



Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia

# ELKS ASSOCIATION *News*

A Fraternal Organization - Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

www.mddedcelks.org

**MARCH 2026**



Ken Chapman, President

## STATE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ken Chapman

### "STEADFAST IN ELKDOM"

Officers, Members, Family, and Guests of the Great Elks State Association MD-DE-DC of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Danelle and I welcome you to our association's Spring Conference at Severna Park Lodge 2482 in Severna Park, Maryland.

It is a tremendous privilege to welcome our honored guests, Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt and First Lady of Elkdom Susan from DeKalb, Illinois Lodge #765, State Sponsor Past Grand Exalted Ruler Malcolm J. McPherson and First Lady Pat from Lyndhurst, New Jersey Lodge #1505, Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee Area 2, Peggy Berry and her husband Ryland from Howell, New Jersey Lodge #2515 and Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler John Loftus and his wife Eileen from Ocean City, Maryland Lodge #2645. Reach out to our honored guests, introduce yourself, grasp the hand of friendship, and show them the great hospitality of the MD, DE, DC Elks State Association.

Please join me in thanking Andre Denault, his team, and members of Severn Park Lodge #2482 for their hard work, fantastic hospitality, and for hosting the Spring Conference.

We have a fantastic meeting planned with fellowship, good times, and knowledge to bring back to your Lodges. Saturday afternoon, there will be a training session on proper protocol for Lodge meetings and the new state website, information on the upcoming State Conference and Grand Lodge Convention, along with a State Ritual contest. I urge everyone to attend these sessions.

As we move into a new Lodge year, I wish to express my gratitude for the fantastic accomplishments achieved by our outgoing Lodge officers. You are truly the great heart of your Lodge and Elkdom. Your knowledge is invaluable to your Lodge, officers, and members. Your mentorship to the newly elected and appointed officers will be of great value.

Congratulations to all the new incoming and repeat Lodge officers for the upcoming 2026-2027 Lodge year. I hope everyone attended the training sessions as they are a great source of information for both returning and new Lodge officers. If any Lodge is interested in further training or training information, please reach out to the state training committee listed in the association directory. Now is also the time to put together plans to enhance and build your team. Get the word out and welcome members who wish to get involved. Your State Association is here for you, your Lodges, and your membership. Do not hesitate to reach out for information, help, or assistance. They have a wealth of information and knowledge available to assist.

Members, I urge you to become involved with your Lodge and the State Association. Consider volunteering at your Lodge or State Committee, Elks Camp Barrett, Youth programs, Veterans programs, The Jernick Fund, and State Vice President or State Trustee. Remember, your participation is the great heart and strength of your Lodge, this association, and the order. Remember too, as we move into the new Lodge year, we must remain: Steadfast in the growth of our Lodges and their membership, Steadfast

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## SPRING CONFERENCE AGENDA

**MARCH 20-22, 2026 AT SEVERNA PARK LODGE #2482, SEVERNA PARK, MD 21146**



<b>Fri. March 20</b>	
Noon-5:00PM	Registration Severna Park Lodge #2482
12:00 Noon	Past Ladies & Gentlemen's Luncheon - Dive Bar & Grille (By Invite Only)
12:00 -2:00 PM	Complimentary lunch, Lounge
1:00 PM	Advisory Meeting, Denault Room, Downstairs
3:30 PM	ECB Executive Committee Meeting Location Bahler hall
5:00 PM	State Trustees Meeting Location Bahler Hall
6:00 - 11:00 PM	Dinner, Karaoke, 11th Hour Toast
<b>Sat. March 21</b>	
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Buffet Breakfast, Severn Park Lounge
8:00 AM-12:00 PM	Registration Severna Park 2482
8:00 AM - 8:45 AM	ECB Representatives Meeting "Bahler Hall"
9:00 AM	Workshop Called to Order "Bahler Hall"
9:00 AM -9:30 AM	Introductions, Invocation, Pledge, Roll Call, Credential Report Etc.
9:30 AM -11:50 AM	Presentations, Committee Reports
9:30 AM	Convention Committee - Mary Underwood
9:40 AM	Americanism - Joy Schreck
9:50 AM	William. J. Jernick Memorial Fund - Judy Black, (Donations Accepted)
10:00 AM	Welcome Home, Army of Hope - Carl Robinson, Lou Schmeltzer (Donations Accepted)
10:10 AM	Website-Brad Medley
10:20 AM	Ritualistic-Dan Kane
10:30 AM	Accident Prevention - Mike Ford
10:40 AM	Training-Kevin Rose
10:50 AM	Elks Camp Barrett - Ben Stone (Donations Accepted)
11:00 AM	Drug Awareness Program, State Camarena Award - Angela Meyer
11:10 AM	Elks National Foundation - Janice Mekovsky
11:20 AM	Elks and Scouting - Tanner Bilborough
11:30 AM	Hoop Shoot-Dewayne Wilcher
11:40 AM	Soccer Shoot - Tommy Patterson
11:50 AM	Trustee Report - Donna Curp
12:00 PM	Announcements & Recess until 9:00 AM, Sunday, March 22
12:00-1:30 PM	Lunch, "Bahler Hall"
1:00 PM	SDGER John Loftus ,GER Bryan Klatt Meeting with DDGERs & PSPs/DLs –Director’s Room
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Workshop Sessions, Times TBA
	Training- Proper Protocol for Lodge Meetings, Bahler Hall
	Training-State Association Website, Bahler Hall

	Con-Con, June Conference, July Grand Lodge, Bahler Hall
	Ritual Competition-Flag Charge, 11th Hour Toast, Denault Room
2:30 PM	Special Meeting with GL Sponsor (if called) Location Directors Room
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM	<b>Cocktail hour Dinner and Presentations</b>
	Honoring Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and First Lady Susan Business dress, jacket and tie
8:30 PM -10:00 PM	Live Entertainment
10:00 PM -	Social, Lounge
<b>Sun. March 22</b>	
7:00AM-8:30 AM	Continental Breakfast, Severna Park Lounge
8:00AM-9:00 AM	Registration Severna Park
9:00 AM	Workshop Called to Order, Bahler Hall
9:00AM-9:30 AM	Invocation, Pledge, Credential Report
9:30 AM-10:30 AM	Presentations, Committee Reports
9:00 AM	Government Relations/Charity Reporting Nikki Evans
9:10 AM	Membership - John Opitz
9:20 AM	Lodge Activities - Jolinda Murray
9:30 AM	Scholarship—Erin Muscararella
	Missed Committees as need and time allows
9:40 AM	Advisory Report - Mary E. Cardinal-Vogt
9:50 AM Bus. Mtg.	Secretary's Report - Betty Hardin
	Treasurer's Report - Jackie Phillips
	Unfinished/New Business, Elections, Balloting
<b>COMMENTS</b>	
	State Sponsor, PGER-Malcom J. McPherson, Jr.
	Special Guest, Area 2 Ritualistic Committee Peggy Berry
	Grand Trustee - Sandra Brantner
	State President Elect -John Opitz
	State President - Ken Chapman
	Special Deputy GER - John Loftus
	Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan Klatt
	Sickness & Distress / Remembrance of Departed Members
	Announcements-Awards - Raffle Drawings
ADJOURNMENT	Prayer by State Chaplain-Raderrio Wilkins
Next Meeting	State Convention-Maritime Institute Convention Center June 5th-7th
<b>May 1</b>	<b>June Newsletter Deadline</b>

**MD, DE & DC ELKS ASSOCIATION NEWS 2023-2024 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION**

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**MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND EXALTED RULER BRYAN R. KLATT**

**LET'S HAVE A SMOOTH TRANSITION AS THE LODGE YEAR ENDS**

As the Lodge year is coming to a close, you still have the opportunity to complete some unfinished projects and end strong.

At this time, review our programs on elks.org to see what awards and certificates of achievement you can give to your Members or get for the Lodge. One such program is the All American Lodge Contest "A". All Lodges should apply to see where your Lodge stands and where you can make improvements for next year.

March is also the deadline for all yearly contributions to Elks National Foundation. I hope your Lodge has met, or is close to meeting, the \$5.15 per Member goal. The ENF provides funding to your State Association, as well as for your Lodge community activity programs. Most programs funded by your Lodge could be funded by ENF, which creates even more opportunities for your Lodge to have a greater impact.

Best wishes to all our new Lodge Officers

who are going to be committed to governing the many practices and traditions that are fundamental to making our Lodges the best they can be. I hope that the transition will be smooth because it's important that the GER Bryan R. Klatt experienced Officers mentor and help the new Officers to make the Lodge year a success.

Exalted Rulers, as soon as possible, your selections for committee appointments should be given to your Secretary who will enter the information into CLMS2.

Leaders of the Lodge, it is time to solidify your budget for the upcoming year and make any adjustments that are needed. This important information needs to be entered into the Financial Reporting System.

Thank you for your dedication to the Order and Be The Difference by promoting "Elks Care— Elks Share."

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

April 5	Easter Sunday
April 19	Americanism Luncheon
May 24	ECB Picnic
June 5-7	State Convention Maritime Conference Center Linthicum, MD
<b>May 1</b>	<b>NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>



**SPECIAL DEPUTY GRAND ER JOHN LOFTUS, SDGER**

Ocean City Lodge #2645  
k9sgt2x@gmail.com | 302-430-8202

Welcome to the 2026 Spring Workshop! This is a particularly exciting weekend! We have with us both our Sponsor, Malcolm McPherson, and his wife, Pat, and our Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan Klatt, and his wife, Susan. Our State President, Ken Chapman, and his team have been hard at work planning this event, and I am confident that you will both have fun, and learn something to take home to your Lodge.

It has long been my experience that the fellow Elks that we meet and befriend at events such as this workshop often become valued resources as we matriculate through the chairs and offices in our own Lodge. As the Exalted Ruler instructs a candidate, "We by each other oft may be aided in our part, or from each other catch inspiration for a high

resolve; and to this end exists the Brotherhood of Elks." I encourage you to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship of the weekend, but at the same time, do not forget to learn something new to take back to your Lodge while building your "network" to aid you in your work.

For those of you who may not have had the opportunity to meet our Grand Exalted Ruler, I assure you that he is very approachable. Please take a moment to welcome him and his wife to our Association and let them know how much we appreciate their visit.

As always, Eileen and I look forward to seeing everyone as well! Let's have a weekend that makes anyone who is not here wish they had been!!

In the words of the late Louis Goldstein, "God Bless y'all real good!

Fraternally,

*John C. Loftus*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM COVER

in growth and support of the Elks National Foundation, William J. Jernick Fund, the Army of Hope, and Welcome Home Veterans Projects.

Steadfast in support of Elks Camp Barrett, our State Major Project.

Steadfast in identifying the needs of our communities, offering youth activities, scholarships, veteran support, and disaster relief.

As Danelle and I have visited our Lodges and represented our Association, we have realized the great honor and privilege you have bestowed upon us. We are truly humbled and amazed at the accomplishments of our Lodges, members, and the Association achieves. You truly personify my motto of "Steadfast in Elkdom" through your commitment to the principles of our order, Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity. Danelle and I wish to thank you for your gracious hospitality and friendship you have shown us during our visits. We wish you continued success in the years to come. This great associations' Lodges and membership are truly the heart of our Order.

I greatly appreciate the support I have received from our State Sponsor, Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, Advisory, Lodges, Membership, Officers, Trustees, and State Chairs. Thank you for all your hard work.

Our State Convention will be on June 5th to the 7th at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum, Maryland. Danelle and I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Remember to – Grasp the Hand of Friendship, Revel in the Good Times, and CELEBRATE the great accomplishments of our Lodges, Membership, and the State Association.

Fraternally,

*Ken Chapman*

State President

*"God Bless our Country, Armed Services, Veterans, Those Who Gave All, and The Benevolent Order of Elks, and all the Good They Stand For!"*



## TRAINING

**KEVIN ROSE, PDDGER**

Glen Burnie Lodge #2266 | 410-984-0079 |  
littlebratzdad@yahoo.com

Strong training is one of the most important ways we support the success of our Lodges. Well prepared officers create stability, strengthen leadership, and ensure our Lodges operate in full compliance with Grand Lodge Statutes.

Training helps officers understand their responsibilities, manage Lodge business effectively, and uphold the traditions and values of the Order. District Deputy Clinics and State Workshops provide essential guidance, updates, and shared learning that benefit every Lodge.

Just as important, training brings members together. These gatherings build fellowship, encourage collaboration, and connect Lodges across the state. When we learn from one another, we grow stronger as a fraternal organization.

A well-trained Lodge is better equipped to serve veterans, youth, and the community. By investing in training, we invest in the future of our Order—and ensure the Elks continue to make a meaningful impact for generations to come.

Past Exalted Rulers (PERs) play a vital role in the strength and continuity of every Elks Lodge. After completing their year as Exalted Ruler, PERs carry valuable experience that helps guide and support the Lodge. They serve as mentors to incoming officers, assist with ceremonies and ritual work, and help preserve the traditions that define our Order.

Most Lodges maintain an active PER Association, which provides leadership, training, and support for Lodge programs throughout the year. Their dedication ensures stability, continuity, and a strong foundation for future leaders. PERs remain an essential part of our success—and we are grateful for their continued service.

*Kevin*



## PRESIDENT-ELECT

**JOHN OPITZ, JR.**

Abingdon Lodge No. 2354  
Cell: 410-591-6123 | Email: mtlian@comcast.net

Hello all, and welcome Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and First Lady Susan. Thank you to Severna Park Lodge and all your members and officers for hosting this wonderful weekend.

Your President-Elect has been busy with the good works of our Association. We are working hard to set next year's visit with the next Grand Exalted Ruler in March of 2027; an announcement will be forthcoming. Many things are occurring, and I look forward to updating you on the coming year.

Our President, Ken Chapman, is conducting his visits and advising me on all the good the Lodges of this Association are doing. I'm excited to be able to do a few visits myself next year.

Our next gathering of the Association will be on June 5-7 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum, MD. I hope to see you all there.

Let's all remain "Steadfast in Elkdom" and make our Association the pride of this great Order.

*John Opitz*

**Elks Care – Elks Share**



## ELKS CAMP BARRETT

**ANGELA M. MEYER**

Director of Operations Elks Camp Barrett  
 ecbsecretary@outlook.com | 410-224-2945 (camp)  
 410-739-5575 (cell)

As MD, DE, DC Elks have managed to get through the heavy snowfalls, and winter blues. The change in season is noticeable, and spirits are lifting as the weather improves. Fortunately, at Elks Camp Barrett, EC the Bee and his staff, volunteers, and the executive committee never really succumbed to the winter blues. They were too busy preparing for our first guests of the new year 2026 – War Fighter Advance in February, making sure everything was ready for a “warm as possible” welcome. WFA were welcomed in February with a clean and happy snow-covered campus, warm cabins to sleep in, and 4 more inches of snow on their first night. But the ECB was ready, and WFA evolution #45 was one for the record books.

As this March newsletter is released at our State Spring Conference, WFA is busy with their March evolution #46. We hope the Ides of March are welcoming, not something to beware of. This special group has all the makings of a group that will be with us for a very long time, like Camp Sunrise and many others. Take it from EC Bee, this group is great and full of truly great people.

Preparations for this year’s summer camp are progressing smoothly. At this stage, we are focused on hiring and actively seeking dedicated counselors and lifeguards to join our team. This is a great opportunity for responsible young men and women, 18 years of age or older, who are interested in serving as counselors during our camp session from July 6th through July 24th. If you know someone who would be a good fit and is interested in making a positive impact this summer, please encourage them to reach out to Angela at ecbsecretary@outlook.com.

We will have two camp weeks this year, both Co-Ed and a week of staff training. Camp Dates are listed in this Newsletter and on the FB Page. As always, any Elk member who wants to help us with camp is appreciated and

should call **2026 CAMP DATES** Angela

Staff Week	Monday–Saturday July 6 –11
Co-ed 5 night residential camp	Sunday–Friday July 12–17
Co-ed 4 night residential camp	Sunday–Thursday July 19–23

At ECB The small pavilion has been enclosed to make a large classroom for War Fighters Advanced for use in February, March and April.

The enclosures are being made with used materials and little expense. Thank you John Meyer and Cameron Cage, caretaker.

Photo below shows the enclosure.



Below is the inside cassette for the Mitsubishi heat unit, 2 in each Cabin #6



War Fighter Advanced Staff and attendees hold a hand crocheted flag bed cover - a prize for their next fundraiser.



## LODGE ACTIVITIES

**JOLINDA MURRAY**, State Chair

Broadneck Lodge 2608  
443-994-5049 jolindamurray322@gmail.com

Greetings!

I am excited to be your new State Chairperson for Lodge Activities.

As the end of the Elk year is upon us, so is the deadline for the All American Lodge Contest. A. Exalted Rulers, information regarding this contest can be found in your "Quick Links" section at elks.org and has also been provided to you by your District Deputies Grand Exalted Ruler.

The deadline for Lodges to submit their entry to their District Deputies is April 1<sup>st</sup>. There is still plenty of time to participate in this great event.

Speaking of events, I will be working with the webmaster for our state website to incorporate all Lodge activities on a central calendar so that we can all support each other and know what's going on around the state association. Stay tuned – more to come. I am also looking for ideas and recommendations on how to increase involvement statewide and introduce some friendly competitions to spice things up. Please feel free to call or email me.

Yours in Elkdom

*Jolinda*



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**NICOLE EVANS**, Chairperson

Selbyville Lodge #2173 | Phone: 302-236-5093  
n.ireland0326@gmail.com

As we move towards the end of the 2025-2026 Lodge year, I want to remind you that your Lodge's charitable hours are due by May 1st. As I am writing this submission, there are still 3, yes THREE, Lodges that have yet to post a one-hour, one-mile, or one-dollar donation. That's 11 months of information just waiting in the wind... to hopefully be entered into the system. To whoever is entering this information, most likely the secretary, you are putting more work and stress on yourself. A quote that most of us should recognize: "Never put off until tomorrow, what you can do today."

As the new 2026-2027 Lodge year approaches, with the new regimes starting, let's make an effort to give a more accurate representation of all the good things our Lodges are doing for our communities. Thank you to the 34 Lodges that have entered information. Please make sure that as much information as possible is entered. There are a few Lodges that have entered monetary donations of less than \$2000... some still have a 0 in that category. Some Lodges have \$0 in the non-cash category. My go-to scenario to understand the difference between cash and non-cash donations is: If your Lodge donates a \$1,000 check to an organization, that is a cash donation. If your Lodge donates \$1,000 worth of items (food, clothing, etc.), that is a non-cash donation.

I want to wish the new officers luck in the upcoming year. Whether you are a new or a veteran member, please do not hesitate to reach out for help when it comes to reporting for Government Relations.



**RADERRIO (RA) WILKINS**

**STATE CHAPLAIN** PG County Lodge #1778

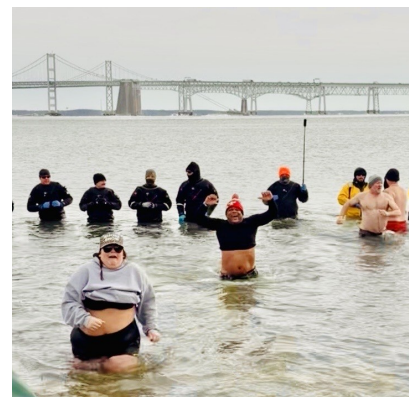
Brothers and Sisters in Elkdom,

As members of the MD-DE-DC State Association observed Presidents' Day, we paused to honor the legacy of our nation's leaders beginning with George Washington and expanding to include fellow brethren John F. Kennedy (Boston, MA Lodge No. 10), Harry S. Truman (Kansas City, MO Lodge No. 26), Gerald R. Ford (Grand Rapid, MI Lodge No. 48) and Franklin D. Roosevelt (Poughkeepsie, NY Lodge No. 275). This day invites us to reflect on the enduring principles that guide our democracy, commitment to the Constitution of the United States, stewardship of the spirit of American patriotism, and the responsibility to safeguard the well-being of the American people.

The above principles are profoundly connected to the mission of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Our work is grounded in gold standard humanitarian services, grants that impact individuals' lives, and collaborations that strengthen and advance the health, safety, and resilience of communities nationwide. Our Elks Association's unwavering commitment to perpetuating a drug-free environment by eliminating use and abuse of illegal drugs by all members of society, supporting our veterans in all areas of increased need to raising funds

supporting over 19,000 Maryland Special Olympic athletes, exemplifies the spirit of public service that Presidents' Day celebrates: leadership rooted in integrity, evidence, and a common good to mankind.

No matter how you spent your Presidents' Day, I hope it offered a sense of renewal and inspiration for the important work ahead. As dedicated members of the MD-DE-DC State Association, we will continue to serve people and communities through our benevolent programs, demonstrating that Elks Care and Elks Share.



30th Annual Polar Bear Plunge into the Chesapeake Bay on 1/31/26. Chaplain Ra's 20th consecutive year plunging for a great cause.



**DEWAYNE WILCHER, STATE CHAIR**

Camp Springs Lodge #2332  
240-882-8785 dewaynewilcher@yahoo.com

**HOOP SHOOT WINNERS MOVING ON**

March madness started early at the Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia State Association Hoop Shoot Tournament. Despite the impending snow, contestants, family, friends, and Lodge members came out to support the event which was made even more festive with the participation of Goldstarz Marching Band of Baltimore. A big thank you to our 44 volunteers who made this a success. Congratulations to our winners moving on to Charlottesville on March 6-8 for the Region 10 Finals.



**SCHOLARSHIP**

**ERIN MUSCARELLA**, State Chair  
Laurel #2283 | (C) 301-922-5453

Our State Association received 690 Most Valuable Student (MVS) scholarship applications across 36 of our Lodges.

The state-level judging ran from February 5-23, 2026.

The Skilled Trades Scholarship application is available on our state website. This application should be completed in full, and submissions are due by March 15, 2026. Any high school graduate who has graduated between 2022 and 2025, or will graduate in 2026 is eligible. We are funded to give out 10 scholarships each year.

*Erin*

Division	Name	Lodge	Score	Overtime	Division	Name	Lodge	Score	Over-
<b>8-9 Boys</b>	William Polling	Hagerstown	15		<b>8-9 Girls</b>	Kinzley Faith	Hagerstown	17	
	Dylan Skinner	Easton	20	3		Kaila Bell	Selbyville	NS	
	<b>Christian Tullson</b>	Havre de Grace	21	5		Penelope Johnson	Chestertown	NS	
	Bruno Buras	Severna Park	21	3		Kadia Johnson	Severna Park	NS	
	Benjamin Hall	Calvert	20	4		<b>Sienna Jain</b>	Prince George	21	
<b>10-11 Boys</b>	Vincent Leon	Hagerstown	15		<b>10-11 Girls</b>	Kaliyah Brown	Waldorf	14	
	Gabe Wideman	Cape Henlopen	14			Julie Chmelik	Ocean City	16	
	Lucas Cliett	Dover	13			Charli Robinson	Dover	NS	
	<b>Jack Burke</b>	Severna Park	21			Maysie Tolentino	Towson	9	
	Kayden	Calvert	20			<b>Kamryn Fleming</b>	Hagerstown	19	
<b>12-13 Boys</b>	Connor Wynne	Westminster	NS		<b>12-13 Girls</b>	Vivian Malott	Hagerstown	18	
	Lukas Queen	Ocean City	20			Sloan Martus	Calvert	16	
	Isaiah Johnson	Dover	16			Raleigh Thompson	Chestertown	14	
	<b>Cole Herring</b>	Severna Park	21	4		<b>Kinzi Da Graca</b>	Towson	20	
	Blake Garrison	Calvert	21	3		Mackenzie Bean	Cape Henlopen	17	



There was a band and cheerleaders.



## MEMBERSHIP

**JOHN OPITZ, JR.**

Abingdon Lodge No. 2354  
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mtlian@comcast.net

Greetings to all, and a sincere hope that everyone weathered this winter in good health. Welcome, Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and First Lady Susan. Here is a brief report on membership thus far this year.

We started this year with 20789 members, and we currently have 21663. We still have 1389 delinquents. That would leave us with a loss for the year of 515. We also have 293 candidates waiting. You can do the math, we are on track for a loss this year unless some last weeks of the year heroics are delivered by our Lodge membership committees. We are well behind last year's numbers in all categories. But as I say, this time last year was doom and gloom, and our membership committees had me "eating crow" when we finished with an increase.

Our Order gained membership last year, which is great news nationally. We have had positive growth for four years in a row; we are now going for five years in a row. Let's "Thrive with Five"

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 2079 new members. For the year, we added 1,681 new members, so this goal is achievable with some hard work.

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 available in the "members only" section of Elks.org.

The billing program will deliver some upgrades for the new Lodge year. There is now an "ACH" payment option available if the individual Lodge wants to use it.

On January 11th, a webinar, "Improving Lodge Membership and Reducing Delinquency," was held. It was quite informative and is available on the Grand Lodge website, under the "webinars" tab in the Membership guide.

Grand Lodge still has the digital photo frame program. This is a fun thing to share with new members. Take a photo of the group of new members, and either email it to Rick Gathen, rickg@elks.org, or get to the Jolly Cork Facebook page and upload it there. You will receive an emailed digital photo of your group with our Grand Exalted Ruler added in with his motto, "Be the Difference".

Please be aware that an initiation does not have to be part of a Lodge meeting; it can be held as a standalone 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 in order for our leaders in recruitment and initiations. Our current leaders are Cape Henlopen, Calvert, Ocean City, Salisbury, and Towson. 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 directory.

*John Opitz*



## DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

**ANGELA MEYER, CHAIRPERSON**

MD, DE, DC Elks Association  
410-739-5575 elksserve24pres@gmail.com

### CONTESTS GIVE YOUTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN IN THE DRUG PREVENTION EFFORT

The volunteers of the Elks Drug Awareness Program are beginning the new year with renewed strength and focus. With the positive strides that the government has made on the dismantling of the drug trade routes into the United States, there are still powerful Drug distribution cartels hard at work poisoning our children and crushing our families. Undaunted, DAP continues its mission to help prevent our children from falling into a world of addiction. The best defense against drug abuse is for children, and adults, for that matter, to never start. We all want our children to be safe, and our communities and country to be successful. DAP volunteers are hard work, and the prize seems elusive. Knowing that our efforts could save a child from a lifetime of addiction is their only reward. Failure is never an option for our DAP volunteers; the risks are too high.

Every DAP volunteer has access to a huge tool chest of materials, lesson plans, videos, contests, and events to help spread the word and boost our drug abuse and prevention cause. Your DAP District Chairperson can provide your Lodge DAP chairperson and youth activities chairs with these items and other things, and is available for assistance when needed. When planning your Lodge youth activities, or any activities for that matter, please get your DAP volunteers involved.

As of the creation of this article, no contest entries have been received. The State Chair has extended the submission dates to the very last dates possible. The LAST CHANCE to enter the 2025 - 2026 DAP Poster, Essay, and Video Contests is as follows:

All Winning Lodge entries must be sent to the District Chairperson no later than April 6th.

All District winners must be given to the State Chairperson (in hand) no later than April 12th.

**The theme for 2025-2026 is: "Drugs are a Grave Mistake."**

All the information you need is available on <https://training.elksdap.org/contests/>

Prizes for the State winners include a \$100.00 amazon gift card. Additionally, the State poster contest winner receives the opportunity to have their poster compete at the national level. The winning poster at the national level will be published on the cover of the next DAP Coloring book. Please encourage your Lodge to get entries for these great DAP contests. Winners will be announced at the 2026 Grand Lodge Convention.



## ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION AND ARMY OF HOPE

**LOUIS B. SCHMELTZER, JR.**

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

### THE ARMY OF HOPE

The Army of Hope has been active in assisting Veterans who are suffering setbacks. Since mid-December of last year to the time of this report, thankfully, we have had only a few requests for assistance totaling \$3,157.00. I say that because there have not been many requests from needy Veterans lately. The account balance can dwindle quickly if there is a "spurt" of requests for aid, which is normally how they come. Over the years, we have given many folks some solace in return for their sacrifices to keep us safe, and I know that we would not want to see that peace of mind become jeopardized by a shortage of funds.

Please remember this important committee when you prepare your budgets for the upcoming Lodge year, and ask your House Committee to hold some fundraising events for the Vets. As you may or may not know, funds for the Army of Hope are provided solely by donations from the Lodges of our State Association.

### THE E.N.V.S.C.

The representatives of the Elks National Veterans Service Committee are working hard to lift the spirits of our Veterans in the VA hospitals and the USO facilities. The restrictions that were previously hampering the volunteers in their access to the facilities are no longer as strict. Therefore, these dedicated Elk representatives are again able to do what they do in the form of gifts, toiletries, gift cards, bus trips, barber visits, games & puzzles, etc.

*Louis*



## ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

**JAN MEKOVSKY**

ENF State Chair Pocomoke City Lodge #1624  
667-221-2482 | janmekovsky@gmail.com

A common question is: "Why donate to ENF if it doesn't directly benefit our Lodge?" This is a common misconception. Last year, every \$1 our association gave to ENF returned \$2.82 through grants and support—totaling \$801,220.

Key funding highlights:

- \$349,000 in CIP Grants for local Lodges (2025-2026)
- \$111,000 in Gratitude Grants
- \$47,000 in bonus grants (up 35 from last year)
- \$16,000 in Freedom Grants for veteran projects
- \$148,000 in Beacon Grants

- \$74,000 in Spotlight Grants
- \$17,580 for Veterans, supporting visits, activities, and essential supplies
- Lodges can seek reimbursement for Welcome Home kits, and FOCUS grants to assist homeless veterans with household items
- \$342,140 for State Charities, Special Projects, and Bonus Grants, including Camp Barrett, youth events like Soccer and Hoop Shoots, Drug Awareness, and Emergency Education Grants
- \$80,000 in Scholarships (Most Valuable Student and Legacy Scholarships, increasing next year)

ENF donations have a clear and substantial impact on our local Lodges through these programs and grants. Your support of ENF plays a crucial role in enabling your local Lodge and the State Association to maintain its charitable initiatives and uphold its reputation for service.

*Jan*

## AMERICANISM

**JOY SCHRECK**, State Chair

908.307.0615  
joyschreck@verizon.net



I would really like to thank all the local Lodges and, particularly, all the district chairs for promoting Americanism throughout their communities and schools. Although we did not meet my goal of 100% participation, it will give us something to strive for next year!

At this time, I would like to announce that the luncheon will be held at Cape Henlopen Lodge #2540 on April 19th at noon, and I am in the process of sending out the invitations.

Remember that Americanism shouldn't only be promoted during the essay contest but all year round. Consider including local youth to participate in your flag day ceremony. Consider reaching out to local schools to have kids write thank-you cards for veterans that can be given to a local Veterans Home. Remember, those thank you cards can be used as a submission to the poster contest!

I am committed to promoting Americanism and am available to answer any questions or offer advice. Please let me know if there is anything that I can help with!

Fraternally,

*Joy*

## Elks Camp Barrett 2026 Improvement Fund Raffle

Louis B. Schmeltzer, Jr. Annapolis Lodge #622  
410-627-5179 | louschmeltzer@gmail.com

This year's raffle is underway. If you have not received your tickets, you should soon. On behalf of the Camp, I want to thank you in advance for your generosity. The tickets are again being offered at \$10.00 each and six for \$50.00. We ask that each member buy at least one ticket (or all six, if able) and also sell them to friends, neighbors, and co-workers. This not only helps the Camp but also gives non-members a chance to win. If you want more tickets, contact me, and I'll see that you get them.

The Improvement Fund is always in need of your help due to the never-ending stream of maintenance issues that require attention. This raffle is the primary source of income for those repairs.

The raffle will take place at around 4 PM on the day of the annual Family Day Picnic on May 24th, which will kick off the summer at Camp Barrett. Please plan to attend a very enjoyable day of food, drink, games for kids & adults, and lots of interaction with other Elks and guests. I hope to see you there.

## Elks Care — Elks Share



Our annual Elks Camp Barrett Picnic will be here before you know it, and we're gearing up for another great day of fun, fellowship, and service. To make this event run smoothly, we're asking for volunteers who can help by rotating through the various stations throughout the day.

If you're able to help a station for an hour or so, your support would make a tremendous difference. Whether it helps with games, food service, setup, or general assistance, every pair of hands helps create a memorable experience for the kids and families who attend.

Please reach out to Kevin Rose or Matt Briggs if you're able to volunteer or would like more information. Even a short shift goes a long way in supporting this important event.

Thank you for your dedication and for helping us continue the great work for Elks Camp Barrett.

Thank you.

Kevin Rose and Matt Briggs,  
Your Friendly PDDGERS



## ACCIDENT PREVENTION REPORT MIKE FORD

State Chair | Abington Lodge #2354  
410-977-8230 | prinklergod26@yahoo.com



### WHAT'S NEXT?

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Spring and congratulations to all the new Officers for the upcoming Elk Year. There are many things to consider as a new Officer of your Lodge. You should be familiar with your Lodge By-Laws and House Committee Rules as well as State and Grand Lodge By-Laws. This will save you a lot of time, and possible headaches in the future, so know the rules. You also need to plan for possibilities and probabilities. So, "What's Next?" Well, I'll tell you.

I'm talking about making sure your Lodge Safety Team or Person is on top of their game. It's more than just doing a checklist every month and signing off on it. We must be aware of potential issues around the Lodge. Such as trees dropping limbs, slight plumbing leaks, or even scorched outlets. All of these can turn into major problems. They usually happen at 3:30am on a weekend morning when no one is around thus turning it into a catastrophic problem. Just a little reminder that our insurance deductibles are now at \$10,000.00. So, if you do have an accident or Lodge damage, you will have to pick and choose when to tap into that deductible.

Also, we need to go through the Lodge and make record of any new furniture, equipment, or property for your insurance coverage. I would suggest calling ahead and schedule an insurance adjuster to come out and make sure everything is accounted for. We don't need to pay for things we don't own anymore. Bottom line is that we need to stay on top of insurance business, so we don't get burned. Again, if you have any questions, ideas, or accident reports, don't hesitate to give me a call.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Severna Park,

*Mike*

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**PICKIN' 4 TROOPS**  
SATURDAY  
AUGUST 22, 2026  
FROM 12-6:00 PM  
At **ELKS CAMP BARRETT**  
1001 Chesterfield Rd., Annapolis, MD 21401  
RSVP: STU 410-608-4587 OR KEN CHAPMAN 410-533-5909



## NORTH EAST VP

### JOHN RAFFERTY

Wilmington Lodge #307  
Cell: 610-357-9047 (H) 610-358-0608

Well, you read the rest, now here's the best.... North East District

Happy Birthday to B.P.O.E. founded February 16th, 1868.

**Abingdon Lodge #2354**—ENF has increased to \$19.29 per member, meeting both the Grand Lodge and State Association Goals.

Lodge is sponsoring a break room at one of the local residence halls at PerryPoint VA Medical Center and the Veterans Committee is in the process of planning activities for 2026.

**Abingdon Lodge #2354** hosted an All-American dinner for the local Americanism Poster & Essay winners. Winners moved on to the District Final at Wilmington Lodge on February 22nd.

The Lodge continues to host Karaoke nights, Flip-five, bingo, craft night, shuffleboard league, and Friday night dinners have started again.

The Lodge is currently under a Restoration Project for the Men's Lavatory. The project is ahead of schedule and was expected to be completed by the end of February. Upon completion of the Restoration Project, the Lodge plans to hold an Open House for Elk Community awareness and promote new Memberships.

**Chestertown Lodge #2474**—Friday Dinners were held on 3 out of 4 dates during the month, with proceeds benefiting the general fund.

PER hosts bingo on the 3rd Friday of each month they held a gun raffle, and the Pool Leagues play Monday nights, and holds Shuffleboard every Sunday afternoon.

Lodge had 1 District Hoop Shoot winner advancing to the state finals.

There is a weekly drawing for Queen of Hearts, and Soup & Sandwich dinner was served on Sundays in January. They had a Dinner Dance at the Lodge in January with music from the Great Train Robbery Band.

**Dover Lodge #1903**—Bingo every Wednesday of the month, Dinner every Friday of the month, and Flip Five twice a month.

January 17th, Dover Lodge hosted the District Hoop Shoot,

In January there was a Chili contest with 11 members participating, They hosted the Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby. They had a made-to-order breakfast & Super Bowl Party and a Valentine's Dinner shortly after.

The Lodge has met ENF-GER & State President goals, received 2 Grants: 1 grant will be hosting Suds & Story at a local laundry facility. Parents will receive vouchers to do laundry, and children pick out a book to take home.

The other grant will be used to purchase and install 2 Basketball hoops for the outdoor recreation area of a local school.

A Charity Quarter Auction to be held on Saturday, March 14th.

**Havre De Grace Lodge #1564**—The Lodge Hoop Shoot was held in December with 20 participants. Four went on to the District Hoop Shoot & one entry will be at the State Finals at Oxen Hill.

During February, Lodge collected donations for "Hearts for ENF." Members donated to have their name put on a heart and displayed in the lounge. Proceeds going to ENF.

The Lodge applied and received a William J. Jernick fund request for \$2,500 for a young girl who has lymphoma. A check was presented to Family by NE DDGER Lou Mueller, who is also the NE District Jernick Fund Chairman, and Betty Hardin, State Association & Lodge Secretary.

The Lodge initiated 2 new members.

**Milford Lodge #2401**—On January 29th, a Lodge Meeting was attended by State President Ken Chapman & District Vice-President John Rafferty.

They presented a check to Food Bank of Delaware for \$6,000, combining the Beacon & Spotlight grants.

Food and Christmas gifts were delivered to needy families in our area using the Gratitude grant, while a community grant was received and is benefiting area teachers with school supplies. The freedom grant was used to purchase a new game table at the Veterans' home, requested by the Veterans.

The Lodge held a quarter auction which will benefit ENF and needy families.

**Newark Lodge #2281**—The January 13th Lodge Meeting was attended by State President Ken Chapman & Northeast District Vice-President John Rafferty.

There was a Children's Valentine's Party, February 7th & Sweethearts' Dinner, February 13th. Both were a huge success. They have a Queen of Hearts drawing every Saturday at 4:30 pm, and play Flip Five every Friday at 7:00 pm. A Hoagie Day Fundraiser was February 28th, along with Designer Bingo.

Membership appreciation day was in March. It is a day when members can pay dues and get a free meal.

They held Karaoke, dancing and live music every weekend in February and March.

On January 13th, Lodge members voted to donate \$1,000 to the Delaware State Trooper Snook Family. Rest in Peace Trooper Snook.

Lodge needs 1 more Fidelity member to reach (2) \$500 Bonuses for the Gratitude grant. ENF Donations: 1st in District with \$24.33 per member.

**Wilmington Lodge #307**—held a Flip Five fundraiser in December, raising \$305 for the Delaware Food Bank.

Lodge had 5 students submit Essays/Posters to the Northeast District Americanism contest.

They had a Fundraiser for Corporal Matthew Snook, Delaware State Trooper, who lost his life in the line of duty, raised \$2,250.

Wilmington Lodge had 24 applications for the Most Valuable Student Award, 6 advanced to the district, with 4 moving on to the State final.

Continued on page 16



## WEST DISTRICT VP

**CHRIS A. POTTER**

Hagerstown Lodge #378

Cell: 301-331-9270 | capotter61@gmail.com

Unbelievably, our current Elks year is coming to a close! What a great year it has been! Let's close our year with a real push to reduce our membership delinquencies and get those candidates initiated. We want to get them involved early so they can experience the true meaning of Elkdom by participating in their local Lodge's activities and supporting their local community service projects.

**Frostburg Lodge #470** continues to shine with its commitment to serving the families of children in its communities by providing a combined amount of \$7,200 in financial support for equipment and travel expenses through the William J Jernick Fund.

Our Hoop Shoot competition is in full swing, and the West District did an amazing job in supporting this great program with 99 participants this year for the local competitions! Congratulations to all the Shooters that advanced to the District level, with 5 of the 6 coming out of Hagerstown Lodge #378! A special thank you to all the Hoop Shoot Chairs for your hard work and dedication!



### Hoop Shoot Competition at Frostburg and Hagerstown

**Frederick Lodge #684** continues to shine with a variety of fantabulous activities for everyone to experience, including Music Bingo, Trivia Night, and the Murder Mystery.

Now, as we are preparing for our new Elk year, I remind the Lodges to get as many Officers as possible to one of the two offered Training sessions! Our Officers, especially new Officers, need this training to get them on the path of

success! I'd like to challenge our Lodges to evaluate how our Lodges conduct orientations and use it as a recruitment opportunity with your new candidates.

I've certainly enjoyed the great hospitality from all the Elkstastic Lodges I've been able to visit in not only the West District, but throughout our spectacular State Association and across our beloved Nation!

**Westminster Lodge #2277** pulled out all stops with their wonderful food and initiation ceremony of new members, even though the weather was once again trying to delay us during President Ken and First Lady Danelle Chapman's visit. Thank you again Westminster Lodge #2277 for such a spectacular evening!!



In closing, let us always be mindful of the principles of our order, Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity, and may it guide us in all we do!

Gooooo West!!!

*Chris*



**Westminster Lodge #2277** proudly hosted the Elks Hoop Shoot West District Finals, where student-athletes competed for the opportunity to advance to the Maryland State Finals. Participants from Frostburg, Hagerstown, Oakland, and Westminster Lodges displayed outstanding sportsmanship throughout the competition and were invited back to Westminster Lodge with their families for a celebratory lunch! Good luck at the state finals!

*Submitted by Brendon Hopkins*





## SOUTH WEST VP

### CARA MILLER

Deale Lodge #2528  
Cell: 443-871-3313 | jerzy6129@gmail.com

I continue to be honored and excited to represent our Lodges in the role of Southwest Vice President. Over the past months, I have had the privilege of seeing the outstanding work our members do — from community service and fundraising, to fellowship and maintaining our traditions.

This newsletter highlights just a few of the many efforts taking place across our district. I am proud to share these stories as a reflection of the dedication, compassion, and teamwork that define "Elkdom". Together, we continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of veterans, youth, and our local communities.

**Deale Lodge #2528**—Over the past two months, Deale Elks Lodge #2528 has been actively hosting a variety of community and social events to engage members and the local community. The Lodge hosted its popular Bull and Oyster Roast, which drew a strong turnout and provided an opportunity for fellowship, dining, and socializing. Members and guests also enjoyed weekly Bingo nights, which remain a cornerstone of the Lodge's fundraising and social activities. Regular events such as wings night, steak dinners, cornhole tournaments, trivia, and live music evenings have kept the Lodge vibrant, offering diverse ways for members to connect and participate. The Deale Lodge continues to honor and support our veterans by hosting an enjoyable bowling outing and dinner, as well as maintaining a well-stocked veterans' food pantry to meet their ongoing needs. Overall, Deale Elks Lodge #2528 continues to provide a welcoming space for both social interaction and community involvement.



**St. Mary's Lodge #2092**—Thanks to the ENF Beacon Grant, the Lodge was able to continue supporting last year's Charity Ball recipient, the Southern Maryland Animal Welfare League (SMAWL), by providing much-needed supplies. During the visit, members were especially charmed by an affectionate orange cat who nuzzled up to them. They were delighted to learn that the cat, who had been at the shelter for quite some time, was adopted the very next day — a bit of "Elks luck" at work.

← St. Mary's Elks Lodge also supported the Community Baby Shower through the use of ENF Beacon Grant funds, delivering more than \$2,000



worth of supplies to the Care Net Pregnancy Center of Southern Maryland. Care Net offers free and confidential services for unplanned pregnancies, providing education, support, and professional medical care in Lexington Park and Lusby, Maryland. Truly, Elks Care, Elks Share.

**Waldorf Lodge #2421**—had a meaningful and impactful quarter, continuing its strong commitment to the community. The Lodge awarded \$1,665 to the Charles County Literacy Council to support adult tutoring programs, \$1,665 to the Charles County Sheriff's Office for the Shop With A Cop program, and \$1,670 to the Poiema Movement to assist women and children with safe housing and trauma-informed support.

Looking ahead, the Lodge's Spotlight Grant will benefit Our Place Waldorf, where members will also volunteer twice next month to serve meals to 150–200 individuals each time, combining financial support with hands-on service.

Inside the Lodge, fellowship remains strong. March will feature a St. Patrick's celebration with a corned beef and cabbage dinner, music, and karaoke, followed by the return of the popular Pork Chop Night. Through service, generosity, and community events, Waldorf Elks Lodge #2421 continues to grow stronger while making a lasting local impact.

**Washington-Rockville Lodge #15**—has hosted a number of lively community events focused mainly on live music and themed entertainment. The Lodge celebrated AliFest 2025 with a performance by Midnight Elixir, featuring 40 songs to mark a special birthday celebration. It also welcomed the bluegrass group No Part of Nothin' for a music night and hosted multiple Dirty Soul dance evenings featuring vintage soul and rhythm & blues performances. Additionally, the Lodge offered a Valentine's Day Grateful Dead tribute event called Dead Flowers, as well as a concert featuring Totally Bowie and The Whom, playing hits from David Bowie and The Who. Beyond concerts, the Lodge continues to host seasonal social activities such as Bingo, chili cook-offs, and Trivia Tuesday as part of its regular community offerings.

**Camp Springs Lodge #2332**—has continued its tradition of community engagement and fundraising, with emphasis on activities that support local needs and build fellowship. The Lodge's social calendar over the past two months has included themed weekly gatherings, Friday dance and music nights, and special drawings/raffles to raise funds for its programs and operating needs, helping sustain its charitable work within Prince George's County. Camp Springs Elks Lodge #2332 continues to foster community spirit through fundraising events, social activities, and financial support mechanisms that contribute to youth, education, and charitable impact in the area.

**Calvert Lodge #2620**—continues to show strong growth and positive momentum. With more than 100 new members added over the past eight months, attendance, participation, and overall Lodge activity remain on the rise.

Recent events have been highly successful, including a sold-out Gun Bash that many called the smoothest yet.



## NORTH CENTRAL VP

### KENNETH G. ROUSSEY

Severna Park Lodge #2482  
Phone: 443-250-4201 (C)  
Email: kroussey@verizon.net

I hope you all have been having a safe and prosperous new year and staying warm. The snow/ice storm we recently had was brutal.

The last couple of months in the North Central Lodges have been busy. Along with getting ready for their nominations and elections of new officers for the new Elk year, they were still busy with Lodge events. Below are a few of the highlights:

**Annapolis Lodge # 622**—The Annapolis Lodge is having an Open House event featuring Redd Smoke on February 27th. On February 10th & 24th and again March 10th & 24th, they will be holding a "Show Me the Money" event. The Lodge also has an upcoming Bull and Oyster Roast on March 7th. Please call the Lodge for details of the events.

**Bowie Lodge #2309**—The Bowie Lodge has been busy as well; just last Sunday, February 22nd, they held a Chili Cook-Off. Betsy invited me to attend and help judge the chilies and hot wings for the event. What a great time, 8 chili's and 3 hot wings were entered. All had a fun time, thanks for the invite, Betsy. Bowie will also be having a dance featuring Oracle on March 6th; the dance has already sold out. Bowie is also working hard planning for their big Camp Barrett Fundraiser to be held on April 11th, "The Quarter Auction Raffle".

**Broadneck Lodge #2608**—Broadneck Lodge has quite a bit happening at their Lodge as well. On February 6th, they held an Open Mic Night; on February 21st, the Lodge held a designer purse bingo; and on March 10th, the Lodge will hold a Red Cross Blood Drive. Please come and donate the gift of life if you can.

**Essex Lodge #1866**—Essex Lodge has been busy with lots of regular Lodge events. Senior Bingos, Thursday Wings & Shrimp Night, Saturday Night Special Dinners, and Bingos on Tuesday & Thursday Nights.

**Glen Burnie Lodge #2266**—Things have been hopping at the Glen Burnie Lodge, too! The Lodge just had Oracle, the band, for a Valentine's Night Dinner Dance that sold out. The Lodge has bingo every Tuesday night and a Friday night dinner every week! On February 28th, the Lodge will be holding a "Cheer Mom Cash Bingo," and on February 20th, the Lodge hosted the band "More Cowbell"!

**Laurel Lodge #2283**—Along with Laurel Lodge's regular events of dinners and bingo, the Lodge on March 28th is holding a Quarter Auction to benefit the Meeting Place MD. All proceeds help to feed and care for rescued pets from shelters. A great cause, please attend and contribute if you can.

**Severna Park Lodge #2482**—The Severna Park Elk's team has been busy preparing for the upcoming March conference and visit by our Grand Exalted Ruler to the Lodge, having been a member at Severna Park for over 16 years the GER has never visited the Lodge since I have been there, My fellow members and myself are excited and looking forward to all the MD, DE,

DC Elks Association members and the GER visiting our Lodge. The entire team is working very hard to make sure everyone has an enjoyable weekend. Also, we are kicking off our big Camp Barrett Fundraiser, "Concert for the Camp"! On day, 2 LIVE bands, just like outside concerts back in the day! April 18th, 12 -6 PM, you can buy your tickets to attend at the lounge bar.

**Towson Lodge #469**—Towson has been busy, just like all the other North Central Lodges, with a Potluck Super Bowl Party, Friday night dinners & Music, and, on February 15th, the Brian Tunney Chili cookoff. The Lodge also had a Valentine's Night Bar Bingo.

And all this is just the tip of the iceberg; every Lodge in North Central is busy having events, accomplishing goals, initiating new members, and growing their Lodges!

Corey Bradley, our District Deputy, has announced that his spring DD Clinic is scheduled for Sunday, April 12th at 10 AM at the Essex Lodge. At this clinic, I will be holding the North Central Caucus or election to determine next year's North Central Vice President, State Trustee, and Elks Camp Barrett Representative. Please mark your calendar so you may attend this important meeting.

Lastly, to date, I have visited all the North Central Lodges except for the Towson Lodge, which I will have visited by the time this is published.

I have genuinely enjoyed visiting all our North Central Lodges and made new friends along the way during my year as your VP. We have an Elkstanding group of members across all our Lodges, and we are growing by leaps and bounds! Keep up the good work!

**Baltimore Hunger Project—**  
**Towson Lodge #469** is working with local school districts to give students an opportunity to develop their communication skills and other social skills like empathy. We create a safe environment for kids, we spend time at PTA meetings in both Baltimore County/City.



Photo left: Now we have added, reading. All schools that have received a My Cozy Corner, we will come to your school, read to the kids, work on their reading skills, and then give each child a book to call their own.

Continued on page 16



## SOUTH EAST DISTRICT VP

### JOY SCHRECK

Cape Henlopen Lodge #2540  
Phone: 908-307-0615 (C)  
Email: joyschreck@verizon.net

Hello, my fellow Elks,

The South East is a strong district with an amazing group of Lodges that are thriving even though some may have had their fair share of hurdles. Despite the challenges they have soared above what is just ok to become quite extraordinary. Every Lodge has its own heartbeat its own personality and that should be celebrated. I have had the honor of visiting most of the Lodges in the district and I can tell you that the spirit of Elkdom is strong.

All the Lodges have a strong participation in Veterans programs within their communities as well as supporting local youth programs. They all contribute to many of the programs if not all in some cases. A notable example is the Easton Lodge that recently provided \$5,000 to help a local VA hospital.

Ideally, every Lodge would take an active part in all state programs, including the State Major Project Camp Barrett. I believe that the South East is well on the way to making that happen.

A few of the South East Lodges have major fundraising campaigns happening right now from Cape Henlopen's O'clock game on March 14th, Crisfield planning a gun bash, Kent Island's Cash Bash March 28th to Pocomoke's Big money blowout happening on May 16th. These major campaigns help fund many local charities.

Then there are Lodges that think outside the box and create programs like Selbyville who started a "Flyng Untattered" program where they will replace any tattered flag of a local business for free no questions asked.

*Joy*

**Cape Henlopen Elks Lodge #2540**—As in years past, they made a generous donation to the Bless Our Children fundraiser, supplying underprivileged children in the area with holiday gifts. This year's donation was \$3,000.

All Cancer Dinner Fundraiser was held at **Cape Henlopen Lodge #2540** and all proceeds were donated to the Cancer Support Community Delaware (CSCDE), a nonprofit that the Elks have supported for ten years, most notably as a top contributor at their annual Wings of Hope Butterfly Release fundraiser. The mission of CSCDE is to support all people impacted by cancer, as well as their families and caregivers alike. They provide emotional and social support through a wide variety of programs, including professionally led support groups, social activities, healthy lifestyle programs, and education. All programs are offered at no cost and are designed to support cancer patients, their families, and caregivers throughout their cancer journey. Although the event sold 140 tickets, the Elks estimated that their goal of

raising \$3,000 for CSCDE would be done mainly through raffle ticket and silent auction sales. Toward the end of the evening, when that figure had not yet been met, generous Elk members and guests, many of whom had lost loved ones to cancer, made individual contributions to reach (and exceed!) that goal. It was a very emotional and uplifting moment of that evening.

Displaying a presentation check are front row, CSCDE's Kate Antisavage and Skyler Bayko. Back row, Loyal Knight Terrie Bradley, Exalted Ruler Marty Schreck, Past Exalted Ruler and Trustee Joy Schreck



In January, Cape Henlopen Lodge had a Sock Drive. The Community Outreach Committee recently asked for non-binding socks for the homeless this winter (which is one of the most requested items). With great pride, several committee members delivered 517 pairs of socks to the Shepherd's Office in Georgetown, which provides year-round support for the homeless and less fortunate in our community.



Photo left: Displaying the sock-drive donation are, left to right, Community Outreach Committee Chair Barb Gilsenan, Pat Barnes, Bob Barnes, and Exalted Ruler Marty Schreck.

*Submitted by Cynthia Butler, Lodge Publicity*

**Cambridge Lodge #1272** held its 4th Annual Veterans Clinic was a huge success. 48 Veterans attended with their families. VA Claims Clinic had 14 appointments along with 19 walk-ins. Representatives from VFW's, American Legions, Maryland Department of Labor and the Comptrollers Office were available to speak with as well. A buffet lunch was enjoyed by all and every Veteran left with a door prize. Thank you to all of our volunteers and donors.



Pictured left is Cambridge Lodge's Veterans Committee Co-Chair Ora Bartrum and George Jackson, who had his scrolls available to sign. George has been collecting

signatures and sending his scrolls to Troops overseas for 30 years.

**NORTH EAST VP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

They had a Fisher House fundraiser for Veterans and families raised \$9,000.

The Hoop Shoot contest had 4 shooters in the district final, with 1 advancing to the State Finals.

**Wilmington** received \$9,500 in ENF grants & \$1,000 state grant, which was used to purchase a fresh produce refrigeration unit for the Claymont Community Center.

Blood Drive was held at the Lodge with 25 members donating to Delaware Blood Bank.

And last Christmas the Lodge held Adult and Children's Christmas parties with over 200 children and members participating.

**NORTH CENTRAL VP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14**

**Towson Elks #469** donated their Freedom Grant to Battle Buddy Response Team as we help prevent our veterans from considering suicide, we love our veterans and believe BBRT has a solution that can work!

Ridge Ruxton STEM Learning and Community Giving—Members of **Towson Lodge #469** set up numerous boxes of cereal to create a domino effect. The Lodge donated 27 boxes to support this learning opportunity. The children will then learn about giving back to the community when they donate all the cereal to the Maryland Food Bank.

**Severna Park Lodge #2482**—Members had a wonderful afternoon bowling with our friends who support mentally and physically challenged adults! I'm not sure who enjoyed it more, our guests or our volunteers. Made possible with part of our Gratitude Grant. Thanks to Amy and Shellie and our terrific volunteers who made it happen.



**The Full Mission Lived**—Charity. Justice. Brotherly

Love. Fidelity. Faith. Welfare. Patriotism. Fellowship. Perpetuity. Governance. These aren't just words—they're our daily charge. When we live them wholly, we don't just improve our Lodge; we elevate our communities and ourselves.

Photo right: Which principle will you focus on this month? Preparing US Flags for a proper retirement!



By Andre Denault - ER

**SOUTH WEST VP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13**

Weekly activities, food specials, and expanded Sunday hours continue to thrive, with plans to add Saturdays in 2026. Appreciation was extended to dedicated volunteers, kitchen staff, and Jo King, Elk of the Month, for their behind-the-scenes efforts.

With increased participation driving both growth and financial stability, the Lodge's overall health is strong.



Pictured above—Calvert Lodge members at Warfighters Evolution #45 . Shown are "Breakfast Mark Balcerak" PER Board Chairman, Linda Smith Lodge Secretary and Larnie Bradford House Committee Chairman



**Prince George's Lodge #1778**—celebrated strong youth participation in its programs this quarter. One local eight-year-old, Judd Wade, grandson of a member, advanced to the Regional Soccer Shoot in York, Pennsylvania. In addition, the Lodge also hosted its first Hoop Shoot in more than six years, where an eight-year-old girl scored an impressive 22 out of 25 shots and advanced to regionals in Oxen Hill. Notably, her mother had once been a state champion in Michigan. To continue the support of our veterans, the PG 1778 provided a lasagna dinner for approximately 30 veterans.

The Lodge hosted two of three Special Olympics Valentine Dances, welcoming nearly 400 high school students from Prince George's County Public Schools for a morning of dancing, along with a light lunch and ice cream.

