

Noble Ralph Albion Brown

Now You See Him! Now You Don't!

By HERMES BOYATIS

MY first view of Noble **Ralph Brown** was at the 2007 Shriners All-Star Classic Football game when he was escorting in the special patients: Game King, **Jimmy Rosales**, a burned child from Central America; Game Queen, **Erica Way**, a high school junior from the Springfield area whose companion dog could turn on the lights in her room.

To interview him is like trying to grab the tail of a comet! He is so many amazing people, a veritable alphabet soup. A for athletics; B for more athletics like bowling, Bruins, baseball (Red Sox); C for Coast Guard, Children's Transportation Fund, collecting stamps and scrimshaw.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, on August 8, 1936, he is now seventy-one. With his usual delight, he says: "Next year, my birthday will be 8/8/8!"

Married? "Three years ago, the day after Christmas I lost my beloved **Alice Bell** to cancer. We had two sons and two daughters. Devastated, we lost son **Stephen** to suicide — with no warning, no message, no cause." Always ready to move forward with optimism: "Son **Gregory** is boss for U.S. Customs in Tampa and St. Petersburg, Florida. Daughter **Heather** is secretary for Pine Hill Hydraulics in Westport, Massachusetts. Daughter **Laurie Mae Fiske** serves as executive secretary for the National Director of Medicines at University of Florida."

Names like Laurie, Heather, and Alice Bell led your interviewer to query: "Are you Scottish, maybe?" "Both Alice and I have roots in Scotland — Glasgow. We went there and some of my family will go again." A brother Scot to Past Potentate **Alexander Campbell**.

His education? "I attended Babson College and Suffolk University and completed a Naval College course for journalism at the Coast Guard. I had the great experience of being on the Admiral's public relations staff, including press conferences on rescues; America's Cup races, even driving the second secretary from the Russian Embassy to various educational sites in greater Boston. He spoke better English than I and offered me a free education in Russia! He confessed that San Francisco is his favorite city!"

Now we find that Noble Brown is an expert in Russian, law, journalism, and the U. S. Coast Guard! "The oldest seafaring service in the United

States, originally called the Revenue Cutter Service!" he said proudly. Delighted he added, "I have joined the RagTops and now drive my 1981 T-Top Corvette convertible in parades."

Finally we reached his Masonic/Shriners life. "I was raised a Mason when I was in the Coast Guard, about 1961; a Shriner 1963 or 1964 — about 45 years." His awards, trusteeships and memberships? "In 2005 I received the **John C. Frye** Athletic Service Award from U/Mass/Dartmouth. Some time ago I was on the Board of the Art Museum there; Scottish Rite Financial Board; formerly Trustee of the Cape Cod Baseball League; last year Financial Chairman of St. Paul's Methodist Church; member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary for 45 years; presently Trustee of the Southeast Shrine Club; charter member of the Weary Travelers Shrine Club in Pocasset; member of King Philip Shrine Club in Taunton; and member of the Shrine Club in Gainesville, Florida."

His years and activities went back and forth rarely with dates attached. It was the done and doing deeds that mattered. "When I served in the Coast Guard in Boston, author **Alex Haley** served with the Coast Guard in New York, aboard a vessel far-different from the slave-craft in his *Roots*."

"I worked at the Smithsonian Institute in Cambridge as assistant film librarian dealing with UFOs, the largest such library in the world. Also, I was a military policeman in Taunton; worked with U. S. Customs in Boston and New Bedford; served as acting port Director of New Bedford, Fall River, and Plymouth; worked for the U.S. Post Office; served in the U.S. Navy Seabees on computers and hazardous materials; and worked at the regional Veterans Administration in Providence, Rhode Island."

Any pets? He laughed as he told the truth: "I have one happy gold fish, 'Goldy!'"

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PLAYING CATCH with Game King, Jimmy Rosales, during the 2007 Shriners All-Star Football Classic is Noble Ralph Albion Brown.



Charles River Duck Tour

Photos are clockwise from above left: The Charles River Shrine Club had an outing on August 12, 2007, the Boston Duck Tour. The boat was full of appreciative guests. Everyone had a great time, especially the grandchildren of **Roger Metcalfe** and **Dave Howard**. They were given the option to drive the duck when it went into the water portion of the trip. There were no other takers to steer the duck.

One of the drivers gets all dolled up for work. After the Duck tour, we went to Faneuil Hall Market Place for refreshments and shopping, if they so desired.

The Club extends its thanks to **Mark Norton** for driving the Aleppo bus.

