



Maine State Grange Bulletin

*American Values.
Hometown Roots.*

Maine State Grange
36 Anthony Avenue, Suite 102
Augusta Maine 04330
<http://MaineStateGrange.org>

FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE

Highlights for Secretaries to Read

In this section, we'll try to help secretaries by providing a short synopsis of each article. **Try just reading 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**— *Passwords, Degree Day, Spring, Grange Month*
- **Agriculture Report**— *No Report*
- **Communications Column**— *Where Are You?*
- **Community Service/FH&H Corner**—
- **CWA Report**— *Location of CWA Conference*
- **From the Deacon's Bench**— *Spreading Light*
- **Educational Aid**— *No Report.*
- **Fundraising Committee Report**— *No Report*
- **History Committee**— *No Report*
- **Lecturer's Column**— *No Report*
- **Legislative Report**— *No Report*
- **Membership Moments**— *Bringing Back Programs*
- **Secretary's Corner**— *No Report*
- **Exploring Traditions**— *Dilemmas and Decisions*
- **View from the Farm**— *Winter Drought*
- **Communication Shorts**— *Brief (short) items for our information and use*
- **But wait, there's more!** — *Items recently posted to the website.*
- **Conferences and Dates**— *A list of events and deadlines.*

The Maine State Grange Bulletin is published monthly by the Maine State Grange, 36 Anthony Avenue, Suite 102, Augusta ME 04330

Walter Boomsma, Editor

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President's Perspective

By Sherry Harriman, MSG Master and President

Annual Passwords: The annual password ciphers were sent to the Grange Secretaries with the December quarterly report forms. The keys to the password will only be mailed to the Masters/Presidents when all dues are paid up to date, including the December 2025 Quarter. If you have not received your key, check with your Secretary or our office to confirm your dues are paid in full. Sharon did tell me recently that not all dues are up to date. As an individual, to receive the new password, your personal dues must be paid up to date, you should receive a receipt as proof of payment to show the Master/President.

Degree Day: April 26, 2026, at 1:00 pm at Manchester Grange #172, located at 953 Western Ave, (Rt. 202) Manchester, ME. All four degrees will be conferred. Let Norma Meserve (207-583-7211) or email her at: meserve1965@gmail.com if you have candidates or if you would be willing to help out. The candidates should bring their application for membership with them.

Spring isn't so far away as it may seem at this point, but it is eventually on its way. Winter has been treating us fairly well, except for the big storm of 19" and a few inches here and there, some wind, and several cold days. I guess we really can't complain all that much about the weather – after all, it is Maine and February. We are still hunkering down in place with the weather & doing well.

With spring comes reopening. It's almost time to get back in the swing of in-person meetings in our halls. Spring is also clean-up time outside and inside for our own yards, but this should also include our halls. Get the lawn raked up, clip the grass and bushes around the steps and foundation, pick up the branches and trash lying around, get the tattered plastic off the windows and maybe even wash the reachable ones. Repaint your sign, the steps, railings and even the door. We all need an occasional facelift. Closer to summer, get some new plants in the window boxes and garden.

As we are all involved in promoting Grange membership and growth, we should be advertising ourselves. The name and number



of a Grange should be on the building or on the sign at the road, and should include the day and time of the meetings. This way, someone passing by or visiting the area will know when you meet.

Grange Month: It doesn't feel like it, but here we are a little over a month away from Grange Month, a time of year we honor our community members and promote our Grange. Congratulations to those who have made plans for something special at this time. Why not incorporate something to honor our Nation's 250th Anniversary at the same time. This was a resolution we accepted at the State Grange Session in October. You can plan your event honoring your community later in the year. Nothing says it can only be done in April, honoring someone special or a special activity can happen anytime, it's the result that really matters. You can buy or make up your own certificates, plaques, etc., for honoring an individual or group, or items may be purchased from National Grange. Whether you order on your own or from National Grange, remember to allow lots of time to get the items back, especially if you are getting it by mail or shipped. We have lots of informational brochures as handouts in your halls available on request at the office.

State Office: I want to remind you that the State Grange office does have an answering machine to leave questions, requests, and information at 207-623-3421. Please leave a clear name, phone number, and brief message so we can return your calls. We are in the office a couple of days a week. We also have a new email address: mainestategrange@gmail.com.

Our personal numbers, home and email addresses are in the 2026 Roster that each Grange Secretary will receive soon. I must apologize for the error I made in the new Roster. I listed the wrong additional email under State Secretary's name – it should be mainestategrange@gmail.com. We had been given a preliminary email prior to the new Gmail one being issued. The State Grange web site is valuable and can provide information, the webmaster is very helpful, however, some of your questions should be directed to the State Grange Secretary or myself personally by email or phone.

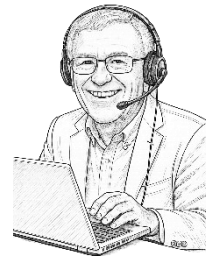
Until we can be together again, take care of yourselves.

Communications Column

By Walter Boomsma, MSG Communications Director

Where Are You?

One of my earliest attempts to visit a Grange had a somewhat humorous result. It was over two decades ago. I was relatively new to the Grange, and technology was still young. I drove to Lincoln, thinking that the Grange wouldn't be too hard to find. I stopped for directions (more than once), and no one could help. In fact, no one had ever heard of a Grange Hall. It took a few phone calls to learn that Lincoln Pomona Granges were several hours away.



In more recent adventures, I've learned that some Granges appear to have multiple locations. It goes with the territory of rural life. There are countless examples where someone unfamiliar with the area could become mightily confused.

I've been guilty myself of giving directions like "turn left where the schoolhouse used to be." When my sister and family from North Carolina first visited us, I talked them in and, without thinking, actually said that. After a short silence, my brother-in-law reminded me that this was their first visit to Maine and asked how they would know where the schoolhouse used to be.

Under the heading, "Nothing's perfect..." I've also learned that travelers coming from a certain direction to our home need to ignore their GPS at one suggested turn. But the simple truth is, we need to make it easy for people to find us, and "us" includes our Grange Halls.

One way to do that is to know and use your hall's street address. Street addresses in Maine are assigned by local municipalities (usually the code enforcement officer or town clerk), plantations, or county commissioners (for unorganized territories), adhering to [E-911 standards](#). The E-911 system requires that each structure be linked to a unique physical address that clearly identifies the caller's location (e.g., 35 Pine Road). Remember that dispatchers are often far away from the communities they serve.

The additional benefit of standards for street addresses make it possible for anyone to locate a building. Once you have your hall's street address, please use it. I recommend placing the street number outside the building or on a post. It also wouldn't hurt to have it posted inside the hall. There are additional steps you can take online, including locating your hall on Google Maps.

As an aside, the National Grange's "Find a Grange" program does not include Maine; you should not rely on it. Our [Maine State Grange online directory](#) is based on the published roster. We'll update it soon, when the roster is issued, but we can also make changes at any time.

Making your hall visible and easy to find is another great spring project!

###

FACT: During a recent seven-day period, over fifty people visited the website from Facebook.

CWA Report

By Margaret Henderson, Director

What crazy, cold weather we are having. I am sorry that I have not been able to get an article in the last couple of months. It has been a sad few months. I have lost 16 friends since November. I hope the rest of this year is better.

I hope that many of you are working on entries for the contests.

I always look forward to seeing all of the wonderful work that everyone does. I am going to start checking next week on the availability of different places to have the judging and the conference.

It will be different not to have it at Headquarters. We have many good memories in that building.

I hope that everyone is staying healthy and warm.

From the Deacon's Bench

By Clay Collins, Guest Columnist

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-16)



Here it is another month. What happened to the month of January? Here we are in the second month, looking at a lot of snow and very cold weather wondering if spring is ever going to get here. Well, take heart my fellow brothers and sisters, it will come.

While we are waiting for the warmer weather to come, let's work on letting our light shine on others. By that I mean during the cold weather, many people (especially the elderly) are spending more time indoors trying to keep warm.

Those of us who can, and are able, to get out should spread our "light" to those who need help. By calling our friends and neighbors to see if they are doing fine or if they need rides to the store or the doctor. They might just need to talk.

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

Benediction: "Gracious Father, help us to spread our light to others. Teach us to learn how to help those who are sad and mourning. Amen"

Thought for the month: "May the roof above us never fall in and may the friends gathered below never fall out." [Irish Blessing]

Editor's Note: While Chaplain Christine is burdened with technology challenges, she has invited Past MSG Chaplain Clay to share some spiritual thoughts with our Grange Flock.

Membership Moments

By Rick Grotton, MSG Membership Committee Director

Spring will be here soon, which means that Grange month in April is on our doorstep. Does your Grange have anything planned? If so, please let us all know by advertising on the Maine State Grange website. Over the years, our Granges have become more individualized and isolated from one another, even within their own Pomona. A Pomona meeting is where the Granges in your area meet once a month to keep contact between Granges strong. However, many of our Granges do not have their Fifth Degree and hardly ever see anyone from their area or a neighboring Grange. What has happened? Why are many not finishing their degrees? Are we encouraging them? What do our new members know about Grange other than what they see in their own Grange?



We need to start bringing back programs that bring others to our different Granges to interact and to have fun. Some of the programs we used to be the following:

Three-point meetings. This is where a Grange invites two other Granges for a night of fun. One Grange usually provides dinner, another, the program, and the third, the officers.

Green Sash and Pink Sash nights. This is when a Grange invites the members of its Pomona or the State Officers to take their offices for the evening while the host Grange provides the program.

Youth Nights. Sadly, with the lack of youth in our Granges today, these nights are almost non-existent. To the youth of different Granges, it was their night to shine and provide a program.

Ritualistic Night. When I was lecturer at my Grange years ago, this was my favorite program to present, so all members could learn or refresh their knowledge of rituals and traditions.

Agricultural Nights and Legislative Nights. There were also fun nights in which the program was based on Ag or legislative

issues. Resolutions were conceived, and we also learned about planting, harvesting, and filled with skits, or having a speaker as part of the program.

Without the above programs, what do we have now? Do Granges still have programs that invite others? How are we to take in new members if we have nothing exciting or beneficial for them? We need to start interacting more with one another through our Grange meetings (Community, Pomona, and State) to grow and prosper. ALL OF US are responsible for keeping Grange alive, so ask this question at your next Grange meeting: What is our vision for the future?

Exploring Traditions--Meandering Around the Grange Way of Life

By Walter Boomsma, Guest Columnist

Dilemmas and Decisions

I confess to having recently watched several fictional movies about time travel. The science is interesting. The application is fascinating. When someone travels back in time, there's usually a dilemma about whether to take an action that might alter the future. Seth Godin points out, "When you give people a choice, they make a choice."

Traditions rarely happen deliberately. But the development of the Internet is one example of how traditions will change dramatically. For example, somewhere along the way, Grangers developed an interest in cooking and recipes. Consider how many Grange Cookbooks exist and notice that recipes continue to be a feature in the National Grange Magazine. It's not just limited to Grangers. You can probably find a recipe box and several cookbooks in most homes today. That may not always be the case.

It may not matter how many cookbooks you have. If you can't find (or don't have) a recipe box, AI (artificial intelligence) can create a new recipe for you in just a few seconds. It may not be unique or have secret ingredients. Without getting too technical, it will create your recipe by analyzing and combining vast pools of information. Some will no doubt see this as good news. Others will see it as bad news. They'll all be correct.

In a very real sense, this is one of the major challenges we face as an organization. No, not cookbooks and recipes, but balancing the old with the new.

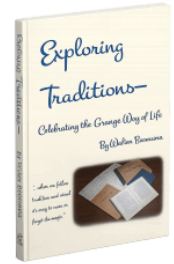
We may not be time travelers to the past, but we have similar dilemmas and decisions. We are given choices and shouldn't ignore them.

Time-travel movies often make the point that small changes can have big effects in the future. It's true for both organizations and individuals.

An individual who decides to read for ten minutes every day is potentially altering his future, and if you appreciate the ripple effect, the future of others, and, literally, the world.

The Grange decided in 1867 to give women equal standing (at least in theory), full voting rights, and leadership positions. We can rightfully claim that those radical decisions contributed to women gaining the right to vote fifty years later.

While our crystal ball is often cloudy, it's worth keeping an eye on it as we make decisions. It's important for individuals and organizations to accept the idea that we can at least influence our future if not control it. As we travel through time, it might be fun to consider what the Grange Way of Life looks like in the future. The decisions we make and the actions we take will determine it.



He's an old hippie
And he don't know what to do.
Should he hang on to the old?
Should he grab on to the new?
He's an old hippie
This new life is just a bust.
He ain't trying to change nobody.
He's just trying real hard to adjust.

Old Hippie lyrics © Conexion Media Group, Inc.

"As we are again to separate, and mingle with the world, let us not forget the precepts of our Order. Let us add dignity to labor, and in our dealings with our fellow men be honest, be just, and fear not.

We must avoid intemperance in eating, drinking and language, also in work and recreation, and whatever we do, strive to do well. Let us be quiet, peaceful citizens, feeding the hungry, helping the fatherless and the widows, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."

###

Any degree or ritual quotations are from the forty-seventh edition of the 2023 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 on Amazon or by contacting the author.

View from the Farm

By Quill's End Farm's Endians

Winter Drought

With snow on the ground and winter enveloping us, it may seem hard to remember that we still are in a drought. But it's very present with us here at the farm this winter.

I've been thinking about it a lot this week because of a quickly approaching deadline for a drought relief grant. We are hoping to get funding for an irrigation pond. Re-charge rates, test pits, volume, acreage, conversion charts, rates of application—all the water things are on my mind as the critters chew through the limited quantity of hay from last year.

I'm learning the multitude of steps involved should anyone ever dig a proper pond for irrigation. It seems the excavator might be the *first* and *last* step instead of the only step. Lots of steps in between. In the meantime, I'm trying to set aside enough time to complete the actual first step, completing the grant application for funding.

Winter doesn't help, even though I always think that is where time resides. "I'll get to that in the winter, when I have time." Winter farming doesn't really agree with that sentiment. Everything now must be hauled to the farm, into the barn, and back out. The hay, the water, the bedding. The milk, the manure, the used bedding. The shoveling and the loading and unloading. They all take time, and daylight time at that. There is nothing so wonderful after winter as watching cows poop on grass.

It's hard to think of a pond, which only holds summery type feelings, when forking out 2027's compost from the barn while wearing a load of laundry. Perhaps, if I concentrate now and write the grant well, I can add some resilience in the future when drought strikes again.



Editor's note: This column's format includes all of the Quill's Endians participating at various times and in various ways! This month's column is by Phil.

Heather and Phil Retberg and 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. Quill's Endians are members of Halcyon Grange and publish a newsletter for their farm's buying club of farmers in the area, and generously permit us to share some of their columns with Grangers. Visit the [Quill's End Farm Facebook Page](#) for more information.

Communication Shorts

A few short items of information and interest!

- **Have you changed this?** The Maine State Grange Office is located at 36 Anthony Avenue, Suite 102, Augusta, ME 04330. The email address is mainestategrange@gmail.com.
- **Changing Column Images:** You may have noticed some changes to images in posted columns and the Bulletin. One reason is that photographs do not print well in the Bulletin. This will be an ongoing project for the next few issues.
- **Seeking Someone!** Do you, your child, or your grandchild have some knowledge of WordPress? (For those unfamiliar, WordPress is an open-source content management system (CMS) that allows users to create, manage, and customize websites without needing advanced coding knowledge. The Maine State Grange Website uses it.) If so, let's connect and explore some opportunities. I could use a few hours of volunteer help occasionally.
- **To Ponder:** "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." – Abraham Lincoln
- Some recent changes to the National Grange Website have resulted in some links not working. **If you encounter broken links on the Maine State Grange website, please [report them to Walter](#).** If you encounter them on the National Grange website, report them to National Grange.
- **An Idea for Your Grange:** I recently stumbled upon an organization offering a free "How to write an obituary" workshop. It might sound unusual at first, but offering some legacy-planning information could be a valuable service. Hospice workers, funeral directors, financial planners, etc., could be included.

But Wait! There's More!

Here are some posts you may have missed since the last Bulletin

- Community Service Awards at Enterprise Grange
- Grange Today 2-21-2026
- Changes at Enterprise Grange
- Fraud Watch- The Rise of Friendship Scams
- Kennebec Valley Flea Market and More
- Charter Draping at Norway Grange
- Maine Membership Notes
- West Bath Grange

- Some Program Ideas for Granges
- Cold Weather Tips for Farms
- Fairview Grange Makes Plans
- Finding and Tracking Scholarships
- Baby, It's Cold Outside!
- Grants for Students

Remember, you can also subscribe to our website and receive weekly summaries of new posts by email. Subscribing is easy-peasy. Just go to the site and click "Subscribe" at the top.

Grange Events

Please note that events scheduled in advance are always subject to change. Sorry, but space does not permit us to include regular local meetings, but we do include local Grange Special Events. Additional information is usually available on the MSG website.

March 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- March 10, 2026, National Grange "Engaging New Energy" Zoom Meeting
- March 14, 2026, 5 PM-7 PM, Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner at Enterprise Grange. [Details here](#) or call Marilyn Stinson at 207 308-3901.
- March 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline

April 2026 – Grange Month

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- April 4, 2026, Craft Sale at Benton Grange, 9:00 - 2:00 pm. FMI contact [Mary Colson](#).
- April 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline
- April 26, 2026, Community Citizen Awards at Enterprise Grange in Richmond, 3:00 pm. [Details here](#).
- April 26, 2026, Androscoggin Pomona Degree Day at Manchester Grange

May 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- May 2, 2026, Craft Sale at Benton Grange, 9:00 - 2:00 pm. FMI contact [Mary Colson](#).
- May 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline

June 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- Elections of Officers
- June 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline

July 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- July 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline

August 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- August 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline
- August 19, 2026, CWA Deadline for contest entries (except baking) to arrive at MSG Headquarters.
- August 22, 2026, CWA Conference at MSG Headquarters starting at 9:30 am. Subordinate and Pomona Reports are due.
- August 31, 2026, Community Service Reports are due, including nominations, FHH Activity, etc. See Program Book FMI.

September 2026

Every Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM, Kennebec Valley Grange hosts a flea market on two floors. [Details here](#) or call Diane Pinkham at 207 314-5135 FMI.

- September 1, 2026, Lecturer's Contests Due – skit writing, poetry writing, Grange book reading.
- September 14, 2026, MSG Bulletin Deadline

All events, letters, or articles submitted for publication must have content relating to the Grange and may be edited for length and grammar. Our complete editorial policy is available on the Maine State Grange website.