

GER Ron and First Lady Nancy Hicks' Visit to Wyoming

We left LAX on a rainy Thursday morning, January 7, for our flight to Casper, Wyoming, by way of Denver. We had been watching the Wyoming weather closely, knowing it would be quite different than the weather in Hawaii!! (Actually, the day before our arrival, the temperature in Casper was

thirty-one degrees and the temperature in our hometown of Fredericksburg, VA, was only eighteen degrees.)

Wyoming really rolled out the "white carpet" for us, as it



Wyoming, you gotta love it!!!!



Wyoming rolled out the "White Carpet" for our visit



Casper Mountain. Beautiful scenery

was snowing when we arrived at the Casper Airport about 4:30 pm. Otherwise, the weather for our visit was very good, 6" of snow, blue skies and no wind, but cold. We were greeted at the airport by PGER and State Sponsor Dwayne Rumney and his wife Sandy, SDGER and Grand Lodge Audit and

Accounting Committeeman Mike Pettigrew and his wife Second VP Pat Russell, Casper Exalted Ruler Josh

Wheeler, and PSP Stan Goodwin and his wife Judy. We went immediately to the hotel to drop luggage and ate dinner at a nearby steakhouse.



State Sponsor Dwayne Rumney and his wife Sandy, Nancy and Ron, and Second Vice President Pat Russell and her husband SDGER Mike Pettigrew



State President Shane Green and his wife Tammy and Ron and Nancy

Friday morning, Ron had an early radio interview with Brian Scott, a local favorite and winner of the Wyoming Radio Personality of the Year Award, at radio station WTWO (K2), which broadcasts State-wide. They then stopped by Casper Lodge 2353, which was hosting the Convention, and where the State Ritual Contest was taking place. Ron's party then returned to the hotel to pick up the ladies for our visit to the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, which told

the story of the history of the area and of the hardships suffered by the early pioneers' during their travels west. Here, we got to experience a fairly realistic rough ride in a covered wagon.



Nancy taking a "trip" in a Stage Coach



Dwayne and Sandy Rumney taking a "ride" in a covered wagon with Ron and Nancy

Lunch was at the Casper Lodge, followed by a number of afternoon meetings with PSPs, Trustees, State Officers, and the State Major Project for Needy Children. Friday night dinner featured an auction of uniquely Wyoming jewelry, artwork and other very nice items, including many beautiful items that were handmade.

Dinner was served with the assistance of young volunteers from The Casper Children's Theater, ages twelve through fifteen, who also sang a number of songs during the evening.

The Association Business Meeting was held on Saturday morning, with many fine reports. Ron spoke about the importance of having a good Orientation Program for the new Member, and getting them quickly involved in a Lodge activity. Ron considers Orientation as the "First Step in



GER's "Share the Pride" Committee



Pat Russell and Dave Whisenhut were presented with ENF Contribution Certificates. Ron, Pat, Dave, Dwayne Rumney, Beth Luers, and Shane Green.

Member Retention,” and suggested that they not lose this opportunity to put their new Members on the path to becoming life-long, active Members. Saturday afternoon was filled with DD, Secretary, and individual Lodge meetings, plus the Eleven O’Clock Toast, Jolly Cork and Flag Ritual Contests.

Nancy was invited to a luncheon for the ladies at Poor Boy’s Restaurant. After lunch Nancy was asked to speak. She spoke about her pin and shared some of the good works Elks across the country are doing. After lunch several of the ladies met and toured the “Backward Distillery” in Casper. We donned old hats provided by the distillery and started our tour. The distillery is owned by a local family from Casper. Having only been in business about one year, they have already received several awards for their vodka and rum. It was interesting seeing and



Ladies and their hats at the Distillery

learning about how they process their liquors, and about the variety of botanicals they use that flavor their liquors and where they come from. They are processing two moonshine varieties besides gin, rum, vodka and bourbon. After our tour we had a tasting given by our guide who is one of the owners of the Distillery. It was a fun afternoon with some of the Wyoming ladies

The Black Tie Banquet was held Saturday Night at the Casper Lodge. Ron spoke of Membership and the importance of not losing Members “out the back door.” He advised that the Order had taken in 51,000 new/reinstated Members so far this year, but that all Lodges needed to finish the year strong by retaining



Casper Lodge 2353 won the State Ritual Competition

their current Members. After dinner, the winners of all of the Contests were announced, with the Casper Lodge winning the Ritual



Wyoming received Grand Lodge Award for Veterans Service

Contest and will be representing the State at the Grand Lodge Convention. The Casper Children's Theater again assisted with food service and entertainment, and for their efforts received a contribution of \$1,190 from the Elks that attended the dinners for a planned trip to an upcoming theater competition in Atlanta.

The Casper Lodge was a wonderful host for the Convention, there were lots of rooms for social gatherings and meetings, and all of the meals prepared by the volunteers were great. ENF Chairman Beth Luers conducted the GER Wine Raffle which was won by Sandy Deal of the Riverton Lodge and raised \$1,055 for ENF. We left the hotel early on a crisp, clear Saturday morning for our flight to Denver, then to Dulles Airport outside DC. Our next trip, to the home of the National Collegiate Football Champions, Alabama.



ENF Chair Beth Luers, winner of the GER Wine Raffle for ENF Sandy Deal, and Ron



-1 degrees to 60 degrees in 2 flights and 4 hours in the air!!!



And the runway is WHERE????

Submitted by Ron and Nancy Hicks

Send comments to webmaster@virginiaelks.org

