

PATRON'S CHAIN

The Official Newsletter of the National Grange

Welcome to Stowe!

BY KARIE BLASINGAME

Senior Communication Fellow

Vermont has rolled out the white carpet for Grangers arriving in Stowe for the 152nd Annual Session of the National Grange.

We were greeted our first night here with a small snowfall and cold temperatures. Many delegates and non-delegates have arrived early to sight see at some of the wonderful different places around the Stowe area.

The Governor of Vermont has penned a lovely note welcoming Grangers to the state of Vermont, stating "Agriculture has long been the foundation of society as we know it in Vermont. It is part of who we are-our culture, our economy and our way of life. For centuries, agriculture has been a platform for Vermonters to demonstrate their values: frugality, hard work, innovation, and helping one another in times of need. As I am sure YOU all can attest, these values are ever present in rural communities across both Vermont and the nation today."

Brenda Rousselle, the immediate Past Mas-

ter of the Vermont State Grange wishes everyone welcome to the StoweFlake Resort and Spa in Stowe, which features an award-winning luxury spa as well as boasts a conference center that is Vermont's only International Association of Conference Centers approved facility that has been a recipient of the prestigious Pinnacle Award of Successful Meetings magazine for 10 consecutive years.

Rousselle said, "The members of the Northeast Connection have been working hard for the past two years preparing for your visit."

In addition to all their hard work the members of the Northeast region like to have fun. Grangers can do so by enjoying all areas of the resort and spa. Rousselle said, "Being outside in the snow can be fun, especially if the day ends with a big cup of hot chocolate in front of a nice, warm roaring fire."

Grangers will spend the next few days enjoying the award-winning conference center and possibly some of the spa treatments as well as they carry out the work of the National Grange. We are utilizing all areas the hotel has to offer, guests are staying in the hotel, in adjacent townhouses and even a ski lodge.

Beginning our paperless journey

BY LORETTA NIETO

Communication Fellow

The Grange is facing modern-day challenges from changing paper copies to electronic cloud-based editing.

But many delegates to the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention are up for the challenge.

Last year, delegates passed a resolution that asked the board to investigate going "paperless" at upcoming National Sessions.

The resolution, from New Hampshire, inspired a movement this year with beta testers using a cloud-based system for sharing all resolutions and policy documents throughout the

week that will allow delegates participating in the pilot to see final versions immediately without waiting for printed copies of amended resolutions and other items to be handed out.

New Hampshire State Grange Master Chris Heath said his state sent forward the resolution of going paperless.

"In my opinion, the National leadership needs to make changes that better suit the delegate body," Heath said.

Earlier in 2018, National Grange President Betsy Huber asked delegates and officers to let her know if they were willing to be part of the beta test group and 11 delegates agreed.



National Grange Delegate binders typically contain more than 300 pages of resolutions, department reports, budget information, minutes and Master's Addresses. This year for the first time, delegates have an option to betatest a paperless program. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

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View

Hank the Burro from Connecticut is part of this year's transportation committee. Dressed for the weather, he is a great greeter for Grangers as they arrive in Vermont.

Attend

Noon - Legislative Lunch

2 p.m. - Session Opens in the 7th degree

2:30 p.m. - Master's Annual Address

6 p.m. - Friendship Dinner

10 p.m. - Movie Sound of Music

Quotable

"You are not creating a Grange for yourself; you are creating a Grange for our youth and junior members."

- Jody Cameron,
2018 Convention Chair

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“For so many years there had been complaints about how much paper was being used,” she said. After 11 delegates agreed via email to try the paperless resolution nine more delegates agreed to try it as well, Huber said.

Burton Eller, National Grange Legislature Director, said the process will not leave those without computers or “who do not feel comfortable going electronic with these documents” out.

Huber said the move is good for the organization during annual sessions.

“I feel that the delegates who volunteered to try the paperless resolution will find it fairly easy to manage using the electronic version,” Huber said.

Eller hopes one day each delegate and officer attending will have access to an electronic device to help them sufficiently get through this process.

Jimmy Taylor who is the longest serving delegate to the convention, having begun service in 1991 when he became Virginia State Master, said he “never thought that we would reach this point in modern times” and feels that using technology is a very smart choice for various reasons.

“Delegates should not be frightened to use the electronic versions because they are fairly simple to work with,” Taylor said.

Eller said he hopes this will lead to more smooth workflow and better time management at future conventions.



New Jersey State Grange Master John Benedik, National Grange Community Service Director Pete Pompper, Barb Narvel and her husband, Chip, National Steward, and National Grange President Betsy Huber pose with a Stowe favorite the weekend before convention began. | Photo used with permission

Grangers enjoy pre-session fun

BY MAGGIE SWARTZENDRUBER

Communication Fellow

Before getting to work, many delegates and officers as well as other members joining us for the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention took a bit of time to venture around the Green Mountain State and beyond.

Lynette and Don Schaeffer were joined by several other Grangers on Saturday for a short day excursion to Montreal, Canada. This was Lynette's first time to Canada, and first time out of the country. While there, they were most impressed with the architectural design of the older buildings. The group was also able to find the World's Largest Zipper, which is 74 ft. long and made out of granite.

Chip and Barbara Narvel explored the local area with fellow Grange members on Sunday. The Von Trapp Family Lodge, Cabot Creamery, and the Cider Mill were a few of the stops. Ben and Jerry's was also a big hit on the local tour.

Chip also enjoyed watching snow be artificially made.

One of the stand out moments for Chip and Ellen Wadsworth, also part of the group, was the whale tale monument, which reminds us how fragile the earth is.

From Canada to ice cream pit stops, Grangers were caught with big smiles days before the gavel dropped.

Derek Snyder and Lindsay Schroeder,

who are both assisting with the Communication Fellows program at this year's session, took a small detour on their way to the 9-day training session to visit Ben and Jerry's.

“The most interesting thing was watching Lindsay man-handle a quart of ice cream with a wooden spoon,” Snyder said on the stop.

Lindsay laughed and said she was just pleased she was able to enjoy her favorite flavor.

“I got ‘Tonight Dough’ ice cream because I love Jimmy Fallon.”

Several also took a more scenic route to get to the convention destination including Communication Fellow Paul Hyland of California and his partner, Darlene Wingfield, who left their home to catch the train at nearby Chemult, Oregon, on November 3 and traveled through to New York where they met Wingfield's daughter, Diane.

Wingfield said she has taken the train across the country multiple times, but she is still able to find something new and interesting every time.

“Oh, the Colorado River is just beautiful,” Wingfield said, but that didn't top time with her companion. She said while getting to ride the train across the country was nice, it was special because she was able to share the journey with Paul.

By plane, train, and car, Grangers arrived throughout the weekend and enjoyed spending time with friends throughout Vermont. How will you make this week memorable?

New trademark manager comes aboard

BY AMANDA BROZANA RIOS
National Communications Director

In late October, the National Grange welcomed J. Spencer Sanders II to the Washington, D.C., office. Spencer has been hired to replace Nelson Drake as the National Grange Trademark Protection Manager.

Drake is preparing to take the bar exam and wishes a pleasant farewell to all the members he has worked with over his past 18 months at the Grange.

“It has been a privilege to work with the Grange over the last year and a half,” Drake said. “It has not only been a great learning experience as I continue to move forward in my career, but it has also connected me to a variety of people and points of view. I know that Spencer will be a fantastic replacement and I hope you work as well with him as you did with me.”

Spencer is a third-year law student at the American University Washington College of Law and graduated from Florida State University in 2015 with a degree in Marketing. He is supervised in part by the Grange’s Trademark attorneys from Smith, Gambrell and Russell, LLP.

“It is a real benefit to the National Grange to work with a third-year law student, especially Spencer who has



studied trademark law and can step right into the position formerly filled by Darlene Tzou and Nelson Drake,” said National Grange President Betsy Huber. “Protecting our Grange trademarks is a continual process and we’re pleased to have a staff person dedicated to that task.”

Spencer specializes in intellectual property law, including trademark, copyright and internet and privacy law. Additionally, Spencer is a member of the Intellectual Property Law Society and Symposium Editor for Vol. 8 of the American University Business Law Review. He previously interned with URAC (formerly known as Utilization Review Accreditation Commission)

and Erik M. Pelton & Associates, PLLC.

In his personal life, Spencer is an avid soccer and college football fan (Go Noles!) and holds the rank of Eagle Scout from the Boy Scouts of America. In 2010 Spencer worked with his Troop to clear a 1/4 mile hiking trail in Tiger Bay State Forest in Daytona Beach, FL for his Eagle Scout project. Spencer grew up in New Smyrna Beach, FL but, despite missing the beach, truly enjoys living in Washington, D.C.

In December, he will join Potomac Grange #1.

As part of his role with the Grange staff, Spencer will provide members with information about our long-standing trademarks, monitors and works with licensees and helps with enforcement efforts against those infringing on Grange trademarks. If you wish to use the Grange in the name of your business or operation, please contact Spencer immediately in order to attain a license for use. If you are a member seeking verification of use of the Grange name or emblem, please contact Spencer who can provide documentation necessary and other advice.

Spencer can be reached by email at trademark@nationalgrange.org or you may leave a message on his phone at (202) 628-3507 ext. 105. He has limited hours in the office, so email is preferred.

New program will help ensure safety of Grange Juniors, Youth

BY KARIE BLASINGAME
Senior Communication Fellow

Beginning in January 2019, the National Grange and National Junior Grange and Youth Departments will require all members who interact with minors within the Youth and Junior departments to obtain a background check through the company “Safe Gatherings.”

Volunteers with current National Background checks – something many parents and others who volunteer with kids schools and other organizations may have – will have until the expiration of their current screening to complete and become Safe Gatherings Certified.

There are many benefits to using the Safe Gatherings programming including a no hassle system.

National Junior Grange Director Samantha Wilkins said she is excited about the system for Grange use because it takes “the pressure off State Grange Masters, Directors and Leaders to make sure these critical steps are taken appropriately in accordance to their state laws.”

Wilkins said information is kept safe and secure through the Safe Gatherings Network, and no personal information is held with the National Grange.



Safe Gatherings provides four levels of background checks: local, state, national and sex offender. Safe Gatherings provides professional reference checks and training for abuse prevention and ideas on how to appropriately work with minors who are at their most vulnerable time in life. This program has a very low cost at less than \$1.50 a month at just \$35 for a two-year clearance.

Safe Gatherings offers a detailed explanation on their website on how their system works and if you are still unsure about it, there is a demonstration on the site.

“Safe Gatherings allows every State Grange to simplify the experience by having the directors and leaders they need to log on to the website and follow the instructions,” Wilkins said. “Safe Gatherings will make it easier for all of our states to get the background checks done that they need to for our Junior and Youth programs without any of the worry of before. It will eliminate many hurdles states had to go through.”

6 Fellows tasked with telling Grange story

BY ANNA MARIA WAGERER
Communication Fellow

From 16 to 84, the age range for this year's National Grange Communication Fellows program participants is wide, as are their experiences, but their differences haven't stopped them from having fun and working hard.

The program, which is open to any member in good standing, provides training that Fellows can take back and use to promote their local Grange and help the organization as a whole. They also are working on materials that will be useful for Good Day! magazine and Grange Radio, along with the special convention edition of the Grange newsletter, the Patron's Chain.

There are several sponsors for this year's Fellows program including Connect Americans Now, TracFone and California State Grange.

"We could not do this training without our wonderful sponsors," Brozana Rios said. "These folks understand the value of education of our members and appreciate the bond built between the members of each Fellows class that helps toward the continuation of the Grange and our work in communities and at the national level."

Paul Hyland

Paul Hyland joined Rosedale Grange in 1998, following a long Grange tradition of membership by affiliation – being pulled into the organization because of his significant other Darleen.

He became a Seventh Degree member at the 146th Annual National Grange Convention in Boise, Idaho, in 2012 and has continuously served on the agriculture resolution committee for several years for the California State Grange. He graduated from Cal Poly-San Louis



Abisbo with a degree in Animal Husbandry and later worked as a "real life cowboy," then a Cattle Brand Inspector for the State of California.

Today, Hyland likes to read in his free time. His favorite Grange experiences this year was a house warming in Sacramento. Right after he heard about the Fellows program, he applied and was very happy to hear that he was chosen to join.

Hyland is a veteran of the Korean War (1953-55), an experience that has informed and impacted much of his life.

He brings enthusiasm and willingness to build interest in communicating with military veterans as well as the general public about programs available throughout the United States to assist those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from military service.

"I am a veteran. I have been through some programs, that were very helpful. I want to share that with other Grangers, so they can inform veterans about those programs," Hyland said.

Ann Bercher

Ann Bercher, known by many in the Grange as one of the faces of the O.H. Kelley Farm Historical Site, was born and raised in Iowa and lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Her family was steeped in the dairy industry.

After graduating from college, she moved to Minnesota, where she started working at the Farm after raising three kids.

During her time at the farm, she was intrigued by Grange, having seen Sunbeam Grange meetings at the Farm and knowing the history of Kelley as a founder. Ann joined the Grange in 2002 and truly enjoys participating at the National level as a representative of the Kelley Farm and as a member of the Grange.

She currently holds the office of State Lecturer and serves as the news-



letter editor for the state. She is also the Lady Assistant Steward at Sunbeam Grange #2. She said she enjoys one of the most popular Grange programs, providing dictionaries to students as part of the Words for Thirds.

Ann said she is looking forward to learning more about "communication and developing skills that can be used across a variety of media."

Loretta Nieto

Loretta Nieto, 19, is a member of Alamo Grange #1446 in San Antonio, Texas, where she serves as Overseer. Loretta is the oldest child in her family, which plays a very important role in her life.

She is a fourth generation Grange member and proud to be part of the State Junior Grange committee.

Nieto is a nursing major in her first year at Palm Alto College, having earned her associates degree while in high school.

In her very little free time she likes to dance, travel, help organize community service events and volunteer for those.

"I hope, I can utilize what I learn here to emphasize the importance of agriculture."

Maggie Swartzendruber

Maggie Swartzendruber, 21, is a member of Riversdale Grange #731 in Oregon, serving there as Lecturer. She was approached by Past State Master John Fine about joining while the two worked together during her 4-H years. She joined in 2014 and has been heavily active, having



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been elected to the office of Lady Assistant Steward in the State Grange recently. Additionally, she has served as Lady Assistant Steward, Chaplain, and Steward for the Oregon State Youth, Lady Assistant Steward for the National Youth, and newly elected Lady Assistant Steward for the Oregon State Grange.

Swartzendruber works full-time, one at an assisted living facility and another as an in-home caregiver. She plans on returning to school in the near future to pursue training to become a Registered Nurse.

In her free time she enjoys photography, cooking, hiking, and being “the cool aunt” to Noah, 3, and Lorelai, 11 months.

Swartzendruber said she is looking forward to pushing herself to learn new skills and hone others.

“I’m always looking for a challenge,” Swartzendruber said.

Lauren Linkemyer

Lauren Linkemyer was born and raised in Santa Cruz, California. She and her husband Mack Ellis are members of Santa Cruz Live Oak Grange #503, where she is Master. They joined the Grange less than two years ago after attending several events and learning more about the organization.



The couple has gotten into homesteading, taking care of a small flock of about 30 chickens and a little herd of kinder goats.

Lauren also owns a small catering business named “Something To Taste.” Her passion for food led her to pursue a degree at Carrillo College in Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management. Her Grange is growing and has made it a priority to reconnect with the State and National Grange.

“I’m here to learn more about Grange, so I can bring that knowledge and inspiration back to my

Grange community. And to connect with other Grangers throughout the country.”

Anna Maria Wagerer

Anna Maria Wagerer, 16, is an exchange student from Germany. She lives with National Grange Communications Director Amanda Brozana Rios and Victor Barretto Rios in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, where she attends High School. Anna had never heard of The Grange, before getting her exchange placement. Since then she has attended a few Grange functions including the recent Connecticut State Grange Convention.



“We have nothing like the Grange in Germany, so it’s interesting to see what you do,” Wagerer said. “I’m happy to learn more about this very American institution.”

Karie Blasingame

Senior Fellow Karie Blasingame has been a member of Prairie Grange #1832 in Belvedere, Illinois, for more than 20 years.

“It’s my third time being in this program. I enjoy working with a group of Grangers, who are interested in learning more about this organization,” Blasingame said.

She has held a number of different offices throughout the years at the local, Pomona and State Grange level, and is currently Secretary and Webmaster of Prairie Grange and Overseer and Youth Director of the Illinois State Grange. She is the Host Chair of 2019 National Grange Session, which will be in Bloomington, Minnesota.



Blasingame works at the Customer Service Desk at the Belvidere Wal-Mart Supercenter.

In her free time she likes to read

mystery books and especially enjoys the Harry Potter series. Blasingame recently discovered audio books and on her way home from this convention will likely be listening to an autobiography about Aretha Franklin.

Lindsay Schroeder

Lindsay Schroeder is serving as the Fellows Program Assistant, having also been through the Fellows program in 2014 and 2016.

Schroeder is from Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania, and is a member of Virginville Grange where she is the Assistant Junior Leader and Youth Chairman. She is also very active at the Pomona and State level, serving as Pomona and Public Relations



Chairman for Berks County Pomona Grange, and has been a State Youth Committee member for four years.

She works as a youth instructor at an indoor sports complex, along with being a photographer, and nanny.

Schroeder owns a photography business named “Little Linds Photos.”

She grew up in the Junior Grange and has been very active with the Grange Youth.

“I wanted to participate again this year not only because I’d have a lot of fun, but it will give me the opportunity to show my work as a photographer, and to assist all the new Fellows to show them what this program is all about,” Schroeder said.

She will also coordinate subscription and individual copy sales for Good Day! magazine and other fundraiser item sales for the Fellows program throughout this week of convention. Visit her or another Fellow assigned time at the table nearby registration to purchase an item or renew your subscription.

Veil of stigma must be lifted for benefit of rural people

BY MAGGIE SWARTZENDRUBER
Communication Fellow

Incompetent. Unpredictable. Crazy. Psycho. Victim.

These are all terms that have recently been used in mainstream media and fictional media to describe a person living with a mental illness. While mental illness is an umbrella term for many different conditions, victim is not one of them.

While many times the portrayal of a person living with a mental illness is one filled with violence and instability, those with mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence than be the perpetrators.

Other times, characters on TV shows or other media are given as part of their role a mental illness, but it is played off as minor parts of their lives and just something silly they have to deal with when in reality, most mental illnesses are a major part of a person's life that they don't get to turn off and on.

Additionally, the most common form of mental illness - depression - seems to be the most misrepresented.

Depression affects roughly 26.2 million American adults and my state, Oregon, has the highest rate of youth with at least one major de-

pressive episode in the past year, the third highest state for youth with dependence on drug or alcohol and more than half of those with mental health conditions received no treatment for their needs, according to Mental Health America association. Those in rural areas are significantly more likely to suffer from depression and other mental illnesses and not receive or have near to them treatment options.

Farm Aid says that the net income for farmers is estimated to be 50 percent less in 2018 than in 2013, putting a new wave of stress on farmers and ranchers.

According to the CDC, people working in the farming, fishing, and forestry industries have the highest rate of suicide overall, averaging 84.5 per 100,000 and 90.5 per 100,000 specifically for males. However, the CDC has released a statement informing the public that the numbers released should be higher due to many suicides being accidentally reported as accidental deaths. The correct numbers are yet to be released.

So with so many people who suffer, why is there still a stigma around it?

It's time to start a change and end the stigma.

There are three basic ways to begin the change, and Grange members and local Granges can be part of that

solution.

Educate yourself and your community.

Understand someone's personal experience, but also know that it is different for everyone. When you understand someone else's life, you will begin to have compassion and empathy for these people. Learn why some vocabulary is offensive to those living with mental illnesses. Be more conscious of the vocabulary you use.

Actively practice empathy towards strangers.

Start to really listen to what people are telling you. Read between the lines and don't settle for less than total understanding. Hold events that welcome all and are positive, and that encourage others to live with kindness.

Openly talk about mental illnesses and issues if you are living with one.

The most important change anyone can make is to start talking about and stop being ashamed of a part of themselves. Consider having a Lecturer's Program focusing on mental health where someone living with depression or another mental illness can provide a personal narrative of what it is like to live with such diseases.

Real change comes from refusing to accept the same old thing.



Come See These And More Items At Convention!
Grange Store™ by Monroe Classic - Will Open Wednesday Morning 9AM - See You There.
Come Check Out Our New Items! It's a Secret, the items are not shown above!
APPAREL | PROMOTIONAL ITEMS | JEWELRY | REGALIA | FUND RAISING PROGRAMS

Host committee focuses on laughter, charity

**BY PAUL HYLAND and
ANNA MARIA WAGERER**
Communication Fellows

The host committee has been busy at work for nearly five years preparing for the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention in Stowe this week.

The committee, chaired by Jody Cameron of Connecticut, is tasked with many different jobs, including one of the most complex: transportation from the airport to the Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa, where the convention is taking place. The nearest airport, Burlington International, is about a 45-minute drive. Several attendees chose to make the journey by train and can come into Burlington or directly to the Waterbury-Stowe station. Many from the region also drove or will take buses.

The committee also is charged with staffing the hospitality room and helping to feed hungry attendees all week, arranging for flowers for several different events, helping plan and carry out tours for general attendees, Youth and Junior members, and making sure the Seventh Degree is on track with volunteers from the region to serve as marching candidates and trumpet girls, signing people up for “extracurricular activities.”

Each of the host states will take charge of the hospitality room to make sure that every day they provide food “fun, enjoyment and fellowship,” Jodi Ann Cameron said.

On Tuesday, the fun will start with Rhode Island, followed by Massachusetts and New Hampshire on Wednesday, New York on Thursday, Maine and Vermont on Friday and Connecticut will round out the week on Saturday.



Members of the Northeast Connection, the Convention Host Committee lift a tub filled with personal care products that will be distributed to veterans of the region after the close of convention. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

While each day is different, Vicki Huff of Maine gave a preview into the Friday menu, saying “Maine is bringing the whoopie pies.”

Jody Cameron said one of the fun parts of planning has also been preparing for the community service project.

The committee has secured a large cast iron bath tub that will be filled with donated personal items such as shaving cream, soap and more, then the entirety of the donated items will be taken and split among the seven host region states – New York, New

Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont – to be given to veterans in need.

“We thought it would be a really beneficial idea to donate as the Grange all these items to the veterans groups in all of the seven states,” said the originator of the service project idea, Maine State Grange Master Sherry Harriman.

Jodi Ann Cameron said she hopes attendees “have fun and relax and look for the joke of the day.”

ENJOY CONVENTION ACROSS MEDIUMS & ACROSS THE WORLD

Several parts of the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention will be live-broadcast through our Facebook page, National Grange, this week. Also, daily reports and updates will be aired on Grange Radio at grangeradio.org. A digital version of the convention newsletter will be distributed to our email list and posted to the National Grange website. Tell your friends to tune in!

Grange Herd comes rumbling into town

BY ANN BERCHER
Communication Fellow

In 2013, Communications Director Amanda Brozana-Rios launched a program that seemed a bit fuzzy.

At that time, she introduced the National Grange Herd, a group of stuffed animals that were given to the Masters of State Granges.

The Masters were charged with using their mascot in a variety of ways that were specific to their state, such as helping to grow Granges, or visit specific fairs and fundraisers held by Granges in their State. For all, they were told to just plain have some fun during a National Session that was predicted to have some low morale.

Many State Masters embraced the task of caring for a National Grange Herd animal, and developed creative ways to put their Herd animal to work.

“I was surprised at how attached many Masters got to their Herd animal,” Brozana-Rios said recently.

Jody Cameron, past State Master of Connecticut was one of the original herd owners. Cameron’s recollection of his experience upon being introduced to the Herd is clear: “This is as dumb as it gets! This is just stupid!”

As he watched Grange Masters receiving their Herd animal, he began to put the pieces together and realized that the animals and Master’s personalities seemed to match. Once he was presented with his herd animal, Hank the Burro, he was sold.

Cameron’s time with Hank was short, but Hank the Burro traveled everywhere with him. Cameron noted that when it came to Hank, everyone was a kid inside. When there were Granges in Connecticut that did not



A few new animals have been called up to be part of the Herd, helping in areas such as Lecturer’s Department and Community Service. Dale “Presley” the Peacock was making sure his sash fit just right before going to his new partner, Pete Pompper. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder



Several members of the Grange Herd have already gathered at the Executive Board Room at the Stoweflake Resort and Spa and received their gift from Willy the Grange Sheep: a gold sash. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

have the greatest relationship with the State Grange, Hank the Burro was able to break a few barriers. Everyone wanted to see Hank, Cameron said. Granges from across the state sent clothing and outfits to Hank. He received Junior red shoes. He got invitations to Grange events that even the State Master didn’t receive. Hank also had his own column in the state’s newsletter, Hank’s Happenings, as well as a recipe under the title of Hank’s Hankerings, which continues today.

When Cameron’s term as Master ended, he found that he had grown so attached to Hank, that he purchased a new stuffed burro to give to the new Master. Cameron presented the new burro on a silver platter to the newly elected Master, Noel Miller. Hank “The Original” is located prominently in Cameron’s living room, dressed in his tuxedo, and is protected under glass.

“I couldn’t give him up,” Cameron said. “I got attached to a stupid stuffed animal!”

Cameron handed off Hank Jr., complete with his wardrobe and his lawn furniture, and Miller continued to use Hank as he traveled to other Granges around the state.

“I would send Hank in first, and if he came flying out, I knew not to go in,” said Miller.

Hank never came flying out.

His ability to break barriers continued and his wardrobe continued to evolve. To assist with marketing efforts, Miller purchased red sneakers to support the Junior Grange, a stocking hat and flannel coat with matching hat.

This past October, George Russell was

elected the newest Master of Connecticut, but Miller, too could not give up his Hank. Instead, Hank Jr. rides in “his spot” in Miller’s truck with him and most recently sported an I Voted button. Miller presented Russell a new Hank, and the match continues to be successful.

Roger Bostwick, Master of Kansas, received Dusty the Bull in 2013. Roger was a fan right away and took Dusty with him everywhere. Dusty proved to be very useful as an icebreaker externally and helped Bostwick tell more people about the Grange and what it stands for. Dusty stayed with Bostwick after he was no longer State Master, but served as State Grange Legislative Director. Dusty traveled along with him and the Facebook page for the Herd member remained very active these last five years. Most recently, Dusty appeared wearing solar eclipse glasses.

Bostwick also made Dusty magnets that he uses like business cards.

Bostwick said he values the opportunities Dusty has provided.

“It’s been five years and we’re still going strong,” Bostwick said.

Steve Logan, former State Master of Rhode Island, received Allie the Llama. Allie was a great marketing tool for the Rhode Island Grange, according to Logan, who took Allie with him everywhere.

She was useful as a Grange mascot on Ag Day at the State House, Logan said. Allie was used in photo ops with legislators and other distinguished guests at Grange events.

Chris Johnston, Master of Michigan State Grange, had a rather different experience with his herd animal,

Chuck the Badger. Chuck kept getting kidnapped for ransom. His first year he helped raise funds that assisted the Youth program and purchased pizza for the Fellows at the National Session. Chuck continued getting kidnapped even when he went to Michigan. Finally, a ransom note came that couldn't be fulfilled, and Chuck disappeared for good. It was quite a loss for the Herd, but this year, Johnston has been given a new herd member: Alabaster the Porcupine. Johnston has plans to use a grooming product to stiffen Alabaster's quills to help discourage potential thieves.

Probably the most well-traveled Herd animal is Pierce the Elk.

Past Washington State Grange Master Duane Hamp took Pierce everywhere, traveling throughout Washington, as well as Maine, Massachusetts and Hawaii.

Pierce attended Grange meetings across the state. If Hamp forgot to bring Pierce in from his seat in the truck, he said the first thing people would ask was, "Where's Pierce?"

Hamp also took Pierce to FFA meetings (Pierce got his FFA pin), and state PUD meetings.

Hamp remembers the National Session when the Masters received their Herd animals and were carrying them around with them through the hotel. Elevator rides were especially fun, as Herd animals would be sticking out of people's pockets, purses and bags. Unsuspecting guests not affiliated with the Grange would enter an elevator and look around at the menagerie of animals begin toted about by people dressed in suits, and ties and evening gowns.

"When you had a meal function to go to, it was fun to have Pierce along. But sometimes there were meetings that needed some problem solving. Pierce helped to lighten the mood," said Hamp. "The best thing about the Herd animals was the camaraderie that it also offered to the Masters."

As they shared stories about their Herd animals, Hamp also knew he could share challenges and concerns with his fellow Masters.

Pierce is working with Hamp's successor, Tom Gwin, but a new Herd animal will soon be joining the Hamp household.

His wife, National Grange Lecturer Chris Hamp received Winnie the Rabbit at the start of this convention.

Chris said she is looking forward to having her own Herd member to travel with.

Chris said it was so interesting to see



In 2013, when the Herd came to help the Grange, Hank the Burro was assigned to then-Connecticut State Master Jody Cameron. He and Hank bonded quickly and Hank Jr. chose instead to go with Cameron's successor, Noel Miller. Miller, pictured here with Hank Jr., recently introduced new Connecticut State Grange Master George Russell to Hank III, who will be Russell's partner for his term of office. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

how Pierce really helped make connections. "We had to make sure we had photos of Pierce next to signs, so we could post them on Facebook and Granges could prove that he had been at the Grange or in their area."

Chris said she isn't sure yet what role Winnie will play, but said she hopes people will watch for postings on Winnie's Facebook page.

Another new partner of a new Herd animal this year is National Grange Community Service Director Franklin "Pete" Pompper who has been teamed with Dale "Presley" the Peacock.

Since its inception, Pompper said he thought the Herd was a great idea, providing great ice breakers, and a lot of fun for Grangers. However, at the time he was not a State Master and there was no Director position for community service.

As he held his mascot, Pompper reflected on the symbolic meanings of the peacock from a variety of spiritual traditions. A peacock represents expressive transformations.

Pompper said we should be reminded

to strut our stuff and show off our skills.

"We need to be proud as a peacock and show off our tail feathers! There needs to be a bit of the peacock in all of us," he said.

Through Facebook posts and visits to Granges across the country, the National Grange Herd provided more information about what was happening in local and State Granges around the country. This gave Granges an opportunity to learn more about each other in a whimsical kind of way.

Five years after the National Grange Herd was created, many of the Herd members are still active. This year, some new Masters will receive a Herd member, and the National Master will receive her own, Aaron the Lion.

Brozana-Rios said that this year's session may again be challenging as delegates work through issues related to budget and tough resolutions, but it's good to be reminded that all work and no play isn't very good for a person, or an animal.

Veterans Day brings pride, concerns for those who served

BY PAUL HYLAND
Communication Fellow

On Sunday, many members making their way to Stowe, Vermont, for the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention were being honored on this Veteran’s Day by others for their service to our nation as members of the armed forces.

Those Veterans know freedom is not free and know a price must be paid to keep intact our way of life as Americans.

However, some Grangers reflected on more than just their service as a point of pride and way to ensure our freedom.

“Veterans feel committed to fellow citizens. We’re proud to have served,” and “proud to continue to serve others when they leave the military and enter organizations like the Grange,” West Virginia State Grange Master Jim Foster said. Foster made a career in the Army, serving in the Korean War and Vietnam War before retiring.

“It’s a shame there is such a small percentage of the population that are veterans,” Foster said.

Foster said he believes it would benefit our nation if each citizen served at least two years in the military or some capacity related to their fitness. Foster said he is concerned with the number of people who have found ways to disrespect the flag and wishes each person would have respect for those who fought for our nation. Foster said he was trained and able to see the world thanks to his service.

The same, too, was true for Richard Harriman Jr., the First Husband of the Maine State Grange, who enlisted in the Army when he was 17. He volunteered to go to Vietnam during the war, but instead was sent to Germany. On weekends he rode the train to nearby countries, including France



Paul Hyland, a Korean War Veteran, speaks with Army Veteran Dwight Baldwin, Iowa State Grange President, in the Communication Fellows room on Veterans Day. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

and Netherlands.

When he finally did get to Vietnam, he realized you cannot make war personal. At that time, he was 19 and spent a full year in country. Relieved to leave, he returned home to being assaulted with rotten eggs and bad tomatoes. Even in church, he found people who could not appreciate his service but instead saw it as a moral affront. Harriman said he felt lonely and spent a lot of time talking to an old oak tree. Foster said he “is concerned with the number of people who have found ways to disrespect the flag and wishes each person would have respect for those who fought for our nation.” Foster said he was trained and able to see the world thanks to his service.

Harriman said he often misses the feeling of others “having your back” and a team effort. “When the country needed us, we said, ‘here we are, we’ll go.’” Harriman said he knows that if our country called on the veterans again to serve, most would go.

Dwight Baldwin of Iowa, an Army

veteran, served from 1970 and went to Germany with the 3rd Armored Division. Baldwin said he often spoke to individuals in the community and enjoyed meeting the people, as well as weekend trips as well to see other parts of Europe. He was transferred back to the U.S. before the Munich terror attacks.

Baldwin’s son now serves in the U.S. Air Force and has made his father proud that he is keeping this tradition of service in the family.

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Chip Narvel, an Army Reservist who served for 21 years, said he’s concerned a lot about veterans who come home with different mental and physical wounds, but knows that a community of those who served can often help each other heal.

Well done good and faithful servant

ED KOMSKI

CALIFORNIA STATE GRANGE MASTER