



# WASHINGTON STATE GRANGE

924 Capitol Way S #300 \* PO Box 1186 \* Olympia, WA 98507-1186  
(360)943-9911 \* FAX 1-360-357-3548 \* 1-800-854-1635

March 17, 2020

Brothers and Sisters,

The coronavirus pandemic continues to create havoc with unprecedented growth throughout our state and nation. As with many other illnesses, many of our Grange members are of the age that may be severely impacted by the potential spread of this respiratory ailment. The State of Washington and the CDC have made strong recommendations regarding the types of activities that need to be curtailed for a short period of time.

As news continues to break with more and more Covid-19 cases and a small percentage of those infected having succumbed to the illness, we continue to see the pattern emerge - not unlike that with the flu and other significant respiratory ailments - that older individuals are disproportionately impacted. Some of you have expressed concerns about what to do regarding Grange meetings and events, but until we had a clearer picture of the situation, we wanted wait to issue clear guidance without causing undue panic.

While we know the risk from this virus is low, many of our members are or socialize with people in high-risk groups, especially the elderly, at Grange functions and in their daily lives. For this reason, we ask you to be mindful and preventative to help us all contain this novel virus as well as other nasty viruses such as the "typical" flu. The best thing you can do is take all necessary and advised precautions, which in some cases includes self-quarantine.

## **State Grange Events and Activities**

The Washington State Grange will make the following changes in their operation over the next few weeks:

- The office will remain open during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To prevent unauthorized entry to our office, we will be locking the doors and the elevator to the third floor. Those wishing to visit our offices should call the office (360-943-9911) upon their arrival and we will meet you in the lobby. We will still be conducting business as usual over the telephone and computers.
- Quarterly reports and dues payments are still due April 1.
- The Intersessions Committee Meetings were postponed from the original date of March 27. We will be looking at setting up conference calls for each of the committees to review current Grange policy, to identify areas where policy is needed, and to identify priorities for the 2021 legislative session.
- The Deputy, State Officer, and Pomona Master Conference, scheduled for March 27-29, is cancelled.
- State Grange Scholarship Applications will have the deadline extended to May 15 to give all students an ample opportunity to obtain transcripts and required recommendations from their school officials.
- Junior Grange Camp Directors Meeting, scheduled for April 7, will be completed via conference call. Prior to the meeting, a packet of information will be sent to each participant. The packet will be reviewed in depth during the conference call. We hope the spread of the virus will be curtailed before the camping program begins in late June.
- The State Grange Convention is still scheduled for June 24-27 at the Walla Walla County Fairgrounds. As we get closer, we will learn if that date will remain intact or if we need to postpone and/or reschedule the convention.
- The deadline for receiving resolutions is normally 30 days prior to the convention. With the cancellation of several Grange meetings through April and possibly into May, the State Grange Executive Committee has extended the deadline to June 10. All resolutions must be in the State Grange Office by 5 p.m. on that date.



# WASHINGTON STATE GRANGE

924 Capitol Way S #300 \* PO Box 1186 \* Olympia, WA 98507-1186  
(360)943-9911 \* FAX 1-360-357-3548 \* 1-800-854-1635

## **Subordinate and Pomona Grange Meetings and Activities**

Grange meetings and our associated events are public gatherings that encourage friendly interactions. Our events often include potlucks with buffet-style service that may also heighten the opportunity for the virus to pass from one person to another. Remember, symptoms may not appear until 14 days after exposure to the virus, and the virus may survive up to three days on surfaces outside the human body. Therefore, even if no one appears sick at an event, it is possible that illness could still spread.

With this in mind, **I strongly recommend all Grange activities to be postponed until at least May.** If your Granges insist on meeting, here are some additional tips you may want to consider regarding meeting protocols:

- This is a good time to try out virtual meetings. Freeconferencecall.com is really free and available to join members together by phone for a meeting without leaving your home.
- If you do have an in-person meeting, the requirement of the Assistants to take the word from members present, involving close face to face exposure, should be discouraged and will not be enforced.
- Unnecessary handling of implements, such as staves, flags, Graces' decorations, station covers, rug, implement box and even the Bible, should be discouraged or done in short form and will not be enforced.
- Refreshments, especially those made at home, should be discouraged.
- The Executive Committee has the authority to transact any business of the Grange in an emergency. The committee can meet, in person or by phone, to conduct any business that cannot be delayed, such as paying basic bills. Be sure to record these actions and report them at the next regular meeting so they can be recorded in the minutes.

**In the face of such an emerging health crisis, the Bylaw (6.12.1) that requires Subordinate Granges to meet monthly and Pomona Grange to meet once in three months will not be enforced.**

## **Grange Hall Usage and Rentals**

The State of Washington has restricted all activities where more than 50 people gather. The federal government is recommending no more than ten people at any one time. It may be possible to make modifications to limit exposure of the virus to those in attendance. If you find it necessary to continue renting your hall during this time, please be aware that you will need to sanitize your hall both before and after each usage. Disinfect all surfaces after any gathering and use disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer frequently. Instructions and recipes for homemade hand sanitizer using Aloe Vera or glycerin and alcohol are available online.

Together, we can turn this crisis into an opportunity to build the connections within our Granges and in each community. Let us continue working together to solve this problem as we work to build a brighter future!

Fraternally,

Tom Gwin  
State Grange Master