

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

We left DC Reagan at 7:30 am on a sunny Tuesday morning headed for Pasco, Washington, by way of Minneapolis. We arrived about 1:00 pm (4:00 East Coast) and were met by PGER and State Sponsor Roger True, State President Dennis Ramsey and his wife Huey, and PSP and Grand Lodge Committeeman Joe Basil. The Washington Elks Association has thirty-eight Lodges and nearly 19,000 Members. Roger drove us to the nearby Red Lion Hotel, where we unpacked and relaxed for a couple of hours before attending a Flag Day Ceremony and Dinner at the Tri-Cities Lodge, Roger's home Lodge.



Ron and Nancy with outgoing State President Dennis Ramsey and wife Huey

The Flag Ceremony was held at the Lodge's very nice outdoor courtyard, where they hold many weddings and other receptions. Grand Lodge soloist Virginia Basil led the singing. The presentation was also accompanied by a number of sing-along Patriotic songs led by Lodge Chaplain Terry Simmelink. The Tri-Cities area got its name from the three adjacent towns of Pasco, Richlands, and Kennewick. After the Ceremony, we enjoyed hot dogs and hamburgers grilled on the outdoor deck by Exalted Ruler Thurman Cooper before returning to Roger's room at the hotel for a few minutes of hospitality before an early bedtime (West Coast Time).



Patti Gustin, Ron, Jan Lindsey, and PGER Roger True at golf outing

Wednesday morning Ron left at 6:30 am to play in the Elks Golf Tournament. The day started sunny and cool, at forty-eight degrees, and quickly became a perfect day for golf, however, the team of Ron and Roger True did not shine! The WEA



Ron and Nancy with PGER Frank Garland, former Sponsor of Washington

Convention was attended by PGER and State Sponsor Emeritus Frank Garland, several State Presidents, Gerry Endicott (Oregon),



Ron and Washington State President Bim Lindsey (white coat) with visiting State Presidents, Konrad Jackson (Alaska), Gerry Endicott (Oregon), and Darrell Green (Idaho)

Darrell Green (Idaho), Konrad Jackson (Alaska), and a number of other visiting Elks. Also attending were



Vice Chairman of Board of Grand Trustees and Alaska PSP Mike Luhr and wife Barb, Nancy and Ron, and PGER Roger True and his wife Marilyn

Grand Trustee Mike Luhr and his wife Barb, Grand Lodge Loyal Knight Bob Ferda, Fraternal Committee Chairman Joe Basil and his wife Grand Lodge Soloist Virginia Basil, and Hoop Shoot Regional Chairman and candidate for the Board of Grand Trustees, Keith Mills, replacing the retiring Mike Luhr.



Ron with PSP and Grand Lodge Loyal Knight Bob Ferda, a PER of the Woodbridge, VA Lodge

While the guys were out enjoying a gorgeous day golfing, the ladies and a couple of men took advantage of the great day and visited several wineries in

the Walla Walla area and did a little wine tasting. First we visited Northstar Winery, then Amari Cellars, then the beautiful Basel Cellars Estate Winery where we had lunch and enjoyed



Lunch at Basel Cellars Estate Winery and Resort



Countryside in Walla Walla with foothills of Blue Mountains

sitting outside basking in the sun. It is also a Bed and Breakfast where you can spend the night for a mere \$1,700 per night. On our way back to Pasco, we stopped at L'Ecole Winery which was an old school house. It was a lovely drive out and back to the Walla Walla area passing corn fields, lots of fields of grape vines, and apple

orchards, some of which were the delicious fuji apples, with a great view of the foothills of the Blue Mountains of Washington.

Wednesday night Mike drove us back to the Tri-Cities Lodge for steak, salmon, and sturgeon prepared by PGER Roger True, dressed in a full chef's outfit, and Exalted Ruler Cooper. After dinner, Roger gave us a tour of the Lodge, which has 203 Members and a long history with the True family. Still suffering from jet lag, we returned to the hotel, calling it another early evening.



Chef PGER Roger True, Ron, and ER Cooper

Thursday morning Ron had breakfast with State Leaders, then attended the Major Project Therapy Board Meeting. The Washington Therapy Program started in 1956 with one therapist and now serves the entire State, reaches hundreds of children each year with in-home therapies and a Budget of \$1.6 Million, and is supported by a Member Per Capita Goal of \$20, Lodge fundraisers and a \$20 Million Charitable Trust. Chairman Lee Frankie announced that the Shoreline Lodge had the highest Per Capital in donations to the Therapy Program last year (\$52.46).



While relaxing, PGER Frank Garland is giving Ron a little advice

After the Therapy Meeting we went with Roger, Marilyn, Mike, and Barb on a tour of the Pasco area. Pasco is located in a dry desert region, but because of the construction of several flood-control dams and irrigation, there is plenty of water and the area developed into a large agricultural community. Pasco is home to a large inland transportation port, industrial park, and rail yard.

Located nearby is the town of Hanford, which was condemned in 1943 to make way for the "Hanford Site," a nuclear production facility which produced Plutonium for America's defense program. The Site is now closed to the public and is part of the Manhattan Project National Historic Park and the largest environmental cleanup in the U.S. We visited the Ice Harbor Dam, one of several flood-control dams along the Snake River, then went to lunch at Country Mercantile, a farmers market with many specialty food items and a restaurant.



Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake River

Back at the hotel we attended a Plus-One Reception for the sixteen Lodges that had a Membership Gain. The Omak Lodge took top honors in Membership with a 22.2% gain (thirty-five new Members), just edging out the Ballard Lodge with a 21.9% gain (216 new Members). We then visited the District Hospitality Rooms before going to the PSP Reception and BBQ Dinner.



Membership Chairman Grims Gislason, President Dennis Ramsey, and Ron with ER's of lodges with a membership gain

Friday morning was filled with Committee Meetings and Workshops. Ron attended workshops on Youth Activities, MVS and Vocational Grants, Membership and Public Relations, Therapy Program, and Business Practices. Lunch was with the PSPs followed by workshops on ENF Grants and Veterans.

Every Lodge in Washington achieved the GER's Per Capital Goal last year with the Oak Harbor Lodge (\$23.96) and Bremerton Lodge (\$20.28) leading the way, followed by Centralia-Chehalis (\$19.88) and Lynnwood (\$19.34).



Ron and the "Share the Pride" Committee

Thirty-two Washington Lodges received sixty-nine ENF Grants with Port Townsend and Forks Lodges receiving four Grants each and ten other Lodges receiving three Grants to assist in their community outreach.

I attended the Spouses "Meet and Greet Social" hosted by incoming Washington State Elks Association First Lady, Jan Lindsey. Jan is a "crafty" lady and attempted to teach us how to make a rosebud out of ribbon. Some of us were successful, but a few proved they were not quite as gifted as Jan.

Our granddaughter Teagan's high school graduation was held tonight in Virginia. Obviously being in Washington State we were unable to attend in person, but for once the three hour time difference was to our benefit. Through the marvels of technology (for two techno-challenged grandparents) we were able to watch her graduation live on our computer. The camera at the graduation did not stay focused on Teagan or the family members in attendance, but we were able to see her walk across the stage and receive a

certificate for having a 4.0 GPA and her diploma. The timing was great and we did not miss seeing graduation or any of the activities of the convention.

At 5:30 pm we attended the Installation of new State President, Bim Lindsey and the other State Officers, then an Awards Dinner with



Incoming State President Bim Lindsey and his wife Jan with Nancy and Ron



Officer of the Year Hal Bornsteadt and Ron

entertainment provided by an all-area high school steel drum band. Hal Bornsteadt (Kelso-Longview Lodge) was named "Officer of the Year," the Ocean Shores-North Beach Lodge won the "Lodge of the Year" Award, which includes a \$5,000 State Grant for the Lodge, and the Forks Lodge was recognized as top Lodge in Youth Activities. Karen Allenby was named Washington "Citizen of the Year," Ace Beckham was "Exalted Ruler of the Year," and Judith Phippen "Elk of the Year." This was followed by the President's Reception.

Saturday morning Barb and I attended a breakfast for the Past State Presidents wives hosted by Marilyn. It was another opportunity for me to spend time with the ladies and get to know them a little better.



Ladies enjoying PSP Wives Coffee

The Business Session was Saturday Morning, followed by the Polly Garland Award



Polly Garland Award Chairman Joyce Fowler, Ron, award winner Judith Phippen, and PGER Frank Garland

Luncheon. Named in honor of the wife of Frank Garland, this Award recognizes the outstanding community service of an Elk and non-Elk female from each of the State's five Districts. The District winners attended the Luncheon and were recognized for their service, then Joyce Fowler, Chairman, announced that Judith Phippen (Walla Walla Lodge) was this year's recipient of the Polly Garland Award. The Luncheon was followed

by an Open Session and the Elks Memorial Service. The Therapy Fundraising Raffle winners were drawn with \$3,500 in prizes being shared by the three lucky winners from Everret, Payallup, and Bremerton Lodges. The GER Wine Raffle was won by Karen Woodbeck (Ocean Shores Lodge) with \$1,470 going to ENF in her name and the name of her Lodge.



GER Wine Raffle winner Karen Woodbeck (Ocean Shores Lodge) and Ron. \$1470 was raised for ENF.

Saturday night we had dinner with the Trues, Luhrs, and Frank Garland at the hotel, then visited the Hospitality Rooms. Ron gave

the Eleven O'clock Toast outside, as Members gathered and held hands around the pool. We were up at 4:00 am on a beautiful sunny Sunday morning for our 7:00 am flight back to Virginia through Minneapolis, arriving home about 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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