

RT '10

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Parenting with a Disability: 12 Years Later

Clark & Amy Shuler's Experiences on Parenting Teenage Twin Girls





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



On the Cover:

Roughly 12 years later, MPVA Treasurer, Clark Shuler, writes about his and his wife, Amy's, experiences on being a parent to two lovely teenage daughters. Be sure to read this issues Guest Column to find out more about the Shuler's journey.

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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.

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Clark and Amy's Story

By Clark Shuler

Parenting With A Disability: 12 Years Later

I have never thought of myself as a skeptic, until now. In the last year or so, I find myself asking questions like, "Am I really 51 years old?" I am? I find it hard to believe that I've been living with a spinal cord injury for 22 years. But, I have. Other milestones that I have trouble getting my "arms around" include being involved with MPVA for 20 years, and married for 14 years. But the hardest fact for me to accept is that our little girls are 12 years old!

For those of you who don't know me, I am a C-6/7 quadriplegic. About 13 years ago, my wife Amy and I decided to start a family. For me, this meant visits to the University of Michigan Hospital Department of Urology for electro ejaculation treatments in order to harvest sperm. Without going into detail, let's just say that when I hear people complaining about the water boarding of enemy combatants my reaction is: "whiners!" However, I have to say it was all worth it when we were blessed with the births of our twin daughters, Julia and Brooke.

Shortly after Julia and Brooke were born, I wrote a story for the Rollin' Times about parenting with a disability. Looking back, I can say with certainty that I didn't know the half of it. I'm positively not an expert at child rearing now, but I feel as though I've learned a few things.

One thing I know for sure is that our children are being raised differently than I was. In some respects this represents an improvement, and in some respects it does not. Times are different than they were forty years ago.

The girls are bright, beautiful preteens with the same interests as most girls their age: popular music, animals, and friends among others. Although they are twins, they are fraternal twins. We prefer to think of

them as sisters born eleven minutes apart. They both love to watch television but only rarely watch together as they don't like the same shows. I will say that we do limit the amount of television they watch, one of the aspects that is very different from when Amy and I were twelve. Cable television is a mixed blessing!

When Amy and I were kids, our choices were channels 2, 4, 7, 9. Then along came, not in chronological order, channels 20, 50, 56, and 62. There was plenty of time when "nothing" was on. I try to make that argument today but I don't get very far. My point is that the television is a big draw for our children. The potential for watching too much is very real and insidious. It requires Amy and I to monitor not just for quantity, but for content as well.

It's always been curious to me that, for the last few years, Julia has typically enjoyed age-appropriate programs while Brooke watches "reality" shows. I occasionally watch with each, and though I don't particularly care for either genre, "Cops" does contain some valuable life lessons. Most of them go something like, "THAT'S why you should never take drugs, sweetie."

Another generational difference is scheduling, particularly time for play. Between sports, music lessons, tutoring, and other obligations it can be very difficult to get two kids together on any given day. Kids today seem to be much more tightly scheduled. After school play isn't just a matter of walking over to a friend's house and ringing the doorbell.

This is especially problematic in summer. For the past twelve years, we have spent the last week of June and the first two weeks of July in Northern Michigan at my late parents' home that I share with two of my sisters. Last summer, a great many of Julia and Brooke's friends went to camp and weren't around when we

came home from our time up north. While we very much enjoy being up north for July 4th, we may have to change the dates we have used for twelve years. For me, a typical summer day at the girls' age was to leave the house in the morning and be home by dinner. Not so today.

Lest you think Amy and I spend all our time wringing our hands about too much television and not enough play dates, let me assure you, there is much more to our lives. One thing the girls share is a love of animals. We share our house with a dog, three cats, two guinea pigs, and a handful of goldfish. Brooke has taught Richie, the dog, quite a few tricks and drills him fairly regularly. This may explain why he always sleeps with Julia.

The girls are now in the sixth grade which, at our school, means an increased workload. The school asks parents to become involved minimally to certify that the work is being done. Amy and I try and go beyond that by going over their work with them. I enjoy seeing the progress that they're making in math, spelling and writing. The occasional "Now I get it" reaction makes up for all the "What in the world are you talking about?" looks or utterances I may get following what I thought was a brilliant explanation. Wrong again, Dad!

We've tried to get the girls exercising on a regular basis and they have responded very well, each in their own way. Brooke plays on the school volleyball team. Julia works out on Amy's stair machine, sometimes for

45 minutes or more. I knew that iPod was good for something.

Being the father to two preteen girls is an experience that fathers of preteen boys can't possibly fathom. Around the time our girls learned to walk, I observed that little boys and girls are different. It's my belief they are hard-wired that way. If you say to a six year old girl, "Whatever you do, don't run full speed into that wall over there," she'll look at you and her lips will say "OK" and her eyes will say "Duh." Say the same thing to a six year old boy and he'll run full speed into that wall over there.

From infancy to potty training is difficult regardless of your child's sex. It's my observation that parents of boys do their hard time from birth to around twelve. We're just starting ours. I know I will lean heavily upon Amy to help me understand what's going on, probably for a number of years.

Among the many challenges we face as parents and particularly me as a father, one leaps out at me. That is, to try and impart the ability to discern right from wrong and a strong enough sense of self to say "no" when they know it's wrong! I hope in a few years I can write again and tell you we succeeded.

and four sisters.



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President's Report

By Kevin G. Elya

Reflecting on Veterans Day 2009

On November 11, 2009, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Veterans Day by hosting the 6th Annual "Salute to Veterans" dinner at the Schoolcraft College Vista Tech Center in Livonia, Michigan.



The event was a great success as nearly 250 guests gathered to pay tribute to Michigan's Veterans of the past and present. Guests included Keynote Speaker Lt. Col. Greg Gadson, Master of Ceremony WJBK FOX 2 Weatherman Rich Luterman, Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone, Senator LeBlanc, Representative Anderson and a wide array of proudly decorated service men and women.

I have always been amazed how Americans confuse Veterans Day with Memorial Day. Both holidays celebrate our veterans service, but with one significant difference. Memorial Day honors servicemen who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle. Veterans Day is set aside to thank and honor living and deceased veterans who served honorably in the military, either during wartime or peacetime.

Most people see Veterans Day as a day off from work. At the MPVA, we see it as an opportunity to properly thank veterans for their service to their country. We see it as a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

The keynote speaker at this year's dinner was Lieutenant Colonel Greg Gadson. He was injured in Iraq when an IED attack led to both of his legs being amputated above the knees. To his credit, he did not let the injury define him. Instead, his life is a portrait of courage in the face of great adversity.

Gadson believes that hard work and determination are key factors in overcoming life-altering setbacks. Gadson

remarked that you do not have to serve in the military to give back to one's country. For example, people volunteering in their community can have the same impact.

Community service is about learning to become an active member of your neighborhood, city, and state and create a positive impact on another person's life. No matter how small the contribution, it provides a source of fulfillment and empowerment to us as individuals. A fulfilling and meaningful life is created through service to others. Doing community service grounds your values and morals and helps make the most of your life.

We are truly thankful for the amazing turnout we had at this year's event. This inspirational annual fundraiser is an opportunity to highlight the impact that MPVA programs have played in improving the quality of life for disabled veterans.

I would be remiss if I did not take time out to say thank to some very special people for making this event possible. Because of the support of the MPVA staff, MPVA Board of Directors, MPVA members, MPVA Advisory Committee, volunteers, and sponsors, this year's dinner exceeded all expectations. Every single contribution made a difference.



It's amazing in just six years the Veteran Dinner has turned into MPVA signature event of the year. Because of this, the Chapter has been lifted to a new level in the eyes of our members and guests.

This year's success can be contributed to the direction and leadership of Jaelyn Kochis. In just over a year she has taken the event to heights never seen before. Any



successful event takes organization, focus and a lot of creativity. She, along with our very committed MPVA Advisory Committee Members, brought a focus to the event that was lacking in previous years.

All the hard work and attention to detail made this year's "Salute to Veterans" veterans dinner a

huge success. At the end of the evening everyone I spoke with commented on how enjoyable and inspirational the dinner had been. In fact, the greatest compliment you can receive is a person asking you to invite them again next year!

To our sponsors, the MPVA would like to thank you for your charitable contributions. Given the tough economic times sponsors could render their regrets and quietly back off. They did not, their support this year has been nothing short of magnificent.

A Hero's Best Friend

The adoption of an Iraqi dog by a Michigan family could be made into a Hollywood movie. It all started when Army Major Steven Hutchison's unit was paroling in Basra, and they came across a puppy no more than 1 month old. He was alone, dirty and starving. Major Hutchison was informed that they would have to euthanize the dog unless they adopted her.

As policy, soldiers are not supposed to adopt strays. When a senior officer ordered Hutchison to get rid of the dog or face disciplinary action, Hutchison sent her into hiding with a friend at a far outpost on the border of Iran. The puppy broke free and ran away, returning one day to Hutchison's base with a broken leg.

Major Hutchison, a decorated Vietnam veteran, came out of retirement at the age of 59 to fight in Iraq. Father of two grown daughters he had wanted to rejoin the military after the 9/11 attacks, but was talked out of it by his wife. After she died of cancer in 2006, Hutchison re-enlisted as an adviser to Iraqi forces.

Hutchison died in May of 2009. He was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his truck. At 60, he was the oldest to die in Iraq war. But Laia lived on.

The day Hutchison was killed, Laia was spotted chained up outside a tent by Jerry Deaven, an employee of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Detroit. He

On behalf of MPVA and we thank the 850,000 Michigan Veterans for a job well done.

I would like to take a moment especially thank the following groups and individuals for supporting our 2009 6th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala:

Lt. Col. Greg Gadson, Rich Luterman, Robin Bennett, Brigadier General Fausone, Nancy Langley, Josie Boore, The Deaven Family and Laia, Patty and Tony Soma, Cheryl Angelelli, Mary Bujold, Sue Burstein-Kahn, Linda DeVore, The VistaTech Center, Post 216 of Milford, Veterans of Modern Warfare Southeast Michigan Chapter 4, Aetna, American House Senior Living, Associated Community Services, Adult Well Being Services, Burke Video, Calvary House, Fausone Bohn LLC Attorneys at Law, Foundation For American Veterans, Gresham Driving Aids, Health Partners, Huron Valley Professional Center, Litho Services, Prisoner of War Committee of Michigan, Rehab Institute of Michigan, SKF, The Senior Alliance, Trillacorpe, UAW Region 1, University of Phoenix, University of Michigan AFROTC, Wright & Filippis

God bless our men and women in uniform. God bless our Veterans!



was visiting Iraq to research terrorist funding.

When Deaven inquired what would happen to the dog he was informed that if he did not take the dog they would have to put the dog down. After contacting his wife, Colleen, at their home in Brighton, without hesitation she said she wanted Laia.

In June, the Deaven family met Laia for the first time at Metropolitan Airport. After taking Laia to a veterinarian it was determined that her leg never healed correctly and had to be amputated in July.

The adoption of Laia by the Deaven family not only preserved the life of the pup, but honored the memory of Army Major Steven Hutchison as well.

The Deaven family honored us by attending this year's Salute to Veterans Gala with Laia. After meeting Laia it became obvious why "a dog is man's best friend" and in this case, a hero's best friend.





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

MPVA Partners with Wayne State University

A professor from the Wayne State University (WSU) School of Law recently contacted Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) to see if we were interested in assisting his students in challenging Detroit supermarkets not in compliance with federal accessibility guidelines. Supermarkets throughout Detroit have installed cart corrals with "flag" gates (locked gates). These cart corrals are designed to prevent shopping carts from leaving the area adjacent to the store, but flag gates block access for many people using wheelchairs from independently accessing the facility.

This issue has been a thorn in my side since I started working for MPVA in 1996. For years, we tried to get the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for the city of Detroit to intervene on our behalf but were not successful in doing so. The city of Detroit's lackadaisical attitude towards this problem of inaccessibility was a disappointment since shopping cart corrals were only found in Detroit. Essentially, the city of Detroit was sending a negative message to individuals with disabilities. It was for that reason that MPVA was happy to work with WSU on this issue.

After investigating several locations throughout Detroit, we were able to conclude that all the supermarkets violated Title III of the ADA because the flag gates at the security bollards did not provide a minimum clearance of 32 inches, and the only accessible entrance through the security bollards was through a locked gate. It is important to note that at each location I waited for over ten minutes in front of the shopping cart corrals and was never noticed by an employee. The problem that most wheelchair users encounter is that employees are often too occupied to notice if someone using a wheelchair needs admittance.

Title III of the ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability in public accommodations. The term "public accommodations" covers a wide array of facilities and services, whether owned privately or publicly. Places of public accommodation, such as supermarkets, are mandated by federal law to remove physical barriers so that persons with disabilities can access the same goods and services as non-disabled individuals. By not allowing wheelchair users to independently access the supermarket they are not

meeting the requirements of the ADA.

Most shopping cart corrals are spaced approximately 21 inches apart to prevent the passage of the typical shopping cart; which is usually 22 inches across at its widest point. The narrowest allowable passage space allowed under the ADA is 32 inches. The ADA regulations state that "any device used to prevent the removal of shopping carts from store premises shall not prevent access or egress of people in wheelchairs." (Accessibility Guidelines 7.4)

In 1996, MPVA proved in their lawsuit against Save-A-Lot supermarket that there is a way to provide a "win-win" situation for everyone involved. Management at Save-A-Lot came up with a design that accomplished both objectives: a shopping cart corral in the front entrance of the store which would prevent theft and an entrance that allowed customers using wheelchairs to have free access into the facility.

Supermarkets throughout Detroit now have an opportunity to make structural changes that will have a far-reaching impact and better ensure that all of its customers have a pleasant shopping experience. Having wheelchair users wait outside until an employee opens the locked gate is not an acceptable option.

Throughout the years, MPVA has worked closely with public and private entities statewide to make positive changes resulting in equal access and participation by people with disabilities. The law cannot act on its own. Partnerships we form with area businesses and organizations can bring the ADA to life, enabling people with disabilities to independently access facilities in and around their communities without encountering architectural and attitudinal barriers.

Such cooperative efforts have created the accurate perception that ADA implementation need not be an adversarial activity, but can be accomplished through partnerships and direct communication among those having a stake in compliance.

Sleeping Experience for Wheelchair Users Has Become A Nightmare

I recently wrote a letter to the Department of Justice (DOJ)

to educate them on an issue that has been overlooked for years. My frustration stems from the fact there are no accessibility guidelines that regulate the height of beds in hotel rooms. What started out as a good-will gesture to enhance the sleeping experience has become a nightmare for wheelchair users.

I have received numerous calls from MPVA members regarding a disturbing and ever increasing problem with beds in hotel rooms. With the common use of deeper mattresses, beds have become too high to safely transfer onto from a wheelchair. It has become commonplace within the lodging industry to place extra padding on mattress that may significantly raise the height of a bed. This creates a problem for wheelchair users who are required to make lateral transfers from their wheelchair to the bed. Since many wheelchair users must use the bed as a dressing bench, a transfer may be performed several times per day. Bed heights in some places have been increased to as high as 30 inches or more.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has profoundly changed how society views and accommodates people with disabilities. Nineteen years after its passage the importance of the ADA cannot be denied. It has put a spotlight on accessibility, universal design, and the idea of equal opportunity for those of us who live with disabilities.

Even though progress has been made, recent events illustrate that we still have our work cut out for us in trying to create an environment where all citizens are treated equally. The ADA requires hotels and motels to make a certain number of rooms accessible. But with that regulation comes one glaring

omission: there are no written specifications for bed heights.

Unfortunately, since the ADA did not specify the importance of bed height in consideration of wheelchair access, changes to the federal accessibility codes are necessary. I propose a reasonable range for accessible bed height for DOJ consideration; for example, 18-22 inches above finished floor (common adult full-size wheelchair seat height). This accommodation can be easily made because a range of accessible bed heights is already in place for the mattress industry, and therefore, this information is readily available and would not pose a substantial or unreasonable cost impact to the provider.

Today, the DOJ defines the height of a standard toilet seat for accessible hotel rooms and lodging areas. Yet, the DOJ is silent on an acceptable height range for beds in accessible rooms. In my opinion, if bed height is not regulated, there is little point in labeling a room as accessible. In order to fulfill the promise of the ADA, it is important that the DOJ review standards to see if an improvement can be made on accessibility issues that are known to be problematic. The MPVA believes that a standard bed height would be considered an issue that would fall into the category of an "accessibility issue that is known to be problematic."

I am hopeful that the DOJ will take the lead in addressing an issue that would go a long way to ensuring that wheelchair users can have an enjoyable lodging experience. Let's create an environment where the welcome mat truly welcomes everyone.



Thank You for Your Support:





Government Relations & Advocacy

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

A look Back at 2009, and What's to Come for 2010

This past year has been a tremendously historical year to have lived through! Here at the MPVA, we were able to continue working on some extraordinary projects. From our Annual Open House during PVA Awareness Week, to the Memorial Day Parade and Salute to Veterans Gala, we have kept ourselves very busy.

One item that was particularly exciting this year was the installation of the Fuel Call Button at various gas stations throughout Michigan. Through this project, we have been able to recognize the Marathon fuel industry and its service stations for signing on to the Fuel Call program and build some lasting relationships. Developments like the Fuel Call are great opportunities for the MPVA to recognize and award businesses and school districts for their work towards the betterment of potential or existing accessibility issues. Another highlight of 2009 involving accessibility was the MPVA's work with Wayne State University (WSU). Currently, WSU is reworking their transition plan, and implementing changes to their campus and website accessibility. We will be sure to keep you posted on this development during the New Year.

We have also encountered many obstacles and challenges during 2009. On the legislative front, we have had to stand by as very difficult decisions were made. As we reflect on this past year, we are able to see how far we have progressed from the dire days of March when we heard reports of doom and gloom as the state battled with the budget and stood watch as services that involved veterans, education, senior citizens and many others were put in jeopardy. Since then, we were able to witness some very positive news as advance funding for delivery of medical services was approved— a change that will benefit millions of veterans. As this was a huge

topic for Veterans Service Organizations in 2009, we were proud to see that all of our advocacy and vigilance paid off when this bill was finally passed.

Looking forward, there are so many issues and developments that will affect all of us in 2010. Here are a few items of interest for you to keep an eye on:

Social Security Department— For the first time since 1975, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Benefits will not receive an automatic Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase. Michael Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, is working to help Americans maintain their standard of living. Last year, when consumer prices spiked, mostly from high gas prices, beneficiaries received a 5.8 percent COLA, the largest amount increase since 1982. Because consumer prices have been down over the past year, these benefits will not see an increase in 2010. To offset this, under President Obama's economic stimulus plan, 57 million Americans will receive a check for \$250. Please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola to find out more information and to see who qualifies.

VA Home Loan Guaranty Program— Many of our Michigan residents including veterans are struggling financially. Although home foreclosures have decreased, Michigan is still the sixth highest state in the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, has recently called the VA's Home Loan Program a "continued success" as the VA's percentage of loans in foreclosure measures less than all other home loan types, including prime loan, requiring high credit scores. Home loans obtained under the VA's Home Loan Guaranty Program number about 1.3 million. In opting to use this loan, veterans become more capable to maintaining home ownership and lenders benefit from the protection it offers should the loan-holder become

unable make their payments. Overall, this program demonstrates a healthy balance in what is considered to be a volatile market.

Those that are able to tap into this resource include active-duty members, some surviving spouses. You can find out more information by visiting <http://www.homeloans.va.gov> or calling 1-877-827-3702.

Census Reminder– It is the New Year, and census time is upon us. There are individuals out there who may not realize how important it is to give this information to the census taker, either by sending in the mailer, or taking the time to answer questions if a census worker comes to your door. The data our government receives affects many different programs (police, fire, and capital improvements) which receive funds proportioned to the size of numbers received. Visit www.census.gov the home page to find out more information regarding this topic.

Veterans' Salute During National Anthem- It was brought to our attention at the MPVA that Veterans and service members not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem. While this change took place in October 2008, many veterans may not be aware of this unique gesture.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veteran's service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The most recent change, included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by Senator

Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform service members during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect January 28, 2008. (Courtesy of VA News)

Thank you to MPVA member, Jim Taratsas, for bringing this information to our attention! Please keep this information in mind while you are out and about at events in 2010!

The New Year, New Pressure- We completed all of our decorating, baking, and shopping, and now it's the New Year and we have new pressures, resolutions, and expectations hanging over our heads! At least that is how it may feel for many. Fourteen million adults, or approximately 1 out of 6, are affected by stress, anxiety, and depression at some time in their lifetime.

Individuals who serve in active duty are often away from home and their families can find themselves experiencing depression. Military personnel or families can go to www.afterdeployment.com to learn more about different ways to attempt to handle depression. There are sessions on how to sleep better, how to improve relationships, how to adjust thinking about war memories, loss of loved ones, or other issues that may be difficult to deal with.

Remember, you are not alone. The help you need is out there! My New Year wish to you and yours is for love and peace in your home and your heart. Try to count your blessings not your sorrows, and have a wonderful winter! Happy New Year!



WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

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We are proud you are part of the MPVA family!



By Charles Henning, Senior National Services Officer

ELIGIBILITY FOR WHEELCHAIRS FROM THE VA

In my article this month, I would like to discuss eligibility for wheelchairs from the VA. The VA can give you wheelchairs to help you overcome the limitations imposed by your disability(ies) if you meet the established criteria for receiving prosthetic services. Your eligibility for issuance of equipment is determined by the prosthetic service at your local VA medical facility. According to The Veterans' Healthcare Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, eligibility for equipment is the same for both inpatient hospital care and outpatient medical services. This law repealed the former requirement that certain care was only be provided in preparation for hospital admission, or to prevent the need of hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, or outpatient care.

More specifically, the eligibility criteria for prosthetic services include the following:

- A disability that requires the use of a wheelchair, even though one may be able to stand and transfer
- A temporary disability and no special features or modifications to the wheelchair are required
- An anatomical loss or loss of use of both legs, or one leg, combined with the loss of use (or severe impairment) of the other leg, which requires the constant and continued use of a wheelchair
- An anatomical loss of use of at least one leg, which prevents participation in normal sports activities

How Do I Obtain a Wheelchair?

All requests for prosthetic appliances and services to a VA Medical Center are referred to its prosthetic services for action and disposition. This includes requests made in person, by telephone, or by mail.

Your request for a wheelchair will likely be referred to the facility's prosthetic clinic team or major medical equipment committee for finalization of the medical prescription. If there are no teams at your facility, a VA staff physician will examine you and determine your medical need and prescribe the wheelchair and any necessary accessories.

The prosthetic clinic team consists of a physician, a rehabilitation therapist, and a prosthetics representative. The physician will write the actual prescription for the wheelchair after consultation with the rehabilitation therapist, prosthetics representative, and patient. The prosthetics

representative will purchase the wheelchair, follow up on the order, expedite delivery if necessary, help set up the wheelchair, and ensure that training is provided on the safe operation of the wheelchair. The prosthetics representative also recovers used wheelchairs and equipment, when those items are no longer needed by the user.

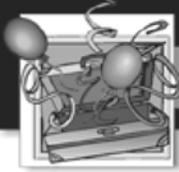
Medical feasibility and your need for a wheelchair are determined through a physical examination, which is generally performed by the physician or a therapist who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He or she should measure and fit you for a wheelchair at the examination. If you are hospitalized, the examination will be conducted the hospital. If you are an outpatient, the examination is conducted at the VA facility closest to your home.

Most often the type of wheelchair is selected after careful discussion between the patient, physician or therapist, and prosthetics representative. You may choose the manufacturer, type, and color of your wheelchair, unless your choice is medically inappropriate for your needs. If you are not sure of a specific manufacturer, the prosthetics service personnel will tell you about the products available from all manufacturers under VA contracts to provide wheelchairs.

VA lends wheelchairs when patients require them for short periods of time (one year or less), such as when patients have temporary disabling conditions. VA makes periodic follow-ups at 6- and 12-month intervals. Veterans may take these wheelchairs with them if they move. Veterans who lose eligibility for prosthetics services are notified that their eligibility has been terminated. VA may recover any items from veterans or decide to issue the wheelchairs permanently. Direct any questions concerning the status of your appliances to your local prosthetics chief or PVA representative.

You may wish to discuss the specific process used by your VA medical center with the facility's prosthetics representative or your PVA National Service Officer. In addition, if you or someone you know is in need of a wheelchair, but is not enrolled in the VA, or may need to borrow a wheelchair, you can always contact the MPVA Chapter Headquarters. MPVA has a loan closet that typically has wheelchairs available for use. You can contact the Chapter by calling (800) 638-6782.





BIRTHDAYS



JANUARY

Raymond A. Todd January 01
 Melvin G. Eisenberg January 02
 Eugene J. Cole January 04
 Raymond D. Hill January 04
 Terry L. Laurain January 05
 Matthew W. Nedela January 05
 Jerome A. Winston January 05
 Michael V. Hall January 06
 Joe T. Harvey January 06
 William L. Watts January 06
 Thomas M. Durkee January 07
 Richard R. Ference January 07
 Laverne W. Coleman January 08
 Patrick L. Smith January 08
 Marc P. Ferguson January 09
 Paul E. Goodpaster January 09
 John W. Hart January 10
 Raymond H. Mays January 10
 Roy J. Randolph January 10
 Leonard J. Sposato January 10
 Michael J. Manfrom January 11
 Chester J. Grew January 12
 Michael J. McMahon January 12
 David G. Peck January 12
 James E. Hillaker January 13
 Gary E. Klatt January 13
 Mary E. Dingeldej January 14
 William B. Milzarski January 15
 Richard A. Crawley January 16
 John T. Koehler January 16
 Timothy A. Berczel January 17

Michael J. Marko January 17
 James C. Pittman January 17
 Debra J. Hoogerhyde January 18
 John E. Tominac January 18
 Dennis Minnifield January 20
 Robert M. Lareau January 22
 Peter J. Pappas January 22
 Randall Charon January 23
 Joan Hamilton-Walker January 23
 Maurice L. Jordan January 24
 Robert D. Boyd January 25
 Tameka R. Citchen January 25
 Leon S. Tallman January 25
 Alexander M. Urquhart January 27
 Pasquale Perna January 29
 Darrell Robins January 29
 George B. Whitehead January 29
 Fred Lauback January 30
 Vernon R. Bach January 31
 Rebecca A. Forbes January 31

FEBRUARY

Claude G. Curry February 01
 Raymond E. Langley February 01
 Pauline P. Littles February 01
 Richard V. Voss February 04
 Joseph L. Yax February 04
 Cheryl A. Vatcher-Bunke February 05
 Charles E. Armour February 06
 David M. Cohen February 06
 John V. Miron February 06
 Bradley J. Anderson February 07
 Nick Ivan February 07

Donna L. Calderon February 08
 Anthony McNeal February 09
 Paula H. Shuler February 09
 Robert M. Vance February 09
 Diane L. Dusa February 10
 Charles P. O'Loughlin February 10
 Arturo Torres February 12
 Haile Garrison February 13
 Jackie Lyons February 13
 Angeline C. LeVasseur February 14
 Gregory L. Union February 14
 James F. Hogg February 15
 Larry D. Anderson February 16
 Roberta Brezzell February 16
 Gregory L. Herban February 16
 James W. Suhay February 16
 Kenneth V. Giorgio February 17
 Anthony T. Bush February 19
 Gary D. Houghton February 19
 William A. Oltersdorf February 20
 Calvin P. Aldrink February 24
 Wendell J. Thompson February 24
 Bobby Bryant February 25
 Eddie J. Collier February 25
 Gary L. Cunningham February 25
 Shannon L. Rhodes February 26
 Eric A. Appleberry February 27
 Adis A. Laws February 27
 Anthony A. Nemeskal February 27
 Diane E. Norton February 27

Sincere Condolences to the family of:

Alvin Bronstetter Richard Wierenga Blain Quillin

Valuable Dates for 2010:

- 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 Dave Clemens, Communications Directors, Wheelin' Team 457

Wheelin' Team 457 2009 Deer Hunt



In October of every year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) allows sportsmen and women with physical disabilities to hunt deer from a motorized vehicle. These hunters are required to have a Standing Vehicle Permit issued by the MDNR under certain guide lines that qualify them for the permit.

For the past 6 years, Wheelin' Team 457 has organized a deer hunt in October. This year, 17 hunters teamed up at Lions Bear Lake Camp. The hunters were supported by approximately 60 volunteers doing various duties from guiding to processing. In addition, Hunting Director, John

Stockdale, had contacted Quality Deer Management asked them to hold a seminar for our hunters and guides so that they would understand the best ways to harvest and help Michigan's deer herd stay healthy. It was very informative and we all learned something.

Some of the memories made that weekend were the following:

Ray Brown, President and Founder of Wheelin' Team 457, was one of the first to score big with the aid of his friend and guide, Roger Wilcox. Hunting in spot that has proven



successful for them in past hunts, Ray was able to harvest a large 8 point buck and a mature doe. The buck was taken to one of the local processors for butchering and the doe was brought back to camp where a team of volunteers packaged the meat. Ray donated some of his harvest to other hunters in the camp, and more of it will be used for our wild game dinner held on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter.

Tom Coward, a disabled Vietnam veteran, also had a very successful hunt. His guide, Tim Filarski, helped Tom bring in the largest buck of the weekend. Tom's 10 pointer won the "Big Buck Trophy." He also harvested two doe that he took to his church and distributed to families in need; the kind of spirit that makes us proud of our members!

One of the best stories was from one of our first time hunters, Mike Destalrath. Mike, who we met at the "Wood N' Water Outdoor Show" in Imlay City, Michigan, was convinced by Carol Clemens, Event Coordinator, to join us in our hunt this year. Mike was uncertain about coming, but decided to join us anyway and brought along his father, also named Mike (who we soon nicknamed "Big Mike"). Mike's guides

for the hunt were LD Thompson and Jim Smith. Together, they brought in a very nice 9 pointer on their first hunt! The experience proved to be a lot of fun for all!

Dale Woiden was another hunter that went home with venison for his freezer, thanks to his guide, Les Secord. They left Saturday morning and came back in the afternoon with a nice buck! Dale, who is from a family of hunters that hunt the Upper Peninsula, was out for the first time with Wheelin' Team 457. During the hunt, Les told us that Dale is full of enthusiasm, and never lets his disability hold him back! Dale certainly confirmed his ability to hunt when he made a well-placed 120 yard shot that weekend.

Other hunters, Rodney Jones and Bob Wilcox, were successful again after teaming up together for the last 5 years. The first day out they saw about 10 different bucks. The next day, they went out and spotted a nice 5 pointer just before dark. Rodney took his time and Bob looked on. When the buck finally made a turn to give the Rodney the correct angle, the shot went off and we had ourselves another buck to hang in our camp.

After the hunt was over, everybody came back into the camp and we were able to give out a few door prizes. We also gave out certificates of appreciation to the guides who we cannot thank enough for their time and effort! They help to make the weekend a success for the hunters.

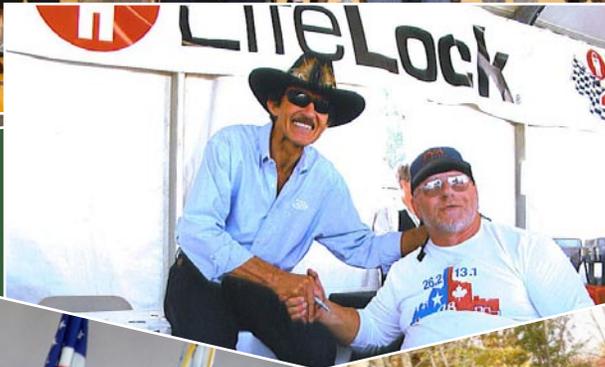
One of the awards was donated by Terry Cavanaugh of TC Taxidermy, who kindly gives away a shoulder mount every year to lucky hunter whose name is pulled from the hat of hunters who got a deer. This year, it was Rodney Jones who won. Then, it was time to award the "Ernie Leach Big Buck Trophy" which was proudly given to Tom Coward. This trophy was awarded by Jim Smith and LD Thompson. We also gave "Successful Hunter Certificates" to all the hunters that came out to hunt with us whether they got a deer or not.

We decided years ago that success is measured in many ways, not just by what you take home for your freezer but what you take home in your heart. That goes for all of us whether you are in the chair or the one pushing it through the mud to get to the blind!

It was a busy weekend with lots of things to do but with the help of our volunteers, it went smooth and we are all looking forward to next year. For information on this hunt next year, you can contact Ray Brown at 989-225-9259.



Snapshots from 2009!





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January/February 2010

*The MPVA
would like to wish you a very
happy and healthy
New Year!*