



# ILLINOIS GRANGER

*In Essentials... Unity  
In Non-Essentials... Liberty  
In All Things... Charity*



**December 2025 Vol 5 No. 12**



## **Lynette's Visions and Wisdoms**

Wow what a great 159 th National Grange Convention Cruise. Twenty IL Grangers plus a guest attended the first ever NG Session Cruise. Don served on the Conservation

Committee, and I on the Agriculture Committee. Most of the committee work was done prior to the convention started. The resolution that was sent to the National Grange from IL was adopted. Much was discussed and decided, about one hundred resolutions were brought to the floor and acted on by the delegate body. Election of National Grange Officers was held, and there were changes: Walter Hartly, RI, was elected to Executive Committee and Dr. Richard Stonebraker, MD, was elected as Lecturer. I was not re-elected to the National Grange Executive Committee. I want to thank Christine Hamp and all the others who serve as officers, staff, directors/teams, your efforts are greatly appreciated. The video of the Seventh Degree was shown for the first time, there were a few computer glitches, but it was a great presentation. The days on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao were wonderful. Some of the work of the delegates included passing a dues increase for the National Grange dues. So, starting January 1, 2026, the dues amount sent to IL State Grange Secretary will be increased. Brian will be sending new quarterly dues forms to each Grange,

for the quarter ending March 31, 2026. The delegates heard reports from various study groups on Junior Dues, Delegate Representation, National Session, and Performance Improvement Plans for State Granges. I will be sharing this information in upcoming articles.

At the National Grange Honors Night, November 21, Congratulations to Turkey Hill Grange, Prairie Grange and County Line Grange for earning the Distinguished Grange Award. A Grange in Action award went to Emerald Mound Grange. Many other awards and distinctions were announced. And the most exciting announcement for IL Grangers was near the end, Junior Granger of the Year – Scarlett Ellwanger, IL. Congratulations Scarlett! We are all very proud of you!

All the State Officers and committee chairs will be meeting in January to discuss items of the Performance Improvement Plan for IL Granges. Robin Kindberg and I will be meeting soon to formulate a plan concerning the membership pilot program we are a part of, starting new Granges and strengthening unstable Granges. The Illinois State Grange Ex Committee will soon be releasing the information about the Scholarship application theme and dates for return, watch social media and email for the information.

Hope you all had a great Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Blessings to all of you for the Christmas season.

## ISG Secretary Report

The new year will be here soon, which means it's time to start thinking about Illinois State Grange scholarships. As I'm writing this, details are still being worked out, but the 2026 application packets will be ready in the near future. If you or someone you know is interested, send me a message, and I'll make sure you get an application as soon as they're available.

The end of the 4th quarter is December 31.

Community Granges should send their Quarterly Reports and dues to me by January 15. Be sure to send along any membership changes, including new member information, as well as any contact updates or officer changes.

As always, if you have any questions or need help, please don't hesitate to contact me.

May you all have a wonderful holiday season, and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Faternally,

Brian Keller, Illinois State Grange Secretary  
brianjkeller@gmail.com  
618-410-9020

## Prairie Grange Report

Prairie Grange meeting was opened in full form on Monday November 17 th , 2025, at 7PM by President Don Ellwanger. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as presented. Committee reports were given.

Ag – Mary Brubach reported safety is important on all Farms. To many accidents with Farm Equipment this year, be safe and stay alert and watch for deer.

Juniors – Patti Lee reported Scarlette did an excellent job on her workshop and on her essay. Be sure to watch National Grange Honors Night November 21 st , 2025, at 7:30PM to see how she comes out. She has applied to be a National Grange Junior Ambassador – Good Luck. Grange Activities - Karrie Kindberg reminded everyone to get the link she provided to order your tickets to the Rockford Ice Hogs Teddy Bear Toss on December 6 th , 2025.

Communications – We received Thank You's from

the 4-H'ers who received the awards we presented at the 4-H Recognition program. We received a Thank You from the Hale Family for the sympathy card they received.

Treasurers report was approved as presented. Unfinished Business – It was approved to get presents for 10 residents at local nursing home as a community service project. Lyle and Patti Lee gave a summary of their adventures on the National Grange Cruise. There were about 4086 people on the cruise alone with 1460 crew members. Weather was great. About 300+ Grangers were in attendance. Little difficulty getting back to land (Mechanical issues on the ship) and trying to reschedule airplane flights back to Chicago.

New Business –

1. Jeremy Meyers got elected to Vice President of the Boone County Fair Board. Manny Fabela was appointed to fill Jeremy's spot as a fair board director for Prairie Grange.

2. December 15 at 6:30PM will be the Prairie Grange Christmas Potluck and Party. Everyone is to bring a hot and cold dish to pass. Prairie will furnish Prime Rib and ham. There will also be a White Elephant Gift Exchange for those who want to participate.

The Literary program was "What is Popcorn and its impact on our Environment" presented by our worthy Community Service Co-Director and farmer herself Sister Robin Kindberg. President Don Ellwanger passed back the Ag contest winners results from state session. Meeting was closed in full form at 7:45PM.

Robin Kindberg

Prairie Grange Publicity Chairman



## Broad Hollow Grange

Broad Hollow Grange met on Friday, November 5th, with a potluck followed by a program. The hall and tables were decorated with Thanksgiving items. The program consisted of rolling a dice to draw a turkey, weather folklore, and a November quiz. Everyone sang "Hello, Mr. Turkey" Participants using the letters in "Thanks" told what each letter stood for. The importance of Veterans was noted since November 11th was Veterans' Day. A roll of a dice determined what each would respond to for Thanksgiving. All enjoyed a left-right turkey game. The program closed with a quote from President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them."

## Boone County Pomona Report

Boone County Pomona Grangers met on Wednesday November 5, 2025, at 7PM. We took in one new member from County Line Grange. Committee Reports were given:  
Ag – Jack Ratcliffe reported having a great harvest and yields are good.  
HEW – Flu season is upon us be sure to get your flu shots and wash your hands frequently  
Youth – Marisa O'Dell reported great entries in youth contests at state. Watch for new contests out soon.  
Community Service -we are collecting hats, scarves, gloves and mittens for the mitten tree here at the Grange Hall. Anyone can donate. They will go to Veterans and schoolchildren in our area. We will continue this through February.  
Deaf – Adam Ellwanger reported it's a good idea to get hearing checked now.  
Sunshine – Robin Kindberg reported she sent sympathy cards to Carol and Virgil Hale for the loss of their son. Get Well card to Jim Langendorf for health issues and a card to Linda Kay Ebel for health issues.  
Fair Board – Tom Ratcliffe reported working on things for 2026 Fair there will be a few changes watch for details. The Fair Board also voted to put new windows in the Community Grange Hall

Jr. – Sara Ellwanger reported juniors are doing birthday cake kits to be distributed to families in our community the 2nd weekend in December. Anyone can donate they need cake mixes, frostings, candles, tablecloths, Birthday banners and decorations as well as disposable cake pans. This is to help make a child feel better for their birthday.

It was announced Scarlett Ellwanger was applying to be National Grange Junior Ambassador. It will be announced after National Grange Cruise returns to land.

Youth Fair Board-Manny Fabela reported they are working on a new fair shirt design for next year's fair and are having a dance party January 3rd at the Grange Hall. Everyone is invited to come out and have some fun.

Grange Reports were given:

Beaver Valley – Marisa O'Dell got Granger of the year

Big Thunder – storage is going well and they will be ringing the bell for Salvation Army

County Line – They reorganized their Junior Grange. Congratulations – helped celebrate one of their members 100 th Birthday. Gave out awards at 4-H Recognition Program, did Trunk or Treat at Paulsen's museum. Attended GRIT, took in 3 new members and received the 2024-2025 Distinguished Grange Award for the third year in a row, been very busy

Flora – planning Roast Beef Dinner on March 29, 2026

Prairie – received the Distinguished Grange Award for the 13 th year in a row. Going to the Ice Hogs Hockey Game Teddy Bear Toss Dec. 6 th , anyone wanting tickets contact Karrie Kindberg to get link to buy your tickets.

Treasurers report was approved as presented. There was no Old Business.

New Business – We elected President, Vice President and Secretary for Boone County Fair Board. John Henninger – President, Jeremy Meyers – Vice President, and Susan Banks – Secretary. Gordon Butt remains Treasurer until next year's election.



Pomona is selling homemade pies for the holidays. Place your order online and pick up is November 26th

Congratulations to Kayla Koneczki who got married to Ethan Fortener on Nov 1,2025.

The evening concluded with a Bake Sale Auction for the Youth Fair Board members. The auction totaled \$408.50.

Next meeting will be January 7, 2026, dues paying supper.

Fraternally Submitted

Karrie Kindberg

Boone County Pomona Publicity Chairman

**Beaver Valley**

Hello,

Wishing you all the blessings and brightness of this festive season! It was wonderful to see so many of you from around the area at state session this year! Thank you for visiting our hospitality suite. We are very proud of our sister, Marisa O’Dell, for being named “Illinois Granger of the Year”

We also honored our members, Cameron Paulson and Bradley Goebel with the “Quilts of Valor” for their service and dedication to our country. We held our October meeting on October 10 & November on the 14 at the Boone County Community Hall.

We sent out membership certificates to Andrew Herstek for his 5 year certificate. Katie Christensen & Sarah Goebel received their 15 year certificates. We also had a new member join recommended by Brian & Marisa O’Dell.

Welcome Samantha O’Dell! Thank you for being a part of the Beaver Valley Grange!

In October, BVG participated in the Paulson Ag Museum’s Tractor Trunk or Treat event. Thanks to Steve Paulson for providing a tractor and all the helpers who participated.

We’ve been discussing several topics through our committee reports. Specifically, Flowers, Ag, Deaf, and Health Ed & Wellness. Thank you to the brothers & sisters who research and give informative reports on these matters.

We are working on community service projects and donating items for Pomona’s Living Tree which needs mittens, scarves, hats for kids and

adults. As well as the Juniors who are providing “Birthday Cake Kits” for those in need. We will hold a distribution day for the kits December 13th from 12-2PM. If you are available to help pack the kits, please contact Marisa O’Dell. We will be in the Fairgrounds Admin building basement on December 10 from 6-7PM. Thanks to those who have already donated items!

We plan to celebrate Christmas this year at our December meeting at Teresa and Manny Salgado’s house. Looking forward to this time of fellowship and fun! We are also sponsoring a Salvation Army family and spreading Christmas cheer at a local nursing home.

We hope everyone has a safe, healthy, and joyful holiday season!

Fraternally submitted,

Micah Schlie

Publicity

Andrew Herstek with 5 year certificate



Katie Christensen with 15 year certificate

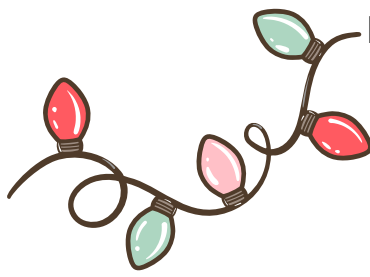


Steve Paulson & Hattie Schlie at the PAMA Trunk or Treat





Bradley Goebel & Cameron Paulson receiving Quilts of Valor



## Illinois State Grange Junior Department

Welcome back, welcome back, welcome back!!!  
 Something wonderful to celebrate when a Junior Grange is reorganized. Thank you Matron Kim, and any others, for your time and dedication in getting this done. Look forward to all you will be doing.  
 Melinda Schiefer Director



### County Line

Way to go to all the Grangers who went on the National Grange cruise convention. I hope everyone enjoyed every moment of the trip.

Illinois State Grange reorganized County Line Junior Grange. They are back and ready to go.

We had our awards ceremony for community service last meeting. Congratulations to all who received an award. Thank you for coming to our meeting, taking time to do interviews with our Grangers and thanks for the work you do in the community.

Congratulations to the Junior Grangers for their work at State Session. Extra congratulations to our Junior Granger of the year Kaitlyn Shere, way to go! We will be ringing the Salvation Army bell November 29th at Pacemaker in Poplar



Beaver Valley Grange is very proud of our sister, Marisa O'Dell, for being named "Illinois Granger of the Year" at this year's State Session. Well deserved, Marisa

Grove from 2-6pm, then Friday December 5th County Line Grange will be cooking and serving hotdogs, chili, nachos, etc in the basement of Community Building for Hometown Christmas. Looking forward to a great start to the Christmas season. We will also be decorating a Christmas tree for a special family. So stay warm, have a wonderful Thanksgiving with your family and friends.  
Cathy Zei

## **Flora Grange Report**

Flora Grange held their November meeting on Tuesday, November 11, 2025 (Veteran's Day), 7 pm at their Flora Grange Hall with 29 Grange members and 1 Jr. member in attendance. Meeting was called to order by Master Ken Fidder with Grange Salutation and Pledge to American Flag. Roll call was taken by Secretary Laurel Ratcliffe and Minutes of October 14, 2025, meeting was approved. Committee reports then followed: Community Service, Lindakay Ebel reported from now until we have our Pomona meeting on January 7, 2026, we are collecting mittens, scarves and hats of all sizes, and you can purchase or make them, for children or for adults. These will be given to children in schools or at the Veteran Centers in Boone County. Also, drop off Christmas cards for other Granges in the stockings at the Community Grange or for another Grange person of your choice. Jack Ratcliffe reported for Agriculture, farmers are 90% finished in the fields, yields were great this year, some bad accidents did happen, also fires. Fair board, Todd Hegge stated they are still planning their entertainment, Jack will be taking over the tractor pulls next year, and we have a new president and vice president of the fair. Jack reported farmland protection has a meeting on Thursday evening, all are invited to attend. Membership, Lindakay Ebel suggested we always have a great Christmas dinner and party, this would be a great time to invite a

friend and let them see and show what our Grange is all about, seeing we will be making food trays for our shut-ins and residents in nursing homes. Family Activities: Deb Silvers reported she went to Federation 4-H office to order a Christmas tree for \$40 for Hometown Christmas and her sewing group this weekend will be making Christmas ornaments on Saturday and Sunday for the tree to give to the family in which the tree will be delivered. Quilting: Emalee Colver stated her quilting group will be quilting on Friday for anyone who would like to come and quilt. Emalee reported that 37 quilt blocks were given to the National Grange from Flora Grange, very proud of our sewing groups. 2026 quilt square will be the star pattern. Jack Ratcliffe reported he ordered propane for the Grange Hall, was paid for by our treasurer, and he plans to retire from Buildings and Grounds, someone younger needs to take over. He thanked the Eucker's for mowing lawn this season. Treasurer, Lindakay Ebel, had written report for all in attendance with all checks written and deposits made and balances of all accounts. Motion was made to approve. Laurel reported 153 Butter Braids were sold this year, they will be delivered on Thursday. Master Fidder presented Lindakay with a check of \$75 from Illinois State Grange for her community service book placing second. Ella Fidder, Jr. member came before the group and told of her 2 photos she placed at National Grange, a goat (animal group) and sunflower photo (farm equipment background). 273 photos were entered total. Ella placed 1st on her goat photo (\$50), and 2nd on her sunflower photo (\$30). Her photos may be used in future marketing or promotional in the National Grange Lecturer. Her Mom entered 4 photos, one of her photos, a bridge photo did receive an honorable mention. We are all SO proud of Ella. Ella also received 2 beautiful big ribbons. Jack Ratcliffe had a special program on Veteran Day with Word Search's and Puzzles



and a quiz. We also sang American the Beautiful. Todd Hegge told about his time in the service, as he was the only Veteran. Emalee Colver collected \$16 in "G" bills, we sang Happy Birthday to Lindakay Ebel and Todd Hegge and signed cards to several members that are ill.

Next meeting is our annual Christmas party on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 6:30 pm, bring a dish to share. Meat will be furnished. Also, cookies or fresh fruit for shut-in trays. Meeting adjourned in full form. Refreshed followed.

Happy Holidays to all, Lindakay Ebel

### **Emerald Mound Grange**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Emerald Mound Grange. We have been decorating our dining room and upstairs hall for Christmas. We will have at least 3 activities going on at our Grange in December. St. Clair Pomona will meet at Emerald Mound Grange on December 10 (hosted by Shiloh Valley Grange). Potluck is at 6:30 and meeting starts at 7:30 pm. We will have one hall rental on Dec 13 for a Christmas party. Then on December 28, we will have a holiday party starting at 5 pm. We will have a potluck, games, and a Christmas movie. All Grangers in the local area are welcome to come celebrate with us. Emerald Mound Grange just had a new roof put on! Not only will it keep us covered and dry for 30 more years, but it makes the building look a little nicer too.

We are still finding ways to help with food security in Lebanon. On Thanksgiving Day, the local Methodist Church is serving a Thanksgiving Community Dinner. We decided to donate some of our community service fund money to help with purchase of supplies/and or food for the meal.

We will not be having our Big Breakfasts in December or January due to the holidays and potential bad weather in January. We hope everyone has a wonderful holiday this year and we hope to see you at our next Big Breakfast on February 21, if not before.







## Chaplains Corner

By: Charlotte Mehrtens

Greetings to each of my Grange Family. It's hard to believe the New Year is right around the corner. As we will get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus in a few weeks, I hope that we can all remember the true meaning of the holiday. Yes it is still great to see the gifts being opened on Christmas morning, smiles and laughter, family and friends being together. Maybe, even reading the story of Christ birth, the Wise men who travel afar to see the Christ child and bringing gifts.

As we each prepare for the holidays and celebrate the family traditions you have, I pray for each and every one of you to have a BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR. Keep Jesus in the center of your celebrations.

Blessings of peace and comfort for those who are ill or lost loved ones these past few months. Prayers of thanksgiving for health, healing and family.

Merry Christmas to all.



## Calendar of Grange Events

### 2025

12/6 Rockford Ice Hogs Teddy Bear Toss

See Karrie Kindberg for ticket info

12/13 Bluff Artist Handmade Vendor Fair

### 2026

1/3 Ugly Shirt Dance – Everyone Welcome

6 to 9 pm at the Community Grangehall

Wear your ugliest shirt/sweater/top.

Hosted by Boone County Youth Fairboard

\$2 At the door

Silent Auction items

Refreshments available for purchase

3/29 Flora Grange Roast Beef Dinner

4/11 Prairie Grange Consignment Auction

5/1-2 4 MOMZ2MOMZ Consignment Auction

Boone County Fairgrounds

### 2027

7/18-25 Grange Revival/Smoky Mtns Edition

Bryson City, NC

NOTE: Please send me any important dates, members in nursing homes, rehabs, or senior living, obituaries, donations, births, weddings, any good news from your Grange so I can add them to the newsletter.

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