

Thanks, Carolyn, for inviting my family to donate something to the auction. Both Camp Nauvoo and the original Ourth donation both have meaning for me – I attended the camp as a teen-ager back in the dark ages, and several Ourths were my friends growing up and at Graceland. My family taught, coached, played, sang, acted and studied at Graceland; my first major academic research and writing book was about the Succession Crisis at the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. and included chapters set in Nauvoo. After wandering, I am now a member of the Community of Christ church of Coralville and Iowa City.

You may know that my book, *Father Gander Nursery Rhymes: The Equal Rhymes Amendment* (Advocacy Press) had a long and rough ‘childhood’ – including two self-publications six years apart - on its way to becoming an ‘overnight sensation’ with more than a decade on the international best-seller and a British and an Australian version as well.

In 1985, it was published by Advocacy Press of Santa Barbara. Some might remember this whimsical cover of the Graceland *Horizons* magazine (August, 1985) below. That dizzying year included features on The Tonight Show, Saturday Night Live, CNN, appearances in ‘The Wizard of Id’ and ‘Doonesbury’, and on 80 radio shows, in 225 international newspapers, on a coast-to-coast national TV tour and an award for ‘Outstanding Contributions to Women’s Educational Equity” from the Los Angeles Unified School District. Thousands of letters of thanks and

praise poured in, from mothers, grandmothers, educators, civic leaders from Mary Louise Smith (Chair of the National Republican Party) to Senator Edward Kennedy; and Dr. Larche made hundreds of speeches, concerts, workshops and media appearances.

Six educational filmstrips (Nystrom), a 49-song musical album, a Christmas Trilogy of plays and a youth musical play soon followed. The book yielded ten printings over fifteen years. In retrospect, the book has garnered many important honors, among them, inclusion on the following Lists: *Eighty Books for Twentieth Century Girls*, *Brave Girls and Strong Women Booklist*, *Great Books for Girls*, *Books to Start a Section for Men* and several others. A new version with even more inclusive 21<sup>st</sup> century illustrations to accompany the originals by Carolyn Blattel-Britton is under contemplation.

In preparation for future consideration, we have put aside twenty sets of the remaining books from each version: *Mother Goose and Father Gander: Equal Rhymes for Girls and Boys* (1979), *The Equal Rhymes Amendment* (1985), *Father Gander Nursery Rhymes The Equal Rhymes Amendment* (1985) and *Father Gander Nursery Rhymes The Equal Rhymes Amendment* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1995), along with copies of the accompanying musical cassette, *Father Gander and the Family Geese* (1995). The books are no longer in print. **There are only 20 full sets extant.** It is our intention to put them up for auction for some future celebration or need. Over twenty of the

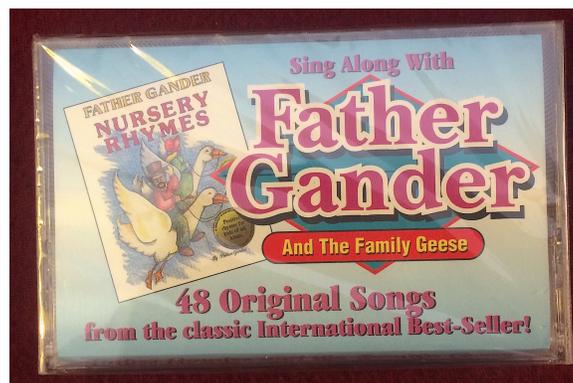
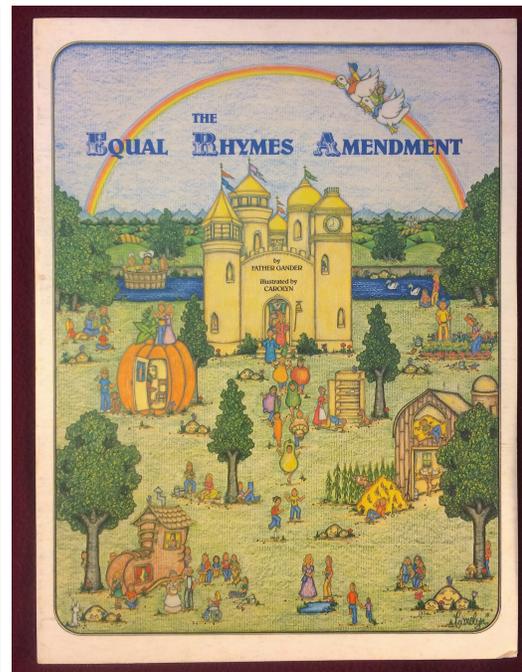
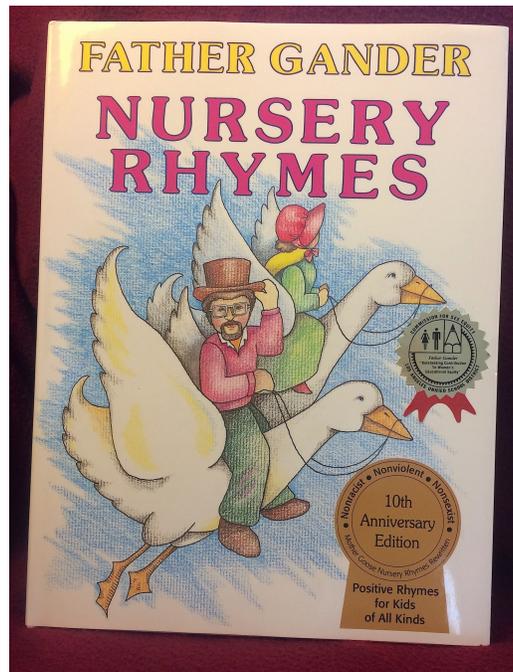
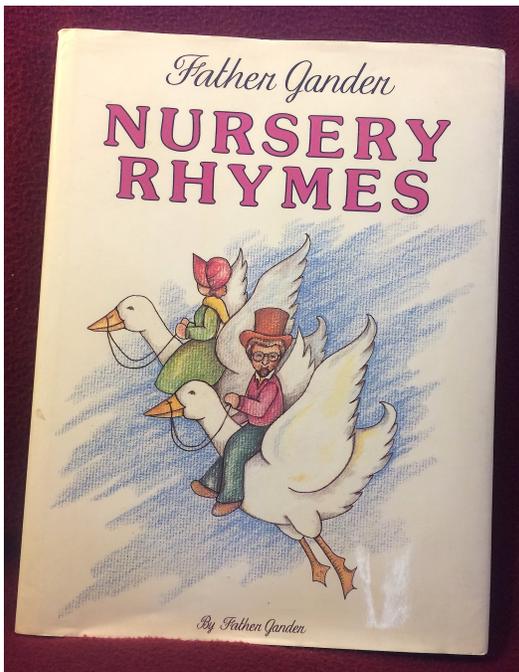
original Father Gander Illustrations by Carolyn Blattel-Britton may be put up for auction as well.

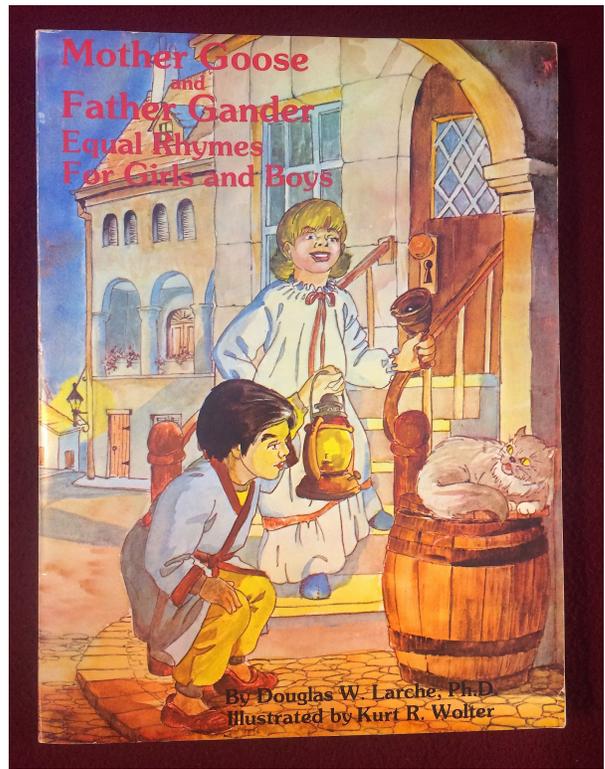
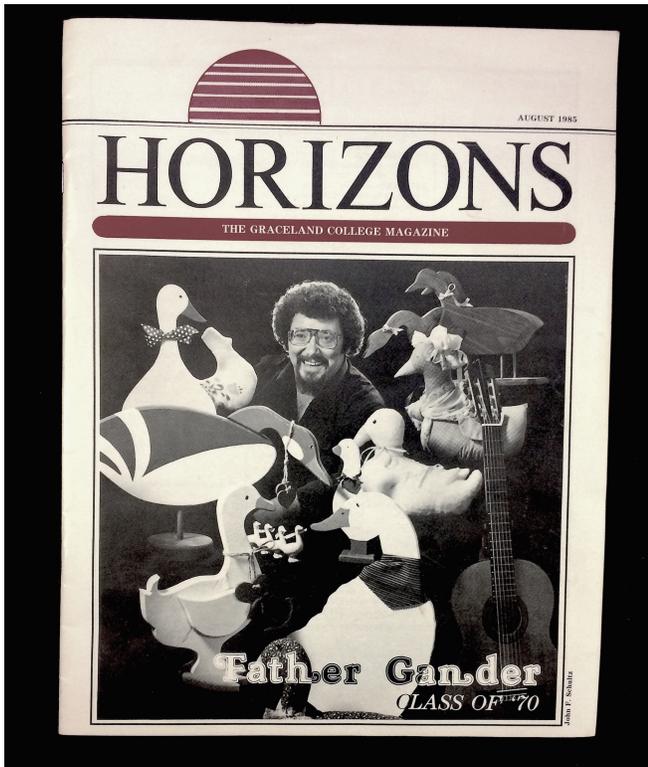
On the condition that the opening bid for this unique, finite and historical grouping is at least \$250, I would like to donate this collection of four books and one cassette, signed by the author, to the Camp Nauvoo Auction. Just as guide, when we release the other 19 sets, our intention is to begin bidding at \$1,000 per set. If this opening bid of \$250 is not achieved, we ask that this collection be returned to us.

Photos of the four books, the cassette and the Horizon magazine cover are below: "

# Doug Larche Books

Minimum Bid \$250





*"Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,  
Jack jump over the candlestick!  
Jill be scumble, jump it too,  
If Jack can do it, so can you!"*  
*from The Equal Rhymes  
Amendment*

Imagine yourself the father of two children named Jason and Elisa. Imagine yourself reading nursery rhymes to them. Imagine being offended by the world revealed to you, a world you felt was "a male-dominated, able-bodied, monocultural fairyland filled with sexism, anger, violence, ignorance and insensitivity to the human condition." What do you do next? Complain to all and sundry? Turn on the TV? Burn the book? Or write one of your own? **The Equal Rhymes Amendment**, and become world famous? Father Gander chose the last option. His story is no fairy tale: poet, professor, playwright, songwriter, director, actor, coach, family man, and a 1970 graduate of Graceland named Dr. Douglas Larche.

Actually, Larche's success didn't

## Father Gander

### RHYMES FOR A REASON

by David Perkins

come that easily. Before **The Equal Rhymes Amendment**, he wrote **Mother Goose and Father Gander: Equal Rhymes for Girls and Boys**. But it went largely unread. Undeterred, Larche revised it and tried again. This time it was a smash.

The excitement began on April 11, 1985, when Larche was interviewed by Bill Cromer, a Des Moines Associated Press reporter. "He (Cromer) told me not to get my hopes up about the story's possible effect because it might not be picked up anywhere except in Iowa," said Larche. Cromer was wrong.

Larche suddenly found his hopes bathed in an international limelight of 80 talk shows including BBC in London; numerous feature articles in publications such as *USA Today* and the *London Telegraph*; and requests from book and record publishers and distributors.

Gryphon House, the world's largest distributor of early childhood educational books, is picking up the book's distribution and has featured it on the cover of their August catalog; Kimbo Records, the nation's largest distributional records, is producing an album of the book due out this fall; and Modern Curriculum Press, a publisher of elementary school phonics textbooks, is replacing their Mother Goose rhymes with Father Gander's in their new texts.

Larche attended Graceland from 1966 to 1970 with classmate and Pulitzer Prize winning writer, Tessa Carpenter. He remembers working with her when they were staff members on the *Tower*. As feature editor, he wrote the first story on Bruce Jenner's deathly performance at the Drake Relays.

After graduating from Graceland, Larche at Wichita State University received his Master's in Education degree in 1973. He earned his Ph.D. in Speech Communication from Indiana University in 1977.

Beginning August 17, Dr. Larche will assume the positions of Chairperson of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, Director of Theatre, and Associate Professor of Speech Communication at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa.

He is leaving a position as an educational consultant for the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction. Prior to that he served as Executive Director of Very Special Arts in Iowa.

As for his hopes for the future, he says:

Perhaps when our children grow up, they will have more healthy perceptions than we have. Perhaps they will be freer to gain individuality and worth to all people than they otherwise might have been. Perhaps they will aspire to offer equality to a troubled world. Perhaps our mutual child may someday say, "If Jack can do it, so can I!"

—Father Gander

*David Perkins is the Director of Public Relations for Graceland College.*

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