

Lakewood Rancher



A FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION

MONTHLY NEWLETTER LAKEWOOD RANCH SARASOTA ELKS LODGE 2855

March 2020

Message from Exalted Ruler Randy Volkart



How times have changed! Twelve years ago we were not an Elks Lodge. A few dozen of us were striving to recruit enough prospective members to receive our Charter (we needed 125 members).

Today we have monthly Orientation/Initiation classes of 20+ new members so you might think that reaching 125 back then would have been easy. However back then we were only selling a dream.

We had no bar, no restaurant, no games, no events, and no live music. Gradually, one new member at a time, the dream came true and we received our Charter in 2009.

Today, we have 1100+ members and continue to grow. We are the newest Lodge in our Elks district, and recently became the largest in membership.

How did this happen? Many of us believe that it was largely because of our dedication to be known as "The Friendly Lodge". Now that we are a larger Lodge, are we still as friendly? While I believe the answer to that question is currently "Yes", I am also aware that we ALL must strive

to keep it that way.

This month, instead of honoring volunteers, I want to recognize our employees. Bartenders Paula Burhoe, Jeff Bittenger, Cherie Klepek, Stephany Johnson, and Deanna Foxworthy. Though they sometimes get 'slammed' with customers, they all manage to keep a smile. Thank you all! Francesca Affolter helps in the kitchen doing whatever needs to be done. Our amazing chef Richard Sargent has amazing cooking skills, and is also a great Elk, as witnessed by fundraisers where he provides both the food and labor, with the Lodge getting all the proceeds.

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Congratulations to our officer-elects for next year



The following officers were nominated unopposed at the February 13th meeting and following their election on our next regular meeting on February 27 will be installed into their new offices on Saturday, March 21st.

Exalted Ruler - Jerry Ditty
Leading Knight - Tonya Ditty
Loyal Knight - Kathy Hogue
Lecturing Night - Frank Iannello
5 yr Trustee - Randy Volkart
Secretary - Brett Davis
Treasurer - Gloria Wilkinson
Alternate to Grand Lodge - Randy Volkart

ER

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Lodge Treasurer Gloria Wilkinson is our longest tenured employee and keeps our business running smoothly. She also volunteers for various fundraisers and serves as one of our "Door Greeters" Kudos, Gloria! Last, but certainly not least, is Lodge Secretary Brett Davis.

Brett is a Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, and currently serves on various Boards of the Florida State Elks Association, all while performing the demanding task of Lodge Secretary. In addition, he also is our Lodge Advisor, whose sage advice has been invaluable to me.

The quote of the month by Marty Rubin, "A simple thing like being friendly to people will create more understanding than all the poetry in the world."

From the Lodge Secretary Brett Davis PDDGER



We are in the heart of the membership renewal season. Please be aware that In order to allow for processing and printing, it will take 14 days from the time you renew until you receive your card. And if you are among the 40% that have not renewed as yet, please do so TODAY!

Remember, you must have your card in-hand in order to enter the Lodge and participate in its activities. Merely holding a receipt showing you paid is not sufficient. You must renew no later than March 15th to have the best chance of having your new card by April 1st when the automatic door locks are

changed. And we have made it easy to do so. You can renew in-club, via the phone by calling the lounge, and online at LWRELKS.ORG.

On another note, an ever increasing problem has been our 'returned mail.' Please remember to let us know if you have a change of address.. This is of particular importance for our SNOWBIRD Members. The Elks membership system does not handle the situation for the changes back and forth as you head home each year. So please let us know each time it must be changed.

There is now a direct phone line to the Secretary's office at 941 567-4245. If you call you will most often have to leave a message as I per-

form most of my duties remotely. However the fastest way to ensure I hear from you is by email at 'info@lwrelks.org'.

We will be initiating 26 candidates at our March initiation ceremony on Saturday, March 7th, and will still have about 30 more being processed. Our membership by the close of the Lodge year should be in excess of 1100.

As we continue to grow it's most important that we do not lose the "family" dynamic that has helped us to become one of the largest Lodges in Florida. PLEASE remember to introduce yourself to someone you don't know and make everyone feel welcomed.



In February, ten Elks from Lakewood Ranch Sarasota Lodge read Let's B Safe books to first graders at two local elementary schools. The books teach children about safety and

what to do if they feel threatened. After the lesson, each child receives a book and a stuffed Bee to take home. These items are supplied by the money from the Promise Grant. By taking the books home the children can share what they have learned with their family. The Bee is to remind them of the safety rules

they have learned. This program is always well received by the children and their teachers. The readers also enjoy sharing this valuable information with the children.

Submitted by Kay Thorson



Freedom Grants

Great news! In 2019-20, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission awarded \$2,000 Freedom Grants to 325 Lodges to hold projects that are serving veterans and active-duty military members. Grants were awarded on a rolling basis to the first 325 Lodges to submit qualifying projects that serve a population in need.

"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

Freedom Grant projects must focus on one of these five areas:

- employment
- homelessness and housing
- military families
- health
- educational support

Lakewood Ranch Sarasota Lodge was one of the 325 Lodges that were awarded a \$2000 grant to be used this year.

Our Veterans' Committee will be using our grant to take Veterans to a baseball game on Sunday, March 22nd at Lecom Field in Bradenton to see the Pittsburgh Pirates game with the Tampa Bay Rays. Game time is 1:05 pm

For information contact Tom Sweeney Veteran's Committee Chairman at 928-3903.



- ◆ Paws for Patriots
- ◆ Veteran's Free Lunch
- ◆ Visit to Bay Pines

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INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS 2020-2021

SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST

We're on the Web
Lwrelks.org

Lodge Officers 2019-2020

Exalted Ruler	Randy Volkart
Leading Knight	Tonya Ditty, PER
Loyal Knight	Rick Thorson, PER
Lecturing Knight	Kathy Hogue
Secretary	Brett Davis, PDDGER
Treasurer	Gloria Wilkinson
5 yr Trustee	Jerry Ditty
4 yr Trustee	John Piper, PER
3 yr Trustee	Darrin Simone Sr. PER
2 yr Trustee	Terry Layland
1 yr Trustee	Leon Duis
Esquire	Frank Malatesta, PSP
Chaplain	Kay Thorson
Inner Guard	Frank Iannello
Tiler	Ron Lee
Lodge Advisor	Brett Davis PDDGER

PER Association

President - Tonya Ditty
Vice President - Darrin Simone Sr
Secretary - Rick Thorson

Committees

Activities - Tonya Ditty, PER
Community Projects - Rick Thorson, PER
Youth Activities - Randy Volkart, ER
Hoop Shoot - Joe Halpin
Soccer Shoot - Randy Volkart, ER
Drug Awareness - Sarah Davis
Fraternal - Randy Volkart, ER
Americanism - Rick Thorson, PER
ENF - Brett Davis, PDDGER
Flag Day - Rick Thorson, PER
Elks Memorial Day - Randy Volkart, ER
Lodge Activities - Norma Perugino
Veterans - Tom Sweeney
Accident Prevention—Terry Layland
EFELT - Clay Wakefield
Elks Training - Tonya Ditty, PER
Entertainment - Norma Perugino
Government Relations - Rick Thorson, PER
Inter-Lodge Visitation - Brett Davis, PDDGER
Investigation - Don LaFrance, PDDGER
Orientation - Darrin Simone Sr., PER
Ranch Hands - Tonya Ditty, PER
Ritualistic - Frank Malatesta, PDDGER, PSP
Scholarship - Dawn Fallon
Sickness & Distress - Joanne DiCarlo
State Major Project - Kathy Hogue & Joanne DiCarlo
Website - Kayla Goddard