



ILLINOIS GRANGER

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

January 2026

Vol. 6 No. 1



Lynette's Visions and Wisdoms

The Schaeffer's hope you all had a Merry Christmas. And are now preparing for the New Year that is better than ever. Hope you are planning to make your Grange better than ever

as well. Don and I celebrated with family for days! It was wonderful. Hope you all were able to celebrate with family the reason for the season. Hope the new year is filled with happiness and activities you enjoy.

Now is the time for interested eligible Illinois Grangers to check the illinoisstategrange.org website for the Scholarship application and current information.

Did you all read the Rural Health Report 2025 that was in the recent Good Day Magazine? It is a great way to share or use this important information about the health for those living in rural America. Need copies contact National Grange.

Go to the nationalgrange.org website for a listing of webinars that would be helpful to all Grangers to listen to the information that is shared. You need to register for the events.

Join in on the National Grange's campaign to showcase our members as we celebrate America's 250th Birthday in 2026, again check

details on nationalgrange.org website. Check out Project Sustenance and Rural Life Initiative programs under National Grange website. There are grants associated with these programs available to each Grange that applies and returns information. Some of IL Granges have already signed up to participate in these grants the National Grange has going right now. Please check the Grange Today, any other information from National Grange or the nationalgrange.org website.

I hope to have a zoom call for all the State Officers and committee chairs in January to discuss items of the Performance Improvement Plan for IL Granges. Karie Blasingame, vice president, Robin Kindberg, membership chair, and I hope to be meeting soon to formulate a plan concerning the membership pilot program we are a part of, starting new Granges and strengthening unstable Granges. I hope many of the Granges and Grangers have signed into the Grange Engage software, to avail themselves of Grange benefits and abilities with this software.

The Grange Foundation has a scholarship opportunity for Grange members seeking further education. Please contact the Grange Foundation website for further information and to check out this opportunity for all Grangers who have been a Granger for at least one year. Now is the time for the Ernie Keiser Scholarship.

Happy New Year to ALL.

ISG Secretary Report

Happy New Year, fellow Grangers! As reported last month, it's time to think about Illinois State Grange scholarships. The application packets are ready and will be available on the Illinois State Grange website at illinoisstategrange.org. You can also request one by sending me an email. The application deadline is March 1, 2026. Please pass the word!

The end of the 4th Quarter was December 31. Granges should send their Quarterly Reports and dues to me by January 15. Be sure to also include any membership changes, including new member information, as well as any contact updates or changes in officers.

Community (Subordinate) Grange dues payable to the Illinois State Grange will be increasing effective January 1, 2026. This is because of the increase in National Grange dues, which received final approval at the 2025 National Grange Convention. Per the Illinois State Grange Bylaws, state dues will increase by the same amount as the national dues. As a result, I will be sending out new Quarterly Reports with updated rates to all Community Granges, to be used beginning with the 1st Quarter ending March 31, 2026.

The increase does not affect the dues the Junior and Pomona (County) Granges pay the Illinois State Grange. How does this affect the amount Grangers pay in dues to the local Granges they belong to? Since each Community Grange sets its own dues, the Grange you belong to will decide and let you know what your dues will be.

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

Fraternally,

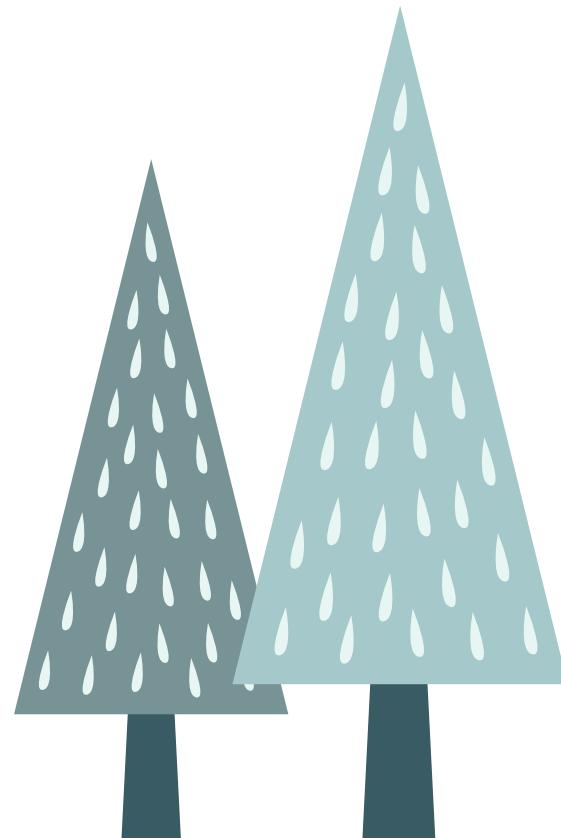
Brian Keller, Illinois State Grange Secretary

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Broad Hollow Grange

Broad Hollow Grange held their Christmas potluck and program on Friday, December 5th. The hall was all decked out for Christmas. The program following the potluck consisted of a humorous version of "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Points were then awarded on who was Mr. Grinch. Each participated in a funny side of the "Twelve Days of Christmas." A Christmas "High-Low" game was played followed by Deck of Cards Gifts to pass. Everyone participated in singing Christmas carols. The closing thought was "The way you spend Christmas is far more important than how much you spend."



Flora Grange

Flora Grange held their annual Christmas Potluck/Party on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at the Flora Grange Hall, 6:30 pm with a delicious potluck supper including roast beef, ham, mashed potatoes, gravy and punch by our hostesses Laurel and Jack Ratcliffe for Grange members and guests present.

Chaplain Donna West led us with a dinner prayer, and members and guests enjoyed a delicious potluck meal with members bringing snacks, salads, vegetables and desserts.

Several Grange members made up some 17 gift boxes of various fruits, cookies, candies, and other goodies to show our love for our Grange shut-ins and friends to be delivered by Grangers for the holiday season.

Following dinner, Grangers moved upstairs and dear old Santa came by sleigh and visited with members of Flora Grange, especially the young Ryan men, who had their picture taken on Santa's knee! Several others had their picture taken with Santa also, he was such a jolly 'old' soul to visit with us this evening.

Program chairman Jack Ratcliffe had several word searches for members to work on or to take home, also 20 words on Christmas to guess what the word is, and he read about the top Christmas songs, favorite seemed to be 'White Christmas'. Thanks, Mike, for helping your dad with the word searches, we all love them.

We had a short business meeting, minutes of November 11th , 2025, meeting were approved. Lindakay Ebel, treasurer, gave her report and it was approved, she pointed out income from the Butter Braid sales and from the Boone County Fair.

Deb Silvers reported that she and Barb Trevathan rang the bell again this year for the Salvation Army. Flora Grange purchased a Christmas tree from the 4-H Federation for \$40 and the sewing circle made decorations for the tree and took part at Hometown Christmas in Belvidere again this year. The tree was given to a needy family, a lady who has 10 children living with her and they were given gifts and gift certificates and the decorations for the tree were also given to them,

well appreciated.

Jack and Laurel Ratcliffe and helpers again purchased a tree and took it to the Belvidere Park and put up a Christmas display for Flora Grange and a second display for the Boone County Fair promoting the seven Granges in Boone County. (The wind was so bad, I don't know if the display will stay up or if it will be blown to the next county,)

Ed and Sherry Cosman and Jack and Laurel Ratcliffe cut a tree down behind the Grange building and hauled the wood away. It was quite a job; (we hope no more trees need to be removed or fall and must be taken away this winter was Jack's and Ed's remarks.)

Several months ago, we had the repair man come out and look at our chair lift at our Grange Hall, thought it was repaired, then found out it was not fixable, had to purchase a new one. Jack and Laurel Ratcliffe donated a new chair lift (\$6,200.) to Flora Grange. Motion was made by Marion Thornberry we purchase a plaque in recognition of this most generous donation, motion carried.

Marion to order plaque.

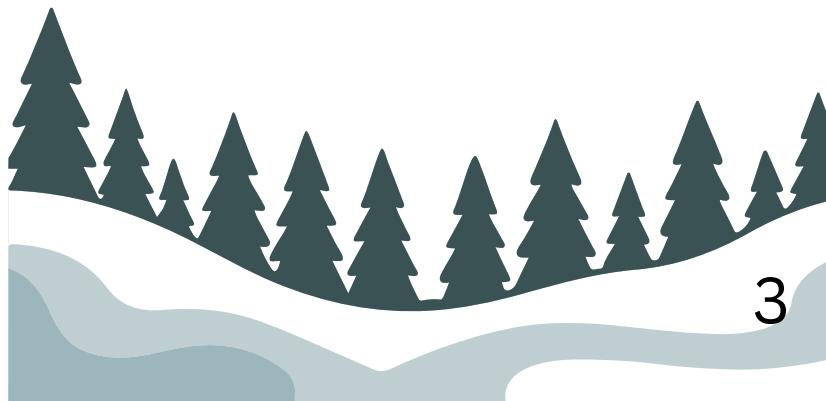
\$36.00 was collected in 'G' bills this evening.

Chaplain Donna West closed with a prayer and the meeting was closed in full form.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13th , 2026, 6:30 pm with a potluck dinner, bring a dish to share & meeting to follow. Hostesses are Lindakay and Albert Ebel and Jerri Schardt.

Happy New Year from Flora Grange, we wish all Grangers a prosperous, healthy and fun-filled 2026 year.

Lindakay Ebel, Publicity.



Beaver Valley

Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday with family, friends and fellow Grangers!

In lieu of our regular monthly meeting we had a Christmas Potluck dinner at the home of Beaver Valley members, Manny & Teresa Salgado. We had a great time and wrapped gifts for our salvation army family.

Our Junior members, Hattie Schlie, Will Schlie and Brandon O'Dell participated in handing out the "Birthday Cake Kits" to community members who picked up one of the kits. It was a cold day but we still had fun!

Also, this month we assembled and delivered goodie bags for residents at Heritage Woods nursing home.

We hope everyone stays warm, has a wonderful holiday and a very Happy New Year! See you in 2026!!

Fraternally submitted,
Micah Schlie
Publicity

Pictured: Susan Banks, Manny Salgado, Rick O'Dell at the Christmas Potluck. Also, Brandon & Marisa O'Dell playing games at the Christmas potluck. Then Dayle & Steve Paulson, Hattie Schlie, Will Schlie and Brandon O'Dell assembling goodie bags.



Excerpts from Frontline Flash

Grange Growth Team

As part of my Internal Address, I called on each State Grange “to form a Grange Growth Team” to be responsible for identifying promising communities, organizing outreach, developing local leaders, and guiding at least one new Grange to charter in 2026. This Team exists to create momentum, expand our reach, and ensure long-term organizational vitality.

Please begin thinking about potential Team members representing a mix of:

- Membership/Leadership Development
- Communications/Outreach
- Legislative Advocacy
- Programming & Community Service
- Youth and Junior Grange
- Experience in revitalization
- At least one “connector” with strong statewide relationships

Your Grange Growth Team should be identified by January 15. Additional resources for the Grange Growth Teams will be provided in the January 1 Frontline Flash.

Performance Improvement Plans

Each State Grange President should be hearing from your National Executive Committee member soon, if you haven’t already, with the PIP assessment forms, goal worksheet, and the request to set a time to discuss and get started. The PIP process is two-pronged: the first prong is to create a PIP for each State Grange – to identify a couple of things your State Grange would like to do better; and the second prong is to identify 2-3 (or more) Community Granges in your state that you will commit to working closely with over the next year, or more, to include creating a PIP with each.

Grange Engage Update

Secretaries or those in your State Grange who maintain your membership records should reach out to Amanda at membership@nationalgrange.org to schedule training on the Grange Engage platform in the coming weeks. The training will take about 45-60 minutes. State Grange Presidents are welcome to attend, or to designate an authorized party to have access to maintain the records.

Calendar of Grange Events

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

3/1 Deadline for ISG Scholarship

3/29 Flora Grange Roast Beef Dinner

4/11 Prairie Grange Consignment Auction

5/1-2 4 MOMZ2MOMZ Consignment Auction
Boone County Fairgrounds

8/4-9 Boone County Fair Belvidere IL

11/11-15 National Grange Session

2027

7/18-25 Grange Revival/Smoky Mtns Edition
Bryson City, NC



Chaplains Corner

By: Charlotte Mehrtens

Oh my gosh it's the end of 2025, what happened to the year. It was just yesterday we were busy planning for this year, where did it go. Hope that you all had a great holiday season.

We have all had the horrible cough around my family so I've been trying to stay away from everyone even though I caught it from somewhere, I think it's in the air or that's what they tell you.

What are your plans for the new year. We pray for better weather, a better world, we pray for peace around the world with our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Regardless of what we pray for let us pray for each other and thank our Lord Jesus for His many blessings to us. May the Lord bless you with good health, prosperity and love this coming year.

BLESSINGS OF LOVE AND PEACE ALWAYS.
HAPPY NEW YEAR'S TO EACH OF YOU.



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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Well Done Good and Faithful Servant

Patricia Sanford 1932-2025 Guilford Hope

Grange #6

Patricia Anne Sanford, affectionately known to her grandchildren and great grandchildren as "Meme", was 93 when she passed away on November 17, 2025 peacefully in her home, surrounded by family.

She was a pillar of strength and compassion for her family, friends, neighbors, and community. She always made you feel special, no matter if she knew you for a lifetime or just for five minutes. Pat volunteered at Swedish American hospital, was a member of the Eastern Star for 60 years, and was a member of the Guilford Hope Grange #6 for 75 years. Pat will be greatly missed.

Brad Blake 1937-2025 Beaver Valley Grange

Brad Blake, a member of Beaver Valley Grange for 65 years passed away last Sunday. He was a Master of the Grange from 1968-1973 and then again from 1995-1996. He was on a bowling team with team members Avis Swanson, Floy Lane and Charles Lane. Remember the Grange dinners? He was always there to help and join in on any of our Grange events. Rest in peace, Brad Blake.

