

# Es Selamu Aleikum: The Nobles of the Mystic Shrine

## Who are the Shrine Nobles?

Usually called just “Shriners,” Masons who have joined a Shrine Temple are easily recognized by the red fez they wear. The name of the Shrine is “Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine” and the initials, A.A.O.N.M.S., are an anagram for *A MASON*.

The Shrine was founded on September 26, 1872 as a social organization by a group of particularly jovial, quick-witted Masons. Fun and fellowship were stressed more than ritual, and an Arabic theme was adopted for symbols and ceremonies. The names of the officers—Potentate, Chief Rabban—the distinctive headgear, originated in Fez, Morocco, the regalia—silks fit for an eastern potentate—and the salutation—Es Selamu Aleikum (Peace be with you)—are all suggestive of the Western world’s fascination with Middle Eastern civilizations when the order was founded.

In 1920, The Imperial Shrine (the supreme governing body) officially adopted a resolution establishing the “Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children.” From that modest beginning has emerged a network of twenty-two hospitals, covering all of North America from Mexico City to Toronto, recognized as the greatest of all Masonic philanthropies, and among the greatest private philanthropies of all time.

## Medinah beckons

Since its founding by thirteen Master Masons, the Shrine has grown to approximately 500,000 members in 191 Temples in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Panama. At about 5,000 members, Medinah Temple, founded in 1883, is one of seven Illinois Temples, and the state’s largest.

An extensive cornucopia of activities has long been a Medinah tradition. Members are encouraged to become involved with a unit or committee of their choice. Units range from the *Black Horse Troop* (equestrians), to the *Brass Band*, to the *Press Corps* to *Zem Zem* (food and beverage)—a total of over forty units and committees from which to choose. Local Shrine clubs—groups that meet regionally but are all members of Medinah—also offer opportunities for fellowship and recreation. This plus a full calendar of parades, golf outings, dinners, holiday parties, and even luxury cruises, banishes the word “boredom” from the Medinah dictionary..

Medinah is a uniquely American Masonic experience, which preserves and exhibits some of the best of Americana for all to see and enjoy. Medinah Units appear regularly in parades throughout the Midwest and North America: The *Big Wheels* on their turn-of-the-century cycles remind us that at one time, cycling was only for the adventurous. The *Highlanders* Pipe and Drum Corps preserves and honors our Scottish and Irish immigrant ancestors. The *Indians*, with their authentic Native American costumes recall the original inhabitants of this continent. The *Clowns* preserve the ancient

arts of mime, pathos and humor. The renowned *Shrine Circus* annually recreates the excitement of nineteenth century America in an updated form for modern audiences.

Medinah’s social events, from the informal family picnic, to the formal Potentate’s Ball, complete with tuxedo-clad, fez-festooned Nobles and their lavishly gowned Ladies, provide opportunities to experience life as it was intended to be lived: with grace, style, and most importantly, *joie de vivre*.

Medinah’s has a long history of success in the highly contested world of Shrine competitions. At the 129<sup>th</sup> Imperial Council Session in 2003, The *Medinah Patrol* (drill team) landed 2<sup>nd</sup> in Drill and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Parade, the *Clowns* brought home a 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Makeup and a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Skit. The *Black Horse Troop* was awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> in Drill and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Parade, while the *Motor Corp* (Harley-Davidsons) won two 1<sup>st</sup> and one 2<sup>nd</sup> place trophy. Medinah took 1<sup>st</sup> place for its *Medinah Review* quarterly publication. The *Highlanders*, Medinah’s much improved pipe and drum unit landed a 2<sup>nd</sup> place in individual drumming and a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for band.

The Shrine’s best known success is its Shriners Hospitals for Children. A corollary effort, the East-West Shrine Football game, has raised millions of dollars for the hospitals and brought the story of the Hospitals to millions of TV viewers.

The Shrine was the first instance of a Masonic organization devoted to social activities. Its success indicates the need that it quickly filled. Now, over 100 years later, other Masonic social organizations dot the map, many boasting their own, different colored, versions of the Shrine’s famous red fez.

Shriners Hospitals established the first burn treatment center outside a military complex, alerting the medical community to the need for burn treatment, and causing the establishment of non-Shrine burn centers throughout North America.

Ask any ten Medinah Nobles why he likes Medinah, and you’ll probably get 100 answers. There are many reasons why Medinah has been an attractive fraternal choice for over 100 years. Its hallmark is the great brotherhood and social opportunities of all kinds it affords its members. Variety is another reason for its great appeal. There’s something for almost every taste and inclination at Medinah.

For those brethren making philanthropy their personal outlet, the Shriners Hospitals for Children have great appeal.

## Get “fezzed,” and become a Noble

Becoming a Noble of Medinah requires membership in an Ancient Craft Masonic lodge, completion of a membership petition, payment of the required fees and dues, and attendance at a Medinah Ceremonial. A petition accompanies this brochure. For more information, contact Medinah Shriners. Contact information is given on the front cover of this brochure, at the bottom of the Grand Master’s message.

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