

# Clowning is Serious Business!



DAVID "DO-NO" NEWCOMB

...from page 20

being the butt of the joke because something backfires on him, like when Moe tells Larry and Curly to pick up a board, and they grab it, turn around, and smack Moe in the back of the head with it." So, every type of clown has a role to play, and they cannot deviate from that role; just think how strange it would be if Curly ordered Moe around!

As a demonstration of a clown face, Do-No used the Master of the 5th Lodge of Instruction, Noble **Stephen M. Coan**, as a test subject to become a hobo clown. The face begins with a layer of pancake makeup, followed by grease paint and some blending of colors to smooth the edges out. Then a little more grease paint is used to do highlighting of features. After all this, the greasepaint needs to be dried out so it stays on, which is what talcum powder is for. Take the powder off, add a nose, and you're done! Not to worry, it sounds a lot simpler than it really is.

By this point, if your mind hasn't been blown based solely on the intricacies of the clown face, you're certainly going to when we get into costuming. Clown costumes aren't just made of random stuff picked up in thrift stores or out of dumpsters; they are professionally made and can cost no small amount of money. Wigs are professionally designed and worked on by actual hairstylists, and a pair of clown shoes can cost upwards of \$500. Costumes are designed and tailored, and are also expensive as

a result. They even have what I would consider "designer labels," such as the "Mooseburger," which would be any costume designed by the famous Ringling clown Priscilla Mooseburger.

Now, let's take this one step further: we know that the professional clown invests a lot of time and money into a face and a costume, but how does the clown get from not being a clown to being a clown? Well, clown school, of course! Our own Do-No is the Dean of the Northeast Clown College, where clowns go to learn how to be clowns and compete against each other. This is where clowns begin to learn the magic tricks of the trade and so forth. If you see Do-No, ask him about the sugar packet trick – it's a party favorite! He might even make a balloon animal for you.

Speaking of balloon animals, they take a lot of practice. Imagine going through an entire package of balloons in a night, night after night after night. Maybe imagine practicing a trick for hours and hours to get it to work smoothly. Imagine having to work 12 performances in a week at the Circus, plus time spent entertaining the patients at the hospitals. Now imagine that you don't get paid for any of this, because everything you make as a fee goes to the Shrine Clowns Sneaker Fund. Lastly, imagine that you don't particularly care about any of the hard work because you really enjoy what you are doing more than anything else in the world. That's a Shrine Clown. So behind its comedic exterior, "clowning is serious business!"

## Aleppo Cycles Unit

By KEN AUSTIN

IT is with great sadness that I report that on April 21, 2009, our friend and Sergeant Emeritus; **Benjamin J. Russo** was taken by the Black Camel. Whether you knew him as Benny, Ben or Sonny, he was one of the most dedicated and hardest working members that the Cycle Unit has ever had. Benny was one of the earliest members of the unit, joining before he could even ride. He walked many of the early parades while learning to ride in a cemetery near his home. He would work countless hours with Illustrious Potentate **Robert F. Smith** running plywood over to Shawsheen Tech so that our trailer could be assembled. I was recently reminded how he spent days scraping paint off of the floor in the Cycle Room that looked really nice, but when wet, the bikes slid across it like ice!

Benny was a fierce competitor and as drill sergeant wanted everything to be perfect. His relentless pushing is one of the reasons that there are so many trophies in our room.

For many years, Benny and his Lady **Judy** organized our annual picnic for the kids from the Burns Hospital. He always enjoyed donning the chef's hat and making sure everyone was taken care of. Once the kids had returned to Boston, Benny was at it again cooking for the Unit, our Ladies and guests.

Aleppo Cycles was deeply honored and moved to be asked to act as an honor guard for Benny's funeral and to provide a motorcycle escort. I know he would have been proud but somewhat humbled by the number of Shriners that paid their respects. In everything he did, he only had the kids in mind. As he often said, "Gentlemen, THIS IS WHAT WE DO!"

In other news, the Unit held its annual Kid's Picnic on June 7th, at a new location; the home of Noble **David Veo** and his Lady **Laura** in Concord. A big thank you goes out to them for their hospitality! A total of twelve kids and staff arrived from the Hospital in the morning and were treated to a cook-



out, motorcycle rides through the countryside, a meet and greet with the several animals that the Veos have on their large property. The day was one of the few sunny ones during the month... I think the Grand Architect knows better! We were blessed and delighted to have Benny Russo's Lady, Judy, present to help out with the work of the day. After the kids returned to the hospital, everyone kicked back and enjoyed barbecued steak and lots of brotherhood.

The Competition team has been practicing twice a week for the Imperial Session in San Antonio while Noble **Dave Henry** has been prepping the trailer by getting the rear doors stenciled and painted. Thanks Dave! Also a big thank you to the folks in the front office who have let us store the trailer indoors during the monsoon season so that we can work on it!

For those of you who have not wandered down to the Cycles Unit Room lately, it is undergoing renovations to allow us to not only store the bikes, but to work on them and still have space to socialize and hold meetings. Studs and drywall have been going up in between practice drills, the picnic and the five parades that we've done! It's going slow... but it's getting there.

The last Ceremonial was very good for the unit with five new members signing up. Welcome to Nobles **John Boress**, **Steve Streeter**, **Angelo Bertolino**, **Michael Broomfield** and **Peter Shulkin**!

The Cycle Unit has been working with Applebee's Restaurant for a "Dining to Donate" evening.



THE CYCLES UNIT competed at the 135th Imperial Convention in San Antonio Texas. They placed first in competition drill, first in slow ride and first in obstacle course.

Applebee's will donate a portion of the proceeds from meals on that day to the Cycle Unit. Details will follow.

Last but not least, our Annual Poker Run is quickly approaching on August 23rd. Please see our ad on page 16 in this issue of the *Aleppo News* for details.

Until next time... keep the rubber to the road and the shiny side up.

