



JEFF "SLO-POKE" COVILLE
A.K.A. STAN LAUREL

Aleppo's Very Own Laurel and Hardy

By HERMES BOYATIS

TEAMED officially for the first time in 1927 after their appearances together in several comedy films, the duo of **Laurel and Hardy** became legendary. They even won an Oscar for Best Live Action Short Subject for "Music Box" in 1932. Now their memory is being re-enacted by Aleppo Clowns **Jeff "Slo-Poke" Coville** (as Stan Laurel) and **Jack "Who-Me" Betts** (as Oliver Hardy). They have been bringing laughter to thousands during parades, hospital visits, and other special events for the past 15 years.

Jeff was born and raised in Malden. He graduated from Malden High School in 1948. From 1950 to 1954 he was a seaman first class in the Navy, serving in the Caribbean and Europe. He studied nights to be an electrician at Industrial Tech in Boston, but grabbed the opportunity to join New England Telephone & Telegraph (the old Bell system) and was with them for 35 years. He has been married for 54 years to **Betty**, and they have two boys and two girls. "We lost our oldest son **Stephen** to leukemia when he was only 31. Roger is a computer analyst with The Limited in Ohio. Our daughter **Leslie** was originally a flight attendant for TWA, and is now a consultant for an office furniture firm in St. Louis. Our daughter **Karen** is a graduate of Bentley, and we have seven grandchildren!"

Jack and Jeff both have some parallels in their lives. Jack attended Medford Vocational High School, studying to be an electrician, as Jeff did. Jack also served in the military; he spent eight years in the Air Force Reserve, and was activated during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He, like Jeff, went on to a career in the telephone industry, first with Pacific Telephone & Telegraph and later New England Telephone. Jack is married to **Kathy** and they have raised a boy and a girl. **John Jr.** is studying physical training, and daughter **Karen** is a homemaker, raising two girls and a boy.

Jeff became a Mason 43 years ago in The Lodge of Stirling in Malden, and Jack became a Shriner in 1979. Jack was raised in Medford Friendship Lodge in Wilmington in 1973 and became a Shriner in 1981. Here their paths converged

"Jeff was a Minuteman in Wilmington, and I joined the unit in 1982," said Jack. "We've been a team ever since. One of our roles was serious and patriotic in observing the Bicentennial. A contingent of our group marched from Wilmington to Philadelphia to deliver the petition. It took about two weeks. Then we joined other groups in marching in the parade."

So why Laurel and Hardy? Jeff and Jack both agree that they "do what comes naturally - we just love having fun! We drive our little car with the electric engine under our seat. We mimic all the antics of the originals, talking and interacting with the crowd and - of course - posing, all smiles, for photo-

graphs. We have a sign posted on the side of our car that says 'Hardy for President, Laurel for Vice President.' We like horsing around, so we sometimes change it to Governor and Lt. Governor. Probably the greatest tribute to our skit came at a function when a guy wanted to be our agent as professionals. Naturally, we refused so we could stay with the Shriners."

The two agree that they are dedicated to the original duo. "We are humble. The greatness was theirs. We just want to stick around awhile, keeping on ticking and getting a lot of smiles - all that stuff. Make people - especially kids in the hospitals - forget their problems for a while." We all watch you two, laugh a lot, and forget our worries, thanks to our own Laurel & Hardy!



JACK "WHO-ME" BETTS
A.K.A. OLIVER HARDY

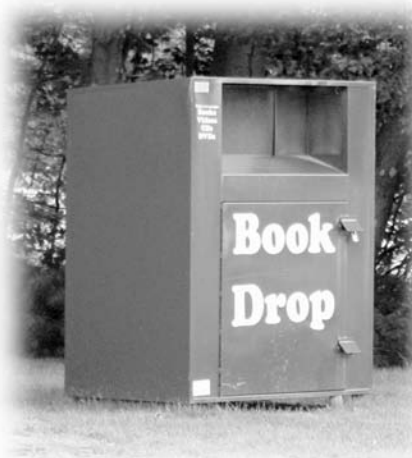


GOT BOOKS?

IF you have been to the Aleppo Shriners Auditorium in Wilmington anytime since last fall, you may have seen a purple container out by the entrance to the parking lot. It's a drop bin for used books, run by Got Books, Inc. They offer fundraising opportunities to organizations, and their goal is to keep their aid local. Got Books pledges to send 20,000 books a year to local troops stationed overseas, and also offers vouchers for free books to schools where their drop boxes are located.

Their charity book sale at new location in Lawrence, on 104 Glenn St., is open every Thurs & Fri 9am-6pm & Sat 9am-4pm. They hold a \$1 book sale, and half of all the proceeds go to local nonprofit groups like the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of North Reading and the Arlington, MA Babe Ruth League.

Aleppo receives a monetary donation calculated by GotBooks based on the amount of books collected, and the response thus far has been overwhelming. The box has regularly been not only full, but over-filled, and people from the surrounding area often come by to drop off books. So, if you've got some old books, CDs, DVDs and videos, bring them to the drop box at the Auditorium - you can support Aleppo, support the troops, and support local nonprofits and schools, all in one easy step!



Back In the Saddle

Expert surgery and innovative therapy help Utah boy lead active life

"You know, I'm feeling good about saddling up Gypsy tonight," **Dallin** said with a smile.

His mother, **Darrilyn**, smiled back. "We'll see," she answered, glancing out the kitchen window to the pasture where the family horse was sleeping.

What made her happiest about her son **Dallin's** statement were the words "I'm feeling good." They're special words, since **Dallin** was unable to walk a mere six years ago, much less ride horses. But because of the care he receives at Shriners Hospitals for Children - Salt Lake City, he's able to count horseback riding among his favorite activities.

Dallin was born prematurely and with cerebral palsy. When he was two years old, a family friend suggested Shriners Hospitals for Children for treatment.

"We didn't know a lot about Shriners Hospitals, so we figured they wouldn't accept us because we made too much money," **Darrilyn** explains. "But that's one thing the hospital makes very clear - they don't care how much money you make or what you do. All they care about is taking care of the kids."

Over the course of nine years, **Dallin's** treatment has included 12 surgeries. **Kristen Carroll, M.D.**, **Dallin's** orthopaedic surgeon, has lengthened tendons in his legs, put screws in his feet, and worked on his hips to increase his mobility. Each surgery is followed by extensive physical therapy, two or three times a week for several weeks. It's a lot of work, but the compassionate attention the family receives at Shriners Hospitals makes the process a positive one.

"Dr. Carroll and her staff treat **Dallin** as if he were their own son," **Darrilyn** says, adding that it's the little things that makes the hospital such a special place. "There's no question in my mind that Dr. Carroll really cares about her patients. In fact, everyone at the hospital treats you like family, and make sure that all of us are very well taken care of."

This one-of-a-kind care enables **Dallin** to go about being a typical 11-year-old boy; riding

motorcycles and four-wheelers, playing with his dog, **Kotah**, and riding horses, which is actually part of his therapy, as it relaxes his tendons and helps improve his balance. And while the motorcycles are not as therapeutic as the horse, they are every bit as fun for **Dallin**, who has followed his two older brothers into racing.

"I like the trophies," **Dallin** admits. He adds that he also likes it when he avoids fender-benders but even when he has one, he doesn't get flustered. "Once when I was racing in the sand dunes, I flipped my four-wheeler over," he remembers. "I was just holding on, relaxing and then Dad came and flipped me back over and I was on my way. I took second in that race."

Do incidents like that worry Mom and Dad? "Oh, no," **Darrilyn** says. "He does pretty well, he's pretty stable. We've done it for so long that it's just another day."

