



APRIL MAY 2025



Mark Couch Sworn In As State President



Mark Couch from the Hickory Lodge in the West District was sworn in as State President at a ceremony during the NCSEA Spring Conference in Winston Salem.

**More conference news follows
on page 7**



Message from State President Mark Couch

My Fellow Elks, It is an honor to serve as your NCSEA State President for the 2025-2026 term. I look forward to working alongside each of you as we continue to strengthen our lodges, serve our communities, and uphold the values that make the Elks organization so special. Thank you, Joe Clancy. Your term as NCSEA President was one of challenges overcome, goals achieved, great fellowship, and Julie and I are grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know and love you and Yenly. I look forward to many more years of serving together with you. Keep your cell phone handy, I know I'll be reaching out for advice often!

Congratulations, Michael Bryant! The Thad Eure Distinguished Service Award is a well deserved honor, my friend. I'm proud to know you, grateful for your mentorship.

North Carolina Elks, there are many ways to make a difference in your lodge and in our association. Whether volunteering at an event, helping with fundraising, or simply reaching out to a fellow member in need, everyone can do something, but no one can do everything. We are strongest when we work together, and I encourage you to find your role in helping your lodge succeed. A common challenge for many lodges is keeping their calendar of events accurate and up to date. I urge you to communicate regularly with your District Deputies, NCSEA Vice Presidents, and State Officers to ensure all necessary deadlines and activities are accounted for. An updated lodge calendar helps drive participation and ensures that our members stay engaged.

Safety is key to maintaining the integrity of your lodge and protecting your charter. I encourage all lodges to complete regular safety inspections and work closely with your DDs and NCSEA VPs to address any concerns. Taking proactive steps now can prevent issues down the road and keep your lodge thriving for years to come. If you have questions, concerns, or good news to share, please reach out. I want to hear the success stories from your lodges just as much as I want to help with any challenges you may face. I'd love to join you for special events at your lodge whenever I can—so include me in your newsletters, on your websites, and keep me in the loop!

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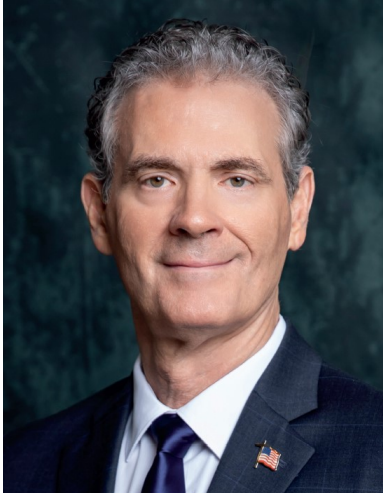
Presidents Message Continued

We always talk about the impact that Elks connections have and the good we can do for our communities. In this newsletter, I'd like to share a personal story about two special Elks and the lasting difference they made in my family's life. My wife, Julie, and I have an adult son with autism, Trey. Like any parents, we wanted to see him succeed, but job opportunities for individuals with disabilities can be extremely limited. That's when two incredible Elks stepped in. Dick Flachbart was my neighbor, my sponsor into the Elks, my dear friend, and a man with a heart for helping others. After Trey graduated from high school with honors (Julie would want me to make sure you know that!), he attended community college, but finding meaningful work was a challenge. Dick took it upon himself to change that. He reached out to Leigh who had a heart for service to her fellow man, and she agreed to give Trey an opportunity in her office mailroom. Ann Delre Long, a fellow Elk and local business owner, didn't stop there. Leigh Ann saw potential in Trey, so she personally trained him to handle incoming checks for customer accounts, a role he excelled at for the next 10 years. Dick took Trey to work, and worked alongside of him to ensure his success. The other employees embraced him, and many later shared that Trey changed their perspective on individuals with special needs and made the workplace more compassionate. Through this time, Leigh Ann also became one of our dearest friends. Sadly, we lost Dick two years ago and said goodbye to Leigh Ann this year. Their kindness and willingness to take action made an immeasurable difference in Trey's life, and Julie and I are forever grateful. These two Elks truly embodied the saying: "Elks Care, Elks Share." If you are a business owner, I'd like to challenge you: consider hiring someone with a disability. You may just find a hardworking, dedicated employee who brings a new perspective and positivity to your workplace. I'd like to think that every individual hired will create a living legacy to these two special Elks, our dear friends. We have an incredible opportunity this year to grow our membership, support our communities, and strengthen our lodges. Let's work together, communicate openly, and make a lasting impact. And, of course... HOW 'BOUT THEM ELKS?!

Fraternally, Mark Couch

State President North Carolina State Elks Association

Elks Care — Elks Share



Message from Grand Exalted Ruler Douglas Schiefer

It's Grand Lodge Convention time! We will be getting together from June 29 to July 2 in Kansas City, Missouri. I hope to see you at the convention. Please take advantage of all the wonderful seminars, meetings, and ceremonies. Visit the exhibit halls and booths and spend time with other states' gatherings and events to meet Elks from across America. States come together to discuss and swap their best ideas.

Elks Care — Elks Share is our motto. Flag Day on Saturday, June 14, is an important mandatory service for Elks. It's a great way to involve local Scout groups and JROTC teams to participate in your ceremony. Invite veterans to attend and participate during the ceremony. Pass out flag pins. Our flag is precious to us as Elks, and we need to display it with reverence and dignity. Our fathers are also precious to us. Father's Day is on Sunday, June 15. My father and my grandfathers were Elks, and they started the legacy for me and my son and sons-in-law. I am proud to say that I got my dedication to service from what I saw my father and grandfathers do. Thank the dads in your life.

It's been an amazing honor and privilege to serve you and our great Order as Grand Exalted Ruler for 2024-2025. Thank you all. God bless you, God bless our troops, and God bless America



Elkdom's **Heart** for America

JOHN L BOYD ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT AS NC SPECIAL DEPUTY TO THE GRAND EXALTED RULER



John Boyd, who has been Special Deputy to the PGER Arthur H. “Jack” Frost, for the past 18 years, announced at the Advisory Board Meeting on May 5, 2025, that he would retire from that position as of July 2025.

John has had a long history in leading the North Carolina State Elks Association (NCSEA) throughout his career, including the Executive Board of NCSEA Boys Camp. He was Exalted Ruler of the Hendersonville Elks Lodge #1616 in 1989-1990 and held many Lodge committee positions. John was State President of NCSEA 1997-1998, received the Thad Eure Distinguished Service Award from NCSEA in 2007, as well as being on the NCSEA Board of Directors and served as Chairman.

He has been a member of the NC Elks Charitable Trust for many years. He has chaired the NCSEA Advisory Board for several years and other important NCSEA committees such as Leadership, Long Range Planning, and Communications. John rose to the Grand Lodge position of District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, West District in 1991. He has served on Grand Lodge Americanism Committee 2001-2003, Membership Committee 2004-2005, and Public Relations Committee 2006-2007. John was selected to chair North Carolina’s Grand Lodge Convention in Charlotte in 2007 when our current state sponsor, PGER Frost, was the Grand Exalted Ruler.

Continued On Next Page

John Boyd Continued

John was selected in 2007 to be the Grand Lodge Special Deputy for the state of North Carolina and has served in that capacity for 18 years. He was selected as chairman of the Special Deputies Committee and served in that capacity for 10 years. He established an agenda for those meetings that is still being followed. Working with PGER Roger True and PGER Jack Frost, established a written document outlining the duties of the Special Deputies. In addition, the Special Deputies endorsed the manual on How To Run A House Committee in a lodge. Finally, he was able to negotiate a Grand Lodge Badge for Special Deputies.

Graduating from Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University, John was teacher and assistant principal at Clyde A. Erwin High School in Buncombe County. Following this he became an NC State Adult Probation Officer and worked in Henderson County. He then became a farm-equipment dealer and started managing real estate. In 1986, he was hired at Blue Ridge Community College as Small Business Center Director and for several years helped startup businesses and Continued Education Training. He was instrumental in starting the “Vision” Henderson County Leadership Program with well over 700 members.

John brought those leadership skills to the Elks, where he was instrumental in growing our leaders and strengthening our State Elks organization to its current strong position. John’s contributions to the NCSEA have made us what we are today, and we have been honored to have had his leadership. However, John is not retiring from NCSEA, so we will continue to have his guidance and leadership, which are so valuable.

During John's professional and Elk’s career, he was supported by his wife, Ann of 58 years; his daughters, Heather and Carrie; his grandsons, Tre, Tristen and Brayden; and many friends he has made along the way.

In honor of John’s leadership and dedication to the NCSEA, the NC Charitable Trust voted at the May 2025 Conference to name two new scholarships recognizing John's contributions. In addition to the forty-academic and ten nursing scholarships already being funded by NC Charitable Trust, there will be two new scholarships. These new scholarships will be awarded to the highest scoring boy and girl from North Carolina who did not receive a Grand Lodge MVP scholarship. Each new scholarship will be \$2,000 and named the John L. Boyd Scholarship of Excellence.

We are a much better organization due to John’s continued support and guidance.

Thank You John for Your Leadership and Guidance

Conference Pictures and News



South Carolina State President Tony Smith and First Lady Jane graced the conference with their presence.

Mark and Julie will visit South Carolina later this year.



John Corbett of the Calabash Lodge was recognized as Veteran Volunteer of the Year.

Presenting the award was PSP Ron Dickson



PSP Michael Bryant was honored with the Thad Eure Distinguished Service Award.

Presenting the award was PSP John Bullock.



Past State President Joe Clancy presented a certificate of appreciation to Michelle DeLaire for her work providing disaster relief to Western North Carolina.

Conference Pictures and News



Joe Knight of the Winston Salem Lodge received the Exalted Ruler of the Year for the West Central District. Presenting the award is Kyle Puryear, PER Association President.



Kim Kuquay Black and Kevin Black were among many recognized for Disaster Relief Assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Presenting the awards were Disaster Relief Co-Chair Michelle DeLaire and State President Joe Clancy



The West District hospitality room was dressed out with a Western theme.



Now Past State President Joe Clancy thanking those in attendance for the honor of serving.

Conference Pictures and News

Friday Morning Ladies outing included a visit to Reynolda House Museum and Gardens.



Incoming State Officers taking the Oath of Office





Four North Carolina Lodges Receive Awards in the Grand Lodge Community Projects Contest

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee is proud to announce the divisional winners of the Community Projects Contest for 2024-2025. This contest provides national recognition for Lodges that have been actively supporting their community by engaging with it and providing needed resources it might not otherwise receive.

This year's winners are:

Division I 1st: Islip, NY No. 2533 2nd: Hackettstown, NJ No. 2331

Division II 1st: Waukesha, WI No. 400 2nd: Webster-Fairport, NY No. 2396

3rd: Southern Pines, NC No. 1692

Division III 1st: Massapequa, NY No. 2162

Division IV **1st: Goldsboro, NC No. 139** 2nd: Cynthiana, KY No. 438 3rd: Bridgeport, CT No. 36

Division V 1st: **Hickory, NC No. 1654** 2nd: Wethersfield-Rocky Hill, CT No. 2308

3rd: Sanford, NC No. 1679

Division VI 1st: Las Cruces, NM No. 1119 2nd: Middleboro, MA No. 1274 3rd: Westbrook, CT No. 1784



North Carolina Lodge Has National Winner in the Grand Lodge Americanism Essay Contest

Congratulations go out to Winston Salem Lodge sponsored contestant in the Grand Lodge Americanism Essay Contest who won second place in the Fifth Grade category.

Fifth Grade 2nd Place: Sterling Lunde. Sponsored by Winston-Salem, NC Lodge No. 449



North Carolina State 2024-2025 Winners

Division I 5th Grade

1st Place	Sterling Lunde	Winston Salem
2nd Place	Anna Jean Pendergrass	Calabash
3rd Place	Amanda Billig	Calabash

Division II 6th Grade

1st Place	Margo Carmichael	Oak Island
2nd Place	Isla Marion	Winston Salem
3rd Place	Scarlett McGuire	Hickory

Division III 7th Grade

1st Place	Ryland Taylor	Winston Salem
2nd Place	Chloe Vallier	Roxboro
3rd Place	Genevieve Melon	Hickory

Division IV 8th Grade

1st Place	Stella Byrd	Oak Island
2nd Place	Quinn Teal	Goldsboro
3rd Place	Annarose Fielden	High Point



ENVSC GIVES UPDATE ON WELCOME HOME KIT PROGRAM North Carolina Finished 7th In The Nation

One of the big ENVSC stories of the past few years is the growth of **the Welcome Home Kit program**. The 2024-25 Welcome Home Kit numbers are in, and they're bigger than ever.

Last year, Elks provided 4,252 Welcome Home Kits to newly housed veterans, a 25% increase over previous years. And, 43.5% of kits in 2024-25 included beds for veterans or their children, a 107% increase from the year before.

As the program grows in popularity, it's dominated less by superstar Lodges and more by a raft of volunteers at hundreds of Lodges across the country. Since the program began, 546 Lodges from 46 states have participated by providing kits to veterans through this program.

Thanks to all our volunteers for the fresh starts provided to veterans last year.

Below, take a look at the official Welcome Home Kit statistics for the 2024-25 year.

Top 10 States for 2024-25 Kits

1. Washington: 529 kits; 2. Florida: 470 kits; 3. California: 312 kits; 4. Minnesota: 304 kits
5. Arizona: 290 kits; 6. Texas: 288 kits; 7. **North Carolina: 265 kits**
8. Pennsylvania: 226 kits; 9. Missouri: 223 kits; 10. New York: 198 kits

FALL 2025 CONFERENCE to be held in Charlotte At the DoubleTree by Hilton October 24th—26th.

Note: Convention has been changed to CONFERENCE. WHY!

- 1: Formality level. A convention is less formal and less serious than a conference. A conference is more formal and serious than a convention.
- 2: Conferences are primarily focused on exchanging information and education. Conventions have a connotation of exhibitors and less serious activities than conferences.
- 3: Conferences will focus on the intent of our gathering as one of learning, exchange of ideas, networking, and being more professionally sounding.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND PLAN TO ATTEND

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

SPRING 2025 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

While the final tally for membership will not be available until the Grand Secretary releases that number in early June, it is evident that the NC Elks will not have a fourth straight year of membership growth. North Carolina will fall short by less than 300 members. This can be disappointing however I am encouraged that we retained over 10,000 Elks for the 2024/2025 year. The devastation by Hurricane Helene in the West took its toll on many members and potential members. Some of our largest Lodges have had issues with swimming pools closing, or needing repairs which has caused some members to drop or at least delay renewing their memberships. I remain encouraged that with the State leadership and more importantly the leaders in our local Lodges we will rebound with great enthusiasm and have a great 2025/2026 Elk year.

I remain committed as your Membership Chairman and will continue to send each Exalted Ruler membership updates from the Grand Lodge as I get them. If you have any questions or concerns regarding membership, lapsation, recruitment or reinstatements please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of my team. Thank you very much!

John Lawrence, PSP

NCSEA Membership Chairman



EAST DISTRICT NEWS

OAK ISLAND LODGE DONATES TO WALK-A-THON



Oak Island Elks Lodge #2769 donated \$500 to the Southport Christian School for their participation in the Oak Island/Southport Knights March Walk-a-thon.

Pictured are Alan McWhirter, exalted ruler and a gathering of his walkers

OAK ISLAND ELKS DONATE TO WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT



Oak Island, NC, Veterans Committee members donated \$600 to the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) local Golf Tournament Hole Sponsor initiative. Wounded Warrior Project began in 2003 as a small, grassroots effort providing simple care and comfort items to the hospital bedsides of the first wounded service members returning home from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, through direct programs in mental health, career counseling, and long-term rehabilitative care, along with advocacy efforts, the Project has improved the lives of millions of warriors and their families. The mission of WWP is to honor and empower wounded warriors while fostering the most successful, well-adjusted wounded service members in our nation's history.

Pictured are (from left) Veterans Committee members Stuart Goodall, Carl Schnepf, Richard Ewing, Clinton Gentz, Kenneth Madison (WWP team member), Michael Ferguson, George Tietjen, and Kevin Swenie.

KINSTON ELKS DONATE BIRTHDAY CARDS FOR VETERANS



On behalf of Kinston Elks #740, Cheryl McLain donated 100 handmade birthday cards for Veterans at the Kinston Veterans Home.

Tracy Klainer, Activities Director accepts the donation.

KINSTON LODGE DONATED TO NEUSE QUILTERS GUILD

Kinston Elks Lodge donated \$500 to the Neuse Quilters Guild of Kinston, NC. The Guild has donated 70 quilts to Western NC, victims of Hurricane Helene. 30 quilts were shipped to California to victims of the wildfires. The Guild also has donated to the Kinston Police Department, Ronald McDonald House, Red Cross and 3 years ago sent quilts to Ukraine. Norma Daniels, quilter shows off some of the charity quilts.



MOREHEAD BEAUFORT PRESENTED CHECK TO NURSING SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Brook Cumbo is winner of one of ten NCSEA Nursing Scholarships. She was presented with this achievement at the Havelock High School Spring Awards Ceremony. Brooke was sponsored by Morehead City-Beaufort Elks Lodge and her presentation was made by Kent Neal of the Morehead City-Beaufort Elks Lodge.

OAK ISLAND MAYOR PROCLAIMED

ELKS NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK MAY 4th-10th

The mayor of Oak Island proclaimed Elks National Youth Week May 4th-10th 2025! Oak Island Mayor Liz White and ER Alan McWhirter among others gave away over \$6900 in Scholarships, Essay Awards and Americanism monies at the Oak island Lodge in May of 2025.



In other news the Oak Island Elks Lodge #2769 recently donated \$200 to the Jack Helbig Foundation. The organization, whose mission is to prevent drownings through education and awareness has been instrumental in helping to save lives in our community.

CALABASH ELKS GOLF COMMITTEE DONATED TO LORD'S FOOD PANTRY



The Calabash Elks Golf Committee recently presented a \$2600 check to the Lord's Food Pantry. The funds were raised during their annual Charity Golf Tournament.

Left to right: Becky Overcash, Deb Mardis, Jeannette D'Abbondanza and Dan Mardis. Dan and his wife Deb donate their time to the Food Pantry and were there packing boxes for distribution .

OAK ISLAND ELKS PRESENTED \$1000 SCHOLARSHIP

Oak Island Elks presented a \$1,000 Veterans Committee scholarship to local South Brunswick High School graduate Conner Walls. Conner will be attending East Carolina University in the fall.

Pictured L-R: Veterans Committee members John Agosta, Richard Ewing, Edward Drzewiecki, Carl Schnepf, scholarship winner Conner Walls, and Veterans Committee members Mark Prevette, James Shire and George Tietjen.



In other news, Lodge Veterans Committee members participated in the 7th annual Veteran Experience Action Center gathering held in Wilmington, NC from May 8th-10th. This group was part of 81 volunteers who worked at the event. A total of 928 Veterans met face-to-face with staff from the Veterans Administration and local Veterans Service Officers to get VA claims submitted, reviewed, and in some cases adjudicated on the spot.

EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT NEWS

RALEIGH LODGE DONATES TO BACKPACK BUDDIES

The Raleigh Elks' "buddy team" made a \$500 donation (which was matched this month to \$1000) to the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, to be applied to Backpack Buddies. This program helps to feed food insecure children. The money was allocated to us from the Bingo Committee.

Pictured left to right: Cheryl Howard; Rosanna Jaworski; Volunteer Services Manager Emily Osborne; Volunteer Services Coordinator Taylor Jones; Colleen Dodds; and Rob Dodds.



RALEIGH WELCOME HOME COMMITTEE DELIVERS 10 KITS TO MILITARY MISSIONS IN ACTION



In May the Raleigh Welcome Home Kit Committee delivered 10 Welcome Home Kits to Military Missions in Action. MMIA provides household items and furniture to Veterans across the state. MMIA is one of our partnering Veteran organizations we work with to improve the lives of our Nation's Veterans. The Welcome Home Committee has provided 33 kits to Veterans since April.

Pictured L-R: Karen DeShong, Homes for Healing Program Manager; Michelle DeLaire, PER, PDDGER; Stan Hoffman, Member.

Southern Pines Lodge: Decades of Dedication to Local Meals on Wheels

The Southern Pines Elks Club #1692 has been a steadfast supporter of Meals on Wheels of the Sandhills for several decades, reflecting its commitment to community service, philanthropy, and improving the lives of residents. This partnership plays a vital role in combating food insecurity and hunger among Moore County residents, ensuring they receive the nutrition they need.

Since 2023, the Elks have harnessed the power of Spotlight Grant funds to bolster the efforts of the Moore County Meals on Wheels chapter. This invaluable program provides nutritious meals to needy, elderly, and homebound residents in Moore County, NC, including many Veterans. Meals on Wheels ensures these meals are delivered either free of charge or at significantly reduced costs every weekday throughout the year.

Under the leadership of Paul Spadafora, the dedicated secretary of the Elks Club, the organization has strengthened its impact and reach. The SP Elks Lodge contributes significantly to Meals on Wheels by allocating \$2,000 from the Spotlight Grant each year, directly aiding in the preparation and delivery of these essential meals. Additionally, the Lodge designates Meals on Wheels as one of its "Charity of the Month" beneficiaries, awarding \$500 in September 2024 from the lodge funds to further support their mission.

This ongoing support from the Elks Club not only helps sustain the nutritional needs of the community's most vulnerable citizens but also strengthens the fabric of Moore County. Such initiatives highlight the importance of community organizations coming together to enhance the quality of life for all residents while actively fighting against food insecurity.



RALEIGH ELKS HOLD FIELD OF DREAMS EVENT

Raleigh held a successful Field of Dreams event was held on May 7. Field of Dreams was started by Wake Forest High School Special Education teacher Gail Tucker and the Wake Forest Army JROTC, led by Sgt. Maj. Ginger Cribb. Coached by varsity athletes and assisted by cadet volunteers, kids who might otherwise not get the chance to play high school sports get a day packed with a series of baseball matchups where they're the stars. The special needs kids will get to participate in batting, running, and scoring. The Raleigh Elks provided hot dogs, water and snacks for the kids.

Special thanks to: ER Merle Freeman, Tony Keller, Robert McAlister, Shawn Graber, Rod Stacy, Barb Amos, Michelle DeLaire, and Matt Leith.



ENVSC BOOST GRANT USED TO HOST LIVE MUSICAL EVENT AT DURHAM VA MEDICAL CENTER

The Durham VAVS team used the Elks National Veteran Service Commission Boost Grant to host a live music event at Durham VA Medical Center on May 20, 2025. The event also included lunch for over 120 Veterans. Members of Raleigh Lodge greeted and helped serve Veterans at the facility. Special thanks to Durham VAMC CDCE for their assistance in coordinating this amazing event and thank you to our Veterans!



Pictured L-R: Kendra Monden, MS, chief CDCE (Voluntary Services) Durham VA, Cheryl Howard, Stan Hoffman, Michelle DeLaire, PER, PDDGER



SOUTHERN PINES LODGE SUPPORTS

WELCOME HOME KIT PROGRAM

Building on the success of its 2023 launch, the Southern Pines Elks Lodge proudly continues its Veterans Welcome Home Kit Program, reaffirming its commitment to the well-being of veterans across Moore County. This ongoing initiative provides essential household and health-monitoring tools to support independent living and promote wellness among local veterans.

These kits are designed to help veterans create a safe, stable, and healthy home environment, particularly those who are older, managing chronic health conditions, or transitioning from homelessness. The Southern Pines Elks Lodge works closely with the Fayetteville VA Hospital's Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) to identify veterans in need. Since January 2025, the Lodge has delivered six Welcome Home Kits to newly housed veterans—each one a fresh start and a reminder of the community's gratitude.

"We are honored to support our local veterans in building healthier, more independent lives," said a Lodge spokesperson. "This program is just one way we continue to serve those who have served us."



Pictured: Dave Rudd, Southern Pines Elks Veterans Committee leader and Deyanira Ceberra from Fayetteville VA Hospital

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT NEWS

LAKE NORMAN AND SALISBURY LODGES RECEIVE RECOGNITION AT VETERAN VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BANQUET

On Friday, April 25th, several members from the Lake Norman Elks Lodge and Salisbury Elks Lodge attended the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet (Mardi Gras theme) hosted by the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement of Charlotte, Salisbury, and Kernersville. The NCSEA was recognized for the golf cart donation to the south Charlotte VA Center and in addition, for all the good works the NC Elks do for veterans. The plaque is beautiful and addressed to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. On behalf of our great organization, Mike Flock with the Lake Norman Elks and Bob Sce with the Salisbury Elks received it. It will reside at the Salisbury Elks Lodge.



SALISBURY ELKS HOST POLAR PLUNGE TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Salisbury Elks Lodge hosted the annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Rowan County on Saturday, March 1. About 200 people attended the fundraiser, including over 50 lodge members, which was held at the Salisbury Elks Lodge River Park. Because lake levels were nearly 7 feet below normal, the typical “plunge” was not an option. So, Miller Ferry Volunteer Fire Department came to the rescue and provided several trucks with hoses and their airboat for the event. And it was a splashing success! The Salisbury Lodge earned top honors for most team members and raised nearly \$2,500. Lodge secretary, Debbie Martin, raised \$1,000, the most money for an individual on a team. She has been “polar plunging” since 2016. “I think this year was one of the best ever,” said Martin. “We had great weather and turnout. Going into the lake is cold and muddy. Running through the fire hoses was just plain cold, but lots of fun for everyone. It took me back to my younger days running through a sprinkler.” “The Polar Plunge is one of my favorite community events. It reminds me of why I became an Elks member in the first place.” The crowd enjoyed music with a live DJ, a costume contest, a raffle with prize giveaways and hot dogs for lunch. The Salisbury Elks Lodge Drug Awareness trailer was also on site. Members, Kelly Davis and Tony Alfano, gave out brochures, booklets, and information about a variety of subjects including drugs, bullying, abuse, online dangers and much more. It’s one of only four trailers in NC. The event raised nearly \$12,000, exceeding the goal of \$10,000. All monies raised, including proceeds from the 50/50 raffle, benefit the Special Olympics.



SALISBURY ELKS PROUD OF NATIONAL HOOP SHOOT FINALIST

It's been over 20 years since Salisbury Elks Lodge #699 had a finalist in the National Hoop Shoot Championships. This year, eleven-year old Marlie Steele showed her skills and talent but even more grit and nerves of steel on the basketball court. Steele sank 12 of 15 free throws in the second round to make a total of 17 of 25 baskets and finish in a tie for 6th place in the Girls 10-11 division. In addition to family, Marlie had plenty of support in Chicago including Salisbury Elks' members Kenny Martin, Debbie Martin and Liz Tennent. The group enjoyed the competition as well as breakfast at the famous Eleven City Diner, a Chicago Cubs baseball game, trivia night, trading cards, site seeing and the awards banquet. Marlie also received *BEST SWISHES* and autographed photos from her favorite basketball team, the Duke Blue Devils, thanks to Coach Mike Krzyzewski.



WINSTON SALEM LODGE HONORS IT'S AMERICANISM ESSAY WINNERS

The Winston Salem Lodge presented certificates to their Americanism Essay Contest winners. Pictures are the five winners, ER Pat Russell, NCSEA Americanism Chair Randy Zigmund, and a couple of parents of the winners.



WINSTON SALEM DONATES GRANT TO STOREHOUSE FOR JESUS



The Winston Salem Lodge presented their Gratitude Grant to Storehouse For Jesus, an independent non-profit Christian ministry helping the unemployed, homeless/transient, elderly, poor and low-income people in a six-county radius, with medical, food, pharmacy, and clothing needs. The grant is for \$2,500 for food supplies and \$1,500 for medical supplies.

Pictured L-R: Randy Zigmund, Grant Committee; Marie Collins, Ministry Director; Dr. David Cline, President of the Ministry Board; and Exalted Ruler Pat Russell .

HIGH POINT LODGE USES GRANT TO SUPPORT VETERANS

In May, High Point Elks delivered two welcome home kits. Pictured right are some of the items delivered.



Pictured above, right, and below; using a \$1,000 ENF Freedom Grant the Lodge bought items for the Arthur Cassell Transitional House in High Point. We bought mattress pads, sheets and personal hygiene items for their 14 residents, who are all veterans. This is a great example of how ENF donations are supporting our local community!



WEST DISTRICT NEWS

SHELBY USES FREEDOM GRANT TO HELP VETERANS



Shelby Lodge used the Freedom Grant funds to purchase and deliver personal care items and food to the Cleveland County Veterans Service Officers, Julie Crotts and Magala Suarez for distribution to there veterans in need.

HICKORY ELKS DONATE ICE CREAM & CAKE TO MILITARY POLICE

Hickory Elks Lodge donated Ice Cream and Cake to 105th Military Police (MP) BN located in Asheville, NC on their Fun Day April 6, 2025. This included 106 Adults and 54 Children. SFRG Leader, Cynthia Hurst McCaskill Collaborated Gratitude on how the Hickory Elks Lodge made a real difference in building strong community ties and uplifting the morale of those who serve. The Hickory, NC Lodge partnered with another nonprofit organization to also provide a full meal to these families at this event.

This publication is produced for and by the North Carolina State Elks Association.

The NCSEA Communication Committee encourages all member Lodges and

Committee Chairmen to submit articles to be included in future issues.

All submissions may be forwarded to Ashley Buckwell, Editor at ashbuc@atmc.net