

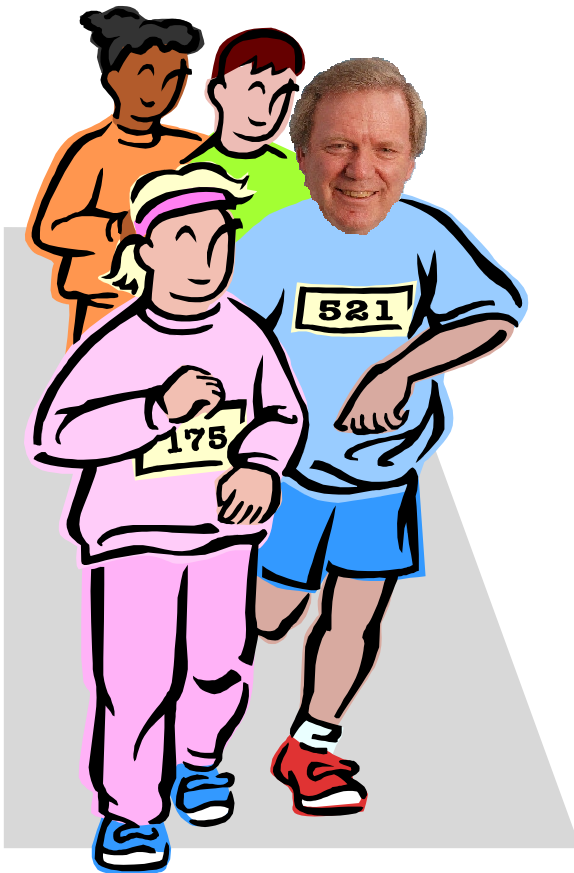
*The
Preston
Masters*

**Masonic
Samaritan
Fund**

Call for sponsorship for an aged entrant in a marathon

Richard Johnson as Master of the Lodge of Unanimity 113 has entered the Salt Lake City Marathon on Saturday 18 April 2009, at the age of 62. He is doing so on behalf of the Preston Masters, as a warm up for their own Lancashire walk (maybe less than 26 miles) in the autumn.

This level of idiocy deserves either sympathy or support, either of them preferably being of a monetary nature rather than just good or other wishes. The benefitting charity is the Masonic Samaritan Fund, the focus of our 2010 Festival - which gives access to quicker operations to people facing long delays in national health service treatment. Help to make my pain (I think the smile in the cartoon will be misplaced) worthwhile by enabling the Samaritan Fund to enjoy a significant gain - all contributions gratefully received.



Richard Johnson's celebration of 25 years in Masonry
Salt Lake City Marathon, Saturday 18 April 2009
In aid of the Masonic Samaritan Fund

The event - the Salt Lake City marathon attracted some 2,000 participants last year, so is one of the smaller events on the international marathon calendar. The course is fairly flat, being run to the east and south of the city centre, and along the bottom of the foothills of the Wasatch mountains.

The time - the marathon is scheduled for Saturday 18 April, starting at 7am. The slower competitors are able to start at 6am, as the roads are due to re-open at 1pm, so any late finishers will be taking their lives in their hands/feet or whatever.

The weather - can be mixed; in the 2007 marathon the temperature rose from 50F in the morning to 70F at lunchtime; when I was there just before the marathon that year they had 8 inches of snow overnight. Last year the temperature was 65F at the start and over 75F at the finish, so it can be late Winter or early Summer.

The idiot - I am 62 years young, and this will be my second ever marathon – before that, the nearest previous experience of distance athletics – approximately a quarter-marathon – was 43 years ago, when running in the cross country team at school. I have over the years done a significant amount of fell walking, but this has lapsed in the last few years. Thus training - a loose terminology for remembering to forget the car keys when going anywhere - has been a shock to the system, especially when I have pulled muscles where I didn't know I had any.

The charity is the Masonic Samaritan Fund, and West Lancashire is in the middle of a festival to raise money for it. The fund enables people with serious ailments and long health service waiting lists to obtain a more rapid relief to their suffering, which in many cases can seriously impair their quality of life for months or even years if not treated promptly. The MSF current boast is that no deserving cause has ever been refused but, with spiralling medical costs and most people's life expectancy increasing, the fund needs as much support as we can give.

The sponsorship - hopefully this will be up front rather than after the marathon, as I have no firm expectation of finishing in one piece - just in case.