

Gateway Gazette

May/June 2017

Volume 50 Number 3



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Photo Courtesy of Noel Dillard

Gateway Chapter



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

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 Kansas City, MO 64128
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 Brent Follas, National Service Officer II

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9700 Page Blvd. Suite 101, Room 1-114
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 Office: (314)253-4480 or (800)795-3614
 Fax: (314) 253-4150
 Fred Bradley, Senior Benefits Advocate
 Jeremy Lile, NSO Candidate
 Susan White, Accredited Administrator

Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center

JB SCI, Room 2S25
 #1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
 St. Louis, MO 63125
 Office: (314) 894-6467
 or (866) 328-2670
 Fax: (314) 894-6465
 Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

National Liaison VP

Charles Brown

Time to update your address or email?

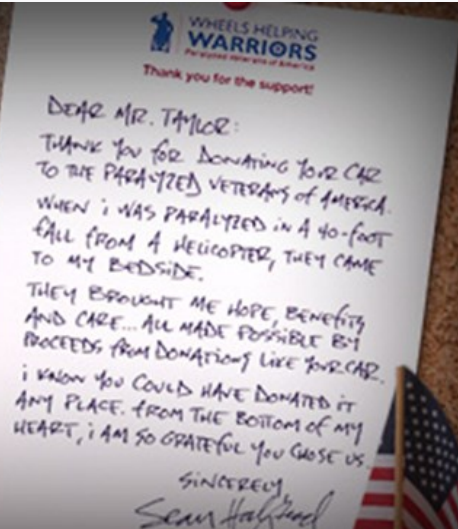
Please email us at info@gatewaypva.org or write or call us at the following:

Gateway Chapter PVA • 1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center • St. Louis, MO 63132 • (314) 427-0393 or (800) 426-4058 • Fax (314) 427-4183

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter

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President's Message

By Stanley Brown

Gateway Is on a Spending Roll



At the recent April Board of Directors meeting, the Board approved some significant outlays of funds to benefit members. Specifically, we approved awarding two \$35,000 accessible vehicle grants and four \$10,000 vehicle grants. In addition, we approved purchasing Kansas City Chiefs field level season tickets, two accessible seats for the eight season home games and the two preseason games. These are excellent seats on the 40 yard line in the accessible seating area. There are two wheelchair places for each game or room for a folding chair(s). The season tickets cost \$2,443.74. Gateway has also opened up their generator program for applications. **The program will close May 31, 2017;** applications must be received no later than that date. Members must submit two bids for the eligibility of receiving \$5500 paid directly to the vendor for either a portable or standalone whole house generator. We also continue to award home improvement grants in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Our final expenditure for Cardinals and Royals baseball tickets was \$13,244.

St. Louis County Housing Opportunities

The St. Louis County Home Improvement Program (HIP) is a federally funded program which provides technical advice and financial assistance to qualified homeowners for a variety of all repairs. The program is administered by the St. Louis County Department of Planning, Office of Community Development. Applicants must be the owner and occupant of the property to be improved. Gross household income must meet the low-moderate income limits. A participant can receive up to \$5000 and will sign a five-year forgivable loan agreement that reduces 20% a year. Applications are taken over the phone at either the Clayton (314-615-8232) or South County office (314-615-4025). Available program funds may vary depending on neighborhoods (73 St. Louis County municipalities). The program is aimed at major system upgrades. Eligibility requires up-to-date mortgages and taxes paid. The following is the program website that you can visit for more information <http://www.stlouisco.com/PropertyandRoads/CommunityDevelopment/HomeImprovementProgram>.

Gateway Elections

Your ballot for Gateway Officers and Board members is included with this newsletter. I strongly encourage everyone to take the time and make the effort to vote. Follow the directions inside the ballot for casting your vote.

Kansas City Chiefs Football Tickets

As mentioned in the first paragraph, Gateway has purchased two accessible field level seats for the eight home regular-season games and the two preseason games. If you are interested in these tickets, please contact the office by email or phone with the games you are interested in. You may request one or ten games. Go online to see the schedule at <http://www.chiefs.com/schedule-and-events/season-schedule.html>. Entries must be received by Friday, June 30, 2017. Names will be drawn and winners will be contacted. Winners must be able to pick up tickets from the Kansas City NSO office. No tickets will be mailed.

Healthcare While Traveling

By Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

Are you, planning a trip outside of the United States anytime soon? If so, are you service connected? Do you know about the VA's Foreign Medical Program (FMP)?

The FMP is a health benefits program for U.S. veterans who are residing or traveling abroad and have a VA rated service connected condition/disability. VA assumes responsibility of payment for certain necessary health care services associated with treatment for those service connected disabilities or any disability associated with and held to be aggravating a service-connected condition. (Veterans living in Canada are under the jurisdiction of FMP; however, inquiries and claims must be directed to the Foreign Countries Operations in Canada.) Additionally, VA may authorize necessary foreign medical services for any condition of a Veteran participating in the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program (38 U.S.C. 31).

How do I know if I am eligible for FMP?

The eligibility requirements are different for veterans outside the U.S. than for those within the U.S. VA may authorize foreign medical services for veterans only for a VA rated service connected condition, or a condition associated with and aggravated by a VA rated service connected disability. Disability percentage has no bearing on determining eligibility for FMP.

Should I notify FMP if I am traveling abroad?

Pre-registration for eligible Veterans is not necessary. However, Veterans who are permanently relocating to a country under the FMP Office's jurisdiction are encouraged to notify the FMP Office upon establishing a permanent foreign mailing address (address and telephone number). At that time, arrangements will be made for FMP registration and the mailing of detailed program material. Included in the program material will be an FMP Program Guide which provides detailed information on benefit coverage and limitations, how to select health care providers and claim filing instructions. Veterans who are simply traveling abroad need not bother with notification. However, program information is available upon request. Please use VA Form 10-7959f-1 when registering with FMP.

Continued on Page 8

VA Makes Wait Times Transparent for Veterans

April 12, 2017—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking unprecedented steps to increase transparency. Today, VA launched a new Access and Quality Tool that provides Veterans with an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand way of accessing patient wait time and quality of care data. This tool not only provides Veterans with more information about VA services, it increases accountability and ensures VA is held to a higher standard.

“Veterans must have access to information that is clear and understandable to make informed decisions about their health care,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin. “No other health-care system in the country releases this type of information on wait times. This allows Veterans to see how VA is performing.”

The tool allows Veterans to access the average times patients are waiting to be seen in their local area; how Veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary- and specialty-care appointments at specific VA facilities; timeliness of appointments for care needed right away; and the quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers compared with local private-sector hospitals. The Access and Quality Tool is the most transparent and easy to understand wait time and quality data website in the health-care industry.

“This tool is another example of VA leading the way,” said Acting Under Secretary for Health Dr. Poonam Alaigh. “No one in the private sector publishes data this way. This tool will instill a spirit of competition and encourage our medical facilities to proactively address access and quality issues while empowering Veterans to make choices according to what works best for them and their families.”

VA will continue to make improvements to this tool based on the feedback it receives from Veterans.

The Access and Quality Tool can be found at <http://www.accesstocare.va.gov/>. The video can be seen at <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/37002/vas-new-online-tool-helps-veterans-make-informed-health-care-decisions/>

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE & CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAYS

BREESE, IL FACILITY

FRI. MAY 12th FROM 12PM-6PM / SAT MAY 13th FROM 9AM-1PM

COMPLIMENTARY FOOD & BEVERAGES /

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VEHICLE & LIFT SPECIALS



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Welcome to our new members:

Andre Jones • Todd Bledsoe • William Welsch • Russell Harvkey

Norman Hente • Jarrette Stewart • John Krug • Jeff Riedesel

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.

St. Louis Service Office Move

The St. Louis Service Office has moved to a new location, the old Record Center. Fred Bradley's, Senior Benefits Advocate, and Jeremy Lile's, National Service Officer Candidate, new contact information is shown below:

St. Louis Service Office
Paralyzed Veterans of America
9700 Page Blvd, Room 1-114
St. Louis, MO 63132

Phone: 314-253-4480
Toll Free: 800-795-3614
Fax: 314-253-4150

Y5 Trout Lodge Applications Due

If you have never been to the Veterans Outdoor Adventure at YMCA's Trout Lodge near Potosi, Missouri, ask one of your fellow members that have attended about the amount of fun that can be had! A photo from last year can be found on the cover of this newsletter. There is a multitude of adapted activities including Archery, Rifle Range, Fishing, Kayaking, Trapshooting, Action Track Trails, Boccia, Golf, Zip Line, and Water Skiing. Trout Lodge applications are due on **June 15, 2017**. If you have any questions, please contact Matt Luitjohan at 314-894-6602 or Charley Wright at 314-652-4100 ext. 64590.

GATEWAY GI

General Information



March Atlanta Dive **By Chris Blanchard, Executive Director**

Since I have been on board with the Gateway Chapter, I have tried to attend every Chapter event that we had on the calendar. I have worn out my shoulders playing wheelchair lacrosse, learned how to play Boccia, gone to Trout Lodge, attended three trivia night fundraisers and the list goes on. But this past March I had the opportunity to try something that was truly new for me. I snorkeled the Atlanta Aquarium with three generations of veterans. I have been an avid reef snorkeler for years, but this was an experience unlike any that I have had before. It started with veterans from almost every branch, some disabled and some not, all of us itching to get into the water. We received a short briefing about the dos and don'ts while in the tank and then when everyone was suited up, we went in the water.

I always forget how quiet it is under water and I am always surprised when all I can hear is my own breathing through a plastic tube. But as we slowly followed the team guide through the water, I started to hear another sound. It was my own heart pounding in my ears as a two-ton, twenty foot whale shark glided under me only a few inches away. This giant animal was so close to me that I could see his eyes and I am certain that he could see mine when he bumped me with his dorsal fin. That was just the beginning, soon giant manta rays were getting close and performing barrel rolls that were hypnotizing to watch. Smaller skates and rays swam by so quickly that they were there and then just gone. I could see black tipped sharks, saw fish, hundreds of smaller fish that were brightly colored and a sea turtle that was larger than I expected. As we made our way through the surface of the water in a large figure eight, it seemed to me that these sea creatures were just as curious about us as we were about them. I have never been so close to such a wide variety of animals and certainly never right next to a whale. To say that I was having one of the best adventures of my life does not come close to describing this experience. When it was over and we were out of the water, there were smiling faces everywhere that I looked. The conversations in the locker room were animated and full of exclamations like "One of those whales hit me with its fin!" and "That was really cool! When are we doing this again?"

So I think that you can tell that this was a remarkable experience for me. It wasn't just being in the salty water with all of those animals, it was also having the opportunity to interact with those veterans that has sold me on going back in November. If you have been considering a trip like this, do it. Kudos to Charley Wright for organizing and leading this adventure.

Healthcare While Traveling (Continued from Page 4)

What is/is not covered under FMP?

Unlike typical health benefit/insurance plans, where the range of benefits is standard among all enrolled beneficiaries/subscribers, FMP benefits are limited to services that are medically necessary to treat a VA-rated, service-connected disability or for a condition that is associated with and held to be aggravating a service-connected disability. Supporting medical documentation is always required. The FMP does not pre-authorize services. A copy of the medical documentation must be submitted to determine if the care was related to a service connected disability. Claims filed under the FMP should be submitted no later than 2 years from the date of services or in the case of inpatient care, within 2 years of discharge date.

Covered benefits include:

Durable medical equipment

Emergency services

Hospitalization

Skilled nursing care

Outpatient services

Physical therapy, when under the direct supervision of a licensed physician

Prescription drugs (including insulin) that are FDA approved

Emergency ambulance services to the nearest medical facility for a VA rated service connected disability

HISA-Home Improvement and Structural Alteration grant (must be preauthorized)

There are a number of exclusions to FMP, so before relocating contact the Health Administration Center in Denver, CO. at 303-331-7950 for help. For more information visit the PC@HAC website at www.va.gov/hac or contact your local PVA NSO for assistance.

In memory of...

Barry Akers	Ashland, KY	07/04/16
Michael Shearer	Blue Springs, MO	01/23/17
Raymond Vasquez	Grain Valley, MO	01/31/17
Gerry Jones	Cape Fair, MO	02/01/17
Alva Edwards	Kansas City, MO	02/26/17
Kal Provance	Cameron, MO	03/09/17
Kathryn Reed	St. Louis, MO	03/09/17
Edwin Ortiz	Warrensburg, MO	03/23/17
Lester White	Carlyle, IL	04/09/17
Steven Baird	Waverly, IL	unknown

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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Send an email with the subject line "Gateway PVA" to marketing@unitedaccess.com. We'll add you to our email list.



We're here to help

If you have a **service-connected disability**, you may qualify for VA funding assistance for wheelchair accessible vehicles or driving modifications. If your current mobility vehicle is over 2 years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion.

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Wheel 'n Warriors



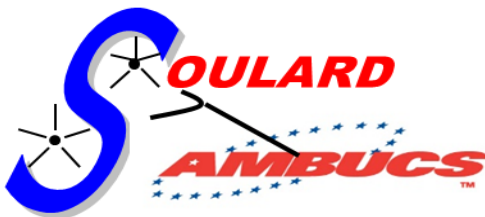
Open to veterans of ALL abilities!

We ask Veterans to be at the location of each event at least 15 min. before roll out. Have your safety equipment with you – flag, water bottle, and helmet. Have your tires aired up and ready to go. Be sure to hydrate!






Rides rotate locations and are held on the first Tuesday, the third Saturday, and the fourth Friday of each month.

Date/Time	Location	Meet at
Tue May 2@1730	Katy Trail, 500 S Riverside Dr. St Charles, MO 63301	Frontier Park Pavilion
Sat May 20@0900	Madison County Trail, 6368 Center Grove Rd. Edwardsville, IL 62025	Edwardsville Township Park -Pavilion 1
Fri May 26@0900	Southwest Illinois College, 2500 Carlyle Ave, Belleville, IL 62221	Metrolink Lot
Tue Jun 6@1730	Madison County Trail, 100 United Dr. Collinsville, IL 62234	Culvers Lot
Sat Jun 17@0900	Riverfront Trail, Intersection of Lenor K. Sullivan and Biddle Street (north of Arch) 63102	Riverfront Trail Greenways Trailhead
Fri Jun 23 @0900	Grants Trail, 4398 Hoffmeister Ave. St Louis, MO 63125	Orlandos Banquet Facility Lot
Mon Jul 3@1730	Southwest Illinois College, 2500 Carlyle Ave. Belleville, IL 62221	Metrolink Lot
Sat Jul 15@0900	Cliff Cave Park, 806 Cliff Cave Rd. St. Louis, MO 63129	Riverside Shelter
Fri Jul 28@0900	Katy Trail, 500 S Riverside Dr. St Charles, MO 63301	Frontier Park Pavilion


Supported by:





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5  Boccia Mid-American Regionals	6
7 Kansas City, MO	8 VE Day (1945)	9 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15pts. Non-BOD Mbr.	10	11	12 SCI/D Local Wheelchair Games	13
14 <i>Happy Father's Day</i>	15 Trapshoot @ MO Dept. of Conservation 11am	16	17	18 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon 5 pts.	19  Boccia A. Legion 162	20  Boccia Gateway Armed Forces Day
21  Games	22 National Maritime Day	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 <i>Memorial Day</i>  OFFICE CLOSED	30	31			



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Newsletter Articles Due 15 pts. published	2	3
4	5 Trapshoot @ MO Dept. of Conservation 11am	6 D-Day (1944)	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4:00 pm 15pts. Non-BOD Mbr.	14 SCI Outreach Poplar Bluff US Army Birthday	15 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon Quarterly Mbr Mtg. after Luncheon 5/15 pts	16	17
18 <i>Happy Father's Day!</i>	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30  Boccia A. Legion 162	



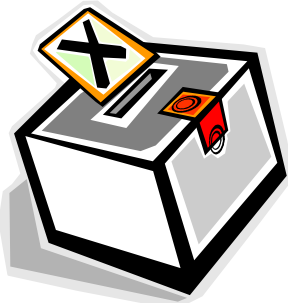
**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

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

Current Resident or

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**BOD Election Ballot is enclosed!
(Due by June 9, 2017)**

Your official election ballot for the **2017-2018** Board of Directors of the Gateway Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America is enclosed in this newsletter. Please note, only one ballot per member will be counted. All mailed voting ballots should be sent to us by **Friday, June 9, 2017** at the Gateway Chapter office (address already printed on the back of your tri-fold ballot). Please carefully read and follow the instructions printed on your ballot. **ALL** member ballots will be opened and counted. Fiscal year 2018 Board officers and members will be announced on **June 13, 2017**. An email with results will be sent to all members. If you do not have an email feel free to call the office.

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