



Maine State Grange Bulletin

*American Values.
Hometown Roots.*

Maine State Grange
146 State Street
Augusta Maine 04330

<http://MaineStateGrange.org>

DECEMBER 2022 ISSUE

The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

Sydney J. Harris

Highlights for Secretaries to Read

In this section, we'll try to help secretaries by providing a very short synopsis of each article. **Try just reading just this highlights section during "communications" and offer the Bulletin to those interested in more information.** "The Bulletin contains the following information..." Then post on the Bulletin Board or make copies so members can read the sections of interest.

- **President's Perspective**— *Report on National Convention*
- **Agriculture Report**— *No report*
- **Communications Column**— *Nudging and Nagging*
- **Community Service/FH&H Corner**— *No Report*
- **CWA Report**—
- **Educational Aid**— *No report*
- **From the Deacon's Bench**— *The true meaning of Christmas...*
- **Fundraising Committee Report**— *No report*
- **Junior Report**— *Meet the director*
- **Lecturer's Column**— *No report*
- **Legislative Report**— *No report*
- **Membership Moments**— *Good feelings impact membership*
- **From the Secretary's Desk**— *No report*
- **Youth Report**— *No report*
- **Exploring Traditions**— *Changing traditions... how much?*
- **View from the Farm**— *The cold has arrived and with it...*
- **Communication Shorts**— *Brief (short) items for our information and use*
- **But wait, there's more!** — *Items recently posted to the website.*
- **Conferences and Dates**— *An updated list of events and deadlines.*

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Walter Boomsma, Editor

Submit articles and info to:
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President's Perspective

By Sherry Harriman, MSG President/Master



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

National Grange Session was a big success held in Sparks Nevada in November. Jim Owens and I were the delegates for a very busy schedule of Grange business and Activities. There were eight Maine folks there for the week. Maine Grangers and Granges received a good number of awards.

Highland Lake #87 and Jonesboro #357 received Granges in Action certificates.

Twenty-four Maine Granges were recognized for a net gain in membership. The National Grange had a net gain in Membership overall, the first time in years and years.

Rebekah Hodgson of Jonesboro won 1st and 3rd places in the photo contest and Laurie McBurnie of Willow also received 3rd place for one of her entries. Each received ribbons and a pack of note cards made from the winning entries. Our junior members also received a couple of winning awards in photo and art contests. Mrs. Swan, Maine's nominee for Teacher of the Year from Jonesboro Grange received The National Teacher of the Year Award. Walter Boomsma was awarded National Grange Cultivator of the Year for

cultivating communications. CONGRATULATIONS to all the recipients. Great job everyone, it was fantastic to see those ribbons and hear Maine called to receive the plaques and certificates. Items will be mailed to the recipients as I won't be traveling much this winter.

We had about twenty Grangers come for the instruction meeting on Saturday the 3rd. I was hoping for more but was happy with those who did come out in the rain. We covered some of the floor work for opening and closing, provided and reviewed an assortment of "how to" paperwork on a whole variety of subjects, and answered questions. Sharon Morton, State Secretary explained about Secretaries duties by providing written information also. Thank you to everyone who attended, Richard for setting up, Sharon for the workshop, and Henry for making the coffee & and picking up the doughnuts.

I am planning to do the same instruction meeting at several places around the state. The State Secretary has agreed to come also, but probably in the spring when the weather isn't so iffy. Please invite us to your area and get a date set up. I have a couple already. The secretaries will receive a list of available materials I provided on Saturday that can be requested anytime.

Communications Column

By Walter Boomsma, MSG Communications Director



A nudge and a nag...

When teaching adult students, I remind them they are taking THEIR course, not MY course. Of course, that doesn't prevent me from offering an occasional nudge or nag (they get to decide which it is) when they aren't doing their part.

There's a parallel with the MSG website. It's YOUR site, not MINE. That means we have a shared responsibility for it. And it also means I get to offer an occasional nudge or nag. (You can decide which it is.) There might be two this month.

First, an ongoing challenge continues to exist with the [online directory of Granges](#). I continue to receive far too many emails and phone calls from people who have tried using it, and it hasn't worked--disconnected phone numbers, no replies from the email address listed, etc. For those unfamiliar with it, this directory lists active Granges, the address of the Grange Hall, and a contact person with a name, phone number, and--ideally--email address. This contact person does not need to be the master or secretary. It does need to be someone who is dependable and responsible.

The [online directory](#) is consistently the most visited page on the website. (The second most visited is the [Program Books and Information Page](#).) For various reasons, people want to contact local Granges. We need to work together to make sure that can happen. Keeping the online directory accurate should be a priority for all of us. **Please make sure the information listed is accurate.** [Send any corrections to the webmaster!](#)

There are too many sad (and sometimes funny) stories I could share. I was recently contacted by someone who desperately wanted to participate in a Grange event in their area but couldn't figure out who to contact for more information. Another example was from a group that had used the Grange Hall. They found a note requesting the group supply their contact information to the local Grange, but it didn't say who to send it to!

We can do better.

This same nudge or nag applies to almost ALL information about your Grange! **Please send information and news about your Grange and your events!** I've tried to make it as easy as possible. You can use the "[submitting information](#)" tab on the site or [send the information in an email](#). If you are sending information to your local newspapers, add webmaster@mainestategrange.org to the distribution list.

By the way, once your information is posted to the website, it's easy-peasy to share it on Facebook. It doesn't work the other way around!

We can do better.

Lastly, I've been nudging and nagging myself to continue the effort to repair and reconstruct the site. One problem with providing so much information is that it becomes a real challenge when much of it disappears! If you visit the [Program Books and Information Page](#), any link with a smiley ☺ face after it should work. If you need something specific and can't find it on the page, [let me know](#), and I'll try to find it for you.

Your patience and participation are appreciated!

► **FACT:** Your MSG website was viewed 1900 times during November 2022--and 10% of those visits were to the online directory of Granges.

From The Deacon's Bench

By Clay Collins, MSG Chaplain



"Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people."
1 Chronicles 16:8

We are now in the Advent season of the Christian calendar. Have you ever really thought about what Advent

is? Many will correctly answer that it is the four Sundays leading up to Christmas day (the day that all Christians celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus) and begins this year on Sunday, November 28th.

Each year as December draws near, many of us try to commit to finding rest in a season notoriously wrought with materialism, busyness, and exhaustion. We try to focus on what really should matter and try to prepare our hearts and minds to remember the birth of our Savior, Jesus, and all that it means to us, the believers. One way we do this is by celebrating the season of Advent, which for centuries has been tied to the first coming of Christ.

Other ways we celebrate is by building crèches depicting the nativity depicting the manger scene with the baby Jesus surrounded by Mary, Joseph, and the animals along with the Wise Men (who actually came later). Most importantly (or we sometimes think so) the presents! But are the presents really that important?

Think about it for a minute. What are we actually teaching our children about the true meaning of Christmas? I can remember as a boy growing up Christmas meant getting as many presents as I could. I didn't know much about the birth of our savior until I was in my teen years (my parents were not church goers). I did know that it was Jesus' birthday, and we should be reverent to this fact, but that was about it. I did not know or understand much about Advent. For the longest time, I got the seasons of Advent and Lent mixed up! I did not fully understand until I started attending Church on a regular basis and got involved with Grange.

You might think that is strange and you are probably correct, but the Grange charges that we hear every meeting (especially the Chaplain's charge) mirror a lot of the teachings you hear in Church.

Mainly, be thankful, thankful for the birth of Jesus who took all of our sins to the Father and asked for forgiveness for us. Be thankful for your loving families who, more often than not, overlook our misgivings and misjudgments. We all should take time to thank the Lord for everything that we have around us; the trees, lakes, oceans, mountains, and all the wildlife in the forests, without which we would not be able to survive.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a very Happy New Year! I hope the new year brings you all a bit of relief and a busload of happiness!

Until the next time, remember, "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch." Amen.

Benediction: "Gracious Father of us all, thank you for the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. May we all learn from this miraculous birth. Amen."

He who loses money loses much;

He who loses a friend loses more;

And he who loses faith loses all.

An Irish Friendship Blessing

Junior Report

By Betty Young, MSG Junior Director



Hello fellow Grangers. My name is Betty Young, and I am the new Junior Grange Director.

I originally joined in 1974 during the state grange centennial and took six degrees in one day at the Augusta Armory. After my second daughter was born, I took a demit and rejoined in 1994 when she was old enough to join. I have held several different offices in Subordinate and Pomona and am currently Chaplain of Androscoggin Pomona. I was approached this summer about taking on Junior Director since the previous directors were stepping down. Initially I was reluctant but was concerned that the program might not continue so at state session I told Sherry I will try.

My daughter has four children the youngest just turned five and will join as soon as we can have a meeting in person. I am looking forward to encouraging our members to participate in the CWA contests and earning badges.



Membership Moments

By Rick Grotton, MSG Membership Director

As the holiday season arrives, we are reminded that this is the season of giving. Aside from the commercial aspects of this season; how you choose to celebrate Christmas and whether you do or do not celebrate, the air seems filled with a sense of giving; even heightened during this time of year. A friendly smile to a stranger, a helping hand to someone in need, a pay forward in the grocery line, shoveling out a neighbor, or any small gesture in order to make someone feel good also makes us feel good. Take a moment to reflect on the good feelings we generate and how it affects others around us. Others sense our positive energies and take notice. It spreads from there. Many times, we don't realize the affects our attitudes and feelings have on others around us. No words need be said or interaction needed. Many people do not realize that their whistling or happy mood while walking down a crowded street or at their place of work may will be making the day for another and another, it goes on and on like dominoes. Imagine if we all did this!!

Now, you say, what does the above have to do with membership? EVERYTHING! It has everything to do with membership.

When talking to someone about joining the Grange, if they feel your passion, your positive thoughts, and your love for the Grange, you are more likely to keep their attention and make them feel good at the same time. They sense your happiness, and it affects them also. We all like things that make us feel good and when we share those feelings, we are spreading good cheer to many others and from the others to those around them. Most of us have a deep passion for our Grange. It can be detected by anyone who senses those feelings. The Grange has changed our lives for the better; enhancing positive relationships with others, the giving and helping we do for others, the sense of usefulness of ourselves and our accomplishments, and most of all it has made us better people all around. It makes us feel good; it makes others feel good. Therefore, when attracting new members, be positive, show your passion and be honest and true in your presentation. Remember that others can sense your feelings and will make their own conclusions based on your attitude. Always be kind and helpful to others. Even if you do not like the person remember that giving of yourself creates rewards for all. Be a part of the solution, not part of the problem. It's about creating peace and harmony in today's crazy world. It begins with YOU!!!
Enjoy the holidays and be safe!



Exploring Traditions--Meandering Around the Grange Way of Life

By Walter Boomsma, Guest Columnist

I was more than a bit saddened to learn recently that an exciting Granger from a Grange that's experiencing amazing growth was strongly criticized for "trying to change the Grange." On a parallel but personal track, a long-standing holiday tradition has pretty much ended due to changes in circumstances. I find myself left to consider how much a tradition changes before it's actually no longer a tradition. And, while I would never propose to limit the value of tradition, I understand the importance of perspective. Consider with me for a few minutes what the Grange would be like if there had been no changes to our traditions.

How far back do you want to go? A handful of us recently contemplated some of the features of the Grange in its early beginnings. We rightfully brag about the early recognition of women as having equal status. But much like the "Animal Farm" fable by George Orwell, it seems "all women were equal, but some were more equal than others." And, before we get too excited about that equality, let us consider that under traditional rule, it would be possible to have every office in the Grange filled by women. But it is not possible to have every office filled by men. At a minimum, the three graces (Pomona, Flora, and Ceres) are supposed to be filled by women. Rumor has it that the "lady assistant steward" position may be changed to eliminate the word "lady" and simply have two assistant stewards.

We can—and perhaps should—debate the value of changing labels, but always remember that change is hard—even good change. Anyone who has ever quit smoking or eliminated an unhealthy habit will attest to that.

"In essentials, unity." One of the characteristics of early Grangers seems to have been a willingness to discuss and debate. So, we might raise another question. What are the essentials? Is it essential to have a lady assistant steward, or would two male or female assistant stewards be just as effective?

It's entirely possible that asking the questions is more important than determining the answers. I remember being at the beach with my oldest daughter when she was a precocious three year old. She was quite impressed by the flocks of seagulls and would point to them and yell, "Birds, Daddy! Birds!" I would gently suggest that they were seagulls. After several of these exchanges, it became apparent that my desire to teach would not be accepted. She replied, "You can call them seagulls. I'm going to call them birds."

"In non-essentials, liberty." I admire her confidence and resilience. She can call them birds. She's not wrong.

We often refer to the Grange as a "grassroots" organization. We have strong roots, and we grow from them up towards the sun. We are not a "top-down" organization. Being a fraternal organization simply means sharing some fundamental values and, perhaps even more importantly, some fundamental purposes.

"In all things, charity." Personally, I've never been a big fan of "for the good of the order." Who decides what is "good?" A recent example was the change of titles at the National Level, whereby the Master is now the President, etc. I understand the reasoning for the change, but I also understand the value of the traditional roles of the Master. So how much can we change the traditional officer titles without losing the tradition and, more importantly, the value of the tradition?

Before we criticize people who seem to us to be intent on "changing the Grange," we might do well to consider that changing can be a tradition. Students of the history of the Grange are likely to recognize that one reason the Grange is still relevant after a century and a half is that Grangers have been willing to adapt to the changes in society without sacrificing fundamental values and purpose. The Grange Way of Life includes that willingness.

Any degree or ritual quotations are from the forty-sixth edition of the 2013 Subordinate Grange Manual or the most recent edition of the Pomona Grange Manual. The views and opinions expressed in "Exploring Traditions" are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official doctrine and policy of the Grange. Information about the book "Exploring Traditions—Celebrating the Grange Way of Life" can be found at on Amazon, or by contacting the author.



View from the Farm

By Heather Retberg, Guest Columnist

The cold of December arrived this week, and with it a reprieve from the mud that has plagued us on the ridge for a couple of months. In warm and wet October and November, the coming cold seemed impossible, like the present was to remain that way forever.

No matter the season, I make adjustments that seem permanent. I don't think of feeding hay in June, even though that is when it is made. It seems then that the grass will last forever. I gleefully move the cows through the fields and watch the beauty of ruminants being ruminants.

The wisdom of the seasons thwarts my complacency, however, and moves everything along as should be. And so, I adapt. After a couple of days, what was new becomes normal and a lends a sense of permanence in an impermanent world.

For now, the cold invigorates me and keeps me mud-free as I tend to the hogs. This is fantastic. For now, the cold also adds time to the day, as hauling water, setting up feed, and tending critters takes more time and care than in the summer and early fall. This calls me to patience.

Finally, the season seems as it should be. December ushers in the cycle of dormancy to our lives with its refreshing starts to the days, its stunning late sunrises and way too early sunsets to bookend the light and the darkness.

Editor's note: Phil continues to write "View from the Farm" while Heather recovers from her surgery. Send her a card/note at Quill's End Farm, 192 Front Ridge Road, North Penobscot ME 04476.

Heather and Phil Retberg together with their three children run Quill's End Farm, a 105-acre property in Penobscot that they bought in 2004. They use rotational grazing on their fifteen open acres and are renovating thirty more acres from woods to pasture to increase grazing for their pigs, grass-fed cattle, lambs, laying hens, and goats. Heather writes a newsletter for their farm's buying clubs for farmers in her area and has generously given us permission to share some of her columns with Grangers throughout the state.

Communication Shorts

A few short items of information and interest!

Pomona People!

We do list Pomona Meetings on the website calendar--please send your dates and times! Send us the whole year!

Ideas for Granges

Valley Grange uses "Grange Bees" in conjunction with our meetings... simply stated, Grange Bees are members who agree to be the official hosts for a meeting. While all members pitch in, we find it efficient to rotate the "official" responsibilities among members. Grange Bees are responsible for opening and closing the hall. (Our checklist is available on the Valley Grange website.) We try to set up a schedule for the entire year each fall. We also occasionally all "swarm" to the hall for major cleaning and projects. Everybody can be a bee!

Thought for You...

What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year."

Vern McLellan

Online Directories Available 24-7

Remember, we have two directories that are interactive meaning you can sort and search! The first is the ODD Directory, which features all state officers, directors, and deputies with contact information. The second is the Directory of Granges, which features all Granges in the state.

But wait, there's more!

A sampling of articles posted on the website...

- Valley Grange Wraps up Dictionary Days
- 82nd Annual Maine Ag Trades Show
- Boots 2 Bushels
- Ocean View Grange December Giving
- The Meeting Before Christmas
- Community Carol Singing at Enterprise Grange
- Santa Is Coming to Vienna
- Mill Stream Grange Outreach
- Wreaths Across America
- Ocean View Grange Collects
- Here Comes Santa Claus to Parkman Grange
- Ignore This Email!
- Send Holiday Cheer, Not Pests!
- Valley Grange Gram
- Jonesboro Grange Delivers Backpacks
- Don't Forget the Cows' Names!

Conferences and Dates

Please note that events scheduled in advance are always subject to change. State and Regional events are listed as well as Degree Days and Officer Installations. Sorry, but space does not permit us to include regular local meetings.

January 2023

- January 10-12, 2023, Maine Agricultural Trade Show in Augusta.
- January 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

February 2023

- February 2, 2023, Piscataquis Pomona Grange meets at Valley Grange at 7 pm. FMI contact Pomona Master Bill Bemis at 924-4123.
- February 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

March 2023

- March 11, 2023, Junior Grange Virtual Meeting at 10 am. Contact Junior Director for more information.
- March 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

April 2023 – GRANGE MONTH

- April 6, 2023, Piscataquis Pomona Grange meets at 7 pm. Location TBD. FMI contact Pomona Master Bill Bemis at 924-4123.
- April 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- April 15, 2023, Junior Grange Spring Challenge Meeting at Enterprise Grange in Richmond, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm. Contact Junior Director for more information.
- April 23, 2023, Ag Scholarship Application Deadline

May 2023

- May 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

June 2023

- June 1, 2023, Piscataquis Pomona Grange meets at 7 pm at Wayside Grange. FMI contact Pomona Master Bill Bemis at 924-4123.
- June 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- June 24-26, 2023, Junior Grange Campout Weekend at Enterprise Grange. Dates are tentative. Contact Junior Director for more information.

July 2023

- July is National Junior Grange Month!
- July 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

August 2023

- August 1, 2023, Ag Enterprise Award Application Deadline – Download information and Application.
- August 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- August 15, 2023, Junior Grange Meeting in Lincolnville at Tranquility Grange. Contact Junior Director for more information.

September 2023

Note that most contest entry forms and information can be found in the Program Book for that department or committee.

- September 1, 2023, Skit and Poetry Writing Entries due to MSG Lecturer. See the Lecturers' Program Book for more information.
- September 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- Date to be determined, **Maine Lecturer's Conference.**

All articles and information for the Bulletin must be submitted by the fifteenth of the month. (Articles will be posted to the website as received unless otherwise requested.) All letters or articles submitted for publication must have contents relating to the Grange and may be edited for length and grammar. The complete editorial policy is available on the Maine State Grange website.

PLEASE POST A COPY OF THE BULLETIN TO YOUR GRANGE'S BULLETIN BOARD