Being Connected

At the end of our ceremony for the Installation of Officers, there is a very poignant paragraph, it reads in part: “And now, Patrons, cherishing in our hearts every kind feeling toward all other orders and associations which seek to promote human welfare, let us strive with them, working hand and hand, for the good of our fellow beings.” At this past session of the National Grange our National Master rolled out a campaign designed to inspire and further impress upon or minds the importance of the above quote, not only in relation to our work with others, but that of our own.

Stop and think about it, there are a lot of people that “do” things to make our Granges and communities better, so it thus begs the question: What will we do when these “doers” are gone? That is the question we have to ask ourselves. Your neighbor who runs the local fair. The lady who arranges the clothing drive. They care, they give, and they do when these things to make our Granges and communities better. Our work with others, but that of our own.

Do-er’s Seminar

New York State Grange Headquarters as March 18, 2017, National Grange Master, Betsy Huber was the guest of the State Grange for a seminar on building the Grange

State Grange Master Coye invited those who participated in the “GOAL” seminars to attend this follow-up session to continue building the Grange in New York State. The “GOAL” seminars were presented by National Grange Leadership/Membership Director Michael Martin. These seminars were held in various locations around the state to discuss ways that the Grange could grow. Many of you attended these seminars and have been receiving follow-up materials from the State Grange. We have seen some good effects of this work.

State Grange Master Coye invited National Master Huber to continue the work. Her presentation focused on the establishment of new Granges. She presented materials that explained the process of starting a Grange and the incentives that are available for participating in this process.

We were encouraged to find locations that were possible sites for establishing a Grange and how to explore and make contacts with individuals to facilitate establishing new Granges. Materials are available and can be obtained from the State Grange by calling the headquarters. Master Coye will determine if the location seems feasible and then determine if it should move forward.

Materials and assistance is also available to help you build your Grange by adding new members. Membership is a key factor in making our organization stronger and more viable in New York State. Many States throughout the country have had enormous success in revitalizing and establishing Granges.

New York State Grange celebrates two Generals. Jerry Batsford, Overseer of New York State Grange succumbed suddenly during a medical procedure. Jerry was also serving as Master of Cuyler Grange and of Cortland County Pomona Grange. In addition he was president of the State Grange Museum and president of the newly formed New York State Grange Foundation and State Grange Sports Director.

Jerry was married to his wife Linda for 32 years. He is a brother to Cindy Bullock also a standing committee chair of New York State Grange. Jerry enjoyed hunting, fishing, bowling, golfing, and grilling in the summer. He was a scout leader and was himself an Eagle Scout. He served in the U.S. Airforce as a sergeant during the Vietnam War and later in the Air National Guard. Jerry was also very much involved in the Grange Headquarters Task Force and was responsible for helping keep the building in good running condition. As a member of the State Grange Executive Committee...
Family Activities

Brenda Noble

The conference is coming soon and we hope to see many of you there! Our conference is a full day of information, fellowship, and viewing all of the entries for woodworking, crafts and needlework that were entered for the contests. Everyone is welcome it is not just for Lecturers or Family Activities. Please call reservations to Corland Legislature by April 21st to plan for lunch. Be sure to have all items to Corland by April 20th for judging. Usually judging takes place on Thursday. Please be sure to have name, address, Grange, and County in an envelope with each entry.

The baking contest is Snicker doodle cookies. Please have 6 cookies on a disposable plate with name, address, Grange, and County in an envelope with the recipe under the plate.

What a great way to stay warm in the winter and provide blankets for children in need.

Grange building at the New York State Fair this year, one of the displays will be of community service projects that Granges around the state have done over the last few years. It will be a continuous slide show, so if your Grange has photos of recent community service projects, please e-mail them to me at kidsbreak1@yahoo.com or mail them to me at: Sherri Taft, 12544 In Station Road, Cato, New York 13033. All photos sent through the mail will be returned. Thank you for your help in promoting your community service aspect of Grange.

Community Involvement

Sherri Taft

“It has been a long and cold winter. My favorite thing to do to stay warm is to knit and crochet blankets. The problem is, what do I do with all these blankets when spring comes and I don’t need a blanket anymore?”

“Why don’t you donate them to Project Linus?”

“What is Project Linus?”

Project Linus is an organization that collects blankets to distribute to children in hospitals, shelters, social service agencies, or anywhere that a child may be in need of a hug.

“What a great idea! Where can I donate?”

“Go to projectlinus.org and find a chapter near you to drop your blankets off.”

Project Linus began in 1995 when Karen Loucks read an article about a 3-year old girl who had been fighting leukemia since the age of one, and how a small blanket had helped her get through her treatments. After reading that article, Karen started to provide security blankets to Denver’s Rocky Mountain Children’s Cancer Center, thus beginning Project Linus.

What a great way to stay warm in the winter and provide blankets for children in need.

By getting them to the conference, you will help in promoting the community service aspect of Grange.

Old sayings are a wonderful thing…..well at least now they are. Perhaps when you are a tween or a teen the old, old sayings as related to you by Grandma and Grandpa and Great Aunt Lizzie were a bit annoying. Perhaps, after a few more years of life’s experiences, the old sayings are not only entertaining but true - oh so very true. Robert Wilton once said: “As we grow older, our bodies get shorter and our anecdotes longer.”

Tom Hiddleston has hit my personal and my Grange life feelings in a nutshell. “We all have two lives. The second one starts when we realize we only have one.” Where is the life of our fraternity….we’re at 150 years and counting….where we go from here is up to us.

Hopefully all Grangers in NYS (and across our nation) are doing all they can to get new members in —it’s good for them and it’s good for us. The new members (as proclaimed in our manual) will “gain in knowledge and usefulness” and new members could ensure the survival of our great fraternity. If our numbers are down and they go up - remember the words of Dianne Feinstein: “Survival is nothing more than recovery.”

Some of our Subordinate Granges have closed their doors and surrendered their charters. Some of our Granges have sold their halls, but retained their charters and continue a very worthwhile existence providing (1) leadership in their communities (2) community service projects and (3) an active legislative program. Perhaps longevity is not necessarily based on the existence of a Grange Hall and the status of its open or closed doors. Alexander Graham Bell once said: “When one door closes, another opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.”

“Can a Subordinate Grange come back from their closed hall doors?” Let’s peer through that open door - in the words of Clarence Darrow: “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelli-
From the Secretary’s Corner

Roger Halbert

As I write this column in mid-April – March, we are experiencing the worst storm of this winter… we have exceeded 20” of snow just today, still snowing, and we are to be blessed with more into the weekend. While the calendar may indicate spring is less than a week away, mother nature is reminding us “not so fast, I’m still in control and winter is still here.” The one reassurance I can give you, I hope, that when you are reading this, we are well into the spring season, not only by the calendar, but that we might be enjoying warmer temperatures and seasonal weather.

To the Subordinate Secretaries, this is a reminder that the March quarterly reports are now due, if you haven’t sent it my way already. This is a real important one as each Pomona Grange’s number of delegates to our annual session in October is determined by the March quarterly reports. It is also significant as Granges who have not paid the March 2017 quarterly report by May 1 are not entitled to serve as delegates to the annual convention. This will be so noted when the delegate form is sent to each Pomona Secretary the first week of May. Please be prompt in completing the March report and sending it to me.

My office received notice from National Grange that fees for some membership recognition awards were adjusted as of March 1. Secretaries were notified of this change that the 75-year Diamond Certificate and folder is now $10 per recognition and the one-time postage and handling fee for all orders processed at National Grange in Washington, D.C. are now $4 per order. The appropriate order forms were sent to all Subordinate Secretaries in late February, so we hope that all future orders will be completed on the appropriate current forms, along with the correct payment, made payable to The National Grange. All of the membership recognitions for 25, 40, 55, 60, and 75 year membership milestones are handled by the State Secretary’s office, free of charge to the Subordinate Grange. Again just a reminder to the Secretaries, do not order any membership recognitions more than three months prior to the earned date of the award and allow 4-6 weeks for processing of such awards, particularly if they are ones that are completed by National Grange. A Subordinate Grange’s quarterly dues to State must be current; if not, requests for any individual awards will be held until such time.

Lastly, a note of personal thanks to so many Grangers who have contacted us in recent months during a challenging time in our lives. We appreciate your patience, too, if some communication was answered slowly… or not at all. We continue to address the work of this office as time allows. The 2016 Journal of Proceedings is being worked on currently and hopefully will be at the printer’s by late April.

And now, let’s look forward to Spring and all that it offers us!

Chaplain’s Corner

Virginia L. Conner

Our hearts are deeply saddened by the loss of three very active Grange members who have contributed much to the New York State Grange and to their home Grange counties. Each of them have introduced many people to the Grange fraternity. They have served their Community Granges, Pomona Granges and New York State Grange with their many talents, knowledge and the giving of their time to serve the organization they loved.

These three men are: Gerald “Jerry” Batsford entered the Grange Above on January 31st. Brother Batsford was currently serving as Overseer of State Grange; Master of Cortland Pomona #25; Master of Cuyler Grange #449; State Sports Director; President of State Grange Museum and on the newly formed State Grange Educational and Cultural Foundation, Inc. Jerry’s mechanical talents are evident at our State Grange Headquarters where he was able to fix so many things during the years he served on the Headquarters Task Force. Jared Wooley entered Heaven’s Grange meeting on January 28th. His valuable knowledge of agriculture greatly assisted the Session Agriculture Committee during the years Brother Wooley served as Co-Chair of the State Grange Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment. He filled many offices in Grange including Secretary of Villenova #604, Chautauqua County. Bruce Wigger gave the gorgeous Grange door knock on March 6th and entered his eternal rest. Brother Wigger’s home Grange was Marcellus #464, Onondaga Co. He served in many offices both in Community and County Grange levels. I would recommend that you read Brother Wigger’s obituary in the Syracuse Post Standard.

Each of us have much to learn from the legacy of these three men. Our prayer should be that the Lord God will show us how to keep their Grange light shining brightly and to continue the Grange spirit that each of them set as an example before us. Well done, good and faithful servants.

Event Calendar

April 1–30 GRANGE MONTH – Plan a special public activity/event
April 15 Art/Photo Entries due at HDQ for Judging
April 15 Talent Entry Report Sheets due to the State Lecture
April 22 NYS Grange Museum Full Board Meeting – 10:00 a.m. Museum
April 20 Woodworking, Quilting, & Needlework due at HDQ for Judging
April 22 Regional Legislative Conference – Onondaga Co. – place TBA
April 28 Executive Committee Meeting, HDQ, 12:00 noon
April 29 Lecturer/FAC Conference – HDQ
April 30 State Dart Ball Tournament – HDQ

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From the Secretary’s Corner

Roger Halbert

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is no perfume on earth fraught with such fragrance, as the flow- ers of good works, and the sweet-smelling savour of that pity which feels for the wants and relieves the distresses of our Sisters and Brothers.” Doing done for the right reasons produces great re- sults, and leaves the Doer with a great satisfaction. Will you com- mit to being a Doer?

Brothers.

(Continued from page 1)

Team contestants. Please check contest winners and the Drill test winners. The Northeast Youth Con- ference will be held July 7-9th at UMass Amherst, in Amherst, Massachusetts at a cost of $111. Please note that partial scholar- ships are available for the NY contest winners and the Drill Team contestants. Please check your e-mail or NYS Grange Youth on Facebook in April for the NEYC schedule and registra- tion forms. If you need the forms mailed to you, call Paula. The deadline to get registra- tions to us is June 1, 2017.

Details of the recent Spring Youth Leadership Weekend at headquarters will be in the next edition.

NYS Grange Camp will be held Sunday July 23rd- Saturday July 29th 2017. We will host this week at Camp Aldersgate in Greig, NY. Please notice our new end time of Saturday morning. Check in will be Sunday at 1pm. Check out will happen on Saturday the 29th with an award ceremony at 10am and check out at 11am. Stay tuned for registration in- formation via our Facebook page and www.nysgrange.org.

We look forward to campers ages 7-17 as well as any new volunteers as Counselors in training (ages 16-17) and camp counselors (18 and older). We are also looking for volunteers to conduct workshops throughout the week for campers.

Albany Co.

Bethlehem Co. #137

Joyce Becker

Joan Oliver

Ravena #1457

Jacqueline Russo

Sandra Russo

Allegany Co.

Cuba #799

Corinne Potter

Birdsall/1117

Cheryl Reynolds

Sharren Jennings

Chemung Co.

Veteran #1108

Chenango Co.

Otselic Valley #1398

Ralph Mosella

Rebecca Mosella

Butternut Valley Co.

Dutchess Co.

Stanford #808

Vencent Ferris

Union Vale #887

Smyr Deluca

Rhinebeck #896

Susan Ruzzi

Oneida Co.

Floyd #665

John Mogensen

 Otsego Co.

Pierstown #793

Sheila Lord

Martha Frey

Butternut Valley #1533

Andrew Sebeck

Anne Sebeck

David Stoy

Sandra Stoy

Oswego Co.

Sandy Creek #127

Kristy Crafton

Erin Meagher

Jodi Miller

Emily Norton

Grace Norton

Stephen Pierce

Putnam-Westchester Co.

Yorktown #862

Elizabeth Ackerman

James Tompkins

Amanda Morgan

Hunter Morgan

Kerry Morgan

James Morgan

Kimberly Teves

Scott Schneider

Saratoga Springs Co.

Milton #685

Mary Ellen Giambona

Steuben Co.

North Cameron #355

Dean VanSikler Jr.

Sarah VanSikler

Wheeler #1416

Jennifer Stokes

Tioga Co.

North Barton #45

Patricia Searles

Wayne Co.

Clyde #33

Joseph Cimineri

Andrew DeSanto

Luigino Tranelli

*always had a soft-spoken grit and determination and was a role model for raising a family with unwavering focus for doing what’s best.” Helen was a woman of few words, but was driven with a deep passion for perfec- tion for whatever she was responsible. A favorite pastime was cheer- ing on the Syracuse Orangemen in their annual basketball trek. Her quiet work done without fan- fare and usually out of sight of others will be deeply missed by those that know of Helen’s self- less gifts: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
Welcome Spring!!! I hope you are all eager to get involved in Grange and community activities, clean-up, show that your Junior Grange is active and involved.

If you missed the Junior Leadership Weekend held at the Headquarters building the first weekend of April, you missed a great time. Welcomed by State Master Stephen Coye. Information on the new National Junior Director, Samantha Wilkins from Texas, with changes in the National Junior Program, what is new (Awareness Award, 12 month meeting guide, Good Day magazine quarterly writing contest) and what has stayed the same (National Creative Art contest, Creative Writing, National Photography, and Mini-Scrapbook) and what has changed (Super JG Award requirements, Ambassador Program, Sign-A-Song Contest, Public Speaking Contest, 18 new merit badges added!) was shared. All are listed in “GOOD DAY!”, the new Grange magazine publication from National Grange.

Combined workshops with the Youth including Ritual mentoring, Team work, and a photo scavenger hunt lead by our Ambassadors Jomni Tarbell (National Junior Ambassador) Tesse Taft (Youth Ambassador) and Heidi Henderson (Young Adult Ambassador). Junior members, parents, leaders and everyone can ask questions, share ideas, get new information and meet other members and have fun with Junior Grange, as well as a great time for older Juniors to interact with the Youth.

After lunch the Juniors enjoyed a workshop by High Priest of Demeter, Bruce Croucher. A couple 2018 crafts were introduced and made with the Junior Deputies Linda Kesby and Mindy Eldred. Jomni told of her duties as National Junior Ambassador and presented the new Awareness Award, which is “bees” this year. In January, the Northeast Grange leaders conference was held in Vermont. Reminder that New York Junior members can participate in the Junior craft for the Big E in September. This year is Make A Boat – must be able to float, size no larger than 6”x6”x6” (This was one of our State Crafts last year, if your boat fits the specification, enter it in this contest or make another one).

NEW YORK JUNIOR IS NATIONAL JUNIOR AMBASSADOR

At the 150th National Grange Convention in Washington DC last November, Alexandria “Jomni” Tarbell was named the National Junior Ambassador for 2017. A member of East Pembroke Junior Grange #324, Genesee County since the age of 5, Jomni is home schooled and understands the value of education and the importance of finishing tasks. She is very active in her Junior Grange and community. She has entered programs on the local, State, Regional; and National level. She provided a Lecturer’s program for her Pomona Grange, arranged a tour to a local history museum for her JG, enjoys making and sharing crafts with other members. Jomni is a hard worker, is kind and dedicated toward others and is committed to the Grange and to helping others. She enjoys reading and learning. Jomni will have the opportunity to travel across the states this year as Junior Grange ambassador and share the Grange excitement! She will end the year at the National Convention in Spokane, WA in November.

Many of you may not be aware that many communications are only being sent from National Grange by e-mail.

If you have e-mail and are not receiving information from the National Grange you should send an e-mail to National Grange and include your e-mail and that of anyone else in your Grange who might be interested in getting information.

Send to: Stephanie Wilkins
swilkins@nationalgrange.org

You can also find information on the National Grange Website
www.nationalgrange.org.

State Grange is also establishing an e-mail list. Send to: nysgrange@nysgrange.org
The National Grange in conjunction with the National Grange Sesquicentennial Committee is proud to announce the 2017 150th Anniversary Four-Minute Movie Contest!

Break out your video cameras or even your smart phones and help us tell your Grange story through the medium of film! We want to commemorate our members and our stories through the production of four-minute movies that can be used to tell the world how amazing Grangers and the Grange are! Get creative as you or a group of participants put together your own four-minute-movie celebrating Grange! And here's the best part: The prizes sponsored by the National Grange Foundation!

The top three finalist submissions will receive up to a $200 travel stipend, Friday and Saturday night accommodations (one room per submission finalist) at the 151st Annual Session of the National Grange in Spokane, Washington and two tickets to the Celebration banquet where the winning movies will be shown and first, second, and third place awards announced!

First Place: $1000 Cash Prize!
Second Place: $500 Cash Prize!
Third Place: $250 Cash Prize!

All entries will be judged on content, quality, and creativity following a designated grading rubric (See attached). The top seven videos will be part of a social media popularity vote August 15 - August 31, 2017, with the top three favorites moving on to the finalist round at National Session in Spokane, Washington on November 11, 2017.

Some suggestions to get your wheels turning include--but are not limited to:
- How Grange has impacted my life
- A Specific Grange Story: Our history and heritage
- Why I love Grange!
- Specific Grange accomplishments, wins, and successes
- Why I joined the Grange, why I stay

Deadlines:
- June 1, 2017: SUBMISSIONS OPEN
- August 4, 2017: SUBMISSIONS CLOSE, midnight PST
- August 15 – August 31, 2017: Top seven finalist popularity voting contest
- September 1, 2017: Top three finalist announced
- November 11, 2017: Prizes awarded at National Grange Celebration Banquet

Rules and Details:
This contest is open to all Grange members!
Videos must not exceed four minutes in length (not counting credits).
Individuals may only enter one submission, but may also be included in an additional group submission.
All entries must be accompanied by a completed submission form and waiver no later than MIDNIGHT (PST) on AUGUST 4, 2017.
Late entries will not be accepted.
The Sesquicentennial Committee reserves the right to close the Four-Minute Movie Contest at any time due to lack of interest or less than twelve quality submissions by close of submission deadline on Friday, August 4, 2017.
All entries remain the property of the creator, but to qualify for any prizes, a waiver allowing the Grange to use the video for promotional purposes must be signed at time of submission.
Members of Sesquicentennial Committee will qualify the top seven videos to move onto the public voting round. The top three videos will be judged by a qualified judge outside of the organization's membership.

What we ARE looking for:
- Smart, funny, poignant, and emotionally engaging four minute movies that celebrate a specific or personal story within Grange

What we are NOT looking for:
- Slide shows or PowerPoints of still images/photos with voice over narration
- A broad history of the Grange
- An “How to” video for current Granges, i.e. “How to Grow Membership,” or “Successful Lecturer’s Programs”
- Negative or critical views of the Grange, Grangers or aspects of Grange History
- Quickly produced movies/low quality

Timeline:
February: Contest released to members (article placed in February edition of Good Day!)
March: Conference call for members, Q & A on contest, reiteration of what we are and are not looking for; date TBD
April: Lecturer’s Program in a Box on short films (T.J. will do with Chris Hamp and Amanda)
May: Conference call for members, Q & A on contest, reiteration of what we are and are not looking for; date TBD
July: Conference call for members, Q & A on contest, reiteration of what we are and are not looking for; date TBD
The Lecturers/Family Activities Conference is April 29 at Headquarters. Art and photos will be on display along with all the needleworks. Talent and public speaking contests will also be held that day. Jackie Turner will be our guest speaker telling about her experiences in Togo, Africa. Bring any extra pencils, lined paper, spiral note-books or “salt & pepper” note-books with you to donate to a school being built there.

Put the North East Lecturers Conference on your calendar for July 31 thru August 2. It is being held at Castleton University in Vermont. The price is the same as last year.

I am looking for some different ideas for the program for the coming years. Call, text, e-mail or snail mail works.

New York State Grange Lecturers/Family Activities Conference

April 29, 2017

9:00 - 9:30 A.M.
Beverages and Donuts

9:30 - 9:45 A.M.
Welcome—Brenda Noble, FAC Director and Kay Bailey, State Lecturer

9:45 - 10:30 A.M.
Speaker: Jackie Turner
Togo, Africa

10:30 - 11:00 A.M.
Family Activities / Lecturers’ Program updates

11:00 - 12:00 P.M.
Talent/Youth Contests

12:00 - 1:00 P.M.
Lunch $10, Served by Cuyler Grange

1:00 - 3:00 P.M.
Competition continues if needed, Craft project, Program Q & A

3:00 P.M.
Wrap-up and safe travel home

Thanks for attending!

WASHING r on Polit ics — NOT AS USUAL

Washingtonians are still talking about the phenomenon commonly referred to as “Middle America”. This is the vast expanse of geography between the coastal metropolises where folks feel ignored and forgotten. Rural economies continue to decline, small town businesses falter, factories shutter, hospitals close, schools consolidate and younger generations move away. Middle America’s citizens turned out to vote for change against the status quo. They voted not so much as Democrats or Republicans but as a common populace looking for hope and opportunity right where they are.

The Trump Administration aims to tackle some mighty big problems and quickly seize on some long-awaited opportunities. These include repeal, replace and transition the Affordable Care Act, control illegal immigration, reform the tax code, renegotiate trade agreements, rebuild the nation’s infrastructure and reduce federal regulations. National Grange policy is strong on all these issues which will require considerable time and attention from Grange leadership and staff.

To accomplish most of these fetes, the President will have to enter uncharted territory for him—negotiations with Congress. While the President can implement some of his agenda by executive action, the heavy lifting on major issues cannot happen without Congress. The President’s choice for Secretary of Agriculture, Georgian Sonny Perdue, has good support on both sides of the political aisle and should be easily confirmed. Following Perdue’s confirmation, the Deputy Secretary appointment should come down rather quickly but this position also requires Senate confirmation. Chances are good the Deputy Secretary candidate could come from either California or the Midwest. Nine Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary appointments, all requiring Senate confirmation, will follow. But don’t expect USDA appointees to be in place any time soon. They’re caught in a FBI background check logjam that’s government-wide. The full regimen of top-tier leadership at USDA may not be in place for several months and could stretch well into summer.

HEALTH CARE

Affordable Care Act Executive Order—On Inauguration Day January 20, President Trump issued an executive order signaling his Administration’s priority to roll back major provisions of the ACA. An analysis of the executive order was sent to state masters and legislative directors.

Maintain Patient Protections and Access to Drugs—The National Grange cosigned a letter to incoming Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price asking the Secretary to ensure uninterrupted coverage and access to drugs for patients with preexisting conditions while the ACA is under review.

Rural Hospitals—The Grange, through Grange Advocacy, is partnering with the American Hospital Association and the DCT Group to draw attention of the plight of rural and small community hospitals in the Affordable Care Act rework. Under the ACA, hospitals saw huge cuts in Medicare reimbursements on the assumption that expanded insurance coverage would pick up the shortfall. Traditionally, rural hospitals treat a larger share of uninsured patients and those who are unable to pay. As Congress moves to create a new patient care system, they must consider restoring Medicare reimbursements to pre-ACA levels.

The National Grange joined with nearly 100 groups on a letter to President Trump asking for his Administration’s support for rebuilding infrastructure in rural America. The letter pointed out those past initiatives often focused on urban and suburban infrastructure without addressing the unique needs of rural communities such as highways, bridges, railways, locks and dams, harbors and ports, and expanding broadband connectivity. The President’s plans for public-private investment partnerships to fund infrastructure improvements are not financially feasible for rural infrastructure returns.

Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) - Following President Trump's announcement to pull out of the pending TPP, Master Huber issued a rather unique statement that was picked up by numerous media outlets including Bloomberg News, The Progressive Farmer, Farm Policy News, and Kansas Agland among others. The statement said, “With the Grange's primary interest in agriculture, food production and the marketing of American products to all available markets, we understand the potential value of the Trans Pacific Partnership to the American producer and our rural economy”. The Grange also represents the interests of rural residents and small community citizens who produce other products and may not expect to fare as well in the proposed TPP agreement.

TAX REFORM

Stay Tuned—Expect broad and far-reaching tax reform proposals to come from the Senate, the House and the White House in the coming weeks. There will be close similarities and wide differences between some of the provisions contained in each proposal. Support or opposition will, of course, depend upon whose ox is getting gored.

Death Tax Repeal

The Family Business Coalition (National Grange is a member) is again mounting a campaign in Congress to repeal the federal estate tax. Many studies show repealing the death tax would spur job creation and grow the economy. Estate taxes amount to approximately one half of one percent of federal revenue. Worst of all, the death tax is the primary cause of breaking up family businesses.

REGULATORY ROLLBACK

The executive order issued by President Trump requiring that for every one new regulation issued, at least two prior regulations be identified for elimination has the federal agencies buzzing. Though similar actions have been threatened in the past, this is the first time agencies expect the directive to be enforced.
Beverly Marvin was honored upon her retirement from the Ontario Insurance Company after 48 years of service. She is pictured holding an engraved plate honoring the occasion. Beverly has been very active in the Grange serving as Master and Secretary of Fairport Grange in Monroe County and as Pomona Master of Monroe County, a position she currently holds. Beverly is also treasurer of the New York State Grange Museum. Many readers have met her at the museum table at State Grange where she sells items to support the museum.

The Ontario Insurance Company was founded in 1877 by the Ontario County Pomona Grange ad the Ontario County Patron’s Fire Relief Association. It was one of many early cooperative insurance companies formed by Granges to provide insurance for Grange members. Many of these Grange Insurance companies still exist in some form today. Ontario Insurance Company merged with the Yates County Company and became the Ontario-Yates Insurance Company and eventually was renamed the Ontario Insurance Company when it changed to an advanced premium company. When it was founded the board of directors consisted of directors from each Grange in the county and these directors also served as agents for the company.

Today, the Ontario Insurance Company has independent insurance agencies representing it. The board of directors is made up of individuals from the community that provide expertise in many areas. At the present time, two Grange members serve, Bruce Croucher who is Chairman and a member of Clifton Springs Grange and Beverly Marvin who is a director emeritus.

As you may remember, both the state court and federal court judges ruled in favor of the National Grange in both lawsuits against the Guild in 2015. The Guild has filed appeals in both cases. Meanwhile, we have taken several actions to protect and recover the real and personal property belonging to the California State Grange.

In 2016, the federal judge awarded the National Grange $144,715.70 in legal fees that we were forced to expend due to the Guild's "deliberate and willful" violation of the court's order prohibiting the Guild from using any Grange trademarks. We still have not seen any of this money but we are continually trying to discover where the Guild's funds may be hidden. Discovery demonstrated that, after the order awarding the National Grange its attorney's fees, the Guild transferred large sums of money, including $80,000 into Robert McFarland's personal retirement account as "severance pay" and tens of thousands of dollars to third parties via cashiers' checks. These transfers and other actions made it difficult for the National Grange to collect on its attorney's fees judgment. Thus, in early March 2017, the federal court granted the National Grange's motion to assign to it the right to collect dues and loan payments from Subordinate Granges and other entities that had been making payments to the Guild. The federal court held that the Guild "is hereby enjoined from assigning or otherwise disposing of the payments discussed [above] to any other person or entity until it has satisfied the court's fees order."

In the state court lawsuit, the California state judge issued an injunction requiring the Guild to place all rents received from the California State Grange headquarters property in Sacramento into escrow. Up until the injunction was entered, the Guild had been collecting and spending this Grange money for its own purposes. The state court has now ordered that to stop.

In a second ruling issued the same day, the state judge also ordered that the monthly disbursement received by the Guild from the escrow account holding rents paid by the Regents of the University of California for its use of part of the headquarters property would be reduced by almost 70% because of the Guild's failure to use those funds for their intended purpose. When these rents were ordered into escrow, the Guild was allowed to receive a monthly disbursement of over $5,000 to pay expenses related to the Regents building. Unfortunately, however, the Guild used most of this money for its own purposes and failed to pay many bills, resulting in late penalties and suspension of services by vendors. Confronted with evidence that the Guild was not using the money in the way it said it would, the Court ordered that all expenses (except the Guild's "management fee" of about $1,600) must be paid directly to vendors out of the escrow. As a result, the Court has ordered that this Grange money can no longer be diverted by the Guild for its own purposes.

The three recent orders from the federal and state court are the culmination of successful efforts to protect Grange property from further waste by the Guild. We will remain vigilant to ensure that the court orders are followed until such time as the California State Grange's property is returned. We continue to fight to uphold the organizational structure and legacy of the Grange for the benefit of all local Granges in California and across the country. We ask for your financial support of this effort by sending your donations to The National Grange, 1616 H Street NW, Washington DC 20006, marked "Legal Fund." Thank you.