

The Castleberry Faire

By MARK STOUGHT

I think that we do not always give the non-Shrine events at the Auditorium enough coverage, but they perform vital functions for us in terms of public exposure and community visibility, not to mention money from concessions. One of the more interesting events this year was the Castleberry Faire, which came to the Auditorium from November 23-25 for its second visit this year, this time as the 12th Annual "Original" Castleberry Faire. This year, the Castleberry Fair is traveling through Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut from March through December, with two stops at the Auditorium and a total of nineteen shows.

So what is the Castleberry Fair? Well, if you can just imagine the Auditorium packed wall-to-wall with crafts of every shape and size and color, you might start to get the idea; there were three aisles worth of booths in the auditorium, from end to end, the Fez Room was filled, and even the front entranceway. Everywhere a person could possibly go, there was something new to see.

There were plenty of standard crafts, but there were many out-of-the-ordinary crafts as well, which I personally found more interesting. This is not to say that I don't like framed photography, painting, or woodcarving, and the stuff at Castleberry is all hand-made, but the "odd" stuff is what catches my attention, like **Brice Booker** of Richmond Glass Works in Newton, who creates designs based on not only his own ideas, but also on antique doilies. The result is some pretty interesting tableware. In another glass vein, **Cristian Gazmuri** of Gazmuri Glass and Reign of a Thousand Flames Studio in

Amherst, MA, displayed his glass marbles, paperweights, sculpture and other blown glass. The designs are varied and spectacular, and make for some interesting conversation pieces.

One of the things I wouldn't expect at a craft fair would be food, but there was plenty of that to go around. I think the highest profile food booth was the one manned by **Chris White** of Ron and Frank's Gourmet out of Pittsburgh, PA. They have been featured in a recent issue of **Rachel Ray's** magazine and also on the Today Show. Ron and Frank's specializes in gourmet beverages in one-pound bags or cans: hot chocolate (twenty flavors), cappuccino (twenty flavors), spiced apple cider mix, lemonade mix, cold drink mixes, brownie mix, and chai. At this point, many of you are probably wondering "so what's chai?" and have a puzzled look on your faces. We now turn to the briefly educational portion of the article.

Chai (pronounced with "ch" as in "chair" but rhymes with "tie") is the word (or a close cognate of the word) for "tea" in a lot of Asian languages, such as Chinese and Japanese. "Chai" as we know it in the US, though, is tea leaves blended with milk and spices, and comes from Hindi (and therefore India) where it is more properly known as "masala chai." The taste obviously depends on the blend, and the places that sell chai certainly have a lot of blends.

OK, that's enough education. Onward and upward (or at least another aisle), where I found **Dena Baker's** Lancashire Eccles Cakes, which date to a recipe from 1653, when, according to the Eccles Cakes website, they were outlawed by **Oliver Cromwell**. The business itself is located in Newton, MA. In any case, now that said cakes are legal, they come in three styles: baked with butter and currants, baked with butter with a raspberry center and currants, and for the health conscious and lactose-intolerant, baked with no dairy and with no cholesterol to boot. I have also



been assured that while the recipe is ancient, the cakes are baked fresh.

At this point I decided I should perhaps get something to eat, so I stopped by Gebow's Galley (also known as the concession stand), because I didn't want to eat an entire booth's worth of food. The Galley was manned (and womanned, for that matter) by the Stewards and the HONS, and the prices were pretty reasonable, with the standard fare: hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, fries, and beverages. I got my food, and wandered off to the Fez Room to eat, whereupon I was surprised to see it full of booths!

After I ate, I took a look around, and I saw some more interesting things: a chair massage setup, boxes made with doors to old post boxes (which were really a lot better than they seem), and even handmade jewelry boxes of various sizes. There were also the obligatory holiday decorations; lotions, perfumes, and other things that the wives/girlfriends/significant others might like (and might get them to forgive you for dragging them to the Auditorium for an event they might enjoy!). There was much more to the Faire than I could possibly describe in an article of reasonable length. So hopefully I've given you a taste of what was there, and I'll leave you with a little bit of web information you can follow up if you'd like: Castleberry Fairs is located at www.castleberryfairs.com; Richmond Glass Works is richmondglassworks.com; Reign of a Thousand flames is at reignofathousandflames.com; Ron & Frank's is ronaandfranks.com; and Eccles Cakes is ecclescakes.com.



CAMELES FAMILY

BUMPER BOWLING
PARTY ROOM

SUNNYSIDE

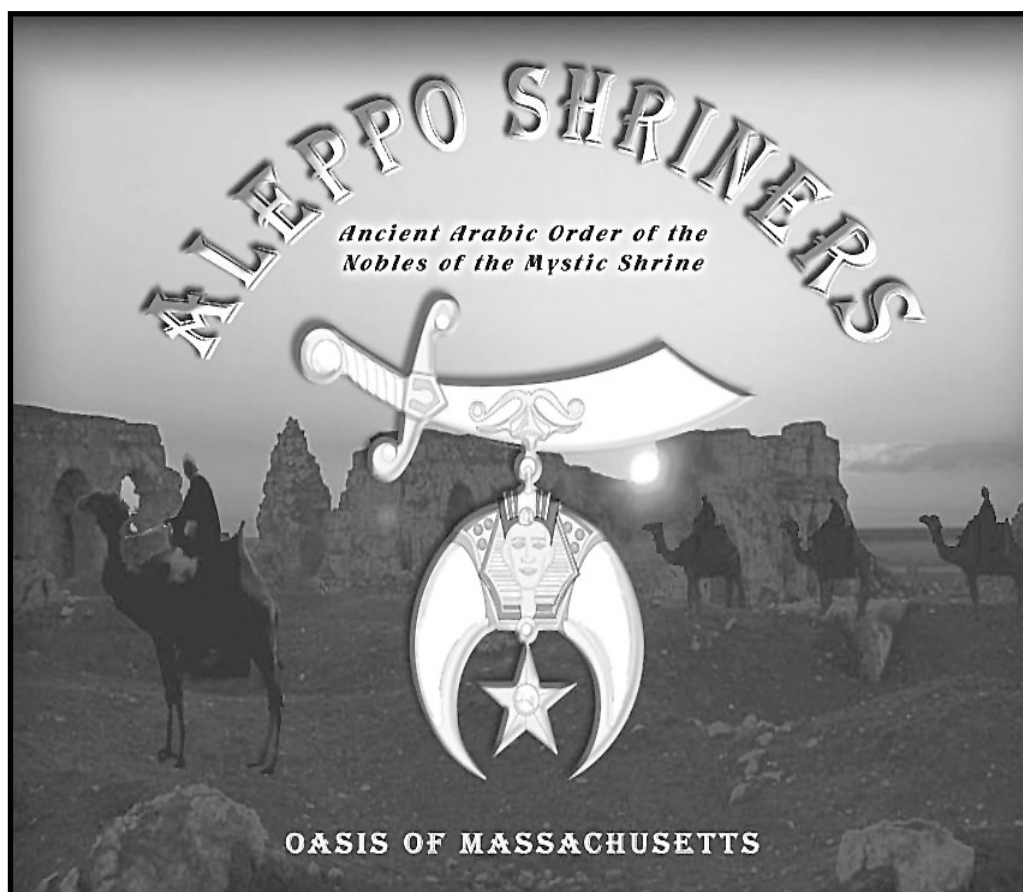


BOWLADROME

32 COLUMBIA CANDLEPIN LANES
EST. 1950

176 WATER STREET
DANVERS, MASS. 01923

FOR RESERVATIONS
978-774-1983



BE SURE TO CHECK OUT
ALEPPO'S NEW
& UPDATED WEBSITE

LOOK AT ALL THE UPCOMING EVENTS

LOOK AT THE PHOTO GALLERIES

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE

ABOUT THE SHRINERS,

IT'S ON THE SITE

WWW.ALEPPOSHRINERS.COM