



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

January 7, 2022

Use the New Year to make resolutions for your Grange

By Betsy Huber, National President

We started out the year at the National Grange Headquarters with a snow day! The new year is like a blank slate, or a white, snow-covered landscape with no footprints to mar the surface.

Of course January 1 dawned like any other day in winter, but mentally it feels like a new beginning, a new chance to do something different, to resolve to try something new, or work harder to accomplish a goal you may have had for quite a while. It will be a very busy year at headquarters as we sort and pack up for moving.

I spent my Christmas vacation scanning Grange Organization and Reorganization forms from Subordinate, Pomona, and Junior Granges created from the 1920s to 2000. It was amazing to read the thousands of Granges joined by tens of thousands of people looking for an organization to improve their lives. Some names I recognized, but what happened to all those people and all those local Granges? Where did we fail them? Why did they leave and close all those Granges? It was a depressing task for the holiday that should be joyous.

BUT—if our ancestors could create those thousands of community groups in an era before telephones or cell phones, before TV or internet, when all communication was through U.S. Mail (RFD)—it should be so much easier for us today to organize Granges! Instead of being depressing it should give us hope and determination to do better. To help improve our nation by sharing this great Grange organization with our communities that have re-set over the last two years and are looking for new focus and meaning in their lives.

Let's resolve in 2022 to work toward a gain in membership at home and nationally! We CAN do it!



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

Margaret Mead



IN-PERSON & ONLINE | APRIL 24-27

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!

Hitting the Ground Running – new Communications Director says hello

By Philip J. Vonada, National Grange Communications Director

Although I was introduced as the new Communications Director in Wichita in November, I have officially made the transition to the National Grange staff, and I'm ready to hit the ground running.

You could say I was born in the Grange – attending my first Pomona meeting at just a few weeks old, and my love for the Grange ran deep as a child and teenager. In my early 20s, I took a few years away from the Grange as college and my career took over, but I found my way back with a renewed passion and vigor for the Grange's mission.



I am a member of Penns Valley Grange #158 and Eagle Grange #1 in Pennsylvania, and I'm the current Director for the Pennsylvania State Junior Grange. In the past few years, I have been fortunate to serve the National Grange as Communications Fellow in 2019 and the John Trimble Youth Legislative Experience Delegate in 2018. One of my favorite things about being a Grange member is the wide range of experiences I have been able to take part in and encouraging other Grange members of all ages and backgrounds to do the same.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the National Grange and I'm excited to work with the rest of the staff on increasing the interests of rural America. I will continue many of the projects Amanda has been championing, including *Good Day!*, the Fellows program and more, and look forward to starting new Communications initiatives to serve our members nationwide.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me to help promote your Grange's event or issue, if you're looking to connect with local media or you just need a trick. I encourage the Communications Director from each Grange (State, Pomona, and community) to reach out and get in touch – I'm looking forward to working with you!

HHS Kicks Off New Year with New Protections from Surprise Medical Bills

From the Department of Health and Human Services

Beginning January 1, 2022, new federal protections championed by the Biden-Harris Administration will shield millions of consumers from surprise medical bills—unexpected bills from an out-of-network provider, out-of-network facility or out-of-network air ambulance provider. The protections, implemented under the No Surprises Act, ban surprise billing in private insurance for most emergency care and many instances of non-emergency care. They also require that uninsured and self-pay patients receive key information, including overviews of anticipated costs and details about their rights.

“The No Surprises Act is the most critical consumer protection law since the Affordable Care Act,” said Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra. “After years of bipartisan effort, we are finally providing hardworking Americans with the federal guardrails needed to shield them from surprise medical bills. We are taking patients out of the middle of the

food fight between insurers and providers and ensuring they aren't met with eye-popping, bankruptcy-inducing medical bills. This is the right thing to do, and it supports President Biden's vision of creating a more transparent, competitive and fair health care system."

"The No Surprises Act offers significant relief to people across the country, and reinforces our fundamental belief that no one should go bankrupt when seeking necessary care," said Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. "We are making it easy for consumers to know and understand their rights under the law, including what they can do if they receive a surprise medical bill. Consumers will not only benefit from these rights, but also will be empowered with the knowledge to address potential violations."

A [recent report](#) from the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) reviewed key evidence on surprise billing and the need for the consumer protections in the No Surprises Act. The report showed that surprise billing is common among those with private insurance—nearly one in five patients who go to the emergency room, have an elective surgery, or give birth in a hospital receive surprise bills, with average costs ranging from \$750 to \$2,600 per episode.

Read more here: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/01/03/hhs-kicks-off-new-year-with-new-protections-from-surprise-medical-bills.html>



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GRANGE ORIENTATION KIT

This Orientation Kit includes new brochures to help recruit and introduce new and prospective members to the Grange. The seven brochures allow Granges to introduce the organization to potential members.

Brochures include information on benefits and responsibilities of membership, Degrees and Symbols, and more!

Get your copy by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.com or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

Washington DC Experience 2022

Youth, Young Adults, and Juniors are invited to join the National Grange in Washington, DC on March 12-15, 2022 for the [Washington DC Experience](#).

The purpose of the Washington DC Experience is for Junior and Youth/Young Adult aged Grangers from across the country to come together and learn about how the Grange functions on the legislative side.

Youth and Juniors will be educated on the many ways in which Grangers and citizens alike can advocate on the issues they feel important to shape public policy and communities in which they live. During the Washington DC Experience, Grangers are invited to get an up-close and behind-the-scenes look at what government is and how it operates in Washington, DC.



Grangers will attend briefings with important information pertaining to the Grange Legislative Department. Plans will also include meeting with governmental departments (such as the Department of Agriculture or Department of Education) meeting with Congressmen and Senators from your state and a tour of DC.

Just as our Grange Declaration of Purposes suggests, we will ensure that our Grange Youth, Young Adults, and Juniors “take a proper interest in the politics of one’s country” so they might become the informed and involved citizens required to move America forward and to guarantee a better society for future generations.

Make plans to join us now. Travel and lodging costs are the responsibility of the attendees with a \$150 registration fee to cover some meal costs and tours. Potomac Grange #1 of Washington DC is offering a scholarship to attend the event - please see the application for the Grange Grassroots Activism Scholarship opportunity in the National Youth and Junior Grange Program books.

Dates for the WASHINGTON DC EXPERIENCE are March 12-15

The tentative schedule will include:

Saturday: Meet and Greet at Hotel

Sunday: Travel to National Grange Headquarters - Learn about the NG Legislative department and how it works in DC - Mock Interviews and Tour the city

Monday: Briefings at National Headquarters - Department visits

Tuesday: Meetings with Representatives and wrap up celebration dinner

FDA Authorizes First Oral Antiviral Treatment for COVID-19:

by Sean O'Neil, National Grange Legislative Assistant

In late December, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency use authorization Pfizer's Paxlovid pill, an antiviral treatment for COVID-19. Paxlovid is a prescription drug which can be given to adult and pediatric patients aged 12 and above to prevent severe cases of COVID-19. In clinical trials, the drug was found to be both safe and effective, with patients who take Paxlovid within the first few days of having COVID-19 seeing a reduced risk of hospitalization and death of up to 88%.

Along with a similar approval for Merck's molnupiravir, a somewhat less effective oral antiviral at only a 30% decreased risk for hospitalization and death, Paxlovid is one of the first COVID-19 treatments which can be mass produced. The ability to be mass produced is an important distinction which will allow Paxlovid to treat many more patients than current options such as monoclonal antibodies which are very limited in supply.

However, it will take time for Paxlovid to become widely available for patients. Currently, the Federal government is distributing limited supplies of the drug to state health departments which are then distributing them to hospitals and pharmacies. This scarce supply means that not every COVID-19 patient will be able to receive Paxlovid; for example, Wyoming is currently only receiving enough of the drug for 100 people per week. The Biden administration has ordered 10 million more courses of Paxlovid as well as 3.1 million courses of molnupiravir and hopes to rapidly increase production and distribution of the drug. However, so long as these drugs remain scarce, it is essential that Federal and State officials do not disproportionately prioritize urban and suburban patients and that rural America receives equal access to these lifesaving treatments.

Good Day! Volume 5, Issue 3

The latest issue of the National Grange's quarterly magazine, *Good Day!*, has started hitting mailboxes across the U.S. If you're a subscriber, you should see your issue in the next 7-10 days (depending on USPS service). If you don't see it, please let us know!

This issue includes a recap of the 155th Annual Session of the National Grange, great programming ideas, articles on issues facing rural America, a feature on the magnificent tuber – the potato *and more!*

Don't wait to wait for it to arrive? You can read online at issuu.com/grangegoodday.

Want to check your subscription status? Email Stephanie Wilkins (swilkins@nationalgrange.org) to make sure you stay up-to-date.

Back issues of the magazine can be ordered through the [Grange Supply Store](#).

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