

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy's Report on their Ohio Trip

We arrived in Columbus, Ohio on Wednesday morning, August 12, and were met at the airport by PGER Jim and Mary Carolyn Nichelson and by Ohio Elks State President Lance Knight and his wife Sue. We proceeded to a neighborhood of Columbus known as "German Village" for lunch, a quaint area with lovely



Ron and Mary Carolyn and Jim Nichelson at a restaurant in Germany Village, Columbus, Ohio.



A home in the German Village area of Columbus.

turn-of-the-century brick homes with beautiful landscaping and window boxes full of gorgeous flowers and a small public park. (For some of Nancy's friends...lat, lat, lat).

After lunch it was on to Kenton, Ohio, to join Kenton Lodge 157 that evening for the celebration of its



Officers and PER'S of Kenton Lodge 157 at their 125th Anniversary Celebration.

125th Anniversary. We quickly checked into the Inn at Ohio Northern University, then on to the lodge.



Poster at the Kenton, Ohio Lodge.

After a tour of the historic Lodge building, with its

impressive Lodge Room we enjoyed a wonderful dinner. Following dinner, there was an interesting program, including review of the Lodge history and a performance by the Kentones, the Lodge chorus, which has performed at several Elks Grand Lodge Conventions. During the program, PSP Roger Crowe presented ER John Hines and the Lodge with a beautifully framed small, tattered flag, which had been presented at initiation to a new Kenton Lodge member in 1909. The flag had survived two World Wars, and had been given to an Australian soldier during the war for good luck. The fate of the soldier is unknown, and the whereabouts of the flag was unknown for many years until it was found in an English apartment and return to the Kenton Lodge member in 1959, based on faded information written on the flag. Along with the flag had come a letter about where and how the flag was found and an old newspaper article. These items remained in an envelope at the Lodge until recently re-discovered and framed, and will now be proudly displayed at the Lodge along with a photo of the original Lodge member.

Of interest, while roaming through the Lodge, it was noticed from original Lodge documents on display, that the Kenton Lodge received Dispensation to establish a Lodge

in January, 1890, from the “Exalted Grand Ruler.” However, the Lodge Charter, issued only six months later, in July, 1890, was signed by the “Grand Exalted Ruler.” So, apparently, the title of our Orders National Leader was changed during that time period?

On Thursday morning, we drove to Sandusky, Ohio, near Lake Erie, to visit one of the Ohio Veterans Homes. We received a tour of the large, newly renovated facility by staff members and Mary Beaston, the vivacious Veterans Services Representative for the District, and a frequent visitor to the Home.



Veterans singing and enjoying being outside.

We had the opportunity to thank many Veterans for their service, joined in the singing of “God Bless America” and other songs with a group of Veterans, made a brief appearance at a Veteran’s Bingo game, and ate lunch in the Home Cafeteria. After lunch, Ron laid a wreath at one of the Memorials located within the cemetery located on the grounds of the Home. Then, we headed back to



Ron saluting after laying a wreath at one of the Memorials in the cemetery on the Grounds of the Veterans Home in Sandusky, Ohio.



Ron at Veterans Home with ladies from Emblem Clubs in the District.

Columbus to get ready for the start of the Ohio Elks State Convention. We were joined on the tour of the Home by a Past National President of the Emblem Club, and the present Ohio/West Virginia President of the Emblem Club and several other members of Emblem Clubs in the District.

Thursday night, we joined a small group of State Officers for dinner in the hotel, followed by a visit to one of the hospitality rooms where they had a surprise birthday cake and sang a rousing rendition of “Happy Birthday” for Nancy. Friday morning included meetings with the incoming Governing Board and the State Trustees, followed by afternoon meetings with the Past State Presidents, and then the District Deputies and DD Esquires.

The PSP wives and State Officers wives had a delicious brunch in the hotel Friday morning. Friday afternoon a group of the ladies went into downtown Columbus and toured the Kelton House, a home built by Fernando and Sophia Kelton in 1852. Fernando was a prosperous wholesaler of dry goods and pharmaceuticals as well as a well respected man of the community of Columbus. Besides the beautiful home and furnishings an interesting part of the home



Ohio ladies in the garden of the Kelton House.



Nancy and Sue Knight, wife of Ohio State President Lance Knight, in the dining room of the Kelton House.

was that the Kelton's were fervent abolitionists who used their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad. They have an informative interactive educational area set up in the basement for students touring the home. The Kelton House remained in the family until the death of their granddaughter, Grace Bird Kelton in 1975. She was one of the first people in the country to make her living as an interior decorator. Her work was widely recognized and was one of several decorators Jacqueline Kennedy invited to consult on redecorating the White House in the 1960's. Today the house is run by the Junior League of Columbus.

Friday night was a casual "Fun Night," including a reception, dinner, and dance. Ron taught Mary Carolyn and other Ohio Elks the steps to the Hokie Pokie, the unofficial Virginia Tech dance, which went along well with the friendly banter over the upcoming re-match of last year's Ohio State vs Virginia Tech football game. VT was the only team to beat OSU,



"Fun Night"

eventual National Champions, and the Ohio Elks are looking for redemption when OSU visits Lane Stadium in Blacksburg on September 7th.

The main Business Session started at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning with the usual fine reports. The Ohio Major Project is Children with Cerebral Palsy, and the session included a presentation by Trish Otter, director of the Cleveland CP Clinic, with two moving videos demonstrating how the Elks of Ohio are helping kids with CP. There was also a slide presentation of our visit to the Ohio Veterans Home. Ohio Lodges received 111 Community Investment Grants last year totaling \$231,000, plus the Ohio Elks Association offers its lodges Community Service Grants of \$750 each to assist the lodges in reaching out to their community fire and police departments. Ohio is on track to be a Plus-1 State in membership for the year!



"Fun Night #2"
Ron, Ohio State President Lance Knight and Michigan State President Randy Jackson.

During our visit, the Elks of Ohio made voluntary member donations to ENF as Ron signed their Membership Cards, and the Ohio State Association generously added another \$1,000 to the ENF total. The theme for the year "Elks Pride – Community Focus" was stressed at all of the Association meetings, and the Elks of Ohio are expecting to have a great year "growing" Elkdom!!!