

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

Retention is Critically Important

As we begin our new York Rite year, It is time to rethink our future. I don't mean just you membership committee, but the entire Florida York Rite of Freemasonry. One person can't do it. It takes all of our York Rite members in every body to reach out to worthy Masons who are not York Rite members and discuss with them what we are about. Many districts have begun their festivals and we have already Knighted 33 new Knights since January. Keep up the good work. Just as important, maybe more important is retaining those that we have. Those valuable companions and Sir Knights who for one reason or another, have gone astray, have stopped coming or have been dropped.

In the last several years we have witnessed an increased in demits and suspensions. This trend denotes a loosening of Knightly ties, and should be a matter of serious concern to every officer and Sir Knight in each Chapter, Council and Sir Knight across our state. An application for a demit is a storm signal. Should a demit application be received by the Body each High Priest, Ill Master and Commander should move quickly to determine the motive of the member submitting it.

A Standing Committee should be appointed in every Body to inquire into applications for demit. Personal interviews to determine the cause for the application is essential and may prevent further applications in the future. If the applicant for demit intends to move to another city where a YRB exists, encourage the applicant to transfer rather than demit and then facilitate his successful transfer. If there is no YRB in his new location, encourage him to keep his membership in his home Body, as thousands have done before. Often he will reconsider and cancel his application for demit.

The Companion or Sir Knight who moves to a new location may be a former Officer or a dedicated member who is just awaiting a call from the YRB in his new location to join with them. If the demit applicant is neglected, he may never again become an active member. The responsibility rests squarely with the Officers of the new and 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 that same dignity and respect that will effectively and firmly remind him of his allegiance to our Cause. If it is found that the Companion or Sir Knight is ill of financially unable to keep up with is 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 (where the Council is a pre-requisite). Under Templar law, it is necessary to start suspension proceedings if the Companion or Sir Knight is suspended from other bodies. Of course, the member may become delinquent in his dues to the YRB, 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 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 Recorder is almost priceless in this field of suspensions for non-payment of dues.

No suspension for non-payment of dues should become final until the Eminent Commander 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 “going the distance of forty miles, to relieve the distress of a worthy Companion or Sir Knight.”

Our Feb/March, April, festivals have begin by the time you receive this. Lets continue our work during this period and began the process of bringing new brothers into our bodies. 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.

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.

Knighted

Dist 1	24 Apr	Miami/Ft Laud. YRB (Chap/Council)	
Dist 2	9 Feb, 9 Mar, 13 Apr 11 May, 8 June	Ft Myers YRB	
Dist 3	3 & 10 October 3 & 10 April	Tampa Tampa	12
Dist 4	Slow Class 13 Mar, 10 Apr, 8 May 12 June, 26 June 2010 27 Apr	Lakeland-Winter Haven YRB Highlands YRB(at Sebring) (Chap/Council)	
Dist 5	4, 11, 18 Feb. 6, 27 Mar September	Eola, Orlando Eola, Orlando	5
Dist 6	March 12-13, 2010 October 1-2, 2010	Fort Pierce YRB Melbourne YRB, Harbor City Lodge	12
Dist 7	March 18-20, 2010 October 29-30-31 3, 4 Apr 4, 5, 6 Nov	Jax YRB Jax York Rite Temple Palatka Palatka	15 6
Dist 8	2, 13, 16 Feb, 2, 6 Mar 2010 May/June 2010 Sep/Oct/Nov 2010	Gainesville Ocala Ocala	1
Dist 9	10 April 2010	Tallahassee	
Dist 10	27 Mar. & 10 Apr 2010 3 & 10 October 2010	Pensacola Pensacola/Mariana	5

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

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 37 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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