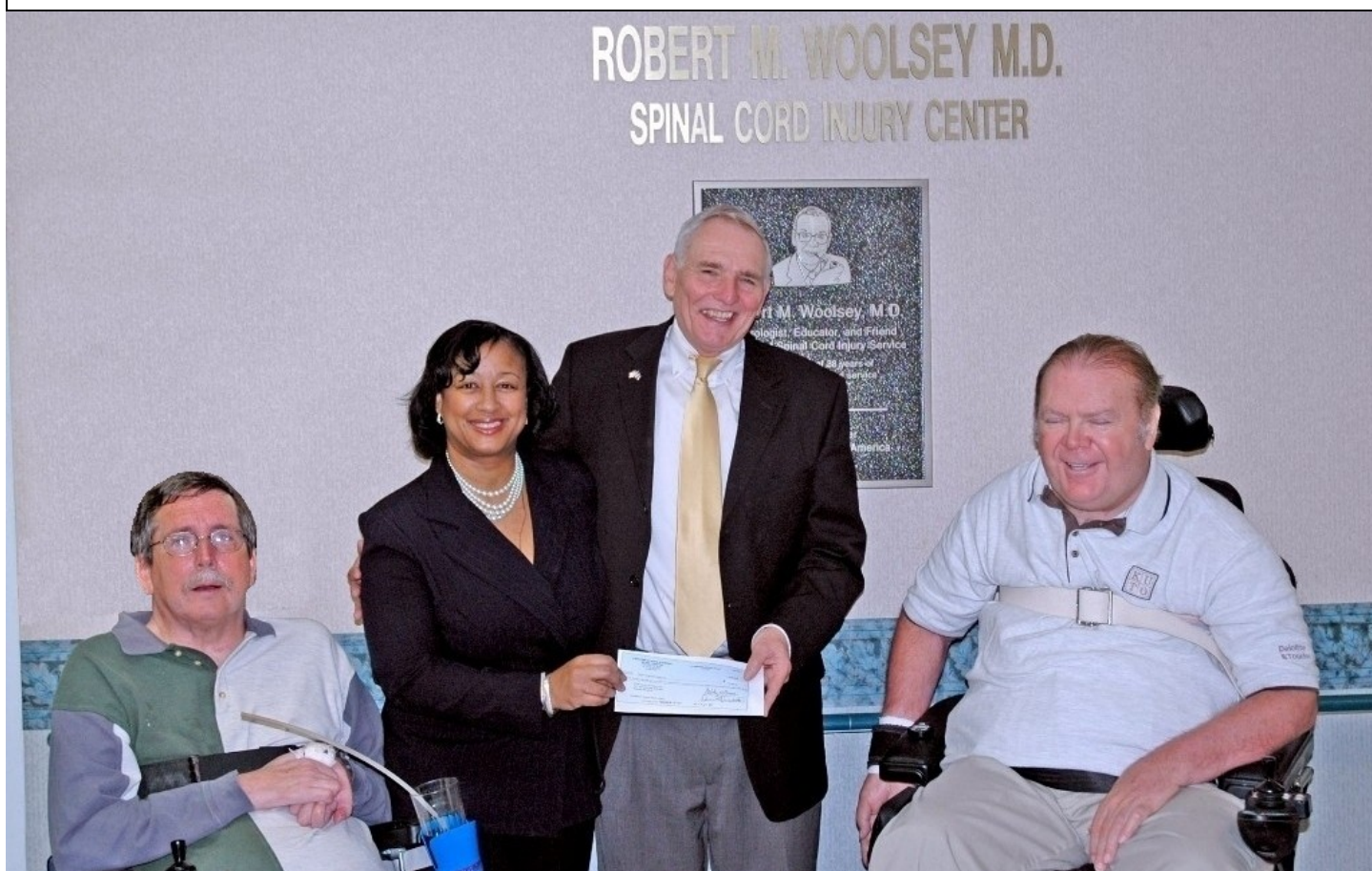


GATEWAY GAZETTE

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



Fisher House Fundraising Chairman Jim Donahue and STL VAMC Public Affairs Manager Marcena Gunter receive a \$5000 check from Gateway PVA President Stan Brown and Vice President Matt Wilcox.

The Gateway PVA Board of Directors recently awarded the Fisher House Foundation \$5000 towards establishing a "home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at Jefferson Barracks VAMC. This home will be located within walking distance of the medical center. There are currently 37 Fisher Houses, with four more in construction or design, and the St. Louis facility in the fundraising phase. The \$5000 will go towards the 50% that the St. Louis VA will contribute to make the Fisher house a reality. The Fisher House foundation will raise the other 50%. Fisher Houses™ are given to the U.S. Government as gifts. Military service secretaries and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the homes. The Fisher House™ Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, builds new houses, and assists in the coordination of private support and encourages public support for the homes. Typically, the houses are 5,000+ to 16,000 square foot homes
continued in right column

donated by the Fisher family and Fisher House™ Foundation. Each house is designed to provide eight to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region. The houses can accommodate 16 to 42 family members. They feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room and an inviting living room with library, and toys for children. A Fisher House™ is a temporary residence and is not a treatment facility, hospice or counseling center. The program began in 1990, and has offered more than TWO million days of lodging to more than 110,000 families.

Inside...

President's Report
NSO Report
National Director Report
Attaboy
Arts in Action
Winter Sport Clinic

Stan Brown
Tony Timmons
Stan Brown
Ruth Kult
Becky Ballard
Amy Will

Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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

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

A gentleman named Terry Prott is offering our St. Louis area members volunteer work of varying types. If you need a hand around the house for miscellaneous work call Terry at 314-965-6880.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Paralyzed Veterans of America's primary goal has been to assist its members and their families in improving the quality of their lives. This goal has been addressed through a variety of activities, including the establishment of the Educational Scholarship Program. This program assists PVA members and their immediate family members by funding a post-secondary education.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be either a PVA member, the spouse of a PVA member, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is dependent (as defined by the IRS) on the member for principal support.
- Applicant must be a citizen of the United States.
- Applicant must be accepted or enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited US college or university.
- Past award recipients may apply.

Award Amounts

PVA will award scholarships in the amount of **\$1,000** to full-time students and **\$500** to part-time students. Scholarship funds are released solely in the name of the university. Under no circumstances will payment be made to the students.

Application Submission

All components of the application must be received by **June 1, 2007**. Late applications will not be accepted, no exceptions. In addition, any incomplete applications will not be considered. The components of the applications should be clipped, not stapled or bound. To obtain an application for this scholarship either call the chapter office or go to the National Website at:
http://www.pva.org/site/DocServer/Memb_2007_Schol_App.pdf?docID=2361

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

President's Report

By Stan Brown

The Elephant in the Dining Room



The family begins their Sunday dinner with an uninvited guest at the table. A 2000 pound elephant is positioned at one end of the large dining room table. All family members discreetly look at the elephant, make no comment, and proceed to eat dinner. A normal dinner conversation is held without mention of the elephant's presence. At the conclusion of the dinner the children go outside to play, the mother and father clean up the table and begin the dishes. Still no mention of the elephant. The elephant remains at the table.

This story reminds me of the problems with VA health care at John Cochran Hospital for our paralyzed members and I believe other veterans accessing that hospital. It's the elephant no one acknowledges. Recent headlines concerning VA care at Walter Reed Hospital prompted tours from Congressman Russ Carnahan at Jefferson Barracks, Congressman Lacy Clay at John Cochran Hospital, and Senator Christopher Bond also at John Cochran. I wrote to all three men about our concerns and met with their St. Louis office representatives prior to their visit. I expressed our organization's concern with our members not being properly treated at John Cochran. During their visits, the Senator and Congressmen were quickly enveloped with an entourage of VA officials and guided through their visit. On the scheduled visits we saw polished floors and made our entrance through the newly refurbished south side of the building. The main entrance on Grand Boulevard, with its deteriorating parking lot and overcrowded entry foyer, was avoided. Whenever given the opportunity, I expressed my concern over the care of our paralyzed veterans who had to endure stays at John Cochran Hospital. At an October 2002, National PVA site visit, our Chapter went on record as saying that "John Cochran absolutely fails with regard to SCI/D patient care." In September 2003, our Gateway Chapter surveyed our membership about their care at John Cochran Hospital and received horrifying results of people not being fed and lying in waste. In response, the Medical Center formed a "Charter Committee" to improve the care. The Six North section of the hospital was also planned to be designated for spinal cord patients. Neither the committee nor VA management ever approved and permanently implemented an instrument to measure improvements in spinal cord patients' treatment at John Cochran Hospital. At our February 2005, PVA site visit, our Chapter commented that we thought patient care had improved from the anecdotal reports we had been receiving. There was, however, to our knowledge no patient satisfaction survey or other instrument to measure quality of care.

In 2006, the Chapter began to hear increased complaints from our members about their treatment at John Cochran Hospital, especially from patients who had to spend time in areas other than Six North. In the fall of 2006, one of our Kansas City members mentioned a VA patient satisfaction survey he had received concerning the VA Hospital in Kansas City, which is like St. Louis and part of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 15. As President, I immediately verbally requested a copy of the survey from management at the St. Louis VA Medical Center. I was told I had to formally submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request and did so on October 4, 2006. Although the request was initially lost, I finally received from the VISN 15 FOIA Officer, a copy of an independent VA study entitled "Survey of Health Expectancies of Patients" (SHEP). The survey covered the first two quarters of fiscal year 2006 (October 2005-March 2006). On February 14, 2007, I filed another written request for a copy of the third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2006. On March 6, 2007, not having received the report, I made a phone call and was told, "they were working on it." The second six months' (April 2006-October 2006) survey was received and the disgraceful results were similar to the first six months. The SHEP survey is based upon June 27, 2006, VHA Directive 2006-041. The Directive says the VA mission is to provide "patient-centered healthcare," and that it is essential "that veteran patients view VA as the best place to receive their health care and that VHA becomes their provider of choice." The Directive further sets forth 13 areas of patient satisfaction for standards. The SHEP satisfaction survey is administered in all 23 VISNs. The St. Louis VAMC, John Cochran Hospital, is one of seven medical centers in VISN 15. The other hospitals are in Kansas City, Wichita, Columbia, Marion, IL, Poplar Bluff, and Topeka, KS. The St. Louis satisfaction scores were clearly the worst of any of the seven hospitals. Responses are statistically analyzed and some scores are considered "significantly better" or "significantly worse" than the average for all the VA hospitals. In the categories of All Bed Sections, Medicine, and Surgery, John Cochran Hospital fiscal year 2006 patient satisfaction survey responses were "significantly worse than the national average" 80%-90% of the time!

Continued on page 4

President's Report *Continued from page 3*

During Senator Bond's visit, everyone gathered in a conference room at John Cochran prior to the scheduled tour. In a room of about 30, Bob Larkin and I were the only disabled VA patients in the room. When asked about our concerns, I detailed the shameful SHEP survey results and said it was clear that if a veteran had a choice, they would not receive care at the St. Louis VA Hospital. I further said that I knew many paralyzed veterans who are actually afraid to receive treatment at John Cochran Hospital. I did acknowledge that our organization felt some improvements had been made on Six North, at least on one shift, and that we had favorable reports on some specialized areas like nuclear medicine, but our paralyzed members continue to not receive adequate care in the rest of the hospital. After my comments there was of course a deafening silence. Someone had mentioned the presence of the elephant at the dining room table. The Medical Center Director responded that they were working on improving the satisfaction survey scores and that the VISN Director had told him two things: The low scores were not that significantly different from other scores, and urban hospitals tend to have low scores. Not wanting to be too argumentative, I didn't respond. The excuses are without merit. That designation that some results are "significantly worse than the national average," is the VA's own statistical determination and I don't see how we can question it. Secondly, the assertion that all VA urban hospitals have low satisfaction scores is of little consolation to the St. Louis veteran who must access John Cochran Hospital. Since that response, I made another FOIA request in writing on April 2, 2007, to receive the survey responses from all 23 VISNs. Let's verify the claim that all urban hospitals have low scores. On April 13, 2007, not having received an acknowledgment of my request, I called and left a message. As I finish this article on April 23, 2007, I still have no response. Although I've yet to convince any Congressional people, I'm personally of the opinion that only outside-VA intervention can change the culture at John Cochran which is reflected in the shameful satisfaction survey results. Many of our old-timers tell me that it's "been that way forever and you're not going to change it." Regardless, our Gateway chapter is going to talk about this "elephant at the dining room table" to anyone who will listen.

For Sale: 2000 Chrysler Town & Country Mini-Van. 33,000 miles, handicap accessible, automatic ramp with remote key fob; Interior modified to lock in a wheelchair. Price: \$23,000.
Contact: Lore Youkhana @ 773-610-3592 (IL)

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NSO Report

By Tony Timmons, NSOC

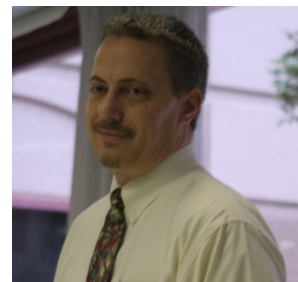
A lot of you out there may be reading this right now and saying to yourself, "who the heck is Tony Timmons?" Well, I am a National Service Officer Candidate with the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) service office here in St. Louis. I suppose if there was an award show that had a category for "The Longest Its Taken a New Service Officer to Introduce Himself to the Local Chapter," the winner would be me. So let me take this time to give you my acceptance speech, um, I mean, introduce myself.

I served seven years in the United States Marine Corps. OooRah! After having a couple of odd jobs, I got into the insurance claims business. I was a property claims adjuster for 16 years. During my 15th year as a claims adjuster, I had an accident at work that eventually cost me the ability to continue to do that type of job. After recovering from that accident, I began searching for a new profession. I became aware of a position opening up with PVA, and the rest is history. I was not hired to replace Rodney Harris, but the fact that I was here made it easier on our office to let him transfer to Richmond, VA without having an adverse affect here.

I am a bachelor living in Collinsville, IL. I have an adult son who lives in CA and a nine year old daughter who lives in Troy, IL. I volunteer as a coach and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Troy Soccer Club. I play roller hockey and softball (during warm weather) one night a week for each. I enjoy cycling and kayaking during my free time. Oh, and by the way, I am single, in case I did not mention that before.

You readers of this should look forward to seeing more articles from me, and Fred Bradley, in the future. I promise not to write about myself anymore. I will be sharing information with you about what is happening in the PVA, VA and DoD environment. If you happen to see me at either the SCI clinic, or the MS clinic, please make sure that I meet you. I try to introduce myself to everyone, especially if I have not met you before. During those times, please feel free to share with me any ideas on subjects you would like me to research and write about for you. Or call me and share that information with me. Please remember, Fred and I are here to assist our members and clients.

Thank you for your service to our beautiful country.



Most members know about the major diseases effecting the spinal cord such as Multiple Sclerosis and even Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrigs Disease), but did you know there are others that afflict our membership such as: Lupus, Spina Bifida, Spinal Stenosis, Syringmyelia, and Transverse Myelitis?

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! Our contact info is on page 2.

Downs, Garry W	Horras, Phillip W	Marrone, Karen A	Maxwell, Darrell L	McConaghy, Robert T
Miller, Ronald L	Ohen, Robert L	Reese, Joe	Salyer, Dale	Turner, John E
Washpun, Odell	White, Eric D			

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....



Logsdon, James	Clarksville, IN	10/03/2006
Jarvis, William	Gillespie, IL	10/07/2006
Strunk, Robert	Sedalia, MO	11/12/2006
Neal, Harrison	Williamsville, MO	11/13/2006
Spearman, Edward	O'Fallon, IL	12/02/2006
Halsey, Roy	St. Louis, MO	02/07/2007
Harris, George	Florissant, MO	02/22/2007
Scarborough, Gerald	High Ridge, MO	03/19/2007



National Director's Report

By Stanley D. Brown



GENTLEMEN and LADIES-start your engines! On April 17, 2007, the National Board of Directors for PVA voted to be a primary sponsor for at least eight races of a Dodge in the 2007/2008 NASCAR race season. The official contract was signed on April 23, 2007. PVA signed an agreement with the BAM racing organization to sponsor their car number 49 (Driver Mike Bliss), which means the PVA logo will be placed prominently on at least the hood and panels of the car and we will be able to do other promotions and marketing in connection with the car and the races. There are 30 races each season and PVA will be the Primary Sponsor for at least six (6) of these each season and an Associate Sponsor for the remainder of the races (opportunities exist to upgrade to the Primary level throughout the seasons).

Our meeting on the 17th started at 9 a.m. and stretched into the early evening. Initially we received considerable information on the NASCAR market of 75 million fans. The goal of our involvement was set forth to leverage PVA sponsorship of a NASCAR vehicle to increase awareness, enlarge our donor base, and generate revenues. In addition to our logo on the car, we will be looking for additional races or season sponsors and supporters for displays on the vehicle. The marketing of PVA/NASCAR merchandise as well as PVA track presence at the races are also planned to increase PVA awareness and donor revenues. In the works are Special "Star Sponsorships" which will be available for NASCAR fans and the general public to place a "Star" on the car for a race of your choice for \$100. It will read, "In Honor of..." for any person you want represented. "Virtual Stars" are also available for purchase for \$50 and will be placed on the web site. Portions of the cost of "Stars" are tax deductible as well. Soon this should be up and running at a special web site or linked from the PVA web site at www.pva.org. Part of the agreement is also the full wrapping of the car transport hauler with PVA signage that will be seen by many people as it heads to each race site across the country. Additionally, a VIP race weekend contest will be put together requiring entry on line or through a newsletter. In either case contact information from participants will be required with our ultimate goal of expanding our donor base.

What is clear and undebatable concerning our national organization finances, is that our reliance on direct-mail marketing fundraising will continue to be less profitable. We need new revenue streams in today's crowded charity market. This step in sponsoring a NASCAR racer is clearly "thinking outside the box" for us and hopefully will be rewarding. As the program unfolds I'll keep you informed. As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

Are you interested in Sports? Below you can find links to some of the more popular activities our members are involved with.

National Wheelchair Basketball Association:	http://www.nwba.org
United States Quad Rugby Association:	http://www.quadrugby.com
American Wheelchair Bowling Association:	http://www.awba.com
National Wheelchair Softball Association:	http://www.wheelchairsoftball.org
National Wheelchair Poolplayers Association:	http://www.nwpainc.org
Wheelchair Sports USA	http://www.wsusa.org

2007 Local PVA/SCI Wheelchair Games

By Amy Will

Come one, come all to the 2007 Local PVA/SCI Wheelchair Games. Join us on Friday, May 11th for a fun-filled day of adapted sporting events. Registration begins on the back patio of JB Building 52 at 9:30 am with events starting at 10:00 am. A BBQ lunch provided by the Gateway Chapter PVA will be served at noon. We are asking that you bring a side, dessert or salad to share.

Events this year include: Bowling, Track and Field, Slalom, Hand cycling, Weightlifting, and the Brain Game. We will also have a Swimming event on Wednesday, May 2nd in the JB Pool at 1:00 pm. Please call Amy Will at 314.652.4100 ext.64590 if you have any questions.

Attaboy

By Ruth Kult



Well, well, well, I'm back again.

We have this certain Certified Nursing Assistant at Jefferson Barracks facility that many people request to be their personal caretaker at both the Summer Wheelchair Games and the Winter Sports Clinic. This person, not being a big fan of the outdoors, spends one of their weekends every year in September and goes to Camp Penuel in Ironton, MO. They go as a caretaker at request of a few of our outpatients. This person doesn't complain and most often has a smile on their face. This person will stay out late with one of the people they're attending knowing beforehand they have to get up at the crack of dawn the next morning to take another person under their care to an event.

Before I announce the person to whom I'm referring, let me explain a little of how this whole ATTABOY came about. One day, months ago, Becky Ballard said you really ought to give this person an ATTABOY. She said nothing more because she is super busy with the National Arts-n-Crafts Festival so, of course, goofball that I am, forgot. Then Amy Will said something. Nothing more was said about it because she too has been real busy with the Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, plus tons of fundraisers. Then Dennis Canoy rolled over to the gym, bless his heart, with the same request. Since Amy Will was there, she gathered some information, gave it to me and the rest is history. These are the three people we can all hold responsible for the idea of writing and giving this ATTABOY. Thanks guy and girls.

Now that I have piqued your interest, I'll give a little hint. It's a female. **S** is for the **S**uperb and **S**uccessful job she does caring for patients. **Y** is because it seems to me that she **Y**earns to help people. **L** is for **L**oving her job so much and helping to make the atmosphere of a hospital seem not so unbearable. **V** is for the **V**alue she puts into a job very well done. **I** is for the **I**nvincible way she makes patients feel about themselves. **A** is for the best **A**ttitude ever. Put them all together? What does it spell? SYLVIA...as in Sylvia Bellmon. If there were an award for a spectacular attendant, she'd win. There are many great words to describe SYLVIA. I'm not sure which ones to choose. Actually just use your imagination. She's awesome.

Not only does she put others before her, like in her going camping when she isn't fond of the outdoors as before mentioned. She hates flying. She'd prefer spending hours in a car driving rather than a few short hours on a plane. She put her apprehensions aside and flew to Alaska. She doesn't drink, so she didn't get schnockered in the airport bar to gain her liquid courage before boarding the plane. She bit the bullet and flew because she is a very requested, professional and experienced attendant.

Sylvia Bellmon is among the elite in caregivers. I believe in luck, and we should thank our lucky stars that she's at Jefferson Barracks.

Thanks for reading.

CHAPTER NEWS:

The chapter would like to sell or donate 4 metal shelving units and 8 office cubicles. Please call the office for details.

For all of those planning on going to the NVWG in Milwaukee, the cutoff for Sports Points will be June 2, which is the date for the Motorcycle Rally held at Lake of the Ozarks in Camdenton, Missouri. We are going to award double sports points for attending this event so that we can boost our attendance. If you have questions, please call the office for details.

Check out the newly updated Gateway PVA website at: www.gatewaypva.org. Work is continuing, but much has been accomplished so far. We hope to put our past newsletters on the site in the near future. Send us your comments!

We have a new van driver and his name is Deonta' Jones. He is currently working for Gateway PVA part-time while also working part-time as a bail bondsman. He is married (wife's name is Loni) and has children. He attended Jennings High School and is familiar with the greater St. Louis area, which makes his routes a breeze. When you meet Deonta' make sure to give him a warm welcome!

Arts in Action

By Becky Ballard

The Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival was held on February 23, 2007 at Jefferson Barracks. Many members of the PVA attended the festival as well as entered art work in this year's competition. So without further a-do, PVA member winners are.....



Aubrey Youngs	Digital Photography	1 st Place	Deny Canoy	Mosaic	1 st Place
Chester Spangler	Painted Ceramics	1 st Place	Donald Lowery	Glazed Ceramics	1 st Place
Ruth Kult	Painted Ceramics	2 nd Place	Robert Kiger	Glazed Ceramics	2 nd Place
Bernard Carr	Painted Ceramics	3 rd Place	Richard Jones	Glazed Ceramics	3 rd Place
Deny Canoy	Glass Work	1 st Place	Fred Claxton	Leather Kit	1 st Place
Jamey Bollinger	Glass Work	2 nd Place	Ken Hale	Leather Kit	2 nd Place
Fred Claxton	Model Kit Metal	1 st Place	Gary Walden	Carving	1 st Place
Ruth Kult	String Art	2 nd Place	Fred Claxton	Paint by Number	1 st Place
Jim Schmitt	Musical Group	1 st Place	Jim Schmitt	Original Poetry	1 st Place

Jim Schmitt took home the Best of Show in Performing Arts and Chester Spangler took home Best of Show in Visual Arts. Way to Go Guys and Gals!

The first place winners will now advance to the second phase of the competition, please wish them luck as they further their aspirations to become a National Winner!!!!

Please save the date, October 28th, to attend the 2007 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival! St. Louis has the privilege of hosting this year's event. We appreciate PVA support of the arts and the wonderful healing modalities that are the associated with artistic expression!



During the week of April 9 - 15, Paralyzed Veterans of America celebrated PVA Awareness Week (PAW). Locally, the Gateway chapter sponsored two events, one in St. Louis at the Herbert Hoover Boys Club (upper left photo with President Stan Brown and board member James Williams) and in Kansas City, Missouri at a local Girl Scouts meeting with board member Bob Larkin in attendance. The theme for this year was "Paralyzed Veterans of America celebrating 60 years of service". PAW's purpose is to present educational and informational programs that showcase how PVA serves paralyzed veterans as well as members of the disabled community as a whole.

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MIRACLES ON A MOUNTAINSIDE

Once again the 2007 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic proved to be hugely successful. Team St. Louis brought ten eager and enthusiastic participants. The participants this year included: Aubrey Youngs, Rose Ganz, Ann Malburg, Steve Stratmann, Mike Norris, Brad Remmers, Joel White, Jamey Bollinger, Sonny Coffelt, and Mike Mcenaney. The weather was beautiful, mid 60s on most days. Activities included downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, hockey, scuba diving, archery, trapshooting and gondola rides. The team enjoyed many social events; dinners, dancing, and an amazing concert featuring JoDee Messina were just a few of the week's highlights. Steve and Pattie Stratmann, both new to the clinic, summed up the week stating "everyone HAS to come out and experience this week...at least once".



<i>May 2007</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	9	10 Patient Sup- port Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30	11 Local Wheel Chair Games JB 9:30	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Trap Shoot 10:00 AM Newsletter Articles due	19 Elks Pool Tournament 10:00 AM
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day	29 Office Closed	30	31		

<i>June 2007</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
					1	2 Motorcycle Rally 2x point for this event
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	13	14 Patient Support Group at JB	15 Trap Shoot 10:00 AM Newsletter Articles due	16
17	18 NVWG Milwaukee	19	20	21 Membership Lunch 12:00 Meeting 1:00 JB	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



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

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