Making Connections

In the last issue of the Empire State Granger we talked about being connected, as we in fact are via the bonds of our Fraternity, and this time we’d like to continue somewhat in the same vein, and share the importance of making connections outside of our organization.

At the end of April we traveled to our Nation’s Capital City to discuss some important issues facing rural America with Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, as part of the National Grange Legislative Fly-In. The event consisted of a day of issue briefings and speakers at the National Headquaters, followed by two days of Capitol Hill appointments. Issues discussed during the appointments included tax reform for agriculture and landowners, rural broadband, H-2A immigration reform, Affordable Care Act coverage and premium concerns, issues to be considered in the 2018 Farm Bill, and the trade issue with Canada in relation to our dairy exports; all of these discussions were possible because of delegates we were able to cover. I might add that every upstate Congressional Office was visited during our stay, even if we did not have an appointment.

Your State Grange is attempting to make as many connections as possible to further the agenda that our members developed, be it through our own Legislative work, with CAO and their member organizations, and with other interest groups that share our policy. A thought that has been discussed a bit is to consider putting together a Legislative Day in Albany, at which time members from across the State could have the opportunity to meet with various Members of the Assembly and Senate. It has been a number of years since an activity of this sort has been considered. These connections are important.

Just as making connections is important for the State Grange, it is perhaps more important for the Community Grange, although these connections need to be much more extensive. It goes without saying that individual Granges should have contact with their local elected officials. Invite them in to share what is going on in the community, what they think needs to be done, or perhaps to help honor a citizen of the community. While this is important, the most important connection your Grange needs to make is the connection with those outside our walls, entreating them to join with us. At the 2016 State Session the challenge was issued for our State Grange to end the year (September Quarter) with a net gain of 144 members, as we were holding our 144th Session. If each Grange had a net gain of just one member, the goal would be more than met. This is not a lofty goal. These are important connections, as they put “feet under” the resolutions Community Granges took the time to develop. Our thanks goes to Bruce & Sharon Croucher who also took the opportunity to attend, thus increasing the number of Members we were able to cover. I might add that every upstate Congressional Office was visited during our stay, even if we did not have an appointment.

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Legislative Column

Cindy Benson-Pollard

Legislative Article….. Where is spring? As I write this article, we are expecting snow and have a frost advisory for the night in the middle of May. Someone forgot to tell Mother Nature that it is supposed to be warm now. Have you forgotten your Grange legislative work? I sure hope not.

By now, you should have received your packet for the Constitutional Convention presentation/information. I hope that you have taken the time to read through it and share it with your Grange members. Why not have an open meeting and invite the community to learn about what a Constitutional Convention is. Making an informed decision is far better than just following the herd. If you would like to use the PowerPoint presentation, please contact me and I will be glad to email it to you or copy it to a CD and mail it to you. I hope that you find it informative and helpful.

By the time this article is published, the first of two regional legislative conferences will have been held. The first one was at Taft Settlement Grange in Otsego County. Speakers included Jim Walsh, Co-Chair of the Constitutional Convention and New York State’s senator for the 34th District, and Francisco. If you attended the meeting, thank you so much for coming. If you didn’t come, why not? You missed some valuable information.

The second conference is in the planning stages. I am hoping to host it in Chenango County. The date is not set at this time. When I have confirmed a date and place, I will send out a letter to Chenango Granges and surrounding Granges with all the details. Please watch your mail.

I am also thinking to September for our annual Legislative Conference. If you have any suggestions for speakers that might be of interest to our members, please contact me. I am always looking for new presenters. A huge reminder, please get your resolutions in as soon as possible. This is a busy time of the year for me. I need time to type and make sure I have all my research done prior to State Grange. If you have any questions or need help, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always glad to do what I can to give you a helping hand.

Brenda Noble

Helping hand.

Family Activities

Brenda Noble


We are collecting snowflake ornaments and money for pet shelters for National Session this year. We ask that the ornaments be the size of Christmas ornaments to hang on a tree; they can be crocheted, beaded, or whatever media you choose. Keep in mind that the snowflakes must be able to travel to Spokane, WA in November for National Session. Each state in the Northeast region are asked to collect 50 snowflakes to be given to National delegates in November 2017 to promote the 2018 National Session theme “Unique as a Snowflake.” The ornaments will be collected at the Family Activities Table at State Session in October. The National Community Service Project this year is to collect items for pet shelters, but due to the distance and cost for shipping we will collect money to encase gift cards for Pet Co or Wall-Mart.

I have a list of items that sell well at the Big E store in the Grange Building. If you would like a list of these items, please let me know. They take anything handmade. People always look for the handmade because they are well made. They can be sent to you by email anytime, but must be to me by August 30th. I thank everyone for all of your hard work.

Community Involvement

Sherri Taft

“What! I need ten hours of community service to graduate? How can I get community service hours? Where can I get community service hours? Plus, I need twelve hours of community service for National Honor Society!”

One requirement for graduates from high school is to perform ten hours of community service for the participation in the government class that students take their senior year of high school. They also need to attend a government meeting. Our Grange youth have an advantage over many of their classmates as they can fulfill both of these requirements in the Grange. How can the Grange help non-Grange members acquire their community service hours and spread the word about the Grange? Do you have projects around your Grange that need doing? Maybe you want to do a Community Service project but just do not have enough workers to complete the project. Contact your local high school and let them know that you are looking for some students to do some community service for or with your Grange. Leave your contact information with the school so they can let you know about interested students. By doing this, you are helping your Grange and helping the local high school students. They are getting community service hours and your Grange is getting help with projects. You will be able to put into your Community Service report that non-Grangers helped you this year. Also, the students can learn more about the Grange, which makes this a win-win situation for all.

Kathy E. Miller

Spring and summer are here….let’s hope our new member numbers are heating up along with our temperatures.

Hopefully all Grange members nationwide have received the word that we MUST increase our member base in order to ensure our existence. This is not a threat, this is a promise. Yours truly is not very strong in the subject of math, but simple arithmetic shows the writing on the wall. We need more members not only for their dollars in the form of dues – we need new ideas and renewed energy. We should welcome folks that can provide us with a general refreshment of our thoughts and awareness for our future. We have reached the fork in the road and it is definitely time to take the new route.

The National Grange website offers an inexpensive “Promotional Kit” complete with applications and information needed to build our membership numbers. This very small investment and when used to its fullest extent, will more than pay for itself in renewing the faith in our future.

The survey at the end of each State Session where each attendee votes on the priority areas says that Community Service is No. 1. Providing services to our communities whether it be good times or a disaster, whether it be charitable like lap robes for the elderly, or whether it be educational or community awareness topics – all activities accomplish so much. Activities increase the awareness that the Grange is still out there and still active and this in an of itself, can bring us new members to help us carry on.

(Continued on page 3)
Sports

Carl Bullock

The State Grange Darball Tournament was held at State Headquarters on Sunday, April 30, 2017 with teams from Cortland, Orange, Steuben and Dutchess Counties participating. It was great having 4 teams this year and hopefully we’ll have 4 teams back again next year. Cortland County took 1st Place and all teams received trophies. A note of special recognition goes to Hamp–tont… (continued on page 2)
goal, and wasn’t intended to be, as we wanted a goal that was not impossible to attain. Just think what a similar goal each year would do members within a few short years, and as there will more members to ask more potential members, the odds become more favorable for a Grange to grow at a greater rate. We trust that all reading this column will use every effort to secure a new member for your Grange.

A the risk of being trite, I would like to close by calling your attention to a well-known song. When we try to go solo, we need not meant to go it alone. What it expresses in verse that we all are familiar with the lyrics, as you attention to a well known song, "Sea Fever," in relation to our Grange, we might do numbers wise in a few short years, and in relation to our Grange, we need to make connections that will culminate in that individual becoming a part of our fraternity and enjoy the same opportunities and accomplishments as we now enjoy.

Paula Turner Elaine Smith

The Spring Youth Leadership Weekend was March 31st-April 2nd at State Grange Headquarters in Cortland with over 20 in present. We shared Saturday morning with the Juniors including workshops on ritual and drill. Our Grange Ambassadors, Tessa Taft and Heidi Henderson then led the photo scavenger hunt with combo teams of Juniors and Youth. Please remember to invite these two young ladies to your Grange meetings or events during the rest of their year as Ambassadors. Their contact info is in the 2017 Grange Directory. Back to the Spring Weekend; we began Saturday afternoon with community service at the NYS Grange Museum with some spring cleaning. We practiced drill for a bit and a Grange trivia quiz was given. Elaine taught us a group game called “Four On a Couch” that was a real hit. Our “Cooking 101” results were a delicious baked potato bar for dinner including pulled pork BBQ, chili, broccoli, and cheese sauce. We also made fruit cobbler with a choice of peach or blueberry, topped with whipped cream. Mmm, my tummy is growling as Mmm, my tummy is growling as we wanted a goal that was not considered for the upcoming Youth Ambassador, age 16-21, or Young Adult Ambassador, age 22-35, will need to contact Elaine or Paula before September 1, 2017. Also, Fall Youth weekend will be September 22-24 at Butternut Valley Grange in Otsego County.

This idea followed some of the principles of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, temperance and pushing to prohibition. In 1876 New Hampshire State Grange was not a direct advocate of suffrage for women. The Master thought that the union in Grange might have repercussions in political life. While voting and being an officer holder in Grange, "woman was not made for man, created to minister to his passions and desires." The sphere of woman was to coordinate to man's and fully support it.

At a meeting of the Wayne County Grange Council a woman spoke against equality of women. She stated that she had three votes-those of her husband and two grown sons. Mrs. Goodell suggested the men might have minds of their own and who would vote for the single woman? The Wayne County woman responded that men should not have their own minds regarding moral issues. She said that men would never be on the wrong side and she wouldn't rest until their convictions were the same as hers. These statements showed the commonly held view that women exerted more influence than their votes could. Another idea was that during their time, women’s purity. The temperance movement and suffrage continued to conflict. In 1883 Michigan State Grange called for temperance and pushing to prohibition. In 1883 New York State
Grange approved by a narrow majority a resolution of equal suffrage. It was reaffirmed in 1891 and was actively working with the New York State Woman Suffrage Association and the WCTU suffrage campaign. National Grange lagged behind several states with regard to enfranchisement of women. Many considered the cause a state issue. It redeemed itself in 1915 when National Grange endorsed the equal suffrage amendment to the United States Constitution. Mrs. Gifford (or her husband) called the Grange the world's greatest equality club. Dr. Mary Walker, M.D. spoke to NYS Grange, dressed in her usual "neat broadcloth (gentlemen's) suit to praise it just as fulsomely." Susan B. Anthony told the National American Woman Suffrage Association that the Grange was its great rural ally. Because

was referred to the states then and again in 1892. Finally 1893 it approved a simply stated resolution that the Grange "is in favor granting to women the same privileges at the ballot-box as are granted to men." The cause was won again. But wait. In 1914 National Grange returned to its previous view that it was a state issue. It redeemed itself in 1915 when National Grange endorsed the equal suffrage amendment to the United States Constitution. Mrs. Gifford (or her husband) called the Grange the world's greatest equality club. Dr. Mary Walker, M.D. spoke to NYS Grange, dressed in her usual "neat broadcloth (gentlemen's) suit to praise it just as fulsomely." Susan B. Anthony told the National American Woman Suffrage Association that the Grange was its great rural ally. Because

women were recognized in the early days of Grange she could tell a "Granger woman as far off as I could see her, because of her air of feeling herself as good as a man." Brothers like Rev. Grosb (a founder) thought that equality could be confined to the Order were proven wrong. Brothers of the early Grange who worried that equality of the sexes could not be kept within the Grange were correct.

This information is the conclusion of a previous article. The information was gleaned from: Sisters a/the Grange: Rural Feminism in the Late Nineteenth Century, by Donald B. Marti, published by Agricultural History Society.

Dr. Walker was a Medal of Honor honoree from the Civil War, the first woman to receive this award. She believed in women's suffrage and less restrictive dress.

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CAN YOU HELP US???

The countdown started last year as soon as the State Fair ended. The countdown is reaching fever pitch as we get closer to August 23rd. The Great New York State Fair is only a few months away. Do you feel the excitement?

Last year there were many changes to the fair. There have been more changes this year. Would you like to know what has changed? One major change has happened. The fair will be 13 days this year. It will start on August 23rd.

Your Grange may have already received our letter asking for your help at the Ox Roast. This is an undertaking that we cannot do alone and hope that you will consider helping us. This is the one big fund raiser that the State Grange does each year. We hope that you and your Grange will consider working a shift to help us to make this another successful fund raising year.

If you haven’t helped recently, would you please consider sending and/or joining a team to work at the fair this year? The shifts run from 11 AM – 4:30 PM and 4:30 PM – 10 PM. Each shift requires 6 to 8 people. The dates of the fair are August 23rd through September 4th.

So we can plan our work schedule, we will need to know your preferred day/time and the number of team members on or before July 15th. To help control our costs, we will need to know the number of admission tickets that you will need. The fair has various days where different groups of people are admitted to the fair for free. We will be glad to let you know what group is being honored that day and can enter the fair for free. Please contact us with your first and second choice for shift preference as soon as possible. We will do the best we can to honor your choices.

If your Grange is not able to send a team of workers this year, would your Grange consider sending a monetary donation? These funds will help us to defray some of the costs that we incur for supplies prior to the start of the fair and would be humbly appreciated.

The countdown started last year as soon as the State Fair ended. The Great New York State Fair is only a few months away. Do you feel the excitement?

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Please fill in below and return to address at the bottom:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!! SEE YOU AT THE FAIR!!
The National Grange Fly-In—In April 24—26 was a huge success. Seventeen Grangers from eleven states made the rounds for meetings in 31 congressional offices on Capitol Hill. The youngest member of the Grange was a member of the Grange in Marlette, Michigan, who was 10 years old. The young Granger spoke passionately about the importance of agriculture and rural development.

The New Secretary of Agriculture

Senate Bill 224. In a statement following the confirmation, National Grange President Betsy Huber said his strong background as the son of a farmer, a government administrator, businessman, and the product of rural America made him an excellent choice to be Secretary. The next day, the new Secretary walked into a meeting with USDA employees, peeled off his coat, discarded his tie, rolled up his sleeves, saying, “I was a farmer first. This Job at USDA is about work. It’s about getting things done.” Perdue then joined President Trump for a dinner with former Secretary Tom Vilsack, the site shaking hands with his host—state Senator Ted Cruz. The group was briefed at the National Grange Building next to the White House before departing to the Hill to discuss dairy issues with Canada, rural broadband, agriculture workforce/immigration, farm bill, infrastructure, healthcare, taxes, trade and numerous state specific issues.

NYS Grange Camp will be held on Sunday July 2nd to Saturday July 29th. We will host this week at Camp Aldersgate in Greig, NY. Please have a new end time of Saturday morning. Check in will be Sunday at 1pm. Check out will happen on Saturday the 29th with an award ceremony at 10am and check out at 11am. Stay tuned for registration information via our Facebook page and www.nysgrange.org. Webpage, Facebook and Twitter are the primary means to keep in touch.

The Tax Reform

President Donald Trump wants to cut the business tax rate to 15 percent, increase tax benefits for families paying for child and dependent care, reduce the top capital gains rate to 20 percent, and lower the personal income tax rate to 35 percent.

Lower the personal income tax rate to 35 percent.

Double the standard deduction so a married couple pays no tax on the first $24,000 of income.

Set the top capital gains rate at 20 percent.

Increase tax benefits for families paying for child and dependent-care.

Neutralize the tax rate on overseas profits to encourage capital investment and job creation in the United States.

The new American Health Care Act could face a dramatic overhaul over in the Senate where members are in no big hurry to bring it to the floor. A number of senators, later, the House, and Senate chairs of Health, Finance, and ranking minority members of the agriculture committees and agriculture appropriations subcommittees for breakfast at USDA, seen around Washington as a politically savvy move.

THE BUDGET DEAL

Congress finally reached a bipartisan budget deal to keep the government open until the end of the fiscal year September 30. The house passed the $1.1 trillion spending package Wednesday, May 9 with an overwhelming bipartisan vote 509-118. On Thursday, May 4 the Senate voted 79-18 to pass the bill with no Democrats voted against it. The budget deal adds $12.5 billion in new money for the military, $1.5 billion for border security, such as technology, thousands of agents, and a $1.3 billion to speed border fencing, and infrastructure plus wildfire relief for the western states. The package does not include some of the administration's top priorities like money for a border wall, funding restrictions on Planned Parenthood or penalties on “sanctuary cities”. Most agencies and programs will continue at existing level funding.

The House Budget Committee Chairman, Rep. Presley (R-TN) has called the agreement “a good start”. A series of deals the week of May 1 brought the conservative Freedom Caucus and wavering Republican moderates on board.

Healthcare

The Obamacare replacement now goes to the Senate where the House-passed bill is expected to be heavily rewritten in hopes of garnering 51 votes under a special rule known as budget reconciliation. Democratic Senators will argue that various parts of the House bill will not meet Senate rules governing what can be included in reconciliation, thus requiring a 60 vote margin to pass.

The new American Health Care Act could face a dramatic overhaul over in the Senate where members are in no big hurry to bring it to the floor. A number of senators from both parties are concerned by analyses that the legislation would significantly cut federal subsidies for people between 50 and 65 especially in rural areas. Senators also question the potential amount of profit for insurance companies in the House bill.

Revising the Internal Revenue Service tax code is a priority for President Trump. Job creation, economic growth and helping low-and-middle-income families who have been left behind by the economy were three priorities of the Trump campaign. Looking back to the Reagan era when tax cuts sparked the economy, the administration is again proposing major revisions to the tax code. The major code changes in the President's proposal are:

Reduce the current seven tax brackets to three at 10 percent, 25 percent, and 35 percent.

Double the standard deduction so a married couple pays no tax on the first $24,000 of income.

Set the top capital gains rate at 20 percent.

Increase tax benefits for families paying for child and dependent-care.

Neutralize the tax rate on overseas profits to encourage capital investment and job creation in the United States.

Of course, any tax code reform proposal will have to be passed by the House and Senate where it will undergo intense scrutiny and possible revisions. Tax reform is on Congress’ priority list and should begin moving through the process soon.

It seems as though Secretary Perdue has convinced President Trump to use a scalpel instead of a meat cleaver to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Secretary apparently explained the disastrous economic and political calculations of terminating NAFTA outright after which the President committed to “give negotiation a good, strong shot.” Perdue said the three highest priorities for agriculture he heard during his Senate confirmation process were “trade, trade, trade.” Ag groups were increasingly concerned with the President's talk of scrapping NAFTA. Both Canada's prime minister and Mexico's president weighed in to persuade him to reconsider. Private and government economic analyses of totally dumping NAFTA show the big winners to be the services industry, IT, and the biologic industry. Big losers would be agriculture and the automotive industry.

The New American Health Care Act

The House bill was passed at 220-215 votes. A Senate measure had to be pulled in March because of a lack of votes. A series of deals the week of May 1 brought the conservative Freedom Caucus and wavering Republican moderates on board.

In delegation, Daniel Wilkins age 10 from Texas, can be seen on the National Grange webpage and www.nysgrange.org. We are looking forward to next year's event.
The Otsego County Pomona Grange held its 44th annual banquet on Saturday, April 29, which honors an outstanding Granger. This year’s banquet was held at the Zion Episcopal Church in Morris, which provided a lasagna meal to benefit Jacob Walling for his Eagle Scout Project. Jacob along with family, church members, and other scouts prepared and served the meal.

Herbert Whipple of New Berlin was awarded with the 2017 Granger of the Year Award. Herb joined the Grange in 1957 in Chenango County and transferred his membership to Wharton Valley Grange in Edmeston. He is a seventh-degree member and on the local level received his Golden Sheaf in 2007. He has been dedicated to the Otsego County Fair for many years as a Superintendent in the Antiques Building and at the Grange Building on the Fairgrounds doing the booth exhibit for the Wharton Valley Grange. This past year the exhibit won best of show for which he worked on by himself.

Herb has served as Overseer and Lecturer of his Grange and would often pick up Grangers to bring to the meetings. He also worked on the Wharton Valley Grange History booklet and is very much involved with the Unadilla Valley Railway Society.

Entertainment was provided by Rylee Lum, who was Best of Show Talent winner at the Otsego County Fair in the mini division last year.

Jacob Walling, a member of Troop 3 in Morris, spoke on his Eagle Scout project. He plans on rebuilding the steps leading into the Harmony Cemetery, which presently has old railroad ties that are deteriorated. This is the Church’s first cemetery dated 1808 located on Pegg Road and was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1997.

The Otsego County Pomona Grange was pleased to be able to hold this Community Service event with 35 Grangers and friends attending to help Jacob with his project.

Butternut Valley Grange Honors Members for Years of Service

Butternut Valley Grange honors members for years of service. Members receiving 25 year silver star certificates at the April 10 meeting were left to right, Nelson and Linda Park, Randolph and Laura Palada, and Colleen Bushnell.

Members Honored for Years of Service to Butternut Valley Grange—left to right, Paul Toutellotte and Cathy Osborne receiving Golden Sheaf of 50 years, Anna Ritchey with 60 years, Roger Halbert with Golden Sheaf of 50 years, and family members for Robert Hewlett for 70 years, a daughter Lisa Hall and son Dick Hewlett. Absent were Marjorie Wild 50 years and John Matteson 55 years. The presentations were on Monday evening, April 10 at the meeting held at the Grange Hall, in Gilbertsville.

Smithville Valley Grange #1397 had a dish to pass lunch with the Junior Grangers for Grange Month. We celebrated the past and looked to the future. We had a memorial service for our past members. One of the Junior Grangers rang the bell after each name was spoken. We sang “In the Garden.” We have bulbs that we are going to plant in our memorial garden at the park. We helped a Boy Scout collect things for emergency bags that will be kept at the fire department in case of an emergency. We are now helping an Eagle Scout with his project of replacing the old playground with a new one. We meet the first Friday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at The Community Center/Grange Hall in Smithville Flats.

Alexandria Hansson who was chosen as Miss Fire Prevention worked together with the Thousand Islands Hose Haulers at a telethon in April. The Hose Haulers are a group that restores fire trucks. The telethon was in conjunction with WPBS-TV. Alex and Assemblyman Addie Russel appeared at a session of the Legislature in Albany to explain the “Miss Fire Prevention” program. Congratulations to Alex on this honor and on her willingness to assist in this very important responsibility.