#### May, 2022

## Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



# MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND



We're delighted to restore our full complement of Memorial Day weekend activities following our reduced offerings during the pandemic. The cemetery is looking magnificent under the dedicated care provided by Diego Llewellyn-Jones and Alex Schumaker. Hope Abbey will be full of displays informing visitors about the

#### cemetery's history.

For over 20 years Taps has been sounded from the Public Square on Memorial Day weekend. This year it will be played at 12:15 on Sunday and Monday by Barry Barreau. It will be followed by guided tours of the cemetery, which will begin at Hope Abbey at 12:30. On Sunday the tour features the landscape and will be led by Diego, EMCA landscape manager. On Monday, the tour, "Cemetery Highlights," will be led by Caroline Forell, EMCA board president.

Of course, visitors can enjoy self-guided tours at any time using the graveside historic plaques and walking-tour brochures describing the site's occupants. They can also appreciate the more than 100 veterans buried in the cemetery, identified by the US flags flying over their graves or placed in front of their Hope Abbey crypts.

A fun family-oriented activity available to all is the "history hunt," a game similar to a scavenger hunt, which will take guests throughout the cemetery to answer questions about its history. There are two versions of the game-"Find the Veterans" or "Tombstone Tales." Prizes are offered for everyone who participates! Game information is available in Hope Abbey.

After visitors have completed their exploration of the cemetery grounds, they can return to Hope Abbey and check out the displays illustrating the cemetery's history. Carol Houde, professional antique clothes collector, will exhibit and talk about one of the early 1900s dresses from her extensive collection. Old cemetery monuments, before and after they have been cleaned by our grounds crew and volunteers, will be on display. And, best of all, cake and coffee will be available. The cakes will be prepared by Reality Kitchen, a nonprofit food service training program in Eugene.

Hope Abbey will be open from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm on Sunday, May 29 and Monday, May 30. There will be no activities on Saturday, May 28.

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I love this time of year in the cemetery. Everything has come alive, the days are long, and it is more likely to be dry and warm, but not yet hot. It's a great time to visit all the special people residing here and enjoy the flora and fauna. Taking a self-guided tour is a good option. Or, like the folks from Osher Lifelong Learning Institute earlier this month, set up a guided tour with me for a group of up to fifteen folks. I always learn something new when I do a tour. Among the Osher group was a descendant of John Whiteaker, the first governor of Oregon, whose family has the large crypt in the center of the cemetery. That made for an interesting conversation when we visited the crypt.

My next guided tour, open to first come first served, will be on Monday, Memorial Day at about 12:30pm, right after Taps. It takes about an hour and starts and ends at Hope Abbey. Our landscape manager, Diego Llewellyn-Jones, is offering a plant-oriented tour the previous day, on Sunday the 29<sup>th,</sup> starting at the same time and from the same place. Joining one of our tours is a great way to get some exercise and fresh air. Take in all the other activities on Sunday and Monday of Memorial Day weekend too and be sure to have a slice of cake when you visit the Abbey which will be open from 11:30 to 5pm each day.

Finally, summertime means music in the cemetery. There are two concerts coming up in June. On Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> an outdoor concert in the public square, featuring New Horizons Band, described in this newsletter, happens at 6pm. In addition, our first *Music To Die For* in over two years happens on Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. The June issue of this eNewsletter will list the performers for 2022.

We have so much to offer. Come visit us soon.

Caroline Forell, EMCA Board President

# A HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States of America. It's difficult to prove the origins of this day, as over two dozen towns and cities lay claim to be the birthplace. In May 1966, President Lyndon Johnson stepped in and officially declared Waterloo N.Y. the birthplace of Memorial Day.

Regardless of the location of origins or the exact date, one thing is crystal clear—Memorial Day was born out of the Civil War (which ended in 1865, six years after the Masonic Cemetery was created.) and a desire to honor our dead. On the 5th of May in 1868, General John Logan, who was the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, officially proclaimed it in his General Order No. 11.

Part of the history of Memorial Day will show that in the Order, the General proclaimed, "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land." On the first Decoration Day, 5,000 participants decorated the graves of 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

New York was the first state to officially recognize the holiday in 1873. It was recognized by all northern states by 1890. Differently, the South refused to acknowledge the day and honored their dead on separate days. This went on until after World War I when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war.

### History of Memorial Day: Red Poppies

Inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields (see below)," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red That grows on fields where valor led, It seems to signal to the skies That blood of heroes never dies.

She then conceived of an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war. She was the first to wear one. Later a Madam Guerin from France was visiting the United States and learned of this new custom started by Ms. Michael. When she returned to France she made artificial red poppies to raise money for war-orphaned children and widowed women.

Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922, the VFW became the first veterans organization to nationally sell poppies. Two years later their "Buddy" Poppy program was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948 the US Post Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a red 3 cent postage stamp with her likeness on it.

# In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow Between the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sky The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie, In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe: To you from failing hands we throw The torch; be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders fields.

John McCrae, was a Canadian doctor and teacher who is best known for his memorial poem "In Flanders Fields".

As the first shots of World War I were

McCrae was stationed in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in an area known as Flanders, during the bloody Second Battle of Ypres.

In the midst of the tragic warfare, McCrae's friend, twenty-two-year-old Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed by artillery fire and buried in a makeshift grave.

The following day, McCrae, after seeing the field of makeshift graves blooming with wild poppies, wrote his famous poem "In Flanders Fields," which became popular almost immediately upon its publication. The poppy soon became known as the flower of remembrance for the men and women in Britain, France, the United States, and Canada who have died in service of their country.

Today, McCrae's poem continues to be an important part of Remembrance Day celebrations in Canada and Europe, as well as Memorial Day and Veterans Day

fired in the summer of 1914, Canada, as a member of the British Empire, became involved in the fight as well. celebrations in the United States.

# MUSIC TO DIE FOR – 2022



*Music to Die For* is a free, all-acoustic summer concert series in Hope Abbey. The hour-long concerts are held at 2 PM on the last Sunday of each month, from June through October. Although MTDF was cancelled for two years, we're planning a full schedule beginning in June, but with reduced attendance. Details of performers will be available in the June eNewsletter and our Facebook page when available.

### **REMEMBER THAT THE MASONIC CEMETERY**

- Is privately owned, but opens its grounds to the public, subject to COVID-19 safeguards.
- Is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is not subsidized by the city of Eugene.
- Is eligible for the Oregon Cultural Trust match.
- Has a website, <u>eugenemasoniccemetery.org</u>, with lots of information about the cemetery.
- Has free informational brochures available at the Garden Cottage, including a walking tour map.
- Has burial rights and cremains space for sale. Contact Sally Dietrich at (541) 684-0949 or <u>by email.</u>
- Accepts on-line donations. <u>Here's how to do it.</u>
- Archives issues of both newsletters.

Find past copies of this eNewsletter here.

Find past copies of the paper Monumental News here.

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

## HOW TO DONATE

#### **Mission Statement**

To restore, rehabilitate, maintain, interpret and operate the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum as a cultural and natural resource for the community.

> The cemetery is operated for the public benefit, but it is private property. (A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)



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