



# ILLINOIS GRANGER



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

**March 2026 Vol. 6 No. 3**



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

Hopefully this finds you all healthy. Today is overcast but a little warmer than recently, and NO WIND. That is great the last few days have been very windy. We could really

use more rain – we are still in drought conditions. I know that many Grangers in the Northeast portion of the USA have just been hit with a record-breaking blizzard. Grangers in Rhode Island had up to 38” of snow in one storm!! I had a meeting with officers and committee members to discuss some of my plans for the IL State Grange and Community Granges. Presidents, Lecturers and Secretaries, watch your inboxes for information I hope to use to help you all be GrangeStrong. Thanks again to Debbie (Buck) Crew for papers and items from Richland Grange, and her parents (Bill and Carol Buck) and grandparents (Marion and Wayne Buck). All past State Officers, Committee or Deputy. Wonderful artifacts and fun reads! I have a couple boxes of information for Historian Bev Smith. ILLINOIS Grangers to the mid 1940's. Again, fun reads. There were a few pictures that we will need to get names and dates for them. So come to state session this fall to see what we have found. I hope all IL Grange students planning on higher

education have submitted all the information for a scholarship. All those who receive a scholarship will need to attend the State Grange Picnic in order to receive their scholarship money. An FAC chair for 2028 for the IL State Grange is still needed. ANYONE interested in this position 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 will probably be at the fairgrounds again at that time. What is your Grange doing to celebrate America's 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. Now is the time for checking your Grange Hall to see if there are repairs that need to be addressed or if there are improvements that need to be completed, 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. National Grange Leadership Conference in Sparks, NV in will be April 30 -May 3, this year. Any Granger that would like to go, just let me know and I'll forward the information to you. You would pay your own fees and travel. Don and I will be attending. IL State Grange Session will be September 11 – 13, at Northfield Inn Suites and Conference Center, 3280 Northfield Dr, Springfield, IL. We have been

there before so you might remember we are all under one roof. Meaning the distance from sleeping rooms to meeting room - meal and display displays is pretty far. Those of you with walking issues might want to consider bringing a scooter. Now is the time to start working on contest entries for all categories. I am sure that the contest information is on the website now. At the next Executive Committee meeting we will be deciding on menus and start a draft schedule. And we will be meeting with committee chairs to talk about the committee financial ledgers as part of Spring Fling Friday evening.

There are many programs available to all Granges check out the [NationalGrange.org/news](http://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 of 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 in 2026. Next National Session will be in Tulsa, OK, Nov 11 -15, 2026.

Happy Easter to all the IL Grangers.

### **ISG Secretary Report**

The deadline to apply for a 2026 Illinois State Grange Scholarship was March 1. The Executive Committee will review the applications and make its decisions a couple of weeks later. Winners will be notified shortly after that.

For Community Grange Secretaries, don't forget to send in membership and officerchanges as soon as you know them, so we can keep our records up to date. Also, the new Quarterly Report forms with revised dues amounts should be available on the Illinois State Grange website soon. They are also being sent to the local Grange presidents and secretaries. The forms are marked "2026 Revised Form" to distinguish them from the old ones. They

should be used beginning now, for the 1st Quarter 2026. The first quarter ends March 31, with the deadline for reports and dues being April 15.

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

Fraternally,

Brian Keller, Illinois State Grange Secretary

[brianjkeller@gmail.com](mailto:brianjkeller@gmail.com)

618-410-9020

### **Congratulations**

Bill and Jodi Johnson are pleased to announce that in the early hours of Christmas Eve, we welcomed our first Grandchild, Orion Zackary Fay Luis Escudero. His nickname is Ozzy. He was born at 2:16 am on Wednesday, December 24 th , 2025. He weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. and was 19 ½ inches long. The proud parents are my youngest daughter, Madelyn (Maddie) Johnson and her boyfriend Aleksander (Alek) Escudero. Ozzy is 2 months old now and growing like a weed.



## Illinois State Grange Youth

We are sending you out of this world for 2026. Thank you to all those who purchased Butter braids, this was our best one yet. Keeping it very simple here are important dates. Spring Fling 2026 Will be at the Community Grange Hall at Boone County Fairgrounds in Belvidere, Illinois. March 13,14,15 th . Murder Mystery Dinner will be on the 14th at 5:00 pm sharp. More details to follow. The Statewide Picnic will be held at the Boone County Fairgrounds in the Pavillion on May 30 th at 11:00 am. The main dish will be provided by the Youth and sides and desserts will be potluck style. Any Questions please feel free to email me: Beth Olson – Illinois State Grange Youth Director Betholson36@gmail.com 815-608-0802 Illinois State Grange Youth Committee Karie Blasingame Kblasingame77@gmail.com 815-299-0313 Marisa O'Dell Marisa.odell.eq@gmail.com 815-914-7411

## Illinois State Grange Youth

Howdy Fellow Grangers, We are busy getting ready for our Murder Mystery Dinner and Spring Fling March 14-15th at the Boone County Community Grange Hall in Belvidere. I hope everyone is planning on attending either all day Saturday or even just coming for dinner. Dinner will be provided by County Line Grange. A big Yee Haw and Thank you to County Line for always being a BIG supporter of the Youth. We are taking donations to help offset the cost of holding this event. Dinner will be at 5 PM on March 14th. If you are willing to be a part of the story, please reach out to either myself or Karie. We are getting ready to start handing parts to this mystery. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for the Itinerary. If you are planning on attending Friday night and or the workshops Saturday it will be \$25.00.

We are also running a Flower Fundraiser this year. Starting now until the end of March. Money is due upon ordering. Please see either myself or Karie to order and we will get you on the list. Fraternaly Submitted  
Co-Youth Directors  
Marisa O'Dell and Karie Blasingame

## 2026 Illinois State Grange Youth Contests

**All entries are DUE at State Session Friday Morning.**

### **Lego Item or Scene**

- 1) Space Lego Set
- 2) Vehicles Lego Set
- 3) Flowers Lego Set
- 4) Animals Lego Set
- 5) Miscellaneous Lego Set

**Diamond Art: Must be framed, ready to hang no sawtooth hangers.**

- 1) Holidays
- 2) Animated Characters
- 3) Animals
- 4) Nature
- 5) Landscapes
- 6) Western
- 7) Space
- 8) Miscellaneous (Coasters can be a complete set)

### **Ceramics**

- 1) Functional
- 2) Display

### **Fabric and Food      Decorated Items**

- 1) Shirt
- 2) Tote
- 3) Apron
- 4) Miscellaneous  
Something Stuffed
- 1) Crochet
- 2) Sewn
- 3) Miscellaneous

**Cookies: Three Decorated Cookies.**

**Pollinator Poster, TIKTOK or YouTube**

**Food Waste Poster, TIKTOK or YouTube**

**Mental Illness Poster, TIKTOK or YouTube**

**Hearing/Signing Poster, TIKTOK or YouTube**

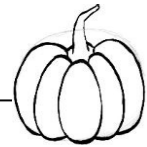
**Anything AG related Poster, TIKTOK or YouTube**






**3D Model of Solar System, Poster, TIKTOK, or YouTube Video**



# Illinois State Grange Agricultural Contests

## GrangeYear 2025-2026



Marilyn Hoffmann/Lana Korte Floraville 618-830-3894 2025-2026	Lana Korte/Marilyn Hoffmann Floraville 618-409-3900 2026-2027	Lyle Lee Prairie 815-988-0249 2027-2028
<p><b>VEGETABLES</b></p> <p><u>Broccoli (1)</u> Green Beans (5) Cabbage (1 head) Carrots (3) Cauliflower (1) Cucumbers (3) Eggplant (1) Gourds (3) White Onions (3) Yellow Onions (3) Bell Peppers (3) Hot Peppers (3) Red Potatoes (3) White Potatoes (3) Sweet Potatoes (3) Cherry Tomatoes (5) Red Tomatoes (3) Yellow Tomatoes (3) Turnips (3) Winter Squash (1) Most Unusual Vegetable Longest Cucumber Longest Bean Largest Tomato</p> <p><b>FRUITS</b></p> <p>Apples - any color (3) Grapes (3 bunches) Pears (3) <u>Pumpkin (1)</u> Watermelon</p> <p><b>HERBS</b></p> <p>Potted specimen of a single herb must be labeled Collection of Herbs (3 or more) must be labeled</p>	<p><b>FIELD CROPS</b></p> <p><u>3 ears of corn</u> Longest eat of corn 3 ears of indian corn (husked) corn (1 quart bag) oats (1 quart bag) Soybeans (1 quart bag) Wheat (1 quart bag) Sunflower Head (1)</p> <p><b>CUT FLOWERS</b> (must be in clear glass container)</p> <p><u>Fall Garden Bouquet</u> not to exceed 24" tall Zinnias (6 stems) 1 variety Zinnias (6 stems) Mixed Variety Marigolds (6 stems) 1 variety Marigolds (6 stems) Mixed Variety Black-eyed Susans (6 stems) any variety</p> <p><b>POTTED PLANTS</b> not to exceed 8" at base of pot</p> <p>African Violets Coleus (1 variety) <u>Coleus (mixed variety)</u> Geranium other annual other perennial succulents</p> <p><b>TERRARIUM</b> any variety - no larger than cubic foot</p>	<p><b>MARKET BASKETS</b> <u>no larger than 30 inches</u> (8 or mote items) Group Basket</p> <p><b>VALUE ADDED PRODUCT</b> 8oz jar of any jam, jelly or fruit butter <u>jar of pickles (must be labeled)</u> honey salsa most unusual flavor or jam or jelly</p> <p><b>JUICE</b> homemade 1 quart mason jar with date any variety</p> <p><b>OUTDOORS</b> <u>Decorated Pumpkin</u> no carvings best looking scarecrow no taller than 4ft with stick</p> <p><b>LIVESTOCK</b> Jerky - in airtight ziplock bag <u>Beef (3)</u> Turkey (3) Fish (3) Deer (3) Misc(3)</p>
		
		<p>* one entry per person/per category * all entries must be grown or made during the current Grange year</p>

Here's hoping this finds IL Grangers checking out their seed catalogs and maybe even starting some seeds indoors or in a cold frame. So, IL has had a reprieve from the cold and snow but 60 plus degrees in February is a gift and won't last long, This year's contest has more indoor plants so if planting seeds isn't your game we still have something for you.

Remember it's ok to get your hands dirty!  
Lana Korte Marilyn Hoffmann Ag Contest Chairs

## Illinois State Grange Community Service

Grangers,

It's that time again to get blankets for the Linus project. I have been lacking on asking for donations but we as Grangers need to step up and get those blankets to me or to Marisa O'Dell.

Please, we need as many as you can make or buy. I hope all is well with you and your families. If you have any questions you can email me or Marisa.

- Sincerely ,

Heather Ellwanger

Community Service Director

## Illinois State Grange Juniors

CONGRATULATIONS!! What an honor for IL to have Granger of the year from our state. Scarlette is a member of Prairie Junior Grange. We look forward to seeing you do even more. "Shoot for the moon, and you will always land among the stars."



## County Line Grange

Our meeting was Feb.11. Hosts for the evening were Lisa Loveridge and Cathy Zei.

Thanks for the delicious food.

We had two guests, Melissa Erwin and Brian O'Dell. We acquired three new members.

Welcome to them.

Committe reports:

Agriculture: Paul Anderson said we are 7 inches below in rainfall. The frost is deep in the ground. He also reported that the Food Pyramid has been changed. This is good news for farmers.

Grange Day: Cathy Zei said there are 5 different concerts around if anyone might be interested in something like that.

Legislative: Paul Anderson reported on the changes for school lunches. Now whole and 2 percent milk and better, healthier foods can be served. He reported on the new proposals being made to create a bag fee for consumers, and a campfire fee on recreational fires.

Antique Tractors: Rick Peters said everything is good.

Grange Hall/Museum: Kim Robin said it needs cleaning but will be ready.

Schoolhouse: Linda Mullins said she needs donations of books and small toys.

Kathy Loy delivered the Valentines that were collected in January to the 3 local nursing homes in Boone County. Jason and Jen Schmelling were awarded their 5 year award certificates that had been misplaced since 2022. Congratulations to them for adding more years to the 5 year total.

We received a Thank You card from Alyssa Gilman for the award of \$25 for 4-H.

We are serving Grange at Pomona on March 4.

New Business: We discussed Spring Fling March 13 and 14th. It will be a space theme.

There also will be a mystery dinner.

Our 4-H Spaghetti Dinner with Leroy Grange will be March 21 at the Fire Department in Poplar Grove. Mopar is in July and we will be serving food at this event. We donated \$100 for snacks for "Springtime Planting

Season Farmer Care Bags” that Boone County 4H Federation are doing. Kim Robin shopped for snacks and dropped them off at the Extension Office.

Ned Loy, our traveller, has returned from a trip to Australia. He posted some great pictures from his trip.

All reports were given and we closed with our Penny March and G-Bills collected.

Stay safe and healthy and please be kind to everyone!

## **Broad Hollow Grange**

Valentine’s Day was the theme at Broad Hollow Grange’s first Friday potluck on February 6th. The hall and tables were decorated with red, white, and pink in the form of hearts, cupids, and red and pink roses. After enjoying the variety of items for the potluck, a short program followed. February holidays and special events were recognized then everyone tried to guess what is happening this February that only occurs every 823 years.

Participants shared food secrets, and a quiz was held on Lincoln’s family pets. “Let Me Call You Sweetheart” was sung followed by a quiz on what February is noted for. Everyone took turns filling in the blank for “A Super Silly Valentine Story.”

## **Flora Grange**

Flora Grange held a meeting on Tuesday, February 10 th , 2026, at 6:30 pm with their annual dues paying potluck and regular meeting with some thirty-five members in attendance.

Following dinner, the meeting was called to order by President Ken Fidler with Grange Salutation and Pledge to American Flag. Secretary Laurel Ratcliffe called roll of officers with eight of the ten officers in attendance. The minutes of January 13 th , 2026, meeting were approved.

Committee reports: **Community Service:** Lindakay Ebel thanked those for their community service hours turned in. She also reminded members to be thinking of individuals for our distinguished awards for this year which will be awarded in May.

**Agriculture:** Roger Miller stated prices are down, need rain, and farmers will be ordering their seed soon. **Fairboard:** Todd Hegge stated the fair board will be voting on some changes of bylaws of fair officers at their next meeting. Bob Scherer announced that Jack Ratcliffe received an award from Illini State Pullers, 2026 Hall of Fame Inductee for spearheading the effect over the years in making the Boone County Fair an outstanding venue for tractor and truck events over several decades.

**Farmland Protection:** Jack Ratcliffe reported they will meet next week, and their annual meeting will be held in March. They are concerned about the growth of Boone County and the amount of farmland disappearing and those attending the meetings are concerned about trying to make people realize the loss of farmland in Boone County which is very important.

**Legislative:** Marion Thornberry stated there is not a lot to report this evening.

**Membership:** Lindakay Ebel stated there will be a Show and Tell event again this year at the community Grange Hall in Belvidere on Saturday, May 2 nd if we want to set up a display again, like we did last year. **Quilting:**

Emalee Colver reminded her group will be quilting on Friday, the other group on Saturday and Sunday. All are invited to join, bring your own project and lunch. **Building & Grounds:** Jack reported there is a pile of gravel in back to be moved. Ryan boys volunteered to help, along with Julie Willis volunteered her equipment. Lindakay Ebel gave the monthly financial report of all income and expenses and balances and had copies for those in attendance, motion was made to approve.

**New Business:** There was discussion on the Roast Beef dinner to be held at the Flora Grange Hall on **Sunday, March 29th**. Reservations to be made with Marion Thornberry by calling 815-985-8544 or e-mail at m8thornberry@mail.com. Madelyn Aves a Grange member and also a member of the Belvidere FFA Ag Boosters asked Flora Grange for a donation for their annual

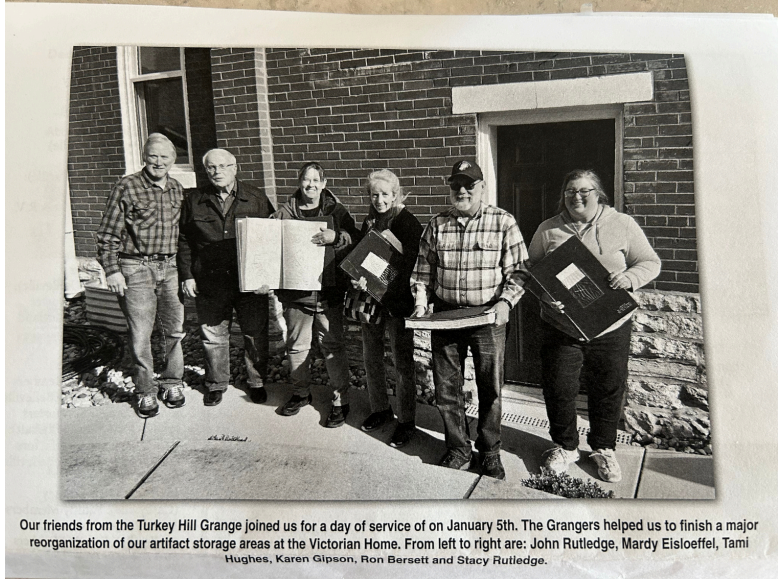
fundraiser/auction on February 27 at the Belvidere High School Cafeteria, dinner at 6 pm with the auction at 7 pm. Motion was made to give them tickets for the Flora Grange dinner and Laurel Ratcliffe donated two quilts. Program Chairman Jack Ratcliffe's program for the evening was Family Feud, and we played "Name the Presidents". He also had word searches for Valentine's Day and President's Day.

\$24.00 was collected in 'G' bills. Chaplain closed with a prayer and meeting was closed in full form.

Lindakay F. Ebel, Publicity

### Turkey Hill Grange

Fourteen Grangers contributed and filled "Blessing Bags" to be distributed to the unhoused or less fortunate people in the area. Each bag contained a \$5 gift card to McDonalds, a pair of gloves and socks, a package of hand warmers and foot warmers, chapstick, and a package of tissues. We filled 50 bags to be given to members to pass out when they see a needy individual. Pictured: Angela Kurburski, Stacy Rutledge, Hilda Koluch, Carol Young, Barb Josh, Mardy Eisloeffel, Bev McKelvey. Not Pictured: Vicki Helms, Emma Rutledge, Tami Hughes, Karen Gipson, Paulette Hill, Ron and Chris Bersett. When completed with the bags, the group wrote notes in cards for the "Valentines for Veterans" program being distributed at area care centers.



Our friends from the Turkey Hill Grange joined us for a day of service on January 5th. The Grangers helped us to finish a major reorganization of our artifact storage areas at the Victorian Home. From left to right are: John Rutledge, Mardy Eisloeffel, Tami Hughes, Karen Gipson, Ron Bersett and Stacy Rutledge.



Happy St. Patrick's Day





## Chaplains Corner

By: Charlotte Mehrtens

Hello, will March come in like a Lion or a Lamb? The month of March brings many surprises. Spring fever sets in, everyone gets excited to start working on a garden, farmers want to head out to the fields and work the land. Oh, that wonderful smell of freshly turned earth. People want to get outside and enjoy activities after being inside all winter. Oh well, can't forget those unexpected snow days that come along without permission.

March brings St. PATRICK'S DAY, FIRST DAY OF SPRING, Palm Sunday and preparing for Easter. Let us not forget the true meaning of the Easter season. That our Lord and Savior was nailed to the cross for our sins. We Worship the Lord and praise Him always for He rose from the tomb and ascended into heaven on the third day.

Praise Him for all His glory.

Prayers for those in need of healing and comfort. Thank each of you for prayers for me, still undergoing tests and biopsies hopefully we will know soon.

Spring is the season of the renewal of life, enjoy. Until next time, may the Lord bless 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.

Ruth Blasingame 815-299-7884

illinoisgranger2017@gmail.com

8711 Deer Run Drive Belvidere, IL 61008



## Calendar of Grange Events

### 2026

3/1 Deadline for ISG Scholarship

3/9 Bunco and Lunch Emerald Mound 10-Noon

3/12-14 Spring Fling

3/21 Emerald Mound Big Breakfast 8-10 am

3/23 Bunco and Lunch Emerald Mound 10-Noon

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

### Notes 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

Mary Beth Lee

Ellis and Dawn Mundy

Charles and Sophia Treser

Dale and Jane Helms

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.

I would like to start a list of members who are currently in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, homebound, etc. Please send name of member, name and address of home. We could then send cards to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers.