



# EMPIRE STATE ELK

The Official Publication of the New York State Elks Association and the New York Elks Major Projects, Incorporated Winter 2014 Issue



## State President's Message

Dear Members –  
As the holiday season quickly passes us by, I can honestly say “Where has the time gone?” A little over six months ago, your First Lady Abby and I began a journey that we could never have imagined possible. That journey has taken us to just

about three quarters and three corners of this Great State. We have visited places we have only read about in books; we have met people we have wondered how we survived without. It has been a wonderful journey and we can only imagine what is left for us yet to see.

Wherever we have been, we have been greeted and treated like royalty. We have been shown so many beautiful places that our camera is on overload. We have had the opportunity to visit several state-of-the-art rehabilitation centers; several new, and some older veteran facilities; numerous historical sites and many breath-taking and beautiful locations. New York is truly a great State and, when you factor in the work of the Elks and what the Elks do from west to east and north to south across this State, it is truly an impressive State as well.

The lodge Visitation season has concluded and although all reports are not yet in, I can report that our lodges, for the most part, are doing very well. True, we have some lodges who are struggling; some lodges who are saddled with high delinquency numbers; and some lodges experiencing financial problems; but even so, our lodges continue to support all of the Grand Lodge and State Association programs to the best of their ability. I have personally witnessed struggling lodges working hard to support their youth; offering guidance through their drug awareness programs; and providing scholarships to the needy. I have seen lodges with large delinquency numbers working hard promoting the benefits of Elkdom and reducing those numbers. And I have seen lodges suffering financial shortcomings, working hard to raise monies to support our Major Project and the Elks National Foundation programs. I am confident that with the support and assistance of all New York Elks, we will band together and help our less fortunate lodges rebuild. We all need to pitch in, to get involved and “*To Get Hooked on Elkdom*”.

Soon, the holidays will be but memories and the challenge of nominating and electing new officers to run our Order will be upon us. We must choose strong and enthusiastic members to assume our leadership roles. Use your PER Association as a means to help find your leaders. They can be a valuable resource for they have been there; done that! Membership remains our #1 issue. We cannot afford to lose members simply because they do not pay their dues. We not only need to continue to recruit new members and reinstate those who have been dropped; but we need to keep those we have, active and involved. All members joined for a reason; we just need to make sure the reason they joined includes them!

In closing, First Lady Abby and I want to offer our most sincere thanks to all of you who have chosen to “*To Get Hooked on Elkdom*” and remain hooked. We are constantly amazed by the activities and work that you do to help others. We are proud to be a part of what you represent. We hope you all had a very happy and joyous holiday season and we hope each of you find peace and prosperity (and at least one new member) in the New Year ahead. God bless you all; God bless our troops; and God bless America.

**“GET HOOKED ON ELKDOM”**

## State President Shook's Upcoming Travel Schedule

West Central District	Jan.30-February 1, 2015
Ontario District	February 13-15, 2015
East Central District	February 20-22, 2015
Southeast District	Feb. 27-March 1, 2015
Bowling Tournament	March 27-29, 2015
East District	May 1-3, 2015
State Convention	May 29-31, 2015

## State President Jerry Shook's Homecoming Celebration

The homecoming celebration for State President Jerry Shook is scheduled for the weekend of April 17-19, 2015 at the Desmond Hotel on 660 Shaker Road, Albany, New York. The homecoming banquet will be held in the Fort Orange Ballroom. The banquet cost is \$50 per person. A ladies luncheon will also be held on April 18<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 12 noon. Cost for the luncheon is \$30 per person with proceeds to benefit Major Projects. To make a weekend reservation and receive a daily group rate of \$124 plus tax, please contact the Desmond toll free at (800)869-8100, at the main number at (518) 869-8100 or by fax at (518) 464-0449. Guests must make reservations with the hotel no later than April 11, 2015. When making reservations, please identify yourself as a member of the NYS Elks/ Jerry Shook homecoming. The event group ID number is 129808. For further information about the homecoming, please see the homecoming announcement and registration information that appears later in this publication.

## Fort Drum USO Visit

State President Jerry and his wife Abby had the opportunity to visit the Fort Drum USO during their visit to the North Central District. They were accompanied by travel partners PDDGER John Minners, State Trustee Deb Minners, and North Central District representatives that included Past State President Tim Kelly, State Trustee Scott Hirst, Empire State Elk Editor Tim Welp, Watertown Exalted Ruler Ray Cooley, State Vice President Paul Monnat and his wife Christy and Carthage Chaplain Paul Clark. During the visit, USO Director Karen Clark provided a tour of the USO facility and provided an overview of the services provided by the USO program. Following the tour, State President Jerry presented Mrs. Clark with a \$5160 donation on behalf of the NYSEA. The group was then provided a tour of the Fort Drum community housing and barrack housing. State President Jerry and first lady Abby are pictured below in the lobby of the Fort Drum USO facility

