

The official publication of the NC State Grange

November/December 2015

# GRANGE NEWS

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NEBRASKA FOR  
NATIONAL GRANGE  
CONVENTION



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# GRANGERS VISIT NEBRASKA

#### February

2 National Grange Fly-In  
12-14 Winter Youth Conference  
Asheboro, NC

#### March

Family Conference TBD

#### July

10-16 Grange Camp  
Eastern 4-H Center, Columbia NC





Long time US Representative Howard Coble passed away on November 3 following an extended illness. He served in the House for thirty years and retired upon the finish of his term earlier this year. The State Grange had a great relationship with Rep. Coble, and he actually remained a member of the Grange for many years. During a visit to DC several years ago in a conversation with him, he proudly said "I'm a card carrying member of the Grange!"

There are a number of qualities that impressed me regarding Rep. Coble, one of those being that he always tried to make himself accessible. On trips to visit Capitol Hill in DC, it was never known if the meeting would be with the actual Representative or a legislative aide. Rep. Coble would always make the effort to meet with us himself (including an aide) and we were made to feel welcome in his office. He was consistently gracious in hearing our stand on the issues.

Rep. Coble was well respected and known by many. Once during a visit to DC, we had dinner together at a restaurant near the Capitol, and the conversation was great. However, our chat was constantly interrupted by people coming by the table to speak to the Representative. This is not a complaint, but a statement of admiration for a gentleman that was highly regarded.

He developed a hobby of knowing high school mascots. Once on a trip to DC, we happened to be on the same flight from Greensboro and were waiting in the passenger area for our flight. He asked me which high

school I attended, and I answered "East Wilkes". "Cardinals" was his reply which was and still is the mascot.

Rep. Coble was delightful to know and it was a pleasure to work with him on legislative matters. We are experiencing a time during which the trustworthiness of some of our elected officials is questionable. Partisan politics is extreme and compromise is rare. Some politicians are very critical of each other and at times make very derogatory statements. Rep. Coble made it through thirty years, and upon his retirement was still highly respected and esteemed. This says a lot about his character and his ability to build relationships with others.

The NC State Grange thanks Rep. Coble for his dedicated service and for a lifetime of achievement. He will be greatly missed.

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*The Grange is a grassroots, community service, family organization with a special interest in agriculture and designed to help meet the needs of people, young and old, through a cooperative effort with government and other organizations that also seek the greatest good for the greatest number.*

# PECAN CHESS PIE

CLAY RAPP ARCADIA GRANGE  
1ST PLACE YOUTH NUT PIE

---

1 1/4 CUPS SUGAR  
1 1/4 CUPS CORNMEAL  
3 EGGS  
1 T. VINEGAR  
1 T. VANILLA  
1 1/4 FINELY CHOPPED PECANS  
UNBAKED PIE SHELL  
1/2 STICK MELTED BUTTER

MIX SUGAR, CORNMEAL AND MARGARINE, BEAT GENTLY. ADD BEATEN EGGS, VINEGAR, VANILLA AND PECANS. POUR INTO PIE SHELL.

BAKE 325 DEGREES FOR ABOUT 1 HOUR. CHECK AFTER 40 MINUTES FOR DONENESS.



## OATMEAL APPLE COOKIES

SHARON RITCHIE  
ST. JOHNS GRANGE  
1ST PLACE ADULT APPLE COOKIE

3/4 CUP BUTTER FLAVOR CRISCO  
1 1/4 CUPS PACKED BROWN SUGAR  
1 EGG  
1/4 CUP MILK  
1 1/2 TSP. VANILLA  
1 CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR  
1 1/4 TSP CINNAMON  
1/4 TSP NUTMEG  
1/4 TSP BAKING SODA  
1/2 TSP SALT  
1 CUP PEELED, DICED APPLES  
3/4 CUP RAISINS  
3/4 CUP BROKEN WALNUT PIECES  
3 CUPS QUICK-COOKING OATS (NOT INSTANT OR OLD FASHIONED)

HEAT OVEN TO 375 DEGREES. GREASE BAKING SHEET WITH BUTTER FLAVOR CRISCO AND SET ASIDE.

CREAM BUTTER FLAVOR CRISCO, SUGAR, EGG, MILK AND VANILLA IN LARGE BOWL AT MEDIUM SPEED OF ELECTRIC MIXER UNTIL WELL BLENDED.

COMBINE FLOUR, CINNAMON, NUTMEG, BAKING SODA AND SALT. MIX INTO CREAMED MIXTURE. STIR IN FRUIT AND NUTS. STIR IN OATS. DROP ROUNDED TABLESPOONFULS OF DOUGH 2 INCHES APART ONTO BAKING SHEET.

BAKE AT 375 DEGREES FOR 13 MINUTES. COOL 2 MINUTES ON BAKING SHEET. REMOVE TO COOLING RACK.

YIELD: 2 1/2 DOZEN.

## APPLE NUT CAKE

LINDA MCCRAW  
EDNEYVILLE GRANGE  
1ST PLACE ADULT APPLE CAKE

1 1/4 VEGETABLE OIL  
2 CUPS SUGAR  
3 EGGS  
3 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR  
1 TSP SALT  
2 TSP BAKING SODA  
3 TSP CINNAMON

COMBINE OIL, SUGAR AND EGGS, BEAT UNTIL BLENDED.

MIX SALT, CINNAMON AND BAKING SODA TOGETHER.

FOLD IN WITH SPOON 3 CUPS DICED RED OR GOLDEN DELICIOUS APPLES AND 1 CUP PECANS. BAKE IN 10" TUBE PAN SLIGHTLY GREASED WITH BAKERS JOY. BAKE 325F FOR 1 HOUR AND 20 MINUTES.

COOL AND INVERT

## VOTE on March 15, 2016

### Vote YES for the CONNECT NC BOND ACT!!

On March 15, 2016 North Carolinians will head to the polls not only to vote in the primaries but also to hopefully vote YES for the CONNECT NC BOND ACT, the 2 billion dollar bond referendum. As Grangers, we all know the importance of voting at all elections and this one is particularly important to all of us. Below are the elements of the Bond Referendum that will be impacted. Our Policy Book, to which we all have had the opportunity to help write, supports every single one of these issues. Also, please realize how important most of these issues are to agriculture. Educate your Granges, your neighbors, your church, your schools---everyone you can possibly think of to tell the importance of voting YES for this Bond Referendum. Below is the breakdown of the bond elements:

- \$94,000,000 will go to a new lab for Department of Ag & Consumer Services.
- \$45,000,000 will go to NC Zoological Park.
- \$100,000,000 will go to grants and \$350,600,000 will go to low-interest loans for state programs in the Department of Environmental Quality for water and sewer improvements.
- \$82,731,000 will go to readiness centers, armory renovations, and heli-pads for the National Guard.
- \$400,000,000 will be allocated among the constituent institutions for the NC community colleges system.
- \$921,669,000 will be allocated among 11 projects for new construction for the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina.
- \$85,000,000 will go to the NCSU Plant Sciences Initiative.

#### A Note from Governor McCrory:

It's been 15 years since the last general obligation bond was authorized to upgrade our state's infrastructure and since then North Carolina has added 2 million people in population. The \$2 billion bond will connect North Carolina to the 21st century through statewide investments in education, parks, safety, recreation, and water and sewer infrastructure.

The Connect NC bond will allow us to pay for 50-year assets with 20-year financing. No tax increases are necessary to finance the bond, given our strong revenue growth and ample debt service capacity. We will continue to balance the budget and uphold our position as one of only 10 states to have earned the coveted Triple A bond rating from all three major ratings agencies.

Please visit [connect.nc.gov](http://connect.nc.gov) to find out more and please don't forget to vote March 15, 2016!



# Vote

# ARC PARTY AT ARCADIA

BY: PATTY SWING



The Arcadia Grange had a very special meeting in October. We had a party for the Group Arc Homes and for the Sheltered Workshop clients at our meeting, with about 70 people in attendance. The Grange Hall was filled with laughter, good food, Bingo, fellowship and we even had cake walk. After a welcome by our president, Kelli Rapp, a prayer by our chaplain, Clay Rapp, our juniors and youth sang songs for our guests. Our junior Grangers did the Bingo party, handing out many prizes and the adults and youth worked very hard serving a meal to our guests. We prepare dinners and parties for these wonderful friends two times each year and this has been one of our major community service projects for many years. These people have special needs and they know and love our Grangers. We had guests from the Troutman Grange that helped us very much. They were Leigh Payne, Kellee Payne and Family Living Director, Joyce Clodfelter. We really appreciated their visit.







Grangers representing North Carolina included:  
Emily Harrison, Rylee Furr, Jennie Gentry, Baylor Howerton, Brodi Olds, Marie Jones, August Howerton, Darby Madewell, Leigh Payne, Emily Hartsell, Joyce Clodfelter, Landon Woolard, Bobby Crawford and Linda Crawford

Not Pictured: Jimmy Gentry, Anita Gentry, Joyce Hood, Mark Hood, Ken Sorensen, Mikayla Jones, John Crawford, Jessica Horton, Donald Marler



By: Jessica Horton

The 149th National Grange Convention was held in Lincoln, Nebraska at the Marriott Cornhusker hotel in downtown Lincoln November 10-14, 2015 by the Great Plains Region. Delegates began arriving at convention over the previous weekend and worked on committees as well as enjoyed some sightseeing before opening session on Tuesday afternoon. Delegates were treated to a tour of the State Capitol building as well as the Governors mansion just a few blocks from the hotel where they viewed amazing architecture and murals adorning the inside. Grangers learned about Nebraska's unique unicameral legislative system which was implemented in 1937 when it went from a legislative membership of 133 as a bicameral to 43 in the new single house.

Most of the North Carolinians in attendance arrived on Wednesday which included eleven youth. Wednesday afternoon Grangers from Troutman (Joyce Clodfelter, Leigh Payne, Jimmy and Anita Gentry) and Grantham (Bobby and Linda Crawford, Mark and Joyce Hood) were able to receive their awards for the Distinguished Grange Program. Also recognized was Cape Fear Grange who was unable to attend. Congratulations to all three Granges for being recipients for multiple years!



On Thursday, the youth and adults were able to take a tour of some of Lincoln's attractions. They toured the Nebraska University Husker's stadium and workout facilities, including an impressive display of their three Heisman trophies earned by players from the Huskers football program. The tour also included the same stop at the Capitol the Delegates took on Tuesday. Everyone joined together for an Italian lunch and then split up again. The youth proceeded to a service project where they sorted multiple pallets of shoes to be donated, while the adults were given the opportunity to visit either the Tractor Test Museum at Nebraska University or the Quilt Museum. Most of the North Carolinians chose to visit the Tractor Test Museum where they learned about the laws of Nebraska regulating the sales of all tractors in their state. They all must be tested to prove their abilities and live up to the advertising claims they make about their performance. This is the first tractor test facility, and the only facility in the western hemisphere, and tests cost upwards of \$20,000.

While the non-delegates were out touring Lincoln, the delegate body was in session debating resolutions and holding the election of officers. The first female National Grange President was named that day, Betsy Huber of Pennsylvania. She is a former member of the National Grange Executive Committee and Grangers welcomed her to the position. Our own Jimmy Gentry, was re-elected to the position of National Grange Vice-President. Many other positions also changed hands this year, including Jim Tetreault stepping down from National Program Director, and former National Grange Communications Director, Amanda Brozana taking on that role. A full list of National Grange officers are listed to the right.

Friday morning the youth officers opened the National Grange session for the day to which the delegates were able to complete their work after much discussion and debate. The evening was concluded with the Evening of Excellence showcasing talents from across the country. Darby Madewell, from North Carolina, won the regional speech contest and delivered her speech on feminism. Mikayla Jones of Grantham Grange, the North Carolina State Grange talent show winner (held at Family Conference) performed a song, and Darby Madewell, Marie Jones, Jennie Gentry and Emily Harrison performed their sign-a-song. A surprise at the end of the show included Anita Gentry as part of a dance group made up of women from across the country, known as the "Babes of the Grange".

Saturday provided sixth and seventh degree work for those interested in taking them. Our own August Howerton of Bushy Fork Grange was recruited to play a trumpet girl during the seventh degree. That evening concluded convention with a grand banquet that included the Cowboy Poet as entertainment. A live auction was held to donate funds to the Program Director's department and a preview was given by Joan Smith, 2016 National Grange Convention Planner of the plans for the 150th celebration next year in Washington, DC.

North Carolina Grangers thoroughly enjoyed meeting others from across the Nation and are looking forward to being part of the host committee for 2016! Mark your calendars for November 15-20, 2016 to attend the 150th National Grange Convention!

#### NATIONAL GRANGE OFFICERS

President: Betsy Huber (PA)  
 Vice-President: Jimmy Gentry (NC)  
 Executive Committee:  
     Phil Prelli (CT)  
     Joe Fryman (NE)  
     Duane Scott (WI)  
     Leroy Watson (WI)  
 Program Director: Amanda Brozana (DC)  
 Steward: Chip Narvel (DE)  
 Assistant Steward: John Plank (IN)  
 Lady Assistant Steward: Christine Hamp (WA)  
 Chaplain: Barbara Borderieux (FL)  
 Treasurer: Dwight Baldwin (IA)  
 Secretary: Judy Sherrod (TN)  
 Gatekeeper: Chris Johnston (MI)  
 Ceres: Claire Logan (RI)  
 Pamona: Susan Noah (OR)  
 Flora: Marie Nicholson (MT)





Clockwise: Grangers tour the Capitol building in Lincoln, Mikayla Jones sings at Evening of Excellence, Heisman Trophy display at Nebraska University, The “Babes of the Grange” perform at Evening of Excellence, Troutman Grangers with their Distinguished Grange award, Nebraska Tractor Test Museum, NC Grangers with former National President, Ed Luttrell at the Distinguished Grange Reception, NC youth perform a sign a song and Darby Madewell delivers her speech at Evening of Excellence, Center: East hall of the Nebraska Capitol building.

# Brodi Olds

## Selected National Youth Ambassador

by: Jennie Gentry

In a special ceremony during the Evening of Excellence at the 149th National Grange Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska, Brodi Olds of North Carolina and Shannon Ruso of New York were named the 2016 National Grange Youth Ambassadors. The announcement was made by the 2015 National Ambassadors, who “crowned” the new leaders with special sashes. The highest, most prestigious leadership position youth can hold in the National Grange, Olds and Ruso were selected among youth from across the country.

As the National Youth Ambassadors, Olds and Ruso will represent the National Grange Youth Department for the next year. Their duties will include assisting the National Youth Director, promoting the youth program, and helping to emcee the Evening of Excellence and leading youth activities at the 2016 National Convention. Their year will also involve traveling to Regional Youth Conferences across the country and participating in the 2016 National Ag Day activities in Washington DC.

The selection process for the National Youth Ambassador involves several requirements. Youth must complete an extensive application that includes their Grange involvement and responsibilities as State Ambassadors, and must earn a minimum of 80 percent on the National Grange Trivia Challenge. They must also complete four National Achievement Awards, must complete achievement awards in Public Speaking, and must complete an interview process with a panel of judges at the National Convention.



Brodi Olds is the ninth youth from North Carolina to serve as National Ambassador in the past 10 years. “The best part was seeing the looks on the faces of both Brodi and Jennie [NC State Grange Youth Director] when Brodi’s name was announced as National Ambassador. Brodi’s mouth dropped open in pure shock, then he could not stop smiling. Jennie’s eyes got huge, then her hands went to her mouth, then she teared up, especially when Brodi thanked her in his acceptance speech. It was so sweet to see,” stated Marie Jones, NC Grange youth who attend the convention. Though no runner-ups were announced this year, Emily Harrison, 2015 State Youth Ambassador commented, “I am so happy for Brodi! He deserves this so much! I cannot wait for everyone across the country to see how much he loves the Grange and to get to know his awesome personality. I’m so proud to have served with him this year.”

When asked about this honor, Brodi stated, “I am so honored to be chosen for this incredible opportunity. I’m excited for the experiences this year will give me, and I’m excited about the Grangers I will be meeting across the country. I hope I can be a great example to Grange youth, and hope I can be a voice to encourage more youth to join the Grange.”

Brodi Olds is the son of Charles and Jennifer Olds, and a member of Summerfield Grange in Guilford County. He currently attends East Carolina State University where he is majoring in Business. He has been heavily involved in the Grange since he was a Junior Granger at the age of 5. In the NC State Grange Youth Program, he has served as State Youth Ambassador, two years on the State Youth Team, as State Assistant Steward, State Youth Chaplain, and currently serves as State Youth Vice President. Faith, family and friends are very important to him. He also enjoys sports, music, making people laugh, and visiting with his Grange friends, whom he considers family. The NC State Grange is extremely proud of Brodi Olds on all of his accomplishments.

## NC Youth Win First in National ParliPro Contest and Bring Home Awards from Lincoln

by: Jennie Gentry

A group of eight Grange youth from North Carolina attended the National Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska, bringing home several big honors and awards. It was quite a successful trip for our youth and North Carolina was represented well.

Six youth worked hard to prepare for the second annual National Grange Parliamentary Procedure Contest. Rylee Furr, Emily Harrison, Marie Jones, Darby Madewell, Brodi Olds and Landon Woolard made up this year’s team with Darby serving as President.

After a written test and live performance, this team claimed first place in the contest for the second consecutive year. These guys put a lot of work into the contest. They had to learn about the different types of motions and memorized officer’s speaking parts. I was absolutely amazed watching them conduct their meeting for the competition.

Before starting the contest, North Carolina attendees watched Baylor Howerton perform a beautiful sign-a-song to “When Love Runs Out” by OneRepublic at the National Grange Junior Breakfast. Attendees were impressed with the grace and poise of Baylor’s performance.

North Carolina was represented well by youth at the Evening of Excellence. Marie Jones, Jennie Gentry, Emily Harrison and Darby Madewell had the crowd laughing with their sign-a-song performance to “Mama I’m a Big Girl Now” from the Hairspray Musical. Darby also impressed attendees with her public speech on Feminism. Makayla Jones, Junior Granger from Grantham Grange, won over everyone’s hearts with her singing performance in the talent show, and of course, we were all excited to watch as Brodi Olds was named the 2016 National Youth Ambassador, the highest honor a youth can receive.

At the convention’s annual GROW Club Banquet, five youth and young adults received awards for serving as National Youth Officers at the convention this year. They include Landon Woolard (Gatekeeper), Darby Madewell, (Steward), Marie Jones (Flora), Rylee Furr (Pomona), and Emily Hartsell (Executive Committee). This banquet also held a special ceremony where NC Ambassadors Emily Harrison and Brodi Olds were inducted into the National Grange GROW Club. There were also many cheers at the banquet as I was presented with the largest pile of National Youth Achievement Awards to take home to youth in North Carolina. This massive pile made a record for most Achievement Awards earned from one state.

In other activities, Darby Madewell made it to the final round of the Grange Jeopardy Contest. And our own August Howerton participated in the 7th Degree as a trumpet girl for the historic ritual.

Outside of the honors and awards, youth participated in a tour of the Nebraska State Capitol, a tour of the University of Nebraska football stadium, and special service projects helping people in need. It was a wonderful trip, and our state was proudly represented by an incredible group of youth.







# 2015

## *National Youth Officers*



TOP: EMILY HARRISON, BRODI OLDS, MARIE JONES

MIDDLE: RYLEE FURR

BOTTOM: EMILY HARTSELL, DARBY MADEVELL, LONDON WOOLARD

This summer Rev. Robert Cayton, President of the NC State Grange Board of Directors, and I were presented with an opportunity to travel to Cuba with an agriculture delegation hosted by the North Carolina Farm Bureau. With excitement and a bit of apprehension we graciously accepted this opportunity. I have captured this experience in the form of a journal which I am anxious to share with all of our Grange membership. It was an amazing experience to travel to a beautiful but rather sad country that has been frozen in time since 1959. We are all hopeful that with the impending lift of the trade embargo by the US, the Cuban people can crawl out from under the tragic effect of communism, and the US can once again have the opportunity to share with Cuba what we have while at the same time enjoy what they have to offer our country.

September 27th~Sunday. Arrived in Cuba with our delegation of 25 after spending the night in Miami. Delegation consists of representatives from the NC State Grange, the NC Farm Bureau, the American Farm Bureau, NCSU~College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, NC Dept. of Agriculture, farmers from L&M Companies, Burch Farms, Beavers' Farms, Tull Hill Farms, RR Dannelley, Joe Moore & Co., Univ. of GA, Carolinas Cotton Coop, US Tobacco Coop and Claybourne Walters Logging. The flight was rather rough and we were forced to circle the airport due to the weather for at least 45 minutes putting us behind schedule. Going through customs was uneventful. We met our travel guides, three Americans who were all fluent in Spanish and one Cuban who is employed by "the State". We boarded our bus and checked into the Malia Habana Hotel in Havana which is the capital of Cuba. The Malia is a resort style hotel on the coast. It is elegant but rather dated.

I was already enthralled by the sights I saw just on the trip from the airport. The majority of cars were from the 1950's. Some were well maintained; others look as though they could not make it another mile. There were no signs of wealth or prosperity. The city of Havana appeared to be crumbling and in ruins in many cases. The Cubans seemed friendly and happy to see us however. We checked into our hotel and because of our flight delay we decided to have a short rest and meet for dinner. We dined at El Aljibe which had a lovely outdoor cabana. The menu, as we found with all of our meals, was prefixed. The food was simple but delicious and consisted of chicken with rice and beans and a vegetable. The atmosphere was very pleasant and upbeat. We were all excited about our adventure. It seemed to be a pleasant, cohesive group that we were traveling with.

# A Cuban Sojourn

by: Laurie Barnhart

September 28th~Monday. We had breakfast at the hotel and then met at 9:00 to hear lectures with Professor Armando Nova with the University of Havana, the National Association of Small Farmers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Our tour guides were able to translate/interpret for

these speakers who only spoke Spanish. They were all informative and fairly specific about the issues that they were faced with in regards to agriculture. We had lunch at a privately owned restaurant, L'Atelier. We are able to speak with the proprietors and we were amazed at the courage and perseverance it took to open up a business in a communist country. The menu consisted of chicken and lobster. It was prepared to perfection and delicious. That afternoon we traveled to a farmers' market which was about a thirty-minute drive outside of Havana. I had never experienced anything quite like it. There was every kind of moving/hauling apparatus that you could possibly imagine from donkey drawn carts to bikes with huge wire baskets to jalopies spilling over with fresh fruits and vegetables. This market served individuals, businesses (state owned and a few private) and street vendors. Very little refrigeration makes it necessary to obtain fresh food on a daily basis. Dinner that night was at Café del Oriente which was a "state owned" restaurant. This restaurant was the most upscale eating establishment that we dined at while in Cuba. We also enjoyed a small jazz band while we ate.



September 29th~Tuesday. We had breakfast and met very early to travel to several farms that were approximately two hours from Havana. It would be a long, hot amazing day. We traveled to Vinales, a Pinar del Rio province where we met and talked to two different farmers on two separate farms on what they refer to as cooperatives. The cooperative consists of the farmers and "the state". One farmer demonstrated how to roll a cigar and some of us bought cigars that the farmers were selling. We tromped

through wet grassy paths to view their sweet potato fields. Oxen are still used for plowing. The farmers were kind and anxious to meet us. The Cuban farmers were much like our farmers here in the US. Very hard working, honest people all doing what farmers do: raising food for the communities that they live in and for their families.

The difference is in Cuba, the government takes 90% of what they raise and allows them to keep 10% for themselves. We had the opportunity to visit a farmer's home where he resided with seven of his family members. The cottage was small but very clean. They were proud to show us their modest home which had no indoor plumbing. I noticed there was a large framed picture of Fidel Castro hanging on the wall. We had



lunch at an open air restaurant where we again experienced a great meal. We traveled back to Havana and after freshening up we met for dinner at another private restaurant La Moneda Cubana. This was a fabulous meal as well, the service was great and we were able to sit outside where we had a great view of the city. We all agreed if we lived in Cuba and given a choice, we would rather live in the beautiful, green countryside rather than the city with its constant sad reminders of what it once was.

September 30th~Wednesday. (last day) We met after breakfast, packed and ready to depart. We agreed the night before to leave early enough so that we could visit the Partagas cigar factory as well as an art market where we are able to pick up gifts and reasonably priced art work. The cigar factory was amazing. As most of us know, Cuba is famous for its cigars worldwide. We were not allowed to take pictures but we were able to walk through where the cigars were hand rolled, and afterwards we were able to go to the retail shop and purchase a certain amount to take home. (Not to exceed \$100 in value) The art market was equally intriguing. There were dozens of artists selling their artwork in all shapes and sizes as well as Cuban crafts. For many, it is their only means of income. We departed to the airport afterwards and said our good-byes promising to regroup when we got back to the States and recap our adventure.

#### The Takeaway:

This Cuban experience was incredible and I am very grateful that I was able to experience it on behalf of the NC State Grange. The purpose of this trip was to assist in opening the doors to what has been a closed relationship between Cuba and the US since 1962. The NC State Grange supports trade with Cuba and after visiting this country which is the largest island in the Caribbean, I feel that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by beginning a new healthy relationship with them. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and like other islands such as the Bahamas and St. Thomas with its close proximity to the US it is ripe for American

tourists. Unfortunately, after years of closed relationships with the US and after years of the oppressive rule of Castro not to mention the lapse of support after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, Cuba has suffered terribly.

For those that keep up with Cuban news, Fidel Castro is alive despite many past reports that he is dead. His brother Raul Castro who took over during his illness is reportedly more lenient when it comes to governing the people of Cuba. It is believed that he is more open to Christianity, especially after the Pope's visit which was the week before we visited. All of these things give light and hope for the people of Cuba. They are now allowed to have cell phones and in some places there is internet availability. Their education system is strong, their healthcare system seems to operate well; however, the drive to grow and prosper is absent among these people. The income of an average worker is equivalent to \$20/month; a doctor's--\$40/month. Their population is aging and as it stands under the present rule, their economy is not sustainable.

If the trade embargo is lifted in the near future, and American companies can trade freely exporting building materials, food, manufactured goods, automobiles and all the many things that they need; and as Americans we can increase their tourism income, therefore providing them with the funds to buy the things they need; then they have the opportunity to prosper again. The people are kind but needy, fed but hungry, educated but unprosperous, hopeful but jaded. I came away feeling very sad for these friendly people that live on an island of paradise but governed by a dictatorship that has stifled and spiritually imprisoned its people. As Churchill once said, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." I believe our delegation left Cuba feeling very fortunate for all the freedoms we are able to enjoy in America.



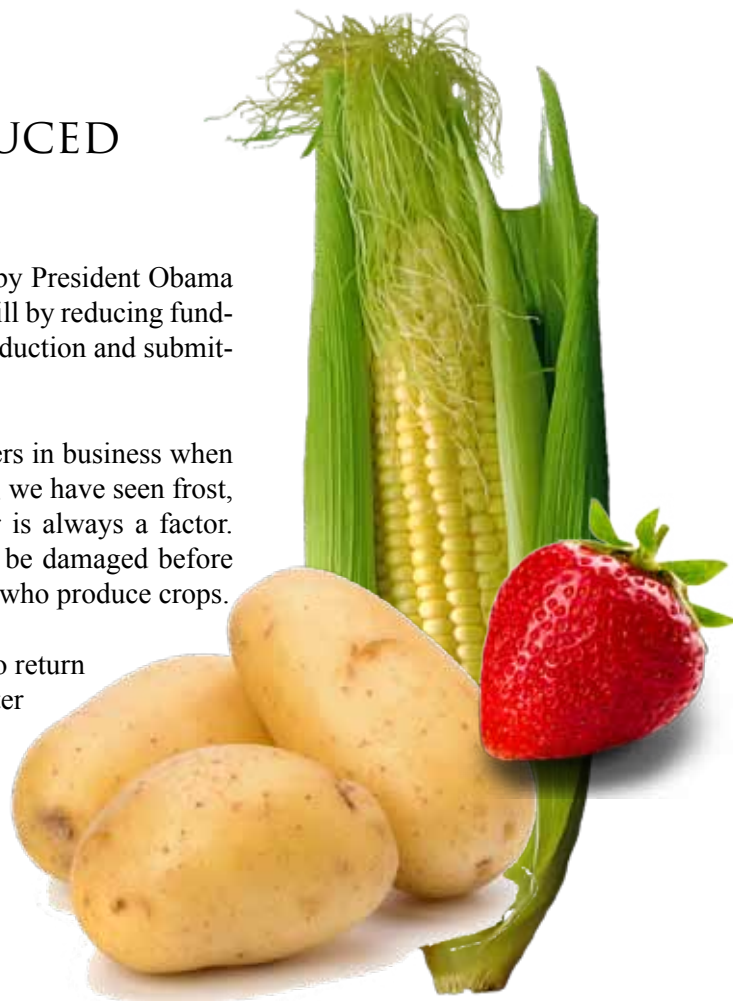
# CROP INSURANCE FUNDING REDUCED

BY: JIMMY GENTRY

Congress recently passed a new budget act that was signed into law by President Obama on November 2, 2015. This budget impacted the current 2014 Farm Bill by reducing funding to crop insurance by \$3 billion. The State Grange opposed this reduction and submitted letters to the entire North Carolina Delegation.

Crop insurance provides a safety net to help keep agriculture producers in business when crop damage occurs due to weather related problems. In past months, we have seen frost, drought, and excessive rain in different parts of the state. Weather is always a factor. When farmers plant their seeds, they never know if their crops will be damaged before harvest time. Ample crop insurance is critical to the welfare of those who produce crops.

The State Grange would support an effort in Congress to find a way to return the \$3 billion back to the crop insurance program. According to a letter received from one of our Senators, there is interest within the Senate Agriculture Committee to do so.



## From Family Living & Community Service Director, Joyce Clodfelter

Following State Convention, the office staff and committee chairmen met to look at the contest guidelines for 2016. Following the Board of Directors approval of the new guidelines, they will be available online at the end of 2015.

A couple reminders to everyone. The National quilt square contest has ended. Hopefully, we will see the results of these squares at next year's convention. Also, at the state level, we will no longer collect box tops and soup labels but I would encourage you to collect them and give them to one of your local schools.

I attended a planning session at National Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska, in preparation for the 2016 National Convention in Herndon, VA. North Carolina is a part of the Host Region. More information will come in *Grange News* early 2016. Go ahead and mark your calendars to attend the 150th National Convention, November 15-20, 2016!

Have a Blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas with family and friends. Safe travel to all.

## In Memoriam

Mrs. Mary Lillian Hege  
Mrs. Helen Campbell  
Mrs. Elizabeth D. Smith\*

Arcadia Grange  
Corriher Grange  
Brogden Grange

*You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness. Psalm 118:28 \* 50 Year Member*



# LIFE'S STREAM

Typically, before I start composing the Gotcha Covered article for a newsletter, I will look back to some of the previous articles to review the subjects covered over the last year, particularly articles for the same time-period of the previous year. While in that process for this article, it triggered a flashback to one difficult experience of life my wife and I were sharing last year with the health issues of her mother. Reflecting on our experiences, along with knowing many of our close friends also experienced similar experiences I concluded life is very difficult at times, while at other times extremely pleasant and relaxing. We experience extreme joy at the birth of a baby, and just a quick year later can hardly wait for them to call out "Pop" or "Lolly" and at other times be in the deep waters as we watch our loved ones pass in death. The picture of a small stream's flow and development on its journey to the ocean crossed my mind as a vivid metaphor of our lives. The creek on our farm starts with a spring with a little flow into the Little Lick Fork Creek then on to the Lick Fork Creek while on our farm. Then the flow travels on to join the Dan River near Danville, VA, eventually entering the Kerr Reservoir and Roanoke River and terminating in the Albermarle Sound, which empties into the Atlantic. As the water travels along, its twist and turns are numerous, as well as traveling over several minor and at least two major dams. Here on the farm, spots that were once crossed by travelers and farm equipment, fords fifty plus years ago now have five and six foot banks, making those crossings inaccessible now. Recent rains significantly changed our current crossing as they washed limb debris downstream, requiring additional work if we want to re-establish that crossing.

Life is just like that stream starting here on the farm. We start small and as we journey in life, we gain independence and strength while we experience many obstacles, twists and turns as in our life journey. Thankfully, the NCSG insurance program offers many tools to us to help us navigate through some of those tough times and keep us from crashing on the boulders we may encounter on our journey.

We offer our BCBSNC individual health insurance products for both the senior as well as the Under 65 market. Our NCSG agents can tailor fit the health products to your need and financial abilities. In most counties, we can still offer the HSA (Health Saving Account) plans for individuals to take

advantage of some lower cost premiums as well as income tax benefits of the optional savings plans. Open enrollment for 2016 continues thru January 2016, so it is not too late to check on your coverage options if you have not already updated your plan for 2016. There are also special enrollment periods for individuals and their families when certain life events occur that can create different needs. So when you come upon one of these life rapids, let us know. If you need a river guide, we will be there to assist you.

Our life insurance program includes a wide array of products – whole life, universal life, term, second to die, key person, etc. If you have not reviewed your plan lately, it is a great time to do so. Just as the stream develops and changes courses, so do our lives. What was adequate several years ago may not be able to channel the volume of water that now needs controlling.

A couple of the underutilized products we offer are the long-term-care (LTC) plans as well as disability insurance. Both of these products will assist with the major boulder of life – the ability to take care of ourselves as well as the ability to earn an income. Either of these will cause huge personal as well as family stress. The insurance program will not erase all the stress, but will be a tool to leverage and navigate you and your family around this boulder.

We all travel the stream of life and trust that we experience more smooth sailing than turbulent waters. We need to prepare for both. Just as the rafters that run the waters of western NC would not set out without wetsuits, dry boxes, life jackets, oars, and maybe a first aid kit, we need to equip ourselves for the stream of life. Give us or one of our NCSG agents a call and we will be sure that we assist you in selecting the right equipment for your trip!



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# Merry Christmas

FROM THE NC STATE GRANGE!

