

PUG Times



The newsletter of the Pittsfield Union Grange

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December 2018

President's Message

As Grange president, I don't feel especially competent. Lately I've felt even less so than usual, preoccupied with my foster child and generally forgetful and muddled. And I had nothing to say in a president's message. But just today there was a further tiny twist in the tale of the easement. Those who come to meetings know that a developer asked us for an easement to build a sidewalk across our property that will go from his development to the commercial area across Oak Valley Drive. It will be sad if we lose trees, but on the whole this is not a bad thing. He sent us a draft. We discussed it, and I sent an email to our ever-helpful Granger/real estate lawyer, Joe Lloyd. He didn't respond and I forgot about it, but then just before the meeting at which I wanted us to vote I remembered, called him, and got several valuable suggestions. We voted to approve it with these changes. I forgot to tell the developer for at least a week. Eventually he sent me a version with the changes, and we were okay with it, and State Grange was okay with it. It took me several days to get it printed, and only then did I see that it needed to be notarized. So after Thanksgiving I went into my bank, signed it for the notary, and then mailed it to the developer—who didn't receive it for over a week.

Today he emailed me to say that he did finally get it, but I may have to do it again because I

printed it on both sides of the paper. The county registrar may not accept it. It had not crossed my mind that a document could be less legally valid because you tried not to waste paper. And so it goes.

Upcoming Events

Sat, Dec 15 - Contra Dance

Martha Vander Kolk calls to music by Luke Panning and friends. 7:30 pm. \$10/\$7 Grange members/\$5 students

Sun, Dec 16 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Drake Meadow calls to music by Donna Baird and Janet Goldwasser. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Fri, Dec 21 - Holiday Party

Join Grangers and friends for a potluck supper, followed by music and grab bag gift exchange. Grange provides a turkey. Bring a dish to pass and a wrapped gift, homemade or under \$10. 6:00 pm

Wed, Jan 9 - Grange Meeting

Bronwen Gates will describe the rituals of a traditional Fijian wedding, from her point of view as the non-Fijian mother of the groom. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:15.

Sat, Jan 19 - Contra Dance

Maeve Devlin calls to music by Big Fun. 7:30 pm.
\$10/\$7 Grange members/\$5 students

Sun, Jan 20 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Drake Meadow calls to music by Donna Baird and friend. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Wed, Feb 13 - Grange Meeting

Program TBA. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:15.

Sat, Feb 16 - Contra Dance

Peter Baker calls to music by Nutshell. 7:30 pm.
\$10/\$7 Grange members/\$5 students

Sun, Feb 17 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Drake Meadow calls to music by Donna Baird and Fred Karsch. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Sat, Feb 23

Ruth and Joan celebrate their birthdays with a contra dance. Caller TBA. Music by Debbie Jackson, Brad Battey, and Steve Schneider. 7:30 pm. The dance is free, but donations to Camp Cavell Conservancy are encouraged.

Thu, Mar 7 - Family Math/Science Night

Grangers, friends, and members of the Pittsfield School family present science and math activities to students at the school. No experience needed. Contact Joan to volunteer. 6:00-7:30 pm

Wed, Mar 13 - Grange Meeting

Dave Langdon talks about collecting traditional fiddle tunes in the Thumb, with examples. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:15.

Sat, Mar 16 - Contra Dance

Caller and band TBA. 7:30 pm. \$10/\$7 Grange members/\$5 students

Sun, Mar 17 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Martha Vander Kolk and Beth Battey call to music by Donna Baird and Janet Goldwasser. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

State Grange Convention and New PUG Mini-project

Joan reports on this year's meeting

The Michigan State Grange Convention was at West Oshtemo Grange Hall October 18-20. Sylvia and I went on Thursday afternoon, since I had not read the schedule carefully enough to note that not much happened then. We hung out and had a pleasant walk along back roads of Kalamazoo County.

It occurred to us that some PUG members and friends enjoy having small and mindless knitting projects. Hats and scarves meet those criteria, but most of us do not need more of them. Making such things to donate is a very Grange-y thing to do. If you knit some extras, you can give them to Sylvia or me, along with an estimate of the time you spent. When we have some, we will find a worthy organization to accept them. I (Joan) have a large stash of yarn that can be tapped for this project.

I went back on Friday. The main issues were the budget, which was not controversial, and the election of officers. There were a few changes; Chris Johnston continues as master.

Next year, PUG is officially one of the host Granges.

National Homeschool Music Ensemble

NHME provides opportunities for homeschooled students to play music together. It rents our hall on Wednesdays, and now owns the former Tecumseh Grange Hall, which they use on Tuesdays. Musicians from both groups combined into two ensembles - strings and winds - to play a concert for us at the November meeting.



Archaeology in Greece

Ruth reports on Megan's program.

The October 10 program was a presentation by Megan Wilson, a graduate student in Classical Studies at the University of Michigan, about her time in Greece with the American School of Classical Studies. ASCSA, located in central Athens, has an academic year program that introduces archaeologists, historians, and other students of ancient Greece to the material remains of the past. The members visit the sites and museums of Athens repeatedly, travel around the country on extended bus trips, and go to the islands of Crete and Delos—and they can often go to areas that aren't open to the general public. While the school's emphasis is on the ancient world (up to about 400CE), they also visit Byzantine churches and monasteries, and of course the members also get a close-up view of the often turbulent life of contemporary Greece. (She said, though, that people didn't blame individual Americans for policies they didn't like.)

This talk, though, was all about the pictures. Megan has a fine eye for a shot, for catching the moment when the light hits at just the right angle or for moving into the best position to see something in a new way. Her special interest is in theaters, but the pictures were wonderfully varied. Those of us who have been to Greece were wishing we could go back, and those who haven't were wishing we could go. She also talked about the complicated problem of visiting ruins: there is what was once there, what was excavated, and what has been restored. For the sake of tourism, columns are put back up, for example, and sometimes you can easily see what's ancient and what isn't— but not always.

Summer Sun in Alaska

Joan reports on her own program.

Russia, gold, WWII, statehood, earthquake - the big influences one notices when traveling in "The Great Land". Alaska also has a high percentage of citizens with native American ancestry.

Russian influence is greatest in Sitka, which was the capital during that period. The bishop's house is now a museum, but St Michael's Orthodox Church still has an active, if small, congregation.

Gold mining is (was) all around the state. Juneau and Nome were sites of gold rushes, and Skagway became important as a jumping off site for the Klondike. The Iditerod Trail was originally a supply route for Nome. Mining for gold was suspended during WWII - gold was not an essential metal - and some mines did not reopen afterwards.

I found it interesting that mining in Juneau was very different from mining in the Klondike (Yukon). In Juneau, the placer (nugget) gold was soon depleted, and large operations blasted the ore, stamped it into sand, and then extracted the gold chemically. In the Klondike, all gold is palcer gold, part of the gravel of a terminal moraine from the ice age. The problem is unfreezing the permafrost before running it through huge sluices. This also soon became the job of big companies, though there are still some small claims.

WWII did more than hurt gold mining - it built the Alaska Highway, to provide a land route for supplying the military defense and later opening the Yukon and interior Alaska to automobile tourism, as well as commerce. For many years a rough gravel road, it is now a fine paved highway.

Since statehood in 1959, there have been efforts to move the capital away from Juneau. Some have gone as far as searching for a new site (not Anchorage), but so far it has not moved.

The earthquake of 1964 devastated the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and Anchorage. Seward and Valdez suffered massive destruction. In the following years, Seward lost its refineries and much of its rail traffic. Other communities lost fish plants. The commerce of the entire area realigned. Lessons learned - and a weaker quake - resulted in far less damage from the one last month.

The title says "summer sun". I was in Fairbanks for solstice, and there the sun set at 12:45 am and rose again at 2:45. I would suppose it never got dark between, but did not stay up to observe. Juneau, being both east and south - Alaska is just one time zone - has sunrise and sunset that seem much more normal to a Michigander.

Pictures of Fall Activities



John Broesamle selling apples



The start of the cider making process



Loading the cider press with mash



Peter digging a trench for the hose that drains the old well pit



The finished trench, before the hose is laid in it



Robin and Ruth handing out dictionaries

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