



Bennett and Dennis Herrick Memorial American Legion Post 626 Gladstone, MO.

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(Quarterly)

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*Post meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month in the Gladstone Community Center at 7:00 p.m.
All members are invited to attend.*

INTRO

Welcome back all!

We started out the New Year seeing our Finance Officer Bob Box on the cover of the Gladstone Dispatch! A well placed article about what we do with the Poppy Sales funds we collect for our Veterans, Service Members and their families. I am sorry about that, but that is the picture they gave me. (Just teasing Bob) In the Next Quarter we have a busy May with Peace Officers Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day and Post Officer elections. Some great ways to become involved right there!

As you read every page of this Newsletter, as I know you will, and you come across information (like your name and years of service) that is not correct please let me know! It may not just be my typing, it could be wrong at National. It is hard to make this newsletter interesting and cover everything we do without going over 4 pages. I try, but we went over again!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Transferring in from Post 1000 in the previous quarter was Michael Claibourn, an Army Veteran from the Vietnam era and 8 continuous years with the Legion. Transferring in this quarter were Vietnam era Veterans Lester Banks, a Navy Vet with 3 years in the Legion; Army Veterans (without their gangs) William Dalton, 2 years in and Samuel James with 1 year. Also joining us from Post 1000 was Francis Hergott, an Air Force Veteran, again from the Vietnam era with one year in the Legion. **New members** this quarter from the Army are Bill Morris from Vietnam, Chris Ramsay (RET) from the Lebanon/Grenada era and Sabrina Barber a Marine Veteran from the Persian Gulf era. Bill volunteers with me down at the KC VA Medical Center, and Chris I met doing Volksmarches in the area.

Welcome All!

WHAT HAPPENED



Boys State interviews at Oak Park High School were conducted on 8 and 12 January. We have 10 qualified applicants this year, five from Oak Park and 5 from Staley. We will be sponsoring 6 this year due to generous donations and Sponsorships from the Andy Patton Insurance Agency and individual Legionnaires.

The **District Meeting** was held at Post 61 on the 11th of January.

Guests - Dept SR Vice Commander George Scarborough talking about the strategy for membership this year. Past Zone Vice CDR Mike Sweeney is making the rounds running

for next years Dept SR Vice. Dist 4 Service Officer Ann Roberts brought up the need for volunteers at special Olympics events throughout the year, and an upcoming Veterans benefits fair(see the bulletin board).

Other - District [Missouri High School Oratorical Contest](#) was held on Sunday (17th) at Post 58 in Smithville at 1400hrs. Ms. Parken, our contestant from Excelsior Springs was the only one to show so she was put ahead to the Zone Contest. Our own JR. Vice Gerald Braton was nominated by his Post for the Distinguished Legionnaire Award and it was carried by the District. I put it in the mail to Dept this morning. I gave a report on the Districts TFA plan. A two pronged approach using the Nationals plan and the Districts own funds for those in need. I have a pamphlet on the County's Veterans Court. They are looking for mentors. I have posted it on our Facebook page Bulletin Board.

At the 22 January **Membership Meeting** we decided to sponsor one student for Boys State (if necessary) out of Post funds to bring the total number of paid student slots to 6 with 4 alternates. Also at that meeting we received an update on the Clay County Veterans Memorial and Gladstone's Veterans Day and Memorial Day Celebration from Gerry Braton; Boys State, Girls State and Cadet Patrol from Bob Box; Public Relations, VA&R, Fundraising and Historian report from Doug Millison; Veterans Affairs from Paul Mims and Fire Fighter/Law Enforcement Awards and the status of our By-Laws from Nelson Duncan. And all the while our Adjutant Phyllis Rosales had to write it all down. So if you want more details you will have to ask her, I couldn't keep up! A letter from the Post to District was signed by Nelson informing them that we have met all of the requirements to be awarded the Post Excellence Award.

The **Zone Oratorical** contest was held on the 25th of January at Post 237 in Richmond. Our Districts entry came in third.



In February, in my capacity as Public Relations Chair and Fundraising Chair, I attended the **Gladstone Chamber of Commerce's** ribbon cutting at Snow & Co. on the 5th of February, the Coffee at HyVee on the 10th, and the After Hours at the Shoal Creek Golf Course on the 18th.

The **Department Spring Conference** was held in Jefferson City Feb. 20th to the 22nd. I was able to attend the Centennial and Membership Committee meetings as well as the General Session. There will be items for sale as well as a pistol raffle to support our Centennial activities. One of those activities now includes placing an interpretive panel near the Missouri Monument to the 35th Division in Cheppy France. Membership was a large topic throughout the conference, not just at Committee. Many Posts are struggling to keep up, let alone get ahead. Our District

has already requested a Revitalization effort for September or October of 2015.

Speakers at the conference included representatives from Truman Medical Center (VA), the Missouri Veterans Commission and the WWI Centennial Commission. The use of the VA is up 6% and cards are out for the Veterans Choice Act. The VA center director stressed that there is a waiver for driving conditions under the 40 mile rule. The MO Vet Commission rep said that a new Veterans home is a possibility; they are waiting for a funding plan. The WWI Centennial Commission rep was Jim Whitfield from Post 131. He told us that Pershing Park in D.C. is being refurbished and that the Commission serves as a clearing house of information on the war's Centennial.

These are just some of my notes. Read your quarterly Missouri Legionnaire for more details.

At the 26 February **Membership Meeting** we did not have enough officers present to have a quorum so we couldn't make any official decisions. Bob Box reported that the student packets for Boys State are complete and turned in. Jerry Braton's brother talked about the upcoming KC Airshow and how we may be able to participate by selling beer at a booth. We would need a minimum of 10 people in the tent for 2 days. I have a couple volunteers, some of whom can only do one day which raises the number of people we need. If you want to get into the airshow for free contact us!! Jerry also reported that the Clay County Veterans Memorial had some maintenance done by the Parks Dept. and that we are now selling the memorial bricks. Jerry also won the door prize. Whenever I get something from the Chamber it goes back out as a door prize!



We also started a **Mega 50/50** at the meetings as a way to raise money for the Posts General Funds. It's called a Mega because we only draw a winner at the December meeting. So you get your share of 11 months' worth of sales! There is \$33 in the pot so far.



At the **Membership Meeting** on 26 March we started off with a presentation by Gary Lint, a Vice President of Honor Flight of KC. A very informative talk on the beginnings of the program, what it is like to participate in the program and what is actually done for the Veterans. Since its inception in 2008 HFNKC has flown over 500 Veterans; more than 98,000 have flown nationally. We discovered that the backlog of WWII veterans has been cleared and that those that are left and want to go will make it onto a flight. All donations to Honor Flight are Tax Deductible. To donate go to www.honorflightkc.org or call (816) 468-8282. Our SR Vice Nelson Duncan will be attempting to reach our WWII members and let them know the facts. At this

time Korean War Veterans are filling any empty seats and are very welcome. The mission doesn't stop at WWII. Gary left with some cash in the collections plate and the 50/50 took in another \$47.

Girls State interviews were conducted on our behalf by the Auxiliary Unit of Post 61. We are sponsoring 2 girls from Oak Park High School this year because of generous sponsorship by the Antioch Bible Baptist Church and Wee Care Preschool. The Oak Park Student Council is also sponsoring one boy and one girl this year.

Our activities with the **Gladstone Chamber of Commerce** in March consisted of a pre-opening tour of the new Starbuck's at HyVee on the 25th and the ribbon cutting on the 26th. I also attended the Chambers luncheon on the 26th.

On the 28th of March Nelson Duncan, Phyllis Rosales and I attended Legion training taught by the Department Leadership Training Team in Savanna Missouri, hosted by Dick Munkres Post 287. Topics covered were duties of officers and committees, By-laws, deadlines, membership, renewals, rosters, mylegion.org, training, programs, awards, protocol and politics. Lots of information! Most of which you can find in the manuals and on line, but it always helps to hear someone else's interpretation and how things are being applied by other Posts. Department Commander Woeltje and Vice Commander Scarborough were also there to assist in the training and answer any questions. In my opinion, it is a must have training along with the American Legion Extension Institute. Even if you're not an officer, go. Find out what it is all about.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Executive Committee Meetings, HyVee, 1000 hrs, 4/18, 5/TBD, 6/20

Membership Meetings, Community Center, 1900 hrs, 4/23, 5/28 (**Elections of Post Officers**), 6/25

District 3 Meeting, 1200 hrs. Post 626 4/12, Post 95 6/14

District 4 Veterans Fair, 0900 hrs, Tarkio MO Community Building, 4/25

Truman Pilgrimage, 0900 hrs, Independence, 5/8

The event will start Thursday, May 7 with an Open House at Tirey J. Ford Post Home, 16701 East 40 Highway, Independence, MO at 1800 hrs.. Refreshments will be provided by the Auxiliary and Post, as well as entertainment. On Friday morning, May 8, those participating are asked to enter by the Main Entrance of the Truman library at 0900 hrs. A procession will form and proceed to the courtyard where the President is buried. At that time, a brief memorial service will be conducted and wreaths will be placed at the gravesite. A luncheon, co-sponsored by Post 21, will be served at

1130 hrs May 8th, at the Truman library. Advance tickets for the luncheon are required. Checks for the tickets should arrive no later than April 25th. Tickets are \$15.00 each and will be held for your arrival. Checks should be made payable to American Legion Post 21 Truman Day Luncheon. Send to American legion Post 21, Truman Pilgrimage, 16701 East Highway 40, Independence, MO 64055-5328. PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY!

On the 15th of May we will be hosting a **Police Officers Memorial Day ceremony** at the Big Shoal Cemetery. More details to come.

Poppy Sales, 0800 hrs, Walmart, 5/16 (Armed Forces Day)

Gladstone Armed Forces and Memorial Day Celebration, Table set up at 1000 hrs, start at 1100, Linden Square, 5/23

Memorial Day Ceremony, TBD, Big Shoal Cemetery, 0900 hrs set up, 1000 start, 5/25

More details on those two events will come in separate emails and be posted on Face Book. EVERYONE is invited.

Please do attend.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congrats to JR Vice CDR Gerald Braton for his nomination by the Post for the Distinguished Legionnaire award. Jerry's hard work and dedication to the Clay County Veterans Memorial as the Memorial Committee's co-chairman was noticed and appreciated by all involved. And if you have driven by it on Vivian lately and noticed that it can actually be seen from the road now, then you noticed too! And this is not to detract from the hard work that the rest of the committee has done. For this award, there can only be one. Jerry was the first to say "It was a team effort", and he is right.

VETERAN AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

There have been lots of changes that we need to keep our eye's on. For instance, if someone received a bad conduct discharge and the reason the Veteran was acting that way can be attributed to PTSD, the Veteran can apply to have his discharge changed to honorable. The Veterans Choice cards 40 mile radius is changing from 40 miles "as the crow flies" to driving miles. The legion is now asking them to ensure that they are getting sent to clinics that can actually treat the current problem and not just the nearest Dr.'s shingle.

I saw a disturbing commercial during my morning PT. It was an advertisement for a company (that looked like a law firm) who would help you process your VA claim. You really had to listen close to get that you would be charged for this service, and you had to pause the playback on the small print to read that they are not lawyers, but Veterans Service "advocates"! If you see one of these ads don't be taken in by it! Remember, the Legion, DAV, VFW and others all have advocates that will work to process your claim at no charge. They have training and experience to get the job done. Remember, they are working with the VA and it will take some time. If you don't think your advocate is doing their job, transfer the case to another. However, there is no need to pay for that service.

There are new forms for filing the claims. They are standardized across the board to make processing them easier for all users. The VA wants you to use their internet site and apply directly online. USE A VETERANS ASSOCIATION SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE!!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you use Amazon for shopping? Instead of just going to Amazon.com, go to smile.amazon.com and Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. When you choose your charity you can even give to Missouri Boys State like I do. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know; same products, same prices, and same service.

We have a **website!** Remember to check out www.al626mo.com if you haven't already. Our **Facebook** page (www.facebook.com/post626mo) for daily updates and changes. If you don't have and don't want a Facebook account you can still use it by going to our website and clicking on the Facebook button. Explore the other buttons while you are there.

Don't forget, www.mylegion.org will keep you connected to the Legion and allow you to update your information remotely and immediately. You can also see our current newsletter there in case you delete or lose this one. Our Post

history is also posted on The American Legion's Centennial website at centennial.legion.org/missouri/post626 and we occasionally post stories on www.LegiontownUSA.net .

[If you would like help doing any of this internet stuff contact me and we can meet to get it done.](#)

MEMBERSHIP

If you know someone that is interested in joining The American Legion and become part of the voice that speaks up for Veterans, put them in contact with the Post Membership Chairman (SR Vice Commander) Nelson Duncan at 816-392-0972, yolegend2@aol.com , our website www.al626mo.com, or they can go online at www.think-legion.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that there has not been a dues increase at the National level in 10 years? And think about that for a minute. Consider that costs of running the organization stays the same or even increases slightly, and the due's paying membership is continually declining. Is that sustainable? No. Especially if we ever get a Post home, dues will be going up at some point. It's inevitable. You can protect yourself by buying the rest of your memberships now with the **Paid Up For Life Program (PUFL)**.

The cost is estimated by your age with the dice rollers guessing on how many years you have left to pay dues and averaging things out. The rate chart that was effective as of January 2014 shows that someone in their 50's would pay \$935. That's 31 years at our current dues rate of \$30. So if you are 50 and live past 81 (90 if you are 59) you are saving money in longevity alone, let alone what dues increases may happen in the next three decades. If you are 60 it's \$740 which is 24 years.

There is a payment plan which extends the payments on a monthly schedule for 12 months, which is what I did. No more guessing if I remembered to pay this year, no dues increases and National doesn't have to spend money on all those reminder notices. You can set it up online at www.legion.org/pufl, ask me for a printable version, or call a customer service specialist at (800) 433-3318.

TAPS

It is my sad duty to report that two members transferred to Post Everlasting. We have lost our only Merchant Marine Veteran from WWII, Melvin Smith, a 10 year Legion member and Marine Corps Veteran Myron Bell, another WWII Veteran with 10 years in the Legion.

PARTING SHOTS

From the Adjutant;

There has been some confusion about the time frame of our dues. I will try to clarify for all concerned. Our membership year is the same as the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. We start our renewal year on July 1, thus, the confusion. Even if you renew as early as August 2015, your membership is good through 2016. Starting reminders early gives our post a head start towards achieving a 100 percent renewal by the New Year. Our preprinted cards are based on current year paid membership as of April 30. I hope this helps, if you continue to have questions, please feel free to contact me. - Phyllis

Content changes, so hold on to old Newsletters for reference!

Remember to visit www.al626mo.com and click on Facebook *often* for updates.

Please submit any announcements or items for the newsletter to Douglas Millison, Editor, at dwmillison7@gmail.com or 816-509-5247. Requests must be received before or at the Executive Committee meeting prior to the release date to be in the current Newsletter.