

THE ISLAND AGRARIAN

NEWS FROM SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

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

TREE GRAFTING WORKSHOP

Learn to graft new trees with Madrona Murphy of Kwiaht, Greg Meyer of Planted Pantry, and Lori Brakken of the Home Orchard Society & Temperate Orchard Conservancy!

Saturday, April 6,
from 1-3pm at the San Juan
Island Grange Hall located at
152 First St N Friday Harbor.



Join us on Saturday, April 6, from 1-3pm for a free Tree Grafting Workshop at the Grange! You'll get hands-on training to graft your own trees by industry experts. Some scion wood and root stock will be provided through a WDSA Specialty Crop Block Grant, but you can also bring your own cuttings, if you have them. This will be a hands-on workshop to graft new trees, so if you have grafting tools, feel free to bring them with you. See you on April 6!



**SAN JUAN ISLAND
GRANGE #966**

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

San Juan Island Grange #966
P.O. Box 2013
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Overmarsh Farm Commons Update

By Bill Severson

Well, things are getting real with our project. Just like when you bring a child or pet into your home, you've got to give it a name. It took us a couple of months, but we finally selected "Overmarsh Farm Commons" as the name for our shared land access project, proposed by the Grange for the San Juan County Land Bank Beaverton Marsh Preserve.

We submitted our proposal to the Land Bank and have since met with them. It was a pleasant meeting with good discussions, and for the first time, I felt this could be a serious project.

We left the meeting with homework, including putting together a performance plan against which to measure our project success, viability, and responsibilities. We have been told the Land Bank will make a decision at their April meeting.

We feel good about our chances of being given the lease, so we are

now meeting twice a week, having fun planning the Potato Patch, an orchard and food forest, fencing, biosecurity protocols for animal grazing, soil testing, public pathways, and the Community Garden.

We constantly remind ourselves that our goal is to *work and learn together to grow food to feed the community using the principles of regenerative agriculture.*



Conceptual drawing of the Potato Patch

Letter from the President

Greetings, Grangers!

Grangers on both sides of the current debate over whether San Juan County should grant a conditional use permit to OPALCO for an agro-solar project at the intersection of Bailer Hill and Douglas roads have told me that the Grange should weigh in.

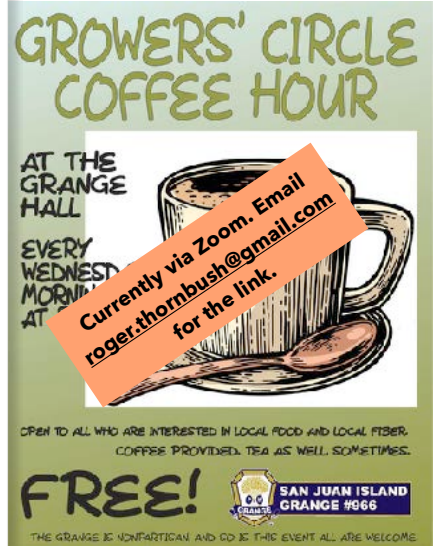
Yes, our Grange can support or oppose policies, as it did when it supported the initiative that prohibits GMO crops in our county or when it supported the use of greenhouses to grow cannabis. However, we may not endorse or oppose candidates or parties, only issues.

Nothing in Grange law prohibits a member's full political expression as individuals. You may write, endorse, campaign, lobby, or boycott what you will, but you may not say you are doing so as a Granger unless our Grange has gone through a specific process. And that process requires that a motion to oppose or support a policy must be made from the floor at a Grange meeting. It is then tabled until the next meeting, while the membership is notified of the language of the motion and encouraged to come to the following meeting, where the motion will be settled.

As for the Bailer Hill Microgrid, it would be good to have a discussion, but any motion that the Grange take a stand would not be settled until the May meeting, which is past the April 24 deadline for comments.

So fellow Grangers, if you have a strong opinion on the Bailer Hill Microgrid, don't wait for your Grange to take a stand. Write a letter to San Juan County Department of Community Development, P.O. Box 947, Friday Harbor WA 98250 or send it by mail or via email to marcs@sanjuancountywa.gov. The deadline again is April 24.

Roger Ellison, 2024 President




GROWERS' CIRCLE COFFEE HOUR

AT THE GRANGE HALL
EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 10:00 AM

Currently via Zoom. Email roger.thornbush@gmail.com for the link.

OPEN TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN LOCAL FOOD AND LOCAL FIBER. COFFEE PROVIDED. TEA AS WELL, SOMETIMES.

FREE!  SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

THE GRANGE IS NONPARTISAN AND CD IS THIS EVENT ALL ARE WELCOME

Notices

Save These Dates!

Master Gardeners Plant Sale

May 18 at the Mullis Center (times TBD)

Plan now to attend the
3rd Annual
Grange Spring Plant Sale
Sunday, May 26 2-4pm!

Pastoral Song—A Farmers's Journey by James Rebanks

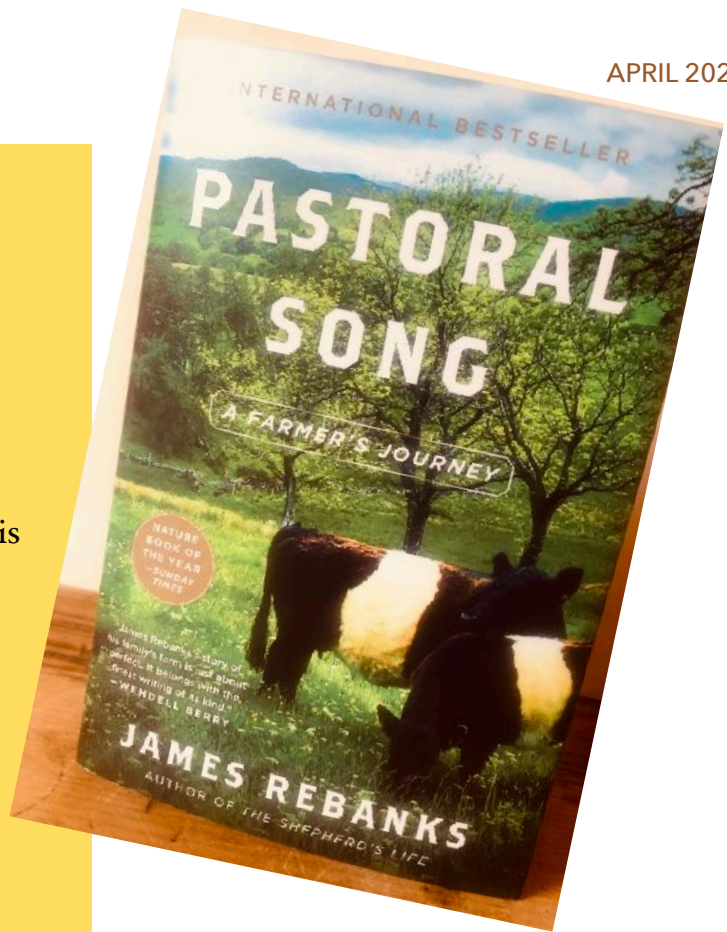
A Book Review by Bruce Robinson

This book reads like a song and takes the reader on a wonderful journey. It is the biographical record of the author and his extended family, as they farm their small holding in the Lake District of England.

The timeframe is vague but seems to span four or five decades, transporting the reader from the mid-1900's, with its more traditional farming methods, into the time when agribusiness and its more destructive farming practices are taking hold.

What makes this book exceptional is that it addresses all aspects of farming: physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. And, as with many good books, it has a happy ending, with the family recognizing the need to return to traditional values through the application of modern regenerative farming practices. As the book concludes, the farm's soil is improving, trees are being planted, crops are being diversified, and, most importantly, the family again recognizes the farm as "home."

I enjoyed this book so much that I bought three copies so I could lend them out. If you want to go on the journey, contact me at brobinson@rockisland.com



The Ag Guild is Hiring!

The San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild is hiring a Finance Manager, based in San Juan County, at approximately 15-16 hours per week. Pay rate: \$32-36 per hour, commensurate with experience.

The Finance Manager plays a pivotal role in overseeing financial operations and resource management of the Ag Guild. Responsibilities include maintaining accurate financial records, ensuring compliance with financial regulations and tax reporting, and providing financial analysis and guidance to the board in support of the Ag Guild's mission.

[See full job description here.](#)

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume with three references to director@sjagguild.com. Open until filled.

2024 March Repair Fair—A Report

By Marc Santos

Overall: A successful event with roughly 40 attendees, mostly ranging in age from young adults to retirees, which is about average for the Repair Fairs held

last year. The event was six hours long instead of four, so the booths had less crowding. A number of items were fixed, including a model of Lime Kiln Lighthouse, a 3-D wood cutout of Puget Sound, lamps, a radio, clothing, numerous knives and pruners (including all Grange cutlery), and a handful of items that were screen printed for added flair or to cover up little stains.

Notes for consideration: The weather was outrageously gusty and fairly cold, which may have kept a few folks at home. Grange Vice President Jessa Madosky noted that the San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit was held the same weekend,

which may have impacted the number of folks attending. And there was one snafu with the larger coffee pot not brewing Third House Coffee. Contributor feelings about the jump from four to six hours ranged from neutral to concerned.



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What is Regenerative Agriculture?

What is the approach to agriculture being adopted by the Overmarsh Farm Commons project? Find out below. Granger Lois Moore has summarized for us an article on regenerative ag by The Carbon Underground and the California State University Chico Institute for Sustainable Development.

“Regenerative agriculture” describes farming and grazing practices that leverage the power of photosynthesis in plants to close the carbon cycle and build soil health, crop resilience, and nutrient density.

Among other benefits, regenerative agriculture reverses climate change by rebuilding organic matter in the soil and restoring degraded soil biodiversity. This results in both carbon drawdown and an improved water cycle.

Regenerative ag practices include:

- No till/limited tillage techniques
- Planting along contours, or keylines
- Using multi-species cover crops and crop rotations
- Inoculation with compost and compost extracts
- Well-managed grazing practices



The future at Overmarsh Farm Commons? An example of planting along keylines

Resulting in:

- Improvement in soil health, primarily through practices that increase soil organic matter
- Increases in diversity and health of soil biota, and thus increases in biodiversity both above and below the soil surface
- Increased water-holding capacity
- Sequestered carbon at greater depths, thus drawing down climate-damaging levels of atmospheric CO₂
- Improved soil structure to reverse civilization-threatening, human-caused soil loss



Access the full article here!

Research continues to reveal the damaging effects to soil from tillage, applications of agricultural chemicals and salt-based fertilizers, and carbon mining. Regenerative Agriculture reverses this damage with a new paradigm that builds for the future.

Another Successful Ag Summit!

By Lois Moore

The Ag Summit this year was held on Orcas Island at beautiful Camp Orkila on March 8 and 9.

Workshops on both days were enthusiastically attended with a sold-out crowd at 8 workshops on Friday and 12 on Saturday. The approximately 20 exhibitors and trade show displays were centered in the main lodge, but workshops gave attendees the opportunity to walk the camp's green fields and along its woodland paths.

There were three areas of emphasis at the summit this year: The first was on carbon as it relates to soil health, fertility, and land management. This theme was explored

through talks on Agroforestry, Climate Resiliency, Soil Health, and Regenerative Agriculture. Lum Farm hosted a farm tour, which provided an excellent example of how regenerative agriculture can be implemented on a small diversified farm.

The second area of emphasis was on community as it relates to land access and food security, with workshops on Community Food Networks, Shared Farmland Access, and Traditional Foodways. Of particular interest to us from San Juan Island was the Orcas Community Participatory Agriculture project as an example of a cooperative community farm, with members farming together using regenerative agricultural practices.

The third area of emphasis was the importance of knowledge to be

gleaned from indigenous cultures. This was explored in the keynote address by Liz Carlisle, who made the point that regenerative agriculture can save us from the impending climate catastrophe, with global indigenous communities leading the way.



Photo by Lois Moore

The San Juan Island Grange display, mounted by Lois Moore and Elaine Kendall, at the Ag Summit

Repair Fair continued



Resources: \$156.15 was spent for coffee, tea, and snacks, some of which can be used for additional Grange events. One Grange member volunteered seven hours for setup, running, and cleanup, while Grange members Anita Barreca, Krispy Staude, and Nancy Best and non-Granger Lunnette Hertel served in staggered rotations at the mending station.

We're open to new ideas for booths: Jewelry repair? Grange Member Kina Smith has volunteered to run bicycle repairs at future events. Contact Marc at marcpolosantos@gmail.com with any other ideas.



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.