

The first month of 2011 is almost over as this is written and to all who read this, I hope that the new year, so far, has left you with good fortune and health. In the KOB, it seems that never a month goes by without one of our members undergoing some surgical procedure or losing a loved one and when this happens, we all pull through and provide support whether it be a card, flowers, visits, calls or prayers. Surely in these matters we are not much different from any other Khiva unit. I guess what I am trying to say here is that I am so thankful to be associated with such an extended family.

Among our membership is a young man that has become an inspiration to me. Without getting too specific, he was born with serious feet and leg deformities and went into the Scottish Rite Hospital for Children in Dallas before age two. After many surgeries, procedures and therapies, he was finally able to walk without any aids and was later able to pursue his passion, playing baseball throughout his school years. He "witnessed" this to me and a fellow Shriner at a recent Oriental Band event. Over the years I knew some of this but it had slipped my mind and I heard more in detail that night for the first time. We listened to his story and didn't ask too many questions- we just listened. Today, no one would suspect he had any such trials during his childhood. He said that he is a Mason and Shriner today because of his experiences as a child who received so much help at an early age. He has a lovely family now and he coaches his girl's softball team. He brags about their athletic skills at such an early age (they are under 10). Perhaps he sees his childhood in their eyes, and because of this he is more aware of how important our mission remains as Masons and as Shriners. I pray we can get more members like Justin Shelton. I'm proud to call Justin, a fellow Mason, Shriner, Oriental Band member and friend.

To catch you up with events at the end of 2010, the Band finished with what I think is a recent milestone for us- a relatively easy and successful fund raiser. Thanks to a generous benefactor in Dallas and our Caliph Joe Brewton, we were able to obtain four tickets to the Dallas Cowboys vs Philadelphia Eagles game at Cowboys Stadium on December 12th. The tickets were in a "Silver Suite" and included VIP parking. We threw in \$200 spending money as part of the winnings. As the fates would have it, the Cowboys were undergoing turmoil at that time with what turned out to be a lame-duck coach with a 1-7 record. I tried to sell tickets to Cowboy fans I personally know but some refused to buy any while saying their interest in the team has wained this year. Like those who follow any team, there are many "T-Shirt Fans" out there. Nevertheless, many tickets were sold by the membership and it turned out to be one of our largest fund raisers in many years despite how the 'boys were playing or whoever was coaching them. Congrats go to those who really sold the tickets. We are truly blessed to have had such a one-time opportunity to stage something like this at the end of the year.

The Band, along with the Mini-Vettes, Klowns and Cycle Escort lit up Polk Street during the December 3rd Electric Light Parade. Since the acquisition of our magic carpet, this parade has become a must attend for the Band. This year was very different from '09. Last year we were in the throws of a mighty cold snap that dropped the night air to 19 degrees during the parade. We froze things that we didn't know we still had! It took an after parade get-together with warm drinks to thaw things and get them working again. This year, when we passed the corner at Amarillo National Bank, the signs were saying 67 degrees at 8:00 pm! Some in the crowds were seen wearing short sleeves. The crowd was huge, there were people stacked four to five rows deep when the space allowed on the sidewalks. The parade slowed down when the units arrived were in front of the Shrine Center. There we had our own cheering sections on the front steps. All-in-all, lots of fun and hope we get to do it many years from now!

The Oriental Band voted in it's new slate of officers at our December stated meeting. Our officers this year are:

Sultan (President): Joe Kiestler
Emir (Vice-Pres): Rick Beecher
Scribe (Secretary): John Wilson
Gold Minister (Treasurer): Francis Johnson
Caliph (Director): Joe Brewton

We pray that our new Illustrious Sir Glenn Pate and his Lady Patty will have a great and successful year at the helm of Khiva Shrine this year. They have some great people working for them and their support will be much needed as our Shrine Center prepares to host TSA in June. The Band will host all Oriental Bands in Texas April 1st (no fooling) at our Mid-Winter conference. Tim & Jennifer Beecher are busy with the details and will no doubt receive lots of good help with that as well. and I am sure that As reiterated before, I wish everyone a great Christmas, and New Years. Hopefully with all the holiday parties, planning and such, we can slow down, take a deep breath and realize why we are Shriners. We are here for the Children!

Have a great New Year!
The KOB Scribe.