



**The American Legion  
Department of Maryland  
Damascus Post 171  
PO Box 171  
Damascus, Maryland 20872**

**Steve Monteiro  
Commander**

**2023 – 2024**

**Anita Trotter  
Adjutant**

**POST MEMBER MEETING MINUTES**

**December 11, 2023**

**ATTENDANCE:**

<b>Executive Committee</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Commander: Charles Bradsher	Finance Officer: Ray Lewandowski
Judge Advocate: Fred Mitchell	At-large Member: Keith Martin
Adjutant: Anita Trotter	
At-large Member: Mandy Buckley	
<b>Members</b>	
Jim Serritella (Chaplain)	Keith Midberry (Service Officer)
Bill Raab (PPC)	Bill Green (Bingo)
Sam Baughman (PPC)	Dave Clemmer (PPC)
Charlie Appleby	Sam LeHane (Historian)
Mike Wright	Dean Elliott
Willie Ruffin	Brownie Chichester
Ryan Arnett	Scott Dallas
Cary Henry	Phil Purcell
Chip Harper	Dan King
Kris Bradsher (Communications)	Cliff Bergstresser (District 8 Commander)

1st Vice Commander: Charles Bradsher began the meeting at 1940 hours.

- The meeting took place at Post 171.
- Chaplain began the meeting with a prayer.
- The Vice Commander presented the previous Member meeting minutes; Approved.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- We're hosting a Blood Drive on **Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>**.
- Be sure to attend the annual Post and Unit Member Awards Event on **Saturday January 27<sup>th</sup>**. This year we'll present our annual awards and then invite the public in for hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and a big band for entertainment and dancing. The event is free for Post and Unit Members \$5 per adult 18 and over for non-members (friends, family, and the public after the awards ceremony). The agenda is:
  - 6:00 pm – doors open to Post and Unit Members and family only
  - 6:15 pm – 7:15 pm – Presentation of annual Post and Unit 171 service awards
  - 7:30 pm – doors open to the Public
  - 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm – Market Street Big Band plays
- The Post Constitutional Speech Contest is coming soon, on **Saturday February 3**.
- The application processes for the Department of Maryland General Scholarships, Boys State, and Girls State 2024 are now open at <http://mdlegion.org/boysstate/> .

**A BIG THANK YOU!**

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- Thank you to Hank and Carol Hartley for performing the difficult and challenging job of the maintenance on the grease trap in the Post.
  - Thank you to Clint Nawara who did troubleshooting and then fixed an underground wiring issue running from the Post building to the WSSC grease trap grinder in the back field. WSSC wouldn't address the issue with their grinder because the power to it was cut so Clint had to dig to find and fix the electrical issue.
  - A belated thanks to Clint also for some new and fixed electrical wiring during the summer as the boiler was being replaced. We have light in that closet now!
  - Thank you to Jim Serritella and Will Trotter for presenting a short-notice Post Everlasting Ceremony for a local vet.
  - Thank you to Larry Matthews, Brownie Chichester, and Bill Green for presenting a flag folding ceremony and lesson to the Kemptown church.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

- The Post 171 Baseball program is in search of new coaches. Contact Fred or Keith Martin for more information.
- Member Larry Matthews reminded everyone that we visit the Lorien senior and veteran living center on the second Wednesday of every month, from 9:30-10:30 am. We have great speakers and topics lined up for January, February, and March. Come to learn something new!

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT**

- The Finance Officer presented the monthly report.
- FO reported that we received the Maryland sales tax exemption. If you purchase materials for the Post, get a copy of this to save us some money.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

- Membership Chair, Sam Baughman, presented the membership stats. As of 12/11, we have 260 members, which is 88.4% of our goal. Post 171 is in first place in the District.
- Sam and the Adjutant announced that the National organization has raised the annual national member dues by \$5 starting in July 2024. The Department organization is considering and will probably raise those dues by \$3 starting in July 2024 or 2025. Therefore, we need to raise our Post dues to cover these new costs. At just \$30, with only \$1 going to the Post accounts, Post 171 has maintained the lowest Post dues in the state, but now we need to cover up to \$36 for these raises.
- At this meeting, *members voted to raise the dues to \$40, starting in July 2024.* As you may know, the Post pays the annual membership fees for members over 90 years of age, and for active-duty members. These additional dues will cover those costs as well as a dollar or two more in case the Department of Maryland approves more than a \$3 raise.
- The National organization now has a 3-year membership dues plan. If you choose to renew online, you can get three years at a time. If you need to renew now (your membership is expired!) then you can get three years at today's price before these raises take effect. That's a deal!
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#### **ADJUTANT'S REPORT**

- The Adjutant reported that we passed our annual Post inspection by the District 8 commander, Cliff Bergstresser.

#### **HOUSE AND GROUNDS**

- Mike Wright reported that installation of the exterior security cameras is progressing well. He has run cables and will install the NVR over his Christmas work break.

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- Mike has also been busy servicing the HVAC system. Though the AC system won't be used for awhile now, the filters really needed to be changed. Mike also worked with McCrea to get a quote for a service contract for our AC and heating systems. The Executive Committee will finalize that soon.
  - As noted above, we had an issue this month with our grease trap system. Renters and others began to notice a strong sulfur smell, indicating a clogged grease trap; we needed to address this quickly before a potential major backup or other issue. Mike reported that this is all fixed now, internal and external to our building.

### **BINGO**

- Bingo is doing well, bringing in \$4,000+ weekly (net, but not accounting for payments to Atlantic Bingo and other smaller bills).
- This week before play, the main bingo board over the stage area was dead. House and Grounds lead Mike Wright was able to diagnose the issue as both a reset issue and a blown fuse. Mike swapped the fuse with the back board and drove to Home Depot for a replacement to finish the night. We'll keep fuses on hand going forward.

### **OTHER**

- District 8 Commander Cliff, Gaithersburg Post 295, attended the member meeting. He commented on:
  - Congratulations for passing our required annual inspection.
  - The District, Region, and Department is encouraging all Posts to be outward focused. Think about the local veteran and community needs and how we can meet them. Post 171 has been doing well at this lately...keep it up!
  - This focus will help, and has helped 171, build membership, including younger members.
  - Don't forget the "Be the One" focus. Materials are available to help members and others recognize someone they know may be at risk for suicide. This is especially targeted to Veterans but applicable to all. Sometimes it takes just One person to help! Be the one.
- Mandy Buckley, Communications lead, reported that she and Kris Bradsher continue to work on the Post website and replacing it with another technology/site. They noted also that articles for the next newsletter are due by 12/20.
- The Rental Agent Anita Trotter reported that rentals are going well. Anita will work on some signage for renters, in English and Spanish. We need to make them aware of external video surveillance (including around the dumpster to deter our neighborhood dumpers), not to put grease and other food in the sinks, and not to put other items in toilets. WSSC tells us we have these issues!
- Planning is beginning for our June 14, Flag Day, flag retirement ceremony. This is a Friday; we discussed having the activity on a Saturday but voted to keep it on the actual day.

### **Meeting Adjourned:**

Chaplain closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2023 hours.

Approved by the Executive Committee via email, December 20, 2023.

Submitted by:

Anita Trotter

Post 171 Adjutant