

GATEWAY GAZETTE

*The Official Publication of the Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America
A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America*

26th Annual Veteran's Day Parade

by Dennis Durrwachter

On November 7th, local members of the Gateway Chapter PVA participated in the 26th Annual Veteran's Day parade in downtown St. Louis. The parade started at noon from 14th Street and Olive Boulevard and then headed south on 14th to Chestnut, then Chestnut to Tucker, south on Tucker to Market and west on Market to Union Station. Sixteen members were on hand along with the

Gateway Technical High School Air Force ROTC cadets who marched along with us and assisted by pushing some of our members and carrying the Chapter's banner. Gateway Air Force ROTC has participated with us in the parade for many years. As always, our sincerest appreciation goes out to them. The weather was the best it has been in recent memory (as expected, Bobby Jackson attended in short sleeves) with the temperature soaring into the low 70's, and as a result, the parade's attendance soared also. It is a great and humbling experience when there is a big crowd in attendance. Gateway PVA was first in the parade right after the Grand Marshall, so we were the first to finish. Then, we watched from our customary perch inside the Maggie O'Brien restaurant located at Market and 21st Street. The parade continued on for about another hour with the last group of about 500 motorcycles burning the carbon off their pistons as they passed. All in all, it was another great parade.

Come out and join our group next year!



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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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Gateway Chapter PVA

9738 Lackland Road

St. Louis, MO 63114

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Meat Shoot Dates

Mark your calendar!

The High Ridge Elks and Ken DeClue are back at it again! They are planning on two meat shoots this winter with the proceeds going to the SCI/PVA Sports team. As always, they love to see the veterans that they're supporting come out and show an interest in them. If you are available, grab your family and friends and come to High Ridge for a good time. The High Ridge Meat Shoots always start at noon, but you can get there earlier if you want. The first one is Sunday, January 17th. The second one is on Sunday, March 21st. We hope to see you there! Call Matt Luitjohan at 314-894-6602 with any questions or for directions.

National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic March, 2010

We have 10 veterans signed up with us this year for the Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colorado. It will be a little different for us this year because we no longer have Amy Will leading us as our head coach. However, she is still going to be there cheering all of you on. There will be more information in upcoming newsletters, so let me know if you have any questions. For those of you who may not know what this event is, or have never participated in it, please call or e-mail me for information if interested. I can be reached at 314-894-6602 or by email at matthew.luitjohan@va.gov.

Job Well Done!

A huge congratulations and thank you goes to Betty Bresler and Ken Biby, Sr. Both of these great volunteers have accrued more than 15,000 voluntary hours at the St. Louis VA Medical Center. Bill Baker has now completed 5,000 hours of voluntary service.

We thank them for all of their hard work and dedication!

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:

editor@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at the address shown to the left and send to the attention of the editor.

President's Report

By Stan Brown

VA Plans to Relocate SCI from Jefferson Barracks to John Cochran

As I write this article in mid-December 2009, the St. Louis VA and national VA have submitted plans for 20 new spinal cord injury beds at an expanded John Cochran Hospital. This project is part of the Senate and House versions of the fiscal year 2010 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act. These 20 beds are more than and separate from the six "acute care beds" that were recommended in 2007 from a special PVA site visit prompted by shameful care of one of our members in the John Cochran ICU. Gateway has heard three different versions or "labels" on what the 20 new SCI beds at John Cochran will be. The only story that makes any sense, although I clearly don't agree with the idea, is that the 20 new SCI beds will be rehabilitation beds for veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. There will be no need for the existing 32 beds at Jefferson Barracks and they will be converted to long-term care beds for SCI veterans. This ultimate plan has been candidly admitted by VA staff.



On November 30, 2009, we mailed to most of our membership a detailed letter with attachments on this planned move. I urged members to get involved and write to their respective congressional representatives. It was and remains very important to get correspondence especially to Senator Bond and Congressman Carnahan. Those individuals were of great assistance in 2008 when we were told the SCI relocation was off the table. I have heard from several of you, but not enough. It is clear to me that unless we generate sufficient membership interest to result in congressional action, the planning and funding for this relocation may be too late to stop.

Several Gateway members have frankly told me, to "give up" because you can't fight what the VA wants. After that statement, the same individuals will tell me about bad experiences they have had, or another veteran had, at John Cochran Hospital. I tell them that I'm being told everything will change when we have new buildings and parking garages at John Cochran. One member veteran reminded me that in the latest one year period of police reporting, there were 13 murders, 228 robberies, 180 serious assaults, and 18 kidnappings that occurred within 2 miles of John Cochran Hospital. The member veteran then asked me if I want my family member to go into a parking garage at night, even if brand new, at John Cochran Hospital. Lastly, the Gateway member reminded me that for the three years (before the VA stopped the surveys) the VA contracted for a patient satisfaction survey of VA Medical Centers, and that John Cochran had the worst patient satisfaction scores of the 132 VA Medical Centers surveyed. I finally responded to the member that those are the reasons Gateway PVA is not "giving up." If you've not yet been involved in trying to stop this move, call me now to find out how you **must** help.

New Gateway Member Benefit for Drivers

At the November Board of Directors meeting, the Gateway Board voted to approve financial assistance for non-service-connected members wanting to drive their own vehicle. The Board voted to give financial assistance of up to \$800 for vehicle hand controls to driving members who demonstrate a financial hardship. The assistance would be for hand controls purchased January 1, 2009 or after.

Gateway PVA Fiscal Year 2009 Audit

Our audit was just completed for fiscal year 2009 (October 1, 2008-September 30, 2009). Not surprisingly, there were no "material weaknesses" or fraud uncovered. The good news, is and has been for several years, that we can qualify as an approved or Wise Giving Guide Better Business Bureau charity. To qualify, in addition to good governance practices, a charity must spend at least 65% of their total expenditures on actual programs as opposed to administration or fundraising. Gateway, for fiscal year 2009, had a 73% program/expense ratio, which is excellent, considering we have overhead costs like rent and utilities that do not count as program expenditures. We are good stewards of the donations we receive and are proud of our good standing with the St. Louis Better Business Bureau.

The Kuk Sool Won Demonstration

by Terri Fuda

I had the unique opportunity to attend the Kuk Sool Won martial arts fundraiser. The event was held at the St. Charles High School in Missouri. There was a very nice crowd in attendance and it was a very enjoyable day. We were greeted and treated extremely well before the "show" began. I was amazed to see the many different age groups participating. They were able to show and demonstrate all their training through their moves. To be honest, I was mesmerized by how well all their moves were executed, from the youngest to the oldest. It showed athletes at their finest. From the first minute, their moves draw you in and keep you wanting more. The movements at the end looked like ones from those action movies. It seemed everybody there enjoyed the show as much as I did. From this fundraiser Kuk Sool Won generously donated \$2,098.50. Thank you to Master Harvey, and I hope to see more people in attendance next year.

At Right: The Kuk Sool Won students demonstrate their skills in front of a appreciative crowd.



Top Picture: Gateway Members Larry Emerick, Stan Brown, Terri Fuda, and Dennis Durrwachter were captivated by the demonstration.



The Robert M. Woolsey, M.D. Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center in St. Louis invites all family members, caregivers, and close friends to our next Family Education Workshop. It will be held on Friday, January 22, from 9 AM to 3:30 PM at our SCI Center at Jefferson Barracks Division of VA Medical Center, Building 52. Topics will include medical, nursing, rehabilitation, dietary, and psychosocial aspects of spinal cord injury, as well as neurological impairments of the spinal cord that are considered non-progressive, such as certain types of multiple sclerosis.

The workshop will be helpful for those family members of veterans who are newly-injured or diagnosed, as well as those who have been living with their impairment for many years. Written materials to supplement the program will also be provided.

For questions or further details, please call Social Worker, Bob Sontag, at 314-652-4100 x6-4819.

MIA

Have you seen or know the whereabouts of these members? They are in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster. Please call us, write to us, or e-mail us if you know where any of these members are! Our contact info is on page 2. Thanks for your help!

Frye, Kenneth E.

Henderson, Floyd R.

Rosenthal, Robert A.

"HORSES FOR HEROES"

Program to begin at Therapeutic Horsemanship Wentzville facility on April 1

Therapeutic Horsemanship (TH) Executive Director Dennis Costello says, "The 'TH Horses for Heroes' is a very exciting and successful nationwide program that was created in 2007 by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) to help America's wounded service personnel and veterans. We are very pleased to bring 'TH Horses for Heroes' to St. Louis area veterans."



There are now nearly 30 US riding centers helping veterans. The centers connect with Department of Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers and Clinics, as well as with individual veterans. Dr. Paul Spiers, Chairman, Task Force, NARHA Horses for Heroes, says, "Appreciating the power of the horse to change lives is our goal."

The program has received national coverage in the media, including both CBS and NBC. One NBC journalist put it this way: "As a student of history, I've studied countless battles where horses were used to wage war. Little did I know that they're now being used to heal our soldiers after they come back from war."

TH has been helping individuals with special needs in the St. Louis area for 35 years. Equine Assisted Activities have been shown to normalize muscle tone, increase range of motion, improve balance, posture and coordination, instill patience and emotional control, and increase concentration and self-awareness.

Once "TH Horses for Heroes" is underway here, TH will be able to help veterans like Craig, 39, and Loren, 25, who know firsthand what "Horses for Heroes" can do. Both served in Iraq. Craig had back, hip, and thigh injuries, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and moderate traumatic brain injury. Loren had back, shoulder, and lower leg injuries, PTSD, and moderate brain injury.

According to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, they spent six weeks at a center in Northern California riding horses and strengthening their bodies, memory, and problem-solving skills while emotionally recovering from their combat experiences by building trust and relationships with the animals and each other.

Therapy included grooming and warming up with the horses, learning how to put on the heavy Western-style saddle, and developing basic riding skills using an obstacle course in an arena and short trail rides.

Craig says, "The only time I didn't feel pain was when I was riding in the saddle."

Loren suffered from short-term memory problems. His "Horses for Heroes" therapist Marcia Cushman says, "When he started coming here, he said, 'I'll forget what I did by the time I get to the car.' But by the fourth session, he came in saying, 'I know what to do, carrying out the whole grooming sequence.'" She says, "It was very rewarding to work with these two guys. They appreciated it tremendously, thanking us over and over again."

Here at our Wentzville facility, NARHA certified instructors and various professionals, including physical and occupational therapists, will help veterans physically and socially enhance their lives. The program will help veterans with challenges such as head and spinal cord injuries, amputation of both upper and lower limbs, auditory and visual impairments, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Gateway Chapter PVA members and all veterans with spinal cord injury or disease are encouraged to come and take advantage of our program. Financial support for our program will come from grants, corporate sponsors, and individual rider scholarships. For additional information about the Therapeutic Horsemanship "Horses For Heroes" Program, please contact Sandy Rafferty at 636-332-4940 or at sraffot@gmail.com.

Agent Orange Update

By Fred Bradley

Updates for new Agent Orange (herbicide) exposure are as follows:

VA will service-connect Amyloidosis. This is a rather rare medical condition. I do not think we will see many cases with this diagnosis, but never-the-less, I want to make everyone aware of these changes.

The latest conditions were announced by Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, on October 13, 2009. The following illnesses will be added to the list of Agent Orange presumptive conditions: hairy cell and other B-cell leukemias, Parkinson's Disease and Ischemic Heart Disease. According to VA guidelines, Ischemic Heart Disease would include Arteriosclerotic Heart Disease and Coronary Heart Disease. However, it should be noted that the Secretary's proposal must first be published in the Federal Register for a period of 90 days to allow for public comment. It is anticipated that the conditions will not be approved until May 1, 2010. Anyone who files a claim for these illnesses will receive acknowledgement of the claim and will be sent a "duty to assist" letter. It is not known at this time what the effective date will be as far as either date of claim or a date specified by the regulation.

Please keep in mind that in order for the VA to grant service connection for any Agent Orange illness, the person must have served in-country in Vietnam or sent to Vietnam on a Temporary Duty (TDY) status. However, the in-country TDY status must be verified either through copies of orders, personnel file, or other reliable documentation. I have seen cases granted based on letters a service member wrote to someone back home while in the military that mentioned being in-country. This can be quite significant if the veteran was based, for example, in Thailand but went to Vietnam TDY. It can be as simple as someone was part of a flight crew that landed in-country to unload cargo and then departed an hour or so later. The key is documentation.

Lastly, veterans in receipt of non-service connected pension that have countable income, be advised the tax year is ending. It is that time of year to start gathering up all the documentation on medical expenses that were paid out-of-pocket where you did not receive reimbursement (includes Medicare or private insurance paying the provider) for either 2008 or 2009. You have until December 31, 2009 to file for last year's medical expenses. For expenses paid in 2009, you have until December 31, 2010. Keep in mind that you will **not** be reimbursed for the expenses. The VA uses the expenses to reduce countable income. Please contact your local PVA service office if you have questions or need assistance.



Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome the Following New Members:

Mueller, Melvin – St. Louis, MO

Hooper, Steven – Union, MO

Roth, Ken – Desoto, MO

Wells, Robert – Warrensburg, MO

Monken, Louis - St. Louis, MO

Green, Floyd – Troy, MO

O'Brien, Michael – Belleville, IL

Carr, William – Anna, IL

Billings, Carl – Corydon, KY

Please have someone contact our Chapter in the event of a member's death so that we can inform other members who might wish to pay their respects to the departed.



In memory of...

Arndt, Daryl	Kansas City, MO	11/07/2009
Burchard, Don A.	St. Louis, MO	10/18/2009
Kinder, William E.	Rolla, MO	11/15/2009
Shea, Evan P.	Kansas City, MO	11/15/2009
Pendlay, Harry E.	Effingham, IL	09/14/2009
Busick, Clarence	Parsons, KS	09/28/2009



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Vocational Rehabilitation: New and Improved

By Dr. Angela Cass-Prost

You probably know something about vocational rehabilitation. But you might not recognize this service here at the VA since it's been undergoing major improvements over the past few years. Whether you are young, old, service-connected or not, looking for fulltime work or just a few hours a week, it might be worth checking out this service again—or for the first time. And if you've hesitated to consider employment because you think it might affect your existing income, think again.

There are 2 main programs here at the VA. The first program is the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&EP). If you have an injury from military service that is causing you problems in getting or keeping a job or in living independently, the VA offers this program as part of your veteran benefits. Whether you're service-connected at 20% or more, you most likely qualify for services. VR&EP offers services and assistance to help veterans prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. Suitable employment means a job that is both within your physical and emotional capabilities and matches your skills and interests. A vocational counselor works with you every step of the way, from determining your abilities, skills, interests, and needs, to job seeking, resume development, and on-the-job or educational training such as certificate, two, or four-year college programs. If you have a disability so severe that you cannot work, VR&EP offers Independent Living Service, which includes technology to help you live more independently, such as a computer. VR&EP frequently call upon their partners from VA Medical Centers, Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, Department of Defense, and Veterans Service Organizations, to assist you in your vocational goals. To find out more, call 1-800-827-1000 or visit www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm.

The second program is the Compensated Work Therapy/Vocational Rehabilitation (CWT/VR) program. Whether service connected or not, this unique program works with you at whatever level of interest you have in employment. There are 4 basic levels of service, and it's possible to start at any of these levels. The first level is Incentive Therapy (IT), which is a work assignment at VAMC-St. Louis. IT is for those veterans who want to work no matter what, and need structured work activity plus some guidance. Hours of work are based on needs and abilities. The pay is a very small monetary incentive that does not affect service connection, non-service connection, or social security. Incentive Therapy can lead to the second level—Supported Employment (SE). This program offers assistance and ongoing support for veterans who are interested in going to work in the community. The SE counselor works closely with the veteran, particularly when there are physical disability considerations to going to work. The third level is Transitional Work Experience (TWE). This program helps veterans ease into the community work force. TWE follows a business model, and helps veterans get and keep competitive employment that's a good fit based on needs, abilities, interests, and social factors. This program helps build "work-tolerance" for those who have been out of the work force for awhile. Companies such as Ameren UE, Monsanto, and Mulligan have partnered with TWE. The fourth level is Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). VR offers continuous support for veterans who want a job in the community with the goal of lasting employment. In addition to the VR counselor assigned to the veteran, other experts are involved including the veteran's providers, various support staff, community and local resources.

To find out more about CWT/VR services, call 314-652-4100 extension 55485. The following psychologists who are on staff at the SCI Center can also be contacted for assistance at 314-652-4100: Dr. Kate Goedeker at extension 66726; Dr. Angie Cass-Prost at extension 64827.



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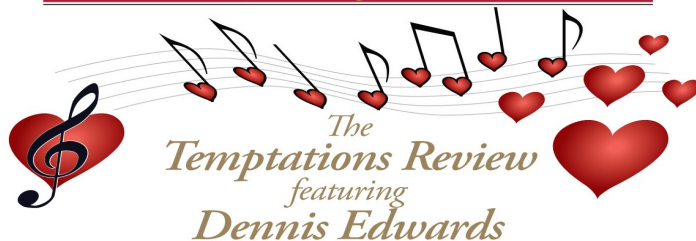
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Now Available...

Our New England Chapter PVA is selling *Images of Common and Uncommon Skin and Wound Lesions in Adults with Spinal Cord Injury: Historical Atlas: 1984-2003*, written by Elsa J. Aguilera M.D.

This book includes skin and wound lesions specific from veterans with spinal cord injury/disease over an eighteen year period.

To purchase this book for \$35 by credit card, visit www.nepva.org or to purchase using another method, call 508-660-1181.

All proceeds from the sale of this book will be used for educational and research purposes.

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Book funds are used for the Yale University Neuroscience and Regeneration Research Center at the West Haven Veterans Affairs Medical Center in West Haven, CT. NEPVA also funds related research projects by universities and doctors in New England.

All book proceeds and royalties benefit the Research and Education Program at:



www.nepva.org

VA's Got Talent Show

By Becky Ballard

The St. Louis VAMC will be hosting the 2nd Annual **VA's Got Talent Show** on February 11th in the JB Theater. If you have the talent for creative writing, singing, dance, poetry or drama, we are interested in YOU! This is an opportunity for you to showcase your talents, provide inspiration to others, and to enjoy the camaraderie of other gifted veterans. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact Becky Ballard at 314-652-4100 ext. 64512 or Matt Luitjohan at ext. 66602.

On February 26th we will have the pleasure of displaying the visual arts portion of the Local Creative Arts Festival in the JB Gym. This is your chance to tap into your creative side and paint that picture or sculpt that feeling that is stirring inside you. We are accepting artwork in the Fine Arts, Applied Arts, and Craft Kit categories. Please contact Karen Wait at ext. 64535 for more information and deadlines.

Even if you don't feel up to being involved in this program, please show your support and join us on Feb. 11th at 5:30PM for the VA's Got Talent Show and again on Feb. 26th at 11:30AM for the visual arts display! All are welcome! Light refreshments will be served at both events.



LaRoy Smith was the "Great and Powerful Oz" in last years' VA's Got Talent Show.



Annual SCI Chili Cook-off and PVA Luncheon

By Matt Luitjohan

Come join in the fun and show us what you've got. Whether it's spicy or sweet, we'll be in for a treat. It can be red or white, but in order to win it has to taste just right! Yes, it's that time again ~ we are going to have the Annual Chili Cook-off on January 21st, 2010. All chili entries need to be in the SCI dining room by 11:30AM. There will be chili tastings and voting, followed by a lunch provided by your Gateway Chapter PVA. Please inform us if you plan on bringing in a pot of chili so that we can have adequate table space for the entries.

To reserve your spot, for more information, or to have any questions addressed, please contact Matt Luitjohan at 314-894-6602.



30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Games with Heart a Mile High

Denver, Colorado ★ July 4-9, 2010

Hosted by VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System and the Mountain States Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America



Presented by

For More Information and Registration Materials Contact:
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Sports and Recreation Program
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(800) 795-4327 (toll free)

or
VA Eastern Colorado
Health Care System
Amanda S. Eckman, RN, MBA
(720) 201-0425
amanda.eckman@va.gov




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Trapshooting
Weightlifting

January 2010

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
					1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2
3	4	5 Annual Steak Dinner @ JB 5:30 pm	6	7 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	8	9
10	11	12 BOD Meeting in Overland at 11:30 am	13	14	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Office Closed	19	20	21 Member Luncheon @ Noon—Annual Chili Cook-off	22 Family Education Workshop 9am JB-Building 52	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

February 2010

<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 Newsletter Articles are due	9 BOD Meeting in Overland at 4 pm	10	11 Patient Support Group at 1:30 pm VA's Got Talent	12	13
14  Valentine's for Vets Concert @ The Fox 2 pm	15 Office Closed Presidents' Day	16	17	18 Member Luncheon @ Noon—JB Building 52	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Local Creative Arts Festival JB Gym 11:30	27
28						

Address Service Requested

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



More pictures from the Veterans Day Parade

Bottom: Mike Norris, Terri Fuda, and Rose Ganz are enjoying the nice weather along with Gateway Air Force ROTC Cadets.

Top Right: Terri Fuda, Mike Norris, Jim Spencer, Dennis Durrwachter, and Stan Brown are anticipating a great parade.

Bottom Right: Stan Brown and Bobby Jackson are having a good time traveling along the parade route???



“Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Living Life to the Fullest”