

NANCY M. ROCHFORD, DDGER
BULLETIN MESSAGE
MARCH 2019

This past Saturday, February 23rd, I attended the NJ Elks State Ritual Contest held at Long Branch lodge. During this weekend, the winning elk lodges from each district compete and perform the initiatory ritual from memory in contest form. Congratulations should be extended to Piscataway lodge #2414, as they will be representing NJ at the contest at Grand Lodge Convention in St. Louis. Unfortunately, the East Central District was one of several districts not represented this year. I would like to see this change and go back to the way it used to be. I am a big proponent of the ritual. First, it is the first impression new members have. What impression do you want to make? Our ritual was created by the founders of this great order, the Jolly Corks and it deserves respect! (If you want to know more about them, ask me!) I love to see the ritual performed from memory. For me, it took time and effort to learn, but I was glad I did it. It helped me with public speaking and I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride from performing. We are human. Some days are better than others. It doesn't have to be perfect; new members appreciate the effort. I am a realist. I know that I cannot force officers to perform from memory. However, I can do my best to reinforce that the ritual should at least be given the respect it deserves. Even if you do not memorize, practice! Read it several times and practice the words and moves as a group. I found that ritual practices were a great bonding experience for officers and I miss them. What are you missing out on?

As new officers are being elected and appointed, I encourage each lodge to place a renewed effort and focus on the initiatory ritual. Members should be coming to lodge meetings, when the ritual is being performed. Not only will existing members have a new appreciation for the initiation, but it feels more welcoming for new members to see existing members in attendance. If I can be of any help, please let me know and I can also direct

lodges to others that I am sure will be willing to assist.

As I stated previously, the All American Lodge Contest "A" forms are coming due. Entries need to be postmarked by March 15th and sent to me. Lodges should get the credit they deserve!

I would like to wish a Happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone whether you are Irish like me or Irish for the day :)

Sincerely & fraternally,

Nancy M. Rochford

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East Central District #5520



**"Working Together to
Make A Difference"**