

EARL C. HILL BLOOMINGTON POST 550

THE Trumpeteer

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPT. OF MINNESOTA



bloomingtonlegion.org

Vol. 68 Issue 2

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April May June 2025



Dan Nguyen of Bloomington won 1st place in the 10th District Oratorical Contest. At the State Oratorical Contest on Feb. 22, the freshman did well but didn't advance to the finals. Dan was sponsored by Post 550. With him is his mother.



Bloomington Post 550 sent member Paul Hassing and his wife, Jody, to the Fort Snelling Joint Service Military Ball on Saturday, March 1, at the DoubleTree hotel on Normandale Blvd. in Bloomington. Also there was Post 550 2nd Vice Commander Chris Schmid, an active Navy commander.



In February and March, Post 550 Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom testified on bills relating to charitable gambling. The bills were put forth by Republicans and Democrats. With him in this photo is Rep. Bjorn Olson of Fairmont. Engstrom doubts anything will change this session.



Post 550 hosted the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee on March 30. In the background, in the white cap, is Post 550 Athletics Officer Mark Scott, who also attended. Bloomington will host the 2025 Div. I Jr. State Tournament at Red Haddock Field on Aug. 1-3. Veterans get in for free.



Post 550's Paul Hassing sat in the audience Feb. 26 when National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. testified before Congress. With him are Legislative Chairman Kristy Janigo, left, and Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo.



Post 550 Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom presents the second of three \$6,000 donations to Bloomington Legion Baseball, headed by Post 550 Athletics Officer Mark Scott, center. With him is Baseball Treasurer Todd Holzinger. The organization receives additional funds earned from meat raffles on Saturdays at the Sports Page from October to March.

AMERICAN LEGION

BLOOMINGTON POST 550

Post 550 January 2025 Minutes

- Meeting called to order by Commander Dan Welch on Monday, Jan. 13.
 - Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW/MIA flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.
 - Roll call of officers: Sergeant-at-Arms excused.
 - Guest Janet Lorenzo, assistant department service officer, The American Legion Department of Minnesota
 - Printed copies of the December minutes distributed. Mead moved, Skundberg seconded, and the minutes were approved.
 - Commander Dan Welch introduced two members of Post 550 who have joined the Bloomington Honor Guard. Thank you to Sevieng Suparat and Greg Duffy.
 - Second Vice Commander Chris Schmid reminded us that the Memorial Day Parade will be on Saturday, May 24, 2025, and the first planning meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Jan. 22.
 - Chaplain Jim Mead prayed for the passing of Post 550 members John Nielsen, U.S. Navy, Korea (John once appeared in Life Magazine for being a member of NORAD) 56-year Member, 54-year member, John "Shorty" McWilliams, U.S. Marine, Korea, and Dave Costello A longtime Member, U.S. Army, Korea.
 - Finance Officer Blaine Beste provided the financial report. Zesch made a motion to approve, which Johnson seconded. Motion carried.
 - Membership Director Paul Hassing reported that we now have 251 members signed up for this year. Our goal is 310, so 222 is 81% of our goal. Paul also suggested we need to search for a new Membership Director. He stated that someone who lives in Bloomington would likely be most effective.
 - Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom provided the gambling report for December. The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended the approval of \$10,400 for the following to be paid in January:
 - \$1000 Wings of the North
 - \$500 Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake
 - \$1,000 Bloomington Speech
 - \$1,000 Bloomington Friends of Forensic (speech), pending a volunteer for Oratorical Scholarship
 - \$1,500 Every Third Saturday
 - \$500 Bloomington Mites Hockey
 - \$500 9th District American Legion Band
 - \$3,400 Car repair for the spouse of a veteran
 - \$1000 SavingsHassing made a motion to approve the report, and Mead seconded it. Motion carried.
 - Gun Safety reports that Saturday, May 3, 2025, is the date of the Spring Class, and Saturday, Aug. 16, 2025, is the date of the fall class.
 - The Legion Riders have many runs planned for 2025, including a northern run. Paul Hassing will provide a list for publication on our website and posting in the VFW Post 1296 lobby.
 - Sons of the American Legion: Jim Mead reported 45 members.
 - Commander Dan Welch informed everyone of the requirement for a Class C Drivers License with Passenger Endorsement to drive the Legion Bus. He asked if anyone had one or was interested in getting one. The Honor Guard and Baseball will need to come up with volunteers to get the Class C License to drive the bus starting immediately.
- (Editor's note: See February and March minutes before acting on this.)*
- Beste motioned to increase this month's savings by an additional \$5,000, and Zesch seconded. The motion carried. Beste also discussed that he will be providing letters to the various committees of the Post asking for goals and funding requests for the coming year.
- Larry Johnson told the story of the "Four Chaplains" who died rescuing civilian and military personnel as the American troop ship SS Dorchester sank in the North Atlantic on Feb. 3, 1943. The chaplains helped the other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.
 - Paul Hassing informed us that the Armed Forces Service Center at MSP is looking for volunteers to serve for four hours one or two times per month. The phone number for the Armed Forces Service Center is 612-726-9156
 - Prayer was offered.
 - POW flag was recovered.
 - Colors retired.
 - The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson

Post 550 February 2025 Minutes

- Meeting called to order by 1st Vice Commander Tom Skundberg on Monday, Feb. 10.
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW/MIA flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.
- Ron Iden, a Post 435 member, is considering transferring to Post 550.
- Roll call of officers: Commander and Second Vice Commander excused.
- Printed copies of the January minutes were distributed. Beste moved, Mead seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- Adjutant Warren Christopherson received letters from Boys State and Legionville. Boys State is requesting High School Students going into 12th grade to attend Boys State this summer at Saint John's University Campus June 8-14. Legionville Summer Safety Camp is open for registration for any child between 9-13 years of age by Sept. 1, 2025. Boys State costs \$350 per student; the registration deadline is April 15. The cost for the Legionville Summer Safety Camp is \$500 per camper. The first session is June 15-20.
- Chaplain Jim Mead prayed for the passing of 24-year Post 550 member James E. Johnson, Coast Guard, WWII.
- Finance Officer Blaine Beste provided the financial report and requested up to \$2,000 for attorney fees for bonding. Mead made a motion to approve the \$2,000, which Crafton seconded, and the motion was carried. Mellin made a motion to approve the financial report, which Johnson seconded. Motion carried.
- Chaplain Jim Mead reported for Membership Director Paul Hassing that we now have 259 members signed up for this year. Our goal is 310, so 259 is 84 percent of our goal.
- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom provided the January gambling report and the annual audit's positive results. The cost of the audit is \$6,800.
- The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended the approval of \$8,500 for the following to be paid in February:
 - \$500 Bloomington Academic Awards Dinner
 - \$1,000 Kennedy Baseball
 - \$250 Story Arts of Minnesota
 - \$250 Support the Troops
 - \$500 Eagles Healing Nest
 - \$6,000 Bloomington Legion BaseballZesch made a motion to approve the report, and Johnson seconded it. Motion carried.
- Sons of the American Legion: Jim Mead reported 47 members.
- Chaplain Mead read letters from Kennedy Softball, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee, and Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake, thanking us for our donations in December and January.
- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom notified us of possibly opening another gambling site. He said that TGI Friday's is interested in having American Legion Post 550 add a pulltab booth to their establishment. He will let us know next month regarding the progress.
- Tim also provided us with some additional information regarding the bus. With the additional requirements for being a driver, which include a Class C with Passenger Endorsement, it may not be possible to keep. He will provide us with additional information next month, but the bus needs to be parked and not driven for now.
- Sergeant-at-Arms Mike Mellin requested information regarding Gun Safety classes and Legion Riders dates be added to the website. It was also suggested that the VFW Hall Rental Inquiries should have a note on the website and the Trumpeteer directing those calls to the VFW.
- Finance Manager Blaine Beste mentioned the upcoming District Chili Cookoff and the Bowling tournament. He was inquiring if there was any interest in forming a team for either or both events.
- Larry Johnson informed us that the Story Arts of Minnesota will be at the Bloomington Center for the Arts on April 5 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Larry may be one of the storytellers on that day.
- In honor of Black History Month, Larry also recommended a book written by Col. David Rabb of the 785th Medical Company, Combat Stress Control, and the first African American Commander to lead Minnesota Soldiers through wars in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The book is called From A to Z What a Veteran Means to Me! A look into the United States Armed Forces' Culture and Veterans Community.
- Prayer was offered.
- POW flag was recovered.
- Colors retired.
- The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson



Post 550 March 2025 Minutes

- Meeting called to order by Commander Dan Welch on Monday, March 10.
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW/MIA flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.
- Guest Joe Vogel, a 27-year Army National Guard soldier, was recognized by Commander Welch for joining American Legion Post 550. Joe came this evening along with Mike Sheehan from Kennedy Baseball to thank us for our continued support and especially for the recent contribution that will allow two players from Kennedy High School to attend a spring training event in Arizona with the rest of the team.
- Roll call of officers: 2nd Vice Commander excused.
- Printed copies of the January minutes were distributed. Engstrom moved, Mead seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- Commander Dan Welch reminded us that we will be electing new officers next month. He also called for Chaplain Jim Mead's endorsement as Department Chaplain. Skundberg provided the endorsement, and Beste seconded. The endorsement was approved. Commander Welch also called for the endorsement of Past Department Commander Paul Hassing to become the Alternate National Executive Committeeman. Engstrom provided the endorsement, and Mead seconded. The endorsement was approved.
- Adjutant Warren Christopherson received letters from Boys State and Legionville. Boys State is requesting High School Students going into 12th Grade to attend Boys State this summer at Saint John's University Campus June 8-14, 2025. Legionville Summer Safety Camp is open for registration for any child between 9 and 13 years of age by September 1st, 2025. Boy's State costs \$350 per Student; the registration deadline is April 15th, 2025. The cost for the Legionville Summer Safety Camp is \$500 per camper. The first session is June 15 – June 20, 2025. Chaplain Jim Mead and Bonnie Proctor from Auxiliary Membership will be contacting Bloomington schools for Legionville Campers and Boys State volunteers.
- Chaplain Jim Mead asked for prayers from members for Bill Aul, who is recovering from knee surgery.
- Finance Officer Blaine Beste provided the financial report. He reported an increased charge for the website and is waiting for an explanation before paying the invoice. Christopherson made a motion to approve the financial report, which Mellin seconded. The motion carried.
- Sergeant-at-Arms Mike Mellin reported that new flags would be presented during the flag-raising ceremony at the VFW/American Legion post on Memorial Day.
- Athletics Officer Mark Scott asked Kennedy High School Baseball Guests Joe Vogel and Mike Sheehan to tell us about the baseball program at Kennedy. They provided brochures for those in attendance and reported they expect around 42-52 players and three teams. They are expecting another good season. The 17 players attending the Spring Training in Arizona will attempt to get an early season jump on other teams by getting in a solid week of baseball with good weather. Mark Scott informed us that Legion Baseball's Div. I Jr. State Tournament will be held Aug. 1-3 and would appreciate seeing our members in attendance.
- Membership Director Paul Hassing said that we now have 266 members signed up for this year. Our goal is 310, so 266 is 85 percent of our goal.
- Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom provided the February gambling report.
- The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended the approval of \$7,000 for the following to be paid in March:
 - \$500 Flags at Fort Snelling
 - \$500 Majestic Hills Ranch
 - \$6,000 Bloomington Legion Baseball
- Beste made a motion to approve the report, and Mellin seconded it. The motion carried.
- Tim Engstrom requested approval from the Members to obtain permission from the Gambling Control Board to begin the process of negotiating the sale/trade of the Post 550 shuttle bus.
- Beste made a motion to approve the request, Mead seconded it. The motion carried.
- Gun Safety Training Class will be on Saturday, May 3rd. POC is Kurt Whiting 612-201-2248
- Legion Riders Don Alman provided a list of upcoming events:

3/23	10th District Chili Cook-Off	Hopkins
4/26	Haven for Heros Ride	Anoka
5/4	Hog Roast	Fridley
5/10	Magnus Ride	Anoka
6/14	Believe it Ride	Lino Lakes
7/19	Christmas in July	North Branch
7/24-27	Fund 85 Ride	(TBD)
8/2	10th Dist Suicide Prevention Ride	
8/16	Minnesota Legacy Run	Walker
- Sons of the American Legion: Jim Mead reported 47 members.
- Larry Johnson reminded us that the Story Arts of Minnesota will be at the Bloomington Center for the Arts on April 5 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Larry may be one of the storytellers on that day. He will have a Legion Post 550 Table at StoryFest, and he will be telling a veterans story at 2:30 p.m.
- Chaplain Jim Mead read thank-you letters from the American Legion Band and from Kennedy Baseball.

- Sergeant-at-Arms Mike Mellin discussed website information suggesting adding pictures and Post 550 events to the website.
- Paul Hassing provided an update on the Military Ball he attended. A great time was had by all in attendance.
- Tim Engstrom will testify at the Capitol for the tax committee regarding the huge disparity in taxes charged to nonprofits in Minnesota compared to other states.
- Prayer was offered.
- POW flag was recovered.
- Colors retired.
- 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 26

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 begins 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: Post 550 and VFW Post 1296 are providing speakers for each of the two observances.

American Legion Family Calendar

April 26: Haven for Heroes Ride, Anoka

May 10: Magnus Ride, Dayton

May 15-18: Work & Play Weekend, Legionville

May 17: Dept. President's Testimonial, Fairmont

May 17-18: American Legion National Oratorical Contest, Hillsdale College, Mich.

May 26: Memorial Day Parade, S. Lyndale Ave., Bloomington

June 7: 10th District Convention, Buffalo Post 270

June 8-14: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.

June 14: Believe it Ride, Lino Lakes

June 15: First session at Legionville Summer Camp begins (there are six sessions in 2025)

June 15-21: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University

June 25: American Legion Day at Target Field, Minnesota Twins vs. Seattle Mariners, Minneapolis



In Memoriam

Name	Age	Died	Cont. Years	Branch
Costello, David E.	86	12/26/24	47	Army
Johnson, James E.	88	unknown	24	Coast G.
McWilliams, John "Shorty"	85	1/1/25	53	Marines
Nielsen, John "Jack"	91	11/23/24	56	Navy

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Find us:

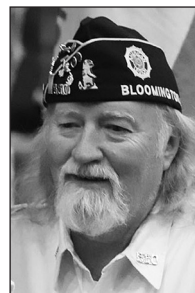
- Post 550 meeting are 6:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month. All members are welcomed to attend. There is a free meal at the start, open to the entire community.
- Post 550 meets at 311 W. 84th St., Bloomington (in the VFW Post 1296 banquet hall).
- Gambling meetings are in the Legion office at 5:45 p.m. that day.
- Baseball is at post550baseball.org.

2 members endorsed!

At the March 10 meeting, Post 550 endorsed Paul Hassing to be the Department of Minnesota's Alternate National Executive Committeeman. This is a red-cap position. Post 550 also endorsed Jim Mead to be the Department of Minnesota Chaplain, which is a white-cap position. Having members running for state and national office is a prestigious honor for Post 550 and reflects well on our post.



**Paul
Hassing**



**Jim
Mead**

Want to be an officer?

Nominations happen at the April 14 meeting.

Honor guard request?

Contact Dan Welch at 952-607-8786.



Be sure to come out to the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26. We appreciate the many soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who participate. We hope to see more!

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Post 550 Officers

Commander Dan Welch
1st Vice Cmdr Tom Skundberg
2nd Vice Cmdr..... Chris Schmid
Adjutant Warren
..... Christopherson
Finance Officer Blaine Beste
Chaplain Jim Mead
Sgt-at-Arms Mike Mellin
Membership Paul Hassing
SAL Jim Mead
Other positions:
Gambling Mgr Tim Engstrom
Honor Guard Dan Welch
Athletics Officer ... Mark Scott

Unit 550 Officers

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

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) _____