



Maine State Grange Bulletin

*American Values.
Hometown Roots.*

Maine State Grange
146 State Street
Augusta Maine 04330

<http://MaineStateGrange.org>

MARCH 2023 ISSUE

The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

Sydney J. Harris

Highlights for Secretaries to Read

In this section, we'll try to help secretaries by providing a very short synopsis of each article. **Try just reading just this highlights section during "communications" and offer the Bulletin to those interested in more information.** "The Bulletin contains the following information..." Then post on the Bulletin Board or make copies so members can read the sections of interest.

- **President's Perspective**— *State Presidents/Masters Conference*
- **Agriculture Report**— *No report*
- **Communications Column**— *Which Half Are You In?*
- **Community Service/FH&H Corner**— *No report*
- **CWA Report**— *Cold, snowy days Are Great for Working on Contests!*
- **Educational Aid**— *No report*
- **From the Deacon's Bench**— *What Were They Thinking?*
- **Fundraising Committee Report**— *No report*
- **Junior Report**— *No report*
- **Lecturer's Column**— *Poets and Poetry*
- **Legislative Report**— *LDs and LRs in the 131st Session*
- **Membership Moments**— *Goal Setting Is Important*
- **From the Secretary's Desk**— *No report*
- **Youth Report**— *No report*
- **Exploring Traditions**— *Let's Have a Party!*
- **View from the Farm**— *We Simply Partake*
- **Communication Shorts**— *Brief (short) items for our information and use*
- **But wait, there's more!** — *Items recently posted to the website.*
- **Conferences and Dates**— *An updated list of events and deadlines.*

The Maine State Grange Bulletin is published monthly by the Maine State Grange, 146 State Street, Augusta ME 04330

Walter Boomsma, Editor

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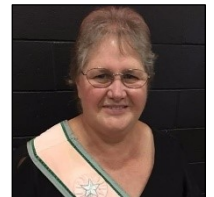
President's Perspective

By Sherry Harriman, MSG President/Master

I participated in the annual informative and helpful State Presidents/Masters Conference via zoom on February 17 and 18. Discussions, Presentations, and Workshops included: Show and Tell-- Sharing personal Grange "ephemera" (memorabilia); National Convention Reimagined—and Better than Ever!; Communications Dept.; It's Not Your Property; Discover Your Website; Why Can't We Just Get Along?; Juniors + Youth = Growth; Membership Department and Wrap-up. Much of the information covered can be found on the National Grange website which will require the annual password to access some of the information and much of the information is also provided in the web posts sent from National. I will be sharing some of it from time to time with you.

GOALS. From time to time, I have mentioned goal setting for your Granges. Here are some of my general goals that should be applied in our Granges as well.

**** Strengthen and improve the Granges we already have, increasing membership and increasing the number of active Granges.** Working to improve its individual members and the good of all. Including community concerns, family and good ritualistic



work for opening and degree. Working together as one unit showing mutual concern and respect for others. Providing programs and projects that keep in step with our changing world and the interests of our members.

**** Improve leadership skills of the Leaders and the members.** Provide workshops on what is required as a Grange Leader, goal setting, how and what to plan for activities and programs including but not limited to fun things, on the local and state level. Give basic guidelines and suggestions to our Granges for program planning and development. Provide, print and distribute leadership & resource materials and training for all Grangers. Continue with good ritualistic work. Assist in developing programs, contests and activities specifically needed and designed for their individual Granges.

**** Identify key individuals to assist with specific activities, programs, projects, rides, and other.** Utilizing key people for their skills and knowledge to assist with training others, in a variety of subjects. Identifying these key people in a resource list for all to refer to, on local and state levels.

**** More cooperation and people support is needed for the Junior Granger Leaders and Members, so they don't feel so alone at the meetings and activities.** Subordinate members work more closely with Juniors on all activities to make Juniors and Subordinate members more familiar with each other as a group and as individuals which will help make the transition between Junior and Subordinate easier, if they already know each other. Give mutual respect to each other.

Communications Column

By Walter Boomsma, MSG Communications Director



“Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say keep on saying it.” (Attributed to Robert Frost)

Which half are you in?

While I'm a big fan of Robert Frost, if he said this, I'm not sure I totally agree—it's too arbitrary. There's a third group who have something to say and can say it reasonably well. Unfortunately, it's a small group.

In the interest of over-complicating this, it also depends on how we define “say” and “saying.” How about “Half the world is composed of people who have something to communicate and can't, and the other half who have nothing to communicate keep communicating.”

With that change, we can note that communication takes place in four basic forms: verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual. A case can be made that listening is a fourth form, but we are trying to keep this simple.

As most of you know, I recently accepted a position as an adjunct instructor at Beal University. I was warned that I would likely be surprised and disappointed by the writing skills of most of my students. I thought I was prepared. I was not.

One of the things I was not prepared for is that many students do not accept the need (or opportunity) for good written communication skills. An even bigger surprise was that most are unaware of the tools and technology available that can help us with writing.

We could have a long and interesting discussion about the future of communication. For example, AI (artificial intelligence) now exists, making it possible to let “the computer” do the actual writing. Part of our discussion would include whether or not that technology diminishes the need to learn the rules of grammar.

Let's get very practical. Thinking about your Grange and Grange membership, do you have something to communicate? Understand that “you” can mean “you as an individual,” but it can also mean “you as a Grange.”

When my students have a paper to write, it's usually apparent whether or not they have something to communicate. If so, helping them find ways to say it can be fun, even if challenging. If they don't have something to say, it doesn't matter if they can write or speak well. Developing skills becomes somewhat pointless and feels empty without a use for them. That's why we give assignments. “Write a 500-word essay explaining...”

If we want our Grange to be vibrant and growing, we'd better have a lot to say. “No report” isn't, by the way, grammatically correct. At a minimum, it should be, “I have no report.” Occasionally, I hear, “I have nothing to report.” That's also grammatically correct. Are you beginning to see that “no report” is not too far from “I have nothing to say?”

- Why should I consider joining your Grange? “I have nothing to say.”
- What are some of your future programs? “No report.”
- What community services are you offering? “Nothing to report.”

If an assignment would help, here's one for your Grange. “Write a 250 word description of at least three things your Grange is doing well.” (For reference purposes, that's less than half the length of this column.) Submit it to the website for publication. Failure to submit (“no report”) results in a zero (F). If you need some help, contact...

Wouldn't it be interesting to make that a formal program? Assignments carry a deadline after which we'd publish grades—if only as pass/fail.

In college, completing assignments competently ultimately means receiving a degree. In the Grange, completing this assignment (and some others) means keeping and maybe even growing the Grange. Failure in college means no degree. Failure in the Grange means no Grange.

► **FACT:** Your MSG website was viewed nearly fifty times per day during February 2023—if you aren't submitting your events and news, you are missing an opportunity!

CWA Report

By Margaret Henderson



Well, March came in like a lion, so hopefully, it will go out like a lamb. We got a foot of snow here last weekend, and the weather app says we have another foot arriving on Tuesday and Wednesday! I guess that we are getting our winter all in one month. Oh well, the pleasure of living in Maine! If you don't like the weather, wait a few minutes and it will change! I am sure this will make the snowmobilers happy.

I am hoping that many of you are working on entries for the contests. It is a good thing to do on a cold or snowy day. I want to wish all of you a very blessed Easter. I hope everyone stays healthy and safe.

From The Deacon's Bench

By Clay Collins, MSG Chaplain



"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3).

"And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen." (Luke 24:5-6).

"It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification." (Romans 4:24-25).

As I sit here staring at a semi-blank computer screen, I can't help but wonder what the disciples were thinking (and feeling) as they watched their Lord being placed on the cross. They probably were thinking that they were next to be put to death.

I can't imagine what I would be thinking at that moment. Jesus knew God had a plan for Him and for us. We saw what God's plan for Jesus was, and what a glorious plan it was. It not only showed us that there is truly life after death, but God's plans are the ultimate!

We should not try to second guess God, but instead, thank Him every day for what He has done for us. Try it. It doesn't have to be a long-winded, church preacher-style prayer. Just a simple "Thank you, God" is a good start. Then after a while, you can add what you are thanking Him for. Then you might add a blessing for your family, friends, co-workers, etc. Once you get the hang of it, you probably won't want to stop. Then, and only then, will you have a church preacher-style prayer!

Remember this, you are all my friends (some I have known forever, and some I haven't met, yet), and I love you all and keep you in my heart, always.

God loves us all!!

One more thing before I sign off: HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY. The only day of the year when EVERYBODY is Irish!!!!

Until the next time, remember, "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch".

Benediction: "Gracious Father of us all, help us to realize that You do a plan, and we are all a part of it. Amen."

Thought for the month:

May good luck be your friend in whatever you do and may trouble be always a stranger to you.

An Irish Blessing for Health and Prosperity

Lecturer's Column

By Margaret Morse, MSG Lecturer



Have you ever written a poem, why not? This year how about trying your hand at writing one or more and entering them into the contest? Poems can express feelings, paint verbal pictures or entertain. Entries to the Poetry writing contest sponsored by the Lecturer's Department can follow any poetic form. This year the three specific categories are: FAMILY, WEATHER, and CAMPING. There is also an "OTHER" category which can include any subject. Also, any poem that you might be required to write for a class or workshop may be entered. This contest is open to all subordinate and junior members and includes children and grandchildren of subordinate members. So hopefully, with your help, my inbox or mailbox will be stuffed with entries that are due by September 1, 2023

"In March, winter is holding back and spring is pulling forward. Something holds and something pulls inside of us too."

--Jean Hersey

Legislative Report

By Linda Weston, MSG Legislative Director



Editor's Note: The absolute best way to read this report is to visit the Maine State Grange Website. The online version of this report includes clickable links and screenshots (pictures) that are easy to use and follow.

The First Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature convened on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Statutory adjournment is June 21, 2023.

When a request for a bill is filed, it is assigned a Legislative Request (L.R.) number that is used to track the request until it is assigned/printed as a Legislative Document (L.D.).

There were numerous Legislative Request (L.R.) request submitted this session, and not all will become Legislative Documents (L.D.) and not all LDs will become Law. It is interesting to see the titles of what have been submitted. Two links below – first shows you list by names of Titles by Legislator and second List by Index/Broad Subject..

The Preliminary List by Legislator: <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/9466>

Another List of LRs is sorted by Index/Broad Subject: <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/9467>

If you want to know if a request was received and accepted and given a LD number – go to this Page: <https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/advancedsearch.asp?error=The+LR+number+range+is+invalid%2E>

In the field "LR Type" put in number of LR number and in the "to" below it same number if you are only looking up that One LR, you could do a range of LRs.

If it has been assigned an LD number it will bring you to the LD – click on LD number (Example note LR 1856 became LD 517) – click on LD 517 link it will take you to the Status page. If the LR number brings up nothing – then the request most likely was not accepted.

From the Status page you can look up Actions, who Sponsors and Co-Sponsors are, what Committee it has been assigned to if it has, hearings that may have been set and other information.

LR 1856 became LD 517 An Act to Allow Maine Families to Deduct Vehicle Excise Taxes on State Income Tax Returns and has been assigned to Taxation Committee, no hearings set as of this writing.

Suggest you look over the lists of Titles – and look up any you would like to have more information on. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.



Membership Moments

By Rick Grotton, MSG Membership Director

If you have read the recent column by our State Master, you would notice that everything she stressed in her goal-setting article pertains to attracting new members and encouraging our present membership. As mentioned in previous columns, everything you do INSIDE of your Grange is noticed OUTSIDE by the community.

Goal setting is very important. There are words and phrases she used in the goal-setting process that are very strong yet very workable and obtainable. Awareness of the operations and members of your Grange will lead to changes and improvements necessary for growth. Think when you have your vehicle inspected. Sure, it runs fine with no problems (that you are aware of, anyways), but it doesn't hurt to do maintenance work. You may find there are hidden things; not so important now, but can lead to bigger problems. The same thing applies when you go for your annual physical at the doctor's office. An assessment of the overall performance of your Grange is needed and changes; no matter how small, will lead to a stronger, organized Grange. The community will notice.

Good leaders are essential. We all have unique talents and blended together, it makes a hearty "soup". When you have the ingredients, it makes it easier to assign roles based on each member's specialty. It takes a good leader to organize this talent into a winning team. Don't be afraid to become a leader! You can make a big difference. Have faith and trust in your membership to help. The rewards are certainly beneficial to you and your Grange. Go outside the box and take the step. You have your Grange family to support you! I certainly was afraid and told myself I couldn't be a leader, however, my Grange friends and Grange family felt different. With their support and my trust in them, I took the step and am glad that I did! Thank you all for that little push and love. Be not afraid.

We all joined the Grange for various reasons; mainly for agricultural and community service purposes. We have created new friendships and bonds with other Grangers; we can use our skills and talents to help others. Personally, I have learned much about myself and my abilities since joining the Grange in 1985. Grange has made me a better person (not that I wasn't before) and taught me new skills and toned up on some lesser-used ones. Family has always been important to me and my Grange family has always been accepting of me, no matter if I make mistakes or embarrass myself (which has been done). They pick me up when I am down; they just don't laugh and turn away. Who wouldn't want a family as supportive and loving?

The following are a few phrases that will help you in your endeavors to strengthen your Grange:

- Respect others.
- Give respect and others will respect you.
- Keep active and you will grow.
- Cooperate with others and respect their opinions.
- Be aware of the needs of your community and your Grange.

- Speak up with suggestions and ideas. Become a leader!
- Attend other's Grange meetings and talk to members of other Granges.
- Form bonds and friendships.
- Work together for a common cause.
- Keep visible!
- Welcome the community into your Hall.

Exploring Traditions--Meandering Around the Grange Way of Life

By Walter Boomsma, Guest Columnist

"...look upon children... If we desire to encourage them to love rural life, we must make its labors cheerful. What a child sees makes the most lasting impression. We may tell them of the pleasures and independence of the farmer's life; but if their daily intercourse with us shows it to be tedious, irksome, laborious, without any recreation of body or mind, they will soon lose all interest in it and seek enjoyment elsewhere."



The Overseer's instruction during the Fourth Degree

I, along with many others, believe that adults are obsolete children. Many of my colleagues in education like to wax eloquent about the differences between how kids learn (pedagogy) and how adults learn (andragogy). I'm more interested in the similarities. How different are we, really?

During a recent conversation with another Granger, we caught ourselves engaged in what might be called a "Pity Party." You've probably attended a few yourself. A pity party is an occasion of feeling self-indulgently sorry for yourself. It can be done alone or with others. One of the earliest uses of the expression was in 1978 when singer Barbara Mandrell sang about having a pity party after her lover left her. But I digress.

Fortunately, my Grange friend and I recognized what we were doing. Parties often have themes. The theme of our pity party was the sad condition of our order in general—dwindling membership, lack of leadership, burnout... Themes do tend to take on a life of their own. With a little creativity, we could have had a theme song. "It's a sad thing to be a Granger... it's a sad thing, you know."

After admitting our self-indulgence in feeling sorry for ourselves, we had a good laugh. We did manage to start a different party. In the course of doing so, I was reminded of the Overseer's instruction to the candidates during the Fourth Degree. Here we were talking about the Grange's condition with a fully negative focus. Who wants to come to our Pity Party?

Unfortunately, more than we might expect. Even the media seems to enjoy reporting on the "dying Grange." My friend and I actually ended up having a laughing spell as we considered advertising the party. "You are invited to join us via Zoom and in person for a Pity Party. The theme will be 'Let's enjoy being miserable over everything that's wrong and discouraging about the Grange. Refreshments will be served.'"

It is, of course, irresponsible to deny the issues we face as an organization. (Although, we do often ignore the elephant standing in the corner!) But here we have another example of the value of the teachings of our order. Let me to edit the Overseer's instructions so they are not just about kids.

"If we desire to encourage people to love the Grange, we must make its labors cheerful. What people see makes the most lasting impression. We may tell them of the pleasures, but if their involvement shows it to be tedious, irksome, laborious, without any recreation of body or mind, they will soon lose all interest in it and seek enjoyment elsewhere."

I recommend the complete version of the Overseer's instruction to you. It includes phrases like "induce all to love" and "speaking the truth in love." In short, making this a place that's cheerful and a place where people want to be.

Occasionally, when old-timers speak of the past, they talk of things like dances at the Grange or huge suppers that included bean hole beans or oyster chowder. On the back wall of the stage at Valley Grange, there's all sorts of interesting graffiti written by actors during plays and skits. Unfortunately, there's not much distance between a nostalgia festival and a pity party. All it takes is for a few participants to start regretting and feeling sorry that "we don't do things like that anymore." Maybe somebody needs to ask, "Why not?"

Any degree or ritual quotations are from the forty-sixth edition of the 2013 Subordinate Grange Manual or the most recent edition of the Pomona Grange Manual. The views and opinions expressed in "Exploring Traditions" are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official doctrine and policy of the Grange. Information about the book "Exploring Traditions—Celebrating the Grange Way of Life" can be found at on Amazon, or by contacting the author.

View from the Farm

By Quill's End Farm's Endians

Editor's note: The format of this column has changed a bit with all of the Quill's Endians participating at various times and in various ways! This month's column is by Phil.



Carolyn, Ben, Phil, Zander, and Heather all have a "view from the farm" and are contributing to these columns

One of the finest chores on a farm or homestead is harvesting maple sap. It is a great reason to spend time in the woods and rewards abound.

We simply boil sap on top of the wood stove. Our house in March is like a sweet sauna. A forty-degree sunny day finds us in t-shirts with windows open, the sweet smell of maple syrup in the forefront.

As the sap runneth over, it occurs to me what an exception maple syrup is to the rest of human culture.

We simply partake.

We have not, as far as I know, hybridized trees to make more sap, or bred them to raise the sugar content in their sap.

We simply partake.

In modern agriculture, production has had an 80-year upward swing in "efficiency." A meat bird's feed conversion ratio (grain: meat) has been cut in half. A milking cow gives at least double what she used to. An acre of corn produces 4 times the volume.

But maple syrup is really beautiful. We destroy or harm nothing as we are given this marvelous treat that sweetens everyday life. We do not plow, harrow, breed, or weed.

We simply partake.

Every year, the trees share the bounty of late winter with us as a gift we could not have planned, could not have conceived, could not have anticipated. Yet here it is.

What a wonderful metaphor for life the trees give us. When your sap is flowing and you have it to spare, share it with the world. Make it all a little sweeter.

Heather and Phil Retberg together with their three children run Quill's End Farm, a 105-acre property in Penobscot that they bought in 2004. They use rotational grazing on their fifteen open acres and are renovating thirty more acres from woods to pasture to increase grazing for their pigs, grass-fed cattle, lambs, laying hens, and goats. Heather writes a newsletter for their farm's buying clubs for farmers in her area and has generously given us permission to share some of her columns with Grangers throughout the state.

Communication Shorts

A few short items of information and interest!

Lecturer's Program Helps

With thanks to MSG Lecturer Margaret, we've posted "Living in Harmony" on the Program Books and Information Page. It includes lots of program help for lecturers and some funny and fun stuff!

Ideas for Granges

Simple social events are becoming increasingly popular. They can be based on crafts, games, and book club discussions... what could your Grange host? A key to success seems to be doing it monthly--or at least on some consistent basis.

Grange Month Happiness!

Don't forget to tell us what happiness you experienced during Grange Month at your Grange. Use the Submissions Tab or send an email!

Thought for You...

Blood is thicker than water, but maple syrup is thicker than blood. So technically, pancakes are more important than family.

Unknown

Online Directories Available 24-7

Remember, we have two directories that are interactive, meaning you can sort and search! The first is the ODD Directory, which features all state officers, directors, and deputies with contact information. The second is the Directory of Granges, which features all Granges in the state.

But wait, there's more!

A sampling of articles posted on the website...

- Parkman Grange Announces Spring Programs
- Slam the Scam Day
- Grange Month News
- Jonesboro Grange Multi-day Yard Sale
- Notes from National
- View from the Hill
- ServSafe® Certification Training
- Event Reminders
- Veterans' Dental Program Expanded

Conferences and Dates

Please note that events scheduled in advance are always subject to change. State and Regional events are listed as well as Degree Days, Officer Installations and Pomona Meetings. Sorry, but space does not permit us to include regular local meetings.

April 2023 – GRANGE MONTH

- April 6, 2023, Piscataquis Pomona Grange meets at 7 pm. Location TBD. FMI contact Pomona Master Bill Bemis at 924-4123.
- April 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- April 15, 2023, Junior Grange Spring Challenge Meeting at Enterprise Grange in Richmond, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm. Contact Junior Director for more information.
- April 22, 2023, Information/Instruction Meeting at Arbutus Grange - tentative.
- April 23, 2023, Degree Day at State Headquarters
- April 23, 2023, Ag Scholarship Application Deadline
- April 26, 2023, Fifth Degree offered by Sagadahoc Pomona at Enterprise Grange

May 2023

- May 13, 2023, Parkman Grange Mother's Day Tea, 10 am until noon. Reservations required. For more information call Sue at 207 277-3942.
- May 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- May 31, 2023, Sagadahoc Pomona meets at Topsham Grange. Potluck at 6 pm, meeting at 7 pm. Contact Marilyn at beedlehill@twc.com

June 2023

- June 1, 2023, Piscataquis Pomona Grange meets at 7 pm at Wayside Grange. FMI contact Pomona Master Bill Bemis at 924-4123.
- June 13, 2023, Information/Instruction Meeting at Granite Grange
- June 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

July 2023

- July is National Junior Grange Month!
- July 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- July 14, 2023, Parkman Grange Minnie Bridge Scholarship Applications are due.

August 2023

- August 1, 2023, Ag Enterprise Award Application Deadline – Download information and Application.
- August 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.

September 2023

Note that most contest entry forms and information can be found in the Program Book for that department or committee.

- September 1, 2023, Skit and Poetry Writing Entries due to MSG Lecturer. See the Lecturers' Program Book for more information.
- September 14, 2023, MSG Bulletin Deadline — columns and posts are due.
- Date to be determined, **Maine Lecturer's Conference.**

All articles and information for the Bulletin must be submitted by the fifteenth of the month. (Articles will be posted to the website as received unless otherwise requested.) All letters or articles submitted for publication must have contents relating to the Grange and may be edited for length and grammar. The complete editorial policy is available on the Maine State Grange website.

PLEASE POST A COPY OF THE BULLETIN TO YOUR GRANGE'S BULLETIN BOARD