

GATEWAY GAZETTE

The Official Publication of the Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America



Gateway members and Gateway Tech JROTC members preparing to roll in the 2006 Veteran's Day Parade in downtown St. Louis

VA LIFE INSURANCE DIVIDENDS

More than a million veterans are in line to share \$369 million in annual insurance dividends during 2007, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA operates one of the nation's largest life insurance programs, providing more than \$1 trillion in coverage to 4.5 million service members, spouses and children. The dividend payments will be sent to an estimated 1.2 million holders of VA insurance policies on the anniversary date of their policies. Sent automatically through different payment plans, the amounts will vary based on the age of the veteran, the type of insurance, and the length of time the policy has been in force. The dividends come from the earnings of a trust fund into which veterans have paid insurance premiums over the years, and are linked to returns on investments in U.S. government securities. Veterans eligible for the dividends have had VA life insurance policies in effect since they left the military and have received annual notifications from VA about the policies. Dividends are paid each year to veterans holding certain government life insurance policies and who served between 1917 and 1956.

Continued In next column

World War II veterans holding National Service Life Insurance ("V") policies comprise the largest group receiving 2007 insurance dividend payments. They are expected to receive total payments of \$286.3 million. An additional group of World War II era veterans, those who have Veterans Reopened Insurance ("J", "JR" and "JS") policies, will in total receive dividends of \$10.1 million. Korean War era veterans who have maintained Veterans Special Life Insurance ("RS" and "W") policies can expect to receive dividends totaling \$71.6 million. Dividends totaling \$1 million will be paid to veterans who served between World War I and 1940 and who hold U.S. Government Life Insurance ("K") policies. Veterans who have questions about their policies may contact the VA insurance toll-free number at 1-800-669-8477 or send an e-mail to VAinsurance@va.gov. They may also visit the Internet at www.insurance.va.gov.

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Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Disease . . . Living Life to the Fullest

Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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Has your address changed? Please inform us by email to: sgokenbach@gatewaypva.org, or writing or calling using the below information :

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9738 Lackland road
St. Louis, MO. 63114
(314) 427-0393 (800) 426-4058
FAX (314) 427-4183

For Veterans with ALS

National Registry of Veterans with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is developing a nationwide registry of veterans who have ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease. The goal of this registry is to collect important information for studies on the causes of ALS in veterans. In addition, the registry will provide a way for the VA to inform veterans with ALS about clinical trials and other studies for which they may be eligible.

All veterans who have been diagnosed with ALS, or their friends or family members, are encouraged call 1-877-DIAL-ALS (1-877-342-5257) or email:

ALS@med.va.gov for more information. Additional information about the registry can also be found at the following website:

<http://www.va.gov/durham/alsregistry.asp>

SCI Statistical Trivia

Gender

82 percent male

18 percent female

Age

Highest per capita rate of injury occurs between ages 16-30.

Average age at injury: 33.4

Median age at injury: 26

Most frequent age at injury: 19

Leading causes of spinal cord injury

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of spinal cord injury: 44 percent

Acts of violence: 24 percent

Falls: 22 percent

Sports: 8 percent (2/3rds from diving)

Other: 2 percent

Falls overtake motor vehicles as leading cause after age 45.

The material contained herein expresses the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or the Gateway Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America. All material in the *Gazette* may be reprinted unless specifically prohibited. Readers are encouraged to submit their articles or rebuttals to:

ddurrwachter@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at address shown to the left and mark with attention to the editor.

President's Report

By Stan Brown



As I write this article at the close of 2006 I can't help but smile on the progress we've made as a chapter this year. We have expanded our programs beyond where we were when we made our budget cuts after reorganizing in November 2005. We are actually looking to expand our transportation program to Tuesdays if anyone is looking for a ride to Jefferson Barracks on that day. We also still have vacancies for providing rides on Tuesday evenings in January and February for ski lessons at the Hidden Valley ski resort near Eureka Missouri. Please contact us if either program interests you. And while you're thinking about contacting the chapter, think about being a volunteer or getting some volunteers for us (Gateway) to host this summer's PVA Annual Convention August 12-August 18, 2007 in downtown St. Louis at the convention center. Not as large as the 2004 wheelchair games participation, but we will be expecting around 150 guests to include the Presidents and National Directors of the 34 national chapters. In December our chapter's National Director Gerald Brown tendered his resignation which was accepted by our Board of Directors. I was voted to fill the unexpired term which ends in September 2008. A few other chapters have the same individual serving as both President and National Director. Because of several of our local issues and the national convention now scheduled for St. Louis this coming summer, it's appropriate to accept the additional responsibility at this time but not something I would do on a permanent basis while serving as President. In the future I will write a separate National Director's report.

The board participated in a three-hour strategic planning session at its December 12 meeting. During our strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, the lack of participation by most of our membership again serviced. How do we get you involved? I would welcome your suggestions. Two other large issues came forward from our planning session: 1) How do we get improved medical care for our members? 2) Do we continue to lease our property after the three-year lease contract or do we buy something?

Our national organization completed a three-day site visit of the Jefferson Barracks facility and the Columbia VAMC the first week of December. The chapter listed our concerns as uneven care on the evening shift in building 52, the depletion of building 52 nursing staff by "pulling" nursing staff to other buildings, and continued unacceptable care of the spinal cord patients at John Cochran hospital to include the so-called "ambassador area" where patients may wait unattended for hours awaiting transportation. In my October message to you I mentioned I had to file a formal Freedom of Information Act request to receive the Survey of Health Expectancies of Patients (SHEP) satisfaction survey commissioned by the VA for the first and second quarters of the fiscal year (October 2005-April 2006) for our VISIN (Veterans Integrated Service Network) 15. I finally received a great deal of paperwork, took the time to sift and digest it all, and found what I consider to be some startling and disheartening, but sadly not surprising news. Within this network (VISIN 15) we have the following VA Medical Centers: Wichita (KS), Columbia (MO), Kansas City, Marion (IL), Poplar Bluff (MO), Topeka (KS), and St. Louis (John Cochran Hospital). In the category of "All Bed Sections," the St. Louis VAMC clearly had the worst scores, receiving "worse than the national average" marks in eight of the nine categories that were rated for patient satisfaction. Likewise in the "Medicine" and "Surgery" sections the St. Louis VAMC (John Cochran Hospital) had the worst marks of any VISIN 15 hospital and again rated "worse than the national average" this time in nine of the ten categories surveyed. There was a "SCI" section but not a sufficient number of responses for survey purposes. About three years ago our board conducted our own "unscientific" survey of our SCI members' experiences with John Cochran and the results were quite shocking. A "charter commission" had been formed with our participation and I do believe they tried to improve conditions for our members. If there was space available, SCI patients were supposed to be assigned to Seven North. Nurses from that area were to be cross-trained on the care of SCI patients. We are hearing that system may again be breaking down. What is a clear message from our members is that assignment to another floor or receiving services in another area of the hospital is a huge problem and is the loud message from the VA sponsored SHEP survey we finally received. Speaking for the board and as President I can tell you we will continue to pursue this most important issue.

On December 21 we hosted a holiday luncheon at the SCI center for inpatients, outpatients, families, and staff. December 28 will be our catered steak dinner for inpatients. I would encourage you at this time of the year to especially think of and pray if you feel so inclined, for all of our military personnel in harms way today. Best wishes to you and your families during this holiday season.

Stan

Sports Directors Report

By Bobby Jackson

By the time you read this you probably enjoyed a good Christmas dinner and are looking forward to the new year. There are a lot of opportunities to get out and participate in chapter and non chapter events.

On Mondays in January starting on the 8th and running through February 24th, there is the Gateway Disabled Ski Program at Hidden Valley Eureka Missouri. Times are 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm and the total cost for all of this is \$50. For more information contact Becky Ballard.

The High Ridge Elks are having a meat shoot to raise money for the wheelchair games on January 14th starting at noon. See advertisement in this newsletter for more information.

This years chili cook off is on January 18th at Jefferson Barracks, contact Amy Will for more information.

The Jefferson Barracks annual Trivia Night is on February 24th in the JB gym.

The 11th Annual PVA Trap Shoot Circuit has started there are still 7 events left. The next one is in Tampa FL on March 22 – 24th.

The 2007 Bass Tour dates are set. The 1st event is in Georgia on March 16th – 18th. The 2nd event is in Texas on April 13th – 15th. The 3rd is in Mt Vernon Illinois on May 18th -20th. The 4th is in Mannford Oklahoma on Sept. 21st - 23rd.

The 27th NVWG - Jun. 19th – 23rd in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The registration packets will be sent out the 1st week of January. If you do not receive yours contact Amy Will.

In January the sports points will be posted on the first floor bulletin board by the elevator along with a calendar of sports points events. If you need more information contact me at (636)671-0453.



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Attaboy

By Ruth Kult (Alive and well after the Power Outage)



This will be short. I suffered from the power outage from Friday until the following Friday. With it being Christmas time and all. This power outage did me in. My life has been turned upside down. I was extremely far behind my usual Christmas duties. I was all undone. I'm finally getting my life back in order again.

Well, Dennis Durrwachter wrote an Attaboy about me last newsletter and as the saying goes, "one good turn deserves another". This one is for you Dennis.

The main reason why Dennis sees me at all of these different events is because he is there right along side of me. Participating as much if not more than I. He's the man behind the camera. He also is one that doesn't mind lending a helping hand, which is perfect because we all need help every now and then.

I don't know if it is luck or what, but since he's been filling the position of Treasurer our heads are out of deep water. Instead of drowning we seem to be treading water. This is a great feeling.

Dennis has a really awesome family. A wonderful wife Brenda and two incredibly kind children (young adults), Joel and Monica. Monica and Brenda were in Minnesota with our sport's team a few years ago. Joel came to Alaska with his Dad and lent a helping hand or push. I think it's great how everyone just gets along with everyone else. We all had a great time.

I'm not sure if anyone outside of the Board of Directors is aware of this, but Mr. Dennis takes on a little of or most of the hectic duty of gathering and preparing the newsletter for print. I'm quite sure Susan, our Executive Director, is extremely grateful for this. It frees her up a little to take care of other business.

One great thing I've noticed about Dennis is that he really tries his best at everything he does. During his first wheelchair games he swam. He was pretty dedicated to improving his times. He went as far as practicing on Saturdays. I wish everyone were like this.

I think he has the same mindset that I have. If you're going to participate, give it your all with a smile on your face.

Best wishes for the New Year!

Ruth

*Things work out best for those who make
the best of the way things work out.*

Unknown

A gentleman named Terry Prott is offering our St. Louis area members volunteer work of varying types. If you need a hand around the house for miscellaneous work call Terry call 314-965-6880.

MIA

Have you seen or know the where these members are? They are in danger of being dropped from the PVA Roster. Please call us, write to us or Email us if you know where any of these members are! Contact info is on page 2.

Downs, Garry W
Miller, Ronald L
White, Eric D

Gore, Steven G
Ohen, Robert L

Horras, Phillip W
Reese, Joe

Kocina, Chad B
Turner, John E

Marrone, Karen A
Washpun, Odell

In memory of....



Spearman, Edward
Strunk, Robert D

O'Fallon, IL
Sedalia, MO

12/02/2006
11/12/2006



America is #1



Thanks to our Veterans!!

WHEELCHAIR VETERANS MEAT SHOOT

Proceeds will benefit the
**JEFFERSON BARRACKS WHEELCHAIR
VETERANS SPORTS TEAM**

**Sunday
JANUARY 8, 2006**

at

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Noon till???**

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Pictures from Santa's recent visit to Jefferson Barracks VAMC for the annual Christmas Luncheon.

Pictures from the Thanksgiving Day Luncheon at JB and from the Veterans Day Parade in downtown St. Louis.



Great Games on a Great Lake!

27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN ★ JUNE 19-23, 2007



The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are the largest annual wheelchair sporting event in the United States. More than 600 athletes and coaches from the United States, Puerto Rico, and Great Britain are expected to participate. The event is an excellent opportunity for novice competitors or newly injured veterans to regain confidence and rediscover the joy of movement and competition.

Featured Events:

- Air Guns
- Archery
- Basketball
- Bowling
- Field Events
- Handcycling
- Motorcycling
- Nine Ball
- Power Chair Golf
- Power Soccer
- Quad Rugby
- Sleds
- Softball
- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Track
- Weightlifting

Exhibition Events:

- Trapshooting
- Wheelchair Curling

For More Information and Registration Materials, Contact:

Paralyzed Veterans of America,
Sports and Recreation Program
(800) 424-8200, ext. 752 or 657
(800) 755-4327 (toll-free)
or
Milwaukee VA Medical Center
Brian Walker
(414) 384-4009
brian.walker@va.gov
or WAT
www.wheelchairgames.org



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR MEMBERS BORN IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY!

Gerald L. Brown	January 01
Nicole J. Trippany	January 02
Tee W. Rodgers	January 03
Edward R. Burnett	January 04
Edward L. Caldwell	January 06
Shane A. McCray	January 06
Odell D. Cornelius	January 07
Ronald L. Harlmon	January 07
Ron Standley	January 08
Betty T. Anderson	January 10
Gregory S. Hollingshead	January 10
Robert A. Long	January 10
Charles R. Winterrowd	January 10
Bruce M. Jantz	January 12
Matt R. Larkin	January 12
James M. Schmitt	January 12
James A. Sharp	January 12
James P. Felder	January 13
James T. Roden	January 13
Charles E. Reid	January 15
Chad Buder	January 16
Kenneth L. Garner	January 16
Chester D. Turner	January 16
Aubrey Youngs	January 16
Guy F. Corbin	January 17
James Dawe	January 17
Hale B. Kennedy	January 17
Elbert Kimmel	January 17
Robert O. Enyard	January 18
Michael J. Jones	January 18
Robert W. Ayers	January 20
Steven C. Hope	January 21
Ed L. Reed	January 22
James D. Thompson	January 22
Murray B. Blume	January 23
Walter J. Stone	January 23
John T. Wood	January 23
Richard C. Ingle	January 24
Roamin Anderson	January 25
Robert R. Schneider	January 25
Gene A. Crayton	January 26
Jonathan D. Lewis	January 27
Johnny R. Marshall	January 27
Timothy P. Azinger	January 28
Robert Schmidt	January 28
Richard L. Sengpiehl	January 28
Marta E. Borjon	January 30
Ted Dawson	January 30
David K. Herring	January 30
Leo G. Hildebrand	January 30
Robert E. Collins	January 31
Barry C. Schriefer	January 31



Alan L. Hampton	February 01
Doug W. Smith	February 01
Joseph L. Eschbacher	February 02
James B. Hook	February 02

Allen D. Hunt	February 03
Richard E. Jablonski	February 03
Jay D. Keehn	February 03
Holland L. Stephens	February 03
Gary E. Dole	February 04
Patro N. Olden	February 04
James R. Ridder	February 04
Carla C. Cline	February 05
Edward Welsh	February 05
Bodney Davis	February 06
Brian K. Elliott	February 06
Scott E. Kisse	February 08
Bradley W. Laux	February 08
Gerald F. Jones	February 10
Robert B. Korbus	February 10
Ben F. Bollinger	February 11
Edward P. Rodgers	February 11
George A. Hill	February 13
Dennis R. Badgley	February 14
Larry J. Emerick	February 14
Lawrence W. Hedden	February 15
Michael T. Hudson	February 15
Larry L. Kerby	February 15
Richard L. Mc Clanahan	February 15
Henry C. Mecey	February 15
John W. Perkins	February 15
Jose Colbert	February 16
James A. Boyle	February 17
John A. Moore	February 17
Kenneth J. Biby	February 18
Billy J. Hughes	February 18
Kevin P. Jackson	February 18
Robert M. Kiger	February 18
John M. Bryant	February 20
Charles R. Packard	February 20
William E. Berkholz	February 21
Matthew P. Erlund	February 21
Matthew Erlvnd	February 21
Walter L. Gardner	February 21
Scott K. Maness	February 21
Donald V. Merrick	February 23
Arjian P. Saddler	February 23
Larry G. Deconcini	February 24
Gary L. Kenser	February 24
Tezzance L. Lane	February 24
James W. Ashley	February 26
John R. Eigel	February 26
Bradley Holloway	February 26
Roy G. Jones	February 26
Michael Calhoun	February 27
Camilleann Nelson	February 27
Garry W. Raybron	February 28

<i>January 2007</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1 New Years Day Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	10	11 Patient Sup- port Group at JB 1:30 - 2:50	12	13
14 Elks Meat Shoot Noon	15 MLK Day Office closed	16	17	18 Chili Cookoff Bowling JB	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

<i>February 2007</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Patient Sup- port Group at JB 1:30 - 2:50	9	10
11	12	13 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	14 Valentines Day	15	16 Newsletter Articles due	17
18	19 Presidents Day Office Closed	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

Address Service Requested

Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
9738 Lackland Road
St. Louis, MO 63114

