



Grange Beacon

Volume 69

A publication of the Rhode Island State Grange

March 2024



Master's Message

Walter Hartley
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Well, a lot sure has happened since the last edition of The Beacon.

As you already know, I was honored to have been elected as the Assistant Steward of the National Grange!! Talk about a dream come true for a little kid sitting in that same seat as a Junior Granger. I was asked to submit my bio to National for their website with a list of my previous Grange positions, titles and committees. I joked with Phil Vonada about being the Assistant Steward at every level of the Grange and that it was my favorite position, along with Steward. He joked and said that I've also been Master at each level as well. Yikes, we'll see my Grange journey takes me.

While I'm talking about National, I want to thank EVERYONE that took part in any way to make our region shine as we did. We had a great turnout of 23 from Rhode Island with 9 candidates taking the 7th Degree. I was extremely proud of all the hard work that you did and that you were there for my installation.

Congratulations to Nettie on her very busy and successful year representing Little Rhody as the National Junior Grange Ambassador. I was excited to have been able to get the time off to join her, Gail and Autumn on their trips. From California to New Hampshire and a boat load in between. With the exception of flying to California and Texas, we drove everywhere else putting about 5,600 miles on the Buick. I had a chance to speak with the Masters of Pennsylvania and North Carolina during our travels and congratulated them on their Young Patrons and thanked them for allowing me to be part of their journey. To watch these three young ladies mature during this past year was amazing and I'm looking forward to watching them continue with their Grange Growth. When they each gave their end-of-the-year-thank-you reports, there weren't too many dry eyes in the room, especially from Danielle and myself.

Thank you to all of our Department Directors for putting their books together and all those that gathered at our State Wide Information Day. I'm looking forward to all of the different contests and events that are upcoming and I'm asking that the Junior, Subordinate and Pomona Granges promote these as much as they can and for all of our Grangers to enter and attend as many as possible to show them the support for their hard works and dedication.

I'm hoping that you all had a Blessed Christmas and brought in the New Year with family and friends. I've never been one to make any New Year's Resolutions, but if you have, good luck with them and keep them in focus. Actually, years ago I made a resolution not to make any more resolutions. I've been doing great keeping that one.

I'm very excited to report that the Northeast Region is getting back into the swing of things with our conferences. Earlier in January, New Hampshire hosted our Leader's Conference with 93 people in attendance. WOW!! We had 19 from Rhode Island!! We tied with Massachusetts for the number of attendees, but would have had about 5-6 more if not for sickness. Next year our Leader's Conference will be hosted in Massachusetts. While in our break-out sessions, it was discussed that we'll be returning to our true New England traditions with the NE Lecturer's Association having their conference in June hosted by Connecticut, a Youth Conference hosted by New York in July as well as a NE Church Service hosted in Vermont the weekend after the Youth Conference. You could feel the buzzzzzz in the room all weekend! A huge THANK YOU to NH State Master Tricia Taylor and Jerry LeClerk for planning such a GREAT conference.

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Juniors Judi White

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juniors.rigrange.org

Happy New Year!! The Junior Program for 2024 has been planned and distributed to all the Granges. There are many things to keep all of us busy over the coming year. There were some changes to the Junior Program this year, we decided to not have a Junior Activity Day and instead ask the Pomona Granges to host the contests during the year. We also have a new contest this year Grange Baseball, which is a Grange trivia-based contest. Please check your Grange's Junior Program Book or the Junior Department website for all information regarding contests, crafts, and or events.

RI was well represented at National Grange Session in Niagara Falls, NY in November. Scarlet Gotauco placed 1st in the Creative Writing Contest for the 8-10 age category. Juliana Gerlach placed 1st in the Creative Writing Contest for the 11-14 age category and she also placed 2nd in the 11-14 age category for her Creative Art Deaf Awareness Poster. Lily Piers competed in the Junior Public Speaking Contest and was awarded Best of Show. Cohen Piers competed in the Junior Sign A Song Contest and was awarded Best of Show. Moosup Valley Junior Grange #27 received Honorable Mention for their Community Service Report. We should all be proud of our Juniors and their accomplishments. We have some amazing kids in our state. Please come out during 2024 to the different events and support the Juniors.

Upcoming events - Juniors

March 2nd - 2pm Lip Sync Contest
Location: Roger Williams – Rumford Grange
Registration from 1:30pm-1:45pm *No Late Registrations*

4pm Providence County Pomona Potluck Supper
5pm Providence County Pomona Meeting – Program:
Youth Night

April 6th - 2pm Public Speaking/Sign Language Contests
Location: Chepachet Grange
Registration from 1:30pm-1:45pm *No Late Registrations*

4pm Providence County Pomona Potluck Supper
5pm Providence County Pomona Meeting – Program:
Women's Activities Night

June 22nd - 2pm Grange Baseball
Location: Washington County Fairgrounds
Registration from 1:30pm-1:45pm *No Late Registrations*
7pm Washington County Pomona Meeting – Program:
Granger Olympics
August 1st Due to State Junior Director
Host State Craft: Iowa Recycle Craft: Water Bottle
Necktie Craft
Soap Carving Craft
“All About Me” Craft
Creative Art Corn Craft
Creative Writing Entries (State & National)
Deaf & Health Creative Art Contest
Mini Prince & Mini Princess Applications
State Junior Ambassador Applications
Master of the Year Applications
National Junior Agricultural Awareness Project
National Junior Creative Writing Entries
National Junior Creative Art Contest Entries
National Junior Cape of Honor Award Applications
National Grange Community Service Contest Report
National Junior Ambassador Applications
September 21st - 1pm Junior Awards Ceremony
Location: Moosup Valley Grange



Deaf & Health Jennifer Lawson

statedeafhealth@rigrange.org

I hope that you are staying warm. Winter has finally arrived, and it is a good time to get some soups, and then scan those receipts.

The department has a few new chairpersons so I would like to take this time to welcome them, and if you have any questions please call me.

Coming up in April is the bowl a thon on Sunday April 28th at Dudek's starting at 2PM. Refreshments will be served at Kickemuit Grange after bowling. This is open to all members and non-members.

I am planning on mailing out some health hints or you can get your own. If you use any of mine, or find your own please save them, and add it to your report. As, far as reports I know some don't like to do them, but please I am interested, and can make it to all the meetings. Sharing them in the year-end report is the best way for me to see what each Grange has done.

If anyone has questions please email or call me



Agriculture
Joyce Bastien
jeh.31@yahoo.com

Hello. I hope everyone is doing well and staying warm this winter. After I finish writing this I will be heading off to Port St. Lucie to visit my sister and relax while I am waiting to see my heart failure specialist. Hopefully my medication has been working.

I am looking forward to all the activities everyone has this year for us to participate in. Before you know it, Women's Activities Day will be here and that seems to be the start of it all.

The contests due for the Agricultural Department on that day will be the Birdhouse Contest, Milk Jug Contest, Decorated Flower Pot Contest, Potted Plant and the Collections Contest. I will be adding an entry form that didn't make it into the program Ag book. I will have the information put on the website and will also have some that day in case anyone doesn't have one. Good Luck to everyone!!!

I also added a picture to my article to show some of the Juniors wrapping at the Wakefield Mall this past December. Hailey Fish, Tristan, Scarlet and Kendall Gotauco came out to help raise money for the Friends of Exeter Animals and for their Community Service Project for this year. We donated \$800 to the Friends of Exeter Animals, paid for seeds from the URI and Job Lot "Free" Seed Program and still have a good amount of money left for candy for the Memorial Day Parade and Community Service Project. Great Job Juniors!!!



If I don't see you before, I hope to see everyone at Women's Activities Day on May 4th at the Exeter Grange!

If you have any questions call or email me at 401-465-9571 or jeh.31@yahoo.com



Chaplain
Stephen Logan
statechaplain@rigrange.org

Coming up soon are a couple of great church services where we can all come together as a Grange family for worship and fellowship. First during Grange Month, the State Master Walter has invited us to "Go to Church with the State Master" for 5PM on Sunday April 7th, at Saint Joseph Church, located at 144 Danielson Pike, North Scituate.

Additionally, the next Church Service is our Annual State Grange Service which everyone is invited to attend. It will be hosted by Providence County Pomona at Hope Congregational Church at 3 PM. The address is 120 Wampanoag Trail, East Providence.

Save the dates April 7th and June 2nd in your calendars; additional details about both services will be provided as we get closer to the dates.

With Valentine's Day season upon us, I wondered how many times the word love was mentioned in the Bible? I found the number of times love was used to be very interesting: English Standard Version: 684, King James Version: 442, New American Standard Bible: 479, New Living Translation: 759 and New International Version: 686. One thing to note is that the King James Version count does not include the count for "charity," a word used in the early 17th century when translation was first published which referred to the highest form of love, selfless, and doing in return. "Charity" appears in the King James Bible approximately 24 times. The most famous passage using this word love is 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13, which defines the word, and puts everything together into a verse, (1 Corinthians 13:13). "*and now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity*" I find this very interesting in Grange principals, Faith, Hope and Charity, sound familiar?

I would like to remind all that I would appreciate sick or in need names and addresses to send cards sent to me for the monthly Chaplains Letter sent to me by the 20th of each month. If you do not have email and would like to call me, please call my home 783-3551 and leave a call back number.



Information Howard Paster

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I will start this issue by mentioning that back in November, I assisted with bringing food to National Grange Session in Niagara Falls, New York for the Hospitality Room. On duty Tuesday November 14, 2023 for Rhode Island teaming with Connecticut as part of hosting the hospitality room. I brought the food myself. Also while at National Session, I watched the opening of National Grange Session and revisited with Grange friends from different states. Also revisited with a past Rhode Island Grange member, Joyce Dutton, who now lives in New York, within a half hour from Niagara Falls.

Later in November and into December, I organized a Coat Drive for St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Charlestown for three Sundays in a row, teaming with Exeter Grange. We collected 65 coats for the 3 weeks, to be donated to Camp Street Ministries in Providence.

On Sunday December 3, 2024, Statewide Information Day was held at Roger Williams-Rumford Grange Hall. We heard highlights from National Grange Session from the Hartley's, including our State Grange Master Walter Hartley being elected and installed as Assistant Steward of the National Grange. I distributed the department books to Granges, and talked about programs and contests with all the departments, including changes within the departments.

On Wednesday December 20, 2024, I assisted with delivering 682 coats and other warm items for winter for Exeter Grange and St. Andrew Lutheran Church to Camp Street Ministries in Providence for the challenged families in the area. Camp Street Director Adrian Caitlin took a group photo which was distributed to and printed in a number of newspapers.

On the weekend of January 12-14, 2024, I attended the Northeast Leaders Conference, hosted in New Hampshire by the New Hampshire State Grange in Concord, New Hampshire at the Holiday Inn-Concord Downtown. A total of 93 people attended from all the states, including 19 members from Rhode Island. For the breakout groups with the departments, I sat in with the Junior Directors as there was no one representing the Information Department, nor my job in Pomona with Deaf & Health. There were excellent workshops and learned a lot from this conference.

I will mention the contests in the Information Department in the next issue.

If anyone has any questions or comments with the programs in the Information Department, you can contact any of the committee members Paul & Barbara Rush, Peggy Fish, Cathy Kamowski or myself Howard Paster.



Photo by Adrian Caitlin



Youth

Walter Hartley
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Eileen Hebert
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Punxsutawney Phil has promised us an early spring, so here's hoping that the prediction holds true. Good Weather for our upcoming events!

Our first activity of the year will be bowling at Old Mountain Lanes in Wakefield on Friday night, March 16, 2024. We had a good turnout last year, and hope to have even more this coming year. Anyone that would like to join us for a night of fun, please make sure you make a reservation with me by March 1.

Another new contest is the Digital Scavenger Hunt. This will run for 16 weeks, and is open to all members, including juniors, although their parents may have to drive them to find some of the objects. It is highly recommended that you have a digital camera or smart phone. There will be a new item each week, announced via emails to all who have signed up. There was only one entrant last year, but the contest was announced mid-year so it may not have gotten the necessary promotion.

The Digital Scavenger Hunt will start on March 23, but you need to register with me (Eileen) by March 16, so I can send you the information each week

We will again try to hold the Youth Activity Day, on April 21, 2024 at the Washington County Fairgrounds. Activities will include a Walk-a-thon, Bean Bag Baseball tournament, and chocolate chip cookie contest. Hopefully, Mother Nature will not conspire against us, and the weather will be nice!

Programs of the Granges of Rhode Island
March 1, 2024 thru May 31, 2024

Moosup Valley Juniors - 10:00 am
 Providence County Pomona – 4:00
 Washington County Pomona - 7:00
 unless otherwise stated

Newport County Pomona starts at 7:00
 unless otherwise stated

Other Grange meetings start at 7:30 except:
 * meeting at 7:00 pm
 ** meeting at 8:00 pm

OM - Open Meeting **PL** - Pot Luck

Outlined items are state events – the department sponsoring the event is listed at the right of the box. In most cases more information is found in the column for that department

<<Note – Due to COVID issues, you should call ahead to verify that a grange is meeting>>

Friday, March 01

Reservations - Bowling Night Youth-Eileen Hebert

*Richmond Brown Bag Auction

Saturday, March 02

Lip Sync Contest- 2:00PM Juniors
RW-Rumford Registration – 1:30-1:45

Providence City Pomona RW-Rumford
 Youth Night

Tuesday, March 05

Chepachet Surprise Lecturer's Program

Wednesday, March 06

*Perryville Alaska
 Moosup Valley Bean Bag Baseball
 RW-Rumford Youth Night – "Fun, Fun, Fun"

Thursday, March 07

*Portsmouth Women's Activities Program

Friday, March 08

Slocum Foster Parents talk/info

Monday, March 11

Hope Valley(6PM) Youth Night & Pie Contest
 *Kickemuit Deaf & Health Program

Wednesday, March 13

Kent City Pomona Old Warwick
 Happy St. Patrick's Day

Meeting St School Tour-10am) Women's Activities
Reservations needed - contact Kathy Stedman

Thursday, March 14

*Newport City Pomona Kickemuit
 Women's Activities Program

Friday, March 15

*Richmond Agriculture Program

Saturday, March 16

Youth Bowling Night-6:00 to 9:00pm Youth
Old Mountain Lanes- Wakefield

Sign up for Digital Scavenger Hunt Youth-Eileen

Monday, March 18

*Ashaway WAC Program-Taste, Test, Time

Tuesday, March 19

Chepachet Agriculture Night

Wednesday, March 20

*Little Compton(PL6:00) Spring Arrives 2024
 Old Warwick Washington Cty Fair by Walt Weber
 RW-Rumford First Full Day of Spring –
 Let's "Spring" into Action

Thursday, March 21

Exeter March Madness

*Rocky Hill St. Joseph's & St. Patrick's Day

Friday, March 22

Slocum Agriculture Night

Saturday, March 23

Washington City Pomona Exeter
 All about bees – Beekeeper Demonstration

Digital Scavenger Hunt Starts Youth

Monday, March 25

*Kickemuit Irish Sweepstakes, WAC Program

Saturday, March 30

Rockin' Music Bingo-2-5PM Lecturer
2x2x2 – entries due by 1:00PM Loc – RW-Rumford

Richmond Easter Egg Hunt

Monday, April 01

Sign up for Bean Bag Baseball Youth-Eileen

Tuesday, April 02

Chepachet Deaf & Health(change)

Wednesday, April 03

*Perryville(OM) Grange Month
 Community Service & Grange Longevity Awards
 Moosup Valley Happy Easter!
 RW-Rumford CWA Program & Penny Social

Thursday, April 04

*Portsmouth Community Service Awards Night

Friday, April 05

*Richmond Deaf & Health

Saturday, April 06

Providence City Pomona Chepachet
 Women's Activities Program

Public Speaking/Sign-a-Song- 2:00PM Juniors
Chepachet Registration – 1:30-1:45

Sunday, April 07

Go To Church with State Master-5:00PM Chaplain
St Joseph's Church, North Scituate

Monday, April 08

Hope Valley(6PM) Community Service Awards
 Grange Longevity Awards

*Kickemuit(OM) Community Service &
 Anniversary Night

Thursday, April 11

*Newport Cty Pomona Kickemuit
Community Service Awards

Friday, April 12

Slocum Master Gardner talk

Monday, April 15

*Ashaway Time to Plant

Tuesday, April 16

Chepachet Youth Night(change)

Wednesday, April 17

*Little Compton(OM) Awards Night
Old Warwick Steamship Historical Society – Donald Nevin

RW-Rumford(OM) (PL6:30) Community Night

Thursday, April 18

Exeter It's All About the Bees
*Rocky Hill to be announced

Friday, April 19

*Richmond Casino Night

Sunday, April 21

**Youth Activities Day- 12:00PM Youth
Washington Cty Fairgrounds – Walk-a-Thon, Bean
Bag Baseball, Grange Baseball**

Monday, April 22

*Kickemuit Youth Night – Bean Bag Baseball

Thursday, April 25

**Papa Gino's Fundraiser Community Service
Warwick**

Friday, April 26

Slocum Community Service Night

Saturday, April 27

Washington Cty Pomona Perryville
Youth Night

Sunday, April 28

**Bowl-a-Thon - 3:00PM Deaf & Health
Dudek's - Warren Refreshments- Kickemuit**

Wednesday, May 01

*Perryville Memorial Service
Plant Auction

Moosup Valley Memorial Program
RW-Rumford In honor of the Kentucky Derby on
May 4 – "RWR Horse Race"

Thursday, May 02

*Portsmouth Memorial Program

Friday, May 03

*Richmond Community Service

Saturday, May 04

Providence Cty Pomona TBA
Memorial Service

**Women's Activities Day- 9AM-2PM WAC
Baking entries judging at 10AM
Ag contest entries due by 9AM - Bird House, Milk
Jug, Decorated Flower Pot, Potted Plants**

Tuesday, May 07

Chepachet Memorial Service

Thursday, May 09

*Newport Cty Pomona Little Compton
Memorial Service

Friday, May 10

Slocum WAC Night

Saturday, May 11

Slocum Mother's Day Breakfast

Monday, May 13

*Hope Valley Memorial Program
*Kickemuit Memorial Program

Wednesday, May 15

*Little Compton(PL6:00) Memorial Program
Old Warwick Health Matters by Jacklyn Ross
RW-Rumford Memorial & Patriotic Programs

Thursday, May 16

Exeter Red, White & Blue
*Rocky Hill Planning our Gardens

Friday, May 17

*Richmond Memorial Service

Saturday, May 18

Washington Cty Pomona Ashaway hosts/ place TBA
Memorial Service – Memorial Day Trivia

Monday, May 20

*Ashaway Prep for Hosting Pomona

Tuesday, May 21

Chepachet(OM) Awards Night

Friday, May 24

Slocum Memorial Program

Saturday, June 01

Public Speaking & Sign-a-Song entries due Youth

Sunday, June 02

**State Grange Church Service-3:00PM Chaplain
Hope Congregational Church, East Providence**



Laura Gotauco and daughter, Scarlett, perform a sign-a-song at a recent youth night at Slocum Grange. Great job girls!



Community Service

Marie Robidoux

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Hi everyone. We have finally had a few snow storms. Love it! Look out your windows and enjoy the landscape and trees with beautiful diamond crystals. Enjoy the coziness of winter.

The next Papa Gino Community Service fundraiser is April 25, 2024 at Papa Gino's in Warwick. Come eat, have fun, and support Rhode Island State Grange Community Service.

There is still plenty of time to get dictionaries into schools for the third graders. Please do as many schools as possible. If you need help, please call me.

Contributions for our vets or the VAVS program are welcomed all year, especially \$5 gift cards to CVS, DD, McDonald's, etc. Deodorant and toothpaste are presently needed; however, all items are welcome. Thank you ever so much to Washington County Pomona for their extremely generous donation of gift cards at Christmas time.

April is Grange Month. A great time for your Grange to do Community Service Awards for a citizen, law enforcement officer, teacher, firefighter and group. The evening can be incorporated with Grange memberships awards, or honoring members for special projects. I am awaiting invitations to Award Community Service nights.

There is still a huge need for staples and money for food banks and pantries. Please continue your generosity. Easter is March 31st. The Easter Bunny could use a little help. Candy would be very much appreciated as part of your donation to the Food Bank. Don't forget, also, to help our four-legged friends as much as possible.

Peter Pompper is no longer the National Grange Community Service Director. Chris Hamp, the new National Grange president has appointed a committee of six people to continue Peter's work. To my surprise, Ms. Hamp asked me to be a member of this new National Grange Community Service Team. We are from all over the country, Maine/Illinois, Kansas, Indiana, Ohio, and Iowa. We have had two Zoom meetings. It should be interesting and fun. I will keep you informed. Happy St. Patrick's Day and a Blessed Easter.



Northeast Host Comm

Annette Hartley

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I hope all are doing well! I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone who either came or helped make the National Session back in November such a big success. We had about 26 Rhode Islanders including 3 juniors and 3 youth. Rhode Island day went great, thanks to Shirley Lawson for running the hospitality room and Celeste and Synda for running the registration desk as well as any other volunteers. We were also able to collect about 600 pairs of socks to go towards the community service project. 300 pairs were brought to NY and the rest stayed in state to be donated to homeless shelters. A big thanks to Roxanne Nelson and Dottie Moone for donating the most socks. National session wouldn't have been possible without everyone's help and support. Our state received many compliments for the kind people and for being so generous. Not only did we represent well but we were able to bring home lots of awards!

Starting with our Juniors:

Cohen Piers won Best of Show for sign-a-song
Scarlet Gotauco won 1st place in creative writing
Lily Piers won Best of Show for public speaking
And Juliana Gerlach won 1st place for creative writing
and 2nd place for creative art

For Youth/Young Adult:

Makayla Piers won 1st place for Sign-a-song

National Officers:

Walter Hartley- elected as National Grange Assistant Steward



Photo courtesy of Walter Hartley

RI members at National Session

Master's Message from page 1

One of the meetings I ran with the NE Connection, we had our Election of Officers and after 4-years as its President, I chose to step aside where Mass State Master Corey Spence was elected for the next 2-year term. It was bit bitter-sweet as I've enjoyed being part of our region getting back to our normal schedule of conferences and being vocal with anyone outside our region trying to get us to change the way we do things. Well, you know me, I'll always be vocal whenever I feel like we're being told what to do and how we should be doing it.

I've also recently stepped down as our Union President for the City of Warwick's Municipal Employees. I've been in a union position for the past 17 of my 20 years working here, and that was a tough decision to make as well. But let me tell you, I DO NOT miss all the phone calls, meetings and other daily BS that went along with it.

A quick thank you to Paul Brodeur for making arrangements in taking care of the NEW suppression system canister from the Corn Dog Booth. They really shouldn't be left out in the winter temperatures and I wasn't about to chance it. They removed ours when they took the one out of Richmond's Steak Barn.

After a brief conversation with our State Chaplain, he reminded me about going to Church with the State Master. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, April 7th at 5:00 PM. I am inviting you all join Danielle, Nettie and I at St. Joseph's Church in North Scituate. St. Joseph's Church is located at the corner of Routes 6 and 116 in the down town village area. This 5:00 PM Mass is also scheduled as our Youth Ministries Mass where the Youth Choir and musicians will be performing. This is not our State Grange Church Service, so no sashes will be needed, just come as you are and join us in Fellowship.

So, until we see each other at the event or meeting, please be safe during the remaining months of the winter.



Photo courtesy of Walter Hartley

RI Members at the Northeast Conference in January



Photo by

Rhode Island's hospitality crew at National Session.
Seated: John A. Lawson III, Howard Paster
Standing: Jennifer Lawson, Shirley Lawson

??Where can I find out more information about....??

Maybe you or your grange is looking for information about a contest, event, or grange policy. There are several places to turn to.

National Grange website: has information on projects, events, contests sponsored by the National Grange. You can also download the National Grange Digest (Bylaws), Journal of Proceedings, Grange Policy, Grange News, etc. Just browse what's available at nationalgrange.org

You can sign up to receive news by email (Patron's Chain, View from the Hill), or subscribe to the Grange magazine "Good Day" – 4 issues for \$16 per year.

For members who have been obligated as their way of joining the grange and never received any information about the ritual lessons of the grange, they may be interested in the Zoom sessions: "Lessons of the Degrees" with the Assembly of Demeter – 4 part series – March 11, June 10, September 16, December 9. You will need to create a signon to access these zoom sessions.

State Grange: The State Grange does post on Facebook, but does not have a traditional website that is regularly maintained. You can find a lot of information at www.rigrange.org/books.html - type this on the search line of your browser

This site contains all of the department program books, as well as documents on Grange policy, bylaws, meeting guides, and other items.

Lastly, you can always turn to the State Grange Officers, Deputies and Department Heads. Not everyone will have an answer for every question, but will do their best to get you an answer.

Hope this has been helpful in your search for information!

News from National Grange

National Grange Building Sold

By Christine E. Hamp, National Grange President

It is with mixed emotions that I let you know that I have signed the final paperwork and that our National Grange Headquarters Building at 1616 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. is sold.

The National Grange Executive Committee signed a Purchase and Sale Agreement with 1616 H Street NW LLC, a District of Columbia limited liability company, on January 17, 2024, and the sale closed on Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

This journey began in November 2021 with the difficult vote to sell our headquarters building. Since that day, there have been countless hours spent by many people making sure that we got the best deal possible based on the current economic and real estate conditions.

The sale price was \$10.3 million. After paying off the \$1.3 million left on our mortgage, broker commissions, title and escrow charges, local taxes and fees, and as the prorating of final rent payments, utility bills, and existing service contracts are wrapped up by the Title company over the next few weeks, we have a net \$8.12 million to invest. The investment advisory committee formed per Resolution 203 in 2021 will reengage and get a Request for Proposal (RFP) out as soon as possible to find an advisor to manage our investment funds. Please know that in the meantime the National Grange Executive Committee has opened an account to protect our proceeds in short-term U.S. Government securities. I will keep you informed of our progress as we move forward with the process laid out in Resolution 203.

The Purchase and Sale Agreement requires us to vacate our 11th floor offices and the basement levels in the next 30 days but allows us to remain in our new 1st and 2nd floor spaces free of charge for six (6) months. The National Grange Executive Committee is working to determine our needs and reviewing our options for what to do moving forward once our six (6) months run out.

Past National Grange President Kermit Richardson said it best many years ago – “The Grange does not live at 1616



H Street. The Grange lives in the many communities we serve.” I, and I fervently hope all of you as well, am excited for this next chapter of the National Grange. #GrangeStrong!

Grace and Mercy

As you can imagine, the next 30 days are going to be extremely busy and arduous (a good Grange word) for your National Grange staff. We have been pre-planning and will be doing everything humanly possible to keep up with the day-to-day operations of the National Grange. However, every workspace and the entire Grange Store must be completely moved and re-set up. Please do not wait until the last minute to make your requests. Your grace and mercy are gratefully accepted.

National Lecturer’s Programming Updates

By Tom Gwin, National Grange Lecturer

As I begin my term as the National Grange Lecturer, I have reviewed all current contests and programs currently being offered by the department.

The contests will remain as printed in the 2024 National Grange Program Guide with one addition. Upon recommendation of the National Junior Grange Leadership Team, we will be adding a Junior Grange Division to the Virtual Photo Contest. This division will be open to Junior Grangers, ages 5-13. We will use the age as of January 1. There will be three classes for Junior Grangers: Pets, Nature, and Scenic Photos. Contest guidelines and the entry form will be distributed at the National Grange Leaders Conference next week and then sent to State Lecturers and Junior Grange Directors.

The remaining contests: Quilt Block, Garden Design, Virtual Photo Contest, Weather Watcher Challenge, and Design-a-Program Contest will all remain as printed in the Program Guide.

We will also be continuing our partnership with the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

After a short hiatus, we will be resuming the Lecturer’s publication, *A Quarters Worth*. I am looking for program ideas to share with other lecturers nationwide. All submissions should be emailed to me at lecturer@nationalgrange.org. Our first deadline will be **February 25**. Later this year, we will also have submission deadlines of April 25, July 25, and October 25.

I am also putting together a **Lecturer Advisory Team** to offer advice and suggestions for future Grange programs and activities. I am looking for Grange Lecturers at all levels, subordinate up through state, to work with me on developing effective programs that will inspire our membership, create Grange awareness, and to build the camaraderie that we all desire from our Grange membership. The Lecturer Advisory Team will meet 4-6 times per year via Zoom. Interested persons and/or nominations for the Lecturer Advisory Team should be emailed no later than February 29 to lecturer@nationalgrange.org.

Register for the Virtual Legislative Fly-In



This year's National Grange Legislative Fly-In will be held virtually on **March 18**.

We hope you'll join National Grange staff, federal legislators, and issues partners for this educational afternoon. You'll learn what the National Grange is working on, how it affects all of rural America, and how you can get involved. This is a **FREE** offering from the National Grange for all members and friends of the Grange. Feel free to share this information and invitation with potential Grange members. Register today at <http://grange.biz/flyin2024>.

Commentary: Broadband Subsidy Enrollment Ends Today; Millions Are at Risk of Losing Internet

By *Chhaya Kapadia and Chris Sadler* for The Daily Yonder

The Affordable Connectivity Program is helping close the digital divide for one in six American families. The program is ceasing enrollment February 7, 2024, and will run out of money completely in April unless Congress acts. This is a problem we can – and must – fix.

FEBRUARY 7 - The Affordable Connectivity Program will freeze enrollment today (February 7, 2024) because funds are running out for this enormously effective federal program that helps people pay their internet bills. Already, roughly 23 million low-income households across America have received notices that the price of their internet service will go up by as much as \$30 in a few months—and that includes more than 8.7 million households in the United States' heartland region. An estimated 20+ million people lack access to broadband internet in the diverse landscape of small towns, urban centers and rural areas that comprise the America's heartland (an area that comprises 20 states in the central divisions of southern and Midwestern Census regions). For many millions more, the monthly costs of broadband can be high due to infrastructure costs and lack of competition, which leaves families struggling to choose between spending on internet service and putting food on the table. Unequal broadband access profoundly impacts all regions of the country. It is a technological and economic problem with effects that cut across political divides.

The ACP is an extension of the Emergency Broadband Benefit from the Covid-19 pandemic's early stages, which has helped narrow this digital divide by providing participating

households a subsidy of \$30 per month (\$75 on Tribal lands) for their internet bill if their income level is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or they participate in certain other assistance programs. Despite a bipartisan majority of voters supporting the ACP (62% of Republicans and 96% of Democrats), millions of households in the heartland will be at risk of no longer being able to pay for broadband internet service if Congress allows funding to run out.

Low population density and high deployment costs have limited the availability of broadband internet service in the smaller towns and rural areas of this swath of the country. Congress recently addressed the need to bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas through \$42.45 billion in funding via the Broadband, Equity, Accessibility and Deployment (BEAD) Program. Half of the 10 largest allocations will go to states considered part of the heartland—Missouri, Michigan, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas—with the largest state allocation overall of \$3.3 billion going to Texas.

While investments like BEAD will help increase availability of connectivity and choice through infrastructure investments, the other side of the broadband adoption equation is affordability of service. Simply put, internet insecurity is real, so people can only be said to have meaningful access to the internet if they can afford to pay the bill month after month.

Nationwide, 43% of eligible households are enrolled in the ACP, while half of those eligible had not even heard of the program a year ago. To spur more awareness and enrollment in the ACP, the FCC launched the ACP Outreach Grant Program to support community outreach efforts.

Across heartland states, enrollment rates vary from 14-17% in the more rural states of North and South Dakota (where network scarcity and population density issues can inhibit enrollment) to 57-59% in Ohio and Louisiana, respectively. Organizations and Native American groups in heartland states have been granted \$25.2 million of the \$66 million planned for ACP Outreach Grants but would lose access to that money if the ACP runs out of funding.

This would also jeopardize the jobs of digital navigators who were employed by that funding. Working through local community organizations and institutions to spread the word about the ACP and help sign up people via digital navigators has been an enormously successful outreach practice in the heartland, as in other parts of the country. Many communities have worked tirelessly to connect residents to ACP benefits, and an interruption in the benefit will harm their trust in those institutions and in their government, which once lost is even harder to regain.

Organizations like Heartland Forward, the American Connection Corps, and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) have been helping address disparities in internet affordability that can improve the lives of millions in the heartland. However, the ACP is set to run out of funding in April. This program is a social and economic investment that will allow *all* residents of the heartland to fully participate in life in the digital age. Failure to extend the ACP with new funding will reduce the efficacy of the huge connectivity investments made in the heartland through BEAD and leave a large digital equity gap in the center of our country.

Keep in touch...

Don't miss out on your next issue of the *RISG Grange Beacon*! If you have moved since your last issue, or you will be away temporarily for the winter or other reasons, please let us know. You may mail address changes to the address at the right or to the email address: ehebert94@aol.com. We must have your correct address for delivery, even temporary addresses. **Beacon issues will not be forwarded by the post office even if you have filed a change of address form.**

We would also appreciate hearing from anyone who, for whatever reason, does not want to continue receiving the Beacon. We are sorry to see you go, but will respond to your wishes promptly.

The *Grange Beacon* is published quarterly in March, June, September and December and is mailed free of charge to members of Rhode Island granges.

Submissions for publication can be sent by email (preferred) to:
 Eileen Hebert ehebert94@aol.com
 Please include the word "BEACON" in the subject

or by snail mail to:
 Eileen Hebert
 221 Grange Rd.
 North Smithfield, RI 02896

Deadlines are as follows:

March issue	January 20
June issue	April 20
September issue	July 20
December issue	October 20

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