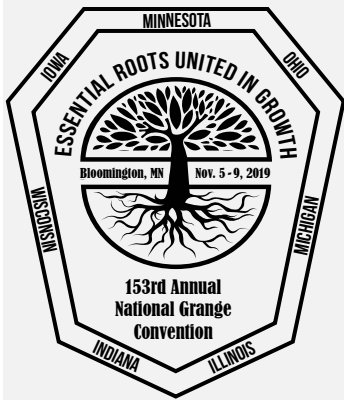




PATRON'S CHAIN

The Official Newsletter of the National Grange

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Thoughts

Past National Master Ed Luttrell spoke to the attendees of the evening session of the 153rd Annual National Grange Convention on Wednesday about the continued relevance and importance of the organization.

Challenge

Solve the puzzle and bring your answer to the Good Day! table in the Bloomington Foyer. If you get it right, you'll get a prize courtesy of the Communication Fellows!

What are the the objects in the implement case?

Take the first letter of each of the implements (if there is more than one word, take the first letter of each word) and determine their value (A=1, B=2) based on their place in the alphabet.

What is the total of all the first letters added together?



Recipients of Quilts of Valor from Wednesday evening's presentation gather for a group photo after the event. Photo by Lindsay Schroeder.

13 members receive Quilts of Valor at moving ceremony

BY ANN BERCHER
Minnesota State Grange Master
and Communication Fellow

On Wednesday night, Chris Hamp, National Lecturer opened the evening's presentation by asking all members of the military branches to stand when the theme song of their military branch was played.

Quilts of Valor Executive Director Tammany McDaniel shared the history of the Quilts of Valor Foundation and the partnership that has been developed with the National Grange called Under Our Wings. It allows Grange quilters to produce the award for veterans and each quilt then includes two patches, one showing it is an official Quilt of Valor and to whom it was issued, for what years they served as well as a patch with the Grange logo and information on the quilter. Jenny Caughey, of Minnesota, explained that she got interested in the foundation after looking at a bumper sticker she had placed on her car that read "I support the troops." She wondered, "how DO I support the troops?" Quilts of Valor gave her the answer and the mission to drive her to be the Minnesota Coordinator for Quilts of Valor.

Quilts of Valor were then presented to 13 military veterans and active duty service members from four of the branches of the

U.S. armed forces in a moving ceremony. Quilts of Valor is a national organization that has awarded over 232,000 quilts since 2003 when the organization began. Its mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

Bonnie Mitson of Idaho and Gwen Swenson of Minnesota displayed and presented the quilts to each individual veteran after his or her name was called and his or her service described. Then they wrapped the veteran in the quilt and in that emotional moment, said, "thank you for your service," face to face.

Michas Monroe Ohnstad of Minnesota was presented with the final quilt of the evening and the story of his service was read aloud. Ohnstad graduated from Hinckley High School in 1944 and left for WWII Army service from the depot in Hinckley. Ohnstad served with the 43rd Infantry Division at Cabanatuan, Luzon, the Philippines and upon Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945 (Ohnstad's 19th birthday) he transferred to Yokoma, Japan with the 1st Cavalry Division. On September 30, 1945, Ohnstad was ordered by General MacArthur to serve with the Atomic Bomb Commission at Hiroshima/Nagasaki and histor-

QUILTS
from page 1

ically is the only Minnesotan to serve in that capacity.

Ohnstad commented that receiving the quilt was "a wonderful recognition for all of our service people, and the Grange should be recognized for saying thank you to the veterans who have pledged their lives and sacred honor in service of America. That's the commitment every veteran has made."

Many veterans spoke with tears in their eyes as they expressed their gratitude for the honor and the words of thanks received along with the quilt.

"It's quite a feeling," said Gary Brumbaugh of Ohio. "I was drafted

and am proud to have served. I was with a wonderful unit of guys and I came out with a good attitude about military service."

While most veterans were surprised by the time and effort family members had put into their quilts, Doug Baldwin of Iowa admitted that he knew in advance as he had been able to read his father's emails to his mom. "If you want to keep a secret, don't write about it in an email!" he laughed. His father, Dwight, has already received a Quilt of Valor.

Several quilters also had stories to share.

Ruth Blasingame, one of two women to receive a quilt was completely surprised by the quilt her daughter, Karie, made for her. Karie and Karie's aunt, Mary Morrison worked together and over the phone to complete the

quilt. This was Karie's first quilt she has ever made, and her aunt has since passed away.

"This quilt has double the meaning," said Blasingame.

Quilter Mona Harmon of Minnesota said, "As I was making the Valor quilt, I was thinking that it was important to recognize the sacrifices made by the veteran and the family. I am grateful for everything they gave for our country."

Dean Davis, also from Minnesota, added, "It was very important to me that the quilt would be pleasing to the veteran recipient and not only to the quilter. We appreciate their service."

For more information about Quilts of Valor and the Grange partnership, see the web site www.qovf.org.

2019 Quilt of Valor Recipients

Table with 4 columns: Name, Service Dates, Service Branch, and Quilter/Note. Rows include Doug R. Baldwin, Ruth A. Blasingame, Noah R. Blosser I, Gary E. Brumbaugh, David L. Dana, Todd R. Hegge, Norman M.F. Keller, Lyle E. Lee, Michael K. Lynch, Michas M. Ohmstad, Gloria L. Paddock, Marion L. Thornberry, and Royal D. Vine.

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Lunch speakers talk about need for rural perspective in D.C.

BY LEXIE SUING
Communication Fellow

The Salute to Agriculture Luncheon was held on Wednesday afternoon with two keynote speakers.

Mark Gibbons CEO of RetireSafe and via pre-recorded video, Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee Collin Peterson both made remarks.

Peterson reminded us of the importance of the Grange in rural communities and spoke about some of the Grange’s most important priority areas including rural broadband expansion.

“We need to get connectivity for people who want to continue to live in these rural areas. You (the Grange) are the best components to represent rural America to connect them to the internet,” Peterson said.



Mark Gibbons, CEO of RetireSafe, talks to attendees at the Salute to Ag Luncheon Wednesday. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder.

Similarly, Gibbons spoke about the outreach and importance of voices like the Grange and our members on issues.

Gibbons spoke specifically about unexpected healthcare bills, Medicare and proposed coverage plans. He also touched on how many medical facilities are shutting down in smaller rural areas – 113 recorded hospitals in the last decade.

“We need to help address the doctor workforce to want to go to rural areas, and also help with the shortage in specialized doctors in these small rural areas,” Gibbons said.

Attendees said they enjoyed the information provided and hearing how respected the Grange continues to be on issues of importance for rural Americans and agriculture.

“The speakers gave us a really good idea of how important it is that organizations like the Grange exist and are actively sharing their concerns with legislators,” said Susan Plank of Indiana.

Emergency causes 2 from California to serve as first-time delegates

BY LORRI FREEMAN
Communication Fellow

Among the new delegates at the 153rd Annual Session of the National Grange is California State Overseer Jan Saxton, acting California State President, and California State Gatekeeper Jini Reynolds.

President Kent Westwood was unable to attend National Convention due to recovering from an unexpected brain aneurysm and surgery. He is out of ICU, walking, talking, and recovering well.

“He wants to escape from the hospital, and won’t let people visit him unless they bring good food,” Reynolds commented while smiling. He is missed deeply and our thoughts and prayers are with him for a quick healing.

Reynolds says this is her first time to the National Convention. “I am looking forward to making connections and understanding our ritual better,” she says. Reynolds, who originally joined Grange in 1980, took a



JAN SAXTON

small break, and rejoined Redwood Valley Grange in 2014 says, “What I want to get out of the 153rd National Convention is moving forward and rebooting the California State Grange.”

Saxton agreed with Reynolds statement.

Saxton who has been a member of Aromas Grange since 2003, has been



JINI REYNOLDS

to National Convention as a Delegate in the past.

“I am looking forward to partnering with our State President, to gain experience at the State and National levels.” Jan wants to get some training that she feels she is lacking, and plans to “absorb everything like a sponge,” she says.

Reminder

Any Distinguished Grange, Legacy Family or Grange in Action award recipients who wish to receive their photo or press release, please send an email to littlelindsphotos@gmail.com with your name and Grange name and the award you recieved.

Legacy member completes first year as youth director

BY MAGGIE SWARTZENDRUBER
Senior Communications Fellow

Sixth generation Kansas Granger and fourth grade teacher, Mandy Bostwick was announced as the new National Youth Director in December 2018. Mandy is stepping up to the plate after Charlene Shupp-Espenshade retired from the role she held for more than a decade.

While it was initially a complete shock to Bostwick, she was ready for the challenge. “I was on my way home from parent-teacher conferences when my voice-mail came in to give Betsy (Huber) a call. So I did, and I think that is the first time I have ever truly been speechless. I am beyond honored to have been selected.”

When you have a program that has had many successes over the years, it can be hard to implement new ideas and have them reach the same level of success. However, sometimes the hardest part of becoming the face of a program is overcoming old stigmas and making a change.

One of the largest stigmas is that the



Mandy Bostwick of Kansas, a sixth-generation Grange member, took the helm of the Youth Department in January 2019. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder.

Grange has a one-track mind, and everything must be done in a certain way in order to get the desired outcome. This year,

thanks to an idea from a “think tank” earlier in the year, the youth department is pleased to start the G.R.A.N.G.E. Pillars Project. The project will give youth more individualized paths to creating their Grange story.

“I am looking forward to introducing new programming that will increase leadership within the Grange and give a more rounded educational experience of things that our youth and young adults can take back into their local Granges,” Bostwick said of the new program.

It has definitely been a busy year for Bostwick, from learning how to lead youth and young adults her own age, to learning what is expected of her as a director. One of her favorite parts of her first year has been getting to know her team and watching them grow as Grange leaders. “As they say, ‘first team, #bestteam’. I was truly blessed with a wonderful first team this year.”

It certainly has been a whirlwind of a year, Mandy is excited to see where the next few years lead her and the youth department.

Sharing their stories

11 people stepped up to the mic during the #GRANGEstory Slam event on Wednesday night, giving personal stories around the theme, “I’d be delighted.” The audience participated by singing along to songs during breaks in the 5-minute speeches, which were recorded to be posted later. Judges scores were tied and Duane Hamp, Washington and John Crippen, Minnesota, shared the first place honors. | Photos courtesy of Lindsay Schroeder



Master's Message by Betsy E. Huber

‘The future is present’ with Youth arriving today

Our youth have arrived showing that indeed, “The Future is Present.” This is a common saying, coined by one of our Communication Fellows Philip Vonada, that is heard across the Grange in Pennsylvania, that I hope makes its way all across our Order.

Make sure to talk to them and hear their passion for the Grange.

These young members are indeed both

our present and our future and their commitment to our organization is shown just by making their way to our session to watch the work of our delegates, embrace our traditions as they perform their opening drill on Friday and so much more.

Your open arms and warm smiles will be just one of the reasons they keep coming back.



OP-ED

‘Grange baby’ looks back at what organization means for next generation

BY LEXIE SUING

Communication Fellow

Most people know the Grange for being involved in agriculture, community service or “That one thing that we go to every year”. For me, it’s so much more than that. The rituals, symbols and skills that I have learned as a Granger have helped shape me into the person that I am today. Everyone has heard the story, “What’s so important about the Grange? It’s so old, it doesn’t apply to anything now.” I wish more people outside of Grange would realize that the skills that you learn are more relevant than ever.

A little background about me. I am what some people call a “Grange Baby.” Basically I’ve been in the Grange my entire life. I cannot recall a time in my life that I wasn’t doing anything with the Grange. The longer I’ve been a part of this amazing Organization, the more I see the things I would not have learned/done without the influence of the Grange.

In my early years of Juniors, everybody was so welcoming and wanted us all to feel included in all we did. We did community service projects, games, and practiced all our parts for opening session. Many of the Grangers that I grew up with are still heavily involved. They are also some of my best friends.

One of the Presidents that I looked up to was John Fine. He knew how things needed to be done and seemed to always be busy. But he always had time to volunteer to help the Juniors. He put in so much fun with something that would affect us for the rest of our Grange lives. We practiced our lines every day before we put on the Junior degree at Oregon State Session. We also practiced very hard on our marches. But our mentors made it so much fun to learn. I remember we had contests to see who could remember their lines first. Some of us went so far as to memorize everybody’s lines; me. And there was John, encouraging and applauding us for the great job we were doing.

When the day came that we had to put on Degree, we would march in to our song we picked, stand proudly when we said our lines without a book and just seeing everyone smile at our performance. While we all thought it was fun, I don’t think we realized how it would help us later in life. And it’s all thanks to people who came to make something they do all the time into something we wanted to do. Without people like John and many

others, I wouldn’t have been as inspired to want to help others.

As I got older in The Grange, we were encouraged to participate in public speaking and the Talent show. Unfortunately, that was also the point in my life when people outside of Grange changed too. I didn’t have a whole lot of friends, so I started reverting back to being quiet and shy. I also never have believed in hurting others. Therefore, it’s logical that people would want to hurt me. I guess I was just an easy target. Maybe it’s because they knew I’d never do anything back. I always looked forward to Grange. It was a break from all the horrible things that were going on.

In my normal everyday life, I was bullied. At school, because I refused to bully others, I would get physically and emotionally abused. At home, I wasn’t the little sibling that my older sister wanted. Still, I never did it to others. My parents never believed me; convinced I was lying. For a long time, I felt like I was truly alone.

During my later years in Juniors, some of the mentors noticed that I would sit off by myself. I didn’t think anybody wanted to talk to me. They encouraged me to do the talent show. They wanted me to feel welcome and wanted me to show others who I was. I was very nervous my first couple times. It was strange at first when people come up to me and tell how beautifully I sang. Or how wonderful of a variety act that I performed. It’s the positivity that I so desperately needed. My confidence was building and I was feeling more comfortable with myself.

When I started doing public speaking, it helped develop the way I approach people and how to actively engage and listen to others. Eventually, I got to the point of being comfortable in my own skin and being friendly to everyone. So now, if I see anybody sitting off by themselves, I will be the first one to come and talk to you. I don’t ever want anybody go through what I went through.

The Grange to me is more than just a Community service organization. It’s more than a voice of agriculture. It saved me because of all the wonderful people that I felt really cared about me. I want to give what so many in the Grange have given me; a place to call home. My hope is that other people will see how much the Grange can help you become who you are and who you want to become.

Author meets, greets Grangers to introduce new program

BY ELIZABETH HINER

Senior Communication Fellow

“At Oliver the Ornament, we believe that, families are just about the best thing on earth.

“Magic can make dreams come true, Imagination exists inside every heart, and you can accomplish anything when you are determined, forgiveness can brighten your life, technology is great, but people are greater. Moms and dads can fix just about anything,

“Memories are created from some of the most unexpected moments, friends look out for friends, and redemption is possible for just about everyone and that Every Ornament Tells A Story™”

These are the lines from hit book series Oliver the Ornament, Todd Zimmerman, who is visiting the convention this week to talk about his book, anti-bullying and kindness and a new partnership formed with the National Junior Grange.

Each of his seven books comes with an ornament for your Christmas tree. The books cover a very serious topic for children, bullying. The story begins when Oliver who came to live with his family when they were just dating, and how he overcame being broken and bullied. These books are heartwarming tales, which teach some core values such as kindness, humility, tradition, love, friendship, forgiveness, and joy. It is a story of Christmas and is easily relatable to anyone who reads him or her.

Each of the seven books has three common themes: 1) Each tells the story of how the different ornaments entered



Todd Zimmerman, author of the hit series of books based on character Oliver the Ornament was part of the Wednesday activities at convention. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder.

the family’s collection 2) Each teaches children the important message of kindness, especially in the face of bullying 3) Each ends with a compelling cliffhanger, sure to excite the children for what is to come. Books one and two are available now with the third out next year and remaining four out one per year with the last out in 2024.

Oliver’s struggles to save the day by overcoming all odds resonates with children facing a difficult time. Therefore, Zimmerman has collaborated with various children’s hospitals in America where they have donated over 2,000 copies of their book.

A portion of proceeds collected from each book sale is donated to various children’s charities. The donation breakdown is 5% for the first book, 10% for the second, 15% for the third and so on until the seventh book is 100%. Zimmerman committed to making a difference in children’s lives throughout the world.

In just the last two years, Oliver the

Ornament was named by People Magazine as one of their Best New Books, was featured on Fox & Friends as one of the Hottest Toys of the year and was selected by First Lady Melania Trump to be read at 2018’s annual gathering at Children’s National Hospital in Washington DC. This continued a 70-year tradition begun by Bess Truman.

Zimmerman is collaborating with the Grange to for the benefit of the Junior Grange scholarship fund and the local Granges, with pre-sales of the books and other merchandise as a fundraiser. The fundraising material is available on the National Grange site or at Oliver the Ornament.

The online store offers an Oliver the Ornament gift set, which includes the book and a hand-painted ornament, Stand-alone hardback of each book as it comes out, or applicable gift set with hand painted ornament or the books are available as and E-Book. There are puzzles and snowglobes to go along with the books. Through the partnership, 50% of the proceeds of the E-books will go to the National Junior Grange and they’re also available in Spanish.

You can use this fundraiser for this year by December 15, 2019. If you do when you make your purchase, use the When checking out, use the promo code: Grange. The open fundraiser is February 1 through April 30. For every \$30 sold the Grange gets 10 to be split 7.50 to the local Grange and \$2.50 to the Junior Grange Scholarship Foundation. Similarly, 50% of the proceeds of the E-books will go to the National Junior Grange.

Grange Store now open for shopping pleasure in Edina room

BY KAREN CLINE

Communication Fellow

The Grange Store, located in the Edina Room, has everything you need to share your Grange pride. From small items like this year’s collectible convention pins to Grange sweatshirts and jackets, the Store has something for everyone.

Owner of Monroe Classics, Mike Warner, said his company likes to offer new items each year for the National Grange Convention. This year, sales of insulated grocery totes are on the rise as more areas institute plastic bag bans. Carrying your own stainless-steel straws branded with the National Grange logo are the answer to business bans on providing plastic straws.

Hot selling clothing items for teens and adults include the new color block Port Authority 3-in-1 jackets with hoods. On the back of the jacket, a large Grange logo, made up of over 2,000 stitches, is a prominent and stylish way to display your Grange pride. For Carhart brand fans, the Store also has Carhart jackets with the same Grange logo on the back of the jacket.

According to Warner, Junior Grange Youth have been asking for more youth-branded items. This year, a lime green sweatshirt with the black Grange Youth logo and black logo sweatpants are the hot items for youth. And lunch for school takes on a deeper meaning when a youth carries the new reusable Grange lunch bag.

Like last year, the limited-edition

Grange Christmas ornament is back. Designed using shatterproof material, the ornament is easy to transport home and affordable at only \$3.75. For both youth and adults, items like the colored pencil set and the stress ball Grange Youth Super Hero make great stocking stuffer items.

After the convention, individual Granges can order from Monroe Classics online through the National Grange website. Warner said his terms are beneficial to small Granges, stating “We can do consignment terms on an order, so any unsold items can be shipped back to us. It minimizes the risk of having unsold items after a fundraiser.” A portion of any purchase from Monroe Classics, whether at the convention or online, supports the National Grange.