

GATEWAY GAZETTE

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

23rd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic *The Greatest Show on the Snow*

By Amy Will

Veterans from Team St. Louis gathered together on the beautiful mountain peaks in Snowmass, Colorado to participate in the 23rd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. A week of Alpine and Nordic skiing combined with alternate activities such as Scuba Diving, Gondola Trips, Snowmobiling, Fly Fishing, Shooting Sports, Rock Climbing, Curling, and a trip to the Hot Springs provided great times on and off the slopes. Attending the clinic for the first time this year were veterans Ben Brown, Scott Richards, Stephen Bruggeman, and Jeremiah Deguire. The first-timers all excelled in downhill skiing while experiencing the healing effects of the mountain. For some, it was their first time on skis. For others, it was their first time on the slopes in quite some time. Rose Ganz, Terri Fuda, Michael McEnaney, Peter Coffelt, Jeff Grace, and Aubrey Youngs completed our tight knit group of ten. The camaraderie of the STL veterans was apparent during special events such as Opening Ceremonies, Taste of Snowmass, and the Taylor Dayne Concert. Adding to the majestic scenery was plenty of fresh powder; the snow continued to fall all week long with frigid temperatures. This week is always an amazing experience for all involved. Each team member challenged themselves while taking their abilities to the next level. The memories and experiences from this exhilarating week will forever be cherished. (Photos courtesy of Aubrey Youngs; she is shown at right.)



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

Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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Has your address changed? Please inform us by email to: susanlyle@gatewaypva.org, or you may write or call us at the following:

Gateway Chapter PVA

9738 Lackland Road

St. Louis, MO 63114

Office (314) 427-0393 or (800) 426-4058

Fax (314) 427-4183

DO YOU KNOW WHAT PRIORITY GROUP YOU ARE IN?

All veterans enrolled in the VA health care system are placed in one of eight priority groups, based on a variety of factors.

Details can be found at va.gov.

All veterans should know what group they are in to be sure that they are properly categorized, as there are many implications that follow. Veterans with a diagnosis of quadriplegia or paraplegia should be classified as Priority Group 4 (if not 3, 2 or 1). VHA has recognized these diagnoses as “catastrophic disabilities.” Congress is considering eliminating co-pays for all veterans in this group, so it is highly recommended that PVA members contact their Social Worker so that if the law is passed, they will be in position to receive medical care with no co-payment responsibilities.

Bob Sontag, LCSW
Social Worker
Robert M. Woolsey Spinal Cord
Injury Center
St. Louis, MO

- NOTICE -

Due to a scheduling conflict, there will be **no Trap Shoot May 15th**. The St. Louis Local Wheelchair Games at the Jefferson Barracks VAMC is also on May 15th. Please make sure you attend the games!

The material contained herein expresses the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or the Gateway Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America. All material in the *Gazette* may be reprinted unless specifically prohibited. Readers are encouraged to submit their articles or rebuttals to:

editor@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at the address shown to the left and send to the attention of the editor.

President's Report

By Stan Brown

Planning for John Cochran Replacement Bed Tower with 20 SCI Beds

Almost a year ago I wrote in this column about plans we (Gateway PVA) had discovered to "relocate" the Jefferson Barracks SCI unit to new construction at the John Cochran Hospital complex. In a joint teleconference with the VISN Director and representatives from Senator Bond's office, that in spite of the document I was looking at which used the words "relocate SCI unit," there were indeed no such plans. At the PVA December 2008 site visit it was casually mentioned that as part of preliminary planning of a new bed tower and improved parking at John Cochran, a ground floor 20 bed SCI unit was also proposed. This was news to both our local chapter and national PVA organization.

It's been almost 3 months of pursuing when and where these plans came from, and who these 20 new SCI beds are designated to serve. I also questioned what role the existing 32 SCI beds at Jefferson Barracks will serve after the John Cochran expansion. Our Gateway Board received a presentation from the departing St. Louis VA Medical Center Director on the preliminary planning of the John Cochran expansion to include new parking structures and a 20 bed SCI unit. I invited and the Director graciously accepted to come to our meeting; he was open and candid in his responses about this proposed project which is only in the planning stage without any funding approved. The preliminary plans and concepts, with possible construction at least five years away, are indeed troublesome to our Gateway Board. Acute care SCI patients requiring surgery would do their rehabilitation at John Cochran and not return to Jefferson Barracks. The 32 SCI beds at Jefferson Barracks, as well as the new 20 SCI beds at John Cochran, would be a mix of rehabilitation and long-term residency. Newly injured SCI patients could go to either facility. SCI therapies would be provided at both locations.

This entire newsletter is not long enough to provide space to put down all my and our Gateway Board's objections, to this concept or preliminary plan. During our evening Board meeting on April 14, 2008, the Board unanimously passed a resolution opposing any plan to have rehabilitative or long-term residency SCI beds on the existing or future expanded John Cochran Hospital complex. Succinctly stated, we feel the healthcare of our members demands SCI veterans have their rehabilitation and long-term care done at Jefferson Barracks, and that only absolutely necessary acute care hospital services with the shortest possible inpatient stays, be done at John Cochran Hospital even as it is preliminarily planned for expansion. If you agree with our Board on opposing this plan, call the office to find out what you can do to help (800-426-4058).

Third and Fourth Quarter 2008 Fiscal Year SHEP Scores

After filing another FOIA request, I've just received the patient satisfaction scores for 125 VA hospitals throughout the United States. The SHEP (Survey of Health Expectancies of Patients) is the only VA approved patient satisfaction survey and tracks satisfaction responses from both inpatient and outpatient veterans. The surveys cover six months (two quarters) and began in fiscal year 2006. For the most recent reporting period (April 2008-September 2008), John Cochran hospital scored "significantly worse than the national average" for inpatient satisfaction in VA hospitals in 29 out of 29 question categories for All Bed Sections, Medicine, and Surgery. It was the **only** out of 125 VA hospitals, to score that poorly in those categories.

Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome the Following New Members:

L.C. Buckley—Grandview, MO

William Montague—Auxvasse, MO

Jewel Parker—Rolla, MO

Dorothy Thomas—Harrisonville, MO

Samuel Lowery—Leavenworth, KS

Steve Montgomery—Chaffee, MO

Bill Shanklin—Union City, TN



Attaboy

By Ruth Kult

HELLO EVERYONE!

Summer is so close, and I'm sure we will all welcome the warm weather. I guess it's spring right now. Well, anyway it's warmer weather. This means both the local and the National Veterans Wheelchair games are near. The local games May 15th will be much bigger and better this year. Then a few months later are the nationals. They'll be held in Spokane, WA.



Well, going to the local games is very important. It gives a person, on a smaller scale, a great example of what it's like to be competitive and to prove to yourself you're still viable. I believe this year will be one of the best we've ever had. The games will be expanded to other disabled groups outside of the Spinal Cord Unit at the VA. In addition to the expansion of the local games we will have Mr. Tom Brown, who is the Director of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, to train us how to correctly do many of the field events.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games will soon be here. Unlike the local games, which will be too awesome to miss and completely free, the Spokane games cost. With cost comes fundraising. Fundraising is a very important thing. In order for either the Gateway PVA or The Honor Roll to justify the giving of money to help defray the trip fees, there needs to be participation of the veteran in fundraising events and just plain participation in general, i.e. luncheons, membership meetings, writing articles for the newsletter, etc. I'm sure there are many excuses. Heck I was guilty of that myself. I figured it was kind of unfair of me to expect other people to raise money for me to attend. I'm sure I said this before, "no-one owes anyone a free trip."

While I'm on my fundraising soapbox I'm going to give an example. A while ago, Ms. Carla Cline sent in a donation for one of the baskets raffled off for the VA Honor Roll. Unfortunately she lived very far away and couldn't attend the luncheon. Ms. Cline just passed away January 31; she showed the true spirit of one veteran helping another. Also look at Chad Buder who sends donations to the Gateway Chapter through our website. He doesn't attend the games, but very unselfishly donates money. That too shows the spirit of one veteran helping another. It's not all about the money; it's about the willingness to try.

Thank you for your time.



As part of the Gateway Chapter PVA Awareness Week, our President, Stan Brown, and our Hospital Liaison, Jim Holland, spoke to the students of the Gateway Tech Jr. ROTC High School in St. Louis, MO. These students march with us and carry our banner, as well as assist some of the manual wheelchair users at the annual Veterans Day parades.

SCI Brings Home the GOLD in the Local Creative Arts Festival

By Becky Ballard

The festival began with an amazing talent show held at the JB Theater on February 12th. We were entertained by musical performances, dramatic, and poetry readings and original instrumental pieces. PVA members, Aubrey Youngs, Jim Schmitt, and LaRoy Smith amused the audience with LaRoy performing a selection from the Wizard of OZ. Jim sang and played guitar with his band, "The Buddy Plan," and Aubrey recited an original poem. We received the largest amount of entries this year as 47 most-talented veterans entered the performing arts section.

The visual arts program took place on February 27th. Veterans and staff had the opportunity to view the 120 works of art that were on display and admire the many talents of our veterans. Again, PVA members were amongst the winners. In the category of Glazed ceramics: Ruth Kult took home the gold, Julio Rivera took silver, and James Williams took the bronze. In the section of Fine Arts, Richard Jones and Jim Schmitt both received second place; Richard with a beautiful black and white oil painting, and Jim with an entry in the category Military Combat Experience. Fred Claxton was 1st, Bob Bruns was 2nd, and Andy Harvey 3rd in Wood Building Kits—making that a clean sweep for SCI! Winning in the Leather Kit category was 1st place Andy Harvey and 2nd place Fred Claxton. We had two veterans entering for the first time this year and both were proud to have the honor of bringing home gold medals: Michal Erbe in the category of pastels, and Walter Steiner in the category of stained or painted ceramics.

Although, it was fun during the artist interaction session, held on the 27th, we were privileged to hear from veterans how participating in the arts helps to heal both physically and mentally, and what a powerful tool freedom of expression is! Thanks to all of our veterans for giving us this freedom!!! (Photos below.)



Gateway
PVA mem-
bers shown:
Left-Michael
Erbe; Imme-
diate Right -
Ruth Kult;
Far Right -
Richard
Jones.
Congrats!!

Veterans Day 2009 Poster & Essay Contest

The Paralyzed Veterans of America's sixth annual National Veterans Day Poster and Essay Contest theme is: ***Veterans Day: Why I'm Grateful for Our Nation's Veterans.*** All entries must be received by October 02, 2009. The contest will consist of a poster contest for 1st – 4th graders and an essay contest for 5th – 8th graders. The final winner of the poster contest and the final winner of the essay contest will each receive an award plaque and an all-expense paid trip for him/her and one family member to Washington, DC, to participate in the Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Day 2009 ceremonies. The winning results will also be featured in *PN Magazine*.

Please spread the word about the contest to your local schools, scouts, boys and girls clubs, church groups, families, friends and any others who may be interested. Visit www.thankyouveterans.org for contest rules and information. If you have any questions, send an e-mail to Evelyn at: evelynr@pva.org.

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 to us, or e-mail us if you know where any of these members are! Our contact info is on page 2. Thanks for your help!

Chapman, Flanagan
Radecki, Raymond J.

Frye, Kenneth E.
Snyder, Ron

Israel, Abinadab
Washpun, Odell

Lauderdale, Charles T.
Williams, Kenneth E.

**It's Here—The 2009 Duke McDonald / PVA
Local Veterans Wheelchair Games and Track & Field Clinic**

Friday, May 15th 2009 at Jefferson Barracks VAMC

Building 63 Gymnasium (Indoors & Outdoors)

9am – 4pm

Please join us for a wonderful day of camaraderie and competition at the 2009 Duke McDonald PVA Local Veterans Wheelchair Games. Competitive events will include; Bowling, Field (*Javelin, Shot Put, Club Throw and Discus*), Track (*Power Chair 220, Wheelchair Racing, Gurney Races*), Slalom, Weightlifting, Brain Game, and 9-Ball. Social activities on this date will include a BBQ lunch (all food is provided, no need to bring a thing!), entertainment and awards ceremony. All local SCI veterans, both inpatients and outpatients, and their families and friends are welcome to attend. Many often consider this day a “homecoming” to our facility after their rehabilitation and look forward to reuniting with friends and the SCI staff. We find that our seasoned local athletes like to compete in these games in preparation for the national event, and novice athletes enjoy learning the adapted sports while looking to the more experienced athletes for guidance.

In addition to our Duke McDonald PVA Local Veterans Wheelchair Games, we will be offering an adapted Track and Field Clinic. We are excited to announce that this clinic will be facilitated by Tom Brown, Director of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. He will provide education and hands-on instruction to all of our competitors. This clinic is an amazing opportunity for athletes to learn about adaptations and technique. Whether you are learning the sport for the first time or looking to improve your technique and form, this clinic is for you! Athletes will also be given information and resources so that they may train and compete on both local and national levels.

The more veterans we can reach, the more lives we can enhance with involvement in adapted sports. We are also looking forward to collaborating with community organizations including Paraquad, DASA, and the MS Society so that the competition will be open to not just veterans, but other local athletes or potential athletes who would like to compete in adapted sports. If you live outside of St. Louis, we hope that you will consider making travel plans for this event. You don't want to miss this!

For more information, please contact the VAMC SCI Recreation Therapy Department at **314.652.4100 ext. 64590** or email amy.will@va.gov or matthew.luitjohan@va.gov.

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



In memory of...

Carla Cline	Coffeyville, KS	01/31/2009
Winfred Matlock	St. Louis, MO	02/19/2009
Camilleann Nelson	St. Louis, MO	12/08/2008
Patro Olden	Belleville, IL	10/23/2008
Dion Ortiz	Bolivar, MO	11/03/2008
Roger Selander	Mt. Olive, IL	04/05/2009
Edward Welsh	Excelsior Springs, MO	02/21/2009



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Insurance Coverage Explained

By Tony Timmons

Submitted with the permission of the author, John E. Gogan, SNSO, Lincoln, NE

Question: As a service connected veteran why does the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) request that I tell them about health insurance coverage from non-VA sources?

Answer: The VA requests to know about veterans' private insurance coverage because by Federal law they may bill the insurance company for treatment provided for disabilities or conditions that have not been adjudicated as service connected. When a veteran receives treatment from a VA facility, that treatment must be coded whether or not it is a service connected disability. If it is a service connected disability then the insurance company should not be billed. If it is not a service connected disability then the VA may bill the insurance company. For veterans who are rated 50% or more for service connected disabilities they become eligible for VA treatment of any and all conditions. That status does not cancel the VA's right to bill the private insurance company. For example; if you are service connected for a gastrointestinal condition and you see your VA Primary Care Provider for the renewal for prescriptions for that condition, and at the same time you talk to the VA Primary Care Provider about headaches which are not service connected. The VA may bill your private insurance company for the entire visit because a non-service connected disability was treated.

Even if the VA Primary Care Provider writes into the medical history that the service connected disability is causing or is aggravating a non-service connected disability the insurance company may still be billed. It is not the VA Primary Care Provider's decision that the two conditions were related that determines the billing practice. The VA Regional Office must adjudicate that the non-service connected disability is service connected. At that point in time, the insurance company would not be billed.

If at anytime you believe that the VA is not billing correctly, you may talk to the VA business office or talk to your PVA National Service Officer to help determine if the billing by the VA is indeed appropriate.

Tony Timmons
National Service Officer II
St. Louis Service Office
314-552-9887 or 800-795-3614

Bonnie Hilburn
Senior National Service Officer
Kansas City Service Office
816-861-4700 ext 6033 or 800-795-3612



As you may have heard, PVA Sports has created a new program - the PVA Fitness and Wellness Program. One of this year's goals for the program is to get more veterans involved in the sport of handcycling. PVA has partnered with **Invacare/Top End** to provide 10 handcycling clinics around the country at 10 VA hospitals.

The next clinic is scheduled to take place from 1-4 p.m. on **Friday, May 8 at the Jefferson Barracks VAMC** in Building 52, room #GN34 (in the basement). The clinic will offer great information to clinicians (OT, PT, KT and Recreation Therapy) in the morning session and then offer product demonstration and trials in the afternoon to veterans, clinicians and **others with disabilities**. To register for the clinic, all participants should contact Matt Luitjohan, CTRS, at 800-228-5459, ext. 6-6602 or locally 314-652-4100, ext. 6-6602 or by email at matthew.luitjohan@va.gov. Please see the Tour de' Force ad on the next page.

The newest and best handcycling products from Top End will be on display and usable for trial; including the brand new recumbent bike (now called Force R) which just came out on the market.



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MUDDY MAYHEM RETURNS TO COLORADO THIS SUMMER!

Paralyzed Veterans and U.S. Handcycling would like you to be a part of an awesome off-road clinic and race July 9-11 in Fort Collins, Colo.



If interested, please contact Geoff Hopkins, Associate Director of Sports and Recreation, at geoffh@pva.org or 202-416-7736.

Don't MISS the

TOUR de Force

**2009
TOP END - PVA
Handcycle Clinic
and Product Tour**



Friday, May 8, 2009

Jefferson Barracks VAMC
Building 52, Room #GN34 (basement)
#1 Jefferson Barracks Drive, St. Louis, MO 63125
(Do NOT use Mapquest - call for directions)

Clinician Session (OT, PT, RT, KT, Prosthetics) 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Product Demonstration and Trials
(Veterans, Clinicians and others) 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

To register and for more information
contact:

Matt Luitjohan,
800-228-5459, ext. 6-6602 or
matthew.luitjohan@va.gov



Yes, you can.

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**Lace up
your shoes!
Let's raise
funds for
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National
Rehabilita-
tion Sports
Events**

Saturday, June 6, 2009

5k or 1 mile Run/Walk/Roll

**St. Louis VA Medical Center
Jefferson Barracks Division
Events begin at 7:55 a.m.**

**For more information, call (314) 652-4100 X 63255 or email
Jean.Ferguson@va.gov**

A Little Trivia About the 2009 VA Trivia Night—by Becky Ballard

Questions:

- 1) How many people attended this year's trivia night at Jefferson Barracks VAMC?
- 2) How much money was raised?
- 3) Who benefits from funds raised?
- 4) What was your favorite trivia moment?
- 5) How many years has the VA hosted this event?
- 6) Who organizes this wonderful event?
- 7) What is the date for next year's trivia night?
- 8) Who is eligible to attend this event?

Answers:

- 1) 325 2) \$6,295 3) SCI Veterans attending the National Sporting Events 4) Create your own answer here but, for many it was Mike Norris bidding on a pink purse at the silent auction table - (he claims he was just doing it for a "friend" — uh huh, okay Mike!) 5) Six years 6) The master mind behind this event is Debbie Gray assisted by Amy Will, Matt Luitjohan, Kathy and Steve Fonod, Jackie Wolz, Whitney Cadagin and Becky Ballard 7) February 27, 2010 8) YOU, YOUR Family and YOUR Friends!!!!!!



<i>May 2009</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
					1 Gateway Games in St. Peters, MO	2 Track & Field thru Sunday
3 Game Details @ www.Dasasports.org	4	5	6	7	8 Tour de' Force @ JB Bldg 52 1-4 PM	9
10	11	12 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30 AM	13	14 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	15 Local Wheelchair Games @ JB 8:00 am registr.	16 NO TRAP SHOOT THIS MONTH
17	18	19	20	21 Member Lunch—JB Bldg 52 @ Noon	22	23
24/ 31	25 Memorial Day Holiday Observed- Office Closed	26	27	28	29 Star Touring & Riding Show- Me Rally at Red Oak Resort	30

<i>June 2009</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 Sweat w/ the Vets 7:55 AM
7	8	9 BOD Meeting - Overland 4 PM	10	11 Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30 PM	12 Newsletter Articles Due!	13
14	15	16	17	18 Member Lunch @ JB - Noon/Qrtly Meeting follows	19 Trap Shoot @ Olin Trap & Skeet (East Alton) 10 AM	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4 Happy July 4th!
FN Magazine Office, PVA, Gateway Chapter PVA, & VBD Service Offices CLOSED this Week						

Address Service Requested

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



This photo was taken at St. Gerard Majella School in Kirkwood, MO. The students participated in our annual PVA Awareness Week events in April. Gateway Chapter PVA President, Stan Brown, is shown in the front row to the far left. Next to Stan is our member, LaRoy Smith. The next two gentlemen are our board members, Jim Holland and Sports Director, Bobby Jackson. The children were very inquisitive; asking many terrific questions. We were happy to have been part of their lives for the morning and hope they enjoyed it as much as we did.

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