



Throne Officers'

Guidebook

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Committee

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Foreword

Companion Officer,

I wish to begin by thanking you for your dedication to Capitular Masonry. You have embarked on a journey of hard work and dedication, and this experience is not to be taken lightly. The future of Capitular Masonry in your area literally rests in your hands.

Dozens of appendant bodies require good standing in a Royal Arch Chapter as a prerequisite to membership. Indeed, Royal Arch Masonry is a requirement for more Masonic Bodies than any other branch of Masonry outside of the Symbolic Lodge. In fact, this impacts your Symbolic Lodge, as studies have shown that Freemasons who belong to one or more appendant bodies are far less likely to drop out of Masonry altogether than those who remain at the Symbolic Lodge level.

To that end, The Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania is dedicated to providing a quality experience for every Freemason who wishes to join their local Chapter. Admittedly, it has failed on that front for many years, but steps are being taken to correct that. The manual you are reading right now is one of the steps toward revitalizing Royal Arch Masonry in Pennsylvania.

In the past, it was customary that those who took an officer position in a Royal Arch Chapter had already served as Worshipful Master in a Symbolic Lodge. Officers would begin their term armed with experience they gained while serving in the East. That is no longer the case, and your Grand Officers are aware of it. In my former career as a Paramedic and, later, in Emergency Management and Counter-terrorism, I learned the phrase that, “experience is something you never get until just after you need it.”

Your Grand Officers formed a committee of some of the most experienced and successful past and current Most Excellent High Priests to compile a manual full of things they wished they knew when they were going through the chairs. Each of the members on this committee came from Chapters that have demonstrated success, both in recruitment and retention, as well as providing quality experiences for members at stated meetings, degree conferrals, and special events. They came from all over the state, with different backgrounds and different viewpoints, and have compiled a thorough, informative, and clear set of action items for you to consider while you plan for your year as the Most Excellent High Priest of your Chapter.

I hope that you will read and use this guide as you progress through the line. I know I gained much knowledge participating in their committee meetings, and their experiences and strategies helped me plan for my term as Most Excellent Grand High Priest.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Jason F. Craig

Most Excellent Grand High Priest

Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania

Section 1 – Introduction

Purpose

Our Fraternity in general, and the Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania in particular, is undergoing a constantly changing set of dynamics. As society changes so must our approach to the traditions we have sworn to and love so dearly.

The purpose of this guidebook is to give guidance and assist with the process of developing a sound strategy to ensure that the various Royal Arch Chapters throughout Pennsylvania are successful in their endeavors and flourish in the midst of the on-going societal changes.

The processes described in this guidebook will assist the Throne Officers in preparing not only a sound fundamental and sustainable program but will also be instrumental in developing professional growth and development outside of the Fraternity.

History of the Royal Arch System

History from Scotland – *(Modified from the RAC Scotland Website)*

Many might believe that the Royal Arch system originated in Scotland similarly to the Allied Masonic Degrees. However, the Royal Arch system is not native to Scotland. It seems to have been introduced from both Irish and English sources, often Military Lodges, near the middle of the eighteenth century.

The earliest reference to the Royal Arch system is at Stirling in 1743. The Military Lodges introduced many other degrees beyond the Craft, and when the regiments moved on, Lodges in the vicinity sometimes continued to work these degrees. This situation continued until the end of the eighteenth century. However, in 1800, the early Secret Societies Acts caused the Grand Lodge of Scotland, to issue a warning to its Lodges against the working of any degrees other than those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. Many Lodges heeded the warning and the additional degrees associated with the Royal Arch had to be worked in assemblies separate from the Lodge.

The feeling grew amongst the brethren that these assemblies should be legitimized in some way. A few obtained Charters from the English and Irish governing bodies and under the patronage of the Duke of Kent, the Royal Grand Conclave of Scotland was chartered. In 1815 a special committee was convened, and all bodies in Scotland known to be working the Royal Arch degrees were contacted, with a view to forming a Grand Body to exercise proper control. All three Home Grand Lodges were consulted, so as not to infringe upon their interests. Advice was sought, in particular, from England where the United Grand Lodge of England had recently been formed, and where the status of the Royal Arch degree had been acknowledged as the completion of the third degree. After an initial encouraging reply from the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the matter became inextricably bogged down in Committee. Eventually a meeting of interested Chapters could be delayed no longer and, in August 1817, representatives of thirty-four Chapters met in Edinburgh and the Supreme Grand Royal Arch

Chapter of Scotland was erected and consecrated. Charters were issued and the new Grand Body grew slowly but steadily, as all bodies working the Royal Arch system in Scotland gradually came under its control.

History from the United States – (From the Grand Chapter of PA Website and C.A.R.E. Curriculum)

Royal Arch Masonry in Pennsylvania can be traced back to December 3, 1767 by a set of Minutes of Royal Arch Lodge No. 3, “Antients” which became known as Jerusalem Royal Arch Chapter No. 3. It is also evident that by 1783 the Brethren of the Royal Arch Degree resolved upon a special night of meeting thus separating it from the Lodge.

This Chapter went on to “warrant” other Chapters and formed a Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter. This “Grand Chapter” was unlawfully constituted in the eyes of the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The Grand Lodge formed a Committee to investigate the forming of a Grand Chapter. The Degree of Royal Arch Mason was conferred upon Past Masters of Symbolic Lodges, and as more Royal Arch Masons were created the need for more Chapters became evident. Therefore, on November 23, 1795, the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Free and Accepted Masons offered the following:

“And whereas, it is the prevailing wish of the Royal Arch Masons within this jurisdiction that a Royal Arch Grand Chapter should be opened, under the immediate sanction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania; Be it further resolved, that all past and existing officers of the Grand Lodge having duly obtained the degree of Royal Arch, and all past and existing officers of Chapters of Royal Arch Masons, duly and regularly convened under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, be considered as members of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter, and that all members of regular Chapters shall be admitted to their meetings, but not have any vote nor speak to any question, unless requested.”

And on November 30, 1795 the Committee reported that it had met with several brethren of the new Chapter and they had agreed to the recommendations. The Committee offered the additional recommendation:

“Resolved, that there now exists a perfect harmony among the brethren in Pennsylvania, and that the several brethren who have been suspended be and are hereby restored, and that all matters and things done in the Grand Lodge, affecting the private and individual rights of the said brethren, be and are hereby done away and repeal.”

The resolution was unanimously adopted and thus the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania became the first such Grand Chapter to be initiated and founded by its Grand Lodge. It also remains the only one in the world.

Basic Elements of Meeting Planning

As Throne Officers, and especially as the Most Excellent High Priest, you are required to conduct your Stated Meeting in an exemplary manner. A Stated Meeting should consist of the following:

- **Opening** – The Opening should be well rehearsed and thoroughly planned out. Prior to the opening, it is the responsibility of the Most Excellent High Priest to ensure that all present are Royal Arch Masons. He has the final say about whom is allowed into the meeting. It is also the responsibility of the Most Excellent High Priest to ensure that the Chapter's official Warrant is displayed at the front of the Chapter Hall. A Chapter cannot be opened without the Warrant displayed. In the event of the absence of various Elected and Appointed Officers, a support plan should be in place to fill the chairs as needed. Unforeseen circumstances will sometimes prevent the officers from attending to their duties which is why **frequent and open communications** between the officers are a necessity.

*See ***Special Note*** below.*

- **Recognizing Visitors** – Grand Chapter Officers and members/officers from other Chapters should be recognized in the beginning of your meeting. They have taken time to come visit you so you should acknowledge that early in the meeting. It will let them know how much you appreciate their visit. Once again this is a paradigm shift from days gone by when being last was a place of honor. Many times, for the sake of "Getting the Meeting done," visitors will be missed and they will feel slighted. Your District Deputy Grand High Priest or your District Instructor will provide you with the proper order for this recognition.
- **Business** – The Business of the Chapter should be concise and precisely choreographed to keep the meeting flowing. The days of reading thirty minutes of Meeting Minutes and Communications are a thing of the past. Members consider their time valuable as should you. Have the minutes available for review prior to the meeting and the Secretary should summarize the key highlights for the members.
- **Royal Arch Related Program** – The substance of any meeting is the Program. Throughout the State there are many resources for quality programs. Plan ahead and have a contingency plan. Your Chapter will have its own character and the programs should reflect that while bringing in an element of Capitular Masonry.
- **Closing** – The Closing is just as important as the Opening. As in the Opening, Grand Chapter Officers and others should be offered the opportunity to speak. Companions have taken time out of their busy schedules to be with others for a number of reasons. One of the main consistent reasons is to get away from their day to day worries and enjoy a time of friendship and fellowship with like-minded friends. A good Closing will send them away with a renewed spirit and vigor after a well-planned meeting. The Closing Charge, when

recited with emphasis, leaves a lasting impression on members as they return to their normal lives.

- ***** Special Note ***** – *As a Throne Officer of the Chapter it is **your responsibility** to find your replacement if you are unable to attend a Stated Meeting due to unavoidable occurrences. **You have committed to be a Throne Officer and should act accordingly.** Have the courtesy of not abandoning your Station and putting the Most Excellent High Priest in the awkward position of asking who is available to sit in a chair. Lead by example and others will follow suit.*

Section 2 – Year Planning

Planning for Your Year as Most Excellent High Priest

It is highly recommended that upon being elected Scribe, a Companion should immediately begin planning for their service as Most Excellent High Priest. During your year as Scribe, do your best to get to know your Chapter's membership. While serving as King, learn what you can about your Chapter's financial situation. You should also develop a calendar of events for the following year, decide on programs, secure speakers, plan degree work, and plan for special events. Planning during these two years will help ensure a successful year as Most Excellent High Priest.

Year as Scribe

Your year as Scribe provides you with an opportunity to learn the Opening/Closing ritual, begin to feel comfortable in a speaking role within the Chapter meetings, and most of all, to focus on the membership of your Chapter. Membership should be your main focus. While it is easy to know the regular attenders, it is important to reach out to members that have not been to a Chapter meeting in quite a while. Who are these Companions? What is keeping them from attending? Is there any program you can institute that will aid in their return? Use the following ideas to guide you in this endeavor.

- Focus on your Chapter membership
 - Who are your members?
 - Obtain a list from the Secretary and access to the electronic membership system – **Groupable**. Talk to your Secretary about this access.
 - What are their ages?
 - Do they live near your Chapter meeting place?
 - Recruitment
 - How is your Chapter recruiting new members?
 - What Lodge(s) do you typically draw new members from?
 - Retention
 - Assist the Secretary with dues reminder calls
 - Involve the Membership Committee
 - Reinstatement
 - Identify former members suspended for nonpayment of dues
 - Identify former members who have demitted
 - Consider outreach to that group to determine:
 - Why they stopped paying dues
 - Anything the Chapter can do to help
 - Would they consider rejoining?
 - Membership Committee
 - Do you have one?
 - Are they active?

- What work do they do (and is it effective)?

You can review [Section 6](#) of this Manual for more information on Chapter Membership.

Your focus on membership will bring you into close contact with the Secretary of your Chapter. He can invite you to join the electronic membership system **Groupable**. You will be given access to review all of the members of your Chapter, including specific information about each member. The use of **Groupable** and **Our Lodge Page (OLP)** provides a convenient and effective method of communicating with your members and promoting events at your Chapter. *See the help sections of each of these electronic tools for the latest features and correct usage.*

Your year as Scribe is an excellent opportunity to get to know the District Deputy Grand High Priest for your District. He will help you understand your role and will serve as a source for information about Capitular Masonry. Developing an open communication line with your District Deputy Grand High Priest will assist you as you move on to be King and Most Excellent High Priest. You may be offered the opportunity to travel with your District Deputy Grand High Priest to neighboring Chapters. If so, take advantage of the time to better know him and other Chapters in your District. A working relationship with your District Deputy Grand High Priest will serve you well in the future.

It is also your job as Scribe to begin to understand the administrative workings of the Chapter. To that end, you should secure a copy of your Chapter By-Laws and review them. You should also confer with both the Most Excellent High Priest and the King regarding candidates to follow you in the Scribe role.

As an officer of your Chapter, you should attend all Capitular District School of Instruction events and make visitations to other Chapters in your District. Meeting and interacting with Companions from other Chapters allows for a sharing of knowledge and ideas.

Year as King

Now that you have spent a year understanding the membership of your Chapter and getting to know your Secretary and your District Deputy Grand High Priest, it is time to turn your attention to the finances of your Chapter. You will work with the Treasurer to review yearly anticipated income and expenses. Income is derived mainly from member dues. Your understanding of membership will assist with understanding the income stream for your Chapter. Expenses are similar from year to year but must account for yearly increases. This review will produce an expected budget for your Chapter and ensure that all expenses are able to be paid based on the income of the Chapter. If this is not the case, the earlier the discrepancy is known, the more time there will be to address the problem, either by reducing expenses or finding other sources of income.

You should also meet with the **Trustees** of your Chapter. They oversee the ongoing funds of the Chapter. You should learn about the investment practices and balances in the Permanent Fund, the Charity Fund, and other funds that are administered by this group.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the current finances of the Chapter, you can begin to develop a budget for your year as Most Excellent High Priest. You will do this in conjunction with developing your calendar for the year. If there are expenses required for a particular meeting, be sure to include those in your proposed budget. Once you have completed your proposed budget, you should share it

with the current Most Excellent High Priest and the District Deputy Grand High Priest to get their feedback. See [Section 4](#) of this Manual for more information on this topic.

You should now begin to consider the events you want to bring to the Chapter during your year as Most Excellent High Priest. Create a calendar of events for each month (see sample in this Section). Who do you want to invite as a speaker or to give a presentation? Often these need a 6-month lead time to schedule properly. Understand the traditions of your Chapter to properly schedule Past High Priest Night and 25/50/60-year Member recognitions. Do you want to invite Grand Chapter Officers for a particular meeting? If so, make the request early because their calendars fill up quickly. This request should be done in conjunction with your District Deputy Grand High Priest. If you wish to give a special gift during any of your meetings, be sure to order it far enough ahead to assure arrival for the planned meeting.

You may also want to schedule a Special Event to occur during your time as Most Excellent High Priest. Such events might include:

- Chapter Anniversary celebration (if applicable)
- Table Chapter
- Ladies Dinner/Brunch
- Picnics
- Fundraisers
- Sporting events
- Cigar night

It is within your discretion to schedule such an event but it is your responsibility to see that it properly scheduled and executed.

As the yearly election approaches, you will confer with the Most Excellent High Priest and the Scribe in the selection of the Scribe for the new year. Be sure to suggest a Companion that you truly believe has the administrative abilities and the leadership abilities you now know are required for the job.

Finally, you must memorize the *Closing Charge*. You will need to demonstrate your ability to deliver this from memory as a pre-requisite to being elected Most Excellent High Priest. Remember this is more than just words. It is an opportunity to share with the Companions the highest ideals of Capitular Masonry. It is situated at the end of the meeting to allow these ideals to go with the Companions as they return to society until the next Stated Meeting.

As an officer of your Chapter, you should attend all Capitular District School of Instruction events and make visitations to other Chapters in your District. Meeting and interacting with Companions from other Chapters allows for a sharing of knowledge and ideas. You should also consider attendance at one or both Grand Chapter Communications. Meeting and interacting with Companions from across the state allows for even more sharing of knowledge and ideas.

Year as Most Excellent High Priest

You are now in charge! You know the Companions of your Chapter and you know the financial situation of your Chapter. It is now time to lead the Chapter in such a manner that attendance increases, meetings are more enjoyable, all Companions increase in knowledge, and the financial requirements of the Chapter are met and exceeded. This is a **BIG** job. If you perform well in this position, your Chapter will flourish and you will leave your Chapter and Capitular Masonry in a better position than when you entered the ranks of elected officers two years ago.

Over the past two years, you have come to know the regular attenders of your Chapter. You should consider those Companions that are most involved and assign them to an appointed position. Often there is a custom within your Chapter to advance appointed officers from chair to chair. By all means, follow this custom if the officers have been faithful in attendance and involved. If not, make the (hard) choice to replace someone in line. Be sure to consider the involvement of new Companions and insert them in the line as they are willing and able. You should also be considering the next Scribe as these appointments are made. Discussing this with the current King and Scribe will make for a smooth transition next year.

You may also want to review the Standing Committees of your Chapter. How active are they? Are they effective? Do they need new members to enhance their function? If so, make changes as needed. Look to Past High Priests for these positions in an attempt to keep them involved in the work of the Chapter. Each Committee should provide a written report of its activities at least annually. More active Committees might report quarterly, or even monthly. These reports are meant to foster interactions with all members and provide for open communication.

A major function of your position is to manage the monthly Stated Meeting. This begins with your message in the Meeting Notice. Ask your secretary to determine when he needs your note so that the Notice is not delayed waiting on you. Your message should be welcoming and encouraging. It is your opportunity to reach all members with your vision and excitement for the meeting. You will also create an agenda for the meeting. This should be shared with other officers so that your entire team knows where the meeting is going.

During the meeting, recognize any Grand Chapter officers present and give them the opportunity to indicate the manner in which they will be received. Also recognize any visitors present. These actions create a sense of Companionship across Capitular Masonry.

Recognition of Capitular Birthdays is common. This date is based on the month in which the Companion was Exalted. The Secretary will have this information available for you, or you can access the information in the electronic membership system - **Groupable**. Welcoming a Companion on his Capitular Birthday and indicating his years of service is well worth the short time that it takes.

Your Chapter may have a custom of sharing a meal or snack prior to or immediately after a Stated Meeting. Be sure that someone is in charge of this function. You may appoint a Companion to this position or ask the Scribe to handle it. This can also be a rotating function. In any event, be sure that it is properly planned and executed so that it seamlessly fits into the night's activities. It is often the case that the Chapter has a meal with a special menu once each year. Be sure to account for this tradition.

It is your responsibility to manage all Degree work in your Chapter. This is not to say that you will necessarily be the presiding officer in each Degree conferral, but you are responsible to see that

whoever you call to the East to preside is competent to confer the Degree. You will take part in Degree conferral as necessary to see that new members are brought into your Chapter on a regular basis. For more information, see [Section 5](#) of this Manual.

You may discover that there are more events in a month to handle than can fit into the time-frame of a Stated Meeting. You may wish to call a Special Meeting or an Extra Meeting for the purpose of conferring Degrees or for a special event such as a Table Meeting. These meetings can serve to provide some time other than the late evening. A daytime meeting might assist some members in being able to attend. You might also host a Virtual Meeting (see *Constitution* Article XIV Section 1 and Article VI Section 17 for proper procedure) to allow members that travel during the Winter months to attend. The bottom line here is that you are not bound to have **only** Stated Meetings. With proper notice, Special Meetings, Extra Meetings, and Virtual Meetings may allow more members to attend.

As Most Excellent High Priest of your Chapter, you will attend all Capitular District School of Instruction events and make visitations to other Chapters in your District. Meeting and interacting with Companions from other Chapters allows for a sharing of knowledge and ideas. You represent your Chapter and make it know to others.

You will also attend one or both Grand Chapter Communications. Meeting and interacting with Companions from across the state allows for even more sharing of knowledge and ideas. Here again, you represent your Chapter and bring knowledge of your specific situation to the other Chapters in the state.

As your year as Most Excellent High Priest comes to end it is often a time of reflection on the fond memories that you have made not only for yourself but others as well. Now is your time to offer your words of wisdom, guidance, and last-minute advice to your successor. Remember always that he and those that come after will always benefit from your support. It is often helpful on the night of their installation to turn over a well-maintained kit to assist them through the coming year. There may be specific items that have historically been passed from the outgoing Most Excellent High Priest to the incoming Most Excellent High Priest; be aware of the traditions.

[Sample Year Calendar for Chapter Meetings](#)

The following suggestions may assist you with your creation of a calendar of events for your year as Most Excellent High Priest.

January

- Introduce your Appointed Officers
- Rehearse Opening/Closing with all new officers
- Program for January
- Confer a Degree?

February

- Program for February
- Confer a Degree?
- Table Chapter?
- Virtual Meeting?

March

- Program for March
- Confer a Degree?
- Virtual Meeting?
- Member recognition 25/50/60-year pins

April

- Program for April
- Confer a Degree?
- Special awareness and collection for Ronald McDonald House Charity

May

- Program for May
- Confer a Degree?
- Honor Past High Priests with a dinner before or after the meeting

June

- Vote to call off for July and August (if applicable)
- Authorize Secretary / Treasurer to make payments as necessary during July and August
- Program for June
- Confer a Degree?

July

- Called off for the summer?
- One-Day Conferral?

August

- Called off for the summer?
- Chapter family picnic?

September

- Program for September
- Confer a Degree?
- Ronald McDonald Charity event?
- Table Chapter?

October

- Program for October
- Confer a Degree?
- Master Mason night

November

- Election of Officers for ensuing Capitular year
- Program for November
- Confer a Degree?
- Work with Secretary to complete Grand Chapter required documentation for the year

December

- Assign Audit Committee members
- Installation of Officers for ensuing Capitular year
- Program for December
- Order of High Priesthood?

Section 3 – Administrative Planning

The Role of Leadership

Your role as an officer of the Chapter implies leadership. Leadership is developed over time. That is why you have been serving as Scribe, then King, and now Most Excellent High Priest. Leadership is the ability to get others to work in a common direction toward the completion of a common goal. Leadership is not doing all of the work yourself, neither is it to require others to do all of the work. Leading by example is the correct balance of your work and the work of others. There is more than enough to do as you lead the Chapter. Encourage others to help. For further assistance with your role as leader in your Chapter, you can enlist your District Deputy Grand High Priest as a mentor in leadership and you can read one or more of the books/articles on leadership listed in the [Suggested Readings](#) section of this manual.

“Leaders are made not born. Each of us contains the capacity for leadership.”

--- Warren Bennis

A main role of leadership in the Chapter has to do with succession planning – who will follow you and the other Elected Officers. It is important to look for active, excited Companions to place in the appointed chairs. While Past High Priests can be used in appointed chairs, members who have not yet been elected to a chair should be appointed first. This is an opportunity to build a great leadership team that will serve the Chapter for many years to come.

A proactive mentoring system is a must for a successful Chapter. Training and encouraging the next group of leaders in your Chapter is as important as new members. At this point in your career in your Chapter, you should be a mentor to several current officers and several current non-officers. Imparting your knowledge and enthusiasm to these Companions will ensure an ongoing line of officers to serve your Chapter in the coming years. You should also be encouraging others to take on mentoring roles within your Chapter. Mentoring is not an add-on to the responsibilities of Companions; it needs to be a part of the DNA, the lifeblood, of your Chapter. Every Companion in your Chapter should be mentored and should be mentoring others. You should be encouraging all Past High Priests, all Elected Officers, and your District Deputy Grand High Priest to mentor Companions within your Chapter.

Being a Good Line Officer (Adapted from *Ohio Chapter Manual*)

- Willingness to work
- Ability to learn ritual
- Willingness to attend meetings regularly
- Desire to someday be the Most Excellent High Priest
- Be an organizer and member of Degree Teams
- Be willing to act on Committees
- Be a good Chapter salesman (get Candidates)
- Be a good planner for social events
- Have the ability to act as an instructor for new members

- Have the ability to act as a Greeter and Welcomer of Members and Visitors
- Have the ability to use and protect paraphernalia and equipment
- Have the ability to smile and be cheerful at all times
- Have the ability to create a friendly atmosphere before, during, and after meetings

Being a Good Presiding Officer (Adapted from *Ohio Chapter Manual*)

- Be neat in appearance.
- Speak clearly and distinctively
- Start meetings on time according to the By-Laws
- Know your work (ritual)
- Follow your agenda (order of business)
- Do not let the meeting drag
- Keep control of the meeting – use your scepter when necessary
- Prevent long discussions – table until later
- Appoint committees who can and will function
- Insist on all Officers being present (if possible)
- If an officer cannot be present, he should ask someone to attend and take his place and not leave it up to the Most Excellent High Priest at the last minute
- See that the opening is properly and correctly done
- Conduct a short, snappy meeting
- Provide some kind of a program for each meeting except when you have degree work
- See that refreshments are provided for every meeting
- Organize Degree teams if possible (see [Section 5](#) of this Manual)
- Study the Chapter By-laws and the Grand Chapter Constitution – to learn what you can and cannot do without violating the laws
- Be a leader – a take charge man – do not be afraid to WORK. Others will gladly follow a good leader
- Cooperate with the Secretary, and discuss your plans with him, asking his advice when in doubt
- Check with the Secretary on dues and suspensions
- Have Officers' meetings; let everyone in the line know your plans for the year in advance
- Prepare and present your year's plan on the night of Installation
- Above all, Smile!

Enlist Committee Chairs

Committee Chairs should be selected from among Past High Priests. These men know the inner workings of the Chapter and have worked to make the Chapter successful. In consultation with the group of Past High Priests, match men to areas in which they are naturally inclined. Allow these Committee Chairs to select others for their committees and charge them to define specific goals for the year. You might have Committees for:

- Membership (Recruitment / Retention) (see [Section 6](#) of this Manual)

- Degree Conferral (see [Section 5](#) of this Manual)
- Fund Raising
- Charity (Ronald McDonald House)
- Community Outreach Programs
- Masonic Programs
- Other specific needs within your Chapter

As you consider the possibilities for a **Membership** chair look for some of the following (Adapted from *Ohio Chapter Manual*):

- He must be an active member of the Chapter
- He must be well liked by the Companions (so they will help)
- He must have a good knowledge of the Ritual and know how it ties with Craft Masonry – Masonic Education
- He must attend his Lodge regularly, and also the Lodges (if possible) in the Chapter's area, and make himself known to the brethren
- He should know the names and addresses of all the Officers in his own Lodge, as well as in the neighboring Lodges
- He must be enthusiastic about Capitular Masonry
- He must be able to get others to help him promote the Royal Arch Chapter
- He must know the amount of the initiation fee and the Chapter dues
- He should have a general knowledge of Grand Chapter and the rest of the York Rite, and how they work
- In other words, he should be an enthusiastic, walking encyclopedia on Royal Arch Masonry and always have some petition blanks in his pocket

As you consider the possibilities for a **Degree Conferral** chair look for some of the following (Adapted from *Ohio Chapter Manual*):

- A good knowledge of the Ritual
- A good knowledge of the floor work
- A good knowledge of the equipment necessary for the work
- Ability to teach others
- Plenty of patience and perseverance
- Able and willing to attend Chapter regularly
- Willing to call and attend rehearsals for Degrees and the Opening and Closing of Chapter
- Should have a general knowledge of the Grand Chapter Constitution and Chapter By-laws
- Should be a dedicated Royal Arch Mason, who can inspire members to be good Ritualists
- Above all, he should be an enthusiastic leader who can answer questions concerning Capitular Masonry

These Committees should provide proposals and action plans to the Elected Officers for their approval. After approval, there should be regular and frequent reporting of the work of the Committees to the

membership during Chapter meetings. Specific actions coming from these committees should be voted on by the Companions.

Role and Duties

The roles and duties of each Elected Officer are spelled out in the Constitution of the Holy Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania and the By-Laws of your particular Chapter and detail the oaths administered to each elected officer at their installation. It is your duty as Most Excellent High Priest to see that each Elected Officer performs their duties as required. To perform this function effectively, it is your responsibility to know the requirements as set forth in the various documents. While it is not your responsibility to **do** these jobs, it is your responsibility to see that these jobs are **done**.

Section 4 – Budget Planning

Chapter Budget Information

For your Chapter to function properly, it must be fiscally viable. This means that your Chapter's finances must be like your personal finances – income must exceed expenses. To this end, your Chapter's Budget must be generated each year. You will do this in conjunction with the Treasurer, the Secretary, and possibly with various Committee Chairmen that may have input on expected income or expenses for the year.

Income

This process begins by looking at income. A major portion of a Chapter's income is from dues. A review of the membership looking for information that will affect next year's dues payments (deaths, exaltations, suspensions, and demits) should be undertaken. Your Chapter's dues structure should be reviewed to ensure that annual member dues are at least twice the Grand Chapter assessment as prescribed in the *Constitution* Article IX Section 1 (as of 2023, \$15 for primary membership and \$10 for plural membership). This means that your Chapter's dues should be \$30 at a minimum for primary membership and \$20 minimum for plural membership. Changes to the dues structure will require changes to your Chapter By-Laws, District Deputy Grand High Priest approval, and Grand Chapter approval.

Next, fundraising activities should be reviewed. For all such activities, you should consider the return on investment for the fundraiser. Some fundraisers will provide more income than others and require less work on the membership's part. You should also consider whether a Small Games of Chance license will be required by your County. If so, be sure to obtain that before holding any lottery-oriented types of fundraisers.

Then consider historical donations to your Chapter. These donations may be in the form of Wills or Estates. If that is the case, the principal amounts from these donations may go into restricted funds, but the interest from such funds might be available for the yearly budget. You may also have a history of raising funds for the Grand Chapter charity of choice, Ronald McDonald House. Setting a goal for contributions to this worthy charity and advertising the need will assist your Chapter in raising the funds for charity.

Finally, there might be some funds that are administered by the Trustees that generate investment income that is to be moved to the General Fund, as received. If so, these funds should be added to the budget.

Expenses

A review of the previous year's expenses should be the start of the budgeting process for expenses. Are the expenses as encountered during the prior year expected to continue? Will these expenses increase due to the change in cost of living?

After this review, the following specific items should be considered:

- Grand Chapter assessments as per *Constitution* Article IX Section 1
- Building related expenses
 - Rent
 - Taxes
 - Utilities
 - Maintenance
 - Cleaning
- Past High Priest jewel or apron (if given by Chapter)
- Gift for Past High Priest recognition (if given by Chapter)
- Cost of your anticipated programs for the year (see [Section 2](#) of this Manual)
- Dinners for meetings (donations or provided?) (Who pays for guests?)
- Special Anniversary celebration (who pays for guests?)
- Salaries for secretary and treasurer (if provided) and taxes on those salaries
- Bank service charges
- Annual cost of Safe Deposit Box or Post Office box rental
- Costs for notices
- Costs for secretary's supplies
- Ronald McDonald House donations (offset by anticipated income)
- Money set aside in anticipation of replacement/repair of regalia or degree paraphernalia
- Other miscellaneous expenses

Final Review

Now that you have accounted for all of the expected income and expenses for the year, a final review is needed. Your Chapter's Audit Report from the prior year will list the ending checkbook balance. This is the beginning balance for this year. Taking the beginning balance, adding the expected income, and then subtracting the expected expenses will give you the anticipated ending checkbook balance. If this is positive you are in good shape. If not, you must reduce the level of expenditures or increase the level of income. Regardless, it is necessary to produce a budget that does not leave your Chapter in a precarious financial situation.

Additional Items

- Our current electronic membership system - ***Groupable*** allows for dues to be paid directly on the website by using a credit card. This feature, if your Chapter elects to use it, currently results in a charge of \$1.00 per transaction plus a percentage per transaction. The Chapter can elect to charge this back to the member's credit card. However, if the member uses a debit card, federal law does not allow for this charge-back. In that case, the system provides for the member to authorize payment of this surcharge. Your Chapter should carefully consider the use of this feature. Data show that the use of this feature provides both a convenience to the member and more timely payment of dues.
- Ronald McDonald House is the Grand Chapter's Charity of Choice. Subordinate Chapters are strongly encouraged to make contributions to this worthy cause. Checks from Subordinate Chapters should be written to the Grand Chapter Charitable Foundation and marked as a contribution to Ronald McDonald House. The Grand Chapter then distributes a check to the

Ronald McDonald House closest to the Chapter with credit given to the Subordinate Chapter. Grand Chapter keeps track of each Subordinate Chapter's contributions to this cause to determine the winner of the yearly Joshua Award. A video showing the service of this charity to our Companions has been produced by the Grand Chapter and can be accessed here:
<https://paroyalarch.org/charity/>

Section 5 – Degree Planning and “Nice Things to Know”

General Introduction

As the Most Excellent High Priest, you are solely in charge of scheduling Degree conferrals for your Chapter. This does not mean that you will necessarily give the Degrees. You have been selected as the Most Excellent High Priest mainly for your administrative abilities. However, if you feel comfortable participating in the Degree conferral, by all means join in. Your main task, however, is to be sure that Degrees are offered regularly in your Chapter so that new members are welcomed into the Chapter on a regular basis. Please note that your participation in conferring Degrees is required for the honorary degree of the [Order of High Priesthood](#), if you have received that Degree. See that Section for details.

You may find that your Chapter has not offered Degrees in some time. If this is the case, you have probably been relying on another Chapter to provide the Degrees either on a monthly basis or in a one-day format. You should consider attempting to develop a mastery of at least one Degree to be offered by your Chapter. This can be followed by another and then by the third. The fellowship involved in a team of Companions working together to confer a degree is well worth the time involved and can strengthen your Chapter.

Degrees can be conferred either monthly (three separate months) or as a one-day Class (all three Degrees on one day). Monthly Degrees can be held during the Stated Meetings or at Extra Meetings. Monthly Degrees give the candidates an opportunity to digest the learning from a particular Degree prior to being involved in the next Degree. One-day degrees may work better for new members that already have many prior commitments. However, the one-day format does not provide a candidate with the opportunity to fully engage in the learning from a Degree. You should consider the pros and cons of each of these methods as you schedule the Degrees for your Chapter. Remember that the whole reason for conferring Degrees is to provide education in the traditions of the Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania and to pass on knowledge of those traditions.

Your Chapter may not have the props and Regalia necessary to confer a Degree. You might need to borrow props or Regalia from another Chapter, make the items, or buy them. Remember that the items are there to amplify the learning for the Candidate. No prop or piece of Regalia is perfect – do the best you can. Candidates will be aided in their learning by whatever you provide. (See the *Red Book* for access to the Regalia Committee for help in obtaining robes and props.) In addition, your District Deputy Grand High Priest will be able to assist you with finding regalia and props.

Music is needed in the Mark Master and the Most Excellent Master Degrees. If your Chapter has an organ and an Organist, they provide a wonderful sense of realism. If not, recordings can be played as needed. Remember to test the audio playback equipment to be sure that the sound fills the room and does not distract from the Degree work. Music in the form of downloadable files is available online at the *Grand Chapter Web Site* under *Audio Files* of the *Secretary Resources*.

Remember that there are fees associated with Degree conferral. Be sure that your Secretary instructs the candidates in the costs prior to degree conferral. Fees and yearly dues should not come as a surprise to any candidate.

As the Most Excellent High Priest, you should be conversant with the information contained in both the *Manual of the Chapter* and the *Capitular Academy of Research and Education (C.A.R.E.)*. These documents will help you discuss membership with all new candidates and provide a basis for the learning these candidates are expected to gain.

Degree Teams

There are many parts (speaking and non-speaking) in our Degrees. There is floor movement to be learned. There is dialog to be learned. There is interaction to be learned. All of these items make for a complex presentation of our Degrees. It is best to build Degree teams for each of the three Degrees. These teams can focus on their Degree – the ritual, the props, the Regalia, the movements – and most of all the learnings that are to be portrayed.

It is not necessary that the Elected Officers take part on all Degree teams, but they should be a member of at least one Degree team. Past High Priests may take major parts. Seasoned Companions may take parts. New members, with their early excitement about Capitular Masonry, may take parts. It is best to attempt to build teams that support each other and have “fun” working together. This will provide the best Degree conferrals. Working together as a team can provide the encouragement new Degree team members need to succeed.

You should schedule Degree team practices so that the team can learn to work together. Even if you are not on the team, your presence will be very supportive. Encourage everyone to join a team, maybe only as a backup member to begin. You might also find another Chapter that has a Degree team and visit one of their practices. The more time the members of the team spend together, the better they will become at conferring the Degree.

If you find that you do not have a Companion that is yet ready to handle a major part, you can reach out to other Chapters and ask for help. Another Chapter may well have a person willing and able to join the Degree team for a limited period to assist with getting your Companions ready to take over. Your District Deputy Grand High Priest will be happy to assist in this search.

Tips to be shared with Degree team members (from *Ohio Chapter Management Manual*)

- As soon as a part has been assigned to you, read the entire Degree through several times. If possible, arrange to see it conferred in another Chapter. The object here is to get an overall picture of what is being said and done and why.
- Now concentrate on the part assigned to you. Read it through until you understand thoroughly what you are saying and doing and why.

- Be sure that you know every word in your part. Look up words you do not understand in the dictionary. Check pronunciations. Ask your Degree Director if you have any doubts. This is the time to get errors out. Once memorized they will plague you for the rest of your life.
 - As you understand what you are doing, you will find that memorization comes easily. It is best done as the last thing in the day. Memorize as much as you can before retiring. After you have gone to bed repeat your part to yourself until you fall asleep. First thing on rising in the morning repeat it again to yourself. Rehearse your part to yourself several times throughout the day.
 - On the next night start at the beginning and when you are sure that you know your part up to where you fell asleep or to your last stopping point, proceed in the same manner to master the next section of it.
 - After you have mastered the part, recite it for someone else. Try to make the part sound natural. You can help yourself do this by thinking about the character you are portraying. What is he like? What does he want? Why is he saying what he is saying? How old is he? Ask yourself all kinds of questions about him. Then try to make your recitation of your part fit your version of the character.
 - Rehearse with the other officers in the room where the degree will be conferred. This is the time to get all your floor movements straightened out and to arrange your interactions with the other characters.
 - Concentrate on getting your story through to the Candidate. Be interested in him. This is not about you; it is about the Candidate.
 - Do your best and don't worry about failure. If you concentrate on the job at hand, concentrating on the part you are playing, thinking about the impression that you wish to convey to the Candidate, and getting involved in the part, you will automatically do a good job.
 - Do not be concerned about stage fright. It is a normal reaction. Do not try to suppress mounting fear and nervousness. Welcome it. It will only last for a short period and when it passes you will be in complete charge of yourself and do a good job.
 - Above all else, be sincere in everything you do. Sincerity will shine through your efforts and do more to inspire the Candidate (which is our ultimate purpose) than any mere words could ever do.

Specific Information for Mark Master Degree

This Degree will take approximately 1.5 hours to confer. If it is to be conferred during a monthly meeting, be sure that enough time is allotted to the work. Specific information about the Degree is

contained in the *Manual of the Chapter* and the second section of the *Capitular Academy of Research and Education (C.A.R.E.)* publication. These publications should provide you, the degree team, and individual members of the team with the background needed to present the learnings associated with the degree in a manner that will be most effective for the Candidate.

Props and Regalia needed: (from *1972 Manual*)

- Worshipful Master's Top Hat
- Set of Mark Lodge Officer's aprons and collars
- Columns for Sr and Jr Wardens
- Gavel and Ashlar at WM's station
- Gavel and Ashlar at SW's station
- Gavel and Ashlar at JW's station
- Chair for Junior Overseer
- Mallet and chisel at proper place
- Wicket at Sr Warden's station
- A supply of Chapter pennies
- A Keystone with inscription
- A piece of perfect (approved) work
- Altar and cushions in center of room
- Altar KJV Bible
- Square and compasses on altar
- Six small KJV Bibles (WM, SW, JW, Chaplain, SMC, JMC)
- Trestle Board with inscription
- Square, level, and plumb at WM's station
- Four cabletows (can be four active Candidates)
- Mark Master's Song copies or recording
- The Mark to be presented by the widow
- Three or four chairs for candidates during lecture
- Supple of quarters
- Blank mark forms
- Four Scarlet Swords (SMC, JMC, P, Tiler)

Specific Information for Most Excellent Master Degree

This Degree will take approximately 1.0 hours to confer. If it is to be conferred during a monthly meeting, be sure that enough time is allotted to the work. Specific information about the Degree is contained in the *Manual of the Chapter* and the third section of the *Capitular Academy of Research and Education (C.A.R.E.)* publication. These publications should provide you, the degree team, and individual members of the team with the background needed to present the learnings associated with the degree in a manner that will be most effective for the Candidate. In this Degree, the "fire from heaven" can be provided by either a red or white hi-intensity LED light fitted in the ceiling.

Props and Regalia needed: (from *1972 Manual*)

- Most Excellent Master's Top Hat
- Set of Mark Lodge Officer's collars and aprons
- Columns for Sr and Jr Wardens
- Gavel and ashlar at ME Master's station
- Gavel and ashlar at SW's station
- Gavel and ashlar at JW's station
- Four scarlet swords (SMC, JMC, P, & Tiler)
- Altar and cushions in center of room
- Altar KJV Bible
- Five KJV Bibles (MEM, SW, JW, SMC, & JMC)
- Altar of Burnt Offerings
- Arch (probably handmade by an experienced Companion)

- Keystone to fit Arch (probably handmade by an experienced Companion)
- The Ark (probably handmade by an experienced Companion)
- Staves for the Ark
- Four cabletows (can be four active Candidates)
- ME Master's song copies or recording

Specific Information for Royal Arch Degree

This Degree will take approximately 1.5 hours to confer. If it is to be conferred during a monthly meeting, be sure that enough time is allotted to the work. Specific information about the Degree is contained in the *Manual of the Chapter* and the fourth section of the *Capitular Academy of Research and Education (C.A.R.E.)* publication. These publications should provide you, the Degree team, and individual members of the team with the background needed to present the learnings associated with the Degree in a manner that will be most effective for the Candidate.

While deep caverns are enticing, many Chapters do not have such a setup. Remember, this is allegorical. Any place outside of the main "Temple" may be used. Stairwells work. Remote rooms work.

Remember this Degree requires three Candidates to go through the Degree. If you are attempting to bring only one or two candidates into the Chapter, additional Royal Arch Companions can be secured for the Degree work, thus providing for three "Candidates" for the Degree. If additional Candidates are in the Chapter Hall when the active Candidates are taken to the vault area, a vault lecture delivered by the Most Excellent High Priest or some other officer is appropriate so that the inactive Candidates receive the same understanding that the active Candidates receive at the vault. A copy of the vault lecture is available from your District Deputy Grand High Priest.

Props and Regalia needed: (from 1972 *Manual*)

- Robes for High Priest including Mitre
- Robes for King including Crown
- Robes for Scribe including Turban
- Four veils (blue, purple, scarlet, white)
- Set of relics to include:
 - Pedestal with inscription
 - Book of the Law (Scroll)
 - Jewel of the Ancient Lodge (Triple Triangle – two needed)
- Burning bush for use at first veil (small Christmas decoration with LED lighting)
- Three serpentine rods for use at second veil
- Glass or bottle of water for use at third veil
- Signet of Zerubbabel (ring) for use at inner veil
- Sandals and crowns for candidates
- Three cabletows for candidates
- Working tools (pick, spade, and crow)
- Casket and Stand with appropriate letters
- Scepters for three throne officers
- Set of Chapter Officer's aprons and collars
- Altar and cushions
- Altar KJV Bible
- KJB Bibles for SMC & JMC
- Chairs for veil and other officers
- Vault prepared with arches in place
- Swords and scabbards for officers (CH – dark blue, RAC – white, M3V –

scarlet, M2V – purple, M1V –
light blue, SMC – scarlet, JMC –
scarlet, P – scarlet, Tiler –
scarlet)

- Three chairs for active Candidates
during lecture
- Three member aprons for active
Candidates in preparing room
- Member aprons for inactive
Candidates in Chapter Hall

Conferral Procedures

As you practice for conferring Degrees, remember that you are doing much more than just memorizing a ritual. Our rituals are designed to convey a learning – a message. The new Candidates participate by being involved in the ritual through movement, sight, and repeating of words. The learning process is greatly enhanced by both pageantry and props. The spoken ritual is aided by these items.

If this is a one-day conferral and you will be breaking for lunch between degrees

- Give the Benediction in the Chapter Hall before going to eat
- Candidates eat first
- Next Degree team eats second
- Everyone else eats after that

Some general suggestions for Degree conferral (from *Ohio Chapter Management Manual*) are:

- Make every Degree a production with pageantry.
- Plan production and character assignments well in advance.
- Develop new talent.
 - Select good ritualists to participate in some degrees, but be alert for new talent, and give it encouragement and opportunity.
 - Suggest that each Past High Priest select one Companion and prepare him for a particular part.
 - Officers are elected primarily for their administrative abilities. The Degrees are not presented to test the ritualistic ability of the Officers, but rather to impress the lessons on the Candidate. Avoid forcing an Officer to take a degree in a part that he is not capable of doing in an impressive manner.
 - Officers should open and close the Chapter.
 - Consider using non-officers for lectures, charges, etc., when officers participate in degrees.
- Read the directions in the ritual. The fine print is important!
- Memorize the words – then instill realistic action.
 - Help the candidate see the character and not the individual.
 - Forget yourself; live the part; be the character.
- A study of the character in reference books will give a better understanding of the rank, temperament, and personality of the character.
- Get the feel of the station by going through the part from the location of that station in an empty room before meeting opens.
- Project your voice; speak up; talk to the person sitting the farthest from you.
- Keep the stage crew and prop men inconspicuous.

- If some changes cannot be made professionally because there is no curtain, etc., take the candidate from the room during this period.
- If you are using a prompter, be sure he is also inconspicuous.
- Avoid obscuring the line of vision of the Candidates and audience.
- Check the lighting to be sure all can see.
- Use lighting, sound effects, scenery, props, music, robing, and make-up to advantage.
- Have a wardrobe chairman to:
 - Maintain robes in good condition.
 - Check appearance of participants before they enter the room.
 - Check to be sure robes are buttoned in the back.
 - Remove jewelry, eye-glasses, etc.
 - Use fleshings or at least don't let trousers show beneath robes.
- Avoid remarks, "thank-you's", calling on Candidates, etc., at the conclusion of a Degree. Let them leave the room with a picture of the Degree uppermost in their minds.
- Continually remember to try to give a performance the way a professional theater would present it.

Post-conferral Procedures

As the Most Excellent High Priest, you should see that each new Candidate receives instruction in the Degree that they just received. Information concerning each Degree is contained in both the *Manual of the Chapter* and the *Capitular Academy of Research and Education (C.A.R.E.)* publication. If you do not feel comfortable providing this instruction, assign another member as a Mentor to the Candidate. Understanding the Degree they have just been a part of goes a long way toward helping the candidate apply the learnings to their own lives.

Once a Candidate becomes a Royal Arch Mason, their first (and maybe second!) Stated Meeting can be quite intimidating. The Opening and Closing of a Chapter involve motions and words they have seen only once during the Royal Arch Degree. Therefore, it is wise to invite new Royal Arch Masons to a Chapter practice prior to their first meeting. Here the opening and closing ritual can be practiced and the new Royal Arch Mason can be instructed in and practice the motions and words to be used. This will prevent any embarrassment on the part of the new Royal Arch Mason. If you find that some of the older members also need to practice the Opening and Closing, a "practice" might be included as part of a program during a Stated Meeting.

Order of High Priesthood

As the Most Excellent High Priest, you may be invited to join the Order of High Priesthood. This invitation is offered under the authority of the Grand Holy Royal Arch of Pennsylvania and with

the authorization of your District Deputy Grand High Priest. It is an honor afforded to a Most Excellent High Priest that has demonstrated the ability to exemplify the part of **Worshipful Master** for the Degree of Mark Master Mason, the part of the **Most Excellent Master** for the Degree of Most Excellent Master Mason, or the part of the **Most Excellent High Priest, Captain of the Host**, or **Principal Sojourner** for the Degree of Royal Arch Mason. (See *Digest of Decisions 2023 No. 53*)

It is important that you have a team of Past High Priests that are also members of the Order of High Priesthood that can confer this honorary Degree. If your Chapter does not currently have a team that confers this Degree, reach out to your District Deputy Grand High Priest for instructions or for connections with another Chapter that has such a team. Conferring this Degree on a qualified Most Excellent High Priest is a singular honor that your Chapter can provide.

Section 6 – Recruitment, Retention, and Restoration

Mission

There are certain guidelines to follow if you expect to increase the number of active Companions in your Chapter, not just add members. In growing the number of Companions in your Chapter you cannot just expand the number of new members. Perhaps you do not feel totally comfortable talking to others about Capitular Masonry or inviting them to become Companions. Perhaps you believe that your Chapter has developed a successful process of getting prospective members to petition your Chapter on a regular, continuing basis. Regardless of your present level of comfort and activity in membership matters, however, it is absolutely critical that you understand and employ the concept of bringing a man to active involvement in your Chapter.

A man who is interested in becoming a Capitular Mason, is Exalted to the Degree of a Royal Arch Mason, and must be purposefully transformed into an active and supportive Capitular Mason. He becomes fully active when he understands the goals of the Fraternity, supports those goals through his active participation in Chapter activities, and recommends the organization to others. In other words, he is fully active when he becomes an advocate for Capitular Masonry.

Many Chapters have no problem bringing in new members, but they fail to realize that membership is not an activity, it is a process. Unless you complete the entire process, you may gain members, but you will likely not have increased the number of Capitular Masons. However, if you fully bring new members to active engagement in the Chapter, not only will they become Capitular Masons in every sense of the word, they will also be promoters of Capitular Masonry in general and your Chapter in particular.

Recruitment Process

Recruiting new members is not a difficult task if you have the right procedure in place. In fact, it can be described in four simple words: **Identify**, **Invite**, **Initiate**, and **Involve**.

Identify: New members come from the Lodges in your area. A new member must be a Master Mason. Visiting various Blue Lodges with the permission of the Worshipful Master of that Lodge and speaking to potential members is a great way to create excitement about your Chapter.

Invite: Master Masons that respond positively to the work of Capitular Masonry can be invited to submit a Petition for Degrees and Membership in your Chapter. Your invitation should be personal and you should share your personal experience in Capitular Masonry, in general, and

your Chapter, in particular. Consider mutual friends that can be mentioned during your conversation. You might want to review the list of frequently asked questions in this Section and develop your personal answers before inviting a friend to join. Remember, you are inviting him to join with you and others in a very special Fraternity. Be prepared to share your experience.

In particular, when you invite a prospective new member:

- Don't use Capitular jargon – these references will likely have no meaning for him.
- Don't "ask him to join your Chapter." Instead, "invite him to become a Royal Arch Mason."
- Don't say, "you'd be a good Royal Arch Mason," or "you'd be a good member." Instead, say, "I think you'd really benefit from being a Capitular Mason because..." or "I think you'd really enjoy being a Royal Arch Mason."
- Talk about the benefits to him for joining, not benefits to the Chapter.
- Again, be natural – be yourself. Talk to him as your friend because that is the reason he will join, not because of what "he can do for your Chapter." He will become a Royal Arch Mason because he sees that the fraternity is meaningful to you and others, not because of what he can contribute.
- Avoid the words "join" or "ask," both of which imply an expectation from the friend with whom you want to share your Capitular Masonry. In other words, they will think you are trying to "get them into something." No one likes to be sold. Instead, use terms such as "become a Capitular Mason" or say that you'd like to "share your Masonic experience with them."
- Focus on the benefits *to him* instead of on the features of Capitular Masonry.
- Increase your own knowledge of Capitular Masonry so that you can share your knowledge with him more comfortably.
- Explain the initiation process and include the initiation fee and annual dues.
- Have some examples in mind of activities of the Chapter, especially those that have benefited the community.
- **Remember – this is not about getting someone to "fill the chairs."**

After inviting a Brother to become a member of your Chapter, you should follow-up with an invitation letter (see sample in this section). This should be a personal letter that represents the conversation you had with him when you made your verbal invitation. Attention to these details will increase the chances that he will follow-through on his intention to join.

Initiate: Every part of the Chapter Temple must be clean and orderly. The Candidate's garb should also be freshly laundered. The aprons should be neatly displayed, not wadded up in a pile. Let your members, as well as neighboring Chapters know that you are conferring a Degree on that date. Do your best to fill the sidelines. This will communicate an active, vibrant organization to a candidate, instead of one unable to get members to show up. When speaking to the candidate, do not use Capitular jargon that he will not understand. Also, do not talk amongst yourselves while ignoring him – include him at every opportunity. After all, he is the only reason you are having Degree work that night.

Is your Chapter lodge room musty, damp, dirty or dingy? Does it have a distinctive unpleasant odor? Take care of this before you initiate a Candidate. Is the temperature properly set and maintained? Take care of this in order to have and provide a pleasant atmosphere for the Degree conferral. Have refreshments available after the degree, making sure the food and drink you offer are pleasant to smell and taste. Consider having cold beverages as well as hot coffee.

Don't just tell your Candidate when and where his initiation will be held. PICK HIM UP AND TAKE HIM THERE. Remember, he is your guest and should be accorded all the courtesies and hospitality that guests deserve, and that you would want to receive should you be a guest. He continues to be a guest—and deserve this special treatment—throughout this process and until you have completed his Exaltation as a Royal Arch Mason. See [Section 5](#) of this Manual for details about this process.

Involve: New members in your Chapter deserve no less attention and for no shorter period of time than prospective members of your Chapter. Teach new members the opening/closing rituals. Ask new members to help with presentations. Ask new members to hold appointive chairs. Ask new members to join in the work of preparing a special event. In short, do not neglect new members. Encourage them to become active in the work of the Chapter.

Retention Process

As with all organizations, retention of members is key. The Capitular Masonic retention process can be broken down into four specific responsibilities that must be completed in sequence. Your responsibilities are: **See it – Learn it – Live it – Teach it!**

See what Capitular Masonry is all about – experience it.

Learn enough about Capitular Masonry to talk intelligently and comfortably with others.

Live your Capitular Masonry by being energetic in and around your Chapter.

Teach your new members how to do the things that you and your fellow pillars of the Chapter are doing on a regular basis.

Don't forget, membership is a process, not an activity. Simply bringing in a new member will not get the job done. He must be mentored throughout his first year and become an active Companion in your Chapter. Your job isn't finished when you collect the signed petition and initiation fee. Your job isn't finished after the new member has been a Royal Arch Mason for a year. Your job isn't even finished when he has become an active Companion in your Chapter. Your job is only completed when you have taught the new Companion what he needs to know, including what he needs to know to one day take over your responsibilities. In short, your job is not finished until you have trained your replacements, and trained them to recruit and train their replacements. Capitular Masonry has a proud heritage; if you want your Chapter to have a bright future you must plan and act accordingly. Capitular Masonry is not just for the here and now, it is for the future.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Capitular Masonry

As you speak with Brothers about joining Chapter, you should be prepared to answer some or all of the following questions. Your answers should be personal. Your answers should represent your experience in Capitular Masonry. It is best to consider all of these questions prior to inviting someone to join. Your answers should be seen as invitational. You should write your answers to each of these questions and use those answers to guide your invitation.

Q. What is Capitular Masonry all about?

Your Answer:

Q. What do Royal Arch Masons Do?

Your Answer:

Q. When did Capitular Masonry originate?

Your Answer:

Q. How much of a time commitment is involved?

Your Answer:

Q. Is it expensive to join / belong?

Your Answer:

Q. Can my family be involved? How?

Your Answer:

Q. What's in it for Me?

Your Answer:

Sample Letter with Invitation to Petition

Dear Brother _____,

You and I have known each other for some time now and there is something that I've always wanted to talk with you about. You may be aware that I am a member of the local Royal Arch Masonic Chapter. Capitular Masonry has been a very important part of my life and it is something that I believe you would benefit from as well. The benefits that Capitular Masonry has to offer the individual, as well as the community, are too numerous to mention in this note, but I have enclosed a card which lists the most frequently mentioned reasons why men have become and remain Royal Arch Masons. My name, email address, and phone number are listed on the back panel, as are some web site addresses that can provide you with even more information about Capitular Masonry. Another brochure along with a Petition for Degrees and Membership are also enclosed. Brother _____, becoming a Royal Arch Mason is one of the best things I have ever done. The men that I have met through Capitular Masonry are some of my closest and dearest friends and among the most important people in my life, outside of my family. Only men of good character are accepted into our fraternity and you certainly fit that description. As I mentioned earlier, my Capitular Masonic experiences have been among the best times of my life. I would like to share that with you. Please look over the information enclosed with this letter and give me a call or email at your convenience. Thanks, I look forward to talking with you personally about Capitular Masonry.

Fraternally,

Companion _____

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Other Suggested Readings

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