

Chapter Revitalization

A PLANNING OUTLINE

Grand Chapter Spring Board

April 5th. 2003

Put some oomph back into your Chapter

There are three areas that need to be addressed in the Chapter:

- **Recruitment** - The on going need for new members to replace deaths and demits.
- **Retention** - Why are our members not attending the Chapter Convocations? How do we get them involved?
- **Restoration** - Has the member voted with his feet? Has he left the Chapter because we offer nothing of interest to him?

If you are willing to take the leadership role in the Chapter or Grand Chapter, then provide leadership. Do not make it just a title. You are going to take up 3 - 4 hours of my time and costs to be here. Give me back something in return:

- Education, Knowledge, Instruction
- Fellowship
- A good feeling, let me participate
- Something, that makes me glad that I came to Chapter tonight.

Where can we make a difference in the life of your Chapter

- At a regular or emergent convocation
- Some kind of educational, officer training and instruction program.
- Socials and activities away from the Chapter

We are planning to hold this mornings presentation as a forum and not as a paper presentation. We will be asking you to get involved and participate in the discussion.

Retention: by Jeremy Gomersall

Companions:

We have all been, at one time or another advised to "think outside the box". Do not blindly follow this advice, Companions.

Those who always look outside the box for solutions, very often take their eyes off the box, and are led away in some totally inappropriate direction. We cannot afford such distraction.

Our future in Capitular Masonry lies within the box; the box being the Chapter itself, and its contents being of real value (all of us who are Royal Arch Masons).

We are always looking for more candidates for our organization, and we all take every opportunity to recruit from among the Master Masons we meet. We use our own enthusiastic personalities to explain the wonders of the Royal Arch to these potential candidates, (often in the teeth of conflicting advice from Companions of other Chapters who, themselves, are seeking (dare I say "soliciting"?) petitions from the same Master Masons).

However, we should also be showing our enthusiasm to our fellow Companions who are not finding everything they need in Capitular Masonry, and who are less that frequent attendees at Chapter Convocations. We are not in competition with any other Chapter in doing this - we are practising "Internal Recruiting".

It is a very well-known, but often overlooked, principle of Human Resource Management, that external recruiting is far, far less effective (read "cost-effective" in industry) than Internal recruiting.

In this respect, someone or other has already expended time and effort to attract every Companion into our organization. It is far less trouble to retain these Companions by giving each and every one of them what they are looking for: a reason to attend their Chapter convocations and activities on a regular basis.

How?

It may surprise some of you that some very effective management ideas have come from the British Army, one of which was the "Satisfied Soldier Scheme". In this, the Army gave the opportunity to every soldier to take part in all sorts of activities: sport, travel, adventure, professional and trade training, and so forth. Those soldiers who took advantage of the scheme became the best "shop window" for the Army. Their enthusiasm for their chosen profession was infectious, and recruiting soared. More important, the recruits they attracted were of a higher calibre than from other sources, and they also convinced many of their own colleagues to take part. In other words, retention rates improved.

How do we apply this to Capitular Masonry?

By becoming, every one of us, a "Satisfied Companion".

Who is a "Satisfied Companion"? A Satisfied Companion is every Companion who finds that his Chapter is giving him what he is looking for in Capitular Masonry. He is one who looks forward to his Chapter's convocations and activities, and he is not one who thinks: "I'm supposed to go to a Chapter meeting tonight".

Finally, we are exhorted by the Grand First Principal to "Stand up and be counted". But, for what are we to be counted? And by whom?

The answers to these questions give us the best indication of how we can retain those

Companions who we have already attracted, and to attract more candidates of high calibre.

The answers are:

We are to be counted as "Satisfied Companions"

We are to be counted by our fellow Companions, as well as by potential Candidates for exaltation

We have so much of value already "inside the box", that we must put it to good use.

Restoration and recruitment - by Keith Godfrey

No written paper submitted

Revitalization - by Steve McVittie

PLAN YOUR WORK AND WORK YOUR PLAN:

First Principal, is to rule and give direction.

Second Principal, is to prepare for 1st Principal, inter-Chapter functions, meet peers and counterparts, learn administration and management.

Third Principal, is responsible for social aspects, run the festive board, entertainment, and Chapter visitations.

Other Officers: it makes for a better year for the First Principal and the Chapter if the officers and members know what is expected of them by having the officers duties and responsibilities laid out in writing. It also allows for short term and long term goals of the officers and the Chapter.

Involvement and delegation: ask someone to do you a favour. Once active they remain active. Ask, not tell, do not ask for volunteers, use the personal invitation. Ask junior members to fill a chair, do a paper, plan a meeting, plan a social, plan a activity, pick up a brother and bring him to Chapter.

Past First Principals: If the officers are going to plan and run the Chapter why should the Past First Principals attend? If you ask the Past First Principals to remember the time when they were in office and what were the different kinds of help they could have used?

- Set up a Past First Principals Association
- Set up and conduct an officer Mentor Plan
- Visit shut ins, the sick,
- Support the First Principals' visits, give the same kind of support to the First Principal that you wanted when you were First Principal
- Assist in setting up an officer training program
- Be a back-up for ritual work, NOT the primary ritualist
- Do papers on various subjects
- Create a library, or a historic record of the Chapter
- Record the Chapter history, assist the Registrar and interview the senior members of the Chapter before all memory of the past is lost

- Do book reviews for the new Companions

Comments please

Committees:

Have you served on a committee for a number of years and the committee has never got together or performed any function? Do you know what the duties and responsibilities are of the committee's? Are only the same people on all the committees? How about each committee having one officer, one Past 1st. Principal, and two or more members at large, their duties defined, and they be asked to report every second or third business meeting or board of general purpose meeting. Better still, discuss all business at a board of general purpose, pick you the important items to be discussed at a regular business meeting. Then keep the meetings short and interesting with a good program (and no open bars after a festive board).

We drive members away, not intentionally, but by ignoring them. Get your members involved. Participation and involvement increases attendance. The First Principal and the Secretary do not have to give all the reports, do all the talking. Get your members to take part in the business communications and the emergent communications.

- Charity work
- Phone widows, shut-ins, non-attenders
- Appoint 6 - 8 stewards

A senior and junior and 4 - 6 assistants, each taking turns in preparing festive boards (clam chowder, Irish stew, pie and cheese, etc.), speakers for festive board, after a business meeting, allowing time for socializing. This also allows for a pool to draw from for future officers. Give them something to do, not a title.

Comments please

What are some suggestions for a business meeting?

In the Chapter Room:

- Papers - the History of Royal Arch Freemasonry
 - Esoteric or Symbolism of Royal Arch Freemasonry
 - the Origins of the Royal Arch
 - the differences between York, Canadian, Emulation, Australian rites
 - Royal Arch Trivia
 - A short skit or slide presentation

What else:

- Explanations of Ritual Work
- Examples of correct floorwork, salutes, etc.
- Paper on Chapter protocol
 - How do you receive a District Superintendent on his official visit?
 - How should you receive visitors
- How to run a festive board.

Comments please

How about after a business meeting?

At the festive board:

- Movie Night (men only or invite the ladies)
movies such as "The Man Who Would Be King", "murder by decree", the classics, travel films, (check with travel agencies)
- Wine & Cheese, contact wineries and wine agents
- Dutch Auction or other fund raiser
- DeMolay presentation
- Job's Daughters presentation
- Guest speaker
- Honour a non-Companion
- Roast

Comments please

What about guest speakers?

- Taxes (Tax dept. or C.A.)
- Fly fishing, salmon fishing expert
- Sailing, boating safety
- How to repair a mower
- Travel, cruising
- Government services

Comments please

What about Special Evenings?

- Roasts - honour a member of the Chapter of long standing, past
- a well known resident
- Oyster night, seafood night, barbeque, clam chowder,
ethnic night where each member brings a dish from the country
of his nationality, Baseball night (hot dogs)
- Inter Chapter visitations,
- Robbie Burns night, Valentine night, St. Patrick's night, Pub Night,
Dart Challenge, Chinese, Irish or other ethnic dinner
- Ladies' Night - not the typical supper and dance. Be creative, make it a
special night. i.e. Roaring Twenties, Rock and Roll 50's
- DeMolay or Job's Daughters special presentation with pot luck supper
or food sampling
- Family Brunch

Comments please

What are some suggestions for degree nights?

After the degrees are done by the officers:

- Past First Principals degree and night
- Visiting degree team

- Guest Chapter degree team
- Presiding First Principals degree
- Exchange or complimentary degree
- Combined degree

Comments please

What are other things instead of a degree?

- Invite the ladies and explain the Chapter room, officers' positions and responsibilities (V.O.S.L. closed). Fellowship Night
- Explanation of concordant bodies, Holy Royal Arch etc.
- Wine & Cheese - sponsored by local winery and invite ladies
- While Chapter is on, have a Chinese cooking class for ladies followed by a Chinese meal with the men present, after the Chapter meeting.

Comments please

Socials are fine but what can be done for officer training?

How about:

- Practices, where the officers try all stations/chairs
- Ritual delivery and symbolism understanding
- Mini workshops
- Clinics
- Retreats
- Officers' duties and responsibilities
- Committees' duties and responsibilities
- Floorwork and salutes
- Festive board

Comments please

We keep hearing that Freemasonry teaches **Charity**, but we rarely see anything being done. How about starting with the **seniors, the shut-ins, the lonely.**

- we could phone them monthly (adopt a grandparent program)
- take them to the doctor, to vote, shopping, a day in the park, a day at the beach
- paint, fix-up, repair, help them maintain the house they are living in
- a special night devoted just to entertain them
- the list is endless

The **widows** were mentioned, what can we do for them?

- use your charity fund, buy paint, lumber, and two or more Companions paint a room, fix a fence
- mow a lawn, take them shopping, help with chores
- just phone them once a month

What else?

- invite them to ladies' nights and other socials at Chapter expense and have someone pick them up
- a special widows night, can be pot luck or catered, a speaker, entertainment, humorous, lively, music, barbershop quartet, comedian, play, set to their time and era
- remember the widows at Valentines, Easter, their Birthdays, Christmas

Comments please

These are just a few ideas. The list is endless and we have the people and talent to succeed.

PLAN YOUR WORK, THEN WORK YOUR PLAN.**NOTE:**

We are recommending to the Grand First Principals elect, that when the District Superintendents are appointed, that they meet with the First, Second and Third Principals for their year and set up a similar forum where ideas are openly discussed. It is also recommended that the Chapters set up a supper meeting with their members and hold a similar forum.