

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to Nevada

We left Fredericksburg at 7:00 am on Thursday, November 18, headed to Reno, Nevada, by way of Phoenix, Arizona, for the Nevada Elks Mid-Year Convention. We arrived at the Reno-Sparks Airport after a twelve hour travel day and were met by State Sponsor PGER Jim Grillo and his wife Lucia and DDGER Dan Wells and his wife Mary. Dan and Mary served as our driver and escorts throughout the Convention. At the hotel we were greeted by SDGER Jim Shirkey and his wife Pam, a Past Supreme President of the Emblem Club. Also attending the



Ron and Nancy with State Sponsor of Nevada PGER Jim Grillo and wife Lucia



DDGER Dan Wells and his wife Mary, our escorts for the weekend, with Ron and Nancy



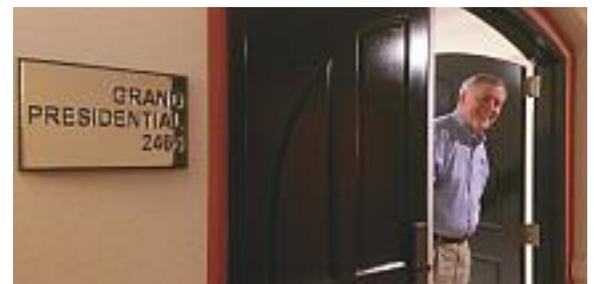
Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee member Dee Boskie and his wife Cheri, Nancy, and Ron

Convention were Grand Lodge

Fraternal Committee Member Dee Boskie and his wife Cheri and GL Area Seven Judiciary Member, Ed Johnson and his wife Kay.

We stayed at the Grand Sierra Resort Hotel (Presidential Suite), however all the functions, except the State Major Project

Luncheon, were held at the Reno Elks Lodge. The Reno Lodge is recently renovated, with over 35,000 square feet under roof, a large lounge, many meeting rooms, a dedicated Lodge Room, game rooms, fitness room, and pool. The Lodge, with a proud, enthusiastic and active membership, has had a Seventy-



Ron peeking out of our Suite in Reno

Five percent gain in membership over the last five years. Alan Squailia, Reno Member and Convention Chairman, and staff were well organized and

attended to every detail of the Convention. All functions were handled by volunteer members from Reno and other nearby Lodges, Emblem Club members, and other volunteers.

Thursday night we enjoyed an informal



Ron and Nancy with State President Ken Catlin and wife Sue

salad and pasta dinner at the Reno Lodge, where

we were greeted by ER Ken DuBois and his wife Mary and State President Ken Catlin and his wife Sue.

sixteen

Lodges in

Nevada with 1,135 members. Performing at the Lodge that night were Dean Martin and Marilyn Monroe impersonators. The dinner was well attended by members of the Reno Lodge as well as Elks from across the State. After a long day we returned to the hotel and went straight to bed.

Friday morning Ron had breakfast at the Lodge. Assisting with the service were members of the local chapter of the "Rainbow Girls," an International organization of girls between the ages of 11-20 years who have as their mission assisting other non-profit and charitable groups. Ron then attended meetings with the PSP Advisory Council, the NSEA State Major Project Trustees, and the State Trustees. The State Major Project is support for "Safe Haven," which provides emergency shelter care for abused and neglected children through the Nevada State Child and Family Services, and "Camp To Belong," which unites siblings placed in foster care in a safe, neutral, fun camp



Exalted Ruler of Reno Lodge Ken DuBois and his wife Mary with Ron and Nancy



Ron and Nancy with "Marilyn Monroe and Dean Martin"



"Rainbow Girls" assisting with the Breakfast Service at the Reno Lodge and Ron

environment. After lunch at the Lodge, Ron attended the meeting of the PER Association, then joined PGER Grillo and SDGER Shirkey for a meeting with District Deputies and District Leaders. The rest of the afternoon was taken up back at the hotel with paperwork and GL business.

Friday morning the Ladies met in the lobby of the hotel and were escorted to a bus waiting outside the hotel to take them on a "Mystery Trip" planned by Alan Squailia. We left the hotel and headed southwest toward the Sierra Mountains. They were beautiful especially since they had just had a snowfall earlier in the week. Our first stop was



Truckee, California with Sierra Mountains

Truckee, California, a lovely little western tourist town. The ladies got off the bus and started visiting in the shops along the main street. Some of the ladies helped the economy of Truckee by doing a little Christmas shopping. We met back at the bus and were off for our next stop in South Lake Tahoe, California.

We enjoyed the beautiful scenery along the shore of Lake Tahoe and the mountains with the newly fallen snow. We had a delicious lunch at Harvey's Casino in South Lake Tahoe. After lunch we again boarded the bus and drove north, up the east side of the Lake and back to Reno by way of Carson City. It was a fabulous "Mystery Trip" and our thanks to Alan for seeing to every detail.



Ron and Nancy were given aprons to wear while eating the Bagna Cauda by Frank and Marie Reynolds

Friday night at the State President's dinner we experienced our first family-style Bagna Cauda meal, which consisted of meat and veggies cooked on skewers in an olive oil, anchovies, and garlic filled pot on the table. We enjoyed table-side Italian song and accordion music throughout the evening. We returned to the hotel, smelling of garlic, and visited the Hospitality Room before retiring



Nancy being serenaded at the Bagna Cauda

for the evening.

Saturday morning it was back to the Lodge for breakfast and the State Association Business Meeting which was filled with very positive reports on Membership, ENF, Veterans Service, Drug Awareness, Hoop Shoot, State Major Project, and all other Grand Lodge and State programs. For 2014-2015, Nevada was Number One in the Nation in Membership and Number One in the Nation in ENF per-capita – a remarkable feat! Nevada also had two finalists in the Hoop Shoot last year and received Five-Star GL Awards for its Website (Bill Wiseman) and Nevada News Publication (Ken Curto). On the way back to the hotel for the Major Project Luncheon, SDGER Jim Shirkey gave Ron, Jim Grillo, and Dan Wells a brief driving tour of Reno.



State President Ken Carlin, Ron, and Bill Wiseman receiving 5-Star Grand Lodge award for Website

The luncheon, hosted by State Major Project Chairman Roger Lund, was well attended and included a fundraising silent auction and raffle of baskets and items provided by Lodges and various Members. Guest speakers were the Director of Safe Haven and a forty-year foster parent for abused and neglected children, who spoke of the joys and hardships through the years, and advised that today's children are much different, with many more issues, than in years past. This Thanksgiving, eleven of her former foster children will be returning to her home with their families for Thanksgiving Dinner. After the Luncheon, the Association held its Leading Knight Spouses Seminar and the Eleven O'Clock Toast and Flag Tribute Contests, won by Ken DuBois and Rick Stone, respectively.

The Leading Knight Spouses Seminar was led by Rosemary Pressler, wife of NSEA Vice President Dave Pressler. She provided information for the ladies concerning protocol, proper dress for various meetings of the NSEA, and what they should expect when attending Grand Lodge Convention. Rosemary did an excellent job of disseminating the information and provided handouts for the ladies too.

The GER Banquet was held Saturday night in the elegantly decorated Reno Lodge dining room, which included a vacant table with a single chair in tribute to POWs and those missing in action. Entertainment was provided by the twenty-seven man award-winning Reno Silver State Barbershop Chorus.



Table set for MIA/POW at the Saturday evening Banquet

Servers included members of the Emblem Club and two Elk Scholarship winners. The Scholarship winners, Elizabeth Everest and

Janay Hagans, are students at the University of Nevada and each had called the Lodge to ask how they could volunteer and give back to the Elks. They are not from Reno, and they had never met until they showed up to work the Banquet. ENF Chairman Leroy Olson led the raffle sales for Ron's special label wine which raised \$900 for ENF and will be donated in the name of the winner, Dom Buffamonte, and his North Las Vegas Lodge. Dom received the wine with special autographs from Ron. Chairman Squailia also announced that the Reno Lodge was donating \$1,000 to ENF in honor of our visit. There were over 160 Elks in attendance and Ron asked them to return home and become Salesmen for the success of their Lodges and to help grow Elkdom through all they do. We ended the evening back in the Hospitality Room, thanking everyone for their hospitality and their efforts for Elkdom.

We left Reno on a beautiful Sunday morning for our trip back home. Next up, a week off for family and Thanksgiving, then on to Mississippi.



Alan Squailia, scholarship recipient Janay Hagans who helped serve dinner, Nancy, and Ron



ENF Chairman Leroy Olson, Winner of GER Wine raffle Dom Buffamonte, and Ron