

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

S. K. Fred Gerdom

Right Eminent Grand Commander 2016

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Grand Commander's Message

This year we are celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Grand Encampment. Let's stop to think about this for a moment. 200 years is a long time. The War of 1812 had just finished dealing with the issue of American exports, our ability to live without external government, and exerting our rights as a free country. We were still growing into the great country we are today. This growing never should end, we must evolve, change, and look to new ideas and focus. The men who met to form the Grand Encampment so long ago also had a vision. The vision to guide and standardize our ritual, privileges, uniform, and even our ability to work within the system to evolve.

I have traveled this state over the past few years and met many Sir Knights who also have ideas to keep us moving forward. They have shared with me their thoughts and practices. The Grand Commandery traveled two years ago the state to assist with conferring the Orders. We saw the excitement of the newly knighted fraters. Their awe in seeing that the Grand Commandery Officers were there at that pinnacle of their York Rite journey. At the same time, we saw the Sir Knights who worked hard to make that day the most meaningful and impressive moment for those new Sir Knights. That scene which played out across the state left a mark on me. To see those same Sir Knights, who just two years ago were not a part of us, use their knowledge to keep us moving, is something we should all encourage.

My goals this year are also simple. I want to see us take pride in who we are. We are all the Grand Commandery of Florida. When we present ourselves, in uniform, we stand out in a crowd. We know we need to have our uniforms in perfect condition to show the world, and, our fellow fraters, we are proud of being a Sir Knight. I have instructed the District Instructors this year to inspect uniforms ensuring that each Sir Knight's uniform meets our guidelines. Let us wear our uniform with pride. I am sending out the call for all Sir Knights to attend the District meetings, in full uniform, to participate in the openings. We, as the new generations of Sir Knights, must take pride and ownership of our great fraternity. It is ours to guide, with knowledge from those in the past, to pass on to those who have not yet discovered who we are.

We, as the Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida, have worked our District Meetings calendar to coincide with the District Meetings of the Grand Master of

Florida. We need to support our Blue Lodges and our Grand Master of Masons in Florida. The Grand Commandery's portion of the District Meeting will be spent performing the Full Form Opening with as many Sir Knights in uniform as possible. Each Grand Officer will be at his station in the opening, unless a local member wants to take the position. The decision to use the District meeting time to teach was an easy one. This is something we did many years ago and has fallen out of practice. We must reconnect with our past if we hope to move forward. We need to know where we came from, before we can move ahead.

Our first district meeting will be on **July 9th** at the Pensacola York Rite (189 West Airport Blvd, Pensacola, FL) while our Grand Master will be meeting on July 8th in Crestview in the evening and July 9th in Pensacola after our meeting. The second district meeting will be held on **July 23rd** at Leesburg Lodge #58 (200 Richey Street, Leesburg, FL) while our Grand Master of Masons will be meeting in Leesburg on July 22nd and then Daytona on July 23rd. Our meeting on July 23rd is also the same date the Grand Encampment will be holding their celebration of 200 years in New York City.

I attended the Ascension service at Castle Ottis in St. Augustine on May 7th with Taylor Commandery #28 acting as the host. We had the Grand Prelate, SK David Aponte, REPGC, and many others Sir Knights including wives. It was a beautiful service held in a castle that was appropriate for such an event. I look forward to attending next year with as many Sir Knights as possible.



Fraternally and in the name of our Lord and Savior,
SK Fred Gerdom, Right Eminent Grand Commander

DISTRICT MEETINGS - AUGUST

District 8 - August 13, 2016 - R. T. Schafer Lodge #350
2505 NE 9th St., Gainesville, FL 32609

District 3 - August 20, 2016 - Tampa York Rite Center
4210 Oklahoma Ave., Tampa, FL 33616-1128

Schedule: District School of Instruction - 11:00 AM
Lunch at Noon Meeting Begins at 1:00 PM

"...We will not slip into the darkness of the night nor give up our right to exist as Knights..."