

Eagles soar toward century mark

by LISA A. JOHNSON
Lancaster/Depew Editor

The state's Fraternal Order of Eagles has spanned 10 decades, and the group's leadership is creating new projects to bring in younger participants.

The state Eagles celebrated their 100-year anniversary at 11 a.m. Sunday — exactly 100 years to the time and date the group organized in New York. The conference was held at the Depew-Lancaster Aerie Home, 4569 Broadway, Depew, with a visit by International Grand Worthy President John Potter of Priddis, Alberta, Canada.

"I think it's a wonderful, wonderful milestone," Potter said.

The event was part of the Eastern Regional Eagles Conference, which began Friday and included participants from as far away as Washington state.

The state Eagles held their first meeting Oct. 14, 1907, in Rochester, at the council chambers of city hall. The original 29 Eagle members were present at that meeting as then-International Grand Worthy President Theodore A. Bell presided.

Today, the state aerie has grown to more than 8,300 members in 32 cities. Keeping with the international motto of "People Helping People," the Eagles donate more than \$500,000 annually to local, state and national charities.

The state aerie has been home to several famous members, including former President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The women's auxiliary was instituted Aug. 8, 1951, in Rochester. During that first year, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt became the first woman to receive a life membership in the ladies' auxiliary in a special presentation in Hyde Park. Today, the auxiliary includes more than 3,400 members.

While the group has a rich history, Potter said memberships have declined. To attract new members and youths, the Eagles have created several new volunteer projects.

Potter's project for 2007-08 is the International Disaster Relief Program, a fund that aims to deliver immediate assistance during disasters. When the group is needed, a tractor trailer marked "The Fraternal Order of Eagles



Delegates stand at the Institution of the New York State Aerie, Fraternal Order of Eagles, on Oct. 14, 1907, in Rochester. The state Eagles celebrated their 100-year anniversary on Sunday.

Disaster Relief Unit" will be manned by volunteers and deliver food and water to affected areas.

Potter said the program follows other volunteer projects the group has designed, including those that help people with cancer, diabetes, and heart, spinal cord, kidney, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease; spread awareness about AIDS in chil-

dren; and support children of members who die while serving their country or at work.

"We have an absolute desire to help other people whenever we can," Potter said.

The international order was founded in 1898. The Eagles donate more than \$100 million annually to charities and individuals throughout the United States and Canada.

Donald Yanchunis, Eagles state president from Saratoga Springs, praised fellow members for the work they've done over the years and expressed hope for the next 100 years.

"I won't be here, but I hope there'll be relatives (here)," he said, "and I know the Fraternal Order of Eagles will be here."

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Community News

The Amherst Lions Club raised \$500 for the Campaign SightFirst II, an international fundraising effort by the Lions to protect millions of people from blindness. The funds were raised through a garage sale held at the Trinity United Methodist Church.

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation has funds available to schools and school districts operating in Erie County to purchase books used by students ages

5-13. The due date for the application is Oct. 31. For information, visit www.thetowerfoundation.org.

Nichols School, located in Buffalo, has named the new members of the alumni board: President Hugh M. Russ III; Jane Arcadi of Hamburg; Michelle Rosenburg Parentis of Clarence Center; Wendy Lebowitz Pressman of East Amherst; W. Scott Saperston of Eggertsville; Craig Semple of Hamburg and David Tiftickjian of Amherst.

The University at Buffalo has received a \$750,000 grant from New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research to recruit Gottfried Strasser, an internationally known scientist in nanotechnology. He will have a joint appointment to the Department of Electrical Engineering in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Department of Physics in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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