

MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP

Sir Knights,

As we find ourselves on the eve of another inspection season I am excited and enthused with the possibilities awaiting the Grand Commandery of Ohio. I look forward to personally conducting at least one inspection in each division and meeting as many of you as possible. We all understand the importance of the inspection process to the continued well-being of our commanderies. The officers and Sir Knights of our commanderies depend upon us to provide objective feedback on not only their knowledge and execution of ritual and tactics, but also, very importantly, the administrative, financial and membership aspects of their respective commanderies.

My theme for this year is “Soar Aloft” but my number one Strategic goal is **MEMBERSHIP!** In any organization there are always two distinct sets of goals. Short-Term (Tactical) and Long-Term (Strategic). In the Air Force there was always this running conflict between Tactical Air Command (fighter pilots) and Strategic Air Command (bomber pukes). The fighter pilots in their modern, single seat, supersonic F-15’s and F-16’s were always looking down on the B-52 crews and their nuclear deterrence mission. I went to Air War College with an F-16 pilot and a B-52 navigator/bombardier. I watched them go back and forth with their good-natured ribbing and on one occasion I heard the B-52 guy say, “Look, you can go out and shoot down all the Mig’s you want but when you come back and find that your base has been turned to glass, you are in deep shit.” I thought that was pretty funny and very accurately described the differences between Tactical and Strategic missions. I also think it applies to the situation that we are facing in Ohio.

We all take pride in the fact that every Eminent Commander in Ohio presides over the Order of the Temple. We **should** be proud of that fact, however; we also have to realize that we can be the best ritualists in the world, but that fact is going to do us absolutely no good if we have to close our commanderies because of a lack of members. Our Grand Commandery is fast-approaching a tipping point and we need to take action to reverse our negative membership trend or we will reach a point where we are no longer viable.

Our state membership chairman, SK Dave Kern has been working tirelessly on membership programs and achieved outstanding results last year under REPGC George Edmiston III. We cannot afford to rest on our laurels and become complacent because we had a great year last year. To do so would be wasting the fruits of our past successes. We need to continue to aggressively press forward with our membership programs.

SK Kern and I are asking each of you to aggressively push our membership programs for this year. I am asking you to highlight this initiative at every opportunity. Whenever you are called upon to speak at an inspection, a CTA meeting or anywhere that you have the opportunity, I want you to hammer membership. The stated membership goal for each commandery this year is the knighting of 3 new Sir Knights. This is the same goal as we had last year. In addition, I am asking every commandery to reinstate 2 Sir Knights. The York Rite Festivals and All Order Days were a tremendous success last year and I want to continue those.

In my Grand Commanders Program, I have asked each division to hold another York Rite Festival or at least an All-Order Day. SK Kern has reported to me that so far, the response from many divisions has been "less than enthusiastic." SK's, I understand that it is difficult to coordinate something as complicated as a York Rite Festival, especially in our larger divisions which extend over multiple Capitular Divisions and Cryptic Arches. I know that it requires a lot of coordination, but I am asking you to push each of your divisions to try to organize one of these very important events. If a division cannot hold a YRF, then please ensure that they hold an All-Order Day to try to knight as many new SK's as possible. Please be sure to emphasize these membership programs at inspections, CTA meetings and any other opportunity that presents itself.

There is a scene in the movie Apollo 13 where during a heated discussion about how to recover the damaged spacecraft, Flight Controller John Aaron says "Guys, power is EVERYTHING! Without it, they don't talk to us. They don't correct their trajectory. They don't turn the heat shield around." Gentleman, in our Grand Commandery, membership is EVERYTHING! Without it, we don't have inspections, we don't go to Alexandria for our Easter Sunrise Services, and we don't contribute to the Holy Land Pilgrimage or the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. Membership

is everything and I am asking you to please convey this message to as many of our Sir Knights as possible.

Sir Knights, whether they admit it or not, the main goal of every Grand Commander is to be able to turn over the Grand Commandery of Ohio to his successor in better shape than he received it. REPGC Edmiston did a great job and I am hoping for another strong year, but I need your help in achieving that goal. Please do your best to get the word out that while inspections are very important to our commanderies, membership is everything!

Thank you for your attention and please be safe in your travels.

Dale A. Olson, KCT

Grand Commander