

## MARYLAND SUPPLEMENT



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### Grand Commander's Message – November 2007

Sir Knights,

The holidays will be upon us sooner than we realize. We are a Christian organization, and I encourage every Commandery to hold a public Christmas Observance in December. It is always a joyous occasion to celebrate the birth of the Savior of Mankind. The service may be held on any day of the week and need not be part of your Commandery meeting. If your Commandery attendance is small and you are unable to officially open, consider having a joint Christmas Observance with another nearby Commandery. The important thing is to have a commemoration of this Holiday.

#### Grand Visitations

The first Grand Visitation will be November 2 at a joint meeting of Maryland No. 1 and Beauseant No. 8 in Cockeysville. The next one (which includes a Christmas Observance Program) is in Denton, MD, on December 12 with Chesapeake No.10. Mark your calendars now. I hope to see many of you out supporting these Commanderies, as I have encouraged all Grand Line Officers to make every attempt to be there, too.

#### York Rite Charities of Maryland, Inc.

Two years ago, the Grand Commandery approved the establishment of a Masonic 501c3 corporation which would not compete with The Masonic Charities of Maryland scholarship, drug addiction, or teachers educational programs. Its purpose was to inculcate and implement the traditional Masonic virtue of charity into existing charities or to worthy organizations or individuals who are Maryland residents. I am pleased to report to you, thanks to Sir Knights Jim Coker and David Tibbetts, the York Rite Charities of Maryland is now up and operating. Your donations to this charity will be tax-deductible. Please consider including a \$2 contribution marked for your York Rite Charities when you pay your 2008 dues.

In the beginning, this charity will only be a small help. Over time, we envision this fund will grow to such an extent it can provide substantial assistance where needed. Fraters, if you are aware of someone who might need assistance now, please pass the information on to the Board of Directors for the charities through the Grand Recorder, Sir Knight William Colburn.

#### Mid-Atlantic Department Conference, Roanoke VA

I was pleased the Grand Commandery of Maryland was out in force at this Conference. All six of your elected officers of the Grand Commandery Line attended. I am pleased to extend personal thanks to SK Carl Cicchetti for attending; I was proud to be able to stand up and report his presence also. Sir Knights, I call to your attention the fact this Conference is open to any of you. It is not restricted only to officers of the Grand Commandery Line to attend. With my Grand Recorder's assistance, we will try to make you aware of when and where next year's Conference will be held. Plan on attending. These conferences are meant as leadership seminars for the presiding officers of a Commandery. It gives us an opportunity to hear what the Grand Encampment considers important for the Grand Commanderies and their constituent Commanderies.

The day started with a video, entitled, "Paradigm Pioneers" by Joel Barker. It was intended to show how some men have the foresight and genius to know when and how to turn a simple idea into something of great value to mankind. It was noted that everyone has intuitiveness. What separates the leaders from the followers is the decision to proceed with the thought and not sit back and wait for someone else to act. Many of the electronic advances that we have today came from right here in the United States. However, it was the Japanese who seized upon many ideas and through diligent effort, brought them to fruition. Examples include the Walkman and flat-screen television. The video concluded by showing how constant shepherding of a project with the intent of improving it for man's use paid even greater dividends.

We also were shown a video entitled, "Focus Your Vision" by Dewitt Jones. Mr. Jones is a world renowned photographer whose work appears in The National Geographic. The video's purpose was to show how focusing on an issue can make the difference between the ordinary job and the superlative job that everyone remembers.

#### Membership

Who is responsible for membership? Is it the dais officer only? Is it the Membership Committee? Does your commitment to it end when you have brought a new Sir Knight into the fold? These are all legitimate questions. The answer is, we are all responsible.

One suggestion made was that a Commandery needs to do a demographic study of its area if it hopes to grow. This means determining the different age groups within the local Blue Lodges, Chapter and Councils, determining how many members of the local lodges live in the area and how many live several states away, determining how many of the members of the local lodges are already York Rite members. Another challenge is accounting for our losses. How many were due to death? How old was the deceased when he passed away? How many have demitted and how many have been suspended? What was the cause of their demitting or just dropping out? If we understand these reasons, we have a chance of understanding how to turn the negatives around and start growing again.

Finally, it is of some note that successful Commanderies are those punctual in starting their meetings. The officers' uniforms are clean and insignia properly worn. The officers were all proficient in their work. Finally, those who took good care of their members are successful in attracting new members and growing. Does your Commandery meet these requirements? If not, what can you do to turn things around?

#### Knights Templar Eye Foundation 40<sup>th</sup> Campaign

Remember, the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Campaign for the Knights Templar Eye Foundation has begun -- from October 1, 2007 until April 30, 2008. I pray ever Commandery develop plans to contribute to this effort. As I stated last month, it is my ardent desire that we reach the \$10-per-member plateau. That means saving a couple of quarters a day. I do not think that is too much to ask, even of those on fixed incomes.

The Eye Foundation provides in excess of \$3.5 million annually for eye care to needy recipients and funds research grants of approximately \$600,000 each year to the fields of pediatric ophthalmology and ophthalmic genetics. Each of us must do our part to assure the continued success of our Eye Foundation.

Sorry Fraters, I was wrong last month; we had two grants to present. By the time you read this, those presentations will already have been made to two young ophthalmologists who have just launched their careers. What a great feeling it is to be able to present these grants.

Fraternally Yours in Christ,  
Patrick A. Curtis, REGC of Maryland