

# Gateway Gazette

November/December 2019

Volume 52 Number 6



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

Gateway Chapter



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

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**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

Gateway Chapter

## *Time to update your address or email?*

Please email us at [info@gatewaypva.org](mailto:info@gatewaypva.org) or write or call us at the following:  
Gateway Chapter PVA • 1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center • St. Louis, MO 63132  
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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](mailto:amber@gatewaypva.org), or Executive Director Chris Blanchard at [chris@gatewaypva.org](mailto:chris@gatewaypva.org), if you would like to start receiving your newsletter electronically.



*by Stanley D. Brown*

# President's Message

## Accessibility Achievement

### WE Served, Women Empowered

#### **ACCESSIBILITY NOT EASILY ACHIEVED**

Although we have the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many public places and government facilities remain problematic if not inaccessible. Changes often don't get made until complaints are filed by individuals or advocacy groups with the Department of Justice. The November PN magazine from PVA highlights on its cover the recently renovated Soldiers Memorial in downtown St. Louis. This final success culminates from a struggle I began 15 years ago in May 2004 when I got stuck on their make-shift lift that resembled a carnival ride. After filing a Department of Justice complaint under Title II of the ADA, the ramp was finally completed in November 2007. The interior of the building remained a problem in spacing and access to rooms/exhibits. The Missouri Historical Society took over the building in 2016, did a major renovation to include many accessible features and was selected for the PVA Barrier Free America Award in 2019 (the subject of the PN article). My luck with private public facilities has been less successful. Most recently I filed a Title III complaint in June 2019 with the Department of Justice over a bakery in Glendale, Missouri and a discount store in Rock Hill, Missouri, both suburbs of St. Louis. Neither building had automatic doors or buttons/plates to open the doors and the doors required greater pressure to open than is accepted by the ADA guidelines. I finally received a Department of Justice response dated October 25, 2019, that said "...we have decided not to take any further action on your complaint. Unfortunately, because the Section receives thousands

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of ADA complaints each year, we do not have the resources to resolve all of them." I will now see if any local or state agency will get involved.

#### **WE SERVED, WOMEN EMPOWERED**

More than 40 U.S. female veterans with a range of disabilities gathered for Paralyzed Veterans of America's WE Served, Oct. 3 to 6 in Crested Butte, Colo. The all-expenses-paid retreat featured workshops focused on holistic well-being and community-building in an inclusive, supportive environment. More than half of the attendees were Paralyzed Veterans of America members. Gateway PVA VP Rose Ganz attended for Gateway.

One of the female veterans attending WE Served is Tammy Jones, National Vice President of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Jones was one year into her service with the U.S. Air Force when a car accident left her with a broken neck. At only 19 years old, she was faced with the knowledge that she would never walk again.

Thirty-three years later, Jones has a unique perspective on what it's like to navigate the world as a disabled female veteran — and how Paralyzed Veterans of America has supported her along the way. This weekend, she will help lead WE Served, Paralyzed Veterans of America's first-ever event solely for women veterans with disabilities. "We want to be a voice for America's women veterans, who deserve the very best in health care, benefits, employment, accessibility and more," said Jones. "When disabled women veterans don't feel comfortable or

welcomed within the VA — for example, because the women's health clinics aren't wheelchair-accessible or because they have experienced sexual trauma there — that poses a serious barrier to their well-being."

WE Served is part of Paralyzed Veterans of America's wider initiative to address the specific needs of women veterans with disabilities. Jones serves on its Anita Bloom Women Veterans Health Committee, named for a paralyzed woman veteran, and has been advocating on Capitol Hill to highlight the unique health care needs of women veterans with spinal cord injuries and diseases. Paralyzed Veterans of America's employment program, PAVE, also specializes in helping minority female veterans and other constituencies who have historically faced higher rates of unemployment and underemployment. "Women tend to fight their personal battles alone. When we take care of ourselves, we're better able to speak up and give back," Jones added. "WE Served is a step toward empowering women veterans to ask for the benefits and care we deserve."

Currently, there are 2 million women veterans living in the U.S., and women are the fastest growing demographic in both the military and veteran population. Female veterans using the VA often have complex health care needs such as post-traumatic stress disorder due to war-related trauma and sexual trauma, mental health care, and substance use disorders — services that, on average, they use at higher rates and more often than male veterans.

*by Liz Deakin, PVA Communications*

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# Five Things You Need to Know about sharing your health information

*by Brent Follas, National Service Officer III*

- 1.** The VA MISSION Act allows VA to now share your health information with participating community care providers for your care and treatment as permitted by federal privacy laws. You do not have to take any action unless you choose not to share your health information electronically.
- 2.** Rest assured. Your health information is safe and secure as it moves from VA to participating community care providers. VA uses a secure network called the Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE) to protect and easily share in real-time your health information.
- 3.** Sharing your health information saves you time, and improves your health. By having all of your information available, your providers will have a more complete picture of your health history to better inform treatment decisions.
- 4.** You can always opt out of sharing your information. If you don't want to share your health information electronically, complete and return VA Form 10-10164 (Opt Out of Sharing) to the Release of Information (ROI) Office at your VA Medical Center or by mail. If a community care provider requests your records in an emergency, information will be shared even if you have opted out of sharing. Traditional paper forms of health information sharing will remain available regardless of your preference to share or not share electronically. If you opted out of sharing, but change your mind, you can opt back in and authorize VA to share your health information by completing and returning VA Form 10-10163 (Opt In for Sharing) to your ROI Office or by mail.
- 5.** There is no deadline to submit your Form 10-10164. You can submit your Form 10-10164 at any time. If you submitted Form 10-0484 before September 30, 2019, you do NOT need to submit Form 10-10164.

# Trout Lodge Adventures

*by Rusty Ezzell, Gateway Member*

**I** would like to invite all that haven't made it to the Trout Lodge outing in Potosi, Missouri, to come next year. It was a wonderful event on a beautiful weekend in September. The weather was perfect and I personally had a blast. I wanted to take this time to thank all the volunteers that came to help out. At any given time there were plenty of people to help you. They helped with getting you fitted with a ski, helped you get into and out of the water - basically helped with any and all of the needs of the Vets that attended.

I would like to thank Jennifer Hahn, her husband Patrick, and of course their wonderful kids for coming out with all the kayaks. Jennifer and Patrick are part of a wonderful organization called Team River Runner. They help disabled individuals learn how to kayak. They came in from Decatur and brought all the kayaks, paddles, and life vests to give us a taste of life on the water. If you have never tried it, you should. It is very relaxing as well as a great workout. Of course I would be a jerk if I didn't mention Jen's mom, I just call her mom. She was there writing in all the names and getting folks where they needed to be and on time. I can see where Jen gets the energy from. I will be volunteering with them on November 17, helping them teach instructors about adaptive kayaking. It is so much fun!

I would like to thank Charley and Jodi as well. Those two have a never ending supply of energy and patience that goes beyond understanding. They bring the boat, they supply the fuel, and they drag us around the lake for two solid days. I personally crash a lot on my skis, so for them to keep starting and stopping all the time is truly amazing. With the help of Matt, who also has a never ending supply of both energy and patience, we get to experience water skiing and tubing. They spend the days picking us up, putting us back into our skis, and helping us enjoy what it's like to tread on the water. They spend months getting the site ready, making all the contacts not only there but with all of us, and then the days there running around helping all who are in need. Without their tireless energy and drive to keep coming up with amazing things for us to do during the year, we all would be very bored.

Of course I can't forget the PVA for being so gracious as to help pay for our weekend. It is truly a wonderful organization that I'm very proud to be a member. If you know someone that qualifies to be a member you should get them signed up right away. It has helped so many vets get out of their proverbial shells and enjoy life. To experience things that you wouldn't normally get to see or do. From Aspen to the Summer Games, from help in your homes to getting vehicles, it's truly a Godsend for so many of us vets!!

So in a nut shell, I wanted to thank everyone that made Trout Lodge a huge success in my eyes. I had a fun and relaxing weekend due mostly in part to all the volunteers and staff that showed up that weekend in September!! If you haven't been, you really need to get out there next year. Leave your fears and second thoughts at home and experience what life has to offer. I promise you that you won't forget it anytime soon.



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# GATEWAY GI

## General Information



### NOVEMBER 2019

**November 2 to 3-**  
Georgia Aquarium Dive

**November 9 -**  
Veterans Day Parade  
@ St. Louis, MO  
10 pts for members

**November 11 -**  
OFFICE CLOSED

**November 12-**  
BOD Meeting  
11:30am @ GPVA Office  
15 pts for non-BOD mbrs

**November 21 -**  
JB Luncheon  
12pm @ JB, Building 52  
5 pts for members

**November 28 to 29 -**  
OFFICE CLOSED

### DECEMBER 2019

**December 10-**  
Holiday Party  
11:30 am @ Gateway Office  
5 pts for members

**December 19 -**  
JB Luncheon  
12pm @ JB, Building 52  
5 pts for members

**December 19 -**  
Qtrly Membership Mtg  
Following Luncheon  
@ JB, Building 52  
15 pts for members

**December 24 to 25 -**  
OFFICE CLOSED

**December 31 -**  
OFFICE CLOSED





## Welcome to Our New Members

Wilfred Benware • Donald Crabtree • William Lytton • Todd Prehm

## In Memory Of

George McManus of St. Peters, MO	05/2013
James McDonald of St. Louis, MO	07/17/19
William Auvenshine of Morrisonville, IL	08/31/19
George Smith of Kansas City, MO	09/09/19
William Beard of Holden, MO	09/11/19

## Veterans Day Parade

If you are interested in participating in the Veterans Day Parade, we will gather around 11am on Saturday, November 9, on Olive Street in downtown St. Louis, between Tucker (12th) and 13th. We finish the parade around Market and 20th Street (free lunch for those who attend). We encourage you to park around that area and roll down to the parade starting point for us. For everyone that is in a manual wheelchair, there will be Gateway Air Force ROTC cadets that will help push you if you get tired.

## Gateway Holiday Party

The Gateway Chapter is hosting a holiday party at the Gateway office on Tuesday, December 10. We will provide food, snacks and drinks. All are welcome to attend. The party will start at 11:30am and will end around 2pm. We hope to see you there!

# We proudly support Gateway PVA



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 is more than two years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion.

## St. Louis North

9389 Natural Bridge Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63134  
Local: (314) 989-1010  
Toll-Free: 877.501.8267

## St. Louis South

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Fenton, MO 63026  
Local: (314) 292-5150  
Toll-Free: 877.501.8267



**We're here to help!**

**Call us today or stop by and take a test drive.**



*Proud Supporters of the*



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**





# **Kim's Korner**

*by Kim Vonder Haar, LCSW*

We at SCI are aware that many of you are still having issues with the bowel and bladder program. We have received almost all the NPI numbers and veteran's care agreements back from those caregivers signed up for the program, and it is much appreciated.

As I have heard from many of you, payment for bowel and bladder continues to be delayed, and there is a high degree of frustration when you are calling the customer support line, 314-894-6603. We have shared your concerns and frustrations, and suggest you call the patient advocate at 314-652-4100 ext. 65712, 53901. We had a recent visit from the National PVA office and were told this was a nationwide problem. We were told that you shouldn't call until 45 days after you submit your time card, as that is how long they have to process it. I will try and help whenever possible but have limited access to many of the business office practices and/or systems.

For those of you who have worked with Charlotte Coleman, our wound care nurse, she retired on October 25 and is moving to Florida. We wish her the best on this new journey.

Parking permits continue to be available for the spaces in front of Building 52 marked with RED signs. Please see the clinic staff or me if you need a permit. They can also be used in SCI spaces at John Cochran. They are laying asphalt on the new parking lot directly in front of Building 52, so hopefully we will have more spaces to use soon.

We have more and more veterans coming from our spoke sites for first time visits, and they are very impressed by the services offered. Please continue to spread the word about SCI services at the VA and let's try and capture some of those vets who have never heard of the program. You are our best advertisement and appreciate all the support you give us.

Make sure you are notifying the clinic or social worker when you are in an outside hospital, so we can put a note in your medical record. This will hopefully prevent getting hospital bills from outside hospitals for VA covered stays. We are still learning about the MISSION Act and will provide information as we get it.

Thanks, and call with suggestions for topics, questions, etc. 314-652-4100 ext. 64819.



## Paralyzed Veterans of America

Gateway Chapter

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St. Louis, MO 63132

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