

THE ISLAND AGRARIAN

NEWS FROM SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

**GROWERS, MAKERS, AND KEEPERS WORKING TOGETHER
FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING**



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San Juan Island Grange #966 is a grassroots, non-partisan advocacy group supporting a resilient community on San Juan Island.

The Grange serves San Juan Islanders with legislative programs and community activities, such as talent and craft contests, scholarships, and more. You don't have to be a farmer to belong, though many are. Our elected officers are volunteers, and our "work" is done through committees. The heart of our mission is fostering community well-being, and we enjoy gathering to celebrate this.

We are a 501(c)(8) organization, accepting donations towards our programs and to maintain Grange Hall, in downtown Friday Harbor.

Officers of San Juan Island Grange #966 may be found at sanjuangrange.org/officers.html

Our bylaws and resolutions may be found at sanjuangrange.org/structure.html

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Winter Tree Pruning at Seagate Farm

We had a great time at our winter Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop. There were 34 of us at Seagate Farm, where we received hands-on

instruction in winter pruning techniques. The event was led by tree-fruit experts and instructors Madrona Murphy of Kwiaht, Greg Meyer of the Planted Pantry,



and Kevin Murphy. We also learned about various pruning tools, tool use, and maintenance and observed demonstrations on how to prune fruit trees during their dormant stage.



Thanks to the wonderful instructors and to the Washington State Department of Agriculture for funding for the workshop through a Specialty Crop Block Grant.

Letter from the President

Occasionally, I hear from a Grange member that they would be more active in the Grange, but they don't like meetings. Well, I say, maybe you should attend one of these:

Try the Potluck, held at 5:30pm right before the regular meeting! The chosen activity at the March 6 potluck will be the packing of seeds into little envelopes. The recent Seedy Sunday attracted 84 attendees who took a lot of seeds home for their gardens (see article). The remaining seeds will be packed up and offered free to shoppers at the Food Bank. Please bring finger food to share at the potluck so that we can focus on the seeds!

Or you could come to the Repair Fair! The next one is coming up on Sunday, March 10 (see article). I've attended the past two fairs. They were both really fun, and a lot of things got fixed. I hear that the fair could use a few more clothing menders, so if you have that particular skill, please drop in.

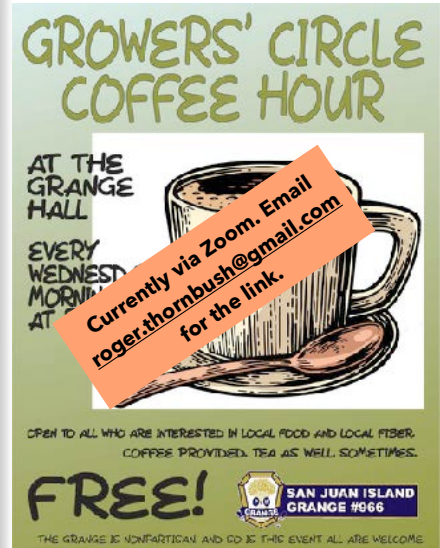
Or there's the Monday Night Contra Dance. It starts at 7pm. All are welcome, no partner is needed, and all dances are taught. And the Organic Contraband is, well, organic. It has no set lineup, and new folks are welcome, so bring your instrument and join in! The 3rd Saturday Contra Dance features bands and callers from the mainland. The next one is April 20, 7pm.

Then there's Game Night, held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Drop in at 7pm to check out the assortment of board and card games!

Finally, there's the Grange Booth at the Farmers Market. Over the years, several important projects and policies have been hatched from discussions behind the counter. The next market is March 16.

See you...there!

Roger Ellison, 2024 President



Notices



Save These Dates!

Master Gardeners Plant Sale

May 18 at the Mullis Center (times to be announced)

Grange Plant Sale
May 26, 2-4pm
at Grange Hall

Repair Fair

By Marc Santos

March 10 is the date of the first of three Repair Fair events for 2024! The fair will run from 11am-5pm and will keep visitors warm and fed with coffee, tea, and some light snacks.

This will be the second year for this event series, and I hope Grangers and all who can benefit make it to this really fun event.

For those that haven't heard, Repair Fairs are where the Grange, the Fellow Shop, Alchemy Arts Center, Transition San Juan, and numerous volunteers and contributors help visitors fix, mend, or learn how to fix and mend their weathered belongings. In addition to the March 10 event, two more repair events will be held this year on June 9, and September 22.

Past events saw well over 40 attendees per event, with ages ranging from youngsters to retirees. Many items saw renewed life, including wooden tables, metal chairs, lamps, dulled knives, sweaters, favorite socks (washed before being brought in 😊), bicycles, radios, and more. Neglected clothes were rejuvenated through screen-printing and indigo dyeing! And lots of good conversations were had all the while.

So, if you just need that little bit of extra energy, help, or courage to tackle fixing your broken or worn belongings, stop by and join in the fun!

Sausage Made— A Report on the 2024 Grange Budget Process

By Bill Severson

On a rainy Sunday in January, interested Grange members met to work out the 2024 capital budget.

Step 1: Treasurer Boyd Pratt explained how much money we had in the bank and the funds we expect to take in this year.

Step 2: Boyd presented our operating budget.

Step 3: We agreed on an amount to store away for a rainy day. So now we knew how much we could spend.



Step 4: Jessa Madosky then took us through a brainstorming exercise. Budget item ideas were grouped in categories. We broke into category groups to work up cost estimates. Of course our wish list exceeded available funds!

Step 5: We sat down to make the hard decisions but, oops, ran out of time. We punted to the Executive Committee, who approved funding for a) nine Grange Hall projects, b) agriculture support equipment, c) the Seed Bank and Seed Library, d) programs and events, e) grants and assistance, and f) the Overmarsh Farm Commons project.

The Executive Committee held off funding project managers for the Grange Hall projects and Overmarsh Farm Commons and will wait to donate to the San Juan Islands Food Hub Distribution Center, pending developments.

Share Our Bounty

By Alice Deane

Share Our Bounty is a program conceived by WSU Master Gardener Bob Levinson, with Dennis Demuth and Rebecca Smith now taking charge. Three dozen volunteers participated in 2023, increasing the produce Master Gardeners donated to the San Juan Island Food Bank by over 25%.

Did you know that all of the crops grown at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden on San Juan Island go to the Food Bank? For the past several years, Master Gardeners have donated over a 1,000 pounds each year. Food Bank



Grange member and Share Our Bounty grower Kat Rose in the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden hoop house, holding gorgeous greens on their way to the San Juan Island Food Bank

Manager Rachelle Randonski is excited that Share Our Bounty has become so successful. For the past three years, the number of families served by the Food Bank has increased 29.2%, and the number of individuals served has increased 35.7%.

Until now, Master Gardeners have been the contributing Share Our Bounty volunteers. But now it's time to open up participation to the larger community, and the Grange is the perfect place to start!

We invite you to become a Share Our Bounty volunteer. Spring is on our doorstep, so this is a good time to begin growing for the project. As you sow your early crops, add some lettuce, spinach, and peas. Add a couple of rows. Keep it going as you later sow your brassicas, tomatoes, squashes and peppers.

The Food Bank welcomes a variety of vegetables and fruits. If you feel hesitant about what to grow or how to do it, we Master Gardeners are here to help. The Food Bank has given us suggestions as to which crops are best received. We can pass those ideas along and explain how to prepare and deliver your donations.

Thank you in advance for considering becoming a Share Our Bounty volunteer. Please reach out to Dennis, Rebecca, me, or any of us with your questions. We are ready and willing to help continue and grow the program.

Winter Seed Sowing with Milk Jugs

By Nancy Best

Suki Boydston and Jill Patten led a workshop on winter seed sowing using milk jugs—an ideal garden activity for January, February, and March. They explained the theory, gave tips on how to set up the jugs, explained the preferred potting soil, and demonstrated techniques of sowing. They then brought out plastic milk jugs, soil, and seeds and had everyone make a jug or two to take home.

Winter sowing of vegetables in jugs is an excellent way for the thrifty/lazy/impatient gardener to start seeds and get hardy, well-rooted seedlings. Thrifty, because lights and heating pads are not required; lazy, because the jugs, once prepared, are put out in a sunny spot and require little care; impatient, because they can be planted after winter solstice, when gardeners itch to get something in the ground but its still too cold.

This is not necessarily a way to get early seedlings, but the small plants started in jugs are hardened off and have impressive root systems once they are ready to go.

Thanks to the Master Gardeners for organizing this workshop, and to Suki and Jill for teaching it!

Curious? For more information on Winter Milk Jug Sowing, go to <https://buncombemastergardener.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Winter-Sowing-uploaded->



Workshop speakers Suki Boydston (left) and Jill Patton demonstrate milk jug planting, as Grange member Alison Longley listens on

SAVE THE DATE! Tree Grafting Workshop

Save the date for Saturday, April 6 for a Tree Grafting Workshop at Grange Hall. You'll get hands-on training by experts to learn to graft your own trees. Details will be posted soon at www.facebook.com/SJIGrange966 and on the Grange public events page at www.sanjuangrange.org.

Successful Seedy Sunday!

By Nancy Best

Another festive seed swap has come and gone. On Sunday, February 25, community members brought in a plethora of seeds: some old favorite varieties and some rarer, more unusual finds. Most were commercially grown seeds, but there were also some home grown.

A seed swap is an excellent way to try out new varieties of your favorite vegetables and flowers without breaking the bank buying whole packets.

On Sunday, seeds found their way into pockets of people with no intention of bringing home more seeds but who couldn't resist the siren song of a new variety.

There were lots of seeds left over, which will be repackaged for distribution through the Seed Library and made available at the Food Bank this spring.

Thanks to all who helped with organizing, set-up, and clean-up and to those who brought seeds. And a special shout-out to Zach Chan, of New Hannah Farm, who generously gave the Grange his retired seeds—no longer appropriate for professional farming but perfectly fine for our gardens!



Photos by John Latimer
**Grange member
Nirmela Arsem on
the hunt**



A CENTURY OF GROWING:
100 YEARS AT HOME
2024 SAN JUAN COUNTY
FAIR POSTER CONTEST

In celebration of the 100-year anniversary of the Fairgrounds, San Juan County Parks & Rec is pleased to announce this year's theme: "A Century of Growing: 100 Years at Home."

To be considered for the poster contest, scan or upload a photo of your "concept draft" and send it to the Fair Board via email (info@sjcfair.org) before March 8. This can be a sketch, an outline, or a partial piece depicting the design.

Submissions are accepted from all San Juan County residents.

More information online: [San Juan County Fair Announces 2024 Theme](#)



Friday
Harbor Film
Festival Best
of the Fest

Each month through September Best of the Fest will offer award-winning documentaries along with livestream Q&As. Programs will begin at 7 pm. Some are in collaboration with the San Juan Island Library; others are at the San Juan Island Grange. Since they're on Fridays, they are a great "date night" activity.

Here's the schedule:

- *PUPS, The Bench, Call of the Orcas, and Island Marble Butterfly Conservation* – April 12 at the Grange
- *Elemental* – May 10 at the Grange
- *Mama Bears* – June 14 at the Library
- *Patrick and the Whale* – July 12 at the Library
- *Covenant of the Salmon People and Our Sacred Obligation* – August 9 at the Library
- *Common Ground* – September 13 at the Grange

Details about the films in the series are available on the fhff.org website.

THIS IS NOT A FOOTNOTE!

We want to let fellow Grangers know...it's done.

The Grange Overmarsh Farm Commons lease proposal has been submitted to the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank for their consideration.

The project Steering Committee is standing by while the proposal is reviewed.

We'll give you an update soon!