

Grand Lodge of Illinois A.F. & A.M.

Public Relations Manual

Published: May 2011

Grand Lodge of Illinois A.F. & A.M.

Forward

Masonry has a long tradition of “keeping our light beneath a bushel basket.” As a result, recent surveys find that fewer than 35% of males in the United States have ever heard the name Mason or Freemason. This compares with 85% who have heard of the Lions or Elks. Of those that have heard of Masons, only 7%-8% say they know something about Masonry.

If we expect men to enter our fraternity with a favorable opinion of Masonry, they must know something about Masonry. We are finding it advantageous if people close to those men, also have a favorable opinion about Masonry. What information the public receives, and how they receive it, is the essence of public relations. Assisting Lodges and members to provide that information is the purpose of this Manual.

Of course, to have an effective public relations program, it is necessary that the Lodge have something to tell. Newspaper editors will be quicker to use your submissions if there is a community benefit rather than an internal Lodge activity. After you have established your “community” activities, most editors will be more inclined to feature Lodge installations, Grand Lodge visits and similar functions.

This manual builds on the foundations of others. In particular, we thank the Grand Lodge of Iowa, the Grand Lodge of Vermont and the Grand Lodge of Oregon for their consent to use material from their public relation manuals. This Manual contains copyrighted materials from their works and their help is most appreciated. With their efforts, and now our Lodges’ efforts, our light should grow brighter and brighter.

Committee on Public Relations:

Most Worshipful Richard L. Swaney
Grand Master

Right Worshipful Richard E. Kohn
Director – Public Relations and Marketing

Robert Kurek
Public Relations Committee

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TO: WORSHIPFUL MASTERS AND WARDENS

Your first important task will be to select (if you have not already done so) a member of your Lodge interested in serving as Public Relations Chairman. Although preferred, no special experience or background is required. Interest and enthusiasm would be helpful. Essential is a genuine desire to get out the “good word” about Masonry in Illinois. This appointment should not be taken lightly and should be for a period of at least three years.

The committee hopes this information will be helpful to you in developing your Lodge’s ongoing public relations program and that it will be of assistance to your public relations chairman.

TO: PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRMAN

Please note and keep the following in mind as you read the rest of the manual. It will make your job easier.

1. As PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRMAN, you are the representative, spokesman, and point of information for Masons in your local area regarding activities and events. (The key words to remember are *activities and events*.)
2. As such, you should thoroughly acquaint yourself with the activities and events that you are publicizing for your Lodge.

SETTING OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Before discussing Objectives or Goals, let us first step back and agree on precisely, “What is the purpose of Freemasonry?”

Not *what we do*. Not *our History*. Not *what we envision*.
But the **actual basic purpose of Freemasonry**.

Agreement on this major point is all-important, because it will become one of the basic guidelines to judge the validity, acceptance or rejection of our objectives.

With this in mind, let us agree that the primary purpose of Freemasonry is:

To bring together men of good will, to promote integrity, fellowship, service, good citizenship and tolerance for the benefit of all humankind.

Based on the basic “purpose,” your communication objectives in your community are:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of the purpose of Freemasonry.
2. Increase awareness of what Freemasons in your Lodge are doing, most particularly in your community.

GUIDELINES. . . CONCENTRATE ON WHAT THE PRESS NEEDS

From this moment on, let us think of placing news or information in the media as a highly competitive “sport.” There are winners and there are losers. Winners get their material used. Losers do not.

A newspaper, magazine, radio station, television station, or any medium that publishes or broadcasts regularly, faces the problem of filling space or time with news, information and entertainment that they feel will appeal to their audience.

Their job is not easy. It requires continuous effort, plus a great deal of time, skill and investment to find the material they have decided their readers want or require on a regular basis.

Note these guidelines:

1. The media needs news, information, and filler on a regular basis.
2. It must be the kind of material that “they” feel will be of interest to “their” readers.
3. You have “your” information that you want them to use.
4. You are competing with every other company, organization, group, or charity for space or time.
5. The Media is not interested in *what you want*. They are only interested in what *they or their* readers want.
6. Therefore, your information must be aimed, adapted or presented in a way to meet their needs, their requirements, in their format. Let us find out what they want, in the format they want, and *give* them what they want, in the format they require. (Let us never forget *it is their ball, their team, and their ground rules*. And there are lots of applicants who want to play.)
7. The easiest way (in fact, the only way) to find out what the ground rules are, is to ask. Ask the editor. Ask the Columnist. Ask the Newspaper in your area. Ask whoever makes the decision on what material is printed.

YOUR NEEDS

Your first step is to establish your objectives for the year, based on the Master’s plan for the Lodge. Your objectives should be planned around the Master’s plan and schedule for the year. By checking the program for the Lodge, you will have an outline of the Lodge’s activities for the year and can plan a series of Press Releases geared to the events that you believe have the best possibilities for placement.

GETTING STARTED

1. Your first step in getting started is to look through this manual and get acquainted with its contents.
2. Establish a one-year goal of placing one publicity release a month, or at least one for each meeting or event of your Lodge.
3. Obtain a copy of your Master's program for the year. If none exists, get together with the Master and Secretary, and make one.
4. Plan your program using those events that provide the best opportunities for press releases.

During the year, you will receive notices of "news" and forthcoming events from the Grand Lodge. Some will present opportunities for community adaptation and trigger news ideas as well.

Once you have selected the items and events that will work best in your community, and you have outlined your plans on paper, sit down with the Master and Secretary. It is important to discuss your plans with them so that they have a clear understanding of your objectives and give you their support. Chances are they will also have suggestions, ideas and input that will help you fine-tune your program. As a good communicator, you will, of course, keep an open mind in evaluating and utilizing suggestions.

MEDIA RELATIONS SHAKE HANDS WITH YOUR TARGET

Most guidelines to effective communication overlook one of the most important steps, person-to-person contact. In your relations with the news media, continuous contact over a period of time combined with accurate information, plus speedy, credible response to questions, will eventually get results. As a communicator for Freemasons, you, more than anyone in your area, must know what Masons are doing locally and elsewhere in the state. *Be informed so that you can inform.* This is the key.

In the communications media, the *people* are key. Remember that they are the professionals. If you follow the next two suggestions, you'll find your assignment that much easier and can build a working relationship with the press that much sooner:

1. Meet and get to know the press contacts in your area, especially the editor of your local paper. Find out the kind of news they are looking for.
2. Maintain personal communications by phone, in person, and by card, letter or e-mail.

You have heard the adage, "Names Make News." It's true. The names of your local members, their activities in the community and to a lesser degree the Lodge, add interest to your releases. The Lodge's activity is of interest, only when its activity impacts on people or the community. The following are some things to remember about establishing a good relationship with media contacts:

1. Never send a story to the media unless you feel it is newsworthy to the community.
2. Of course, always use common sense and good taste in your news stories and relationships with news contacts.
3. Don't play favorites. If there is more than one contact in your area, give each an equal opportunity for coverage.
4. Never ask an editor to run a story as a favor.
5. If your story is used in part or in whole, remember to say Thank You.
6. If a news contact calls after receiving your release, answer any questions candidly, quickly and completely, so he can complete the story. If you don't know, say "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you by (date or approximate time)." Then ask if that is all right, but then you must do it. You must deliver. That is how you build credibility, confidence and a good relationship.
7. Do not be overly dismayed, or call to complain, if your story was not used or only used in part. Sometimes space limitations or reshuffled feature schedules cause this. Remember, once the story is in your contact's hand, it is his to do with as he feels fit. It is a good idea to ask how you can improve your release. Ask for thoughts and suggestions.
8. Also submit a typewritten list via letter or e-mail, of official titles of officers in your Lodge that are likely to be used in your releases. Some editors find these helpful to check names and titles in any subsequent releases or telephoned stories. Important: You must keep that list up-to-date for them.

WHAT MAKES NEWS THE EDITOR WILL USE

Not only the Masons, but also the Lions, Elks, Rotary, Kiwanis, K of C, and many other groups in your area are competing for attention in the news media. The limitations on space the news media can give to social, fraternal and religious news competes with everything else. Some of the media may have policies against running such routine articles as organizations' elections, appointments, or achievements. Your "edge" is to know what the editors are looking for and giving it to them in the time and format which meets their requirements.

You must learn to recognize and use publicity only for those things that interest others.

You may be the originator of more interesting Lodge programs if you issue a tactful challenge to the officers. "Give me something to publicize" is a request that sometimes works wonders. When members are made aware of the need to think in a "newsworthy" manner, they are more apt to develop ideas, programs and projects that have news value.

Be part of the planning. Know what is going on. Operate as though you were the media. It is very important to *insist on the lead-time you need to do an effective job*. At meeting and planning sessions, you must take accurate notes. These are mandatory in preparing your communications plan of action and the news releases. Get used to taking accurate notes because they can be the basis of news phoned to your media contact if news is breaking quickly.

The following are some ideas, which usually warrant space in many of the news media throughout the state:

1. New or Unusual Approaches to publicize annual or routine items. This is where your imagination counts.
2. Human Interest Angles: Everyone appreciates stories about warmth, humor and unusual events of other people's lives, especially if it involves youth, the elderly, the community or deserving persons.
3. Look for "news hooks" in your stories: This might be a single facet that makes your news story different from all the others. Examples: include any firsts; a program designed to accomplish a unique purpose; unusual participation or involvement of people; a new twist to your story theme; onetime only events never before done; something that affects the majority of the people; topical events, information, solutions, etc.
4. Look for potential features in your story - something which people would appreciate knowing about in greater depth. Past events, anniversaries, history and holidays lend themselves to this approach.
5. A flair for the dramatic: The story, unto itself, might be less than exciting, but its history, background, environment, concept, application, or potential may make news.
6. Think about the reader: Each newspaper has particular visual needs and interests. Think of the visual potential of your story as if you were an editor or news director, or someone other than a brother... does the idea still "grab you"? If so, GO.
7. Initiating or providing support to elements of prime importance to your community... pollution control, youth activities, charities, crime prevention, health and educational activities, urban development, self-help or locally oriented programs for community betterment; all have news potential.

8. Special Awards received or presented by your organization, especially for other than Lodge activities.
9. Guest Speakers, speeches or interviews presented by well-known spokespersons or authorities, particularly those visitors with credentials.
10. Reaching milestones as they affect local people and the community.
11. Public Installation of Lodge officers... Be aware if there is any tie to the community.
12. Visitations by Grand Lodge Officers, or for that matter, any noteworthy guest or speaker. Again, the key words are *noteworthy to the community*.
13. The three phases of any project, depending upon the event, provide at least;
 - a. BEFORE the planning stage, announcement of plans.
 - b. DURING the announcement phase, what's going to happen.
 - c. AFTER the event, the follow-up report of what happened.

More tips that usually get your story used:

Make sure that:

- *your story contains something of interest to the community served by a particular media.
- *there is enough factual information.
- *it is timely.
- *the media does not have a policy against publishing articles of this kind.
- *the facts are accurate and the statements quoted are correct.
- *you, or a responsible individual, are available to provide answers to questions after the article has been received. Both names and phone numbers of people to contact to answer questions, must appear in the letterhead of your release.
- *the story reaches the right person, particularly at a new newspaper.
- *there is no reference to "raffles" or anything similar to gambling, which by law, is usually restricted from use by newspapers.

PREPARING NEWS RELEASES ... DO'S & DON'TS

Writing the News Release:

1. There are many methods of writing news releases, but consciously or otherwise, most writers follow the “inverted pyramid.” The diagram below will be helpful in utilizing this discipline of descending-order-of importance:

WHO, WHAT, WHEN

WHERE, WHY

AND HOW

**Important
Details**

Other Info

When tight on space or time, editors cut copy to fit their format. So, facts presented in this order are more likely to be used because the story can be cut back to the first paragraph or leading few sentences, which should include the most important of the “Five W’s.” Few editors have the time to sift through copy in order to rewrite a story. If it cannot be cut from the bottom, it could end up in the “round file” under the desk. Remember: the substance of the story should be told in the first two or three lines at most.

2. Be sure that each story includes the most important factors of the “Five W’s” as soon as possible - those factors that make the news. Certainly by the end of the second sentence you should have covered the most important points.
3. Make headlines short and concise.
4. The first paragraph is called the “lead” paragraph and should be designed to capture and hold the attention of the reader (editor).
5. Accuracy is all-important. Names, dates, places, time, etc. must be specific and correct. Always verify names because a name may have a variety of different spellings. Always use the full name (first, middle initial and last names) and proper title. Never submit copy using only the last name and initials. Be certain to indicate whether a woman is Miss, Mrs. or Ms. You are almost always safe with Ms. if you are in doubt.
6. Always write as an organization, never as “we.” Avoid editorializing with colorful adjectives or adverbs that are news taboos, such as: “fantastic,” “great,” “colossal,” etc. Also, quantify amounts when possible. Rather than saying: “Had a fantastic turnout”, say, “More than 200 attended the event, thereby setting a new record in

attendance.” All claims, opinions, or predictions must be anchored or attributed to someone (“said,” “reported,” “stated Mr. Jones”).

7. Write “tight.” Use short declarative present-tense sentences (7-10 words at most). Verbs are better than adjectives. Use simple straightforward words as much as possible. Keep paragraphs brief and maintain easy-to-follow flow through them. Include pertinent facts and do not “pad” basic information. If the media wants additional information, they will ask for it.

Writing Headlines: Follow the Three Golden Rules

1. **FOCUS:** Go directly to the point. Do not dance around and stay on track.
2. **LANGUAGE:** Be precise, use minimal number of words, no fluff and no intentional exaggeration.
3. **CONTENT:** Make the most interesting or important point to *the reader*. Not to you, not to the craft, not to the master, but *To the Reader*.

EXAMPLE: The Worshipful Master of the Lodge is presenting the Johnson Edwards Award to the Town Sheriff, Bill Smith.

Situation A: The Worshipful Master, John Q. Mason is a great guy, but unknown outside the Lodge.

Headline: Sheriff Bill Smith Receives Johnson Edwards Award

Situation B: The Worshipful Master, John Q. Mason, who is also a town mayor, is presenting the Johnson Edwards Award to the Town Sheriff, Bill Smith.

Headline: Mayor Mason Presents Award to Sheriff Bill Smith.

Analysis: The above headlines compact the news factors of the story to its irreducible minimum in terms of interest to the reader and interest to the community. The fact that it is a Masonic award is of interest to the Craft, not the community. The key factors are the award and Sheriff Bill Smith. John Q. Mason takes on importance only because he is a mayor.

Reproducing the News Release

1. News releases should, of course, always be clean and neat, and preferably typed (on one side of the paper only).
2. Use 8-1/2 x 11 plain white paper that can be handled without tearing.

3. Provide ample margins (1-1/2 inches) on each edge of the paper for the editor to mark instructions and make editing notes. Always double space sentences.
4. In the upper left-hand corner, type your address including, name, street, city, state, zip and telephone number. You should list a second name and telephone number on the chance you may not be reachable when the media calls with questions. If you do use a second name, be sure he is versed on the release and its background.
5. Very Important: In the upper right hand corner, indicate "FOR RELEASE" Wednesday, May 10, 2000, or whatever date meets the paper's closing date. Newspapers must get materials in advance of closing dates. Check your media for their closing dates and remember them.

The Body of the Release

1. Leave an inch of space after your headline before you start your lead paragraph. This gives the editor space to rewrite or write his own headline or instructions.
2. Indent each paragraph five typewriter spaces.
3. If at all possible, your story should not run more than one page. Always end each page, if there should be more than one page, with a complete sentence and paragraph. Write "more" if the story continues to page 2.

Figures and names:

Figures: One to ten are always *spelled out* except in time and dates. *Numerals are used* for 11 on up. Never begin a sentence with a numeral.

Names: First mention of a man's name should be Bob Public. Thereafter, it is Mr. Public.

Titles: Never use Worshipful, Right Worshipful, or Most Worshipful in your copy except when preparing it for a Masonic Publication.

Staple multiple pages of a release close to the upper left corner. Never use paper clips, particularly with photographs enclosed. Be sure the staple is close to the edge because the pages must be separated in the newsroom and might be torn if the staple is too low.

SUBMISSION VIA E-MAIL

The same format can be followed when submitting your story via e-mail, either by pasting into the body of the e-mail, or by an attachment.

Determine from the newspaper editor, if the stories should be submitted in MS word form or RTF file format. Submit in a timely manner.

It is recommended that you contact the editor of the paper you are e-mailing your story to, for their specific requirements. The same procedure should be utilized for radio or television contacts.

Photographs

News articles should be supplemented with photographs whenever possible. Good photographs are a must, if included. All media aim for professional results. You can help and should try to meet their photo standards. Some Lodges are fortunate enough to have volunteers who provide good quality photographs; others should budget a little money for photos.

Some Do's and Don'ts about Photography

1. Ask for each editor's needs regarding size, color or black & white, etc. Follow any information you get from the media. If submitting a digital photo ask the editor, if photos or graphics are to be submitted in a separate file, and if so which file, usually TIFF or JPEG.
2. Find out how far in advance the paper needs the photos and try to meet their deadlines.
3. Number of subjects, in most cases, should never be more than four. Two or three are the preferred limit unless for some special reason it calls for a "group" photo. Move in close to the subjects so that faces can easily be recognized. If you can see their aprons, you are usually too far away.
4. Action (interest) is a must. Do not have the subjects just sit or stand there grinning at the camera. Show them shaking hands, looking at business papers or casually discussing something, doing anything with implied action. No beverage glasses if it is a banquet.

Captions for Photographs

1. The bare facts *What, When, Where and Why* should be indicated. This should be followed by the *Who*, name and title, identified from left to right. A portrait photo carries the name, title and name of organization. The source information (name, address and telephone number typed from left to right) should appear above the caption as it does in a news release.

2. Never paste the caption across the back of the print; the caption must be easily removable. The caption usually goes to the typesetter and the photo to the reproduction department.
3. Never use a paper clip to attach the caption. Never write on the back of the print. Either of these acts will damage the print.
4. Captions should be typed on the lower half of an 8-1/2 x 11 sheet of paper. Lay the print face up and centered above the caption so that you can see the picture and read the caption at the same time. Fold the caption up over the face of the print along the bottom edge of the print.

Media Outlets for Your News Releases

1. Daily Newspapers: Many daily newspapers publish once-a-week area sections or special announcement sections. These may be your best chance for local news. If there is a local correspondent (“Stringer” as they are known in the trade,) find out who it is and how they like to receive news; through the mail, by phone, or by email.
2. Get to know them, and deliver when you promise some information. Editorial sections that talk about local news are also a possibility. Last, but not least, is the Letters to the Editor section. If something good is done for the community, have someone write a letter to the editor saying so.
3. Weekly Newspapers: Here is where you stand the best chance of getting your news in print. Weekly editors depend on hometown folks for nearly 75 percent of the news they publish. Small staffs mean little time or patience, with poorly prepared news releases. Remember to relate to the community.
4. GRAND LODGE BULLETIN: Please do not forget to keep the Illinois Freemasonry Magazine, our Illinois Grand Lodge publication, on the list to receive all of your material. At least here, you will get first hand attention to everything you send. Get to know the deadlines.

WRITING YOUR FIRST PRESS RELEASE

In writing your press release it is easiest if you take a step by step approach. Here are the steps for a sample press release on a Lodge giving awards.

- STEP 1. Gather information for your release by interviewing the key people at the Lodge and those who get the awards. When assembling the facts, make sure you cover the five “W’s,” which are “who, what, where, when, why” and how. Check names with somebody familiar with their spelling.

STEP 2. When you are satisfied you have all the basics, check again for the five “W’s.”
*What’s going to happen? Who will do it? When will it occur (hour, day, date)?
Where (precise address)? Why?*

STEP 3. Decide on the time frame for the releases. For the sake of this exercise, you’ve decided to do two releases.

1. Announcing the selection for the award at a future date.
2. Announcing the award has been made.

Both releases will tend to be quite similar, unless there is something to add a new dimension to the award ceremony. The advantage of doing two releases is that your first release may not get used by the paper. The second release will double your chances of exposure.

STEP 4. Write the headline and release.

*Avoid Masonic “buzz words,” i.e.: brethren, temple, Worshipful Master, etc. Use Members, Masonic Hall, (or Center), Master, etc. Say “meeting” instead of “stated communication.” Masons know what MWGM means, but it is better to identify him as “John Q. Jones, Grand Master.”

*Avoid meaningless phrases like “a good time was had by all.”

*Avoid using flower adjectives. For example, after writing, “the lovely ladies of the Eastern Star served a luscious chicken dinner”, go back and remove “lovely” and “luscious.”

*Mention location of residence where recipient is “local.”

*Refer to local Lodge and/or events.

**Example - Background Facts:
John Q. Jones to Receive Masonic Award**

*Event: Special award for distinguished Masonic Service, Fifty and Twenty-five year pin, Work for Lodge Awards

*Recipient: John Q. Jones

*Presenter: William A. Doe, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Illinois

*Sponsor: ABC Lodge

**Example of Release #1 Prior to Event:
John Q. Jones to Receive Masonic Award**

John Q. Jones of Chicago has been selected to receive a special award for distinguished Masonic service by the Freemasons of ABC Lodge No. 5.

The presentation will be made November 2 at a special awards banquet set for the Lodge members, their wives and families. James M. Street will receive his 50-year award, and Thomas F. Walker will receive his 25-year pin. All presentations will be made by John A. Doe, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, who will attend as a special guest and personal representative of the Grand Master.

The award presented to Mr. Jones is one of the highest awards that can be presented to a Freemason for exceptional Masonic service. Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. Illinois Freemasons celebrated their 159th year in 1994, and continue to assist and work for the good of Illinois communities.

**Example of Release #2 After the Event:
Jones Receives High Masonic Award**

John Q. Jones of Chicago was presented a Distinguished Service Award at a special awards night banquet sponsored by ABC Lodge No. 5 on November 2. The presentation was made by John A. Doe, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. The award recognizes outstanding Masons for distinguished Masonic service.

Other awards presented included a 50-Year membership pin to Thomas F. Walker, and a 25-year membership pin to James M. Street. Several brothers were also recognized for their efforts of time and initiative toward the ongoing contributions to the Lodge. Over 50 family members, Lodge members and friends attended the banquet and program.

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. There are approximately 68,000 Freemasons in Illinois with lodges in more than 300 communities.

LOCAL RADIO

If you have local radio stations treat them just like any other editor. They have departments and shows that use local news. They are particularly interested in coming events, so mail or e-mail your material to the care of: The News Editor. Brevity is particularly important when working with radio stations as their time is limited. Still, make sure you give them all the facts.

Three Steps to Getting “ON THE AIR.”

1. Personally visit the radio station and ask about its Community Program and about Public Service announcements.

2. Ask how the station would like you to prepare copy for each program and the deadlines.
3. Write your announcements exactly as directed. (If you get no specifics, follow the guidelines you have been reading about here.) Whatever you write, get it to the station on time!

TELEVISION STATIONS

If your lodge is doing a project in the community that might have wide public interest, make sure that you let the television stations in your area know about it. Examples of projects that might get you some “air” time are: The Lodge is helping build a house for Habitat for Humanity; helping a retirement community clean up after major storm damage; or providing shoes for needy school children. Send a press release to the news director with the 5 “W’s” outlined. Make sure that contact people are listed on the press release with telephone numbers and have someone at the project to greet and help the reporter. Weekends are “slow news days” for local television stations and they are looking for stories.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this manual will be helpful in getting you started. We do not expect that you are going to go right out and be a professional overnight. Over a period of time, if you try to adhere to the main principles here and learn through your own experience, you will succeed. Once you get a set procedure for the way you approach and do things, the time you put in on projects will be greatly reduced.

Keep copies of your clippings so that at the end of your first year, you can show your results. The Grand Master’s Award of Excellence award guidelines includes a plank for submission of public relations materials. Also by sharing copies with the Grand Lodge Public Relations Chairman, future manuals can benefit from your experience.

SAMPLES

Sample No. 1 Election of Officers

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 BUSY STEET
CHICAGO, IL 60606

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

ABC MASONIC LODGE ELECTS OFFICERS

James Persons, of Chicago, was elected Master of ABC Masonic Lodge at the regular November meeting of the 80 year-old Lodge, Tuesday night, November 16. Mr. Persons succeeds John P. Jones at the helm of the 167 member Lodge, and will be installed along with the other officers at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 3, at the Lodge hall, 1234 Busy Street in Chicago, IL.

The Masonic term of office runs from January 1 to December 31.

In addition to Mr. Persons, the Lodge elected Jack Straw, Senior Warden; Lyle N. Needles, Junior Warden; Chuck Freeman, Treasurer and Lawrence Nottinham, Secretary.

Mr. Persons will appoint six additional officers between now and December 27. ABC Lodge was chartered by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Illinois in June, 1908.

Sample No. 2
Scholarship Presentations (after the presentation)

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 Busy Street
Chicago, Il 60606

Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-999-9999) Email: xxx@xyx.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUSIE PUBLIC RECEIVES MASONIC SCHOLARSHIP

Susan (Susie) B. Public received a \$1,000 scholarship at a presentation Tuesday, April 18 at ABC Masonic Hall in Chicago, IL. The presentation was made by James Persons, Master of ABC Masonic Lodge.

Susie will be attending the University of Illinois this fall, majoring in speech pathology. Following graduation she is planning on conducting speech therapy classes for disadvantaged children. “This will really be a big help,” said Miss Public, “it is unbelievable how much tuition and books cost.”

In making the presentation, Mr. Persons told the group that this is the 10th year in a row ABC Masonic Lodge has given scholarships to worthy students. Selection of the recipient is based on academic performance, need and field of study. Miss Public is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Q. Public of Chicago.

Sample No. 3
Fund Raising (before event)

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 Busy Street
Chicago, IL 60606
Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday, May 10, 2000

BREAKFAST PLANNED TO BENEFIT NEW TOWN SIGN

ABC Masonic Lodge's fifteenth annual breakfast, sponsored jointly by the ABC Masonic Lodge and the Northwest Chapter of the Eastern Star, will be open to the public again Sunday morning, June 12, at the Lodge hall, 1234 Busy Street, Chicago.

James Persons, Master of the Lodge, said breakfast will consist of hot cakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, toast and coffee. It will be served from 8 a.m. until noon at \$3.00 for adults and \$1.50 for children. Francis La Rue is Matron of the Eastern Star Chapter.

Proceeds from the breakfast, (all food having been donated by local food and pantry stores), will be used to rebuild the ABC Masonic Lodge sign on Highway 41 just east of the Kennedy Expressway. The sign blew down in the recent windstorm.

All residents of Chicago and the vicinity are invited, according to Mr. Persons. First time visitors will be given a tour of Lodge facilities.

Sample No. 4
Fund Raising (after the event)

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 Busy Street
Chicago, IL 60606
Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday, May 10, 2000

SIGN FUND RAISER A BIG SUCCESS

ABC Masonic Lodge's fifteenth annual breakfast raised more than \$2,000 to help rebuild the ABC Masonic Lodge sign on Highway 41, east of the Kennedy Expressway.

"Approximately 800 people enjoyed the breakfast," reported James Persons, Master of the Lodge. The annual Masonic breakfast is sponsored jointly by ABC Masonic Lodge, A.F. & A.M. and Northwest Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. Francis Larue is Matron of the Eastern Star Chapter.

"We have a lot of fun doing these breakfasts," said Ms. Larue, "and with this year's income we have been able to donate more than \$20,000 to worthwhile projects in our community."

Sample No. 5
Teacher - of - the - year/ Excellence in Education

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 BUSY STREET
Chicago, IL 60606

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

LOCAL STUDENTS AND TEACHER HONORED

Two classroom instructors from the Chicago school district were honored recently for their efforts and effective teaching methods. Ms. Mary Widow, an art teacher at Chicago High School and Mr. Jacob Ladder, who is a math instructor at the Lincoln Middle School, were awarded certificates by ABC Masonic Lodge. Present to make the awards to these two outstanding citizens was Ralph Goodbody, Illinois Grand Master.

Also honored were two students from the Chicago suburban area. Robert Parsons of Glen Ellyn received a Grand Lodge of Illinois scholarship and plans to attend Illinois State University where he will major in Veterinary Medicine. He is the son of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Parsons of Glen Ellyn. Nancy Smith of South Holland, daughter of Lilly Smith and the late Jim Smith was awarded a scholarship by the Lodge, and will enroll in Central (Illinois) College this fall. She plans to become an elementary teacher following graduation.

These four local residents received their honors May 19th at a banquet at the Chicagoland Community Center. Superintendent of Schools Damon Priestly was the featured speaker.

Sample No. 6
Lodge Awards

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 BUSY STREET
Chicago, Il 60606
Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday, May 10, 2000

At the 156th Annual Convention of the Grand Lodge of Illinois in Springfield, W.M.
_____, and the members of _____ Lodge No. _____ were honored
on September 15, during a special awards ceremony at the Medinah Shrine Center as recipients
of (USE ONLY THE APPROPRIATE CHOICE) the Lodge of the Year Award; the Plus One
Award; both the Lodge of the Year and Plus One Awards.

These awards are in recognition of achievement and activity by the members of the Lodge in
the areas of membership, community involvement, and charitable endeavors. These efforts
reflect Masonry's continued commitment to the State of Illinois, its citizens and the principles of
Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth that have guided Masons since Masonry's inception. This year
51 Lodges qualified for the Lodge of the Year Award, 97 Lodges met the goals to qualify for the
Plus One Award, and 17 Lodges went the extra mile and qualified for both awards.

“more”

_____ Lodge was established in _____ and has been a part of
_____ community life since that time. Its members join with over 30,000 other
Illinois Masons who share pride in their state, their communities and their fraternity. If you
would be interested in learning more about Masonry and _____ Lodge, please
contact _____ at _____.

Sample No. 7
Grand Master's Visit

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 Busy Street
Chicago, IL 60606

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Media Contact: Ima Mason (630-111-2222) (with photo of Turner)
123 Side Street
Chicago, Il 60606
Email: xxx@xyz.com

James Persons of Springfield, Grand Master of Illinois's 30,000 Masons, will speak at a meeting of Masons in Mattoon Tuesday evening, October 4. Mattoon Lodge at 2312 E. Cassandra Street in Mattoon, IL will be host to the affair, according to Josh Timmons, Master of the Lodge. Members of the surrounding Masonic Lodges will attend, together with their wives, as will several members of the Illinois Grand Lodge.

The meeting will open at 6:30 p.m. with dinner served by Rose Chapter of the Eastern Star. After dinner, Mr. Persons will meet with the Masons in the Lodge room while the wives are entertained separately.

Mr. Persons' visit marks his first appearance in Mattoon since he was elected in June to preside over Illinois's 300 Masonic Lodges. A retired forester, and former Marine Captain, Mr. Persons is active in several phases of Masonry.

**Sample No. 8
Scholarship Awards**

Timothy Windom, Grand Secretary
Grand Lodge of Illinois
708-222-1111.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ILLINOIS MASONS AWARD \$150,000.00 IN SCHOLARSHIPS
TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADS**

Springfield, Illinois - The Grand Lodge of Illinois Ancient Free and Accepted Mason, has awarded scholarships totaling \$150,000.00 to 75 graduating seniors in Illinois's public high schools. The awards, \$2,000 each, are in recognition of the student's academic performance, community activities, leadership and financial need. The students were selected from among 899 applicants.

Local recipients include: (see attached list)

The Grand Lodge of Illinois has awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships from an endowment fund established to recognize the accomplishments and potential of young Illinoisans.

Believed to be the world's oldest fraternity, Masonry is an organization dedicated to building character among its members. Membership is open to men at least 18 years old. There are 503 Masonic Lodges in communities across the state.

Sample No. 9

Grand Lodge Scholarship sent by Grand Lodge (Prior to presentation)

GRAND LODGE OF ILLINOIS A.F. & A.M.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PO Box 279

Springfield, Il 00000-0000

Media Contact: Timothy Windom, Grand Secretary (708-222-1111) Email: xxx@xyz.com

SUSAN Q. PUBLIC AWARDED SCHOLARSHIP FROM ILLINOIS MASONS

Susan Q. Public of Bloomington has been selected to receive a \$2,000 college scholarship for the 2001-2002 academic year, from the Grand Lodge of Illinois Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Members of the local Masonic Lodge will present the scholarship to Miss Public in the near future. Miss Public is one of 75 graduating seniors of Illinois's public high schools to receive scholarships this year. The awards of \$2,000 each are in recognition of the student's academic performance, community activities, leadership and financial need. The students were selected from among 899 applicants.

With the \$150,000 being given this year, the Grand Lodge of Illinois has awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships from an endowment fund established to recognize the accomplishments and potential of young Illinoisans.

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Sample No. 10
Grand Lodge Scholarship (after presentation by local Lodge)

ABC MASONIC LODGE
1234 Busy Street
Chicago, Il 60606
Media Contact: Robert P. Mason (630-111-2222) Email: xxx@xyz.com

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday, May 10, 2000

LINDA BLACK RECEIVES MASONIC SCHOLARSHIP

Linda Black, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Black of Waukegan, received a \$2,000 scholarship from the Grand Lodge of Illinois of Freemasonry. The presentation was made to Black at a dinner held in her honor at the ABC Masonic Lodge on May 20. She will be attending Illinois State University, majoring in elementary education.

Miss Black is one of 75 graduating seniors of Illinois' public high schools to receive scholarships this year. The awards of \$2,000 each are in recognition of the student's academic performance, community activities, leadership and financial need. The students were selected from among 899 applicants.

With the \$150,000 being given this year, the Grand Lodge of Illinois has awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships from an endowment fund established to recognize the accomplishments and potential of young Illinoisans.

“more”

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