

EL-KU-TA LODGE
ORDER OF THE ARROW
FIRE LIGHTING CEREMONY

This ceremony is adapted from Chapter XVI, "Council-fire Ritual".

It is designed to be used to open any event that uses a campfire with an authentic Indian "Call to Council" ritual.

Prodecure:

The audience is seated. The Council Fire Ring is in darkness. The procession forms out of sight of the audience. In front are the two torchbearers, each with a torch held out to the side away from the procession line. Behind them is the Herald holding a small hand drum. Next in line is the Chief of the Council. Behind him is the Firemaker with his firemaking equipment. Next is the Echo and six indians.

Dress:

The Chief of the Council is dressed in full Indian costume with a double-trailer war bonnet. All others are more simply dressed in leggings, breechcloth, armbands, necklaces, head band and 2-3 feathers in their headdresses.

Action:

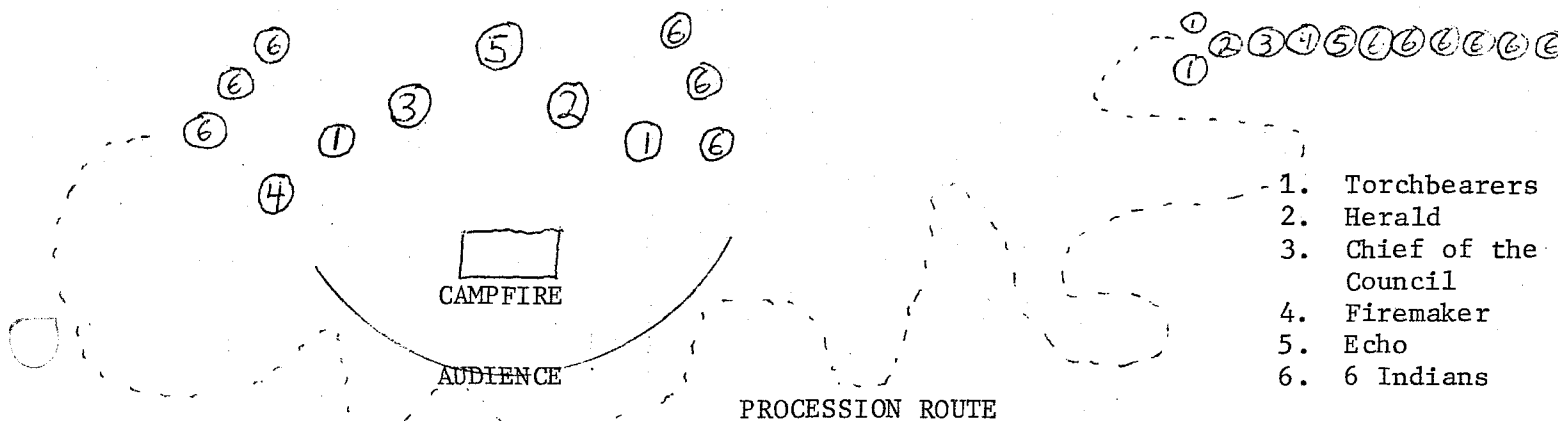
The signal comes from the Council Fire Ring that all is ready. The torches are lighted.

The Herald begins to drum and the group moves forward, walking at a slow pace. The drum is struck on every other step. After eight beats, the Herald sings the "Zuni Call To Council" to the slow tempo of the drumming. The song finished, he walks on for eight drumbeats and repeats the song, singing it over again every eight drumbeats.

The procession does not go directly to the fire ring, but it circles around it, taking an indirect route. This prepares the audience, who can hear the drum and song and can see the torches, for the ceremony to come.

As the procession nears the Council Fire Ring, the tempo slows down gradually, the loud drumming used at a distance is softened. When within 50 yards of the ring, the song is repeated for the last time.

The procession comes up to the opened end of the ring as shown:



Each takes his place as indicated. The only light in the Ring is that from the torches.

When the two torchbearers are in position, the Herald walks in slowly and takes his place as indicated. He stands silently for a few seconds, his eyes looking beyond the Ring into the distance. Then he sings the beautiful "Zuni Sunrise Call" using the Indian words (See last page of this ceremony), at the end repeating the first two measures, finishing with the soft echo.

The Chief enters with slow and measured step, walks to his spot, as shown above, about 10' from the firelay. With deep religious feeling, his words measured in harmony with the tempo of his step, he says:

"Let there be silence. We stand in the presence of the One Great Spirit."

He takes two steps forward toward the firelay and says:

"Now light we the Council Fire after the manner of the forest children, even as Wakonda Himself doth light His fire, by the rubbing together of two trees in the storm wind, so cometh forth the sacred fire from the wood of the forest."

The Chief turns his back to the firelay. The Firemaker enters and walks slowly and quietly to the firelay, kneels at the left side of it, and makes fire by the fire-by-friction method. He makes no undue fuss or commotion about lighting, performing quietly and without show. His tinder lighted, he inserts it under the central firelay, arises and walks quietly out. Saturated with kerosine as it is, the fire instantly bursts into brilliant blaze.

As the Firemaker returns to his place, the Chief turns and faces the fire, speaking with great vigor and increased tempo:

"Now know we that Wakonda, the Great Spirit, having been pleased to smile upon His children, has sent down the sacred fire. By this sign know we that He will be with us in council, that His wisdom will be present."

The Chief turns slowly around and returns to his place. The rest of the Indians move back into the background and sit down during the rest of the program.