Kentucky Disaster Appeal Update

The response to the disaster relief appeal for the tornado victims in Kentucky has been overwhelming. As of December 31, 2021, over $150,000 has been collected. A payment of the total amount was prepared and submitted to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky in early January. Future payments will be made periodically as more donations are received.

Please forward any donations you feel appropriate to MSA to help our devastated Brothers and their families in this stricken jurisdiction.

To donate online with a credit card, go to https://msana.com/current-appeals/

To donate by check or money order, make payable to MSA Disaster Relief Appeal and send to: Masonic Service Association, 813 1st Avenue SE, Suite 357, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402. Mark clearly on your check that this gift is for the “Kentucky Disaster Relief Appeal.” All such donations are tax deductible. MSA is a 501(c) (3) organization.

Short Talk Bulletin Podcasts

If you are looking for an alternative to reading the Short Talk Bulletin every month, the STB Podcasts, produced by Brother Michael A. Smith of Maine may be what you are looking for. There are currently 318 episodes available that are sortable by title, volume, number, and category. The episodes are narrated by 40 volunteers and are of very high quality. Each year use of the podcasts continues to increase. The first year of being available there were 50,000 downloads, 150,000 in year two and 278,388 in 2021. The top episodes are: The Trowel (3430 downloads), The Hiramic Legend (2366), The Holy Saints John (2115), For the Newly Raised (1889), Thoughts on Memorial Day (1712), Alas My Brother (1679), The Ultimate Lessons of the 1st Degree (1640), Tell the Applicant (1546). You will find a link to the Podcasts on the MSA website https://msana.com or directly at https://shorttalkbulletin.com/.

Save the Date

Please save the date February 20, 2023, and plan now to attend the historic re-enactment of the cornerstone laying of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

The Memorial is a National Historic Landmark that stands as American Freemasonry's vital tribute to George Washington and the values of freedom. Each year, thousands of museum guests visit the Memorial to learn about Washington and Freemasonry, and to become inspired by the great heritage left to us by the Father of our Country and our nation’s foremost Freemason.

As more information is available, it will be posted on this page. https://gwmemorial.org/pages/cornerstone.
The Truth About Presidents Day
Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association
https://www.mountvernon.org/

In 1879, the United States made Washington’s February 22nd Birthday a federal holiday. Today, the third Monday in February is frequently referred to as “Presidents’ Day.” So, which is it? We get to the bottom of what’s official and what’s not.

George Washington was a humble man who did not enjoy flashy celebrations. During his lifetime, Washington paid little attention to his own birthday, and often “celebrated” it by responding to letters or attending to matters at Mount Vernon.

However, national celebration of his birthday began while he was alive and continued after his death. While his birthday is still recognized to this day, the parameters around it changed in the late 20th century, when it unofficially became known as “Presidents’ Day”.

The road to what the majority of the public in the United States now recognizes as Presidents’ Day is a long and confusing one. After Washington died in 1799, his birthday was informally celebrated across the country. It wasn’t until January 31, 1879, that Washington’s birthday became a federally recognized holiday.

Washington’s birthday is also recognized in another unique fashion. Starting in 1896, it has become a tradition to read Washington’s Farewell Address on February 22 (the actual day of his birth) in the US Senate by a current member. This tradition reminds us of a man whose patriotic spirit still inspires us to this day, particularly federal workers who uphold what he helped create.

Moving to a Monday

Until 1968, Washington’s Birthday had always been celebrated on February 22. It was tradition and a powerful reminder of the man who helped create what we have today in the United States. On June 28, 1968, Congress passed the “Uniform Monday Holiday Act”. This law was to provide uniform annual observances of certain legal public holidays on Mondays. The act was also created to provide federal employees with more three-day weekends. Under this new law, Washington’s birthday would be celebrated on the third Monday of February, partially losing the value and identity of the importance of his birthday. Washington’s birthday has not been celebrated on the actual day of his birth since the law took effect in 1971.

The Presidents’ Day Misnomer

Today the nation typically combines Washington’s Birthday with Presidents’ Day, celebrating both days on the third Monday in February. However, Presidents’ Day is not the official name of the holiday.

While the name “Presidents’ Day” was proposed for this Monday holiday in 1951, the U.S. government never officially changed the name. In the 1980s, thanks to advertising campaigns for holiday sales, the term became popularized and largely accepted.

The idea behind the name was to create a holiday that did not recognize a specific president, but rather celebrated the office of the presidency. This joint recognition would also celebrate President Lincoln’s February 12 birthday within the same period, but arguably, George Washington, the father of our country, deserves his own day.

George Washington Day

While it may seem like the entire nation observes “Presidents’ Day,” Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, and New York specifically recognize the third Monday in February as “Washington’s Birthday” or “George Washington Day.” Some states, such as Virginia, celebrate Washington’s birthday the entire month of February. In the city of Laredo, Texas, an annual Washington Birthday Celebration that began in 1898 lasts the entire month!