



Brothers and Sisters:

Last week you learned that the judge in the federal trademark lawsuit issued a final and permanent injunction against Bob McFarland and his unchartered organization. I would like to talk to you about this and how the injunction can profoundly affect us all.

But before I go into that, let me ask you if you and I share at least one goal in common. Isn't the mission of the Grange basically one of service to the community? Many of you, myself included, have worked hard to augment that mission. Some of you have even talked about the need for the Grange to return to its roots and revitalize itself by making it more relevant to the times. Many of you have found your Grange identity in the causes of seeds, fracking, GMOs, water conservation, education, and any number of other worthy causes. I am aware of this, and applaud your passion. I believe that the Grange is a wide and welcoming tent that can accommodate many different causes and many people with different interests. As Master of the California State Grange, my job is to make sure that the tent is open to all Grangers, and I take that responsibility seriously. Indeed, I sincerely hope that all Granges will make sure that they are in good standing so that they can send delegates to the California State Grange's next convention in June, and bring resolutions that will advance the vision of a better and revitalized Grange.

But first we must make ourselves whole again as a State Grange. And once we are whole and connected as Grangers, we can talk about the past, learn from it, and make the resolutions and by-laws changes that we, in good form, democratically wish to make within the rules that have shaped our Order since the 1800s.

I had to tell you this before I could give you more details about the injunction issued by the judge. The legalese of this document is difficult for the layman to ponder (trust me -- I have waded through more legalese in the past year than anybody would wish on their worst enemy), but the meaning is clear: no one but

the legally and fraternally sanctioned California State Grange can use the name "Grange" or represent itself as a State Grange for any purpose.

Mr. McFarland sent around a message last week declaring that the judge's order was a victory for his group. In fact, the National Grange got everything it asked for in its complaint. The federal judge denied the extra relief that the National Grange later sought based on Mr. McFarland's actions since the trademark ruling, including requiring him to abstain from using the name "CSG" as the name of his organization, because it is an acronym that has been used by the California State Grange for decades, and confusingly using phrases like "formerly California State Grange" on his group's materials to mislead people into believing that his group is the same Grange that has existed since 1873. But these were not grave issues; the National Grange got most of what it asked for. Weeks ago, the National Grange also voluntarily dismissed its claim for money damages, because it believes further litigation causing expenditure of Grange funds by both sides is senseless.

But that's enough with the legalese. While the injunction will affect how you run your upcoming meeting, I hope you use that meeting as a time to discuss the future of the Grange. We have a purpose, and we want to serve that purpose. Granges in California have accomplished many good things over the past few years, as a result of your efforts, even despite the litigation cloud that has hung over us all. Those accomplishments are too many to name, but include: an active and successful legislative program; associations and networking with organizations with shared interests; the establishment of the Grange Farm School; and the growth of Granges with younger folks with an active interest in healthy food and healthy soil. And there is no reason why these accomplishments cannot continue and grow within the California State Grange. These issues and others are welcome in the California State Grange, and if our delegate body puts itself behind them, I would be honored to represent those issues at the National convention. So at the meeting this week, I encourage you to talk about the future of the Grange, and how to best go forward to bring all the Community and Pomona Granges into good standing under one roof and within the rules of our fraternal Order. If this can be done in a Grangerly manner, and with fidelity, there will be a place for all, and genuine encouragement for you to bring the best resolutions you've passed in the last three years, as well as any others you can stand behind, to the Convention in June for the delegate body to consider.

Fraternaly yours,



Ed Komski, President, Master and CEO

California State Grange

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