

**H**istory of the Grand Nest  
Honourable Order of the Blue Goose

**2015-2016**



**110 Grand Nest Convention  
Hilton at the Ball Park  
St. Louis Missouri  
Jul 19-23, 2016**

**Randall Wilson, MLGG**

Prepared by John C. Bishop, PMLGG  
Grand Nest Historian

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The Grand Nest would like to give a big shout out to PMLG Neil Miller of the Edmon-  
ton Pond for the pictures shown in this history and to GGN Dan Rich for the Conven-  
tion Report, both without which this publication would be nothing.

**Grand Nest Officers  
2015-2016**



**Most  
Loyal  
Grand  
Gander  
Randall  
Wilson**



**Grand  
Keeper  
Dan  
Rich**



**Grand  
Supervisor  
Linda  
Meik**



**Grand  
Wielder  
Terry  
Maloney**



**Grand  
Custodian  
Mark  
Robertson**

**Judge  
Advocate  
Robert W.  
Cockerham**



**Grand  
Guardian  
Kim  
Bilbrey**

**Acting Grand  
Nest Historian  
John C. Bishop,  
PMLGG**



# Grand Nest History

## Blue Goose Holds Grand Nest Convention in St. Louis Hilton St. Louis at the Ball Park, St. Louis , Missouri, July 19-23, 2016

A total of 145 Ganders, spouses, guests and children from across the US and Canada journeyed to St. Louis, Missouri to attend the 110th Blue Goose Grand Nest Convention from July 19-23, 2016. The convention was held at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark in a great location-across the street from Ballpark Village with an easy walk to Busch Stadium, The Arch, the Statehouse, and restaurants. The only thing that could have made these walks easier would have been a drop in the temperature, it seemed to be 99 degrees all week long!

### Wednesday July 20, 2016

The Convention kicked off with a festive Welcome Party in the hotel's Arch Room Ballroom. It was a great way to trade pins, revisit old friends and meet quite a few new ones. The food stations were terrific! We started with a huge display of meats, cheeses and roast vegetables, then moved on to a roast beef carving station, and pasta station where you could either serve yourself from one of the three chafing dishes or have your own customized creation made to order in front of your eyes.



*Opening reception cheese and crackers display*

As dinner was winding down, we moved into the entertainment portion of the evening-



*Roast beef carved right off the bone*

A Regional "athletic" competition based on the TV show "Minute to Win It".

Each region was instructed to wear a specific colour, so our Southern members wore red, our Central representatives wore black, the Eastern contingent wore blue, and our Canadian crew wore green. Each team nominated four Gander-Athletes to uphold the honour of their region in a series of gruelling competitions. Forget about the Olympic decathlon or pentathlon, they are mere child's play when compared to our events-Floatalicious (trying to stack 6 beer cans on a floating plate), Ping Tac Toe (bouncing ping pong balls into targets), Bubble Hoop (trying to direct bubbles across the room through the air into a ringed target, and Junk in the Trunk (Ganders had to shimmy and shake their booties to liberate ping pong balls from a box strapped to their derriere). The final results were Central 2, South 1, Canada 1 and the East zippo. The St. Louis Pond donated \$250. to the winner of each event for the upcoming convention in the winner's region.

### Thursday, July 21, 2016

After a buffet breakfast, we moved into Salons C & D for the Opening Ceremonies. Most Loyal Grand Gander Randy Wilson called the meeting to order, the flags were presented by the VFW District 12 Honour Guard and the Lewis & Clark Fife and Drum Corps. The national anthems of the United States and Canada were sung.

The invocation was conducted by Reverend Del Miller who received recognition as "Friend of the Order". The introductions of the head table, the spouses, families and guests of the current Grand Nest Officers, the attending PMLGG's and spouses, and the St. Louis Pond Committee followed.



*Lewis & Clark Fife and Drum Corps*

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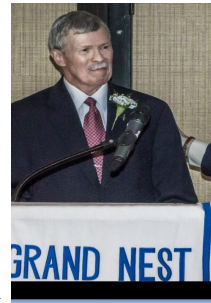
## Grand Nest History

The morning's Guest Speaker was the tremendously entertaining and very funny KMOX radio personality Ron Elz, better known locally as "Johnny Rabbitt", who started his remarks with a joke about a North Dakota claims adjuster. Johnny was great-his remarks wove together histories of Blue Goose and St. Louis with dozens of great anecdotes and trivia about St. Louis sights, attractions, museums, neighbourhoods, restaurants and local foods. He concluded his remarks with a declaration that "rabbits and geese get along". After his remarks, MLGG Wilson presented Johnny with a "Friend of the Order" award.



*Johnny Rabbitt*

The Memorial Service was conducted by Ganders from the Dayton Pond, Cincinnati Puddle, and the Indianapolis Puddle. Carrie Miller, Janice Folzenlogen, Steven Ettinger, Amanda Terrell, Kim Bilbrey, and Wendy Goetz conducted a beautiful and dignified service. Each Pond was called, its members stood in unison their Memorial Report was read. If any of their Ganders had taken their Last Long Flight over the past year, a candle was lit in their memory and the Pond representatives lined up across the front of the room. Each participant was given a rose and a bag of bird seed to take back and feed the birds in their home Pond to honour the memory of their fallen ganders. The ceremony included a lovely poem for those that were lost and a request that their Ponds celebrate their lives and honour the three Blue Goose cardinal precepts. The service closed with a beautiful eulogy read by Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey.



*Rev. Del Miller*

The Model Initiation went "Old School" with a very traditional take on the Initiation Ritual, performed by members of the Peace Garden and Manitoba Ponds. The Hands Across the Border Team consisted of Scott Anderson, Ken Zetocha, Keith Pic, Dale Cowman, Dustin Bales, Kim Boultsbee, Ron Farber and Kathleen Thompson with strong guest performances by PMLGG John Bishop for the Admonition and MLGG Randy Wilson for the Charge. All combined to welcome eight new Ganders into the St. Louis Pond.



*Memorial Service presenters*

But that was just the beginning, because we were next treated to seeing a very interesting Blue Goose tradition.



*Eight new Ganders for the St. Louis Pond*

PMLG Scott Anderson told us about the Hands Across the Border history between the Peace Garden and Manitoba Ponds that involved international hockey games and water polo matches. They recreated a Peace Garden and Manitoba initiation tradition for us as a blind folded Grand Wielder Terry Maloney was paraded in. His pant cuffs were rolled up high and he was commanded to "step high...step high" to insure that he stepped into big plastic basins filled with oatmeal and ice water to simulate the rice fields and frozen lakes that are the natural habitat of geese. The ceremony concluded with an appearance of a rubber fish for Terry to eat. (You had to be there).



*Grand Wielder Maloney stepping high*

The All Industry Luncheon featured a fascinating and educational presentation by Linda Anderson of the Fire Mark Circle of Americas, which we learned was a forum for collectors of firefighter and insurance memorabilia. Linda gave a brief history of fire fighting in England and the United States and spoke of the rise of volunteer firefighting brigades that were affiliated with insurance companies. This led to the developments of "Fire marks" (a plaque or sign made of tin, lead, copper or zinc) used to identify an insured building for the firefighting authorities. Fire marks also served as an incentive for volunteer fire departments to fight fires that displayed them, because they knew who would pay their service bill! They are a unique piece of insurance industry memorabilia, because most insurance artefacts are limited to old contracts or pieces of paper.



*Linda Anderson*

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## Grand Nest History

After the luncheon, the regional meetings were held between 2:30 and 4:30, then we boarded a bus to the Family Night Dinner at the Fox Theatre. It was built way back in 1929 and was one of the first movie theatres in the US to show “talkies”. The Fox is known as “The Fabulous Fox” for a reason. It's a gorgeous structure, filled with paintings, sculptures, columns, glasswork and an opulently decorated domed ceiling set off by a huge jewelled glass chandelier. In front of the stage was a massive Wurlitzer organ. We were treated to a mini-concert by the house organist, and when he played the theme from “Phantom”, the building shook. We enjoyed passed hors d'oeuvres and many took advantage of the free tour that was offered to our members. Dinner was served on the Fox Theatre stage where we were entertained by a great 9 piece orchestra and vocalist known as “The St. Louis Big Band”.

MLGG Randy Wilson introduced the Ponds that were 100 years old, and Grand Wielder Terry Maloney raffled off a 100 year old Blue Goose luggage tag which resulted in a bidding war between St. Louis, Texas, Ohio and Michigan.



*Glass Chandelier at the Fox*

When the dust had settled, Ohio and Texas each donated \$1,550 to Grand Nest for the luggage tags. The funds will be used by Grand Nest for increased membership initiatives, a fitting choice considering the Honourable Order's third year of increased membership. MLGG Randy Wilson generously donated an additional \$500 to the cause.



*Fabulous Fox Theatre stage and Grand Curtain*

The St. Louis Big Band was great, and had us up and dancing. The band also featured two guests from our group-Wendy Fletcher on tambourine and Aria Kohlruss on vocals.

The evening at the Fox ended with a huge conga line of ganders snaking its way across the stage. But the evening was far from over, as we also enjoyed an After party at the Ballpark Room back at the hotel.

### Friday, July 22, 2016

After breakfast, we opened the day with another athletic competition. Steven Ettinger of the Garden State Pond donned a Cardinal's baseball cap that had two tea bags dangling from it. By thrashing his head around, somehow he ended up successfully flipping the teabags onto the hat's brim, winning a Bluetooth speaker for his efforts. It was announced that the Committee reports, Blue Goose pins, stickers and handouts were stacked on the side table and were available for the taking.

Grand Wielder Terry Maloney mentioned that the first Convention golf tournament was held in 1921. The tradition is still going strong ninety-five years later, as Terry congratulated the hearty golfers who survived Wednesday's hot weather.

Next, Terry pointed out that all but three Ponds were represented in the Convention registration numbers. He called the delegates roll call and recognized the first time convention attendees. A video of the convention highlights to date was shown on the screen located in the meeting room.

Grand Supervisor Linda Meik addressed the group and asked the delegates to take away from the convention some ideas to strengthen their Ponds. She specifically asked them to review the Pond-Puddle Operations Guide (POG) which was fully updated and revised this year. Copies of the guide were available in the meeting room, as well as on the website.

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## Grand Nest History

MLGG Randy Wilson's report followed. At his installation in Baltimore, he dedicated his year to PMLGG Chuck Cramer. Randy spoke of his spiritual values and how they meshed so well with our cardinal precepts. Randy spoke of his efforts to "brand" Blue Goose and advertise our values. The use of a uniform signature block for e-mail by the officers was one example. He mentioned a popular TED talk that centers on "*Selling the Why*". We need to "*explain why we are here*" and "*advertise how we give back to the community*".



MLGG Randall  
Wilson

Randy had a very busy term as MLGG. In September, he visited the Tennessee Pond for their 100th anniversary, visited Columbus Ohio for the PLRB Central Region Blue Goose reception, and visited Indianapolis for an organizational Puddle meeting and initiated over 40 ganders. In October he helped transform a Northeast Ohio claims organization into a Puddle, and in November he initiated none members into the St. Louis Pond. In December he travelled to the Michigan Pond's Christmas Party.

Randy spoke of the Cincinnati Puddle's February Monte Carlo Night and shared the great success of that night with us-it raised \$13,000 for a disabled veteran. In March he attended the Central region's Mid-Year and visited Dallas. In April, he visited Fargo, ND for the "Hands Across the Border" meeting and attended the Grand Nest Mid-Year in Savannah.

Randy was the guiding force behind 2016's "Rush for Goslings" initiative and under the leadership of Rush Chairman Dustin Bales, the program was a big success with over 500 new and reinstated members. Randy noted that the new memberships do not cancel out the fact that we have a retention issue-which is just as important as adding new recruits. He also mentioned the completion of the Grand Nest's Pond Operating Guide and impending completion of a Wielder's Guide and Financial Guide as important accomplishments.

Our Western Region has less than 100 members, and the Honourable Order is reacting to that reality with a regional realignment and an appointed Grand Keeper as we will move from five regions and five elected Grand Nest Officers to four regions and four elected Grand Nest Officers.

He concluded his remarks with comments on the increased Grand Nest cyber insurance coverage and our increased industry publicity through industry magazine profiles and our PLRB presence. He thanked the Grand Nest officers, PMLGG's, his company and partners, and his family for their help and support over the past year.

Grand Supervisor Linda Meik appointed a committee of PMLGG Lorena Kohlruss, Past JA Emeritus-Robert Ross, and PMLGG John Paris to study MLGG Wilson's report and present their findings on Saturday morning.

Grand Wielder Terry Maloney looked at Blue Goose membership trends over the years. He spoke of the Order's explosive growth spurt over the inaugural years of 1906-1921, and how excitement over the new organization spread and caused membership to surge. Terry proclaimed that "history is repeating itself" because of our renewed growth. We have finished three years of net growth, a statement that is unprecedented in recent memory. The surge is due to new Ponds, new Puddles, and the reinvigoration of the Southern region.



Grand Supervisor  
Linda Meik

The top ten largest Ponds for 2015-2016 were announced, with Michigan (310) leading the pack ahead of Quebec, Hartford, National Capital, St. Louis, Edmonton, Texas, Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

Acting Grand Nest Historian John Bishop began his remarks with a definition of history- "*a branch of knowledge dealing with past events, written chronologically*". He said the Grand Nest has been very busy working on our his

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## Grand Nest History



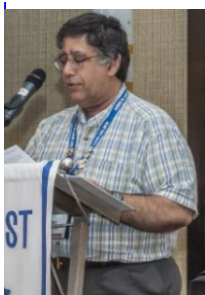
tory over the last year. He challenged our Ponds to set up a committee to study and record their Pond's history, and he congratulated the Ponds who have done so. John has been working with Grand Supervisor Linda Meik and Grand Keeper Dan Rich to record the annual histories that needed to be written, and when completed, the accounts will be stored on the Grand Nest website. John asked the convention to visit the archives display in the registration room and announced that donors to the archive fund will be eligible to win a vintage Blue Goose belt buckle in a drawing.

PMLGG John Bishop

Judge Advocate Robert Cockerham spoke of the impending restructuring from the five to four regions, *"with the knowledge that in the near future we will go back to five regions"*. The reasons for the restructuring have been approved by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. JA Cockerham also spoke of some of the other issues he dealt with this year, including Privacy Statements, Cyber Insurance, and Directors and Officers Liability Coverage. He said that he hears from someone on Blue Goose business every day. He asked us to be careful of copyrights, he said we are a 501-C8 Fraternal Organization and we need to carefully explain ourselves and related tax deductible issues. He asked us to remember to communicate within your Ponds and within Grand Nest. He asked us to *"show everyone the value of our great organization"*.



JA Robert Cockerham



Grand Keeper Dan Rich

Grand Keeper Dan Rich spoke of his visit to Wisconsin to see Grand Wielder Terry Maloney and gave his audit report. He reported that although we finished the year with a surplus of \$2,700, there were some troubling signs. The issues of non-payment of dues fell \$13,000 short of our goal due to major corrections in our membership numbers, and had we not rallied to collect almost three thousand dollars in dues in the final month of the budget year, we would have had a deficit for the year. With the dues so adversely affecting our revenue, it was only through expense management that we were able to avoid a deficit for the year. One expense the Officers chose to incur this year resulted in the Honourable Order's Insurance & Bonding expense going \$2,700 over budget. This reflected our purchase of cyber insurance to protect us as more and more of our Ponds expanded their on-line footprint and embraced the use of on-line payments for member dues and event registrations or sponsorships.

Grand Custodian Mark Robertson reported on Charity. He showed a PowerPoint that demonstrated how *"Charity fosters fellowship and is woven into the fabric of our organization"*. Mark showed a slide summarizing our Ponds' charitable activities for the year, and asked the Ponds to be more diligent in reporting, because there were several that did not send in their charity summaries. Nevertheless, Blue Goose had these impressive stats for \$242,279 in cash donations, \$78,401 in donated items, \$11,000 in scholarships, and 2,180 volunteer hours of community service. He singled out the Louisiana Pond for their outstanding work. We should make sure that more, if not all Ponds, should report back to Grand Nest with their charity work. He challenged the Ponds to be creative and invigorate their membership with novel and exciting ideas to support local charities. He closed with an analysis that tracked the dollars per member total for charity over the last 4 years, and the results were very impressive. In 2013 the total was \$45/member, and in the following years, it rose to \$53, \$79, and a whopping \$90 in 2016.



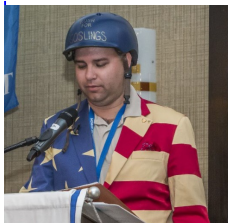
Grand Custodian Mark Robertson

Membership and change were the topics of Grand Supervisor Linda Meik's Membership Committee remarks. *"Change is a challenge, our world has changed. We don't need to change what Blue Goose is, we need to change how we do Blue Goose in a changing world"*.

She stressed the importance of updating our member contact information and getting Pond dues in early. She urged us to be active in our Ponds, and to look at new blood for vitality and creativity. The Order is focusing on the Scottsdale Arizona area for a renaissance. Similar hotbeds of new activity are Savannah, Pittsburgh, Minnesota,

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## Grand Nest History



*Dustin Bales  
Rush for Goslings  
Chairman*

Knoxville, Memphis, and Charlotte. Her membership Committee report had a twin focus-Retention “*a big problem*” was looked at by Lisa Kane and the Rush for Goslings campaign was looked at by Dustin Bales. Dustin reported on the “Rush for Goslings” campaign-it generated 500 new members. We have an opportunity to better improve our reporting of Rush events-they don’t have to be large events, but we should at least identify “What did you do?”, “How many were there?”, “How many new members did you sign?”, “How many new Initiations were there?” Dustin challenged each Pond to get five new members, and he gave out a lighted tambourine to all Ponds that committed to a 2016 Rush event.



*Grand Supervisor Linda Meik*

Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey reported on the Communication and Marketing Committee.



*Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey*

Committee member Martin Moran asked for better communication between Ponds, within Regions, and across Regions. The very rapid advances in technology make it crucial that we re-examine our websites and social media policy. Many Ponds have a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Linked In and Instagram. Martin bluntly said “*We should strongly care about these platforms, because this is where the young people are*”. If your Pond has a website, maybe the old landing page is getting tired. Martin urged us all to “*look at your landing page*” and see if it tells people what we are all about immediately.



*DMLGG Martin Moran*

1. Consider replacing the standard “Who We Are” screen with text and photos that promote and highlight your events.
2. Emphasize your fun events.
3. Maybe the Grand Nest website can scroll these posts from the local Ponds across their site.
4. Consider attending local broker and agent trade shows to publicize Blue Goose.
5. Consider holding quarterly DMLGG meetings via Skype to share information and promote consistent messaging.

The morning’s program continued with the presentation of the Grand Nest Awards. The **Membership Cup** for the greatest % of increased membership was won by the **Alabama Pond** with a 48% increase. The **Fellowship Cup** for the lowest % drops & resignations was won by the **Regina Pond** with a 1.25 % drop. The **No Drop Out Cup**, awarded for no dropped members, was won by the **Columbus Pond**. The **Peace Garden Award Cup**, awarded to the Pond with the most first time convention attendees, was won by four Ponds-**Bay State, Mid-Missouri, Peace Garden, and Tennessee** who all had two first-timers in St. Louis. The **Link of the Year**, awarded to the Pond with an Outstanding Communication Strategy, was awarded to the **Saskatchewan Pond**. The **Gordon Crowther Charity Award**, awarded to a Pond with outstanding charitable activities, was won by the **Texas Pond**. The **Regional Challenge Cup**, awarded to the region with excellence in five combined membership criteria, was won by the **Central Region**.

The **Regional Charity Awards** concluded the morning’s program. The **West Region** Charity Awards for the highest % increase and Most new & reinstated members were both won by the **Utah Pond** (10% and +8). The **Central Region** Charity award for the highest % increase went to the **Wisconsin Home Nest** (15%) and the award for the most new & reinstated members went to the **Michigan Pond** (+35). The **Southern Region** Charity Award for the highest % increase was won by the **Alabama Pond** (48%) and the award for the most new & reinstated members was won by the **Tennessee Pond** (+19). The **Eastern Region** Charity Awards for the highest % increase and the most new & reinstated members were both won by the **National Capital Pond** (15% and +24). The **Canadian Region** Charity Awards for the highest % increase and the most new & reinstated members were both won by the **Quebec Pond** (13% and +34).

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## Grand Nest History

The constitutional amendment, previously referenced by Judge Advocate Cockerham, to realign the Honourable Order from 5 regions into 4 was formally introduced and was passed without discussion.

New charters were awarded to the Cincinnati Pond and the Northern Ohio Pond. The Ohio Pond was renamed as the Columbus Pond.

This concluded the convention activities for the day. As our attendees had the afternoon and evening on their own. Convention Chair Patty Semke reminded the group that the Convention Committee had arranged several Optional Activities-An Art and Architecture Tour, free shuttles to Forest Park, a theatre trip to the Muny to see a presentation of Mama Mia, and a visit to Busch Stadium to see the Cardinals host the Dodgers. Many Ganders made a beeline for the tour and tasting at the Anheuser Busch brewery. Later that evening, over 100 Ganders attended the ballgame, but we are unsure how many stayed to see the final pitch because the game ran over five hours in duration. It ended in the 16th inning with the Cardinals winning 4-3 on a walk-off home run.

### Saturday July 23, 2016

After breakfast, Linda Meik and Ray Wicker of the Texas Pond gave a presentation on the next year's Southern Region Convention in Savannah, GA. This will be a true Regional Convention, whose theme is "*Passport to the South*". They wanted the convention to be held in a location without a Pond that was representative of the South. Savannah is one of the nations top three tourist destinations. Savannah is a walking city, there is "*no need for a car*".

We saw a promotional video for the city and Top Ten list of "*Why we Love Savannah*" that highlighted 1) the water, 2) the architecture, 3) beautiful family friendly Tybee Island and its beach, dolphins, lighthouse and kayaking, 4) the historic Squares (over 20 urban parks), 5) the literature, 6) the colourful locals, 7) the history, 8) the food, 9) to go cups for your cocktail, and 10) the heat.

The convention hotel is the Hyatt Regency Savannah on River Street in the heart of the food and retail district. Please book early! The rate will be \$170 per night but there are limitations on capacity. We were thrilled to learn that the convention rate will be valid from July 9th through July 15th, so you can extend your Savannah stay on both ends of the Convention. The hotel offers free Wi-Fi, a heated pool, and proximity to Savannah's Water Taxis. The convention rate will probably be \$375. There will be no Convention Golf outing, but feel free to bring your clubs if you want to, there are many golf options to choose from. Here is the convention schedule:

On July 11, 2017 the Convention will start with a community service activity and the Welcome Party at Savannah Smile Duelling Pianos.

July 12, 2017 will be a full convention day ending with a dinner cruise around Savannah on a riverboat. Children's Museum and Railroad Museum. Spouse activities include a visit to the historic Planter's Inn with lunch at the Olde Pink House.

July 13, 2017 will be a full and busy Convention day and night. Spouses and children will have the chance to take a Waterway Tour and see dolphins. There will be additional Spouse activities as well. The convention will culminate with a "*Dance Through the Decades*" Banquet and Ball.

After the presentation, the Grand Nest reconvened as Terry Maloney called the delegate roll call and recognized a formal motion that next year's Convention be held in Savannah, GA. The motion was seconded, and accepted by acclimation. The convention sang "*Happy Birthday*" to the St. Louis Pond as it approached its 100th anniversary (the Pond was chartered on October 4, 1916). Terry announced the Convention Golf awards and showed a video of



Ray Wicker

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## Grand Nest History

last evening's Conga line dance at the Fox Theatre.

MLGG Randy Wilson commented that PMLGG Bill Olson called him from Maryland and said that because he had been following the dozens of Convention photos posted on the Blue Goose website, he felt as if he was actually at the convention. The MLGG spoke of how someone had found a 1937 DMLGG medal at a Flea Market, and he wanted to reinstate that tradition, to our current Deputies. The Grand Nest Regional Officers presented the new version of these medals to the DMLGG's present.

MLGG Wilson gave special recognition to Grand Nest Historian, Jerry Hale, Judge Advocate, Robert Cockerham, and St. Louis Convention Chair, Patty Semke.

GNH and PMLGG Jerry Hale served as our Historian for five years before stepping down from an illness this year. Grand Keeper Dan Rich accepted Jerry's crystal plaque on his behalf and spoke of a recent visit he and some Pond Officers had paid to Jerry. Dan will make sure that the award is presented to Jerry at a Hartford Pond event. A motion was passed to recognize Jerry as Grand Nest Historian Emeritus.

After Patty Semke accepted her gift, she presented MLGG Wilson with a clock on behalf of the Convention Committee.

Grand Wielder Maloney again welcomed the convention's First Timers and asked them to take home with them messages about the convention experience and the value that comes with a registration.

Nominating speeches for the 2016-17 slate of Grand Nest officers ensued. PMLGG's Joe Coccia and John Bishop installed Linda Meik of the Texas Pond as Most Loyal Grand Gander, Mark Robertson of the Edmonton Pond as Grand Supervisor, Kim Bilbrey of the Dayton Pond as Grand Custodian, and Dan Rich of the Hartford Pond as the Grand Guardian.

New MLGG Linda Meik announced several Grand Nest appointments, and each new officer offered remarks of acceptance. Lorena Kohlruss of the Alberta Pond has been a Blue Goose member for fourteen years. She was our MLGG in 2012 and has now become our Order's first female Judge Advocate, or as she said "*General Counsel of Blue Goosers*". She previously served on both the Constitutional and By-Law, and Judicial Committees, experiencing that will give her "*historical context on contemporary issues*".

PMLGG Randy Wilson will bring his 29 years of membership experience to the position of Grand Keeper of the Golden Goose Egg. This officer slot became an appointed position this year as a result of the Regional realignment.

Randy said he is "*excited and proud to be on the board*" and will "*work with our team on a vision*" of the Order's structure and organization to maintain our Cardinal Precepts. The completion and publication of a "*Pond Financial Guide*" is one of his goals.

PMLGG John Bishop of the Nova Scotia Pond is a 34 year veteran of Blue Goose and will now serve as our Grand Nest Historian. He told us that he is "*honoured to accept MLGG Meik's appointment to preserve the Order's history and follow the examples set by previous historians Gordon Crowther, Barry Snyder, John Zeldam, and Jerry Hale*". He spoke about Jerry, and his commitment to Blue Goose and its historical past. He urged everyone to visit the archives, make a donation to the archive fund, and enter the drawing for vintage Blue Goose belt buckles.

Most Loyal Grand Gander Linda Meik's Address of Acceptance followed. She said it is a "*great privilege and honour*" to accept the conventions nomination for the office of Most Loyal

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## Grand Nest History

*Grand Gander*". She thanked her friends for their support over her 20 years of Blue Goose membership, and also thanked the Southern Region for their support, singing out Virginia's Kay Marchetti and Keith Strohecker and Texas' Ray Wicker.

Linda thanked Randy for being "*an awesome leader*" and told a funny story about how Randy schooled some Toronto hecklers during a St. Louis Blues hockey game. She presented Randy with a *Dammit Doll* that he can use as an alternative to profanity.

Linda acknowledged the contributions of her many Blue Goose friends, and the Order's past and present Grand Nest Officers. She looked back at Blue Goose's origin in 1906 and remarked how "*amazing it is to think how our organization was founded and how 110 years later, we are still here*". She spoke of how "*grand it is to spend fellowship with our friends*".

She spoke of "*character and leadership and attitude*" as being the "*moral fibre*" of how we respond to changing situations, and challenged us to "*create sparks of fire within our membership*" as we "*honour the memory of those who came before us and the current friends we have today*". She asked us to "*remember our corporate sponsors and partners for all they do to help us meet our commitments to our precepts*".

Linda next spoke of her goals, the first of which is increasing our membership. "*Look for the gold in our new recruits and help them become our next generation of leaders*".

Another goal is "*improving our infrastructure*". The publishing of the Pond Operating Guide is one example- "*it's a valuable tool updated this year*". Linda committed to "*updating all of our written materials for clarity*". Linda spoke of developing tutorials for our Ponds and Puddles because the days of "*nine to five are over*". People work more hours, so "*our commitment to Blue Goose has to be passionate and purposeful*". She closed by urging us all to "*continue our successful momentum*".

Next up was PMLGG and new Judge Advocate Lorena Kohlruss to report on Randy Wilson's year in office. She commented on how he "*led by example*" and how in his travels he spread "*a positive influence on the Order*" that is sure "*to affect our future growth by his activities*".

Grand Wielder Terry Maloney presented Randy Wilson with his PMLGG pin and plaque and delivered a powerful and emotional speech about his friend of 22 years, and how his "*long time love of Blue Goose sets a beacon for others to follow*".

Before we adjourned for lunch, Randy asked the Convention Committee to stand as a group and be recognized one more time. He urged the convention attendees to "*take the enthusiasm of this convention home to your Ponds*".

The family lunch was held across the street from the hotel at PBR on the second floor of Ballpark Village. We had a great buffet meal of hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled chicken, and all sorts of side dishes. Dozens of door prizes were awarded in a "*Lucky Duck*" drawing. The Belt Buckle drawings raised over \$300 for the archives and a 50/50 drawing for the Southern Region's convention raised over \$600. PBR had a mechanical bull ride that saw a lot of action from our Blue Goose family.

That evening, the Convention culminated with a cocktail reception and passed appetizers in the Grand Foyer and Grand Nest Banquet and Ball in the Grand Ballroom.

We enjoyed the traditional ceremony of the presentation of our PMLGG's and current Grand Nest Officers. The food (Salmon and filet dinner) and the band were terrific.

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Grand Nest History

The St. Louis Pond hosted an outstanding convention, with fun events and terrific food. We are grateful to the Convention Committee: Chair Patty Semke, Art Schulte, Keith Seiffert, Mark Nixon, Carole Myers, Jim Myers, Donna Neukomn, Tina Crist, Marsh Ring, Ron Farber, Della Ostendorf, Cindy Hertlein, Randy Bernhardt, Andrea Roth, Michelle Roshell, Libby Wilson, Randy Wilson, and Cheryl McShane of PEC for their efforts to plan and produce such a successful and thoroughly enjoyable event.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Rich, Grand Guardian of the Nest



*PMLGG Randy Wilson and his DAMMIT Doll*



*Gander Conga Line at the Fabulous Fox*



*Outgoing Judge Advocate Robert Cockerham receiving a golden gavel plaque from MLGG Randy Wilson*



*Wurlitzer organ and house organist*



*Grand Wielder Terry Maloney presenting PMLGG Randall Wilson with his appreciation plaque*



*Make your own pasta station*

## Grand Nest History

### Grand Nest Officers 2015-2016



l-r GKGGE Dan Rich, Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey, Grand Custodian Mark Robertson, Grand Supervisor Linda Meik, Most Loyal Grand Gander Randall Wilson

### Grand Nest Officers 2016-2017



L-R GC Kim Bilbrey, GS Mark Robertson, MLGG Linda Meik, GG Dan Rich

JA Kohruss

GKGGE Wilson

GNH Bishop

## Grand Nest History

### Most Loyal Grand Gander Report 110 Grand Nest Meeting and Convention Randall Wilson, MLGG 2015-2016



MLGG Randy Wilson

Dear Fellow Ganders,

I am writing to report on my year in office as your Most Loyal Grand Gander. It began with election and installation in Baltimore. It was with gratitude for the trust that you all placed in me that I accepted this position. It has been a very busy, and so in many ways, important year in the history of our Order.

If you were in Baltimore last year you will know that I dedicated this year to my dear friend and mentor, Chuck Cramer, who took his last long flight in 2015. For those that may not know, Chuck was the PMLGG of our honourable Order in 2000-2001 and I served as his convention chairman. He was a wonderful person of faith who truly cared about others and lived according to his Christian values and our honoured principles of **character, charity and fellowship**. And, he believed in the golden rule, which is embodied in our watchword. He focused his year as MLGG on achieving positive growth in membership, and often talked with me of the importance of growth in members and development of character.

I wanted to begin my report with a word about the ‘branding of our Order’. I believe that we must promote what we stand for and what we do in our communities in order to be successful. I would encourage each of you to include a signature block on any email that you send that includes the trinity of virtues as a by-line, **Character, Charity and Fellowship since 1906**. If we we’re not selling our Order and its meaning for us then why would anyone want to buy? You may be familiar with the ‘Ted Talks’, there is one in which the discussion involves “selling the why”. People want to know why you do what you do with the Blue Goose. Today’s insurance professionals place a great deal of value on ‘giving back’. But it’s not enough to say it, we have to explain that it is why we’re here. Believe me, those Ponds that focus on programs designed around our precepts, are the ones that are the healthiest and most active Ponds and Puddles in our Order. Why you may ask, I’ll tell you...because the insurance audience from which we recruit sees the why!

During this fiscal year, I was fortunate to visit a number of Ponds and Puddles as well as assist with the organization of a new Pond and new Puddle:

- In August of 2015, my wife Libby and I traveled to Nashville for the 100th Anniversary celebration of the Tennessee Pond. The members and their guests were so gracious and friendly. That Pond is one of many success stories of the rejuvenation in the Southern region of our Order.
- In early September, I traveled to Columbus, Ohio for the Blue Goose Reception at the PLRB Regional Claims Conference. As you have heard, Grand Supervisor Linda Meik has been promoting the Order through these conferences and is really making a difference in getting the word out that we stand for something important...giving back! Many of our members from the surrounding area were there including members from Dayton, Columbus and Cincinnati as well as many new friends who were interested in learning more about our Honourable Order.
- Then later in September, I drove to Indianapolis where together with others including Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey and several members from Cincinnati, Dayton, and Michigan, we organized a new Puddle there and initiated them into our Order. This was the first of a growing trend of claim associations looking to transition to a Blue Goose chapter. We are very excited about this new Puddle in Indianapolis and are hopeful that they will soon be a fully functioning Pond.
- In October, I was contacted by several officers of another Claims Association in the northwest corridor of

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Grand Nest History



MLGG Randy with member of the Tennessee Pond

Ohio...including Cleveland, Canton, Youngstown and Akron. They wanted to transition the claims group to a Blue Goose Pond. My special thanks to the officers of the Cincinnati Pond who were instrumental in this opportunity to grow our Order and expand its influence. We later planned and executed an organizational meeting in March for the new Northeast Ohio Pond and initiated the new members into our Order. Their MLG is with us here in St. Louis. I hope that you have the opportunity to meet her. The Northeast Ohio Pond will be receiving its charter in St. Louis.

- In November, I served on the initiation team for the new Goslings in our Rush for Goslings program in our St. Louis Pond. We recruited and initiated nine new members with that program.
- In early December, Libby and I traveled to Michigan for its Offers' Dinner and Charity Christmas Gala. We had a great time, made some new friends and even had a chance to tour the Henry Ford Museum that was right across the street. There were several visiting members from other Ponds there including someone I knew when I was in the Chicago Pond more than 25 years ago. And, Dan Caldwell, a member in the Columbus Pond who later became the Wielder for the Northeast Ohio Pond.
- I was also invited to the Christmas party of the National Capital Pond. Due to work commitments I was unable to attend. However, my Grand Supervisor, Linda Meik, attended in my place. And, Grand Guardian, Kim Bilbrey, was there as well.
- In February, the Cincinnati Puddle held its Monte Carlo Night and invited me to attend. I was unable to make it, but wanted to make special mention of its event because it is emblematic of the spirit of Blue Goose. They raised \$13,000 to assist a disabled veteran named Ron who needed a new van. But, it was so much more than that...they communicated why they do what they do in the Blue Goose. The result is that everyone in the insurance business in Cincinnati wanted to be part of it. They had hundreds of people there to tell Ron's story and their commitment to giving back.
- In March, Libby and I attended the Central Region Mid-Year Meeting in Milwaukee. It was great fun and exciting to see the rejuvenation that is occurring in the Wisconsin Home Nest. During the festivities, they held an initiation and I was honoured to give the Charge. But, the most proud moment was when my daughter Abby, who is now in the insurance business, joined our Honourable Order and was initiated there in Milwaukee.
- In early April, we travelled to Fargo, North Dakota to attend the ***Hands Across the Border*** weekend. Members for the Peace Garden, Dakota and Manitoba Ponds have gotten together for international fellowship for more than 50 years now! It is so obvious at their long standing good fellowships that exists between these Ponds. I would encourage any of our Ponds to arrange for an event in which you get together with a Pond that is close to your own. The bonds of fellowship grow strong in these instances, which advances our mission. We were also fortunate enough to recruit members from the Peace Garden, Manitoba and Dakota Ponds to form the ***Hands Across Border Model Initiation Team***.
- In mid-March, I met up with my Grand Supervisor, Linda Meik, in Dallas while I was there for our firm's partners meeting. It was great to see Linda and spend some time talking about the Blue Goose and our plans for the international Blue Goose Mid-Year Meeting coming up in April in Savannah.
- In April, Libby and I travelled to Savannah (site of the 2017 convention) for the international Blue Goose Grand Nest Officers Mid-Year Meeting. We enjoyed the scenery and southern charm of Savannah. The hotel and its location on historic River Street was fantastic. You will truly enjoy Savannah next summer!

During the year, we spent a lot of our time on the Grand Nest Officers board promoting membership and charity and branding of our precepts. Through the membership committee and its International Rush Chairman, Dustin Bales, PMLG of Manitoba, and his Regional Rush Chairs, we were able to promote and see Rush for Goslings events planned all around the Blue Goose. All together, we added nearly 500 new members and reinstated members to our Order during fiscal 2016. Unfortunately, we had more drop than we had new and ended the year with-

(Continued on page 17)

## Grand Nest History

out accomplishing the third consecutive year of growth that we were hoping to achieve.

What we found; however, was the realization that we have a retention problem in the Blue Goose. We can recruit new members, but we need to do a better job of retaining those members. Some of the board's suggestions are to engage the new members when they join, match them up with a big brother or big sister right away, help them to acclimate to the Pond by introducing them to others and involve them immediately into the activities and mission of the local Pond. If you don't have a Pond Mission Statement, how about to "*seek to develop the character and integrity of our members through events and activities that focus on charity and fellowship*".

During the year we completely updated and issued the **Pond-Puddle Operations Guide (POG)** and posted it to the international website in November. We have received a lot of positive feedback indication that the POG is a valuable resource. Yet, it is a living, breathing document and we expect to have it regularly updated so as to keep it current for our membership. Other updating projects are in the works as well including plans to develop a **Pond Financial Guide (PFG)** to provide information on such topics as financial structure, bank accounts, tax filings and budgeting including the plan to financially support the delegates of the Pond to the Grand Nest Meeting each year.



Members of the Cincinnati Puddle raised over \$13,000 for a disabled Vet

As many of you know, we have been facing an ongoing challenge of declining membership and chapters in our western region. Total active members in the west had dropped to less than 100. As such, we decided to take action and drafted a proposal to realign the regions. The result will be to reduce the regions to four and the advancing line of officers to the same. It also results in an appointed Grand Keeper who we intend will eventually serve a more expanded financial role of the Order. But, the positive affect will be to support these four remaining Ponds in the West by giving them a connection to an active region. Utah, Colorado and Seattle will join the Central Region and Arizona will join the Southern Region. Together, we believe can build up and support these Ponds to more growth and focus on precepts of our Order.

Also, during the year, the officers voted to increase the insurance support that the Grand Nest provides for all of its Ponds and Puddles. We added Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability and Cyber Liability to the already existing policies in place.

We received some national attention during the year. First, through the *charity issue* of the *Insurance Journal* and Linda Meik's interview that was reported in *Review Med*. And, secondly, through the promotional receptions at the Property Loss Research Bureau (PLRB) regional claims conferences in the United States. There are three regions that were covered, east, central and west. And, Grand Supervisor, Linda Meik, managed to organize a promotional reception at all of them. As mentioned earlier, I was with her for the conference in Columbus, Ohio to support the Order and the Central Region and the Columbus Pond. These events are really starting to make a difference in name recognition of our Order and educating the insurance community regarding why we do what we do...to give back!

We have been blessed with great leadership at the Grand Nest Officer level these past many years, all of whom inspired me to give my very best to continue to advance the strength and vitality of our beloved Order.

I am confident that Linda Meik, as your MLGG for the ensuing year, will continue to carry that torch and help us

(Continued on page 18)

## Grand Nest History

build the infrastructure and communication and vision to show others how we can truly give back through the Blue Goose International.

But, she cannot do it without your help, support her and all of her soon to be elected officers and together we can build a bright future for our Order!

I would like to thank my fellow Grand Nest Officers and PMLGG's who participated in the many decisions and discussions we have had this year and were always supportive and committed to building a bright future for our Order. And, I would like to thank my business partners and the leadership of our firm for supporting me these past five years in service to the Blue Goose. And, I would also like to thank the members of the St. Louis Pond especially to those who served on the convention committee. But mostly, I would like to thank my lovely wife, Libby, and our two beautiful daughters, Alicia and Abby, for their love and support.

I would encourage each of you to consider how you can further the Blue Goose mission back home and make a difference in your community and your home and your respective nations.

May God bless the United States and Canada and may God bless the Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, International.

Fraternally yours,

Randall Wilson  
Most Loyal Grand Gander  
Honorable Order of the Blue Goose International



Character, Charity and Fellowship since 1906



Convention Pin Banner



*Members of the Columbus Pond receiving the Kentucky Pond No Drop Out Award from Grand Guardian Kim Bilbrey*



*PMLGG Randy Wilson riding high at the PBR*

## Grand Nest History

### Newly Elected Most Loyal Grand Gander Acceptance Speech 110th Grand Nest Convention Linda Meik, MLGG 2016-2017



PMLGG Randy Wilson, fellow Grand Nest Officers, past PMLGG's, delegates, fellow ganders and guests, it is a great privilege and honour for me, that I accept this nomination to serve in the office as Most Loyal Grand Gander.

To reach this pivotal spot, there are so many folks to thank. To begin with there is my family, who has allowed me to flap these Blue Goose wings over the past 20+ years in all sort of ways. And, what is so great, is my granddaughters have never once thought their GG (Gorgeous Grandmother) was crazy.

I would like to thank all of the members of the Southern Region for the faith they entrusted in me to be their Grand Nest officer as we move toward the 2017 convention in Savannah next summer. I would especially like to thank Ray Wicker, Keith Strohecker and Mary Kay Marchetti for putting up with my craziness and persistence. A special thanks to each Pond and Puddle for their commitments in pulling together for one great upcoming Regional Convention. One thing we have all learned with the complexity of this task is that it takes more than just an individual, or a Pond to organize and plan a convention. It takes a Region.....!

I want to take a few moments to thank Randy for being one awesome leader this past year. My friend, you are one hell-of-an act to follow. In fact, I tried to do a little research on Randy, as I wanted to see if one could find any antics or misgivings on him, especially after the St. Louis Pond all those accolades last year on you, when you were nominated as the MLGG. Trust me I explored several corners of the world around Randy Wilson. He has either burned the bodies well, or being an accountant has financially hushed the mouths appropriately...but I did find one person who was brave enough to share a story....

So probably about 18-20 yrs ago, Randy invited me and my young son (probably around 6 or 7 yrs. old at the time) to a Blues game. I believe the Blues were playing Toronto. We had good seats, very close to the ice and close to one of the goals. When Toronto was shooting at our end, a group of Toronto fans sitting a couple of rows behind us would yell in unison, "CuJo (Curtis Joseph) Sucks!" This went on for quite a while. After a while, I could tell they were getting under Randy's skin. If you didn't know it Randy doesn't like people booing his team or players when the opponent is the away team. Sooooo.....after he could not tolerate this any longer, he stood up, turned around to the Toronto fans and while pointing at them yelled, "No, you suck"!! He immediately realized what he had done and began apologizing to me and my son.

To this day, Randy still feels bad for his outburst that night with my son sitting there, I laugh and advise him that my son has never been the same since that night. (Steven Boyer)



Sooooo, Randy, I thought it might be good to give you something that would allow you to vent your frustration semi quietly and not embarrass yourself greatly...Randy, let us know if it works!

Seriously, our Blue Goose waters sometimes are rough and we need a lighthouse to guide us along the shoreline, so we can dock properly. Randy you have been like a beacon of light, that lighthouse for Blue Goose this past year. And with that I would like to present you a gift for all the Grand Nest Officers that symbolizes this lighthouse beacon you have been.

*MLGG Linda Meik presenting  
PMLGG Randy Wilson with a  
glass sailing ship*

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## Grand Nest History

Today, I would like to thank all of you, whom I count as friends and extended family to this farm girl from South Dakota. I can honestly say that these many years as a fellow Blue Goose Member, DMLGG, a Regional Officer and ultimately a Grand Nest Officer, I always admired and looked up to our current and past Grand Nest Officers, I never in my wildest dreams felt that I would be embarking on the role of MLGG for this organization that I have loved being a part of for over 21 years.

★1916 - 1931

Our organization is steeped in history and traditions, which make us unique from many other organizations. It is amazing to think how this organization was founded. In 1956, Paul Rudd, Grand Nest Historian and a Past Wielder, said Blue Goose was founded on a cold, rainy day in 1906 as a lark to help pass the time in fellowship with, and in the company of good friends.



PMLGG Paul A. Rudd

Today, we are experiencing some *winds of change*, but what they created that day to address a need is still valid today: Character, Charity, and Fellowship.

**Let me talk about these three Precepts: CHARACTER, CHARITY & FELLOWSHIP.**

To me Leadership is all about character and attitude. How we respond or deal with what has happened to us determines our **CHARACTER** and who we are. Leadership includes temperament, personality, disposition, energy, stamina, strength, and most important one's moral fibre. Leaders don't light a fire under someone, they light a fire within, and our challenge today for each of us is to create those sparks of fire within each Blue Goose member.

110 years ago, the founders of our Order believed in the concept of 'giving back'...**giving back to their community in charity.** Our Ponds, each in their own way, has and is providing needed support for a variety of charities.

There also is giving back to each other in **good fellowship** and the development of friendships throughout the US and Canada and giving back to ourselves in the **further development of our character.** They knew then as we do today...that as long as we hold true to these virtues, our Order will continue. We honour the memory of all those who came before us and cherish the many friendships we have today. We are truly stronger together.

Let's each one of us make a commitment to reach out to all avenues of the insurance industry and share with them our unique focus of giving back to the communities and bring them into our circle of fellowship. Pushing our charity focus and fellowship attribute forward will help to continue the transformation of Blue Goose as one of the most vibrant organizations.

I know that we would not have accomplished our goals without the commitment of our industry partners, sponsors and our members that unselfishly volunteer their time. The indication of these outstanding groups or individuals has allowed our organization to continue from a **pathway of success onto a journey of significance.**



John C. Maxwell

John C. Maxwell, a New York Times bestselling author, coach, and speaker stated, "I know a lot of people who believe they are successful because they have everything they want, they have added value to themselves, but true significance comes when you add value to others-and you can't have true success without significance." Blue Goose has demonstrated its "significance" through the **CHARACTER** of its members and the **CHARITY** work it has accomplished.

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## Grand Nest History

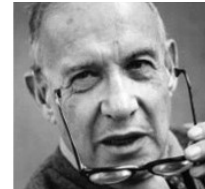
*“Integrity is also the most fundamental leadership characteristic. Without integrity, people will not follow you, and if you have no followers, you are not leading.”*

**MEMBERSHIP.....MEMBERSHIP.....MEMBERSHIP**

Membership continues to be our top focused concern as we move forward on this “**Journey of Significance**” How we look at things can impact this journey. For example, when gold is mined, several tons of dirt must be removed to get even an ounce of gold. Now one does not go into the mine looking for dirt, but one goes in looking for gold.

Coaching and guiding our members, our Ponds and Puddles, educating others about Blue Goose is how we mine for our Blue Goose gold and build a stronger organization. Let’s continue the promotion of better branding of our Order through the by-line, **Character, Charity and Fellowship since 1906**

According to Peter Drucker, “Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hope, but no plans.” Let’s help each member with a commitment to our three precepts in order for them to see the promise of this bright Blue Goose future. And let’s help each member make plans for, and with, the future of Blue Goose.



*Peter Drucker*

We each must step up to move the organization forward. Just sitting and talking about it is not going to get us down the road, nor sitting back and waiting for someone else to make the difference. This past year our current MLGG was instrumental in seeing that a Pond Operational Guide was created for the various Ponds/Puddles to utilize. To continue building in this area, I am going to embark on this challenge road by calling upon the Grand Nest Officers, PMLGG’s and other Blue Goose members to assist in updating all documentation on the various aspects of this organization. We all need to work on putting more clarity into several areas such as various committees, what is needed to host a convention, Grand Nest, Pond & Puddle officer roles and the various awards of the Blue Goose Organization. I would also like to develop tutorials in key areas which will help the new & old Ponds & Puddles’ officers grasp a clearer understanding of the organization. In other words, my goal is work collaboratively to improve the infrastructure of our great organization.

Nowadays, it’s rare that people work nine to five. We’re more connected than ever before, so many are working longer hours and with more commitments. With this in mind, it’s important for our organization’s membership to be passionate people, who genuinely care about Blue Goose, its purpose and core values. **Purpose is no longer a buzzword. It’s a must-have.** Working hard for something we don’t care about is called stress; but working for something we love is called passion. I know everyone in this room today loves Blue Goose, this Blue Goose passion and purpose will keep members focused on Blue Goose’s goals and help the on-going building of a successful organization. Passionate and purposeful members are the lifeblood of our Order and keep us delivering a standout organizational culture. **Without purpose, a Pond is just putting in time. A Pond without purpose is a Pond without Passion!**

Thank you all, for entrusting me with this most honourable position. I am especially proud to serve with these Grand Nest Officers to continue our mission of service and to face the many challenges and opportunities of the Blue Goose today and tomorrow. I am proud of the hard work of the Committees, DMLGG’s and all of you, together, we WILL meet the challenges we are facing. These challenges include membership-both growth and retention; communications; and leadership, as well promotion of the activities and good work of the order. And, perhaps most important is the mission of re-dedication to our heritage of building character, supporting charity and fostering fellowship, as we continue on this **journey of significance together.**

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## Grand Nest History



*PMLGG Lorena  
Kohlruss*

Just a few short years (5 to be exact, but who is counting) Lorena Kohlruss ended her MLGG acceptance speech with a quote by Henry Ford, which five years later, I too find this quote very appropriate for the Blue Goose today...”**coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress; working together is success.**”

Let’s continue the successful momentum we have been achieving during these last few years! Remember that the **WINDS OF CHANGE** are upon us, but together we can make this a **JOURNEY OF SIGNIFICANCE!**

In closing, let me share the words of a poem by Frank Outlaw, who took the word “**WATCH**” and created this poem for one to contemplate:

*Watch your thoughts; they become your words.  
Watch your words, they become your actions.  
Watch your actions, they become your habits.  
Watch your habits, they become your character.  
Watch you character, it becomes your destiny.*



*Poet Frank Outlaw*

I look forward to seeing all of you, in Savannah, Georgia for the 111th Grand Nest Convention.

Linda S. Meik, Most Loyal Grand Gander  
Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, International  
Journey of Significance through Character, Charity & Fellowship since 1906



*Chippewa Square, Forest Gump Bench  
Savannah, Georgia*

## Grand Nest History

### Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, International Judge Advocate Report 2015-2016

The Officers of the Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, International are dedicated and committed to this charitable, educational and social organization and truly believe in its principles and long term development and improvement. The leadership, vision, passion and hard work of your Most Loyal Grand Gander, Randy Wilson, and the entire Grand Nest, are commendable. The same is true for those who have dedicated themselves at the local Ponds and Puddles throughout the United States and Canada. For it is in our communities that our work is accomplished and necessary.

In order to foster a better future of the Blue Goose and unite the resources and talents necessary for proper administration and harmony among the Regions, much thought, time and effort has been engendered to accomplish this venture. As a result, you have presented with a proposed amendment to realign the Regions from five to four. The proposal was approved by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee as being in due and proper form and distributed to all of the members of the Order for their review to provide instructions to their delegates for the vote at the convention. There was a comment made about the proposal that the wording on page three, item (d) “Beginning with...” was incorrect in that it says 111th Grand Nest Convention.” However, that provision is correct as it relates to when the next advancing line officer will be elected and not when the amendment will take effect. As such, there is no need to modify the proposal at the convention.

There was an additional recommendation to further amend the proposal for realignment to add language regarding the duties and responsibilities of the Grand Keeper and to change the name of the **Grand Keeper** to the **Grand Financial Officer**. This proposal was determined by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee as having several technical problems and not related to the substance of the underlying realignment proposal. Further, it would require a substantial rewrite of the original proposal. As such, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee has not recommended that this be sent for consideration. Consideration of changes in the duties and name of the Grand Keeper may be addressed at subsequent Grand Nest Meetings once the realignment amendment is finalized.

There was also a memorandum from PMLGG Lewer indicating that there were errors in the Grand Nest Bulletin for the fiscal year ended June 2015. The recommendations are duly noted for preparation of the Grand Nest Bulletin for MLGG Wilson’s year in office.

We also completed and finalized a *privacy statement* for the use with the Blue Goose Database that facilitated the cyber liability insurance coverage that was added this fiscal year by the Grand Nest Officers. We also added a Directors’ and Officers’ Liability insurance policy during this fiscal year. These policies also protect each of our Ponds.

There were several emails inquiring about your approval on copyright such as the video prepared by one of the Ponds. We need to be careful about how we describe our Order to the outside, we are a fraternal organization under 501 © 8 of the Internal Revenue Code and not a public charity. We are also not a pass through entity for charitable contributions like United Way for example. However, if we (or one of our Ponds or Puddles) have a charitable event and the proceeds go to a specific charity, we can promote that charitable purpose of the event and contributions to that event may be deductible depending on the circumstances.



*Judge Advocate  
Robert W. Cockerham*

*(Continued on page 24)*

## Grand Nest History

On behalf of and for the good of our Order, there have been numerous communications via email, telephone and in person, it seems on a daily basis, from not only the Grand Nest Officers, but also from so many loyal and true members throughout our Order. This shows a genuine belief in our purposes and true love and admiration you have for the Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, its members and others who benefit from your constant good works and efforts.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve you as your Judge Advocate and I look forward to continued enthusiastic, enjoyable and rewarding experiences in our service to God, our Countries and humankind.

Most Loyally and Ganderly,

Bob

Robert W. Cockerham  
Judge Advocate  
2015-2016



Character, Charity and Fellowship since 1906



*Convention Sponsors*



*Ganders with their Rush for Gosling tambourines. In the background Ganders Phil Sbar, left and Mike Nardulli right*

## Grand Nest History

### GKGGGE Audit Report Friday July 22, 2016



*Grand Keeper Dan Rich*

On the weekend of June 25th and 26th, I had the pleasure of visiting Terry and Lynne Maloney and staying at their beautiful lake house. Terry picked me up at the airport, and on the ride to his house he gave me a tour of the history and architecture of downtown Milwaukee. The highlight of the ride was seeing the Town Hall where the opening of Laverne and Shirley was filmed.

I had a great weekend there. We rode around the lake in Terry's boat, enjoyed a fine dinner in a nearby restaurant where we drank Masterson's Rye from Canada, and shared an appetizer plate that featured sliced kangaroo.

On Sunday we spent many unsuccessful hours trying to hook up Terry's laptop to a wireless printer before we gave up and loaded the thing into the car to go to Office Max for help.

But we did have time for some serious business and reviewed the Honourable Order's finances. We were budgeted to have a surplus of \$1,700 this year and good news is we ended up with a surplus of \$2,700. But when we looked inside the numbers you'll see that we achieved that result by the skin of our teeth.

The issues of non-payment of dues and late payment of dues continue to be a problem. Our budgeted income from dues fell \$13,000 short of our goal due to major corrections in our membership numbers. And had we not rallied to collect almost three thousand dollars in dues last month, we would have had a deficit for the year.

So with the dues so adversely affecting our revenue, it was only through expense management that we were able to avoid a deficit for the year.

One expense the Officers chose to incur this year resulted in the Honourable Order's Insurance & Bonding expense going \$2,700 over budget. This reflected our purchase of cyber Insurance to protect us as more and more of our Ponds expand their on-line footprint and embrace the use of on-line payments for members dues and event registration or sponsorships.

I'd like to thank Terry and Lynn for their hospitality and generosity they exhibited to me during my visit. And I want to congratulate Terry on his leadership for another successful financial year.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Rich, GKGGGE

## Grand Nest Officers and Spouses 2016-2017



*Left to Right Standing: Tim Bilbrey, Mark Robertson, Terry Maloney, Dan Rich, Gary Kohlruss, Randy Wilson, Libby Wilson, John Bishop*  
*Left to Right Seated: Kim Bilbrey, Peggy Robertson, Lynn Maloney, Susan Rich, Lorena Kohlruss, Linda Meik*

## Grand Nest Officers 2016-2017



*Standing-GHN John Bishop, GSOF Mark Robertson, GWGQ Terry Maloney, GGN Dan Rich, GKGGE Randy Wilson*  
*Seated-GCOG Kim Bilbrey, MLGG Linda Meik, J. A. Lorena Kohlruss*