

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Boonville Lodge Halloween Haunted Trail Drug Awareness Program is a great community event!!

By Tim Welpel, Empire State Editor



The Boonville Lodge Halloween event features a costume contest. Pictured are the costume contest contestants.

Boonville Lodge #2158 18th annual Haunted Trail drug Awareness program was once again a success and for the 18th consecutive year, the event drew a large crowd of children and parents. Over these 18 years, thousands of children, Parents and community members, far and near, have experienced the Boonville Elks Halloween experience. I was informed of this event during the fall convention and responded to an invite by Exalted Ruler William Evans to see first-hand what the event was all about. The event has many features that contribute to its success. As families arrived they are greeted and assisted with parking by parking attendants. Upon entering the first floor of the Lodge, children were greeted and provided a bag of goodies. 640 bags had been prepared in advance. They then had opportunity to visit a Drug Awareness table that was manned by area Law Enforcement. From here, there were many fun filled opportunities that included a pumpkin carving contest, a poster contest, face painting, a clown, a fortune telling booth, bobbing for donuts, fishing for prizes, a lollipop tree, and hotdogs and treats. There is also a costume contest for the children and adults. As one proceeded upstairs, they had opportunity to watch a K-9 demonstration featuring drug sniffing dogs and their Law Enforcement partners from the Lewis County Sheriff Department. The room was full of spectators for this demonstration. And there was opportunity to visit with and have a photo taken with Elroy the Elk. Once outside, the activities continued with a Jaws of Life demonstration that was provided by the Forestport Firefighters. Children and families then had the option of two haunted trails. I was escorted along the trails by Lodge member Peter Poppleton who provided me with history and an explanation of events as we toured. We first toured a low fright trail designed for younger children. The trail features "scary blow-ups such as spiders, friendly ghosts and a big scream video. And For those looking for a good Halloween fright, the featured haunted trail offered a variety of Halloween scares and characters that included a frightful girl on a swing who would bellow a unexpected scream, goblins, witches, trolls, grave yard sites, the sounds of a chainsaw, and ghosts. At the conclusion of the trail, a haunted house was set up. The Lodge spent several months converting an outside pavilion into a haunted house. The haunted house was set up in a maze format and featured rooms with different themes that included ghosts, a snake room, a corn stalk room with demons, a store featuring body parts, a black light room, a morgue, a Zombie Room, a Pirate Room, a Spider Room, a clown room and a room of prom ghosts. During the tour I had opportunity to speak to Willie VanHatten. He and his wife Tracy have coordinated the event since its beginning. He noted the event gets bigger each year. There are 40 Elk Volunteers, including a set up committee of about 10 members. During the event, Lodge members and area students are in costume. The students and Lodge members in costume along the trail were amazing in fulfilling their roles. Mr. VanHatten noted the Lodge owns the costumes that are used during the event. The event has become a community partnership as community businesses assist with donations, including food and candy and others, such as the students and Law Enforcement, have an active part in the event. Mr. VanHatten shared that Lodge members commitment about 30 hours per weekend over several months to set-up and it takes about 12 hours to tear down. The Lodge itself donates about \$2500 towards the event. The event is free to the public and as I learned first-hand, is a lot of fun. Great job Boonville!!!



Glens Falls Elks Lodge #81 honored 27 Scouts that had earned EAGLE status. After a wonderful meal, the scouts were presented a certificate and flag from the Elks. They were also asked to share the projects they did for the community. The Glens Falls Elks are proud to support the scouting program!



Ken-Ton Elks Lodge # 1942 partnered with NYS Elks Army of Hope to provide Christmas Gifts for 75 children of Deployed and recently returned Airmen from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. (R-L) Ken-Ton Elks trustee Brian Maxwell, West District State Vice President Richard Donn, District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler Barry Griffith, and Lodge Veterans Coordinator Becky Whelan pose with the collection of toys they delivered to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station Installation Airman and Family Readiness Center. These gifts were provided to 75 children of the 31 military members who were deployed or had come back from recent deployments. Funds were collected from the Ken-Ton Lodge with matching funds donated from the New York State Elks "Army of Hope Grant"



Lowville Lodge #1605 32nd annual Father-Daughter banquet was a great success and once again featured a member of Team USA. A packed house listened to Sam Fischer, an infielder on the U.S. national softball team, who was this year's guest speaker. "Our father-daughter event is continuing a Team USA tradition in bringing women of strong character and drive to share their experiences with the young ladies of our area," said David W. Cole, volunteer organizer and event coordinator since its inception. A California native and 2012 graduate of Loyola Marymount University, Ms. Fischer was the first player from that college to earn National Fast Pitch Coaches Association All-American accolades, being named to the second team in her senior year. During her college career, she set nine Pacific Coast Softball Conference and school records, including 65 career home runs. She was a member in 2012 and 2014 of the World Cup of Softball championship teams and silver medal winning squads at the International Softball Federation world championships. The previous two father-daughter dinners have featured women who won sledding medals at the 2014 Olympic Games: Remsen native luger Erin Hamlin in 2013 and two-man bobsledder Jamie Greubel last year. Ms. Fisher is pictured with members of the Lowville Girls Softball team that attended the event. Those attending were treated to dinner and door prizes were given out. Ms. Fisher also signed autographs and was available for pictures.



Rochester Lodge #24 held a Christmas time breakfast and served over 50 children to make their Christmas a joyful experience. The children received a special treat as Santa and Mrs. Claus visited the Lodge for breakfast. Pictured are members Al and Erin Rich who played the roles of Santa and Mrs. Claus.