



Vol. 45 #2 Fall 2026

Brick Lodge No. 2151 Journey to National Ritual Champions

BY MARTIN CRERAND, NATIONAL RITUAL COACH



Brick Lodge
No. 2151 National
Champions

Being part of a Ritual team takes time, dedication, and courage. Martin Crerand, National Ritual Coach 2026 and Ritual Judge since 1993, shares the story of how Brick Lodge No. 2151 became National Ritual Champions.

The team began studying their lines in April 2025 and started full practices that July 2025. At their first meeting, Martin promised to coach each officer to their full potential if they committed to distraction-free practice every Wednesday. It wasn't easy — missed practices due to work, illness, and personal matters tested everyone's patience. Martin arranged substitutes when he could and pushed through frustration, reminding officers that practice was the place to make mistakes and grow.

Setbacks piled up. Days before the Official Visit of the District Deputy, their Leading Knight was hospitalized, and a Past Exalted Ruler stepped in. The team advanced to the state competition; but in February, their longtime Inner Guard fell ill and was hospitalized — then tragically passed away just a week before competition. Heartbroken but determined, the team recruited another PER



Martin Crerand,
National Ritual Coach



Lisa Manetta, All-American
Eastern Div. Exalted Ruler

who had never performed that part to fill the role. Martin thought to himself that they would place second at best.

A snowstorm that shut down the entire state caused the State Competition to be postponed until April — extending practice further than any team before. Doubts lingered until competition day, when the team delivered a performance that even surprised Martin. They won. Tears, hugs, and pride followed.

But the journey wasn't over. Two months of

fundraising, travel prep, and more practice led them to the National Convention in Chicago. They still had one more hill to climb. After an early morning performance, the team went for lunch; Martin waited in the Convention Center for the scores to be posted. After clearing the preliminary round, Brick's team had made it to the final four! After eleven months of practice, it came down to one final performance. Martin reminded them that reaching the top four was already an achievement.

During the Tuesday morning session, they waited for the announcement: fourth place, third, second... and then a roar from where the New Jersey Elks were seated — **Brick Lodge No. 2151 had won first place nationally.** It felt like a dream. Amid more hugs and tears, the team was escorted onto the Grand Lodge stage to thunderous cheers from the New Jersey Elks.

Reflecting on the journey, Martin remains in awe of the team's dedication. They helped fulfill one of his dreams, and the Brick Lodge Officers of 2025–26 will always hold a special place in his heart.

Cheers to the "Little Team That Could!"

State President Message

BY DON TONACHIO

We are off to a great year so far! Lori and I have already had the opportunity to attend some truly wonderful events and witness firsthand the incredible things our members and lodges continue to do for their communities. Our trip to the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago was an experience that made us incredibly proud to represent New Jersey. Once again, the New Jersey Elks demonstrated that we are among the best in the nation, bringing home an impressive list of national honors and awards.

New Jersey received Five-Star Awards for Internet, Publication, and our State Major Project, Camp Moore, along with several Community Project Awards. Our Lodges also earned outstanding recognition in membership and ENF:

- Hackettstown Lodge No. 2331 – 1st Place Membership, 1-150 Division
- West Orange Lodge No. 1583 – 3rd Place ENF Lodge Chair Challenge, 151-225 Division
- Cranford Lodge No. 2006 – 1st Place ENF Lodge Chair Challenge, 451-700 Division
- Greater Cape May Lodge No. 2839 – 1st Place ENF Lodge Chair Challenge, 700+ Division

Congratulations also go to Eva Pulaski, sponsored by Old Bridge Lodge No. 2229, for her recognition in the 6th Grade Americanism Essay Contest.

New Jersey was well represented among the All-American Lodges, with honors going to:

- Elmwood Park-Paterson Lodge No. 60 – 3rd Place, 1-150 Division
- Cedar Grove Lodge No. 2237 – 1st Place, 151-225 Division
- Kearny-Belleville Lodge No. 1050 – 2nd Place, 151-225 Division
- Middletown Lodge No. 2179 – 2nd Place, 301-450 Division
- Rutherford Lodge No. 547 – 3rd Place, 301-450 Division

Our Ritual team also made New Jersey proud. Lisa Manetta of Brick Lodge No. 2151 was named the All-American East Division Exalted Ruler winner, Martin Crerand of Brick Lodge No. 2151 was named National Coach of the Year, and, topping it all off, Brick Lodge No. 2151 was crowned National Ritual Champion!



WOW! New Jersey truly leads the nation in all that we do, and I could not be prouder of everything you accomplish. A special congratulations also goes to our new District Deputies, who were sworn in during the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago. I wish each of you a successful and hopefully calm and uneventful year!

Back home, the work of our great Order has continued. The Jim Hall Memorial Homeless Veterans Picnic was once again a tremendous success. Through this program, we continue to self-fund our efforts to help Veterans and their families move off the streets and into homes. This is truly what Elksdom is all about. I thank everyone who attended the Army of Hope picnic on September 13 and showed our Gold Star families that we will always remember, honor, and cherish the sacrifices of their loved ones.

The Miracle Run was another outstanding event, with so many Lodges participating, cooking food, and helping promote and support our State Major Project. Thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a success.

I also want to encourage every Lodge and every member to continue supporting the Elks National Foundation. Our goal remains at \$6 per-capita. Every contribution, no matter the amount, helps ENF provide the programs, grants, scholarships, and resources that come back to our Lodges and communities. Working together, I know New Jersey can reach and exceed that \$6 per-capita goal.

Before we know it, our Peer Leadership and Path to Leadership Conferences will be here. I urge every Lodge and member to support these programs, even if you do not have students attending. These conferences truly change lives, giving young people the tools, confidence, friendships, and leadership skills they need to make positive choices and become leaders in their schools and communities.

Lori and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Fall Conference and visiting your Lodges throughout the remainder of the year.

Please continue doing what Elks do best, being compassionate and caring people, helping those who need us, supporting our communities, and having a little fun along the way.

Always remember that We Are the Givers of Hope.

Welcome Grand Exalted Ruler Timothy Jaeger & First Lady Sandy Jaeger

Grand Exalted Ruler Tim's journey with the Elks began when he was initiated into Sioux Falls, SD Lodge No. 262 in 1985. After moving to California, Tim transferred to Petaluma, CA Lodge No. 901, serving in several roles, including Exalted Ruler in 2007-2008. He served as an appointed advisor to Napa, CA Lodge No. 832 from 2011-2013 and ultimately transferred there.

He began his tenure with the California-Hawaii Elks Association in 2010-2011 by serving as Vice President. He has served on several district committees and as the CHEA Drug Awareness Chair from 2011-2013. He served on the CHEA Board of Trustees from 2014-2017 and as the CHEA First Vice President in 2018-2019. Tim then acted as CHEA President from 2019-2021. He has served as the CHEA Northwest District Leader since 2020 and served as a board member of the California-Hawaii Elks Major Project, Inc. from 2022 until 2025.

On the Grand Lodge level, Tim was District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 2013-2014. He served as an Assistant Director of the Elks National Drug Awareness Program from 2014 through 2021. Tim acted as a member of the Board of Grand Trustees from 2021 until 2025, including serving as Chairman during his final year.

Tim has received several accolades in Elksdom. He was named an Honorary Life Member by the Napa Lodge and was named Elk of the Year and Officer of the Year by the Petaluma Lodge. He was recognized by the CHEA Elks Luncheon Club as the 2023 recipient of the Roses for the Living Award.

Tim met the love of his life, Sandy, in 1981, and they married in 1984. They have three children: Ben, his wife Whitney, and their two children Logan and Conner, who live in Moraga, California; Brittany, her husband Tyler, and their two children Jameson and Trace, who live in Tampa, Florida; and Lizzie, a proud Napa Lodge Member, her husband Bob, a proud Walnut Creek Lodge Member, and their two children Reese and Avery, who live in Walnut Creek, California.

Sandy's love for children led to a 25-year elementary school teaching career, including 10 years as an administrator working with the California Beginning Teacher program.

Tim and Sandy are honored and humbled to be chosen as ambassadors to represent our great Order as the Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady of Elksdom. They are excited for the opportunity to promote the Elks while visiting communities throughout America, sharing the theme: Ready Elks...Let's Go!



Grand Lodge Sponsor

BY MALCOLM J. MCPHERSON, JR., PGER

Our Grand Exalted Ruler Timothy F. Jaeger and his wife Sandy from Napa Elks Lodge No. 832 will be joining us at our Fall Conference in November in Long Branch, New Jersey. Our Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady will be arriving Thursday and we will be able to take them to several sites highlighting the New Jersey Elks. They are looking forward to meeting and seeing each of you in Long Branch.

I congratulate our State President Don Tonachio and his committee people, our District Deputies and Vice Presidents for all of their hard work this year. All of our committees have been working very hard and at the Fall Conference we will hear their accomplishments to date. Remember, we have been emphasizing to committees that when an event is being held to invite the public relations and membership retention committees to the event. We want everyone to know the great work we are doing and the activities we are sponsoring for our veterans, homeless veterans, special children, youth programs, drug awareness programs and scholarship programs and at the same time attracting new members.

I would like to congratulate the officers of Brick Lodge No. 2151 in representing the State of New Jersey in the National Ritual Contest. All of the officers of Brick Lodge No. 2151 made New Jersey extremely proud by finishing **FIRST PLACE** in the Nation – Outstanding! I would also like to congratulate Lisa Manetta, Exalted Ruler on receiving All American Honors as the First place Exalted Ruler. Congratulations also go to Jessica Boudreau, Union Lodge No. 1583, who represented New Jersey in the National Flag Charge Contest and Thomas Flannigan IV, Long Branch Lodge No. 742 who represented the State in the National 11 O'clock Toast Contest. Jessica and Tom did an impressive performance.

Through the Elks National Foundation, the Beacon Grants, Promise Grants, Impact Grants, Lodge Assistance Grants, Gratitude Grants, Freedom Grants and Spotlight Grants are available to each lodge. I urge each lodge to apply for and take advantage of each grant. We want to make our communities fully aware



of the great work we are doing. As the result of your donations to the Elks National Foundation, the State of New Jersey just received the sum of \$337,260 for the state charities grant and the sum of \$69,660 as a bonus grant to be utilized for our charitable purposes.

The Miracle Run held on July 26th at New Egypt Lodge No. 2457 was again a tremendous success. The money raised through the Miracle Run Committee clearly puts a smile on the faces of our Special Children and their families. I urge everyone to visit our State Major Project Camp Moore to see the renovations and improvements made to our camp and the work we are doing for our special children. Please keep donating to our State Major Project.

The National Veterans Services held a successful picnic on June 27th at Brick Lodge No. 2151 and the money raised at the picnic assists with our efforts for our homeless veterans. Our Batters Up Competition was held in Howell and we had a great turn out.

I would like to congratulate Victoria Watson, PSP on her appointment to be on the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee. The State Association is extremely proud of the 5 Star Award given by the Grand Lodge for our New Jersey Elk Publication, our website and the Special Children's Booth.

As of August 12, 2026, eight lodges have failed to file their 990 with Grand Lodge by the due date of August 1, 2026. Failure to file the 990 on time resulted in the imposition of penalties starting at \$100 per month. The Grand Lodge Area 2 Chairperson and your District Deputies have been in contact with those lodges to file the 990.

Finally, I would like to warn the lodges on the use of AI. Please read the notices, flyers and posters created through AI to ensure the lodge name and number is correct and the Elk emblems do not violate or infringe upon the Elk trademark logos.

Pat and I are looking to seeing each of you at our Fall Conference in November.

The New Jersey Elk Submission Deadline

Submission Deadline:
FEBRUARY 15, 2027

Send e-mail articles and photos to:
njelkpublication@gmail.com

Photograph Policy

Photographs are to be sent electronically and must be in JPG, TIF or EPS format **ONLY** and a minimum of 300 dpi at 100%, (no photocopies or reproductions). Please make sure to identify who is in the pictures.



Edison Lodge Destroyed By Fire

On Saturday, September 26th, Edison Lodge No. 2487 was destroyed by a devastating fire. The lodges of the New Jersey State Elks Association stand ready to support them as their Lodge rises from the ashes. While the officers and members of Edison Lodge grieve the loss of their home, they recognize that the true heart of the lodge lies not in the building, but in its members.

Requirements for Seeking Elective Office in This Association

BY FRANCIS J. DECIBUS, PSDGER, ELECTION COORDINATOR

Article VI Section 3D – Elections (District Vice President & Trustee)

Section 3: Any Member of this Association may seek an elective office in the Association provided:

- (A) They are a Member in good standing in their Lodge and a Past Exalted Ruler.
- (B) Their Lodge is a Member Lodge in good standing in this Association and is located in a District in the electing Region or the District is eligible for the office sought.
- (C) For the position of Vice-President and Trustee, they shall have filed by certified mail, return receipt requested or by email, with the President, their District's Vice President and the Secretary of this Association, not before December 1 and no later than January 5, a Resolution of endorsement adopted by their Lodge, at a regular Lodge session. Said resolution must be signed by the Lodge Exalted Ruler and certified by the Lodge Secretary. If they elect to file by sending an email, it shall only be effective upon receipt of a return email from the President, Secretary and/or Vice President, acknowledging receipt of the Resolution. A local Lodge may only endorse one candidate for the position of Vice President or Trustee.

The districts which will have Trustee Elections in 2027 are: Central, East Central, North, North Central.

FALL CONFERENCE VOTING RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolution to amend the Army Of Hope Committee Mission Statement will be presented and voted upon at the business meeting at the Fall Conference of the New Jersey State Elks Association on Saturday, November 14, 2026.

In order to revise its mission statement to keep up with changing times and meet the needs of our gold star families, severely wounded troops and active military personal, the NJSEA Army of Hope committee has voted to add the following (bold print) to its mission statement:

OUR MISSION

Our mission statement is, "To assist our Active Military Servicemen and women from New Jersey **and those who have lived here for at least five (5) years**, those severely Wounded in the line of duty, and our Fallen Hero families whose loved ones were killed in the line of duty.

We ask that the membership approve the change to the mission statement to be voted on at Fall Conference, November 14, 2026.

Approved by the NJSEA NVS 501C3 Trustees

The following Resolution will be presented and voted upon at the business meeting at the Fall Conference of the New Jersey State Elks Association on Saturday, November 14, 2026:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the New Jersey State Elks Association has established appointment of the Chairmen to the State Committees should be effective upon the installation of the State President each year until the installation the following year of the State President; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey State Youth Tournament is held each year the end of June, subsequent to the installation of the new State President, placing the new

State Chairman in the position of just being appointed and expected to chair the Tournament a few weeks after his appointment with newly appointed Committee members; and

WHEREAS, to remedy this, the State Youth Tournament Chairman and all appointments thereunder should have their appointments continue to June 30 rather than upon the installation of the new State President in the beginning of June.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the By-Laws be amended as follows

CURRENTLY READS: IV. COMMITTEES

SECTION 2. DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(bb) TOURNAMENT: Consisting of a State Chairperson and such other members as the State President shall deem necessary and advisable to plan, promote, coordinate, and run the New Jersey State Elks Youth Tournament.

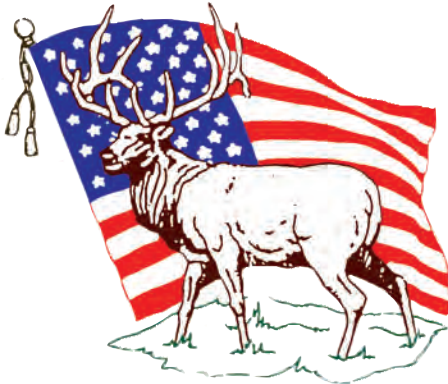
TO BE AMENDED TO READ: IV. COMMITTEES

SECTION 2. DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

(bb) TOURNAMENT: Consisting of a State Chairperson and such other members as the State President shall deem necessary and advisable to plan, promote, coordinate, and run the New Jersey State Elks Youth Tournament, all of whose terms shall continue until June 30, rather than end upon appointment of the new State President at the Wildwood Convention the beginning of June.



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Public Relations.... Hope Deserves a Headline

BY PAUL BURKE, STATE CHAIRPERSON

Across New Jersey, Elks support veterans, create opportunities for children, help families and strengthen communities. That is what it means to be NJ Elks: Givers of Hope.

Our challenge is making sure those stories travel beyond the lodge walls. If the only people who knew what happened were already in the room; we would have missed an opportunity.

Today, people often meet us online before attending an event, asking about membership or walking through our doors. Our websites, social-media pages, Google Business Profiles, online calendars and email newsletters are our digital doors. Together, they shape the public's first impression of a Lodge.

Current information, recent photographs and timely responses quietly say, "We are here, we are active and you are welcome." Outdated information can unintentionally send the opposite message. That digital welcome can continue inside the Lodge. Interactive signs, monitors, event boards and QR codes keep members connected while highlighting programs, activities and accomplishments.

Our online presence is about more than keeping people informed. It is where the story of our service comes to life. The strongest content is human. Photographs of elks in action, the people behind a program and the reason the work mattered reveal something numbers alone cannot.

Numbers measure our impact; people give it a heart. Artificial intelligence can help polish captions, organize press releases, adapt stories and create supporting visuals. Yet one boundary must remain clear: AI should never be used to create, alter, recreate or stylize copyrighted Elks trademarks or emblems. Official, approved files should always be used as provided and in accordance with established usage guidelines.

Grand Lodge shareables give us professional, approved graphics and a consistent national message. When paired with a local photograph, update or invitation, they connect the larger elks story with the work happening in our communities. Technology can open the door...only our stories can invite people through it. Let's show New Jersey what the elks do best – and give people a reason to step inside. NJ Elks: Givers of Hope. Ready, Elks? Let's Go – and let's tell the story!

Lacey Lodge Welcomes 26 New Members

Lacey Lodge No. 2518 celebrated the addition of 26 new members on Sunday, August 30, as the newest members of the lodge were formally initiated into the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

The initiation marked an important milestone for the new members as they joined an organization with a long-standing commitment to serving communities, supporting veterans, helping children, providing scholarships, and assisting those in need.

Lacey Elks Lacey Lodge No. 2518 is proud of its active involvement throughout the local community and looks forward to the contributions these new members will make through volunteer service and participation in lodge programs and committees.

"Membership is more than simply joining an organization," said Lodge ER Michael Day. "It is an opportunity to become part of a team that works together to make a positive difference in the lives of others."

The 26 new members bring new enthusiasm, ideas, and talents to Lacey Lodge No. 2518. Their involvement will help strengthen the lodge's ability to continue its many charitable and community service programs.

Welcome to the Elks — where membership means making a difference.

Membership is the Beating Heart of our Order

BY EDWARD EGLENTOWICZ, STATE CHAIRPERSON

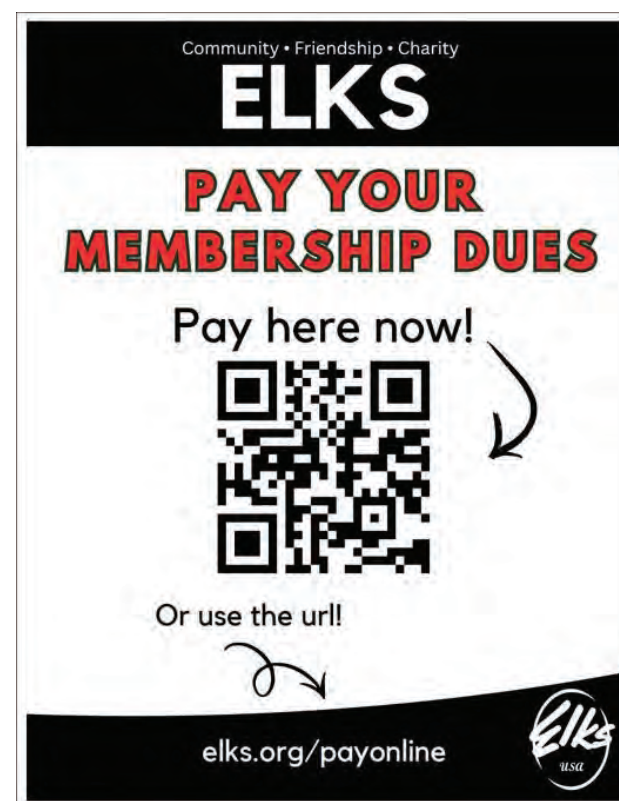
The Order of Elks is the greatest charitable organization in the world. What we do we don't do for money – we do it to help others. We do it to accomplish something that sets our organization apart from all others. Our lodges are committed to lending a hand to the men and women who are serving and have served our country and to the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We support Camp Moore and assist special children and their families in any way possible. As respected members of our communities, the lodges are often called upon to help their fellow neighbors in their time of need.

We manage this through the work and dedication of our members. To continue to provide these valuable charitable services, it takes a strong growing membership. I started off by saying that membership is the beating heart of our Order and truer words were never spoken.

Every lodge benefits from strong membership in many ways. When new members are initiated, the first thing they bring is income. We all need to survive, and new members help not only by paying dues, but by visiting our grillrooms and by attending the many events each lodge hosts. As members grow older we need new strong volunteers to keep things moving and along with new volunteers comes fresh ideas on how to make the lodge better and new ways to make the lodge more productive.

A strong membership committee is one piece to a lodge's growth. The officers must be part of the process. The committee needs to motivate the members to actively recruit new members, and the officers need to make sure the lodge is a safe, friendly and attractive place for members to bring their friends, family, and business acquaintances.

Explain the many social activities that are available to them and how they tie into our charitable endeavors. Try to get them involved somehow in these activities which will lead them to make new friends and have a real sense of pride in what they can accomplish. This will lead to a genuine love for the lodge and make them proud to be an Elk. I am sure if this is achieved, they will remain a member in good standing for many years to come. Even after all this hard work, a lodge will still have some delinquent members, and this must be addressed. The importance of retaining members cannot be overstated and every effort must be made to bring them back into the Elk family. A strong lodge has success in both recruiting new members and retaining existing members. Grand Lodge has pages of great marketing and membership tools at your disposal...USE THEM. Market your lodge and the Elk brand in the community, make everyone aware of how important the mission of your lodge is to everyone in need. Take advantage of community events that aid in getting the word out. Make it easy to join and easy for members to pay their dues. Grand Lodge has made it easy so take advantage of all they have to offer. We are capable of great strides forward if we work together. Let's keep our lodges and state strong and growing. Let's show the world that New Jersey will ALWAYS lead the way.





Serving Those Who Served

On Sunday, May 31 Freehold Lodge No. 1454 National Veterans Committee had the honor of preparing and serving lunch to the veterans at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home. It was a day filled with gratitude and an opportunity to give back to those who have given so much in service to our country. Spending time with these veterans and showing our appreciation was truly rewarding.

Pictured: Freehold Elks Exalter Ruler, Christine Reese, State Trustee Mary McPaul, PVP Joe Reese, Andria Vold, Freehold Lodge Veteran Committee Chairperson, Freehold Elks Lodge Veterans Committee, Freehold Elks Lodge MC, Point Pleasant Lodge MC, Jamesburg Lodge MC and the VFW MC.



Working Together For Our Veterans

Manville-Hillsborough Lodge No. 2119 was proud to donate to American Legion Post 304, sponsoring 10 veterans for the American Legion's "A Day of Fishing." This generous act reflects the spirit of community and the importance of local organizations coming together to support those who have served our country. By working together, these two organizations are creating meaningful opportunities for veterans and showing appreciation for their service in a heartfelt and lasting way.

Pictured, left to right: Ed Leib, New Jersey Elks State Chairperson for National Veterans Services; Joseph Hanover, Exalted Ruler of Manville-Hillsborough Elks; John Grannahan, Commander of American Legion Post 304; and Jim Collin, Sergeant-at-Arms of American Legion Post 304.



NVSC Members Responding Statewide

Recently, members of the New Jersey Elks Veterans Committee, made six deliveries to veterans throughout the state who were previously homeless and who have now moved into a new apartment. First on Friday morning, members of the Southwest District made a delivery to a veteran in Maple Shade. On Friday evening, members of the Manville-Hillsborough Lodge represented the West Central District and made a delivery to a veteran in Bound Brook.

Saturday was the busiest day with members of the East District delivering to a veteran who moved to Bayonne. The Northwest District made a delivery to a veteran in Boonton while members of the Clinton Elks, representing the West Central District, delivered to a veteran in Bloomsbury. Finishing up the weekend, members of the North Central District made a delivery to a veteran in Newark on Sunday.

All of these members, from different lodges, helped the veterans make their house a home by delivering a welcome home kit and furniture. Thank you to all of the lodges who used their grant money to purchase these items.

We have a few pending deliveries that will be happening in the Central District, Northeast District and South District within the coming weeks. A special thank you to Stirling Lodge members, Ed Romeo and Greg Cross for pulling all of the welcome home kits and furniture for these deliveries, so they are ready to be picked up at the Veterans Annex when needed.



North Central District Team

The North Central District Veterans Committee helped a Vietnam Veteran named John who served 3 tours. The Elks helped John with furniture, household supplies and food. While taking care of the delivery, they learned something even more special. John's father was a member of Kearny Lodge No. 1050.

Army of Hope: Our Promise to Remember and Serve

BY JACK JOYCE, STATE CHAIRPERSON

Each year, the Army of Hope Picnic honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice – through the Roll Call of the Fallen, the POW/MIA table, “Taps,” and the Field of Flags – assuring military families their loved ones will never be forgotten. This year’s picnic raised \$165,000. Thank you to everyone that attended.

Yet our picnic is only the most visible part of our year-round promise. Throughout the year, the Army of Hope Committee quietly identifies and responds to the needs of severely wounded veterans, active-duty service members, and Gold Star families and their loved ones – offering not just financial relief, but the reminder that they are not alone.

This past year, we provided educational assistance to a disabled veteran’s daughter, bereavement support to a widow of a veteran with burn-pit-related illness, and emergency help to a sailor in financial hardship. Our back-to-school and holiday gift programs continued supporting military families, while care packages and handwritten letters from NJSEA members reminded service members far from home that New Jersey stands behind them.

We’re proud to partner with organizations sharing our mission – sponsoring dinner for 250 campers and volunteers at the NJ National Guard Family Youth Camp, supporting the SPC Benjamin Moore Memorial Scholarship and Gold Star Awareness Ride, and helping six wounded veterans earn drone pilot licenses for new career opportunities. Through the NJ Run for the Fallen, we continue honoring our fallen heroes and their families.

None of this is possible without our lodges, districts, Antlers, New Jersey Elks Charities, and members statewide. Every volunteer and contribution strengthens our ability to answer the call when a military family needs us.

Every member who gives time or resources is a foot soldier in this effort. “If not us, who?” Greater participation means reaching more families in need. This is more than a committee’s work – it is a sacred promise that no hero will be forgotten and no military family will stand alone.

Let us remember with reverence, serve with compassion, and remain unwavering in our commitment. This is our responsibility, our privilege, and our promise – and together, we will carry it forward.



Carol and Michael Vecchio, parents of PO 3rd Class Michael J. Vecchio



Helen Giglio, mother of Captain Nicholas T. Giglio



Jim Harvey, father of US Army Sergeant James W. Harvey II Purple Heart Medal recipient.



Mary Bowers, mother of Master Sgt. Jamal H. Bowers

Right Down The Alley

It was an outstanding day for bowlers at the Vineland Memorial Home when Brigantine Lodge No. 2428 Veterans Service Committee, aka “Alley Kats,” bowled with them. The veterans LOVE it when their Elk friends bowl with them.

Members of Brigantine Lodge bowled with Veterans from Veterans Haven South in this event. Many of the veterans from this Vineland, NJ Home are physically challenged. They all enjoyed being together and sharing in the competition. Jay Ferreira was honored to bowl with the bowling ball that belonged to our beloved deceased member, Tom Pantelena. Former Brigantine resident, Veteran Ronnie Powell, won against amazing bowler Gregg, who has been a winner for years. There was a lot of excitement at the end when Ronnie got a strike to win 137-136.





Convention Committee N.J. Welcomes GER Jaeger!

BY THOMAS M. ZISA, PCJGF

The NJSEA Fall Conference will be held November 13 through 15, 2026. We will be staying once again at the beautiful beachfront Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch, New Jersey. Our Grand Exalted Timothy F. Jaeger of Napa, CA Lodge No. 832, together with his lovely wife Sandy, will join us. Let's be sure to show Tim and Sandy just how loud and proud NJ Elks are.

Your Convention Committee has made all the arrangements for a fantastic conference. We will begin the weekend Friday evening with the annual Memorial Service to honor those Past Exalted Rulers we lost during the previous year. After the Memorial Service it will be time to relax, enjoy each other's company and have some fun at our Picnic Party, complete with nosh, music and dancing. Dress for the party is casual.

On Saturday morning starting at 7 AM there will be a continental breakfast for all attendees. Registration of members will open at 8 AM and the Business Session will begin at 8:30 AM sharp. The State Association Luncheon will be held immediately following the business session. The State President has arranged for a very informative afternoon breakout session. The State Flag Charge and 11th Hour Toast Contest will also be held Saturday afternoon. Be sure to attend to support your district's contestants.

Saturday evening, we will hold our State Association Banquet honoring our Grand Exalted Ruler and his wife to close out the conference. Without question, this year's Fall Conference will be a great weekend filled with fun, food, friendship and a whole lot of New Jersey Elks charity.

At the Fall Conference, many of our State Committees will have exhibits set up in the Grand Hall adjacent to the hotel ballrooms. The Convention Committee will have shirts, pins, ties, badges and other apparel available for purchase. Please be sure to visit all the committee exhibits.

For those of you who want to plan ahead, the 2027 Grand Lodge convention will be held July 4 – July 7 in Denver, Colorado. Denver is home to the Denver Broncos, the Denver Nuggets, the Colorado Rockies and known for the best Rocky Mountain Oysters Anywhere.

As always, your Convention Committee is working hard for you. It is, and has always been, our main goal to make each Convention, Conference or Reunion better than the one before. We hope that you will join us.



Thanks To Our Convention Committee

(Above) PGER Malcolm J. McPherson, State Sponsor and Past First Lady Pat stopped by the New Jersey booth at Grand Lodge for a photo op with our amazing convention committee.

Pictured L-R 1st Row: Karen Imperatrice, Ken Low, Richard Poole, and Maureen Whalen, Chairperson.

Pictured L-R 2nd Row: Harry Schutte, II, Paul Haropolous, Bruce Baita, PGER Malcolm, Past First Lady Pat, Pete D'Antoni, Vice-Chairperson, Dawn Doherty, and Howard Proctor.

(Left) Our State President Don Tonachio proudly waved our State Flag during the opening ceremonies of Grand Lodge.

Parades Committee

BY DINA ZACEK, CHAIRPERSON

Organizing a boardwalk parade in Wildwood takes a lot of hard work. You should all know the committee is working with the Convention Center and the Police departments on some corrections for next year's Parade.

I would like to congratulate Lake Hopatcong Lodge No. 782 on winning the Governor's Trophy and all the lodges that won parade awards. To me, every lodge that walks that route are winners. Your dedication to the parade is what makes it one of the best parades in the country.

I would like to thank the Parade Committee for all their hard work, countless hours, and their dedication. You are truly amazing. At this time, I would like to give special thanks to our Advisors, Diego "Dick" Tabbachino and Vicki Watson for their guidance and support.

The 2027 Theme will be announced at the Fall Conference. We look forward to an even better parade next year.



2026-2027 Vice Presidents: Allen Hartland, Stephen Heldt, Shean Opie, Denise Aiello, Joseph Glover, Jennifer Coggin, State President Don Tonachio, Stephanie Conti, Kevin Carney, David Curtiss, Michael Corbosiero, Deborah Kirkland, and Samantha Martin.



2026-2027 State Officers: James Cantwell, Jamie England, Melanie Pasquarelli, Sue Dupas, State President Don Tonachio, Ken Low, Lisa Rovito, Kelly Mazzocchi, and Tom Sparacio.



PGLC/PSP Richard Bard, State President Don Tonachio, GLC/PSP Peggy Berry.



Trustees: 2026-2029 Raphael Riquelme, Liz Sorenson, Brendan McNulty, Scott Graef



Jaime England and SP Don Tonachio



First Lady Lori Tonachio and State President Don Tonachio

Givers Of Hope: New Jersey Reaches For \$1 Million In ENF Grants

BY WILLIAM H. HARTMAN, CHAIRPERSON

Momentum is building for the Elks National Foundation across New Jersey — and our lodges have given us plenty to celebrate. Thanks to the outstanding generosity shown at our recent Wildwood Reunion, lodges throughout the New Jersey State Elks Association contributed \$59,856 to ENF. This impressive total reflects the commitment of New Jersey Elks to strengthen our communities and support the charitable programs that make a difference every day. Thank you to every Lodge and member who helped make Wildwood such a success!

New Jersey Lodges are also making excellent use of the grant opportunities ENF provides. Last year, our lodges received \$968,000 in ENF grant funding. Now our goal is to meet and exceed the \$1 million mark. That milestone is within reach. By identifying local needs, developing strong projects, and taking full advantage of available ENF grants, our lodges can bring even more resources into communities throughout New Jersey.

These grants help Elks support veterans, invest in young people, assist families, and respond to needs close to home. They also provide our neighbors with a powerful example of who we are and what Elkdom represents.

Members can help keep this progress moving by joining the Fidelity Club. For as little as \$5 a month, you can provide dependable support that strengthens ENF programs and expands their impact. If you are already a Fidelity Club member, thank you for your continued commitment. If you have not yet joined, now is the time. A small monthly contribution, combined with the support of Elks across the state, can accomplish remarkable things.

Our Region 1 and Region 2 ENF fundraisers will return in early 2027. Dates and details will be announced soon, and we look forward to enthusiastic participation from Lodges throughout both regions. Grand Exalted Ruler Timothy F. Jaeger has set a national ENF goal of \$5.25 per member. State President Don Tonachio has challenged New Jersey Elks to raise that standard to \$6 per member.

With the generosity already demonstrated in Wildwood and a million-dollar grant goal now in sight, New Jersey Elks are ready to make this another outstanding year for ENF.

We are New Jersey Elks Strong. We are Givers of Hope. READY, ELKS? LET'S GO!



Reading, Writing, and Backpacks

Lyndhurst Lodge No. 1505 recently held a very successful school supply drive. In just 90 minutes, members of the Lodge proudly gave out one hundred 30-piece school supply kits and 125 backpacks to local children. Thanks to their Elks National Foundation Beacon Grant that made this possible.



Spotlight on Greater Essex Lodge

Great things are always happening with Greater Essex Lodge No. 21 & Greater Essex Antlers Lodge No. 2. Saturday, August 22nd was an awesome day for Nassan's Place that was hosting its annual backpack & Family Day at East Orange High School. With funds from their Spotlight Grant, the Lodge was able to deliver about 200 stuffed backpacks to their event.



Summer Fund With Gratitude Grant

South Amboy Lodge No. 784 used their Gratitude Grant to help fund Summer Camp at the South Amboy YMCA.

Pictured, left to right are Exalted Ruler Dawn Roberts, Alexis Korsak & Elizabeth Bennett from the YMCA and Sandra Low, Youth Activities Chairperson.



Spotlight on a Wishlist

Clinton Lodge No. 2434 used their \$2,500 Spotlight grant to donate wish list items to SAFE in Hunterdon. SAFE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Hunterdon County, NJ.



Supporting Our Veterans

South Plainfield Lodge No. 2298 recently presented a check for \$1,000 to Independence for Veterans. This donation was made possible by obtaining the ENF CIP Freedom Grant. The packages featured in the snapshot are a collection of non-perishable food and new clothing items collected for veterans during the lodge's recent clothing drives.

Pictured, left to right: Stacia McDonough, President of Independence for Veterans, Grant Coordinator, Leading Knight Debbie Boyle, Trustee, Co-Chair of the Veterans Committee Margaret Williams and PER, Exalted Ruler Tom Perry, PER.



Bingo and BBQ

Marlton Lodge No. 2514 visited the residents at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland and enjoyed an afternoon filled with great food, lively games, and meaningful connection.

Through a National Elks Foundation Freedom Grant, the Lodge hosted a barbecue and bingo event designed to bring joy and engagement to the veterans who call Vineland home. The grant also supported the purchase of sensory toys for the facility's new solarium, enhancing a calming and therapeutic space for residents.

The event was organized by Deborah Albrecht, Chairperson of the Lodge's Veterans Services Committee, alongside State Trustee and Lodge member George Tencza. Their efforts drew such an overwhelming response from volunteers that, for the second year in a row, they had more support than they could accommodate.

For the Elks, the mission is clear: serve those who have served. While the barbecue and bingo brought smiles and laughter, organizers emphasized that the true purpose goes beyond the activities. Volunteers made it a priority to sit, listen, and engage in conversation with residents in an effort to create moments of connection that matter just as much as the event itself.

Among those volunteering was Eileen Linvill, the Lodge's Leading Knight, who at over 80 years old continues to give her time and energy in service to others. As a military spouse, she understands firsthand the importance of community support for veterans and their families.

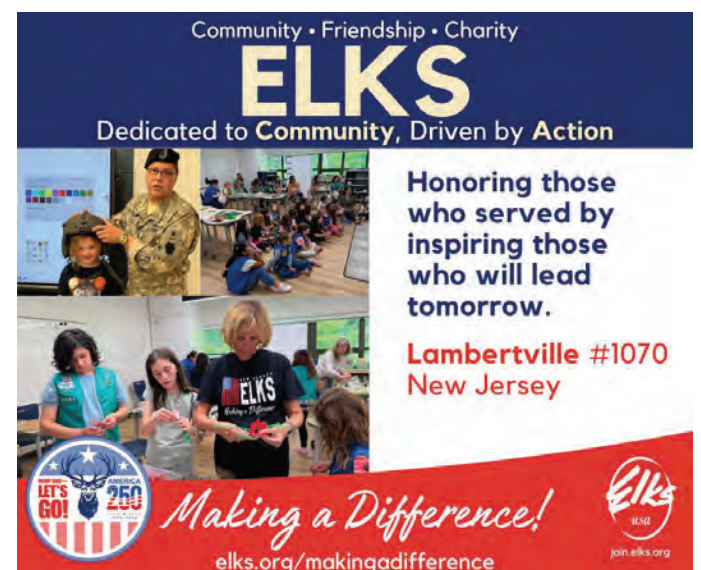
Now in its second year, this growing tradition reflects the power of partnership and compassion. Through initiatives like this, the Marlton Lodge No. 2514 continues to make a lasting impact by bringing not only food and fun but also fellowship and appreciation to the veterans they proudly serve.

Patriotic Cooperation

Through an Elks National Foundation Grant, Lambertville Lodge No. 1070 created an unforgettable opportunity to educate, inspire, and honor our nation's heroes while instilling patriotism and respect in the next generation.

Partnering with 32 local Girl Scouts and lodge veterans, the Lodge helped participants earn the new "Honoring Our Veterans" Girl Scout badge during the month of May. Scouts had the opportunity to interview a panel of veterans during an engaging Q&A session, hear firsthand stories of military service, and even try on a veteran's helicopter helmet and uniform.

The day continued with Scouts and veterans working side by side to place flags on the graves of local veterans throughout the community—a meaningful act of remembrance and gratitude. Several Scouts called it their favorite meeting of the year, ending the program with a heartfelt, "Thank you for your service!"



One Camper – One Counselor – One Smile At A Time

Building Our Team of Smile Makers: A Year-Round Mission

BY TODD THOMPSON,
ELKS CAMP MOORE DIRECTOR

The magic of Elks Camp Moore reaches far beyond our physical campgrounds in Haskell, New Jersey. It takes a team of dedicated Smile Makers – our camp counselors, activity specialists, health center staff, kitchen crew, and housekeeping team – to ensure that every camper who walks through our gates receives the attention, support, and care they need to fully enjoy their camp experience.

Building this team isn't a summer project. It's a full year of work, running from September through May, involving both a domestic and international search to find the best individuals for the job.

A Global Search for Local Impact

Part of what makes our staffing possible is our partnership with summer work and travel sponsors, who help us offer counselors from around the world a Cultural Exchange opportunity. These sponsors handle the details most people never think about – visa applications, program eligibility, background documentation, travel arrangements, insurance, and arrival support. Without them, staffing an international team of our size simply wouldn't be feasible.

Over the years, we've welcomed counselors from Great Britain, Australia, Poland, Mexico, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Italy, China, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Wales, Scotland, Jamaica, South Africa, Spain, Colombia, the Netherlands, Peru, Argentina, and Chile – just to name a few. We can't hang all their home country flags on our walls, but we do keep a scratch-off map in our office marking every place our Smile Makers have traveled from. It's a living reminder of just how far people will travel to make a camper's day unforgettable.

One Person at a Time

Our campers have unique needs and support requirements, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to staffing. Many of our campers require additional behavioral management support, personal care and hygiene assistance, or staff who understand specific



medical and health needs. Every camper has their own personality, needs, and wants – so when camper applications open each November, we begin recruiting specific staff members suited to ensure that particular camper's success.

It's this person-to-camper focus that makes the difference. It's why so many of our campers leave camp smiling – and why they come back year after year.

Over 500 Interviews, One Team

Here's something most people don't realize: every single staff member is personally interviewed, whether in person or via Zoom. Over the course of nine months, we interview 500 to 550 individuals – sometimes more – to hand-select our team across every department: camp counselors, activity specialists, housekeeping, health center staff, kitchen staff, and beyond.

This isn't a job for everyone. Our staff members work a full camping season, often putting in 70 to 75 hours a week. They're on their feet, running activities, providing hands-on care, and sometimes waking up in the middle of the night to support a camper. It takes a special kind of person to sign up for that – and an even more careful process to find them.

Preparing for Day One

Once hired, every staff member goes through pre-camp training and orientation, ensuring they have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to work with our campers before that first arrival day. It's

our final step in making sure our Smile Makers are ready to hit the ground running.

Why They Keep Coming Back

Every year, the number of returning staff varies. Many of our counselors are taking a gap year from university or have just graduated, looking for one last adventure before beginning their careers. We also have a core group of dedicated individuals who love this camp so much, they simply have to return – whether for a full summer or just a few volunteer weeks. Some of our current Smile Makers have been part of Camp Moore in some capacity for the past ten years. Others only join us for a portion of our ten-week season. Either way, the impact camp has on their lives stays with them forever.

What we hear from staff, time and time again, is remarkably consistent: **they miss the campers.**

Long after summer ends, they stay connected – through Facebook messages, WhatsApp check-ins, and video calls – sending birthday wishes and holiday greetings to campers and families they met months, or even years, earlier. Some have remained in touch with campers and families for seven years or more, well past the point when those campers aged out of our program.

That's the real magic of Elks Camp Moore. It's not just what happens during the ten weeks each summer – it's the relationships that carry on long after, connecting hearts across the globe, one Smile Maker at a time.

In Their Own Words: Our Smile Makers Share Their Camp Moore Experience

With the assistance of Todd and Jenna, some of our counselors were given a series of questions regarding their experiences at Elks Camp Moore.

How many years have you worked at Elks Camp Moore? Our counselors represent a beautiful mix of camp experience – from first-year Smile Makers discovering Camp Moore for the first time, to devoted veterans like Natalie Cannell, returning for her fourth summer, and Megan Howell, marking five years with us.

Why did you want to come to (or return to) Elks Camp Moore? For first-year counselors, the reasons were remarkably heartfelt: many came specifically to gain experience working with children with special needs, drawn in by ECM’s reputation after speaking with Todd, Jenna, and returning staff. Others were inspired by happy campers they saw on social media, a desire to experience American culture, or a long-held dream of doing “Camp America.”

For returners, the answer was simple and consistent: the campers. Counselors spoke of missing the kids during the year, loving watching them grow summer after summer, and treasuring the friendships and memories they’ve built. As Natalie put it, camp is “home away from home,” while Maia shared that campers “run up to us with smiles when they see that we’re back.”

What is one of your favorite activities and why? The Talent Show and swimming emerged as clear favorites across responses.

Counselors described the Talent Show as an emotional, powerful experience — watching campers “show their true self,” with the whole camp community rallying behind each performer. Adéla shared it “always makes me almost cry,” while Issabelle called it a moment that “shows growth in all individuals from day 1.”

Swimming was equally beloved, with counselors highlighting how the water helps campers step outside their comfort zones, socialize, and simply have fun. Music and chorus were also mentioned fondly, with counselors enjoying the “good vibe” of singing and dancing alongside campers.

Do you keep in touch with your campers, and how? An overwhelming yes — our returning Smile Makers maintain heartfelt connections with camper families through Facebook, WhatsApp, texting, email, and video calls. Several counselors mentioned exchanging birthday and holiday messages throughout the year. Natalie shared she’s remained in contact with a camper’s family from her very first year — seven years ago — even after that camper aged out of the program. Others noted that families often reach out asking when they can return to camp, a testament to the lasting bonds formed in just one week.

Do you keep in touch with other Smile Makers after you return home? Yes — and these friendships often go far beyond simple check-ins. Counselors described reunions across countries, lifelong friendships, and even one engagement! Natalie met her fiancé at camp. Megan has traveled internationally to visit camp friends. As Jess put it: “Camp Friends are the BEST Friends.”

Do you see changes in campers from arrival to departure? Every single counselor said yes, describing a consistent transformation:

- Campers arrive shy or hesitant and leave with noticeably more confidence
- They form friendships and social connections with fellow campers
- They become more comfortable with camp routines and expectations
- Emotional bonds with counselors deepen so much that check-out day often brings tears

Natalie beautifully captured this arc: campers who were “hiding behind mom on check-in day” are often “clinging to their counselor on checkout day, not wanting to leave.”

How Would You Describe Elks Camp Moore to a Family Thinking About Sending Their Child to Camp For The First Time?

Natalie Cannell: “Elks Moore is more than just a camp. It’s a place of memories, tradition, and fun. It makes even the most quiet and shy kids come alive on our floor shelf and build friendships along the way. There is always something special about having their own counselor to advocate for them during the week. Some bonds become unbreakable. Elks Camp Moore is indeed the miracle on the mountain and Todd and Jenna see to it that no stone is left unturned in terms of organization. Everything from the themes, activities and arrival and check-in day is seamless. Elks Camp Moore is somewhere you will never stop thinking about and always remember for the rest of your lives.”

Natalia Arjona: “Elks Camp Moore is a safe space and a place for the campers to have the best time and be themselves.”

Megan Howell: “100% recommend it to any family interested, it’s the best experience! Elks Camp Moore is an amazing experience for all. All our counselors will share regular updates, pictures and highlights with you throughout their week at camp.”

Maia Marshall: “IT IS THE BEST EXPERIENCE THE KIDS WILL EVER HAVE!!”

Jess Swainston: “An amazing place where campers will make some core memories.”

Issabelle Kent-Jackson: “At ECM your camper is guaranteed to be made the heart and soul of their smile maker for the week and they will leave this place with a child every overnight but they will have the time of their life and miss camp when at home.”

Aaron Cowley: “As a very safe environment and a place where children can grow as a person.”

Adéla Vilimovska: “That it is the camp with such a sweet setting, built on foundation – to make those kids happy and to make it the best week of their life.”

Taylor Jay Lawson: “It’s like we’re on a different planet. When at camp, all that matters is camp! The outside world isn’t important, campers and staff are just here to enjoy ourselves without distractions.”

Marije Wildschut: “A great place for lots of fun. And always someone looking after your child. I would describe it as being the most incredible place for both children and staff. Two days are the same and there is always so much to look forward to. From the opening campfire to the end of the week dance, everything is always so well planned and thought of with care and consideration for the children. Even though I’ve only been here for a short period of time, it already feels like a home away from home where I feel comfortable and confident. At ECM every day is the best day the campers have ever had.”

Caitlin Treanor: “I would say that ECM is an incredible experience for children to attend who have special needs. It gives campers a chance to fully express themselves and have the best time ever.”

Emma Fowler: “Elks Camp Moore is an amazing place to send your children to as they get to partake in a wide variety of activities and some great themes that the activities will match them too. The themes get the campers really involved as it goes on for the whole day and the fun just keeps coming. Elks Camp Moore is the perfect place to send your children as they get to experience so many new and different opportunities and make lots of friends that they may see in future summers. It’s amazing, there is nothing they can’t do for you. Your children will have the best week and try lots of new things and make new friends for life. There are different themes every day and a range of activities for everyone to enjoy and take part in. It’s like being a part of a big family that you won’t want to leave.”

Abbie Churchill: “I would say it is the happiest place on earth, the camp really does care about what’s best for each and every camper and that their child would be looked after so amazingly.”

Megan Saltmarsh: “Great fun and inclusive for everyone.”

Brendan Butcher: “I describe Elks Camp Moore as a place where campers are accepted exactly as they are. It’s a safe, supportive environment where they can have fun, build confidence, make friends, and try new experiences.”

Madison Loughrey: “It’s an incredible opportunity for your child to have fun, make friends and make the best memories!”

Emily Eaves: “The children are at the heart of everything that we do. It’s inclusive, accessible and full of love and fun. The staff are well trained and caring.”

Robert Carns: “An amazing, friendly, and SAFE environment where your child can express themselves and also have a relaxing week if they want but no matter what the care and support they receive will be second to none and I couldn’t think of anywhere better.”

Emma Northfield: “A welcoming place where families can feel at ease as they are assured their campers are in safe hands where they can have lots of fun.”

Behind the Magic: A Look Inside Elks Camp Moore's Summer of Themes

BY JENNA BADO, ASSISTANT CAMP DIRECTOR

Ask any camper at Elks Camp Moore what their favorite day was this summer, and you might get thirty different answers – because that's exactly how many themed days our campers experienced this season. From Hollywood glamour to Disney magic, from time travel to holiday cheer, no two days at camp are ever the same. And behind every single one of those days is a team of dedicated staff working tirelessly to make sure every camper feels the magic.

More Than a Schedule – A Labor of Love

As Assistant Camp Director, planning the daily themes is one of the most rewarding parts of the job – but it's far from simple. With over 30 themes rotating throughout the summer, every day requires careful coordination across every department at camp. When it's Christmas in July, our art staff are helping campers create handprint Santas, our cooking instructors are guiding them through decorating sugar cookies, and our recreation team is leading a spirited game of reindeer tag on the field. By evening, campers explore Polar Expedition stations and get the thrill of a lifetime meeting Santa himself.

None of this happens by accident. Our activity specialists receive their weekly themes in advance, thoughtfully designing activities that meet each camper exactly where they are. For our larger camp-wide evening programs – game shows, dances, talent shows, and themed stations – the planning starts weeks ahead, with every detail prepared so our specialists can focus on what matters most – being fully present with our campers and helping them shine.

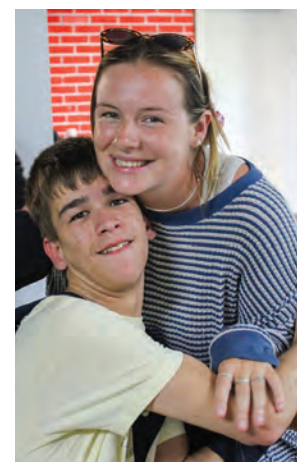
Growing With Our Campers

Just like our campers, Elks Camp Moore's traditions continue to grow and evolve. At the end of each season, our counselors vote on their favorite themes, and the top five earn a place in our beloved Best of the Best week – a celebration of the moments that meant the most.

But not every tradition lasts forever, and that's okay. When a theme no longer resonates, it makes room for something new. This year, we proudly introduced Camp Olympics – complete with an opening ceremony where campers were paired with personal “coaches,” assigned countries, and given the chance to create their own flags. Later, eight nations came together for friendly competitions in soccer, golf, hockey, and track and field. Watching our campers cheer each other on, wave homemade flags, and celebrate every small victory was a powerful reminder of why we do this work.

The Heart of Summer: Color Wars

If there's one week that captures the true spirit of Camp Moore, it's our final week Color Wars. Campers are divided into color teams, and each day brings two major camp-wide events. A scoreboard proudly hangs in our dining hall, tracking points as the week unfolds. It's a week filled with teamwork, encouragement, and unforgettable smiles – proof of just how far our campers have grown, not just in skill, but in confidence and connection.





Little League World Series

Bayonne Lodge No. 434 supported the New Jersey Little League Champions from Bayonne. For more than 20 years, lodge member Marty Reed made an annual pilgrimage to Williamsport, PA until his death two years ago. Bayonne opened their lodge for watch parties to support their Little League Champs.



Youth Activities Committee

BY ANTHONY PERRONE, STATE CHAIRPERSON

The committee had another successful Batters Up program this season. The state finals were on August 1st at Deerwood Park in Howell and followed by the awards ceremony and hospitality right on the field. A big thank you goes to the Howell Lodge No. 2515 and their members for providing and preparing the food on the spot.

Contest winners were awarded trophies and will be awarded tickets to the Elks Day at the Somerset Patriots on Saturday, September 12, 2026. State President Don Tonachio will throw out the first pitch, and our contest winners will be honored on the field in a ceremony before the game.

As summer comes to a close, the Youth Activities Committee starts its school-based activities. Every fall, lodges should be working with the schools in their jurisdiction to reestablish their Student of the Month programs or start an additional program. Lodges can run multiple programs in high school, one in middle school, and elementary school. Winners can be given a certificate or a small gift as recognition of their achievement.

The Karen Minutella Reading Initiative is still one program our committee is promoting. If your lodge didn't participate last school year, now is the time to start working with the schools to get approval to read Freckle Juice to the 3rd grade classes in your area. District Youth Activities chairpersons can provide your lodge with all the information necessary.

The Youth Activities Committee is in the process of scheduling fundraisers for the upcoming year. Your support will help us raise money to supplement the Youth Activities Committee's programs. Be on the lookout for event dates.

Antlers Today – Elks Tomorrow Building Tomorrow’s Leaders One Antler At A Time

BY TOM BOYCE – STATE ANTLERS CHAIRPERSON

The Antlers are about much more than meetings, activities, and community service. It is about young people discovering what they are capable of and giving them the opportunity to make a difference.

The story of Antlers in New Jersey is one of perseverance and commitment. The Antlers trace their roots back to around World War II, but after becoming dormant for a number of years, a new chapter began in 1997.

PGLC Diego Tabbachino became New Jersey State Elks Association President, he believed New Jersey’s young people deserved an opportunity to experience the values of the Elks firsthand. With the support of PGER Arthur Mayer Jr. and PGER Kenneth V. Cantoli, a pilot Antlers program was established. What began as an idea grew into something much bigger and eventually became part of the Elks youth programs at the Grand Lodge Level.

In 2000, Lacey Antlers Lodge No. 1 was instituted as the first Antlers Lodge and in January 2026, Kearny/Belleville Antlers Lodge No. 46 became the newest Antlers Lodge in New Jersey. Today, 27 active antlers lodges are giving young people the chance to get involved, serve their communities, and discover their own potential.

These young people are potentially future Elks and are our future leaders; They are making a difference today in our communities. The commitment of the NJSEA and the Antlers Committee was especially evident in June 2026, when the Antlers Committee awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 22 Antlers, providing educational support. Behind every scholarship is a young person who has worked hard, served others, stepped up as a leader, and shown a commitment to making their community a better place.

Maybe your lodge has never had an Antlers Lodge or maybe your Antlers Lodge went dormant years ago. Either way, the State Antlers Committee is only a phone call or an email away and is here to guide you. Now imagine what could happen if your Lodge opened its doors to the next generation of leaders.

The Antlers, tomorrow’s leaders, learn to serve their communities, take on responsibility, lead others, make new friends, and grow into confident young adults. More importantly, they discover that their ideas matter, their efforts make a difference, and their ability to make their communities and their future better.

The next generation is already out there. Our communities need young people who care and want to make a difference by getting involved. They want to be heard, to belong and to make new friends. The life lessons learned as an Antler are invaluable. They help young people build confidence, develop responsibility, and understand the importance of service and community.

The question is: Will your Lodge give them the opportunity to lead?

Contact the State Antlers Committee today to learn more about starting an Antlers Lodge or how to reinstitute your dormant Antlers Lodge Antlers Today. Elks Tomorrow. Building a Brighter Future, One Antler at a Time.



Ready For Back To School

Through the kindness and generosity of Rutherford Lodge No. 547 and Rutherford Antlers Lodge No. 41 and our community supporters, to assemble/stuff 21 backpacks with everything a student should need to start the school year and also donate 4 additional containers of bulk school supplies for Rutherford Social Services to provide to local families and teachers as needed.



Our Antlers had a fantastic time attending the State Antlers Party at the Wildwood Reunion. It was a great opportunity to come together, make memories, build friendships, and celebrate the spirit of Antlers across New Jersey.



Members of Bergenfield Lodge No. 35 stand proud and ready to honor our flag as they prepare for the start of Bergenfield No. 1477 Flag Day Ceremony.



Congratulations Eagle Scouts

Hackettstown Lodge No. 2331 honored two scouts from Troop No. 436. Aiden Cuccaro's Eagle project was to plan and organize the construction of three park benches at Schooley's Mountain Park. Also honored was Jared Thomas Bermeo who created a sustainable garden in the back of Benyan High School in Little Falls. Both Scouts were presented with a letter, certificate and pin from the Grand Exalted Ruler, and a certificate, small American flag and a \$50 check from the Lodge.

Pictured with the two Scouts is Esquire & Youth Activities Chair, Robert Furda.



6 Times A Charm!

Cedar Grove Lodge No. 2237 was the National "All American Lodge Contest" Div. 2 winner for the 6th Time!

The All-American Lodge Contest is a contest for lodges. Cedar Grove Lodge was awarded points for all the efforts the lodge made, over the last year, in raising funds for charities and civic causes, along with achieving Grand Lodge programs listed on the very rigorous test criteria.

Even though the lodge was in a division of smaller lodges by number (250 & below), they beat out hundreds of other Elks Lodges in the nation to win this title!

Pictured is last year's Exalted Ruler Mike S. Corbosiero (L) and this year's Exalted Ruler Leon Dupas, PER.

Americanism Committee

BY CHARLES STECHER, STATE CHAIRPERSON

Our committee's goal is to fulfill the Grand Lodge objective to "foster the spirit of American pride, patriotism, and civic responsibility." We support key Grand Lodge programs, including June's Flag Day services and an annual Flag Retirement ceremony. Currently underway is the Grand Lodge Americanism Essay Contest for 5th–8th graders, themed "Explain A Constitutional Right or Privilege and How It Affects You and Your Family." The committee will be judging the essays early Spring 2027.

At the state level, our June fundraiser sold 113 "250th Anniversary Banners" to local Lodges and Districts, with proceeds supporting our essay contest awards. In July, we honored our 2025 "Americanism Challenge" winners – Brick Lodge No. 2151 (Region 1) and Kearny-Belleville Lodge No. 1050 (Region 2) – each receiving a plaque and \$500 check.

As individuals, we share our pride during the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance, along with deep gratitude for veterans, active-duty personnel, and their families. Instilling these values remains central to our Order's mission. With your continued support, we will succeed.



State President Don Tonachio escorted in Kimberly Brander, wife of Specialist E4 Albert A. Brander.



Every year the committee places flags for each of the names read. The family members take their flags home at the end of the picnic.

Scholarship Committee

BY KAREN IMPERATRICE, CHAIRPERSON

CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITY 2026 - 2027

The 2026 NJ Elks Family Scholarship application deadline has passed. The State Judging Committee has started its review of the applications and the winners have been contacted.

2027 ENF SCHOLARSHIP SEASON

The 2027 Scholarship season is upon us and there are three types of Scholarships offered by Elks National Foundation.

1) The Most Valuable Student Scholarship

It is open to any high school senior who is a citizen of the United States. Ranging from \$1,000 per year to \$12,500 per year, Most Valuable Student scholarships are for students pursuing a four-year degree, on a full-time basis (minimum of 12 semester hours), in a U.S. college or university.

Applications will be available online after August 1, 2026 at ELKS.org.

2) The National Legacy Awards Scholarship

Legacy Awards are \$4,000 (\$1,000/yr) scholarships for children and grandchildren of Elks members. The Foundation will offer a total of up to 251 awards in the 2027 contest. New Jersey will receive 10. The 2027 ENF Legacy Awards contest will kick off on September 1, 2026. Applications for the 2027 contest will be available ONLINE ONLY starting September 1, 2026 at Elks.org. Deadline is February 1, 2027 at 11:59 am Pacific Time. Winners will be announced in April, 2027.

Who is Eligible? For the 2027 contest, any child or grandchild (or stepchild, step-grandchild, or legal ward) of a living elk who joined the order on or before April 1, 2024 or a charter member of a Lodge that was instituted on or after April 1, 2024, is eligible to apply. The elk must also be a paid-up member through March 31, 2027. Great-grandchildren are not eligible. The applicant must be a high school senior. The applicant must apply online only. The 2027 Legacy Awards application deadline is February 1, 2027. If the applicant's parent and grandparent are both Elk members, the applicant must apply through the parent's lodge. They have waived the standardized test requirement for the 2027 Legacy contest. You do not need to submit ACT and/or SAT scores.

Students may apply for more than one ENF scholarship; however, they may win only one. In cases where the student wins more than one, we will award the scholarship with the greater value. Students can accept local and state scholarships, which are separate from the awards at the national level. Legacy Awards may only be applied to accredited US American schools, colleges or universities.

If you are selected as a 2027 Legacy Awards recipient, you will be required to perform service once a year with an Elks Lodge during the four years you are receiving the scholarship. New Jersey will offer 10 Legacy Scholarships this year.

3) Emergency Educational Grant program provides financial assistance to children of deceased or totally disabled Elks, who wish to obtain or further their college education.

Check on elks.org for more information.

Ritual Committee

BY RICH ZACEK, CHAIRPERSON

I would like to congratulate Jessica Boudreau of Union Lodge No. 1583 for representing our State Association in the Flag Charge contest at the Grand Lodge Convention in July. Congratulations are also extended to our 11 O'clock toast winner, Thomas Flanagan IV from Long Branch Lodge No. 742. New Jersey is proud of both of you.

Congratulations to Brick Lodge No. 2151 for winning the National Ritual Competition at Grand Lodge Convention. Job well done! You made New Jersey proud!

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our Flag Charge and 11 O'clock Toast contest and the lodges that participated in our ritual contests. You are all winners!

We had 4 lodges participate in our ritual contest this year. The Committee is hoping to have at least 6 participate this year. Please put the word out and help us keep the ritual alive in New Jersey.

We are in need of judges so we will be having a judges' clinic coming up soon. Check with your district chairperson for dates and places.



This year I was honored to present the Elmwood Park-Paterson Lodge No. 60 "Tom Clarke Memorial Scholarship" to graduating Elmwood Park High school senior Eleni Cruz who will be attending Scranton University this coming fall. This scholarship recognizes Eleni who has shown significant improvement throughout her high school years, embodying the spirit of perseverance and dedication that Tom Clarke valued. Congratulations to Eleni for her outstanding achievements and her bright future ahead. Pictured, left to right: Eleni Cruz, PER Robert Blum, Scholarship Chairperson

Three Students Win Prestigious \$6,000 National Elks Legacy Scholarships

Lacey Lodge No. 2518 is proud to announce that three high school seniors have been selected as national recipients of the Elks National Foundation (ENF) Legacy Award Scholarship. Each student will receive a \$6,000 scholarship (\$1,500 per year over four years) to help fund their upcoming undergraduate education.

The ENF Legacy Awards are highly competitive, nationwide scholarships available exclusively to the children and grandchildren of living elk members who demonstrate exceptional academic success, leadership, and a deep commitment to community service.

"We are absolutely thrilled that three of our local students have been recognized on a national stage by the Elks National Foundation," said Michael Day, Exalted Ruler of Lacey Lodge No. 2518. "With more than 3,300 members, our lodge takes immense pride in our charitable footprint across Ocean County. Seeing the grandchildren and children of our own dedicated members succeed like this is the ultimate reward."

As part of receiving the Legacy Award, these scholars will also complete acts of service with an elks Lodge throughout their college careers, further strengthening the multigenerational bond of civic duty within the community.

"Investing in our youth and supporting our local families is at the very core of what we do," added Trudy Stolte, chairperson of the Lacey Lodge Scholarship Committee. "These three exceptional young adults have proven themselves inside the classroom and out. We are honored to stand behind them as they take this next monumental step."

These major national accolades come on the heels of the Lacey Lodge's localized community push, which recently saw \$21,000 in local Most Valuable Student (MVS) scholarships distributed to 21 graduating seniors from Lacey Township High School.



Lodge Activities Committee

BY JAYNE MCLAUGHLIN, STATE CHAIRPERSON

For 2026, the Lodge Activities Committee had a lot of lodge participants for the All-American Lodge Contest. The committee would like to thank all that took the time to enter their lodge for consideration. We appreciate all the dedication and time it took to prepare these entries.

We are excited to announce the 2026 All American Lodge Contest winners which were announced at Grand Lodge in Chicago, Illinois. Awards will be handed out at Fall Conference in November.

The Following New Jersey Lodges made Top 10 in their Respective Divisions:

- Division I – Elmwood Park Paterson Lodge No. 60
- Division II – Cedar Grove Lodge No. 2237 & Kearny-Belleville Lodge No.1050
- Division IV – Rutherford Lodge No. 547 & Middletown Lodge No. 2179
- Division VI – Manahawkin Lodge No. 2340 & Lake Hopatcong Lodge No. 782

The Committee is proud to announce the following winners of the All-American Lodge Contest:

- Third Place in Division I – Elmwood Park Paterson Lodge No. 60
- First Place in Division II – Cedar Grove Lodge No. 2237
- Second Place in Division II – Kearny-Belleville Lodge No. 1050
- Second Place Division IV – Middletown Lodge No. 2179
- Third Place Division IV – Rutherford Lodge No. 547

NJSEA Lodge Activities 2026-2027 CONTEST DUE DATES

CONTEST	DUE TO DISTRICT	DUE TO STATE
Lodge Bulletin	Tuesday 2/2/27	Tuesday 2/9/27
Memorial Service	Tuesday 2/2/27	Tuesday 2/9/27
Community Service & Image Contest	Tuesday 3/2/27	Tuesday 3/9/27

Drug Awareness

BY MARY ELLEN LAWRENCE, CHAIRPERSON

Congratulations to the Lodge Chairperson of the Year, Kelly Tartarka, Colonia Lodge No. 2282. There were also two District Chairperson of the Year awards: Lisa Rovito, Northwest District and Jamie England, Northeast District.

Now that Fall has arrived, our NJSEA State Drug Awareness program enters our busiest time of year. Our Poster, Essay and Video contests begin in September and run through the new year. The theme this year is “A Healthy Me is Drug Free.” Lodges are encouraged to bring our contests to their local school districts. Our DAP National training site, training.elksdap.org, contains all the guidelines for this year’s contests.

The site is a valuable tool that anyone can access for information. Nominations for our Enrique Camarena Award are due to the State Chairperson by November 1st. This is a prestigious award given to law enforcement personnel who have gone above and beyond in their dedication to drug awareness.

Our largest fundraiser for Peer Leadership is the Walk Out on Drugs (which can include cook out, race out, dance out, etc.). Districts are busy planning their events and some have already participated. All events should be completed by November 1st. Last year the State raised \$56,799.

This year, our goal is to reach or exceed \$60,000. Support from our Elk families is greatly appreciated.

Lake Hopatcong Lodge No. 782 held their 8th Annual Gerry Cook Golf Outing for Drug Awareness in October at the Farmstead County Club in Andover, NJ.

Our 13th Annual Path to Leadership and 38th Annual Peer Leadership conferences will be held on February 4th, 2027 for Middle School students and February 5th thru the 7th for High School students. Once again, they will be held at the Ocean Place Spa and Resort in Long Branch. Last year, over 1,000 students attended Path and Peer. We look forward to an increase in that number for 2027. Funding for students is available through local lodges, Opioid settlement funds from local and county Alliances, ENF Grants and Walk Out proceeds. We are fortunate that the price for students attending Path will remain at \$50 and for Peer at \$385. Applications for Peer will be available on September 15th and October 15th for Path.

Looking forward to another great year for Drug Awareness in 2026-2027.



Brigantine Lodge No. 2428 was proud to host the NJ South District Elks “Walk Out on Drugs” on May 30, 2026. It was a great turnout; money was raised for the NJ State Elks Youth Programs (Peer Leadership for high school grades and Path to Leadership for grades 6-8th).

Central District	East Central District			Millville #580	Point Pleasant #1698
Carteret #2235	Cranford #2006			Vineland #1422	Toms River #1875
Colonia #2282	Mountainside #1585	Kearny-Belleville #1050	Northwest District	South Central District	Southwest District
East Brunswick #2370	Rahway #1075	Lyndhurst #1505	Boonton #1405	Eatontown #2402	Bordentown #2085
Metuchen #1914	Stirling #2392	Greater Essex #21	East Hanover #815	Freehold #1454	Deptford #2708
New Brunswick #324	Springfield-Hillside #2004	North Arlington #1992	Hackettstown #2331	Jamesburg #2180	Hamilton #2262
Piscataway #2414	Summit #1246	Nutley #1290	Lake Hopatcong #782	Keyport-Matawan #2030	Hightstown #1955
South Amboy #784	Union #1583	South Orange #1154	Livingston #1855	Long Branch #742	Marlton #2514
South Plainfield #2298		West Orange #1590	Madison #1465	Middletown #2179	Mount Holly #848
Watchung Hills #885	North District		Parsippany-Troy Hills #2078	Millstone #2613	New Egypt #2457
Woodbridge #2116	Mahwah #1941	Northeast District	Sussex #2288	Old Bridge #2229	Trenton #105
	Oakland #2167	Bergenfield #1477	Sparta #2356	Red Bank #233	West Central District
East District	Passaic Valley #2111	Clifton-Garfield #1569	South District	Southeast District	Bound Brook #1388
	Park Ridge #2234	Dumont #2593	Brigantine #2428	Bayville #2394	Clinton #2434
Bayonne #434	Pompton Lakes #1895	Elmwood Park-Paterson #60	Clayton #2132	Brick #2151	Flemington #1928
Greater Palisades #2475	Westwood #1562	Hackensack #658	Deerfield #733	Howell #2515	Lambertville #1070
Hoboken #74	West Milford #2236	Hasbrouck Heights #1962	Galloway #2845	Jackson #2744	Manville-Hillsborough #2119
Ridgefield Park #1506	North Central District	New Milford-Teaneck #2290	Egg Harbor #2563	Lacey #2518	Middlesex #1488
Tenafly #2271	Cedar Grove #2237	Paramus #2001	Greater Cape May #2839	Manahawkin #2340	Princeton #2129
Weehawken #1456	Harrison East Newark #2326	Rutherford #547	Greater Wildwood #1896	Manasquan #2534	Somerville #1068
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!					



National Hoop Shoot Winner

At Elks Day at the Somerset Patriots game on September 12th, State President Don Tonachio got to personally congratulate Marina Abou-Daoud National Winner 8-9 Girls. Marina was sponsored by Lambertville Lodge No. 1070.

Hoop Shoot Committee

BY BOB SORENSON, STATE CHAIRPERSON

Our committee completed a very successful 2025-2026 year. New Jersey sent 4 contestants to the National Finals in Chicago, one of them taking the 8-9 Girls Championship. Hoop Shoot remains one of our key youth activities. It's a basketball free throw contest for boys and girls ages 8 to 13. It's free and all a contestant needs is a pair of sneakers. The program encourages kids to set goals, develop effective work habits, learn sportsmanship, make friends and have fun.

Winners of local shoots, sponsored by the individual lodges, advance to district competition. Those winners advance to the state shoot and then to the Grand Lodge regional shoot. From there they move on to the national competition. Of course, competition gets stiffer at each level.

Local lodges and district directors should have received Hoop Shoot packets in the mail by now. This material, along with the Age Calculator, can also be found on the Hoop Shoot dashboard on elks.org.

I encourage directors to educate their volunteers on all rules prior to the contest. Parents often know these rules very well. Lodge secretaries need to appoint the lodge Hoop Shoot director in CLMS. Contest dates, times, locations, and winners are entered by the Hoop Shoot directors at each level.

A few important deadlines: Local shoots must be completed by December 15, 2026, and district competitions should be completed by January 15, 2027. The state competition will be in February 2027 at South Plainfield High School.

Please also note that Hoop Shoot is a required program for all lodges per Grand Lodge. Thank you to all local directors, district directors and state advisors for your support. I welcome your suggestions and comments.

Soccer Shoot Committee

BY MIKE WALSH, CHAIRPERSON

The Soccer Shoot Committee meets on the last Monday of the month, July through February, at Asbury Park-Wall Lodge No. 128.

The contest measures the ability of the contestant to score goals. U8 will shoot at small goals, and U10 to U16 will shoot at a regulation-size goal with a grid attached for point calculation. The lodge contests are held September through October, followed by the district contests October through December. Last year, 9 of 12 districts held contests.

The State contest will be held in Manasquan in early January at the Manasquan High School Fieldhouse. The awards will be given out at Manasquan Lodge after the shoot.

The State winners will move onto the Mid-Atlantic National Regional in York, PA, which will be held in early March.



Historical Committee

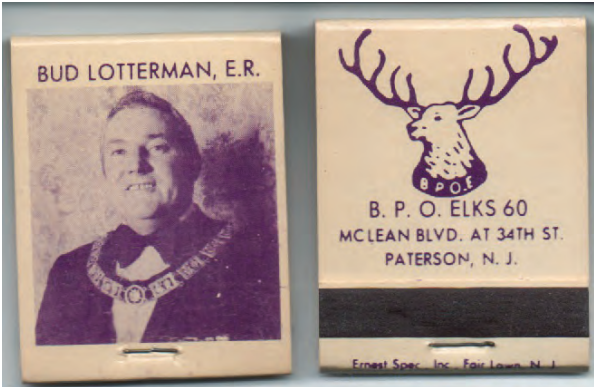
BY JEFF BRYANT, STATE CHAIRPERSON

At our recent Wildwood 2026 Reunion, a New Jersey elk approached the NJSEA Historical Committee with a surprising question: "Would the committee be interested in a collection of Elks Magazines, from 1922 through about 1980?" There was only one possible answer — an enthusiastic "Sure!"

A Gift Rooted in Elk Tradition

The donor, Mike Moroney of Lake Hopatcong Lodge No. 782, explained that the collection belonged to his uncle, Howard "Bud" Lotterman, a devoted member of Paterson Lodge No. 60 who was recognized in a 1979 Congressional Citation. Bud passed away in 1993, and his family felt the State Association was the rightful home for these carefully preserved volumes.

The collection's roots stretch back even further, to Leo W. Eirich, a Paterson Lodge No. 60 PER who began collecting and leather-binding every issue of the magazine nearly a century ago. Bud later continued Leo's work with the same devotion. Beyond his Elk achievements — Past Exalted Ruler of Paterson and Northeast District Vice President — Bud was also a Navy veteran who served on the USS New Jersey BB-62. This collection may stand as one of his most lasting contributions.



A Century of Elk History, Now Preserved Twice

While Elks.org offers a searchable digital archive of the magazine, nothing replaces holding history in your hands. Thanks to Leo, Bud, and the generosity of the Moroney family, the State Association now holds 57 original bound volumes spanning 1922 to April 1979, plus unbound issues through 1982 — a physical bridge to the Order's past.

A Treasure for the Future

The NJSEA Historical Committee is proud to safeguard this rare, complete archive. Heartfelt thanks go to Mike Moroney's family, and we remember Leo Eirich and Bud Lotterman, whose quiet dedication created a legacy that will be cherished for generations of NJ Elks to come.

Special Children's Committee

BY ARLEEN HICKMAN, STATE CHAIRPERSON

A special thank you to all the lodges and districts that donated to Camp Moore and the Miracle on the Mountain Fund at Wildwood Reunion. We also thank those that provided meals for our campers and staff. Special recognition and thank you to the John Sentner Memorial Plunge Committee for their hard work and generous donation. Total donations at Wildwood Reunion were \$409,050.

Having completed the 2026 camping season, a great round of applause to Todd and his staff. The 2027 applications will be available soon and will be filed electronically. Due to limited capacity, please file as soon as possible.

Every year one male and one female special needs scholar are selected for a \$10,000 scholarship (\$2,500 over 4 years). The Scholarship Winners this year are: Michael Thomas sponsored by Toms River Lodge No. 1875 and Jessica Theobald sponsored by Hackensack Lodge No. 658. The runners-up will receive \$1,000 a year for 4 years. Winners are Jace Gibson sponsored by South Plainfield Lodge No. 2298 and Sophia Arbreit sponsored by Manasquan Lodge No. 2534. Congratulations to our winners.

On July 26th the Annual Miracle Run event was held at New Egypt Lodge No. 2457. Thank you to all those who attended. The 2026-2027 Ambassadors were introduced, and the Miracle Run Committee presented each with gifts.

AREA 1 Ambassador Aubrey Ibrahim sponsored by Old Bridge Lodge No. 2229. Alternate Michael Gaynor sponsored by Middletown Lodge No. 2179.

AREA 2 Ambassador Jaymeson Hayward sponsored by West Milford Lodge No. 2236. Alternate Grayson McTague sponsored by Elmwood Park-Paterson Lodge No. 60.

AREA 3 Ambassador Luke Bowman sponsored by West Orange Lodge No. 1590. Alternate Derek Coar sponsored by Booton Lodge No. 1405.

AREA 4 Ambassador Lonnie Mattox sponsored by Union Lodge No. 1583. Alternate Jack Hamilton sponsored by South Plainfield Lodge No. 2298.

Congratulations to our Ambassadors, Chaperones and sponsoring lodges. Thanks to all for supporting our Calendar Raffle and Clothing Drive which benefit our Special Children.

Our appreciation for keeping smiles on our Special Children's faces.



Reflections from a Smilemaker!

Elks Camp Moore 2026! What a ride it's been! I've grown so much over these 10 weeks. I've learned how to tackle different situations, catering to children/young adults with different needs. I also learned how to accommodate everyday activities to encourage more engagement and happiness from my campers! I've learned to make it the best best day the campers have ever had! I'm still as impulsive as always going from blue hair week 1 to a tattoo week 10! Blue team till I die.



Camper Graduation 2026

Every year there is a graduation party for those campers who are attending their last year of camp.



Pottery & Pizza

Lacey Lodge No. 2518 Special Children's Committee recently hosted a fun-filled Pottery Paint & Pizza Party on June 6, bringing together approximately 120 guests for an afternoon of creativity, friendship, and smiles.

The event was organized and staffed by 20 dedicated members of the Special Children's Committee, along with 4 enthusiastic members of the Lacey Antlers Lodge youth group. Their hard work helped create a memorable experience for the children and their families.

Each child received a ceramic stepping stone to paint and decorate using their own set of paints, brushes, and aprons. Once completed, the young artists took their personalized creations home as a lasting reminder of the special day.

In addition to the pottery activity, everyone enjoyed pizza, refreshments, and the chance to spend time with friends in a welcoming, supportive environment. The room was filled with laughter, creativity, and excitement as the children proudly showed off their colorful masterpieces.

Providing opportunities for children with special needs to have fun, express themselves creatively, and make lasting memories is one of the most rewarding things the committee does.

Doing What Elks Do Best!

Sparta Lodge No. 2356 has been busy doing what ELKS do best — Keeping Smiles on the Faces of Special Children!

Sparta Lodge holds recurring Special Thursday Night Game Nights, and on March 8th, the Lodge held their Annual Polar Plunge. About 35 brave men, women and children dipped, ran, or otherwise dove into the icy waters of Lake Mohawk to benefit Camp Moore!

On May 21st, the Lodge hosted a Prom for Sparta Unified Sports and Sparta's Special Olympics. They posed for a picture on the Lake Mohawk Boardwalk. Then on July 31st, Sparta Lodge provided 110 frozen treats to campers and staff at Camp Moore. Tom, the NJ Ice Cream Man, was a hit with the campers as he arrived in his 66 year-old Ford truck!



SCC Trustees Report

BY VINCENT DITTA, TRUSTEE CHAIRMAN

Elks Camp Moore completed another year of sending campers to camp at no charge to the lodges. The camp staff had a challenging year; but as usual, did a great job putting smiles on the faces of our children. Social media postings of the year's activities were plentiful and the smiles on our camper's faces were great to see.

We are always honored and excited to be able to showcase our State's Major Project to our Grand Exalted Ruler Timothy F. Jaeger and First Lady Sandy when they visit in November.

The online camper registration process continues to be a valuable tool in registering campers. This process helps to eliminate incomplete applications, misplaced applications and records applications in the order that they are received. This process still requires local lodge sponsorship. If your lodge should need assistance, please reach out to your District Chairperson for guidance.

The camp's website, njelkscampmoore.org, serves as an introduction and tool for members, perspective campers' families and counselors to view the camp. It contains a search by zip code to find the closest lodge along with pictures and videos showing our "state of the art" facility. The site also serves as a reference for district and lodge chairpersons and contains a link to the state's website, NJElks.org.

The last piece of revitalization to our State's Major Project, the remodeling of Cantoli Hall, is complete. Improvements were finished on time and the dormitory was ready for the 2026 camping season. The revitalization has impressed not only campers, their families, counselors and visitors but also our members.

During the off season, the camp is always in need of assistance with projects and maintenance. You can contact Anthony Alfonso Jr., our Property Maintenance Supervisor, to offer your assistance. Once the camping season ends the Board of Trustees begin the review of camp agency agreements, used to hire both domestic and international counselors, along with reviewing the existing health policy and all insurance coverage for the camp to ensure they are always up to date with the ever-expanding and improved camp. The Trustees are focused to ensure the camp and attendees are well protected and secure.

The Special Children's calendar raffle continues to be a major fundraiser supporting Elks Camp Moore. This year's spring cycle was a complete success, with all calendars being sold. Thanks to all the participants and congratulations to all the winners! The real winners of this program continue to be our special children. An unexpected donation of \$10,000 was received in July from the Rivercrest Cabana Club of Piscataway. Their donation was in recognition of the "diligent efforts and invaluable services" our organization provides.

The Board would like to welcome Elyse Russo, from Brick Lodge No. 2151, who has been appointed to the Board of Trustees as the new Five-Year Trustee and will serve as Secretary for the Board during the 2026-2027 elk year. Elyse recently completed a successful three years as the SCC Chairperson. The Board would also like to acknowledge the appointment of Arleen Hickman, from Millville Lodge No. 580, for her appointment as the new SCC Chairperson. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for all that you do in support of Elk's Camp Moore, Miracle On the Mountain, and our Special Children. Please continue your fundraising so we can keep putting smiles on the faces of our Special Children.



Visit to an Alpaca Farm

Lacey Lodge No. 2518 recently provided a memorable day of fun, learning, and laughter for students from the Lacey High School special needs classes with a trip to Out of Sight Alpaca Farm. The students enjoyed a unique yoga session alongside the farm's friendly goats, followed by an interactive tour of the farm where they had the opportunity to meet and learn about the alpacas and other animals. The experience offered a wonderful combination of recreation, education, and hands-on animal interaction.

The smiles on the students' faces throughout the day said it all. From feeding and petting the animals to participating in goat yoga, the outing created lasting memories and plenty of joyful moments for everyone involved.



"I was so nervous in the beginning to send Carter...but that has changed into pure happiness for him! He looks like he has had the most fun!! Last day today at Elks Camp Moore! My son had a blast at Camp Moore! It really puts into perspective what and why we do all this work. ELKS AND OUR CAMP MOORE PROJECT IS AMAZING!"
Love & thanks from Joanna Crerand



"THANK YOU to the amazing Elks Camp Moore for an incredible camp experience for our kids and respite for Mom & Dad! Special shout out to the best Counselors-Taylor & Emma, and of course- Camp Director Todd, the incomparable Jenna, all of the camp counselors and honorary#TeamMcGowan members Jess & Maddie!!!! Love to ALL of our Elks family for making Camp Moore a place that changes lives and celebrates our beautiful children".....Stephanie & Jeff McGowan.



Spring Cleaning

Members of Somerville Lodge No. 1068 Special Children's Committee participated in a camp cleanup day at Camp Jotoni, an ARC of Somerset County camp located in Warren. Members swept, mopped, painted, and cleaned windowsills, transforming the dining hall into a welcoming space.

Pictured, left to right: Joe Miller, Camp Director; member Colleen Adams; member and two-time camp counselor Nancy Stober-McCarthy; and member Frank Higbie.