



## **MASTER'S MESSAGE**

My health has been an issue. In the middle of July, I had several infections and became septic. Nearly a week in the hospital. During the week of Thanksgiving, I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, another week in the hospital sorting out effective medications. I'm much better now. Except my cat and I had a tussle, and she bit my hand. Infection ensued. Getting better. I did not attend the Leadership Conference but do have excerpts of minutes taken by Sister Brenda Rousselle.

- The 2025 Leaders Conference will be held in Massachusetts. Vermont is scheduled for 2026.
- Community Service suggests a good resource website is Oregon State Grange. The committee is requesting criteria from National for judging Community Service Reports. The committee is looking at producing a recipe book of contest entries.
- Needlework Contest Tea Cup contest remains the same for 2024.
- Juniors Big E contest
  - 2024---Air dried craft project
  - 2025---Egg carton projects
- Youth - New York hosting 2024 NE Youth meeting, perhaps July 19-21. Drill Teams of 8-16 people, 14-35

years of age. Several workshops suggested. Discussed using Vermont Grange Center as site location for camps. Discussed allowing Juniors to participate but with their own chaperons. The idea was nixed.

- **Lecturers Conference, 2024, being held in Norwich, CT, June 21-23.** 6 workshops, one from each state. Two possible tours, and a service project. Costs being negotiated: Room-\$139.00 per person, Registration--\$45.00 Banquet --\$45.00. Decision to hold Lecturers Conference every two years, 2026 will be in New York.
- **Chaplain Go to Church service being scheduled for July 27<sup>th</sup>** at the Vermont Grange Center with the leader being the Connecticut Chaplain. There was discussion of making this a weekend event.

By the time you receive this GMG you may have heard that Middle Branch Grange had a fire on January 20th. There is disagreement as to whether the building is a total loss or not. An investigation will take place January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Seems they saved all Grange paraphernalia and objects. A neighbor is providing storage, and an alternative meeting location is being explored. We wish

them well. Deborah Ploof will have more on this in this publication. Hoping for a much better year! Kendal Holden. President Vermont State Grange

## **CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE**

*"The power of a leader isn't what you tell people. It's what you get them thinking about."* Cy Wakeman.

Yes, I know that is not a Biblical verse. I heard it at the NE Grange Leadership Conference down in Concord, NH. and wanted to share it with you. It makes sense. So did discussion about conflict where it is suggested that you guide the energy of the group and build trust. Also you can deescalate a situation by addressing concerns, defusing tension, and detecting a conflict's root cause. How? by 1) staying composed, 2) actively listening, and 3) validating the emotion.

Often, Grange meetings go on without an issue. Just be sure if someone isn't happy, you find out why in a kind and concerned approach. Grangers are our brothers and sisters in our benevolent fraternity. We all come to Grange with individual situations back home, whether we are young parents, established businessmen, farmers, or elders in our community with lots of wisdom and experience, but sometimes not willing to accept new ideas.

Do we see our Granges for the strength and service we offer in the community, or are we bogged down by a weakness like the condition of the physical building, if we are fortunate enough to have our own hall? Remember: "A Hall is a building; Grange is the People!" I will fill you in on the upcoming "Go to Church" event that will be held at our wonderful Grange Center in July

this summer. Chaplains from New England and NY made a decision to get it back on the calendar. Learning that the Chapel in the Pines is no longer an option, I offered our little Chapel in the Trees for a service and family activity day or weekend on July 27th in Brookfield. Stay tuned. Please stay safe and remember to count your blessings. May God Bless us.

Warmly, Jenny Nelson, Chaplain

### **LECTURER'S DESK**

I have just returned from the Leader's Conference in Concord, N.H. What a weekend. I even learned about AI and a bit about Canva. Don't know if I will use either but it was interesting. Stay tuned for more info but I can tell you that there will be a Lecturer's Conference this spring. It is scheduled for **June 21-23 in Norwich, CT**. Save the date now. I hope to see lots of Vermonters there dressed in green as that is our color. Write or call if you have any questions. Are you reading and doing book reports? Send them to me as soon as you finish them either by snail mail or email. I keep them in a special folder.

The directors will meet soon to plan next year's book. Got any ideas?  
Alice Daley, VT State Lecturer

### **NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee met on Sunday, January 21, 2024, via ZOOM. The sale of the Maple Valley #318 Grange Hall is still being processed.

As per a resolution passed at State Session in October, the process of forming the committee to discuss the possibility of merging Family Camp and Fall Festival into one week has begun. Representatives from both

committees have been invited to the next Executive Committee meeting. As per a resolution passed at State Session in October, a committee is being formed to do a study of the Grange Center. Sister Deborah Ploof has agreed to chair the committee. The Vermont State Grange has been contacted by our insurance company with a request to inspect the Grange Center property. A request is being made to postpone the inspection until the Spring when the Center is open and more accessible. Information was provided to the Executive Committee on the recent Leaders Conference in New Hampshire. It was noted that the 2026 Leaders Conference will be held in Vermont.

The Executive Committee was brought to date on the recent fire at Middle Branch Grange.

Submitted by: Brenda Rousselle, Secretary

### **A BIT OF GRANGE HISTORY**

The National Grange has a program called "The Grange Hall of Fame", wherein Granges and individuals can nominate worthy candidates who have "instrumental in the origins, growth, success and evolution of the Grange, including the fraternal aspects." Last April, Eben Thompson (1848-1897) from Danville was nominated, but to date there has been no response from National Grange.

Here is the reason he should have been considered. In the course of five busy years, Eben Thompson, a charter member of Green Mountain Grange #1, organized 14 Granges in Vermont, 16 in New Hampshire, 1 in Massachusetts, 9 in Quebec and 15 in Ontario, for a total on 55 Granges across three states and two provinces. Remarkably, he began this work when he was 24 years old and concluded it before he was 30.

He later went to medical school and was became a highly esteemed physician in Newton Upper Falls, Mass. from 1877 until his death in 1897.

Among the Granges he organized were the first in Canada (International #1 in Stanstead), the first in New Hampshire (Gilman #1 in Exeter) and the first in Massachusetts (Guiding Star #1 in Greenfield). These last two are still in existence. He also organized Caledonia #9, the oldest existing Grange in New England.

Because of his work in the early days of the Grange, Thompson was included on a Roll of Honor in 1872, recognized as entitled to seats and votes in the National Grange.

According to Oliver Hudson Kelley, who had appointed Thompson as a General Deputy, he was listed among those "whose honors are nearly equal as Founders of our Order."

Had this nomination been accepted by National Grange, he would likely have been added to the Grange Hall of Fame at the National Session in Niagara Falls, which was held only a few hundred yards from Ontario, the province where he organized 15 Granges.

More information can be found in "The Grange in Vermont" by Guy Horton (1926) and "Origins and Progress of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United State" by O. H. Kelley (1875).

Erroll Briggs, VSG Historian



## **Northeast Leader's Conference** **January 2024**

Jenny Nelson, VSG Chaplain and Ag Director, Martha Bissell, Junior Director, Alice Daley, VSG Lecturer and Health Director, Brenda Rousselle, VSG Executive Committee, Janice Rouselle, VSG Trust Officer and member of Community Service Committee, Lisa Goodrich, VSG Ceres, Joe Goodrich, VSG Ex. Comm and past Master, Deborah Ploof, VSG Ex Comm., Membership and Community Service Director. Missing from photo is Linda Sanderson, VSG Overseer and Family Activities Director.

Your VSG Leaders met with other directors from the other Northeastern states and renewed and formed new friendships and exchanged ideas of how we could make Granges function better. We also attended 3 workshops, plans were made for Lecturer's Conference, Youth Camp, and next year's Leader's Conference. See more information about workshops and plans in the individual department reports.

## **EDUCATIONAL AID FUND**

This is a slow time of year for us. We do still have loans, scholarships and grants available. State Session in October passed a new resolution extending the \$100.00 grants for as long as the money is there or as long as there are people using them. These can be used for any educational purpose—even to learn a new craft or something fun.  
Lois Wakefield, Chair

## **GRANGE CENTER**

What a frigid winter we have been having. Where is the regular snow? Heavy, wet snow and then warm days melt it away. Only two storms

with light fluffy snow. We have been fortunate that way, in terms of snow building up on the roofs at the Center.

We held our first zoom meeting on January 6th, with the Worthy State Master Kendal Holden presiding over the election. Ruth Hovey-Sicely was re-elected as Chair of the Board. The Chair then took over for the rest of the elections. Richard Austin was elected as Vice Chair and Linda Sanderson was re-elected as Treasurer. We no longer have a secretary position, only a Recording Secretary for each meeting. We are still under a Boil Water Notice from the State, and we are under an order to have a down well camera inspection 3 weeks prior to opening, so the electricity will need to be turned on early. Let's hope the weather cooperates!

Our Food Breaks at Sharon are scheduled for June 7-9 and August 30 to September 2. These are the only two Food Break Weekends they had available to us for scheduling. We're looking into the possibility of perhaps having one day events on a weekend when a group doesn't want the entire weekend.

Our next meeting is on February 24th and our assignment is to bring fund raising ideas. If you have any great ideas, please feel free to reach out to me. My phone number is 802-223-7961 or email [ruthsicely@aol.com](mailto:ruthsicely@aol.com).

Fraternally, Ruth Hovey-Sicely, Chair

## **AG AND ENVIRONMENT**

As a State Grange, we have chosen to send donations to Heifer International. I received a thank you note and it featured families who had been helped by our generosity. One family was struggling to survive in Honduras raising cows, but only produced a meager amount of milk. Now, the two little girls no longer go hungry, Dad was trained to properly

feed the cows and manage his pasture and soon they had extra milk to sell. Now they can buy other foods like meat and eggs and Mom makes fresh cheese to sell, too. A tomato farmer off the coast of Nigeria where all goods must come in by boat, and there's no electricity and only salty water. What few tomatoes he could sell to market buyers was only by credit. Now the HI Naija Unlock program has offered them seeds, training, and tools to improve. And they have been connected with a buyer. Soon they hope to dig a well for both drinking and irrigation which will result in better health and more tomatoes!! Heifer International has empowered many women who work hard to feed their families but lack real training. A chicken farmer in Cambodia who tried to raise rice to feed her birds learned she needed to feed them properly, vaccinate them, and shelter them properly through a self-help group sponsored by HI. Now her chickens have become healthier, bigger, and more survive. She has protein-packed food to feed her children and grandchildren and an ever-increasing income.

Your gifts change lives! Perhaps you can sponsor a gardening workshop or donate to a community garden this summer right here in VT.

Jenny Nelson, Director

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

By now you should have received a large white envelope full of information and a thumb drive with information for having several open meetings or educational programs for your community. I mailed this to all Community Service Chairs using the VSG directory. This is from National. I encourage you to work with your Lecturer, Master, Membership, Health, and Family Activities chair people in your Grange and partner with other

Granges to use this information to provide some valued educational meetings. Maybe, a Pomona Grange will want to work as a group to plan a large event.

I hope you and your Grange have been doing acts of kindness in your community. From the Community Reports in this GMG I can see what several Granges are doing. I would like to hear from more Granges.

Next GMG articles will be due on March 20<sup>th</sup> so please consider submitting an article for publication in the GMG. Send articles to me at [Deborah.ploof@outlook.com](mailto:Deborah.ploof@outlook.com). Love to hear from all of you!

Fraternally, Deborah Ploof, Director

## **FALL FESTIVAL**

Have you looked at the Program Book lately? Did you notice that the current one had a new section for Fall Festival? When I wrote those pages, I looked for inspiration from the websites of Vermont's fairs. I thought that the information on those websites was great and as most of you probably enter items at your local fair that our festival should be in line with their requirements. Like the fairs limiting the number of entries per category seemed the best way to go so as not to overwhelm those accepting the entries and the judges.

I received some questions regarding what can and cannot be entered last year; the items listed in the categories are examples and I tried to be as generic as possible when listing them. As I review and make changes to next year's program book, I will try to look for new ways to explain what can be entered in each category. I will also be asking people who have more than 5 items for entry to please pre-register as this will help the process go smoother.

If you have any suggestions for contests for the program book or simply to do at Fall Festival, please let me know. I am always open to new ideas. Thank you, Beth Morse

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

I am still recovering from Covid which I had just before Christmas. I hope everyone has had the latest Covid vaccine as well as RSV vaccine. You could end up in hospital as this one is nasty. How about your series of Shingles vaccine? Don't put that one off. Shingles can be very painful. Have you done your program this year? Remember to document the items you have reported on at meetings. You need 6 with topics and dates when you are filling out your book in June.

As always call or email if you have any questions. We will be meeting soon to plan the next Program Book so if you have any ideas, let me know.

Alice Daley, VSG Health Director

## **JUNIOR GRANGE**

- 2023-2024 projects
  - Rock Painting - Find a nice rock to paint or color. Size of rock no larger than 3" x 3" x 3".
  - Duct Tape project - Create a project using duct tape. Size not to exceed 6" X 6" X 6".
  - Buttons--Create something interesting or useful using buttons. Decorate with any medium. 4" X 4" X 4"
  - Other state contests can be found on the Community Service, Fall Festival, Family Activities and Lecturer program pages in this program book.

- Passport / Badges – Refer to the National website at <https://www.nationaljuniorgrange.org/junior-grange-passport/> and Good Day Magazine
- National Junior Projects – Refer to the National Grange website at [www.nationaljuniorgrange.org](http://www.nationaljuniorgrange.org). Deadlines vary for National contests.
- Photo/Writing Contests – Refer to the National Grange website.
- Big E Contest Project 2024 - Craft using Crayola Model Magic or similar air-dry clay, size 6"x6"x6". Each entry must be clearly labeled with the following information: Name, Age (w/ birth date), Grange name & number, Mailing address, Phone &/or Email, & Junior Age Group. (Junior Age is determined as of January 1, 2024)

**Jr. Age groups: Group 1: age 5-7, Group 2: age 8-10, Group 3: age 11-14**

Any contest entries need to be brought to Family Camp by 12:00 noon on Saturday, July 13, 2024. The entries will be judged, and the first winner will be sent to the Big E. **\*\*\*I need to get a count of how many Junior members we have in the state. Whether it is in a Junior Grange or the 1+ program. If anyone working with Juniors could get in touch with me it would be greatly appreciated. I know that there are some that may be aging out soon if they haven't already. I would like that information also.\*\*\***

Respectfully submitted, Martha Bissell, Director, 213 Maple Lane, West Danville, VT 05873  
[mbisswal@hotmail.com](mailto:mbisswal@hotmail.com)  
802-563-2429

## **JUNIOR AND YOUTH GRANGE CAMP**

I'm happy to announce that as of January 14th, the application form is now live! To access it online, you can find it at <https://www.jotform.com/233525250041039>. I emailed this application to those who attended camp last year, and within 48 hours, I now have 5 campers signed up. Two of those families have expressed that they are interested in joining their local Grange! Things are going to be different this year, and submitting an application will not guarantee the child a spot in the camp. The number of campers allowed will depend on the number of volunteer counselors that I have. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me know.

I am currently in the process of reaching out to members of the community to visit during the day (Hopefully the weather works out this year!). If you have a talent, collection, display, etc. that you would like to present at camp, please reach out to me at [mfalker03@gmail.com](mailto:mfalker03@gmail.com) or 802-483-4330 so we can coordinate a date and time for your visit. Melody Falker, Camp Director

## **LEGISLATIVE**

As I write this the VT Legislators are entering the fourth week of this session, the New Hampshire primary is days away as is the January thaw. This year has the potential for many great legislative gatherings and discussions in our various meetings throughout the state. Let us be the example that so many need and keep these discussions respectful and civil, proving that is still possible to have and express opposing views respectfully and that disagreement doesn't equal dislike.

The National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-in is scheduled for March 18th for approximately three hours in the late afternoon/early evening. Register at [grange.biz/flyin2024](http://grange.biz/flyin2024), remember attendance counts for points on your Legislative reports and more importantly is always full of good information. Have you thought about how this could be used as your legislative program or an opportunity to host people from your communities to see what we do and reach the Grange has? State Legislative Day: Keep your fingers crossed as we give it another go and stay tuned for more information.

Kind Regards, Kathleen Paglia, Director

## **MEMBERSHIP**

I attended several Membership meetings at the Northeastern Leader's Conference and one of the major issues was do Granges have access to the web at their Grange Halls? I know that Capital City and Bridgewater do but what about the rest of you? Are you able to attend a zoom meeting when you need to? I am hoping that this spring and summer I will be traveling to every Pomona to present a GRIT workshop. Your Pomona master should be familiar with this, and I am just waiting for my invitation! What is GRIT? It stands for **Grange Resources, Information, & Training**. For us to train our future leaders, we need to provide them with resources, information and training so they can become leaders in our community and in our Grange. We have held GRIT workshops before but the goal this year is to move these workshops into each Pomona area. I challenge all of you to get a place and time setup soon and let me know so I can come. GRIT workshops are open to ALL

Grange members and is a time for learning, fun, and fellowship. Fraternally, Deborah Ploof, Director

## **YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT DEPT**

A packet of information was mailed to each Grange last month containing information on state and national contests, as well as a request to send me a list of your members age 14-30, with dates of birth. Thank you to the 7 Granges that have gotten those lists to me! If you have not done so already, please mail to 72 Alfred Buck Ln, Pittsford, VT 05763, or email to [jjem1999@yahoo.com](mailto:jjem1999@yahoo.com). I need this information to plan a state youth & young adult conference. If you have no members age 14-30, please let me know that you have no youth or young adults at this time. Jessica Falker, Director

## **COMMUNITY GRANGE REPORTS**

**Blue Spruce Grange** - Happy New Year from Blue Spruce. We have been busy with many activities. We recently delivered dinner to the Josh Pallotta House in Colchester. What a meal and event. In December we had our annual Christmas party. It was preceded by a potluck dinner. What a good time everyone had. Next week, on February 3, we will sell fried bread dough at the Colchester Winter Carnival. Come see us and have some lovely fried dough. Alice Daley, reporting

## Bomoseen Valley Grange



Poultney, VT - Charles E. Matteson, age 90, passed away on January 12, 2024 at Rutland Regional Medical Center. Charlie was born on June 20, 1933 in Sunderland, Vermont, the son of Byron E. and H. Lavina (Fox) Matteson. He graduated from Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester at the top of his class. By the time his senior year rolled around Charlie took the afternoons and worked at Wilcox Dairy expounding on his farming knowledge. Upon graduation he attended Randolph Agriculture College (currently Vermont Tech) from which he graduated with a degree in Agriculture. After college he worked for a farmer in Dorset VT before moving to Poultney and hauling milk, then for a time working at Green Mt. College doing maintenance before farming full time for himself. Pat & Charlie met at a dance they both attended at Idylwild Pavilion at Lake St. Catherine. Patricia had just moved to Dorset with her family, and Charlie was working for a farmer in Dorset at the time. Pat being younger, they dated for a few years until she finished high school and college. They were married in 1957 and shared the next 66 years of life and love. They sugared for several years and after

retiring from dairy farming, they established Riverside Maples as a business to continue making and selling their maple syrup. The business still runs under another name by his son-in-law. Charles was very active throughout his life. He was a 75-year member of the Grange, over 50 years as a Mason, a member of the Vt. Cooperative Farm Bureau, the Agriculture Society of Vermont, the Vermont State Fair Board and the Vt Maple Sugar Association, to name a few of the organizations that were better for Charlie having participated. He was predeceased by his parents, a sister Nancy Usrey and his daughter Dorothy Roberts. He is survived by the love of his life Pat (Scott), his brother Howard Matteson (Barbara) and five daughters: Susan Lockwood (Wayne) of Middletown Springs, Martha Kirchner of W. Pawlet, Pam Gibbs (Gordon "Skip") of Poultney, Linda Whiting (Arnie) of Granville and BettyJean Bogue (Roger) of Shelburne. He was blessed with 11 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. A Celebration of Charlie's life will be held on January 21, 2024 at the Bomoseen

Valley Grange Hall, Route 30 Castleton VT, from 1 – 3 pm, with the Grange ceremony at 1:30. A family burial will be in June at Mountainview Cemetery in West Pawlet, VT.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the East Poultney Baptist Church or the Bomoseen Valley Grange, in care of Martha Kirchner, PO box 623, Manchester Ctr VT 05255.

**Bridgewater Grange #284** will be holding a Holiday Potluck on February 10, 2024 beginning at 6:30, please bring your favorite dish to share. On the 17th of February we

will have our monthly Bingo game. Doors open at 5:00 and games start at 6:15. Open to the public. Our Grange meetings are the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, weather permitting in winter months. Call Alice Paglia for more information. 802-672-3790 or 672-6223.

Below is one of our members and her accomplishments. She has worked very hard for this. Her mother Robin, her uncle Bruce and two cousins also belong to the Grange. Teresa is Ceres in the Grange. Bridgewater Grange members wants to congratulate one of our members Teresa Ennis. When Covid hit Teresa put her dreams of becoming a baker on the back burner when her pastry school in Montreal closed and she also couldn't cross the border. Cambridge culinary school also stopped with some classes. She decided to start a new career in early childhood education. She cut back working full time to working 30 hours a week so she could be full time college student. She has worked hard for the last 2.5 years and has finally finished her associate degree. She is now working full-time in Bridgewater using her degree.

We have ordered 60 wheelchair/walker bags to sew, maybe we will be doing those this month.

On January 25, our regular Grange meeting, we will be holding a Dues Paying night and will have desserts and coffee, tea, etc. This is an open meeting, and all are welcome to come and see what the Grange does and ask questions. Hope to see you there. Laura Robinson, reporting

**Broad Brook Grange #151** - On Tuesday, February 27, Broad Brook Grange #151 will host Guilford's

annual pre-town meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. This event gives Guilford residents the opportunity to meet the candidates running for town positions and learn about the issues up for discussion at the official town meeting held the first Tuesday of March. Pre-town meeting will be held at Guilford's Broad Brook Community Center (the former Grange Hall which serves as home base for the subordinate Grange). Looking forward, Broad Brook Grange will hold the region's first Sugar on Snow Supper for this year's season on Saturday, March 2, with three separate servings. This is a popular community event and major fundraiser that makes possible our projects. Bobbie Fitch Haumann, Broad Brook Grange

**Middle Branch Grange** met for their annual Christmas Party and meeting on Friday 12/15. There was a good turn out, and festive fun was had by all. The hall was used to host a community potluck on Sunday 12/31, which also saw a nice turn out. We are so thankful that we had these gatherings. On Saturday 1/20 fire broke out before our scheduled potluck and meeting, and our beautiful, historic hall was severely damaged. Fire departments from 5 towns came to help, and luckily, our regalia and charter were saved. Our neighbors also turned out to assist and there has been an outpouring of support from the surrounding communities and Granges. We are so thankful that no one was hurt and that we have amazing local heroes to come when we call. More to come as we sift through the ashes, and work to rise from the flames. Jillian Dean, Master

**Tunbridge Grange** - Our meetings will be held this winter in the lower level of Tunbridge Town Hall on the

first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. We will return to our Grange Hall in April.

We will be holding Bingo each Friday at 6:30 at the Town Hall. There will be no Bingo on Friday, March 8th as the Tunbridge Civic Club will be holding their variety show.

We had a successful seven events last year hosting the Sharon Welcome Center rest area. The donations received will go toward the building repairs and we were able to provide Christmas gifts and a complete Christmas dinner for a family of five as well as financial support for a family during the Christmas season. The food that was left from December 22 and 23 dates was donated to the Chelsea Nursing Home for their residents. We have scheduled March 22, May 17, July 12 and November 15 for this year.

The veterans at The Veterans' Place in Northfield appreciated the gifts and the homemade goodies each of them received. There was room for improvement with the caroling, but there was applause following each song.

On November 25th we held a Holiday Craft Fair followed by three community crafts nights and ending the year with a Holiday Bingo on December 8th.

We didn't hold a meeting in January because some members were away and everyone was winding down from the holidays, but we will be meeting on February 7th with a full agenda. I'm challenging our members to come up with ideas for community participation as well as fundraisers. Linda Lazaroff, reporting

## **CORRECTION FROM DECEMBER GMG 2023**

In the resolution of appreciation from Vermont State Session some Pomona names were inadvertently not listed. **ALL of the Pomona's were fantastic** in their assignment and will be listed in the resolution which will read: 6. A special thank you this year goes to the Pomona Granges, who hosted the various meals and coffee breaks. Meal hosts were New Horizons Pomona, Vermont State Grange Officers, and Kingdom Pomona. Coffee breaks were hosted by Champlain Valley Pomona, Friendship Pomona, Mountain Valley Pomona, and Heart of Vermont Pomona.

## **DEVASTATING FIRE AT MIDDLE BRANCH GRANGE**

On January 20<sup>th</sup> Middle Branch was planning to have a Potluck at 1 PM but before the meeting a devastating fire broke out inside the building. Lester Gibbs arrived at the meeting early and saw smoke coming out from around vents and called 911. Help arrived quickly and fought the fire. One end of the building is structurally unsafe. Contractors are evaluating what can be done. Save the old or build new? That will be a challenging decision as they move forward. Insurance will help pay but always falls short so any help other Grangers or Granges can give will be greatly appreciated. They lost all their kitchen so eventually all of that will need to be replaced. Maybe your Grange has surplus items you could donate to them. Please check with them before donating as currently everything salvageable is being stored off-site. For checks, please mail them to the Middle Branch. Address: Jillian Dean, Master, Middle Branch Grange, PO Box 1041, White River Jct, VT 05001

Help them rise from the ashes!!!

Deborah Ploof, reporting

