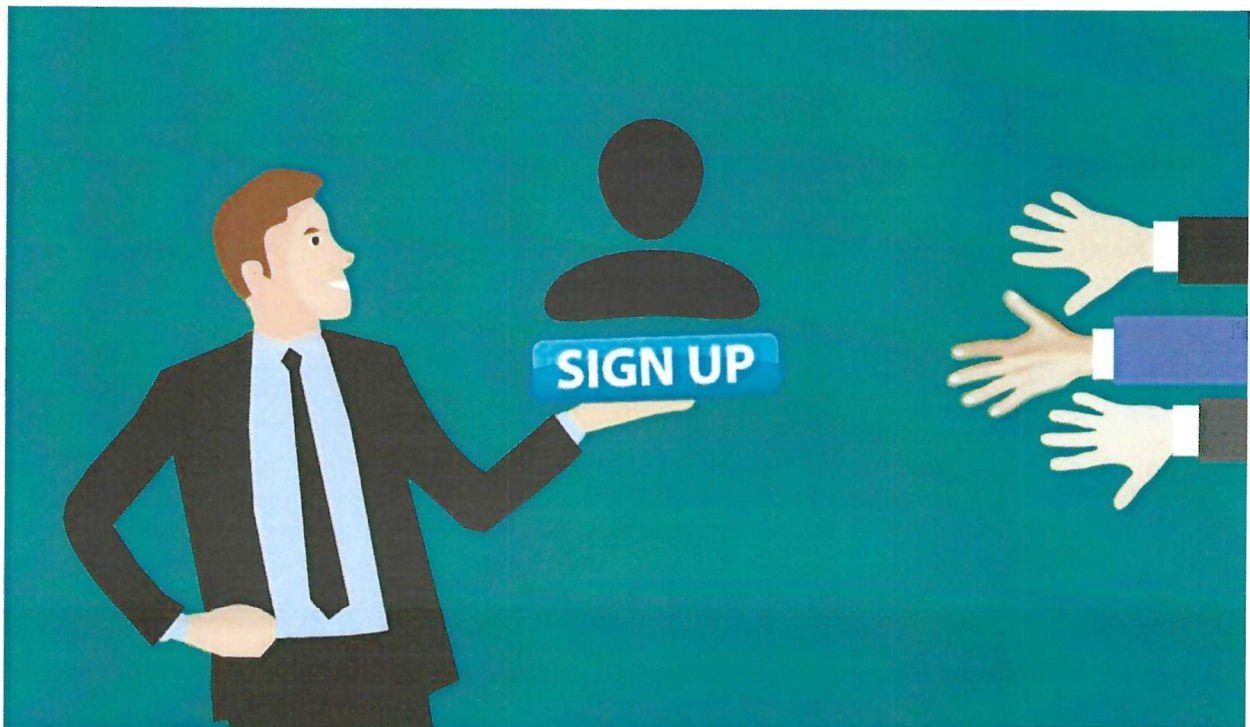


LEADERSHIP MEMBERSHIP



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The old saying is that there is nothing new under the sun. This is mostly true in recruiting new members for your Grange. The basics have not changed, and no new gimmick, contest or rewards will alter that. Recently a song made a change in another old saying. Seeing is believing. The lyrics of this song say - You have to believe it to see it. You have to believe that Grange is a worthwhile organization, and you have to be able to communicate that to potential members. Like politics, all Grange membership ideas are local. It is your Grange, in your community and it is up to each member of that Grange to be out there telling others about it. Recently a Grange member turned the tables on a person who was being asked to join. He asked the possible member - What do you want from a community organization? From there, using the person's answers, he was able to describe the Grange in many of the words he heard. It may work for others, too.

To steal a motto from the Boy Scouts - Be prepared! Have your answers ready for questions you may get. Have brochures and handouts ready. Make sure the person knows they are welcome any time to attend a meeting. Perhaps you can offer a ride. Many community members still believe the Grange is a secret organization. That is a myth which certainly needs to be dispelled.

After COVID many people are looking for ways to again be connected to others. What a great excuse to ask them to join your Grange. Come, be social, help your community, have a good time, be part of a century old organization.

Recently a member of the FFA made a comment that agriculture is not just farmers. It is all the surrounding businesses and other supports to farmers, too, Feed stores, milk haulers, veterinarians, mechanics, tire dealers... Use your imagination to expand your and your Grange's definition of what agriculture is - especially in your own locality.

You will see as you continue through this section of the handbook that little has changed in the ways to recruit members. They are ideas that do not need revising. But maybe expansion in the ways your Grange fits into the life and function of your town, village, or geographic area.

Do not give up. There are people out there who are searching for connections. Offer them membership in your Grange. See what happens.

Leadership and Membership do not happen in a vacuum. Both are extremely important to your Grange. It is true that sometimes a Grange may find both happening without much fanfare. If you believe that leaders are born not made, then you will have to find them. If you believe that leaders can be molded and trained, then you will have to do that. Some Granges are fortunate in having people come to them asking to join, many are not. If you are one of the former Granges - good. If one of the latter - not so much. Reasons to belong to an organization or become a leader in it vary from person to person.

Leadership development can and should be incremental. You may find leadership possibilities in other areas of this handbook. Will someone organize a sports team, or teach a class for baking or doing a craft project for FAC? If a member has an idea for a resolution is there someone in your Grange who can help them get it into a presentable form? How about a painter who can offer a watercolor class? Teaching is leadership. If a Lecturer's program uses groups to discuss an issue - then choosing a reporter for a group offers the opportunity for leadership development. Not to mention practice with speaking in front of a larger group - the number one fear of many people.

Any of the ideas from FAC or the Lecturer for contests can be opened up to non-members if your Grange decides to. They may be excellent portals for having new people join your Grange.

For the sake of brevity - not vanity - my articles in the Empire Granger offer ideas for continued leadership and membership development.

Please contact me if you find a program idea that assists your Grange in any way to bring in new members or develop leaders.

In this handbook I have offered lists and ways of speaking about the Grange and your Grange in particular. It should not be a memorized speech as much as a conversation from the heart. Having some of the information readily at hand could help. Share the reasons for your commitment to the Grange, how it has aided you and helped you develop as a leader or member.

Let's continue reaching for that net gain in membership in 2024 and 2025.

Fraternally,

Barton

GRANGE CHECK LIST

*The Grange is a family oriented fraternity which has represented rural America
for over 150 years.*

Faith, patriotism, and grassroots activism have been, and are, the foundations of our values.

*We develop personal leadership skills in our members and strengthen communities through local
presence and involvement.*

Have application forms with you at all times - just in case.

Always ask.

Use every opportunity to talk about your Grange involvement and programs.

Follow-up with potential members by returning phone calls and inviting them to activities and meetings.

Network with the community outside your Grange.

Talk to all age groups and people who work in and out of their homes.

Publicize your Grange through ads, flyers, press releases, and other public media.

Promote your Grange by participating in or sponsoring community service projects, fairs, bazaars, suppers (meals), forums and other events.

Greet visitors and introduce them to fellow Grangers.

Every Granger is a recruiter.

Grange FYI

The Grange is a fraternal service organization with a long history of grassroots activism which has opportunities for the whole family.

The Grange offers the opportunity to reach out to others in the community, and to make new friends at all levels - local, county, state and national.

The Grange actively promotes initiatives to benefit the state's agriculture and agricultural industries. Through the National Grange we have a voice in Washington, DC.

The Grange is very proud of its activities and programs for children and youth. Many Granges and communities offer an active Junior Grange program. Other Granges support cooperative activities such as 4H and FFA. The New York State Grange has college scholarships available.

As a member of the Grange you have access to many activities. Besides leadership development opportunities there are baking, quilting, woodworking, photography, writing and artistic contests. In most Granges many ways are available to participate in community service projects, opportunities to meet and socialize at hometown, regional, state and national conferences. Granges support state and county fairs.

Grange members can participate in government by offering resolutions on various issues affecting agriculture, our economy, health and human services, environmental issues, public safety and education at state and national levels.

A free subscription to *Empire State Granger* helps keep members informed.

In addition members have access to low interest credit cards, and discounts on car rentals and prescriptions.

Deaf activities programs of the Grange provide assistance to those with hearing disabilities.

As a Granger you have the pride of belonging to an organization with a 150+ years of distinctly proactive history and a "Declaration of Purposes" which is still applicable and vital.