



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



## Building Membership and Attendance

There is a story that Jesus tells about a king who was hosting an elaborate wedding banquet for his son. No expense was to be spared as this was to be the greatest event of the year. He sent out the invitations, only to discover that the attendance would be very poor. Everyone had an excuse as to why they could not attend. The event looked to be a total failure with lots of leftover food. The band would only play for a few people. There would be plenty of empty seats.

The king's servants even go in person to invite those who were to be guests. Some of those invited were indignant, even mistreating the servants who had delivered the kind invitations. The king, enraged at all the excuses, decides to do something different. He ordered his servants to find others to replace those who would not attend. And, according to Matthew 22:10, the hall was filled.

Does this sound familiar? It should because most of the members of a dying lodge or York Rite Body are generally pretty happy with what is happening within the Body. Most are unaware of the situation and, sadly, probably don't care. Those who could care will often wring their hands and say, "It's too bad" before they go on their way.

Your YRB didn't get into this situation overnight. It has taken many years to build up this state of apathy. A person will always fill their 24 hours a day. If the organization has slipped into maintenance mode, it will be easy for members to drift into other things.

When reactivating an old Chapter/Council/Commandery, some members may even resent the "intrusion" of the Body into their lives. They're happy just paying dues once a year. Somehow, being able to list membership in their obituary comforts them.

So what is the solution to rebuilding York Rite attendance and membership? The answer is simple. The process is a bit more difficult. It takes finding new members.

### **The Power of Image Building**

Truth is, few people want to join a dying organization. If the organization is perceived as not viable, very few will want to participate. Older members, as stated above, are often happy with the way things are. They're not looking for change. New members will bring new life into any organization. They do it with enthusiasm and excitement. While not everyone who joins will become involved, enough will get active to make a difference.

When there is a felling of new life and that things are happening again, old members begin to

drift back. New members can be brought into the group. Here's how to do it.

1. **Build on your successes.** Start small, but do some projects. It can be dinner before the meeting, a special activity, etc. It doesn't have to require a lot of work, and if your group is small, keep it easy. When it succeeds, let the members know that it has been successful.

2. **Keep a positive attitude.** Attitudes are contagious. Negative attitudes are easy to acquire.

3. **Be a Team Builder.** Building for success requires building people into a team. The presiding officer is the coach. As the coach, you should encourage each member, to bring out their best.

4. **Tell the world what you are doing.** Communication is always a problem with organizations that are not doing well. No one knows what they're doing (if anything at all). The old adage "out of sight, out of mind" is very true. Remember, almost all your inactive don't wake up in the morning thinking, "I wonder what's going on at the lodge?" And as for the community, they probably don't even know you exist.

5. **Plan, plan, plan.** Don't skimp on the planning stages. Proper planning does indeed bring positive results. Your successes, no matter how small, are most important when you are trying to change the membership perspective.

6. **Dream.** Every organization needs a vision. The founders of your lodge or York Rite Body had dreams and visions. Over time these visions and dreams begin to fade as the organization enters maintenance mode. Things begin to be done because of tradition. When new things are not tried, a lodge or YRB becomes stale. Without excitement and a sense of purpose, dry rot sets in.

7. **Invite people, always.** Successful organizations are tireless in promoting themselves. The members are always extending an invitation to others to join them. They do it by talking about the fun they have and what it has done for their lives.

8. **It is easier to bring in new members than to reactivate inactive members.**

9. **Mentor your new members.** When a person joins, spend time with them. Have someone work with them one on one to understand the signs, the lessons protocol and more. This becomes the connection to keep a new member active.

10. **Be a friend and brother.** Fraternal groups are about friendship and brotherhood. So why not create an attitude among the members.

Membership growth and retention is a slow process. At first it may look hopeless. But persevere, and you will find it easier and easier to build. Remember, success does breed success

Start small, publicize, be positive, and you will reap the harvest.

**Our Spring 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.**

				<u><b>Knighted</b></u>
Dist 1	24 Apr	Miami/Ft Laud.YRB (Chap/Council) 25,Melita		
Dist 2	9 Feb,9 Mar, 13 Apr 11 May, 8 June  21 Sep, 12&26 Oct	Ft Myers YRB      Highlands YRB(at Sebring)	(Chap/Council)	5 (Orders)
Dist 3	3 & 10 April 5 & 12 Oct	Tampa Tampa		3
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)	Bartow (Order s)
Dist 5	4,11,18 Feb. 6,27 Mar  11 & 25 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	Gainesville		1

	May/June 2010	Ocala	
	Sep/Oct/Nov 2010	Ocala	
Dist 9	10 April 2010	Tallahassee	
Dist 1027	Mar. & 10 Apr 2010	Pensacola	5
	3 & 10 October 2010	Pensacola/Mariana	
Spring 09, Knighted	76	Spring 2010, Knighted	52

**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 Captain General  
 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., Baderstadt, Jon L. New Life for Dying Lodges and Chapters, And from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

Hm Ph: 321-726-6971  
E-mail: hadams1@aol.com

Cell: 321-795-8316

Fax: 321-951-9680