

HISTORY OF THE GRAND NEST

Honorable Order of the Blue Goose, International

2010– 2011



105th GRAND NEST CONVENTION
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
July 20-23, 2011

Joseph C. Coccia

Prepared by:
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Most Loyal Grand Gander

GRAND NEST HISTORY

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GRAND NEST OFFICERS

2010 - 2011

Most Loyal Grand Gander



Joseph C. Coccia

Grand Keeper



Bill Olson

Grand Supervisor



Lorena Kohlruss

Grand Wielder:



Terrence M. Maloney

Grand Custodian



Guy Charron

Judge Advocate:



Robert Ross

Grand Guardian



John Paris



GRAND NEST HISTORY



105th GRAND NEST CONVENTION JULY 20-23, 2011 AMWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



250 Ganders, spouses and guests, including 30 children from across the US and Canada journeyed to Grand Rapids, Michigan to attend the 105th Blue Goose Grand Nest Convention from July 20-23, 2011. The convention was held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in the city's downtown area – within easy walking distance of a myriad of restaurants and attractions, such as the Gerald Ford Museum and the Grand Rapids Public Museum.



Wednesday July 20, 2011

The Convention kicked off with a terrific Michigan Migration Welcome Party at the Amway Grand Plaza's Embassy Ballroom. The fabulous food and beverage menu had one thing in common- all components of the food stations were Michigan delicacies, ranging from fish to cherry pies, and the products of Michigan breweries and wineries. Roving magicians entertained the adults, and balloon animal artists entertained the kids.

Thursday July 21, 2011

After a full breakfast, a bag-piper led us into the Ambassador Ballroom East for the Opening Ceremonies. The presentation of the US, Canada, and Michigan flags was performed by athletes from the Special Olympics of Michigan. Most Loyal Grand Gander Joe Coccia called the meeting to order, and introduced Pastor Dennis Morrow of the St. Peter and Paul Church for the invocation. The national anthems were sung beautifully by Shannon Mason.



Joe introduced several Guest Speakers. First up was Joyce Miller, the Director of Conventions at the Grand Amway Hotel for a welcome address. Next was Lois Arnold, the President & CEO of Special Olympics of Michigan. Her remarks gave us a lot of background information and facts on the Special Olympics program (they are in 180 countries organized into 7 world regions). Brian Hustofsky, a 14-year veteran of Special Olympics competition and a "global messenger" for the program delighted the crowd with his entertaining remarks on the competition and camaraderie of the program. Don Van Oeveren, a Special Olympics dad (and father of Katie, one of our flag-bearers) gave a touching parent's

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perspective to the morning. After a video was shared with the group, MLGG Joe Coccia reminded everyone that Special Olympics is the international charity of Blue Goose, and he presented Lois Arnold with a donation on behalf of the Michigan Pond.

MLGG Coccia introduced the head table, the Grand Nest spouses, the PMLGGs, and DMLGGs. Convention Chair Joe Kosdrosky addressed the Grand Nest with some important schedule and activity reminders for the balance of the day.



The Convention's Memorial Service was conducted by Jane Rogaliner, Christian Fox, and Tod Felton of the Ohio Pond. The program started with a lovely bagpipe rendition of *Amazing Grace*. The name of each Pond was shown on a screen, and then announced, as the members of that Pond stood in unison. If a Pond lost a member during the year, the name was displayed on the screen and the date of his or her Last Long Flight was also displayed. Candles were lit and roses were placed as the names were called.



The Hartford Pond stood as Joe McDevitt was remembered. PMLGG and Grand Nest Historian John Zeldam gave a moving eulogy for PMLGG Barry Snyder. John did a fabulous job of describing Barry's personality and mannerisms, and excelled at capturing the traits that endeared Barry to so many people.

The St. Louis Pond conducted a "Lewis and Clark Expedition" themed Model Initiation ceremony, complete with appearances by President Thomas Jefferson, Sacagawea, members of the Corps of Cadets, and of course Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Twelve new ganders were initiated, and the St. Louis team members invited those in attendance to renew their commitment to Blue Goose by participating in the Initiation Ritual.



The All Industry Luncheon featured a riveting address by local photographer Robert De Jonge. He spoke of his Survivor Quest project to photograph and document the last surviving WW I veterans. De Jonge spoke about how he travelled across the US, Canada, and England to meet the veterans, all of whom were at least 100 years old, how they shared stories about their lives, and described the circumstances under which their historic photos were taken. De Jonge started the project in 2006, and during the 2011 year, the last remaining WW I veteran passed away. DeJonge is now actively involved in efforts to have a WW I Memorial built in Washington DC.

After the luncheon, the regional meetings were held between 2:30 and 3:30, followed by several Grand Nest Special Committee Meetings between 3:30 and 4:30.

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The evening's Family Night Dinner was held at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. The museum offered a bonanza of exhibits on a wide-ranging variety of topics including autos, technology, music, electronics, toys, civil war weapons, stamps, money, immigration and culture. There were many food stations sprinkled throughout the museum offering a delectable choice of dinner, desserts and beverage items.



Friday July 22, 2011

MLGG Joe Coccia called Friday's meeting to order and introduced Grand Wielder Terry Maloney for the roll call of delegates. First, Terry asked the first-timers to stand and be recognized, and then he thanked his sons for supporting the prior evening's Hospitality Suites. Terry called the Ponds in alphabetical order, as the delegates from Alabama to Wisconsin checked in.

Grand Supervisor Lorena Kohlruss introduced MLGG Joe Coccia to report on his year in office. Joe said that his year actually started in November 2009, a result of the sudden passing of MLGG Bill Wasekanes. Joe confessed that "one cannot hold the office without the help of his colleagues, and fellow Grand Nest officers." He personally thanked each of the Grand Nest officers, and the DMLGGs, and the members of the Michigan Convention Committee. Joe

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related that shortly upon his installation as MLGG, Blue Goose learned of the death of Grand Historian Barry Snyder. PMLGG and former GN Historian John Zeldam was named as the Acting GN Historian. After a search was conducted for a permanent replacement, Joe soon announced that PMLGG Jerry Hale would be named as the Grand Nest's new Historian.

MLGG Coccia recapped the many committees he organized –Membership, Regional Realignment, Grand Nest Website, Marketing & Communication, and Convention Conceptual. Joe highlighted the many Pond bright spots across North America, and cited the Greater Chicago, Louisiana, Ohio, and Tennessee Ponds as examples. He spotlighted Tennessee as having benefited from the Blue Goose presence at the 2011 Nashville PLRB, just as the Texas Pond benefited from Blue Goose's participation in the 2010 San Antonio PLRB. Blue Goose will look forward to a similar participation at the 2012 Orlando PLRB, where hopefully the Florida Pond will benefit.

Joe urged our members to embrace change, and expressed his pride and humility at becoming the latest PMLGG hailing from the Michigan Pond; tracing the history of that small group back to 1912.

Grand Wielder Maloney's report gave an overview of how Blue Goose was faring "in a troubled economy." Despite the economic slowdown, there were "rays of light" reflected by our successes in Ohio and Vancouver. He spoke of the value that our members get from attending a convention, and of the benefits of a good family environment, and how children get to meet friends from all over the US and Canada.

He stressed that our Ponds would receive many benefits by creating and maintaining their own websites, and offered links to all the Ponds from the Grand Nest's site. He hopes that Ponds without websites would find that valuable "point person" to take charge of putting his or her Pond on-line.

The ten largest Ponds were announced, with Michigan (336) narrowly besting Quebec (334) for the top spot. The rest of the top ten were Ontario, St. Louis, Hartford, Edmonton, Seattle, National Capital, Nova Scotia, and Wisconsin.



Acting Grand Nest Historian John Zeldam gave his report and recounted how he accepted that position on September 8, 2010 after the sudden passing of Barry Snyder. John went to Barry's home in Maryland, and transported some of the Blue Goose historical archives to Michigan. Some of this material was on display at the convention. John learned that Barry's computer had been hacked- some of his files were recovered but some were not. John wrote the Grand Nest history for the year, and posted it on the Grand Nest website. John said that in honor of Barry, we should make an effort to improve, enhance, and restore the archives. John acknowledged and welcomed incoming Grand Nest Historian Jerry Hale, and then thanked the Michigan Pond and his wife Peggy for their support.

Judge Advocate Robert Ross opened his report by thanking MLGG Joe Coccia and called him "a master communicator" for the way he reached out to the Ponds and shared information with them. Robert said the Grand Nest has been active in addressing the future needs of Blue Goose; specifically, in the areas of officer succession and vacancy, charity, future conventions and regions, membership, and expanding our reach into the insurance industry.

Grand Keeper Bill Olson thanked Terry Maloney and his family for the hospitality extended to him during his audit. Bill reported that the finances are in good shape, and that last year we had a \$17K surplus based on income of \$77K and expenses of \$60K.

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The Grand Nest Committee reports on Charity, Communication, and Convention Planning followed. Grand Custodian Guy Charron summarized the wide variety of charitable pursuits our Ponds were active in during the year in service volunteer projects, financial donations and “humane gestures” across Canada and the US. The Ponds that responded to his documentation requests reported a combined total of \$125,000 donated to charitable organizations. Guy gave recognition to the Hartford Pond for their varied activities of charitable pursuits and community volunteerism.

Grand Keeper Bill Olson’s Marketing Report was compiled in a year that was “difficult for associations”. He spoke of the “big problem” that membership retention is becoming, and asked us to think about why people do not renew their memberships. Our dues are inexpensive, and our members get value for their dues, such as networking, accessing special information, advocacy, Continuing Ed, etc. Our pursuit of charitable pursuits is very rewarding, and belonging to the organization gives us a sense of purpose. Our top draws to find new members continue to be word-of-mouth and our websites. But Bill said we also need to embrace newer arenas such as technology platforms and social media. Bill urged all Ponds to maintain their websites and launch a website if they do not have one. Key goals for the organization are focusing on member retention, updating the Grand Nest website, full Pond participation in websites that include e-mail addresses, phone numbers for key contacts, and meeting schedules. He asked our Ponds to partner with each other in social functions, and to plan at least two educational meetings a year. He urged the Ponds to use social media (such as Linked In) to promote Blue Goose and stress our charitable actions. He recommended that the Grand Nest allocate a small budget for marketing and advertising.

Grand Keeper John Paris reported on Convention Planning. He was pleased to report that there were Ponds that have expressed interest in hosting a convention out into 2020.

The morning’s program concluded with the presentation of the Grand Nest Awards.

The **Membership Cup** for the greatest % of increased membership was won by the **Texas Pond**.

The **Fellowship Cup** for the lowest % drops & resignations was won by the **National Capital Pond**.

The **No Drop Out Cup**, awarded for no dropped members, was won by the **Manitoba Pond**.

The **Peace Garden Award Cup**, awarded to the Pond with the most first time convention attendees, was won by the **Dayton Pond**.

The **Link of the Year**, awarded to a Pond with an Outstanding Website, was won by the **Greater Chicago Pond**.

The **Gordon Crowther Charity Award**, awarded to a Pond with outstanding charitable activities, was won by the **Virginia Pond**.

The **Regional Challenge Cup**, awarded to the region with excellence in five combined membership criteria, was won by the **Western 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 **Seattle Pond**.

The **Central Region** Charity Awards for the Highest % increase and Most new & reinstated members were both won by the **Ohio Pond**.

The **Southern Region** Charity Awards for the Highest % increase and Most new & reinstated members were both won by the **Texas Pond**.

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The **Eastern Region** Charity Awards for the highest % increase was won by the **Penn Pond**, and the award for the Most new & reinstated members was won by the **Hartford Pond**.

The **Canadian Region** Charity Awards for the Highest % increase was won by the **Nova Scotia Pond**, and the award for the Most new & reinstated members was won by the **Ontario Pond**.



Saturday July 23, 2011

After breakfast, the Alberta Pond presented a preview of the 2012 Convention, to be held on July 25-28, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Calgary, Alberta. Their presentation started with a screen shot from Google Earth showing a goose taking off from Grand Rapids, Michigan and flying across the continent into Calgary. We were reminded that Ganders from the US will need a passport to travel into Canada. Some of the attractions being considered for the convention include the 628' high Calgary Tower, the Glenbow Museum, Calaway Park (Western Canada's largest amusement park), the Canadian Olympic Park, the Calgary Zoo, Spruce Meadows (Equestrian Center), Drumheller, Alberta (Dinosaur and fossil site and museum). Nearby attractions not too far from the Calgary area include Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper National Park.

The room rate at the Hyatt Regency will be at \$189, and the registration fee will be between \$300 and \$325.



Terry Maloney called the delegate roll call and recognized a formal motion that next year's Convention will be held in Calgary. The motion was seconded, and accepted by acclamation.

Nominating speeches for the 2011-12 slate of Grand Nest officers ensued, and PMLGG John Zeldam installed Lorena Kohlruss of the Alberta Pond as Most Loyal Grand Gander, Guy Charron of the Quebec Pond as Grand Supervisor, John Paris of

the Utah Pond as Grand Custodian, Bill Olson of the National Capital Pond as Grand Guardian, and Randy Wilson of the St. Louis Pond as Grand Keeper. Robert Ross and Grand Wielder Maloney presented the new officers with their Grand Nest pins and ribbons. MLGG Lorena Kohlruss was joined by her husband Gary, her baby daughter Aria, and the Alberta delegates as she received her MMLG pin.

Randy Wilson, the Grand Nest's newest officer shared his thoughts with the convention. He spoke of his pride in belonging to the Honorable Order, and thanked the St. Louis Pond, the Central Region, and the Grand Nest for the support he has received over the years. He sees our key challenges as membership and growth, and will work with the Grand Nest to meet those challenges. He displayed a Blue Goose tractor trailer, used as a fundraiser for the 2001 St Louis Convention. He donated the trailer to our historical archives, and acknowledged the role played by the late George Kindler in the development of the trailer project.



Most Loyal Grand Gander Lorena Kohlruss' Address of Acceptance followed. Thanking the leaders of the Alberta Pond, she accepted her appointment "with privilege and with honor." Lorena observed that her driving forces are the same as Blue Goose's – a sense of family and a sense of community. Acutely aware of our decrease in membership, her primary objective will be a revitalization of the Order. She will stress Pond websites as a crucial aid to the health of the Order, and will look at "at large" memberships, (perhaps as a way to leverage all of our PLRB contacts?), social media, and regional realignment. Lorena concluded her remarks by announcing that Terry Maloney and Robert

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Ross will again serve on the Grand Nest in their respective roles as Grand Wielder and Judge Advocate, and that PMLGG Jerry Hale would join the Grand Nest as the new GN Historian.

PMLGG JoAnn Clark reported on Joe Coccia's year in office as MLGG. Grand Wielder Terry Maloney asked all of the Michigan ganders in attendance to stand and be recognized for their long tenure of service to Blue Goose. Joe Coccia was presented with his PMLGG pin, plaque, and Life membership status.

The morning session ended with a special presentation by Eastern Region DMLGG Dan Rich and several members of the Hartford Pond. Dan recounted Barry Snyder's 2009 request that the Ponds start to preserve and document their history. The Hartford Pond had produced a 101-page book on the first 25 years of their history, documenting the years from 1954-1980. Three of the books were presented to individuals that have shown a commitment to preserving Blue Goose history. Hartford PMLGs Bob Partridge and Wendy Hubbard presented the first book to Pat Snyder. PMLG Jim Gustin presented the second book to PMLGG and former GN Historian John Zeldam, and MLG Jon Hale presented the third book to his father, PMLGG and incoming Grand Nest Historian Jerry Hale.



2011-2012 Grand Nest Officers

Left to right: Lorena Kohlruss, MLGG; Guy Charron, GSOF; John Parris, GCON;
Bill Olson, GGOP; Randy Wilson, GKGGE.

The Family Luncheon was held on site with a baseball theme. There were souvenir bats on the tables, and lunch fare included hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, cotton candy and popcorn. The children showed off the many hand decorated back-packs they had created, and a presentation followed where the packs were donated to the Grand Rapids Public School system.

Entertainment was provided by a Dueling Piano show from the nearby Mojos Piano Bar and Restaurant. They played an amazing variety of sing-along favorites including Crocodile Rock, Old Time Rock 'N Roll, Bad Leroy Brown, Hey Baby, Brown Eyed Girl, Sweet Caroline, and Johnny B. Goode. It was a high-energy group participation show.

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That evening, the Convention culminated with a cocktail reception and Grand Nest Ball. Pre-dinner entertainment was provided by musical impressionist Brandon Styles who performed as a rainbow of entertainers ranging from Elvis Presley to Frank Sinatra to Michael Jackson. The Banquet Band was The Hip Pocket, an R&B horn band that was tremendous. The band was supplemented by PMLGG Joe Coccia who sat in on drums for a few songs.

The Michigan Pond hosted an outstanding convention, with Open Bars at every function, and a full breakfast every morning, including the morning after the Banquet. We are very grateful to Convention Co-chairs Dick Chenard, Joe Lothschultz, Fred Fernandez, and Dave Kosdrosky for their efforts to plan and produce such a successful and thoroughly enjoyable event.

Article by Dan Rich

Photos provided by Neil Miller



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**Most Loyal Grand Ganders Report
Joseph C. Coccia, MLGG 2010-2011
105th Grand Nest Convention
Amway Grand Hotel
Grand Rapids, MI**

Grand Nest Officers, past and present, Delegates, Ganders and Guests.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as an Officer to the Grand nest. I can honestly say that over these many years as a fellow Blue Goose Member, be it a Member of the Detroit Puddle Holiday Party, a Committee Chairperson, a Regional Officer and ultimately a Grand Nest Officer, I always looked up to our current and past Grand Nest Officers. I never in my wildest dreams felt that I could achieve such a lofty position.

My term as Most Loyal Grand Gander really started following the untimely death of MLGG Bill Wasekanes on November 13, 2009. Serving the Order in the position of Grand Keeper, Grand Guardian, Grand Custodian and Grand Supervisor did afford me a certain amount of experience on the National level, so despite the suddenness of Bill's death, I felt comfortable yet a bit apprehensive taking on the role of MLGG at that time. I strongly believe that one does not hold such an office as MLGG and is not successful in the position without the help and commitment of many loyal Members.

With that said, any accomplishments that occurred during my tenure as Most Loyal Grand Gander only occurred because of the efforts and support of my fellow Grand Nest Officers. From the down to earth advice received from our Grand Supervisor, Lorena Kohlruss, to the funny yet sincere dedication of our Grand Custodian, Guy Charron, to the quiet yet firm resolve from our Grand Guardian, John Paris, to the challenging but always looking out for the other guy attitude from our Grand Keeper, Bill Olson, to the always there with an answer to your question on protocol from our Grand Wielder, Terry Maloney, to my own personal Lawyer and Judge Advocate, Robert Ross. And I cannot forget my mentor over the 25 years, Grand Historian, PMLGG and friend, John Zeldam. Let me say without any hesitation that my success and the success of the officer of Most Loyal Grand Gander this past year is due to the hard work of my fellow Grand Nest Officers.

The untiring work of our DMLGG's from our five Regions many of whom are here today support Our Order and work behind the scenes to foster membership and our high ideals need our DMLGG's, and I appreciate their loyalty.

The support and work of my fellow Central Region Members and their Officers, Jane Rogaliner, Kim Bilbrey and Dave Beger, They have been there since the beginning of my rise with the Grand Nest. Many of the Central Region Members work behind the scenes, not looking for recognition but only there to carry out the responsibilities of our Region that is asked of them.

But the support does not stop at the Grand Nest level or the Regional level. My fellow Michigan Pond Members, my Detroit Puddle friends, my Michigan Convention Chairpersons all have been there to do what had to be done so I could carry out my responsibilities as your Most Loyal Grand Gander.

I single out the Big Four – my Convention Chairpersons Dick Chenard, Joe Lothschutz, Fred Fernandez and Dave Kosdrosky. I single out the Michigan Convention Committee Chairpersons, so many of them that time does not permit me to acknowledge them all but I urge you to look them up in you Convention Program and personally thank them. I thank them now. This Convention and my role of MLGG is the total result of their commitment to me, to the Michigan Pond and to Our Honorable Order.

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I have had a wonderful yet very busy year as your MLGG. I mentioned all of those great people because anything that I accomplished could not have occurred had everyone not believed in Our Order or performed their job to the best of their ability.

As you know, besides losing Bill Wasekanes in November of 2009, we also lost our Grand Historian, Barry Snyder on August 15, 2010. Yes sadly, this occurred very shortly after the Penn Pond Convention this past July after Barry had agreed to serve another year as our Grand Historian. I reported that after a call out to our membership, it was announced recently by incoming MLGG Lorena Kohlruss that Jerry Hale, PMLGG from the Hartford Pond would be appointed at this convention as the new Grand Historian.

We have standing Grand Nest Committees that are doing the work of Our Order and committed to making you proud to be a Member. Lorena is chairing the Committee to look into how the "Member at Large" section of our Constitution and By-Laws can be called upon to bolster our membership in Canada and the US. Guy Charron took on the task of looking into Regional Re-alignment after the Grand Nest was presented with a Constitutional Amendment that we would have been voting on at this Convention but decided to table until Guy's Committee could do their due diligence and look at alternatives.

John Paris is chairing the Grand Nest Committee to look at revamping our Grand Nest website so that it is timely, accurate and attractive to prospective members. While Bill Olson is chairing the committee of Marketing and Communication, a committee that all should be watching closely because of the research into the Social Media landscape and how the Blue Goose with its membership issues could benefit from participating.

Our PMLGG's also have continued to support Our Order. PMLGG JoAnn Clark from the Seattle Pond is chairing a Special Grand Nest Conceptual Convention Committee to outline current Grand Nest Convention traditions for future conventions. PMLGG's Tim Seider from Wisconsin, Larry Lewer from Tennessee, John Bishop from Nova Scotia, JoAnn Clark from Seattle, and Keith Strohecker from the Virginia Pond would serve on Guy Charron's Regional Re-alignment committee.

I must also acknowledge the support of my family, especially my wife Courtney. All those evenings following dinner, I would forgo our after dinner walk together or a quiet evening watching TV or just reading a book together and instead head into my home office and begin doing the work of the MLGG.

I have enjoyed my visits to the Greater Chicago Pond, the Louisiana Pond, the Ohio, Dayton and Alberta Ponds and the new Cincinnati Puddle. My work as Director of Business Development for the Independent Adjusting firm of McMartin Wasek & Associates and inclement weather prevented me from attending several Holiday and Annual events at the other Ponds that graciously invited me to attend.

As I leave the role of MLGG, I hope to continue to preach the benefits of exhibiting or hosting receptions at Industry events like the Property Loss Research Bureau's annual convention. Most recently, through the efforts of DMLGG Linda Meik from the Texas Pond and Grover Alspaugh, Wielder of the Tennessee Pond after attending a Blue Goose Reception during the recent 2011 PLRB in Nashville, TN. The Texas Pond also benefited from holding a Southern Splash in San Antonio during the 2010 PLRB Convention by starting the San Antonio Puddle of the Texas Pond. The next annual convention of the PLRB is to be held in Orlando, Florida in April of 2012. With just a little planning, the Florida Pond would undoubtedly benefit from promoting the Blue Goose at this Conference.

I urge our Grand Nest and our Members to embrace change where it makes sense as long as it is in the framework of our Traditions and Values. If the change is in conflict with our Constitution and By Laws, then we should use the proper resources and established protocol available to us to make the change.

Finally, I am very proud to be in the Grand Company of our Past Most Loyal Grand Ganders and especially the PMLGG's from my Michigan Pond; William Benallack, MLGG 1912; MM Hauxhurst, MLGG 1922; Gene Salcy, MLGG 1960 and John T. Zeldam, MLGG 1991. Thank you all for allowing me to be of service to you as your Most Loyal Grand Gander 2011.

Respectfully submitted, Joseph C. Coccia, MLGG 2010-2011

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105th Grand Nest Convention Newly Elected Most Loyal Grand Gander Acceptance Speech Lorena Kohlruss

PMLG Joe Coccia, past PMLGGs, fellow Grand Nest Officers, delegates, fellow ganders and guests. It is with great privilege and honor that I accept to serve the office as Most Loyal Grand Gander.

Firstly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Alberta Pond who has supported me these past few years through the ranks of the executive office. There are three members of the Alberta Pond here today, who need special acknowledgement.

Gail, Mike and Lynn, please stand.

These three are the true work horses of our Pond. Over the past decade, each of them has gone over and beyond their duties within the Pond. They have expended numerous hours on weekends, evenings and during their work day to tackle the struggles that face all Ponds today - vitality of the Pond. I cannot thank each of them enough for their patience, understanding and support they have given me over the years AND I know, will continue without complaint over the next year, as we continue to prepare for the upcoming 2012 convention. Thank you!

I have been asked by many people what drives me... After much reflection I have come to the conclusion that it is the sense of family and community that gives me the strength and energy to do my best in all facets of my life. I realized how important family and community were, in particular, this year with the birth of my daughter and one occasion at an Edmonton Pond charity fund raiser. When Aria was born she required a special breathing machine. It turned out that Edmonton Pond's fundraiser was for the type of machine that helped Aria. The purpose of the Blue Goose became very real to me particularly at that point when I realized how much the Blue Goose has touched so many people in a positive way, for so many generations.

Our organization is bound in history and traditions, which makes us unique from any other organization. This is what allows us as an organization to make changes and adapt when faced with changes in the insurance industry. Joe has done a magnificent job of getting the Order where we are today, and he would be the first to recognize that we have much more to do to reach our potential.

The most important issue facing our organization is the decrease in membership. This year my focus will be on the re-vitalization of the Order. This will require the help of everyone here today, our members, Grand Nest officers, PMLGGs, and DMLGGs. I will be putting a plan into place to address the issue. We're going to have strong committees to address the challenges we have come up against. For example, as a result of the hard work done by marketing and communications committee, with respect to new membership, we have set up a subcommittee, chaired by DMLGG Dan Rich, to integrate into our Order members at large AND potential members that we have attracted through the PLRB;

We have set up subcommittee to address Pond websites, and or lack of, chaired by Kim Bilbrey of the Dayton Pond; we have set up a subcommittee to explore an educational component and plan for individual ponds to adopt, if they choose, with the goal of attracting new members. This will be chaired by Jodi Brutto of the greater Chicago Pond, and finally a subcommittee to address social media.

We have also set up a special committee to address the issue of regional re-alignment and Future conventions. This committee, consisting of Wendy Hubbard, PMLGG Jack Fitch, PMLGG Larry Lewer, PMLGG George Harwood, DMLGG Martin Moran, and Ray Wicker will be chaired by PMLGG JoAnn Clarke ... additionally,

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we have set up an international fundraising committee for future conventions, chaired by PMLGG Gerry Hale.

Further, in addition to our true dedicated DMLGGS we have added several new DMLGGS to assist with the re-vitalization of Ponds and membership throughout their regions.

I encourage anyone who has any ideas on how to help re-vitalize our Order or, have some time and would like to be part of a committee, to get in touch with me directly. I anticipate this to be a very busy year for our GN Officers, DMLGGS and Committees and in advance would like to thank each of you for your ongoing dedication, and for the endless hours I know you will be spending over the next year helping keep this Order alive and vital!

Thank you all, for entrusting me with this most honorable position. I know with the support of the current executive, the guidance and knowledge of our Grand Wielder and Judge Advocate, as well as the hard work of the Committees, DMLGGS and all of you, we WILL meet the challenges we are facing today.

I thought fitting to end with a quote by Henry Ford..."coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress; working together is success."

I look forward to seeing all of you, in Calgary Alberta for the 106th GN convention.

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Grand Keeper Acceptance Speech

105th Grand Nest Convention

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Randy Wilson

Good morning.

I am proud to serve this honorable order ... including service to my Pond, my Region and now the Grand Nest. And, I am especially proud to serve with the Grand Nest officers and PMLGGs and all of you to continue our mission of service and to face the many challenges and opportunities of the Blue Goose today. These include membership, growth, communication, 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.

I believe it was destiny for me to be here today in that when I was a young lad my family moved to Wisconsin and settled not far from Green Lake in the land of the Home Nest. We lived in Watertown and my high school mascot was the "Goslings." We were feared. And, believe it or not, our own Terry Maloney refereed basketball games at my school.

I'd like to thank my lovely wife, Libby for her love and support. And, I'd like to thank my fellow Ganders in the St. Louis Pond as well as all of the Ganders in the Central Region for their support and confidence in me to represent them on the Grand Nest.

Also, I'd like to tell you about this tractor-trailer ... it was given to me as a thank you for serving as the Convention Chairman to the 2001 St. Louis convention. You may recall that George Kindler used these trucks to promote the convention and also sold them to raise money for our convention. He didn't raise a lot of money, but his heart was in the right place. So it is in his memory that I'd like to donate this truck to the Grand Nest archives.

It is my prayer that organizations with vision, mission and values are those destined to serve an important role in the world of affairs ... and I believe that the Blue Goose is such an organization.

Thank you so much.

Randall Wilson

Grand Keeper of the Golden Goose Egg

Honorable Order of the Blue Goose International

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**July 19-July 24, 2011
Annual Convention and Meeting
Report of the Judge Advocate Year Ending July 1, 2011**

Most Loyal Grand Gander, Grand Nest Officers and Ganders:

During this one hundred and fifth year of the Honorable Order of the Blue Goose International, I am pleased to give you this report as the Judge Advocate.

It has been my great pleasure to serve again as the Judge Advocate for the Honorable Order of the Blue Goose, International, under the leadership of Joe Coccia, the Most Loyal Grand Gander, who is also known as the Master Communicator. MLGG Coccia has touched every Pond over his one year plus as either the Acting Most Loyal Grand Gander or the Most Loyal Grand Gander for the Honorable Order. Not only has MLGG Coccia reached out to the membership at large, but he has continually reached out to the Officers of Ponds around the United States and Canada, as well as to the Grand Nest Officers. He has fostered enthusiasm, growth and development of our Order.

The Grand Nest has been very active over the year 2010 through 2011. In particular, the Grand Nest has been actively addressing both the immediate and future challenges of the Order. For example, the Grand Nest considered whether amendments to the Constitution & By-Laws would be required as a result of the death of a Most Loyal Grand Gander. After much discussion and debate, it was decided that such an amendment would not be pursued at this time.

As always, the Grand Nest continues to focus on the Order's charitable activities and ways to quantify our efforts. Charity goes hand in hand with our marketing efforts, which will translate into the expansion of the Blue Goose into the 21st Century. The Grand Nest has also focused on future conventions throughout the regions and has assisted Ponds in evaluating contracts with hotels for future conventions.

As we endeavor to pursue our guiding principles of charity, character and fellowship, we must be mindful of the importance of increasing membership, expanding our reach within the insurance community and strengthening our leadership for the continued vitality of our Order.

It has been a great honor and a distinct pleasure for me to serve the past year as the Judge Advocate of the Honorable Order of the Blue Goose International.

Fraternally, Robert Tayloe Ross Judge Advocate, PMLG

GRAND NEST HISTORY

Grand Nest Officers and Spouses 2012-2013



Pictured Left to Right: Robert Ross, Libby Wilson, Randy Wilson, Gerald Hale, JoAnne Hale, Gary Kohlruss, Lorena Kohlruss, Terry Maloney, Lynn Maloney, Zelma Paris, John Paris, Guy Charron, Johanne Charron, Bill Olson

GRAND NEST HISTORY

PHOTO GALLERY



Jacque Cuierrier & Marc Thurber raising the new Grand Supervisor of the Flock or should we say the Grand Super Guy Charron



A free afternoon of sailing on the Great Lake Michigan. Seeing the houses along the water front, watching the bald eagles managing their nest, and oh the entertainment from the ranks of the attendees.



Guy demonstrating his Singing & dancing skills

The Canadian Trio

Now who are they laughing at?

GRAND NEST HISTORY



John Zeldam presenting to Joe Coccia the Michigan MLGG plaque. The plaque contains the names of all the Michigan Ganders who have been MLGGs for the Honorable Order of Blue Goose International

The Grand Nest Officers make their entrance one by one into the Grand Ball



John & Peggy Zeldam



Jerry & Joann Hale



Robert Ross & his daughter



Terry & Lynn Maloney



Randy & Libby Wilson



Bill Olson, Pat Snyder & her daughter



John & Zelma Paris



Guy & JoAnn Charron



Lorena, Gary Kohlruss & their daughter

GRAND NEST HISTORY



Joe & Courtney Coccia



Blue Goose members from across the USA & Canada enjoying the Grand Ball Dinner & Dancing



The 105th Grand Nest Convention ends.

Thanks to the Michigan Pond for this outstanding convention. See you next year.