

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

We flew out of Des Moines, Iowa, on a sunny but chilly Sunday November 8 at 6:45 am, headed for Bangor Maine. After "hurried" transfers in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, we arrived in Bangor about 4:00 pm and were met at the airport by PGER and State Sponsor Amos McCallum and his wife Barbara, State President Don Piper and his wife (of 3 months) Sue, Past Grand Lodge Officer Andy Constantine, and Past Grand Lodge Officer and former GER Assistant Roger Sicard and his friend Dot. We rode with Don and Sue to the hotel while Andy handled our luggage. The area between the airport and the hotel was the former Dow Airforce Base, which was given to the City of Bangor, and is now Bangor International Airport and a thriving commercial area.

At the hotel, we were met by Bangor Lodge Exalted Ruler Bill Blackwell and Lodge member Bill Titcomb, two young Elks who delivered the luggage to our room on the second floor (no elevator). Sunday night we went to dinner at the Lucerne Inn, a former "half-way" house, circa 1812, turned resort hotel with a golf course and located on the edge of a beautiful lake. The setting is said to remind travelers of Lucerne, Switzerland. Ron had caught a cold while in Iowa and was not feeling well, so we returned to our room after dinner.

Monday morning we went to Bar Harbor for a tour of the Jackson Lab, a large non-profit human genome medical research facility on 160 acres with 1,300 employees. The Lab uses mice in its research because they are genetically compatible to human beings,



Ron and Bangor Lodge Exalted Ruler Bill Blackwell



Guides from the Jackson Lab, Sue Piper, Nancy, Barbara McCallum, and Dot.

having ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of the same genetics. There are over one million mice in the facility at any given time and they sell another three to four million mice a year to other research facilities, allowing them to operate the Jax Lab at a profit. The fascinating work being done at this Lab is responsible for many remarkable medical breakthroughs and has been associated with twenty-six Nobel Prizes. Their work is changing health care as they search for patient specific treatments and tomorrow's cures for cancer, Parkinson's, diabetes, and many other diseases.



Nancy looking at a model of the buildings at the Jackson Lab

We then went to the Seal Cove Automobile Museum, a collection of early vehicles from the "Brass Age," the period from about 1900 to 1917. The Museum, like much of Bar Harbor, had closed for the season, but the Elks had arranged for it to be opened for our visit. There were fifty-five very unique and rare vehicles on display, a few in their original unrestored condition and most in running condition and often taken to car shows and parades. Museum Curator Roberto Rodriguez and guide Bill Barter led our tour of the many gas, steam, and electric cars and early motorcycles, explaining how the auto industry evolved through those early years.



Roger Sicard, Andy Constantine, Museum Curator Roberto Rodriguez, Ron, and Don Piper



Ron is "driving" one of the antique cars from the "Brass Age" in the Automobile Museum

We arrived at Ellsworth Lodge 2743, a little behind schedule, for lunch. Ellsworth is the Home Lodge of State President Piper and his wife Sue, who is the Lodge Secretary. Our group was greeted by Exalted Ruler Bob Hubbert,

several Lodge Officers, PSPs, and other Maine Elks. We feasted on wonderful Maine Lobster Stew and homemade pies. Ron had a second bowl of Stew, explaining that his Mother taught him to "feed a cold and starve a fever!" We each thanked the Lodge for their hospitality and spoke about the meaning of our GER and First Lady pins. Exalted Ruler Hubbert gave a tour of the Lodge facility, which has a nice banquet hall, lounge, and a dedicated Lodge Room.



Ron and Ellsworth Lodge  
2743 Exalted Ruler Bob  
Hubbert

Before we left the Lodge, we met Lodge Member Dr. Ruth Moore and her husband Butch who

started "Internity," a program designed to aid survivors and families of sexual abuse and other trauma, mainly in the military, by helping them find resources and learn how to communicate and function effectively. Their express goal is to end the twenty-two Veteran suicides that occur every day. Internity is now partnered with several organizations across the Country to meet the needs of our Veterans. Monday night we had dinner at a nearby Italian restaurant, and again retired early.



Ron with Dr. Ruth Moore and her  
husband Butch

Tuesday we toured several places in the Bangor area, beginning with



Our first "snow fall" found in front of  
ice skating arena at the University of  
Maine. (The ice rink "Zamboni" had  
made a deposit...no snow fall.)

the University of Maine Advanced Structures and Composites Center which tests and develops composite materials and other products. The facility works with private companies and the government and is self-sufficient. One of the products developed is a lightweight composite material added to military tents to make them safer from blasts and shrapnel. We then visited the Bangor Water District Standpipe, the home of writer

Stephen King, the USS Maine Memorial, the Paul Bunyan Statue in downtown Bangor, and the Air National Guard Base.

At the Base we met with Colonel Douglas Farnham and were given a private tour of a large KC-135 cargo jet that carries up to 125,000 pounds of fuel to re-fuel other jet aircraft in flight. Ron got to lay down in the rear of the plane where an airman guides the refueling hose to the receiving plane. A fighter jet can be refueled in less than five minutes. He also got to sit in the cockpit and simulate flight. Fortunately, the plane never left the ground!

Tuesday night we visited the Bangor Lodge for a reception and dinner. There were about 120 Elks present from across the State, a number of whom had driven several hours to be with us. Ron thanked the Bangor Lodge for its hospitality and congratulated the Maine Elks for their State Major Project, Children with Cancer Program; their support of Maine Veterans, Drug Awareness, and ENF; and their use of Community Investment Grants. He also talked about his theme for the year "Elks Pride - Community Focus." After the Program, the Lodges came forward and presented us with ENF donations totaling \$2,500. Then, Ron was given a tour of the Lodge by Exalted Ruler Blackwell.

Wednesday we were honored to participate in the Brewer-Bangor Annual Veteran's Day Parade. Because of Ron's cold and the fact that it was a cloudy, chilly, windy day, we opted out of the convertible and rode in a hardtop car. The long parade route, which started in Brewer and crossed over the Penobscot River into Bangor (Sister Cities), was lined with



Ron and the Officers at the Bangor Air National Guard Base



Ron prepares to fly a KC-135 re-fueling cargo jet



Veterans Parade 3



Veterans Parade 1



Veterans Parade 2

Veterans and well-wishers both children and adults, with many people thanking the Elks for our support of Veterans. Despite the weather, Ron walked part of the route, shaking hands and thanking Veterans for their service, and handing out stars from retired flags in recognition of their service ("Star Project").



Ron giving a Veteran a "Star" during the Veterans Parade

Wednesday afternoon offered a special treat. After returning to the hotel and getting casual, we went to the "camp" of Arnold and Ann Beyer located in the Maine woods. The one-room cabin was very cozy and welcoming, with its wood stove, down-home



Andy announcing "the lobsters are ready!"

decorations, and memorabilia on display. Amos and Barbara McCallum, Don and Sue Piper, Andy, and Roger and his friend Dot, joined us on this North District traditional venture. At the camp we cooked and

feasted on lobsters and enjoyed several of Ann's homemade pies while watching wild turkeys roam through the fields.



Our "camp" hosts Ann and Arnold Beyer and Nancy

It was a very relaxing and enjoyable afternoon with our new Elk Friends.

On a rainy Thursday morning, we were up very early for our 6:30 am flight from Bangor to Long Branch, New Jersey, and the New Jersey State Elks Convention.

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

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