



RITE NOTES

Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 October 2017

Surveying Strengths and Weaknesses

Companions and Sir Knights,

In surveying the strengths and weaknesses of your York Rite Body, you have probably already seen the problems but failed to recognize them. You go into Chapter, Council or Commandery, and you are lucky if you have enough to open. Your bills get paid, there is probably a little bit of coffee in the pot afterward. A few stand talking while everyone else beats it out of the door. It's not a late night and not much happens. Sometime on the way home you wonder, "Why did I even bother to show up?" Maybe you are the High Priest, Ill. Master or the Eminent Commander, and you really wonder why showed up, and why you are doing this. In fact, you may have been Em. Commander several times which is quite common in dying organizations because there is a lack of others willing to be involved. Don't despair, In this chapter. We will attempt to identify some of your problems.

The first thing is to understand the history of your York Rite Body. When was it founded? Where did it start? Who were the founders? How did the membership grow? Where were their struggles? How did they overcome and strive? These same stories can be used to excite members of your Body, as they began to realize the rich history of your organization. Sometimes, it is in these early years when they were building the Body, other times it is in a period where things were slowing down. That is when it took the courage of one or two men to keep the York Rite Body alive and to still move forward. Their inspiration to you is that they have been there before. Look at those glory years where they were taking in so many candidates a year they could hardly keep up with the work. With the dinners that filled the entire dining room. The sidelines were always full.

Emphasize the Positive

We have set in many meetings where the "East" proclaims, "We sent out the letters, we called everybody and look who showed up." That is the wrong approach. Always be thankful for who comes out because that means that they care. Those who come on their own volition are the ones who truly care. They form the nucleus. Each person contributes a part of their personality to the group. Some are natural leaders, some are good in the kitchen, some are natural followers: they are willing to help do anything if there is somebody to provide the leadership.

In identifying the strengths of each person, you have a better idea how to best utilize them. This makes them happier, and your York Rite Body stronger. Even if you only have six people coming out to your meeting, that is a core to start with. In that small group, there is strength.

Community Awareness

What kind of community do you live in? Is it agriculture? Urban? Growing suburb, or a dying small town? These external factors will have a strong impact on your organization. If the pool of people available to join is getting smaller, that could be a problem, and a much closer relationship with the surrounding Blue Lodges needs to be cultivated. Many small communities have thriving lodges and York Rite Bodies, where some of the larger cities have difficulty in opening their Bodies.

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Identifying Problems

What are the problems that exist in your Lodge or York Rite Body? They usually fall into one of the four categories as follows:

Finance
Membership
Lack of Vision
Lack of Activities

A healthy organization is positive in all four of these areas. Finance is good. They may have to struggle to make ends meet but they are accomplishing it. They have a strong active membership that is supportive and cares about one another. They have a plan and they have a vision. All of this is fundamental for a strong organization.

When one or more of these areas is weak, the organization begins to wobble and eventually it falls apart. If there is a lack of finances, there is a lack of activities. If the membership has strong wills with internal bickering and separating of new members into factions, others will begin to leave.

If there is no vision and no plan, nothing is going to happen. If there are no activities, interest begins to die. No one feels that it is worth their time to show up except for a handful and dedicated.

I hope these suggestions are helpful for you to begin a revitalization of your York Rite Bodies, and remember, recruiting is a must.

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

New Membership by District for 2017:

DIST	LOCATION	#	DIST	LOCATION	#
1	West Palm Beach	2	6	Cocoa	2
	Fort Lauderdale	6		Melbourne	2
	Miami	5		Fort Pierce	6
	Florida Keys		7	Jacksonville	6
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity			Fernandina	
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity	8		St. Augustine	1
	Everglades			Palatka	2
	Fort Myers	12	8	Lake City	1
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)	1		Middleburg	
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)	5		Gainesville	1
	Clearwater (Springtime)	2		Inverness (Ocala)	
4	Lakeland	1	9	Tallahassee	1
	Plant City	5		Marianna	
	Sebring (Highlands)			Panama City	1
5	Daytona (Halifax)	2	10	Fort Walton Beach	
	Lake Sumter	4		Crestview	2
	Sanford	1		Pensacola	8
	Orlando	6			

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 201 CONFERRING ORDERS UPON APPLICANT NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP

Voluntary non-affiliation in a lodge or Chapter or Council where required, for six months shall deprive a Knight Templar of his membership in the Commandery. (1988 pages 208-209)

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

When a member holding dual membership loses the same in one Commandery, he loses it in both, and the Grand Recorder of one jurisdiction where the sentence was imposed should notify the Grand Recorder of the other jurisdiction of the results of the trial. Provided he may demit from one Commandery without affecting his membership in the other Commandery. (1967, p.154, No. 14 part 4, Brucker, 1988 digest -- 119).

If the Council prerequisite did not apply to the Knight Templar when he petitioned for the Orders, it can never be applied to him individually, and no resolution can be adopted under the authority of Section 79 of the Constitution of the Grand Encampment, which would apply such prerequisite to a knight templar retroactively. Since Council membership cannot be required of this Knight Templar, neither can it be required that he continue to be an active member of a Council of Royal and Select Masters if he becomes a member after becomes a member after becoming a Knight Templar

New Membership by York Rite Body 2017:

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1	Slow class	WPB(2), Ft Lauderdale(6), Miami(5)	13
	13 Oct	Lake Worth (Order of the Temple)	
2			
3	4-11 Mar	Tampa: Plant City(4), Ft Myers(3), St Pete(4), Trinity(3)	14
	15 Oct	Clearwater(2), Tampa(1), St Petersburg(1) Ft Myers(4)	
4		Trinity(5), Lakeland(1), Lake City(1)	15

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
5	11 & 18 Mar	Eola(Orlando) (6), Lake Sumter(4), Daytona(2), Sanford(1)	13
		Slow Class	
6	3-4 Mar 17	Box Ranch: Melbourne(2), Cocoa(2), WPB(2), Ft Pierce(6), Miami(5), Ft Laud(6), Ft Myers(5)	28
	7 Oct	Ft Pierce (Chapter/Council)	1
	13 Oct	Ft Pierce (Order of the Temple)	
7	21-24 Mar 17	Jacksonville(6), St Augustine(1), Palatka(2)	9
	23 Sep 17	Jacksonville (Cancelled)	
8	7,11,21 Feb, 3-4 Mar	Gainesville (Cancelled) Gaainesville(1)	
	5 Aug	Gainesville Order of the Temple	
9	28 Jan, 5 or 11 Feb	Tallahassee(1), Panama City(1) Crestview(1)	2
10	25 Mar, 8 Apr Sep.	Pensacola(3) Crestview(1), Pensacola(5)	3

TOTAL 2017 KNIGHTINGS	98
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. 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

HENRY A. ADAMS, PGC, KYGCH, KCT
Chairman, Grand York Rite Membership Program

"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, 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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