

# Virginia Elks Association News

November 4, 2015

## GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to South Dakota

We flew out of DC Reagan on Thursday morning, October 1st, arriving in Rapid City, South Dakota, about 3:30 pm, after a brief layover in Minneapolis. We were met at the airport by State President Rick Woolridge and his wife Pat, SDGER Harlan Huetson and his



Ron and Nancy with South Dakota State President Rick Woolridge and his wife Pat from Huron, SD



Ron and Nancy with PGER Jack Traynor, State Sponsor of South Dakota

wife Elaine, and a large contingent of South Dakota Elks. At the hotel, we were met by PGER and State Sponsor Jack



Ron and Nancy with SDGER Harlan Huetson and his wife Elaine

Traynor and more South Dakota Elks.



Ron standing by the entrance of Rapid City Lodge 1187 Golf Course

other social functions. ER Jerry Cummings and the other Lodge Officers enthusiastically welcomed us to the Lodge and were obviously proud of the Lodge and all it has to offer to its Members and the Community.

After breakfast on a cool rainy Friday morning, we

Thursday night we enjoyed dinner at the Rapid City Lodge with Grand Lodge, State, and Lodge officers. Rapid City, the largest Lodge in South Dakota, has a very nice facility, featuring a golf course and inviting rooms for dining and



ER of Rapid City Lodge Gerald Cummings giving Ron a lodge pin



Past Grand Lodge Committeeman and PSP Dean Reichert guiding our "Black Hills Tour"

traveled by van to the Black Hills, an area acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase and famous for its gold rush in the 1870's. PSP and Past Grand Lodge Committeeman Dean Reichert, a former guide for a local tour company, led our group and passed along much interesting information about the area. Our first stop was Mt Rushmore by way of the Iron Mountain Road, a narrow roadway with many

switchbacks, pigtail bridges and tunnels, and its awesome views of The Badlands, the mountains and Mt Rushmore.

Originally conceived as the "Shrine of Democracy," that name soon gave way to "Mt Rushmore," interestingly enough named after a New York lawyer who spent years settling many claims in the area. At first, the project was quite controversial, thought by many to be a preposterous idea and a desecration of the mountain, while considered by others as a bold and brilliant plan.



Ron and Nancy visiting "Shrine of Democracy" on a rainy and very cloudy day

Working on the granite face from a boatswains chair suspended on cables from the top, Danish-American Gutzom Borglum worked on the mountain from 1927 until his death in 1941. Borglum's vision was for Mt

Rushmore to be a colossal monument to the founding, preservation, and growth of our



One of three tunnels we went through on our way to Mt. Rushmore and each one gives a view of great sculptures of the four Presidents



Ron and Nancy with Rick and Pat Wooldridge on the Avenue of Flags at Mt. Rushmore

Nation. His son, Lincoln, completed the final touches and it was opened as a National Monument in the fall of 1941. Despite the damp and hazy weather, we had a nice visit and view of the Monument, just before the fog came in to hide the sculptures. Another item off our Bucket List!

Next stop, the Crazy Horse Monument. Korczak Ziolkowski, who had worked with Borglum on Mt Rushmore, was invited by the Lakota Indians to sculpt what would be the largest sculpture in the world. Korczak, who worked alone for many years, labored on the mountain from 1948 until his death in 1982. He and his wife raised ten children and all have worked on the mountain. Built and operated entirely with private funds, it remains very much a family operation today, as construction continues. We had lunch on site, but unfortunately, because of the fog, could not see the monument from the Visitors Center and we missed out on the planned private tour up on its surface. Before leaving, the South Dakota Elks presented a donation to Jadviga Ziolkowski, daughter of Korczak and CEO of the Monument Foundation.

Next on the day's busy agenda was a visit to the Children's Home Society, which is supported by the South Dakota Elks as part of its State Major Project Foundation. Director Ella Shaffer and her husband Vern gave our group a tour of the impressive residential facility, which has a sister facility in Sioux City,



Our view (?) of the Crazy Horse Memorial



Rick Wooldridge making a donation to Monique Ziolkowski of the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation on behalf of the South Dakota Elks and Ron



Upon completion what the Crazy Horse Memorial should look like



South Dakota Elks at Children's Home Society

South Dakota. The two facilities provide educational and therapeutic care for over 120 abused, neglected, and ADHD children, ages four to fourteen. A lot of great work with children in

need is happening here.

Back at the hotel, Ron attended a 4:00 pm meeting with the South Dakota Advisory Board. Then we were off for a reception and tour of a nearby Lifescape facility. Lifescape, with facilities throughout South Dakota, is also supported as part of the South Dakota State Major Project Foundation. Lifescape provides in-home, in-school and in-house services, equipment, support and expertise to help children and adults with mild to significant disabilities reach their full potential in life. We were given a tour of the facility by Christine Stephenson, an enthusiastic Therapeutic Manager, and met several children and parents served by Lifescape, including Grace, who has Cerebral Palsy, and Kailee, a two year old preemie with developmental issues. After another impressive visit, we returned to the hotel for dinner with PGER Traynor and State Officers.



Ron and Nancy with two adorable little girls who receive services from "Life Scape"

Saturday morning, Ron met with the Association Board of Directors at 8:00 am, followed by the General Business Session and Memorial Service. After the Member Luncheon, the Association held the 11 O'clock Toast Contest. The South Dakota Lodges are great supporters of ENF, with all Lodges making the GER goal for the last three years. Last year, all but one of its Lodges received an ENF Community Grant to aid in their Community outreach. State President Rick Woolridge's theme is "Elevating Communities by Caring and Sharing," which goes along nicely with Ron's theme of "Elks Pride - Community Focus."

A Ladies Luncheon was held in the hotel Saturday afternoon after the Memorial Service. A South Dakota State Trooper spoke to the ladies about safety in and about the home and also while driving. Nancy spoke to the ladies about some of their travels and also explained the design of her pin.

A Silent Auction and Raffle for ENF and a Reception preceded the Saturday evening Banquet. After dinner, Ron encouraged everyone to return to their Lodges and use their Elks Pride to "grow" Elkdom in all they do, and to use their talents and experience to become "Salesmen for Success." The South Dakota Elks presented annual donations to the Children's Home Society; Lifescape; and Black Hills Cabin, a Veterans retreat. Representatives of each of these organizations spoke about their work and thanked the Elks for the generous support through the years. Following the Banquet, we gathered in the Hospitality Room to thank everyone for their hospitality and to say our goodbyes.

While we worried about our return trip to Virginia because of the rain, wind and flooding throughout the mid-Atlantic region, the weather cleared and we were able to arrive home about 8:00pm Sunday night without delay. Our next state visit - Pennsylvania.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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

