

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 2023

President's Column

Stephen C. Coye



Now that Grange Month 2023 is in the history books, we trust that there will be an entry therein detailing the events and activities your Grange planned and presented at sometime during the month. The important thing at this point is not to let the impressions of your event fade from the consciousness of the public by planning a public event in the near future. These events do not always have to involve a large number of Grangers, as it is important that your facility be available as a public place for any number of events. Defensive Driving classes, gardening workshops, canning/preserving classes, hobby bee keeping and/or maple syrup making, blood drives, exercise classes, just to name a few things. The list is practically endless, and of course needs to be reflective of the needs and interests of your communities.

Before we know it, fair season will be upon us, which has historically been a good opportunity to bring visibility to the Grange. A good many of the fairs existing today have their organizational roots in Grange initiatives. As the nature of the fair has changed over the years, especially in relation to why people attend and what they look for after they arrive, there is still the opportunity to make our presence and relevance known. The reason

for the fair in the mind and times of O.H. Kelley was for farmers (90% of the population at that time) to bring in their produce for exhibition to compare with the entries of others and learn how to do a better job next year. Back in the 1950's many county fairs still have extensive entries in farm produce in any number of classes for adjudication, but since that time there has been a steady decline in entries, some fairs having such entries in the 4-H program. To a great extent it is a numbers game, as in this day and age farming operations reflect a very small percentage of the total population, and the industrial type of farm operation is not known for its interest in exhibiting to learn how to do things better – that's what computers are for. Getting back to the 1950's for a minute, even though there were a lot more agricultural product exhibits than there are now, there wasn't a lot of traffic through the area. Generally speaking, the folks that checked them out were pretty much the same ones that exhibited, just to see what prize they had won.

Fairs are being mentioned early on hopefully to stimulate thinking on the nature of your exhibit and participation in the activities, should you be involved in such. For whatever reason, most probably due to the influence of TV and social media videos, we do not see things that are static anymore. If there is no movement or sound of any sort, or the opportunity to be interactive, there is no interest on the part of most in looking further. The competition for people's attention is stiff, especially against the glitter of the midway (by the way – you won't find anything static there), so thus the key is to start early and explore all possibilities. Don't be afraid to enlist the advice of an expert, and/or spend money to produce the desired end.

Have a great spring season!

Rural Minds



Clifton Springs Grange

and

Chautauqua County Pomona Grange

host

Rural Minds Meetings

The main purpose of the "Rural Minds" meetings is to focus attention in rural communities of the *"a silent epidemic that is having a devastating impact on rural communities throughout America. Compared to people who live in urban areas, rural Americans have both higher rates of depression and higher suicide rates. That's because people living in rural areas are often confronted with unique barriers to mental health."*

In his presentation, New York State dairy farmer and Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton:

- Shares a lived experience of confronting mental illness in rural America
- Highlights some important statistics that affect mental health in rural communities
- Talks about the major barriers and challenges rural Americans face in seeking help and accessing mental health services
- Discusses the stigma around mental illness in rural communities and ways to help overcome it
- Provides resources and supports that are available.

Clifton Springs Grange and Chautauqua County Pomona Grange prepared tri-fold brochures which gave the purposes of the meeting, short biographies of the presenters, Jeff Winton and a staff member of NY-Farm-Net. Each Grange also prepared a flyer that was distributed around the area. The brochures were put in prominent places such as libraries, banks, churches and farm machinery locations. Local farmers were also sent a personal invitation to attend. Area Granges were also notified of the event.

Below are some photographs of the event in Clifton Springs.



Left; Jeff Winton



Right Sarah McCumisky



Below: Attendees

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New York State Grange



Sesquicentennial
1873-2023

Legislative Column

Cindy Benson-Pollard



Winter is finally behind us. The spring flowers are in bloom and the grass and trees are turning green. Soon we will be busy with the activities of the warm and busy summer months. Now is a good time to be sure that we are reaching out to our communities to let them know what the Grange is doing to help everyone living there.

As I write this article, we are still waiting for a state budget to be passed. Again, the negotiations are being held behind closed doors. The Grange has long been vocal about passing state budgets on time. Many state legislators have made their voices heard that they are unhappy about what is happening at this time. I encourage all of our members to reach out to your local representatives and remind them of the Grange's policies on a balanced, on-time budget. By the time you read this, hopefully, a budget has been passed but you can still remind them of the need for this.

On a federal level, hearings have begun for the new Farm Bill. With the turmoil that continues in Washington, I am not sure how productive these hearings will be. The divide in Congress has made it almost impossible to believe that any agreement can be reached. I encourage you to write to your Representatives and to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and ask that they work together to reach a new Farm Bill that will help our agricultural economy. In your letter, I would include Grange's position on milk pricing reform and SNAP benefit funding. If you would like help with writing your letter, please reach out to me, I will be happy to help you.

Thank you to all the Pomona Granges who have forwarded resolutions for consideration at this year's State Grange. I encourage you to send your resolutions to me as soon as possible. Please do not wait until the last minute to get them in. If you need help in writing your resolutions, please let me know. I am always happy to help. It is never too early to start planning our annual Legislative Day in September. If you have any ideas for speakers for the event, I would be interested in hearing from you. I am always open to

suggestions for planning the day. When it comes to the legislative work of the Grange, think about a colony of ants. One little ant can't move a rubber tree plant but when the ants work together, "oops there goes another rubber tree plant."

State Grange Secretary



Ryan Orton

During Spring Break, I traveled to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands in South America with 23 students (including 2 of my Youth Members from Stanford Grange) and 4 other teachers from my school as part of our new Travel Club. This Club was formed under the auspices of my former Principal who wanted to give our students the opportunity to travel the world, see new places, and experience new things. I love to travel, so I told her I would be honored to be one of the Co-Advisors of our School's Travel Club.

We had a fantastic experience – it was truly a once-in-a-lifetime trip! While it was the rainy season in Ecuador, it was the tropical experience in the Galapagos with temperatures topping off at 105 degrees during the day with bright, hot sunshine – a welcome relief from this winter! We had the opportunity to stand on the equator and eat an Ecuadorian delicacy – guinea pig (tasted just like dark meat turkey). We saw many different animals unique to the Galapagos – giant tortoises, sea turtles, sea lions, marine and terrestrial iguanas, pelicans, Galapagos penguins, flamingos, blue-footed boobies, sharks, rays, crabs, and all kinds of fish. Of course, we discussed the evolution connection with Charles Darwin and his trip to the Galapagos in 1835.

These students know how involved I am with the Grange. While on the trip, several students noticed that I wore a lot of Grange shirts (I do own a lot of them). I also brought my Grange hat and a Grange umbrella. One student said, "Mr. Orton, you're a walking billboard for the Grange!" They were absolutely correct! While I was advertising and promoting the Grange in a different country, I was also showing my Grange pride! The Galapagos is also full of tourists and other school groups on tours like us (we met some from California and Ohio), and I took the chance

that someone we may encounter might know what the Grange is by seeing my Grange merch. No one came up to me and said, "Hey! I'm a Granger, too," or "I know what the Grange is!" But, I helped get the Grange name out there both in the airports in New York City and Miami as well as in Ecuador and the Galapagos. Who knows – if we can start a Grange in Hawaii...

I encourage all our Grangers in the Empire State to show off your Grange pride by wearing something Grange – a shirt, hat, pin, sweatshirt, etc.! After the initial purchase of any type of Grange merch, it's free advertising! People always notice what others are wearing, and it may spark a conversation. You may find another Granger that you didn't know was a fellow Brother or Sister. And, your promoting our wonderful organization and getting our name out in public.

I was pleased to see many new members in our Granges from our March Quarterly Reports! Congratulations to the following Granges for welcoming new members since the last writing:

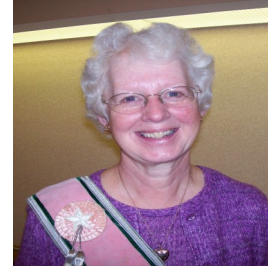
3 New Members
Copake Grange #935 (Columbia County)
Walton Grange #1454 Delaware County)
Oak Grove Grange #873 (Dutchess County)
Brunswick Grange #1337 (Rensselaer County)
Plattekill Grange #923 (Ulster County)

2 New Members
Fredonia Grange #1 Chautauqua County)
Corfu Grange #142 (Genesee County)
Adirondack Grange #530 (Lewis County)
Pierstown Grange #793 (Otsego County)
Eureka Grange #46 (Wayne County)
Rose Grange #1051 (Wayne County)

1 New Member
Bethlehem Grange #137 (Albany County)
East Chatham Grange #1066 (Columbia County)
Stanford Grange #808 (Dutchess County)
Taft Settlement Grange #473 (Onondaga County)
Lamson Grange #588 (Onondaga County)
Clifton Springs Grange #1042 (Ontario County)
Butternut Valley Grange #1533 (Otsego County)
Curriers Grange #1273 (Wyoming County)



Chaplain's Corner



Virginia L.

SPRING IS HERE !!

Spring is a wonderful time of the year. As we went through each State traveling north on our way home from Florida, the progression of the stages of flowering trees, plants and grass was truly fun to watch. It made me think of the word "spring" and all the uses of the word.

Here's a sampling of sayings I'm sure you have heard over the years: "you must be feeling better because you have a **spring** in your step"! When we change to/from daylight savings time, it's "**spring** forward and fall back". **Springtime** is the season of Nature's rebirth.

Then there's the cute little ditty we learned in elementary school: "**Spring** has sprung, the grass has riz'; I wonder where the birdie is? There he is up in the sky. He dropped some white-wash in my eye! I'm alright, I won't cry. I'm just glad that cows can't fly!"

In the Bible, "**spring up**" means to rise out of something. These verses will help us understand how we can rise above anything that confronts us in life: Matthew 13:5; Hebrews 7:14; John 4:14 and Matthew 4:16.

As we march into the months of May and June, may you experience a **spring** in your step and that you have a "**spring up**" occasion or encounter in your life.



Family Activities

Brenda Noble



Hope everyone is enjoying the beginning of summer. I will take items for the Northeast Exposition until mid August. These items help support the judging of the craft contest and the running of the building.

The baking contest will be at State Grange Session. There will be Regular and Diabetic divisions. Be sure the pie is marked with Name, Grange, type of apple pie (regular or diabetic). The

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(Continued from page 2) Family Activities

pie needs to be in a disposable pan as they will be sold at State Session.

State Grange Historian

Carol Bailey



DID YOU KNOW...

That on August 19, 1950 E. Carroll Bean, High Priest of Demeter, spoke at the Grange Temple at Chautauqua? The building is in the Greek Revival style with Doric columns across the front. This temple was the scene of many Grange picnics through the years.

Now to back up a few years. The Susan Freestone Vocational Fund was established in 1945. This fund continues today and awards scholarships to deserving young Grangers. Susan Freestone served for many years as superintendent of Juvenile Grange for National Grange. She was the wife of NYS Grange president Fred Freestone.

Also in 1945 a song "Seeds for Victory and Peace" were being sold. 3000 copies were printed to be sold as a money making project to benefit the Revolving Scholarship Fund. Does anyone have a copy of this song? Did a Granger write it? Was it a contest? This information was in the lecturer's report.

During this closing year of WWII, a state wide canning contest was held. Gerald Eastman took the degree of Flora that year also. We currently have an award in his honor.

In the 1948 journal is the first mention of appointment of a youth committee. Those appointed were: Franklyn Sheldon, Arthur Mooney, Mrs. Grace Kohn, Mrs. Roy Bridenbecker and Elton Borden. The executive committee also moved that a Pomona Youth Chairman be appointed in each county. In 1951 it is noted that a Youth Leadership School was held at Cobleskill.

During the lecturer's program a Rural Radio Broadcast of a discussion, "How Can the Nations be made United Neighbors?" was featured. On the panel was Lois White of Jamesville, NY; Mrs. Russell MacDonald, Canada; John Madsen, Denmark; and Donald Pringle, United Nations, whose home was Canada.

One of the resolutions from 1948 was requesting better enforcement of 50 miles per hour

speed limit.

The Middle Atlantic Lecturers Conference resumed in 1949, the first since the beginning of WWII. At this time also there was talk of the Grange having an "old folks" home. The Grange had six TV programs over WRGB-GE TV in Schenectady. It was voted to move State Grange from December to October beginning in 1950. Acres of Diamonds was the theme for the 1950. A Grange band from Tioga County, PA presented a concert before the Sixth Degree.

There were 53 entries in the chocolate cake contest in 1951, one from each Pomona. One of the entertainment numbers during that session was an exhibition of ax throwing by Archie Lobdell. Delegates opposed daylight saving time.

An example of the executive committee working overtime is noted in 1953 when they adjourned at 2 a.m. to reconvene at 9:30 a.m.! Elton Borden escorted to two German exchange students back home and returned with more students. This was a youth project of National Grange. Grange was against the St. Lawrence Power Project.

Robert Paine was elected treasurer for the first time in 1957. Fern Palmer, lecturer, had an advisory committee to assist her. Among the discussions were consolidation of Granges and sales of such property. Delegates opposed the unionization of agricultural workers in 1958. In 1959 Elizabeth Arthur read her first draft of Grange history to the executive committee. Richard Church was president of the state FFA. It was urged that state aid to county fairs continue. Opposition to federal take over of the Barge Canal was recorded.

Plans are being made for a state Grange paper in 1960. Cost of publishing a history are being looked into. A new history covering 1973-2017 should be available this year. The National Republican Platform Committee asked for suggestions for agriculture.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Smith of Huntington, Quebec, won the ballroom dancing contest in the lecturer's department. Also that year Maple Leaf Grange Drill Team from Canada performed during the youth program. For a number of years the Canadian flag was presented as we had members attending from Canada, especially Maple Leaf. Kay Williams, a past state lecturer, was from there. At one time according to some records there were eight hundred Granges in Canada.

One of the community service projects was cleaning and painting mailboxes.

During this our sesquicentennial year, the following quote from Elizabeth L. Arthur from her historian's report is appropriate. "It is said that Anatole

France once remarked that all the historical books that contain no lies are extremely tedious. I can safe say this History contains no lies. The Grange needs no such embellishment. Yet I defy anyone to term it drab. To me, it is alive with color. There is the true blue of the Subordinate member, without which the Grange might be a run of the mill club. There is the life-blood crimson, tint of sacrifices made officers, members, to promote lasting rural good, often at the cost of their own personal dreams. There is the purple of royalty, the lineal heritage we have from the Founders themselves who wrought a regal thing when they built the Grange. There is the lovely hue of dawn, when youth sees visions; the green of the eternal hills."

Youth



Johannah Stewart

Youth Column

The Youth are back and busier than ever. We just had a successful Spring Youth weekend in Dutchess County. (Details provided by Alyvia Fuches) We also got a team together for the dartball tournament and had several youth members participate in the public speaking contest at the state level. Coming up, we are looking forward to assisting with summer programming for the Juniors in Columbia County on July 13th. Just after that, we will practice our drill for regional competition, and head to VT for the NE youth conference. Interested youth should check our Facebook page for more details or contact me directly. Before summer arrives most of our youth need to go through a fairly stressful time: finals. Here are some tips for you to use or share with youth in your life: 1. Schedule time to study for each test. 2. Get a good night's sleep before each day of testing. 3. Eat a good breakfast the morning of the exam. 4. When studying, play video game soundtracks in the background on low. (They are designed to keep you focused and alert). 5. Take regular breaks every 20-30 minutes when studying or writing papers. Do something active during that time. I hope these tips help. Don't forget to pass along your tips to friends in your life. Best of luck with finals and we hope to see you and a friend at our next event.

See the Regional Youth Conference info on Page 8

Alyvia Fuchs

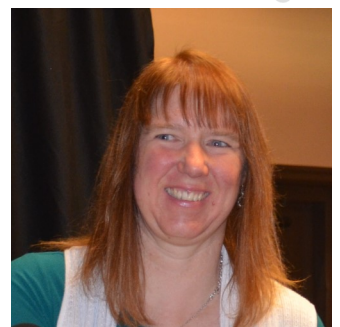
It was an amazing weekend held by Stanford Grange #808 in Dutchess county, Full of excitement and community service.

Friday once everyone got to the hall we played some games then got ready for bed so we were well rested for Saturday morning.

We kicked off the weekend officially on Saturday morning with breakfast and a car ride to the walkway over the Hudson. When we got back we started a drill workshop by Jo Stewart and Christian Taft where we learned a box step, barn doors, funky corners and some other basic moves in drill. We had lunch and got ready to help out with one of Stanford's community dinners. Once we were done with the dinner we ate and did a paint and sip done by Sara Barber with mocktails and lots of designs on canvas to choose from. Then I got to try something new: dartball. We had an interesting mix of teams and overall I think everybody had fun with it. We got ready for bed and turned in.

On Sunday morning we ate and said goodbyes and then a small group of us went to a church for a service then departed.

Junior Grange



Congratulations to Cuba Junior Grange for a successful Carnival held at their Grange Hall! At this carnival, the members were able to talk to people about the Junior Grange and, as a result, received two applications for membership. If your Grange would like to hold a carnival, the Cuba Grange committee is willing to offer their "expertise" and games to any Grange interested in hosting a carnival for their community. The games include klinko, ducks for a pond, memory game, Jingo, clothespin to drop into a milk bottle, bowling, and ball bounce. Reach out to Sandra Green to plan a time for these carnival games to come to your Grange, as well as some pointers or physical help with Chinese Auctions or any other fundraising ideas for your Grange.

Kirkland Junior Grange hosted an invite-a-friend night for painting and hot chocolate with a local guest art teacher to lead the painting class. The teacher led the children in paint-

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(Continued from page 3) Historian

ing a cardinal. This is a great way to introduce more people to Junior Grange as well as include people from the community in your events. Great job to Kirkland Junior Grange and Cuba Junior Grange for hosting such exciting events! I think we are well on our way to having the Junior Grange program grow faster than my baby spider plant that I planted just prior to last year's State Grange Session.

What is your Junior Grange doing to promote the Junior Grange program? I would love to hear what fun activities are happening in Junior Granges around New York State. Please send me information on the events your Junior Grange is hosting. If I am able, I would like to attend some of the events and help promote the Junior Grange. Even if your Junior Grange does not have an event scheduled, I would love to come to a meeting of your Junior Grange. Also, if you have any pictures from your Junior Grange activities or meeting, please send them to me. I would like to start putting pictures of Junior Grange events on the New York State Grange website.

As always, if you have any questions or would like some ideas for your Junior Grange, please reach out to me. I am willing to help the Junior Granges in New York State in any way that I can.

Sports

Director Bruce Dehner



The Sports Department will have held the Dart Ball Tournament by the time this article is published so the results will be in the next issue. The next event will be the State Bowling Tournament at Cort-Lanes in Cortland on Sunday, June 4th. We will be mailing out forms to all previous team captains. We have received a request for one new team already! See if you can get more teams involved, just give me a shout and I will get a form to you! Golf is in Shortsville, NY on July 9th. We will be finalizing this soon so if you are interested in having a team, and would like more information, let me know. On Saturday, Au-

gust 5th, Corn Hole will be held at State Headquarters in Cortland. We are trying a different date this year in hopes that there are fewer conflicts and more teams will be able to participate. Let me know as soon as possible if you have a team as we may need more boards. I am very happy to see more interest in the Sports Department and look forward to seeing everyone soon.

New York State Grange



Sesquicentennial
1873-2023

New York State Grange Sesquicentennial

A Treasured Tradition With
The Future In Focus

Has your Grange been thinking of honoring that special member who has contributed so much over the years with a candle on the traveling fundraising 150th Birthday Cake? It is not too late to call Roberta Halbert at 607-783-2445 and she will send a candle order form. Candle prices range from \$10 to \$100 depending on color. Recognize your very important member in this unique way!

New York State Grange Sesquicentennial Committee members Ryan Orton, Barbara Lavier, Roberta Severson, Melvin Phelps, Laura Magrum, Tom Hebiesen, Alice Grimsley, Sharon Croucher, Roberta Halbert, and Susan Drake look forward to welcoming you at one of the seven 150th Regional Celebrations. Gather a group from your Grange and please come to one of the Regional Celebrations listed. Remember to have someone from your Grange bring a photograph of your Grange Hall, Grange event/activity, or both with accompanying caption for the 150th State Grange Photo Album. The New York State Grange Sesquicentennial will be celebrated:

Saturday May 13, 2023, at Freedom Plains Grange #857 in Dutchess County starting at 2pm. Host, Ryan Orton- phone 845-868-7869. Counties - Columbia, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam,

Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester.

Sunday May 21, 2023, at the State Grange Headquarters, 100 Grange Place, Cortland starting at 1pm. Hosting are Barbara Lavier-phone 315-662-7758 and Roberta Severson – phone 315-673-9927. Counties - **Chemung**, Cortland, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, **Tioga**, Tompkins, and **Schuyler**.

Sunday June 4, 2023, at Kirkland Grange #684, 43658 State Route 37, Redwood, NY 13679 in Jefferson County. Host, Melvin Phelps- phone 315-778-6712. Counties - Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and St. Lawrence.

Saturday June 17, 2023 at Curriers Grange #1273, 983 Chaffee Road, Arcade, NY 14009 in Wyoming County. Hosts are Laura Magrum – phone 585-813-8238 – and Tom Hebiesen – phone 716-680-2211. Counties - Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, **Steuben**, and Wyoming

Saturday July 22, 2023 at Brunswick Grange #1337 (Rensselaer County) starting at 2pm. Hosts are Alice Grimsley (phone 518-279-9113) and Susan Drake (phone 607-264-3069) Entertainment - Hill Country Cloggers. –Counties – Albany, Essex, Fulton, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Washington;

Saturday July 29, 2023 at Wide Awake Grange #747 (Ontario County) starting at noon with a potluck lunch. Hosts are Sharon Croucher (phone 315-573-3097) and Roberta Severson (phone 315-673-9927) - Counties – Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, Yates.

Saturday August 26, 2023 at Butternut Valley Grange # 1533 (Otsego County) located at 7 Bloom St., Gilbertsville starting at 2pm. Hosts are Roberta Halbert (phone 607-783-2445) and Susan Drake (phone 607-264-3069) - Counties - Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego.

October 13-17 at Holiday Inn in Auburn, 151st Annual New York State Grange Session with Sesquicentennial Events throughout the Session.

The NYS Grange Headquarters building is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. To highlight this achievement and help the State Grange reach the goal of a net gain in membership the Sesquicentennial Committee has arranged for a **Degree Day on Saturday September 30** at the State Grange Headquarters in Cortland. The First through the Fifth Degrees will be conferred starting with Opening of the Grange by the NYS Grange officers at 10:15am. First Degree 10:30am, Second Degree 11:15am, Noon Sandwich lunch, 12:45pm Third Degree, 1:30pm Fourth Degree, 2:30pm Cupcake Break, 3pm Fifth Degree. Please make plans to bring your candidates for membership, new members, and those members who have not seen the Grange Degrees. You can continue with the beautiful Sixth Degree at the State Grange Session in Auburn at the Holiday Inn on Saturday October 14 in the evening and the very special Seventh Degree at the National Grange Convention in Niagara Falls in November.

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



WHAT IS THE GRANGE EXCHANGE?, a memory for you from the NYS Grange 150th Celebration

Committee

Before Sam's Club, before BJ's, and before Costco there was the Grange Exchange. The Grange Exchange was a collaboration between the NYS Grange and the former Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative, Inc., a dairy cooperative (now part of Dairy Farmers of America) operating in and around NYS. People join together to pool orders of needed food items in order to receive lower prices. Today such businesses can be food cooperatives. Letters promoting the opportunity to purchase products were sent Grange members in Broome, Cortland, Tompkins, Monroe, Yates, Ontario, and Wayne counties in early 1982 to test the buyers club. Eighty-eight products useful for farm and home use were available for purchase. The goal of Eastern Milk Producers was to increase

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Washington Overview

Little Progress on Debt Limit

Nearly every ongoing conversation in Congress is colored by the looming threat of a debt limit default which could come this summer. Nevertheless, Congress and the White House have made little progress towards an agreement to raise the debt limit and avoid default. As a reminder from last month's View from the Hill, the debt limit is a cap set by Congress on the amount of money which the federal government is authorized to borrow in order to meet ongoing fiscal obligations. It is important to note that the debt limit does not control future or new spending by the federal government, it only controls borrowing to meet existing spending authorized by Congress. Congress has never failed to raise the debt limit when necessary, and has done so 78 separate times since 1960 under Congresses and Presidencies of both parties. Should Congress fail to raise the debt limit before the cap is hit, which is estimated to come sometime in the summer this year, then the federal government would default on its fiscal obligations, certainly causing serious economic turmoil.

In early March, President Biden released his budget request for the 2024 fiscal year, outlining a total of \$6.8 trillion in desired mandatory and discretionary federal spending, along with a number of proposed tax increases to help cover new spending. It is important to note however, that the President's budget is merely a proposal for Congress to consider when it comes time to write annual spending bills later this year. Considering the significant spending and tax increases included in this year's budget proposal, Republicans in Congress have made clear that they will not pass the budget as written, and instead intend to pursue spending cuts for many federal programs.

This discussion around the federal budget ties into ongoing conversations surrounding a debt limit increase, as Congressional Republicans argue that any debt ceiling increase must come with provisions that would require decreased government spending in the future. Democrats in the White House and Congress have thus far refused to agree to anything more than a clean increase of the debt ceiling, arguing that much of the debt accrued since the ceiling was last raised comes as a result of spending from the previous Presidential administration for which they raised the debt ceiling three times. As Congress goes on recess for much of the beginning of April, talks will continue over a potential debt limit increase with only a few months to go before a looming default.

Congress Takes First Legislative Actions

In March, Congress began to take its first serious legislative actions for the current session. With support from the White House and many Democratic Senators, a Republican bill to strike down changes to the DC criminal code passed, marking the first bill to become law this year. Furthermore, Congress has also set the stage for repeal of outdated Authorizations of Military Force for the 1991 US invasion of Kuwait and the 2002 invasion of Iraq with significant bipartisan support. Current issues in the banking and tech sector have also spurred calls for potential new regulations to prevent future bank failures in the wake of a series of high-profile collapses early in March. Finally, a bipartisan consensus has emerged in support of some level of restrictions for the Chinese social media app TikTok, with many pushing for an outright ban.

Agriculture and Food

Focus on Dairy

The bicameral, bipartisan *Dairy Pride Act* has been reintroduced in Congress in an effort to combat the practice of labeling non-dairy products using dairy names. Senate cosponsors Risch (R-ID), Baldwin (D-WI), Crapo (R-ID), Collins (R-ME), and Welch (D-VT), and House cosponsors Joyce (R-PA), Kuster (D-WI), Van Orden (R-WI), Craig (D-MN) and Courtney (D-CT) say the Dairy Pride Act will require non-dairy products made from seeds, plants, and algae to no longer be mislabeled with dairy terms such as milk, yogurt or cheese. Meanwhile, the FDA has acknowledged the problem of nutritional differences and has drafted recommendations to prevent consumer confusion about the nutritional makeup of plant-based milk alternatives. Unfortunately, the guidelines still permit the use of the term "milk" on plant-based products and have not yet addressed labeling of cheese and yogurt.

USDA's New "Product of USA" Label

A proposed new rule would allow the voluntary "Product of the USA" or "Made in the USA" label claims to be used on meat, poultry, and egg products only when born, raised, harvested, and processed in the United States. The change would alter the current language which allows for meat

derived outside the U.S. to bear a "Product of the USA" label if it is processed in an American facility. National Grange policy has long supported such requirements.

More Free School Meals

USDA is proposing rule changes to allow more schools to offer free meals to all students regardless of income. Under existing eligibility provisions, schools can offer free meals to all students if at least 40% of the students have household incomes below the federal poverty line. Approximately 16 million students get free meals now under existing policy; the proposal would expand that number to 25 million.

Equity Commission Interim Report

Interim recommendations have been received by USDA from its Equity Commission appointed to recommend solutions to alleged differences in equity treatment to those served by the Department. A final report is expected by the end of the year. Recommendations included land access funding for minority producers, relief for distressed borrowers, eligibility to participate in USDA programs for owners of heirs property, suggestions regarding elections and operations of Farm Service County committees and more

FY 2024 Appropriations

Grange Supports Ag and Food Priorities

The National Grange joined other food, agriculture, conservation, and environmental groups to urge Congress to support funding of priority items in the fiscal year 2024 which begins October 1, 2023. These priorities include agricultural research, agriculture extension education, agriculture economics, research facilities, innovation, conservation, export promotion and development, disease control and prevention, pest control and more. The Grange is concerned that U.S. public food and agriculture research has fallen by a third since 2002. Cutting edge research is critical to America's competitiveness and national security.

Conservation/Environment

Climate Alliance Farm Bill Priorities

The Food and Climate Alliance is a coalition of ag, food, conservation, environmental and agribusiness groups, including the National Grange, that came together to propose a series of new farm bill provisions needed to help producers and landowners address climate change. The proposals include a broad emphasis on using USDA conservation programs to encourage farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, capture carbon and make operations more resilient to droughts, floods and other weather-related disasters.

Health Care

Breakthrough Alzheimer's Treatments Bypass Rural Patients

Alzheimer's disease kills twice as many people in rural America compared to urban areas. A recent editorial in the Kansas City Star by National Grange President Betsy Huber argues that Medicare coverage for breakthrough Alzheimer's treatments discriminates against rural Americans and should be reversed. Medicare covers only beneficiaries enrolled in studies run exclusively in a limited number of urban medical centers. Huber called for government agencies to ensure health equity for rural America by establishing study sites in more of the accessible parts of the country so rural Americans will not be left behind. Fortunately, expanding Alzheimer's coverage has bipartisan support in Congress.

Urgent Need for RSV Vaccine

The respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cases rose sharply during the fall and early winter of 2022 and proved to be a serious respiratory condition for infants and older adults. News outlets reported challenges the remaining rural hospitals faced as they tried to cope with the influx of patients needing care with no space to offer them. National Grange's Burton Eller recently testified before FDA's Vaccines and Related Products Advisory Committee and stressed the urgent need to approve a safe, effective vaccine to prevent RSV. When fall arrives this year, we could once again face a quadruple threat from flu, pneumonia, RSV and COVID.

Continue Access to Pharmacist Services

During the recent pandemic, pharmacies were temporarily allowed to become front-line providers of COVID testing and vaccination. This was important because rural residents are generally closer to pharmacies than hospitals and clinics. The National Grange has joined patient, pharmacist, senior, rural, and other stakeholder groups in support of the bipartisan *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act* (HR 1770) to enable pharmacists to continue providing care and to expand these services to include additional testing and treatment for flu, strep and RSV in addition to COVID and be covered by Medicare Part B

(Continued from page 5) National News Corner National Grange

Right to Repair

Case IH and New Holland Sign On

The American Farm Bureau has signed right to repair agreements with farm equipment manufacturers Case IH and New Holland. The memorandum of understanding is similar to the agreement signed with John Deere earlier this year. The MOU sets a framework for farmers and independent repair facilities to access manuals, tools, parts, product guides and other information to self-diagnose and self-repair machinery while protecting the intellectual property rights of the manufacturer.

Taxes

Support for Estate Tax Repeal

The National Grange joined 111 members of the Family Business Coalition and the Family Business Estate Tax Coalition in support of Senator Thune's (R-SD) *Death Tax Repeal Act*. The estate tax currently accounts for only one half of one percent of federal revenue. In addition, the tax forces family businesses to spend money on insurance policies and estate planning services instead of expanding their businesses and creating more jobs.

Telecommunications

Rural Poles Slow Internet Buildout

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that high speed internet rollout to rural America is being delayed as cable companies and electric utilities battle over who pays when new utility poles are needed for internet services. The poles are owned by electric or phone companies that often aren't receiving public money to build out broadband. Broadband providers need access to these existing poles to run their broadband lines. Pole owners need to be compensated for "make ready" costs such as moving existing wires or replacing poles. Internet providers say they are experiencing high fees and foot-dragging from pole owners. The Federal Communications Commission has drafted but not released mediation guidelines that would help solve this problem. The National Grange has petitioned the FCC several times in recent months to release the mediation document.

Of Interest

Not in a Recession?

Recession or not, Americans say they are poorer today according to a Gallup poll. In fact, Gallup says in nearly 50 years of polling only once before have so many people reported dwindling fortunes and that was during the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009. The national credit card balance hit a record \$931 billion at the end of 2022. The national savings rate has hovered below 5 percent since the start of 2022, the lowest since 2009. The toxic combination of inflation and high interest rates means consumers will probably spend and invest less in 2023.

Perspective

"We can live without our friends, but not without our neighbors." ~ **Thomas Fuller**

"Everyone says I'm like the girl next door... Y'all must have really weird neighbors." ~ **Kelly Clarkson**

"Good fences make good neighbors." ~ **Robert Frost**

"Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder." ~ **John F. Kennedy**

What is precision agriculture and why should we care?

By Betsy E. Huber, National Grange President Precision Agriculture – a term we are beginning to hear more and more these days. But what is it exactly? You hopefully are aware that I've been serving on a couple of task forces of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for broadband deployment for six years. Currently, I'm on the working group for rural deployment of broadband to support precision ag. The official definition of precision ag is a farming management strategy based on observing, measuring and responding to temporal and spatial variability to improve agricultural production sustainability in both crop and livestock production. Precision ag uses computer software programs to collect massive amounts of data from the field to enable the farmer to adjust levels of pesticide, herbicide, fertilizer, and water used so the farm can be more economically and environmentally sustainable. Sensors in the fields or on the equipment are connected to tablets and smartphones located on the tractor or harvester or in the farm office. For instance, fertilizer sprayers can "read" the field yield maps and know where more nitrogen is needed to produce a better crop, or where the soil is fertile,

so fewer additives can be used to save money and prevent excess runoff. Spray nozzles are automatically turned on or off when the machine passes over the appropriate section of the field. This also prevents duplicate spraying. There are many other applications of P.A., from irrigation controls to cattle tags that can tell when an animal is sick even before any signs are visible. And we haven't even mentioned auto-steer and driver-less tractors. Of course, this equipment is expensive, so it's clear that larger farms will adopt the technology quicker than small farms. USDA's Economic Research Service report on "Precision Agriculture in the Digital Era" found that 7% of farms with cropland less than 200 acres used yield maps, but 50% of corn farms with cropland greater than 1725 acres used yield maps. Auto-steer guidance Energy & Agriculture – The Nexus We all Depend Upon Grangers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia (and beyond!), here is a great conference to attend if you are interested in ag and energy. "Energy and Agriculture – the Nexus We All Depend Upon" sponsored by America's Rural Energy Coalition and the National Grange. May 3-4, Canonsburg PA, Hilton Garden Inn Registration: <https://arenergyc.org/conference-2023/> Great nationally-known speakers from government, energy, and ag sectors. systems were used on 5.3% of corn acres in 2001; by 2016 it was 58%. All these technologies require internet service - in the barn or office or field - to operate. That's why we are advocating for broadband expansion to the last acre as well as the last mile in rural America. It's fascinating to see the advances in the last 50 years that have allowed production to increase greatly using less land and inputs - advances that must continue if we are to feed 9.7 billion people by 2050.

Celebrating inclusion and actively recruiting diverse membership strengthens the Grange while honoring our roots By Amanda Brozana Rios, National Grange Membership & Leadership Development Director

Diversity is a key ingredient for a strong organization. When people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives come together, they can create a more innovative and productive environment. There are many ways in which diversity can strengthen an organization. For one, it can lead to better and more informed decision-making. When people from different backgrounds and with different experiences are involved in decision-making, they are more likely to consider all sides of an issue and come up with creative solutions. Similarly, people from diverse backgrounds are together more likely to come up with new ideas, which can lead to new services, outreach, important areas of advocacy, and more. Diversity in an organization can also improve morale and engagement. When members feel like they are part of a diverse and inclusive organization, they are more likely to be engaged and feel a sense of belonging. This can lead to increased productivity and a more positive Grange experience. Finally, diversity can help attract and retain talented individuals to join; this is especially true for younger generations who expect to see people from diverse backgrounds involved in an organization or they may choose to go elsewhere because they are concerned that their friends and others who value diversity are not welcome. Unlike 1867, there are quite literally hundreds of organizations in many communities that someone can belong to which make a difference, each one looking for talented and passionate volunteers. So, making clear the Grange does (and has since our founding and early days) value people from all backgrounds, helps us stand apart. Studies have shown that organizations and companies that embrace diverse individuals are more likely to be successful in the long run – and the Grange is a perfect example of that. In our history, there are so many publicly celebrated and quietly memorialized spaces made to embrace marginalized individuals as equals in Grange. From women to formerly enslaved sharecroppers to LGBTQ individuals, membership and leadership opportunities have been open equally to all in Grange. That's not to say every member has equally embraced this idea – certainly, some pushed back at the Grange's expectation that women, people of color, non-native English speakers, and queer individuals should share space with, vote with (or against) and hold office in the same local Grange or organization as a whole, but always inclusion and equality has prevailed in our Order. Here are some tips for creating a more diverse and inclusive Grange:

- Recruit for diversity. When you are working on your next membership campaign, consider where and whom you are recruiting. Make sure you are both informing and welcoming people from all backgrounds. Look for places that individuals less like you frequent and try to include as your target market people with different experiences, skills, and perspectives.
- Promote diversity and inclusion. Before your membership campaign, inform yourself and members of your Grange about our Order's long history of inclusion. Engage your members in a discussion about concerns they may have about blind spots in their understanding of others and consider providing training on diversity and inclusion from a local professional such as someone in education, the human resources field, clergy or others. Encourage your members to learn about and respect each other's differences as well. Then, make it clear to potential new members that your Grange values diversity and inclusion.
- Create a culture of inclusion. Make sure that everyone feels welcome and included in your organization. Ensure your Grange's calendar includes celebrations for major holidays from a variety of faith traditions; have Lecturer's programs that celebrate people from different backgrounds; consider outreach events that include or help those from minority communities. Provide opportunities for members and volunteers to get to know each other and to build relationships.
- Address discrimination. If you see or hear discrimination, take action to address it. Make sure that everyone feels safe and respected in your Grange. Creating a diverse and inclusive organization is not easy, but it is worth it and it follows a 150+ year tradition in the Grange. When we embrace diversity, we create a more vibrant and attractive Grange for our entire community.

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Community Involvement



Melvin Phelps

In past issues I discussed the parts starting a community service project. So far, I have discussed investigating your projects, which included Finding Your Team, Determine Your Need and Choosing Your Project and Planning your project. This issue I want to share the next step which is to SERVE. As a reminder these are taken from how FFA recommends implementing service projects – in true ag teacher fashion I will beg borrow and steal what I can to be successful.

Review Tips for a Successful Project
 Think you are ready to serve? Have you considered these?

- Before serving...**
- Let the community know about your project.
 - Contact and invite the media.
 - Make sure everyone knows what is expected of them.
 - Brainstorm types of problems that may occur and how you will address them.
- While serving...**
- Arrive early to ensure everything is ready to go.
 - Wear items (T-shirts, etc.) to let

- others know you are a part of Grange.
 - Is the Grange Brand present/front and center?
 - Meet with the planning team to review the schedule.
 - Distribute a list of contact numbers to your group so that everyone knows who to contact if something goes wrong.
 - Coordinate the check in of Grange members and volunteers.
 - Manage Grange members and volunteers throughout.
 - Provide a welcome and kick-off for everyone.
 - Monitor the schedule to stay on track.
 - Close out the event/work day (s).
 - Interact and get to know the people you are serving or those serving with you.
 - Acknowledge and thank volunteers, community partners and the service site.
 - Take pictures or video to document progress.
 - HAVE FUN!
- After serving...**
- Recognize volunteers, community partners, the service site or anyone else who helped make your project a success.
 - Example recognition: Send thank you notes.
 - Evaluate the success of the project.

Next time we will discuss Evaluate!

(Continued from page 4) Grange Exchange

consumption of their branded products. The goal of NYS Grange was to provide a service to existing members and attract new members. Over the following year, the Grange Exchange had over \$1,000,000 in sales. Once orders were placed, they were pooled and placed on a tractor trailers for delivery at specific locations at designated pick-up times. One thousand dollars in sales was needed to become a designated delivery/pick-up point. Interest declined and the program was stopped a few years later. (Thanks to Carol Bailey for contributing information to this article.)

New Grange Members

- Albany Co. Bethlehem #137**
James McGaughan
- Chautauqua Co. Fredonia #1**
Emily Horton
Ivy Rivera
- Columbia Co. Copake #935**
Signe Adam
Sarene Shanus
Colleen Coyte
- Delaware Co. Walton #1454**
Beth Conklin
Donald Conklin
Sammie Conklin
- Dutchess Co. Oak Grove #873**
Jeanne Ferranto
Annie Trujillo
Dan Tyler
- Genesee Co. Corfu #142**
Lynn Wahl
- Onondaga Co. Taft Settlement #473**
Helen Martin
- Rensselaer Co. Brunswick #1337**
Nicholas Halford
Kenneth Herrington
Coleen Vedder

Clifton Springs Grange Egg Hunt

This was the 21st year of the annual Egg Hunt held by Clifton Springs Grange. This is truly a community project as individuals and business in the community contribute in some way. Stuffed animals and free pizza for children and free oil changes and hair salon coupons for an adult drawing. The Grange provides four Easter Baskets and four \$25.00 cash prizes as well as many pounds of candy. There are over 3000 eggs for the children to gather. The park is divided into four sections: Pre school, Kindergarten through First Grade, Second Grade through Third Grade and Fourth through Sixth. This way there is no unfair competition in gathering eggs. This year there were nearly 150 children taking part. There is also opportunity to have a photograph taken with the Easter Bunny.



Some eggs for younger children



Some eggs for older children



The special prizes



The Easter Bunny



SUPPORT JUNIOR GRANGE

Regional Youth Conference



Northeast Regional Grange Youth Conference 2023

July 15th at 8am – July 16th at 11am
Vermont Grange Center, 308 West St, Brookfield, VT 05036
For Youth Members age 14-35, but all are welcome to attend!

Regional Contests - Games - Drill Teams

\$35 includes all meals, activities & lodging

Payment accepted through Venmo @Jessica-Falker-1 or cash/check payable to:
Vermont State Grange Youth, c/o Jessica Falker, 72 Alfred Buck Lane, Pittsford, VT 05763

Please mail form to Johannah Stewart, PO Box 81, Rose, NY 14542 or email to barringer.johannah@gmail.com no later than June 30th.
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Food allergies or special needs: _____

I would like to participate in the following contests (check all that apply):

- Sign-A-Song Grange Baseball (trivia, not actual baseball)
- Public Speaking Drill Team
- I'm Not Sure Yet

Junior Grange Camp News

Grange Camp 2023



Grange Camp 2023 is looking different from Grange Camp in years past. This year we are planning six Kids Day Out events around the State. Below is the six different locations for Grange Camp/Kids Day Out 2023. Kids Day Out will be 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at each location and the cost is \$10.00 per attendee. Lunch and fun activities will be provided. Registration forms are available on the New York State Grange website under Grange Camp or from your Junior leader or Community Grange Secretary.

June 24, 2023 – Birdsall Grange, 9041 Co Rd 16, Angelica, NY 14709

Allegany County

Regional Co-Coordinator, 2023 National Convention Paula Turner

National Grange Convention @ The Conference and Event Center, Niagara Falls is fast approaching on November 14-18th. As we “Flow Into The Future”, I am forever grateful for Zoom meetings, in order to meet with the coordinators of the other Northeast states.

Attention all agile girls age 13 ½-22: Please consider this ‘Once in a Lifetime Opportunity’ to be a Trumpet Girl in the Conferral of the 7th Degree. You can be a Trumpet Girl and take the degree the same day, as long as you are already a 6th Degree member prior to Convention. Call or email me for more details if you or anyone in your Grange are at all interested. My email has changed recently and is paula-turner635@gmail.com, and call or text me @ 607-377-1736. I appreciate all the help so far, and there are still spots to volunteer if you have not signed up yet.

Our Community Service Project for National Grange Convention is collecting socks, hats and mittens of all sizes for Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier. In addition to shopping for this, knitters and

crocheters are definitely welcome to send handmade items too.

I did get more XL cardinal red Convention shirts in after running out at State Session. The t-shirts are \$11 and long sleeved shirts are \$16 in sizes M, L, XL, 2X and 3X. I will have them with me any time that I leave Steuben County, whether I have a table set up or not.

In addition to seeing National Grange at work beginning on Tuesday morning, and concluding with the Celebration Banquet and the Evening of Excellence on Saturday night, there is an Advocacy Luncheon on Tuesday and Salute to Agriculture Luncheon on Wed open to all. The Quilts of Valor presentation is Wednesday night and the National Grange Honors Night is Friday. There will be activities, local tours, and workshops for all ages as well as the Showcase Room and Grange Store. If you have never been to National Grange Convention, or have only gone for the 7th Degree, I have a four page info-sheet entitled “Introduction to Your First National Grange Convention” that I can email or mail to you just for the asking. Registration for the Convention will be open in May with the complete schedule, so check it out at nationalgrange.org.

July 8, 2023 – Wide Awake Grange, 1004 NY-88, Phelps, NY 14532

Ontario County

July 13, 2023 – East Chatham Grange (to be held at the East Chatham Fire Department), 14 Frisbee St, East Chatham, NY 12060

Columbia County (TENTATIVE)

July 18, 2023 – Smithville Valley Grange, 5285 NY-41, Greene, NY 13778

Chenango County

August 10, 2023 – Champion Grange, 20323 County Route 47, Carthage, NY 13619 Jefferson County

August 11, 2023 – East Pembroke Grange, 2610 School St, East Pembroke, NY 14056, Genesee County

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