

The official publication of the NC Grange

January / February 2021

GRANGE NEWS

NC TROOPERS
ASSOCIATION
CAISSON UNIT

VET FARM

NEW GRANGE INTERN



contents

3	A Note From Jimmy NC State Grange President
4	Vet Farm
6	Caisson Unit
9	Membership Matters
10	Capitol News
11	NC Grange Foundation
12	Gotcha Covered
13	Community Service
14	New Grange Intern
	New Members
15	Save The Date
	In Memoriam

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UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4-10

Grange Camp

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.

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A NOTE FROM JIMMY: A FORCE FOR GOOD

It seems that division is becoming worse not only in the halls of Congress, but also among Americans. The concept of agreeing to disagree is losing to strong feelings with little desire to compromise and find middle ground. It seems that fear and anxiety is present among those who are part of the losing side each time we elect a new President. Why? Because the extreme views of both parties get the attention of the media, so it is easy for citizens to fear that a President might buy into those extreme views.

Who or what causes the division? That is hard to say but the finger is always pointed first to the President currently in office. I do not believe that there is any one person at which to point the finger. Yes, the President might play a part, possibly Congress, and maybe even some state leaders. The media might be part of the problem because of the way that they spin the news, and some outlets are clearly either right or left. The media really likes to publish arguments among elected leaders, especially if they make disparaging remarks about their colleagues.

The bottom line is some Americans have allowed forces from somewhere to cause division. Some have become less tolerant

of opposing views and more willing to criticize those who do not see things their way. I believe that the extreme divisions have not reached all of us. Most of us want to live in a country where we work through differences, and in the end, live as peaceful citizens. Disagreement has always existed, and it always will. What is important is how we handle disagreement.

A ray of hope in all of this is the Grange. I believe that our organization and our membership is what is right about our country. We are a mixture of people from various walks of life with our own viewpoints, and regardless of our deliberations we remain united. We care for each other, we help in times of need, and we respect our fellow members. Each year at the National Grange Convention there is often disagreement over some of the resolutions, but once we are finished dealing with them, we all remain collegial. That is the way that it should be! So do not forget that the Grange is a force for good in this country, and it is the activities that are performed in your local Granges that help to keep us as a positive influence.



A PURPOSE LED LIFE

by: Laurie Barnhart

NC GRANGE DONATES TO VET FARM

If you have ever read the *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, you will understand what is meant by the title of this article. Robert Elliott, the founder Executive Director of The Veteran's Farm of NC, Inc., (VFNC), personifies the title of this book. As Rick Warren states, "Knowing your purpose gives your life meaning, simplicity, focus and motivation." Robert Elliott did not always know his purpose, but he certainly began to find it through his work developing a program to give Veterans the opportunity to pursue a farming vocation. Although extremely challenging, most Grangers know the value and therapeutic benefits that can come from a farming career and life. Many veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which exacerbates the struggles that already exist when coming back to civilian life. Robert's hope in developing this program was, and continues to be, "To give Veterans a new mission, and America, new farmers."

Robert left the farming world at 18 because he saw the hardships of a family in agriculture and wanted out of that lifestyle. After five years in the Marines, an injury sustained from his service forced him out of active duty, and like many Veterans that exit the military, he was unsure of what to do with his life. He found himself back in the same unit as before but this time as a contractor working with the Marines until a mass-layoff took his and 3,000 others contractor jobs at Marine Corps Air Station in Cherry Point, NC. Jobs were scarce, and his only option was to return home to the family farm in Franklin County and focus on a degree in engineering at NCSU.

This was Robert's transition into the civilian world after 15 years of life with the Marine Corps. He quickly found himself

amidst the struggles so many Veterans face in this phase of life. After his first semester at NCSU, he realized that engineering school wasn't for him, and his only option left was to try his hand at farming. "I was depressed and was having such a hard time adjusting to post-military life," Elliott said referring to his return back into farming. "A chicken in the backyard kept jumping in my lap and staring at me as if she was telling me, 'hey, start farming already.'" Robert developed a passion for the farming way of life and began to do very well with his pastured livestock operation. "It honestly saved my life," he stated.

Robert was asked to speak to a group of agricultural leaders attempting to place more Veterans into agriculture about his experience, and his story spread like wildfire throughout social media. Veterans began calling every day and coming to the farm to learn how to do what he was doing, and he realized he could share this passion with other Vets looking for what he found.

An award for his work in the Veteran world led to a small opportunity to help NCSU Agricultural Institute with spreading the word about their two-year program in various ag topics with Veterans in NC. Soon after, Fort Bragg requested that he build a program for transitioning Soldiers to learn how to become farmers. The Soldier to Agriculture Program was born in 2017 from Robert's and Dr. Elizabeth Wilson's (Ag Institute Director) work. After successfully initializing this program, Robert continued to expand opportunities for Veterans by purchasing 50 acres of property on the outskirts of Sanford that will be the pilot location of VFNC.



The goals of the VFNC are to:

- Teach Veterans to farm on small to mid-scale size farms.
- Provide a fully operational farm where all training is hands-on with an existing agricultural business.
- End Veteran suicide and offer ways out of homelessness and joblessness.
- Provide equipment programs for veterans beginning farms.
- Provide strong focus on networking and marketing of Veteran-produced products.
- Offer mentorships, business planning, financial counseling and a connection to additional resources and partner organizations.

The NC Grange has been a crucial partner of VFNC by assisting in a few of Robert's endeavors with a working party for the Warrior Transition Battalion garden workday with Cooperative Extension Service's Master Gardners Program helping VFNC with a grant to purchase plasticulture equipment Veterans can use. The NC Grange was proud to present Robert with a check to The Veterans Farm in January in support of his efforts. We had the opportunity to walk a portion of this property with Robert and several of his board members as well as his foreman, Buck Staples, who is a Retired Army Veteran. Robert's plans are to live on the teaching farm to have close proximity to what he loves so passionately. He and his team and a host of volunteers will be gathering soon to begin clearing the property and raising money for VFNC which will be ongoing.

There is no doubt that Robert Elliott has found his "purpose" in life. Our Veteran community in North Carolina has certainly benefited from this purpose and will continue to. Please visit The Veteran's Farm website at vfnc.org to find out how you can help and support this very worthy effort, or email Robert at vETFarmofnc@gmail.com.



SUPPORTING THE NC CAISSON UNIT

by: Jennie Gentry



Nestled in a rural part of Goldsboro is a beautiful farm owned by Benny Grady, a State Trooper very dedicated to his job. As you drive onto the property, you see pastures, a precious country house, and a large, rustic barn. Visiting the farm is most definitely a special treat, which I recently had the privilege of experiencing. As we pulled up, we were immediately greeted by two sweet dogs who welcomed us with wagging tails. Next to greet us were two playful goats named Carlos and Petunia Belle who absolutely love the company of visitors. There are miniature horses, chickens and even a very loyal donkey. But what makes this farm so unique are the horses.

Housed in the barn are eight stunningly beautiful horses with black hair that looks like velvet. Of the Percheron breed, these horses are part of the state's Caisson Unit, which is also managed by Grady. Run by the NC Troopers Association, the Caisson Unit is one of only three in the entire country, which is one reason why this unit is so distinctive. This unit covers five states: North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, and South Carolina.

I must be honest; I did not know what a caisson was until I heard about the fundraising that Grantham and Brogden Granges were doing for Grady's group. A caisson is a beautifully polished wagon that is pulled by horses as part of the funeral procession of emergency personnel who have died in the line of duty. Personnel would include law enforcement officers of all types, fire fighters and EMTs. This also includes NC Governors and other incumbent members



Pictured Jimmy Gentry, Mark Hood, Benny Grady, Jimmy Martin, John Crawford



of the state. The caisson holds the coffin, which is draped in the American flag, and will either begin or end the funeral procession. The troopers in the unit will hop on the horses in complete unison and uniformly pull the caisson with the utmost dedication and pride to honor the fallen.

The Caisson Unit in NC started in 2008 at the funeral of Shawn Blanton, a State Trooper who was shot and killed while making a traffic stop near Canton, NC. Since then, they have taken part in around 90 funerals, five of which were held in 2020. In 2016, the unit found itself in a bind. Funds had depleted and things were not looking too promising. Around that time, Benny Grady had joined the Board of Directors for the Troopers Association and was up for the task of getting the unit back on its feet. That is exactly what he did. He found new horses that were donated to the unit and paid the high cost of transporting the horses to his NC farm out of his own pocket.

The Caisson Unit does not receive funding from the state, and the State Troopers that are part of the unit do not get paid to do this job. They travel to be part of the funerals out of pure kindness and respect for the families of the fallen. Funding comes from charitable donations and the community. After visiting with Grady and determining the needs of the unit, Grantham Grange member Mark Hood brought forth the idea at a Grange meeting to do something to help. After several meetings and



much planning, it was decided that the members of Grantham and Brogden Granges would help build a large building that Grady desperately needed on the property. Supervising the project was Grange member Joe Beamon. You can take one look at the large shelter and know that a lot of hard work and dedication was put into building it. Even hay was donated when the building was completed.

Not all the materials were donated. The association had to spend ample money to acquire what was needed for the building. Although the Grange members offered free labor and got everything built, the money has been depleted. Because of this, the Wayne County Granges are now fundraising for the unit with a goal to raise \$50,000 to replenish the unit's funds. The State Grange got involved in supporting the Caisson Unit after discovering the projects that Grantham and Brogden Granges were doing to support this special group. After meeting Grady and learning more about the unit, the NC Grange's Board of Directors recently decided to donate \$15,000 to the unit.

Grady has made some amazing changes to the unit. He has dedicated his whole life to this cause and his passion is infectious. In fact, Mark Hood commented, "He's so passionate, he could talk for days on it!" Before Grady took

"It's the community that allows us to do what we do. Without the community, we couldn't do anything."

- Benny Grady

over, no one could visit the horses and many people did not know there was even a unit in North Carolina. Now, you can visit the farm, meet the horses, and learn all about the amazing things the unit does. He and his wife, Pamela, even offer school groups the chance to visit the farm. Grady loves his job and wants the community to be part of the unit. He stated, "It's the community that allows us to do what we do. Without the community, we couldn't do anything."

When I visited the farm and met Grady, Grange members who built the large new building were also there. It was such a joy to hear them tell stories as they reminisced about the hot summer days when they worked to construct the





shelter. While talking to the group, Grady mentioned the importance of awareness. He stated, "It's never been about the money. It's about awareness." He simply wants people to know the importance of what this unit does to honor the fallen. When wrapping up our time with the group of Grangers, Grady stated, "You didn't have to make a decision to give, but you did. I don't have the words to say thank you, but it means everything to me."

As the group somewhat dispersed, Jessica Horton and I retreated to the barn to pet the horses. They were so gentle and sweet as they let us pet their soft faces. Grady then let Peggy out of her stall so that we could see her up close while her pal Rosie lightly kicked the wall of the stall beside her with jealousy. We even got to ride Peggy and see her calm nature.

After visiting with Grady and meeting the horses, I keep thinking about all the good that the Caisson Unit does. These troopers drop everything when duty calls. From all over the state, they have 24 hours to get to the farm and get loaded up before making the trek to honor someone who has fallen in the line of duty. This is a huge deal, especially to the families who have lost a loved one. I want more people to know about this special unit so we can offer donations and support. The only other two units in the country are in Texas and Washington D.C. The NC Caisson Unit is unique to our state and is definitely something North Carolinians should all be proud to support.

For more information on the NCTA Caisson Unit, you can visit their website at www.nctacaisson.org. If anyone would like to contribute to the Grange fundraiser, checks should be made payable to NCTA Caisson Unit and mailed to Grantham Grange, PO Box 133, Goldsboro, NC 27533. You can also donate through the unit's website.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Katie Greene

As we all know, 2020 was a very different year to say the least. There was a lot of uncertainty everywhere we turned. We started working from home and toilet paper was in limited supply, but we made it through the year! Just when I thought things were starting to turn around, I received a phone call from Jimmy Gentry.

It was the Saturday night after Christmas, around 7:30 p.m., and he called to inform me that the water pipe above my desk area at the Grange office had burst and flooded the entire office. When I received the call, my thoughts immediately were, "Oh no, what else can 2020 throw at me? You have got to be kidding me!" So, my

dad and I drove up to the office to meet Jimmy, Jennie, and the landlord to assess the situation. Papers that I had laying on my desk were ruined and pictures of my friends and family were wrinkly. After gathering my things, we returned home around 9:30 p.m. that night, and I placed everything out on a table to begin the dying process.

My basement was covered in papers, mostly my membership documents. Over the next few days the papers dried, and I was able to sit down and sort through them. As I was going through everything, I began thinking of ways I could put a positive spin on this bad situation. I realized how thankful I was to have been working from home because that meant that my computer and important paperwork (such as checks and bills) were at home with me instead of sitting on my desk. Otherwise, they would have been ruined, and I would have lost everything. I was thankful that the

pictures of my friends and family can be reprinted, and thankful that the damaged papers were only wrinkly and could still be saved. I also appreciated the fact that laying out all these documents gave me an opportunity to go through everything. All these factors gave me much-needed, positive inspiration for 2021!

Last year, I started working on a Membership Team. This team included people from across the state. I was super excited about getting the opportunity to work with these folks. Then, 2020 happened. After taking my positive spin on the bad situation with the flood at the office, I decided that 2021 was going to be THE year for membership! I have contacted the "old" Membership Team and have developed a plan of action for the year. Be on the lookout for more information to come. I am excited about what 2021 is going to bring to membership in the Grange!

CAPITOL NEWS

by: Laurie Barnhart

The North Carolina General Assembly convened for the 2021 Long Session on January 13. The brief session was primarily ceremonial held for the swearing in of General Assembly members. Legislators returned on January 27 to begin business. It began with a flurry of bills filing; 31 in the House and 25 in the Senate to be exact.

Speaker Pro Tempore Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore have agreed that the first priority of the 2021 session will be Covid-19. Both conservative leaders are very concerned that North Carolina is ranked one of the worst states for distributing the vaccines to residents. The Center for Disease Control ranked North Carolina in the bottom ten states. Unfortunately, the dispute between the Republican majority in both NC General Assembly Chambers and a Democratic Governor will likely continue. Both Senator Berger and Speaker Moore feel that Gov. Cooper has too much power in making emergency orders for North Carolina. Before any other business, the General Assembly will look at the COVID-19 relief package that has been released by the Federal Government.

The Senate and the House have announced the 2021-2022 biennium committee chairs. Some of the House standing committees have been restructured. They have also returned to multiple judiciary committees. The House and Senate committee chair appointments are as follows:

House Committee Chairs:

- **Agriculture:** Reps. Dixon (Senior Chair), McNeely
- **Alcohol Beverage Control:** Rep. Moffitt
- **Appropriations:** Reps. Lambeth (Senior Chair), Saine (Senior Chair), Arp (Senior Chair), Brisson, Bumgardner, Elmore, Faircloth, K. Hall, Strickland
- **Appropriations, AGNER:** Reps. Dixon (Senior Chair), Goodwin, McElraft
- **Appropriations, Capital:** Rep. Hastings
- **Appropriations, Education:** Reps. Hardister, Torbett, Hurley
- **Appropriations: General Government:** Reps. Cleveland, Riddell
- **Appropriations, HHS:** Reps. Potts, Sasser, White, K. Baker
- **Appropriations, IT:** Rep. Johnson
- **Appropriations, JPS:** Reps. Boles (Senior Chair), McNeil, C. Smith
- **Appropriations, Transportation:** Reps. Jones (Senior Chair), Iler, Shephard
- **Banking:** Rep. Kidwell
- **Commerce:** Rep. Sauls
- **Education - Community Colleges:** Rep. Hurley



- **Education - K12:** Reps. Blackwell, Torbett
- **Education – Universities:** Rep. Hardister
- **Elections Law and Campaign Finance:** Rep. Mills
- **Energy and Public Utilities:** Reps. Arp, Szoka
- **Environment:** Reps. McElraft, Yarborough
- **Ethics:** Reps. Sauls, Wray
- **Families, Children and Aging Policy:** Reps. Carter, Hunter
- **Federal Relations and American Indian Affairs:** Reps. Clappitt, Graham
- **Finance:** Reps. Howard (Senior Chair), Setzer (Senior Chair), Szoka (Senior Chair), Bradford (Senior Chair), Kidwell, Wray
- **Health:** Reps. Lambeth, Potts, Sasser, White, K. Baker
- **Homeland Security, Military and Veterans Affairs:** Rep. Goodwin
- **Insurance:** Rep. Humphrey
- **Judiciary 1:** Rep. Davis
- **Judiciary 2:** Reps. Stevens, Richardson
- **Judiciary 3:** Reps. Zachary, Rep. Rogers
- **Judiciary 4:** Rep. Blackwell
- **Local Government; Land Use Planning and Development:** Rep. Brody
- **Local Government:** Reps. Hanig, Watford
- **Marine Resources and Aqua Culture:** Rep. Hanig
- **Pensions and Retirement:** Rep. McNeill
- **Redistricting:** Rep. D. Hall
- **Regulatory Reform:** Rep. Riddell
- **Rules:** Rep. D. Hall
- **State Government:** Rep. Torbett
- **State Personnel:** Rep. Warren
- **Transportation:** Reps. B. Jones, Iler, Shepard
- **UNC BOG Nominations:** Rep. Hastings
- **Wildlife Resources:** Reps. Adams, Yarborough

Senate Committee Chairs:

- **Agriculture, Energy, and Environment:** Sens. Sanderson, Jackson, C. Edwards
- **Base Budget:** Sens. Jackson, Harrington, Hise
- **Commerce and Insurance:** Sens. McInnis, T.

Johnson, C. Edwards

- **Education/Higher Education:** Sens. Ballard, Lee
- **Finance:** Sens. Newton, Rabon, Daniel
- **Health Care:** Sens. Krawiec, Burgin, Perry
- **Judiciary:** Sens. Britt, Jr., Sanderson
- **Pensions:** Sens. Ballard, Harrington, Krawiec
- **Redistricting:** Sens. Daniel, Hise, Newton
- **Rules:** Sen. Rabon

News From The Hill

The Following are excerpts from Burton Eller, National Grange Legislative Director.

Thankfully, the 2021 Presidential inauguration went off peacefully although things looked very different with US flags representing the people that normally would be there. Following his inauguration on the January 20, President Biden's cabinet team has been rapidly coming together. So far top-level picks such as Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken have been confirmed, with votes on Secretary

of Transportation nominee Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandra Mayorkas, and Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo expected soon. As well, President Biden has moved faster than most previous administrations in appointing thousands of lower-level political positions throughout agencies in order to jumpstart his agenda.

With his cabinet coming together, President Biden has laid out his first legislative priority: a \$1.9 trillion COVID19 relief bill. In the \$1.9 trillion package are another round of stimulus checks at \$1,400, billions of dollars in aid for schools, state and local governments, small businesses, unemployment benefits, and vaccine distribution. As well, the package includes larger overhauls including an increase to a \$15 minimum wage, expanded paid leave for workers, increased tax credits for families with children, and an extension of an eviction moratorium. Despite efforts from the White House to gain Republican support for the bill, no Republican has indicated support for the current version and so, while the White House continues outreach, Democrats in the House and Senate are already pushing the bill through the complicated budget reconciliation process which will only require the support of Democrats to pass.

NC GRANGE FOUNDATION

by: Jimmy Gentry

In 2000, a Foundation was created within the NC Grange which created new opportunities for the organization and our members. It is a 501c-3 organization that is generally considered as charitable, and donations to the Foundation are tax deductible. The Foundation has a Board of Directors who are currently also members of the NC Grange Board. They are: Jimmy Gentry (chair), Chair, Robert Cayton, Julia Stack, Ned Hudson, and Deb Welch. This Board makes decisions regarding the Foundation including the approval of funds spent.

Funds may be spent from the Foundation if the expenditure fits one of the following purposes. 1. To promote educational programs with emphasis on domestic spheres

to develop a better manhood and womanhood among persons engaged or interested in agriculture or residing in rural communities. 2. To support the development of programs for rural community improvement. 3. To promote research in agriculture and economics. 4. To foster education, leadership, and self-reliance among youth. 5. To encourage the exchange of information with friends of agriculture in foreign countries. 6. To encourage and facilitate charitable activities for the benefit of the poor, handicapped, or underprivileged persons in North Carolina.

Recently, both the Foundation Board and the NC State Grange Board approved some changes to enhance the quality of the

Foundation. The decision was made to fund the scholarship program from the Foundation with funding provided from the NC State Grange. In addition, the Disaster Fund will be moved to the Foundation. We are also considering re-structuring the Foundation Board by adding members who are not members of the NC State Grange Board. If this change is made it will require an amendment to the Foundation Bylaws.

In the past, members and others have contributed to the Foundation in the form of memorials, to support youth to attend camp, for disasters, etc. Contributions to the Foundation are welcome so that those funds can be used for a worthwhile purpose.

GOTCHA COVERED

2020 HINDSIGHT

by : Mark Davis

How many times have we heard the phrase “hindsight is 20/20?” Usually this follows a mistake or a different choice that we could have, or maybe should have made, resulting in a different outcome. We do not have a rewind button on life, and once that moment is expired, there is no “re-do.”

This past year proved to be a challenge to all of us in many different ways. We suffered minor inconveniences such as not finding as many paper products as we wanted and not eating inside our favorite dining establishment. Then there were some more serious issues involving our jobs. Classifying positions and businesses as essential or not caused much heartache for many individuals and businesses. Thankfully, many of us found ways to work from home and carry on most of our duties. For those who needed to physically be at their place of business to work, such as barbers and beauticians, the closing of “non-essential” businesses became a very critical issue for them.

One of the most difficult times many experienced in 2020 was the inability to be with loved ones who were in nursing homes or hospitals. While many were able to see and talk with these loved ones behind windows or over the phone, nothing can replace that human touch and in-person comfort. This separation created an amplified void when a family member departed this world and their loved ones were not able to be there to say goodbye to them. On top of this, families had to deal with the Governor’s

mandated funeral limitations, leaving people to grieve alone.

In the hindsight of 2020, we can learn from our experiences from the past year. One of the biggest lessons that we all can use is that we are a resourceful and resilient nation. Look at many of the restaurants as an example. Many restaurants that were once dine-in only

support. This example reminds me of the Bible verse Ecclesiastes 4:12: “Though one can be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.”

One of the most important takeaways from 2020 is the realization that you cannot always believe everything you hear. We need to take the information we receive and verify its validity. Is it the full truth, or just a partial truth to get a specific reaction from us? Take into consideration the motives of those delivering the message. We need to question the source and ask ourselves if the information is logical, reasonable, and defensible. This is always the challenge given to our NC Grange Insurance Agents in regards to their actions for the way they conduct themselves and their business. If we all follow this guiding principal then we will continue to build a positive reputation and trust in our family, community, county, state and nation. Positive reputations and trust seem like rare commodities these days and are easily broken and difficult to regain, so we need to be mindful of our actions and words.

I believe that Psalms 66:10-12 adequately reflects this past year: “For You, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.” Moving into 2021, let us look and move forward to that place of abundance!



Courtesy: iStock/photo_Pawel

have now turned to drive-in and carryout as their mainstay revenue source. This has allowed them to keep their businesses alive. In my limited travel around the state, I have continued to see one chicken sandwich chain constantly having long lines around their building everywhere I go. Reports indicate they are making more profit now than before the pandemic closed their dining rooms. Some establishments took advantage of other resources to expand their usage. A local drive-in opened up to allow a high school graduation ceremony, youth and community revivals, open air concerts, movie nights, and even a wedding. We also learned how to depend on family members and neighbors even more as we shared everything from extra toilet paper rolls, babysitting needs, and grief

COMMUNITY SERVICE

by: Sharon Underwood

During the pandemic, we have been able to find ways to help others in need. I continue to welcome reports from your Granges about what you are doing in community service as you stay safe and socially distanced. In upcoming issues, I will share Grange community service updates that are coming to me. Jessica Horton enjoys putting your reports and photos in our magazine and on our Grange social media sites. Please let me know how your Grange is specifically helping others during the pandemic.

Our State Grange service project, Baby Bundles, is continuing through 2021. The organization needs anything from clothing and bibs to blankets and toys. Baby Bundles would also greatly appreciate donations of books for babies. Being from an educational background, I want to focus on literacy and books for this Grange News issue. Reading to young children encourages the love of books and prepares them for the future.

The National Center for Family Literacy provides tips for reading and selecting appropriate books for infants. A few are as follows:

1. **Content:** Choose books with bright colors and bold illustrations.
2. **Language:** Infants enjoy looking at pictures or books with a single word or short sentences. Nursery rhymes are good for this age too.
3. **Design:** Stiff cardboard books, cloth or soft vinyl books are good. The latter two can be washed and cleaned.
4. **Reading Aloud:** Reciting rhymes and songs are fun for children. Reading at nap time or bedtime is a good routine for families.
5. **Ask questions:** Ask things like, "What is that?" You can answer for them, until they can talk.

When you select books to donate for this state project, please consider these tips. Books make a huge impact on language development and early childhood intervention.

If it is safe for you, another idea for a service opportunity is to consider helping with local Covid-19 vaccination sites. The state has informed us that some counties need and want help. You can simply call your county's site and find out how you can help. Other groups who may need help are NC Med Assist and American Red Cross. Again, please ONLY do these things if it is safe for you to do so.

Sadly, my family lost our last Ferguson Aunt recently. Carolina Ferguson Finley was our mother's youngest sister. My grandparent's T.W. and Edith Ferguson were avid Grangers and had all four of their daughters involved in every aspect of the Grange. Aunt Carolina left this world on October 26, 2020 at age 84. Though in her older years she could not be as active in Grange, she was Ferguson Grange's oldest living member. She was named "1956 Grange Princess" as a young girl and over the years was proud to win many art awards in the State Grange Art Contest. She was a gifted artist and did many acts of community service as she used her talents to bless others. If there was a photo in the dictionary of a person who displayed kindness and care for others, her photo would be right there.

I will leave you with her favorite scripture which truly speaks to community service and loving one another. Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." I look forward to hearing any updates on community service work your Grange is doing during this time of the pandemic.

Sincerely,
Sharon Carter Underwood
Community Service Director
email shaunderwood1@gmail.com



Carolina Ferguson Finley

Favorite Fruit?

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEADERS

PINEAPPLE - MARK DAVIS
PEACH - EMILY HARTSELL
STRAWBERRY - DEBRA CAYTON
BANANA - ROBERT CAYTON
APPLE - DAVID ALLEN
WATERMELON - BOBBIE DELLINGER
HONEY CRISP APPLE - CRYSTAL ALLEN

WATERMELON - DEB WELCH
BLUEBERRY - VINNIE DUNCAN
GRAPE - JESSICA HORTON
STRAWBERRY - JANICE WILCOX
STRAWBERRY - JIMMY MARTIN
GRAPE - RAYMOND HAYES
WATERMELON - KATIE GREENE

APPLE - NED HUDSON
PEACH - DIANNE HUDSON
APPLE - CHARLES FORRESTER
PINEAPPLE - JENNIE GENTRY
PEACH - JIMMY GENTRY
STRAWBERRY - LAURIE BARNHART

NEW GRANGE
INTERN
ZIPPORAH HAYES



Zipporah Hayes, a member of Taylor's Bridge Grange, is serving as an intern for the NC Grange during the spring semester. The internship is part of her course work at NC A&T State University where she is majoring in Animal Science. She will be supervised by Laurie Barnhart, and much of her work will center around agriculture and legislation in the General Assembly, and possibly some federal issues. The internship is expected to end in early May when she completes the current semester.

Hayes has been a participant in the NC Grange youth program and is a very talented dancer. She participated in the 2019 State Convention as a delegate and has an interest in policy work.



*TO OUR NEWEST
GRANGE MEMBERS!*

Shaun Carroll - Beaufort County
Matthew Respass - Beaufort County
Kirby Johnson - Edneyville
Maggie Minton - Ferguson
Bennie & Pamela Grady - Grantham
Mary Melton - Old Richmond
Brian Bannigan - Old Richmond
Perry & Robin McKnight - Patterson
Ken Andrews - Schley
Archie, Beth & Toby Daniels - Schley
Elizabeth Hargrove - Schley
Bobby & Jane Blackburn - Westbrook



ARE YOU RECEIVING EMAIL FROM US?

Have you not been receiving your Grange News? Are you being left out of the loop? Contact Katie at the State Grange office (kegreene@ncgrange.com) to see what address we have on file for you!! Here at the State Grange office, we are getting lots of mail that is being returned. We want our members to get everything that we send out!

Also, do we have your email address? If you do not think so, sign up on the website and we will add you to the email list! We will not spam or sell your email address. It is strictly used for Grange related news and events.

FERGUSON GIVES!

by: Sharon Underwood

In December, four masked members of the Ferguson Grange helped pack Samaritan's Purse boxes for needy children at the Boone packing center. From left to right are: Brian McCann, Pam McCarrick, and Deborah and Lloyd Howell. These boxes will go to children in the Ukraine. Our hopes and prayers are to help and brighten these children's lives.



SAVE THE DATE!!!

2021 STATE CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 9-12



GRANGE Revival

Days End Campground
Sturgis, South Dakota
July 20-25, 2021

Mark your calendars and pack your bags!
Grange Revival 2021 is scheduled for July 20-25, 2021!
at Days End Campground in Sturgis, South Dakota.
More than 70 Grangers joined us in 2019 for the inaugural
event held in Ozark, Arkansas. Now it's your turn!



SAVE THE DATE!!!

2021 GRANGE CAMP JULY 4-10

In Memoriam

Susan Hunt
Anthony Naylor

Schley Grange
Westbrook Grange

You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

Psalm 118:28
* 50 Year Member



*The Grange
Exchange*

The Grange Exchange is a new column here in *Grange News* to help members sell an item. If you have something you'd like to sell email it to Jessica Horton at JLHorton@ncgrange.com to list it!



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1734 WILKESBORO HWY
STATESVILLE, NC 28625
704-878-0000
NCGRANGE.COM

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Stay Safe, Grangers!

