

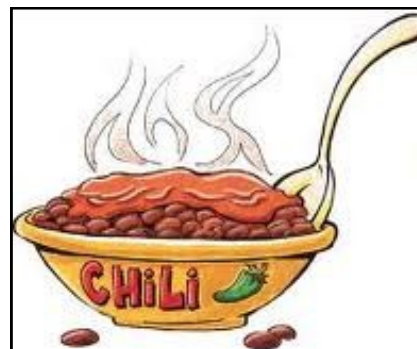
GATEWAY GAZETTE

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

Annual SCI Chili Cook-Off and PVA Luncheon

Come and be part of the greatest chili cook-off known to the VA. It's time once again to start getting your chili recipe perfected and then put it to the test on January 17, 2012. All crock pots of chili must be in the SCI dining room by 11:30 am. There will be chili tastings and voting by all, followed by a wonderful luncheon provided by the Gateway Chapter PVA. Please inform us if you plan to bring 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 at 314-894-6602 or Charley at 314-652-4100 Ext. 64590.



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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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**JB Chili Cook-Off and Luncheon**

January 17, 2013, at Noon—Bldg 52
All crock pots/entries must be in the dining room by 11:30 a.m.

VA Art Show

February 15, 2013, at 1:00 p.m.
followed by

VA's Got Talent
2:00 p.m.



Touhill Performing Arts Center
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63121
(Please see page 7 for more details!)

Valentine's For Veterans Concert

February 15, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.
Touhill Performing Arts Center
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63121

**VA's Written Expressions and Creative Arts Awards**

February 22, 2013, at Noon
Jefferson Barracks Gym, Building 63
A light lunch will be served.

VA Trivia Night

February 23, 2013, Doors at 6:00 p.m.,
Trivia at 7:00 p.m.
Jefferson Barracks Gym, Building 63
Snacks and sodas will be provided.
For more information, contact Debbie Gray
at
314-652-4100, Ext. 64504 or
deborah.gray@va.gov.



**Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of
America**

Has your address changed? Please inform us by email: susanlyle@gatewaypva.org, or you may write or call us at the following:

**Gateway Chapter PVA
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132
Office (314) 427-0393 or (800) 426-4058
Fax (314) 427-4183**

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 via US mail at the address shown to the left and send to the attention of the editor.

President's Message

By Stanley D. Brown



The Passing of One Remarkable Lady - Ms. Betty Jane Bresler

Longtime volunteer and friend to all of us, Betty Bresler, passed away November 24, 2012, at the age of 81. She had volunteered and served veterans for 35 years. Gateway VP Rose Ganz and I, as well as GPVA staff, attended her funeral and had the opportunity to speak with her family and friends. They really had no idea what all she had done for us over the years volunteering. Betty's devotion to us is nothing short of inspirational. For many years until her health declined, she would operate the food (snack) cart three days per week for the inpatients at the Jefferson Barracks SCI unit. For JB luncheons and holiday meals that Gateway PVA sponsored, Betty would come in and fill her cart with plates and meals to distribute among the patients on bed rest. One day I saw her gathering up clothes on the floor of a patient's room. I told her housekeeping would take care of that and she replied that she was taking the clothes home to launder them for the patient. She had apparently been doing it for years. My most recent memory of Betty concerns my delivering boxes of food and snacks to the front door of Building 52. Frail and with a cast on her arm, Betty met us at the door pushing an empty cart to take the boxes to storage in the dayroom. I asked her if she needed help or possibly her walker (which I didn't see). She responded that she leaned on the cart for balance, and would unload the foodstuff with her one good arm, item by item. She then proceeded down the hallway pushing a loaded cart with one good arm. Betty cared deeply for her "boys" as she referred to us, and reliably came to serve us for over three decades. I don't often say this but I doubt we'll ever see another person so dedicated and selfless. All of our lives are so much richer having been touched by Ms. Betty.

PVA and Gateway Clothing Pickup Program/Points, Points, Points...

The combined PVA and Gateway chapter clothing donations/pickup program is now up and running. It's only waiting for **YOUR** participation in the form of securing drop box locations. The same arrangement has been operating in other parts of the country with other PVA chapters and I know Gateway can make it work also. PVA has contracted with Charity Clothing Pickup, a private company. For each cartload of clothing deposited in a PVA drop box, Charity Clothing Pickup will pay national PVA a set price, who in turn will distribute a percentage to our chapter. Our Gateway office will be handling all calls concerning the program for this area. We discussed this new program at the October Kansas City membership forum, plus material was handed out at the last Gateway luncheon (November 15) at Jefferson Barracks. I'm disappointed to report that so far no members have asked for further information or secured any drop box locations. A sample of the St. Louis area box is shown at right.



Members securing business locations willing to accept a clothing drop box with both Charity Clothing and PVA signage, will receive 20 participation points (fundraising) for each box secured. No guarantee for the future, but 20 points translated to a \$200 reimbursement for the 2012 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Each year as the games or Winter Sports Clinic approaches, people call the office from both St. Louis and Kansas City bemoaning they don't have enough points to help fund their participation. Here is another vehicle or way to earn points that translate directly to reimbursement dollars. Even if you're not interested in the wheelchair games or freezing at the winter sports clinic (my personal opinion as a quad), points can be redeemed for numerous gift cards (visit our website for more info). In sum, we need **YOUR** participation in securing these clothing drop boxes to bring in needed funding for the chapter, and for those less altruistic, **YOUR** securing of locations will equate to dollars in your pocket. Please call the office for more details or available areas. In general most of the Metropolitan St. Louis area to include some of nearby Illinois, and the Kansas City area especially south of I-70. Kansas has not been included yet. Again, please call the office for more details and materials needed to sign up locations.

Government Relations Director's Report

By Jessica Dunsmore



News and Notes

Update on Alton National Cemetery Accessibility

We appear to be making some headway as far as the accessibility issues at Alton National Cemetery (Alton, Illinois) are concerned. Currently, the letter request for a no-cost land transfer from the City of Alton to the VA and subsequent ADA ramp construction has reached the VA's Office of Construction and Facilities Management in D.C., after first being reviewed by the local and regional offices. Again, GPVA has collaborated with the IMPACT Center for Independent Living in Alton and the City of Alton in order to make this national landmark accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Congress/Legislative News

Social Security and Veterans Cost-of-Living-Adjustments for 2013

The Social Security Administration announced in mid-October that the cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) for 2013 is 1.7%. Social Security beneficiaries will see the increase in January (for some recipients, this increase may be offset by increases in Medicare premiums). And immediately upon returning to Washington after the election, the Senate passed S. 2259, which provides a 1.7% increase to compensation, pension and DIC payments for veterans this upcoming year. President Obama signed S. 2259 into law in late November.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Not Ratified by the U.S. Senate

On December 4, the Senate failed to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Although it received bipartisan support, the 61-38 vote in support of the international treaty fell short of fulfilling the two-thirds supermajority needed for ratification. Opponents of the treaty in the Senate have said it violates U.S. sovereignty and parental rights. The CRPD, adopted in 2006 by the U.N. General Assembly, is modeled in part after the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is intended to protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities worldwide. Currently, 154 countries have signed on to the treaty (including the U.S.), but still only 126 nations have ratified it.

As Reported in PVA's "Washington Report"--Senate VA Committee to Have New Leadership in 2013

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) announced she will step down as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (effective January 2013) to pursue the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on the Budget. It is expected that Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), a senior member of the Senate VA Committee, will take on the chairmanship. Senator Sanders has been a strong advocate of the *Independent Budget* and PVA believes veterans issues will continue to receive appropriate attention with Senator Sanders at the helm.

Missouri News - The legislature will convene on January 9, 2013. Also, during the Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (MAVO) statewide meeting held in September of this year, we were presented with MAVO's "2013 Legislative Priorities." At the top of that list is maintaining the current funding levels for the Missouri Veterans Homes and other programs administered by the Missouri Veterans Commission. Another highlighted priority for this next year is to "work with the Missouri Veterans Commission to develop a long range plan to meet the changing needs for the Missouri veterans community now and in the future."

Illinois News-The Illinois General Assembly is also back in session on January 9, 2013. We will continue to closely monitor legislation in both Missouri and Illinois, particularly that which affects veterans and people with disabilities.

My best wishes to you all--this is my last article as Government Relations Director with the Chapter, and I want everyone to know it has been an honor and a privilege to serve you since March 2011. A new GRD will be appointed in the New Year, so stay tuned. Happy Holidays!

Tribute to Our Beloved Volunteer, Betty Bresler—She Will Be Missed Immensely!



In memory of...



Richard Bradshaw	Macomb, MO	11/25/12
Charles Diel	Mt. Vernon, IL	08/29/12
Donald Harness	Imperial, MO	11/23/12
Richard Hinkleman	Florissant, MO	10/01/12
Raymond Lippitt	Centralia, MO	09/05/12
Shelby Stone	Larned, KS	11/01/12



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.

Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome Our New Members

Joseph Bennett..... Jennings, MO
Michael Hanig Skidmore, MO
Edmund Lewandowski St. Peters, MO
Dave McCulley Marquand, MO
John Miriani St. Louis, MO
Lindell Purdy..... Chesterfield, MO

Edgar Brown St. Louis, MO
Mitchell Harris Belleville, IL
Burton Maurer St. Peters, MO
Rodney Mills..... Annapolis, MO
Frank Mocerri..... St. Louis, MO
Matthew Schremp Perryville, MO

MIA

Melvin Mueller



*Have you seen or know the whereabouts of this member?
He is in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster.*

Please call us, write to us, or e-mail us if you know where he is! Our contact info is inside the front cover.



Spousal Benefits

By Senior National Service Officer, Tony Timmons



Benefits Available for your Spouse

Veterans will frequently ask what benefits their spouse may be entitled to when the veteran passes away. There are two types of widow's benefits; one is when the cause of death is considered to be service connected and is referred to as Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). The second death benefit is referred to as Non-Service Connected Widow's Pension, which is based on income and net worth.

To be eligible for the service connected death benefits (DIC), the veteran's immediate cause of death has to be caused by a service connected disability/disabilities, the veteran's death was substantially contributed to by a service connected disability, or have a 100% evaluation in effect for over 10 years. The DIC payment rate as of December 1, 2011, is \$1,195.00 per month and the VA will add \$254.00 per month if the veteran and surviving spouse had been married for eight years or more prior to the death of the veteran.

For example, it would be quite apparent that if a veteran is service connected for a form of a heart condition and dies of a heart attack that the VA would relate that the cause of death was due to a service connected disability. If you are service connected for a heart condition, but pass away from cancer, then there wouldn't necessarily be a direct relationship between the service connected disability and the cause of the death.

Another example would be if a veteran has a service connected heart condition and the veteran develops cancer; if for some medical reason the service connected heart condition would prevent the most effective treatment of the cancer and if that could be medically established, it raises the possibility that the VA would consider the service connected heart condition substantially contributed to the cause of death (cancer).

Yet another example is if the veteran is service connected for multiple sclerosis and needed a period of hospitalization to treat the MS, but develops pneumonia while hospitalized. The pneumonia was the primary reason for the veteran to pass away. In this instance a doctor would need to provide a medical opinion. Although MS was not the immediate cause of death, it substantially contributed to the death because of the prolonged period of hospitalization and the development of pneumonia. In cases such as this it is always beneficial to have the death certificate list the service connected disability as part of the immediate cause of death versus contributing to the cause of death.

For a veteran who has a 100% evaluation for service connected conditions that have been in effect for over 10 years, the VA regulations allow for the surviving spouse to be paid the service connected DIC. The cause of death does not need to be a service connected condition.

The Non-Service Connected Death benefit is a very limited program that the VA has for the surviving spouse. As of December 1, 2011, a spouse without dependents is limited to an income of \$8,219.00 per year. If there is one dependent child, the annual income rate allowed is increased to \$10,759.00 per year. The VA also considers net worth, and as a rule, the VA has been accepting \$80,000.00 or less as not excessive net worth. This is an extremely complex benefit program.

If you have additional questions please contact a PVA National Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 2 (inside the front cover) of this newsletter.

VA Trivia Night

By Debbie Gray

FEBRUARY!! That means ONE important thing—VA TRIVIA NIGHT. This event has become a winter staple. This year will be our TENTH year. Yes, what began as a single event in 2004 has evolved into a much anticipated, highly enjoyable 4th Saturday in February.

The 10th Annual VA Trivia Night will be held on Saturday, February 23, 2013, in the VA Gym. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the game starts at 7:00 p.m. Activities for the night include a fun game of trivia, a silent auction and 50/50 raffles. QuikTrip will once again donate snacks and sodas. The result? A fantastic time, and all for the most reasonable price of \$15 per person. The proceeds assist veteran athletes to attend the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and other VA sponsored events. The 2013 NVWG will be held in Tampa, Florida, this year.

We all know bits and pieces of information. During Trivia Night, you will pull that information out of the deep recesses of your brain and use it to help your team of eight answer questions during the 10 rounds of 10 questions. If you don't have a team of eight, don't worry! We will find you a spot with another group.

Of course, believe it or not, PLAYING the game doesn't always interest everyone. In that case, you might choose to donate money to VA General Post Fund #8179 or sponsor a round for \$100. Or you might like to solicit contributions for the Silent Auction. The organizing team at the VA appreciates any way you choose to support this great event!

VA Trivia Night continues to grow each year. We had over 400 attendees last year and had to disappoint a few teams of players when we ran out of table spaces. So, make your plans and RESERVATIONS early!

Come on out and have a good time and support a great cause! Contact Debbie Gray, SCI OT (314-652-4100, Ext. 64504 or deborah.gray@va.gov) for more information or to reserve a table.

VA Art Show

2013 Veterans Applied Arts, Fine Arts and Crafts Competition

Friday, February 15, 2013, at 1:00 p.m.

Touhill Performing Arts Center

One University Boulevard

St. Louis, Missouri 63121

*The deadline to submit artwork is January 31!

For more information, call Karen Wait at 314-652-4100, Ext. 64535



VA's Got Talent

2013 Veterans Dance, Drama and Music Competition

Friday, February 15, 2013, at 2:00 p.m.

Touhill Performing Arts Center

One University Boulevard

St. Louis, Missouri 63121

The deadline to schedule your performance is January 31! Rehearsal will be held February 8, Noon-4:00 p.m.

For more information, call 314-652-4100. Becky Ballard, Ext. 64512 or Matt Luitjohan, Ext. 66602.

(The Valentine's for Veterans Concert will follow the Art and Talent shows at the Touhill with a performance by the Miracles at 7:00 p.m.)



VA's Written Expressions and Creative Arts Awards

2013 Veterans Creative Writing

Friday, February 22, 2013, at Noon

Jefferson Barracks Gym, Building 63 (A light lunch will be served.)

*The deadline to submit your work is January 31!

For more information, call Becky Ballard at 314-652-4100, Ext. 64512.





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Career Corner

By Keisha Wright



OPERATION PAVE: PVA's Vocational Program!

Education Benefits for Older Veterans

There is a VA education benefit that is available for older veterans. Unlike other VA education and employment programs, veterans do not need to be disabled in order to qualify for this program. Veterans might be eligible for education benefits if they:

- Are between the ages of 35 and 65;
- Are unemployed;
- Were not dishonorably discharged;
- Are not eligible for any other VA education benefit;
- Have not been rated as individually unemployable (I/U) by the VA;
- And are not currently enrolled in a federal or state job training program.

If you meet these criteria, you may qualify for the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

The VRAP education benefit is a part of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. The Act was drafted to provide transition assistance to service members separating from active duty, expand education and training services for veterans and provide tax incentives to employers who hire disabled veterans. To learn more about the Vow to Hire Heroes Act and the benefits available to veterans, go to: <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/index.htm>.

VRAP is a program for older unemployed veterans which authorizes up to 12 months of Montgomery GI Bill benefits. If approved for VRAP training, qualified applicants can use this educational benefit to earn an Associates Degree, a non-college degree, a training certificate, certifications or other training in high demand occupations. A list of high demand occupations can be found at: http://benefits.va.gov/vow/docs/VRAP_High_Demand.pdf.

To apply for the VRAP or to obtain more information on the program, go to: <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm>.

If a veteran has already completed an education program under the Chapter 31, VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program, and they meet the criteria for the VRAP program, they may qualify for an additional 12 months of VR&E benefits.

Thus far, over 67,000 veterans have been approved to participate in VRAP training. All veterans are encouraged to apply at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>.

Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Spinal Cord Disease who may be receiving SSDI or SSI and wish to work might consider calling a Paralyzed Veterans of America Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Contact information:

Keisha Wright, M.A., CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor
Office: 210-617-5300, Ext. 10148
Email: keishaw@pva.org
www.OperationPAVE.org

Veteran In Need Of Transportation

A Gateway Chapter member living in the Metro East is seeking reliable, friendly and safe transportation on an as-needed, weekly basis (for medical appointments, etc.). You must be a non-smoker and have a dependable vehicle that can accommodate an adult with a spinal cord injury, as well as a manual wheelchair. You must have clean driving record and be able to pass a background check. Pay is negotiable. If interested, please contact: (618) 277-0543 or casedea@aol.com.

Congratulations to the St. Louis Rugby Rams!

The St. Louis Rugby Rams took 2nd place in the Crazy 8's Rugby Tournament, held in Perryville, Missouri.

Congratulations to United Access employees, David Miles & Kevin Geekie!

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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <h1 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">January</h1>  </div>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Happy New Year! Office Closed	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 BOD Meeting @ GPVA—11:30 a.m. 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 Chili Cook-Off & Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts.	18	19
20	21 M.L.K., Jr.'s Birthday Office Closed	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <h1 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">February</h1>  </div>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Newsletter Articles Due	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 BOD Meeting @ GPVA—4 p.m. 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	13	14  Happy Valentine's Day!	15 VA Art Show VA's Got Talent See page 7!	16
17	18 President's Day Office Closed	19	20	21 Member/Patient Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts.	22 VA Creative Arts Awards JB Gym at Noon	23 Trivia Night JB Gym 7 pm (See pg. 7)
24	25	26	27	28		

Address Service Requested

Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132



Missing Hockey?

Need to see those bone crunching hits?

Come see your local sled hockey club, The DASA Blues, play against teams from Colorado, Illinois, Texas and Canada.

January 4 DASA Blues vs. Colorado Avalanche 5:30 p.m.-6:45 p.m.

January 5 RIC Blackhawks vs. DASA Blues 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

January 5 Team Quebec vs. DASA Blues 7:45 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

January 6 DASA Blues vs. San Antonio Rampage 10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.

All games are free admission and will be played at the Lindenwood Ice Arena.

Lindenwood Ice Arena
910 Main Plaza Drive
Wentzville, MO 63385



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