

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Side R&R Trip to Florida

After our visit with the Elks of Mississippi, instead of returning home to Virginia to begin our three weeks off for Christmas, we traveled to Florida for a week of R & R. After a flight cancellation, we arrived at the Orlando Airport at 1:00 am on Monday December 7 and grabbed a cab to our condo in Bay Hill. Our "Grand Journey" started at Bay Hill with a phone call ten months ago, and we had not been able to return since February, so it was nice to get back and see that the place was still standing.

Monday was a day to crash, but on Tuesday Ron joined his golfing buddies for the regular Tuesday Game and his first individual round of golf since

April. Bay Hill

is a melting pot for golfers, retired and otherwise, from all over the Country. Ron couldn't find his game, but did find a few muscles that had not been exercised for a while and required some Tylenol over the next couple of days. Wednesday, the morning was spent relaxing at the condo and catching up on Thank You notes, paperwork, and neglected items, then we took a leisurely drive around the area in the afternoon to see what had opened since we left (The Orlando Eye), what had changed (Downtown Disney is now known as Disney Springs) and what was under construction (Shopping Centers and houses). We capped off the trip with dinner and a visit to our favorite ice cream stand,



Ron and Nancy in the Orlando airport in front of the Christmas Tree



Ron with his Bay Hill golfing buddies. (L to R) Ron, John (St. Louis, MO), Jim (Erie, PA), David, (Dover, England), Bob (Indianapolis IN), Dave (Middleburg, VA), Bill (Tampa, FL) and Norm (Chicago, IL)



The new Orlando Eye on International Drive

The Tastee Twist.

Thursday we traveled about seventy miles to Tampa for a little "Gaming Therapy" at the Hard Rock Casino. On the way we stopped for lunch at Danny's All-American Diner, which has been featured on TV's Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives. This "dive" is an eat-outside eatery voted the best hamburger in Tampa for the last two years. Ron had the Home Run Chilli Cheeseburger and I had the Triple D Chilli Dog. Then, on to the Casino, where we have had better days! PGER Mike Smith and Sandra, who live in nearby Plant City, joined us Thursday night for dinner and an enjoyable evening.



Ron and Nancy at Danny's All American Diner in Tampa, FL



Ron with Arnold Palmer at Bay Hill Lodge and Golf Club

Ron played golf again on Friday, and afterwards in the locker room, spent some time sitting and talking with Arnold Palmer, an Elk and the owner of the Bay Hill Golf Club. This was Ron's first opportunity to personally thank Arnold for participating in his GER Video shown at the Indianapolis Convention, and he gave Arnold one of his special Elk GER ballmarkers. They talked about the Elks and our travels across Elkdom and throughout America, which Arnold said reminded him somewhat of his days on the PGA Tour

and traveling every week.

Saturday we took one of our favorite day-trips to Winter Garden and its wonderful Farmers Market, which always has great fruits and vegetables, food and craft tents with everything imaginable, and usually music with lots of chairs to enjoy. However, this was the day for Santa's annual appearance, and



Nancy checking out the vegetables at the Farmers Market



Ron visiting with Santa at the Winter Garden Farmers Market

of course Ron took advantage by joining with all the

other kids to visit with Jolly Old St Nick, and (I think) ask Santa to bring me a special Christmas present. After watching other kids play on the Market's splash pad of



Selfie of Ron and Nancy with the Elves in the lobby of the theater of the show "Miracle on 34th Street"

water spouts (It was eighty-six degrees), we walked downtown to the popular Harry and Larry's Bar B Q for lunch, then on to the Winter Garden Theater for the matinee and "sold out" performance of an interesting adaptation of "The Miracle on 34th Street." A fun day!! Saturday night we returned to the condo, enjoyed a quiet dinner and watched a couple of Hallmark Christmas Movies on TV.



Ron trying to cool off in the "Splash Pad" at the Farmers Market

Sunday afternoon, Ron went to Winter Park Lodge 2165 for the District Deputy Visitation for the North Central District of Florida.



Ron and the North Central District and other Florida Leaders

(He had hesitated about even going.), Ron arrived late and eased his way into the back of the room. DD Colleen Gallant, a Winter Park PER, who is very proud of the performance of each of her eight Lodges, delivered a very upbeat and positive message, including much of what Ron is promoting throughout Elkdom. Colleen spotted Ron and he was introduced to a standing ovation. Ron spoke very briefly, thanking Colleen and the District for their service and performance, then he was put to work with drawings and presentations. After the meeting, Ron had an



Ron , DD Colleen Gallant , ER of Winter Park Lodge Debbie Edmiston, and District Leader PSP Vic McClellan

After the meeting, Ron had an



Ron and ENF Donor Award recipient PDD Richard Baer

After the meeting, Ron had an



Demi Wilson in front of the Tea Room

opportunity to meet Lodge Exalted Ruler, Debbie Edmiston, and District Leader, PSP Vic McClellan, and many other Elks, including Demi Wilson, a senior member of the Winter Park Lodge, who has been recognized multiple times for her un-ending volunteer service to the Lodge and just had one of the Lodge dining rooms named in her honor, the "Demi Wilson Tea Room."

The rest of our afternoon was spent readying for the trip home and Sunday night we had dinner at the Club with Jamie Bolton, one of Ron's classmate from his days at Lynchburg College in Virginia. We arrived at the DC Reagan Airport about 3:30 on Monday afternoon and were greeted by the smiling face of our Transportation Committee Chairman, Steve Ravinsky, who drove us home. Now, two glorious weeks for Christmas with family and friends!!



Winter Park
City
Christmas
Tree in the
center of the
downtown
median



Christmas decorations at entrance to
Bay Hill



Christmas
tree at one
of the
Orlando
shopping
centers



Christmas
Tree at the
Hard Rock
Hotel



Christmas
tree in
Charlotte
airport



Wells Fargo coach and horses giving rides in one of
the shopping centers

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

Send comments to webmaster@virginiaelks.org