



GATEWAY GAZETTE

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



SCI Veterans Memorial Garden

By Matt Luitjohan and Charley Wright

We at JB just wanted to take a moment to say thanks to the St. Louis Corvette Club for the large amount of time donated and generosity they have shown us over the past 9 years. Many of you may not know who they are or what they have done, but we're willing to bet that if you've visited the SCI Center and have been out to the patio behind Building 52, you have noticed their work.



many of the planter boxes, created new ones, and maintain the area on a daily basis to keep it beautiful. In turn, they have created one of the most beautiful places on our campus for you, the veterans, to visit with family or friends and enjoy the beauty of nature. It is a great space to get away from it all and let the mind heal while the SCI staff works on healing your body.

They have never wanted a special recognition, they are just happy to be able to provide it to you, our nation's veterans. We would encourage all of you to see the Memorial Garden firsthand next time you are in the area. We ask that if you see a volunteer out there watering plants or pulling weeds, tell them thank you, because chances are he or she is a member of the St. Louis Corvette Club who stopped by to keep it beautiful so that we may all continue to enjoy this peaceful and thoughtful backyard paradise.



Back in 2005 we were contacted by the St. Louis Corvette Club and were told they wanted to adopt us and improve the look of our patio (which was in great need of improvement at that time). Since then, they have put on BBQs and car shows, placed a flag and several fountains outside, redone



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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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Trap/Archery
Missouri Dept. of Conservation
Jay Henges Shooting Range

First Monday of each month, May-September
1100 Antire Rd.
High Ridge, MO 63049

Boccia Tournament

July 16-17, 2014 @ Crestwood Elks Lodge #2503
(See Page 10 for Details)

19th Annual Jack Buck / Gateway PVA Golf Event

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 @
The Landings at Spirit Golf Club in Chesterfield
Members Earn Points for Attendance!!!
Call our office for more information...

Kansas City Membership Forum

Friday, August 8, 2014, at 12:30 p.m.
Kansas City VA Hospital in the Hall of Heroes
4801 Linwood Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64128

34th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

August 12-17, 2014
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tentative Date!!!

The GPVA Annual Membership Picnic
Friday, October 3, 2014, 10:00 a.m.-3:00p.m.
Des Peres Park

YMCA Trout Lodge Adventure

September 25-28, 2014
(See Page 5 for Details)



<https://www.facebook.com/GatewayPVA>

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
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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 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 Brown



Memorial Day - "What it's about...?"

I am writing my message about a week after Memorial Day. Seven years ago on Memorial Day, I got stuck on (broke) the antiquated chairlift ramp going from the sidewalk to the opening of the Soldiers Memorial in downtown St. Louis. About that time, I lamented on the inaccessibility of the public monument as well as the commercialization of what should be a somber holiday (Rib Fest held at the base of the Memorial and countless store sales). After a few years and a formal complaint filing with the US Department of Justice, we now have an accessible ramp for veterans to visit the Soldiers Memorial. Unfortunately, I think commercialization of the day seems even more widespread. I see less and less store closings, and those that do seem to market their patriotism by announcing their closing in advertisements stressing their altruism. News outlets continue to do three-minute segments on the ceremony at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, while everyone revels in the backyard barbecue and the holiday from work. I think most people "just don't get it." In my opinion, since the ending of the draft with the Vietnam War (58,209 deaths), most Americans are unaffected by US casualties in the recent wars (Iraq-4800, Afghanistan-2229, Gulf War-258). World War II, which basically affected everyone, had 405,399 deaths. In solely my opinion, not endorsed by PVA or the Gateway Chapter, the recent war conflicts are not affecting the "haves" of our society. The majority of us are only aware of the war tolls through closing segments on the nightly news. It is not impacting us personally.

True to the stereotype, I was at a family barbecue on Memorial Day this year. There was no conversation about any family members or friends of the family that had died in recent conflicts. I, in fact, must think back to my college days when two drafted friends actually lost their lives in Vietnam. This year's Memorial Day, however, my 14-year-old nephew, who I consider relatively intelligent, asked in general to the table: "Memorial Day? Who are we memorializing?" Eyes turned to me, the only veteran at the table, as I tried to give an explanation that would endure a teenager's attention span.

I knew it was originally called Decoration Day and it was proclaimed shortly after the Civil War (625,000 deaths). I then tried to give my personal slant as a veteran in a wheelchair who "works" with many similar wheelchair veterans. As difficult as our lives may be, I explained, it does not begin to compare to those who made the ultimate sacrifice and the effect on their families. My nephew still seemed attentive as I finished, but I could tell he was done when he responded: "Oh, I didn't know that, would you pass the deviled eggs?"

The next day, the day after Memorial Day, I was more encouraged on the significance on the observance of Memorial Day. As I wheeled out of the grocery store, I passed an elderly gentleman half-leaning and half-pushing on his cart full of groceries. He was tall, thin, and moved at a slow but deliberate pace. When I got to my van, I turned and saw he was following me. I also noticed the car next to me. It had both US Army and World War II decals on the back window; the car had a Purple Heart designated Missouri license plate. Sure enough, the gentleman and his grocery cart arrived at the same time at that car. After he finished loading his groceries, I rolled close to him, knowing I am soft spoken and suspecting he was hard of hearing, and spoke as loud as I could: "You're an US Army veteran who was in World War II?" He smiled, showing a full set of

white teeth and twinkling eyes. He told me he indeed was in the Army and that he had been an infantryman in Germany in the waning years of the War. I then asked him how he had received his Purple Heart and what campaigns or battles he experienced. Then, for the next ten minutes, in the hot sun, he regaled me with his experiences and pointed to the three places on his body where he had received shrapnel. I thanked him for his service and for sharing his experiences with me. He smiled again and told me there were fewer and fewer World War II veterans. I told him I knew that and he then closed by saying: "Although I am now 97, and fewer of us are around, I still remember the name of every friend of mine who died over there."



Her Mission...Service to Others

By Becky Ballard



At the recent Volunteer Awards Banquet, our very own Gateway PVA Vice President, Rose Ganz, was awarded the Directors' Award of Lifetime Achievement! If you know Rose at all, you know that they could not have chosen anyone more deserving of this very prestigious award. Rose began her 14-year career of voluntary service when another vet approached her and told her about the rewarding and fulfilling opportunities of giving back to vets. He showed her the ropes and helped her through the sign-up process and, 8,630 hours later, she is still going strong! Rose's commitment comes from the heart, stating that, "it makes a difference in my life, helping others in need and doing for others. Helping fellow veterans achieve what they didn't think they could is a good feeling and keeps me going."



Rose has been volunteering not only for the SCI Unit and PVA, but also for mental health and Chaplin services. She was very instrumental in seeing the vision of the Hope Recovery Center come to life. She and her husband, Victor, seldom miss an opportunity at the VA to support veterans and their families. Outside of the VA, she volunteers for Camp Penuel, located in Arcadia, MO. This camp provides camping opportunities for inner city youth. She is also a devoted mom and grandmother. She describes volunteering like a tree, branching out, growing, and spreading into the community and the lives of the people she serves. Let's give a BIG shout-out to Rose and a warm HUG for her astounding work ethic and compassion towards her fellow vets!

In memory of...

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Marvin Baker | Festus, MO | 04/26/14 |
| Dennis Bazant | Mesa, AZ | 11/07/13 |
| Clarence Boyer | De Soto, MO | 05/03/14 |
| William Cameron | Mexico, MO | 03/23/11 |
| Michael Chaney | Asbury, MO | 05/01/14 |
| Larry Emerick | Godfrey, IL | 03/18/14 |
| Lynn Hensley | Pierce City, MO | 05/13/14 |
| Raymond Jex | Hazelwood, MO | 02/19/14 |
| Billy Pankey | Belleville, IL | 11/19/13 |
| Ishmael Ramirez | Kansas City, MO | 05/08/14 |
| Rex Sanders | East Alton, IL | 03/27/14 |
| Gary Sims | Hannibal, MO | 07/19/12 |
| Ron Standley | Sandoval, IL | 02/10/13 |
| Maurice Tomkins | Vandalia, IL | 02/24/14 |



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 might wish to pay their respects to the departed.



Thank you to Social Workers in Long-Term Care!
At the end of the year, they decide on a charity to assist, and Bob Sontag (pictured above with President Stan Brown) nominated Gateway PVA.

Thank You!



Thank You, Union Pacific Railroad, for your donation!

Trout Lodge Adventure—By Charley Wright

September 25-28th, 2014, we will be traveling back to the Trout Lodge this year for the 2nd annual "Veterans Adventures" program at the YMCA Trout Lodge located in Missouri's Eastern Ozarks, which is situated on a 360-acre lake surrounded by 5,200 acres of forest-covered hills and is located 90 minutes south of St. Louis. Trout Lodge offers an outstanding family experience, with cabins that are heated and air conditioned, three full buffet-style meals, and many activities that include adaptive kayaking, trap/skeet, archery, a 9-hole golf course (limited number of adaptive carts), fishing from the shore or boat, camp fires, sunset boat rides on the lake, and the list goes on. Last year was a huge hit and we expect to double the number of Veterans this year. We have limited space for 40 Veterans, so make sure to put this on your calendar and get in contact with Charley or Matt ASAP. This event will fill up quickly; spots are already being filled. Remember: this is a family-friendly event, so kids get to camp right along with the adults.

Senator McCaskill VA Health Care Survey—By Stanley Brown

I think it has gone below my radar, although I know it started in 2011 when there were sterilization issues at John Cochran, but for the past three years, Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill has been administering an online survey for veterans using Missouri VA facilities. The VA also annually contracts with a private group to administer the Consumer Assessment of Health Care Provider Systems (CAHPS), which replaced the old SHEP survey. Both instruments gather data from mail surveys sent to veterans using VA facilities. Senator McCaskill is also trying to gauge VA performance and address problems that veterans bring forth. In addition to answering VA CAHPS survey questionnaires when you receive them, I would encourage you to visit Senator McCaskill's website (<http://www.mccaskill.senate.gov/>) to record your VA experience. You can take the survey directly (<http://www.mccaskill.senate.gov/vcsp/>). You may review recent survey results for St. Louis, Kansas City, and Columbia VAs (http://www.mccaskill.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=12179).

GATEWAY CHAPTER PVA

WISHES TO WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

John Hornaday.....St. Louis, MO
Ronald Mitchell.....St. Robert, MO
Teresa Woodby.....Waynesville, MO

Kenneth Johanning..... Breese, IL
Paul Wilson..... Granite City, IL

VA Fully Developed Claims

Submitted By Fred Bradley, Senior Benefits Advocate, Written by Greg Treacy, Sr. NSO



The Fully Developed Claims (FDC) program is an optional new initiative that offers Service members, Veterans, and survivors faster decisions from the VA on compensation, pension, and survivor benefit claims. New VA Forms 21-526EZ (for Veterans and Service members) and 21-534EZ (for survivors) are available at www.va.gov/vaforms.

Veterans, Servicemembers, and survivors simply submit the application form with all relevant records in their possession, and those records which are easily obtainable, such as private medical records, at the time they make their claim and certify that they have no further evidence to submit. The VA can then review and process the claim more quickly.

If a Veteran is filing a VA claim for the very first time, it is an original claim. A reopened claim means the Veteran has new and material evidence and wants the VA to reconsider a claim it once denied. There are also new claims, secondary claims, and special claims.

Veterans may file a FDC for disability compensation for an injury, disability, or condition believed to have occurred or been aggravated by military service, or for a condition caused or aggravated by an existing service-related condition. By filing an FDC, Veterans, Service members and survivors take charge of their own claim by providing all the evidence at once. By then certifying that there is no more evidence, the VA can issue a decision faster.

Participation will not affect the attention the claim receives from qualified VA rating staff or the benefits to which the Veteran is entitled. If the VA determines other records exist and those records are required to make a decision on a claim, the VA will simply remove the claim from the FDC program and process it through the traditional claims process. Once a Veteran initiates a FDC, he/she will have up to one year to complete it. Should the VA approve the claim, benefits are to be paid back to the day the claim was initiated. For more information, review the VA's website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/>.

Though the VA is attempting to make disability claim filing as easy as filing a tax return through H&R Block's automated website, it is highly recommended that before filing an electronic claim, you consult with your friendly neighborhood PVA NSO. It is imperative that the Veteran has a good understanding of the difference between claims for service connected and non-service connected conditions, eligibility for ancillary benefits, the five types of service connection, the eligibility requirements and household income relevance for non-service connected disability claims, and the application of each of these to the Federal Law and Regulations that govern Veteran Benefits.

Veterans who disregard counsel with their NSOs prior to submitting FDCs through eBenefits are requested to give their NSOs a courtesy "heads up" that the claim has been submitted for tracking purposes. Service Officers' contact information can be found on page 2.

MIA

Phillip Baldwin
Nolan Fitzgerrel
Shawn Kemp
Dale Salyer

Richard Banton
Billy Hughes
Raymond Radecki



*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.*

MORE BASEBALL TICKETS—**St. Louis** AND **Kansas City**!!!

St. Louis Cardinals Games

We have purchased an additional eight (8) field box seats for our Gateway Chapter PVA members: Two sets (one wheelchair and one able-bodied seat in each set) for the Sunday, August 17th Cardinals game against the San Diego Padres at 1:15 p.m.; one set (one wheelchair and one able-bodied seat) for the Sunday, August 31st game against the Chicago Cubs at 1:15 p.m.; and one set (one wheelchair and one able-bodied seat) for the Tuesday, September 16th game against the Milwaukee Brewers at 7:15 p.m. We also have, for that very same game, September 16th against the Padres, 30 complimentary terrace level seats from the Cardinals (15 wheelchair and 15 able-bodied seats) - Thank You, St. Louis Cardinals! To enter the drawing, please call our office or email us at: info@gatewaypva.org no later than Friday, August 1, 2014, by the close of business. You may enter the drawings for all three dates.

Kansas City Royals

We have also purchased 18 tickets (9 wheelchair and 9 able-bodied seats) for the Tuesday, July 29th Royals game against the Minnesota Twins at 7:10 p.m. Please contact our office no later than Friday, July 18th by the close of business, if you are interested in entering this drawing. Our office number is 314-427-0393 or email us at info@gatewaypva.org. Good Luck to All!!!



Honorary Contract

With

St. Louis Cardinals

Whereas, Chris Gutierrez, caught a fly ball at Busch Stadium, St. Louis, MO on May 15, 2014 and

Whereas, this performance clearly indicates an extraordinary degree of proficiency, agility and skill as an off-field outfielder;

Therefore, Chris Gutierrez, is hereby tendered this honorary contract with the St. Louis Cardinals. This honorary contract includes a guarantee that at no time will the holder's loyalty to the St. Louis Cardinals be traded to any other Major League Baseball club.

The St. Louis Cardinals hope that our present, mutually satisfactory relationship will be a permanent one.

GPVA Member Catches **Foul Ball...** **Gets a "Contract" with** **the Cardinals!**

Member, Chris Gutierrez, recently won Cardinals tickets from the Gateway Chapter PVA. He entered the drawing after reading about it in the last newsletter. While at the game, he caught a fly ball and was given an Honorary Contract for his "extraordinary skill as an off-field outfielder"!

Way to go Chris!!!



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Or at

www.UnitedAccess.com

2014 Duke McDonald–Gateway PVA Local Wheelchair Games and Softball Clinic

By Charley Wright

We welcomed the local games back to the patio of the Jefferson Barracks SCI Unit, and all in all it went well. There was no rain for the first time in several years and we had a good showing. We had a total of 35 athletes at the games, which included one from our friends at the Kentucky/Indiana PVA Chapter, nine from the Kansas City VA, and ten from our local community through ParaQuad. United Access once again provided a fantastic lunch, we had a few booths at the community expo, plus live entertainment. For those of you who were unable to make it this year, we ask that you mark the date down right now - the first Friday in May of 2015 (May 1st) and plan to participate next year. We are hopeful that between the inpatient veterans and the local Gateway PVA members we will be able to increase our numbers while continuing to grow from our spoke sites.

The Local Wheelchair Games are a great chance to challenge yourself, meet new people, and cheer on others who are giving it their all. Those of you who participate in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are able to use it as a final practice event before leaving to compete nationwide. However, we would like to encourage you to practice, train, and stay active throughout the year in whatever it is you enjoy doing. We have several new programs offered all year around to assist in meeting your leisure needs. We still have an air gun program, a cycling program, an intro to computers class, and will hopefully be welcoming back the adaptive SCUBA program for you to try.

If you are interested in participating, or want more information on any of our programs, all you need to do is contact us: Matt Luitjohan 314-894-6602 or matthew.luitjohan@va.gov and Charley Wright 314-652-4100 ext 64590 or charles.wright6@va.gov. We are also going to be planning more spoke site outreach programs if you live far from St. Louis, so keep checking the GPVA newsletter to see when we'll be in your area.



Go Ahead ... "Live Life to the Fullest"

BOCCIA

**USA VETERAN
CAMP/
TOURNAMENT**



CONTACT:

**CHARLEY WRIGHT
SCI RECREATION THERAPIST
ST. LOUIS VA MEDICAL CENTER
CHARLES.WRIGHT6@VA.GOV**

DATES & TIMES

JULY 16 12-4PM CAMP/INSTRUCTION

JULY 17 9AM-3PM TOURNAMENT

OPEN AND RAMP DIVISIONS

LOCATION:

CRESTWOOD ELKS LODGE #2503

10261 BAUER ROAD ST. LOUIS, MO 63128

Announcement!

16-17

JULY

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ASSOCIATION

|  July  | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| National Veterans Golden Age Games June 28-July 13, 2014 in Fayetteville, AR | | | | Happy 4th of July! Office Closed July 3-4 | | |
| 6 | 7 Trap/Archery Jay Henges Range (pg. 2) | 8 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr. | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 Boccia Tourney on the 16th & 17th (See page 10 for more details) | 17 Mbr/Patient Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts. | 18 KC Royals Ticket Drawing Deadline | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

|  August  | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | August 1st is Deadline for Cardinals Ticket Drawing → | 1 MDWSA Summer Splash at Creve Coeur Lake (pg. 2) | 2 |
| 3 | 4 Newsletter Articles Due Trap/Archery Jay Henges Range (pg. 2) | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 KC Membership Forum at KCVAMC (pg. 2) | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4:00 pm 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr. | 13  | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Mbr/Patient Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts. | 22 | 23 |
| 24/31 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

**1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132**

Address Service Requested



The 1st Annual “Spring Bash” wheelchair softball game was held May 3rd at Spirit Field, which is a wheelchair accessible field. After a long, successful day at the JB Local Wheelchair Games and a full night’s sleep, our SCI Vets, volunteers, and family members, came together to have a great day of softball. Everyone got the chance to work on their swing and enjoy a nice brat or two by the lake. We hope to continue this tradition and host a tournament for our Vets, plus invite more wheelchair softball teams from the surrounding states. This event would not have been possible without the generous donations by Gateway PVA, High Ridge VFW, and the AMVETS. We thank everyone for their support! If you want to get involved in next year’s Spring Bash, make sure to contact us—your friendly Rec Therapists, Matt and Charley, at the St. Louis VAMC.

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