

The Winter Youth Weekend was held at the Wide Awake Grange Hall in Phelps, Ontario County, from January 15 - 17. Approximately 25 Youth members and friends attended from Genesee, Ontario, Steuben, Onondaga, Washington, Columbia, and Dutchess Counties. This was a relaxed game-filled weekend with some ritual review included. We went through the Opening & Closing Ceremonies without the use of a manual as well as reviewed the ceremonies for Receiving Honored Guests and Draping the Charter. Katelyn Chamberlain (Washington County) led a workshop on how to plan Lecturer's Programs. To all the Lecturer's in New York State - don't be afraid to call on these Youth to help with your Programs throughout the year - they certainly proved they can create interesting and entertaining programs! We also began planning for the Drill Competition in July. We will have 2 teams this year - one from Eastern NY and one from Western NY with Sarah Gearing (Columbia County) and Heidi Henderson (Onondaga County) as Team Captains. Since we blew last year's competition out of the water with one team in 2009, imagine the possibilities we will have with 2 teams in 2010! We had the privilege of having the following State Grange Officers/Directors with us for all or part of the weekend: Sarah Gearing - Lady Assistant Steward; Allen Henderson, Gatekeeper; Dave Crane, Camp Director; and Bob & Pat VanLare, Past FAC Directors. Brother & Sister VanLare also explained how the Robert Earlandt Legislative Award Program works. Unfortunately, National Youth Director Charlene Espenshade was unable to be present at the last minute due to her son's illness and job restrictions.

We also visited the Adams Family Dairy Farm and some of us milked a cow for the very first time! Of course, we held one of our favorite activities - bowling! Congrats to Diane Adams (Ontario County), Julia Masti (Steuben County), and Allison Orton (Dutchess County) for the highest scores - all over 100! We were treated to Square Dancing at the Hopewell Grange Hall on Saturday night. Thanks to Hopewell Grange #472 for this special treat - you definitely know how to party! Square Dancing is now one of our favorite activities along with Bowling and Dartball! Special thanks to Wide Awake Grange #747, especially Ken Livermore, Diane, Stacy, and Jason Adams, and all the other members who helped put this weekend together from cooking the meals to sweeping the floors!

Be on the look out for information on our Spring Youth Weekend, which will be held from April 9 - 11 at the Butternut Valley Grange Hall in Gilbertsville, Otsego County, and they are already planning some fantastic activities for us. We will be having our Youth Ambassador Contest at this Weekend - any Youth member between the ages of 16 & 22 can apply for this prestigious award and experience! Information for this can be found on the National Grange Website as well as from the State Youth Director. The Public Speaking and Sign-A-Song Contests will be held on conjunction with the State Lecturer's Talent Contest on Saturday, May 1st at Headquarters in Cortland. We hope to see an increased number of Youth and Young-at-Heart members at these events as well as more of our State Officers and Directors! See you in April!