



RITE NOTES

Membership and Recruiting

15 November 2021

Learning How to Talk About Membership

Companions and Sir Knights,

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

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

Section 140 and 141, Installation of Officers

Section 140-The officers of the Grand Encampment may be installed by the Grand Master, or a Past Grand Master, or Past Grand Commander.

Section 141-The Officers of a Grand Commandery may be installed by the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Generalissimo, or Grand Captain General of the Grand Encampment, by a Grand Commander or Past Grand Commander, or in their absence by a Past Commander.

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

The installation of an officer of a Grand Commandery must take place in the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery in which the officer is a member. (1913, p. 39, No. 2, Melish)

Finally, we have completed our Fall Festivals. There is now time to receive petitions for membership for the Spring. Go to the Blue Lodges and speak to existing Masons about “further light” and greet newly raised Masons with information about what we are all about.

We have had a great Fall recruiting effort in 2021 with 170 new Knightings for the year, let us continue the good works, and in the next three months, our membership should swell. We must, however, keep our NPD’s as low as possible. Bring them back and put them to work. We can add to that 170 number, with a possible festival in (Dec) in Jacksonville. If you have any candidates that were unable to attend our festivals in September/October this will be that last opportunity this year. Contact Tom Olsen

Remember, equipment, 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 2021 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 2021:

DISTRICT	LOCATION	#	DISTRICT	LOCATION	#
1	Palm Beach	2	6	Cocoa	4
	Ft Lauderdale	2		Melbourne	
	Miami	12		Fort Pierce	10
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity	5	7	Jacksonville	5
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity	14		Fernandina	2
	Everglades			St Augustine	1
	Fort Myers	3		Palatka	1
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)	10	8	Lake City	1
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)	4		Middleburg	3
	Clearwater (Springtime)	4		Gainesville	7
4	Lakeland	3	9	Tallahassee	
	Plant City	4		Marianna	1
	Sebring (Highlands)			Panama City	
5	Daytona (Halifax)		10	Fort Walton Beach	1
	Lake Sumter	4		Crestview	5
	Sanford			Pensacola	4
	Orlando	6			

REMINDER: MASONIC MEMBERSHIP SOLUTIONS (MMS) RULES STATE THAT NEW COMPANIONS AND SIR KNIGHTS NEED TO BE PLACED IN MMS WITHIN 15 DAYS.

MMS IS NOW ON GOOGLE CROME

New Membership by York Rite Body 2021:

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1			
2	1 May	Ft Myers: Ft Myers (1)	1
3	12 & 13 Mar	Tampa: Tampa (6), St Petersburg (4), Clearwater (3), Plant City (4), Manasota (5), Lakeland (3), Ft Myers (2), Orlando (3), Lake Sumter (6)	36
	2 & 9 Oct	Tampa(4), Clearwater (1), Orlando (3), Sarasota (14)	22
4			
5	13 & 20 Mar	Orlando: Cancelled	
	9 & 16 Oct	Orlando Cancelled (moved to Tampa)	
6	11&12 Mar	Ft Pierce: Ft Pierce (9), Cocoa (3), Palm Beach (1), Miami (20), Ft Lauderdale (5)	38
	1-2 Oct	Ft Pierce (3), Miami (22), Ft Lauderdale (3), Cocoa(1), WPB(1)	30
7	3 April	Jacksonville: Jacksonville (1), Fernandina Beach (2), Palatka (1), Gainesville (7), Lake City (1), Lake Sumter (2), St Augustine (1)	15
8		Jacksonville (4), Middleburg (3)	7
9			
10	10 Apr	Crestview/Pensacola: Pensacola (6), Ft Walton (1), Crestview (5)	12
	28 Aug/4 Sep	Pensacola (3), Ft Walton Beach (1), Crestview (4), Marianna(1)	9
TOTAL 2021 KNIGHTINGS			170
TOTAL 2019 KNIGHTINGS			134

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

HENRY A. ADAMS, PGC

"Every Christian Mason Should Be A Knight Templar"

Some excerpts, from the Grand Commanders Handbook, 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" pp 67-72, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006