



## Let's Talk About the Shrine

By Noble Chuck Maass  
NUR Shrine



Before proceeding with the main thrust in this, the third of a series of articles intended to acquaint some of our Masonic fraternity and acquaint others, with the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (the Shriners), let me pause to reflect on the previ-

ous articles in order to establish some continuity and establish a "base" from which to continue.

The first article focused on who the Shriners are, some of the history of the Shrine "fellowship", the mission of the Shriners and, of course, an introduction to the "World's Greatest Philanthropy" - the Shriners Hospitals for Children. It was also pointed out in that article that **all Shriners share a Masonic heritage: each is a Master Mason in the Freemasonry fraternity.** The second article addressed the "early years" of Shrinedom starting in 1888 when Florida Shriners worked long hours to relieve the suffering populace from the effects of a Yellow Fever epidemic, continued with the establishment and growth of Shrinedom and the Shriners Hospitals, and ended with the Shriners Creed. That article also asked if you could name a businessman, newscaster, or sportscaster who is or was a Shriner. For those of you who had some difficulty with that question, some possible answers are revealed at the end of this article.

To continue in my attempts to shed "more light" on the Shrine, 1930 was a significant year in the history of the Shrine. In addition to a Peace Memorial being commissioned by the Shrine's Imperial Potentate in that year (to be subsequently constructed in Toronto for the purpose of commemorating 150 years of friendship between the United States and Canada) the Shrine's 1930 Imperial Session was considered to be the Shrine's antidote for the gloomy years following the Great Depression. However, for the first time in history, it was then that the Shrine began to lose members since many Nobles found they no longer had sufficient funds to pay their dues. Thus, with the resultant decrease in income it was necessary to use some of the Endowment Fund capital to pay the hospitals' operating expenses in the struggle to keep both the hospitals and the fraternity afloat during those troublesome times. This action in turn resulted in the formation of separate corporations for the hospitals and the fraternity in 1937 to ensure the financial distinction between the two.

Shortly after surviving the ramifications of the Great Depression, the Shrine and its hospitals then found it necessary to adjust to wartime conditions during World War II. Imperial Sessions were therefore limited to business activities and they were attended only by official Temple representatives; thus, the usual Shrine parade units marched only in local hometown patriotic parades instead of being part of Imperial Sessions. It is also interesting to note that during World War II, the Shrine and its members invested more than \$1 billion in US Government war bonds and the hospital corporation invested all of its available funds in government securities.

After being located in Richmond, VA, and Chicago, IL, the decision was made in 1978 to relocate the Shrine's national offices to Tampa, FL. Those Executive Offices house not only the administrative personnel of both the fraternal and Shriners Hospitals corporations, but also a legal department (under the supervision of an appointed General Counsel) that oversees the many estates left to Shriners Hospitals. The day-to-day operations of the Shrine fraternity and Shriners Hospitals for Children are supervised by an Executive Vice President for Fraternal Affairs and an Executive Vice President of Shriners Hospitals (both of these officers are also located in Tampa).

Currently, in addition to 191 Shrine Centers throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Republic of Panama that house approximately 500,000 Shriners, Shrine Clubs are

located throughout the world. Although "Corporate" (fraternal) matters at all Shrine Centers are run by an elected Divan (officers), headed by a Potentate and a Chief Rabban, day-to-day activities are handled by a Recorder (record keeper/administrator). Official "stated" (business) meetings of each Shrine Center membership must be held at least four times per year, and one or more ceremonials are conducted each year for the induction of new members. There are also many Shrine Center unit and club business meetings and social events each year.

Within each Shrine Center there are various "units" and "clubs" that are organized for a specific purpose or interest. It is within these units and clubs where one will find the "real action" in each Shrine Center taking place. They usually meet monthly and have various social and other activities throughout the year for their members and their wives (many times the entire family is involved) and, as a result, long-time friendships and family relationships are formed among unit members and their families. Many of these organizations are the uniformed units that many parade watchers have become accustomed to seeing: Oriental bands, Shrine bands and other musical units, horse and motor patrols, precision marching units, clowns, Legions of Honor, yacht clubs, and other special units and clubs.

Each Shrine Center has a clearly defined geographical "territory" from which it can obtain new members. These jurisdictions are often quite large and, therefore, smaller geographical units (such as Shrine Clubs) are sometimes organized for fellowship purposes. Also, regional Shrine Associations (currently 20 in number throughout North America) are formed by groups of Shrine Centers, and various uniformed units within each of the Shrine Centers also form their own nationwide or regional associations (currently numbering 19).

Governance of the 191 Shrine Centers is by the Imperial Council, which is composed of representatives elected by each Shrine Center, past and present Imperial Officers, and Emeritus Representatives (who have served 15 years or more). The Imperial Council meets once a year (usually at the Imperial Council Session in July) to make policy decisions and adopt legislation regarding both the fraternity and the hospitals. The Imperial Council, with nearly 900 Representatives, constitutes one of the largest legislative bodies in the world.

The Imperial Divan is the governing body of the Shrine. It consists of 13 officers plus the Imperial Chaplain. The officers, who are elected by the Imperial Council, are usually past Potentates of their own Shrine Centers. The Imperial Divan and the immediate Past Imperial Potentate constitute the fraternal corporation's Board of Directors and they, with the chairman of the Board of Trustees, constitute the Board of Directors of the hospital corporation.

The Chief Executive officer of the Shrine of North America is the Imperial Potentate who is elected for a one-year term when the Imperial Council Session meets each July. He appoints various committees to help him with his many responsibilities and assist in implementing his programs. The Endowment, Wills, and Gifts committee is one of the most important of these committees. It coordinates and supervises all the contributions and bequests given to the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Although many changes have taken place within the Shrine since the original 13 members started the great Shrine organization, one thing has not changed: the fact that all Shriners share not just a Masonic background, but a real zest for living. The essence of the Shrine is the fraternal fellowship for which it was originally founded. Wherever Shriners get together there are great times and laughter - there are no strangers in Shrinedom. This is evident since most convention and other Shrine activities, as well as fund-raising events in support of Shriners Hospitals, include the families of Shriners. The "buoyant" philosophy of Shriners has been expressed as "Pleasure without intemperance, hospitality without rudeness and jollity without coarseness." Shriners are men who

enjoy life as they support the "World's Greatest Philanthropy", Shriners Hospitals for Children. Most Shrine Centers provide funds for the Shriners Hospitals for Children by sponsoring various fund-raising activities. As many as 500 of these events can occur in each calendar year, and they include such activities as the East/West Shrine Game and other football games, horse shows, hospital paper sales, and other miscellaneous sports and social events. Wouldn't you like to be part of a fraternal organization like that? Any Master Mason can join the Shrine - **membership in the Scottish Rite or the York Rite is no longer a requirement to become a Shriner. Also, no memory work is required.**

In the next article of this series, I will address Shrine membership information - how you can become a Shriner and join in the many activities that take place in Shrinedom. In the meantime, I hope this series of articles has raised some questions that deserve to be answered. So, please take the time to write them down and send them to me at **NUR Shrine, P.O. Box 10085, Wilmington, DE 19850-0085**. I will be pleased to restate your question (without referring to the source if you prefer) and respond in open forum in the next issue of **THE DELAWARE FREEMASON**. If you have an individual or "private" question, please feel free to contact me through the Recorder's office at the NUR Shrine Center (302-328-6100) - just leave a message, including your phone number, and I'll respond as quickly as possible.

Oh, yes - I almost forgot, here are some possible answers to the question at the end of my last article: Shriner businessmen include Jeno F. Paulucci (Founder of Jenos Pizza) and Dave Thomas (Founder of Wendy's); Shriner newscasters and sportscasters include Chet Huntley, Bob Prince, and Curt Gowdy.

This time, can you name an entertainer who is or was a Shriner? (Tune in next time for the answers, if needed.)

## Ionic Lodge No. 31

Brother John Philip Sousa is coming to town! We are pleased to offer a presentation of the life and music of this distinguished Freemason on October 2, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Newport Masonic Temple, Newport, Delaware. Dinner is optional for \$10.00 and will be served at 6:30 p.m. Ladies are invited. Please call (302) 475-8917 for reservations.

Mr. Ed Okonowicz, a renowned local author of the paranormal, will be our guest speaker on November 6, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. Please plan to attend with your significant other as we turn down the lights and experience Mr. Okonowicz's presentation entitled, "Tales Tombstones Tell". The 6:30 p.m. dinner is optional. Join us if you dare!

## The Delaware Lodge of Research By Franklin Townsend, PM Secretary

### Did you know

The Delaware Mason who served both as the US Secretary of Treasury and the U.S. Secretary of State?

That the last Union general killed in the Civil War was a Delaware Mason?

The names of the Masons who were elected governors of Delaware?

Anything about Hiram's Delaware Regimental Lodge No. 30?

These and other facets of Freemasonry are covered in the almost 50 papers that have been published by the Delaware Lodge of Research. The Delaware Lodge of Research is open to all Master Masons and meets twice a year, usually the third Saturday in April and the first Friday night in June. The petition fee is \$25.00, which entitles you to a full set of previously published papers. The annual dues are \$5.00, which provides you with the one or two papers presented yearly. For further information contact Franklin Townsend at 818 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, or (302) 998-6475 (days).

## Freemasonry in Action

By Robert E. Trice, PGM

It is a well know fact that a picture is worth a thousand words Nothing brings to my mind this phrase more vividly than the two pictures accompanying this article. For the benefit of the brethren who are not aware of what these pictures represent and also for those directly involved, I will give a brief explanation of the related event.

This past winter one of our well-known brothers was involved in a near death automobile accident in the



area of Oriole, Maryland. The roads were slick with black ice and he was struck by another car, totaling his vehicle. En route to the hospital there was a need to call upon additional aid from another EMT Unit, which proved to be a lifesaver. Brother Bill was brought back from near death by aid of the crew who had the additional equipment and expertise the first team did not have. Brother Bill suffered multiple injuries to almost every part of his body. Some of the most severe injuries were his broken jaw, arm, leg and a very sore back. Two months after the accident six past Grand Masters and our Deputy Grand Master visited Brother Bill and his lady Marty. We came away saddened by their extreme monetary difficulty and, just as important, his depressed state of mind.

It was collectively decided we personally would help Brother Bill with additional aid from the Grand

Lodge Charity Fund. Weeks later it was discovered that Bill's back was broken. This diagnosis placed his medical and monetary situation in an entirely, different circumstance. It became apparent that Brother Bill would not be able to return to the pulpit in Oriole and would therefore be required to find another residence. In the latter part of May we learned that Bill and Marty would be leaving Oriole and moving into a rented trailer in Magnolia, Delaware.

In order to improve

the financial situation of Bill and Marty it was determined that we, as Masons in Delaware, should muster all the time and monies (as liberally as our means would permit) to help aid and assist our brother. As a result of various means of communication, a moving van with all the essential equipment and fuel accomplish to move was donated by a local furniture company. Brothers at every lodge meeting were asked for their contributions in support of the "Bill Downing Fund". By moving day we had brethren from the far reaches of Northern Delaware to Southern Delaware committed to participate in what I referred to as "Moving Day for Bill".

On June 21, 2003, over 50 Freemasons and many of their wives formed on Route 13 (across from Johnny Janosik's Furniture Company) in convoy formation. It was initially decided that the brethren from the southern part of the state would do the loading in Oriole and the northern brethren would unload at Magnolia. However, all the brethren from north and south arrived at Oriole with a tremendous show of unity. This support totally overwhelmed Brother Bill and Marty. There were no boundaries on this day as everyone worked together.

Now you know the entire story. The group photograph requires no further explanation as it involves Freemasons who came to help and give support and encouragement to a needy brother. The most emotional time was when the Grand Secretary presented Brother Bill with a check for \$6,000.00. I have known Bill for over forty years and that was the first time I saw him break into tears.

I thank all Freemasons in Delaware and those in Maryland and Pennsylvania who helped make this a truly wonderful day for Bill and Marty. It would not have happened without the help of all of you. What a wonderful feeling and honor to be a Freemason!

