

2024 MASTER'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

Worthy National Representative Barbara Foster, Officers, Delegates and Members of the Maine State Grange,

150th Anniversary Celebration

It is an honor to present the 2024 Maine State Grange Annual Address at the end of our 150th anniversary year as a State Grange. **The 150th Anniversary Celebration** was a success with about 55 Grangers and 10 Juniors attending. Thank you for attending and thanks to all who helped in any way, cleaning, changing light bulbs, setting up tables, bringing food, setting up, taking part in the program, clearing away, and saving me some goodies. Thank you, Juniors for weeding and sprucing up the memorial garden around the flagpole as a Community Service activity. It was a very casual afternoon with lots of visiting, reminiscing, hugs and big variety of yummy sweets & snacks! Everything was done downstairs throughout the house – our State Grange headquarters and office (the chairlift to the auditorium was out of order). Souvenir 150th booklets were printed for our guests to take, listing all 593 Maine Granges, when they were organized & closure dates; all State Officers & dates they served; Annual State Sessions dates & places; National Sessions in Maine; and Maine Grangers who served as National Grange Officers; and assorted moments in State Grange history. Special 150th pads of paper were also passed out. The booklets and pads of paper are available here.

There were posters, memorabilia, assorted photo albums, and other unique items to look at. The attendees participated in a meet the officers scavenger hunt to fill in a questionnaire with the name of a different officer for each question. Richard and I were very disappointed we couldn't be there because we had been exposed to Covid on Wednesday. Mike G. was MC for the program which consisted of a Welcome by Darrell H., Moments in History by Missy B., membership information by Sharon M., Jim O. talked about the officers albums he has custody of, the Juniors performed a couple of songs, the officer questionnaire was reviewed with much laughter, several folks gave some of their Grange experiences, door prizes were drawn and "It's A Good Thing To Be A Granger" was sung by all. Thanks for making the day a success.

National Grange 2023 and 2024

Richard and I were the registered delegates at the 2023 National Grange Convention which was hosted by the Northeast Region held in Niagara Falls, New York in Nov. However, due to some health issues Richard was unable to attend. I asked Peter Ivers if he would be interested in taking over for Richard as our 2nd delegate, he very readily agreed to the task. I want to commend and congratulate Pete on a difficult job very well done, this is a daunting task when you are familiar with it, but jumping in with no knowledge how things work is even more so. He took a lot of time reviewing the materials for the resolutions, and other items we had to discuss and vote on, listened to all discussions and made decisions he felt best. I was assigned to Citizenship & Taxation Committee. Pete took Richard's place on the Labor, Judiciary, & Transportation Committee and I heard great comments from the other members of the committee about Pete's participation. Well done and thank you very much. Pete is now a past National Delegate and permanent member of the Assembly of Demeter, the highest division of our Order, and was

made?" This includes any request for information. We get complaints at the office, that "I didn't get this mail or that", we also get mail returned regularly, but do we have the correct information, have changes been made? If you don't send something to us, how do we know who to send items to. I have noticed on several of the roster forms I have received, there is a change to the day or time of the meeting. If you are changing the time or day you meet, this is a By-Law change and is required to be voted on at your regular Grange meeting and approved by the State Master before it can officially take effect! **Do you have a copy of your By-Laws or do you know where there is a copy? Do we have a copy of your By-Laws at the office? We should.**

Goals

- *More active and involved Subordinate Granges working to improve its individual members and the good of all.
- *More involvement in community concerns, family and good ritualistic work for opening and degree.
- *Working together as one unit showing mutual concern and respect for others.
- *More cooperation and people support for the Grange Leaders, so they don't feel so alone at the meetings and activities.
- *Improved programs and projects that keep in step with our changing world and the interests of our members.
- *Utilize those people for their skills to assist with training others, in a variety of subjects.
- *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 including but not limited to fun things.
- *Get a complete data base for all Granges with current membership information.
- *Better communication with Leaders from State and National levels.
- *Easier communication of ideas and problem solving between Leaders and each other.
- *Increase in membership statewide. Net gain in membership.

Passing of our Dedicated Members

Once again during this past year our ranks have been broken with the loss of many special Grange members and good friends. Former State Lecturer, June Burke passed to the great Grange above in November. We have lost several prominent Deputies, and many other valuable members. Their passing was a difficult time at the Subordinate, Pomona and State levels and these strong notable Grange personalities will certainly be missed by many.

Meetings and Ritual

Most of our 80 Subordinate Granges and 14 Pomona Granges are doing okay, some better than others. Some of these Granges are large and some are the smaller ones doing great things in their communities with large and small projects. A strong sense of achievement and service to our communities must be developed. We still have other Granges that are struggling. We have a few Granges that are considering consolidation or closure, they have been struggling for some time, invite them to be part of your Grange. The biggest concerns continue to be membership, attendance at meetings, participation in projects and activities, internal fighting & squabbling, no one to take over or someone won't let go and financial concerns, all of which are vital to our organization. Community activities and involvement are important but so is the Grange Ritual.

our meetings and activities productive and interesting. New ideas came out of necessity, we need to continue with our renewed excitement, new ideas and the positive energy can be contagious. Many public events were held, where we had a manned booth and some unmanned, an ag trade show, fairs, and other public events where we publicized Grange.

Membership Director, Rick Grotton writes an excellent column for the Bulletin every month with helpful tips and suggestions, please check it out.

Headquarters

The Maine State Grange headquarters building in Augusta had a much better year as you can see from the budget, but much of the expenditures were related to the issues from last year or paid during this fiscal year. The circulator in the furnace in the front part of the house quit and needed to be replaced, we found this to be the cause of the pipes freezing upstairs last year, all those issues have been taken care of but we have not reconstructed the dining room yet. The furnace in the garage end of the building was replaced in November, all other related work was completed and all is in order.

Sharon and Henry Morton spend a lot of time at our building, doing a whole variety of extras, like letting in the plumber, electrician, furnace man, and the list goes on and on for the good of the Grange because they care. Again this year, they have been chasing away the vagrants and cleaning up after them, who use our porches & extra eaves to get out of the rain and the bushes to hide behind. The police have come several times and removed people. For all **the extra** things Sharon & Henry do for the Grange and the Maine State Grange HQ building, thank you doesn't cover my appreciation for your efforts. THANK YOU BOTH VERY MUCH!

Committees and Departments

I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this job easier and keeping our organization moving and to each of you who do so much to make our Granges grow and prosper. It is hard work, no doubt about it, but the rewards are worth it. Thank you to the Executive Committee, for your advice, guidance, counsel and friendship. In addition, Sharon, thank you for all your help and assistance you have given me, doing a lot of things, and behind the scenes work, I appreciate you very much. A special, thank-you Richard for your support and strength through the good happenings and some very difficult Grange situations & decisions.

I certainly appreciate the efforts of our Officers, Members, Deputies, Directors, Committees and Departments who have continued to work diligently promoting programs and events. Several provide a monthly column for the Bulletin and Website. Many thanks to each of you that are involved and thank you for your year end reports!

If anyone is interested in being a deputy, committee chair or part of one of these committees let us know.

Agriculture

Roberta Meserve, Chairman and committee members Willie Grenier, Sharon & Henry Morton, Bob & Agnes Nelson, Terry & Harriet Spencer, Pete Ivers, and Nate Pennell, promote agriculture with their participation in several statewide events and have met during the year. The committee gave scholarships again this year to students going to college with agricultural

This committee, Pres. Carolyn Van Horn, VP Linda Cobb, Sec/Treas J. Patrick Elwell, Trustees Darlene Miles and Margaret Morse, Ex-Officio Melissa Baldwin and myself continue to promote higher education and award scholarships to deserving recipients. The committee is still in need of your assistance to get the word out that these scholarships are available. Scholarships are now available to non-members. Your continued donations are needed to keep these scholarship programs viable.

Fundraising

Norma Meserve chairman and helpers have been dedicated in their fundraising efforts and are still working for the good of the Grange. We appreciate what has been done. The Visa gift cards and assorted yard sale and session items were fundraising successes. Thanks to each of you for supporting their efforts.

Junior Grange

Thank-you Junior Directors Betty Young & Terry Lacombe Stevens and committee Helen Brooks, Caroline Young-Coffin, CJ Stinson-Roy, Marilyn Stinson, Tim & Terry Wilson, Nicole Nickerson, Kathy Gowen and Christine Herbert who have worked hard to increase the number of active Junior members through the various programs and activities. Distance is still disrupting plans but adjustments were made and zoom utilized a few times. This department needs your support to continue growing. Thank you to all the Juniors who helped weed the memorial garden at HQ. Thank you for participating in our 150th State Grange Celebration.

Legislative

Director Linda Weston, continues to follow legislative issues. I would encourage our Granges and membership to be active in legislative issues in your local community. As in days gone by, the Grange can make a difference, be part of the solution and be an important part of our community, state and nation.

In Conclusion

We can only imagine what an effort it took for that first group of people to meet together, 150 years ago, just the challenge of getting there, what dedication. We are here today because we have a similar dedication to the principles of our organization and the heartfelt desire to continue to be helpful and keep it going. We, as an organization, have accomplished great things in the 150 years of our existence and the opportunity is ours to continue that tradition for a very long time to come. We are still needed to support agriculture and work in our communities.

I love the Grange and the people in it, and I am so glad the Grange is a part of my life. I believe strongly in the Grange as a constructive way to advance and improve life. I continue to be firm in my beliefs of the values and lessons taught through the ritual work and I am open minded enough to accept new ideas. I am looking forward to working with all those involved on all levels and to a successful year in our State Grange and I hope all our Granges prosper.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sherry A. Harriman
Master Maine State Grange