

News Release

Contact: Nancy M Oakes (307) 250-3378
Publicity and Marketing Chair
Nancy@garnettlaw.com



For immediate release: September 1, 2016
Ocean Shores, WA

A PHOENIX RISES IN OCEAN SHORES

Last month, the Ocean Shores North Beach Elks Lodge #2581, proudly received the Frank O. Garland Award, as the Number One Lodge in the State of Washington, at the State Convention. The Frank O. Garland Award is given to the Washington Elks Lodge that achieves the highest scores in 35 categories.

It was a long road to this great achievement. While the Elks have a long, proud history in Ocean Shores, it was just 6 short years ago that it appeared it may have to close its doors for a time. Bill Sisco had just taken over as Exalted Ruler and he made the tough decision to go from paid employees to a volunteer staff. His wife Jeanne stepped up as the Activities Chair. Bill was followed to the ER position by Bob Howe and his wife June and together they lead the Lodge in the same direction.

This was a tenuous time, funds were in short supply, and members and volunteers were waning. Dan and Mei Fajardo, and Mark and Patti Swanson remember well the tough times. In the 2013-2014 year, with Dan as the Exalted Ruler and Mark as the Leading Knight, the task was made clear and the commitment of all four was needed. "We dedicated two years of our lives to getting it back up and solvent," said Mark. "It was no easy task! Without a renewal of membership and the participation of those members, the doors would have been locked." Mark followed in 2014-2015 as the Exalted Ruler and the foursome, once again, supported each other in every endeavor to bring the Lodge back to a viable business.

That was the time the direction of the Lodge was restructured. "It was a hard road of hard work" said Dan. "It took the mentality of the leadership to bring the Lodge back as a strong business, which it is, and to sustain managed consistency and improvement." "This is not an easy task when all you have is volunteers yet, it is still a business and must be run as such." "We are a proud, vital part of the community when it comes to our involvement in charities – veteran's assistance – senior's programs – and supporting all of our schools and children." Dan is the current Chairman of the Board of Directors, a position he has held for the past 3 years. It is because of his business acumen and experience, and that of the other Past Exalted Rulers that the operations of the club have turned around and have resulted in a profitable, acclaimed facility. In the past 15 years, Elks Lodge #2581 has contributed over \$350,000 to the community of Ocean Shores.

The Elks became a formal group on February 16th, 1868. Prior to that, they were known as, The Jolly Corks, a group of actors that would gather on Sunday's in New York. At the end of the evening, they would gather what food and drink was left over, and give it to the needy. These practices led to the motion that "*...we resolve ourselves into a benevolent order...*" Each meeting and gathering would end at 11:00 pm, an edict set by the times. At that hour, they would fill their glasses and drink a toast to those whose misfortunes had made them absent from the gathering. Thus, the Eleventh Hour Toast was born, a tradition that is continued to this day by gathering together, holding hands, and listening to the chime of the eleven bells, and saying a prayer to all deceased and distant Elks.

The Elk name was chosen as it was "....distinguished by its fleetness of foot" and "timorous of wrongdoing." Besides being fast and avoiding evil, the elk also avoided aggressive combat. The elk preyed upon no other species for its existence and destroyed nothing – but it would fight valiantly in defense of its own life and those of its mate and young. The elk, with its spreading antlers, was not only a beautiful animal, but it seemed to symbolize the ideas and values of this group most wanted to stand for and perpetuate.

Tony Woodbeck, the immediate Past Exalted Ruler from the 2015-2016 year, could not agree more with the premise of the Elks. "Being an Elk has given me a purpose and opportunity to help give back to the community, veterans, students, and special needs children," stated Tony. "It has been the most worthwhile effort in my life. It has given me a huge opportunity to pay it forward." During the time Tony was busy as Exalted Ruler, his wife Karen was the Loyal Knight. She currently is the Leading Knight, and will assume the duties of the Exalted Ruler in April of 2017.

In the 2015-2016 Elk year, the Ocean Shores Lodge donated over \$20,000 to the community and local programs. The Girl's High School Golf Team, Summer Golf Program for Kids, Youth Football Scholarships, Lion's Thanksgiving Dinner, Park's Committee, and the High School Senior Prom, Drug Awareness Program, just to name a few of their donation recipients.

Not only does this Lodge donate money, but every Christmas, the members "adopt" children from our community, identified by teachers, churches, etc, as being in need of clothing, shoes, supplies, etc, and an Angel Tree hangs in the Lodge for members to "adopt" a child. Those children are given Christmas gifts they might otherwise never have received. These are much needed items, as well as, things that just put a smile on their faces. The Lodge hosts a holiday dinner for them with their families and there are smiles for days!!!! Last Christmas, they hosted 85 children and over 200 family members.

Lodge #2581 is very proud of the over \$35,000 that they have distributed to North Beach Seniors for college scholarships in the past 7 years. And, over 200 children look forward every year to the Children's Fishing Derby.

"All of this is part of the 35 categories that we were judged on to receive the Frank O. Garland Award as the Best Lodge in the State. Last year, we missed it by two-tenths of a point and we vowed right then and there to do whatever it took to bring this award to Ocean Shores," said Tony Woodbeck.

The current Exalted Ruler, Ron Devore, is working hard to continue the legacy of excellence of service to the community. He has the help of his wife, Lynda, who also serves as the Lodge's Chaplain.

"Next year, I hope to be the Exalted Ruler," said Karen Woodbeck, and my success will be based upon the good examples of past leaders, building the membership, working towards more community service involvement, and TEAMWORK!" "That's the bottom line to the success of this Lodge. "

They continue to strive to encourage new, younger members to grow through the organization and learn the rewards of personal satisfaction through helping others. Learning from the mistakes of the past, and sticking together as a solid unit, has provided a Lodge that the next generation can be proud to join, support, and help grow into the next generation of givers.

“Seeing a third grader’s face light up because we gave them their own dictionary, or to see a disabled child smile because they were able to receive the personal therapy they need in their own home, a service we support through our Tall Elks Program, is magical,” recounted Tony. “This is not just a Lodge, it is a family of Elks that spans over 2000 Lodges throughout the US.”

Since the inception of the Elks in 1868, the value of their charitable works is more than \$4 billion. Continuing the sentiments of the Jolly Corks from 1868, the Ocean Shores North Beach Elks Lodge #2581 will strive to help the community where needed, and promote solid values, and patriotism.

Currently, the Lodge is open Tuesday thru Sunday with dinners on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday nights dinners, and Bingo on Sunday, which is open to the public. To become a member, you can visit the Lodge with a current member, or stop by the office and fill out an application. The office is open Monday and Tuesday, Noon to 3pm, and Wednesday through Friday, 10 am to 1 pm.

The Ocean Shores North Beach Elks Lodge #2581 is located at 199 Ocean Lake Way SE. From the round-about, take Pt. Brown Ave south for 1.6 miles. Turn left onto Ocean Lake Way. Continue for 2 blocks to the Elks Lodge on your right.

Ask an Elk to bring you as a guest to one of our great events or weekly dinners and you will see first-hand the pride we show in our Lodge and our newest addition.....The Frank O. Garland Award as the #1 Lodge in the State of Washington.

§§§§§§