



RITE NOTES
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 January 2017

**RETENTION AND MEMBERSHIP ARE
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 your membership committee, but the entire York Rite of Freemasonry. One person can't do it all. It takes all of our York Rite members to reach out to worthy Masons who are not York Rite members and discuss with them what we are about. Our districts will begin their festivals in March/April time frame. 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 increase in demits and suspensions. This trend denotes a loosening of Knightly ties, and should be a matter of serious concern to every Companion and Sir Knight across the states. An application for demit is a strong signal. Should a demit application be received by the Body each High Priest, Illustrious Master and Commander should move quickly to determine the motive of the member submitting it. The same applies to Suspensions for Non-payment of dues. Why is this occurring?

If You ask, They will come! *This derivative is from the famous line from "A Field of Dreams" carrying a simple but effective message about membership recruiting and retention. You need only to take the time to ask that potential member or dormant member to actively participate in Templary and they will come!*

"Every Christian Mason should be a Knight Templar" This is the message of our Most Eminent Grand Master and it must be the guiding lesson of every Templar. We have a duty to insure the continued success of Templar Masonry and this will occur only if each of us take the personal responsibility to preserve it. The Grand Encampment Membership Committee has developed, revised and updated its membership materials. Growing the business is the preeminent goal of the Grand Encampment; stemming the flow of losses is an unacceptable one.

Personal involvement and commitment are minimum requirements for a successful membership process. A knowledgeable and enthusiastic sales organization is equally important to insure that we are getting good results. We use the term "sales" because it perfectly describes our task at hand, selling membership in an organization whose prime mission is the "Support and Defense of the Christian Religion" No other organization unites all denominations of Christians together for this common cause. Knowledgeable Knights make enthusiastic and successful salesmen because they know the quality of the product and the benefits of ownership. A knight who is well versed in all aspects of Templary must also "walk the talk" if he expects to be a convincing salesman.

As we move into the 21st Century, the Grand Encampment Membership Committee is redoubling its efforts to train and encourage Knights Templar leadership at all levels to implement the plan and the process necessary for success. Individual leadership, commitment and accountability are keys to an effective program; but the real key is **YOU!** Membership Recruiting and Retention cannot be delegated to committees, or the sole responsibility of the leadership. We must live by this motto *“If it is to be, it’s up to me”*.

As Knights Templar, we have one foe that we must collectively vanquish, and that is apathy. The membership program of the Grand Encampment is an action program designed to perpetuate our organization and it will succeed if **all** members do their part. We read in Chapter 28 of the Book of Matthew where Jesus commissioned his disciples to “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost”. Your Grand Encampment Membership Committee would paraphrase this commission by asking every Knight Templar to “Go ye therefore and teach all Christian Masons, encouraging them to unite under the banner of Templary”. Our Grand Master puts it more eloquently, “Every Christian Mason Should be a Knight Templar”!

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

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 their 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 a 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 be successful, we should be able to, also.

There is no substitute for an all-out campaign to strengthen and build our membership.

New Membership by District 2017:

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

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 172: Commanderies - Surrender of Charter, Part 11

A Charter surrendered or arrested cannot be used to form a new Commandery. It may be restored, if not less than Nine unaffiliated former members are in good standing, by either the Grand Encampment or the Grand Commander which granted the same. In such case, it is not proper to reconstitute the Commandery.

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

In regard to the restoration or granting of a Charter where a previous Charter had been lifted and property taken by the Grand Commandery a question was asked about returning property obtained from the previous Commandery. The disposition of property which was acquired by the Grand Commandery from a Commandery whose Charter had been arrested is entirely within the discretion of that Grand Commandery.

As to granting a charter with the previous number, numbers assigned to Commanderies indicate seniority and just so. After a lapse of eight years or more, during which former members have been scattered or affiliated elsewhere, restorations of the old Charter and of the old Commandery Number would not seem to be proper or equitable procedure. (1955, p. 114 & 280, No. 33, Gordon, 1988 digest - 46)

New Membership by York Rite Body 2017:

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1	Slow class		
2			
3	4-11 Mar	Tampa	
4			
5	Slow class		
6	3-4 Mar 17	Box Ranch	
7	21-24 Jan 17	Jacksonville	
8	7,11,21 Feb, 3-4 Mar	Gainesville	
9	9 Jan, 11 Feb	Tallahassee	
10	25 Mar, 8 Apr	Pensacola	
TOTAL 2017 KNIGHTINGS			
TOTAL 2016 KNIGHTINGS (May 2015-May 2016)			85

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 within 30 days. Remember, if your new members are not in Y.R.I.S., they will not receive the Knight Templar Magazine.

FLORIDA ONLY:

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

**HENRY A. ADAMS, PGC, KYGCH, KCT
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, Baderstadt, 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