A Brief History of the Corona Elks Lodge #2045

Chartered June 9, 1957



Updated March 2025

A Local History of BPOE Corona Lodge #2045

Written by Bob Young, Corona Elks Member

The following document is to honor the history of the Corona Elks Chapter of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE). The material presented was found in the recorded facts and history of the Corona Elks Lodge and the living testimony given by many of the key leaders and individuals who have contributed to the success of our Lodge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS **PAGE**

IN THE BEGINNING	3
MAJOR IMPACT LEADERS	5
LADIES BECOME PART OF THE ELKS	10
ANOTHER IMPORTANT LEADER	12
MILESTONES	13
PAST EXALTED RULERS	14
VETERANS AFFAIRS	15
TRADITIONS, CEREMONIES, RITUALS	16
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	18
SOCIAL LIFE	21
HOPE AND THE FUTURE	24
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25
MORE PHOTO MEMORIES	26

IN THE BEGINNING

Corona Elks Lodge #2045 member #3, James "Jim" Pauly, gave a short presentation at our Elks July Steak Night in 2019. Jim's presentation started me thinking about our Lodge's history and became the inspiration for writing this short document telling the story of our Lodge.



My interview with Jim Pauly was an incredible look at the early days of Corona Lodge #2045. As of this writing in 2019, Jim is a 92-year-old, 62-year Charter member of our Lodge.

I found his memory to be a very effective reflection on the early years. Jim says the first meetings in 1957 were held in the old Masonic Lodge of Corona on 7th Street. After about a year and a half, they were moved to an old office space above a hardware store. The Lodge bought and sold several pieces of property to build a permanent lodge. They finally settled on our current location, 912 E. 6th Street, in 1962. The Lodge building was previously a restaurant called "The Italian Inn."

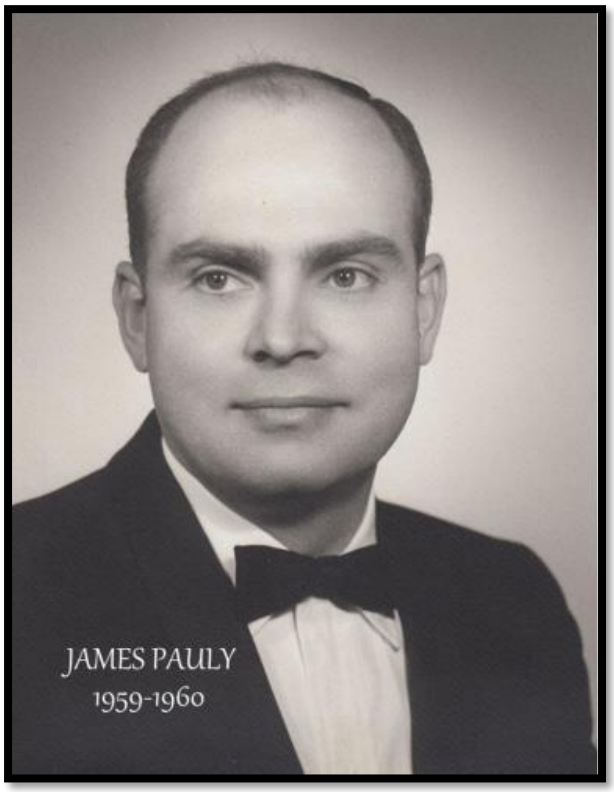
During its first couple of years, the Lodge membership consisted of about 300 members, of which 30 were transfers from other lodges. Some of these transfers were instrumental in applying for and receiving a national charter in 1957.

Jim Pauly had lived in Corona since 1938 and contributed to the community in numerous ways over six decades. When he sold his very successful business, Emerson-Pauly Men's Wear, in 1993, he had been in business for over 50 years. He began as a clerk in 1942 and sold the Corona landmark clothing store in 1993 as the owner.

Jim became Corona Elks Lodge's third Exalted Ruler in 1959. During his tenure as ER, Jim said budgets and times could be very tight. The number of members peaked at 507.

Like other major impact leaders of our Lodge, Jim's awards and accomplishments are too numerous to discuss in this brief document. However, here is a list of a few of his significant accomplishments.

Jim passed away on February 4, 2022, at age 94.



Corona Lodge Charter Member

Corona Lodge Exalted Ruler 1959-60

Long-time Corona Business Owner

"Corona Citizen of the Year" in 1972

Corona "Lifetime Achievement Award" recipient in 2015

Long-time Corona Business Owner

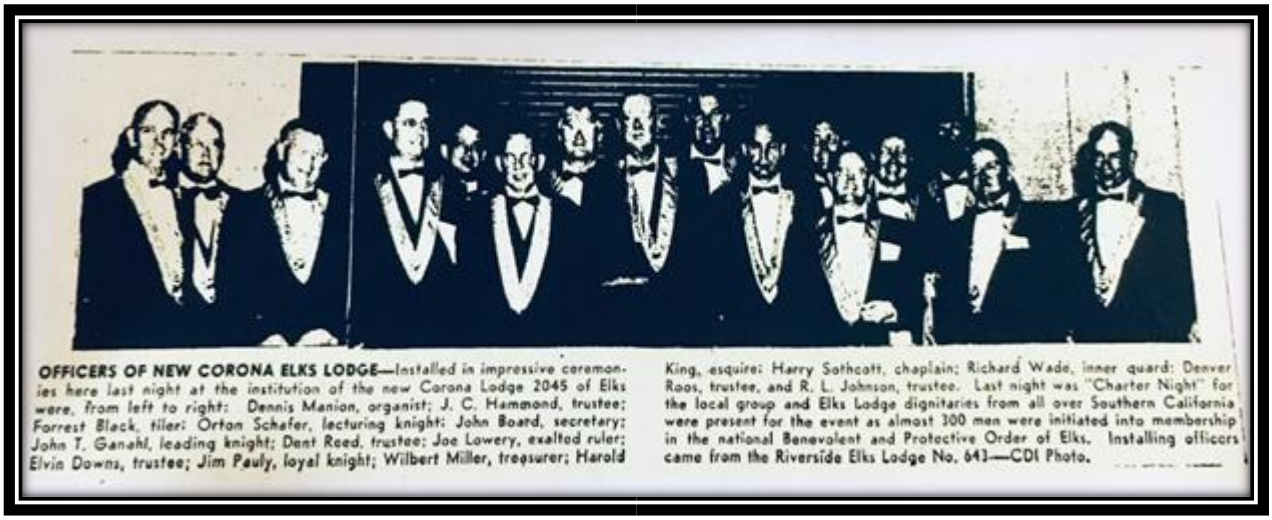
MAJOR IMPACT LEADERS

First Charter Officers and Leaders

June 9, 1957

Corona Elks Lodge # 2045

Proud members of The Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (BPOE) of the United States of America



OFFICERS OF NEW CORONA ELKS LODGE—Installed in impressive ceremonies here last night at the institution of the new Corona Lodge 2045 of Elks were, from left to right: Dennis Manion, organist; J. C. Hammond, trustee; Forrest Black, tiler; Orton Schafer, lecturing knight; John Board, secretary; John T. Ganahl, leading knight; Dent Reed, trustee; Joe Lowery, exalted ruler; Elvin Downs, trustee; Jim Pauly, loyal knight; Wilbert Miller, treasurer; Harold King, esquire; Harry Sothcott, chaplain; Richard Wade, inner guard; Denver Roos, trustee, and R. L. Johnson, trustee. Last night was "Charter Night" for the local group and Elks Lodge dignitaries from all over Southern California were present for the event as almost 300 men were initiated into membership in the national Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Installing officers came from the Riverside Elks Lodge No. 643.—CDI Photo.

Above: Corona Elks Lodge members who had a major impact on the local, state, and national Elks community.

For a point of reference, here are a few facts for the year (1957), when Lodge # 2045 was created by charter.

- President Dwight Eisenhower was elected to a second term
- The USSR launches Sputnik, the first man-made satellite
- The average American new house costs $12,225
- A new car costs $2,157
- A gallon of gasoline was 24 cents

- A first-class postage stamp was 3 cents

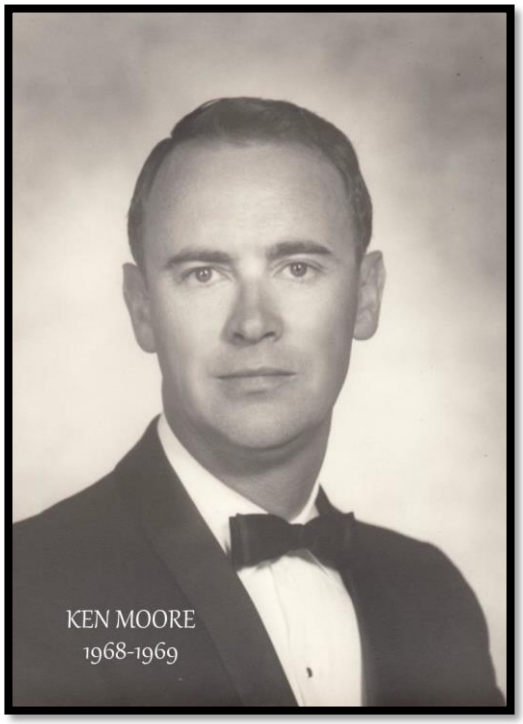


A large part of Elks history and success is because of those who served as outstanding early leaders.

You only need to drive into the parking lot of our Elks Lodge on 6th Street and look up at the sign to realize that **Ken Moore** was an Elk of significance.

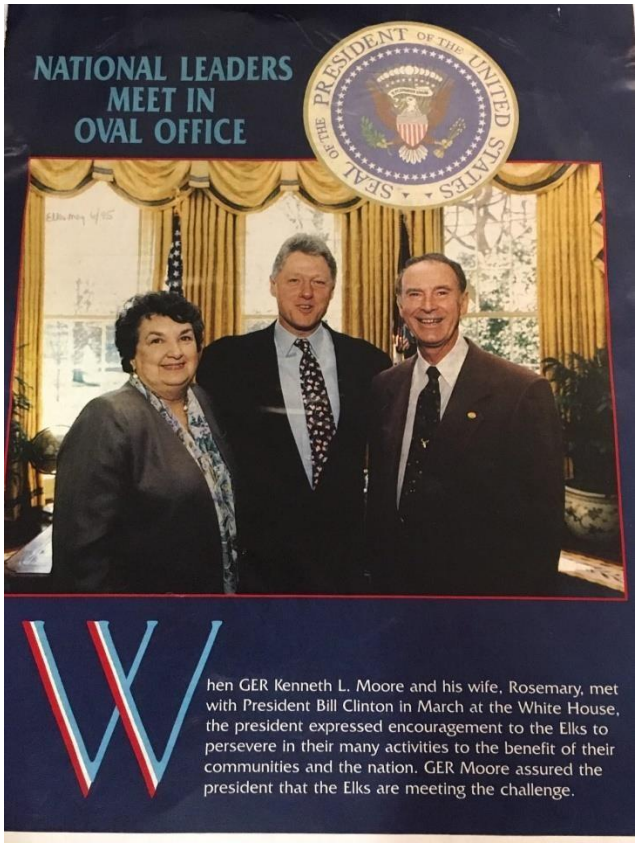
He was a quiet, honest, and hard-working man who led multiple organizations with dedication and integrity. He was selected as Corona's "Citizen of the Year" in 1991.

His greatest involvement with the Elks was serving as the Exalted Ruler of the Corona Elks Lodge in 1968-69, the California-Hawaii State President in 1982-83, and Grand Exalted Ruler (national level) in 1994-95. Ken's positions and recognitions include:



Corona Lodge Exalted Ruler 1968-69
California Hawaii Elks Assoc. President 1983-84
Corona "Citizen of the Year 1991"
National Grand Exalted Ruler 1994-95

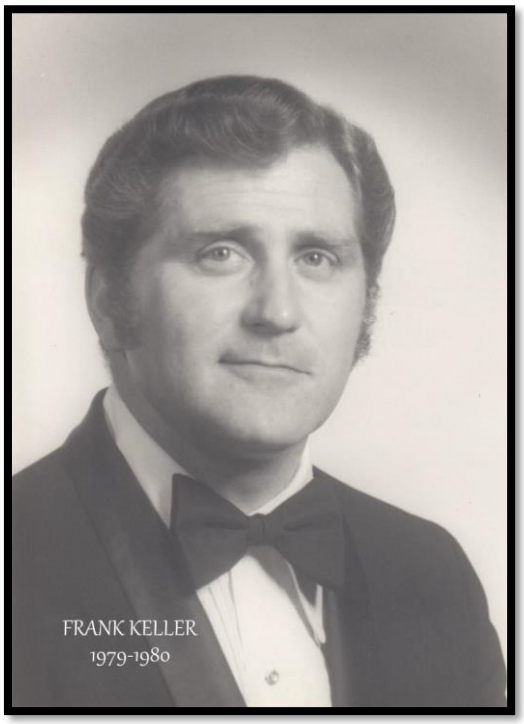
Ken Moore passed away on January 10, 2018, and the community lost a humble humanitarian.





(Above) Grand Exalted Ruler Ken Moore on ABC "Prime Time LIVE" with former Senator Bob Dole

(Above) Grand Exalted Ruler Ken Moore and his wife, Rosemary, met with President Bill Clinton at the White House.



Frank Keller joined the Corona Elks Lodge # 2045 five decades ago and served in many capacities within the Lodge, including Exalted Ruler (1979-80).

When Lodge Exalted Ruler Ken Moore (1968-69) moved on to become California Hawaii Elks President (1982-83) and National Grand Exalted Ruler (1994-95), Frank was selected as his Administrative Assistant and managed the Grand Exalted Rulers staff and office in Corona. During this time period, the two Corona Elks members provided

leadership to close to 1.3 million Elks nationwide. Frank's commitment to the Elks has been lifelong, and the list of the numerous offices he held is too long to list here.

If any Elks member is looking for an example of what it means to be an Elk, they don't have to look beyond Frank Keller. Frank has probably volunteered over 20,000 hours in the many charities and organizations he has served.

Frank has been honored with prestigious awards, including the US Presidential Award for Meritorious Volunteer Work and many other recognitions.

Corona Lodge Exalted Ruler 1979-80 Corona

Lodge Elk of the Year 1989-90 Corona Lodge

Honorary Life Member 1992

Administrative Assistant to the Grand Exalted Ruler 1994-95

California Hawaii Elks Association President 1998-99 California Hawaii Elks

Association Elk of the Year 2014 National Grand Esteem Loyal Knight 2016-17

The early impact leaders of the Corona Elks set the foundation for Lodge #2045. The solid organization they Chartered in 1957 and the following years made it possible for our Elks Lodge to continue to be a strong and vital organization serving our community. Brian Ratliff, PER, reflected upon these early leaders and upon the fundamental principles of Elks when he read the words he wrote during the Celebration of Life for James Pauley in February 2022.

> "Elks Charter Members. Members since the inception of the Lodge since its Charter. Possibly involved in the forming of the new Lodge as well. As Exalted Ruler during the opening of the Lodge, the Ritual is the Roll Call of Officers. The Secretary reads the names of the Officers duly noted as present or absent. Past Exalted Rulers in attendance are asked to rise and be recognized. Next on the list are Charter Members, who rise and are recognized.

Now, this is where things have changed over the years as their numbers have dwindled. Charter, Life, and Honorary Life Members have become lumped together, as all Charter Members were by then also holders of a Life Membership.

Charter members are a link to our past and heritage of our organization. They were pathfinders to forge ahead and build a new Lodge in their town to better serve the resident members and their town. Back in 1995-1996 when I was Exalted Ruler my neighbor and well know resident of Corona, Ralph Covington, wanted to put on a Charter Member Night. A special occasion for those that had been members from day one. Then there were 35 Charter Members that made that special evening. There were a few then that did not make it being they lived out of State or had illnesses preventing their attendance.

As time marches on and age increases the number of Charter Members dropped to three. Dewey Roos was 96 when he passed away last October leaving two. He was considered the youngster of the Charter Members. This past week we lost another, Jim Pauly, not only was he a Charter Member but our most tenured Past Exalted Ruler. Yes, he is way up and to the left on the Past Exalted Rulers wall in the hallway of the Lodge.

Growing up in small-town Corona, one met these people who were Elks and leaders of their community. The owner of the Men's Wear Store was where you met Jim and his partner, Frank. The Sporting Goods Store where one got parts for their bicycle was another place to find these men. The rental yard, the bank manager, the auto repair business, the mortician, the parts store.....the list went on and on.

May their memories live on even after our physical connection to the past is slowly severed. Like a Family, once the Matriarch passes on, the tribe splinters a bit because the living glue is not present. This picture is now ten years old; it shows how time marches on. A Taco Night when long-time friends had an occasion to sit for a while and smile in each other's presence. Long-time friends, brother Elks, and Leaders of our Community, Art Seidler and Jim Pauly. The newer members might only know the faces by stories of the departed, and soon, all too soon, even those younger will fade away, but we shall never forget their names.

My Brothers, you have heard the toll of Eleven Strokes.
This is to impress upon you that with us, the hour of Eleven has a tender significance. Wherever an Elk may roam, whatever his lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night, the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs.
It is the Golden Hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who come no more.

Living or Dead an Elk is never forgotten, never forsaken.
Morning and noon may pass him by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of Midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message, "To our absent Brothers."
Rest in Peace, Jim; it was always a pleasure to take the time to shake your hand and share a smile with you. All that knew you, knew you were a good man

THE LADIES BECOME PART OF THE ELKS

The original spirit of Susan B. Anthony inspired a determined group of crusaders to a victory in 1919 that led to the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was a small step for women and a giant leap for equality. The BPOE joined the party 75 years later.

With **Ken Moore** at the helm of the annual National Elks meeting and **Frank Keller** at his side, one of the most significant Elks votes was taken at an annual national meeting of the BPOE. The hot and politically sensitive issue of allowing females to join the Elks. Having taken a vote, Ken announced the measure had passed, and women could join the Elks. As Abigale Adams, the second First Lady of the United States had famously been quoted, "Let's not forget the ladies."

The Corona Elks have been pleased to have women members ever since, and the first four women Exalted Rulers for the Corona Elks were Susan Reis Simmons, Joyce Nohavec, Sophia Betancourt, and Amelia Nieves.



Susan Reis Simmons
ER 2004-2005



Joyce Nohavec
ER 2008-09, 2012-13, & 2020-21



Sophia Betancourt
ER 2018-2019



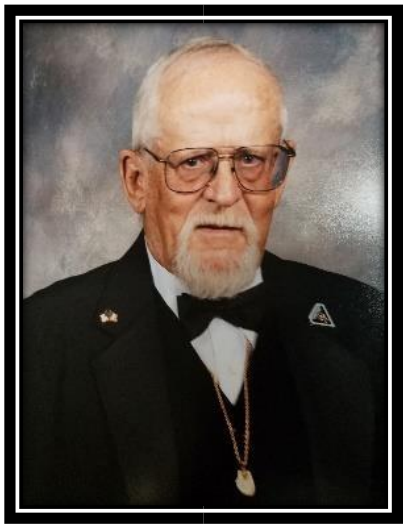
Amelia Nieves
ER 2023-24, 2024-25

Another Important Leader to the Corona Elks

While conducting historical interviews with some of Corona Elks' past leaders, many nuggets of historical gold were uncovered and enriched our Lodge's history. Just this type of historical nugget came while interviewing three-time past Exalted Ruler **Brad Area**. Brad's first term as Exalted Ruler (1989- 1990) found him managing a $23,000 annual budget for a lodge of 500 members. During his first term as ER, one of Corona's local citizens included a bequest of $60,000 to Lodge in their final estate plan. Twelve years later, during Brad's second term as ER (2001-2002), history repeated itself, but with a much more significant sum of $900,000. This series of events makes one think of Brad as our Leprechaun Ruler with the knack of finding the proverbial pot of gold.



This is a good time to remind the benevolent members of Elkdom that people can speak to the charitable needs of our fellow citizens even after the "eleventh hour" has sounded with a legacy donation.



Brad Area started his third term (20222023) as Exalted Ruler when the Lodge needed
him again to fulfill the role. He had continuously volunteered at the Lodge since his second term ended twenty years earlier. This time he stepped up during the unexpected resignation of an ER just a month after taking the position. Everyone looked to Brad, and his love and dedication for the Corona Elks had him graciously take the leadership role again.

MILESTONES

In 2018, just one new Lodge was added to the national list of Elks lodges. The new Lodge # 2881 is in Hewitt, Texas. With the addition of the newest Lodge, the number of active Elks members stands at 770,957.

This figure shows the tremendous growth of the Elks nationwide since the founding of Lodge #1 in 1868, with just 15 members voting to make the noble Elk the permanent symbol of the organization.

A few of the milestones mark the growth of our Corona Elks Lodge over time. The current number of membership cards issued by the Corona Elks since 1957 is 2710.



The youngest person to hold the honored position of Exalted Ruler was **Patrick Akes** (2016-17), who was 32 years old.

(Above: Patrick Akes)

Another notable youthful ER was **Brian Ratliff** (1995-06), who was 34 years old during his first time serving. Brian had the distinction of serving in all major leadership positions for the previous six years.

The first female Exalted Ruler, as mentioned earlier, was **Susan Reis Simmons** (2004-05).



A true Lodge milestone belongs to **Robert Calsing**, who is the only 4-time Exalted Ruler (200203), (2005-06), (2010-11), and (2013-14). His leadership during so many years was instrumental in many positive activities taking place at the Elks. His warm personality and sense of humor made him a true asset. The kitchen was named in his honor.

(Left: Robert Casling)

PAST EXALTED RULES

1957-58 Joe Lowery *	1981-82 Chuck Manges *	2004-05 Susan Reis
1958-59 John Ganahl *	1982-83 Bill Crow *	2005-06 Robert Calsing (2)*
1959-60 James Pauly *	1983-84 Roger Key *	2006-07 Kevin Kearly
1960-61 Orton Schafer *	1984-85 Cecil Lopez	2007-08 Joe Jordan*
1961-62 Harold King *	1985-86 Gib Wilson	2008-09 Joyce Nohavec
1962-63 Richard Wade *	1986-87 Casey Sturm *	2009-10 Robert Brant Sr.*
1963-64 Harry Sothcott *	1987-88 Ron Kershaw	2010-11 Robert Calsing (3)*
1965-66 Robert White *	1988-89 Randy Rawson	2011-12 Bill Shaw
1966-67 Walter Blake *	1989-90 Brad Area	2012-13 Joyce Nohavec (2)
1967-68 John Harper *	1990-91 Jim K Held	2013-14 Robert Calsing (4)*
1968-69 Ken Moore *	1991-92 Bill Fehner	2014-15 Brian Watt
1969-70 Claude Zehnder *	1992-93 Terry Kokot	2015-16 Bruce McLain
1970-71 Dent reed *	1993-94 John Keller *	2016-17 Patrick Akes
1971-72 Glen Gundlach *	1994-95 Barry Shurilla *	2017-18 Mike Stevens
1972-73 George Lemire *	1995-96 Brian Ratliff	2018-19 Jesse Vargas
1973-74 Richard Spangler *	1996-97 Chuck McLain	2019-20 Sophia Betancourt
1974-75 Richard Wade (2) *	1997-98 David Crisp *	2020-21 Joyce Nohavec (3)
1975-76 Paul Kadow	1998-99 Fred Reis *	2021-22 Ron Anderson
1976-77 Robert Ellis *	1999-00 Roger Hodge	2022-23 Brad Area (3)
1977-78 Bill Gallager	2000-01 Jerry Koellisch	2023-24 Amelia Nieves (2)
1978-79 Paul Mullowney	2001-02 Brad Area	2025-26 Patrick McDowell
1979-80 Frank Keller	2002-03 Manny Rodrigues	2026-27 Rashell Tye
1980-81 Robert Ellis (2) *	2003-04 Robert Calsing *	

* Deceased (2) Second Term (3) Third Term (4) Fourth Term

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Corona Elks Lodge is committed to supporting America's veterans by following the goals of the National Elks Veterans policies. "So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks will never forget them."

The Corona Elks live up to this pledge to the highest level, with several of our lodge members leading this effort. The Corona Elks support our veterans through programs like the Christmas Party for children of Vets in need, our program to assist homeless veterans, and the Blue and Gold Star Mother's Steak Dinner held annually.

Members of our Elks also reach out to other Veteran organizations to volunteer. **Tom Sherman** (a five-decade Elk member and Life Member) and **Ray Russell** (an over 25-year Elk member) have been officers and active members of the Corona American Legion Post #742 and past Lodge Tiler **George Brightenburg,** a past Commander of American Legion Post #216. They have done an excellent job of tying the mission of two non-profits together for the benefit of helping Veterans.

The Corona Elks continually strive to support and help Veterans.

TRADITIONS, CEREMONIES, AND RITUALS

During the early years of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, many of the initiations and ceremonies of the Elks Lodges resembled college fraternities with hazing and made-up challenges. The meaningful and respectful rituals of the contemporary Elks Lodges honor the things that make this country great: faith, family, and country.

The current ceremonies and rituals are designed to encourage dedication to the principles of being an Elk.

Fidelity, Brotherly Love, Charity, and Justice



(Below: In the center is the altar and around it are images of the podiums of each of the Esteemed Knights and at the top the Exalted Ruler)



CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Charitable contributions from the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks have increased annually since its start back in 1868. Donations to charities have gone from tens of thousands of dollars to over $4,000,000,000, and this figure continues to grow.

The National Elks Lodge directs each state Elks Lodge to identify a primary state charity to be added to the national charitable programs recognized by the national BPOE.

California and Hawaii joined together to adopt the Purple Pig Program to assist needy children with disabilities to pay hospital and therapy bills, with about $4,000,000 contributed annually.



The Corona Elks is involved in a multitude of charitable programs every year. This includes our sponsorship of a Boy Scout troop and other nonprofit organizations as we work together to make things better. The following photo collage exemplifies our past commitment to helping those in need.



Victress Bower School for Exceptional Children
"The Best School in America!"
Russell Marsh, Principal

P.R.I.D.E.

May 8th, 2018



TO: Corona Elks Lodge #2045

FROM: Victress Bower

To all Lodge Members and Families,

We are honored to receive $2,500.00 dollars for the 2017-2018 school year. We have ordered a large wheelchair swing to replace an older smaller wheelchair swing. Once we receive this we will show you what new swing area we created for our students. Basically, with your generous donation we redesigned our older, outdated swing-set into a safer and more user friendly area!!!!

Our staff and students thank the Corona Elks Lodge # 2045 members and families for their continuous support of so many NEEDED projects. We look forward to the relationship we have with the lodge and we welcome any members to come by to view the system and our school.

Victress Bower only serves the most severe and medically fragile students. Out of the current 55 students enrolled there are only five students that are able to walk without support.

Sincerely THANK YOU!

Russell Marsh













CORONA ELKS SPONSOR VETERAN'S FAMILY CHRISTMAS







SOCIAL LIFE AT THE CORONA ELKS

When Charles Vivian began a social club of entertainers in New York in 1867, he took the first step in a journey of a thousand miles. The group's original intent was as a social gathering to get around New York's restrictive Blue laws of the 19th century. {Blue laws commonly ban certain
business and recreational activities on Sundays and impose restrictions on the retail sale of hard goods and consumables, particularly alcoholic beverages, as examples.}

The group called themselves the Jolly Corks. Within a year, they became the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and over the next century and a half, they evolved into the social and charitable organization we know today.

It's that social and charitable aspect that people find welcoming about the Elks. On a personal note, my father-in-law, Mike Derenzo, moved into our home from Washington, and it was then he introduced me to a new experience. He was a 45-year Elk, and to make him feel at home, we started dropping by some of the social events at the Corona Lodge. After a few Taco Tuesdays and Steak Nights, I began to feel at home and welcome. Mike asked to sponsor me as a member. I joined.

The social environment at the Lodge events is always upbeat and friendly. The volunteers who make all the events successful are the cornerstones of the Lodge. Everyone is invited to help our Lodge by finding an area that suits them.

The following picture collage shows photos of most of the Lodge's social events in 2018.






International Night













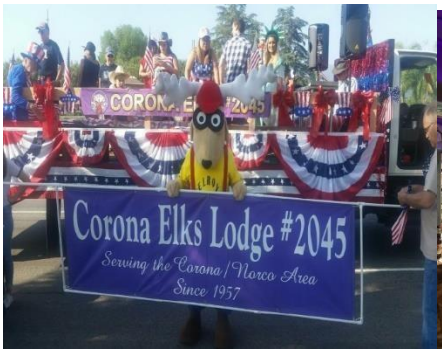







7/13 Lets Paint! $25pp
Freedom
Paint Night
7/13 ~ Paint Party 101 ~ $25pp




Corona Elks Lodge #2045
Serving the Corona / Norco Area
Since 1957








YOUTH TODAY
ELKS TOMORROW
CORONA ELKS LODGE 2045

HOPE AND FUTURE

This document has focused on the journey the Corona Elks Lodge #2045 has traveled to get to the place we are today. It also shares some of the fun we have together while raising money for our community.

"I asked the Past Exalted Ruler, **Jesse Vargas**, to give his view of where we want to go. Here were his thoughts.

"When I was interviewed by the Past Exalted Ruler's Association of Corona Elks Lodge before being installed as Exalted Ruler, I was asked what was my platform. I had already looked at the membership statistics over the past five years on the elks.org website and saw that membership was on a downward trend, as it has been for many non-profit groups. Thus, my platform was to increase membership and involvement.

Initiating new members, especially younger members, benefits our Lodge as new members beget new members. Additionally, the remodel of our Club Room, to bring it up to modern-day standards, was used as a recruiting tool to bring in more members of all ages.

As new members started coming forward with ideas for events and Lodge functions, my policy had always been to listen to the ideas and always encourage more involvement and participation. With all that we have accomplished this last year, I feel we have set the stage for future leaders to continue the trend of membership growth, community involvement, helping children with disabilities through major projects, helping veterans through our Veterans Affairs Committee; doing things for the special needs children of our adopted Victress Bower special needs school; as well as, supporting Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Looking back at the original charter members' vision of what they wanted to accomplish and where they expected the Lodge to be 62 years later, I hope we have not disappointed. I would like to think that we have continued with their pioneering spirit and made significant contributions to the community and the members of this great brotherhood. Lastly, I have been blessed with knowing so many generous and giving people. BPOE also stands for the Best People On Earth!"

Acknowledgments

History has always been one of my loves and hobbies. When I found a lack of written history for our Lodge, I was motivated by the many great Elks I met at the Lodge to provide this short historical review.

When I conceived of this project, I went to the then Exalted Ruler, Jesse Vargas with a proposal of my willingness to provide a brief written history of the Corona Lodge #2045. His support was very important to completing this, which allowed me to look in the rearview mirror of Corona Elks Lodge # 2045.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the many Corona Elks I have pestered with questions in order to put this Corona Elks history together. Many have provided great background stories that I have been privileged to hear. The brevity of this historical report hasn't allowed me to use all the information provided to me.

On a personal note, when the District Deputy Exalted Ruler was at our meeting to present the Presidential Award to Frank Keller, our ER introduced me to him (along with his wife) as the Lodge {mythical} historian. Little things mean a lot!

Thanks to Lodge member Art Hernandez for his assistance with some of the photographic work. Special thanks to all the members who provided pictures that allowed the creation of the charitable and social photography collages showcasing our 2018 activities.

The last acknowledgment goes to the W.D. Addison Heritage Room - the center of local history - in the Corona Public Library. A personal thanks to Jennifer Marlatt, for searching the archives for supporting historical photographs and information.

Members will be able to look through this document to learn about the history of the Corona Elks. I hope it encourages them to join the long list of active volunteers and commit to the battle to help those in need through the many Corona Elks Lodge's charitable programs.

Just remember, if you are a member of Corona Elks Lodge # 2045 and you aren't having fun…You aren't doing it right!

"Thanks for the Memories"

Bob Young, Author

Photos of More Memories



The Board of Grand Trustees held its fall meeting at the **Elks National Home** in Bedford, VA. Pictured are (from left) Frank Keller, Administrative Assistant to the GER; Trustees Elmer Lanini, Ann McCallum, Gene Buchy, John Heard and Valentine Bates; GER Moore; Grand Secretary Varenhorst; Chairman of the Board Galen Marr; Trustees Paul Helsel and Clyde Thornburg; and Home Executive Director William Pickett.

Grand Lodge Trustee, 1995, including Frank Keller and GER Ken Moore at Elks National Home



GER Ken Moore planting a tree at the Elks National Home,
1995



(Above: Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA), a member of Corona Lodge, and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich with GER Ken Moore, 1990s.)