

# PUG Times



## The newsletter of the Pittsfield Union Grange

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### Message from the President

My last president's message was about trying to apply Grange values to the pandemic situation. I am still feeling very frustrated and am trying to nurture hope, as our salutation says we should. The State Grange meeting was a strange mixture. Some of the resolutions we proposed at Pittsfield Union were carried, although the one urging the legislature to ban guns in the state Capitol except to law enforcement, did not. There was an extended discussion about the building in Washington, which needs extensive repair and which represents a Grange that had a much larger membership and was a significant political force. I don't know what the National Grange will do about the building, or how fully it understands the position of the organization, or of the values it represents, but I did leave the meeting feeling hopeful.

Our Pittsfield Grange November meeting was a rehearsal for fourth degree work, more-or-less in form, so that those who had never seen Grange ritual would have an idea what it's like. Some members were worried that the ritual would just look silly without an understand of Grange history—which we'll try to provide at the March meeting. I find Grange ritual at once silly and very moving, because for all its fussiness, the lessons it offers are the best tradition of the rural United States. The Grange wanted to introduce best practices to farmers, and its ceremonies encourage not just hard work, but

intelligent work. They treat women as true equals, even though they assume traditional gender roles. They may assume religious beliefs that have an unmistakably Protestant base, yet they preach tolerance and carefully avoid sectarianism. I wish Americans could all be good Patrons.

### Events

Events are still pretty sparse. Adult dances are still on hold.

Our programs, but not the potlucks, will be advertised in the Ann Arbor Observer. We are asking for proof of vaccination for attendees. In order to keep the potluck and the program separate, the program will be held upstairs (if we have members of the general public attending). Vaccinated friends are welcome at the potluck.

#### **Wednesday, January 12 - Grange Meeting**

Washtenaw County Clerk (and PUG member) Larry Kestenbaum will talk about the work of the clerks behind the scenes in putting on an election. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:30.

#### **Wednesday, February 9 - Grange Meeting**

The League of Women Voters of Washtenaw County will address what are the elements of a good health care system, where are the problems in our current health care system, and what is Medicare for All? We look forward to discussion. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:30.

### **Wednesday, March 9 - Grange Meeting**

Several Grangers will address various aspects of Grange history, national, state, and local. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:30

### **Preemie Pals**

For our October program, Nancy Memmer and Cyndi Etsler spoke to us about Preemie Pals. These are quilters around Michigan who make quilts for premature babies in the NICU at Mott. The quilts are draped over the incubators to protect these tiny babies from the harsh light and noise of the hospital, and the families take the quilts home and treasure them. Because they have been able to expand thanks to help from Kiwanis, they also provide quilt for babies who need surgery at Mott and other hospitals, including St. Joe's. The variety of colors and patterns means that every family will receive a quilt that will give comfort.

The group works with local quilt shops (we heard about them because they were considering the Grange as a meeting place when the Quilting Season in Saline was too crowded). They provide complete kits for volunteers. Grangers took their information, because some of us are quilters or have friends who are quilters!

### **The Ritual - Once in 25 Years**

As Ruth mentioned in her president's message, the program at the November meeting was performing the Fourth Degree ritual. PUG has not done this in the time I (Joan) have been a member, that is not since the mid-90's at least. It was definitely a rusty performance, but gave a taste of ritual to members who have not seen it at a state Grange meeting. Michael Bean and Carol Jacobs marched as initiates, and Sylvia Hobart took both roles as initiate and Lady Assistant Steward. We were a bit short of officers, so some of us took two parts. We don't allow food upstairs, so we waited until we closed the Grange to have the feast.

### **Holiday Party**

We held our annual holiday party on the third Friday of December. Given the virus, we were not joined by the recorder society this year. Nonetheless, we enjoyed a delicious meal, conversation, and our usual grab bag gift exchange.



### **Words for Thirds**

The lockdown of schools in March 2020 came just days before we were scheduled to deliver dictionaries to the then third graders at Pittsfield School. All school was virtual in the next school year. To make up, this year we gave dictionaries to the students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. The fifth graders are the only ones currently studying Spanish, so they got Spanish-English dictionaries as well. Usually, a couple of PUG members go to the school and hand out the books personally, but given the virus, this year Robin Warner just dropped boxes off at the school office.

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