

Carrie's Uncle Jon – Her Proudest New Shriner

HELLO Aleppo and all our Shrine friends near and far. I suspect most of you all know of **Carrie Holmstrom's** past near four years as a Shriners patient. This is her dad Mike writing, but best known now as "Carrie's Dad." Most of you reading know of her accident and how Shriners Hospitals For Children has not only saved her life, but is now helping her live her life to its fullest.

I will spare all the details since this is not my reason for writing this. All you need to do is Google "Carrie Shriners" to learn about her ordeal if you are not aware. Or simply visit her website – carrieholmstrom.com

My purpose for writing this article is so very emotional on so many levels. One of the constant daily dilemmas that I, as Carrie's father, have had to deal with since true heroes pulled her from the burning car is "How can I ever thank these people appropriately." How does a father thank anyone for

saving his baby? Then there were the heroes at Mass. General that saved her life several times in the first few days. We later learned these are the same heroes that control and work at the Boston Shrine, where she ended up eight days later. Her life was saved several more times... major infections, blood pressure, and much more. She spent nearly eight months in the Boston Shrine, I could name 20 plus people easily but at the top of the list is **Dr. Rob Sheridan**. I will never be able to find a way to thank so many other than to continue to spread the Shriner's story and cause..... and continue to try and help you save kid's lives.

But again, this is not my reason for writing this. We are now closing in on four years since Carrie's accident..... 36 surgeries and seven pairs of prosthetic legs later. She will be 21 this May first which will be emotionally charged to say the least. Three days prior to her birthday will be the four year anniversary of her accident, but it will also mean the end of being a Shrine patient. But know this.... we will never stop being a Shrine Family!

Shriners have given my baby girl back to us and she has/is now paying it forward big time. Again, simply visit her website to see how she is throwing the love back in the Shriners direction that we have been so fortunate to receive.

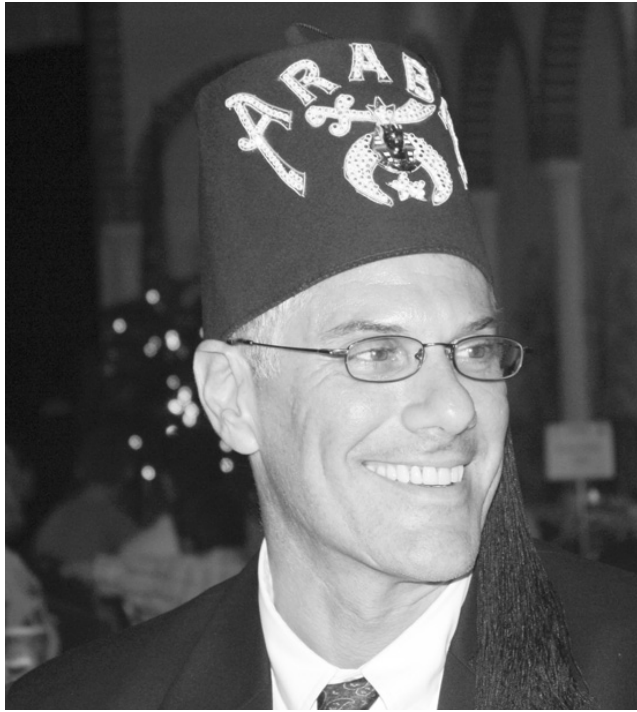
But my reason for writing this article is Carrie's Uncle, **Jon Karalekas**. He is my wife's "baby" brother and is running a very successful produce business in Naples Florida. During the early days of Carrie's ordeal, Jon and his wife **Carol** were in constant daily contact with my wife **Karen**, worried so much about Carrie. He and his wife even flew up several times to be with us during those so extremely difficult early days.

But besides being so very worried about his sister and Carrie, he was learning on a daily basis about this Shriners Organization. Carrie and I now very affectionately refer to them as our favorite "men in the funny red hats." We all knew of you guys, but we learned so much more once we needed you. And now we are so honored and thankful to consider so many of you through our travels as dear friends.

I would guess about a year ago Jon asked me how



Carrie Holmstrom's Uncle, Jon Karalekas and Karen Holmstrom (Carrie's mother) at Araba Shriners in Florida, where Jon became a Noble. Karen was able to present her brother with his Fez during this momentous occasion.



NOBLE JON KARALEKAS

one becomes a Shriner. He caught me a little off guard. At that time I wasn't totally sure so I contacted a Shriner friend, the marketing director at the Boston Shrine, **David Faulkner**. Since Jon lives in Florida, David put him in contact with someone at Tampa Headquarters and the ball started rolling. They offered Jon a "fast track" method. If memory serves me, Jon was considering it because all his time was being spent running his business, not to mention his extreme dedication to his own family. But he instead decided to go through the whole Masonic process. During his training he sent me several emails about how impressed he was by all his mentors. He was amazed at how much he had to learn and memorize but persevered and went through it. I must remind you, he did this while running a business with multiple offices throughout the country. And yet he kept mention-

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Social: 11:00 am
Lunch: 11:30 pm
Attire: Street Dress or Pant Suit
Deadline: January 15, 2010
Tickets: \$30




Aleppo

2010 Ladies Luncheon

Come Celebrate the Year Ahead with
The Potentate's Lady!

Saturday, January 23, 2010

at the



20 Elm Street ~ North Reading, MA

Complimentary bus transportation from Aleppo at 10:30 am. Arrive at 11:00 and enjoy a no-host gathering with our new First Lady and Friends.

North on Rte.128: Take Exit 41 marked Lynnfield Ctr- Bear right off exit and follow straight through for 4.5 miles - you will reach a sign marked Rte. 62 - Bear left onto Rte. 62 - The Thomson Country Club will be 1/4 mile on the left.

South on Rte 128: Take 114 West to Rte. 62 Middleton - Take left at Rte. 62 and follow through until you reach the Thomson Country Club

North or South on Rte 93: Take Exit 39 marked Concord St/Wilmington - Bear right off exit - follow Concord St. to the lights - Take a left onto Rte. 28 - follow until you come to Kitty's Restaurant - Take a right onto Rte. 62 and follow for 5-6 miles - the Thomson Country Club will be on your right.

Rte 1: Take Rte. 114 West to Rte. 62 Middleton - Follow for 2 miles then bear right - the Thomson Country Club is on the left.

MENU

Chicken Marsala
or
Baked Scrod

Please complete and return this form along with your check and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
Aleppo Shriners • 99 Fordham Rd. • Wilmington, MA 01887
Attention: Maribel DeLuca

Yes, I will attend the Potentates Ladies' Luncheon on Saturday, January 23, 2010
Selection: Chicken Marsala Baked Scrod

Check here if you intend to take the bus from Aleppo *Bus leaves Aleppo at 10:30 am

Please send me _____ tickets at \$30.00 per ticket. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Lady's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____