



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

*Elks Care – Elks Share*



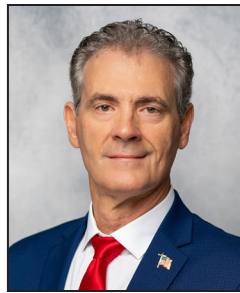
## Positive energy helps new Officers get settled

Happy birthday to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks! On February 16, we celebrate 157 years of our great organization. On a personal note, my birthday is February 14. I wish everyone a happy Valentine's Day, especially my beautiful and amazing wife, Julia.

This month is extremely important for Elkdom. First, new Officer elections should be held at your last monthly meeting. Second, you need to make sure those who are nominated and elected for the new Lodge year will be supported.

The new Officers must be encouraged by others. Everyone should be dedicated to making the Lodge an active and effective Lodge internally and externally in the community.

It would be a good time for the current Exalted Ruler to recognize any Member who sponsored or reinstated three Members by awarding them with the Grand Exalted Ruler pin. Please check out the



**Message from  
the Grand  
Exalted Ruler**

**DOUGLAS A.  
SCHIEFER**

activities program supported by the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee on other awards that Exalted Rulers can submit. It's time to recognize and encourage those who have shown a great deal of effort and dedication to what we do as Elks.

February is an important month for Past Exalted Rulers to perform the ritual during their Lodges' Past Exalted Rulers Night. PERs deserve to be thanked for all they have done and for what they continue to do for your Lodge.

The Contest 'A' - All American Lodge

Contest certification forms are due soon, so it's a good time to get prepared to show the efforts you have made during the last year. It takes teamwork to achieve this very prestigious award. Honestly, most Lodges would qualify but don't fill out the form properly. It is important to score your efforts on the form provided. It's a great way for your Lodge to keep track of what you need to be doing. If you need assistance, contact your local area Fraternal Committee member. There are three winners named in each of the six membership divisions. Why not take the time to plan now and submit your form before the deadline. Be sure to include supporting documentation.

You deserve to be recognized. Continue to demonstrate *"Elks Care—Elks Share"* and show *"Elkdom's Heart For America."* God bless our great Order and our troops, and God bless America.

## Chairperson report due via CLMS2Web

After the election of Lodge Officers this February and before April 15, the Secretary must complete the **2025-2026 Lodge Committee Chairperson Report** in CLMS2Web and confirm acceptance.

The WORKSHEET was mailed to all Lodge Secretaries in January to assist in compiling the needed information.

**GRAND SECRETARY**  
Bryan R. Klatt

**Remember:** This information is to be filed via CLMS2Web. Please, do not mail to

Grand Lodge or your District Deputy.

With the pending automatic submission of the Annual Membership Report, all membership activity must be entered in CLMS2Web by 11:59 p.m. Central on **March 31**.

What does that mean? All membership records (additions, drops, and deaths) must be finalized. If not, the Lodge membership total will be out of balance.

## Hoop Shoot is in the Hall of Fame

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**  
ENF Communications Coordinator

Michael Jordan. Lisa Leslie. Beckett Jilka. Ainsley Weaver.

Jordan and Leslie combined to score more than 38,000 points across 27 seasons in the NBA and WNBA. Beckett and Ainsley are still years away from high school.

However, they all have their names in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

As 2024 Elks Hoop Shoot National Champions and winners of the Getty Powell Award, Beckett and Ainsley are featured, along with the other Hoop Shoot National Champions, in a digital display. In October, the young Hoop Shoot champions and their parents were flown to Springfield, Mass., by the Elks National Foundation so they could see their names among the greats.

"We were able to see Ainsley's name and picture in the Elks Hoop Shoot digital display," said Ainsley's mom, Tara. "It was very cool."

While reading stories and learning about players who graced the court long before they were born, Beckett and Ainsley didn't have to imagine what these basketball legends must have been like—they got to meet some of them firsthand.

The program affords all six National Champions an opportunity to go to the Hall of Fame, but winning the Getty Powell Award comes with an exclusive invitation to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony.

"Beckett enjoyed the Enshrinement Ceremony," said Beckett's mom, Traci Jilka. "There were so many awesome

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## HOOP SHOOT From Page 1

speeches and big-name people in attendance. They gave very good motivation and advice.”

Among those inducted was Seimone Augustus, a three-time Elks Hoop Shoot National Finalist, who competed in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Before she took the stage to give her speech, Augustus congratulated Ainsley on becoming an Elks Hoop Shoot National Champion—something even Augustus, an eight-time WNBA all-star and three-time Olympic gold medalist, was never able to accomplish.

In this whirlwind of a weekend, Beckett and Ainsley created incredible memories for themselves and their families.

“It was a weekend we will never forget,” Traci said. “We thank the Elks so much for the opportunity.”

The memories aren’t the only long-lasting thing to come from their Hoop Shoot experience, though. Beckett and Ainsley learned the importance of hard work, developed the courage to try, and performed in the face of adversity. Through it all, they unleashed their grit—and have no plans of looking back.

“I’m so amazed at the difference in Ainsley over this past year,” Tara said. “She’s still the same sweet girl, but she’s so much more outgoing and self-assured. Her experiences with the Hoop Shoot have been life changing.”

*The Elks have been unleashing gritty kids through the Hoop Shoot program for more than 50 years. For 2024-25, the Elks National Foundation allocated more than \$1.5 million to fund the program. For videos, news from the court, and more information about the Hoop Shoot, visit [elks.org/hoopshoot](http://elks.org/hoopshoot).*



**Ainsley Weaver poses next to a digital display of Elks Hoop Shoot National Champions at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.**

## G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

### Our ‘heart’ is love, legacy, and growth

By RICK GATHEN

Membership Marketing Manager

Along with Valentine’s Day, a celebration of love and connection, February also marks a significant milestone for our Order. On February 16, we observe the birthday of the Elks—a testament to 157 years of generosity and unwavering dedication to our communities.

This month, we honor the Great Heart of Elkdom that has guided us through the years. The love we celebrate on Valentine’s Day is mirrored in the Elks’ commitment to caring for others.

Our legacy of service is only possible because of our Members. As we

commemorate 157 years of Elkdom, let us remember that every new Member strengthens our foundation and extends our reach. Membership growth is vital to ensuring that the Elks continue to be a vibrant force for good in the years ahead. By inviting others to join our mission, we open the door to new opportunities, ideas, and ways to serve.

Let’s celebrate love, legacy, and growth. Whether it’s a heartfelt act of kindness, recruiting a new Member, or participating in a Lodge event, every effort contributes to the enduring heartbeat of Elkdom. Together, we can honor our proud history while building an even brighter future.

## GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

### How to honor public safety heroes

By ROGER McQUEEN

Committee Member

Every Elks Lodge can pay homage and express our gratitude to our nation’s heroes. Sadly, every day a tragic event results in the death of a police officer, firefighter, or emergency medical responder. The loss of life by those who provide our protection leaves not only their families but each one of us searching for the reason why.

Many of our Lodges honor public safety personnel with their annual Law and Order and/or Emergency Medical Service Nights. Many times, those who have paid the supreme sacrifice are overlooked. The Public Service Medal of Valor is available as a gentle reminder to those families that they are not forgotten. It also helps us become known as an organization that truly cares about those individuals and their families.

The Public Safety Medal of Valor is available to all Lodges and is suitable for engraving. The medals can be ordered by your Lodge Secretary through the Grand Lodge Supplies/Shipping Department.

Also available is the Public Safety Medal of Service. Many Lodges currently have programs where they honor individuals who are putting their lives on the line every day to protect our communities. This Medal of Service will cover all first responders, law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel. The Medals can be ordered by your Lodge Secretary through the Grand Lodge Supplies/Shipping Department. Also,



a Certificate is available to download at [elks.org](http://elks.org) under the Activities Committee to go along with the medal.

At the Grand Lodge Convention in Austin last July, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee had the Medals out for sale and displayed in their booth. Many of our Members were unaware that they were available and were pleased to see the Elks stepping up to recognize our public service personnel.

Every community has these individuals who go above and beyond in providing emergency service and protecting us in our everyday lives. As Elks we have an excellent opportunity to reward these individuals. We can invite them to our Lodge, we can show them the support they have, we can reward them with more than a friendly handshake. Please seek out the information to be able to present these medals to those who give so much. Information on the Grand Lodge Activities Committee is available online and the committee members are willing to help you in any way.



## DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

# COA Awareness Week reaches vulnerable children

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**  
National Director

The shortest month of the year has many days to remember. Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, Groundhog Day, and Black History Month occur in February each year—as does the BPOE's birthday. In many years, Mardi Gras and Lunar New Year are commemorated during this month as well.

One lesser-known observance during February is Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week, which is taking place from February 9-15, 2025. This campaign shines a light on the often-overlooked challenges faced by kids growing up with a parent struggling with alcohol addiction. It's a time to raise awareness, offer support, and remind these children that they're not alone. The week promotes understanding, encourages healing, and

connects families with resources to break the cycle of addiction and build healthier futures. If you want more information, contact your State Chair.

In the Drug Awareness Program, the month of February is a time where we can reflect upon the year and begin to plan for the coming year. Lodges can be proud of what they have accomplished, but also must be vigilant because our work is never done. Our contests will be ending in a month, so now is the time to ask yourselves: did we participate this year? If you didn't, why not? The essay contest, video contests, and poster contests are simple and fun, and are a great way to show your community that you care. If in doubt as to what to do, simply contact your State Chair.

The DAP's Speaking Tour has reached a record number of schools and students.

Lodges may want to consider having virtual presentations instead of in-person presentations. Virtual engagements allow Lodges to reach schools at absolutely no cost and relatively little work for them. Again, the best resource for you is your State Chair. Reach out to them for more information if you'd like to have one of our talented speakers come to your community.

George Washington, who we celebrate this month, said: "A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?" That holds true to the work and accomplishments of the Elks Drug Awareness Program.

## GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

# Contest 'A' celebrates excellence

By **MICHAEL L. KENNEDY**  
Committee Member

The Contest 'A' - All American Lodge Contest recognizes Lodges across the country for their outstanding service, commitment to community, and adherence to Elks values. The contest is one of Grand Lodge's most prestigious awards, symbolizing excellence in administering Elks programs and promoting the motto "*Elks Care—Elks Share.*"

The contest evaluates Lodges based on their participation in a variety of activities and programs throughout the year, assigning points to each contribution. These activities include observing Flag Day services, participating in youth programs like Hoop Shoot and the Antlers Program, supporting veterans, contributing to scholarships, and engaging in community outreach.

Lodges compete within membership divisions, ensuring fair comparisons. The divisions are based on the size of the Lodge, ranging from under 150 Members (Division 1) to over 700 Members (Division 6).

To participate, Lodges must:

1. Complete an official entry form detailing their activities and points earned.
2. Provide supporting documentation, such as photographs, program bulletins, or thank you letters.

3. Submit the form to their District Deputy by April 1, 2025. Additional deadlines follow for submission at the state and national levels.

Winning Lodges are honored at state conventions in May and the Grand Lodge Convention in July, with awards celebrating their contributions.

Success in the contest often involves:

- Coordinating efforts across committees to document activities.
- Participating in high-impact programs like veteran support and community grants.
- Submitting thorough backup materials to verify point claims.

The contest not only motivates Lodges to strive for excellence but also reinforces the impact of their service on local communities and Elksdom nationwide.

For more information or to download the contest form, visit [elks.org](http://elks.org). For this year's documents go to the Grand Lodge website, Fraternal Committee page, forms and contests: [elks.org/grandlodge/fraternal/allAmericanLodgeContest.cfm](http://elks.org/grandlodge/fraternal/allAmericanLodgeContest.cfm). There you will find my letter outlining this year's program with the required due dates. Also on the Fraternal Committee page, under the Manuals tab, is our new All American Lodge Contest "A" Handbook. It is an excellent guide in preparing a strong application and improving your chances in the competition.

## Elks Lodges celebrate 100 years of service

The following Lodges honor their 100-Year Anniversary this 2024-2025 fraternal year during GER Douglas A. Schiefer's term.

| <u>LODGE NAME &amp; NO.</u>     | <u>INSTITUTED</u>  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Beacon, NY No. 1493             | July 17, 1924      |
| Wellsville, NY No. 1495         | September 23, 1924 |
| Burbank, CA No. 1497            | December 2, 1924   |
| Watervliet-Colonie, NY No. 1500 | January 5, 1925    |
| Brattleboro, VT No. 1499        | January 6, 1925    |
| Saranac Lake, NY 1508           | May 22, 1925       |
| Hood River, OR No. 1507         | May 29, 1925       |
| Lyndhurst, NJ No. 1505          | June 3, 1925       |
| Ridgefield Park, NJ No. 1506    | June 20, 1925      |
| Brookfield, IL No. 1510         | June 24, 1925      |

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Other ways to help include dropping off food and gifts, arranging live music, and donating crafts and games. You might even find out you like volunteering for veterans and want to come back in March.

Visit [elks.org/vets/vavs.cfm](http://elks.org/vets/vavs.cfm) to connect with your local Elks Voluntary Service Representatives and Deputy Representatives and get started.

# Veteran patients appreciate the love in February

By **MARY K. MORGAN**  
Commission Director

It's February and that means VA's **National Salute to Veteran Patients Week** is here!

The annual VA National Salute to Veteran Patients program began in 1978 when VA took over sponsorship of a program started a few years earlier by the humanitarian organization, No Greater Love, Inc.

The program has grown since. Today, Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) staff at the VA administer local events and activities to honor hospitalized and outpatient

veterans.

The National Salute to Veteran Patients Week is observed annually during the week of Valentine's Day, a day of caring and sharing, which mirrors the Salute's expression of honor and appreciation.

February can be a difficult time for those who are hospitalized or living away from family. The holidays are over, the weather can be rough, and volunteer levels tend to be lower than other times of the year. This makes it a great time for representatives to plan extra activities, for Lodge Members to volunteer, and for Elks and their families

to help out at VA and other veterans' facilities.

There are plenty of ways to celebrate! Last year, Alaska State Veterans Chair Joel Hembach passed out hot chocolate and Valentine's cards at the Anchorage VA Clinic. Representative Bill Curlin hosted two February Bingo nights at the Connecticut Veterans Home. Representative John Phelan took veterans from the Hot Springs VA Medical Center to lunch and a visit to the Crazy Horse Memorial.



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**BRYAN R. KLATT**, Grand Secretary  
**Benevolent and Protective  
ORDER OF ELKS**  
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-1889

**February 2025**

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## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

# Two amendments make reporting more efficient

By **JOHN C. LOFTUS**  
Committee Member

Last year we engaged in over half a billion dollars of charitable activities. This is a remarkable accomplishment. Yet, I believe we can—and will—do even better by improving our efforts to capture our charitable activity.

To that end, at the 2024 Grand Lodge Session in Austin, Texas, two amendments to our Statutes were approved.

Resolution 2024-15 amended Chapter 13, Section 13.020, expanding mandatory committee appointments to include a "Government Relations Committee"

consisting of no less than three members.

In addition, Resolution 2024-13 was approved expanding Chapter 12, section 12.050 which describes the duties of the Secretary of the Lodge. As a result, it was expanded to include item "q-Perform or supervise year-round entry of charitable and community service statistics into Pending Charity Report in the Chicago Lodge Membership System."

Our new Exalted Rulers will soon take office and make their committee appointments. I anticipate that this new committee will significantly improve the implementation of the activities enumerated

in the Government Relations Committee Manual and accurate documentation of these events. The submission of this information to Grand Lodge will be consistently performed, or facilitated by, the Lodge Secretary.

Sharing this information with your elected officials and your community can significantly enhance the exposure and standing of your Lodge and aid in your growth and success.

Working together, I expect to see a more accurate measure of what we as Elks do to fulfill our mission of service to our communities, youth, and veterans.