Flooding Causes Nebraska to Request Disaster Relief Appeal

Torrential rain and flooding of the many rivers and streams throughout Nebraska have caused Grand Master Robert W. Moninger to ask the Masonic Service Association to announce a Disaster Relief Appeal. Donations may be sent to MSA at 3905 National Drive, Suite 280, Burtonsville, Maryland 20866. When remitting by check, please mark that your donation is intended for Nebraska. Donations can also be made online at MSA’s website www.msana.com.

The flooding comes at a critical time in Nebraska’s agricultural season. Flooding has deposited six inches to six feet of sand over the fields in some areas. This sand needs to be removed before plantings can take place for the growing season. In many cases, that season has passed, but there is hope for another season this year.

The harsh weather has continued with an unusually cold winter continuing into the spring. Rain continues to fall. Governor Pete Ricketts has called the disaster "the most widespread natural disaster we’ve ever experienced in Nebraska."

In eastern Nebraska, there is an extreme shortage of hay for farm animals. MW Moninger said that one field that would normally produce 65 bales of hay is now expected to produce only fifteen. As the Grand Lodge of Nebraska website explains, "Nebraska has experienced historic flooding in the eastern part of the state and devastating blizzards in central and western Nebraska with major loss of farm and ranching assets and income."

Every dollar donated through the Masonic Service Association will be sent to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska for relief. Please remember, MSA deducts no part of your contribution for administrative expenses including charges by PayPal, bookkeeping, and cost of acknowledgment letters. Your entire gross donation will be sent to the affected jurisdiction.

Minnesota Mourns their Grand Master, Most Worshipful Steven D. Johnson

Most Worshipful Steven D. Johnson, who had only recently been installed as Grand Master, passed away suddenly on Easter Sunday, April 21. A eulogy about his relationship with Freemasonry said, "He respected their honored traditions and philanthropic mission, but above all, he valued their friendship and guidance toward becoming his best self. Steve was installed as the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota on April 13th, 2019. This was a tremendous honor for him."

Minnesota Masonic Charities offered this tribute: "He left us too soon and he will be missed. But we will never grow tired of telling stories of who he was and the mark he left on our lives. "The impact of his work has been transformational, inspiring philanthropic support and accelerating progress toward a healthier future for countless families. He will be deeply missed."

MSA offers our sincere condolences to his wife, family, and friends on their loss.
Looking for Something to Do?

While the Masonic Con at Ezekiel Bates Lodge in Attleboro, Massachusetts, and the Midwest Conference on Masonic Education in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have concluded, there are still more events like these coming up for interested brethren.

The Mid-Atlantic Esotericum is on June 15 in Manassas, Virginia; New Mexico’s MASONICon takes place on June 21-22 in Albuquerque, New Mexico; the Texas MasoniCon is scheduled for July 22 in Fort Worth, Texas; and the Ventura Masonic Con takes place on August 17 in Ventura, California. The Masonic Restoration Foundation has its annual conference and business meeting on August 16-18 in Lexington, Kentucky.

The Northeast Conference of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries is on July 20 in Bangor, Maine; the Southeastern Masonic Conference is from August 1-3 in Charleston, South Carolina; and the Rocky Mountain Conference is from August 18-20 in Denver, Colorado.

Many fine speakers and presentations will be given at all of these events, and it is an opportunity to meet new brothers and gain new ideas. For some, the summer is a time for rest and relaxation from Masonic labors. For others, it is a disappointing pause to their usual Masonic rhythm. For the latter, these conferences give everyone a chance to meet with brethren from different jurisdictions, compare experiences, and gain Masonic knowledge. Take advantage of any of these opportunities even if it means just sitting on the sidelines and listening.

Thank You, Brother Chris Gans!

On page 19 in the May Wisconsin Masonic Journal, Brother Chris Gans writes a concise and informative description of what the Masonic Service Association’s purpose is. We couldn’t have said it better if we had written it ourselves.

He explains how MSA Representatives support the volunteer efforts at five Veterans Administration facilities in Wisconsin. Brothers Chuck Wallens, Vandy Prior, Steve Labus, Jesse Long, and Mike Peterson are well known at MSA headquarters for the work they do as Representatives.

Beside visitations, they each have special duties each specific to the facilities needs. This might include providing coffee, escorting visitors, ice cream socials, chapel services, or sponsoring musicians. At the Tomah VA, Brother Long participates in the “no Vet dies alone” program. When a Vet is close to passing and has no family members nearby, this brother will sit with him until the end.

These Wisconsin brothers have corresponding Representatives throughout the country. Each gives of their time for those who kept our country free. We should do everything we can to support them. MSA has been doing this for the past seventy-two years at the suggestion of President and Brother Harry S. Truman. We provide our Representatives with comfort items and support. The Grand Master of each jurisdiction encourages their brethren to do the same. Can you help? If so, contact MSA at office@msana.com.

We Can’t Forget Seventy-five Years Ago: June 6, 1944

If ever there ever was a culmination of effort for good to prevail over evil, June 6, 1944, was it. The invasion by Allied forces to free Europe from the tyranny of Nazism began that day and continued until final victory in April of the next year. Millions of servicemen and women set examples for us to do whatever is necessary to preserve freedom.

Twenty years after that date, CBS news correspondent Walter Cronkite, a Senior DeMolay, brought President Dwight D. Eisenhower back to the Normandy beaches to recall that day. On the fiftieth anniversary, June 6, 1994, President Bill Clinton, another Senior DeMolay, met with leaders of the World War II Allies to mark the date: D-Day.

Now, on the seventy-fifth anniversary, June 6, 2019, there will be celebrations throughout Europe and especially Normandy for a “momentous occasion to celebrate peace, liberty, and reconciliation.”

It is estimated that of the more than 16 million American World War II servicemen and women, fewer than half a million are still living. While the number of those who served continues its inevitable decline, it is well worth it for those of us who cannot remember that day to remember its everlasting significance in our lives.