



RITE NOTES
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 June 2020

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 report. 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 begin 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 are 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 sat in many meetings where the AEast proclaims, AWe sent out the letters, we called everybody and looked for 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.

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 will 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 the dedicated ones.

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

Remember, equip, train and send out the troops, and they will come back with results!

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, for the Fall of 2020 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 2020:

DISTRICT	LOCATION	#	DISTRICT	LOCATION	#
1	Palm Beach		6	Cocoa	
	Ft Lauderdale			Melbourne	
	Miami			Fort Pierce	
	Florida Keys				
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity	2	7	Jacksonville	
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity			Fernandina	
	Everglades			St Augustine	
	Fort Myers	1		Palatka	
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)	1	8	Lake City	
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)	2		Middleburg	
	Clearwater (Springtime)	1		Gainesville	
				Inverness	
4	Lakeland	1	11	Tallahassee	
	Plant City	4		Marianna	
	Sebring (Highlands)	2		Panama City	
5	Daytona (Halifax)		10	Fort Walton Beach	
	Lake Sumter			Crestview	
	Sanford			Pensacola	
	Orlando				

REGARDING THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

Section 44 & 45, Term of Office--Eligibility to Office

Elective Grand Commandery Officers shall hold office until their successors shall have been duly elected and installed. The Grand Prelate, if appointive, shall hold office during the Grand Commandery year or during the pleasure of the Grand Commander. A Grand Commandery may provide that other appointive constitutional officers shall be appointed to serve during the full Grand Commandery year or only during the Annual Conclave. (1970, p. 322-323 & 445)

No Knight Templar shall be eligible to any office in a Grand Commandery, except that of Grand Prelate, unless he shall be at the time a member thereof. 1928

DECISIONS OF THE GRAND MASTER:

A member otherwise qualified may be elected in his absence and installed at a later time. (1916, p.41, No. 11, McArthur)
A Commander of a Constituent Commandery can, during his term of office as such, be elected to serve as the Grand Recorder of the Grand Commandery but he can only hold the office as long as he remains a member of the Grand Commandery. If he resigns as Commander of his Commandery before he legally becomes a Past Commander (he served to the end of his term of office). he would be ineligible to continue in office as Grand Recorder of a Grand Commandery, and a vacancy would occur. If he completes his full term of office, he would remain a member of the Grand Commandery and would be eligible for the office of Grand Recorder. (1055, p.112)

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 2020:

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1			
2			
3	7 & 14 Mar	Tampa (1), St Pete (2), Clearwater (1), Plant City (4), Manasota (2), Lakeland(1), Ft Myers(1)Highlands(2)	14
	3 & 10 Oct	Tampa	
4			
5	27-28 March	Cancelled, until Fall	
	10 & 17 Oct	Eola	
	13 & 20 Mar.2021	Eola	
6	27-28 March	Ft Pierce, Postponed	
7	19-20-21 March	Jacksonville, Postponed	
8			
9			
10	4 April & 2 May	Pensacola, Postponed	
	6 & 7 Nov	Pensacola	
TOTAL 2019 KNIGHTINGS			136
TOTAL 2020 KNIGHTINGS			14

I would like to commend the Grand Chapter of Florida, for having a net 51 in membership for 2019. By bringing in more members than we lose, we can grow!

Also, as soon as your area determines the dates for the Spring Festival, PLEASE let me know so they may be included.

Fraternally,

Henry A. Adams

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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. "Surveying Strengths and Weaknesses". 2004, pg 21-25, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

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