

# The big 1-0-0 at Beaver Homes Grange

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**Goble icon celebrates its centennial this weekend**



Photo Credit: COURTESY OF BEAVER HOMES GRANGE - The Beaver Homes Grange in Goble. The grange was first organized in 1914, and its centennial anniversary will be celebrated this weekend. Two days of events in and around the grange will give grange members and the public an opportunity to celebrate.

The centennial celebration for the Beaver Homes Grange in Goble will be held Saturday, Aug. 2, and Sunday, Aug. 3.

Members of the public are invited to attend a series of free events at

the grange that include games for children and adults, what grange master Melvin Brady describes as “a lesson in history” that will be complimented by historic photographs and antiques, and even nondenominational prayer services Sunday morning, as well as an “old fashioned” chicken dinner Saturday evening.

“Everything’s free but the dinner, and that’s only five bucks,” Margaret Brady, Melvin’s wife, says.

And from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, the grange will have a family dance and live country music, harkening back to the years when it was new.

In many ways, the rural grange is a living monument to the America of yesteryear.

Melvin and Margaret talk about periodic get-togethers at a member’s house to make blankets for newborns, sick babies and the infirm elderly — they plan to move the blanket-making to the grange itself after the centennial, Margaret says — and renting out the building for weddings, benefits and memorial services.

Melvin says he turned down payment from a family who held a memorial at the grange several months ago; in gratitude, he adds, the family is making salad for the centennial dinner on Saturday.

Margaret suggests she might be able to rent out the grange more often if not for the standing rule against bringing alcohol onto the premises, but if she feels any pressure to change the tradition, it doesn’t show.

Decades ago, the grange would host regular dances. Some old-timers in the community still remember them fondly, Margaret says. She and Melvin are thinking of bringing them back.

“Everybody’s been asking, ‘Why don’t we start doing music again?’” says Margaret.

“It might be a consideration, you know,” Melvin adds.

The number of granges in Columbia County has dwindled over the years, Melvin notes. While the Beaver Homes Grange will have officially lasted 100 years this November, the organization faces an existential challenge: its 60 or so members are an aging population.

“We’re trying to get younger members in,” Margaret says. “We’re

starting to get some. There's two or three young girls that are taking care of the outside. But all of us are, what, 60-something and older — so we can't do all of that anymore.”

Melvin and Margaret take obvious pride in what they have done for the grange over the past seven years — repainting the building, replacing a wasteful old furnace, and trying to hold as many regular activities and events as they can manage.

“The idea was to keep the doors open,” Melvin says. “We started having game nights and tried to have ... a reasonably priced dinner at least once a month.”

A spring fundraiser and well-trafficked Halloween and Thanksgiving events contribute toward keeping the grange afloat. The grange has also built relationships in the broader community, participating in the annual Relay for Life, hosting students from the Rainier History Club for historical reenactments in the spring, and having a presence at community events like the Columbia County Fair & Rodeo and Rainier Days.

But the centennial is a different kind of event from the traditions that have been established at the grange. Melvin and Margaret say they are not entirely sure what to expect.

“I don't know if there's going to be a hundred [attendees] or there's going to be 300,” Margaret says.

Parking has been donated by a neighbor who is allowing vehicles to park in two pastures in front of the grange, Melvin says. A secondary parking lot will also be available off-site, at Portland General Electric's Trojan Park off Highway 30 — at the old site of the visitor's center at the former nuclear power plant where Margaret used to work. A shuttle van will ferry people between Trojan and the Beaver Homes Grange every 30 minutes.

As it has been for nearly a full century, the Beaver Homes Grange is located at 31105 Beaver Homes Rd., Goble.

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