

American Values, Hometown Roots

THE EMPIRE STATE GRANGER



Our Vision!

- Initiator of Community Action
- Facilitator of Leadership Development
- Advocate for Families
- Trusted Conveyor of Issues to Legislators

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March—April 2021

Master's Column

Stephen C. Coye



A LIGHT IN THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

Of late we have been given reason to believe that the pandemic is being beaten back to the point that in-person activities can cautiously begin to take place in slightly larger numbers, due in part to the massive immunization program as well as factors relating to the virus itself. It has been a long year, and we trust there will be a desire on the part of loyal Grangers to re-engage with their members and their communities to help rebuild. No aspect of our collective lives have been left untouched by Covid, regardless of whether or not there was personal infection and/or exposure requiring quarantine.

As the spring of the year has been traditionally the time when Grange/community activity and outreach begins, it makes this the perfect time to organize a suitable community wide event to bring folks out of isolation and once again be a true "community." We should also not be hesitant to reach out to other community organizations to join in the effort. Perhaps a talking point to mention when enlisting the help of potential Grangers to join with us would be to help us with ideas to rebuild our community. I'm sure it

goes without saying that we still must be cautious and observe expected protocols when it comes to social distancing, masking, and assembly numbers especially when inside.

In the interests of safety, we have cancelled the Lecturer/FAC Conference at the end of April, as even with the increase of allowable participants it could be difficult for us to observe social distancing standards in all aspects of the day's activities. We are in hopes that not too much else will have to be laid aside this year, but if necessary we will do it.

I have a premonition that the most damaging aspect of the pandemic to our organization is yet to come. As we have been a year now, with more to go, with very limited and in some cases no activity in our local Granges I fear that many having gotten out of the habit of attending meetings and participating in activities will not return to active membership. This could have disastrous consequences. I am not suggesting that anyone venture into activities they may not deem as "safe" for them, as we 100% respect that position. We also know however, that it is human nature many times to take the path of least resistance and remain home. The "old normal" will most likely never completely return, thus forcing us to adapt new types of formats and activities. "New normals" are not necessarily bad, as with the advancement of society and technology everything continues to change, mostly for the better.

There is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. How long the tunnel is we have yet to learn, but it is getting shorter. Let us be inspired to retake the mantel of community leadership and make a positive mark out of a very difficult situation.

Amazing Leadership Opportunity

The NYS Grange is seeking personnel to manage the Grange operations at the New York State Fair. Listed below is a general job description outlining the responsibilities that the position entails. If this is of any possible interest to you, please do not hesitate to reach out. Should the fair run this year the activities in the building might be a bit different than usual, as the customary time for booking entertainment has already passed due to the uncertainties of Covid-19.

NEW YORK STATE GRANGE STATE FAIR DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION POSITION:

Coordinate and direct activities at the New York State Fair Grange Building. Includes:

- Booking entertainment acts and appearances for four (more on the weekend) events each day during the Fair.
- Supervising the Building during hours of operation: {10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.}
- Responsible for securing exhibitors and vendors.
- Coordinate maintenance and personal service needs with State Fair Administration.
- Responsible for building maintenance and security during the day.

REQUIREMENTS:
This person(s) (or couple) must possess administrative skills necessary to book entertainment venues during the off season {February and March}, arrange for and distribute fair week passes, schedule coverage personnel and handle the finances necessary to the operation.

This position also requires the creative skills necessary to determine the best use and arrangement of display space and vender location to catch the eye and interest of the fairgoer.

Daily attendance at the Building during the Fair is required, along with such days before and immediately after

necessary to properly prepare the building for the public and/or off-season storage.

BUDGET:

CONTACT: New York State provides funds for operations and some staff remuneration. New York State Grange volunteers assist with additional staffing needs and exhibit construction. Camping space is available.

Stephen C. Coye, President
NEW YORK STATE GRANGE
100 Grange Place Cortland, NY 13045
Tel: 607-756-7553 Cell 518-573-1274
email : steve@nysgrange.org

2021 FAIR DATES-
AUGUST 20 -
SEPTEMBER 6

Grange Month

Grange Month is just around the corner. Don't forget to order your Community Citizen Award and/or Pomona Grange Award for Public Service either in the Grange Supply Store or by mailing the order form <https://www.nationalgrange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Grange-Month-Citizen-Award%20Order-form.pdf>. These awards are available for purchase year round and with Grange month right around the corner, there is no better way to honor those within your community.

New York State Grange Scholarships

New York State Grange sponsors and administers four Grange scholarships for people continuing their education at two and four year colleges. We need your help in sharing this information with College bound students in your area.

These Scholarships include:

The DeNise Scholarship Fund

Awards for this scholarship place strong emphasis the

(Continued on page 2)

What's Inside	
Legislative, Community Involvement, Secretary, Scholarships	Pg. 2
Some items from National Grange	Pg. 3
Leadership/Membership, Family Activities, Camp, Youth	Pg. 4
Junior, Lecturer, National Master Letters	Pg. 5
Calendar, Contact Information, Chaplain	Pg. 6
National News	Pg. 7
Grange News	Pg. 8



That's the GRANGE way!

Legislative Column



Cindy Benson-Pollard

Can you feel it? Spring is in the air. Birds are singing, flowers are blooming and the world is turning green again. There is also hope in the air that we are finally starting to put the pandemic behind us. If you haven't received your vaccination as of yet, I encourage you to do so as soon as you can get an appointment. The sooner the better. During this long winter and the pandemic that has kept us from meeting, I hope that you have been able to keep your legislative work for your Grange going. This is a good time to review our policies and make contact with your representatives to let him/her know what the Grange's position is on issues of importance. When you received your new policy book, you also received a pamphlet that tells what our priorities are for this year. This is a good reference material and could be used to hand out during your Grange month activities.

Speaking of Grange month, I hope that you have plans in April for your Grange month activities. This is a good time to invite your community in to see what your Grange is doing to help make your community a better place to live for everyone. It was suggested to me that we might try Zoom meetings with legislative members rather than regional conferences. I would be interested in hearing back from you regarding this idea. If I set one up, would you be willing to join in on the meeting. Please let me know your thoughts on this. You can email me at cbenson81@msn.com. I think this would be a good way to hear from them in a small venue.

Here are issues that are before the State Legislature that we are working on at this time:

- Regional food markets expansion

(Continued on page 4)



That's the GRANGE way!

Community Involvement

Sherri Taft



It has been a year since the Coronavirus pandemic hit the United States of America. Many Granges have been unable to do their normal community service projects in the past year due to the pandemic. However, many Granges have found very creative ways to do Community Service projects safely as we continue to follow all the recommendations of the CDC. If your Grange has not been able to do much for Community Service in the past year, please consider entering nominations for Law Enforcement Officer, Teacher, or Firefighter of the Year for local Law Enforcement Officers, Teachers or Firefighters who your Grange feels have gone above and beyond all expectations to do their job this year. It has been a tough year for everyone and many people have excelled in their occupations this past year. Let us recognize these people and show them our appreciation for all that they have done during the pandemic. The applications for Law Enforcement Officer, Teacher, Firefighter of the Year can be found in the handbook or on the New York State Grange website under Community Service. Please send in your Community Service projects and nominations by September 1, 2021 to:

Sherri Taft
164 County Route 14
Fulton, New York 13069

I look forward to seeing all that Granges have done in the past year and I hope to receive many nominations for Law Enforcement Officer, Teacher and Firefighter of the Year. As always, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

From the Secretary's Corner



Roger Halbert

Welcome, Spring! It not only follows our usual winter shut-in but a whole year of unusual living. We all look forward to the warmth of sunshine and the opportunity to once

again enjoy the outdoors, hopefully with less restrictions in 2021. Our degree work reminds that springtime renews us and encourages us to look forward to the future with faith and hope. Let it be so!

A word to our Pomona Secretaries: we have opted to hold up the usual first mailing of State Session, that is sent out in early May. It is that first communication that alerts our Granges to the upcoming State Convention, important information to help us all prepare for this highlight of the year. As the health crisis changes and more people become vaccinated, the guidelines change toward a "more normal" life. We want to be assured that the information and plans in that first communication will hopefully be accurate and lasting. We realize that a later notice makes it more difficult for Pomona Granges to act on their delegate list when many Pomona Granges meet in June. Any Pomona can cautiously plan on their usual number of delegates which will be confirmed in the first official letter we anticipate in early June. We will announce, however, that the current plans call for State Convention to be held in the Corning Radisson, October 15 – 19. We hope this helps all initially in their plans. At this writing, the Executive Committee plans to meet at the Corning Radisson in June to work with the host committee on plans for October, so that is exciting!

Before we leave thoughts on State Convention, Subordinate Secretaries are reminded that the March quarterly report is an important one as it determines the number of delegates each Pomona Grange can send, so if you have not sent in March 2021 report (or showing membership losses), you place your Pomona Grange in jeopardy with possible fewer delegates in October.

Subordinate Secretaries should check their Grange's roles to check out members who are reaching a milestone year in their Grange membership, 25 years, 40 years, 50 years and every five years thereafter. Members who joined in years that end with "1" or "6" may be earning special recognition. Please remember that individuals can only receive recognition if that Subordinate Grange is current in their dues to State Grange. Also, plan on 4-6 weeks for processing, and an additional 4 weeks if part of the processing is handled at National Grange (this would be for Golden Sheaf, 50 year awards and special recognition for 75 or 80 years). Requests for such membership recognition are made on Forms "M" and "O". Secretaries should have copies of these

forms. If you have questions, please contact me.

The Journal of Proceedings for 2020 was sent to the printer's the end of March. They should be sent to State and Pomona leaders and to the Subordinate Granges that requested a copy by early May.

Enjoy this wonderful spring season and may you be well.

(Continued from page 1) Scholarships

applicant being agriculturally oriented.

This scholarship may be used in any recognized accredited institution of higher learning. Public and private institutions may be attended within or outside of New York State.

Courses of study must entail a major within the field of agriculture.

Applicants must be a resident of New York State.

All applications must be returned to the New York State Grange, 100 Grange Place, Cortland, N.Y. 13045, no later than April 15th.

Susan W. Freestone Education Award

A candidate must have been a member of a Junior Grange in New York State and must presently be a member in good standing of a Subordinate (Community) Grange in New York State

This award is a \$1,000 grant.

The candidate must graduate from high school and enroll in an approved two or four year college in New York State.

All applications must be returned to the New York State Grange, 100 Grange Place, Cortland, N.Y. 13045, no later than April 15th.

June Gill Nursing Scholarship

Up to two Grants for this scholarship will be awarded to students pursuing a Nursing Degree.

The candidate must be enrolled in an accredited Nursing Program

A candidate must be a member in good standing of a Subordinate (Community) Grange

All applications must be returned to the New York State Grange, 100 Grange Place, Cortland, N.Y. 13045, no later than April 15th.

The Application for these three scholarships are available at <https://nvsgrange.org/education-opportunities/> and are due by April 15th.

In addition to the above three scholarships, the Grange also awards:

The New York State Grange Cornell Fund

- Awards are made to students in any class in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell.

- Selection is based on character, scholastic record, and need

(Continued on page 4)

The Therapeutic Power of Plants

Courtesy of NICH/ConsumerHort.org. with Commentary by National Grange President Betsy Huber Celebrate

National Horticultural Therapy Week March 14-20, 2021! Many people (especially me!) enjoy looking at plants and flowers and find it relaxing to dig in the dirt. But research and a growing number of horticulture therapy programs are showing that gardening holds serious healing power. Trained and certified therapists, including members of the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA), help clients treat physical and psychological conditions including PTSD, addiction, and dementia through gardening. According to the AHTA website, "Horticultural therapy helps improve memory, cognitive abilities, task initiation, language skills, and socialization. In physical rehabilitation, horticultural therapy can help strengthen muscles and improve coordination, balance, and endurance." Horticulture therapy programs have been implemented in schools, correctional facilities, retirement homes, hospitals, outpatient facilities, and community centers, and the same techniques can be adapted to home gardens. More information on finding a program or licensed therapist can be found at AHTA.org. National Garden Bureau past-president Heather Kibble says, "Caring for plants and experiencing nature brings healing and purpose to people whose lives have been affected by illness, addiction, violence or military service." The National Garden Bureau (NGB.org) administers an annual grant for therapeutic gardens to support garden-based education and therapy. Research compiled by the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH) reveals other benefits of plants and gardening on the healing process, including a reduction in the amount of pain relievers taken post-surgery by patients in rooms containing plants. Plants in room décor also reduced the stress, blood pressure, and reported fatigue levels of hospital patients. More findings on the healing benefits of plants can be found in the infographic, "#PlantsDoThat Where We Heal," available for download, reprint, or adaptation at ConsumerHort.org. When posting on social media, please use the hashtag #PlantsDoThat. The National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH) is a consortium of industry leaders who are promoting the benefits and value of horticulture. NICH brings together

Grange Month and Community Awards

Grange Month and Community Awards By Betsy Huber National Grange President As you plan your Grange Month activities for April, may I suggest that you include some recognitions or awards as part of the program? Whether virtual or in person, it is even more important this year to honor people in your community who have been especially helpful to you or others during this pandemic. National Grange recognizes several "of the Year" occupations at convention, and you can nominate your local honorees using the application forms on the website under Programs – Community Service. Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter/EMS, and Teacher are those who qualify for National Grange recognition, but you can honor anyone in your community who has gone "above and beyond" this year. When your Grange makes its selection, be sure to publicize the honoree and his/her story with a press release, Facebook post, even radio or TV spot. This will recognize the person for their work, and recognizes your Grange as an organization that serves the community and celebrates its residents. Also available from National Grange are the Award for Public Service (Pomona) and the Community Citizen Award (Community Grange.) Each has a certificate or plaque and paperweight to present to the awardee. These are available from the Grange Store on the website www.nationalgrange.org. Recognizing community members for their outstanding work is a great way to publicize the Grange and its important position in your community. Make it a part of your Grange Month celebration! 2021 Grange Month Community Service Activity Suggestions By: Pete Pompper National Grange Community Service Director Since Grange month and spring both occur in April, I feel it is appropriate that we look at some community service ideas that can be refreshed or would be new to your Grange. If your Grange is in an area where the weather permits you can hold an outdoor event for the community. People are looking for activities that are in a safe environment and still socially distanced. Some ideas include: • Seed or seedling swaps: these are a great way to share extra seeds or seedlings you may have either left over from last year or from what you started this year. Several Granges throughout the nation do this. • Easter egg hunt • Story time for children (story telling or reading a book) • Open mic night for the community • Holding informational meetings/programs that are relevant to your • community. • Organize and host a community wide picnic utilizing locally grown • produce or products. • Start a Farmers market where local producers can sell their products. (This is a great way to introduce the local consumer to the producer which consumers are wanting, also is a great way to support local economy).

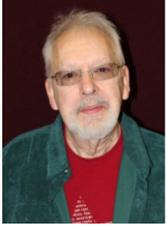
Who Do You Think You Are?

By Samantha Wilkins, National Junior Grange Director, and Mandy Bostwick, National Grange Youth Director For nearly a year now we have been stuck at home and have had to learn to change and adapt the way we do things. Those things could be how we work, how we are educated, or even how we grocery shop. Over the past year, many of us have learned more about ourselves than we ever thought possible. Some of us have discovered and taken on a new hobby or advanced our skills in one we were already passionate about. Many of our Grangers have been very creative about how they have been able to come together and serve their communities. Many of us have learned new attributes about ourselves that we didn't know we had; we have gained new insight as to what is most important to us. But have you ever wondered what Muppet or Sesame Street character you were most like? We know we hadn't considered that before. While we were digging deep into some old archived workshops, we found this quiz that we knew we needed to share. A team of researchers got together and analyzed the personalities of Sesame Street/Muppet characters, and put the information gathered into a quiz. Sometimes it is really fun to break away from the monotony of the day today and discover new things about ourselves. Some of you may be thinking how does this relate to Grange? Well, folks let us tell you: Discovering more about ourselves is sometimes the best way to unearth a little more detail about ourselves; that then furthers our abilities to succeed in our day-to-day work, or within our Grange work. Learning about our inner strengths and weaknesses will help in exploring and investigating how we can best serve our Granges and furthermore our communities. After you complete the quiz, go to the National Grange Youth or Junior Facebook page and complete the survey, where over the next few days, we will share what character best described us and a little bit of why we think that it could be beneficial in our Grange work. Answer each question with the answer that most describes you, then add up the points that corresponded with your answer. Use a pen and paper, because you'll want to keep track of both the question number and your answer. You'll need both to unlock the secret code

- What describes your perfect date?
 - Candlelight dinner for two
 - Amusement park
 - Rollerblading in the park
 - Rock concert
 - See a movie
 - What is your favorite type of music?
 - Rock and Roll
 - Alternative
 - Soft Rock
 - Classical
 - Pop
 - What is your favorite type of movie?
 - Comedy
 - Horror
 - Musical
 - Romance
 - Documentary
 - Which of the following jobs would you choose if you were given only these choices?
 - Waiter/Waitress
 - Sports Player
 - Teacher
 - Policeman
 - Bartender
 - Which would you rather do if you had an hour to waste?
 - Workout
 - Read
 - Watch TV
 - Listen to the radio
 - Sleep
 - Of the following colors, which do you like best?
 - Yellow
 - White
 - Sky Blue
 - Teal
 - Red
 - Which one of the following would you like to eat right now?
 - Ice Cream
 - Pizza
 - Sushi
 - Pasta
 - Salad
 - What is your favorite holiday?
 - Halloween
 - Christmas
 - New Year's Day
 - Valentine's Day
 - Thanksgiving
 - If you could go to one of the following places, which would it be?
 - Paris
 - Spain
 - Las Vegas
 - Hawaii
 - Hollywood
 - Of the following, who would you rather spend time with?
 - Someone who is smart
 - Someone with good looks
 - Someone who is a party animal
 - Someone who has fun all the time
 - Someone who is very emotional
- ANSWER KEY: Q1) a=4 | b=2 | c=5 | d=1 | e=3 Q2) a=2 | b=1 | c=4 | d=5 | e=3 Q3) a=2 | b=1 | c=3 | d=4 | e=5 Q4) a=4 | b=5 | c=3 | d=2 | e=1 Q5) a=5 | b=4 | c=2 | d=1 | e=3 Q6) a=1 | b=5 | c=3 | d=2 | e=4 Q7) a=3 | b=2 | c=1 | d=4 | e=5 Q8) a=1 | b=3 | c=2 | d=4 | e=5 Q9) a=4 | b=5 | c=1 | d=2 | e=3 Q10) a=5 | b=2 |
- 10-17 points: You are **OSCAR** You are wild and crazy and you know it. You know how to have fun and can sometimes seem as though you are too rowdy. You know what you are doing though and are much in control of your own life. People don't always see things your way, but that doesn't mean that you should compromise on your beliefs. Try to remember that your wild spirit can lead to hurting yourself and others.
- 18-26 points: You are **ERNIE** You are

(Continued on page 6)

Leadership Membership



Barton Snedaker

As I started thinking about writing this edition's column my Good DAY! magazine arrived in the mail. (Thank the Grange for rural free delivery). Two things almost immediately jumped out at me. The first is that the theme for 2021 is remaining the same - Cultivating Connections. The second is from President Huber's message.

She writes: "Take this opportunity, while people are resetting their priorities, to invite them to your meetings and involve them in your community service activities." She goes on to say, "We can step in now to fill that void created when all other activities are closed, if we show our value to the individual and the community through our service to others. Use these unusual circumstances as an opportunity to showcase your Grange as a vital resource in your community."

The correlation of these two pieces of information is exactly what I have been writing and talking about since becoming the Membership/Leadership Director for NYS Grange.

The word Connections in the Grange theme is a masterful piece of wordsmithing. It is a very broad, very umbrella-ish term. To my mind the original idea of cultivating is agricultural in nature. In this case I'm pretty sure it means nurture or foster or maintain or tend. I spent a sleepless night thinking about what else we could cultivate in the Grange and follow the original alliterative theme. The first one that came to mind was Cultivate Community. That is the primary connection a local Grange should be making. The next word that came to mind was Culture. The culture of your Grange is a calling card or a "No Trespassing!" sign on your local, community Grange. It is one of the values prospective new members use in their determination of whether to join your Grange. Will they fit in or not? Will their talents and ideas be accepted? Then came Cultivate Continuity. To me that means the connection from grassroots to National Grange. It also means connecting the past, present and future of your Grange and the Grange in general. What has the Grange stood for that is still important? What needs to be continued? Creativity is the connection of your skills, passions, and abilities to make something new. That creativity may be used to

enlist new members by asking them to participate in the Family Activities contests thereby creating another way to connect to your Grange. Then came Caring, Companionship, Cooperation, Cohesiveness, Compassion. As this is my thought train I'll add Cultivate Kindness and for some New Age thinkers I'll even throw in Cultivate Karma. By now you've got the idea.

Using the words nurture, foster, maintain or tend we can do a similar process - Nurture nature, neighborliness, etc; foster faith, foster family, etc. Tend traditions, tend togetherness and so on or Maintain momentum, members, etc.

There are, however, a couple of words which came to mind that do not follow our hard consonant alliteration. One is a word we repeat at least twice at each meeting. We are admonished to dispense Charity. Certainly a most worthy connection. That slight change in letter sound brought me to consider (Cultivate Consideration) adding Civility, much needed in our current climate, and Civics. With the recent unrest I came to realize that much of it was exacerbated by a lack of knowledge of some of the basic facts about the makeup of our country's government. Civics, unfortunately, is no longer a required course of study in many of our schools. Civility has, since its inception just after the Civil War, been a Grange hallmark. Respecting other people's ideas and speech, being able to disagree and still remain Worthy Patrons within the organization. Disagreement does not mean having to become enemies. In the same issue of Good Day! there is an article by Gary Abriem entitled "Braver Angels works to bridge the political divide through dialogue" which speaks exactly to this point. While we are using the sound of soft C we can also include a reference to President Huber's editorial and Cultivate Change. That Change has been an irrefutable part of our lives for the past year - so use it positively.

As a child I was fascinated by the hand-pushed cultivator which was stored in the tool shed. With its big iron wheel, long beautifully curved handles and three-pronged digger it was an item of much interest. I remember watching my father pushing it down the rows of the garden. Of course the physics of my size and its unwieldiness made my using it almost impossible until I was a young teen. The spud, symbol of the Assistant Steward, is a reminder of the simplest way humans have to cultivate. The hoe among the

implements in the degree work is another simple cultivator. Cultivation is the process of removing that plant life - weeds - which most gardeners and farmers do not want in their fields. Cultivation not only dispenses with them, but loosens the soil and allows the plants you do want to grow to thrive. Cultivating Connections is a way to remove the elements of our lives we do not want or need, at the same time we further support the development and nurture of those elements which we do.

I am not usually in favor of too many committees. If your Grange chooses to start one to follow up on President Huber's suggestions it could be called a Cultivation Committee. In one of my earliest columns I wrote about ways to go about increasing membership in your Granges and ways to increase the activity of existing members. Now may be the exact time to do so following her advice.

(Continued from page 2) Legislative

- Customer Operator protections in ag districts
 - Banning the use of hydraulic fracturing fluids on winter highways
 - Nursing staff to patient ratios in acute care facilities
 - Community broadband districts.
- If you need any help, please let me know, I am always available to help.

Family Activities



Brenda Noble

We hope everyone is staying well. We will be having the contest for the needlework and crafts, but we will not have the conference again this year. The items will be judged April 29th in Cortland. This year we will be judging plastic canvas and the quilt size is baby size. We will plan to display the top four of each category at State Grange in October. We are not sure about the Northeast Exposition whether that will happen or not. We will plan on it for September, and will adjust plans if they need to cancel.

The baking contest at State Session this year will be scones. Next year will be the gluten free cookie in 2022.

CAMP

Sherri Taft

Grange Camp

As New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo has recently stated that day camps and overnight camps can begin to open for the summer, we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to have New York State Grange Camp this year. The camp directors will be attending a Zoom meeting with Camp Wyomoco and Wyoming County at the end of March to discuss what needs to be in place in order to have camp. Updates will be sent out as soon as more information becomes available. Keep positive thoughts flowing that we will be able to have camp this year!

Youth



Katie Fallon

I hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and well. At this time I can not yet report if there will be a NEYC this year. With that said as soon as I know more information I will most certainly let you all know.

If any youth/young patron is interested in running for state ambassador this coming year please contact me. I can help you start getting ready now for the fall.

(Continued from page 2) Scholarships

for financial assistance.

- Preference is given to farm-reared students whose families are Grange members.
- Preference is also given to students who transfer from an Agricultural and Technical College of the State University of New York.
- Must have filed a Cornell Financial Aid application, and determined to be financial aid eligible.
- To apply, notify the NYS Grange office at 607-756-7553 by June 1.



Junior Grange



Gail Chamberlain

Jibber Jabber. The name for the National Grange Junior Director zoom meetings currently scheduled for the third Sunday evening, odd months. The first one started in March with Samantha Wilkins. I logged in early 8 pm and discovered it was to start 8 pm **Central** time or 9 pm our time. Sometimes it is good to be early. . . These will be sharing ideas and concepts across the nation, ask questions and learn the new or updates. State directors, Junior Leaders, parents, anyone with Junior interests are welcome. The National Lecturer is to join in the next Jibber Jabber on May 16 at 9pm.

The passport program is growing quickly. With currently five areas of interest, all 50 states have a passport. Plus the American Flag, 19th amendment, history, Grange history, agriculture, and many more and MORE to come. Were you aware the passport “stamp” can be printed on an iron-on label (by avery) and can be put on a sash or vest? Check out the Junior section on the National Grange website. Child Protection policy – it is there. Contests, programs, reports, it is all there. If you can’t find the information you are looking for – call me and I will help.

National Grange is in Kansas this fall. The Junior tour will be at the children’s museum and they are excited to be planning special presentations on the ecosystem with weather, tornados etc.

Grange baseball will continue at the Leadership Conferences with the winners advancing to National. Juniors are eligible to compete in other departments contests, even the quilt block. . There is certainly something for everyone’s interests.

The weather getting warmer and the sun setting later, we can enjoy the outdoors more. Continue helping each other and neighbors, expanding community service activities. With things beginning to open up more, stay smart, stay cautious, follow the current guidelines and be safe. Let us take a step forward with care so we don’t lose two steps backward.

National Grange Actions Master's Letters

Secretary Vilsack,

Congratulations on your confirmation to once again serve as Secretary of Agriculture. The National Grange looks forward to welcoming you back to Washington, D.C. Since our founding in 1867, the National Grange has worked with administrations of both parties to create policies which support agriculture and rural America. Today, the National Grange serves as the voice of over 150,000 rural Americans from all across the country. In this mission, we look forward to working with you and the Department of Agriculture in the next few years to advance policies which benefit rural America.

In particular, our membership’s top priorities include rural broadband, rural healthcare, infrastructure deployment, and agricultural issues from trade to climate change. We have been encouraged so far to see that the Biden administration is pushing forward with campaign promises on many of these issues and hope to see swift action in the coming months and years. Yet more, we are confident that with your deep history and connections in the agriculture community that you will ensure that farmers are a priority in any actions taken by the Biden administration.

While the National Grange has many more legislative priorities for rural America on which we look forward to working with your department, rural broadband, rural healthcare, and farmer-focused agricultural policies are the most significant. Once again, congratulations on your confirmation; the National Grange looks forward to working with your department to implement successful policies for rural America.

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Huber, President National Grange

The National Grange appreciates action by the House of Representatives to pass the

Bi-partisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act by a vote of 247-174. “This action will go a long way toward relieving the ag labor shortage on our farms and ranches,” said National Grange president Betsy Huber. “Now we have to work on the Senate.” The bill, H.R. 1603, sponsored by Zoe Lofgren, D-CA. and Dan Newhouse, RWA., for the first time allows 20,000 year round visas per year, provides for numbers to increase or decrease depending on demand, includes provisions to help farms renovate or build housing, streamlines the H-2A application process and caps wage rates increases at 35% for nine years. Existing undocumented farmworkers can get temporary legal status if they’ve worked in agriculture at least 180 days over the last two years. Farmworkers can also earn a green card by paying a fine and continuing to work on farms for an additional period of time.

Re. Farmers to Families Food Box Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Grange urged the Department to establish a food chain link directly between our food producers and our food consumers. The USDA responded by standing up the Farmers to Families Food Box Program which has become so necessary to help those in need obtain food this past year. The program fed families and individuals as it provided valuable markets for farmers and ranchers.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over and the nation is expected to experience a long economic recovery. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program or the creation of a similar initiative. The program’s mission of delivering local farm products to local communities in need should definitely be carried forward.

We encourage the USDA to learn from those on the ground who have participated in the Farmers to Families program. Their experience, advice and ideas should definitely be taken into account when designing next steps. The National Grange encourages the Department to remove any barriers that might discourage participation by small producers, and to allow the content of boxes to reflect local preference and local availability of food.

Mr. Secretary, the National Grange encourages you to continue this program and concentrate on feeding citizens in need with local farm products. The decision should not be whether to continue the program but how best for farmers to feed families.

Sincerely, Betsy Huber President

Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee

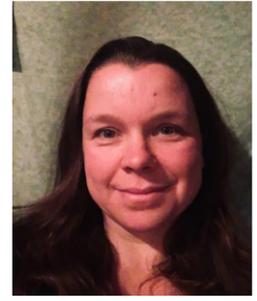
RE: Docket No. FDA-2021-N-0134

Dear Members of the Committee:

The National Grange is the oldest general farm and rural life

(Continued on page 8)

State Lecturer



Jolene Pirrone

Again this year, there will not be a Lecturer’s/FAC conference. Some of you have reached out to me about submitting project work to be judged. Send your completed work to State Headquarters as soon as possible. The traditional date is April 15, but I will accept things a little later. The earliest we would be meeting is April 29, but I need to confirm with my committee.

My committee and a couple of judges will evaluate your work as before and send it back to you as soon as possible. Prize money will be handled differently this year so there won’t be so much of a wait.

A special note about performances, please don’t discount the performance section of the handbook. We will still be judging via recorded performance or Zoom. Don’t be discouraged by technology — I will be happy to help you.

I appreciate that so many if you are continuing in project work as best you can during these trying times. I will be working on a new handbook that will be easier to follow and hopefully make more opportunities for Grangers to participate.

I attended a state department head meeting, led by Master Coye, via Zoom recently. I am pleased to report that our State Grange is staying the course and looking ahead to a better future. I felt good about our discussion.

Plans for a northeast regional conference this year are largely abandoned, but we are looking forward to a dialog with other state leaders about opportunities for a possible combined conference in 2022.

I would like to add that I am available to attend your Grange meetings, in person if I can, or via Zoom. Reach out to me by phone, email or through the Facebook page. (518)929-1279
jolene@advancedwebdesign.com

(Send me a text to the number above with a topic that is important to you personally, and it may be included in next year’s handbook.)

Contact Information

NEW YORK STATE GRANGE 2021

Calendar of Events, Activities, & Dues Dates

Special Note: Items noted with ** are the responsibility of the State Grange and are being scheduled with the possibility of future cancellation/modification due to Covid-19.

April 1-30	GRANGE MONTH – Plan a special Public activity/event
April 15	Art/Photo Entries due at HDQ for Judging
April 15	Talent Entry Report Sheets due to the State Lecturer
April 18	NYS Grange Museum Full Board Meeting – 10:00 a.m. Museum
April 20	Woodworking, Quilting, & Needlework due at HDQ for Judging
April 23	Executive Committee Meeting, HDQ, 11:00 a.m.
April 23-25	Youth Spring Weekend – Cortland **
April 24	Lecturer/FAC Conference – HDQ **
April 25	State Dart Ball Tournament – HDQ **
May 13-15	NYS FFA Convention – Syracuse
May 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
May 15	NYS Grange Museum Cleanup Day, 10:00 a.m., Museum
June 6	State Bowling Tournament – Cortland Bowling Alley, Cortland **
June 18	Executive Committee Meeting – Corning Radisson
June 30	Subordinate Dues to State Secretary
June 30	Junior Grange Membership & Dues Report Due
July 11	State Golf Tournament – place TBA **
July 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
July 17	NYS Grange Museum Full Board Meeting & Picnic, Museum
July 23	Executive Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., HDQ
August 3-5	Empire Farm Days, Pompey
August 20 – Sept. 6	New York State Fair – Syracuse
September 1	Community Service Reports due to Director
September 1	National JG Report due
September 4	Grange Day at the NYS Fair
September 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
September 15	Lecturer's Reports due to State Lecturer
Sept. 17 – Oct.	Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) – West Springfield, MA

(Continued from page 3) Who are you?

fun, friendly, and popular. You are a real crowd-pleaser, You have probably been out on the town to share of times, yet you come home with the values that your mother taught you. Marriage and children are important to you, but only after you have fun. Don't let the people you please influence you to stray.
27-34 points: You are **ELMO** You are cute and everyone loves you. You are a best friend that no one takes the chance of losing. You never hurt feelings and seldom have your own feelings hurt. Life is a breeze. You are witty and calm most of the time. Just keep clear of backstabbers, and you are worry-free.

35-42 points: You are **KERMIT** You are a lover. Romance, flowers, and wine are all you need to enjoy yourself. You are serious about all commitments. A family person. You call your mom every day, and never forget a birthday. Don't let your passion for romance get confused with the real thing.
43-50 points: You are **BERT** You are smart, a realm thinker. Every situation is approached with a plan. You are very healthy in mind and body. You teach strong family values. Keep your feet planted in them, but don't overlook a bad situation when it does happen.

The Empire State Granger, Published 6 times annually by **The New York State Grange**, 100 Grange Place, Cortland, NY 13045
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Third class postage paid at Cortland,(#57). Subscription Rate a portion of member dues is paid as a subscription to the Empire State Granger.
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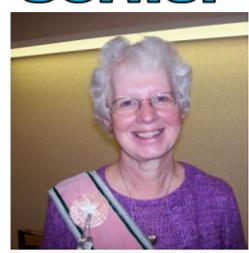
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Chaplain's Corner



Virginia L. Conner

ARE WE PAYING ATTENTION?

My column this time is full of questions. These questions have come to me this past year as we live through this COVID19 pandemic. Maybe you have already faced and dealt with these questions. However, I share them with you to think about in those quiet moments of your day.
How has the isolation changed you?
What things have you done differently?
How have you changed personally?

What have you done to get peace in your heart?
What new things has the Lord shown you or had you do with the time at home?
Do you have new priorities?
Has the pandemic changed your attitude or demeanor?
In the book of Ruth 1:20 & 21, Naomi wanted her name to be changed to Mara which means bitter. She requested this because of the bitterness she felt after the Lord had taken her husband and her two sons. Have you felt bitterness during the past year? Read the remainder of Chapter One of Ruth for the rest of the story. In fact, the whole Book of Ruth is a wonderful read – it's only four chapters long. Think about why the Grange Seven Founders chose this Book of the Bible for our meeting opening ceremony.
Looking down will fill us with discouragement but looking up will give you encouragement.

The National Grange is pleased to announce the Rec-
ognition Program. This program will honor and
celebrate families in the Grange community and
State chapters are encouraged to nominate
families for national recognition. Each family
will receive a certificate and be featured at
the National Convention. To learn about the families you
would like to be published in the National Grange, the deadline for nomi-
nations is September 10, 2020 and should be sent to the

National Grange News CORNER



Following COVID-19 relief and cabinet nominees the Biden administration has begun to signal their future legislative priorities such as immigration reform and infrastructure spending. While details of the timeline for future proposals are not yet clear, this is a space to be watching for the rest of the year.

Secretary Vilsack's Priorities

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee in early February, Secretary of Agriculture-designee Vilsack spoke about several of his priorities for USDA, including:

- Establish an agriculture carbon bank using the Commodity Credit Corporation spending authority to provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to participate.
- Assistance to develop a new local meat processing capacity by subsidizing small processors seeking to qualify for federal inspection.
- Expand agricultural trade.
- Take bold action to address discrimination in all its forms across USDA.
- Embrace sustainable and regenerative agricultural production practices.

Expand food and nutrition assistance.

Grange Congratulates Vilsack

Following the Senate 92-7 vote February 23 to approve Tom Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture, National Grange president Betsy Huber delivered a congratulatory letter to the Secretary pledging Grange support to advance policies which benefit rural America. She specifically pointed to rural broadband, rural health care and farmer-focused agricultural policies.

See entire letter on page 5

Hunger is a Pandemic Issue

The number of citizens relying on the federal government for food assistance jumped 14 percent in September compared to the same month a year ago. USDA said nearly 43 million people received help from the government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) compared to 37 million in September 2019. Endless lines at local food pantries are expected to increase as the pandemic crosses the one-year mark. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 23 million adults reported they sometimes or often struggled to provide food for their families.

Bill to Boost Locally Processed Meat Sales

Representatives Johnson (R-SD) and Cuellar (D-TX) have introduced the Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act to allow locally processed meat to be sold at retail across state lines when standards meet federal requirements. If enacted into law, the DIRECT Act will allow farmers, ranchers and smaller processors more options to market directly to consumers. The National Grange has strong policy supporting this concept and will work diligently to pass the DIRECT Act in the 117th Congress.

Capturing Carbon on the Farm

The Biden administration is targeting \$30 billion from USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to pay farmers and ranchers to implement sustainable practices and capture carbon in their soil. CCC money to create a carbon bank and facilitate emerging carbon trading markets does not need specific Congressional approval. The Depression-era CCC was created nearly a century ago and has the authority to borrow from the up to \$30 billion from the U.S. Treasury to help stabilize farm income and commodity prices.

Waters of the U.S. Rule Safe for Now

The Senate voted 51-49 in favor of preserving the Navigable Waters Protection Rule which more clearly defines wetlands, ponds, streams and rivers regulated under the Clean Water Act. The Protection Rule was finalized in 2020 with strongly support by farmers, ranchers, landowners and others. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WVA) joined Republicans to preserve the rule.

30x30 Order to Triple Protected Lands and Oceans

President Biden has signed an executive order aimed to protect a third of the nation's land and ocean waters by 2030. Much of the President's goal of 440 million acres, a land area twice the size of Texas, can be accomplished on federal lands by restricting multiple use such as timbering, drilling, mining and livestock grazing as well as declaring more wilderness and monuments. Tools such as conservation easements might be used to bring private lands into the fold. More clarity will be needed for an on-the-ground definition of "protected."

The National Grange and the Rebuild Rural Coalition sent a letter with over 200 cosigners to President Biden acknowledging his Build Back Better in Rural America plan. The Coalition emphasized the state of our deteriorating rural infrastructure and thanked the President for including roads and bridges, locks and dams, broadband, health care, railroads, electrical and

water systems, housing and land grant university research in his infrastructure plan.

Exit Polling Targets Health Care

A national voter exit poll by Morning Consult indicates voters are most worried about protecting pre-existing conditions coverage and rising out-of-pocket costs. Voters said they want policymakers to deal with the real drivers of health care costs rather than simply shifting costs to consumers and the sickest patients.

Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening

The National Grange, five state Granges and numerous patient advocacy groups sent a letter to Capitol Hill expressing support for bipartisan bills S. 5051 and H.R. 8845, the Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act. This legislation will dramatically cut the time between the approval of a procedure by FDA and its approval for Medicare coverage by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). New innovative multi-cancer early detection tests can now utilize a simple blood draw to find most cancers before they spread.

Ease Medicare Enrollment During Pandemic

The National Grange and 49 state and national organizations are asking the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reinstate policies to help people sign up for Medicare amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment pathways were established last May but the enrollment flexibilities were allowed to lapse shortly thereafter despite clear and ongoing needs.

Broadband Network Traffic Spikes

Traffic on broadband networks has increased by 51% during the pandemic, according to OpenVault. Total broadband traffic was also driven by a 6.5% increase in subscribers. Extreme power users who consume more than 2 TB per month jumped 184% year over year.

FCC Should Reconsider Data Order

The National Grange filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to urge the Commission to reconsider its Lifeline Data Collection Order which was released without public comment. The National Grange has long maintained that it is the FCC's prerogative to review and, if needed, revise the Lifeline program, its services and its customer base. However, in the middle of a pandemic is not the time to change the program or to make new demands on Lifeline customers. Lifeline is a federally subsidized phone and internet service for the disabled, elderly, shut-in individuals and low-income households.

National Grange hangs banner facing the White House welcoming President Biden



2021 NATIONAL GRANGE *Virtual* LEGISLATIVE FLY-IN



Save the Date, Wednesday April 7, 2021

Speakers from Capitol Hill, the Biden Administration, issue coalitions, National Grange leadership staff & more. [Visit the National Grange website for more information coming soon](#)

Grange Activities

When there's a Will, there's a Way!!

Bethlehem Grange #137, of Selkirk



Bethlehem Grange #137, of Selkirk, NY, celebrated their 147th Birthday on their actual Birthday of 3/17/21. Rarely have we been able to celebrate our Birthday on our actual birthday. We also included our members that do not have long distance telephone service or internet service. We have quite a few of members unable to call long distance without incurring large



telephone bills, which is required for participating in a ZOOM meeting. Another issue is the distance some of our members travel to our meetings. With our evening meetings lasting a couple of hours after it has already become dark, several of our members do not want to drive the hour or 2 hours required for their drive home. Additionally, one of our 27 year members, Caroline Wirth, now located in Virginia, was able to join us for our 147th Birthday meeting via ZOOM. Caroline, our Lecturer for over 20 years, was able to provide our Lecturer's program via ZOOM. Her program was our written history from our 125th Birthday, with the addition of many of the community service projects and renovations to our historical building, which is on the National Historic Registry.

Carol Carpenter, President of Bethlehem Grange 137 inventively used her cell phone and those of other members, to call the members without long distance phone service or internet, to keep them connected. We placed the cell phones near the speakers of the computer, so that they are also able to hear and participate, by us not muting the individual phones.

(Continued from page 5)

organization in the United States. Now in its 153rd year, the Grange has worked at the local, state, and national level to address the needs and concerns of its members, their friends and neighbors, as well as all rural Americans. The health concerns of rural America have been and remain one of our organization's highest priorities. A disproportionate number of poor, elderly, disabled, and those with chronic health conditions live in rural areas. The impact of dealing with chronic pain is a real issue for them.

While chronic pain and pain management are a very real challenge for millions of Americans, life in the United States' rural areas presents a unique set of challenges for the chronic pain community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 24% of rural adults suffer from chronic pain, compared to 18% of urban dwellers. In fact, our recent survey found that more than three-quarters of Grange members live with chronic pain—more than half from arthritis. These startling statistics demonstrate just how vital access to care is. Unfortunately, access to care is one of the most challenging problems in rural America.

To adequately address the needs of these patients, we must first acknowledge the disparities they face. The National Rural Health Association found that only 12% of physicians and 8% of specialists practice in rural areas, despite 20% of Americans living there. As such, Americans suffering from chronic pain in rural areas must travel farther distances to receive care than those in urban areas. This is exacerbated by the fact that many rural medical facilities have been shut down in recent years.

As we consider the unique challenges rural pain patients face compared to the rest of the country, we must also remember that rural America has been tragically affected by the opioid crisis. As of 2017, Americans in rural areas have been dying from drug overdoses at a higher rate than in cities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Furthermore, three-quarters of farmers have

been directly impacted by opioid abuse, according to a survey by the American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union.

The high percentage of adults suffering from chronic pain in rural America, paired with the extreme shortage of health care clinicians—and even greater shortage of pain and addiction specialists—creates a catalyst for prolonged and unnecessary suffering. If we do not address this issue head-on, rural Americans will continue to experience pain and addiction issues that will be left untreated. The National Grange recently adopted a resolution to prioritize and address chronic pain issues in rural America. We pledge to support more research to help identify the causes of chronic pain in rural life and what we can do to address them. The Grange will also support national and state initiatives that encourage the research and development of new therapies and non-addictive treatment options to treat and manage pain. These priorities are shared across our membership, as more than half of Grange members place a high priority on the development of new treatment options for chronic pain. Notably, we must advance treatment options that are safe, effective, and fit the unique needs of rural Americans living in pain.

On behalf of our membership, more than three-quarters of whom suffer from chronic pain, the National Grange urges the Committee to support the development and approval of new, non-addictive treatment options to manage chronic pain symptoms.

Respectfully, Betsy Huber President, National Grange

