

Rite Notes

Membership and Recruiting

Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida

15 September 2008

Just as important as obtaining a new member, is the retention of present members. In the past several years, we have witnessed an increase in demits and suspensions. This trend denotes a loosening of Knightly ties and should be a matter of serious concern to every Officer, Companion and Sir Knight in every York Rite Body in the state. An application for a demit is a storm signal. Should a demit application received by the Commandery, the Eminent Commander should move swiftly to determine the motive of the Companion and Templar submitting it.

The Companion or Sir Knight who moves to new location may be a former officer or a dedicated Companion of Sir Knight who is only awaiting a call from the York Rite Body in his new location. Personal interviews to determine the cause for the application are essential and may prevent further applications in the future. If the applicant intends to move to another city where a York Rite Body exists, encourage the applicant transfer rather than demit, and then facilitate his successful transfer. If there are no YR Bodies in his new location, encourage him to keep his membership in his home Commandery, as thousands have done before. Often, he will reconsider and council his application for demit. The responsibility rest solely on the Commanders of the Commanderies in the new as well as the old location. There is absolutely no need to lose any member when he moves to another location. It is our responsibility to see that this doesn't happen.

Let us remember that an application for a demit has taken the same vow we have taken, and we must treat him with the same dignity and respect that will effectively and firmly remind him of his allegiance to our Cause. If it is found that the Companion and Sir Knight is ill or financially unable to keep up his dues, then ways and means should be found by the Commandery to retain such member by remitting the dues, or even paying them out of a charitable fund for a reasonable time.

As for suspensions for non-payment of dues - this may originate in the Blue Lodge, Chapter or Council. Under Templar law, it is necessary to start suspension proceedings if a Sir Knight is suspended from other bodies. Of course, the member may become delinquent in his dues to the Commandery, which likewise entails similar proceedings.

However, long before any of the foregoing events occur, an alert Officer or member can learn about such impending difficulty. In the early stages, it is possible to do a great deal more than after written notices have been served by registered mail and embarrassment has occurred. The ingenuity of a good Secretary/Recorder is almost priceless in this field of suspensions for non-payment of dues.

No suspensions for non-payment of dues should become final until the Eminent Commander, Illustrious Master and High Priest is willing to take personal responsibility for certifying that everything humanly possible has been done to prevent such a suspension. Let us recall the phrase about “going the distance of forty miles, to relieve the distress of a worthy Companion and Sir Knight.

Reminder, The M.E.G.H.P. Companion James Rudman, issued Executive Order #1 granting relief to those NPD’s who would like to return by only paying the current years dues. This should help greatly and I commend the Grand High Priest for this worthwhile initiative.

Note: If any York Rite Bodies plan weekend festivals, please let me know, with the date, time location and contact person, and I will put it in the next newsletter, and on the website.

September 27	Mariana	Warren Almond, 850-482-4809
September 13 and 20	Pensacola	William Jacobs, yrbpecola@bellsouth.net
October 4, 10, 11	Jacksonville	Burt McGuire, bmagu2003@bellsouth.net
October 4-11	Tampa	Robert St John, 813-685-4638
October 3-4	Okeechobee	Paul Friend, 772-260-6404
March 6-7(Outdoor)	Box Ranch, Stuart	Paul Friend, 772-266-6404

HENRY A. ADAMS
Eminent Grand Junior Warden
Chairman, Membership Committee

*some excerpts from the book, Making Members, with permission, by Rev. Jan L. Belderstadt, OPC, KYGCH, and from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States.