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**GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**



Sir Knights:

I recently had a conversation with one of our Sir Knights from the western part of the state, and the questions proposed during our exchange were extremely encouraging in regard to our membership goals, and ways to achieve positive growth within our Commonwealth. I felt it necessary however, as of this writing, to share with you all some of the ideas we discussed, and, hopefully, try to inspire and stimulate renewed interest in all of our members to go out and continue working hard getting petitions for our beloved York Rite.

First, lay some groundwork, but don't expect this to be an automatic method of getting members in volume to begin with.

Think with me along these lines: The Grand Officers of any jurisdiction cannot, as a person, or as a group, bring in new petitions and increase our membership in volume. Therefore, we must all begin at the very grass roots of our Order: each Lodge, Chapter, Council and Commandery. Sir Knights, this is where our real strength is.

Second, tell the York Rite Story. If possible, meet with each individual body. This is the best place to generate enthusiasm – by talking to each person present. Tell them all something about the York Rite. Explain that it consists of four separate bodies, and that each is sovereign unto itself. Therefore, all Master Masons have already received approximately one-fourth of the York Rite, and that all Master Masons who profess the Christian religion should be York Rite Masons.

Third, push both symbolism and social aspects. Many of us know a lot about our Masonic Symbolism, but you would be surprised to learn how many do not know the connection between the Symbolic Degrees and the York Rite. Tell them this and other related information you think will be inspiring to them, and wait for their reaction and questions to follow.

Most Subordinate York Rite bodies have social affairs once, twice, and in some places, more than twice each year, including their ladies. Invite friends to the various suppers, fund raisers and entertainment nights. Having our ladies present on various occasions has created much interest in our activities over the years, and even helps stem the tide of absence occasionally felt at home.

Finally, consider our members habits, and strive to improve our quality of work. I think we can well understand that, when a man leaves work at five or six o'clock and goes home to freshen up and eat, he gets comfortable, and it can be hard to move him out of his easy chair, or away from the television to go to a meeting. But, if he knows that he can go from work to a York Rite meeting and get a good meal, sound fellowship, and appreciation for his time it will make all the difference if he shows up.

Arguably, degree work is, and will always be of paramount importance to our Order. When we receive a petition and accept the required fee, the least we owe our candidates is the nearest perfect dramatization of the Degrees and Orders possible. Remember, the more experience we have in conferring our Orders, the more proficient we will be. Our proficiency helps to impress our candidates.

Sir Knights, this may sound as if I'm preaching to the choir, but I'm not. You are not the choir, you, or should I say, we, are much more than that. We are the present day standard bearers for our own future, and those that will follow us. We have many fertile fields to cultivate within Freemasonry to strengthen our great Fraternity, and I believe that we can do this. So, I leave you all with this one question: ISN'T IT TRUE THAT WE ONLY DO WHAT WE WANT TO DO?

Best wishes to each of you,

Courteously and Fraternally Thine, Raleigh C. Foster Grand Commander

**YORK RITE-KOSAIR SHRINE UNITY CLASS JULY 18, 2009**

We are soliciting the assistance of every Templar in Kentucky. You have an opportunity to bring your Master Mason friends into the York Rite with minimum effort on your part and at a somewhat reduced expense. Help your local York Rite by driving to Louisville on July 18 with your candidates.

Petitions are coming in for the state-wide York Rite Shrine class to be held at the Louisville Scottish Rite Temple on Saturday, July 18, and a very large class is anticipated. If additional blank petitions are required, send me a note at [jbhitt@att.net](mailto:jbhitt@att.net) and I'll send a form out immediately. We'll begin at 8 A.M. at the Scottish Rite Temple at 200 East Gray St. with the Mark Master Degree, finish the Order of the Temple by 4 P.M., assist Kosair Temple in hosting a cold sands ceremonial beginning at 4:00 and conclude with a banquet at 7 P.M. at Kosair Shrine Temple, at 812 South Second St. Lunch and dinner is free for candidates, cast, and wives. Total cost for candidates for the entire York Rite is \$100 including dues til December 31. Total cost for the Shrine is \$100 including dues til December 31 and includes an embroidered fez. A jeweled fez can be purchased. Plan to join us. If we have the anticipated turnout, the cost to the participants will be about twenty percent of the fee. That is, we will be able to return to the participating Chapters, Councils and Commanderies \$80 out of the \$100 collected. Your committee has done its best to hold all costs to a minimum, however the journal advertising was expensive.

We hope to have candidates from throughout the Commonwealth. We have gone to great lengths to prove in every way possible that this is not intended to be strictly for Louisville Masons but we intend to provide a cast from around the Commonwealth that will provide the very best rendition of the degrees and orders. For your candidate to get the most out of it, we suggest that you put him in the car with you and others from your York Rite and bring him to the Scottish Rite Temple. Then remain with him all day and help us explain what he's experiencing and why. At the conclusion of the day, you will have developed a new best friend and a better Freemason, better equipped to practice Freemasonry. Sometimes the conversation and exchange of ideas to and from a conference is as valuable as the conference.

This festival is open to all Master Masons in Kentucky and at the conclusion of the day, each will hold membership in the York Rite nearest his home.

The elected heads of the four York Rite Organizations have endorsed the day's activities and all expect to be present. Some will participate in the work.

**YORK RITE ELECTIONS**

Each of us has another opportunity in June to redirect the growth and improvements in our local York Rite by electing and appointing not only the very best of our members to office, but also the most enthusiastic of our members. We gain little by just filling the stations with warm bodies because they happen to attend. Let's look ahead to select those who are willing to enthusiastically help us grow and improve our units. Attendance is vital to every successful organization, and it does us no good to select men whose attendance is irregular.

The nation is paying more attention to Freemasons today than in recent years, thanks to a variety of media references. We have seen the influx of younger men into our Symbolic Lodges, as well as the reduction in the age requirement. Let's visit with our Master Mason brothers with a clear idea of the benefits of York Rite membership, and increase the size of the pool from which we'll be selecting these new officers. As we promote the York Rite, don't forget our friends in the Shrine and Scottish Rite who are not yet members and perhaps being under utilized in the other organization. For maximum benefits, each of us needs to take advantage of the opportunity for membership in each of the appendant bodies. However, we don't find new York Rite participants without conscientious visits to those organizations that can provide them. Let's keep our goal for success firmly in mind as we discuss our hopes and aims with potential members.