



# RITE NOTES

## *WHAT PEOPLE WANT IN MEMBERSHIP*

15 January 2024

Companions and Sir Knights,

What does a person want in return for dues and time? While generations may change, the basic needs are the same.

When a person joins an organization, they want to be more than a number. They want they want to belong to something, and be valued as a human being. They want to feel like they belong, that they are welcome.

Personalities vary greatly. Some people are natural leaders, others are followers. Some are outgoing and make friends easily while others are introverts and require a lot of work to draw them out. Some are natural ritualists while others are afraid to speak in front of a group. Each person is unique, and their personalities impact the organization in very personal ways.

Despite personal contributions and personalities, all people have things in common. They include the desires for the following:

Security -- Is your York Right Body a safe place to be? Personal safety can include many things. One is physical safety, is this a place where a person feels safe from harm? This can include the neighborhood where the local group meets. Declining downtown settings have contributed to people not joining, and older members not coming to meetings. If they feel unsafe, they are less likely to join or attend.

Security is also emotional. Can they be themselves, or must they always be on guard? Will they be accepted, or will they be constantly ridiculed?

Introverted people are especially concerned about emotional safety, as they don't usually mix well with people. They tend to be shy and reluctant to expose themselves in what may appear to be a dangerous setting.

Another fear will be hazing. What will they endure when they join? Will they be embarrassed. Personal security is important in this day and age when crime is a problem. The fear of lawsuits has also forced many people to withdraw into themselves. The issue of personal safety is vital if we want to grow and organization.

Feeling of Self-Worth-- Will becoming a member make them feel better about themselves? It should. This is an important sales point about Freemasonry. Membership has long contributed to self-improvement. It was a way for a person to improve themselves. Personal improvement has often drawn men and women to our doors.

Potential members want to see belonging as "a good thing". If they feel confident of this, they will more likely consider joining.

Accomplishment--"What will joining accomplish for me". How would you answer this question? The last thing people want to do is to join something just to attend "useless" meetings. So, what is the definition of useless meeting? Literally, it's meeting for the sake of meeting. That is where nothing worthwhile happens. These often include regular business meetings where the biggest item on the agenda is paying the electric bill and the rent.

While routine business is important, it is equally important that our lodges and York Rite Bodies have a purpose for existing. How do we improve the lives of our members? How do we impact the community in which we live? Will our actions better mankind?

The older a person gets, the more they want to give back to the community. Younger members will be looking for how to improve themselves so that they can advance themselves. When we get past age 39, our family is usually grown, and we have settled into our work routine. Now the concern shifts to leaving our community a better place than the way we found it. This is the time we want to leave our mark. We want to attract members for our lodges and York Rite Bodies must have ways to address these kinds of needs.

Acceptance--"Will I be accepted by the others if I join?" This is a natural fear everyone has. Every one of us can remember what it was like in school when the captains were choosing teams. I was never very good in sports, so I was one of the last ones they chose. It became very personal, and eventually, I tried to hide when it came time to choose teams. Of course, the decision to choose team members were based on skill rather than if they liked me or not. I remember being shocked one time when they were choosing sides for a spelling bee, and I was chosen first. The two captains were actually fighting over having me on their team! Suddenly, I had worth and acceptance. And I took my team to first place. That sure lifted my spirits.

The same is true of adults. We have been conditioned over the years that we are not acceptable and we fear a repeat performance. We shy away from opportunities because of that underlying fear. Freemasonry has always shown a great deal of tolerance toward individuals. We need to stress that we are very accepting of people. Of course, new members must be willing to conform to our rules and regulations in order to maintain this orderly society.

The feeling of acceptance is very powerful in the human psyche. Give something back to the community--As stated earlier, as a person ages, they desire to give something back to the community. Freemasonry needs to offer opportunities to contribute to the community.

Civic clubs offered these opportunities for years. Organizations like Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Jaycees gave community members such an outlet for community involvement. Freemasonry is an integral part of any local society. It is composed of members bonded together by a sense of localness. In turn, our lodges and York Rite Bodies need to offer members outlets to contribute to their communities.

How do we learn of these projects? It's usually through our local members! Each of us sees needs and opportunities to become involved. Our national philanthropies are another way to become involved on a larger level. Freemasonry gives nearly \$2 million a day to charity. Why? Because we like to! It is a way of making our world a better place. Freemasons are givers of time and money because they are builders of communities. This is a powerful draw, but it must have a local impact in order to draw new members.

Prestige and Education--Few people want to join an organization composed of a "bunch of losers". If your York Rite Body is dying, it will not attract many new people. What you have to do is to change the image. Prestige is an important part of being a member of any organization. Will

being a member enhance one's standing in the community? It's supposed to, but how our masonic Bodies conducts itself says a lot about the value of membership.

Education is another aspect, and this will be a major factor for a new generation. Freemasonry has always offered ways for self-improvement. The fraternity has always been a place to discuss ideas, where people can feel safe sharing opinions. It must be the type of sharing where each member is willing to listen as well as to speak.

Knowledge is power, so says the old adage. It is true. Prestige combined with knowledge and an opportunity to grow and learn can be strong draw for new members as well as retaining older ones. The above is a list of things that attract people to membership. It is doubtful that the entire list will apply to any single person. One point will be a stronger draw for one than another. Being aware of these areas can allow a York Rite Body to focus on improving these areas, making themselves more attractive to potential members.

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

Bring them back and put them to work.

**Membership and Retention is everyone's business.**

## **EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND CHAPTER OF FLORIDA**

ARTICLE XX: Candidates and Balloting

### **Section 1. Eligibility Procedure.**

No person shall receive the Degrees conferred in a subordinate Chapter unless he can be affiliated with some Symbolic Lodge recognized by the "Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Florida, ". And then only upon a regular petition of application. The petition must be signed by two members of the Chapter petitioned and be referred to a committee of three members; it may be thereafter acted at the same meeting at the discretion of the Chapter. Except, however, in cases of concurrent jurisdiction, in which cases the Constitutional provisions applying thereto must also be complied with.

### **Section 2 Eligibility, Physical**

Physical perfection is not required of candidates for the degrees of the Chapter. The Chapter is the sole judge of the qualifications of its members.

### **Section 3. Eligibility Jurisdiction**

Every candidate for the Chapter (Capitular) Degrees must be an affiliated Master Mason in good standing; a resident of the State of Florida for at least one year, and of the territorial jurisdiction of the Chapter to which he applies for six months, preceding the presentation of his petition.

### **Section 4 Interstate Jurisdiction**

A Chapter may not confer the Degrees upon a candidate who resides in another State without consent of the Chapter in whose jurisdiction he resides; except, however, that the Grand Chapter recognizes concurrent with the Grand Chapters of Georgia, and Alabama over material residing within five miles of the mutual State Aline, provided there be no recognized Chapter in such jurisdiction within ten miles of said State Line.

### **Section 5 Interstate Jurisdiction**

A Chapter shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all material residing w3ithin the corporate limits of the Municipality in which it is located, except where two or more Chapters are located in the same municipality,

they shall have exclusive concurrent jurisdiction with the corporate limits of each municipality.

**Section 6 Withdrawal of Petition Prohibited**

After a petition for membership has been received and referred to a committee, it cannot be withdrawn, but must be balloted on for final action.

**Section 7. Balloting**

The ballot on petitions must be inviolably secret, and once begun, must be completed without postponement. The results of the ballot shall be declared by the High Priest, after exhibiting the ballot to the King and Scribe for inspection. It is the duty of every member of the Chapter present to vote, and one negative ballot shall reject.

**Section 8. Collective Balloting Procedure**

A collective ballot on two or more petitions may be taken in the discretion of the High Priest and when a separate ballot is not called for. In such case, however, the High Priest shall first announce that if a negative appears a separate ballot on each petition shall then be taken.

**Section 9. Landmarks Preserved**

Each Chapter must preserve the Ancient Landmarks of the ballot. All petitions for Degrees must be acted upon at a regular meeting except by due and timely notice. Such place of ballot shall be in the said Chapter Meeting place and for ballot only excepting conferral of Degrees.

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 Spring and Fall of 2024 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.**

**Membership by District for 2024:**

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

Palatka had one brother who completed Chapter and Council but due to COVID was unable to complete the Orders

**REMINDER: MASONIC MEMBERSHIP SOLUTIONS (MMS) RULES STATE THAT NEW COMPANIONS AND SIR KNIGHTS NEED TO BE PLACED IN MMS WITHIN 15 DAYS. If this is not done, the magazine will not be sent automatically. The Secretary will have to contact Grand Encampment.**

**MMS IS NOW ON GOOGLE CHROME**

**New Membership by York Rite Body 2024:**

<b>DIST</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>KNIGHTED</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6	8-9 Mar 24	Ft Pierce	
7	10 & 17 Feb 24	Palatka	
8			
9			
10			
<b>TOTAL 2024 KNIGHTINGS</b>			
<b>TOTAL 2023 KNIGHTINGS</b>			126

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, KYGCH

"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 73-75, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006