



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

March 12, 2020

Master's Message: Be safe, use caution, find opportunities to cultivate connections in face of COVID-19

By Betsy Huber, National President

Everyone is talking about the coronavirus and every day I'm getting notices of meetings postponed or canceled. Each day brings new updates, information, and events canceled. At the Grange, we have tried to balance prevention and reduction of risk with care not to cause panic. However, we have made some changes to the Grange calendar as part of our precautions.

The Mid-Atlantic Leaders Conference has been canceled, many State and local Granges have been sending cancellation notices for meetings and events they were planning to ensure they are protecting their members and communities.

We know the risk from this virus is low, but many of our members are or socialize with people in high-risk groups, especially the elderly, at Grange functions and in their daily lives. For this reason, we implore you to be mindful and proactive so we can be part of the solution, helping to contain this novel virus as well as other nasty viruses such as the "typical" flu. The best thing you can do is take all necessary and advised precautions, which in some cases includes self-quarantine.

Yesterday I issued a statement for all Grangers and hope you will share it. One specific thing to note is that in the face of such an emerging health crisis, the Bylaw (6.12.1) that requires Subordinate Granges to meet monthly will not be enforced. However, this should not be an excuse to avoid fellowship and interaction with your community.

For Granges, remember that we now have the option to hold Grange meetings virtually. Free conference call options are available where members all call in to one phone number and can talk to each other and conduct business. Zoom or Skype are also available. Don't let the virus keep you from your Grange business or separate you from your Grange friends! If you do meet in person, avoid hugs or handshakes, whispering the passwords, or sharing refreshments.



We also hope you will use this as an opportunity to Cultivate Connections. As some individuals choose to limit their social interaction and stay indoors, feelings of isolation and loneliness may occur. The Grange theme for 2020 is "Cultivating Connections" and this time of preventative isolation allows us to do that in a truly meaningful, though different way than we may have imagined.

Let's take this as an opportunity to reconnect with our Grange family and with those far outside our membership. Commit to calling or writing a letter to a different individual each day to check in. Let's make this a movement, starting right here with the Grange, to ensure that everyone across our great country has regular and meaningful social contact and knows that Grangers care.

You may even find this a great reason to reconnect with long-lost Grange friends, those who you used to attend Junior/Juvenile Grange or Youth events with. Tell them what it means to you to remain active in the Grange today and encourage them to reconnect. Maybe they can start with a subscription to our quarterly Good Day! magazine. The next issue is due to arrive in mailboxes in mid-April.

As of this newsletter, our National Grange office in Washington, D.C., remains open. However, since the Junior and Youth Washington DC Experience was held at our building and our staff assisted, and a few of the attendees visited an office where a staff member later tested positive for COVID-19 (likely not one who was in the office at the time our members were) – our office may close due to illness or prevention, or because of an emergency order by the government.

We will keep you posted if any operations are suspended but we will appreciate your patience if there is delayed response to your requests, as our staff may be required to take leave or work remotely and be unable to fulfill some specific tasks.

Hopefully the virus and the fear will be over soon and we can get back to the good work of the Grange with our dinners, fundraisers, community service projects, and all the other activities of Grange.

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First ever Washington DC Experience for Youth, Juniors a success

By Amanda Brozana Rios, National Grange Communications & Development Director

Nearly two dozen members attended the first ever Washington DC Experience for Youth and Juniors over the past week. The event began on Saturday, March 7 with welcome activities and a workshop on how to properly shake hands and make a great first impression.

On Sunday, attendees toured the National Grange headquarters, enjoying being the first to use the newly renovated conference room. They also learned from past Youth Ambassadors Derek Snyder, Pennsylvania, and Rylee Furr, North Carolina. Snyder, who is currently the State Outstanding Young Patron, is a constituent specialist for PA State Representative Torren Ecker and presented an overview of the three branches of government and their basic functions. He also discussed how a bill becomes a law.

Furr is a junior at NC State University with a major in polymer chemistry, oriented toward agriculture, and political science minor, and campus coordinator for Turning Point USA, a conservative student organization. She did a workshop on Grange policies and the difference between partisanship, bipartisan approaches and nonpartisan advocacy.

The two also organized and facilitated mock interviews, employing parents and chaperones as interviewees of youth and Junior participants to give them a taste of what it would be like when they visited the offices of their members of Congress.

Coronavirus 19 weighed heavy over the event and there was concern that the attendees would not be able to be seen at scheduled appointments on the Hill. More than a dozen Juniors and chaperones from Florida were unable to attend because their school had sponsored their participation and had already canceled all school trips and activities due to virus concerns.

After the mock interviews, participants took a tour of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, then returned to the building for dinner.

Potomac Grange President Joan Smith, who also serves as chairwoman of the National Grange Foundation and "state contact" for National Ag in the Classroom to Washington D.C., presented a workshop on cotton ginning and the various uses of fiber.

Later the group boarded a trolley for a private guided tour of Washington, D.C. that included a stop at the National Grange monument on the Mall as well as many other well-known monuments and memorials.

On Monday, the group traveled to the USDA headquarters, took a tour and met with Torey Powell, National Coordinator for Agricultural Youth Programs for the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, who presented information about rural youth programming and career opportunities.

Back at the National Grange Headquarters, Jon Conradi, Outreach Director for Connect Americans Now, spoke to the group about the progress being made in the fight for broadband expansion and how these young advocates could assist. CAN, who is a partner of the Grange, sponsored several meals for the four-day event.

Next on the agenda was a tour of the Capitol, then travel to Reuters News, where they toured and heard a presentation by Katharine Jackson, a producer who told the group about how news decisions are made by journalists, editors and producers and what ultimately appears on their screens.

After they returned to the National Grange building, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director Joe Stefenoni spoke during dinner about how to apply lessons learned this week to participants' community Grange experience, including how to write effective resolutions.

The highlight of the week for attendees was getting to meet with and discuss issues with members of Congress or their staff on Tuesday and Wednesday. Each participant had at least three different appointments set by National Grange Intern Heather Simon. Juniors and Youth impressed with a range of subjects they advocated for, including rural broadband, telehealth, school lunch programs, sustainability, anti-bullying and cyber-bullying and much more.

The event closed with a Celebration of Young Advocates dinner where Junior Ambassadors Brianna Gervais, Connecticut, and Bryce Danko, Pennsylvania, presented a review of their participation in the National Grange Fly-in just weeks before in New Hampshire.

JUNIOR GRANGE LEADERS & GRANGERS!

Check Out Our JG Items On Our Website!

Where The Best Memories Are Made T-Shirts & Brown Paper Bag Lunch Coolers - Knit Cap Beanies

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Decals, Magnets, Pins & Buttons, Onesies, Bibs, Member Pin, Past Master Pin with Gavel and more.

Click Here To See This Items

Thanks to Sarah Barber, NY for an order of Ceramic Mugs for Grace Fellowship Church.

Thanks to Burns Grange, MI for a repeat order of T-shirts!

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