



RITE NOTES
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 October 2016

Stimulating Membership Interest and Attendance

Companions and Sir Knights,

Leadership is vitally important in all York Rite activity but never more urgently needed than in the task of stimulating membership interest and attendance. The good leader finds ways of interesting men to work for the good of the Order. There are countless ways of challenging their interest. There is no rule of thumb that everyone must follow. A good leader will display initiative and will devise and invent ways to inspire the interest of the Chapter, Council and Commandery. The Companions and Sir Knights must be made to feel that they are Part of the Team - and not just spectators. The best way to get them to feel that way is to actually put them to work as part of the team. There are so many tasks to perform and so many jobs to do that no Sir Knight ought to be left out.

Here are some places to put men to work:

1. Membership on one of the many Regular or Standing Committees.
2. Membership on one of the Committees for Special Projects
3. Membership on a Drill Team
4. Membership on a Ritualistic Team
5. Membership on a York Rite Festival Committee.
6. Membership on the Property or Locker Room Committee.
7. Membership on one of the many, newly created committees.

A little ingenuity will reveal many more ways to put Sir Knights to work. Experience shows that men will respond and will begin making suggestions on their own part to improve the work. All it needs is a determined leader. It was Colonel John Glenn's father who told his famous son when he was a boy: The world will stand aside for a man who knows where he is going.

Attendance at a York Rite meeting is a by-product of arousing interest in York Rite activity. Attendance is most important to any Masonic organization - but particularly where we depend so largely upon manpower. Only by attendance of dedicated and devoted Templars can we progress and prosper. There are numerous ways to stimulate attendance, among which are the following:

1. Arrange a York Rite Festival
2. Hold Special Nights
 - a. Honoring some Companion or Sir Knight on his birthday
 - b. Awarding a pin on an membership anniversary (25th, 40th, 50th)
 - c. Honoring a Companion or Sir Knight upon some civic achievement
 - d. Honoring a Companion or Sir Knight who has performed outstanding service
 - e. Honoring Past Commanders, High Priests and Illustrious Masters
 - f. Receiving and honoring distinguished Masons, Grand Officers, etc.
 - g. Honoring an anniversary night of your Chapter, Council or Commandery
3. Publishing a York Rite Bulletin. This is of tremendous importance because it will be the means of telling the members of coming events. It will carry the Commanders orders, and will elaborate on social affairs, entertainment and speakers. The York Rite Bulletin is the Regular and continuous contact between the Commander and the Sir Knights. The Bulletin does not need to be elaborate or expensive; however it should be attractive and informative. The use of the names of Companions and Sir Knights give it greater appeal. A story about Templar projects will increase the readers interest. As for finding an Editor - the average Commandery will be pleasantly surprised to see how much talent it has along this line if they only look.

4. Organizing a York Rite stated meeting night. In many sections of the country, The Chapter, Council and Commandery (located in the same town) can meet on the same evening for their Stated Conclave. Short sequential meetings are critical to success. Their routine business is transacted in one evening instead of spending three separate nights. This speeds up business and leaves other night for the conferral of degrees and Orders. It also tends to unify the three bodies of the York Rite and increases membership attendance and participation.
5. Organizing a Ladies Auxiliary or affiliation with the Social Order of the Beauceant, composed of Templar ladies. If the women attend a meeting at the Masonic Temple, it is surprising how attendance of the Sir Knights grows. Many women would welcome an organization of their own to assist Templary or to perform some useful work for the community. A ladies organization, meeting on the same night and at the same place as the Commandery has frequently resulted in doubling the attendance at the Commandery Conclave.
6. Designate a night to honor each of the Blue Lodges, Chapters, Councils, Scottish Rite, and Shrine of the Community.
7. Conduct all meetings on a business-like basis. After all is said and done. One of the best ways to secure attendance is for the Commander to conduct all meetings on a business-like basis and let it be known in advance that-
 - a. Each meeting will be on time;
 - b. Conferral of Orders will be done with dignity and finish promptly;
 - c. The Commander will plan ahead and follow the agenda.
 - d. The Conclave will adjourn at a reasonable hour; and
 - e. Social events of general interest with outstanding speakers, excellent food, good music, or other exciting entertainment are scheduled throughout the year.

In my travels to various Commanderies throughout the South East, I find that by advertising the degree festivals outside of our district, it becomes easier for a candidate to receive the degrees. We cannot hope to build our membership if we cannot provide weekend degree programs within a reasonable time period and distance. One or two Sir Knights should visit the other Commanderies within your District and discuss ways in which this can be accomplished. Each Commandery should provide the teams for two or three different degrees. If this cannot be accomplished within the district, pursue an neighboring district, until all degrees are filled. No candidate should have to drive 100 miles to attend the degrees. This is how we lose candidates. Finally, a set date and location each year should be established well in advance so candidates can properly plan. If Scottish Rite and the Shrine can do it, and they are successful, we should also.

**There is no substitute for an all-out campaign to strengthen and build our membership.
New Membership by District 2016:**

DIST	LOCATION	#	DIST	LOCATION	#
1	West Palm Beach	4	6	Cocoa	5
	Fort Lauderdale	4		Melbourne	1
	Miami	4		Fort Pierce	1
	Florida Keys		7	Jacksonville	4
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity	1		Duval	
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity	1		Fernandina	
	Everglades			St. Augustine	
	Fort Myers		Palatka		
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)	2	8	Lake City	3
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)	1		Lawtey	
	Clearwater (Springtime)			Gainesville	8
4	Lakeland	2		Inverness (Ocala)	2
	Plant City	3	9	Tallahassee	8
	Sebring (Highlands)	2		Marianna	10
5	Daytona (Halifax)			Panama City	2
	Lake Sumter		10	Fort Walton Beach	1
	Sanford			Crestview	5
	Orlando	3		Pensacola	3

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 149:

A Commandery to which a Sojourner presents a Petition for the Orders, except persons in the active Army, Navy, Air Force, U.S. Public Health Service, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the National Aeronautical Space Agency as prescribed in Section 82 of the Constitution shall immediately notify the Commandery having jurisdiction over the petitioner and obtain its waiver of jurisdiction over the Petitioner and obtain its waiver of jurisdiction before receiving and acting upon the Petition. (1964, p. 321-322)

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

When a Commandery accepts a Petition from a Sojourner - a resident of another jurisdiction - and confers of Orders upon him without obtaining the consent of the Commandery having territorial jurisdiction, and pays the penalty provided by Section 82 of the Constitution of the Grand Encampment, the status of the Sojourner who was thus created a Knight Templar is that of an ipso facto member of the Commandery conferring the Orders. (1940, p. 65, 66, 282 & 284, No. 14 & 18, Norris, 1988 digest - 339.)

A former resident of Louisiana, now a five year resident of Panama City, Panama, it being Templar unoccupied territory, cannot petition a Commandery in New Orleans for the Orders.

The territorial jurisdiction of a Commandery in Louisiana cannot be extended into a foreign country. (1946, p. 67 & 242, No.5, Orr, 1988 digest-219)

Under the provisions of Section 147 of the Statutes of the Grand Encampment, the territorial jurisdiction of a Grand Commandery is limited to the boundaries of the country, state, territory or district in which it is located and it cannot legally extend the jurisdiction, of any of its Commanderies beyond its borders, hence, it follows that any such Commandery cannot legally receive an original petition of one whose domicile is in another jurisdiction. (1946, p. 71 & 242, No. 8, Orr, 1988 digest - 218.)

If the Grand Commandery Regulation or Laws prohibit nominations from the floor for Officers of the Grand Commandery, the Grand commander can prevent nominations from being made from the floor; but in the absence of such law prohibiting such nominations, nominations from the floor are permissible, and a member of the Grand Commandery has the right to request the privilege of the floor to make such nominations. (1961, p. 51, No. 25, Wieber, 1988 Digest - 130)

Finally, a reminder to each Secretary/Recorder, you must submit your changes in your MONTHLY REPORT to the Grand Secretary/Recorder and Recorders must report all changes to YRIS. Remember, if your new members are not in Y.R.I.S., they will not receive the Knight Templar Magazine.

First line signers should be included on all new companions on the monthly report, in the line of OCCUPATION (Commandery).

Please send me a roster or completed Data Sheets of each new member from your festival whether they were knighted or completed Chapter/Council. This includes all members, not just those belonging to your body.

We cannot excuse our declining membership and we must be individually accountable for growing our body. Don't wait for someone else to do what you can do now.

New Membership by York Rite Body 2016:

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1	1-2 April	WPB(4), Miami(4), Ft Pierce(1), Ft Lauderdale(4)	13
2			
3	5 & 12 Mar	Tampa(2)	2
4	6 & 27 Feb, 2 Apr	Lakeland(2), Plant City(3), Sebring(2)	7
5	12 & 19 Mar	Eola(3), Melbourne(1), Brevard(5),	9
6	27 Jan, 12 Feb	Brevard (Degrees 1-3)	
	1 & 2 Apr	West Palm Beach	
7		Jacksonville(4)	4
8	16 & 20 Feb, 1 & 11-12 Mar	Gainesville(1)	1
	6 Aug	Gainesville (3), Ocala (1)	4
9	23 Jan, 6 Feb	Tallahassee(7)(2), Lake City(3), Mariana(4)(6), Panama City(1)(1), Crestview(1)	26
10	26 Mar, 9 Apr	Pensacola(3), Crestview(4), Ft Walton(1)	8
	3 Sep, 17 Sep	Pensacola	
TOTAL 2015 KNIGHTINGS			134
TOTAL 2016 KNIGHTINGS			74

Crestview	(1) Chap/Council	Lakeland	(1) Chap/Council
Miami	(6) Chap/Council	Manatee/Bradenton	(1) Chap/Council
Ft Lauderdale	(3) Chap/Council	Pensacola	(1) Chap/Council
Sebring	(1) Chap/Council	Beach	(1) Chap/Council
Eola	(1) Chap only		

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 determines the dates for the Fall Festival, PLEASE let me know so they may be included.

Fraternally,

Henry A Adams

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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 A New Life for Dying Lodges and Chapters, 2004, pg75-77, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006