

# POMONA ECHO

**BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE #43**

**FEBRUARY 2026**

**BERKS COUNTY GRANGE WEBSITE:**

berkscountygrange.org

**Contact person to add items to website:**

Jennifer Beamon at: berkscountygrange@gmail.com

**COMMENTS FROM YOUR  
COUNTY PRESIDENT**

David Merkel

!!!Happy New Year!!!

I know we are already a few weeks past that, but it still rings true. This is a time when we all tend to start over. Be it with our health, or habits we want to change / create, or even refocus on important matters we may have let lapse.

One of the items I have re-focused on is my Grange responsibilities. I have spent many hours the past few weeks looking at the Grange By-Laws, digest of proceedings, Subordinate and Pomona manuals, and the individual officer guidelines. One thing that keeps standing out across all these topics is that it is not one person that makes the Grange. It takes all of us. I know we have busy lives and many of us have other activities that may conflict with our Grange lives. I would really like to offer a bit of perspective with that. Most Subordinate Granges meet only one time each month. Pomona is only four times a year. Add those together and it is literally only 16 times a year if you can make each meeting. 16 days.

I ask you all to resolve to be more active with your local Grange and Pomona. We have elections this year at both levels. Please do not let our Granges be a casualty of busy lives. Make your Grange a priority again. It takes all of us to keep this great organization going. Please do not assume someone else will carry us into the future. Our last election saw a vacancy at the Pomona Presidents position. This is very sad to me. While I felt I wasn't ready, I attended each Pomona meeting already, so I jumped in. It hasn't been easy, but seriously, it hasn't been hard either. I urge everyone to stop, determine how important Grange has been in your life so far, and make sure our children have the same opportunities we are taking for granted. If you can fill an officer seat this year, do it, commit to being the future of our Grange. (continued page 6)

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# Berks County Youth and Junior Grange News

## Attention all YOUTH

The Pomona meeting in June will be a Youth meeting. We would like the Youth to take the officer chairs for the meeting. Please reach out to Gail if you are able to and willing to be a Youth Officer for the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting at Trinity UCC in Rehrersberg.

## Line dancing Fundraiser

March 14<sup>th</sup> at Virginville Grange

Set up 6pm  
Doors open at 6:30  
Dancing 7-10pm

\$5 requested donation admission,  
additional donations accepted

Food for sale:  
\$5 – Hotdog, snack or baked good,  
drink  
\$3 – Mac and cheese  
\$2 – any single item (drink, baked good,  
snack, hot dog)

Limited baked goods needed. Gail will post on Facebook about needs. Thank you to all who have helped and continue to help with this!

## Reading Royals

Thank you to all of the attendees at the Reading Royals game! We earned \$105 back to the account from our attendance.

## Junior Sleepover

February 13-14, 2026  
Fleetwood Grange

The Juniors are gearing up to kick out the winter blues in the next week or so. If not registered, reach out to Jennifer Berger (or Gail) as soon as possible to late register. Helpers and Chaperones needed too!

## Night at the Reading Fightin' Phils

Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> – 5:15pm Game time

Tickets will be \$13 and in the Reserved Green seats. For each ticket sold, \$2 will come back to the youth/junior department.

Attending Berks royalty will throw out the first pitch at the game.

Please contact Gail if you are interested in attending so she can send you the information to get tickets

Bring a friend – attendees in our section do not have to be Grange members, the more the merrier!

## County Camp

May 15-17, 2026

Blue Mountain Camp (Olivet Boys and Girls Club)  
Camp Coronation – May 17<sup>th</sup> time TBD

We are seeking Granges to help with our meals throughout the weekend. Reach out to Jen Beamon if your Grange can help with making a meal for our Junior Camp!

## 2026 Junior Attendance Contest

In order to qualify, a junior member must participate in at least 4 junior events (i.e. sleepover, camp, swim party, bowling), the line dancing fundraiser (preparing, participating in, and/or cleaning up), and 1 contest on the State level.

Upcoming activities:

- ◇ Sleepover **JUNIOR** event (February 13-14, Fleetwood)
- ◇ PA Grange Youth Winter Retreat (February 20-22, Rebersburg, PA)
- ◇ March Pomona (March 7<sup>th</sup>, Bernville Grange)
- ◇ Line Dancing Fundraiser (March 14, 7-10pm, Virginville). (Snow back up date 3/21)
- ◇ Grange Night at the Reading Fightin Phils (April 11, 5:15pm game time)
- ◇ County Camp (May 15-17, Blue Mountain Camp)
- ◇ June Pomona (June 6th, Marion Grange at Trinity UCC)
- ◇ State Youth Camp (June 26-June 28 13/14 yrs invited)
- ◇ State Camp (June 28 - July 4, Camp Sylvan Hills)
- ◇ Swim Party (July 25, 6-9pm, Schoey Pool)
- ◇ Sept. Pomona (September 12th, Ontelaunee)
- ◇ Line Dancing Fundraiser (November 7, 7-10pm, Virginville)
- ◇ Winter Activity (December 5<sup>th</sup>) TBD
- ◇ December Pomona (December 12, Virginville)

## Junior Volunteers over 18:

Clearances must be submitted to the state in order to support at junior events, including camp!

Next Meeting:

April 6<sup>th</sup>, 7pm on Zoom

## State Youth and Junior Grange Camps

Keep a lookout for registration for youth and junior camp for the state level as we enter into the Spring.

Youth camp is June 26-June 28

Junior camp is June 28-July 4

## Contest Prep

It is never too early to get started on your entries for state session! Look at the state website to find the guide to contests.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## February—May 2026

Feb 13-14 Berks Junior Sleepover @Fleetwood Grange  
Feb 20 Ontelaunee Junior Grange Spaghetti Dinner  
Feb. 20-22 PA Youth Winter Retreat @Rebersburg, PA  
Feb. 21 Hoedown @Virginville Grange, 7—10 p.m., doors open at 5:30 p.m.  
Mar. 1 Ontelaunee Grange Breakfast, 8 a.m.—1 p.m.  
Mar. 2 Pioneer Grange Italian Hoagie Sale\*  
Mar. 7 Pomona Meeting @Bernville Grange, 9:30 a.m.  
Mar. 8 Bingo @Virginville Grange, 1 p.m. (doors open at 11:30 a.m.)  
Mar. 9 Kutztown Grange Basket Bingo^  
Mar. 14 Berks Junior/Youth Line Dance @Virginville Grange, 7 p.m., doors open 6:30 p.m.  
Mar. 17 Ontelaunee Grange Open House, 6:30 p.m.  
Mar. 21 Berks Junior/Youth Line Dance (snow date)  
Apr. 3 Pioneer Grange PA Dutch Potato Filling Sale\*\*  
Apr. 5 EASTER (no Ontelaunee Grange breakfast)  
Apr. 6 Berks Junior Team Meeting via Zoom, 7 p.m.  
Apr. 6 Kutztown Grange Basket Bingo^  
Apr. 11 Reading Fightin' Phils Junior/Youth Fundraiser, 5:15 p.m. @First Energy Stadium  
Apr. 17 ECHO deadline  
Apr. 23 Fleetwood Grange Open House, 6:30 p.m.  
May 3 Ontelaunee Grange Breakfast, 8 a.m.—1 p.m.  
May 4 ECHO collation @Ontelaunee Grange, 3 p.m.  
May 4 Kutztown Grange Basket Bingo^  
May 4 Pioneer Grange Ham & Cheese or Turkey & Cheese Sandwich Sale\*\*\*  
May 6 Virginville Grange Open House, 7 p.m.  
May 10 Mother's Day Dinner @Virginville Grange, 11 a.m.—3 p.m.+

**Remember—check the website if you are unsure if a particular event will be happening—or call the appropriate grange/leader for final verification**

^March 10 & April 14 Kutztown Grange : tickets, \$20 for 25 games; call 610-762-4611 for tickets Doors open @5:30 p.m.; starts 6:30 p.m.

\*March 2 Pioneer Grange: \$6.00 Order deadline is Feb. 22 Pickup at the Grange hall from 3—5 p.m. Call Tammy to order, 610-463-7213

\*\*April 3 Pioneer Grange: 1.5 lbs for \$7; 2.5 lbs for \$9. Pickup at the Grange hall, 2—4 p.m. Deadline to order is March 23. Call Tammy to order, 610-463-7213. Limited quantity will be made.

\*\*\*May 4 Pioneer Grange: Ham & Cheese or Turkey & Cheese Sandwich Sale, \$5. Deadline to order is April 23. Pickup at the hall from 3—5 p.m. Call Tammy to order at 610-463-7213

+May 10 Virginville Grange : Mother's Day Dinner—reservations must be made by May 3rd. Call Jenn Berger, 610-823-4813. Seatings 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.



**Salvation Army Christmas  
Angel Tag gifts 2025**

# COMMUNITY NIGHT PROGRAMS 2026

March 17—Ontelaunee Grange, 6:30 p.m.

April 23—Fleetwood Grange, 6:30 p.m. (meal)  
7:30 p.m. (program)

May 6—Virginville Grange, 7:30 p.m.

*(please check ahead of time to make sure activity will be held)*

## VIRGINVILLE GRANGE COMMUNITY SERVICE

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year!

At our benefit bingo in November, we were able to help the Jake Leiby Farm that was a community farm that experienced a barn fire earlier in the Fall. We were able to present Jake with a check at our December meeting. Thank you to all who came out to play, helped with bingo, or made baked goods to sell. Additionally, over 500 canned goods were collected and delivered to Keystone Military Families in Shoemakersville.

In December, we also rang the bell for the Salvation Army at the Redner's in Hamburg. We appreciate everyone who donated their time or money to help a worthy cause to support members in the local community during the holiday season.

A new year means another opportunity for the community service committee to help others in need in the community. We invite you to come out for an afternoon of fun and fellowship at our annual bingo on **Sunday, March 8th, 2026**. A recipient has yet to be determined. Packages are \$25 each with upgrades and special games available. Come early for lunch as doors open at 11:30 a.m. Games will begin at 1:00 p.m. Prizes include Vera Bradley bags and cash. Keep an eye out in your email or mailbox for a flyer! If you are interested in playing, please contact Denise Clare at 610-562-3876 or Lee Gougler at 484-866-5304 to reserve your seat today.

As always, we are looking for the names of individuals or groups that could benefit from our help. Please do not hesitate to contact any committee member with suggestions.

## GO-TO-CHURCH SUNDAY

**SUNDAY, April 19, 2026**

**Place: Belleman's Church  
3540 Belleman's Church Road  
Mohrsville PA 19541**

**Time: 10:00 a.m.**

## LET'S SAVE POMONA MONEY!

If you know you will be moving, please inform your Grange Secretary of your address change so she/he can forward that "change of address" to Fern to update ECHO mailings.

Better yet, why not give your email address to Fern Kulp so you can receive the ECHO paperless. Fern would send you an email notifying you that the current ECHO newsletter is now available on the grange website ([berkscountygrange.org](http://berkscountygrange.org)).

In addition, you would receive the ECHO newsletter in advance of those who receive the paper copy. (Email Fern at: [clk19530@enter.net](mailto:clk19530@enter.net) Subject line: ECHO email address)

Thanks for your consideration.

(appreciate those of you who have already changed to paperless.)

## CALENDAR 2026 CORRECTION

There will be no Hoedown at Fleetwood Grange on November 21, 2026. Please cross that off your calendar.

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR, Debra Kieffer

Hope everyone is having a good year so far. As I sit here and write my first article for the New Year, it is cold and cloudy. There is ice everywhere around our buildings waiting to melt. But Spring will soon be around the corner, when we see things starting to thaw and new things starting to pop to add color to our world. We can't complain though about the beautiful sunrises and sunsets that we see.

At Pomona we will "Think Spring" it will only be 13 days away from our Pomona meeting that we will welcome Spring. The Junior Royalty will be presenting the day's program.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE, by Michael Adams

The Grange has been known for doing Community Service and helping others that are less fortunate, whether donating items, giving money, or doing hands on to help others, including animals. We will be collecting items and money at every meeting.

This quarter, I am asking **Granges and members** to do what they can to support the Keystone Military Families. This is a local organization, based in Shoemakersville, PA. They serve our local military and veteran families that need help. Here is a list of what is needed: **money, canned vegetables (not corn), beans, & fruit, instant potatoes and rice, bagged or boxed side dishes, gravy or gravy mix, canned meat like tuna or chicken, large bottles of juice, ketchup, mustard, mayo, salad dressing, flour, sugar, baking soda & baking powder, diapers-size 1 thru 4, toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning & laundry supplies, dish soap, Ziploc bags-quart & gallon, snack bars and protein bars.** If you have any questions, please reach out to me @ 610-562-5933, or you can contact Keystone Military Families @ 610-698-2122.

I am planning for us to support Mary's Shelter, Opportunity House, and the Salvation Army Angel Tree Gifts this year, if you have any suggestion to help others, please let me know.

**THANK YOU** to everyone that took Salvation Army Angel Tree Gifts! We made 100 children very happy this past Christmas Season.

## FUNDRAISERS

The Fundraising Committee wants to Thank everyone that sold and bought lottery calendars. **They were all sold!** At the last Pomona meeting, it was decided not to do the 50/50 drawing. We are looking for a fundraiser idea to replace the 50/50 drawing.

Suggestions made, included another chicken or pulled pork bbq dinner, bingo, dance, wine tasting, and a gun raffle. Please give your suggestion to Michael Adams, Fern Kulp, Dave Merkel, or Henry Seidel. We are looking for someone else to help chair whatever fundraising activity that might be chosen.

## BERKS HEIM by Anna Heffner

Church services are happening on Sundays at 2:30. We need volunteers for the following Sundays: 4/5, 4/12, 5/10, 5/17, & 6/14. Even if you have signed up to volunteer, please sign up for more dates, since we need to cover these dates. Please call Anna Heffner (610-207-9755) if you can help or if you know someone who can help with this activity. Thank you to everyone who volunteered during 2025.

Santa's Corner and the Unit Christmas Parties were great successes.

There will probably be a bake sale in May. I will have more information at the March Pomona meeting.

The Volunteer Service Board has had several members resign and is in need of new members! If you or someone you know are interested in becoming a member call me. You can become a representative for your church or other organization or as an independent member. If you know someone who might be interested, even if they are not grange members, let me know.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

If this message is a bit heavy handed, I am sorry, unfortunately this is the actual state of the Grange in Berks County. I will continue to do my best to represent all Berks County Granges and promote our historic and proud organization. I simply ask that you step up and make sure we can continue being an organization. Please, feel free to reach out to me to discuss any concerns you may have.

I plan to keep visiting Granges throughout the year and will try to be more visible. I hope to see you all at your Subordinate meetings.

## ONTELAUNEE JUNIOR GRANGE 15th ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER



**Friday, February 20, 2025  
4 p.m.—8 p.m.**

13 and over \$14  
3—12 yr old \$8  
2 and under FREE

All you can eat—price includes salad bar & dessert

There will also be Raffle Baskets

Ontelaunee Grange Hall  
1076 Grange Road  
Leesport PA 19533

## POMONA GRANGE HIGHLIGHTS

The following are the highlights from the December 13, 2025, Pomona Grange meeting hosted by Hamburg Grange. Again, we would rather have you in attendance to help make decisions and for your input.

- ◆ Tony Calafaty, Salvation Army, thanked us for our donations towards the 100 gift tags
- ◆ The 4-H Livestock recipients, who Pomona supported in this year's livestock sale, spoke to us about their 4-H experiences
- ◆ Attendance: 8 Brothers, 25 Sisters, 2 Juniors, 1 Mini-Junior, 4 Visitors = total of 40
- ◆ 2026 Pomona calendars were distributed at the Pomona meeting—Bernville Grange footed the cost of the printing
- ◆ New email address for Secretary Jen Beamon: berkscountygrange@gmail.com Please use this address when emailing her grange related items
- ◆ Finance committee presented annual audit—approved
- ◆ Family Activities still have Applebee hamburger coupons for sale; 150th Anniversary cook-books for sale. Thank you to those who brought cookies. Door prizes given to Jane Reppert & Grace Reber (in a drawing).
- ◆ Family Activities will meet prior to the Pomona meeting—start time 8:30 a.m. (instead of the 9 a.m. start time)
- ◆ 44 cap/hats/beanies were donated to the Reading Hospital cancer center—this is an ongoing project.
- ◆ There will be no 50/50 raffle in 2026—refer to article in this newsletter for further info
- ◆ Renew BARN membership—\$50
- ◆ Barb Schroeder reported that for the 2026 State Session, Berks County will be responsible for selling 250 lottery calendars, and they are also asking \$100 donation from each Berks grange
- ◆ 2026 State Session: Still looking for people to get business sponsorships, registration table, help with some committees
- ◆ County membership, as of 12/6/25: 890
- ◆ Jacob Schroeder, received 5th degree
- ◆ Received thank you notes from: Berks County Fair Board, Berks County Fair Fundraising, Berks County Fair Fall Fest



Zach Gougler, Wyatt Koller and Owen Kutz—4-H livestock recipients

### 2026 STATE SESSION

Derek & Barbara Schroeder—2026 Host Co-Chairs

Hello everyone. Plans all well underway for preparing for State Session 2026. It will be in Grantville, PA at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg/ Hershey, October 16-18. Currently, we have a chairperson set up for almost all departments. We are still looking for someone who may be skilled in seeking sponsorships and looking for groups that would like to advertise with us. While this committee isn't an absolute must, the more funds we have to work with, the more we can do.

Our next meeting will be February 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 via Zoom. If you are not receiving any information and would like to be part of the email list, please let us know. There is group on Facebook as well, 2026 State Session Host Committee, which also serves as another tool of communication.

In the near future, Granges should be receiving a letter requesting a donation to support session as well as requesting door prizes and goodie bag donations. Please continue to sell the dark pink lottery calendars and see that they are returned to Mike Adams as soon as possible, as this is our major fundraiser for session. If each Grange sells their lottery calendars and we receive the requested donations, we will not have to do any further fundraising.

## Family Activities (FA)

It appears that Winter is here to stay for a while and that's a great opportunity to start a new project from the Family Activity contests (as well as the other departments).

Contest details are available on the pagrange.org website and your local grange FA chairperson may have hard copies available for you.

**New 2026 contests** are Baking – Coffee Crumb Cake, Zucchini Bread, and Brookies (brownie and cookie batters mixed); Christmas Ornaments – Wooden, Beaded, and Small Decorated Jars; Buttons – Jewelry, Pictures; and Message Boards along with many continued needlework contests. Road trips can be used as opportunities to work on those entries, as well. Of the 21 – 2025 FA contest entries that advanced to state judging, almost all received additional awards. Way to Go, Everyone!!

**Reminder:** Starting with the March 2026 Pomona meeting, Family Activities (FA) will start our quarterly meeting at 8:30AM (still at the Pomona meeting location) to give more time for discussion, questions, and sharing of ideas. We invite all to attend, share your input and be part of our group. There may be munchies!!

**Thank You** to all grangers who baked and participated in our December cookie exchange. I'm proud to say that we had more cookies than the prior year and the extras brought to the meeting helped to make an additional 44 extra boxes of cookies that were delivered to Keystone Military Families for their Holiday food distributions. The volunteers were amazed at all the boxes and stated that the individuals and families they help, always look forward to these special treats and appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of the grangers. "Such a good feeling" to help in this small way.

All previously collected caps/hats/beanies (44) during our "Caring for Cancer" project have been delivered. An additional 29 items were given to me after the December meeting and those are being delivered in the next week. Continue this project and bring all items to our March meeting. There we hope to have a new 2026 outreach project to reveal.

\*\*\*Please note, we have **Applebee hamburger certificates** available for purchase, \$10 each. They make great gifts for any occasion or just to go out for dinner; no expiration date and good in many locations/states. It's a great deal! The PA State Grange 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cookbook is also available for sale at \$25 each (great gift, as well). See your FA chairperson for any of these, or communicate with Jane Adams for arrangements.

\*\*Stay Connected! Send us your contact info if you would like to be included on communications between meetings. Let's keep informed and keep the conversation going!!

### **GET TOGETHER AFTER POMONA MEETING:**

##Come join us after the March Pomona meeting at Blue Marsh Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria, 5027 Bernville Road, Bernville, PA for good food and some fellowship. Spend a little extra time with your grange family and enjoy a meal. Hope to see you there!

Respectfully,  
Jane L Adams  
610-507-5933  
jladams2@gmail.com

Denise Clare  
610-763-1282  
dlc416@yahoo.com

# CONTEST CORNER

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **GRANGE** \_\_\_\_\_

Bring completed form along to March Pomona. Must be present to win.

As I type this we had 2 snowstorms in the last 24 hours. Tis the season! While you may be stuck at home you can always work on State Session contest entries. Valentine's Day is on the horizon. Can you answer these Valentine's Day trivia questions?

1. What shape is most associated with Valentine's Day?  
A. Circle    B. Square    C. Heart    D. Triangle
  
2. What date is Valentine's Day celebrated each year?  
A. February 29    B. February 14    C. March 1
  
3. What color rose symbolizes romantic love on Valentine's Day?  
A. Red    B. White    C. Purple    D. Pink
  
4. What sweet treat is often given in a heart shaped box on Valentine's Day?  
A. Peppermint    B. Chocolate    C. Cherry
  
5. What color other than red is also associated with Valentine's Day?  
A. Purple    B. White    C. Blue    D. Pink
  
6. Which Shakespeare play included the line "Good morrow, tis St. Valentine"?  
A. Hamlet    B. Romeo & Juliet    C. Macbeth
  
7. What does XOXO represent at the end of a love letter?  
A. Love You    B. Be Mine    C. Hugs & Kisses
  
8. What small candy with printed messages is popular in Valentine's Day?  
A. Conversation Hearts    B. Fortune Cookies    C. Hershey Kisses
  
9. What winged figure is commonly depicted shooting love arrows on Valentine's Day?  
A. Angel    B. Bird    C. Cupid
  
10. What bird is traditionally associated with Valentine's Day and couples?  
A. Dove/Lovebird    B. Robin    C. Swan

December contest winner was: Jane Reppert

**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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**BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE #43  
c/o FERN E. KULP  
11 Gilmore Road  
Kutztown PA 19530**

**Return Service Requested**