

# GATEWAY GAZETTE

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

## National Veterans Wheelchair Games 2010 By Matt Luitjohan

Well, we had a great week at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Denver, CO this year. We ended up having 13 athletes, 3 of whom were new to the games. Bill Skiles won the gold in Bowling, and also took silver medals in the Power 200 and Motorized Slalom. His partner in travel, Earle Lester, did not win any medals but was a true teammate and a wonderful example of the St. Louis Gateway PVA Team. Louis Murray was one of the first-timers this year and did quite well, winning 2 gold medals and a silver. Ruth Kult participated and once again was outstanding, bringing home 4 gold medals. Rose Ganz was at it again signing up for as many events as possible and then adding the exhibition Kayaking event. Rose brought home the gold in Swimming and Hand Cycling, the silver in the Motor Rally, and the bronze in the Discus. Terrance Stith, another of the first-timers, brought home 2 silver medals, a bronze medal, lots of memories, and loads of pictures. LaRoy Smith showed that practice really does help; he went home with the gold in Weightlifting and Shot Put, as well as a silver medal in Bowling. Bob Huskey returned to competition after a brief stint with retirement from the games and ended up coming home with a gold medal in the Club Throw - way to go Bret Favre! Jamey Bollinger attended this year and although he did not win any medals, he did try his best and promised to practice for next year. Hey Jamey, bowling is on Thursdays at 1 PM! Bobby Jackson attended and didn't win any medals, but he wins for the most exciting journey to the games. He and Lanna stopped everywhere and saw everything along the way; just ask to see their pictures. For the second year in a row we had a hard time with Ed Caldwell's chair getting along with the airline's cargo bin. But it did make it through the week and helped Ed get the bronze medal in Bowling. I think Ed should have also won an award for the largest personal cheering section - way to go "Team Ed!" Bobbie Hutchinson is the last of our new athletes and, although he did not win any medals, he did get to test his 3 day old sports chair in several events new to him. Stick with it Bobbie, you did wonderfully! Our final athlete needs no introduction; it's none other than Terri Fuda. She was a little frustrated at first because her classification level was increased, but she did what she had been training to do and ended up winning the gold medal in Bowling and Swimming, as well as a silver in Discus. Then at the closing ceremony she was awarded the Endeavor Award from the British Team. Congratulations to all who attended as a member of the team and for doing your best. We are looking forward to having all of you join us again in 2011 for the games in Pittsburgh, PA. For anyone else interested, please contact us in January for an application. Thanks to Jean Ferguson and Charley Wright (shown below) for coaching with me.



At Right:

LaRoy Smith  
and Ruth Kult  
pose with their  
medals!



### *Inside—Important Upcoming Events & More...*

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

## Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

<http://www.gatewaypva.org>

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## Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

Based on a VA clinical decision, Veterans are considered to be Catastrophically Disabled when they have a severely disabling injury, disorder or disease that permanently compromises their ability to carry out the activities of daily living. The disability must be of such a degree that the Veteran requires personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed, or require constant supervision to avoid physical harm to themselves or others. Veterans determined Catastrophically Disabled are placed into Priority Group 4 unless eligible for a higher Priority Group. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) General Counsel recently released an opinion addressing questions about the scope of P.L. 111-163, the "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act." Specifically, the General Counsel was asked to determine if the legislation exempted collections for prescription drug co-payments. In its opinion, the General Counsel determined that the legislation does prohibit the VA from collecting inpatient, outpatient and prescription copays for Veterans determined to be Catastrophically Disabled. However, these Veterans may still be subject to copays for extended care (long-term care) services.

PVA staff is now working with VA staff to get this legislation implemented as soon as possible. We were recently informed that this statute should be able to be implemented without the need for new regulations, which should expedite this process. We anticipate that this new policy should come online within the next few months. Also, the VA has informed PVA that it will have a means to reimburse veterans who paid for services retroactive to May 5, 2010.

This opinion marks an excellent outcome for PVA and its members. PVA has spent many years advocating for the elimination of co-payments of catastrophically disabled veterans enrolled in Priority Group Four.

**Has your address changed? Please inform us by email: [susanlyle@gatewaypva.org](mailto:susanlyle@gatewaypva.org), or you may write or call us at the following:**

**Gateway Chapter PVA**  
**1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center Drive**  
**St. Louis, MO 63132**  
**Office (314) 427-0393 or (800) 426-4058**  
**Fax (314) 427-4183**

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 Stanley D. Brown

### *VA Confirms Plans to Move SCI from Jefferson Barracks to John Cochran*

I just received a copy of the below August 2010 letter from the VA Under Secretary to our National PVA office. This letter confirms what I have long suspected, and that is the VA plans to have the SCI/D rehabilitation at the new John Cochran facility. No one from our local chapter was invited to attend the July 28 "consensus meeting" mentioned in the letter below where National PVA and the VA discussed this issue. The current 32 bed Jefferson Barracks rehabilitation unit will in the future become long-term care beds. In addition, Gateway Chapter PVA has been requested to get prior approval from PVA before advocating with elected officials on the John Cochran move issue. PVA plans are now to move our SCI unit to the worst hospital in the VA system. On July 13, 2010 there was an Armed Forces Subcommittee Hearing on the John Cochran dental clinic sterilization problems that were disclosed with the letters to 1,812 veterans using the clinic from February 1, 2009 to March 11, 2010. The only chance now to stop the proposed SCI move is encourage congressional action to stop funding the project.



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH  
WASHINGTON DC 20420**

**AUG 11 2010**

Mr. Homer S. Townsend, Jr.  
Executive Director  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
801 Eighteen Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. <sup>Homer</sup>Townsend:

This is in response to your letter regarding care of Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Veterans at the St. Louis Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in St. Louis, Missouri.

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and the National Paralyzed Veterans of America leadership team on July 28, 2010, to discuss future plans for the Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders (SCI/D) program at the St. Louis VAMC. During this meeting, a consensus was reached to increase SCI/D bed capacity from 20 to 30 beds in the St. Louis VAMC John Cochran (JC) major project. As a result, once the JC project is activated, the Jefferson Barracks (JB) division of the St. Louis VAMC will no longer have an acute care SCI presence. As discussed, beds will be considered for long-term care at JB as future needs are identified.

I have instructed my staff to begin developing plans to move forward with this increase from 20 to 30 beds. We will need to review the impact of this addition to overall patient care, but I am confident that, with your support, we will be able to work through any obstacles that present themselves in our effort to provide the best care for SCI/D patients as well as all of our Veterans served at the St. Louis VAMC.

I appreciate your continued support and concern for the welfare of our Nations Veterans.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.



## Attaboy

By Ruth Kult



Hello again!

The heat is on. It wouldn't be as bad if the humidity didn't go hand-n-hand. This makes it downright ugly. The heat does bother most, but there are a few heat seekers that thrive on it. A quad friend told me heat is preferred over cold, which is completely understandable to me. If you go to Aspen, or if you went to Denver this summer, drinking a lot of water was more than pounded into your head. If you didn't go to either one of these events, let me do the honors. Drink water, water, water, and no, beer does not count. Now on to the reason for my article...

If you've noticed, the President of our local Gateway Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans' term is coming to an end. We are so happy that he is running for President again. I know his obvious talents as our leader aren't going unnoticed because he's in the public eye every time you turn around. Well, both President Brown and our Vice President Dr. Huskey are often in the media's eye. This is such an awesome thing for all of us. They are both bringing public awareness to our issues. With Stan's abilities as a wonderful leader, I believe great things will happen. Hopefully he never burns out and can continue on with his phenomenal success for many years to come. I've noticed something about Stan Brown that makes him a force to be reckoned with. Once he gets his mind set on something, and really sinks his teeth into it, he doesn't let go until whatever it may be at the time is finished. Whatever the outcome, he stands up for us and he's accomplished quite a bit. Honestly, I don't think there is a better man for the job. I admit, I don't like change, but I'm also very opinionated when I believe in something. I can tell you this, I don't really believe there's another person who's so in tune with helping veterans and their needs. Give him your support and we can accomplish so much more – "strength in numbers."

Obviously we've had our share of a few good men as presidents before; especially since I've been on the Board of Directors. Dr. Robert Huskey, who is an extremely smart individual, is especially in sync with disabled causes and needs. He won an award for his excellent abilities. We're fortunate to have him continue on as Vice President for our chapter. Many of you may not know this, but Dr. Huskey is President of Paraquad in St. Louis. Yes, we've nominated some great leaders in the past.

So, guess what's coming up soon? Voting, voting and voting. Your ballots are due by September 16. Huh, I am a broken record, but my voice is once again being ignored. Imagine that? We have a total of 640 members, yet a small amount of about 45 members bothered to vote last year. SHAME on the members who didn't vote. Our leaders work very hard for our members to make places accessible or find funding for our sports program. I went to the summer wheelchair games and the winter sports clinic this year. Though there were new faces, there were also many familiar ones. These programs cost money, even though there is a discounted fee on the hotel. For an example, skiing - the lift tickets alone are very costly, but the athletes are given them for free. Where else could you get such a discount to go skiing? I'll tell you where - NO WHERE! Participate in your chapter sports program. Participate in your chapter. Take an interest; get to know your leaders. In the newsletters there are other articles besides my own. If you can read my stuff, then you can read the other things and find out who these other people are and how they help you. No excuses. Get familiar with the faces running your chapter either in person, by phone, or by newsletter, and then vote!!!

Thanks for reading!

## 2010 Local Creative Arts Festival by Becky Ballard

What an amazing wealth of talent displayed at this year's VA's Got Talent Night and Visual Arts Show, held during the month of February at the St. Louis VAMC. Several PVA members were first time participants and I am happy to say, were first place medal winners as well! Donald Crabtree has been writing poems for several years and Debbie Gray, discovered his "hidden" talent on a recent home visit and encouraged him to submit his creative works to the 2010 Festival. Don took home the gold in both Poetry Inspirational and Other and took silver in Poetry Humorous. His grandson remarked after returning home from the show, and seeing his medals, "Grandpa you have been to the Olympics!"



Rusty Ezzell, won the coveted Best In Show award for his rendition of "Old Man" by Neal Young. He also got the house rocking with "Night Moves" and recited an original poem "Hippie Chick". PVA member, Jim Schmitt, and his band Buddy Plan were first place winners for their performance of "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood". LaRoy Smith treated us to a dramatic reading of a selection from, "My Grandfather's Son" and a vocal performance of, "You're a Grand Old Flag".

On the visual arts side, PVA members again made an impact on the success of the show! Board member and talented artist Ruth Kult was awarded first place medals in the categories of Glazed Ceramics and Mosaics. Michael Erbe took home the silver and Marvin Foster received the bronze in the Ceramic category. Larry Hibbler and Rose Ganz took home second and third places in the Mosaic categories making both categories a clean sweep for PVA members! Ira Simmons took home the gold in the category of Stained Ceramics. Second place award for Suncatcher Kits went to Bill Skiles whom, by the way, paints with the brush held in his teeth! Learning a new skill was a challenge for Gregory Stone but the payoff was worth it as he received a gold medal in the category of String Art. Richard Jones, who holds the record for entering the most festivals in succession, took the bronze medal in the category of Monochromatic Drawing and last but not least, Michael Erbe was presented the silver medal in the category of Pastels.

The local 2010 festival had the honor of accepting 150 works of art, 17 performing artist, 4 dramatic readings and 29 poems from veterans throughout the medical center. All first place winners will now advance to the second phase of the National competition. The national festival is being held in La Crosse, Wisconsin this year and with a little luck and lots of skill, maybe one of our PVA members will be making the trip! Remember for those of you who work at home on that poem, painting or song we would love for you to get involved in the creative arts program next year and who knows you might just be taking home a "VA Emmy" like novice performer Rusty Ezzell!

News flash!!!! The St. Louis VAMC has the honor of sending two veterans to the National Festival. Rusty Ezzell was invited to sing "Old Man". Our VA has never had a solo vocal artist represented at the national show. WAY TO GO Rusty! Theophilus J. Smith local artist was also invited to attend.

The 2011 visual arts show will be held on February 25 and the performing arts show will be held February 10<sup>th</sup>. Hope you are all working on creative writings, poems, paintings, songs or dance! It is great fun and you never know where you'll end up! Maybe in Fayetteville AR. home of the 2011 National Festival!



Above: LaRoy Smith is doing a dramatic reading.

## Just a Letter of Thanks

By Rusty Ezzell

I want to thank Becky Ballard from Arts and Crafts for introducing me to the 2010 Creative Arts Festival that was held in February. Not only did I have an excellent time, but low and behold, I won. I managed to win "Best in Show" that evening and one of the songs I sang is taking me to Wisconsin. The whole experience was such a positive one that I will be competing for years to come.

Becky and her staff made the entire night exciting. The competition was done so professionally that each competitor felt as if they were all winners at the end of the night. I encourage everyone to at least come out and try this once. I can guarantee that you won't be disappointed. The next one is in February of 2011, so if you can sing, dance, draw, and/or write please come out and show your talents. Just go up to the second floor of the Jefferson Barracks' SCI Unit in Building 52 and talk to Becky. She will get you going in the right direction. As for me, thank you Becky, and I will see you in Wisconsin.



Above: Best in Show—Rusty Ezzell

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

James Blanford-Henderson, KY  
James Mitz-Evansville, IN  
Danny Proctor-Duenweg, MO  
Thomas Simmons-Columbia, MO

William Buckman-Ridgway, IL  
Richard Llewellyn-Cottage Hills, IL  
Robert Ramsey-Boonville, MO  
Scott Thompson-Savannah, MO

Thomas Mayhew-St. Louis, MO  
Fred Overmeyer-West Plains, MO  
Darrell Schrader-Granite City, IL  
Richard Weaver-St. Peters, MO

## 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!

Jason W. Austin  
Kenneth E. Frye  
Keith Roberts  
Jeramie C. Walters

Dennis L. Bazant  
Floyd R. Henderson  
James T. Roden

Robert E. Collins  
Jonathan D. Lewis  
Leon Smith



## In memory of...

Begley, Thomas A.	Debary, FL	07/12/10
Blume, Murray B.	Silver Springs, MD	05/08/10
Boerio, Joseph	Springfield, IL	07/13/10
Horras, Phillip W.	Springfield, MO	05/27/10
Knipple, William R.	Lees Summit, MO	07/15/10
Paule, Edward G.	St. Louis, MO	07/06/10
Taber, Calvin	Kansas City, MO	06/21/10



*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.*

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## Autobiography By Tom Herrington



This being my first article for the newsletter, I figured I would start by giving a little history on myself. I graduated from Belleville East Township High School, Belleville, Illinois in 2000, and joined the Marine Corps when I was 17. I graduated from boot camp in the last week of December from MCRD, San Diego in 2000. After infantry training I was off to 29 Palms for my MOS training as a Field Radio Operator and from there my orders were to report to 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Battalion at Camp Pendleton, California. I was assigned to Headquarters Company in the Communications Platoon for my first deployment in 2001.

My first deployment was with the 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit or (MEU). We set up the first forward operating base in Afghanistan after 9/11, Camp Rhino. I remember being told that we were heading into the desert where it hasn't rained in five years and it wouldn't be too cold. While there, it rained and snowed multiple times and was regularly below 40 degrees and I learned a valuable lesson on trusting intelligence and packing my gear properly for all situations. We returned home from deployment in 2002 and we started training again.

I was assigned to a couple of different platoons, but wound up in Javelins Platoon in 2003, where they cross trained me for a second MOS as a Heavy Gunner. We deployed with the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU later that year and began sailing towards the escalating war in Iraq with a few stops here and there. We participated in Operation Sweeney and found our way home in early 2004 where I finished out my four years in the Marine Corps.

After the Marines, I spent two years earning an Associate's degree from Southwestern Illinois College in Industrial Electronics. I transferred in late 2007 to Southern Illinois University of Carbondale in the Capstone program to further my education. In May of 2009, I graduated with my BA in Applied Science with computer networking as my major. After graduation I had heard about a National Service Officer opening at the Paralyzed Veterans of America; my friend said I would be helping veterans. I didn't really know what to expect seeing how I didn't know much about the PVA and never used a service organization before to handle my claims for benefits. I was interviewed and hired by September 2009, and found myself on a business trip within the first two months of working for the organization. Although I am still in training, I have begun working more with veterans and found that I enjoy it quite a bit. Well, I hope I have given everyone a little insight of my background prior to the PVA, and I hope I will be able to help many of you.

### **Agent Orange Claims Update: Vietnam Veterans or Their Survivors Are Urged to File Claims Immediately**

Starting as early as October, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin compensating the first of thousands of Vietnam veterans for disability claims for Ischemic Heart disease, Parkinson's disease and B-cell leukemia illnesses newly associated with exposure to defoliants, including Agent Orange, used in the Vietnam War. The move comes thanks to a federal court victory by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and its partners.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has instructed the VA to issue within 30 days new rules for paying disability benefits to Vietnam veterans stricken with Ischemic Heart disease, Parkinson's disease and B-cell leukemia. Vietnam veterans who have these diseases, or their survivors, should file their claims as soon as possible to ensure the earliest possible entitlement to benefits.

It is estimated that this expansion of Agent Orange-related claims will benefit several hundred thousand Vietnam veterans. Congress signaled a strong support for these veterans in July when the Senate and the House passed the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010 (HR4899), which included \$13.4 billion for VA to pay the first wave of compensation claims for these diseases.





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### 6th Annual Gateway PVA /SCI Camp Penuel Camping Weekend and Fishing Tournament

**Join us for a fun-filled weekend of camping, fishing, boating, campfires with treats, and a great time with great people, at Camp Penuel in Ironton, MO.**

**The Festivities begin Friday evening, September 10th and wrap up Sunday morning, September 12th.**

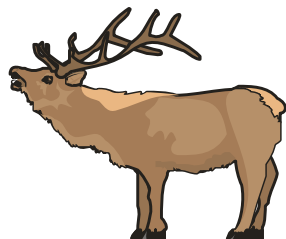
**Please call Matt or Charley at 314.652.4100 ext. 64590 or ext. 66602 for more information or to get registered. This fishing tournament/camping weekend is free of charge for all veterans and their families.**

**Meals and activities are sponsored by your local Gateway Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (GPVA). This event will be cancelled in case of inclement weather.**



## Annual Lone Elk Park Member Picnic in Valley Park, MO October 1, 2010

10:00 a.m. to  
3:00 p.m.



## 9th Annual "Shoot for the Gold" Trap Shoot East Alton, IL, Olin-Winchester Trap & Skeet Facility

Friday, Sept. 24th  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



The Robert M. Woolsey, M.D. Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center in St. Louis invites all family members, caregivers and close friends to our next Family Education Workshop. It will be held on Friday, October 8, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at our SCI Center at Jefferson Barracks Division of VA Medical Center, Building 52. Topics will include medical, nursing, rehabilitation, dietary and psychosocial aspects of spinal cord injury, as well as neurological impairments of the spinal cord that are considered non-progressive, such as certain types of multiple sclerosis.

The workshop will be helpful for those family members of veterans who are newly-injured or diagnosed, as well as those who have been living with their impairment for many years. Written materials to supplement the program will also be provided. For questions or further details, please call Bob Sontag, Social Worker, at 314-652-4100 x6-4819.

It's time to start thinking about the 2011 National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. The clinic will once again be held in beautiful Snowmass, CO from March 27 – April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you attended last year, you will automatically be receiving an application for this year's event. If you didn't attend, please contact Charley or I (Matt) and we will send an application to you. We are asking that all applications be in to us no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>. If you would like more information on this event, please call Matt 314-894-6602 or Charley 314-652-4100 x64590.

## St. Louis 2010 Local Golden Age Games October 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>






**"Life is an adventure, dare it."**

The first annual VA Local Golden Age Games will be hosting a progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports program at the **St. Louis Jefferson's Barracks VA**, offering over 10 different sports and recreational activities. This exciting multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program is designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

**Deadline:  
Applications due October 1, 2010**

***If you would like more information on this event, please call Matt 314-894-6602***

<i>September 2010</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 Labor Day Office Closed	7	8	9 Patient Support Group at JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	10 <div>Annual Camp Penuel Fishing Tournament &amp; Camping Event</div>	11
12	13	14 15th Jack Buck/PVA Golf @ Landings at Spirit Course 10:30 am—8 pm	15	16 Member Luncheon @ Noon— JB Bldg 52 Qrtly Membership Meeting to Follow	17 See 24th for new date...	18
19	20	21 BOD Meeting @ 11:30 am	22	23	24 “Shoot for the Gold” Final Trap Shoot at Olin-Winchester in East Alton, IL@10	25
26	27	28	29	30		

<i>October 2010</i>						
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
					1 Annual Lone Elk Park Member Picnic 10—3	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Family Caregivers Workshop at JB Bldg 52 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	9 Newsletter Articles Due
10	11 Columbus Day Office Closed	12 BOD Meeting at 4 pm	13	14 Patient Support Group @ JB 1:30 - 2:30 pm	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Member Luncheon @ Noon—JB Building 52	22 Local Golden Age Games 21st & 22nd	23
24 31 	25	26	27	28	29 JB Halloween Pizza Party @ 11:30 am	30



NOTICE: TRAP SHOOT DATE  
CHANGED TO SEPT. 24TH!  
SEPT. 16 - JB VAMC SCI  
BLDG 52 DAY ROOM 1 PM  
ELECTION OF BOB THURS.

Address Service Requested

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



National Veterans Wheel-  
chair Games in Denver,  
Colorado—July 2010



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