



# Manual of Public Relations

of

La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux

## Forward

Voyageurs All,

It has been several years since the Public Relations Manual has been updated and I would like to thank Renny Keagle for the time and energy he has put into the project and for the outstanding job he has done as Secretary of the Press Association of La Societe.

La Societe has many proud traditions and programs and every Voyageur Militaire should be proud that their Comrades felt them worthy to be invited to join the ranks of “The Fun and Honor Society of American Veterans”. That pride needs to be communicated to our communities and that is the goal of Public Relations.

This manual is meant to give you some tips and guidelines to help you reach that goal. It is those Voitures that experience a good relationship with their communities and the local press that have the most vibrant and growing Locales and Grands. Ultimately, we all realize the benefits of this “handshake” with our fellow Veterans and the communities we live in.

It is my hope that you will find this manual helpful and that you will refer to it often as you develop your Public Relations Program and that you will share both your successes and failures with your National Public Relations Team so that we can all benefit from both.

Remember that you can get constant tips and ideas from the P.A.L.S. monthly Bulletin and I recommend that at least one member of every Voiture Locale be a member of the Press Association of La Societe.

Yours in service to La Societe,

*Bob "OB 1" Cearlock*

**National Directeur, Public Relations**

**La Societe 40 et 8**

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## **Part A. - Introduction**

If we are to survive and grow as an organization, La Societe has to get into the public relations (PR) business or close our doors! The 40 & 8 must become well-known and respected in our communities and throughout the country as the fraternal veteran's organization that gets things done and cares deeply for one another.

We must realize that today in most parts of the country we are the least known veterans group. That must change and PR is the tool to use for this to happen. The challenge is there....it needs to be met – head on.

Public Relations is a term that is not clearly understood. PR by definition is any type of communication with another person, in or outside of the organization. Literally, every time we open our mouths, we are doing either a good or a bad job at public relations.

Good PR must begin within your Voiture and Grand. Each Voiture and Grand should have a PR person who is responsible for all communications. However, it should be emphasized that PR is everyone's responsibility.

Promoting good public relations within the Voiture and Grand is vital to the life of the organization. This "hands on" manual was created to assist and guide you in public relations.

## **Part B.**

### **I. Strategizing and prioritizing public relations from the Forty and Eight perspective – Overview**

One of the earliest definitions of PR was created by Edward Bernays. According to him, "Public Relations is a management function which tabulates public attitudes, defines policies, procedures and interest of an organization followed by *executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.*" The Forty and Eight must make use of PR in support of awareness programs, fund-raising, new member recruiting, member retention, and to increase community awareness and involvement. Said in another way...

*"Public relations can be an organization's most value resource for building name value, maintaining vitality, and establishing credibility."*

A public relations strategy will help you organize your PR activities and make strategic decisions around the best way to communicate. It can also help you to use the stories and history of your Locale or Grand to draw in your target audience as well as increase your profile and build awareness.

### **II. Goals and Objectives of This Manual**

Obviously, the most import goal is to help you master the public relations area.

PR is not rocket science or an area that requires a master degree – but it is an area of great importance that requires some skill and knowledge. It is hoped that this manual becomes a useful tool to help and assist you to achieve the PR outcomes you desire and need for your Locale or Grand.

The objective of this manual is to help you create a PR program that *is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely* – in other words “SMART”.

### **III. Strategies – Methods to achieve goals and objectives and master public relations.**

The first part of any PR strategy is an understanding of the media. Public relations and the media are synonymous – in other words go hand in hand. PR has to have an outlet and the media is the priority. Press releases, newsletters all matter but it is the media that holds the key to take PR to its highest exposure level.

Media relations involves working with media for the purpose of informing the public of an organization's mission, policies and practices in a positive, consistent and credible manner. Typically, this means coordinating directly with the people responsible for producing the news and features in the mass media.

An important part of any PR strategy is to know and understand your story. Every level of La Societe must define its unique story and value to the community it serves. This story should be built on a foundation of sharply defined messages that clearly position and differentiate you from other veterans' organizations. A core message platform is the cornerstone of any communications strategy.

A key element of any PR strategy is to know and understand WHO is going to tell your story. We all know that PR is everyone's responsibility – but who leads this important program – the Publiste, Chef de Gare, L'Editeur, Correspondant, Historien, one, two or three of the former? If no PR person is appointed to head this program – then who is going to do it? Obviously, the Chef de Gare needs to periodically review and assess the PR program efforts, but anyone heading this program should have some or all of the following assets...

- A good PR person is a competent writer and speaker who knows how to get ideas across in a variety of media.
- A good PR person should be creative - connecting your organizations ideas, cause, and key message to the veterans and community you seek to reach.
- A good PR person has awareness and knowledge – awareness and knowledge of the local media, social media, press releases, organizational history, etc.
- A good PR person is someone not just “tagged – you're it”, but who has accepted the duties and responsibilities of the public relations program – but with the understanding of help from the entire Locale or Grand.

### **IV. Target media – Whom must the 40 & 8 reach or influence to make the PR program work**

To begin with, personal visits and cordial rapport with the local media are vital if the word about our organization is to get out. In approaching the printed media it is extremely helpful for the PR director to consider stopping by newspaper offices and invite the person who is responsible for veterans' news to a cup of coffee. Be friendly, open and cooperative. Tell them that you'll stop by again soon with news releases and pictures.

At the radio and TV stations contact the Program Managers. Most stations have a talk show and are always looking for guests. It does not hurt to have the Chef with you on these visits. Personal visits plant

the seeds that help you get coverage for the Voiture. Knowing who your contacts are can greatly help your cause with Voiture news releases and save a great deal of time and frustration.

Developing relationships with the media takes *patience, persistence and practice*. It may take time to get that first release in print but DO NOT GIVE UP. Keep writing, calling and visiting your media contacts. Using “little caring touches” such as a gift of a small American flag, a small framed patriotic picture or even a plate of home-baked cookies or fresh donuts won’t hurt. Remember that they do not have much room on their already crowded desks but they will find space for small meaningful items or food. Enclose a small card or business card that has your name, your contact information...AND the 40 & 8 logo!

Some steps to master the media...

- Understand the media – there is a difference between newsprint and TV, identify which will work best for you in getting your message out – perhaps both.
- Identify those media outlets that seem to cover veterans’ organizations – many stations have reporters just for that area. Assess your local media to identify who seems to cover stories or events relating to your organization. Research heavily the people who report and write about news regarding veterans.
- A media list is key and essential – Use Google and web searching for media contact info, assess your local newspaper to see which reporters or editors cover veterans and their organizations. Get phone numbers, fax numbers and emails – get as much as you can for local radio, TV and hard print.
- Know how to spin your story or event – Why should a journalist bring your story to the public – *tell them*. How can a journalist or media outlet benefit from your story – *tell them*. How will the community benefit – *tell them*.
- Understand that the “media” is not just your local paper or TV station – there is an entire world of social media out there that can be a tremendous PR resource.

## Part C.

### I. Tasks and Tools

#### a. Social Media

To use social media for PR – perhaps first we should define it - Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people, and other organizations to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. Some examples...

Social connections – The two most popular are:

- *Facebook*: Arguably the most popular social media utility, *Facebook* provides a way for users to build connections and share information with people and organizations they choose to interact with online.
- *Twitter*: Share your thoughts and keep up with others via this real-time information network.

Multi-media sharing – Social networking makes it easy to share video and photography content online. For PR purposes, one of the best is *Flickr*

- *Flickr*: This site provides a powerful option for managing digital photographs online, as well as for sharing them with others.

Professional social media - Professional social networks are designed to provide a general forum for professionals to connect, while others are focused on specific occupations or interests such as veterans groups. For PR purposes, the best of these is *LinkedIn*.

- *LinkedIn*: *LinkedIn* had more than 400 million members, making it the largest online professional network. Participants have an opportunity to build relationships by making connections and joining relevant groups.

Social media is rapidly turning into a vital part of the modern public relations mix. The "BIG THREE" (Facebook, Twitter and Google+), has become a MUST for anyone in PR striving to bring their organization up to speed. What better proof than 665 million of daily active users on Facebook and over 500 million registered accounts on Twitter? Lacking social profiles on social media would be a strategic public relations miss for any Locale or Grand.

#### **b. Press Releases**

A press release, news release, media release, press statement or video release is a written or recorded communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something newsworthy.

The purpose of the press release is to get the media reporter's attention so that they seek you out for more information. In other words, the press release is supposed to be just the starting point that encourages a reporter to write an actual news article based on your story. Bottom line...

*"The press release is a description of the news, not the full news itself."*

There are key elements that a journalist looks for in a story – and the human interest angle is the key. *Do you have a human interest angle, and can you show that your news has an impact on people and the community?*

Once you have decided that you have a story to tell, you need to draft your release abiding by very clear rules. These rules are designed to make it as easy as possible for journalists to use your material.

- Who? Who are the key players – your organization, anyone else involved? Who does your news affect – who does it benefit?
- What? What is new?
- Why? Why is this important news – what does it provide that is different?
- Where? Where is this happening – is there a special or unique angle – is the location of the event relevant?
- When? Date and time important! But what is the timing of this – does this add significance?
- How? How did this come about? Special event – annual event?

- Timing? For immediate release or embargo? You need to indicate at the top of the release whether it is for immediate release or under embargo and if so, give the relevant date. Generally, immediate release will be sufficient.
- Quick Checklist – Does the story have news value and is a release appropriate. Identify the most appropriate time to send out. Identify the key facts (WWWVWH). Decide on using quotes or adding photos.

Some reasons to write a press release...

- Introducing or announcing new leadership
- Celebrating an anniversary or significant event
- Receiving an award
- Officer or leadership receiving a significant community appointment
- Announcing that your organization is available to speak on a particular/specific subject of interest
- Special events
- Sponsoring a workshop or seminar

Summary – Each week, journalists and reporters received dozens, perhaps hundreds of news pitches and press releases. Of all the releases sent, only a handful received editorial coverage. If your release doesn't, it may be because it doesn't contain content that reporters want. Please consider all of the above to ensure your press release gets "released."

### **c. Publicity Campaigns – Increasing funding, awareness, membership**

Think of launching a PR/publicity campaign like flying a kite. The press release (which aptly details your campaign-event) is the kite. But if your kite doesn't have the proper amount of string, a good tail, a strong wind and the expert manipulation of the kite flier – it has very little chance of getting off the ground. But if all these elements are in place, a PR/publicity campaign can send your Locale or Grand soaring like a kite on a breezy spring afternoon. *A successful PR/publicity campaign for your organization, website or whatever should include many, if not all of the following:*

- A decision on why you are doing a campaign instead of a traditional press release alone. What is the goal of the campaign? Ex: Raise funds for nursing scholarships
- A decision on how long your campaign will be – a week, a few weeks or months?
- Decide on who will run the campaign – one person, a committee?
- Identify who your campaign will target – could be small or large groups or anyone
- Identify which media will be best suited for your campaign
- How will the campaign be supported (tactics)?...Press releases, media interviews, flyers, ads, articles in newspapers, mass emails, photos, open house, newsletters, and other promotional materials
- How will the campaign be funded?
- Identify which, if any, social media will be used to publicize your campaign... Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Raffle = Campaign... Raffles are used for fund raising and quite frankly are short or long term "campaigns", so all of the above apply.

**d. Media Lists “Use the media to shine your light!”**

To send a press or media release, you need to create a media list of those outlets to which you will send it. This list should include media in your region of coverage, specific to your organization. Your list may include contacts at newspapers, radio and television stations, local Web news portals, newsletters, cable TV calendars and bulletin boards. Tips on getting your media list started...

- Determine the media groups that are important to include in your PR communications. These media contacts may include journalists, reporters, bloggers, producers, freelance writers and editors across print, online, blogs, radio and television.
- When creating a media list, it is important to find the best person to contact from the media outlet. This person should have responsibility for or an interest in the topic of your story.
- Use the phone book, Internet and other resources to locate important information for each. You will need the appropriate contact for sharing news releases (very important), mailing address, phone number, fax number and e-mail address.
- Great hint...Consult your local library to help compile a list of all the publications and media in your area.
- Ask each media contact if he or she prefers press releases and materials to be emailed or faxed.
- Compile a comprehensive list of your findings, organizing your list by medium.
- Be prepared to update your media list at least every six months. Turnover in media can be high, and you always want to have the most accurate contact information.

**e. Public Speaking “Using public speaking as another form of PR”**

Public speaking *is* public relations...

Speaking to increase your Locale or Grand’s public awareness is not quite the same as delivering your message by press release, newsletter, etc. You need to deliver something of special value to your targeted audience, and you want to educate and inform – leaving with them with a positive image of you and La Societe. Public speaking does a number of things for you:

- It establishes you as an expert in whatever subject you are talking about especially if it is about the Forty and Eight. You become a resource they will remember.
- You are in a giving mode. You are giving information and ideas. You may even be sharing some stories that your audience will relate to and learn from. Your audience will appreciate this value and remember you. Put another way - delivering your message once for many to hear is much more efficient than delivering it many times singly.
- You start and continue a relationship. Many people will want to talk to you after you speak or follow up with you in one form or another. You develop a prospect list of highly targeted people after your presentation.

Here are some general tips...

- Be prepared. Your audience is giving you their time and consideration, so rehearse enough to be confident you'll leave a good impression.

- Start strong. Begin your speech with a powerful opening that will grab your audience's attention, such as a startling fact or statistic, an interesting story or a funny joke (careful on the joke).
- Be conversational. Avoid reading your speech word for word. Instead, refer to notes or points from an outline to help your speech have a more free-flowing, conversational tone.
- Speak with passion. If you're truly invested in what you're saying, you'll be better able to keep your audience's attention.
- Be patient. It's easy to get frustrated if you make a mistake. More than likely, you are the only one who knows you made it. But remember that public speaking is not easy and it takes time to hone your skills. Practice several times before your actual speech.

Here are some detailed speaking tips...

- Just before the most important point...pause for 10 seconds. Look your audience over. Pause for two or three seconds and audiences assume you've lost your place; five seconds, they think the pause is intentional; after 10 seconds even the people texting can't help looking up. When you start speaking again, the audience naturally assumes the pause was intentional ... and that you're a confident and accomplished speaker and your next point is very important.
- Share something no one knows. Try of course to relate it to your topic – but you want to achieve the “Wow, I didn't know that” effect.
- Don't do your prep onstage. Don't wait until you're onstage to check your mic, your lighting, your remote, or your presentation. Do all that ahead of time. And if there are people running some of those functions, talk to them about what to do if something fails. And if something does fail, smile and try to look confident while you (or others) take care of the problem. When things go wrong, what really matters is how you react.
- Finally – beforehand, create a notecard on who to thank so you do not forget anyone.

#### **f. Your “PR Tool-Box”**

Everyone has a tool box of some sort or fashion – most of us in the Forty and Eight who are not handymen or women usually have just the bare minimum to take care of those everyday problems at home or the car. But what are the everyday tools we should have on hand that we can quickly and easily access when we need to “publicly relate” about La Societe. Remember that recruitment is an important part of public relations. As a minimum, the following items should be in your PR toolbox...

- Your membership card. Whenever you talk to someone about the Forty and Eight, take out your membership card and place it in their hands. You want them to visualize what it would be for them to have one of their own.
- An application. You can't close the sale with placing an application in someone's hand.
- A pen. To help them fill out the application – or to write down their address, email or phone to send them some additional info on our organization and programs.
- Your chapeau. This should be your favorite – what a great way to explain LA Societe by showing a box car or nurses training pin to explain the program. “Show and tell” always works.
- A business card. Professional or home-made – leave your name, address, email, phone, etc. to contact you back.
- A good set of eyes and ears. To keep a sharp look-out for potential members.

- Inspiration and motivation – Without the desire to get new members, your tool-box might as well be empty.

#### g. Press Kits

A media kit, sometimes called a press kit, is simply an information packet about an organization. It is called a media kit or a press kit because many times reporters will ask for more information on the potential organization pending an article or news release.

A press kit is like a resume for your grand or locale. In it is a collection of information and articles put together to address questions from the media, community and others. The goal of the press kit is the same as all other marketing that an organization does. It should grab the reader's attention, make a lasting impression and create enough interest that they will contact you for more information—or help in getting that press release or information out there.

As a minimum, your press kit should begin or start with the national website. But here are a few other things you should consider...

**Specific information on your organization:** This includes your specific grand or locale history, an organizational profile, and profiles of the leadership. Include bio sheets, if appropriate. This should also be supported with fact sheets, sell sheets or brochures that are specific to your organizational level. Consider a one-page info graphic.

- Fact Sheet - A fact sheet is an important, at-a-glance tool used in public relations to provide an overall view of your business. Though fact sheets can stand alone, they are more commonly used to supplement a news release or website, anchor a press kit, or replace a brochure.
- Shell Sheets (One Sheets) - A one sheet is a **promotional piece** where you present yourself in a way that will get people's attention, will get them interested in you, and will get them to act on your call to action.

**Recent press publications and articles:** Copies of recent press coverage is very appropriate for a press kit. After all, what other media have done will be of interest to current media targets. This can include article reprints and printouts of online press that a company might have received. The national media kit has good examples of press releases.

**List of frequently asked questions:** This helps the editor/reporter determine what questions to ask you in an interview or what to include in the article. Answers to how you raise funds and how you spend them, what 40/8 programs you focus on, etc. **Consider the rest...** Recent awards and recognition, photos, and mission-goals-objectives.

The best thing to do right now is to start assembling part of your press kit, based on available materials. Then, add to it as you see fit and develop new materials. The challenge is to put it together on paper, electronically or both. There is a trend now toward online media kits. A lot of these items can be developed for online distribution; it's just a matter of putting what you already have online or onto letterhead and fact sheets. Typically, the media kit doesn't have to be as fancy as people think. Those requesting media kits just want information--not necessarily glitz. See what items you already have and then work on the rest. Start here: <http://www.fortyandeight.org/national-media-kit/>

#### h. Basic Do's and Don'ts

##### Do's

- Lead time and timing – Too early, reporters will forget, too late they will not have enough time to respond
- Leave your personal opinions, criticisms, anger and moods out of everything you do in PR.
- Keep confidences, both personal and professional
- Using email – create a good media distribution list
- DO proofread everything before sending: Few things will take you down faster than failing to proof (and proof again) before you send your pitch. If it's filled with misspellings, grammatical errors, and the like, no reporter will take you seriously. (I know this seems like PR 101, but it can't be overstated.)
- Be professional!
- Do make sure that everyone has a good basic understanding of La Societe, your own Locale or Grand history
- Ensure everyone understand that they are an “ambassador” for the Forty and Eight

### **Don'ts**

- Don't criticize other peer veteran's organizations – making comparisons is ok
- Never criticize or complain about your own organization
- Make appointments, call first – doing anything unannounced is not favorable
- Send the same release to every media contact. Tailor a story or release to fit the scope of the audience you're approaching. That way it is more likely to be picked up.
- Blanket media with every event that comes along. The more received from you, the more likely they are to tune you out. If what they receive is solid, newsworthy and timely, you are more likely to receive coverage.
- DON'T be a pest: On that note, reporters generally prefer email to phone calls, which is good to keep in mind before you pick up the phone. On the other hand, there are situations when it's appropriate to make a call. Do avoid leaving too many phone messages, however.
- DON'T forget that this is about relationship-building: Relationships take time. Get to know journalists, and allow them to get to know you. Providing them with valuable news and information will go a long way toward building a lasting relationship.

### **Part D.**

#### **I. Newsletters – “Things to consider for a successful newsletter.”**

The key to a successful newsletter is regular and predictable distribution. If you decide that your newsletter is going to be monthly, then say so, and do your best to stay on that schedule. Frequency should be dictated by the ability of the L'Editeur to write each issue on a regular schedule.

A newsletter should be clearly branded with the name of your Locale or Grand and should indicate that this is an official publication, with the same authority as a print publication. One way to brand a newsletter effectively is to use a standard header and footer on each issue. A header might include the name of the newsletter, the name of the organization, the date of the publication, and the web address of your web site. A footer may include other contact information as well.

The content itself can be varied as the work of your Locale or Grand, including: news of your organization, successes, personal stories, updates on programs and events, and just about any other relevant topic.

Tips for making you newsletter more engaging...

- Consider a special edition – you can also create special editions based on a particular issue,

theme, or special event to grab members attention and focus on some special or critical.

- Report on outcomes – numbers impress. How about using them to tell a story about the success of your latest event or program.
- Use tips and advice – How about some helpful advice or tips for your readers.
- Boosters...Create a booster section, for a small donation, boosters get their name in the newsletter and special recognition – use boosters to keep expenses down.
- Consider a “member spotlight” – a dedicated piece on a special member who deserves recognition. Learning about members, member’s families and accomplishments can be a positive teambuilding force.
- Write to tell, not to preach.
- If possible or appropriate, use lots of images and photos throughout your newsletter.
- Encourage officers, Directeurs and members to submit news and information. A personal article or message from leadership is important!
- Use appropriate humor, quotes, trivia, and jokes to liven up your newsletter and to fill dead space.
- Finally – don’t just send your newsletter to your membership – send it to other veterans’ organizations, military PAO’s, reporters and journalists who specialize in the veterans area – get it out there!

#### **Part E. Additional ideas and things to do – helping and improving your existing PR program**

Develop a “speaker’s bureau” within your organization and then let other organizations and the media know you have speakers available. Organizations are always looking for new speakers and this is a great way to publicize you Voiture or Grand. Make sure you are always “camera ready.” Wear appropriate clothing including chapeau. Contact area schools and offer veterans who are willing to speak about their military experiences. This is especially appreciated around veteran’s holidays such as November 11<sup>th</sup> and Memorial Day.

Seek a dedicated and knowledgeable member who is savy on the internet and web to create a Facebook page, web page, etc. for your Locale or Grand. Then it must be kept up to date with copies of your newsletters, meeting notices, photos, etc. See which other social media sites make sense – Flickr is great for creating and sending links to photo albums. Don’t know where to start – start by looking at other Locale or Grand websites – contact their IT officers or coordinators.

More tips...

- Encourage members to promote the organization by always wearing the chapeau or uniform at any event they will be seen in public.
- Good, persuasive writing remains a core component of good PR. Because strong writing is a skill to be maintained and improved – refreshing those skills is always in order.
- Build your own “megaphone”. For your PR to be a hit, two things have to happen. It has to be really good, and the right people have to see it. Use all the tools of this manual to connect with social media followers, reporters, journalists, and newsletter subscribers.
- Remember that publicity is short term, public relations is long term – PR establishes communication and fosters relationships with the media and community. If you are focusing solely on publicity, you are not doing PR.

#### **Part F. Internal Public Relations**

## I. Using PR to recruit and retain membership

You may passionately believe your Locale or Grand is an exceptional organization to be a member of, but you can't assume that everyone feels the same way. You need to consider what the organization looks like to the outside world – even to your own membership. How do prospective members know you? Do they even know you at all? Help potential members see what you know by building your image. One of the most effective ways to do this is to introduce some public relations principles to your traditional recruitment efforts.

Public relations is ultimately about communicating with your key audiences. When you think about incorporating PR into your recruitment strategies, think about your messages, your constituents and the media. What do you want to say, how do you want to say it and who do you want to say it to?

Fine tune your message for recruitment and retention. What do you want people to know about your Voiture? What is your organization's differentiator? What makes you special or different than your peers? What are your values and what is important to you?

Ask your current members: "What is important to you? Why is this a great organization to be a member of? Feedback from this key audience can help you refine your message to potential new members. If you address what is important to your current membership, you can use similar messaging to describe your Locale or Grand to the outside world.

Tips...

- Put together prospect member information packets – can also be used for the media.
- Print organizational business cards with promenade meeting location and times and POC's.
- Have extra copies of newsletters on hand to distribute when appropriate.
- Participate in community events
- Does every member have a bumper or window decal?
- Develop a welcome letter for all new members – a thank you letter for each renewal

## II. Leadership in Public Relations – Are You Ready?

If you are responsible for public relations for your organization, here are some questions you should ask yourself to get ready:

**Am I ready?** Do I have my goal clearly in sight? Your job is (a) to raise awareness of your organization and its cause, but more importantly, (b) to improve the climate for its fundraising, recruit new members and raise community awareness.

**Do I understand my organization's story?** (Background, history, programs) You can't explain it if you don't understand it yourself. Be able to put it in context within your community. A good first step is to identify the programs person who knows the nuts and bolts of the organization. Become a journalist investigating your own organization, finding the people who can tell your story in a way the media will be interested in following. The most effective stories are the first-person accounts of the people your group has helped. Be able to immediately connect reporters to them. This is the hardest but most rewarding work you can do. Reporters used to find these stories themselves; now they just don't have the time. So know your organization inside-out, how it works, what its impact is. Paint a picture of the problem, and then be in position to get individuals who represent the emotional heart of the work to speak to journalists.

**What are my key message points?** And especially, what is the one thing you wish everyone knew about

your organization? Say it every time you are on the air or in print. It's impossible to overdo. Share your key message points with **everyone who is interested in us.**

**Can I help the media organize their story?** Journalists hate it when they feel a PR person is trying to control them, but they appreciate intelligent suggestions about the set, props, logistics and storytelling. It's best if they aren't even aware they're following your direction. Reporters are not stupid, but you have much more time to think about the story than they do, and you know it more intimately. If you come up with a better plan, they'll use your idea. Try to think like a director or producer of a TV segment. Think movement, think action, think props—TV loves props. You can say, "You could ask this . . ." and "then you could do this." If your suggestion improves their story, gets it beyond a "talking head," they'll do it. (Are your colors available? Ask to put them in as a prop. Wear your chapeau – a must!)

**Am I comfortable being uncomfortable?** If you are going to lead the Locale or Grand (or higher) PR effort, you need to find a comfort zone in front of reporters and journalists, in front of groups – large or small in public speaking.

**Ask yourself if you have the discipline of the "4 p's"** – You are in a position to help La Societe, at your level, to determine its purpose; you understand the principles under which we work as a Charitable Honor Society of Veterans; you understand that people, relationships and reputation are at the core of any PR endeavor; you are willing to lead or learn the PR process and make it work.

**Summary** – For the most part, public relations is in the background of most organizations only to be brought forward when deemed necessary...and if no PR person is appointed the next question is "who is going to do it?" If your public relations program is lacking, then it is time for a "call to action." A call to action could be more simply put as putting energy into your PR program.

The bottom line for PR is you have to be resilient. It is possible that much of your PR will fail – no call backs, no reaction or action. This is the cost of doing public relations and every new failure is an opportunity to better understand what works and what doesn't. This manual has given you a lot of ideas and approaches.

You also have to be adaptable and flexible. And like many things in life – the more we practice, the more we learn. The more we find out about public relations and how it fits into the world of La Societe, the more we will be successful.

## **Appendix A – Annual Public Relations Awards.**

The following is a list of the annual awards eligible to be made at Promenade Nationale. Nationale Directeur, Public Relations will determine date of submission entry – usually NLT June 1 each year.

It is required to state the award you are seeking – annually an announcement will be made on award criteria.

### **Thomas W. Fay Award** - Chef de Chemin de Fer - 1978

Awarded to the Voiture Locale presenting the best publication for the fiscal year.

### **Award John Kilgus** - Chef de Chemin de Fer - 1977

Awarded to the Grande Voiture presenting the best publication for the fiscal year.

### **Arthur McDowell Award**

Awarded to the Grande Voiture presenting the best publications without advertising for the fiscal year.  
Award and Honorable Mention

### **John W. Emerson Award**

Awarded to the Voiture Locale presenting the best publication without advertising for the fiscal year.  
Award and Honorable Mention

### **La Verne Eccleston Award**

Awarded to the Voiture Locale for excellence in promoting 40/8 Programs and fostering effective communication with the community during the year.  
Award and Honorable Mention

### **Robert Kaseman Award**

Presented to the Grande Voiture for excellence in promoting 40/8 programs and fostering effective communication within the community during the year. Award and Honorable Mention

### **Don Collins Award**

Presented to the Voiture Locale that submits the best entry showing utilization of the public media (TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.) to promote the activities of the 40 & 8. Award and Honorable Mention.

Appendix B – Sample Press Release



***(Sample)* PRESS RELEASE - Immediate**

**La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux**

**The Forty and Eight**

**Flags for First Graders – Special Ceremony and Presentation**

***City, State – Date – (Who)* of the Forty and Eight *(What)* will be conducting a special presentation on the U.S. Flag to the first and second graders of Dr. Nixon Elementary School, *(Where)* 11141 Loma Roja, El Paso, Texas 79934 (intersecting Marcus Uribe).**

***(When)* The presentation will be conducted at 10:00 am on Friday, May 27th.**

**The special presentation is an education program by the Forty and Eight conducted in elementary schools to educate some of our youngest students on flag history, etiquette and protocol.**

***(How)* Each student will receive their own U.S. Flag on a stand with additional flag education materials such as a coloring book on the Pledge of Allegiance and an illustrated book on the American flag.**

The ceremony will be conducted by members of \_\_\_\_\_, “A Charitable Honor Society of Veterans” which has been serving the County of \_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_\_ with nursing scholarships and youth programs such as this.

We recognize the importance of flag education in our youth – we understand it is not so much the flag of our fathers as it is the flag of our children, and of all children yet unborn.

Information regarding this ceremony may be obtained by contacting (Name, phone, email, etc.)

***(Prepared by – include name and contact info if different from above)***



**Appendix C – The Press Association of La Societe, P.A.L.S.**

The Press Association of La Societe is dedicated to the advancement of Public Relations within the Forty and Eight.

The Press Association of La Societe des Forty Hommes et Huit Chevaux is established to foster a closer relationship between and among editors, their staffs, and publicity persons of the Forty and Eight and La Femmes and to promote and disseminate news of locales, Grand and National.

Membership is limited to paid-up members of La Societe.

P.A.L.S. has a President, Secretary, Treasurer, L'Editeur and other officers including an Executive Committee voted on at each annual Promenade Nationale. At National, an annual meeting is held to discuss business, receive reports, elect officers, etc.

Annual dues are established at each yearly meeting of officers.

Membership is highly encouraged at all levels of La Societe to include each Locale and Grand. The following officers at all levels are encouraged to join – Chef de Gare, Correspondant, Publiste, L'Editeur and anyone interested in public relations – to include all levels of La Femmes.

Members will receive a membership card and an annual subscription to The Bulletin – the official publication of the press association. The Bulletin is published monthly and focuses on public relations and newsletter assistance. Members are encouraged to attend the Public Relations meeting at National.

Membership can be obtained by contacting the National Public Relations Directeur or any member of the Public Relations Committee.