

An Open Message To All Lodge Officers and Members

I am approaching the final portion of my Lodge visitations for this Lodge year. I have observed that there is a surprising lack of officers and members attending these visitations. The dismal number of Visiting officers and members from the other lodges in our district is disturbing. Visitations are much more than dinner and a few words from the District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler or the State Vice President. They are an opportunity for members to hear the messages from our Grand Exalted Ruler James Nicholson or State President Leon Karjola. They should be considered as informative and fun, not something to run and hide from. The lack of a substantial number of visiting Officers and members attending these visitations not only shows disrespect for the person making an official visitation, but also a lack of interest in the work of Elkdom in general.

The visitations are an opportunity for all Elk members and officers from different lodges to get to know each other. Chair officers can form lasting friendships and exchange ideas with fellow officers. These same Officers generally will serve at the same time through the 4-year process. They may learn that they are in need of the support and friendship of their counterparts while serving Elkdom. Members can make new friendships and become more knowledgeable about the workings of the Elks.

The Knight's have their own meetings, however when Knights do not attend these meetings some lodges may go unrepresented. In turn, membership doesn't feel encouraged to participate, and not only do the Elks lose but also our Lodges that would benefit from the exchange of ideas between members in a more casual setting. It is extremely important that all Knights attend as many of these visitations, DD Clinics, Knights Clinics, and other meetings as possible.

Some additional benefits to the host Lodge may be that the visitation dinner can be a positive revenue opportunity. When the members of a Lodge support these functions, they become more comfortable with members from other lodges and are more likely to attend the different programs. Participation increases revenue to the lodge and that revenue will help support Lodge programs.

I realize that economics are tough right now but I ask All Exalted Rulers to encourage your Officers and members to support these visitations and other Lodge functions by their participation. Not only may you increase your lodge revenue, but you might also increase membership.

Elks Make A Difference

Melvin R. Keeter, DDGER