



Youth Camp Chronicle

June, 2021

Willmar, MN

The Camp Board

Executive Director

John Miller Hopkins 2221

North District

Krazy Thompson Int'l Falls 1599

Charlie Radika Hibbing 1022

Central District

Herman Wisneski PSP Brainerd 615

Dick Lyscio Brainerd 615

Metro District

Pat Wright Hopkins 2221

Tom Hoelscher Minneapolis 44

South District

Ron Sik Mankato 225

Allen Rahn Winona 327

Check out our web site

www.mnelksyouthcamp.org

Like us on Facebook

[MN Elks Youth Camp](#)

Contact Us:

youthcamp@mnelks.org

Visit Us:

10860 County Rd 118

Nisswa, MN 56468



From the Camp Board

Members,

With Covid finally behind us, we are working at getting back to normal at the Youth Camp. Some changes have taken place in the Youth Camp Board of Directors. John Miller has become Executive Director, Charlie Radika is now Chairman of the Youth Camp Board, Krazy Thompson is Vice-Chair of the Board, Pat Wright is the Secretary and Tom Hoelscher is Camp Maintenance Supervisor.

Krazy came to camp April 21st-25th with 35 members of the International Falls Lodge. In the Owatonna House they made 2 bedrooms out of 1 large room, a lot of wood was cut and hauled to the racks, painting of the buildings, and many other projects too numerous to mention got done.

A lot of work was accomplished in 2020 even though we were shut down. We had groups of people come and stay for a weekend, they were assigned jobs and they were all completed.

Camp Opening was held May 18th—23rd with about 60 members in attendance. A new walk-in freezer was installed next to the dining hall. A new dishwasher was installed along with many other projects that were completed.

The Camp Board is looking forward to 2022 where we will be able to get back to normal operation with a full slate of deserving children coming to camp. If you get a chance to get to camp, you can see all the improvements that have been done. The camp is in GREAT shape!

Finally, to the Members of Life, purveyors of good times, celebrators of joke and laugh. It is time to think beyond serious, beyond straight faces and snarled lips. There is revelry to be had. Now here, in this moment, whatever this moment may be, put the past behind us and move into the future.

Charlie Radika, PER,

From Our Youth Camp Directors

Greetings MN Elks Members from Elks Camp!

This message comes to you filled with hope and gratitude as we enter into the summer of 2021 as directors of the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp. After not having a camp season in 2020 due to Covid shutdown, we are excited to finally plan and prepare for camp to resume a partial season this summer with staff training starting on July 5th. Getting back to eventual normalcy at the Best Place on Earth is our goal.



Throughout this past year there have been numerous uncertainties for the outlook of summer camps and schools whether they would be allowed to operate at all. Guidelines as dictated by the CDC have been constantly changing over the past months as what will be allowed and under what conditions. Trying to estimate what restrictions would be lifted and when that would happen was a challenge. We believe that our decision to start camp later with less staff and campers has been a good decision as we will be able to have fewer restrictions for campers and staff later this summer.

During the summer of 2021, we will operate 4 weeks of campers in the format of the usual Elks Kids Weeks with individual signup, payment and drop off. We will operate at half capacity with less staff to allow for potential Covid restrictions. As we look back at our plan we are convinced it is what we will need to reestablish Elks Camp for 2021 and then operate in full capacity in 2022.

We have been recruiting staff members over the past 6 months and are extremely excited in the potential of our staff and look forward to working with our summer team. There will be many adjustments and changes from our usual summer plan due to the many remaining guidelines. It will be very important for our leaders to provide instruction and training for staff during training and throughout the summer. Our staff will show up on Monday, July 5th and go through extensive training to be ready to welcome the first group of campers on Sunday July 11th. Camp will operate for 4 consecutive weeks under this plan and finish on Friday, August 6th for the season. We will be using the next couple weeks in June to finalize the facilities and plan for the season.

Each year the camp facilities continue to improve and grow, allowing us to offer new and improved opportunities for youth. The number of Elks committing time and effort to various important projects continues to grow and the camp visibly improves each season. The efforts of the men and women during the opening weekends, along with other individual lodge's projects, have helped prepare the camp for this season. Thanks to everyone involved!

There have been many new projects completed at camp by Elks members during the past off-season. A special thanks goes out to the Elks Camp leaders John Miller, Charlie Radika and the rest of the MN Elks Camp Board members in helping to guide these improvements and spending so much time and effort for the camp! There have also been many improvements to the cabins and staff houses in addition to the usual woodcutting, trail maintenance, raking, mowing, cleaning, painting, moving and fixing. The camp looks great and is operating because of everyone's efforts.

In addition to the numerous work projects and hours of work, donations from various lodges also help to provide much needed goods for camp operation. Thanks to various individuals and groups who donated items this year including clothing, paper goods, food items, and other necessities. All of the products help to support our camp and allow us to keep costs down.

(Continued on page 3)

Minnesota Elks Ring Committee

Many of you know, but some may not know, that the Minnesota Elks Memorial Rings originated in Owatonna, Minnesota. The Elks rings were designed by Owatonna Elks members working for Jostens sometime back in the 1950's (or possibly in the early 1960's). Over time there have been several Owatonna Elks members that have headed up efforts to promote and sell these unique rings. The rings became well known and popular in Minnesota. As the popularity of the Elks rings grew, they started to be promoted at the Elks National Convention in conjunction with the Youth Camp display. The rings have become nationally known for their quality and uniqueness. Proceeds from these ring sales have gone to support our State Project, the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp.



As donations from these efforts continued to grow, the ring committee was formally recognized at the state level and currently reports through the State Youth Camp Executive Director and Camp Board of Directors. Since 2006, the ring committee has donated over \$70,000 to the Minnesota Elks Youth Camp! In 2019 Randy and Lisa Richmond resigned from the ring committee after 15 years of dedicated service. Since that time, Jeannie and I have been looking for a member to join us on this committee. We are super excited to announce that Jayne Kath will be joining our team! Jayne is a member of Owatonna Lodge #1395 and is the daughter of PSP Wayne Hermanson. And as you probably know, each year Minnesota presents a ring to the Grand Exalted Ruler at the National Convention. Every one of our members can be proud of this heritage that began right here in Minnesota!

Note to Exalted Rulers - Now is a good time to start considering if you would like to commemorate your year of leadership as Exalted Ruler by purchasing an Elks ring or pendant. Stop by our table at the State Convention and see all of the options available to you! This fall at the mid-year convention is a good time to place your order so that it will be ready when your ER term is completed. Please coordinate with your lodges if they are contributing all or a portion of your ring or pendant purchase. This will ensure that your order can be placed in a timely manner. Thank you!

Fraternally,
Ron Probst, PER,
Memorial Ring Committee Chair

Did You Know?

- Rings and pendants can be purchased commemorating more than Exalted Ruler? You can also commemorate BPOE Elk of the Year, Past District Deputy, Past First Lady and more!
- Rings are available in both Men's and Ladies sizes
- You can see all of the options as well as download a printable brochure of the options from the state web site at www.mnelks.org/jewelry.html

Rules of the Road for Conventions at Camp

As we approach the fourth year of hosting the Mid Year Convention at Breezy Point and Youth Camp, it seemed appropriate to reflect on what has been working well as well as where we need to reinforce some of the rules of hosting such an event at Youth Camp. There's no doubt that hosting the meetings at Breezy Point with social activities at Youth Camp has been a rousing success. Members who may not have visited camp have seen what a great facility our state operates and long time members may see it from a new perspective.

On the flip side, as the owners and operators of our great facility, we need to make sure that we are utilizing Youth Camp in a safe and secure manner that furthers the mission of our state association and the camp. With that in mind, below are guidelines for how to use Youth Camp as part of the Mid Year Convention. These will help set consistent expectations from year to year based on what we've learned over the past few years.

- The safety of our visitors and protecting the facility and its equipment has to be our number one priority.
- An event insurance policy including liquor coverage must be purchased (\$200), by the lodge in charge, naming the Youth Camp and the State Association as additional insured.
- The host District or Lodge should only use the year round housing (e.g. Mankato House, Red Wing House, or HRS) and limit the number of guests and days in residence to what is needed to prepare for the activities during the conference.
- The ball field is off limits to anything but member parking the day (s) of the events. Campers, RVs, tents etc. will not be allowed on the ball field during the convention. This would jeopardize the state room counts possibly affecting our relationship with Breezy Point, be difficult to supervise and administer as well potentially create problems with clean up.
- Tom Hoelscher or the maintenance supervisor will stay at Camp to advise on how to utilize the facilities and to protect against any misuse, accidental or otherwise.
- Golf carts are only for use in tours, events, and the shuttling of our handicapped members. Drivers need to be agreed upon and assigned.
- Hayrides will be approved by the Camp Board on a case by case basis. The climbing wall will not be set up.
- It is imperative that the host district/Lodge provide for a clean up crew after the events especially for the grounds, dining hall, restrooms and housing used. The motto is: leave it better than you found it.
- As with other events at camp, we do not charge for liquor – we rely on donations. Those serving liquor should use the same rules and guidelines for service as those we use at our Lodges.
- Please be aware of the upcoming weather. If a hard freeze is in the forecast, the water has to be shut off. The year round buildings would be open but water will not be available in the dining hall. Therefore, those planning meals should have a plan B.
- Again-safety is primary. The host district should submit a general plan to the Camp Board and within 60 days after a report on the Camp results. A donation to Camp is always welcome.
- The focus is on showcasing the Youth Camp while at Youth Camp. Please obtain approval from the Camp Board prior to hosting any unrelated events and/or fundraisers.

Thank you for your time and attention to these guidelines. Our Youth Camp is the **Best Place On Earth!**

Thanks again to all Elks members for providing this camp and all it has to offer. This is a team effort and it cannot be successful without all of you. Thanks to the Elks Camp Board for providing the needed materials and support to make this a successful place. No matter what role you have in supporting this camp, you are important! Keep spreading the word about the Best Place On Earth!

During the camp sessions, if you would like to check us out, go to mnelksyouthcamp.org or on Facebook LIKE our page [MN Elks Youth Camp](#). We have numerous photos on Facebook and post updates with more photos several times each week. Families have enjoyed the ability to catch a glimpse into their camper's experience.

Sincerely,

Joel & Kim Baumgarten

Minnesota Elks Youth Camp Directors



Members of Red Wing Lodge constructing the shelter for the new walk in freezer



Members of Hutchinson Lodge & Alexandria Lodge replacing fence posts throughout camp

Youth Camp Update

As we meet in Willmar, we are fast approaching the opening of camp on July 11th. Things will be different but we will open on a limited basis and following the MDH guidelines. We have a staff put together, we are almost full for the sessions and are confident it will work. That will lead us to full capacity in 2022 and full use of the camp.

The camp has changed the makeup of the board: I am now the Executive Director and the board remains at 8 members. I report to the board and oversee the budget, the IRS needs, the raffle, the Ring committee, the treasurer, insurance, licensing, calendar management, the staff as well as Joel and Kim our on site directors. In all, the people we have total 140 years experience in operating the Camp. It is indeed in good hands.

Everyone is frustrated over 2020 and 2021, but looking forward the future for the Camp is bright. I also thank all involved in keeping the camp in great shape, for all the opening hard work and continued donations and support! Please continue to support Penny A Day, the Raffle and ENF. We could not operate without that support.

The "Best Place On Earth" is alive and well and all members should be proud of what they own and operate.

John M. Miller, PER
Executive Director

2021 Camping Schedule

Because of the restrictions placed by the MN Department of Health on summer camps due to COVID, the local lodge sessions have been cancelled for 2021. We will however be hosting four (4) weeks of Elks Kids and Grandkids.

The sessions are as follows:

Session 1: July 11 – July 16, 2021

Session 2: July 18 – July 23, 2021

Session 3: July 25 – July 30, 2021

Session 4: August 1 – August 6, 2021

Limit of 50 campers per session which is about half capacity.

Troops Week participants have been sprinkled throughout the four Elks Kids sessions.

There will be NO Family Camp this year.

Camp Closing is September 24-26, 2021.

See John Miller or Charlie Radika if you'd like to participate.

Donations Wish List

If you can help with any of these wish list items, please contact John Miller

- 20 new life jackets
- Charcoal/lighter fluid
- One 9 foot kayak
- White t-shirts for crafts
- Snacks
- Paper goods
- Scholarship donations
- Troops week donations
- Mattress fund- we will start replacement program soon-about 140 mattresses

Possibly coming in 2022

- Wider pontoon lifts
- New pontoon boat
- Steel roof on lodge

Ladies Weekend

Thank you to all the ladies that showed up for our "work" weekend. We had representation from Hibbing, Hopkins, Faribault, Minneapolis, Red Wing, Rochester, Stillwater and Willmar. Once again, the kids cabins all received a good cleaning, the Health House had some painting done and a really good cleaning as well.

I didn't realize that there would be a battle for the job of power washing golf carts and the Dining Hall. We may need to use that on the kids cabins next year—it sure worked slick. The clothes that were donated were gone through, washed and put away.

Thanks again and looking forward to seeing you all again next year. Hopefully we didn't scare away the newbies that came to help us.

Becky Radika

Ladies Weekend Organizer

Dennis Schroeder Memorial Scholarship

Dear Minnesota State Elks Youth Camp,

As many of you know, Dennis Schroeder passed away September of 2020. Dennis was a charter member of Hutchinson Elks Lodge #2427 and active for 52 years. He participated in many facets of the Elks organization throughout his 52 years. Elks Youth Camp is one of the places he visited, camped, helped and enjoyed. He was always supportive and proud of how the Elks work together to support youth throughout the state.

As a family we would like to continue that support through a monetary memorial. Please designate the \$5,000.00 in memory of Dennis E. Schroeder to support scholarships given to summer camp counselors to help support their education aspirations.

Sincerely,

Louise A. Schroeder, Denise Einck, Kyle Schroeder