

# Gateway Gazette

November/December 2016

Volume 49 Number 6



**Paralyzed Veterans of America**

**Gateway Chapter**





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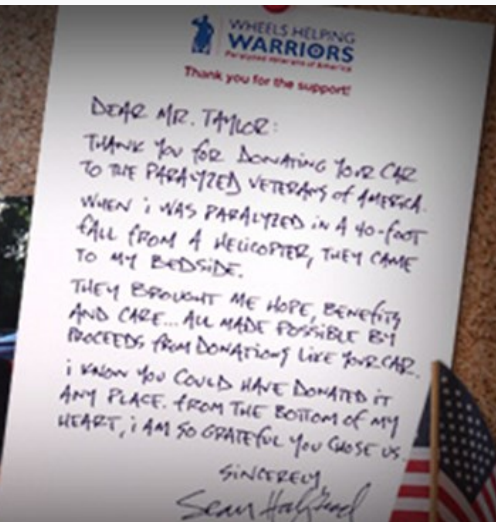
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# President's Message

## By Stanley Brown



2016

As we finish this calendar year, we prepare our annual report that includes our fiscal year audit for FY16 (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016). I am pleased to report we are in good shape again and spent considerable sums of money, which we should do, on our membership. In this last fiscal year we spent \$63,626 on home accessibility grants for members, \$33,579 on generators for members, \$65,000 on four vehicle accessibility grants to members, and \$8,706 on hand controls for members' vehicles. In this last fiscal year we also distributed \$38,325 to members to attend wheelchair sporting and recreation events. Our just completed audit shows that we have an 86% program expense ratio, which is down just a little from last year. That drop is because of the building area expenditures we made for repaving the parking lot, replacing our concrete sidewalk and entrance, and replacing the side elevated ramp entrance to the building, all of which did not count as a "program" expense. Nevertheless, the Better Business Bureau only requires a 65% ratio.

### A Grave Discussion



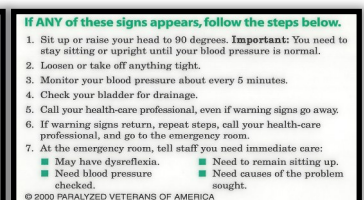
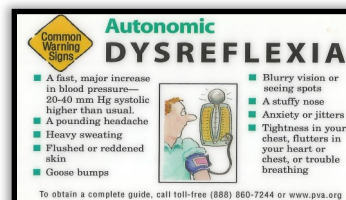
How appropriate to discuss this topic as Halloween approaches, and that is, have you considered your burial plans, and in particular your headstone? Begrudgingly acknowledging my own mortality, I recently purchased a headstone and gave details on the inscriptions. I also gave the monument people directions on adding two additional medallions/plaques on my headstone. PVA has, free of charge, an approximately 2 inches in diameter medallion with the PVA logo that can be screwed into the headstone and secured with epoxy.

The VA also has a somewhat similar medallion for each branch that can be requested after your demise by your executor or family member submitting a VA form 40-1330M. If you're interested in the PVA medallion, please contact the office and we will request the appropriate number and send one to you. If you're interested in eventually having the VA medallion on your headstone, contact the office and we can mail you the form (although you could also find it online with the VA).



### Autonomic Dysreflexia-Up Close and Personal

On page 4 of this newsletter, Kansas City NSO Brent Follas gives a great and detailed explanation of something we all may encounter someday - autonomic dysreflexia. I can recall nearly 20 years ago when I was first injured, hearing these "lectures" and reading about the reaction. At times I would have normal headaches and cold sweats with a UTI probably, and wondered if I was experiencing autonomic dysreflexia. In hindsight, I doubt it. I did however on two occasions have a distended (too full) bladder that would not empty. As that pain got worse, I assume, my paralyzed body's reaction was the increased blood pressure which produced a headache that only became worse. That headache was unlike anything I had ever experienced. We checked my urine bag and it was virtually empty. So, somewhat remembering my earlier "lectures," we unsuccessfully tried to insert a catheter, and then took off for the emergency room. They were able to insert a catheter and as I voided, that headache relief was instantaneous. As Brent points out in his article, your problem may be different. I highly recommend you obtain a PVA "Autonomic Dysreflexia" plastic card (shown below) from us. The card can be given any time you go to a hospital or doctor's office (as an inpatient or as an emergency case, with these AD symptoms). Hospitals and ERs may not be familiar with these issues of an SCI/D patient.



# Autonomic Dysreflexia

## By Brent Follas



A veteran, who entered my office recently, started to show the symptoms of Autonomic Dysreflexia. I have read and received training and education on this medical condition but did not experience it until then. I brought him to the Spinal Cord Injury Clinic and they measured his blood pressure and it was significantly high so I took him to the Emergency Department in the Kansas City, MO VAMC. He was sweating and eventually started to seize beginning at a mild level and moving towards severe. I asked the nurse if he was familiar with Autonomic Dysreflexia and thankfully he was but not all are educated on this potentially dangerous situation. It took some time but the veteran eventually recovered from his symptoms and was much better the next day.

This article is to create awareness and education because we don't want anyone losing their lives when there is proper treatment available even before an ambulance arrives. Luckily, this veteran was already in the hospital or this could have been a different story. A description of the symptoms are described in the following paragraphs.

Autonomic Dysreflexia is a potentially dangerous clinical syndrome that develops in individuals with spinal cord injury, resulting in acute, uncontrolled hypertension. All caregivers, practitioners, and therapists who interact with individuals with spinal cord injuries must be aware of this syndrome, recognize the symptoms, and understand the causes and treatment algorithm.

Briefly, Autonomic Dysreflexia develops in individuals with a neurologic level of spinal cord injury at or above the sixth thoracic vertebral level (T6). Autonomic Dysreflexia causes an imbalanced reflex sympathetic discharge, leading to potentially life-threatening hypertension. It is considered a medical emergency and must be recognized immediately. If left untreated, Autonomic Dysreflexia can cause seizures, retinal hemorrhage, pulmonary edema, renal insufficiency, myocardial infarction, cerebral hemorrhage, and death. Complications associated with Autonomic Dysreflexia result directly from sustained, severe peripheral hypertension.

As a result, there is flushing and sweating only above the level of injury, bradycardia, pupillary constriction, and nasal congestion (unopposed parasympathetic responses); and below the level of injury, there is pale, cool skin and piloerection due to sympathetic tone and lack of the descending inhibitory parasympathetic modulation.

Episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia can be triggered by many potential causes. Essentially, any painful, irritating, or even strong stimulus below the level of the injury can cause an episode of Autonomic Dysreflexia. Bladder distention or irritation is responsible for 75-85% of the cases. Bladder irritation is commonly caused by a blocked or kinked catheter or failure of a timely intermittent catheterization program. The second most common cause of Autonomic Dysreflexia is Bowel Distention, usually due to fecal impaction. This accounts for 13-19% of cases.

Although the list is not comprehensive, the following events or conditions all can cause episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia: Bladder Distention, Urinary Tract Infection, Calculus, Irritation, Appendicitis or other Intra-abdominal pathology/trauma, Anal fissure, Menstruation, Pregnancy - Especially labor and delivery Vaginitis Sexual Intercourse, Ejaculation, Deep Vein Thrombosis, Pulmonary Emboli Pressure Ulcers, Ingrown Toenail, Burns or Sunburn Blisters, Insect Bites, Contact with hard or sharp objects, Temperature fluctuations, Constrictive clothing, shoes, or appliances, Heterotopic Bone Fractures or other Skeletal Trauma Surgical or diagnostic procedures .

A person with symptoms of Autonomic Dysreflexia should sit up and raise the head and remove tight clothing.

For a complete explanation visit: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/322809-overview#a1>. There are also many articles on Autonomic Dysreflexia you can browse as well as visit [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org).



**G**ood day to you all. I wanted to write a little thank you to the Missouri Disabled Water Ski Clinic. If you haven't had a chance to go out to Creve Coeur Lake the last weekend of July you should mark it on your calendar and go. Between the staff, and the volunteers it's a wonderful time. They have skis for all skill levels. They will help you get fitted for the appropriate ski and teach you how to use it. I used a beginner ski which didn't stop me from drinking half the lake but after a few tries I was able to get up on the water and make it around the lake a couple of times. It's a thrilling experience to say the least. They also had plenty of food and water and everything that you would need to have a great day. I rode a 264 horse power jet ski. It was amazingly fast and super cool. I got to take it around the lake a couple of times. You don't really know how exhilarating it is until you are going 62mph on the open water. I ride a Harley and I was completely blown away.

The staff and volunteers will help you in any way they can. From getting you fitted to the right ski to helping you get to the water. They are very knowledgeable about the skis and are more than willing to help you. They have a group of people that will follow you while you ski and help you get back onto your ski so you can continue on with your adventure. I have to give a special shout to the guys that followed me. When I first started out, I fell more times than I care to admit. Those guys promptly jumped in the water after me to make sure I was okay and then get you set up to get back behind the boat. They were the best for sure. The food was delish and there was plenty to be had by all.

If you are a disabled Veteran the cost is covered for the event. Its a two day event that covers training and some skiing on Friday and then all day skiing, tubing, and jet skiing on Saturday. It can be a bit scary at first but if you trust the staff and volunteers you will have a great time, no doubt.

So having said all that I want to say thank you again to all the volunteers and staff that were out at Creve Coeur lake on July 29-30th. It was a great time and I had a lot of fun. You can count on me to be there next year for sure.

Sincerely,  
Rusty Ezzell



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# Gateway Chapter Annual Events



We would like to thank the Gateway Gun Club, United Access, Winchester Facilities, and H&S Co. 3/23 4th Marine Division for making our Annual Membership Trapshoot a blast for our members.



Our 21st Annual Jack Buck/Gateway PVA Golf Tournament was another great success! Thank you to all that contributed!



The Annual Membership Picnic had a great turnout despite the chilly weather. Great food and company!



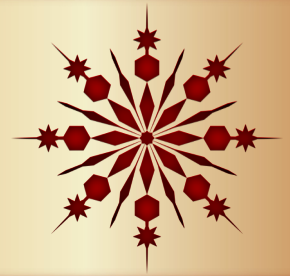
*Photo courtesy of Noel Dillard*

Trout Lodge was action-packed! Jefferson Barracks Recreation Therapists Charley Wright and Matt Luitjohan did a spectacular job organizing the event!



# GATEWAY GI

## General Information



## Welcome to our new members:

Donald Feldott   William Van Nuys   Shawn Pollett   Robert Wacker

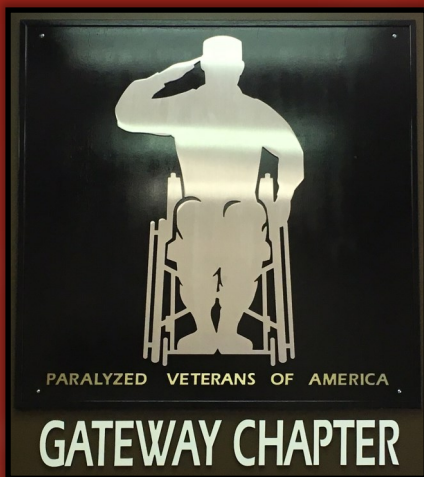
## Missing in Action



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.

Lynn McGrane • Perry Burch • Michael Elzey • Allen Medford • Jeffrey Ford

William Sandquist • Richard Johnson • Randy McGahan • George Haggard



## Thank You

We would like to thank L.E. Sauer Machine Company for donating their services and manufacturing our new logo for the Gateway Chapter office lobby. It stands at about three feet high and is made out of brushed aluminum. It looks incredible!

## Disabled Athlete Sports Association

The Disabled Athlete Sports Association proudly offers a variety of sport and fitness opportunities specifically designed for disabled veterans and disabled members of the armed forces thanks to generous funding and support of community leaders and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Opportunities include Alpine Skiing, Boccia, Personal Fitness, Handcycling, Sled Hockey, Swimming, Track & Field, Wheelchair Basketball and Lacrosse, and much more.

Contact 636-477-0716 or [meghang@dasasports.org](mailto:meghang@dasasports.org)  
for more information.





It has been 60 years since I was injured with a spinal cord injury resulting in quadriplegia. When I was released from the VA hospital I wanted to be able to get outdoors as much as possible. I went where I could in my push wheelchair. For years I tried numerous different ways to get about on the farm that my family owned. At one time I had a three wheel motorized cart which I could use but it would not go very well except on open ground. I also had a Ford Bronco which was able to get around well but I had to get out of my wheelchair and into the car to drive it. As time went by I became too weak to make the transfer into the Bronco and continued to look for a vehicle that could get me where I wanted to go while I remained in my wheelchair. I wanted to do this so badly with my father in the last few years he was alive. He always seemed to enjoy being outdoors as much as I did. What little time I was able to spend with him outdoors looking at all of nature was one of the best times I can remember.

I continued to look for an off-road vehicle that I could drive as well as have someone with me. I found a person who would modify a golf cart with a ramp and a set of hand controls. That worked fairly well because I could be independent and others could ride with me. However, the time soon came when I could no longer do it because I didn't have the strength to turn the steering wheel in tight places. The other distinct disadvantage was that it was two wheel drive and although I went many places where golf carts don't usually go, I would get stuck on occasion and I needed a tractor to pull me out, which meant somebody had to walk to get the tractor.

In February of this year, my wife was looking at the local newspaper when she noticed a fellow I know in a 4 wheel drive utility vehicle who is a quadriplegic. She immediately said this is what I needed. I agreed.

My brother was recently diagnosed with cancer and I wanted to be able to take him out doors as a therapeutic activity. I, along with my brother have a hundred plus acres and I now am able to go every where on the farm because James Gebert, whose father is a Veteran, converts four-wheel-drive vehicles (ATV) to accommodate a quadriplegic.

My unit is custom made for me. It has hand controls, a power ramp for boarding, power steering, power brakes, two emergency parking brakes, a winch, Q restraints, enough room to get in behind the adjustable steering wheel, and an EASY-loc on the floor. I now have a vehicle that will go anywhere on my farm with ease and safely. I can carry one other wheelchair, my brother, and two other passengers. It is the most carefully planned mobility device I have had for myself in the 60 years that I've been in a wheelchair. Now I can get out in the outdoors anytime and in any weather. I can now see deer, turkey, wildlife and acres of plants, flowers, and trees that I could not see before.

I think that this ATV is one of the most creative, custom made, outdoor vehicle for a person with my physical condition that I have seen since my injury 60 years ago. I have never encountered anyone working with vehicles or wheelchairs give this much attention to each tiny detail. James wanted his father and other Veterans to get outside in any kind of terrain. As James built my ATV, he was always tweaking each little part, each control in each part of the unit in such a way that I as a C-5 quad am able to safely access any place on my farm.

Because the original accessible ATV was designed by James Gebert for his father, he has paid more attention to the details of accessibility and safety needed by a person who is a quadriplegic than any other person I have known. It makes a huge difference. I am now able to enjoy all of my farm. I hope that others might be able to have this kind of vehicle available to them because of the pleasure that it has brought to me. I'm looking forward to enjoying this for the next few years that I am able to use it to be outdoors and go where I want to when I want to regardless of the terrain.

**Bob Huskey**



James A. Boyle  
Donald Oley  
Warner Robertson  
Serald Jacobson  
Raymond Hendrix  
Joseph Lindsey  
James Dessent  
Julio Rivera  
Serald Fraley

*In memory of...*

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O'Fallon, MO  
Piedmont, MO  
Overland Park, MO  
Festus, MO  
Paducah, KY  
Independence, MO  
Pacific, MO  
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08/05/2016  
09/15/2016  
09/17/2016  
09/19/2016  
10/06/2016  
10/24/2016



*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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Did you know that the Department of Veterans Affairs has issued a national policy to provide **any veteran** who meets the physical qualifications access to **ReWalk** exoskeleton technology?

**What is ReWalk?** ReWalk enables individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) to **stand** and **walk** and is cleared by the FDA for home and community use.



For a **No-Cost Screening** and Information on Evaluation and Training contact your local VA hospital, VA Rehabilitation Center or **contact ReWalk directly at [rewalk.com/contact](http://rewalk.com/contact) or via phone at 508-251-1154 Ext. 741**



ReWalk Robotics' mission is to fundamentally change the Quality of Life for individuals with lower limb disability through the creation and development of market leading robotic technologies.

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Rtd. Army Specialist Gene L. - Spinal Cord Injury in 2001 - ReWalker since 2013






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# November 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Veterans Day Parade 10 pts
6	7	8 <b>ELECTION DAY</b> BOD Mtg. @ GPVA 11:30 am 15 pts. Non-BOD Mbr.	9	10 US Marine Corps Birthday	11  OFFICE CLOSED	12
13	14	15	16	17 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon 5 pts	18 SCI Scuba - Atlanta	19
20 	21	22	23	24  OFFICE CLOSED	25	26
27	28	29	30			

# December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10
11	12	13 <b>US National Guard Birthday</b> GPVA Holiday Party/ Open House	14	15 Member/Patient Luncheon @ Noon Quarterly Mbr Mtg. after Luncheon 5/15 pts	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26  OFFICE CLOSED	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve





**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

Gateway Chapter

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

Current Resident or

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## **Greetings to GPVA members**

### **By Jeremy Lile**



I am honored to join the PVA team as a National Service Officer Candidate in the St. Louis office, and look forward to serving veterans in need. I was born and raised in the metro east region of Illinois and so I grew up loving the St. Louis Cardinals. Following high school, I enlisted in the U.S Army at the age 18 and served seven years as a Personnel Administration Sergeant. I am blessed to report that I have been married 22 years to my high school sweetheart and together we share two boys 19 and 14. After completing my general studies at Columbia College, I went on to graduate from Lee University with a Bachelor's Degree in Christian Studies. I have also trained in Radio Broadcasting and even spent time as an On-Air talent in Texas. For the past 12 years, I have served as an ordained minister with the Church of God organization. In my free time, I enjoy lifting weights, painting, playing the trumpet at church, writing, and spending time with my family.



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