

Sebring Elk of the Month January-November 2024

November 2024

The Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 has selected Buddy Richards as the November Elk of the Month. Buddy has been a member of the Sebring Elks Lodge for the past 10 years. He has served as Leading Knight, Esquire, Lodge Chaplain and Bar Manager. He also leads the Lodge Maintenance Committee and serves as Lodge Historian. The best way to describe Buddy is to think of “MacGyver” in that he can pretty much fix anything. Whenever something needs fixing, it’s just call Buddy, and he is right on it. Every room at the lodge shows his handiwork as he has undertaken the interior painting project of the entire lodge. Most recently, he has been involved in the remodeling of the bathrooms and the installation of the handicapped bathroom.

Buddy was born in Michigan and his family relocated to Florida when he was nine years old. His father, who was a lifetime Elks Member, was involved in the development of two large mobile home parks in the Ft Lauderdale area. Buddy graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in 1973 and in the early 1980’s he and his father moved to Sebring and started the Buddy Richards RV and Auto Sales Business. After that Buddy worked for the Highlands County School Board in the facilities department for 33 years. He has been married to his wife Brenda for 34 years. One might ask if he has any time for hobbies and interests outside the lodge. With all the work he does for the lodge, he does find time to support the Tampa Bay Rays. Buddy loves to vacation in North Carolina and plays golf weekly with other Elk members. The Sebring Lodge is so appreciative of all the hard work and time he has dedicated to making our lodge grow and shine. Thank you, Buddy, for what you have done and continue to do every day!



October 2024

Ken Wheeler is currently serving as a Lodge Trustee and is involved in many large projects around the lodge. He certainly shows what ELKdom is all about. He first joined the lodge in 2006 and jumped right into a leadership position. Sebring Lodge #1529 has selected Ken as October's Elk of the month. One of the first projects that he worked on as a new Elk was getting the kitchen area into compliance, and he continues to work on upgrades in the kitchen as needed. Ken has a background in engineering and still works part time for the Cool & Cobb Engineering Firm. Ken shared that he has a son and daughter, three grandsons, and a granddaughter who live in the northeast. He and his wife, Jean, recently celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary this past May.

Currently the major project that he is overseeing is the remodeling of the bathrooms. A handicapped bathroom is being built and installed to meet the needs of our increasing lodge membership and those attending functions in the large lodge room. Another major area of work that he spearheaded was the construction of the dock and overseeing the paperwork to get DEP approval for the permits needed for the construction of the dock. So many of the Elk's members are so appreciative of the hard work that he put in overseeing the enormous amount of the paperwork that took "months and months" to complete. Members are now enjoying a place to tie up their boats while visiting the lodge.

Another area that he worked on was the patching of the front, back, and side parking lots making it much safer until the lodge can undertake a major resurfacing project. Ken also oversaw the installation of all the new AC units that have been installed throughout the lodge. The Bingo players on Monday night certainly thank Ken for this since it was rather warm in there at times. This has made the large lodge room much nicer for events. Now they enjoy the cool air on those hot evenings! He also prepares the P&L statements for the lodge and keeps the membership updated in that area. Sebring Lodge thanks Ken for all his expertise and hard work in keeping the lodge in good running order. He never says NO and is continually striving to make the lodge safer, cleaner, and more efficient. Thank you, Ken, for all the hard work you are doing!



September 2024

The Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 is proud to announce that the September Elk of the Month is Wainetta Holmes. Wainetta is no stranger to us all and is active in numerous roles around the lodge. She truly exemplifies what ELKdom is all about. She joined the lodge in 2009 and served as Exalted Ruler for two years in 2020 and again in 2021. During this time, she led the lodge out of a trying time during Covid and set the lodge on a more successful path. Her husband Dick also served as an Exalted Ruler.

Originally from Michigan she is spending most of her time in Florida. The best way to describe Wainetta is comparing her to the "energizer bunny" helping out whenever, and doing whatever is needed to help make the lodge successful. She oversees the weekly Charity Bingo event each Monday evening. Wainetta takes an active role as a Past Exalted Ruler and participates in numerous lodge committees and community events. She helps provide desserts for Friday night dinners and helps oversee the cash register when needed. We thank Wainetta for everything she does in making our lodge shine within our community.



August 2024

The Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 has selected Kelly Dressel as Elk of the Month. Kelly has lived all her life in Sebring and graduated from Sebring High School. She is a true Gator and graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Advertising. Since 2017 she has been the Executive Director for the Highlands County Children's Museum in downtown Sebring. She is also the Chairperson for the Alumni Association at South Florida State College. She has been a 4H leader and VP for the SHS Band Boosters.

Now how did she become an Elk? One evening she was seeking a venue to hold the Casino Night Fundraiser for the Children's Museum. She stopped by the lodge with some friends on a Friday night when the lodge was serving their Pork Rib Eye. She went into the lodge room and floods of memories came back as she recalled being married to her husband Scott in 2000 and they held their wedding reception at the lodge. She booked the lodge that evening and actually rented the entire building for the event.

Since that time, she has been involved and volunteering in so many areas around the lodge. She can be seen helping in the kitchen and dining room on Friday's and Tasty Tuesday. One Monday each month she volunteers to help with the lodge Charity Bingo. She shared that she is kind of going through the "empty nest syndrome" right now as both of her sons are now in college. Walker attends the University of Central Florida and Evan is attending the University of Florida. Kelly truly exemplifies what "Volunteerism and Servant Leadership" is. The Sebring Lodge is proud to recognize her as August Elk of the Month!



July 2024

Elk of the month is Rex Allen Roussell. Rex was born June 4, 1960, in the small town of Elmira, NY. He is the middle child of 13 brothers and sisters. In 1977 at the age of 17 he left Elmira to pursue a military career in the United States Navy. After bootcamp he was stationed on the USS Midway in Japan as E3 Ship Company Air Department. He then moved through the different Duty Stations, USS Carl Vincent, and then a shore station Nas Whidbey Island WA, NAS Oceana Virginia Beach, VA, NASJRB Willow Grove PA, then back to NAS Whidbey Island WA, where he retired from the military service after 22 years. After retiring Rex stayed in Washington State where he took on several odd jobs.

The East coast was calling him back, so he moved to Sebring in December 2010, where he bought into a small business called Jimmy's Lube and Tire. He recalled his father telling him "You must be a jack of all trades, so it's best to learn to adjust to where you live and make a good life for yourself". At Jimmy's he worked on everything Bumper-to-Bumper; then sold the business in 2017 and began traveling the country for a year; returning to Sebring in 2019.

Rex would like to thank the Sebring Elks Lodge for accepting him into the club and giving him the opportunity to cook. Cooking has always been his passion. He got it from his father who was a very good cook himself. He always told his kids a quote written in his bible "No meal is a bad meal, just let your taste buds tell you that."



June 2024

Elk of the month is Clara A. Fonseca. When Clara was 14, her father moved his family of six from Cuba to New York City. After finishing High School Clara took a job in bookkeeping for a large company. She married in 1963 and had two daughters, Cris and Ely. They moved to Miami, FL in 1972, where she got her real estate license. Clara sold real estate, owned a real estate title insurance company, and sold heavy equipment to construction companies in Venezuela. In 1974 her son Henry was born.

Clara loves to travel. She has visited Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Italy, China, Hong Kong, and Newfoundland. Clara has also traveled across the USA including Alaska and Hawaii. Clara moved to Sebring in 2021 then joined the Elks in 2022. She moved in with her daughter Elaine who has recently passed. Her Elks membership was with her in her darkest days, and she will never forget the love she received from everyone. All the members have been very helpful and will cherish the friendships made.

Clara volunteers a lot of her time in the kitchen, helping wherever needed. On Friday steak nights you will find her pouring soup into the bowls and has earned the nickname The Soup Lady.



May 2024

Elk of the month is Martin Bowers. Martin joined the Elks to become active in the Lodge and in the community being initiated in October 2023. Martin was encouraged to join by some community neighbors who are Elks. He has met countless nice people who have offered advice and encouragement as well as their hand in friendship. Martin volunteers for booked events, Monday night Bingo, and as cashier on Taster Tuesdays whenever needed. Martin has also been appointed Inner Guard at the Lodge for this current term. Martin is a native Floridian, born into a US Navy family and lived in several locations before settling back in Pensacola. He worked and lived in Pensacola, Sarasota, Key West, and Ft. Lauderdale, as a Probation Officer with the Department of Corrections. He then was a high school Teacher here in Sebring then moved to Miami as an Investigator for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. He retired after a total of 38 years of service moving (back) to Sebring to join a family who have lived here for over 40 years. Thank you for all you do Martin. The lodge greatly appreciates dedication.



April 2024

The Elk of the month for April 2024 is Dawn Bartolomeo, Dawn is one of our newer Members. Dawn is really stepping up in a big way for the lodge. She started cashiering on nights we serve food whenever needed, helping on our bingo nights, and will start helping with the open Public Relations position. Dawn was Born in Massapequa NY and spent 41 years in banking. Now retired, she is a stay at home "cat mom" and owns a small business from home, "Wax Shoppe Candles and More". She loves to craft and create, and attends craft shows and events. Dawn has a sweet spirit and a genuine willingness to help others. Thank you, Dawn, for all you are doing for the lodge.



March 2024

The Sebring Elks #1529 has many people to thank for its success and our Exalted Ruler has chosen well again this month to appoint one of them, Joe Stockenberg, as the March Elk of the Month. Joe was born in Worcester, Massachusetts and his parents moved to Ft. Lauderdale in 1978, and after 8 years they relocated to Avon Park. Joe has two daughters, Megan and Carlie; Megan who now lives and works in Norfolk, Va. and Carlie who attends Lake Placid High School. He has worked in the agriculture industry most of his adult life and currently works for TriEst Ag Group. Having been the President of the Highlands Archery Club, he continues to enjoy the sport in his spare time and is an archery and shotgun instructor for Highlands County 4H Shooting Sports. He is currently on the Board of Directors for the Florida Watermelon Association.

Joe is currently the Lodge Leading Knight and has been elected to the position of Exalted Ruler starting March 1st. He is there when help is needed for special events; and assists with lodge maintenance and repairs. His true talent is at the kitchen grill!! He is our Grill Master and cooks all the rib eye steaks, both beef and pork, to perfection each month. Joe also runs our Ship, Captain, Crew game on Wednesday nights. Thank you, Joe, for all you do and for your love and commitment to the Sebring Elks!



February 2024

In choosing February's Elk of the Month, our Exalted Ruler chose a man who is a Lifetime member of the Elks and who has given his heart and mind to its success. Bob Lewis was elected 1 year Trustee in 2009, and 3-year Trustee in April 2021 and will be fulfilling his obligation on March 31, 2024. Statutes state that the Lodge is the supreme power and the Board its agent. The Trustees control funds, investments, and real property and execute all leases and contracts. Through the years Bob has worked the dining room, special events, and he and his wife Deanna attend all social events. Bob is originally from the Pontiac, Michigan area where he worked with the A&P grocery chain before owning an IGA store. Bob and Deanna have raised 6 children and share 12 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. Thank you, Bob, for your years of dedication!



January 2024

The Sebring Elks Lodge #1529 has named Sheryl Teachout Elk of the Month for January 2024. Sheryl is a self-motivated person who seems to excel in any task. She requested permission from the BOD last summer to have a New Years Eve party. She and her partner Ed Kwasnick, worked diligently to have one of the most successful parties with a complete sell out. Sheryl has graciously accepted the responsibility of selecting the musicians for our Friday night dances starting in April 2024, bakes for Friday night meals, is one of the Friday night servers and she is a member of the decorating committee.

Sheryl was born and raised in Southwest Michigan. She has one daughter and four grandchildren. As a testament to her self-motivation, she went to college when she was 48 years old and graduated with a degree in physical therapy and then moved to Indiana to work in Home Health and Nursing Home care. In 2021 she moved to Sebring and promptly joined the Elks to meet people and to help her new community. Sheryl, thanks for all you do and thanks for your way of greeting members and guests at the Lodge with a happy and smiling face.

