

UGLE



Brandon Elks Lodge #2383

800 CENTENNIAL LODGE DRIVE, BRANDON, FL 33510
ALL AMERICAN LODGE 1999-2000
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MARCH 2024 www.brandonelks.org

Volume 24 Issue 3



Message From Your Exalted Ruler, Ed Ciesla

One More Month To Go

As this Lodge year comes to a close, it is time for me to review my term. When I took office 11 months ago, I set goals that would have an impact on our Lodge. In addition to the usual goals of having an increase in membership and a stronger financial position, I also intended to: 1) Have a decrease in membership non-renewals. 2) Have more activities for our members. 3) Involve our NEW members in Lodge events, activities, and committees. 4) Change/improve some of the ways we've been doing things. And 5) Ensure ALL of us have FUN in our Lodge doing the things Elkdom is all about. As this Lodge year draws to a close, I would like us to look back at what has been accomplished.

Financially, we are stronger. We have spent some big money, but it has not hurt us. In fact, the investments in our upgrades will bring us more revenue, eventually paying for themselves, and making us stronger for the future. As for increasing membership, I am proud to have led our Lodge to its LARGEST net increase in membership in 10 years!

As for my other goals, they are discussed here:

Item 1) Indeed we did have a decrease in non-renewals, a 65% improvement! Item 2) With the help of our Lodge Hostess (Terri Ciesla) we absolutely had more events and activities for our members to enjoy, adding value to their membership. Item 3) I am very happy to report that not only was I able to engage many of our new members in our Lodge, but I was also successful in recruiting many of our longer-time members for committees, and volunteering for our special events. Item 4) I am not 100% on this one.

As you have guessed, not everyone embraces change. So as I promised as I took office, if any changes did not work out, I would pull back, reevaluate, and move forward. And this, I have had to do (RE: The issue of members going home on a Friday night at, or around, 9:00 pm). Other changes that did work out are the improvements to our Lodge: A) The erection of a fence along our east property line, allowing for the expansion/organization of our Storage Lot. B) The implementation of a NEW, modern Point of Sale system for our Lounge. C) New flooring for our rental hall, anteroom, lobby, and Lounge (expected to be completed by April 1, 2024). Thank-you very much BLOE. D) The upgrading of our Sports Package for the TVs in our Lounge. E) The adoption of a new software program (APP) that will allow us to manage our RV Park better. F) Receiving, installing, and using the two new "Eleven O'clock" Elk clocks for our Lounge and Meeting room. Thank-you AGAIN, BLOE! G) The upgrading of our Queen of Diamonds game to the Queen of Hearts with some significant improvements. H) The introduction of my Volunteer of the Month, allowing more people to be recognized for their contributions to our Lodge. And I) The introduction of The Elk

of the Quarter, which congratulates our members for their true Spirit of Elkdom. Item 5) is a qualitative goal. Since there is no data to measure, I can only go by observation and feedback. I feel this goal has also been successfully achieved. With membership up, participation up, morale up, and an overall positive feeling among members, coupled with a willingness to "pitch in", I can safely say, "goal accomplished".

One more accomplishment, which was not cited as a goal, was the raising of a significant amount of money for our charities: The ENF, The Florida Elks Youth Camp, The Florida Elks children's Therapy Services, and the Harry-Anna Trust Fund.

Although my time commitment to our Lodge this year has been a large one, with one more month to go, I have never felt overwhelmed, overworked, discouraged, or unappreciated. It was fun. And, it has truly been a pleasure. Thank-you to all who have helped make it so. *Your Exalted Ruler, Ed Ciesla*

Volunteer of the month

This month's volunteer surprised me. When I evaluated volunteer hours, and the type of energy contributed to our Lodge, this person stood out. So far this year, he has volunteered more hours at the snack bar than any other member of our snack bar crew.

He has helped with many catering events and other Lodge events. He even pitches in with tasks both inside and outside our building, helping Lou and Rick get things done. He is also active in contributing to our community. He assists Jan Jacobsen (our first Elk of the quarter) with the Nativity Food Bank and volunteering to feed the homeless through T.H.O.R.N. Ministries, a mobile homeless outreach. Help me recognize and thank **Ken Muzyk** for all he does for our Lodge, and our community.

Elk of the Ouarter

. As you remember, my criteria for Elk of the Quarter is that our honoree be a member of our Lodge, be active as a volunteer in our Lodge, AND be active in volunteering in our community outside of our Lodge, thereby exemplifying the virtues of Charity and Brotherly Love. This quarter's Elk is VERY well known to us. He is someone who consistently helps with our Lodge events, activities, dinners, and snack bar. And he attends the events and activities that he doesn't sign up for as well. His outside-the-Lodge service includes coaching soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, and assisting with the performing arts program at his favorite school. He is also very well known for his extreme generosity, giving freely to the needs of children and adults. And he never wants or expects recognition or thanks. He gives purely from the goodness of his soul. He is a true Elk.

Brandon Lodge Officers for 2023-2024 Elk Year



Ed Ciesla **Exalted Ruler** 813-679-7699



Donald Harrison Leading Knight 813-376-8949



Lou Valencia Loyal Knight 813-376-9863



Robin Rutzke Lecturing Knight 305-498-5654



Ed Campbell Lodge Esquire 813-245-0827



Carol DiAddezio Inner Guard 484-678-3926



Teresa Reeves Tiler 813-650-1607



Mark Fox Lodge Chaplain 813-785-5353



Mary Lou Schreck Secretary 813-458-5872 Member Illness /





Nancy Price Treasurer 813-756-9341





Rick Weigand 2 Year Trustee 813-748-2678



Mark Vargo 3 Year Trustee 813-376-8855



Jim McCleary 4 Year Trustee 813-763-9019



Marionette Garvey 5 Year Trustee 813-956--3776



Committee Chairs 2024-2025

2655

Accident Prevention - Rick Weigand 813-748-2678

Annual Calendar Updates - Mark Vargo 813-376-8855

Bugle Editor - Lara McCleary 203-988-5089

Community Activities - (COULD BE YOU!)

Drug Awareness - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

Grants Coordinator - Sharon Hammersla 813-323-1992

Fraternal Committee - Jim McCleary 813-763-9019 Fraternal Sub Committees:

> Americanism: Nickie Wells 813-716-8056 Flag Day: James Randall 813-833-7086 Lodge Activities: Mark Vargo 813-376-8855 Orientation: Jerrilyn Pietro 813-493-0425 State Associations: TBD (Could be You!) Elks Memorial Day: Ed Ciesla 813-679-7699

ENF: Ed Ciesla 813-679-7699 Veterans Services: Robin Rutzke 305-498-5654 Hall Rental - Terri Ciesla 813-679-8007

Hoop Shoot - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

House Committee - Mark Vargo 813-376-8855

Kitchen Manager - Ed Ciesla 813-679-7699 Kitchen Coordinator - Terri Ciesla 813-679-8007

Lodge Advisors - Henry Poage 813-480-6272 & Sharon Hammersla 813-323-1992

Lodge Maintenance - Rick Weigand 813-748-2678 & Lou Valencia 813-376-9863

Lodge Purchasing Food - Stephen Blackman 813-387-5917

Public Relations - TBD (Could be You!)

Youth Activity - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

Web Master: Ray Blinski - webmasterbrandonelks@gmail.com

BLOE BITS Next Meeting is MARCH 4TH @ 7:00

Hoping to See You There!

The year is close to the end. What a year it has been. Now we are looking for women to start the next year, April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025. All the elected officers have been filled except the Lady President. I know there is someone out there willing to step up to be our Lady President. You will not be alone, there are many knowledgeable women willing to support and help you. If we can not find that one special person, we will have to dissolve the B.L.O.E.. It would be a sad day at the Brandon Elks should that happen. So, I beg each of our ladies to consider stepping up and keeping the B.L.O.E

What a fun, hard working, friendly group of women we have finding ways to raise money for our Lodge. Let's keep this group going. Let's continue to enjoy each other in our everyday lives.

A quote by Elizabeth Andrew. 'Volunteers DO NOT necessarily have time: They have the heart.'

Jane Gilblair B. L. O. E. Lady President



Brandon Ladies of Elks Lady of Distinction FEBRUARY



Our lady of distinction for February is quiet but powerful. She is behind the scenes accomplishing things that are extremely necessary for our ladies' events. Every event, every dinner, every breakfast, she posts and promotes. The beautiful flyers she creates adds excitement to the function drawing in guests. Folks can't help but attend after being mesmerized by the colorful, and informative flyers.

And it doesn't stop there, she also creates tickets and helps whenever she is needed. She has used her skills with balloons designs to decorate tables and create amazing balloon arches and columns. Give her a task and she's on it without much direction or instruction. Let's CONGRATULATE JERRILYN PIETRO as our February Lady of Distinction.

From the Secretary's Desk,

The assessment for Grand Lodge has increased by

\$5.00 due to Insurance, etc.

Please be aware that our dues have remained





people and then people build the brand

BEGINS & ENDS at the lodge level

Hostess Corner

This is my last hostess corner.

It has been quite a busy year but was well worth it. I want to thank each one of you for supporting Ed as your ER this past year. I'm so proud of him for everything he has accomplished.

Ed and I have had many events and dinners to keep our Elks family busy, as well as entertained.

The month of March is full as well. Facebook, emails, and bugle will keep you informed of what's happening.

If you've never come to our Trivia, come on March 2. It's free to play, a big variety of snack bar food for purchase, and great prizes to win along with great folks to hang out with.

I'm cooking 3 of the Friday night dinners which will be something different than the regular meals. March 1, I'll be making seafood Paella. Tickets will be sold for this dinner since the ingredients are pricey. And March 22 we'll have Shrimp Scampi. Yummy! Can't wait!! Looking forward to spending time with you at our lodge. Terri

Victoria Harrison

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Mark C. Vargo, Sr. Director / Owner

Kevin Talbert Director / Owner

Mary Lou Schreck LODGE SECRETARY

Office Hours

MONDAY: 3pm - 5pm WEDNESDAY: 3pm - 5pm Or call for appointment

Nancy Price LODGE TREASURER

Office Hours

MONDAY: 12pm - 3pm THURSDAY: 12pm - 3pm Or call for appointment

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT Dinner * Dancing * Music

Weekly 50/50 Raffles \$500 Club Drawing

02

6:30PM TRIVIA

LOUNGE

09

16

ELKS OFFICER TRAINING

- ORLANDO



Door Duty

MARCH 1ST -RICK MARCH 8TH - MARY LOU MARCH 15TH - MARK F MARCH 22ND -ED CAMPBELL MARCH 29TH - MARIONETTE

> **BLOE BREAKFAST ALL YOU CAN EAT \$10** 2nd Sunday **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

500 Club Winners

Called "Not signed up" ~ Carole Cornett. Stephanie Shirey, Frankie Perry, Ed Scanlan Jarvis Wood, Joseph Highsmith, Albert Noriega Elizabeth Schmitt, Alvin Hecker, Richard Jones

Lounge Rental

Lounge usage will be restricted to members, spouses or widows/widowers for their specific purpose, and they must be present at ALL times.

Lodge Meetings Are Open To Members In Good Standing and is the Place to Discuss any Lodge issues. 2nd Monday of each month, May-January! February-April, 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month!

Dress code for meetings is long pants and collared shirt for men. Skirt, Dress, or long slacks for women.

PER Meeting - 1st Monday, 7pm **Lodge Meeting 2nd** Monday of month, 7pm Governing Board mtg – 3rd Monday at 7pm BLOE Ladies Meetings - 1st Monday of month at 6:30pm



03 Social & Sports Lounge 1PM

1PM - 5PM LOUNGE RENTAL

6:30PM **BLOE** MEETING HALL **6PM PER MEETING-**ANTE ROOM

11

18

7PM BOARD

MEETING

6PM BUNCO

04

5-7PM Queen Cards, Pool snack bar open

12

5-7PM

Queen 🥸

Cards, Pool

snack bar open

05

Dinner Hall 6:30PM \$8

13

6:30PM

BLOE

DINNER

LOUNGE

20

27

à Veterans

... Dinner

MEMBER

ORIENTATION

& AUDIT

06

Spaghetti

BINGO IN THE HALL 6:30pm SNACK BAR

14

07

THUR

Friday night dinner see page 5

15

Music:

TONY

01

Music: SKIP & NANCY

Friday

night dinner see page 5

08

Music:

TOURIST

BOB

8-11AM BLOE **Breakfast** Hall

10

Social & Sports

1PM LOUNGE RENTAL

Social & Sports Lounge 1PM

3PM ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

24

Social &

Sports

Lounge 1PM

ELKS OFFICER TRAINING -ORLANDO

Oueen *** Cards, Pool snack bar open

26

5-7PM

Queen 🥮

Cards, Pool

snack bar open

6PM BLOE

INSTALLATION -HALL

19

5-7PM

BINGO IN THE HALL 6:30pm

KNIGHT SNACK BAR **OPEN** Friday night

dinner see page 5

BINGO

21

IN THE HALL 6:30pm SNACK BAR **OPEN**

28

Music: 3 12PM - 4PM LOUNGE DOM BAND RENTAL

Friday night page 5

5PM dinner see INSTALLATION **OF NEW OFFICERS &** DINNER

HALL

29

Music: 5TH BINGO **GEAR BAND** Friday night

IN THE HALL 6:30pm dinner see SNACK BAR page 5 **OPEN**



Brandon Lodge supports our Veterans

Lodge Veterans please come out every 4th Wednesday of the month to enjoy free dinner and visit with other local Vets! Prepared by Nancy and friends.

Save the Date

BLOE MEETING, MARCH 4TH LODGE MEETING, MARCH 11TH BOARD MEETING MARCH 18TH LODGE MEETING MARCH 25TH

LOUNGE HOURS

Sunday: 1pm - 7pm Monday - Thursday 4pm - 9pm Friday 4pm - 10pm Saturday 4pm - 9pm MANAGER: JANE GILBLAIR

2664 MARCH MENU ITEMS

TO BE ASSURED OF A MEAL, YOU MUST RSVP TO RSVPBRANDONELKS@YAHOO.COM

BY 12 PM THE DAY BEFORE FOR ALL MEALS! TEXTING SOMEONE IS NOT CONSIDERED AN RSVP!



MARCH 1ST



MARCH 6TH



MARCH 8TH



MARCH 13TH



MARCH 15TH



MARCH 17TH



MARCH 22ND



MARCH 27TH



MARCH 29TH



TO OUR ELKS RV GUESTS

Welcome to our RV Park **ELKS MEMBERS ONLY**

OUR RATES ARE:

- ▶ \$25 per night; 7th night FREE
- ▶ RV Storage is \$50 per month

THANKS FOR STAYING IN OUR PARK

Frank Craft - 813-245-6238 LODGE PHONE - 813-685-6469



Connie & Henry Poage

Donald Harrison

Kenneth League Diane League

BUGLE BOOSTERS: BE A BUGLE BOOSTER !!! Pat & Jeff LaVoie Please help defray the cost of printing and Joseph Zebrak Kim Martinez mailing out our Bugle. Lynda & Frank Craft Donations help a great deal!! Carolyn & George Thomas John Christensen Barbara Myer Julie & Henry Ebert JOIN THE Rich Clark Phillip Singletary Karen McArthur Charlene Hart **Angela Sweeney** Grace & Rick Weigand BOOSTER CLUB

Pat & Bernie Hiskey

Mary Lou & George Scribner

Gerri Mann



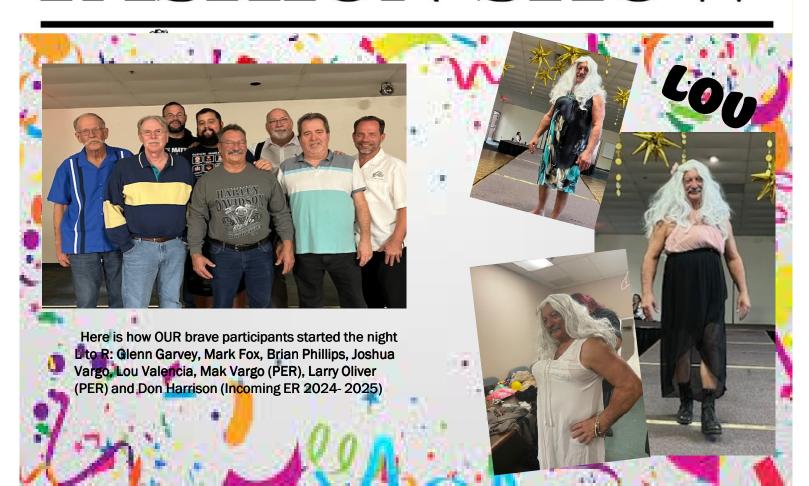
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LODGE ELKS CHARITIES

Get your tickets from Terrie Ciesla , Beth Benham or at the bar



FASHION SHOW



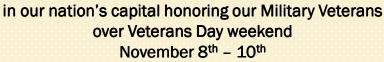


ATTENTION – ATTENTION – ATTENTION!



Parade of Heroes recognizes and honors veterans from WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Afghanistan Freedom.

3-day, all expense paid event





If you are interested in participating in the

Parade of Heroes

For more details go to our FSEA Historical Programs 2024 Parade of Heroes Website for enrollment and more details:

Register by logging on to

https://www.floridaelks.org/veterans-historic-program/parade-of-heroes

Feel free to reach out to Brandon Veteran Chair,
Robin Rutzke 305-398-5654 rrutzke@gmail.com
or
Mary Lou Scribner/PER 813-230-1943 perelkmls@hotmail.com

Robin and Mary Lou will be happy to answer your questions and Provide you more information.

Brandon Lodge has participated in this event each year sending many of Military Veteran Brandon Lodge members to Washington. If you are a Military Veteran, take advantage of this great opportunity and event!



The Legacy of Brandon Ladies of Elks

Everyone in our Lodge knows how important the Ladies are to our Lodge. But did you know our Brandon Ladies of Elks (the BLOE) has a rich history? They are a strong group of ladies who have proven over the years to be supportive of not only our Brandon Lodge, but also the Elks Major Projects, and our community. Countless hours are devoted, and great events are developed and carried out. Friendships are formed that last forever. Some have even provided their support at the State level of the Florida Ladies of Elks (FLOE), representing all ladies affiliated with a lodge. Did you know that Brandon has 4 Past State Ladies of Elks Presidents? They are Lillian Tourville in 1989, Beverly Messerschmidt in 2008, Jane Moon in 2015 and Connie Poage in 2017. This is remarkable and says a lot about the Ladies of Brandon!

At this time of year, when officers are elected for the upcoming year, the Brandon Ladies of Elks sometimes struggle to find someone to step up to a leadership role. Everyone wants to help, but no one wants to be in charge. For those that do step up, an everlasting sense of pride follows. AND there is plenty of help and guidance for the new leaders. They will not be left to flounder. If no one steps up, our Ladies group will fold, and a horrible tragedy will have

occurred. Our Lodge needs our BLOE. Yes, we can survive without them. But do we really want to?

Be a part of the legacy. Step up to a leadership role.

VETERANS AFFAIRS
Committee Chair
Robin Rutzke

BPOE Lecturing Knight USAF (ret) 305-498-5654



Any questions or concerns about the Veterans that the Elks Lodge serves, or other note worthy Veteran events, please address them with Robin.

God Bless our Veterans!





THANK YOU TOO SO MANY!

The Past Exalted Rulers Association of the Brandon Lodge want to thank all those that purchased tickets and supported the PER Annual Dinner Fundraiser held on Friday, January 26th. It was a GREAT evening. The social hall was filled with so many new faces along with so many of our used to be regulars. We have been told by many just how delicious the food was, and we definitely agree. A humongous thank you of appreciation to our chef Rick Weigand and his dedicated crew: Pat and Jeff Lavoie, Mark Fox, Grace Weigand and PER's Larry Oliver, Mark Vargo and Henry Poage. This crew always does a fantastic job each year.

We also want to recognize and thank all our ladies that played a big part in the success of this event. Cakes were baked and/or purchased by PER spouses Mary Lou Schreck, Barbara Rhodes, Pat Hiskey, Carolyn Thomas, Connie Poage, Mary Lou Scribner, Lodge Hostess Terri Ciesla, and PER's Nickie Wells and Marionette Garvey, and lodge member Patty Schwartz. In all, we had fourteen different desserts, and each one was a big hit. It was fun just watching everyone picking out the dessert of their choice from such an assortment.

In addition, thank you to our set-up crew that made magic happen to the hall: Carolyn and George Thomas, Connie Poage, Ann Fox, and Mary Lou Scribner. Our PER's Nickie Wells and Marionette Garvey along with our Lodge Treasurer Nancy Price did a great job selling 50/50 tickets as well as the raffle of the American Flag Afghan (donated by Mary Lou Scribner). Thank you to Leading Knight Donald Harrison for donating his 50/50 winnings back to the PER fund raiser.

The entire evening was a labor of love. And guess what? In addition to having such a great evening of comradery and scrumptious dining, it was also a financial HIT! This event had a profit of \$2,683.42. This money will be put toward the beautification of our lodge. It will help cover some of the expenses for the new floors.

Thank you to everyone that played a part in the success of this annual event. It was wonderful to see our hall full of members on a Friday night!

A warm and heartfelt thank you from All the PER's of Brandon Lodge #2383!





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