

2023 Fairview Grange Report to Smithfield Residents

HELP NEEDED...the Fairview Grange needs members if it is to remain open. The China Virus took the wind out of our sales like it did to most of you. We were not able to meet or hold events for way to long. Out of sight. Out of mind and we are suffering. Adding to our dilemma has been the loss of (too) many of our members, our Grange family and friends, whether to old age or health issues the outcome is the same. We are now at the point where a ½ dozen of us are trying to shoulder the load. Sure, we can keep the grass mowed, the building available for rentals, have a monthly Grange meeting for an hour or two, etc. but in order to ever be a resource for the Town of Smithfield and surrounding communities we need help. Help in the form of increased membership.

What happens if the Grange closes? The property will be taken over by Maine State Grange and they will sell it. Not one dime stays in Smithfield. It means,

*The last point accessible from the lake is gone. No boating over to the Village for an ice cream, Grange event, trip to the store or garage.

*The Grange will no longer be a hub for events like Leap Year events.

*No parking for the Roller Rink, the neighbors or park and ride. No parking for ice fishermen.

*No Maine State Boater Safety Course, No home for the NPA's storage of their tools, records, equipment or for their meetings and classes. No training for Courtesy Boat Inspectors or Invasive Plant training.

*The property will be sold and will become someone's private property.

How do you help? Join. It costs \$30 a year (which BTW also all goes to the Maine State Grange) and your commitment is to come to a meeting once a month. We typically pay the bills, discuss Grange needs, socialize and if any community needs are identified we have always voted to help.

In 2023 we were able to keep the US flags flying throughout town (Thanks SVFD), donated to the food cupboard, to the Christmas needy, the Veterans at Togus VA, supported a family in need by offering the facility free of charge for a fundraiser, supported the weekly training series offered by the 7 Lakes Alliance (CBI and Invasives) during July and August. We also rented the Hall over 30 times which is our only income but is able to sustain us and to keep up with the buildings needs.

We don't need money, we plan ahead and keep the building and grounds up so Fundraising is not what is needed.

We need People to help us once again have staff enough to offer Craft Fairs, Jam Sessions. Public Dinners, Poetry and Arts open houses, and any number of other items of interest to the Community. Great ideas are welcome and always the easy part. We need you in order to offer them.

We will be having an open meeting on the last Tuesday of April (the 30th) where we can more thoroughly discuss our hopes and plans with you. Please attend so we might keep the Grange open and active. It has been a fixture in town for over 135 years.

Sincerely,

Rick Watson, Fairview Grange.