

GATEWAY GAZETTE

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

Dr. Jai Park Recognized for 30 years of VA Service

By Stan Brown

At Gateway Chapter PVA's March luncheon for SCI inpatients, outpatients, and staff, Dr. Jai Park was congratulated and thanked for her 30 years of excellent service to our SCI/D veterans. Dr. Florian Thomas, Chief of the SCI service line, Dr. Robert Huskey, past Gateway Chapter President, and Stan Brown, current Gateway Chapter PVA President, all made laudatory remarks. Over the years, Dr. Park has been a trusted professional, always accessible to our members, and a friend to Gateway PVA. She represents what is best about VA healthcare.

In addition to receiving deserving plaques, she received four rounds of golf from The Landings at Spirit Golf Course in Chesterfield, Missouri. That is the course that has hosted our annual charity golf tournaments for the past several years.

It was our pleasure to recognize the 30-year accomplishment of such a fine professional. Well done Dr. Park and thank you for your care and compassion.

Keep up the good work!



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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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1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center Drive
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Fax (314) 427-4183

Emergency Help

The VA Medical Center is offering a new service that may be very helpful to veterans, perhaps even life-saving. It is called "Freedom Alert" and functions much like a "Lifeline" service that is fairly well-known. The difference is that the pendant that is worn around the neck serves as a type of "walkie-talkie." When the button is pushed, it opens a 2-way communication with the contact person chosen by the veteran. Up to 4 contacts can be programmed, as well as 9-1-1.

Additionally, this service can include a lock box if needed. Similar to the type used by real estate agents, it has a combination lock that can be provided to the emergency responders so they can access a key and not have to break a door or window to get inside. This service is available thru Prosthetics (for those with a medical justification for it), based on a consult submitted by the veteran's Primary Care Provider.

For questions or further details, please call Bob Sontag, Social Worker, at 314-652-4100 ext. 6-4819.

—HOUSE FOR SALE IN KANSAS CITY, MO—

Universal Design/fully accessible home, ranch on double lot, 3BR/2BA, main floor bedrooms and laundry, wood floors, full basement (not accessible), master bath roll-in shower, accessible deck from master BR, fenced yard, 2-car garage, 20 minutes from KCVA, \$180,000.

If interested, please contact our realtor:

Reece & Nichols Real Estate

Contact: Jeff Curry

Cell: (816) 536-3742

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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



Spring Has Arrived

It appears Spring has thankfully finally arrived in the Midwest. It seems to me like we had six straight months of cold weather, but thankfully not much snow or ice (at least in St. Louis). If you're like me, winter is always to be dreaded, with inclement weather making it difficult or impossible for attendants to get to work, and ice causing power failures. Yes, I did purchase a generator but of course procrastinated having it installed and it remains sitting in my garage gathering dust. I now rejoice in the warm weather.

Status of Our New Building

Our contractor is busily completing our new building and we hope to move of in May. The process has been agonizing especially in complying with a plethora of municipal and county codes. Our oversight of the project has been tremendously aided by the experience and doggedness of our own Executive Director, Susan Lyle. I thought I was hard-nosed until I saw Susan deal with our contractors and vendors. She has literally saved us a lot of money. And, if you know me, you know I like to save money. The new building will be accessible from two entrances, one of which we had to provide a ramp. Half of the building is currently occupied by a tenant, and that is proving to be a very good revenue source that covers our occupancy costs for the building, as well as provides additional revenue. All in all, I think we made a good decision in our purchase.

SCI Rehabilitation move to an expanded John Cochran Hospital

The VA is still planning to expand the John Cochran Hospital and include a 20-bed SCI rehabilitation unit, with presumably 12 rehabilitation beds remaining at Jefferson Barracks. National PVA has gone on record with the VA Undersecretary opposing the "split" rehabilitation concept. Gateway has remained adamantly opposed to any rehabilitation beds at the new John Cochran facility. It remains an uphill battle. John Cochran had the worst VA SHEP patient satisfaction scores of any VA facility in the three years of the survey (2006-2008). Through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, I've just obtained the new VA patient satisfaction survey (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems or CAHPS) for fiscal year 2009. One of the survey questions to inpatients requested their overall assessment of their inpatient hospital care. Using the VA's own performance measurement, the 2009 survey revealed that out of the 124 VA facilities reporting, John Cochran scored the lowest in inpatient satisfaction. With the SHEP surveys and new CAHPS survey, the VA has documented John Cochran has had the worst inpatient satisfaction for four straight years. Gateway PVA has documented and sought correction of the inpatient care before the surveys. The location of the John Cochran facility is unsafe for SCI veterans and their family members. The new Fisher House for family members visiting inpatients, is almost complete and is located at Jefferson Barracks. Gateway remains steadfast in our belief that SCI rehabilitation should not be moved to the John Cochran facility.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Paralyzed Veterans of America has received a gift in the amount of \$338,143 from Edward Rose Associates, LLC. This gift has been designated to help disabled veterans who seek to eliminate architectural obstacles in their homes. The targeted gift is available for veterans with disabilities living in Indiana, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The grants will be administered by the PVA National Office and are limited to a maximum of \$20,000 per veteran. Any veteran with a disability residing in one of the aforementioned states who wishes to apply for this grant should contact the PVA National Office at 800-424-8200 and ask for the Veterans Benefits Department.

Attaboy

By Ruth Kult

Hello people. Happy spring everyone! Heat and sunshine are much better than the cold, gloomy winter. The sunshine just makes people feel better. It's much easier to get out and about.

Well enough small talk, let's get down to the nitty-gritty of this whole "attaboy" thing. I know I have praised this person once before, but I believe an additional pat on the back is warranted so they know how appreciated they truly are. I did this before because I saw what a fantastic job they did for everyone. It became apparent to me once again at the Winter Sports Clinic when I required help. It was a weird feeling when I realized I was the person who needed a lot of assistance this time. Honestly, the thought of dropping the whole winter clinic had crossed my mind again this year; especially after the reasons I decided to go in the first place was for people who ended up dropping out a few weeks before we were supposed to leave.

Let me give you some background. Around two or three years ago I stopped participating in the clinic because my beloved dog, Jake, passed away. I was having such an awful time dealing with it that I decided it was too depressing and too sad for me to go to the Winter Sports Clinic that year. Suddenly one year turned into two and then three. The time seemed to slip by. As the time drew near to go to Colorado this year, my willingness to attend was shrinking. With assurance from Matt, I went and it wasn't as bad as I thought.

I don't want to sound like a broken record, but after Jennifer T. left, I thought we were doomed. Then we got lucky and got Mrs. Amy W. as a replacement. However, Mrs. Amy recently moved on to a new job. Thank goodness we were blessed with Mr. Matt Luitjohan's awesome abilities. Mrs. Jennifer and Mrs. Amy could never have physically done what Matt did for me without some help from someone. Although my room was supposedly handicap equipped, the bed was too high. This was one of the major dilemmas that Matt solved for me. With rather quick thinking on his part, he took the frame off of the bed and put the mattresses on the floor. Bing-bang-boom, he made the bed lower and easier for me manage.

In addition to just plain helping me get around on the long hauls, Matt came to my rescue again later. He put my shower/bathtub rail on tightly and securely. I was worried about it loosening in mid-transfer and re-injuring myself. This was a huge relief for me because I tend to worry about everything. I'm kind of paranoid when it comes to the accessibility of a room. To be honest, if it's not as convenient and easily accessible as it is at home, then I don't want to be bothered; I just won't go. I'm sure many of us feel this way about travel.

Anyway, as you can tell this "attaboy" is well-deserved. Granted, we had a smaller group than was originally planned, but Matt spread himself thin and was helpful to everyone. He is a huge asset to our spinal cord unit.

Thanks for reading.



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...

Biby, Arthur A.	Mount Vernon, IL	02/03/2010
Cockrell, Philip	Pleasant Hill, MO	01/11/2010
Collins, Dennis D.	Kimberling City, MO	03/06/2010
Guice, James E.	St. Louis, MO	03/16/2010
Owens, Harry C.	Belton, MO	02/09/2010
Senseney, Michael	Florissant, MO	04/11/2010



Winter Sports Clinic 2010

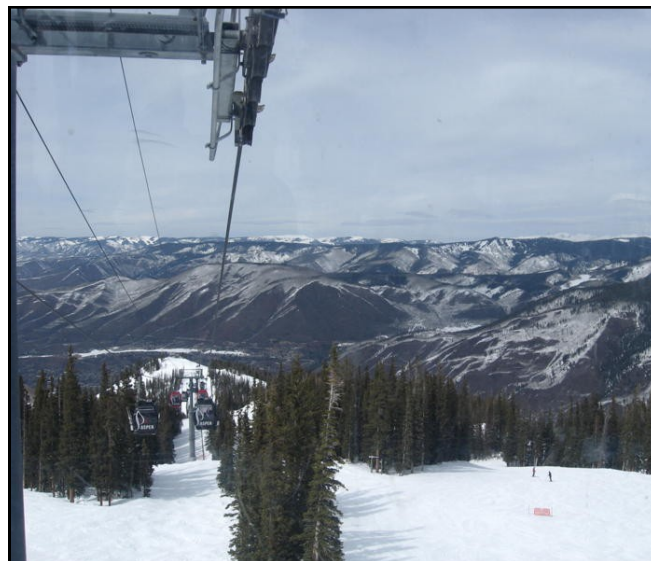
By Terri Fuda

It was another wonderful year in Snowmass, Colorado. The week started off a little bit cool in the mornings, but by mid afternoon the temperature reached into the lower 40's; extremely comfortable weather for all the sporting activities. Of course by night it dropped, so you had to grab a coat on the way out. Wednesday through Thursday night we got hammered with snow! It became a winter wonderland! Lots of fun!



This was my third year attending, and our team was a bit smaller than it was in past years. We all still seemed to have a great time. Due to everyone picking different alternate activities on our non-ski days, some of us were able to spend some time together and some of us just set out on our own. As I talked with everyone, they seemed very happy with how the week was going.

I chose the same activities as I did every year before. I guess that makes me a creature of habit. But, to be able to snowmobile through the mountains and then stop for hot cocoa is an unbelievable experience. My other alternate activity was a trip to Aspen. I would recommend this to everyone. We were treated to lunch by the Elks Lodge. They are so hospitable to us every year. We were then transported to Aspen Mountain via gondola up the mountainside for an adventurous ride in a snow cat through the back country. It's the prettiest place I have ever seen with my own two eyes (see my picture to the right). One of the sports I have never tried is cross country. But listening to the conversations of the cross country skiers, I think that is an activity I will be signing up for next year!



If you haven't had the chance to attend the Winter Sports Clinic, I encourage you to try it. There are so many fun things to do such as, fishing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, curling, gondola rides, shooting range, hot springs, and scuba diving. All of this and you still have your two fabulous ski days also! Lots of fun to be had and many great people to meet from all over the country. Each of us with the same thing in common... we are all veterans! (Pictures below are courtesy of Matt Luitjohan; Floyd Porter left & Aubrey Youngs with Matt right.)



National Director News -**By Stanley D. Brown**

In February I attended our PVA Mid-Winter Board Meeting in Orlando. Don't be too envious, it was actually fairly cold with temperatures staying in the 50s while we were there. In my opinion it was a momentous meeting for fairness in how the National Board of Directors conducts business. Previously business was decided by a weighted vote of the chapters based upon membership size. In spite of guidance that individual directors represent PVA as a whole, and not their individual chapters, and the inherent unfairness of membership size related to the location of the chapter and the number of states they covered, or whether they have a SCI center, larger chapters always have had this disproportionate power. At our Mid-Winter Meeting I brought forward to the board as a whole, an internal conflict in our National bylaws on how our votes were counted. In line with parliamentary rules, the board adopted by a majority vote an interpretation that each director of the board would only have one, but an equal to all others, vote. Even though our chapter lost a little "power" with this change because of our seven previous votes, it was in my opinion the right thing to do.

Two other interesting issues were discussed but failed in resolution; PVA will not pursue in amending its charter to include traumatic brain injury veterans and PVA will not explore including medical marijuana as an approved VA drug. It would take a complete newsletter to debate those issues, but I would be glad to discuss them with anyone.

It is with great pleasure that we announce Paralyzed Veterans of America's 7th Annual National Veterans Day Poster and Essay Contest. The theme for this year's contest is: *Veterans Day: A Time to Honor A Veteran in Your Family or Community*. The contest is open and all entries must be received by October 1, 2010. This deadline will allow time for the entries to be judged and winners chosen to attend Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Day celebrations in Washington, DC.

This year 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 essay contest will receive an all-expense paid trip for him/her and one family member to Washington, DC, to participate in Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Day 2010 ceremonies.

This contest is a great way for kids to learn about veterans and the sacrifices they have made by giving them a creative outlet to express their gratitude for the service of others. Please spread the word about our contest to your local schools, scouts, boys and girls clubs, church groups, families, friends, and others whom you think would be interested in participating.

Please visit www.pva.org/posteressay for contest rules or more information. If you have any questions, please e-mail evlynr@pva.org.

Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome the Following New Members:

Jeffrey Carneal - Blairstown, MO

Michael Laughman, Sr. - Kansas City, MO

Robert Thompson - Kansas City MO

Jerald Zornes - Lees Summit, MO

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!

Jason W. Austin

Dennis L. Bazant

Kenneth E. Frye

Castro M. Galvan

Floyd R. Henderson

Paula J. Lemon

Jonathan D. Lewis

James Sullivan-McGuire

James T. Roden

Leon Smith

James White

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By Tony Timmons

We have had a lot of new Members and Member-Eligible veterans, and their spouses, become part of the PVA family since the change in the Law regarding presumptive service-connection for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Therefore, in this edition of the Gateway Chapter Newsletter, I will address some questions that seem to come up from time to time and that I feel deserve to be answered again.



1. What is presumptive service-connection? According to the 38 CFR 3.307 (a), a chronic, tropical, POW-related disease, or a disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents (listed in 38 CFR 3.309) will be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated by service, (as stipulated), even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service. Unless listed, a condition will not be considered chronic.
2. Is it possible to obtain service connection on a presumptive basis if a condition is not diagnosed during the presumptive period? Yes. There must be shown by acceptable medical evidence or lay evidence characteristic manifestations of the disease to the required degree, followed without reasonable time lapse by definite diagnosis.
3. At what percentage of service-connected disability are dependents added to a veteran's award? According to 38 U.S.C. 1115, any veteran whose disability is rated not less than 30 percent, shall be entitled to additional compensation for dependents (based on the VA's definition of a *dependent*).
4. Can a veteran whose disability is rated at 100 percent receive additional compensation benefits? Yes. There are a multitude of additional benefits available to veterans who have obtained a rating of 100 percent, not based on Individual Unemployability. There are Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) awards that can be added to a veteran's overall rating depending on the nature of their service-connected disabilities. Things such as: loss or loss of use of a foot (or feet), loss or loss of use of an arm (or arms), loss of use of a creative organ, loss or loss of use of one or both breasts, etc. The concept of SMC is difficult because of its complexity and the various factors that can affect entitlement. The different rates of SMC are based on the extent of service-connected disabilities involving anatomical loss or loss of use of extremities and in some cases the loss of certain bodily functions.

What are some other ancillary benefits that are available? Based on a veteran's disabilities and the meeting of certain criteria, a veteran may be entitled to dependent's education benefits, Specially Adapted Housing/Special Home Adaptation grants, Automobile/Adaptation grant, clothing allowance and Vocational Rehabilitation and Education.

Start Campaigning for a Board Position! By Susan Lyle, Executive Director

Our next issue of the Gazette will include a nomination form for the 2010-2011 Board of Directors. Member nominations will be due back in our office by July 31. If you are interested in running for a position, start campaigning now because the deadline for sending back the nomination forms will be here before you know it! Our official election ballots will be mailed shortly after we receive all of the nomination forms. The deadline for the ballots will be September 16th and can be hand-delivered to us at our Jefferson Barracks Quarterly Membership Meeting!



One way to get started campaigning is to attend our events so that you can get to know your fellow members. Keep in mind, if you would like to be a board member, it takes more than campaigning—it takes commitment. Once on the BOD, there are monthly meetings and events that you will attend on a volunteer basis.

We would like to get our future board members more involved in the chapter and the organization as a whole. We understand that distance could be an issue. Therefore, we are offering the majority of your board attendance through a teleconferencing system, which will be available at our new office. If you think you can make a difference in the life of a veteran, please consider running for a board position at the next election!



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Alert!

By Fred Bradley

For anyone needing repair of a Prosthetic item, the VA is now enforcing a long-standing policy. To those who use the St. Louis SCI Service, this will seem like a “new” procedure when in reality it is not.

Patients will now have to call the Prosthetics Service at their local VA Medical Center for any repair needs. For example, if you live in Kentucky, you’ll need to contact either Louisville or Lexington; Kansas will be Wichita; southern Illinois is Marion; western Missouri is Kansas City; south-west Missouri will probably be Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The reason being is that the local Prosthetics service will have a list of vendors in your area that can do the repair. This is being done as a matter of efficiency, not to make things difficult. If you need new equipment, you can still go through the SCI Service. If you encounter problems with this process, you are still welcome to call the SCI Center for assistance.

As with any new change, problems are to be expected. Hopefully, the problems can be ironed out with minimal consequences and no one will suffer from the enforcement of this policy.



Local Wheelchair Games May 7th, 2010

We are gearing up for the 2010 Duke McDonald PVA Local Wheelchair Games at the St Louis VA Medical Center. They will once again be held at the Jefferson Barracks location in and around building 63. They will be held on Friday, May 7th and will begin with registration and classification at 8:15 AM. We are opening up the event to all veterans or civilians, with a diagnosis of spinal cord injury, spinal cord disease, or amputation that require the assistance of a wheelchair for athletic competition for any member of the Gateway PVA, we have a great deal to offer you; the Gateway PVA Board has agreed to reimburse any member traveling over 50 miles with an established amount of 30 cents per mile. We have a full day of events scheduled including an adaptive golf clinic and informational community expo. We ask that participants preregister in order to expedite the morning check in process. For additional Information or to receive a registration form please e-mail me at: matthew.luitjohan@va.gov

New Airport Outing Program

SCI Recreational Therapy and Gateway Chapter PVA have partnered up with Lambert St. Louis Airport, TSA, and Southwest Airlines (other airlines to come in the future hopefully) to offer a new aspect to our Community Re-entry out trips. We will incorporate the airport as a regular location for outings to address four main goals: to learn what is expected of the traveler with a disability (arriving at the airport, going through security, and boarding and deplaning the aircraft); to learn what is expected of the airport personnel and TSA personnel; address what can be done to decrease stress and damage to wheelchairs; and learn what is acceptable to place in carryon luggage.



Who we're looking for: 1) A veteran with a new injury that is new to traveling with a disability 2) A veteran that has traveled in the past but had a bad experience 3) A veteran that is experienced in flying and can offer guidance and suggestions to other veterans. If you fall into one of these categories or think this program may benefit you please contact either Matt at matthew.luitjohan@va.gov or 314-894-6602 or Whitney at whitney.cadagin@va.gov or 314-652-4100 Ext 64504. This program is currently open to all inpatient veterans. We will accommodate outpatient veterans on a standby basis so please contact us as soon as possible!!


Winter Sports Clinic 2010

Well we had another great Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, CO this year. Our team consisted of six athletes and, as far as I know, for the first time the women outnumbered the men 2:1. Floyd Porter attended for the first time and had a blast skiing down the mountain. He also tried curling and snowmobiling and is hooked. Jeff Grace, although not a member of the PVA, attended as part of the team for the fourth straight year and enjoyed Alpine Skiing and several shooting events. Rose participated in rock climbing, X-Country, snowmobiling, and alpine skiing. That woman does not stop! Ruth was another busy bee. She made her first trip back to Snowmass in a few years and didn't skip a beat. She went to the hot springs, did X-Country (both sitting and standing), tried snowboarding and also did Alpine skiing from a bi-ski. Terri had a great year and is progressing very well. Next year she'll be ready to sit ski with outriggers on her arms instead of mounted to the ski. She's also been given the title of unofficial team photographer. Aubrey, who helped give Terri her photog title, had a slew of paparazzi following her wherever she went. Aubrey was easy to spot on the mountain because she had 4 or 5 people chasing her down with cameras and microphones, they might have been hiding in bushes also! I would like to thank you all for taking it easy on me...even though I was called Bossley, had to tear up a hotel room and had to braid hair. Everyone did great in your events and in representing the Gateway PVA, the St. Louis VAMC, and our team. I'm very proud to be your coach, and I'm looking forward to the next time.

May 2010

<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 BOD Meeting in Overland at 11:30 a.m.	5	6	7 Local Wheelchair Games @ JB 8:15 a.m.	8 Camp Penuel 5k or 1 mile "Fun Run" @ Arnold Park
9	10 4 p.m. Site Visit (meeting @ office)	11 PVA Site Visit	12 PVA Site Visit	13 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	14	15 Bowling fundraiser @ St. Clair Bowl 1:00 p.m.
16	17	18	19	20 SCI Lunch @ Noon JB — Bldg 52	21 Trap Shoot @ Olin Facility in East Alton, IL 10 a.m.	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2010

<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 Sweat w/the Vets—Run, Walk & Roll @ JB "Show-Me Rally" in Hannibal, MO
6	7	8 BOD Meeting in Creve Coeur at 4 p.m.	9	10 Patient Support Group 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	11 Newsletter Articles due	12
13	14	15	16	17 SCI Lunch @ Noon JB Building 52; Member Meeting @ 1 p.m.	18 Trap Shoot @ Olin in East Alton, IL @ 10 a.m.	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center Drive
St. Louis, MO 63132
Address Service Requested



Our chapter visited two schools during PVA Awareness Week in April; Point Elementary left & Cahokia Army JROTC right.



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