

I have presided over every meeting during my term as ER, a better attendance record than I had in school. I have also attended every convention, State, National and Regional, each time being more convinced that **I was Exalted Ruler of one of the best, if not the best Elks Lodge in the nation.** I will continue to participate in as many lodge functions as possible in the coming years and I hope that will be many. My special efforts will be for our Veteran's programs, I hope all of our members will participate in all of the fund raising programs that our lodge supports to benefit the most deserving people in our county. I would like us all to consider revising and/or expanding some of our charity efforts. I will be offering some suggestions at future lodge meetings. I have been asked by the State Elks to be on the convention committee this year to seek out convention sites. We are the most requested location and I hope to make us a State Convention location in the future.

I would like to make a special challenge to all Gatlinburg Elks Lodge 1925 members. **You have heard old Mac from the Pulpit, now you will hear me from the Pews. We have great members, however too many of you do not attend monthly meetings or only participate in few if any of our lodge's functions.** We have a very popular lounge, but too much business has been discussed at the bar that should be discussed at regular meetings. I'm sorry but we don't vote at the bar. I would like each of you to ask yourself what you have done for your Elks Lodge this past year? **Did you participate or help with the Shoe Fund, Food Baskets, Hoop Shoot, and Annual Golf Tournament or were you among the few that visited the Veteran's Nursing home in Johnson City this year?** For that matter any other function supported by our lodge. What have you contributed in your personal efforts to support your lodge? I know times are tough for many of us. Your contribution to our lodge does not have to be \$\$\$\$\$. Your time and support is a more valuable contribution. You can be a bar room philosopher or a true participating Elk. **I enjoy the lounge as much as anyone,** but we need your support and attendance at regular meetings too. If you want to suggest a way to improve the lodge, please do so at a meeting and not at the bar. Decide if you are a DMO (Drinking Member Only) or a true supporting Elks Lodge 1925 member who cares about the future of your lodge. I have expressed in many of my past Newsletters that **"We are more than a Lounge, we are the finest Elks Lodge in the country".**

**We have the opportunity to make every year better than the last.** The lodge did very well this past year. We hit a couple of bumps, but we got over those. I ask you to join with me in supporting our new ER and our new chairpersons, and let's not forget the Trustees who oversee the lodge's budget. **Just remember one thing, our Officers and Trustees are our leaders, but the final decisions are made by you as members as to the future success of Gatlinburg Lodge 1925.** All important matters pertaining to the lodge must be voted on the floor by **attending** members. If you don't attend meetings and vote on lodge issues, you have no reason to complain.

I'll close for now. **I'll see you all at the next meeting.** I can't wait to give the sign of the Elk in the middle of an important meeting issue being discussed so I can go to the bathroom. Robert (Skiddy) Skidmore, I'll look forward to your picture hanging next to mine as PER a year from now. I hope your year as ER will be as rewarding for you as mine has been for me. I remain;

**Wm. (Mac) McDonald  
Exalted Ruler 2008-2009  
Gatlinburg Lodge 1925**