



RITE NOTES
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 October 2019

Learning How to talk about Membership

Whose job is it to get new members for your lodge or York Rite Body? The answer is; everyone's. Most people will sadly answer: "everyone else's".

Getting members is scary for most people. While the reasons people don't bring in new members are varied they have a couple of elements in common. One of them is apathy. The other is fear of rejection.

No one likes to be told no. In High School, it was rather traumatic for many of us guys to ask a girl to dance. I remember going through all kinds of stomach knots when I dialed a girl's telephone number. I usually got rejected, and in looking back, much of it had to do with my approach. If you come across a loser, why should some girl feel sorry for you and say "yes".

Asking for a date is rather personal. Even if her reason was legitimate, it still hurt. If the excuse was really flimsy you felt like loser extra-ordinaire.

Fortunately, when someone rejects joining Freemasonry, it isn't necessarily a rejection of us personally, or even the Fraternity.

Of course, we come to the question -- can we ask people to join Freemasonry, ? That answer can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Traditionally, we have been prohibited in the US from asking people to join. Membership has to be on "one own free will and accord." This comes from the Anti-Masonic period of 1826-1840 when Masonry was driven underground.

In England, no one petition's a lodge. A man is proposed by the members, investigated, balloted upon, and then if found worthy, invited to petition for membership.

Some states prohibit members from directly asking, while others permit personal recruitment. What is possible in all situations is that we can talk about Freemasonry and what it means to us personally. We can tell someone they would be a good Mason. We can even give them literature about who we are, and how it impacts their lives.

There is no law against telling people how much fun you have at the lodge, and why being a member is important to you. Once an individual becomes a mason, however, there is nothing wrong in asking that mason if they would like to join York Rite.

Most of us cannot tell others what it means to be a mason, because we do not understand how to talk about it. Next month's addition of the Rite Notes, we will show you how to become comfortable talking about being a Mason.

Most of us received the advice "Don't talk about it". And most of us did a pretty good job following the advice. When asked about our ring or emblem on our car, we acted embarrassed and tried ways of changing the subject. Unfortunately, it simply perpetuates the myths that Freemasonry is a "Secret Society."

What is a "Secret Society"? It is an association or organization that does not publicize its members, structure or meeting locations. It is underground. The mafia is a good example of a secret society. Unless one of its "dons" is brought to justice, he doesn't hang out a sign that says that he is a Mafia leader. You won't find a personalized license plate on his car proclaiming his high position. Their members may be suspected by many, but they offer little evidence to their membership. Their rituals are held in great secrecy, and they don't have any public rituals.

Freemasons boldly proclaim our membership thru dues cards, pins, jewelry, car emblems, personalized license plates and more. I own shirts with Masonic emblems on them, and even had a red golf shirt that indicates that I am a proud Mason. Most lodges, have signs outside that indicate dates when they meet, when York Rite and when the ladies groups meet. Many lodges and York Rite Bodies produce newsletters. That certainly is not in keeping with a "secret society."

We can talk about what we do, from our charities to our teachings of brotherhood and personal development.

What I discovered a long time ago is that the best way to share Masonry is to tell your story. Next month, we will explore seven questions that will help you do that.

In this writing, we want to keep in mind whose job it is to get new members. The answer: **It's everyone's job!** Each of us can get at least one new member. Even the shyest member can be successful in getting numerous members. Excitement about being a member is contagious. Don't assume it's everyone else's job to get new members.

Here are some common excuses for failing to try to get new members:

1. Don't have a petition.
2. Don't know what to say.
3. It is the job of the Grand Lodge or the Grand York Rite. Yes it is their job but you know more people in your community than they do. Besides, who are people going to trust more: you or a stranger?
4. The only reason Grand Lodge wants new members are for numbers and money. Just think that 10 new members would help your York Rite Bodies finances.
5. Not my job. That's pure apathy. What it really says is that your membership means very little to you.
6. They might say "no". Fine. Talk to someone else.
7. Everyone in our town belongs to a church that's anti-Masonic. Less than 50% of all people belong to a church in the United States. And there's usually more than one church in town. The anti-masons are a minority. There are many who want to know about us. Don't focus on the negative. Build on the positive.
8. Young people don't want to join. That's a myth. We have young men and women joining and becoming active across the country. If they are made to feel welcome and wanted, they will come. And best of all, they'll bring their friends.
9. Everyone's busy watching TV or golfing. Not everyone's a couch potato, and no one can play golf 24/7.

As you can see, most excuses are smoke screens. They're covering up the real issue, which is "I'm afraid to talk." Next month, we will show you how to gain the confidence you need to become a true Masonic Ambassador.

The Fall festivals are almost over and, we are now preparing for the remaining district wide festivals all Spring festivals. The success of our first festival was excellent in that we knighted 34 new knights. In Ft Pierce knighted 25, with one festival not reporting as yet. Once Tampa reports, we will have our final count. We should have 140 new knights when they report in. This will be 39 knightings over last year. Great Job! We can then begin planning for our Spring festivals. Let's continue our efforts and began the process of bringing new brothers into our bodies. Allow them to take a seat and participate in the leadership of the body. If all seats are filled, encourage them to get involved in the ritual work as part of a degree team, but let them know that they are needed.

Note: If any York Rite Bodies plan weekend festivals, Short of Time or Slow Classes, please let me know, with the date, time, location and contact person, and I will put it in the next newsletter, and on the website. Remember, Membership and Retention is everyone=s business.

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

New Membership by District for 2019:

DISTRICT	LOCATION	#	DISTRICT	LOCATION	#
1	West Palm Beach	4	6	Cocoa	3
	Fort Lauderdale	4		Melbourne	
	Miami	18		Fort Pierce	10
	Florida Keys				
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity	1	7	Jacksonville	12
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity	5		Fernandina	3
	Everglades			St Augustine	
	Fort Myers			Palatka	
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)		8	Lake City	1
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)			Middleburg	2
	Clearwater (Springtime)			Gainesville	5
				Inverness (Ocala)	
4	Lakeland	2	9	Tallahassee	3
	Plant City	1		Marianna	3
	Sebring (Highlands)	1		Panama City	
5	Daytona (Halifax)	3	10	Fort Walton Beach	2
	Lake Sumter	5		Crestview	8
	Sanford	2		Pensacola	3
	Orlando	18			

REGARDING THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 234: Filling Vacancies

A vacancy in any office of the Grand Encampment created by resignation shall be filled as prescribed in Section 25 and 26 of the Constitution as to the office therein mentioned; as to all other offices, by appointment by the Grand Master. A vacancy in any office of a Grand Commandery created by resignation shall be filled in Sections 49 and 50 of the Constitution as to the offices therein mentioned; as to all other offices, by appointment in Section 72 of the constitution.

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

No decisions list for this Section.

AS YOU SEE ON THE TABLE BELOW, WE HAVE BROUGHT IN VERY FEW NEW KNIGHTS. THIS IS BECAUSE THE COMMANDERY RECORDER OR FESTIVAL COORDINATOR DOES NOT REPORT THE NUMBERS KNIGHTED. IF YOU WANT YOUR NEW MEMBERSHIP TO COUNT, IT IS INCUMBANT OF YOU TO CONTACT SK HENRY ADAMS.

A REMINDER: GRAND ENCAMPMENT RULES STATE THAT NEW SIR KNIGHTS NEED TO BE PLACED IN MMS WITHIN 15 DAYS.

New Membership by York Rite Body 2019:

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1	3/30/19		
2	3/30/19		
3	9/28/10	Tampa, No numbers reported	
4	3/30/19	Ft Pierce, Sebring (1)	1
5	3/16/19 7/28/19	Orlando(4), Lake Sumter (1) Orlando(14), Daytona(3),Lake Sumter(4), Sanford(2), Lakeland(2), Plant City(1),Cocoa(3), Gainesville(3),Miami(1), Bradenton(1)	5 34
6	3/30/19 5/19/19	Ft Pierce (3), Ft Laud. (2), Miami (3), Sarasota (5) Ft Pierce Ft Pierce(7),Ft Lauderdale(2,Miami(14) Palm Beach(@)	13
7	21/09/19	Jacksonville(12), Fernandino Beach(3), Middleburg(2),Lake City(1), Gainesville(2), Tallahassee(1)	21
8			
9	14/09/19	Crestview(4), Pensacola (2), Tallahassee(2)	8
10	3/23/19	Ft Walton Beach (2), Pensacola (1), Marianna (3)	6

TOTAL 2019 KNIGHTINGS	113
TOTAL 2018 KNIGHTINGS	101

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 Chapter Membership Program
Chairman, Grand Encampment Membership Committee

"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. " Learning how to Talk About Membership". 2005, pg 67 to 72, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

Hm Ph: 321 726-6971

Cell: 321-795-8316

Fax: 321-951-968

Email: hadams1@aol.com