Pennsylvania's First Grange **Serving the community since 1871**

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Eagle Grange #1

Route 15 & East Blind Road, Montgomery, PA 17752

August 2026

August 4, 2026 @ 6:30 p.m.

Local Army Veteran to Discuss Mental Health Awareness

U.S. Army Sergeant Major Kevin Bittenbender of Montgomery retired in 2018 with 34 years of service after being deployed several times in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, including combat tours in Afghanistan. As a result of his combat deployments and burn pit exposure, Kevin had his left leg amputated and continues to cope with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and TBI (traumatic brain injury) with the help of his service dog Kirby.

We are indeed fortunate that Mr. Bittenbender will speak on ***Mental Health Awareness*** at Eagle Grange on Tuesday, August 4th. His story of successfully coping with both physical and emotional challenges is one that will uplift and inspire his audience. Mental health services and treatment is one of the topics which the National Grange "Rural Minds" initiative seeks to promote.

Don't the flowers planted outside the Grange Hall look beautiful?

So many compliments are being heard about the lovely landscaping around the Grange Hall. With the exception of one plant, all the shrubs and perennials planted last year during the installation of new landscaping by students from neighboring Penn College are thriving. The beds are augmented with several different kinds of seasonal annuals – pansies, marigolds, petunias – to bring a splash of color throughout the spring, summer and fall. The four planter boxes, built by students from Montgomery High School, flank the entrances and are especially lush. Very special thanks to **Katy Moser** and other helpers for all the work maintaining the gardens.

Annual Picnic Held on Local Farm

A beautiful summer evening greeted 30 people at our July outing/picnic held at **Blue Sparrow Farm**, Kleintob & Eshbach Roads, just north of Milton and within sight of the Route 147 expressway. This farm, managed by Pam Harper and Frank Rosencrans, is being developed into an Agri-Tourism destination to share the story of agriculture with visitors. It was interesting to learn about the growing and many uses of lavender raised on their land and to meet one of their mini-Highland cows.

Note the lavender in the foreground of the photo above. As is always the case at Eagle Grnage events, there was an abundance of food on the buffet to enjoy and plenty of great fellowship among attendees (photos below).

LAST CALL: SCHOOL SUPPLIES

One of the Grange's big service projects is coming up in just a few weeks – the 2nd annual "Prep for Success" on Saturday, August 15th. This free event helps families in need, distributing all kind of school supplies, shelf-stable lunch foods and personal hygiene items. A limited number of free haircuts will also be provided. A Rural Life Initiative grant obtained through the National Grange will help purchase some of the supplies.

Below you'll find details about the supplies being collected. Bring to Grange prior to August 15.

2026 Display Makes Debut at Lycoming Fair

A long-standing tradition of Granges all across the country is creating displays for local fairs. Some modest premiums are received so a few hundred dollars are netted after expenses but the main purpose is to educate the public about agriculture.

Jenn Nauss (fair exhibit chair) and John Sear were among those working on setting up at Hughesville.

As this newsletter is released, the exhibit will be at the Montour-Delong Fair and later in August at the Perry County Fair. Finally, in September the exhibit will be at the Juniata County and Bloomsburg Fairs.

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST 2 – Remove Montour-Delong Fair exhibit

AUGUST 4 – **Grange Meeting @ 6:30 p.m.**
Election of officers for 2027-2028
Program – ***Mental Health Awareness*** by U.S. Army veteran Kevin Bittenbender of Montgomery

- *Host – Patty Peterman*

AUGUST 15 – 2nd annual **Prep for Success Back-to-to School Give Away** (free supplies & haircuts for local students); help needed for set up in morning and to greet our guests from noon-5 p.m.

AUGUST 17 – Take exhibit to Perry County Fair

AUGUST 23 – Remove Perry County Fair exhibit

AUGUST 29 – Open House @ State Grange Headquarters, Mifflintown

SEPT. 1 – **Grange Meeting @** *6:30 p.m.*
Program – Woodworking by Bob Fry, .

- *Hosts – Katy Moser, Karen Schooley*

SEPT. 4 – Take exhibit to Juniata County Fair

SEPT. 9 – Pomona #28 planning meeting @ Eagle

SEPT.13 – Remove exhibit @ Juniata Co. Fair

SEPT. 18 – Work day for take-out dinner – 10 a.m.; bring something to share for lunch

SEPT. 19 – **ROAST BEEF Take-out Dinner**
Help needed starting @ 10 a.m.

SEPT. 21 – **Pickle Making Workshop** led by Penn State Extension – advance registration required

SEPT. 23 – Take exhibit to Bloomsburg Fair

More Educational Classes

Last.year Eagle Grange partnered with Penn State Extension to offer several classes for anyone who was interesed in learning new food preparation skills. The summer salsa class and Thanksgiving charcuterie board class were both well attended.

The most recent class on July 21st taught processes to make homemade jams & jellies. A dozen people participated; see Page 5 for pictures from the event..

Plans are in the works for the following classes:

- **September 21 – Pickle making**
- **November 21 – Pie crusts made simple**
- **December 2 – Christmas charcuterie**

Scenes from July 21st Jams & Jellies Making Class

All ages, male & female, were part of the group making blueberry, pepper and peach spreads.

Pork Chops & Ham Loaf Proved a Popular Menu

This new take-out dinner menu, the result of a survey taken last winter among dinner patrons, proved to be extremely popular for the July 25th dinner. Just over 225 meals were served and quite a few more reservations could not be accepted. The available kitchen, stove, oven and refrigerator space at the Grange Hall limits the amount of food that can be prepared.

First the pork chops were stuffed and then browned in skillets before going into electric roasters to complete cooking.

Meanwhile, the ovens were filled to capacity several times with the ham loaves and baked potatoes.

The profits earned at take-out dinners are used to cover on-going property expenses like utilities, insurance, repairs & improvements as well as to give monetary donations to worthy causes.

There are always mountains of pots, pan and dishes to be washed at every take-out dinner. Honey Specht (above foreground) was at the sink much of the day while Joann Murray (below) glazed the individual ham loaves.

Will you help when the corn is ready?

The Grange is very fortunate that each summer a friend donates corn that is frozen for upcoming dinners. The corn will soon be ready so expect a call any day in the next weeks asking for your help.

Eagle Grange #1

c/o Douglas A. Bonsall
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August 2026

Newsletter

Part of the July 25th Kitchen Volunteer Crew

(left to right) ***Joann Murray, Lila Styer, Patty Peterman, Doug Bonsall and Jackie Murray. This particularly successful take-out dinner netted over $3,100; see Pages 6-7 for more pictures.***