

I have a challenge; I would like each Lodge to commit to sending ten kids to ECB summer camp. Reach out to your schools, community centers, whatever it takes. Let's get those kids to camp. I think we all can afford the small cost of 10 kids.

Faternally,

Kevin Rose PER, NCVP-2266



Elks Riders held a large fundraiser bull roast and collected PJs and Toys

NORTH CENTRAL CONTINUED

Essex Lodge #852 shared a Community Event: Elks Drug Awareness, Red Ribbon Ceremony, Safety Day, and Children's Halloween Costume Contest with trick-or-treat candy bags. This year's event drew about 100 people, mostly youth/students from local Elementary & Middle Schools. Historically, this event has attracted about 350 people, but attendance was down for some reason. A DJ entertained the audience with Halloween music following the Red Ribbon Ceremony but played solemn music during the ceremony.



Photo left, Joe McGeeney passes candy to the attendees and below is the line up for the Red Ribbon Ceremony.

Essex news and photos submitted by Joseph E. McGeeney, PDD, Lodge DAP Chair

In November, Towson Elks Lodge #469 and the Towson American Legion held Veterans Day Ceremonies in Towson at The Wayside Cross and Vietnam, Enduring Freedom monuments.

Towson Elks also had its annual Thanksgiving Day dinner, hosting 45 Veterans from the McVets organization (This group takes homeless Veterans off the street and provides housing, clothing, food, and education to help them get back on their feet again.) They were treated to a meal and Bingo.

Picture below: The Towson Elks donated and presented the new US Space Force Command flag to a local high school to add to their veterans' monument. In the photo is Elk member and Army National Guard member Josh Taggart,



Above: American Legion Post 22 Commander Anita Stewart-Hammerer, Legion Chaplain Harold McFadden Sr., Elks Chaplain Val Spangler, ER Chris O'Connell, Elk and Army National Guard member Josh Taggart
Towson Lodge submitted by PR Committee Jim Bullington

From Severna Park Lodge #2482 This crew, shown below, were finishing up loading of the second of four deliveries to the Veteran's Hospital in Baltimore. They took bags of needed items for various groups at the hospital including the homeless Vets.



Washington-Rockville Lodge #15 member Bob Morris and his band took the stage at the Lodge to play at a fundraiser for Fields4Valor. This non-profit, veteran-run farm supports veterans experiencing food insecurity in our community. For the past four years, the Lodge has coordinated food deliveries of fresh produce, eggs, and honey and provided ENF grant monies to support the farm's mission. Every Saturday during the growing season, Elks volunteers drive to Brandywine, MD, to bring back food shares to Montgomery County, where Walter Reed Hospital medical students distribute the packages door to door to eligible veterans and their families.

This fundraiser was somewhat unique because its idea came about from a spring fundraiser at the Lodge for Lollipop Kids, a non-profit group in our community that supports young adults with disabilities. Two members in attendance purchased a band night donated by the Bobby Lewis Band. They decided to pay it forward and have the band play at a future fundraiser for Fields4Valor.

This great event raised approximately \$2,000 to support the 2024 growing season.

A huge thank you goes out to all the members who delivered produce all season and helped make this event so successful.

Washington-Rockville Lodge #15 looks forward to a fifth season of partnership with Fields4Valor next spring.

Submitted by Judith Black, Washington-Rockville Lodge



WEST DISTRICT VP

JEFFREY T. SCIRE

Frederick Lodge #684
Cell: 240-674-7920 | dcfd0069@sol.vom

Good Day to All,

The West has been very busy for the calendar year of 2023. Many veteran projects and community projects were fulfilled and were a big success in their communities.

Membership is up in the West, and Elkton will continue to strive in these communities.

Following this missive, take a look at some of the good works of the West Region in the photos below and to the right.

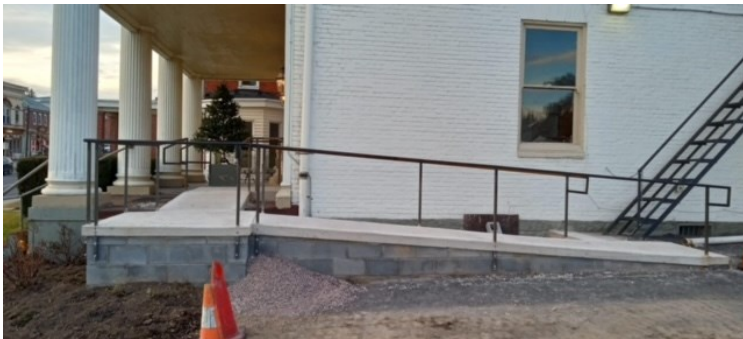
Keep up the excellent work,
Jeffrey Scire, West VP



Frederick Lodge #684
Each year, around the holidays the girls of 3-d Maryland Lacrosse take part in a service project. They joined forces with Frederick Lodge and sponsored "Sleep in Heavenly Peace". They provide local children in need beds in the local community. Their moto is, "No kid sleeps on the floor in our town." They built 40 beds and provided mattresses and linens for all.



provided mattresses and linens for all.



Above: **Frostburg Lodge #470** used a grant from the state for the parking lot to their building ADA compliant with parking spots and entrance.

The **Frederick Elks Lodge #0684** presented a check for \$5,000 to Kline Hospice House. The funds were raised, in part, through the Sometimes Annual Golf Tournament.

Frederick's Drug Awareness Chair, Melissa Carpenter, held a drug take back as part of the Elks National Prescription Drug Take Back Week.

With a \$1,000 grant from the MD DE and DC Elks and money from a crab night 50/50 raffle, the Frederick Lodge donated over \$1,200 worth of toiletries to SOAR (Supporting Older Adults with Resources).

Twenty-three award recipients, at least one from each Middle School in Frederick County, received recognition on Sunday, May 7th, for the **Frederick Elks #684** Youth Appreciation Banquet. The theme of the event was "Planting Seeds of Kindness." Kavonte Duckett, Vice President of the County Council, and Jade Smith, former Youth Appreciation Award recipient and granddaughter to Elks Member John Renn, were the esteemed speakers for the event.

Frederick Elks Lodge #684 collected over toys valued at over \$4,000 for Toys for Tots. They also hosted their annual external Veteran's Day Celebration with six veterans from Montevue and Citizens Nursing Homes, as well as 30 veterans from Martinsburg, WV. The veterans heard from active-duty serviceman Gregston Kelly-Westry and enjoyed a day of games ending with a crab feast. The veterans were presented with personal hygiene items, personalized fleece blankets with their branch of service, gift cards, and patriot coupon books.

With a \$1,000 grant from the MD DE and DC Elks and money from a crab night 50/50 raffle, the **Frederick Elks #684** donated over \$1,200 worth of toiletries to SOAR (Supporting Older Adults with Resources).



Pictured are ER Dennis Helmstetter, Treasurer Karen McNitt, and Leslie Richards Schultz from SOAR.

Portions of Frederick Lodge News submitted by Vicky George

Oakland Lodge #2481 members were very busy. They had a Hoop Shoot, a Cash Bash, and a Soccer Shoot. They used their ENF Spotlight Grant for the House of Hope and donated \$2,000 to the food bank.

Westminster Lodge #2277 Used their Beacon Grant for a Christmas Town Event. Over 100 deserving families were provided gifts and a ham or turkey for their Holiday dinner.

WEST CONTINUED

In early September, the Hagerstown Elks Lodge #378 used their State Grant money to purchase \$993.00 of new clothing for young children attending the Head Start Programs of Washington County, MD. Frequently, children will soil themselves and need a clean set of clothing. Often, the clothing does not get returned to the Program. This clothing will help throughout the school year when children are in need of clean clothing.



The photo above includes Lou Chillemi, Exalted Ruler, Vicki Robinson, Head Start Executive Director, and Tammy Keener, Family Services Manager



SOUTH WEST DISTRICT VP

WALTER E. BENSON, SR.

Camp Springs Lodge #2332
 Cell: 301-943-2125 | bensonw089@gmail.com

It has been my pleasure to visit Prince George's County Lodge #1778; we had a great meeting and fellowship.

Also, I visited Deale Lodge #2528, another great meeting, and fellowship. The dinner was Delicious.

Unfortunately, I had to cancel my visit to Waldorf Lodge #2421, but I am looking forward to visiting them soon.

Fraternally,

Walter (Ben)) Benson

The Birthright of Prince Frederick was the recipient of the 2023 MD, DE, DC Elks Association Grant from Calvert Elks #2620. The Lodge received \$1,000.00, which we used to purchase essential items for all stages of growth through the baby's first year. Forty-three (43) cases were purchased and delivered to Birthright on December 8th in support of their mission. Members also donated a handmade blanket, gently used baby clothing, and bath supplies for an estimated \$500. Twenty-one (21) Elks members were involved in the handling and delivery of purchased items. Birthright was elated to receive such a generous donation. These items and donations will help to sustain their goals for several months.



Pictured Above: Birthright Rep. - Kristyn Temple, Elks - Sharon Roston, Kathy Gioffre, and Mary Cardinal-Vogt

Calvert News submitted by Mary Cardinal-Vogt

South West continued on page 20

SOUTH EAST CONTINUED



Shown with the coats L-R are: Gloria Ho, Milton Elementary Social Worker; ER Joy Schreck; John Kreitzer; Principal Clara Conn; and Terina Kreitzer.

SOUTH WEST CONTINUED

Prince George's County Lodge #1778 conducted its 54th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the seniors in our community on Thanksgiving Day. This year, they prepared 133 dinners with all the fixings and received several compliments on the food. Thank you to everyone who made donations and donated their time to this worthy event.

On Saturday, December 16, 2023, the Lodge provided 58 Christmas food baskets to less fortunate families in our community. Our members donated (30) turkeys, (40) roasting chickens, canned vegetables, soup, fruit, cranberry sauce, potatoes, stuffing, and cereal. Some members made a cash donation, which was used to purchase additional food needed to complete the baskets. Each basket included Christmas stockings for the children of the family.

Especially at this time of the year, we wanted to ring throughout our Community.

The many gift baskets are pictured below:



Submitted by Deb Davies Sprecher, Leading Knight

NORTH EAST CONTINUED



Wilmington Lodge #307 delivering Thanksgiving Dinner to Elsmere Hospital workers.

LODGING IN POCOMOKE CITY

HOTEL INFORMATION

Use "Elks Spring Workshop" when making reservations.

1. **Holiday Inn Express** (2 miles / less than 5 minutes to Lodge) 125 Newtowne Blvd , Pocomoke City, MD 21851 (410) 957-6444 \$129
2. **Hampton Inn & Suites Chincoteague Waterfront** (20 miles / 25 minutes), 4179 Main St., Chincoteague, VA 23336 (757) 336-1616 \$159
3. **Fairfield Inn & Suites** (20 miles / 25 minutes) 3913 Main St. Chincoteague, VA 23336 (757) 336-0043 \$159

(Note - other hotels in Pocomoke City. We have negotiated special rates with those listed above)

LIMITED OVERNIGHT RV PARKING IS AVAILABLE AT THE LODGE CALL AHEAD TO RESERVE



At our Fall Workshop in Ocean City, MD, newly appointed Grand Lodge Inner Guard William Buttrill, Jr. said it is an honor and privilege to serve in the position. There are only ten people chosen each year to serve the Grand Lodge.

Being out of Grand Lodge Inner Guard pins to distribute, he offered up his own from his lapel instead. It was raffled and brought—a whopping \$270.00 which was in turn donated to the William J. Jernick Fund.

Pictured above is Kendra Nichols (*pin winner*) Bill Buttrill, and Loren Evans.