



CHRISTMAS IN JULY AT BIG KNOB GRANGE

submitted by Megan Stang
Big Knob Grange #2008 (PA)

On a warm July evening the Big Knob Grange Hall in Rochester, Pennsylvania felt more like December than the height of summer.

On July 25, 2025 the Grange hosted a festive "Christmas in July" Bingo that drew more than 200 neighbors, friends, and families for an evening of games, laughter, and fundraising. The event – equal parts fundraiser and community social – capped off with a \$1,300 jackpot, a lively 50/50 raffle, and a concession stand selling an unexpected seasonal treat: Christmas cookies alongside the usual hall favorites.

The event was advertised to the community ahead of time on the Grange's Facebook page and community calendars, and it clearly delivered on the promise of a fun night out.

One sweet surprise: the concession stand's holiday twist. In addition to the usual bingo-night concessions, volunteers baked and



Junior members and friends pose with a giant inflatable Santa and Big Knob Grange's Christmas in July.

Photo Provided

sold Christmas cookies, a playful nod to the event's theme that became an instant hit. The cookies were an icebreaker and a tiny bit of festive nostalgia that kept excitement alive through the last card. Between bingo admission, snack sales, and the 50/50 raffle, the night generated meaningful

Continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Christmas in July at Big Knob Grange	1
49 Distinguished Grange Applications Received	2
Grange Heirloom for September	2
Grange Foundation Awards Deaf Awareness Grant	4
Accepting Board of Directors Nominations	4
Register for National Grange Convention	5
Every Number Tells a Story	5
Hamp Watch: Where was our National Grange President last month?	6
Commentary: Food Near Me - The Ironic Tragedy of Rural Food Deserts	9
Recipes from the Heartland	10
Donate to the Grange Foundation for a special opportunity	11
Grange Member Benefit: Choice Hotels	12
Grange Store: #GrangeStrong Socks	12

49 DISTINGUISHED GRANGE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The National Grange received **49** applications from Community, Pomona, and State Granges to be recognized as Distinguished Granges this year. Applications are currently being reviewed. All Granges who qualify will receive a notification by October 30 letting them know of their achievement.

applications! Please review the list below; if your Grange is missing, but you believe it should be included, please contact Connie Johnston, Distinguished Grange Administrator at distinguished@grange.org no later than September 19, 2026.

Community Granges

- Bethlehem #137 (NY)
- Big Knob #2008 (PA)
- Brogden #967 (NC)
- Burns #160 (MI)
- Central Union #559 (CA)
- County Line #1751 (IL)
- Creswell #496 (OR)
- Eagle #1 (PA)
- Fairview #2177 (IN)
- Five Mile Prairie #905 (WA)
- Grantham #968 (NC)
- Gratiot #1898 (MI)
- Hamburg #2103 (PA)
- Harveys-Aleppo #1444 (PA)
- Hookstown #1980 (PA)
- Linganore #410 (MD)

- Marys River #685 (OR)
- Mica Flats #436 (ID)
- Montague #140 (NJ)
- Penns Valley #158 (PA)
- Pleasant Ridge #135 (ID)
- Poteet #1576 (TX)
- Prairie #1832 (IL)
- Progress #96 (PA)
- Redland #796 (OR)
- Rio Linda #403 (CA)
- Russellville #91 (PA)
- South Rutland Valley #53 (NY)
- Springwater #236 (OR)
- Stanford #808 (NY)
- Sterling #53 (MA)
- St. John's #729 (NC)
- Stony Point #1964 (PA)
- Thurmont #409 (MD)

- Turkey Hill #1370 (IL)
- Upton #125 (MA)
- Vaca Valley #298 (CA)
- Valley #1360 (PA)

Pomona Granges

- Clackamas County Pomona #1 (OR)
- Jefferson County Pomona #5 (NY)
- Mid-Michigan Pomona #61 (MI)
- St. Joseph/Cass/Kalamazoo Pomona #4 (MI)

State Granges

- Maryland State Grange
- North Carolina State Grange
- Oregon State Grange
- Pennsylvania State Grange

GRANGE HEIRLOOM FOR SEPTEMBER

Use the **Grange Heirloom Program** to teach your members and the community about some of the key cornerstones of the Grange. Materials are available at <http://www.nationalgrange.org/heirloom-program>.

You are welcome to choose any of the **Grange Heirlooms** at any time.

Use the hashtag #GrangeHeirloom when you share these important pieces of our Order on social media.



GRANGE FOUNDATION AWARDS DEAF AWARENESS GRANT

Award granted to Moosup Valley Grange #26, Rhode Island, for “Play Beyond Words: A Day of Connection”



September 2025 (Washington, D.C.) – The Grange Foundation is proud to announce the award of a **\$1,000 National Grange Deaf Awareness Grant** to Moosup Valley Grange #26, part of the Rhode Island State Grange, in support of its innovative project,

“Play Beyond Words: A Day of Connection.”

This inclusive community event, scheduled to take place at Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick, Rhode Island, will bring together children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing for a day of integrated play, crafts, and celebration. The event aims to foster natural connections among children of all communication backgrounds while raising awareness of deaf culture and the mission of Rhode Island Hands & Voices.

“Play Beyond Words” stands out as a model of community engagement and deaf awareness. With interactive games using visual cues, storytelling in American Sign Language (ASL), a deaf magician, and an inclusive 3K “Silent Steps” fundraising walk/run, the event will not only provide a joyful experience for families—it will also advance understanding, inclusion, and friendship across communication differences.

The Grange Foundation is especially proud to support this project’s commitment to accessibility, community outreach, and meaningful connection. From ASL interpreters and CART services to visual signage and sensory-friendly spaces, the event exemplifies the goals of the Grange’s historic commitment to the deaf and hard of hearing through the Deaf Awareness Program.

“Our goal is simple but powerful: to show children and families that communication differences should never be a barrier to friendship,” said Makayla Piers, the grant applicant and event coordinator. “We’re grateful to the Grange Foundation for believing in this mission.”

“We are proud to support this effort of Moosup Valley Grange #26 for their vision and leadership in creating a more inclusive and connected community,” Grange Foundation President Chris Hamp said. “We look forward to the stories, smiles, and impact this event will bring— and to the lasting connections that will grow beyond a single day of play.”

Grange Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports youth development, promotes agriculture education and research, improves communities, and fosters culture, heritage, citizenship and charitable activities.

ACCEPTING BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS



The Grange Foundation will accept nominations for members of the Board of Directors through Close of Business on October 13.

Interested persons should submit a letter of intent, bio, and a headshot to ngfb@grange.org and champ@nationalgrange.org.

The election will occur during a special pre-Convention Zoom meeting on October 28th at 8pm ET.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

funds to support local youth programming.

The 50/50 raffle was a signature part of the fundraising. The raffle paid out \$508 to the winner and raised \$508 for the Big Knob Grange Fair Queen Program, showing how a single community event can deliver immediate support to local youth leadership initiatives. The proceeds will go toward the Fair Queen's activities, appearances, and travel, helping

the young women who represent the Big Knob Fair and Beaver County at local and state events.

The Pennsylvania Fair Queen program provides structure and state-level opportunities for fair queens across the commonwealth, and local fundraising nights like this are a key part of keeping that connection strong.

Community events like this are the lifeblood of small-town traditions. They raise money,

Continued from page 1



Plates of Christmas cookies were a special twist on the concession stand for the Christmas in July event.

Photo provided

yes – but they also make memories: grandparents teaching grandchildren how to dab a bingo card, friends selling raffle tickets with bright smiles, and neighbors carrying a plate of cookies home.

At Big Knob Grange, a July evening became a little like December – with warm hearts, stacked cards, and the unmistakable taste of community spirit.



More than 200 neighbors, friends, and community supporters piled into Big Knob Grange Hall on July 25th for Bingo and more fun!

Photo Provided

**Submit your
stories, events,
and ideas to...**

GRANGE



Today!

<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>



If you have already registered for this year's National Grange Convention aboard the *Carnival Horizon*, but you didn't add your "swag items" when you checked out, you have the chance to do so thorough October 1!

Visit the National Grange website at <https://www.nationalgrange.org/159ngconvention> to add your limited-edition 159th Convention items.

These items will be given to you at check-in aboard the *Horizon* on November 8th.



Convention Swag T-shirt
Available in S - 3XL



Convention Swag Tumbler



Convention Swag Beach Towel



Convention Swag Tote

EVERY NUMBER TELLS A STORY

Courtesy of AT&T

AT&T knows connecting changes everything. Since the first phone call nearly 150 years ago, people have used phones to connect with those who matter most, memorizing phone numbers as children for emergencies, sharing them with friends, and keeping them close—like Grandma did near the kitchen phone to call on birthdays.

As AT&T focuses on the best ways to keep people connected for generations to come, technologies may evolve, but the phone numbers that hold those memories don't have to. With newer technologies like AT&T Phone - Advanced and wireless, customers can keep their same phone number to stay connected to those that matter most.



The **Every Number Tells a Story** campaign invites you to share your special home phone number story.

Share your every number story here: [Every Number Tells a Story - AT&T Connects](https://www.attconnects.com/everynumber/) or at <https://www.attconnects.com/everynumber/>

Or call and leave a message : 1-855-551-2662

HAMP WATCH: WHERE WAS OUR NATIONAL GRANGE PRESIDENT LAST MONTH?

This monthly feature highlights where National Grange President Christ Hamp has been and what she's been up to in the month prior. Want to see her in your neighborhood or at your Grange event? Email her at champ@nationalgrange.org. This week, we reflect on August.



August 4: Five Mile Prairie Grange #905 (WA) - Free Books and Ice Cream Parking Lot Event. A simple but meaningful event bringing literacy, local engagement, and a little fun to the heart of the neighborhood.



August 14: My birthday celebration with family and the traditional made-from-scratch, with love by mom, cherry cake.



August 13: Columbia Grange #87 (WA) - It was a beautiful day and gathering of friends, neighbors, and fellow Grange members (from both sides of the Columbia River Gorge) to recognize Brother Charlie Deach for his selfless and heroic actions which allow the historic Columbia Grange hall to stand today. Read the proclamation on page 8.



August 15: The 40th Class Reunion of Monroe High School's Class of '85. Go Bearcats!



August 19: I got a firsthand look from inside the cab of a combine during wheat harvest. From this vantage point I witnessed both the raw power of modern agriculture and the timeless rhythm of the harvest season. Thanks to fellow Granger and neighbor Greg Lucht for answering my million and one questions and providing real perspective and experience on everything from Right to Repair to crop rotation to commodity pricing.



August 22: A subset of the Archives Study Committee visited Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore to get into a historical mood for our task at hand.



August 22-25: Success! The archives of the National Grange are inventoried.



August 30: We gave Ralston Grange #943 (WA) a hand with their food and Bingo booth at the Wheat Land Communities' Fair in Ritzville. A great day for work and play.



NATIONAL GRANGE

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PROCLAMATION

Honoring Charlie Deach for Heroism and Devotion to the Grange

Whereas, the Columbia Grange Hall in Klickitat County, Washington, has stood at the heart of its community since 1891 as a beacon of service, fellowship, and community for generations of Grange members and neighbors alike; and

Whereas, in the afternoon hours of July 18, 2025, the fast-moving Burdoin Fire threatened and destroyed more than 44 structures and 11,000 acres of the landscape along the Columbia River Gorge near Lyle, where the historic Columbia Grange Hall stands; and

Whereas, while others rightfully sought safety amid a Level 3 “Go” Evacuation Order, Charlie Deach, chose to stay and fight – placing himself at great personal risk to defend the Columbia Grange Hall from the approaching fire; and

Whereas, Brother Deach’s bravery and swift action were instrumental in protecting the Hall from what could have been total destruction, preserving not just a building, but a legacy, a gathering place, and a symbol of rural resilience and unity; and

Whereas, his selfless act exemplifies the very spirit of the Grange – service above self, love of community, and a deep reverence for the institutions that bind us together across generations;

Therefore be it Resolved, that the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry does hereby formally and gratefully recognize Charlie Deach for his heroism, his commitment to the preservation of Grange heritage, and his enduring example of leadership, courage, and service.

Let it be known that Charlie Deach’s actions on that day reflect the highest ideals of the Grange, and he shall ever be remembered as a guardian not just of a building, but of the spirit of our Order.

Signed this 13th day of August 2025.

Christine E. Hamp, President
The National Grange

COMMENTARY: FOOD NEAR ME - THE IRONIC TRAGEDY OF RURAL FOOD DESERTS

Food deserts not only affect cities. Our disappearing farms mean they affect rural areas with plenty of land to grow food.

by Brian Reisinger

Originally published by [The Daily Yonder](#)

The idea of a food desert would have seemed impossible to us, growing up so close to all the earth can provide.

As kids, we'd walk with our dad to bring the cows in from the pasture, and watch as they gave milk that became dairy products for other families. Each spring, he'd plant crops that by fall seemed plentiful enough to feed and fuel all the world.

Imagine my surprise years later to learn food deserts were right down the road. Somehow, we've allowed food deserts—places with poor access to affordable, healthy food—to spread even to regions with plenty of fertile land to solve the very crisis.

In fact, food deserts are most common in rural states, representing a problem I'd come to learn can unite rural and urban America. Nearly [54 million Americans](#)—about one in six—live in food deserts, where poor access to grocery stores and low income drive a growing crisis, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In Midwestern states like Wisconsin, [that includes parts of Sauk County](#) near where I grew up, and neighboring farm counties. The Annie E. Casey Foundation found the ag-heavy South is the most [common home to food deserts](#). And yet, early food deserts were urban areas where the wealthy fled to the suburbs, drawing grocery stores out of inner cities, according to the [National Library of Medicine](#).

It doesn't have to be this way.

The central issue is how we've wiped out our family farms, at the rate of [45,000 per year on average for the past century](#). This is due to a combination of [economic crises impacting farms](#) from the Depression to today, [government policy under both parties](#), and technology [needlessly leaving many family farms behind](#).

In rural areas, vanishing farms drove population loss and economic decline. In both rural and urban areas, the loss contributed to a vulnerable supply chain. As industries taking food from the farm gate to the dinner table consolidate, we face spiking food prices when a large distribution center or other link in the chain goes down amid disaster (i.e. Covid-19, or bird flu).

Losing farms also drives our [growing rural-urban divide](#), with declining rural areas resenting urban areas, and many urban residents not understanding the nuances of rural life (from diversity of thought to the [diversity of its people](#)).

This means policymakers, divided along similar lines, can't see solutions, even though they're amazingly close at hand.

In the town nearest our farm, we lost our grocery store,

and a farm supply store carries foodstuffs to fill the gap while a fierce debate has unfolded over a dollar store coming in. This makes rural food deserts insulting: people producing America's milk, or growing other crops, don't like feeling they can't provide for themselves.

And yet, so many farmers grow something other than food because of the complex economic, political, and technological issues wiping out farms. Many are left with markets only for certain crops, often heavily subsidized for animal feed, offering a certain level of stability but little economic growth to advance.

These farmers have places to sell commodity grain, not fresh vegetables. Meanwhile, those farmers with access to food markets usually must sell into our national supply chain, where so much food is highly processed, and large companies reducing costs through economic scale are favored (even though supply chain disruptions increasingly jolt consumers' prices back up).

I saw half of the solution growing up on our family farm, and half splitting time between there and northern California, near my wife's family. There, the local food movement is strong with plenty of affluent, food-conscious people, but family farms are [facing some of their biggest challenges](#).

The solution could be shifting our food supply to combine the best of both places, creating farmland opportunity and consumer choice. A three-pronged approach would include focusing government and private R&D around technology to help farms of all sizes innovate; ensuring government policy guards fair markets, and diversifying subsidies to stabilize a well-rounded food supply, instead of playing favorites; and calling on consumers to shift how they shop.

We can't all find everything locally, but everyone can take small steps, patronizing the [growing number of farmers markets](#), grocery stores carrying local goods, local butcher shops, community-supported agriculture, or online marketplaces.

These changes go beyond one-off programs toward real, local market infrastructure. It's a lot of change, but I know we can do it. After all, for so many suffering in food deserts, a farm that can help is just down the road.

Brian Reisinger is an award-winning author and rural policy expert who grew up on a family farm in Sauk County, Wisconsin. His book "Land Rich, Cash Poor," was named Book of the Year by the nonpartisan Farm Foundation. He serves as senior writer for Midwestern-based Platform Communications. You can learn more or contact him at www.brian-reisinger.com

Recipes from the Heartland

The America's 250th Grange Workgroup is celebrating our country's 250th Anniversary by "throwing back" to some classic recipes from Grange cookbooks. Do you have favorite recipes that evoke the American spirit which you would like to see published again? Send them to Lew Gaskill at olgaskill@comcast.net. Please include which Grange cookbook your recipes come from.

This week's recipes are courtesy of Daria D'Arienzo, Williamsburg Grange #225 (MA), with the recipes from the Williamsburg Grange's Grange and Community Cookbook (1952).

Note from Daria: I decided to try and offer these two because they are basic cakes, easy to make, using ingredients that are in your own pantry or easy to find. Neither takes a long time or has too many steps, and with the busy lives people have, they offer the possibility of making something homemade in a short time. The **Busy Day Cake** is versatile, and you can add a variety of flavors or chocolate chips or nuts or citrus zest. When taste-testing, my husband and colleagues thought this one was a keeper— not too sweet and they thought "one of the best". The **Wonder Cake** has no dairy—and is fun to make. It is moist and taste-testers said it was a really good cake too.

Busy Day Cake

Recipe submitted by Theresa Walpole

1 2/3 cups flour	2/3 cup milk
1 cup sugar	1/3 cup shortening
1/4 tsp salt	1 egg
2 1/2 tsp baking powder	1 tsp. flavoring

Measure milk, add shortening until it reaches line indicating 1 cup. Sift flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder together. Add shortening, milk, unbeaten egg, and flavoring all at once. Beat all ingredients together with a rotary beater for 2 minutes. Pour into a well-greased and floured pan. Bake 35 minutes at 350 degrees F.

Use Broiled Jiffy Frosting (below).



Broiled Jiffy Frosting

3 Tbsp. melted Oleo	2 Tbsp. cream
5 Tbsp. brown sugar	1/2 cup shredded coconut

Spread the mixture on the cake while still warm. Place low under broiler and brown.

Watch carefully, when icing begins to bubble so it won't burn.

Daria's Notes & Adjustments:

1. Used scant 1 cup sugar.
2. Used about 1.5 tsp of vanilla for flavoring - any flavoring can be used. Chocolate chips could be added, or zest of an orange or lemon.
3. Baked in a 7.5-inch springform pan for 45 minutes. Placed a sheet of tinfoil over the cake after 35 minutes. Lined the bottom with parchment paper.
4. Baking time will depend on the size of the pan and your oven.
5. Dusted cooled baked cake with powdered sugar - did not ice.

Wonder Chocolate Cake

Recipe submitted by Helen McColgan

1 1/2 cups sifted flour	1/2 tsp. salt	1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup sugar	6 Tbsp. melted shortening	1 cup cold water
3 Tbsp. cocoa, leveled	or cooking oil	
1 tsp. baking soda	1 Tbsp. vinegar	

Put all dry ingredients into the flour sifter and sift into a square ungreased pan. Make 3 holes in the dry ingredients in the pan. Put 6 tablespoons of oil or melted shortening in one; the vinegar in the second; and the vanilla in the third. Pour 1 cup of cold water over all. Stir with a fork until all the ingredients are thoroughly mixed.

Bake for 25 minutes at 350 degrees F.

Frost while in the pan.


Remove the first slice with a spatula.

A 7"x7"x2" pan is recommended.



Daria's Notes & Adjustments:

1. Used scant 1 cup sugar.
2. Used white vinegar.
3. Used canola oil.
4. Used a generous 1 tsp. vanilla
5. Baked 35 minutes. Baking time will increase depending on the oven and pan.
6. Did not frost - dusted with powdered sugar.



You could be one of the special guests chosen to represent a National Grange officer during the closing of the second day's business of the 159th Annual Convention on Monday, Nov. 10 at 4 p.m.!



**GRANGEFOUNDATION.ORG/
GENERAL-FUND**

HOW TO ENTER

Make a **\$25 donation** to the Grange Foundation General Fund between June 21 to Nov. 2, 2025, and you will have the opportunity to receive a priceless experience – serving as a National Grange Officer during the closing ceremony.

- 9 donors will be drawn. (Each individual \$25 donation - or donation in a multiple of \$25 - counts as an opportunity for the drawing. i.e. \$200 = 8 opportunities). New donations ONLY.
- You (or someone you choose) must be present at the Convention aboard the *Carnival Horizon* to take part.
- Winners will be notified on Monday, Nov. 3, and have until Thursday, Nov. 6, to accept or notify the National Grange of their stand-in selection.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY at GrangeFoundation.org

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NATIONAL GRANGE

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Publisher - Christine Hamp, National Grange President. Available to members at champ@nationalgrange.org or by phone at (509) 953-3533

Editor - Philip J Vonada, National Grange Communications Director. Contact to submit a story idea for *Grange Today!* or *Good Day!* magazine, request assistance with publicity, business cards, social media, and more. Email pvonada@nationalgrange.org or call/text (814) 404-7985

Leadership Training & Membership Development - Amanda Brozana, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director. Contact us to learn more about membership recruitment or how to start or reorganize a Grange, leadership training, and more. Email abrozana@nationalgrange.org or call/text (301) 943-1090

Legislative and Policy Issues - Burton Eller, Legislative Director - *National HQ*, ext. 114 or email beller@nationalgrange.org

Membership Recognition, Grange Supply Sales, Grange Programs and Member Benefits -

Loretta Washington, *National HQ*, ext. 109 or email Lwashington@nationalgrange.org

Free Grange Websites, Emails, *Good Day!* subscription questions, and Membership Database -

Stephanie Wilkins, IT Director. *National HQ*, ext. 101 or email swilkins@nationalgrange.org

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