January 5, 2017

EDICT

To: All Appointed and Elected Grand Lodge Officers, Permanent Members, and to All of the Worshipful Masters, Senior and Junior Wardens, Secretaries and Brethren of Every Lodge in the State of New York

Brethren:

Official Directives, Letters, Correspondence, and Communications emanating from the Grand Master, the Office of the Grand Secretary, and/or any Grand Lodge Officer or Committeeman, shall always contain an inside address and/or salutation which is specific to the recipient(s). Thereby, restricting the letter’s audience to those members, organizations, and/or officers identified or so named with a presumption of discretion and confidentiality. The act of divulging the contents of any official communication with a party or parties who are not the intended recipients, especially to those outside of this fraternal family of New York State, would contravene that sense of trust.

With consternation, I have observed the results of an increased trend by our own brothers who indiscriminately post internal as well as official fraternal business of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York on various forms of Social Media. It may very well be the intention of these erring brothers to facilitate the good of the cause by giving our fraternal matters the widest possible distribution, but unfortunately once the

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message appears on Social Media, there exists no gatekeeper to that public audience. We
as brother Masons have an obligation and duty to be vigilant in protecting the welfare
and solemnity of our fraternity while ensuring both its good stature and prominence in
the community.

BEARING THE ABOVE THOUGHT IN MIND, I find it apropos and necessary to establish
this edict providing general rules of engagement when interfacing with Social Media (i.e.
Twitter, Face Book, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc.)

FIRST AND FOREMOST, I DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE OBLIGATION OF THE FIRST
DEGREE OF MASONRY, which clearly inculcates that all members of the Craft must
respect the sanctity and privacy of our Institution and that of our intimate fellowship.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JEFFREY M. WILLIAMSON, GRAND MASTER OF MASON IN THE
STATE OF NEW YORK, do hereby Order and Decree that all correspondence, letters,
documents with cover letters attached, which have been placed on Official Grand Lodge
Stationery and/or bearing the Official Seal of the Grand Lodge of New York, written by
or on behalf of the Grand Master, the Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of the State of New York,
the Office of the Grand Secretary, Permanent Members, any and all Elected and
Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters, Grand Lodge Staff
Officers, Grand Lodge Committeemen, and Assistant Grand Lecturers, are hereby
designated Official Masonic Correspondence.

FURTHERMORE, I DO HEREBY ORDER AND DECREES THAT ALL CORRESPONDENCE,
letters, documents with cover letters attached, which have been placed on Official
Masonic Lodge Stationery and/or bearing the Official Seal of the Masonic Lodge
chartered by the Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of the State of New York, written by or on
behalf of the Worshipful Master, and/or Secretary and/or Elected Officer of the Masonic
Lodge, are hereby designated Official Masonic Correspondence.

FURTHERMORE, I DO HEREBY ORDER AND DECREES THAT ALL OFFICIAL MASONIC
CORRESPONDENCE must at all times remain private and confidential and under no
circumstances shall it be made public or caused to be recorded, seen, read or heard by
non-members or profanes.

FURTHERMORE, I DO HEREBY ORDER AND DECREES THAT ALL OFFICIAL MASONIC
CORRESPONDENCE is absolutely prohibited and precluded from being posted to any and
all Social Media, without the expressed permission of the Grand Master.

FURTHERMORE, I DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE EDICT OF THE GRAND MASTER on
a related subject promulgated back on December 8, 2015 by then M:. W:. William J.
Thomas, a copy of which is attached to this Edict.

FURTHERMORE, I DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE STATEMENT ON BEST PRACTICES
FOR SOCIAL MEDIA published under the Program Section on the Grand Lodge of New
York’s Website at NYMASONS.ORG, a copy of which is attached to this Edict.

**IN CONCLUSION, I ORDER AND DIRECT THIS EDICT** to be read in each Lodge, throughout the State of New York, at the first Communication after its receipt and entered in full upon the Minutes thereof.

Witness my hand and private seal the day and year first above written.

Jeffrey M. Williamson  
Grand Master

By the Grand Master,  
Paul M. Rosen  
Grand Secretary
BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media and New York Freemasons

The presence of New York Freemasons on various social networking sites is growing exponentially and it is drawing attention to the fraternity. By participating on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn (and others), we should strive to make that attention as positive as possible.

When we represent ourselves as members of the Fraternity, we become someone’s impression of Freemasonry. As such, it is important that we act accordingly and subscribe to the lessons we are all taught as Masons in terms of how we communicate and interact with Masons and non-Masons.

Your individual postings reflect on the entire Fraternity as well as you as an individual. Be mindful that your image online could be viewed by your colleagues and co-workers, future employers, as well as your Lodge Brothers and their families.

Best Practices for Social Media by New York Masons

- Always remember that you are a Mason in the Lodge, in public, at home, and in your communications – both public and private.
- Conduct your Social Media activities in a way that reflects your membership in the Craft. Always display courtesy towards others.
- Act in a way that presents a positive image of your membership in Freemasonry to the world.
- Your actions on the various Social Media outlets should reflect the highest standards of morality and integrity, as you would practice within the Lodge.
- Assume that every email you send will be seen by people other than the intended recipient.
- Regardless of the privacy settings you use, assume information posted to social media sites will not stay private.

Smart Phones in Lodge

Audio or video recordings of ritual work are never permitted, except with the written permission of the Grand Master.

Recordings of specific programs in tiled Lodge meetings (such as lectures) may be permitted with the expressed permission of the elected Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Use of smart phones in lodge is both rude and distracting. They should be turned off or to vibrate.

Without permission of the Presiding Officer, texting is inappropriate.

There are times when consultations with a calendar or reference of contact information are needed in the Lodge, and this policy does not inhibit those requirements.
EDICT

To: ALL GRAND LODGE OFFICERS, PERMANENT MEMBERS, AND TO THE MASTERS, WARDENS AND BRETHREN OF EVERY LODGE IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION that there is a growing tendency by various members of the Craft through electronic, digital and static media to capture and record the Masonic activities, ritual work and business, as well as the Minutes and Proceedings of the tiled Lodge. Under Section 313 and 310-A of the Constitutions, this is clearly the exclusive duty of the elected and installed Secretary of the Lodge, and in the case of his disability or absence it shall be the duty of the acting Secretary appointed by the Master of the Lodge. All others are strictly prohibited by our Masonic Obligation from engaging in such practices.

TO REITERATE from the Edict of the Grand Master on this very subject promulgated back on February 17, 1931 by then M:. W:. Charles H. Johnson, “... to depart from a fundamental principle of our Fraternity and to disseminate news or information as to the nature of the participation by individuals in the ritual of our several degrees, more particularly in the ritual of the Third Degree. I am constrained, therefore, in the most emphatic manner possible, to remind the Brethren of their Obligation to preserve the Ancient Law of our Craft and to refrain from publication, either in Lodge notices or elsewhere, of any matter by which the nature of our esoteric ritual or any part thereof may in any manner become public ...”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. THOMAS, GRAND MASTER OF MASONs IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, do hereby Order and Direct that the recording,
printing or publication in any form, electronically, digitally or statically, whereby the use of words, symbols or graphic imagery intended to reveal or record the esoteric ritual or private and confidential business of the Lodge or its participants in any manner as being unlawful and may not in any circumstances be permitted; provided however, the Secretary or acting Secretary shall record the same in the Minutes and Proceedings thereof. With emphasis placed upon Statute 798 of the Masonic Law, which reads in part that “no resolution, no action taken by the Lodge, no part of the Minutes of a Communication should ever be given publicity of any kind outside the Lodge.”

FURTHER, BE MINDFUL that it is not unlawful to print the names of the officers or temporary officers of the Lodge, nor shall this edict operate to forbid the publication of the name of the brother who may be designated to deliver the Historical Lectures or Charges.

FURTHER, I DECLARE that the said conduct and practice is to cease immediately with the exceptions as specifically noted above without the prior written approval of the Grand Master.

IN CONCLUSION, I ORDER AND DIRECT THIS EDICT to be read in each Lodge, throughout the State of New York, at the first Communication after its receipt and entered in full upon the Minutes thereof.

Witness my hand and private seal the day and year first above written.

William J. Thomas
Grand Master

By the Grand Master,

Paul M. Rosen
Grand Secretary

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