

Our Football Hero Fundraiser

Bob Smith

By HERMES BOYATIS

WE watched his command and careful control at the Shriners Football game on Friday, June 22, 2007. The spectators, the coaches, the team, all knew that we were witnessing a leader, decisive, doing, what he had set out to do!

Just a little background here: **Bob** was born in Lowell, but he and his wife **Helen** have lived in Billerica all their married lives.

We are proud to know that this go-to guy will soon be moving up the ranks. We'll give all the details of his Masonic and Shrine deeds in our next issue. Bob loves to talk football.

"The players," he said "often learn, for the first time, who we Shriners are and what we do. The teams are chosen in our North/South football games. North is northeast of Boston. South is as far as Nantucket. One player for the Friday game had to fly from that island to get to the game on time."

He interrupted his Shriners game to express his personal delights; "I'm an AVID Boston Patriots and Red Sox fan." In addition to football, Bob and just about all his family are involved in some form of automobile or helping-Shriners businesses. Their daughter Wanda works for Genzyme Company in Cambridge, the firm which coordinated the studies of the Shriners and Massachusetts General Hospital in the development of artificial skin.

First son **Douglas** owns Doug Smith's Automotive Repair in Billerica. Second son **Randy** sells automotive products and chemicals for B&G



ROBERT F. SMITH
ASSISTANT RABBAN



2007 FOOTBALL CLASSIC
CHAIRMAN

Enterprise. "We ALL" he continued, "ride motorcycles – mostly Harley Davidsons!"

He noted that the happiest time of his life was his marriage to Helen. "We have had a loving life together for 48 years! In addition to our three children, we have five grandchildren. We love to play with them."

"I graduated from Billerica High School. Since then, my education has come from my lifetime experiences. After we had raised our children, Helen studied nights at Middlesex Community College for a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. When she retired, her job was trouble shooter in the payroll division of Raytheon."

"For 11½ years I served in the National Guard." Always a get-things-done guy! "I am Captain Emeritus of the Motorcycle Unit and chairman this year of the Football Game. My Harley Davidson has taken me to at least four Imperial Sessions all over the USA. Helen likes to ride as my passenger, but for LONG TRIPS, she flies and meets me at our destination."

There is so much more, but your interviewer had to cut short the saga of our future inspiring Rabban. What, we asked, Bob, are your hopes for the future? "To improve and increase membership in the Shriners, to get MORE YOUNG PEOPLE involved. My biggest fear: If we don't, we'll become nonexistent. Then, what will happen to our children?"

No way, we say! With Bob Smith in the driver's seat, we'll raise more funds and help more children than ever!



THE UNIFORMED UNITS lined up for inspection at the June 2 Ceremonial.



Oscar Pistorius at the the 2004 Visa Paralympic World Cup where he won the gold.

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The World's Gutsiest Athlete

By HERMES BOYATIS

LIKE the recent media coverage of SPAM, a runner with prosthetic legs, 20 year-old **Oscar Pistorius**, "the fastest thing on no legs", has received far-reaching media attention.

SPAM has had delightful reception from readers everywhere, but the runner is in the midst of controversy. His history of amputation, treatment, and surgeries bears no connection with our wondrous Jamie Jordan or Aleppo Shriners Hospitals. Oscar's fierce determination to make his dreams come true, however, has reached from his home town of Pretoria, South Africa, to Beijing, China, and Tom Hanks.

Born without the calf bone normally found behind the shins, he ultimately had his legs amputated below the knee. He has used artificial limbs since he was 13 months old.

Since then, Oscar has played rugby, water polo, and now track. He dreams of running in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, but other hopeful track sprinters and Olympic governing body, the IAAF, have created controversy. The IAAF bans the use of "any technical device that incorporates springs, wheels or any other element that provides the user with an advantage over another athlete not using such a device." Oscar says that his carbon fiber curved legs do not give him an advantage, "the company that makes my legs do make bionic feet but this device is passive, it doesn't put out any more energy than I put in."

In a surprising serendipity of names, Oscar-winning Tom Hanks plans to make a film about 20-year-old Oscar Pistorius!

We shall be watching and waiting. Will the peg-leg sprinter's dreams come true?

(quoted and abridged from Examiner, 5-29-07)