# **GATEWAY GAZETTE**

The Official Publication of the Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America



National PVA President Randy Pleva presenting Most Improved Chapter award to Gateway Chapter President Stan

### National PVA BOD held in St. Louis

On August 13 the National PVA Board of Directors meeting got kicked off at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown St. Louis. In attendance was Gateway's National Director/President, Stan Brown, Vice President Matt Wilcox, Sports Director Bobby Jackson, and Treasurer Dennis Durrwachter.

Special guests included Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson, who delivered the keynote address on Tuesday. During the week Paralyzed Veterans' members heard year-end reports from each department within the organization, evaluated budget requests and elected its Executive Committee for 2008. Randy Pleva was again elected President.

During the awards presentation on behalf of the chapter, President Brown accepted the award which is presented to the Host Chapter and more importantly the award for Most Improved Chapter of fiscal year 2006 from National PVA President Randy Pleva. The PVA fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30. In presenting the

Most Improved Chapter award President Pleva noted that the Chapter received the award for it's dramatic financial turnaround and vast improvement in chapter provided services in fiscal year 2006. Due to greatly reduced income and reserve financial resources Gateway had been on the brink of being forced into a monitoring status by the National PVA. At the end of calendar year 2005 the chapter had less than 30,000 dollars on hand. Significant reductions were made in the Gateway staff and program expenditures. Gateway also sold their longtime chapter offices at 9040 Lackland Avenue and relocated to a less expensive leased space just west of that location at 9738 Lackland Avenue. For more information regarding the Convention see the National Director's report on page 5.

### Inside...

President's Report Attaboy Bob Larkin Speaks Hospital Liaison And much more! Stan Brown Ruth Kult Bob Larkin Matt Wilcox

# **Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America** http://www.gatewaypva.org

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**Gateway PVA** 9738 Lackland Road St. Louis, MO. 63114 (800) 426-4058 (314) 427-0393 FAX (314) 427-4183

### Missouri Shared Tax Credit

By Bonnie Hilburn, SNSO, Kansas City, MO Just in case some of you may not be aware of the Missouri's Shared Care Tax Credit. I wanted to pass the information along so that we can help inform families. This tax credit is available to individuals who are providing care to another individual who is 60 years old or more and that (1) isn't on Medicaid (2) lives in the same home and (3) are not paid to provide care for that individual through any other source. Spouses, children, or a significant others may be eligible if they are uncompensated caregivers for someone with a catastrophic disability. This tax break could reduce their tax burden by \$500 per year. The following link can provide more information: http://www.dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/sct.htm

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### **Burial in a National Cemetery**

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our 125 national cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family.

The material contained herein expresses the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or the Gateway Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America. All material in the Gazette may be reprinted unless specifically prohibited. Readers are encouraged to submit their articles or rebuttals to:

ddurrwachter@gatewaypva.org or in the US mail at address shown to the left and mark with attention to the editor.

# **President's Report**

By Stan Brown

Healthcare continues to dominate the chapter and my attention. In my last newsletter message, I mentioned our national PVA site visit recommendations concerning John Cochran Hospital. Although we've not received a formal response from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, all indications are that the recommendations to set up a five bed SCI unit at John Cochran, complete with occupational therapy and physical therapy, are going to be accepted. Matt Wilcox and I have been shown the area of the seventh floor of that hospital that will be renovated



to accomplish this recommendation. We have told both our national PVA representatives and Congressional delegates, the establishment of a special SCI unit at John Cochran should not be viewed as an acceptable precursor to moving the entire SCI unit from Jefferson Barracks.

In my April message I revealed what I had learned after discovering the existence of the VA's patient satisfaction surveys of medical centers. Pursuing my Freedom of Information Act request for over two months, I finally received the fiscal year 2006 Survey of Health Expectancies of Patients (SHEP) for 21 of the 23 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). In total there were 132 VA medical centers/clinics reporting results. These inpatient surveys were administered throughout the hospital but the vast majority of responses came from three areas: All Bed Sections, Medicine, and Surgery. There were 9, 10, and 10 satisfaction categories respectively for these three areas. A strong argument can be made that John Cochran Hospital had the worst patient satisfaction scores for fiscal year 2006 of all the 132 VA medical centers/clinics reporting. For the first six months of fiscal year 2006, John Cochran was the only VA Medical Center to have the most or next to most, "significantly worse than the national average" patient satisfaction scores in the areas of All Bed Sections, Medicine, and Surgery. For the second six months of fiscal year 2006, John Cochran was the only VA Medical Center to have eight or more "significantly worse than the national average" patient satisfaction scores in these three major survey areas. I've also just received pursuant to another FOIA request, the SHEP survey results for the first six months of fiscal year 2007 for VISN 15 which includes John Cochran Hospital. The patient satisfaction scores are actually worse. In the three main areas of All Bed Sections, Medicine, and Surgery, every single one (29 possible) of the patient satisfaction responses in the categories surveyed, were "significantly worse than the national average." I have consistently stated dramatic, non-VA, intervention is required. In the interim, a special SCI unit with a stable, trained, staff is a start.

With this newsletter you should be receiving a ballot if you are a member. I would encourage you to vote. As I write this newsletter message, we are sending out the baseball tickets to the Cardinals team September 16. I'm pleased to say that everyone who responded in writing is receiving tickets. Here's hoping you enjoyed the summer and survived in good health the scorching heat of the last days of August in the St. Louis area. The chapter has just completed a year of a three-year office lease in our present location. This next year we need to begin thinking about buying property and renovating for our chapter office. Any suggestions would be welcomed.

### Shingles Vaccine Available to VA Patients

Nicholson: Single Inoculation Provides Protection

WASHINGTON—A vaccine for shingles, which Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers helped develop, is available to veterans who are patients at VA medical facilities nationwide.

"Shingles can seriously degrade the quality of life for those who suffer from this disease," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "Offering this vaccine to our patients is further evidence of VA's commitment to provide world-class health care to America's veterans.

"VA will continue research that leads to real-life solutions like the distribution of this shingles vaccine for patients at VA facilities across the country," Nicholson added.

VA physicians will offer the vaccine to patients with appropriate medical conditions, usually those who are 60 years of age or older and have healthy immune systems. A single dose of the vaccine offers protection against shingles, which is scientifically named Herpes Zoster.

VA researchers and patients from across the country participated in studies which led to the vaccine's approval by the Food and Drug Administration. The vaccine is available immediately to those who are recommended for the treatment.

### **Attaboy**

By Ruth Kult

Hello all you fantastic guys and gals. I have come once again to praise another good and well-deserving person with an in-house honor. This person believe it or not is a volunteer of his own time to help provide transportation to our members. I usually know the person or have seen the person I'm supposed to present this honor to. I may have seen this person and not even know that it was him.



The pleasure of giving an ATTABOY like this really brings a smile to my face. This great praise goes to one **Richard Bishop**. He just turned 70 and is retired from Ralston Purina. Way before that he was in the ARMY during the Korean war. After the Army he decided that a higher education was a good choice for his occupational future, although a little birdie named Becky told me he is very talented and is a well-accomplished pianist. The man has great staying power and believes in commitment. He has been married to his beloved wife Pat for 51 years. He along with another volunteer by the name of Jim Gooderun are volunteer van drivers working for the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Gateway Chapter. These two came to volunteer when there was not a single soul that showed any interest. However, I as well as most of you, know Ms. Rebecca Ballard. She came through with a nominee for us again. Thank you Ms. Becky. We all know Becky is an honest and a very trustworthy person. Her word is like gold and you can take that to the bank. Not knowing Mr. Bishop, but knowing Becky's honest opinion of someone is good enough for me.

I know he brings one or more of our PVA member's in on Wednesday. This alone earns the man this honor. If even one person is able to get out of their house and out of their normal everyday atmosphere for just a few hours to break the monotony of the day then something worthwhile has been accomplished. This should make the whole idea of being a volunteer worth its weight in gold. I know there are many organizations out there in need of volunteers but he chose us. How cool is that.

Becky is grateful I'm sure for the all help people give her. She told me Mr. Bishop goes on his own accord out onto the back patio and waters the plants. He often brings his own supplies from home to tend to the garden. How awesome is that. I assume he knows about gardening some. I think this because I hear he has his Masters in Agricultural administration. Also I hear that Dick's wife Pat is a Real Estate salesperson. If anyone needs some help in that area you might want to contact him.

I wish things like his gesture of kindness would be an every day occurrence everywhere, unfortunately, it is not. I guess we need to look good fortune in the face and be grateful he's who he is. Once again the sunny side of life is shining through.

Thanks for reading.

# **Bob Larkin Speaks**

By Bob Larkin

America tried to send this message to our leaders, "fix the problems with Iraq". It has been broke for a long time. Secure our borders, we are at too great a risk. Put aside your differences and get some work done. Watching the recent debates I have realized something. This message is falling on deaf ears. These people are incredible. Almost traitors in my



eyes. Making statements like they do is giving the terrorist hope that they will win. If there is any part of the war we are losing, it is because of liberals.

If this country were united in our opposition to the terrorist instead of Bush, we might have crushed the terrorist long ago. But just like Viet Nam, these liberal idiots hurt our cause, hurt our military and much of the blood should be placed on their hands. If I am playing a football game and I hear the other team fighting amongst themselves, I know that they will be much easier to defeat. Isn't that common sense?

The thing that is really scary is that these liberals want us to lose. They would rather lose the war so they can get rid of Bush and get in power. They don't care about the success of this country or the military. The worst possible thing for them is if we beat the terrorist. I know that sounds crazy but their hatred for George Bush makes them want him out at the expense of what is best for our country.

I say to everyone, make yourself aware. Then make them aware. Call your Representative, write your Senator, and vote your heart.

# **National Director's Report**

By Stan Brown

We have just completed a successful PVA Annual Convention (61st) in downtown St. Louis. It was the week of August 13-18 and St. Louis experienced temperatures over 100° each day. On the first day Gateway board members Matt Wilcox, Bobbie Jackson, and Dennis Durrwachter came to the opening ceremonies where our chapter received the Host Chapter award and more importantly the Most Improved Chapter Award. There are 34 PVA chapters



across the country and Puerto Rico. I submitted our nomination based upon the difficult and dramatic turnaround from our financial and program crisis in the fall of 2005. Bob Larkin came for the NASCAR investment discussions.

The National Board of Directors, through a weighted voting process, returned the same officers for 2008 that were elected in 2007, with the exception of one Vice President Liaison. The returning officers are: Randy Pleva-President, Gene Crayton-Senior Vice President, Craig Enenbach-Treasurer, and Carl Flemmons-Secretary. Gateway's Vice President Liaison, Greg Joyce, was not returned as a vice president. Not commenting on anyone else's qualifications, Greg's departure is a big loss for PVA and Gateway in particular.

In addition to approving a \$40 million budget, the National Board considered several important resolutions. The Board thankfully voted to discontinue our contract with BAM Racing for sponsoring a NASCAR entry. Although it passed by a 3/4 majority initially in April 2007, I and a few others were against it in the beginning. We also voted down at this convention an expensive two-year venture with the Richard Petty race-car team and instead approved funding for a market study and research of the NASCAR market and our place, if any, in that market. The Board again failed to pass with a required 2/3 majority, the concept of "one chapter-one vote," where each chapter gets one vote and PVA avoids concentrating voting power with the size of a chapter's membership. I've been in favor of the change and would be glad to share my thoughts with you in person. Please feel free to contact me for a complete list of resolutions and as always, I welcome your comments.

# Membership meeting and Elections at Jefferson Barracks Thursday, September 20, 11:30

### **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 us or Email us if you know where any of these members are! Contact info is on page 2.

Downs, Garry W Marrone, Karen A Reese, Joe Washpun, Odell Fuqua, William McConaghy, Robert Salyer, Dale White, Eric D Horras, Phillip W Nibarger, Robert W Sullivan-McGuire, James Williams, James E

Lauderdale, Charles T Radecki, Raymond J Turner, John E

Please have someone contact the Chapter in the event of a member's death so that we can inform other members who might wish to pay respects to the departed.

# *In memory of....*



Scarbrough, Gerald L High Ridge, MO 03/19/2007 Reid, Charles E Blackwell, OK 05/09/2007 Harward, William B St. Louis, MO 05/24/2007 Maxwell, Darrell L Saint Petersburg, FL 05/29/2007 Ozburn, Donald E Raytown, MO 06/05/2007 Dunscombe, Norman R St. Louis, MO 07/08/2007 Cook, Terry L Sikeston, MO 07/19/2007 Mehrle, Richard E St. Charles, MO 07/19/2007



# **Hospital Liaison Report**

**By Matt Wilcox** 

The PVA National Convention was in St. Louis the week of August 13-17. President Randy Pleva and Past President Joe Fox came in early and met with Stan and I at John Cochran. We toured 6 North and the MICU unit and talked with its nurse manager. He explained what procedures were when they had a SCI inpatient. We later talked with the



Medical Center Administrator and he explained what they have planned for the "SCI Satellite Unit" there. For now the plan is to set up the five room unit on the seventh floor South unit. When it comes to staffing we want to make sure they do not take away from the SCI Center and leave them short. It has to be a separate unit with extra staff!

After the opening ceremonies at the convention both of them in their opening statement informed the conventioneers of the seriousness at John Cochran and how it is going to be a major concentration.

At the awards ceremony Gateway Chapter won the *Most Improved Chapter*. To receive this it took some drastic actions as far as positions and personnel shuffling. Some people still disagree with those calls. But in the long run it will improve our service to the membership.

# BATEMAY PLACETIONS Don't forget to send in your Vote!



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### Improved accessibility in air travel?

# 787 Dreamliner



When Boeing's newest airplane, the all-new 787 Dreamliner, enters service in 2008, passengers will experience a more comfortable flight because of enhanced accessibility features. "We analyzed accessibility issues passengers face on today's airplanes and incorporated advancements to better accommodate passengers of all ages and capabilities," said Mike Bair, vice president and general manager of the 787 program. "These advancements, coupled with the Dreamliner's larger windows, bigger carry-on bins, lower cabin altitude and cleaner air, will ensure that everyone enjoys a better flying experience on the 787."

Boeing partnered with the National Center for Accessible Transportation at Oregon State University to research accessibility improvements. As part of the research, Boeing engineers who design interiors were placed in simulated environments to better understand accessibility issues faced by persons with mobility, sensory and cognitive disabilities. In addition, the team worked with individuals with these disabilities to verify improvements.

Virtually all aspects of the Dreamliner's interior enhance passenger comfort. For example, all lavatories aboard the 787 Dreamliner feature universally designed interior and exterior door handles that are more intuitive and enable easier access by passengers with limited hand agility. Assist-handles installed in all lavatories are easier to grip and offer passengers better stability through improved design and location. "Touch less" features including faucets, toilet flushing and waste flaps can be activated by infrared sensors in addition to their traditional mechanical operation, making them easier to use.

Boeing is offering two wheelchair-accessible lavatories on the Dreamliner, each with significant advancements. The 56-inch longitudinal lavatory repositions the entryway door and toilet to provide extra usable space and makes it easier for passengers to reach and use the facilities.

A 56-inch by 57-inch convertible lavatory includes a movable center wall that allows two separate lavatories to become one large, wheelchair-accessible facility. Other wheelchair-accessible lavatory improvements include an additional toilet flush button on the sink cabinet and a fold-down assist bar to aid independent transfers.

Additional enhancements are sprinkled throughout the airplane. Exterior assist handles are better positioned to accommodate passengers of all heights and levels of mobility. Overhead stowage bins are easier to reach, and latches work whether they are pushed or pulled, eliminating uncertainty. Bigger closets are offered that enable personal wheelchair stowage in the passenger cabin, while special closet features will better secure the wheelchair. As on current airplanes, aisle seats will have movable arm rests that offer passengers with disabilities easier access to their seats. "Boeing is making an ongoing effort to identify opportunities to improve the flying experience," said Bair. "The 787 Dreamliner will set a new industry standard for accessibility on airplanes." Cabin interior width is approximately 18 feet at armrest, and was increased by 1 inch over what was originally planned. The 787's interior cabin width is a full 15 in greater than that of the Airbus A330 and A340.

The internal cabin pressure will be increased to the equivalent of 6000 feet altitude instead of the 8000 feet on conventional aircraft. According to Boeing, in a joint study with Oklahoma State University, this will significantly improve passenger comfort. Higher humidity in the passenger cabin is possible because of the use of composites (which do not corrode). Cabin air is provided by electrically driven compressors using no engine bleed air. An advanced cabin air-conditioning system provides better air quality: Ozone is removed from outside air; HEPA filters remove bacteria, viruses and fungi; and a gaseous filtration system removes odors, irritants and gaseous contaminants.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner provides operators with a more efficient commercial jetliner. Using 20 percent less fuel per passenger than similarly sized airplanes, the 787 is designed for the environment with lower emissions and quieter takeoffs and landings. One third of the efficiency gain will come from the engines, another third from aerodynamic improvements and the increased use of lighter weight composite materials and the final third from advanced systems. The 787 features lighter weight construction. Its materials (by weight) are: 50% composite, 20% aluminum, 15% titanium, 10% steel, 5% other. Composite materials are significantly lighter and stronger than traditional aircraft materials, making the 787 a very light aircraft for its capabilities. Each 787 contains approximately 35 tons of carbon fiber reinforced plastic, made with 23 tons of carbon fiber. Regarding advanced systems, the most notable contribution to efficiency is the electric architecture which replaces bleed air and hydraulic power with electrically powered compressors and pumps.









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Noon to 6 p.m.

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### 1st Annual Sweat with the Vets 5K run/walk/roll

By Becky Ballard

Some came to run, some came to walk, others came to roll but they all joined forces on August 4th to raise funds for the 2007 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival at the first annual "Sweat with the Vets" 5K run/walk/roll.

And sweat they did as temperatures soared into the high 90's over 150 of the 250 of the registered participants braved the heat to take part in the run that traversed the beautiful rolling hills of Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center. The run was the dream of chair-person Jean Ferguson. She combined her passions, running and helping veterans, into a winning formula that brought together veterans, employees and the general public for a very worthy event.

The event sponsored by Enterprise Bank, Gateway Chapter PVA and Gray Eagle Distributors raised over \$3,000.00. Funds will benefit the veterans that are attending the Festival on October 28 (See ticket information below). Dr Nathan Ravi, COS, thanked all of the participants at the award ceremony and added the he would like to make this a yearly event. It not only benefited veterans but brought about community awareness and contributed to the goals of the MOVE program.

We thank PVA for their support, James Spencer and Rose Ganz for participating and for inviting the wheelchair track club. Both went home medal winners! We hope to see more of you at the event next year.

#### 2007 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The 50-piece art exhibit will open at 12:30 p.m. in the theatre lobby and the stage show performance will start at 2:00 p.m. Veterans can obtain **complimentary tickets** (free of charge) for the stage show performance while tickets are available by calling (341) 894-6530 or writing to Becky Ballard at the below address.

Return by October 15, 2007 to: Becky Ballard

2007 NVCAF 128 J/B #1 Jefferson Barracks Dr St. Louis, Mo. 63125

Include the following information:

Name, Return address

Phone number, and number of tickets required.



September 2007									
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
						1			
2	3 Labor Day Office Closed	4	5	6 Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30	7	8			
9 Elks Veteran's Appreciation Day 12 to 6	Golf Tournament 11:00	BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	12	13	14	15			
16	17	18	19	20 Member- ship mtg Elections JB 11:30	Final Trap Shoot 10:00	22			
23 30	24	25	26	27	28	29			

October 2007										
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday				
	1	2	3	4	5 Lone Elk Park 10:30 to 2:30	6				
7	8	9 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30	10	Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30	12	13				
14	15	16	17	18 Halloween Party JB	19 Newsletter Articles due	20				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27				
28 National Vets Creative Arts Festival	29	30	31 Halloween							

# Address Service Requested

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St. Louis, MO 63114



Opening Ceremonies at the National PVA Annual Meeting held at the Renaissance hotel in St. Louis.



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