



GATEWAY GAZETTE

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



Outdoor Adventure Program / Trout Lodge Expo Successful!

On September 12—15, Gateway Chapter PVA and the Kentucky/Indiana Chapter combined with our SCI Recreation Therapy Department at Jefferson Barracks VAMC hosted our first annual Veterans Outdoor Adventure Program at the YMCA Trout Lodge in Southeast Missouri. The event brought out many new veteran participants who had not otherwise been involved in sporting events like the Annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games or the Winter Sports Clinic.

There were 13 Gateway Chapter PVA members (9 from the St. Louis area and 4 from the Kansas City area), 5 veterans from the Kentucky/Indiana Chapter, and 4 day-only campers. Plus, our Chapter National Liaison Vice President, Charlie Brown (formerly a Gateway member), came up from Florida and introduced us to the sport of bocce ball. In addition to bocce ball, veterans were able to participate in trap shooting, fishing, kayaking, archery, and trail rides. Even more events are planned for next year and, yes, there will be a next year with even more veterans planning to come. All veteran participants this year came without any personal expense thanks to funding from the Gateway and Kentucky/Indiana Chapters, as well as grants secured by the Recreation Therapy Department. Our thanks to Permobil and Anthem Blue Cross for their generous support in making this event happen.

For more information about next year's event, date unknown at this time, contact Charley Wright at 800-228-5459 x 64590. Charley has been the "mover and shaker" for this event.

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

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Paralyzed Veterans of America**
<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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10 points!

Veterans Day Parade

Saturday, November 9, 2013
Downtown St. Louis; Meet at 13th St. & Olive at 11:00 am; lunch afterward

Sweat with the Vets

Sunday, November 10, 2013
Jefferson Barracks Gym
8:00 am



The Gateway Chapter PVA has upgraded our office desktop computers. We now have three (3) older desktops that we would like to give to members. The computers are available immediately and on a first come, first serve basis. Please call or email our office if you are interested in picking up one. We have two (2) Dell Optiplex GX260s and one (1) Dell Optiplex GX270 with a keyboard. We also have one (1) large monitor.



Entries for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival will be accepted beginning January 2, 2014. Please contact Matt Luitjohan, Charley Wright, or Becky Ballard for more information on how to enroll for 2014. Contact Matt at 314-894-6602; Charley at 314-652-4100, ext. 64590



**Gateway Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of
America**

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

President's Message

By Stanley D. Brown



Jefferson Barracks Construction/Renovation

On the last Saturday in September, I came late but fortunately Rose Ganz was on time, to the ceremonial groundbreaking of major renovation and construction at the Jefferson Barracks VA. The National Cemetery Administration will be taking 20 acres from today's Jefferson Barracks campus. The existing power plant, adjacent buildings, including the gymnasium, will be transferred for expansion of the Jefferson Barracks Cemetery. The need for replacement buildings and outdated infrastructure in existing buildings has prompted plans for five new structures as part of a \$366 million upgrade to the remaining campus. Once completed, the campus will be much more self-sufficient and the need to transport patients, lab samples and tests, to the John Cochran facility will be reduced. A new outpatient clinic will have expanded radiology and lab capability. There will be a new recreation building between our SCI unit (building 52) and building 53 immediately next-door. There will be a bridge/closed walkway connecting the SCI unit to the new recreation building. Additional green space and parking are also planned close to what is now the second entrance. The plans call for demolition of the existing gymnasium, which includes the bowling alley. Mr. Jim Donohoe, who headed up fundraising for the Fisher House, is now doing the same for a bowling facility in the planned new recreation complex. Gateway has donated \$5,000 toward that project.

Turn up the Heat - Best Golf Tournament Ever

On September 10, 2013, we had our best ever fundraising event - the 18th Annual Jack Buck/Gateway PVA golf tournament. This occurred in spite of a poor economy, less big-ticket auction items (condo stays), and record heat for September with temperatures reaching 98°. I don't want to give away numbers and make you think we are flush with money, but our net proceeds were 10 times higher than eight years ago before Bob Rives and his friends got involved. So again this year, on behalf of all the membership, I want to thank Bob and his staff especially Kathy and Cindy, Fred and Michelle Waelter, Jerry Hollingsworth, Organized Labor, all of our firemen and especially the Pattonville Fire District, and all our volunteers for their continued herculean efforts. A special thanks to Emerson for their Double Diamond Sponsorship again this year, as well as Silver Sponsors Anheuser-Busch, Boeing, and new sponsor Coventry Health Care.

John Cochran SCI Parking Placards are Available

We now have hanging placards that will enable you, if you drive with hand controls, to park in one of the two designated spaces in front of John Cochran. I mentioned this possibility in my last newsletter article. I have seen the placards and list of potential recipients. Stacy Duncan, SCI Social Worker in building 52, has the placards for distribution after proper documentation is shown. These parking spots are immediately in front of the main John Cochran entrance and a little to the right. These are reserved disabled spots and are designated with "SCI only" signs.

Unresolved SCI Issues

As I write this article the first week of October, we are still without a permanent chief of the SCI/D service line. A very capable physician from Milwaukee is deciding if St. Louis and we are the place for his family. The other unresolved issue is the now physically complete 6 bed SCI satellite unit on the sixth floor of John Cochran. It's been over a year and sufficient nursing staff have yet to be hired. Even once hired and staffed, there are not enough acute care SCI patients to fill the six beds. The "plan" six years ago was to fill the beds with acute care patients and increased numbers of SCI/D veterans receiving their annual examinations in St. Louis. The latter expectation has not occurred.

Attaboy

By Ruth Kult

Hello my friends,



Our Gateway Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans just held one of our biggest fundraisers, which happens to be my favorite. Our 18th Annual Jack Buck Memorial Golf Tournament. What fun, but it was steamy hot. Considering the intense heat, it was a nice turnout. Much better than expected.

I'd like to thank everyone who voted for me and also for the 97% of our members who didn't even bother. The only way to try to make a change in your outcome is to act on it, i.e. - take the time to vote.

THE DRUM ROLL PLEASE:

I can't think of a proper way to announce this amazing person other than just to give you his name. Mr. Charley (the Tuna) Wright, one awesome individual. The newest ATTABOY.

We went from great, to awesome, to wonderful in my recreational therapists overview. I've been around here for a long time and I am almost in awe of everything that Mr. Tuna has done for our recreational therapy department. We never had any of this when I was an inpatient. Or, if it was out there, I was unaware.

A little background. Before Matt -n- Charley, we had Matt -n- Amy. Before Matt, we just had Amy. Before Amy, we had a wonderful woman by the name Jennifer Hahn (Tobey at that time). She was the igniter of the flame. When she came, she turned the recreational therapy department upside down and made it into what was supposed to be. I owe her a lot. We all do. Most of the fundraisers, like the Elks Lodge events, they were Jennifer Tobey's idea. All of these Jefferson Barracks fundraisers help with the costs for trips.



It's strange, when Charley arrived on the scene to replace Amy, I was hesitant to like him. Just like I thought no one could ever compare to Jackie of Physical Therapy, but Jody Paniagua, one of our fabulous three in the physical therapy department, (Charley's wife) is also great.

Charley brought all of his Arizona vibes with him. He seems to be doing things I never thought were possible. Who would have ever thought people in wheelchairs, let alone quadriplegics, would be going to Cozumel, Mexico, to go S.C.U.B.A. diving. Charley, and of course, Jody, knew it was possible and they made it happen.

Years ago, Jennifer started a few people on S.C.U.B.A. A few even flew to the Keys in Florida to get certified, but it all ended as fast as it started. Thanks to Charley, it's a reality again. Bigger and better.

Matt is also a great therapist; he and Charley are like a well-oiled machine. They work so well together. We're lucky to have people so dedicated to their jobs.

As always, thanks for reading!

The New Gateway Chapter PVA Logo

Pictured to the right is the new PVA, and by mandate, local chapters', basic logo that has been approved effective immediately. The new logo was adopted by almost unanimous vote at the August 2013 Annual Convention of PVA in Long Beach, California. I voted in favor of the change in logos. There are a couple of reasons/rationales for the new logo: the silhouette is gender-neutral in that the person could be either female or male reflecting the composition of today's military; the person is in military clothing which is a direct reminder of a person's active duty service to the country; and the silhouette is saluting which should hopefully instill a sense of patriotism. One Director described the new logo as having a certain "gestalt" appeal (think about that for a moment!). Locally we are researching the possibility of inserting an arch over the top of the wheelchair figure. If you have any suggestions please share them with the office.



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter

Stan Brown
Gateway PVA President/National Director

In memory of...



Carl Dorsey	Winfield, KS	07/26/13
Gregory Hollingshead	Arnold, MO	08/05/13
Richard Lipps	Jackson, MO	08/06/13
Stephen Moyes	St. Francisville, IL	08/14/13
Fred Overmeyer	West Plains, MO	08/21/13
Margaret Schaben	Kissimmee, FL	08/01/13



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 might wish to pay their respects to the departed.

Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome Our New Members

Donald Black Bowling Green, MO
Robert Coleman Ballwin, MO

David Murray Barnhart, MO
James Standridge Buckner, MO

First-Time Experience at The Wheelchair Games

By Member, Charles Marino

It never occurred to me that having a spinal cord injury would allow me to enjoy participating in any sporting events. I had it in my head that I couldn't have fun anymore since I found out my limitations. A person that use to run, jump and do so many other things as if it was second nature. I had it in my head that I would just take what life gave me in stride and do the best that I can with it. This has been going on for over nine years now.

Then I was approached by Charley Wright, the coach for Team St. Louis, at Jefferson Barracks hospital. He suggested that I should register to partake in the 33rd Annual National Veteran's Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Florida. He had tried to have me do so the last two years, but I have always turned it down because I could not afford to do something like this. So when I was approached this year I said that I would...saying, "That it would be better than sitting around watching television and organizing my sports card collections." Charley even said that I would have a good chance of winning some medals for the events that I would participant in. I looked at it as just doing something different thinking that I wasn't going to win anything.

I felt alone on the flight going to Tampa, because I was the only athlete boarding the plane leaving St. Louis. This is because I missed the cut-off date for group ticketing. I thought that this was a waste of my time and money. The flight had another stop in Kansas City and then to my destination of Tampa. I became very surprised when the plane loaded up about 30 Para-athletes. Some were from the Kansas City area and others were from the connecting flight in San Diego. I never would have imagined that these veterans would have high spirits, and after talking with them, I found that they have done the event for several years. This was their time to showcase their skills. One of the athletes that sat next to me was Willie and he brought his service dog Bentley. We got to talking about our events and he joked that he needed to cut the competition down, because we had the same events. I told him "that he'd need not worry; I doubt very much that I would win anything." He looked at me and said that I should change my perspective. Not to look at it as if not winning anything, but to have fun and meet new friends. And if you had a pleasant experience, come back to next years' games.

There was not much said after that. We just sat there waiting for the plane to land. After we landed and I waited my turn to have my scooter available to depart from the plane, a crowd of people wearing T-shirts with the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games logo, welcomed us to Tampa, Florida. Later during the Opening Ceremony they were identified as volunteers that would be helping the participants and coaches with distribution of water, securing us on the bus (so that we don't injure ourselves while being transported) and administering first aid (if we needed it). These dedicated people are to be commended for their volunteer services throughout the games. I feel that the games would have been very difficult to commence without them.

Since this was my first time participating in the wheelchair games, I thought that the opening ceremony was going to be fairly low brow, because I didn't think that the event was that big a deal. How wrong I was. The ceremony was like the Olympics on a miniature scale. The organizers had us in alphabetical order, with the exception of the host state (Florida) leading the parade. After all of us, including our guest Great Britain, finished our review before the audience of about 2000, local politicians, sponsors and special guests spoke to us and gave us praise for participating in the 2013 Paralyzed Veterans of America National Wheelchair Games. While the people were making their speeches we noticed that ESPN camera operators were taping everything, but we later found out that it would be broadcasted at another time. Hopefully they will show this soon.

The events were held for seven days and my events were spaced evenly. Buses were provided by the local transit service free of charge, taking us to each event venue. My first event was bowling. I was considered a fair bowler before being disabled, but when I had to bowl from my scooter I was just above a novice, holding a 98 average and getting a silver medal for my effort. The next day was weightlifting, by using the bench press. This was the longest event. We had to take turns by what each person could bench in gradual weight increments. From 100 lbs to 425 lbs was the range. I had no knowledge as to what my limits were, I started at 125 lbs. Then 160 lbs when I found that the previous weight was rather easy. My last lift was 175 lbs....I could not even lift off its supports. There were other novices participating and somehow I got a silver medal for my 160 lbs lift, where the gold went to a guy that lifted 200 lbs, which was more than I did. It goes to show that I need to get in shape for next year's event...LOL.

The other events I didn't do that well in. I had never drawn a bow in my life in the archery event, but I did improve as I progressed. The field events (shot put, discus and javelin) I did fair in. There is a lot that I need to improve on. And shooting pool I thought I would be very good at, but I lost concentration when my opponent had me laughing too much at my mistakes and taking me out on the first round. Next year I have not decided as to whether or not I would participate in these events again. It just depends on my exercise program and the practice I can get. When the closing ceremonies drew to the end I learned a lot about myself and what the other veterans have shared with me. Their life stories, their trials and tribulations, and their wanting to prove themselves as not only athletes, but individuals that show that they can function with society. This improved my outlook on myself. I am not a useless person with a disability. I can and will do things as long as I can put effort into it. Will I be participating again? "Hell yes...I will be at Philadelphia in 2014."

Improved Pension Benefits

By Rodney Harris, Senior National Service Officer



When I get a request from a veteran or a surviving spouse to let them know if they qualify for improved disability or death pension benefits, I let them know that certain criteria must be met in order to be eligible, such as war time service and disability and income criteria.

Who is eligible?

Generally, veterans may be eligible if the following circumstances apply: They were discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and served at least 90 days of active military service, of which 1 day was during a war time period. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty. However, there are exceptions to this rule, if your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law (the yearly limit on income is set by Congress) or you are age 65 or older, or, you are permanently and totally disabled, not due to your own willful misconduct, you would qualify.

What is countable income for veteran's pension eligibility purposes?

This would include income received by the veteran and his or her dependents, if any, from most sources. Earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business would be eligible income. There is a presumption that all of a child's income is available to or for the veteran. VA may grant an exception in hardship cases.

The Improved Disability Pension provides a monthly benefit to certain low-income veterans. The Monthly benefit is based on a maximum annual benefit, and the actual benefit received by the Veteran reflects a reduction (from the maximum amount) of the veteran's "countable" income. This means that a veteran with countable income above the maximum benefit amount is not eligible for the pension. Under the Improved Disability Pension law you may use Unreimbursed Medical Expenses and Last Expenses and Burial Expenses to reduce your countable income.

Unreimbursed Medical Expenses

Unreimbursed Medical Expenses (UME) are medical expenses that are not reimbursed by any insurance or any provider. They are out-of-pocket medical expenses. In the Improved Disability Pension law you may use unreimbursed medical expenses to reduce your countable income. You may use up to 95% of the maximum allowable pension income limit to reduce your countable income.

Maximum Annual Benefit Amount

The maximum annual benefit amounts for the veterans' pension benefit are set in statute and are based on the presence of a spouse or dependent child (or children) and the need for housebound and aid and attendance. The annual benefit amounts are adjusted automatically by law each year to reflect a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) equal to the COLA for Social Security benefits.

For example: beginning December 1, 2012, the maximum annual amount for the pension benefit in 2012 and 2013 is \$12,465 for a veteran and \$16,324 for a veteran with one dependent. The maximum annual benefit amount will be higher if the veteran is housebound with no dependents; the rate is \$15,233 and \$19,093 with one dependent. If one requires aid and attendance without a dependent it is \$20,795 and with one dependent it is \$24,652.

Since the law states that you may use up to 95% of the maximum allowable pension income limit to reduce your countable income, we must take away 5% of the maximum pension limit from any amount of UMEs that are reported.

In this example let's say that a veteran with his spouse has income in the amount of \$9,000. He annually reports \$5,000 in UMEs and he is entitled to pension benefits. You must take the 5% from his maximum annual benefits amount $\$16,324 \times 5\% = \816 . That amount must then be subtracted from the amount of UMEs he reports $\$5,000 - \$816 = \$4,184$. This is the amount that can be used to reduce the veteran's income.

In this case the veteran was receiving \$610 monthly before reporting the UME's which is $\$16,324 - \$9,000 = \$7,324 / 12 = \610 monthly. But when you subtract the UME's minus the 5% the \$4,184 from the \$9,000 income you get \$4,816. Then you subtract that amount from the maximum annual benefit amount of $\$16,324 - \$4,816 = \$11,508 / 12 = \959 monthly.

Therefore, in this case, a veteran with a spouse that was receiving \$610 monthly reports UMEs of \$5,000 will get an increase in his monthly amount to \$959. The UMEs were used to reduce the veteran's annual income.

Finally, expenses relating to the veteran's last illness or his spouse's last illness and burial paid by the veteran or the surviving spouse or eligible children may be used to reduce countable income from Improved Disability Pension and Improved Death Pension. These expenses may reduce the countable income by a dollar per dollar amount.

If you have any questions regarding this article, contact your local PVA National Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 2.



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Valerie Bess Receives the 2013 Excellence in Nursing Award!

By Becky Ballard



Valerie Bess, CNA on the SCI unit, was formally recognized in June for her outstanding contributions in the care of our veterans with SCI. If you know Valerie, you are aware of the incomparable love and care she gives to our veterans. But for those of you who haven't had the good fortune to have her care for you or the opportunity to meet her, I want to share with you just a few of the things that make her a standout in her field.



Val has worked in the SCI unit for the past 10 years. In that time she has frequently volunteered to work with some of our most challenging veterans, serving them with kindness and respect, and gaining amazing results. On several occasions she volunteered to accompany discharged veterans as they returned by airplane to their homes. As many of you have experienced, air travel in a wheelchair can be a challenge; going through security, navigating narrow aisle space, transfers to and from seats, dealing with bowel and bladder issues. Val managed all of this with ease and success. Her willingness to accompany veterans to national events, like the Wheelchair Games and Winter Sports Clinic, gave many an opportunity to experience new recreational avenues. And who wouldn't have fun with Val as your caregiver!

Staying late to do a double shift when we have been short-handed or when weather is bad is standard operating procedure for Val. She has often been heard saying, "I'll do anything for my veterans, I don't want them to be without." Besides providing exceptional nursing skills, she has a smile that always lights up the room, a laugh that is contagious and a heart as big as the moon.

Putting veterans first is her main priority. She is a team player who works with the RT, PT, OT, Social Work, Psychology, physician and nursing staff to the benefit of those veterans. These are only some of the reasons why she is so deserving of this very prestigious award. Val's past honors include two VA Civility Awards, nominated by her peers, for exceptional care to veterans, family or co-workers.



A big tip of the hat to our friend Val and job well done!

MIA
William Grier



*Have you seen or know the whereabouts of this member?
He is in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster.
Please call us, write to us, or e-mail us if you know where he is! Our contact info is inside the front cover.*



March 30- April 4, 2014 - Snowmass Village, Colorado

The 28th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is fast approaching. The clinic attracts to the mountain nearly 400 Veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions and other disabilities. More than 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled, and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team, serve as ski instructors to meet the unique needs of the participants. In addition to Alpine skiing, the clinic also features a number of other sports including: cross country, rock climbing, scuba diving, kayaking, and snowmobiling.

The clinic is co-sponsored by The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and made possible by a number of sponsors who make monetary and in-kind donations. Gateway Chapter members who earn sports points will receive funding from our chapter. Registration / applications are available. Contact Matt Luitjohan at JB VAMC by November 1st for details: 800-228-5459 x 66602

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November



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Caregiver Appreciation & Resource Fair @ JB 11:30-2:30 in Building 63, gymnasium	9 Veterans Day Parade Downtown St. Louis (see page 2)
10 Sweat with the Vets at JB at 8 am	11 Veterans Day-Office Closed 	12 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Mbr/Patient Luncheon at JB @ Noon 5 pts.	22 Caregiver Support & Education Series 10:30-12 @ John Cochran Basement Educ Room A	23
24	25	26	27	28 Happy Thanksgiving! Office Closed 28-29	29 	30



December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Newsletter Articles Due	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 4:00 pm 15 pts. non-BOD Mbr.	11	12	13 Caregiver Support & Education Series @ JB 10:30-12 in Building 63, Theater stage/gym	14
15	16	17	18	19 Mbr/Patient Luncheon/Qtr Mbr Mtg. at JB @ Noon 5/15 pts.	20	21
22	23	24 Merry Christmas! Office Closed 24-25 	25	26	27 Caregiver Support & Education Series 10:30-12 @ John Cochran Basement Educ Room A	28
29	30	31 Happy New Year! Office Closed 12/31-1/1 	1			

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Paralyzed Veterans of America
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132



Left: Our friends Cliff Spinner (left) from Thrifty Nickel and Fred Waelter (right) from Rent to Own Auto Centers presents a check to Gateway's President.

Right: Jerry Seger presents Stan with a check from the St. Louis Elks Lodge No. 9 located on Ladue Road in St. Louis, MO. Jerry is a good friend of Bob Rives and owns Awards and More LLC on Manchester Road in Brentwood.



Left: Team St. Louis pictured in Tampa, Florida, during the 33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in July. Next year, the 34th NVWG will be held in Philadelphia, PA. Start earning your sports points now so you can be part of the fun!

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