



GATEWAY GAZETTE

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



2015 Gateway Membership Wish List

By Stanley Brown

I am pleased to report we are more than halfway through our fiscal year and are once again this year in good financial shape. Rather than just putting more money in savings, I believe we will be in a position to authorize some substantial financial outlays for membership in the next few months. As you may recall, last year we spent \$109,500 in purchasing four used accessible vans that were gifted



by a lottery to four of our deserving members. We could do that again. In 2014, we also financed \$5,747 worth of modifications for home accessibility, and \$7,391.36 for purchasing hand controls for members. Those programs will continue, but perhaps we should increase the home modification grants again. Gateway non-service connected members can now receive up to \$10,000 and service connected members \$7,500, after use of the veteran's Home Improvement and Structural Alterations (HISA) grant. This edition of the Gazette has an article by Senior Benefits Advocate Fred Bradley on important HISA grant changes, to include a pre-award inspection by the VA and the adjustment of three required bids down to one.

Last year, prior to the Board deciding to purchase and give away used accessible vehicles, we had the not-so-bright idea to purchase a home that was already accessible or could easily be made accessible. I actually visited/inspected several houses and began to realize the plethora of variables and unresolved questions in choosing the home prior to choosing a winning member. The Board also pointed out the great risk in selecting a lucky member and at the same time, being assured the member could maintain the house and make utility payments. After discussion of the house giveaway, we decided on accessible vehicles instead. At the upcoming two board meetings, we will again be discussing what substantial outlay we should make available to members this year.



In the past we have discussed purchasing, or providing assistance in purchasing, generators for homes. There has also been a discussion about just sending out to our members (650 approximately) a gift card for a pre-determined equitable amount. Other topics discussed ranged from Gateway grants to purchase amounts toward a vehicle if there is a need demonstrated, and an idea to provide more money for members to go on recreation/sports trips. Bear in mind that if a member is relatively active now, they can earn enough points to participate in every major event.



Perhaps we should fund members for one event to attend, regardless of accumulated points, like the Trout Lodge Outdoor Adventure. What ideas do you have? Please email, call, write, or send by a carrier pigeon, any ideas you might have, or comment on what I've already brought up, to the Gateway Chapter Board of Directors to consider as a major financial outlay for members in the next few months. We can be reached by email (info@gatewaypva.org) or by phone (314-427-0393 / 800-426-4058).

Inside—Important Upcoming Events & More...

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Paralyzed Veterans of America**
<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

-Attention Team St. Louis -

**NVWG applications are due at the SCI Recreation
Therapy Office at Jefferson Barracks March 20!**

Boccia Tournament of Champions Cup

American Legion Post 162

March 27, 2015

9305 S. Broadway

St. Louis, MO 63125

Noon - 4 p.m.

Kentucky/Indiana Bass Tournament

Kentucky Lake

Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park

April 17-19, 2015

Boccia Tournament of Champions

Crestwood Elks

April 24, 2015

10261 Bauer Road

St. Louis, MO 63128

Noon - 4 p.m.

**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**



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

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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



St. Louis SCI/D Healthcare

As I write this message in the early days of February, we have just completed a site visit from our national VA Field Advisory Committee representatives and staff at the national PVA office. Not surprisingly, we heard a recurrent theme that's been replayed the last few visits. St. Louis needs permanent SCI leadership and more medical staff, specifically nurses. After Dr. Taylor left as the SCI Chief at the end of 2012, Dr. Park took over the position as "Acting Chief" for two years. For those two years she performed the duties of two physicians. In addition, she continued in the on-call rotation, as well as making rounds to the six-bed unit at John Cochran. Thank her the next time you see her. We (the VA) are again recruiting for an SCI Chief; the position has been offered to four different individuals in the past, all of whom eventually declined. We are also now recruiting for a Deputy SCI Chief (a new position), whose main responsibility would be the six-bed acute care unit at John Cochran. I'm optimistic we may fill both positions this month.

In one of his first speeches, VA Secretary Sloan Gibson stated the VA was short 28,000 medical care professionals. Our SCI/D unit at Jefferson Barracks has, for the last few months, been short 6 -10 nurses/direct care staff, and the six-bed acute care unit at John Cochran has usually been short about four nurses/direct care staff. Last month I heard that out of the nine Chief of Staff positions in our Veterans Integrated Service Network 15, there are seven vacancies. For a while there was almost daily negative press on the VA. I continue to hear of lengthy wait times for nurses getting hired and actually starting work. Is it any wonder the VA is finding it difficult to fill all of their authorized positions. In St. Louis, in particular, look at a weekend newspaper and see all the ads for medical care professionals at hospitals, nursing homes, and agencies.

Hospital Liaison Chairman Scott Richards, Senior NSO Rodney Harris, and I meet monthly with St. Louis VA leadership over the personnel issues/problems. We are committed to improvement and getting fully staffed, which also means we could have more inpatients at Jefferson Barracks. Next time you see a nurse or aide, smile and convince them "you" are the reason they want to continue working in SCI!

Dr. Jai Park wins 2014 St. Louis VA Medical Staff Award

If you've been by the main elevators on the first floor of John Cochran, you should have noticed Dr. Park's picture as one of two awardees for the "St. Louis VA Medical Staff Recognition Award" for 2014. There couldn't be a more deserving winner of the award. Please congratulate her next time you see her.

Gateway Sports Director

Would you like a thankless job for double my salary (zero dollars times two)? Would you like to listen to a lot of members complaining? We now have a vacancy in the Sports Director position. You need not actually be on the Gateway Board of Directors for this position, but would be required to attend monthly meetings, either in person or by phone. As president, I make the appointment with the approval/confirmation of the Board of Directors. Applicants should be interested in the sports/recreation program, as well as be computer literate and familiar with Excel software. Please contact me with interest! And, by the way, it's really not that bad, you do receive 25 annual participation points for being the chairman of that committee.

Gateway Chapter PVA would like to thank "Santa" Bill for once again handing out our gift bags to the patients, visiting with everyone, and posing for the occasional photo or two. It wouldn't be Christmas without him! A good time was had by all...

Christmas at the Barracks



The veterans and staff of the Spinal Cord Injury Service would like to personally thank the High Ridge Elks Lodge #2455 for the generous amounts of time, resources, and financial assistance their organization has provided us both recently and in the past. At the December luncheon they provided the Sports account GPF 8179 a check in the amount of \$2,056. It is through their continued interest and support that the members of the St. Louis VA Medical Center's Disabled Ski Team and St. Louis Wheelchair Team are able to attend the National Rehabilitation Sporting Events across the country. These rehab events provide our veterans continued growth and additional exposure to new activities. They are also a means to show how previously enjoyed activities can be adapted to their current physical abilities. The financial assistance that the High Ridge Elks organization continues to provide has helped many veterans get these experiences for the first time—we would all like to commend and thank them for their efforts!

NVWG

By Terri Fuda



The 35th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held this year in Dallas, Texas. Registration packets have been sent out and are also available through Charley Wright, Jefferson Barracks Recreation Therapy SCI Unit, call 1-800-228-5459, ext. 64590.

There is not only fun to be had at these games, but being together as a team and competing as well, can and will happen. Up to nineteen different sports are available to choose from and participate in. If you are in to team sports and are a para, there are basketball and softball games to participate in. If you are a quad, you have power soccer and quad rugby to choose from. Otherwise, you have many other challenging sports to choose from such as swimming, trap shooting, nine ball, table tennis, archery, bowling, hand cycling, slalom, air pistols and air rifles. Motor rally and Boccia are available for quads only. So you see, you have many options when it comes to activities at the NVWG. You still have time to train for the games before they begin on June 21, 2015. Below are photos taken from last year's Games in Philly!

In my opinion, you can't really go wrong trying the wheelchair games at least once...I bet you'll be back! Not only do you have Team St. Louis at your back, but you will meet so many others from your branch of service and from many different states. Trust me you'll meet great people who are a lot of fun, not to mention all the great sights! If you have never been to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games before, just ask any of the veterans who have gone, the pride you feel after competing is like no other! You will come home from Dallas having pride in yourself as well as tons of fun!

So, don't forget to send those application forms to Charley Wright, by March 20! Any questions please call Charley or Matt Luitjohan @ 800-228-5458 ext. 64590 or ext. 66602.



In memory of...

Robert Davis
Charles Heavin
Jimmy Smith

Topeka, KS
Sparta, MO
Effingham, IL

01/24/15
01/09/15
05/10/14



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.

Looking for a Few Good Men & Women...

By Susan Lyle



Enclosed in this issue of the *Gateway Gazette* is a nomination form for the Fiscal Year 2015—2016 Board of Directors (BOD) and Officers. The term begins July 1, 2015. If you or someone you know is interested in running for the BOD, please write the name(s) on the nomination form, fold the ballot into thirds (our address is conveniently printed on the back) and return it to our office no later than Friday, April 3, 2015. I will personally contact the nominees to answer any of their questions and confirm their interest in serving on the Gateway Chapter PVA Board of Directors before their names are added to the election ballot.

For the second step, the official election ballots will be included in the May/June issue of the *Gazette*. Upon receiving the election ballot, please complete it and return the form to the Gateway Chapter office no later than June 8th. If you miss that date, you may hand-deliver your sealed ballot to a Gateway Chapter representative at the Thursday, June 18, 2015, luncheon at the Jefferson Barracks SCI Unit dining room (in Building 52). All ballots will be counted during the Gateway PVA Quarterly Membership Meeting, which immediately follows the luncheon. The new Officers & Board of Directors will be announced at the end of the membership meeting.



~ Thank you for taking part in the creation of your Board ~



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Thank You Star Touring & Riding!

Members of Star Touring & Riding Chapter's 275 and 437 stopped by our December luncheon at the Jefferson Barracks SCI Unit to donate a total of \$500 in gas cards for the Gateway Chapter's Transportation Program. President Don Kaiser of Chapter 437 and James Ferguson from Chapter 275 presented Gateway's President, Stan Brown, with the gas cards in hopes that GPVA can continue transporting our Veterans to important events and appointments. We sure will!!!

The SCI Recreation Therapy Department has gone mobile with it's own website, providing information on the up and coming Local RT Clinics, National and International programs, and competitions. We'll be updating the site monthly to provide the most up-to-date information for our SCI Veteran programs, as well as community programming that our Veterans might have an interest in. We're excited to be able to provide a (www.upto.com) calendar that is included on the website and can be downloaded to your mobile device with a FREE APP. Check it out today!!!! www.veteranadventures.com



Monthly Trapshooting with the Missouri Department of Conservation

The SCI Recreation Therapy Department and Gateway Chapter PVA have again teamed up with the High Ridge VFW and the Missouri Department of Conservation to offer monthly trap shoots/archery. They will begin on May 4, 2015, and will be held on the first Monday of each month from May through August - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. They will once again be held at the Jay Henge's Shooting Range at the Missouri Department of Conservation, just off of Antire Road and I-44. The address is 1100 Antire Rd., High Ridge, MO 63049. We are limited to 10 veterans participating in this program, so if you are interested in signing up, please contact: Charley Wright at 314-652-4100 x64590 or charles.wright6@va.gov or Matt Luitjohan at 314-894-6602 or matthew.luitjohan@va.gov as soon as possible in order to secure your place!

GATEWAY CHAPTER PVA

WISHES TO WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

Chilton Christopher Odessa, MO
Daniel Rodriguez Topeka, KS

Roger Denly Farmington, IA
Craig Trimmell..... Springfield, MO

MIA

Richard Banton
Jonathan Lewis
Raymond Radecki
Dale Salyer
Kenneth Williams

Chad Kocina
Michael McKinney
Joe Sabo
Rick Taylor



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.



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HISA Grants

Written By Joni St. Pierre, Sr. NSO, Updated and Revised by Fred Bradley, SBA



One of the issues that tends to be presented to our office for both our service connected and non-service connected veterans with some frequency is the issue of the Home Improvement & Structural Alterations (HISA) Program problems. We often hear veterans stating contractors are unable to receive the grant payment they have paid for work done to their residences. This article will address the basics of HISA and speak to the issue of grant payments as well.

HISA is a Veterans Health Administration program for veterans with disabilities that may provide assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. The grants are **\$6,800** for a service connected condition and a non-service connected condition of a veteran rated 50 percent or more service connected and **\$2,000** may be provided for non-service connected veterans.

The application process to receive a HISA grant requires a prescription from a VA, or fee-basis physician for the modifications and must include the following:

1. The specific item(s) needed.
2. Diagnosis and medical justification for the item or modification(s) requested.
3. Veteran's name, address, last four digits of Social Security Number (SSN) and phone number.

A veteran must provide the following:

1. A completed VA Form 10-0103
2. If you live in rented or leased property, written permission from the owner
3. A quote from one contractor. **NOTE: VA no longer requires a quote from three contractors effective December 3, 2014.**
4. A picture of the work site prior to the construction.

Effective December 3, 2014, VA Prosthetics Service is now required to conduct a pre-award inspection of the site. They will arrange the time and date with you.

The regulations governing and requirements for acquiring a HISA grant is more extensive than the short list provided above, but the list gives you a basic guideline for obtaining a grant. The prosthetics departments at any VAMC have packets available to guide veterans through the process.

An issue often brought to our attention is veterans wanting to be paid the grant money for work already completed on their homes. The VA HISA information and documents provided to veterans are replete with statements reminding veterans that no work should be started until the approval letter from the VA is received. The HISA forms reiterate that as well as require a veteran's acknowledgement that it is understood that no work will be undertaken until written approval is received. That being said, the Chief of Prosthetics & Sensory Aids Service under VHA Handbook 1173.14(10)(i) is tasked to authorize claims for prompt payment, or reimbursement, of costs or services performed (without prior authorization), when:

1. The veteran meets both the legal eligibility and medical criteria for the modifications for which payment is sought, **and**
2. The claim is submitted within 30 days of the date that the improvement or alteration was performed, **or**
3. Documented evidence indicates that an application was made for the actual home modification, or a VA physician recommended furnishing the improvement or alteration before the work was performed.

Another significant change: A veteran may request an advance payment up to 50% of the total benefit authorized (see above for amounts and criteria). Prosthetics will make payment no later than 30 days after the grant is approved. The payment must only be used for the work described in the application for the grant. If an advance payment was approved, the veteran must request a final payment no later than 60 days after the advance payment was made. The request must include:

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

1. A statement by the veteran that the work requested in the application has been completed.
2. Color photograph of the completed project.
3. Documentation of itemized costs for material, labor, permits and inspections. Please be advised that Prosthetics can make an inspection before final approval of payment. If a final payment request is not submitted, VA can take steps to collect the advance payment. If no advance payment was requested by the veteran and no request for final payment is submitted, Prosthetics will notify the veteran that no payment will be made and this project will be closed out.

Another change is that Prosthetics can now pay the veteran. It will be entirely up to the veteran to pay the contractor. It is unclear what recourse the contractor will have if the veteran does not make payment.

While there are narrow windows of recourse for payment for work done on a HISA project, our office strongly recommends that our veterans obtain a HISA packet from their appropriate prosthetics department and follow the guidelines carefully. It is difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain payment from the VA after the work has been completed.

If you have any questions or if a problem arises that you are unable to resolve, please call your PVA Service Officer (contact information is located on page 2). Please be prepared with specific information, in order for us to follow up on the issue.



Team St. Louis will travel to Dallas, Texas, for the 35th Annual NVWCG in June.

IMPORTANT Dates – Registration packets are available at the SCI Recreation Therapy Clinic located on the ground floor of Building 52. All applications must be returned to Coach Charley Wright no later than MARCH 20, 2015. Make sure to get your Primary Care Physician to fill out the medical portion of the registration form. Don't delay in getting your application turned in! The Games take place June 21 through June 26.

The St. Louis National Boccia Team "Cluster Busters" started its Tournament of Champions Cup this month, hosted by the American Legion Post 162. Twelve Team Members will accumulate points throughout the competition and will go toward the final point total and crowning the Cup Champion in November 2015. Over the next 10 months, American Legion Post 162 and Crestwood Elks will be co-hosting the cup series. Check out the calendar at www.veteranadventures.com for details on locations and times. The team would like to extend a big thank you to both veteran support associations for hosting and providing food and volunteers.

Here are the top 4 standings after the first match in Feb:

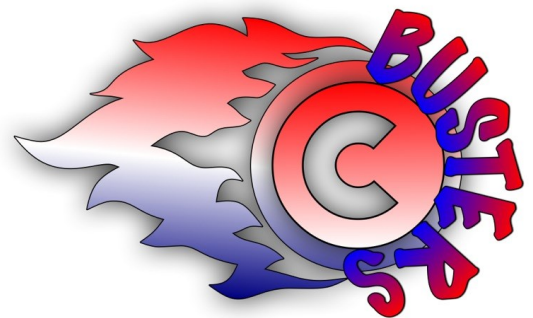
Roger Denly 19 Pts

Hank Tipton 18 Pts

Scott Richards 14 Pts

Everett Hackman 13 Pts






Running results will be posted on the website.





March



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 	3 We accept clothing donations at our office!	4	5	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	9	10 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4:00 pm 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	11	12 SCI RT Outreach to Wichita, KS VA Adaptive Sports	13	14
15	16	17 Happy St. Patrick's Day 	18	19 Mbr/Patient Luncheon/Qtr. Mbr Mtg. at JB @ Noon 5 pts./15 pts.	20 NVWG Apps Due See pg. 2 	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Boccia @ American Legion Post 162 Noon - 4 pm	28
29	30	31				
 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (March 29—April 3, 2015) Snowmass Village, CO 						



April



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 BOD Nomination Forms Due!	4
 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (March 29—April 3, 2015) Snowmass Village, CO 						
5 Happy Easter 	6	7 Newsletter Articles Due 15 pts. published	8	9	10	11 Scuba Trip to Georgia Aquarium 11th—13th See JB Rec. Therapy
12 Atlanta, Georgia Scuba 4/11 - 4/13/15	13 	14 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	15	16 Mbr/Patient Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts.	17  KY/IN PVA Bass Tournament Kentucky Lake/Dam Village Resort 4/17 - 4/19/15	18
19  KY/IN Bass Tourney	20	21	22	23	24 Boccia Tournament of Champions Cup at Crestwood Elks Noon - 4 pm	25
26	27	28	29	30 Boccia Kansas City Tournament St. Louis "Cluster Busters" Team Event 4/30 - 5/3/15		



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

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

Address Service Requested

BOD Nomination Forms Enclosed
**Please return nominations to the office
no later than April 3, 2015!**



Dollars for Bowling or Bowling for Dollars

Pictured to the left with Jim Donahoe is our Gateway Chapter President Stan Brown in a ceremony giving the second donation of \$5,000 for equipping a new bowling alley in the future JB all-purpose recreation building. The new “gym” will be located next to Building 52 (the Jefferson Barracks SCI Unit).

Mr. Jim Donahoe, who also chaired the fundraising effort for the Fisher house, is chairing the effort to raise

\$500,000 in private funding for four bowling lanes in the new recreation building. The VA will furnish the space, but that’s all. The existing bowling alley and gymnasium will be knocked down as part of the future Jefferson Barracks Cemetery expansion. The proposed recreation building will sit just to the left (as you face Building 52) of our current SCI Unit, and an actual covered “sky bridge” will connect the two buildings. It should be awesome! Contact Mr. Donahoe if you would like to support his current fundraising efforts.



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