

THE ETIQUETTE OF TOASTING IN SPEECHMAKING WITHIN ROYAL ARCH MASONRY.

Foreword

This paper is presented with minimal alteration. Only the errors judged to be the result of copying have been corrected.

While the title implies that it is the Etiquette of toasting which will be discussed the author has included his personal views on how one should present a toast or speech. It seems that the author prefers a speech to be highly structured and formal. There is appended a long list of regulations which, while they may be appropriate, do not conform with the requirements of the Constitution, Regulations and Rules of the USGC of NSW & ACT.

It is my view that the proposition of a toast or speech is an highly personal expression of one's views and I am certainly reluctant to say how one should do it.

P.L. Harris

In speechmaking, there is a recognised etiquette which should be observed, and it embraces the Companion's as the speaker his attitude to the Excellent First Principal and Special Guests, (Grand Representative) to the audience and to any other speakers there is also an etiquette to be observed towards the speaker.

In turn, the Companion speaking should address the Presiding Officer in the Chair, in doing so he should be addressed by his Office as "Excellent First Principal". Any Companion speaking should never fail to address the Chair, excepting when a Vote of Thanks is being proposed to the Presiding Officer in the Chair (in which case the mover should address the audience with ("Ladies, Gentlemen (if any) and Companions"). It is usual and advisable in the course of the toast presentation to address the Presiding Officer in the Chair, as "Excellent First Principal" once or twice. It is recognition that the proposer of the toast is still addressing his remarks to the audience through the Chair.

The toast proposer should never exceed the time allotted to him, unless with the express permission of the Presiding Officer in the Chair, as "Excellent First Principal". When he feels that he is approaching the time limit, and that it is desirable to bring the toast to an end, he should come to the conclusion as nicely as possible. He may be sure that no one in the audience will be aware of what the toast proposer has prepared ,and been compelled to omit by the effluxion of time.

The toast proposer should refrain from mentioning that he had prepared much more than what he has delivered, or that he "could go on speaking for another few minutes or more". On the other hand, no matter under what circumstances he may be called upon to propose a toast, the proposer should never apologise for being unprepared - "didn't know that I was to be called on for a toast", and so on. The Companion should treat it as a compliment, and do his best, even if the chief thing about the toast is its briefness.

In responding to a toast, the speaker in reply should thank the proposer (and any supporter) for proposing the toast in such a nice way; and he should thank the audience ("and you, Companions") for receiving it in so cordial a manner (or for drinking to it so heartily). It is each speaker's duty to his audience is to keep them interested, and he may be sure of success in that direction, if his matter is good, and has been carefully prepared. Companions should be very careful with contentious subjects in their speech, he may be interrupted from a Companion in the hall by supporters of opposing views. The Companion should on no account lose his temper, but he would not be offending any rule of etiquette if he were to give "the retort courteous" to the interjector.

At the conclusion of the toast proposition - particularly if the Companion is the only one - a vote of thanks - will probably be moved by a member of the Chapter, and maybe seconded by another, or put by the Presiding Officer, as "Excellent First Principal", and carried with the usual Masonic honours, unless Ladies are present then by acclamation. In responding to such vote of appreciation the invited speaker should not make another speech, but content himself by remarking, "Excellent First Principal, it has been a great pleasure for me to be present and I thank you all for the compliment paid to me". If there has been more than one address it is each speaker's duty as far as other speakers who have preceded him are concerned, is to make some such remark as "It has been a pleasure to listen to the previous speakers".

If the invitation to speak had been extended to a Companion some weeks previously by the Chapter Scribe, he should be written to again, a few days before the event, and be reminded of it, and arrangements made to replace him if unable to attend. If it is necessary to call upon anyone to speak at short notice, he should be acquainted with the subject and be given as much time as possible to collect some thoughts upon the matter. Each Companion speaking, is entitled to be listened to attentively, and not interrupted by Companions or Ladies talking, or by the noise of cutlery operating on plates containing food, or teaspoons in cups or saucers. It is the Director of Ceremonies duty to stop anything of this kind.

HINTS ON MASONIC TOASTS WITHIN PUBLIC SPEAKING

General Remarks

In the early days when the health of a person - and particularly a lady - was being drunk, it was considered a great compliment to the person honoured to put a piece of toast into the liquor. By an extension of this idea we now speak of the person so honoured as being "toasted"; the sentiment expressed is a toast; and even the drink and the act of drinking is called a "toast." A Toastmaster is the person who announces the toasts.

At the Installation Banquet, Festive Board or Special Masonic Dinner, or other functions may be, the programme should generally include a few Toasts; and some hints as to the duties of the Director of Ceremonies to call on Companions to propose toasts suitable to the occasion.

It is perhaps more suitable for the elocutionist than for the platform speaker, whereby, in ancient times as described by Cicero as "the language of the body," and that delivery (including gesture) was the first, second and third essential of oratory. Cicero even said that the best orator without it was of no value, and was often defeated by one who employed gesture but who was in other respects his inferior.

The French and the Italians use gesture far more than the English-speaking nations, particularly by moving the hands, by shrugging the shoulders, by elevating the eyebrows, and by bodily grimaces. The national characteristic of the English-speaking people is undemonstrative; and few of us give our speech the help that our hands are so well capable of affording.

The English-speaking audience of nowadays, prefers to see a man stand up and speak in simple words, but vivaciously and confidently, without or with very little gesture. Should gestures be adopted by the speaker, he should use them in a natural manner. Studied gestures, unless thoroughly mastered, tend to make the use of the arms mechanical. The object of the gesture is to emphasise the ideas; but they should be in keeping with the occasion. For instance, on memorial occasions a slight gesture of the hand would be more appropriate than the more vigorous use, suitable for a patriotic speech or a political address where there is perhaps the best opportunity for passionate gesture.

The following are suggestions for appropriate gestures, but they are more suitable for the elocutionist than for the speaker or the lecturer:

- (1) Hold up your hand, palm toward the front, to indicate aversion, with a backward movement of the head.
- (2) Clasp the hands to indicate anguish.
- (3) Extend both hands toward the audience, palms up, when appealing.
- (4) Clench the fist for malediction.
- (5) Fold the arms to express meditation.
- (6) Open the hand, palm to the front, for declaration.
- (7) Slightly lift the hand above the horizontal, with palm toward the audience, for caution.
- (8) Place the forefinger to the lips for indecision.
- (9) Point the forefinger upward for argumentation and arraignment.
- (10) Fling the hands outward and backward to indicate carelessness.

If the speaker intends to adopt gestures it would be for him to practise them before a mirror, without making a speech, in order to see himself as others would see him, and so that he may correct any inelegant attitudes. Gesture should be avoided during dinner speaking, unless standing at a lectern or at the end of a table. When the speaker is penned in between his chair and the table, any gestures used by him might endanger the safety of the wineglasses! Some speakers who wear glasses employ them very effectively, removing them from

their nose with the right hand and using them to tap the palm of the left hand with when emphasising some particular point or points.

Initial Preparations

There must, of course, be a Presiding Officer, as "Excellent First Principal", to control the proceedings, supported by the Director of Ceremonies, and the usual practice is for him to fill the role of "Toastmaster". Recently at certain Masonic gatherings a new functionary has come into existence at some Masonic Festive Boards, in the person of a professional "Master of Ceremonies". Whose duty it is, at a signal from the Presiding Officer, to announce each toast, the proposer, the Supporter (if any), and the responder. Generally, he is thoroughly competent in his duties, which are carried out with appropriate dignity.

To enable the Director of Ceremonies to make the most of his onerous duties, and to retain that cheerfulness of appearance, which is so contagious at any convivial gathering, it is essential that all arrangements in connection with the function should be completed at least a few days before the event. Should the organiser be other than the Presiding Officer or the Director of Ceremonies, he should have well beforehand, consulted the latter as to the toast list, ensuring nothing is left to the last moment.

The Chapter notice paper containing the toasts, the names of the toast proposers and where possible musical numbers and other items should have been drawn up (and, if necessary, nicely printed as a souvenir), and distributed on the tables, particularly the Grand Representative's place and those of the guests. The seating of the Companions and Guests with reference to the Presiding Officer at the main table will have been decided upon after due consideration.

The Toast of "The Queen."

The repast being well in progress or over (which ever is in accordance with previous arrangements), the Presiding Officer claims the attention of the gathering for a few moments and invites them to charge their glasses. After inquiring if the glasses are charged, the Presiding Officer proposes the toast of "The Queen," all rise, and the toast is then drunk. No speech is made to this toast - everyone knows who and what the Queen is - and, of course, there is no response to it.

Useful Hints.

The Director of Ceremonies may then announce an item of harmony with the name of the performer; and on its conclusion Director of Ceremonies calls upon the "Excellent First Principal" to propose the toast to The Most Excellent First Grand Principal and Grand Master.

At some Masonic meetings members may observe the toast to "Absent Friends" which may be given. This toast is drunk with every solemnity in impressive silence, and usually at a given time in the night (e.g., 10 o'clock). Although a speech is unusual, a few - a very few - appropriate words would not be out of place; and it would be quite correct if a few lines of poetry suitable for the occasion were recited by a competent elocutionist. In between the toasts there

can be musical items, and, as with the toasts and responses, each will be announced by the Director of Ceremonies. The Director of Ceremonies, when announcing the proposer of a toast has no right to make a speech at all. He must not "steal the thunder" of the toast proposers.

When proposing a toast or supporting the remarks of the proposer, the speaker should endeavour to confine his remarks to the subject of the toast; and remember that such speeches are more or less of a laudatory character; but one or two anecdotes suitable to the occasion may be introduced appropriately. An anecdote to be appreciated should be apt, short and well told. Unless the anecdote be apt, the essential point will not be apparent, and the story will be received with the silence which it probably deserves. If the anecdote be long, the audience will be tired of waiting for the climax, and perhaps the appropriateness of it will be weakened by its length. Should the anecdote be poorly told, its effect will be discounted considerably. Remember, then, the three strong points of an anecdote - aptness, shortness, and well told.

Unless the toast be a very important one, or the toast proposer has a reputation as an after-dinner speaker, it would be as well for his speech to be short or of moderate length. There are many excellent collections (in book form) of anecdotes, which will probably be suitable for the particular occasion; but be aware of selecting an anecdote that is as old hills, or one which is on everyone's tongue. It often pays to retail an anecdote of one's own manufacture - it may be an old fellow disguised in a new mode of dress.

In all cases the Companion or persons who are receiving the toast, should remain seated - and, of course, they must not drink the toast. In responding to a toast, the Companion should commence by addressing the Excellent First Principal, then the Grand Representative (if present), Companions. He should first (or in the early stages of his response) thank the Companion for so kindly proposing the toast and "You Ladies, Gentlemen (if any) and Companions" for receiving it in so hearty manner.

The response should, generally speaking be brief; and, therefore, it should be well prepared beforehand - that is, of course, if due notice has been received by the Companion that he will be called upon. Nothing should be left to the inspiration of the moment, for the chances are that in the room in which you are to speak there will be no opportunity of finding a peg upon which to hang an idea. Not only should your subject be carefully selected, but the response should be thought out well in advance, and elaborate until every sentence is clear. The anecdote to be related should be thoroughly learnt, and plenty of practice given to the delivery of it, so that when the Companion begins his response he will have the self-consciousness of ready utterance.

At sporting dinners, weddings, and similar functions, both the speeches in proposing toasts and the responses thereto should aim at being light and entertaining; and the best after-dinner speakers on these occasions always endeavour to place their audience in good humour.

Despite initial preparation by the Companion, it infrequently happens that his "thunder has been stolen from him" by a previous speaker; and in such cases he

must rely upon his ability to speak above the situation, or perhaps to clothe the same theme with other words. The best advice in such a contingency is to be brief, for it is better to say a few words well than to attempt long speech and stumble through it.

It can be important to have a good memory for stories, combined with ability one or two well, is an exceedingly useful possession; and any person who is prominent in social, political or sporting activities should form a collection of anecdotes, humorous and otherwise, and learn a few of them. Try out your quotations and your anecdotes separately at home, and practise them until you are able to relate them perfectly.

The following examples of Toast Propositions:

On Proposing Toast of "Our Newly Advanced - Brother" of Mark Master Lodge.

(By the Director of Ceremonies as his Sponsor).

Excellent First Principal, District Grand Inspector of Workings,

Companions, -

The toast I give you to-night is that of "Our Newly-Advanced Brother," and I am sure it is one that you will enthusiastically receive, for our newly-advanced brother will, I am convinced, develop into a useful member of, this Mark Lodge. And also, be a credit to us, particularly me as his sponsor and proposer of this toast. During the ceremony of advancement our new Brother showed in a becoming manner, his respect for the ideals which our Order stands for. He has already shown a desire to show interest in the ritual. And when he was invested with the Mark Master apron, we witnessed the delight given by him, and we therefore heartily welcome him into this Mark Master Masons' Lodge. He, I am sure, experienced a brief connection to operative Masonry by the emulated labour he endured during this evenings ceremony. Brethren, are you all charged? Then I call you all to rise and drink to the health of "Our Newly-Advanced Brother."

Response by the Newly-Advanced Brother.

Excellent First Principal, District Grand Inspector of Workings,

Companions, -

I thank the Director of Ceremonies for the kind expressions used when submitting the toast which he so ably proposed, and it was a pleasure to me to see how well it was received by the brethren. Being only too well aware of my deficiencies at present, I promise that I shall endeavour to live up to the excellent teachings of Mark Masonry. It would be presumptuous my part to express any opinion upon the general principles of the order, for I have had but an hour or so upon which to view them in the light in which they have so far been revealed to me. Perhaps when I have the future privilege to have gone through the various chairs (for I will admit that I hope to be able to do that) I may be qualified to talk upon the subject. However, brethren all, I must say that I have been deeply impressed by the solemnity of the ritual, and I am looking

forward with a large amount of curiosity to ascertain what the future has in store for me. Worshipful Mark Master, District Grand Inspector of Workings, Worshipful Brethren, and Brethren, for this new Masonic experience, I thank you.

Proposing Toast of Installed Principal and His Officers of the Chapter.

Excellent First Principal, Right Excellent Companion (Representative and his Rank), and Companions,-

I rise to ask you to do honour to the newly-Installed First Principal and his Officers of this Chapter by toasting to their good health. To be chosen as the one to whom the honoured task is entrusted is a compliment to me, but I am somewhat doubtful about my ability to do adequate justice to the occasion. Nevertheless, however greatly I may fail in finding suitable words in which to embrace my thoughts, I feel sure that there will be no similar shortcoming when you rise to drain your glasses in honouring the toast of the "Newly- Installed First Principal and his Officers of this Chapter," and in that security I derive a considerable amount of satisfaction.

The Companions who have been invested to carry out the official duties of this Chapter for the ensuing year will fill their respective offices with dignity and ability, and it is doubtful whether a better team of officers has ever been selected in this Chapter. From the occupant of the Chair of Zerubbabel down to the Janitor, the Newly-Installed and Invested Officers are "worthy Royal Arch Masons," willing and able to show by personal example the true and admirable teaching of our Royal Arch Order. Those Masons of ancient times built well, as did the Masons who in the Middle Ages constructed those magnificent cathedrals and stately structures which are still the glory of our nation. These Companions of to-day - our newly-installed and invested officers are also splendid workmen, building into the characters of the younger members of this Chapter the principles of Royal Arch Masonry. We congratulate them upon their Installation, from the First Principal down to the Janitor, and we wish them a very happy and a very beneficial period of office in their respective duties. Excellent Companions and Companions, it is my great pleasure to ask you to charge your glasses to the full, and to drink with me the toast of

"Our First Principal and his Officers."

DEGREE TERMINOLGY FOR CANDIDATE TOASTS

The following terminology is required to be used for toasting candidates as they progress through the various Degrees.

Beside each item below displays the United Supreme Grand Chapter Regulation Number and detail.

11.9. Degree Progression Terminology.

11.9.1. The terminology relating to a Candidate's progression through the various Degrees is indicated as follows:-

Advanced to a Mark Master Mason

Received	as an Excellent Master
Exalted	to the Holy Royal Arch
Received and Acknowledged	as a Most Excellent Master
Honoured	as a Royal Master
Chosen	as a Select Master
Greeted	as a Super Excellent Master
Created	a Knight of the Red Cross
Elevated	as a Royal Ark Mariner

Below are the required protocol observations that Companions need to be aware of in accordance with the following United Supreme Grand Chapter Regulations.

15. FESTIVE BOARD

15.1. Festive Board General Rules - Regular Meetings.

15.1.1. In our Order, Brethren and Companions take refreshments at the "Festive Board - NOT in the "South".

Seating at the First Principal's Table is at the discretion of the First Principal and may follow various patterns, of which the three most common are:

- (i) The First Principal is seated in the centre, with the Second Principal on his right and the Third Principal on his left. In this situation, any Grand Representative or District Grand Inspector of Workings, if present, would sit on the right of the Second Principal.
- (ii) Alternatively, the First Principal is seated in the centre, with the Second Principal on his left and the Third Principal next on the left. In this situation, any Grand Representative or District Grand Inspector of Workings, if present, would sit on the right and immediately next to the First Principal.

Another option is to have any visiting First Principals seated at the First Principal's table with any Grand Representative seated at the right of the First Principal. In these circumstances the Second and Third Principals would sit with the Companions.

NOTE: Of the three options given above none is more correct than the other, the custom in the Chapter may utilise any of these options or may follow some other form.

15.1.3. It is customary for any Grand Director of Ceremonies present to sit at the right end of the table (facing the Companions), while the Chapter Director of Ceremonies occupies the opposite position on the left.

15.1.4. Seating of Candidates at the Festive Board;

The nominators of a candidate should see that he is seated close to the First Principal's table, explain the proceedings as these progress, and ensure that he knows what will be expected of him in reply to the toast proposed in his honour.

15.1.4.1 Alternatively, if the Candidate is seated at the First Principal's table he should be seated next to the Chapter Director of Ceremonies, so that he can similarly guide the candidate.

15.1.5. Visitors at the Festive Board;

Special attention should be given to visitors at the Festive Board. It is the duty of all Chapter members and Stewards to see that they are suitably accommodated and not left sitting alone. The Director of Ceremonies has a particular supervisory responsibility in this regard.

15.1.6. Grace at the Festive Board;

Companions should take their place at the table and remain Standing until the Third Principal has said Grace. All Companions and Ladies should stand. This should be prior to the partaking of any food or the proposal of any toasts.

15.1.7. Titles and Prefixes to be used at the Festive Board;

During speeches at the Festive Board, the titles and prefixes to be used shall always be those appropriate to Royal Arch ranks, irrespective of the Degree which the Chapter has worked at the meeting just concluded.

15.1.7.1. Similarly, the Presiding Officer shall always be addressed as Excellent First Principal during speeches and/or toasts at the Festive Board.

15.1.8. Responses to the toast Honouring Visitors at the Festive Board. Refer to para.15.3.

15.1.9. Smoking at the Festive Board;

In accordance with current customs, smoking at the Festive Board should be forbidden.

15.1.10. Ladies Present at the Festive Board. Refer to para. 15.4.

15.2 Festive Board - Installations.

15.2.1. The Saying of Grace. Refer to para. 15.1.6.

15.2.2. The first Toast must always be the Loyal Toast. Refer to para.

15.3.2. 15.2.3. The second Toast must always be the Toast to:

"The Most Excellent First Grand Principal and Grand Master"

15.2.3.1. This Toast is always given by the First Principal and is never coupled with the name or Office of any person. Under no circumstances is the toast to be entitled "United Supreme Grand Chapter".

15.2.3.2. The toast shall be honoured with "Feint One; Twenty-One"

15.2.3.2. When the First Grand Principal is present, all Companions, including ALL Grand Officers, Present and Past, rise to honour the toast.

- 15.2.3.4. When the First Grand Principal rises to reply to the toast, Present and Past Grand Officers do NOT rise.
- 15.2.3.5. When the First Grand Principal is represented by a Grand Officer, the Present and Past Grand Officers remain seated for the Toast.
- 15.2.3.6. When the Representative rises to respond, all Present and Past Grand Officers rise at the same time, and remain standing until the Representative thanks the Companions for honouring the Toast. They are then seated, and the Representative continues with his reply.
- 15.2.4. The Grand Director of Ceremonies should seat himself at the right hand end of the Presiding Officer's table. Refer to para. 15.1.3. He should observe the Grand Representative, in case he is called and needed for assistance.
- 15.2.5. At an Installation, the third Toast should always be to the newly Installed First Principal and his Officers.
- 15.2.5.1. The Grand Director of Ceremonies should conduct the Honours accompanying this Toast. Refer to para. 15.3.4.
- 15.2.5.2. He should call on the Officers, other than the First Principal, to rise, after which he announces that, "The First Principal will now respond"
- 15.2.6. Ladies should be encouraged to attend both Meetings and Installations. Refer to para. 15.4.
- 15.2.7. It is the prerogative of the First Grand Principal or Deputy First Grand Principal but not of any Grand Representative, to request The Grand Director of Ceremonies to ask the Companions to rise whilst he retires. The Grand Director of Ceremonies should seek instruction on this point at a convenient time during the Festive Board.
- 15.2.8. It is considered discourteous for a Grand Officer to retire from the Festive Board before The First Grand Principal, (or the Grand Representative) without offering an apology and seeking permission.

15.3. Toasts and Honours at the Festive Board Other than Installations.

- 15.3.1. In the presence of Ladies or Non-Masons:
At the discretion of the First Principal, Honours may be given in the presence of Ladies or others who are not Masons. However, when this is done, certain limitations are entailed - specifically the exclusion of honours involving Masonic symbolism.
- 15.3.1.1. With Ladies present, 'Chapter Honours' are permitted with all other Toasts, Refer to para.15.3.4., but the Ladies should not participate.
- 15.3.2. The Loyal Toast:
The first toast must always be the Loyal Toast and should not be given until at least five minutes after Grace has been said and after the Companions have been seated. Ladies, if present, should also respond to this toast.

- 15.3.3. Toast to the First Grand Principal and Grand Master: The toast to the First Grand Principal and Grand Master is only given when either he is present in person, his Official Representative is present or the District Grand Inspector of Workings is present. Refer to para. 15.2.3. for the procedure.
- 15.3.4. Other Toasts at the Festive Board:
- All toasts (except to the GZ, Refer to para. 15.2.3.) should be honoured with "Apron, Heart and Hand" given four times, "Foot" may be used if customary in the Chapter. To this general rule there are three exceptions;
- Toast to Candidates at the Festive Board
- When Brethren and/or Companions only are present (no ladies or others not Masons), the toast to the candidates may be received with such Masonic Honours as have been customary in the Chapter.
- e.g. "Point, Triangle and Circle" or "Apron, Heart and Hand with Mark Firing" as may be appropriate.
- (i) Toasts to Visitors at the Festive Board
- The toast to the visitors may be received with such special Honours as have been customary in the Chapter for this particular purpose.
- (ii) Toast to Ladies at the Festive Board
- The toast to the Ladies, when given, shall always be received with "acclamation" only. A response is not necessary, unless desired by the First Principal or the Ladies themselves.
- 15.3.5. Responses to the toast Honouring Visitors at the Festive Board: Discretion should always be exercised in deciding the number of Companions to be called in response to the toast honouring the visitors. This decision is one for the First Principal. It is then a matter of courtesy for those Companions so selected to be given prior notice that they will be called upon to respond. Such notice will enable them to prepare a better response, the better to entertain and reward their Hosts.
- 15.3.6. A Chapter may have toasts presented at the direction of the First Principal. "Absent Companions" "Anniversaries" "Our Lecturer", etc.
- 15.4. Ladies at the Festive Board.
- Attendance of Ladies at the Festive Board should be encouraged and, when present, they will always be seated with their partner.
- 15.4.1. Ladies should not in any way or circumstance replace the role of Stewards at the Festive Board, by serving at tables or dealing with liquor or selling raffle tickets.
- 15.4.2. Grace with Ladies present Refer to para. 5.1.6.

15.4.3. Toasts with Ladies present - Refer to para. 15.3