Maine State Grange Bulletin

American Values. Hometown Roots.

Maine State Grange
36 Anthony Avenue, Suite 102
Augusta Maine 04330

OCTOBER 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—** *State Session, Roster Information Due*
- **Agriculture Report**— *No Report*
- **Communications Column**— *Reminders and Ideas*
- **Community Service/FH&H Corner**— *No Report*
- **CWA Report**— *No Report*
- **From the Deacon's Bench**— *Combining Talents*
- **Educational Aid**— *No Report.*
- **Fundraising Committee Report—** *No Report*
- **History Committee—** *No Report*
- **Lecturer's Column—** *No Report*
- **Legislative Report—** *No Report*
- **Membership Moments**— *The Meaning of Membership*
- **Secretary's Corner—** *No Report*
- **Treasurer's Tip—** *No Report*
- **Exploring Traditions**— *From the Second Degree, A Shepherd and Sheep*
- **View from the Farm**— *Alternating Notes*
- **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.*

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Walter Boomsma, Editor

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President's Perspective

By Sherry Harriman, MSG Master and President



State Session October 30 & 31. Black Bear Inn in Orono. You or Your Delegates may pick up new Department Program Books Agriculture, Lecturers, Women's Activities, Community Service, Communications and the Annual Reports will be in the Delegate materials. If you did not have delegates at the session, you may download the programs and reports from the web under "Program Books," or if you want a printed copy, email or call the office or me, and we will send them to you. You may request all or just select certain ones. Agricultural Scholarship, Educational Aid & Howes Nurses Scholarship requirements and applications can also be found on the website or requested from the office. We need to promote these scholarships and awards in our communities; each is a wonderful opportunity for our young folks.

2027 Roster information is past due. Another reminder, a few more than half of you have provided your info. Even if there were no changes, a report needs to be sent.

Successful Granges are Led by People

1. Willing to make trade-offs.
2. Who work for the goals.
3. Who are effective communicators.
4. Who are sensitive to the group.

5. Good at integrating various interests and priorities.
6. Who are creative and adaptable.
7. Who are positive role models.
8. Who acknowledge others' efforts.

Responsibilities of a Leader

- Listen
- Contribute
- Don't dominate
- Show enthusiasm
- Put group at ease
- Promote team work
- Discourage criticism
- Focus on the task, not personalities
- Be fair
- Give recognition

Communications Column

By Walter Boomsma, MSG Communications Director



A Few Reminders and Ideas…

Seth Godin recently posted about how easy it is to win the race to the bottom. "We can justify most moves to the bottom while they're happening, but the problem with this race is that you might win." Even doing nothing contributes to winning the race to the bottom. The opposite is not necessarily a race to the top. As Seth points out, if we resolve not to continue the race to the bottom, we're committing to a climb, not a race.

We have a few things to help you on your climb.

Your New Communications Handbook… Recently completely updated, it replaces the former annual additions and includes a lot of resources to help you improve your messages to members and your communities. It's an easy download from the website and the pdf includes a number of clickable links to even more resources. The price is right. It's free for the taking. If your Grange is still not comfortable with technology, you can request a printed copy from the Maine State Grange office.

Your Local Grange Library… A number of Granges have established Little Free Libraries or Box Exchange Boxes. (How are you maintaining them during the winter months?) Your Grange should also maintain a self-serving library of forms, program books, etc. that ideally is available to your members. Many of the suggested contents are available on the Maine State Grange Website, but having them readily available locally makes sense!

Your Annual Reports and Program Book… Don't skip over this one! While we often apply these to state directors and officers, your local Grange can do both. Some Granges write a report and submit it to the town clerk for inclusion in the town's annual report. We are, after all, community Granges! A program book might summarize your work and include a directory of officers and members.

Your Publication of Events… We're still working to make this easier and more effective! Submitting events to and through the website is now easier than ever. The format will also help you ensure you are including complete details. We've also developing a new "breaking news" logo we can use to further your public awareness. Don't forget my decades old truism. "It's easier to make news than it is to write press releases." (See the Communications Handbook!)

And speaking of climbing, consider this poem by Edgar Guest, published in the *Detroit Free Press* (March 4, 1921) and now in the public domain.

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
And the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns.

And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than it seems
To a faint and faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up when he
Might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

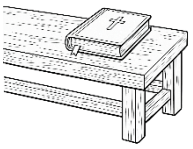
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are.
It may be near when it seems afar.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit.
It's when things seem worst that
You musn't quit.

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FACT: Nearly one-third of visits to the MSG website happen as the result of a Google Search!

From the Deacon's Bench

By Clay Collins, Guest Columnist



"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4

Halloween is rapidly upon us, the weather is quickly changing (right now it is like a roller coaster). If you are not already raking your leaves and getting your snow removal equipment ready, you had better get started! Don't be like me. I have a 'honey-do list of projects I have to do before snow flies!

While you are getting ready for winter, remember at least two things. The first take things easy. Don't hurry so that you hurt yourself. Slow and easy wins the race (usually). The second is to remember your friends, neighbors, relatives, acquaintances, even strangers who might not be as fortunate as you.

They might not be as nimble as you or have the equipment or know how to do some things as you do. They might have other talents that you do not possess to do a task. Combine your talents, and you might be surprised at what you might be able to accomplish.

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

Benediction: Gracious and patient Father of us all, bless those who need help and those of us who offer help to others. Teach us that we all have different talents that can be helpful to others. Amen.

Thought for the month: "Love much, laugh often, live well.

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



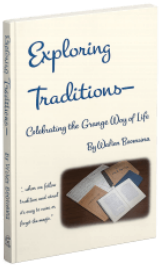
I hope everyone had a great summer and a good beginning to our new Grange season. Harvest is wrapping up, as are the agricultural fairs in our grand State of Maine. There were many great fair booth exhibits displaying the hard work done by our Grange members in the previous year. Congratulations to all of you!

Membership growth is an ongoing project which we should all take very seriously. Hopefully, your labors in the preceding months have attracted new members! I do have the past year's membership results and noted that 16 Granges had increases in membership totaling 65 new members. Very encouraging, HOWEVER; we need increases from more than just the 16 Granges. We need increases in ALL Granges. The overall losses have once again outnumbered the gains. I encourage every Grange; no, I challenge every Grange to take in more new members by promoting, advertising, word of mouth, or by other means. It is not just a request; it is a plea, as we are in great demand. Losing more Granges is not an option! Do you have a plan to attract new membership? Is your Grange ready? If our Granges stick to our traditions and rituals,

educate our members (new and seasoned), keep a positive attitude, make yourselves visible to the public, support your communities, and keep your doors open, then we have a chance. Otherwise, Granges that are just social clubs with no respect for Grange rituals and traditions continue to hurt our image and do nothing but disillusion the public. These "social clubs" are Granges that are in name only and are self-serving. This is why we need to educate our members on the true meaning of a Grange member and how we serve our families and communities. Keep plugging away as members have done for 159 years.

Exploring Traditions
Meandering Around the Grange Way of Life

By Walter Boomsma, Guest Columnist



From the Second Degree

> ***Above all, God is a Shepherd, and His people are the sheep of His pasture. You have, therefore, an adorable Pattern in your high and holy duties. To keep in safety those within the fold, and to reclaim the wandering—be your sacred charge. Be patient with the wayward, carefully instruct the erring, diligently seek and bring back the straying and those that are cast out.*** [Chaplain to the candidates]

I hesitate to use the word "trivial" in conjunction with the Ritual, but I have an interesting note about the Chaplain's instruction. It is one of the rare exceptions where reference is made to Christ and the New Testament. In the previous paragraph, the Chaplain references Abel who "offered the first acceptable sacrifice," as well as the "Shepherds at Bethlehem." The position of shepherd is, then, "ancient and honorable."

This is another place where I wish we could pause the ritual to explore in depth why the Chaplain compares God to a Shepherd and His people to sheep. The suggestion that the shepherd is an "adorable" pattern deserves thought. "Adorable" in this context doesn't mean "cute." The word comes from the Latin word *adorare* (to worship or ask in prayer). It therefore also sets a high standard that isn't limited to animals.

It's also tempting to think the pattern applies to other members, particularly if we think the flock is limited to Grangers. But it doesn't take too much divergent thinking to see how following the shepherd pattern could be the basis of our contribution to our communities. Remember, the master/president's challenge when closing the Grange meeting. "Let us be quiet, peaceful citizens, feeding the hungry…"

The most admirable quality of a shepherd is a profound commitment to protecting, guiding, and caring for the flock. While I will not claim to know what the original degree writers were thinking, the Ritual as a whole is not limited to fraternalistic instruction. The Ritual more accurately describes a way of life that embraces much, much more.

The role of a patron (one who provides support) might well resemble the role of a shepherd. When I demonstrate the shepherd's hook during our dictionary presentations, I introduce third graders to the idea that leadership isn't a title or position; it's a way of thinking and living. "When you help a classmate with their work, you're being a shepherd and a leader…"

When I think of what a shepherd does, a familiar verse comes to mind.

The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Can we do that at least to some degree for each other?

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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" is available on Amazon or by contacting the author.

View from the Farm

By Quill's End Farm's Endians



Alternating Notes

This past week held notes of dissonance. Discordant, sad strains in the melody of fall's alternating glory of rain and shine, a long-awaited harmony.

Benjamin headed off to Draft Animal Power Network field days in Vermont. This means we employ help at chore times.

Our cows know *our* boundaries. If anyone else tends to them, they need to find this new human's boundaries, much like children in a classroom with substitute teachers. For example: we milk in a parlor with two stanchions. While one cow is milked, the next one is let in to be prepped. We milk in the same order day after day. The cows know when their turn is coming and busy themselves with hay until then.

Unless...they need to test someone new. Since last Wednesday when Ben left, the jumble has begun after the first cow, Polly. Astrid refused outright to come into the parlor just to see which tricks might be employed to persuade her otherwise. I stepped in with apples...the stomach wins the heart.\

I made it my goal to just keep up with grazing rotations while Benjamin was away. The hens move every two or three days, the hogs as they use up a paddock, the cows twice daily. I was on top of everything until Eliza calved on Friday.

Everything went well. This is Eliza's 7th calf.

We typically give a new mama a day or two in the barn to keep an eye on things postpartum. When I walked into the barn on Saturday morning, I immediately knew something was wrong. Eliza was unable to get up and bloated. I set to action with Fisher, who was milking cows that morning and our oldest son, Alexander. We propped her up with bales of hay. She started to belch and get rid of the bloat. I figured she would be up in no time.

After milking she was still unable to stand. We gave her some oral calcium and glucose, hoping her system would recover quickly. I called our vet. By 1:30 that afternoon, she had passed, most likely from internal bleeding postpartum.

This is a big loss, as sad as it was unpreventable. Eliza was our oldest cow and the herd matriarch. She left us a cunning, super-smart, little heifer. This wee slip of a calf has big shoes to fill.

Ben returns tonight (Sunday). The cows will have to behave again and... he'll have a good-bye to say and a tree to plant over Eliza. The regular melody will return. As will those dissonant notes. Alternating necessities each in their turn, the flip side one of the other.

As our many summertime guests head home for the winter, I entreat all of you to please spread the good word. Our local farms are overflowing with bounty and quality unlike anything you can purchase at the grocery store. "The best dairy in Hancock County" (according to Google reviews) is in your neighborhood. Visit your farms and eat well.

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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!

- **Words for Thirds - Book Exchange Boxes:** Are you getting ready for this year's dictionary distribution? Are your BEBs and Little Free Libraries prepared for winter and snowfall?
- **Bogus Email:** Remember to keep your radar on! A different type of bogus email you might receive is claiming some of your email wasn't delivered. Just delete it!
- Breaking News Icon/Logo: Congratulations to Manchester Grange for being the first to be assigned our new "Breaking News" Icon! When a Grange submits news about their programs or events, we'll be using it to identify the post as a "developing story." Is that too subtle a hint that you should be sharing your news for posting?
- **Craft/Christmas Fairs:** Send us your plans! We've created a special page on the site listing the ones we know about!
- **An Idea for Your Grange:** Check out this month's Communications Column for several, including the idea of sending an annual report of your activities and accomplishments to your Town Office for inclusion in your Town's Annual Report.
- **To Ponder:** *)"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." (John Quicy Adams)*

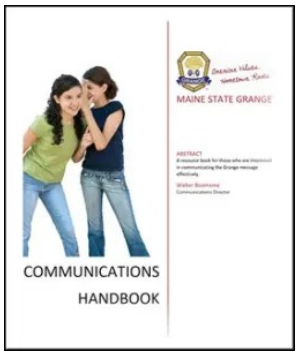
But Wait! There's More!

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

- Manchester Grange Craft Fair T-8 Days
- Fraud Watch - Medicare Open Enrollment Scams
- Androscoggin Christmas Craft Fair
- Gathering of Dyers at Evening Star Grange
- Winter Heating Guide
- Welcome to State Session (Chris Hamp)
- Fraud Watch - Cybersecurity Month
- Grange Today! 10-09-2026
- St George Grange Fall Craft Fair
- Danville Junction Grange Christmas Craft Fair
- Parkman Grange MSAD 4 Santa Project
- Communications Handbook Available
- Mill Stream Grange Awarded Distinguished Grange Badge
- Mill Stream Grange Debuts LFL
- Ocean View Grange Bean Suppah
- Grange History Revealed Locally
- Suicide Prevention Month #4 Supporting Recovery
- Androscoggin Grange Hunters' Breakfast
- Election Day Information

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.

Communications Handbook Available



Communicate the Grange story with confidence. The Maine State Grange Communications Handbook offers practical guidance for connecting with local media, writing news and event announcements, sharing photos, and keeping members informed. From press releases and branding to websites and social media, it's a useful resource for Grangers who want to share their work clearly and effectively.

The Communications Handbook is brand new for 2026, and it's much more than the traditional program book. Journalists probably know the Associated Press Stylebook has 504 pages. While this Handbook incorporates some AP practices, it's much shorter at 35 pages and still quite inclusive. **It's free! Give it a try!**

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.

November 2026

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- November 7, 2026, **Public Bean Supper at** Saco Grange #53 from 4 pm to 6 pm. $10 pp. We do take out!
- November 13, 2026, Deadline for applications to the **Parkman Grange MSAD 4 Santa Fund**.
- November 14, 2026, **MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline**
- November 14, 2026, **Gathering of Dyers** at Eastern Star Grange, 10 am – 3 pm.
- November 14, 2026, Highland Lake Grange **Turkey Supper**, 4 pm – 6 pm. Take-out only.
- November 14, 2026 Androscoggin Grange **Christmas Craft Fair**, 9 am -2 pm.
- November 14, 2026, **Fall Fair** at Saco Grange #53 from 9 am to 2 pm. Join the festivities and discover handmade gifts from local crafters and seasonal decor.
- November 15, 2026, **Fall Fair** at Saco Grange #53 from 9 am to 2 pm. Join the festivities and discover handmade gifts from local crafters and seasonal decor.

December 2026

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- December 4, 2026, Valley Grange has "Breakfast for Supper" at 6:00 pm, followed by a short meeting and program. FMI Valley Grange Website.
- December 5, 2026, Parkman Grange's Kids Christmas Party from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm.

- December 12, 2026, Christmas Fair at Saco Grange #53 from 9 am to 2 pm. Join in the festivities, discovering handmade gifts from local crafters and seasonal decor.
- December 12, 2026, Girls' Night In at Saco Grange #53 at 5 pm. Come shop with a handful of amazing local vendors! No need to stress about cleaning your house—just gather your girlfriends and join us.
- December 14, 2026, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline
- December 20, 2026, Parkman Grange's MSAD 4 Santa Project Distribution.

January 2027

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation..

- January 14, 2027, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline

February 2027

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- February 14, 2027, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline

March 2027

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- March 14, 2027, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline
- March 27, 2027, Easter Egg Hunt & Raffles at Saco Grange #53 starting at 10 am. Free, all ages. Have your picture taken with the Easter Bunny.

April 2027

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- Grange Month
- April 14, 2027, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline

May 2027

Every Monday, 10 am – 3 pm, Saco Grange Quilting Club meets to learn techniques for quilting for charities. $5 donation.

- May 14, 2027, MSG Printed Bulletin Deadline
- May 22, 2027, Outdoor Plant Sale at Saco Grange #53 from 9 am until 11 am. Come buy local plants to support the greenhouses at Sweet-ser. FMI

June 2027

- Elections Month
- June 14, 2027, MSG Printed 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.