

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy's Visit to Kentucky



The welcoming group of Kentucky Elks at Churchill Downs. (One of the spires in the background).



Kentucky State President Pat Fletcher and his wife Donna and Ron and Nancy at the Entrance to Churchill Downs.

We arrived in the Bluegrass State late Friday Morning, July 31, and were greeted at the Louisville Airport by a host of great Kentucky Elks, including State President Pat Fletcher and his wife Donna, SDGER Greg Willis, and ER Tom Armstrong of Lyndon Lodge 2052 and his wife Ann. Lyndon 2052 is located in Louisville and was the host lodge for the Convention. The Louisville area is also home to Louisville Lodge 8.



PSP Frank King, Ron, and Head of Security Rob King.

We were whisked directly from the airport to Churchill Downs Raceway for lunch, followed by a very interesting and unique "back of the house" private tour conducted by PSP Frank King and fellow Elk Rob King (no relation), who is Head of Security at Churchill Downs. (Another item checked off our Bucket List!)

The delegates were housed at the Marriott Hotel with all of the meetings and functions held at the Lyndon Lodge. Friday evening we were invited



Ron and ER of Lyndon Lodge Tom Armstrong

to dinner with the Kentucky PSPs and State Officers, State Sponsor, PGER Lester C. (Ted) Hess, and Indiana State President, Ed Dyer and his wife Kate.

The Business Sessions on Saturday morning were filled with Reports of achievements of the sixteen Lodges in Kentucky and their State major project, Kids with Cancer Camps. Last year, every Lodge met the GER per-capita-goal and every Lodge received at least one Community Investment Grant! In all, Kentucky Lodges received thirty-two Grants, totaling over \$72,000 to help with their community outreach.

The Cynthiana Lodge was the top ENF donor and also was honored with the All-American Lodge designation, both for the third year in a row. The Tri-County Lodge led the state in member recruitment with a gain of thirty-seven members. Kentucky is often a plus-1 state, and is well on their way to achieving another gain in membership this year.

Donna Fletcher hosted Nancy and Kate Dyer along with several Kentucky Ladies at a breakfast at a nearby restaurant. The ladies went to Lyndon Lodge and heard the Reports on Youth Activities. The Kentucky Hoop Shoot winner spoke about her experiences, as did the Director of one of the Kids for Cancer Camps and two of the camp participants.

The Kentucky State Elks Auxiliary met at the beautiful old Hurstbourne Country Club Clubhouse for a luncheon meeting. The ladies had their annual auction to raise money for ENF and the auction became quite lively when University of Kentucky items were brought up for bidding.

Saturday night, the Lyndon Lodge hosted a delightful Banquet for the Association with the



L-R: Director of one of the Kids for Cancer Camps; Ron; and Diane Yates, Youth Activities Chairman



Ron and Gene Butters, Past Grand Lodge Treasurer

meals being served by the young members of a local 4-H Club. A number of Lodges and individuals were recognized for their service and accomplishments, and the State Association made a \$10,000 donation to the camps that hosts Kids with Cancer Programs. Ron and Nancy were presented with Certificates from the Governor of Kentucky granting them the honorary title of Kentucky Colonel. Ron was presented with his very own signature Louisville Slugger bat. (He says the bat comes a few years too late, but maybe not for one of our grandsons.) Nancy also received engraved Mint Julep cups and the real Kentucky recipe for Mint Juleps and the fixings for a couple too.

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was on our flight back to D.C. on Sunday morning. In addition to a little politics, Ron had a chance to speak with the Senator about the Elks of Kentucky, the State Convention, and how the Order of Elks is spanning America and making a difference in the communities we serve with our Programs for Youth, Drug Awareness, the Military, and our Veterans.

We enjoyed our trip to Kentucky and the opportunity to meet many wonderful Elks and to discuss the various ways that we can strengthen our “Elks Pride and Community Focus” in the coming year, and help to grow Elkdom in all we do.



Ron with Kentucky State President Pat Fletcher and Ron's Kentucky Colonel Certificate.



Ron and State President of Indiana Ed Dyer with their Signature Louisville Slugger bats.



Ron and Senator Mitch McConnell at Louisville Airport.