

## GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to Kansas

We left DC Reagan at 7:30 am on Thursday, May 5, headed for Wichita, Kansas, by way of Chicago. We arrived at Wichita's newly remodeled Eisenhower Airport (formerly Mid-Continental Airport) about noon Central Time, where we were greeted by the largest contingent of Elks of the year, including PGER and State Sponsor Jim McQuillan, State President Jim



Ron, Nancy, and Kansas State Sponsor PGER Jim McQuillan



Past Board of Grand Trustee Walt Linthacum and his wife Linda, Nancy, and Ron

Capper and First Lady Melinda Baumann, SDGER Chuck Buechman and his wife Karlene, and PSP and PBOGT Member Walt Linthacum and his



State President Jim Capper, First Lady Melinda Baumann, Nancy, and Ron

wife Linda.

After dropping our luggage at the nearby Double Tree Hotel we went to visit the State Major Project, Kansas Elks Training Center for the Handicapped (KETCH) for lunch and a tour of the facilities. KETCH was started by Wilma Martin and a group of parents in 1962 and adopted by the Kansas Elks in 1964 as the State Major Project. KETCH meets the needs of adults with developmental disabilities by teaching life and vocational skills, serving over 30,000 people since its inception. The KETCH philosophy is that everyone can and should work alongside co-workers without disabilities. After lunch, Ron Pasmore, President and CEO for nineteen years explained the history of KETCH to our group.



Director of KETCH Ron Pasmore and Ron

Our tour of the facilities included visits to departments that make three-ring binders and air filters, which are sold mainly to state agencies and school systems. Ron got to assemble an air filter with the assistance of Stephon, one of the long-time clients in training at the facility. I know I will never look at a three-ring binder or an air filter without thinking of the BIG smiles of these men and women and how proud they were of their accomplishments. KETCH facility is made up of seven adjacent buildings near downtown Wichita. It also provides housing for 170 residents with group homes, apartments and group housing. There are 300 employees and eighty vehicles in the operation, and over 400 clients are served each year, age eighteen to eighty-six.



Ron assembling an air filter at KETCH

After leaving KETCH, Linda Linthacum, Karlene Buechman, Melinda Baumann, Addie Atkinson and I went to a local Spa where we each had a beauty treatment of some type. I was treated to a facial. I'm thinking they thought I was beginning to look a little haggard. What a wonderful treat!!! Thank you ladies!

Thursday night we gathered with State and Grand Lodge Officers in the Hospitality Room for Dinner prepared by Melinda Baumann. After visiting with people in the hospitality room, Ron and I excused ourselves to retire for the evening; it's that time change thing.



Share the Pride Committee

First Lady Melinda Baumann hosted a ladies coffee for the State Officers' wives and Past State Presidents' wives in the hospitality room on Friday morning. A special guest was Melinda's Mom who had driven up from Texas with her Dad to be with her for the KEA Convention. After lunch in the hotel, we joined the Elks for the Annual KETCH awards. Then Karlene took us for a tour of Downtown Wichita where we visited the "Keeper of the Plains" at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers. It is a sculpture of an Indian Chief designed by Native American artist Blackbear Bosin and



Bronze Sculpture 1



Bronze Sculpture 2



Bronze Sculpture 3

constructed by Tom Washburn. The statue is surrounded by a ring of fire. The island where the statue is located along with other artwork depicting the Circle of Life – Water, Fire, Air and Earth and other Native American memorabilia is accessed by a suspension pedestrian bridge from either side of the river. We also saw the thirty-one bronze sculptures by Georgia Gerber along one of the main streets of the downtown area. They are whimsical sculptures mostly of children and animals on the sidewalks. In a small park there is a bronze lunch counter sculpture on the former site of the F. W. Woolworth dime store.



Linda Linthacum, Sandy Foster, and Karlene Buechman on the riverfront in downtown Wichita. The suspension bridge leads to the "Keeper of the Plains"

Friday morning Ron met with the PSPs at 8:00 am followed by the meeting of the KETCH Board of Directors. After lunch KETCH held its Annual Awards Presentation for clients and supporters of the Program. Clients recognized for their attitude, hard work and achievements as participants in the Program

were Christian Vierthaler, Donal Graves, and Jason Wagner. Mary DeWitt was recognized for her ability to deal with hardship and her personal growth. Brad

and Robin Russell and Gary and Jannette Ritthaler, whose adult sons, Tyler and Travis, are in the Program, were recognized for their support of the Program. Suzanne Meeker and Sierra Scott were recognized as Outstanding Volunteers. Gardner



KETCH Award Winners

Design was recognized as Outstanding Business Partner and PSP Fred Badders

received the Wilma Martin Pioneer Award for outstanding service to KETCH as a twenty-two year Board Member. Ron congratulated all the Award winners and spoke about how the KETCH Program exemplifies his theme of "Elks Pride and Community Focus."



Nancy, "Dorothy", and Jim McQuillan

Friday night dinner was with the PSPs and GL Officers, followed by a fun evening in "The Land of Oz," with many characters and games along the Yellow Brick Road.



Nancy and Ron and the characters of Oz

Saturday morning was the first Business Session of the KEA with many fine Reports. Kansas offers great support for ENF, finishing twelfth in the Nation with a Per Capita of \$9.49. Overland Park Lodge 2395, with 240 members, finished sixth in the Nation with a Lodge Per Capita of \$87.14. Reagan Pozner, sponsored by Atchison Lodge 647, was the National 12-13 Girls Hoop Shoot winner and the Getty Powell Award winner. Kent Gade, GL Drug Awareness Director, and Bill Bryan presented a very interesting and informative presentation on the DA Program, advising of the information available online and otherwise to assist the Lodges in promoting DA education.



The passing of the largest gavel of the year

Following the Drug Awareness presentation, the Enrique Camarena Award was presented to Sheriff Burton Pinalto, a seventeen year veteran of Law Enforcement, in recognition of his



Ron, ER of Goodland Lodge Charles Boyne, Winner of the Enrique Camarena Award Sheriff Burton Pinalto, and Grand Lodge Drug Awareness Director Kent Gade

significant contributions to the community in drug education and enforcement. Burton is a member of Goodland Lodge 1528. He joined the

Lodge after several years working together on the DA Program with Lodge "dynamo," Zona Price, who was presented with a Presidential Achievement Pin for Community Service by Kent Gade. A brass bust of Enrique Camarena was presented to Chuck Bohme, ER of the Goodland Lodge for nominating Sheriff Pianalto for the Award. Ron congratulated the KEA for their support of ENF and encouraged them to be loud and proud, and to take full advantage of the ENF Community Investment Grants. Saturday afternoon the KEA held Toast and Flag Tribute Contests, workshops for secretaries and soccer, and held a meeting for GL Convention attendees. Kansas is providing a bus for Members who wish to attend the GL Convention in Houston.

The ladies of the KEA had a brunch again hosted and MC'd by First Lady Melinda Baumann and continued with the theme of Land of Oz with the beautiful and mostly handmade decorations by Linda Springer. State President Jim Capper, SDGER Chuck Buechman, PGER Jim McQuillian and Ron all came into the brunch to be introduced to the ladies. The Kansas Ladies do a number of projects to help raise money for the States Major Project and several were recognized for their outstanding efforts. Karlene Buechman did a special memorial presentation to honor Karen McQuillian, wife of the Kansas State Sponsor, Jim, who passed away in February, 2016. She will be missed by the Kansas Elks and their ladies. She is remembered for her love for her family, her charm, wit, and sweet smile.



Kansas Elk of the Year  
Tony Nash and Ron

Saturday night was the KEA Banquet. Sheriff Burton Pianalto was recognized again as the Enrique Camarena Award winner, along with his family. Awards were presented to "Veteran Volunteers of the Year," Ed and Samantha Landers (Overland Park), and the "Elk of the Year" was Tony Nash of Parsons Lodge 527. The Kansas Ladies "Lady of



Ron, Nancy and In-Coming State President Loren Anthony and his wife Jacque

the Year" Award was presented to Sharon Matlock. Loren Anthony was installed as the new KEA President, along with the other new Officers, including Debbie Betts, the Association's first female Vice



Get out of the way!!! Ron is firing a dart pistol to determine the winner of the Major Project Raffle

President. Ron fired the pistol for the State Major Project Fundraiser Shootout, and Ken Schaffer won the GER Wine Raffle, with \$545 going to ENF in



Ron, winner of the GER Wine Raffle Ken Schaffer, and ENF Chairman Larry Cure

his name and the Overland Park Lodge.

Sunday morning, Mother's Day, the Association held a breakfast for the MVS Scholarship winners: Faith Tuttle (Hoxie Lodge), Jolyn Smith (Overland Park Lodge), and Kurt Winter (El Dorado Lodge). All of the Scholars had impressive backgrounds of volunteer service, community activities, sports, and student government. Brief comments and "Thanks You's" were offered the Scholars and then awards were



Most Valuable Scholarship winners

presented to Lodges for Membership, Lodge Activities, ENF, and Contest winners: the "Image of Elkdom" Brochure Award went to the Atchison Lodge, the Newsletter Award to Overland Park, the Poster Award to Goodland, and the Award for the best Scrapbook went to the Atchison Lodge. ENF District winners were: West - McPherson (\$11.86); SE - El Dorado (\$28.86); and SW - Overland Park (\$87.14 and number six in the Nation). The morning ended with the KEA Memorial Service, after which Walt and Linda Linthacum delivered us back to the airport for our scheduled 12:25 pm flight home by way of Chicago.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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