

Gateway Gazette

March/April 2017

Volume 50 Number 2



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter



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Time to update your address or email?

Please email us at info@gatewaypva.org or write or call us at the following:

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 I KNOW YOU COULD HAVE DONATED IT
 ANY PLACE. FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY
 HEART, I AM SO GRATEFUL YOU CHOSE US.
 SINCERELY
 Sean Haygood



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 of America**

Gateway Chapter

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President's Message

By Stanley Brown

Baseball Season Again - Cardinals and Royals Tickets

Gateway PVA has purchased a boatload of the St. Louis Cardinals and Kansas City Royals tickets this year. We have purchased field box seats, one regular seat and one wheelchair space, for all 81 home games of the Cardinals this year. We are in the process of trying to purchase at least 16 home games, one regular seat and one wheelchair space, for the Kansas City Royals. The Gateway Board of Directors voted to make available 41 of the 81 Cardinal home games to be given away by lottery, and open up for purchase at one half the ticket value, the other 40 home games of the Cardinals. We believe several members would want some games in particular and not want to chance getting them in a lottery. It is not our intention to make money or recoup what we spent, but merely to allow some members to actually secure the games they want. Members may purchase a maximum of four games with two seats each game. The other 41 home games will be available by lottery method as in the past. In either case or both cases, you may want to buy four games and possibly put in the lottery for other games. Please email or call the office no later than 5 PM on Friday, March 17, listing in order of preference, those games you want to purchase and those you would like to receive free by the lottery. If you're interested in buying four games, I would list more than those four because others may also put in to buy those games (like games against the Cubs). All the Cardinals games, starting times, opposing teams, and ticket prices can be found on our website (www.gatewaypva.org) by clicking on the 'News/Events' tab in the upper right hand corner. The games plus the ticket prices vary and are listed. If you want to purchase a particular game, just be prepared to pay a price for the two tickets listed on the website, which is one half the actual price of the two tickets. These prices are exactly what we paid for the tickets and then discounted by 50% for members. For those games you want to buy at half price, you must purchase the tickets before receiving them. We're going to set some tickets aside for recreation therapy to take inpatients from Jefferson Barracks. We are also going to try to divide up the games with souvenirs given, between those tickets being bought and those available by lottery.

The Kansas City Royals tickets we are purchasing, are also listed on our website under the 'News/Events' tab. We are purchasing two tickets for these 16 games, one regular seat and one wheelchair space, given by lottery method. These are good field box seats on the first and third base side. If you're interested in any or all of these games, please email the Gateway PVA office with your choices in order of preference, or call the office with your choices no later than March 17.

If you are awarded or purchased tickets for either Cardinals or Royals games, you must be able to pick up Cardinal tickets from the Gateway PVA office or Jefferson Barracks SCI Unit. Royals games tickets must be picked up at the PVA National Service Officer (NSO) office in the Kansas City VA. Neither tickets (Cardinals or Royals) will be mailed to people. We've just had too many problems doing that in the past. Members will be called and emailed with the results of requesting to buy tickets and winning tickets through the lotteries.

Generator Grants Again Available

Upon receipt of this newsletter, you will again be eligible to request a generator grant from Gateway PVA. These grants are in the amount of \$5500 or less, and will only be paid to contractors after work is done, or vendors after delivery. Grants can be applied to a portable generator (which should cost less than the \$5500) or go

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Needed Information, Just a Click Away

By Jeremy Lile

We are living in an age where everything is information based and so society has raised the requirements for literacy and education. Learning is no longer something that simply takes place through education in school. Life-long learning is now required in order to keep up with advances in technology, tools, and the new skills needed to effectively use them. Likewise, as veterans it is equally important to stay up-to-date with all of the available benefits and opportunities offered by the Department of Veteran's Affairs. Unfortunately, there are often times when our veterans don't know who to call or where to obtain the information they are seeking regarding VA benefits and programs.

Consequently, the VA/DoD has developed a web portal called eBenefits. The eBenefits portal provides resources and self-service capabilities to veterans, service members, and their families to research, access and manage their VA and military benefits and personal information. It also provides a list of links to other sites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits. There is also a mobile eBenefits version that is accessible via mobile device or tablet.

Perhaps you are searching for a National Service Officer or organization, to help establish a service connected claim. Maybe you are trying to check on your compensation or pension claims status or upload documents to support your compensation or pension claim. Through eBenefits, you can complete those tasks and many others. Here are some of the other things you can do through eBenefits:

- ◆ View DoD TRICARE health insurance
- ◆ Sign up for Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) (Time limits apply)
- ◆ Search for and select an accredited representative or organization
- ◆ Access your medical information
- ◆ Order medical equipment such as hearing aid batteries and prosthetic socks
- ◆ Check on your appeal status
- ◆ Generate a VA home loan certificate of eligibility
- ◆ Obtain official military personnel documents such as DD Form 214
- ◆ Register for and update direct deposit information for certain benefits

If you are a family member of a veteran, you can check on your compensation and pension claims status, use the eLearning Center to get important health information, view Post-9/11 GI Bill enrollment status, and even check your VA payment history.

For more information about eBenefits, visit www.ebenefits.va.gov. Before Veterans can access and use eBenefits they must be listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and obtain a DS Logon. A DS Logon is a secure identity (username and password) that is used by various DoD and VA websites. If you are already registered in DEERS, you are eligible for a DS Logon. Finally, in order to keep your information safe, never access the site in a public place, use complex passwords and be careful when sharing personal information like a social security number. Once again, for more information visit www.ebenefits.va.gov.

Sports Report

By Mike Norris

In my earlier life, I was a Soldier. I joined the U.S. ARMY when I was 17 years old. You could say I grew up in the Army. I did not go to college; instead, I went to work as a well-trained Combat Engineer. I was proud to be completely independent at such a young age.

My independence ended on November 17, 1999. I don't remember the car accident that took away my independence, I just remember waking up from a coma with a doctor telling me I was paralyzed. At the time I didn't fully understand what that would mean for my future.

Like a child, I had to learn the basics. How to write, sign my name, try to dress myself, hold a fork or spoon, and shave. It was a long and painfully slow process. The thing that was most difficult to learn was to depend on others, and to put myself in the hands of others. I was often depressed and felt alone, down and out. Then a Recreational Therapist got me involved in sports, Quad Rugby to be specific. They soon had me participating in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and the many sports offered there. I went to Snowmass Colorado to try the Winter Sports Clinic. By doing these things I found I wasn't a great athlete. I had limitations, but I wasn't alone either. I met other people going through the same things as me, dealing with the same difficulties. Some of the times I learned from them, other times they learned from me. We became a team and we became friends. Being involved in sports helped ease my depression and I had friends to lean on when times were rough.

Now 16 years later, I am still learning and I am still dependent upon others. As a C6 Quadriplegic I need help in

Continued on Page 10

Rentals, Leasing, and Financing Available



Amerivan



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- New & Pre-owned Wheelchair accessible vans: BraunAbility/ EIDorado Amerivan
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WINNERS**1st Place • *Cassy Cook*2nd Place • *Jackie Black*3rd Place • *Charley Wright*

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.

Perry Burch • Michael Elzey • Allen Medford • Jeffrey Ford • Robert Melchior • Scott Geiger

Eddie Dillard • Randy McGahan • Frederick Claxton • Harry Knoblauch • Joe Reese

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.

GATEWAY GI

General Information



Access to Care

When comparing Veteran Service Organizations, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) leads the way not only by assisting Veteran with Compensation & Pension benefits, but also ensuring timely and proper medical care within the VA Spinal Cord Injury/Disease System of Care. With that being said, PVA is requesting feedback from our members in regards to any access to care issues you may be having. We would like to hear from you if you are experiencing any restrictions to receiving access to care at the SCI/D Center or SCI/D Clinic. This would include any issues such as your ability to receive timely quality health care, delays in obtaining an appointment, delays in appointments for a particular procedure, or delays in obtaining specific prosthetic equipment and supplies, delays that resulted in you having to use the Choice Act, and/or denial of care from the VA facility. If you are experiencing any of the aforementioned issues, please contact your local PVA National Service Officer or Veterans Health & Benefit Specialist, who is compiling a database of reported issues and working to resolve them on your behalf. Please be ready to give specific details about your experience such as the time, date, request that was made, and person you spoke with if possible. We thank you for your time and involvement with this matter. You can reach your local service officer Rodney Harris located in JB VAMC at 314-894-6467 or Jeremy Lile or Fred Bradley at 314-253-4480.

Cluster Busters Success

By Charley Wright, VA SCI/D Recreation Therapist

St. Louis National VA Boccia Team, Cluster Busters, formed just three years ago, and in that short period of time this team has acquired over ten National Champions in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. They represent the largest Veterans Boccia team in the USA and have brought home USA National Champions in all four classifications that the team has competed in for the last two years. We are proud to announce, once again, that some of our St. Louis players have been selected to be on the USA National Team representing on the international stage of Boccia. Scott Richards, Bobby Jackson and Joey Avellone will have the opportunity to compete in Montreal Canada in the Regional Open Championships in April as well as three other international meets - Argentina, Colombia South America, and Kansas City, Missouri - for the Worlds Open. We are so proud and excited to see our home grown Boccia athletes moving on to the highest levels of competition. Our team continues to grow and practice hard nearly year round. Two additional Cluster Busters team members are currently on the USA Developmental Team for the new BC5 Classification; which is in the process to become a new class to compete on the international stage. Doug Barnes and Mike Norris, both BC5 Class, will have the opportunity to sign up and compete in the Montreal Canada Canadian National Open Championships. This will be the first time for USA Citizens to be invited to compete at this competition and will open the door for more friendly competition between the USA and Canadian Boccia teams. The Head coach of Cluster Busters, Charley Wright - SCI Recreation Therapist at the St. Louis VA, was named as one of the two USA Coaches and will be traveling with the USA National Team to Montreal in 2017.

President's Message continued from Page 3

toward an automatic permanent home generator (which will cost more than that grant amount). In either case, portable or permanent home generator, members are required to obtain two bids for the same product or scope of work. Apply sooner rather than later, because these grants will be awarded as long as we believe there are sufficient budget funds.

Accessible Vehicle Grants Starting Again

At this point in early March 2017, I believe we will have sufficient funds to again award some grants for members to use in trading in their existing accessible vehicle (\$10,000), or purchasing an accessible vehicle for the first time (\$35,000). As in the past, we are requesting from interested members to furnish either written or email statements of their need and lack of their funding, to have accessible transportation. Please explain what, if anything, you have at this present time for transportation, your inability to purchase new or better transportation on your own, and what a difference a reliable, accessible vehicle would make in your life and your family's if applicable. Please submit that statement (mailed hard copy or email) no later than 5pm on Friday, April 7. If you have submitted before, you will need to resubmit a new statement. Submit statements upon receipt of this newsletter. At the Gateway Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, April 11, the Board will read through all statements and determine which grant might be appropriate, and which statements are considered "grant-worthy." We don't try to rank the statements in order of need, and generally just approve all those that sound genuine. We then draw names by a lottery method and determine what funds are available and go down the list of those names drawn in order. This is the same method as last year. So please submit your statement of need by written mail or email, and feel free to call the office to verify that we received your statement.

We Are Looking for "A Few Good Women"



I have volunteered Gateway to participate in a women's VA health care survey, that was started at the Texas PVA Chapter. Our national PVA will be trying to get a perspective on the care our female members believe they are receiving from the VA. To my knowledge, this type of survey of female SCI/D veterans has not been done before. Out of all our approximate 650 Gateway members, our records indicate only 47 are female. Right now we plan to email the survey to all our female members. Please email the office to verify you have access to email. If you don't have access to email or would prefer to get a hard copy of the survey to respond to, please call the office and give us your correct mailing address which I assume would be where you are getting the Gateway Gazette. To encourage a good participation number, you will receive five (5) participation points for completing and submitting the survey. Please call the office with any questions. I hope to have the surveys out by the beginning of March 2017.



In memory of...

Dale Salyer	Wichita, KS	08/05/2016
David Howard	Underwood, MN	10/02/2016
Robert Lehmen	Portage Des Sioux, MO	12/08/2016
Gary Kenser	Poplar Bluff, MO	02/19/2017



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.



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MARCH

24th • Boccia A. Legion 162
 25th-1st • Winter Sports Clinic
 Colorado
 26th • Atlanta Scuba

**APRIL**

13th-14th • Lexington SCI
 Outreach
 21st • Boccia A. Legion 162
 26th-1st • USA Boccia Montreal
 Ambucs Ride • TBA

MAY

5th-7th • Boccia Mid-American
 Regionals-Kansas City, MO
 12th • SCI Local W/C Games
 19th • Boccia A. Legion 162
 20th-21st • Boccia Gateway
 Games

JUNE

7th-10th • SCI Outreach-Kansas
 City, Leavenworth, Topeka
 14th • SCI Outreach Poplar Bluff
 15th • TROUT LODGE APP DUE
 30th • Boccia A. Legion 162

JULY

5th-10th • USA Boccia Nationals
 -Chicago, IL
 16th-23rd • NVWG-
 Cincinnati, OH

AUGUST

5th-12th • Scuba-Cozumel
 17th-20th • PVA Boccia
 Nationals-St. Louis, MO
 25th • SCI Outreach-Marion, IL

SEPTEMBER

14th-17th • TROUT LODGE

Y5

**OCTOBER**

20th • Boccia "Cluster Busters"
 Championship
 American Legion
 @12pm to 4pm

**NOVEMBER**

17th-19th • Scuba Atlanta

**Sports Report continued from Page 5**





the mornings just to get up and dressed, I have someone else clean my house. I have a bowel and bladder routine I must adhere to, but I try to be as active as I can be. I still participate in the sports and activities offered by the Recreational Therapist at Jefferson Barracks. I am older and slower now, and the rough hitting sport of Quad Rugby has given way to the slower and less painful strategy of Boccia. I still feel the thrill of competition; I like to win! But, win or lose it is the team I can't do without. It is their comradery and friendship that I need.

I serve as your Sports Director, on the Gateway Chapter Board of Directors, and this sports article is long overdue. I encourage everyone to come out and participate in the programs sponsored by Gateway PVA, like monthly luncheons. This summer there will be St. Louis Cardinal and KC Royal baseball tickets available. Try the many things going on at Jefferson Barracks from arts and crafts; to Boccia and bowling. Come out to socialize, come to see and be seen. Join in on one of our many BS sessions.




As Sports Director, my goal is to pass along my love for sports and to help others the way I was helped. Right now, the Boccia Ball team practice is every Tuesday at 1pm, and Wednesday at 10:30am. We practice in the Rec. Therapy shop in the SCI Building 52 south day room. We have some small local tournaments scheduled, sponsored by the American Legion Post 162. The first is March 24 at 1pm.

This month I've told you a little about myself. Keep reading your Gateway Gazette and I will keep you informed on what's going on with the team and the tournaments, and the great people that make the team work. In each article I will try to highlight one member of the team and introduce to all who read the Gazette.

March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12  Daylight Saving Time Begins	13	14 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15pts. Non-BOD Mbr.	15	16 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon Quarterly Mbr Mtg. after Luncheon 5/15 pts	17  Happy St. Patrick's Day	18
19	20	21	22	23	24  Boccia A. Legion 162	25
26 Atlanta, GA Scuba	27	28	29	30	31	
						

April 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Newsletter Articles Due 15 pts. published	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4:00 pm 15pts. Non-BOD Mbr.	12	13 Lexington SCI Outreach	14	15
16 	17	18	19	20 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon 5 pts.	21  Boccia A. Legion 162	22
23	24	25	26 	27	28	29
30						



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

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Thank You



Gateway BDG

The Gateway Chapter would like to thank NAPA Gateway BDG for donating their trivia night proceeds to our Chapter! We appreciate their continued support and donations that help fund our member programs!



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