

*A FORM AND ORDER
FOR A
TABLE COUNCIL*

Adapted from a text
written and compiled
By
M.:I.: John Mauk Hilliard

FORM AND ORDER FOR A TABLE COUNCIL

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The purpose of a Table Council (whatever form it may take) has always been to provide in the festivities of the banquet, enjoyment and instruction. The instruction is designed to enlighten the mind, touch the heart, and engage the will of man. It is a summary of Masonic doctrine - the dependence on God, the dignity of man as a co-worker with God, and the blessedness of human fellowship.

OPENING

The Table Council will be opened after dinner. During dinner, however, the Master of the Council will take wine in the English manner with various companions of his choosing. The announcement of wine-taking will be made by the Illustrious Companion who is serving as Immediate Past Mast (IPM). The announcement of wine-taking is made by the IPM in a single sentence, i.e.: "Companions, the I.M. will take wine with his Deputy Master and his Principal Conductor of the Work." Whereupon, those officers will rise, silently salute one another with there glasses, and drink, then resume their seats.

I.M. (Rises and raps nine times, followed by the DM and PCW who do likewise.)

I.M. Comp. D.M., are you a Cryptic Mason?

D.M. All my companions know me to be such.

I.M. How my I know you to be one?

D.M. By my having wrought in the quarries during the mystic hours, by having lent my skill as a craftsman, and my integrity as a worthy and select man to the creation of that hidden place where repose the ancient and secret mysteries of this Royal and Gentle Craft.

I.M. What are your tools?

D.M. Peace, silence and virtue.

I.M. For what purpose are they used?

D.M. To craft Chambers to Virtue, and dig Dungeons for vices.

I.M. How long must we work?

D.M. From nine at night until twelve.

IM What is the hour?

DM. nine at night.

I.M. In consideration of the hour, inform the companions that a Council of Table Instruction is open, and we are about to commence our work in the usual manner. (THREE RAPS)

D.M. Companions on the column of the West, a Council of Table Instruction is open, and we are about to commence our work in the usual manner.

PCW Companions on the column of the South, a Council of Table Instruction is open, and we are about to commence our work in the usual manner.

I.M. Companions, our work which have for some time been suspended are again in full vigor. Let each remember that he bears the honorable rank, style, and title of 'companion' because he has broken bread, honestly and justly earned, with his brothers and fellows, and let us remember that each at this consecrated board has been selected through the witness of his silence, the faith of his integrity, and the loyalty of his friendship. Let us approach our labor with gratitude for the material and spiritual sustenance which we each have been privileged to receive as our Masonic birthright.

I.M. INVOCATION: "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

(1 rap to seat the Council)

PROTOCOL FOR CEREMONY OF THE SEVEN TOASTS

The format for each of the toasts will be the same. Please follow the pattern given below for each of them.

1. The Illustrious Master, Deputy Master and Principal Conductor of the Work will stand as each toast is announced. This rule applies to all toasts. The original reason for this custom may have been that the three dominant figures helped to keep order, and added an extra degree of importance and dignity to the proposer's words.
2. The Illustrious Master raps once followed by a single rap from the Deputy Master, and then the Principal Conductor of the Work. The Illustrious Master may choose to instruct the Deputy Master and Principal Conductor of the Work to see that all cannons are charged in the columns of the West and South, although in large companies, this request may not be practical, and may at the Ill. Master's discretion, be eliminated.
3. The Illustrious Master will then say: "Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to _____ He will then propose the toast himself, or introduce the companion who will do so.
4. The Proposer will say: "Illustrious Master and Companions, I give you _____" He will Then read the text of the toast.
5. After the toast is read, all present will raise their cannons, and respond by repeating in unison the subject of the toast, and drinking.

6. The Proposer will then say: "The Good Fire, Companions, taking your time from me."

THE PROCEDURE FOR "GOOD FIRE" IS:

THE PROPOSER WILL RECITE AT A SMART PACE, MARKING TIME WITH HIS RIGHT INDEX FINGER IN THE AIR; ALL PRESENT IMITATE THE MOVEMENT AND CADENCE AS SET BY THE PROPOSER:

**POINT, LEFT, RIGHT
POINT, LEFT, RIGHT
POINT, LEFT, RIGHT**

ONE, TWO

CLAP! (brief one-beat pause, followed by the traditional Masonic battery)

**CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!**

7. The Illustrious Master will seat the Companions with one rap. A song or response will then follow

8. The Illustrious Master may ask some Companion to give a response to the toast. The Companion so designated speaks spontaneously and BRIEFLY about the subject of the toast. The Companion DOES NOT PROPOSE ANOTHER TOAST.

9. The next toast on the program will then follow in sequence.

Note: The GOOD FIRE is really a 21-gun salute, and in ancient times, especially in the French Rite, the GOOD FIRE was given by an elaborate ritual using heavy "firing" glasses, or "cannons" with thick glass bases which could be struck upon the table top in time to the proposer's cadence. In order to avoid breakage, we use the more elegant English hand signal described above.

WARNING: NO COMPANION SHOULD PRESUME TO OFFER A TOAST WHICH IS NOT LISTED UPON THE OFFICAL PROGRAM. TOASTS ARE STRICTLY LIMITED TO ONLY THOSE LISTED UPON THE OFFICAL PROGRAM, WITH THEIR ORDER AND PROPOSERS DETERMINEQBY THE ILLUSTRIOUS MASTER.

CEREMONY OF THE SEVEN TRADITIONAL TOASTS

THE FIRST TOAST (THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

I.M., D.M. and P.C.W. stand. I.M. raps once, D.M. and P.C.W. answer with a single rap each.

I.M. Comp Deputy Master, are all glasses charged in the column of the West?

D.M. They are, Illustrious Master.

I.M. Comp Principal Conductor of the Work, are all glasses charged in the column of the South?

PCW They are, Illustrious Master.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to the United States of America, which I have the honor to propose. (ALL RISE)

I.M. Companions, I give you the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA! We will add to this health our wishes for its honor and prosperity in peace, and for its continued Sovereignty, Independence, and Freedom. This is a health so dear to us I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

ALL PRESENT: "The United States of America" (DRINK)

I.M. Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from the East. (Procedure is as previously described).

I.M. Companions, join me in signing the fourth verse of 'America the Beautiful'.

O beautiful, for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

I.M. (1 rap to seat the Companions)

THE SECOND TOAST (THE ANCIENT AND GENTLE CRAFT AND THE MEMORY OF OUR FOUNDERS)

I.M., D.M. and P.C. W. as in the first toast, rise, each rap in turn, and the L.M. inquires of each whether glasses whether glasses are charged, and each answers affirmatively.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the Toast to our Ancient and Gentle Craft and the Memory of our Founders, Which will be proposed by _____.(ALL RISE)

PROPOSER

Illustrious Master and Companions, I give you our Ancient and Gentle Craft And The Memory of Our Founders. This second obligatory health which I have the honor to propose is to the ties which unite a great brotherhood, and to a future made great by reason of a greater understanding of the spirit of Freemasonry. This health is so dear to us that I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

ALL PRESENT: "The Craft and its Founders" (DRINK)

PROPOSER: Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.
(Procedure is the same as previously described).

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

I.M. I will call upon _____, who will respond to this toast.

THE THIRD TOAST (THE GRAND LODGE OF NEW YORK AND THE GRAND MASTER)

I.M., D.M. AND P.C. W. rise, rap, and make necessary inquiries as to charging of glasses.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to the M.:W.: Grand Lodge of the State of New York, and its M.:W.: Grand Master, to be proposed by _____.

PROPOSER:

Illustrious Master and Companions, I give you the GRAND LODGE OF NY AND THE MOST WORSHIPFUL, THE GRAND MASTER _____. To its long and honored past, its steady adherence to our principles, its unflinching answer to the call of distress, and its encouragement to those who seek further light in Masonry. To this health, we gladly add our fraternal wishes for its prosperity that it may direct with Wisdom, decide with Justice, and plan with vision worthy of the Fraternity it serves, and of the brethren who constitute its Masonic people. Be pleased to join me in delivering this most Masonic and fraternal toast and fire.

ALL PRESENT "The Grand Lodge and the Grand Master" (DRINK)

PROPOSER: Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

I.M. I will call upon _____, who will respond to this toast.

THE FOURTH TOAST (CRYPTIC MASONRY AND DORIC COUNCIL #19)

I.M., D.M. AND P.C. W. rise, rap, and make necessary inquiries as to charging of glasses.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to Cryptic Masonry and Doric Council #19. To be proposed by _____.

PROPOSER:

Illustrious Master and Companions, To this precious Council, and to all of Cryptic Masonry: the culmination of Ancient Craft Masonry, and the completion of the Hiramic and Solomonic Legends; Let us drink its health and deliver the best of fires, and let us hope that the companions of Cryptic Masonry may devote to it an interest and loyalty unshaken by adversity, and unspoiled in times of prosperity. May we ever reflect its integrity and stability in our daily lives.

ALL PRESENT: "The Cryptic Rite" (DRINK)

PROPOSER: Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

I.M. I will call upon _____, who will respond to this toast.

I.M. Sickness & Distress
Miscellaneous Council Business
Announcements

THE FIFTH TOAST (ALL YORK RITE BODIES)

I.M., D.M. AND P.C. W. rise, rap, and make necessary inquiries as to charging of glasses.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to all the bodies of the York Rite, to be proposed by _____.

PROPOSER:

Illustrious Master and Companions, I give you the health of all the bodies of the York Rite of Freemasonry, principally the Capitular Rite, the Cryptic Rite and Templary. To this health we add the Allied Masonic Degrees, the York Rite College, and all other invitational and collateral degrees, orders, rites and societies associated with the York Rite. This vast constellation of institutions arching across the firmament of Freemasonry offers each Craftsman an astoundingly varied and rich array of venues Masonic life, learning, and leadership. May their adherents share our hospitality whenever their circumstances permit, and may hereby proclaim to all: UNION - CONTENTMENT - WISDOM.

ALL PRESENT: "ALL York Rite Bodies" (DRINK)

PROPOSER: Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

I.M. I will call upon _____, who will respond to this toast.

THE SIXTH TOAST (OUR ANCIENT MASTERS)

I.M., D.M. AND P.C. W. rise, rap, and make necessary inquiries as to charging of glasses.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the toast to Our Ancient Masters to be proposed by _____.

PROPOSER:

Illustrious Master and Companions, I give you Our Ancient Masters, those three great pillars who are the very foundation of our venerable Fraternity; Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff:

To Him who brought the stone and wood,
To Him who all things understood,
To Him who hapless shed his blood
In the doing of his duty,

To that bright day, to that blest morn
Wherein these three great men were born,
Our Ancient Science to Adorn
With Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Be pleased to join me in delivering your fire with fervency and zeal.

ALL PRESENT: "Our Ancient Masters" (DRINK)

PROPOSER: Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

I.M. I will call upon _____, who will respond to this toast.

THE SEVENTH AND LAST TOAST (OUR ABSENT COMPANIONS)

Note: This Toast is Traditionally the Last and NO BUSINESS IS PERMITTED AFTER ITS CONCLUSION.

I.M., D.M. AND P .C. W. rise, rap, and make necessary inquiries as to charging of glasses.

I.M. Companions, kindly be upstanding for the final toast of this festive board.

I.M. Companions, the following poem was written by an anonymous Freemason in India in the middle of the 19th century, and is a traditional way of introducing the seventh and last toast:

1.

Are your glasses charged in the West and South, the Worshipful Master cries;
They're charged in the West, they're charged in the South, are the Wardens' prompt replies;
Then to our final toast tonight your glasses fairly drain,
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again, again
Oh! Happy to meet again!"

2.

The Masons' social brotherhood around the festive board,
Reveals a wealth more precious far than selfish miser's hoard.
They freely share the priceless stores that generous hearts contain —
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again!"

3.

We work like Masons free and true, and when our task is done,
A merry song and cheering glass are not unduly won;
And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure touched with pain —
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again!"

4.

Amidst our mirth we drink "to all poor Masons O' er the world" —
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled,
We prize each brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain -
Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again!"

5.

The Mason feels the noble truth the Scottish peasant told.
That rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man himself's the gold;
With us the rich and poor unite and equal rights maintain:
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again!"

6.

Dear Brethren of the Mystic Tie, the night is waning fast -
Our duty's done, our feast is o'er; this song must be our last-
"Good Night, Good Night" - once more, once more, repeat the farewell strain .
"Happy to meet - Sorry to part - Happy to meet again, again,
Oh! Happy to meet again!"

I.M. Companions, according to ancient custom among Freemasons, before rising from this festive board, let us turn our thoughts to those of our brethren who are scattered over the face of the earth. Let us wish solace to those who suffer, a speedy recovery to those in sickness, and improvement in their lot to those in misfortune, humility to the fortunate, and to those who stand before the Gates of Death, firmness of heart and peace in the Eternal East.

ALL PRESENT: "Our absent Companions and Brethren" (DRINK)

I.M. Companions, the GOOD FIRE, taking your time from me.

I.M. Companions, join me in the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne'

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days of auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS MASTER'S CHARGE TO THE COMPANIONS:

Companions and Brethren, You are now to quit this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, to mix again with the world. Amidst its concerns and employments, forget not the duties you have heard so frequently inculcated and forcibly recommended in our Council. Be diligent, prudent, temperate, discreet. Remember that around our altar you have promised to befriend and relieve every worthy companion who shall need your assistance. Remember that you have promised to remind him, in the most tender manner, of his failings, and aid his reformation. These generous principles are to extend further. Every human being has a claim upon your kind offices. Do good unto all. Recommend it more especially to the household of the faithful. Finally, Companions and Brethren, be ye all of one mind, live in peace, and may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you.

CLOSING THE TABLE COUNCIL

I.M. (Raps once) Companion Deputy Master and Principal Conductor of the Work, are the companions in order?

D.M. They are, Ill. Master.

PCW They are, Ill. Master.

I.M, Compo Dep. Master, What is the hour?

D.M. Midnight.

I.M. In consideration of the hour and the age, inform all our companions on the columns of the West and South that we are about to close this Council of Table Instruction ending our work in the usual manner

D.M. Companions on the column of the West, I inform you on behalf of the Illustrious Master that we are about to close this Council of Table Instruction ending our work in the usual manner.

PCW Companions on the column of the South, I inform you on behalf of the Illustrious Master that we are about to close this Council of Table Instruction ending our work in the usual manner.

I.M. (Raps nine times).

D.M. (Raps nine times).

PCW (Raps nine times).

I.M. Companions, our labors are CLOSED.

I.M. (1 rap to seat the companions)

FORM AND ORDER FOR A TABLE COUNCIL
CEREMONY OF THE SEVEN TOASTS

THE FIRST TOAST (THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "The United States of America"

Song: **America, the Beautiful**

THE SECOND TOAST (THE ANCIENT AND GENTLE CRAFT AND THE MEMORY
OF OUR FOUNDERS)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "The Craft and Its Founders"

Response: _____

(Name)

THE THIRD TOAST (THE GRAND LODGE OF NEW YORK AND THE GRAND MASTER)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "The Grand Lodge and The Grand Master"

Response: _____

(Name)

THE FOURTH TOAST (CRYPTIC MASONRY AND (Name) COUNCIL #____)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "The Grand Lodge and The Grand Master"

Response: _____

(Name)

THE FIFTH TOAST (ALL YORK RITE BODIES)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "All York Rite Bodies"

Response: _____

(Name)

THE SIXTH TOAST (OUR ANCIENT MASTERS)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "Our Ancient Masters"

Response: _____

(Name)

THE SEVENTH TOAST (OUR ABSENT COMPANIONS)

Proposer: _____

(Name)

Toast: "Our Absent Companions and Brethren"

Song: **Auld Lang Syne**