



# ILLINOIS GRANGER

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

**February 2026 Vol. 6 No. 2**



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

Hopefully this finds you all healthy, warm and dry. The weather here today (Jan 27) is sunny, warmer than the last few days. We are not complaining about the warmer, even when it is

30 degrees. The minus temps and 9+ inches of snow have taken a toll on the area. The schools have had two e-learning days so far. I know that the northern IL Grangers have been dealing with the cold as well. Hope everyone is doing well and adjusting to the cold. Storm Fern was very cold and dumped snow or ice from New Mexico to New York. Predictions are going to be cold again. The ground hog will be pretty cold on 2/2/26! I don't know if he'll see his shadow – he might be too cold to come out to check!!

The Officers and Committee members attended a Zoom to discuss items of the Performance Improvement Plan for IL Granges. I will be working with Granges in person and online to help meet their needs. 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.

There are many programs available to all Granges, check out the

NationalGrange.org/news website for all the Granges/Grangers to participate in. Check it out!!

Hope you all are checking out Grange Engage avail yourself and your Grange of valuable opportunities through this portal.

Some IL Granges have signed up to participate in the grants the National Grange has going right now. There are now 40 \$1000 grants available. Please check the Patrons Chain and any other information from National Grange about the Rural Life Initiative program, several Granges in IL received money for participating in the last round of RLI money. Thanks for participating.

All IL Grange students planning on higher education are invited to submit a request for scholarship. If you have been a Granger for 1 or more years please check the website, [illinoisstategrange.org](http://illinoisstategrange.org), for the application. Get completed form to Brian Keller on or before March 1. All those who receive a scholarship will need to attend a State Grange function in order to receive the scholarship money. Qualifying functions Spring Fling, Picnic, State Session and GRIT. A FAC chair for 2028 for the IL State Grange is still needed. ANYONE interested in these positions please let me know. There are people around you that would be willing to assist you with the service. I would like to talk to anyone from Boone/Winnebago county. The Session would be at the fairgrounds again then.

The Grange Foundation has a scholarship opportunity for Grange members seeking

further education. Please check the Grange Foundation web page for further information and to check out this opportunity for all Grangers who have been a Granger for at least one year.

The Grangers of St Clair County had a meeting to discuss and plan the 155 th annual IL State Grange Session at the Northfield Inn in Springfield, IL September 11 – 13, 2026. Great things are being planned. Hope you are all planning to attend. On Saturday we would like everyone to wear Red, White and Blue clothing in celebration of America 250th Anniversary.

What is your Grange doing to celebrate America 250 th Anniversary? Please send information to Ruth or Sammantha so it can be published in the Illinois Granger. It will be fun to see what every Grange is doing.

Always remember if you have a Grange Hall and need to make some improvements, the State Grange has a Hall Improvement Fund. The application form is on the website [illinoisstategrange.org](http://illinoisstategrange.org). Contact me, or anyone on the IL Ex Committee if you have any questions. The Executive Committee has updated the Hall Improvement program. The amount now will be \$7500 per project instead of the \$5000. And the 3 year total is now \$15000.

National Grange Leadership Conference in Sparks, NV in will be in May this year. Any Granger that would like to go, just let me know. You would pay your own fees and travel. Don and I will be attending.

Next National Session will be in Tulsa, OK, Nov 11 -15, 2026.

Happy Valentines Day to all the IL Grangers.

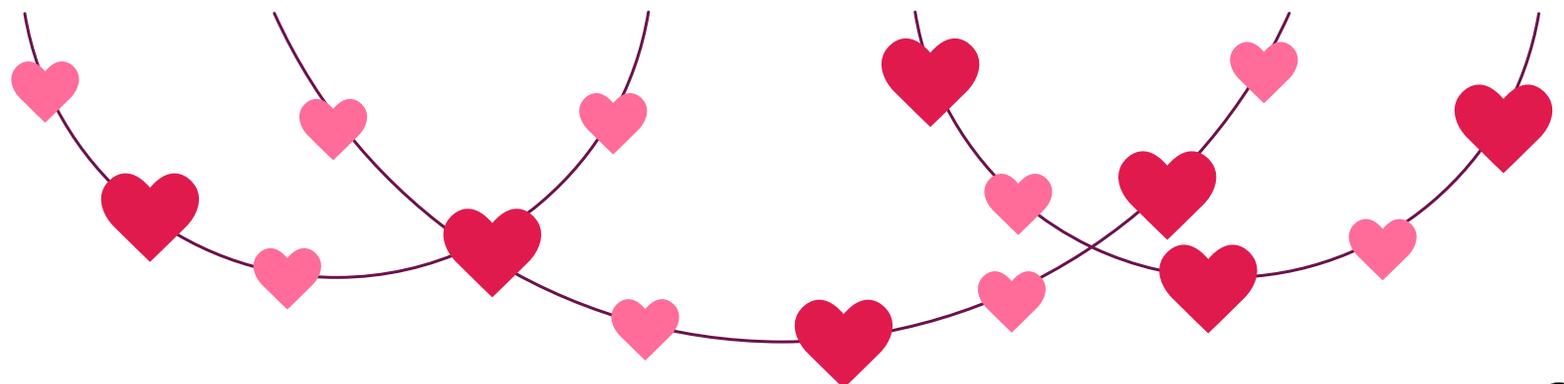
## ISG Secretary Report

Thinking about applying for an Illinois State Grange scholarship? The deadline is just a month away - March 1, 2026. The scholarship packet can be downloaded from the Illinois State Grange website at [illinoisstategrange.org](http://illinoisstategrange.org) or requested directly from me.

There are still a few Granges that haven't turned in their dues and reports for the 4th Quarter. If that's you, please send them to me as soon as possible. Also, remember that dues will be increasing for the 1st Quarter 2026. In February, I will send out new Quarterly Report forms with the revised amounts to all the Granges to replace the old ones.

This year, the Illinois State Session will be at the Northfield Inn in Springfield, September 11 - 13. What better time than the present to start thinking about resolutions! It's never too early to start working on them. Need some help with how to go about it? Let me know, and I can send you some guidance on resolutions from the National Grange to get you started. We don't have a specific deadline for the resolutions yet, but it will be sometime this summer. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you need help or have any questions.

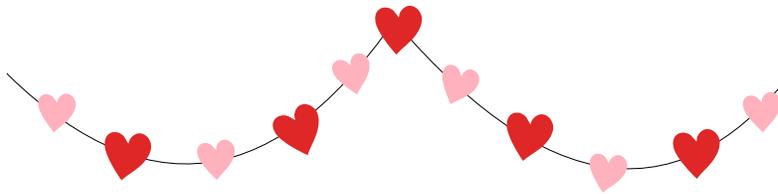
Fraternally,  
Brian Keller, Illinois State Grange Secretary  
[brianjkeller@gmail.com](mailto:brianjkeller@gmail.com)  
618-410-9020



# Quick Note from the Illinois State

## Grange Flora

Attire will be a bit different this year for State Session. For the Men- Suit( Sport coat, dress shirt, and tie) the tie should be PINK. For the Woman Officers- Floral dresses( dress with Flowers on it). Pomona- Green Dress. Ceres - Gold dress. Flora- Pink dress. Attendants will be in White dresses. Rose drill participants- Floral dress. I am excited to see everyone at State Session. Graces- Please make sure you have your attendants lined up prior to Session. I will be reaching out for Rose Drill participants.



# JUNIOR GRANGE

Kim- County Line  
815-494-3917  
Marisa- Beaver  
Valley 815-914-7411  
Sara- Prairie and  
Pomona 815-985-  
8764

## WINTER WONDER PARTY

Crafts, Community Service,  
Games, Pizza and snacks

**JAN 30**

🕒 5-9 PM



## SPRING FLING YOUTH

Crafts, Community Service,  
Workshops, meals included

**MAR 14**

🕒 TBA

## HOPPY SPRING PARTY

Crafts, Community Service,  
Agriculture Education, Supper

**MAR 20**

🕒 5-9 PM

## STATE GRANGE FUN

State Grange Crafts. Education,  
Community Service, Supper

**MAY 15**

🕒 5-9 PM

## NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

National crafts, Education,  
Community service, Supper

**JULY 24**

🕒 5-9 PM



BOONE COUNTY  
POMONA GRANGE



# SMALL ACTS BIG IMPACT



*Together, We Make  
a Difference.*

Join us in spreading  
kindness — donate daily  
essentials. New Shampoo,  
Soap, Toothpaste ...etc.

**BE PART OF THE  
MOVEMENT THAT  
CHANGES LIVES.**

**JAN-MAR**

**3**



## Emerald Mound

It's been rather quiet lately at Emerald Mound Grange due to winter weather. However, we will be coming to life soon. On Saturday, Feb 21, we will hold our first Big Breakfast for the new year. It will be from 8 – 10 am. If you've never been, we serve pancakes, biscuits and gravy, bacon, sausage links, hashbrown casserole, French toast sticks, and fruit. All for \$15. We hope our fellow Grangers in the area will come out and support us and have a great hot breakfast!

Just recently, we were approached by another nonprofit organization, the Leu Civic Center, from Mascoutah IL. They provide activities and programs (both fun and educational) for kids and adults in Mascoutah, just a few miles away from Lebanon. They were looking for a space in Lebanon to start holding some activities for the Lebanon community. The Mayor and the City of Lebanon had asked them if they could do this because Lebanon does not have a community center. Someone who works for the city suggested they contact Emerald Mound Grange since we have a nice building and we offer hall rentals. As a result, the Leu Civic Center will be holding a few fun activities at our Grange, starting in February. This will benefit the community, Leu Civic Center and Emerald Mound Grange.

In February, there will be two Bunco game activities for adults on Feb 9 & 23 from 10 am – noon. The cost is \$8, which goes to Leu Civic Center for supplies. Emerald Mound Grange will provide a light meal (soup, chili, cornbread muffin and dessert) for which our Grange will take donations. There will also be a Family Board Games & Bites activity on Feb 19 from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. This activity is for families. Cost is \$20 per family (no matter what size). The Grange will provide sloppy joes, chips, and dessert for donations. If anyone is interested in going to any of the Bunco or Family Board Games activities, there is a signup for each one. You can sign up for the Bunco at:

<https://leuciviccenter.net/event/bunco-lunch-club/> Signup for the Family Boards Game event is at: <https://leuciviccenter.net/event/family-board-games-bites/>

# BUNCO LUNCH CLUB

*Bunco Lunch Club is coming to the Lebanon Emerald Mound Grange and is the perfect way to spend a fun-filled day with friends, laughter, and a little friendly competition! Join us for an easygoing game of Bunco followed by a delicious donation-based lunch*

**FEBRUARY 9<sup>TH</sup> & 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**at Lebanon Emerald Mound Grange  
from 10am - noon  
\$8 per session  
Adults only**

**LEU - LEBANON**

## Big Breakfast at the Grange



**Saturday, Feb 21, 2026**

**8:00 to 10:00 am**

**Emerald Mound Grange**

(1.5 miles east of Lebanon on Hwy 50)  
On the corner of Hwy 50 and Emerald Mound Grange Road

**Menu:**

Pancakes, biscuits and gravy, sausage, bacon, hashbrown casserole, scrambled eggs, fruit, French toast sticks, juice & coffee

**Price:**

**\$15 for Adults, \$6 for ages 3 – 12, Under 3 free**



**Family Board Games & Bites**

Family Board Game Night is a relaxed and fun evening for families to spend time together, laugh, and enjoy some friendly competition! Bring your favorite board games or jump in on one provided by us. We'll be serving a simple, kid-friendly meal for donations featuring sloppy joes, individual bags of chips, and dessert.

FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup> & MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>  
5:30-7:30  
AT LEBANON EMERALD MOUND GRANGE  
\$20 PER FAMILY

LEU - LEBANON

## County Line Grange

Hoping everyone had a wonderful Christmas season. We did not have a regular meeting in January we had our annual Christmas party. We had Italian food and awesome desserts. We played the dice game and exchanged gifts. It might have been a small party but we had big fun. Our next meeting in February we will start working on all the upcoming events. Here's hoping everyone has a blessed new year

Cathy Zei

## Hello from Flora Grange

Flora Grange held a potluck and their first meeting of the New Year on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 6:30 pm at their Grange Hall. Hostesses were Lindakay and Albert Ebel and Grange members enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner followed by their meeting.

President Ken Fidler introduced a special guest at the meeting, Vice President of the Boone County Fair, Jeremy Meyers. Jeremy stated he was at our meeting this evening to answer any questions we may be concerned about the upcoming fair or what may be going on at the fairgrounds.

The biggest concern was a rumor we heard that the Grange food stand was going to be removed and several Granges were upset about this happening. He stated this is not going to happen, the Grange food stand will be used again at the fair for those Granges who want to serve both breakfast and the noon dinners can do this. He also gave us an update on other improvements being made.

President Ken Fidler called the meeting to order, followed by the Grange Salutation and Pledge to American Flag. Secretary Laurel Ratcliffe called roll with seven of the ten officers in attendance. Minutes of December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, were approved. Reports: Community Service: Lindakay Ebel thanked those who brought gloves, mittens, scarves and hats and put on the tree at the Community Grange Hall in Belvidere for the



**4MOMZ 2MOMZ**  
**KIDS RESALE**

The Prairie Grange #1832

Friday May 1; 4-7PM  
Sat. May 2; 9-4 PM

Boone County Fairgrounds Building #3  
8847 IL Rt. 76, Belvidere, IL

Featuring over 20 consignors with all your family needs! Clothing, shoes, swim wear, toys, books, and so much more!

Admission \$2, or bring a nonperishable food item to get in free!

Questions: 4momz2momz@gmail.com



Veterans and School Children. Jack Ratcliffe reported that the farmers will soon be getting their equipment ready and seeds ordered for the 2026 season. Farmland Protection had a meeting, and motion was made to pay their \$100.00 annual dues.

Quilting will be meeting again this weekend, one group on Friday, starting at 10 am and the other group on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 9 am. Bring lunch and your own project to work on. This is open to anyone and everyone.

Building and Grounds, Jack Ratcliffe will remain chairman, and Ed Cosman will be his co-chairman, and they may need help with some projects. This past week they had the Boone County Fire Inspectors (6) of them came out and inspected the Grange Hall, and we passed with flying colors. Jack ordered a tank of propane for one tank, be sure and turn down the heat when leaving if you use the building.

Treasurer Lindakay Ebel had written treasurer reports for all in attendance with all checks written and deposits made and balances on all accounts. Motion was made to approve.

It was called to our attention that on May 2nd there will be another Community Grange open house like the one last year if we are interested in setting up some kind of display. More information to follow.

Program chairman Jack Ratcliffe had program on 'nicknames of states' and read a poem by Irving Berlin. Emalee Colver collected \$17.00 in 'G' bills.

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

Lindakay F. Ebel  
Publicity

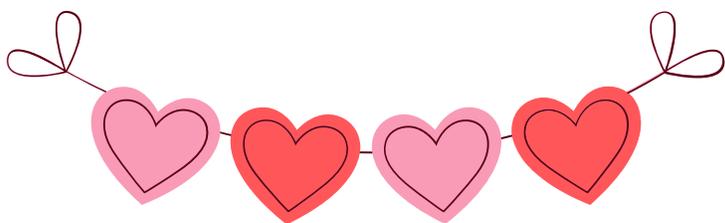
Flora Grange Friday Quilters show off their finished Mystery Projects. Always fun to tackle a special project just for fun!



## Beaver Valley

Happy 2026!

Beaver Valley met on January 9th at Boone County Community Hall. We discussed several topics and ways to help our members as well as the community. Report was given for Agriculture by Steve Paulson. Discussed the disconnect between the younger generation and farming and how the Grange could help bridge the gap between farmers and the public. Rick O'Dell reported on Deaf activities and what happens to hearing between certain ages. Jerry Paulson let us know the theme for the Non-Livestock building for this year's Boone County fair will be the 250th celebration of the Declaration of Independence. Red, White, and Blue or anything patriotic. Marisa O'Dell gave an update on the flu and how it's all over the place right now. Hospitals are not allowing children to visit and some places are asking you to wear a mask. Wash those hands! Spring Fling is approaching, March 13-14. Marisa updated on the activities planned for both nights. Hoping lots of Juniors will attend and also, Saturday evening will be the Mystery Dinner. We are looking forward to another fun event! There is a Juniors party on January 30th. We are in some very cold days and hope everyone is staying warm and being safe. Fraternaly submitted,  
Micah Schlie  
Publicity



Brian and Marisa O'Dell draping Beaver Valley Grange charter in memory of Brother Brad Blake.

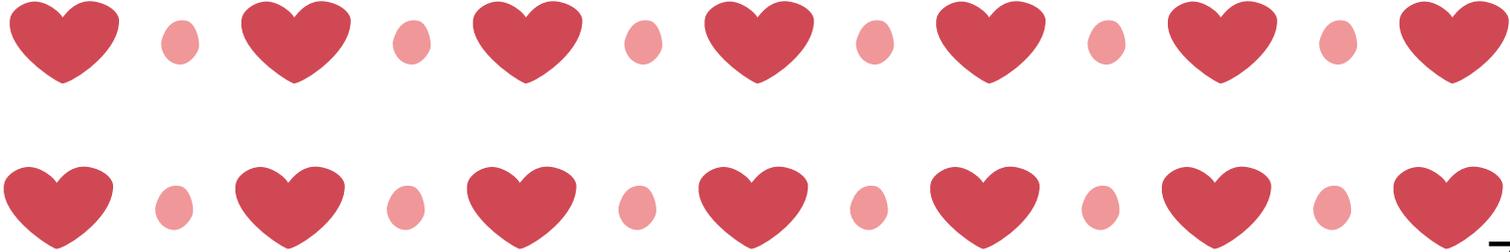


### Big Thunder



### Broad Hollow Grange

The new year at Broad Hollow Grange began with a potluck and program on January 2nd. The hall and tables were decorated with snowmen, snowflakes, silvery poinsettias, and winter berries. The program consisted of how January got its name followed by winter preferences. Participants unscrambled wintry words. Lots of facts were shared about Antarctica. Several winter jokes were shared followed by a quiz about January. The closing thought shared was "January is the worst month. "You are fat and broke from the holidays, paler then ever, and you can't feel your face."



## Boone County Junior Superheroes

On January 30 th many members of the juniors of Boone County met at the Grange Hall for a rousing good time. Juniors from Beaver Valley, County Line, Flora and Prairie Grange were all invited. They learned which stations are where and what officers sit there, what the bridge is in the Grange Hall and many other things about our Grange ritual that they found interesting. Their craft this time was valentine door hangers for one of the local nursing homes. They also learned some camp songs to keep them entertained. The next Junior night will be March 20th . It will be a Hoppy Spring party from 5-9 pm at the Boone County Community Grange Hall.



## Illinois State Grange Youth

Spring Fling will be held, March 13-14 th at the Boone County Community Grange Hall beginning at 6 pm with registration and dinner. At 7 pm we will be watching the movie The Last Starfighter or Batteries Not Included. Those who would like to spend the night will be setting up your sleeping area before dinner.

Saturday begins with breakfast at 7 am. We are looking for volunteers to host workshops for the kids at 8 am and 9 am. At 10 am Marisa will be hosting a workshop on Dollar store creative finds. We will have lunch at 11 am then head to the climbing wall and gym for volleyball at Rivers Edge. We will return to the hall at 1:30 pm to get ready for a 2 pm workshop on Grange Engage with Amanda Brozana. At 5:30 we will be ready for a Murder at the End of the Universe space themed Murder Mystery dinner. At the conclusion of the mystery, we will be hosting an Interstellar Dance until 9 pm for those who would like to participate. Snacks and drinks will be available for purchase during the dance. Cost for the weekend is \$30 per individual, those under 5 are \$15. For those only attending the Murder mystery dinner we will have a basket out for a donation, suggested donation is \$25.

County Line Grange has graciously donated the meal on Saturday night for us, please help us Thank them for their contributions to the Youth department. We are also looking for volunteers to help us with workshops. Please let Beth, Marisa or Karie know if you are available. Please indicate on our Facebook group if you intend to participate so we can purchase the right amount of food. Our Astro Bash (Grange Picnic) will be held on May 30 th at the Grange Food Pavilion at the Boone County Fairgrounds at 12 pm. Meat and chips will be provided by the Youth department. Scholarships will be awarded and fun times will be had by all. You never know what might happen. Come join us, avoid the asteroids and we will all moonwalk together.

# Boone County Pomona



Boone County Fair Queen Abigail Koltoff giving her speech at the January Pomona Meeting

## Note From Ruth

We need a prayer list/chain going. Please pray for all these Grangers and anyone else you know is in need of prayers.

- Al Henninger
- Charlotte Mehrtens
- Donna Ellwanger
- Heather Ellwanger
- Renee O'Dell
- Dave Geske
- Robin Kindberg
- Jim Langendorf
- Ellis Mundy

These are only the ones I know about. I'm sure there are many more. If you know of someone to add please let me know.





## Chaplains Corner

By: Charlotte Mehrtens

I'm writing this from my hospital room and almost forgot to write this. At this time they are still running tests.

I want to wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day which is the big day of showing our love to each other. God blesses us every minute of every day not just on special days.

He shares His love with everyone and wants us to do the same. Enjoy your day of love.

February is also the time we start preparing for Easter, six weeks that we begin the journey to the cross on Good Friday. Let each of us begin to prepare ourselves for that journey and learn more about what happened in those days before the tomb.

God's blessings to each of you stay safe and warm in this cold and snowy weather wherever you are.

Remember to share God's love with others.

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.

Ruth Blasingame 815-299-7884

illinoisgranger2017@gmail.com

8711 Deer Run Drive Belvidere, IL 61008



## Calendar of Grange Events

### 2026

2/9 Bingo Lunch Club Emerald Mound Grange  
10-Noon

2/19 Family Board Games & Bites EMG  
5:30-7:30 pm

2/21 Emerald Mound Big Breakfast  
8-10 am

3/1 Deadline for ISG Scholarship

3/12-14 Spring Fling

3/29 Flora Grange Roast Beef Dinner

4/11 Prairie Grange Consignment Auction

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

5/2 Open House Boone County Pomona Grange  
All Granges can sign up,

Contact Marisa O'Dell

6/26-28 Midwest Grange Leadership Conference

8/11-16 Boone County Fair Belvidere IL

11/11-15 National Grange Session Tulsa OK

### 2027

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

