

GUIDELINES
f o r
PUBLICITY and PUBLIC RELATIONS

*Taking
the Mystery
out of
Public Relations*



Committee on Public Relations
Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
of the United States of America

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I.

PREAMBLE

Woodrow Wilson was asked how much time he needed to prepare a ten-minute speech. His answer, "Two weeks." When asked how long it would take him to prepare a one-hour talk he replied, "I'm ready now."

The example also applies to writing. It is easy to ramble, to ignore limitations of space and length. It takes considerable effort to concentrate on essentials, to organize information in orderly fashion and to condense a composition.

Wordiness in writing, as in speaking, generally needs to be avoided. There can be exceptions but benefit usually results if needless words are eliminated. Facts of information are the basis of publicity and public relations and these are projected more clearly if they are not beclouded with an overabundance of words.

There are other points of importance. Some of them are covered in the following suggestions and recommendations. The Committee respectfully submits these guidelines for your consideration and asks your indulgence if a number of the listings appear to be elemental.

Originally Prepared by the Grand Encampment
Committee on Public Relations (1967-70 Triennium)

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II.

BASICS

A RESUME OF RANDOM DO'S AND DON'TS

1. DO know your subject before you try to tell anyone else about it.
2. DO learn to know your media, the correct contact at each; learn what they will use, how they want it prepared and when they want it.
3. DO be brief! It's east to ramble and fill space. It takes more work to organize facts and keep them condensed, but you'll get a better reception, more beneficial results.
4. DO remember the essentials – Who, What, Where, When and Why; sometimes How (*).
5. DO be prompt, reliable, accurate – and LEGIBLE!
6. DON'T trust your memory. Train yourself to make notes of the vital facts – especially names, dates and locations.
8. DON'T use a news release to express an opinion or to sell tickets, or to plug door prizes or a raffle.
9. DON'T ask the publication for clippings – or, unless absolutely necessary, to return pictures. Make it easy, not difficult, for your material to be used.
10. DON'T ask your news media contacts to buy tickets or to pay their own admissions.

The Final Test

Ask yourself this question: "If I were not a member of this organization, would I be interested in reading this story?" If your answer is NO, the experts tell us to skip it.

(*) Rudyard Kipling, as you will recall, put it this way:

I keep six honest serving-men;
 (They taught me all I knew)
 Their names are What and Where and When
 And How and Why and Who.

III.

**THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
OF THE GRAND COMMANDERY**

A. Primary purposes of the Grand Commandery Public Relations or Publicity Committee:

1. Maintain flow of news and information on Grand Commandery and Grand Encampment activities, projects and personnel to:
 - a. Templar membership of jurisdiction.
 - b. General Masonic membership of jurisdiction.
2. Interpret and publicize the aims and philanthropies and notable events of the Order to the public.
3. Maintain contact with Public Relations Committees of Constituent Commanderies and provide them with:
 - a. News information or releases for adaption and use at local level.
 - b. Continuing suggestions and publicity examples.

B. Methods and Media.

1. Write releases and distribute to newspapers, radio stations, television stations, area publications generally; Masonic papers, magazines and bulletins.
2. Prepare copy for short talks on Templar projects for presentation, as needed, at meetings of service clubs and civic groups — as well as for use in Masonic gatherings.
3. Possibly, where feasible, prepare and distribute direct mail letters of announcements to Masonic members and bodies.

C. Organization and Structure.

1. Step One: Compile list of Chairmen of Constituent Commandery Public Relations or Publicity Committees — with addresses and phone numbers.
 - a. Note the home Commandery of the Grand Commander, and each of the other officers, as guide to news distribution.

- b. If Constituent Commanderies have no Public Relations Committees, consult Grand Commander regarding need and desirability of such committee.
 - c. Notify Chairmen of existing Public Relations Committees of your aims and planned method of procedure. Ask them, when newsworthy events occur or are planned, to notify you.
2. Step Two: Compile list of publications in the area — Masonic and non-Masonic.
 - a. List their deadlines and publication dates.
 - b. List contact at each — with name, address and phone number.
 - c. Make personal or written approach to each regarding specifications, picture possibilities, attitude and general procedure.
 3. Step Three: Compile list of radio and television stations
 - a. Make contact and learn requirements and possibilities.

In general, television and radio — if news opportunity not always available — will incorporate “news announcements” in catch-all programs such as “Calendar of Events” which can be helpful.
 4. Step Four: Consult the schedule of activities and projects of your Grand Encampment, Grand Commandery and the Constituent Commanderies and plan tentative preparation-and-release schedule to match.
 5. Step Five: Get supply of paper for releases — “newsprint” quality, not expensive, and have it imprinted:
 - a. Identification of Grand Commandery.
 - b. Your name, title, address and phone number.
 - c. Space for release date designation.
 - d. Designated space for current date.
 6. Step Six: Start a “morgue” or “library” of current facts, figures, biographical material, fact-sheets on the Educational and Eye Foundations, pictures, rosters and similar reference material.

- a. Helps you compile releases and announcements with accuracy and completeness.
- b. Eliminates possibility of overlooking informational details which belong with the story.
- c. Saves time and effort.

D. Examples of Jurisdictional Publicity Opportunities or Events.

1. Annual Conclaves (advance and follow up).
2. Installations, especially public.
3. Easter Sunrise Service.
 - a. Check possibility of radio or television coverage if yours is a state or area event for public and warrants such coverage.
 - b. Suggestion: Ask your area radio stations to carry the NBC radio pickup of the Grand Encampment Easter Sunrise Service from Arlington, Virginia — preferably by delayed audio tape. A later hour is more feasible for the station and more conducive to a larger audience.
4. Anniversaries of significance.
 - a. Grand Commanderies.
 - b. Constituent Commanderies.
 - c. Office or membership anniversaries of prominent members.
 - d. Other bodies of Masonry (which Templary can salute!).
5. Visits by Grand Encampment and Grand Commandery officers.
6. Knights Templar Eye Foundation cases — or large institutional contributions.
7. Knights Templar Educational Foundation figures.
8. Youth groups activities — DeMolay, Jobs Daughters, Rainbow for Girls, etc.

9. Commandery involvement in community events.
10. Templar flag raisings.
11. Templar or Masonic cornerstone ceremonies.
12. Awards or recognitions to individual Templars for “outside” activities and accomplishments — in profession, in community. (Be sure Knight Templar membership is included in coverage.)
13. Outstanding Knight Templar awards, such as Knights Templar Cross of Honor.
14. Almost any event distinguished by:
 - a. Large number of participants.
 - b. Association with community projects.
 - c. Prominent personages.
 - d. Religious significance.
 - e. Historic connections.

E. Reminders and General Suggestions for Grand Commandery Committee.

1. Maintain a scrapbook for your records.
2. When you prepare a report, stress recommendations for the future, not primarily what you have done in the past.
3. Releases and information to Constituent Commandery committees should be accompanied by a self-addressed card permitting a return report on use or non-use.
4. Establish lines of communication with Grand Officers and Committee Chairmen in order to receive flow of information.
5. Because much of material (and much the same process) applies to Constituent Commanderies as well as to the Grand Commandery, don't neglect close contact with local committees.
6. Help correlate news for *Knight Templar Magazine* by publicizing name

and address of the appointed State Editor so information is sent to one source.

IV

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEES OF THE CONSTITUENT COMMANDERIES

A. Four important considerations for the Public Relations Committee of the Constituent Commandery:

1. Media Contacts.

Newspaper, magazine, bulletin, radio, television.

2. Self-Organization.

Prepare yourself and your equipment.

3. Selection of Newsworthy Events.

Don't try to make a mountain out of a molehill.

4. Preparing the Material.

Provide information, not wordage.

B. Media Contacts.

1. Get to know your contacts.

- a. Make visit, but don't stay long. They have deadlines to meet.
- b. Let them know that you represent the Commandery in field of news.
- c. Leave a neatly typewritten sheet listing your name, address and phone number, the identification of your Commandery, the names and titles of the officers.
- d. Ask about pictures – whether they provide or you do.
- e. Ask about form of material they desire.
- f. Learn their deadlines.

g. Ask about anything you don't understand in regard to your connection with them.

2. Your job is to provide them with news information or articles that they can use; their job is to tell you what they can use. (Don't fuss if they change of shorten. That's their privilege.)

C. Self Organization.

1. Don't handle publicity stories or public relations in general by impulse, whim or sudden inspiration.

a. Indoctrinate yourself to think in advance.

b. Prepare yourself with the practical tools.

1) Typewriter and paper.

2) Dated notebook.

3) Scrapbook (for clipping file).

4) Roster of Commandery Officers and Committee Chairmen.

5) Schedule of the year's programs and events.

6) Descriptive and statistical information on Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Educational Foundation, any special projects in your area.

7) List of names and phone numbers of your media contacts.

2. Plan your own schedule (and/or the members of your committee) so that activities of expected news value will be covered.

3. Work with your Officers, Committee Chairmen and project leaders so you know the background information in advance of the event.

4. Start collecting a picture and bio file of individuals and information on objects having possible connection with news releases.

5. Keep in touch with your Grand Commandery Committee on Public Relations for information and assistance.

6. As the public relations man, you should know the answers to these and many others: "What is a Knight Templar?" – "What is Knight Templary?" – "What does it do?" – "Is it something like the Shrine?" – "How does the Eye or Educational Foundation work?" – "What is the Grand Encampment?" – "How old is the Order?" – "What does 'A.O.' mean?" – "Why do you have titles such as 'Commander', 'Generalissimo', 'Captain General'?"

D. Selecting Newsworthy Events.

1. Study your Commandery's schedule for the year.
2. List the activities you think will be newsworthy.
 - a. Make advance notes about possible picture.
 - b. Where speakers and performers are involved, collect biographical background in advance.
3. Skip the routine. There are ways and means of listing regular and routine items – but don't make "news" stories out of them.
4. In making your decisions, use this question as the real test of any article's news value: Will it interest non-members in your community?
5. Among the things that make news:
 - a. A large class of candidates.
 - b. A prominent speaker.
 - c. A service or ceremony to which the public is welcomed.
 - d. Collective or individual Knight Templar participation in a community project.
 - e. A significant anniversary.
 - f. Election and installation.
 - g. In other words: special events, special people, special circumstances.
 - h. Activities of prominent local Templar – each time he gets recognition or gives it so that his Templar membership is mentioned.

6. If your Commandery does nothing, there is nothing to publicize. In such a case, the Commandery needs more than Public Relations.

You are then in position to offer suggestions for possible programs which will have news value.

7. In your "news thinking," do not overlook any DeMolay possibilities – and related groups; also Educational Foundation, Eye Foundation, and anything your Commandery (or any member) is doing in related fields.

E. Preparing the Material

1. Two basic forms – depending upon circumstances and media arrangements in each locality:
 - a. Outline form (listing of basic facts).
 - b. Written news release form.
2. Suggested preparation guidelines:
 - a. Use 8 1/2 by 11 sheets of white paper, one side only.
 - 1) Avoid odd bits, shapes and sizes of paper – and the backs of old calendar sheets!
 - 2) Type your name, address and phone number at the top, the release date, and the identification of your Commandery; also date submitted.
 - 3) Double space your typing.
 - 4) Allow wide margins – and do not type to the extreme edge, top or bottom.
 - a) Paper isn't so expensive that you must use every iota of space.
 - b) If your writing covers more than one or two pages, it's possible that your article is too long – not that the paper is too short.
 - b. Be brief and factual.

- 1) Give essential information and adequate coverage – but don't pad.
 - 2) Try to start your article with an important part of the event – rather than: "A meeting was held June 1 at . . ."
- c. Names and titles important.
- 1) Use middle initial when it applies.
 - 2) A married (or widowed) woman is MRS JOHN J. DOE, not MRS. MARY M. DOE.
 - a) Subsequent use in the same article – MRS. DOE.
 - 3) First use of man's name is JOHN J. DOE; subsequent use, MR. DOE.
 - a) If John happens to be a Protestant minister, he is THE REVEREND JOHN J. DOE.
 - 4) The title of your Eminent Commander in a news article is COMMANDER; title of the Most Eminent Grand Master, in public press use, is GRAND MASTER.
 - 5) Check and double-check each name for accuracy.
 - 6) Identify by title, name and home town.
- d. Copy suggestions:
- 1) Avoid becoming unduly academic.

Fancy words not needed if good five-cent words can tell the story.
 - 2) Don't write more than there is to tell – or, again, be concise.

Common misconception is using length as measure of value or prestige. (Always remember the conciseness and impact of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.)
 - 3) After you have completed the article go over it and cross out all adjectives and all unnecessary words like "the," "a," "an," "that." (Amazing how much better it will "read.")

- 4) A final thought in news selection and use: Your purpose is to report news of people and events. Do not use releases simply to flatter individuals or court favor or "make them feel good." If such an article does reach print, you have used valuable time and space for an ulterior motive and have "defrauded" your readers. Give credit where credit is due, where circumstances warrant. List those who should be listed, not just because they are Templar friends and associates, but because they are involved.

And, please – avoid: "lovely" ladies, "sumptuous" banquets, "jammed-to-the-rafters" entertainment events, "inspiring" talks.

Even if any of the terms would be quite accurate, your integrity should call for you to use opposite terms when the reverse is true, as: "unattractive" ladies, "unappetizing" banquet, "deserted" entertainment hall, "dull" talks.

F. Examples of Copy. (See Following Pages)

1. Outline form.
2. One (no-no!) of written coverage.
3. Second (recommended) version of written coverage.

(Example 1)

OUTLINE FORM

(Current Date)

(Your name, address, phone number)

(Name and number of Commandery) (Release: Immediate or dated)

WHO: Gethsemane Commandery No. 75, Knights Templar**WHAT:** Stated Conclave, conducted by John J. Doe, Commander**WHEN:** Monday, December 3, 7:30 p.m.**WHERE:** MASONIC TEMPLE, 331 Locust Street, Libertyville**WHY:** Program of evening will be talk by Dr. James J. Jones, President, Sugar Loaf State Teachers College, a Knight Templar, on subject of proposed new free public library for Libertyville. Group discussion.

(the end)

(Example 2)

**(WARNING: MAY BE INJURIOUS TO YOUR
MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS – IF USED!)**

A special meeting of exceptional interest was held last night in the newly painted social hall of the Masonic Temple by the local Commandery of Knights Templar with more than 200 members in evidence for a dramatic talk and a highly spirited discussion on the proposed new library for Libertyville, which was followed by delicious refreshments expertly prepared and efficiently served by the loyal members of the Ladies Auxiliary, whose President is Mrs. Mary Doe. Her husband is the Eminent Commander of Gethsemane Commandery.

Before partaking of the fine refreshments at the culmination of the assembly, the ladies enjoyed the brilliant piano music of Mrs. Jane Roe at the Steinway, recently purchased by Gethsemane Commandery's outstanding Drill Team.

The members, during this period of entertainment for the ladies, were giving their rapt attention to their speaker of the evening, who was introduced by Eminent Commander John Doe. He was Dr. James J. Jones of Sugar Loaf State Teachers College – who, incidentally, is an active member of the valiant and magnanimous Order of Knights Templar, who gave a dynamic talk about the new library proposed for Libertyville. After the talk and a fine discussion, the members joined the ladies for the piece d'occasion, the refreshments, in the social hall.

(the end)

(Please note that the form used above definitely is NOT recommended. Compare it with Example 3 on page 18 to see why.)

(Example 3)

RECOMMENDED FORM

(Same standard heading)

Dr. James J. Jones, President of Sugar Loaf State Teachers College, expressed support of Libertyville's proposed free public library in an address to 200 Knights Templar Monday evening at the Masonic Temple, 331 Locust Street.

"Every citizen owes it to the community to study every detail of the proposal," said Dr. Jones to his fellow members of Gethsemane Commandery No. 75, Knights Templar. He claimed that "apathy is the biggest enemy of the proposal," and that "too many residents think of the library as a toy, a gadget, something we really don't need."

"Such people are uninformed," said Dr. Jones. "If we have any respect for learning and for the cultural growth of our community, if we value books more than pocketbooks, we will see to it that Libertyville gets its free public library."

John J. Doe, Commander, introduced the speaker and conducted a brief question and answer period after the address by Dr. Jones.

The concurrent meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary in the social hall of the Masonic Temple featured piano music by Mrs. Richard R. Roe. Mrs. John J. Doe, President, presided for the meeting.

(the end)

Each of seven different Grand Masters has authorized several printings of the Publicity and Public Relations Guidelines first prepared and distributed in 1968. The contents of the current printing remain the same. We hope they will continue to be of some help for Subordinate, Constituent, and Grand Commandery promotional use.

Photographs, biographical sketches and interview materials for visitations of Grand Encampment Officers and Representatives are among other materials available from the Grand Encampment office.

April 1988

Charles R. Neumann, Grand Recorder

Additional copies of these and other Grand Encampment Guidelines
can be secured at no charge by writing to:
Grand Recorder, Knights Templar, U.S.A.
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