

# State Grangers 'Speak Out' At Competitions

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.) — Members of the Youth and Deaf Activities departments took center stage recently at the 128th annual Pennsylvania State Grange Convention here with rousing performances in the

Public Speaking and Sign-A-Song competitions.

The Public Speaking and Sign-A-Song are two events, which were held at the Grand Ballroom of the Clarion Hotel, that promote the activities of the

Grange's Youth and Deaf Activities departments. The Public Speaking and Sign Language judges said the competitions were exciting and enlightening.

Brian Ebersole of Community Grange #1767, Perry County, was a first-place winner in both the Sign-A-Song and Public Speaking competitions. Ebersole won the 20-29 age bracket with an informative speech titled "Life's Lessons" and the individual category of the signing competition.

Jodi Keith, Lincoln Junior Grange #509, Huntingdon County, took the division for youth ages 14-19 with the motivational speech "Milk. It Does a Body Good," and the topic "The Future of the Grange" helped propel Ila May McMillin, Westfield Grange #1514, Lawrence County, to first in the 30 and older category.

The Youth Department of the State Grange is for members ages 14-35. Youth members attend annual retreats, a summer camp, and leadership training seminars to prepare them to be the leaders of tomorrow. The youth program also promotes fellowship and socials that lead to friendships that last a lifetime.

Tina Houser and Rebecca Vonada, both of Logan Grange #109, Centre County, won first-place honors in the group division.

If crowned queen, the candidate must be able to make herself available for promotions and must maintain a scrapbook of her activities.

Following her reign as state queen, she will be eligible to com-

petition of the Sign-A-Song competition.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Department is the community service project of the Pennsylvania State and National Granges. The Sign-A-Song contest is one of the outreaches of the Grange's Deaf Activities Department, which promotes sound hearing and works to assist individuals, schools and social agencies that serve the deaf community.

The past few years the Deaf Activities has made a monetary donation during the annual convention to a charity, and the 2000 session proved to be no different.

Deaf Activities Director Pat Beck presented a check for nearly \$450 to Teresa Deller, manager, Deaf Center of York located in York County. Deller told the audience of about 250 Grangers assembled for the competitions that the donation will be used to purchase instructional videotapes to assist in the training of individuals interested in a career as a deaf interpreter.

The top three places in each competition were:

#### Public Speaking

Ages 14-19: 1. Jodi Keith, Lincoln Grange, Huntingdon County. 2. Rebecca Vonada, Logan Grange, Centre County.

Ages 20-29: 1. Brian Ebersole,

Community Grange, Perry County. 2. Yvonne Shepherd, Community Grange, Perry County.

Ages 30 and older: 1. Ila May McMillin, Westfield Grange, Lawrence County. 2. Pat Beck, Scrubgrass Grange, Venango County.

#### Sign-A-Song

Individual division: 1. Brian Ebersole, Community Grange, Perry County. 2. Ila May McMillin, Westfield Grange, Lawrence County. 3. Tina Houser, Logan Grange, Centre County. 4. Rebecca Vonada, Logan Grange, Centre County.

Junior division: 1. Catherine Carberry, Lincoln Grange, Huntingdon County. 2. Jodi Keith, Lincoln Grange, Huntingdon County. 3. Philip Vonada, Logan Grange, Centre County.

Group: 1. Tina Houser and Rebecca Vonada, Logan Grange #109, Centre County.

The first-place winners at the state convention advance to the regional meeting known as the Mid-Atlantic Grange Conference in next spring in New Jersey. They will face Grange Youth members from six other states. The winners of the Mid-Atlantic Youth Conference will perform for national honors at the National Grange convention in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in November 2001.

## Somerset Cooperative Extension Plans Annual Meeting

SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) — The annual meeting and banquet of the Somerset County Cooperative Extension Association will be held on Thursday, Nov. 9, at the Masonic Temple, Somerset. A social time to view educational displays begins at 6 p.m. with the stuffed pork chop dinner served at 6:30 p.m.

The annual business meeting will include the election of new board members and presentation of the annual program report highlighting programs in agricul-

ture, family living, 4-H, and youth. Several local residents will give the program a personal approach as they share how Cooperative Extension has touched their lives. A written annual report will be provided.

Attend the annual meeting and banquet by making reservations at the Cooperative Extension Office, 165 E. Union Street, Somerset or by calling (814) 445-8911. Adult tickets are \$8 per person. Reservation deadline is Nov. 1.

## Honey Queen Candidates Needed

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — The Pennsylvania Beekeepers Association is seeking qualified candidates for the Pennsylvania Honey Queen title. Contestants will compete for the title during the PSBA annual winter meeting and convention held at the Country Cupboard in Lewisburg, Nov. 10-11.

Each candidate must be no younger than 17 and no older than 21, and must be sponsored

by a beekeeper or a local association, which will pay the expenses of the candidate while she attends the convention to compete.

The candidate must write a 300-word essay entitled "Honey" and complete all necessary applications. During the competition, candidates will be interviewed by a committee and judged on general appearance, poise, ability to speak to the public, and basic knowledge of the beekeeping industry.

## Montgomery County Granger Is Best Of Show At State Grange Convention

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.) — By day, Matthew Wismer is a typical dairy farmer — someone who toils long hours caring for his herd, cultivating the crops, and performing all those jobs necessary to run a successful operation.

By night, however, the Montgomery County Granger chucks his work clothes for a tuxedo and takes on a completely different persona — that of a semiprofessional concert pianist and entertainer.

Wismer took Best of Show

honors during the Talent Night Festival recently at the 128th annual Pennsylvania State Grange Convention here, and won the right to represent the Pennsylvania State Grange at the National Grange Convention next month in Fresno, Calif.

"I'm looking forward to it since I've never been to California," Wismer, of Keystone Grange #2 in Trappe, said after of the competition. "I feel confident about the music I've selected, and am honored that I will be representing Pennsylvania

Grangers at the national session."

Wismer, whose musical repertoire ranges from classical to modern pop, said he picked what he calls a medley of "popular classical" to perform before the 500 Grangers in attendance at the festival held in the auditorium of Boiling Springs High School. Calling it "The Carlisle Overture" in honor of the session being held here, Wismer's performance included Tchaikovsky's "Piano Concerto," Mozart's "Symphony #40," Strauss' "Blue Danube Waltz," Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody," Beethoven's "Für Elise," and the "William Tell Overture."

Wismer said he squeezed practice sessions — in addi-

tion to working the 230-acre, 190-herd dairy farm and spending time with his wife and two children — into the early morning or late night hours in the month leading up to the festival. Wismer, who is in a partnership with his father, Charles Wismer, grows alfalfa, corn, wheat and rye, and has approximately 120 milking cows and 70 calves and heifers.

"It could have been a little more polished," Wismer said in critiquing his performance, "but considering the amount of time I invested, I am doubly satisfied with the outcome."

Wismer said he supplements his farming income by playing the piano at corporate affairs, parties and organizational programs.

The Runner-Up Best of Show, 17-year-old Paul Elliot of Hookstown, Beaver County, sang a spiritual song called "People Need the

Lord" and will represent Pennsylvania if Wismer is unable to compete in California. Elliot, a senior at South Side High School, performs in school and local theatre productions and plans to have a career in the arts after he graduates from college with a degree in theatre/arts.

The Grange talent show encompasses individual and family group performances in vocal, instrumental and other acts (theatrical skits and scenes) categories. Sponsored by the Lecturer's Department, which is in charge of programming at local, county and state Grange meetings, the Pennsylvania State Grange Lecturer's Department handed out awards to the top Subordinate (local) and Pomona (county) Lecturer of the Year.

Keith Grim of Lehigh/Northampton Pomona Grange #68, who was the 1999 Pomona Lecturer of the Year, was awarded the Subordinate Lecturer of the Year sash for 2000 while Faye Heckman of Berks County Pomona Grange #43, was honored as Pomona Lecturer of the Year. The Subordinate and Pomona Lecturer of the Year are judged on the programs they run at their Granges during the past year.



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