



MICHIGAN GRANGE NEWS



Volume XXXII NO.1

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2026

SO MUCH FUN FOR EVERYONE AT THE MICHIGAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Everyone
patiently
waiting for
pizzas**



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Michigan Grange News

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Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 18	MSG Foundation Meeting 3 p.m.
Jan. 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Feb. 9	MSG Exec. Comm. Meeting 2 p.m.
Feb. 14	Valentine's Day
Feb. 16	President's Day

Happy
Valentine's
Day

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From Christmas Light to...

From Christmas Light to Winter Faith

The glow of Christmas does not vanish when the decorations are put away. The candles may be extinguished and the carols grow quieter, yet the light of Christ continues to shine, especially as we enter the long, cold weeks of winter.

Winter has a way of slowing us down. The days are shorter, the nights longer, and the pace of life often turns inward. In Scripture, some of God's deepest work happens in such seasons. Seeds lie hidden beneath frozen ground, unseen but very much alive. So it is with our faith. After the joy and celebration of Christmas, we need to nurture what God has planted in us.

The season after Christmas reminds us that Christ is still being revealed. The story did not end in the manger. Jesus grew, taught, healed, and called ordinary people to follow him. During winter, we too are called to keep walking with Christ, even when the path feels quiet or the days feel heavy.

For many, winter can be challenging. Illness lingers, loneliness can deepen, and the cold can feel relentless. This is a season to be especially attentive. We need to check on one another, to offer warmth in practical ways, and to remember that God's presence is not dependent on sunshine or celebration. The Emmanuel of Christmas is still "God with us" in January and February.

Winter also offers us the gift of time. Time to pray more deeply, to read Scripture more slowly, to listen more carefully for God's voice. Just as the shepherds pondered what they had seen and heard, we should be carrying the message of Christmas into our everyday lives, into our homes, our work, and our relationships.

As we move through the cold months ahead, may we trust that God is at work even when we cannot see it. Beneath the frozen ground, new life is forming. In God's time, it will rise again.

Until then, we should walk together in faith and keep the light of Christ burning brightly in our hearts.

Spread Cheer Throughout the Year

Kind words and deeds can warm the hearts of others—and they're good for the giver, too. Being helpful and generous can boost both the physical and mental health, in addition to having a positive effect on the recipient.

Sincere compliments can also have a huge impact on a person's mood. If you like somebody's clothes, shoes, car, a joke they told, anything—tell them! Whether a stranger or someone close to you, your words will hold meaning.

Creative types may enjoy making notes to leave around the community.

It doesn't have to cost a lot to help others out in financial ways. You could leave a few quarters at a Laundromat, pay for a person's coffee behind you in line, drop off canned items to a food pantry.

Christopher D. Johnston, Master 6241 Grand River Road, Bancroft, MI 48414
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Happy New Year

Welcome to 2026, the beginning of a new year for new ideas, new programs, new members, new fun, and new fellowship opportunities. This is a great time of the year to be planning for the new year. One suggestion is to look at the National Grange Distinguished Grange Award application and use that as a platform to see what points you can earn and then plan your events so that your Grange can qualify for the award. With Connie as the coordinator for the program, she's hoping to increase Michigan's participation in the program. She would love to see 100% participation! Reminder to let the State Grange webmaster know of your events so she can get them on the State Grange website calendar to share with everyone!

National Grange Recap:

Connie and I returned from a very interesting National Session aboard the Carnival Horizon. The session itself had many challenges that as Grangers we were able to overcome and proceed for a successful convention. The cruise itself shared a few of its own challenges, from a late departure from the port for one matter to a much later return to port due to mechanical issues. While the next few sessions are already set and will be firmly on land, this experience doesn't appear to have eliminated the chance of another session aboard a cruise. The main news to report that will affect everyone is the \$6 dues increase I mentioned at the state session has passed and will go into effect January 1, 2026. The Michigan State Grange Secretary is in the process of getting new quarterly reports ready to send to the Secretaries of the respective Granges across the state. For those not at the state convention, the delegates approve revisions to the dues structure within the Michigan State Grange bylaws to be \$35 per member plus the National Grange Dues. The change allows for National Grange to change their dues and we won't have to change the By-Laws in multiple locations to allow for the change. In addition to the dues increase, the National Grange Executive Committee has divided the State Granges amongst themselves to work with the State Grange Presidents and select others on a Performance Improvement Plan. The plan is to work

towards the common goal of improving Community Granges by increasing members as well as to increase the number of Granges in the state. I will be working with Walter Hartley who is newly appointed onto the National Grange Executive Committee from Rhode Island. In addition to myself working with Walter, I will be contacting a few others to assist in the PIP.

Michigan State Grange Department Directors Day of Learning

Your MSG Department Directors are working together to set a date and location for the Day of Learning in the spring where they will share their ideas and goals and programs for this year. There will be food, fun and fellowship for all members. Plan to come and bring a car load of people for a day of learning.

Until next time.....

Michigan State Grange Webmaster

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Send any events or announcements for your Grange to Connie for the Website.



DEAF AWARENESS

So Rewarding

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CHRISTMAS AT MSD

WOW! What a wonderful, exciting, fun filled, day. This year we helped out 29 boys and girls. The school also helped 4 others that also took part in our party. There were several interpreters and helpers present from the school to make it easier for us who can't communicate with the kids.

Our Grange staff was excellent! Always is! This year we had Randy and Joanne Cebulski, Dale Moore, Sharon Popler and Peggy Johnston.

Besides all of the wonderful gifts provided, the Michigan State Grange Deaf Awareness Fund furnished pizza for everyone. We also had cookies, chips, pop and water, and some cute little Snowman Soup cups for everyone.

We only had two kids that were absent due to illness.

Below we are sharing some of the pictures from that day. Enjoy!



MORE
PHOTOS
ON
OTHER
PAGES

Naomi Fletcher, President 14685 25.75 Road, Rapid River, MI 49878
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Is it possible to overdose on Grange conferences and conventions? We attended the Mid-West Grange conference in July, California State Grange's 150th Annual Session AND Michigan's Annual Session in October, then two weeks later boarded a ship for the southern Caribbean for the National Grange session. A lot of Grange-ing for sure!! Saw a lot of friends and family, had some great fun everywhere, visited the beautiful coastal Redwood Forest, and visited the islands of Aruba, Bonair and Curacao. My favorite was Curacao. Clean, beautiful, welcoming, and lots of local art. I wish we had more time on Curacao.

I'm going to keep this short, because the Convention Booklet is a focus right now for me. New contests, more divisions to choose from, and some fun activities are coming your way! Check your Lecturer's Bulletin for some new ideas for open discussion at your meetings, as well as some history to share. If you're looking for interesting facts, look up History.com and search "this day in history". You can pick a day and look up historical facts from around the world.

I'd like to encourage you all to enter as many categories as possible. And get your kids, grandkids, local schools, neighbors and friends to enter as well! The more the merrier! My challenge to you is to enter more categories than I will!

New contest this year is "Tell me a Story". Writing prompts will be: 1. Travel 2. Family 3. Autobiography . Write a story about your travels, your family or your autobiography. Brag about yourself! I'm hoping to publish a booklet of recipes, stories and pictures over the next two years to share with membership.

Happy New Year!!!!

COMMUNITY SERVICE continued from page 6...

Of your events. Remember if a couple of pictures cover the event it isn't necessary to use a couple of pages of materials.

Awards: Our Granges have several ways to honor its members. You can nominate them for the VIP Award or the Dedicated Person Award. We also have the privilege of honoring a Firefighter/EMT, A Law Enforcement Officer or Teacher of the Year Award in your area. These individuals deserve special recognition for services in your area, helping with Grange service projects or very special projects/service they do.

More in depth information will be coming in the next months. If you have something happening in your Grange you would like to share in the Michigan Grange News Community Service Report, please let me know.

If I can do anything to help you, please contact me. *Mary Ann Rocco*

A plan for a Great Year: A weekly calendar or agenda isn't just for scheduling appointments. Check these out:

- Budgeting: Recording your spending in a planner provides a visual look at your finances.
- Meal Planning: A meal plan can help you save money, eat better and reduce food waste.
- Physical Health: A planner can serve as a fitness tracker by scheduling your workout goals for the week or writing down your accomplishments.
- Mental Health: Take a minute to jot down your overall mood on each day. This can help you recognize triggers and look for ways to boost your mental outlook.
- Goals and lists: Stay organized and motivated by keeping all sorts of lists in your planner.

***BE SURE TO KEEP THE PROGRAM BOOK
THAT IS BEING SENT TO YOU WITH THE GRANGE NEWS
FOR FUTURE USE THIS YEAR.***

Community Service

2026 Wishes

Mary Ann Rocco, Director 145 Beadle Lake Drive, Battle Creek, MI 49014
Tel: 269-209-6640 Email: roccomaryann@yahoo.com

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Sending warm wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy Valentine's Day! Wishing you a time of joy, a time of hope and good health in 2026.

As I look back on at this year's State Session I was pleased to see all the Granges that participated in reporting on the Community Service projects we had going on in our State.

I would be happy to visit your Grange and help in any way I can. Help with your Community Service Reports or with community service idea. Just let me know if I can help.

The winter months can be very hard for family members, neighbors or shut-ins. Lets see if we can bring a little cheer to them with a short note, a phone call or a short visit.

The way we report our Community Service reports to the National Grange has changed. We will continue reporting our Community Service Reports to the State the same way we have done in the past. Our State way of judging has not changed.

Community Service Report Rules and Suggestions.

Program Date: September 1, 2025-August 31, 2026.

Community Service Report Due: This means your book needs to be delivered to the State Community Service Director on or before that date.

Mary Ann Rocco, 145 Beadle Lake Drive, Battle Creek, MI 49014

Divisions: Granges are divides into two categories, small Granges with 40 members of less and large Granges with more than 40 members. Membership numbers are determined by the second quarter (June 30) membership report to the State Secretary. Granges will compete within their own category.

Summary Report: A Summary report form will be supplied to each Community Service Chairman. A report may be submitted alone or with a notebook to receive full credit as an entry. Reports may be typed or neatly hand written.

Notebook Report: Notebook reports **MUST** contain **the Summary Report as the first pages of the report.** Materials should be organized and indexed in a manner that effectively tells the story of your Grange's Community Service work. Some →

FOUNDATION

Scholarship

Naomi Fletcher, President 14685 25.75 Road, Rapid River, MI 49878
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The Foundation has now approved a scholarship for any individual seeking higher knowledge, either in a formal college setting, vocational education or trade school. Applications are available on the Michigan State Grange website in the Foundation section. The number of scholarships and award amount will be determined each year based on the amount of interest earned from the American National Annuity. We will also continue with Student Loans. If you or someone you know would like to apply, please do so BEFORE June 1 to allow time to prepare applications for the Scholarship Judging.

Your continuing support of the Foundation enables us to provide funding for not only educational opportunities, but assists the State Grange in covering costs of mailings and program expenses incurred by select Officers and Directors at state sessions.

The next Foundation meeting will be January 18, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. via zoom.

Thank you. And Happy New Year!

MSG FOUNDATION,

Jackie Bishop, Sec/Treas.

479 Tuscany Drive

Portage, MI 49024

Please accept my donation to help support the Mission of the Michigan State Grange Foundation.

\$ _____

In Memory _____

In Memory of: _____ **Birthday** _____

_____ **Anniversary**

Address _____

City/State _____ **Zip** _____ **Deceased** _____

Donations made by: _____ **Other** _____

Thank you for your Support!

Choose to arrange projects from large to small and others choose to arrange materials in chronological order. You might also want to include newspaper articles, flyers, and or pictures Continued on page 5

Kevin Young, Director 60822 Creek Road, Niles, MI 49120
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Happy New Year everyone! Wow, 2025 is in the books and 2026 has just started! Well, I am sure everyone is starting to think about Spring and winter is not even half over! I know it is important to have snow during the winter months as that helps to add moisture to our farm fields and helps to protect the winter wheat during the cold months. So far, we have had a good bit of snow in my area of Michigan which seems weird as it is December 14th as I sit writing this article. What snow we had earlier in November around Thanksgiving stayed around longer than normal because the temperature stayed cold. I hope this isn't a sign of what winter is going to be like. I do not like cold weather where the high temperatures do not get over 32. The way we had such a very hot summer, we will probably have the opposite for winter!

Yes, snow is a part of everyday life during winter in our community. And don't we often wish we didn't have to live with it, but we couldn't live without it.

So, while you sit and look at the snow float from the sky, think about what you might want to plant in your gardens or yards this coming spring. Now is a great time to be looking through the seed catalogs and plant books for those special favorites you might want to plant and then share the crops with friends and neighbors.

Here is a good reason to plan early. Be sure to check out the Agriculture Department in the Program Book. I left the classes from 2025 in the program book for 2026. I may have added a new "decorated pumpkin" sub class, so be sure to check out the Program Book. I know it is tough trying to get things to last until our State Session, but I try to have classes that the produce would still be good to enter. If our State Session was during the late Summer or early Fall months, we could do more classes to deal with fruits, vegetables and flowers. Remember that the class under Flowers: Bloom is any type of flower bloom and they are fresh not dried. Please be sure to keep the inserted Program Book for the 2026 State Session.

Well, that is all for now.

Here is hoping 2026 is another great Grange year for all and brings bounty to our Agriculture Neighbors and Friends!
Until later....

MORE MSD PICS...



FUNDRAISING

Collect "G" Dollars

Kevin Young, Chairman 60822 Creek Road, Niles, MI 49120
Tel: 269-684-3870 E-mail: Kevin60822@sbcglobal.net

MEMBERSHIP

Fresh Start

Tricia Eidsmoe 1451 Grey Road, Midland, MI 48640
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Well, hello everyone. As we start another new year, that means we start another new year of Fund Raising for the Michigan State Grange. We are continuing to do the "G" Dollars again this year. It is a fun way to raise funds for the State Grange. Any amount helps, even \$2.00 "G" Bills!!!

With the Penny coming to an end with minting any new ones, we are going to change this fund-raising project to be called "Coins from Heaven"! We will take any coins, rolled or loose. If you do not want all of your loose change in the bottom of your purse or in your cup holders in your vehicles, put them in a jar and bring them to State Session in October.

I know some people do not like the next form of Fund-raising but we have been graciously given a beautiful quilt called "The Flower Basket" (or it might be Pot, sorry Naomi I can't remember now!). I have been asked to come up with a Theme for the next Raffle that will have this quilt as 1st prize. Once we have a Theme in place, I will let everyone know so if you wish to secure an item to raffle with the quilt we thank you in advance.

Thank you so much to everyone that helped with the fundraising efforts in 2025. I look forward to what we can all accomplish in 2026 when we work together. Every little extra we put in the bank account keeps us from needing funds transferred from the Invested Funds.

Until next time....

Burns Grange #160 has been busy!

It's been a busy fall and early winter for us. We co-hosted the Michigan State Grange Convention at the Comstock Inn in Owosso in October.

Delivered approximately 560 dictionaries late October, early November to 3rd Graders in Shiawassee County.

Held our chicken dinners in October and November. Jamborees every month and dinners to go with them.

Decorated the Grange hall inside and out for the holidays along with decorating a tree at the Durand Depot, which we have done for many years.

We had a Christmas dinner at a local restaurant with our members that could make it. Always fun to

Welcome to 2026! Wow that seems so strange to write. A new year means a chance for a fresh start and clean slate for your Grange.

I would suggest every Grange take the opportunity in the first quarter of the year to evaluate the needs of your Grange. Every Grange in the state is different and has different needs than even a neighboring Grange. Come up with a plan now to implement for 2026.

Please reach out if I can be of any assistance.
Have a safe and warm winter!

get together and have some fun and eat of course.

Then there was the Michigan School for the Deaf Adopt-a-child Program, party and gifts. Its always a job getting the information to the Granges, Grangers and friends of the Grange that purchase gifts for all these kids. At Burns we shopped for a total of twelve boys and girls and wrapped gifts for fourteen. Making all the arrangements at the school, making name-cards, ordering pizzas, purchasing pop, water, cookies, chips and making some kind of a small little treat, making sure all gifts will be delivered in time, takes place before the big day. It always works out, just a bit of stress beforehand. The fun wipes that away.

This year the day after the party at MSD our Grange had a huge bake sale at the Band Boosters Annual Craft Show at the middle school in Durand. So much baking, packaging, pricing, but well worth it all. Great Success!!

We always wonder if we actually will have the December Jamboree which is the third Friday of the month. Weather in Michigan is so unpredictable! We planned a ham, scalloped potato with all the trimmings dinner and prayed for good weather. The weather forecast was for ice on that particular Friday. Our policy has been that if the Durand Schools are closed there will be NO Jamboree that night. This year we lucked out...no ice, jamboree went on and everyone had fun. The dinner was delicious! The music was super...so many Christmas songs and everyone singing! We gave away three Christmas baskets of goodies and come January 1st we start all over again!! Happy New Year from Burns Grange.