





FEBRUARY 2025 www.brandonelks.org 800 CENTENNIAL LODGE DRIVE, BRANDON, FL 33510 ALL AMERICAN LODGE 1999-2000 PHONE 813-685-6469 Fax 813-643-5652



Volume 25 Issue 2

Message From Your Exalted Ruler, Donald A Harrison

The month of February and the upcoming months have a few extra events. In addition to the Friday dinners, the Ladies dinner, Veterans dinner and the Tuesday and Thursday snack bars, we will be having nominations for next year's slate of officers. The positions open for nominations are, The Exalted Ruler, Leading, Loyal, and Lecturing Knights, Treasurer, Secretary, and Five-Year Trustee. To facilitate the election, we have member meetings on the second and fourth Mondays in February, March, and April. Please attend these meetings to meet the potential candidates and to have your vote counted. We are still looking for members to assist in the numerous events we have each month. I have already mentioned the kitchen related activities. We also have car and horse race events in the hall on the calendar in addition to five rentals in these next four months. We have a Valentine dinner/party, a masquerade ball and the PER dinner, a low country boil. The need does not stop with the mentioned events. We need people to assist in stripping and cleaning the kitchen floors, touch-up painting the floors in the cooler and dry storage as well as the back porch. Organizing the storage facilities in the lodge and assisting in generally improving the eye appeal of our lodge. There is an old saying, if you are not growing, you are dying. I am forming a committee to grow membership, the membership committee. The committee's task, to present ideas on how to grow membership and get members involved about 8 hours a month to implement the growth plan. Advertising, membership in community organizations such as the chamber. Direct invitations to businesses that appear to have a mission aligned with our goals, etc. We generally bring in about 40 to 50 new members each year. If those new members were to offer the 8 hours a month for three years, we would have about 12,000 hours a year. Our current use is about 5,500 a year. All this extra labor would allow us to re-engage the community with anti drug programs, scholarships to local students, assistance with food security, expand the rental hall use to generate the revenue to fund these programs, participate in the Fourth of July and other local parades to be seen and many other projects. Growing our participation in projects will grow our lodge and our investment in our community. In closing, you can communicate your desire to assist this lodge in our activities by emailing Elks2383sharing @yahoo.com.

WE ARE ELKS! WHAT DO WE DO? WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE. HOW? WE HELP!

WE SHARE, WE ARE SEEN.

Fraternally Yours, Don Harrison, Exalted Ruler



ELK OF THE MONTH



Our lodge is 99% volunteer operated. This month's member is a lady that stands up, steps up and makes it happen. Each month she organizes the orientation for our new members.

She does not stop there. You can see her handy work in the Bugle, all our colorful flyers for dinners and events and other FB posts related to upcoming events. Yet she still does more. She provides desserts for dinners but does not stop there. You can see her in the kitchen preparing dinner and serving you, our members, with delicious meals.

This month's Elk of the Month is Jerrilyn Pietro.

When you see her, please thank her and let her know how much she does and is appreciated.

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Brandon Lodge Officers for 2024-2025 Elk Year

Donald Harrison Exalter Ruler 813-376-8949



Lou Valencia Leading Knight 813-376-9863



Robin Rutzke Loyal Knight 305-498-5654



Wendy Smith Lecturing Knight 813-862-8573



Mark Fox Lodge Chaplain 813-785-5353



Puhalla Lodge Esquire 609-217-5782



Michael Fultz 813-205-5885



Beverly Laundy Inner Guard 813-446-0150



Mary Lou Schreck Secretary 813-458-5872

Member Illness/ Convalescence: **Notify Lodge** Secretary



Nancy Price Treasurer 813-756-9341

Rick Weigand 1 Year Trustee 813-748-2678



Mark Vargo 2 Year Trustee 813-376-8855



Nickie Wells 3 Year Trustee 813-716-8051



Marionette Garvey 4 Year Trustee 813-956--3776



Ed Ciesla 5 Year Trustee 813-679-7699



Committee Chairs 2024-2025

Accident Prevention - Rick Weigand 813-748-2678

Annual Calendar Updates - Mark Vargo 813-376-8855

Bugle Editor - Lara McCleary 203-988-5089

Community Activities - Lou Valencia or Mark Vargo

Drug Awareness - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

Grants Coordinator - Robin Rutzke 305-498-5654

Fraternal Committee -Fraternal Sub Committees:

> Americanism: Nickie Wells 813-716-8056 Flag Day: Robin Rutzke 305-498-5654 Lodge Activities: Mark Vargo 813-376-8855 Orientation: Jerrilyn Pietro 813-493-0425 State Associations: TBD (Could be You!)

Elks Memorial Day: Don Harrison 813-935-9040

ENF: Nickie Wells 813-716-8056 Veterans Services: Robin Rutzke 305-498-5654

Hall Rental - Jan Czajkowski 518-312-9891

Hoop Shoot - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

House Committee - Mark Vargo 813-376-8855

Kitchen Manager - COULD BE YOU

Lodge Advisors - Henry Poage 813-480-6272

Lodge Maintenance - Rick Weigand 813-748-2678 & Lou

Valencia 813-376-9863

Lodge Purchasing Food - Stephen Blackman 813-378-1597

Public Relations - Mike Highfill 813-812-2727

Youth Activity - Don Harrison 813-935-9040

Web Master: Ray Bilinski -

webmasterbrandonelks@gmail.com

BLOE BITS

Next Meeting is FEBRUARY 3RD @ 7:00 PM Hoping to See You There!

Welcome to the month of February!!

The month of Hearts & Flowers. Here is hoping that each one gets a little of both this month.

We had a great Wednesday night dinner planned by Tracy Tirado, Terri Buntin and Beverly Lowe and Bunco. February will be a good month as well. Wednesday night dinner this month will be prepared by Donald and Cheryl to thank the BLOE board for all they have done. The Masquerade Ball is on the 22nd. I am hoping for a great turn out as I have been notified by Pauline Talbott, President of the FLOE that she and her husband will be attending. I would really like for the BLOE to have a great turnout and am counting on more people to step up and help Melinda decorate. She has really good ideas and they are not very hard to do, it just takes teamwork. We need to knock this one out of the park to show FLOE what great events we hold at the Brandon Elks Lodge. Horse races have been moved to May 10 (closer to the Kentucky Derby time) Time is already on the calendar for the new president so that she will have time to get in the grove before she must plan things. In their place, we are planning to do NASCAR Races on March 8th. If you want to help and participate, get with the event chair, Cheryl Barker.

I would rather walk with a friend in the dark, than alone in the light. \sim Helen Keller \sim



Thank you, Becky Cresswell President

Brandon Ladies of Elks Lady of Distinction JANUARY

January 2025 Lady of Distinction is a good example for the rest of the year. She has been a BLOE member for many years and has held several offices including President. She is one of the hardest working members and very often gets overlooked for all the hard work she does for the ladies. She has wrapped silverware, cooked Wednesday Night Dinners, always works special events, makes cakes for holiday cake raffles, sets up and works at caterings, helps with memorial services and is a staple at the Sunday Breakfasts - she does it all with a quiet demeanor and a smile. If we could have two or three more ladies like her, we would never have to be concerned about getting the job done. When she works, she knows what jobs need to be done and goes about doing them till they are finished. It gives me great pleasure to recognize this wonderful lady for her hard work and dedication to the Brandon Ladies of Elks. Please congratulate Anne Fox our January 2025 Lady of Distinction.



Cyndi Buchanan

Yellowfin Realty 813.391.7231

CyndiBuchanan.YFR@gmail.com

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Mark C. Vargo, Sr. Director / Owner

Kevin Talbert Director / Owner

Mary Lou Schreck LODGE SECRETARY Office Hours

MONDAY: 3pm - 5pm WEDNESDAY: 3pm - 5pm Or call for appointment

Nancy Price LODGE TREASURER Office Hours

MONDAY: 12pm - 3pm THURSDAY: 12pm - 3pm Or call for appointment

FEBRUARY

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT Dinner * Dancing * Music

Weekly 50/50 Raffles \$500 Club Drawing

To All Lodge Members

To clarify an apparent misunderstanding regarding our lounge being reserved by one of our members. Our lounge is always open to our members, and their guests, during normal operating hours. If there is a private event also happening during those hours, members/guests are not allowed to freely partake of any food and/or beverages supplied by the member that reserved the use of our lounge unless you were invited to the event, or the member grants you permission to partake

Board of Directors Chair

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of their food/beverage. Thank you. Mark C. Vargo, Sr., PER

Brandon Lodge supports our Veterans

Lodge Veterans please come out every 4th Wednesday of the month to enjoy free dinner and visit with other local Vets! Prepared by Nancy and friends.

> **BLOE BREAKFAST ALL YOU CAN EAT \$10** 2nd Sunday **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Lounge Rental

Lounge usage will be restricted to members, spouses or widows/widowers for their own specific purpose, and they must be always present during the rental

Lodge Meetings Are Open To Members In Good Standing and is the Place to Discuss any Lodge issues. 2nd Monday of each month, May-January! February-April 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month!

Dress code for meetings is long pants and collared shirt for men.

Skirt, Dress, or long slacks for women.

PER Meeting – 1st Monday, 7pm Lodge Meeting 2nd Monday of month, 7pm Governing Board mtg – 3rd Monday at 7pm **BLOE Ladies Meetings** – 1st Monday of month at 6:30pm

1	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				QUARTERLY M	EETING UMATILL	A 2/6 - 2/8	1
	SOCIAL & SPORTS LOUNGE 1PM	3 6:30PM BLOE MEETING - HALL PER MEETING 7PM ANTE ROOM	5PM-7PM CARDS	5	BINGO IN THE HALL 6:30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS	8 11AM-3PM RV APPRECIATION LUNCH 6:30PM MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY DINNER LOUNGE 5PM-11PM HALL RENTAL
	9 8AM -11AM BLOE BREAKFAST HALL SOCIAL & SPORTS LOUNGE 1PM	Lodge Meeting 7PM	5PM-7PM CARDS	12	BINGO IN THE HALL 6:30pm 6:30PM	FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS	PER FUND RAISER DINNER 6:30PM HALL SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS
	SOCIAL & SPORTS LOUNGE 1PM	17 7 PM BOARD MEETING - HALL	5PM-7PM CARDS	6:30PM BLOE DINNER HALL	IN THE HALL 6:30pm BRANDON BOYS LOUNGE	FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS	22 8AM-12PM QTRLY FOOD DRIVE 6PM -11PM MASQUERADE BALL
	23 SOCIAL & SPORTS LOUNGE 1PM 3PM- 8PM LOUNGE	24 Lodge Meeting 7PM VOTING ON NEW OFFICERS	5PM-7PM CARDS	6:30PM VETERAN'S DINNER HALL	BINGO IN THE HALL 6:30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS	

Save the Date

RENTAL

BLOE MEETING, FEB 3RD PER MEETING, FEB 3RD LODGE MEETING, FEB 10TH BOARD MEETING FEB 17TH

LOUNGE HOURS

Sunday: 1pm - 7pm Monday - Thursday 4pm - 9pm Friday 4pm - 10pm Saturday 4pm - 9pm Memorial, 4th of July and Labor Day 11AM -**6PM** Manager: WENDY SMITH

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FEBRUARY MENU ITEMS

THE ONLY WAY TO BE ASSURED OF A MEAL IS TO RSVP RSVPBRANDONELKS@YAHOO.COM

BY 12 NOON THE DAY BEFORE FOR ALL MEALS!

THIS HELPS US MAXIMIZE RESOURCES AND MINIMIZE WASTE TEXTING OR CALLING THE LODGE IS NOT CONSIDERED AN RSVP! DINNER IS FROM 6:30PM – 8PM

FEBRUARY 7TH



FEBRUARY 8TH



FEBRUARY 9TH



FEBRUARY 14TH



FEBRUARY 15TH



FEBRUARY 19TH



FEBRUARY 21ST



FEBRUARY 26TH



FEBRUARY 28TH



BE A BUGLE BOOSTER !!!Please help defray the cost of printing and

TO OUR ELKS RV GUESTS

Welcome to our RV Park ELKS MEMBERS ONLY

OUR RATES ARE:

- ▶ \$25 per night; 7th night FREE
- ▶ RV Storage is \$60 per month

THANKS FOR STAYING IN OUR PARK

Don Cress 207-703-5574 Mark Vargo – 813-376-8855 LODGE PHONE – 813-685-6469



BUGLE BOOSTERS:

Pat & Jeff LaVoie Kim Martinez Lynda & Frank Craft Carolyn & George Thomas Ron & Ester Cantrell Julie & Henry Ebert

Charlene Hart
Donald Harrison
Kenneth League
Diane League
Richard Clark
Jackie Florentino
Gerri Mann

Karen McArthur Angela Sweeney Joseph Zebrak David Zilka Mary Lou & George Scribner Pat & Bernie Hiskey



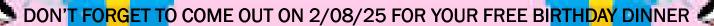
mailing out our Bugle.

Donations help a great deal!!

Happy Birthday

TO OUR FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY MEMBERS

JOHN NORIEGA, ROBIN RUTZKE, BARBARA WHITE, PATRICIA HUDSON, PAULA MATHER, SAM MILLER, MELVIN RAY, BEVERLY LOWE, WENDY SMITH, CHRIS THOMPSON, MICHAEL CAMERON, JAMES HESLIN, JANE MOON, HENRY POAGE, DENNIS ROBERTS, HUBERT BEASLEY, SAMUAL MILLER, RONALD CANTRELL, CAROLYN GREESON, MICHAEL PLANTE, DAVID RODRIGUEZ, LISA BALL, GEORGE PINCHOTT, JAMES HELM, DAWN SANDERSON, JOHN CHRISTENSEN, MICHAEL FULTZ, EDWARD PELLENZ, RUSSEL CHRISTY, DEAN DAVIS, JERRY NOVAK, JAMES STERLING, CHARLES FEE, LARA MCCLEARY, TREVOR WEEKS & WILLIAM STOUT





Hello PER's, we will have our monthly luncheon on February 13th at 11:30 at Tibbys, the address is 1721 W Brandon Blvd next to Leaders Furniture. Known for their Cajun food but there are American dishes as well. Hope to see you there.

Your Restaurant Hunter Kim Martinez PER



Annual Walgreen's Toy Drive a Huge Success

For its Seventh Year Because we have Elk Elves!



This was our lodge's seventh year participating in the Walgreen's Christmas Toy Drive, and it was another tremendous success. This year we collected 1,408 toys! When you total our collection for the past seven years, we collected 8,275 toys!

All toys collected go back into our community. We invited our two local Therapist of the Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services, our local Title I Schools: Lopez, Yates, Dover, Seffner, Palm River, Mintz, Brooker, Boyette, and Limona Elementary Schools as well as Livingstone Academy. Toys were donated to A Kid's Place for Foster Children. And we were able to help The Springs for Battered Women, Hope for Her for Battered Women, as well as ECHO who serves our community.

We have wonderful volunteers who are key to the success of the project. It began with picking up the toys from each Walgreen location by our Elk Elves PER Larry Oliver, PER Nickie Wells, PER Mary Lou Scribner, and Elk members Ken Muzyk, Mike Fultz, Mark Sims, John Wick, Joe Alverico, Robin Rutzke, Nelson Guggino, Melinda Giffin Frater, and Jim Kraus.

The next step; the 1,408 toys had to be sorted and displayed on tables in our hall by our Elk Elves Carolyn and PER George Thomas, Past Lady President Terri and PER Ed Ciesla, PER Mary Lou Scribner, BLOE Secretary Donna Fultz and Elk members Melinda Giffin Frater, Norm Perkins, Jackie Florentino and Lori Underberg. Because of these involved members we were ready by 6:00 when our invited organizations came to choose their toys.

Any remaining toys were hand delivered to The Springs, Hope for Her and ECHO by PER Rick Weigand, PER Ed Ciesla, and PER Mary Lou Scribner.

We invite each of our Elk members and Brandon Ladies of the Elk members to help us next year and become an Elk Elf volunteer. It is a rewarding "makes you feel good" annual event and a wonderful way to begin the Christmas Season; a way to be involved in your community and your lodge. Would you want to be part of this next year? Just reach out to Melinda Giffin Frater at (973) 908-7745 melindagiffen@gmail.com and she will be happy to put you on the list..... and that is not the naughty list....it's the "I'm an involved Elk"

And least we forget.....a BIG thank you and shout out to Walgreen's for partnering with the Florida Elks



Saturday, February 22, 2025 6pm - 10pm Hors D'oeurves, Live Music, 50/50 Raffle

Dress To Impress - 21 and over

Ticket \$20
at Bar or call Melinda 973-908-7745
soo Centennial Lodge Dr., Brandon, FL

RACE NIGHT

PRESENTED BY

BRANDON LADIES OF ELKS



DRIVERS START YOUR ENGINES! MARCH 8TH 5PM

TICKETS \$20 (\$25 ON THE DOOR) (TICKET INCLUDES UNLIMITED CONCESSION FOOD & SOFT DRINKS)

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Quilts of Valor Presented to Brandon Elk Veterans

On November 23rd members of the Brandon Elks Lodge gathered to witness the honoring of five Military Veterans at a special ceremony presided by Tangled Threads, representing the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

Quilts of Valor is a non-profit organization whose mission is to recognize Military Veterans for their service and sacrifice serving our country. A Quilt of Valor is a handcrafted heirloom that takes considerable time to make by hand. Each Quilt is carefully pieced and quilted by volunteers who wish to provide comfort and healing to those touched by war and may take six to eighteen months to make. During the presentation each of the Veterans being honored is wrapped with one of these beautiful handmade quilts signifying comfort, healing and respect; to recognize and let each Veteran know their service to our country is appreciated, Veterans who were recognized and honored at this special event at the Brandon Lodge were (from left to right): Marine Stearns Poor who served in WWII, Marine John Hogue who served in Vietnam, Marine Donald Cornett who also served in Vietnam, Airforce Mark Fox who served during Vietnam and Army Larry Lane who also served during Vietnam.



VETERANS AFFAIRS
Committee Chair
Robin Rutzke

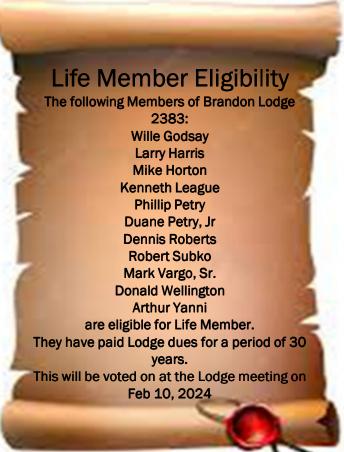
BPOE Loyal Knight USAF (ret) 305-498-5654



Any questions or concerns about the Veterans that the Elks Lodge serves, or other note worthy Veteran events, please address them with Robin.

God Bless our Veterans!





ATTENTION – ATTENTION – ATTENTION!

Parade of Heroes

recognizes and honors veterans from WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Afghanistan Freedom.



Parade of Heroes

3-day, all expense paid event

in our nation's capital honoring our Military Veterans over Veterans Day

If you are interested in participating in the

Parade of Heroes

For more details go to our FSEA Historical Programs 2025 Parade of Heroes Website for enrollment and more details.

Registration opens on www.floridaelks.org second week in January, 2025

Reach out to Brandon Veteran Chair, Robin Rutzke 305-398-5654 rrutzke@gmail.com

Brandon Lodge has participated in this event each year sending many of Military Veteran Brandon Lodge members to Washington.

If you are a Military Veteran, take advantage of this great opportunity and event!









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