

## SECRETARIES INSTRUCTIONS

“The duties of your office are the most arduous of all, requiring judgment, promptness and efficiency.” I would like you to know that your efforts are appreciated.

MINUTES: The minutes of the Grange are extremely important as they represent the history of your Grange to all who come after us. Be especially careful that decisions made are accurately recorded. Minutes should be concise with emphasis upon motions made and the action taken. It is not necessary to record every detail of your meeting unless you feel they are of importance to the history of your Grange. Granges do have the option of having their secretary read the minutes at the end of the meeting and/or at the beginning of the next meeting. Personally, I feel that at least the business portion of the minutes should be read at the end of the meeting just to verify all actions before they could be forgotten before the next meeting.

QUARTERLY REPORTS: The quarterly reports are the tool to keep the membership records up to date on all levels of the Grange. It is important that Granges report promptly so that state reports can be made to National Grange on time. Quarterly reports are due and payable by March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31. Please be prompt. A resolution was adopted at our State Session stating that **all Subordinate and Pomona Granges submitting their quarterly reports beyond one month past the end of each quarter will be charged a fee of \$25.00 payable to the State Grange.**

Subordinate dues are currently \$6.50 per member per quarter. Pomona dues are 10 cents per member per quarter. If your Pomona Grange would like quarterly or monthly reports from your Grange, please make sure you have the appropriate forms (if available) and see that these reports are also made in a timely fashion. Please contact the Secretary of your Pomona Grange if you have any questions.

GOLDEN SHEAF MEMBERS: Although National Grange is now assessing the State Grange for members who have received their Golden Sheaf Certificates after January 1, 2001, at the 2001 RI State Grange Session a resolution was adopted stating that RI Granges will not be assessed by the State Grange for **all Golden Sheaf members.** Periodically you will receive a request for a listing of your Golden Sheaf members so we can make sure that our records are up to date. **All Golden Sheaf members receiving their award during the year will be issued a Life Membership Card to be presented during the Secretary's Annual Report at State Session in October of that year.**

AFFILIATE MEMBERS: Affiliate members should be counted on your quarterly report and dues paid on them. Please list the number in the space provided on the quarterly report form and periodically you will also receive a request for the names of these members as well. **If your Grange has an affiliate member who is a Golden Sheaf Member of another Grange they should also be noted as such and counted along with your regular Golden Sheaf members on your quarterly reports.**

NEW MEMBERS: New members should be recorded on your quarterly reports as soon as they have been obligated, given the welcoming ceremony, or taken their First Degree. You will not have to pay dues for them the quarter they join, however, you will have to pay the initiation fee of \$1.00. Do not list prospective members who have filled out applications but have not had an official ceremony or degrees for membership.

When a member is admitted by demit, please inform me from what Grange they demitted from if known. This information is essential to keep their records up to date. Please notify me of any name change (i.e. marriage, divorce), so the change can be made on the state records as well. It might also be beneficial if you keep your Grange members informed of the number of members in your Grange.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES: A resolution was adopted several years ago stating that **any person submitting an application for membership in the month of April (Grange month) or at a membership booth at the Washington County Fair, would not be charged an application fee or dues for the remainder of that year.** When these members are reported on your quarterly report form, please note that they joined as a result of one of these activities, but pay the initiation fees and dues as required by the State Grange. Your Grange will later be reimbursed for the initiation fee and dues for the remainder of the year from the State Grange 10K Fund.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP PLAN: If your Grange has members who are under the age of 23, and more than 2 members in their family belong, you can participate in the Family Membership Plan and will only have to pay dues for 2 members in the family. This should apply to your Subordinate dues as well. This benefit can be used as a membership tool when asking families to join the Grange. It is necessary to report all family plans and members under these plans on your quarterly report forms. The current fee your Grange pays to State Grange for each Family Plan is \$13 per quarter.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Please report any address changes of your members to our Editor of the State Grange Beacon, Eileen Hebert. She should also be informed of any additions or losses in your membership so the mailing list for our newsletter is current. Many do not receive the Beacon because the post office does not deliver to an expired or insufficient address because the Beacon is in bulk mailing format.

DUES COLLECTION: Collection of dues is usually the responsibility of the Secretary. Your prompt collection of dues allows your Grange to operate financially. A large number of members are dropped for non-payment of dues. **If there are members who have limited income and cannot pay their dues in one lump sum, they may be paid semi-annually or even quarterly or monthly, whatever your Grange decides.** Sometimes just a phone call or visit might save a member from being suspended. Also, when inquiring about dues payment, you should happen to determine that one of your members is experiencing great financial difficulties the State Grange PIN Fund may be of assistance.

BY-LAWS: You should also have available a copy of the by-laws of your Grange, the State Grange By-Laws and the National Grange Digest for reference. It is important that the by-laws of your Grange be up to date.

MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION: The presentation of Membership Awards is a way to honor those who have been faithful to the Grange for many years. Applications for **25 Year Silver Star Certificates and seals for 40, 55, 60, 65 and 70 years** should be made on the **yellow form** available from this office and sent to the State Secretary. National Grange charges for these seals, however the RI State Grange is paying for them and the State Secretary has them on hand. Applications for **Golden Sheaf Certificates, 75, 80, 85 and 90 year awards** should be made on the **gold colored form** as these have to be processed through National Grange but should also first be mailed to the State Secretary. There is a \$14.00 charge for each Golden Sheaf Certificate and an \$14.00 fee for a 75 year award with

all checks payable to the National Grange. We also have a **non-consecutive membership certificate** for someone who has accumulated 25 years or more of service who may have been out of the Grange for some period.

CORRESPONDENCE: Correspondence overlaps some of the areas mentioned above and of course is part of communication within your own Grange as well as with the Pomona and State Granges, and with the community. It is important that you let your membership know of activities being held and decisions made by the Grange. Inform the Editor of the Beacon if you want to advertise a special event and try to make sure that all your members also have a Pomona program book. Don't forget the latest technologies available such as websites, e-mails, facebook, etc. that now make it easier to communicate with one another. Has your Grange considered a monthly or quarterly notice to your members informing them of the activities going on in your Grange and encouraging them to attend meetings?

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Try to open and unfold your communications before you go to your meeting, and organize them along with the bills for quicker reading. It is wise to read over the communications before you get to your meeting, as some lengthy ones could possibly be condensed. If your Grange (via the e-mail contact listed in the State Grange Directory) has received an e-mail correspondence, please print it out to be presented along with the other communications.
2. Outline your meetings before your meeting. I have a form available if you need one. The National Grange also has record books available that are already outlined.
3. Brief your Master on communications, etc. before the meeting if possible (especially those that may require action). This helps the Master in planning what may take place during the meeting. The Master should not have to re-read the communications.
4. Keep a roll call book for your Grange officers.
5. Keep a card file, computer file, etc. for all of your members. This should include all the information about the member for your records and future reference.
6. Secretaries should use Order to the Treasurer forms to authorize payments from the Grange treasury. These forms are available in pad form from National Grange as well as record books and other supplies as well. Go to the "Grange Store" on the National Grange website.
7. When State Directories (5 per Grange) are distributed, they should go to the Master, Lecturer, Secretary, and chairmen of CWA and Youth. Your Grange will also receive 2 copies of the Journal of Proceedings each year, one for the Master and one for the Secretary.
8. Although this is not really part of the secretaries' duties, members should be encouraged to write resolutions as this is how the policy of the State and National Granges is determined.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me.

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