

PUG Times



The newsletter of the Pittsfield Union Grange

Volume 19, Number 1

August 2019

President's Message

Yesterday I read an article in the Wednesday food section of the New York Times about former vegetarians who have become butchers. They are, not surprisingly, not selling the meat you buy at the supermarket. They have entered the special niche of the meat industry where farmers and ranchers raise animals entirely on pasture instead of putting them in feedlots. Feeding grain to animals is a wasteful use of resources, turns waste from a valuable fertilizer into an environmental hazard, and is cruel to the livestock. These butchers have come to feel that killing animals for food is acceptable, but raising them in confinement, overusing antibiotics, and using land to grow feed that could be used to raise food directly for people far more efficiently is not. The meat these butchers sell, however, is very expensive.

Many of my friends are vegetarians, but my attitudes are closer to those of the butchers. I don't eat much meat, usually cooking stews or casseroles that combine a little meat with starches and vegetables. If you come to Grange potlucks, you've seen these. I get most of this meat by buying a lamb or half a club pig in the name of the Grange at the Chelsea or Saline Fair auction—a practice I adopted from other Grangers. This isn't quite the ideal solution to my omnivore's dilemma, since the animals are raised for competition and are not going to have been raised entirely on the most environmentally

benign feed and they have probably been given medically unnecessary antibiotics to spur growth. But they have been well treated, as you can see when they jump around in the auction ring, and the money helps local farm kids go to college.

It takes me more than a year to use the 40lbs of meat on a lamb from the fair, even with all the potlucks and even though I buy almost no additional meat. So if any of my fellow Grangers would like to share such a purchase, let me know!

Upcoming Events

Tue - Sat, Aug 20 -24 - Chelsea Fair

See article below (and president's message).

Wed - Sun, Aug 28 - Sep 1 - Saline Fair

See article below (and president's message).

Wed, Sep 11 - Grange Meeting

Susan English will talk about taking a group of Berea Country Dancers on a cultural trip to China in 2017, and plans to take a small group of adults on a similar trip in fall 2020. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15. All welcome. Free.

Saturday, September 28 - Apple Day

PUG's annual day of cider making and fun with apples. Apple sauce, apple tasting, bake sale. Contact Richard or Joan if you can help.

Wed, Oct 9 - Grange Meeting

Program TBA. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15. All welcome. Free.

Sat, Oct 19 - Contra Dance

Martha Vander Kolk and Peter Baker call to Stout Hearted String Band. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Sun, Oct 20 - Family Dance

Traditional dances suitable for children with adults.. 2:00 - 4:00 pm. \$12/family, Grange members free.

Wed, Nov 13 - Grange Meeting

An ensemble or two from the National Homeschool Music Ensemble program will provide a short concert. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:15.

Sat, Nov 16 - Contra Dance

Peter Baker and Martha Vander Kolk call to music by Brad Battey and Kendll Rogers. 7:30 pm. Pay-as-you-can dance; \$10 suggested.

Chelsea and Saline Fairs

The second half of August is a time to celebrate farming and the harvest. Washtenaw County does not have a county fair, but two of Ann Arbor's neighboring towns host community fairs, which are much the same.

PUG has a booth in the Merchants' Building in each of the fairs - Chelsea, August 20 -24, and Saline August 28 - September 1. Joan will be at the booth for some hours each day, and would love to have company.

Each fair has many contests which are open to anyone: baking canning, needle crafts, photography, vegetables, antiques, to name just a few. Small monetary rewards go to those who place.

Thursday night is the animal auction. PUG members often buy a lamb or pig; so far, we haven't managed enough people to bid on a steer. We get invitations to the pre-auction supper; anyone interested in buying meat that has had a decent life should contact Joan. Note that at the Saline Fair, the lamb and swine clubs

sell pre-butchered halves, and the steer club sells quarters, too.

Friday is Ladies' Day - early in the morning in Chelsea, in the afternoon in Saline.

Entertainment, refreshments, and door prizes. Last year the entertainment in Saline was a show by the RFD Boys.

Threshold Singers

Our May program was a introduction to the Threshold Singers, represented by Susie Lorand, Jennifer Oliver, Karen Mori, Kay Holsinger, Pat Shalis, and Suzanne Hopkins, followed by some songs. . First, they described the history and mission of the group. The first Threshold Choir was organized in 2000 by a woman named Kate Munger, who had sung to a dying friend and realized that this could be a deeply humane experience for both the dying person and for the singers. (They do not sing exclusively for the dying—they also respond to request from people who are recovering from surgery, for example.). There are now many Threshold choirs; the Ann Arbor group formed in 2007. They sing in harmony, in small groups, at bedsides in homes and in institutions—often at Arbor Hospice or Huron Woods, at the request of the recipient or of caregivers. They sing gently for about half an hour, singing rounds, lullabies, chants, and songs from various spiritual traditions, selecting songs appropriate to the individual for whom they are singing.

Their singing produced a meditative, peaceful mood, and it was easy to see how this music would help people achieve some serenity and calm when they might be full of painful emotions. We were all very grateful that they shared their work with us.

Cancer Support in Ann Arbor

In June, our lecturer was Rosie Ingebritson, the program director at the Cancer Support Community of Greater Ann Arbor. They had borrowed our building as a stop on their annual fundraising scavenger hunt, so it seemed natural to invite the organization to a Grange

program. The presentation moved efficiently through a lot of information in a lively way, so that we enjoyed hearing about what could be a depressing topic.

The Ann Arbor Cancer Support Community is a local nonprofit affiliated with the national Cancer Support Community. It starts with the recognition that medical treatment is only one component of care, that the families of cancer patients need support too, and that the difficulties around cancer are varied. The CSC has a variety of support groups, for adults, young adults, and children, for people with specific kinds of cancer, for friends and family, for African-Americans and TBLGQ people, and in varied locations. An especially significant part of Rosie's presentation for many of us was the CSC's emphasis on serving the underserved.

The organization also provides educational workshops, and a monthly class on cooking and nutrition (led by an oncology dietician), along with a variety of meditation, yoga, and exercise classes that help especially with managing pain and alleviating the emotional problems caused by cancer. There are social activities.

One fundraising activity is especially interesting: the Brides Project. CSC has a boutique where they sell donated wedding dresses, some used, some new. Both recycling and a worthy cause!

Rural Education Days

Grangers spent three days in April popping popcorn and talking about grains grown in Michigan at the annual Rural Education Days.



Ruth talking about popcorn and wheat



Annie, Richard, and Bud with our display



Our FFA volunteer handing out popcorn



Richard supervising making flour with his mill

Items to Borrow from Grange

(This is a reprise of an article from the last issue, because we want to make sure everyone knows, and because there is space.)

For a while, we have had a policy that members may borrow things from the Grange hall, when they are not needed there. Various events have used this policy to borrow things such as coffee pots and chafers. We now wish to publicize this policy more widely, so more members can take advantage of it. Richard Raymond is the contact person; he will know when items are not available or know whom to ask. Following is a fairly complete list of the items we have.

- folding chairs, tables
- coolers: drinks and chest types
- coffee and hot water pots
- chafers
- canopies
- sound equipment
- electric chain saws, sump pump, fans
- dehumidifier (small one)
- ladders (step and straight)
- lawn mower (gas and battery powered)
- weed whacker

In addition, Joan owns white place settings (large and small plates, mugs, flatware) for about 80 people, and Ruth owns a variety of black tablecloths, mostly round. These are also available to be borrowed.

Contra Dance Price

The Grange Contra Dance is following along with the other Ann Arbor contra dances in going to a pay-as-you-can policy, with a suggested price of \$10/person. Thus, members will not see the \$3 Grange discount on the dance price anymore, but should feel free to use it if they desire.

National Grange Membership Benefits

Grange membership brings a variety of discounts on things such as healthcare, prescriptions, and travel. Partnerships have been negotiated with Choice Hotels, Wyndham Hotels, and Hertz, Avis, and Budget rental cars.

Many of these discounts are similar to ones you might receive as members of AAA or other such groups, and some would duplicate benefits of health insurance. Some are for specialized services. Look at the web page www.nationalgrange.org/our-values/benefits-to-members/ for details.

Recently, I got a discount card in the mail from the National Grange for use at Office Max/Office Depot, and I plan to test it when printing this newsletter.



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