



the CONNECTICUT GRANGER

Published Monthly

Vol. 66, No. 4

The Official News Magazine of the Connecticut State Grange

January 2026

From the President's Desk



Robert Buck
State President

Bethlehem Grange No. 121
president@ctstateGrange.org

President Chris Hamp's Internal Address to the delegates at National Convention was a stark wakeup call to reality and a roadmap to the future. We must face the fact that if we are to continue into the future, we must not only staunch the hemorrhaging of membership but grow the organization. Past State Grange President Cameron talked about this at length in his term from 2010-2014, and held many programs to aid Granges in reversing the trend. In spite of those efforts, it fell on deaf ears, and we are where we are today.

The Performance Improvement Plan (aka PIP) to be rolled out this month is part of the SMART goal paradigm to be instituted to strengthen our community Granges and build membership. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound. Part of the plan involves a Pilot Program adopted by six State Granges to be tested as a tool for opening new Granges. It is meant to be smaller, faster, and more flexible. The number of required officers is four instead of 16. The program

allows Granges to meet in places where people already gather: cafes, community centers, libraries, and online. One goal is for every State Grange to open a new Grange in 2026.

I think that the PIP will dovetail with our Connecticut State Grange Mentoring Program. Every Grange has a mentor from among the cadre of state officers to help guide you along, listen to your concerns, and make suggestions to help you along on your pathway to success. We will also have a Grange Growth Team consisting

of members from Membership/Leadership Development, Communications and Outreach, Legislative Advocacy, Programming and Community Service, Youth and Junior Grange, one with Experience in revitalization, and Connector(s) with strong statewide relationships. The Mentoring team is shared in this edition and the Grange Growth Team list will be shared soon.

I think we would all agree that by the positive feedback to our community programs, whatever they are for your Grange, there is a need for the Grange. For instance, the showing of the nature film Beaver Family Life of by Ray Asselin at

...Continued next page

Wallingford Quilt of Valor



Doug Connelly was presented with the 7th Quilt of Valor by the Quilters of Wallingford Grange on Dec. 7.



Connecticut State Grange
A part of the National Grange



NEXT ISSUE:
Articles Due January 15

From the President's Desk

Continued from page one...

Simsbury Grange last night, co-sponsored by other local groups, was well attended and of great interest to the audience. The need is present.

National Grange is also pursuing a rebranding initiative to reinvent the Grange for the first time in 60 years. We all have noticed how little known the Grange can seem to be in our communities and rebranding is aimed at addressing that issue. This is to be released next year at National Leaders Conference in May

at Reno/Sparks, NV, with a full roll out in June.

The National Convention this year was a radical change from the past, and while some have noted

glitches, I would say it was an outstanding success. By the lesson of Perseverance in the Fifth Degree of our Order, obstacles are challenges to be overcome and shouldn't stop us from progress. We can and must change and move forward as there is simply no other possible choice.

Community Service

As Vice President, I would like to thank all the Granges for their participation in the Community Service contest for the last three years and look forward to your entries this year. President Rob Buck has asked me to take on the following contest: Teacher, Fireman, Police Officer of the Year Contest. All candidate nominations should be sent to me. I am working on getting a group of judges for this contest as I did for community service. The Grange has a lot of contests to enter from Youth, Junior, Family Activities, Lecturer, Agriculture and Honor Grange. Let's enter these contests and have fun this year.

Ted Powell

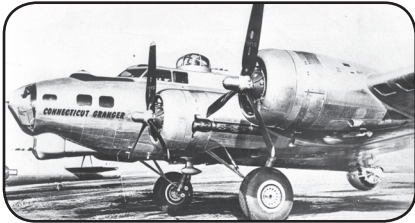
G Dollar Thank You

The Connecticut State Grange thanks all of the members who generously donated to the "G Bill" fund for State Session. Nearly \$3,000 was raised through donations of dollar bills denoted with a "G" on them. Of that amount, \$980 was donated by Elena Hermonot in memory of her husband, Rick, who passed away in February 2023. It is, of course, the largest individual donation to the fund and it has gone a long way towards offsetting the cost of holding State Session. Thank you to everyone and especially the Hermonot family!



the Connecticut Granger

Published Monthly



WW II Flying Fortress "Connecticut Granger"

STAFF

President/Editor Todd A. Gelineau
Vice President Terri Fassio
Treasurer Jody Cameron
Secretary Noel Miller

DEADLINE/CORRECTIONS

News is due on the
15th Day of each month
and should be sent to:

Connecticut State Grange
100 Newfield Road
P.O. Box 3

Winchester Center, CT 06094
or Todd Gelineau, Editor
P.O. Box 1134, Sharon, CT 06069
Granger@CTStateGrange.org
(USPS 563-220)

the Connecticut Granger

is published monthly for \$10.00/yr. by:

Connecticut Granger, Inc..
100 Newfield Road, P.O. Box 3
Winchester Center, CT 06094

Periodicals postage paid
at Winsted, CT 06098

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:
Connecticut Granger,
100 Newfield Road, P.O. Box 3
Winchester Center, CT 06094

November 10-14, 2026
Broken Arrow, OK

Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center

Secure your hotel room: <https://grange.biz/160hotel>



Eye on Communications

GLEANINGS FROM YOUR STATE PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM

A New Year, A New Grange

*Terri Fassio,
Public Relations Co-Director*

As we step into 2026, there's something invigorating about turning the calendar to January. For Community Granges across Connecticut, this spirit of renewal offers a perfect opportunity to reimagine what our organizations can become in the year ahead.

"New year, new me" is a phrase we hear constantly this time of year—but what about "new year, new Grange"? Just as individuals use January as a launching point for personal growth, we can harness this season to breathe fresh energy into our Community Granges and build momentum that carries us through all twelve months ahead.

The Resolution Trap: Why Good Intentions Aren't Enough

We've all been there. January 1st arrives filled with determination — we're going to lose fifty pounds, run a marathon, and read a book every week. By February, the gym membership sits unused, and we're back to our familiar routines, feeling discouraged.

The problem isn't lack of willpower, it's that we set unrealistic goals. When we aim too high too fast, anything less than perfection feels like failure, even when we've made meaningful progress. This same pattern plays out in our Granges, where big dreams can lead to the same disappointment that derails our personal resolutions.

The Power of Achievable Goals

Imagine your Grange sets a goal to recruit ten new members by December. Throughout the year, your members work hard by hosting open houses, participating in community events, personally inviting

friends and neighbors. By year's end, you've successfully welcomed six new members.

But here's the critical question: How does your Grange feel about this outcome?

If you set that goal of ten members, you fell short. Despite the hard work and real growth, there's a nagging sense of disappointment. You didn't hit your target, and that negative feeling saps momentum heading into the next year.

Now imagine a different scenario. Your Grange sets a goal of recruiting four new members, challenging but achievable based on your capacity and past experience. You implement the same activities, and by year's end, you've welcomed those same six new members.

Suddenly, everything feels different. You didn't just meet your goal, you exceeded it by 50%! There's energy in your meetings, pride in your accomplishments, and excitement about next year. Those six new members represent not just growth, but success that builds confidence and momentum.

The outcome was identical — six new members — but the psychological and organizational impact was dramatically different. That's the power of setting realistic, achievable goals.

Applying Smart Goal-Setting

This principle applies to every aspect of your Grange's activities. Rather than committing to a major event every month, plan four signature events throughout the year. Instead of tackling every community need, choose one or two service projects that align with your strengths. Base fundraising goals on past performance - if your annual barbecue typically raises \$800, set a goal of

\$850 and celebrate when you bring in \$900.

Communication and Building on Grange Strengths

No matter how well-crafted your Grange goals are, they won't succeed without effective communication. Your members need to understand what you're trying to achieve. The broader community can't support your Grange if they don't know what you're doing. Create opportunities for two-way dialogue so your goals remain relevant.

Your Grange doesn't need to reinvent itself to have a successful year. Look at what already works. If your harvest dinner has been successful for twenty years, that's an asset to build upon. Perhaps this year's goal is to increase attendance by 10% or use the event to recruit new members. By starting with proven successes and making incremental improvements, you create a much more achievable path forward.

Your Grange Holds the Keys to Its Future

Your Grange's future is in your hands and is not dependent on what other Granges are doing or waiting for perfect conditions. Some Granges have large memberships and can take on ambitious projects. Others are smaller and need to be more selective. Neither is better or worse, they're just different and call for different approaches to goal-setting.

This doesn't mean settling for mediocrity. It means being strategic and intentional. Sustainable growth happens through consistent, achievable progress rather than sporadic bursts of unsustainable effort.

Making 2026 Your Grange's Year

As you gather to plan for 2026, approach the process with both optimism and realism. Ask yourselves: What did we accomplish last year that we're proud of? Where did we

...Continued next page

A New Year, A New Grange

Continued from previous page...

struggle, and why? What resources do we actually have available? What does our community need that we're positioned to provide?

Use these questions to guide your goal-setting. Make your goals specific and measurable, but ensure they're also realistic and achievable.

Remember: It's better to set five modest goals and achieve all of them than to set ten ambitious goals and accomplish only half. Success breeds success.

A Fresh Start Awaits

The beauty of a new year is that it offers a clean slate and a chance to learn from the past while looking forward with hope and determination. For your Grange, 2026 can be a year of meaningful growth, consistent communication, stronger community connections, and renewed energy among your members.

But it all starts with how you set your goals. Be ambitious enough to push yourselves, but realistic enough to succeed. Focus on what you can actually accomplish. Communicate clearly and frequently.

Build on your existing strengths. And remember that your Grange's future is yours to shape.

Here's to a new year and a new Grange — one that sets achievable goals, celebrates real successes, and builds the kind of momentum that transforms good intentions into meaningful accomplishments.

Ready to make 2026 your Grange's best year yet? The Connecticut State Grange Public Relations Committee is here to help you succeed. Contact us at information@ctstategrange.org or publicrelations@ctstategrange.org. Reach out to Terri or Bob, and let's work together to make your Grange goals a reality!

Join us at the 2026 NE Lecturer's Conf.



Dave Roberts
State Lecturer

Riverton Grange No. 169
Lecturer@CTStateGrange.org

As we step into 2026, we also enter a historic moment for our nation and the Grange. Across the country, organizations are beginning to reflect on and celebrate America's 250th anniversary, and the Grange—rooted deeply in community, patriotism, and civic responsibility—has an important story to tell. One of the most exciting opportunities to explore that story together will be the 2026 North East Lecturers Conference, to be held April 17–19, 2026, in Cortland, New York, at the New York State Grange Headquarters.

This biennial gathering, hosted by the North East Lecturers Association, brings together Grangers from across our region for fellowship, learning, and inspiration. I am especially proud to be involved this year not only as Connecticut State Grange Lecturer, but also as Treasurer of the Association, helping ensure that this critical event continues to thrive. The 2026 conference theme, "America250 S.T.R.O.N.G.",

challenges us to reflect on the enduring role the Grange has played in making America great—and how that role continues today.

From its founding in 1867, the Grange has been a unifying force in American life: promoting agriculture, education, civic engagement, and patriotism. As we approach the nation's semiquincentennial, this conference will focus on how Grange values have strengthened communities for more than a century and a half—and how they can continue to do so for generations to come.

The weekend will begin on Friday night with what promises to be a relaxed and enjoyable fun night, a perfect opportunity to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. In a special show of state pride, Connecticut Grangers are encouraged to wear orange, the official color of the Connecticut State Grange. Let's make sure Connecticut stands out in Cortland with enthusiasm, energy, and plenty of orange on display.

Saturday will be filled with both education and exploration. Attendees will enjoy tours of the New York State Grange Museum, where the history of the Grange comes to life through artifacts, exhibits, and sto-

ries that remind us of how far we have come. An outdoor excursion is also planned, allowing participants to enjoy the region's natural beauty and the fellowship that comes so easily when Grangers gather.

The day will conclude with a celebration banquet, one of the highlights of every North East Lecturers Conference. Each state will present a skit that blends humor, creativity, and meaningful messages tied to the conference theme. These skits are always a crowd favorite and a wonderful reminder that learning and laughter go hand in hand in the Grange.

A program book is currently in preparation, and Connecticut's section will focus on patriotic music and its role in Grange rituals. Music has always been a powerful tool for unity and reflection, and our rituals are enriched by songs that honor our country and our shared values. This contribution will highlight how music helps connect Grangers to our national heritage and reinforces the ideals we hold dear.

Every attendee will receive a complimentary goodie bag, and I am pleased to share that the Connecticut State Grange will be donating...

...Continued next page

Lecturer

Continued from previous page...

ing pens/styluses for these bags—a small but practical reminder of our participation and support.

Education remains at the heart of the Lecturers Conference. Each state grange will present a workshop, and Connecticut's workshop will focus on Project Sustenance. This vital program reflects the Grange's ongoing commitment to addressing food insecurity and supporting our neighbors in need—an-

other example of how Grange principles translate into meaningful action.

The conference is open to all Grangers, and while it is especially highly encouraged for all Lecturers and Program Directors, anyone interested in education, programming, and the future of the Grange will find great value in attending. Cortland, New York, is approximately a four- to five-hour drive for most Connecticut Grangers, and carpooling options will be available, making the trip both economical and enjoyable.

Final details for the conference will be finalized following the North East Leaders Conference, to be held in Vermont on January 9–11. As more information becomes available, it will be shared widely, so please stay tuned.

I encourage Connecticut Grangers to mark their calendars now and plan to attend this meaningful regional gathering. Together, we can celebrate our past, strengthen our present, and help ensure that the Grange remains America250 S.T.R.O.N.G.

Time to start new projects



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

Now that the Holidays are over, we can all settle in for a nice winter's rest. I'm busy making my crafts for the Big E. Hopefully you can now start your projects for this year's contests. As always, I look

forward to seeing what you come up with.

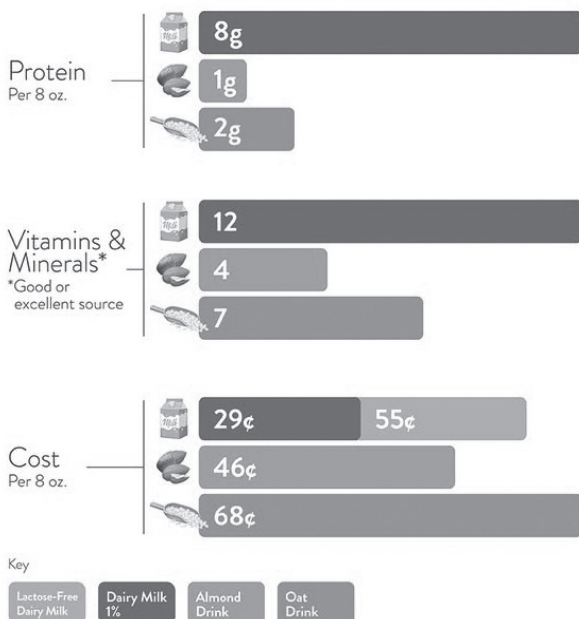
Our most popular new item is the Needlework Class M for Miscellaneous. It can be any craft you do so like paintings, rugs making, or any other crafting that you do. Don't forget to decorate a picture frame. Let your wacky talents flow! I wanted to make a correction that went out in the Newsletter Bits and

Bytes.

I am not collecting the G Dollars this year. It was an idea that I had to help out our State Grange. We do a lot of Community Service and put energy into our own events. But I'd like to challenge anyone else to come up with an idea for helping us keep costs down at the state level.

Stay warm and don't forget to visit people. Winter can be lonely for some who can no longer go out in the cold.

How Do Plant-Based Drinks Compare to Real Dairy Milk?



USDA MyPlate Dairy Group – One of the Five Food Groups.
National Dairy Council. What's in your glass? USDairy.com. January 2025.
doi:10.1016/j.jand.2024.06.003

NDC
NATIONAL DAIRY COUNCIL



STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES

A National Grange Webinar Series

JANUARY

13

60 MINUTES

FROM IDEA TO IMPACT

Join Nona Bear and Beth Westbrook as they transform sample event ideas into real, workable plans—offering clear steps, smart planning strategies, and proven examples to help your Grange launch impactful community projects.

FEBRUARY

10

60 MINUTES

LESSONS LEARNED: SUCCESS STORIES FROM 2025

Hear directly from Granges funded in the 2025 RLI grant rounds as they share achievements, challenges, and insights to inspire your next community-focused event.

MARCH

10

60 MINUTES

ENGAGING NEW ENERGY

Join Amanda Brozana to explore strategies for welcoming and involving new members who join through the Rural Life Initiative, fostering active participation, lasting connections, and stronger, more vibrant Grange communities.

Register: <https://grange.biz/RLIwebinar>

All webinars will begin at 8:30pm ET / 5:30pm PT.
Can't make it? Recordings will be available following the event.



The Grange Foundation invites you to join Common Routes: Choose Your Challenge, a virtual event running now through April 2026 that celebrates unity through movement. Walk, run, bike, ride, drive, or take part in any activity you choose to support the Foundation's work. Kids and even pets can join the fun!

Participants receive special event swag, from cooling towels and sticker packs to pet bandanas, Baby's First stickers, and keychains for our Sunday Drivers. You can also register as a cheerleader if you'd like to show support without racing.

Registration is open through Grange Month in April. Every registrant gets a digital bib to share online or hang at their Grange Hall, and swag will be delivered by mail. This is a great way to move with purpose and share why the Grange matters to you, said Foundation leaders.

Choose your challenge. Support the Foundation. Invite a friend to join you!

Register here:

<https://runsignup.com/grangefoundation>

SPEAK LIKE A "CHAMP"

Speak like a "CHAMP" is a monthly message designed to get everyone speaking the same language to encourage positive teamwork as we Grange.



NEXT UP

Next Up signifies anticipation and preparedness for what is immediately ahead, whether it involves people, actions, or events. In leadership or succession, Next Up refers to the individual or group prepared to step into a leadership role or fill a critical position.

Harmony Grange



Harmony Grange (Monroe) cooked dinner at the Spooner House and thanks them for hosting the Grange.

Open Mic at BVG



Beacon Valley Grange (Naugatuck) held another successful Open Mic in December at the Hall.

Christmas in Riverton



Pat Tarca is pictured behind the Granby Grange booth at the Christmas in Riverton event held at Riverton Grange in December.

Gingerbread house decorating in Cheshire



Cheshire Grange celebrated its Christmas Party on Dec. 10 with members and guests. All were invited to decorate the eight (bare) gingerbread houses provided by the Lecturer. By the end of the meeting, the above, fully decorated, houses were ready for display.



ERNESTINE "ERNIE" KEISER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Applications Due March 1, 2026

Scholarship is available for Grange members in good standing, who are graduating high school seniors or continuing two-year community college, four-year college/university, or postsecondary vocational school students attending an accredited school. Students pursuing graduate degrees or higher vocational certifications are also eligible to apply.

LEARN MORE AT [HTTPS://GRANGEFOUNDATION.ORG/ERNESTINE-MEMORIAL-SCHOLARSHIP/](https://grangefoundation.org/ernestine-memorial-scholarship/)

Wallingford Grange
Community Education presents



The History and Culture of Pasta

Jan. 13, 2026 6-8pm

Presented by Nicholas Imbriglio of Passionately Pasta.
Nick will share his love for pasta and the history of making. Fresh pasta will also be available for sale.

Registration is \$10

Link to register: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/history-and-culture-of-pasta>



Winter 2026 Line Dancing

at Senexet Grange

628 Route 169, Woodstock CT 06281

Sundays, 1-2:30pm

BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE - Join instructor Lori Kuszewski for this fun, energetic four-week class at Senexet Grange. This class is designed for folks that are brand new to line dancing, as well as those that have a little bit of experience. Beginners will learn basic steps, while intermediate dancers will get slightly more advanced instruction.

DATES:
Jan. 11, 18, 25
Feb. 1, 8, 15

6 Classes: \$60



4 Class
Flex-Pass: \$40



3 Class
Flex-Pass: \$30



Or look under "ENRICHMENT":
<https://secure.recl.com/CT/woodstock-ct/catalog>

WOODSTOCK
RECREATION

Questions?
erinlucas@woodstockct.gov
(860) 928-6595 x333

Legislatively Speaking



Noel Miller
Legislative Director
Coventry Grange #75
millernoel434@gmail.com

Happy New Year! 2026... What is before us in the new year?

Affordability was the word for 2025 and the President promised us all that "Food prices will be fixed on day one". We are still waiting. Because of tariffs, most food prices have been raised by 20 to 40%. Our grocery prices have increased for all of us. The previous administration continues to be blamed. The tariff deals have turned out to be just additional expense paid by you and me.

Our farmers are hurting because of the trade deals with China. Tariffs on Chinese products have resulted

in China not buying American soybeans. It has been promised China will purchase 12 million tons by December and the date moved to February and now it's the end of 2026. A farmer's bailout plan has been announced for \$12 billion but the math doesn't add up. Losses in just soybeans is estimated to be over \$40 billion. The concern is that very little of the small amount of money promised will never make it to small farms and much of it will end up with corporate farms.

The next word for 2026 is Empowerment. We will let you, the taxpayer, decide and pick and choose which Affordable Care Act Plan is for you. They even will give you \$1,500 to help you find a health plan for your family. As one member of Congress stated, "women are great at finding savings and know what the

family needs are and will find the best deal."

I would urge all members of Congress to fill out applications for SNAP, the Affordable Care Act, and USDA Farm Loans by themselves and see how you make out with the hurdles and traps made for years against our fellow American.

The 2026 midterm elections are ahead of us and it is time for all of us to reflect and seek the best for our country. Our lower courts are keeping us safe. We need a working Congress and if those who are not working for the people should step aside and let the people for the people get your vote.

As of this writing, the Defense Department is bullying Venezuela over drugs and seizure of oil tankers. The word today was fentanyl is a weapon of mass destruction. We have heard this phrase before.

Happy New Year!



SENEXET GRANGE #40

Corr: Diane Miller

Jan: 28: Making Valentines for Community

The members have been busy with meetings and the wonderful Thanksgiving pie sale. Christmas also held pie sales. Our members held a very well attended boot drive in the Putnam Municipal Center parking lot. We were able to collect 67 pairs of boots and 142 pairs of socks. Cash donations of \$307.42. These were delivered to TEEG by Danielle Duquette. It was great to have a front-page article in the Villager Newspaper. It is always wonderful to see this kind of publicity for our Grange.

We made some decisions to upgrade the heating system. This would improve the interest in rental of the hall. A Christmas wreath making session was held on Monday Dec. 1. It is good to have a hands-on project for the community. We participated in the Woodstock Winter Festival with a informational display as well as a hands-on project. Thank you, Amy, for organizing this. The display and project were held in the Mansion at Bald Hill with lots of traffic. Glad to see members and guests at meetings and events.

COVENTRY GRANGE #75

Corr: Noel Miller

Coventry Grange #75 will be

Senexet Grange pies



Students from the Griswold High School Home Economics Department rolled out the crusts for Senexet Grange's Thanksgiving pie sale. These wonderful students rolled 269 crusts plus 2 bags of scraps to be used for the crumble topping.

Celebrating our 137th birthday this month, our furnace kept us from meeting due to cold weather. We have to Drape our Charter for Golden Sheaf member Cynthia Sposito Granddaughter of Past State Master Al Beckwith. Happy and Healthy New Years.

NORTH STONINGTON COMM. GRANGE #138

Corr: Nancy R. Weissmuller

Feb. 13: Program hosted by Dick and Camilla Tarryk

Feb. 27: Snow date for February 13

December was a busy month. Our annual Christmas party was well attended, with nearly 20 children enjoying Sue's fun and games and receiving gifts from jolly old Saint Nick. The annual guessing game was not candies in a jar, but ornaments on the tree and was won but one of our youngest attendees. We presented many gift cards to our local food bank to help families in need to have a happier Christmas.

Eleven hardy souls caroled around town on a chilly Monday evening and delivered baskets of fruit along with the carols. This year we were accompanied by Dick Tarryk's accordion as an added treat.

On the 13th we continued our new tradition of Wreaths Across America, instituted by Debbie Barnes last year. This year we expanded the program to include three local cemeteries, placing 192 wreaths on the graves of our veterans. The local Boy Scouts presented the flag, the Girl Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Wheeler Band played Taps. All who participated were invited back to the Grange Hall to enjoy pasta, muffins, grinders and donuts, donated by local restaurants. Thanks to Wayne Byasee for making the stands for the wreaths. And if those icicles hanging from the eaves will just, please, quietly melt away, next time we will tell you all about jolly January.



MOUNTAIN LAUREL POMONA #15

Corr: David Roberts

Mountain Laurel Pomona held its annual holiday luncheon and meeting on Sat., Dec. 13th, bringing together more than 40 members from across the region at Riverton Grange Hall. Pianist Mary Lou Keefe was our very special guest, filling our hall with holiday music!

Members from Bethlehem, Riverton, Winchester, Vernon, Whigville, Simsbury, and Granby joined in person. In addition, others participated by Zoom, ensuring that all who wished to be part of the celebration could do so.

The catered luncheon featured a hearty menu of pasta with homemade meatballs and sauce, a fresh garden salad, snowflake rolls with butter, and a seasonal favorite—pumpkin pie topped with a dollop of whipped cream—all of which were warmly received by attendees.

Lecturer Debbie Vail coordinated this year's holiday service project, organizing the collection of 23 new hats, 27 pairs of gloves, seven pairs of mittens, one sweater, and 13 scarves for local schoolchildren. Mountain County Pomona No. 15 selected Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen Inc. as the recipient of these donations.

This nonprofit organization, supported by volunteers—including many Grangers—uses donated food, goods, funds, and volunteer labor to provide free, nutritious meals once a week to individuals and families



Simsbury Grange President Susan Masino is pictured with filmmaker, Ray Asselin at the premier of his new film "Beaver Family" at the Grange Hall on Dec. 5.

facing food insecurity. In addition to its weekly meal service, the Kitchen also distributes emergency food and essential items throughout the week as needs arise. Through its community-driven model, Waste Not Want Not works tirelessly to ease hunger and support the well-being of neighbors in need.

Executive Committee member Rob Buck installed our Vice President (Patrick O'Brien) and Treasurer (Carol Innes).

The Lecturer's Program, coordinated by James Mele of Riverton Grange in partnership with Debbie Vail, added festive cheer to the afternoon. Members enjoyed a lively gift exchange. In addition, following dessert, attendees received a special holiday treat—a dramatic "reading" of "The Night Before Christmas" by St. Nick himself, portrayed by Riverton Grange member Colin Wright. Colin is autistic and has memorized the entire book from heart, having heard his parents read it to him. Colin was presented with two gift certificates by the Pomona President.

The next meeting of Mountain Laurel Pomona Grange No. 15 will be held on Saturday, February 28th, at Bethlehem (Grange) Memorial Hall beginning at 2:00 PM. All members are encouraged to attend as we

continue our work together in the new year.

GRANBY GRANGE #5

Corr: David Roberts

Granby Grange held its regular monthly meeting on December 14 at its historic hall. Connecticut State Grange Deputy Patrick O'Brien was in attendance for the meeting.

During the business session, members voted unanimously to accept all recommendations proposed by the Building Committee, including a \$20,000 private donation to address several urgent needs of the Grange. The funds will first be used to repay loans to members who stepped up quickly last month when the Grange's oil tank cracked. Additional funds will be used to upgrade the historic hall's electrical system, with the remaining balance reserved to provide matching funds for potential grants that require such support.

In recognition of this generous contribution, the donor was granted naming rights to the main meeting room in the basement hall. A dedication ceremony will be held at a future date and time.

Also during the meeting, Life Member Nancy Silkey was formally welcomed into Granby Grange by Mountain Laurel Pomona President

Continued next page...

Dave Roberts.

Following the business meeting, members and guests enjoyed a festive holiday buffet, a gift exchange, and two games of bingo. Both bingo games were won by junior and youth members of the Grange, adding to the celebratory spirit of the afternoon.

Granby Grange will hold its next meeting on Sunday, January 11, at 2:00 p.m.

WINCHESTER GRANGE #74

Corr: Todd A. Gelineau

Jan. 13: Out with the Old- In With the New, Ref. Betty & Bill Ahrens

Jan. 27: It's Chocolate Cake Day, Potluck Supper, 6 PM

Feb. 10: Hearts & Flowers (Country Store), Ref. Mary Lou Keefe

Feb. 20: (Fri.) Baked Potato Dinner, 5-7 PM, \$10 per person.

Feb. 24: Chips & Dips, Ref. Debbie Vail & Steve Serota

Happy New Year from Winchester Grange! Our 2026 Jan/Feb meeting schedule is listed above. Visitors are always welcome! Join us.

TAGHHANNUCK GRANGE #100

Corr: Barbara Prindle

Jan. 8: Surprise by Bill Dinneen Ref: Bill Dinneen

Feb, 12: Something About Books by Barbara Prindle Ref: Lynn Cline

Mar. 12: Into Spring by Debra Tyler Ref: Barbara Prindle

Apr. 9: Spring Cleaning In & Out by all Members Cleaning begins at 6PM. Ref: Debbie Hanlon. NOTE: Refreshments & Social Hour time at 7PM with Meeting at 7:30PM unless otherwise noted.

At our December meeting members brought 5 dozen of the same kind of cookie to make up 37 "cookie plates". Debbie Hanlon as CWA/Family Activity Chairman had it all planned out to go smoothly. "Large plates" held 2 of each cookie and "Small plates" 1 of each. Thirty went to Cornwall Social Services and the remainder went to families or individuals that member suggested.

Members met at the Cornwall Cemetery December 13th (on one of

Taghhannuck Grange



Taghhannuck Grange (Sharon) helped the Cornwall Cemetery to place wreaths as part of the Wreaths Across America program. Below- Taghhannuck members put together 37 cookie plates with 30 going to Cornwall Social Services and the rest to shut-ins or as thank you's.



the coldest days of the year) to take part in Wreaths Across America by placing the wreaths on Veterans or First Responders graves. Bill Dinneen, a Taghhannuck Grange member, headed up the whole event. There was a very moving ceremony including Taps.

We are further along in our planning for the picture frame decorating program/event. This is provisionally set for Feb. 21st and if needed Feb. 22nd. We will have the frames but if you join us bring along some "themed" decorations to add to what we have collected at this time.

Last month an Agricultural Subcommittee was formed consisting of Chris Hopkins, Debra Tyler and Bill Dinneen. The "Nominating Local Farm as a Grange Farm School-East" held it's first meeting December 1st and wrote their Mission Statement. "Help create a vibrant agricultural community with learning and awareness of ecosystem principles. Bring into current awareness and thinking the ancient mythological thoughts and words that are the foundation of the Grange". They also have a Plan of Action. "In
Continued next page...

collaboration with Motherhouse of Local Farm, offer 4 seasonal activities in our Grange Hall, including a related short reading from our Blue Book based on our Sign of the Order.

SIMSBURY GRANGE #197

Corr: Marguerite Smith

Happy New Year!

On Dec. 1, Simsbury Grange had a lovely table display for the month at Liberty Bank in Simsbury. Many items from our fair, music and film information, along with programming flyers were included. December 1st - MUSIC MONDAY - The last one of 2025! Gracin Dorsey and Joel Weik helped us end our year-long Music Monday events in style. Gracin, an accomplished guitarist, singer and songwriter was fantastic and Joel, a FABULOUS Fingerstyle guitarist, was also a pleasure to hear and so much fun to watch.

Dec. 5 was the Surprise Ray Asselin Film. Ray was back with a fun and endearing wildlife film about beavers families. We had a social hour at 6:00pm which was well attended. Filmgoers enjoyed a beverage and cocktail shrimp and other nibbles. This film was a WORLD PREMIERE. All participants were totally engaged in the work and antics of one particular beaver family.

December 11th - Monthly meeting - We are very pleased to have welcomed Dawn Anstett as a Simsbury Grange Member. Welcome, Dawn! We love having you and helping us learn more about the traditions of the Grange. We also discussed preparations for welcoming several new members in January, Marguerite, Pat and Dawn's attendance at the recent Lecturer's Roundup, and programming for 2026. We were thrilled to learn Simsbury Grange received a 2025 Neighborhood Assistance Act Grant. Our treasurer, Scot Riley was able to be present in Orange, CT to pick up the check on December 15th.

Service Project Update: We asked our local community to donate toiletries and cleaning supplies to Simsbury's Food Pantry and they

came through! Our vice-president, Erin Leavitt-Smith, took several bags of donated items to the pantry after our meeting.

January 5th - MUSIC MONDAY - All Star Showcase - You won't want

to miss it! We will have several local guitarists/singer/songwriters join us for the start of 2026. Doors open at 6:30pm, music from 7:00-8:15pm. Additional parking is at Farms Village Plaza. We'll see you there!

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 uncover 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.



We heard from Don Offinger on the December issue photo – “I can definitively identify the three pictured in the December “this month” photo: (l-r): Carol Pepe, Elaine Deysenroth, Don Offinger. Carol and Elaine had a singing vaudeville act where they performed as “The Stoop Sisters”. I am at the piano as their accompanist. Carol and Don both were members of Cannon Grange 152, and we had always tried to recruit Elaine to Grange membership, but she resisted. All 3 are classically trained musicians: Carol in trumpet, Elaine in Harp and Don in Piano & Organ.”





NUTMEG POMONA #16

Corr: Joanne Cipriano

Wallingford Grange did a great job of hosting the Christmas Party and meeting of Nutmeg Pomona on December 7th. This was their first meeting and our first meeting at their hall. They served pulled pork plus for refreshments. No one went home hungry. The program featured an original skit by Lecturer Rob Charbonneau. Beacon Valley Grange was the winner of the Community Service soup project.

March 21st is the next meeting at Cheshire Grange. Start lining up your candidates as the conferral of the Fifth Degree is the main item on the agenda. Until then stay warm.

CHESHIRE GRANGE #23

Corr: Ruel Miller

Jan. 7: Regular Meeting and Program

Jan. 21: Agricultural Program- Would You Grow This?

We held our Christmas Open Meeting on December 10th. We had a card exchange and the program was decorating ginger bread houses, followed by refreshments with a Christmas flare. We are allowing a local dog obedience school to hold their sessions in our hall. We are speaking with a local AA group to use our hall for early Sunday morning services beginning in early January. We are expecting a county AA group to hold their annual Christmas Eve

Cannon Grange



Cannon Grange (Wilton) hosted over 200 people for their annual Breakfast with Santa event.

and New Years Eve get together once again this year at our hall.

We expect to be meeting in our downstairs area for meetings during this winter season to save on our fuel costs.

BEACON VALLEY GRANGE #103

Corr: Joanne Cipriano

Beacon Valley Grange met on the 13th and held their meeting and Christmas Party. Prior to the meeting a delicious Ziti and meatball dinner was enjoyed. Thanks to Pat Fischer for making the dinner and our other members who made the dessert and sides.

The next meeting will be held on January 9th at the home of Master Joanne. She will provide the refreshment and the program with the letter "G".

Our hall will be closed for the months of January and February to save oil. No tag sales or open mics.

Hope you all had happy holidays As I am typing this it is freezing. I hope the weather warms up a little. It's nothing we can do anything about.

CANNON GRANGE #152

Corr: John Kriz

More than 200 people -- mostly young families -- came to Cannon Grange's 'Breakfast With Santa' holiday event in the Grange's historic 1899 Grange Hall. "We were thrilled with the turnout," said Cannon Grange President Doug Shepherd. "It was especially gratifying to see so many young families come and enjoy the pancakes, sausages, coffee and sweet treats -- and meet Santa." The Connecticut Society of Santas supplied St. Nick and one of his elves to meet the families. There was also a face painter who had a steady stream of young customers. "It was a great community event," concluded Doug.

HEMLOCK GRANGE #182

Corr: Maureen Sanborn

Jan. 9: Winter Games

Jan. 23: Omitted, unless regular meeting is canceled.

Feb. 13: Love is in the Air

Feb. 27: Omitted, unless regular meeting is canceled.

Coffee and refreshments will be served following the meeting.



... ESPECIALLY ADORN THE FAMILY CIRCLE WITH THE NOBLE TRAITS OF A KIND DISPOSITION - FILL ITS ATMOSPHERE WITH AFFECTION, AND THUS INDUCE ALL TO LOVE AND NOT TO FEAR YOU: FOR LOVE IS THE ONLY ENDURING POWER.

Vice President, Fourth Degree

National Tree



The National Grange Christmas Tree displayed at the Headquarters in Washington, D.C.



The Connecticut State Grange History Book - Volume 1

*Perseverance: Connecticut Granges Make Their Mark On History
Celebrating 140 Years of the Grange in Connecticut
through the Eyes of our Members*

• COST: 85.00 per book plus shipping •

CUSTOMER INFO:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

**ORDER
FORM**

CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE

✉ secretary@ctstategrange.org

📍 P.O. Box 3, Winchester Center, CT 06094

Payment:

☐ CHECK: _____

☐ CASH: _____

☐ OTHER: _____

Please make checks payable to the
Connecticut State Grange

#	DESCRIPTION	COST	Qty	TOTAL
01	Book Recipient: _____	\$85.00 per book	_____	\$ _____
02	Book Recipient: _____	\$85.00 per book	_____	\$ _____
03	Book Recipient: _____	\$85.00 per book	_____	\$ _____
04	Book Recipient: _____	\$85.00 per book	_____	\$ _____

Shipping & Information:

- History Books cost \$85 each
- Shipping will be via USPS Flat Rate Side-loading Medium Priority Mail Box, and will cost the following per shipping address:
Shipping Cost Per Book = \$14.00
- Pre-orders will be accepted through February 15, 2026. Books will then be printed, and shipping will begin late-March, 2026.

SUBTOTAL: _____

SHIPPING: \$14.00 x # of Books = _____

TOTAL DUE: _____

PAYMENT IN FULL MUST BE MADE AT TIME OF THE PRE-ORDER. WE WILL NOT BE INVOICING ORDERS.

? PR ? Guessing Game

At State Session, the Public Relations Committee held a guessing game. There were 407 pieces in the jar and the winner of \$12.00 was Patrick O'Brien of Winchester Grange #74. Congratulations, Patrick!

E. Connecticut Pomona Christmas Choir



Our Pomona Christmas Choir Members featuring Eastern Connecticut Pomona Members and our friends from the East, Kent County Pomona Members.



Christmas ornaments made for Wallingford Grange.

Virtual CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE
**SOCIAL HOUR
2026 SCHEDULE**

E-mail information@ctstategrange.org
for Zoom Meeting Access Information

zoom

FEB 19 **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19 - 7:00 PM EST**
TOPIC: HOW TO KEEP YOUR GRANGE MEETINGS
FUN AND INTERESTING

THURSDAY, MAY 21 - 7:00 PM EST
TOPIC: CT STATE GRANGE HISTORY BOOK
PROJECT - VOLUME 2 UPDATE

MAY 21

AUG 27 **THURSDAY, AUGUST 27 - 7:00 PM EST**
TOPIC: GRANGE HOLIDAY PLANNING SHOULD
START IN THE SUMMER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17 - 7:00 PM EST
TOPIC: 2026 CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE
VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

DEC 17



Charles W. Dimmick
State Chaplain
Cheshire Grange No. 23
chaplain@ctstateGrange.org

A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed. Proverbs 15:13

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. Proverbs 17:22

While you strive to make labor honorable, exert yourself to make it pleasant and cheerful for all around you. [Overseer's charge in the 3rd degree of the Patrons of Husbandry]

As people of faith we are instructed to be cheerful, in work, in giving, and in almost all of our interactions with our fellow human beings and with the world. Being cheerful, in fact, follows as a corollary from the holy law to "love your neighbor as yourself", or the golden rule to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". I know of very few people who enjoy being around other people who are constantly grumpy or complaining or "in a bad mood". And I cannot imagine people who enjoy living with themselves if they themselves are constantly "in a bad mood". Not only the bible but also the medical community stress the importance of having a "merry heart" in terms

Cheerfulness



of one's overall physical and mental health. On average, cheerful people live longer, recover more quickly from illnesses, and are more productive in their everyday lives.

Note that the two proverbs quoted above also talk about the negative consequences of not being cheerful: the spirit is crushed and the "bones" are dried. The meaning is that profound emotional or spiritual despair can negatively affect a person's overall health and vitality. One is more likely to fall prey to physical and/or mental illness, and take much longer to recover from them. One may also become a burden to others as a result.

Outside the realm of religion, society in general urges us to be happy and cheerful. Think of all the books and songs which urge us in

that direction, such as "Let a smile be your umbrella" and "Put on a happy face". There is another thing that many of us have discovered which is even if you are not feeling cheerful the mere act of pretending you are cheerful quite often is enough to make us forget that we are not so.

In summary, why be cheerful? Cheerfulness makes things bearable, makes jobs easier, helps those around you relax, and makes challenges easier to bear with less stress.

In Memoriam

Cynthia Sposito
Coventry Grange #75

"Well done, good and faithful servants."