

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

Home at last!! We left Fredericksburg on an unusually cool Thursday morning, June 9, for our drive to Falls Church, in Northern Virginia, and the Virginia Elks Association Spring Convention. The Elks of Virginia provided tremendous support for us during our fundraising campaign, at the Grand



Ron and Nancy with Cheryl and "Elk of the Year" Bob Hinkle

Lodge Convention in Indianapolis, and throughout the year, so we were very happy to return home and have the opportunity to thank them personally. We met SDGER Bob Hinkle and his wife Cheryl at noon for lunch at the Marriott Fairview Park, site of the Convention.

Ron and Bob attended the State Trustees meeting at 2:00 and the Past State Presidents meeting at 4:00. At both meetings, Ron spoke about starting an annual "Exalted Ruler March" at this Convention in support of the relatively new Virginia Elks Charitable Trust. He explained how he had observed many other States enthusiastically supporting their Trusts through such lines of giving and his desire to have the Lodges in Virginia focus on the importance of our Trust for the future support of VEA charities. The Lodges had been advised of the "Exalted Rulers March" at the April District Deputy Clinics and that, for this first effort, because of the short notice, no amount of giving would be considered too small, but that it was important to get the Program started to create awareness and interest in our Charitable Trust.

Virginia has two State Major Projects supported by our Charitable Trust, the Virginia Elks Youth Camp and a Vocational Safety Glasses Program for high schools and vocational centers. Ron also announced at the meetings that he understood that he would become the State Sponsor of Virginia after the Grand Lodge Convention, and that, while Bob would be losing his job as SDGER, Bob would be remaining as "State Leader," a new position, but essentially continuing with his current duties and helping Ron fit into the shoes of outgoing State Sponsor, Ted Hess. Bob was also elected President of the PSP.



Ron and Nancy with State Sponsor Ted Hess and his wife Becky



Ron and Nancy with North Carolina State President Peter Breidenbach and his wife Joan



PSP and Past Chairman of Board of Grand Trustees Julian Taliferro and his wife Pat with Ron and Nancy

anniversary cake throughout the visit! Although we were not able to go, the nearby Arlington-Fairfax Lodge 2188 offered special entertainment and meals during the Convention and bus service to the Lodge.

Friday morning the Virginia Elks held their annual golf tournament at the Sterling Golf Course which is adjacent to the Loudon Lodge, President Geoff's home Lodge. Ron's five-man team was fortunate enough to win the captain's choice tournament. Afterwards the golfers and other guests were welcomed to the Loudon Lodge by Exalted Ruler Carlos Ortiz for a tour of the facility and a barbeque luncheon. And, after



Carlos Ortiz giving a tour of Loudoun Lodge 2406

PGER and State Sponsor Ted Hess and his wife Becky, Past Chief Justice of the Grand Forum Bob Goolrick and his wife Anna, and North Carolina State President Peter Breidenbach and his wife Joan, arrived Thursday afternoon and joined us and VEA State President



Ron and Nancy with Past Chief Justice of the Grand Forum Bob Goolrick and his wife Anna



Ron and Nancy with State President Geoff Cox and his wife Susan



Ron and Nancy with son Jeh Hicks, State Legal Advisor

lunch, Carlos presented Ted and Becky with an anniversary cake for all to enjoy!

Back at the hotel, Ron met with Ted and Bob and the current DDs and the DD-Designates for next year. The meeting of the Virginia Elks Youth Camp Board and its Lodge representatives was held at 4:00. The Camp, located in one of the most scenic mountain areas of Virginia, was started for boys in 1948, and now offers separate weeks for boys and girls, ages eight to thirteen, and is rented to other groups. In addition to its beautiful setting on a crystal-clear river, the Camp is blessed with very good facilities and utilizes its natural surroundings to enhance the experience of its campers.

The PSP Dinner was Friday night. Ted told the PSPs, in all modesty, that Ron was perhaps “the second best Grand Exalted Ruler ever,” and Ron joked back that he would always be happy to play second fiddle to Ted. We both spoke about our travels and some of the fun times and great memories. And, Ted and Becky had more anniversary cake!

Afterwards, we attended the Central District Hospitality Room, hosted by our Fredericksburg Lodge. At 11:00, the Toast was an unusual one-two punch, with Ron giving the traditional



Ron, Nancy Avery, Fredericksburg 875 ER Tim Mead, and Nancy



Fredericksburg Ladies, Carol Shiflett, Betty Gallahan, Dot Mills, and Shelby Frantum with Ron showing GER T-Shirt

Eleven O’Clock Toast, followed by Karyn Swenor’s rendition of the Jolly Cork’s Toast. Grand Exalted Ruler T-shirts were on sale with an image of Ron’s pin on the front, which Fredericksburg Lodge Member, Betty Gallahan, had provided in honor of her recently deceased father, PER Huffy Gallahan, a long-time, faithful member of the Lodge and a great

friend to Ron and all Elks.

Saturday morning was the PER/ER Breakfast, where senior PSP Don Netschke (Winchester Lodge) was presented with the President’s Achievement Award and Certificate



PSP "Ten Dollar Bill" Tennis and PER Secretary/Treasurer Beverly McMurtry with Nancy and Ron





Ron with PSP Don Netschke receiving Presidents Achievement Award for more than 4,000 hours of Community Service

for his 4,000-plus hours and many years of service to the Elks and his Community. This was followed by the Business Session with a number of fine Committee Reports. ENF Chairman Beverly Hamby announced that Virginia finished tenth in the Nation in Per Capita donations to ENF (\$10.30), with the Virginia Beach Lodge finishing third in the Nation (\$93.80), Newport News thirty-second (\$37.03), and Petersburg fifty-ninth (\$28.71). Virginia has twenty-nine Lodges and 8,300 Members, and while not achieving a Membership gain last year, Membership Chairman Justin Reiter announced that Virginia showed significant improvement by reducing its losses by almost fifty

percent from the previous year. Twenty-five Lodges received Community Grants, with the Virginia Beach and Onancock Lodges receiving four Grants each and six other Lodges receiving three Grants in support of their Community outreach.

Under Lodge Activities, Patti Graves announced good participation in the All-American Lodge Contest and announced the three Division Winners in Virginia: Virginia Beach, Front Royal, and Arlington-Fairfax. Although unofficial, it is believed that Virginia Beach will be recognized as a GL All-American Lodge in Houston. Hoop Shoot Chairman DD Lynn Rutherford-Snow (the "Cookie Lady") gave the Hoop Shoot Report and Scholarship Chairman Bob Hinkle announced that Virginia would be giving out forty-three scholarships this year. The first-ever "ER March" was conducted and raised an amazing \$8,674.00 from the Lodges for the Virginia Charitable Trust. In addition, because of the substantial money raised by Ron throughout our travels for ENF with the GER Wine Raffles and the signing of Membership Cards, ENF offered to donate \$10,000 to any Elk's Charity in Ron's name, and Ron selected the Virginia Charitable Trust. So, it was truly a great start for what is to become a significant annual giving Program.

The Ladies Breakfast was Saturday morning in the hotel. A trio from Swing Shift, a Big Band that State President Geoff Cox plays in, played background music while we ate breakfast. A very special touch for the ladies. Leah Powell

was Mistress of Ceremonies and introduced all of the Officers' wives and our Special Guests. Nancy spoke about some of the adventures she and Ron have had on their journey so far this year. She thanked everyone for the support given to her and Ron in preparing for the Year as GER and during their year of travel. It's great to be back home in Virginia! Becky Hess, wife of State Sponsor



Becky Hess speaking at the Ladies Breakfast and Cheryl Hinkle

Ted Hess spoke and thanked everyone for their warm welcome since it had been a while since she had been able to attend the Virginia Convention. Joan Breidenbach, wife of North Carolina State President Peter Breidenbach, thanked everyone for the wonderful hospitality and how she loves the friendliness of the Virginia Elks. After giving out door prizes

and having the benediction we went into the Memorial Service.

The Scholars and their parents were welcomed into the meeting at 11:30 for the State Memorial Service. Virginia lost two Past State Presidents last year, David Biggs (Clifton Forge Lodge) and Carlton Leonard (Suffolk Lodge) and eulogies were given by Jennifer Duncan and PSP Jim Powell.

The Scholarship Awards Presentation and Luncheon followed the Memorial Service and was presided over by its enthusiastic Co-Chairman, Bill Schindler, a former high school principal, who relates well with the students and always does a great job with the introductions and presentations. After missing almost every special occasion for our oldest granddaughter this year, including high school sports, plays, and graduation, we had the opportunity to share one shining moment with her at this Convention, and be proud grandparents, as Teagan Rianne Hicks was announced as an Elks Legacy Scholarship winner!



Student Scholars with Ted Hess and Ron



Our son, Tee Hicks, and Granddaughter, Teagan Hicks, winner of an Elks Legacy Scholarship, with her proud grandparents



Ron playing a game while visiting a hospitality room. Three Strikes You're Out!

Saturday afternoon, we took the traditional tour of the four District Hospitality Rooms with Ted and Becky, Bob and Cheryl, Peter and Joan, and Geoff and Susan. There was lots of good home cooking, some of which we could not resist even though we had just left the luncheon. At the Southeast District Hospitality Room, John Owen, VP and PER of the Bedford Lodge, presented Ted with a framed print of the Peaks of Otter, which overlook Bedford, in grateful thanks for his twenty-four

years as Virginia State Sponsor.

Saturday night was the President's Reception and Dinner. Geoff plays trombone in a DC Area big band, Swing Shift, and they provided special entertainment during our Dinner and afterwards for dancing. Geoff's wife, Susan, is a dance instructor and



Vice President John Owen presenting Ted Hess with "Peaks of Otter" print in grateful thanks for twenty-four years as State Sponsor



Susan Cox and her partner dancing for Ted and Becky's fiftieth Wedding Anniversary

performed a special dance with one of her students for Ted and Becky in honor of their fiftieth anniversary. We both thanked the Virginia Elks for their steadfast encouragement and loyal support throughout the years, and expressed our great joy at being back with them. For the first time, Ron installed the new State Officers, but unfortunately, due to the death of President-Elect Bobby Fender's mother on Wednesday morning, he was not able to

attend the Convention, and he will be installed in Houston prior to the start of the Grand Lodge Convention.

State Veteran's Chairman Vicki Shiflett presented the male and female "Veteran Volunteer of the Year Awards" to Rich Crawford (Front Royal Lodge) and Susan McDaniel (Woodbridge Lodge). The "Officer of the Year" was State Secretary, Horace Jones (Staunton Lodge), who has served in that position for ten years. The "Elk of the Year" was Bob Hinkle (Staunton Lodge), who serves



as SDGER, Scholarship Co-Chairman and PSP President, and is relied upon by all Virginia Elks for his advice and guidance. PSP Don Netschke had donated an Invicta watch to Ron earlier in the year to be used for fundraising of his choice, and Ron had selected the Elks National Foundation. Tickets were sold by the DDs and Ron's Administrative Aide Ray Dameron, and PER and DD-Designate Milton Werner (Harrisonburg Lodge) won the watch, with \$1,615 being raised for ENF. The GER Wine Raffle was won by Rich Crawford (Front Royal Lodge) with another \$890 going to ENF from the Raffle. We visited the Central District Hospitality Room after the Dinner, where PDD Ray Dameron (Fredericksburg Lodge) delivered the Eleven O'Clock Toast.

Sunday morning we enjoyed our last Sunday Breakfast paid for by Ted Hess. Even though Ted is retiring as Virginia's State Sponsor, Ron did ask if he would be willing to send a check next year! After breakfast, and before heading home, we drove Ted and Becky to Dulles Airport for their trip back to West Virginia. Ted and Becky are wonderful Ambassadors for our Order, they are great friends to us and will be greatly missed by the Elks of Virginia.



ENF Chairman Bev Hamby, winner of the GER Wine Raffle Richard Crawford (Front Royal Lodge) with \$890 going to ENF, and Ron

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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