



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

Ideas to Improve Interest and Attendance

Companions and Sir Knights,

The following is a sampling of ideas that we can use to improve interest and attendance:

1. Stress the importance of fellowship. Encourage those who attend regularly to share their ideas about improving fellowship.
2. Give someone the job of greeting all members as they enter the asylum. Make sure that this person knows that it is his job to make members feel welcome when they enter.
3. NEVER allow a new member to sit alone in the asylum.
4. Make sure the High Priest, Ill. Master or Commander circulates among the members before the meeting.
5. Hold introductions to a minimum. Long introductions are a waste of time. Make all introductions with sincerity. They should be warm and personal.
6. Use the time after closing to reinforce fellowship. Thank the members for coming, and ask for feedback. How satisfied were the members and guests of the quality of fellowship that they received. Follow up with a personal note to a new member or guest thanking him for being with you.
7. Include the names of new members in your newsletter with a brief summary of their interests and the names of their wives and children.
8. Place a suggestion box in a prominent place in the asylum.
9. Give members a questionnaire they can use to evaluate the level of fellowship and activities.
10. Do not waste time. The leading cause of dissatisfaction among members is that meetings were boring and that too much time was wasted. Many of our Senior members come to our York Rite Body for relaxation, fellowship and fun. Spend less time with business and more time with fellowship. Adding some excitement and interest to the meetings will help bring members back.
11. Limit remarks at the end of the meeting. Do not allow *Apersonal agendas@* to mar an otherwise efficient meeting.
12. When planning meetings, consider the interests of the youthful and mature members equally. The older member may want things to remain unchanged; the youthful member may expect variety and

excitement. Remember that newer members are determining whether they did the right thing in joining. They will evaluate your plan for the evening on their terms.

13. **Focus on Quality!** No matter what you do, do it well. Nothing works as well as high quality to achieve member satisfaction.

14. Make something special happen at least six times a year. Force yourself to plan in detail for the meeting; this forces you to consider the desires of the members. Plan at least six months in advance and involve your members in the planning.

a. Call on individuals in your community to provide excellent programs.

b. The principle of a local school can speak about the scholarship needs of students or ways the Commandery can help improve the school.

c. A financial planner can help members discover important financial or retirement services available to them and answer their questions.

d. A travel agent can speak about trips that are available to individuals or groups and how to save money.

e. Show any number of videotapes that will interest the members. They can be educational, fraternally related or just plain entertaining.

f. Invite a strategic planning expert or futurist from a local college or consulting firm to meet with the Commandery about how the needs of men have changed and will continue to change.

g. Ask every member to be involved by accepting an assigned date to lead a discussion on a relevant topic to Templary or Masonry. The Masonic Service Association of North America publishes a monthly "Short Talk Bulletin", a great source of relevant information.
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15. Constantly focus on communications up, down and across the entire organization. Dress up and spruce up your existing publications and communications to members.

16. Consider at least a quarterly publication mailed to the member and his family.

17. Develop a list of men who have been raised to Master Mason in the past three years and ask the officers or volunteers in the Commandery to contact each by phone and invite him to a special meeting, a dinner, or a "Friends Night".

18. Mail remembrances to members and their wives on behalf of the Commandery on significant holidays, birthdays or anniversaries. Remember, every time a communication comes into the home from the Commandery, it raises the awareness of the member.

19. Maintain an attractive bulletin board and keep it current with member related news and information.

20. Improve the quality of the photographs and graphic images you use. Find a member who may be a designer or graphic artist with computer desktop publishing experience and let him review all communications, then listen to his recommendations.

21. Assign every new Sir Knight a "Buddy". This can be the top line signer of his petition or a fellow Sir Knight about the same age who agrees to be at each stated and special meeting for at least six months. This "Buddy" keeps close personal tabs on his new charge and assists him with his assimilation. He also introduces this new member to other members at every opportunity.

22. Watch for any loss of interest of a member. If attendance starts to lag, get in touch with him immediately and determine the cause. Don't let more than a few meetings to pass before contacting him. Nothing works as well with members as personal contact. Try to meet face-to-face.

23. Contact all new members who have joined over the last five years, but have been absent from the Commandery. Listen to them tell you the reasons why they have lost interest. Share the exciting new things that are happening in the Commandery. Agree to assist them with the proper signs and words if they have forgotten.

24. Identify the skills, talents and interests of each of your members, especially new members. A man joins an organization with the expectation that he will somehow be involved with the members, involved in the leadership, and involved with the community. Understand that involvement means using a man's talents. Match their involvement with their gifts and talents.

25. Reward real performance and real contributions in some meaningful way.

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

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 169: Commanderies - Consolidation

The Grand Commander or the Grand Commandery may investigate and may determine to initiate proceedings to consolidate two or more Commanderies if in their judgement it should be undertaken. He shall cause a conference to be held by him with the Eminent Commanders involved. Two or more Commanderies having concurrent jurisdiction or stationed in adjoining jurisdictions may be consolidated into one Commandery, provided, that the proposition for such consolidation shall be presented at a Stated Conclave of each Commandery, which proposition shall be acted upon at a subsequent Stated Conclave. Notice thereof shall be mailed to all members of each Commandery involved at least ten days prior to such Conclave.

A consolidation shall not be effected unless a least two-thirds of the Members present at each Commandery vote in favor of the proposition. Two or more Commanderies having thus decided to consolidate may unite under the charter of one of said Commanderies, retaining the Officers thereof, or they may elect new Officers by a proper Dispensation. The Charter or Charters surrendered must be deposited with the Grand Recorder. (1955, p. 488-492)(1967, p.86-87)

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

Grand Encampment laws govern consolidation of Commanderies and Grand Commanderies may not pass by-laws governing the subject. (1931, p. 82 & 267, No. 9, Sharp)

Where the word "ballot" is used in Templar law it means a secret ballot; when the language of the statute is by "vote", a show of hands is the proper procedure. (1937, p. 39 & 339, No. 23, Agnew, 1988 digest - 30 & 407.

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), Sunshine(2)	4
4	6 & 27 Feb, 2 Apr	Lakeland(2), Plant City(3), Sebring(2)	7
5	12 & 19 Mar	Eola(3), Melbourne(2), Brevard(5),	10
	29 Oct	Lakeland(1), Lake Sumter(9), Sanford(2)	12
6	1 & 2 Apr	West Palm Beach	
7	Feb	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)	25
10	26 Mar, 9 Apr	Pensacola(3), Crestview(4), Ft Walton(1)	8
	3 Sep, 17 Sep	Pensacola(3), Ft Walton(1)	4
TOTAL 2016 KNIGHTINGS			92
TOTAL 2015 KNIGHTINGS			134

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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ÆEvery 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, Baderstadt, 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

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