THE EMPIRE STATE GRANGER

American Values, Hometown Roots

Our Vision!

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

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January February 2026

President's Column

Sandra Green

I hope this New Year of 2026 is a good one for the Grange and our nation. As we plan to celebrate the USA's 250th anniversary, let each of us re-dedicate ourselves to doing our part to bring civility back to our great land.

New York State Grange will be celebrating the Nation's 250th birthday at our State Session. Anyone who has ideas for the celebration should share them with the members of the Celebration Planning Committee: Carol Bailey, Marcy Bolio, Alyvia Fuchs, Emily Ormsby, and Valerie Griffing. Do you remember what they announced at State Session? Maybe you should read your Journal of Proceedings when it comes.

I have been busy contacting Grange members to serve on the committees of New York State Grange. If anyone has any interest in serving the State Grange in any way, at present or in the future, please contact Headquarters and leave a message as to what area interests you. I thank all of you for all the work you have done and continue to do for every level of the Grange you serve.

It is my hope that I will continue to grow in my ability to serve as your NYS Grange Master. Please let me know any suggestions you have. I shall improvement my New Year's resolution. (How many of you can name which degree is about improvement?) Because I had not been involved much at the State Grange level for several years, aside from attending Session, I have not been sure how to direct the Special Deputies.

Special Deputies will be more active this year. Long-time Grange members remember when Deputies came to evaluate the performance of a local Grange. No longer do they do this. The Deputies serve as a connection to the State Grange. They are the first tier of information. They are also the closest members of the State Grange "Official Family" that can be contacted for help and advice. Each is eager to help. Please contact them.

While the Special Deputies are the first tier of contact, I believe each member of the Grange in New York State has the right to speak to the State Master. I appreciate members reaching out. Don't assume I know what you are thinking. Don't assume I have heard about a situation in your Grange. I am always willing to speak with any member. I will do my best to help as soon as I am able. I know I have not acted as quickly as some would have liked, but I try. Please, always feel free to contact me.

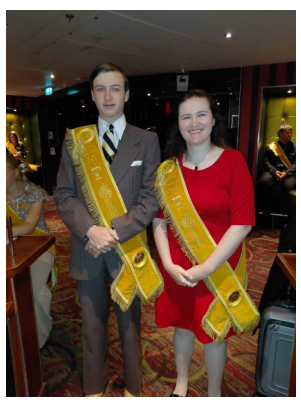
What's Inside

National Grange Convention

By Bruce Croucher

The 2025 National Grange session was very unique. For the first time in history, the convention was held on a cruise ship. There were around 550 Grangers and relatives and friends that were on the cruise and 20 from New York State. The cruise was 8 days in length, 4 days at sea and 4 days in ports. The convention conducted its business while the ship was at sea, so that the ports could be explored. The room that was used was on the small side, but the business could be accomplished.

Some of the things that normally took place did not occur or the cruise ship. Meal functions that included all of the Grangers did not happen. Meals were included as part of the cruise fee, and people ate their meals as individuals or in groups of their choosing. Menus were varied to a degree each day in the main dining rooms or in the specialty restaurants. There were also cafeteria areas where you could have breakfast, lunch and dinner. The awards gathering was also not held, but was provided on line following the cruise.



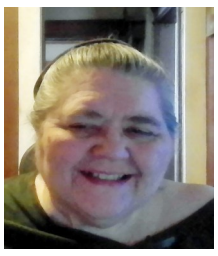
There were excellent workshops for youth members that were able to attend. The youth officers were able to open the session on one of the days. Two New York youth participated in the youth opening, Jomi and Colton Tarbell. Colton was an Executive Committee member and Jomni served as Chaplain.

The 7th degree was presented in the form of the "Archival" film that had been produced by the National Grange. Over 10 people attended the viewing.

Daniel and Valorie Woolley were presented and recog-

(Continued on page 6)

Legislative Column



Cindy Benson-Pollard

By the time you read this article, the holidays will be behind us, and we will be in the middle of winter. Snow, wind and cold are normal for this time of year. Granges tend to slow down a little during the winter months. Now would be a good time to work on your research for and the writing of resolutions for consideration at the 2026 State Grange session.

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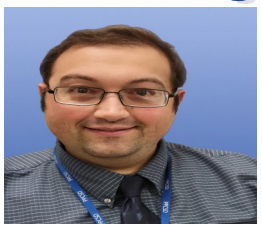
You should have received your new 2026 legislative policy handbook. This was updated from the resolutions that were adopted at the 2025 session in Watertown. I hope that you will take an opportunity to read through our current legislative policy statements. You will also be able to see which resolutions were adopted at the National Grange session in 2025. Those resolutions are highlighted in bold and italic font. Several of our resolutions were adopted into National Grange policy.

If you have any questions or need any help, please contact me either by email at cbenson81@msn.com or by phone. My contact information is always listed in the paper or in the directory. Should you want to call me, I ask that you call after 1 PM. Here's to a successful year for our legislative efforts.

State Grange Secretary



Ryan Orton

It's 2026, and new calendars are on our walls or refrigerators. There are many blank spaces on these calendars. I hope you make the most of these spaces and potentially do something new and unique for your Grange. Perhaps you can network and collaborate with another community organization. One new activity my Grange is trying is Trivia Nights this winter. Each night has a different theme. For one of the Trivia Nights, we are working with the National Honor Society at our local High School to raise funds for St Jude Children's Hospital. I'll let you know how these new Trivia Nights did at my Grange in my next article! Our community is very excited about this new opportunity to break the winter doldrums!

The 2026 Directory is at the printer, and will be ready for distribution soon. The next project is compiling everything for the 2025 Journal of Proceedings. If you still owe me your report for the Journal, please send it to me electronically ASAP!

There are only three milestone anniversaries in 2026 with three Granges celebrating their 125th Anniversary. Each was organized in 1901:

Brushton Grange #901 (Franklin County)
Mount Hope Grange #902 – Dutchess County
Little Britain Grange #913 (Orange County)

When your Grange organizes a celebration for these wonderous occasions, please let us at State Grange know! We can order an Anniversary Plaque for your Grange Hall or meeting place, and we can arrange to have a State Officer attend to express the congratulations of the State Grange. The community should be invited to attend as well – this is a perfect occasion to talk Grange membership with potentially new members that would help keep your Grange alive and well for another 125!

I wish a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2026 for all our Empire State Granges and Grangers! Congratulations to the following Granges for welcoming new members:

Copake Grange #935 (Columbia County) – 10 new members
Walton Grange #1454 (Delaware County) – 4 new members
Putnam Valley Grange #841 (Putnam County) – 12 new members

GRANGEYOUTH

Chaplain's Corner

Kelly Frost

The Grange offers the potential for wonderful friendships. I remember the part in the Junior Grange Degree where the Master says, "In joining the Grange, you have acted wisely. With us, you will ever find friends." The Grange opens the Bible on the altar to the book of Ruth, which tells the history of remarkable friendship and loyalty between Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. This lesson of devotion and fidelity is also featured in the community Grange's 4th Degree, and uses the beautiful agate stone on the Master's station as a symbol of friendship: "May our friendship be as firm as the stone itself."

I am blessed to experience the gift of Grange friends who brighten my day with a text or call, help with home improvement or community service projects, and travel quite a distance to be present after the loss of a loved one. I hope to learn from their example and grow into just that kind of friend.

Did you know there is a brief Memorial Service in the Grange Manual that serves as a way to honor and remember a faithful Grange member? It requires two people to read the Chaplain and Master

The Empire State Granger, Published 6 times annually by **The New York State Grange,** 100 Grange Place, Cortland, NY 13045
Phone (607)-756-7553 FAX (607)-756-7757, E-MAIL NYSGRANGE@NYSGRANGE.ORG
Third class postage paid at Cortland,(#57). Subscription Rate a portion of member dues is paid as a subscription to the Empire State Granger.
Editor Bruce M. Croucher
Executive Committee: Daniel Woolley, Chair, Sandra Green, President, Ryan Orton, Grange Secretary, Melvin Phelps, Vice President, Bruce Croucher, Executive Committee Secretary, Barbara Lavier, Elaine Smith.
Postmaster: Forward address changes to 100 Grange Place, Cortland, NY 14532

Community Involvement

Melvin Phelps and Joan Phelps

Happy New Year! And a Happy One I am hoping it will be for everyone.

With every new year, there are always new expectations for that year. Some people may wish to alter their diets so as to lose weight and to become healthier. Others may wish to take on a new hobby or to learn something "new" such as wood working, crafting, photography, etc. Whatever "new" project you may be thinking about – why not invite some friends, fellow Grangers and/or neighbors to join with you. This just might be fun and everyone will be learning something new at the same time. You don't have to meet in your Grange Hall. You could meet in someone's home. Whatever works for the group of people involved is fine. This also doesn't have to be a year-long project. It may last a month or two.

For instance – would you like to learn how to quilt? Find a person who quilts and is willing to instruct a group of people in this skill. Set a date and time and place to meet for the teaching of this program. Gather some scrap material for people to work on and have plenty of detailed handouts for those in attendance. When this is all said and done, you may have just created a quilting group. I am aware of a group of women who meet at a Church and quilt lap quilts that are then given to people who are ill and need to be remembered in prayer. This quilt group began much in the same way as described above. People were always welcome to come and learn to quilt. Some people stayed and joined the group and some people learned the skill and continue to quilt from their home. (This is just one thought of a Community Service program.)

Have you checked the New York State Grange web site for the Community Service Department information for the year 2026? If you have not, please do so as there are two new programs listed and we hope that Granges will participate in them. Also, the information needed in order to file your report and/or notebook is listed in this section. It would be wise to keep track of your community service information as you proceed through the Grange year so as to make it easier to compile your report and/or notebook for the end of the year. You will be surprised when you have finished your report and/or notebook and review all of the community service events your members have participated in.

Best Wishes for all of your endeavors in serving your community this Grange year.

Leadership Membership

Thomas Lawton

Growing Together: Why 10% and Even 20% Membership Growth Matters

Every Grange in New York has its own story, its own rhythms, its own strengths, its own challenges. But across our entire state, one truth stands out: when a Community Grange grows, the whole Grange grows. This year, we have set an ambitious but achievable target for every Grange: strive for at least 10% growth, and stretch toward 20% wherever possible. These numbers aren't just goals on a spreadsheet. They represent people new hands, new ideas, new energy, and new possibilities.

Why 10% Growth Matters

A 10% increase in membership strengthens the foundation of every Grange:

- More workers for community projects. A small boost in membership dramatically changes what a Grange can accomplish.
- Healthier finances. Even a few new dues-paying members help support programs, upkeep, and long-term planning.
- Future leadership. New members mean new talents, future officers, and long-term stability.

Ten percent is the threshold that keeps a Grange vibrant instead of stagnant. It's the point where momentum begins to build.

Why Aim for 20%?

While 10% is the state goal, many Granges can, and should, challenge themselves to reach for 20% growth

A 20% increase is transformational:

- It brings in enough new faces to diversify ideas, age groups, and interests.
- It sparks excitement and community attention, people talk when something is genuinely growing.
- It positions the Grange as a visible, active, future-focused presence in its town.

Some Granges will reach this level by reorganizing programs. Others will do it by deepening community partnerships, hosting creative events, or simply inviting people personally. But the impact is the same: it changes the culture of the local Grange in powerful, positive ways.

What Works: A Few Practical Steps

Every Grange can take simple actions that make growth more likely:

- Invite personally. Most people join because someone cared enough to ask.
- Share your story. Let your town know what you do service projects, scholarships, events, food drives, and fellowship.
- Strengthen your welcome. New members stay when they feel needed and known. Give them a role early.
- Celebrate progress. Whether it's one new member or five, it's a step forward.

Small, consistent efforts across many Granges create statewide momentum.

Recognition for Growing Granges

To honor and encourage this work, the Leadership & Membership Department will recognize every Community Grange that reaches:

- 10% Membership Growth
- 20% Membership Growth (our "stretch goal," offering special recognition)

These awards are not just certificates, they are public signs that your Grange is alive, engaged, and moving forward.

The Bottom Line

Growth isn't about numbers. It's about future strength, renewed purpose, and the relationships we build along the way.

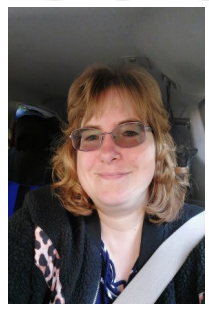
This year, let's challenge ourselves:

- 10% is within reach for every Grange.
- 20% is possible for many.

Both make a difference.

Let's grow together, for our communities, for our future, and for the Grange we love

Youth



Co– Directors

Sarah & Raymond Barber

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National Grange News CORNER

Policy Updates and Issue News November 2025

Washington Overview

The government shutdown ended on November 12, with a continuing resolution to fund the government through January 21, 2026. The Senate voted 60-40 in favor of the stopgap funding bill, with eight Democrats voting in favor and one Republican opposing the measure. The House then voted 222-209 to pass the legislation, with six Democrats voting yes and two Republicans voting no. This was the eleventh government shutdown and the longest in U.S. history. The measure contained appropriations bills to fund USDA, FDA, Veterans Affairs, military construction, and the legislative branch for the full fiscal year, which ends September 30, 2026. For all other government entities, a new funding vehicle must be adopted by January 21, 2026. The House-Senate compromise bill provides back pay for government employees, reinstates furloughed employees, and prohibits further reductions in force until January 21. SNAP recipients will receive full benefits for October and November. In a major shift of jurisdiction, USDA was instructed to work with the State Department to prepare a process to transfer the Food for Peace foreign food aid program from State to USDA. The remaining sections of the farm bill, which were not included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (signed July 4, 2025), were extended for one year and retained the longstanding prohibition of the closure of Farm Service field offices. A side agreement to the legislation promises Congress will address health care issues in December, including enhanced premium tax credits and Medicare cuts.

Agriculture and Food

Farm economy compared to 1980s crisis

Crop growers are facing a third straight year of financial struggles. Producers who lived through the generation-defining farm crisis four decades ago point to market price slumps, soaring input costs, and global trade disruptions as indicators that the ag economy could tip into the worst shape in 45 years. Ninety-one percent (91%) of agricultural economists recently surveyed by the Farm Journal believe the crop sector is in a recession. This is up from 53% in July. In addition, farm sector debt has risen alarmingly in 2024 and 2025. Congress continues to discuss various forms of relief payments to crop producers, with possible action in December.

Fertilizer Supply Concerns

The United States does not have enough fertilizer production capacity to meet producer demand and relies heavily upon volatile global supply chains. Recent tariffs have exacerbated the situation that led to surprise price hikes and scarcity shocks. There is growing concern that fertilizer supplies will be insufficient to grow the country's 2026 crops. As a result, the administration added potash and phosphate to its critical minerals list, which are defined as commodities essential to the economic or national security interests of the U.S. As critical minerals, potash and phosphate are now eligible for tariff carveouts.

China controls critical livestock supplements

China is deepening its stranglehold on key amino acids and vitamins used in livestock feeds. According to an American Feed Industry Association report, China accounts for 80% of five key supplements, and another five supplements rely on China for more than 50% of imports. These supplement ingredients, relied upon heavily by the broiler and pork industries, include lysine, vitamins A, B1, B2, B12, D3, and E, and threonine, methionine, and tryptophan. Efforts are underway in Congress to strengthen U.S. resiliency with the bipartisan, bicameral Securing American Ag Act that directs USDA to analyze America/s dependency on China across a wide array of ag inputs.

Antitrust investigation of major meat processors

President Trump, who frustrated cattle producers with his push to lower beef prices, is directing the Justice Department to investigate major meatpackers for possible price-fixing and manipulation. The President is reportedly frustrated that futures prices for cattle have declined significantly, while boxed beef prices have risen. Four companies, Tyson Foods, JBS, Cargill, and National Beef, dominate beef processing.

Conservation

Waters of the United States rule under review

The Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers will take another stab at establishing a "durable, common-sense definition of waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin says the previous rule failed to properly implement the Supreme Court decision in the Sackett Case, which more clearly defined adjacent wetlands, continuous surface connection, and tributary.

Health Care

Health insurance tax credits expire December 31

Many rural and small-town residents get assistance with their health insurance premiums through a program known as enhanced premium tax credits. Created by the Affordable Care Act a decade ago, tax credits were designed to help individuals and families lower their cost of health insurance purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace. During the COVID pandemic, Congress temporarily expanded eligibility for these credits to make coverage more affordable for middle-income and rural households. These temporary enhanced premium tax credits are set to expire on December 31, 2025, unless they are extended by Congress. Subsidized enrollment more than doubled between 2020 and 2025, primarily due to the enhanced premium tax credits. If enhanced credits are allowed to expire, insurance premiums could double, rural hospitals will lose even more money by treating more nonpaying patients, and families will have to make difficult choices between health care and other basic needs. The National Grange is encouraging Congress to extend the enhanced credits or

Junior Grange

Congratulations to Raegan Hartsell for being selected for the 2025-2026 National Junior Grange Ambassador. Raegan is from North Carolina. She will do a wonderful job of representing the National Grange this next year.

One of the ways Junior Grange prepares our members to become leaders is that we encourage quality, not necessarily quantity. What does this mean? It means that more meetings does not make a better Junior Grange. At each of your meetings, you should plan a quality meeting by creating an agenda of what you hope to accomplish. This will help the meeting to run smoothly and keep the focus on your goals. Maybe at one meeting, you focus more on ritual and learning about the Grange; then at the next meeting have more of a social time by working on crafts and doing team building activities. This way, the Junior Grange members will look forward to attending the meetings because each time will be a different experience.

Why should we work on team building activities with our Junior Grangers? Team building activities help our members learn to work together, listen carefully, communicate clearly, and think creatively. They will get to know one another, build trust within their Junior Grange, and learn valuable life skills that will last their entire Grange life. Some of these skills include: problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and cooperation, boost confidence and promote leadership skills, promote social inclusion and create friendships, and teach resolution skills. Problem-solving and critical thinking happens when children work together to solve challenges or puzzles as they must think creatively, plan strategically, and persevere when they get stuck. By working on a team to accomplish a goal, children learn to respect others' ideas and perspectives and learn to compromise. Team building activities also allow children to interact with new people, build empathy for other people and help them to feel included in the group. As the Junior Leader, you have the opportunity to model and guide your Junior Grange members through the process to learn how to solve any conflict within an activity. Here is a team building activity that you can try at a future Junior Grange meeting:

Objective: Students work cooperatively in small groups to sort items into categories.

· Materials: A tray with 20 unrelated items, or an image of 20 unrelated items

· Participants: Groups of 3 or 4

How to play:

1. For this activity, prepare a tray with 20 unrelated items, e.g., a book, an eraser, a juice box, etc. Alternatively, create a document with 20 images of things to project on a screen.
2. Divide students into groups and set a timer.
3. Have each group divide the items into four categories that make sense to them. For example, things you wear, things you use with your hands, etc.
4. Have groups work quietly so that their ideas are kept secret.
5. When each group is finished, give each one time to present their categories and the rationale behind their thinking.

After you have done this activity within your Junior Grange, I would love to hear how it went. Which of the above skills do you feel your Junior Grange members acquired the most from this activity? What could be done differently to learn a different skill? Everything that we do to help our young people to become leaders will benefit them in Grange and in life.

Have a great holiday season and stay safe this winter!

Kids Days Out

Kids' Day Out 2026 Wish List

2-liter soda bottles (Canadian Dry Ginger Ale works best) Stickers Plastic Tablecloths rice/beans 8x8 aluminum pans Old CDs/DVDs Marbles Soda bottle caps

If you or your Grange is able to donate any of these items, please contact Co-Directors Sherri Horner at kidsbreak1@yahoo.com or call/text (315) 380-2294 or Ryan Orton at secretary@nysgrange.org or call (845) 868-7869 to arrange pick up or drop off time and location

(Continued from page 2)Chaplain

parts. Other members carry a flower and stand in support, as words of comfort and Hope are read from 1st Thessalonians 4:13 "We weep at the loss… yet not as those who have no Hope." And Psalms 23: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul…", and Revelation 21:4 **"**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

When your Grange experiences the death of a member, you can share with the family that the Grange has a Memorial Service. It's not too long, perhaps 5 to 10 minutes. If the family would like, this special tribute can take place during calling hours, funeral, graveside, or celebration of life service. My community Grange has presented the Memorial Service twice this year. It has been a comfort and encouragement during a sad time, and shown our community the care of the Grange. If you need more information or help with the Grange Memorial service, to pay honor and respect when your fraternal circle has been broken, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sports

Co-Directors
Bruce Dehner & Matt Horton

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the sports events this year. We had great turnouts. Here is the schedule for next year. Dart ball will be held on April 26, 2026 at state headquarters, bowling will be June 7, 2026 at Cort lanes in Cortland, golf will be July 12, 2026 at Vassar golf course in Poughkeepsie, NY, and corn hole will be August 1,2026 at state headquarters. I would like everyone to start thinking about getting your team organized as the early bird catches the worm. I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays and look forward to seeing you all next year. Fraternally Bruce Dehner Matt Horton

Calendar Of Events

NEW YORK STATE GRANGE
2025-2026
Calendar of Events, Activities, & Dues Dates

January 19, 2026	SG Executive Committee .
March 23, 2026	SG Executive Committee
April 17-18, 2026	NE Lecturer Conference
April 24, 2026	SG Executive Committee
April 25, 2026	FAC/Lectures Conference
June 19, 2026	SG Executive Committee Lux Hotel
July 7, 2026	SG Executive Committee
September 25, 2026	SG Executive Committee
September 26, 2026	Legislative Day
October 16-20, 2026	State Grange
October 20, 2026	SG Executive Committee

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(Continued from page 1) National Grange Cruise

nized as the newest "One in a Thousand cub members.

One of the amusing things that cruise members enjoy is the relationship of the cabin stewards. They are very attentive to the wishes of those in their area. They make sure that your cabin in well taken care of during your stay. They also make sure that you can find your way around the ship as you try to find your cabin. Remembering which direction to go is sometimes confusing. They also make little "towel" animals each day. It is fun to try to identify what the represent.

For the most part the weather was good with a bit of rain but not mush of a bother. I only know of one who had any seasickness.

The cruise went very smoothly until our last day. On our way back to way back to Miami one of the engines stopped running and we could only travel at about one half the normal speed. This meant were later by almost 10 hours. As a result many missed their scheduled flight back to their homes and had to reschedule. They also had to find lodging in Miami or nearby for the night.

Fortunately Elain and Ken Smith, Sandy Green and myself were able to travel to Sarasota and spend the night with Joan Smith. The 3-1/2 hour drive with all of our luggage was a bit difficult, but as good Grangers were persevered.

It was an interesting experience, time will tell if this becomes an alterative to using a hotel.

New Grange Members

Albany Co
Bethlehem #137
Alison Dooley
Thomas Dooley
Chautauqua Co.
Fredonia #1
Sue Penhollow
Columbia Co.
Copake #935
Kerry Greene
Rosa Lazcano
East Chatham #1066
Mackenzie Calhoun
Amber Hammond
Cathy Jeanty
Nixon Jeanty
Nixie Jeanty
Nyrie Jeanty
Jennifer VanBrunt
Jacob Warton
Susanne Williams
Cortland Co.
Cuyler #449
Braedon Callahan
Willow Sampson
Dutchess Co.
Stanford #808
Matthew Benack
Kara Cronin
Gertrude Desmond
Tyler Knapp
Pleasant Valley #838
Brett Greenberg
Yorktown #862
Alex Mandara
Anna Mandara
Gianna Mandara
Freedom Plains #857
Jerelyn Smith
William Fitch
Rhinebeck #896
Margaret Rosenzweig
Clinton/Essex
Ausable Valley # 973
Adam Krawiec
Genesee Co.
East Pembroke #1157
Kassie Crane
Jody Hanel
Jefferson Co.
Kirkland #684
Haily Fleming
Martin Schrodt
Lewis Co.
Adirondack #530
Linda Waild
Monroe Co.
Webster# 436
Robert Bilings
Donald Stothard
Otsego Co.
Pierstown #793
Kathy Edwards
Mona Harris
Mary Livermore
Diane Richardson
Richard Richardson
Hinman Hollow #1331
Deborah Taylor
Oswego Co.
Ricard #993
Eva Dobbs
Saratoga Co.
Milton #685
Debra Butner
Gregg Chandler
Chris Gonzales
Meg Woolbight
Corinth # 823
Barb Arnold
Doug Arnold
Joe Mihacek
Shelly Mihacek
Linda Rohne
Ulster Co.
Plattekill #923
Deborah Hanlon
Wayne Co.
Eureka # 46
Allan Cook
Brenda Cook
Lincoln # 122
Martha Cleary
Tom Cleary
Wyoming Co.
Curriers # 1273
Crystal Killenbeck
Tracey Zozewicz

enact an equitable alternative. See the enhanced premium tax credits factsheet in this newsletter.

Rural doctors battle misinformation

Many rural doctors report that political attacks on science and medicine are affecting their relationships with patients. Increasingly, they say misinformation and conspiracy theories about health fill a vacuum created by a lack of doctors in rural areas. This conundrum makes it even more difficult to recruit doctors for rural practices. Recent dramatic changes to immigration policies have made the recruitment of overseas talent tougher and too expensive.

Grange fights to lower prescription drug prices

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) are business entities that operate between the drug manufacturer and patient and play a powerful role in determining which medications are accessible and affordable. Three PBMs process nearly 80% of prescription drug claims, which gives them tremendous power over drug pricing that drives up drug costs, limits patient choice, and makes it difficult for employers to negotiate contract terms for medications. The National Grange joined 127 medical, pharmacy, consumer, and patient groups on an open letter to Congress to request PBM transparency and operational reforms, including:

Full transparency of PBM practices, including business arrangements, financial incentives, and formulary design.

Ban spread pricing, which allows PBMs to profit from the difference between what they charge for insurers and reimburse to pharmacies.

100% pass-through of rebates, discounts, fees, and other payments from drug manufacturers to plan sponsors and patients.

De-link PBM compensation from drug prices.

Telecommunications

Reduce barriers to space innovation

The National Grange and the Connect Everyone Coalition are supporting modernizing outdated space policies to reduce unnecessary hurdles in the space sector, including for Low Earth Satellites (LEOs) supporting broadband deployment to remote areas. In a letter to the nine responsible federal agencies, the Coalition pointed out that outdated regulatory burdens should be transformed into a swift, predictable approval process for routine launches to enhance American competitiveness, innovation, and leadership. The letter called for the agencies to:

Establish a unified routine launch approval process through interagency coordination.

Eliminate multiple redundant agency environmental reviews that analyze the same data.

Codify shared standards so the same rocket conducting the same mission from the same pad will not require separate safety reviews by multiple agencies.

Trade

Lowly soybean drives China trade deal

China is normally the largest buyer of U.S. soybeans. But in response to tariffs and trade wars with America, China had not made any soybean purchases through October, causing soybean market prices to fall drastically. President Trump met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in late October and emerged with an agreement for China to resume purchases of U.S. soybeans in similar volumes to recent years as a central component of a new U.S.-China trade deal. While on his three-leg Asian tour, the President also announced a flurry of trade agreements with Japan, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

Cattlemen take issue with Argentinian beef

In late October, the President announced his intention to raise Argentina's beef tariff-rate quota to 80,000 metric tons from 20,000 metric tons to lower U.S. beef prices. The announcement caused the futures market for beef to plummet. Domestic cattle herd numbers are low, and feeder cattle normally imported from Mexico are at a standstill due to screwworm outbreaks. Strong consumer demand for beef and low beef supplies have exacerbated high beef prices. Farm and ranch state lawmakers and cattlemen argue that beef producers should be allowed to make a profit in this time of high input costs and drought conditions in cattle country, adding that high prices will incentivize herd expansion, more beef, and lower beef prices. The good news is that Argentine imports will be lower-quality meat destined for products like hamburgers.

Of Interest

Every day expenses Americans want Congress to prioritize

High inflation rates and soaring consumer prices are high priorities for cash-strapped voters. Here are their priorities for Congress to address:

Health care-31%

Food-22%

Housing-22%

Electricity-5%

Gas-4%

Perspectives

"What we're really talking about is a wonderful day … when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?" ~ **Erma Bombeck**

"I find that it's the simple things that remind you of family around the holidays". ~ **Amy Adams**

"The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us". ~ **Anonymous**

(Continued from page 1) President

Some notes from National Session:
The proposed dues increase for National Grange was passed. Secretaries will note the changes on the quarterly reports.
The discussion about referring to Caroline Hall as the 8th founder included the fact that this designation had been considered while she was still alive. She stated then that she did not wish to be considered the 8th founder.
It was decided to no longer use the term "Subordinate Grange". Many folks refer to their "local" Grange, or "Community Grange". Those terms will now be the "official terms".
There are some videos available to view on the Grange YouTube site. (Not the 7th degree)

Grange Doings

Butternut Valley

Butternut Valley Grange members were recognized at the recent meeting held on Monday, December 8 at the Grange Hall. 25-year awards were presented to Front row Sue Winter and Stacy Barnes. Back row, Roger Halbert (presented awards} Diane Perry 65 years, Keith and Penny Klingman 40 years with Master Lynne Porter (assisted in presentation).

Photo by Anne Sebeck.

Kirkland Junior Grange

Kirkland Junior Grange #116 of Jefferson County, has had an exciting fall season! After most of our group graduated from Junior Grange last year, we were drastic need of new members! Our local school welcomes youth organizations to have a display table at their "Back to School Open House." We were excited

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to gain some new members after the event! We have been using a new format this year, meeting one Friday night each month from 6 to 8 pm. There are 4 main parts, roughly 30 minutes each: 1) supper, 2) JG info/flag, 3) hands-on project or service, and 4) games. At our most recent meeting, we had

tacos for supper, and tried the Alternate Junior Grange Opening for the first time. The kids loved doing the Opening and asked to do the Closing as well! We have been using a custom Junior Grange Pledge, with complementary sign language: "In Junior Grange we will GROW, LEARN, LEAD, and SERVE." We had deaf awareness activities, and worked making hand-made Christmas cards. 100 cards were completed that night amid smiles and laughter. Throughout the next week, our goal was fulfilled of making 350 cards, one for each resident of the Watertown nursing home!!! There has been a wonderfully supportive team of adults helping at our JG meetings (both Grange members and potential members) which has made a huge difference. Everyone is having fun! We will continue work-

Copake Grange

Copake Grange RLI project 2025

In July 2025, Copake Grange #935 applied for and received a Rural Life Initiative grant from the National Grange. The grant served to fund a mental health and wellness initiative, something we had been discussing for the previous year. The grant was a welcome catalyst to put our program into action.

Our project, titled "Mental Health Matters: Building a Community of Support," took place on Thursday, September 18, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Copake Grange. It was open to the general public, a complimentary buffet-style meal was served, and take-away materials with wellness resources as well as Grange membership information was handed out to all attendees.

We were pleased to have two of our Grange members as presenters: Veronica Brodsky, Psy.D, founder and clinical director of Interactive Discovery Consulting & Psychological Services, P.C. Ms. Brodsky was the lead creator of the outline and content for the evening and led the first presentation. Monique Rinere, PhD, LP. was instrumental in creating the content for the evening and for publicity messaging. They opened up the conversation about mental health with personal stories, talked about ways that mental health manifests, and ways to boost mental health and overall wellness. They solicited ideas and coping strategies from the audience as well. We also partnered with our local hospital organization, Columbia Memorial Health. Presentations were made by a CMH behavioral health specialist and a CMH psychologist. Facilitators from NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness were also on hand to share the work they do for NAMI.

The evening was a time to build a community of support, to gather community members to talk about the pressing issue of mental health in a safe environment, to create a forum for learning more about what our community needs most, and to create a sense of belonging. We attracted a diverse audience in terms of full-time and part-time residents, as well as age range. Over a delicious dinner of borscht, pierogis and honey cake, created by Grange member and chef Oleg Shcherbakov, people expressed deep thanks and enthusiasm for the opportunity to meet, and hear and share their thought and stories.

Participants filled out a survey indicating what topics they were most interested in – e.g. depression, anxiety, stress management, emotional wellness, sleep, nutrition, etc. This information is being used to plan a series of Wellness Wednesdays, which will continue throughout the year. Our first Wellness Wednesday event will take place November 19. Our goal is help people become empowered to develop their skills and strengths, increase their knowledge and awareness, practice better self-care and improve their relationships with loved ones, as well as the entire community. We are grateful to the National Grange for providing us with this opportunity.