

Central District News

New Jersey Elks/January 2026/Volume 22, Issue 8



 I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and I want to wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!

January looks to be a busy month with several Lodge Chili Cookoffs and the District Chili Cookoff on January 31st at Colonia Lodge, which will benefit the district's Army of Hope Committee (check the district calendar for dates of the lodge cookoffs).

Come out and support another great cause at the "Shave That Beard Fundraiser" for Camp Moore on January 17th at Union Lodge. Watch PSP Pete Smith and others shave off PER from Piscataway Lodge Kevin Krasnansky's beard. Contact Jessica Dudik, Central District SCC Chair for tickets.

The state Soccer shoot is on January 10th at Manasquan High School. The following day, January 11th is the Central District Hoop Shoot at the Woodbridge Community Center.

DD Dan will be holding his second DD Clinic on Monday, January 12th at New Brunswick Lodge. I will be holding my second VP Meeting on Tuesday, January 27th at Edison Lodge. I look forward to the reports about the great work that they are doing. I encourage all Leading Knights to attend with your Exalted Ruler to learn more about our Central District committees.

"Remember: The help we extend to those in need is added to our own strength".

Fraternally,
Dan Pencak
Central District Vice-President

 Happy New Year

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DISTRICT LEADERS

Francis J. Decibus PSDGER
Peter D. Smith PSP

DISTRICT DIGNITARIES

Dan Pencak VP
Dan De Zaio DDGER
Betty Bellanca CDST

Newsletter & Calendar

Bill Seesselberg PER

Our State Project



District Deputy Message Dan De Zaio DDGER

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful holiday season. As we move into January, we know that for us—especially as Elks in our Central District—this marks one of the busiest times of the year.

I will be hosting my next District Deputy Clinic on January 12th at New Brunswick Elks at 7p.m. This clinic is a requirement for all Exalted Rulers, Leading Knights, Lodge Secretaries, and Chairs of the Board of Directors. It is highly encouraged for all lodge officers to attend as it provides valuable knowledge and insights into the Elks organization.



This is a very important time of year for our lodges. It's essential that our PER associations hold meetings to discuss the upcoming nominations and elections, which will take place at the first and second meetings in February. If your lodge has not yet selected a date for the installation of officers—scheduled to occur between March 15 and April 15—please begin doing so and notify me as soon as possible so I can plan accordingly. Several lodges have already provided their dates.

All visits have been completed, and I will be following up with the lodges to ensure progress has been made, especially regarding the safety items. The good news is that our district performed very well overall, and most of the items identified were minor. I commend all lodge leadership for staying on top of these matters and for the care and attention you give to your buildings and properties.

Please keep me informed of any important events your lodge is hosting, as well as when new members are being initiated. I will always do my best to attend. The district has done an outstanding job bringing in new members since April—keep up the great work!

Continue to be THE BEST OF THE BEST.

Fraternally,
Dan De Zaio
Central District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler





Elking Around the District



Edison Elks spreading some holiday cheer with caroling at the Menlo Park Veterans Home



South Plainfield ER Tom Perry brings his grandsons to meet Santa at the lodge's Breakfast with Santa



Watching Hills Lodge Hosted their SCC Christmas Party with Santa





DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS

Americanism	Hank Hart PER	tahklikid@gmail.com	609-401-6512
Army of Hope	Sal Malinconico PVP	smalinconico@aol.com	732-690-9421
Auditing	Megan Hayes PER	mah411@optonline.net	732-986-2887
CLMS	Rita Massimi PDD	joereets@yahoo.com	908-966-3242
Conventions	Karen Imperatrice PER	adele310@aol.com	908-472-8649
Drug Awareness	Jeanine Sieber PER	jaselks784@gmail.com	732-690-8858
Government Relations	Ginger Olszewski PER	golszewski@msn.com	732-668-2392
Hoop Shoot	Brian Molnar PER	bmolnar20@aol.com	732-750-9252
Internet Operations	Bill Seesselberg PER	billseess@gmail.com	908-217-1831
Lodge Activities	Betty Bellanca PDD	booper336@yahoo.com	908-917-3166
Membership	Jennifer Hammill PER	jhammillelks@gmail.com	732-718-0167
National Foundation	Paula Kopcho PDD	pjkopcho@gmail.com	732-501-2280.
National Veterans Services	Dave Lewis PER	david.lewis.885@optimum.net	908-227-8228.
Parades	Tina Bartko	tinabartko@gmail.com	732-983-2699
Public Relations	George Michaels PER	geomichaels@aol.com	609-802-2182
Ritual	Jami Gill PER	jgill102178@gmail.com	908-419-3143
Scholarship	Jerry Mercado PER	Jbm.elkslodge324@gmail.com	908-812-5905
Soccer Shoot	Karen Finney	queenfinney@comcast.net	732-514-6614
Special Children	Jessica Dudik ER PER	misspris55@aol.com	732-718-3240
Training	Chris Sauer PDD	yackhunt@aol.com	732-672-9829
Youth Activities	Maureen Chapman PER	mojochapman@aol.com	732-236-7296
Youth Sport Tournament	Allen Hartland PER	allenhartland@gmail.com	732-322-8954



Americanism - Hank Hart PER

Welcome to 2026! We intend to carry on in our country's 250th birthday year with our Americanism Committee in celebrating this celebratory occasion.

Our committee will be meeting on January 19th at Woodbridge Lodge #2116 with the main topic of judging the entries to this year's essay contest. Carteret, East Brunswick, New Brunswick, Metuchen, Piscataway, South Plainfield and Woodbridge have received entries.

East Brunswick had a breakfast featuring Santa and the "Americanism Train" and had youth volunteers from East Brunswick's Youth Council. The money raised from the breakfast will be earmarked for the lodge's Americanism Committee.

Our lodges had their Memorial Service and the remembrance of the veterans who passed away was noted.

Lodges continue to identify their Citizen of the Year for the dinner to be held on March 7th at Woodbridge.

Fraternally,
Hank Hart PER
Central District Americanism Chair



Auditing – Megan Hayes PER

Happy New Year!

Quarterly Review - Per Grand Lodge Statute, each lodge's Audit Committee shall in the month of January review the financial record keeping of the Lodge and compliance of the approved budget. They should also be checking to see vouchers match payments and event forms are filled out and match the expenses and proceeds for all events the Lodge have held each quarter. The committee should give their report at the last meeting of the lodge in January.

FRS Reporting - Just a reminder, the monthly FRS Report is due by January 16th.

Contracting Accountant Now for Year-End - The fiscal year end is still months away but engaging your lodge accountant now for your year-end tax filings is a good idea. The Lodge Auditing and Accounting Committee should discuss with prospective accountants the requirements and proposed terms of the engagement. The "Employment of Accountant Contract" found in Appendix D of the Auditing and Accounting Manual (pages 119 & 120) needs to be completed. Inform the accountant when you will provide the books, which should be no later than April 30th, and that the accountant is aware that copies of the completed tax forms should be returned to you by June 15th. This allows the information to be presented to the Lodge at the last monthly meeting in June and tax forms to be uploaded to the GL Auditing and Accounting Committee for review by the August 1st deadline.

I know it seems like a long way off, but by starting now it will make meeting these deadlines much easier and help Lodges avoid possible fines for being late.

Fraternally,
Megan Hayes, PER
Central District Audit Chair



Conventions – Karen Imperatrice PER

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great holiday season. The Convention Committee will be meeting on February 5th and I am hoping to have some updates on the Wildwood Convention and Grand Lodge Convention.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Imperatrice, PER
Central District Convention Chair



Drug Awareness – Jeanine Sieber PER

I hope everyone had a wonderful and blessed holiday season and Happy New Year to all!

Right now there is a lot of excitement in the district, as ten out of our eleven lodges have hosted already, or will be having their lodge Chili Cook Offs in January. Remember, Colonia will be hosting the Central District Cook Off on Saturday, January 31st at 4 pm. The winner at the district level will proceed to the DAP State Chili Cook Off on Sunday, February 15th, 2 pm at Woodbridge Lodge. Cost is \$5 at the door and it gets you hot dogs, chili and a voting ticket, music and FUN! Even if your lodge is not sending someone to compete, please plan to attend the Cook Off, to support our district competitor.

The NJSEA Peer Leadership Conference and Pathways to Leadership Day Conference are rapidly approaching. You should be getting an email confirmation for the students that you have sponsored. This year the vouchers will be emailed to you, once every application, including yours as a Weekend Youth Advisor. Please submit your voucher for payment as soon as you can. If you have any questions you can email Jamie England, at njelksconference@gmail.com. Please be patient with her return email. She has been processing over 400+ student applications and adult volunteers.

The Peer Leadership Conference student and parent orientation will be held at Edison Lodge, on Sunday, January 18th at 2 pm. Please notify all the students and their parents/guardians of the orientation and the address for Edison Lodge. This year I would like to include a few students who attended last year to say a few words about their experience. Please let me know asap if you have someone to speak. I would like to thank Edison Lodge for hosting this event.

Our next DAP District Meeting is being held Monday, January 5th , 7 pm for hospitality, 7:30pm meeting, at East Brunswick Lodge. Please bring your Lodge 1st Place Winners from the DAP Poster, Essay and Video Contests. We will be judging them at our meeting. Thanks.

Yours in Elkdom,
Jeanine A. Sieber PER
Central District DAP Chair



Government Relations – Ginger Olszewski PER

District Government Relation Committees:

Just a reminder that your Government Relations Report should be submitted every month. If you are behind in submitting your report please do not wait until the last minute.

If you have questions on what you should be reporting, please contact me.

The goal is 100% reporting. We are doing the work, let's get the credit!

Fraternally,
Ginger Olszewski PER
District Government Relations Chair



Hoop Shoot – Brian Molnar PER

Happy New Year. Looking back, November and December were busy months for Hoop Shoot. Nine out of our eleven lodges held local Hoop Shoot competitions. As of now we have over 10 children participating on January 11th at the District Hoop Shoot.

Just a reminder for your calendars, District Hoop Shoot will be Sunday January 11th starting at 12 noon at the Woodbridge Community Center located at 600 Main Street in Woodbridge. Please come out and support our district shoot and cheer on our shooters.

Volunteers are expected from all lodges.

Fraternally yours,
Brian Molnar PER
Central District Hoop Shoot Director



Lodge Activities

Remember—when planning an activity or event, in addition to posting the details on Facebook, please send the details (including a flyer if available) to CJElksCalendar@gmail.com to be included in the district calendar.



Membership



South Plainfield Lodge initiated two members.



South Amboy Lodge initiated three members.

Public Relations – George Michaels PER

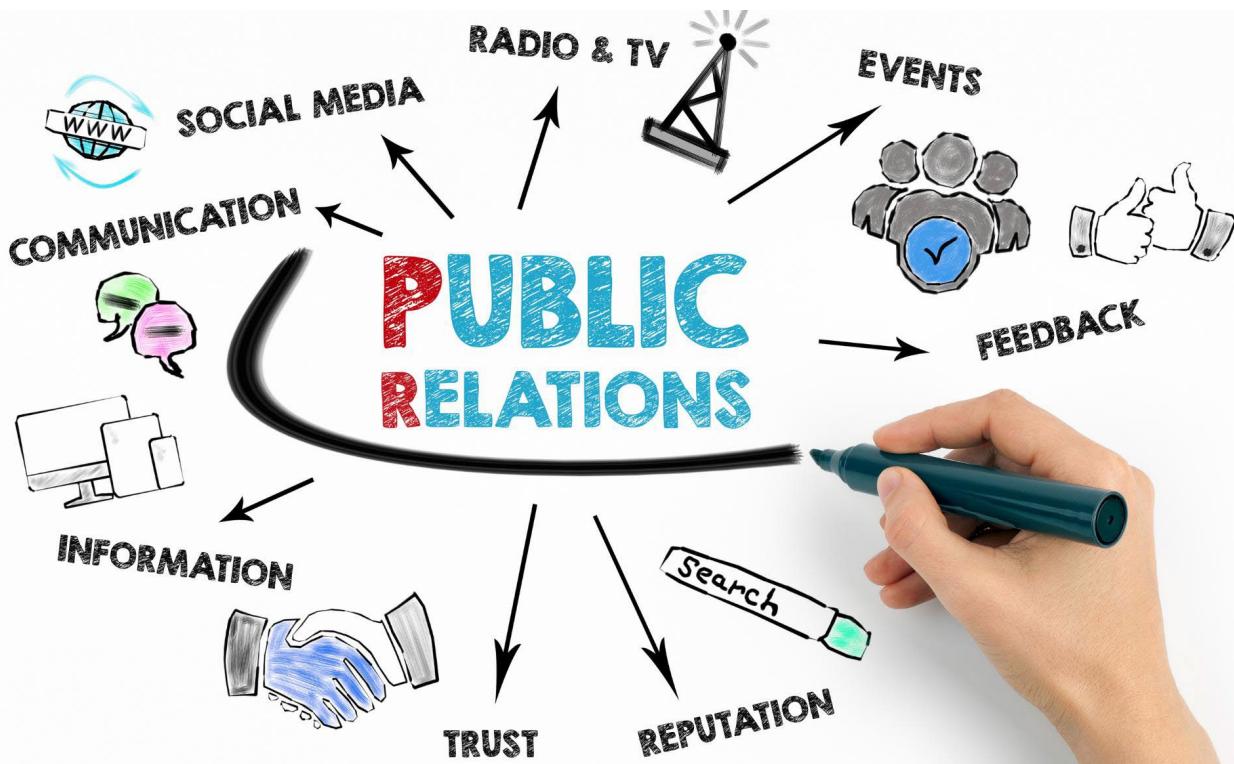
Happy New Year, and we hope your holidays were wonderful. I just wanted to remind you of some DO's for Public Relations, as we begin this bright new year.

- DO** publicize your activities as soon as scheduled. Get the word out as soon as possible, not at the last minute. There is no such thing as too much publicity.
- DO** list your activities on the district calendar.
- DO** make use of social media. Our younger members and non-members live on social media. These postings will also help you with your Lodge Activities contest entries.
- DO** send releases to outside media. This helps to attract potential members.
- DO** include "members and guests only," unless you can list a social permit.
- DO** proofread your ads and releases.
- DO** list a contact person for details, reservations, etc.
- DO** keep your postings concise. List needed information, but not every little detail. Keep your readers interested.
- DO** send reports of charity events to the Grand Lodge and state publications.

Send in photos if at all possible and send them to the district newsletter too.

If you have any questions or comments, or have any Public Relations and Marketing needs, or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

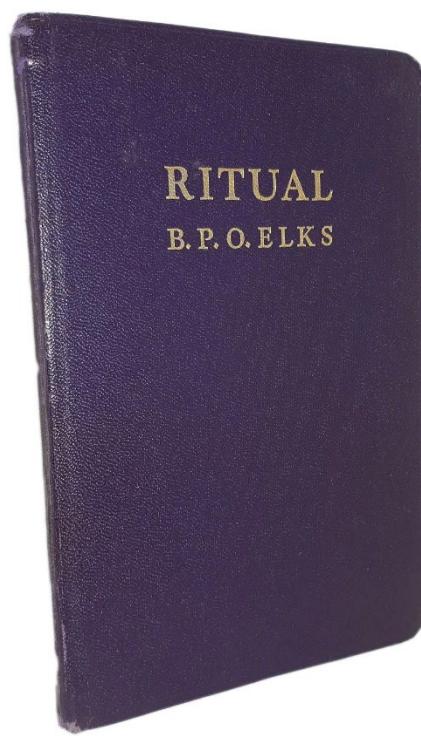
Fraternally,
George Michaels PER
Central District Public Relations Chair



Ritual



Piscataway Lodge 2414, your 2025-2026 Central District Ritual Team!



Scholarship – Jerry Mercado PER



Happy New Year Brothers and Sisters of Elkdom!

I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and is ready for another productive year supporting our scholars.



Most Valuable Student (MVS) Scholarship Lodge-level judging for the Most Valuable Student Scholarship has been completed. We are now moving into District judging, which must be finalized by January 13, 2026.

A sincere thank-you to the Scholarship Chairs who attended the virtual Central District Scholarship committee meeting on Dec. 8th, 2025. It was a very productive meeting. We reviewed important aspects of the MVS process. In addition, a huge shout out to those that volunteered their time to help review and score the MVS applications.

State judging: February 5–23, 2026.

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ENF Legacy Scholarship The Legacy Scholarship application window is open until February 2, 2026.

- All applications must be submitted online.
- Once received, both the applicant and the Lodge Secretary will receive confirmation.
- Our state has been allotted 10 Legacy Scholarship awards this year.

Fraternally,
Jerry B. Mercado, PER
Central District Scholarship Chair



Soccer Shoot – Karen Finney

Happy New Year to you all! I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday with your families and friends and are ready to kick the New Year off with a great State Soccer Competition. All our winners are so excited for this next step in the competition.

As you all know, the winners of the State Soccer Competition, which is being held at Manasquan Field House on January 10th, will be heading the Mid-Atlantic finals in York, PA the weekend of March 6th to March 8th. We are asking for volunteers from each District to help at the State Finals. Registration begins at 8:00 with shoot to begin at 9:00.

Immediately following the competition, we will be headed to the Manasquan Elks Lodge for hospitality and awards. If you would like to help as a volunteer, let me know and I will be more than happy to get you the directions.

With all that being said let us not forget about the Mid-Atlantic Ad Journals. The deadline for ads along with boosters need to be sent to Maureen Chapman by January 28, 2026. If you need any forms, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

I will be in contact with all of the committee members with the date of our next meeting. Thank you all for all your help in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Finney
District Chair, Soccer



Training - Christine Sauer PDD

Happy New Year everyone. I hope your Holidays were great and that 2026 will bring many wonderful things your way.

It's getting to be that time of year again, when we start to look to the end of our fiscal year and want to express thanks to those members who have performed throughout the year to enhance our lodge's success. Awarding someone in your lodge the Elk of the Year, and the Officer of the Year awards is the perfect way to show appreciation.

Below is a synopsis of the rules for the selection of these awards:

Elk of the Year award-An anonymous committee assigned by the ER should observe and evaluate members in your lodge. A candidate cannot be a Lodge Officer and only one member can be chosen. Selections must be submitted to the Grand Secretary before the deadline of March 31, 2026 and an inscribed citation will be issued.

Officer of the Year-Recipient must be a current Officer and only one Officer can be chosen. This Officer should have shown leadership and volunteered for services and Committees over and above their regular duties. Selections must be submitted to the Grand Secretary before the deadline of March 31, 2026 and an inscribed citation will be issued.

Fraternally,
Christine Sauer PDD
Central District Chair Training Chair



Youth Activities – Maureen Chapman PER

As we start the new year, please consider doing the Karen Minutella Reading Initiative. It's great program for third graders. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

If anyone else has any fundraisers that they are doing for Youth Activities, please let me know so I can pass on the information. It's always nice to support each other. We will continue selling chocolate & chocolate covered pretzels so please continue to support our Central District Youth Activities Committee.

The State Youth Activities Committee is planning another fun event - an Elk-A-Thon on May 30th at 1pm at Old Bridge Lodge. More info to follow.

If you're doing other things at your lodge for Youth Activities Chairs, please let me know so I can report to the State Youth Activities Chair.

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope this year we continue our good works along with our Youth Activities for the youth in our communities –they are our future.

Fraternally,
Maureen Chapman PER
Central District Youth Activities Chair



District Lodge Information

Carteret #2235

233 Roosevelt Ave.
732-541-2880
Meetings 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 pm
ER Lars Astrom, Secy. Patricia Golino

Colonia #2282

855 Middlesex Tpke.
732-382-2282
Meetings 3rd Thursdays 7 pm
ER Jessica Dudik, Secy. Eileen Parks

East Brunswick #2370

21-B Oakmont Ave.
732-821-9527
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays 7:30 pm
ER Timothy Sexton, Secy Joan Scaduto

Edison #2487

375 Old Post Rd.
732-985-2487
Meetings 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 pm
ER Tim Langan, Secy Aimee Malave

Metuchen #1914

87 Middlesex Ave. Rt. 27.
732-494-3557
Meetings 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7:30pm
ER Michael Peer, Secy. Sharon Grice

New Brunswick #324

40 Livingston Ave.
732-249-3420
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays 7:30 pm
ER William Negvesky, Secy. Elizabeth Bonura

Piscataway #2414

450 River Road
732-356-9827
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays 8 pm
ER Peter Namen, Secy Rita Massimi PDD

South Amboy #784

601 Washington Ave.
732-727-7170
Meetings 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7:30 pm
ER John Leo, Secy. Mary Patricia Kall

South Plainfield #2298

1254 New Market Ave.
908-668-9750
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays 7:30 pm
ER Tom Perry, Secy. Sandi Smith

Watchung Hills #885

1 Elks Trail
908-668-9727
Meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays 7:30 pm
ER Susan Dougherty, Secy. Danny Larsen PDD

Woodbridge #2116

665 Rahway Ave.
732-634-2116
Meetings 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7:30 pm
ER Jamie M. Chick, Secy. Paula Kopcho PDD

Antler Lodge#20

Sponsoring Lodge
Carteret #2235
233 Roosevelt Ave. 732-541-2880
Advisor Terri Kelly 732-904-8275



Antler Lodge #30

Sponsoring Lodge
South Plainfield #2298
1254 New Brunswick Ave. 908-668-9750
Advisor Irene Polanco 908-337-4360

Antler Lodge#28

Sponsoring Lodge
New Brunswick #324
40 Livingston Ave. 732-545-0658
Advisor Elsie Isaacson 908-917-2778

Antler Lodge #45

Sponsoring Lodge
South Amboy #784
601 Washington Ave. 732-727-7170
Advisor Dawn Roberts 732-642-5949