



ILLINOIS GRANGER

*In Essentials... Unity
In Non-Essentials... Liberty
In All Things... Charity*



July 2026 Vol. 6 No. 7



Lynette's Visions and Wisdoms

Hopefully this finds you all healthy. Don and I are getting ready to leave to go to Midwest Grange Leaders Conference (June 26-28.). I hope to see many of you at the event. I know that Karie,

Marisa and Beth have worked hard to make this a great conference. I will be presenting my version of a workshop Sarah Strawder (KS) did at NG Leadership Conference in Sparks, NV, May 1- 3. Don and I attended the Grange Service for Renee O'Dell [Beaver Valley]. Boone County Pomona did a meaningful presentation of the Grange Ritual. Our deepest sympathy to O'Dell family. Well Done Good and Faithful Servants.

Today is rainy, warm and humid. And the wild blackberries are starting to be ready to pick. Yumm

Thanks to Karie, Brian O, and Adam for their assistance. IL has a new Grange!! Charity #1713 has been reorganized. Charity Grange has chartered with more than 20 names! Welcome Charity members. They have also started a Junior Grange with more than 12 names on that Charter! Thanks to all Charity 1713 members for their faith in the Grange.

The Statewide Picnic was held at the Boone County Fairgrounds in the Pavillion on May 30 th . I was pleased to present scholarship

checks to the students; Emma Rutledge and Emily Smith of Turkey Hill Grange, and Cassidy Renken of Hopewell. I was also thrilled to give a Hall Improvement Grant check to Boone County Community Grange . Lana, Don and I were then able to attend the Broad Hollow Grange for the 105 Anniversary program. I was honored to present membership longevity awards to Cindy (50 years) and Dave (55 years) Vogler, Linda Rensing (55 years), Carol Neff (65 years), Shirley Brandenburger (70 years) and Arlene Brandenburger (75 years). More than 370 years of GRANGE Service! Several others were unable to attend, for Dave Wiskamp, Betty Suemnicht, Neil Schaller, and Betty Hardt. It was a great evening. The ukulele group was wonderful.

IL State Grange Session will be September 11 – 13, at Northfield Inn Suites and Conference Center, 3280 Northfield Dr, Springfield, IL. Secretary Brian has sent the information on menus and other important dates. Please be working on Resolutions of important matters to your Grange. The Prairie has submitted the first resolution, and I know that at least one will be coming from Shiloh Valley. William "Buddy" and Karen Overstreet will be our National Grange Representatives. Buddy is on the National Grange Executive Committee and Karen is President of Texas State Grange. I can't wait to show Karen and Buddy how Illinois does Grange. I have sent letters to Officers and Committee people, so I will be contacting the hotel with those room reservations.

Next National Sessions will be in Tulsa, OK, Nov 11 -15, 2026. If you are interested in going and want to stay at the main hotel reservations need to be made now. They are also asking for volunteers to assist with all the “behind the scenes work”. Contact Karie, she will get you in touch with proper person.

ISG Secretary Report

The 2nd Quarter of 2026 ended June 30. Granges should send me their Quarterly Reports and dues by July 15. It’s also the end of the membership year, which means Pomona and Junior Granges should send their Annual Reports and dues to me as soon as possible. If you need a copy of the forms to use or you need to know what your numbers were last year, just let me know.

The countdown continues for the 155th Illinois State Session - less than 3 months away! It will be at the Northfield Inn & Suites, 3280 Northfield Dr. in Springfield, from September 11 through 13.

The deadline for State Session Resolutions was July 1. That’s so I can send them to the Granges in time for them to review them. However, if you are still working on Resolutions or are planning to, please tell me so I know to expect them for the Delegate Books. As of June 22, I’ve received one Resolution - thank you, Prairie Grange!

The State Session deadline for everything else is Friday, August 7. By then, I need delegate names plus meal and Delegate Book counts. Hotel reservations should also be made by that date. See the June 2026 Illinois Granger for more information on hotel reservations and meals. Payment for meals and Delegate Books can be mailed to me or brought to the registration table the morning of the first day of State Session.

August 7 is also the deadline for reports to be included in the Delegate Books. These should be emailed directly to me. State officers should report on their Grange activities. Deputies should report on the activities of their Granges. Directors and Committee Chairs should report on their programs and Grange activities. Please only include your

Grange activities, not family or personal activities. Would you like a copy of what was written last year to help with writing them? Just let me know, and I’ll be happy to send it to you.

As always, if you have any questions or need help, don’t hesitate to contact me.

Fraternally,
Brian Keller
Secretary, Illinois State Grange
618-410-9020
brianjkeller@gmail.com
703 E 2nd St, O’Fallon IL 62269



Dear Worthy Officers\Deputies\Committee members for IL
The 155th Annual Session of the Illinois State Grange will be held at the Northfield Inn in Springfield, IL. The meeting will start 1:00 PM on Friday September 11, 2026, and end on Sunday, September 13 around noon. Worthy National Grange Executive Committee member William “Buddy“ Overstreet and Texas State Grange Karen Overstreet will be our guests for the weekend. They will be presenting a workshop on Saturday. Other speakers or presenters have not presented. Attached is a draft schedule. Officers are to be ready for practice at 10:00 am on Friday. As an officer if you are not going to be attending, please let me know ASAP. The Exec Committee, Lecturer and Committees (Ag, FAC), and Junior Director, are authorized for three nights, the rest are authorized for two. If you need /want more room nights, please let me know asap and before June 30 2027 th 9:00 PM. Attached is the list for the rooms. Let’s start making plans to attend.

□ Room reservations are made for you at Northfield Inn and Suites 3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL, 62702,.
PLEASE check to see that the number of nights that are listed for you are correct on the rooms file attached.

Please respond on or before June 30th. You

will pay the bill and ISG will reimburse you for the number of nights you are qualified, if you turn in your bill to Mary. If you need more/less nights, please let me know ASAP. If you are not staying in the hotel make sure you let me know.

- Please be on site in time to start your responsibilities. At this point the display rooms are available on Friday morning.
- If you would like a delegate booklet please let Brian know June 30. All the delegates are requested to have a booklet. There is a fee of \$5.00 per booklet. This fee will cover the cost of the booklets.
- Clothing for the meeting: Friday afternoon and dinner, open session in dress business casual. Saturday will be 250 th Red White and Blue day. I would prefer no jeans any time during the session. As long as you are looking professional, we are good. IL State Flora, Marisa O'Dell, would like the officers to wear Floral for women, white shirts- tie for men know about the clothing for 6 th degree.
- Check the rules in the ILLINOIS GRANGER for the various contests and bring your contest entries to the Session prior to the start of the meeting on Friday.
- Officers - Please have reports of your Grange activities. Deputies – Reports of Activities of your Granges.

Directors – reports of your program and your Grange activities. WE do not need to know your family activities, just Grange activities. To Brian (brianjkeller@gmail.com) by August 7..

- There will be three meals during the State Session. Friday dinner will be an Italian Feast Dinner Buffet for \$40.

Saturday lunch will be a Taco Bar Buffet for \$30. Saturday dinner will be a Chef's Own Pizza Buffet for \$30. All prices are per person. If you want all three meals, the total cost is \$100.

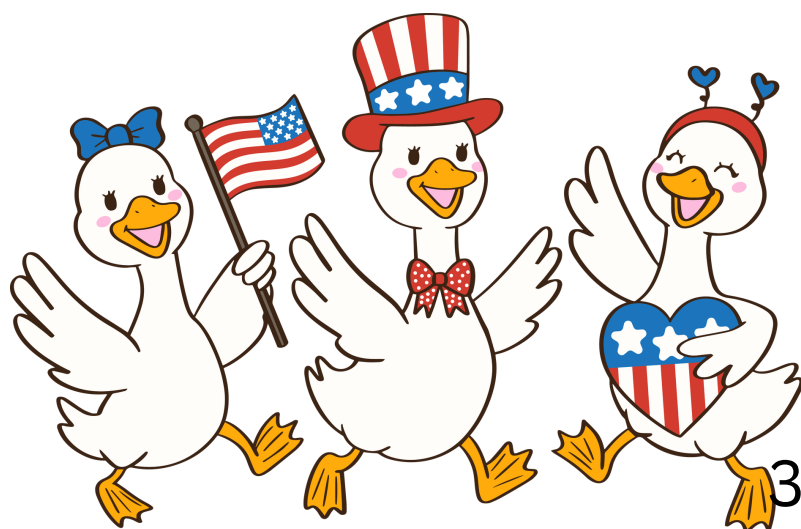
Meal reservations must be sent to me by Friday, August 7. For each person, I need their name, the Grange they belong to, and the meals they want. Reservations can be mailed to me with payment. They can also be emailed to me. If you choose email, payment

must be made at the registration table on Friday, the first day of the State Session. Make checks payable to "Illinois State Grange." All meal tickets can be picked up at the registration table. Just as a reminder to most of the committee chairs, if any of you do not wish to continue serving as chair please let me know.

Contact me if you have any questions or concerns. schaeffr@att.net or lschaeffr@gmail.com or 618-979-5546

No question is silly – not asking is the foolish thing. See you on September 18 or 19.

Fraternally
Lynette



Prairie Grange Event



Robin Kindberg presented a Patriot's Program at our last Grange meeting honoring all the veterans in our Grange. It was a surprise to most of us, and a wonderful program. Lyle Lee and Gordie Butt were both excited to go on Vet's Roll this year! They both had a great time and made lots of memories.



DRAFT

**Schedule of Events of the 155th Annual Session of the Illinois State Grange
Northfield Inn, Springfield, IL, September 11-13, 2026**

Friday, September 11, 2026

8:30 AM – Noon

Registration & Contest entries in place in display room

9:30 State Officers Practice Sixth Degree Practice

1:00 PM Open in the Sixth Degree – **Lynette Schaeffer**, President

Open to all Delegates and Grangers attending

Roll Call of Officers Close in the Sixth Degree Open in the Fourth Degree

Presentation of William "Buddy" Overstreet Member of NG Executive Committee
and his wife Karen Overstreet, President of Texas State Grange. IL Past
Presidents and National Officers/Committee

Presentation. Who should we talk to - or not have anyone?

Response – **Karie Blasingame**, Vice President

Roll Call of Delegates

Adoption of Order of Business – Frank D Wurth, Chair Exec Comm

Meeting place for 2027 St Clair

Invitation of Meeting Place 2028 **Boone/Winnebago with Wisconsin?**

Reports – Treasurer (Budget), Secretary (Credentials), Exec Committee (Deb
Wade)

2:15 Recess

2:30 Election of Officer [one Executive Committee member **Todd Hegge**]

Appointment of Session Committees Assignment of Resolutions

Committee Instruction by President and Vice President Resolutions to the
committees

4:00 Grange Closed in the Fourth Degree

Committee Meetings

6:00 Main Banquet

7:00 Evening Program

Introduction of Special Invited Guests

Summary of Address of State President – **Lynette Schaeffer**

Community Service Awards – **Heather Ellwanger**, Director

Membership Awards – **Robin Kindberg**, Director

8:30 Committee Meetings .

Saturday, September 12, 2026

7:00 Breakfast Ag Chairman: **Lana Korte/Marilyn Hoffmann** Speaker: - don't know

8:00 Opening in Fourth Degree Roll Call of State Officers

Roll Call of Delegates Reading and Adopting of Minutes

8:45 Junior Grange Report and Awards, **Mindy Schiefer**, Director

9:45 Report – Committee on Finance & Accounts

10:00 Recess

10:15 Committee Reports

11:30 Family Homemaking Projects Luncheon – **Trisha Renken**, Director

1:15 PM Obligation of or presentation if we have officers - Fifth Degree – **Karie**

Blasingame

Conferring of Sixth Degree – IL State Grange Officers

3:00 Recess

3:15 Grange Historian – **Beverly Smith** Legislative – **Marc Henricks**

4:00 National Grange Representative Report/Workshop – William "Buddy" Overstreet
Member of NG Executive Committee and his wife Karen Overstreet, President of Texas
State Grange. Topic not sure yet

Committee Reports

5:00 Grange Closed in Fourth Degree (Take possessions with you)

6:30 Youth/Young Adults Banquet – **Beth Olson**, Director

7:30 Evening Program

Talent Presentation??? – **Ethan Edwards**, Lecturer

Auction

Sunday, September 13, 2026

8:00 AM Celebration of Life – **Charlotte Mehrkens**, Chaplain

8:45 Opening in the Fourth Degree – Youth/Young Adults Officers

Roll Call of Youth Officers Roll Call of State Officers

Roll Call of Delegates

Reading of State Minutes

9:00 FAC/AG – Final Reports and Sash Transfers

Community Service Booklets, – **Heather Ellwanger**, Director

Lecturer Report – **Ethan Edwards**

Committee Reports

Completion of Remaining Business/Installation of Officers –

Closing of the 155th Annual Session

Blast from the Past

By Beverly Smith

A big Thank You to the Buck Family for giving Lynette many Grange items and publications that their family had collected over many years.

Lynette brought me two boxes of items. There are way over 150 items to sift through. I have been working on them for a few days now.

Immediately I added three photos to the Junior Grange book. Pat Rich, Junior Grange State Leader in 1971 presented Richland Grange an honorable plaque. Then there was a commemorative program from the 100th National Grange Session held November 1968 in Peoria, Illinois. This goes along with other articles in a separate book I am keeping of when Illinois hosted National Sessions.

Our National Grange Building in Washington, D.C. has evolved over the years from Jackson Street to our current building, which now we are renters. Now, I have added some additional articles regarding the government kicking us out of the first building and President Dwight Eisenhower dedicating of the newer building at 1616 H street NW on June 29, 1960. I am really proud to have some original program booklets and news articles regarding all these events.

Here is an interesting fact: Per February 1970 National Grange Newsletter: This shows photo of John W. Scott, National Grange Master making arrangements to move historic Grange records and memorabilia to the Archives at Cornell University in New York. I did a little search online, it may be several years monthly publications of the National Grange newsletter. Library code is S1.N2G7

The National Grange Newsletter of September 1966 has an article regarding Dr. Henry C. Taylor, Past Director of the Farm Foundation and well-known agricultural economist, attended the National Grange Executive Committee meeting to present the Grange with two historic treasures: an autographed picture of the Grange founder Oliver H. Kelley and the book The Handy Book of Husbandry. Dr. Taylor received the picture in

1911 when visiting the Kelley Farm. The book originally belonged to Wilson Grange in Van Buren County, Iowa. When that Grange closed its doors, it became property of Dr. Taylor.

Wow I wonder where this autographed picture and historic book are today?

The Grange Blue Book- it was a little blue book featuring Grange regalia items to purchase. I now have the Fuller Regalia and Costume Company Catalogue No. 34 printed in 1932. Of course, there are the usual jewelry, pins, etc., officer sashes, badges, and Grange meeting necessities. Agates, solid bronze official Grange grave markers, and hoodwinks are items I had never heard of before.

Next month I will write about Founder and First National Grange Master William Saunders, National Master Albert S. Goss and National Master Herschel D. Newsom.

Emerald Mound Grange

Emerald Mound Grange's handicap ramp has been completed! We will have a ribbon cutting for the ramp on Monday, July 13 at 10 am at our Bunco event sponsored by the Leu Civic Center. The ramp has been decorated with patriotic banners to celebrate America's 250 th Birthday.

On June 20, we had our annual Pork Steak Dinner. We would like to thank all the Grangers who came out to support our dinner as well as those from Lebanon. There were 2 or 3 other events nearby on the same day. However, we still did really well. Emerald Mound Grange signed up for a booth at the Lebanon Farmer's Market on Thursday evenings from 5 – 7:30 pm in the Ace Hardware parking lot. Any St. Clair County Grange can participate and bring something to sell. If you wish to come out and sell something, please let Marc Henrichs know at (618) 541-0490. You can just show up, but if you contact Marc ahead of time, we can include what you are selling on our Facebook post.

On a sad note, one of our longtime Grange members, Shirley Porter passed away on June 17. She was a member of Emerald Mound

Grange since 1949. She and her husband, Eddie were both active with the Grange until he passed away in 2009. Shirley moved to Highland after Eddie passed but kept her membership with Emerald Mound Grange. She will be missed.



Turkey Hill



Ham and Peach Dinner

Turkey Hill Grange

Rt. 15 & Green Mount Road

(Next to Eckert's)

Sunday, August 2, 2026

10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ham Green Beans
Regular & German Potato Salad
Spiced Peaches Peach Sauce Peach Cobbler
Fresh Sliced Peaches Ice Cream

\$18.00 Adult – eat in or carry out

Kids eat in 5-10 – \$9.00 Children under 5 – Free

Carry Out Service Available

Dining Room is Handicapped Accessible

OUR FAMOUS JAMS AND JELLIES FOR SALE

Guilford Hope Grange #6

Guilford Hope Grange met June 23, 2026 at Al & Lindakay Ebel's home for a potluck lunch and regular meeting with 12 members present. Meeting was opened in the 4th degree. Secretary and Treasurer's reports were given and approved. Our garage sale was successful making our annual gift to the Midway Museum possible. We discussed our upcoming meetings with plans for August at the Paulson Ag Museum to present membership awards. Bob Lyford was elected Vice President and Ernie Carlson was elected to fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee.

Wayne and Nancy Lyford were selected to be our delegates to the State Grange. Beverly Smith told us about the Linus Project and the blankets being collected for children through the community service project of the State Grange. Carolyn Wheeler read a piece entitled Recipe for a Happy Life. We draped the charter in memory of Pat Sanford and Jerry Hart - rest in peace, you are greatly missed. Grange was closed in the 4th degree. Nathalie Lyford, secretary

Beaver Valley Grange News

Beaver Valley Grange members gathered on June 12th at the Boone County Community Grange Hall with President Brian O'Dell welcoming guests from Prairie Grange as well as several new members. We're excited to continue growing our Grange family.

Members shared community service hours and enjoyed a variety of reports. The agriculture report by Steve Paulson highlighted ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of the New World screwworm, while the Deaf Awareness by Rick O'Dell shared an inspiring reminder that hearing loss doesn't have to stand in the way of living life to the fullest. As our beloved sister, Renee O'Dell was deaf in one ear and many did not know. Looking ahead, members were reminded that the July Pomona Picnic will be held at the Grange Pavilion. Fair preparations continue to move forward, with several improvement projects underway.

Summer was a common theme throughout the evening. Members were encouraged to protect themselves from the sun, wear hearing protection at concerts and events, and spend some time reading with children and grandchildren. Jerry Paulson reminded the flower growers to keep those blooms looking their best for this year's fair, which celebrates America's 250th anniversary.

Junior and Youth members are busy preparing projects for State Session, whose theme this year is "Outer Space." Donations of blankets for the Lionus program are still being accepted.

Members were also reminded that the Midwest Leadership Conference will be held June 26-27 and will celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States. The conference offers an opportunity for Grangers from across the region to gather, learn, and share ideas.

Finally, plans are underway for Wreaths Across America. Organizers hope to honor all veterans laid to rest in the Scottish Cemetery and encourage members to spread the word among family and friends.

As always, Beaver Valley Grange continues to combine service, learning, fellowship, and community spirit—along with a healthy dose of summer sunshine.

Fraternally submitted,
Micah Schlie
Publicity

Prairie Grange



Prairie Grangers had an Utterly Striking good time at a bowling outing on May 31, 2026. We had great fellowship and some awesome food. Awards were presented to Ramona Swanson for least amount of pins, Sara Ellwanger for highest amount of pins, Scarlett Ellwanger for first to need a band aid, Don and Heather Ellwanger for last to arrive, and Niesha Swanson for first to score a spare.

Flora

Flora Grange held their annual Distinguished Guests and Membership Awards night on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 6:30 pm, starting with a potluck dinner, serving some forty-five Granger members and guests.

Following dinner, members and guests moved upstairs, Vice President Marion Thornberry called the meeting to order with Grange Salutation and Pledge to American Flag. We had the Draping of the Charter for Jerry Hart and Chaplain Donna West had a prayer and we sang In The Garden.

Community Service chairman Lindakay Ebel then introduced and recognized Teacher of the Year, Kim Nelson, who started her teaching career in 2018 in the Rockford School District before coming to Immanuel Lutheran School in Belvidere teaching 3rd grade.

Lindakay then introduced Lynee Giddens, Non-Granger of the Year who volunteers with Senior Connections in Belvidere, the Salvation Army,



local Food Banks and Midway Village. Lynee enjoys volunteering wherever needed.

Mark Beck was Flora Grange's Firefighter of the Year and has served as a firefighter for some 24 years, including 5 with Cherry Valley Fire Dept. and 19 in Belvidere as a paramedic.

Zackary Smith was introduced as policeman of the Year and has served in law enforcement for 10 years, 3 in the South and several in the Rockford area and now the Belvidere police department.

Albert Q. Ebel, III was one of the two Grangers of the Year. Al has been a member of Flora Grange for 12 years, served as Master for 6 years, served on the Boone County Fair board for 7 years, served as Chr. Of Il State Grange Ag Committee for 3 years, member of Pomona Grange for 12 years, member of Guilford Hope Grange for 8 years and is on Flora Grange Executive board. He is a member of Kingston UM Church and works on their monthly dinners and is a lifetime member of the Kirkland Historical Society.

Lindakay Ebel was also named Granger of the Year and has been a member of Flora Grange for 12 years, been their treasurer since 2015, Membership chairman since 2019, Community Service char for the past five years. Her community service book earned first place at the National Grange two years ago. She has been Treasurer of Pomona Grange since 2016 and has been a member of Guilford Hope for 8 years and serves as Chaplain. In addition to her Grange service, she works in the Boone County Fair food stand each year, serves as Vice President of the Kirkland Historical Society and volunteers weekly at the museum and is an active member of Kingston UM church, where she helps with monthly dinners and breakfasts and founded the United Women in Faith group in 2025. Lindakay loves to volunteer and be with people. Membership Awards given at the meeting by Secretary Laurel Ratcliffe to the following:

10 Years – Lydia Melillo, Richard Nelson, Kay Ollmann, Ruth Perley, Marion Thornberry
15 Years – Tom Berry

20 Years – Kerry Lee, Kristine Lee, Dawn Rogers, Nancy Shea, Bev Swanson

25 Years – Allen Fidler

30 Years – Central Grain Commodities

45 Years – Mary Jean Lane

50 Years – Sharon Fidler

60 Years – Emalee Colver and Laurel Ratcliffe

Minutes of the May 12, 2026 meeting were approved. Motion was made to approve the membership of Bonnie Smith of Rockford.

Reports Followed: **Community Service:** Lindakay Ebel reminded members they have June and July to turn in community service hours. **Agriculture:** Jack Ratcliffe stated we received a lot of rain, crops look good and yields are good.

Fair board: Todd Hegge stated there is a new bathroom service this year, also doing some seal coating. **Membership:** Lindakay Ebel welcomed our new member, stated we all need to get out and recruit. **Family Activities:** Deb Silvers stated new fair books are out, start thinking about what you are going to enter in the fair this year.

Quilting: Emalee Colver reported the two groups will be quilting this weekend. She showed the beautiful work that Nancy Shea has been working on all year for the Linus Project. All are welcome to come.

Treasurer's report was given and approved. We discussed working the breakfast at the fair three times this year and Laurel asked who would be willing to help. There was discussion on a spaghetti dinner on November 1st at the Flora Grange Hall, this was again tabled. A motorcycle run will be held on September 19 and will end at the Flora Grange Hall, gift baskets are needed, contact Tammy Brauer for more information. \$38.00 in 'G' bills was collected. Happy birthday to Emalee Colver on June 30th. Meeting was closed in full form. July no meeting will be a work night at the fairgrounds on Tuesday, July 14, starting at 4: 30 pm. August meeting, 1 week later, August 18, 7 pm at Flora Grange Hall.

Lindakay Ebel, Publicity



Chaplains Corner

By: Charlotte Mehrtens

Another day, Another month

Hello, hope you are all enjoying this summer and having fun with all your family. Remember that the freedom we always enjoy wasn't always free, many people paid the price to keep our country free and safe.

Just as our Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Many of us will enjoy picnics, fireworks displays, and family times together. I hope that as we all gather together to celebrate this special 250th anniversary we can all draw closer together in Christ.

Many of us have lost loved ones these past few months we send our deepest prayers to you.

Many of us have many happy times reminding us that we are free to embrace what we have to share.

HAPPY 250TH ANNIVERSARY TO EACH OF YOU.
GOD BLESS.

Well Done Good and Faithful Servant



Jerrold "Jerry" Hart

1939-2026

Flora Grange

Guilford Hope Grange

Jerry was a long time member of Flora Grange and an Affiliate member of

Guilford Hope Grange. He will be greatly missed. Jerry served in the US ARMY. Jerry will be remembered for his patience, kindness and unwavering love for his family.

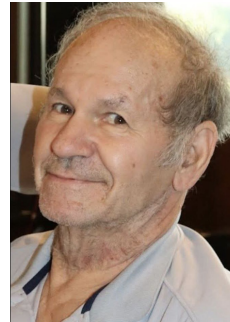
Mary Innis of The Prairie Grange left us on Monday June 22 after a short illness. Her services are pending. There will be an obituary in the next Illinois Granger.



Shirley Porter

1935-2026

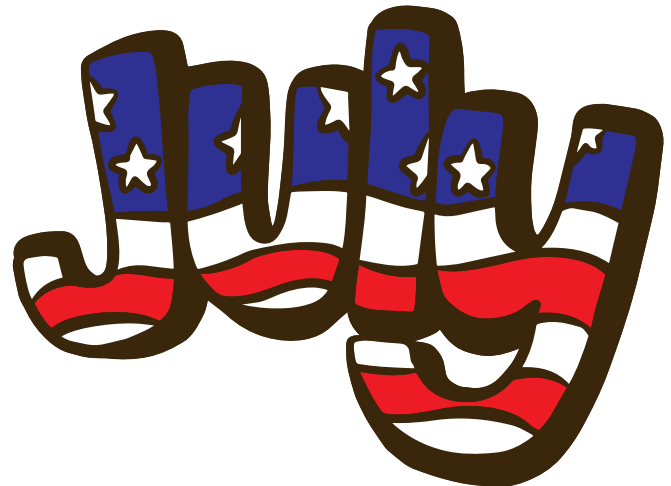
Emerald Mound Grange
Shirley was a longtime member of Emerald Mound Grange. She will be greatly missed.



Robert L. "Bob" Hoffman

1952-2026

Floraville Community Grange
Bob will be remembered as an avid hunter, fisherman, and gardener. He was also a prankster! Please keep Marilyn in your prayers.



Calendar of Grange Events

2026

7/1 Deadline for Resolutions

7/13 Bunco at Emerald Mound sponsored by Leu Civic Center 10am-Noon

7/18 BBQ dinner at Emerald Mound from 5pm-7pm - \$10/person

7/27 Cards & Games at Emerald Mound sponsored by Leu Civic Center 10am-Noon

8/2 Turkey Hills Ham & Peach Dinner 10:30am-2pm

8/7 Deadline for Rooms and Meals for State Session

8/11-16 Boone County Fair Belvidere IL

9/11-13 Illinois State Grange Session

11/11-15 National Grange Session Tulsa OK

2027

7/18-25 Grange Revival/Smoky Mtns Edition
Bryson City, NC