

“Roaring Off” to a Strong Start This Spring

As the saying goes, March can either come in like a lion or a lamb. Without a doubt as I sit here at my computer in Lancaster County, Pa. March is coming in like a lion, winds just howling across the fields to our farm.

As I take over this month as the National Grange Youth Director, there has been one common thread among all of the Grange leadership, youth directors and Grange youth in this country – they all want to see this great program succeed. My challenge this month is to ask you all, “are you roaring” for Grange? When was the last time your Grange hosted a youth recruitment night or a youth night to feature the talents of your younger Grangers? Belong to a Grange without a youth membership, start taking the steps to revitalize the program by bringing in youth from the community to present a lecturer’s program and then take advantage of the Grange’s recruitment program to encourage their membership.

The one thing I would challenge each and every one of you this month is to think out loud and try something unusual, then let me know how it goes so we can share the idea with other Granges.

Youth Regional Conferences Are Coming!!

Starting next month I will be traveling across the U.S. for National Grange Youth Regional Conferences. Please visit the National Grange Youth Website (nationalgrangeyouth.org) for the latest information on the conference closest to you.

My challenge to you all is to see what state can bring the most youth and older juniors. Also, use this opportunity to get some non-Grange youth to attend and use the weekend as a chance to introduce them to the Grange. Hopefully by the end of the weekend, you will be taking a Granger home with you.

Some highlights of the weekend will include a leadership workshop focusing on teamwork. It will be an interactive workshop using the example of the U.S. Air Force’s Blue Angels. Also, the host states are working to include an outing to feature some of the “local flavor” of the area.

In addition, the conference will provide youth an opportunity of a lifetime – a chance to provide feedback on the National Grange Youth program. We are looking to build on our program foundation to better deliver programming and activities our youth would enjoy. Start making notes now; I look forward to hearing about your ideas.

Connecticut is hosting the National Grange Session this year. For a chance to represent your state and region, bring your best speech or sign-a-song for a chance to travel onto the national showcase.

Featured Youth Program for March:

Francis McDowell Grange and Current Events Trivia Challenge

Ever wish your Grange knowledge test could be taken with an open book? Well, now here is your chance with the Francis McDowell Grange and Current Events Trivia Challenge (form located at: <http://www.nationalgrangeyouth.org/Awards/2008trivia.pdf>).

Resources that can be used include: The Subordinate Grange Manual, the National Grange Digest, The Code book, The Grange-Friend of the Farmer by Charles M. Gardener, People Pride and Progress by David Howard, The Grange 1867-1967 First Century of Service and Evolution by William L. Robinson, The National Grange Roster, Sample Citizenship test for immigrants, The New Grange, The Grange and You, United

States Flag Code, and the National Grange Journal of Proceedings. You can find some of the answers in dictionaries, or on the Internet at ask.com.

Grangers that score a 75% or higher will receive a National Grange certificate.

The best part of this program, there is no time limit in how long you take to finish the test. When completed, submit the tests to your state youth director to be forwarded onto the national youth director.

Participation suggestion: this contest is not limited to just youth membership. Work with your subordinate lecturer and utilize the test as a multi-month program. At the end, she can submit all of the tests for scoring. Or Youth Directors, utilize this test for a workshop at a youth or young adult event.

Local Grange Youth Highlights: Potential New Member Recruitment Party

New to this newsletter: an idea exchange for youth activities happening across the country to improve youth participation.

This month's highlight is Elizabethtown Grange #2076 in Elizabethtown, Pa. This Grange has recently seen an increase in its younger youth membership (under 18). To help these members enlist their friends into joining, a "recruitment party" was hosted at on of the youth member's home.

The youth were challenged to invite as many friends out for a night of games, fellowship and to learn about the organization. Nearly 100 invitations were issued, about 20 friends responded. The youth director and a couple of parents provided the snacks and drinks. The Grange youth organized games and activities, which were a hit. The Grange youth provided a short program on what the Grange was and asked to join. One youth joined that night, five applications are pending.

Key planning points, make sure the Grange youth are in charge of the planning. It gives them more "ownership" of the event. This was very easy to do planning wise and had a very casual atmosphere. Non-Grange visitors were given information on the organization and invited to join. Realize many will probably not join that night since they will need to get permission from their parents.

Take home message, youth Grangers should always look at their friends as PNM's or potential new members and look to those members for ideas on how to help them recruit these PNM's into membership.