

## MEMBERSHIP

Over the past three years the Membership Committee has searched for programs that were being used and were effective. We received several inputs from various States and will be included in this document. We will recognize all who contributed to this effort. We would also ask that this document be used in all jurisdictions and to give us feedback so we can keep it current. Our desire is to make a viable membership program for the General Grand Chapter and implore you to assist us in assuring that this be one of the better tools at our disposal.

First, let's give something for nothing. Or is it? Several States offer the Mark Master Degree for free. One such program was the Mark Master Program for the State of California developed in 2009. It is quoted in its entirety below:

"The program consists of several components:

1. Offering the Mark Master at no cost
2. Conferring it for candidates around the State at several venues:
  - a. Annual Communication of Grand Lodge in San Francisco
  - b. York Rite Cruise, December 7-11
3. Marketing to the constituent Chapters to schedule a conferral of the Mark Master Degree; visit Blue Lodges to collect petitions; confer the degree
4. Marketing directly to Blue Lodges via their Trestleboards, especially in regard to developing candidates for the Grand Lodge Class

The program is now in its first year and has demonstrated the wisdom of setting large, even outrageously large, targets. Although we did not achieve 5,000 Mark Master candidates and 1,000 exaltations we have, nonetheless, increased our exaltations considerably over prior years. Growth in exaltations has been over 30%, in comparison to the average of the last three years, and that's just through October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Another beneficial effect has been the enthusiasm generated amongst our dais officers as they are experiencing the positive feedback from Blue Lodge brethren who are offered a substantive benefit at no cost. Many have decided to go forward petitioning all four Degrees. Hence, the offer of the no-fee Mark Master Degree gets our "foot in the door." It almost forces our serious brethren to seriously consider the York Rite as a whole. And it helps our Companions fulfill their obligation to spread further light and knowledge to our brethren.

The program's underpinning is the change to our Constitution allowing the no-fee Mark Master Degree. Candidates must still petition for all four Degrees, but do not need to pay any fees until they decide to take the remaining Degrees. At the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, 103 petitions were received - 67 had already been balloted upon by a local Chapter, and 36 petitioned during the Grand Lodge proceedings. The latter 36 were balloted upon by a new Chapter set up to host the conferral on the first night of the Annual Communication - October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Of the 103 candidates, 81 showed up. After the conferral, their petitions along with a waiver of jurisdiction were forwarded to a local Chapter, which will then ballot upon them again for local membership and the remaining Degrees. At least 24 of the 81 have already been exalted.

Data analysis showed that 139 Blue Lodges, of the 340 in California, had not been the source of a single exaltation from 2006 through 2008. Thirty-three of these 139 Lodges had over 200 members each! We sent email to the Masters of those Lodges in the San Francisco Bay Area, and asked them to publish an article in their September Trestleboard about the upcoming Mark Master Class on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and who to contact should they be interested.

Since only one in 12 Blue Lodge members in California is also a Chapter member, we have much room for continued growth. California raised over 1,200 new brethren last year also, so these new brethren represent a large growth segment for us as well. What we have asked our dais officers to do is take a fistful of petitions to local Blue Lodge Stated Meetings, ask the Master to speak for a minute, and then pass out the petitions, and collect the completed petitions at the door. Only the most stolid brother can resist a cheerful but persistent entreaty and offer of a no-fee Degree. But success in this kind of marketing begins by scheduling the Mark Master, developing and practicing a conferral Team, and conferring the Degree as often as necessary. Furthermore, this gives the new members easy work to perform in order to contribute to their Chapter's overall health. And when making presentations at Stated Meetings, it creates a certain sense of urgency when the potential petitioners realize that the time of the conferral is rapidly approaching and that it may be time to "fish or cut bait."

So in conclusion, California constituent Chapters will close the year with a larger than normal body of Mark Masters, many of whom will be ready to progress when the remaining degrees are scheduled, perhaps in conjunction with other Chapters. And they will have a larger than average body of new members, many of whom will be eager to contribute by learning a small part in a Degree, or taking an officer position. This in turn will strengthen the Chapters, and will help us build on an upward spiral."

Thus, all of the Grand Chapters have a challenge. Have you done any leg work to better your Grand Chapter, or even your Chapter? Many have not done this and have been on a downward spiral for a few years now. Study your circumstance, prepare your plan and then execute it. What do you have to lose?

Second, Companion Carlos H. Gonzalez, Signet Chapter No. 57 RAM of California and Chairman of the Grand Chapter of California developed a thorough and comprehensive Membership Plan. It is at attachment one and is a program that merits study and application if it fits your State requirements. Again, it can only help.

Third, the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Maryland modified the *Fervency and Zeal* Program that was developed by the Grand Chapter of New York and adapted it to their ritual. Further, they created "Task Force Tactics" with the following requirements:

1. "Most Excellent Grand High Priest-Elect will send out a letter of introduction and purpose to every Worshipful Master or Senior Warden announcing that a representative will be contacting him about a date to present the "York Rite Story"
2. Point of Contact (POC) will call Worshipful Master or Senior Warden to get a commitment on a date to make a Royal Arch Presentation to his Lodge
3. POC will notify Chairman of the date selected
4. Chairman will notify Presenter and other members of Task Force of the date. If there is a conflicting date, the Chairman will contact the Lodge for the soonest available date
5. Presenter will make Presentation at the Lodge with the Most Excellent High Priest and at least two other Companions from the nearest Chapter in attendance. This essential because after the meeting each Companion should meet individually with a Brother who expressed interest about "learning more about Royal Arch Masonry" during the meeting. Petitions and literature (Presenters Kit) must be available at this time. A date for the conferral of the York Rite Degrees will be known by the presenter and be given during the meeting.
6. On the days of Conferral, the High Priest and Companions of the host Chapter will be responsible for setting up the paraphernalia, having enough pennies, Mark cards and

refreshments. Upon completion of the Chapter degrees, a Royal Arch pin is recommended to be given to each candidate along with a new petition

7. The Local Chapter Coordinators will act as mentors during the conferral, explaining and reiterating the lessons, signs and passwords associated with the ceremony.
8. Once the conferral is complete, it will be announced when the Chapter will hold its next meeting. **Someone must call** the newly made Royal Arch Masons and urge them to attend. At this meeting the Grand Lecturer or his representative will attend and conduct a School of Instruction, having rituals to distribute and offering his cooperation to the High Priest."

This was developed by MEC Louis F. Bandell, Jr., Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter RAM of Maryland.

Fourth, there is a paper written by Companion James M. "Jim" Tome, Excellent Grand Steward, Grand Chapter RAM of Illinois. It is entitled *Reinvigorating Your Chapter*. It is one more item to consider in your quest to create a viable Membership Program. This article is at Attachment 3.

Fifth, the next presentation as at Attachment 4 and was provided by MIC Don Manweiler, Most Illustrious Grand Master of North Carolina. His presentation follows:

"We do suggest to the leaders of our York Rite Bodies that they institute the following programs to help them to obtain new members and to keep present members interested and on roll and to prevent NPD's. These programs are as follows:

Programs suggested to obtain new members:

- A. Visit the Blue Lodges in your area and present a program designed to recruit new members. (Attachment 4)
- B. Hold an open house, invite prospective members, and present a program about York Rite. (Attachment 4)
- C. Invite prospective members to your Awards and Ladies Night.
- D. Invite prospective members to a dinner and present a recruitment program. (Attachment 4)

Programs suggested to keep present members interested, on roll, and to prevent NPD's.

- A. Create a calling committee to keep in touch with your members and let them know you care about them.
- B. Send out a monthly or quarterly bulletin to all members to keep them informed.
- C. Each year have a "Past Head of Bodies Night" to honor those who have served as leaders in the past.
- D. Hold a "Service Recognition Night" and give service certificates and awards to members who have 25 years of service or more.
- E. Set up a transportation committee, whose function is to bring members who need a ride to the meetings.
- F. Appoint a welcoming committee to make members and visitors feel they are wanted and needed.

Enclosed is a copy of the program ... we use when we visit Blue Lodges [A]. Also enclosed are programs that can be used at the other programs designed to obtain new members [B].

Sixth, we have approval of Grand First Principal of Royal Arch Masons of Manitoba, Victor Bryll to use the program at Attachment 5. The associated power point presentation will be at Attachment 6. It is another arrow in your quiver.

Seventh, we have a document prepared by Henry A. Adams, Eminent Grand Captain General, Chairman, Membership Committee, Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida. He suggests that local lodge secretaries should be contacted for possible candidates in the York Rite Bodies. Have a social function of some kind as was suggested above and invite all of those possible candidates and their families. The following was taken from Rite Notes, Membership and Recruiting, Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida, 15 June 2010, entitled: *Establishing a Working Membership Committee*.

**“Responsibilities of the membership committee,**

A membership committee deals with all aspects of getting and retaining members. Their duties include:

- Training members to talk about the fraternity.
- Developing programs for outreach into the community to make people aware of its existence.
- Mentoring new members
- Membership Retention
- Delinquent Dues.

‘Training members to talk about the Fraternity; This is a real problem in Masonry. Most members do not know what to say when asked the question, What is Masonry. The first step is teaching our members how to talk about their membership. I will discuss ways of talking about our lodge and York Rite next month. This is a critical step, however, No one joins what they don’t know exists!

‘Masonic Awareness is another job of the membership committee. Provide interesting programs and invite non-York Rite members in. Many complain that nothing different happens at a meeting. (Opening, business and closing) Bring in outside speakers. Every member should have petitions. Have an Open House, Table Chapter Council or Commandery and invite other in. Show them that YOUR YORK RITE BODY wants to inform them in what we believe. In future newsletters, I will discuss Mentoring and Retention....

‘In my monthly newsletter on membership and retention, I have mentioned several times that no one should be placed on the NPD list unless previously spoken to by the SEC/Rec and the Head of the Body. This could prevent ... over sites ....

‘If a Companion or Sir Knight misses several meetings, they should be contacted. There is usually a legitimate reason.

‘I realize that many of our Sec/Rec are over-worked, but we are all on the membership team and we all have a responsibility for not only gaining membership but retaining our current Companions and Sir Knights.

‘The York Rite Bodies need to be more discriminating in determining who should or should not be dropped.

‘Companions and Sir Knights, don’t let our members drift away and eventually dropped without intervention. They are too valuable to us.”

Than above is part of an on-going series of messages which can be accessed by going to the Florida Web Site.

Eighth, we acquired a *12 Step Chapter or Lodge Intervention Program*. It will be shown at Attachment 7. We have no knowledge about where it came from, but it is an excellent checklist for your organization. If one of our readers recognizes it please contact us so we can give the proper recognition and any update to this document.

Ninth, Attachment 8 is a *Membership Development Booklet* developed for the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International. It was compiled and Edited by Danial M. Hogue, Jr., Ph.D., Past Grand High Priest – North Carolina, Membership Chairman. Although it was published some time back its contents are still germane.

Tenth, we are attempting to get permission to include The Grand Chapter RAM of Ohio's *manual for Membership Development* in this document. If approved, it will be at Attachment 9. It is an outstanding document and well worth the time it takes to develop any program from its guidance.

As you can see there is a tremendous amount of information here concerning membership. Please review all of the attachments and apply any to your Grand Chapter's efforts to develop your own program. If any of you have additional information please pass it on and we will include it in any update in the future. Additionally, please provide feedback to help us improve our efforts. If it is not useful we must change it.

I want to thank all of the contributors to this document. We would also ask every reader to visit the [www.yorkrite.org](http://www.yorkrite.org) Web Site and review each State's pages. There is a wealth of information that can be used by any or all of you. I also want to thank my committee for all of their assistance.

Sincerely and fraternally,

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