

Virginia Elks Association News

October 12, 2015

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to New York

After a two hour delay and a couple of gate changes at Reagan National Airport in DC, we finally left for Albany, New York, arriving about 6:00 pm, on Thursday September 17th. We were met at the airport by PGER and Co-Sponsor of New York, David Carr, PSP Paul Garlaneau, and Edgar Manwaring and shuttled to the nearby Convention hotel. At the hotel, we were greeted by a host of New York PSP's and other Elks, including PGER and Co-Sponsor of New York, Peter Affatato and Irene, David's wife, Penny, and State President John Jacques. PGER Leonard Bristol was unable to attend, but in a phone call, welcomed us to New York, thanked us for coming and wished us a great visit. The PSP and State Officer Dinner was moved back one hour because of our late arrival.

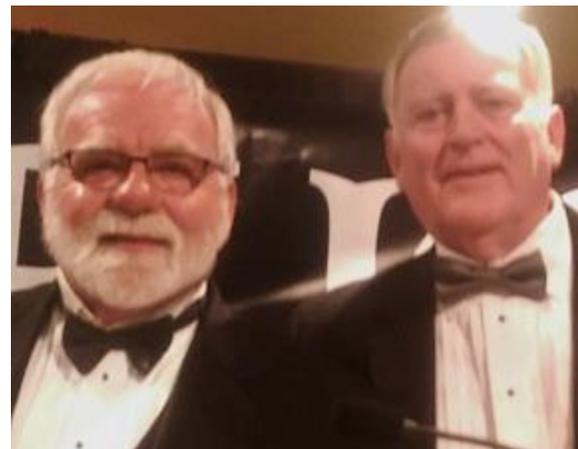
Friday was State Committee Workshop Day, with many informative



Ron and Nancy with PGER David Carr and his wife Penny.



Ron and Nancy with PGER Peter Affatato and his wife Irene.



Ron and State President John Jacques.

and well attended workshops from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Ron attended and spoke at as many workshops as possible, but was ushered off to an Albany radio station after lunch for a 30 minute radio interview that focused on the Elks, Ron's travels as GER and the great programs we offer to the communities we serve. PGER David Carr and Ron, along with many other New York Elks participated in "Red Shirt Friday" by wearing red in support and recognition of the sacrifices of the men and women in the Military and our Veterans.

The ladies were treated to a bus trip to Saratoga Springs on Friday, where we enjoyed shopping in the boutiques and unique shops of the lovely downtown area and helped boost the local economy. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at Lillian's. It was a gorgeous day to be outdoors enjoying the warmer than usual Fall weather of New York.



Ron enjoying one of the Hospitality Rooms.

On Friday evening, we had dinner with PGER Peter Affatato and Irene, PGER David Carr and Penny, State President John Jacques and Grand Chaplain Father Michael Martine. Following dinner Ron, David and John visited several of the fifteen District Hospitality Rooms, talking Elk, taking photos, signing cards and handing out



Nancy in front of welcome sign at Lillian's in Saratoga Springs.

GER pins.

The General Business Session was held on Saturday morning with Committee reports and Awards. Ron presented two 5-Star Awards, one to Matt Intrieri, Internet State Chairman, and the other to Jan and Irene Pashley for their NY State Major Project Exhibit at the Grand Lodge Convention in Indianapolis. Ally

Comfort attended the Session with her family. Ally, who has Cerebral Palsy, is one of the young people being aided through the NY Elks Major Projects Fund and is an Elk Ambassador for the Fund. Ally's mother gave thanks to the Elks for its support and expressed what a blessing the program

was to Ally and the Comfort family. The PSP wives, along with Irene Affatato and Penny Carr, enjoyed breakfast in the hotel restaurant Saturday morning. Afterwards several of the ladies drove to a local mall for a little retail therapy. Ron was pleased I had been able to save him money while still aiding the local economy.



L-R: State President John Jacques, PGER David Carr, Elk Ambassador for the State Major Project, "Home Service Program," Ally Comfort, Ron, Chairman of State Major Project PSP Jamie Peace. Seated is PGER Peter Affatato.

After lunch, Vito Caruso, who served with Ron on the Committee on Judiciary, drove Ron, David Carr, and Bruce Hidley to nearby Vale Cemetery to visit the grave of PGER Simon Quinlin (1890-91). The Rotterdam Lodge and its District help maintain the gravesite and provide other support for this historic cemetery. Upon their return to the hotel,



Ron and Vito Caruso at the Vale Cemetery visiting the graves of PGER Simon Quinlin (1890-91) and wife Ester.



Ron and Gland Lodge Chaplain, Father Michael Martine.

status of the Lodges in their Districts along with other topics. Ron and I attended Mass conducted at the hotel by Grand Lodge Chaplain Father Michael Martine. Father Martine said this was the first time he had two Southern Baptists sitting in the front row for one of his Masses.

The State Major Project and its “Home Service Program,” under PSP and Trustee Chairman, Jamie Peace, concentrates on in-home services for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities. Last year, 108 New York Lodges achieved the GER Per Capita Goal and 95 Lodges received a total of 160 ENF Community Investment Grants, bringing an additional \$343,000 into their Community Programs. Two Lodges received Community impact Grants, Lockport Lodge #41 and Mid-

Westchester Lodge #535 and both of the these Lodges also received the Beacon, Freedom and Gratitude Grants. Membership gain is a focus for the New York Lodges this year and Regis Austin Foster of Port Jervis Lodge #645 currently leads the state by proposing 21 new members, ranking him in the top 10 in the Nation.

A Gala Banquet was held Saturday night. After another hearty New York meal, which included a huge special bowl of ice cream for Ron and PGER Affatato, Ron spoke to the attendees, stressing his theme “Elks Pride – Community Focus” and finding ways to grow Elkdom through all we do. Ron often speaks about how technology and Social Media have changed the way people communicate, connect and do business and how the Elks need to take advantage of it to increase our visibility and awareness. In NY we had the opportunity to meet and recognize Diane Gleason who is taking advantage of Social Media by often posting inspirational messages with great graphics on her Facebook page. Way to go Diane!



Ron with Diane Gleason. Check her out on Facebook.

We left Sunday morning on the first leg of our 4-day, four state blitz through New England Elkdom, which will include Lodge visits in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and New Hampshire, followed by a 3-day visit to many of the Lodges in Massachusetts.