

GEORGIA Elks NEWS

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February 2026

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 27-28

GEA Spring Meeting in Macon

March 14

Regional Hoop Shoot in Valdosta

April 18

National Hoop Shoot in Chicago

May 9

Aidmore Open House

June 11-13

Annual Convention on Jekyll Island

July 5-8

Grand Lodge Convention, Chicago



I hope everyone's new year got off to a great start! We are now looking forward to our Spring Meeting in Macon in a few short weeks. We will have the pleasure of meeting our Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt and his wife Sue at our Spring Meeting. Hopefully we will have some spring like weather then. We will also be welcoming the Florida VPAL Jeff Muehlfeld and accompanying him, Francisca Pouza.

I hope everyone has bought their Good Fortune tickets as our Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt will be doing the shoot off at the Spring Meeting. Good luck to everyone that has a ticket. Hopefully the weather will cooperate and it can be held outside instead of indoors. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Macon, until then stay well, stay warm, and safe travels.

Lynda Lewis
Editor
Ga Elks News

Larry R. Pope
President
Georgia Elks Association
2025-2026

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

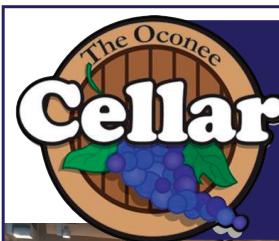
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Lynda Lewis
EDITOR
PHOTOGRAPHER

John Helgesen
EDITOR EMERITUS



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Grand Exalted Ruler 2025-2026

GER Bryan R. Klatt



Bryan Robert Klatt was born in DeKalb, Illinois on December 5 to Robert A. Klatt and Donnalee (Bettner) Klatt. He is the oldest of two children, with a younger brother, Mark A. Klatt (Layne). Bryan was raised in DeKalb and graduated from DeKalb High School in 1977.

Bryan graduated from Northern Illinois University in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in industrial arts. During his time in college, he was a five-year student equipment manager for the football team, which earned him a half-ride scholarship for all five years.

After college, Bryan worked with his father and brother at the former Kallal's Sheet Metal Inc. in his hometown. He was with the company for more than 25 years, first as an employee, then as a co-owner with his brother. Bryan is a past chairman of the City of DeKalb HVAC Mechanical board and a former member of the DeKalb Public Library board. He is a member of St. Mary Catholic Church in DeKalb and a Third Degree Knight of the Knights of Columbus Council No. 717, as well as a member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge No. 586.

During Bryan's senior year of high school, he was introduced to the former Susan Louise Ekstrom, to whom he has been married since October 1983. They have three children: Gregory Robert, Andrew Jordan, and Lucas Richard (BreeAnne).

When his boys attended and played sports at DeKalb High School, Bryan found a way to watch the action and save the school a little money. He volunteered to be the public address announcer, and stayed in the role for more than a quarter century. Bryan's voice could be heard at the school's football games, boys' and girls' basketball games, wrestling meets, baseball and softball games, and other events. He has also assisted Northern Illinois by announcing baseball, softball, gymnastics, football, and women's basketball. Bryan is a regular volunteer in his community in various school, civic, and athletic activities.

Bryan was initiated into DeKalb, Illinois Lodge No. 765 on November 12, 1985. He served on numerous committees before becoming Exalted Ruler in 1989-1990 and Lodge Secretary from 1998 to 2009. He is an Honorary Life Member and continues to serve the Lodge when needed to fulfill unexpired Officer terms or committees.

For the Illinois Elks Association, Bryan served as North Central District Vice President (1992- 1993); State Chaplain (1993- 1994); State Americanism Committee Chairman (1993- 1994); Third (1994-1995), Second (1995-1996), and First (1996-1997) State Vice President; State President (1997-1998); Chairman of Advisory Committee (2000-2001); Chairman of Convention Committee (2002-2004); Co Chair of Leading Knight/Officer Training Seminars (1998-2008); Co-Chair of the LouGER Committee for then Endorsed Candidate for Grand Exalted Ruler F. Louis Sulsberger (2006-2008); and District Leader/Sponsor for the Northwest District No. 2680 since 1999.

Bryan has served the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler (1994-1995); as a member (2001-2008) and the Chairman (2005-2007) of the Grand Lodge Membership Committee; and as the Grand Secretary from July 2008 through July 2025. Bryan and Susan are humbled, thankful, and honored to be chosen as the ambassadors to represent our great Order as the Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady of Elkdom. They are excited to travel to and visit Elks communities throughout America promoting their theme:

“Be the Difference”



Larry Pope
GEA President

Wow, the year is rapidly passing by, with about 5 months left in the state year and 3 months left in the lodge year. My hope is everyone had a joyous holiday season.

Our Georgia Elks Association Spring Meeting will be held in Macon, Georgia at the Macon Marriott City Center, located at 240 Coliseum Drive on February 27th and 28th. We are honored to have our Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt, and his wife Susan join us. It is also our pleasure to have Jeff Muehlfeld and accompanying him is Francisca Pouza.

We have seen some accomplishments in our membership of some lodges. As Georgia Elks, we must buckle down and work on membership and delinquents. As of this writing, we have 370 members that need to be contacted. Georgia stands at 8.1% delinquency rate vs the National average of 8.7%. This is a good thing, but we are in the middle of the pack (so to speak) Nationwide. As we strive for five, we must contact these members to encourage them to come back and be a part of our wonderful organization. I have seen all the remarkable things that our lodges across the state are doing. Exalted Rulers, Secretaries, Membership chairpersons, rally around these opportunities and let our delinquents know that their support helps to fund these activities, remember **Be the Difference**.

As of this writing, we have received \$187,500, and some pending, in ENF grant fundings to help support our communities and Veterans throughout the State. I want to congratulate each lodge who has worked diligently on grant applications. Please remember to send in your receipts and reports for each grant by your closure dates.

I encourage each lodge to support our ENF Golf outing to be held May 15th at Apple Mountain Golf Course in Clarksville, Georgia by supporting a team. A hole sponsorship cost will be \$600 for both. Please contact Brian Russell who is our State Chairman for ENF.

I ask our members across the state to please support our State Major Project Aidmore, the cost is \$8 a month. I want to applaud Dr. Vickie Hale and her staff, along with Stanley Santee, board of directors, and lodge Trustees, for their commitment and dedication to our state project. If you want to learn more about Elks Aidmore, please contact Stanley Santee or your local lodge Aidmore Trustee. Also, if you are ever in the Conyers area near Aidmore, please drop by Aidmore and visit the new GEA Museum. It will be well worth your time.



Joanne Bennett
President, Elks
Aidmore Auxiliary

Welcome 2026!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Christmas at Aidmore was a great success, made possible by the dedication and generosity of so many. Thank you to Aidmore Chair Pam Stewart for her strong leadership, and to Dr. Vickie Hale and her team for thoughtfully organizing engaging activities for the girls. Santa and his elf brought smiles and laughter as they entertained everyone, while the auxiliary members worked hard to decorate and support the event, making the space truly festive. A special thank you goes to Covington lodge for donating a beautiful new Christmas tree. This truly felt like the best Christmas yet at Aidmore, thanks to everyone's heartfelt contributions.

As we look ahead to 2026, it is important that we continue making progress in expanding our membership within the auxiliaries. Our members are the foundation of our organization, contributing to its success through their actions and dedication. The vitality of our group depends on the enthusiasm and ideas that each member brings.

To strengthen our organization even further, let's set a collective goal for the year: each auxiliary will strive to welcome at least five potential new members every quarter. By consistently focusing on growth, we can ensure that our organization remains dynamic and continues to thrive. Let us all challenge ourselves to invite others to join, share the benefits of membership, and build a stronger community together.

I look forward to seeing you in Macon at the Spring Quarterly Feb 27th and 28th.

Sincerely,
Joanne Bennett
Auxiliary President



I would like to thank each and every one of you for your heartfelt support through cards, visits, calls, and prayers after my wife, Linda's passing. It has meant so much to me, brought comfort, and showed that I am surrounded by love during this difficult time.

Mike

Mike Bailey, PSP



HAPPY 2026 to ALL! I hope everyone had a fantastic Holiday Season. How about one of your New Years Resolutions is to finish the Lodge year strong? The Georgia Elks Association is tracking for another gain in membership this year. Our Order set a new benchmark by attaining FOUR years in a row of positive growth. This is an outstanding accomplishment. What is even more exciting, we are tracking for a FIFTH year in a row of membership gain. My special thanks to Steve Petrie, GEA Membership Chairman, and his team for leading this drive.

Our State President, Larry Pope, and his wife Ana, along with Special Deputy, Bruce Hayden and his wife, Lisa are guiding the membership and the Committees and Officers to a very successful Elks year. Please show your appreciation to everyone involved when the opportunity arises. All of us should **“Be Loud, Proud and Visible”** to be a vital part of the GEA. We need each of you to focus on how you can help improve our Association. Be a part of the momentum.

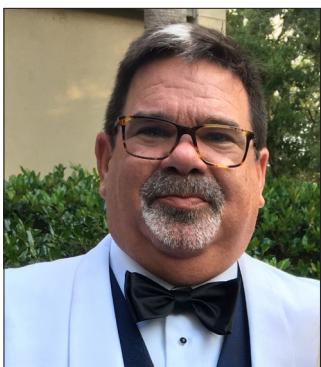
**Mike Smith
PGER, PNP**

The GEA, as of this writing, ranks **8th** in the Elks National Foundation per capita with **\$11.76** per member. Let's finish the year in the top five! You will determine the end results. Our membership is adding new members on a regular basis. However, we have approximately 400 members who have not renewed their membership. Ask your Lodge for a list and give those you know a friendly reminder that we miss them and the GEA counts on their membership to continue our good work.

Mark your calendars and make your plans to join everyone at our Convention in Macon to welcome and meet our Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan Klatt, and Elks First Lady, wife Sue. Many of you may know Bryan as he served as the Grand Secretary, COO, of our Order for almost 18 years. Come, visit, and enjoy his message and their company. They are not only very nice people, they represent your Order with dignity and respect.

Sandra and I look forward to visiting each of you in Macon. Thank you for your membership to help others. GOD Bless each of us and our families, GOD Bless our United States of America!!

**Michael (Mike) F. Smith, PGER/PNP
GEORGIA ELKS SPONSOR**



As we head into that time of the year to nominate & elect officers for your Lodge, I urge you to pay close attention and be present to elect those duly qualified to run the affairs of your Lodge. The elected Officers of your Lodge are the ones who manage the day to day affairs of your Lodge. This includes the business side of being a Lodge, paying the bills, making sure revenue is coming in, managing any employees and seeing that ALL aspects of your Lodge is profitable.

As a reminder it is a REQUIREMENT for the Exalted Ruler to attend the Grand Lodge Session, all DDGER Clinics, Officer Training Academy, all State Association meetings and of course be the individual running your Lodge meetings every month. It is also a requirement of the Leading Knight, Secretary and Board Chairman to attend the DDGER Clinics as well as the Officer Training Academy. ALL Officers are required to attend ALL Lodge meetings and ALL Board of Director meetings at the Lodge. You cannot just put a body in a chair that does not fulfill these obligations as they must be diligent in the success and growth of your Lodge.

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

With the changing of the guard, it is also time to clean up the small things like taxes, business licenses, bingo licenses, and liquor licenses. These things need to be followed up on to ensure your Lodge is legal to operate. It is also time to look at your Lodge & Club Bylaws to ensure they are current & correct. Ask for a Committee list of the Lodge committees to make sure that they are filled and see if you have an interest in helping with the committees. Become a part of a committee and be active in your Lodge. Your Lodge is only as good as you can make it, be a part of it and enjoy the benefits of being an Elk!

I would also like to take this time to THANK YOU for the calls, messages and cards in the passing of my brother. This goes to show me that being an Elk is more than carrying a membership card, it is a way of life, it is being with people who care and most of all it shows that we as Elks love one another.

As our State Sponsor's motto says, BE LOUD, PROUD AND VISIBLE!!!!

Past State Presidents Retreat

The Georgia Elks Past State Presidents, along with State President Larry Pope and President-Elect Steve Petrie and guests, gathered at Little Ocmulgee State Park for their annual PSP Retreat the end of September 2025.

Pictured kneeling in front, Junior Roberson and Bethany Jackson. Middle Row L-R: Tim Whalen, Ana Pope, Peggy Rhodes, Dan Tatum, Debi Spradley, Jane Santee, Stanley Santee and Nita Knighton. In the back L-R: Larry Pope, Pres., Stan Jones, Vance Rhodes, Margie Jones, Bobby Carter, Linda Robinette, Beth Colie, Bob Colie, Gary Robinette, Steven Spradley and Pres.-Elect Steve Petrie.



Highlights from the Albany Fall Meeting



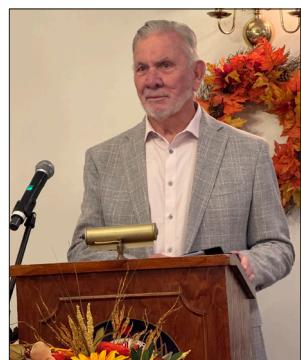
Albany Lodge #713 hosted the GEA Fall Meeting in October. Left, are volunteers from the Albany Lodge that worked so hard to make everything perfect for everyone. Right, is Albany ER, Debbie Dougherty thanking the volunteers and welcoming not only GEA President Larry Pope (next to ER Dougherty) but all of the attendees. Thank you everyone for a great Fall Meeting!



The meeting began with the presentation of colors by Valdosta Lodge #728.



GEA President Larry Pope addressed the attendees at the business meeting.



PGER & State Sponsor L-R: President-Elect Steve Petrie and Mike Smith spoke at the Vance Rhodes, PSP, Parliamentarian business meeting.



Highlights from the Albany Fall Meeting continued



Banquet at the GEA Fall Meeting



GEA President Larry Pope addressed the attendees.
Seated L-R: PGER & State Sponsor Mike Smith,
Sandra Smith and GEA First Lady Ana Pope



President Pope presented Lynda Lewis with the GEA 5 star Ga Elks News award and the 4 star website award.



President Pope presented Pres-Elect Steve Petrie the Grand Lodge award for 4th place for outstanding growth of our order.



Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, right, accepted a check from Barbara Burnett, PSP Aux, for her year as State Aux. President.



Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, spoke about Aidmore and some of its successes throughout the year.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented Mike Johnson and Debbie Barrett from Valdosta Lodge #728, with the South District award for highest overall donations. Next to them are Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore & Stanley Santee, PSP & Aidmore President.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented Savannah Lodge #183 & Aux. with an award for South District highest per-capita donations. Pictured with ladies from Savannah are Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore & Stanley Santee, PSP, Aidmore President.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented John White, ER, Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 with the award for highest NE donations to Aidmore, to the right of ER White are Laura Nichols, CFO of Aidmore and Aidmore President Stanley Santee, PSP.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented Junior Roberson, PSP & Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux. from Dalton Lodge #1267 with the NW highest donations award. Also pictured are Laura Nichols, CFO of Aidmore and Aidmore President Stanley Santee, PSP.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented John White, ER, Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 with the award for highest statewide donations to Aidmore. To the right of ER White are Laura Nichols, CFO of Aidmore and Aidmore President Stanley Santee, PSP.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented Jeff Roudebush, Leading Knight, with the Covington Lodge #1806 award for highest per-capita donations and behind Jeff is Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore and right Aidmore President Stanley Santee, PSP.



Piker Penn, Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore, presented Tim Nelsen (the winner) with a check from the Golf Fore Kids ball drop. To his right is Laura Nichols, CFO Aidmore and Aidmore Pres., Stanley Santee, PSP.



Dr. Vickey Hale, CEO Aidmore and Aidmore Pres. Stanley Santee, PSP, accepted a box of bracelets for the girls at Aidmore. They were donated by a lodge member from the Jesup Lodge and were presented by Ron Anderson.



Group of ladies enjoying horseshoes with Sandy & Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux., Debbie Barrett, & Ladies Aux. President, Joanne Bennett.



Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux., Horseshoe Chairperson



2nd place winners Sandy and Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux. & 1st place winners Pam Stewart, PSP Aux. & Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux.



First Place horseshoe winners were presented their medals by Horseshoe Chair Nancy Strickland. L-R: Nancy Strickland, PSP Aux., Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux., Pam Stewart, PSP Aux.



PSP Aux. Nancy Strickland presented a check to Dr. Vickey Hale for PSP Aux. Jenny Taylor's year.



Deborah Johnson, PSP Aux. in blue and her partner, Sandy Johnson came in second place. It was Sandy's first time playing.

News From Aidmore



**Message from
Aidmore CEO
Dr. Vickey Hale**

Greetings,

As we step into a new year, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude, reflection, and renewed hope. At Elks Aidmore, our mission remains steadfast—to transform lives, one child at a time. As CEO, it is both a privilege and a blessing to witness the resilience, courage, and growth of the children, youth and young adults we serve each day. Every milestone reached and every life impacted—no matter how small it may seem—stands as a powerful reminder of what compassion, commitment, and community can accomplish together.

Over the past year, Elks Aidmore has continued to stand in the gap for children in foster care, offering safe spaces where healing can begin and hope can take root. Through the dedication of our staff and the unwavering support of our partners and supporters, we have provided more than care—we have provided stability, opportunity, and a pathway toward brighter futures. Together, we are not just meeting needs; we are opening doors and creating possibilities.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to the Elks Aidmore Auxiliaries, Elks Lodges, Aidmore staff, and our countless community supporters who made this past Christmas season a truly phenomenal experience for the children, youth and young adults in our care. Your generosity and love were felt in every smile, every gift, and every moment of joy shared.

As we move forward in this year, we are energized by what lies ahead. While challenges remain, our resolve is stronger than ever. In the year ahead, Elks Aidmore will continue to expand programs, strengthen services, and pursue innovative approaches to meet the evolving needs of the children and families we serve. Our commitment is unwavering—to ensure that every child who walks through our doors feels seen, valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

The work of transforming lives is never done alone. It is made possible through partnership—between our staff, volunteers, donors, advocates, and the broader community. Your belief in our mission and your continued support fuel everything we do, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.

As we embrace the opportunities ahead, I invite you to continue walking alongside us. Whether through volunteering, advocacy, or giving, your involvement truly makes a difference. Together, we are building a legacy of hope, healing, and transformation—one child, one day at a time.

Wishing you and your loved ones a year filled with hope, purpose, and possibility.

With gratitude and hope,

Dr. Vickey Hale

Christmas at Aidmore (more photos on page 29)

Christmas at Aidmore was a truly special time, filled with warmth and holiday spirit that brought everyone closer together. The highlight of the celebration was undoubtedly the heartwarming performances by the girls, who graced the gathering with drums, songs, and skits that showcased their talents. Their joyful participation brought smiles to every face and created a sense of shared community and belonging among all the residents and staff. The appearance of Santa and his little elf, Evie, was especially enjoyed by everyone. The experience of seeing everyone gathered, sharing in the simple yet profound magic of the season, underscored the loving and supportive environment at Aidmore and created memories that resonated long after the program ended.



Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux. with
Dalton Auxiliary's Aidmore girl.



L-R: Carolyn Harris, Teresia Wilkinson, Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux., Nancy Strickland, PSP, Aux. & Abe Wilkinson, Past CEO of Aidmore



Aidmore Pres. Stanley Santee, PSP and CEO Aidmore, Dr. Vickey Hale accepted a donation from the LaGrange Lodge.

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 September 6, 2025 to January 8, 2026.

MEMORIALS

LINDA BAILEY

Wayne and Charlotte Johnson
John and Petite Yost

NEAL HARRELSON

Abe and Teresia Wilkinson
Pat Harper

Stan and Margie Jones
Michael and Linda Bailey

ROXANN NEWTON
Michael and Linda Bailey

CHERYL SHENKLE
Don and Roberta Furlong

CHRIS WHITAKER
Stan and Margie Jones

EIGHT FOR AIDMORE

Duane and Patricia Nesbitt

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 September 6, 2025 to January 8, 2026.

IN MEMORY

LINDA BAILEY

Stan and Margie Jones



L-R: Priscilla Browning, Dr. Vickie Hale, CEO Aidmore, Tangelia Benjamin (Priscilla & Tangelia are staff in the Aidmore Intake Dept.)



Santa aka Mr. Mike Byrd and his little elf, Evie.



L-R: Aidmore resident and Pam Stewart, PSP Aux.



L-R: Aidmore Staff, Linda Richardson & Laura Nichols



L-R: Debbie Barrett, Valdosta Aux. Pres. & Joanne Bennett, State Ladies Auxiliary President



Beth Colie & Bob Colie, PSP



L-R: Auxiliary President Elect Miriam Wheeler & Pam Parker



L-R: Nancy Strickland, PSP, Aux. & Jane Santee

Aidmore Golf Fore Kids

The annual Aidmore Golf Fore Kids Tournament, a charitable event organized by Elks Aidmore and the Georgia Elks Association, was a day of community and fundraising. Held at the Creek Golf Course, the tournament successfully brought together participants for a good cause. Among the highlights was a ball drop, adding a fun element of chance to the day's proceedings. Attendees also enjoyed a delicious meal, with the volunteer crew from the Lake Oconee Chuck Wagon diligently grilling hamburgers and hotdogs for all the golfers and guests. This combination of sport, fun activities, and community spirit made the event a success in supporting Aidmore's mission to help children in times of crisis.

There have been so many great things happening at Aidmore for all the kids in the Therapeutic Foster Care Program and also, right there on the Aidmore campus where a group of girls live full time. It is a beautiful campus with 3 cottages, a gymnasium and 3 administrative buildings. There is a learning resource center, which includes a computer lab, recreation room, swimming pool, pavilion, camping facilities, ropes course, and a lake for fishing and canoeing. Thank you to all of the golfers, volunteers and sponsors that came out to the Golf Fore Kids tournament! It is all about helping our Georgia children!



The New Georgia Elks Association Museum at Aidmore



**Bill Lewis, PSP
Historian**

The new Georgia Elks Association Museum at Aidmore officially opened on December 14, 2025 at the Aidmore Christmas Party held at Aidmore. The museum has hundreds of interesting items from lodges all over the state. Did you know that Georgia has had in the past, as many as 53 Elks Lodges across the state. We now have only 22. Numerous items have been donated over the years from various lodges that are now no longer in existence, plus items from some of the ones that are still active to include a few items from 1893. There are over 1000 articles that have been inventoried and displayed in the museum.

These are wonderful reminders about our storied past and some of the customs that took place from as early as 1902 and continued into the 1920s and 30s. Read about how some of the early initiations were conducted, the famous people that have been Elks throughout the years, and the opulence of some of the Elks Lodges themselves. Grand chandeliers, ballrooms and large expansive lodges were the norm at one time.

The museum is located at the main Aidmore administrative building at the top of the beautiful staircase. Come and visit and take a walk through the Georgia Elks Association's history. You may see items you recognize or people you know. If you see something that is not labeled and you know about the item, please contact me at: blewiselk2849@gmail.com



In the main room, a Time Line goes around the room, starting on the left inside the door. There are 53 lodges with dates of their charter, with donated items from their past.



In the GEA/GL rooms there are items from Warren Moyers (long time basketball state chairman) and info on our state's past GERs.



In the main room, there is a large plaque with ritual winners throughout the years, a large BPOE clock from the Newnan Lodge, and a history of the Griffin Lodge.



In the main room, there are many items from the Decatur Lodge and original Buckhead Lodge before it merged with Atlanta. Also items from East Point that eventually became Union City to Tyrone Lodge.



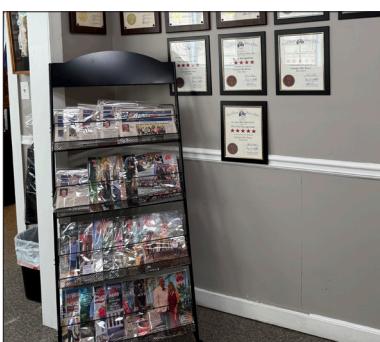
In the GEA/GL rooms items from Soccer and Drug Awareness plus youth activities that were popular at one time.



There is a cabinet filled with very old items to include a invitation to a barbecue at the Atlanta Lodge dated late 1800s before the lodge was actually chartered.



New, updated, Past State President Wall



Issues of the Georgia Elks News from October 2018 to Present, Lynda Lewis, Editor



Issues of the Georgia Elks News from John Post, Editor and Georgia Elks News from Marilyn & John Helgesen, Editor

**GEA SPRING MEETING
MACON, MARRIOTT CITY CENTER
240 Coliseum Dr. Macon, Georgia
February 27-28, 2026**

Friday, February 27th

All events at Macon Marriott Dress for Friday Casual

10:00 - 4:00	Registration Desk Open
4:00 - 5:00	Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Meeting
4:00 - 5:00	Past State Presidents Meeting
4:30 - 5:00	PER Association Meeting

Friday night - dinner on your own

Saturday, February 28th

Breakfast on your own. Dress Business Casual for Meeting

7:00 - 9:00	Registration Desk Open
7:30 - 8:00	GEA President Mtg with VP's and President-Elect
8:00 - 8:30	Membership (Steve Petrie Pres. Elect)
8:30 - 9:00	Business Practices (Cliff Arden)
9:00 - 9:30	Auditing & Accounting/IRS/Leadership Academy (Jane Santee)
11:00 -11:30	ER, Leading Knight Association Meeting
11:00 -12:00	Lunch on your own
12:00 -12:30	GEA Board Meeting
12:00 - 1:00	Charity Board Meeting
12:00 - 1:00	Credentials Desk Open
1:00 - 3:00	Business Meeting
Immediately after the meeting, Shoot-Off will take place outside of the Convention Center.	
3:00 - 5:00	Meet/Greet President-Elect Candidate and Athletic Activities: Mike Johnson
7:00 - Until	Banquet Dinner Buffet (Dress: Men coat & tie; Ladies-Dressy)

**BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th
1:00 - 3:00 PM**

Call to Order
Presentation of Colors
Pledge to Flag
Invocation
Welcome/Introduction to Macon

Larry Pope, President
Valdosta Lodge #728
Steve Petrie, Pres.-Elect
Mike Johnson, Chaplain
Larry Pope, President

Intro of Grand Lodge Officers
Bryan Klatt GER
Mike Smith, PGER & State Sponsor
Bruce Hayden, SDGER & Past Grand Tiler
Tim Whalen, Past Grand Esquire &
GEA Secretary/Treasurer

Larry Pope, President

Intro GEA Officers (Head Table)
Steve Petrie, PDDGER, President-Elect
Vance Rhodes, PSP, Parliamentarian
Mike Johnson, Chaplain

Larry Pope, President

Recognition of District Vice Presidents
Steve Henderson, VP NW
David Marrero, VP NE
Bob Reardon, VP South

Recognition of Past State Presidents

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA (continued)

Recognition of District Deputy GER

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

Recognition of VPAL

Jeff Muehlfeld, Florida State VPAL

Roll Call

State Officers / Lodges
Minutes of Previous Session

Tim Whalen, Sec/Treas.
Tim Whalen, Sec/Treas.

Sickness and Distress

Larry Pope, President

Introduction of State Sponsor

Bruce Hayden, SDGER
Past Grand Tiler
Mike Smith, PGER

State Sponsor Remarks

Reports

President
President-Elect
Chairman, GEA Board &
GEA Charity Board
Elks Aidmore
DDGER's NW, NE, South
District VP's NW, NE, S

Larry Pope
Steve Petrie

Junior Roberson, PSP
Stanley Santee, PSP
Jackson, Whitcomb,
Sailors
Henderson, Marrero,
Reardon

Reports of Committees

Membership
Audit & Accounting / IRS
Leadership Academy
Business Practices
Disaster Relief
Drug Awareness
Lodge Activities
Budget
Convention
Government Relations
Insurance/Accident Prevention
Scholarships
Elks National Foundation
Elks National Service Veterans
Americanism
Public Safety Officer
Public Relations
Leadership Training
Memorial Service
Fundraising
Grants
Hoop Shoot
Soccer Shoot
Youth Activities
Athletic Activities
Ritualistic
Credentials

Steve Petrie, Pres.-Elect
Jane Santee, PDDGER
Jane Santee, PDDGER
Cliff Arden, PDDGER
Bill Lewis, PSP
Cyndi Russell
Cyndi Russell
Beth Colie
Tim Whalen, PSP
Tim Whalen, PSP
Ned Thompson
Stan Jones, PSP
Brian Russell, PDDGER
Maureen Manning
Stanley Santee, PSP
Arthur Anderson
Nita Knighton, PSP
Nita Knighton, PSP
Amber Henderson
Bethany Jackson, DDGER
Michelle Langham
Vance Rhodes, PSP
Junior Roberson, PSP
Wendy Morris
Mike Johnson
Bruce Davis
Rick Corbett

Old Business

New Business

Good of the Order

Resolutions

Vance Rhodes, PSP

Benediction

Mike Johnson, Chaplain

Adjournment

Larry Pope, President

Committee Reports

Drug Awareness



Hello my family of Elks,

I hope each of you have had a wonderful Holiday and starting the new year with a bang. I can not believe we are already into 2026.

I hope you were able to get at least 1 poster/essay turned in. I am excited to announce the winner at our spring meeting in February.

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

With the soccer shoot and hoop shoot behind us, I am sure everyone set a DAP table and remembered to submit your charity report for these events. It is critical to enter as much as possible to these reports and you can also send the reports to local government officials to show the abundant work we are doing to spread awareness of the growing drug problems in our areas.

As the new year approaches please start planning the next year in advance, so dates and events do not sneak up. Here are some upcoming ideas to get you started. If you are low on material give me a call/text/email/snail mail/carrier pigeon...

March

1. Should be planning for Drug Awareness Activities during Youth Week in May
2. Remind your District's and Lodges that all DAP information needs to be in CLMS before May 1st.
3. National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days - April 2025 (Date TBD)
4. Planning for Drug Awareness Activities during Youth Week in May (May 3-9)
5. Planning for the National Alcohol Awareness Month in April should be completed.
6. Planning for your Lodge to be involved in the National Prescription Take Back Day in April, should be completed.

April

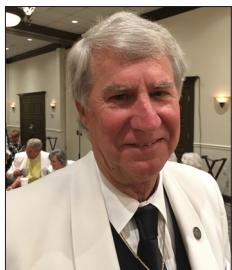
1. Alcohol Awareness Month
2. Lodge Drug Awareness Report due to State DAP Chair by April 1st
3. Planning for Drug Awareness Activities during Youth Week in May (3-9), should be completed
4. Planning for National Prevention Week which will take place May 11 through 17, 2025, should be completed.
5. National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days - April 2025 (Date TBD)
6. Are you working on your Lodge Enrique Camarena Award?
7. Remind your District's and Lodges that all DAP information needs to be in CLMS before May 1st.

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 needs to be in CLMS before May 1st.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Cyndi Russell
864-247-5768
cyndilay@yahoo.com



Scholarships

Most Valuable Student- Legacy- Boska Nursing Scholarship

It is a busy time of the year in the Elk Scholarship world. MVS Lodge Judging ended Dec. 22, 2025. MVS District Judging ended Jan. 13, 2026. MVS State Judging will end Feb. 23, 2026. On the State level our top Girl and Boy and the next highest score will be forwarded to the Elks National Foundation for Grand Lodge Judging. The judging on the Grand Lodge level will take place in March of 2026.

**Stan Jones, PSP
Scholarship
Chairman**

Our Legacy scholarship applications are due Feb. 2, 2026, remember the Legacy scholarships are for the children and grandchildren of Elks. To obtain an application go to enf.elks.org/leg

Please help us publicize our new Ga. Elks Charities Dr. Fred Boska Nursing Scholarship. These applications are due April 1, 2026. Go to www.gaelks.org for information and applications.





**Vance Rhodes,
PSP
Hoop Shoot
Chairman**

Hoop Shoot

By the time you receive this publication, our State Hoop Shoot will have concluded, and preparations will be underway for the Regional Hoop Shoot in Valdosta on March 14th. A full report will be presented at the Spring Meeting.

I would like to thank all of the Lodges and volunteers who participated in the Hoop Shoot program this past year. This program not only helps our children develop competitive skills they will carry with them throughout their lives, but it also strengthens relationships within our communities.

Our committee stands ready to assist any Lodge interested in hosting a Hoop Shoot next year. Please contact your District Director or me directly if you would like guidance or support.

Fraternally,

Vance



News From Lodges Around The State



Albany Lodge #713 took part in the Christmas Parade at Leesburg, Georgia in December 2025. Members Tory Martin & April Reardon passed out drug awareness material assisted by the Young Marines of Albany, along with several parents. Many Albany lodge members helped pack the bags that were passed out.



Brunswick Lodge #691 donated \$500 to HIS Ministries. Their activities are designed to restore hope to the at-risk men, women and children in the neighborhood by building fruitful relationships and in the belief that Christ alone has the power to transform and heal the most broken lives. Pictured L-R: Treasurer Patti Barber, HIS Ministries Sinclair Dudley and Trustee Rachel Hamilton.



(Above 2 photos) **Augusta Lodge #205** partnered with ReStart Augusta to build beds for local folks in need. ReStart Augusta furnishes the foundation for a good start on the day and a healthy life by providing a new or gently used bed and bedding for children, families and veterans in the Augusta area. The delivery of these beds brings a smile to the faces of children and adults alike. Members work with local volunteers and donors to build up the community and the lives of people who live in it.



Brunswick Lodge #691 collected and donated hygiene products, socks, towels, toiletries and other assorted items to take to the Golden Isles Veterans Village (GIVV). The GIVV assists homeless veterans in the local area in shelter and getting them back on their feet as contributing members of the community. Tracy Hite, representing GIVV, received the donations and was deeply touched by the outpouring of support from the Lodge family. The lodge also presented a \$200 check to help further their mission of supporting our local veterans. Together, the lodge displayed what it truly means to be an Elk - people helping people, and especially honoring those who have served. L-R: ER R.J. Fernandes, GIVV Rep Tracy Hite, and Treasurer Patti Barber.



Calhoun Lodge #1883 donated the Freedom Grant to HERO Agriculture. It is run by Mike Reynolds, a wounded veteran, and his team to use farming to help veterans find hope, heal, and build purposeful lives that make tomorrow worth living.



Calhoun Lodge #1883 held its annual Shoe Party where members provide new shoes, toys, hats, and gloves to disadvantaged children identified by local schools. The Lodge featured a festive gathering with food, music, and an auction for members, followed by the actual party for the kids with Santa, snacks and gifts.

Cartersville Lodge #1969 hosted families for Breakfast with Santa. This year, Elks supported 15 Advocates families with breakfast and festive photos with Santa. While families enjoyed the holiday fun, the amazing “Elks Elves” were busy filling trunks with Christmas gifts for the kids and essential household items. Parents got to “shop” for extra necessities in a special shopping room.





Left & Right, **Cartersville Lodge #1969** sponsored a baby shower for 30 mommies at Bartow Family Resources on September 10, 2025. Everyone had a wonderful time celebrating expectant mommies and mommies who have recently had their babies. A lot of love happening! BFR does a wonderful job supporting women and families in our community. There was such strong support from our Lodge members in providing this shower. Cartersville Elks, you make a difference!



Covington Lodge #1806 - ER Robert Foxworth delivered food to Margaret McDonal Food Pantry at the Covington First United Methodist Church. The food was provided by Elk men and bingo players.



Covington Lodge #1806 on Dec. 12, 2025, Elks and Elkadettes gave out food, hats, gloves, socks and blankets to the homeless to include veterans.



Covington Lodge #1806 ER Robert Foxworth presented Bob Colie, PSP from the Lake Oconee Lodge with a US Flag to thank him for his support of the Covington Lodge. Bob was the speaker for the Lodge's Dec. 7th Memorial Service.



Above, Covington Lodge #1806 Elkadettes decorated the tree on Legion Field for Christmas in Covington.

To the Left, Covington Lodge #1806 held a Special Needs Halloween and Bingo party. Lots of costumes and fun. Top corner, the youngest costume winner.



Covington Lodge #1806 celebrated its 75th anniversary on October 11, 2025. In addition to Covington members, there were quite a few special guests from around the state that came to help celebrate this milestone. It was a wonderful night with great food and a wonderful set up.



Covington Lodge #1806 held a Veterans Program on November 11, 2025 conducted by ER Robert Foxworth & Chaplain. Also, Trustee Lynward Thompson.



Dalton Lodge #1267 participated in the annual parade with their Heroes trailer in the Veterans Day parade in Dalton.



Dalton Lodge #1267 hosted a Veterans luncheon at the Lodge the day after the parade. They had as their guest speaker Mike Reynolds, the director of HERO Agriculture. His team teaches veterans to use farming to help them find hope, heal, and build purposeful lives that make tomorrow worth living. Pictured far left, Heather Dicky, Vance Rhodes, PSP, Peggy Rhodes, PSP Aux., and Bill Dicky. Center are Vance Rhodes, PSP and Mike Reynolds, director of HERO Agriculture. Far right are folks lined up for a delicious lunch.



Dalton Lodge #1267 donated \$3500 to Share your Christmas and spent over 15 hours volunteering during the event. This was made possible by the ENF Gratitude Grant. During the holiday season, the food bank had an anonymous donor matching all the donations! With the match this donation will provide 17,500 meals to families in NW GA! Pictured L-R: Ned Thompson, Nancy Simms, Michelle Langham, Brenda Silva & Junior Roberson, PSP



Eatonton Lodge #2549 hosted a Faux Stained Glass Paint and Sip on October 28, 2025. There were 35 participants and all of the projects turned out great! Thank you all for your support and keep an eye out for the next event.



Eatonton Lodge #2549 - On Friday, December 19th, Connie McElhannon presented Police Officer Blaze Waldroup with a check for \$730, generously collected by the Eatonton Elks Lodge in support of the 2025 Shop with a Cop Event.

To the right, Elberton/Athens Lodge #1100 wants to thank everyone that played in and supported their John Williams 1st Responders Charity Golf Tournament in October. The funds raised were donated to Elbert County Emergency Services in appreciation for all they do to serve and protect their community.

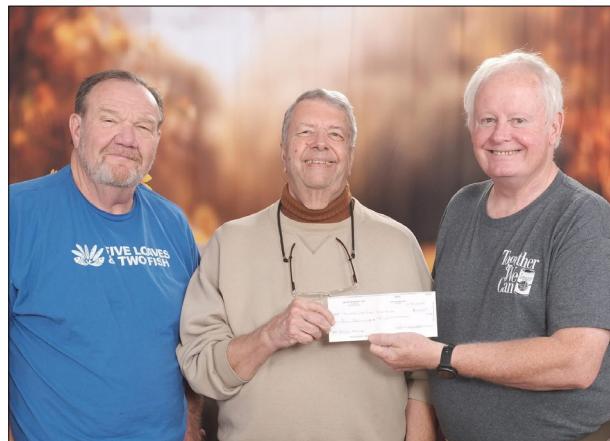


Elberton/Athens Lodge #1100 held a Parti-Gras at the Elks Lodge that was a huge success. It was an amazing night filled with fun, fellowship and a lot of great memories. The food was delicious and it was a treat to hear the Havana Daydreamers bring those classic Jimmy Buffett tunes to life. Thank you to everyone that came out and celebrated with us!





Griffin Lodge #1207 made a Freedom Grant donation of \$1000 to the Griffin-Spalding Military Affairs Committee for their Homeless Veterans Shelter. Pictured are Lodge Sec. Tim Whalen, PSP and committee member Dick Morrow.



Griffin Lodge #1207 made a \$4000 donation to the "Yes We Can" food drive. Pictured are Steve Trawick, food pantry director, David Hicks, Griffin ER & Rick Blackshear, food drive director.



Griffin Lodge #1207 made a \$4500 donation to the Marine Corp League "Toys for Tots" Christmas campaign. Pictured are Matt Middleton, Lodge member; Rak Patel, Tim Whalen, PER & PSP, and Ray Barron, PER. The donation was made possible through an ENF grant.



Jesup Lodge #2133 - Ted Mathis of the Jesup Lodge spearheaded a drive to collect pull tabs and caps from aluminum cans and donate them to the Ronald McDonald house in Savannah, Georgia. Under his leadership, the lodge collected 58 lbs. worth of aluminum. The Ronald McDonald house then recycles this aluminum, and the proceeds are used to fund their general daily operations. Ronald McDonald House mission is to provide a home away from home for families with sick children, aiming to remove barriers and promote healing when children need healthcare. Pictured is Ted Mathis sitting on the bench with Ronald.



Above & to the right, LaGrange Lodge #1084 hosted a Patriot Day luncheon for First Responders.





To the Left, Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 - Our Drug Awareness Chairs Ana & Bill Wright attended the big candy give out at the Greene County Recreation Field on Halloween and gave out drug awareness materials. Their son, Matt helped and is pictured here with his Mom, Ana. Bill took the photo.

To the right, Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 - Jim Green, center, oversees the veterans facility in Dublin. The Dublin folks hosted a volunteer event for its volunteers. Attending also with Jim Green were left of Jim, Wayne Palmer & right of Jim, Bob Rubright.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 made a \$2000 donation to Madison/Morgan County Food Bank. Pictured above are Mike De Petrillo and Don Hill (in red shirts) presenting the check to Sherry Terrell, the director. **Lake Oconee Lodge** also made donations to Greene County Food Pantry for \$2000, Hancock County Food Bank for \$4000, & \$2000 to Putnam Co. Service League.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 participated in Wreaths Across America and members bought 870 wreaths that were put out at 4 locations. Pictured is Dave Tateyama, Chairman, who conducted the ceremony at the Lodge's Wall of Honor. Also Bill Lewis, PSP, conducted the ceremony at the Greensboro Cemetery location and Kevin Baker led the ceremony at the Madison Cemetery. Wreaths were also put out at the National Cemetery in Milledgeville.

Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 partnered with SCI (Safari Club International) to host a group of Georgia wounded Veterans for a weekend of fishing and target shooting. The group of veterans, including from the Ga War Veterans Home, came to the lodge via a big parade down Lake Oconee Parkway, led by the Ga Patriot Riders, and the lodge fed around 130 people a lunch of pulled pork, cole slaw, baked beans and assorted desserts.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 hosted a Thanksgiving dinner for the veterans at the Georgia War Veterans Home. Chuck Brake smoked butts and turkeys and they had all the trimmings that go with a Thanksgiving feast. There were over 20 volunteers from the lodge to help and make sure everyone was taken care of. Pictured far right, Bob Colie, PSP, talks to one of the veterans who happened to be a Vietnam era US Army Military Policeman.



To the left & right, Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 held Breakfast with Santa on Dec.14th. Our Sec. Scott Pitocchelli cooked a delicious breakfast with eggs, grits, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy. He even made pancakes for the kids. The kids did craft projects & then Santa, aka Thomas Smith arrived. The kids told Santa what they wanted for Christmas and Santa read them a story. Pictured to the left are our kitchen staff Catie Ruskey and Cathy Hogan with Catie's kids/ Cathy's grandkids (Destry & Aydrienne) on Santa's lap. Right, Santa reads the kids a story.



Lake Oconee Lodge #2849 - Mary Zachary, PER, and Dictionary Chair, (In the red shirt in back) delivered around 600 dictionaries to 3rd graders in 7 area schools. Mary did a wonderful job explaining to all the third graders everywhere she went about how their dictionaries worked. She was very entertaining for the kids. Drug Awareness book marks were also inserted into all of the dictionaries that were given out at all the schools. Thank you Mary!



Marietta Lodge #1657 hosted a Santa Event at their Lodge on December 6th. Looks like Mrs. Santa arrived with a very decked out Santa. Looks like Mr. & Mrs. Santa brought some snow to the lodge as well.



Above, Marietta Lodge #1657 delivered snacks to Fire Station #10 (pictured top) and the Sheriff's Department (pictured bottom). Nita Knighton, PSP (in red) and Adrianna Watkins (in purple) delivered the snacks.

Marietta Lodge #1657 used their Freedom Grant to purchase 100 stockings and stuffed them with goodies for our Veterans Christmas. ER Jimmy Gregg was a Santa's helper when he delivered stockings that were stuffed by the Veterans Committee, to the Marietta VA clinic. Pictured is ER Jimmy Gregg at the VA clinic.



Savannah Lodge #183 - Gary Roush, ER, gave 96 bears to Sgt. Barry Lewis of the Savannah Police Department so when they go to anything that has kids, they give the bears to help the kids to not be afraid of the police. Magic Mike is also in the picture.

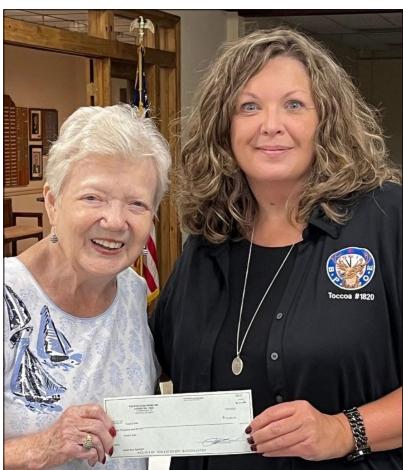
Savannah Lodge #183 held a Savannah Elks children's party December 14, 2025 with Santa (Steve Shirah) and Magic Mike. Also taking part were members of the Elks and Auxiliary. Savannah used a grant they received from the Grand Lodge.



Savannah Lodge #183 held its Memorial Service on December 7, 2025 and 5 members had their names put on the Tablets of Love and Memory. Pictured are: ER Gary Roush, Leading Knight, Steve Shirah, Vivian & Elliott Palefsky, Secretary, Sharon Lawson, Chaplain Cleveland Burkhalter, and Treasurer, Patty Bell.



Toccoa Lodge #1820 - Pictured Toccoa's winner for the Drug Awareness Lodge Poster contest. Congratulations Brielle (pictured center).



Left, Toccoa Lodge #1820 presented the Spotlight Grant for Food2Kids to Ms. Lucy Davis with the program. This program packs backpacks each week for students with food insecurities.

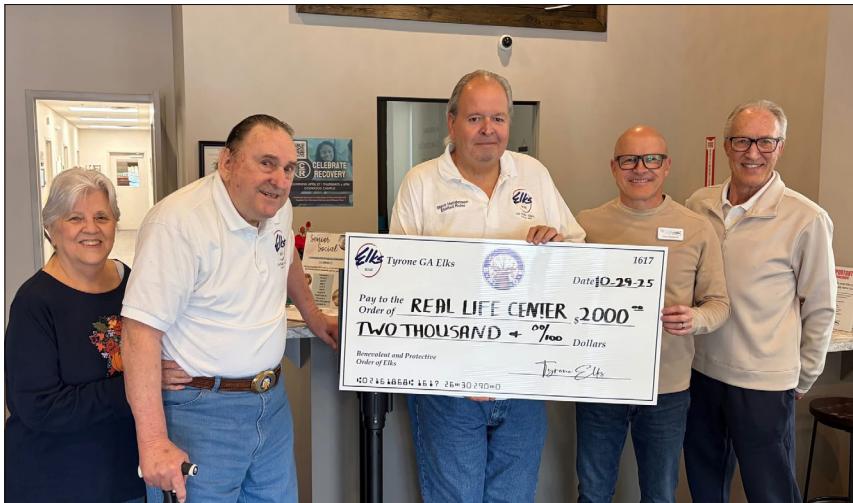
Right, Toccoa Lodge #1820 had the privilege of joining the Special Needs students for their Christmas party at Stephens County High School. Santa arrived and listened to each students wish list and gave them each a goody filled stocking.





Toccoa Lodge #1820 had a beautiful day for the Military weekend Veterans Parade! They had such a wonderful turnout for the parade, the food, and fellowship. Thanks to everyone who helped and especially to the Auxiliary.

Toccoa Lodge #1820 participated in the Wreaths Across America ceremony. Thank you to all of our Elks and their families who participated as well as those who donated to purchase wreaths. Special thanks to VFW Honor Guard, Edward Lutell, Senior Army JROTC instructor and Stephens Co. JROTC for your participation. Special thanks to all our Veterans. Pictured: Stacey Simmons leading the ceremony.



Tyrone Lodge #1617 donated \$2000 (ENF Spotlight Grant) to Real Life Center of Tyrone. These funds will assist to supplement their "Backpack Buddy" program. This program provides food items to eight elementary schools throughout the school year. Steve Henderson, ER is seen above delivering the check.



Tyrone Lodge #1617 ladies auxiliary and members Sandy & Dan Fambro, delivered Drug Awareness coloring books to Franklin County Elementary to be used with Red Ribbon Week at their Fall Festival.



Tyrone Lodge #1617 proudly donated \$3500 (ENF Gratitude Grant) to our community's Royal Animal Refuge. Pictured: Scotty McCarthy, PSP, and Steve Henderson, ER with shelter director, Becky Smith and fur baby, Andy.



Valdosta Lodge #728 donated \$1200 to Brooks County School Cross Country Team for their team uniforms.



Valdosta Lodge #728 packed 120 boxes of food and gifts. After 3 days of packing and wrapping, they were picked up or distributed with gifts for the children which included stuffed animals and a visit with Santa himself!



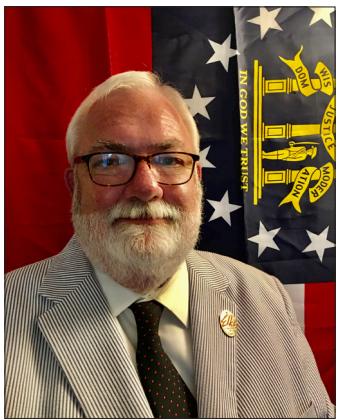
Valdosta Lodge #728 hosted Breakfast with Santa! The breakfast was delicious and all the kids got a present from Santa and special instructions for Christmas Eve.



Valdosta Lodge #728 also provided Christmas gifts with the Spotlight Grant to 65 Veterans in local assisted living facilities.

Valdosta Lodge #728 - Students at Moody AFB Youth Center were recipients of a new electric keyboard, electric drumset, and videography equipment made possible with the Gratitude Grant.

Also, at the Moody AFB Hearts Apart Christmas Dinner, **Valdosta Lodge #728** provided dinner to almost 100 military family members through the use of the Beacon Grant.



Georgia Elks Association Fall Meeting, October 25, 2025, Albany Elks Lodge #713

The Georgia Elks Association met at the Albany Elks Lodge #713, on October 25, 2025, for its fall meeting, President Larry Pope presiding. President Pope called on the Valdosta Elks Lodge #728 Color Guard for the presentation of the Colors. He asked Association President-Elect Steve Petrie to lead the Pledge to the Flag. He then called on Chaplain Mike Johnson to deliver the Invocation. President Pope called on Albany Lodge Exalted Ruler Debbie Dougherty for her welcoming address.

President Pope introduced those seated at the head table, recognized the District Vice Presidents & District Deputies & the Past State Presidents in attendance. He then called on State Secretary Tim Whalen for roll call of the officers & Lodges.

Officers present were Larry Pope, Steve Petrie, Steve Henderson, Robert Reardon, Tim Whalen, Cliff Arden, Mike Johnson, Bill Lewis, Brenda Sailors, Vance Rhodes & Lynda Lewis. David Marrero, VP NE, was absent. All Lodges in the state were present for the meeting. A motion to accept the minutes from our Annual Meeting, as published in the "Georgia Elks News" was made by Piker Penn, seconded by Cliff Arden. The motion was approved.

Past Grand Esquire PSP Tim Whalen's Minutes

Sickness & Distress

Bruce Hayden, Roy & Dixie Spiker, Deborah Johnson, Mike & Linda Bailey, Shirley Woodall & Neal Harrelson were all remembered.

Secretary Whalen introduced our Past National President & State Sponsor Mike Smith. Mike said it was fun to be back in Georgia, an honor & a pleasure. He commented that our ENF giving is doing very well. We currently stand at \$10.06 per capita in Georgia. More giving equals more in return. He said the ENF scholars are to visit Savannah this year. This will be a memorable event in the lives of these young people. Grand Lodge Convention will be held in Chicago in 2026. It is the 100th Anniversary of the Elks Memorial Building. This will be the best convention you could ever attend. Make plans now to join us in Chicago.

Reports

- Junior Roberson gave a brief review of the P. S. P. meeting, the Charity Board & the Association Board.
- Stanley Santee introduced Dr. Vickie Hale, C. E. O. of Aidmore Childrens Center. Aidmore is a successful program; changing lives, providing stability; serving youth across Georgia. Stanley said it is important for the Trustees or their designee to attend meetings. As we apply for Grants & funding locally & Nationally, our attendance figures & involvement are reviewed. Stanley recognized Delane Crawford from Jesup as giving a gift to Aidmore of jewelry for the Christmas season. He then accepted donation checks from the members in attendance.

Committee Reports

- Membership - Steve Petrie: Steve said the 4 keys to growth are Membership, Ownership, Mentorship & Leadership. He looks forward to a great Elks journey as State President. He introduced Cyndi Russell as the Membership Chair for 2026-2027.
- Audit/I. R. S. - Jane Santee: Jane recognized Beth Colie & Ned Thompson as her Audit Assistants. She reminded everyone the 990 & 990T reports are due by August 1st each year. Make sure yours has been submitted properly.
- Leadership Academy - Jane Santee: Dates are as follows: NW, April 11th, 2026, Griffin; NE, April 18th, 2026, Eatonton & South, April 25th, 2026, Tifton. Jane will have further information at the spring meeting in Macon.
- Business Practices - Cliff Arden: Treat your Lodge as a business. Reach out & ask for help if & when needed. The committee is here to serve at your request.
- Disaster Relief - Bill Lewis: We have been lucky so far this hurricane season; no problems yet. Bill has set up each Drug Awareness trailer with quick response items to cut down on response time. He is working on getting a 5th trailer for Disaster Relief only.
- History - Bill Lewis: The Georgia Elks Museum, formally the Historical Room, is now open. It will be available for inspection from noon - 4 pm at the Aidmore Christmas Party on December 14th.
- Drug Awareness - Cyndi Russell: Cyndi has lots of material going out across the state. This year's poster/essay contest theme is "Drugs are a Grave Mistake". Cyndi urged the Lodges to make use of our 4 Drug Awareness trailers across the state.
- Lodge Activities - Cyndi Russell: The theme for the Friday Night Dance at Jekyll will be the "Roaring '20's". Please come dressed appropriately. The Lodge Activities contest, the Newsletter contest & the All-American Lodge contest are currently open. Please have your Lodge participate in these contests.
- Budget - Beth Colie: Beth explained the budget process & urged committees to have their requests in early so they may be included in future budgets for the Association & Charity accounts.
- Conventions - Tim Whalen: Tim gave dates for the upcoming spring meeting, the Annual meeting & the Grand Lodge convention.
- Government Relations - Tim Whalen: It is important that each Lodge fill out the Charity Records book after each Lodge event. These records help the Order to keep its 501-c-8 status with the I. R. S.
- Insurance - Ned Thompson: Ned will be available for questions at the Merry Acres Motel this afternoon.
- Most Valuable Student - Stan Jones: Stan thanked Jack McPhillips & Cyndi Russell for their help as District Chairmen. Stan explained the awards given & gave submission dead-lines.
- Boska Nursing Scholarship - Stan Jones: Stan passed out Nursing Scholarship brochures to the Lodges. This will be a supplement to the Hope Scholarships given by the State of Georgia. Applicants may apply on-line or download & fill out the application. Tax deductible donations to the Boska fund are encouraged.
- E. N. F. - Brian Russell: Georgia has 79 members of the Fidelity Club. We have donations of \$44,753.42 as of today. We are currently 3rd in the U. S. A. in giving. Keep up the good work.
- E. N. F. Golf Tournament - Brian Russell: The 2026 Tournament will be held at the Apple Mountain Golf Course on May 15th, 2026. Make plans to bring a team to Clarksville to play in this tournament. The Toccoa Elks Lodge will be open on Thursday evening for those coming in early for the tournament.
- V. A. V. S. - Maureen Manning: Due to staff lay-offs & funding cuts, the V. A. is doing little to help our Veterans now. Please make every effort to support our Veterans on a local basis.

- Americanism – Stanley Santee: The theme for the essay contest is “What Does Service to Your Country Mean to You?”. February 28th, 2026 is the filing dead-line.
- Fund Raising – Bethany Jackson: Tickets are available for the Shoot-Off to be held on February 28th, 2026.
- Grants – Michelle Langham: Georgia has received \$133,000 in grants so far this year. Don’t leave money on the table. Improve your community awareness through this important program.
- Hoop Shoot – Vance Rhodes: Vance expects another great year for Georgia’s Hoop Shoot contestants. District competitions are NW & NE, February 8th & South, January 31st. State finals are February 21st. Contact Vance for any help you may need in running your local Hoop Shoot competition.
- Soccer Shoot – Junior Roberson: The state competition will be held on November 16th on the Aidmore campus. Junior will help you set-up a Soccer program if you need his assistance.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Good of the Order

None

Vance Rhodes read the Resolutions for the meeting. A motion to approve by Piker Penn, seconded by Stanley Santee. The Resolutions were approved as read.

There being no further business for the Association, President Pope called on the Valdosta Color Guard to retire the Colors. He then asked Chaplain Johnson to deliver the Benediction. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Whalen

Tim Whalen, Secretary
Georgia Elks Association

Credentials

	Attendees	PER's	Delegates
Northeast	22	10	22
Northwest	19	12	19
Southern	35	19	33
Total Delegates			74
Total Attendees	76		
Total Lodges		21	
State Sponsor	1		
Total Attendance	77		



Lodge members wait patiently for their Aidmore girl to come and open her gifts.

Teresa Parker and a friend
Barbara Burnett, PSP, Aux.



Abe Wilkinson, Past Aidmore CEO, Teresa Wilkinson, Mickie Emmett, PSP Aux., and Judy Norrell



Douglas Lodge members wait for their Aidmore girl to come and open her gifts.



Harriett Watson, PSP, Aux. and Charlie Watson

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www.gaelks.org

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 Past State Presidents**
**Always Supporting
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 Go 1/4 mile east on GA 225
 Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:00 pm

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"

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



GRIFIN 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
 (Formerly 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



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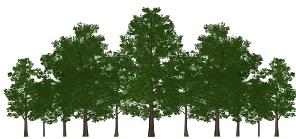
Dalton Lodge #1267



Gary Robinette
 Past State President

**"Truth is the
 foundation of all
 honorable endeavors."**

**Member of Cartersville Elks
 Lodge #1969**



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

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mollyn998@comcast.net

Dan Tatum, PSP
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&
Lynda Lewis
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blewiselk2849@gmail.com



Junior Roberson, PSP
 Soccer Shoot Chairman
 Georgia Elks Association

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FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH
AT 7 P.M. IN JEKYLL
— TO HONOR —
OUR 100 YEAR MEMORIAL CELEBRATION
**THE GREAT ELKSBY
DANCE**
DON YOUR FAVORITE
ROARING '20S ATTIRE
WE WILL HAVE A BEST DRESSED CONTEST
ALONG WITH SOME FESTIVE DECORATIONS

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

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