

## Andover Congregational Raising Funds to Restore Grange Hall

\$200,000 should cover it

**Elodie Reed, Concord Monitor staff**  
*From the May 6 Concord Monitor*

Joyce and John Bourdon are retired Andover residents, so they figured, why not help restore their local grange hall? "I've got nothing else to do," John joked Friday.

The building, initially built as a school in 1850 and used as a space for numerous community events today, is in its 10th year of intensive restoration. It was bought by the next-door Andover Congregational Church in 1991, and through vigorous volunteer work and fundraising by church members, the Highland Grange Hall now has a functioning toilet, a kitchen and basement, heat, and beams that aren't about to buckle – yet.

All of this has been completed by the church's restoration committee, which the Bourdons have led for the past four years. Joyce is a church member, and her husband is a handyman and engineer who built the Andover church's steeple.

As for the grange hall, Joyce said, "It's safe and usable." Last summer, they helped ensure it could stay open all-year round by complying with several fire departments requests, including upgrades to the electrical work, new emergency lighting, a staircase in the back of the building and clearing out the less-than-stable second-floor hall.

"We kind of got a reprieve," John said.

Now, though, they face perhaps the biggest hurdle: raising an estimated \$200,000 to replace the building's roof, posts and beams, repair its second floor, right the foundation and, hopefully, get

the cupola to not lean as much.

On Friday, Bourdon stood on the old, rickety second floor hall, which has been totally cleared as a safety precaution. A hole in the ceiling sat right over a temporarily strengthened beam.

"The timbers, believe it or not, were previously used in some other structure – like most other places in New Hampshire," John said. "After 150 years they're really not in a good condition."

"What are we going to do now to fix it permanently?" he asked. "We need money."

The amount – \$200,000 – is the worst case scenario, John said. The church is continuously fundraising through yard sales, bake sales, and other events.

In the meantime, the Bourdons and other volunteers make what little repairs they can: tearing down old wallpaper and painting the walls, putting new clapboards on the front of the building and repainting it's small sign, new cork boards in the main hall, and a small Sunday School space above the new kitchen.

Why? Because the hall is currently busy – it hosts a food pantry, regular church events, weddings, funerals and baby showers, coffee houses every third Friday, performances, and other presentations.

"It's a great community place for holding lots of events," Joyce said. "It's used constantly."

It's also a standing reminder of East Andover's history.

"There's members at the church, their grandfathers and early relatives were involved in building it," John said. "It's an old structure and people don't want old structures to go away."

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## Andover Congregational Church, June 2016

Fundraising for Grange Hall restoration continues

**Sandy Miller**  
**Andover Congregational**

Andover Congregational Church's Plant and Bake Sale, held on May 7, was very successful. We realized over \$600 from this annual event. Special thanks to Ginny Newton for heading up this event.

Again, we thank John and Joyce Bourdon and Lloyd Perreault for updating the wiring in the Highland Lake Grange Hall and tending to other minor issues. Their help has been invaluable.

We recently hosted "Teen Challenge" from Brockton, Massachusetts. This Christian-based rehabilitation facility consists of approximately 70 men of all ages who enter a 15-month program. This non-profit organization is for alcoholics, drug abusers, etc. who make a decision to try to change their lives.

Several men gave testimony at our church service that this is happening by being introduced to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, making them realize that they can be forgiven and start anew through His love and strength. Approximately \$300 was collected to help "Teen Challenge" continue their ministry.

Several people from our Church have joined the Franklin Mayor's Drug Task Force to attempt to make a differ-

ence in the drug problem which seems so prevalent in that area. A table was set up at Odell Park on May 14 (Community Day in Franklin), where members of our church plus others were there to talk or pray with individuals. Please keep this ministry in your prayers, that somehow with God's help, we will see an improvement in this ongoing battle.

Baby bottles were handed out on Mother's Day for the purpose of putting in loose change or bills as we collect for the Aspire Women's Center in Laconia (formerly called the Care Net Pregnancy Center). The bottles will be collected on Father's Day. This money helps this organization provide pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting classes, and material and spiritual support to abortion-vulnerable women, all at no cost to the client.

Don't forget – we continue to have flea market and bake sales on the last Saturday of every month from 8:30 AM to 2 PM at the Highland Lake Grange Hall. They will continue through October. There are new and different items at each sale. All money from this sale goes to the Save the Grange fundraiser.

We invite all to join us for Church service. Worship service and Sunday School for children are held every Sunday at 9:30 AM. There are also many small group meetings during the week. Call 735-5160 for more information.

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