



A GUIDE TO LECTURER BASICS



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MAINE STATE GRANGE

A Guide to Lecturer Basics

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A SUCCESSFUL LECTURER

What makes the successful lecturer? Like all successful people your success begins when you have a good attitude toward your office and the work that goes with it. In addition you should:

- Believe you can make a difference and acknowledge self-worth
- Be committed to your work and the organization.
- Give yourself different level goals (immediate, within the quarter, within the year, by the end of your term).
- Learn to be a good communicator, both as a speaker and a listener.
- Recognize that not every program will delight everyone.
- Acknowledge when changes are needed for whatever reason.
- Remember people have helped you. Show your appreciation.
- Plan ahead and be prepared for the unexpected with a backup plan.
- Never settle for "second best" in programs you plan and how you handle your office.

PROGRAM IDEAS

Be versatile, mix things up, in how you put your program together each time. It does not have to be the exact same format each meeting, as long as each of the four basics is included as part of your theme.

Be very careful when putting funny and serious parts right after one another. You may need something neutral to make it flow smoother.

Keep things moving along smoothly. Avoid extra chatter, giggling and wasting of time.

Write down what you are going to say and stick to it. Limit time of discussions.

Speak clearly and loudly so everyone will understand and have a more enjoyable evening.

Be selective who is going to be doing the parts for you, some people may not care to read something aloud or participate in games. Find something they are comfortable with. Try to use as many different people as you can each time. Don't do everything yourself.

Ask those to participate ahead of time and give them instructions you want them to follow. Special items should be sent out well in advance. Remember your extra copies.

For games use someone who is familiar with the game and give them any props needed to save time. Keep your audience involved, don't leave them sitting for a long amount of time. Break up the busier activities with something quieter.

If someone else is doing the program for you but you are putting it together, write out as much detail and information as you can so they will know what you want done. It saves time and embarrassment.

Let the pianist know what music you will want and when it will come in and other particulars concerning music. If group or solo will the pianist be playing for them? Or if you are using alternative music, do you need an outlet and someone to run the machine.

When you plan to use the stage, make sure it is clear and can get to it easily. Let people know where you want them.

Let people know ahead where their number will be on the program and check to see if they need extra time to change or get ready.

If you are having a special night, check ahead of time "WHO" is doing the program, will you have to plan it or is someone else taking care of it. Make sure to get it straight before you get there and someone says "Oh, I thought you were doing the program for us tonight."

Limit readings to 2 (two). Use other things to get your theme across. Very long readings or poems are sometimes hard to follow and the audience will lose interest quickly.

Let speakers know how much time they will be allowed and also allow time for questions and answers. If a nonmember, it is best to have them do their program before meeting. Ask for program suggestions from your Grange members from time to time, see what might interest them, and use their ideas. Ask the person who suggested it if they would like to help put the program together. If your members are uncomfortable telling you in person put out a suggestion & comment box for them to leave you a note.

BACK TO BASICS

Remember to have well-rounded programs at ALL your meetings, not just special occasions, select items for each of these basics to get your theme across.

INSPIRATION This is something meaningful, gives a message or is from the heart. It gives you something to think about and make your own conclusion or interpretation. It could mean something different to each person. It does not necessarily have to be religious but it can be. Perhaps a tableau, poem, thought or music can be used.

EDUCATION This gives you information or teaches you something on a particular subject. Facts are okay but be brief depending on how they apply to the theme of your program. Speakers are good but give them a time limit ahead of time and allow time for questions and answers. Skits, quizzes and games can also be educational.

RECREATION This includes games, quizzes and skits. If doing games be careful who you pick to take part, some people are embarrassed by games or just can not do them physically. But they might like to be a

"Judge" for others taking part. Quizzes where everyone yells out the answers can be enjoyed by all. If using paper and pencil, pass it out ahead of time or while people are walking around for the mystery march saving time.

MUSIC Make selections to do with your theme if possible. Make sure the musician knows what music you need and when it will come in. If something special check first to make sure he/she has the music on hand. If you ask someone to sing solo or with a group ask ahead and see if they are comfortable with what you are asking for and will they need the musician or not, also limit the amount of numbers. If singing without music ask someone beforehand to start the song off. Use alternative music if necessary.

THE TIME IS YOURS, WORTHY LECTURER

The length of your program should be between 15 and 30 minutes for regular and between 30 and 60 minutes for special programs. Take into consideration what else is going on that evening. For example: do you have a lot of business, is it inspection or election or memorial? Basically take everything into consideration for the overall Grange meeting and try to make it a pleasant experience and folks will want to come again. Do you have guests who have traveled a long way? (Do not try to over impress them with a long drawn out program. They will be much happier if given a good well-rounded program in a reasonable amount of time.) Special nights - CWA, Past Masters, Youth, Ag, Jr. etc. -- have just one or two honored guests speak during your program (to keep with your overall theme). Then under suggestions, have one person speak for the rest of the group of guests. (You don't HAVE to ask everyone to speak.)

To give you some idea how long your program will be, read each piece (readings, skits, tableaux, songs and quizzes -everything) and time it. Figure about 10 minutes for each game, (that allows time for moving around, instructions and the game) but don't let it drag on too long. The dime march or mystery add to the total time of the Lecturer's program. If refreshments are planned after the meeting, this also adds to the lateness of the evening, which is not your "fault", but we need to think this through. Presentation of certificates takes up time as well. Write down what you are going to say and stick close to it. Avoid extra chatter and giggling on your part. You can have fun and present a good program and not act foolish. Don't let extra stories and joke telling get out of hand. Use your own judgment, you are in control.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANGE LECTURERS

1. The Lecturer's Hour should be the highlight of the Grange meeting. The program should be held at the appointed place in the regular order of business and should last from 15 to 30 minutes. For an open meeting, one-hour maximum.
2. There should be something of value. in the nature of instruction or information at every meeting. Aim to have programs part educational, part entertainment, part inspiration, part recreation, but always plan the educational part first. Recreation should always be last, so that it does not break the continuity of the program and it can be held after the regular closing of the meeting.
3. A good Lecturer does not put on the program personally by reading a few poems or newspaper clippings and conducting a quiz, but gets others to do these things. The Lecturer may help find the material and assist with its preparation, but should not, even as a last resort actually give the numbers himself on the program. The Lecturer's job is to get others

- to take part, arrange the various numbers in the best order for effectiveness, and announce the program.
4. Encourage and solicit program participation by every member of the Grange. Develop the Talents and Abilities of the Members! Tactfully and in a diplomatic manner, graciously approach the members, to arouse within them the desire to do something even though it be a small part.
 5. It is up to the Lecturer, first, last, and always to present such interesting and educational programs that the lives of the members will be enriched, "Knowledge is Power" and so the Lecturer Hour becomes the powerhouse of Grange growth, membership and usefulness.
 6. The Lecturer is an "Educational Director". Foster and promote the foundation principles of the Grange. Encourage Pride in Grange membership!
 7. The Lecturer will be present at all meetings of his or her Grange and will arrive before time for the meeting to begin so that he 'or she may check with the Master regarding details of the meeting. Should the plans for the program fail to materialize the Lecturer will have a file of emergency numbers to use for the program. Never let your Grange down by just not having any program!
 8. Know the membership and strive to make the program appealing to all groups. Secure a complete list of the members of your Grange and write after each name such information as birthdays, anniversaries, special interests, hobbies and program possibilities so that all members may be widely used on your program.
 9. Give your Grange's publicity chairman details of your program both before and after your meetings.
 10. Cooperate with other Lecturers, Subordinate, Pomona, State and National. Plan to attend all Lecturers' and other leaders' conferences to exchange ideas. Work to hold and extend Grange interest and membership.
 11. Turn over all property of your office to your successor immediately after your successor's election or as soon as it is received.
 12. You have taken a solemn pledge before the altar to perform all the duties appertaining to the office; "to support the Constitution and By-Laws of the State and National Grange and to inculcate a strict obedience to all laws emanating from the proper authority."

UNDERSTANDING GRANGE PROGRAMMING

Programs are the responsibility of the Lecturer but remember that they should be discussed at a planning meeting with all members having input. It is important that all members feel that decisions are a group effort. The Installation Ceremony should be read and this will help you to understand that a Lecturers program should not be all entertainment it should have an aspect of learning or instruction.

The members are probably the most important part of your program, if you are doing things that your members do not enjoy and take part in then you need to revamp and take another look at what you are doing. Make changes, it is not a sin to say, "I made a mistake" but it is a sin to keep doing it.

Assess the needs of your community and have programs that highlight the pluses and the minuses get your members involved. Include the departments in your program planning being sure that they have sufficient time to promote their programs and have a chance to showcase the accomplishments of the members in those departments.

Invite other organizations to come to your meetings and tell about their projects and programs. Perhaps this will interest your grange in helping them or starting their own projects.

Use the media for up to date current events, perhaps inviting some of the people in the articles to come and tell more about their story to the Grange. Use unusual subjects to discuss and provide a learning experience for your members.

Holidays are always the old standby, why not pick an unusual aspect of a holiday and have your program on that instead of the same old thing every year.

Be sure to use your members in your programs. If the program is well planned the Lecturer should never have to do anything but introduce the numbers on the program. There is nothing more boring than to sit while the lecturer talks on and on and does the whole program themselves. The title of the office is Lecturer but it does not mean that you lecturer. Think of the title Lecturer as Program Director this means that you direct the program, the same as the director of a play you very rarely see a plays director on stage the night of the performance. Some members enjoy being performers while others would rather be behind the scenes, use them wherever they are the most comfortable.

Your programs affect the attendance at your meetings. I know that this is putting quite a load on your shoulders but it is true, if your programs do not interest the members many of them will not return and will eventually drop out. Don't have all readings; my rule is two readings or less. Members can sit at home and read poetry, magazines or newspapers. If a member has written an original poem or essay then I would include it on my program as an original article to spotlight the talents of the members.

Probably the most important part of a program is the preparation. Plan ahead, not just an hour ahead but several days or weeks. Make contacts with speakers, members and others that you want to take part in the program in advance. Don't go to the meeting and pass out things to be done when the Master calls for the Lecturer's Program. If it is something simple it should be passed out before the meeting starts if it is going to take some preparation then it should be passed out at the previous meeting. Be sure you have enough copies of items for all taking part. Check and recheck the status of the program several times if necessary. Always have a backup program or numbers for the program in the case of no-shows or illness.

If you follow these guidelines your programs will be a success and your Grange will grow. You will acquire a reputation of putting on a worthwhile program and other lecturers will look to you for example. There is no higher praise than when another lecturer comes up to you and says, "may I use your program for my Grange" or "will you come and visit and bring your program with you, it seems to be what my Grange will enjoy.

PROGRAM IDEAS

BE VISIBLE:

- Hold Public Events : Open Houses; Fairs, Craft Shows, Valentine Buffets, Strawberry Festivals, Halloween Programs, Haunted House.
- Publish a Community Newsletter and feature your Grange activities.
- Hold a "Meet the Candidates Night"— a service to the whole community.
- Have a Spring/Fall Community Cleanup Day — another service to the community.

- Sponsor a program or speaker of Community interest or entertainment.
- Put a Float in an Area Parade.
- Have a joint meeting with another Community organization.
- Work with another group on a joint community service project.
- Pomona and Subordinate Granges could develop a program to be offered to other fraternal and service organizations in their area. This could be a slide show about what your Grange does in the community.
- Work with local schools on such activities as seed planting. This could also promote agriculture and fairs.
- Prepare a History of your Grange (Share with ,your Grange. Present to your local Historical Society.)
- Sponsor a community project — such as a Community Calendar.
- Put up a Grange Road Sign near your meeting place.
- Put up a Grange Display in a store window.
- Participate in your area fairs with exhibits, banner.
- Enter the Community Service Program. Get Photos. Publicize.

HAVE FUN

- Plan programs and activities that are fun — and invite non members to come.
- Encourage trips
- You might invite Grangers from other parts of the State to see your area and then visit them.

APPRECIATE YOUR MEMBERS

- Recognize the accomplishments of your own members
- Hold a Past Master's Recognition night
- Have a Member Recognition Night — Feature your long time members. This could be an open meeting. Issue a special invitation to the families of these members. Be sure to include a time for Grange memories and stories. Perhaps you could research your Grange minutes for some interesting stories.
- Have a time at your meeting to recognize your members for the good things that they do for others.
- Recognize your high school and college graduates.

LOCAL SOURCES FOR PROGRAMS

Listed below are just a few of the many sources usually available within your own community. Each of these would make a good program for your grange.

Fire Department-- This program could be on fire safety, how to prevent or deal with home fires, or a demonstration of just how a thermal imaging camera works.

Police Department-- This program could be on home safety, scam artists, protecting children from dangerous situations (kidnapping, for instance), preventing juvenile crime in our area, or any of a number of other topics.

EMS-- How to handle an emergency situation and other related topics would make a good program as well as let you become familiar with your EMS staff.

Library-- There are many different programs you could devise using your local library. How long has it been since you've been in your town library ? Organize a tour, scavenger hunt, or just an opportunity for your members to see how updated your library has become. Sponsor an event in conjunction with your town library. This could be an historical personality or performer. Work with your librarian to present such a program.

Schools-- A working partnership with a local elementary, middle or high school can be a wonderful benefit to your community as well as to your Grange. Whether it is a speaker from the school, with or without students, presenting a program or information or the grange sponsoring an event for the students or teachers at the school would benefit you both.

The Historical Society-- Nearly every town now has an historical society determined to not let us forget our past. When was the last time you met with them? Have you ever toured your own town's museum? Delve into the history of your own town. It can be fascinating.

The Chamber of Commerce-- Invite members of your local chamber to speak to your members concerning issues which will affect your town. Work together to put on or sponsor a breakfast on a weekend.

Other people to consider participating in a program include:

Accountant--financial planning;

Banker--interest rates and / or home mortgages;

Insurance agent--personal liability in lieu of today's situations;

Florist--how to do floral arranging;

Restaurant owner-- what it takes to manage a business or why he/she
choose a particular type of cuisine;

Craftperson-- what to do and how to do it;

Member of your Board of Health-- upcoming clinics and/or working with them to sponsor one;

Finance committee member, Selectman or Town Manager--present a program on local issues of interest.

These are only some of the people you could work into a good program for your grange. Have fun !

PROGRAM RESOURCES

These are places where you can look for ideas and materials. Sometimes you need to really use your imagination and keep your mind and eyes open. You never know when an idea may jump out at you. Sometimes you need hardly any imagination at all, it is there and very obvious. You may not use the idea or material right away, make a note of it or keep the material in a file or folder for some time when you

do need it. Take the file out and look completely through it from time to time, it may surprise you how much material you have collected.

YOUR OWN HOME. GARAGE AND YARD

GROCERY STORES

DEPARTMENT OR DISCOUNT STORES

FLEA MARKETS, YARD_SALES

BOOKSTORES

FAIRS

LIBRARY

DOCTOR'S OFFICE

EXTENSION SERVICE

MAGAZINES

NEWSPAPERS

TOWN OFFICE

SCHOOLS

DISTRICT OR COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Look for books with games, activities, quizzes, poems, music, facts and information notes on any variety of subjects that could be made into some part of a program. Even kids books have great material in them and are not quite as involved as some others and may be more easily turned into skits, tableaux, or candle lighting ceremonies. A lot of songs can be changed into poems, skits, tableaux, and beautiful candle lighting services as well. Take time to really read the words and what they are saying. (The music is super but it is the message you are looking for, so use it some way without the music.)

Cereal boxes often have games and quizzes and information on them. Take several kinds of cereal, place a small amount in clear baggies and ask people to guess what it is and what grain it is made of, use any other kinds of dry product to do the same thing. Try seeds or spices in the same way.

Current articles or events going on in the community. If taking articles out of newspaper or current magazine it is best to tuck it away for another time, as everyone else in the room, almost, read that same thing today. Or use it for a discussion.

Public notices about different speakers or programs, at courthouse, school, town office or community college. Take down name and addresses of those persons putting on the program or class. Look through the adult education brochure that comes in the mail, something in there may give you an idea for a program. If you have the opportunity and time to go check out some of these things ahead of time, then you will have a better idea what to expect.

HELP WITH YOUTH PROGRAMS

- Junior Granger
- 4-H
- Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts
- Church Groups
- Schools
- Sunday School Classes
- Child Care Centers
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- YMCA/YWCA
- Campfire Girls
- Summer Camps
- Family Members
- Dance Classes
- Music Classes
- Hobby Clubs
- Library/Special Groups
- Exchange Students
- Little League Teams

USING GUEST SPEAKERS

Contact the speaker far in advance. Be sure to tell how long you want the presentation; whether you will have a question time after. Be sure he knows the time and location of the meeting.

Publicize the meeting to be sure there is a good audience.

Call to remind the speaker a week before the meeting. If there is a charge, arrange to have the check ready to present after the meeting.

Be sure the speaker is greeted at the door, welcomed and helped with any equipment he has to bring in and arrange.

Don't ask the speaker to sit through a lengthy Grange business meeting. Have an open meeting or have the speaker first.

Give the speaker a good introduction (Keep it brief, tell his "credentials" and topic, conclude your introduction with his name.

If there is a Question and answer period, keep it brief and let people ask questions "one on one" after the meeting. "Leave them wanting more"

Send a thank you a few days after the meeting.

MUSIC IN THE GRANGE



You CAN have Music, even without a piano— even without a good singer!

You may have recorded music for opening and closing--have a musician work with you and tape several numbers for use in your Grange. (When our Grange was practicing floor work for a degree last year, with no pianist available that night, we all "tapped out the time" with

our feet--and it worked well. We were even able to teach some to "keep in step" this way.

Find a person in your community who plays an instrument (a portable one) and invite her/him to lead the Grange in songs.

IF YOU HAVE A PIANO OR KEYBOARD AVAILABLE:

You're fortunate! There are many games you can play without a great knowledge of music.

GAME: Guess the names of songs from playing only the first few notes.

GAME: Musical Chairs for Senior Citizens - The contestants sit in a circle of chairs. Give each a number. When each number is randomly called, and music stops, that person is automatically "out" and leaves the circle. This may have many variations....

GAME: A musical game with absolutely NO music! Turn to the index in your Grange Songbook---the last two pages in the book. Read silently and rapidly down the list of songs until you find one which mentions a pertinent word in the title.

For example, on my NATURE PROGRAM, we looked for titles with words depicting NATURE; = e. "Climb Every Mountain, Cruising Down the River, Harvest March, etc. If you wish, you could have two sides in competition, having each person call out the titles of songs as they find them. The winning side would be the side with the greatest number of appropriate songs.

You don't have to have NATURE items; you can have songs depicting a SEASON or LOVE or whatever.

SIMPLE SKITS WITH SIMPLE PROPS

Simple skits may be devised from one's own imagination, a true life funny incident, from various reading materials or friends stories. Simple props (the icing on the cake) can be found or easily made from items we probably have in our homes or are easily obtainable free or for very little money.

Do you read the comic strips in the weekly and/or Sunday edition of the local newspaper? If a cartoon caught your funny bone, it just might be something others would think funny also. A cartoon strip may be used "as is" or you can dress it up with a few more lines in the speaker's part, or by creating speaking parts for other characters in the cartoon. Cartoons are printed in many magazines other than newspapers, too.

Magazines are a great source of "jokes" which can be designed into a short skit or a "black-out" number. The Readers' Digest is well-known for the humorous anecdotes it prints monthly. Sometimes you may even spot an article which can be made into a skit, either humorous or educational - or both. When an inspirational piece "speaks to you," save it and share it and spread the joy. Then clip, clip, clip (after everyone else has finished with the magazine, of course). Store your goodies in shoe boxes or make up a filing system. Oops - did I say you might end up needing a couple of 5-drawer file cabinets? Seriously, keep what you comfortably have room for and your Grange members will be the grateful recipients of your efforts.

Be sure to pick up the booklets prepared by our State Grange Lecturers and sold at the New England Regional Grange Lecturers' Conference and the State Lecturers' newsletters. There are great ideas in all of them— save these if you keep nothing else! Visit the second-hand book sales and at tag sales for joke books and other books in which you might glean some good ideas. And visit your local library— but be sure to "copy" the pages here, not "clip" them.

When you make up your program list for the year or get an idea for a special program, begin a file with all the things you have collected that pertain to that subject. When the time gets close - Voila! - you will have a complete program. And, don't forget the props! You may not want to put them in your file - most of them wouldn't fit anyway - but you can jot down ideas and keep your list handy there.

Props will dress up even a simple 2-3 line skit. Look around your house with new eyes and think of fun ways you can use some of the things you already have. Check out the basement and the attic, too— you may be surprised at the new uses you can find for something you might have been tempted to toss out. The rule of thumb is: Save it if you can think of a good use for it; otherwise, toss it and make do with something else when you find out later that you could have used it after all. (You have saved too much when you need to rent a storage unit or build on an addition, or you notice you now live alone with your stuff!)

Go to tag sales and see what treasures you can find. Costume jewelry and someone's cast off clothing (especially hats— all kinds of hats) can be fun! Someone getting rid of their son's old bow and arrows— I'll bet you could do lots of skits using "native Americans." A simple headband with feathers stuck in the back can be used over and over. Keep an old long skirt and a shawl for the "old" grandma and the frames to a pair of spectacles (which have the glass removed). Silk flowers can be used again and again in different ways— a bride's bouquet, a May basket, a Memorial service, to decorate the Grange hall for a special occasion, etc. If you spot an old hula hoop, you probably shouldn't try and use it for its original purpose— but it makes a great portable shower curtain holder (yup! - did that), a hoop for a vintage dress or an old fashioned game.

Have you bought any new "put-together furniture" lately. The box may be great to cut out one side of an automobile or a Viking ship. Try setting up a large box with a hole in one side for a "toss" game. And bean bags to toss are easy to make.) Corrugated cardboard from smaller boxes can be used for many other props— a hatchet (for little George or one of our Indian friends); a broadsword, a "house" dress for a dress review, or any number of things. What about the large shaped foam packing pieces. Do you need paddles for that Viking ship? Lighter weight cardboard makes great crowns, Lady Liberty's crown and torch (stuffed with yellow and red tissue paper flames) will make a great addition to a patriotic theme. Just stretch your imagination a little— and most importantly, remember this is for fun and

doesn't need to be artistically correct. Sometimes our interpretations can make the end result even funnier.

Of course, you will probably need to invest in a few totes to keep all of your treasures in order. These are better than cardboard boxes because they tend to keep critters out who may think what we have saved is edible or would make nice nesting material—and a lot of it probably would. Consider this an investment with the resulting satisfaction you get in preparing a great program— and listening to the accolades of your members who enjoyed the fruits of your labors!

Happy hunting,

(Skit information by Maryanne Stone, Manchester Grange #31, Manchester, Connecticut, August 2001)

BROWN BAGGING IT

We have all had the experience of a guest speaker or a special number not arriving in time for the program or canceling at the last minute. What to do? Well the first thing you DON'T DO is get up in front of your Grange and say well I had invited so and so but they are not coming therefore, I have no program.

A good lecturer is always prepared and this is where the title of this workshop comes from. Literally a Brown Bag Program, every Lecturer should have a program prepared and kept in a Brown Bag or some other useful bag kept either at the Grange Hall or in your vehicle. The reason to keep it at the Grange Hall or in your vehicle is that sometimes you don't know that the program is not going to show up until you actually get to the hall.

Understandably it is quite disappointing when something for the program does not arrive but many things can happen and all the blame should not be put on the shoulders of the missing person. Did you contact the guest prior to your meeting, preferably within the last 24 hours? It is always a good idea to make contact with a guest, to be sure they remembered the date and also to tell them once again the time they are expected to be there. The length of their presentation should be once again discussed so that there will be no confusion. If there is a supper to be sure they are invited.

If you have a guest who wishes to just come for the program, you can plan the program for prior to your meeting. If guests are invited to the meeting, we want to make a favorable impression, so invite them into your hall and make them comfortable. If you usually schedule refreshments to follow your meeting perhaps you could do just desserts prior to the meeting thereby making it possible for the guests to take part.

It is so very important that you have a program at each meeting. A speaker is never the whole program, be sure to have an opening thought, a song or something that pertains to what the speaker will be speaking about.

The Lecturer's program is the one most important order of business, the members expect you to have something that is inspiring, educational, recreational and musical, every well-balanced program will have these items. Please do not disappoint them. This program is interesting and much of the information came from a book called, "The Bag Book" by Vicki Lansky. It not only discusses brown bags but also plastic bags and other bags. You could easily do a program like this for Earth Day as there are many ideas for recycling bags.