

American Values, Hometown Roots

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THE EMPIRE STATE GRANGER



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



May-June 2022

President's Column

Stephen C. Coye



THE REARVIEW MIRROR

One of the most important features on a vehicle is the rearview mirror. As it is undisputed that the majority of our attention should be focused in our direction of travel, knowing what is going on behind and to the sides of our vehicle is very important – so important that failure to recognize and adjust to these situations can be as destructive to our health and property as what is before us.

The principle set forth in the above illustration is also applicable to us in our personal circumstances, and in our corporate involvement as well. The formal ceremonial aspects of the Grange are rich with admonitions for members, and doubling down for those in leadership positions, to always be progressing forward – just as nature does; while at the same time keeping an accurate account of where we have been and what we have done in order to achieve greater success in our future endeavors. Just as the rearview mirror can't be the primary focus of our attention while operating a vehicle, neither can it be when plotting the future activities and involvements of the Grange, but in both cases it cannot be ignored.

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New York State Grange Growth Summit

The New York State Grange President has presented the State Grange Leadership/Membership Director with a new-well equipped committee. The purpose is to **GROW** Grange membership in our state. The number of members lost has been diminishing the last few years and it is time to have a net increase for New York State.



The photo above shows the new committee hard at work as they listened to Amanda Brozana Rios (National Grange Membership Director) sharing her expertise on practices that will help Granges secure new members.

Amanda shared a great deal on determining how to approach members in different age groups regarding Grange membership. We learned that there are different things that are attractive to members in different age categories such as “Boomers”, Millennials” and “X’ers”. How you communicate with and what types of projects vary with each group. Not using the appropriate approach could have them stop listening before they even begin to hear what you are saying. It is important that you give people a chance to present and try their ideas and to encourage them for success. Many States are



being successful in growing membership. Above is a photograph of the committee. Please be vigilant so that when information comes forward on how to be involved in growing your Grange becomes available that you will be ready to participate in the exciting future of our State Grange. There are great things ahead and we should all be anxious to get involved.

National Grange

Diversity

Task Force

Betsy Huber
National Grange President

The Diversity Task Force, which reported at the 2020 National Grange Convention, is getting ready to start meeting again to continue its work identifying any unintended prejudices that may exist in our Grange work.

You may recall in the summer of 2020, with racial unrest swirling around the country and around the National Grange Headquarters building in Washington, DC, I appointed a task force with the goal to evaluate the Grange through a social justice lens to make sure that we are as welcoming in reality as we say we are in our literature. The group was also tasked to make recommendations to increase diversity and improve accessibility and inclusion within the Grange.

Several differing backgrounds, races, cultures, ages, and geographical areas were included on the original committee to ensure a diverse panel of Grangers who took extra care in evaluating the best moves for the Grange going forward.

At the 2021 Convention the delegates voted to continue the task force's work, taking a broader look at us and our traditions and procedures. They are looking to expand the committee, so if you are interested, please contact me, and let me know your willingness to participate on the committee. They will be reporting again at the 2022 Convention in Sparks, Nevada.

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Legislative Column



Cindy Benson-Pollard

March is beginning of meteorological spring. The weather is starting to warm up and the days are getting longer. There are more activities available for us to do that gets us out of the house. I hope that your Grange activities are picking up. April is Grange month. I hope that you are planning a meeting to invite your community in and share what your Grange is doing on behalf of them.

The New York State Legislature is back in session. They are busy with various bills that have been introduced for this session. I have been busy letting them know of our position on some of the issues that are in bill form and are being discussed in committee. We have had two Grange policies that have been signed into law by the Governor this session. The first was on climate resiliency farming and the second allows air ambulances to administer blood transfusions while in flight. We do make a difference. There have been some questions that I have received regarding the policies in our legislative policy book. These statements are the result of resolutions that were passed at the past State Grange session. The policy statements that are reaching 5 years old are reviewed by the delegates and are determined to be still relevant and to be kept in the policy book or should be deleted. If a Granger wishes to change current policy statements, a resolution should be submitted with proper factual documentation supporting why the change should be made. The delegates at this year's State Grange session will consider the resolution. This is the only way policy statements can be changed.

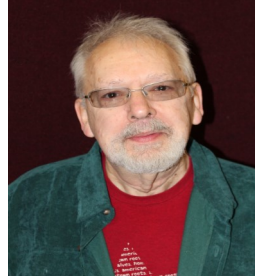
We have standing committee chairpersons who work with the session committees at State Grange. These members are knowledgeable about the area that they represent. They are listed in the legislative policy handbook. They are available to Granges as reference people. They are always happy to help you an issue that you are working on. Please feel free to reach out to them or to myself.

I will be starting to plan for the annual legislative conference that will be held in September. If you have any suggestions for speakers, please let me know. If you have a specific topic that you would like to hear more about, I will be happy to investigate having someone come and address

those in attendance.

Be sure we have your email address for our legislative email blasts. If you need help with any legislative issue, please let me know. I will be glad to help in any way I can.

Leadership Membership



Barton Snedaker

The doldrums. What a great word to describe a way we have probably all felt at some time in our life. Especially over the past couple of years. That sense of no forward movement, no motion, or a total lack of mobility. In a rut. Stuck! Then there is ennui. It says kind of the same thing but sounds fancier in French. The blues, the blahs. Depressed? A word that is tossed around about a general feeling of sadness. However, it can be much more serious than that for some people. Over the past two years many of us have felt in our lives that sadness and isolation. Feelings these words provoke.

Am I suggesting that we as Grangers continue to wallow in them? NO! That is the farthest from what I want to have happen. I have a friend who brightens up with the arrival of the first seed catalogs. Plain old bright sunshine helps some people counteract these negative feelings.

So how can the Grange help? At the beginning of the pandemic I wrote about how the words of our salutation could help us get through it. Little did we know then that it would be such a protracted experience. I believe the same is still true about how Faith, Hope, Charity and Fidelity can and do help.

Faith and Hope are probably the two most apt words for what we needed over the course of the pandemic. I'm sure there were many, many prayers being said for friends and family through this. Many churches prayed for the world's population in general. Hope springs eternal - getting safely through the worst times, for people we know who have been affected personally, that a "cure" is in the offing, that the vaccine will continue to protect us. The amount of Hope is at least in equal proportion to the amount of Faith we have spent.

Charity has been a massive need. People who lost jobs and housing, families who lost loved ones, children missing friends and teachers in school. As I type this the phrase

"Random acts of kindness" keeps crossing my mind. I'm not exactly sure why. Could it be that they are the truest form of Charity? Have you as a Granger performed any? Has your Grange? What could you do?

The word Fidelity in our salutation has always intrigued me. How does it differ from Faith? Fidelity to a cause means protecting it or standing up for it. It seems a strange word to use directly after the Civil War when one cause was in fact defeated. During a sleepless night it dawned on me that Fidelity could simply mean Confidence. It could also mean Consistent. Either way Fidelity needs to be our constant and confident stance as we come out of the pandemic. Be confident in your Grange and constant in your promotion of it and its values. See this time as an opportunity to bring your Grange back (if need be) to your community and Persevere!

Community Involvement



Melvin Phelps

Most may know my background, but not all, so I thought I would share some of my experiences that have led me to this opportunity. I live with my wonderful wife Jennifer and our two youngest boys; we also have 3 adult children for a total of five children. We live on a hobby farm in Copenhagen NY in Lewis County. We are all Grange Members at South Rutland Valley Grange in Jefferson County. Both Jennifer and myself are agriculture teachers and FFA Advisors; she at Carthage High School and I teach at Lowville Academy and Central School.

I have always been a Grange member and with my son Garrett becoming active with the youth, I have stepped back into a more active role. Much of my experience in community development and community service comes from my experience as an FFA Advisor and I plan to draw from that experience and share with you some of the information the National FFA Organization uses as it could be a great base for our Granges as well; why recreate the wheel.

The National FFA outlines these suggestions for executing a successful service project: investigate, plan, serve and evaluate. This process helps

insure that any service engagement opportunity will be a success!

Investigate

To determine how you can best serve, you must find out what your community needs most. By investigating issues facing your community and what causes those issues, you ensure that you maximize the impact of your project.

Find Your Team – Depending on the size of the project, you may need people to help you. Can you not only use Grange members but also partner with the Lions, Farm Bureau, FFA or 4-H. Many hands make less work.

Determine Your Need – Community Issues can be complex and need to be investigated. Take a look around your community and ask questions. Why does this issue exist?

Choose Your Project – What is already being done to fix the problem in your community? How will you and your Grange use your leadership skills and knowledge to make a difference?

I will be sharing more in-depth information about the other three steps in future articles. I want to thank everyone who share with me how they completed Challenge #1 and how they reached out to their local school about the NYS Grange Scholarship Program.

Now for Challenge #2 – Random Acts of Kindness – The idea is to do something nice for someone to brighten their day. It could be as little as a complement or a cup of coffee. I was fortunate one day to have the person ahead of me in the Dunkin drive thru pay for my coffee. Wow something as simple as a \$4.00 cup of coffee made my whole day even better. What can you do as a random act of kindness.

Youth



Katie Fallon

Spring is finally here! Many youth have been active at their subordinate Granges this past winter helping with fundraisers and dinners!

What better way to get local youth involved and possibly become members then checking with your local school district to see who needs their community service hours! Once they are in your building they can see how gratifying it is to help and how much fun we have in the process. (and of course we always have food, we're Grangers)

Since there is no Northeast youth weekend this July they

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(Continued from page 1) President

One of the fantastic new programs from the National Grange is entitled the "Heirloom Program," which takes a small relevant section from our traditions and values for presentation and discussion at one meeting a month, spread over a three year period. To get the complete information on this important program go to the National Grange website (nationalgrange.org) mouse over the word "programs" in the navigation bar at the top of the page, then click on the Heirloom Program tab that appears. The entire three year cycle, along with other information and suggestions to make this a very effective and beneficial experience for all members is available for download and printing at that location. This is a situation where the rearview mirror can assist us to learn and/or refresh our minds as to philosophies and objects of our Order, and do so without overwhelming aspects of the Degree work.

Turning our attention from the rearview mirror for a moment, this time of year offers opportunities to be of service to our communities and showcase our abilities as an organization. Fair season might seem to be a long way off, but it isn't. Displays historically, and continuing to be so today, are excellent ways to call attention to goods, services, etc. The operative phrase here though is "call attention" for if it does not do that the message, no matter how good it is, is lost. I would challenge all to create a list of what is the quickest thing to attract your attention when you are just looking around, as opposed to a situation where your sights are set on a particular focus. I'd be willing to bet that something static, or something that seems to blend in with everything else around it would be pretty far down on your list, if on it at all. Given the all pervasiveness of the electronic media, I think it is safe to say that most have been conditioned to the point that if something isn't moving it's not seen at all. We as an organization have a tremendous message to get out there, but it has to be able to be seen. Now is the time to begin planning and preparing so that there is time to ascertain its eye catching abilities. Something thrown together a few days before the event will more than likely not accomplish the desired outcomes.

Long range planning helps to diminish the possibilities of neglecting the minutia that can mean the difference between a great success, a so-so outcome, or dismal failure. As you plan events for the days ahead, big or small, remember that part of

the success of the event is folks gaining some knowledge of the Grange as a result of their participation.

As we will be celebrating our 150th year as a State Grange in 2023, let us take advantage of the rearview mirror to find out what was on the road ahead for our forebears, as their efforts paved the way for us to be here today.

State Lecturer



Jolene Pirrone

As I write this, I'm getting very excited to see what you've sent in to be judged for the Lecturer's FAC Conference. You'll have to wait until later this summer to get results here in this column, but I should have them on Facebook before that. If you haven't found me on Facebook yet, search for "NYS Grange Lecturer" and like the page.

Moving ahead, I'm looking forward to putting something together for Grange Day at the State Fair. It's a little tricky for me because I'm not local and it runs the same time as our fair here in Columbia County.

After the Conference, I will reach out to my committee. In the meantime, if anyone wants to score some Fair tickets to perform on Grange Day — Saturday September 3rd — or know someone who does, let me know.

We want to come out of a really bad time for the fair, and serious challenges for our order, by putting on a nice program in our building.

The other thing I've been working on is some kind of regional conference for 2023. As you may or may not have heard, Maine canceled for this year due to continued health concerns.

It looks like 2023 will be a combined Leadership, Lecturer's, Youth, etc. conference. Nothing yet to report on that now. Other than that, things are kind of quiet for the summer.

I hope you're all having really great meetings and doing lots of interesting work in your Grange. If I can be of any assistance, let me know.

(Continued from page 2) Youth

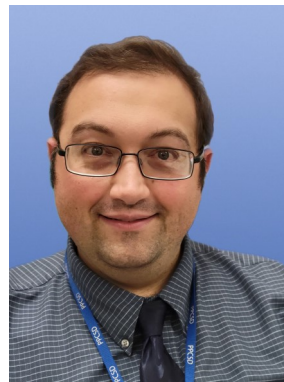
youth will be able to participate virtually at Eastern regional for public speaking and sign a song. Reminder the National Director has made it so that you do not have to qualify at State first you can just sign up online! (this is due to low participation across the country) let me know if you have

any questions and I will post on the Facebook page as soon as I have the signup link from National.

With that being the case we are planning a Northeast youth day July 16th at the Big E. We are still in the planning stage, once I have a schedule and registration information I will also post that online!

Support Grange
Youth

State Grange Secretary



Ryan Orton

The vast majority of Granges in New York State have received the newly revised Quarterly Report for March 2022. I received many back with Quarterly Dues payments. This also means that Secretaries received the letter enclosed explaining why the Quarterly Reports were revised. I hope this letter was read and understood, and not placed in the proverbial "circular file." But, I wonder...

As mentioned in my last article, the Quarterly Report was revised to ask for the phone numbers and e-mail addresses for new members, as well as our current members, to make our database at Headquarters the most complete it can be. This information would be used to contact our statewide membership regarding legislative information and potential action that could result in immediate effects. Without this complete information from our statewide membership, we are only reaching a fraction of our 3,000+ members in the Empire State.

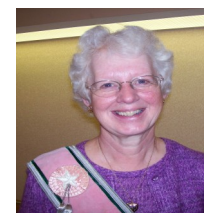
As of this writing, I have not received any updates to this effect...not one. Again, this makes me wonder. Was the letter I wrote and had Mary Liddington at Headquarters include with the March Quarterly Report read? Are Secretaries trying to compile all the information to send at a later date? Are our members concerned with what might be done with their contact information? I'm hoping the second and third questions are the reasons why I haven't received any updates.

In one e-mail thread I am a part of, a Grange member stated that they would give a "fake e-mail" if the State Grange really wanted one on file. This completely defeats our purpose. Sending information to a "fake e-mail" is just as effective as trying to squeeze water out of a rock. It not only wastes the time of the member sending this information to us (whether it be you or your Grange Secretary), but mine for collecting the information and forwarding it to Mary at Headquarters, who inputs the data into our system, and for whomever is contacting our statewide membership whether it be the State Master/President or any of our Directors including Legislative, Membership/Leadership, Community Service, Sports, Junior Grange, or Youth.

The old adage, "Communication is the key to success," is true for the State Grange. Communication with our members is key to potential legislative success on many issues, disseminating information on contests and events sponsored by our many Departments, and with me and each Subordinate and Pomona if there is a question or concern. I can assure you that your contact information will remain at the State Grange Office in Cortland, and will not be sold or given to any other person or entity outside of the State Grange.

Perhaps a second reminder is worthwhile. Enclosed with the June Quarterly Report will be a request to each Secretary to update each Grange's membership list we have on file at Headquarters. Hopefully our Secretaries will update their membership list with not only current or additional names, but complete contact information including addresses, phone numbers, and e-mails.

Chaplain's Corner



Virginia L. Conner

HANDS SPEAK

I am sure you have thought about all the things our hands do in a day's time. But have you considered how our hands "talk" to both people and animals?

Here is an incident that occurred in the RV park where we stay in Florida. A neighbor lady knows all the dogs in the park by name and when the owners walk their dog by Barb's house, the dog will stop and wait for Barb to give them a loving rub or scratch be-

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New Grange Members

Albany Co.

Bethlehem #137
Deborah Blanken
Josephine Culkin
Brian McClatchie
Jonathan Riven
Dianne Tiedmann

Allegany Co.

Cuba #799

Kaitlyn Davis

Columbia Co.

Copake #935

Brennan Cranna

Lauren Cranna

Onondaga Co.

Lamson #588

Donald Hamilton

Roberta Hamilton

Ontario Co.

Wide Awake #747

Jim Earl

Carol Spangenberg

Oswego Co.

Sandy Creek #127

Patricia Van Houten

Otsego Co.

Pierstown #793

Amy Zoltick

Butternut Valley #1533

Kendra Campbell

Sam Corcoran

Regina Rinaldi

Brady Rogers

Putnam Co.

Putnam Valley #841

Ximena Chaux-Ospina

Leigh Heyward

Rensselaer Co.

Hoosick #1127

Alex Babbitt

St. Lawrence Co.

Kendrew #891

Karen Moon

Tioga Co.

North Barton #45

Sandra Fiske

State Grange Historian

Carol Bailey



DID YOU KNOW...

That in 1879 New York State Grange favored the establishment of an agricultural experiment station? Grange continued its interest in the station for many years. This interest included visits to the station by members and reports by the director at state session.

1878 the first mention of music is noted in the Journal of Proceedings. In 1879 Mrs.

Wiggins, the musician, was paid for providing music. Our current pianist Irene Fassett has held this position since 1981. She also played for centennial pageant of State Grange in 1973. She is our longest serving pianist as far as I know.

When State Grange met in Rochester in 1880 agricultural education was urged to be taught in schools. Also Brother Hill of Dominion Grange in Canada spoke of the 800 Granges in Canada. This is something I know little about. However I remember Kay Williams of Maple Leaf Grange as state lecturer. We always sang "O Canada" when she was present.

Believe it or not State Grange was held in the little village of Lyons in 1882. Our beautiful 1854 court house was the scene of the meeting and the hotels in town housed the delegates and others. The benefits of a Pomona were extolled at that time. Resolutions were against monopolies and the use of tobacco.

The Committee on Woman Suffrage presented the following resolution which was adopted; "Resolved that the subject of political and civil government be made a special study in Subordinate Granges; that if suffrage is extended to us that, we, as Patrons, may be able to vote intelligently; also, that we labor to extend the education in this particular branch to those outside of the Order. Thinking, as we do, that there are already too many ignorant voters in the field, we respectfully ask the adoption of this resolution." It is signed by seven women. ("Ignorant voters" had to be referring to men as they were the only ones allowed to vote.)

During these early years counties always gave reports on the condition of Grange in their jurisdiction. These continued until well into the 20th century.

When Grange met in Canandaigua in 1884 the chaplain, Mr. McKay of Wayne County was reported as absent due to a "snow blockade." The Union Trade Association of Monroe County reportedly saved Grangers \$238,000 through their services. The earliest or one of the earliest associations they purchased supplies for Grangers at wholesale and resold to member for a slight markup. Supplies included household goods and farm supplies.

By 1885 State Grange was asking the legislature to prohibit the sale of fake dairy products (margarine.) There was much discussion on obtaining the early years' records which were missing. The person who had possession of them wanted payment for them. It was noted that once they were obtained

they would be printed and bound. In 1886 a brother had met with the offending brother who presented a bill of less than \$65. A motion was made to drop the matter if the records were not deemed indispensable. Part of the problem was the offending brother had organized many Granges and never turned the money over to State Grange which was entitled to it. The records were not mentioned again. Anyways there are records of the early years however they were obtained and they were bound. I am fortunate to have those two bound volumes of the first fifteen years.

Another topic of interest that year was the exorbitant cost of the state capital and the Niagara Falls Parks Commission. A resolution against spending \$1.5 million for property for the park was passed by a wide margin. The gobbling up of small mechanical and manufacturing businesses by large stock companies was discussed.

Woman's suffrage continued to be a topic as the years passed. In 1886 Flora's report was on that subject. In 1888 a letter of greeting was read from the First Political Equality Club of Jamestown (where Grange was meeting.) Immediately thereafter a strongly worded resolution was presented, adopted and forwarded to Albany supporting suffrage for women.

More tidbits of history will continue in the next column. Now for a couple of ideas to celebrate it from my pages in the handbook, which is not on the website unfortunately.

An idea for lecturers is to choose an artist or photographer from years past who primary focus was rural. Ask one or more members to research them and share the information with your Grange. Some rural related artists are John Francois Millet (or others from Barbizon School of Art), Grant Wood and Hudson River artists. Much of Millet's work corresponds with degrees of Grange. Besides "The Angelus" his works include "The Gleaners," "The Sower," and many more revolving around peasants and their work.

The legislative committee in community Granges can check the historic markers in your town. Are there notable rural people or an event that should be commemorated? The Pomeroy Foundation will provide markers. If anyone wants more info on the Pomeroy Foundation let me know. Also research and present a talk on the Granger Laws, RFD, rural electrification or other Grange legislative issue that had a national benefit.

Junior Grange

Sherri Taft



Spring is coming! Has your Junior Grange planned an outdoor event during the warmer weather? The event can be a fun activity for the Juniors or a community service project to help out the local area. Let us do what we can to make sure our communities know that our Junior members are active and that Junior Grange is the "cool" place to be!

How is your Junior Grange doing? Has the leader of the Junior Grange had some questions about some of the Junior Programs? Here is an opportunity for Junior Leaders to come together to talk about the Junior Grange Program. A Junior Leaders Information Day is being planned for Saturday, June 4, 2022, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM (tentative times) at a central New York Grange. I am currently working on securing a location for this day. More information will be mailed to the Junior Leaders in the very near future.

While working on the Junior Grange projects for this year, here is another opportunity to show off the craftsmanship of our Junior members. The Junior Project for the Big E is a Wooden Star "Hanging Holiday Ornament" for Christmas or Hanukkah. Each Junior Granger is asked to make a Wooden Star Ornament. This is made by gluing together 5 or 6 wooden craft or popsicle sticks, then decorating it with paint, glitter, gems, poms, feathers, beads, etc. Hang the star with a string, ribbon or pipe cleaner. Each entry must be clearly labeled with the Junior Grange member's name, age with birth date (Junior age is determined by the age of the Junior as of January 1, 2022), Grange name and number, mailing address, phone number and/or email, and Junior Age Group. The age groups are Group 1: 5 – 7 years of age, Group 2: 8-10 years of age, Group 3: 11-14 years of age.

Below are a few examples of some Wooden Star Ornaments.



Contact Information

The National Grange is pleased to announce the recognition of families for national recognition. Each family will receive a certificate and feature in the National Grange News Corner. To be published in the News Corner, the deadline for nominations is September 10, 2024 and should be sent to the



National Grange News CORNER

Supply Chain Bills Move Forward

In late March, progress was made on two significant bills related to the myriad supply chain issues which have persisted since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 28th, the Senate, in a bipartisan vote, passed its version of the America COMPETES Act which had passed the House in February of this year. The bill provides \$52 billion in funding for the semiconductor industry to incentivize increased domestic manufacturing of microchips as well as advanced research and development of the technology. As well, the bill includes a variety of other provisions intended to increase American cybersecurity and supply chain resiliency in the context of competing with China. With the Senate version having passed, the bill must go through a conference with the House to smooth out differences between the two bills before it is able to make its way to the President's desk.

Another bill aimed at tackling pandemic supply chain issues that moved in late March was the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA). OSRA is a bipartisan bill that would seek to reform American port operations and infrastructure in a way that is intended to increase US exports and decrease delays at ports. Specifically, the bill takes aim at ocean shipping companies by authorizing the Federal Maritime Commission to address unfair practices and price gouging at the expense of American exporters. Supporters of the bill have argued that this would be particularly beneficial for American agriculture as the industry would be able to move its goods to foreign markets in a more timely and cost-effective manner. The bill has wide bipartisan support and has been made a priority by both parties in the House and Senate. The House passed its version of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act earlier this month, and the Senate is currently looking to pass its own version on an expedited timeline.

Keep West Coast Ports Shipping During Labor Negotiations

America's fragile supply chain cannot afford any more pauses in shipping. The National Grange and 24 additional members of the Agricultural Transportation Working Group sent a letter to President Biden requesting his administration take an active role in ensuring upcoming contract negotiations for West Coast ports do not result in any labor disruptions. The current contract between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association expires July 1, 2022.

USDA Commits More Processing Capacity Funds

In addition to previous commitments of \$1 billion, USDA will make an additional \$215 million available in grants to expand existing small meat and poultry processing plants by:

Offsetting costs of construction, expansion and acquisition of equipment

Expanding existing workforce development programs to recruit, train and retrain adequate labor

Establishing partnerships with organizations who specialize in meat and poultry processing

Rule to Lower Prescription Drug Costs

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) should finalize a rule to help lower the cost for prescription drugs for Medicare Part D beneficiaries through pharmacy direct and indirect remuneration (DIR) fee reform. This is according to the National Grange and 231 other signatories on a letter to CMS. A similar letter was cosigned by 30 bipartisan members of the Senate. DIR fees grew more than 107,400 percent between 2010 and 2020. These fees are rebates and discounts that were not passed along to patients at the pharmacy counter but instead were used by insurance companies and middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers. It is important that the CMS rule reduce beneficiary drug costs and protect patient access to any drug store.

Postal reform is now a reality!

The Senate passed the Postal Service Reform Act March 8 on a bipartisan vote of 79-19. This action followed an earlier bipartisan vote in the House of 342-92. The National Grange worked with the Coalition for 21st Century Postal Service and was responsible for securing several votes for the bill's passage. Key provisions of the legislation are:

Eliminates the requirement to prefund retiree health benefits
Requires six-day integrated (mail and packages) delivery
Expands special rates for local newspaper distribution
Requires congressional reporting on postal service operations and performance

The new law will address most of the National Grange policy priorities for postal reform.

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(Continued from page 3) Chaplain

hind the ears and a treat! People trust her to dog sit their pets when they are away for a day. Well, one day a new person and dog moved in and Barb went over to welcome them. She reached out toward the dog and it bit her arm! She had to go through the normal "dog bite" routine and her hesitation to approach any dog was evident.

Soon after this incident, I learned something about how our hands speak. You should never offer your open hand to a dog. To them it looks like five fingers coming at them and take it as a threat. Those fingers are in position to possibly pinch their nose or ear. The person who gave me this advice said to instead offer the back of your hand for

them to smell. In this manner of approach, the fingers are downward and not a threat to the dog.

I got to thinking: how do we humans use our hands to greet people? During this pandemic, we use fist bumps, elbow bumps or put smiles in our eyes. Hands are mentioned in the Bible many times. Psalm 37:24: "though a man stumbles, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand". One of my favorite verses is Psalm 139:10, "Your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast". (Choir members out there have sung this scripture, "On the Wings of the Dawn".)

There are multiple uses for our hands: clap to rejoice; raise in worship; reach out to assist the needy; to work plus many, many more uses. May God guide you each day on how to use your hands to speak to others that would honor Him.

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Editor Bruce M. Croucher

Executive Committee: Richard Church, Chair, Stephen Coye, President, Ryan Orton, Grange Secretary, Elaine Smith, Vice President, Bruce Croucher, Executive Committee Secretary, Barbara Lavier, Daniel Woolley.

Postmaster: Forward address changes to 100 Grange Place, Cortland, NY 13045

(Continued from page 4) Junior



We

will have our New York State judging on Saturday, June 4, 2022, then the winner of each category will be sent on to the Big E.

As always, if you have any questions, or would like to contact me for any reason, feel free to reach out to me. I look forward to hearing from you and helping in any way that I can.

NEW YORK STATE GRANGE 2022

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

May 12-14 NYS FFA Convention,
Syracuse

May 15 Empire State Granger
Copy Due

May 21 Museum Clean Up Day
10:00 a.m.

June 5 State Bowling Tournament –
Cortlanes Bowling Alley,
Cortland, 12:00 noon **

June 30 Subordinate Dues to
State Secretary

June 30 Junior Grange Member-
ship & Dues Report Due

July 10 State Golf Tournament –
Winged Pheasant Golf Course,
Shortsville NY

July 15 Empire State Granger
Copy Due

July 16 Museum Full Board
Meeting 10:00 a.m.

August 2-4 Empire Farm Days,
Pompey

August 24 – Sept. 5 New York
State Fair – Syracuse

September 1 Community Ser-
vice Reports due to Director

September 1 National JG Report

due

September 3 Grange Day at the
NYS Fair

September 15 Empire State
Granger Copy Due

September 15 Lecturer's Reports
due to State Lecturer

Sept. 16 – Oct. 2 Eastern States
Exposition (The Big E) – West
Springfield, MA

September 24 State Legislative
Day – HDQ **

September 25 Grange Day at the
Big E – West Springfield, MA

September 30 Subordinate Dues
to State Secretary

That's the GRANGE way!

Family Activities



Brenda Noble

The year is nearly half over for the Grange year. Granges are busy getting back to their regular activities. I hope we will be able to get some people to help make items for the Northeast Exposition. It always is a great money maker to support the building and judging for the contests. Many people come to look for the things Grangers make. Last year was a record year. They are looking for crocheted dishtowels (regular and holiday), scrubbies, aprons, skillet mitts, cloth pot holders (fall and winter colors), clothes pin bags, microwaveable potato sacks, mobile phone covers and glass case covers (cloth, knitted, or crocheted), travel size tissue covers, adult clothing protectors (bibs), wheelchair and walker caddies, child safe toys, Christmas ornaments, set of 4 placemats - Fall and Christmas themes can add napkins, gnomes, and lotus leaf scarves. If anyone can make any of these items let me know. I will need them by August 15 so I can get them to the Northeast Exposition.

The quilt block for our Anniversary quilt is the "Churn Dash" in blues and whites. Let me know if you need directions or you can get them on the Grange website. We will collect the blocks by State Grange session in October 2022. The blocks will be made into a quilt and presented at State Grange October 2023. It will then be raffled off. I thank everyone for their work and support.



Samuel Clemens

Tales of Mark Twain

So what does Mark Twain, writer, satirist, story-teller, have in common with this day and age? Everything! Ernest Hemingway once said that, "all of American literature could be traced back to Mark Twain." Samuel Clemens known as Mark Twain, circa 1900, boldly branded himself with his personal style of a white suit, white unruly hair and a cigar long before it was fashionable to engage in such pomposity. However, for all his feats and accomplishments in the literary world and lecture circuit, Twain experienced what was, at times, a tragic life that he endured like the colossal steamships he wrote about. From a young age, Samuel Clemens learned to take advantage of life's opportunities. As part of a growing newspaper industry, he found a platform to introduce ideas that challenged the fundamental issues that faced the America of his time; racism, evolving landscapes, class barriers, access to education, with a perspective that was well-rounded by experience. Today, Mark Twain is still revered by many as a leading American author, social critic and humorist. His work stands out as an outstanding achievement of authenticity, spattered with autobiographical elements and experiences from Twain's childhood that paint vivid backdrops for each story told.

In his latest solo show, Joe Baer portrays Samuel Clemens near the end of his career, in a narrative and thought-provoking performance. He presents a nostalgic look back through time; starting from Twain's rural roots in small town, Missouri, to his International acclaim. Context and words from the pen of Mark Twain are intertwined to reimagine this legend on the lecture circuit, highlighting the ebbs and flows of this iconic American figure's life against a visual collage of historical imagery. If you enjoy history and contextual story-telling, plan your Spring activities to include Samuel Clemens: Tales of Mark Twain, A Solo Show written and performed by Joe Baer. For more information and to reserve a seat, visit www.baerhands.com to purchase tickets at the venue of your choice.

For more information call Cynthia Baer, 845- 876-5738.

Plan your time at the Theater Now!

In Albany, NY The Linda, WAMC's Performing Arts Studio
<https://www.thelinda.org/events/list/?tribe-bar-search=samuel+clemens>

Saturday, May 14, 7pm

Sunday Matinee, May 15, 2pm

In Pine Plains, NY

<https://thestissingcenter.org/tsc-events/month/2022-05/>

Saturday, May 21, 7pm

Sunday Matinee, May 22, 2pm

In Ellenville, NY: The Mainstage at Shadowlands

Saturday May 28th at 8pm:

<https://shadowlandstages.easy-ware-ticketing.com/generaladmission/WfDE4FE6Xoh8LpxV0JZEBw>

Sunday May 29th at 2pm:

<https://shadowlandstages.easy-ware-ticketing.com/generaladmission/vZhaUQrFDbSy4ipj17Xobw>



Joe and Cynthia Baer are members of Rhinebeck Grange.

If your Grange might be interested in having the show performed in your area, contact Cynthia at: 845- 876-5738.

Allegany County



Ray McKinney-President of Allegany-Cattaraugus Joint Veterans Van Service (middle), Jim Dowd- NYSG Gatekeeper and Allegany County Pomona President (right). My wife Donielle and I presented a check for \$200.00 dollars to the Van Service from Allegany County Pomona towards the purchase of a new van.

Donielle took the picture.

Jim Dowd-NYSG Gatekeeper and Allegany County President helping out in the grange booth at the Farm Show on Feb.26,2022 at the State Fairgrounds in Syracuse. My wife Donielle was there to help also but wouldn't get in the picture with me.



Jim Dowd-NYSG Gatekeeper, Allegany County Pomona President and another volunteer at an Accord Corporation Food Distribution. These Distributions are every two weeks thru the whole year. I volunteer at them all to help pass out food. I also volunteer at Accord for other activities and do some maintenance for Accord.

Dutchess County Rhinebeck Grange

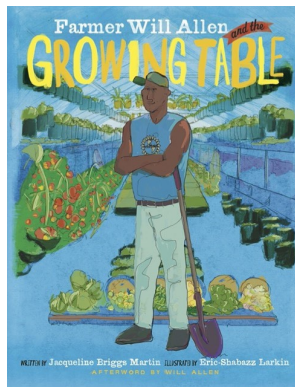
Rhinebeck Grange Participates in NYS Agriculture Literacy Week

Agriculture is a unifying factor for communities all over. Whether you have 100 acres or a rooftop, there are opportunities for growing food and sharing the journey from soil to table with those around, as illustrated in Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table by Jacqueline Briggs.

In celebration of New York agriculture, Rhinebeck Grange #896 recently participated in NY Ag Week. Organizations throughout the state were asked to read a book with an agricultural theme to elementary students, with a focus on second grade classrooms. This year's featured book was *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* Written by Jacqueline Briggs Martin with Art by Eric-Shabazz Larkin was read by Joe Baer, Treasurer of Rhinebeck Grange. The book takes children on an explorative journey to learn about community gardens and inspire them to build communities through food, even if they only have a pot on their porch to cultivate. The story also showcases the unique diversity of agricultural operations that is especially applicable to New York's combination of rural, suburban, and urban landscapes.

Afterward, children participated in a hands-on activity related to the book to extend their learning. Grange member Cynthia Baer and volunteer Rudy McGuire engaged children in a lesson about Vermicomposting and Planting with Castings. Children learned about worms and how they help soil recycle discarded materials back into useful material.

The Grange coordinated efforts with the Cornell Coop Extension of Dutchess Co. All activity materials were prepared and donated by NYAITC. After the event, the book was donated to Morton Memorial Library in Rhinecliff, NY so Ag Week is alive year round. ■



Ontario County - Clifton Springs Grange



Clifton Springs Grange had the honor of presenting a Silver Star Certificate to Kerry Croucher. She has been an active member of our Grange, attends meeting regularly and participates in our projects. She has been our Easter Bunny at our Annual Egg hunt. This year our Egg Hunt was very successful with over 250 in attendance. The participation of our village businesses and individuals helps us to fill around 3000 eggs with candy and larger prizes.



Albany County Ravena Grange



Members of Ravena Grange 1457 gathered at Pegasus Restaurant in December to celebrate the season, and give continuous membership awards to several members. Seated are Doris Irving, 75 years, Gerald Lampman, 60 years; standing

left to right Caitlyn Collins, accepting a 25 year membership award for her mother Lori Collins, Robert Payne, 50 years, Frank Stanton 55 years, Joel Coye, 25 years, and Jo Downey, Ravena Grange President.

Albany County Bethlehem Grange

A Good Samaritan Story To Touch Your Heart

The Bethlehem Grange #137 in Selkirk, NY, from time to time, gets donations of all sorts. Some they pass on to charities; some they hold onto for their, renew, reuse, recycle sales.

One donation was a bicycle that we put on our sale. An individual, frequent to our sales, offered to take the bike home telling us he wanted go over it with a fine-toothed comb. He said he liked to do this for a hobby. He greased the brakes, cleaned up the chain and adjusted the brake cables.

Several of us were overwhelmed with his generosity and told many people of his work.

But...the story doesn't end there. One friend, in particular, knew of a young boy who walked quite a distance to school. One of our members thought that this newly restored bike might be good fit for him. She told the gentleman that refurbished it, the young lad's plight. Upon hearing the lad's story, the Good Samaritan, in turn, went out and bought a new bike and a gift certificate for a chain-lock and an adjustable helmet from a bike store.

Two of our members then presented the bike to the young man. He cried with appreciation and he said he would share it with his siblings and his Dad, who walks to work.

We sold the refurbished bike.



Sports

Director
Bruce Dehner



The dart ball tournament was held April 24th, results in next issue. We had some new interest in this event so hopefully we can add more teams next year. Bowling will be the next event on June 5th at Cort.Lanes in Cortland. Entry forms will be mailed to all teams that have bowled in the past. Anyone that still needs a form, please contact me and one will be sent out. Golf will be July 10th. Plans to hold it at the Pheasant golf course in Shortsville NY are still being worked out and will be finalized soon. As for Corn Hole, we are planning on holding a trial run on August 14th at State Grange Headquarters. I will be passing out rules at each sporting event and will need to know how many will be attending so we have enough boards for everyone. If anyone needs a copy of the rules, please contact me and one will be sent out. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at this year's events. Have fun, Bruce.

NYS Grange Sesquicentennial

A Treasured Tradition with the Future in Focus

Have you been searching for a focal point, backdrop, or inspirational highlight for your Grange exhibit at the County Fair? Would you like something that makes people take a second look as they go past your Grange Hall? Are you looking for an impressive and attractive item for your Grange meeting room or community event? Our Sesquicentennial Banner unveiled at the NYS Grange Session last year, has sparked much attention. It commands interest and conveys a sense of history and permanence while aiming for the future. The words on the banner “Explore and Innovate”, “Educate and Advocate”, “Conserve and Cooperate” can be used by your Grange as a springboard for future planning. The Sesquicentennial Committee has received requests to purchase a banner. We are happy to honor these requests and make the banner available to everyone.

The banner is made of a strong vinyl material and measures 79 inches in length and 29 inches in width. Six metal grommets for hanging are located as follows; one at each corner and one in the middle of the long dimension at the top and bottom. The total cost of the banner including shipping and handling is \$75. The banner is pictured near this article.

To request an order form, call or text 150th Anniversary Committee member Melvin Phelps at 315-778-6712 or Co-chair Susan Drake at 607-237-2930.

ORDER DEADLINE! ORDERS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JUNE 1, 2022. Banners will be shipped by the end of June 2022.

All orders for banners should be mailed to Melvin Phelps, PO Box 493, Copenhagen, NY 13626. \$75 checks made out to New York State Grange **MUST ACCOMPANY THE ORDER.** If you have questions, contact any committee member.

Remember that The NYS Grange 150th Anniversary Committee is encouraging you to participate in the “People’s Choice Poster Project”. The poster size, no larger than 36x48 inches. The two classes, 1. Use the theme “A Treasured Tradition with the Future in Focus” or 2. Any poster focusing on Grange in 2073. Bring all posters to the NYS Grange Annual Session in October 2022 for display, judging, and “surprise” prizes.

In the last issue of The Empire State Granger – March-April 2022 on page 8 were two copies of the Candle Order Form. If you wish to honor a member or have your Grange recognized with a candle on the Sesquicentennial Traveling Birthday Cake please copy and/or use the forms printed on that page. Candle orders are sent to Co-chair Roberta Halbert, PO Box 102, Gilbertsville, NY 13776.

Sesquicentennial Co-chairs
 Roberta Halbert 607-783-2445
 Susan Drake 607-264-3069



Sesquicentennial Banner



A Treasured Tradition With The Future In Focus

NYS Grange Sesquicentennial Committee
 Candle Order Information

- Fundraiser for Celebration expenses is a birthday candle for the traveling birthday cake (Limit 150 candles).
- Have a special past or present member’s name applied to a candle or the name of a Grange
- Candles with names will be added to the cake as ordered
- Order or pay directly to Committee Co-chair Roberta Halbert

This cake will be traveling to various events and the regional celebrations until October of 2023 and then will be on view at State Grange Headquarters. Recognize a special member or put your Grange on the cake!

 Name of Honoree (Print Clearly)

(Circle one) RED CANDLE \$10 BLUE CANDLE \$25 GREEN CANDLE \$50 PINK CANDLE \$100

If ordering by mail enclose a check for the circled amount made out to **New York State Grange** on check memo line add 150th Anniversary Candle

Name of person or Grange for Appreciation Certificate _____

Mail to: Roberta Halbert, PO Box 102, Gilbertsville, NY 13776

Candle Order Form

**“A Treasured Tradition
 With The Future In Focus”**

CERTIFICATE of APPRECIATION

**Supported the 2023 New York State
 Grange Sesquicentennial Celebration
 Candle Project**

In Recognition Of _____

