



PVA

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter

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Gateway Chapter

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NEED TO UPDATE
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?

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DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE
YOUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?

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Contact us at one of the following:

Gateway Chapter PVA
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132

314.427.0393 or 800.426.4058
Fax 314.427.4183

info@gatewaypva.org

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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 to info@gatewaypva.org or via US mail at the address shown above.

VETERANS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY OR DISEASE, LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

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Ken Ness

ANNOUNCEMENTS

End-of-Year National Information Provided December 21, 2023

In January 2023, we published our legislative priorities for the year. A couple of months later, PVA members arrived in DC for our Hill advocacy event and PVA's National President's testimony on Capitol Hill to talk about our top priorities. We had a great turnout with over 70 PVA representatives from 32 chapters coming from across the nation to speak with their Representatives and Senators about issues of concern to our community.

Throughout the year, we had 16 new campaigns on congressional bills important to PVA. We had a total of 1,946 actions sent out to Congress this year alone. Each action equals as many as three messages to members of Congress. Our campaign with the most messages for 2023 came as no surprise with the FAA Reauthorization/Air Carrier Access Amendments Act with 2,233 messages sent. Following the FAA Reauthorization is the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, with nearly 900 messages. Close behind, we had our Justice for ALS Act campaign with over 650 messages. Almost every state in the country reached out to Congress this year.

Starting in April 2023, PVA started pushing out our advocacy webinar series to help advocates learn the basics of advocating to Congress. We started out going over the basics with "The Fundamentals of Government" and followed with the "Legislative Process". Then, we went into more detail covering the "Stakeholders of Advocacy" and who that entails. We then went a

step further by looking into "Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent", learning from a prior congressional staffer and seasoned advocate. Finally, we rounded everything out by "Connecting the Dots" with closing advice from our CEO, Carl Blake. It's not too late for you to jump into the action and learn about advocacy. Anyone who completes all five webinars will receive a certificate from our Government Relations team. You can view a list of all of our webinars here along with the accompanying PowerPoints and resources.

On July 26, the U.S. Department of Transportation released the long-awaited rule on accessible lavatories on larger single-aisle aircraft. The release of the final rule represents decades of advocacy by PVA and other disability organizations to require a wheelchair-accessible lavatory on single-aisle aircraft. Twin-aisle aircraft are already required to have such a lavatory. It will still be a while before we start to see a significant number of accessible lavatories on single-aisle aircraft, but we finally have dates mandating access in the future.

New Action Needed

The Veterans Accessibility Act (S. 2516) aims to address disability access concerns across the VA. This bill would authorize an Advisory Committee to focus on improving the accessibility of VA's infrastructure, websites, and benefits and services. The bill would also allow the committee to review the acquisition process to ensure it results in VA having products, services, and equipment that meet accessibility requirements.

FROM THE DESK OF GATEWAY CHAPTER'S **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

Katarina Ausley

HAPPY 2024!

I know some of you have heard, but my name is Katarina Ausley and I will be taking over the Executive Assistant role here at Gateway. So, I wanted to write a brief introduction so you can learn a little more about me.

I graduated this past December with my B.A. in Psychology from Webster University. I am from O'Fallon, Illinois. Before coming here to Gateway, I worked for Webster's Department of First-Year Experience serving as a Student Coordinator. I planned and ran New Student Orientation for 3 years, as well as helped create long-term initiatives for new student participation in the first 16 weeks of school. In addition, I was appointed to serve the position of Ambassador for Student Inclusion for the Student Government Association. Here, I worked to advocate for student accessibility and partnered with local organizations in Saint Louis to host diversity-centered events. I love working with people and serving my community.

Outside work, I enjoy working on my hobbies, such as knitting,

reading, baking, and working out at my CrossFit gym. My New Year's Resolutions include playing more board games and spending more quality time with my family.

Overall, I am so excited to work here and meet everyone! It's been fun so far, and I look forward to seeing all the awesome things Gateway will be doing in 2024.

Feel free to reach out to me via email at katarina@gatewaypva.org

- Katarina

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JANUARY 2024

Rose Ganz

We are off to a great start this year. Our Annual Appeal Campaign brought many amazing donations. After just mentioning at a party what we do for Veterans with spinal cord injury or disease, our Executive Director was given a check for a thousand dollars. We will have many fun fundraising opportunities coming up this year, starting with our Trivia Night in February. We will be adding several smaller fundraisers to the three we have done in the past. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate either in person or by donation.

We will be forming a fundraising committee in the very near future. If this is something you have a talent for or you just want to help give us a call.

We will begin having lunches again at the Jefferson Barracks Building 52 dining room starting in February. These lunches will be held on the third Thursday of every month at 11 am. I look forward to our inpatient veterans and outpatient veterans being able to get together again. We have added many new members during the Covid pandemic that we have not been able to meet and look forward to doing so.

Wishing you a happy and safe 2024!

- Rose Ganz, President

We proudly support Gateway PVA



If you have a **service-connected disability**, you may qualify for VA funding assistance for wheelchair accessible vehicles or driving modifications. If your current mobility vehicle is more than two years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion. Veterans discounts available. Check out our daily rental rates!

St. Louis North

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Trivia Night

silent auction \$ 50/50

FEBRUARY

17

**CRESTWOOD ELKS LODGE
#2503**

10261 BAUER RD, ST. LOUIS, MO 63128
(OFF OF TESSON FERRY)

\$25 PER PERSON \$200 PER TABLE

DOORS OPEN @ 5:15

TRIVIA STARTS @ 6


** NO OUTSIDE BEVERAGES ALLOWED**

** NO FOOD PROVIDED, BRING YOUR OWN FOOD**

TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Call (314)427-0393 or email

Katarina@GatewayPVA.org

 **PVA**
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Gateway Chapter

MEMBER SUBMISSION

Ruth Kult

“RUTH’S FISHING TRIP”

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Isn't it strange how things happen? Back in 2021 my sweet nephew, Jackson, unexpectedly passed. He was the sweetest, most charismatic young man. Losing him so suddenly was rough on everyone. Strange, but a day or so before he passed away, we were all in the back of my home fishing. He and I were catching up on the latest of what was going on in this weird world. Those conversations I'll remember and cherish forever.

I had been reading in the newsletter about the PVA Bass Tournament. Rose Ganz encouraged me to attend, and I credit her with starting my fishing craze. I lived here for 20+ years and never fished on my lake without other people. Rose said I needed 2 working rods, but when I looked in my garage, I could only find one working, adult-size rod & reel. Then, I found the Scooby Doo fishing pole that I had gifted to Jackson long ago. Little did I know, my Scooby Doo fishing adventures were about to begin.

I'm trying to explain the strangeness of this. I just recently had to make a rough decision to put my sweet dog down. He was my baby and wherever I could, I'd bring him. Recently, I took him to Tower Grove Park for the 5K walk/run/roll. His arthritis got too painful for him, so he rode on my lap on a pillow like a king. I also took him to the PVA picnic the day before making my tough decision. This was another heartbreaking tragedy. He was with me for 15 years. I rescued him when he was two, now 17. He was a senior citizen in dog years who lived like a king to the very end. It's weird, a tragedy comes, and we have a fishing trip that comes along too, helping me cope a little and clear my head, getting me out of the house away from sad memories, and working on easing my broken heart.

I hope these above few paragraphs caught everyone up on my little story. So, let's go fishing.

The people who fish off the dock all gather together to find what area they're supposed to go. To try their luck, some people stuck around and fished out of a boat slip. A few people went to an area called The Wall. While we were deciding where the best place was, a few volunteers came. Not everyone needs a volunteer, but unfortunately, I do. I felt like I'd hit the jackpot with the volunteer that assisted me! She was a local, and very much into fishing, and especially catfish. In this competition, catfish seem to weigh the most. Weight matters.

I was in a boat slip for a while and I was getting bites, but they kept taking my bait. I'm done feed-

ing the fish. Let me move to the wall and try my luck over there. I was luckier on The Wall, catching about 7 or 8 that day, but it was nothing to write home about. I love fishing, but patience is not my best virtue. I kept asking where are all the big fish I'm supposed to be catching? My volunteer kept saying "Be patient, catfish are slow to act. It's all in the weight. The heavier, the better." Catfish are usually the heaviest. So here I am, just waiting.

I was trying my best at patience, then suddenly a tug, then a big tug, and then a big blur of whose hands were on the caster trying to help me reel in the monster fish. Nick came running over, grabbed a net, dived onto the deck, and reiterated "Don't pull!" as he scooped up a 7lbs of glorious catfish out of the water - the biggest I ever caught. No Scooby rod for this big dog; it would have snapped my line or pole. The 7lb big dog makes a great escape but it leaves me feeling blessed. Another pleasant coincidence, my little Sammy dog, loved fish. Whatya think?

Well, I hope you enjoyed my fish story and hope it may inspire others to take up fishing. It certainly helps take one's mind off their troubles. Thanks for understanding!

Since these events were so enjoyable. I'd like to advise everyone to keep their eyes on the lookout in the newsletter, so you won't miss the opportunity to go fishing again. Below is a pic of my Beloved dog, Sammy. Isn't he sweet?! He was feeling the Christmas Spirit!



GENERAL INFORMATION



JANUARY

JANUARY 2 at 9:00am

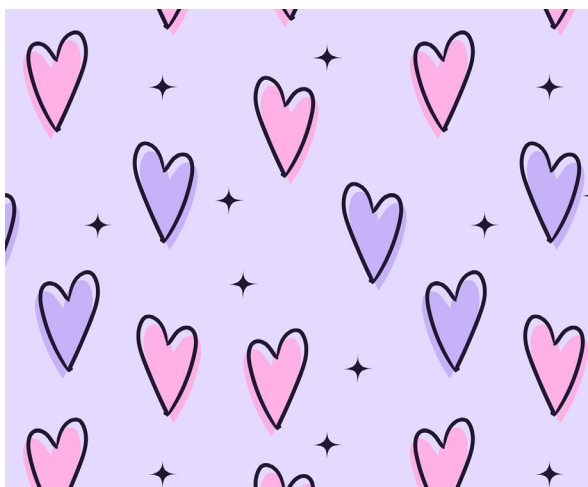
Gateway office reopens

JANUARY 9 at 11:30am

Board of Directors meeting

Via Zoom (contact office for link)

15 points for nonBOD members



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 13 at 11:30am

Board of Directors meeting

Via Zoom (contact office for link)

15 points for nonBOD members

FEBRUARY 17 @ 6pm

Gateway PVA Trivia Night

@ Crestwood Elks Lodge #2503

10261 Bauer Rd, St. Louis, MO 63128

- This is the Crestwood Elks Lodge off of

Tesson Ferry, not the Lodge off of Lindbergh

Cost: \$25 per person and \$200 per table

There are no outside beverages allowed, as well will be no food provided. Feel free to bring your own snacks

Sign up by calling the office at (314)427-0393 or email katarina@gatewaypva.org

20 points for members



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Gateway Chapter
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
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Paralyzed Veterans
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