

The official publication of the NC State Grange

November / December 2017

GRANGE NEWS



2017 National
Convention

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Events

2017
December 25-26: State Office Closed

20178
January 1: State Office Closed

NATIONAL CONVENTION

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While it was a privilege to serve the National Grange, sometimes there were conflicts with duties here and duties there. It was not unusual to miss something I needed to be doing in North Carolina while attending National Board meetings. On the other hand, I sometimes missed National Board meetings because of responsibilities here. I am grateful to the National Grange delegates over those twelve years that provided me with the opportunity to serve.

I will begin by letting you know that I am no longer Vice-President of the National Grange and no longer serve on its Board of Directors. It was a privilege for me to serve on the Board for a total of twelve years. The first year, I served as a Board member, and the second year I served as Chair of the board. The third year, I was elected as Vice-President of the National Grange and remained until the convention a few weeks ago. I simply reached a point at which I knew it was time for me to step down. So, prior to the National Convention, I sent an email to the delegates letting them know that I would not be a candidate for re-election

I was quite proud of our North Carolina members who attended the National Convention in Spokane, Washington. Some were there to receive Distinguished Grange awards. A good number of youth were there to participate in various activities, including Parliamentary Procedure, Sign-A-Song, Grange Jeopardy, youth ambassadors, and talent. They represented the NC State Grange well!

The National Grange Youth Department conducted a fundraiser during the year. Different levels were established, and if those levels were reached, designated National youth representatives and national officers were to get a pie in the face, which began at the \$250.00 level. If \$10,000 was raised,

National Grange President, Betsy Huber, would get a pie. If \$7,500.00 was raised, I was to get splattered! I frankly thought I was safe. However, safety was not to hold true as the \$10,000 goal was exceeded. Several designated individuals got “pied” throughout the week. On Friday evening following the Evening of Excellence, both Betsy and I received a pie in the face – in front of the crowd – on stage- by two young excited gentlemen. Yes, the cream filling was a bit sticky, but it was fun! (pictured left and below!)

The Distinguished Grange program will continue into 2018. The new forms have not yet been posted on the state and national Grange websites, but you are welcome to contact our office if you would like a form. when it becomes available.



On the cover: A calf at the University of Washington’s Farm

North Carolina Grange News (USPS 392-780) is the official publication of The North Carolina State Grange, 1734 Wilkesboro Hwy, Statesville, NC 28625 and is published bi-monthly. The yearly subscription cost is included in the annual membership dues for members of The North Carolina State Grange. ISSN # 0279-5914—Periodical Postage Paid in Statesville, NC and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to The N.C. State Grange, 1734 Wilkesboro Highway, Statesville, NC 28625.

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.

UPSIDE DOWN CORNBREAD APPLE CAKE

PATTY SWING | ARCADIA GRANGE
1ST PLACE APPLE PIE

1/2 CUP BUTTER
1 TEASPOON GRATED GINGER
3 GRANNY SMITH APPLES, SLICED VERY THIN
1/2 CUP BROWN SUGAR
1/2 TEASPOON CINNAMON
1/2 TEASPOON SALT
1 CUP FINE CORNMEAL
3/4 CUP ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
2 TEASPOONS BAKING POW.
1/4 TEASPOON SALT
3 EGGS
1/2 CUP APPLESAUCE
6 TABLESPOONS BROWN
1/2 CUP RAISINS
SUGAR
3/4 CUP MILK
4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER OR
OLIVE OIL

1. OVEN 375 DEGREES. MELT BUTTER(1/2 CUP) AND GINGER IN SAUCE PAN. COOK THE APPLES IN PAN UNTIL CRISP, TENDER. STIR OFTEN. ADD THE SUGAR, (1/2 CUP)1/2 TEASPOON SALT AND RAISINS. COOK FOR 2 MINUTES THEN REMOVE FROM HEAT.

2. LINE THE BOTTOM OF A PAN WITH PARCHMENT PAPER AND SPRAY ENTIRE PAN. LIGHTLY DUST WITH FLOUR. I USE A BUNDT PAN THAT THE BOTTOM IS REMOVABLE. PUT THE APPLE MIXTURE IN THE PAN.

3. MIX CORNMEAL, FLOUR, BAKING POWDER 6 TABLESPOONS SUGAR, AND THE 1/4 TEASPOON SALT IN A BOWL. STIR WELL. MIX ALL LIQUID INGREDIENTS. POUR DRY AND LIQUID INGREDIENTS TOGETHER AND STIR UNTIL JUST COMBINED. POUR MIXTURE ON TOP OF APPLES IN PAN. BAKE FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES OR UNTIL CAKE SPRINGS BACK. COOL FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES, PUT ON PLATE AND REMOVE PARCHMENT.

CRANBERRY CRISPS

SHARON BLACKMAN
GRANTHAM GRANGE
1ST PLACE BERRY COOKIE

1 CUP BUTTER-FLAVORED SHORTENING
1 CUP SUGAR
1 CUP PACKED BROWN SUGAR
2 EGGS
2 TEASPOONS VANILLA EXTRACT
2 1/2 CUPS OLD-FASHIONED OATS
2 CUPS FLOUR
1 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
1/2 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER
1 TEASPOON GROUND CINNAMON
1/2 TEASPOON SALT
1 CUPS DRIED CRANBERRIES
1 CUP COARSELY CHOPPED NUTS

DIRECTIONS: IN A LARGE BOWL, CREAM SHORTENING AND SUGARS UNTIL LIGHT AND FLUFFY. ADD EGGS, ONE AT A TIME, BEATING WELL AFTER EACH ADDITION. BEAT IN VANILLA. COMBINE THE OATS, FLOUR, BAKING SODA, BAKING POWDER, CINNAMON, AND SALT; GRADUALLY ADD TO THE CREAMED MIXTURE AND MIX WELL. STIR IN THE CRANBERRIES AND NUTS.

DROP BY TABLESPOONFULS 2 IN. APART ONTO LIGHTLY GREASED BAKING SHEETS. BAKE AT 350 DEGREES FOR 12-14 MINUTES OR UNTIL LIGHTLY BROWNED. REMOVE TO WIRE RACKS TO COOL. YIELD: 5 DOZEN

PECAN PIE

JUDY BROGDEN
WESTBROOK GRANGE
1ST PLACE NUT PIE

1/3 C. PACKED DARK BROWN SUGAR
3 EGG WHITES
1/2 C. SUGAR
1 LARGE EGG
1 TSP. VANILLA EXTRACT
1 C. LIGHT CORN SYRUP
1 C. PECAN HALVES

ROLL OUT PIE CRUST DOUGH TO A 12-13 INCH CIRCLE. FIT THE DOUGH INTO A 9-INCH PIE PAN, PRESSING TO FIT AND CRIMPING THE EDGES TO FORM A RIM.

PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 350*.

IN A LARGE BOWL COMBINE THE EGG WHITES, EGG, CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, BROWN SUGAR AND VANILLA EXTRACT; MIX WELL. STIR IN PECAN HALVES AND POUR MIXTURE INTO PIE SHELL.

BAKE 25 MINUTES THEN TENT LOOSELY WITH ALUMINUM FOIL. BAKE UNTIL THE TIP OF A KNIFE INSERTED 1-INCH FROM THE EDGE COMES OUT CLEAN, BAKE AN ADDITIONAL 15-20 MINUTES THEN COOL.

PECAN PIE POUND CAKE

LINDA ALBRIGHT
PATTERSON GRANGE
1ST PLACE NUT CAKE

1 LB. BUTTER
4 C. SUGAR
4 C. FLOUR
8 EGGS
8 OZ. CREAM CHEESE
1 C. CHOPPED PECANS
2 T. VANILLA

BEAT BUTTER & SUGAR, AFTER MIXED WELL ADD EGGS ONE AT A TIME BEATING WELL AFTER EACH. BEAT IN CREAM CHEESE, MIX UNTIL CREAMY. ADD FLOUR, NUTS, AND VANILLA. PLACE IN A TUBE PAN THAT IS SPRAYED WITH COOKING SPRAY.

GLAZE
1C.BROWN SUGAR 1C. CHOPPED PECANS
CARAMEL SYRUP
SPRINKLE SUGAR & PECANS ON TOP OF CAKE BEFORE BAKING.

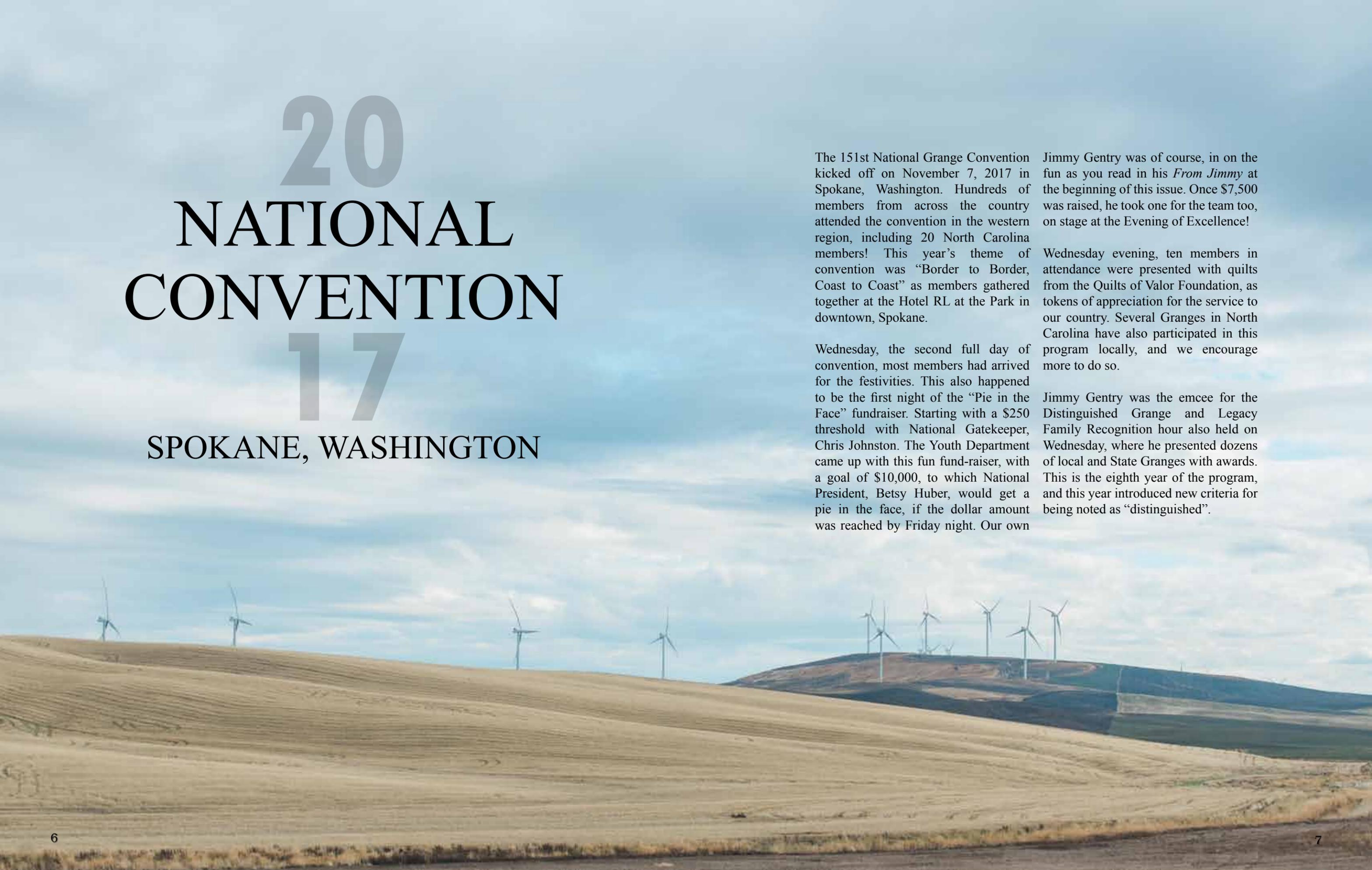
BAKE AT 300 DEG. FOR 15 MIN., TURN OVEN UP TO 325 DEG. FOR 30 MIN. LONGER. ADD CARAMEL AFTER TAKING OUT OF THE OVEN.

COCONUT PIE

LOUISE WILLIAMS
GRANTHAM GRANGE
HONORABLE MENTION

2 EGGS BEATEN
1 T. FLOUR
1/2 C. MILK UNDILUTED
1 C. SUGAR
7 OUNCES OF FLAKED COCONUT
PINCH OF SALT
2 T. MARGARINE MELTED

MIX ALL THE INGREDIENTS IN A BOWL. POUR INTO AN UNBAKED PIE CRUST AND BAKE 45 MINUTES AT 350 DEGREES. BAKE 45 MIN.



20 NATIONAL CONVENTION 17 SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

The 151st National Grange Convention kicked off on November 7, 2017 in Spokane, Washington. Hundreds of members from across the country attended the convention in the western region, including 20 North Carolina members! This year's theme of convention was "Border to Border, Coast to Coast" as members gathered together at the Hotel RL at the Park in downtown, Spokane.

Wednesday, the second full day of convention, most members had arrived for the festivities. This also happened to be the first night of the "Pie in the Face" fundraiser. Starting with a \$250 threshold with National Gatekeeper, Chris Johnston. The Youth Department came up with this fun fund-raiser, with a goal of \$10,000, to which National President, Betsy Huber, would get a pie in the face, if the dollar amount was reached by Friday night. Our own

Jimmy Gentry was of course, in on the fun as you read in his *From Jimmy* at the beginning of this issue. Once \$7,500 was raised, he took one for the team too, on stage at the Evening of Excellence!

Wednesday evening, ten members in attendance were presented with quilts from the Quilts of Valor Foundation, as tokens of appreciation for the service to our country. Several Granges in North Carolina have also participated in this program locally, and we encourage more to do so.

Jimmy Gentry was the emcee for the Distinguished Grange and Legacy Family Recognition hour also held on Wednesday, where he presented dozens of local and State Granges with awards. This is the eighth year of the program, and this year introduced new criteria for being noted as "distinguished".



Wednesday also brought all our youth to Washington. They had a variety of mixers and games that night as they got to know one another before the long practice for opening the session on Friday morning.

Thursday, everyone gathered in the lobby to board buses for the annual convention tour. This year, Grangers were taken to Pullman, Washington to tour the University of Washington's agriculture facilities. The drive down took Grangers through the Palluse region, which was filled with stunning rolling hills and windmills. They stopped at the Angus barn to learn about the different breeds, and then over to the dairy barn to learn about the programs offered there. The dairy facility is home to 35 cows each semester. The students are responsible for those particular cows during one particular class. They are in charge of all decision making for those 35 animals and learn much about

their care during that time. After leaving the farm, tour-goers were treated to lunch on campus with a university alumni speaking about his nearby farm.

Following lunch, members headed over to the impressive greenhouse facility and saw all the many holding cells for growing all different crops at different seasons. Before boarding the buses home, there was a quick stop at Ferdinand Ice Cream Parlor on campus! Once back in Spokane, our youth attended the 150th birthday party for the Grange, all dressed up to spell out "Happy 150th!"

Friday of convention meant the youth were up early to open the session! Margie Griffin, Emily Hartsell, Marcus Avendano, Baylor Howerton and Zac Mazag all represented North Carolina well with their marching and opening ritual. That evening, everyone gathered in the INB Performing Arts Center for the Evening of Excellence. Baylor Howerton was awarded the best sign-a-song winner and Kasey Vann sang "Jesus Take the Wheel". Our North Carolina Ambassadors, Katie Leonard and Landon Woolard, were also there, proudly representing our state.

Saturday brought the 7th Degree and the close of convention with the final banquet. We are so thankful to the western region for hosting a great meeting, and North Carolina members area already looking forward to visiting Stowe, Vermont next November!



NC Youth Visit Spokane; Youth Director Honored

By: Jennie Gentry, NC Grange Youth Director

A wonderful group of youth and young adults represented North Carolina at the National Grange Convention in Spokane, Washington, November 8 – 12. Bringing home several big honors and awards, it was quite a successful trip for our youth.

Our young Grangers who attended were involved in many different roles from contests to leadership positions. They attended workshops, participated in educational tours, engaged in service projects, and interacted with people from all over the country at the 151st convention. Among those who attended to represent North Carolina were our State Youth Ambassadors, Katie Leonard (Arcadia Grange) and Landon Woolard (Beaufort County Grange).



Several of our youth were selected to serve as National Youth Officers this year. After two late night practices, they professionally opened the Friday morning Grange Session with a drill and officer opening. Made up of youth from across the country, the team did an excellent job with their opening, a long-time convention tradition. Serving from North Carolina were Marcus Avendano as Treasurer; Margie Griffin as Pomona; Baylor Howerton as Executive Committee Member; and Zac Mazag as Gatekeeper. Emily Hartsell, our State Junior Director, also participated as a young adult member of the Executive Committee.

Friday evening of the convention held the popular Evening of Excellence, in which two of our youth participated. Kasey Vann (Grantham Grange) sang “Jesus Take The Wheel” in the Talent Show, placing second in the vocal category. She participated after winning our State Talent Show in March at our Family Conference. Baylor Howerton (Bushy Fork Grange) won first place overall in the sign-a-song contest with her sign language performance to “How Far I’ll Go” from *Moana*. She competed after winning first place and Best In Show at our state and regional contests.

The Evening of Excellence is also the time when the National Youth Ambassadors give their final speeches and pass their roles on to the new Ambassadors. Katie Leonard received First Runner-Up for Female Ambassador, making North Carolina very proud. The new National Ambassadors are Jacob Gwinn of Washington and Tessa Taft of New York.

Just before the evening event, our youth attended the National G.R.O.W. Club banquet, where youth awards were presented. In a special ceremony at the banquet, Katie Leonard and Landon Woolard were honorably inducted into the National Grange G.R.O.W. Club in a ceremony led by Emily Hartsell who serves on the G.R.O.W. Club Board of Directors for the Southeast Region.

At the end of the banquet, National Youth Director, Charlene Espenshade, presented this year’s Albert S. Goss Award of Distinction to Jennie Gentry, honoring her for her work with youth, her service to the G.R.O.W. Club and her dedication to the National Grange’s Youth Program. Though completely shocked receiving this special honor, Jennie commented to attendees, “There is no greater honor than getting to serve as a Youth Director.” Our State President, Jimmy Gentry, received this award in 2015.

Held Saturday morning of the convention, the fourth annual National Grange Parliamentary Procedure Contest, for which six of our youth have worked hard this year to prepare. After a written test, live performance, and judges’ questions, our North Carolina team claimed first place in the contest for the fourth consecutive year. This team was made up of Marcus Avendano, Margie Griffin, Rylee Furr, Zac Mazag, Landon Woolard, and Katie Leonard, who served as President. Katie also received “Best Chairman” for the contest.

Outside of the awards, honors and performances, this outstanding group of young people represented our state demonstrating professionalism, hard work, dedication to the Grange, and love for their Grange friendships. They supported each other through all activities and cheered each other on, which is part of what makes the Grange “family” so special. We are extremely proud of our youth.

Corriher & Troutman Granges Honor Vets

By: Vinnie Duncan, Corriher member and Anita Gentry, Troutman member



Corriher Grange met on Saturday, November 4, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance. Shelby Karriker led the devotional on the Thanksgiving season. Program Director Vinnie Duncan presented a history on Armistice Day, now celebrated as Veterans Day. Veterans in attendance were recognized and celebrated by receiving a service coin as a “Thank You” for your service and a rousing applause. Four of the 12 veterans in attendance served in WWII – Paul Campbell, Kenneth Corriher, Hoke Karriker, and Philip Sloop.

Bobby Mault provided members and guests with the story of the beginning of The Price of Freedom Museum, which opened in 2006 and is housed in the old Patterson School located on Weaver Road. Bobby told of current auditorium renovations and the addition of the WWII 3-room house, depicting how a home might have looked during WWII. During the year, every 5th grader in Rowan County visits the Museum; so far over 12,000 have visited.

Bobby was honored with the Community Citizen Award for his dedication, personal involvement and outstanding service to the community and mankind. This award is presented on behalf of the National Grange, North Carolina State Grange and members of Corriher Grange.



Above:
Back row, L to R: Bill Waller, Wiley Goodman, Ray Preston Karriker, Aaron Hainor, Jerry Karriker, Chuck Bormann, Mike Bebbler
Front row, L to R: Hoke Karriker, Paul Campbell, Philip Sloop, Kenneth Corriher, Henry Starnes
Right: Bobby Mault talking to the group

Troutman Grange hosted a breakfast to honor local veterans. 25 veterans and their spouses, and twenty-three Grangers were in attendance for the celebration breakfast. Speaker for the event was Ralph Dagenhart, US Army Veteran and retired rural mail carrier. He acknowledged the Grange’s contribution to rural mail delivery. He spoke of his experience in the Vietnam War and how Veterans Day is special to him because of the men who sacrificed their lives and health in service for our country.

Veterans received a full breakfast of eggs, grits, sausage, bacon, biscuits, coffee and juice.



Activity at the legislature is typically pretty quiet as the holiday season approaches. Interim committees are meeting but the most interesting news has been around the ongoing NC Senate and House redistricting issue. Federal judges brought in a “map-making” expert to rework the controversial districts; his proposal was released on November 13th. The attorneys that represent both sides of the lawsuit had until November 17th to recommend changes to the new maps. Dec. 1st is the deadline for the plan to be submitted to the 3 federal judges that are administering the map redraw. Ultimately this panel of judges can accept the new map that the Stanford University law professor redrew, or they could possibly decide to go with a more modified version of the NC General Assembly’s map. Hopefully a compromise will be reached and this issue can be put to rest.

An Ohio based farm labor organization has filed a law suit against a provision of the NC Farm Act that was signed into law this past summer claiming the restrictions are unconstitutional and discriminatory. This provision prohibits farming operations from collecting union dues from workers and blocks future legal settlements that require a farm to enter into a collective bargaining agreement. Leaders in the NC agriculture industry support this provision saying that it reduces an unnecessary administrative burden on our farmers, but it does not halt union activities. Representative Jimmy Dixon, a farmer from Duplin County, who was one of the amendment sponsors, said the restrictions were needed to protect the state’s right-to-work laws and because of continued harassment from out of state. “There are predatory folks that make a good living coming around and getting people to be dissatisfied,” said Rep. Dixon. The Farm Labor Organizing Committee criticized Gov. Cooper for signing the bill into law in July citing that he refused to support migrant workers as well as the poor. Gov. Cooper is a defendant in the lawsuit. In spite of the Ohio based Farm Labor Organization Committee’s (FLOC) continued strides to infiltrate, North Carolina still has one of the lowest number of union workers in the US.

From the Hill

On November 16th, the US House passed President Trump’s Tax Reform package 227 to 205 along party lines. This plan would bring about the biggest overhaul of our tax system in 30 years. The Senate’s plan differs from the House’s version. One difference is the Senate version would repeal the Affordable Care Act’s requirement to buy health insurance. Below is a simplified breakdown of more differences in the House and Senate tax reform plans.

State and Local Deductions

After the tax reform framework was revealed last month, some lawmakers grumbled about a provision that would eliminate state and local tax deductions – meaning taxpayers in high-taxed states would lose a write-off. This impacted mostly blue states, such as California and New York.

The latest House plan ditches a full repeal of the deductions, called SALT, and instead leaves in place state and local property tax deductions up to \$10,000. However, other deductions – such as income and sales tax – would be eliminated.

Repealing the Individual Mandate

The Senate repealed the ACA mandate in its latest version of its tax reform legislation. The House is under pressure to follow suit, but House Speaker Paul Ryan doesn’t seem so eager. “Obviously we’re in favor of repealing the individual mandate, but we didn’t want to needlessly complicate the passage of tax reform,” Ryan said during a *Fox News Town Hall* Tuesday. “So we want to see the Senate go first and see if they can get that done and then we’ll discuss whether or not it gets included at the end [in conference].”

Corporate Taxes

In the House plan, corporate tax rate would be lowered to 20 percent from 35 percent. The Senate plan would make the change permanent but delay its implementation for a year.

Mortgage Deduction

The House plan would drastically reduce the cap on the popular deduction to interest on mortgages to \$500,000 for newly

purchased homes from the current cap at \$1.1 million. The Senate capped it at \$1 million.

Child Tax Credit

In the Senate plan, the child tax credit is raised to \$2,000 from \$1,000 in the Senate’s latest plan. The House plan had been criticized for not raising it enough.

High-income Households

The legislation eliminates the Alternative Minimum Tax, a supplemental tax meant to offset benefits a person with a high income could receive, however, the Senate’s plan would expire that repeal at the end of 2025. Republicans also want to phase out the so-called estate tax – sometimes referred to as a “death tax” by opponents. The federal estate tax generally affects wealthier Americans because it is only levied on a portion of an estate value transferred after death that exceeds a certain exemption level, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Standard Deduction

The House plan doubles the standard deduction used by more Americans. The Senate bill increases the standard deduction – which reduces the amount Americans are taxed – to \$12,000 for individuals. It also raises it to \$24,000 for married couples.

Pass-through Provisions

The Senate’s bill includes additional relief for “pass-through” businesses. Millions of American businesses use this format, where their profits are counted in the owners’ personal tax returns. The Senate version would set a new 17.4 percent deduction for “pass-through” income, aimed to help smaller businesses. It would also make it easier for taxpayers to fully benefit from the 17.4 tax deduction.

The House bill taxes many of them at a maximum 25 percent, down from 39.6 percent currently, and adds a lower minimum rate.

Tax Filing

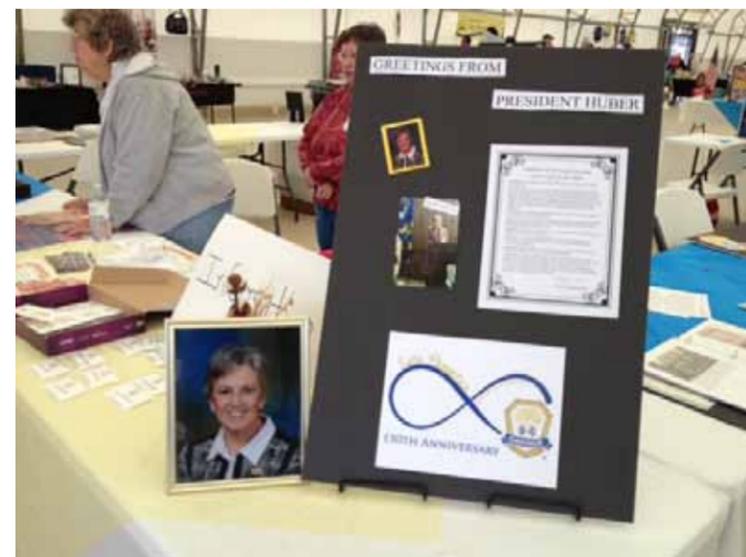
The legislation aims to simplify how Americans file their taxes. The filing system would be able to be completed on a postcard with just 15 lines for most Americans.

The House plan shrinks the number of tax brackets from seven to four, with respective tax rates of 12 percent, 25 percent, 35 percent and 39.6 percent.

Tax Brackets

The Senate measure keeps the current number of personal income tax brackets, seven, though it changes the rates to 10, 12, 22.5, 25, 32.5, 35 and 38.5 percent. That last top bracket for the wealthiest earners carries a higher rate of 39.6 percent under current law. The House bill goes further toward simplifying the tax system. It shrinks the number of brackets from seven to four, with rates of 12, 25, 35 and 39.6 percent.

Fox News’ Chad Pergram and Barnini Chakraborty contributed to this report. The Associated Press also contributed to this report. The Senate is still debating their version of the tax reform bill. When it will be on the floor for votes will all depends on when the Senate majority can get the votes to pass it.



FROM JOYCE!

Joyce Clodfelter, Community Service & Family Living Director

Our community service project for the coming year will be the MedAssist program. I am asking you to collect items for the FREE table, which is part of their community events when giving out medications. Many of you who attended Family Conference last spring will remember our Saturday outing to help with the MedAssist truck that came to Wilmington. One table was set up with free items from which people could choose two. I have talked with MedAssist and the following is a list of free items that are needed: rubbing alcohol, peroxide, deodorant (men and women), toothpaste, toothbrushes (one per pkg), mouthwash, cotton balls, cotton swabs, antiseptic cream/liquid, aspirin (81mg) and feminine hygiene products.

I hope we have as much enthusiasm as we have had the past two years working with MedAssist. This is a much-needed service to those less fortunate in our communities. I am looking forward to 2018 and to seeing what our Granges across the state can do with this project between now and next September at State Convention. May each of you have a blessed holiday season!

Grantham Grange Celebrates 150th

By: Jimmy Gentry

On a beautiful Saturday in late October, Grantham Grange held a huge celebration honoring the 150th anniversary of the National Grange. The event was held at the Wayne County Fairgrounds where there was plenty of room for a lot of different activities, which ran from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On stage entertainment was provided throughout the day with a variety of performers including North Carolina Grange talent winner, Casey Vann. Other activities included an antique vehicles and tractors display, corn hole games, an auction, a chili cook off, train rides for children, an educational soils demonstration, and a number of other activities. In an exhibition building, were a variety of vendors who displayed and sold crafts. One of those vendors there was Scott Mason, a TV personality with WRAL in Raleigh who had a booth offering books that he had written.

An opening ceremony was held at 10:00 a.m. with Grantham Grange President John Crawford presiding. Attending included a variety of Wayne County officials as well as two members of the General Assembly, Jimmy Dixon and John Bell. Loretta Washington from the National Grange staff attended. Jimmy Gentry, North Carolina State Grange President attended as well as three Board members, Robert Cayton, David Allen, and Raymond Hayes, Jr., Emeritus Board member Carlton Barefoot attended as well. Grantham Grangers did a lot of work on this event and were present to be sure the day ran smoothly. It was a great day, well-attended, and those present seemed to really enjoy themselves.

A Year in Review.....

With this issue of *Grange News*, we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas; we celebrate the close of 2017; and we anticipate the start of a new year.

Reflecting on 2017, there were challenges to overcome, opportunities to seize, times of sadness, and times of joy. We experienced the death of loved ones including special North Carolina Grange members. The pressing question now is: Have you accomplished your 2017 goals yet and are you prepared for the beginning of 2018? If you still have some items remaining on your punch list, like myself, time is drawing short and those important things needing attention must move to a priority spot. Now is a great time to review your tax planning for 2017. Are there expenses or donations to various charities you support that could help reduce your tax liabilities? If you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) health insurance plan, have you made/met your annual contribution limit yet?

Speaking of health insurance, remember that the open enrollment period for those with Medicare coverage ends on December 7th for a January 1, 2018 effective date, unless you are entitled to a Special Enrollment Period. This year there are several options available. The newest option available for 2018 is the Basic BlueRx prescription drug plan. We can combine this plan along with a Hi-Deductible F Medicare Supplement plan for a very cost-effective option. As a reminder, Medicare Supplement plans are accepted by any provider that accepts Medicare reimbursement. The Medicare Supplement option is essentially nationwide coverage. Medicare Advantage plans are available in many of our North Carolina counties as well.

For those under-65, the open enrollment ends December 15, 2017 for an effective date of January 1, 2018. This year, all our NC State Grange agents have a new tool available to them to assist their clients in the enrollment process. By using the Health Sherpa tool, they can enroll/renew members in a much quicker and efficient manner. Agents are assisting members who have lost their Grandfathered plans, current Affordable Care Act (ACA) members who need to update their financial status or making plan changes.

Agents and members alike have experienced numerous challenges this year with members losing their Grandfathered plans. Those members saw premiums increase anywhere from 100% to 400%. A few of those members did qualify for ACA premium subsidies, some were able to either join an existing employer group plan or establish their own small group plan thru their business. However, many faced the serious decision to either pay more premium dollars for, in many cases, less insurance coverage, go without coverage and pay the penalty or possibly join an association/co-op plan. This group of members had major decisions to weigh out this renewal season and our NC Grange agents rose to the occasion and gave these members the best information available for them to make an informed choice.

As we look forward to 2018, if there is an insurance opportunity that you, or your family needs to address, please know that our NC State Grange agents stand ready to assist you in every way possible. They are the experts that you can rely on for sound advice with you and your family's interest being at the pinnacle of all their recommendations and products they offer as a solution to your needs.

Cape Fear Grange in Fayetteville, NC continues their hard work on Carvers Creek State Park.

By: Ken Plummer



Spring Lake, NC is home to one of the lesser known treasures of the North Carolina state park system, Carvers Creek State Park. The Long Valley Farm portion of the park is comprised of 1,430 acres, and was donated to the state by The Nature Conservancy of North Carolina who had received the land and its buildings from the Estate of James Stillman Rockefeller. Mr. Rockefeller's will stipulates the land must always be used for conservation purposes. In the 1700's, the land was part of a large plantation known as "Ardnave" and was a working farm from 1912 to 2004.

After several members of the Cape Fear Grange visited the park, we were very anxious to find a way to support the park, as there is clearly potential to use the facility to help educate the community on the importance of agriculture in our history. There is nothing like a former working farm to help illustrate this point. Jane Conolly, Park Superintendent, suggested that we begin by refurbishing a circa 1940's pump house in the farm area that was on the verge of collapse. This pump house, which was the primary water source for the farm section of the property, was damaged when a tree fell on top of it a number of years ago. Not only was the roof extensively damaged, but the rear wall was also severely damaged. "The collapse or loss of this building would be a loss of the unique character of the park and its farm history," Conolly said. As a building in a state park, we would be required to renovate the building in a historically accurate manner. This would include utilizing pine lumber and tin roof repurposed from demolished buildings on site.

We were ready to select a date for the project when the park was hit with a double whammy. First, the park received about 10 inches of rain on September 28, 2016, and a week later Hurricane Matthew came through the area, depositing another 15 inches of rain. The dam and spillway on site were overwhelmed by the volume of rain, and severely damaged. The flooding also caused extensive damage to the access roads and other areas of the park. Based on this, we mutually agreed to postpone the project while the park staff focused on more urgent repairs.

Finally, on April 29, 2017 a 10 member team from the Cape Fear Grange completed the refurbishment of the pump house. This included replacement or reinforcement of the structural supports in the building and the roof, siding repair and replacement, and the installation of the tin roof. The shingles on the exterior walls were removed to return the structure to its' original condition. Superintendent Conolly is very thankful for our work and said, "Managing a state park is a lot like running a farm. The list of work to be done is endless and must be prioritized. The work on the old pump house completed by the Cape Fear Grange was a great success, and I am very thankful for their efforts." The members of the Cape Fear Grange were happy to contribute to this worthy cause, and hope maintaining the integrity of park structures helps visitors understand the use and importance of the structures required to operate the farm. We look forward to providing further support to the park in the future.



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