

William and Mary Buffington

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National Grange.

On the state level, William serves as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania State Grange.

In their home subordinate unit — Kennett Grange No. 19 — William is currently Master, a post he has held several times over his long tenure, and Mary is secretary.

So in all reality, the matter of who may out-rank who doesn't even exist. Because when it comes to the all-important commitment and dedication to Grange and what it stands for, there's no difference between the two.

They are both All-Grange and with a capital "G."

William likes the way that Grange will go to bat for rural America as a whole and for each farmer and resident as an individual, if necessary.

"Grange gets vitally involved in legislation on the national, state and local levels," he explains.

"Here, in Pennsylvania, there have been examples with the milk security fund and the Avian flu.

"But at the same time, Grange will be there to help smaller rural groups and even individuals, if necessary."

And, Mary likes the way Grange operates.

"It's a real grassroots organization," she said.

"In Grange, things begin at the subordinate level. They move up through the higher levels instead of filtering down from the top.

"In this way, each Granger gets better representation in his organization because it's doing what the members want."

As a long-time member, William's recollections go back to his earliest days in Grange as a teenager. As he reminisces, his voice takes on a bit of a nostalgic tone.

"I can remember members coming to meetings in uniform," he said, "white shirts, trousers and even wearing badges.

"The ritual was much more a part of Grange back then. The degree work was more important.

"This impressed me as a

youngster because I had never seen anything like it before.

"I enjoyed the ritual part of activities and still do. I have served as County Master and just loved to do it."

The Buffingtons have observed a rejuvenation in recent years in Pennsylvania Grange in an activity that is central to the very founding of the fraternal organization — looking out for the interests of farmers and rural residents through programs that cooperatively help guarantee that both are getting a fair shake.

"There has been a trend back to co-op activity in the Grange," William said.

"I guess it's a sign of the need of the economic times we find ourselves in."

Pennsylvania Grange has a food co-op, Credit Union, gas and oil leasing service and a program of fertilizer and seed availability as just a few examples.

Mary Buffington's eyes light up when she talks of Grange women's activities.

These could be described as a combination of craft competition and community service.

As just as busy as are the hands of Grange women in their crafts so are their heads in helping to make their rural communities better places to live.

"Our Golden Quill Project is one in which only Grange women can take part to spearhead a drive or get involved in a community project," she said.

"We can enlist the aid of others, contact local officials or write to our legislators to correct a traffic hazard or meet some other need in our rural communities."

And, as far as crafts are concerned, you only need to see the smiles on the faces of countless thousands of youngsters in children's homes or hospitals. Those smiles are the result of the stuffed toys donated through Grange competition. Thousands come out of Pennsylvania alone each year.

Kennett Grange No. 19, the third oldest active Grange in the state, is sort of symbolic of the Buffington's

assessment of what Grange is all about. It's altogether fitting that it is their subordinate Grange and both have been actively involved in its development and progress.

Curiously, the building and the organization are just about the same age. Kennett Grange was organized in 1873 just a year or so after the building was initially built as a one-room school house.

The Grange didn't take it over until 1932 but the building truly mirrors the organization. Both display a proud and long heritage in their area — one that holds on to the values of the past while keeping abreast of the needs of the present and future.

And as this heritage continues to grow, it appears as if Buffingtons will continue to be deeply involved.

For William and Mary are the mid-point of a five generation family involvement in Grange. William's grandfather, Edward, had been a Granger and his parents, Thomas and Catherine, had met at Grange.

And following William and Mary are their four children and already three grandchildren as members.

To the Buffingtons Grange is family and family is Grange.

And thus it is too with many more as Grangers pause to exert a little extra emphasis during their week.

Grange Week proclaimed

HARRISBURG — In recognition of the Grange's "many contributions to the growth, development and improvement of agriculture in the Commonwealth," Gov. Dick Thornburgh has signed a proclamation designating April 22-28, 1984, as "Pennsylvania State Grange Week."

The annual event is recognized nationwide, in thousands of local granges, and on the state and national levels. As a statewide celebration, the Pennsylvania State Grange will host the State General Assembly for dinner on April 24 at the Host Inn, Harrisburg.

The Grange was founded in 1867 by Oliver Hudson Kelly, a clerk with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. His goal in the post civil war period was to bring farmers together, from both North and South, united under a single cause. He made the Grange into a fraternal order, patterning it after the Masons organization to which he belonged.

Over the past century, Grange members initiated many great strides for agriculture and rural America, among them standards for dairy products, milk marketing laws, many of today's national farm programs, rural electrification and rural free delivery of mail. Many of these important laws were conceived in a local grange hall in a small rural Pennsylvania community.

As the State's oldest and largest farm and rural membership

organization, the Grange boasts a membership of 42,000 individuals in 557 local granges.

Signing the proclamation in a public ceremony, Thornburgh commented, "Pennsylvania recognizes the important services provided by this grassroots organization. Local granges often serve as hubs of rural community activity and have provided convenient forums for community planning."

Pennsylvania citizens are asked to join with the Grange in recognizing the achievements and service of the organization to the Commonwealth.

Maryland names

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second year and \$10 the third year when their animals will be shown. The state of Maryland helps support the show, Knutsen said, so a guaranteed \$600 is available for the champion animal.

Approximately 550 calves were entered for the first Futurity Show, Knutsen said, however, only 100 members paid the final \$10 to qualify for the show. To break even with what was paid into the show, a breeder would need to place in the top 22 spots, Knutsen added.

The 1984 Futurity Show will again be held in April along side the Maryland State Holstein.

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