

Local

At Trump's inauguration



Submitted Photo by Bill Currier.

Ronna Romney McDaniel, the new RNC Chair with ORP Chair Bill Currier.

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Currier added, “He sang with sincerity and conviction, and in a way no patriot could resist. I saw quite a few tears of real hope for real change in the audience. And while the words are familiar, it was as if a huge burden was being lifted and we were on the verge of a new day in America. The next day at the inauguration ceremony that hope became a reality.”

Knight said he stayed in a typical D.C.-style row house, and when he woke up on Friday morning he looked out and saw the trail of pedestrians already headed toward the inauguration. He soon followed.

“It was very packed,” Knight said of the venue. “It looked full to me.”

He added that he didn’t “know what the big deal was” when media started comparing attendee numbers, nor did he know for sure when the national media had taken the ubiquitous photo of the empty spaces on the grounds.

Knight thought that the inauguration attendance was high, particularly for a Republican president. He said, “D.C. is a Democrat stronghold. You’re not going to have the highest citizen turnout for a Republican president. Maybe Obama did have higher numbers, I don’t know... If we’d had the inauguration in Texas, Trump would have record numbers.”

Currier said, “The next day, Friday, we got up at 4 a.m. because we had to go through several layers of security to get to our seated position at the inauguration. From the hotel we boarded a bus to a location where the Secret Service scanned us and our personal effects. Then we were police escorted on a second bus to the Capitol Building near to where we would be seated.

“Upon exiting the bus we walked past the Marine One helicopter that Obama used afterwards to leave the ceremony. Everywhere there were military and police personnel. As we found our seat at about 7:30 a.m. we observed that they were already protesters beginning to block some of the gates into the observing area west of the Capitol.

“I heard later that many people who wanted to get in and watch the ceremony could not because of the protestors. At times, during the opening comments and during the inauguration

ceremony itself we could hear the protestors try to start up chants to disrupt the program, but each time the audience would respond back with deafening shouts of ‘USA, USA, USA!’ It was a volley the protestors always lost. The energy in the crowd was palpable, and the mood was one of solidarity.”

“It was an entirely different experience than watching it on TV,” said Knight. “There was no press commentary. It was just a different experience. I didn’t hit me until the next day some of the good stuff that had been happening and was going to happen.”

Currier said, “The ceremony was mostly uneventful leading up to the administration of the Oath of Office. There was moment when Chuck Schumer was speaking where he started to talk of division within our country. It was like he was casting a shadow on the incoming president before he had even taken office. The crowd boomed and you could tell they were not happy with his attempt to darken the event.”

Knight also noted the crowd’s booing, which was not picked up by national media.

Currier said, “One thing I noticed was that both Trump and Pence placed their hands on two Bibles. I had learned earlier that Trump was using the Bible that Lincoln used along with a personal Bible. Pence was using the Bible that Reagan used along with a personal Bible. The faces of both while being sworn in were of great humility combined with great determination. We were seated too far back to see their faces or the Bibles clearly, but we had a big screen close to us that brought out every detail.

“At times during the morning there was light rain. Most of us had ponchos to cover ourselves. It was funny to see George W. Bush’s antics as he struggled with his poncho. Umbrellas were not allowed anywhere within the seated areas. At one point the camera caught Hillary Clinton glaring at Bill Clinton as he looked at Melania Trump. The spontaneous eruption of laughter from the crowd was inditing.”

Knight noted the drizzle and cold. “I wish I’d brought a poncho ...”

After Trump’s speech, Knight edged his way out of the crowd to an area in front of the Capitol Building where the Marine One



Submitted Photo by Kyle Knight.

Obama departs from D.C. directly above Knight’s head.

helicopter was awaiting.

“It wasn’t something that was set up for people to watch,” Knight noted. Perhaps 20 people had stumbled across the scene as Obama boarded the helicopter.

“He basically flew straight over my head,” Knight said. And, that moment was Knight’s second favorite moment of the entire experience, after the actual Oath of Office.

“I remember watching President Bush leave in high school and thought how I was seeing a complete change in government. It reminded me of that day. It seemed like yesterday, but it was eight years ago.”

Following former President Obama’s departure, Knight headed toward the parade, but opted to leave in the middle of it to get a jump start on making his way to the next event, the Freedom Ball.

“A cab was not easy—it was already almost quicker to walk,” Knight said.

“There were three balls,” Knight said. “I went to the Liberty Ball. Trump appeared at all of them. I was told there were about 15,000 at the ball. It was at the convention center and there was already a huge line. All the events had huge lines—the celebration before the inauguration, the inauguration, the ball...”

Knight arrived early enough to avoid the first real wave of protestors.

“I saw law enforcement in riot gear out front and I wondered why they were there. There wasn’t a single protestor in sight, but they knew,” Knight said.

Shortly after he entered the ball, the protestors arrived in droves. Attendees behind Knight began talking about protestors harassing them, spitting on them, cussing at them, and in some cases pushing and blocking them physically from entering the venue.

Knight attempted to maneuver his way forward to better see the first dance between President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump, but, much like at a rock concert, soon found that the crowd was packed in too tightly to move.

“There was dancing, mingling and drinking,” Knight said. “Everyone was waiting for the President to arrive.”

When he did, Knight said, “It was cool being able to see the first dance.”

Trump asked the crowd, “Do you think I should keep tweeting?” and the crowd “went crazy” according to Knight.

At the ball, Knight nearly ran into Anderson Cooper exiting a restroom and surrounded by heavy security. Aside from Cooper, he didn’t see anyone other than politicians he might have recognized from TV.

Knight and Currier, along with others from Oregon, eventually found each other at the ball, but by that time the visiting was short-lived.

“We had all stood there for five hours,” said Knight, “and there were no chairs. Everyone was tired.”

Early the next morning, Knight awoke to witness a stream of pink as participants in the women’s march made their way along the same course as inauguration attendees had the morning before.

“I got out quick,” said Knight. By the time he did, he had no option but to pause in the street with his hazard lights flashing in order to drop off his tuxedo from the ball.

By the time he arrived at the airport, cars had been completely blocked by marchers.

Once on his flight back to Portland, Trump supporters found themselves mixed with protestors in pink on the same flight.

“It didn’t even make sense,” said Knight, who wore his Trump clothing from the inauguration. “Wherever they went they looked shocked at me, glared, put their hands on their hips. I never got into an argument with one and I didn’t glare at them. It seems like the tolerance of the left is pretty much zero. Their level of disrespect is definitely not needed. They make it seem like if you have different views it’s a personal attack on them. I heard on the news there had actually been problems on other flights because of it.”

All in all?

“I looked around several times while Trump was speaking and saw not hope, but expectation. Hope is wishful and distant. Expectation is all about action in the here and now. Trump made it very clear he was going to shake up Washington and that it was going to happen immediately. I found myself realizing that the recovery of America from the error of Obama was going to happen fast, and that it wouldn’t necessarily take as long to achieve as the decline,” Currier said.

“It was definitely worth it,” Knight concluded. “As my first time ... it was definitely worth it. It was an honor to be there.”

Two promoted in SWAT team

According to Sgt. Gary Bell of the La Grande Police Department—who also serves as Team Commander for the Northeast Oregon Regional Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team—Patrol Officer Shannon Regan of the Baker City Police Department and Dispatcher Jessica Lynch of Baker County 911 Consolidated Dispatch have been promoted to Assistant Team Leaders for the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) element of the SWAT team.

Said Bell in a written statement, “I would like to share how much we value both Shannon and Jessica and their dedication to the team. It has not gone unnoticed how hard they both worked on behalf of the team and the contributions they have made.”

The Baker County Sheriff’s Department, Union County Sheriff’s Department, Baker City Police Department, and La Grande Police Department comprise the regional SWAT team.

Woman bitten, arrest made

On January 23, 2017 at about 2:30 p.m. Shenesse Moffett-Cobian was arrested for Assault in the Fourth Degree following an altercation that occurred at 45892 Slough Road. Shenesse Moffett-Cobian and Anthony Shankle have children together but are currently separated. The children have been living with Shankle at the Slough Road address.

Moffett-Cobian went to the residence to retrieve her children and in the processes ended up biting Mary Shankle-Colton on the arm, breaking the skin and causing injury.

This altercation occurred in front of young children. Moffett-Cobian was restrained at the residence until deputies arrived. Moffett-Cobian was booked and lodged in the Baker County Jail.

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He explained that citizens of eastern Oregon counties (and elsewhere) have provided thousands of comments in opposition to the plan revision, and the push to implement it has been halted for now (he said a major part of that is a result of the public pressure for the USFS to document each County road).

He spoke about the overreach of the federal government, an example being the historical issues in Harney County (he mentioned the Harney County/federal government relationship has been through the process of collaboration), as with the Hammonds’ convictions and subsequent imprisonment. “The Hammonds used the same techniques that we use--burning off brush, juniper, etc. They’re the same techniques the federal government uses, but yet, when a private citizen uses the same techniques, it’s against the law...” He emphasized the chance citizens have to curb the overreach, and he expressed great relief that Secretary Hillary Clinton had not been elected President, because of the damage he anticipated would have resulted, especially to rural counties. “Now, we have a reprieve...If we don’t take advantage of the opportunity we have now, we’ll never have it back again...” he said, explaining the effects on agriculture, mining, logging, etc.

Harvey expressed frustration with the public confusion created by large documents, such as USFS’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the BMFPR, a three-volume set, of nearly 1,200 pages, the “condensed version” of which he had at the meeting, a 150-page volume.

Through the process of coordination, which Harvey said, “...is the law--it’s what’s right...” several counties have joined forces with Baker County, to form a stronger voice, and, “...we’re making headway...I get an opportunity to shed light on something that’s wrong.” He spoke about the constant fight to keep environmentalists from causing more land to be locked up, and more economies to be destroyed, through litigation.

Drew asked what point the USFS is at in its process, regarding the Plan, and Harvey said that implementation of the Plan is stalled, because the proposed Alternatives are unacceptable, and the USFS is missing the step of coordination with the County, a point he challenged Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya on, during an agency-to-agency coordination meeting (there have been numerous coordination meetings between the USFS and the County, with strong, though civil debates, and Harvey said that the USFS hasn’t gone through the process of coordination with the County, while Montoya maintains that it has, and he intends to move forward).

BCLA meetings are normally held the third Thursday of the month, 7 p.m., at the Sunridge Inn Restaurant.

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