GATEWAY GAZETTE

The Official Publication of the Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America



Chili Cook-Off: From left to right, Amy Will, Matt Luitjohan, Pat Vertrees and Allen Brown of United Access. Pat won first place in the annual Chili Cook-Off held at JB January 17. Second place went to Cindy Lechner and third place was won by PVA member Ann Malburg.

BUILDING 52 – SCI EXPANSION PLANS

ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW:

The goal of the renovation to Building 52 is to provide more current standards of care for Spinal Cord Injury patients. The intention is to reduce the quantity of multiple bed rooms to semi-private and private nursing rooms, increase the number of patients with access to attached toilet and bathing facilities, provide flexibility for a mix of male to female patients, and to increase the space around each bed for patient and staff maneuverability.

The project will be phased construction. When the Domiciliary function is relocated to Building 3, the North wing will be remodeled to accommodate 16 SCI patients and support functions including Nurse Station, Med Room, Clean Utility/Supply, Soil Utility, Equipment Storage, Housekeeping, Patient Day Room and Patient Laundry. Two new patient toilets will be added, three existing patient toilets will be modified to meet current SCI criteria, medical gasses will be added to the wing at each patient bed and new finishes will be provided throughout.

After the North wing is occupied, the phased renovation of the South wing will begin. The challenge of the South wing renovation is to keep 16 patient beds with support areas available throughout the construction. There may be periods during the South wing renovation when it is not possible to maintain 16 beds. Every effort will be made to maximize the number of available beds to limit imposition on the effectiveness of the unit. The cumulative intent is to add two new patient toilets to meet SCI criteria, modify the existing Bowel Care Clinic for conversion to Patient Toilet Room and a Patient Shower Room with more privacy for patients, and remodel Nurse Station, Med Room, and Patient Laundry areas. *Continued on page 8*

Inside...

President's Report Attaboy And much more!

Stan Brown Ruth Kult and others

Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America http://www.gatewaypva.org

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Has your address changed? Please inform us by email to: susanlyle@gatewaypva.org, or writing or calling using the below information:

Gateway PVA 9738 Lackland Road St. Louis, MO 63114 (314) 427-0393 or (800) 426-4058 Fax (314) 427-4183

Cateway is offering transportation 5 days a week for medical appointments or trips to JB. Call the office for eligibility!

MISSOURI SHARED CARE TAX CREDIT

As tax season approaches, I wanted to bring to Gateway PVA members' attention an item that may be quite helpful to them. The "Missouri Shared Care Tax Credit" is available to individuals who are providing care for someone age 60 or older, who is not on Medicaid, who lives in the same home and for which they are not being paid. This profile might fit spouses or children and could reduce their tax burden by \$500 per year.

Details are available at http://www.dor.mo.gov/tax/ taxcredit/sct.htm

Thanks to Janet Gillow of the Gateway MS Society for bringing this to our attention.

Bob Sontag, LCSW

Robert M. Woolsey SCI Center

Please welcome our new Employees, Administrative Assistant Tammie Winkler and Van Driver Jim Tumulty. You can reach Tammie via email at:

tammie@gatewaypva.org

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:

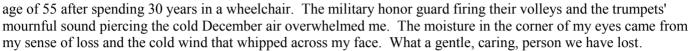
Tammie@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at address shown to the left and mark with attention to the editor.

President's Report

By Stan Brown

A Time of Remembrance

In December, I experienced what I consider to be two of the saddest moments in life. I attended an interment ceremony where "Taps" was played and at that ceremony parents were burying their child. Our Gateway Chapter Vice President, Matt Wilcox, was laid to rest at the



Matt devoted most of his waking hours to volunteer work for other veterans. He was our chapter liaison to both the Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran VA facilities, visiting patients at both locations. He was our representative on the Oversight Committee for the Peer Counseling Program. When our own transportation program wasn't available, Matt would hazard to use area public transportation. I can recall him saying, "Don't worry, I'll get there somehow." If you were around Matt, you will remember him rolling into the room with a "How Do?, How Do?" greeting to everyone. He was still at heart a young man from Decatur Illinois, described by his childhood friend as long legged and skinny, running after his dog. The last week of his life Matt was representing our members' interests by participating in a PVA Site Visit of John Cochran and Jefferson Barracks.

December also saw the passing of long time Gateway Board member, Harold Brakefield. Harold was 85 when he died and had been in his wheelchair for an amazing 55 years. He enlisted in the Navy in 1944 and was part of the liberation of the Philippines in World War II. After his injury, Harold continued to work with his own tool sharpening business until his eyes forced him to retire. After retirement he spent his time volunteering for his church and working with other veterans with spinal cord injury at Jefferson Barracks. My memory of Harold will always see him wearing that BDU (battle dress uniform) cap and hearing his southern Missouri accent coming from the crafts room in Building 52.

In remembering both men I find so much in common, but one trait stands foremost. After devastating injury, these veterans chose to push forward and unselfishly gave back to others. They endured a life-changing event, in both cases a split second dramatic change from a spinal cord injury. They met the daily challenges of wheelchair existence and emerged not focusing inward on their own plight, but rather came out of the tunnel determined to help others. For many years Matt and Harold did just that - gave to other veterans. Although we mourn their passing, we must treasure what they have left us.

Free Gateway PVA Transportation

We are looking for members who need transportation to medical appointments, VA facilities, or other daily living activities. We're especially looking for people needing rides on Mondays or Fridays. If you live within 20 miles of Jefferson Barracks or 35 miles of our Overland office, we should be able to accommodate you with our wheelchair equipped van by picking you up and returning you to your home. Call the office for more information.

ATTENTION VETERANS

If you have a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and are interested in employment, you may be eligible to participate in a new research project.

The St. Louis VA SCI Service is starting a new research study to find out the best way to help veterans with SCI become part of the work force. The project is called SCI-VIP for short. We are proud to say that PVA supports this work. If you would like to learn more about this research project, please contact the SCI-VIP study staff at 314-894-6677 or 800-228-5459 x6-6677.

Angela Cass-Prost, PsyD Christine Mayden, RN Florian P. Thomas, MD, PhD Melissa Zuccarello, RN

Spinal Cord Injury Service—St. Louis VA Medical Center

Attaboy

By Ruth Kult

WOW! UNBELIEVABLE

You think you know someone and then they go and do something so out of character it seems too nice and almost too good to be true. The gentleman I'm speaking of is usually so all about himself, or so most people thought. Well, if you haven't guessed it, the person I'm referring to is Joey Avellone who had a truly awesome idea, but honestly "who would have thought he's actually so nice and thoughtful."



I called his house a few days ago to discuss something totally different; when he suggested this I was almost floored. He suggested that a Posthumous Attaboy should be given to our wonderful Vice President of the Gateway Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Unfortunately, Mr. Matthew Wilcox passed away a few weeks ago.

Speaking for myself, Matt was a one-of-a-kind guy with heart of gold. All of us will miss him terribly. It will be very hard to replace him. I don't believe Matt ever had any enemies. He was that kind of a guy. He always put others first. Most importantly, it will be nearly impossible to find someone with the passion Matt had to help our veterans.

My friend Matt served on the Board of Directors for quite some time. He served for 17 years and two months. A long, long time. Matt, as our Vice President, did countless amazing things for our veterans. He was on our Chapter's hospital committee. He also attended monthlys meeting with Dr. Thomas, where a variety of topics were discussed that could range from nursing care at Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran to the renovation of the Spinal Cord Injury Unit.

It'll be hard to find someone with the qualities of Matt. He's irreplaceable, but we'll try to find someone close. Hopefully, someone will roll up to the plate.

Thanks for reading.

Attaboy 2

By Steve Spurgeon

After reading my Gateway Gazette this month I realized how many people in the PVA and the VA system that have touched me in some way.

I was in a wreck in 1997 resulting in a C6 & 7 spinal cord injury. I knew nothing about the VA at the time. After about 7 weeks in the hospital I was very lucky to have been sent to the KC rehab. At that time the head nurse was Pat Houdart who I would like to give my first Attaboy! After a short 20 days in rehab my insurance ran out. I was to be sent home! I had three small bed sores, pneumonia and a 101 temp. With no one at home to help me, Pat Houdart said "Try the VA"...which my Mother and Sister did. In the space of 3-4 hours and the help of Stan Riemer, Kathy Ricker, Doctor Curtis, Dan Rubble and Bonnie Hilburn of the PVA, I was enrolled in the VA system and transported to JB in St. Louis. All these people are deserving of an Attaboy!

Getting to JB, I spent another four months in rehab and recovery. I was welcomed by the staff and by Bobby Jackson who was my peer counselor. Yet another Attaboy to Bobby for the pep talks when I was up or down! I can't say enough good things about the nursing staff; all need Attaboys. I won't start naming because I can't remember them all and don't want to leave anyone out.

More Attaboys for Mr. Williams who sat in the elevator with me, and for Becky Ballard for her extra time with me. And, for Debbie teaching me to drive!! Also to Kristen Witt for the buttons, and Kim and Cindy for faith and the extra hard work helping (making) me stand.

A few years after leaving JB and getting back to Kansas City, I was pleased to see my old nurse Pat Houdart. She was the nurse at the KCVA spinal cord unit. Sadly she has now transferred to the VA in New Mexico. She will be sadly missed. So one more Attaboy for Pat Houdart.

An Attaboy for Fred Bradley for his help getting my service connected status. And I don't want to forget Ruth Kult. She needs and well deserves an Attaboy for writing the ongoing Attaboy articles in the Gateway Gazette!

More Attaboys on the next page!

Attaboy 3

By Bonnie Hilburn

I have an "Atta Girl" to my secretary, Rebecca Warchola in the Kansas City PVA Office. She has been such a great addition to our PVA family that I can't let it go unnoticed to our members.

Throughout her time with PVA, Rebecca has always been so highly motivated, inspirational and willing to please. She has single-handedly set up our PVA Awareness Day Celebrations in KC for two years and done several booths throughout the past couple of years. Last Christmas she decided to have our clients and others cut a snowflake from paper and sign it. We covered our filing cabinet with snow-



flakes. This year she decided to make a Christmas tree out of our clients' handprints. Out of her own pocket she bought green crepe paper and glitter glue. When anyone came into the office, she would trace their hand, cut it out and then that person would paint their handprint. She put them all together and we had a spectacular Christmas tree. We saved the snowflakes and we will save our tree. This is her tribute to our members and friends. She also stayed up all night and made cookies and candy to give away to all of our VSO offices and significant others.

ATTA GIRL REBECCA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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 us or email us if you know where any of these members are! Contact info is on page 2.

Anderson, Roamin Fuqua, William Mcpherson, Darrell Pfeifer, James E Washburn, Odell Bunch, Jack Jones, Davett N Monahan, James Roden, James T Williams, James E Calhoun, Michael Kiesling, Elmer Morehouse, Allen W Sabo, Joe Edmiston, Derek Lauderdale, Charles T Needham, Florida Sullivan-McGuire, James

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

In memory of...



Maultsby, Gene Dawson, Ted Nibarger, Robert Montgomery, Gary Barbee, Charles

 New Baden
 12/17/2007

 Lees Summit, MO
 12/25/2007

 Cherokee Vil, AR
 12/30/2007

 Cameron, MO
 01/13/2008

 Madison, IL
 01/22/2008



Public Transportation Problems?

Has anyone had problems using Call-a-Ride? If so, below are example situations where filing a complaint with the Federal Transit Authority Office of Civil Rights may be warranted:

- Receiving busy signals when calling the reservation and customer service line
- Lengthy waits on the reservation line
- Excessive trip lengths
- Untimely pickups/drop-offs
- Trip denials
- Transfer policy which drops individuals off at unfamiliar and unsafe locations
- Transfer policy which makes individuals wait for a second Call-A-Ride van for long periods of time
- Transfer policy that transfers individuals who cannot independently navigate the fixed route system
- Lack of public telephones, public restrooms, and Metro security at transfer locations
- Overall failure to provide a comparable and complementary Para-transit system

This is only a partial list, and if you've stopped using Call-A-Ride for any of these reasons, particularly in regards to the transfer policy, in the last six months you should consider filing a complaint. Please call the Gateway Chapter office (314-427-0393) and ask to be sent a copy of the FTA Rider Complaint Form. We ask for the complaints to be sent to Kimberly Barge at Paraquad, 5240 Oakland Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110 and to our Chapter office. Gateway PVA will collaborate with Paraquad on this issue. Paraquad is actively pursuing a solution for problems with the St. Louis area mass transit system and will forward the complaints on to the FTA via certified mail to ensure they have received them.



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New VA Rules for Specially Adapted Housing Grants Program Aids Most Seriously Injured

A change in the law that allows certain seriously injured veterans and service-members to receive multiple grants for constructing or modifying homes has resulted in many new grants, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today.

Before the change, eligible veterans and service-members could receive special adaptive housing grants of \$10,000 or \$50,000 from VA only once. Now they may use the benefit up to three times, so long as the total grants stay within specified limits outlined in the law.

"Veterans seriously disabled during their military service have earned this benefit," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This change ensures that every eligible veteran and service-member has the chance to use the maximum amount afforded to them by our grateful nation."

In order to ensure all previous recipients are aware of this opportunity, VA has mailed more than 16,000 letters to eligible veterans, reaching out to those who used only a portion of their grant or who decided not to use the grant even after initially qualifying.

The response over the past year has been dramatic, with more than 4,600 applications received thus far. Of these, approximately 3,900 veterans have been determined eligible under the new law, and more than 200 grants already awarded.

VA has averaged about 1,000 adaptive housing grant applications per year during the past 10 years. Since the program began in 1948, it has provided more than \$650 million in grants to about 34,000 seriously disabled veterans.

To ensure veterans' and service-members' needs are met and grant money is spent properly, VA works closely throughout the entire process with contractors and architects to design, construct and modify homes that meet the individuals' housing accessibility needs.

Eligible for the benefit are those with specific service-connected disabilities entitling them to VA compensation for a "permanent and total disability." They may receive a grant to construct an adapted home or to modify an existing one to meet their special needs.

VA has three types of adapted housing grants available. The Specially Adapted Housing grant (SAH), currently limited to \$50,000, is generally used to create a wheelchair-accessible home for those who may require such assistance for activities of daily living.

VA's Home Loan Guaranty program and the Native American Direct Loan program may also be used with the SAH benefit to purchase an adaptive home.

The Special Housing Adaptations (SHA) grant, currently limited to \$10,000, is generally used to assist veterans with mobility throughout their homes due to blindness in both eyes, or the anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow.

A third type established by the new law, the Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant, is available to eligible veterans and seriously injured active duty service-members who are temporarily living or intend to temporarily live in a home owned by a family member.

While the SAH and SHA grants require ownership and title to a house, in creating TRA Congress recognized the need to allow veterans and active duty members who may not yet own homes to have access to the adaptive housing grant program.

Under TRA, veterans and service-members eligible under the SAH program would be permitted to use up to \$14,000, and those eligible under the SHA program would be allowed to use up to \$2,000 of the maximum grant amounts. Each grant would count as one of the three grants allowed under the new program.

"The goal of all three grant programs is to provide a barrier-free living environment that offers the country's most severely injured veterans or service-members a level of independent living," added Peake.

Other VA adaptive housing benefits are currently available through Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service's "Independent Living" program, the Insurance Service's Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance program, and the Veterans Health Administration's Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grant.

For more information about grants and other adaptive housing programs, contact a local VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or local veteran service organization. Additional program information and grant applications (VAF-26-4555) can be found at http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm.

SCI Expansion Plans Continued

This will involve a variety of compromises in terms of interim relocation of patients from room to room, and establishing some interim, temporary accommodations for Nurse Station, Patient Day Room, and other support functions

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Building 52 was originally built in 1950 as an inpatient hospital for rehabilitation of spinal cord injury patients. This same function occurs today, with the basement and second floor also serving spinal cord injury outpatient services. Additions to the building were made to add patient dayrooms and "seismic" towers; dates unknown. Renovations to the building have been made since the original construction.

Building Code/Life Safety: The first floor does not comply with current codes relative to exiting as there are dead-end corridors at both the north and south ends of the building.

Accessibility: The first floor currently meets accessibility criteria. New work will modify rooms being renovated to meet accessibility standards, but will not rectify rooms only receiving new finishes.

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS

We have received an invitation/information regarding the FIRST event to be held at The Chaifetz Arena (St. Louis University's new arena) and a **special discount for veterans**. Military personnel tickets are \$16.00 (regular price is \$28.00). **Offer ends Friday, MARCH 28TH!** Harlem Globetrotters Friday, April 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Chaifetz Arena (St. Louis University Campus). The Chaifetz Arena has 50 wheelchair accessible seats with a companion seat located next to each wheelchair seat. These are first come/first serve and to secure these seats, you must specify "wheelchair seating" in your request. **TO ORDER TICKETS**, contact Jenny Madras, Group Sales Manager, at (314) 977-5008 or via email at madrasjm@slu.edu. For more information regarding the arena, visit www.TheChaifetzArena.com. Any questions, please feel free to contact me at anytime (see page 2). Thanks, Tammie Winkler

Scholarship Money Available for the 2008-2009 Academic Year

PVA established an Educational Scholarship Program to assist PVA members and their immediate family members in gaining a post-secondary education from accredited colleges and universities across America. For the upcoming 2008-2009 academic year, PVA will be offering both full-time (\$1,000) and part-time scholarships (\$500).

This program is open to PVA members, their spouses and unmarried children (under 24 years of age). Applicants must be United States citizens and accepted or enrolled in an accredited college or university.

Applications must be received at the PVA National Office no later than June 2, 2008. To obtain the instructions and application forms, go to www.pva.org (click on the *Membership* tab); contact your local PVA chapter or contact Patricia Rollins at: 800-424-8200 ext. 619, or email: TrishR@pva.org.

8th ANNUAL CAMP PENUEL FUN RUN

April 26th, 8:00am. The event takes place at Lemay Ferry Road in South County and the Meramec River on the Arnold side of the water. Contact Rose Ganz for more information at 314-607-2077.

2nd ANNUAL SWEAT WITH THE VETS 5K / 1 MILE RUN/WALK/ROLL

Who wants to personally help raise money for veterans and be in a race to do it? Get ready, get set, go! The Second Annual Sweat with the Vets 5k and 1 mile RUN/WALK/ROLL has been set for May 31, 2008 at the St. Louis VA Medical Center-Jefferson Barracks Division. The money to be raised is for the support of the 2008 National Rehabilitation Events—Wheelchair Games, Golden Age Games, and Winter Sports Clinic. Last year, we had over 220 racers and we are expecting more this year. T-shirts will be guaranteed to entries post-marked by 4/25/08. It is a great run and includes views of the Mississippi River, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, and usually some friendly wildlife along the way. For more information and to obtain a copy of an application, contact Jean Ferguson at 314-652-4100, ext 64015, or email: Jean.Ferguson@va.gov

March/April 2008 Gateway Gazette Volume 41 Number 2

SCI Recovery Center to open in Kansas City

By Brian Rollin

I'm writing to tell you about a great new SCI recovery center opening in Kansas City on April 7th, 2008. It's called Quest to Walk. Quest to Walk is a spinal cord recovery center that specializes in exercise based recovery methods for spinal cord injuries. Quest to Walk's founder and co-founder are both recovering from spinal cord injuries and are very excited to get this center open. The founder, John Teegarden of Olathe Kansas was inspired to bring Ouest to Walk to Kansas City after visiting Project Walk in Carlsbad California. John then realized that there were no other rehab centers in the Midwest that met his needs like Project Walk. He got together with Thomas Eddy (co-founder) to open a SCI Recovery Center that could help all midwest SCI patients in Kansas City. I will be heading up the First Step program. The First Step program will help clients through support groups for them and their families. We will also be helping them using websites and programs designed to help them become active in their community again. Applications and donations are now being accepted. If there are any questions about Quest to Walk you can go to their website at www.questtowalk.org. Quest to Walk will also be doing a fundraiser on June 7th, 2008. We have signed up with the charity program for the Hospital Hill Run in Kansas City and will be starting a wheelchair division for the race. John Teegarden, Thomas Eddy, and I will all be in the race with our wheelchairs (hand cycles). We are looking for other participants in wheelchairs to join us. The website for the race is www.hospitalhillrun.com. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at rollinbb1@att.net. I personally believe that this is going to be a great opportunity and can't wait to be there myself. Thank you for your time.

Gateway PVA Sports Points Criteria for 2008 Sports/Activities Year

PVA Member Status - A = Associate member B = Bonafide member

Hardship Classification: All categories except letter "e" will have a doubling of points

- a = Illness: member (active and affiliate) health significantly affected ability to earn points
- b = Distance: At least 100 miles one-way from both Chapter office and Jefferson Barracks and 100 miles to the location of the event.
- c = Transportation: Lack of transportation resources
- d = Employment: Many activities fall within normal working hours of employed member
- e = Person does not have Hardship classification

Point Categories/Opportunities	Points
1. Attend a chapter function (JB monthly lunch, other activities such as the Pig Roast,	
Lone Elk Park outing, etc.	10
2. Attend a community function as a chapter representative	10
3. Attend a quarterly membership meeting as a non-board voting member or affiliate member	15
4. Attend a monthly BOD meeting as a non-board member	15
5. Chair an active committee of the Gateway Chapter PVA	25
6. Actively serve on an active committee of the Gateway Chapter PVA (As determined by	
Committee Chair)	15
7. Published original submission to the bi-monthly newsletter (One per year for	
President and VP)	15
8. Sign up a new voting Gateway PVA member	25
9. Volunteer in the Chapter office by calling members, working on the newsletter, or other	
in-office tasks	15
10. Attend a Gateway PVA Sports Fundraiser	10
11. Direct fundraising efforts (sales): receive points for every \$50 raised	5
12. Documented volunteer Peer Counseling as part of an approved VA Program (per hour)	5
13. Attend a Memorial or Funeral of a Gateway PVA member	15

NOTE: Your attendance or participation in earning these points must be documented in the Chapter Sports Points Spreadsheet. Any questionable request will be decided on by the Gateway Chapter Board of Directors.

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Reliability

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Elks Meat Shoot High Ridge @ Noon	10	11 BOD Meeting Overland @ 11:30	12	Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30	14	15
16	17	18	19	JB Lunch @ 12 WSC Mtg/Apps due for NVWG	21	22
23 Easter	24 31	25	26	27	28	29 Winter Sports Clinic

Alpril 2008								
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
30 Winter Sports - Clinic	31	1	2	3	4	5 Winter Sports Clinic		
6	7	8 BOD Meeting Overland @ 11:30	9	Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30	11	12		
13	14	Tax Due Date	16	JB Luncheon @ Noon	18 Trap shoot @ Olin - East Alton 10am	19 Newsletter Articles Due		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Camp Penuel Fun Run 8:00 am		
27	28	29	30					

батемат снартея Address Service Requested

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



Annual Trivia Night to benefit the NVWG, held at Jefferson Barracks VAMC Saturday February 23



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