

RT '09

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



2009 Annual Open House

May/June 2009





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



On the Cover:

Michael Harris, Kevin Elya, and David Peck receive an impressive \$1,161.00 check from the Great Lakes Dart Association who benevolently hosted a February event to support the MPVA!

Pictures on Page 11

MPVA Officers and Directors

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MPVA Staff

Executive Director
Michael Harris
mharris@michiganpva.org

Director of Development
& Public Relations/Editor
Jaelyn K. Kochis
jkochis@michiganpva.org

Director of Government Relations
& Advocacy
Bonnie L. Welbaum
bwelbaum@michiganpva.org

Sports & Recreation Director
Scot Severn
ssvern@michiganpva.org

Administrative Assistant
Jan Black
chapterhq@michiganpva.org

Financial Officer
Linda Highland

Office Maintenance
Don Swale

Legal Advisor
Steve Cohen

Certified Public Accountants
and Consultants
Morris, Kalish + Walgren, P.C.

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of America*

VETERANS BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

McNamara Federal Building, 477 Michigan Avenue, Room 1233, Detroit, MI 48226

Phone: (313) 471-3996 or (800) 795-3608

Service Office Supervisor Charles Henning

Service Officer Stephanie Strickland ¶ Service Officer Bonnie Williams
Service Office Secretary Marilyn Kittrell ¶ Service Officer John A. Brezzell
National Field Director Phil Marcum
(502) 566-4432 ¶ VARO Louisville, KY

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Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

40550 Grand River Avenue

Novi MI 48375

(248) 476-9000 Fax (248) 476-9545

Toll free: (800) 638-MPVA (6782)

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is one of 34 member chapters of Washington, D.C.-based Paralyzed Veterans of America. A Congressionally chartered veterans service organization, MPVA has been assisting veterans with spinal cord injuries or diseases, including Multiple Sclerosis and ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease), in Michigan since 1961.

MPVA programs include:

- Veterans' Benefits
- Wheelchair Sports and Recreation
- Spinal Cord Injury Research
- Equipment Donation
- Advocacy to eliminate architectural barriers and protect civil rights for persons with disabilities
- Referral Services for assistive devices, housing, employment and transportation
- Literature on a variety of topics including self-care, independent living, and disability rights.
- The Pump Guide: an online directory of gas stations throughout Michigan that will pump gas at the self-serve price for persons with disabilities.
- MPVA is a nonprofit organization and receives no federal funding. MPVA relies on grants, sponsorships, and private and corporate donations to support its programs.

The MPVA headquarters is in Novi, Michigan. Our service officers are based out of the McNamara Federal Building in Downtown Detroit.

Disclaimer:

The Rollin' Times is a publication of the Michigan Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America. It is designed to inform the members of the PVA and other interested parties on veterans' issues, legislation, legal decisions, medical technology and other matters deemed to be relevant to the disability community.

The contents of this publication do not always reflect the views or policies of Michigan PVA, and no endorsement or approval is made or should be inferred with respect to products or services advertised herein. Consult an appropriate professional before making use of any product or service mentioned.



President's Report

By Kevin G. Elya

MPVA Open House a Huge Success!

In April, The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Paralyzed Veterans Awareness Week with our national office and the other 34 PVA chapters across the country. This year's theme was in recognition of their years of "Leadership, Service, and Empowerment."

PVA Awareness Week was created with the hope of sharing the PVA mission of service and its countless accomplishments with our nation's citizens. Many Americans are unaware of the PVA's existence or the organization's important contributions to the disability community. While we have chapters and service offices across the nation, PVA is much smaller than most veterans' organizations because of its stringent membership criteria.

PVA Awareness Week is our opportunity to let Americans know we are here and continuing to serve. This is achieved by planning a week of activities to educate the public about MPVA and to demonstrate how we make a difference in the lives of paralyzed veterans and others with disabilities.

PVA plays a role in meeting the full range of our members needs. Our members, staff, partners and volunteers work throughout the year to make a positive difference in the lives of our paralyzed veterans and all people living with disabilities.

MPVA celebrated PVA Awareness Week at various sites around Michigan. At the Detroit, Ann Arbor and Battle Creek VA's, we had an opportunity to set up the MPVA display booth in the main medical lobby. This was a chance for us to introduce MPVA to veterans and their caregivers as well as meet with in-patients and with the medical staff to show our appreciation for the outstanding medical care they provide to veterans.

MPVA made financial donations to the Detroit, Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Saginaw and Iron

Mountain VA Medical Centers in support of their VA Volunteer Services Program. The Grand Rapids and D.J. Jacobetti State Home for Veterans received a financial contribution for their member services program. We were honored to make a donation to such worthy programs because their work is a priceless asset to our nation's veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On April 16, the MPVA and our participating vendors sponsored an Open House held at our Chapter Headquarters in Novi. We are truly thankful for the amazing turnout we had at this year's event. MPVA members, community leaders and the attending public had an opportunity to compare and review independent and assisted living products and services.

I would like to take this opportunity and thank all of our sponsors for their contributions to our Open House: Caremor Inc., Advantage Mobility Outfitters, Fusion Medical, Gresham Driving Aids, Heartland Health Care Center, Inclinx Inc., Mobility Works, The Standing Company, Wheelchair Getaways, Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame, Wright and Filippis, Hollister, Ford Mobility Monitoring, and Pro Bros Window & Sunroom.

Due to the generous support of the MPVA staff, volunteers and sponsors, this year's Open House was a huge success. Everyone's contribution truly made a difference.

By working together, we were able to make PVA Awareness Week a huge success!

Please see the inside back page of this issue for pictures of the event!





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

PVA's Legislative/Advocacy Conference

In March, I attended Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) Legislative/Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C. The main focus of the conference was providing us with the tools to effectively carry out PVA's legislative and advocacy priorities for the upcoming year.

During the week I, along with our Government Relations Director, Bonnie Welbaum, had an opportunity to visit with thirteen members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation. The visits allowed us an opportunity to educate Congress on important issues that affect our membership. As usual, the topic that dominated the conversation was Veteran Affairs Health Care funding for FY 2010.

The Independent Budget (IB) calls for a minimum of \$54.6 billion to fund the VA; a total increase of \$4.5 billion over last year's IB recommendation. This includes: \$46.6 billion for health care, \$575 million for prosthetic research, \$1.6 billion for benefits processing, and nearly \$2 billion for major and minor construction.

The Independent Budget enlightens the nation's decision-makers on veterans' perspectives, specifically regarding federal spending, and national policy priorities for veterans programs. These recommendations are well-considered policy funding proposals based on the actual needs of the men and women these programs were created to serve.

President Obama's 2010 released budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs is a positive step in the right direction toward providing ample funding for health care. His budget would exceed the monies that were recommended in the Independent Budget by \$1.3 billion. No president before has ever submitted a VA spending plan that surpassed in the amount recommended by the Independent Budget.

Priority 8 Veterans will be allowed to Enroll into the VA

The President's 2010 budget will also allow the VA health care system to enroll up to 550,000 new Priority Group 8 veterans by 2013. Priority Group 8 veterans include individuals who have a non-service connected disability and have incomes deemed adequate, based on family size and geographic location. The VA estimates that the total for new enrollees includes 266,000 Priority Group 8 veterans slated to enroll in the VA health system starting this summer, which was accomplished under a financing initiative that Congress passed last fall.

The PVA has always supported the removal of barriers that block more than 500,000 veterans from accessing their health care benefits. Priority Group 8 veterans have been barred from enrolling in the VA health care system since 2003. This new initiative is another optimistic stride for veteran services.

PVA endorses Advance Appropriations for VA Health Care

The new legislation being introduced entitled the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform & Transparency Act of 2009 places the VA on a two-year advanced appropriations schedule. The legislation is necessary because of Congress' failure to approve the VA spending bill at the start of the fiscal year, which begins on October 1st, for 19 of the past 22 years.

The legislation would require Congress to approve the 2011 Veteran's Health Care Budget by October 1st when it also passes the 2010 budget. Subsequent funding for veterans health care would be finalized one year before the VA needs the money.

When congress does not deliver VA appropriations in a timely manner it directly impacts the quality of medical care veterans receive from the VA. The timeliness of the

appropriations also does a disservice to the VA health care professionals who are left wondering what kind of resources they will have to meet their patient's needs.

A well thought-out and swift budget will give decision makers an opportunity to set long term goals that improve hospital services; such as the hiring of nurses, and the repairing or replacing of medical equipment.

MPVA Partners to Build Accessible Housing

When groups of World War II veterans with spinal cord disabilities were organized in 1946 to form Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), the single biggest issue they faced was the lack of suitable housing. The choices, even for those who were married with children, were to reside at the VA or military hospitals. In 1948, after considerable efforts, the PVA finally managed to have President Harry S. Truman sign legislation that provided a grant toward the purchase of an accessible residence for veterans with service related disabilities.

Regrettably, the continuing lack of accessible and affordable housing still plagues so many Americans. It is precisely why – some 60 years after our founding – the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America has joined forces to address the accessible, affordable housing needs of people with physical mobility impairments.

Currently, the MPVA has gone forward and set a goal to build between 40 -60 apartments for physically disabled, low-income persons who are capable of living independently;

with or without a live-in-aide (the location has yet to be determined). It is our hope that these complexes will have one and/or two bedroom units.

Rents will be subsidized by the Federal Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Residents will be required to meet HUD's income requirements. According to HUD regulations, each resident will be required to pay 30% of adjusted monthly income as rent, which includes all utilities except electricity. HUD provides a monthly allowance to assist with the cost of electricity.

As we move forward, the MPVA will be proactive about educating policy makers on the advantages of creating communities that are truly inclusive of all citizens through endorsing and incorporating the concept of universal design.

The main priority should be to get a commitment from everyone involved in the housing industry to produce the best possible living environments for all Americans of any age. In essence, it's about creating a home where the "welcome mat truly welcomes everyone."

As the baby boom generation ages, it is an undeniable fact that the number of Americans with a disabled family member will increase. The need for housing that is accessible or can easily be made accessible (universally designed) will increase even more, given that most current housing is not at all accommodating for people with disabilities.



Valuable Dates for 2009:

-
- **Board of Directors Meeting**
May 5, 2009 & June 8, 2009
MPVA Chapter Headquarters, Novi
 - **Membership Meetings**
May 21, 2009
(all meetings are on Thursdays at the Novi MPVA office unless otherwise notified)
 - **Tips up for Troops Bass Fishing:**
Saturday, June 13, 2009
Kensington Lake in Brighton will be the official location for the 3rd Annual Tips up for Troops Bass Fishing event. It is a fun day of Bass Master Fishing for veterans, civilians, families and friends. Call Rick Briggs at 810-229-5880 or register on line at BIAMI.ORG.
 - **Mark Your Calendar for MPVA's Annual Picnic!**
Saturday, July 18, 2009
The Detroit Zoo
Call the MPVA Chapter Headquarters and RSVP Today! PH: (248) 476-9000
 - **Veterans Night at Comerica Park**
Tuesday, July 21, 2009
Seattle Mariners vs. Detroit Tigers
The MPVA wants you to join in on "Veterans Night at Comerica Park"
All MPVA members interested in going to this game should contact our Chapter Headquarters at (248) 476-9000





Government Relations & Advocacy

By Bonnie L. Welbaum, Director of Government Relations & Advocacy

VA Dealing with Veterans' Suicides

The recent April 16th, 2009, "Desperate Veterans Turn to Suicide," Detroit News article written by, Marney Rich Keenan, focused on the "epidemic of suicides" the Military and the Veterans Administration is currently facing. According to this article, the number of military-related suicides reported from several different branches of the military, survivors of both active duty and veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, is on the rise. In response to this scary statistic, many veterans are now beginning to file lawsuits against the VA, with the help of lawmakers and other veterans' groups, accusing the VA of medical malpractice.

Furthermore, many are charging that the VA failed to treat injured veterans for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury, which is known as the signature wound of the Iraq and Afghanistan war. In conjunction, the VA is also being accused of downplaying the statistics, as well as misdiagnosing returning soldiers who have acquired mental illness because VA resources are tapped out. The article further sites U.S. Representative Bob Filner, D-Calif., "a steadfast critic of the VA" stating that the "tragedy is [that] we could have predicted this, ...with multiple deployments, the type of urban warfare and the almost inevitable killing of innocent people. Now we have an epidemic on our hands. This is a national disgrace."

Even more disheartening, the article focuses on a military family dealing with grief and anger in regards to the treatment of their son by the VA. Randen Harvey, a 24-year-old Marine Corps veteran, was evaluated for PTSD about five weeks before he committed suicide. This family's heartbreaking story is unfortunately similar to so many others. Randen Harvey was an honorably discharged soldier who came home and began suffering from an inability to: sleep, hold a job, be in public, and stay sober. He also did not wish to be around friends and family who cared about him.

Three days prior to the day Harvey took his own life, he was "found on the roof of the nine-story building" of the VA Affairs Medical Center in Ann Arbor. On that day, the Psychiatrist report regarding Harvey's condition quoted the former Marine stating, "I'm at the end of my rope. Things would be easier if I weren't here."

Moreover, the Detroit News reported that, "but because Harvey failed a Breathalyzer test, he was discharged." The next day Harvey was examined by Dr Brian Martis, Associate Director of Psychiatry at the Ann Arbor VA. Harvey told the doctor that he felt "hopeless" and "ashamed." Yet, Harvey was still not admitted to the hospital.

Harvey who had previously been diagnosed with "PTSD, agoraphobia, panic and anxiety disorder, and alcohol abuse—the same patient who had tried to commit suicide two months prior and who, only hours earlier, had been talked down from the hospital roof—was, in Martis' words "not certifiable"—hospital code for not being sick enough for involuntarily commitment."

Harvey's mother claims in her lawsuit against the VA, that the organization "failed to keep him from taking his own life." Just week prior to Harvey's heartrending passing, his physician wrote:

"Patient says his motor transport unit was assigned 'cleanup duty' of casualties. P. [patient] says he felt disgusted and horrified by the site of dead and mutilated bodies especially by those of dead women and children. [Physician quoting patient] 'We bagged them and threw them in the truck like it was garbage day.' At one point he says he vomited from the sights and smells."

One day after her son's death an intake counselor called from the VA Battle Creek Medical Center saying they had a bed available. The Doctor also called to apologize to his mother.

The irony is this; the same week this story broke, PVA Chapters across the nation were celebrating PVA Awareness Week. The MPVA hosted an Open House and many of the MPVA staff and members visited the VA hospitals and State Veterans Homes. Financial contributions were made to VA Medical Centers throughout Michigan with the understanding that they could use the money to support their core services, and we thanked them for their work and time. The MPVA distributed educational booklets, pamphlets, buttons, phone cards, and took time to introduce our full-time service officers and explain available benefits. We tried to thank as many soldiers as we could for their service and let them know we are here to help. We visited different departments to learn about seminars, and available counseling.

During that week, I met so many caring and professional individuals at each VA Hospital who are really trying to make things better. There were so many new programs that have been developed which allow the VA to improve its delivery of medical services and counseling; like offering individual and group treatment for PTSD. In addition, the inpatient units are completely renovated to reflect a more home-like environment for veterans. For example, each doorway was personalized to include a porch light, a mailbox, and an address plaque in place of a room number. It truly impressed me the efforts that the hospitals were trying to make in attempting to help our veterans feel like they were at "home."

There were smoking, weight control, and anger management sessions. The Volunteer Service Professionals are compassionate and thoughtful and wanted to make life better for the inpatients and/or outpatients. People working there have good hearts and intentions. The staff members are hard-working professionals who realize that some things are still not working.

Not everything I saw was perfect that week. It did bother me to see the people having to wait in three different long lines for extended periods of time to collect their travel pay. It was explained to me that this was because two new people were training at the desk. I believe there could be a better ways of handling these situations. I also observed that soldiers would really prefer to speak with psychiatrists that have actually served in the military, because they will have a better understanding of what they have experienced. Furthermore, some of the veterans feel that the drugs doctors want to prescribe leave them feeling tired, more depressed, and impotent.

The story of Marine Randen Harvey is absolutely heartbreaking. While there is so much good taking place at the Veterans Hospitals, we have to be vigilant in asking our lawmakers for better funds and available resources at the VA Hospitals. The VA's can only give more to the our veterans who are so deserving of care when they have the resources to do so---and our lawmakers are the ones that need to be held truly responsible. 🚲

*Sincere Condolences to the
families of: Scot Nys
Matthew Trippe
Brian Randolph
Michael Calhoun*



Country Home near Ann Arbor: Built in 1990. 2,032 sq ft on over 2 acres. Trees all the way around for privacy. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2.5-car garage, gas fireplace, 3 decks, wheelchair access at all entrances. New roof, furnace and central air. Kitchen remodeled in 2005. Easy access to major highways. 734-434-3158



By Charles Henning, Senior National Services Officer

All Veterans with ALS Eligible for Benefits

In the past 6 months, we here in the Detroit Benefits Office have been working closely with the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Association along with the East Office, which is located in Troy, Michigan and the West Office, which is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan on claims for veterans with ALS. Our National Office in Washington, D.C. has an ALS project that is ongoing, and reaches out to veterans all over the country as veterans who have ALS are now eligible for membership with the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

As of September 23, 2008, the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published new regulations granting military veterans diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also called ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, full access to health and disability benefits. The new rule went in effect immediately and covers all veterans serving at least 90 consecutive days no matter where or when they served.

ALS is a progressive neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States, according to the National Academies of Science. It causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that leads to muscle weakness, muscle atrophy, paralysis, and eventually the patient may lose the ability to swallow or breathe. Life expectancy after diagnosis is generally two to five years.

Scientific evidence linking military service and ALS is too strong to ignore. Many veterans with ALS, and researchers, point fingers at the military's experimental and mandatory vaccines as the reason ALS occurs between one and one-half to twice as often in veterans than non-veterans.

Citing the high incidence of ALS among Persian Gulf War veterans who were diagnosed with the disease at younger ages than had been typical, the VA granted service connected benefits to veterans of the 1990-1991

war. Veterans with ALS advocacy groups, including the ALS Association, and some members of the military and Congress, continue to push to designate ALS as a presumption of service connection and to expand benefits for all war veterans.

The VA cited a compilation of medical studies, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in Veterans: Review of the Scientific Literature, which states that "there is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between military service and later development of ALS." The report, completed by the National Academies of Science at the behest of the VA, was released in November 2006. According to the studies, military veterans within the last century are nearly twice as likely to develop ALS as those with no history of military service, regardless of where or when they served in the military.

"Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it is appropriate to take action," former VA Secretary James Peake said in a written statement. "ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly, once it is diagnosed. There simply isn't time to develop the evidence needed to support compensation claims before many veterans become seriously ill. My decision will make those claims much easier to process, and for them and their families to receive the compensation they have earned through their service to our Nation."

The VA said it will try to identify and contact veterans with ALS, including those whose claims were previously denied.

Why ALS occurs more often in veterans is unclear but anthrax vaccine may play a role

Bob Evans, a reporter with the Daily Press, wrote about the anthrax vaccine-ALS connection in a December 2005 article ('Young' men got Lou Gehrig's disease,

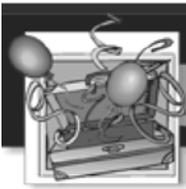
Navy officers Denis Army and Brody Prieto were hit by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis soon after their shots). Evans wrote: “Both died thinking that their anthrax shots triggered – or caused – this always-fatal illness, despite military doctors’ refusal to consider the possibility, their widows say.”

Both veterans also received anthrax from vaccine batches containing “squalene,” Squalene can be described as “an oil obtained for use in manufacturing pharmaceuticals.” Yet, it is reported that while the chemical boosts the potency of vaccines, it caused symptoms consistent with “Gulf War Syndrome,” according to a 2002 study. Gulf War Syndrome is an illness reported by combat veterans of the 1991 Gulf War typified by symptoms including immune system disorders and birth defects. Furthermore, the chemical squalene is also known to cause severe autoimmune problems in laboratory animals. The Army experimented with vaccines containing squalene for 50 years, Evans found.

Todd Sanders of Kingsport, TN, told a reporter last year that he and his friend, another among the nearly 2 million Gulf War soldiers to receive the anthrax vaccine, believed their illness was caused by the vaccine. “Sanders said he believes their condition was caused by the anthrax vaccine, which made him sick and almost caused him to pass out when he first received it,” wrote Rick Wagner.

Other studies have looked at the possible role of genetics, physical activity, environmental toxins, trauma, chemical and alcohol use, or a combination of these factors, to explain the high incidence of ALS in military veterans. Aside from determining that 5 or 10 percent of cases are inherited, these study results have been, for the most part, inconclusive.

If you know a veteran, or are a veteran, that has ALS; please contact our VA Benefits Department in order for us to file a claim on behalf of the veteran. The Detroit VA phone number is: (313) 471-3996. 🦿



BIRTHDAYS



MAY

Alonzo Baker	May 02	Willie E. Buchanan	May 20
Glenn B. Hall	May 02	Florian C. Rabineau	May 20
James L. Nicewander	May 02	Paul H. Senske	May 20
Ronnie D. Adkins	May 03	Anthony R. Wilson	May 20
Fred R. Dahlberg	May 03	Thomas E. Delleruyelle	May 21
John E. Senn	May 04	Ida N. Harper	May 22
Theresa Smith	May 04	Andrea C.	
Rolland M. Butler	May 05	Trimmingham	May 22
John L. Ramgren	May 06	Charles E. Williams	May 22
Arthur J. Evans	May 08	Donald S. Desmarais	May 23
Herbert A. James	May 09	Robert A. Hanner	May 23
Stanley C. Macey	May 10	Joe M. Rodriguez	May 23
Harvey D. Slotman	May 11	Neil L. Begin	May 24
Thomas A. Driver	May 12	Earl E. Gunnels	May 24
Johnny R. Miles	May 12	Keith A. Ketchum	May 24
Gary L. Wreggelsworth	May 12	Linda May	May 24
Martin Erickson	May 13	Thomas L. Melin	May 24
Ann Chisholm	May 15	Michael D. Hogue	May 25
Charlie L. Potts	May 15	James D. Minton	May 26
Kenneth M. Painter	May 16	Timothy W. Patrick	May 26
Milton Kaunitz	May 17	Danny Shumate	May 26
Henry Triesenberg	May 17	Bonnie L. Welbaum	May 26
Marshall A. Jackson	May 19	Beverly A. Valliere	May 29
James F. Lear	May 19	Dawn M. Hamm	May 30
		Sam A. Bateman	May 31

APRIL

Michael E. Madigan	June 04	Jack A. Converse	June 21
Lynn R. Ordiway	June 04	Dani M. Deline	June 21
William F. Wilson	June 05	Jeremy A. Ramirez	June 21
Kristy A. Dubois	June 06	Larry Springer	June 21
Lyman M. Justice	June 06	Larry G. Neely	June 22
Albert Lett	June 06	Jerry R. Martineau	June 23
Byron R. Cook	June 07	Eddie L. Cheese	June 24
Kevin G. Elya	June 07	Steve J. Jarmosco	June 24
Werley Vanover	June 07	John E. Hockstadt	June 25
John D. Edgar	June 08	David C. Kiel	June 26
James H. Farmer	June 09	Jon M. Crocker	June 27
Carole L. Halquist	June 09	Robert L. Davis	June 27
Evan F. Mayday	June 10	Melvyn J. Mandell	June 27
Dolly Taurence	June 10	Dale L. Larson	June 28
Ernest P. Whaley	June 10	Danny D. Pryor	June 28
Dannie C. Pauley	June 11	Douglas M. Bobo	June 29
Marvin C. Petty	June 11	George A. Bolden	June 29
Kenneth L. Faber	June 15	Brett D. Howd	June 29
Thomas C. McGillen	June 15	Jerry Spearman	June 29
Tony A. Rhodes	June 16	Daniel R. Porterfield	June 30
Michael P. Cope	June 17	Edmund C. Ross	June 30
Bernard P. Wein	June 17	Judy M. Ross	June 30
Edward L. Wilmers	June 19		

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

Joseph Yax

Lynn Schebel

We are proud you are part of the MPVA family!



Sports & Recreation

By Scot Severn, Sports & Recreation Director

Stormy Season

The Michigan Storm wheelchair rugby team began their season with about half the number of players as last year. The loss of powerhouse player Brian Sheridan, and Canadian paralympian, Erica Schmutz, was particularly hard since they made up half of the Storm's starting lineup.



The first tournament of the season was in Pittsburgh, and we knew we had a chance but also knew it would be a challenge. The Storm prevailed by going undefeated for the weekend and followed it up 2 weeks later with a second tournament victory in Chicago.

In December, the teams faced an 8-team tournament in Columbus; a tournament the Storm had won the previous 3 years. Michigan cruised through this tournament right to the finals against Kentucky TNT. It was an even match-up with the Storm going up by 3 at the half. However, a weak 3rd quarter handed the lead to TNT and they never looked back, handing the Storm their first loss of the season.

January brought on the beginning of a tough schedule with 3 tournaments in a 4 week period. The first was in Tampa, and after a loss to the London, Canada team, the Storm fell to the Texas Stampede by 1 point and ended up dropping down to a 6th place finish. Two weeks later, a trip to Portland saw the Storm facing some tough competition and settling for 4th place. Just a week later, Columbus hosted the *Heartland North Regional Playoffs* where Michigan beat Minnesota in the final to win the Regional title for the 3rd time in

the last 4 years.

Once again, Saginaw, Michigan would be the featured spot for the *Heartland Sectional Playoffs* with the top 8 teams from the section fighting for 4 slots at the National Championships. The Storm teammates were pleased when they made it past the first two teams to guarantee themselves a spot at Nationals. During the second day of the tournament, Michigan faced the #2 team in the nation and it was a tough task as the team battled while missing one of their starters, and a wrist injury slowing down another starter. The second game of the day was also an uphill battle with Kentucky TNT fighting their way through to the finals. The Storm eventually would fall to 4th place after their first loss to a vastly improved Minnesota Northstars team.



Nationals were held in Louisville, Kentucky for the 5th time in the last 6 years. The Storm fought hard but did not have the depth to face some of the toughest teams in the nation. Finishing in 7th place was a little disappointing, but just making it to the big show fulfilled our goals for the season. Our volunteers played a huge part this season. With such a small team, playing iron-man all weekend was commonplace and having a crew on the sidelines was invaluable. The six-man-team was never expected to even make it to nationals, but the Storm fought hard and never gave up. I am very proud of my teammates and thrilled to have been a part of it!



Thank You to every single person who supported MPVA's 2009 Annual Open House!





**Mark Your Calendar for
MPVA's Annual Picnic!
Where: The Detroit Zoo
When: Saturday, July 18, 2009
Call the MPVA
Chapter Headquarters
and RSVP Today!
PH: (248) 476-9000**



MICHIGAN PARALYZED
VETERANS OF AMERICA
A Member Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America
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