

Gateway Gazette

Jan/Feb 2018

Volume 51 Number 1



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter



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

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4801 Linwood Blvd, Rm. M1-566
 Kansas City, MO 64128
 (816) 922-2882 or (800) 795-3612
 Fax: (816) 922-3369
 Brent Follas, National Service Officer II

St. Louis Service Office

9700 Page Blvd. Suite 101, Room 1-114
 St. Louis, MO 63132
 Office: (314) 253-4480 or (800) 795-3614
 Fax: (314) 253-4150
 Jeremy Lile, National Service Officer
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Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center

JB SCI, Room 2S25
 #1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
 St. Louis, MO 63125
 Office: (314) 894-6467
 or (866) 328-2670
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Please email us at info@gatewaypva.org or write or call us at the following:

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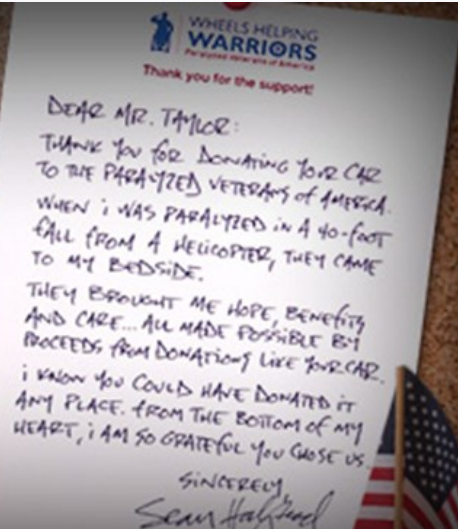
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President's Message

By Stanley Brown



Happy New Year Gateway PVA Members!

As a chapter and as individual members, I believe we had a good 2017. We spent more money on members and their programs than we ever have since our inception as a chapter in 1976. As I noted in my last message, our expenditures actually exceeded our revenue for fiscal year 2017. We are on the same pace for fiscal year 2018. To meet these increased program expenditures, we have been dipping into/selling portions of our investment portfolio. Fortunately, because of stock market increases, our investment portfolio total value has remained about the same.

I often get asked by my counterparts in other chapters, what are all the programs Gateway offers and how do we afford it. I reply that we have member grants for home accessibility, generators, vehicle adaptations and continue to fund our members' participation in events like the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Winter Sports Clinic, Outdoor Adventure at the YMCA Trout Lodge, scuba and snorkel trips for members, and the ever-increasing Gateway member interest and participation in Boccia events around the country and overseas. I also add that we use a participation/point system for awarding travel funding for the sporting events and that members are expected/encouraged to attend all of our fundraising events. Although I don't like to "sell" my disability, I attended three Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) events last week, competing with adorable guide dogs and other charities, seeking charity donation pledges from Federal employees. Our annual biggest fundraiser is our golf tournament and we received no federal funding. We instituted an annual holiday donation appeal last year (names from our defunct telemarketing program and others) that was successful and we are doing it again this year.

Portable Generator Giveaway

One of our members is donating a never-used Generac generator GP5500, model 6110, gasoline generator. This generator must be started by the homeowner. The generator has 6875 watts power for starting and 5500 running watts power. If you are a Gateway member and have not received a previous generator grant, and you would like this generator, please email or write to the office with your request. Your request must be received by 5pm on January 12, 2018. Questions related to the generator should be addressed to Gateway Executive Director, Chris Blanchard, (314)427-0393. We will draw a name from the entries and the winner will need to pick up the generator from the Gateway Chapter office. The individual who receives this generator will not be eligible for future generator grants.



Forever GI Bill

By Brent Follas, National Service Officer II



Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act

The President signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act also known as the “Forever GI Bill,” which will bring significant changes to Veterans education benefits. The law is named after the American Legion National Commander who wrote the original GI Bill language in 1944, and will allow more Veterans to use the GI Bill and more time to use it. Some of the changes will go into effect immediately, most will not. The majority of the changes enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Service members, Families and Survivors.

Some new provisions that go into effect immediately include:

- The 15-year time limitation to use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits is eliminated for Veterans who left active duty on or after January 1, 2013, children who became eligible for the Fry Scholarship on or after January 1, 2013, and all Fry scholarship eligible spouses.
- The VA Education Department is now authorized to restore benefits and provide relief to Veterans affected by school closures or disapprovals. The application is named, “Department of Veterans Affairs Education Benefit Entitlement Restoration Request Due to School Closure or Withdrawal.”
- Reservists who had eligibility under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) and lost it due to the program sunset provision, will have that service credited toward the Post-9/11 GI Bill program. We are in the process of identifying the approximately 2,800 Reservists affected by this and will send them letters with instructions.
- Certain work-study is permanently authorized; previously it had to be re-approved by Congress every few years.
- Anyone eligible for the Forever GI Bill can use their benefits at an accredited independent study program at an area career and technical school, or a postsecondary vocational school providing postsecondary level education. There is no action for you to take here, as these programs will go through the normal course of approval by the appropriate State Approving Agency. Any new programs will be added to the GI Bill Comparison Tool.
- The Vet Success on Campus program will be available to students across the country
- VA will help Veterans to more clearly identify schools that offer them priority enrollment

Resources:

- Provisions explained. <https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIBSummaries.asp>
- See communications on the Forever GI Bill. <https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIBCommunications.asp>
- Take advantage of your local Veterans Service Officers to help you navigate the new information.
- Join the conversation on our Facebook page or on Twitter.
- Announcements will be made on the GI Bill homepage.
- The Education Call Center is available at 1-888-442-4551 (Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. CST) for any questions about GI Bill benefits.



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GATEWAY GI

General Information



Welcome to Our New Members

Willis Walker

Missing in Action

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 they are! Our contact info is inside the front cover.

Troy Bucklew • Randy McGahan • Harry Knoblauch • Edward Williams

Receive Gazette via Email

We are offering the option to receive our Chapter's newsletter by email. Members taking advantage of electronic delivery will help to reduce the cost of printing and postage. In turn, this will allow the Chapter to put more funds toward our members and member programs. If you have not done so already, please contact Administrative Assistant Amber Lee at amber@gatewaypva.org, or Executive Director Chris Blanchard at chris@gatewaypva.org, if you would like start receiving your newsletter electronically.

In Memory Of

Joe Reese	Mountain View, MO	07/02/15
David Jefferson	Vivian, LA	12/01/13
Jarette Stewart	Chesterfield, MO	09/11/17
Steven Hooper	Union, MO	10/11/17
Robert Schmidt	Bixby, MO	12/07/17

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

Annual SCI Chili Cook-off

Matt Luitjohan

Come and join us for the greatest chili cook-off known to the VA. It's once again time to start getting your chili recipes perfected and then put it to the test on January 18th, 2018. All crock pots of chili must be in the SCI dining room by 11:30AM. There will be chili tastings and voting by all, followed by a wonderful luncheon provided by the Gateway PVA Chapter. *Please inform us if you plan to bring a pot of chili so that we can have adequate table space for all of 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.

Scuba Clinic

The Veteran Immersion Program (VIP) co-hosted with LifeWaters (non-profit VSO) an official SDI Scubility International training program on December 9, 2017. This Scuba Discover/Snorkeler Diver program allowed veterans to experience the thrill of diving in the convenience of the Jefferson Barracks swimming pool.

LifeWaters Scuba program is designed to help improve the lives of our disabled Veterans by offering discover scuba and scuba certifications through Scuba Diving International (SDI) (Scubility Program) as part of recreational water therapy. The program is run by dedicated staff volunteers to include SCI therapists, doctors, nurses, veterans and civilians who are passionate about helping any disabled veteran learn scuba diving.



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Ruth Kult and Rose Ganz



Mike Norris, Doug Barnes
and Joey Avellone

On the 15th of December we had five of our Boccia Ball athletes go to La Grange, Illinois to represent the Cluster Busters and Gateway PVA Sports in the Chicagoland Boccia Regionals.

The weather was cold but the competition was heated. My main competition in the BC5 classification were my own teammates, Doug Barnes and Ruth Kult. Also there to compete was Kristen Ridge Quist from Chicago. My first game was against Doug, who was a tough opponent. I lost in our first game and I started my day in the losing bracket. I came back to win my matches against Ruth and Kristen and I won in my second match against Doug. When the tournament was over Doug and I were tied in our win/loss record, five wins and one loss. So it came down to points scored and Doug won out taking the gold and me the silver

Joey Avellone was there representing the BC3 class, his day started much better. He shut out his opponent and went on to win every game thereafter, winning the gold medal.

Rose Ganz was our representative in the Open Class. This class is usually the most competitive and the most crowded with talent. Rose fought gallantly but in the end it was Billy Brooks from Chicago who took the gold.

The competition was great but the chance to share the time with good friends was even better. Sometimes it's more about sharing special time with special people than scoring points. I am proud of my friends, win or lose. I want to send a special thanks to Victor Ganz, Dave and Deb Barnes and Angie Brown. It is your help and support that make all these trips possible.

If you happen to be in the Chicago area stop in to eat at Palmers Place, their stuffed date appetizer was amazing!



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Sports Report

Mike Norris, Sports Director

In this edition of the Gazette I thought I would try to answer a question that I get more often than any other. As a member of the Gateway Chapter BOD and the current sports director, I try to stay knowledgeable on the many programs that we offer. I can answer questions on the generator program, the Housing assistance grant, the Vehicle grant and how to best amass and use your sports points. These are just a few programs that Gateway offers to make our lives easier. To be able to answer these questions is important and I consider it to be one of the duties that a member of the BOD takes on when they are elected to serve and I take this responsibility serious.

That being said, I must tell you that the question I get the most, by far is: "What does QUADBELLY mean?" Well, there is no simple answer for that. I guess the place to start is the beginning. I am a Quadrapalegic. I know there is a newer term for my disability but I identify as a Quad. I do not shy away from the word, I embrace it. I know the things that I and my fellow Quads have suffered through and the stereotypes that an unknowing public places upon us. I know we are stronger because we have suffered, so I rebel against perceived notions of who or what we should be.

I first heard the term "Quadbelly" from a nurse when I was a new injury. She used the term to explain why my once flat stomach now looked like the belly on Buddha. That was seventeen years ago and as you can imagine my belly grew to be more round and Buddha like every year.

At first I used Quadbelly to jokingly describe my plight, but as the time went by I grew and matured. Gone was the sad, frail new injury. I didn't want to stay home and let life pass me by. I wanted to travel, to shop for myself, to pick the things I wanted to do. QUADBELLY now became a way to voice my frustrations. QUADBELLY became my statement of rebellion, moreover it was my declaration to the world. Quadbelly says here I am!

Four years ago I bought a new van and I quickly named it QUADBELLY, I had the lettering put boldly across the top of the windshield. The letters are a bright silver color that can be seen in the sun, or on cloudy dark days. When my friends at Jefferson Barracks read the letters they nod in silent understanding, when able bodied people read the letters you can sometimes see the confusion on their faces. It is then that the questions come.

The questions start with Quadbelly but usually move on to too many other subjects. These questions let me tell the story about the PVA and the Gateway Chapter, the VA SCI/D Unit and the many Quads and Paras and people out there who helped me become who I am. As a community we have much to be proud of, our local president is a lawyer who has fought city hall and won. We have a couple of PhDs who have gone to school, raised their families, traveled the world and still they all found time to counsel, and help me when I was in need of help. We have those who volunteer just to help others through mentor programs, and those who spend countless hours every week passing out snacks to brighten a patient's day. I admire these people and I feel fortunate to have them in my life.

Now I am to the part of my article where I invite you to come join us. Check out the calendar find an event or activity that sounds interesting and get involved. Bocchia Ball season is winding down but we will still be playing in the day room of Building 52 South.


Hope to see you soon!



January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1  OFFICE CLOSED	2  Registration Opens Jan. 2, 2018	3	4	5	6
7 ^{10 pts} Meat Shoot Legion Post 162 1pm—6pm	8	9 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am <i>15 pts. Non-BOD Mbr.</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15  OFFICE CLOSED	16	17	18 ^{5 pts} Chili cook-off & Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Newsletter Articles Due <i>15 pts. published</i>	2	3
4 ^{10 pts} Meat Shoot Legion Post 162 1pm—6pm	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4pm <i>15 pts. Non-BOD Mbr.</i>	14 Creative Arts Dress and Performance	15 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon <i>5 pts</i>	16	17
18	19  OFFICE CLOSED	20	21	22 Washington's Birthday	23 Visual Arts	24 ^{Team St. Louis Fundraiser} Trivia Night Crestwood Elks 5pm-10pm
25	26	27	28			



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of America**

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