

RT '09

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Friend, Roger McCarville

“May we live in peace without weeping. May our joy outline the lives we touch without ceasing. And may our love fill the world, angel wings tenderly beating.”

~An Irish Blessing





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER

www.michiganpva.org



On the Cover:

The MPVA lost a great friend and advocate for the disability community when Roger McCarville passed away. Please see the President's Report and read MPVA's tribute to Roger.

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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's Tribute to Our Dear Friend, Roger McCarville

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) and the disability community lost a true friend, advocate, and supporter when Roger McCarville passed away.



He touched thousands of lives. Politicians, civic leaders and everyday people consider him as a friend. Many words have been spoken and written about Roger McCarville. Of all of them, the ones that stand out are that Roger was a man of sincere

warmth, infectious humor, brutal honesty, humility, and extreme generosity. Roger was a person who was able to light a room up with his energy, leaving people to feel as if they known him for years even if they just met him.

Rogers's life work was not to champion the causes of those with wealth or power or special connections. It was to give a voice to those who were not heard. He always encouraged the disability community to take risks and stand up for themselves so that positive action could create a world where people with disabilities are afforded their God given rights.

Among his work, Roger was best known as for his 12 years of hosting and producing the popular "Disabilities Today Show" (now known as "A Wider World"), a weekly production on Detroit Public Television. He served as on the Board of the National and Michigan Chapters of Easter Seals and won a distinguished service award in 2008. He was an active member of the MPVA, The Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan, The Paralympics Games, and The Michigan Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame from which he received a "Lifetime Achievement Award." Roger was

a recipient of the Brooks Royal Award, MPVA highest honor, a Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Detroit; elected 1997 "Michigianian of the Year" by the Detroit News. Furthermore, Roger was an army veteran who served during the Korean War.

I, along with others, will miss my dear friend. But, I know that his spirit and legacy will live on forever in the multitudes of lives that were touched by his compassion and commitment to the disability community. The best compliment I can give Roger is that he left this world a better place to live than when he entered into it.

During President Barack Obama remarks at Senator Ted Kennedy funeral he spoke on how the Senator made it a point to personally write each one of the 177 families of his state who lost a loved on September 11th. To one widow he wrote the following:

"As you know so well, the passage of time never really heals the tragic memory of such a great loss, but we carry on, because we have to, because our loved ones would want us to, and because there is still light to guide us in the world from the love they gave us."

On behalf of the MPVA family, we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife Doris, sons Roger and Daniel; daughters Margaret Sills, Maura Dewan, Bridget Wanczyk and Nancy Howles; six grandchildren; three brothers and four sisters.

Rogers's spirit will live on forever in our hearts and mind!





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

Wheelchair Seating Ticket Policy Concerns

Over the years, I have received numerous complaints regarding the availability of wheelchair seating at venues throughout Michigan. I recently received an inquiry from the Detroit Lions regarding their Transfer Seating Policy. They expressed concerns that the policy has been abused by some guests who purchase less expensive tickets in the upper bowl and then expect to be relocated to the more popular wheelchair seating locations on the more expensive first and second levels.

Because wheelchair seating is so attractive, individuals who do not need these seats have found ways to gain access to tickets, which prevent people who need accessible seating from accessing tickets. When the stadium first opened in 2002, the Detroit Lions indicated they were getting about 200 requests per game for transfer seating. Now, they average about 400 requests per game. To combat this, the Detroit Lions implemented a policy stating that the relocation is only for those who utilize a wheelchair, walker, cane or crutches.

The Detroit Lions were not sure what they could do to improve their wheelchair ticket policy, so they contacted the MPVA wanting assistance in answering the following questions:

- Is it a violation of any law to implement a policy for relocation to wheelchair seating for “only those who utilize a wheelchair, walker, cane or crutches?”
- Can a venue request to view a doctor’s note regarding unseen conditions/disabilities?

Unfortunately, the Department of Justice (DOJ) does not allow venues to ask someone for medical documentation for “proof of disability.” All large venues have issues with the abuse of wheelchair viewing locations by non-disabled fans. However, the major challenge for these businesses is actually to find an appropriate balance for complying with the DOJ’s requirements which prohibit venues from asking for proof of disability, while still working hard to not exclude any fans that may have a disability from enjoying future events at their venue. This puts businesses in a difficult place, especially when the legally recognized information regarding this issue is not written and expressed clearly.

As for the recommendation I made to the Detroit Lions, I suggested that:

Staff should refrain from asking people what their disability is or requesting “proof of a disability” in order to accommodate

cliente, and instead, they should consider asking the question “what kind of assistance do you need?”

To make matters more simple, management should instruct staff to think of these issues less from the “disability-angle” and more from a “quality customer service angle.” By asking questions that are geared towards the needs of the client, staff will be able to better decipher how to make best use of their facilities.

For example, if it can be determined that an individual needs to have an aisle seat with a removable armrest and/or if they are able to climb a few stairs; staff can accommodate them in another location rather than using up the limited number of accessible wheelchair seating locations. Staff should only consider using wheelchair seating locations once all other options have been explored.

When wheelchair and/or transfer seating is required, I recommend that venues create a policy that suggests for patrons to call the ticket office by a certain date and time prior to the event. It should be explained that seating is subject to availability, and the ticket office will make its best effort to provide such tickets in a comparable location to their original tickets if an exchange must be made. Hopefully, this will help alleviate confusion on the day of the event.

Any person needing an accessible seat who holds a ticket in a conventional seating location must be accommodated in an available accessible seating area that provides a seating experience (e.g. sight lines, proximity to the field, yard line placement, etc.) equivalent to or better than the conventional seating area, without any additional cost. It is for that reason that some venues do not sell all their available wheelchair seating because they want to have the ability to accommodate individuals at the last minute.

If an individual resells a wheelchair seating ticket to someone who does not need accessible seating, the venue has the option of moving that person should the space be needed for someone with a disability. Once again, the person must be provided a seating experience (e.g. sight lines, proximity to the field, yard line placement, etc.) equivalent to or better than the conventional seating area, without additional cost.

The venues need to develop policies that promote the inclusion of patrons with disabilities so they may enjoy all of the same opportunities and benefits as patrons without disabilities.

Venues should seek input from patrons with disabilities attending events as well as local disability organizations in the development of policies and procedures. All staff should be trained on policies and procedures for selling tickets and accommodating patrons with disabilities. When policies, procedures and legal obligations are clear for staff, decisions are easy.

I would also encourage venues to develop welcoming statements for visitors, patrons, and guests of all abilities. Welcome statements in brochures and on company websites can be an especially valuable communication tools as it is the first point of contact with patrons who have disabilities. The welcome statement not only says, "Welcome, we are here to serve you," but it also states how to request an accommodation or to reach a specific staff contact at the venue.

The DOJ Needs To Take the Lead in Developing Wheelchair Seating Policy

Creating accessible ticket and accommodation policies inclusive of patrons with disabilities has long been a challenge for operators of performance venues, theaters and sports arenas. Since the passage of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), there has been little guidance set forth by the federal enforcement agencies to assist venues with their accessibility concerns. The technical assistance and guidance materials that are currently available are written in very general terms, leaving venues open to interpretation and possible uncertainty. These uncertainties can lead to potential problems, especially once the Department of Justice (DOJ) adopts the new American with Disabilities Act Architectural Guidelines (ADAAG).

The current standards require that a minimum of 1% of the total number of seats in places of assembly must be designated for wheelchair users. Once the DOJ adopts the new guidelines wheelchair seating requirements would change based on the arena seating capacity; gradually dropping off to only 0.5% with seating capacity exceeding 5,001 seats.

The "gray area" here is in the difference between new construction and existing facilities. As we wait for the DOJ to adopt the proposed standards it is still not known if existing facilities will be allowed to reduce accessibility features already in place.

Meanwhile, various venue operators have inquired about the MPVA's position on the new guidelines that are about to be adopted by the DOJ. The MPVA is prohibited by our bylaws from deviating from federal accessibility guidelines currently required at any given time. MPVA would be supportive of the reduction of wheelchair accessible seating only if existing facilities are given permission to do so by the DOJ and the State of Michigan's Barrier Free Design Board. Many prominent Michigan-based venues have assured us that if wheelchair seating locations are reduced, the MPVA would be called upon to give recommendation on seat reductions.

Unfortunately, in venues throughout Michigan there are several issues that do not have clear guidance from the

DOJ, namely the purchase of tickets and the hold/release of wheelchair seating. For example, can a venue release the wheelchair accessible seating for sale to the general public two weeks prior to the event? Two days? Two hours?

While some venues have clear policies and procedures in place for the release of wheelchair seats for general sale, other venues are not as clear in their policy. With the possible reduction of wheelchair seating in the new design standards coupled with a lack of DOJ guidance on ticket release policies has the potential of eliminating access to venues for large numbers of people who use wheelchairs.

In order for the ADA to be fully realized so that people with disabilities can equally participate in all aspects of American society, the DOJ must begin to play a more active leadership role in providing technical assistance and direction to venue operators so the limited number of wheelchair seating locations will be occupied by legitimate users. This will require a national dialogue among all stakeholders; performance venues and sports industry, enforcement agencies, and people with disabilities to ensure that a balance can be found between the venue's interests in seating revenue while achieving access for people with disabilities.

The DOJ needs to develop technical guidelines that give direction on the most critical issues such as ticket buying and hold/release policies. If we sit back and do nothing, the accessibility gains made under the ADA will have been in vain. It is quite disappointing that after 20 years of the ADA being signed into law by President Bush, we are still having this discussion.

A small investment is all it takes to develop well conceived, clear policies and procedures which ensure both the rights of the person with a disability to have equal access to seating and the right of venues to protect its own interest. Venues should not have to wait until a complaint is filed with the DOJ to discover that their current policies have not been accurately set due to a lack of clear instruction from those that govern over the law themselves.

Sadly, many patrons who visit local venues may become frustrated as they find that their experiences with these businesses are unaccommodating and insufficient. However, what many fail to realize is that the much of the fault is actually not with the venues themselves, it is with those that are failing to accurately articulate the law to these businesses. As economic times are already difficult, we cannot sit back and aid in the downturn of Michigan businesses by letting things get by as "status-quo!" If there is ever a time to make things right, its now—and the responsibility lies with the DOJ! Wellness and recreation activities are social occasions at which people enjoy themselves and make new friends. These are quality of life issues, and when people of different abilities and backgrounds come together, they can develop positive perceptions, break down barriers, and banish stereotypes.





Government Relations & Advocacy

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

For Your Information

As summer has abruptly turned into fall, we have had many important news articles and press releases roll across our desks here at the MPVA. I have taken the liberty of highlighting some of the most important issues happening here in Michigan in the following paragraphs. Please take some time to read through them, and as always, do not hesitate to contact us at MPVA Chapter Headquarters if you have any questions at all!

VA Secretary Shinseki Pledges VA Changes

Recently, VA Secretary Shinseki proposed his plans to make major improvements for returning veterans and their families. This is a crucial undertaking as the benefits we provide to the men and women who have served our country can potentially assist in bettering their future.

The VA Secretary is hoping to increase the VA's budget by 15.1 billion dollars, with plans on increasing Iraqi/Afghanistan veteran programs. Moreover, the announcement demonstrates the real push to reach out and educate veterans who may not be aware of benefits that they are entitled to.

Aging WWII, Korean, and Vietnam veterans seeking claims for ailments of Agent Orange, PTSD, and the current re-opening of medical services for Category 8 veterans has left our VA Hospitals overwhelmed. Couple this with the amount of people losing their jobs and healthcare benefits, we can see how we have more individuals using the VA hospitals than ever before.

Furthermore, in an effort to target homelessness among veterans and provide services to help them get on their feet, Secretary Shinseki also announced that nineteen states, including Michigan, will share over \$17 million dollars in grants to community groups to create 1,155 beds for homeless veterans in 2010. These grants helped

the VA reduce the percentage of homeless veterans last year by 15%.

VA Secretary Shinseki's proposals are absolutely essential to our Michigan veterans—we will be sure to keep a close watch on the progression of these plans in the following months!

VA Suicide Prevention Campaign Expands With On-Line Chat Service

The VA has added thousands of professional counselors over the last four years to improve their mental health program. Now, veterans, their families, and friends can now go online where they can anonymously chat with a trained VA counselor.

There is a suicide prevention helpline (1-800-273-talk) and website available for online chat during at www.suicideprevention-lifeline.org/Veterans.

In addition, even more organizations are finding unique ways to reach out like the VA Suicide Prevention Campaign. The Defense Centers of Excellence is one such entity. By using veterans as spokespersons, The Defense Centers of Excellence started an educational project called "Real Warriors" which urges veterans and their families to reach out for help should they begin to have suicidal thoughts. They also look into issues on dealing with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and treatment for psychological health concerns. Go to www.realwarriors.net and find answers to your questions now!

Change in Policy to Simplify PTSD Claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs will drop the requirement of extraneous proof or validation to prove a stressor-related fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist says the stressful experience recalled by the veteran adequately

supports a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Prior claims required proof for veterans. Therefore, future cases will be less laborious to develop under new guideline. This is a long time coming for many veterans who have had to endure frustrating years of attempting to prove their case.

Agent Orange Compensation Update

Agent Orange, which was used to defoliate trees to expose enemy hiding places in Vietnam, is a herbicide which was exposed to an estimated 2.6 million military personnel. Recently, the VA linked this toxin as a contributor to three more illnesses, which include "B cell leukemia's, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease." These illnesses will now be taken into consideration for "service-connected" illnesses in Vietnam-era veterans.

Vietnam veterans who have a presumed illness do not have to prove association between ongoing illnesses and their military service time. This presumption speeds up benefit claims and hopefully simplifies things. There are now 15 presumed illnesses recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs. To read more about Agent Orange go to: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

VA Medical Centers in Need of Used Clothing

Warm clothes, gloves, and various items are needed by the VA Medical Centers here in Michigan. As you know, Michigan winters can be bitter-cold. Your donation of clean long underwear, white briefs, socks, sweatpants and sweatshirts, and toiletry items like shampoo, deodorant, soap, combs, toothbrushes and toothpaste are desperately needed. You can also donate playing cards, and crossword puzzles.

Call (734) 845-3467 if you have questions about donating, or contact your local VA and ask for the "Voluntary Services Department."

MPVA Lost a Very Dear Friend

We were very sad to hear Roger McCarville of the PBS Program "A Wider World" passed away. He will be missed by everyone at the MPVA and by the whole disability community for whom he did so much for. My thoughts and prayers are with his family as we enter this holiday season! I know we will all surely miss seeing Roger's bright smile!

Take Care, and Happy Holidays to All!



WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

Sam Clymer • Esther Karp

We are proud you are part of the MPVA family!

Thank You MPVA Corporate Sponsors!

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By Charles Henning, Senior National Services Officer

VETERANS' PREFERENCE FOR FEDERAL JOBS

Periodically, I receive phone calls regarding veterans' preference for federal jobs here at the National Service Office in Detroit. Let me explain the process for all veterans seeking veterans' preference:

Since the time of the Civil War, veterans of the U.S. armed forces have been given some degree of preference in the consideration processes for federal jobs. Veterans' preference in its present form comes from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, as amended, and now written in Title 5 of the United States Code.

Specifically, Title 5 was written to set standards and procedures for government organizations and employees. Under the general provisions written, agencies that utilize this law are not required to use any particular appointment process for hiring. Agencies can pick candidates from a number of different special hiring authorities or through a variety of different sources. The decision on which hiring authority the agency desires to use rests solely with the agency.

However, under the terms written by this law, veterans who are disabled, or who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns, are entitled to preference over others when hiring from competitive lists of eligible candidates. To receive preference, the veteran must have received discharged or released from active duty in the U.S. armed forces under honorable conditions (honorable or general discharge). Preference is also provided for certain widows and widowers of deceased veterans who died in service; spouses of service-connected disabled veterans; and mothers of veterans who died under honorable conditions on active duty, or have permanent and total service-connected disabilities. For each of these preferences, there are specific criteria that must be met in order to be eligible to receive the veterans' preference.

Recent changes in Title 5 clarify veterans' preference eligibility criteria for National Guard and Reserve members. The changes now take into consideration any individuals that served active duty for more than 180 consecutive days in the armed forces (other than for training), and of which, any of those days must have occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). The National Guard and Reserve service members must have been discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions.

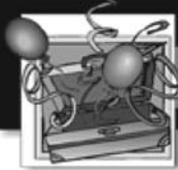
Furthermore, many may not also realize that those who earned the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for service in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) now qualify for veterans' preference under Title 5 as of December 2005. Any Armed Forces Expeditionary medal or campaign badge qualifies for preference. Medal holders must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period of active duty.

When applying for federal jobs, eligible veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Veterans should apply for a federal job by contacting the personnel office at the agency in which they wish to work. For more information, visit <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/> for job openings or help creating a federal resume.

For additional information on Veterans' Preference regulations and terms, visit the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp#2>.



*Sincere Condolences to the family of:
Christos Raftis Werley Vanover Jr
Robert A Hanner Roger McCarville*



BIRTHDAYS



NOVEMBER

Andrea M. Grubbe	November 01
Norman S. Pearson	November 01
Charles R. James	November 02
Arthur D. Radford	November 02
Rudolph M. Sexton	November 03
Anthony J. Borum	November 05
Gerald Weber	November 05
Ronald J. Buhl	November 06
Gordon K. Davis	November 06
Randy M. Krampien	November 07
James P. Ford	November 08
Dennis Mingus	November 08
Roberta S. Dodea	November 09
Robert L. Hopkins	November 09
Robert C. Rayl	November 09
John K. DeBono	November 10
Steve H. Young	November 10
Daniel D. Hicks	November 11
Stanley Kirkpatrick	November 11
Theodore C. Nardin	November 11
Harold A. Walton	November 11
Wilbert E. Carr	November 12
George F. Fogel	November 12
Henry W. Mitchell	November 13
Louise E. Ware	November 14
Zachary Hampton	November 15
Alexander Jefferson	November 15
Richard J. Martindale	November 15
Sandra H. Bennett	November 16
Shane M. Ranta	November 17
Vincent R. Koster	November 19
Thomas J. Lahaney	November 19
Brian A. Davis	November 20
James H. Taratsas	November 20
Michael J. Hornick	November 21
Angela B. Humphries	November 21

Robert W. Jenkins	November 21
Dickie J. Mahlum	November 21
Lorie Walton	November 21
Sanford Kornwise	November 22
James E. Spears	November 22
John D. Acker	November 23
Leslie G. Sanford	November 23
Dennis R. Beaudoin	November 24
Richard K. Pavley	November 25
Robert A. Warren	November 26
Blain Quillin	November 27
William S. Williams	November 27
Kathy A. Adams	November 28
Ronald M. Dennis	November 28
Brenda J. Klemon	November 28
Joseph M. Little	November 28
Joseph Sutika	November 28
Virgil D. Deselm	November 29
James E. Isaacs	November 29
James C. Pampu	November 29
Bernard J. Stanaway	November 29
Philip Walker	November 29
Thomas R. Willard	November 29
Garand F. Rowell	November 30
Quintin Williams	November 30

NOVEMBER

Mark Lasker	December 01
Juanita D. Oleson	December 02
Wesley M. Russell	December 02
Clifton L. Howard	December 03
Raymond D. Vachon	December 03
Carulus E. Giddings	December 04
Leonard J. McCulloch	December 04
Alphonso Riley	December 04
Carl F. Bachle	December 05
Robert C. Calderon	December 06
Johnnie Holmes	December 06

Anthony C. Quaizer	December 06
Richard L. Fezatte	December 07
Michael Miller	December 08
Dollie Linton	December 09
Ralph Beuhler	December 10
Peter C. Scavarda	December 10
Richard S. Wierenga	December 10
James Faust	December 11
Michael A. Armitage	December 13
Edward Price	December 13
Paul A. Etenhoffer	December 14
Andrew Bell	December 15
Robert D. Boyd	December 15
Paul H. Hickman	December 16
Bradley D. Houston	December 16
Robert A. Alpeter	December 17
Sam C. Clymer	December 19
Michael F. Delaney	December 20
Randall C. Bowers	December 21
Arthur S. Madajczyk	December 21
Daniel A. Schoene	December 21
Robert A. Miller	December 22
Russell D. Miller	December 22
David E. Neeson	December 22
William Barz	December 23
Ronald Draheim	December 23
William W. Messeroll	December 23
Charles J. Henning	December 24
Spencer Payne	December 24
Calvin L. Tatum	December 24
Stefan Florescu	December 26
Edward M. Gentile	December 28
Ronald J. Muschong	December 28
Randall F. Miller	December 30
Donald J. Riggins	December 31

Valuable Dates for 2009 & 2010:

- **Salute to Veterans Gala**
Wednesday, November 11, 2009
Time: 6:00 PM
Place: VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI 48152
Registration: \$55 for Dinner, Call Jaclyn Kochis at (248) 476-9000 ext. 06
- **Membership Holiday Party**
Saturday, December 5, 2009
Time: 5:30 PM to 10:00 PM
VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College

18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI 48152
Please contact MPVA Chapter Headquarters at (800) 638-6782 or (248) 476-9000 no later than November 30th to RSVP or to find out more information!

- **Membership Meeting**
Thursday, January 28, 2010
Luncheon begins at 12:00 noon, and the meeting begins at 1:00 PM
(all meetings are on Thursdays at the Novi MPVA office unless otherwise notified)





Sports & Recreation

By Scot Severn, Sports & Recreation Director

A LOOK BACK AT SUMMER 2009



This summer flew by and there were many things that took place that I would like you to know about—from terrific track and field events, to the loss of a good friend that we will never forget. Please read all about it below, and keep your eyes and ears open for updates on upcoming events that you can get involved in!

2009 THUNDER IN THE VALLEY

The 2nd annual Thunder in the Valley Games took place June 19-21st at Saginaw Valley State University. The year, we had 74 participants that competed in: Track and Field, Archery, Air Rifle, Handcycling, Swimming, and Powerlifting. Once again, Wheelin' Team 457 won the "Large Team Award!" Let's help make this one of the nation's premier wheelchair sporting events! You can find out more information and view photos at: www.thunderinthevalleygames.com. *Photos above were taken from the 2009 Thunder in the Valley Games!*

2009 NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

The 2009 National Veterans Wheelchair Games were held in Spokane, Washington. Unfortunately, the Michigan Team has been shrinking over the years and we were down to only 8 athletes this year. Although we fielded fewer athletes, the Michigan Team still brought their best to the table and managed to bring home a pile of medals!

I want to encourage more people to join these exciting games. I am a good example of someone who made the mistake of missing out on about 13 years of this outstanding sporting event. I came into my first year of the games having no idea what the National Veterans Wheelchair Games were about. After I completed the first year, I wish I had been going all along. Do not let that happen to you! Please give me a call at 989-225-7053 or an e-mail

at ssevern@michiganpva.org and join our team. You can check out the games at www.wheelchairgames.va.gov, I promise you will not be disappointed.

THE LOSS OF A GREAT FRIEND

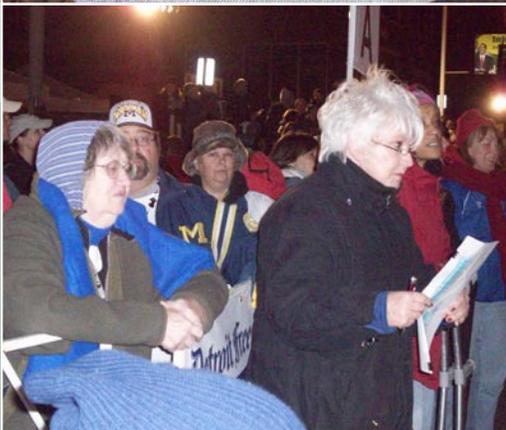
Fifteen years ago, a man chased me down after he saw me leaving a video store in my hometown. He had seen that I was a wheelchair user and wanted to get me involved in a suit against the Tuscola County Courthouse for inaccessibility.

Since I was aware of the accessibility issues at the courthouse, I decided to participate as a witness in the case because I wanted to see something change for the better. Little did I know that I would build a great friendship with an unknown man who chased me down at the video store!

Over the years, I would get to know Roger McCarville so well that I would not even notice if he was there with his camera crew from The PBS Television Show "Disabilities Today" (now called "A Wider World"), or if I was just sitting one-on-one with him. He had a way of making you feel that comfortable. It did not matter what sport or activity we were doing, Roger was always willing to be a part of it. This was a man who was so genuine in his intent to make this world a better place for anyone with a disability; you could not help but love him for it.

I never thought I would see the day that Roger would slow down or stop serving the community in his own special way, and suppose he never really will. I know if he could speak to me now he would tell me that there was a lot of work to still be done. But, I'd tell him, "If I want to visit the Tuscola County Courthouse—I can!"







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November/December 2009



MPVA Annual Holiday Party

MPVA
Members
are invited
to celebrate the
Holidays on Saturday,
December 5, 2009, from
5:30 PM to 10:00 PM at the VistaTech
Center at Schoolcraft College (18600
Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI 48152).
There will be great food, music, gifts,
and laughter! Please contact MPVA
Chapter Headquarters at (800) 638-
6782 or (248) 476-9000 no later than
November 30th to RSVP or to find out
more information! Reservations only,
no walk-in's please!