

PUG Times



The newsletter of the Pittsfield Union Grange

Volume 19, Number 3

November 2019

President's Message

“A Good Patron...Dispenses Charity”

I am not always happy with the chaplain's message in the State Grange newsletters. I'm not a Christian, so it's not surprising that I am turned off by Christian messages. The most recent one, though, I found very interesting (even though the next-to-last sentence implied that we should want to bring others to Jesus).. Jeff Swainston, the chaplain of State Grange, discusses a frequent dilemma of the charitable, the fear that the people we help don't really need it and that we're being scammed. He argues that this isn't really a relevant question, since Jesus told his followers not to judge others, and the Golden Rule requires us to imagine ourselves in need and help accordingly.

I sometimes volunteer at a food pantry, and Jeff's advice is valuable there. Most of our patrons are meticulously ethical. We often hear “I have enough of that this week, so I'll leave it for those who really need it.” I once asked an elderly woman if she could use some light bulbs when we had some, and she cried “Thank you, Jesus!” in a way that rang true. But there are a few who try to take more than their share, and I do have moments of suspicion about others. But while it's my job to ensure that distribution follows the rules, I shouldn't worry about whether somebody has told the truth when they said they needed the food we provide.

On the other hand, when I give away money, I want to be sure that it is well spent. I look at Charity Navigator to make sure that the overhead isn't too high. I go to “The Life You Can Save” for their recommendations of the most efficient charities. Some, like the Fistula Foundation, can't really go wrong—nobody has obstetric surgery who doesn't need it. But even if you did far more research than I do, you can't be certain. At a certain point, you just have to try to follow the Golden Rule and hope that good gets done.

Upcoming Events

Sun, Dec 15 - Family Dance

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

Fri, Dec 20 - Holiday Party

Grangers and friends gather for a potluck dinner (main dish provided by Grange), caroling, and grab bag gift exchange. Bring friends, a dish to share, and a small present suitable for anyone (\$10 maximum or homemade). 6:00 pm

Sat, Dec 21 - Contra Dance

Peter Baker and guest callers call to music by Brad Battey and friends. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

2020 dues are due in January.

Wed, Jan 8 - Grange Meeting

Jorge and Griselda Broggio, from the Tango Argentino Club in Michigan, will tell us about tango. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15. All welcome. Free.

Sat, Jan 18 - Contra Dance

Megan Wilson calls to music by Hotline Strings. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Sun, Jan 19 - Family Dance

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

Wed, Feb 12 - Grange Meeting

David Hoornstra and friends from Ann Arbor Sword will tell us about fencing, and what to watch for if it is televised during the summer Olympics. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15. All welcome. Free.

Sat, Feb 15 - Contra Dance

Peter Baker and/or Martha Vander Kolk call to music by Nutshell. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Sun, Feb 16 - Family Dance

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

Wed, Mar 11 - Grange Meeting

Joan Hellmann will give a travelogue on her recent trip to the Falklands, South Georgia Island, and Antarctica. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15.

Sun, Mar 15 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Caller TBA; music by Donna Baird and Nan Nelson. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Sat, Mar 21 - Contra Dance

Peter Baker and/or Martha Vander Kolk call to music by Pearl Street. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Wed, Apr 8 - Grange Meeting

Kathy Daly will tell us about the Back Door Food Pantry. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:15. All welcome. Free.

Sat, Apr 18 - Contra Dance

Ken Gall, from Indianapolis, will call to music by the Luke Panning Quartet. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Sun, Apr 19 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults. Caller TBA; music by Betsy Beckerman and Paul Winder. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Tue-Thu, Apr 21-23 Rural Education Days

More info later

Thu, Apr 30 - Family Math and Science Night

More info later

State Grange Convention

Ruth reports on Friday's session.

The State Grange this year was at a time especially difficult for most of us. Only I could attend, and only for the day on Friday. I was present for discussion and voting on four resolutions. One passed: that we encourage the Department of Transportation to install solar powered flashing lights on the "wrong way" signs on freeway ramps. The others failed. One urged the National Grange to encourage the IRS to make charitable contributions deductible on the short form. A second called for the MDOT to mark lines on roads immediately after resurfacing, and another to have MDOT create a program for the quick removal of roadkill. There were practical issues with all of these, which came out in the discussion (in which I actively participated).

I was unfortunately not able to stay for two resolutions from the agriculture committee that I would have supported: one urging the reuse of vacant areas in cities for urban agriculture, after soil and water testing, and one opposing Trump administration proposals to cut food safety inspectors and allow processing plants to self-

police. I also missed discussion of two resolutions from the By-Laws Committee. One urged that the State Grange officers take over Fifth Degree conferral. I would have supported that. The other I found very troubling: it proposed that there be a deputy force of four members, one from each region, to be appointed by the state master. These deputies would serve as coordinators for the state conventions, but would also “Promote well run meetings and program and encourage the use of Grange ritual in some form.” The deputy from a region would make an annual visit to each Grange in the region.

The Masters Address was largely about the van—the state newsletter has an article about that—and Connie Johnston talked about “Wreaths across America,” a charitable program to collect and lay wreaths at the graves of fallen soldiers.

Traveling to China

Susan English, who used to be a member of this Grange, but now lives in Ohio, was teaching English in 1980 to Chinese scientists who wanted to do work that the Cultural Revolution had interrupted. They thought Americans danced every evening. So she started teaching them international folkdance. She is now a leader of contra, square, and ballroom in Wooster.

In 2017 she saw an application for a State Dept grant and contacted Deborah Thompson from Berea, and with very little time to make it actually happen they got a grant to take Berea students/dancers. China has changed since her first visit. On her first trip she got a traditional umbrella (which she showed us); now the umbrellas are very modern.

She showed us pictures and video from the 2017 visit in Yunnan, an area characterized by high elevation, biodiversity, cultural diversity, and mild weather. The group visited schools and community centers, and saw some splendid performances. They also performed themselves, introducing American traditional dance. They also put on dances with bystander

participation. The trip was obviously a superb example of the best kind of travel, sharing joy with people from a very different culture.

Susan is trying to organize another trip to China in fall 2020. This time, though, she needs to recruit adults who could pay for themselves. It was obvious that everybody present would like to go, and if some lucky folks do, they’ll give us a great program when they come home.

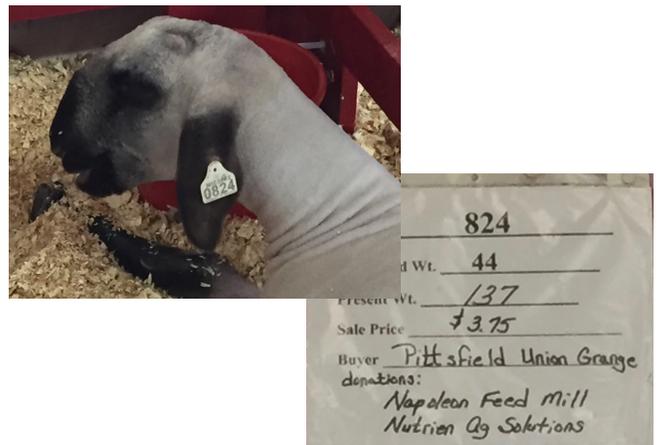
Chelsea and Saline Fairs

PUG had a booth again in the Merchants’ Buildings at the Chelsea and Saline Fairs. As every year, we donated gifts for the drawings at Ladies Day; this year we put two passes to a contra or family dance in each of three bags, but they have not been used yet.



Our booth at the Saline Fair.

Ruth bought a lamb in PUG's name at the Saline animal auction. Prices of the animals at Saline were almost the same as at Chelsea this year.



Census

In October, Margaret Leary, from the League of Women Voters, presented a program about the upcoming 2020 census. The Constitution mandates that a census of all people residing in the US be counted every ten years. The results are used for apportionment of representatives in the House and in redistricting. About \$675 billion in federal funds is also allocated based on census data.

There are several important things to remember about the census. Participation is required. Your privacy is guaranteed; it is against the law for the Census Bureau to share your responses with any other governmental agency. Everyone should be counted, whether or not they are documented. In 2020, you can complete the census form online. The question about citizenship will not be in the census.

Apple Day

Apple Day provided a new challenge this year, as John Broesamle did not have apples in his orchard and could not find any to buy and bring. Luckily, Richard talked to a vendor at the Farmers' Market who was willing to sell us 15 bushels of cider apples at a good price, even though they also make and sell cider. Joan borrowed Gretchen's truck on Friday and drove out to Tipton to pick them up.

The weather was iffy, so we moved the press indoors, though the grinder remained outside.



We had a fairly steady stream of people in the morning, but it dropped off in the afternoon, so we were able to make our own cider before closing a bit before 4:00.

National Home School Music Ensembles

The November program was a selection of musical pieces performed by the string and wind ensembles of NHME. Verbal descriptions of music just won't do, so photos of the ensembles will have to suffice.



The string ensemble



The wind ensemble

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