

PUG Times



The newsletter of the Pittsfield Union Grange

Volume 9, Number 2

April 2010

Message from the President

The Wayne Washtenaw Pomona Grange, made up of our Grange and the Plymouth (Wayne-Westland) Grange, is hosting the State Grange Meeting this year. One of our responsibilities is to present the 5th degree which is the ritual of the Pomona Grange. This is a sort of play that several of our members are involved which illustrates a life lesson. The lesson of the 5th degree is "Persevere".

Recently Pittsfield Grange and some individuals in it have seen the results of persevering. Emily Springfield has developed a very popular program at Pittsfield Grange called Preserving Traditions. Once the program was up and running and a proven success, Emily started looking for ways to spread it to other Granges and other groups interested in traditional food preparation and preservation. I tried to help by talking the program up with people who were active in the State Grange. I thought that other Granges in Michigan would be quick to adopt a program that attracted younger people by using skills that were common among older Grangers. Partly because my experience with the program was limited and partly due to my poor salesmanship no one at the State Grange caught the enthusiasm of the program. Preserving Traditions remained just a successful program in Ann Arbor.

In November 2009 the National Grange Meeting was held in Michigan. Joan, Helen and I took advantage of the fact that it was as close as
(continued on page 2)

Meetings and Events

Wednesday, April 14 – Grange meeting

The 4-H Pony Club tells us about their activities. sorry, no pony rides. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:15.

Sunday, April 18 – Family Dance

John Freeman, David Park Williams, and Ed Vincent call dances suitable for (grand)parents and children, to live music by David West and Donna Baird. Followed by Grange-baked cookies. \$12/family (\$10 for Grange members). 2 pm

Tue-Thu, April – RED

Pittsfield Grangers pop a hundred pounds of popcorn at Rural Education Days to hand out to Washtenaw County third-graders, as they learn about local farming and land conservation. This is RED's 20th anniversary. Contact Richard if you can help.

Sunday, May 2 – Preserving Traditions

Holly White teaches us how to make butter and mozzarella and ricotta cheeses from locally-available ingredients. RSVP at <http://cheese.sign-up-sheet.com/>

Wed, May 12– Grange meeting + Pomona

Pomona meeting at 6:00, potluck at 6:30, Program TBA at 7:15

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Grand Rapids to attend. While there I had a conversation with Randy Hunt, the National Membership/Leadership Director. Since Preserving Traditions had added several members to our Grange, I thought that he might be interested. Randy said that people at National were working on a section of the web site that contained descriptions of successful activities at local Granges. He suggested that we keep in touch even though he probably would not be the one in charge of this project.

When I got home I shared this with Emily. I looked up a version of this web page section from several years ago and sent it to her. I kept waiting for more information about submitting articles for the new web page.

Emily didn't wait. She wrote a wonderful article full of all the reasons that Preserving Traditions was a great program and why it was a great program for the Grange in particular. It was full of the enthusiasm and advocacy that I had lacked at the State Grange Meeting. I sent it to Randy hoping that he would get it to the right person.

The result was unexpected. The web page of Grange stories has not appeared yet. Emily's article has. It is in the March/April issue of the New Grange, the newsletter of the National Grange. It occupies most of the section called "Around the Grange". This is exposure beyond anything that I expected. There are several thousand Granges in the nation. The printed news letter is much more widely read by the average Grange members than the website.

Perseverance is the way that we achieved this. I kept asking people how to get the word out about this wonderful program at our Grange. Emily was interested enough in sharing her success to write a wonderful article when there was no clear place to publish it. Randy Hunt was interested enough based on his talk with me and Emily's article to find a way to share it with Granges all over the nation.

(continued from page 1)

Sunday, May 16 - Family Dance

John Freeman, David Park Williams, and Ed Vincent call dances suitable for (grand)parents and children, to live music by David West and Donna Baird. Followed by Grange-baked cookies. Last Family Dance of the season. \$12/family (\$10 for Grange members). 2 pm.

Sunday, June 6 -Preserving Traditions

Come learn to can with Preserving Traditions! We'll be making a relatively low-sugar strawberry jam recipe that requires only three ingredients, but can be adapted to a variety of interesting flavor combinations. Once the jam is made, we'll learn how to can it in a simple water bath canner. This water bath technique can be used to can any jam, jelly, fruit, and many kinds of tomatoes and salsas. Bring 3 quarts of fresh strawberries, two cups of sugar, and 2 empty pint canning jars (or 4 half-pint jelly jars) with bands and lids. We'll provide all the other ingredients and canning equipment. \$5; free for members of the Grange. RSVP at <http://strawberryjam2.sign-up-sheet.com/>

Wednesday, June 9 - Grange meeting

Potluck at 6:30, program TBA at 7:15

July or August - Grange picnic

Tues-Sat, August 24-28 - Chelsea Fair

As summer winds down, PUG has a booth in the Merchants' Building, and Grangers have fun entering contests, bidding on animals, and generally enjoying viewing the fruits of agriculture. Contact Joan if you can help, or if you are interested in lamb, beef, or pork.

Food Gatherers Barrel

There is a barrel for donations to Food Gatherers in the basement next to the Grange display. Please bring non-perishable items that are not out of date, and encourage others to do so as well.

Dictionaries at Area Schools

In January and February, PUG completed the annual donation of dictionaries through the Grange's Words for Thirds project. We gave dictionaries to three local schools this year – Northside and Pittsfield Elementaries, and the Ann Arbor Learning Community.



One of the third grade classes with their new dictionaries

Family Math and Science Nights

Winter activities included two successful Family Math and Science Nights – in February at Ann Arbor Learning Community and in March at Pittsfield Elementary. We had some new activities – about DNA and using a digital microscope to view plant diseases on food – and the schools chose their favorites from our stash of previously tried ones.



Linda shows the microscope picture on the computer screen.



Mini-Juggle is an adaption of a math Pentathlon game.



Making Sticky Icky from glue, water, and borax



Playing with soap films is a perennial favorite. One can feel the surface tension as the soap pulls the strings together.

These Branches Still Bear Fruit – Feral Apples in Ann Arbor

Richard Raymond reports on the March program.

The program on 10 March was by J. Amadeus Scott. Ms. Scott is a graduate student in Art at the University and proprietor of the Apple Heritage Museum, “a permanent collection without a permanent location”. Her collection of apple-related items includes apple peelers, pie plates, apple pickers, equipment for making and storing cider and a range of historical maps of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County. She sees three eras of apple use: the early period when a primary use of apples was for (hard and not) cider production; a table-apple era, after prohibition, when apples as part of a healthy



Part of the Apple Heritage Museum at the Ann Arbor Farmers' Market last fall

diet were encouraged; and the modern, industrial era, with more processing and wider distribution of apples. The Museum has exhibits showcasing each era. Another part of

the Museum is a map Ms. Scott has been working on of feral apples around Ann Arbor. She has been using her map to make connections to our past by working to connect the trees with the people who planted them. And they are a source of free and sometimes unusual fruit, some of which Ms. Scott uses for her spectacular pies.

Americana Apple Pie

Technique is as important as ingredients.

2 Crust instructions:

2 cups unbleached flour

1 tsp salt

1/4 cup sugar

1/3 C butter, room temp and cut up

Combine all ingredients and mix until surface of dry ingredients are coated and the mixture is loose and crumbly.

Then add...

5-7 Tbs ice water

1/3 cup butter, very cold and cut up small

I put my butter in the freezer at least an hour before hand. Mix butter and ice water in slowly to form a solid, even dough. You can do all of this by hand, with a food processor, or a stand mixer. If you use a processor or stand mixer, make sure it doesn't get too hot or mix for too long. This will make your crust tough and will warm the second addition of butter. The trick of adding both warm and cool butter is that the warm butter coats the flour making for a tender crust, and the cold butter stays in layers in the mix, creating a flakier crust.

I like to roll out my crust between two layers of flour ed wax paper, which I save to wrap up any leftover dough. Divide the dough in half for each crust. You can roll it out any way you like, but I prefer to make a ball, then flatten it in my hands and center it on the wax paper. Then I push out the edges by hand before I put on the top layer of wax paper and roll it out with

a rolling pin. Be sure that the crust doesn't get too warm while you handle it and roll it out. You can let it rest in the fridge for a little bit if you have the time to spare. Put the rolled-out crusts on a baking sheet in the fridge while you assemble the other ingredients.

Pie filling:

4-7 apples (depending on size)

1/4 cup unbleached flour

1/2 cup sugar

sprinkle of cinnamon

This is a really simple filling recipe, and I keep it simple for good reason. I prefer to let the apples be the central flavor, and too much spice gets in the way of the subtlety in flavor. You can use other spices if you like; nutmeg and allspice are popular choices.

Apple choice is pretty important for a good pie. Some varieties bake better than others. Northern Spy and Ida Red are probably the best single varieties for pie, though Wolf River is good if you can get them. If you can't get any of these types, then use a mix of tart and sweet apples. Pre-heat your oven to 400 degrees F. Notice that you didn't do this earlier, when you were making the crust. This was so you don't heat up the kitchen too much, and thus your crust as you roll it out.

Mix together flour, sugar, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Cut up apples with a corer, then slice into smaller pieces if you like. I prefer to leave the skins on - there's vitamins there and it makes the filling a pretty pink. If you cook the pie long enough, they shouldn't be tough, but you can peel them if you want. As you cut up the apples, add them to the sugar/flour mix, coating them as you go. This keeps the apples from browning too much without having to add lemon juice. I would much rather use tart apples if I want a tart pie than coat my apples with lemon. Once all apples are cut up and coated, set aside the bowl, and get your bottom pie crust out of the fridge and get your pie tin ready. Leave

the top crust in the fridge until just before you need it.

Put the crust on the counter next to your pie tin, and peel off the top layer of wax paper. Hold the side of the crust that still has wax paper on it, and flip it over the pie pan, forming the crust lightly into the pan with the wax paper side up. Now you're ready to peel off the last layer of wax paper, carefully. If it grabs, go to a different corner and try to work it off from there. If it gives you real trouble, try putting it back in the fridge for a little bit to cool. Once the crust is in the pan, poke the crust on the bottom of the pan with a fork all the way around, so you don't get any bubbles. Then add your filling, making sure to get it even all around. Take the top crust out of the fridge and peel off the top layer of wax paper. Now you have a decision to make. Do you want to get fancy, or just have a plain top crust? Either way, remember to cut vents to let out steam. If I'm not making a lattice top crust, I like to cut designs into my plain top crust to act as vents. Have fun with it.

Now you're almost ready to put the pie in the oven. First cut a sheet of aluminum foil larger than your pie. Poke a small hole in the center of it, and wrap your pie, covering all of the crust. This keeps the crust from getting too brown and burning around the edges. You can save the foil and cover the pie with it when it's done if you like. Some people like those crust covers, and I've made some of my own, but plain foil covering the whole pie works best. Pop the pie into the oven, and bake for 45 minutes to an hour depending on your oven. The pie should be bubbling sugars out of the vents; at this point you can take off the foil, and let the crust brown for 10 to 15 minutes longer in the oven. Keep an eye on it, and make sure that it doesn't burn. Once it's golden brown and delicious looking, take it out of the oven to cool 30 minutes. A good pie is a lot of work, but well worth the effort.

Lamb Curry w/ Apples & Apricots

An apple cookbook was open under glass at the Apple Heritage Museum, and this recipe was showing. Seemed yummy.

2 lbs lamb
1 onion
butter for frying
1 diced large apple
10 apricots, dried or fresh
4 carrots
2 tablespoon shredded coconut
1 handful raisins
4 whole cloves
1.5 teaspoons curry powder
pinch of cayenne
3 teaspoons vinegar
1-2 teaspoons sugar
apricot jam

Brown the lamb and onion in butter. Add fruit, vegetables, cloves, 2 cups water. Simmer until lamb is tender, adding water if necessary.

Combine curry, pepper, vinegar, and sugar. Add when meat is tender. Remove cloves. and stir in jam before serving. Makes 4-6 servings.

Bill Lutz's Farm

The farmer selling apples from his green truck at Apple Day is Bill Lutz. His orchard is on Macon Road south of Saline; you can buy apples, pick apples on weekends, or rent a tree or two. He has a herd of Holsteins in addition to the orchard.

The farm has been in Bill's family for well over 100 years; his father started the process of being designated a Centennial Farm. In the last couple of years, Bill renewed the process. He has recently received notice that his farm has been approved for Centennial Farm status. The plaque will arrive in a few weeks; watch for notice of a celebration. Thank you to John Freeman for helping Bill with the bureaucratic details.

Grange Store

Pittsfield Grange is selling several new items. Preserving Tradition "Yes. We Can." aprons, T shirts, and packs of canning labels are available through Downtown Home and Garden, with all profit being returned to our Grange. Other Preserving Traditions items - tote bags, mugs, magnets - are available through the web at www.cafepress.com/preservetrad. The second edition of the PUG Apple Cookbook, now coil-bound, and the 2010 Michigan Grange Calendar are for sale at Grange events. Michigan quarter medallions, small and large, are also available, as are both the state and national cookbooks

Price List for Items for Sale at Grange:

2010 Calendar	\$10
"YES. WE CAN." Apron	\$25
"YES. WE CAN." Canning Labels (12)	\$ 3
PUG Apple Cookbook	\$ 5
Michigan Quarter Large Medallion	\$10
Michigan Quarter Small Medallion	\$ 1
Sharing Our Best	\$15
What's Cooking at the Grange	\$15



Grange contacts:

Robin Warner, President 734-426-0241, robin@ic.net
Helen Welford, Hall Rental 734-426-0241 welford@umich.edu
Joan Hellmann, Treasurer/Membership 734-769-1052, hellmann@umich.edu
Linore Latham, Community Service/Secretary 734-769-6152, linore@umich.edu
Richard Raymond, Hall Maintenance 734-662-9290, rreymond@umich.edu
David Wilson, Program Chair 734-699-7623, djw1ls0n@sbcglobal.net