

The official publication of the NC Grange

March / April 2021

GRANGE NEWS

TEACHERS

FFA

MEMBERSHIP



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Remember to continue collecting new and gently used baby items for Baby Bundles, our 2020 / 2021 State Community Service Project!

- Children's Clothing sized newborn to 12 months: onesies, sleepers and outfits (outfit sets need to be pinned together)
- Blankets
- Board Books
- Developmental Toys, Rattles, Teethers
- Socks, Hats
- Bibs & Burp Clothes

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4-10	Grange Camp
September 9-12	State Convention

The Grange is a grassroots, community service, family organization with a special interest in agriculture and designed to help meet the needs of people, young and old, through a cooperative effort with government and other organizations that also seek the greatest good for the greatest number.

North Carolina Grange News (USPS 392-780) is the official publication of The North Carolina State Grange, 1734 Wilkesboro Hwy, Statesville, NC 28625 and is published bi-monthly. The yearly subscription cost is included in the annual membership dues for members of The North Carolina State Grange. ISSN # 0279-5914—Periodical Postage Paid in Statesville, NC and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to The N.C. State Grange, 1734 Wilkesboro Highway, Statesville, NC 28625.





A NOTE FROM JIMMY:

COWS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A SPOOF ON A SERIOUS MATTER

For years, cows have come under fire because scientists think they release emissions into the air that contribute to climate change. I saw a statistic indicating that in the United States, cows release 4% of the emissions that are killing our planet. I have been really concerned about anyone thinking that cows could be such a major culprit. It is quite offensive to them! When one looks at the worldwide statistics on cattle emissions, it rises to 12%. However, this article will only deal with the US. For the benefit of all cattle, I believe that the statistics are skewed. So, I am going to fight these statistics with statistics!

There are approximately 94 million cows in the United States. Sure, 94 million animals that are emitting methane by passing gas and burping could add up to a significant amount. I believe that the statistics overlook the fact that cows are not the only living beings on earth providing similar contributions. There are approximately 33 million deer in the country which are ruminants just like cattle. Therefore, it stands to reason that deer produce one-third of these emissions reducing cattle to 2.7%. There are approximately 327 million people in the

United States, more than 3 times the number of cattle. While people are not ruminants, they are impressive in the ability to release gas, especially babies! Since cows are outnumbered by people, it would stand to reason that humanity is releasing much more gas than cattle, but I will give cows the benefit of the doubt and reduce their release statistic to .5%.

I am confident that the researchers have completely overlooked gas produced by wildlife, especially the large ones such as elephants, rhinos, apes and whales. Have you ever gone on a whale watching cruise and observed the bubbles rising to the top of the water? So, wildlife must be producing at least .5% of climate changing emissions. Thus, I have proven that cows are completely innocent, so leave them alone! They produce better milk and meat when they feel good about themselves!

Since people provide such a major contribution to climate change, the next challenge is to determine what we can do about it. Currently, only two things come to my mind. We must stop eating beans, and no more Colonoscopies!



WHITE LAKE

by: Laurie Barnhart

A RETREAT FOR YOUNG, ASPIRING AGRICULTURALISTS

Most eastern North Carolinians have visited White Lake at one time or another during their life. I for one have made occasional visits there to swim in the pristine water at the lake. In fact that is where I learned to slalom ski. I have very fond memories of the time I spent there as a child. What many North Carolinians do not know, however, is that White Lake is home to the second oldest FFA Camp in the US and the only remaining FFA Camp in the state. Now known as the North Carolina FFA Center, the facility was opened on June 4, 1928 and operated as the Young Tar Heel Farmer Camp. That first summer, the camp hosted 896 young men. For the last 93 years, the FFA Center has hosted more than 150,000 students at this camp that sits on the shores of beautiful White Lake. What an amazing legacy!

Today, the FFA Association works with NC Agriculture Education to offer the best programs for ag students and teachers across North Carolina. Among the programs offered at the FFA Center are leadership programs for students as well as seven weeks of recreational camp. State Leadership Conferences are also held at the center as well as a Wildlife Camp. “It’s our goal that as we grow this facility here at White Lake that even more young people will be involved in FFA and agricultural education,” said Josh Bledsoe, State Agricultural Education Leader. “Agriculture is the number one industry in the state and Agricultural Education/FFA is the pipeline for that industry. We’re proud to provide life changing experiences for students that will ultimately make a huge difference in our state.”

Plenty of blue jackets can be seen at the camp. FFA members are known across the country by the recognizable FFA blue

jacket worn as “a beacon of community and pride.” The FFA corduroy jacket is how we recognize these Future Farmers of America. Known as “official dress,” the jacket represents an article of faith, honor and pride among FFA members across the nation. More importantly “the jacket unifies members in a long-standing tradition and reminds them that they are part of something bigger than themselves.” (ffa.org) The North Carolina FFA Center at White Lake has certainly played a role in helping build these traditions.



This year, during the 2021 General Assembly Long Session, we are assisting the North Carolina Agriculture Teachers Association's (NCATA) request for \$1.5M in one-time funding for the NC FFA Center, and \$450K in recurring funds to support three much needed new agricultural education state staff positions. The one-time funding will be used to build a new staff house for camp staff, FFA chapter retreats, and many other activities. This funding would also be used to rebuild the boys cabins. The NC Grange is proud to support, and help continue, the legacy of this wonderful retreat for the North Carolina FFA Association.

photos provided by: Tash Bledsoe



FOOD WASTE IN AMERICA

by: Jimmy Gentry

Recently I was reading about the climate change issue and learned that food waste is considered as bad for the environment. Researchers are estimating that Americans waste almost one-half of the food that is produced in this country. The unused food ultimately goes to landfills where it decays and forms methane which is released. It is believed that the release of methane contributes to climate change. Not only is it an environmental problem, but a huge waste of money. It is estimated that a family of four wastes approximately \$1,600.00 worth of food on an annual basis. Food is relatively inexpensive in this country, but lately all of us have experienced increased food prices during the last year.

Why do we waste food? Part of it is for cosmetic reasons – we want the prettiest fruits and vegetables that are on the grocery store shelf. The less attractive produce gets left behind and likely thrown away even though there is nothing wrong with it. Some grocery stores may be contributing this food to food banks. Sometimes we purchase more food than we can eat. The food goes bad and is thrown away. Food labels can be misunderstood, leading to the disposal of food that is still okay to eat.

What can be done? Families can do a better job of planning for their food needs, getting the freshest items, and storing the products properly. The food will last longer, thereby reducing the temptation to throw the food away.

We can donate extra food that is safe and nutritious to food banks. It is sad that we are wasting so much food while approximately one in six Americans do not get enough to eat.

We can also eat leftovers, properly preserve food, and compost unused produce. Finally, we can learn to understand food labeling to reduce the chance of throwing away perfectly good food.

This short article in no way covers all reasons why we waste food and possible remedies. It is a tremendous problem in this country, and with all of the waste, no one should be going hungry. Maybe the Grange can be part of the solution!



AG TEACHERS MAKING IMPACTS

There is an old Japanese proverb that states, “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.” When you think back to your school days, who is the teacher that made the greatest impact on your life? We all have at least one we can think of with fond memories. For many people, it was their agriculture teachers that made some of the greatest impacts.

NC Grange has always advocated for education and was an instrumental force in getting agriculture education into public schools. The Grange is also a long-time supporter of Future Farmers of America (FFA), for which agriculture teachers serve as advisors. Many of our members were involved in FFA as students. I recently had the honor of speaking with four of our Grange members who teach agriculture. I was so impressed with the amazing things they are doing to impact their students and communities.

Ashley [Pedersen] Holloman of Southern Wake Grange, a former Grange youth, is in her seventh year of teaching agriculture at Corinth Holders High School (CHHS) in Johnston County. Ashley always knew she wanted to be a teacher, but she was unsure of what subject she wanted to teach. She did not come from an ag background, but after engaging in agriculture classes and joining the FFA, she was hooked and decided to teach ag. She is proof that you do not have to grow up on a farm to be an ag teacher.

CHHS has a large agriculture program with four teachers. Ashley teaches Animal Science and Agriscience. There are 582 students enrolled in ag classes at CHHS. They all are members of FFA thanks to extra funding from the county used to pay the affiliate membership dues for each student

to join. For hands-on learning, their ag program includes a greenhouse, retention ponds, an Agriculture Mechanics workshop for woodworking and welding, and a barn that houses chickens as well as goats and sheep used for showing competitions. Ashley oversees the barn. I was fortunate to visit Ashley in person, especially since many schools are still not allowing visitors due to Covid19. She took Jessica Horton and I on a tour of their facilities. The greenhouse was full of beautiful flowers ready for their annual plant sale, and a new chicken house had just been installed in a pen that houses 30 chickens. It was built by the woodworking students.

FFA Chapters are often engaged in serving their communities. One of this chapter’s favorite projects is Breakfast with Santa. Families buy tickets to attend a pancake breakfast in the school gym, fully decorated for Christmas. A teacher plays the part of Santa for families to have pictures taken with him. The money raised goes to adopt five middle school families for Christmas, for which the chapter buys gifts and necessities.

As we wrapped up our time together, Ashley enthusiastically mentioned that her favorite part of being a teacher is seeing students learn and discover something new and watching them become more excited to learn about agriculture. “Most of my students come from suburban areas, so I love seeing kids inspired to learn about agriculture who did not even know they would enjoy ag in the first place,” said Ashley.

Through Zoom, I had the privilege of speaking with David Latta of Schley Grange. His background growing up in the





dairy industry played a big role in his decision to become an ag teacher. David teaches Agriscience and Ag Production at Orange High School (OHS) in Orange County. The school also has one of the biggest programs in the state with four teachers and over 400 FFA members. Their facilities include a greenhouse, a welding shop, a woodworking shop, and a barn that holds livestock such as goats and pigs. David oversees the woodworking shop.

The OHS FFA Chapter is involved in several different service projects. One project that stands out is for the Wounded Warriors Project. Each fall, a local hunting club opens their land and allows veterans to hunt on the property for a week. The chapter provides a meal for veterans on the opening night. This is an incredible opportunity not just for David's students to serve, but to experience interacting with those who have bravely served our country.

The biggest event of the year for their program is Ag Day, which has become just as much of a tradition as prom or homecoming. Ag Day is for the entire school. Every school club sets up displays to promote their activities, and some ag students will exhibit the impressive projects they have been conducting. The event also includes livestock, a wildlife wall, and a display of tractors. The entire school comes together for this big event that celebrates agriculture. It is something the students highly look forward to every year.

Before ending our conversation, David spoke of what he loves most about teaching agriculture. Besides building connections with students and watching them grow, he also stated that he enjoys getting students inspired about what the next chapter after high school will bring and seeing who they become after graduating. For students thinking about going into agriculture education, David states, "There is a lot of joy when impacting kids' lives. Try to gain as much diverse knowledge as you can from different programs to help your students in the long run. Learn from other programs and take small pieces of those and make them your own."

Another ag teacher in our organization is Caroline [Tart] Warmack, member of Grantham Grange. Like Ashley, Caroline grew up in the Grange's Youth Program. She served on the State Youth Leadership Team and was named National Youth Ambassador in 2009. She also served as a State FFA Officer while in college. Caroline's father was an ag teacher. She has fond memories of riding her bike around the NC FFA Camp at White Lake as a little girl. Her agricultural background and love for FFA were influences in her decision to go into ag education. Caroline teaches Animal Science, Agriscience, and Ag Mechanics at West Craven High School (WCHS) in Craven County. Their program has two teachers who also oversee a greenhouse, a tractor and a barn that houses a goat, pigs, chickens, and rabbits. All 120 students that are enrolled in agriculture classes are also members of the FFA with the help of their local Farm Bureau which pays the affiliate memberships for each student.



One of my favorite stories that Caroline shared is how her students came up with a new idea to serve someone in their community. A local elderly lady has driven a bus for WCHS for many years. She owns a horse farm, but her husband passed away a few years ago. The FFA students have been helping her with upkeep on the farm. The students noticed that the fencing around her horse pasture is old and falling apart, so they approached their FFA advisors with the idea to raise money to

buy the supplies to build a new one for her. It is amazing to hear how motivated these students are to serve.

Students often go to their teachers for advice about their futures. Caroline advises those thinking of becoming ag teachers to tune out anything negative they might hear about the teaching profession and focus on the positives. She continues, “Teaching is a great career because you get to impact students and those students will always remember the impact you made on them. Not everyone gets an opportunity to do that like teachers do. Being an ag teacher is great because you have a lot of freedom and creativity with your lessons. It’s also fun, and every day is different. If you are passionate about helping and impacting others, then you should do it!”

“I tell students that if they find that they do not want to go into ag, that’s okay. But if you find that you love it and want a future in it, I will do everything in my power to help you.”

- Arno Peterson

Several ag teachers involved in Grange have come from Sampson County including Arno Peterson of Taylor’s Bridge Grange. Arno teaches Animal Science, Agriscience Applications, and Ag Mechanics at Lakewood High School (LHS). With 182 students enrolled, the ag program at LHS is led by two teachers. They have a greenhouse, a welding shop, and ducks. One of Arno’s future goals is to start a research farm for the school to give students more hands-on experience in animal science.

While Ashley, David and Caroline started their careers as ag teachers after graduating from NC State University, Arno’s story is different. Arno spent 22 years working for Smithfield Foods, Inc. He always had a love for agriculture and worked in the industry but felt a passion to share that love for ag with students. After receiving his degrees in ag education from NC A&T University, he left his job in “corporate” agriculture as a production specialist and began teaching agriculture. He has been in the classroom for 7 years now.

The LHS FFA Chapter holds a successful food drive each fall around the holidays to serve their community. This started after a bad storm left many people in their area displaced and struggling. The FFA officers came up with the idea to do a food drive, which has become an annual project. The entire school is involved by competing to see

which homeroom can collect the most food items. The class that donates the most wins a donut party, sponsored by the FFA. The food is donated to the Christian Food Bank of Salemburg in Sampson County.

Arno enjoys teaching inside and outside of the classroom. He likes being able to work with kids on a specific skill, then watch them practice it, grasp it, and succeed at it. He also enjoys seeing students truly loving and enjoying learning about agriculture. He stated, “I love being part of culminating our students’ love for agriculture and watching them participate in it.” Arno is also inspired when kids who are not interested in agriculture end up growing a passion for it. He fondly spoke of a student who needed one more class and accidentally registered for an ag class with no interest in the topic. That student ended up loving it, stuck with it, and is now enrolled at NCSU to be an ag teacher.

Arno is very driven by a desire to help students find their place, whether it is in the ag industry or not. When a student comes to him for advice about a future in agriculture, he encourages them to learn about different areas of agriculture and take a variety of classes to discover their niche. “I tell students that if they find that they do not want to go into ag, that’s okay. But if you find that you love it and want a future in it, I will do everything in my power to help you.”

Not everyone realizes that being an ag teacher is a busy, year-round job. These teachers devote much time to their students outside of school, especially with FFA. They spend many nights, weekends, and even weeks in the summer traveling with their students to a wide variety of events and competitions. The time spent with their students builds strong connections, and those connections are what is most important to all four of these amazing ag teachers.



Though they teach at different schools in different counties, these four teachers have something major in common. They all were impacted by an ag teacher, and because of this, they also want to make an impact. A strong example of a teacher making an impact is when their students want to follow in their footsteps. David Latta spoke of the positive influence his ag teacher, Dave Gibbs, had on him. Ashley and Caroline had the same ag teacher in Wayne County, Allison Jennings, who made major impacts in both of their lives. Ashley stated, "Mrs. Jennings was very instrumental in helping me find my passions." Arno Peterson spoke highly of Gerald Barlowe who strongly influenced and encouraged him as well.

With uplifting stories about the impact made on them, it gives me so much joy to see these incredible teachers doing the same for their own students. Building connections with students, cultivating a love for agriculture in their students, and making a strong impact is what these teachers strive for. Their enthusiasm for teaching agriculture is motivating, their investment in their

student's lives is empowering, and their passion to help their students have successful futures is extremely inspiring. With teachers like these in the classroom, we can be confident that the future of agriculture is bright.



MEMBERSHIP TEAM HOLDS LEADERSHIP TRAINING CONFERENCE

by: Katie Greene

The NC Grange held a Leadership Training Conference virtually on Saturday morning, March 6, to help local Granges establish membership goals. The conference was hosted by the State Grange's new Membership Committee made up of David Allen, John Crawford, Jason Davis, Rylee Furr, Ken Plummer, and me. Our committee has been working hard to develop a plan to grow membership in the Grange.

Before the training conference was organized, the Membership Committee met for a few months to swap ideas to build membership. One of the first things that we did was create the following mission statement: "The mission of the Membership Committee is to guide and assist subordinate Granges to grow the North Carolina State Grange membership by ten percent in three years and twenty percent in five years." We plan to accomplish this by strengthening individuals, families and communities through education, advocacy, awareness, service and networking with other Granges.

Our team has a vision to usher in an era of perpetual membership growth sustained by the values of the North Carolina State Grange. We want Granges to gain members, but we also want them to hold onto these new members. We decided to start achieving this by hosting a Leadership Training Conference for Granges to help them set goals to gain new members. The training was developed and divided it into four main goals, all of which were presented at the conference.

Goal one for Granges is to meet again. We understand that due to Covid19, many members may not feel comfortable meeting face to face. As a solution, the State Grange has created a Zoom account that local Granges can use to meet virtually. If your Grange would like to meet online, please contact Jessica Horton who will set up the meeting for you. Two other options are to meet on a conference call or to meet somewhere outdoors, socially distant, while wearing masks. The important thing is for Granges to start meeting again safely.

The second goal for Granges is to plan events and projects to hold throughout the year. As your Grange starts to meet again, discuss activities for your members to be part of. We suggest reaching out to the community and asking what their needs are. Though the possibilities are endless, our committee created a list of places you can reach out to in the community such as fire departments, police departments, schools, churches, homeless shelters, social services, and farmers.

Goal one for Granges is to meet again.

Ken Plummer from Cape Fear Grange described what his Grange does to reach out to the community and how they have been able to obtain the Distinguished Grange Award from National Grange for the past few years. They create their calendar at the beginning of the year and develop a plan based around the criteria for the award. Ken also gave examples of

projects they do in their community such as presenting Community Recognition Awards and hosting a Breakfast with Santa for a church preschool. In 2020, Cape Fear Grange created and sponsored Friends of Fayetteville's Front Lines to provide meals to the medical personnel working on the front lines of the pandemic. They received media recognition. Ken encouraged Granges to aim for the Distinguished Grange Award. Information can be found on the website at nationalgrange.org.

Goal two is for Granges to plan events and projects.

John Crawford from Grantham Grange spoke about our many state contests that local Granges can get involved in. Many members in his Grange enjoy participating in these contests each year. Our annual Contest Guide contains information on all these contests and can be found online at ncgrange.com. It offers awards that your Grange and its members can receive as well as awards that people in your community can receive. If won on the state level, these awards come with high honors and monetary gifts. Members can also participate in contests such as talent, photography, art, crafts and baking. Everything you need to enter is in the contest guide.

Goal three is to ask for help if you need it.

The third goal for local Granges is to ask for help if they need it. David Allen described several programs that Granges can take advantage of such as a community service grant offered by the State Grange that can provide your Grange up to \$5,000 in assistance for worthy projects that will benefit your

community. The application can be found online. David also mentioned a loan service that the State Grange offers to those with Grange buildings to help with repairs. The point is that we are here for you and we want to help your Grange succeed, so please let us know how we can assist you.

It may sound tricky, but Goal Four is to accomplish Goal Two. This is a reminder that if you try something that does not work, it is okay. Just try again! It is important to keep trying and keep discovering what works for your Grange. Remember, things do not have to be done the way they have always been done. Change can be good!

After walking through the goals, Rylee Furr spoke about bridging age gaps in local Granges. She offered ideas to keep the Youth and Young Adults engaged and encouraged Granges to offer leadership positions to members in these age groups. This gives them more reason to stay involved. She reminded us that youth and young adults often do not speak up because they are concerned about stepping on other Granger's toes. Asking for their opinions and doing projects that they suggest will also help keep them involved. Rylee's other great ideas can be heard in the recording of the conference that is being provided to our Granges.

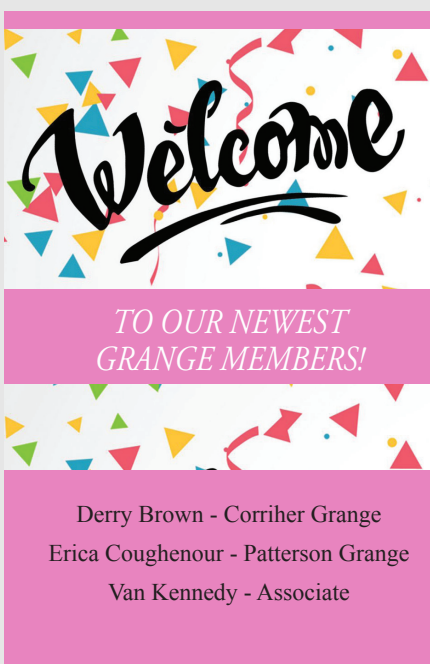
Jason Davis gave a presentation on Generational Differences. These are the differences in values, beliefs, and opinions between generations of people. He gave fascinating details about each generation represented in the Grange today, from the Silent Generation to Gen Z. Understanding their differences can help Granges meet the needs of the changing generations. Jason suggested challenging members with change and allowing them to lean on their own strengths. His ideas around outreach, providing purpose, offering authentic experiences, and more can also be heard in the recording.

State Grange President Jimmy Gentry was the last to present, offering his

thoughts on diversity within the Grange and how important it is for us to reach out to everyone to join our organization. As a reminder, anyone can join the Grange starting at age five with the Junior Program. At age fourteen, a person becomes a full member eligible to hold an office and vote.

Goal four is to accomplish goal two.

The Leadership Training Conference was very informative and full of beneficial ideas for Granges. A recording of the meeting was sent to all local Grange Presidents and Secretaries. I strongly encourage every member to watch or listen to the video. If you would like a copy of the recording, please send a request to kegreene@ncgrange.com. Future training sessions have been discussed to further help our local Granges. I encourage you to take part in the discussion and reach out for any assistance. I am excited to see what the future holds for new growth in the Grange!



MEMBERSHIP DREAM TEAM

by Katie Greene

The most important part of the Grange is our members. Without members, we would not exist. Membership growth is at the center of so many organizations that are always working to find ways to grow and maintain their membership. As the State Membership Director, it is exciting to take on the challenge of growing the Grange, but one person cannot do it alone.

Not long ago, a resolution was submitted to our State Convention by Cape Fear Grange concerning membership. It was resolved that the NC Grange develop a five-year strategic plan focusing on growing our membership. I met with Jimmy Gentry, State Grange President, and discussed forming a Membership Planning Committee with the goal of developing this strategic plan. As I contacted people from different Granges, an enthusiastic team was established. We were all set to meet in person in April 2020, but the pandemic happened, and we had to cancel.

As we moved into 2021, I decided to regroup and move forward with the Membership Committee. I was so thankful and excited when everyone confirmed that they were still willing to serve! We held our first meeting via Zoom and hit the ground running. Feeling like the title “membership committee” sounded so drab, we decided to call the group “The Membership Dream Team.”

This team has put in several hours bouncing around new ideas and discussing how to help local Granges to grow and to help them use resources offered by the State Grange. To do this, the team worked diligently to organize a Leadership Training Conference that was held virtually on March 6. I am very fortunate to be able to work with this wonderful team. I look forward to continuing to work with them in the future as we work to develop our strategic membership plan.



David Allen - David is a member of Corriher Grange. He is also a member of the NC Grange Board of Directors. He owns and operates Tranquility Farm in Mooresville, NC.



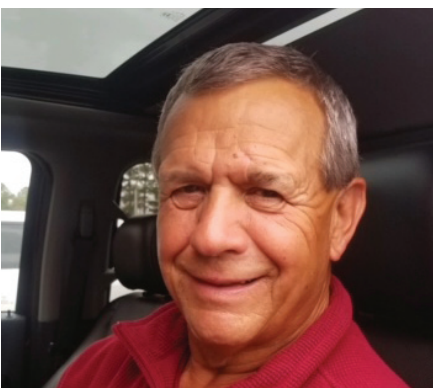
Rylee Furr – Rylee is a member of St. John’s Grange. She is graduating from NC State University this May.



Jason Davis – Jason is a member of Westbrook Grange. He is also the Assistant Dean of the School of Agriculture & Biological Sciences at Mt. Olive University.



Ken Plummer – Ken is the President of Cape Fear Grange. He is also very active within his community in the Fayetteville area.



John Crawford – John is the President of Grantham Grange. He is also a member of the NC State Grange Board of Directors.

Teaching and Uplifting Through Instagram

by Jennie Gentry



For anyone who works with kids, you know that the impact made on a child's life is one of the most amazing things to experience. Impacting the lives of our Grange youth and watching them grow is something our volunteers and I constantly strive for in our youth program. If you work with students, you also understand the importance of social media, which is often used to communicate. It can also be used to inspire others, which is exactly what one of our Grange members is doing.

Montana [Wrigley] Riley, a young adult that grew up in our Grange youth program, is an elementary school teacher who is using Instagram as a platform to inspire other educators. After she landed her first teaching job, she wanted to have a place to share her ideas, but to also connect with other teachers and learn from them. So, she created Teaching and Uplifting, an Instagram account that has quickly grown to have nearly 60,000 followers.

When you browse through her Instagram account, you will see colorful pictures of Montana's 4th grade classroom and the creative ways she has made her space fun for learning. Her favorite part is her class library where she has created a beautiful, very organized area for her students that helps cultivate a love for reading. "My students love hanging out in the classroom library with their friends, sharing books with each other and just taking the time to relax and read," states Montana. Pictures of her library have also become some of her most popular on her Instagram account, along with her ideas for organizing different spaces. She keeps her classroom very orderly so that she can stay focused on planning, prepping, teaching, and getting to know her students.

I'm confident in front of my students and coworkers because of the Grange. I feel comfortable speaking in front of others because of the Grange and being on the Youth Team. I still use a ton of games and activities that we do in Grange in my own classroom, and my students absolutely love it!
- Montana Riley

With so many followers, one of Montana's favorite experiences has been connecting with other teachers who often send messages. Some have reached out mentioning a post that has helped them. She expressed, "I absolutely love seeing how other teachers implement my teaching resources and ideas in their

classrooms!” Teaching and Uplifting has also become a place for teachers to connect and share ideas and experiences. They even share the emotions that come with the profession and offer encouragement when discussing tough things such as getting through the pandemic. Montana stated, “My first year of teaching was super challenging. I remember being extremely thankful for the many ideas I learned from teachers on Instagram back in 2017, so to know that I’ve been able to do that for others is a very rewarding experience.”



To keep up the continuously growing Instagram account, Montana posts around 3 to 5 times a week. Her picture posts are fun, colorful and inspiring. She is also very active on her Instagram story where she checks in daily with her followers and posts activities, ideas and projects she is working on. She also posts captions that are encouraging, motivating and engaging and is quick to respond to those who have reached out.

Because of the success of her uplifting Instagram account, Montana is now receiving opportunities to partner with different companies and organizations to collaborate and fundraise. She was recently approached by the company

Custom Ink for a partnership and had the opportunity to create a design for t-shirts and sweatshirts supporting education. All proceeds are going to an education charity called Room to Read. Montana said, “It has been fun partnering with different brands, and I’m looking forward to doing more in the future.”

I remember watching Montana as she grew up in the Grange’s youth program. She served on the State Youth Leadership Team where her abilities were honed, and her creativity started to shine. She was a natural leader who easily connected with her peers and was a positive role model for our Juniors. After seeing her grow and receive huge awards like the Grange President’s Award, it was no surprise to us when she was named the National Grange Ambassador in 2013. Montana now

gives back by serving as a counselor at Grange Camp and weekend youth events. She has a beautiful way of making our kids feel safe, special, and comfortable. She loves them all and inspires them in so many ways, and I know she does the same for her own students.

As we talked about her life as a teacher, Montana commented, “The Grange has made such a huge impact in my life for many reasons. I can truly say that I am the teacher I am today because of how the Grange helped me grow as a person and as a leader. I’m confident in front of my students and coworkers because of the Grange. I feel comfortable speaking in front

of others because of the Grange and being on the Youth Team. I still use a ton of games and activities that we do in Grange in my own classroom, and my students absolutely love it! So yes, the Grange has absolutely influenced who I am as a teacher, and I am so thankful for that.”

Montana’s favorite part of being a teacher is building connections and relationships with her students. She shared, “Of course, teaching academics is important. But to me, it is more important to make my students feel seen, feel heard, feel comfortable in themselves, and to help them to grow up to become kind, hard-working, ambitious people.” She aims to uplift her students to have confidence, and strives to help other teachers do the same.

You can follow Montana Riley on Instagram at www.instagram.com/teachinganduplifting/ to see all the wonderful things this young Grange member is doing to inspire others. Her Instagram’s bio also includes a link where you can see the amazing downloads and products she has designed to help other teachers. To teachers, Montana says, “Don’t be afraid to stand up for your ideas and try something new. Be creative and have fun with teaching!”



photos provided by: Montana Riley

CAPITOL NEWS

by: *Laurie Barnhart*

The 2021 General Assembly Long Session is in full swing in the Capitol City. Cold, rainy weather and Covid restrictions have not stopped legislators and staffers from drafting and introducing bills and holding various subcommittee meetings. To date, the House has filed 337 bills and the Senate has filed 323. The deadline for bill filing in the House is April 20 for public bills and April 27 for appropriations and finance bills. In the Senate, the deadline for all bills is April 6. The deadline for filing local bills has already passed for both chambers.

The budget starts in the Senate this session and the Senate appropriations committee chairs are now working on it. When their budget is finalized it will go to the House. The budget bill works just like any other bill. It is passed by the chamber where it is originated, then moves to the second chamber where it is amended, changed and eventually passed. It then goes back to the chamber of origin where it must once again be approved and passed. As you can imagine, it is quite a complicated process and involves many hours of committee meetings.

Significant legislation was passed as it relates to the reopening of schools that have been closed for a year now due to Covid restrictions. SB 220 was passed unanimously by the House and the Senate on March 11 and signed by Gov. Cooper on the same day. The bill was passed by what is referred to as a “gut and amend” process that fast tracks legislation. This bill allows for daily, full-time, in-person education for all school districts for elementary schools and also allows school districts to apply the same change to middle-school and high-school students. (The Raleigh News & Observer)

NC Grange is assisting in lobbying for funds for NC A&T University. If enacted, this bill would affectively increase the university’s appropriations by \$3 million to provide the full federally mandated match for NC A&T’s Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension programs, beginning with the FY-22 budget and continuing annually. The funds are broken down to two main sectors: Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension.

\$1,709,578 million would enable the Agricultural Research Program to support and hire 4 research scientists, 4 research associates, 4 postdocs and 8 graduate students. It would also replace outdated, non-functioning equipment and purchase needed equipment and supplies to update research labs, which would enable researchers to pursue meaningful research to advance progress in the agricultural sciences.

\$1,087,485 million would enable Cooperative Extension at NC A&T to add faculty and staff and expand outreach in the four state priority areas of plant and animal

agricultural systems; food safety, nutrition and health; youth, family and community well-being; and environmental and natural resources. Extension would also address gaps in programming and natural resources.

In addition to this bill, the NC Grange is also assisting the North Carolina Agriculture Teachers Association’s (NCATA) request for \$1.5M in one-time funding for the NC FFA Center at White Lake, and \$450K in recurring funds to support three much needed new state agricultural education staff positions. The one-time funding would be used to build a new staff house for camp staff, FFA chapter retreats and other uses. More information on this project can be found in this issue of Grange News.

On the Hill

With the new administration we have seen tremendous changes in Washington. The biggest piece of legislation of the current administration that has been passed in DC was the extremely controversial \$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 Relief Bill. President Biden signed the package on March 11. No Republican members of Congress voted for the relief package. The items included in the relief bill are as follows:

- Gives most Americans earning up to \$75,000 a \$1,400 check.
- Extends a \$300 weekly federal boost to unemployment benefits through August.
- Sends \$350 billion to state and local governments whose revenue has declined because of COVID-19’s impact on the economy.
- Allocates \$130 billion to help fully reopen schools and colleges.
- Allots \$30 billion to help renters and landlords weather economic losses.
- Devotes \$50 billion for small-business assistance.
- Dedicates \$160 billion for vaccine development, distribution and related needs.
- Expands the child tax credit up to \$3,600 per child.
- Expands premium subsidies for people who buy health insurance on their own instead of getting it from an employer or a government program like Medicare or Medicaid. (USA Today)

Another significant piece of legislation that has passed the House is HR 1603, The Farm Workforce Modernization Act. This legislation was passed in the House on March 18 with a bipartisan vote of 247 to 174. Thirty Republicans voted for it. Similar legislation has been introduced in the Senate. It is promoted as a bipartisan bill, however as currently written it may not be favorable to southern agriculture and farmers. It expands the current H-2A seasonal worker program to include full-time, year-round workers for dairy and other agricultural businesses. (Connect C; Ag Alliance)

There are several significant highlights from the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. It will reduce labor costs by freezing wages for one year and capping wage growth. It also makes available 60,000 year-round H-2A visas over the first three years, growing annually by 12.5%. In addition, it stabilizes the existing workforce by giving legitimate farmworkers a chance to get a five-year Certified Agriculture Worker (CAW) visa to work in U.S. agriculture. As long as the worker continues to meet minimum days in agriculture annually, the worker can continue to work in the U.S. with unlimited five-year renewals. CAWs can cross the border as they need without restriction. CAWs can earn the opportunity to apply for a green card by paying a penalty and continuing to work in agriculture for at least eight years.

The American Dream and Promise Act of 2021 (HR 6) also passed the House on March 18. This legislation, an issue that has been ongoing for years, provides a pathway for citizenship for seasonal migrant farmworkers. It will enable workers to apply for citizenship after another four years if they have been traveling to the US for a decade. This bill, which passed with a vote of 247 to 174, is expected to provide citizenship to more than a million migrants. It also ups the number of agricultural visas available to those seeking to come to the U.S. for work. (The Hill)

I am quite sure the NC Grange will be supporting additional bills as they continue to be filed. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding any legislation.

AGRICULTURE & CLIMATE CHANGE

by: Timmy Gentry

For years now climate change has been a topic of concern in not only the United States but worldwide. Unfortunately, this issue became politicized, and when politics became a force in the discussions, it became difficult to know who to believe. The democrats believe strongly that climate change is a problem, and republicans have not taken it as seriously. Now that the democrats are in control, President Biden is all about doing something about climate change in this country. (I should note at this point that if the US should make major advances toward a clean country that has vastly reduced greenhouse gases, the problem continues if the rest of the world does not follow suit.) So, President Biden and Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack will be expecting agriculture to play a major role in climate change.

It is believed that agriculture could be seriously harmed by climate change, in addition to contributing

to the problem. If temperatures continue to rise, it could impact crop production and literally change the climate zones. Crops may not be able to be grown in areas that are currently suitable. Livestock and laborers could be impacted by heat stress. Researchers believe that we are being impacted now by rainfall fluctuations and storm severity.

How does agriculture contribute to climate change? The quick answer is cattle emissions, fertilizer, pesticides, deforestation, and food waste. I believe that the loss of farmland to development is also a culprit. Both farmland and forests are being destroyed to make room for development. Trees and plants are important for carbon sequestration, and once they are removed so is the ability to clean the air.

What can agriculture do to help mitigate climate change? The quick answer is to reduce food waste, change livestock diets to reduce emissions, reduce the use of chemicals and fertilizers and diesel fuel, carefully manage irrigation practices, increase the use of solar power, maintain forests, and expand the use of cover crops

and conservation practices. Some of these are quite doable, and quite frankly already being done. We are doing a great job in North Carolina with conservation practices. Farmers are already using the recommended amounts of pesticides and fertilizers. The US Department of Agriculture is also considering the use of carbon credits to help mitigate climate change. In theory, farmers would be paid for implementing practices that help to sequester carbon.

Regardless of the views any of our members have on the climate change issue, new initiatives are coming from the federal government, and NC Grange must be ready to provide advocacy. The best thing is for us to be knowledgeable so that we can be a viable participant in the matters that come before us. Whatever comes down from USDA, we want voluntary programs that are beneficial to farmers, and provide financial incentives to adopt new practices. We do not want new regulation that is detrimental to farmers! Ideally, if the process leads to better practices that make farms more productive and profitable while protecting the planet, it may be worth it.



NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

American Values. Hometown Roots.

View from the Hill



With major COVID-19 relief in the rear-view mirror, Congress and the Biden administration are turning their focus toward other major priorities, including infrastructure, and a slew of smaller miscellaneous bills.

Infrastructure

As part of the ‘recovery’ aspect of President Biden’s campaign promise to “Build Back Better” the White House and Congress are turning their focus to a massive infrastructure package. Currently, the contours and budget for an infrastructure bill remain unknown because the administration and Congressional Democrats are still in the process of drafting a proposal. However, general themes and a timeline for such a package can be predicted. Beyond traditional infrastructure investments in roads, bridges, and waterways, it is certain that any large infrastructure package would include significant investments in projects to address climate change such as increased support for electric vehicles, and the deployment of renewable energy resources. With regard to rural America, the Biden administration has hinted that investments in broadband could be included in a potential package.

Miscellaneous Priorities

While infrastructure is expected to be the major Presidential legislative priority for the next many months, Democrats also plan to advance bills addressing issues such as gun control, immigration, equal protection for the LGBT community, women’s rights, and most prominently voting rights and democracy reforms.

THE RELIEF PACKAGE

In mid-March President Biden signed the long-expected American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion bill he proposed to Congress which is intended to address the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic downturn, with key provisions affecting rural America. In the bill, Democrats included \$22.7 billion in agriculture and nutrition assistance provisions, including \$3.6 billion in aid for the food supply chain and \$4 billion marked for assisting minority farmers in paying off USDA direct and guaranteed loans, a provision pushed by recently elected Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) who garnered crucial support from Georgia’s black agriculture community. Outside of agriculture, the bill also targeted significant sums towards rural broadband. For example, the new law created an Emergency Connectivity Fund of \$7.2 billion to reimburse schools and libraries for providing free broadband service during the pandemic, a reality which has played out across rural America as schools and work have gone remote. Yet more, the \$220 billion which the bill allocated for state and local governments was changed at the last minute to allow funds to be spent “to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure” meaning that a state could use some funds to expand broadband access in rural America.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Continue Farmers to Families Food Box Program

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Grange urged USDA to establish a food chain link directly

between food producers and food consumers. The resulting Farmers to Families Food Box Program became a major source of food for those in need. Because the pandemic is not yet over, National Grange president Betsy Huber is asking Secretary Vilsack to continue the popular food supply program.

Free Meals Extended

USDA will extend free meals to children nationwide when schools are out of session this summer through September 2021. The summer meals programs will allow parents and guardians to pick up meals for their children, including bulk pick-up to cover multiple days of feeding.

Bills Support Local Meat Processing

National Grange is supporting the bipartisan bicameral Strengthening Local Processing Act for technical assistance and cost-share programs to expand local consumer demand

Ag Research Lagging Behind

Investment in research has enabled American agriculture to be the Breadbasket of the World for many decades. But that investment has not kept pace with the times. USDA funding increases have generally been less than half the rate of increase for other departments. The National Grange has joined a large contingent of agriculture and food groups, professional societies and land grant universities to encourage the Senate and House budget committees and appropriations committees as well as Secretary Vilsack to restore appropriate levels of research and development funding to USDA.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Grange Welcomes EPA

Administrator Regan

National Grange president Betsy Huber congratulated Michael Regan on his Senate confirmation as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Huber noted Regan's previous working relationship with agriculture and the State Grange in North Carolina and said the Grange looked forward to working with him and the administration to advance environmental policies which benefit rural America.

WOTUS Wins in Court Again

A further clarification of the definition of Waters of the United States by the Navigable Waters Protection Rule issued in mid-2020 has again been upheld in court. An administrative stay by a district court judge in Colorado has been lifted by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth circuit. With the stay lifted, the National Waters Protection Rule is now effective nationwide which is good news for farmers, ranchers and landowners.

The Many Sides of Climate Change

Clean energy, carbon sequestration and methane gas emissions are on the top tier of the Biden administration agenda. All agencies of the federal government have been charged to create a climate action plan. The first question in the discussion is always what are we going to do about climate change? The tougher questions follow; how are we going to do it? Are the goals realistic? What's the time frame to accomplish certain goals?

HEALTHCARE

Rural Needs Vaccine Options

We need additional vaccine delivery options as rural and underserved communities struggle to immunize their populations. Rural communities are in desperate need for more innovative vaccine methods of delivery, including an oral option, to facilitate more robust distribution methods.

Medicare Should Cover New Cancer Test

The National Grange and an enormous number of patient and health care organizations are voicing strong support for the bicameral, bipartisan Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act. A groundbreaking new category of cancer screening can detect many deadly cancers in earlier stages through a simple blood draw before it spreads throughout the body. Medicare to cover patients' cost for the screening test when approved.

IMMIGRATION/AG WORKFORCE

Ag Labor Bill Clears House

The House has passed the Grange-supported Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R.1603) by a bipartisan vote of 247-174. Sponsored by Representatives Lofgren (D-CA) and Newhouse (R-WA), the Act allows 20,000 year-round worker visas per year, provides for these numbers to increase or decrease depending on demand, streamlines the H-2A application process, and helps farms renovate or build worker housing. Existing farmworkers in the country can get temporary legal status if they've worked in agriculture at least 180 days over the past two years. Farmworkers can also earn a green card by paying a fine and continuing to work in agriculture for an additional period of time.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

During the COVID pandemic this past year, the United States discovered a large number of its citizens, particularly in rural areas, did not have broadband at all or broadband at speeds fast enough to allow households and small businesses to operate under lock-down pandemic conditions. In response, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission swiftly targeted over \$22 billion in new broadband funding to close the connectivity gap. Congress instructed the FCC to prioritize more accurate mapping efforts to determine

areas without internet service. Communities and internet providers teamed to stand up mobile hotspots to give students access for online learning, homework and research. The National Grange has been beating the rural broadband-deficiency drum for over a decade and appreciates the heightened levels of awareness, commitment and funding targeted toward closing the rural digital divide.



JUNIOR NEWS!

After a year of everything being canceled, I am excited that we are in the process of planning Grange Camp. A year without seeing our Juniors feels like forever. I am looking forward to seeing each of you at camp this summer!

If you are a rising 6th, 7th, or 8th grader, and you would love to be on the Junior Leadership Team, then this is your chance. You can apply now to be part of the 2021 Junior Team at Grange Camp. You can find the application at: https://form.jotform.com/ehartsell/junior_application. Please apply by May 15. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am looking forward to another great year!

- Emily Hartsell

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."
~John Quincy Adams

GOTCHA COVERED

WITH THE END IN MIND

by : Mark Davis

Our Pastor is delivering a series of sermons with the theme “Living with the End in Mind.” He is reminding us that this world is not our home. We are just traveling through this world as pilgrims on our way to our permanent heavenly home, and we are to hold on to our “earthly treasures” very lightly.

His series parallels closely with many of our insurance needs. We need to plan and tailor our insurance portfolio with the end in mind. In plain words, what is it that we need and want our insurance benefits to provide for ourselves and our family? With this directing thought, we should have a better idea to structure our plan.

For example, if we are going to take a trip from North Carolina to Cedar Key, Florida, where we have not been before, we know where we are starting from, but we probably are not exactly sure of the best way to get there. Before we start off on the trip, we will consult a map, GPS, or friend to outline the route we should take. I just pulled my 2003 Rand McNally atlas out to find Cedar Key, Florida, but the route I see is most likely outdated with several new roads constructed between our house and southwest Florida over the last twenty years. I can still use that route, but it may require some modifications and detours along the way and may not be the most efficient route to get there. My updated GPS should get me there in a more efficient, quicker way and will even let me know of road hazards, traffic, and rest stops along the route.

As we look at our insurance plan with the end in mind, let us focus on two

specific needs: Long Term Care and Life Insurance. Long Term Care is generally defined as the expected need for assistance with the activities of daily living on a continual, extended period of time. Activities of daily living include bathing, dressing, eating, mobility, continence, and toileting. The other condition requiring Long Term Care is Cognitive Impairment.

With Long Term Care, we recognize that as we age (or endure cases such as a major accident or illness), the potential need for Long Term Care increases. Long Term Care can occur in the home, an adult day care center, or a LTC facility. Of course, very few want to go to a LTC facility for care. Most prefer to stay at home with family care. When we look at the benefit proceeds from a Long Term Care policy, these payments can assist the family in taking care of their loved one with dignity and respect and with care in areas that a spouse or child are unable or just uncomfortable performing. Therefore, in this case, the Long Term Care Insurance proceeds actually allow the insured to remain in the home and out of the LTC facility. Just as my 2003 map has a newer version, so do many Long Term Care policies. We have hybrid policies available now that will pay a Life Insurance benefit should the insured not require the Long Term Care benefits (or fully use their benefit pool of money). In looking at the Life Insurance plans, this is predominately a benefit for those we leave behind. Planning with the end in mind is a key factor in deciding which life insurance plans we utilize to accomplish our desires for those remaining behind. Some of the key considerations that we need to look at to make those plans

are debt liquidation, living expenses for minor children and spouse, final expenses, estate tax, and inheritance and directed gifts. Just as the map changed from 2003, so will our needs and desires change the closer we get to the end of this journey. Therefore, we recommend that your life insurance program be a blend of Term and Permanent Life insurance.

You can utilize the Term products for short and medium term objectives. For example, if you have minor children or grandchildren that you need to fund a college education for, then most likely a term of 20 years or less will fulfill that need. If you are trying to cover a mortgage on the dwelling, a 30-year or less term should do the trick. If you are leaving funds for one child to buy out the farm from his siblings, then a more permanent life insurance policy is a better choice, one that you cannot outlive. These plans can take the form of a Guaranteed Universal Life or Whole Life policy. Either of these have their pros and cons, but most importantly, as long as the premiums are paid according to their schedule, the policy will not expire before you do.

As you ponder the concepts in this article, I am offering the challenge to all of us to not only live with the end in mind, but also plan with the end in mind. If we can assist you in an insurance plan review, please reach out to us and we will be delighted to assist you in every way possible. With access to a multitude of different company policies, we can certainly find a good fit for your needs!

COMMUNITY SERVICE

by: Sharon Underwood

Greetings, NC Grange members! I would like to remind everyone that the NC Grange selected the Baby Bundles program as the state service project for the year, continuing from last year. Our collection of items will be presented at the State Convention in September. Keep working on your donations! Thank you for your continued efforts to help families in need. If you have questions, visit babybundlesnc.org or contact me at shaunderwood1@gmail.com.

Our National Grange Community Service Director has requested information on any Granges doing community service activities pertaining to our pandemic crisis. If that applies to your Grange, please notify him at communityservice@nationalgrange.org. He will have a form for you to complete. Do not be afraid to "toot your own horn," and share your ideas that can inspire others.

We had a very inspiring Leadership Conference in March, and I learned about the wonderful community service projects Granges in our state are conducting. Both Ken Plummer from Cape Fear Grange and John Crawford from Grantham Grange spoke on the many helpful activities their Granges are doing. If you missed it and would like to see it, Katie Greene sent out a link for the program to Grange Presidents.

Local Granges have done a surprisingly large number of community service activities despite the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic. Several Granges submitted reports describing the individual service projects they have been doing in their communities. As your Granges start being able to safely meet again, I hope this list of projects might inspire your Grange and offer new ideas.

BROGDEN GRANGE:

- Collected home-made baby booties and blankets for those in need.
- Helped a local family who lost their home to fire at Christmas with a donation of \$150.
- Worked with the Grantham Grange in erecting a hay barn for the caretaker of the NC Caisson Unit, which took about 2 months of Saturdays to complete.
- Worked with the Grantham Grange to feed the Cardio-Pulmonary Department at Wayne Memorial Hospital, approximately 40 lunches.

CAPE FEAR GRANGE:

- Donated to the Cumberland Road Elementary School Teacher Thanksgiving Feast.
- Supported and donated to Walker Spivey Elementary School's coat drive and sponsored school baseball tickets.
- Supported Haymount UMC Preschool Breakfast with Santa.
- Sponsored a Christmas Family for the holidays.
- Held a White Bean Chili Fundraiser.
- Collected can tabs for Ronald McDonald House for State Grange Youth Program.

- Collected items for State Baby Bundles project.
- Partnered with "Operation Inasmuch" to serve breakfast to homeless members of our community on a rotating basis. We served four meals before having to cancel the others due to the pandemic.
- Started "The Friends of Fayetteville's Frontlines" to provide meals to front line workers during the pandemic. This supported local restaurants by purchasing from them. Congressman Richard Hudson featured Cape Fear Grange Project in his Hometown Heroes segment of Fayetteville's Frontlines. Grange member David Wade Fowler from appeared on WFNC Morning Radio Show with Goldy - 640 AM on April 2 to promote the project and solicit donations.

FERGUSON GRANGE

- Held Winter Blues Bingo by offering free bingo and food for our community to help with the winter blues.
- Conducted a Baby Bundles Work Session by demonstrating how to sew blankets, baby towel wraps, and small dresses, and made tie blankets and fabric toys together.
- Donated \$100 to the NC Agro Institute Fund for COVID-19.
- Donated Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to farm workers.
- Made and distributed Snack Gift Box for the Wilkes County Sheriff Department.
- Served ice cream to honor teachers and staff at Boomer Ferguson.
- Hand tied blankets for Ebenezer's Children's Home.
- Donated 24 shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. The boxes were sent to Zambia, Africa.
- Donated a Covid Relief basket for the needy, kept in the Little Free Library. It held rolls of toilet paper, hand sanitizer and other items.
- Donated food and household items for a neighbor whose home burned.

PATTERSON GRANGE

- Made approximately 920 cloth masks for members in the community. Mother / daughter teams that worked on the project included Pam & Madalyn Freeman and Vanessa & Sara Bradley.





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