



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

RETENTION IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT

Companions and Sir Knights,

As we begin our new York Rite year, It is time to rethink our future. I don't mean just you membership committee, but the entire Florida York Rite of Freemasonry. One person can't do it. It takes all of our York Rite members in every body to reach out to worthy Masons who are not York Rite members and discuss with them what we are about. Many districts have begun their festivals and we have already Knighted 33 new Knights since January. Keep up the good work. Just as important, maybe more important is retaining those that we have. Those valuable companions and Sir Knights who for one reason or another, have gone astray, have stopped coming or have been dropped.

In the last several years we have witnessed an increased in demits and suspensions. This trend denotes a loosening of Knightly ties, and should be a matter of serious concern to every officer and Sir Knight in each Chapter, Council and Sir Knight across our state. An application for a demit is a storm signal. Should a demit application be received by the Body each High Priest, Ill Master and Commander should move quickly to determine the motive of the member submitting it.

A Standing Committee should be appointed in every Body to inquire into applications for demit. Personal interviews to determine the cause for the application is essential and may prevent further applications in the future. If the applicant for demit intends to move to another city where a YRB exists, encourage the applicant to transfer rather than demit and then facilitate his successful transfer. If there is no YRB in his new location, encourage him to keep his membership in his home Body, as thousands have done before. Often he will reconsider and cancel his application for demit.

The Companion or Sir Knight who moves to a new location may be a former Officer or a dedicated member who is just awaiting a call from the YRB in his new location to join with them. If the demit applicant is neglected, he may never again become an active member. The responsibility rests squarely with the Officers of the new and old location. There is absolutely no need to lose any member when he moves to another location! It is our responsibility to see that this doesn't happen.

Let us remember that an application for a demit has taken the same vow we have taken, and we must treat him with that same dignity and respect that will effectively and firmly remind him of his allegiance to our Cause. If it is found that the Companion or Sir Knight is ill of financially unable to keep up with is dues, then ways and means should be found by the Commandery to retain such member by remitting the dues, or even paying them out of a charitable fund for a reasonable time.

As for suspensions for non-payment of dues, this may originate in the Blue Lodge, Chapter or Council (where the Council in a pre-requisite). Under Templar law, it is necessary to start suspension proceedings if the Companion or Sir Knight is suspended from other bodies. Of course, the member may become delinquent in his dues to the YRB, which likewise entails similar proceedings.

However, long before any of the foregoing events occur, an alert Officer or member can learn about such impending difficulty. In early stages, it is possible to do a great deal more than after written notices have been served by registered mail and embarrassment has occurred. The ingenuity of a good Recorder is almost priceless in this field of suspensions for non-payment of dues.

No suspension for non-payment of dues should become final until the Eminent Commander is willing to take personal responsibility for certifying that everything humanly possible has been done to prevent such a suspension. In Templar law, a trial must also be conducted before a suspension can be put into effect. Let us recall the phrase “going the distance of forty miles, to relieve the distress of a worthy Companion or Sir Knight.”

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	10	
	Fort Lauderdale	4		Melbourne	3	
	Miami	4		Fort Pierce	1	
	Florida Keys		7	Jacksonville	4	
Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity	1	Duval				
Sarasota/Venice/Trinity	1	Fernandina				
Everglades		St. Augustine				
2	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	4		Pensacola	3	

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 171: Commanderies - Surrender of Charter

The Charter of a Commandery may be surrendered by a two-third vote of its members present at any Stated Conclave; provided, that a written Resolution proposing such surrender shall have been read and filed with the Recorder, at the Stated Conclave next immediately preceeding, and that at least twenty-one days notice of such proposal shall have been given to each Member of the Commandery. (1955, p. 492-496)

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

When the charter of a Commandery has been surrendered or arrested, a former member who has been suspended for non-payment of dues may apply for reinstatement or condition of good standing to the Grand Commandery having jurisdiction. (1919, p. 59 & 303, No.29, Smith)

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)

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 4-5 Nov	West Palm Beach, Ft Pierce, Melb(2), Cocoa(5)	7
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(3), Ft Walton(1)	4
TOTAL 2015 KNIGHTINGS			134
TOTAL 2016 KNIGHTINGS			85

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		

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.

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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Chairman, Grand York Rite Membership Program**

AEvery 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 ANew 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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