



# I ndependent G range C ommunications N etwork

—AN UNOFFICIAL VOICE FROM AND FOR THE GRANGE GRASSROOTS—

## *The Emerging Grange Vision...*

*...is non-partisan, in tune with the times, pro-small-farmer and dedicated to bringing the Grange into the 21st century*



"Rooted in history, seeding the future"

**Here is a Grange history you have not seen before. It ties together our beginnings and our future. If you are serious about growing the Grange, Brother Chernoff sets the stage for our success. Buzz is the past Lecturer of the CSG.**

## THEN AND NOW

By Buzz Chernoff

In 1873, the Grange was introduced to farmers in California and within 6 months 104 Community (Subordinate) Granges were formed. How did that happen and how can we make it happen again? Philosophers and historians tell us that to understand the present we need to look at the past. Futurists say that the past should be used like the rudder on a ship; a tool to navigate the future. That is the premise of this article: (Chernoff— cont. on p. 2)

### **Howdy, Grangers!**

How does it feel belonging to a organization that, after long decades of continuously declining membership, is poised to turn our growth positive? It all depends on attracting the younger generation; and this will happen if we look to the future where the younger Grangers are going to live! This will take new eyes, accepting new challenges, and a readiness to learn or respect the appropriate and necessary expertise.

What does the future hold for the small, independent farmer? Demand. A demand that the farmer produce fresh, healthy food while actually healing the soil. Call it a revitalization.

It may be hard at first to accept the facts, but fraternal organizations—in this age of the Internet and social-networking, the Corporatocracy and perpetual war—are dissolving away. The spirit and purpose that gave birth to our Order has been forsaken or forgotten. The time is ripe to reflect on and feed our real roots again.

The average age of a Granger tells another sad tale. But there is a way to attract the younger generation: we must make our organization relevant once again. We can do this. Our first step is to determine what "relevancy" means for the Grange Movement today and in the years ahead.

~ Lanny Cotler, editor

**While this newsletter originates in California, it wants to reach Grangers and potential-Grangers in all states. Our hope is that Grangers from other states will see this as a voice of, by, and for the grassroots Grange Movement. If you have contributions for any of the sections herein, please send them to us.**





## Independent Grange Communications Network

is truly independent and unofficial in every way. It belongs to the Grange grassroots.

Send articles and inquiries to:

**Offices: 1517 Casteel Drive,  
Willits, CA 95490**

Tele: 707-367-1812

Managing Editor: Lanny Cotler,  
lanny@lcotler.com

Senior Editor: Buzz Chernoff,  
toohighranch@gmail.com

Website: *under construction*.

~•~

*We believe that leadership serves  
the members, not the other way  
round, and that each garden is  
unique, as every gardener knows.*

~•~



**Delegate1:** *What's Charlie doing there?*

**Delegate2:** *Measuring to see if those hay bales are the same size as they used to be.*

**Delegate1:** *Are they?*

**Delegate2:** *I let sleeping dawgs lie.*

(Chernoff:—cont. from p. 1)

## "THEN AND NOW"

### TOWARDS A FUTURE HISTORY OF THE GRANGE

#### THEN:

In 1873, farmers in California like those throughout the nation were feeling the pinch from the Financial Panic of 1873. They were having a difficult time making a living since most of earnings went to the broker, the shipper, the insurance company and any other middleman who found his way into the line. Throughout the state farmers met to talk about problems and seek solutions. The general consensus was that the farmers should form a union to take action against the monopolies they felt were getting an undo share of the profits. A meeting to establish a union was set for May in San Francisco.

At this meeting was W.H. Baxter, a farmer from Napa who was the California Deputy to the National Grange. He asked and was given permission to speak to the group at the beginning of the meeting to talk about the Grange. He told them about Grange programs, the grassroots nature of the organization, the potential for making and changing laws through legislative and media activism, and building a cooperative movement based on the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers model in England. His words resonated with the group and the idea of forming a union was quickly replaced with a plan to organize a state-wide Grange. Granges began to be formed across the state and in July 1873, two months after the San Francisco meeting, 35 Community Granges met in Napa to formalize a California State Grange (CSG). Three months later 104 Granges attended the first annual convention of the CSG and the membership had grown to 3,168.

Farmers were attracted to the Grange because it served their interests and addressed their concerns. It was a grassroots movement offering structure and a place to come together, not only for social and educational purposes, but to discuss common problems and seek



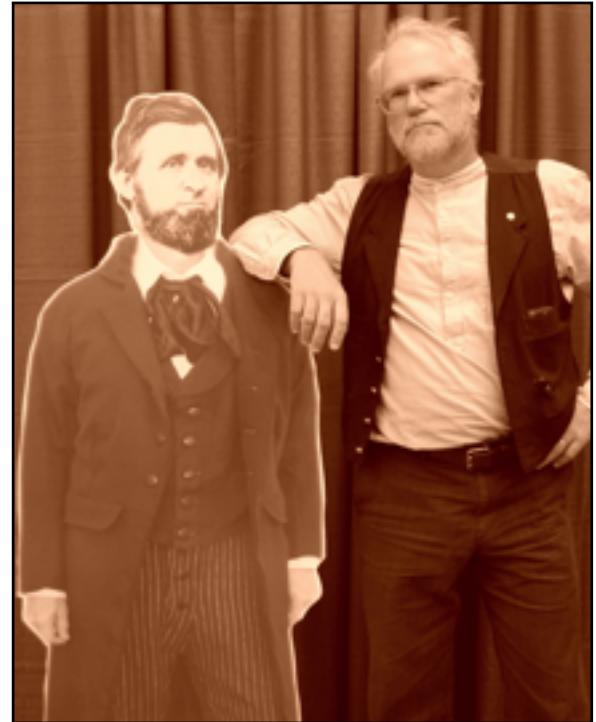
**We would love to hear from you how your state first formed its Grange Movement and energized its citizens to take collective action on behalf of its local "patrons of husbandry". Each state is different and comes to collective action differently. *Vive la différence!***



solutions. Indeed the early Grange became the incubator for major social changes. There was talk of outlawing monopolies with anti-trust laws; regulating railroad freight rates; the nationalization of the railroad, shipping, meatpacking, oil, and telegraph industries. There was support voiced for unions, state-run programs for unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, and an end to child labor.

The results were impressive. Wheat and grain farmers across the state were at the mercy of the shipping lines that transported their products to the east coast and overseas. To address this problem, in 1874 the CSG established a California Grange Bank headquartered in San Francisco. The Grange farmer now had access to affordable financing for the transportation costs of shipping via the sea. At the same time, a Grange Business Association was established to run a warehouse building in San Francisco for Grangers to warehouse their products. Cooperatives were started and silos built for storing grains thereby cutting out another middleman. Other cooperatives were formed for producing farm equipment, clothing, and furniture, many of which were sold exclusively to Grangers through the early Montgomery Ward catalogs. Cooperative Grange Stores were opened where Grangers received a hefty discount on their purchases. By 1875 the membership had grown to 15,913 and the voice of the Grange was heard on the farm, in the community, and in the State House in Sacramento.

In California, as well as other states, the Grange worked because it met the farmer's needs. As the emphasis on social action was replaced by social and educational programs, many farmers lost interest and the membership took a steep decline. By 1898 it dropped from a high of more than 15,000 to fewer than 1500 and the State Master reported that "The CSG is in the morgue and ready for burial."



ROGER ELLISON, MASTER OF SAN JUAN ISLAND  
GRANGE, #966, WA, STANDING NEXT TO OLIVER  
H. KELLEY, GRANGE FOUNDER. USED WITH PERMISSION

## NOW

Within the CSG there is a new generation of members, mostly younger, that harkens back to the early days of the Grange. They are Grangers who want the small organic farmer to have the same consideration as the agribusiness growers. They are concerned with the health of our planet and want honesty and accountability from those harvesting our resources. They want the right to know the quality of the food they are eat and put on the table for others. They are suspicious of corporations and big business and their relationship to the political process. They are Grangers who put sustainable practices in agriculture, food, health, and the environment over short term productivity and profitability. They are the progressive, activist, relevant folks who have a vision of what our order can do in this changing world, and the energy, enthusiasm and skills to make it happen. And it has.





Over the past few years, the CSG has seen growth in membership, the number of new Granges formed, and the revitalization of Granges that were either inactive or functioning at a minimal level. Most importantly, the new members are younger; the average age of a CSG member has dropped from 65 to 45. These new energetic Grangers are active in their communities, teaching classes in the lost rural arts, forming food cooperatives, starting community Grange gardens and farmer's markets, hosting speakers on topics of interest and showing and discussing relevant films, harvesting solar energy to power their halls, and constructing small silo's at their Granges as part of local food distribution systems. Their influence has been felt at the state level where legislators and state officials come to the CSG requesting members' participation on local and state policy committees. Resolutions passed at the State Convention have been taken up by legislators with the CSG serving as the lead on agriculture, health and environmental legislation and related ballot initiatives. And the most ambitious CSG project to date, initiated by the grassroots resolution process, is to develop a college for the agricultural arts that will serve as a hands-on farm for teaching all aspects of growing and marketing and will serve as a laboratory for the development of sustainable farming practices.

The CSG is thriving with young vital members who share the tradition and the values of the order. The members see the CSG as an organization willing to take on relevant issues, make recommendations, and take action. As Then, the CSG Now is a voice on the farm, in the community, and in the State House. It need not be restricted to California. What has been learned here can serve as a model for Granges across the nation willing to give a voice and focus to the new generation of small farmers and responsible

social activists. Our history tells us that as long as the Grange is responsive to the members needs, it will thrive and grow. However, if this new generation of members is not heard and their voice is lost, they will leave and the Grange will decline until it is only a distant memory to our grandchildren. The choice is ours.

#####

*[Buzz is happy to send reference info to anyone seeking it. Email: [Buzz Chernoff toohighranch@gmail.com](mailto:Buzz.Chernoff@toohighranch@gmail.com). At the recent CSG Annual Convention details were released about the new Grange School of the Agricultural Arts, including an invitation to all state Granges to participate. See: **Job Announced for Site Coordinator, page 6]***



**Convention regalia waiting for the officers march**

IGCN NEWS IS LOOKING FOR SHORT ARTICLES ON GRANGE HISTORY THAT CRISPLY EXEMPLIFY THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE BIRTH, MISSION, AND VALUES OF THE GRANGE MOVEMENT.

PLEASE SEND THEM IN—WHETHER YOU WROTE IT OR FOUND IT.

**"ROOTED IN HISTORY, SEEDING THE FUTURE"**



**HERE'S A CONDENSED VERSION OF A RECENT ARTICLE FROM THE LANCASTER, PA, ONLINE NEWS, UPDATED NOV. 4, 2013—ENTITLED "TOUGH TIMES FOR FULTON GRANGE", BY DEBBIE WYGENT**

Fulton Grange 66, the last Grange with its own hall in Lancaster County, might soon be sold unless its members can find a way to keep open the historic building. A bit of help to keep the lights on and the taxes paid will come when a group of southern Lancaster County gospel bluegrass musicians gather and sing as the Grange's own "angel band." Proceeds will benefit the Grange, which once was a social and legislative powerhouse in southern Lancaster County.

Members Dave Hanks, Ruth Ann Wood and Jesse Wood Patty Welch and Carole Huber (seen on the right) are among the Grange's 60 members who recently recalled decades when the Grange hall was packed for turkey suppers, dinner theaters, ice cream socials, minstrel shows and square and line dances. "It was a social organization," said Ruth Ann Wood. "The Grange brought farmers out when there wasn't TV. It was a family gathering place, a fun time."

There are about 9,000 Grangers in Pennsylvania and about 200,000 nationally, according to the national organization. Huber said membership is gaining nationally but dwindling locally. Property taxes, utility bills and insurance have become too expensive, said Huber, and aging members no longer have the stamina to run large fundraisers. Huber said that Fulton is one of 10 Pennsylvania Granges on the state list to be sold.

"I'm proud this building has been available to the public for whatever they wanted to use it for," said Ruth Ann Wood. Jesse Wood said the Grange played a big part in helping to establish Fulton Fire Company, bringing the Walter Aument Medical Center to southern Lancaster County, and pushing to have the Norman Wood Bridge built. Hanks said the Grange also pushed the Public Utility Commission and the former Commonwealth Telephone Co. to improve phone service to the southern end. The Grange formed its own bulk-buying club for food and farm supplies.

Hanks said the Grange hall often was packed during political debates. Ruth Ann Wood said the Grange is nonpartisan, but was always interested in providing information about current local issues. State Rep. Bryan Cutler said in an email that members of his family have been involved in Fulton Grange for a long time, and he has hosted several political events there. Bob McFarland, California Master, said in response to the



LancasterOnline article:

"It's hard to imagine a hall with 60 members considering closure. The article quotes Pennsylvania having around 9,000 members. Just one or two years ago, I recall California and Pennsylvania running neck-and-neck just behind Washington at over 10,000 members each. But the total number of members does not accurately gauge what *growth* looks like. California's total figures are not that different from Pennsylvania, hovering around 9,000. But we can boast of having 4000 NEW members since 2009. In this respect, I believe we are the fastest *growing* state Grange. The simple fact is that our rate of attrition is slightly greater than our rate of growth. But we are once again gaining ground.

IGCN News spoke with Betsy Huber (no relation to Carole) who is a Pennsylvania Granger herself and chair of the National Grange Exec. Comm. She confirms this story and expressed her disappointment about how difficult it is for many older Granges to attract younger members. We asked Sister Betsy about the statement Carole made regarding "National membership gaining but dwindling locally". Betsy said that while National membership is still in decline, there are twelve states that have reported an increase in membership over the past few years.



## California State Grange School of the Agricultural Arts

*In our last issue (Vol. I No. 3), we included a .pdf trifold describing briefly this new school, now affectionately nicknamed The Farm. The site for this "campus" is ten miles south of Willits, CA, on the incredibly beautiful Golden Rule Ranch, which some may know as the final pasture and resting place of **Seabiscuit**, the famous racehorse. You will find photos of our school site on these pages. Antonia Partridge, director of the school, is looking for the second-in-command. We have the privilege of extending news of this position to qualified Grangers across the land.*

### Job Opening Announcement: Site Coordinator

The Grange Farm School is looking for an enthusiastic, organized and multi-skilled individual to fill the position of Site Coordinator. The California State Grange School of the Agricultural Arts is a venue for sustainable farming and education programs that demonstrate a holistic approach to food production. Our students include aspiring farmers, home gardeners, and youth.

Our program will initially focus on infrastructure development. We will be designing and

building the facilities to teach, host students and workshops.

The ideal Site Coordinator will have experience working in small scale sustainable agriculture, in teaching, in construction and farm maintenance, and in leadership for volunteers, student interns, and for youth. We are looking for someone who is knowledgeable in organic farming practices for diverse crop and livestock farm systems. Job duties will cover a broad range of tasks, including:

- *supervision and leadership for residential student interns, and farm visitors.*
- *assist director in teaching and farm planning, and implementation.*
- *building and maintenance of facilities*
- *assist director in outreach and facilitation for workshops and volunteers work days*
- *facilitate clear communication between land owner, grange, farm director, and students*
- *performance or supervision of daily chores and farm caretaking*
- *crop and livestock management including, planting, soil fertility management and cultivation, irrigation, composting, greenhouse operation, harvesting, marketing, feed, water, and care of livestock, operation of farm equipment, and other associated tasks*

This is a year-round residential position, with daily attention to the farm required including weekend duties. Housing will be provided. Work load will be based on the needs of students, plant and animal life-cycles and hours will vary throughout the seasons. The Site Coordinator will be on-call 24 hours per day to address the needs of farm and student. Anticipated winter work load will be low, around 15 hours per week.

We ask for a one-year minimum commitment and will accept applications until the position is filled. Anticipated start date will be late winter to early spring 2014.

To apply please send a cover letter, resume and 3 references to [farmdirector@califroniagranger.org](mailto:farmdirector@califroniagranger.org). For more information on the California State Grange School of the Agricultural Arts, please visit our website at <http://californiagranger.org/agschool/mission.html>







## The Significance of the California State Convention 2013

The heart, the soul—the pow-wow of the year for any Grange is the Annual State Convention. For California, this was the second year for our subordinate and pomona Granges to gather *in fidelity* in spite of having our Charter revoked by National.

This year, the Convention was hosted by Sebastopol Grange #306.

The Convention was a huge success by any measure and significant in many keen ways. Here are some comments by delegates and officers who embrace deeply the Grange salutation.

—Editor

## Reflections from Convention

Convention 2013 followed strongly upon the tone and tenor established last year at Convention 2012, in Willits California—and both were annual conventions of a State

Grange whose charter had been ill-advisably revoked by National. Both conventions expressed a remarkably positive vision and looked intelligently and ambitiously to the future. While there was continued respect for Grange tradition, ritual, and protocols, there was also a brightly burning spirit for a return to an agrarian relevancy, one that reflects the roots of Grange history, with all its political and economic struggles and advocacies. Look how supportive the delegates were of the establishment of our new Grange School of the Agricultural Arts! I'd say the Grange today, in the spirit of Oliver H. Kelley, is working towards inclusive community development, sustainable agriculture and food systems, and direct participatory democracy! If that isn't in the spirit of early Grange values, then what is?

~ Damian Parr

CSG Exec. Comm.

Santa Cruz Live Oak Grange #503,



There was without a doubt a very diverse group of people attending the convention, with many differing beliefs & opinions & age-groups. As "true" Grangers, however, we were able to express ourselves and not be ridiculed for it. I had many discussions with people of opposite opinions to

mine and it was easy to try and understand their point of view because they were willing to listen to mine. The overall most encouraging and exciting thing for me was the strong, strong agriculture influence. Perfect!!

~ Kathy Bergeron

CSG Overseer elect

Greenhorn Grange #384



One aspect of our convention that I value is the vigorous discussions of resolutions and motions. This is direct democracy in action, with young and old, liberals and conservatives, speaking and listening with respect. I am also encouraged by the election of young people, most of them relatively new to the Grange. I value the old members who connect us to our past and seem willing to accept change for the future.

~ Takashi Yogi

CSG Exec. Comm.

Marshall Grange #451



If I had to speak to one thing that I took away from the California State Grange 2013 Annual Session, it would be solidarity. By viewing the voting results, it was quickly apparent that the membership of the California State Grange supported their



elected leadership completely. The State Master/President was elected by a 95% margin demonstrating the strong support for Brother McFarland. The bylaws changes were passed unanimously showing the resolve of the membership to determine the future of the California State Grange without undo outside influence and policy corrections. There were many views discussed regarding a diversity of issues, but on the main topics everyone came together and joined their brothers and sisters to send a signal across the land that the California State Grange is "Alive and Well!"

~ Bill Thomas  
CSG Exec. Comm. Chair  
American River Grange #172



As the first president of the revitalized Sebastopol Grange I was proud and excited to bring a new network of young farmers to the convention (Young Farmers' Guild). They clearly saw that the Grange can still be relevant to small, independent, local farming. Several became members, and this in turn brought about press and radio interviews, thus strengthening the profile of the Grange. Several other community groups have invited our current president to speak at their meetings and explain how we have generated

so much community enthusiasm in such a short time.

~ Lawrence Jaffe  
CSG Exec. Comm elect.  
Sebastopol Grange #306, past-pres.



For me the most significant aspect of the convention was in the camaraderie and unity among us all. [Worthy Master] Bob's story about the elderly woman Granger near Placerville who responded to the town's plea about saving their creek summed it up well. She caught the spirit of "grassroots" when she said, "together we are many". The joy I felt with all of us working together, laughing, singing, hearing stories, eating together, earnestly debating resolutions with civility and unity, watching teenage or young Grangers step forward and take important roles, feeling the cohesion in our Sebastopol team in our common effort of hosting the convention....

~ Jerry Allen  
CSG Musician  
Sebastopol Grange #306, President



It was incredibly inspiring, even an honor, to be part of such an enthusiastic, diverse gathering of Grangers, and so many of us, filling this large and lovely country Grange hall to the brim. So many 50 year members and so many 20- and 30-something's still new to the Grange. What a great mix of people! Even with our wide range of views and experience, we repeatedly showed our unity and commitment to survive and thrive in spite of, or even because of, the national leader's hostility toward us and our chosen leaders. We must do what works for us, as every State Grange should be able to do. Until more flexible, tolerant national leadership welcomes us back, we must persevere on our own, and we are. I'm especially excited about our progress in starting the California Grange School of the Agricultural Arts to help train the new generation of young people going back to the land, committed to serving the booming demand for fresh local food in our communities. This is a natural for our Grange, taking us back to our roots.

~ Jon Luvaas  
Ex-Chair, CSG Exec. Comm.  
Biggs Grange #841



What really stood out was how united we were as California





Grangers behind Bob and our need for sovereignty and refusal to be dominated by the National Master. I was also inspired by the fostering of the relationship between the Young Farmers Guild and CSG. The Guild is going to relocate to our hall and we expect many of them to become Grangers. My Grange mantra is "youth youth youth"; our relationship with the Guild and the potential of the Ag School speaks to this.

These are major ingredients to building the future. I left the convention feeling refreshed, renewed and ready for Grange work.

~ Gary Abreim

Newly-elected CSG  
Treasurer

Sebastopol Grange #306,  
Treasurer



This 142nd California Grange Convention was truly a momentous occasion! I was proud of the delegates for standing up for what we all believe to be right! We have a long battle ahead of us, but I know the victory will be ours.

~ Cheri Bunker

Out-going CSG Secretary

Thermalito Grange #729, Master



I was impressed with the State Grange Deputies' efforts to reach

out to Community Granges and encourage them to send delegates to convention this year. Their success, with a 39% attendance [quorum 25%]. I must say that I also am really enjoying having convention at Community Grange halls instead of the flashy, expensive convention centers that had been the tradition before. Not only do we get to see our Brothers and Sisters and their own beautiful



halls, but the food has been Fantastic! I think the National Grange would definitely benefit from having their convention in a Community Grange!

~ Rich Saxe

Ex-CSG Membership Director  
Aromas Grange #361, Lecturer



I enter a beautifully restored aging Grange Hall to laughter and hugs from dearly loved Grangers from distant towns. A contingent of young farmers

maybe 50-strong accompany me into the hall to see an incredibly powerful documentary, *Symphony of the Soil*. They are tanned, fit, and alert, clearly ready to take on local food production. They will stay long enough to learn more about the Grange and some will become members. If Grangers across the land could see what we are doing here in California—looking to the future to grow a more

relevant Grange Movement—they would know we are seeking out the original Grange. We are revitalizing our halls with young vibrant energy. The youth are back in the guise of...farmers!

~ Annie Waters

Newly-elected CSG Lecturer  
Little Lake Grange #670,  
Lecturer



This was my 3<sup>rd</sup> State Grange Convention and I think it was the best one yet. It is always great to see the delegates you haven't seen for a year and meeting new ones. We passed a lot of great resolutions that if they make it into law will benefit small California farmers and citizens of this state. Voting to fund the Grange Agricultural School was one of the best things we did and I was impressed with the actual number of small farmers that



actually attended as delegates It feels as if we are returning to our roots.

~ Kent Westwood

Laytonville Grange #726, President



**Delegate1:** Is Charlie still measuring that bay of hay?

**Delegate2:** No, he's asleep. Measuring hay bales is hard work!



I'm nearly 70 years old and have childhood memories of the Grange Hall near our Mid-Western family farm, which have helped guide me in my last 20 years as a farmer. After months of sprucing up the Sebastopol Hall for the convention, it was worth it when people filled it with vigorous discussions, ceremony, laughter, stories, music, good food, and joy. As an ordained United Methodist minister and former U.S. Army



[Random, lovable old Grange graphics]

officer, I especially appreciated the old-fashioned Sunday morning honoring of veterans, their wives and widows and the memorial for departed Grangers. In 2009 the average Calif. Granger was 65, whereas it is now 45. With 4,400 new members since then, there are now 8,700 Grangers. Here in our town of less than 8,000 we already have 150 members and continue to grow. We are like a family that supports each other in our labor, agricultural pursuits, and relationship to the land.

~ Shepherd Bliss

Sebastopol Grange #306,



The Convention is important as a foundation of the Grange, where old friends meet and new ones are embraced. Our recent Convention was a good example of working together. I saw that it would be better for our process if the resolutions were given to the delegates 60 days, no less than 30 days ahead. This would give everyone a better understanding of the implications of the resolutions. This can only deepen the conversations.

~ Jaime Harris

Newly-elected CSG Assistant Steward  
Atascadero Grange #563,



What became absolutely clear at this Convention was the

continued increase in group intelligence over the last five years. While there is still a wide diversity of values, agendas, and on-going projects, the ability of the delegates as a voting body to discuss, debate, and collectively engage new ideas and directions has improved enormously. The willingness of the majority to take risks gives me hope that the Grange does not have to go the way of most other fraternal organizations—and disappear. The theme of this Convention —"Rooted in history, seeding the future"—for me tells it all.

~ Lanny Cotler

Independent Grange

Communications Network, Editor

Little Lake Grange #670

Brothers & Sisters of the  
plow,  
The power is with you;  
The world in expectation waits  
For action prompt and true,  
Oppression stalks abroad,  
Monopolies abound;  
Their giant hands already  
clutch  
The tillers of the ground.

(Chorus)

Awake, then, awake! the great  
world must be fed now,  
And heaven gives the power to  
the hand that holds the plow.  
—Geo. F. Root,  
"The Hand That Holds The Bread"  
Grange Melodies (Philadelphia, 1905)



**Upper right: President Bob and Wendy McFarland — Upper left: Beautiful Expo fare  
Lower right: CSG Convention tent food line — Lower left: Convention vegan vittles line**

Jerry Allen, President of  
hosting Grange #306  
and CSG Musician

**Convention keynote speaker**, and new member of Sebastopol Grange #306. Santa Rosan Michael Dimock, president of Roots of Change, talked about "a new social contract for agriculture." Dimock said, "The food system is broken... rural regions are poverty stricken, ecosystems degraded and human health harmed by what we are eating." He added, "A food movement is growing....We need to farm with nature and mimic her systems in order to deliver health and resilience rather than simply cheap calories. Our survival depends on it."

Lawrence Jaffe,  
newly elected  
to the CSG  
Exec. Comm.



CSG Master/President Bob  
McFarland having just  
obligated new member,  
Brother Michael





## THE ANNUAL NATIONAL SESSION — THIS MONTH IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



This is a critical year for the Grange Movement. There are signs of this popping up in diverse ways, in diverse places—with plenty of passion.

Whether or not Grange leaders at all levels will hear this and heed the call for change—we will know soon enough.

Our ability to turn our membership rolls around will be determined by our commitment to attract the next generation into our fraternity. Do we have the will, the wisdom, and the humility to understand their needs, concerns, and relationships to the modern world?

As a State Deputy, I've traveled to many halls, towns, and gatherings answering questions about the Grange. I often find myself invoking a term rarely used anymore: ***the Grange Movement.***

I learned about the Grange Movement before I knew the Grange was a "fraternity of sisters and brothers". I knew about the Granger Laws long before I learned what the Grange salutation was. I knew about the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist Party and how the Patrons of Husbandry influenced them all. Then I found out that the Grange was responsible for rural mail delivery and giving women and teenagers full voting membership rights....

One thing is clear, there is a brave new world out there, some of it good and hopeful, some of it truly worrisome. The next generation will have to deal with this every day of their lives. I've told many potential young people about our organization.

"Are you really a democratic organization? Are your elections fair or are you run by a 'good ol' boy network'?" I told them the truth. I told them that National elections favors the incumbents hugely. We have no formal nominations; all delegates write a name for an office on a piece of paper and the one who finally has a majority vote wins. The young people didn't like this a bit. We need to change this.

The young people know that the older generation is leaving them a threatened environment and enormous debt. They don't appreciate this. They'd like to know that our organization is aware of this and willing to do something about it. Are we?

Two Californians are coming to our National Session. They come with a mandate to share with you what we've learned about attracting the youth. Kathy and Leo Bergeron. Kathy is the new California State Grange Overseer, and Leo is a Golden Sheaf Granger *and* past-master of the California Grange. They love the Grange and the Movement it was and can be again. Seek them out.

—Lanny Cotler

## ***iActionAlert!***

How many Grangers know about "The Federal Food Modernization Act"? Karina McAbee, past-master of Little Lake Grange #670, stood up at a recent meeting hosted by her Grange and said: "Now with the FDA making the rules, this is an outrageous attack on local food and agriculture." After the meeting, we asked her for more info:

"Read the Constitution again—I just did; it's a very short document—and you will see that the Feds have absolutely no legitimate authority to mess with local agriculture and commerce. They can and should regulate Big Ag, with all it's related problems and interstate commerce—that is their job. But to use the problems created by factory farms and huge distribution centers as an excuse to crush our small farmers is an egregious overstepping of their constitutional powers. You have only until Nov. 15th to comment to the FDA. Not only is this unconstitutional, but many of the rules are absolutely stupid and unnecessary. Please educate yourself. Then take a stand for local food sovereignty. Save what's left of our family farms!"

Go to [www.tinyurl.com/l7fptr8](http://www.tinyurl.com/l7fptr8) to learn more, or [www.tinyurl.com/pgwo2bm](http://www.tinyurl.com/pgwo2bm), which is the FDA site.

We can comment on the specific rules, which only legitimizes the process, or we can call the Feds on this unconstitutional infringement of our rights and the overstepping of their legitimate powers. Face it, folks—this is the kind of stuff the Grange Movement was born for. Only if we revitalize our Movement can we give it the power to sustain itself unto the next generation.

