

MANUAL FOR MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PREFACE

January, 2011

The Membership Development Committee have been working the last three years to development a manual that the Chapters of the State of Ohio will be able to use to increase and maintain the membership of their Chapter and that of the Grand Chapter of Ohio.

The contents of this manual represent a collection of material that has been correlated into a symmetric approach to assisting our Chapters in solving mutual problems. The committee thanks everyone who has contributed to the articles used in the manual.

This publication, while not complete in every facet concerning membership, does provide proven methods to insure the growth of Capitular Masonry and retention of its members. We believe these suggestions will help you; but a plan, regardless of how well designed, will not work unless you are committed to implementation.

It is the sincere desire of the committee that every Royal Arch Mason from the Grand High Priest to the newest Companion will accept the responsibility and promote these programs to a successful completion.

Membership Development Committee (2011)

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A. Retention and Reinstatements Calling Procedure

The membership committee recommends the following for the Districts and Chapters to do to increase and retain their membership.

1. **Each District** should form a **degree team** to portray THE PECULIAR STONE SKIT to each **Blue Lodge** in their District.

2. The **High Priest** of a Chapter appoints **Companions** to be a YORK RITE LIAISON to each **Blue Lodge** in their local area.

3. The **High Priest** of a Chapter appoints a COMMITTEE for the purpose of **Retention and Reinstatement** of members.

4. That each **District or Chapter** forms a team to portray the ROYAL ARCH WIDOWS DEGREE at least once a year.

5. The **High Priest** of a Chapter appoints a **New Member Assimilation Committee** and to oversee the **Mentoring program**.

6. The **High Priest** of a Chapter appoints a **Recruitment Committee** for the purpose of **recruiting new members** and to oversee the **LIAISON** program.

Membership Programming

Freemasonry is in a state of flux, membership has fallen from over 4,000,000 members in 1954 to 1,500,000 members in 2005, the leadership of Free Masonry at all of its levels must develop a plan to stop the decline and then follow it. The Reader should remember that all lodges and chapters are not the same and what works in one location may not work in another. The Following are suggestions of what should be considered as part of establishing effect Masonic programming.

1. Religion: Masonry needs to have a meeting of the minds with organized religion. While Freemasonry is not a religion, we express basic principles to help make the world a better place. Getting the major religions to accept freemasonry is in no way competition, but compliments the teachings of the church is fundamentally necessary.
2. Masonic Education: Masonry needs to be sure that every member is aware of what masonry is and how to explain it to any layperson. Masonry also needs to lift the voluntary veil of secrets. It is not a secret society or even a society with secrets. The Fraternity does have grips and words that we share with each other as a means of communication and recognition. The goals and objective is to dispense the light of education and morality to all mankind.
3. Mainstream life: There needs to be a way to make Masonry visible to everyone, there is a need for books, both fiction and nonfiction covering masonry written by both masons and non masons that describes masons as hero's making the world a better place and explaining the concepts and symbolism that define the fraternity. Masonry needs to make music, both rock and roll and country western. There needs to be games both video and board games that are fun and entertaining but also be able to educate and enlighten both generally and morally. Develop the Masonic Channel that would have programming that would raise awareness of Masonic history and encourage a sense of curiosity about the fraternity
4. Movies: The popularity of National Treasure and the Kingdom of Heaven should encourage the production of other movies with Masonic concepts and ideas with Masonic hero's or historical dramas where masons of the past made a difference to the world as we know it, or about Biblical characters that are central to the Masonic experience.
5. Charities: Masons need to toot their own horn, the ability to be charitable to all mankind, and the level of support that masons give to their charities should be shouted from the rooftops. Charity is central to the character of all masons and a connection with major charities needs established. An example would be getting the United Way to include the Knight Templar Eye Foundation, Royal Arch Foundation, and Royal Arch Research Association in the public search for funding.
6. Youth Groups: Reaching young people early and often with all the good of individual and social growth coupled with leadership skills should be supported. Masonic youth groups, Little League teams, reading clubs etc. should be encouraged and supported by masons at every level.
7. MOGOWS: Men of Good Will. For every mason joining or working with the fraternity today there are many more men of good will who are doing the very things every good mason should be doing, but we are not reaching them or connecting with them because of the lack of outreach to the community. Having seen the records where the past social and political leaders of the community were almost always freemasons. The fraternity needs to return to those leaders to the craft or to develop future leaders to aid and assist in their good works.
8. Equality: While the Masonic experience is for men. Fully half of the population is not male. There needs to be a concerted effort to reach and include women in the benefits and advantages of Masonic life. For the craft to grow the influence of women must be considered.

The Masonic fraternity also needs to develop a long term plan to arrest the decline in membership and influence of today's society and to promote and communicate the benefits of the search of light and knowledge. These aspects should be discussed and researched to aid and assist our brothers and companions in reaching out to the future.

AN APPROCH TO A NON-MASON

WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?

A Mason is sometimes asked by a friend, a neighbor, or a business associate, "What do the Masons do?" The question may be worded more generally, "What are the Masons?"

In either case, the Brother is challenged by the realization that there is no simple answer which he can rattle off "from the top of his head," because the questioner is really asking him for a comprehensive explanation about what organized Freemasonry is, what its principles and purposes are, what programs it is engaged in, how it carries them out, and what satisfactions the individual Mason derives from his Masonic membership.

Some of these considerations arouse the fraternal doubt that "you can't tell that," or "that's secret," so that the Brother's reply is marked by hesitation or reluctance to explain.

Puzzled by the difficulty of knowing what facets of the vast subject of Freemasonry the questioner is really inquiring about, the Mason "just doesn't know where to begin," and too often may avoid a simple statement of facts. He isn't sure of what to say.

Or, knowing that his questioner is a "practical man of affairs" who measures outcomes quantitatively, in materialistic terms he realizes that Freemasonry's reputation cannot be explained by charts, statistics, or financial statements, because the Fraternity's real worth can be expressed only in spiritual terms, and that is rather difficult to explain to the uninitiated. Masonic terminology, the most comfortable words with which to reply seems inadequate or out of place. Masonic "secrecy" gets in the way.

Embarrassment is probably the commonest cause of a Brother's difficulty in replying to the question. He is embarrassed because he realizes that he doesn't really know enough about the Fraternity to give a good simple reply. He knows that there is much more Masonic activity going on in other lodges all over the country and throughout the world, but he has never taken the time to experience some of it or to read about it with real interest. He hasn't given much thought to the subject. He never expected to be asked such a question by a non-Mason outside the lodge. Even though he has experienced Masonry, he has never tried to express in words just what Freemasonry means to himself.

A well-informed Brother, therefore, will prepare himself for the possibility of being asked such a question. Even though no one ever asks the question, he will have the confidence of knowing what Freemasonry means, especially to himself.

First of all, he will determine to give a Masonic answer, one which asserts the real nature of the Fraternity as a spiritual force, as "a way of life" which seeks to improvement morally and spiritually, by associating with other idealistic men who want to improve the quality of life around them by means of a brotherhood which emphasizes the Fatherhood of God.

In an age which derides ideals, absolutes, the concepts of law and order, and advocates relativism instead of standards of excellence, which angrily demands rights instead of responsibility, and which preaches a nihilistic doctrine of Individualism (doing your own thing), Masons find it difficult to explain the Fraternity's idealism and its charitable and educational purposes. But it must be done. A Mason must give a Masonic answer to the question, "What are the Masons?"

There are really so few "secrets" which a Mason is required to keep, and so much that he should be proud to proclaim to others, that his principal concern in answering questions is probably the doubt that he can give an adequate Masonic reply.

The esoteric parts of the ritual work, the grips and passwords of the three degrees, these are really the only "secrets" which should be kept inviolate. Because it is impossible to communicate to the uninitiated the joys and satisfactions of brotherhood experienced in "the labors of the lodge", this too becomes a secret because it is inexpressible.

But there is so much that can be told about Freemasonry, about the particular lodge, about the individual Mason, that the real problem in answering the question, "What do the Masons do?" is to say only enough to satisfy the questioner without boring or distracting him.

He can point out that Freemasonry is an educational organization. By means of the ritualistic ceremonies and other educational programs, Masons learn and teach the truths of morality, justice, patriotism, and the necessity of brotherly love to achieve those universal ideals. Reverence for the Great Architect is inculcated because men are brothers only if they are related to God as the, sons of the Creator Father.

He can explain that Masonic meetings, while resembling the meetings of any organized society, have a distinctly Masonic character. They are opened and closed with prayer. They are patriotic because the nation's flag is kept in an honored place in the lodge and properly saluted with the pledge of allegiance. They are opened and with Masonic ceremonies to remind the members of the principal purposes of the Fraternity, which are to develop brotherly love and respect for truth not the truths of scientific facts or history, but the truths which guide a man to live happily and harmoniously with his fellow man.

For that reason Masonic meetings do not permit the introduction of discussions about sectarian religious differences or partisan political opinions. A Masonic lodge, if it is working seriously, teaches its members the principles involved in attaining a universal Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

A Mason is also free to explain that Freemasonry is a charitable organization, which acts to relieve the distress of local individuals who are victims of calamity, and that it has created programs and institutions to care for its needy senior citizens, or to provide scholarship aid for worthy and needy young people in college. Masonic Homes and Hospitals, Grand Lodge Scholarship Programs, Charity Funds, and the Hospital Visitation Program of the Masonic Service Association are examples of such achievements.

Freemasonry is also, but not primarily, a social organization, which arranges special meetings to which are invited wives, children, neighbors and friends for the purposes of entertainment and sociability. Masons seek the pleasure of associating with other members of the community, hoping thereby to reveal the serious and idealistic nature of the Fraternity's objectives.

There is so much that a Mason can tell about his beloved Fraternity; but the way in which he tells it is more important than what he tells. When a Mason is conscious and proud of the moral and spiritual achievements he has made through Masonry, when he has been inspired to display the beauties of friendship, morality and brotherly love, when he realizes that his one personal life is the most important evidence he can give to show what a Mason is, he usually finds it very easy to talk about the Fraternity to his non-Masonic friends. When he knows that his lodge is a spiritual force, when it is learning and teaching its members the universal ideals of the Craft, when it is actively promoting charitable programs and pursuing truth, he will tell what Freemasonry is with conviction and enthusiasm.

But he must know what he is talking about. This essay suggests only in general terms what he can talk about. He should be prepared to fill in the details. When he is convinced that he can supply those details, he is ready to answer the questions, "What do the Masons do?" and "What are the Masons?"

When he is asked the questions he must then decide on how much or how little to say. A brief but adequate reply is advised for if the questioner is not satisfied he will undoubtedly ask for further information. The following answer is only a suggestion.

"Masons are men who voluntarily asked to join a lodge. They were accepted because they were good men who believe in God and hold high ethical and moral ideals. They go to meetings which they call the lodge, in order to learn and to teach what 'friendship, morality, and truth really involve, and to practice on a small scale the reality of brotherhood. They also have

meetings open to their wives, children and friends where they promote an understanding of the serious nature of the Fraternity by entertainment and sociability. Practical programs for charity and relief are planned and executed. The special kinship they feel for each other as a brotherhood is their deepest satisfaction.

MASONIC COOPERATION

When we are accepted and enter a Blue Lodge, we begin to learn the many lessons that will bring us that light which we try to obtain from the many bodies of Masonry: brotherly love, exalted benevolence, pure religion, unity with brother Masons and cooperation with all Masonic branches.

This knowledge should plant a seed within us that should not be bottled up but should be fertilized freely by studying the many precepts of Masonry and applying these to our lives' activities. We want our interest in and devotion to Masonry to flow freely to our Masonic brothers as well as to all of mankind.

This seed should grow and bring us from darkness to light- from rough ashlar to perfect ashlar. How will this seed be fertilized and brought to fruition? Who will help us- our family or neighbors, our Masonic brothers, the Great Architect who created us? None of the above can do so by themselves but this growth can only continue if we, ourselves, are willing to continue with our commitment of Masonry and the Great Architect who created us all. We as masons must grow not only on our own from that entered apprentice to a Master Mason and teacher but also grow in cooperation with our fellow Masons and bodies. We should never be satisfied to remain at status quo but by our example should continue to teach others the many opportunities that can be found within this great Masonic fraternity.

As I mentioned above, the unity that is created in the lodge bonds us as one, makes us want to help those in need, be friends with those within the lodges and develop stronger as a group. When we grow stronger in our Masonic knowledge, we create a desire within us to continue on our pilgrimage and travel farther into the higher degrees in search for more and further truths that can be found there.

Within York Rite Masonry, we see the great foundation for which we worked hard to achieve. The cooperation between and among these three bodies- Council, Chapter and Commandery- only strengthen our quest for more knowledge and deeper understanding of Freemasonry. We are a Masonic family- Blue Lodge, York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shrine. When we all effectively use communication and cooperate willingly, no brother or sister, no appendant Masonic body and no Masonic institution need be "a thorn in the flesh" of another.

I read on Page 20 in the book AT REFRESHMENT compiled by Stewart M. L. Pollard a statement that illustrated the point for cooperation among all of Masonry. It is entitled "Explanatory Hand".

I like to think of the Masonic Fraternity as being a hand. I like to think of the Symbolic Lodge as being the thumb, the stronger of the digits of the hand. I like to think that Masonry is composed of the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons; that it is composed of a Council of Royal and Select Masters and I like to think of the Knights Templar as another group of a strong Masonic Family. Then there is the little finger and I like to think of that as the Scottish Rite, and then I like to close that hand up and put the Whole family together. G. Wilbur Bell

Oh, how great it is to be a part of a fraternity that makes us feel so good about its outstanding work and many accomplishments. Let us join together in this great fraternity and have fun while doing so.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT PLAN

It has been said that complex problems have simple, easy to understand, wrong answers. This is certainly seems to be the case as it relates to membership development because virtually everything we have done in recent history to curtail losses in membership has failed. In a review the Grand Commandery annual reports as part of studying membership trends there, numerous articles were written in the 1930's about the concern of falling membership as related to the Knights Templar in Ohio. Membership has been an issue for Masonic Bodies in Ohio and around the country for nearly a century. Membership records in Commandery indicate a resurgence of membership following World War 2 and the Korean War, but basically we have been going down steadily for over a hundred years now. The numbers of Masons has been falling in absolute terms, but of equal importance – the percentages are falling even faster.

Robert Putnam in a 1995 book titled, *Bowling Alone* wrote about the decline of "social capital" in the United States of America since 1950, which he feels undermines the active civil engagement a strong democracy required from its citizens. Putnam notes the aggregate loss in membership of many civic organizations, including church and Masonic groups, and points out that membership has not migrated to other organizations. To illustrate why the decline in Americans' membership in social organizations is problematic to democracy, Putnam uses bowling as an example. Although the number of people who bowl has increased in the last 20 years, the number of people who bowl in leagues has decreased. Since people bowl alone they do not participate in social interaction and civic discussions that might occur in a league environment. The same is true with the game of golf and any other activity that can be done alone. Putnam doesn't offer much hope for any large-scale turn around, citing that Americans have undergone a massive social restructuring process since 1950. See the following link for more information on this subject: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling_Alone

The demise of the social structure of the family seems to be the central issue. Whereas prior to 1960, the family structure existed primarily as a "nuclear family" meaning that at least 3 generations lived under the same roof, beginning in the 1950's, a social transition resulted to what many experts describe as the "extended family" structure. Instead of having grandpa and grandma in the house, now it is just mom, dad, and the kids; or worse, simply mom and the kids. Clearly, single parenting has become a major issue in the United States, with the father being the one absent. One in three marriages ends up in divorce. While the primary gain for the extended family is privacy, much as been lost in many families across the United States – most notably the support structure and the passing down of stories. We are losing our identity. It is hard to understand who you are, if you don't know from whence you came. Perhaps we need the precepts and teachings of Masonry taught to our youth, and exhibited in our family, community, and our nation now more than ever before.

This information is presented for the purpose of illustrating the magnitude of the task before us in Membership Development, and specifically related to Recruitment because there is a current tendency for men to disassociate themselves from larger groups or organizations, engaging in smaller "circles of friendship". And, there is the competition issue of time. Many men are actively involved in their children's sporting activities, such as soccer or baseball, etc. These activities are time consuming, and leave no time to devote to Masonry after satisfying the needs of a spouse and a home and house. Membership Development is indeed a complex issue.

If we are to succeed in replenishing our numbers and holding this fraternity together for yet another generation, we need to learn from the past and apply those lessons learned in formulating a plan for the future. By necessity, it involves our youth and the younger men in our community, for without them; there will be no one to bequeath our Masonic secrets to.

Concerted efforts to restore membership in the Scottish rite began under the direction of Ill. Bro. Neil M. Smalley on September 8, 2007 pursuant to a plea from the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction to address significant decreases in membership. The Grand Chapter

Membership Committee having reviewed and participated in this program has substantially adopted this plan from a global perspective; however, the means by which it is implemented is different in many respects. There are four (4) modules of the Membership Development Plan- Recruitment, Assimilation, Enrichment, and Reclamation. In addition to the process of identifying and enlisting new members as part of the Recruitment process, the other modules are designed engage new and existing members in Royal Arch, build and strengthen Masonic relationships through education and participation in our activities, and to recover former members who have dropped their membership for various reasons.

1. The Recruitment Plan

Al Capone was once asked why he robbed banks. His answer was “because that is where the money is”. In Scottish or York Rite Masonry, there is only one place to go for potential members. We have to obtain our members from Symbolic Lodge members. Capone’s plan of robbing banks was a short-term plan for growth, and going to the Symbolic Lodges to gather up non York Rite Masons can be viewed in much the same way. Many Symbolic Lodges view both the Scottish and York Rites as “robbers” of their resources, and a threat to their existence. Once a member has become active in the Chapter or Council or Commandery, he is lost to the Lodge because he becomes too busy with other activities. He starts missing meetings and events because of conflicts, and eventually stops coming.

In the long run, we must have an attitude and be seen as an organization that supports the symbolic lodge with our attendance, participation, and membership building efforts. We are less likely to be viewed as a robber of resources if we are in a mode of supplying new candidates to our blue lodges.

Recruitment is more than an issue of numbers. It is an issue of quality. Our leaders in Masonry in past years were business leaders, doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, pharmacists, mayors and chiefs of police. They were not only business leaders - they were church leaders and leaders in the community and government. The point is this: They failed. Our numbers have continued to decline despite their influence, intelligence, financial contributions, and standing in the community.

While this Recruitment Plan primarily addresses the specifics related to identifying and securing qualified candidates for membership into our ranks, it is understood that the Recruitment Committee must work in concert with the other elements of the Membership Committee, those being the committees of Assimilation, Enrichment, and Reclamation. Because of the complexity of the Recruitment initiative, we will address our plans in two sections – short and long term initiatives.

2.1 Short Term Recruitment Initiatives

On a short-term basis, there is much that we can do to temporarily increase our membership. It is strictly a numbers game. In Ohio, we have 110,250 Masons as of December 2008, and only about 17.7% of these are Chapter Masons. The good news is that there are about 90,000 Symbolic Lodge Masons who in theory could become Royal Arch Masons. Of course not all of them are obtainable, as many have retired and moved out of state. Others are here in Ohio but perhaps too old to join, and others simply will not join for various reasons- time, money, or whatever. Of course, there are many who were former members and have dropped out for various reasons. We will not address them as part of the Recruitment efforts, as they fall under the Reclamation Committee’s purview.

The short-term recruitment plan boils down to identifying the Masons in our jurisdiction who are not Chapter members. We need to analyze these prospects as to age and other factors, and create a target list. We need to have sales materials to convince them to join, and show them the advantages and value of being a member, aside from the obvious. And, *we need to ask them to become Royal Arch Masons*. This sounds easier, perhaps, than it truly is because it is an ever-changing list. We are continually raising new master masons, and we are losing members to death and non-affiliation. Possessing an accurate list today can be essentially worthless in a matter of months.

The key is to maintain an updated target list, and to do this, we need access to Grand Lodge records or constituent lodge databases.

2.1.1 STEP 1: WE NEED A TARGET DATABASE

Obtaining a database of Masons in Ohio, which can be sorted by jurisdiction, is imperative. The next step clearly involves comparing that membership database to our database, and create a target list from the difference. There are two means by which this information can be obtained- from the Grand Lodge and from constituent Lodges. At the present time we have access to neither. We need to pursue both courses. But perhaps as equally important to obtaining the information is keeping it updated and current, and that is a monumental issue unless we are able to convince the Grand Lodge to merge our membership data with theirs and form additional sorting fields from which periodic reports can be created.

From the Grand Lodge perspective, while the Grand Lodge membership database exists within the new MORI Database System just commissioned in the summer of 2008, we do not have access to it, as it is considered private information and cannot be released without the express permission of the Grand Master. And even if we obtained access at this time, there is nothing that would assure us access in subsequent years. As a second problem, additional fields do not exist for Scottish Rite and/or York Rite data. As a back up plan for obtaining names of potential members, we must enlist the cooperation of Lodge Secretaries. The Scottish Rite has Rite Reps and we need advocates for Chapter who regularly attend Lodge as well. This would give us the membership data at the Lodge level from which we could do our own comparative analysis, and from which we could use to create our target list. This is clearly a laborious, never ending project and is not the preferred approach to maintaining a current target list.

2.1.2 STEP 2: WE NEED RECRUITMENT SALES MATERIALS

In order to be able to “sell” Royal Arch Masonry, we are going to need “sales/marketing” tools. At the present time, we do not possess many such tools. Indiana has recently developed some excellent recruitment materials for York Rite, and we have used them for recruitment during the most recent One-Day Grand Master’s Class of 2007. Also, the *Peculiar Stone Skit* has been recently rewritten and is being used on a limited basis with excellent success in Ohio and other neighboring states. A copy of the text of the skit is attached, and plans are underway to videotape a portrayal of the skit. The Peculiar Stone Skit is an Allegory that can be presented to non-Masons, including our ladies.

Materials need to be developed to feature our programs and benefits of membership in such a way to both attract and retain new members. We will need to work closely with the Assimilation and Enrichment Committees as they develop their programs to *engage* our members. We also need to be able to address the financial concerns of both joining and being a life-long member. For this reason, we are working to propose a Life Membership Fee that is affordable, yet covers our long-term obligations such as per capita expenses, periodicals, etc.

2.1.3 STEP 3: WE NEED A RECRUITMENT “SALES FORCE”

Unfortunately, membership in Masonic organizations has not sold itself. Sure, the movie *National Treasures* did much to promote interest in Masonry, but it has been shown through the years that membership recruitment into Masonry is best done *one-on-one*. In analyzing the source of our new members, we find a strong connection to an existing or former family member, or a neighbor or work associate. Though the years, we have witnessed a downsizing of large companies. As we have lost our industrial and manufacturing base as a country, we have also lost large corporate related Masonic memberships. Years ago, Ford and GM possessed large numbers of Masons. We now have more small businesses than ever before, and Masonry is not present.

Every existing member should sell York Rite Masonry. Additionally, we need York Rite Representatives active in the Lodges who are trained to promote our institution. It would be good

that our representatives function as the Lodge Education Officer. This would afford us direct contact with the symbolic lodge candidate as he progresses through the blue lodge degrees. Having worked with the candidate in preparing him for the various proficiencies, and contributed substantially to his development in becoming a “Blue Lodge” member, our representative would be in an excellent position to introduce the new Master Mason to the opportunities York Rite.

These recruiters need to be trained on how to approach prospective candidates and have ample recruiting materials on hand. The Recruitment Committee strongly suggests that constituent chapters request that training seminars be conducted in their Capitular Districts for this purpose.

YORK RITE LIAISON PROGRAM

The purpose of this program is to have a Companion in each Blue Lodge representing the York Rite Organizations. His duties will be to inform the Brothers about the many activities of the York Rite in his area and in the state. He will need to be well versed about the York Rite. Some of his duties are:

- 1. Have materials available for the members to read.**
- 2. Keep the members informed about the activities of the York Rite.**
- 3. Make sure that PETITIONS are available for membership. Have the three part PETITIONS available, if your area uses them.**
- 4. Present Education programs about the York Rite especially Capitular Masonry.**
- 5. Talk to the newly raised Master Mason about Capitular Masonry and offer him a petition to join.**
- 6. Talk to Master Masons who are not York Rite Masons about becoming a member of your Chapter and other York Rite Bodies. OFFER THEM PETITIONS**
- 7. Keep the York Rite organizations informed about your Blue Lodge activities.**

2.1.4 STEP 4: CONTACT TARGET LIST- GO RECRUITING

This step is self-explanatory. Having a target list and recruiting materials in hand, and a trained recruiting sales force, we go about the business of contacting and enlisting new members. This has to be done one-on-one at the Lodge level. Mass mailings do not work. They are a waste of stamps.

At the present time, the Recruitment Plan is under construction. A milestone chart is attached for the short-term recruitment activities. We are working to obtain lodge databases through initiatives with both the Grand Lodge and constituent lodges. We are developing marketing/sales brochures, a DVD, and identifying those best to sell our fraternity.

2.2 Long Term Recruitment Initiatives

swot... feature our strengths.... Neutralize our weaknesses..... exploit our opportunities... threats.

DeMolay

Universities

Visibility reputation image

Continuation

We have included as part of this document the The Peculiar Stone Degree which was revised to help assist with membership recruitment and was mentioned in the prior section

The Peculiar Stone

A Newly Modified Version by Dedicated Craftsmen of the Fourth Capitular District – 11/10/06

Setting:

Daytime in the stone quarries near King Solomon’s Temple during its construction.

This new adaptation of The Peculiar Stone is designed to be presented at meetings of Master Masons as a York Rite membership recruitment tool. However, it can be used for almost any occasion: an education night, ladies night, friendship night, etc. for either Symbolic Lodge, or a York Rite or Scottish Rite body. There are no “secrets,” therefore, it can be used in either a tiled or non-tiled meeting.

Hiram Abif is now a character in this dramatization. Therefore, all references to “the substitute” in the original version have been removed since Hiram Abif is still alive. This version is also more generalized for all of York Rite, rather than being Royal Arch exclusive. It includes references to the Coptic Degrees as part of its purpose to promote the completion of Ancient Craft Masonry through the York Rite.

This version also removes the use of an actual candidate. The “Candidate” character is actually another cast member portraying a Craftsman, who is symbolically representing a candidate for the Mark Master degree.

This short skit should be followed by a brief talk by a well-versed speaker. While the topics will vary according to the audience and nature of the meeting, the talk should include the purpose and symbolism of the York Rite; how it fits into the Masonic system of degrees and directly ties into the Symbolic Degrees; how the degrees improve Masonic education, develop officer and leadership abilities thereby making better lodge officers and members; broadens Masonic friendships and associations; York Rite bodies meeting times & locations; upcoming degree work, festivals, etc.; York Rite philanthropies. Depending on the audience, the “interesting ending” (swapping of the stones) may be pointed out and that it is a prelude or segue into the Mark Master degree.

Costumes:

All cast members are clothed as working craftsmen—clothed as a Fellow Craft with brown leather aprons, hats and sandals. **Varied hairpieces and beard styles.** Hiram Abif wears a red or blue (not purple) king’s robe and crown or turban, under which is a Fellow Craft costume with leather apron as the other cast members.

Paraphernalia:

Tables and working tools (square, chisel, mallet) for the three craftsmen and Candidate in the West; a table and same working tools on the Southeast side of the room for Adoniram, the Mark Master. Rough and Perfect Ashlars are placed on the craftsmen’s tables. A Perfect Ashlar with a Mark enscribed upon it is placed on Adoniram’s table. A table with a Keystone upon it is placed in the Northeast, with a chisel, mallet and compasses (no square). A trestleboard with a chalk drawing of the Keystone is also placed in the Northeast. The trestleboard is covered with a white sheet.

Cast of Characters:

- Adoniram** – An enlightened Mark Master. Speaks intelligently and with authority.
- Reuben** – A Craftsman. He is somewhat skeptical, animated and unrefined.
- Enoch** – A Craftsman. He is the most philosophical of the craftsmen.
- Shadrack** – A Craftsman. He is curious and inquisitive. Wants to learn more.
- Hiram Abif** – One of the three Grand Masters and chief architect of the Temple.
- Candidate** – A Craftsman. He acts as a devious fellow, looking for a chance to get ahead without the effort. An opportunist who quietly listens and observes carefully to what is going on around him, almost as if lurking in the shadows.

Act I

Three craftsmen (Reuben, Shadrack and Enoch) along with the “Candidate,” enter and go to the West side of the room where tables are set up with Ashlars (Rough and Perfect) and working tools (Square, Chisel and Mallet). They begin working on the Rough Ashlars. (They can optionally have the paraphernalia on the floor, kneeling down to perform their work, rather than providing tables.)

A few moments later, a Mark Master (Adoniram) and Hiram Abif enter and go to the East side of the room where tables are set up with ashlars, the Keystone, trestleboard and working tools. As they pass, they point to and acknowledge to each other the working craftsmen in the West. The Craftsmen don’t notice or acknowledge their entrance, but rather are busy working. As the two arrive in the East, they confer briefly and then Adoniram takes his place Southeast and Hiram Abif takes his place Northeast. Hiram Abif removes and lays aside his kingly robe and crown, revealing the Fellow Craft’s clothing and leather apron underneath. He then removes and lays aside the white sheet from the trestleboard, revealing the chalk drawing of the Keystone.

They then begin to work, separate from the others. They act very studious and meticulous in their work. During the skit, Hiram Abif occasionally takes the Keystone to the Trestleboard to compare it with the drawing, using the compasses to check dimensions, etc.

After a few moments of labor, Reuben (the most animated, unrefined of the Craftsmen) stops work, wipes away the perspiration with a groan, sets his work aside and says to the other craftsmen and candidate:

Reuben:—We have been working here in the quarries for more than four years now making stones for King Solomon’s Temple. Will we ever finish this work?

Shadrack, Enoch and the Candidate take the opportunity for a short rest. All set their work aside except the Candidate, and assume various postures of repose. During the following conversation, Adoniram and Hiram Abif continue their work in the East end of the room.

Reuben:—(Waits a moment for the other craftsmen to stop working) Right angles! Square work! Chip, chip, chip! I’ve worn out a dozen chisles and mallets! I imagine it will be dozens more by the time our labor on the Temple is completed!

Shadrack:—(Shadrack is the most curious and inquisitive of the Craftsmen) It takes a lot of work and a lot of time to produce a Perfect Ashlar (Points to or holds one up); but it’s certainly worth it! Have you seen the Temple? Every sixth day of the week when I go up to the South Gate to present my work, I observe its finished parts. It’s going to be beautiful when completed! Fit for a King; or even for God to dwell in!

Enoch:—(Enoch is the most philosophical of the Craftsmen) Brother Reuben, the results of our labor will be viewed by future generations with wonder and admiration. Look, (Enoch and other craftsmen stand up and Enoch points) there are thousands of craftsmen at labor, all working toward the completion of their portion of the work. I would like to

participate in other parts of the project so I can see how our work is being used in the construction of the Temple.

Reuben:—I wonder about that too, Enoch. None of us really know how our work is used in the Temple. The Masters gives us a trestleboard with designs upon it and we do our best to produce it, perfect and square. I don't know what's going on in the other parts of the quarry. (As an example of his point, he motions toward Adoniram, the Mark Master) What is that craftsman over there doing?

Shadrack:—I have no idea. Well, I know our work is good because it has never been rejected by the Overseers as unfit for use! Even so, we should always strive to learn more and do better—to improve ourselves in Masonry.

Enoch:—(Focusing in on Adoniram) I've been watching that craftsman over there for quite a while, Shadrack. He seems to be putting a mark of some sort on his stone. I've noticed he has done that with each piece of work he has wrought.

Shadrack:—I have too. (Brief pause, then points to Hiram Abif) Why is our Grand Master Hiram Abif working in the quarries? Isn't that a bit unusual? He's working on a very peculiar stone; a design of which I am unfamiliar.

Reuben:—(Nodding in agreement) I've had my eye on him too. It's not oblong or square like ours. It's a singular piece of work. Look how beautiful it is! I have never seen anything like it before! For what could it possibly be used? He must be on a special assignment from King Solomon.

During next lines, Hiram Abif gives a final check of the Keystone and the drawing on the trestleboard, nods in approval and sets down the Keystone on the table (or on the trestleboard beside the drawing). He then replaces his king's robe and crown or turban and then exits the room, leaving the Keystone behind.

Shadrack:—Seeing him here makes me wonder another thing also. When are we to receive the secret of a Master Mason?

Enoch:—I asked about that one time and was told that all those who are found worthy will receive the secret when the Temple is completed.

Shadrack:—I have also heard that King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abif must all be present to give us the secret. What would happen if something were to happen to one of the three Grand Masters?

Enoch:—I don't want to think about that. Look, Grand Master Hiram Abif is gone; and he left that peculiar stone behind! Should one of us take it up to the Temple?

Shadrack:—Not me! He will probably come back for it.

Reuben:—Yeah.

Shadrack:—Let's find out what that Craftsman is doing over there.

Enoch:—Yeah; and let us find out what that mark is all about.

During Shadrack's and Enoch's following discussion, Reuben acts somewhat skeptical about the whole matter, but goes along with it nonetheless. Craftsmen and Candidate walk toward Adoniram. The Candidate, carrying his ashlar, lags slightly behind, snooping around during the discussion. Throughout the entire skit, he is a loner, present in the action, but does not participate directly in the conversations. The other Craftsman act almost as if not present.

Shadrack:—Hail, brother! We wondered if you would be so kind as to answer some questions for us. (Adoniram stops work) We've noticed that you are a very skilled craftsman and are curious about the mark you place on your work.

Enoch:—And we are curious about a peculiar stone upon which we have seen our Grand Master Hiram Abif working—a form and shape of which we are unfamiliar. We're interested in gaining additional Light in Masonry in order to be of better service in the building of the Temple. What can you tell us?

Adoniram:—I'm pleased that you're interested and will attempt to answer any questions you may have. A brother should always be eager to assist another in gaining more Light in Masonry.

Shadrack:—(Inquisitively) You appear to be a Master. Are you a Craftsman?

Adoniram:—Brethren, we are all Craftsmen laboring to complete our Temple. You saw our Grand Master Hiram Abif here earlier? Even though he is our Grand Master, he too, is still a craftsman. To answer your question, I am a Royal Arch Mason and a Royal and Select Mason.

Craftsmen look and nod at each other as if they're impressed by this.

Shadrack:—(Very fast and excited) Wow! What is a Royal Arch Mason? Can I become a Royal Arch Mason? What is a Royal and Select Mason? How do you...

Adoniram:—Hold on! (Chuckles) One question at a time! First, Royal Arch Masons are a group of Master Masons who have continued their search for more Light; and through hard work and dedication to the Craft have been duly rewarded. There are four degrees conferred in a chapter of Royal Arch Masons—the Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and the Royal Arch Mason degree. These degrees build upon your Masonic education and provide more Light, Knowledge and Information to the Master Mason to help him better understand and appreciate the lessons received thus far. The Mark Master degree amplifies upon the Fellow Craft Degree and teaches the importance of industry, fidelity, skill and honesty. The Past Master degree teaches that he who would rule must first learn the lesson of self-discipline and obedience; and that leadership qualities are developed through service to others. The Most Excellent

Master degree teaches us how to complete the moral and spiritual edifice within the Temple of our own heart. Finally, in the Royal Arch degree, out of the ruins of a destroyed Temple is found that for which we have so long wrought, symbolizing the ultimate victory over death and the rewards received from the hands of the Supreme Grand Architect of the Universe, as promised to us as a right and key to it, by our Most Excellent King Solomon upon the completion of the Temple—the secret of a Master Mason. The Royal Arch degrees are called Capitular Degrees, as they represent the capstone of Freemasonry. The Royal and Select Mason degrees are referred to as the Cryptic Degrees because they allude to the preservation of the secret that may be lost.

Reuben:—I had no idea there was so much to learn in Masonry beyond what I have already been taught.

Enoch:—Are you telling us that we may never receive the Secret of a Master Mason?

Adoniram:—That is correct, you may never receive it. The prophets have told us that this Temple we are now building will at some future time be destroyed. It therefore becomes necessary for us to preserve the secret of a Master Mason for future generations to rediscover and bring to light. That is what the Royal and Select Mason degrees are about—the preservation of the secret.

Shadrack:—Wow! There is so much more for us to learn! (Pointing toward the Keystone) I almost forgot. What is that peculiar stone upon which our Grand Master Hiram Abif was working? Do *you* know?

Adoniram:— I can tell you is that That stone is of great importance and is required to complete the Temple—but more than its physical necessity, it has a moral and spiritual significance.

Enoch:—We were complaining a little while ago that we didn't know what is going on with the building of the Temple. Now, we are finding out that the work of our hands is being used to safeguard a precious and important secret for future generations—a secret that we may never learn, unless we become Royal Arch Masons.

Adoniram nods in concurrence with Enoch's revelation.

Shadrack:—(Pointing toward Adoniram's ashlar) I have another question. Why do you put marks on all your work?

Candidate looks inquisitively at Adoniram's ashlar and alternately at his own during the following line by Adoniram.

Adoniram:—When you become a Mark Master, you will be given the opportunity to choose your own personal mark to place upon your work. No one will have a mark like yours. It identifies you and relates you to your work. (Pauses and looks around for any other questions)

Enoch:—Let's get back to work. (Pauses and states reflectively:) Brother Adoniram, we thank you for your information. (Pauses for another instance) I have just one last question. How do we become Royal Arch Masons and Royal and Select Masons?

Adoniram:—You just took the first step by asking and wanting to learn more. I have work at the Temple tonight, so I have to go, but I will be in touch. (Pauses) Thanks for asking. We need more zealous craftsmen like yourselves.

Craftsmen begin to return to their work area in the West by way of the Northeast, passing the work area of Hiram Abif, with the Candidate again quietly lagging behind. Adoniram exits the room along the South side. The Candidate stops at Hiram Abif's work area examining the Keystone and trestleboard, while the others continue on.

Reuben:—(He's a convert now. Musing:) Just think that years from now, people will find stones in the Temple with my mark on it and they'll know that I'm the one who did the square work.

Enoch:—(Playfully pushes Reuben) Hey Reuben, you're not a Mark Master yet!

Reuben:—Maybe not, but I will be!

Shadrack:—Yeah, me too!

Shadrack playfully knocks Reuben's hat off. They both, like children, start to run out, but then Shadrack holds out his arm to stop Reuben.

Shadrack:—Hey! It's the end of the sixth day of the week! We had better get this work up to the Temple for inspection!

Everyone takes up their work and begins to exit. Shadrack and Reuben move ahead and chase each other as they playfully leave the lodge room. The Candidate remains at Hiram Abif's work station, pondering his work and the Keystone.

Enoch:—(Enoch stops, turns back, walks a few steps toward the Candidate, annoyed, says:) Hey, are you coming?

Candidate:—Yeah, I'll be right along. (Enoch turns and exits, shaking his head in disgust.)

The Candidate starts to walk out, stops and returns. The candidate picks up the Keystone and compares it with his own work, indicating that he is coveting the Keystone. He deviously looks around checking that no one sees him.

Candidate:—Hey, wait for me!

The Candidate places his ashlar where the Keystone had been. Hiding the Keystone under his arm, he runs to catch up with other craftsmen.

~~~~ **Finish** ~~~~

## **PRESENTATION OF YORK RITE MASONRY TO A SYMBOLIC LODGE FOR RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS OR EDUCATION PROGRAM**

This is an example of how to conduct a York Rite training session for Master Masons in a lodge. This is not the only way but seems to be the most effective. The companion making the presentation should remember that he is there as a dispenser of light, and not to belittle or embarrass his less informed brethren. Be light hearted and answer any and all questions as they are asked. Make sure the brethren know that you are willing and able to answer their questions.

Begin the presentation with introducing yourself and any helpers, do not try to overwhelm your audience with titles, always maintain the KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) principal. The questions do not have to be asked in this order but again I have found this order to be the most effective. Emphasize that these questions are not made to embarrass but to get the brothers to think. Also promise to provide an operative Masonic secret during the presentation.

Questions:

### **1. How many brothers are members of the York Rite? Please raise your hands.**

Answer: All brothers should raise their hands; Members of the Symbolic (Blue) Lodges are members of the York Rite. The York Rite consists of Blue Lodge, Chapter, Council & Commandery.

### **2. Worshipful Master, with your permission I will ask you and your officers a series of questions to show you that the founders of Free Masonry never expected its members to stop with just the first Three degrees, The First three Degrees are the frame work to build the Masonic building of every masons life. The Degrees of Chapter, Council, & Orders of Commandery fill in the frame work and make a mason complete. W.M. Are you a Master Mason, made in the legal lodge of such? Please give me the secret of a Master Mason. He will not be able to give you the secret. If he has it, between the two of you.**

Answer: You have the substitute for the Masters Word, and you know there is a real word why would any brother be satisfied with the substitute? The founders gave us the substitute that we may continue to search, not only for the masters' word but for that which give our lives meaning.

### **3. W.M. is there in any of the first three degrees which holds the secret of the master's word?**

Answer: If the master says no, ask the Senior Deacon if he has participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the master mason degree. If so ask him what he says when Jubala asks to be given the secret of the master mason. That it can only be given in the presence of Solomon King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Myself (Hiram Abiff). So the Master Mason Degree tells us that the word can only be communicated by the three Grand Masters. All three present and agreed. I'll get back to this.

### **4. Brother Junior Warden, What are your duties? He should be able to recite them, Then ask when have you ever as a J.W. ever been asked to tell the time? Why not if that is your duty why doesn't the master ever ask you what the time is?**

Answer: In the Chapter degrees that question is asked and answered in that the J.W. is asked what the hour is and he answers the master by telling him what he needs to know.

### **5. Brother S.W. What are your duties? He should be able to recite them. Then ask the question when have you ever paid the craft their wages? It it's your duty then they don't you perform it?**

Answer: explains that in a following degree in chapter the S.W. does perform this duty and its meaning is explained.

Now would be a good time to give a general overview of York Rite Masonry. The York Rite is the oldest know branch of free masonry being first mentioned in 926 A.D. in England in the records of the time talk about the craft and how to integrate into society. The 926 document is also the basis of what would become the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 A.D. and that is the basis for American Freemasonry.

**The degrees that follow the Symbolic lodge are those of the Chapter. There are four Capitular degrees that are portrayed: the degrees are the Mark Master Degree, Past Master Degree, the Most Excellent Master Degree and the Royal Arch Degree.**

A. **The Mark Master Degree** is the oldest of all the degrees, ancient workmen providing the work for the great undertakings of civilization often placed their marks on their work to show that their work did meet the standards of the day. The Mark Master Degree is the new beginning of Masonic education with many lessons being provided.

B. **The Past Master Degree** directly reflects on the Symbolic Lodge and the responsibility of the master to provide leadership. Here you will learn the meanings of why the master is covered, why the gavel is used in a lodge, why the Master station is called the Oriental Chair. You will also see the Allegory of King Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre decide the future of the lodge.

C. **The Most Excellent Master degree** is where the brother will actually see the completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple and all the meaning of that glorious time.

D. **The Royal Arch degree** is the Capstone of the Chapter degrees. The Royal Arch is the second part of the Master Mason opening in the new chapter. The Master Mason without the Royal Arch is a story half told, a song half sung, putting the two together completes the story and brings greater understanding of what has gone before. Rediscover the secret that which had been so long sought. You are also called Companions to show you closer relationship to Freemasonry.

**The next set of degrees are those of Council of Royal & Select Master, which are called the Cryptic degrees. These degrees deal with the preservation of the secret of the master's word.**

**The three degrees of this body are the Royal Master, The Select Master & the Super Excellent Master Degree.**

A. **The Royal Master degree** is where you will get the chance to have a conversation with Hiram Abiff and see the unfinished temple along with discovering the need to preserve those Masonic secrets so dear to us.

B. **The Select Master Degree** brings you deep under King Solomon's Temple to discover how the Three Grand Masters made it possible to rediscover that which was lost in the Master Mason degree, rediscovered in the Royal Arch degree.

C. **The Super Excellent Master Degree** teaches the companion to be true to the demands of Faith, Friendship & Fidelity. It is also an excellent portrayal of how the first temple was destroyed.

**The Chivalric body put on what are called Orders belonging to Commandery of Knight Templar's. They are special in that to belong to these orders you must profess your belief in Christianity or at least that you will defend the Christian Religion. There are three orders:**

A. **The Order of Red Cross** teaches the importance and power of truth.

B. **The Order of Malta** brings the lessons of being vigilant and zealous in the pursuit of honor.

C. **The Order of the Temple**, in my opinion the most beautiful of all the degrees and orders bringing us as masons to the ultimate knowledge, that death is not the final victory: Jesus died, was buried and on the third day burst asunder the bonds of the Grave bringing to all who believe in him everlasting life.

**This concludes my presentation. Oh I forgot I promised you a Masonic secret didn't I: ok here it is .** In the building of King Solomon's Temple there were 80,000 workers. Some of the tools that were used were the level, the plumb and the square. But how did the workmen know if their tools were true in measurement. Easy the level can be checked by using water which is always level. The plumb always points towards the center of earth by gravity. But the Square? How do you know if a square is really an angle of 90 degrees? Remember that in the building of the temple the craft depended on their tool and measurements to be really accurate. So how do you check to see if a

square is? It's really easy all you need is a square and a ruler. Take the square and measure one side three units, measure the other arm four units, then measure between the two points if the length is five units then a square is just that. So now you are in possession of an operative secret of Masons.

There are many paths to follow in free masonry that will provide instruction in your spiritual temple but also provide real life experience that will benefit you though out your life.

I would also recommend for your reading books by Robinson and Brown.

Thank you for your attention and I will be willing to answer any and all questions to the best of my ability.

Remember to be positive and Cheerful while answering any questions

You may also want to incorporate a video, Recommend the York Rite by the Grand Chapter of Indiana.

## **NEW MEMBER ASSIMILATION**

Assimilation is one of the most crucial functions in membership development because it establishes for the new candidate a feeling of inclusion and interest in him as a welcomed member of our fraternity. Creating this welcoming and inclusive feel for the candidate may just determine how active and engaged this member may become in the future. Not only will the impact of this effort be felt in Royal Arch Masonry, but it's properly executed efforts will have a significant impact in the larger York Rite family of Masonic bodies. Remember, this will be the first impression that the candidate has of the York Rite and Royal Arch Masonry and as we've all heard before "first impressions are lasting impressions". Think about it, you will never be given a more influential second chance in your efforts to make a powerful first impression.

Considering the dynamics of today's socio-economic family structure, the assimilation program should encompass more than the individual petitioner but should strive to be inclusive of the greater family unit. Statistically there are many reasons why an individual may choose to petition a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. However one fact remains consistent; every man that signs a petition is not only interested in being involved but wants to feel like he belongs and is part of the chapter.

In short new member assimilation is all about making the candidate and his family feel welcomed and valued as a viable part of this fraternity. The ultimate goal is to create such a feeling of belonging that the new member will want to become engaged in the activities and functions of the chapter.

It's strongly recommended that you DO NOT immediately ask the newly exalted companion to join the officer line. If you follow this new member assimilation process closely, he will approach you about getting active in the chapter. He may have an interest in becoming part of the degree team, working on one of the committees or in an area that's within his comfort zone. Let him choose first how he wants to get involved. Over time he may express an interest in becoming an officer. If you push him into a role he is not comfortable with you may just be pushing him out the door. However, it doesn't mean you shouldn't let him know what functions or activities are available for him.

This New Member Assimilation program is equipped with many new tools and suggested procedures that you can use to welcome your new candidate and get him engaged quickly. Below is a list of the tools that will be explained in detail later in the manual;

### **Sample documents are provided at the end of this New Member Assimilation section.**

#### 1) Initiate a New Member Mentor Program

(Sample New Member Mentor description or guideline of responsibilities is provided)

#### 2) Create a New Member Packet – (sample New Member Packet check list is provided)

#### 3) Create a welcome letter for each New Member – part of the New Member Packet

(Sample letter is provided)

#### 4) Create and distribute a New Member Survey – included in the new Member Packet

(Sample survey is provided)

- Suggestion - after the survey is completed and turned over to the secretary, present a keystone lapel pin to the new member - this can be done prior to the Mark Master Degree

#### 5) Create a Welcome letter for spouses (or significant others) of new member

(Sample welcome letter for the ladies is provided)

#### 6) Create an orientation presentation for a ladies program

(Sample talk/presentation is provided)

## **How do you get started?**

The High Priest should start by appointing a New Member Assimilation Committee. The committee chairman should then assign tasks to four committee members that will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating; Mentors for the New Members, Ladies night and programs, New Member Survey and Informational Materials needed for the Packet that is necessary for assimilating the new members into the chapter.

The assimilation process for each new Royal Arch Mason should start immediately after the petition has been signed and fees have been collected. The assimilation program is intended to start the moment the candidate signs the petition and if done properly, will last for at least a 12 month period after he's exalted in the Royal Arch degree.

## **New Member Mentor**

It's at this time the New Member Assimilation Committee Chairman should assign a Mentor for this new member. Ideally the mentor will be someone this petitioner should know, preferably the first line signer on his petition. If the first line signer is unable to be his mentor, someone of a similar age and interests should be appointed. This Mentor should be provided with a description or guidelines of responsibilities and these guidelines should be reviewed with the mentor upon assignment.

## **Welcome Letter**

A letter should be mailed, by the secretary or mentor, to the petitioner immediately following the elections notifying him of his acceptance and welcoming him into the chapter. This letter should include the name, meeting location and stated meeting dates of your Royal Arch Chapter. More importantly this letter should tell him who his mentor will be; please remember to include the mentor's phone number. One of the chapter's junior officers should also be assigned to the candidate as a secondary source of information and guidance.

## **New Member Assimilation Informational packet**

As soon as the letter is mailed there are a couple of other things that either the mentor or New Member Assimilation Chairman should undertake. First a new member informational packet should be assembled and made ready for the candidate. It's our belief that comprehensive education is the key to any successful endeavor. The new member should be encouraged to share this information with his spouse or significant other. The more the new member learns about this great fraternity the more information he will want to seek out.

Before this new petitioner receives the Mark Master degree he should be presented with this new member informational packet. This packet will contain a welcome letter from the High Priest detailing the dates of the degree portrayals in addition to informational booklets on the various degrees portrayed within a chapter of Royal Arch Masonry. The new member packet should also include a chapter calendar, district calendar of events, history of the chapter, list of officers including phone numbers, addresses and spouses names. It's also suggested that information on the Royal Arch Research Assistance program and the Royal Arch Foundation is included along with anything else the High Priest may find of value for the candidate. Let's not forget to include information on the other bodies within the York Rite degree structure; for further ideas please reference the new member informational packet check list.

## **New Member Survey**

The assimilation process should also include the candidates filling out of a survey, focused not only on collecting information on the petitioner and his interests and hobbies, but also on the activities and

interests of his family unit. The information gleaned from this tool will be invaluable in structuring chapter programs that are interesting and meaningful to your candidate. This information will also allow the leadership of your chapter to develop broader long range programs of interest.

Upon submission of this survey by the candidate, he should be presented with some significant keepsake such as a keystone lapel pin that he can wear to future meetings. All of these things will help to make him feel like the companions of his chapter are interested in him and want to include him in the Royal Arch fraternity.

### **Welcome Letter to the Lady of New Member**

Royal Arch Masonry also needs to be a welcoming environment to the spouse's and families of your new member. For this reason a second letter should immediately be sent to the petitioner's spouse or significant other welcoming and inviting her to a ladies program. It's at this program where she will get to meet the other members of the chapter and their spouses in a relaxed enjoyable setting. It may be best to have the wife of the High Priest or spouse of another dais officer send out the letter. We highly suggest that the ladies program be held in conjunction with a dinner. It's at this time the suggested "Ladies Program" paper could be read so she can actually see and hear some of what her husband finds of value in Royal Arch Masonry.

Oftentimes the spouse is an extremely influential factor for the petitioner and it's important for your chapter to create and include programs that are of value and interest to her. For these reasons, within the assimilation process, the spouse should be offered a program of orientation and informational value.

### **New Member Reception**

The evening of the Royal Arch Degree should be one that the new member should never forget. It's at this time where the candidate finally finds, what he as a mason, has been searching for. It's at this time when an important and lasting impression of Royal Arch Masonry can be made, so don't hold back. Host a dinner and invite every companion in your chapter to attend and observe this degree. If the work is done in a dignified and professionally performed manner the candidate will respond – as thousands have done before him – and become deeply impressed. If the degree is portrayed in a careless and sloppy manner, the candidate may believe your chapter doesn't care for the capitular degrees and more importantly what Royal Arch Masonry stands for. Unfortunately, after poorly portrayed degree work has concluded, you may find that your new member may never come back to your chapter. Because the moral lessons of our degrees is what we hold most valuable as a fraternity then we must show utmost proficiency and pride in the degree work we portray.

**Let us not forget, the candidate is the most important person in the chapter at any given time and he is entitled to the very best work we can produce.**

Immediately following the Royal Arch Degree the newly exalted companion should be greeted by every companion in the chapter and made to feel like he is "at home" among other Royal Arch Masons. Include him into the fraternity by offering him a small assignment; it doesn't matter how small, just so he returns to the next stated meeting to relive the "at home" feeling and warm fellowship of the other companions. It's at this point where his Mentor will play a crucial role in keeping him engaged within the chapter. His mentor should provide him with insight and education into the chapter operations, history, philanthropy and traditions. His mentor should "take him under his wing" until the orientation process is completed; usually no less than a 12 month period.

Once a Chapter has exalted a new companion in the Royal Arch Degree, he should be presented with a member certificate suitable for framing, a paid dues card, a triple tau lapel pin and an engraved chapter name badge. The new companion should have already received his new member packet

complete with a calendar of upcoming chapter and district events. A brief review should be made by the High Priest of upcoming meetings, chapter/district activities and volunteer opportunities. The Mentor should also be west of the alter with the new companion and at that time offer to go with him to some of the upcoming meetings and events.

These are just a few tools and suggestions offered to help your chapter assimilate new members into your chapter. There are many other approaches you might think of that can further welcome and engage these new members. Whatever your approach you should keep in mind that all new members want to feel like they are wanted and valued in your chapter. Statistically speaking, if these new Companions establish a bond with your chapter and the individual Companions in your chapter they will want to help your chapter grow and improve.

### **New Member Assimilation Packet Checklist**

|                                                                         |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Envelope                                                                | 3.00           |
| Welcome Letter from HP – List Primary Mentor and Chapter officer Mentor | .05            |
| Questionnaire – (Pin is presented when turned into Sec)                 | .05            |
| Chapter Certificate                                                     | .15            |
| Temporary Name Badge                                                    | .15            |
| District calendar                                                       | Free           |
| Capitular Rite – Red Booklet                                            | ????           |
| RARA booklet                                                            | Free           |
| Royal Arch Foundation informational pamphlet                            | Free           |
| Chapter Newsletter (provided by individual Chapter)                     | cost of copies |
| Chapter Event Calendar (provided by individual Chapter)                 | cost of copies |
| Officer - Member Roster (provided by individual Chapter)                | cost of copies |
| Royal Arch Mason Magazine (one year subscription)                       | \$5.00         |

### **New Member Assimilation Festival Packet Checklist**

(In addition to packet above)

Council Calendars

Council philanthropic literature

Council News and Views

Commandery Calendars

KT Eye Foundation pamphlet

York Rite – Booklet from York Rite Cooperation committee

Knight Templar Magazine

York Rite Crusader

## **Mentor Duties and Responsibilities**

As soon as the Petition is accepted by the chapter the New Member Assimilation Committee Chairman or the High Priest should assign a Mentor for this new member.

The mentor will be someone this petitioner should know, preferably the first line signer on his petition. If the first line signer is unable to be his mentor, someone of a similar age and interests should be appointed.

The appointed mentor should be provided with a description or guidelines of responsibilities. The High Priest or New Member Assimilation Committee Chairman should review these guidelines with the mentor immediately upon assignment.

A new member welcome letter should be mailed, by the secretary or mentor, to the petitioner immediately following the elections, notifying him of his acceptance and welcoming him into the chapter. This letter should include the name, meeting location and stated meeting dates of your Royal Arch Chapter. More importantly this letter should tell him who his mentor will be; please remember to include the mentor's phone number. The High Priest should assign one of the chapter's junior officers as a secondary source of information and guidance.

As soon as the letter is mailed, the Mentor or New Member Assimilation Chairman should begin to assemble a New Member Informational Packet. The new member should be encouraged to share this information with his spouse or significant other

Before this new petitioner receives the Mark Master degree he should be presented with this new member informational packet.

This packet will contain a letter from the High Priest detailing the dates of the degree portrayals in addition to informational booklets on the various degrees portrayed within a chapter of Royal Arch Masonry. The new member packet should also include a chapter calendar, district calendar of events, history of the chapter, list of officers including phone numbers, addresses and spouses names. It's also suggested that information on the Royal Arch Research Assistance program and the Royal Arch Foundation is included along with anything else the High Priest may find of value for the candidate. For further ideas please reference the new member informational packet check list.

The assimilation process should also include a survey, focused not only on collecting information that the petitioner should be asked to fill out. The information gleaned from this tool will be invaluable in structuring chapter programs that the candidate may find interesting and meaningful.

Upon submission of this survey by the candidate, he should be presented with some significant keepsake such as a keystone lapel pin that he can wear to future meetings.

## **New Member Mentor Checklist**

1. Review the Mentor Duties and Responsibilities guidelines with the High Priest or Membership Assimilation Chairman
2. Mail out the New Member welcome letter – make sure the High Priest signs the letter and has assigned a Junior Officer to the petitioner
3. Begin to assemble the New Member Informational Packet
4. Coordinate the date for a New Member Ladies Night with the High Priest, Secretary and New Member Assimilation Chairman
5. Present the New Member Informational Packet to the petitioner prior to the conferral of the Mark Master Degree- review the enclosed material with the petitioner
6. Present the petitioner with the New Member Questioner and upon submission present the petitioner with a Keystone lapel pin
7. Call the Petitioner 14 days prior to the conferral of each degree and offer to give him a ride to the Chapter
8. Call the New Member 7 to 10 days prior to each stated meeting and special event the chapter may host and invite him to accompany you – this should be ongoing for at least 12 month after the conferral of the Royal Arch Degree – offer to give him a ride to the meeting
9. Assist the New Member Assimilation Chairman in the organization of a Chapter reception in honor of the New Member on the evening of conferral of the Royal Arch Degree
10. Stand with the New Member west of the Alter when he received his Member Certificate, Triple Tau Lapel Pin, Dues Card and name Badge
11. Call the New Member 7 to 10 days prior to each district event and invite him to accompany you – this should be ongoing for at least 12 month after the conferral of the Royal Arch Degree – offer to give him a ride to the event



# Royal Arch New Member Survey



## Required Information:

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home/Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birth Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **How long have you been a Mason?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital Status:** \_\_ Single \_\_ Married \_\_ Widowed \_\_ Divorced \_\_ Separated **Wife's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children's Names(Ages):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupation** (former occupation if retired): \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone#** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell Phone#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Hobbies and Interests:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Interests:** Sports \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation \_\_\_\_\_

**List non-Masonic Memberships:** \_\_\_\_\_

### *How would you prefer to receive information from the Chapter?*

Mailed letter \_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_ Text message \_\_\_ Phone call \_\_\_ Chapter Newsletter \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### *In what Chapter Activities would you like to participate in?*

Social Functions: Family functions \_\_\_\_\_ Dinners \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Activities \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Degree cast: Speaking part \_\_\_\_\_ Non Speaking part \_\_\_\_\_ Stage Crew \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Community Activities: Member/Community Networking \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Leadership Development: Officer Line \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Secretarial Support \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Committees \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fund Raising/Finance: Charity Functions \_\_\_\_\_ Membership/Social \_\_\_\_\_ Budget/Audit Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Development:

Lodge Ambassador \_\_\_\_\_ New Member Mentor \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Retention \_\_\_\_\_

Member Reinstatement \_\_\_\_\_ Program Development \_\_\_\_\_ Member Survey/Analysis \_\_\_\_\_

Communications: Chapter Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Member Correspondence \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Tree Coord. \_\_\_\_\_

Charity Functions: Welfare/Widows \_\_\_\_\_ RARA Representative \_\_\_\_\_ RA Foundation Rep. \_\_\_\_\_

*If you could bring one positive impact to the future of your Chapter what would it be?*

Brother \_\_\_\_\_,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you into this Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. As you progress through the four degrees in this Royal Arch Chapter you will not only be advancing your knowledge of masonry you'll meet many new friends. When you received the Master Mason degree, you were instructed that only the substitute for the Masters word was given and that diligent search would be needed to find the real word. In the Royal Arch degree, you will sojourn on a long and perilous journey and be challenged at the gates of the tabernacle. You will be required to help search for and will eventually find, the Ancient Masters Word, the long lost secret of a Master Mason.

It is common, as you continue on this journey in search of more light in Masonry, that you will have many questions, see new faces and have a desire to learn more about this Great Fraternity. I would like to make this experience a smooth and pleasant one for you. For these reasons I have asked Companion \_\_\_\_\_ to be your mentor, and guide you on your journey into this Royal Arch Chapter. We are hoping this companion is one you feel comfortable calling upon to answer any questions you may have about this chapter or the degrees in which you participate. This dedicated member of our fraternity will place a reminder call to you prior to every stated or special meeting and will even offer you a ride to the meeting if you need one. He is also being asked to introduce you to all of the members that attend our meetings so that you will not feel like you are among strangers.

In the event your mentor isn't available for one of our meetings, I'm asking Companion \_\_\_\_\_ one of the officers of the Chapter, to help introduce you to the other companions of the chapter and answer any questions you may have about capitular masonry.

Please keep in mind, \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter has its stated meetings on the \_\_\_\_\_ and meets at \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge in \_\_\_\_\_ Ohio.

The officers and companions of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter No. \_\_\_\_\_ Royal Arch Masons of the State of Ohio, wish to welcome you and look forward to greeting you as a brother and companion of this great fraternity. It will be my extreme pleasure to greet you and welcome you on \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely & Fraternaly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of High Priest), HP

(Name of Chapter) (No. \_\_\_)

## **Notes on New Member Assimilation**

New member assimilation is all about making the candidate feel welcomed and valued as a viable part of this fraternity. The assimilation program will start at the moment the candidate signs the petition and will last for at least a 12 month period after he is exalted in the Royal Arch degree. The ultimate goal is to create such a feeling of belonging that the new member will want to become engaged in the activities and functions of the chapter.

Considering the dynamics of today's socio-economic family structure, the assimilation program should encompass more than the individual petitioner but should strive to be inclusive of the greater family unit. For this reason the assimilation process should include a survey, focused not only on the interests of the petitioner but on the activities and interests of the family unit. The information gleaned from this tool will allow the leadership of the chapter to develop programs of interest to the membership as a whole.

Oftentimes the spouse is an extremely influential factor for the petitioner, it's important for the chapter to create and include programs that are of value and interest to her. For these reasons within the assimilation process, the spouse should be offered a program of orientation and informational value.

Comprehensive education is the key to any successful endeavor. For these reasons an informational New Member Packet should be assembled and presented prior to the conferral of the Mark Master Degree. The new member should be encouraged to share this information with his spouse or significant other. The more the new member learns about this great fraternity the more information he will want to seek out.

For these reasons we have created certain procedures and tools that the chapters can use. Some of the tools that are being made available are detailed below starting with a job description for the Mentor, a new member survey, a sample welcome letter, a sample welcome letter for the ladies of New Members, a talk for a ladies program and guidelines for creating a New Member Packet.

### 1) Initiate a Mentor Program

Construct a Job description for Mentor (being developed)

### 2) Create and distribute a New Member Survey

(Sample is created and ready for review)

- After survey is completed and turned over to secretary, present a keystone pin to the new member - this can be done prior to the Mark Master Degree

### 3) Create a welcome letter for each New Member

(Sample is created and ready for review)

### 4) Create a New Member Packet

(Sample packet is assembled and ready for review)

### 5) Create a Welcome letter for spouses (or significant others) of new member

(Sample welcome letter for the ladies is being developed)

### 6) Create an orientation presentation for a ladies program

(Sample found on internet and ready for revision and review)

**SUBJECT: ADDRESS TO A LADIES' NIGHT - WHY YOUR PARTNER IS INVOLVED  
IN FREEMASONRY - PARTICULARLY IN ROYALARCH FREEMASONRY?**

This was delivered to a Ladies' night (to which a potential Companion also attended) which was our Christmas Party night at Stephen's Royal Arch Chapter #78 SGRAC Queensland, 5 December 1997 by Rt.Ex.Comp Ian Weir who is also the Scribe E of our Chapter.

**Address for a Ladies Night at a Royal Arch Chapter**

**ROOM LAYOUT and ORGANIZATION:**

The Chapter should be set up as for a Royal Arch Degree, Altar covered and the Floor Lights extinguished, Volume of the Sacred Law should be closed. The Working Tools, Square, Compasses, Sword and Trowel can remain set up as for the Degree. Officers should be correctly robed and at their respective stations. The normal business of the Chapter should be dealt with expeditiously and the Chapter closed before the Ladies are brought into the Chapter.

**LADIES AND COMPANIONS:-**

It is my pleasure to welcome you into our Chapter this evening and I consider it a privilege to have this opportunity to address you. However, before I introduce the topic itself, may I direct your attention to your immediate surroundings. You are seated within a Royal Arch Chapter, furnished in every respect as it would be were we to exalt a Candidate into the Royal Arch. Degree.

You will note, among other things, an Altar, an Arch, a series of Ensigns and Banners, a Crowbar, Pick and Shovel, a Volume of the Sacred Law, a Sword, a Trowel, a Square and a pair of Compasses. The Arch relates to the building of King Solomon's Temple around which much of our philosophical teachings revolve. The Ensigns and the Banners take us back to the Twelve Tribes of Israel who play a prominent part in the Historical aspects of our Order. Each of the tools you see is of the common or garden variety - articles which can be found in most homes, but to a Royal Arch Mason each also has a deep symbolical meaning.

I direct your attention also to the various Officers of the Chapter. Each is seated in a special position and each has a special responsibility. Most of them are wearing distinctive clothing which I'm sure you can relate, without any great stretch of your imagination, to the dress of the Regal, Vice-Regal and Attendant Ceremonial Officers of the Royal Courts of yesteryear.

Whilst all of these play an important part in our Ceremonies, they have little bearing on my Topic tonight which is "Why your Partner is involved in Freemasonry; -Particularly Royal Arch Freemasonry." This topic is, of course particularly directed to the Ladies, to whom I offer a special welcome, but it could also offer a challenge to the Companions to make a critical analysis of themselves, and perhaps enable them to arrive at a better understanding of themselves. Let me first of all spend a few moments on what Masonry is and is not.

One of the more common definitions of Masonry is that it is a peculiar system of Morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Note the words, "morality", "allegory" and "symbols".

According to the Dictionary, "morality" concerns itself with "goodness" or "business of character or disposition", or with "the distinction between right and wrong." A "symbol" is something regarded by general consent as naturally typifying, representing or recalling something - especially an idea or quality. Each of the tools to which I directed your attention earlier is a symbol. An "allegory" is defined as "a narrative description of a subject under the guise of another having similarities to it."

In summary then, masonry deals with morality, with the distinction between right and wrong and with the building of one's character. In other words, it endeavors to teach good men to become better men. However, it does not adopt an evangelical approach of "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." Remember its teachings are veiled in allegories. For example... A chisel, to a Mason, at least to a Royal Arch Mason. is not just a tool used by a carpenter or stone mason. A chisel is a symbol which

represents a relationship between education and the development of the mind. Instead of saying education develops the mind, so read well, read wisely and you will become a better educated person, a mason might present a candidate with a chisel, compare the uneducated mind with a rough or unpolished stone, and say, "As a chisel, in its application to the surface of the stone quickly uncovers the stone's hidden beauty, so education reveals the latent qualities of the mind." Here we've used a chisel., a symbol and an allegory to present a well known truth.

I have already stated that masons, in their teachings do not adopt an evangelical approach. Masonry is not a religion. It never can be a religion and in no way can it be a substitute for a religion. On the other hand, "the Volume of the Sacred Law is the very foundation on which rests the whole Masonic structure. The doctrines contained therein are given and accepted as standards of truth and justice." We embrace its purest principles of morality and virtue, of brotherly love, relief and truth, and also the three graces, faith, hope and charity. Masonry does not dictate to any man what his religious beliefs or secular followings should be. Rather, it supports and strengthens his existing religious beliefs.

Masonry is often proclaimed, by the uninitiated and ignorant, to be a secret society and one possessing all the attendant connotations of evil associated with such societies. Nothing can be further from the truth. Our centers and meeting places are clearly defined and indeed many are open for public inspection. Our Constitution, Laws and Regulations can be found in many Libraries. Our ceremonies of Rededication, Consecration and Grand Installation are now open for all to share. You are presently seated in a fully furnished Royal Arch Chapter with all its symbolism fully displayed. We are not a secret society, but we do have secrets. Secrets which are shared only with those who belong to the Order just as you share your personal and private secrets with those members of your immediate family.

But let's leave this thumbnail sketch of what Masonry really is and tackle the real question of what there is in the above which maintains the interest of your man.

First of all, let me hasten to assure you that there is no single, definitive answer to the above question. Different people join masonry and maintain their interest for various reasons. Ideally, one would hope that the original motivation to join our Order came from a favorable, preconceived opinion of the Institution and what it does - to be a part of something which someone else, for whom one holds a deal of respect, is already a member. Often this is a father, father-in-law, grandfather or friend etc. Those who join merely out of curiosity, without commitment, or in the misguided belief that membership of the Order will gain them materialistic benefits or preferential treatment, discover their error and drop out.

Some gain enjoyment merely by having an opportunity to meet and mix with men from other walks of life. In Masonry, all men are equal. There are certainly differences in rank and fortune, but we are taught early in our Masonic career that eventually "the time will come, and the wisest knows not how soon, when all these distinctions will cease, save those arising from the exercise of goodness and virtue." In other words, masonry, it's what we do, not what we think we are, that counts. So, we meet on the level and part on the square.....There's that symbolism again.

Masonry gives us the opportunity to mix freely with those with whom we would not normally come in contact, during the course of our own social or professional life, and to some, this social interaction is sufficient to maintain their interest.

Masonry is, however, a progressive science... progressive in this sense, meaning "on-going" and so, for some of us, once having taken the first step, there is an urge to go on, to take the next step and the next. It's somewhat like reading a gripping suspense novel. Once your appetite has been whetted, you want to hurry on to unravel the plot, to find out what happens next, to satisfy your thirst for information..... and so it is with Masonry!

Further, most men respond or react to a challenge, so let's look at the challenge in Masonry. There's the challenge for the Candidate to understand that which he is being taught, but for every candidate or student of masonry, there must also be a teacher and therein lies a further challenge. There's the challenge of first of all understanding ourselves what it is we are trying to teach to the candidate. There's the challenge of being able to memorize the ritual which conveys the message: the challenge

of being able to stand in front of an audience and deliver that ritual in a manner which will enable others to share in the interaction. For some, masonry provides the first and only opportunity for speaking in public.

But being a good ritualist is more than just being a good speaker. To really convey the true meaning of the word, one has to be somewhat of an actor or dramatist to be successful, and again, we all know there is a little bit of an actor in all of us. Masonry, then, provides an opportunity to express oneself - to go on stage, as it were. Accepting this challenge of memorizing ritual, reproducing it and knowing that the candidate has got the message brings an enjoyment of its own and helps maintain the interest of others in our midst.

But not all men enjoy this aspect of masonry. There are some who get more enjoyment from just listening to the story unfold. Certainly they have heard it all before but so has the four year old who wants Mum to read again and a gain, his favorite story. I'm not for one moment suggesting that Masons have the mentality of a four year old, but there is comfort and assurance and pleasure in knowing what comes next.

There's also the opportunity for leadership, for administration and for organization. Many Companions earn their living by exercising these skills in daily life. To them, the needs of Masonry afford them the opportunity to give of their expertise for the benefit of others. Some, who are the "doers" rather than the "shakers" in life, gain enjoyment by developing untapped skills in those areas as they progress through the various offices of responsibility.

What about Ceremonial? In all our degrees, there is a deal of movement around the room. This is done with an emphasis on dignity and decorum which is what would be expected in all ceremonial procedures. Role playing it might be, but this too has an appeal and helps maintain interest.

Still another reason expressed by many Masons for their continued involvement is that they feel a sense of belonging. Consider the thrill of discovering that whilst traveling overseas or far from home, the person in the seat beside you comes from the same town as you do, or that the stranger across the street went to the same school as you did all those years ago. You have something in common on which you can, if you so desire, further develop a relationship... and so it is with Masonry, no matter where you go in this or any other country, you will find other Masons. No matter what their color, race or creed, their station in life or their lack of it, we have a common bond. We have all passed through the same experiences and shared the same knowledge and teachings. We belong to a worldwide companionship of brotherly love, relief and truth.

Now whilst I have touched on some of the reasons for our continued involvement, there are as many more again for which time will not permit further elucidation. I haven't really explored the thirst for knowledge, the need to understand and explore all the symbolism and allegories, the love of history, the desire to know oneself and become a better person, the drive to seek promotion to a higher rank in the Order or even the thought that after all, it may only be habit which brings us back month after month.

Suffice it to say, Masonry is many things to many men. Conversely, Masonry provides something for every man. Somewhere along the continuum of reasons I have drawn, lays every Mason - Maybe on just one point, maybe on two or three and maybe on many. You Ladies present, knowing your man much better than I do, might like to attempt to categorize him and place him where you believe he fits best.

**In conclusion, let me use-another allegory to explain what I' am trying to say.**

**Masonry can, I believe, be likened to a stained glass window. When looked at from the outside, no matter how intricate the pattern or how large the frame, it appears to an observer as an imponderable conglomeration of bits of colored glass of differing shapes and sizes, all joined together by uninspiring lines of grayish-black material. It has no meaning; it lacks interest and it is easily dismissed as inconsequential. But, once inside the room, and looking from the inside out, one experiences not only the superficial beauty of that same multicolored glass, with the sun streaming through. To accentuate the nuances of light and shade, but there for all who care to look, experience and search is the light of knowledge and the understanding of what the**

**story inherent in the window is intended to convey. There is no doubt some will see more than others; some will gain more enjoyment than others and sadly the enjoyment gained whilst looking from the inside cannot be shared with those who gaze only from without.**

**And so it is with Masonry.**

I.J.Weir.P.G.H.P

DGIW. Dist No.6., United Grand Chapter of Queensland

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:-

1. Words enclosed with inverted comas are either extracts or adaptations from various Masonic Rituals.
2. The allegory, "the stained grass window was used by M.Ex.Comp.G.W.Miller in an address to the Companions of Waratah - Tyrian Chapter No.15 on the occasion of their Amalgamation. 21 June, 1997. It has here been considerably expanded.

BACKGROUND READING:-

1. Address for a Master Mason's Meeting Conducted by a Royal Arch-Chapter.Rt.Ex.Comp.J.H-.McKone PDGZ. June 1995.
2. Masonry an Ancient and Unique Fraternity. V.Wor.Bro.J.H..McKone. AGSW. 1995.

## **PLANNING FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**

**Congratulations.** Your Chapter has just exalted or restored a meaningful number of Companions. You and others have worked hard on membership development, achieved the goal that was established, and welcomed new or restored Companions and their families into your Chapter to become a part of Capitular Masonry and share in our glorious heritage.

What excitement these new Companions must have experienced as they participated in our Degrees. What joy each must have experienced during the elegant ceremonies of the Royal Arch Degree. Each may have received a special candidate pin from the Grand High Priest. Perhaps a beautiful certificate commemorating the occasion along with endless memories of becoming an Ohio York Rite Mason.

The challenge has been met. We have finished the job...or have we?

The growth of any Chapter, however slight, represents a lot of hard work by its Companions. It also represents the implementation and execution of the highest priority of a Chapter: its membership development plan.

The obvious benefit is a replenishment of our ranks...new Companions that can learn the beauty of our degrees and history, and perhaps in time become a junior officer and future leader of your Chapter.

However, have any of these new Companions been asked to return to the Convocation Hall?

How would you feel joining one of the most prestigious organizations anywhere only to hear nothing from its leaders or members after initiation? What impression would the new Companion's family have? Positive? It's doubtful. It should come as no surprise that personal involvement by a new member in any organization begins with an invitation... a personal one.

If you have not taken the time to invite each new Companion back to the hall, then do it, and do it now. You will lose them soon if you don't.

### **The Benefits of Personal Contact**

First, your new Companions and families will appreciate the follow-up invitation, and be favorably impressed with your invitation. It also says that the entire organization cares about them, appreciates their membership and hopes for them to become involved. Companions whose membership was restored will particularly appreciate the invitation.

Second, it's a chance to learn even more about this new member. What are his skills and talents, and what did he enjoy most about the entire experience?

It's also a chance for you to highlight the contents of the new member packet particularly the planned activities of the local Chapter, an Officer list with telephone numbers and addresses, the Stated Meeting schedule, and other important events. This is particularly important if the new Companion who may have been exalted in a class at a different location from his home Chapter

### **Post Sale Follow-up Needed**

Membership Development programs are designed to stimulate membership growth through both exultations, and restorations. Getting them to join or be restored is one challenge, but inspiring them to become actively involved represents another.

These new Companions need to be personally invited to participate in the activities of your Chapter. Do it and do it now.

## **Bonding Agents, What ties new members to the Chapter**

There are three main agents or activities that bond your new member to the Chapter.

The first is a common or shared belief in the ideals or principles of the Royal Arch. This shared belief in our ideals and principles is a long term process and is developed by an understanding and participation in our work.

The second is a personal friend or acquaintance. The importance of inclusion of new members is to enlarge the number of people the new companion considers a friend.

The third is involvement in small work groups. Involvement is the greatest methods of making new members feel a part of the larger whole. Put the craft to work and then stand back. It will amaze how the new members will step forward.

## **LEADERSHIP IS:**

**The ability to influence people to strive for group objectives. It is about action, not position.**

**Traits/characteristics of good leaders: honest, clever, creative, tactful, democratic, supportive, team players, good communicators, good listeners, organized, committed, dependable, optimistic, enthusiastic, resourceful, cooperative, willing to assume responsibility.**

**A progressive Chapter results from progressive leadership, who generates and creates new ideas (new answers to old questions), and then designs programs that are needed in that particular Chapter.**

## **A Menu of Ideas**

Yes, plans are organized and executed with a team spirit and your Chapter can do this too. These plans can be simple programs and not time consuming to all. They can also be cost effective when financial resources are limited.

This is not the responsibility of the Chapter Secretary although he can assist. This should be for the elected and appointed Chapter Officer team to organize as a group.

## **A Suggested Approach for your Chapter**

**Schedule a Chapter Officers meeting. Agree to select several specific programs from the following list for implementation in your Chapter. It may be only 4-6 programs, but try something new that you haven't done before.**

1. Develop a Companion's Handbook for your local Chapter- Update Annually.
  - a. History of your Chapter
  - b. An Officer list with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses
  - c. Names of the Ladies of each Companion (+ Children)
  - d. Programs scheduled or fraternal events planned for the year
  - e. Family activities planned
  - f. Membership recognition events: 10 + years dinner, Past High Priests, etc. and include the ladies and kids.
  - g. A list of former Chapter leaders who may not be as active now
2. The High Priest sends a personal letter to each new Companion welcoming him to membership in the Chapter.

3. The High Priest sends a letter to his Lady as well which welcomes her into the 'fraternal capitular family'. Let her know the family is welcome.
4. Begin publishing a Chapter 'Newsletter' – stir interest-assign each Officer to be responsible for just one month's publication. This could be an e-mail.
5. Utilize 'Calling Committees'- Divide the membership list- Call your out-of-town members to say hello.
6. Invite the Companions to make frequent visits to other Chapters, and have dinner together along the way. Car pool for fun and conversation.
7. Share rides to the stated convocations-make it an event to look forward to.
8. Schedule 'Family Nights' with interesting programs and a nice meal.
9. Appoint a local ambassador to promote our primary charities, and include newer members on the Committee.
10. Invite the local ambassador to give reports at all convocations how the fund raising is going for our charities.
11. Communicate Chapter activities through the State York Rite Association.
12. Prepare and publish a document that answers the question: "Why be a Capitular Mason?" and distribute to all members with their annual dues notice.
13. Showcase annual events such as Inspection, Banquets, Past High Priest Recognition Banquets also plan and "Awards Night" and recognize everyone for something.
14. Participate more in Community/ Civic Events to showcase our Chapter.
15. Establish a 'Mentoring Program' to keep newer members coming back.
16. Have the 'Top line Signer' become the new Companion's Mentor for a year and plan ways of recognizing those who bring in new members.
17. Establish a 'Director of Work' to interpret our Degrees for new members.
18. Assign the Chapter Veils to be responsible for the Degree paraphernalia, and ask newer members to assist.
19. Develop detailed plans for Property, Wardrobe & Floor Arrangements and ask new members to assist.
20. Honor widows and sweethearts on a regular basis.
21. Schedule and organize children (kids + grandkids+ neighborhood friends) events at Easter, Halloween and Christmas.
22. Have fund-raisers for special projects.
23. Send Thank You notes when members have helped with a dinner or a meeting. Show your appreciation.
24. Establish a Membership Development and Retention Committees, and appoint a Chairman for each. Let them manage the programs decided.
25. Rejuvenate absent members- Let them know we care by sending them a post card.
26. Send birthday cards to your members and have the Officers sign them.
27. Create a Hospitaler Committee and report on the sick and distressed at stated convocations. Make hospital and home visitations frequently.
28. Schedule Pitch-In dinners and make it a family true affair.

29. Schedule a family dinner event at a restaurant so you don't have to cook.
30. Establish a calling tree for urgent Communications, Special Mailings for Immediate Communications and regular mailings for normal communications and announcements.
31. Assign Officers to make personal visits to every Companion we have not seen in a while.
32. Develop a 'Glossary of Terms' and explanations of Masonic terms and acronyms.
33. Ask to speak at a Masonic meeting or awards night and coordinate your efforts with the Master of the Lodge.
34. Obtain the names of those who joined your local Blue Lodges on the day of the one day class and invite them and their wives to a dinner party or other function and follow with information about the York Rite but especially Chapter.
35. Approach the Blue Lodge about having Chapter petitions available for their members use and especially for newly raised Master Masons.
36. Set up your own web page.
37. Plan activities that can be enjoyed after the meeting. Keep the actual meeting short so all will stay and participate.
38. Praise members on their good deeds and accomplishments at Chapter, Make them feel important! If they have been featured in the newspaper, post the article somewhere in the Masonic building
39. Confer the Royal Arch Widow Degree. (See next page)

We encourage each of you to offer many other suggestions that will improve our performance as a Chapter. The ideas we generate are important, but they are useless if we do not put them into proactive. We must commit ourselves to working diligently towards our future success.

### **So what's the Point?**

Successful Chapters are active Chapters and they engage many of their Companions in the programs.

Success requires planning, organization, hard work, and execution. It means using people's skills to their best advantage. It does not necessarily require a lot of money. But it can be rewarding and retain Chapter members by making them feel they have contributed and in turn receive value for their membership.

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression. It takes a little extra effort but you will be glad that you did. More 'new' active members will result because your happy members will invite other Masons to join.

**Now let's show everyone that we are as good as we say we are!**

### **THE ROYAL ARCH WIDOW DEGREE**

**A humorous "initiation" ceremony that was conceived for entertaining their wives in lieu of convocation of their chapter. The ceremony was prepared and it was so successful, that it has been repeated year after year.**

**It is not advisable to confer this degree more than once a year; otherwise it will become too common and unappreciated. A special night should be set apart for the event.**

**Copies of the RITUAL and other material may be obtained by any secretary of a regular Chapter by writing or calling their office. The address of General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons is: General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons P.O. BOX 128 Greenfield, In 46140**

# Retention and Reinstatements

## Membership Development vs. Retention

Membership development is a program designed **to recruit new members**. It focuses on the “front door” of the fraternity. Membership retention is a program designed to **retain or keep the current membership** or protect the “backdoor”.

The purpose of this document is to summarize methods and activities from active and successful Chapters that have a strong membership and lasting vitality. It is not meant to be a solution to a chapter that is having member retention problems. Rather, it is a place to turn for guidance in finding ideas and methods to uncover root causes of the problems and develop a process to address them.

There is no “magic pill” that will solve a Chapter’s membership retention problems. Active and successful chapters have demonstrated certain characteristics that keep their members coming to meetings and participating with the Chapter. There is an old adage that says “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten.” So you have to find new and different ways to address problems. If a Past High Priest says “We have never done it that way”, then perhaps, it might be just the solution you need.

**The materials discussed herein are intended for the benefit of Ohio Royal Arch Masons and members and to support and promote the Masonic tenets of Brotherly love, relief and truth.**

## What is Retention?

Retention is all about engaging your members, not as dues-paying no-shows, but as active and interested brothers who attend meetings and gladly and enthusiastically participate (get in line as an Officer, work on committees, run programs, cook the dinner, etc.)

Retention is just one part of the broader issue of Membership, so Retention does not encompass the process of bringing in new members; it is involved with engaging the hearts and minds of those that have already joined. The burning issue that needs to be addressed in Retention is, “Brothers Jim Smith and John Jones are no longer attending meetings or participating. How can we recapture their interest?”

Following are some of the steps taken by successful Chapters to ensure an active, vibrant Chapter community. These ideas are presented as ten “commandments” for ensuring an active Chapter. If your Chapter is having difficulty retaining members, maintaining good attendance, or keeping new members active, consider how the programs and activities embodied in these “Ten Commandments” might help you change direction.

## Suggestions for Retention Program for Ohio Royal Arch Masons

1. **Secretary sends out dues notices by May 1.** At the **April meeting**, the Welfare committee should have a present a list of members who have a need to have their dues remitted. This list should be voted on and approve at the April meeting.
2. **Secretary sends out second notices for dues after June 30th.**
3. **Secretary sends out third dues notices after August 31.**
4. High Priest with the “Call Committee” starts calling in **November** and talk to them following the following procedures:
  - A) Indicate that it has been noticed that the member has not yet paid his Chapter dues and that you would like to discuss the issue
  - B) If the nonpayment of dues is because of financial and/or family problems, there may be a solution that can be reached to continue their valued membership.

C) If after discussion of the reason for non-payment, and the member qualifies; you could suggest that the Chapter pay his dues on the member's behalf for a onetime benefit.

D) If they need further assistance, ask them to let us know so we can discuss the options of how we may be of help.

E) If they do not want to continue their membership for any reason, ask them to pay this year's dues and take a demit. Explain that they may go out as a member in good standing. Then, if they so choose in the future, they can return to their Chapter with no penalty. If they still do not wish to pay their membership and the Chapter wishes to pay their dues to assist in allowing the member have good standing in their exit, explain that this will be done on their behalf by the Chapter.

Follow up with a personal letter explaining their decision.

F) If all this fails, the Grand Chapter should send out a letter, (like Grand Lodge of Ohio is doing.)

### **Reinstatements**

When a person first decides to join the Chapter (or the York Rite as a package) it is because he either has a friend who is active in the York Rite or he has really enjoyed the lodge but wants something more within Masonry which he believes the York Rite might have to offer him. Often the Chapter he is joining is either in the building where he belongs to lodge or close to his current residence. So why does he then let his dues lapse which causes the need for reinstatement in the first place? I think knowing this answer is the key to working on his reinstatement.

Unfortunately it seems that many are being suspended from their Blue Lodge which automatically means they will need to be suspended from their Chapter. In this case many Chapters believe there is nothing which can be done since the person was suspended from Blue Lodge it is not their problem. So let's use a simple analogy. If the Credit Union where you save your money paid a dividend based on how well they invested your money but they continually made bad investments, would you just say "oh well, there is nothing I can do". **NO WAY!** You would be at the Credit Union demanding either your money back or they get new persons to do the investing...after all it is YOUR money they are dealing with. The same is true with Chapter members who are suspended from their Blue Lodges. We need to become actively working with the Blue Lodges where we gain the membership within our Chapters to ensure they are keeping their members happy so they don't become part of the suspension for non-payment of dues within their Blue Lodge.

We also tend to lose members because the friend who invited them to join loses interest himself or the Chapter is not what the new member thought he was joining. Unfortunately, another reality is that often the degree work being portrayed when the candidate receives his work is not the best quality and the candidate becomes discouraged. While many Chapters are very good at asking a brand new member if he would like to become an officer, how many times do we ask what he wants to get out of being a member of the Chapter? Why don't our petitions contain information which might really be beneficial to the Chapter such as asking what the candidate wishes to get out of being a member. Why doesn't the petition ask if the new member would like to help on a committee, do a speaking or non-speaking part or would just like to be invited to participate in the social activities of the Chapter? (I guess of course many chapters should first start having social activities!) Another reality often is many of our members don't attend Chapter regularly and the only contact they have from the Chapter is a notice asking for money for their dues. While it would be nice for the Chapter to have other contact with their members during the year, when sending out the dues notice a Chapter should at least include some information explaining why the Companion should remain a member (such as the good they do through the charitable foundation) or a note indicating some of the upcoming activities which the Chapter would like to see the member in attendance.

So again you probably ask what does any of this have to do with reinstatements? I contend that in order to re-energize a former member (who originally had a reason he wanted to be a member) requires this knowledge. The officers (and especially the Secretaries) are usually too busy to be an

affective reinstatement committee for a Chapter. You really need to find a person who is well known in the Chapter and is willing to devote some time to work with the Chapter to help reinstate members to lead this committee. The committee needs to be called upon at least once every month to give a report and the High Priest needs to set a goal for reinstatements for the committee to achieve during the year. When given an expectation for a certain number of reinstatements for the year, the committee will often respond. Another point is that this report should be expected to be a written report which is presented to the District Deputy upon his Inspection of the Chapter.

And NEVER, NEVER, NEVER should the Reinstatement Chairman just be picked as a name to indicate the Chapter has a Chairman. You might as well indicate you have no Chairman as to pick someone unwilling to do the job or worse yet who has not even been informed he is the Chairman (which I have personally seen done in some Chapters!).

Once the Chairman is selected, 3-5 additional members for the committee need to be selected. Next you need to get information from the Secretary about who has been suspended for nonpayment of dues, usually no more than 5 years in the past. When dividing the list up it is a good idea to review the list first to see if there are names which the committee members are familiar. Once this is done, picking teams to divide the list up among is a good option. While one on one contact is often most affective, a team of two companions working together often have more success than individual discussions. Before the team starts their job of contacting those suspended, the committee should be well versed in the forms needed for reinstatement, any costs with reinstatement, the exact procedure and what the upcoming activities are for the Chapter.

While many say reinstatements are easier than getting new members, I contend it is harder to get a reinstatement. For a reinstatement the person probably has had a negative experience which you must overcome before he is willing to be reinstated.

When talking to a potential person for reinstatement, ask him why he dropped his membership and then LISTEN CLOSELY TO HIS ANSWER. You may not be able to address his concerns completely but without at least hearing those reasons you stand no chance of reinstating him as a member. Another key is to know who some of the suspended persons' friend are in the Chapter (or who he might recognize). It is very difficult to feel comfortable anywhere when you don't know the persons in attendance and a major part of Masonry is the fellowship which we all enjoy when attending Masonic functions.

So what if the person just says, I'm not interested in getting reinstated right now? First you should have a contact point which the person can call to give him in case he changes his mind. This number should probably be something such as the Secretaries number or the Temples phone number rather than your own since it might be many months (or even years) before this person might change his mind and decide to contact someone about reinstatement. Also always thank him for his time and be cordial when leaving him after the discussion. Chances are someone else from your Chapter in the future might also contact him for the same purpose of reinstatement and you do not want the next person to have to deal with a bad experience from your meeting. You should also complete a quick note on when you contacted the suspended member, who was with you when you discussed it with him and any relevant comments the suspended member may indicate. This information should be given to the Committee Chairman who should keep the information and give a copy to the Secretary who should enter the information in the minutes so there is a permanent record in case someone in the future again attempts to contact the suspended member.

If the person decides to be reinstated, help him complete the proper paperwork and assist him with the proper steps for reinstatement. Keep in constant contact with him and when he is approved for reinstatement, invite him to attend the next meeting with you. And if he attends the meeting TALK TO HIM and introduce him to the other members in attendance. Make him know he made the right choice listening to you to become reinstated in his Chapter.

## RETENTION AND REINSTATEMENT CONTACT PROCEDURE

For At-Risk Members-(A) Delinquent Dues & (B) Suspended

### Be Positive and Caring!

- Ask for the Companion by name
  - Introduce yourself (name only, no titles)
  - “I’m calling on behalf of the (name of your chapter)”
  - “We have appreciated having you as a member since (date of initiation)
  - “In fact, we would like to -
- A- continue your connection with (name of your chapter) and maybe even improve it”  
B- renew your connection with (name of your chapter)

\* “I am aware that

A- you have (1) (2) year/years of dues that can be brought up to date.”

B- your membership lapsed in (year), and I’d like to chat with you about getting reinstated. “

- “Is there any way that I can be of assistance to you?”

### LISTEN

- “The amount that would  
A- Bring your dues up to date is \_\_\_\_\_”  
B- Reestablish your membership is \_\_\_\_\_”
- there are several ways this can be taken care of. You could:  
\_ pay using the last dues notice that was sent “  
\_ pay with a new reminder I could have sent from the office”
- “By bringing your dues up to date you then have the option of requesting a demit so that you might reinstate your membership easily at a later date or re-affiliate with another chapter.”

If he is unwilling to bring his dues up to date, remind him that:

\*”Together with the other members of (your chapter name) your dues are supporting:

Royal Arch Research Assistance

Royal Arch Foundation

Adopt America Project

Many other activities for families and children.”

OR- Does this sound like a situation that calls for consideration of:

- One time remittance of one year’s dues?
- One time remittance of all past dues?
- Senior member consideration?

If so gather the appropriate information of the member’s sheet and contact your secretary who can assist you with any of these circumstances!

Wrap up any loose ends, answer any questions and again offer your assistance in any way.

“I’d really like to THANK YOU for you

If yes - continued association

If no- past association

With your (name of chapter)

End you call appropriately.