

EARL C. HILL BLOOMINGTON POST 550

THE Trumpeteer

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPT. OF MINNESOTA



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April May June 2023



Bloomington American Legion Post 550 Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom hands a \$10,000 check to the Bloomington Kennedy Show Choir to help fund their trip to nationals at the Encore Theater in Branson, Mo.

Post 550 featured on national Legion's website

Editor's note: The staff at the National American Legion HQ in Indianapolis saw Bloomington Post 550's donation to the Kennedy High School show choir on social media and requested an interview for a story. (Maybe it will be in the magazine, too.) Here is that story reprinted:

Minnesota post provides boost to local show choir's efforts to participate in national finals

By The American Legion

With its performance at the Waconia Star Power Competition in mid-February, the Kennedy High school show choir in Bloomington, Minn., earned an invitation to the FAME Show Choir National Finals April 1 in Branson, Mo. But with that invitation came a stiff price tag: \$60,000 to cover the costs of the trip to the finals.

The show choir, Rhythm in Gold, started a fundraiser to be able to make the trip, and so far, it's raised around \$35,000. Of that, \$10,000

came from American Legion Post 550, which has made it a mission to assist all aspects of its local high school.

"Our post supports activities at Kennedy High School, not just the sports," said Department of Minnesota Communications Director Tim Engstrom, a member and past adjutant of Post 550. "I know there's a large emphasis on sports, and we're happy to support it. We have a great Legion Baseball team ourselves. But we want to show the community that we're there to support all the activities the kids do. Our show choir made it to nationals. We're more than happy to chip in \$10,000 for that effort."

Asking each Rhythm in Gold participant's family to come up with the money for the trip was out of the question, director Nikki Goulet Jordan told CBS Minnesota. "There is nothing entitled about them, where they come from, why they want to work hard and they want to be good," she said. "To spring on our families,

'oh we qualified for National, and oh by the way we need a thousand dollars,' that's just not reality for the kids we serve."

Engstrom said when Post 550 made the donation, members of the show choir began referencing members of The American Legion they knew from other posts. "And other folks were talking about how great The American Legion had been when they were kids," he said. "They were talking about their Legion experiences ... their positive experiences they've had over the years with the Legion. It was great. It's good to hear that. It keeps you wanting to go forward."

On its Facebook page, Kennedy Show Choirs thanked Post 550 for its donation, posting, "We're so grateful for community partners who are supporting our trip to Nationals! The American Legion Post 550 generously donated \$10,000 to help cover the costs of this trip and we couldn't be more excited. Thank you, American Legion!"

General Membership Jan. 2023

- Meeting called to order by Past Post Commander Paul Hassing.
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge & Preamble recited. Thank you to Bud Kopitski for standing in for the sergeant-at-arms.

- Guests: Dan Libbey and Frances Bressman-Egan from Bloomington Sister City Organization (Izumi, Japan) with a mission to promote international understanding through the exchange of people, information, and ideas. This year is the organization's 30th year and a delegation from Japan will visit Bloomington in August. Contact Dan Libbey for more information at 612-409-3104. Home sponsors may be requested for August's Guests from Japan.

- Ray Kane, department service officer, provided information regarding the Minnesota American Legion Foundation and Fund 85, assisting veterans in need. Email dso@mnlegion.org. Phone 651-377-0547.

- Roll call of officers: Five were excused, commander, 1st vice Commander, 2nd vice commander, chaplain, and sergeant-at-arms.

- Printed copies of the November Minutes distributed. Engstrom moved. Zesch seconded, and the minutes were approved.

- Financial Officer Jerry Narragon gave the Financial Report. Warren moved. Engstrom seconded, and the report was approved.

- Membership Director Paul Hassing reported that membership for 2023 is at 296 or 80 percent of the goal. We reached the Jan. 14 target of 80 percent.

- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom provided the Gambling Report. He reported the American Legion Post 550 Shuttle Bus wrap (protects the bus, cheaper than paint and provides advertisement for the Legion) would cost \$10,656.40. The state it cannot be paid with gambling funds. Gambling funds to be distributed: Bloomington Sister City Organization Inc. \$5,000. Zesch moved, Narragon seconded, and the report was approved.

- Gun Safety Committee plans to have the 2023 Spring Firearms Safety Course at the VFW Post 1296 banquet hall on April 25 and 27 with the Field Day on April 29 at American Legion Post 435 gun range in Elko.

The Fall Firearms Safety Course dates are Aug. 15 and 17 and Field Day is on Aug. 19.

- Legion Riders Legacy Run for 2023 will be the last weekend in July, Wednesday through Sunday. It will be a northern route. The Fund 85 Run is on Aug. 19 in Forest Lake.

- Paul Hassing is a candidate for the department commander beginning in 2023. Bloomington Post 550 last had a department commander in 1979, said Past Adjutant Rick Warren. A motion was made by Zesch and second by Warren to provide up to \$5,000.00 for his campaign. The motion was approved.

- Tim Engstrom provided a legislative report regarding Bloomington Veterans Memorial. Bloomington Remembers Veterans, in conjunction with the city, has filed bills in the House and Senate requesting \$350,000 of the \$750,000 total. The city of Bloomington will provide the space for the memorial and the ongoing maintenance and upkeep once completed. \$200,000.00 has been raised by the volunteer committee and a 2023 groundbreaking is possible but 2024 is more likely.

- Prayer was offered. Thank you to Troy Dukart for his thoughtful prayers this evening.

- POW flag was recovered.
- The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson

General Membership Feb. 2023

- Meeting called to order by Post Commander Luis Campero
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.

- Guests: Mike Dardis, Les Fordahl, Fran Stachour and William Botsford from Bloomington Remembers Veterans. They thanked American Legion Post 550 for its ongoing support.

- Roll call of officers: 1st vice commander excused.

- Printed copies of the November minutes distributed. Mead moved, Walsh seconded, and the minutes were approved.

- Chaplain's Report, 52-year member Kenny "Jay" Benkowski, 35-Year member Wayne J. Dvorak (former post chaplain), 47-year member Elmer "Bud" Potter, and 36 Year member Arthur C. Welsh Jr. recently died. A prayer was offered by Chaplain Mead for the deceased.

- Financial Officer Jerry Narragon gave the Financial Report. Dan Welsh moved, Keith Zesch seconded, and the report was approved.

- Membership reported that membership for 2023 is at 305 or 84 percent of the goal.

- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom said new software for the gambling operations was implemented in January and took much time from the gambling staff. They have to catch up. He will provide the Gambling Report for January along with the report for February at the March 13 meeting.

The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended approval of the following to be paid in February:

- American Legion 9th District of Minnesota Band: \$500
- Bloomington Remembers Veterans: \$5,000
- Bloomington Friends of Forensic (speech team boosters): \$2,000
- Bloomington Legion Baseball: \$8,000

- Kennedy Pantry: \$4,000
- Bloomington Girls Hockey: \$1,000
- Bloomington Mites: \$1,000
- Bloomington Traveling Baseball Association: \$1,000
- Bloomington Fastpitch Association (Blast): \$500
- Angelica Cantini Youth Choir: \$500
- ISD 271 (Senior Achievement Recognition Event) \$500

Approved the following to be paid in March:

- Bloomington Remembers Veterans: \$5,000
- Bloomington Legion Baseball: \$8,000

Approved the following to be paid in April:

- Bloomington Remembers Veterans: \$5,000
- Bloomington Legion Baseball: \$8,000

Approved the following to be paid in May:

- Bloomington Remembers Veterans: \$5,000
- Bloomington Legion Baseball: \$8,000

Approved the following to be paid in June:

- Bloomington Remembers Veterans: \$5,000
- Motion was made by Mead and seconded by Stachour at general membership meeting to make those donations. Motion carried.

- Gun Safety Committee plans has scheduled the 2023 Spring Firearms Safety Course at the VFW Post 1296 on April 25 and 27 with the Field Day on April 29 at American Legion Post 435 in Elko.

- The Fall Firearms Safety Course dates are Aug. 15 and 17 and Field Day is on the 19.

Gun Safety Questions Contact: Ken Lundgren 612-812-0854

- Sons of the American Legion reports 42 paid members
- New Business: A discussion on supporting Legion Riders with Jacket Patches will be discussed next month Mullen moved and Mead seconded. Motion carried.

- Prayer was offered.
- POW Flag was recovered.
- The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson

General Membership March 2023

- Meeting called to order by Post Commander Luis Campero.
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.

- Guests: Larry Johnson and Jim Finley from Veteran Resilience Project (VRP). Both are Post 550 members, too. Larry discussed EMDR Therapy and how VRP is working to provide therapy for veterans with PTSD, trauma and other mental health symptoms. For more information contact info@veteransresilience.org or call 612-356-2713.

- New Post 550 member Raymond Dutrieville 88-96 USMC veteran was introduced to the membership.

- Roll call of officers: Sergeant-at-arms excused
- Printed copies of the February minutes distributed. Engstrom moved, Mead seconded, and the minutes were approved.

- Chaplain's Report, 29-year member Richard B. Schultz, 71-year member Vern Bolduc, and 36-year member William J. Pavlicek recently died. A prayer was offered by Chaplain Mead for the deceased.

- Financial Officer Jerry Narragon gave the Financial Report, Mead moved, Nenovich seconded, and the report was approved.

- Membership Director Paul Hassing reported that membership for 2023 is at 308 or 84 percent of the 365 goal.

- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom provided the Gambling Report for January and February Report for February.

- The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended approval of the following to be paid in March:

- Kennedy High School Show Choir \$10,000
- Kennedy Softball \$1,500
- Midwest Special Services \$500

- Motion was made by Mead and seconded by Nenovich at Mar. 13 general membership meeting to make those donations. Motion carried.

- Gun Safety Committee has scheduled the 2023 Spring Firearms Safety Course at the VFW Post 1296 on April 25 and 27 with the Field Day on April 29 at American Legion Post 435 firing range in Elko.

The Fall Firearms Safety Course dates are Aug. 15 and 17 and Field Day is on Aug. 19. Gun Safety Questions Contact: Ken Lundgren 612-812-0854.

- Sons of the American Legion reports 42 paid members.

- New Business: Hassing motioned to support Legion Riders with Jacket Patches on an as-needed basis. Alman seconded. Motion carried.

- A discussion regarding the many reports and forms received by the post from the district commander including Blood Drives, Community Service, Outstanding Enlisted Person, Firefighter of the Year, and Police Officer of the Year.

- One camp fees for SAL member Jasper Engstrom to attend Legionville Education Center was approved by the membership for \$500.

- Thursday, March 30, is Veterans on the Hill Day at the State Capitol. The bus will depart the VFW 1296 at 9:30 a.m.

- Saturday, June 17, is Flag Retirement Ceremony in the parking lot at VFW Post 1296/American Legion Post 550.

- Prayer was offered.
- POW Flag was Recovered.
- The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson



Memorial Day Parade

What: Parade down Lyndale Avenue

Who: Veterans and their friends, family, supporters

When: Assemble 8-9 a.m., depart at 9 a.m., end at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 30

Where: Assemble at Ziegler CAT on W. 94th St. Parade goes east on 94th, then south on Lyndale to Bloomington Cemetery. Memorial Day service at the cemetery begin at 10 a.m.

What else: Our Bloomington Honor Guard will be with us and work the Bloomington Cemetery service, then drive over to Dawn Valley Cemetery along Bush Lake Road for that Memorial Day service, which begins around 11 a.m.

Speaker: American Legion Department Vice Commander Paul Orson has agreed to be the speaker.

Auxiliary January-March 2023

• No meetings held in January, February or March due to snowbirds and weather considerations.

• February motion via text made by Bonnie Proctor, seconded by Joan Boerner, to donate February meat raffle proceeds to Helping Paws. Passed.

• March motion via text made by Bonnie Proctor, seconded by Joan Boerner, to increase annual Senior dues from \$35 to \$40 (Junior dues to remain at \$10). Passed. This increase is due to increases from both our department and national.

— Secretary Bonnie Proctor

American Legion Calendar

April 4: Twin Cities Auto Show Veterans Appreciation Night (veterans get in free; their friends and family get \$7 discount), Minneapolis Convention Center

April 14-15: ALA Junior Conference, New Prague Post 45

April 15: DEC/Appreciation Rally, New Prague Post 45

April 16-21: National Commander's Tour of Minnesota

April 19: 95 percent membership target

April 20-23: Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley

April 22: Dept. President's Testimonial Dinner, Spicer Post 545

April 22: Women Veteran Appreciation, LC's Venue, Rochester

May 1-3: Auxiliary National President's Tour of Minnesota

May 13: Dept. Commander's Testimonial, New Prague Post 45

May 17: 100 percent membership target

May 26: National Poppy Day

May 26-29: The Wall That Heals, St. Thomas Academy

May 29: Memorial Day Parade, Bloomington

June 11-17: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.

June 11-17: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel Univ.

June 23-24: SAL Detachment Conference, Anoka Post 102

July 4: Forest Lake Post 225 Fourth of July Parade

July 12: DEC, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls

July 13-15: Dept. Convention, Jackpot Junction, Redwood Falls

July 26: Legacy Run Kickoff Party, North Branch Post 85

July 27-30: Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament, Rochester

July 27-30: Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament, Burnsville

July 28-30: Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, Roseau

July 28-30: Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, New York Mills

Aug. 4-6: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, Granite Falls

Aug. 19: Fund 85 Run, Forest Lake Post 225

Aug. 25-31: National Convention, Charlotte, N.C.

Oct. 12-15: Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley

Oct. 26-28: Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud

For VFW Post 1296's music schedule go online to vfw1296mn.us.

Financial report for Dec-Feb. 2023

Revenue

ATM transaction fees.....\$2,310
Total revenue.....\$2,310

Expenses

Rent for Legion office.....\$575
ATM support.....\$375
Bank service charge.....\$12
Commander's Fund.....\$250
Donation to Paul Hassing campaign.....\$5,000
Total expenses.....\$6,212
Edward Jones investments 12 month change -8.8%

— Finance Officer Jerry Narragon



In Memoriam

Name	Age	Died	Cont. Years	Branch
Benkowski, Kenneth J. (This man was famed wrestler "Sodbuster" Kenny Jay.)	85	2/2/23	52	Army
Dvorak, Wayne J. (He was a past post chaplain.)	97	1/30/23	35	Army
Pavlicek, William J.	83	3/8/23	36	Air Force
Potter, Elmer "Bud"	94	2/2/23	47	Marines
Welsh, Arthur C.	88	1/30/23	36	Army
Schultz, Richard B. (He was a former deputy chief for the Minneapolis Police Department and served the city for 35 years.)	79	2/11/23	71	Army



At the January meeting of the Post 550 membership, Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom presents a check for \$5,000 to Bloomington Sister City Organization President Kellie Lowman and board member David Murphy. BSCO is bringing officials from sister city Izumi City, Japan, to visit Bloomington this summer. Post 550 has invited the Japanese contingency to see a Legion Baseball game at Red Haddock Field.

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 THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPT. OF MINNESOTA



Official publication of Earl C. Hill Bloomington Post 550 of The American Legion, Auxiliary Unit 550, Sons of The American Legion Squadron 550 and American Legion Riders Chapter 550, P.O. Box 201813, Bloomington, MN 55420. Phone: 952-884-9621. Distributed to members of the Post and Auxiliary who held membership cards for the current year.

Find us:

- Post 550 meeting are 6:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month. All members are welcomed to attend. There is a free meal at the start, open to the entire community.
- Post 550 meets at 311 W. 84th St., Bloomington (in the VFW Post 1296 banquet hall).
- Gambling meetings are in the Legion office at 5:45 p.m. that day.
- The Post 550 phone is 952-884-9621. Our email is echalp550@gmail.com.

Questions on VA benefits?

Call Minnesota American Legion Department Service Officer Ray Kane at 651-377-0547 or call a Hennepin County Veterans Service Officer at 612-348-3300. They are here to help you.

We have e-pullitabs!



Sports Page Bar & Grill

Pull tab hours:
 Mon.-Sat. 11-11
 Sunday 9-11

9104 Lyndale Ave. S.

Post 550 Officers

- Commander Luis Campero
- 1st Vice..... Ron Nenovich
- 2nd Vice..... Clarence Bunkholt
- Adjutant..... Warren
- Christopherson
- Finance Officer..... Jerry Narragon
- Chaplain..... Jim Mead
- Sgt-at-Arms..... Dan Welch
- Membership..... Paul Hassing
- SAL..... Jim Mead
- Other positions:
- Gambling Mgr..... Tim Engstrom
- Honor Guard..... Dan Welch
- Athletics..... Ron Nenovich

Unit 550 Officers

- President..... Jody Hassing
- 1st Vice..... Bonnie Proctor
- 2nd Vice..... Joan Boerner
- Secretary..... Bonnie Proctor
- Treasurer..... Gabriele Servin
- Sgt-at-Arms..... Trish Bunkholt
- Chaplain..... Cathy Moretton
- Membership..... Bonnie Proctor
- Exec. Board Elizabeth Hassing
- Rose Kitt
- Past Presidents..... Bonnie Proctor
- Hon. Jr. President Liliana Campero

Do you have an honor guard request?

Contact Dan Welch at 952-607-8786.



Post 550 donates \$10,000 to the Bloomington Kennedy Activities Foundation in December. Also known as BKAF, its volunteers run bingo at the Sports Page on Mondays through May.

ADDRESS UPDATE: Mail to Post 550 Membership Director, PO Box 201813, Bloomington, MN 55420

Name: _____ Circle one: Post Unit Squadron

Summer Address effective date: _____ Winter Address effective date: _____

Street: _____ Street: _____

City: _____ State/Zip: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Discontinue Mailing (i.e. deceased) _____

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