



PATRON'S CHAIN

The Official Newsletter of the National Grange

Master previews '19 initiatives

BY PHIL VONADA

Trimble Legislative Youth

On Tuesday, November 13, at the opening of the 152nd National Grange Session in Stowe, Vermont, National Grange President Betsy Huber presented her annual external address, highlighting accomplishments of the past year, and laying out action priorities for the coming term.

Despite partisan politics in D.C., Huber says "National Grange activities in Washington have been both massive in number and intense in action this year... we get actively involved with as many issues as we possibly can. Some of these, like farm and food policy, rural broadband expansion and health care are top priority and require intense time and effort." Huber touted the successes in these areas, but also noted that there were other Grange priority areas, including immigration, farm labor and re-



search, and infrastructure, where progress stalled. National Grange Delegate binders typically contain more than 300 pages of resolutions, department reports, budget information, minutes and Master's Addresses. This year for the first time, delegates have an option to beta-test a paperless program. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

search, and infrastructure, where progress stalled.

"We expected a Farm Bill by now," Huber stated, "but Congress has not been able to get it to the finish line." She credits the Senate and House Agriculture Committees for working hard on creating compromises between versions of the bill and expressed optimism that a bill could be passed

in the current lame duck session. In the dairy industry, she outlines that the Grange is wading into the "what's milk" issue, while also fighting for better prices and profits for our dairy farmers.

Huber announced the National Grange's partnership

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Delegates tackle tough issues in 'Grange Way'

BY DEREK SNYDER

Communication Fellow

National Grange delegates are meeting this week to consider more than 100 resolutions brought forth by members from across the country. Below is a further look at several topics that have garnered discussion by Grange members and throughout the nation.

Immigration

Resolutions include:

806-NC – Citizenship Pathway for Dreamers – urges Congress to form pathways to citizenship for "Dreamers" that is in the interest of the United States and those

who qualify for the pathway program

817-NE – Immigration – does not allow any illegal immigrants to enter the United States of America

828-ID – Separating Families at Our Southern Border – supports legislation to change immigration law to allow legitimate families to stay together until their asylum requests have been duly processed

"Illegal is illegal!" said Jody Cameron, Past Master of the Connecticut State Grange. Cameron emphasized that Dreamers are sometimes offered better opportunities that the citizens of the Unit-

TOUGH,
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View

Celeste Spencer, Rhode Island, shows off her Grange pride worn on her nails.

Attend

9 a.m.-8 p.m. Grange Foundation Mercantile and Book Signing & Grange Store

12:15 p.m. Salute to Ag Luncheon

5:30 p.m. Distinguished Grange & Legacy Family Awards

7:30 p.m. Quilts of Valor Presentations and Grange Hall of Fame Inductions

9:30 p.m. Youth Dance/Party

Quotable

"It is more important than ever that Granges get involved in their communities and take responsibilities..."

- Betsy Huber,
National Grange Master

Get gifts, support Foundation at Mercantile

BY ANN BERCHER
Communication Fellow

The Grange Foundation Mercantile, renamed from the Great American Quilt and Handicraft Expo, is located outside of the Session Room on the lower level and opened on Tuesday.

This premier handicraft sale serves as a fundraiser for the affiliated 501 (c)(3) Grange Foundation.

According to National Lecturer Chris Hamp that has taken the helm of the event, last year's efforts raised over \$8,000 for the Foundation.

"More importantly, the Mercantile recognizes, preserves and celebrates the handicraft skills and traditions of our Grangers and friends," Hamp said. "You can get one of a kind items for your home, or for someone on your gift list for the upcoming holiday season."

Many Grange members have helped with this effort; some by making by hand and sending in donations to sell, and some by purchasing the items. The event shows the breadth of abilities found in the Grange.

A unique feature in this sale is that not all items are newly made.

There are high-quality vintage items such as doilies, iron on embroidery transfer patterns, and packages of buttons. There are some carefully embroidered pillowcases and towels, whimsical animal pot holders, and



Handmade items and more are part of the Grange Foundation Mercantile at the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

scarves. There are beautifully pieced quilts in all sizes, and colorful, knitted afghans.

In addition to the Mercantile, you can enjoy the variety of the more

than 300 quilt blocks submitted in the 2018 Tender Heart block contest.

You may also buy a raffle ticket for \$5.00 for a chance to win a quilt made with last year's quilt block design.

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with the Rx Abuse Leadership Initiative (RALI), "building a network of state and local coalitions of community groups, community leaders, first responders, school officials, the medical community," and more to focus on local awareness, education, treatment, and finding a cure. "We've seen a growing consensus that winning the drug addiction epidemic begins with friends, family, and the local community." Over the next year, the National Grange will continue to work on drug pricing, availability, and affordable insurance coverage.

Other critical issues for the 2019 term year include overcoming the "mean-spirited political divide" in Washington DC, especially as the 2020 Presidential campaign is already preparing to launch, rebuilding ailing infrastructure, and rewriting immigration laws and finding a solution to farm worker shortages.

President Huber reaffirmed the National Grange's effectiveness as a grassroots membership network, reaching

rural and small-town America, and encouraged states to coordinate their efforts and to work closely with Grange Advocacy before launching a major effort on a national issue. "It is more important than ever that Granges get involved in their communities and take responsibilities... Grange members are knowledgeable about the issues, believe in family values, are honorable and sincere citizens that we need so much in our country's leadership." In closing, Huber praised Grange members for reporting more than 850,000 hours of community service, and encouraged Granges to continue getting involved, and to become a "pillar organization" and to help "restore respect, civility, and patriotism" to local communities.

When asked about his thoughts on President Huber's address, Vermont State Grange President Joseph Goodrich remarked "I agree with President Huber that it's time for our legislators to put partisanship aside and for our representatives to actually represent their people, not their interests." He also expressed excitement in the theme for the year: "Grangers are Superheroes," which Huber unveiled at the end of her address.

Many new faces welcomed to delegate body

BY MAGGIE SWARTZENDRUBER
Communication Fellow

You may have seen some unfamiliar faces around the Convention starting over the weekend. This year we have several new delegates representing seven states from across the country.

National Master, Betsy Huber, was there to welcome everyone to the Convention. She said she is most “looking forward to having our new state masters joining convention with a fresh, new outlook to contribute to our grange discussions.”

Ohio State Master, Sue Roy, has multiple ideas for increasing the membership in her state, including receiving grants for after school programs to get younger member and their parents involved, and a children’s safety video sponsored by the Grange.

George Russell from Connecticut, is hopeful about the new Membership Director in his state.

“We have a stipend for our membership chair now, it’s the first time we ever have, so hopefully it’ll work,” Russell commented on what he’s looking forward to this year.

New Texas State Master, Karen Overstreet, is thrilled to be at National Convention this year.

“There’s so many different people here from across the country, and I’m so excited to meet them and to work with them,” Overstreet shared, “and to be in a place where so much is happening, for the betterment of each community.”

Joe Goodrich, Vermont State Grange Master is ready to face what comes towards him this year.

“I’m excited to meet the challenges that come this year, with trying to renew enthusiasm within our state,” he reported when asked how he plans to increase membership within his state.

Walter Hartley is the second delegate from Rhode Island. This is his first time as a delegate at National Session and has been a member since his junior days. He says a gold sash has always been a goal of his.

Eileen Hebert is the first female Master from Rhode Island in over 100 years.

“It is a great honor to be selected as



**WALTER
HARTLEY**



**EILEEN
JAVAUX**



**JOHN
CRIPPEN**



**JOE
GOODRICH**



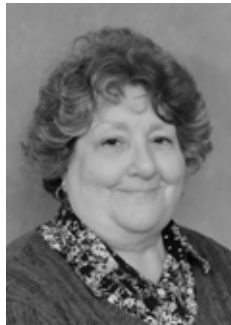
**KAREN
OVERSTREET**



**KENT
WESTWOOD**



**GEORGE
RUSSELL**



SUE ROY



**SHARON
RUSSELL**



**RICHARD
HARRIMAN**



**RICHARD
JAVAUX**



**EILEEN
HEBERT**

the Master, and I’m excited to bring back information to Rhode Island,” she said on the topic, “it’s a little overwhelming to be here, but I’m looking forward to it.”

“(I’m) excited to hear these new perspectives and eager to have new ideas introduced, potentially with new procedures and organizational plans,” Huber stated.

Eileen Javaux in the new State Master from Idaho. She hopes to bring back unity, fun, and some new projects to her state.

Kent Westwood, the unexpected new State Master for California, joined us in Tuesday afternoon.

“I wouldn’t say it’s overwhelming, but it is going to be a challenge be-

MISSING:
Lisa
Goodrich, VT
Bruce Roy,
OH



**BUDDY
OVERSTREET**

cause I have a lot to do to bring the Grange back to California after all our difficulties,” Westwood commented on being asked how he felt about becoming Master so suddenly.

If you see any new faces this week, make sure you give them a big Grange welcome.

Test Your Grange Knowledge

Code Reading Contest time slots are still available for Grangers of all ages. Sign ups close Wednesday at 9 p.m. at the Youth Dance. Try this out to see if you are ready.

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T o a s t G w s

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TOUGH *from page 1*

ed States. Cameron did say that he supports immigrants that come to the country legally, adding that those individuals deserve the same opportunities as everybody else.

Buddy Overstreet, a delegate representing Texas, noted that there are many people in his state who have gone through the correct processes to legally immigrate to the United States. Overstreet said that, “to come over here illegally and not go through the right steps takes away from our resources that could help people who have come here legally.” Overstreet further voiced his opposition to both immigration related resolutions listed above. Regarding Dreamers, Overstreet cited the 14th Amendment and said that in order to be considered for birthright citizenship, the immigrant should have to be born under the influence of laws of the United States, which can only occur if they are in the country legally. When discussing separating families at the border, Overstreet commented that the parents are criminals for crossing the border illegally and may be separated from their children just as any citizen who commits a crime could be separated from their own family.

Noah agreed that border security needs to be improved, but was supportive of finding a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers in the country. Noah said that the United States needs to improve its process and find a way to make it easier and faster for immigrants to be able to come into the country. Noah understands however that he does not experience this issue as much on a personal level as someone who lives in Oregon, and expressed how Grange has allowed for him to meet people closer to the border who have firsthand experiences that he can sympathize with.

Marijuana

Resolutions include:

831-NY – Synthetic Marijuana – supports legislation that would ban the sale of all forms of synthetic marijuana

While National Grange currently does not offer present policy on medicinal or recreational marijuana, there is still much debate among many members of the organization.

Philip Vonada, John Trimble Legislative Youth Experience Member,

issued his ardent support for the legalization of both recreational and medicinal marijuana. “Apart from proven medicinal uses, which include preventing seizures, lessening ADHD side effects, helping with autism and stress reduction, in the states in which it is now legalized it is estimated to be a 30 billion dollar industry by 2021, with an average of \$1.50 per gram in profit for marijuana farmers,” said Vonada.

Vonada detailed how each medical user spend roughly \$3,200 per year and the average recreational user could spend up to \$1,500 annually. Vonada noted that this information also does not take into account the underground market, which is estimated at 50 billion dollars.

Cameron explained that he does not have an issue with legalizing marijuana either, but believes that there are many issues that will arise when marijuana is legalized. One issue Cameron mentioned involves being able to determine how recently an individual has smoked marijuana. Cameron acknowledged that legalizing marijuana would serve as a great revenue stream and noted that he would like to see it implemented in the future only once those issues revolved around it are considered and resolved.

Voting & Census Requirements

Resolutions include:

323-OH – Support for Citizenship Question – ability to ask if a person is a U.S. Citizen on U.S. census forms.

329-WV – Voting Identification – requires U.S. voting citizens to show picture identification in order to vote in any city, state or federal election

330-WV – Voting Rights – permits only legal citizens of the United States to vote in any city, county, state or federal elections

Noah said that he would be against asking citizenship questions on U.S. census forms. In addition, Noah does not support requiring individuals to show picture identification in order to vote. Noah expressed that “we need to be making it easier for people to vote, not harder,” and requiring people to show ID would only make things more difficult.

Daniel Greer, past Colorado State Grange Outstanding Young Patron, pushed that it is of vital importance that individuals show ID when voting any election. Greer expressed that it is necessary to utilize picture identification to help better prevent voter fraud in elections.

School Safety

Resolutions include:

501-IL – Active Shooter Drills – encourages legislators to add active shooter drills in all public and private schools

508-NY – Federal Funding for School Resource Officers – supports Federal legislation to provide funding for one or more School Resource Officer (SRO) per school building

527-NY – Safer Schools – recommends action by school students and staff to prevent bullying, support disenfranchised individuals, promote counseling and increase positive attention for at risk students

“While I am not opposed to the use of SROs, it should be balanced with resources that promote and improve the mental health of students,” said Jennifer Nauss, 2018 National Grange Outstanding Young Patron. Nauss, a speech pathologist in a public elementary school, discussed how she has seen an ongoing increase in mental health needs among students. Nauss added that when these needs go unaddressed, they have a negative impact on students’ academic achievement, peer relations and school engagement. “Currently, I am not sure that we are addressing the heart of the problems facing our schools,” concluded Nauss.

“It is extremely important to have measures in place to protect the children in our schools by providing resources and training to teachers, staff and administration,” said Samantha Wilkins, National Junior Grange Director. Wilkins added that these measures could incorporate many components, including SROs, active shooter drills, and further support to address mental health and bullying among children.

Child Abuse Clearances

Resolutions include:

602-PA – Child Abuse Clearances – requires Grange officers, staff members, and volunteers at all levels who come in contact with children to provide Child Abuse Clearances and Background Checks

“It is important that there be a uniform process throughout the Grange,” said Pete Pompper, a delegate representing New Jersey. Pompper expressed that there needs to be a similar method used by Granges from across the country and discussed looking at

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guidelines from other organizations like the Boy Scouts to determine best practices that the Grange could follow in developing clearance requirements. Pompper had some concern about where to draw the line as to who must obtain certain clearances, but was adamant in his support for the National Grange to develop clearance requirements.

National Youth

Resolutions include:
610-FL – National Youth Session – supports the addition of a National Grange Youth Session to hear resolutions related to junior and youth issues and allow for the master of the National Youth Officer Team to be considered a voting delegate
Pompper issued his support for more youth involvement in National Grange policy issues, stating that “this would empower youth a little more and include them more in the process.” While Pompper does not support creating an annual National Youth Session, he suggested that resolutions could be discussed and pushed forth at each of the regional youth conferences. Pompper explained that any youth member in attendance could bring and vote on resolutions that would then be sent on for consideration at National Grange, just as any State Grange is able to do at their annual session. Pompper added that the John Trimble Legislative Experience members

should then be allowed voting rights at National Grange Session to advocate for the resolutions set forth by the youth.
Charlene Shupp Espensshade, National Grange Youth Development Director, is supportive of having a National Youth Session, but had some concerns of her own about it. “The idea itself is good, and if done correctly would be a very good thing for our organization. But there is a lot of details that would need to be figure out beforehand in order to implement something like that on the national level,” concluded Shupp Espensshade.

Gun Control

Resolutions include:
802-OH – Ban on Bump Stock Weapons – urges legislation to ban the use of bump stock weapons
803-RI – Bump Stocks and Military Assault Style Weapons – promotes a ban on all bump stocks and Military Style Assault Weapons throughout the country on both the federal and local levels
804-NY – Bump Stocks/High Capacity Magazines – supports legislation that forbids the use of bump stocks or high capacity magazines on firearms
814-MN – Expanding Gun Control – advocates and supports any legislation that expands gun control and further supports legislation that would make owning bump stocks, silences, and “large capacity” magazines over 10 rounds a felony
Overstreet believes that restricting rights to own guns takes away from the fundamental rights of citizens.

“Without the 2nd amendment, you cannot have free speech,” said Overstreet, noting that every one of the mass shootings have been in a location where guns are not allowed, which has made them a target for potential shooters.
Vonada discussed that he does not believe in controlling guns themselves, but rather access to them. “I want to see stricter background checks that include mental health screenings, and a limit to the number of these items a person can own,” said Vonada, adding that people also need to be more aware about in-home gun safety measures. Vonada also wants to encourage people to think more about why they want access to things like assault rifles and bump stocks, adding that these items can serve to bring about carnage and mass chaos.
As the delegates continue to debate resolutions throughout the week, they will encounter many opportunities for discussion about issues that do not always have an easy right answer. In order to continue to push forward our views and policies as both Grange members and citizens, it is important to be able to have productive conversations with our brothers and sisters in which we do not always agree with. In doing this, we can respect each other’s differences while continuing to have an open dialogue and solve important issues that face the communities in which we live in.

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Healthcare costs, advances topic of Legislative Luncheon

BY JENN NAUSS
2017-18 Outstanding Young Patron

Many delegates and members attended the Legislative Luncheon held Tuesday with keynote speaker was Steve Janson, Vice President of Pfizer.

Janson spoke to attendees about the challenges in the healthcare system, starting with trends in the health field, including the expansion of Medicaid and Medicare.

Currently 32 states plus the District of Columbia have expanded Medicaid, with three additional states recently voting on the ballot to expand Medicaid, according to Janson. Despite continuing to increase healthcare spending – currently the US spends more on healthcare than any other industrialized country – health outcomes have stayed roughly the same, he said.

Janson told the audience there have been significant improvements in medications and advancements in treatment that have increased life expectancy. There are currently about 4,000 new treatments/medications in trials. However, as treatments become more advanced, the costs continue to rise, a concern for Grangers as we have many present policies and resolutions delegates will deal with this week on affordable care.

Janson said the current system

leaves the American people with a “cost conundrum;” should incentives continue to be based on volume of services or be radically changed to be contingent on health outcomes. Essentially, if incentives were based on health outcomes, patients would pay based on the results of their treatment, Janson said.

To solve some of the problems with healthcare costs, Janson made a few recommendations, including continuing to support the generic prescription drug industry, as well as biosimilar drugs.

Biologics are a booming part of the healthcare industry, something the Grange has dealt with in policy for a number of years.

Biosimilar drugs are similar to generics, but with the use of living organisms, it is possible to create an identical match, as is possible with generic drugs. Janson said two percent of Americans are using biologics, but they make up 35% of total pharmaceutical spending.

In addition to suggestions, Janson also identified a few disruptions to the healthcare system. Specifically, he discussed horizontal integration – mergers that acquire competitors in the same field – and vertical integration – mergers that acquire upstream suppliers or downstream buyers.

Personalized medicine is a recent



Steve Janson, a Pfizer Vice President, spoke to attendees of the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention's Legislative Luncheon Tuesday. | Photo by Lindsay Schroeder

area of innovation, catering treatments to each individuals' genetic make-up. While these treatments would be optimal, they come at an increased cost.

Janson anticipates that federal focus areas will continue to be the Affordable Care Act, Prescription Drugs, and public programs. The big question that Americans and organizations that advocate for individuals like the Grange, will have to ponder, he said, is “what tradeoffs are we willing to make if we are to cover everyone and every treatment while keeping costs affordable?”

Healthcare costs, advances topic of Legislative Luncheon

BY LORETTA NIETO
Communication Fellow

About 100 Grangers gathered to share a meal at the Friendship dinner on Tuesday night

The purpose for this event, which is in its' second year, is to bring Grangers from across the country to engage in fellowship through a feast an idea brought to life by Betsy Huber, National Master.

“There is so much going on at any conveniton, it is wonderful to have som etime to just sit and relax with friends and enjoy the fellowship that is a corenerstone of the Grange,” Huber said,

Chris Cleland and his team from American Senior Benefits provided Grangers with information significant to insurance specifically for retired individuals.

Cleland, a Grange member from Connecticut, said their company wishes to work with the Grange to create an exclusive member benefit that will allow for deep discounts on a Supplemental Medicare policy.

American Senior Benefits is already a partner with Grange, offering all members, regardless of age, a variety

of financial and estate planning services.

“I actually talked to Chris about what kind of planning my dad should do as he is now retired to ensure a lower tax burden when it comes time to fulfill his last wishes and transfer his estate,” National Communications Director Amanda Brozana Rios said. “We also talked about what my husband and I should do just before we were married about potentially joining our retirement or other savings or finances. It was so helpful and something that was a huge value. I can't imagine having to pay for those services that younger people often forget or avoid to seek out.”

The company also helps Grangers understand their rights and pptions under Medicare, income and estate planning, Social Security taxes, Veteran's benefits, review of insurance and legal shield services.

“All Grangers will qualify for the proposed United Medicare,” Cleland said, regardless of preexisting conditions or current health.

Al Foschini, a branch manager at American Senior Benefits, said the partnership between American Senior Benefits and the Grange allows for safe “advocates for those who need the extra support.”

Junior hero takes service to new heights

BY PAUL HYLAND
Communication Fellows

Cory Johnston, 12, the son of Michigan State Grange Master Chris Johnston and his wife, Connie, had an interest in planes since he was very small.

Earlier this year he took that interest further and blended it with his desire to help others.

Cory said he wants to fly for the U. S. Air Force and had the opportunity to speak to someone who is a USAF recruiter.

The recruiter told Cory and his parents about Civil Air Patrol-a public service organization that has a cadet program for young boys and girls with more than 60,000 members across the country. The Civil Air Patrol was founded on December 1, 1941 and has a three-prong purpose; aerospace education, safety training and search and rescue. The Air Force can call up the Civil Air Patrol to assist the public as well.

While he was ready to take the plunge, the Civil Air Patrol requires you to attend three meetings and to be 12 years old before joining, something he was excited to do. He also completed prescribed online training and quickly became a Senior Cadet Airman.

One of the best things about this experience, Chris said, is that he has been able to participate and forge a stronger bond with his son.



Michigan State Grange Master Christopher Johnston is part of the ceremony to recognize his son, Cory, 12, as one of the newest Senior Cadet Airman in the Civil Air Patrol recently. | Photo courtesy of Connie Johnston, Facebook

Chris is also proud of the fact that if Cory decides to enter the Air Force, he will be eligible for rank upgrades due to his service in the Civil Air Patrol.

While he has a few years before he

can get his pilot's license at 16, he will still e able to take to the skies as part of the Civil Air Patrol. They allow the Cadets to take up to five free powered and five free glider flights.

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Loss of long-distance, unexpected mentor felt deeply

BY DEREK SNYDER

Assistant Communication Fellow

Through my involvement as a Grange Youth over the last several years, I have been provided countless opportunities to learn new skills, create friendships and develop a passion for issues that are important to me and the community in which I live in. One opportunity that has continued to impact my motivation to make a difference was the 2016 National Grange Fly-In in Manchester, New Hampshire, where I first befriended Ed Kowski.

The National Grange Fly-In was held in the midst of the 2016 Presidential Primary Election, where attendees had the opportunity to volunteer for a campaign of one of more than a dozen candidates running for the nomination of their perspective political party. Ed and I both chose to volunteer for the campaign of then candidate Donald Trump and quickly bonded over our similar interests in wanting to solve critical issues that were facing our local communities, Grange membership and country as a whole. Ed and I sat side-by-side for hours, calling voters throughout the state of New Hampshire to discuss issues including rural affairs, healthcare and immigration reform. We shared many laughs and long discussions and both embraced the opportunity to talk with potential voters, some of which agreed with us and many of which did not, about concerns that they were facing in their own lives and within their communities.

Throughout that day, Ed continued to provide advice to a young college student who was eager to learn more about making an impact on society and the political process as a whole. Ed encouraged me to always believe in myself, to remain driven about issues I cared about, and to take advantage of every opportunity that ever came my way.

I was further inspired by Ed's caring spirit for other individuals around him. During that Fly-In, Ed went out of his way to thank the Grange members who served as our drivers to and



from events throughout the weekend, including paying for several of their meals as well as the meals of the entire group he was with one evening, just to show his appreciation of their friendship. Ed has long served as a mentor and inspiration to many of the Grange Youth that have attended Fly-Ins, Regional Conferences, and National Sessions, myself included.

Since 2016, Ed and I have had brief opportunities to catch-up and reminisce of our time volunteering for President Trump's campaign. While we have not spent much time together since then, I am extremely grateful that I was able to have a lengthy conversation with Ed once again this past Sunday morning. For this column, I was originally planning to write a two part series regarding "hot-topic" issues that may come up in resolutions this week, and had the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time interviewing Ed about two issues that he is extremely passionate about, which I will go into further detail on now.

The first issue revolves around 703-CA – Honoring Religious Diversity in the Grange – amending the National Grange Digest of Laws to allow for other books of faith in addition to the Bible to be placed on the alter if a Grange so chooses.

Ed, who served as Master/Pres-

ident/CEO of the California State Grange and Chairman of the 2018 National Grange Law Committee, expressed that "this is a great resolution that expresses the diversity on which the Grange was founded". He further referenced several sections of the National Grange Digest of Laws, which included:

- 1.12.1: "Denominational religious or partisan political matters shall not be the subject of discussions in the work of the Order, and no religious or political tests for membership shall be applied."

- 6.4.1: "United States citizenship, religious belief or political views shall not affect eligibility for membership in the Order."

- 11.8.3: "All Granges shall have the Bible open on the alter and the flag of the United States of America properly displayed in the Grange meeting room."

Ed discussed that the Grange is not a religious organization and this resolution would not be taking anything away, but only further adding to the future of the Order. Ed concluded that "the Bible is part of our history as seen through many of the references in the Digest and carries a great deal of symbolism, rather than religious channelization, and any other book can have that same level of symbolism if handled properly".

The second issue pertained to 705-CA – National Grange Executive Committee Election – amends the National Grange By-Laws to have five elected members of the Executive Committee from each of five designated Grange regions.

Ed pushed how western states, including his own in California, make up more than one-third of Grange membership but currently have no representation on the Executive Committee. Ed commented how "this resolution gives a voice on the National Grange Executive Committee. All delegates work for their membership and all officers are voted in by the delegates. It is only fair that every member has a channel to voice their

LOSS,
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Partner provides insight to Fellows about collecting stories that strengthen advocacy on rural issues

BY DEREK SNYDER

Assistant Communication Fellow

Jon Conradi, Outreach Director of Connect Americans Now, discussed how they are a coalition of over 200 member organizations who have an interest in the well-being of rural America whose vision is to eliminate the digital divide of rural America over the next few years.

Conradi expressed that they support all technologies, adding that TV-White space technology is a critical component in completely solving the issue of rural broadband access.

“TV-White space is so important due to the cost factor, to help get broadband access to the roughly 20 million people in rural America who currently do not have it.” Conradi detailed that using TV-White space will cost only \$6 billion to provide access to those individuals, where other methods would cost roughly \$80 billion to accomplish this.

This technology is currently in 13 states, covering about 200,000 households. The goal is to get 700,000 households covered through mixed technology networks by the end of next year. In order for it to go widespread and to bring costs down further, they need

the FCC to take action to protect open channels that are available for public use. “We just want the FCC to act on all of these issues to give the market the regulatory certainty it needs to solve this digital divide.”

Conradi said that “we’ve made a lot of progress from when we first started with this”. He further expressed the importance of Grange members who are active in the community and have a voice that is influential to reach out to other members in their communities, write op-eds for their local media outlets, and contact their legislators to push these topics.

Conradi explained how broadband is talking about a certain speed of internet, adding that it is important in allowing individuals to do all things regarding modern internet usage, like streaming video and uploading large files.

“The folks on the frontlines of getting folks connected are the existing internet providers, or ISP’s. They are the ones who have an interest in getting more customers connected to provide them that service and also profit off of that. The local internet provider can use the TV-White space technology tool to reach the last few people who are not able to have that internet connectivity.

Currently, the gold-standard is fi-

ber cable, but we are advocating for the mixed technology approach that focuses on additional measures that allow for providing internet access to be much cheaper and economically viable. Many of these providers want to get fiber out to everyone that they can reach, but it costs too much for them to be able to reach some people.

“In the 21st century economy, it is so critically important for folks in Rural America to have access to things like a wide array of telemedicine solutions, starting a small business, and agricultural technologies,” said Conradi, adding that Governors and state legislators need to think about how to best allocated limited funds to reach as many people as possible in their states. Conradi noted Gov. Scott Walker (R-Wisconsin) as an advocate for this issue who has also pushed President Trump to take action on some of these concerns.

Conradi expressed that there have not been enough conversations yet in Washington that are focused on clearing the regulatory barriers to innovation that could rapidly speed up the development of rural broadband access. Conradi added how things like 5G are being implemented in cities, which will only further add to the broadband divide between cities and rural areas.

LOSS

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opinion to the National Grange, and to be able to do so through an elected official within the National Grange,”

Ed will long be remembered by more than just his family and friends, but by hundreds of members who knew him from around the country. Ed served as forward-thinking voice that brought the California State Grange through some of its most difficult times, and carried that voice into shaping the future of the National Grange and its membership. Furthermore, Ed was a staunch supporter of the Communications Fellows Program, the National Grange Youth and Junior Departments, and his own California

contingency, which this year includes his wife Cynthia, Joe Stefenoni, Paul Hyland, Lauren Linkemyer, Martha Stefenoni, and Kent Westwood.

As someone who is entering a career in politics and looking to further continue my involvement in Grange, I can only aspire to have a fraction of the drive and forward-looking mentally that Ed has inspired so many with. I will think of him fondly at every National Grange session, each primary election season, and every time I come across another forward-looking leader like him, as I know many of you will too. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Komski Family and the members of the California State Grange.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

ENJOY CONVENTION ACROSS MEDIUMS & ACROSS THE WORLD

Several parts of the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention will be live-broadcast through our Facebook page, National Grange, this week. Also, daily reports and updates will be aired on Grange Radio at grangeradio.org. A digital version of the convention newsletter will be distributed to our email list and posted to the National Grange website. Tell your friends to tune in!

Maine Granger pens book on Order; signing today

BY LORETTA NIETO
Communication Fellow

There are many current Grangers who do not have a full understanding why the Grange participates and carries on the many traditions that it does, therefore, Walter Boomsma wrote the book titled, “Exploring Traditions--Celebrating the Grange way of life”.

This book is not a manual expressing how people can become Grangers. However,

it is a explanation of the many traditions and rituals that Grangers have practiced for 150 years.

A Granger of 16 years and a communication director of the state of Maine, had been writing monthly columns about exploring traditions in the Grange for three years.

Then he was presented with the idea of gathering all of the columns he had written and publishing them as a book.

In agreement to the idea, Boomsma felt that it was important to revive the understanding of the many rituals and traditions that Grangers participate in because many individuals have lost their understanding within the 150 years of why they do what they do.

“My main example is the ritual of being mindful of when to cross and not cross between the altar and the Graces. Many Grangers do not know why this is a ritual and they follow



Walter Boomsma, a Grange member in Maine, has taken blogs he’s written over the past few years that distill lessons of the Grange and created a book. Here he signs a copy for a buyer outside the Grange Store at the 152nd Annual National Grange Convention. | Photo by Karie Blasingame

by it because that’s all they have ever known. The reason it is important is because it is a form of respect for women” Boomsma said.

So he decided to expand on what the mission of Grange is, the purposes that Grange was built on, and showing readers that the Grange is more than a historical organization.

The Grange teaches ways of life and how working through communities makes the world a more efficient place.

In Stowe, Vermont at the National Convention on Wednesday morning Boomsma will be holding a book signing.

“The message that I want people to take away after reading my book is that the Grange has a huge opportunity to become more relevant through its’ rituals”

and in order to fulfill becoming more relevant Grangers have to learn that, middle ground, consisting of keeping rituals but being comfortable with transitioning into modern-day styles, Boomsma said.

Letting go of the phrase, “that’s the way we have always done it”, is the primary step of moving forward to letting the Grange flourish as an organization.

Pulse

Fellows have offered up poll questions each day for Grange memebtrs in attendance at the 152nd Annual National Grange session and on our Facebook to answer. See their responses and take part in today’s polls now!

Monday:

How Many National Grange Sessions Have You Attended?
Average: 6.6 sessions
Highest Answer: 31 sessions

Do you think states should require open primary elections nationwide?
71% - yes | 29% - no

Tuesday:

What is your favorite flavor of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream?
Top 3: 1) Cherry Garcia
2) Half-Baked
3) Cinnabons

Do you think school districts should allow teachers to keep a concealed weapon in the classroom?
37% - yes | 63% - no