



# Transitions

By: HARRY G. ORCUTT  
CAPTAIN



THE great clock of the Earth, which majestically proceeds in an elliptic orbit about the Sun that provides warmth (usually) and sustains our lives has completed another grand revolution comprising a single year. Most folks on our planet celebrated the New Year on January 1st, but the New Year for Aleppo Shrine began at the January 24th Change of Command Ceremonial. As compared with the great clock of our planet, our own fraternal body may appropriately be likened to that of a finely jeweled watch. The spring of this Aleppo watch is wound up once at this time of year, and the energy from the main spring then provides the energy for the Shrine Center to function through another such cycle.

Despite the economic downturn presently afflicting most of the nations of our world and thus also the institutions that comprise them, Aleppo itself enjoyed a rather good year with a successful April Circus, September North/South Shrine Football Game, and enough parades to wear out a pair of footgear. The Units and Clubs of our Shrine Center raised near record amounts for the Transportation Fund by redeeming bottles and cans, recycling tabs and non-redeemable cans, and conducting many different events like the can contribution fundraising program by Nobles at area stores and malls, the Chili Cook-off, and many others. A worthy effort doesn't even come close to describing how outstanding this achievement proved to be.

Like a watch, keeping everything running properly requires all the wheels and gears of the mechanism to function flawlessly together. The main wheel or Divan provides direction to the other wheels, the Uniformed Units and various Shrine Clubs. Whoever thought up this system had a pretty good notion of how to design a reliable watch. Though the Potentate or "Illustrious" is in absolute charge, he didn't just appear out of nowhere. A previous Potentate had to recognize his leadership abilities from previous good works which he may have performed within or without the Shrine, and then appoint him to the first rung of the Divan, that being the post of Second Ceremonial Master. Six years of moving up from post to post and taking on (and succeeding in) ever more arduous assignments would then pass before such an individual attained his own place as Potentate, served his year, and replaced himself with the appointment of another Second Ceremonial Master.

Such a system familiarizes and prepares each selected potential Potentate for what is expected of both himself and the Divan he currently works with during his tenure. Each month the entire Divan, ably assisted by the Aleppo Recorder (who runs the day-to-day operations of the Shrine Center) and the Treasurer (who keeps a good account of the Temple assets, liabilities, incomes, and expenditures), meet to discuss and plan upcoming events, Unit issues or requests, project assign-

ments, and any other item affecting the successful operation of Aleppo. Thus are actions decided upon and set in motion. If a thing works well, it is tried again and perhaps improved upon; if it doesn't, it is modified or discarded and something else tried. Attaining success is the primary goal.

Then, as previously mentioned, we have the smaller wheels of the watch, which are the Uniformed Units and Shrine Clubs. By way of example, there is the Minutemen Unit. Here, too, leaders are chosen, confirmed in their posts by the serving Potentate, perform their year or two of service, and then return to the ranks of the Unit as a guiding resource for those who have replaced them. Such was my happy fate when I relinquished my command this year as Captain, and presented my Executive Officer, David Sisler, with the polished silver gorget of Unit Captain (The gorget was the bottom crescent of a knight's helmet, which protected his throat. Over time it became smaller and smaller, an article of office hung from a cord or chain, that signified the wearer was an officer in command of an Army, and all of the lesser sub-units that comprised such). The Minutemen Unit possesses a distinct Company gorget to identify our Captain, while Past Captains are presented with a gorget that, though similar, is also distinctive in appearance. Former Musket Sergeant Daniel Corshia then replaced Dave as 1st Lieutenant and Executive Officer. The Unit is foursquare behind our new leadership and ready to follow them as we all prepare for the coming year.

The attentive reader may have noticed that my title on the byline of this article has also changed from that of Captain to Mukhabir Lt. In returning to the ranks (2nd Lieutenant), but keeping my responsibility of reporting what transpires in our happy company, having a title like Clerk, Recorder, Reporter, or (defining role - some such) Adjutant just did not satisfy my inclination for the distinctively unusual. So, with a pinch of panache, a jigger of je na sais quoi, and a hint of humility (never leave humble out of the recipe), I perused the two volume 1915 History of Aleppo Temple, where on page 1000 of Volume II, I discovered a section titled: EXPLANATION OF ARABIC TITLES OF SHRINE OFFICERS. Therein listed was "Mukhabbir"- Correctly, "mukhabir," meaning "messenger." The word is derived from "khibra," "to learn." From the standpoint of curiosity, I wonder how long it has been since a Shrine has had a



PAST-CAPTAIN Harry G. Orcutt presented incoming Captain David P. Sisler the Company Command Gorget.

Mukhabir in its service? As with Lazarus, I have brought it forth from the dead; it lives anew. My bizarre soul is content.

We congratulate incoming Potentate, Illustrious Bob Smith on the assumption of his exalted office. Give us parades in which to play our fifes and drums, patriotic flags to carry proudly and the "boom-boom fire sticks" that inform bystanders that we are indeed in the field; and let us serve hot dogs at the Aleppo Shrine Circus. We look forward to consuming Angus Steaks and performing at the June Ceremonial. The new year is before us -- let it be a great and prosperous one for Aleppo Shrine.

Nobles, we still have openings for those who wish to throw in their Shrine futures with us, the only Minutemen Unit in Shrinedom. All that is required is that you are an Aleppo Noble in good standing and that you are physically able to march up to five miles (almost always less than two and a half) with whatever equipment (i.e. drum, fife, flag, guidon, or musket) that is essential to your duty station. Join us in our 2nd floor barracks (the one with the Minuteman on the door) each 1st Thursday of the month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m., after which a collation is enjoyed. Come on down and get to know us, and give us the opportunity to get to know you.

## Aleppo Cycles Unit

By KEN AUSTIN

FOR several years, you could always count on the fact that every issue of the *Aleppo News* would have an update of the goings-on of the Cycle Unit by our dedicated reporter, Past Captain and Noble Gerry Stangroom. It is with great sorrow that we report that the Black Camel has taken our devoted friend and brother. He will be missed by all of us in the Cycle Unit. Well done, good and faithful servant.

In December, the Cycle Unit, their ladies and guests, again reveled in the season with our annual Holiday Party at the home of Bob and Maura Baker. A fantastic feast was enjoyed by all prepared by Bob and his trusty sidekick, Wilson Wong. Thanks for your hospitality and hard work!

The Unit is particularly privileged and proud this year to be serving under one of our own; Illustrious Potentate Robert F. Smith. Also seated on the Divan as its High Priest and Prophet is our Lieutenant, Peter Simmons. If that wasn't enough, Past Captain Gerald Wentworth and our Treasurer Bob Baker. Have been appointed as Personal Aides to the Potentate. Congratulations to all!

We would be remiss if we didn't note that Past Captain Rob Havener has been appointed District Deputy Grand Master for the 15th Masonic District-North. The Unit turned out in force to accompany him on his first Fraternal Visit to Alpha Lodge in Framingham.

Congratulations, Right Worshipful!

On February 7th, the Unit was well-represented at the Potentate's Ball in Framingham. We were honored, at the request of our Potentate, to act as an Honor Guard along with the members of the Motor Patrol. The evening was filled with dining, dancing and camaraderie and the members present were particularly surprised at the unannounced visit of Alice, a friend and supporter who we have not seen for some time.

As the snow and cold weather seemingly never ends, our thoughts still travel to those warm spring days when we'll finally be able to dust off the bikes and fire up those engines. Good thing, because it's going to be an exciting and busy season. Our new Captain, Doug Dodge, has been quickly filling the calendar with Tours of Duty, fundraisers and social events including seven parades, our annual Kids Party in June, the 135th Imperial Session in San Antonio in July (and yes, some of our members will again be riding cross-country) and our Poker Run in August. We will also be finding time to enjoy events with our ladies and a scheduled Unit Weekend Trip!

Does all of this sound like fun? You bet it is, and we're always looking for new members to enjoy it with. Some have heeded our call, and we'd like to welcome Nobles Rich Cail, Ron Muise and Bruce Hestand to our family. Stop by any Tuesday night at the Cycle Unit room and see what it's all about.

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E-MAIL THE ALEPPO NEWS AT:

[alepponews@alepposhriners.com](mailto:alepponews@alepposhriners.com)