

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

On Wednesday evening, Oct 7, we left home driving to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania State Convention. We stopped in Gettysburg for the night and toured the Visitors Center and Civil War Battlefields on Thursday morning. We arrived in Harrisburg about 3:30 pm



Ron and Nancy welcomed to Harrisburg, PA by State President Stan Welch and First Lady Mary Ellen.

Thursday afternoon and were met by PGER and State Sponsor Carlon O'Malley, Pennsylvania State President Stan Welch and his wife Mary Ellen, and Board of Grand Trustees Chairman Vic Cid and his wife Donna. We had dinner that night

at the hotel with the State and Grand Lodge Officers and Committeemen and a number of other Pennsylvania Elks. Kay O'Malley was not able to attend the convention because of recent shoulder surgery.

On Friday, Ron met with the State Major Project Board and then the PSP Advisory Board. The Pennsylvania Major Project is their Legacy

Trust which supports the Pennsylvania Elks Home Service Program and Special Kids Network, providing nurses for in-home care of people with disabilities since 1963. Later in the day, Ron met with the State Committee Chairmen. There were a number of enthusiastic reports, including Scholarship Chairman Mike Marcinek, who suggested that all Committees should be working with "Membership" in mind, and Membership Chairman David Wessels, who stressed that every event should be considered a Membership event. Public Relation Chairman Hilary Harry spoke about the need to increase the awareness and use of social media, noting this is where people are going for their information today. Ron and Rick Gathen spoke to the group briefly about



Ron and Nancy stopping by Gettysburg on their way to Harrisburg for Pennsylvania State Convention.



Ron and Nancy with Chairman of the Grand Lodge Board of Trustees Vic Cid and his wife Donna.

growing membership and promoting Elkdom. Then, Ron met with PGER O'Malley and the District Deputies to discuss Lodge activities in the eight Districts of Pennsylvania.

Nancy joined the Past State President wives for lunch in the hotel on Friday. With a theme "Old Fashion Tea", Donna Cid had set a lovely table with crocheted doilies and tablecloths her grandmother had made as well as several old Tea Services and antique tea cups. Each attendee was given their own tea cup and a choice of teas to drink while we were "stylin" in hats from Donna's collection of old hats. Jean Kanouff presented fashions and accessories from the early 1900's from her clothing collection.



Ron and Rick Gathen encouraging membership in Pennsylvania.

Diane Gleason, who often posts such messages on her Facebook page, some of which have been featured on Elks.org.



Ron and Stan Welsh giving Kay Foy a plaque from ENF in recognition of attaining the Silver Circle level of cumulative giving. (\$10,000.)

Friday night was an Association Dinner followed by breakout sessions on Ritual, Drug Awareness, and a special session by Grand Lodge Membership and Public Relations Director Rick Gathen. Rick always offers an entertaining, interesting and common-sense approach to Membership and Lodge operations, and provides helpful tips for Lodge Secretaries. Rick discussed the handling of delinquent members, suggested revamping the Lodge dues notice and the use of credit cards for payment, Wifi (not a Korean car!), making the Lodge friendly and fun, and focusing on the Future. Rick used a Power Point presentation with a number of positive comments about Elkdom and graphics designed by

Saturday morning the Association held its General Business Session, with reports from all State Chairmen, Grand Lodge Committeemen, awards, and presentations. Ron assisted ENF Chairman Diane Usoff in presenting Kay Foy with a plaque in recognition of attaining the Silver Circle level of cumulative giving (\$10,000) to ENF. State President Stan Welsh was presented with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award by Drug Awareness Chairman Debie Raible in recognition of his 4,000 hours of community service. Saturday afternoon, Ron attended a Business Practices Session and a meeting with Past DDGERs.

Nancy was in for a special treat Saturday afternoon. First Lady Mary Ellen Welsh, Donna Cid, and several of the ladies took her to the Hershey Hotel for lunch. They were seated in the center of lovely dining room overlooking the hotel gardens. While enjoying our delicious lunch a wedding began to take place in the garden. It was a lovely day for an outdoor wedding and this



In front of the Hershey Hotel in Hershey, PA. Donna Cid, Cathy DeStefano, Sandy Davidson, Nancy, Mary Ellen Welsh, Jonni Olson, Jean Kanouff.

group of ladies certainly enjoyed being indoor “wedding crashers.” After lunch we walked out on the front terrace where the summer hanging baskets were still in full bloom.

Saturday night we attended the Association Reception and Banquet. Ron spoke on Elks Pride - Community Focus and the importance of Orientation and Ritual in Member retention and the long-term success of

any Lodge, stating there is nothing the Lodge Officers can do that will return greater benefits to the Officers and the Lodge than working together as a team to perform a good Ritual. He also recognized the Bridgeport Lodge for their second place in the Grand Lodge Ritual Competition in Indianapolis and the Lancaster Lodge for receiving four ENF Community Investment Grants.

Pennsylvania is one of our larger states with 93 Lodges and over 44,000 members. In addition to having Vic Cid serving on the BOGT, PA has four members serving on GL Committees representing Area 2: Kevin Brouse, Fraternal; James Destefano, Ritual; Terry Liersaph, Activities; and Dennis Kanouff, Public Relations. Throughout the weekend Craig Stevens and Derek Kerfoot sold raffle tickets for a 3-pack of Ron's Special Label Wine, which he personally signed for the winner. The State President's theme is "Membership is our Strength," and it is hoped that Pennsylvania can achieve a Plus-1 in Membership this year.

It was another great weekend of Elkdom! Next week a return trip to Michigan and a visit with the folks who helped so much in our campaign for GER, including close friends Ric and Barb Mulholland, Howard and Jeannie Diehl, and Jim and Tina Deamud.



Ron and Nancy with State President Stan Welsh and First Lady Mary Ellen.



Craig Stevens and Derek Kerfott with Ron and the 3 pack of Ron's Special Label wine.