

## GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to CHEA Convention

We left Phoenix, Arizona, on a sunny, already warm, Sunday morning, May 15, headed for Santa Ana, California, and the 101<sup>st</sup> California-Hawaii Elks Association (CHEA) Convention. We arrived at the John Wayne Airport about 11:30 am to a pleasant sixty-eight degrees and were met by PSPs Skip Henke and Art Echternacht and their wives Karen and Shirley. After a short drive to the Marriott Anaheim and dropping our luggage, we had lunch at the hotel with Skip and Karen, our Escorts for the week. The hotel was located across from Disneyland, so we would be entertained with fireworks every night.



Ron and Nancy with our CHEA escorts PSP Skip Henke and wife Karen



Ron and John Wayne at the John Wayne Airport, Santa Ana, CA

Sunday night the four of us went to dinner at Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant, America's largest chicken restaurant, located at Knott's Berry Farm, known as America's first theme park. Mrs. Knotts started the restaurant, which now seats 880, in 1936 to help promote the jams and jellies she made and sold on the farm. If you like chicken, this is the place for you! Monday morning was breakfast at the hotel, then back to the room to catch up on work before riding to Huntington Beach with Skip and Karen for lunch at Sandy's. We drove along Balboa Peninsula to gawk at the large boats and the multi-million dollar houses and took the ferry over to Balboa Island. Of course I found a house I would like to buy on the water that had a fabulous deck and boat dock, but think real estate prices on the West Coast are a little too steep for our pocketbook!



Ron and PER Bill O'Hearn of Garden Grove Lodge 1952 in front of their Veterans Memorial

On the way back for dinner, we stopped by the Garden Grove Lodge. The Lodge, with 1,100 members, has an impressive facility with a beautiful Lodge Room and a large outside area for activities, their Veterans Memorial, and RV parking. We were given a tour by PER Bill O'Hearn.

We were impressed when Skip presented his membership card to the bar attendant; she was quick to ring a bell and proudly announce that a Past State President was visiting the Lodge. (We were honored to be with him!) Dinner was with a number of Orange Coast District Elks at Azteca Mexican Restaurant, which is filled with a statue, photos, posters and other memorabilia of Elvis.



Nancy, Ron and Elvis at the Azteca Mexican Restaurant

Tuesday was the State Golf Tournament. Ron left the hotel at 6:00 am and played with Skip, Convention Coordinator PSP Tom Lemm, and CHEA VP Dave Seeley, who, with his wife Karen, had organized the Tournament. The team played good, shooting a 68 with no bogeys, but not good enough to collect any hardware.



Ron's Golf Team. PSP Tom Lemm, Ron, VP Dave Seely, and PSP Skip Henke

While Ron was playing golf, Nancy, Karen Henke, Shirley Schultz, and Lezel Martin visited Christ Cathedral, previously the Crystal Cathedral, a world famous landmark for many faiths



Christ Cathedral with Crean Bell Tower, Garden Grove, California

synonymous with Rev Robert Schuller and his "Hour of Power." It was purchased by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange in 2012. We were unable to go in the cathedral as it has been gutted and is under construction. Plans are for it to reopen in late 2018. Besides the inside construction, we could see they were in the process of repairing the 10,000 windows panes of the cathedral which was designed to be the air conditioning system and to be able enjoy nature from the inside. There were displays and architectural drawings in the Cultural Center of what the inside of the cathedral should look like upon completion. The grounds, consisting of thirty-four acres besides the cathedral and Cultural Center, includes Christ Cathedral Academy for students Pre-K through eighth grade, The Arboretum, and the temporary worship area for over 10,000 members of the Parish and where masses are held in English, Vietnamese, and Spanish. There are several bronze statues of biblical figures like Moses holding the Ten Commandments; Mary, Joseph, and

Jesus as a baby; and a shepherd and his flock of lambs. Also, the Freed Arts Theatre; the Crean Tower and its fifty-two bell Carillon; the Cathedral Memorial Gardens which is the final resting place for Rev. Robert and Arellano Schuller, restaurateur Marie Calendar, and pianist Roger Williams; the Diocese Pastoral Centre, home to the Bishop of Orange; and several other buildings. It was a beautiful day to have Schultz been outside and walking the lovely landscaped grounds. We had lunch before returning to the hotel to rest a little before dinner. Tuesday night we enjoyed a private dinner with PGER and State Sponsor



Ron and Nancy with Out-Going State President Don Schultz and wife Shirley



The ladies at Mission San Juan Capistrano. Lazel Martin, Venita Brazier, Nancy, Shirley Schultz, and Karen Henke.

Tom Brazier and his wife PDDGER Venita, State President Don Schultz and his wife Shirley, and Association Executive Director Tim Martin and his wife Lazel.

another gorgeous day in sunny California. This time we visited the charming Mission of San Juan Capistrano. The Mission was founded by Father Junipero Serra (1713-1784) in 1776. It is known as the Birthplace of Orange County, California and the chapel is the historic “Mother Church” of the Orange Diocese. San Juan Capistrano was founded as the seventh of the twenty-one Missions statewide. The missions were originally built to be self sufficient communities and were centers for agriculture, industry, education and religion. Capistrano is

Wednesday morning after breakfast, Venita Brazier joined the same group of ladies taking off on another adventure on yet



Garden inside Mission San Juan Capistrano



Olive Mill at Mission San Juan Capistrano



School children having lunch on the grounds in Mission San Juan Capistrano

famous for the annual return of the Cliff Swallows every March. We did not see any swallows, but saw the nests left by the swallows. The

lovely gardens, which are tended weekly by volunteers, were filled with lots of beautiful flowering bushes, plants, and succulents. There were many school children visiting the mission too. The missions are a part of California history and visiting the missions is a field trip all students take. After having lunch at El Maguey Mexican Restaurant in the Historic District, and a quick (?) stop at a local shopping mall, we returned to the hotel to get ready for dinner.

Wednesday morning Ron attended meetings with the CHEA Investment

Committee and the State Major Project (CHEMPI) Board. Lunch was with the DD-Designates, then Ron had a meeting with the PSPs. The Past State Presidents Dinner was Wednesday night. Ron spoke briefly, and after dinner PSP "Trill" Torrilhorn, who is an Elk Historian and one of the largest collectors of Elk memorabilia in the Nation, presented Ron with an antique "Fredericksburg, VA" Elks Pendant. Older items from the Fredericksburg Lodge are difficult to find, so it was greatly appreciated. After Dinner the Association held its Opening Ceremonies for the Convention and their Memorial Service.



Trill Torrilhorn presented Ron with a rare antique Fredericksburg Lodge pin



How many Elks does it take to put money in a parking meter??? Ron and Skip Henke. (Note the Solar Panel)

The first Business Session was Thursday morning. Brian Fitzpatrick opened this Session with the singing of "God Bless America," and led the attendees in singing at the beginning of every Session. CHEA is a large Association with 172 Lodges and 84,000 members, and over 1,500 attending the Convention, the largest of the year. Last year CHEA had their second straight Membership gain and their Per Capita to ENF was over \$10. The Lodges strongly support all Grand Lodge Programs, and received over \$530,000 in Community Investment Grants, and are enthusiastic supporters of the State Major Project (CHEMPI), which has

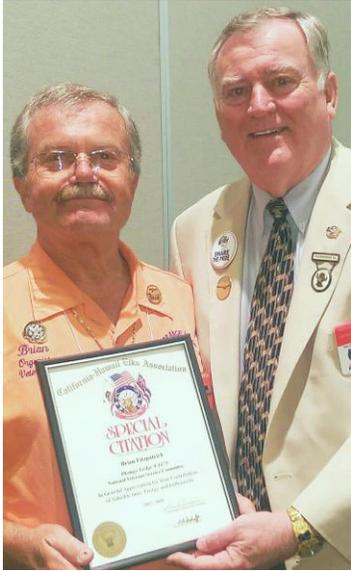


Ron and Nancy selfie in a CHEA meeting

offered therapeutic services to children with disabilities since 1950 and also provides Vocational Grants and Scholarships. Fresno Lodge 439 received five

Grants last year, including an Impact Grant. Thirteen other Lodges had four Grants and eighteen Lodges received three Grants. Duarte Lodge 1427 led the State last year in ENF Per Capita donations (\$52.85) and is currently number two in the Nation (\$21.99). Twenty Lodges received Freedom Grants in support of the State's many VA Hospitals.

Brian Fitzpatrick (Orange Lodge) and Patty Riggs (Westminster Lodge) were named male and female Veteran Volunteers of the Year, and Robert and Sharon Anderson (Ridgeway Lodge) also received an Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. The Alhambra-San Gabriel and El Centro Lodges were recognized for 100 years of Elksdom, and Michael Rentchler (San Gabriel Valley Lodge) was presented with a special "Roadrunner Award" by President Schultz for his volunteer service. (President Schultz referred to his VPs as "Roadrunners" throughout the year – beep, beep!) Lodge Secretary of the Year was Beth Davis (Kailua) and the All-American Lodges were: Santa Ynez Valley, Chico, Roseville, Semi Valley,



Ron and Male Veteran Volunteer of the Year Brian Fitzpatrick from Orange Lodge 1475

Orange, and Santa Maria, while All-State Honors went to the Orange Lodge. Ron joined the Exalted Rulers for lunch which was followed by a number of break-out sessions and seminars. The President's Reception and Dinner were held Thursday night. This is their banquet and Ron spoke about his theme "Elks Pride – Community Focus" and incorporated the themes of President Schultz, "Press on for Success," and incoming President Lance Erickson, "Make Elksdom Shine" into his comments. Norm Kaufman (Poway Lodge) won



Ron with Michael Rentchler receiving a special "Road Runner" Award from President Schultz

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Ron and Nancy with incoming State President Lance Erickson and wife Karen

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Ron and Bob Ostini with Norm Kaufman, Poway Lodge 2543, winner of the GER Wine Raffle which raised \$3,000 for ENF

the GER Wine Raffle, which raised \$3,000 for ENF through the sales efforts of Bob Ostini, the new ENF Chairman, the DDs and his co-workers

Friday morning, Brian Fitzpatrick opened the Session by leading the audience in “America the Beautiful.” Awards were presented for Americanism and Youth Activities, and Officer Jeris Rohos, sponsored by the Duarte Lodge, was recognized as the State Enrique Camareno Award recipient, in recognition of his community involvement and support for a drug-free environment. This was followed by a Pre-Installation Rally (Celebration) and the Installation of new State Officers. President Schultz was presented with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for his more than 4,000 hours of volunteer service. The



Ron and Officer Jeris Rohos, State Enrique Camareno Award Recipient, sponsored by Duarte Lodge 1427

meeting adjourned for break-out sessions, workshops and seminars. Ron attended the Drug Awareness Seminar with DA spokesman, Ray Lazano, as the guest speaker. The



Ron and Ray Lazano, Grand Lodge Drug Awareness Spokesman

Incoming President’s Reception was at 3:00, with a Social Hour and President’s Appreciation Dinner that evening. The Dinner was casual, most wearing Hawaiian dress, with a DJ providing dance music and other entertainment. Ron presented President Schultz with one of the four foot trophy-like buffet table decorations, proclaiming him “CHEA President of the Year!”

The Ladies Luncheon was held on Friday afternoon. Shirley Schultz was the Mistress of Ceremonies. Nancy spoke to the ladies about some of the trips she and Ron have taken this year and of the many great work Elks are doing across the country. There were 300 ladies attending the luncheon, a few more than the average attendance for most ladies luncheons.

The final Business Session was on Saturday morning and included the Report of the Major Project (CHEMPI), which CHEA proudly refers to as “the premier State Major Project in all of Elkdom.” The Project, which is totally funded by the CHEA, has twenty-four therapists and screeners serving over 36,000 children per year throughout the State. The Garcia family, with sons,

Emilio, five years old, and Marcos, age three, both born with rare genetic disorders and served by CHEMPI, attended the Convention to thank the Elks for supporting children with special needs. CHEA presented the family with tickets to Disneyland and Knotts Berry Farm, \$1,600 in spending money, and presented the boys with a bicycle and tricycle. One of the major fundraisers for CHEMPI is the Purple Pig piggy banks, which can be found throughout the States and raised over \$2M in coins last year. Venita Brazier was recognized for reaching the \$5,000 level of giving to ENF and Chair Persons of the Year were Dave York (South) and Philip Deighton (North). The 172 Lodges lined up for an impressive “Exalted Ruler’s March,” with a band playing and totals being flashed across a huge screen, as each ER presented a check that raised an unbelievable \$3.5M from the Lodges for the State Major Project. Lastly, the individual and Lodge awards for the Ritual Contest were announced, with the Santa Clarita Lodge (Skip’s Lodge) taking top honors and representing CHEA at the GL Convention in Houston.



Nancy with the Garcia Family that are being served by CHEMPI



Ron with the Santa Clarita Lodge  
2379 CHEA Ritual Champions

The Convention ended at noon on Saturday and we were invited to lunch at the nearby home of Dave and Rose Coffin, a Vice President, for Skip and the VPs from his year as President of the Association. Another fine example of the comradery and togetherness of the CHEA Elks. We had dinner at the hotel with Skip and Karen and Hugh and Dale Scanlon on Saturday night. Hugh and Ron served together on the Board of Grand Trustees and Hugh will become the new Chairman of the Board in July.



Ron and Nancy with  
Chairman - designate  
of Grand Trustees  
Hugh Scanlon and wife  
Dale

While in California we saw Hawaiian Elks who hosted us on our January trip to Hawaii: Tom and Ruby Bentkowski, Ron Mizuno, and Wayne Howard. From Nevada were State President Bill Wiseman and his wife Mela; from Utah were State President Bob Pagani and his wife Adele; and from Arizona were newly elected Arizona State President Al Skorupski and his wife Diane. PGER



A selfie on the dance floor. Ron and Nancy with Tom and Venita Brazier

Jim and Lucia Grillo were unable to attend because of a family illness, but PGER Tom and Venita Brazier took great care of us. We also saw from our days on the Board of Grand Trustees Anthony and Carol Mauro, and from our days on Committee



Ron and Nancy with member of Grand Forum Bob Duitsman and wife Beth

on Judiciary Bob and Beth Duitsman who is now on the Grand Forum. It was great seeing all of these folks once again.

Karen and Skip took us to the airport early Sunday morning ending a great week and a new friendship with a fun couple. We left John Wayne Airport in Santa Ana, going through Dallas, arriving home about 11:00 pm Sunday night.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

Send comments to [webmaster@virginiaelks.org](mailto:webmaster@virginiaelks.org)

