

IOWA SUPPLEMENT

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This month I am going to use this space to write about the importance of **ceremonies!**

All kinds of ceremonies, i.e. Installations, Opening and Closing the Lodge/ Chapter/ Council/ Commandery, Receiving VIP's, Giving grand honors, Presenting of awards/ rewards/ appropriate preferment, Easter- Ascension- Christmas Services!

Most individuals, who know me well, are aware that I served in the US Army for many years and that I enjoy reading military history. I recently read a book about the Korean War. It was in that war that our Masonic Brother General MacArthur assured our Masonic Brother President Truman that the Communist Chinese Forces would NOT enter the war, AND that if the **three army groups** poised just North of the Yalu River DID enter, we would inflict upon them "...the greatest slaughter in the history of mankind." Within weeks of that assurance, 300,000 Chinese Troops (appropriately described as) "...a phantom which cast no shadow" (because many of them had *already* crossed the Yalu River and had entered Korea at the time MacArthur made those assurances), set upon the American forces more voraciously than I go after a piece of medium rare prime rib. After the phantom struck, American troops began the longest retreat in the history of the United States Army. Exacerbating the nightmare situation was the fact that the 1950-51 Korean Winter was one of the coldest winters in 100 years, wherein our troops had to endure temperatures of more than 70 degrees below freezing and wind chills of over 100 degrees below freezing. Communications fell apart. There was a complete breakdown of *order* and *hierarchy*. *Camaraderie* and *sense of purpose* evaporated. Command *structure* disintegrated, and when the command structure was gone, so was much of the *will to fight*.

As I read the account of what those brave soldiers endured, I thought about the importance in **ALL** aspects of life of **structure** when it comes to the **will to continue**.

How about your Lodge, Chapter, Council and Commandery? Is there communication with members? (Other than notice that it is time to pay the dues again?) Is there communication with the governing grand bodies? Is the Secretary/ Recorder simply recycling the same names for leadership positions? Is there camaraderie and a sense of purpose? Is there a will to continue the fight to keep the Order alive and healthy?

I submit to you that one of the ways to insure that the Order will be kept alive and healthy is to have the ceremonies I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this supplement.

Permit me to itemize what I consider to be the, "**NO DON'T DO THAT**", followed by my version of, "**YES, THAT'S WHAT I HAD IN MIND**"

- Don't waive installation ceremonies!

You do not have to necessarily use a long ceremony. I have drafted a short form ceremony for all three York Rite Bodies. (I will do it for the Symbolic Lodge upon request). The basics and

fundamentals are included, and the elected and appointed officers of all three bodies can be installed within 30 minutes TOTAL. Make those officers place their hands over their hearts & either repeat that obligation or say in a firm voice "I do so promise and vow!" You can have a meal afterward or should *at least* have coffee/ lemonade and cookies/ fruit/ veggies.

- Don't sit around the table, declare the meeting open and conduct what should be significant business as if you want to hurry up and start the cribbage game!

Get in that lodge room and OPEN! If you have to, distribute scripts to the officers that they can read. I, like everyone else, would prefer to have a situation wherein people know their parts and you can designate a prompter. The reality in Iowa York Rite is that very few people know the work any more. I would rather put people in the lodge room and tell them to read, than not open at all. You know it is just *possible* that a few of the Companions and Sir Knights might be inspired to learn a part.

Now that you are in the lodge room and open for business, if you have a distinguished visitor or a member who has earned an award, treat him properly. Give three knocks of the gavel! Order every member in the lodge room to get up on his feet! Get that important person to the EAST! Tell the members they will NOW give public grand honors! Tell them that they WILL take their lead from a designated individual who is standing in a place that everyone can see! That will result in a loud coordinated effort instead of machine gun fire.

- Don't treat a sacred service like it is a routine matter!

Christmas and Easter Services are supposed to be to honor the Messiah! Ascension Service is supposed to be to honor the Sir Knights who have laid down their swords for the final time! Treat these as important events. Have a special meal! Have toasts! Have appropriate brief remarks!

I stress again that ceremonies are important. They demonstrate that there is *order*, and people see a *hierarchy*. They show a command *structure* is in place. They can help generate *camaraderie* and *sense of purpose*. They can instill that vital energy needed to sustain a *will to fight!*

While I am on the subject of ceremonies, bear in mind three particular ceremonies scheduled for Grand Conclave, 6-4-09, in Cedar Rapids. 1) Retreat Ceremony where the Sir Knights will pass in review with Beauceants flying to the song "Onward Christian Soldiers". 2) Vespers Service. 3) Opening Competition between Commanderies.

In 2009, Sioux City will host a Festival April 4 & 11. (Point of contact is still Gregory L. Kenkel, 712 251 7935). Estherville will host a Festival April 17 & 18. (Point of contact is Frank C. Osdoba 712 332 2271). Des Moines will host a Festival April 25. (Point of contact is David M. Dryer 515 961 3279).

These York Rite Bodies will Exalt, Greet and Knight Brothers if they will come to the Festival! The candidates for the York Rite Degrees and Orders can pay their fees to your York Rite Body. Bring them to the Festival and the Companions and Sir Knights of the host York Rite Body will do the work. You need only let the host know that you are coming and get your candidates there.

You may also bring new members into your York Rite Body by contacting the Iowa York Rite College. There are two colleges in Iowa. They exist to support Symbolic Lodges, Chapters, Councils and Commanderies. They will assist the local bodies with the work.

(Points of contact are Pre-Eminent Governor Donald A. Radloff, Iowa College # 37, 319 240 1917 or Pre-Eminent Governor Richard W. Martin, Lewis & Clark College # 199, 712 212 0351).

Fraternally,
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