

Green Mountain Granger

FEBRUARY 2026



MASTER'S MESSAGE

A good February to you all!

The Vermont State Grange hosted the Northeast Leaders' Conference January 9th through the 11th. First impressions are that it was a most successful undertaking by us.

Approximately 74 Grangers and presenters attended, and all seemed to enjoy themselves. I missed an opportunity at the conference to publicly thank the people who made our endeavor a success. Sisters Brenda Rousselle, Janice Rousselle, Alice Daley, Linda Sanderson offered their help, and Deborah Ploof made sure we had the needed supplies. These sisters did more than help. If ever there was an example of "whatever we do, strive to do well", they are the epitome. By comparison, my contributions were meager. I managed to secure Anson Tibbets as a speaker and agreed with the plans and preparations this team made. Thank you, Sisters!

As I write this, the Northeast Leaders Conference exit surveys are being reviewed and results compiled. As I said above, I believe the event was very successful. We had two National speakers, John Benedik, our National Overseer, and Leroy Watson. Both spoke about Project Sustenance and programs designed to educate and grow membership. Local speakers included Anson Tibbetts of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, Wanda Emerich of the William H. Miner Agriculture Research Institute and Amy Bedard. Also amongst our group was Alexandria (Jomni) Tarbell, National Young Ambassador, hailing from New York. She could be seen busily interviewing participants and spoke very well at our Saturday evening gathering.

The Northeast Connection met Friday night. Officers were elected. Money was set aside for the Youth Conference to be held in New Hampshire. National Overseer John Benedik spoke on Project Sustenance bringing in 400 new members; Tuesday night Zooms to educate and improve performance; Grange Action programs. He did mention working to get accurate mailing lists, something I think Vermont has been doing very well with Sister Brenda updating our GMG mailing lists. Also mentioned is a new pilot program, Charter Granges. Newly forming Granges may organize with 8 members, have a quorum of 5, and meet anywhere, and be less formal. This is a two-year program.

The Big E group met Saturday. Officers elected. Building manager listed items that need addressing: electrical updates (wiring), lighting, replacing ceiling tiles, hot water heater and associated plumbing, new security cameras installed. Some State Granges, including Vermont are asked to bring in a loop for the TV highlighting our Granges. Our state directors lead committee discussions which were most productive. The State Chaplains have exciting news and I'll not steal Jenny Nelson's thunder, nor will I steal Alice's Lecturers announcement.

Two highlights of the weekend were a workshop: Working with Committees, and State Masters' panel. Sister Brenda devised an exercise where a variety of people were assigned a table, a behavior, and an assigned task. She cleverly assigned behavioral traits to those whose traits were diametrically opposed and set us to work. If you have witnessed me in committee

meetings, you know I don't say much. I got the "doesn't stop talking" card. I failed. Others did better. It was a lot of fun and enlightening. The Masters Panel had all the State Masters (Presidents) at a table and Mark Belisle MCing. Some energetic dialogue resulted from our responses, and some wished for more time to ask their own questions.

As of this writing I have tentatively set a date of February 28th for an officers' meeting, and March 14th as a Directors' meeting, meeting place to be determined.

Kendal Holden, Master VSG

BIDS NEEDED FOR FIFTH & SIXTH DEGREE AND AWARDS BANQUET

The VSG Executive Committee in an effort to reduce expenses and reduce time spent at the annual state session has voted to have the sixth degree and awards banquet in a Grange building in Vermont prior to the session (even years). This year the plan is to host both the Fifth and Sixth Degree. The following are the requirements for submitting a bid:

- 1) A Grange Hall that can accommodate (large enough) the Fifth and Sixth Degree.
- 2) The Hall needs to have a stage with stairs up to the stage in the front. They need to be safe. The stage needs to have a curtain and a way to open/close it.
- 3) **It must be possible to darken the Hall, i.e. dark curtains over all windows as both degrees start in the dark!**
- 4) Is there a tuned piano? If not is there power for musician's keyboard?
- 5) The Hall needs to be available several hours before the start time, either same day or the day before, to give Flora time to set up her stage.
- 6) We want a dinner--or depending on the timing--a lunch that is served. The hosting Grange entity will keep the money for the meal. Reservation will be encouraged,

- 7) The preferred date is a Saturday or Sunday between August 15th and September 13th.
- 8) Bids should include:
 - a) Date and time
 - b) Full Menu and Price
 - c) Piano and/or power available
 - d) Bids should be sent to Kendal Holden via email or USPS.
- 9) Bids are being accepted until April 15th, 2026 so plans can be made and members notified.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met on January 19 via ZOOM. Mark Belisle and Joe Goodrich, members of the Grange Center Board reported on actions taken at the last Center Board meeting. A new brochure is being produced. The contracts for the Center were gone over with motions made and approved to adjust the pricing at the Grange Center for Grange and non-Grange events.

The Internal and External Policy Books have been duplicated and are being sent out to each Subordinate and Pomona Grange. Debbie Ploof reported that she is continuing to research setting up Google Storage for VSG documents.

Discussion was held on dates for the 5th and 6th Degrees. A notice is going out for Granges to submit proposals to host the event. There is an April 15 deadline for submitting proposals.

Research is being done on linking information on the Grange Center to other camping WEB pages. Work is also being done on getting pictures of past State Masters for a new poster.

Kendal reported on the recent Northeast Grange Leaders Conference held in Colchester the weekend of January 9-11. Kendal is also working on scheduling an Officers Meeting and a Directors Meeting.

As usual, a complete copy of the minutes of this meeting will be printed in the Journal.

Submitted by Brenda Rousselle,
Secretary

LECTURERS NEWS

I recently attended the Leaders Conference meeting with the Northeast Lecturers. We are planning our Lecturers Conference in April. I hope that you all come. It is always a fun weekend, you meet other Grangers and it's a weekend away.

Have you been working on your contest entries? I just heard of a Lecturer who take the supplies to her Grange meeting, and they work on their "barn quilts" as the program. Or you could work on another of the contests. Maybe write a story! Enjoy the rest of your winter and stay warm.

Alice Daley, VSG Lecturer

CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE

Once a year, the NE Collaborative gathers for a Leadership Conference. This year it was in Colchester, VT. and our VT State Grange Officers were asked to chair committees and report on discussions. I was pleased to see some of the other Chaplains who I met last year in Danvers, MA. Vermont had hosted our "Go to Church Worship Service" found to be successful at our Grange Center in Brookfield back in 2024.

A date has been set for July 25th this year in Stockbridge, MA. I want to encourage everyone and especially Chaplains in our local Granges to spread the word and plan to go. You will note that this is a Saturday after many of the 250th celebrations of our country have already been held. But, in keeping with our country's birthday and its history, we are offering you an opportunity to tour the Norman Rockwell Museum between 1 and 3:30pm. This artist captured so much of the history in his paintings and there is the wonderful collection of the "Four Freedoms" to observe, along with traditional life and customs starting in wartime. The worship service will

be held at 4pm followed by a dinner served by the local Stockbridge Grangers at 5pm.

My service included a presentation of stories that developed into hymns. Focusing first on the "Star-Spangled Banner" written by Katherine Lee Bates in 1893, I shared that she was a professor at Wellesley College and traveled out to the World's Fair and visited Chicago, finally traveling to Pike's Peak in Colorado, 14,000 feet high via prairie wagon and mules. As she looked out, the words came to her. Paid \$5 for the poem, it was then put to music by Samuel Ward. "Out of their genius came a hymn that has moved the hearts of millions in love of America-

Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountains majesty
Above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed His
grace on thee,

And crown thy good with
brotherhood

From sea to shining sea."

The quote is found in **Stories of the Hymns** by Rawson & Tonioli.

As this year begins, we need to pray for our concerns with our country, whether it be homelessness, health care, the drug war, our Congress who can't find consensus, the policies of immigration, law enforcement and our judicial system, as well as affordability and health care costs. Read carefully, listen intently, and pray for understanding, as our country seeks a righteous place in the world- leading, caring, and seeking freedoms in liberty and life for all. May God Bless us All.
Jennifer Nelson, VSG Chaplain

AGRICULTURE

Northeast Grange Leaders Conf.
January 9-11, 2026

I attended the conference held at the Hampton Inn in Colchester, VT as Agriculture/Environment and Family Activities Director. Neither of these committees were attended very well from the other 6 states. I gave out the VT Family Activity program to a

few States and they gave me their program.

I did learn that one State Ag committee plans an Ag Day in April that bring vendors & workshops to the public. Last year they had 800 attend this event, this event runs from 10-3 at an Ag college. This committee mainly gives grants to other organizations, mainly trying to get membership.

Anson Tebbitts (Sec. of VT Ag) was the guest speaker at the luncheon. He said that Vermont could use 10 more milking goat farms in the state. With these 10 farms having 400-500 goats each, processors would not have to buy goat milk from Canada and Nova Scotia. A lot of our goat farms are making soap and salves on their own. Sec. Tebbitts also said that the drought & flooding from the last 2 out of 3 years has cost \$15 million to the agriculture industry. Vermont did just receive some money from National to help the farmers. It's getting harder for the smaller dairy farms (under 100 head) to make enough money to continue to farm. The average age of our farmers is 55 years, and they can sell their land for more money than they are making farming.

Dairy Goats:

- 1) Their milk has a higher market price and maintenance costs are lower.
- 2) May generate financial return quicker than cows.
- 3) They are ready to milk at 12-15 months, whereas cows are 23-24 months
- 4) Goats small size makes it easier and safer as livestock
- 5) There are two categories for goat milk producers
 - a) Producers who primarily ship fluid milk
 - b) Producers who process their milk into value-added products on-site (cheese, soap, salve etc.) and are known as farmstead creameries.
- 6) Vermont Creamery is the largest buyer of goat milk in the State. They pay a base price and a premium on the milk's protein content. Goats usually give birth

to at least 2 kids, which is rare in cows. They require fewer resources than cows, goats eat less and take up less land.

For upcoming events go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar> to find the date for the Vermont Maple Festival (April 24-26) in St Albans and the Vermont Dairy Festival (usually in early June) in Enosburg. I am sure there are many more events that take place in Vermont. I have not heard if there will be a "Breakfast on the Farm" this year.

If you're looking for something to do in Vermont go to <https://plan.vermontvacation.com/events> there are many things happening.

Also online, key in Vermont Festivals and Events for 2026 Seven Days is a good paper to look in also.

I will not be sending out a monthly letter as the Green Mountain Grangers is coming out that month. Working with 2 State committees is getting a little too much for me. Linda Snderson, VSG AG/Environment Director

COMMUNITY SERVICE

As I am writing this in sunny Florida, I know you all are getting VERY cold weather and a big snowstorm. Remember throughout the year to check on your neighbors to be sure they are all right especially the elderly and those that live alone. You could save their life with just a phone call or knock on their door to check on them.

As I pull together this GMG issue, I am amazed at all the projects going on at the different Granges and hope that you will consider completing the paperwork and submitting it in the Community Service section of your Program notebook due in July at Family Camp. The forms are quite easy to complete, and you can get them from your Master or online at our website under downloads.

<http://www.vtstategrange.org/program-and-legislative-policy-book.html>

I need 25% of Community Granges to submit reports to apply for the

National Grange award money. Marble Valley and Blue Spruce both received \$125 checks for their notebooks at state session 2025. Could your Grange use that money to fund Community Service projects? Even though I am in Florida I have been working on eye masks, which is a new project my Grange voted to do after being contacted by UVMCM-PMC that they had a need for them and ones we created would be so much more creative and colorful than ones they could buy! Making that connection to a hospital, daycare, library, homeless shelter or other charitable organization can blossom into many community service projects and good exposure about the Grange. When you gift items, remember to tag them with your Grange name.

Keep Warm!

Deborah Ploof, VSG Community Service Director

FALL FESTIVAL

The Fall Festival is more than just a celebration, it's a chance to connect with other Grangers, family, friends, and revel in the beauty of the season. Whether you're coming for the food, the fun, or simply to enjoy the crisp autumn air, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Mark your calendar and join us for a weekend of community spirit and festive cheer on September 11th through the 13th at the Vermont Grange Center!

As we plan our upcoming Fall Festival, we would love your input! Do you have any fun or creative activity ideas that you think would be a hit? Please complete the survey below and send it to: Beth Morse; Email: morbe8@live.com; Address: 92 Happy Valley Rd, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Thank you for helping make our festival a success!

1. What activities would you most like to see at the Fall Festival? (*Check all that apply or add your own ideas!*)

- Games (please specify types)
- Crafts (please specify types)
- Food booths or tastings

- Live music or performances
- Contests (baking, cooking, art, etc.)
- Presentations or workshops
- Other (please describe):

2. Are there any new or creative activities you'd like us to try this year?

(Share your suggestions!)

3. What did you enjoy most about previous Fall Festivals?

4. What could we improve to make the festival more fun or welcoming?

5. Would you be interested in volunteering or helping organize an activity?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (please specify):

6. Any other comments or ideas?

Thank You! Your feedback helps us create a festival that everyone will enjoy. We appreciate your ideas, energy, and community spirit.

Please submit your responses by March 8, 2026. Mark your calendars and get ready for a memorable weekend at the Vermont Grange Center!

Beth Morse, Fall Festival Director

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

This year's Vermont's cooking contest will be chili as stated in the Program book. There was not much info in the program book and no Director at that time, so here is the info you will need to enter the contest.

- There are two categories, one using meat and the other meatless. You can only enter one category!
- No prepackaged chili mix can be used. You need to bring enough for 6-8 people (2 quarts)
- You will need to bring your typed (if possible) recipe and entry tag (found in the program book) with your entry by 11:30 a.m. (No late entries will be accepted) as this will be part of the camp lunch.

- The State Family Activities department advises you to bring it in a crock pot, at a temperature of 165 degrees. You will need to plug into an outlet in the hall and Mark says there are only 4 outlets. No One will be allowed in the Kitchen!
- The Family Activities department will be giving a stipend to anyone who brings an entry for the Chili contest.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda at VTLVS54@gmail.com
This will be printed in at least one more Green Mountain Granger.

Helpful hints:

- Cocoa powder—fluff the packed powder with a fork, sift, then spoon into the measuring cup, this will make sure you have the correct amount. I do this with most of my spices, salts, leveling ingredients.
- To Upgrade cookies:
 - o add 1c chopped dried cherries (Blackforest flavor)
 - o Add 1c of dried cranberries (for those that don't like raisins)
 - o Swap vanilla for ½ t. mint extract and crushed candy canes
- To tent or not to tent (loosely) cooked meat?
 - o If you do tent your resting meat, it might over cook the interior and it does keep it a little warmer when you don't tent it.
- Did you know: Salt stays in your system for up to 3 days

Cranberries facts:

- 200 are in a standard can of cranberry sauce
- 440 per 1# bag of fresh cranberries
- 4,400 used for a full gallon of juice

Colored Vegetables (part II)

- Purple veggies are great and vibrant addition to your diet and overall health. Why not try some of the purple veggies such as *purple carrots* (has anthocyanins), *purple cabbage*

(is rich in sulforaphane-may have anti-cancer properties, vitamin C), *purple sweet potato* (fiber, potassium and antioxidants) and of course *eggplant*. Purple veggies have anthocyanins and offer powerful antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, boosts your brain, and are heart healthy. They are said to reduce chronic (cancer, diabetes and heart disease), improve blood pressure, aid in muscle recovery and support your immunity system. They are helpful for your Digestive health, Immune support, Brain and Cognitive Health, Muscle recovery, some cancer prevention, Heart health, Antioxidants & Anti-Inflammatory.

I hope you have started working on some of the other VT Family Activities contests, needlework and crafts, which are due at Family Camp in July.

I will be going in another direction for next year and plan to increase the State prize money.

The Northeast Needlework will also be collected at Family Camp, and the current brochure runs until the 2027 fair. I have signed up to help in the Grange building the last weekend of the fair, which runs Friday September 18th through Sunday October 4th.

Linda Snderson, VSG Family Activities Director

GRANGE CENTER

A BIG THANK YOU to Jessica Falker and New Horizon Pomona #33. They held a basket raffle on January 17th as a fund-raiser for the Grange Center. The raffle brought in \$2,407. Jessica reported that about 53 people turned out for the raffle. It would be nice if all the Pomona's were able to do a fund-raiser for the Center. To encourage this, in next year's Program Book (2026-2027) for the Grange Center, 15 points will be awarded on the score sheet if your Pomona holds a fund-raiser for the Grange Center.

The Center Board met on January 18th On motions made by Joe

Goodrich and Jessica Falker, it was agreed to change the rental rates. At the beginning of this year, any Grange related activity will be charged at a rate of \$100.00 per day, regardless of how many people attend. This rate will apply to any Subordinate or Pomona Grange activity. Good examples: a Subordinate or Pomona mystery ride, a Grange picnic, etc. The Grange Department Directors could hold a yearly meeting at the Center and add this amount to their budget; or the fee could be split between those Departments attending. It was also voted to that non-Grange related rentals will increase from \$600.00 a day to \$750.00 a day. The Grange Center will once again be conducting Food Breaks at the Sharon Rest Stop. Two have been scheduled so far: Thursday, May 21 and Saturday, September 7. Times: 8:00 am to 6:30 pm. Contact Ruth Hovey-Sicely to set a time and date that you would like to volunteer to work. Volunteers are asked to bring the baked goods (no store-bought wrapped snacks at the request of the Rest Stop). Please do not bring mixes that need to be baked. We are no longer preparing baked goods at the Grange Center.
Eunice Crowell, Chair VSG Center

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

I don't know about all of you, but my skin is very dry this winter. Add lotion all over. I saw a dermatologist on TV this morning and she says to get your lotion in a jar, rather a pump bottle. It appears to be better at moisturizing.
How is your Program Book coming? Is your health person reporting at every meeting and are you saving the info for your report?
I'm back from the Leaders Conference. Met some new people. I've discovered that most of the Northeast don't have a dedicated health committee. I will have to try meeting them and discuss it.
Alice Daley, VSG Health and Wellness Director

JUNIORS

I attended the Northeast Leaders Conference in January. It was great to meet with Junior Directors from other states and share ideas. Moving forward, we decided that one way to try to increase our Junior age members is to reach out to local libraries to see if there are any children's events they need help sponsoring or leading. I encourage subordinate Granges to do the same. Are there other popular family events in your area? Reach out to them! The more involved we are with the community, the more likely we are to attract new members.
Melody Falker, VSG Junior Director

LEGISLATIVE

The 2026 session of the Vt State Legislature is underway with a significant amount of work before them. Governor Scott has charged them with continued school and tax reform. The old adage of "you get what you pay for" has been tossed around in regards to school spending and performance for years, with student performance on standardized tests revealing that this isn't the case year after year throughout the State. The Governor has remained clear that he wants to see reform and that Vermonters need and deserve a fiscally responsible plan for education. There is currently legislation in both chambers proposing use and posting of property. As you may have seen reported on WCAX, there are 3 proposals for managing bottle returns and redemption centers, all are multimillion dollar plans which would be put back on the distributors and manufacturers.
January 14th President Trump signed the whole milk bill into law! This allows for full fat (3% fat) milk, low-fat milk and nondairy options to be made available to students. Representative GT Thompson of Pennsylvania has spoken of this bill for the last several years during our National Grange Legislative Fly-In. January 20th in the afternoon the Governor will be giving his state budget address.

There are a few House districts that have newly appointed people finishing out the elected term of the Representative. Make sure you know who your representative in Montpelier is and communicate with them and the delegation in Washington, this is an election year remind them who they work for.
Kathleen Paglia, VSG Legislative Director

YOUTH

In January, I attended the Northeast Leaders Conference, which was held in Vermont this year! This was the first time I had attended this conference, so I didn't know what to expect and was tasked with leading the Youth Committee! I was so pleased to have 10 people from 5 states, including our National Young Adult Grange Ambassador! It was comforting to know that I am not alone in the struggles facing all of the Youth Leaders from our region. We were able to identify those challenges and set some goals that will help all of us. Our committee also did a team building exercise of learning to sign-a-song our National Anthem! I felt it was really helpful to get together with other Grange leaders and am already looking forward to next year's conference!
Jessica Falker, VSG Youth Director

POLICY BOOKS

The Legislative Policy Book (<http://www.vtstategrange.org/program-and-legislative-policy-book.html>) is available on the Vermont State Grange Website. The Internal Policy Book is also on the website behind the password (Fourth Degree Annual Word). <http://www.vtstategrange.org/internal-policy-book.html>

POMONA GRANGE NEWS

New Horizon Pomona wants to thank all that helped out with our basket raffle for the Vermont Grange Center. We had a good turn out even though there were 4 other basket raffles at the same time. We made \$2407. Not Bad! Thanks again to all that donated and worked.

Martha Kirchner, Master

COMMUNITY GRANGE NEWS

Blue Spruce Grange #574 - I

hope all of you had a good holiday season and that your New Year has started well. Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Blue Spruce was shy of monthly meetings.

In November's meeting Community Service director (Nikki Yandow) reported that our Community Service Book took first place with a prize of \$125.00. This money will be used for our future community service projects. Good job Nikki! We continue to sew and stuff Comfort pillows and make lap quilts. If any of you are interested, the news interview for TV station WCAX can be found by going to WCAX News and searching Comfort Pillows. Brenda did a wonderful job explaining why, how, and for whom the Grange makes the comfort pillows and other items (muslin dolls, lap quilts, and in the near future Sleep Masks) for area hospitals (and any other organizations or person who requests them). The interview was received very well and Brenda is still getting e-mails from people wishing to donate to our projects. December's meeting was our annual Christmas party. We collected Toys for area toy drives, and we had fun playing games.

In our first January meeting, we accepted a new member, set a date to award a quilt of valor at the VFW Meeting in February, discussed selling Fried Dough at the annual Colchester Winter Festival, and set up a committee for our 50th Anniversary later this year. Leaders Conference was held at the Hampton Inn on January 9 – 11 in Colchester - Kendal Holden, Alice Daley, Linda Sanderson, Brenda Rousselle, and Janice Rousselle attended. Over 70 members from the region also attended. The weather was a little iffy, but we didn't get a foot of snow.

I know the weather leaves a lot to be desired. I received four garden

catalogs in the mail this past week. Spring is coming!

Janice M Rousselle, Master

Bridgewater Grange #284 -

December was a slow month. We had our Community Dinner on the 6th. We had one bingo on the 13th. We did not have any meetings in December. On the 11th our water pipes froze and busted. Still recovering from that. And of course, no meeting on the 25th, We did get to gather on the 18th for a little Christmas celebration at Rumanto's. There were 7 there.

Bridport Grange #303 and

Addison County Farm Bureau Announce the 2026 Legislative Breakfast Series - A Vermont Tradition of Civic Connection For over four decades, Addison County residents have gathered around breakfast tables to share ideas, ask questions, and connect with lawmakers at the beloved Legislative Breakfast Series. This year, the tradition continues—stronger than ever—thanks to the partnership between Bridport Grange and Addison County Farm Bureau, with generous support from the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, Addison County Regional Planning Commission, and Addison County Economic Development Corp. Why Should You Attend?

Imagine starting your morning with a hot cup of coffee, surrounded by neighbors and local leaders, as you dive into the issues that matter most to our community. These breakfasts and the special luncheon aren't just about food, they're about making your voice heard, learning firsthand about what's happening at the Vermont Statehouse, and building relationships that strengthen Addison County.

Whether you're a longtime attendee or joining for the first time, you'll find a welcoming space to share your thoughts, ask questions, and help shape the future of our region.

2026 Event Schedule

Mark your calendar and join us at one (or all!) of these engaging gatherings:

- Monday, February 9, 7:30–8:45 AM; St. Peter's Parish Hall, Vergennes, VT
- Saturday, February 21, 8:30–9:45 AM; American Legion, Bristol, VT
- Saturday, March 14, 8:30–9:45 AM; Weybridge VT Church, Weybridge, VT
- Saturday, March 21, 8:30–9:45 AM; Shoreham VT Church, Shoreham, VT
- Saturday, April 11, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM; American Legion, Middlebury, VT

All events are open to Addison County residents. No RSVP required—just bring your curiosity and community spirit!

Let's Keep the Conversation Going Your participation keeps this important tradition alive. Come for the breakfast, stay for the dialogue, and leave with new insights and connections. Together, we can make a difference—one conversation at a time.

For more information, reach out to the Addison County Farm Bureau or Bridport Grange
Beth Morse, Master

Caledonia Grange #9 is busy planning a series of activities for the year. We will be hosting a weekly music jam at our Grange starting in the spring when we reopen the building. We are planning a new series of our monthly Second Sunday AG workshops; we are still working out the topics. We are planning a film festival, probably in the fall, to build on the showing we had of films created by film maker Meredith Holch, a longtime member of our Grange who passed last year. Several other events are still in a more nebulous planning stage. In even bigger news, we are moving forward with our plans to make our building more accessible. We are actively working with an architect to have plans drawn and have some very promising fundraising leads that may make the project doable much sooner than we had hoped. All in

all, very exciting and we are looking forward to an active year.

Rob MacLeod, President

Center Grange #290 - We met on Dec 17th for our annual Christmas party with a Yankee gift exchange. A small program of Christmas trivia was presented by Karen Barnouw as the Lecturer was unable to attend. We voted to spend \$200 on items for the Basket Raffle that was hosted by New Horizons Pomona to benefit the Grange Center. Sisters Michelle Farmer, Carissa Johnston, & Karen Barnouw shopped for the items, baskets were assembled by Michelle. We donated 10 baskets. Our January meeting was held on the 21st. This was a Dues Paying Potluck and our Chili cooking contest. Will announce winners in next issue. February's meeting will be held on the 18th. Agriculture will be in charge of the program. Hope to do a couple more cup auctions to help with annual donations. Michelle Farmer, Information Chair

Capital City Grange #469 - We are having a busy beginning to the New Year. At our January meeting, we started planning to hold our presentation of the First Degree, likely in May. We hope to combine that with our Cooking Contest, so we can have a variety of tasty chili recipes to enjoy as part of a potluck after the Degree ceremony. We are reaching out to a couple of other Community Granges to combine with us in putting on the Degree. At our meeting, we also discussed how our tenants are reacting to our need to increase rental income to offset the rising costs of operating our Grange Hall. Merry Shernock, our Rental Agent and Treasurer, told us that our long-term tenants (some of whom have been renting for a few decades) are responding well to our request to them to let us know how much they can afford to increase their rent payments help us stay solvent for the long term. We feel it's vital to our mission that we provide an affordable place for non-profit, cultural groups to put on their events and bring people together. We are

pleased to be working together with the rental groups, so that we can all thrive together. At our meeting, we also voted to increase our annual dues by \$6, to match the increased rate set by the National Grange. As I write this on Jan. 20, we are on the verge of having our new **Energy Recovery Ventilator** running. It was installed in the week before Christmas and is now getting the controls installed. We look forward to bringing in fresh, outside air, warm to meet the thermostat setting, to keep our Main Hall a healthy space for everyone to use. We already have the ceiling-mounted air purifier installed and plugged into a "smart outlet", so that it is scheduled to run when the Hall is rented. It's pleasantly quiet!

We held a Red Cross Blood Drive on Jan. 16, which unfortunately only drew about a dozen donors. The Red Cross has told us they are canceling the next scheduled blood donation session which was supposed to take place on May 15; we are looking for ways to work with them to have future drives with better timing and publicity.

We are looking forward to our next Community Program following our Feb. 7 meeting. We will hear Erica Heilman, the producer of the award-winning **RumbleStrip Vermont podcast**, talk about the challenges and joys of doing audio journalism focused on what happens in the lives of real Vermont residents. Please join us to hear her and ask questions, at 5:00 PM on Feb. 7. There is a Zoom link on our website Calendar, if you can't make it in person.

We're continuing to hold our monthly **Kids Trade & Play** clothing exchange; in March we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of this event at our Hall! We're proud to have helped many, many families to have good-quality clothes (plus books, games and toys) for their kids, as well as making connections between families! Our monthly family dancing series, **Dance, Sing & Jump Around** continues as well, until May on the 2nd Sunday of the month, with live music and great callers. We've

been proud to sponsor this event since 2019!

Looking farther ahead, we're excited to sponsor and host the **Great Vermont Bob Dylan Wannabe contest** on April 28. Last year, this contest raised nearly \$2,500 for the Peoples Health and Wellness Center! Start practicing your Dylan songs (and vocal styles) now so that you can take part! Tim Swartz, President, reporting

Charlotte Grange continues to host robust monthly poetry gatherings through the winter. Dictionaries will be presented to Charlotte third graders through the Words For Thirds Program this January. This year we are excited to have installed internet at the Grange Hall so we can once again host Charlotte's Candidate's Night before Town Meeting Day and present it both in person and online. Work is underway on a new ADA compliant ramp and second first floor egress. Fundraising is currently underway for several other exciting building improvements. We also use winter to plan for our busier spring, summer, and fall programming months. For more information about all of our programs and events, please visit charlottegrange.org

Marble Valley Grange - We held our annual toy drive again this year, at which we collected 95 gifts for Brandon Area Toy Project and \$266 for Pittsford Christmas for Kids! We also held our own Christmas Party with a delicious meal and lots of fun. Many of our members helped with our Pomona's basket raffle to benefit the Grange Center. We've also been working on our barn quilt paintings for the State Lecturer's Contest, a little more difficult than we anticipated but they're coming out great! We're all looking forward to Spring! Jessica Falker reporting

Middle Branch Grange - On December 5th the Grange presented Janet Angell and Bonnie Willis with their 50-year seal. Members reviewed and made minor changes to the blueprint for the new hall. A

donation was sent to American Legion Post #9 in Randolph. The Legion allowed us to use their hall free of charge for several months after the fire. The Christmas party on December 14 was well attended. The Jr. Grangers presented the program, Santa brought gifts for the kids, and the adults did a gift exchange. The Home Ec. Committee purchased additional dictionaries and presented them to Randolph third graders. Master Jillian Dean and Lecturer Judy Powell attended the Northeast Leader's Conference. January and February brings the return of our long-standing card parties. Master Jillian Dean is working with Riverside Grange in hopes that we can confer the degrees together again this year. We have tentative plans to make this year's "baking" contest open to the public and have them cast votes for the best chili. Middle Branch wishes everyone a happy and healthy New Year! Judy Powell, Lecturer

Win a Free Weekend Retreat!

For up to 120 people at the
Vermont Grange Center in Brookfield, VT

\$1,500 Value!

Winner may choose any available weekend in 2027, Friday through Sunday. Facilities include: Cabin Lodging with Bunkbeds. Indoor Recreation Hall, Commercial Kitchen & Meeting Rooms. Outdoor Recreation Areas, Chapel, Picnic Tables & Firepit. Bring your own food & linens, everything else is included! Drawing will be held October 24th, 2026. Proceeds benefit the Vermont Grange Center.

Tickets are \$5.00 each

Name: _____

Phone #: _____