

Notes from the Flight Deck # 28
by Robert C. Penoyer, MWGP
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As I ended the last issue of my Notes from the Flight Deck, it was just four days before Houston was hit with a devastating hurricane. Mari and I were thankful we weren't exposed to that frightening experience. Many of our Sisters and Brothers in southern Texas suffered through a major flooding and weeks of discomfort and many of our Grand Chapters, General Grand Chapter and individual Sisters and Brothers sent aid to assist in their recovery.

August 25th found us attending the annual Rob Morris Banquet and weekend in Mississippi. The banquet was held in Kosciusko and was well attended by over 260 members. The following day we attended the Rob Morris picnic at the Little Red School House in Richland, MS where Dr. Morris was a teacher and wrote our ritual and created our Order. Everyone was in a festive mood and we were treated to good entertainment. We had lots of fried chicken with all the trimmings at noon. Our MWGM, Sister Helen Westmoreland and I were honored to unveil a large stone obelisk that the Grand Chapter of Mississippi had purchased in honor and memory of our late PMWGP, Brother Ed McDonald. Late in the afternoon Mari and I said our farewell to our Mississippi hosts and departed for our home, arriving at the Elizabethtown Masonic Village late on August 27th. We spent the next two weeks catching up on family news, doing laundry and dry cleaning clothes, paying bills and getting ready for our next journey.

On September 13th we left home and drove to Louisville, Kentucky for their Grand Chapter Session. We arrived at the Galt House Hotel in downtown Louisville at 1:30 on the 14th. That evening we attended the WGM and WGP's Banquet. The following morning I attended the Grand Representatives Luncheon and was presented with a lovely hand woven lawn chair made by Mr. Warren Miller. The informal opening of Kentucky's Grand Chapter was from 2PM to 4PM where all the appendant Masonic Bodies and the three Youth Organizations were presented and gave greetings. Mari and I attended the Past Grand Banquet at 5 PM at which time Brother Michael Berry, RWGTreasurer announced he would not seek re-election at the 2018 Triennium. The reason for this was made immediately apparent when Sister Billie Bradfield, RWAGConductress arose and announced that Brother Michael Berry was her choice to be her running mate and would be the candidate for RWGSentinel at the 49th Triennium in Orlando in October of 2018. That news was met with a standing ovation and unanimous support from Kentucky's Past Grand Officers. Following the banquet we attended the Formal Opening of Grand Chapter during

which all the introductions were made. The following morning I attended the business session and it was at that time that the motion was made for Kentucky to support Michael Berry in his decision to run for RWGSentinel. The motion was adopted unanimously by the delegates. Sister Mary Ann Shenefelt, RWAGMatron then announced her choice of GGCCCommittee Members for the 2018-2021 Triennium. Kentucky will have 5 plus one Special Appointment. On the evening of the 16th Mari and I attended a very well done and touching memorial service. On September 17th we attended the morning business session and then attended their installation of the 2017-2018 Kentucky Grand Officers.

The morning of September 18th found us packing up and loading our car for our journey on to Colorado's Grand Chapter in Denver arriving at the Denver Doubletree Hotel the evening of September 19th, a distance of 1127 miles from Louisville. The 20th was a day of rest. We did attend the Past Grands Banquet that evening and enjoyed a good meal and greeted our Colorado Sisters and Brothers.

The morning of September 21st I arose at 5:30AM and attended the "Pinkie Pie Proud" breakfast at 6:30. Mari had come down with a nasty cold and was unable to attend the sessions this day. They had the Formal Opening Session with all the introductions in the morning. At noon I attended the Distinguished Guests Luncheon followed by the afternoon session. That evening they had a very casual get together called the "Mad Hatters' Tea Party." You wouldn't believe some of the hats and outfits that were worn. It was a fun night and all had a good time.

I attended the morning business session on the 22nd and the Grand Officers gave their reports. Mari was feeling better so she went with me to the Grand Representatives Luncheon after which we attended the afternoon session when tribute was paid to Colorado's GGCCM's and to my Eagle Appointment in Colorado, Sister Suzanne Teague. At the close of the session there was a reception line for all the Grand Officers and Mari and I said our farewells. Early in the morning of September 23rd we left Denver and drove east arriving at our cottage in Elizabethtown on the evening of September 24th, a couple of weary souls. The following ten days were filled with doctor's appointments, paying bills, unpacking suitcases, attending a General Grand Chapter Board of Trustees meeting in DC on the 26th and attending our own Rainbow Chapter #517's regular stated meeting.

Being somewhat refreshed, we loaded up our car again and on October 5th we drove to Jefferson City, Missouri, arriving at the Capital Plaza Hotel at noon, October 7th. That afternoon we attended Worthy Grand Adah, Sister Amy Wehmeir's Honor Nite which was held in the rotunda of the Missouri State Capital Building, a beautiful and historic site on the banks of the Missouri River. Over 200 members and friends were present to honor Sister Amy and all were treated to an excellent catered meal served on the second floor of the

rotunda. In the afternoon of October 8th I attended the ESTARL program featuring one of the scholarship recipients as speaker. The ESTARL program was followed by their Necrology Service honoring those members who had died during this past year. Mari and I attended the All Member Banquet in the evening with 350 in attendance. The following morning at 10AM we attended the Grand Representatives' Brunch. It was a treat to greet our Sister Jean Beers, Grand Representative of Missouri in Pennsylvania at the brunch. It's always good to see Pennsylvania's Grand Representatives in our travels and to know they are making good use of their commissions. In the afternoon I attended the business session and MWGM, Sister Helen and I gave our speeches. Because we were on a short time frame between Missouri's and Michigan's Sessions, Mari and I left Jefferson City at 7PM and drove part way to Michigan. We arrived at the McCamly Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek, Michigan at 4PM on October 10th. We were met by my Pages: Mark and Donna Baldwin who were waiting for us, had us registered and whisked us to our room so we would be ready for the Informal and Formal opening of the Michigan Grand Chapter Session which was scheduled to begin at 6PM. We made the Session with time to spare! After all the introductions of the evening and speeches given, I attended a reception sponsored by the GGCCMembers of Michigan. The following morning I attended their business session and in the afternoon their elections for Grand Officers. This was Michigan's 151st Session as the oldest Grand Chapter in the Order of the Eastern Star and I congratulated them upon reaching this milestone in their history. In the evening Mari and I went with WGM, Sister Colleen Wilcenski and WGP, Brother Robert Otte as their guests to a lovely restaurant in an old railroad depot called Clara's Restaurant. Let me say it is well worth a place to stop if you happen to be in or near Battle Creek.

At 8:30 AM on October 12th Mari and I were back on the road to Birmingham, Alabama arriving at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel at 12:30PM on Friday the 13th. We got into our room in time to get changed into formal attire and attend the WGM and WGP's Banquet at 4PM and then attended their Informal Opening when all the introductions were made. We also attended a reception for all the GGCCMs and Distinguished Guests. Needless to say we were very tired by the end of the evening.

The following morning I attended the Formal opening and gave my official speech on membership. Mari and I attended the afternoon session when they held their election of Grand Officers. As there was only one candidate for each office, the election went smoothly and quickly. At 5PM we attended the Past Grands Dinner and renewed some old acquaintances from years past. We then attended the evening business session and listened to the committee reports.

The next morning, Sunday, October 15th Mari and I left Birmingham and drove to Powder Springs, GA to make a short visit with our grandson, Jonathan Childress, who now

lives in Atlanta. We spent a few hours chatting with him and then we continued on to our next Grand Chapter Session in Altoona, Iowa. We arrived at the Prairie Meadows Hotel and Casino in the late afternoon of October 17th. We were a day early so we had a nice rest on the 18th. We went down to the hotel lobby and got our registration packets on the 19th and stood in a reception line and greeted members in the afternoon. Mari and I attended the "All Member Banquet" that evening. The 20th began with the Grand Representatives' Luncheon. It was well attended by over 300 members and we were happy to greet Betty Sue Johnston, our PA Grand Representative of Iowa, along with her husband, PGP Bill Johnston who were enjoying the fellowship of their Sisters and Brothers at that luncheon. I attended the Formal opening in the afternoon by myself as Mari had come down with another nasty cold and upset stomach. So she stayed in our room and rested. The Past Grands' Banquet was at 4:15 and I had another excellent meal. They do feed you well at this Grand Session. The evening session started at 6PM and the WGM, Sister Jane Green and WGP, Brother John Hauser did all the introductions quickly and efficiently as the session was over at 9:30PM. Our Right Worthy Grand Trustee, Chairman Betty Briggs and her husband, Bill sponsored a reception for all the General Grand and Iowa Grand Officers after the session's closing.

The morning of the 21st I attended the PAGO breakfast at 6:30AM along with over 150 other early risers. Mari was feeling better this morning so she and I went to the morning session at 8AM and listened to the Officers and Committee reports. After another luncheon, we attended the afternoon session during which the election of officers for the ensuing year was held. My special appointment from Iowa, Eagle Bruce Thomas, was elected AGP and my Page, Brother William Post was elected to a 5 year term on the Board of Trustees for Iowa Grand Chapter. That evening MWGM, Sister Helen and I gave our official speeches, after which the Grand Officers of Iowa participated in a lovely memorial and necrology service.

On the morning of October 22nd, Mari and I repacked our car and left Iowa bound for the Grand Chapter of California held in Visalia. We arrived at the Marriott Visalia Hotel just before noon on October 25th after traveling for almost four days though some of our country's most beautiful and scenic vistas of the Rocky Mountains and Western deserts. That evening we attended the Distinguished Guest Dinner and then the Informal Opening of California's Grand Chapter Session, "Treasures of California" Session and hosted by WGM, Sister Linda Hooser and WGP, Brother William Prentiss. All introductions were made, MWGM Sister Helen and I gave our official speeches and the session was over prior to 9:45PM. At 9AM on the 26th I attended the Formal opening and listened to the Grand Officers' reports. At noon Mari and I attended the Grand Representatives' luncheon with more than 350 hungry members. We attended the afternoon business session where a

heated discussion was held on the raise in per capita. The increase passed despite the dispute. The Grand Chapter sponsored a fun night that evening with the theme of a "State Fair." Everyone was dressed casually and it was a great night of fun and frolic. Dennis Jordan, RWGTrustee and Don Snyder, PGP did some of the entertainment and Don was the auctioneer of a fundraiser where they auctioned off 3 very lovely handmade quilts.

On the morning of October 27th we packed up, loaded into our car and left for Pennsylvania. We took the southern route home with overnight stops in Arizona, Texas and Illinois before arriving back home on October 30th at 9:30 in the evening. From the time we initially left on October 5th until we returned home on the 30th we had driven 7,806 miles.

After nine days of catching up on our family's activities and paying a few bills, Mari and I were ready for our next adventure. On November 9th we boarded an airplane along with Sister Judy Rutter, Worthy Grand Ruth and Worthy Grand Electa, Sister Wilma Thompson and flew out of Baltimore to Honolulu, Hawaii where we met the rest of our group. Altogether there were 23 members upon arrival and we were met at the airport by our Deputy to the MWGM, Sister Barbara L. Smith and two Past Matrons from two of the Oahu Chapters. After we gathered all the luggage we loaded onto a bus that took us to the Courtyard Marriott in Waikiki. The next morning we loaded onto our bus at 7AM and went on a tour of the city of Honolulu before we arrived at the Museum of the Pacific for WWII at 9AM at Pearl Harbor. This is a huge National Park area and attracts over one million visitors to the site annually. At 10:30 we boarded a US Navy Launch to the Park's main attraction, the Arizona Memorial. It is a humbling and awe inspiring moment to look down into that sunken battleship and realize it is the final resting place for more than two thousand of our brave servicemen who gave their all! There is much more to see in the Park and there are guided tours of the famous submarine, the Bowfish and also of the battleship Missouri where the final Peace Agreement ending the war with Japan was signed. Our bus then took us up to the Punch Bowl which is our National Veterans Cemetery on Oahu and then returned us to our hotel in the afternoon. Our MWGM, Sister Helen and I met with our Deputy, Barbara Smith and we spent the rest of the afternoon and most of the evening inspecting the Treasurer's and Secretary's Cash Books and the Minute Books of Lei Aloha Chapter #3 and Mid Pacific Chapter #10.

The following day was spent quietly watching several of our members swimming in the hotel's outdoor pool while others went shopping at nearby malls or went for walks on Waikiki Beach until 5:45 when we boarded vans and attended Lei Aloha Chapter's meeting and a nice dinner. After the meeting some of the ladies put on a nice Hula demonstration. A few of us were asked to participate and they gave us instructions, but I, for one, am a slow learner when it comes to dancing.

The next day, Sunday, November 12th we all boarded a flight from Honolulu to the big island, Hawaii and landed at the Hilo airport at 2:30. We were then transported to the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel which is a very lovely facility on the beach covered with black sand. We had three of the members of Hawaii Chapter #1 there to greet us. On Monday morning the 13th we were given a guided bus tour of the East side of Hawaii. Our first stop was at the Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Plantation and had an opportunity to sample their products. I do enjoy eating macadamia nuts! Their macadamia nut ice cream isn't too bad either. We also stopped at an Orchid sanctuary where there were hundreds of various types of orchids and many other lovely flowers. Our third stop was the Kielua Crater in the Volcano National Park. We couldn't get very close to the caldera, but we could see the sulfur smoke rising above it. We returned to the hotel at 2:30 and spent two hours going over the Chapter's Treasurer's and Secretary's Cash books and Minute Books. All was in good order. At 4:30 we loaded into cars and vans and drove to Hilo's Masonic Lodge Building. We had a lovely home cooked dinner which was sponsored by the Chapter's Worthy Matron who happens to be a chef. After an excellent meal, Hawaii Chapter #1 held a special meeting for us. We were off again the next morning and flew from the big island over to Maui for a meeting of Maui Chapter #5. The meeting was held that evening in the Masonic Lodge in Kahului. This chapter is very small and has trouble getting a quorum for meetings. As a matter of fact, they only had 6 members present including WM, WP, Secretary, Treas and 2 appointed officers. The General Grand Officers in our group filled in the vacant stations for the meeting. All went very well and all of us were given lovely flower leis prior to the meeting. What a lovely aroma they emit. The next morning our hosts took us on a sightseeing trip to the top of Maui's inactive volcano at an elevation of over 10 thousand feet and then a tour of the rest of their island.

The following morning we flew from Maui to the Garden Isle, Kauai. Our bus took us to the Marriott Hotel which is a lovely facility right on the beach. We relaxed for a couple of hours and at 5:30 we attended a true Hawaiian Luau with pork and all the trimmings. One could even sample the poi, the native Hawaiian's food – but not high on my list of good tasting food! We were treated to great music and entertainment for the evening.

On the morning of November 17th we boarded a bus for a guided tour of the island and of the famous Waimea Canyon, also known as the Grand Canyon of the Pacific. Absolutely gorgeous vistas and great photo ops. In the afternoon we had a boat cruise up the Weimea River to the Fern Grotto, a famous place for many wedding ceremonies. It was pouring down rain when we arrived at the Grotto so most of us stayed on the boat and were entertained by a ukulele trio with songs and dances.

The next morning we boarded a plane and flew back to Honolulu for a dinner and meeting of Harmony Chapter #4. We arrived at the Masonic Lodge at 5 and had the

meeting first. It was a good meeting with over 60 in attendance. The meeting ended at 7:30 and we then had a delicious dinner of salmon and steak. The Lodge members prepared the meal. The three who prepared the meal were Navy cooks who are stationed at Pearl Harbor. We even had carrot cake for dessert. Again, all of us received lovely flower leis and gifts from the members of the Chapter.

On the morning of November 19th we were driven to the lovely Koa Waikiki Hotel for an "All Chapter Brunch." All five of the chapters had our group as their guests as a farewell gesture. We enjoyed a very nice buffet brunch followed by very enjoyable entertainment. Many of us were given instruction of the Hawaiian Hula dances. It was quite a sight! We said our farewells to all our friendly and happy hosts and returned to our hotel where we packed our suitcases for our return home.

We boarded our Delta airline flight on the evening of November 20th and finally landed back in Baltimore at 4PM on November 21st. We arrived back home at 7:30 that evening. It took us a few days to readjust to the 6 hour time change, but we were able to enjoy a terrific family get-together at daughter and son in law's, Peggy and Jim Filizzi's home in Columbia on Thanksgiving.

The months of December and January were relatively quiet which finally allowed us to attend a few meetings here in Pennsylvania. We attended Hershey Chapter for AGC, Sister Linda Watson's Honor Night; WGM, Sister Emily's Christmas Luncheon at the Seven Springs Resort and we were able to attend our own Rainbow Chapter's meeting on December 13th. Of course, we had another great family get together on Christmas day at son, Gary and Donna Childress's home in Dallastown with 44 in attendance. Truly a housefull!

In January we attended the AGC Luncheon honoring Sister Linda Watson on the 20th at the Holiday Inn in Grantville; our own Rainbow Chapter #517's stated meeting on the 25th and the Central Caring and Sharing Bingo party on the 27th.

On February 1st I will be leaving for Mexico City for an official visit to their Eastern Star Chapters. Our future Notes from the Flight Deck adventures will be in the next issue of our Pennsylvania Eastern Star Newspaper. Stay tuned.