

## **FORMAT FOR ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE MEMBERSHIP TEAM**

SK Jeffrey Nelson has declared that MEMBERSHIP is the Number 1, top priority of the Grand Encampment for the 68<sup>th</sup> Triennial. It should go without saying that our very existence depends on a strong, vibrant and dedicated membership. In accordance with each Grand Commandery's Constitution there must be a Membership Committee as one of its standing committees. This committee should be made up of active, dedicated Sir Knights who have demonstrated their willingness and ability to undertake this project. In the coming months and years, with the direction, support and assistance of the Grand Encampment Membership Committee, each Grand Commandery, subordinate or constituent will be empowered to achieve certain goals and will be held accountable therefore.

We must all remember that membership is not just the responsibility of a committee or our Recorders, but is highly dependent upon the participation and support of **EVERY** Sir Knight. If every Sir Knight works enthusiastically at bringing in new members, keeping those we already have on our roles actively engaged and we make an effort to bring back those Sir Knights we may have previously lost due to a demit or even suspension, then we will succeed in our efforts.

The Grand Commander should appoint a Membership Chairman with other Sir Knights to serve as sub-Chairmen for Recruitment, Retention, Restoration and Masonic/Public Relations. This paper suggests how such a committee should be structured and the duties of its several members.

### **Qualifications of Committee Members**

- Should be well known and respected within their jurisdiction.
- Committed to the project and able to devote the time and efforts to support this project.
- Should be computer literate, knowledgeable and able to work with MMS.
- Be active with his home Blue lodge and have a good relationship with the Grand Lodge.

### **Membership Chairman Duties**

- Recruit active Sir Knights who are willing and able to undertake assigned duties.
- Organize and conduct monthly or at least Quarterly Membership meetings.
- Be himself fully trained in utilization of the Membership Management System (MMS).
- Conduct regular training sessions with his full committee.
- Work with the Grand Commander and his delegated officers to set attainable goals.
- Regularly communicate with the Grand Commandery officers and constituent Commanderies and their respective membership committees.
- Submit regular reports to the Grand Commander and update Grand Commandery websites and/or publications with support material that can be utilized by all.
- Submit regular reports to the Department Commander as required and to coordinate with the Department and Grand Encampment Membership committees.

- Assist with the development of future membership planning.

### **Recruitment Chairman Duties**

Every Grand Commandery and the constituent Commanderies within its jurisdiction must recognize the need for a continuous, aggressive effort to attract and bring in new Masons of outstanding character to fill our ranks. This requires a commitment to reach out beyond our Chapters, Councils and even our Blue lodges to our families, friends and business associates, encouraging them to become members of our fraternity. By our actions and associations we should always be ready to demonstrate the relevance and pride in being a Masonic Knight Templar.

- Set an annual goal to recruit new Sir Knights and communicate that goal throughout the jurisdiction. (This number should exceed the previous year's numbers by at least 5-6% of your existing membership numbers)
- Provide every Sir Knight with the tools necessary for approaching and recruiting new members (print materials, brochures and suggested scripts for discussion).
- Develop and implement regular Member Referral events such as inviting prospective new members to a dinner or evening where promotional videos or PowerPoints may be presented that demonstrate what it is to be a Knight Templar.
- Regularly monitor MMS for his particular jurisdiction, closely watching the results of each constituent Commandery with regard to new knightings as compared to the goals that have been set for new membership.
- Work closely with the Masonic/Public Relations sub-chair to jointly promote our fraternity and our charity.
- Upon request, provide membership promotion/educational programs for other Masonic bodies.
- Closely follow and communicate with all member referrals, inviting them to join in on any open events such as dinner before stated meetings.

### **Retention/Mentoring Chairman Duties**

It is equally vital that we must always strive to keep the members we currently have, making certain that we give them a reason for maintaining their membership and a desire to remain active. Over the past several decades the losses we have suffered more from demits and suspensions for non-payment of dues (NPDs) have far exceeded the number of new Sir Knights that we have brought in. Retention also involves keeping our Sir Knights gainfully involved from the first moment they have passed through the Order of the Temple.

**Retention** of our current members is one of the most important functions, if not THE most important function, of our membership committees today. This should be a constant (7 /365 day) effort. It should not fall entirely on the Recorder to make sure this is taken care of, but must have the full support of this committee.

- Reduce demits and suspensions to a goal of less than 2% of your existing membership.
- Implement a call program to check on the welfare of those Sir Knights who have not been in attendance for some time or have suffered from some illness or malady,

- always encouraging them to come back to your meetings.
- Check with the Grand Recorder and MMS on a regular basis to determine what fraters still remain NPD and need to be contacted.
  - Develop and implement a simple report on all contact that is made with NPD Members that records their comments, commitments and confirms their best contact information.
  - Increase continuous and timely communication with all members.
  - Ask members how they wish to be contacted, i.e. email addresses.
  - Contact those Sir Knights who have remain NPD, preferably by telephone or in person, email or USPS to remind them how much we value their continued membership and timely payment of dues.
  - When making this call, ask them if there is any reason for this late payment or if there is anything that we can do to assist them.
  - Always attempt to interview those members who have indicated that they wish to demit or have been recently suspended for NPD to determine their reasons for dropping their membership.
  - Develop and implement a plan to provide for the measurement of member satisfaction.
  - Review existing means of communication for effectiveness.
  - Develop new ways of communication, i.e. email blasts, Calling Post, Constant Contact or effective websites.

**Mentoring** the new candidate starts with his journey through the Orders, carefully explaining all that he has seen and heard, never assuming that he has an innate ability to absorb this new knowledge. It requires that we should always work to fulfill their expectations as best we can, adding new light to their lives as a Sir Knight.

- Implement an effective mentor program and provide for a follow up of program effectiveness.
- Make personal contact with inactive members to determine their needs and to
- Further explore members' needs and desires as well as checking on the fulfillment of their expectations of membership.
- Inform them of current and future activities in hopes of increasing participation.
- Schedule quality activities for members on a regular basis, provide educational Programs.
- Train a cadre of capable Sir Knights in what it is to be an effective Mentor.

### **Restoration Chairman Duties**

This again, is one of those areas of membership where we seem to have failed almost completely. It is almost as though a rule of "out of sight, out of mind" prevails. We have spent a great deal of time and effort to recruit new members only to let them fall by the wayside as a demit or suspension for NPD. It is imperative that we make an effort to contact them and revisit their reasoning and to determine if there is anything we can do to rectify or fulfill those hopes or desires that we have failed them by.

- Set a Restoration goal of 2% or more of your Commandery membership numbers for the year.
- Ensure that the data on suspended members is current, accurate and available to the Membership committee (can be found on MMS).
- Work with the elected leadership to determine if an agreeable long-amnesty program can or should be implemented.
- Implement a program for contacting those Sir Knights who have been suspended over the past several years. Personal contact through a personal visit or by telephone is most preferable. Keep good accurate records of information gathered during these visits/phone calls.
- Recruit and train a Restoration Team.
- Make regular reports back to the Membership Chairman and the Commandery.

### **Masonic/Public Relations Chairman Duties**

Creating and maintaining a good working relationship with our Blue lodges, the Grand Lodge, Scottish Rite, Shrine Temples, Ladies' and Youth Groups is absolutely vital to the success of this program. We should always work with them to demonstrate how York Rite Masonry and the Knight Templars in particular can be used as a retention tool for these other organizations. If we can convince them of the relevance of what it is to be a Knight Templar, that we have a great and long heritage to follow, then we can be more successful in attracting new members.

Putting forth a good public appearance will always serve our fraternity best. We should always demonstrate our commitment and support of the communities we live in and thereby attract potential new members.

- Regularly support and interact with all Masonic organizations within your jurisdiction, especially our Blue lodges.
- Develop a Lodge Ambassador program for every Blue lodge within your jurisdiction. Provide them with the training and materials they can use to promote and educate our Masonic brothers who are not yet York Rite Knight Templars on the reasons why they should join our ranks.
- Encourage all Sir Knights to become more active with their home lodge, to lead by their example what it is to become a Sir Knight.
- Coordinate your calendars with other Masonic bodies.
- Hold joint meetings with all other Masonic bodies to determine how we can support one another with our membership numbers and programs.
- Plan and host special events to honor the leaders of your Grand Lodge, Scottish Rite and Shrine Temples, thereby encouraging more cooperation among our entire Masonic family.
- Participate in public parades, memorial services, Veterans' events as a unit displaying your beauseant and uniforms.
- Provide honor guards for officer installations or official events of any other Masonic Bodies.

### **Commitment, empowerment and Accountability**

It is imperative that every Grand Commander, every Commander, **every** Sir Knight should be absolutely committed to the welfare and growth of our overall membership. We took an oath that we would find all good men and true who might apply and whom we find worthy and make them better men. Now is the time when we must keep this in mind and take up the challenge to bring our fraternity back to its previous strength and numbers. We have been charged with looking out for our membership. We have been empowered by our Grand Master and strengthened by the means to accomplish this.

### **Recruitment**

Encourage all Sir Knights to assist with membership development. Stress that it is important to recruit new members into our ranks as Knight Templars.

- Implement an effective program to attract new candidates and to reach out beyond our existing Masonic family in doing so.
- Develop a referral program for prospective new members that can be followed by your Membership committee.
- Plan for a “Prospect” night or event, inviting any new prospects.
- Track and assist all new prospects through your Blue Lodge, Chapters and Councils as they continue their journey to becoming a Masonic Knight Templar.
- Make regular reports to the Grand Commandery on your efforts and progress.

### **Retention**

Strive to make personal contact with all members who have not been in regular attendance and/or have not yet paid their current dues to determine how you can assist them. Emphasize how much we value their continued membership.

- Mentor new Sir Knights
- Contact and survey those Sir Knights who are NPD or have indicated a desire to demit.
- Conduct regular surveys of all Sir Knights to determine if we are fulfilling their expectations or what we can do to improve this.
- Make certain that your programs and stated meetings are interesting and educational.

### **Restoration**

We should not simply forget those members we have lost in the past few years due to NPD, loss of interest or personal issues that prevented them from continuing their membership. There may have been valid reasons for his leaving our ranks, but if we have shown him that we still care about him and that we have improved on whatever it was that caused him to lose interest, then there is always a chance that we can bring him back.

- Contact inactive and suspended members.
- Work with your leadership to develop an acceptable amnesty program to bring back recently suspended members.

### **Budget Considerations**

Some of these suggested programs may need some funding to make them successful. The Membership committee should identify these costs and work with the incoming Grand Commander to include these numbers in his proposed budget. Often times, we need some financial support as much as we need the commitment of time and effort from our fraters to succeed in growing our fraternity.