

Sister Foster, Officers and Members of the Maine State Grange:

It is my honor to present my 9th Annual Report. I am sorry that our National Grange Rep Barbara Foster, Ceres of the National Grange and President of the West Virginia State Grange, was unable to join us for our session this year, she sends her very sincere regrets but we all understand, family first.

2026 has been a busy year and we continue to see many changes around us.

Headquarters

Our long time Grange home & office building at 146 State Street was sold in December. The net proceeds from the sale were **\$511,668.14** which has been invested. It was purchased by Kennebec Savings Bank, our next-door neighbor. They are refurbishing it but I am unsure what their final use of the building will be.

We had many discussions before, during and after putting the property on the market, what would be our best option for a new office space, whether to rent or buy another place. We decided to start looking ahead of the sale so we wouldn't get caught on short notice to get moved out. We started searching for office spaces in mid August, leaning more toward a rental space than a purchased property. We searched a lot of available places, then visited several good possibilities. In November we found our present office at 36 Anthony Ave, Suite 102, which is perfectly suited for our needs. It has 3 large rooms, all inclusive except internet and insurance, all on one floor, handicapped accessible, even the main entrance has no steps, multiple bathrooms, plenty of parking and easy access off the highway at \$2,200 a month. The rent will increase to \$2,266 for next year.

Next came the move from our 17 room home to a 3 room office space, what to take, what to give away and what could be discarded. Sharon, Henry, Richard and I spent a lot of time at the task and what a task it was. We donated lots of items to other organizations & individuals, sold things, and discarded some. We did have a few other folks help us a few days, thanks everyone especially Sharon, Henry and Richard. We had most of it ready to go when the professional moving company arrived to actually move us, it took two separate days, it was money well spent! One room is our office area with plenty of room for 2 large desks & all the usual office equipment, we own all the equipment, furniture and everything else in the office. The main room has our long conference table, and several other tables & desks. We can seat 20 to 25

comfortably. The records storage room has 7 sets of shelves loaded with boxes of old records, old seals, and other assorted items.

Thank-you Sharon & Henry for the extra finishing touches, hanging items on the walls, putting down the rugs and all the other things you did for the new Maine State Grange HQ Office, I appreciate your efforts, it looks wonderful.

Master's Duties

I hosted Officers, Deputies, and Director meetings during the year, passing out a bundle of paperwork, gaining a lot of input and ideas from those attending. I attended a variety of meetings when required and invited, have traveled to closure or consolidation meetings, presented certificates, signed a variety of paperwork, deeds and contracts for the sales of buildings, etc. I work some at the office in Augusta and continue to do most of my Grange work from home and camp. I communicate directly with the Subordinate & Pomona Masters/Presidents, answering member and non-member questions, calls & emails, creating, printing & sending assorted information & letters to the Granges, State Officers & Committees and others, on a variety of subjects, if one person asks a question I share the answer and information with all, and I have written a monthly article for the bulletin and website.

I continue to act as "salesman" for several properties, which involves listings and keeping track of expenses incurred by each. There are currently 5 halls available for sale: Alder River in Bethel, Castine in Castine, Community which was formally Wilson in Wilton, Indian River in Addisson, and Paugus in Fryeburg is under contract. We also have a very small lot in Ft. Fairfield.

Membership

Most of our Granges are doing well, some large, some small but doing good things in their communities but we still have other Granges that are struggling. Attendance, participation, membership numbers, finances and insurance coverages are the biggest concerns. Some Granges still continue to ignore the "rules", doing as they please, which is just wrong, wrong, wrong.

We had several Granges with net gains in membership, however, the Maine State Grange did not have a net gain overall this year. Maybe next time. Several successful degree days were held throughout the state. Thank you to all who took the time to invite someone to join the Grange and to the members who organized and took part in degree days or obligation ceremonies. I have encouraged

Granges to handle degrees and installations on their own and many have reported finding it worked out well.

As you saw in the Secretary's report, several Granges have closed this year. Community # 593 in Wilton; Castine #250 in Castine; Mt. Etna #147 in East Baldwin and Seaside #567 in Corea. Many of their respective members have joined other Granges in their areas.

A Memorial Service will honor our members who have concluded their memorable Grange journeys, six Former State Officers, several Deputies, and many other wonderful and valuable members. Their passing was a difficult time at the Subordinate, Pomona and State levels and they will be missed.

Committees and Departments

I appreciate the efforts of our Officers, Members, Deputies, Directors, Committees and Departments on the State level who have worked to promote programs and events. Many thanks to each of you that are involved and to the members who support these programs. Each of the committees need your personal participation, help and even monetary support to make their programs successful. Several provided a monthly column for the Bulletin and Website. Their yearend reports are included in the session material. Thank you for sending them.

If anyone is interested in being a Deputy, Committee Chair or part of our committees let us know. As a committee chair or member, take the commitment seriously, follow through with your assigned task. Are you one of the people who volunteers but doesn't follow through? This applies to the Subordinate or Pomona committees also.

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who has helped keep our organization moving and to each of you who do so much to make our Granges grow and prosper. It takes many to accomplish the work which needs to be done. It is hard work, no doubt about it, but it shows we care about our organization. I look forward to your continued support and assistance as we go in to the next year with a positive outlook. Thank you to the Executive Committee, for your support, advice, guidance, and friendship. Thank you Sharon for the extra work you do on my behalf. A special, thank-you Richard for your support.

In Closing

It is not at all out of order, but encouraged, for Granges to consider motions that certain goals will be reached, a particular program executed, a specific number of people asked to join, meetings and activities be productive, interesting and fun. People like to be around others who are pleasant, positive and productive. If we build fun and joy into our meetings, provide information and educational programs and fill a need in our communities, we will grow our Granges.

Whatever it might be that is relevant to your Grange give it a try. A confirmation can demonstrate two things, the first being that we are all in this together, and secondly that we are all accountable to each other for the success of the venture. Always ask where can we improve? The Grange Mission Statement: "The Grange strengthens individuals, families and communities through grassroots action, service, education, advocacy and agriculture awareness." Raise your hand if you agree this should be our mission statement.

Next year is a full election year, every Maine State Grange officer will be up for election, except 3 Executive Committee members, it's time to consider making changes.

Good things happen to people who "believe" and see goodness all around them. I have grown in the Grange and we have so many good people in our Granges. We must focus on the good, the great and the wonderful things we see happening in our Granges.

Believe in the **P O W E R** IN OUR GRANGES...

P --- POSITIVE ATTITUDES,

O --- OPTIMISM RENEWED,

W --- WAVES OF NEW ENERGY,

E --- EXCITEMENT AND

**R --- REASSURED GRANGERS TURNED INTO *SUCCESSFUL DOERS*
BELEIVING IN THE GRANGE AND ITS WORK ONCE AGAIN.**

Positive energy can be contagious. I wish each of you a successful year in your local Granges and hope all our Subordinate, Pomona and State Granges prosper.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sherry A. Harriman, Master
Maine State Grange