

# POMONA ECHO

**BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE #43**

**FEBRUARY 2025**

**BERKS COUNTY GRANGE WEBSITE:**

berkscountygrange.org

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

Jennifer Beamon at: jennifermarie707@gmail.com

**COMMENTS FROM YOUR  
COUNTY PRESIDENT**

David Merkel

Good afternoon and Happy New Year!

My name is David Merkel. I am the newly elected Pomona Grange President and Ontelaunee Grange President.

I work at Heidelberg Materials making cement in Evansville. I have been there 26 years and enjoy what I do and the people I work with.

I am married to Jocelyn Merkel. She works at Schlouch Construction, she is the Pomona Grange VP, Ontelaunee Grange Program Coordinator and my best friend. We have four daughters who are all members of Ontelaunee Grange. Skylar Weddle is the oldest and a Bloomsburg Grad working in childcare and getting a secondary degree at Kutztown University to be an educator. Zoe Merkel is a Sophomore at Juniata College studying to be a Museum Curator with a secondary degree as a History Educator and plays Field Hockey. Sierra Merkel is a Freshman at Kutztown University studying Early Childhood Education with a secondary in Special Education. Finally, the baby of our brood is Reese Weddle, she is a freshman at The University of Mount Olive in North Carolina where she is undecided in her major and playing Lacrosse. I am extremely proud of all my ladies and the wonderful adults they are becoming.

I have a long family lineage in the Grange—my grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws, and my children have been, and are currently involved in Ontelaunee and Pomona Grange. When I say that we are a Grange family, I mean it. I also feel that my Grange family includes each and every person I have met in this great organization.

I look forward to seeing everyone and doing the best I can to help lead our Pomona Grange into the future.

Please come join us at the meetings and see how we can refresh our Berks County Pomona Grange.

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# Berks County Youth and Junior Grange News

## **National Junior Grange Update!**

Congrats to **Justin Dusko** who was named one of the National Junior Grange Ambassadors for this year! He will share his year with a North Carolina junior. National Youth Ambassadors and OYP are Shae and Ashlan Smith from Lancaster Co. and a North Carolina Youth

## **Line dancing Fundraiser** March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Virginville Grange

Set up 5pm  
Doors open at 5:30  
Dancing 6:30-9pm  
Clean up 9-10pm

\$5 admission, additional donations accepted

Food for sale:

\$5 – Hotdog, snack or baked good, drink

\$3 – Mac and cheese, bbq sandwich, hotdog with bbq

\$2 – any single item (drink, baked good, snack, hot dog)

If any Grange or Granger would like to donate baked goods, let Gail know by March 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **Reading Royals**

Thank you to all of the attendees at the Reading Royals game! We earned \$160 back to the account from our attendance.

## **Junior Sleepover**

February 14-15, 2025  
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.

## **Night at the Reading Fightin' Phils**

**Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> – 6:45pm 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 16-18, 2025

Blue Mountain Camp (Olivet Boys and Girls Club)  
Camp Coronation – May 18<sup>th</sup> at **11am**

We will be serving lunch for all attendees at camp. Please RSVP with Gail the number of non-camp participants (i.e. non-campers/helpers/counselors etc.) who will be attending coronation so we have a headcount for meal prep purposes. (Ideally by May 1, but still contact if decided after).

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## February—May 2025

- Feb. 14-15 Junior Sleepover @Fleetwood (see junior page for details)  
Mar. 1 County Meeting @Pioneer Grange, 9:30 a.m.  
Mar. 3 Pioneer Grange Italian Hoagie Sale\*  
Mar. 8 Ontelaunee Junior Grange Spaghetti Dinner, 4—8 p.m. (see article for further details)  
Mar. 10 Kutztown Basket Bingo, 6:30 p.m.^  
Mar. 14 Fleetwood Grange Hoedown (see article for details)  
Mar. 18 Ontelaunee Grange Community Night, 7 p.m.  
Mar. 22 Junior Fundraiser: Line Dancing at Virginville Grange, 6:30—9:00 p.m., doors open at 5:30 p.m. (see junior page for details)  
Mar. 26 Ag-Legislative Meeting @Ontelaunee Grange, 7:30 p.m.  
Apr. 7 Jr. Team Meeting, 7 p.m. Via Zoom  
Apr. 14 Kutztown Basket Bingo, 6:30 p.m.^  
Apr. 18 ECHO deadline  
Apr. 18 Pioneer Grange, PA Dutch Potato Filling Sale\*\*  
Apr. 18 Junior/Youth Reading Fightin Phils Baseball Game, 6:45 p.m. (see junior page for details)  
Apr. 25 Fleetwood community Night, 6:30 p.m.  
Apr. 27 Go-To-Church Sunday, 9:30 a.m.. Gernant's Church (see article for further details)  
May 5 Collate ECHO  
May 5 Pioneer Grange Ham & Cheese or Turkey & Cheese Sandwich Sale\*\*\*  
May 7 Virginville Community Night, 7:30 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 610-395-3889 for tickets Doors open @5:30 p.m.; starts 6:30 p.m.

\*March 3 Pioneer Grange: \$6.00 Order deadline is Feb. 23 Pickup at the Grange hall from 3—5 p.m. Call Tammy to order, 610-463-7213

\*\*April 18 Pioneer Grange: 1.5 lbs for \$6; 2.5 lbs for \$8. Pickup at the Grange hall, 2—4 p.m. Deadline to order is April 7. Call Tammy to order, 610-463-7213. Limited quantity will be made.

\*\*\*May 5 Pioneer Grange: Ham & Cheese or Turkey & Cheese Sandwich Sale, \$5. Deadline to order is April 24. Pickup at the hall from 3—5 p.m. Call Tammy to order at 610-463-7213

### Program Coordinator, Debra Kieffer

Well, another winter will soon be behind us and the flowers and trees will be pushing to bud and bloom once again. I hardly ever make it to March Pomona because I'm on my way back from a trip to Maine. But I have my back up, Tammy Schaeffer, filling in for me. I know she will do a good job. We will have a presentation from the 4-H'ers that we helped at the sale of their animals.

### Going out after Pomona

Jane Adams is checking into this. Nothing has been finalized at this time—good chance it will be Valentino's. So, if you need to know more information closer to time of Pomona, check with Jane Adams or check the website for an update on this get together.

### FLEETWOOD GRANGE HOEDOWN

Music by: Days of Old

Date: March 14, 2025

Dance Starts: 7 p.m.

Doors open at 6 p.m. with food and drink available for purchase.

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### BERKS HEIM

Still looking for Granges and/or volunteers for the following dates (within this ECHO newsletter time frame) to help escort patients to the Sunday afternoon church service.

March 2	April 6	April 13
April 20	May 11	May 18

Contact Anna Heffner, 610-207-9755 to let her know which dates you are willing to help!

# COMMUNITY NIGHT PROGRAMS 2025

March 18—Ontelaunee Grange, 7:30 p.m.

April 25—Fleetwood Grange, 6:30 p.m. (meal)  
7:30 p.m. (program)

May 7—Virginville Grange, 7:30 p.m.

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

## GO-TO-CHURCH SUNDAY

SUNDAY, April 27, 2025

Place: St. John's Gernant's Church  
13 Gernant's Church Road  
Leesport, PA 19533

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Pastor: Rev. Frances Merkel

The church service will be held in the Fellowship Hall—no steps!

## 50/50 RAFFLE – HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR POMONA

The Berks County Pomona Grange is holding a 50/50 raffle for the months of March, April, and May 2025. The drawing will be held at the June 7, 2025, Pomona meeting, 11 a.m.

50 percent of what is collected will go into the Pomona treasure and the other 50% will be divided equally among 6 winners.

For each fundraising activity, Pomona would like to at least \$2,000 to put into the treasury to help fund activities throughout the year. A total of 3,000 tickets were printed. We are asking each Grange member to help by either purchasing tickets and/or sell tickets.

### 2025 BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE 50/50 DRAWING

50% of collected amount—to Pomona

50% of collected amount—divided into 6 equal prizes

**DONATION: 1 TICKET—\$2.00**

**3 TICKETS—\$5.00**

**7 TICKETS—\$10.00**

**15 TICKETS—\$20.00**

**AMOUNT OF DONATION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Drawing: Saturday, June 7, 2025, 11 a.m.**

*Need not be present to win. Winners will be called to get mailing address for mailing of the prize check.*

*Winning names will be posted on Facebook. The fundraising committee will submit the appropriate number of tickets in the drawing to match your donation amount.*

License: G-24-045444-R

If you are willing to sell tickets, call Fern, 610-401-6458. If you are willing to support Pomona and would like to purchase tickets and are unable to see a salesperson, you are more than willing to forward a check to Fern Kulp (11 Gilmore Road, Kutztown PA 19530) and she will deposit the appropriate number of tickets in the drawing for you. (Please make sure you include your phone number.)

Our goal is to raise at least \$6,000: \$3,000 for Pomona; \$3,000 to distribute to winners.

All monies and stubs need to be returned to Fern Kulp by Sunday, June 1, 2025. If throughout the 3 months you sold all your tickets, you can call Fern (610-401-6458) to hand them in and/or to get more tickets. We need everyone's help to achieve this goal!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## 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 Sylvia Keller, a community member with medical needs who sadly passed away. We were able to present a check to Sylvia's estate to her sister at our December meeting. Thank you to all who came out to play, helped with Bingo, or made baked goods to sell. Additionally, 572 canned goods were collected and delivered to Keystone Military Families in Shoemakersville.

In December, we also rang the bell for the Salvation Army at Redner's in Hamburg. We appreciate everyone who donated their time or money to help a worthy cause to help members in the 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 9th, 2025. The recipient of this bingo is Amber Santiago, a community member battling cancer. Packages are \$25.00 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 Thirty-One 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 David Geschwindt at 610-562-7421 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.

## 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).

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

Thanks for your consideration.

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

## COMMUNITY SERVICE by Michael Adams

Hello Berks County Grange members, my name is Michael Adams, and I am the new Community Service Chairperson.

First, I want to Thank Carlene Kleckner for doing this for the last 10 years. 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 Blessed Beginnings, Animal Rescue League, and the Salvation Army Angel Tree Gifts this year, if you have any suggestion to help others, please let me know.

### LOTTERY CALENDARS

I want to Thank everyone that sold and bought the lottery calendars, especially Fern Kulp, she sold 150+. **They were all sold!**

## ONTELAUNEE JUNIOR GRANGE 14th ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER



**Saturday, March 8, 2025  
4 p.m.—8 p.m.**

13 and over \$12  
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 14, 2024, Pomona Grange meeting hosted by Fleetwood Grange. Again, we would rather have you in attendance to help make decisions and for your input.

- ◆ Representative from Salvation Army spoke and accepted the Angel Tree gifts.
- ◆ Received the resignation letter from David Merkel from the Executive Committee
- ◆ David Merkel was nominated for the position of President. A unanimous vote was taken to elect David Merkel as President. He was installed immediately.
- ◆ Position of Executive Committee will remain open until the next Pomona meeting as there were no nominations given
- ◆ Attendance: 9 Brothers, 22 Sisters, 1 Mini Junior Total—32
- ◆ 2024 tax filing has been completed
- ◆ The Junior and Youth/Young Adults are combining at this time
- ◆ Westy fundraiser earned \$219.45 for the juniors
- ◆ State Session: Youth officers—President, Autumn Tworkoski; Flora, Cadence Tempel; Executive committee, Grace Tempel and Emma Seidel.
- ◆ Jen Beamon was appointed as the PA Junior Grange Director
- ◆ Junior line dancing fundraiser profited roughly \$700 (November 2)
- ◆ Family Activities—14 different kinds of cookies were given. Bringing cookies door prize went to Donna Kunkle
- ◆ Applebee coupons for \$10—good for one hamburger/fries combo—have no expiration date (Family Activities selling these)
- ◆ Michael Adams will be taking over the role of Community Service for Pomona
- ◆ 50/50 raffle tickets will be sold from March through May—winner will be drawn at June Pomona meeting (see article)
- ◆ ECHO contest winner—Michael Adams
- ◆ A demolition derby will be added to the Berks County Fair (July 9-12, 2025)
- ◆ Membership as of 12/7/24: 910
- ◆ Received a thank you from Berks County Fair Fall Fest committee for our donation
- ◆ Received a donation of \$800 from the Oley Fair (for manning the soup stand)
- ◆ Renewed website for next 2 years: \$554.89
- ◆ Literary program was Christmas Fun
- ◆ Fleetwood Grange served attendees lunch

### AGRICULTURE REPORT by Doug Sattazahn

The USDA's Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) system, which governs milk pricing in the U.S., has been reformed for the first time in 20 years to address challenges facing dairy farmers and processors. The FMMO sets minimum prices that processors must pay for milk from farmers, aiming to stabilize the dairy market. However, over time, some producers and industry stakeholders have raised concerns that the system no longer reflects current economic realities or meets the needs of all parties involved.

Recent reforms focus on increasing pricing transparency and improving fairness within the system. Changes include returning to using the higher of Class III and Class IV prices to set skim milk prices rather than the average of the two, which cost farmers over 1 billion in revenue since 2019. This gain is somewhat offset by an increase in make-allowances to processors, which hadn't been changed since 2007.

Additionally, the reforms aim to better accommodate small dairy farmers who have struggled with fluctuating milk prices and competitive disadvantages. By refining pricing mechanisms more closely with market conditions, the USDA hopes to create a more equitable framework for dairy producers and processors alike.

One other item to note from John Meyer, retiring Holstein USA CEO, that I thought was interesting. Although US dairy exports continue to increase, we are still importing more than we export. These are things like dry-milk powders and concentrates. I would expect the incoming administration to take aim at slowing these imports.

### 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 7th meeting at Kutztown Grange.

### Junior Volunteers over 18:

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

### Next Meeting:

April 7th, 7 p.m. 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 27—June 29 and Junior camp is June 29—July 5.

### Contest Prep

It is never too early to get started on your entries for state session! Look at the state website to find the 2024-2025 Guide to Contests.

## Family Activities (FA)

By the time you get to read this article, hopefully Spring won't be too far off. It's quite cold right now and white flakes are still floating down in the sky. Brr... If the weather has you wanting to stay inside for a while, dig out those 2024-25 PA State Grange Guide to Contests and Program guides, and start a new project that can be entered for judging. Try one of the new contests this year or make a new entry in one of the older favorites. Visit the [pagrange.org](http://pagrange.org) website (Documents, Policy and Other Documents) for additional information, or contact your Family Activities chairperson. We will also have some extra FA copies at upcoming Pomona meetings.

Our next Family Activities Group meeting will be held at 9AM before the March Pomona meeting. Everyone is invited!

### 2025 New contests: Quilt Block – The Crayon Box

**Baking: Scones-any flavor; White Chocolate Macadamia Nut cookies; Divinity Candy**

**2025 Special contests: Wine bottle-painted; wine bottle-painted with lights; wine bottle-decorated; wine bottle-decorated with lights; Macrame Wall Hanging (large=min 17x17, max 24x24); (small=min 10x10, max 16x16); burlap ornament (max 6"); burlap -wreath (max 18" diameter); burlap-table decoration (max 12" high x 12" long)**

Thank you to all those that baked and brought cookies to our December Pomona meeting. We were able to put together ten extra cookie boxes for Keystone Military Families to hand out with their holiday distributions. I'm sure those special goodies made their holidays a little more festive.

Please keep in mind that if you need a gift for a Birthday, Anniversary, or special occasion, we have some of the **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary grange cookbooks** for sale at \$25 each. Contact Jane Adams to arrange delivery. Also, as a Berks County Pomona Family Activities fundraiser, we have **Applebee hamburger certificates**. Cost is \$10 each and they are good for any hamburger on the menu (except for the 2 for \$25). They have no expiration date and are good at many restaurants in PA, NJ, DE and MD. Locations are on the certificate. Contact your grange's FA chairperson to purchase.

During 2025, for our FA annual projects, we will be making Chemo Caps for Cancer patients (sewn, crocheted, knitted, various sizes) and simple Tote Bags (different sizes welcome too). **Do Not Use Any Materials that contain Animal Fibers (such as wool, alpaca, silk, etc.) because of possible allergic reactions with patients.** If anyone has extra material supplies that you would like to donate from your stash, please bring them to our March Pomona meeting or another one afterward. We will have some patterns available at our meeting or feel free to find your own. Chemo Caps should not have large open areas. A tighter stitch is better suited for this project. **CrochetforCancer.org** is a great resource for information. All items will be donated locally to Cancer treatment centers. We may be asking for items to place in the tote bags later in the year. As always, suggestions are always welcome. **Come Join the FUN!!**

Respectfully co-chairs,

Jane Adams ([jladams2@gmail.com](mailto:jladams2@gmail.com) 610-507-5933) Denise Clare ([d1c416@yahoo.com](mailto:d1c416@yahoo.com) 610-763-1282)

## 2025 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 14-15, Fleetwood Grange)
- ◆ March Pomona (March 1st, Pioneer Grange)
- ◆ Line Dancing Fundraiser (March 22 set up starts 5 p.m., Virginville Grange)
- ◆ Grange Night at the Reading Fightin Phils (April 18, 6:45 p.m., game time)
- ◆ County Camp (May 16-18, Blue Mountain Camp)
- ◆ June Pomona (June 7, Kutztown Grange)
- ◆ State Youth Camp (June 27-29, 13 and 14 year olds invited)
- ◆ State Camp (June 29—July 5, Camp Sylvan Hills)
- ◆ Swim Party (August 16, 6—9 p.m., Shoey Pool)
- ◆ September Pomona (September 6, Gouglersville Grange)
- ◆ Fall Activity (September 21, 4 p.m., TBD)
- ◆ Winter Activity (December 6, Ontelaunee Grange)
- ◆ December Pomona (December 13, Bernville Grange)

# CONTEST CORNER

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

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

By the time you get this we will be in the midst of winter. As I type this, we are due to get a snowstorm tomorrow! Now is a great time to review Grange activities (work on your contest entries), committees and officers. Unscramble these Grange words.

1. DUTESNBA0IR \_\_\_\_\_
2. TALINONA VINNOCTENO \_\_\_\_\_
3. RCTURELE \_\_\_\_\_
4. DRESTAW \_\_\_\_\_
5. DEEPRINTS \_\_\_\_\_
6. PHEMBSERMI \_\_\_\_\_
7. TRECYSRAS \_\_\_\_\_
8. NOPAMO \_\_\_\_\_
9. LIFYAM CITSEVIAT \_\_\_\_\_
10. STARERURE \_\_\_\_\_
11. TATES SINOSES \_\_\_\_\_
12. NACPILAH \_\_\_\_\_
13. MITMUNYOC VERECIS \_\_\_\_\_

December's answers: 1E, 2G, 3I, 4A, 5F, 6B, 7J, 8C, 9H, 10D Winner: Michael Adams-Hamburg/Kutztown Grange

Return Service Requested

BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE #43  
c/o FERN E. KULP  
11 Gilmore Road  
Kutztown PA 19530

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