Green Mountain Granger

JANUARY 2025

MASTER'S MESSAGE

A good February to you, fellow Grangers. I'm writing this January 20th and am a little bemused. Weather people and I are talking about how cold this time of year is (single numbers around zero), yet I recall Januarys where the actual temperature has plummeted to -10 f. or -15 f. for days on end. Will we never be happy??

The Northeast Leaders' Conference brought up a subject that was not on my radar, Core Values. Core values include, but are not limited to accountability, humility, integrity, inclusion, relevance, compassion, service commitment, teamwork, and stewardship. These core values are a compass for a sense of mission. Coupled with the concept that a strategic plan is a description of a group's vision, and you should have the tools to grow your Grange. This takes training individuals to go out and train others. The Massachusetts Granges are working with this and experiencing success. I'll be looking into this and discussing it with the Executive Committee.

The Grange Center Board has published its calendar for Rest Stops. Each Pomona is asked to man these rest stops on two dates covering both shifts, at least two members each. Dates that need filling are May 24th, 25th, 26th; July 5th + 6th, August 30th + 31rst; September 1rst. The Board also needs input from the Pomonas on ways to fundraise to cover the costs incurred with updating the kitchen, work on the Winter Building, the water system, and any other bills that need to be paid.

I am trying to find a location for a face-to-face meeting with State officers and Deputies, and Directors. Grange buildings near central Vermont are few and far between or very busy. We used to meet in schools, not sure how expensive that would be. I plan to meet in February. Please stay tuned.

Vermont hosts the Northeast Leaders Conference in 2026. I need to pull together a team to pull this off. Any help will be greatly appreciated! I'm also looking for a few good people to take over some Deputy positions and the Family Activities Program.

Hoping your year goes well.

Kendal Holden Master VSG

FILE YOUR 990-N

Reminder!!!! File your Granges 990-N before February 15th!!!!!

And if anyone has any problems with them being rejected please feel free to contact me. Martha Kirchner, VSG Treasurer. At email marme94@hotmail.com

CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE

Chicken Soup for the Soul - Perhaps some of you have read one or more of these books over the years. I have one for the Woman's Soul! They are usually a series of short stories and a few cartoons for meditation time.

I thought a lot about chicken soup and how it was about the only soothing thing I could eat or sip with my case of Influenza A, which I was diagnosed with the day after Bill and I returned home from the Northeast Leaders Conference down in Danvers, MA. I went last year and met up with several of the Chaplains from around New England. And we spent time organizing the regional Worship Service/Go to Church program which was held in our dear state at the Grange Center last summer. Folks were glad to do it again this year and circulate the organizational responsibilities. The date is not firm yet, but it looks like it will either be in the Berkshires of Massachusetts or back in Rye, NH. We look for a place where we can move inside if need be. I'll keep you all informed as soon is a date, probably in July, is picked.

What does it take to soothe your soul? A walk in the woods? A quiet time sitting in a pew at your Church? Watching birds at a feeder? Reading a favorite scripture? Watching a baby sleep peacefully? God gives us our life, our friends, our family, this beautiful state to live in and our health. Do we take the time to appreciate it when everything is going ok? Or does it take a "curve ball" in our health to recognize God's simple blessings?

Matthew 6:26-Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither

do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? May God Bless You in this New Year!
Jennifer Nelson, VSG Chaplain

LECTURER

I recently returned from this year's Leaders Conference in Danvers, MA. It was a good weekend with both workshops available to everyone. That is better than having to pick one or 2.
Saturday morning, we had the chance to visit a Tech School just down the road from our hotel. It was huge! The NELA lecturers met and elected new officers. Brenda Noble of NY is the new president. She shared the NELA Conference that might be in the Finger Lake area of New York in 2026. I was elected secretary. The other officers are Dave Roberts of CT who will remain Treasurer and Missy Baldwin of Maine is the new VP.
In our own state, get working on your contest entries. June 30 will be here before you know it. Are you taking pictures? Reading books and writing book reports? This can be sent to me any time. I keep a special folder for them.
Alice Daley, VT State Lecturer

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met on Sunday, January 26. Items discussed included the notification of the sale of Maple Valley #318 Grange Hall. Work is being done to identify expenses that the VSG covered for Maple Valley during their last few months before the Grange was closed. These funds will be returned to the VSG. The remainder of the sale price, after expenses, will be turned over to the Trust Officer.
The status of the kitchen and well at the Grange Center were discussed. It is hoped that the carpenter can be at the Center in February/March to install the hood. Work is being continued by the committee studying the Grange Center, as per Resolution 15. It is hoped that a grant can be obtained to help pay for the evaluation of the Winter Building. Sister Debbie is working on the possibility of the VSG Foundation obtaining a 501c(3).
The Policy Books have been completed and printed. Distribution of the books has already begun. If your Grange hasn't received its copies, they will be arriving soon.
Master Kendal Holden reported to the Committee that the 2026 Leaders Conference will be hosted by Vermont. He is currently looking for a place to hold the conference.
As usual, a complete copy of the minutes will be available in the 2025 Journal of Proceedings.
Submitted by: Brenda Rousselle, Secretary

EDUCATIONAL AID FUND

Our department is very quiet at this time of year. Is anyone doing a fun class or workshop that you might want one of our $100.00 grants to cover the fee for? Applications online and in Program Book.
Lois Wakefield, Chair

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Century Farms - VT State Grange has worked with the VT Farm Bureau for many years to honor Century Farms- farms that have been actively farmed by the same family for more than 100 years. I found my old Century Farms of Vermont book written by Deacy F. Leonard back in 1986 which was published by the two organizations and with financial backing from the VT Historical Society. Our Home Acres Farm made that list, since it was purchased by James and John Nelson back in 1818. Our nephew and his family have purchased the farm from us and the children will be the 9th generation.
The book contains lists of farms honored over the years starting back in 1953. There's even mention of the 87th National Grange meeting held in Burlington, VT. Nov. 10th to the 19th. In recent years, the idea of honoring farms "becoming of age", namely 100 years old, has slowed. Many of the small family farms have either been abandoned or sold mostly for the land and combined with bigger farm operations in order to stay in business.
As Paul Stone, Commissioner of the VT Department of Agriculture at the time, wrote in his forward letter for the book remarking about the increased technology," In adjusting to changes, the family members found they had to work at keeping the real value of life in proper prospective. These Century Farms stand as a living symbol of their values. If we are to maintain some success in our agricultural activities, we must understand the lessons these Century Farm families have learned."

As Grangers, keep your eyes open in your communities, do a little research, and see if there are any farms who may have reached this special 100-year anniversary. We would love to recognize them.
Jennifer Nelson, Director

COMMUNITY SERVICE

I hope you all are staying warm! Maybe you have been thinking of others and knitting mittens or socks. Be sure to let your Community Service Chair know when you share your talents with others.
This year the Community Service National Book needs to be submitted by me to National. I can do this is you follow a few simple steps. 1) Don't put your pages in plastic sheets. 2) Keep all sheets to the standard letter size sheets 3) Paper must be flat so I can put it on a scanner and scan your pages into a document to send to National. Not so bad! You can out your book into plastic when you get it back to keep it looking nice.
I hope everyone is recording their Community Service projects. I recommend you do this as you do the project, adding information and pictures. See recommendations and forms in the Program Book which your Master/president received in June of 2024 and shared or on the website at: Program and Policy books or http://www.vtstategrange.org/program-and-policy-books.html.
If you have any questions, you can contact me at Deborah.ploof@outlook.com or 802-989-3237.
Deborah Ploof, Director

HEALTH & WELLNESS

I came back from the Leaders Conference and within a week, I was sick. CT water? I was diagnosed with Influenza A. Just think how sick I'd be without my flu shot this year. I'm going on week 3 and still not well. I'm better so there is that.
Start working on your reports which are due at Family Camp. Don't save them for the last meeting of the year.
As always, if you have any questions, concerns or ideas, let me know.
Alice Daley, Director

INFORMATION

On January 14th, I "attended" a zoom conference with National Grange as they launched their newest project. It is called Project Sustenance. There were 67 attendees from all over the country. National President Christine Hamp talked a bit about the project having three pillars. Unfortunately, they were talking faster than I could write, so I only got two. Food Security and Community Resilience. Christine Hamp's big burning questions were. **Does your community know who you are? Does your community know where you are? Does your community know what the Grange is?**
There were several speakers telling what their Granges are doing for projects. Some of them were getting speakers about suicide awareness, Homesteading, Disaster preparedness. This last consisted of things like making up flood buckets with items needed for the next flood and having them stored and ready. Also, personal hygiene packets filled with toothbrush, soap, washcloth, towel and the like… also to be stored and ready for the next flood or disaster.
Several of the ideas they talked about made me think of Capital City Grange as it's pretty much what their Saturdays look like.
They also emphasized that it can be a profitable thing or a non-profit. Both are OK.
One of the Granges does a yearly Festival type thing where they get the FFA, 4-H, Feed store owners, as well as Grangers to have a field day with many demonstrations going on for the day. People can come and go from booth to booth and learn things like weaving, canning, fermenting, jelly making, milking goats, making sourdough, making a stove out of cement blocks, etc. Sounded like a fun day to me!
For more information on Project Sustenance, please go to the National Grange website at https://www.nationalgrange.org/projectsustenance/
There are several things on the site already about what Granges are doing. I found the evening to be very enlightening.
Lois Allen, Director

IN MEMORY

Daniel Boone, age 87, left this life November 10, 2024 a member of Tunbridge Grange #384. He has been a member for many years. He helped to reorganize the Tunbridge Grange in 1990.

Rebecca (Becky) Blanchard, a 32-year member of Blue Spruce Grange #574 passed away in January 2025.

GRANGE HAPPENINGS,

Bartonsville Grange - We have stayed open all year and have had a busy fall and winter, we too did the dictionary's and we did a few different places for the Christmas Gifts, disables in their homes as well as a nursing home, we had a pot luck dinner with Santa and gifts for the community children, we are now getting some things ready for the ground work for our pavilion in the spring, we have been working with the fire department as they have needed our assistance, and we will continue to help them in the upcoming months. We are also thinking of the 4th of July parade and maybe having a bake sale as well. We have been busy with rentals and more coming up, we do our funerals for free and those will book pretty quick in the spring, as always, we are looking for new members and new ideas to help our Grange grow!!! Charlyn Start, reporting

Blue Mountain Grange will host an Emergency Preparedness Program on January 28th. A food drive will be held on Saturday, February 1st. Bingo is held every Saturday at 6:00 PM. Tyler Pokines, reporting

Blue Spruce Grange #574 members slowed down a bit after all our activities listed in the December edition of the Green Mountain Granger. We held our annual Holiday Party in December with lots of good food and fun games to play.
Three of our members attended the 2025 Leaders Conference in Danvers Mass. The Conference held two workshops and multiple Meetings. The workshops (Aligning Your Strategic Plan to Your Core Values – Conducted by Katie Gilfeather and Finding Hidden Potential and Empowering Members by Teresa Kenney and Mary Jordan) were scheduled in such a way that all attendees could attend both. They also had a field trip to tour the Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School. Please note that next year's Conference will be hosted by Vermont.
As noted in December's issue, Blue Sprue members collected 68 toys for Christmas for the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction. Not all the items were chosen by families in need. Some of the toys, not chosen, were taken to the Pediatric Ward at the Medical Center by our Community Service Director Nikki Yandow.
Our very talented crafters are busy working on projects for the Big-E, our own craft fair at the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction later this year and the contests in the Program Book.
During the next few months, we will be planning our float in the Essex Junction Memorial Day Parade. Prior to the Parade, Blue Spruce will be giving out Quilts of Valor to two Veterans. They will be awarded before the parade starts and hopefully the 2 recipients will be joining us on our parade float.
We are also planning a celebration of our 1,000th Blue Spruce Meeting. More to come on this as planning is firmed up.
In closing, I want to wish all my fellow Grangers a Happy Valentine's Day and Presidents Day. I hope that once Presidents Day is in the past, Spring is not far behind. Stay well and safe out there. Janice M Rousselle, Master reporting

Capital City Grange - Over the winter months, we have been having a number of "life-saving" events, including blood drives and training in CPR and AED use sponsored by and held at our Hall in the last couple of months. In January, the Montpelier Contra Dance Committee, which purchased the AED for our Hall, held a full training in CPR with resuscitation breathing plus AED training, for the committee and others in the community. This training offered certification—and it looks as if there is a need for more certification classes like this in our area. Stay tuned for more info!
We will start off February on the 1st, with an informal ½ hour meeting at 4:30. At 5:00, we'll have the second in our free trainings in "Hands-Only" CPR + AED use. A trainer from the American Heart Associations will provide the training, which includes video and in-person instruction, plus several training dummies, so you can get hands-on experience. Please join us—no need to register, and all ages are welcome! FYI, these free trainings do not offer any certification. As usual, we'll have a potluck dinner in our accessible Lower Level from 6:00 to 7:00, following the training.
Also in February, we'll have our "Family Weekend" event combination: Saturday 2/8 will feature "Kids Trade & Play" in the Lower Level from 9:30 to 11:30 AM, and Sunday 2/9 will feature "Dance, Sing and Jump Around". These two family-oriented events,

open to all, never turn anyone away. Both provide great opportunities for socializing for the families who take part, especially valued in the cold winter months.
We anticipate the third Red Cross Blood Drive in the series that started in November 2024 will take place in March; exact date TBD. The Red Cross is very happy to have our space available—lots of parking and plenty of room for them to set up. These events have been set up by Merry Shernock, our Grange Treasurer and Rental agent. The Red Cross has had some trouble publicizing the Grange as a "Montpelier" donation site, but they and we hope to change that with additional publicity.
Also, for March, we are starting to plan an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the induction of a large number of new members—about 70 people joined in January, 2005! We are hoping to stimulate other members of our Grange community to take a more active part in keeping our Grange going. We plan to include a "Family Fun Day" at the Hall to draw more younger families in.
Our Calendar remains full of lots of other events as well, of course. Looking ahead to the last week of February, we'll have a full week of Vermont Youth Theater "Theater Camp" filling the Hall—always a lot of excitement as a bunch of kids rehearse a new show. Tim Swartz reporting

Charlotte Grange closed out 2024 with 48 members...we are in a time of steady growth, wonderful programming, increasing opportunities for community connections, and exciting future visions for our Grange Hall and our organization. Our program committee is busy planning for 2025. Our website, charlottegrange.org, is the best way to find out our latest updates and upcoming event and program details. -Tai Dinnan reporting

Ferrisburgh Grange #539 - National Grange honored 92-year-old Ferrisburgh Grange Member, Helen Hawkins Cobb with a special pin and Certificate for 75 years of "Steadfast, Faithful, and Devoted" contributions to the "Development and Accomplishments of the Grange membership." The beautifully framed, ornate Certificate and pin were presented in an online meeting convened by special guest Master, Deputy State Grange Master, Brenda Rouselle.
Helen, now living in Middlebury at the Helen Porter Rehabilitation and Nursing Retirement Home, grew up on the family farm in Ferrisburgh. In comments after the presentation, and from the account of the ceremony in the *Addison Independent*, we hear, "she joined the Grange with her two brothers [twins, James and John] and two other youths when she was fourteen years old." She said, "The Grange and one-room schoolhouses were the heart of the community then." Ferrisburgh Grange President, Don Peabody, recalls the Hawkins family as long-time family friends and says, "they were at the center of everything that made Ferrisburgh what it is." He particularly enjoyed, in later years, working with Helen at CVOEO/Addison Community Action in Middlebury as she transported Medicaid patients to and from medical appointments. Karlene Devine, another life-long friend of the Hawkins, made it possible for Helen to participate in her first Grange meeting since she left Ferrisburgh for residence in care homes. Now that Helen's settled at "Porter Nursing Home", she's once again a regular attender through the miracle of Zoom. Don Peabody reporting

Gassett Grange will be opening back up in the Spring as it was closed for the winter. At this point we are planning a big bake sale, as well as cleaning up and doing some painting at the hall! We are going to promote rentals and of course we still offer the hall for funeral services, we had a busy fall/winter, with the dictionaries and the Christmas gifts for the Senior center and shut ins. As always, we are looking for new members. Charlyn Start, reporting

Marble Valley Grange with help from the Rural Life Initiative Grant through the National Grange, Marble Valley Grange held a toy drive with Santa and his elves at Dollar General in Pittsford on December 15th, where we collected 67 toys and over $200 in cash donations for holiday gifts for local children in need. Mark your calendars: We will be having a basket raffle fundraiser for our Grange on April 12th at the American Legion in West Rutland. Drawings start at 1pm. Jessica Falker, reporting

Middle Branch Grange - In December, Middle Branch presented the following membership awards: 25 years for Kristi Conant, Jackie Garrapy, Patricia Gast, and George Gast. 60 years to Joe Williams. 65 years to Patricia Hemenway, Nancy Hutchins, and Dalene Whitcomb. 70 years to Lester Gibbs. We purchased a storage container and have removed salvageable items from the hall. Our winter card parties have started up again and will likely continue until March (or sugaring season). On January 26 we will be conferring the 1st and 2nd degrees with Riverside Grange; we will meet at the octagon in East Bethel at 1:00pm. On February 9, Middle Branch will travel to Riverside for the 3rd and 4th degrees. We are looking forward to working with Riverside and we hope other Grangers will take this opportunity to visit.
Our next fundraising event is the Cabin Fever Bazaar on February 1 at VSU Randolph Campus (formerly VTC). This annual event is hosted by the East Randolph Fire Department Auxiliary. Middle Branch will be selling pies, donuts, cinnamon buns, etc.
Our Worthy Secretary Jackie Garrapy published the first issue of "Middle Branch in a Minute" in December. This is a one-page newsletter that goes out to our membership every 2 months. Great idea Jackie! Judy Powell, Lecturer

Tunbridge Grange #384 has had a busy winter season so far beginning with our annual Harvest Supper in November, followed by a community craft fair and holiday bingo night in early December. Proceeds from the bingo night were donated to local families in need and causes that members voted to support. Friday night bingo runs through April at 6:30 pm at the Tunbridge Town Hall. We continue to work on building repairs and hope to renovate our kitchen. If you have any tips for us, contact Master Mary Roberts at marelizrob@gmail.com. Peggy Willoughby reporting

GET YOUR ARTICLES AND PICTURES IN THE GMG!
Send articles and pictures to
- Brenda Rousselle at brousselle@myfairpoint.net or
- Deborah Ploof at Deborah.ploof@outlook.com

so we can have your news and activities in the GMG!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
We want to add a new section to the GMG. When your Grange brings in new members, send us their name and Grange. We will list them in the Granger. No addresses, just name and Grange name. Let's toot our horns when this happens!

IN MEMORY
If your Grange sadly has a member die, be sure to notify the State Chaplain, Jenny Nelson. Also send the information to us. We will include their name, Grange name, and if you have it, the number of years they were a Granger in the next issue of the Granger.