



Leadership & Membership

September Membership Tip of the Month

The Obligation

Do you remember when you took the Obligation? Were you scared or nervous? Do you actually remember what was said to you and did you think about that to which you were asked to agree?

I remember when I took the Obligation. I had already been sitting in Grange meetings for years as the son of active Grange parents. My brothers and I had already been to so many of the Grange Halls around the state that we were used to the ritual. You see, my mother was a State Chaplain and then State Lady Assistant Steward. I trusted the man who was asking me to repeat after him and trusted that whatever I was saying was alright because my family already belonged to the Grange. But what about the new members we are asking to join the many Granges around the country? Many of them have never heard of the Grange and almost all do not know they are required to take an obligation. In such cases, what do we tell them if they ask about it?

We all need to know what is being said in the Obligation, why we are saying it, and what it means. We need to explain it to new members before they take it, and for sure be able to discuss it afterwards.

When was the last time you watched the full Obligation Ceremony and listened to the words? I think it might be time to run thru it so we can remember what is said. Maybe the Lecturer/Program Director could do a program on the Obligation so we can learn what it is all about and why we state it the way we do. Maybe everybody could stand and recite it for "the Good of the Order".

In addition, I recently heard of a Grange that asks existing members to repeat the Obligation with new candidates when taken to the altar. This is a great way to make the new member feel as if they are becoming part of the group. It also reminds each member of the things that are expected of them.

I have recently worked with a community Grange trying to get back on its feet. For the past 4 months, there have been new folks from the community showing up to witness how a Grange functions. In light of such, the membership team has decided to conduct the Obligation Ceremony at the appropriate time during each meeting. The team first asks everyone to stand, then proceeds through the ceremony with everyone placing their right hand over their heart while simultaneously repeating the Obligation. This ritual has been a great influence on me, and I know that many of those from the community are very impressed by the words and the passion with which they are said.

I hope each of you will take some time to read thru the Obligation Ceremony and really try to understand its full meaning. I think you will be impressed and inspired to recruit folks in your local

community to the Grange so they too can enjoy being a brother or sister of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry.

Fraternally,

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National Grange