



The State Grange News

The official publication of the Massachusetts State Grange

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4 Pages

From the President's Desk

The Covid-19 numbers are going up again in our state so I urge everyone to be responsible when holding in-person meetings. The Governor reduced the limit of indoor gatherings to 10 people and outdoor gatherings to 25 people. All gatherings, regardless of size, must disperse by 9:30 PM.

Using social media, such as Zoom, is becoming the “norm”. We used Zoom to hold our one day State Session this year and it seemed to go pretty smoothly thanks to the assistance of the members of the Communications Committee and the State Officers. At State Session, we had 4 resolutions which triggered some good and healthy discussion on the floor. We held elections for 2 State Offices and I'd like to congratulate Sister Kathy Peterson for being re-elected to the Executive Committee and Sister Janet Segur who was elected to the Educational Aid Committee. The Master's Award of Excellence was presented to Nancy Blackmer, Barbara Giguere and Ruth Fairman for their work in helping the community in making masks, etc. in response to the Pandemic outbreak. The R.O.S.E. Award was presented to Herb & Sue LaFleur in recognition of all their hard work and dedication to our organization. The State Grange Proceedings were dedicated to Calvin Chase and was accepted by Linda Chase (much to her surprise).

National Grange was held entirely via Zoom. Committee meetings were held the previous week to work on the resolutions and then it was a 2-day, 14-hour Session. A Memorial Service was held and I was honored to read for Brothers Cal Chase and Bob Barrows. You can check this part out of the National Session on YouTube. There

are a couple different videos about his year's National Session to view.

Several Granges have not submitted their Executive Committee Reports. We need to keep these up-to-date. The Master and Executive Committee of each Grange have several choices to get these done including: a very careful in-person meeting, emails, phone calls, or social media. Just send me a note if you cannot get all the signatures. Don't let it hold you back from sending them in.

We plan to continue the monthly State Grange Zoom meetings (the 4th Wednesday of the month) to keep members informed and, at times, entertained. At the time of this article, we are planning to have our State Grange Family Meeting via Zoom in December. Keep an eye out for an email and/or phone call.

It's been a difficult year but we were still able to accomplish a lot even though we had to be creative and “think outside the box”. We've tried to keep the lines of communication open between the State Grange and our members across the state and worked together to get things done.

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From the Agriculture and Environment Committee

Happy December everyone! Where has the time gone? The piles of leaves are most likely either mulched in the garden or disposed of and we are all getting our plants, yards, and gardens ready for the winter.

As mentioned in last month's article, we will be talking about our individual partners and what they will be planning for the coming year. With the health situation still in turmoil, these events are all subject to change. This month the focus will be on the Sustainathon. The 2021 Sustainathon will be the third held and the Grange has been a partner since the first year. The event is scheduled to coincide with Earth Day and takes place in western Massachusetts. A few of the objectives for the event are; to educate students who will be future leaders in solving future challenges, to inspire informed and active Citizenship, to inspire responsive and active Leadership, to expose the community to current challenges and ongoing efforts to protect local ecosystems and biological diversity, and a variety of other goals. The day consists of two vital components; Sustainability Competition and Interactive Sustainability events. The Grange, along with two other organizations, work together to help fund this event. The 2021 Sustainathon is tentatively scheduled April 22, 2021. We are looking forward to working with them in the coming year.

Don't forget to check out your program books. With winter approaching and everyone stuck indoors, now is the perfect time to work on your entry for the poster contest. This year's theme is "Pollinators". We all know that bees are a big pollinator, but don't be afraid to do a little research and see what other pollinators there may be. You could be surprised.

Until next month! We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy Holiday season.

Matt, Kathy, Warren, Ann, Jessica, Peter,
& Sam

Upcoming Events

*** Watch for e-mail updates from the State Master and Secretary in the event of changes due to COVID-19. ***

Sunday, December 5, 7:00 p.m. — Grange Youth Mixer (GYM) Zoom Meeting. RSVP to youth@massgrange.org for the Zoom link information.

Wednesday, December 23, 7:00 p.m. — State Grange Zoom Meeting. Watch for an email invitation with the link to log in and phone number to call in. If you haven't received an email invitation for the past Zoom meetings, please enter your email address in the Subscribe to the State Grange News box found at www.massgrange.org/state-grange-news.

— PRESIDENT'S DESK *From Page 1* —

With this holiday season upon us, there is still so much we can be thankful for. Even though we may not be able to spend time with our friends and family during the holidays, let's still try to reach out to them and let them know how much they mean to us and hope that next year we will be together again.

Here's hoping you have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving and a blessed Christmas.

Glenn Gibson

State Grange President

Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah!

MASSACHUSETTS STATE GRANGE NEWS

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From the Home & Community Service Committee

This year has not been the best of times but, the Granges in Massachusetts have stepped up as they always do. Community Service reports were due in September.

Thirteen Subordinates and 3 Pomonas submitted reports. It is amazing how much they were able to do during the “shut down.” Over 19,000 hours of service were reported. Some 2,000 plus face masks were made and donated to those who needed them. Thanks to all the Granges in Massachusetts and their members for all you have done and continue to do. Of those that went on for judging four were judged exceptional. Their names have gone on to National Grange. The Home & Community Service committee wants to congratulate the following Granges for their outstanding service to the Grange and their communities.

- 1st place – Sterling Grange #53
- 2nd place – Holden Grange #78
- 3rd place – Dartmouth Grange #162
- 4th place – Upton Grange #125

As yet, I have not received their certificates and prize checks from National Grange but hope that they will arrive soon so that they can somehow be presented to these deserving Granges.

As to what is going to happen in 2021, it is still up in the air. Stay tuned for information on contests etc.

For now – Hope you all had a good Thanksgiving. Wishing you a wonderful Christmas with family and friends. Stay safe, be healthy and may 2021 be not just a better year but a good one for you all.

Susan LaFleur

Home & Community Service Co-Director

Follow MA State Grange Online!

Website: www.massgrange.org

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From the Veterans Committee

Do you know which of your fellow Grange members are veterans? To help in planning for future programs of the State Grange Veterans Committee, we would like to know how many members have served or are serving in one of the five branches of the armed services and/or has been a member of the National Guard or Reserves. We would appreciate the Secretary or other designated person from each Subordinate Grange forwarding a list of members who are veterans and his/her branch of service. Please send the list to Janet Segur, 26 Glenwood Pl., Rutland, MA 01543 or jsegur55@gmail.com.

Mission Statement: “The Massachusetts State Grange creates opportunities for leadership and community improvement through its commitment to expand agricultural education in order to raise the quality of life for all.”

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Herb and I want to thank the State Grange officers and members for honoring us with the “R.O.S.E. Award” with which we were presented at State Session this past October. To say we were surprised is an understatement. We both didn’t even realize it was our names being announced. Too busy looking around to see who was going to be named. Surprise! We both feel truly honored to be named to this elite group of Grangers that includes so many wonderful friends. Herb & I never imagined that our Grange lives spanning over 50 years would someday be recognized for just doing what we love. Thank you all again for this wonderful gift. We look forward to many more years working with all of you and serving the Grange in our small way.

Herb & Sue LaFleur

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

DECEMBER 2020

1 Both Short-tailed and Long-tailed Weasels molt from brown to white in the fall. In winters with little snow cover their white pelage makes them easy to see if they are out and about in the daytime.

3 **Beavers** resurface their lodges with a new layer of vegetation and seal them up with a mud shell in the late fall. They leave an unsealed circle in the center of the roof to allow ventilation and on cold days you can sometimes see the steam of the warmer air rising out of the roof.



6 Now that the leaves are gone, Eastern Gray Squirrel dreys, which look like a large ball of sticks and leaves, are visible high up in large deciduous trees. Squirrels usually build more than one drey in late summer-early fall to use as shelters in the winter.

8 Most Great Blue Herons have migrated but you can still find a few where the water is not completely frozen. Used to be they would all be gone by January as their access to fish froze over but with warmer winters we now see a few of them all year.



10 Watch Red- and **White-breasted Nuthatches** as they husk and store sunflower seeds in bark furrows along the trunks of trees.

11 Throughout the winter, chipmunks, skunks, opossums, and raccoons sleep or stay in their shelters for long periods but come out every few weeks while other mammals – coyotes, foxes, bobcats, fishers, deer, squirrels, rabbits – remain active all winter.

13-14 It's the peak of the **Geminid meteor shower**, with as many as 120 shooting stars visible in the dark sky from midnight to dawn.



16 The winter diet of White-tailed Deer – mostly buds and twigs, some evergreen leaves, acorns – is very dry which means their scat is dry as well. The piles of small, oval pellets they leave behind are easy to identify.

17 **Black bears** may still be out and about until nights are consistently below freezing. If you live in an area with bears, it's best to wait until full winter cold to put out bird feeders.



19 If food supplies are scarce up north, crossbills, Pine Grosbeaks, and redpolls may be around by this time.

20 Mating season for Red Foxes is December-February. Male foxes leave scent markings all year but during courtship their urine develops a distinctive skunky odor that is very noticeable.

21 Winter solstice. It's the shortest day and longest night, and the official start of winter. Even though daylight increases from now until June, our coldest weather is still to come.

21-22 The Ursid meteor shower originates from the Little Dipper (Ursa Minor).

25 Look for shiny, leathery, evergreen **Christmas ferns** in the snowy woods.



28 Winter is a great time to learn bird songs – there are fewer singing birds and most of the songs are easy to differentiate. One classic winter songbird for us is the White-throated Sparrow whose song is an upward whistle followed by repeated notes. The mnemonic is *Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody*.

29 **Full Moon**. This is commonly known as the Cold Moon but Eastern Woodland tribes had many variations including Snow Moon, Frost Moon, and Long Nights Moon for the December moon that travels high in the sky.

