

Notes From the Flight Deck #30  
by  
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and PGP of PA  
November 30, 2018

As I finished my last "Notes" Mari and I had just returned from our marathon journeys to Alaska, British Columbia the Yukon and several other Grand Chapter Sessions. It felt good to get a bit of rest and catch up on events closer home with our families and friends.

We ended June by attending our own Chapter, Rainbow #517, on the 28<sup>th</sup> and stayed close to our home in the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown until July 21<sup>st</sup> when I boarded an American Airlines flight out of Harrisburg and flew to Des Moines, Iowa to attend a banquet honoring Sister Betty Briggs, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of General Grand Chapter and who will be retiring from that position at the end of this 49<sup>th</sup> Triennium on November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018. Sister Betty has served General Grand Chapter well, giving over 30 years of dedication to our Order; First as Right Worthy Grand Secretary and then as Right Worthy Grand Trustee. Indeed, it was a very well deserved Honor Night and I was proud to attend and extend my thanks to her for a job well done and wish her and husband Bill a well deserved retirement.

On July 27<sup>th</sup> Mari and I attended the funeral services for PGM, Lois Summers. Sister Lois was another wonderful lady and always Pennsylvania Proud. She was always available to give advice and support, when asked, to all the line officers. She will be missed by many of us who appreciated her wit and direct answers.

The following day Mari and I continued to travel west to Scottsdale, Arizona arriving there on July 31<sup>st</sup> at the Scottsdale Plaza Resort to attend the Honor Night for Sister Billie Bradfield, RWAGC and Arizona's Grand Chapter Session. Her Honor Night was a fun evening with good entertainment and fellowship. The following morning I wasn't feeling very well, but I did attend the informal opening of the Grand Chapter Session for a couple of hours, but I really became quite ill and returned to our room at 11:30. I was having trouble breathing and Mari called the front desk requesting assistance; short story version is I got a quick ride in an ambulance and spent the next five days in the Scottsdale Ogden Medical Center, the first two days in ICU. After many tests and much input from many doctors, I was diagnosed with C.O.P.D. Apparently the years I spent in the coal mines and smoking heavily in my youth have finally caught up with me, or at least that is what the doctors told me. With new medications and inhalers I was feeling well enough that they said they would release me to go home with the stipulation that I was not to drive and could not fly. That left Mari and me with a small problem as I did not feel that Mari should drive 2400 miles back home without help.

Fortunately, two of our daughters, one of whom lives in Bradford, PA and the other lives in Annapolis, MD, volunteered to fly to Arizona and drive me and Mari home. So, when I was discharged from the hospital on August 6<sup>th</sup>, my daughter, Andrea and Mari's daughter, Mary arrived, loaded up the car and we headed east back to Pennsylvania. Thank goodness for the girls coming to our rescue. We arrived home safely on the early evening of August 8<sup>th</sup> tired, road weary and thankful that the police radar guns were not working and the good Lord was watching over us.

We had a few days to rest and I was feeling quite a bit better, so Mari and I drove up to Elysburg to Knoebels for the picnic and fun day in my honor. It was just a great day of fun, frolic and fellowship. PGM Rhonda Johnson had planned this for quite a while and true to form she made it an enjoyable afternoon and all of you who attended know it was a blast. Rhonda is planning on making Knoebels an annual event and I hope all of you can attend next year. If I know Rhonda, it will be even bigger and more fun event. Stay tuned.

Mari and I rested during the next few days with a visit to a pulmonary physician who put me on an inhaler. The meds have done the job and I have been breathing freely ever since.

On August 17<sup>th</sup> Mari, PGM Betty Hammell and I drove to Louisville, KY to attend an Honor Night Banquet for RWGTreasurer, Michael Berry on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Mike is another dedicated Eastern Star member and served nine years as a General Grand Trustee and now has served six years as RWGTreasurer. The banquet was well done and Mike received many well deserved accolades for his service to our Order. I received a real surprise at the banquet as I was given a commission as a Kentucky Colonel signed by Matthew G. Bevin, the Governor of Kentucky. It truly was quite an honor.

That next morning, August 19<sup>th</sup>, we drove the 20 miles out to La Grange, KY to the home of our founder, Rob Morris, for the annual Rob Morris picnic. It started off in the cemetery with a graveside service honoring Brother Morris. MWGM, Sister Helen Westmoreland and I were honored to place a lovely Eastern Star wreath at the Obelisk marking his grave. At 11:30 we returned to the home site and had a lovely well attended outdoor picnic with over 400 attendees. We left LaGrange for home at 2:30 and drove straight back to Elizabethtown and arrived home at 11:30 PM.

On Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, we attended the "Joy of the Journey" Luncheon held at the Brossman Ballroom in the Masonic Village for all of our Pennsylvania General Grand Chapter Appointments. It is a well deserved tribute for all the work these members have accomplished during these past three years for our Order.

On September 9<sup>th</sup> I drove to Washington, D.C. for the Board of Trustees meetings and attended those on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. The MWGM and I gave our final reports of our activities to

the Right Worthy Grand Trustees on the 10<sup>th</sup>. On that evening I was honored to attend the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting of Federal Lodge No. 1 and after the meeting there was a celebration with over 125 in attendance. The highlight of the evening was the announcement that Chairman Betty Briggs was voted "Patron of the Year" in honor of her many years of community service in the District of Columbia. On the 11<sup>th</sup> we had reports from the auditors, investment advisor, Treasurer's budget for the next Triennium and update of the Perry Belmont House Foundation. I left for home at 6PM and thankfully the traffic was light and I arrived at our cottage at 8:30PM.

On September 15<sup>th</sup> Mari and I attended the Finley/Miller 45<sup>th</sup> Reunion Luncheon in Mt. Joy at the Gathering Place. It was a great tribute to Sister Peg and Brother Wayne with a good turnout of members to honor them.

We attended the Grand Master's Autumn Days at the Masonic Village in Elizabethtown with over 6000 visitors enjoying a very pleasant Saturday.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> Mari and I loaded up our car and left for Illinois Grand Chapter Session in Springfield where we arrived at the Wyndham Springfield Hotel at 1:30 PM on the 30<sup>th</sup>. We attended the Past Grands of Illinois Banquet that evening where I received a lovely jade obelisk with an eagle perched on top of it. The next day at noon Mari and I attended the Grand Representatives Luncheon. They had a good turnout and I was given an Honorary Membership in their Grand Representatives Club. In the evening we attended the GGCCM's Honor Banquet which was followed by the Informal opening and all the introductions. There was a reception after the Informal Session closed and we finally got back to our room at 1:30AM.

We were happy that we were able to have a short visit with Kathy Miller, whose husband, Gary, had served as RWG Secretary until his sudden death in May of 2016. It was nice to be able to renew our friendship and chat for at least a few minutes. She is quite a lady and has shown much courage in dealing with her loss.

We left Springfield on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and drove to Charleston, WV, arriving at the Holiday Inn in the early afternoon of October 3<sup>rd</sup>. That evening we attended Worthy Grand Organist, Charlie Chandler's Honor Night Banquet. Charlie is a very talented musician and has been a dedicated member of this General Grand Family and of the Order of the Eastern Star. During the Banquet he received many accolades for his great musical entertainment. A well deserved fun filled evening for Brother Charlie. October 4<sup>th</sup> saw us attending the Grand Representatives Luncheon followed that evening with the Formal Opening of West Virginia's Grand Chapter Session and all the introductions. Mari and I stayed for the whole session from October 4<sup>th</sup> thru installation on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Judy Chandler, Charlie's wife, was installed as Worthy Grand Matron of West Virginia in the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Mari and I returned home for two days where we washed clothes, repacked our suitcases and on October 9<sup>th</sup> we headed north to Granby, Quebec for the Grand Chapter of Quebec's Sessions. We arrived at the Castel Hotel in Granby at noon on October 10<sup>th</sup> and attended a reception for our General Grand Officers and photos taken with Quebec's Grand Officers. The following morning we attended the Formal ritualistic opening and the introductions. Quebec is a small Grand Chapter with only seven active Chapters, so introductions were over before noon. Mari and I attended the Past Grands luncheon and I attended the afternoon session. In the evening they held the "4 Seasons Banquet" where all the accordant bodies were represented and the MWGM, Sister Helen and I gave our speeches and then listened to a very inspiring speech by the Grand Master of Quebec.

Mari and I left the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> and headed south to attend our last Official visit at the Grand Chapter of Rhode Island. We had a very lovely drive that took us through absolutely beautiful and colorful fall foliage in Vermont's Green Mountains and New Hampshire's White Mountains. We arrived at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, Rhode Island in the early afternoon and in time to attend their Grand Representatives Banquet that evening. The next morning I attended the Formal Opening and all the introductions as well as their elections. Rhode Island, like Quebec is a small Grand Chapter with only six active Chapters. So they are able to complete everything in two days. The afternoon Session was very short and they held the installation of Grand Officers immediately after the closing of their Session. Grand Chapter was closed at 4:45 and then the "All Member Banquet" was held that evening at 6:30. Mari and I returned home on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mari and I spent most of the next ten days getting ready for the 49<sup>th</sup> Triennium in Orlando. We did make a short trip to Washington, PA for AGP, George Camlin's Honor Night at Martha V. Paul Chapter #404 on October 19<sup>th</sup>. An excellent meal was served prior to the special meeting and over 170 members were in attendance to honor Brother George as he continues his journey in Pennsylvania's Grand Chapter.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> Mari and I arrived at the lovely Marriott World Conference Center in Orlando where we began the last week of the 49<sup>th</sup> Triennium. The next three days were taken up in practices, details, meetings and setting up the Session and Banquet rooms. On Saturday, the 27<sup>th</sup> over 1100 Grand Representatives and guests attended the International Grand Representatives Luncheon and our MWGM and I gave short speeches. Our own Sister Saralee Tollinger gave me a very generous honorarium from the PA Keystone Club. That evening Mari and I boarded buses that took over 400 members and guests to the Medieval Times Theater for supper and a demonstration of knights jousting in the arena. Quite a pleasant evening.

On Sunday morning MWGM, Sister Helen and I had breakfast with our Deputies and all our Subordinate Chapter members from all over our Eastern Star World. There were members

there from Hawaii, Philippines, Alaska, Romania, Bolivia, Peru, Germany and Brazil. That was followed by an ESTARL Worship Service and an ESTARL recipient minister giving the sermon at 9:30 AM. The Youth Committee of General Grand Chapter then sponsored a program with Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughters and DeMolays demonstrating their ritualistic work. It was well done and the young ladies and gentlemen received a standing ovation by the membership for their efforts. That evening was the Session's Main Banquet honoring the MWGM and MWGP. It was a great evening with over 1200 attending. The entertainment was by Brothers Dennis Jordan, RWGTrustee and Don Snyder, PGP of California who put on quite a show of dual pianos and songs roasting Sister Helen and me. WGOrganist, Brother Charlie Chandler assisted them in the process. It was all in fun and made for an enjoyable evening for all those attending.

On Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup> we got started on the business of General Grand Chapter with the Informal Opening at 1:30 in the afternoon. Introductions of all the General Grand Officers, General Grand Committee Members and Ambassadors took up most of the afternoon. At 7:30 that evening we accomplished the Formal Ritualistic Opening and that was followed by introductions of all the Past Most Worthy Grand Officers present. We were called from labor to rest at 10:15 PM.

The next morning MWGM, Sister Helen and I were invited to attend a breakfast sponsored by the Star members of Maryland at 7AM. It was a very nice start to our day. At 8:30 the morning Session was called to order and Sister Helen and I gave our supplemental and final reports on our three year term. Our reports were followed by the final reports of the acting GGC Secretary, the RWG Trustees and by RWG Treasurer, Michael Berry. The afternoon session started at 2:10 PM and I presided over the resolutions. It was a very interesting afternoon with much debate and it kept me, the Jurisprudence Committee and our Parliamentarian very busy. We suspended the legislation at 5:30 with less than half of the resolutions having been presented. However, Tuesday evening had been set aside for all the jurisdictions to have their own dinners and party night and we had a great Pennsylvania Party planned and executed by our own Keystone Eagles Club Board Members. The theme was an Hawaiian Luau and emceed by none other than our own Rhonda Johnson. There were over 165 attendees and that included 13 members from Sao Paulo, Brazil and best of all 15 members of Mari's and my family had come to join us for that evening. Mari and I felt blessed that all eleven of our children, most of their spouses and two of our grandsons were able to join us during our Triennial Assembly and most of them were able to stay and celebrate with us at our Pennsylvania Luau Party. It was an evening of fun, frolic and great fellowship. Rhonda announced that the Keystone Eagles Club Board sent a check to the Perry Belmont House Foundation for \$15,000. In my honor for the upkeep of our International Headquarters in D.C. What a wonderful gift from all the members of the Keystone Eagles Club of Pennsylvania!

The October 31<sup>st</sup> Session was called to order at 8:40 AM and we listened to Committee reports until 10:00 when I presided for election of the 2018-2021 Officers. Those elected who were unopposed were: Marianne Shenefelt, MWGM; Henry Martin, MWGP; Glenda Winchester, RWAGM; Lon Lowry, RWAGP; Billie Bradfield, RWGC; Michael E. Berry, RWGSentinel and Debbie Dhayer, RWAGC. Those elected by ballot were: Alma Lynn Bane, RWGSecretary; Linn McNary, RWGTreasurer and Helen DeLaney, RWGTrustee. We broke for lunch after the elections were completed at 12:35.

The afternoon session was devoted completely to legislation and I presided. Again there was much discussion and debate. At 6PM I suspended our deliberations until 8:30 the following morning, Thursday November 1<sup>st</sup>. We still had seven resolutions to bring to the floor for a vote.

The evening session began at 7:15 and was an evening of Deputy reports and programs put on by our U.D. Chapters. Our Hawaiian Chapters put on hula dance demonstrations and our Chapters from the Philippines did also, all in their native costumes. There were also demonstrations by members from Bolivia, Brazil, Romania and Peru. The final program was done by Donna Sanders from Saskatchewan, aka, as Queen Elizabeth II who proceeded to roast MWGM, Sister Helen and me as well as many others of our General Grand Chapter. All in all, it was an interesting and fun night. Happy Halloween!

The following morning we opened the session at 8:40 and I continued to proceed with the final resolutions. We finished the resolutions at 11:45 and I handed the gavel back to Sister Helen who proceeded to finish all the committee reports and closed General Grand Chapter ritualistically at 1:15PM.

Marianne Shenefelt had declared an open installation to begin at 6:30PM; I called the meeting to order at that hour and then there was a video put on by Texas and Wyoming. Sister Helen Westmoreland then invited PMWGM Sister Pat Rasmussen to preside as Installing Officer assisted by PMWGP Brother Loyal Stark. I was honored and privileged to be the installing Chaplain. After the installation was over and the acceptance speeches by MWGM, Sister Marianne and MWGP, Brother Henry, Sister Helen was presented with her PMWGM's jewel and gave a short acceptance speech. Then PGP Brother Brad Lewis, Chairman of PA's Trustees and several of PA's Board of Directors presented me with a truly magnificent PMWGP's jewel from the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania and all our delegation and membership. What a humbling and heartfelt moment for me. I gave a short speech thanking our delegation who also gave me a standing ovation. I don't remember what I said, but I can assure you it was a most emotional moment for me.

By the time we were finished and session closed it was well past midnight and we had not eaten so Mari and I stopped by the PA Hospitality Room and they had a pizza party for all

the PA delegation. As always, Pennsylvania always does things right and that night was proof positive! It took a lot of time and talent to put this 49<sup>th</sup> Triennial Assembly together and make it the success that it was. A big THANK YOU goes to PA's PGM Melody Sorge, Chairman; PGM Jo-Ann Lauderman, Finance Chairman; PGM Shirley Capo, Decorating Chairman; PGM Anna Miller, Social Events; PGM HelenBeth Vilcek, Triennial Assembly and PGM Mary Ann Naugle, Vendors. They worked long and tiring hours and made "Pennsylvania Proud."! I especially want to thank Brother Mike Feit, Florida's General Chairman and PGM Sister Lois Casaccia, Florida's Finance Chairman for doing a great job and working so well together with our PA members. By the way, Sister Lois hails from Punxsutawney, PA.

Sisters, Brothers and friends, it has been a fantastic nine year journey serving you as an Officer in General Grand Chapter. My wonderful loving companion, my wife Mari and I have traveled the entire Eastern Star World and we have met many interesting new friends, visited many exotic places, dined and tasted many strange foods (pickled duck's feet comes to mind), but no matter where we went, we were always welcomed with open arms and warm friendly smiles by all our Eastern Star Sisters and Brothers.

Lastly, I want to thank all you Pennsylvania members for your love and support given to Mari and to me during this once in a lifetime experience. This chapter in our lives has now come to a close, but we will be able to open a new chapter and keep most of our travels closer to home and spend more of our time getting reacquainted with our family and friends.

This is the last "Notes from the Flight Deck" that I will write. I appreciate your telling me how much you have enjoyed reading of our travels and I want you to know that I have enjoyed writing these "Notes." Just know that this old flier has landed and will rest for a while, but you may rest assured that "I Will Always Keep Flying High for O.E.S."