

NEBRASKA STATE GRANGE NEWS

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January, February, March 2015



**President's Report
Kevin Cooksley**

Greetings, fellow Grangers.

Spring had arrived, and with it, preparations for field work and spring calving. Unfortunately, here in Custer County, soil moisture is not in good shape, so our pastures are dry and the fire danger is extremely high. On the other hand, the dry weather has been very helpful for the folks calving out cows. Let's just all pray for rain come May, when the chances of wet snow are minimal.

The Executive committee met on March 26th in Lincoln. The day began at 7:15 AM with the Legislative Ag breakfast at the top of the US Bank building. The Grange co-hosted the breakfast, along with Farm Credit Services of America.

Over a half-dozen other groups had representatives there, along with several state senators and representatives from Senators Sasse & Fischer's offices. After breakfast, we headed on over to our scheduled

Quarterly Executive Committee meeting. Lila Tooker, who is serving as Nebraska's coordinator for the 2015 National Grange Convention in Lincoln, briefed us on the progress she's been making with plans for various activities during the convention, as well as her ideas on transportation to, from, and during the convention. She still has some details to work out, but let me tell you, I am so glad she is in charge of this. She is one organized lady, and she has some great events lined up. I will remind you that the convention dates are November 10-14 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. I hope to see a large contingent of Nebraskans there to take it all in, and also to take the 7th Degree if you don't already have it.

We also discussed the 2015 state session. It will be at the River's Edge Convention Center in Columbus, September 11-13. Some of you may remember this site as the former "New World Inn" where we have held the State Grange Convention before. Columbus is a great central location, so I hope to see many of you there. Our Executive Committee state session planning meeting will be in Columbus at the Convention Center on August 8th.

The 2015 Legislative Session is now more than ½ over. Several major issues remain, to focus our attention on. Property tax relief is one. While there were plenty of bills introduced which dealt with the subject, none of them were comprehensive enough to get at the fundamental causes of ever-increasing property tax reliance. I sincerely hope the legislative body

can conduct a summertime study of answers to this issue and come back next year with a responsible plan. Schools and county governments must have reliable sources of revenue without over-burdening their property tax payers. LB 280 attempts to resolve those issues, but it still needs some work. Perhaps LB 280, or a similar plan can be worked on this summer. One of the other major issues is LB 176, the bill to allow Packers to own swine in Nebraska feeding operations. The Grange opposes this bill and testified as such at its hearing. Unfortunately, the Ag committee voted to send it to the floor. It has been prioritized by Senator Schilz, so I am certain it will get floor debate. I hope all of you contact your state senator and let them know we think it is a bad idea to let the Packers compete directly with the family farmers who are already feeding hogs. The other major concern is that if this bill passes, it will just be a matter of time before the beef packers demand the same rights in Nebraska. If we give in to them, family-owned cattle and hog feeding operations will soon be a thing of the past.

That's about it for this issue.

**Don't forget our
Grange Radio Program on
KNEB 960 at 1:20 p.m. and
KRVN 880, KTIC 840 at 1:40
p.m. on Fridays to help keep
you better informed about
Grange**

Schedule of Upcoming Events

April is Grange Month!

- May 19 Registration deadline for
Great Plains Conference
June 19-21 Great Plains Conference
Hesperus, CO
June 25 News sheet deadline
August 8 Planning for state session
River's Edge Columbus
September 11-13 State session at
River's Edge Columbus
November 10-14 National Grange
Convention at Cornhusker
Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska



GRANGE FAMILY ACTIVITIES Phyllis Tooker, Director

It must be spring. I bought the pansies that I use for taking to the cemeteries for Memorial Day but I get to enjoy them on my porch until then. It's the only thing that I can think of that won't freeze sometime before then and they were one of my mother's favorite flowers.

It's time to begin thinking about what you can bring to the state convention in September. The most changes in the contests are always for the food. Try to think what you can bring that will sell well as this has become a great money-maker for the Grange. The other contests help us to make a wonderful display and could be called our "Idea Fair." Now is the time to plan ahead.

2015 – CONTEST RULES FOR – BAKING—SEWING— NEEDLEWORK—CRAFTS

BAKING CONTEST:

- Cash prizes will be awarded – 1st = \$6.00, 2nd = \$4.00, 3rd = \$2.00
CLASS 1 – Chocoholics Delight
CLASS 2 – Nut Bread
CLASS 3 – Muffins – sweet or savory
CLASS 4 – Apple Recipe (not pie)
Applesauce would count as apples
CLASS 5 – Drop Cookies
CLASS 6 – Men's Choice

(All food items must be a baked item that does not require refrigeration.) All baking entries become the property of the State Grange and will be served, sold or auctioned off during the State Convention. Must include recipe with entry. Must be a Grange member to enter baking contest.

ALL CONTEST ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED IN 2015

HANDIWORK – NEEDLEWORK-CRAFTS – ETC:

Cash prizes will be awarded – 1st = \$5.00, 2nd = \$4.00, 3rd = \$2.00

CLASS 7 –Decorated Pillow Cover – (throw pillows, not pillow cases) May use any media.

KNIT OR CROCHET:

CLASS 8 – Doilies and Table Runners - Any kind of thread & yarn may be used

CLASS 9 – Afghan

CLASS 10 – Knitted Clothing (Sweater, etc.)

EMBROIDERY:

CLASS 11 – Embroidery

Any item can be made and any type embroidery floss may be used.

QUILTS:

Prizes will be awarded – 1st = \$10.00, 2nd = \$8.00, 3rd = \$7.00

CLASS 12 – Quilt – Hand Quilted

CLASS 13 – Quilt – Machine Quilted

Prizes will be awarded – 1st = \$6.00, 2nd = \$4.00, 3rd = \$3.00.

CLASS 14 – Wall Hanging – Keep it small enough to display easily

CLASS 15 – Table Runner –Quilted or not

CRAFTS:

Cash prizes will be awarded – 1st = \$4.00, 2nd = \$3.00, 3rd = \$2.00

CLASS 16 – Purse made from a man's tie (Contact Phyllis Tooker for pattern, if needed)

CLASS 17– Wood decoration or craft
CLASS 18 – Scrapbooking page or pages (only what's needed to tell the story)

CLASS 19 – Plastic Canvas Item

CLASS 20 – China Painting

While the quilt block for the National Grange is part of the Program Director's Department, it will be judged by the judges for the above contests.

The general rules remain the same every year. The other programs, Toys for Loving, Linus blankets, Dictionaries for Thirds, Premie items and pop tab collection for Ronald McDonald House all remain the same as in past years.

The following recipe is quick, easy and very good. People love the crust and ask what it that makes it so different.

Cherry Pie Sugar Cookie Bars

- 1 pouch (1lb. 15 oz.) sugar cookie mix (Note: this is not the refrigerated dough—look in the cake mix aisle)
½ cup butter, melted
1 egg
¼ teaspoon almond extract
21 oz. can cherry pie filling

In a medium bowl, whisk egg. Stir in contents of cookie mix pouch and melted butter. Keep mixing until thick dough forms. Remove ¾ cup of dough and set aside. Press remaining dough into a greased 9 x9 square pan. In a separate bowl mix pie filling and almond extract. Spread over cookie dough in baking pan. Break up remaining dough into small chunks and sprinkle over cherry pie filling. Bake at 375 degrees for 20-30 minutes, or until edges are golden brown. Cool before slicing and serving.

I dropped the reserved dough over the pie filling using a small amount on a teaspoon. It spreads as it bakes and is pretty with some of the pie filling showing through. I doubled everything for a 9x13 pan. I can't see why you couldn't use blueberry pie filling (or something else) that you might like. Enjoy.

Program Director Darlene Janing

On this 15th day of March the sunshine and the wind remind us that spring is not far way. Being Nebraskans we know that as the seasons change so does the activities of our Grange members. You may wonder "How so?" After having well planned meetings during the winter months and addressing serious topics followed by discussion

you will address seasonal topics that continues to attract members.

Here is another way to meet the needs of your members as you prepare programs and activities.

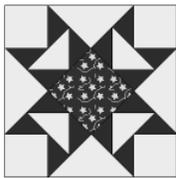
Programs need to:

- E..enlighten
- N..new thinking
- C..creative minds
- O..opportunity
- U..utilize talents of members
- R..remember roots thru ritual
- A..address current issues with resolutions and follow up
- G..gather together for the good of the order
- E..education leads to change

As you ponder this brief message, I challenge you to encourage your members to support your local community in small steps as each project begins with ideas that can grow. Your individual Granges are made up of talented people. Keep up the good planning and keep track of what you have been doing.

Great Plains Leadership Conference

The Great Plains Leadership Conference will be held on June 19-21 in Hesperus, Colorado. Registration deadline is May 19. For more information, contact Darlene Janing.



2015

QUILT BLOCK CONTEST RULES

The National Grange Quilt block contest is a contest that we are promoting to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the National Grange in 2016. The idea behind the contest is to create a vehicle for our members to share their creative talents.

Rules:

A. The period of the contest runs from January 1, 2015 until September 15, 2015 deadline for submissions is September 30, 2015 to the National Lecturer:

James Tetreault
19 Parker Street
Winchester NH 03470.

B. Judging will be done prior to National Grange session.

C. Any entries received after the deadline will not be judged however, they will be exhibited at the National Grange session in Lincoln, Nebraska.

D. Pattern: this year's pattern will be the Northumberland Star

E. Colors for this year will be red, white and blue

Categories:

A. Individual quilt block to measure 12½"x12½"and must come unfinished-no batting/backing.

B. Quilted throw pillow finished size 18"x18"must come finished batted and backed.

C. Quilted table runners size 17"x56"must come finished!

All categories must use the Northumberland Star

All entries are property of the National Grange. All entries will be given proper credit and awards.

We ask that each entrant also submit the following information:

Name(s)

Grange

Name, #, State

Address/Hometown

Years of Grange Membership

What is special about your Grange/hometown?

Community Service Sandra Dunkel

I was interested to see who had won the community Service contest on the National level so I looked on the national Grange site. There was an article about the winners so I decided to share it with everyone this month. It didn't say how many Granges entered on the National level but here are the winners: 1st Place went to Ekonk Community Grange #89 of Sterling/Moosup, Connecticut. 52 of the 151 members participated. 2nd Place was Stanford Grange #808, Stanfordville, New York. 93 members. 3rd Place was Clear Lake Grange #692, Aitkin, Minnesota. 26 members. 4th place was Maple Grove Grange #148, Sebago, Maine. 20 members.

Most of you know I originally came from Connecticut. I was surprised to see that the winning grange was only about 15 miles from where I lived. A lot of my relatives were very active in the grange back there in Connecticut.

Community Service is an integral part of the Grange that allows local members to interact and serve the communities where they reside. Grange members participate in big and small projects, partner with other community organizations and fundraise for various causes within their community.

Let's get to thinking about what YOUR GRANGE will do this year. Wouldn't it be nice to have one of the Nebraska Granges be one of the winners in this year's National Contest. After all the NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION will be in NEBRASKA this fall. Let's get those thinking caps on and get to work. Don't forget to keep track of the hours spent on your projects.

Remember no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

2015 Scholarship Winner



Ashton Dunkel

The recipient of the 2015 Nebraska State Scholarship is Ashton Dunkel of Archer City, TX. She is the daughter of Doug and Jill Dunkel and granddaughter of Weissert Grange members, Junior and Sandra Dunkel.

She will be a member of the 2015 Texas A&M Women's Equestrian team. She will be majoring in Agricultural Leadership and Development. She enjoys working with children and has a passion for the outdoors and agriculture. As a future job, she would like to combine her love of agriculture with her love of children.

Carver Grange



Carver Grange, President Louise Latimer with Charles Fricke and wife at Bryan High School's Ag Week event. Charles father was a long time member of Papillion Grange. Fricke Farms is a big booster of the FFA program.

The March meeting of Carver Grange of Omaha (CarGO) was hosted at the HQ for NoMoreEmptyPots at 8511 N 30th Street in Florence.

<http://nomoreemptypots.org/>.

Carver Grange for the month made significant strides in developing the after school initiative it has been seeking with Omaha's Druid Hill Elementary School during the past year. With the assistance of Douglas/Sarpy County Extension (Cathy Ramer), Carver Grange was able to finally get its after school STEM 4H activities off the ground. The weekly activity events (with approx. 20 students) for the initial month of April will be led by Louise Latimer, Leigh Cheloha, and Edgar Hicks.

On Thursday March 19, Carver Grange took part in Bryan High School's Urban Ag Week celebration <http://www.omahaschoolsfoundation.org/images/pdf/nationalagweek.pdf>.

It was such a great opportunity to share the connection of the National Grange to FFA that we spot-lighted the National Ag Week event in our Nebraska State Grange radio report in March.

On March 23, we shared in the Grange TeamSpeak conference call on the Parliamentary Procedure contest that will take place at this year's 139th National Grange session in Lincoln. There is a strong interest by Bryan High School's FFA to partake in Carver Grange and to get a better understanding of the requirements for the Parliamentary

Procedure contest which requires six students on a team.

We are looking forward to having Bryan FFA students at Carver Grange's April meeting.

NATIONAL GRANGE POLICY UPDATES and NEWS

Broadband / Net Neutrality

National Grange wrote an op-ed calling for any new net neutrality regulations to find ways that increase both innovation and investment. High-speed mobile applications and broadband services are playing an increasingly vital role in agriculture, telebusiness, telemedicine and teleeducation. Yet rural Americans are among the most underserved consumers of high-speed Internet. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced its intent to regulate broadband services using outdated 1934 landline rules. The regulatory move pits 150 current internet companies against startup company executives and dedicated Web activists. While net neutrality sounds good at first blush, this latest proposal could actually slow rural high-speed broadband connectivity. This move is likely to perpetuate litigation and may have to eventually be pitched to Congress for a workable long term solution. The National Grange has long advocated that facts and evidence should guide the government's decision-making process on any matter. We will stay close to the highly controversial net neutrality issue and strongly advocate for state-of-the-art access for small towns, rural communities and other underserved areas.

Immigration

The lack of definitive solutions to the nation's immigration crisis from Congress is frustrating for agricultural producers, small businesses, processors, law enforcement and local citizens. A Texas judge's recent order delayed some of President Obama's executive actions on immigration. For the time being, this court order will discourage undocumented agricultural workers from leaving agriculture to seek better paying jobs. Employers also report evidence of an enforcement shift

away from farms and businesses to the border. Although the court order and enforcement shift may relieve fears of a labor shortage for this growing season, serious concerns remain for agriculture. The House Judiciary Committee has approved H.R.1147, the Legal Workforce Act which would mandate employers to E-Verify the documentation of prospective employees.

Unfortunately, as stand-alone legislation, E-Verify is problematic for agriculture until Congress addresses agricultural worker needs and creates a new guestworker program for the future. The Grange will continue to advocate for a strong and workable guestworker program to that is compatible with E-Verify for agriculture. Meanwhile, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), reports about half the employers who use the H-2A and H-2B visa programs rely upon third party agents rather than hiring directly. GAO investigators have found evidence of illegal fees, the promise of jobs that don't exist, and failure to disclose employment information including wage levels.

Agriculture Export Promotion

The National Grange policy supports free and fair trade of agricultural products. Grange cosigned a letter to Congress urging full funding for Foreign Market Development and Market Access Programs for U.S. agricultural products on the Omnibus appropriations bill funding the Federal Government for FY '15. Full funding was approved. The Grange is currently supportive of Congress restoring Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) to the President. This legislation authorizes the President to negotiate trade pacts such as the pending Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) then take it to Congress for approval. Trade Promotion Authority has both bipartisan support and bipartisan opposition.

Highway Trust Fund

Grange members were part of the effort last fall to authorize short term funding for the defunct Highway Trust Fund which allowed the revitalization projects on America's highways and bridges to continue. Those monies run out in May and Congress is already arm wrestling

about where to get future revenue to build and maintain the nation's highways and bridges. Gas and diesel taxes, which haven't been increased since 1993, are the traditional source. Additional potential sources being discussed are repatriating U.S. corporate taxes from abroad and increasing and redirecting certain U.S. Customs fees.

COOL

National Grange cosigned a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee opposing inclusion of any Country of Origin Labeling "fix" language in the Omnibus government funding package. Cosigners urged Congress to wait for the WTO appeal ruling. No COOL language was included in the final appropriations legislation. Appearing at recent hearings on Capitol Hill, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack has repeatedly said, if the U.S. loses the appeal before the World Trade Organization (WTO), Congress must rewrite the law; the Secretary maintains he does not have the authority to administratively make the changes WTO may demand.

Dietary Guidelines

First issued in 1977, Dietary Goals for the United States was intended to give Americans guidance on nutritious and healthy eating habits. Dietary Guidelines, as it has since become known, is reissued every five years and has become the benchmark document for public feeding programs (SNAP, WIC, school lunch, military, etc.). This year, the independent Dietary Guidelines advisory panel convened by USDA and HHS took a paradigm deviation from the traditional role of the panel in years past; they added the environmental sustainability of foods to their agenda and recommendations on human nutrition. Of course that drew a shock wave of reaction from agriculture, the food industry, policy wonks, scientists and politicians. The final official Dietary Guidelines will be drafted by USDA and HHS. Secretary Vilsack has assured Congress he will be personally involved in writing the new dietary guidelines and will keep them narrowly focused on nutrition.

Health Insurance Tax

National Grange cosigned a letter of support to bipartisan sponsors of legislation to repeal the "HIT" tax. This is a punitive and hidden tax on small employers and the self-employed in the Affordable Care Act in the form of higher premiums for private insurance coverage.

Medicare Part D

National Grange cosigned a letter to Congress highlighting the success of the Medicare prescription drug benefit (Medicare Part D) and urging their opposition to proposals that weaken the program for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Administration has proposed a mandatory Part D rebate which is essentially a tax that goes directly to the U.S. Treasury and would not be used for new drug development or to reduce prescription costs to the patient.

Ensuring Seniors Access to local Pharmacies Act

National Grange cosigned a letter supporting bipartisan H.R. 793 introduced by Griffin (R-VA) and Welch (D-VT). The bill would expand access to seniors in medically underserved communities by allowing any pharmacy willing to accept a plan's terms to participate as a preferred provider.

Postal Service Cuts

National Grange publicized an article by Postal Regulatory Commissioner Goldway highlighting service reductions and plant closings in small towns and rural areas. Commissioner Goldway suggested that before proceeding with these reductions in service, the Postal Service should offer well-supported projections of the impacts and solid estimates of financial savings before embarking on this new round of service cuts and closings.

Rare and High Cost Drugs

National Grange authored an op-ed calling for an audit and increased oversight of the 340B drug pricing program. Congress created the 340B program to help medically at-risk, vulnerable, low income patients gain access to expensive specialty medicines by requiring drug manufacturer to provide prescription discounts to these individuals. Increasing numbers of hospitals and contract pharmacies are reportedly

qualifying for discounted medications but may be selling them to regular patients at full price.

Rural Veterinarians

National Grange cosigned a statement of support for the bipartisan Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act. Even though graduating veterinarians may qualify to have their vet school loan forgiven by working in rural areas for at least three years, there is a 39 percent withholding tax levied on the loan. This Act would exempt loan repayments from withholding tax so underserved areas can actually get a veterinarian.

Taxes

National Grange supported House passage of H.R.636 to make permanent the \$500,000 same-year capital expenditures write-off for agriculture and small business. Favorable Senate action is expected as well. National Grange will also cosign a letter supporting the introduction of the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015 in both the House and Senate when the cosponsors are ready.

Farmers Market Growth Slows

A new study by USDA finds that the rate of growth in the number of farmers markets has slowed dramatically in the last five years. There seems to be evidence of market saturation. Shoppers in many parts of the country are able to choose from several farmers markets on any weekend. On the other hand, the study found that sales at so-called "food hubs" grew dramatically. Hubs are independent direct-to-consumer groups and businesses that connect farmers with consumers and include direct sales to restaurants and feeding programs such as hospitals and school systems.

News Sheet Articles are due

By

June 25

**Send to Judy Hansen
20657 State Highway 91
Blair, NE 68008**

or

**preferably by email
jhans@pointenet.com**