



# **RITE NOTES**

## **Surveying Strengths and Weaknesses**

15 March 2025

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 stay to talk 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 willed 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.

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

## **EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND CHAPTER OF FLORIDA CHAPTER SEVENTEEN– SUBORDINATE CHAPTERS, CHARTERS**

### **17.1 Charters and Dispensations.**

The Grand Secretary is required to record the Charter or Warrant heretofore issued to any Chapter in his jurisdiction upon request of the Chapter on being furnished with such warrant or charter or a copy certified under seal of the Chapter. All warrants of Charters hereafter issued from the Grand Chapter or its authority shall be recorded by the Grand Secretary in a book to be procured and kept by him for that purpose; column to be added on page in proceedings under heading of Directory of Chapter, showing date of Charter of each Chapter.

### **17.2 Petitions for Charters, Deadlines**

Petitions for Charters must be file in the office of the Grand Secretary at least ten days prior to the opening of the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter.

### **17.3 Charters and Fees.**

A fee of \$100.00 one hundred dollars shall be paid to Grand Chapter with the petition for Charter.

### **17.4 Dispensation Fee.**

The fee for dispensation to form new Chapter shall be twenty-five dollars to be paid to the Grand Chapter with the petition.

### **17.5 Lodges not to be Instituted.**

Neither Dispensation nor Charter shall be granted for instituting Lodges of Mark Master, Past Masters, or Most Excellent Masters independent of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons.

### **17.6 Dormant Chapters.**

A Chapter failing to hold at least four regular Convocations in any one Capitular year shall be considered to be in a dormant state of existence, not fully meeting with the approval of Grand Chapter. The Grand High Priest shall charge the Officers of such Chapter under penalty of forfeiture of Charter.

### **17.7 Forfeiture of Charters.**

A Chapter failing to convene in at least four Convocations in one year or failing to make returns and payments of dues to the Grand Chapter in two consecutive years, forfeit its Charter and the Grand High Priest shall order the Charter, records and effects of such Chapter sent to the Grand Secretary (1997 Effective May 20, 1997).

### **17.08 Surrender of Charter.**

Any Chapter may surrender its Charter at any Regular convocation, after written notice to all members and to the Grand High Priest, after lying over for at least one month, by majority vote of its members. The provisions of Reg. 17.01 regarding records and property shall be complied with.

### **17.09 Grand Chapter Certificates.**

If a Chapter has surrendered its Charter or if the Charter has been arrested and Grand Chapter Certificates have been issued to any who were members at the time of its surrender or arrest, a petition for restoration of Charter must be accompanied by the Grand Chapter Certificates of the petitioners. If no Grand Chapter Certificate has been issued to a Companion who is shown by the Grand Chapter records to have been a member of the Chapter at the time of the loss of Charter and who signs the petition for restoration, no such Certificate is required to be filed.

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

**Companions, our recruiting efforts are paying off. With two festivals completed for the fall, and two to go, we have already knighted 49 new knights. With Ft Pierce and Tallahassee, we should go well beyond our numbers for last year. Great work.**

## Membership by Chapter for 2025:

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

**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 District 2025:

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1			
2			
3	1 & 8 Mar 25  Oct 25	Tampa (2), Plant City (5), Lakeland (1), Sebring (2), Orlando (2), Lake Sumter (2), Manatee (4), Ft Myers (6), St Petersburg (1), Clearwater (1)	26
4			
5			
6	28-29 Mar 14-15 Sep 25	Ft Pierce(3), Tallahassee(1), WPB(Boca-Delray)(6), Palatka(1)	12
7	8 & 15 Feb	Palatka (5), Jacksonville (3), Gainesville (1), Miami (1), Lake Sumter (4), Daytona (5), Middleburg (1), Fernandina Beach (2), Cocoa (1)	23

8		
9	Mar 25	Tallahassee
10		
<b>TOTAL 2025 KNIGHTINGS</b>		<b>61</b>
<b>TOTAL 2024 KNIGHTINGS</b>		<b>76</b>

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, Beaderstadt, 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

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