

Aleppo's Modest Man

2nd Ceremonial Master Robert E. Havener

By THOMAS FRIBERG

THIS year's Divan appointment by Illustrious **Dennis E. Reebel** as Second Ceremonial Master is **Robert E. Havener**. Rob is a very modest man when it comes to talking about his Masonic and Shrine involvement as well as personal ones. He is a third generation Mason and followed in his fathers' footsteps when he joined Aleppo in 1997 and immediately joined the Cycles Unit with him. As a matter of fact his father, **Noble Wingate Havener**, sponsored him in both the Masons and Shrine and is very proud of his son, especially sitting in the stands at the January Ceremonial as Rob was appointed.

Rob entered in Alpha Lodge in Framingham in 1992, and raised in 1993, where he has worked thru the chairs and served as Master in 1998. He was installed as Worshipful Master by a distinguished Installation Suite of Aleppo Shriners, Nobles: **David Newcomb, Robert Baker, Gerry Wentworth and Ken Austin**. Within Alpha Lodge Rob served in many elected and appointed roles, including Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, proxy to Grand Lodge, Master again in 2011, and is currently installed Assistant Treasurer. He served the Natick 23rd District Lodge of Instruction in 2001 as President. He also joined the Scottish Rite - Valley of Boston in 1996.

As an active Blue Lodge Mason, he affiliated with Meridian Lodge-Natick and Mount Lebanon Lodge-Boston, and was elected Honorary Member of Charles A. Welch Lodge, Maynard. He is also honored to have served the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts as District Deputy Grand Master of the 15th North District from December 29, 2008 to December 27, 2010.

Rob's passion for riding started at the age of 12 when he got his first Honda. He enjoyed many years with his father in parades and competitions with the Cycles Unit.



Rob married his loving wife **Linda (Wells)** in 1986 at the Natick Congregational Church where he has volunteered on many committees over the years, and

have not strayed from their home town of Natick. Linda has been extremely supportive with all that Rob has been committed in doing not only fraternally but civically as well. He has been on the Natick Zoning Board of Appeals for 25 years, which he said was "another avenue of giving back," but will not be going for another seat on the board after this year so he can fulfill his duties to the Aleppo membership as a member of the Divan.

Linda also has some Masonic heritage in her family as her father and grandfather were also Masons, and her grandfather, **Bill Wells**, was also a Shriner, playing clarinet in the band. Rob was fortunate to have accompanied Bill to some of the Alpha Lodge meetings, having to drive him there when he wasn't able to drive himself.

They have three daughters: **Amanda**, 24, who is going for her masters in mental health counseling; **Marissa**, 22, who is in her dream job as a school nurse; and **Hillary**, 20, who is in college earning her undergraduate degree in mathematics and education and is currently studying abroad at the University of Limerick in Ireland (her second study abroad). All three girls grew up with the Cycles Unit where he was captain in in 2005-2006. They would go on Aleppo trips to Imperial and Northeast Field Days as a family since Rob was on the competition team. They also enjoyed volunteering at the Aleppo Shrine Circus sometimes rearranging their family vacations around it.

Rob and Linda have lived their lives helping others and have bestowed this in their children as each has chosen a career path that would also help others. Linda was telling me of how Rob would stop to help anyone who was having car troubles, be it a



flat tire or an accident. Of course Rob would not tell her until after he arrived home because she worries about him when he does this, she said "he knows I would yell at him."

Besides going on Aleppo trips the Havener family also enjoys vacationing in Vermont where they have a time share.

When asked about his thoughts when Dennis approached him about being appointed, he said he was "surprised, humbled and honored." Linda said she wasn't surprised since he is such a devoted man, not only to his family but to others. Rob of course asked Linda of her thoughts of him being on the Divan and explained the level of devotion and commitment involved, he said "having her on his side is the best thing."

Rob says he is "enjoying the playground of Freemasonry and Shrinedom," but that they have changed since the olden days when his father was younger. The "eight hours of labor and eight hours of refreshment doesn't happen anymore." The younger generations are working more and don't have the extra time after spending it with their families. He knows that Aleppo has to have more family oriented events which will show that it is not only a place for the guys, but that we care about the whole family and everyone gets involved.

One of the personal stories that Rob shared with me, at the urging of Linda, is how Rob is a regular blood donor to the Red Cross and of a friend who was near and dear to both of their hearts. Billy was a longtime friend who had cancer back when bone marrow transplants were experimental and how insurance companies don't pay for them making them financially hard for most families. Back in 1984 they were raising money to help pay for the testing of the many people who donated blood to help find a match for Billy. Unfortunately Billy passed away in 1985 and his father **Frank Rizzo** created the **William Rizzo Foundation** in memory of his son. The foundation raises money and has blood drives for the Red Cross and to create a bone marrow and blood stem cell registry to help others who need transplants. Rob was a director for the foundation and has also helped save two lives with bone marrow transplants. One a woman who he donated blood stem cells to which helped her to survive another year, and bone marrow to a young boy in 2000 from Washington State. He is hoping to



make it to Washington State to meet that boy, and they have kept in contact over the years with cards and letters. I know Rob had a hard time telling this story, being an emotional one, but I thank him and it shows the modesty behind him and how selfless he is and as he put it earlier, "another way to give back."



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