

# GATEWAY GAZETTE

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

## TEAM ST. LOUIS - AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE BY MATT LUITJOHAN

We had another successful year at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in beautiful Spokane, WA. Twelve athletes attended with us this year and although there were no novices we had several competing in events for the first time! We brought back a few broken wheelchairs along with **7 Gold, 4 Silver, and 5 Bronze medals**. Doug Barnes did great in the Slalom event, winning a Bronze medal. He was inspirational to watch as he persevered over challenging obstacles. **The Great Britain Team was so impressed that they honored him with the Endeavor Award at Closing Ceremonies.** Way to go, Doug! Ed Caldwell had some issues with his power chair and was in a manual chair for the majority of his events, however still persevered. He attempted Air Guns not only for the first time, but without his orthotic seat back. Charlie Dean entered the 100 Meter Race and competed against athletes who utilized racing chairs. He was not deterred; he pushed his chair as hard as he could, winning the Silver medal. Dennis Durrwachter did great in all of his events while still finding time to train for his Handcycling event daily. At the end of the Handcycling event Dennis was given a new nickname; so if you see him just call him "7." I'll leave it to all of you to find out why! Terri Fuda came back our most decorated athlete with five medals. Over the last year she has been training very hard for Swimming: her hard work paid off by winning the Gold! Bob Kiger had a great deal of problems with his power chair, throughout every leg of our trip something else broke. It didn't stop him from breaking a world record though...while his chair was being held together with zip ties and duct tape during the Slalom, he knocked down 29 cones. However, Bob smoked his competitors in the Power Chair 220 adding another Gold medal to his collection. (Continued on Page 9)



Pictures from the 29th NVWG Games, including Team St. Louis (bottom left) and Dennis Durrwachter and Coach Jean Ferguson (below).



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## Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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**St. Louis, MO 63114**  
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**Fax (314) 427-4183**

*All Gave Some.....  
.....Some Gave All*

**POW \* MIA**  
**Recognition Ceremony**  
**Friday, September 18, 2009**  
**10:00am**  
**Soldiers Memorial**  
**1315 Chestnut Street**  
**St. Louis, MO 63103**

*This event is open to the public.*

### “Shoot for the Gold” Trapshoot September 18, 2009

Hey everyone! Come to Olin Trap & Skeet Facility in East Alton, IL, on Friday, September 18, for our last shoot of the season. There will be food, prizes, and trophies given to the best of the best! The trapshoots are sponsored by the Paralyzed Veterans of America each year. Come see what makes this event a blast!



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:

**[editor@gatewaypva.org](mailto:editor@gatewaypva.org)** or in the US mail at the address shown to the left and send to the attention of the editor.



## President's Report

By Stan Brown



### *Membership Involvement*

I've recently read two other PVA Chapter President's columns in their newsletters basically berating membership for not being more involved. Although I can share these other presidents' discontent not having greater membership involvement, I'm not sure I'm ready to blame anyone. Until I have "walked (I wish) in your shoes," who am I to judge. The only time I really get "judgmental" is when one of our members starts to complain about not having enough participation points for receiving Gateway funding. We offer so many activities and events to get involved, even if they stay at home and make survey calls, that there really are no excuses. We have three important events coming up in September: 1) Shoot for the Gold season ending trapshoot in Alton on **September 18**; 2) Monthly luncheon and membership meeting (elections) on **September 17**; and 3) PVA/Jack Buck Memorial golf tournament (our biggest fundraiser) on **September 22** (worth 20 points). We are slowly but surely doing our membership surveys by phone. Although it's early, it looks evident to me we need to find a way to get members who live outside of the St. Louis area, more involved. I would welcome your suggestions. We are now meeting twice a year in Kansas City. Would a meeting in your part of the state be worthwhile?

### *Annual Evaluations*

I would like to encourage members to do two things when it comes to their annual evaluation or physical: 1) schedule and keep the appointment; and 2) get the evaluation at the Robert Woolsey SCI unit with the SCI/D trained medical staff at Jefferson Barracks. Everyone in a wheelchair should be examined at least once a year; ambulatory members with spinal cord injury or disease likewise should have an annual evaluation. Less than half our membership is getting their annual evaluations at the Jefferson Barracks Spinal Cord Unit. I've heard two reasons why not. It's too far to travel, and the trip costs too much. I'm working with the VA to address those issues. If you remain an outpatient, even if your evaluation takes more than one day, I believe we can cover the costs of your trip and provide overnight lodging. I only say "believe" because we are still working out what our chapter will pay and what the VA will pay or provide. VA reimbursement is complicated and varies with disability rating, income level, pension status, and other factors. As President of the Gateway Chapter, I can tell you that if you want to have your annual evaluation done at the Jefferson Barracks SCI unit, we'll find a way to make this happen. If you are not service-connected with your injury or disease, and you are admitted as an inpatient, there may be substantial copayments, depending on your means test. We are working on keeping even two-day stays to be on an outpatient basis and provide lodging. Those veterans who are subject to a co-pay would hopefully have only a nominal charge for outpatient care. Please call your assigned VA SCI social worker to discuss what assistance you might need and to schedule your next annual evaluation at the Jefferson Barracks SCI unit.

### *Free Disabled Seats and Pit Passes October 8 Tri-City Speedway Midget Race Car Nationals*

One of our members, active in the midget race car circuit, is going to provide some free seats and pit passes for the October 8, 2009, nationals being held in Granite City, Illinois, at the Tri-City Speedway. The races will be on Thursday, October 8, in the evening. We hope to get both inpatients and outpatients to this event. Please call our office if you are interested in receiving tickets.

### *End of Fiscal Year 2009*

By the time you receive this newsletter, fiscal year 2009 will be closing in a few weeks (at the end of September). When I think of the term "fiscal year," I always think of budgets. With that in mind, I want to tell you the Chapter and its membership had another great year, with our revenue exceeding our expenses and the board investing the remainder into different institutions' FDIC insured money market accounts. After several months of looking, I believe we're close to purchasing a building, which we believe is a good investment given the depressed market prices in today's economic climate.

## “Attaboard”

By Ruth Kult



Hello Everyone!

Well it's that time again. Time again for the PVA members to have their opinions heard in electing the new Board of Directors for the Gateway Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans. Let's just hope that it isn't an instant replay of last year's sorry turnout of 25 votes. What a bad scene that was; 625 members and only 25 ballots returned. Come on now, we can do better than that.

Being on the board is an honor and not something to be taken lightly. I would like all of the current board members to take a moment to congratulate themselves for a job well done. The BOD has shown their generosity in volunteering their time and, for those who drive, using their own gas to come to all of the meetings during the year. They have also shown the dependability needed to attend the scheduled outings and events that come up during the year to represent their chapter. And, of course, there are those difficult decisions that they have had to make at the board meetings; placing the member's needs as the highest priority and always trying to do what is best for them no matter how unpopular it might be to some. Most of the current board will likely serve again, but there could be a few new faces this coming fiscal year. If there are, I'd like to be one of the first to congratulate them and let them know, with hard work comes great rewards.

Speaking of great rewards, this year was pretty special. One of our own outstanding board members received a special award. Yes, Dr. Robert Huskey received the PVA Cliff Crase Award, which honors exceptional members for dedicating themselves to the PVA mission and acting in a professional manner, with character and hard work. See what can happen with years of dedication, the courage to just be yourself, and the desire to help others?!?!

### *Way to go board – Keep up the good work!*

Broken record time folks. Okay, I'll be blunt and to the point. There absolutely needs to be more, very much more participation of everyone - not just board members. It isn't the responsibility of only board members, but of all the members to attend events. The participation shouldn't only be seasonal, but all year through. There are those you see a few months before the Winter Sports Clinic; then the participation is pretty much nonexistent once again until just before the Wheelchair games. That's when people seem to appear out of nowhere.

Apparently, many members think you get something for doing nothing. Just because recreational events like the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games or the Winter Sports Clinic isn't your cup of tea, it doesn't mean don't participate. Accumulate enough points and you can get pretty much “something for nothing” for mere participation. Gift cards can be given if enough points are accumulated. Members can get up to \$150 annually for dining out or entertainment. It's a no-brainer. Participation is the name of the game. So are you in?

Thanks for reading.

## 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 to us, or e-mail us if you know where any of these members are! Our contact info is on page 2. Thanks for your help!

Chapman, Flanagan  
Saighman, Donald

Lauderdale, Charles T.  
Snyder, Ron

Lowery, Samuel  
Washpun, Odell

Monahan, James M.  
Williams, Kenneth E.

## “Attagirl”

By Steve Spurgeon

I would really like to give a **BIG** Attaboy, or “Attagirl” in this case, for the writer of the Attaboy articles, Ruth Kult! She is the person who takes the time to write the Attaboys for the people she has met and for the people who are being praised by others. She is the first in line to praise another for their admirable actions. So it is time for her to be recognized.

Although I have only met Ruth once, I have read her Attaboys in every issue. I can see that she has great compassion for others. I spend most of my time at the Kansas City VA hospital, but I do talk to a lot of people and each has had a heartfelt story about Ruth.

Ruth not only writes the Attaboy articles, but she is extremely active with the PVA. She attends so many functions through the year that there is no way I could attempt to name them all. Those are just the things she does that you can see. Then, there are the cookies she brings to the board meetings for all to enjoy. There are the PVA members’ birthday cards that she personally stuffs and gets ready for the mail. But that isn’t all either - she takes the money out of her own pocket to get the stamps for those cards! This is all done on her own.

She also pays for a team at the Gateway Annual Jack Buck Golf Tournament. She bids on golf packages at the benefit auctions and gives them to her brothers to use. She goes to Jefferson Barracks and helps with the raffles that support the sports team. She even dresses up every year in full costume at the Jefferson Barracks Halloween parties. She brings joy to many SCI patients without even knowing it!



Last, but not least, she was chosen to represent the disabled on the special edition boxes of National Veterans Wheelchair Games Cheerios!

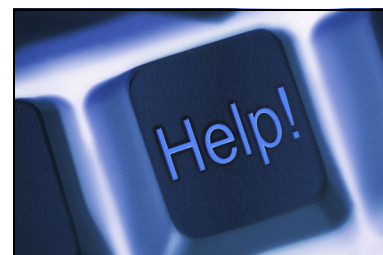
So, Ruth Kult, this Attaboy is for you—well deserved and past due! Keep up the great articles and know that you are very well thought of by all.

## Typing Hints

I would like to share something that just came to my attention from Randy Kiger, another PVA member. Like a lot of SCI people, I have a hard time typing. I don’t use an adaptive tool but have a hard time holding down the shift key and pushing the @ or any other symbol that is above the numbers; even using capital letters. This is called sticky keys. You simply push the shift key 5 times and a box will pop up asking if you want to turn on sticky keys. Click “yes.” After that when you want to use capital letters or the @ sign, just push the shift key and release it. The next letter will be a capital letter or the sign of your choice. It only works on one letter or symbol at a time then reverts back to regular until you push shift again. True one-finger typing! To turn it off, push the shift key down and hold it until you push any other letter. It’s very easy to turn off and on. Also, it beeps to remind you it’s in use.

Hope this can be helpful!

**Submitted by Steve Spurgeon**



## Important Election Insert Enclosed!

By Susan Lyle

Members:

The nominations for the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Gateway Chapter PVA Board of Directors have been received. It's now time to vote for the candidates that you feel will best represent your Chapter. The enclosed official election ballot has been embossed so that each member may only submit one form. Our return address is printed on the back of each ballot, so all you need to do is fold the ballot in thirds and mail it back to us. Your return address **MUST** be on the ballot so that we may verify your member status on our membership roster. This is a secret ballot and will not be opened until our September 17 membership meeting at Jefferson Barracks VAMC. The meeting will be held in the day room after our monthly luncheon located in Building 52. If you prefer to hand-deliver your ballot, you may present it directly to the person(s) counting the votes during our quarterly membership meeting Thursday, September 17.

Please make an effort to send in your vote. Last year the response was poor and it is so important for every member to be involved in the decision of who will represent their Chapter. Let your voice be heard; make your election selection today! Thanks.

## Join us for the 5th Annual PVA/SCI Camp Penuel Camping Weekend and Fishing Tournament!

This will be a great weekend of camping, fishing, and boating at Camp Penuel in Ironton, MO.

Our outing will be held on September 11th and 12th. This year is going to be slightly different, though, with the main day/night being Friday instead of Saturday. Camp will be up and running at 10:00 AM on Friday and ending on Saturday. Anyone interested in attending or needing more information, please e-mail [matthew.luitjohan@va.gov](mailto:matthew.luitjohan@va.gov) or call 314-652-4100 ext. 66602.

*Meals and activities sponsored by the Paralyzed Veterans of America. In case of inclement weather, this event will be canceled.*

## Gateway Chapter PVA Wishes to Welcome the Following New Members:

Donald Allen—Ozark, MO

John Benwell—St. Louis, MO

Patrick England—Overland Park, KS

Robert Simmons—Carterville, MO

Daryl Arndt—Kansas City, MO

Edward Butler—Higginsville, MO

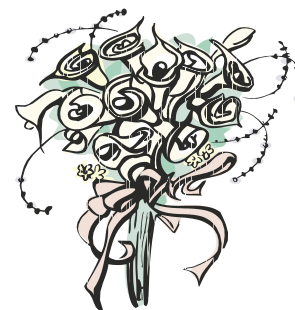
Anthony Hasting—Florissant, MO

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



### In memory of...

Francis Gardner	St. Louis, MO	07/18/2009
Robert McConaghy	Daytona Beach, FL	06/22/2009
Frank R. Pearce	Mexico, MO	05/08/2009
Mark E. Pilley	Independence, MO	02/02/2009
Ronald Schuchardt	St. Charles, MO	03/17/2009





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## Discovering Sled Hockey

By Tony Timmons



I know that it has been a few months since the Duke McDonald Wheelchair Games took place at VAMC Jefferson Barracks. However, I wanted to take this opportunity to share my thoughts about the event. This year's event was done in a much different format from previous years. Veterans, as well as non-veterans, took part in the different activities. I thought this was a significant change from the previous Games I witnessed because it helped to increase the competitive spirit of the Games.

I have only had the pleasure of witnessing four of the local wheelchair games so far in my young career with Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). However, in that time I have been thoroughly impressed by our veterans in their determination, spirit, fight and willingness to take part in these games and to participate to their utmost abilities. My daughter has accompanied me to three of those four Games. She is always moved by what she witnesses that she invites a friend to join us each year. This year my daughter and her friend assisted us in operating the "smell" portion of the Poker Run. They found it very interesting to learn how important a sense of smell is to people and how deceiving it can be sometimes.

The Games this year included having tables set up for vendors and organizations that cater to the disabled community. One of the organizations that caught my eye immediately was Disabled Athlete Sports Association (DASA). For anyone who knows me the reason was obvious, they had hockey equipment set up on their table. I am admittedly a huge hockey fan (and no, not the Blues). On the table they had a helmet, gloves, two sticks and a sled. I had seen pictures of sled hockey before in PVA's Sports N' Spokes magazine, but I had never seen the equipment in person or talked with someone who played sled hockey. I was fascinated to learn more.

Sled hockey is very similar to regular hockey, but instead of skating upright, the players sit on a specially designed tubular framed sled. The sled is approximately 4 – 5 feet long, sits about 3 inches off the ice and is mounted on two skates that sit beneath the seat. There is a portion of the front frame that rests on the ice to provide stability. Straps are placed around the ankles, knees and waist to secure the player to the sled. Two 1 ½ foot sticks are used to assist in propelling the sled along the ice. The sticks are modified hockey sticks with 4 cm teeth attached to the non-blade end and these "teeth" are what are used to drive into the ice and propel the sled. Leaning right or left, while digging the stick into the ice, turns the sled. The rest of the equipment is the same as normal hockey. Although, each player is required to wear a helmet with a full shield due to the sleds being closer to the ice surface and shooting area.

DASA is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1997 by physical therapist Kelly Behlmann. They recruit individuals 5 – 18 years old with permanent physical or visual disability who have difficulty participating in sports with non-disabled peers. Their athletes' disabilities vary from: hypotonia, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, amputee, visually impaired, etc. The majority of the hockey players that I spoke with are older than DASA's target group, but they are still just as much a part of DASA. In fact, the hockey team receives additional support from the Scottrade Center and the St. Louis Blues hockey team. They have members of their team who have tried out and made the Team USA Paralympics. However, do not let this be a deterrent to any of you in attending, or even trying to play, sled hockey.

The local team is looking for additional players, especially veterans. The players were really excited to learn of my connection with PVA and the possibility of spurring some interest in veterans to join them. My daughter and I have been to the O'Fallon, IL, Ice O'Plex a couple of times to watch the team's practices. The team's home facility is in Wentzville, MO. Like most all hockey leagues, they are presently on their summer break. In the past, I have emailed the Gateway Chapter dates and times of practices the team had during the summer, and I will do this again once the season starts up. Hopefully, I have sparked some interest with you readers to this exciting sport. Who knows, if some of you show up out there, I can get the team to suit me up too and I can join you on the ice. After all, I cannot be any worse sitting on my butt on the ice than I am standing on my feet on the ice!

Contact the closest PVA National Service Officer for more information or referrals.





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*(Continued from cover page)*

Bob Larkin had another great run in Quad Rugby this year and ended with the Bronze, way to go Bob! If anyone wondered where Bob was throughout the week, he was usually at the Convention Center cheering on fellow veterans. Earle Lester attended the Games for the second year and did wonderful in all of his events. Earle gets the award for longest travel (probably beating out athletes from Puerto Rico and Great Britain). The train ride to Spokane took 36 hours and the way home was 50 hours, that's almost 4 days of just traveling, WOW! Floyd Porter did great in all of his events and came very close to medaling in the Shot Put, Discus, and Javelin throws. Bill Skiles had a great game in Bowling and also came very close to medaling with a combined score of 409. LaRoy Smith entered the 100 Meter Track Race for the first time and did a wonderful job. He also brought the spectators to tears by dedicating his lifts in Weightlifting "To the LOVE of his life, Barbara." Aubrey was our media queen as she was interviewed more times than I have fingers and toes combined! She also attempted Basketball and did a fantastic job. Aubrey had the distinction of being the youngest female veteran at the Games this year. Amy, Jean, and I would like to say "Thank You" to all for being part of the team. We hope to have all of you that attended the Games, along with those of you who had to cancel, on board for the event next year in Denver, Colorado!



## Executive Director's Annual Message

By Susan Lyle

It has become a tradition for me to write an annual article to our readers around this time each year, so bear with me while I pour my heart out to you once again. I have been with the Gateway Chapter PVA for 4 years now and am thankful to be employed with such a wonderful organization. So many people are going through hardships during this recession and need our help more than ever. It's gratifying to be a part of a large network of incredible people who are always willing to help others in need. I really do mean INCREDIBLE, amazing volunteers, members, their families, and the donors who support our mission. I am grateful to our volunteer golf committee who works tirelessly to raise funds for our Veterans' programs each year. I feel blessed to have developed great relationships with our members, their families, and their caregivers while I serve them. Most of all, I am amazed by the connections that remain long after the service is over. One such example is the contact that I still have with the family of our late Vice President, Matt Wilcox. Matt's parents have endured so much, yet they still find time to keep in touch with me by email. Ralph & Weezie Wilcox even stop by our office on occasion, too; and may I say it's never empty-handed, either. Ralph is always making some peanut brittle or peanut butter cookies for us. They are truly great people and we love them!



Before I go, I want to thank all of my monthly luncheon helpers; especially those who help without fail - Charlie White, Marian & Rich Greathouse, and, of course, Matt Luitjohan & Amy Will. Thanks to all of our volunteers and donors who enrich the lives of our Gateway Chapter PVA members—God Bless!

## Upcoming Membership Event!


By Susan Lyle


Do you like to get out and enjoy the fresh air? Well, our Annual Lone Elk Park Picnic is just what you need! Mark your calendars for Friday, October 2, and spend some time with fellow members exercising your minds and bodies. For those of you who may want to Mapquest the site, Lone Elk Park is located at 450 Lone Elk Park Road, Valley Park, MO 63088 (Exit 272 and merge onto North Highway Drive). The picnic is once again being held at the White Tail Deer Shelter; upon entering the park take the road to the right of the lake as you descend the first big hill and follow the signs. There will be plenty of BBQ, side dishes, desserts and drinks, so come hungry! The picnic takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with lunch being served around noon. Please RSVP to me by September 20<sup>th</sup> so that I can get a head count for the food. Call the Gateway Chapter office at 314-427-0393.



Thanks so much and hope to see you there!



<i>September 2009</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day <i>Office Closed</i>	8 BOD Meeting Overland 11:30 AM	9	10 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	11 Annual Camp Penuel Fishing Event	12 Annual Camp Penuel Fishing Event JB Freedom Walk 9AM
13 ShowMe Aquatics BBQ 2-6 PM @ 2661 Veteran's Memorial Pkwy—St. Charles, MO	14 Election Ballots Due—Election on Thursday!	15	16	17 Luncheon & Membership Meeting @ JB- Noon, Bldg 52	18 "Shoot for the Gold" Trap Shoot 10AM @ Olin	19
20	21	22 14th Annual Jack Buck/PVA Golf Tournament	23	24	25 MidAmerica PVA Bass Tour Sept. 25-27 at Lake Keystone, Mannford, OK	26
27	28	29	30	Saturday, Sept. 12, Jefferson Barracks will be co-sponsoring their 1st Annual Freedom River Walk at 9 AM to honor those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001. Everyone will meet at the JB Park Overlook.		

<i>October 2009</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
				1	2 Annual Membership Picnic @ Lone Elk Park 10:30	3 Paraquad Assistive Tech Consumer Fair 10AM-4PM
4	5	6	7	8 Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30 PM	9 Newsletter Articles Due!	10
11	12 Columbus Day <i>Office Closed</i>	13 BOD Meeting - Overland 4:00 PM	14 CFC Kickoff St. Louis, MO 10:30AM-1PM	15 Member & Patient Lunch @ JB - Noon Building 52	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Jefferson Barrack's SCI Halloween Party	31 Happy Halloween 



Address Service Requested

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Paralyzed Veterans of America  
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St. Louis, MO 63114



Photos from the 29th National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in Spokane, WA.



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