

# POMONA ECHO

BERKS COUNTY POMONA GRANGE #43

MAY 2026

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Merkel

Hello everyone. Happy Spring!

Well it's that time again. Every two years we have elections at each level of Grange. This year we already have had some nominations for Pomona officers. We will still accept more nominations at the June meeting. I implore each and every member who is reading this to consider being more active. Pomona happens 4 times a year. The sacrifice is not huge. The Secretary and Treasurer do most of the heavy lifting, the fund raising committee does a lot of work, and the family activities committee keeps us active but all those spots are currently spoken for. As for the President, I am happy to continue into my 2nd term, but would welcome anyone to be nominated. I do know, at the conclusion of my 2nd term, we will need a replacement at President. Maybe you aren't ready now, but come to the next 8 meetings and get ready. I certainly would like to see new faces and more butts in the seats at our Pomona meetings even if you don't intend to be an officer.

While we are on the topic of elections, each Subordinate Grange has elections this year as well. Be active people, our Granges will wither and fade away if we do not participate. Geigertown Grange has surrendered their Charter, as of Feb 5, 2026 they have been closed. Please, everyone, do not think someone else will do it, we need each and every one of our members to be active participants.

I encourage everyone to mark these upcoming events in your calendar. Yes they are on the Pomona calendar, but the more you see it the easier it is to remember. (continued page 4)

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## GRANGE WEBSITE

[berkscountygrange.org](http://berkscountygrange.org)

### IF YOU WANT INFORMATION POSTED ON THE WEBSITE:

Contact Jennifer Beamon at

[berkscountygrange@gmail.com](mailto:berkscountygrange@gmail.com)

# Berks County Youth and Junior Grange News

## County Camp

May 15-17, 2026

Blue Mountain Camp (Olivet Boys and Girls Club)

Camp Coronation – May 17<sup>th</sup> at 12pm

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).

## 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 Rehrersburg (Marion Grange).

## State Youth and Junior Grange Camps

Registration for youth and junior camp for the state level are closing soon.

Youth camp is June 26-June 28 and Junior camp is June 28-July 4.

1<sup>st</sup> year Youth camp attendees will be reimbursed for half of the cost from the Berks account!

Carpool information for camps to be posted on Facebook in early-mid June.

Next Meeting: July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7pm on Zoom

Thank you, **Virginville Grange**, for allowing the Junior/Youth to use the hall for our line dancing fundraisers.

Thank you to everyone who supported and advertised our event. Next is set for November 7 with DJ Nugget

Open hall at 6:30 for food sales – Dancing 7-10.

Thank you to everyone who came out for the R-Phils ball game and supported our junior royalty as they threw out the first pitch. We are hoping to make this an annual event!

We approximately received \$80 back from ticket sales to support the junior/youth account.

## 2026 Junior Attendance Contest

In order to qualify, a junior member must participate in at least 3 junior events (i.e. sleepover, camp, swim party, fall/winter event), the line dancing fundraiser (preparing, participating in, and/or cleaning up), and 1 contest on the State level.

Upcoming activities:

- ◇ County Camp (May 15-17, Blue Mountain Camp)
- ◇ June Pomona (June 6<sup>th</sup>, Marion Grange- Trinity UCC, Rehrersburg)
- ◇ State Youth Camp (June 26- 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 12<sup>th</sup>, Ontelaunee)
- ◇ Line dance (November 7<sup>th</sup> (7-10), Virginville)
- ◇ Winter Activity (December 5<sup>th</sup>, location TBD)
- ◇ December Pomona (December 12, Virginville)

## Westy Fundraiser

Be on the lookout for a Westy fundraiser night in September!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS MAY—JULY 2026

**REMEMBER, ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE KEEP CHECKING THE WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK FOR CANCELLATIONS OR DATE CHANGES.**

May 10 Virginville Grange Mother's Day Dinner, 11 a.m.—3 p.m.  
May 15-17 Berks County Junior Camp, Olivet Blue Mountain Camp  
May 17 Berks County Junior Camp Coronation, 12 noon  
June 1 Pioneer Grange: Italian Hoagie Sale\*  
June 1 Kutztown Grange Basket Bingo\*\*\*  
June 6 Pomona Meeting @Trinity UCC of Rehrersburg, 27 Maria Street, Bethel, 9:30 a.m. (Marion hosting)  
June 7 Virginville "Dairy Month" benefit (see article for further details and order deadline)  
July 10 ECHO deadline  
June 12 Fleetwood Grange Strawberry Festival, 4—9 p.m. (see article for further details)  
June 18-20 Kempton Fair  
June 23 R & K Sub & Pretzel Roll sale @Fleetwood Grange#  
June 26-28 PA Youth Camp @Sylvan Hills Christian Camp, Howard, PA  
June 28—July 4, PA Junior Camp @Sylvan Hills Christian Camp, Howard, PA  
July 6 Berks Junior Team Meeting via Zoom, 7 p.m.  
July 8-11 Berks County Fair  
July 16-19 Family Festival, Centre County Fairgrounds  
July 25 Berks Junior Swim Party @Shoemakersville Pool, 6—9 p.m.  
July 26 Pioneer Grange Meeting & Picnic @Schaeffer residence, 70 Pensinger Lane, Mertztown, PA  
July 27 ECHO collation @Ontelaunee Grange, 3 p.m.  
Aug 3 Pioneer Grange: Ham & Cheese or Turkey & Cheese Sandwich Sale\*\*  
Aug 3-8 Kutztown Fair

#Fleetwood Grange: Subs, \$8; Pretzel Sandwiches, \$7. Orders due by June 14. Pick up at hall 3 p.m.—5:30 P.M. Orders come with a bag of chips. Call Marlo, 610-413-4875, to place orders or for further information.

\*Pioneer: \$6 per sandwich. Pickup at the grange hall from 3—5 p.m. Call orders to Tammy at 610-463-7213 by May 24.

\*\*Pioneer: \$5 per sandwich. Pickup at the grange hall from 3—5 p.m. Call orders to Tammy at 610-463-7213 by July 23.

\*\*\*Kutztown Grange: Starts @6:30 p.m. Doors open @5.30 p.m. Call/Text Rhonda 610-762-4611 for tickets. \$20 for 25 games.

### **BERKS HEIM** by Anna Heffner

Church services are happening on Sundays at 2:30. We need volunteers for the following Sundays 5/10, 5/17, 6/21, 7/5, 7/12, 8/2, & 8/9. 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 have volunteered.



There will be a bake sale in May 8. Anyone available to bake for the sale please call me.

Heim Fest is scheduled for September 12. Anyone willing to help at Heim Fest please call me.

Future dates when volunteers are needed include December 11 for Santa's Corner and December 14 & 15 for the Unit Christmas Parties.

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.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT by Michael Adams

I want to Thank the Granges and members that supported the Keystone Military Families at the March Pomona meeting. They appreciated what we did to help the families of veterans.

This quarter, I am asking **GRANGES AND MEMBERS** to support Mary's Shelter.

Health Care System – Continuity of medical care for the mother will ensure that she is healthy and capable of caring for the family. It will ensure that the child's immunizations are up to date and that the child is ready for entrance into the educational system. Continuing with a primary health care provider reduces the need for expensive repeat or first exam testing.

Educational System – Permanent secure housing enables the family to concentrate on active participation in the educational process. Most of the residential clients of Mary's Shelter had not finished high school prior to entering the program; they attributed this to a transient, homeless lifestyle.

Personal Counseling – Continuity of personal counseling allows the resident to develop a trust relationship with the counselor that increases compliance with professional recommendations. Residential clients were referred to personal counseling for Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities issues; counseling for Domestic Violence; counseling for Drug & Alcohol issues; and had active Children & Youth cases. Most of the residents have overlapping issues.

### Mary's Shelter Wish List

Resident-brushes/combs, shampoo/conditioner, lotions, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shower gel, hairspray, deodorant men/women, umbrellas, feminine products, flashlights, tools-screwdriver, hammer, tape measure, first aid kits

Household items-dish detergent, dish cloths & towels, laundry detergent & softener, paper plates/cups/napkins, plastic forks & spoons, paper towels, trash cans for bedroom & kitchen, garbage bags for kitchen & large outdoor bags, cleaning supplies, air-fresheners, shower liners & curtains

Gift Cards – Giant, Redners, Walmart, Target, Amazon, Wawa, and Sheetz

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** (continued)

Berks County Jr Camp – Olivet Blue Mt Camp – May 15-17

JUNE 6 IS THE NEXT POMONA MEETING at Trinity UCC at 9:30am.

Our Chicken BBQ fundraiser is starting to get organized.

Berks County Fair July 8-11

Kutztown Fair August 3-8

Pomona Chicken BBQ – September 6th

**GO-TO-CHURCH SUNDAY** was held April 19, 2026. Approximately 15-20 Grangers were in attendance. Thank you for your support.

### **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.

## **SEPTEMBER CHICKEN BBQ**

The Berks County Grange will be hosting a Kauffman Chicken BBQ on Sunday, September 6, 2026, from 11am-2pm, this is Labor Day weekend, at the Ontelaunee Grange Hall. A ticket will cost \$14 and the meal will consist of a half chicken, baked potato, roll, applesauce, and a bottle of water. The Family Activities committee is planning to hold a bake sale and selling pepper cabbage.



We are asking Grange members to sell tickets and we are offering the incentive of 1 free ticket for every 15 tickets sold. We know that it may be hard for members to sell tickets, depending on the location. We are suggesting that you sell tickets, pick up the dinners, and then set up a time and location closer to your customers.

The tickets will be distributed at the June Pomona Grange meeting. The tickets will be distributed to the presidents, but if you have trouble getting tickets, please contact the committee members for tickets after the June Pomona meeting. Poster is included in this newsletter—please make copies and hang throughout community.

Committee members; Michael Adams 610-562-5933

David Merkel 484-890-3768

Fern Kulp 610-401-6458

Henry Seidel 610-223-1082

**THE ABSOLUTE DEADLINE FOR TICKET SALES WILL BE SUNDAY AUGUST 9<sup>th</sup>!!**

### **OLEY FAIR SOUP STAND**

Volunteers Needed! Mark your calendars for the Oley Fair which will be held on September 17-19, 2026.

We will again be manning the Soup Stand and if we have more volunteers than work, people can help in other areas. The stand is open from 9AM to 10PM and we ask that people sign up for 2 or more hours at a time. Parking passes will be provided and anyone interested in helping can call or email Henry Seidel at 610-223-1082 or [hseidel@aol.com](mailto:hseidel@aol.com).

A sign up sheet will be available at the June and September meetings.

### **PROGRAM COORDINATOR by Debra Kieffer**

Well, you can see that spring has sprung. Spring flowers are showing their colors, weeds are popping and grass is growing. At our June meeting, the Youth will fill in the chairs of officers.

Please come out and support the future of the Grange. My time is up as Program Coordinator, if you ever considered an office in the Grange consider this spot that is still open. It isn't a hard office to fill.

### **FLEETWOOD GRANGE STRAWBERRY & ICE CREAM FESTIVAL**

This year's Strawberry and Ice Cream Festival at the Fleetwood Grange will be on June 12th from 4-9pm. We will be having the Happy Dutchmen Band for entertainment while you eat your fill of a delicious assortment of food and desserts. Of course, make sure to leave space for your strawberries and ice cream!

There will be a quilt raffle and Chinese auction as well as children's activities.

All tickets will be sold at the event with winners drawn at 8:30pm. The winners do not need to be present to win.

## POMONA HIGHLIGHTS

The following are highlights from the March 7, 2026, Pomona meeting that was held at by Bernville Grange. Remember, it is always better to be at the meeting to give your input and find out information first hand.

- ◆ Attendance: 7 Brothers, 20 Sisters, 1 Junior, 1 Mini Junior Total: 29
- ◆ 10-15 youth from Berks participated in the February Youth Winter Retreat
- ◆ Applebee's burger certificates are still available for purchase—contact Jane Adams
- ◆ 100th anniversary cookbooks still available for purchase
- ◆ 44 boxes of holiday treats were donated to Keystone Military Families after the December Pomona meeting
- ◆ Bake sale and pepper cabbage sale is planned for the Chicken BBQ in September—looking for baked good donations
- ◆ 94 Projects were made and donated to the Caring for Cancer
- ◆ New project: soap sacks, can be knitted/crocheted/sewn, also collecting soap
- ◆ New project: knitted knockers to donate to post-mastectomy patients
- ◆ Thank you to all who donated to the Keystone Military project—next Pomona, Mary's Shelter
- ◆ PA State Grange Legislative Meetings are run by Carrie Nace, Zoom on the 4th Thursday of the month
- ◆ A lot of legislation is being proposed regarding data centers
- ◆ All 500 Lottery calendars were sold
- ◆ Chicken BBQ (Sept 6) tickets will be available at the June Pomona meeting
- ◆ Winner of the ECHO Contest Corner—Nettie Kauffman
- ◆ BARN is willing to come out to present a program at your Grange. Can help with grant writing.
- ◆ County membership, as of Feb. 28, 2026—870
- ◆ Donated \$ 75 to the Berks County Dairy Promotion
- ◆ Donated \$700 to the Berks County Fair; \$500 to the Kutztown Fair
- ◆ Donated \$100 to each: PA State Junior Grange Dept., PA State Grange Youth Dept., and the PA State Grange Deaf & Community Service Dept
- ◆ Alexis Servin, Berks County JG Princess, presented the day's program

## SUGGESTED OFFICERS FOR THE 2026 ELECTIONS

President: David Merkel

Vice President: Darlene Savage, Jocelyn Merkel

Prog. Coordinator: OPEN

Steward: Michael Adams

Asst. Steward: Andrew Kieffer

L.A.S.: Jane Adams

Chaplain: Nettie Kauffman

Treasurer: Shirley Breininger

Secretary: Jen Beamon

Gatekeeper: Debra Kieffer

Ceres: Sierra Merkel

Pomona: Jocelyn Merkel

Flora: Marga Row

Ex.Comm: Henry Seidel

Fin. Comm: OPEN

## FAMILY ACTIVITIES (FA)

Jane Adams, jladams2@gmail.com 610-507-5933 and Denise Clare dlc416@yahoo.com 610-763-1282

Hopefully, you've taken some time over the past winter months to look at the contests in our department as well as the Juniors, Youth, Lecturers, Deaf and Community Services, etc.

PA State Grange contest details can be found at the [pagrange.org](http://pagrange.org) website (Documents, Policy, and Other Documents) for all specific rules, including "size and material limitations." **New 2026 contests** are Baking – Coffee Crumb Cake, Zucchini Bread, and Brookies (brownie and cookie batters mixed); Christmas Ornaments – Wooden, Beads, and Small Decorated Jars; Buttons – Jewelry, Art; and Message Boards along with many continued needlework contests. You do not want to work hard on a new project just to have it disqualified for being too large or small. We will have some extra paper FA contest copies at upcoming Pomona meetings. Baking/needlework county level judging will be at the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Please make sure to have your subordinate winners at that meeting by 9AM for judging readiness. Our next Family Activities Group meeting will be held at 8:30AM before the June Pomona meeting. This meeting time change worked very well in March and will be in place going forward. Everyone is invited!

Our committee still has a few of the **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary grange cookbooks** for sale at \$25 each. They make great gifts for special events or a new college student/graduate. Contact Jane Adams, if interested. Also, as a committee fundraiser, we are continuing the sale of **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 and would be ideal to take on vacation. Contact your grange's chairperson to purchase or Jane Adams (contact info below).

To compliment the Berks County Chicken BBQ (held at Ontelaunee Grange) on Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, we would like to request that each grange provide 4-5 baked items to be part of the **Baked Goods** for sale, along with the **Pepper Cabbage** sale (provided by Sharon Heck/Fleetwood Grange). Sounds delicious!! Volunteers to help prep and sell is always appreciated. More on that later.

**JOIN US** in our new annual FA Berks County Pomona project – **Soap Sacks** which we will be making and collecting for distribution throughout 2026. Cotton or cotton blend yarns should be used for knitting and crocheting styled sacks (any stitch or design can be used) and the sacks should measure approximately 4" x 6" when lying flat. They can also be made by sewing wash clothes made to that size. Patterns will be available at the quarterly meetings but feel free to use any design you wish. **\*\*If you do not want to try making the sacks, please consider donating original wrapped/boxed bars of mild/gentle bar soaps, to be included with the distribution. We will collect any completed items and/or bar soap at each upcoming Pomona meeting. We **Thank You** in advance and appreciate any and all participation helping us to help others less fortunate or in need.**

## GET TOGETHER AFTER POMONA

Enjoy some extra Grange fellowship by joining us for lunch at Kauffman's Bar-B-Que Restaurant, 254 Gravel Pit Rd., Bethel, PA 19507 after the completion of the Berks County Pomona Grange business meeting. YUM!

## **State Session 2026** Derek and Barbara Schroeder

When you receive this copy of the Echo there will be less than six months until State Session in October. The committee has been working hard behind the scenes to get everything ready so that the event can go smoothly.

We will be looking for more help from individuals to help with things like registration and the display rooms. The display room help will involve "guarding" the display rooms, allowing the committee members to be or do something else that they need to do. You can sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/session26help> or by reaching out to Derek at 610-698-3999 (text preferred).

You will be contacted directly closer to session by either Maddie Seidel (registration) or Derek/Barbara for display rooms to work out details of when you are needed.

The presession tour has been organized by Tina Blatt and will include a tour of the PA State Capitol and the Department of the Treasury. You can reserve a seat with your Session Registration.

If anyone has any questions about Session let us know. We are hoping to see a lot of Berks County Grangers there!

## **VIRGINVILLE GRANGE COMMUNITY SERVICE**

As the days get longer and the flowers begin to bloom we hope everyone is starting to get spring fever and finding some time to enjoy the beautiful weather! Our committee has been busy and we held our annual benefit bingo in March. We were able to help Tracy Schaeffer, a community member battling cancer. Thank you to everyone that came out to play, helped with bingo, or made baked goods to sell. Additionally, 657 canned goods were collected and delivered to Keystone Military Families in Shoemakersville.

The community service committee will, once again, be holding our annual eat-in or take-out chicken bbq fundraiser event to benefit the family of Brian Mummolo, a community member who battled cancer. We will be celebrating "Dairy Month" and will have food and sweets available for you to purchase. Orders are due by **Monday, June 1st, 2026**. You can place your order by contacting Lee Gougler at 484-866-5304. When ordering, please provide your name, contact number, and what you will be purchasing. Payment can be made at pick-up by cash or check (made out to VGCS). We look forward to seeing you!

**When:** Sunday, June 7th, 2026

**Time:** 11-2 pm

**Where:** Virginville Grange Hall (Main Street, Virginville, PA 19564)

**What:** - Farm Show Milkshakes (vanilla, chocolate, twist) - \$6.00

- Kauffman's Chicken (1/2 chicken, potato, roll with butter, & applesauce) - \$13.00

As always, please let us know of any groups or individuals that could benefit from our help.

# CONTEST CORNER

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

Please bring your completed contest form to the June Pomona meeting. You must be present to win

The weather has been up & down lately: cold, rainy, and very hot. Its all over the place—welcome to spring! I hope everyone enjoyed their Easter and all the pretty spring flowers. Major League Baseball has started and is now in full swing. Can you answer these baseball questions!?

1. What is the minor league team located in Allentown?  
A. Yard Goats    B. Iron Pigs    C. Phillies
2. Who is the oldest major league team?  
A. Chicago Cubs    B. Cincinnati Reds    C. Philadelphia Phillies
3. How many games are played in the regular season?  
A. 162    B. 125    C. 176
4. Who won the world series in 1980?  
A. CA Angels    B. KC Royals    C. Phillies
5. How many teams are there in the majors?  
A. 30    B. 26    C. 34
6. When was the last time there was an expansion team?  
A. 2002    B. 1995    C. 1998
7. Where do the Red Sox currently play their home games?  
A. Wrigley Field    B. Fenway Park    C. Citizens Bank Park
8. What does HBP mean?  
A. Hit By Pitch    B. Heavy Ball Player    C. Hot Ball Pass
9. How many innings are in a regular game?  
A. 7    B. 8    C. 9
10. The Senators play where?  
A. Scranton    B. Harrisburg    C. Altoona

March Winner: Nettie Kauffman, Ontelaunee Grange

March Answers: 1. C, 2. B, 3. A, 4. B, 5. D, 6. A, 7. C, 8. A, 9. C, 10. A

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