



Rite Notes

Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 February 2013



Companions and Sir Knights

In surveying the strengths and weaknesses of your York Rite Body, you have probably already seen the problems but failed to recognize them. You go into Chapter, Council or Commandery, and you are lucky if you have enough to open. Your bills get paid, there is probably a little bit of coffee in the pot afterward. A few stand talking while everyone else beats it out of the door. It's not a late night and not much happens. Sometime on the way home you wonder, "why did I even bother to show up?" Maybe you are the High Priest, Ill. Master or the Eminent Commander, and you really wonder why showed up, and why you are doing this. In fact, you may have been Em. Commander several times which is quite common in dying organizations because there is a lack of others willing to be involved. Don't despair, In this chapter. We will attempt to identify some of your problems.

The first thing is to understand the history of your York Rite Body. When was it founded? Where did it start? Who were the founders? How did the membership grow? Where were their struggles? How did they overcome and strive? These same stories can be used to excite members of your Body, as they began to realize the rich history of your organization. Sometimes, it is in these early years when they were building the Body, other times it is in a period where thing were slowing down. That is when it took the courage of one or two men to keep the York Rite Body alive and to still move forward. Their inspiration to you is that they have been there before. Look at those glory years where they were taking in so many candidates a year they could hardly keep up with the work. With the dinners that filled the entire dining room. The sidelines were always full.

Emphasize the Positive

We have set in many meetings where the "East" proclaims, "We sent out the letters, we called everybody and look who showed up." That is the wrong approach. Always be thankful for who comes out because that means that they care. Those who come on their own volition are the ones who truly care. They form the nucleus. Each person contributes a part of their personality to the group. Some are natural leaders, some are good in the kitchen, some are natural followers: they are willing to help do anything if there is somebody to provide the leadership.

In identifying the strengths of each person, you have a better idea how to best utilize them. This makes them happier, and your York Rite Body stronger. Even if you only have six people coming out to your meeting, that is a core to start with. In that small group, there is strength.

Community Awareness

What kind of community do you live in? Is it agriculture? Urban? Growing suburb, or a dying small town? These external factors will have a strong impact on your organization. If the pool of people available to join is getting smaller, that could be a problem, and a much closer relationship with the surrounding Blue Lodges needs to be cultivated. Many small communities have thriving lodges and York Rite Bodies, where some of the larger cities have difficulty in opening their Bodies.

What is the average age of your community. Is it old? Is it young? Does it have a strong school system? Good schools usually attract young families. Families that have the means often move away from schools in trouble. That can impact your membership.

Identifying Problems

What are the problems that exist in your Lodge or York Rite Body? They usually fall into one of the four categories as follows:

- Finance**
- Membership**
- Lack of Vision**
- Lack of Activities**

A healthy organization is positive in all four of these areas. Finance is good. They may have to struggle to make ends meet but they are accomplishing it. They have a strong active membership that is supportive and cares about one another. They have a plan and they have a vision. All of this is fundamental for a strong organization.

When one or more of these areas is weak, the organization begins to wobble and eventually it falls apart. If there is a lack of finances, there is a lack of activities. If the membership has strong willed with internal bickering and separating of new members into factions, others will begin to leave.

If there is no vision and no plan, nothing is going to happen. If there are no activities, interest begins to die. No one feels that it is worth their time to show up except for a handful and dedicated.

I hope these suggestions are helpful for you to begin a revitalization of your York Rite Bodies, and remember, recruiting is a must.

We cannot wish away our declining membership; we must be individually accountable for growing our business. Don't wait for someone else to do what you can do now.

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>KNIGHTED</u>
1	15 & 16 Mar 25 & 26 Oct	Miami Miami	
2			
3	2, 9 Mar 5, 12 Oct		
4	23 Feb, 23 Mar		
5	22 Feb, 9 & 23 Mar 24 Aug, 7 & 21 Sept	Sanford/Sanford/Eola Sanford/Sanford/Eola	
6	12 & 13 Apr 11 & 12 Oct	Melbourne Ft Pierce	
7			
8	5,9,19 Feb	Gainesville	
9	Mar Jan (slow class)	Mariana Panama City	
10	2 Mar, 30 Mar 14 Sep, 26 Sep	Pensacola	
Total 2012 Knightings			152
Total 2013 Knightings			

If any of the above dates are incorrect OR if you have dates or numbers that should be changed, please let me know. Also, as soon as your area determine the dates for the Spring and Fall festivals, PLEASE let me know so they may be included.

Henry A Adams

HENRY A. ADAMS
Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander
Chairman, Membership Committee

“Every Christian Mason Should Be A Knight Templar”

some excerpts, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, reprint from Aug 2009, intro. and Grand Commandery of Florida,, Beaderstadt, Jon L. Making Members, also “New Life for Dying Lodges and Chapters, 2004, pg 21-29, And from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

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