



the CONNECTICUT GRANGER

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March 2021

Hoping for an early spring



George Russell
State President

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Will March come in like a lion or go out like a lamb or go out like a lion? I am hoping it will go out like a lamb and take this COVID-19 with it! Back in February when the groundhog saw his shadow, we've had pretty stormy and cold weather. I am ready for an early spring.

A year ago in March, when we first heard of this COVID-19 pandemic, who would have thought that a year later we would still be fighting it? I was saddened to hear of the passing of Marge Bernhardt, our State Lecturer, due to complications from COVID-19. Marge was well-known throughout the Northeast for her work with the Lecturers. She was Treasurer of the Northeast Lecturer's Association and was very active in the Grange. She was lecturer of the Connecticut State Grange, Treasurer of Cheshire Grange, a member of Nutmeg Pomona Grange and the Past Deputies Association. She will be deeply missed.

As we approach spring, it is time to clean up our Grange halls by picking up sticks, raking leaves and cleaning up any other debris that may have collected over the winter. While you are doing that, you should make a map of where your well and septic system is so you have a record in case it needs to be found. Also, if

you have an in-ground tank that is approaching 40 years old, it should probably be taken out of the ground.

Make sure your paperwork is up to date. Make sure you have at least two signatures on all bank/financial accounts. For those of you

who have not sent in your Executive Committee report for 2020, please do so as soon as possible. Either send it to me or General Deputy Peter Keefe. Thank you.

So... let's hope for an early spring so we can get outside and start meeting again. Stay safe and healthy.

State mourns Marge Bernhardt



Marge Bernhardt

by Todd Gelineau, Editor

It greatly saddens me to report that our Fraternal Circle has once again been broken with the passing of State Lecturer Marge Bernhardt. Sister Marge died on February 13 at Backus Hospital in Norwich due to complications from COVID-19.

It is very difficult to sum up a person like Marge in a short Granger article. Her contributions to the Grange were many and varied. She was known by members throughout Connecticut and the Northeast Region as a Granger dedicated to the Order and her responsibilities as State Lecturer. For many years she served as State Flora and worked with her husband Carl

on the State Public Information Committee. She served as a Junior Matron and filled many other offices and roles throughout her years of membership. If we had to identify "essential Grange workers" Marge would certainly be at the top of the list.

Marge worked for Dattco Bus Co. for many years. When National Grange met in Connecticut in 2008, Marge cheerfully took on the task of coordinating transportation for delegates needing to get to and from Bradley Airport and members attending activities away from the host hotel.

As State Secretary I always appreciated her willingness to send out Fraternal Concerns whenever a member was sick or in distress. She also motivated and inspired lecturers across the state with her monthly newsletters.

All who knew her will agree there are not many members who loved the Grange more than Marge. She had a great positive attitude and looked forward to the day we would all be able to put this virus behind us and resume meeting again in-

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Connecticut State Grange
A part of the National Grange
American Values. Hometown Roots.



NEXT ISSUE . . . Articles Due March 15

Marge Bernhardt

person.

There is a tremendous void in the State Grange, Nutmeg Pomona and Cheshire Grange No. 23. My small tribute here doesn't really do justice to Marge Bernhardt and her legacy in the Grange. I hope in the coming days you will reflect on your own memories of her. The one thing for which we can be glad is that she is now able to be with her beloved Carl. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to her family at home and her Grange

family as well.

As has become our tradition when current or past officers have

passed, we have included images of Marge through the years. She will be greatly missed.



Marge speaks at State Session in the early 1970s.



Marge installed as Lecturer in 1998.

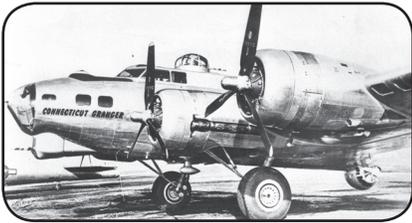
With Jody Cameron in 2013.



Marge (center) at Northeast Lecturer's Conference in 2004.

the Connecticut Granger

Published Monthly



WW II Flying Fortress "Connecticut Granger"

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A message from Sue Gray

To our Grange family,

The hundreds of cards and letters we received and continue to receive following the unexpected death of my best friend and husband of almost 50 years, Russell M. Gray, has been extraordinary and a tribute to the exemplary man who touched the lives of folks from all across the country. Russell had a big heart, a bright smile, he continually gave back to the community and family that he so dearly loved. His Grange journey began 60 years ago this spring and set in place what would become an extraordinary life. The tribute in the last issue of the Granger was heart-wrenching. Thank you all! Blessings from Sue Gray and family.



Russell Mason Gray was a devoted family man, committed to his town and lover of all things John Deere!

Russell often told me NOT to cry for him when he passed away. He had enjoyed a wonderful life, been to many places, cherished so many friendships and accomplished so much more than he ever thought he would as the young son of small town dairy farmers. He joined Ekonk Community Grange at the age of 15. This journey enabled him to meet lifelong friends around the nation and travel from Maine to California. He became knowledgeable of the subway system in Washington, D.C. and many major airports.

In 1976, we met Joan and Dennis Phelps at a National Grange Convention in New Jersey and this began a friendship that endured and included an Alaskan cruise, trips to Vermont, New York, Canada and so much more.

Through his Grange connection, Russell, for many years served as a Director of the Patrons Mutual Insurance Company. More friendships formed. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment was election as First Selectman of the town of his birth in 2005. He

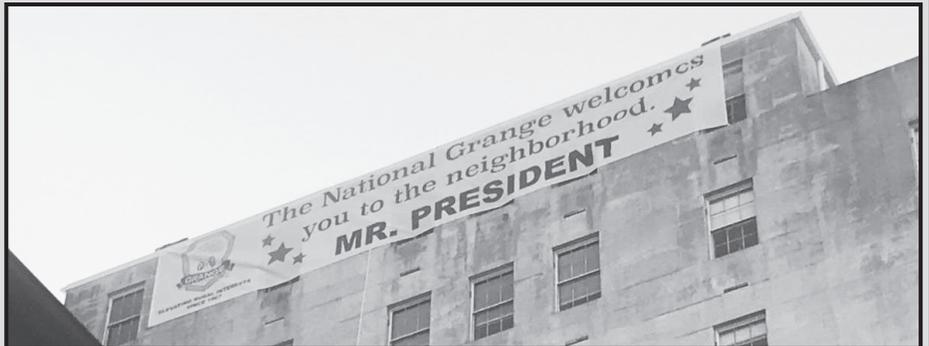
served with honor and dignity and was re-elected four times for 4 year terms. He was especially proud to use his native-born skills in building 4 bridges without using State funding. As selectman, he became excellent friends with State Senators and Legislators as well as making numerous treks to the State Capitol and the Governor's Mansion. So many friendships he formed in Sterling and throughout the entire state. Not simply a farmer, he was veterinarian to his herd, mechanic to his precious John Deere tractors and equipment, plumber and carpenter helping build barns and repairing them, teacher to his children, environmentalist, humorist, caretaker of land and



always there to help in anyone in need, oftentimes selflessly reaching into his wallet.

Adored by his children, idolized by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Dearly loved by his adoring wife. A life well lived! He loved a good joke and was quick with his radiant smile. So pass it on... remember him with a good deed and a smile! That is the legacy he would want... not tears!

Welcome to the neighborhood



Above- A giant banner welcoming the new president covers the side of the National Grange Headquarters in Washington, D.C. As it is the only private building on the Federal block opposite the White House, it has a perfect view of the Executive Mansion and surely noticed by those working and living there. Left- Interns and staff members gathered on the roof to help hang the banner. The White House is seen in the distance.

The information contained in each issue of The Connecticut Granger is for informational purposes only. The Connecticut Granger assumes no liability or responsibility for any inaccurate, delayed or incomplete information, nor for any actions taken in reliance thereon. The information contained about each individual, event or organization has been provided by such individual, event organizers or organization without verification by us. The opinion expressed in each article is the opinion of its author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Connecticut Granger. Therefore, The Connecticut Granger carries no responsibility for the opinion expressed herein.

February was a difficult month



Todd A. Gelineau
State Secretary
Winchester Grange #74
Secretary@ctstategrange.org

So much has happened since the last issue. My apologies for delays at the State Office during the last couple of weeks. Early in February I contracted COVID-19 and wound-up living in my unfinished basement for 10 days. It might seem luxurious to have all your meals served to you (at the top of the stairs) and to be surrounded by portable heaters and electric blankets but it's really not. Thankfully I had a milder case but it did prevent me from working in the office for a couple of weeks. I will catch up... it will just take a little longer to get some things completed.

One of the first things completed after my quarantine was the mailing of State Directories, Blue Books, Legislative Policy Guides and other important materials to all Granges. I remind you the Blue Book covers both 2021 & 2022. So please hang on to this book. The Executive Committee reports are no longer printed in the center of the book. Separate sheets were printed and sent out to each Secretary. It seemed a waste to put these reports in each of 300 books when only one or two copies are needed in each Grange. Additional copies of all materials may be obtained by contacting me. Digital copies of the books are also available to all who request them. We want to make sure all members have access to this information, especially when we see each other in person less frequently.

The annual filings of the 990-N E-Postcards will be completed by me in the next couple of weeks. Receipts of the filings will be sent to each Grange. Please file these away in a safe place when you receive them.

There are still a number of Granges who haven't sent in

their Bonding Insurance for 2021. Bonding is not optional. It is required by the National Digest. Granges that do not respond will be renewed by me and billed for the expense. We would rather have each Grange evaluate their need and order coverage appropriate to their particular Grange.

We remind you t-shirts, jewelry, key chains, window decals, pens, Grange supplies and much more are available through the State Grange Office. Let me know what you need

New programs on the way



Faith Quinlan
Membership Dir.
Winchester Grange #74
membership@ctstategrange.org

In February I attended the last National Membership meeting hosted by Joe Stefanoni. He invited the Oregon State President, Susan Noah and their Membership Director, David McBride to talk about Oregon membership growth and what has been the source of their success. It was very interesting and many of their programs make a lot of sense. From the state perspective it is about giving support, tools, and ideas to aid the individual needs of a Community Grange. They believe their number one was to visit each Grange, listen and then help them make a plan to fit their specific needs, interests and strengths.

This was my plan when I took on my role last March and Oregon State Grange confirmed it's the best direction. In light of the lack of in-person meetings and the strong fears surrounding the past year I became worried there may not be the possibility we could follow through with this program ourselves. Oregon admitted they did not have a suggestion for us if the Granges were not meeting in-person. Many of us ARE still meeting and getting

and we'll be happy to get items out to you. It's our Grange version of Amazon.

For many years, Sister Marge Bernhardt took on the task of notifying us all when members were sick or in distress. Please continue to send your notes to me and I will make sure to let you all know when members need a card or when others have passed away. You can send information to my email address at: secretary@ctstategrange.org.

Until next time... stay safe and stay well.

things done. For now that is mostly on Zoom meetings. The Membership Committee and I are devising a schedule and plan to visit with all of the Granges that are operating virtually and when possible in person.

I promise you that this committee has amazing ideas and knowledge to get things going in the right direction. Please remember to reach out to us and let us help you as soon as possible. We will also be hoping to set up a schedule to meet with your Grange in the next month or so.

We also will have other helpful programs rolling out soon and I will share more as we solidify the details. Reach out to me if you want to schedule early – otherwise we will be in touch with your Grange. If you have not heard, the new National Membership Director will be Amanda Brozana-Rios. We wish Joe all the best in his future endeavors and offer Amanda all the support and best wishes in her new role.

Schedule Meetings

All Granges should be meeting at least virtually by now. How about your Grange? Setting up a Zoom meeting is easy and we will help you through it. Just contact Faith for more information today!
Call: 518-698-2785; Email is above

Please support Heifer International

Irene Percoski, Agric. Committee

Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth.

When Heifer International gives an animal to a small business it is providing wool, milk, eggs and so much more, thus increasing access to medicine, school, food and a sustainable livelihood. The difference a small flock of chickens, a hive of honeybees, a heifer, a pig or sheep

Put on your thinking caps...

Write an Agriculture-related resolution this year

or goat can make a profound difference in a family's life.

The Agriculture Committee is asking for your support with a monetary donation. In this stressful time of Covid 19, we realize the difficulty that many Granges are having without the usual financial

income. However, many small donations can make a difference in combating hunger and poverty. Please discuss this among your members and send your check to the Ct. State Grange and note The Heifer Project on the check. The total will be announced and presented at the 2021 State Grange session.

Our Agriculture Committee wants you to put on your thinking caps and write an agriculture related resolution.



Alma Graham
Legislative Director
Coventry Grange #75
Legislative@ctstategrange.org

While digging through a box of old photos and documents for another project, I came across a March 8, 1935 copy of the Willimantic Daily Chronicle. When I noticed the headline I just started laughing. This is quoting the 1935 Chronicle.

"BUT LITTLE ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY"

"Second Month of Session Closes With Bulk of Major Legislation Still Hanging – Defeat of Rehabilitation Bill Most Important Action Thus Far. "

The article goes on saying: "The General Assembly has closed its second month with the bulk of major legislation still hanging fire. Aside from committee hearings, scheduled soon to report on liquor and milk control, old age pension, government reorganization, labor and the budget, little in the way of prominent reform has been accomplished."

It is interesting that 86 years later the same can be said about the present General Assembly. Many bills have been introduced and different committee hearings are occurring. The only bills that have been presented and voted on

Little has changed in 86 yrs.

so far by the Legislature have been judicial appointments. This is not uncommon thought at this point in the session. Note that one of the topics from the 1935 session was about liquor control. This session we are also discussing liquor control, allowing sales of wine and beer in grocery and big box stores.

In early February, Governor Lamont presented his proposed bi-annual budget. The Governor proposed some new revenue sources which included legal marijuana sales, sports betting, online betting and a new fee on tractors-trailers traveling through the state. He did not include highway tolls this year. His budget proposal avoids major tax increases. He is relying on the federal pandemic relief funds

to help close some of the projected deficits. He is not planning on any major cuts to towns and has slightly raised some school grants to towns.

The legalization of marijuana will be one of the controversial topics of the budget. It has been proposed before and there has been strong opposition to it. One major thing to note is that many of our neighboring states have now legalized it so they are receiving revenue benefits by our resistance to legalize marijuana.

Now the members of the General Assembly will review, tear apart, and present their versions of a budget. Hopefully presenting a revised budget before the end of the session.





Eye on Communications

GLEANINGS FROM YOUR STATE PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM

Special history book project update

by Terri Fassio, CT State Public Relations Co-Director

The Public Relations Committee of the CT State Grange, under the guidance of the State Grange Executive Board, is undertaking a new project - compiling a new book about the history of the Connecticut State Grange.

Seeing as it has been 67 years since the Lida Ives book "The Grange in Connecticut" was published, it is time that the CT State Grange assemble an updated publication about our Grange. This new book will be a compilation of information from both of the earlier books published on the CT State Grange, then taking it a step further and bringing it up to current day. The book will include more than just "statistical lists" as we will be adding photos, scans of his-

torical documents, and news clippings of Grange Halls, events, and activities. It will also include biographies of important Grange members and leaders throughout our history. This is a long-term project, with a goal of being released for the 140th Anniversary of the CT State Grange in 2025.

We have begun the process of collecting data and assembling information. Roy and Betty Jane Harrington have offered to lend a hand to assist us with this project, and we are very grateful for all of their help. You may be hearing from them soon!

We need the help of all of our Connecticut Grange members. Here's a few of the areas where assistance is needed --

- writing biographies and sharing recollections and experiences

of influential Connecticut Grange members, activities and moments in our history

- sharing of old photos and historical clippings of all Connecticut Granges, but primarily of Granges that are no longer active

- researching particulars about our Grange history through sources such as old Grange minutes and publications, local historical associations, town libraries and online resources like newspapers.com

We are also looking for old CT State Grange Journals, State Directories, Pomona Handbooks, CT Grangers, old newspaper clippings and more. If you have any of these publications/items that you are looking to get rid of, please don't throw them away. Send an email to information@ctstategrange.org and we can make arrangements to get them from you.

We will keep you updated as we move forward. If you would like more information, or have an item you think will be perfect to add to this project, please send a note to information@ctstategrange.org or publicrelations@ctstategrange.org.

Help support the 2021 Family Activities Projects



Dawn Percoski
Family Activities Dir.
Vernon Grange No. 52
CWA@ctstategrange.org

As I am writing this article, I am looking out my window and it's raining and snowing. The weather doesn't know exactly know which way it is leaning toward. Like it's on the brink. I hope that it will just clear up and be nice and sunny. Just as I hope that we can all start meeting in person again and get back to normal. With hope and perseverance, we all will be doing so again soon. But we still have a way to go before we get there.

One of the Programs that is assisting others to get thru this unprecedented time is an



organization called the Community Renewal Team (CRT). They have many programs to assist our veterans and seniors.

One of the programs is their Elderly Nutrition Program -Meals on Wheels-CT (MOW). In addition

to the nearly 2,500 meals per day that CRT is already delivering they have expanded to grab and go meals. They are adding another 40 - 45 new clients to the program each week and CRT Continues to Deliver Meals to Seniors throughout the Pandemic.

This program is who we have chosen to have as our special project for the next 2 years. All of our donations will be directed to this specific program. It will be able to assist them in expanding the ever-growing needs for Seniors and Veterans. As this pandemic makes us all painfully aware of those needs, we all have to do what we can. Please consider asking your Grange to make a generous donation. Thank you and God Bless.



GLASTONBURY GRANGE #26

Corr: Kathryn Ruff

March 4: 2021 “March Winds” 6:30 p.m. on Zoom

April 1: “April Fools Day” 6:30 p.m. on Zoom

Glastonbury Grange met on Feb. 4th on Zoom. We had a good meeting and want to thank our Lecturer for persevering. Her computer was not working and she drove thru South Glastonbury into Portland to a relatives home and joined us on Zoom. Thank you Ann. We are also happy to have welcomed our State Master, George Russell, that evening.

We are all anxiously waiting for the time when we can “all” meet at the Masonic Hall again. We do miss our Overseer, Tom Breen; Chaplain, Doris Monaco; Gatekeeper and Flora, Peter and Pauline Hunt ; Pomona, Priscilla Schmartz; and Exec. Committee member, Mario Accornero.

Meeting on Zoom is just o.k. It is just not the same as meeting “in person”.

Glastonbury sends its condolences to the family on the passing of Sister Marge Bernhardt.

SENEXT GRANGE #40

Corr: Diane Miller

Mar. 13: Shepherds Pie Dinner

Mar.17: Youth Art Month

Mar. 19: Sunflower Paint Night

We held our regular meeting on Jan. 20. We discussed Mentoring. This was an opportunity to interact with someone. Sometimes single mothers or teens with alcohol issues need our help. Bryn Miller high school sophomore indicated

she is a mentor to a freshman music student at her high school. We discussed the state Grange programs including the CWA theme “You are my Sunshine”. On Feb. 6 we had a craft day with learning how to make the octopus crochet pattern for preemies. This was a learning lessons for those who wanted to learn to crochet.

We continue to want to have small groups use our hall. There are several using the downstairs and the tables are well spaced. We have a lot of craft supplies available for anyone to use. We will be hopefully be able to have some larger group events in the future. Now that the Covid vaccines are available to many the public may get out to socialize. Our dinners at the present time will continue to be take out only. We have plans for Easter fundraisers. We hope all will stay well.

VERNON GRANGE #52

Corr: Irene Percoski

March 5: Color Our World

Apr. 2: Spring Cleaning.

We shared the Love at our February Zoom meeting with an excellent program by Lecturer Cheryl Robinson. It is difficult enough to do a really good program at a regular in-person meeting, but even more difficult at a virtual Zoom meeting. Well done Cherie. In order to make use of all this “at-home” time, Vernon members have been busy writing thank you cards. 225 were sent to the patients at Rocky Hill VA Home and hospital and 192 were sent to the staff at Woodlake at Tolland an ECHN facility. Whether you are a nurse, cook or janitor your presence has been critical in this pandemic and we thank you.

Please continue to collect your clean plastic bags to drop off at the Strong Farm. These will be sent to Cheshire Grange where they are making them into mats for the homeless. Our meetings will continue as Zoom meetings, but look forward to the time we can resume regular ones. All are welcome to join us. For information please contact Master Nancy Strong. We also invite you to “like”

us and follow us on Face Book.

As I was writing this article for the Granger I found out that our State Lecturer Marge Berhardt passed away. Our deepest sympathy, our hearts and prayers go out to Marge’s family. She will be missed so very much. R.I.P. Marge.

N. STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

Corr: Nancy R. Weissmuller

Mar. 12: Ritual Program

Mar. 26: Lecturer’s Program - State Contest Entry

We haven’t held any meetings and everything is quiet, so I send my thoughts in a poem.

Thoughts

Nancy R. Weissmuller

I have nothing to do. I’ve nothing to say.

These walls look the same as they looked yesterday.

The restaurants are closed. There’s no movie to see.

And I’m sick of the bad news they spout on TV.

We can’t leave the house. They give us no choice

And I’d give my right arm just to hear a friend’s voice.

The loneliness gets almost too much to bear

When you so need a friend and there’s nobody there.

I can’t do a thing except eat and then sleep.

And hope those old programs won’t cause me to weep.

The TV holds nothing of any appeal.

And all I can think of is “When’s my next meal?”

Oh how I would like to break free from these bounds!

At the end of this thing I’ll have gained twenty pounds!

If this darn old pandemic will just set us free

I’d love to get back to the old used-to-be!

And if the big storm that is looming on the horizon will just let us keep our power, next time we will tell you all about fantastic February.



MOUNTAIN LAUREL POMONA #15

Corr: Todd Gelineau

March 6: Pomona Meeting

The next meeting of Mountain Laurel Pomona will be held on Zoom on Saturday, March 6 beginning at 4:00 P.M. It may not be in-person but it is a great opportunity to see folks you haven't seen in a while. If you haven't attended a Zoom meeting before please give me a call (860) 307-1522 and I can get you started. We would love to see you there!

WINCHESTER GRANGE #74

Corr: Todd Gelineau

Winchester Grange held its February Zoom meeting on the 23rd with a good turnout of members and guests which included State Chaplain Charles Dimmick, State Exec. Comm. Chair Alma Graham and Public Relations Co-Director Bob Charbonneau.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, a vote was taken to officially cancel the 2021 Strawberry Festival. The Laurel Festival has also been canceled for this year -- traditionally partnered with our Festival the following weekend. The 350th Anniversary celebration of the Town of Winchester has also been postponed to 2022 making it the 350 plus 1 celebration instead.

Our members have taken to Zoom very well and look forward to each meeting but I am sure each and every one is waiting

for that day when we can finally schedule an in-person meeting and re-open our beautiful hall. The vaccinations will hopefully bring COVID-19 under control and allow us to resume some sense of our lives prior to the outbreak.... soon!

TAGHHANNUCK GRANGE #100

Corr: Barbara Prindle

Taghannuck had a lively February meeting on Zoom.

As usual we started off with a half hour social time for members to catch up with each other. It was wonderful to have Roy and Betty Jean Harrington and also Dawn Percoski attend and take part in our meeting.

Our two Candidates were Obligated in the 4th degree. Roy assisted by giving some great Grange history. We then talked about their house which is next to our Grange Hall and was where Taghannuck met before they bought the present building in 1930. It is a tradition that anyone who lives in that house must join our Grange or so we say.

When Ruth Schnell gave her CWA report, Dawn showed off some of her crocheting and talked about the contests. The octopi were a big hit. Members were again encouraged to enter the "A Grange Memory" contest.

Roy will send us more information on Bridgewater Grange's Trivia Contest that is being planned including the link so we can attend. Debbie Hanlon's program "Love" had everyone involved and added to the fun of the evening.

March 11, 2021 meeting is at 7:30 with a social half hour at 7:00pm. The Program is "Ritual". We invite all to join in with what is their favorite part of the ritual.

Our April 8, 2021 meeting will begin summer hours (I love the idea of summer) at 8:00pm with a social half hour at 7:30. The Program is Spring Cleaning.

RIVERTON GRANGE #169

Corr: Dave Roberts

I am pleased to share with you that our next Riverton Grange Community Service Project is going to be collecting containers of peanut butter from now through April. Why peanut butter, you ask? Recently, we learned that Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation in Bloomfield uses peanut butter (make sure it has no xylitol in it) to train their service dogs for visually impaired individuals. Peanut butter is placed inside "toys" that are used for training purposes.

Last year, our Grange partnered with other community groups to collect over 760 gently used towels for Fidelco to dry service dogs. Based on the success of that project, I recently met with Mark McGrath, Fidelco's Philanthropic Relationship Director, and he told me that one great need they have this year is for lots of peanut butter. So I hope that we can donate at least 100 containers of peanut butter. A donation box was placed on the Riverton Grange Hall porch today and a path was shoveled so folks could get up the steps to place peanut butter in the donation box.

In the next few days, First Selectman Don Stein has approved us placing a second collection box on the porch of the rental unit at the Barkhamsted Senior Center. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

If you or anyone needs me to pick the peanut butter up, please let me know. This project is another great initiative to show our community that our Grange is relevant and serving those in need. If anyone would like to go with me when I deliver the peanut butter to Fidelco after our drive has ended, please let me know. Thanks in advance for your continued support!

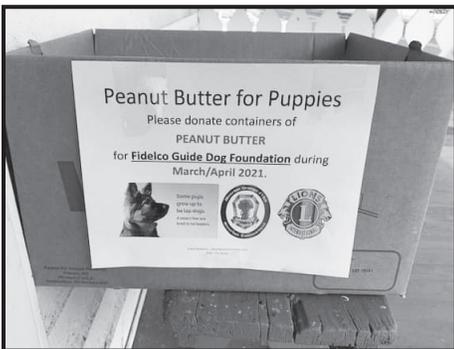
If you cannot get out to shop and

Continued next page...

just want to donate, I will purchase the peanut butter for you. No donation is too small! Just send the check to me c/o Dave Roberts, P.O. Box 155 in Riverton 06065 and I will take care of it for you.

Riverton Grange is sponsoring a 2021 Community Citizen Award Program to honor community members such as teachers, public safety, non-profit volunteers, civic leaders and others to recognize their good work going above and beyond their normal duties.

Just send your nomination with the nominee's name, contact information and no more than 500-word statement on why you think the individual should be honored. Nominations are due to Community Services Chair Dave Roberts (dave@daveroberts.org) no later than Wednesday, March 31.



Top- Peanut Butter for Puppies collection box. Above- Riverton Grange Hall.

Riverton Grange joins service clubs and town in Farmers to Families effort

reprinted from *The (Torrington) Register Citizen*

BARKHAMSTED — The Town of Barkhamsted has completed its seventh food-box distribution event under the leadership of First Selectman Don Stein, with food provided by the USDA Farmers to Families program.



Phil Prelli volunteers at the event

Stein asked local nonprofits to help coordinate the event. Members of the Barkhamsted Lions Club, Barkhamsted Senior Center, Riverton Grange 169 and Northwestern Connecticut Cyber Lions Club helped distribute 1,500 pounds of food to those in need during the pandemic, according to a statement.

“This food is so critical to help shut-in seniors and others affected by this pandemic have a lifeline until times improve,” said Barkhamsted Senior Center President and Riverton Grange Community Service Chair Dave Roberts. “We are so grateful to our town’s leadership for allowing us to participate in this program.”

A group of 15 volunteers from all four nonprofits distributed food boxes at the Barkhamsted Senior Center. Food boxes were also delivered to those residents who unable to attend the event, Roberts said.



1,500 pounds of food were distributed to Barkhamsted residents.



NUTMEG POMONA #16

Corr: Joanne Cipriano

The next meeting of Nutmeg Pomona #16 scheduled for Sunday, March 21, 2021 at Beacon Valley Grange Hall has been changed to a virtual meeting which will begin at 2 P.M.

To be included in the meeting, please contact Master Donald Lanoue via e-mail at dlanoue35@gmail.com or phone 203-213-6235. Our last Zoom meeting was good so let's make this one even better.

We will have a complete meeting with program and refreshments. For the program - your homework is to make a 9 square Bingo card. For the refreshments, please bring a snack you like.

On the agenda is the election of Steward, Treasurer and Flora. Masters should have a report on their Grange activities.

The Secretaries or Dues Collectors - Dues are now payable at \$5.00 per member excluding Golden Sheaf members. Remember the next quarterly report is due March 5th. Please send me the slip at the end of the report.

CHESHIRE GRANGE #23

Corr: A. Ruel Miller

March 3- Maple Season

Our first zoom meeting on February 3rd worked out rather well all things considered. Our thanks to our State Membership Director, Faith Quinlan, for her help in setting up the link, for the

meeting. As mentioned earlier, we will continue to meet once a month for now on the first Wednesday of the month on Zoom. We are not optimistic for the upcoming fair season and there is a possibility that we will not hold a 2021 fair. We will monitor things with the State Fair Association. It has been quite a winter thus far.

Editor's Note: This article has been edited as there was information regarding Marge Bernhardt that didn't seem appropriate to print as she has since passed. The members of Cheshire Grange are both shocked and grieving this tremendous loss. I'm certain Brother Miller will talk about Marge more in his next column for the Connecticut Granger. Our sympathies go out to the members of Cheshire Grange and the Bernhardt family.

HIGGANUM GRANGE #124

Corr: Richard A. Prescott

Our February meeting was the first in-person meeting we have had since November, 2020. Seven members were in attendance, and it was nice for those few to again meet in our hall and conduct a Grange meeting in regular form. Of note was the exciting news that four of our members have received their first COVID vaccination shots. Most of the meeting was devoted to discussion of how we will continue functioning as an active Grange to maintain our presence in the community in spite of our general inactivity. Our tenant, the grocery store has been doing very well in serving the variety of needs of their customers and has been able to do a fantastic job of stocking supplies in spite of the many shortages. They have been a great asset to this community.

In looking ahead to better weather, we are planning an outdoor hike and get-together in the Spring, hoping that we have been able to get ahead of the social restrictions with which we are now

coping. Many of our members are still active in volunteering their time in the community in some manner or another, in true Granger spirit. We are finding ways to help as best we can!

This correspondent wishes to thank our Lecturer, Helen Luk, for providing the initial written content of this article so that it could be reported. We are hoping that all our Brothers and Sisters stay safe in these challenging times. Looking forward to turning the COVID corner to better times.

LYME GRANGE #147

Corr: Lois Evankow

Apr. 1: Meeting

May 6: Meeting

As I am writing this we are experiencing our second significant snow fall in less than a week. I'm sure all the winter sports people are thrilled. However, the rest of us are not.

It's bad enough being forced to stay away from friends and family, never mind being stranded by snow.

I am lucky- got my first vaccination and have an appointment for the second one in three weeks. So far so good. No reaction. Maybe, just maybe we will get this COVID-19 under control in the near future.

Our Grange has not met- either in person or virtually but perhaps we may be able to soon.

Keep up washing hands and wearing masks and social distance.

HEMLOCK GRANGE #182

Corr: Maureen Sanborn

Mar. 17: All Things Green

Mar. 26: Omitted, unless regular meeting is canceled.

Apr. 9: CWA

Apr. 23: Omitted, unless regular meeting is canceled

Coffee and refreshments will be served following the meeting.

Slow Cooker Corned Beef & Cabbage Soup



Corned Beef and Cabbage is a March meal tradition. But it can be the same year after year. How about kicking it up a notch by turning it into a tasty soup! GimmeSomeOven.com has the perfect easy to prepare recipe - and it's made in the slow cooker.

INGREDIENTS:

4 cups chicken stock
1 (12-ounce) bottle of beer (I used a pale ale)
1.5 pounds corned beef, cut into large chunks
1.5 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, diced into bite-sized pieces
2 carrots, peeled and diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 medium white onion, peeled and diced
1 small head green cabbage, quartered, cored and shredded
1 bay leaf
generous pinch of salt and freshly-ground black pepper
for serving: chopped fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS:

Add all ingredients to a large slow cooker bowl, and toss to combine. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or on high for 3-4 hours, or until the beef is tender and shreds easily.

Transfer the beef chunks from the stew to a separate plate, and use two forks to shred it into bite-sized pieces. Return the beef to the stew, and stir to combine. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper if need be, then remove the bay leaf.

Serve warm, garnished with fresh parsley if desired.

SOURCE: <https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/slow-cooker-corned-beef-and-cabbage-soup/>



Hello Grange friends!

Hard to believe that we are now entering March. This year is going by quickly. We are still going to a lot of Zoom meetings, and it is good to see all of our friends. We are saddened by the passing of CT State Grange Lecturer Marge Bernhardt. So many losses in our Grange Family recently. Let's hope we can put COVID behind us and get back to normal soon.

Please visit my Facebook page and click the "Like" button to follow all of my adventures. <http://www.Facebook.com/CTGrangeHank-theBurro> - and don't forget to let George know when your Grange is meeting on Zoom, and perhaps we will stop by and see you online!

WINDOW TO THE PAST

Photographs are a treasured part of Grange history. Many of them, unfortunately, do not come neatly labeled on the back with names, dates, people or places. These photographs have a history to tell... but about whom or what? Please help us solve the mystery of faces and places as we look through the Window to the Past. You can contact us by calling (860) 626-5074 or on the web by emailing: submissions@ctstategrange.org.



On the October Photo:

We heard from Barbara Narvel - "In the photo in the bottom right from October, the gentleman on the left is Norman Dempsey and his wife Dorothy. Norman was Master of the Delaware State Grange. I don't know the year."

On the December Photo:

We heard from Carol Hnath, "The photo is obviously a youth program or function and had to have been taken between Nov. 1971 and Nov. 1972 since that is when Gordon Fraser Jr. was State Prince. The girl standing to his left is Sharon Chapman.

Some of the other faces look familiar but the names escape me."

We also heard from George Kotowicz -- "One of the guys in the photo looks like Phil Prelli, and it might be a Mountain County Pomona event."

Susan MacGeachie identified Kathy Chapman, Susan (Koniecko) MacGeachie, Gordon Fraser, Anne Marie Watson and Leslie Laputz.

On the January Photo:

We heard from Nancy Strong - "It was taken at Vernon Grange's 100th anniversary and are all the past masters at the time. Front row - Herb Niederwerfer, Pearl Gibson, Francis Lyman, Nancy Strong. Back row - Gordon Gibson, Ernie Graham, Doris Madden Callahan, Everett Gardner, Earl Purrington, Norman Strong and Ken Hill."

We also heard from George Kotowicz -- "The woman seated on the right is Nancy Strong. The man standing on the left is Gordon Gibson."

On the February Photo:

We heard from Joanne Cipriano, "The man at the microphone is the late Jim Grandy (former husband of Pat Palmer) from Hamden Grange. I believe he was Chairman of the Agriculture Committee." Ruel Miller also identified Jim.

We heard from Pat Maines - "The Fellow on the right is Dr. Alan Collins. He was our neighbor. He was from the Department of Agriculture, and worked at UCONN for many years. He passed away several years ago."

We also heard from Richard Campbell, Past Master of Pachaug Grange - He agrees that the man on the right is Dr. Alan Collins.



View from the Hill

Burton Eller, National Grange
Legislative Director

With the time and attention consuming impeachment trial of former President Trump now over, President Biden and Congressional Democrats are turning towards completing cabinet confirmations and moving forward their agenda.

COVID-19 Relief

The Democratic proposal for another round of COVID-19 relief is soon to face critical votes in both the House and Senate this week. In the House, a vote on the final package is expected on Friday the 26th or Saturday the 27th of this week. With a narrow majority, Democratic leaders have to walk a careful line in crafting the relief bill to not be too big or too small so as to scare off moderate or progressive members and ensure the bill makes it to the Senate. At the same time, members of Republican leadership in the House are actively pressuring their members to not support the bill. While current expectations are that the House bill will pass on a party line vote, with narrow majorities passage is not guaranteed.

At the same time, in the Senate a fight is brewing within the Democratic caucus over the bill's proposed \$15 minimum wage hike. On one side, moderate Senators like Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona do not support a \$15 minimum wage and would prefer a more moderate increase to something like \$11. On the other side, Senators such as Vermont's Bernie Sanders are adamant that the minimum wage must be increased to \$15 without compromise. At the same time, it is not yet clear if the \$15 minimum wage will be able to be included in this COVID relief package because the unique process Democrats are pursuing to pass the bill (called budget reconciliation) only allows for measures which directly effect the budget. The office of the Senate parliamentarian will have ultimate authority to determine if the \$15

minimum wage is allowed and a decision is expected to come at any time.

Confirmations

With more available time the Senate is also rapidly pushing forward nominees for President Biden's cabinet, with key hearings and votes schedule across the next few weeks. So far most of Biden's nominees have moved through the process without much trouble; however Biden's nominee to run the Office of Management and Budget, Director of the Center for American Progress Neera Tanden, will likely not make it through the narrowly divided Senate because Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia has announced he will vote no on her nomination due to her previous controversial tweets.

What's Next

Following COVID-19 relief and cabinet nominees the Biden administration has begun to signal their future legislative priorities such as immigration reform and infrastructure spending. While details of the timeline for future proposals are not yet clear, this is a space to be watching for the rest of the year.

AGRICULTURE & FOOD

Secretary Vilsack's Priorities

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee in early February, Secretary of Agriculture-designee Vilsack spoke about several of his priorities for USDA, including:

- Establish an agriculture carbon bank using the Commodity Credit Corporation spending authority to provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to participate.
- Assistance to develop a new local meat processing capacity by subsidizing small processors seeking to qualify for federal inspection.
- Expand agricultural trade.
- Take bold action to address discrimination in all its forms



across USDA.

- Embrace sustainable and regenerative agricultural production practices.
- Expand food and nutrition assistance.

Grange Congratulates Vilsack

Following the Senate 92-7 vote February 23 to approve Tom Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture, National Grange president Betsy Huber delivered a congratulatory letter to the Secretary pledging Grange support to advance policies which benefit rural America. She specifically pointed to rural broadband, rural health care and farmer-focused agricultural policies.

Hunger is a Pandemic Issue

The number of citizens relying on the federal government for food assistance jumped 14 percent in September compared to the same month a year ago. USDA said nearly 43 million people received help from the government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) compared to 37 million in September 2019. Endless lines at local food pantries are expected to increase as the pandemic crosses the one-year mark. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 23 million adults reported they sometimes or often struggled to provide food for

Continued next page...

their families.

Bill to Boost Locally Processed Meat Sales

Representatives Johnson (R-SD) and Cuellar (D-TX) have introduced the Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act to allow locally processed meat to be sold at retail across state lines when standards meet federal requirements. If enacted into law, the DIRECT Act will allow farmers, ranchers and smaller processors more options to market directly to consumers. The National Grange has strong policy supporting this concept and will work diligently to pass the DIRECT Act in the 117th Congress.

AG WORKFORCE/IMMIGRATION Agriculture Takes a Hit

House Democrats have introduced a sweeping immigration bill, the U.S. Citizenship Act, backed by President Biden that would require farms and ranches to pay overtime, pay minimum wage and provide an expedited path to citizenship for undocumented ag workers. Family members would continue to be exempt from overtime and minimum wage requirements. The Act does not expand the H-2A visa program to allow for year-round work by the experienced foreign workers that agriculture depends upon.

ENVIRONMENT/CLIMATE CHG. Capturing Carbon on the Farm

The Biden administration is targeting \$30 billion from USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to pay farmers and ranchers to implement sustainable practices and capture carbon in their soil. CCC money to create a carbon bank and facilitate emerging carbon trading markets does not need specific Congressional approval. The Depression-era CCC was created nearly a century ago and has the authority to borrow from the up to \$30 billion from the U.S. Treasury to help stabilize farm income and commodity prices.

Waters of the U.S. Rule Safe for Now

The Senate voted 51-49 in favor of preserving the Navigable Waters Protection Rule which more clearly defines wetlands, ponds, streams and rivers regulated under the Clean Water Act. The Protection Rule was finalized in 2020 with strongly support by farmers, ranchers, landowners and others. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WVA) joined Republicans to preserve the rule.

30x30 Order to Triple Protected Lands and Oceans

President Biden has signed an executive order aimed to protect a third of the nation's land and ocean waters by 2030. Much of the President's goal of 440 million acres, a land area twice the size of Texas, can be accomplished on federal lands by restricting multiple use such as timbering, drilling, mining and livestock grazing as well as declaring more wilderness and monuments. Tools such as conservation easements might be used to bring private lands into the fold. More clarity will be needed for an on-the-ground definition of "protected."

INFRASTRUCTURE

The National Grange and the Rebuild Rural Coalition sent a letter with over 200 cosigners to President Biden acknowledging his Build Back Better in Rural America plan. The Coalition emphasized the state of our deteriorating rural infrastructure and thanked the President for including roads and bridges, locks and dams, broadband, health care, railroads, electrical and water systems, housing and land grant university research in his infrastructure plan.

HEALTH CARE

Exit Polling Targets Health Care

A national voter exit poll by Morning Consult indicates voters are most worried about protecting pre-existing conditions coverage and rising out-of-pocket costs. Voters said they want policymakers

to deal with the real drivers of health care costs rather than simply shifting costs to consumers and the sickest patients.

Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening

The National Grange, five state Granges and numerous patient advocacy groups sent a letter to Capitol Hill expressing support for bipartisan bills S. 5051 and H.R. 8845, the Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act. This legislation will dramatically cut the time between the approval of a procedure by FDA and its approval for Medicare coverage by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). New innovative multi-cancer early detection tests can now utilize a simple blood draw to find most cancers before they spread.

Ease Medicare Enrollment During Pandemic

The National Grange and 49 state and national organizations are asking the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reinstate policies to help people sign up for Medicare amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment pathways were established last May but the enrollment flexibilities were allowed to lapse shortly thereafter despite clear and ongoing needs.

TAXES

Paycheck Protection for Ag Organizations

Nine agricultural organizations, including the National Grange, are asking the Senate and House leadership to include 501(c) 5 agricultural organizations in the next round of pandemic relief in budget reconciliation legislation. The groups stressed the importance of keeping ag-focused, non-profit organizations in business to serve as key resources for farming best practices, market information, educational outreach, farm and ranch life, youth in agriculture, rural life and pandemic-related assistance.

Continued next page...

CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE

Wearing of the Green

Virtual **Social Hour**

Celebrating St. Patrick's Day

zoom

Thursday, March 18th • 7:00 PM

Wear your favorite green shirt and join us for a fun and casual social gathering. Stop by and say Hello!

Send an e-mail to information@ctstategrange.org or membership@ctstategrange.org for the Zoom Meeting Access Information

Senexet Grange #40

Shepherd's Pie

with Salad & Roll
 Convenient Take Out
 From Your Car
 March 13, 2021
 5pm to 7pm
 Generous portion of
 Shepherd's Pie with side
 of green salad and
 homemade roll.
 \$12 per person



Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

March 27, 2021 7:30-9am
 628 Route 169-Woodstock, CT
 3 pancakes, eggs, sausage or
 bacon and homefries
 Kid's meal- one pancake, egg
 and choice of bacon or sausage
 \$10 per person,
 Kids meals are \$5 each,
TAKE OUT ONLY



Breakfast w/
the Easter Bunny

Please support the Senexet Grange!
 We are a non-profit organization here to serve the community.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband Network Traffic Spikes
 Traffic on broadband networks has increased by 51% during the pandemic, according to OpenVault. Total broadband traffic was also driven by a 6.5% increase in subscribers. Extreme power users who consume more than 2 TB per month jumped 184% year over year.

FCC Should Reconsider Data Order

The National Grange filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to urge the Commission to reconsider its Lifeline Data Collection Order which was released without public comment. The National Grange has long maintained that it is the FCC's prerogative to review and, if needed, revise the Lifeline program, its services and its customer base. However, in the middle of a pandemic is not the time to change the program or to make new demands on Lifeline customers. Lifeline is a federally subsidized phone and internet service for the disabled, elderly, shut-in individuals and low-income households.



amazon smile
 You shop. Amazon gives.



With COVID, many of us are shopping more and more online and Amazon is one of the most popular sites for purchasing all kinds of things like food, clothing, electronics and much more. Did you know you can support the Connecticut State Grange Foundation just by shopping on Amazon? By following the steps below, a donation will be made to the Connecticut State Grange each time you shop.

1. Sign-in to smile.amazon.com on your computer or mobile phone browser. If you do not already have an account, follow their easy directions/prompts for creating a new account.
2. After logged in, go to Your Account and select the option to change your charity. Select "Change your charity" from the options at the bottom of the page.
3. Select a new charitable organization to support, i.e. Connecticut State Grange Foundation.
4. Each time you shop on Amazon, you must go to Smile. Amazon for the Foundation to receive a donation as a result of your purchase(s).

Faith versus Belief



Charles W. Dimmick
State Chaplain

Cheshire Grange No. 23
chaplain@ctstategrange.org

Hebrews 11 1. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Sometimes people use the words "Faith" and "Belief" as though they are interchangeable, but often in context they have different meanings. When we translate from the Bible into English the same word in the original Hebrew or in the original Greek may sometimes be translated "faith" and at another time "belief". It is all a matter of context. But for me Faith is something I am absolutely sure of, with a firm foundation, needing no argument to convince me, while Belief does not have quite as firm a foundation. Some things I once believed I now am not so certain about and am quite willing to think that perhaps I was mistaken.

Note also that for any individual



In Memoriam

Margaret Bernhardt
Cheshire Grange No. 23

"Well done, good and faithful servants."

Faith is always singular, while Beliefs may be plural. I have one faith, but I may hold many beliefs. If some of those beliefs turn out not to be true it does not shake my faith. According to one dictionary definition: belief is an opinion or judgment in which one is fully persuaded. Faith is complete trust or confidence in a person or thing. Thus, they are similar, but there is an important difference. I am certain of my faith, but I have less confidence in my beliefs. Faith inspires one to good works, this being an outward manifestation of faith, as St. James says. Many of my beliefs, being mostly matters of

opinion, are less likely to drive me to decisive action.

Again, faith tends to bring people together, while differences in belief tend to drive them apart. When I lived in East Texas, I was astonished at the very large number of very small churches scattered across the countryside. I was told that this was a result of countless disputes among congregations over minor points of doctrine, causing them to split and set up separate churches. It got so bad that the State of Texas revised its tax law, stating that a church must have at least ten members to claim tax-exempt status. What a sad commentary when beliefs become more important than faith.

Simsbury restores windows

We would like to take a moment to offer our sincere thanks and utmost respect for the talents of Jade Mortimer, owner of Heartwood Window Restoration out of Shelburne Falls, MA. Over the past few years, The Simsbury Grange has been making strides in preserving our historic building, as well as creating the most efficient updates as possible. We were very specific in our requirements for our windows, as we wanted them to be restored rather than replaced. The process required a great deal of intensive labor, stripping paint with a steam process, sanding, re-glazing, painting. Jade's rates were very fair, and included pickup and delivery, removal, installation, and replacement of the ropes for the weights. The windows do look great and will probably now last another 100 years with care, especially with the storm windows in there.

For those of you with historic homes, please make a note to consult with Heartwood Window Restoration when the time comes to address your windows. We've spent a couple years doing the research, and getting the quotes- we are so thrilled with the results!

<http://heartwoodrestoration.com/>

