

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

**2016-2017**



**111Grand Nest Convention  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Savannah, GA  
July 10-14, 2017**

**Linda Meik, MLGG**

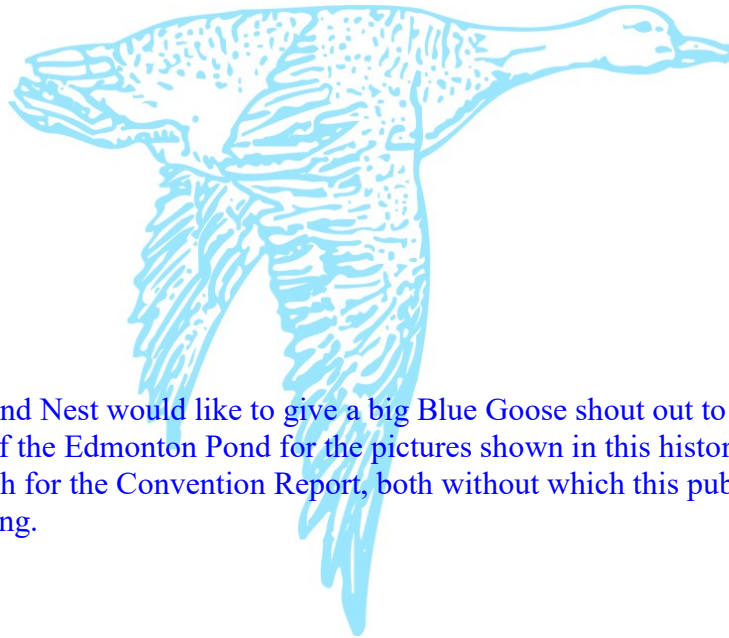
**Prepared by John C. Bishop, PMLGG  
Grand Nest Historian**

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

## Grand Nest Officers 2016-2017



MLGG Linda Meik



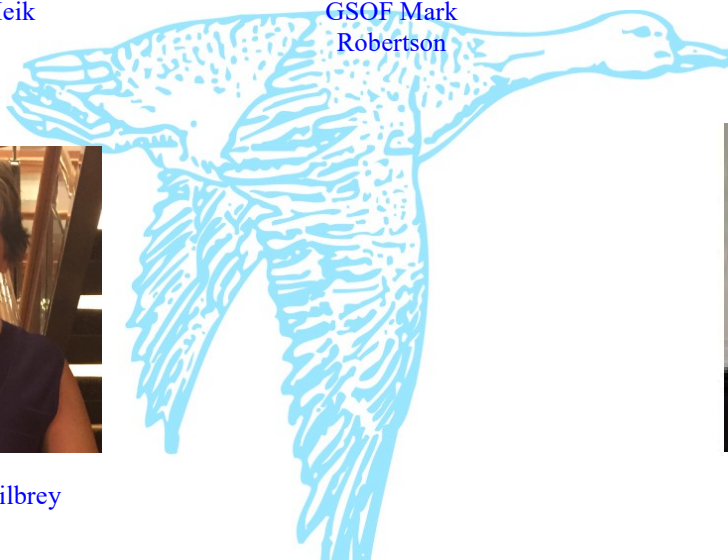
GSOF Mark  
Robertson



GWGQ Terry  
Maloney



GCOG Kim Bilbrey



GGOF Dan Rich



GKGGE Randy Wilson



JA Lorena Kohlruss



GNH John C, Bishop

# Grand Nest History



Blue Goose Holds Grand Nest Convention in  
Savannah, Georgia  
July 12-July 13, 2017

This was a convention of many firsts

- First with a convention app for your mobile device.
- First to incorporate a charity event into the convention agenda.
- First to donate extra convention food to charity.
- First to donate newly purchased convention furniture to charity.
- First to hold a program for first-time attendees.

182 Ganders, spouses and guests, including six children from across the US and Canada journeyed to Savannah, GA to attend the 111th Blue Goose Grand Nest Convention from July 11-13, 2017. The convention was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the heart of Savannah's bustling tourist district. The hotel was located between River Street and Bay Street-an outstanding location within easy walking distance of hundreds of shops, restaurants, and attractions.



Ganders gathering for charity event at  
Second Harvest Food Bank

## Tuesday, July 11, 2017

The Grand Nest Officers met on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

For many Ganders, the Convention's first formal event, was boarding a bus to take us to a voluntary charity event at the Second Harvest Food Bank of Coastal Georgia. Second Harvest sorts and repackages 14 million tons of food donations for distribution in twenty-one Georgia counties.

That night's Welcome Party was held just a short walk from the hotel at Savannah Smiles Duelling Piano Bar, where we had a rousing good time. The entertainers were excellent! And! did a great job of singing, playing two pianos, and taking requests. One of the singers did a pretty good job of rapping for us! Some of our Ganders stormed the stage as we saw and heard a blazing hot version of "Mustang Sally" with Michigan's own Joe Coccia on drums and British Columbia's Stacey Rose on vocals.

A fun convention activity was having our Passport "stamped" to signify either attendance at an event or tracking down a Grant Nest Officer or designated representative of a Southern Pond. Passports were stamped, pins were traded and it was a great time catching up with old friends to begin the convention.



Christine &  
Rich Mancuso  
along with Sue  
& Dan Rich  
organizing the  
archives



Archive  
display

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## Grand Nest History

Wednesday July 12, 2017

After a full breakfast, we walked over to Regency Ballroom A as the 111th Grand Nest Meeting was ready to get underway. MLGG Linda Meik welcomed the group, gavelled the meeting to order, and remarked that **“Savannah welcomes you with true Southern Hospitality.”**

The flags were presented by the American Legion Post 184 of Thunderbolt, Georgia. The national anthems of Canada and the United States were sung by the Gullah Geechee Ring Shouters Gospel Choir, then MLGG Meik delivered the invocation and led us in the Blue Goose ritual prayer.

The morning’s speaker was Queen Quet Marquette L. Goodwine, the Chieftess of the Geechee Nation. She entered the room singing a soulful hymn and educated us on the history of Georgia’s Gullah Geechee culture.



Queen Quet Marquette L. Goodwine, the Chieftess of the Gullah Geechee

The Convention’s Memorial Service started with a performance of “Amazing Grace” by the Gullah Choir. The Commemoration of Departed Ganders service was conducted by Barrett Leslie and Cathy Johnson of the Tennessee Pond.. The name of each Pond was called and the members of that Pond stood in unison. If a Pond lost a member during the year, the name was called and a flower was placed in a V-shaped frame. After the commemoration, three PMLGG’s were eulogised– Jerry Simpson (1986-87), George Harwood (1996-97), and Gerald “Jerry” Hale (2004-05)

The Kentucky Pond conducted a very creative and thoroughly entertaining Kentucky Derby themed Model Initiation Ceremony. Things got off to a fun start with a red jacketed bugler’s call to the starting gate for the **“Blue Goose Derby”** with special guests Ryan Maloney and Linda Meik wearing oversized hats to suggest the twin spires of Churchill Downs. The Initiation team wore jockey silks and the familiar “honks” of the ritual were replaced by bugle notes.

The All Industry Luncheon featured motivational speaker Billy Riggs who entertained us with a fascinating mix of magic and inspiration. He used a series of baffling tricks such as levitating tables, undoing torn up newspaper pages, and seemingly impossible Rubik’s cube solves to illustrate his talking points about leadership, character, integrity, honour, trust, and teamwork.



Billy Riggs

MLGG Meik spoke about “Change and Transformation” and summarized the **“foundational business process changes”** in our industry with respect to a consolidating marketplace, and changing workforce demographics. She argued that these changes offer even more reasons for people of **“common interests to band together”**, and how a **“common effort and mutual bond”** can allow us to **“do so much more than one of us could do alone”**.



Members of the Kentucky Pond Model Initiation Team

Grand Custodian Kim Bilbrey spoke about the sometimes difficult journey facing our Puddles as they become Ponds. She spoke of the newly published Guide on Pond and Puddle organization we

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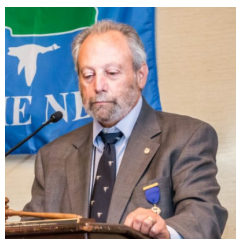


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## Grand Nest History

hope will provided clear information of Pond and Puddle roles, as well as Blue Goose as a whole.

PMLGG Joe Coccia spoke on **“How to Properly Run a Pond”** on behalf of Grand Supervisor Mark Robertson who was unable to attend the convention because of illness. He urged Ponds to **“be selective”** and choose leaders that had **“good character”**, and **“to be passionate about charity”**. He reminded the convention that revised Welders and Keepers guides were available.



MLGG Joe Coccia

Regional Breakout meetings followed, as the Canadian, Southern, Eastern, and Central members and delegates met to discuss the issues facing their respective regions.

The evening's Family Night Dinner Cruise was held on the Savannah Riverboat Cruise's Georgia Queen. The boat was immense-in fact it looked like a three-story apartment building. It held 1,000 passengers, measured 230 feet in length, and was an impressive 68 feet tall with three grand ballrooms and multiple bars.



Yum! Yum! on  
The Georgia Queen

### Thursday July 13, 2017

After breakfast, the Edmonton Pond's Andrew Happer, Tracy Fata, Neil Miller, Halie Wispinski, and Gordie Goose gave us a preview of next year's convention in Edmonton, Alberta.



PMLG Halie Wispinski with  
Gordie Goose

Gordie had become quite a popular fixture in Savannah, and had redefined the phrase “Party Animal”. He was seen everywhere making the rounds, visiting half the pubs in Savannah, posing for hundreds of photos, and getting into all sorts of mischief and compromising situations. He is also quite active on social media and has his own Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts-all are good places to follow him for convention news.

We saw a video that highlighted some of the cultural and entertainment sights and attractions that will serve as a backdrop to next year's Edmonton Convention.

MLGG Linda Meik reported on her year in office, a year that was **“challenging and inspiring. What a year it has been.”**

She thanked the Convention Planning Executive Committee of Ray Wicker, Keith Strohecker, and Mary Kay Marchetti for their hours of hard work and dedication. She also thanked the Southern Region Ponds and Puddles for making the convention “an everlasting memory”. She told us how proud she was of the charity work at the Savannah convention, and her hope that this will continue.

Grand Wielder Terry Maloney's report on the year started with the pronouncement that **“Linda really stepped up as MLGG”** with her efforts to strengthen the Southern Region and her concept of a Southern Region convention. The Southern Region raised \$57,000 and the convention drew 30 sponsors and 27 first timers (24 from the South). He singled out the Florida Pond for their excellence in adding 38 new members. Successes in Charlotte and Atlanta and Alabama led to over 100 new members in the Southern Region, where it became one of

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## Grand Nest History

amine our Pond websites, and take a critical look at the Grand Nest Website as well for improvement opportunities in their look, management, and keeping their content fresh and dynamic. Six years ago we saw that barely 40% of our Ponds had an operating website. Today that percentage is 75%. But for the Ponds that still don't have websites-how can we help them? Is website creation something each Pond has to figure out for themselves, or is there a way Grand Nest can support them? Dan then introduced Kevin Brady, the Hartford Pond's Webmaster to talk about some of his observations and recommendations.

The morning's program continued with the presentation of the Grand Nest Awards, which were updated and revised for 2017. After the awards, DMLGG certificates were distributed, special recognition plaques for outstanding services were awarded to PMLGG & Grand Historian John Bishop, DMLGG Joe Lothschultz, and Grand Custodian Dan Rich, and Savannah Convention Tri-Chairs Ray Wicker, Keith Strohecker, and Mary Kay Marchetti were recognized for their time and effort in planning the convention.

After a lunch break, a motion was made, seconded, and accepted that next year's convention will be held in Edmonton, Alberta.

MLGG Robertson re-appointed John Bishop as Grand Nest Historian, Lorena Kohlruess as Judge Advocate, Terry Maloney as Grand Wielder, and appointed Archie Gillis of the Nova Scotia Pond as Grand Keeper. Archie thanked MLGG Robertson for his appointment and addressed the group by saying that "Blue Goose is only as good as all of us" and that he is looking forward to serving us all.



Webmaster for the  
Hartford Pond Gander  
Kevin Brady

The Grand Nest's newest elected officer, Michael Smith, shared his thoughts with the convention and told us of his journey to Blue Goose. Michael served in the Navy and Naval Reserves for ten years where he studied electronics, and after his military obligation ended, he continued to study electronics in college. He had run through the officer chairs with other organizations and one day heard about Blue Goose. "I was struck by our mission and our record of doing good for others."



Tri-Chairs, Keith Strohecker, Mary Kay Marchetti and Ray Wicker being recognized for their time and effort. A job well done.

Even though illness had prevented Mark Robertson from attending the convention, we were able to leverage technology and have him sworn in and deliver his address of acceptance by Skype. He congratulated Linda and the Southern Region and said he was sorry he couldn't be here to join everyone and participate in the Passport concept which intrigued him. Mark also asked everyone to turn to the Ganders to their right and left, and tell them "I appreciate you being here."

Terry Maloney awarded a PMLGG pin and plaque to Linda Meik. Linda received a Blue Goose comforter from her fellow officers, and she gave gifts to her Convention Executive Committee.

That evening, the Convention culminated with a cocktail reception and "Dancing Through the Decades" themed Grand Banquet and Ball. We enjoyed great food, great music and great fellowship. The band, "Coastal

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## Grand Nest History

the three of four regions with positive growth. Linda's busy travel schedule and her success in the South is **"an inspiration for those who will follow her."**

Grand Nest Historian John Bishop commented on the "love and compassion we showed to our lost PMLGG's and their family members who came here". He also commented on some of the musical talent that had been on display at the convention and quipped that we have enough singers and musicians "to form a Blue Goose chorus". He oversaw a productive year for the "curation" of Blue Goose history and have now erased a six year gap in our annual histories. He thanked Neil Miller for his contribution in providing photographs for the histories. He said that we are working to regionalize the historical archives and started this year by highlighting our Southern Pond memorabilia for display in Savannah. He asked the Canadian Ponds to do the same next year.



MLGG Linda Meik



Gordie Goose singing in the band first night

PMLGG Lorena Kohlruss completed her first year as our Judge Advocate, and thanked Linda Meik for her guidance throughout the year. She focused on the future of the Honourable Order and last year's amendment to realign the regions, update the by-laws, and clarify our language regarding Dual Members.

DMLGG Joe Lothschutz of the Michigan Pond delivered Grand Keeper Randy Wilson's report on Audit. The Order ended the year with \$74,457 in revenue, \$32,676 in Operating Costs, and \$38,600 in Membership Expenses for a surplus of \$3,181. Randy expressed a need to be more diligent in fiscal management, i.e. dues payments, multiple signatures on Pond accounts, government filings, and Pond fiscal control and reports to officers.

Grand Custodian Kim Bilbrey's Charity Committee report stated that this year 21 of our 39 Ponds had filed the charity report that is included in the May mailing to the Welders. She asked more Ponds to be diligent in filing the report because "we have so much compassion and need to show our accomplishments as a whole." Kim cited Blue Goose support of causes for veterans, children, pets, and the homeless. The year saw a reported total of \$166,559 in cash donations, \$38,000 in value for items collected, \$9,900 in scholarship donations, and 710 volunteer hours of community service. She challenged the Ponds to get their charity reports in next year and to increase each Pond's charitable contributions by 5%.

DMLGG Dustin Bales of the Manitoba Pond delivered Mark Robertson's Membership report. He urged the Ponds to keep your membership data current and accurate. Only the Central Region filed a Rush for Goslings report and he asked the other Regions and their Ponds to be more diligent.



The beginnings of the Blue Goose Band. Stacey Rose on vocals and PMLGG Joe Coccia on drums.

Grand Guardian Dan Rich's Communication and Marketing Report was next, and his committee suggested we 1) look at our industry footprint and asked "how effectively are we promoting the Blue Goose 'brand?'" 2) ex-

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## Grand Nest History

Breeze” did a great job and sure had everyone up and dancing all night.

The Southern Region hosted an outstanding convention and we were all impressed by the history, beauty and hospitality of Savannah. We are very grateful to the Convention Committee for their efforts to plan and produce such a thoroughly enjoyable event.

**(Editor’s Note: This is an abbreviated text of the convention report. The full version can be found at [bluegoose.org](http://bluegoose.org), first page, right side, under Publications/Grand Nest Bulletins)**

### Grand Nest Officers 2016-2017



Blue Goose volunteers  
packing bags of food at  
the Second Harvest  
Food Bank of Coastal  
Georgia

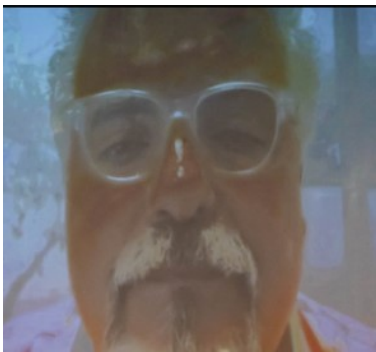


# Grand Nest History

## Grand Nest Officers 2017-2018



l to r Mike Smith of the Florida Pond, Grand Guardian, Dan Rich of the Hartford Pond, Grand Custodian, Kim Bilbrey of the Dayton Pond, Grand Supervisor, and standing in for newly elected MLGG Mark Robertson, absent but not forgotten, Andrew Happer, 2018 Convention Chairman and member of the Edmonton Pond.



Incoming MLGG Mark Robertson via Skype



Incoming Grand Keeper Archie Gilles from the Nova Scotia Pond being pinned by Grand Wielder Terry Maloney



PMLGG & Grand Nest Historian John Bishop



Judge Advocate Lorena Kohlruss

# Grand Nest History

Midyear Meeting Minutes  
Westin Hotel, Edmonton Alberta  
April 21, 2017

1. MLGG Meik called the meeting to order.
2. GSOB Robertson welcomed all to Edmonton
3. Roll call-Current GN Officers Meik, Robertson, Bilbrey, Rich in attendance. In addition, GWGQ Maloney, JA Kohlruss and PMLGG Paris attended.
4. MLGG Meik led discussion on the South. The South has doubled in size under Linda's leadership, however due to the youth of the members, there is no one currently ready to step up to a GN position. A regional convention should probably be considered once again.
5. Discussed developing a business model to raise money for future conventions. Perhaps a Power Point could be developed.
6. MLGG Meik will lead a general membership session in Savannah on future conventions and leadership.
7. MLGG Meik has formulated guidelines for steps to become a Puddle or Pond. This document will be distributed at the Savannah convention
8. GWGQ Maloney reviewed outstanding dues list. Also explained the change of servers due to our Lenox software for membership.
9. MLGG Meik highlighted events at her convention in 2017. Start with a Second Harvest charity function. New 1st time attendees program. A passport to the South program.
10. MLGG Meik asked that all reports are in her hands prior to June 23, 2017 from the committees. The hospitality suite will be managed by the Hotel for liability reasons.
11. Ponds will be asked to require 2 members at least to have bank signature authority. The 2 signers cannot be from the same household. The WGQ and KGGE positions should not be combined but rather held by 2 different people. The USA Ponds need to file 990 tax forms and incorporate as a non-profit organization in their state.
12. PMLGG Paris led review of the convention budget. At the time the submitted budgets were within acceptable guidelines,
13. 2018 Mid-year meeting will probably not take place in Indianapolis. Further discussion to follow.
14. Future conventions: South 2021 will be a regional site. Canada 2022 will be British Columbia, 2023 and 2024 open at this time.
15. Chicago Pond has been suspended by MLGG Meik. Past dues will be purged from the ledger software after the GN meeting in July 2017 and not prior to the convention. Decision to remove the charter remains a possibility. PJA Ross and GKGGE/PMLGG Wilson weighed in via a conference call. Heart of America was suspended by MLGG Meik. All the funds have been put in an isolated fund for 1 year. The GN Executive committee unanimously approved MLGG Meik's suspension decision.
16. GWGQ Maloney detailed our current financial position which has a substantial surplus.
17. GSOB Robertson membership report. Canada is only positive growth this year so far. Rush report will be presented in Savannah, GA. MLGG Meik highlighted the PLRB membership gathering. She said about 65% attending were potential new members. Branding needs to be done to the other parts of the industry.
18. The GN officers discussed, changed and renamed the membership awards to be presented in Savannah.
19. The Edmonton Convention committee including Cheryl McShane from PEC provided insights on their preparation of the 2018 convention.
20. GCON Bilbrey provided a report on the various Pond activities. She wants to encourage Ponds to share

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## Grand Nest History

- the scholarship guidelines that the Hartford Pond used for their Educational Scholarship awards.
21. JA Kohlruss noted she will follow the future involvement of the Chicago Pond circumstances.
  22. While the GKGGE job description will remain the same, the emphasis on which duties will receive priority will change.
  23. MLGG Meik thanked GNH Bishop for his tireless efforts to get our history reports current. The size and the parameters of the History will continue to be a work in progress.
  24. Pond issues were discussed. Besides Chicago and Heart of America, we looked at the struggles of new Ponds like N. E. Ohio and Indy as well as old Ponds such as Garden State. The result is a comprehensive set of guidelines to insure that their groups are ready to take on the struggles that come with Puddle and Pond development.
  25. GSOF Robertson volunteered to develop a business plan on "How to Run a Pond". There will be a draft ready for Savannah.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Terry Maloney, GWGQ



Edmonton Pond's Andrew Happer, Grand Wielder Terry Maloney and PMLGG Joe Coccia enjoying themselves the opening night



Blue Goose members enjoying the river boat cruise. Hey isn't that GCOG Bilbrey smiling in to the picture!



Blue Goose children doing their thing in the children's program.



Preparing boxes at the charity event

# Grand Nest History

Pre-Convention Meeting  
July 10-11, 2017  
Savannah, GA-Hyatt Regency

1. MLGG Meik welcomed all to Savannah
2. All current GN Officers were in attendance except GSOF Robertson and GKGGE Wilson. In addition Deputy GKGGE Lothschutz, JA Emeritus Ross, PMLGG's Olson, Paris, Coccia, Strohecker and the late arriving Bishop. GSOF Robertson participated on "Skype".
3. MLGG Meik presented an overview of this convention. 183 attendees with 27 being first timers. The Nest room will include Registration, Archives and Hospitality. There will be 3 PMLGG Eulogies for Simpson, Hale and Harwood with a Southern Gospel Choir.
4. Deputy GKGGE Lothschutz led discussion on the 4 convention budgets. The South shows a \$6,000 deficit but should bring in a positive situation. \$56,198 of financial support came in from the Southern Ponds. Edmonton is currently \$60,000 short but should be within \$10,000. The Central convention has revenues on track. Hartford has an early good start with \$63,000 in revenue. Sponsorship ideas need to be shared by the Regions.
5. GGOP Dan Rich brought the Archives that were in PMLGG Hale's possession to Savannah. Discussion to look for public storage of GN archives. Also suggestion made to have archives be pertinent to the Convention regions rotate each year.
6. GWGQ Maloney presented the year-end financial statement. After discussion GGOP Rich made a motion to accept and GCON Bilbrey seconded. Unanimously accepted.
7. GWGQ Maloney presented membership results. Highlight was a terrific growth in the South which was strongly influenced by MLGG Meik's efforts and leadership!
8. The Greater Chicago Pond was suspended for past dues. Our JA and PMLGG Strohecker and Deputy GKGGE Lothschutz told the representative that there will be a Puddle formed called the "Windy City". Cincinnati Pond will accept them until such time the Puddle can reset with a new FEIN #, new officer leadership and achieve 50+ dues paying members. GGON Bilbrey motion and GGOP Rich second. Unanimous.

Adjourned until morning.

9. GCON Bilbrey summarized her written Charity report. Only 24 Ponds reported. However, there was raised \$166,000, \$38,00 in kind and 710 hours of manpower given. Report will be published.. JA Kohlruess filed her report to be published. In addition the Jurisprudence committee ruled that Mark Robertson could be installed by proxy due to his medical issue. However, he will be using "Skype" to Hear and see the induction ceremony. GHN Bishop reported that all years of Grand Nest history are now completed thru his leadership. These will be added to the GN website, GCON Bilbrey produced some guidelines for Puddles to become Ponds. GWGQ Maloney will send this to each Pond.
10. MLGG Meik reported that until the Southern Regional meeting, we will not know if there will be a candidate for GGOP? Canada primary issue is Ontario Pond. One of our largest appears to somewhat have leadership issues. No delegates. Garden State is non-existent. Westchester is dwindling. Central is OK. Seattle turned in their Charter.
11. Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Maloney, GWGQ



# Grand Nest History

Post Convention Minutes  
July 14, 2017  
Savannah, GA-Hyatt Regency

1. All the current GN Officers were in attendance. MLGG Robertson attended via Skype. PMLGG's Paris, Meik, Strohecker, Coccia, Bishop and Olson were also in attendance.
2. MLGG Robertson confirmed appointments of GWGQ Maloney, JA Kohlruss and GKGGE Gillis and GNH Bishop.
3. GWGQ contract was executed and signed.
4. GWGQ Maloney indicated that the bank resolution was executed and signed by MLGG Robertson.
5. Approval of Grand Nest Officer's expenses was unanimous.
6. The 2016-2017 budget was discussed and approved.
7. Mid-Year date and location was tabled for a future discussion.
8. Photo and signature of GGON Smith and GKGGE Gillis will be obtained for the bulletin.
9. GN Officers were reminded to send Regional minutes and roll calls to GWGQ Maloney.
10. Committee and deputy assignments need to be confirmed. Ken Miller of Utah and Archie Gillis of Nova Scotia will be dropped from the DMLGG list. We will be advised of the changes to the DMLGG list of the South a little later.
11. Mileage rate for 2017-2018 is 50.5 cents per USA mile.
12. Canadian exchange rate for 2017-2018 is .75.
13. GCON Rich led discussion on the consideration of spouses of deceased member to be able to petition for legacy membership. GNH Bishop suggested that this idea be limited to GN spouses. Due to membership software restrictions, suggestion was made to use Honorary (Life) memberships for the vehicle. Tabled for now.
14. JA Kohlruss led discussion on the organization's initiation wording. First "Gander" be changed to "Goose". More generic? Second that the reference to "God" be removed from the ritual. Tabled for now.
15. JS Kohlruss wanted more emphasis be placed on receiving Charity reports from all of our Ponds. The GN Officers were asked to help get those results from the Ponds. That are failing to respond from their respective Regions. The Gordon Crowther Charity form will be sent separately earlier and NOT combined with the May mailing.
16. GGON Rich suggested that next year the registration fee for Neil Miller be waived for his diligent effort as a GN Photographer.
17. Motion by GGON Rich to adjourn. Seconded by MLGG Robertson, Unanimous.

Fraternally submitted,

Terry Maloney, GWGQ



Edmonton Convention Chairman Andrew Happer  
inviting us to Edmonton in 2018



GCOG Bilbrey with  
British Columbia's own  
Wendy Werier

# Grand Nest History

## Blue Goose Donates to Hurricane Relief

During the months of August, September and October 2017 a series of some of the most devastating storms seen in years hit the USA. We became very familiar with the names Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria. When the first storm, Hurricane Harvey hit US soil, the Honourable Order of the Blue Goose International stepped forward as an organization to aid the victims impacted by that storm. A call for help went out to the Ponds and the Regions, and you responded with donations totalling \$4,925 to the North Texas Food Bank. These funds helped supply 14,775 meals to those in need of their services.

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a proud partner of the Mass Care Task Force, a partnership between NTFB, Red Cross DFW, Salvation Army, and VolunteerNow. The vision of the Task Force is a community prepared to effectively and efficiently meet the humanitarian needs resulting from a major disaster. Should a large-scale disaster strike that directly or indirectly impacts North Texas, the four organizations will join forces to help meet the need. NTFB's unique role during MCTF activation is to immediately provide food and beverages during the initial days of response, and to support the transportation and storage of other critical resources. Because of the learning's from hurricanes Katrina and Rita, they know this will be a long-term situation and there will be a long-term need in our communities resulting from Hurricane Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria.

NTFB is a member of Feeding America, a national hunger relief organization of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs that provide food, water, and other resources and services to people each year. The Feeding America nationwide network secures and distributes 4 billion meals. Feeding America's food bank partners, like NTFB, and non-profit organizations that collect, distribute, and provide food, water, and other resources and services to children, families, seniors, and individuals in need relying on donors and volunteers to carry out the day-to-day operations to meet those demands. Together, they are the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

During our 2017 Grand Nest Convention in Savannah, the Honourable Order of Blue Goose International volunteered at another one of the Feeding America's affiliates: Second Harvest Food Bank of Coastal Georgia. We also have several Ponds who also volunteer for the Feeding America affiliates in their communities.



Daphney Elliott & PMLGG Linda Meik of Texas Blue Goose delivering the 1st set of funds to NTFB



PMLGG Linda Meik delivering the 2nd set of funds to NTFB. Shown in the photograph with Linda is Melissa Payton, Director of Philanthropy Operations.

# Grand Nest History



**Gerald F. Hale, MLGG 2005  
Hartford Pond**

Past and Present GN Officers, Ganders and friends,

You know, this really is an impossible task...Trying to put into words what Jerry Hale meant to us, what he meant to his family, what he meant to our industry, and what he meant to anyone that had the good fortune to have met him.

So what did Jerry Hale mean to us?

Well, when I joined the Hartford Pond in 1991, I barely knew him when he came up to me, tapped me on the shoulder, and in a soft whisper said “whatever you do during the initiations, don’t laugh, because some of these old guys take this stuff very seriously”. Of course he was smiling when he said that.

You see, Jerry always had a knack for putting people at ease. He was an inspirational leader, and an incredible story teller. He was always smiling and laughing, and he always made you feel so lucky to be in his company. It was no wonder that people naturally gravitated to him.

Jerry joined the Hartford Pond in 1988, and it didn’t take the Pond very long to realize that he was officer material. He was installed as a Pond officer just two years later, in 1990, and rose through the Officer’s Chairs, to serve as Hartford’s Most Loyal Gander in 1993-94.

Jerry was always glad to see you and would always make time for you. He had a real knack for leadership, for motivating people, for organization, clear thinking, and negotiation.. I remember the Pond officers thought it would be a good idea to run a Dinner dance in 1994 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Hartford Pond. Everyone on the board thought it was a great idea, except our members who wanted no part of it. The registration numbers were abysmal. We were stuck with cancelling a big restaurant contract that would have cost us dearly. Of course, Jerry sweet talked our way out of the contract and the fiasco didn’t cost us one thin dime. I still don’t know how he managed that one

But Jerry wasn’t done with his gift of Blue Goose leadership..... and his ability to inspire and motivate people. In 2000 he moved to a larger stage and became a Blue Goose national officer when he joined the Grand Nest. His term as Most Loyal Grand Gander culminated with a wonderful Convention at Foxwoods Casino in 2005, a convention that people still talk about today. Jerry rejoined Grand Nest a few years later when he was named Grand Nest Historian, a fitting role considering his appreciation of tradition and history.

Jerry loved being on Grand Nest, and he loved working with all of you, and your predecessors to benefit our Honourable Order, help it grow and maintain our wonderful traditions.

And what did Jerry Hale mean to his family? If you really wanted to see Jerry smile, all you had to do was ask him about his family. He was married for 45 years to Joanne, and he loved to talk about his son Mike and his wife Jill, his son Jon and his wife Sarah, and his daughter Carrie and her husband Jason. And of course, there were his six grandchildren that he absolutely adored. He would grin from ear to ear when he told us of his latest

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## Grand Nest History

adventures with Sydney, Gavin, Mason, Ethan, Kaitlin and Braden.

So what did Jerry Hale mean to our industry?

Jerry started his career as an adjuster with CNA Insurance and then the Gordon Boyd Company in Bridgeport, CT. He successfully started his own business with co-founder Dave Beaver when they opened the Eastland Claim Service in 1995. And a few years ago, the company joined Vericclaim. Jerry's footprint and influence are all over our industry, our two countries, and really all across the world, because in addition to being a Blue Goose Gander, he belonged to dozens of insurance organizations, and probably served as leader in all of them.

He was a 35-year member and Past President of the New England Claims Executives, and a 35-year member of Loss Executives Association.. He was a member and Past President of the National Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters, an associate member of the Canadian Independent Adjusters, a PLRB member, and an honorary member in both the Charter Institute of Loss Adjusters in London, and the Australian Institute of Loss Adjusters. He successfully recruited an Australian colleague to join Blue Goose and he remains a member to this day. Jerry really loved his role as a member and Past President of the International Association of Loss Adjusters. He used to tell some real funny stories about his trips around the world for this group, and he told me once that he loved it when Association members would address him as "Mr. President".

Jerry and Joanne loved to travel, they visited 43 of our 50 states, and 5 of the 7 continents. His membership in these organizations took him to Scotland and Wales and Paris and Dubai, and to Australia, and London, which he loved.

Last September, the Hartford Pond hosted a tribute to Jerry Hale that drew two hundred and seventy-five Ganders and guests in an amazing demonstration of love, affection, and respect. How much did folks love Jerry? Well, we had at least four guests fly in just for the evening including MLGG Linda Meik and Hartford PMLG Kim Gleason from Texas, and PMLGG Bill Olson and DMLGG Gene Newman from Maryland. And in a great display of friendship and technology, our Australian Gander Leo Fluitsma "Skyped" in! Leo made everyone laugh when he told Jerry that in his country calling someone a goose was not a term of endearment.

Jerry's business partner Dave Beaver spoke eloquently at the tribute, and two of his passages really struck me, and I'd like to end by sharing them.

Dave told us the following:

"They say that friends are like stars, you don't always see them, but you know they are out there. Thank you, Jerry, for being one of the brightest stars in the galaxy"

And then he said:

"Some people knock on the door to your life and they come right in and make themselves at home in our hearts. And we're so much better for having them there as a friend".

Jerry sure was one of those few people. Jerry made all of our lives better just by knowing him. And if you knew him, you will miss him dearly.

Hail Friend and Farewell!





# Grand Nest History

**George Harwood, MLGG 1997  
Florida Pond**



First allow me to express my personal deepest sympathies, along with my wife Lynn's, and my sons, to you Jonathan, your mother Joanne and the family on your loss of an awesome gentleman, my very good friend and a pillar of strength for the Blue Goose family!

Also Annette and Phil, and Kayelynn, thank you for allowing us to honour Jerry another pillar of the Blue Goose community.

And Donna, how courageous for you to be here. How honoured to have you want to be with your Blue Goose family for comfort. I believe George and God had a plan for your support in your time of need.

George Harwood was born July 25, 1946, married to his loving wife, Gander Donna Harwood, for 33 years. There is an irony in memorializing George here in Savannah. He was actually stationed here in the Coast Guard where he proudly served his country. We thank him for his service.

George was initiated into Blue Goose January 13, 1975. I saw a part of George that some of you may not have had the privilege to witness. George had a quiet passion and concern for Blue Goose. Behind the scenes he supported Blue Goose in whatever way he could, more ways than you could imagine.

Then there was a time in our history, somewhat similar to now. The South needed leadership. George was the only one to step forward. MLGG Harwood of the Georgia Pond hosted the '97 convention in Atlanta, GA. He proved to all that a model based on a lower level of income revenue with enthusiasm and sweat equity could still provide a quality convention. His efforts set the pace for us to help inspire other similar Ponds to come forward and continue our tradition. If George could speak to us one last time he would implore each of us to take up the banner that he so faithfully carried for 42 1/2 years of service to our Order. The banner of Character, Charity & Fellowship!

Finally if I may reflect on a few personal memories of George.

First was the day George was sworn in as our MLGG. For one moment I saw George let his guard down and with a tear in his eye he told me how proud his Father, who was a Gander, would be of him.

Then the time he supported my side against my new MLGG who was my new boss.

Then at the 1997 Atlanta convention, Donna and George presented to me during our meeting with a framed photo of a building with the only markings on the outside saying Terry's Blue Goose. Considering this was at a crossroads in the middle of Mississippi with nothing else near it for miles. Diner or "House of ill Repute" referring to the story of 1906 and how the name Blue Goose has a similar twist back then. Both totally false of course.. But a good laugh was had by all. But that photo has been in my office ever since because I know that gift from Donna and George truly had a deeper meaning. I have treasured you both ever since.

Hale Friend and Farewell until hopefully God lets us meet again!

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Maloney, GWGQ





# Grand Nest History



**P. J. (Jerry) Simpson, MLGG 1987  
Florida Pond**

Thank you MLGG Meik, Southern Conference and Tennessee Pond, for affording me the honour of sharing with you a little about my father, PMLGG P. J. (Jerry) Simpson.

My dad was born August 21, 1936, graduated high school in 1954, married my mother, Annette, who truly was the girl next door, in 1957.

After high school, following in his father's footsteps. Dad began working in the construction industry doing marble work in the Tampa, Florida area. Having asthma as a child made his career path unworkable. Then he went to work for the Florida Rating Bureau starting in the mailroom and working his way to special examiner. After obtaining his Property and Casualty and Life licenses, he began working in the general agency business. In 1964, he left there to help start a new company (Morrison Assurance Company), a subsidiary of Morrison Cafeteria Company. He started doing marketing, safety inspections and loss control, eventually rising to Vice President.

In 1985, MORCO, the parent company decided to divest itself of some subsidiaries. Dad engineered the sale and the company was reborn First Southern Insurance Company. Dad was offered the job of President. Although he had the knowledge and capability for the job, he declined. He felt with just a high school education, it could possibly be an embarrassment to the company, he had helped build, if ever in social circumstances others were discussing their higher education.

In 1986 and 1987 he took a half salary and worked half time in order to fulfill his commitment of visiting every Pond of this Honourable Order during his time as a Grand Nest Officer, an accomplishment never before attained. In 1989, dad retired to help mom in her insurance agency. They sold the agency in 1991, full retiring and spending the next 26 years and dividing their time between home in Florida and their North Carolina mountain cabin.

During his early years in the insurance industry, dad met then PMLG George Brussels, who became one of his early mentors. Mr. Brussels introduced dad to Blue Goose. He was initiated in 1959. He attended his first Grand Nest in 1962. His next Grand Nest was PMLGG Brussels' 1967 convention in Miami, Florida. Dad then went on to attend the next five Grand Nest conventions. He missed 1973, then Salt Lake City in 1974, that began a run of attending 33 consecutive Grand Nests with Williamsburg, Virginia, in 2007 being his last

Dad loved his Honourable Order serving as Florida's MLG in 1971. He spent many years as permanent Wielder for the Florida Pond. That translated to our family folding, labelling and stamping newsletters to recording dues and convention registrations to filling out deposit slips and taking them to the bank.

It was truly a labour of love because Blue Goose was our extended family on both the state and Grand Nest levels. Our family has friends all over the United States and the Provinces of Canada.

Our dad's 40 Grand Nest Conventions, 39 were attended with my mother by his side. I was fortunate enough to

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## Grand Nest History

attended 10 as a youth and 4 more as a Gander, along with my wife, Kayelynn, and cherish the many friendships with other youth and adults we have met along the way.

In closing, I do not know of anyone other than my mother who lived their life with more Character and Charity in their heart and Honour in the soul than my father.

Dad took his last flight October 25, 2016. I am sure he is looking down on us with his fellow Ganders, most especially his dear friends, PMLGG's George Brussels, Brownie Bolton, King Luck and many others too many to name that were met throughout the years of Fellowship that he so enjoyed within this Honourable Order.

We love and miss you dad. Thanks you.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip J. Simpson II, PWGQ Florida Pond



Phillip J. Simpson II, PWGQ Florida Pond  
delivering his father's eulogy



# Grand Nest History



Brennan Mills & Jamie Birns of the Saskatchewan Pond receiving the regional Most New & Reinstated and Best Percentage Increase awards.



Paul Hollis, Diana Roe Hollis, Cheryl Saggese, Donna Harwood and Chris Smith from the Florida Pond receiving the Regional Most New & Reinstated and Best Percentage Increase awards for GWGQ Terry Maloney7



International Winner of the Charity Fund Award  
l to r Bill Mullen, Dan Rich, Sue Rich, Paula Pelletier, Allyson Kataji, Catherine Finlayson, Grand Nest's Kim Bilbrey and Kevin Brady



The Savannah convention drew a large contingent of "first timers" as you can see depicted in this photo. They came from all over Blue Goose land!



Members of the Hartford Pond receiving the International Charity Fund Award



Members of the Cincinnati Pond receiving the Gordon F. Crowther Charity Award from GCOG Bilbrey



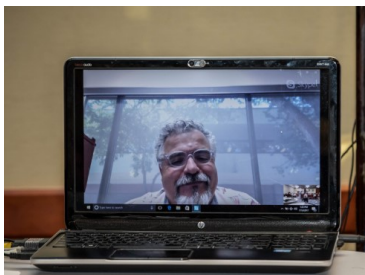
# Grand Nest History



Regional DMLGG's receiving their certificates



Canadian Region members with Gordie Goose



Ailing incoming MLGG Mark Robertson "skyping" in from Edmonton

Ray Wicker receiving his regional Gander of the Year Award from MLGG Linda Meik



Members of the Tennessee Pond on the left and British Columbia Pond members on the right, receiving their International Communication Awards from GGOF Dan Rich



Neil Miller, photographer extraordinaire, PMLG of the Edmonton Pond and member of the Canadian Region, receiving his Gander of the Year certificate from MLGG Linda Meik.

# Grand Nest History



Dancing the night away at the Savannah Grand Ball



PMLGG Linda Meik looking as regal as ever.



Grand Nest's Terry Maloney with his Blue Goose flock!



Members of the Saskatchewan Pond receiving their Regional Best Percentage Increase and Most New and Reinstated Awards from Grand Wielder Terry Maloney



# Grand Nest History



Edmonton's Andrew Happer  
with Gordie Goose enjoying  
themselves at the conclusion  
Ball in  
Savannah, GA



Blue Goose ladies from Canada  
There he is again!



PMLG Donna Harwood and  
PMLGG Keith Strohecker  
entering the Grand Ball in  
Savannah



Members of the Hartford Pond.  
Gordie gets around  
doesn't he!



Annette Simpson with  
her son Philip J Simpson  
II



Member of the Kentucky Pond receiving their Scholarship  
Award from GCOG Bilbrey