

MEMBERSHIP



PROGRAM & PLANNING MANUAL

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Membership Program & Planning Manual

Foreword

The strength and vitality of any organization largely depends upon its ability to maintain or increase its membership.

As a leader, your attitude has a powerful impact on others. Whether that attitude is positive or negative depends on the choices you make. You have an obligation to develop a positive attitude that inspires the people around you to create an atmosphere that encourages others to become members of our great Fraternity.

Good leaders also possess a passion for membership retention. If enough Elks care, there isn't any membership goal we can't attain.

We must continue to allow Members the freedom to choose their level of involvement, and remain mindful that if a Lodge can keep Members positive and enthusiastic, we will achieve growth for our Order.

Each of us must be accountable for membership growth. Your Membership Committee and Lodge Officers must have a genuine hunger to accomplish their goals.

If you have passion, you will find that it will transmit to others who will pledge their heart and soul to grow the membership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.



Elks Care — Elks Share

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Elks Care — Elks Share

◆ Section I ◆

Introduction to the Membership Program and Planning Manual

Every successful Exalted Ruler must be a planner, a worker, a leader and an executive — not just a “*meeting night*” Officer. To ensure that each Exalted Ruler succeeds, a Lodge must have strong, continuing business leadership and guidance. This is usually supplied by the Past Exalted Rulers and Secretary, whose tenure in most Lodges extends over a period of years.

Applying good business management practices will solve most problems of a Subordinate Lodge. Emphasizing a business approach to problems will always improve the condition of a Lodge.

The glaring need in most Lodges is managing membership in all phases: Recruitment of New Members, Orientation of Members and Dues Collection. The Membership Program and Planning Manual provides an adequate and efficient Membership Management Process. Membership management is part of Lodge operations to which good business practices seldom apply, yet addresses a problem that can best be solved by good business methods.

Membership must be managed intelligently. This implies capable personnel, good planning, continuous supervision and regular evaluation of results. The key individuals include the Exalted Ruler, as Chief Executive Officer, the Secretary and chairpersons of the Membership, Orientation and Lapsation committees. In business, these committee chairpersons — comparable to the executive heads of Sales, Customer Relations, and Credit and Collections — constitute the Membership Management Team. The Membership Program and Planning Process will succeed only in proportion to their planning, supervision, enthusiasm and effort.

No process can succeed without careful planning and definite objectives. The same is true of a Lodge Membership Recruitment Process. This Membership Program and Planning Manual suggests ways to develop a successful membership program, based on actual successful experiences in Elks Lodges as well as in business.

In any “service” business, the sales force must not only make the original sale, but also continue to keep the customer sold. In the Order of Elks, this is best

accomplished through a well-planned Orientation Program. This program should tell new Members what they are buying — the Principles of the Order, the activities and facilities we have to offer, our programs and objectives, and especially, our many benevolences. It must tell them about the opportunities for fellowship, but more importantly, impress upon them the opportunity to help others.

Not only new Elks, but every Member of the Order must be continually reminded of the privileges and opportunities of membership. We do not give up easily the things we cherish and in which we take great pride. Through Orientation, we want to develop pride in the accomplishments and programs of the Order. We want every Elk to be so proud of their membership that they will not only engage in Lodge activities, but will also cherish and keep their membership as long as they live.

“We want every Elk to be so proud of their membership that they will not only engage in the Lodge’s activities, but will also cherish and keep their membership as long as they live.”

Lodge Activities — fraternal, patriotic, youth, civic and charitable programs — are the means of “keeping the customer sold.” These might compare to activities of a customer relations department, the means of maintaining the interest and loyalty of Members.

The Secretary and Lapsation Committee, of course, constitute the “Collection Department.” Again, success requires planning and a definite program. Collecting dues in an Elks Lodge is similar to collecting accounts receivable in a business. There must be an established credit policy known to all members, regular billing of dues and a planned follow-up on delinquents. The Lapsation Manual, which is a part of this Membership Program and Planning Manual, describes the specifics of collecting dues based on successful experience in many Lodges.

Lodges that have a plan for collecting dues survive with small losses for “bad debts” (lapsations) and always wind up the year with a healthy, paid-up membership. **The old, accepted custom of letting the delinquencies go until the end of the year and then driving to collect them**

does not work. The record proves its ineffectiveness. And no wonder. Any businessperson offering credit would soon go broke following such a haphazard method of collection.

Each Lodge must establish realistic goals based on their particular requirements and environment. Goals should be attainable but high enough to present a challenge. Remember, if you shoot for the moon and come up short, you'll still be among the stars.

For instance, a new Lodge, or a Lodge that is building a new home, or one located in a growing community, should set the membership recruitment goal much higher than an established Lodge.

Except in Lodges where unusual opportunities exist, the goal should be to initiate 10 percent more members than at the beginning of the Lodge year.

The collection goal is to end the Lodge year with not more than 2 percent of the Members delinquent, and to drop not more than 2 percent of members for non-payment of dues.

These goals are realistic and, in fact, attainable at least in part by many, many Lodges. You may not meet all your goals immediately, but by striving to meet them, you will improve your membership management process.

Good membership management requires regular evaluation of membership recruitment, orientation and dues collection. There are many ways you could choose to measure your success. Regardless of the method, the test is whether you are growing and improving the use of Lodge assets. Fans of "Star Trek" know that the Ferengi calculate their profits hourly. You don't need to be *that* diligent, but you cannot track your progress without periodically comparing this year's results with previous years'.

“As leaders, we do not set the goals high enough for our Members. Leadership is salesmanship. Getting people to say: ‘Come on, we can do this.’”

We've provided sample reports in the back of this manual in which to record monthly membership and delinquency figures. Please note that these charts are not for membership results obtained for that month, but are *cumulative charts*. The figures on each chart should be year to date. The time required to keep these charts up to date is negligible, but their value to membership management cannot be overemphasized. Only through comparing figures can the membership program be assessed. There is no other way!

Therefore, just as the department heads of a well-

administered business meet monthly to study the financial, sales and other data, the Membership Management Team should meet each month to study the comparative membership and delinquency figures. The success of the membership and collection programs from past years can be compared with goals set for the current year. Emphasis on membership recruitment or collection of delinquencies can be adjusted as the year progresses. Opportunities for improvement can be corrected while ample time remains in the Lodge year.

This is the business approach to the membership problem, a sure way of managing membership successfully. Additional copies of the Membership Program and Planning Manual may be obtained inexpensively through the Grand Secretary. No Exalted Ruler can over look the vital responsibility to plan and supervise the membership program in a businesslike manner and still faithfully discharge his or her obligation to the Lodge and Order. We urge every Lodge to take advantage of the membership management suggestions contained in this manual.

Steps to Start a Successful Membership Management Process

1. The Exalted Ruler and Lodge Secretary must study the entire Membership Program and Planning Manual. In addition, the chairpersons of the Membership, Lodge Activities, Orientation and Lapsation Committees must each study at least the portion of the manual that affects their role in the Membership Management Process.
2. These Members constitute the Lodge's Membership Management Team. After studying the manual, this team should draft a specific Membership Management Plan that clearly defines duties and responsibilities.
3. We always do better when challenged by specific objectives, so set definite goals, duties and responsibilities.

The suggested goal for Membership Recruitment is to initiate at least 10 percent of the year's beginning membership: *i.e.*, if membership was 700 on April 1, the Lodge goal should be to initiate 70 new members.

The goal for Lapsation is to close the Lodge year with not more than two percent of the ending membership delinquent (*all only six months delinquent*), and in so doing, to drop not more than 2 percent of the membership for nonpayment of dues.

Thus, to meet program objectives, a Lodge with a beginning membership of 700 should initiate at least 70 members, drop for nonpayment of dues no more than 14, and if the Lodge closed the year with 735 members, no more than 14 or 15 members more than six months delinquent.

4. After defining the program and establishing goals, the Membership, Lapsation and Orientation committees should meet. Each Committee should discuss its entire program. In a broad sense, these committee chairpersons are revolutionaries. They should constantly challenge the status quo and examine whether they are doing the right things or if those things can be done better or smarter. Most importantly, when something needs changed, they do it. The entire Committee must believe in the program, and that won't happen if good ideas are ignored.

“They should constantly challenge the status quo and examine whether or not they are doing the right things, or if those things can be done better or smarter.”

5. In the back of this manual are Membership Statistics Charts for the end of each month. The Lodge Secretary must fill in the figures on the appropriate chart promptly each month so that the Membership Management Team can review the figures on the first of each month. In doing so, the Exalted Ruler can assess whether the program needs improvement or attempt to solve the problem, either by increasing emphasis or trying new ideas.

These charts are cumulative. April's chart will disclose the figures for April, but May's chart should show the total figures for April *and* May. June's would be for three months, etc. These charts allow comparisons with previous years as of the same date. When this plan is not followed, the Team usually discovers too late that it's not going to meet its goals.

6. Use graphs to plot membership recorded in the Statistics Chart against your goals.
7. Do not get discouraged. Delinquencies must be reasonably controlled to achieve the first year's lapsation objectives. Even then, you may not attain all your goals. But remember that they are all possible. Many Lodges do achieve all three goals, and many more achieve some of the goals. Even if you don't achieve *any* of the goals, you will have benefited just by trying.

This suggested process applies good, proven methods of business sales and collections. If your present program is not succeeding, try this plan. In recent years, the Order has initiated just a little more than 6 percent and dropped for nonpayment a little more than 5 percent. By attaining the specified goals, we would have had a net gain of 7 percent, or more than 90,000 Members!

◆ Section II ◆

The Membership Recruitment Process

Lodge Membership Process

At the beginning of their term, every Exalted Ruler should set a realistic membership goal. Recent experience in this Order is that the average Lodge loses approximately 9 percent of its Members through deaths, dimitts and nonpayment of dues. To absorb this loss and still increase membership, the number of new members obtained must exceed this 9 percent loss. If the Lapsation Committee meets its goal, this percentage is reduced to 6 percent.

Select a Membership Committee

Selecting the Membership Committee requires care. The Chairperson should be outstanding, enthusiastic and highly motivated to devote the time to attain the membership goal. Committee Members should be enthusiastic, active and well-known within their communities. Their stature should encourage prospects to join our Order.

The number of Committee Members may vary according to the requirements and membership of your Lodge. Select Members geographically so that every section of your jurisdiction is covered.

Set a Goal

This Committee should meet as soon as it's appointed. If the facilities of the Lodge permit, hold a luncheon or dinner meeting. The Exalted Ruler and Chairperson should discuss with the Committee the importance of securing new members and the membership objectives. Except for extraordinary conditions created by institution, new buildings, etc., the goal for initiates should be 10 percent of the membership at the beginning of the Lodge year. The goal for Transfer Dimitts and Reinstatements should be enough to offset the number usually lost each year by Absolute Dimit and deaths. Make the goal realistic but challenging.

Organize and Brief the Committee

A well-informed Member should talk to the Committee about the benefits of membership in our Order, stressing our national projects and community service. Appoint a secretary to keep minutes and record names of prospects. A vice chairperson should also be designated.

Compile a List of Prospects

Once the Committee is organized and briefed, begin formulating a systematic and selective membership program to meet your goal.

Make a list of prospective Members. By careful selection of these prospects in advance, practically all undesirable applications can be eliminated. The names should be selected by the Membership Committee from suggestions obtained from their own sources or received from the entire membership of the Lodge.

For instance, ask your Members who are physicians to look over the list of the jurisdiction's medical society and

check off names of prospects. Rolls of members of the Chamber of Commerce, leading service clubs, social and country clubs, and other organizations are another source of good prospects. Personal friends and acquaintances of Lodge Members should be listed. The list should be much larger than your membership goal. Figure on actually obtaining only 10 percent of these prospects.

Set up a Card Index of Prospects

As soon as the name of a prospect is recommended, list it on a card in duplicate. Below is a suggested form for such a card.

As the prospect cards are prepared, the Committee should review them carefully. If the slightest doubt of the qualifications of any of the prospects exists, place the card in an inactive file. This is the time to weed out any undesirable prospects. Assign the cards to Committee or Lodge Members best able to approach each prospect. The Committee Secretary should retain the duplicate cards as a record and check against the originals.

At each Committee meeting, a report should be made on every prospect assigned for interview. With a large prospect list, be sure to assign to Committee Members and Members only as many prospects as can be interviewed in a reasonable time. If a prospect refuses or shows little interest, put the card in a future-prospects file. Frequently, where one Member was unable to sign up a prospect, another may be able to do so. These future-prospect cards can be reassigned later to Members who through

Prospect Card	
Name _____	Approx. Age _____
Address _____	
Employed By _____	
Occupation _____	
How long lived in Jurisdiction _____	
Prospect suggested by _____	
Assigned to _____	
This card is your authority to interview the person named above. To prevent duplication, no interview should be conducted without the card. If you think of the name of a prospect, a card will be issued you if not already assigned.	
When application has been obtained, or if unable to obtain application, return this card to the Chairman of the Membership Committee. Report of your interview should be turned in on this card not later than _____	

(Signature) _____	

some personal connection might succeed in signing up the prospective candidate.

“Frequently, where one Member was unable to sign up a prospect, another Member may be able to do so.”

Hold Regular Meetings

Meet at least once a month, and as often as weekly when a Special Class is being promoted. The Committee should take advantage of Grand Lodge Membership Seminars and those of State Associations. Classes promoted by the Lodge add a local touch and are usually effective. Such classes may be named in honor of a prominent Member, past or present Officers or Members, a certain profession or industry, or even in recognition of a significant event.

Publicize Membership Efforts

Use Lodge bulletins and mailings to further the work of the Committee. Publicize membership classes in the Lodge bulletin and encourage Members to suggest names of prospective candidates to the Membership Committee.

“Try to promote friendly rivalries among Committees and the membership, both for submitting names of prospects and for actually signing them up.”

Offer Incentives

Try to promote friendly rivalries among Committees and the membership, both for submitting names of prospects and actually signing them up. Delegates at the 1996 Grand Lodge Session in Las Vegas, Nevada, amended Section 14.010 of the Laws of the Order permitting a Lodge to offer prizes to members for securing applications for membership, as long as it is not done publicly.

One successful program is called “Ship, Captain and Crew.” The Committee is the Ship, the Chairperson the Captain, and the Committee Members the Crew. Several ships compete to bring in the most members. To increase the stakes, make the losing ships pay for the winners’ dinner, or make them prepare and serve dinner to the winning ship.

This kind of friendly rivalry can only help your recruitment program.

Grand Lodge offers incentives in the form of the GER Award Pin and special Elks Membership Award Watch. Members can earn the GER Award Pin by sponsoring three new or reinstated Members. The Elks Membership Award Watch can be earned for sponsoring any combination of eleven new or reinstated Members.

Stray Elks

A “Stray Elk” is a paid-up Member of a Lodge who now resides within the jurisdiction of another Lodge. An individual who has taken an Absolute Dimit or been dropped from membership for nonpayment of dues is not a Stray Elk.

The Stray Elk Program is aimed at extending friendships by inviting Stray Elks to continue their participation in Elkdom through your Lodge programs. A successful Stray Elk Program can curtail the dwindling interest that leads

to a loss of Members.

In metropolitan areas where several Lodges may be close by, Elks who are Members of one Lodge may show up on a neighboring Lodge’s Stray Elk list because they reside in that Lodge’s jurisdiction. Common sense dictates that these individuals not be pursued as Stray Elks. Contact those Elks who have moved from another state or those who are not Members of neighboring Lodges.

Questions arise about Lodge jurisdiction in connection with this worthwhile program. All printouts include a list of the zip codes presently assigned to your Lodge. Our computer used this data to determine whether a Member should appear on your list or the list of a neighboring Lodge when residency changes. Please notify your Sponsor(s) of additions and/or deletions of zip codes within your Lodge jurisdiction. Make sure you copy the office of the Grand Secretary with any such correspondence.

Stray Elk printouts are sent to each Lodge semi-annually by the Grand Lodge Membership Committee.

If your Lodge is just starting a Stray Elk Program, or if your Program needs a fresh start, a complete listing of STRAY ELKS can be obtained from the Grand Secretary by requesting the COISES printout for copying names and addresses onto Avery #5351 Copier Labels.

The Stray Elk Program is one of fraternalism. Its primary purpose is to welcome Stray Elks to the Lodge near their new home — to show them that the bonds of Elkdom transcend specific localities. In this way, we might encourage these Elks to maintain membership.

By welcoming these Stray Elks, you can help prevent the needless loss of good Members. A Stray Elk may not want to transfer into your Lodge. If so, make sure that they feel comfortable and welcome. There are good reasons why some Stray Elks do not want to transfer. Charter Members, Life Members, Past Exalted Rulers and “old-timers,” for example, may not want to relinquish their standing in their current Lodge. Other Members may have personal reasons for sticking with their old Lodge.

Whatever their reason, we should not fault them. We should make *every* Stray Elk feel welcome. Offer them the opportunity to transfer to your Lodge, but let them know that they are just as welcome to use the facilities of the Lodge and to participate in its functions if they don’t.

Every Lodge should keep its Stray Elk file up to date. If the list becomes obsolete, a new list can be secured from the Grand Secretary by submitting the post office zip codes in the jurisdiction of the Lodge. The Grand Secretary will respond with the names of all Stray Elks receiving The Elks Magazine at these post offices. Please keep in mind that this procedure is expensive. Only request a new list as a last resort.

Associate Membership

An alternative to membership for Stray Elks who do not wish to transfer Lodges is an Associate Membership. Your Lodge, if desired, can provide Associate Membership for these Elks. To do so, your Lodge, following the Laws of the Order, must amend their By-Laws and have the amendment approved by the Grand

“Offer them the opportunity to transfer to your Lodge, but let them know that they are just as welcome to use the facilities of the Lodge and to participate in its functions if they don’t.”

Lodge Committee on Judiciary.

Associate Membership provides all the privileges of membership, including use of club facilities and attendance at Lodge meetings. The only drawback is that an Associate Member cannot vote on issues presented at a Lodge meeting.

“Dr. William Glasser wrote that “perception is reality.” Perception is reality and whether that perception is right or wrong is totally irrelevant.”

EVERY ONE OF US MUST PITCH IN

Why Do Some Members Quit?

The answer is simple. Many quit because they feel neglected! Whether perception or reality, many Elks fail to return to the Lodge because they feel their fellow Members were indifferent or without courtesy toward them. We failed to impress upon them how important their membership was to us.

Even if we replace these Members with new ones, we’re still far behind. More time and effort go into getting a new member than holding onto present members. And we’re losing the members that they might have sponsored.

We all yearn to be appreciated. We love individual attention, to be recognized. This won’t change when we join an Elks Lodge. A Member wants to feel important and valued. Let your Members know — especially new Members and Stray Elks — that the Lodge is thinking about and appreciates them.

Reinstatements

If we could just reinstate some of our former Members — people who at one time found the Elks attractive — we could significantly improve our overall membership.

The Lodge Membership Committee should take a good look at desirable former Members. Many times special circumstances cause an Elk to let membership lapse or take an Absolute Dimit. But when these problems have disappeared, the former Member may be embarrassed to ask for reinstatement. The Lodge Secretary can provide a list of Members eligible for reinstatement for consideration by the Lodge Membership Committee.

Delegates at the 1997 Grand Lodge Session in Chicago, Illinois, amended Section 14.180 of the Laws of the Order, which established a 60-day window during which the reinstatement fee could be reduced to \$1. This would apply only if a Lodge adopted a specific By-Law Amendment that it could **not** apply during February through May.

Round-Ups

The Lodge Membership Committee should hold a “round-up” night once or twice a year featuring good fellowship

and entertainment. The program should also serve as a reorientation to the Order’s objectives and achievements. Invite all Stray Elks and select reinstatement prospects and explain, either orally or in writing, how easy it is to transfer or reaffiliate. Many Elks think this process is complicated and therefore hesitate to ask about it.

Also, invite Stray Elks to your Preinitiation Orientation meetings. The Orientation Program presents the perfect opportunity to get to know these Members while exposing them to the projects of your Lodge and, if necessary, the nationwide works of the Order.

“It is vitally important that we, as Elks, are aware of the messages we send to people both by our actions and our inactions because they create perceptions that affect our membership.”

Making It Happen —

Getting Energy Out Of Everyone

Effective Lodge leaders pay attention to creating positive energy the same way they pay attention to Ritual, the Elks National Foundation, Youth Activities and the needs of their communities. They know positive energy helps Members overcome membership obstacles and rise to new challenges.

One way to create positive energy is by being positive yourself. You must be determined that you really care and support the Lodge membership goal.

Use your enthusiasm to attract people while making them see that their contributions make a difference.

Potential Members are just waiting to be asked to join by the right person. A well-planned membership effort with clearly defined responsibilities will result in new ideas, more reinstatements, membership retention and a growing, viable Lodge. Don’t forget that newly initiated Members are themselves important for obtaining other new Members. They all have friends who may never have been asked to join. Appendix A contains suggested model letters for recruiting Members.

◆ Section III ◆

Orientation of New Members

Membership and Lapsation are problems for nearly every Lodge in the Order. Officers and Members at every level of Elkdom have spent countless hours seeking cures. What may be needed most, though, is a healthy dose of prevention.

We need to do a better job of informing new Members about our aims, purposes and objectives. We need to show them “*What It Means To Be An Elk*” and do it early, while the appeal that first attracted them to our Order is still fresh. That’s what the Orientation Program is all about.

“We need to show them “*What It Means To Be An Elk*,” and we have to do it early, while the appeal that first attracted them to our Order is still fresh.”

A good Orientation Program:

- Exposes candidates to the camaraderie found at an Elks Lodge;
- Opens avenues to participation in Lodge activities; and
- Make them proud to become part of an organization with such an outstanding record of service to others.

The goal is to connect with each candidate on at least one of these points. The Member who develops friendships with other Elks will remain an Elk. The Member who uses the Lodge for helping others will remain an Elk. The Member who understands that his or her annual dues help support worthwhile charitable activities, even if not actively participating in these activities or taking advantage of Lodge facilities, will remain an Elk.

The candidate with whom we don’t connect, however, will undoubtedly wind up on the Lapsation rolls, which is why having a formal and consistent Orientation Program is so important.

Pre-initiation Meeting

A week before initiation, the Orientation Committee (*which is appointed by the ER at the first regular meeting after installation*) should invite all candidates to a dinner meeting at the Lodge. This evening should be exclusively for the candidates, not on a regular Lodge meeting night or in conjunction with another Lodge activity.

The invitation itself will make an impression. If you do it by letter, make sure you address the candidate by name and not as “Dear Candidate.” (*Using a simple mail-merge in a word-processing application, you can plug*

personalized information into a form letter.) Personal invitations will tell your candidates that in your Lodge, they’re going to be more than just numbers.

Whether by card or letter, the invitation should include the time, location and purpose of the meeting, as well as a self-addressed stamped postcard for the candidate’s reply. Also, consider inviting the candidate’s spouse to attend. The spouse is a potential member, and his or her support will likely be necessary if the candidate is to become and remain an active Elk. Finally, invite the candidate’s proposer and ask him or her to encourage the candidate to attend.

So, for the dinner and meeting, you should invite your candidates and their spouses, the candidates’ proposers, the Orientation Committee, and the Lodge Officers.

During the meeting, thoroughly orient the candidates to the charitable and philanthropic works of the Order, and make them feel welcome and have fun.

Be sure to seat the proposers with their candidates. They are the bridge between the candidates and the assembled Lodge Members. Also, try to seat a Lodge Officer or Orientation Committee Member at each table during dinner, and at the very least, have an Officer or Committee Member visit each table. Treat dinner as if it were your only chance to expose the candidate to that Lodge camaraderie we like to boast of. Let the Officers and Committee Members, and any other Members present, know that they must bend over backwards to welcome the candidates.

The meeting should begin after dinner and be conducted by the Chairperson of the Orientation Committee or a qualified Member designated by the Chairperson.

The Chairperson should introduce him or herself, the Orientation Committee Members, and then the Officers. Have the candidates to introduce themselves. Ask a few questions to get them going: Are you married? Do you have kids? Where do you live? What do you do for a living? Do you have any hobbies? Who is your proposer?

If time permits, ask the rest of the assembled Members to stand and give their names. (*Use your best judgment here. If 100 people attend the meeting, you may want to ask them to introduce themselves to the candidates after the program.*)

Once everyone is better acquainted, begin the video presentation.

Video Presentation: In 2000, the Grand Lodge

professionally produced an 6-minute 33-second video featuring the Hoop Shoot®, Drug Awareness, Veterans Service, State Major Projects, *The Elks Magazine*, Elks National Home, Elks National Foundation and other programs. The video, which is updated periodically, is intended to replace the old slide show presentation. Under Code 533200, it can be purchased from Grand Lodge for \$20.

Some Lodges have taken the video presentation a step further by producing videos of their community works. This is an excellent idea. Examples of the Lodge at work can only enhance the overview given in the Grand Lodge video.

Producing your own video or slide presentation isn't difficult. You should be able to find a Member or two who are comfortable behind a camera. Instruction on producing videos is available at local cable-access stations, as are the tools necessary to edit footage.

Speakers: Follow the video with short talks on the State Association, the organization of the local Lodge, the camaraderie and fellowship of an Elks Lodge, and any topics unique to your Lodge. Line up a speaker for each topic, and give them time to prepare an informative presentation, preferably no more than five minutes.

State Association: Explain the aims of the association, as well as its structure (officers, major committees, etc.); its history; the Major Project, including fundraising; and various activities, such as ritualistic contests, Veterans Service, Americanism, scholarships, service pins, bowling, golf, etc.

Local Lodge: Present an organizational chart of the local Lodge, including names of the Officers, their stations and duties, and explain the function of the various Committees. Also, inform candidates about:

- Available facilities, including building and club hours, meals served, golf, swimming, etc.;
- Social activities for Members as well as privileges extended to spouses and families;
- Charitable work of the Lodge and the means of raising the funds for it;
- Programs of the Lodge in progress and planned for the future;
- Mandatory services of the Order and their obligation to attend, and;
- Special local rules of the Lodge and club.

Fellowship: Emphasize that the Elks is a charitable and patriotic Order founded on good fellowship. Explain that the Lodge is for meeting old friends and making new ones, and that new members will benefit most from frequent attendance at social and charitable functions.

But again, we can talk about the camaraderie found at Elks Lodges, but it's far more important that this

fellowship be on display throughout the evening. The candidates will come away asking themselves: Did I have fun? Did I feel welcome? Did I meet new people? If the answer is "NO" to any of these, they'll throw whatever you told them about Lodge fellowship right out the window.

“We can talk about the camaraderie found at Elks Lodges until we're blue in the face, but it's far more important that this fellowship be on display throughout the evening.”

The hand that you extend on this night is the candidates' link to greater involvement in the Lodge. Once extended, it's up to the candidates to grab it. But if you pull it away before they do, they'll likely end up on your lapsation rolls. So tell the candidates how much they mean to the Lodge. Welcome their involvement. Invite them to participate in Lodge functions and programs. Explain that the return they'll get on their membership will be in direct proportion to what they put in. But above all, remember that how the Members assembled that night treat them will carry much more weight than what the speaker says.

About Initiation Night: Close the meeting by reminding the candidates of the date of the initiation and asking them to be at the Lodge an hour before the meeting.

Explain that the initiation is entirely serious and that the candidates should dress fashionably. State the initiation fee and that if only partial payment has been made, the balance must be paid before initiation. Mention the annual dates of dues payment, and that since dues must always be paid in advance, that the proportionate amount of the half-year's dues must also be paid before initiation.

Tour the Facility: Adjourn the meeting with a tour the building. In the Lodge room, explain the stations and names and titles of the Officers who occupy them. In club, dining, game and other rooms, explain the rules for their use.

Pay close attention to time throughout the evening. Your chances of connecting with the candidates will be much better if you keep the program short and lively. We're not cramming for a final exam. We want to show them a good time, give them a good overview of the principles and objectives of the Order, and open avenues to greater involvement in the Lodge. The entire evening, from the dinner's first course to the end of the tour, should take no longer than two hours and 30 minutes.

“Keep the program short and lively. We're not cramming for a final exam.”

Preparing information packets for the candidates to take home may be helpful. Include background information

about the Lodge and Elks. You can obtain a copy of “What It Means to Be an Elk” from Grand Lodge. The “About the Order” section of the official home page of the BPO Elks, <http://www.elks.org/about>, is an excellent source of handouts. *(The home page also is a great place to send candidates with Internet access who wish to learn more about our organization.)* The candidates are more likely to retain information that they can read at their leisure than if you overwhelm them during the orientation. You’re also giving them material that they can easily share with their friends.

Finally, each of the orientation’s functions is compatible with the Stray Elk Program, so consider inviting selected Stray Elks to enjoy the evening as Lodge guests.

Initiation Night

Have the candidates report to the Secretary’s office about one hour before the meeting convenes so that there will be enough time to complete the “book work” on each candidate, collect the balance of the initiation fee and dues, and ensure that the Lodge has the candidate’s preferred mailing address on file.

The Orientation Chairperson should welcome the candidates and keep them together until the Lodge is ready to receive them for initiation. Discourage the candidates from drinking. In no case should the Lodge initiate a candidate who is intoxicated.

While waiting for initiation, the Chairperson should briefly explain once more the purposes and principles of the Order, review the qualifications for membership and explain how applications are processed (Interview, procedure of ballot, etc.). In addition, he or she should preview the initiation so that the candidates will know what to expect and therefore get the most out of the ritual; tell them how to respond to the questions they’ll be asked and that they should do so firmly and clearly; and reassure them that the ritual is entirely serious.

After the initiation, under Good of the Order, each New Member should be introduced by name, residence and occupation, and the Exalted Ruler should welcome the new Elks into the Lodge.

A well-prepared speaker, selected in advance by the Orientation Chairperson, should then talk briefly about an Elks program. Feature a different program at each initiation. The idea is to reinforce what the new Elks learned at Orientation as well as to remind all Members present of the good works we do.

After the talk, present each New Member with the Constitution and Laws of the Order, the By-Laws of the Subordinate Lodge, and the booklet “What It Means to Be an Elk.”

“The end of the initiation ceremony is just the beginning for these New Members.”

Postinitiation

The end of the initiation ceremony is just the beginning for these new Members. The succeeding 10 to 12 weeks will be the key to retaining them. During this period, they’ll be evaluating the Lodge.

CAMARADERIE. Are they welcome there? Have they met new people and made friends? Are they having fun?

PARTICIPATION. Have they been invited to help out in Lodge charitable and philanthropic programs? Does the Lodge have social activities for both younger and older members? Does it have family activities?

PRIDE. Is the Lodge synonymous in the community with a major project? Are any of the Lodge’s charitable and philanthropic works recognized by the community? Is the community even aware that it has an Elks Lodge?

If the answer to any of these questions is “NO,” you might lose some or all of your new Members.

The solution to the question of pride is obvious: Start blowing your horn.

Use the Lodge bulletin to inform your members about your charitable programs and to invite their participation. *(Regarding the latter, always be positive. Don’t complain that the sky will fall if they don’t help. Instead, focus on the good work that you do and occasionally profile one of your volunteers. Volunteer workers, like flies, are more apt to respond to honey than vinegar.)*

Send news releases to your local newspapers. The GL Public Relations Committee produces several excellent tools that can help get your publicity program off the ground. These include the Media Relations Handbook, Code 5107-1, available from the GL Shipping Department, and Seven Steps to Planning and Staging a Special Event and the ABC’s of Publicity, both free and available from the GL Public Relations Department.

Send news releases to *The Elks Magazine*. We’ve heard countless myths about the difficulty of getting material published in *The Elks Magazine*. The fact is the magazine will publish all Lodge news that meets their guidelines (available online at <http://www.elks.org/elksmag/fratguid.htm> or from the editorial department on request). Items must be timely (within four weeks of the event), no matter whether your Lodge has 100 members or 1,000, you raised \$100 or \$10,000, or you took one veteran to dinner or 40 to a ball game.

Questions of camaraderie and participation are a bit trickier. Offering a full slate of social activities appealing to all ages and being active in the community may not be enough. Inviting and encouraging new members to

“The Elks Magazine will publish all Lodge news that meets their guidelines and that is submitted in a timely manner, no matter whether your Lodge has 100 Members or 1,000.”

participate may not be enough either.

You probably know people who are completely at ease in a room full of strangers. They have no problem working the room, meeting people, making friends, exchanging small talk. Well, most of us aren't like that. Most of us don't like walking into unfamiliar territory without a guide. For the new Member, that guide has to be his or her proposer.

“Most of us don't like walking into unfamiliar territory without a guide. For the New Member, that guide has to be his or her Proposer.”

The proposer must be responsible for nurturing the new member until he or she has been integrated into the Lodge. The proposer should offer to take the new member to a Lodge meeting or go with the new Member to social functions. The proposer also should volunteer with the new member to help out at a charitable function. Proposers must stay with new Members until they feel comfortable participating on their own, whether that takes three or six months or a year.

“Ask them to hold their New Member's hand from Orientation through integration.”

Consider making the Proposer-Member relationship a formal arrangement in your Lodge. Let your members know how much you appreciate their recruitment efforts, but tell them that just proposing people for membership is not enough. Ask them to hold their new Member's hand from Orientation through integration. You may even want to specify a time during which this arrangement is mandatory. If so, make it no less than three months and encourage proposers to continue holding their members' hands if integration has not occurred within that time.

Consider offering retention incentives. If you award the person who sponsors the most new members during the Lodge year, why not offer a second award to the proposer from the previous year who has the most members still in good standing.

Another possible solution is the “Red Badge Program.” The idea here is to give each new Member on the night of initiation a red plastic name tag, with all other members having badges of a color other than red. Instruct the new Members to wear their red badges to every meeting and Lodge function until they have attended the initiation of another new member. Encourage the older members to seek out the men and women wearing red badges, shake their hands and strike up a conversation. You may find that this program will not only increase participation and improve retention, but new Members will be reluctant to surrender their red badges when the time comes.

If we communicate our good works through the Lodge bulletin; if we toot our horns in the local newspapers, our bulletins and *The Elks Magazine*; if we ask proposers to serve as guides from orientation through integration; and if we ask members to look for the distinguishing mark of new members at all Lodge functions, then the decision whether to remain an Elk after those first 10 to 12 weeks will be a slam dunk.

Summary

Different Lodges demand different orientation programs, and each should be tailored to a Lodge's distinct characteristics. But the principles are the same: camaraderie, participation and pride. Keep these principles in your sites at all times, because if you can connect with the candidates on any of them, you'll never see their names on your lapsation lists.

◆ Section IV ◆

Lapsation Manual with Sample Letters, Ideas and Membership Management Forms

Foreword

This Lapsation Manual is a start toward standardizing the Subordinate Lodge collection and lapsation procedures. We hope to periodically revise and add new ideas to this manual. If your Lodge has a proven method not mentioned here, please tell us about it. Write the Grand Secretary at 2750 N. Lakeview Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60614-1889, or e-mail grandlodge@elks.org.

Delinquency Defined

All Elks should know the correct method of computing delinquency. The Laws of the Order, Section 14.300, provide that “*dues must be paid semi-annually in advance on April 1 and October 1; provided, however, a member may... pay not to exceed one year’s dues in advance as of April 1 in any year.*”

Thus, since dues are payable in advance, delinquency begins on the first day of the dues-paying period. Members without membership cards showing that they are paid in advance of the current date are delinquent. If they owe six months’ dues to reach an advance date, they are six months delinquent. If they owe one year’s dues to reach an advance date, they are delinquent one year; and if they owe more than one year’s dues to reach an advance date, they are more than one year delinquent.

Understanding six-month, one-year and more than one-year delinquencies is essential. If you aren’t sure, check with your District Deputy.

Suggested Collection (Lapsation) Plan

The poor delinquency record of many Lodges is partially due to the lack of any definite plan in collecting dues. This, coupled with an inexperienced Exalted Ruler, an apathetic Secretary or inactive Lapsation Committee, is certain to throw any Lodge into a delinquency tailspin.

This manual outlines a definitive plan for those charged with dues collection. Collecting dues is an administrative problem. Exalted Rulers are obligated, as Chief Executive Officers, to see that the proper Administrative Officers do not shirk this duty.

Not sure how seriously you should treat lapsation? Just look at the record. Many Lodges drop from 7 to 15 percent of their membership for nonpayment of dues each year. The average for the Order is now more than 5.5 percent.

Nationwide, for every three new members initiated, roughly four old members are dropped. The problem isn’t bringing in new members, it’s keeping the ones we have.

Every Lodge is different. Each has its own idiosyncrasies that make a single, standard program impossible. However, the plan that follows is flexible and proven. If you have a lapsation problem, try adopting this plan and molding it to fit your exact needs.

“Nationwide, for every three new members initiated, roughly four old members are dropped. The problem isn’t bringing in new members, it’s keeping the ones we have.”

Let’s start with this: An Elks Lodge is a business and should be run like a business. Dues are our accounts receivable. Elks Lodges, like businesses, cannot survive without a good plan for collecting this income.

Every successful business establishes a credit policy. Ours is based on the premise that members who will not pay one year’s dues certainly will not pay two years’ dues. We must not allow our members to become more than one year delinquent. That’s our credit policy — it has been tried by a number of Lodges, and it works. Experience has shown that when a membership realizes the Lodge means business, even the habitual offenders will pay rather than let their membership lapse.

One of the most important features of the plan is keeping the statement of Membership and Delinquency forms, which you’ll find at the back of this manual. Most Lodges let their lapsation work drift along until the end of the year and then suddenly realize that they have a tough problem. This is partly due to those responsible for collecting dues are unaware of delinquent members until they are called upon to drop a group for nonpayment of dues. An up-to-date comparative statement of Membership and Delinquency will apprise the Secretary, Exalted Ruler and Lapsation Committee of the progress made each month in collecting dues and maintaining membership. Major changes in the delinquency percentage will be apparent immediately and can be addressed before the situation is out of control.

To ensure that we’re all on the same page regarding lapsation statistics, here’s a short course on the accepted formula for determining the lapsation or delinquency

percentage. For any given date, divide the number of delinquent members by the total membership. Multiply the resulting decimal figure by 100 to get the delinquency percentage, which should then be entered in the appropriate column of the membership charts and reported to those tabulating membership statistics.

For example, 165 delinquent members in a Lodge of 1,071 would mean a delinquency percentage of 15.4: $165/1071 = 0.1540616 \times 100 = 15.4$ percent (rounded off).

Dues collection is shared by the Secretary, Exalted Ruler and Lapsation Committee. All must play a role. Suggestions for each role follow. No doubt you'll think of others, and we'd appreciate your input if you do.

Remember: The collection effort begins immediately upon the start of the Lodge year! Anyone delinquent on April 1 or before is a candidate for being dropped for nonpayment of dues on the following March 31!

In April, the Committee can personally contact members who owe dues from the preceding year. Those who owe dues from September 30 to March 31 cannot be dropped on March 31 because they only owe six months' dues. But on April 1, they owe another semi-annual dues payment and therefore, become one-year delinquent. These members must be talked to personally, and April is the best time for the Committee to do this.

In May, the Committee should begin sending letters to the delinquents. Choose from among the sample letters in Appendix A, or devise your own, but always address the members by name. We can't stress enough that dues-collection letters addressed to "Dear Member" are counterproductive. If you were "*Dear Member,*" would you believe that the Lodge really wanted you back? Send a second wave of letters on June 1.

“If you were “*Dear Member,*” would you believe that the Lodge really wanted you back?”

By June 1, the Committee should have initiated personal contact. Face-to-face contact is better than by telephone. On the phone, it's too easy to say no or that the check's in the mail. And the fact that the Lodge has taken the time to pay a visit will not go unnoticed by the delinquent member. If you choose to call, don't leave messages. Be sure you talk to the member directly. Whichever way you go, enlist the aid of the member's proposer.

We have not emphasized the "Early Bird Plan" enough. In the February bulletin, publish an announcement that members who pay their dues before April 1 will have Early Bird stickers affixed to their membership cards. Include a similar announcement with the dues notices. Try it! You'll be surprised how many members will pay their dues in advance just to get their sticker.

Any gimmick that you can use to encourage members to pay their dues early will lighten the burden of collection, so be creative. And remember: Face-to-face contact will say more about our desire to have a member back than

anything we could write or say over a telephone.

There is no magic to dues collection – just hard work!

The Secretary

1. Bill all delinquents monthly!
2. Just before the first of each month, including the first of April and October, mail bills to all unpaid members.
3. On the bills mailed May 1 and November 1, stamp "Second Notice." The bill should also carry the statement: "Your Lodge has advanced the money to pay for your subscription to *The Elks Magazine*, Grand Lodge per capita assessment, Service Commission assessment and State Association per capita amounting to \$X, therefore the Lodge will appreciate your prompt payment of your dues."
4. On the bills going out June 1 and December 1, stamp "Past Due — Third Notice." This bill should carry the same statement as in Paragraph 3.
5. Use personal letters or notes, gags, cartoons or clever sayings. Conduct face-to-face interviews with delinquents. Suggest partial or monthly payments for clearing up old delinquencies.
6. Keep a running record as of the end of each month showing the year-to-date figures for new members initiated, transfers in, reinstatements, dropped for nonpayment, transfers out, absolute dimits, deaths and number of those delinquent six months, one year, or more than one year. *See Statement of Membership and Delinquency at the back of this manual.*
7. Cooperation with the Exalted Ruler and Lapsation Committee is essential to the success of this plan. Prepare and mail letters for the Exalted Ruler and Lapsation Committee. Keep the Statement of Membership and Delinquency up to date, and give these figures to the ER and Lapsation Committee at the first of each month.
8. As the paid Lodge Officer, you're largely responsible for dues collection and prodding the others into keeping this lapsation schedule.
9. Use remittance and window envelopes for billing and collecting dues. They may be secured through the Grand Secretary's office.
10. Sixty days before the last meeting in March, read to the Lodge the names of all members delinquent one year or more.
11. Thirty days before the last meeting in March, mail all members delinquent one year or more an official final notice.
12. At the last regular meeting in March, read the names of those delinquent one year or more and enter them in the minutes as dropped for nonpayment of dues as of March 31.

13. On April 1, delete from the minutes of the last regular March meeting the names of those delinquent one year or more who have since paid their dues.
14. On April 1, mail members dropped for nonpayment of dues a letter advising them of the Lodge's action and the proper procedure to follow for reinstatement.
15. Follow this with a second letter on May 1 if the member has not reinstated, explaining that the 30-day grace period has expired.
16. When an Absolute Dimit is granted by the Lodge, mail a letter notifying the member and explaining the reinstatement procedure.

There is no magic to dues collection – just hard work!

The Exalted Ruler

1. If the Lodge budget permits, hold a free dinner for all paid-up members the night of the first meeting in April.
2. Strictly enforce the law that members cannot attend Lodge Sessions unless paid-up, and don't allow delinquent members to use the club facilities.
3. On May 1, write to all members delinquent more than the current half-year dues, expressing surprise at finding their delinquency and asking their support and cooperation by paying up at once. On November 1, write a similar letter.
4. When you send an announcement for a big event, jot down a personal, handwritten note to some of the delinquents (a different group each time). Mention that you haven't seen them in the Lodge room during your term and that you would appreciate their special effort to attend this function. Be sure to thank them if they come.
5. About 90 days before a member will become more than one-year delinquent, write him or her a letter explaining that on a certain date, you have to turn over a record of all delinquent members to the Lapsation Committee. Explain that you hate to give up on a member this way and ask if there's anything you personally can do to change his or her mind about paying their dues.
6. In February, write to all delinquents asking for their help in breaking the Lodge record for paid-up membership. Tell them that you'll consider it a personal favor if they pay their dues before the close of the year.
7. Instruct the Interviewing Committee to discuss with each applicant the Lodge rules for paying dues and the applicant's ability to meet these financial obligations promptly. Many Lodges obtain a credit report on each applicant. Emphasize that dues must be paid in advance.
8. Instruct the Orientation Committee to emphasize rules regarding dues payment and the penalties for nonpayment.
9. Make lemonade out of lemons. Despite your efforts,

some delinquent members won't pay their dues. So after dropping these members, contact them and ask why they let their membership lapse. (*If you contact them by letter, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for their response.*) Perhaps through this contact you'll learn of and correct a problem with the Lodge. That may not get this member back, but it might stop another from leaving.

There is no magic to dues collection – just hard work!

The Lapsation Committee

The Laws of the Order, Section 13.090, state: The Lapsation Committee "*shall investigate and report on all delinquencies in Lodge dues and employ such means and methods as may be best adapted to prevent the dropping from the rolls of members for nonpayment of dues. ... The committee shall report at the first meeting in each month.*"

These are the goals we strive for:

1. Reduce Lodge delinquencies by June 30 to 10 percent or less of the June 30 membership.
2. Reduce Lodge delinquencies by September 30 to 5 percent or less of the September 30 membership.
3. Reduce Lodge delinquencies by March 31 to 2 percent or less of the March 31 membership total — all only six months' delinquent.
4. Reduce the total members dropped for nonpayment of dues to 2 percent or less of the total membership at the beginning of the year.
5. Maintain a year-round watch over delinquencies and guide the Exalted Ruler and Secretary in collecting dues.
6. See that a planned collection program is carried out throughout the year.
7. Sixty days before a member will be dropped for nonpayment of dues, write a letter calling attention to this deadline established by the Laws of the Order, and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Chairperson of the Lapsation Committee. Suggest partial payments for paying their arrears. Invite them to share their reasons for not paying their dues. (*Again, this feedback could prove valuable.*)
8. During this month, ask an Officer, Committee Member or Past Exalted Ruler who knows the delinquent Member personally to write a friendly letter on plain stationery. (*One Lodge mailed 150 of these letters and received a 15 percent favorable response in one week.*) This is also a good time to ask the Member's proposer to initiate face-to-face contact.
9. Thirty days before dropping a member, have the Secretary send the required official 30-day notice of suspension. Please note that members may be dropped for nonpayment in September as well as March.
10. During this 30-day interval, have Lapsation

Committee Members, along with the proposer, visit the delinquent Member in a final effort to retain him or her. Failing this, try to get them to pay up and take an Absolute Dimit. Solicit the assistance of the proposer, the Past Exalted Ruler who initiated him or her, or a close friend. Call out-of-town delinquents. Sundays at noon is a good time to make these calls; one Lodge succeeded in collecting dues from 75 percent of its out-of-town members this way.

11. Use your best judgment when recommending that the Lodge pay the dues to keep a member in good standing. Length of service, illness or financial distress may be suitable reasons, but only if you have substantiated evidence and the member is sincere about retaining membership in the Order. Such payments should be made by check from the Charity Committee and not read before the Lodge. Where such cases are known in advance, pay the dues at the beginning of the period. This not only removes the name from the delinquent list but also allows the member the benefits of membership.
12. At the last regular meeting in March, under the Laws of the Order, Section 14.160, the Lapsation Committee should read the names of all members owing one or more year's dues in order to place the names in the minutes. No motion to drop them for nonpayment of dues is necessary as the Laws of the Order make severing their membership automatic.
13. The Lapsation Chairperson should classify each member dropped according to the following schedule, and turn in to the Secretary for permanent file the number of members dropped in each classification:

Reasons for Relinquishing Membership:

1. Unable to locate.
2. No longer interested.
3. Finances.
4. Out of jurisdiction.
5. Dissatisfied with Lodge and Officers.
6. No time — too busy.
7. Poor health.
8. Business reasons.
9. Other reasons — specify.
10. Refused a reason.

Length of continuous service of those dropped:

1. Two to five years.
2. Five to eight years.
3. Eight to 12 years.
4. 12 to 16 years.
5. 16 to 25 years.

6. 25 to 35 years.

7. Over 35 years.

The questions on the mind of every delinquent are:

Why should I pay my dues?

Why should I continue to be active in the Lodge?

“The questions on the mind of every delinquent are: • Why should I pay my dues? • Why should I continue to be active in the Lodge?”

This should be answered by a more important question:

Why did you join the Lodge?

If we took the money we spend at the Lodge in dues, charity functions and contributions, social activities and other Lodge events, and gave it to deserving students seeking higher education; or bought food, toys and clothing for the needy; went to visit the local VA medical center, writing letters for and entertaining the bedridden and arranging outings for veterans able to enjoy such events, maybe we wouldn't need an Elks Lodge.

But, how many of us can afford to do these things? How many can or will carry out such projects? Very few.

As we say in the Elks National Foundation: ***“If you can't give a million, be one of a million to give.”*** This is why you joined the Lodge. This is the primary function of the modern Lodge. It's not just a friendly spa where friends meet to drink and enjoy good fellowship. It's where we can pool our funds, whether \$1 or \$1,000, to make our communities, states and country better places to live.

“Why did you join the Elks?”

Was it the fellowship you saw at a family outing or when a neighbor asked you to leave the TV for a night to help out at Las Vegas Night at the area VA medical center?

Possibly it was the day you were asked to play one of Santa's elves at a Christmas party for disadvantaged children. That was the day you noticed two of the kids making so many trips through the hotdog line. It was only after you followed them back to the bus that you discovered they weren't eating them — they had a bedridden mother and two little brothers, and no father at home, who hadn't had a good hotdog in weeks.

Or maybe one of those little kids was you, and you resolved that day that when you grew up, you'd give back to your community the way the Elks gave to you.

Is that why you're an Elk?

The community still needs the Elks, and the Elks still need people who care. People like you.

Even if you're not as active as you used to be, your dues still make our charitable and philanthropic works possible. We need you, and the community needs you!

Yes, you should remain a member. Your dues make you a

member of one of the greatest organizations in the world! Your dues enable your Elks Lodge to continue making your community, state and country a better place to live!

There is no magic to dues collection – just hard work!

Computing Delinquencies

1. Dues are payable in advance on April 1 but may be paid semi-annually on April 1 and October 1.
2. Compute delinquencies as of the close of business on the last day of each month. Remember that all membership statistics reports are due on July 20 and November 20, but that the requested membership delinquency figures are those from April 1 to July 15, due July 20, and from April 1 to November 15, due November 20.
3. Since dues may be paid semi-annually in advance, the term of delinquency is determined by how many semi-annual periods for which the member owes dues. If they owe for one semi-annual dues period, they're six months delinquent; if they owe for two semi-annual periods, they're one year delinquent; and if they owe for three semi-annual periods, they are one and one-half years delinquent. For example:
 - a) Dues not paid for 4-1 to 9-30...six months delinquent.
 - b) Dues not paid for 4-1 to 9-30 and for the period 10-1 to 3-31...one year delinquent.
 - c) Dues not paid for 10-1 to 3-31 of the preceding year, for 4-1 to 9-30 and for 10-1 to 3-31...one and one-half years delinquent.

It is this easy! Starting from the date the report requests, count the number of semi-annual periods the member owes dues for to determine his or her delinquency. How many semi-annual dues payments will it take from the date of delinquency to pay dues up to and including the date of the report?

Dropping for Nonpayment

1. Sixty days before the last meeting in March, the Secretary shall read into the minutes, the names of all members one year delinquent or more.
2. Thirty days before the last Lodge meeting in March, the Secretary shall send a final notice, in person or by prepaid first-class mail, addressed to all members delinquent one or more years, advising that they will be dropped from the Lodge membership rolls as of the close of business on March 31 unless their dues are paid before that time.
3. At the last meeting in March, the Secretary shall include

an updated list of those members listed in Item 1 who have not at that date been returned to good standing by paying their dues. The Secretary shall mark off this final list any members who pay their dues between this meeting and the close of business March 31. All others remaining on the list shall be stricken from the membership roll as of that March 31.

4. A member who is delinquent one year on September 30 may be dropped from the roll as of that date by following the same procedure outlined above. But the date for first reading and recording in the minutes as provided in Item 1 shall be 60 days before the date of the last Lodge meeting in September, and the date of sending the final notice shall be 30 days before the last Lodge meeting in September. Dropping members at September 30 is optional with the Lodge. These members will become one and one-half years delinquent on October 1, but may be carried over until March to give additional time for collection. The per capita taxes have already been paid, so it costs little to carry them over.

There is no magic to dues collection – just hard work!

Appendix A

The following letters are intended as models for use in your Membership Program. You may want to alter them somewhat to suit your Lodge. Following are guidelines for using the letters:

- Except where noted, all letters should be on Lodge stationery.
- Each letter should be personalized. Address the Member by first name. You're not going to convince anyone that you value their membership when you address them as "Dear Former Member" or "Dear Member."
- Include a "What You Should Know About the Elks" Brochure (available from the Grand Secretary's Office) with each letter.

Use these letters liberally, but always keep in mind that the best way to contact delinquent Members is face-to-face.

[Sample Letter to Stray Elks.]

Dear (First Name),

I have just received notification from The Elks Magazine that you have recently moved to our wonderful city of (city). On behalf of (blank) Elks Lodge, I'd like to welcome you and your family to our community. I know that you will find us very hospitable, and we all hope that your stay will be long and prosperous.

I'd also like to invite you to visit our Lodge on meeting night, (date) at (time). We are proud of our Lodge and believe that you will enjoy a visit with us. Our club facilities are at your disposal, and we invite you to use them.

I look forward to meeting you personally in the very near future.

Sincerely,

(Name),
Exalted Ruler

[Sample Letter to New Member.]

Dear (First Name),

I would like to again welcome you as a New Member to our Elks Lodge. I do hope that membership in the Elks is meeting your expectations.

An Elks membership offers many different avenues of service to both the Lodge and the community. If you would like to get more active, consider working with one of our many Committees. Please fill out the enclosed data sheet and return it to the Lodge in the postage-paid envelope. This will help us put you in touch with the Committee that best fits your interests.

You should be very proud that a Member of this Lodge thought enough of you to propose you as a member. Undoubtedly, among your friends and associates are those whom you feel are qualified to join with us. Therefore, I am enclosing a membership application for your convenience.

We sincerely believe that every one of our neighbors who is at least 21 and believes in God and in helping others would appreciate the opportunity to serve our community through membership in the Elks. We encourage you to make this opportunity available to someone else.

We look forward to receiving the enclosed application filled out and to seeing you at the Lodge in the very near future.

Sincerely,

(Name),
Exalted Ruler

[Sample Reinstatement Letter]

Dear (First Name),

The Reinstatement Committee regrets to learn that your name has been stricken from our rolls for nonpayment of dues. I have been directed by the Officers of the Lodge to contact you with the thought of renewing your affiliation.

No doubt you are aware of our Lodge's record of service to our community, our state and our country. We helped the national organization contribute more than \$143 million in support of charitable and philanthropic programs last year, and we expect to better that number this year. Locally, (cite a recent local project here). Our Elks Lodge is making a difference.

Our ability to continue serving others depends on the support of Members like you, (First Name). We need your help, and we would consider it a privilege to restore your name to our membership rolls. You do not have to be initiated again, and you would retain your original membership number. I would be glad to meet with you to complete your application for reinstatement.

Should you wish to be reinstated, please advise our Lodge Secretary, (Secretary's name), or me at your earliest convenience.

Please join us again, and help us help others.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Name)

Exalted Ruler

[Sample Letter from PER who initiated the Delinquent Member.]

– Should not be on Lodge stationery. –

Dear (First Name),

When I was Exalted Ruler of our Lodge, it was my privilege to initiate you into our wonderful Order. It is with extreme regret that I find you have dropped out for nonpayment of dues and discontinued your active membership in the Lodge.

(First Name), I am proud to be an Elk. Through our Lodge, I have made many strong and lasting friendships, and I have had an opportunity to give back to our community. I feel good about our service to others and about belonging to a group of people who care.

It would mean a lot to me if you would reconsider your decision to drop out of the Elks. You can cover your reinstatement fees and be paid-up through April 1, (year), for only \$(amount). Just send a check to the Lodge at your earliest convenience.

And, (First Name), even if you decide not to come back, I'd still like to hear from you. If membership in our Lodge somehow did not meet your expectations, I want to know about it so that I can share this failing with the Lodge and perhaps make the necessary changes. So please write back or call me at (phone number). Perhaps we can get together for lunch.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Name),

Past Exalted Ruler

**[Sample Letter to be mailed May 1 to all who owe more than the current
half-year's dues.]**

– A similar letter should be sent on November 1. –

May 1, (Year)

Dear (First Name),

As you know, I have just been installed as Exalted Ruler of our Lodge. As a matter of personal pride and for the good of the Lodge, I want to make a good record.

Many times the failure of a Lodge is caused by too many delinquent Members, and so one of my first concerns upon taking office was an examination of the delinquent list. Your name was on the list. An unpaid membership is not only a detriment to the Lodge, but it is also of no value to you, since you cannot use it.

If your delinquency is simply an oversight on your part, I'd appreciate your cooperation in the form of prompt payment of \$(amount) to bring your membership up-to-date. If there is any reason why you cannot pay, please call me at (phone number). And if you have not paid your dues because you intend to let your membership lapse, I'd appreciate a call or a letter to let me know why.

(First Name), your membership is important to us. I hope you will send in your check for \$(amount) at once so that you can continue to help us help others, and if you don't, I hope you will at least make some time to tell me why so that if there's a problem, I can attempt to correct it.

Please remember that dues must be paid in advance by April 1 and October 1.

Sincerely,

(Name),
Exalted Ruler

[Sample Letter to be mailed July 1 and January 1 to Members delinquent more than the current half-year's dues.]

July 1, (Year) / January 1, (Year)

Dear (First Name),

The rules of our Lodge require that on the first of next month I must turn over to the Lapsation Committee for their consideration and action the names of all Members who are one year delinquent in payment of dues.

Your name is on this list, so I am writing you again in the hope that you will pay before I am required to turn in your name. Reporting delinquent Members to the Lapsation Committee is one of the most unpleasant duties of the Exalted Ruler.

If there is any reason why you cannot pay, please call me at (phone number). And, (First Name), even if you've decided to let your membership lapse, I'd still like to hear from you. If our Lodge is failing to meet the expectations of our Members, I'd like to know about it so that I can try to do something about it.

I hope to hear from you before the first of next month.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Name),
Exalted Ruler

**[Sample Letter to be mailed February 1 to all Members
owing more than the current half-year's dues.]**

February 1, (Year)

Dear (First Name),

It is the duty of the Lapsation Committee to examine delinquent accounts, assist the Exalted Ruler and Secretary in maintaining a paid-up membership, and recommend to the Lodge the suspension for nonpayment of dues of those Members who do not pay.

Section 14.160 of the Laws of the Order requires the Lodge, at the last meeting in March, to suspend for nonpayment of dues all Members who are as much as one year in arrears in dues.

We regret that your membership is in this category and must, therefore, be considered for suspension before the close of the Lodge term on March 31. We sincerely hope that you will be able to pay the \$(amount) in the very near future.

Many times, when a Member cannot pay the full amount at one time, paying in installments makes it easier. If it would assist you to pay \$(amount) this month and \$(balance of delinquency) next month, we would be glad to arrange it that way.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed, and if you are unable to pay, we urge you to write us explaining your situation so that we may have it in giving final consideration to your delinquency. And if you're unwilling to pay, please share your reasons with us. Perhaps your insight will allow us to correct a problem. Please give this matter your immediate attention.

We look forward to hearing from you and sincerely hope that you will not allow your membership to lapse.

Sincerely,

The Lapsation Committee
(Signed by each Member of Committee)

[Sample Letter from Lapsation Committee.]
– May be helpful to put the four questions on a separate sheet
and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. –

August 1, (Year) / February 1, (Year)

Dear (First Name),

A Request From the Lapsation Committee

This request is mailed to you with but one thought — that of cooperation: cooperation between the Lapsation Committee and a Member who is subject to suspension on March 31.

Your Lodge Officers and this Committee are working on the theory that it is more important to keep our present Members than to replace them with new ones. We accept the fact that you joined the Order as evidence that you wish to retain your membership. The Lapsation Committee is offering its services to you as a medium through which some plan can be formulated to retain you as a Member.

With but one motive — that of cooperation — we have enclosed a questionnaire. We would appreciate your taking the time to fill it out and mail it to us in the enclosed stamped envelope. You have our assurance that all correspondence will be kept in the strictest confidence.

We hope you will receive this letter and questionnaire in the spirit in which it is sent, and that we may work together for the benefit of our great Order.

Sincerely,
The Lapsation Committee
(Name), Chairman

[Sample Letter to Member requesting Absolute Dimit]

Dear (First Name),

It was with sincere regret that I received your request for an Absolute Dimit, which will place you on the inactive rolls. If there is anything I can do to correct any situation that you may have found displeasing, please let me know.

Quite possibly, your decision to become inactive has been reached simply because of your lack of time to attend meetings or utilize the club facilities. If this is the case, I appeal to you to reconsider; we need your continuing help in the furtherance of our Lodge's charitable and community projects. Nationwide last year, the Elks contributed more than \$140 million in charitable and philanthropic programs. Every Member of this organization helped achieve that figure. That should be a source of pride and satisfaction for all of us, but there's still more work to do, more people who need our help. (First Name), even if you can't be as active as you'd like to be, you're still an important part of our team, and I sincerely hope you will decide to remain a Member of our Lodge.

I look forward to hearing from you in regard to the reason for your decision, and I am hopeful that we may continue to share with you the responsibilities and pleasures of membership in our great Order.

Sincerely,

(Name)

Exalted Ruler

Appendix B

YOUR OWN SUBORDINATE LODGE NAME AND NUMBER

Date of your institution. Meets every (the day and time of your meeting) at (place of your meeting). Must have current dues paid to attend. Every Member of this Lodge present in the Lodge meeting at the time of the vote is entitled to vote.

OFFICERS

EXALTED RULER

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT

SECRETARY

TREASURER

TRUSTEES — (3 or 5)
*(1 elected each year —
state number and term)*

TILER

*Appointed yearly by the
Exalted Ruler:*

ESQUIRE

CHAPLAIN

INNER GUARD

ORGANIST

COMMITTEES

STATUTORY COMMITTEES:

Americanism
Auditing & Accounting
Drug Awareness
Flag Day
Government Relations
Hoop Shoot
Indoctrination
Investigating
Lapsation
Lodge Activities
Membership
Memorial Day
National Foundation
National Veterans Service
Public Relations
Community Activities
Visitation
Youth Activities

*(Statutory Committees are
appointed by the Exalted Ruler
at the next regular session
after his installation.)*

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES:

*Appointed by the Exalted Ruler as
needed to carry out Lodge programs:*

Social Sessions
State Major Project
Golf
Bowling

PROGRAM

PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF GRAND LODGE PROGRAMS:

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION — To raise funds for contribution to this permanent benevolent trust and to inform the membership of the activities of the Foundation. Participation in Most Valuable Student Scholarship Contest.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION — To cooperate through the State Association with national programs to aid hospitalized veterans.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM — To help youth decide to reject drug abuse before they start by education to increase awareness of its dangers. The program at national, state, district and Lodge levels involves Elks with parents, teachers and community leaders, and 4th through 9th graders.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS — Committees on a national, state and local level to protect our constitutional right to privacy and individual association.

PUBLIC RELATIONS — This Committee has recently has been found on a national, state and local basis to publicize the charitable, patriotic and youth work of the Order so as to improve the good public image of the Elks which seems to have lost its impetus.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES — To aid the Youth Activities program by sponsoring scout units, camping, and other youth activities in our jurisdiction and to promote the National "Hoop Shoot®" and Elks National Youth Day in your Lodge.

LODGE ACTIVITIES — To support programs sponsored by Grand Lodge such as membership classes, newspaper week, lapsation, etc.

PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF STATE ASSOCIATION PROGRAMS:

MAJOR PROJECT — To inform your Members of the activities and accomplishments of the Major Project and to get their support for special programs to raise additional money for such programs.

RITUALISTIC — Competition in District and State contests.

VETERANS' SERVICE — Aid in gathering hides and other therapy materials, entertainment for veterans in hospitals.

LOCAL LODGE PROGRAMS:

Charity, Community Welfare, Lapsation, Indoctrination, Grand Lodge and State Association, Flag Day, Memorial Day, Mother's Day, Fund Raising for Building, Americanism, Old Timers, and many others that make for a complete Lodge program as needed in your Subordinate Lodge.

A complete list of the committees of the Lodge should be given to all new members at their post-initiation meetings or should be mailed to them requesting that if they have preferences for serving on particular committees, they should designate such, listing first, second and third choices as it may not be possible to assign the member to a committee which has a full complement of members.

Appendix C

A TYPICAL STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION

(This chart is furnished as an example of a State Elks Association set-up. It may be adapted to any State Association as their organization, conditions and activities warrant.)

Organized October, 1913. Meets in May each year at a place selected by the Board of State Trustees. Consists of all the Lodges of the State. Voting is by the Exalted Rulers present or their officially designated proxy.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENTS
(One from each of the Grand Lodge Districts.)

SECRETARY

TREASURER

STATE TRUSTEES/
DIRECTORS
(Terms 2 years, 5 elected each year, 1 from each of the Grand Lodge Districts.)

Appointed each year by the President:

CHAPLAIN

TILER

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

ASSISTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY

AMERICANISM

BOWLING

CREDENTIALS

GOLF

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

GRAND LODGE

CONVENTION

LODGE ACTIVITIES

MAJOR PROJECT

MEMBERSHIP

NATIONAL FOUNDATION

PUBLIC RELATIONS

RESOLUTIONS

RITUALISTIC

SCHOLARSHIP

VETERANS' SERVICE

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Advisory Committee consists of Past Presidents. All other Committees appointed by the President in accordance with By-Laws or as required.

PROJECTS

MAJOR PROJECT

Aid to cerebral palsied and other physically handicapped children. Free mobile home therapy program—therapists each with own station wagon. (Other State Associations sponsor a variety of other major projects.)

PIGGY BANK

A program of raising extra money for the Major Project. Each member has a purple piggy bank and is asked to contribute at least a penny a day during the year. Proceeds of piggy banks and of other fund raising events for the benefit of the Major Project are presented each year to the State President at the State Convention.

NEW LODGES

The designated individuals or a subcommittee of the State Membership Committee shall have general charge of all matters pertaining to the organization and institution of new Lodges.

RITUALISTIC CONTESTS

Contests are held in each Grand Lodge District to determine the District champion. The District champions compete at the State Convention. The winner of this contest is the State Champion and goes to the Grand Lodge Convention to compete for the National Championship.

VETERANS' SERVICE

Hides and other therapy materials contributed for use of hospitalized veterans. Visitation to Veterans Hospitals.

GRAND LODGE

Organized February, 1868. Meets in July each year at a place selected by the Grand Exalted Ruler and the Board of Grand Trustees. Voting by Exalted Rulers, who are representatives, and Grand Lodge Members.

<u>GRAND LODGE OFFICERS</u>	<u>GRAND LODGE COMMISSIONS, ETC.</u>	<u>GRAND LODGE STANDING COMMITTEES</u>	<u>GRAND LODGE PROJECTS</u>
GRAND EXALTED RULER	Advisory Committee <i>(All Past Grand Exalted Rulers)</i>	<i>Appointed Yearly by G.E.R.</i>	<u>The Elks Magazine</u> <i>(The official magazine of the Order)</i>
GRAND ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT		Americanism	
GRAND ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT	<i>Appointed Yearly by G.E.R.</i>	Auditing and Accounting	Elks National Home <i>(For aged Elks at Bedford, VA)</i>
GRAND ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT	National Memorial and Publication Commission <i>(5 members—1 appointed each year)</i>	Government Relations	Elks National Memorial Building <i>(A memorial and headquarters building located in Chicago, Illinois)</i>
GRAND SECRETARY		Judiciary	
GRAND TREASURER	Elks National Veterans Service Commission <i>(5 members—1 appointed each year)</i>	Lodge/State Association Activities	
GRAND TILER		Membership	Elks National Foundation <i>(A permanent trust fund, the income of which is spent for charitable and humanitarian services)</i>
GRAND INNER GUARD		Public Relations	
BOARD OF GRAND TRUSTEES <i>(8 members—2 elected each year)</i>	Elks National Foundation <i>(7 members—1 appointed each year)</i>	Ritualistic	
GRAND FORUM <i>(5 Justices—1 appointed each year)</i>	Elks National Convention Commission <i>(5 members—1 appointed each year)</i>	Youth Activities	Elks National Veterans Service Commission <i>(Provides entertainment, recreation and occupational therapy supplies for hospitalized veterans)</i>
<i>Appointed by G.E.R.</i>			
GRAND ESQUIRE	Pardon Commission <i>(3 members—Chief Justice of Grand Forum, Chairman of Judiciary Committee, and Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight)</i>		
GRAND CHAPLAIN			
DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND EXALTED RULERS			



Attention, ERs and Secretaries: Have you ordered “*What You Should Know...*” Brochures to tell the public and your Members in a modern and colorful style about what Elks are doing across America today?

This attractive Brochure replaces all previous pamphlets, and explains who we are and what we stand for in 14 concise points. And these are points that we should not only share with *prospective* Members, but also from time-to-time with our *current* Members...especially when we’re asking them to pay their dues.

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