

GEORGIA Elks NEWS

May 2026



**GEA Jekyll
Schedules
Pages 15-18**



**Hoop Shoot
News
Page 13**



**Soccer
Regional in
Florida
Page 14**



**Highlights from the
Macon Meeting
pages 6-10**





Grand Opening of the BankSouth HMGMA Branch

Banking Built for the Workplace

BankSouth proudly opened a new on-site branch at Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America in Ellabell, Georgia. As the exclusive banking partner for HMGMA's workforce, known as Meta Pros, we provide convenient, relationship-based banking services designed to meet employees where they work. It's another way BankSouth supports innovation, people, and progress across Georgia.

Scan to Learn More



BankSouth

HMG Metaplant America



Editor's Comments & Table of Contents	3
Larry Pope, GEA President Joanne Bennett, Auxiliary President	4
Mike Smith, PGER, PNP Bruce Hayden, PSP, Special Deputy, PG Tiler	5
Highlights from the Macon Meeting	6-10
News from Aidmore, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO	11-12
Hoop Shoot with Vance Rhodes, PSP	13

Regional Soccer with Junior Roberson, PSP	14
GEA Annual Meeting at Jekyll Schedules	15-18
Committee Reports Cyndi Russell & Stan Jones	19
News from Lodges Around the State	20-27
Tim Whalen, PSP, PG Esquire's Minutes	28-29
Our Sponsors	2,3,30-31

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 9 Aidmore Open House from 10 am to 2 pm
- May 9 In person board meeting at Aidmore
- May 16 ENF fundraiser Calhoun Lodge Golf Course
- June 11-13 Jekyll Island Annual Convention
- July 5-8 Elks National Convention in Chicago, IL
- October 2 Golf Fore Kids



Lynda Lewis
Editor
Ga Elks News

It is hard to believe another year has already gone by, which means it is time for our annual convention on Jekyll Island! It feels like we just got back from Macon where we welcomed our Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and his wife Sue.

Please make plans to attend our annual meeting on Jekyll, as we gather to bid a fond farewell to Larry and Ana Pope, our esteemed outgoing GEA President and his wife, and welcome Steve Petrie as our incoming GEA President, and his wife, Marguerite. This year's event is packed with exciting parties, networking, and fun, so you definitely do not want to miss it. See you on the island!

Larry R. Pope
President
Georgia Elks Association
2025-2026

MENTORSHIP!
Matters!
Steve Petrie
President-Elect 2025-2026
Georgia Elks Association

SEND ARTICLES
PHOTOS & ADS
(full resolution photos) to:
gaelksnews@gmail.com

or postal mail to:
Georgia Elks News
6350 Lake Oconee Parkway
Ste 110 PMB 165
Greensboro, GA 30642
Page 3

Lynda Lewis
EDITOR
PHOTOGRAPHER

John Helgesen
EDITOR EMERITUS



**Serving Lake Oconee
for 20 Years!**
Next to Publix on Highway 44



Fine Wine | Spirits | Beer | Cigars
Sign up for a free Cellar Rewards Card



**The Oconee
Cellar
Delivers!**

Go to www.theoconeecellar.com to place your order.

Voted Best Liquor & Wine Store 9 Years in a Row!
706-453-0420



**Larry Pope
GEA President**

As my year as your state president comes to an end, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support I have received. I would like to thank all my brother and sister Elks who have stood by me throughout this journey. Special appreciation goes to my officers, the board members, past State Presidents, Mike Smith our state sponsor, my good friend Bruce Hayden, Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, and Steve Petrie, our President-Elect and trusted friend. Steve has been a pillar of strength for me during this year, and I am confident that he will lead us to achievements we can all be proud of.

This year presented us with challenges as we explored new and innovative approaches. Some efforts were successful, while others did not yield the desired results. It is essential that we avoid falling into routines simply because they have worked in the past. The future of our fraternal organization depends on embracing new leadership and fresh ideas, provided they align with Grand Lodge Statutes and our association's bylaws.

Congratulations to all new and current officers for each lodge. Your lodge membership nominated and elected you to fulfill these important roles. Always remember that you and your fellow lodge members form the backbone of your local lodges and the Georgia Elks Association.

Serving in these positions is both an honor and a challenge. As Exalted Ruler, you function as the CEO of your lodge, with officers, members, the board of directors, and the PER association as your key resources. State Committee Chairs are valuable assets on which you can rely. Remember, it is not a failure to ask for help; the real failure is not seeking assistance. Your local lodge leader, district leader, District Deputies, and Past State Presidents are all excellent sources of guidance. By working together, we can fulfill our mission to serve our communities, veterans, first responders, families in need, and our State Major Project, Elks Aidmore.

Our motto, "Elks Care Elks Share," extends not only to our local communities but also to members who may face adversity. Supporting each other is at the heart of what we do.

I wish each of you a successful year. Be loud, be proud, and be the difference. Continue to grow our organization and make a positive impact.

As we bring this year to a close, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to my beautiful wife and best friend, Ana Pope. Her love, constant support, patience, and guidance enabled me to keep my eyes on the path this year. It has been an honor and a joy to have her with me on this journey.

Fraternally,
Larry Pope



**Joanne Bennett
President, Elks
Aidmore Auxiliary**

They say time flies when you're having fun, and this year has gone by so quickly. I've had an incredible year, and I'm really looking forward to seeing all of you at Jekyll! As I prepare for my last meeting, I want to share how much it has meant to serve as your State Auxiliary President. I'm truly proud of everything the auxiliaries have achieved in their communities and deeply appreciate the support you give to our state project, Aidmore.

Here's a quote from a PSP: "Let people know about the good work we do, the fun we have, and our membership will grow." If you haven't attended the annual convention or the state quarterlies yet, you're really missing an opportunity! I wholeheartedly invite you to come see what you've been missing.

I sincerely thank my officers and the executive board for all their help and support throughout the past year. You're truly the best, and I couldn't have achieved this without you. A heartfelt thanks also goes to Deborah Johnson, PSP, and the Valdosta Auxiliary for your incredible support this year!

I'm excited about Miriam Wheeler stepping into her new role as our state auxiliary president. I truly believe she'll lead our group with dedication and care in the coming year.

You all have really helped make my theme, "Everything's coming up roses for Aidmore," a wonderful success.

Sincerely,
Joanne Bennett
Auxiliary State President





**Mike Smith
PGER, PNP**

CONGRATULATIONS GEA ON ANOTHER POSITIVE GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP!

With the leadership of State President Larry Pope and his wife Ana, along with his group of officers and committee persons, they achieved another landmark in GEA. A special thanks to State Membership Chairman, Steve Petrie and his team. I am sure that Steve will continue the push as he is preparing to become the next GEA State President. With the support of Special Deputy, Bruce Hayden, and his wife Lisa, we should have a very successful year. Our thanks to the District Deputies for their continuous support to grow the GEA. The association is on a very good trend to remain a vital part of the B.P.O.E.

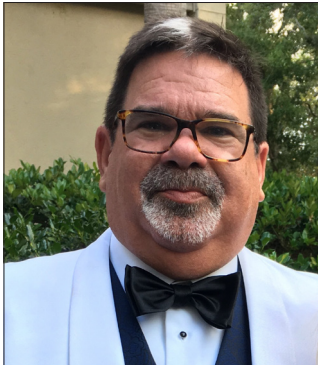
Please mark your calendar and plan to come to the Jekyll Island Conference. The Conference will provide fellowship and education along with learning more about how you can get more engaged with our great work.

This July 4th will be an exceptional time as we meet in Chicago for our National Convention. During this time we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of our Memorial Building while also enjoying a magnificent display of fireworks over Lake Michigan. Make your plans now on-line to attend.

Our Order is setting a new precedent each year on membership growth. This will be the FIFTH year in a row for us to have a positive growth in membership. This growth not only provides the opportunity to help more people in need, it gives you a chance to make new friends.

Sandra and I remain honored to serve as the GEA State Sponsor and truly thank each of you for the friendliness we always receive. May GOD Bless each of us and may GOD Bless our United States of America. We hope to see everyone in Jekyll Island!

**Michael F. Smith, PGER, PNP
GEORGIA ELKS ASSOCIATION STATE SPONSOR**



**Bruce Hayden, PSP
Special Deputy
Past Grand Tiler**

As our Lodges set out on a new year with new Officers in position, we need to ensure that the officers are trained and knowledgeable to all aspects of our Order. The past two weeks we have had DD Clinics in combination with Officer Training Academy. Since these are DD Clinics, these were not optional to the Lodge Officers. If you took a position in your Lodge, it was part of your obligation to attend. I know many of us have attended these many times but we still are required to attend. I am pleased to report that these have all been well laid out and organized, topics that are relevant to your Lodges and they were accomplished in a single day. For the new Officers please remember that you have a large pool of talent to reach out to for help across the state. The committee chairs are ready to help you and your Lodge have a very successful year. While at these trainings I was very excited to see and be part of the many discussions that were had when questions were asked. The incoming Officers were engaged and it seems Georgia is set for a great year.

To the members, always remember that the Officers are in charge, not just of the meetings but of the day to day operations of the Lodge and all business matters. I would ask that you support them and assist them in making your Lodge shine as an example of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and with Fidelity. We always try and teach the officers about the right way to conduct business but we also bring in the laws of our Order. Too many times we set aside our obligation, you know, the one that you took during your initiation into our Order. The one that you said you would protect and defend, you stand ready, you will always obey..... We try and bring the obligation into our teaching because it is easy to forget, it tends to get laid aside and it is supposed to be our CONSTANT GUIDE! I would that each of us read the Initiation Ritual from time to time, reflect on the words, strive to live by them. Be the example not the exception, guide and mentor not complain and criticize. The next time your lodge has initiation make it a point to attend but more importantly be ATTENTIVE. It isn't just words, it is meaning that should reflect action. We are all members, joined by the same beliefs and doing the same works for our community. The officers could definitely use help in the way of support from the members so please join them in making your lodge be a shining example of the noble work that Elkdom is dedicated to doing.

The faults of our members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory. This is our motto, it emphasizes forgiveness. It signifies forgetting mistakes. Most importantly it is supposed to prioritize kindness over criticism!

The faults of our members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory. This is our motto, it emphasizes forgiveness. It signifies forgetting mistakes. Most importantly it is supposed to prioritize kindness over criticism!

**Bruce Hayden
SDGER - Georgia**

Spring Meeting in Macon

The Elks of Georgia welcomed Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and his wife Sue to the GEA Spring meeting held in Macon, Georgia on February 27 & 28. The Klatts enjoyed a dinner on Thursday evening at the Rookery in Macon hosted by the GEA PSPs. On Friday morning GER and First Lady Klatt were escorted on a tour of the Allman Brothers Museum. The museum is also known as the Big House which was home to the Allman Brothers Band's original members, their families, and various friends from 1970 to 1973.



Left to right in front of the Allman Brothers Museum: Steve Petrie, GEA President-Elect, Larry Pope, GEA President, Ana Pope, Georgia First Lady, Bruce Hayden, PSP, SDGER, Lisa Hayden, Susan Klatt, National First Lady, Bryan Klatt, Grand Exalted Ruler, Francisca Pouza, and Florida VPAL, Jeff Muehlfeld.



Left to right around the table at the Rookery: GEA President Larry Pope, GA First Lady Ana Pope, National First Lady Sue Klatt, GER Bryan Klatt, Junior Roberson, PSP, Bethany Jackson, DDGER, Bruce Hayden, PSP, SDGER, Lisa Hayden, Vance Rhodes, PSP, Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux., Beth Colie & Bob Colie, PSP.



Valdosta Lodge #728 presented the colors at the opening of the business meeting.



Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt finds something amusing.



Vance Rhodes, PSP, presented GEA President Larry Pope with a Veteran's cap.



Vance Rhodes, PSP, presented GER Klatt with a Veteran's cap.



Cyndi Russell, Activities Chair, presented the Newsletter awards to the following lodges: 1st place NW Div 1, Marietta; 1st place S Div 1 Albany; 1st place S Div 1, Brunswick; 1st place Div 3 Valdosta; 1st place Div 4 Tifton; 1st place NW Div 3 Cartersville; 1st place NE Div 4 Toccoa & 1st place Div 6 Lake Oconee. L-R: Jerry Holly from Tifton, Heather Hickey, PSP Aux. from Brunswick, Julia Burton, ER from Toccoa, Yvonne Wyche from Valdosta, David Dougherty from Albany, Marietta member, Ken Crane, ER Cartersville, Cyndi Russell, Activities Chair, and Lynda Lewis from Lake Oconee.

Activities contest winners were 1st place Div 1 Brunswick; 1st place NW Div 3 Cartersville; 1st place Div 4 Toccoa & 1st place Div 6 Lake Oconee. Honorable Mention awards went to Albany, Dalton, Tifton, Elberton-Athens & Eatonton. Pictured L-R: Heather Hickey, PSP Aux. from Brunswick, Julia Burton, ER from Toccoa, Ken Crane, ER from Cartersville, Activities Chair, Cyndi Russell, and Beth Colie from Lake Oconee.



GER Bryan Klatt Shoots for Good Fortune Winners

Immediately after the business meeting, everyone headed outside to find out who would be the lucky winners of the Good Fortune Raffle held every year at the Spring meeting. Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt shot at targets with numbers spinning to see who the winners would be. Junior Roberson, PSP was the brave soul that spun the targets for GER Klatt to aim at. The big winner this year was none other than President-Elect Steve Petrie.



Above, Junior Roberson, PSP gets ready to spin the target with the numbers for GER Klatt to shoot.

Center, Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt takes aim and fires at the targets. Right, GER Klatt waits for the next target.



After the Good Fortune Shoot Off, the GER and First Lady stopped to chat with SDGER Bruce Hayden and wife Lisa.

Grand prize went to GEA President-Elect Steve Petrie, to the right and on his left is Florida VPAL Jeff Muehlfeld.

The Banquet

The Spring meeting concluded with the banquet Saturday evening with a delicious buffet. We had the privilege of hearing Grand Exalted Ruler Klatt's address to all attending, and enjoyed seeing the GER and First Lady receiving gifts, from not only the GEA and Ladies Auxiliary, but also some unique items from other lodges, such as the handmade wooden flag from the Calhoun Lodge and a beautiful Elk rug from the Dalton Lodge. Dalton, Georgia is known for its carpets.

Aidmore awards were also presented by CFO from Aidmore Laura Nichols and Aidmore President Stanley Santee, PSP.



GER Bryan Klatt and First Lady Sue Klatt



GEA President Larry Pope and GA First Lady Ana Pope



Ladies Auxiliary Pres. Joanne Bennett & Gary Bennett



Francisca Pouza & Florida VPAL Jeff Muehlfeld



Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux. and husband Mike Johnson



Bruce Hayden, PSP and wife Lisa Hayden



Beth Colie and Bob Colie, PSP



GEA President Larry Pope welcomed everyone



First Lady Sue Klatt spoke to the attendees



GEA President Larry Pope presented GER Bryan Klatt with a gift from the GEA



Aux. Pres. Joanne Bennett presented First Lady Sue Klatt with a gift



GEA Sec./Treasurer Tim Whalen, PSP



GEA President Larry Pope and Ga First Lady Ana talk with GER Bryan Klatt & Nat. First Lady Sue.



Bill Lewis, PSP with Steve Petrie, President-Elect



Piker Penn, from Calhoun Lodge, presented GER Klatt and First Lady Sue with a handmade wooden flag from the Calhoun Lodge.

Aidmore Awards

Stanley Santee, PSP and President of Aidmore, along with CFO of Aidmore, Laura Nichols, gave out a number of awards during the banquet on Saturday evening.



Michelle Langham, left and Mike Parker, right presented GER Klatt and First Lady Sue with an beautiful Elk rug from the Dalton Lodge.



L-R: Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP & President of Aidmore, Brownie and Piker Penn from the Calhoun Lodge.



L-R: Mike Johnson from the Valdosta Lodge, Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP and Ladies Auxiliary Pres. Joanne Bennett



L-R: Dan Tatum, PSP, Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore & Stanley Santee, PSP



L-R: Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Jane Santee, and Stanley Santee, PSP



L-R: Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP, Ladies Auxiliary Pres. Joanne Bennett and Debbie Barrett



L-R: Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP and Steve Petrie, President-Elect



Above, L-R: GEA President Larry Pope, Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore & Stanley Santee, PSP



Far left are the horseshoe winners at the Ladies horseshoe event. L-R: Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux. (Valdosta Lodge) and Mickey Emmett, PSP Aux., (Toccoa Lodge) came in second place. Darcy Stewart, (Lake Oconee Lodge) and Tina Shamlian, (Savannah Lodge) came in first place.

Near left, Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux. donated the money made at the horseshoe competition to Aidmore President, Stanley Santee, PSP and Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore.

Aidmore Awards from Macon continued



L-R: Yvonne Wyche from Valdosta, Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP, Ladies Auxiliary Pres. Joanne Bennett



L-R: R.J. Fernandes from Brunswick, Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP & Joanne Bennett, Ladies Aux. Pres.



L-R: Brunswick Ladies Aux. Pres.; Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore, Stanley Santee, PSP and Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux.

Ladies Auxiliary in Macon



Pam Parker, NW Vice Pres., Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux. & Dannie Anderson, Vice Pres. South



Past State President's Luncheon; front row: Lisa Hayden and Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux.; middle row: Ana Pope, GA First Lady, Francisca Pouza, visiting from Florida, Cheryl Wilson, PSP Aux., Sue Klatt, National First Lady, Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux., Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux., Harriet Watson, PSP Aux., and Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux.; back row: Pam Stewart, PSP Aux., Barbara Burnett, PSP Aux., pretty much hidden is Miriam Wheeler, Aux. President-Elect and Joanne Bennett, Aux. Pres.



Tina Shamlian & Cindy Shuman also at the Macon Meeting, Savannah Aux. Co-Presidents



Margie Jones, Albany Lodge & Darcy Stewart, Lake Oconee Lodge

News from Aidmore



Greetings

It is both an honor and a privilege to share an update with you as we continue our mission of serving children across Georgia. Because of your unwavering support, Elks Aidmore remains a place where healing begins, hope is restored, and lives are transformed.

Over the past several months, we have remained focused on strengthening our programs and expanding our impact. We are especially proud of the continued growth of our services, including the opening of our six-bed Assessment Center, which allows us to better serve youth entering care with immediate, comprehensive support. Our residential and therapeutic foster care programs continue to provide safe, nurturing environments for children who need us most.

As we approach the month of May, we are reminded that this is **Foster Care Awareness Month**—a time to shine a light on the needs, resilience, and potential of the children and families we serve. It is also a time to call our communities to action.

Message from Aidmore CEO Dr. Vickey Hale

In recognition of this important month, we are excited to host our **Virtual 5K & 1-Mile Fun Run on May 2, 2026**. While this event serves as a critical fundraiser for Elks Aidmore, it is equally important as an opportunity to raise awareness about foster care across our state. Whether participants walk, run, or cheer from the sidelines, every step taken helps tell the story of a child's journey toward stability and success.

Additionally, we are asking for your continued support of our **Annual Live and Silent Auction**, which will be held on **Friday, June 12th during the Georgia Elks Association Annual Meeting**. This event is always a highlight of the meeting and plays a vital role in supporting the programs and services that make a lasting difference in the lives of the children we serve. Your participation—whether through donations, bidding, or simply showing up—helps us continue this important work.

We encourage each of you—our dedicated Georgia Elks members—to register, form teams, invite your families, and spread the word about the 5K, and to come prepared to support the auction in June. These are meaningful ways to engage your local communities while supporting a cause that reflects the heart of who we are.

Your continued commitment, generosity, and advocacy make all the difference. Because of you, children who have experienced trauma are given the chance to heal. Because of you, families are supported. And because of you, hope is made possible every single day.

On behalf of our staff, and most importantly, the children we serve—thank you. Thank you for standing with Elks Aidmore and for helping us build brighter futures.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Vickey Hale, Ph.D., MSW
Chief Executive Officer
Elks Aidmore, Inc.



Covered up in Easter baskets - Scott Pitocchelli and Pete Young (not pictured the very creative Barb Young) from Lake Oconee Lodge delivered Easter baskets to Aidmore for the girls and also foster care children. Center is Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore..

SILENT & LIVE AUCTION

BENEFITTING

Elks

AIDMORE, INC.

June 12th

at the GEA Annual Meeting

Jekyll Island.

Donations for the Silent and Live Auction can be stored in the Elks Aidmore trailer parked at the Villas by the Sea Conference Center. **Please label your donation with your name, address, and lodge name.**

Need ideas on what to bring? Consider themed baskets such as: Family Game Night (board games and puzzles), Wine Lovers, Book Enthusiasts, Coffee Delights, Scottish or Irish Whiskey, Ice Cream Fun (complete with an ice cream maker), College Football, Cocktails, Gardening, Fishing, Hobbies & Crafts, Moonshine, Professional Sports, or Craft Beer

Aidmore Honors & Memorials

HONOR AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

The staff and youth of Georgia Elks Aidmore, Inc. gratefully acknowledge the financial support of every donor. The following lists those whose recent gifts honor both living and deceased friends. For convenient reference, the list is printed in alphabetical order. We apologize should any names be omitted and if you call such errors to our attention, we will gladly make an appropriate correction in the future. Donations are from January 9, 2026 to April 15, 2026.

MEMORIALS

LINDA BAILEY

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

JAMES BARFIELD

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

LAWSON COX

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

MARY CUTFORTH

Nancy Strickland

BETH EADES

Stan and Margie Jones

DAN LINDSEY

Stan and Margie Jones

Michael and Linda Bailey

Wayne and Charlotte Johnson

Eunice Luke

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

SANDY MILES

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

HARRY JOHN REARDON

Stan and Margie Jones

CHERYL SHENKLE

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson

ROBERT HODGES WHITAKER

Stan and Margie Jones

BRICK DONORS

We wish to recognize the following donors to the Elks Aidmore Brick Plaza. The Patrons have purchased bricks in their own names. Honor bricks can be purchased in recognition of another person and Memorial bricks are purchased in the name of deceased relatives and friends. We apologize should any names be omitted and if you will call such errors to our attention, we will gladly make an appropriate correction in the future. Donations are from January 9, 2026 through April 15, 2026.

IN MEMORY

CHARLES COKER

Eatonton Elks Lodge

LARRY MANLEY, SR.

Eatonton Elks Lodge

GARY P. MCELHENNEY

Eatonton Elks Lodge

JOHN SANDERS

Eatonton Elks Lodge

DAVID LOWE

Eatonton Elks Lodge

JAMES BARFIELD

Eatonton Elks Lodge

EIGHT FOR AIDMORE

Duane and Patricia Nesbitt



Lake Oconee Ladies Auxiliary brought Valentine goodies to the girls at Aidmor in February.



Barb Young from LOLA (Lake Oconee Ladies Auxiliary) dropped off gifts for the girls in March. They donated Kleenex, wipes, and school supplies. Pictured with Barb is Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore.



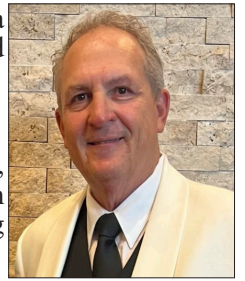
Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore manned the Aidmore Booth at the Macon Spring Meeting

Hoop Shoot

This year, 14 Lodges across Georgia held Hoop Shoots. Three Lodges did not report that they held a shoot, and six Lodges reported no activity. Even so, participation across the state remained strong, and our young athletes delivered an impressive season.

Thank You to Our Lodges and Volunteers

Our program thrives because of the dedication of our Lodges and the volunteers who give their time, energy, and heart to support Georgia's youth. With over 3 million children participating nationwide each year, the Hoop Shoot continues to be one of the most impactful youth programs in the country, helping young athletes build **GRIT**—growth, resilience, integrity, and tenacity.



**Vance Rhodes,
PSP
Hoop Shoot
Chairman**

News from the Court

Our Regional Finals in Valdosta showcased some exceptional talent. Please join me in congratulating our 2025–2026 Georgia Elks State Hoop Shoot Champions: The combined scores of these outstanding shooters earned the Georgia Elks the Warren Moyers Award for the highest overall performance in Region 12.

State Champions

- 8–9 Boys: Brasure Hoyt – 21/25 (Brunswick Lodge 691)
- 8–9 Girls: Lanessa Murray – 15/25 (Augusta Lodge 205)
- 10–12 Boys: Edward Wilbanks – 24/25 (Dalton Lodge 1267)
- 10–12 Girls: Kaylee James – 18/25 (Albany Lodge 713)
- 12–13 Boys: Dante Thomas – 23/25 (Augusta Lodge 205)
- 12–13 Girls: Emily Green – 21/25 (Dalton Lodge 1267)

Regional & National Highlights

We are proud to recognize Edward Wilbanks, our Regional Winner in the 10–11 Boys Division from Dalton Lodge 1267. Edward advanced to the National Finals in Chicago on April 18, where he shot an outstanding 23/25, tying for second place. After a competitive shoot off, he secured third place nationally, competing against 11 of the top young shooters in the country.

Looking Ahead

We are already gearing up for next year's Hoop Shoot season and hope to see even more Lodges participate. If your Lodge is considering hosting a Hoop Shoot—or if you need assistance getting started—please reach out.

For updates, resources, and program information, visit our website: gaelks.org → **Activities** → **GEA Activities**.



Pictured L-R: Cristin Rumler, Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux., Edward Wilbanks (3rd Place National Champion in boys 10-11), Vance Rhodes, PSP, Georgia Hoop Shoot Chairman, and Jeff Rumler, Region 12 Hoop Shoot Director.

Soccer



**Junior Roberson,
PSP
Soccer Chairman
706-847-7122
willieroberson@
gmail.com**

SOCCER!!

What can I say? In some cases mother nature didn't exactly work real well with some Lodges. But at the end of it all, it turned out to be a pretty successful year with 6 Lodges participating. Georgia had 5 participants make the trip to Florida for the Regional Soccer Shoot. All 5 represented the Georgia Elks very well with 4 - 3rd place and 1 - 1st place. I'm also very pleased to announce Georgia had its 1st Virtual National Soccer Shoot Champion. U16-Girl Jaiden Dobson coming from the Calhoun Lodge No. 1883. Maybe we all will be able to congratulate Jaiden in Jekyll.

With having all the success last year, hopefully this will encourage more Lodges to participate this coming year. It only takes a few hours and very little cost to show kids in your area that Elks Care. So get out in your community and Be The Difference.

As ALWAYS I am available to help get your Lodge Soccer Shoot program up and going. Contact me at willierobersonjr@gmail.com, text or call 706-847-7122.

And remember SOCCER it's a KICK!!!



**Regional Soccer Shoot at the
Florida Elks Youth Camp in
Umatilla, Florida**





Larry Pope
GEA President, Georgia
Elks Association



Steve Petrie
President-Elect
Georgia Elks
Association



Joanne Bennett
President, Elks
Aidmore Auxiliary



Miriam Wheeler
President-Elect, Elks
Aidmore Auxiliary

GEORGIA ELKS ASSOCIATION

125th Annual Convention

Jekyll Island, Georgia

June 11-13, 2026

Officers of the Georgia Elks Association 2025-2026

- Larry Pope, President**
- Steve Petrie, President-Elect**
- Steve Henderson, VP NW**
- David Marrero, VP NE**
- Bob Reardon, VP South**
- Tim Whalen, Secretary/Treasurer, Past Grand Esquire**
- Cliff Arden, Sergeant of Arms**
- Mike Johnson, Chaplain**
- Bill Lewis, PSP, Historian**
- Brenda Sailors, Tiler**
- Vance Rhodes, PSP, Parliamentarian**
- Lynda Lewis, Photographer, Ga Elks News**
- Junior Roberson, PSP, Chairman, Board of Directors**

Grand Lodge Officers 2025-2026

- Mike Smith, PGER, PNP, State Sponsor**
- Bruce Hayden, SDGER, Past Grand Tiler**
- Ed Whitcomb, DDGER, NE**
- Bethany Jackson, DDGER, NW**
- Brenda Sailors, DDGER South**

Georgia Elks Aidmore Auxiliary Officers 2025-2026

- Joanne Bennett, President**
- Miriam Wheeler, President-Elect**
- Pamila Parker, Vice President, NW**
- Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux., Vice President, NE**
- Dannie Anderson, Vice President, South**
- Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux., Corresponding Secretary**
- Pam Stewart, PSP Aux., Recording Secretary**
- Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux., Treasurer**
- Harriet Watson, PSP Aux., Parliamentarian**
- Miriam Witherspoon-Wheeler, Chaplain**
- Barbara Burnett, PSP Aux., Advisor**

**Schedule of Events
Georgia Elks Association
125th Annual Convention
June 11-13, 2026**

Thursday, June 11, 2026 (Dress Casual)

10:30 - 3:30 Registration Desk Open, Villas Lobby
Auxiliary Activities
(See Aux. Schedule on page 18)
3:00 - 5:00 President Larry Pope & Auxiliary President
Joanne Bennett Reception Under the Tents
6:00 Low Country Boil Under the Tents

Friday, June 12, 2026 (Dress - Business Casual for Mtgs)

8:00 - 9:30 GEA Credentials Desk Open
Villas Conference Center
9:00- 10:45 GEA Business Session
Villas Conference Center
11:00 -11:30 Elks & Auxiliary Memorial Service
Villas Conference Center
12:30 - 1:30 Secretaries Luncheon Place TBD
12:00- 12:45 GEA Past State Presidents Meeting
Cannon Point
12:45 - 1:15 GEA Charity Board Meeting
1:15 - 2:00 GEA Board Meeting
Cannon Point
1:00 - 4:00 Dunk Tank & Axe Throwing Contest
2:00 - 3:00 ER/Leading Knight Assoc. Meeting
Villas Conference Center
2:00 - 3:00 11 O'Clock Toast & Tribute to Flag
Cannon Point
2:00 - 3:00 DDGER Designate Meeting
SDGER's Villa
2:00 - 4:00 Candidates Cocktail Reception
Under the Tents
4:00 - 5:30 Aidmore Auction
Villas Conference Center
6:00 - 7:30 Picnic Dinner -Jesup Lodge Cooking
Villas - Stanton Building
7:30 - 11:00 The Great Elksby Dance (Roaring 20's Theme)
With Coastal Groove on Stage
9:30 Eleven O'Clock Toast, Larry Pope, President

Saturday, June 13, 2026 (Dress Business Casual for Mtgs)
(Dress for Banquet- Men Coat & Tie/Ladies Dressy)

8:00 - 9:00 GEA Credentials Desk Open
Villas Conference Center
8:30 -10:00 GEA Awards Program - Open to All
Villas Conference Center
Following Awards -12:00 GEA Business Session
Villas Conference Center
12:15 - 12:45 PER Association Mtg
Villas Conference Center
2:00 - 4:00 GEA President-Elect & Auxiliary President-Elect
Reception - Under the Tents
6:00 - 10:00 Banquet Dinner
Installation of Officers/ Awards Banquet

**GEA Annual Convention
Villas by the Sea Convention Center
Business Meeting Agenda
Friday, June 12, 2026**

Call to Order Larry Pope, President
Presentation of Colors Bunswick Lodge #691
Pledge to the Flag Steve Petrie, Pres.-Elect
Invocation Mike Johnson, Chaplain

Introduction of Grand Lodge Officers Larry Pope, President

Grand Lodge Officers

Mike Smith, PGER, PNP & State Sponsor
Bruce Hayden, SDGER, Past Grand Lodge Tiler
Ed Whitcomb, PDDGER, Current DDGER, Georgia NE
Bethany Jackson, PDDGER, Current DDGER, Georgia NW
Brenda Sailors, PDDGER, Current DDGER, Georgia South

Recognition of State Officers

GEA Vice Presidents Larry Pope, President
David Marrero, Northeast
Steve Henderson, Northwest
Bob Reardon, South

Tim Whalen, PSP, Secretary/Treasurer, Past Grand Esquire
Vance Rhodes, PSP, Parliamentarian
Cliff Arden, Sergeant at Arms
Brenda Sailors, Tiler
Bill Lewis, Historian
Lynda Lewis, Ga Elks News/Photographer

Recognition Past State Presidents

Larry Pope, Presidents
Roll Call of State Officers Tim Whalen, Secretary
Roll Call of Lodges Tim Whalen, Secretary
Minutes of Previous Session Tim Whalen, Secretary

Sickness & Distress

Larry Pope, President

Reports

President Larry Pope
President-Elect Steve Petrie
SDGER Bruce Hayden, PSP
State Sponsor Mike Smith, PGER
Sec./Treas. Convention Tim Whalen, PSP
CEO Aidmore Children's Center Dr. Vickey Hale
President, Aidmore Stanley Santee, PSP

Reports of Committees

Membership/Lapsation Steve Petrie, Pres.-Elect
Lodge Act./Drug Awareness Cyndi Russell
Business Practices Cliff Arden
ENF Brian Russell
Grants Michelle Langham
Hoop Shoot Vance Rhodes, PSP
Soccer Junior Roberson, PSP
Scholarships Stan Jones, PSP
DD Leadership Academy Jane Santee, PDDGER

New Business

Presentation 2026-2027 Budgets Beth Colie
Convention/Credentials Report Tim Whalen, PSP
Announcements Larry Pope, President

- 1. The Awards Program will be reconvened at 8:30 AM on Sat., June 13, 2026, with the Business Session to follow.**
- 2. Immediately following the Memorial Service the PER Assoc. will meet - Villas Conference Center.**

Benediction Mike Johnson, Chaplain

**Georgia Elks Association Annual Convention
Awards Program & Business Meeting Agenda
June 13, 2026 - 8:30 AM**

Spouses, Ladies, and Guests are invited to the Joint Meeting

Call to Order

Larry Pope, President

Special Programs & Awards

Americanism Program
Presentation of U.S. Military Flags
Announcement of Americanism Essay Winners

Stanley Santee, PSP

Guest Speakers, Jim Conine and Ruth Conine

Stanley Santee, PSP

Public Safety Officer of the Year
Youth Scholarship Awards

Arthur Anderson
Stan Jones, PSP

Ritual Awards
11 O'Clock Toast Contest
Tribute to the Flag Contest

Bruce Davis
Bruce Davis

Spouses, Ladies and Guests are Dismissed

Conclusion of the Business Meeting

Roll Call of State Officers
Roll Call of Lodges
Remarks of the President-Elect
Chairman, Board of Directors Report

Tim Whalen, PSP, Sec.
Tim Whalen, PSP, Sec
Steve Petrie, Pres. - Elect
Junior Roberson, PSP

Unfinished Business

Approval of the 2026-2027 Budgets

Beth Colie

New Business

Nominations & Elections of Officers for 2026-2027
Installation of Appointed Officers - Mike Smith, PGER

Good of the Order

Announcements for Future Elections

Reports of the Credentials Committee
Convention Resolution
Announcements
Retirement of the Colors
Benediction
Adjournment

Tim Whalen, PSP
Vance Rhodes, PSP
Larry Pope, President
Brunswick Lodge #691
Mike Johnson, Chaplain
Larry Pope, President



IMPORTANT NOTICE: All delegates must register with and be certified by the Credentials Committee to be entitled to participate in and vote on all matters that come before the Association at any business meeting session. The Credentials Desk will be open both Friday and Saturday mornings, opening one hour before the start of the business meeting and closing one half hour after the start of the business meeting. Please present your current membership card each morning for an accurate attendance count and to be eligible to vote. **P.E.R., please mark your credentials slip accordingly.**

**Georgia Elks Association
Annual Convention - Jekyll Island, Georgia**

**Installation and Awards Banquet
Jekyll Island Convention Center
Saturday, June 13, 2026**

(Dress: men coat & tie, ladies dressy)

Call to Order	Larry Pope, President
Invocation	Mike Johnson, Chaplain
Introductions	Larry Pope, President

Head Table, from the right

Past Grand Tiler, Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler
Bruce Hayden and his wife Lisa
Past Grand Exalted Ruler & State Sponsor
Mike Smith and his wife Sandra
Past Grand Esquire, PSP, GEA Sec./Treas., Tim Whalen

From the left

Chaplain, Mike Johnson and his wife Deborah, PSP
Ladies Auxiliary
Elks Aidmore State Auxiliary President Joanne Bennett,
and her husband Gary
Steve Petrie, President-Elect and his wife Marguerite
My Wife, First Lady Ana Pope

District Deputies

Ed Whitcomb, NE
Bethany Jackson, NW
Brenda Sailors, South

Vice Presidents

David Marrero, NE
Steve Henderson, NW
Bob Reardon, South

Introductions Auxiliary	Joanne Bennett, Pres.,Aux.
Ladies Horseshoe Awards	Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux.
Farewell Remarks	
State Auxiliary President	Joanne Bennett, Pres. Aux.

Recognition of Appointed Officers

Vance Rhodes, Parliamentarian	Larry Pope, President
Cliff Arden, Sergeant of Arms	
Brenda Sailors, Tiler	
Bill Lewis, Historian	
Lynda Lewis, Ga Elks News/Photographer	

Introduction of Past Grand Exalted Ruler

Our State Sponsor	Bruce Hayden, SDGER
Mike Smith, Past Grand Exalted Ruler	Message for Georgia

Awards Recognition

Past State President's Award	Nita Knighton, Pres. PSPs
Officer of the Year	Larry Pope, President
Lodge of the Year	Larry Pope, President
Elk of the Year	Larry Pope, President
Exalted Ruler of the Year	Larry Pope, President
Special Recognition Award	Larry Pope, President
Farewell Remarks, State President	Larry Pope
Installation of Elected Officers 2026-27	Mike Smith, PGER
Installation Prayer	Mike Johnson, Chaplain
Presentation of Presidents Pin & Gavel	Larry Pope
President's Acceptance Speech	Steve Petrie, President
Introduction of Auxiliary Pres.	Joanne Bennett, Pres.Aux
Presentation of PSP pin to Larry Pope	Ana Pope.
Completion of Business	Steve Petrie, President
Announcements	Steve Petrie, President
Eleven O'Clock Toast	Winner of the Toast Contest

Benediction	Mike Johnson, Chaplain
Adjournment	Steve Petrie, President

**Georgia Elks Auxiliary
Annual Convention
June 11-13, 2026**

Thursday, June 11, 2026 (Casual dress)

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Registration Desk Open Villas Lobby
11:00 AM	Past State President's Luncheon Tortuga Jack's 201 Beachview Dr. N. Jekyll Island, GA
1:30 PM	Executive Board Meeting Villas Conference Center
2:00 PM	Past President's Meeting Villas Conference Center
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	President Larry Pope Auxiliary Pres. Joanne Bennett Reception under the tents
6:00 PM	Brunswick Low Country Boil Under the tents

Friday, June 12, 2026 (Business casual for meeting and installation)

8:00 AM	Ladies Credentials Desk Open
8:45 AM	Ladies Credentials Desk Closes
9:00 AM	Auxiliary General Business Mtg. Villas Conference Center
11:00 PM - 11:30 AM	Elks & Auxiliary Memorial Ser. Villas Conference Center
12:00 PM	Auxiliary Installation Luncheon Brunswick Elks Lodge #691 1509 Union St. Brunswick, GA 31520
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Candidate Cocktail Reception Under the tents
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Aidmore Auction Villas Conference Center
6:00 PM	Picnic Dinner - Jesup Lodge Villas Stanton Building
7:30 PM	The Great Elksby (Roaring Twenties Theme) with Coastal Grove on stage

Saturday, June 13, 2026

8:00 AM	Horseshoe Registration Villas Room 134
9:00 AM	Horseshoes Competition Begins
11:00 AM	President's Executive Board Brunch Joanne Bennett's Room #409
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	GEA & Auxiliary Presidents Reception/Cocktails Under the tents
6:00 PM	GEA Installation & Awards Banquet - Jekyll Convention Center

Committee Reports

Drug Awareness



Hello Spring/Summer

I know the new year is just beginning but we need to start working toward building the best DAP team the great state of Georgia has had.

I was given 2 lodges coloring and essay contest submissions. This year's winners of the contest are from the North-east- Toccoa, Coloring contest went to Brielle, and the essay contest went to South- Valdosta, was Ja'Mya Gober.

Cyndi Russell
864-247-5768
864-886-8786
Cyndilay@
yahoo.com

We also had one Enrique Camarena awarded to Dalton Elks Lodge for Sheriff Darren Pierce from Whitfield County.

This will be my last article, and I want to thank you for allowing me to assist in the GEA as the DAP chair for the past 5 years. It has been an honor to serve and assist each lodge in building a Drug Awareness Program. You all have taught me so much more than I could ever list here. The friendships I have made will always stay close to my heart.

Always remember once a DAP chair always a DAP chair.

MAY

1. Drug Awareness Activities During Youth Week May (3-9)
2. National Prevention Week May 11-17
3. Remind your District's and Lodges that all DAP information need to be in CLMS before May 1st.
4. Are you working on your Drug Awareness Video, Essay and Poster Contest?

JUNE

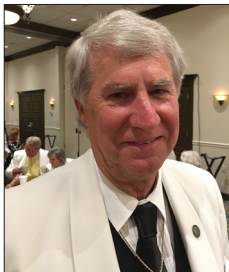
1. Are you working on your Lodge Enrique Camarena Award?
2. When is the last time you gave your DAP information to be entered into CLMS? Remember 1801 is the most important number to the DAP in CLMS
3. Did you schedule the Drug Awareness Trailer or Elroy for a Lodge or community Event?
4. **Remind your Districts, Lodges, and all Elks attending Grand Lodge, that the Elks National Drug Awareness Commission will host an "Open House" on Tuesday July 1st.**

JULY

1. Start planning for Drug Awareness Month in October
2. Start planning for Red Ribbon Week in October
3. Are you planning for Alcohol Awareness Week in November?
4. Are you planning a back to school event?
5. Plan a workshop to provide parents with resources for making healthy choices and copying skills for back to school bullying.

AUGUST

1. Start planning for Drug Awareness Month in October
2. Start planning for Red Ribbon Week in October
3. Are you working on your Drug Awareness Poster Contest?
4. Are you working on your Drug Awareness Essay Contest?
5. Are you planning for Alcohol Awareness Week in November?
6. Remind your District's and Lodges to enter all DAP information into CLMS



Stan Jones, PSP
Scholarship
Chairman

Scholarships

Most Valuable Student- Legacy- Boska Nursing Scholarship

We have had an outstanding year in Scholarship in the state of Georgia. Our Local Chairpersons have done a wonderful job. We had 515 applications sent to our local Lodges. The Local Lodge is where it all begins, with the local committee getting the word out to the community about the scholarships we offer. Our District chairpersons also did an outstanding job, many thanks to Jack McPhillips & Cyndi Russell. The Elks National Foundation sent the best of our local applications to our District chairs to be judged and to be sent on to the State to select our top three winners. Each District Chair judged all 44 applications and the Elks National Foundation averaged the three scores and came up with our top three State winners. Our top three State winners are: from the Toccoa Lodge Emily Cai, from the Savannah Lodge Mason Gaylord, and from the Covington Lodge Madelyn Reardanz. We announced our District winners at our Spring meeting. Our three Legacy Award winners will not be announced until April 24, 2026.

Good news for the Legacy Awards next year, the amount will be increased to \$6000. and the number of 4 year Scholarships will be increased to 400.

The Fred Boska Scholarship is in motion and we are waiting on our applications to judge for this year's winner. It is each Lodges responsibility to get the information out to their local nursing schools about the Boska Scholarship. I will have more brochures available at Jekyll Island for you to pick up and distribute. Thank you for your help in implementing this Scholarship.

Stan



News from Lodges around the State



Albany Lodge #713 Volunteers for the lodge's local Hoop Shoot. L-R front row: April Reardon, Debbie Dougherty, Harriet Watson, Bob Reardon, David Dougherty. L-R second row: Joyce Langford, Tim Nelson, Lou Taylor, Tory Martin, Teresa Stanfield, Wally Binns, Charlie Watson, Margie Jones, Johnny Kavanaugh and Stan Jones.

Albany Lodge #713 Donated time and money to the Fishes and Loaves Food Bank in Warwick, GA and to feeding the Valley Food Bank in Albany, GA. L-R: Bob Reardon, Kay Badly, Director of Feeding the Valley Food Bank, April Reardon, Tim Nelson & Joyce Langford.



Augusta Lodge #205 always try to improve the residents' quality of life at the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home by enhancing physical, emotional, and cognitive health, while reducing loneliness and behavioral issues. A good time is always had by everyone.



Brunswick Lodge #691 held their local Hoop Shoot in January at Ballard Park with the support of Glynn County Recreation Department. Pictured far left: 8-9 Girls first place Jordyn Robinson, second place Harmony Sharpe and third place Rowan Dunn. Behind the girls is Kevin Weese. Pictured center: 8-9 Boys first place winner Brasure Hoyt, Kevin Weese and second place Micah Lowe. Pictured far right: 10-11 Boys third place Ethan Fuller, second place Elijah Fuller & first place Hudson Moore. Kevin Weese in back.



Calhoun Lodge #1883 hosted the Public Safety Officer of the Year Awards for each local agency in Gordon County. Each recipient was accompanied by their nominating superior officer, and family and co-workers enjoyed a lasagna dinner. Paramedic Jodie Johnson with Advent Health Gordon EMS, Officer Chaz Shelton with Calhoun Police Dept., TFC Ignacio Orozco with Georgia State Patrol Post 43, Corporal Missy Bingiel with Gordon Co E-911 Communications, Division Chief Josh Cochran with Gordon Co Fire & Rescue & Deputy Kevin Summerville of the Gordon Co Sheriff's Office. Pictured far right, Firefighter Andrew Thayer with Calhoun fire Dept.



Calhoun Lodge #1883 is proud to announce that Jaiden Dobson of Calhoun, GA was named as the winner of the 2025-26 Elks Virtual National Soccer Shoot Championship for the Girls 16U age division. Her winning score of 44 points at the SE Regional competition in Florida was used against other Regional 16U winners from around the U.S. and she came out on top.

Cartersville Lodge #1969 honored their Public Safety Officer Recognition Award winner, Police Officer, Dixie Tucker, who was instrumental in quickly starting and continuing measures that helped save the life of a local high school student.

Dalton Lodge #1267 proudly presented its Public Safety Officer of the Year certificate to Trooper Black of the Georgia State Patrol, Post 5. Pictured with Trooper Black is Vance Rhodes, PSP.



Dalton Lodge #1267 hosted their Public Safety Officers award banquet at the Dalton Lodge. Pictured are just a few of those honored at the banquet. Pictured with the recipients are Dalton Lodge members Mike Parker, Michelle Langham and Vance Rhodes, PSP.



Above, more recipients from **Dalton Lodge #1267's** Public Safety Officers award banquet at the Dalton Lodge. Pictured on the left end Mike Parker and on the right end Vance Rhodes, PSP.



Dalton Lodge #1267 held its local Hoop Shoot. Above left, pictured with one of the winners is Randy Keener, NW district director. Above right, the ladies take care of registration.

Douglas Lodge #1286 held their district hoop shoot in Jan. L-R: Benda Meeks, Addy Talbert and Addy's dad Rick Talbert



Douglas Lodge #1286 had great helpers for their hoop shoot. Pictured are Jerry, Cindy, Marion and Shirley.

Eatonton Lodge #2549 donated to Blue Birds of Hope, an organization dedicated to providing support & hope to individuals & families in need.



Eatonton Lodge #2549 had the honor of hosting a Valentine's Dinner for the veterans. Each veteran received a Valentine's gift along with heartfelt, handmade cards created by the children in Elizabeth Kelly Harkin's class. Their beautiful artwork brought so many smiles and was truly treasured by all. The veterans also loved the Valentine mural painted by Lauren, a friend of an Elk member. The evening also featured a delicious fried catfish dinner with fries, hush puppies, and slaw which was enjoyed by all. To close out the night, Joy Waters proudly presented a \$500 check to the Georgia War Veterans Home to support their canteen.



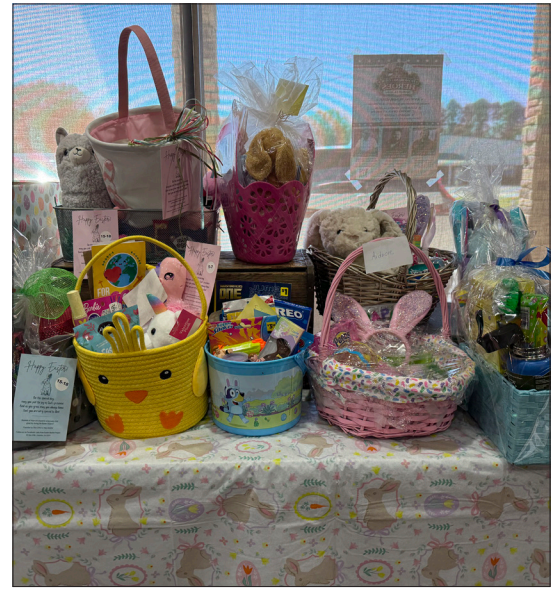
LaGrange Lodge #1084 held a special needs Easter Party at the lodge that included food, fun and hunting Easter eggs with the Easter bunny.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 went to the Ga War Veterans Home and took grilled ribs along with baked beans, slaw and cookies and ice cream for dessert. Pictured are the volunteers and some of the veterans that enjoyed the ribs.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 went to the Ga War Veterans Home and took pizza for a pizza party. Pictured are the volunteers and some of the veterans that attended the pizza party. There was also dessert, one of the veterans' favorite things.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 members and LOLA participated in the Easter basket collection for area needy children and also took baskets to Aidmore for the girls and foster children.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 participates every month giving out food at Second Harvest in Greensboro. Known as the "Red Shirts", the lodge sponsors the food 1 of the months each year. A large number of volunteers from the lodge show up to volunteer each and every month throughout the year to make sure nobody goes hungry.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 partnered with SCI (Safari Club International), to support local veterans. This collaboration was called "Honoring Our Heroes", an evening which featured notable speakers and was held at Briarpatch Farms in Eatonton, GA. This event will help to support the Annual Cast and Blast Wounded Veterans event in Sept. where wounded veterans are escorted down Lake Oconee Parkway and treated to lunch at the lodge and are taken fishing and target shooting for a fun filled weekend of activities for the veterans. The funds will also help veterans in other needed areas. There were around 600 people at the event and the lodge cooked and served them all. A big thank you to all the volunteers. This event could not have happened without you!





Savannah Lodge #183 used a \$4,000 Beacon grant to give school supplies to Hodge Elementary School and Gadsden Elementary School.



Savannah Lodge #183 donated \$2,000 worth of supplies to the Inner City Night Shelter for Veterans using the Spotlight Grant. Elk members Raul Matias, Tom Everett, Mary Ann Evans, Sec. Sharon Lawson and Leading Knight Steve Shirah.



At Savannah Lodge #183's Scholarship Dinner, Chairman, Dr. Elliot Palefsky, and ER Gary Roush handed out \$500 checks to 8 Scholars. Four of the students were unable to attend.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 held its annual chili cook off/cornhole tournament for Veterans. ER Julia Burton with crowd favorite winner Brittany McCollum.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 held a special needs prom on March 27, 2026.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 fed the Airborne Battalion breakfast for the whole week of March 20-24. they also servred 2 dinners.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 - Far left, ER Julia Burton, left, presented a check to Lucy Davis for Food2Kids at Toccoa's annual night of giving. Center, ER Julia Burton presented a donation to the representatives for the American Legion and far right, pictured are ER Julia Burton, Jimmy Mize, Soccer Shoot Chairperson, Bellamy King & Everette King. Toccoa donated around \$23,000 to the community. Cyndi Russell also secured \$11,500 in grants that went to Toccoa Life, Veterans at the Clary Center, Shirley's Shelter and New Beginnings. Also recognized were the Hoop Shoot, Drug Awareness essay and poster contest winners and ENF scholarship recipients.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 had a great turnout for its local hoop shoot.



Above and Below, Valdosta Lodge #728 held their annual Public Safety Officer of the year and dedication of service on March 12th. There were five nominees: Chief Nathan Huffmaster; Lowndes Co. Fire and Rescue, Lt. Keith Niehanke; Valdosta Fire Dept., Investigator Rodney Smith; Lowndes Co. Sherriff's office, Officer Jason Glass; Valdosta Police Dept., TFC Darryll Fulghum; Georgia State Patrol. They were all nominated by their peers, who were present, and described why they deserved the award. There was only one winner, but they all were given recognition certificates and praised and applauded for their service. Officer Jason Glass of the Valdosta Police Dept. was responsible for stopping a man with a gun from entering S. L. Mason Elementary School in Sept. of 2025. Mike Johnson, on the far left, is shown presenting the awards in each of the photos. Above top, Mike is behind the podium to the left.



Valdosta Lodge #728 had so much fun at their Birthday Bash/Valentine party. Thanks to all who helped put it together! Great food, band, and fellowship. Thanks Marianne Wayne for the kissing booth. It was a Huge success!



**Past Grand Esquire
PSP Tim Whalen's
Minutes**

The Georgia Elks Association held its Spring meeting at the Macon Marriott City Center Hotel in Macon, Georgia on Saturday, February 28th, 2026. President Larry Pope called the meeting to order & called on the Valdosta Elks Lodge #728 Color Guard for presentation of the Colors. President Elect Steve Petrie led the Pledge to the Flag. Chaplain Mike Johnson delivered the Invocation. President Pope welcomed all to Macon for the meeting. Introductions of Grand Lodge Officers, Association Officers, Past State Presidents & Special Guests then followed.

President Pope called on Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler Bruce Hayden for introductions of our Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan Klatt & Florida V. P. A. L. Jeff Muehlfeld. Both gentlemen reserved their comments for a later time.

President Pope called on Secretary Tim Whalen for roll call of the Association Officers & Lodges. Officers present were Larry Pope, Steve Petrie, David Marrero, Robert Reardon, Tim Whalen, Cliff Arden, Mike Johnson, Bill Lewis, Brenda Sailors, Vance Rhodes & Lynda Lewis. Vice President N. W. Steve Henderson was absent. All Lodges were present expect the Tyrone Lodge #1617.

A motion was made by Piker Penn to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the Fall meeting. Motion seconded by Brian Russell & the motion was approved by the membership.

Sickness & Distress: Mike Smith, Larry Pope's mother, Roy & Dixie Spiker, Mike Bailey, Brenda Sailors, Dan Lindsey, Bob Reardon, Larry Westberry, Bruce Hayden, Charles Smith, Carlos Ruiz, Junior Roberson's brother & Steven Spradley were all remembered.

Reports:

- President Pope - No Report
- President Elect Petrie - No Report
- Board Chairman Roberson - A 3 year plan is being completed for the Association; an up-dated Convention Manual has been approved by the Board & will be submitted to the Lodges for their approval; 2026-27 budgets for the Charity Board & Association Board were approved; these will be forwarded to the Lodges for review before a final vote at the Annual meeting; it has been suggested that some committees be combined. This will require a By-Law revision. The proposed changes will be presented at the Annual meeting. 2 At-Large positions on the Association Board will be voted on at the Annual meeting. Boska Nursing Scholarships are now available. The Beast Raffle for 2026 was approved.
- S. D. G. E. R. Hayden - Bruce has the Grand Lodge Endorsed Candidate pins & pendants available now. Bruce told of the importance of pledging the Flag at all Lodge events. Always have a Prayer & the Pledge when you gather.
- Aidmore President Santee - he will give his report at the dinner this evening.

Committee Reports:

- Membership - Steve Petrie: the Membership year never ends. Steve recently made a trip to the Florida Elks meeting & told of their "membership script". They "call, call, call" & do their best to retain delinquent members. Steve will share this script with our Lodges. Our members are our customers, we must do what is required to keep them.
- Leadership Academy - Jane Santee: April 11th in Griffin; April 18th in Eatonton & April 25th in Tifton. The Academy portion of the program will follow the District Deputy Clinic in each location.
- Audit & Accounting - Jane Santee: the committee remains active with recent I. R. S. reviews of various Lodges. Please contact Jane if your Lodge is approached by the I. R. S.
- Business Practices - Cliff Arden: the committee is eager to be of help if requested by a Lodge. Please call before your problems get out of hand.
- Disaster Relief - Bill Lewis: no bad storms as of yet this year but hurricane season is approaching. Our Drug Awareness trailers are now stocked with disaster relief supplies for quick response.
- Elks Museum - Bill Lewis: the museum is up & running in the Aidmore Administration Building. Please visit the site & see the history of Elkdom in Georgia.
- Soccer - Junior Roberson: Georgia contestants competed in the Regionals this past January in Florida. The weather did not cooperate & we had lower numbers than in past years. Junior once again offered his help in setting up a local Soccer Shoot for your Lodge.
- Budgets - Beth Colie: the Association & Charity budgets for the upcoming year have been presented to the Boards for their approval. The budgets will be sent to the Lodges for review prior to a vote at the Annual meeting.
- Conventions - Tim Whalen: Tim brought the membership up-to-date on the Annual meeting & the Grand Lodge convention to be held in Chicago this year.
- Government Relations - Tim Whalen: the committee is striving to attain \$600,000,000 in giving Nation-Wide this year. Please complete your Charity Records Books & submit so Georgia will have 100% compliance this year.
- Drug Awareness - Cyndi Russell: It is time to participate in the Poster & Essay contests this year. Visit your local schools & find children willing to apply. Awards will be presented at the Annual meeting in June.
- Lodge Activities - Cyndi Russell: Newsletter Awards were presented to the following Lodges: 1st Place NW Div 1 Marietta; 1st Place S Div 1 Albany; 1st Place S Div 1 Brunswick; 1st Place Div 3 Valdosta; 1st Place Div 4 Tifton; 1st Place NW Div 3 Cartersville; 1st Place NE Div 4 Toccoa & 1st Place Div 6 Lake Oconee. Lodge Activities Contest winners were 1st Place Div 1 Brunswick; 1st Place NW Div 3 Cartersville; 1st Place Div 4 Toccoa & 1st Place Div 6 Lake Oconee. Honorable Mention Awards went to Albany, Dalton, Tifton, Elberton-Athens & Eatonton.
- Scholarships - Stan Jones: In 2026-27, the Legacy Scholarships will be increased from \$4,000 to \$6,000. Georgia had 515 Most Valuable Student applications this year; a very good response. Checks for District Winners were distributed to the Lodges for their respective students.
- Elks National Foundation - Brian Russell: Georgia is slightly behind last year's giving figures but there is still time to catch up. Currently we have given \$63,395.83 & last year we gave \$68,357.91. Georgia is currently 10th in the Nation in giving. Georgia received much more from the Foundation than we sent. Have a fund raiser at your Lodge to support the E. N. F.

- Hoop Shoot – Vance Rhodes: Vance thanked the Covington Elks Lodge for supporting the State Hoop Shoot again this year. The Banquet went well & attendance was good. Regionals will be in Valdosta on March 14th & the Nationals will be in Chicago, IL on April 18th.
- Americanism – Stanley Santee: the Essay contest is over. We had good participation. Awards will be presented at the Annual meeting.
- Public Safety Officer of the Year – Arthur Anderson: nominations are due by March 15th.
- Memorial Service – Amber Henderson: Please submit your Lodge Necrology to Amber by April 15th. She is planning a nice program this year.
- Good Fortune Shoot-Off – Bethany Jackson: The Shoot-Off will be held immediately after this meeting. Tickets are still available for purchase.
- Grants – Michelle Langham: Georgia has received \$218,000 in Grants this year. Please submit your final reports so you will be eligible for Grants in the future. Freedom Grants open on April 1st, 2026.
- Youth Activities – Wendy Morris: Lodges across the State are very active with their community youth. Call Wendy for ideas that may work in your town.
- Athletic Activities – Mike Johnson: Corn Hole Tournament on the 8th floor of the hotel after this meeting.
- Ritual – Bruce Davis: The Ritual Clinic will be held in Dalton on May 30th.

Old Business:

- Bob Colie said he would send out instructions on setting up a Zoom call. This was discussed at past meetings as a way of holding committee meetings. Bob also complimented the Augusta Lodge on their Hoop Shoot, saying they have two contestants going to the Regionals in Valdosta.

New Business:

- The Districts caucused, nominated & elected the following members to serve as Vice Presidents during the 2026/2027 year: R. J. Fernandez, Southern District; Julie Burton, Northeast District & Mike Parker, Northwest District.

Good of the Order:

- Tifton Lodge recognized Wanda Davis for her service to the Lodge.
R. J. Fernandez told of a recent drug bust in Glynn County & the rise of a new strain of fentanyl, a very dangerous drug. He indicated it is ten times more deadly than the current strain.

Resolutions:

- Vance Rhodes read the Resolutions for the meeting. He made a motion to accept, seconded by Piker Penn. The Resolutions, as read, were accepted.

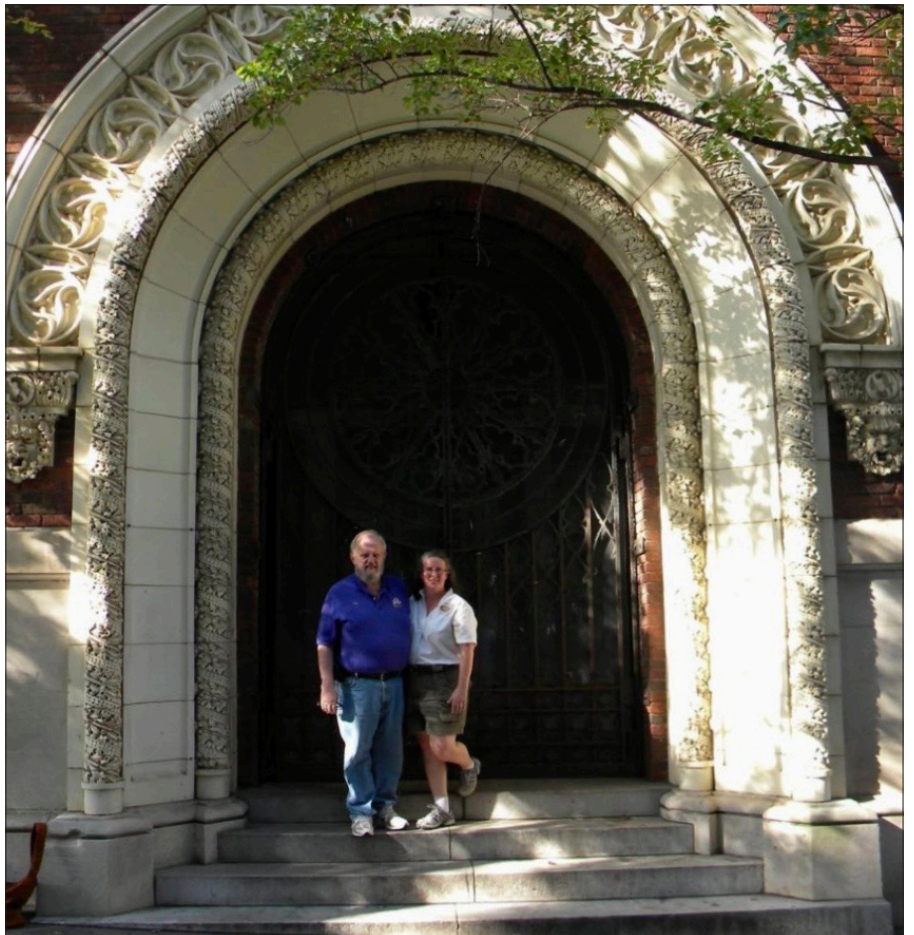
There being no further business for the Association, President Pope called on Chaplain Johnson to deliver the Benediction. President Pope then called for the adjournment of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Whalen

Tim Whalen, Secretary/Treasurer
Georgia Elks Association

<u>Credentials:</u>	
Northeast Attendees	19
P.E.R. s	6
Delegates	19
Northwest Attendees:	26
P.E.R.s	14
Delegates	26
Southern Attendees	39
P.E.R.s	18
Delegates	35
Total Lodges	21
Total Delegates	80
Total Attendees	84
Grand Exalted Ruler	01
Grand Total	82



To the right, a photograph that captures a moment in time. Dan Lindsey, PER and long time member of Atlanta-Northlake Lodge #78, that recently passed in February, and Suzy Lindsey, PER and Sec., pose in front of the Ellis Street Atlanta Lodge, built in 1911.

In Honor & Memory of All Georgia Elks Aidmore Auxiliary Past State Presidents

Always Supporting
Georgia Elks Auxiliaries
and Elks Aidmore

ALBANY LODGE #713

3213 Gillionville Road Albany, GA 31721
229-436-4896
Meetings 1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 7:30 pm
Game Nights & Billiards
2nd & 4th Wednesdays
Meals Served On Those Evenings 6:30 pm
Food Served Every Friday Night at 6:30 pm
Dinner & Dances On Special Occasions

BRUNSWICK LODGE #691

1509 Union Street, Brunswick, GA 31520
Phone (912) 264-1389
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursday at 7:00 pm
Bingo Every Tuesday Open at 5:00 pm
Games start at 6:30 pm
Lodge Open Tues., Wed., & Fri. at 5:00 pm
Sports Bar is open for games of Pool or Darts
Wednesday & Friday Night Dinners 6:00 pm
FISH FRY every 3rd Friday 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
JOIN THE ELKS FOR "FIRST FRIDAY"

CALHOUN LODGE #1883

Great Golf Course! 18 Holes
Elks Rates: \$24 weekly/\$29 weekends
Bingo Thursday night
doors open 6:00pm- start play 7:00 pm
Ph (706) 629-4091 143 Craigtown Rd. NE
From I-75 take Ext. 317
Go 1/4 mile east on GA 225
Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:00 pm

CARTERSVILLE LODGE #1969

Ken Crane, Exalted Ruler
Lodge Location: 1715 West Ave.
Cartersville, GA 30120
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 566
Cartersville, GA 30120
770-382-3557
Meets 1st & 3rd Thursday @ 8:00 pm
Monday and Thursday 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm
Open Select Saturday/Sunday

DALTON LODGE #1267

Located off I-75
1212 Elkwood Dr. Dalton, GA 30722
Bar Open 7 days/week
Restaurant Open Thurs., Fri. & Sat.
Motor home parking
Pool
Meets 1st & 3rd Thursdays @ 7:00 pm
www.daltonelks.org
706-278-6565

EATONTON ELKS LODGE #2549

135 Industrial Blvd, Eatonton, GA 31024
P.O. Box 4306, Eatonton, GA 31024
706-485-8606

Meets 3rd Monday @ 7 pm
Open:
Every other Tue: 6 pm - 8 pm
Thurs @ 6:30 pm: Trivia
Fri 6 pm - 9 pm: Full Menu



GRIFFIN LODGE #1207

Lodge Location: 324 E Broad St.
Suite 222, Griffin, GA 30223
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 257
Griffin, GA 30223
Meets 2nd & 4th Monday @ 7:00 pm
Call for operating hours 770-584-3586
Monthly dinners - Call for information
770-584-3586

JESUP LODGE #2133

Lodge Location: 1802 US Hwy 301
Jesup, GA 31546
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 154
Jesup, GA 31598
912-427-3339
Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday @ 7:30 pm
Open: 1st, 3rd & Last Tuesday of month
Open Meeting nights only 7:00 - 10:00 pm

LAKE OCONEE LODGE #2849

871 Harmony Road
Eatonton, GA 31024
706-991-1499 after 3:00 pm
1 mtg. month 3rd Thurs. Jan., June, July,
August, Nov. and in Dec. 1st Thurs.
2 mtg. month 1st & 3rd Thurs. Feb., Mar.,
April, May, Sept. Oct.
Open: Mon - Fri 3:00 pm & Sat-Sun 1:00 pm
(Weekend hrs. subject to change)

MARIETTA LODGE #1657

Proud Home of
Dan Tatum, PSP
&
Nita R. Knighton, PSP

TOCCOA LODGE #1820

Hours: Mon-Fri 4:00 - 11:00 pm
Sat 3:00 - 9:00 pm
706-886-6531
Food: Wed Buffet 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Thursday - Bar Menu 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Fri. Dining Room Menu 6:00 - 9:00 pm
Bingo - Sun & Wed 7:00 pm
Email: Toccoaelks1820@gmail.com

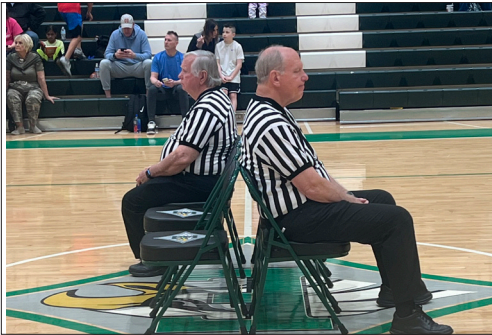
TYRONE LODGE # 1617

26 Carriage Oaks Dr.
Tyrone, GA 30290
Meeting Nights - 2nd & 4th Tues. 7:30 pm
Bingo Nights - Mon., Wed., Thurs. 7:15 pm
Sat. afternoon 2:15 pm
(Formally known as Union City Elks 1617)

VALDOSTA LODGE #728

2309 Hwy 84 West
Valdosta, GA 31601
229-242-3012
Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday @ 7:30 pm
Open: Friday 6:00 pm - til
Bingo Monday & Thursday
Call for additional information





S. L. Jones Electric Co.
168 Spring Creek Rd.
Warwick, GA 31796

Stan Jones

Cell: 229-435-0871
Warwick: 229-535-4261

sljones@planttel.net

Mike Bailey, PSP

Dalton Lodge #1267



Gary Robinette
Past State President

"Truth is the
foundation of all
honorable endeavors."

Member of Cartersville Elks
Lodge #1969

Beth & Bob Colie, PSP

Proud Members of
**Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 &
Georgia Elks Association**

Dwaine Lovingood, PSP
Liebengut Farms

P. O. Box 692
LaFayette, GA 30728-0692
423-838-1940

mollyn998@comcast.net



Humber Ingram
President

Beth Prestridge
478-288-6624

INGRAM PLANTATIONS

John Ingram
706-476-0122

Good Luck, Lady Trojans!
Taylor Prestridge & Jordan Prestridge
Class of 2021 Class of 2024

Dan Tatum, PSP

**Marietta Lodge #1657
&
Georgia Elks Association**

Ronnie & Nita Knighton, PSP

Proud Members of
**Marietta Lodge #1657
&
Georgia Elks Association**

**CASH
PAINTING**

Residential & Commercial

Jeremy Cash 706-473-3660

Mike & Sandy Langan

Proud Members of
**Lake Oconee Elks Lodge #2849
and
Lake Oconee Ladies Auxiliary**

PEGGY HOLMES REALTY, INC.

2004 South Dixie Hwy.
Dalton, GA 30720

Peggy Holmes
Broker GRI-CRS
Million Dollar Club
Life Member
Hud Specialist

Bus. 706-278-5000
Res. 706-422-8155
Fax. 706-226-9194
Bus. 706-277-5000

**JOHN WHITE JR
CUSTOM HOMES & REMODELING**

1840 Jernigan Bridge Road
White Plains, Georgia 30678

Cell 478-288-2063

LICENSED & INSURED
JohnWhiteCustomHomes@yahoo.com



**Bill Lewis, PSP
&
Lynda Lewis**

Lake Oconee Lodge #2849

770-337-9010
blewiselk2849@gmail.com



Junior Roberson, PSP

Soccer Shoot Chairman
Georgia Elks Association

(706) 847-7122 wiliarobersonjr@gmail.com



Elks Aidmore, Inc.
2394 Morrison Rd.
Conyers, GA 30094

NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
Conyers, GA
Permit #47



MEMBERSHIP! *Matters!*

join.elks.org

SAVE THE DATE

Elks
AIDMORE, INC.

27TH ANNUAL
GOLF FORE KIDS
CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

2026

Join us for a day of golf dedicated to making a meaningful impact by raising funds to support and empower youth in care.

OCTOBER 2

The Creek Golf Course at Hard Labor Creek
1400 Knox Chapel Rd, Social Circle, GA 30025

REGISTRATION COMING SOON

Wally Binns
Albany Lodge #713
representing
the South District for the
G.E.A.

Bethany Jackson
Cartersville Lodge #1969
representing
the Northwest District for
the G.E.A.

Stacey Simmons
Toccoa Lodge #1820
representing
the Northeast District for
the G.E.A.

Steve Petrie,
President-Elect
Lake Oconee Lodge #2849
G.E.A.
Membership Chairman