

Rite Notes
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 January 2010

Membership A New Beginning

As we begin a new year, I congratulate all those newly elected Eminent Commanders, Illustrious Masters and Ex High Priests. Thank you for taking on this important responsibility. It is now time for each of you to use your leadership skills to continue to help our beloved York Rite grow and thrive. We had a good membership year in 2009 bringing in nearly 100 more members than in 2008, however overall growth is determined by new members minus deaths and Non Payment of Dues. I encourage each of you to develop a membership committee to develop a plan how you can approach the non-York Rite members in your surrounding Blue Lodges. Most of the districts are planning festivals in March-April. The work begins now. If you do not have your own festival, join in with your district festival or a festival in an adjoining district. Short of Time classes and slow classes are also an excellent way to bring in new members.

Following is a letter (sent originally last February) that we use in District 6. It has been very successful for us. I suggest that you review it, change it to meet your needs and prepare it for each non-York Rite member in the local Blue Lodges and hand it to them personally Mailing it does not have the same impact. Then follow up with them for questions or until you get a commitment. I suggest that you include a petition with the letter. As soon as they become York Rite members, **put them to work**. Make them feel like they belong.

Dear Brother _____,

By now you should be comfortable in Lodge and gaining experience as a Master Mason. As the Commandery Mentor to our Lodge, feel free to ask me for any help you may need. I know it is not always easy being the “new guy”. The only conciliation I can offer is that we have all been in your situation.

As beautiful and impressive as the Lodge ritual and degrees are, they are far from being everything Masonry has to offer. While the first three degrees teach the cardinal virtues upon which the entire structure of Freemasonry is based, there is more light in Masonry beyond the degree of Master Mason.

I would like to take a few minutes of your time to remind you of the opportunities waiting for you in _____ Commandery No. ____ and in the rest of the York Rite. The Commandery meets on _____ at _____ in the _____ Masonic Temple. Royal Arch Chapter and the Council meets on _____ at _____ pm in the _____ Masonic Temple.

Each of the York Rite Degrees has its own special character and teaches important lessons in Masonry. However, the Commandery Orders are sometime set apart from anything you have experienced. They are very different in character. The first of the Orders is the Red Cross. It

takes place in the time of the Babylonian captivity before the building of the Second Temple. At the end of the evening, a new Order of Knighthood has been created, dedicated to truth. At this point the stage is set for everything that is to follow in the next Orders. Before you are created a Knight of Malta, you will be invested with the Mediterranean Pass and learn the history of this Order of Knighthood. Finally the Order of the Temple is conferred; the only true "Christian" Order. This Order is the longest, most impressive and involving work in Masonry. It asks the candidate to examine his life in the light of his call to a life of integrity, honor and service.

The Commandery actively supports three national philanthropies: The Knight Templar Eye Foundation, The Knight Templar Educational Fund, and the Holy Land Pilgrimage for Christian Ministers.

I hope that you will consider the York Rite and specifically the Knights Templar. I am sure that our work will interest you and we would like you to join with us. We have a lot of good work left to do and would welcome your help.

I would like to invite you and your lady to be our guests at _____.
This will be a good opportunity to meet some of the Commandery members informally and have a good time in the bargain. As you are our guests, there will be no cost to you other than your time, which I hope will be richly rewarded with fellowship.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at _____.

With Highest Fraternal Regards,

As of the 31 December, we have knighted 230 (compared to 133 last year) new Companions and Sir Knights. Only a few months before our Feb/March festivals begin. Let's continue our work during this period and began the process of bringing new brothers into our bodies. However, of more importance, we must keep those members that we currently have. Allow them to take a seat in the leadership of the body. If all seats are filled, encourage them to get involved in the ritual work as part of a degree team, but let them know that they are needed. As we begin to pay our per capita to Grand Commandery, make every effort to bring those lost companions and Sir Knights back into the fold so NPD's cease to exist.

Note: If any York Rite Bodies plan weekend festivals, Short of Time or Slow Classes, 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. Remember, Membership and Retention is everyone's business.

Dist 1

Dist 2 Slow Class

Dist 3 3&10 October Tampa
 March Tampa

Dist 4 Slow Class
 13 Mar, 10 Apr, 8 May Lakeland-Winter Haven YRB
 12 June, 26 June 2010

Dist 5 4,11,18 Feb. 6,27 Mar Eola, Orlando

	September	Eola, Orlando
Dist 6	March 12-13, 2010 October 1-2, 2010	Box Ranch, Stuart (Outdoor degree) Melbourne YRB, Harbor City Lodge
Dist 7	March 2010 October 29-30-31	Jax YRB Jax York Rite Temple
Dist 8	Feb 2010 March Sep/Oct/Nov 2010	Gainesville Ocala Ocala
Dist 9	Feb 2010	Tallahassee
Dist 10	March 2010 3 & 10 October 2010	Pensacola Pensacola/Mariana

If any of the above dates are incorrect or if there are any additional dates please let me know, I will include them next time.

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

*some excerpts, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, p.9 and Grand Commandery of Florida,, And from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

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