

A quarterly publication of the National Grange

Vol. 1, Issue 1 | Winter 2017

Good DAY!

WHAT BINDS US: A Look at Family Traditions

MEMBER TALENT ON DISPLAY

Enjoy a Junior's story, a photo essay and a poem submitted by Grangers

ANOTHER SASH ADDED TO FAMILY COLLECTION

Profile of the 2016-17 National Grange Outstanding Young Patron

HAVE THE TALK THIS APRIL

Use Grange Month to celebrate the DO-ers in your community and challenges others to step up

DEPARTMENTS

6

NATIONAL NEWS

National Grange leadership welcomes you to the magazine and provides you an update on the news of the Order

10

GRANGE NEWS

Be inspired by what Granges across the nation are doing and learn who we've lost

18

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Learn who took home top prizes in the 2016 Community Services Awards

19

MEMBER RECOGNITION

Congratulations to our 100- and 125-year-old Granges and long-time members

27

LEGISLATIVE

Health care reform and the new USDA Secretary are in focus

35

GRANGE MONTH

All you need to know to prepare for a community conversation this April

57

JUNIOR GRANGE

New director, program changes and additional badges are introduced

67

GRANGE YOUTH

A look at the work done by 8 Distinguished Grange Youth programs

74

HOBBIES & CRAFTS

Make Mother's Day memorable with great gift or D-I-Y wood photo transfer

86

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

Poetry, prose, photo essays and more are welcome in Good Day! Also find a Junior Submission on pg. 65

87

RECIPES

A hearty winter vegetable is in focus with featured recipes

91

LAST WORD

Ritual is an important tradition that makes Grange family

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Features

40



FAMILY TRADITIONS

Food, friendships and this fraternity are all significant parts of many family traditions

62



HONEY BEES

Learn a bit about the helpful, hardworking honey bee and be prepared to help Juniors in quest for 2017 Awareness Award

69



YOUNG PATRON

Not new to the spotlight, the Outstanding Young Patron has a lot of spirit for the Grange

WHO WE ARE



150TH ANNIVERSARY

The National Grange was founded as a fraternal organization for farm families in 1867 – opening its doors to men and women equally from the start.

From rural free delivery of mail to the direct election of U.S. Senators by the people, Grangers have influenced so many aspects of American life and culture.

Today we continue to advocate for rural Americans and those interested

in all areas of agriculture – including those who just like to eat – and our local Granges provide millions of dollars and hours of service to their neighbors annually.

Each Grange operates as a grassroots unit, taking on projects most appropriate for their communities and advocating based on their members' beliefs.

Learn more at www.nationalgrange.org.

OUR FAMILY

TRADITION DEFINED
P. 43

**START YOUR OWN
TRADITION**
P. 47

**MAKE OTHERS
PART OF YOUR FAMILY**
P. 49

**A LOOK AT THE DIVERSE FAMILY TRADITIONS THAT
SPAN GENERATIONS, AND HOW TO BUILD OR
ENHANCE YOUR OWN TRADITIONS**



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white and black striped cardigan over a white top and a white skirt with a lace hem, is seen from the side, holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white top and a blue bow in their hair. They are standing on a grassy area in front of a white brick wall. The wall has some peeling paint and is the background for the text.

LY traditions

**CARD NIGHT MAKES FRIENDS
PART OF THE FAMILY
P. 48**

**DAIRY EXPO BONDS FAMILY
P. 50**

**NATIONAL MASTER SHARES
FAMILY RECIPE
P. 53**

**HOW TO BE GOOD STEWARDS
OF GRANGE FAMILY HISTORY
P. 51**

Traditions TO KEEP

FAMILY DEFINED BY SHARED EXPERIENCES AND VALUES

By Bonniejean Alford

Family.

This is a word that leaves an array of emotions and interpretations as to how it is defined. Entire fields of study have developed to explore familial roots and definitions.

At the core, though, are the shared experiences more often than lineage that makes family.

The activities families engage in speak volumes about what they think about family and who they define as family. Of utmost importance to understanding family are the traditions carried on through generations that build a sense of togetherness and belonging, establish values and shape the identity of each family.

Gatherings as Tradition

On July 4, 1943 three dairy farming families in Monroe, Wash. – two named Ohlsen and one named Steffens – came together to celebrate the holiday.

That gathering began a tradition that continues into the present day.

However, the gathering was not all about fun.

In fact, initially, it was about coming together to help each other complete farming tasks. It was a time during WWII when everything metal was going toward the war effort, so if you needed something you had to share. Each family would have one piece of equipment and then they would go around and help each other.

Since the families lived so near to each other, they worked together, played together – depended on each other. That was the reality of the time, which became a blessing for the community.

Harriet Barr, also of Monroe, Wash., was just a few months old at the inaugural event.

“I was very blessed to grow up in the neighborhood I did – always had friends to help when you needed it. And such great neighbors, I married one of them.”

Barr said she most remembers the warm closeness of the neighbors: never a need for money; good friends assisting



Generations from three Washington families, all with Grange roots, have gathered for annual Fourth of July picnic since the days of World War II.

“The activities families engage in speak volumes about what they think about family and who they define as family.”

each other and growing as community – and a family.

Eileen Hartzell, now of Deer Park, Wash., said while not all those who attended the picnic then or now are related by blood, the three families were indeed just that, in the sense that their lives were interconnected as neighbors. Their livelihood depended on each other both in terms of farming and daily life.

As neighbors and members of Tualco Grange, Hartzell said, “we did a lot of things together,” stretching far beyond the yearly Fourth of July festivities.

Betty Meske, of Monroe, remembers how, through the years, the three families participated in activities together to make the work better.

The work became enjoyable, which for dairy farmers was a good thing because as farmers there wasn’t much time for fun, Meske said.

Whether blood-related or not, Meske said, “we just enjoy each other.”

The Fourth of July gathering allowed them to have that time with each other, even if they only saw each other once a year. Ultimately, the event became an American tradition for the community of Monroe, and it called to those far and near to be in attendance. Today, people of all ages connected to the original families come from all over the country to help and celebrate.

Barr still resides just two miles from where the original celebration was held. She has watched the event grow and

shrink as lives of extended family have evolved.

The event continued not because people didn’t have anywhere else to go, but because they didn’t want to go anywhere else, the ladies related in their own terms. Truth was, they often only saw certain extended family members once a year and wanted to catch up.

In 1961, dozens of men from the families and the community helped build a cement pool. All the builders signed their names in the cement – signifying the importance of the event and the families attending for years to come.

In that pool, generations of Steffens and Ohlsens have learned how to swim, played and laughed, and with new generations metaphorically baptized into the larger family at the event, this tradition is likely to continue for decades more.

FOOD AND HOLIDAYS AS TRADITION

Gathering with friends and family to enjoy good food has been an important tradition for the Barr family, even beyond the Fourth of July. So much so, that Barr’s nephew built the table for gatherings that is higher, making it easier to gather around and talk while making various dishes.

Made most often is the Norwegian Lefse, a flat bread made from a potato base. Barr has been making it more than 25 years now, after being gifted with the recipe by Norwegian friends visiting America. Now the recipe is made at almost every special event, including Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving.

Often food becomes a central, defining characteristic of both events and people.

For the Fourth of July celebration, people brought chicken for their own immediate family and then something else to share, Barr said.

Certain people become known for bringing a particular dish.

Hartzell remembers Alice Ohlsen’s black cherry Jell-O made with fresh cherries and Mary Ohlsen’s cheesecake.

DEFINED: FAMILY TRADITION

By: Bonniejean Alford

At the center of family life are the traditions that help to shape the identity of both the family unit and each individual member.

For some, traditions are synonymous with saying culture, which involves all the activities, symbols, norms, values, beliefs and material objects of a group of people – basically all the ways of existence that express exactly who a culture is. Or, who a family is.

Traditions, though, go deeper than just how the culture is practiced.

Functionally, traditions teach the practices of culture by passing on activities and ideals from one generation to the next. They reveal what is important simply by encouraging participation and then actually taking part.

At the most individual level, this teaches children both to place value on that which parents hold dear and how to critically evaluate practices to make them their own within their own identity parameters.

Through this, those traditions that most represent a family for generations become ingrained in a person’s role as part of a family, establishing their identity both in a family and separate from the family unit.

A person can become identified by an activity or belief structure that they engage in to honor a heritage that came before. In the end, these traditions ultimately play an essential role in the establishment of a person’s distinctive sense of self and worldview.

Identity is the collection of ideals, behaviors, beliefs, and practices that are the core of an individual or family.

This drives a person’s choices, from personal to social to professional. Identity unfolds over a lifetime and can shift as life shifts. Traditions are a large part of this identity development, as are other less controllable factors such as race, class, gender, etc.



Fay Snyder, one of the original Snyder Family tradition-starters, pulls a milkshake during the 2017 PA Farm Show.

by coming to volunteer on weekends while returning to his studies during the week at Penn State in State College.

Derek said he especially likes watching how popular his grandmother, Fay Snyder, is, noting how everyone wants to talk with her.

"We even tease her that she has a boyfriend with one of the TV news reporters who always has to see her first when he gets here to get his picture with her and talk to her," Derek said, smiling and teasing Fay who blushes from more than a foot below him.

Derek was the male 2014-15 National Youth Ambassador, and he said some of what he learned about working to serve others at the stand allowed him to better understand what it would mean to be the face of the Grange. He also hopes one day to share the tradition with his children and keep the spirit of service alive, passing the value onto the next Snyder generation.

All three generations of Snyders agree that service helps to root them to the community and connect their family with each other in a way they may not have without the pleasurable chore of working the stand.

TRAVELING THE WORLD BY WAY OF TASTE BUDS

Joan Hammel, of Wildwood, Ill., has created a tradition centered around food

The cheesecake is especially memorable for Hartzell as the recipe was gifted to her as a wedding shower gift because her husband-to-be loved it so much.

Hartzell's own signature caramel recipe was gifted to someone else within the extended family.

SERVICE BECOMES TRADITION FOR SOME

The partnership between Valley Grange #1360 and the PA Dairymen's Association has helped to create even more traditions. For many who attend the Pennsylvania Farm Show that runs for more than a week early each January at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, the experience is incomplete without a chocolate, vanilla or half-and-half mix milkshake.

Behind the counter, at the milkshake machines or in the back doing heavy lifting or one of the multitude of other duties to serve more than 100,000 shakes over the course of the event, you will find several members of the Snyder family.

Since 1954, Snyders – young and old, family by blood, those who married in and even in-laws – have been part of the core team coordinating volunteers to staff the stand.

Over the years, the family has worked the stand because, among many other reasons, it is a place to see and catch up with those people you may only connect with once a year.

Bud Snyder, a second generation shake stand volunteer and Valley Grange member, said he was first involved as a toddler because the whole family came out to the stand, no matter age.

"I never missed a year," Bud said. "It's just always a great time to get back together and see some friends."

His son, Derek, also got involved as a toddler and has continued the tradition

Derek Snyder, left, sips a milkshake while taking stock of the shake mix, while Fay Snyder, right, talks to new volunteers at 2017 PA Farm Show milkshake stand. Her son, Bud Snyder, back, talks to other volunteers.



that also provides a bit of an education into the world culture.

Each year, she and her husband, Mark, host a Christmas Eve dinner for which they select a new culture to introduce to their guests.

Each guest brings food from that country, and they find activities to participate in that connects to that country's culture. Some of the countries they have celebrated are Brazil, Italy, Germany, France, Poland, Israel, Palestine, Spain, Greece and most recently, the Czech Republic.

This was rooted in the original celebration when Joan returned from a USO tour in Cuba. She liked the food so much that she wanted to share it with her family.

But the celebration of Christmas Eve goes beyond just the food for the Hammels.

Their home remains a place of refuge for anyone without a place to go for the holidays.

Joan's open-door policy has welcomed people from many different walks of life



HAMMEL FAMILY GATHERING

Joan Hammel's open door policy is in part derived from the types of family gatherings she grew up with.

and religions over the years, and she always makes a point to invite service personnel stationed in the area that cannot return home for whatever reason.

Christmas Eve, Joan said, "truly has been a place of welcome and fellowship."

"I see it continuing to always be a policy of 'all are welcome,' with perhaps some new twists," she said.

In the future, Joan is considering

hosting a pot luck where guests would bring food from their heritage, offering a smörgåsbord of cultures in one setting that honors the America's diversity as a nation of immigrants.

HOLIDAYS ARE THE PERFECT TIME FOR TRADITIONS

For Jeff S. Bray, now of Charlotte, Texas, food often reminds him of Sunday



Photo courtesy of McCormick Kitchen

Lemon CHEESECAKE

Coveted recipe of Mary Ohlsen

- 1 package (3 oz.) lemon Jell-O
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup butter

- Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Add lemon juice. Set aside.
- Cream softened cream cheese and sugar.
- Mix Jell-O and cream cheese mixtures together.
- Pour evaporated milk into a bowl and put in freezer just until ice crystals start to form, then remove and immediately whip with mixer until stiff. Fold into Jell-O and cream cheese mixture to make cheesecake filling.
- Form the crust by mixing melted butter with graham cracker crumbs and pat into the bottom of a 9" x 13" pan.
- Pour cheesecake filling over the crust. Refrigerate until firm.

dinners at his grandmother's house in Southern California.

Everyone gathered and spent time together – time that revolved around food. Nothing specific, Bray said, just eating and working together to prepare a meal.

In fact, it never exactly seemed like a tradition, per se, according to Bray. It was more that everyone was hungry so they ate together. Through the years, as he looks back, Bray believes these gatherings meet all the criteria of tradition.

Even though Bray now resides in Texas, and the remainder of the family still gathers in California for Sunday meals, he has taken that idea of gathering and shifted it to fit his family of six.

He and his wife, Carolyn, spend every New Year's Eve with their four kids, eating finger foods and playing games. They close out the night, beginning the new year, with s'mores.

Bray also recalls Christmas gatherings being about more than just food.

His maternal great-aunt would give each person an extremely large stocking, easily the size of a 20-pound burlap sack of potatoes, he said. In it were gifts she had collected all throughout the year. Each item was wrapped and placed with love into the stocking. The gifts could be anything from toiletries to arts and crafts to a favorite canned good.

And, Bray said, there would always be candy.

“Traditions can be made in many ways, but no matter what traditions bond people – related by blood or shared experience – as a family, they are important.”

As an adult with his own kids, he takes the time to gather and read “The Christmas Story” each year, and carries on part of his aunt's tradition by giving small gifts with great thought and meaning. While these are not packed into a giant stocking, each carry with them the same feeling of love that he felt radiating from what he received as a kid.

BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD
For some, membership in the Grange is a family tradition all of its own.

As a fifth-generation Granger, 61-year-old Tricia Taylor of Danbury, N.H., is about to help usher into the Grange another grandchild. He will make seven generations

of the Taylor family that have taken the degrees, many helping to present them, to become Patrons of Husbandry.

The tradition began with two sets of charter members – her great-great-great-grandparents, Isaac and Olivia Perkins, on her father's side, charter members of the Blazing Star Grange #71 in Danbury, N.H., and great-great-great-grandparents, James and Lorette Jackman, on her mother's side, charter members of Mont Calm Grange #70 in Enfield, N.H.

Being a Grange member and all that entails is just part of life in their family.

Across the country, in Washington, Barr, Meske, and Hartzell, share a multi-generational history of Grange membership, too, and some of their stories begin to sound very familiar as they recount their Grange's work and activities.

Not unlike many members generations deep in the Order, Tricia's mother has a story of attending her first Grange meeting in a laundry basket at just 10 days old in 1936.

For the Taylor family, a simple truth prevails: “It is a family tradition,” Tricia said. “Tradition keeps us together – and for us, Grange brought us together.”

In their tight-knit community where everyone knew one another and kids couldn't get away with anything, according to Taylor, many were Grange members.

Grange served as a common bond



THROUGH THE YEARS

Seven generations on both sides of the family of New Hampshire member Tricia Taylor, far right, have been active in the Grange.

throughout the area, Taylor said.

The members “just felt like family – go to meetings and everyone gave each other a ton of hugs – called each other Brother and Sister.”

She said the people “simply behaved like family to each other and were always there for one another.”

In addition to having an extended family, membership in Grange is rewarding in a multitude of other ways that pay off throughout life, Taylor said, from leadership training, to public speaking coaching and experience, learning to collaborate, showing kindness, understanding the needs of others, and much more, the Grange

better the lives of its members and gives them shared experiences, making them feel like family.

Several members said you knew someone’s values were similar to your own if they were a member – a good reason, one reasoned, that you find many marriages between two people who had already belonged to the Grange when they met.

LIVING ‘ON IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO LOVE US’

Traditions can be made in many ways, but no matter what bonds people – related by blood or shared experience – as a family, traditions are a kind of social glue.

“When it comes down to it, family

is all you have. It’s where you turn when everything else and everyone else turns on you,” Bray said. “When we fail, or succeed, family is there to pick you up or to celebrate with you. And family is not necessarily blood. Sometimes you get so close to someone that they become part of you.”

Ultimately, the practice of traditions binds families, no matter whether born in blood or united by choice, across generations, place and even across the world of the living and those who have passed on.

“Traditions allow us to remember where we came from, where we are, and allows all of us to live on in the hearts of those who love us,” Hammel said.

CREATE YOUR OWN *Tradition*

By Jenna Spinelli

Every great family tradition has to start somewhere, and it’s never too late to get one going in your family — whatever form that family may take.

Leave your mark on future generations while honoring your family’s heritage. Traditions do not necessarily require a lot of planning and, in fact, are sometimes best when they develop organically.

Use these ideas as a springboard to create your own tradition.

HOST AN UNEXPECTED FAMILY DINNER

Anyone who has ever hosted a family dinner that they can seem like more trouble than they are worth. You spend time making the sure the house is spic and span, washing the good dishes and shopping for special ingredients. And then it’s over in a matter of hours and you are cleaning up again.

What if it didn’t need to be that way? What if you could invite your family over without cleaning a thing and cooking whatever you had on hand? That is exactly the idea behind the unexpected dinner party.

In some versions of this concept, friends and family even show up unannounced at dinner time. That might be a little too extreme for some families, but the idea of spontaneity can help families bond by working together to plan a creative meal on short notice. It may take some time to get used to, but it will lead to greater peace of mind about family gatherings in the long run.

CELEBRATE A HALF BIRTHDAY

Birthday celebrations are family staples, but happen so infrequently that you need to cram a year’s worth of celebrating into one day. A half birthday is a great way to add another celebration into the mix and have a little fun in the process.

You can really go crazy with the “half” theme — bake half of a cake, drink half glasses of punch, eat half hamburgers or hot dogs — the possibilities are endless.

COMPLETE A NEW YEAR’S INTERVIEW

Start the new year off right by having your family set goals and intentions for the months to come.

Have everyone complete a questionnaire about their favorite parts of the past year and what they hope to accomplish in the year to come. Take turns reading the answers on New Year’s Eve or New Year’s Day over a big meal.

Far-flung family members can participate in this tradition, too. Send the questions in advance and connect them in via Skype or on the phone to talk with those in person about their responses or ask them to send their answers back in writing and share copies of yours as well.

No matter how many people participate, this provides an opportunity for a family to reflect on good times over the past year, and start the new year feeling more connected.