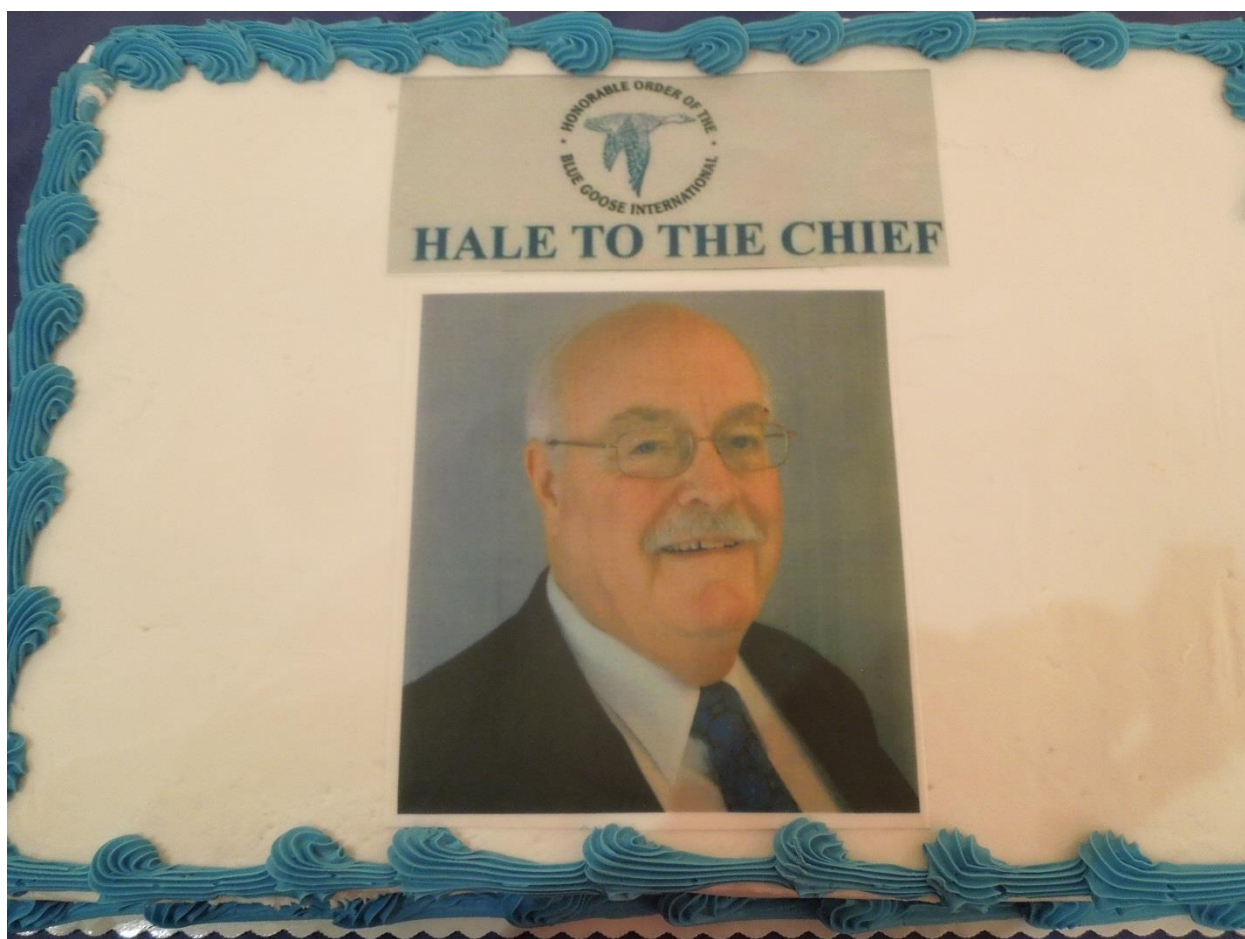


The Hartford Pond Honors Jerry Hale on PMLG Night



A terrific turnout to salute a terrific leader and friend!

Two hundred and seventy-five Ganders and guests joined together at the Aquaturf Club in Plantsville, CT on September 7th to honor PMLGG Jerry Hale on PMLG Night.

How much do folks love Jerry? Well, we had three guests fly in just for the evening, namely MLGG Linda Meik from Texas, and PMLGG Bill Olson and DMLGG Gene Newman from Maryland. And in a great display of friendship and technology, Australian Gander Leo Fluitsma “Skyped in”!

The evening started with a cocktail hour, and when we were seated, PMLG Bob Partridge welcomed the group and did his usual great job in acting as the evening’s Master of Ceremonies. After Pond Chaplain Craig Sikora gave the invocation, the evening’s first speaker was Most Loyal Grand Gander Linda Meik of the Texas Pond.

Linda quipped that the evening offered a welcome alternative to the “*gentlemanly*” tone of the summer’s presidential campaign. She spoke of Jerry’s Blue Goose accomplishments – starting an Australian Puddle, and broadening our national footprint

with involvement in the national and regional PLRB Conferences. She read a note from PMLGG Randy Wilson that thanked Jerry for “*teaching us the true value of friendship*”.

Linda ended by thanking Jerry for his advice over the years, to always “*do what is right for the Honorable Order*”. She presented Jerry with gifts from the St. Louis Convention, including an engraved crystal plaque.

PMLG and Grand Guardian of the Nest Dan Rich spoke next and gave a brief summary of what Blue Goose is all about to the dozens of guests in the room. He summarized Jerry’s history with Blue Goose, how he joined the Hartford Pond in 1988, became a Pond Officer in 1990, and served as Most Loyal Gander in 1993-94.

Jerry took his Blue Goose skills for leadership, motivation, organization, clear thinking, and negotiation to a larger stage in 2000 when he joined the Grand Nest as a Blue Goose national officer, and finished his term with a gala convention at Foxwoods in 2005. Jerry went on to serve many years as the Grand Nest Historian. Dan finished his remarks by asking the room to stand and give Jerry an arm flapping Blue Goose salute.

A slideshow of Jerry Hale photos followed before one of the evening’s highlights took over the big screen. With the assistance of Pond Webmaster Kevin Brady and the wizardry of Skype, we were able to chat with Australian gander Leo Fluitsma, a long-time friend of Jerry’s.

Simply put, Leo was terrific. He started us off with a laugh when he said that “*in Australia, a goose is not a term of endearment*”.

He spoke of his long friendship with Jerry and the “*instant chemistry*” between them. And although it was just 9:15 AM in Australia, Leo cracked open a can of Australian beer to salute his friend.

Leo and Kevin put in a lot of work and practice sessions to pull this off, and it worked beautifully.

VeriClaim’s Dave Beaver, a long-time friend, business partner and colleague of Jerry spoke next. He started with a Hale history lesson, and how the family was traced back to the 1600’s in Glastonbury. He spoke of the many professional organizations Jerry has been a part of –the Loss Executives Association, the New England Claim Executives association, the National Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters, the CT Adjusters Association, as well as Blue Goose.

He spoke of Jerry’s love for travel, and his visits to 43 of the 50 states and 5 of the 7 continents. Dave got emotional with some beautiful remarks on Jerry’s character and personality, and Jerry’s deep love of his family.

The Hartford Pond’s officers were introduced and 23 PMLGS from Ponds/Puddles across the country (Hartford, New York, National Capital, Texas, Bay State, Ocean State) posed with Jerry for a wonderful group photo.

Our Maryland guests, PMLGG Bill Olson and DMLGG Gene Newman (who somehow flew up from Baltimore dressed as the Blues Brothers without being detained by the NSA) led the group in a rousing rendition of Soul Man. The lyrics were changed to "You're a Soul Man" to salute Jerry.

Almost lost in the shuffle was the large pile of food goods donated by our guests for the Immaculate Conception Men's Shelter. We also want to thank the officers of the Bay State Pond for their generous monetary donation to the shelter.

So many people worked very hard to make the evening the big success that it was. We thank MLG Cathy Finlayson, SOF John Mastroianni, COG Cristine Kern, and GOP Allyson Kataja for all of their hard work. We're also thankful to Ron Kern and Maria Sandillo for their work at the registration table, Robert Ascii and Jennifer Martel for their work at the 50/50 table, and Webmaster Kevin Brady for producing the memorable Skype segment.

But most of all, we are grateful to Jerry Hale for his inspirational 28 years of Blue Goose leadership and friendship. There is no one who better embodies "Character, Charity, and Fellowship".

"Hale to the Chief" was the inscription that capped a photo of Jerry on a beautiful cake created for the evening.

Hale to the Chief indeed !