

STATE

Illinois Elks load 625 care packages for Army Guard Units in Afghanistan

For the fourth consecutive year, Illinois Elks from Cairo to Chicago converged on Springfield on Jan. 24, bringing food and personal care items to sort, pack and load 625 military flat-rate boxes for Illinois Army Guard Units in Afghanistan.

Lodges began arriving on the Friday of the IEA Mid-Winter Meeting with cookies, soup, beef jerky, M&M's, toothpaste, batteries and sunscreen just to name a few of the 35 items assigned to lodges throughout the eight IEA Districts.

Saturday afternoon the packing began,

with Elks, spouses, Mothers of Marines, Military Support Group Ladies and other friends of Elks working to fill and seal the boxes, which were loaded onto two trailers, all in less than three hours.

Elks Grand Exalted Ruler Paul D. Helsel, and Illinois Elk State President Darrell Swisher witnessed first hand Illinois Elks' commitment to U.S. military men and women in harms way. Thank you letters from Helsel and Swisher were inserted into each box, reminding the soldiers that Elks will never forget our service men and

women.

While Illinois Elk lodges and friends supplied the product, the Illinois State Elks Association stepped up with \$6,900 for postage. Dixon and DeKalb lodges also donated postage money, as did the West Aurora Girls Bowling team.

"A big thank you goes out for these generous donations to the SOS program," organizer Dave Rathgeb said.

Sixteen different chaplains' addresses in Afghanistan each received approximately 40 boxes to share with their fellow soldiers. As

the boxes are opened, the men and women of the Illinois Army National Guard will see first hand that "Elks Care - Elks Share."

"The Illinois Elks' Serving Our Soldiers Program would like to thank all Illinois Elks lodges and friends of Elks for their time, effort, generosity and dedication for a job well done," Rathgeb added. "Elks throughout Illinois will always remember the sacrifice our soldiers and their families make everyday for our country. May God bless our military men and women wherever they serve."

Lady Elk of Year Sue Dines always there for Danville Elks

Sue Dines, a tireless supporter and organizer of fundraising activities for Danville Lodge 332 for more than 12 years, is the 2008-09 IEA Lady Elk of the Year.

Besides attending most weekly lodge dinners and activities, Sue is always there to help with the setup and cleanup, said Lodge ER Donald E. Mowers in his nomination of Dines for the award.

"She checks in with the lodge secretary and the bar manager to see what is needed or in what way she can help," Mowers said. "Sue contributes desserts and hors d'oeuvres for special events and parties - even bringing the 'good china' from home to help set a more attractive table. She has chaired committees to decorate for monthly dances and uses her artistic eye and talents to not only keep us looking good, but to also keep us within the budget!"

Shortly after the presentation at the Mid-Winter meeting in Springfield, Dines said of the award, "It's quite an honor and I'll remember it for the rest of my life. I'm thrilled because there were a lot of people who deserved it."

Sue, a legal secretary by trade, works parttime at the machine and manufacturing shop of her husband Max, now a second-term lodge trustee. As a former secretary and president and current member of the Women In Construction organization, she helped organize successful fundraisers for many youth programs, including Danville High School's We Can Do Anything Club, which is also a Lodge 332 project.

Sue was active with Block Kids, a local

division of the National WIC program to challenge kids with toy building blocks. Sue and Max have personally paid for a C.H.O.I.C.E.S scholarship for Bismarck School where their grandchildren attend.

As a homemaker, mother of three and grandmother of four, Sue is the chauffeur for her autistic granddaughter, Lindsey, who attends Danville Area Community College. When Lindsey was in grade school and high school, Sue was there to assist with the daily needs and transportation. Known at school as Grandma Suey, she can always be found on the sidelines cheering for the grandkids and their friends.

"Fundraising is the lifeblood of our lodge, and Sue is the chairperson of our biggest fundraiser," the "Going Nuts" nuts sale, Mower said.

For the past three years, Sue has ordered, stored, sorted and delivered nearly 18,000 pounds of product, and managed the bookkeeping for the fundraiser.

She has organized the setup at rummage sales and flea markets and, during the 2008 holidays, after receiving a call that a major Christmas Craft Show had an opening, rearranged her schedule to raise money for the lodge.

"Twenty-two hours in three days, and Sue was back with over \$1,600," Mower said. "During the past three years of this project, Sue has worked and overseen the making of nearly \$20,000."

During the lodge's summer Maxwell Street Rummage Sale, Sue made phone calls, collected, sorted, marked and priced



Sue Dines of Danville Lodge 332 and East Central District (front center) was named IEA Lady of the Year on Jan. 24 at the Mid-Winter Meeting in Springfield. District candidates, front from left, are: Karen Smith, substituting for Terry Moore, representing Quincy Lodge 100 and West Central District; Joan Lundmark of Wheaton Lodge 2258, North District; Dorothy Kessel of Dixon Lodge 779, Northwest District; and Hazel Vest, Fairfield Lodge 1631, South Central. Back: IEA First Lady Sandie Swisher; Linda Rouse of Benton Lodge 1234, South; Dixie Vogel, Pontiac Lodge 1019, East; Brenda Rneau, Canton Lodge 626, West; and Grand Lodge First Lady Jane Helsel.

items, made displays and cleaned up afterwards.

"Flipping pancakes and pouring orange juice with the Easter Bunny, or making tacos for the Soccer Shoot Awards; baking cookies for the Hoop Shoot dinner or making hot chocolate for the Wreaths Across America; selling 50/50 tickets or working the number board at the Cash Bash; selling balloons

and making desserts for the Breast Cancer Awareness; or setting the table for the Memorial Service, Sue is there with a smile, words of encouragement, and a generous helping of sincere friendship," Mower said. "Leading by example, Sue's efficiency, her ability to communicate our needs and her caring attitude and infectious personality have drawn others to help and care, too."

Thank you to outgoing ER's and what a year in store for incoming ER's!

By the time the *Newsette* comes out, we will have 74 new exalted rulers in our lodges. Let me say to the exalted rulers who were in office last year - thank you for meeting the challenge! I know you had a great year in Elkdom and you worked very hard for your lodge. Now that you are out of office, remember, your lodge still needs your help, your advice, your leadership and to know that your lodge can count on you whenever you are called upon. Thank you.

To the new exalted rulers, what a year you are going to have! You will be leading your lodge into the



IEA Secretary
Marvin
Leathers PSP

future of Elkdom! You and your lodge officers will have a great year in Elkdom; I know. Work hard for your lodge and the programs of Elkdom, the Elks National Foundation and its great work and our State Major Project, the Children's Care Program!

I am sure that you have selected some fine chairpersons to run

the programs as set forth by the Elks. A good chairman can go a long way toward helping out your lodge. Remember, let's all work together for Elkdom. And don't forget to ask for help at any time if needed.

State dues — Yes, it's that time of year again. I will be sending out dues notices the first of April to all of our 74 lodges. Watch your mail!

Voting credentials — By April 20, I will be sending out credentials to members listed in our State Directory and all the lodges for the vote at the Annual Meeting in May. We will be

voting on a new treasurer. George Hornung and Larry Smith are running for this office.

Also, we will be voting on a change for our State Major Project, the Children's Care Corporation. The text is in this issue of the *Newsette*. I will have copies at the registration desk at the State Meeting for you to read, if you like.

Scholarship winners — In June, I will be sending out the forms to our scholarship winners. This is always a great labor of love. There is so much need out there for students, and the Elks

always step to the front and help each and every year. Thank you for your help.

Meetings schedule — I am asked all the time for dates of state meetings. Here they are:

September 2009	24th-27th
January 2010	21st-24th
May 2010	13th-16th
September 2010	23rd-26th
January 2011	20th-23rd
May 2011	19th-22nd
September 2011	22nd-25th

Remember, Illinois Elks do lead the way!