

Arizona Elks News

The Arizona Elks News is an Official Publication of the Arizona Elks Association

January, 2018



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Arizona Elks
Web Site:
azelks.org

"Good Communication Breeds Success"

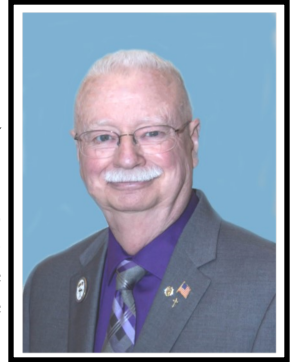
Jim's Jibberish

~ HAPPY NEW YEAR ~

Dear Members,

We welcome in the New Year and are hoping and praying for a peaceful and wonderful New Year.

Just a reminder of our District Hoop Shoots coming up this month...each Saturday will find us in a different city for a different Hoop Shoot. The dates and places can be found on the State website under the calendar. arizonaelksassociation.org Please come out and support your District's kids vying for a title to move them on toward the State shoot on February 17th in Apache Junction. Thanks to Gregg and Jeanne Boyce for their outstanding work on behalf of the Hoop Shoot and what it means to thousands of kids across the great state of Arizona and the nation.



I wanted to again suggest and challenge Lodges across Arizona to promote our two annual meetings at the state level. Our annual AEA Convention will be held in Tempe at the Doubletree Hotel by Hilton on May 9-12, ending my tenure as your State President and the installation of incoming President, Mike Murphy from Tempe Lodge #2251. Please come out and show your support and confidence for this new team of officers, as you have showed our current team your support. One does not need to attend every dinner, lunch, etc., it's your choice to pick and choose. If anyone talks of the cost involved, please let them know that they do not have to attend all the functions, but, the advantage in attending is that it builds teamwork within your Lodge, your District and especially in the State. They will find interesting topics to discuss with fellow Elks from around the State, exchange ideas and therefore, better the goals of the Arizona Elks. The mid-year meeting is in October of each year...it's a nice way to start off the fall and the winter happenings. It's a shorter meeting, by one day, and again, it gives an individual the chance to meet and greet fellow Elks from throughout our state.

Our delinquency rate is still high in our state. We need to concentrate on this to show a positive number at the end of the fraternal year. We have many waiting initiation into our Order. Why is this not being addressed? What is the hold-up? Also, have you used your Stray Elks listing to check on new arrivals in your communities? Now is the time to work on that. There are more people moving into Arizona again since the economy seems to be on an upward trend. Do not let those Stray Elks wander and roam without a "home".

Please don't forget our Progress Meeting on February 24th, I'm expecting all of our State Committee Chairs to be there and give their next to final report on their committees. Jan and I wish everyone the very best of the New Year and that it brings all you want for you and your families. Be safe and enjoy!

Until next issue, I remain

Fraternally,

Jim

Jim Casacchia
AEA President



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Lake Havasu Helps The Marines

Earlier this year, the Marine Corps League's equipment trailer was obliterated by a lightning strike. The Lodge and several groups donated a combined \$2,300.00 to Marine Corps League to help replace destroyed equipment. Pictured are MCL Senior Vice Commandant Ron White, ER Gary Parsons donating \$1,000.00 from the Lodge, Elkette President Paulette Nainteau donating \$500.00 from the Elkettes, Country Line Dancer President Julie Cameron and Dancer Nancy Reynolds donating \$300.00 from the Line Dancers, PER Association President Denny Dunkirk donating \$500.00 from the PER Association and MCL Public Relations/Information Officer Russell Mascari

Article and photo submitted by Jackie Turcotte



Sun City Elks Support Youth Group

On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, Sun City Elks Lodge #2559 was proud to become a partner with the Maricopa County Sheriffs Youth Foundation.

The Maricopa County Youth Foundation program works with local youth from ages 14-21 years old.

The foundation works to instill discipline, respect and honor within the group and community.

The youth group works at community events providing security, assisting with toy drives for the underprivileged, helps to provide toys and bicycles to those who have none and assists with the St. Vincent De Paul charitable organization in their charitable efforts.

In 2016, the deputy's and youth group provided for approximately 4,700 toys and 700 bicycles to needy youth and plan to do the same or more in 2017 according to Deputy Merritt who is actively involved in the program.

Over the past few years, the youth group has seen nine (9) of their group go to college, two (2) become police officers, six (6) become detention officers and four (4) join the military.

The Sun City Elks assisted the program by donating a check for \$1,500 to the Sheriffs Department Youth Assistance Group Foundation, with the hope that this program will continue and grow.

The \$1,500 was a grant given to the Sun City Lodge by the Arizona State Major Project program and was provided to the Sun City Elks to assist in local youth charitable programs, such as the Sheriffs youth Program. The only restriction being the grant must be used for a program that the lodge does not presently support. The lodge already supports a boy scout and girl scout troop and a cub scout den as well as providing drug awareness and scholarship programs and students of the month programs to 12 local schools.

The Arizona State Elks Major projects program supports the Steele Memorial Foundation in Tucson, Arizona, a foundation dedicated to erasing childhood diseases. Upwards of \$6 million dollars has been donated by the Elks major Projects Foundation, enough so that the Steele Foundation has added a new wing to their hospital naming it the "Elks Wing". It also supports a youth camp in the Sierra Anche Mountains, approximately 40 miles north of Globe. The camp is open to any organized youth group, such as school and church groups, scout groups and city and state youth groups, all expenses paid as long as these groups are organized and show proof of insurance.

The Elks Organization is a Fraternal organization and all Elk Lodges work diligently to support their individual communities.

Article submitted by Val Bianchini Public Relations Chair.

Catalina Mountain Kids Shopping Spree

Christmas came early for students from Roadrunner Elementary School in the Marana Unified School District. On Saturday, December 2, thirty-five students had the unique opportunity to be treated to a shopping spree and holiday luncheon sponsored by Catalina Mountain Elks Lodge #2815.

Lodge members and community volunteers greeted the students, grades K-6, and personally assisted each child with their clothing and shoe purchases at Oro Valley Marketplace Walmart Supercenter. The students were allowed to spend \$140 each.

Following the shopping spree, Roadrunner students attended a holiday luncheon party at the Lodge. During the luncheon, students were visited by Santa and Mrs. Claus, who arrived in a Golder Ranch Fire District fire truck. Each child received a toy from Santa and a stocking full of school supplies. Elroy the Elk also visited the lodge and distributed drug awareness literature to each student.



Catalina Mountain Elks Chairperson Joyce Garcia said, “This is one of my favorite times of the year. It is heartwarming to see what a difference the day makes for these wonderful children.”

Article submitted by Pat Cox, Public Relations Chair. Group Photo by Robert Hurt

Holbrook Elks Support Scouts



Holbrook BPOE #2450 recently presented \$500 each to the local Boy Scout Troop, led by Twyla Taylor, and Girl Scout Troop 151, also of Holbrook, led by Jme Baloo. The lodge was awarded the grant funds due to the fundraising efforts of chairperson, Gerrienne Bielefeldt, through the Arizona Elks Major Projects to forward to worthy local youth programs.

Some of the Girl Scouts will be working on their Silver Award Project. A Friendship Garden to include a labyrinth and benches for relaxation, reflection

and meditation. The proceeds will be used towards the many materials needed for this project.

The Boy Scouts have many projects. Their Secret Santa project includes painting and home repair for a single working Mom, they help where needed for residents of Extended Care of Holbrook, Christmas gifts for a large family in need.

The Holbrook Elks Lodge is very proud to be able to help these two youth groups with their projects. The Scouts are an excellent example of “Paying it Forward”



Boy Scout Picture Front row: Twyla Taylor, Ivan Smith, Alex Szverra, Shane Smith, Dan Bielefeldt, Gerrienne Bielefeldt, middle row: Ryan Taylor, Wynn Penfiled, Aiden Legg, Trevor Taylor, back row: Ray McLaws, Ron Smith, Brayden Taylor, Sam and Ben Meeks Girl Scout Picture From left to right are: Cindy Allen, Kaylee Derrick, Elena Mar-

Elks Youth Activity Post 2399 donation Parks and Rec



The Elks Youth Activity donated \$300 to the Parks and Recreation Program. The money will be used for the Annual Children’s Community Celebration held this Saturday December 9th at the Rotary Park from 10:00 – 2:00. Children will be treated to a petting zoo, inflatable toys, crafts, food and a visit from Santa. Handmade ornaments that may be kept or donated will also be part of the activities.

Pictured Left to Right: HR Radtke – Elks Youth Activity Chairman Sarah Ross – Program Coordinator

Planned Giving

Financial Help for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Are there any financial assistance programs that can help grandparents who are raising their grandkids? I'm raising two grandchildren and could use some help.

Money is often an issue for the millions of U.S. grandparents who are raising their grandchildren today. To help with day-to-day expenses, there are a variety of government programs and tax benefits that can make a big difference in stretching your budget. Here's where to look for help.

Financial Assistance Programs

For starters, find out whether your family qualifies for your state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which may include cash assistance, food stamps and free or low-cost daycare. If your household income is too high to qualify as a family, ask about the "child-only grant" for just the grandchild's support alone. You should also find out if your state offers any additional programs like guardianship subsidies, non-parent grants or kinship care.

Contact your state's TANF program (see ACF.HHS.gov/ofa for contact information) or call your county's social services office for more information about these programs.

You should also determine if your grandkids are eligible for Social Security benefits, including benefits for children, survivor benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). You can find this out by visiting your local Social Security office or by calling 800-772-1213 or visit SSA.gov.

Also, check out BenefitsCheckUp.org, a comprehensive website that allows you to search for additional financial assistance programs or discounts that you may be eligible for, such as discounts on energy bills and prescription medications.

Tax Benefits

In addition to the financial assistance programs, there are also a number of tax benefits that may help. For example, the Dependency Exemption allows you to deduct \$4,050 for each qualifying grandchild in 2017.

There is also the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is available in 2017 to those with moderate to low incomes. The Child Tax Credit is also available in 2017 for those who earn too much money to qualify for the EITC.

If you are employed and are incurring childcare expenses, the Child and Dependent Care Credit may save you money on your 2017 return. Also, if you choose to legally adopt your grandkids, there is an Adoption Credit that provides a federal tax credit of up to \$13,570 in 2017.

There are also education-related tax credits available if your grandchildren attended college in 2017. These credits include the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit.

To learn more about these tax benefits, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or visit IRS.gov. You can also call the IRS publication line at 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you the publications that further explain the aforementioned benefits for your 2017 tax return. Ask for publications 501, 503, 596, 970, 972. Also be aware that these credits and benefits could change in 2018 pending any tax law changes.

Health Insurance

If your grandchildren need health insurance, depending on your income level, you may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance through your state's Medicaid Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program. See InsureKidsNow.gov or call 877-543-7669 for more information.

Legal Aid

You also should consider speaking to a family law attorney to discuss the pros and cons of obtaining legal guardianship, custody or adoption. Without some sort of legal custody, you may not be eligible for many of the previously listed financial assistance programs. You may also face problems with basic things like enrolling your grandchildren in school or giving a doctor permission to provide medical assistance. For help locating affordable or free legal assistance, visit www.FindLegalHelp.org or call the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 for referrals.

For more information and resources, see the Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center at GrandFamilies.org.

Need Additional Information ?
Al Skorupski, PSP
Planned Giving Program
plngvg@aemp.tuccoxmail.com

Arizona Elks Major Projects

At this time of year we often see advertisements on television for St. Jude's Childrens Hospital, Shriner's Hospitals, Make-a-Wish Foundation, and several other worthwhile children's charities. These are national organizations and, by the extent and frequency of their ads, cannot spend all of their donations on the children they purport to help. I'm sure the care they provide is excellent.

"Just \$19 a month" or "Just \$.60 a day" is the usual amount they ask for. While this may or may not be practical for everyone, the funds they collect are used in their hospitals and facilities throughout the United States. Those who donate to these charities have no choice in there their donations are used.

Arizona Elks Major Projects accomplishes everything these childrens' charities do *but every cent collected from Arizona Elks stays right here in Arizona.* Arizona Elks have provided the very latest in state-of-the-art research equipment, funds for pediatrician training and development and medical research that end up as hands-on medical care for children at the Steele Children's Research Center.

No child's family is ever given a bill for care at the Steele Center. The award-winning research conducted there and the care provided children there is second to none. Research is shared with childrens' hospitals throughout the world via the Internet and all donations to the Steele Children's Research Center qualify for tax-exempt status.

Our lodges are asked to have one or more events for "Major Projects" each year. Net proceeds from these events, along with our investments will allow us to contribute \$450,000 each year to "Steele" for the next five years. Every dollar collected helps to provide the necessary research and care to thousands of Arizona children each year, all without asking anything from their families.

Our new and improved website is now active and provides information about donations to the Steele Center, the Jack C. Warter Jr. Youth Camp and the new Legacy (Planned Giving) Program. **Please go to www.elks4kids.org** for complete information.

Article submitted by Ira Cohen, President Arizona Elks Major Projects

Phoenix 335 Donations to Veterans



The Phoenix Elks Lodge #335 Donated \$3,000.00 worth of furniture to Veterans in transition from homelessness to an apartment.

In the picture Bill Conner VP Veterans Furniture Center, John Schwiesow Veterans Furniture Center, Andy Chuka Phx Elks, Pamela Records Phx Elks, Larry Bodwell ER Phx Elks

Article and photo submitted by Larry Bodwell, Exalted Ruler.

Food Bank Donation



The Elks Country Dance Club donated \$300 to the Interagency Food Bank. The money will be used to help families in the community that need assistance providing Christmas dinners.

Pictured left to right: Julie Cameron – Dance Club, Linda Scoggin – Interagency Food Bank, Nancy Reynolds – Dance Club

Article and photo submitted by HR Radtke

“Mountain of Undies” Report....

I just want to say a big “Thank You” to all the individuals and Lodges that so graciously donated to our Mountain of Undies for the Veteran’s at the Mid-year meeting.

Our **final count** of all is approximately **\$2,600**, but rest assured that all of the VA Hospitals, the 2 VA Homes in Tucson and Phoenix and any other venues where the Veterans Committee deemed needy, were happy to receive the undies that were collected.

I was so impressed by the “Mountain”, I could hardly believe my eyes. Thank you again and remember, this campaign will continue through the May convention...

Jan Casacchia

AEA First Lady

Wife of President Jim

Catalina Mountain Elks Adopt-a-Family Program



Catalina Mountain Elks Lodge #2815 made the holiday season brighter for 12 children in need from families in the Catalina area through its Adopt-a-Family program. The program was funded by several fundraisers and generous donations from lodge members. Lodge Community Activities Coordinator Jan Trudeau purchased clothing, toys, and art supplies for the children and delivered them to IMPACT of Southern Arizona for distribution.

Pictured are (from left) Leading Knight Bob Kielsa, Community Activities Coordinator Jan Trudeau and IMPACT Youth Program Manager Brenda Garcia. Article and photo submitted by Pat Cox, Public Relations Chair

Elks Students

The Bullhead City Elks are proud to honor four seniors for their academic achievements in November with a certificate presented by Elks Youth Activities (right) Carol Crough. From left is Lacey Freasier from Mohave Accelerated Learning Center, who wants to go the Eckerd College in Florida to study marine biology. From Mohave HS is Erika Magana looking to become a nurse practitioner and hopes to attend UNLV, From River Valley HS are Cody Gill who has been accepted to NAU to study law enforcement to eventually be an agent with the FBI and Janelle Florez who will study computer science while attending U of A in Tucson and is interested in the technology that drives the self-driving cars.

Article and photo submitted by Terri Frear, Public Relations Chair.



Elks Spread Christmas Cheer to Children and Veterans



Catalina Mountain Elks Lodge #2815 spread a little Christmas cheer at the Arizona Elks Pediatric Clinic at Banner University Medical Center and the Arizona State Veterans Home. Committee Chairperson Joyce Garcia, accompanied by PDDGER Jack Baillargeon, Gail Baillargeon, and Leading Knight Bob Kielsa, delivered gifts to the veterans and a Christmas tree decorated with snowbabies ornaments to



the Pediatric Clinic. The children also received stuffed animals, music boxes, and 75 books, which were donated by a secret Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Pictured are (from left) Pediatric Clinic staff, Joyce Garcia, Gail and Jack Baillargeon.

Pictured are (from left) Bob, Kielsa, Gail Baillargeon, Joyce Garcia, and Jack Baillargeon.

Article and photo submitted by Pat Cox, Public Relations Chair.

Sun City Elks Continue To Support Our Vets

On Thursday, October 19, 2017, two more vets were provided with an opportunity For increased mobility.

On that Thursday, the Elks delivered two more motorized wheel chairs to vets at the U.S. Vets facility on Grand Ave. in Phoenix, Arizona.

The chairs are dedicated to vets who presently do not have the mobility that they would like to have and these chairs will go a long way in increasing their freedom of movement considerably.

Both vets have extremely difficult times walking and look forward to the extra mobility that these chairs will provide and the Sun City Elks are only happy to accommodate them.

Pictured L to R: Val Bianchini, Gary Drumheller, Randy Roberts and Tony Davis. Seated: C. Sosa, and William Evans.



Article and photo submitted by Val Bianchini, Public Relations Chair

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APS Light Parade



Phoenix Elks Lodge #335 had a float in the APS Light Parade on December 2nd 2017. We had members of our Antlers walking the route alongside Elks. The parade committee think that there were 350,000 people viewing the parade.

Article and photo submitted by Larry Bodwell, Exalted Ruler.

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