

NORTH DAKOTA SUPPLEMENT



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GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year to all Sir Knights and your ladies!!!! Traditionally, New Year's is a time of merry making, anticipation, looking forward to see what the new year will bring for us, and filled with thoughts of new beginnings.

New Year's, is also a time to take action. In the annual December Meeting at Carrington, on December 8, 2007, the York Rite Grand Line officers met and discussed several topics, including the financial statements, the 2008 Budget, Annual Convention in March, Membership, and the Holy Land Pilgrimage. Most of the information that was covered or developed in the December meeting will be presented to you to act upon at the Annual Convention in March.

Currently Grand Chapter has about 433 members, we project a loss of 17 members due to various reasons, including death. Grand Council has 290 members, with no projected loss; Grand Commandery currently has 389 members, the projected loss is 16 members. As we all know, these numbers are not great. It would be terrific to start seeing the number climb. If each one of us would pledge to get one new member during 2008, just think of what that would do for our York Rite organizations. I don't think that I am asking the impossible, it may just seem like it. Start thinking about having a one-day York Rite Festival in February, do a college style rush party, inform potential candidates, sit down with them and fill out the petition, and get them involved in York Rite masonry.

Were do you find the candidates, well, first take a look at the new blue lodge masons, have any of them opted to continue on into the Rites? If not, take the active approach and ask them to think about York Rite Masonry. Then there are the members of the Scottish Rite who are not members of the York Rite, perhaps they may be interested. Talk to some of the newer Shriners in your area. Even though they do not need to be a member of the Rites to be a Shrine member, they may be interested if someone would approach them and take them under their wing so to speak. Oh yes, and God-forbid, those York-rite members who have been suspended for non-payment of dues. If we applied some understanding and patience, we might even be able to get these individuals back into York Rite Masonry and the Masonic family. Now wouldn't that be a great way to start the New Year of 2008.

THOUGHTS ON A TROUBLED WORLD

Unfortunately, New Year's is also a double-edged sword. It is the time of year when many of us have to pay our dues to the various organizations to which we belong. The pressure to pay dues, Christmas bills, and daily living expenses makes this time of year exceedingly stressful for many of our members. To save face and to avoid asking for help or patience, our brother Sir Knights give-up going to our meetings or gatherings. Over time, they forget about being Sir Knights, friends, and brother masons. They forget the ritual and eventually decide it is not worth it or they feel exceedingly uncomfortable about being with those individuals who can be a very valuable support group. Once these ideas or conditions develop, these once vibrant and dedicated members are lost to us.

I encourage each local commandery and each Sir Knight to do something about this. If you know of a Sir Knight who is in trouble financially, forgive their dues for at least the current year. If a Sir Knight has transportation problems, offer to pick them up and drive them home or furnish transportation to your meeting or event. Develop a program or meeting that you can take to the shut-in member, make

use of the phone and e-mail to reach out and communicate with your lost members, make them feel welcomed and part of our wonderful fraternity.

Thank you Sir Knight Larry Holmes for providing me with the following letter from Brother Tyler J. McCabe, Past State Master Councilor of DeMolay in Nebraska. It is very powerful and thought provoking. It definitely needs to be shared with the Grand Commandery of North Dakota and all of its members.

"By the time you read this there is no doubt in my mind you will have heard of the tragedy that has struck my home only hours ago. With tears, agony, and stunned disbelief Nebraskans watched this tragedy unfold, thinking all the while this is our "September 11th". Even now I write this with a heavy heart to know that my home has joined a fraternity of cities who's only membership requirement is to have suffered the tragedy of a mass murder at the hands of a young man.

On Tuesday, December 6, 2007 Robert Hawkins, a 19 year old troubled young man, entered the WestRoads Mall in Omaha, NE with only one goal in mind...to "become famous". Hawkins opened fire with an SKS military grade assault rifle killing eight(8) holiday shoppers and wounding another five(5), three(3) of which are still in critical condition. After his rampage he turned the gun on himself bringing the death toll to nine(9) which is now the worst mass murder in Nebraska history. The media is describing Hawkins as a loner with few friends; his own mother had turned her back on him by kicking him out of the house, and on that tragic day Hawkins had lost his job, his girlfriend, and apparently all hope

.As the national media descends upon my home to cover what they're calling "news worthy", all Nebraskan's can do is ask why. Why did this have to happen? Why here? Why now? Although these questions can never be answered I must ask what if. What if Robert Hawkins had not been a loner but a Brother? What if Robert Hawkins had a Dad to talk to? What if Robert Hawkins had been in the mall to buy a suit for an up coming sweetheart ball? In this time of tragedy the DeMolay World must remember our mission to make young men, better men. There are more Robert Hawkins in this world and we MUST be there for them so this will not happen in someone else's home.

Brothers, I must ask for a favor from one brother to another. Contact the DeMolay World and ask them to pray for us. Ask them to pray for Omaha, for Nebraska, but above all ask them to pray for the cause in which we, as DeMolay, are laboring.

"With pain in my heart,
Brother Tyler J. McCabe

Moving on.

In a couple of months, the Annual North Dakota Grand York Rite Convocation will be upon us. The dates for this event will be March 14 and 15, 2008. Please put these dates on your Calendar and plan on attending. The North Dakota Grand York Rite Convocation will be held in the Double Wood Inn, in Fargo ND. As soon as plans are finalized, you will be notified. One thing that I can tell you for sure, is that the Silent Auction will be making its return this year. We are also planning on having some very entertaining and emotion provoking programs, which we are sure you will enjoy. I hope that you will think about the things that I have mentioned, formulate a plan, and act upon that plan. Let us all truly make a difference this year, let's make this year, the year that we need it to be, and more especially, the year that we all want it to be for our wonderful fraternity.

James V. Acker
Grand Commander
Grand Commandery of North Dakota