

RT '10

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



The 2010 Detroit Free Press Marathon Wheelers get ready for their cue to start the race on Sunday, October 17, 2010.





On the Cover:

The 2010 Detroit Free Press Marathon took place this past October and the MPVA was the sponsor of the Handcycle/Wheelchair Division. The event was a great success! See MPVA President, Kevin Elya's, article and the inside back cover of this issue for more details.

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Published by
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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

2010 Detroit Marathon A Success

The 2010 Detroit Free Press Marathon was a success—especially for our Wheelers and Hand Cyclist that were able to all complete and finish the race in under four hours! This year brought forth great weather and some very inspiring stories regarding those who were out

to compete in the Wheelchair/Hand Cycle Division of the race. One such story came out of the Detroit Free Press and if you did not have a chance to read it, we thought it was well worth sharing with you again!

Racing a rebirth for Flint's Nick Koulchar after being wounded in Iraq

BY SHAWN WINDSOR FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

Nick Koulchar quit college when his father died and wound up scraping asbestos in abandoned buildings in Detroit. He took the work to pay for the mortgage he acquired when he lost his dad. Koulchar had a younger brother, Mike, to guide — his mother left the picture when they were toddlers — and there weren't many options for a 20-year-old community-college dropout.

The Flint-area native managed to hang on for almost four years before youth and poor decisions led to foreclosure. He needed a drastic change.

"The military seemed nice and drastic," Koulchar said.

Some two years later — in September 2008 — Koulchar woke from a two-week coma at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. His legs were gone. For the next 19 months, representatives with Achilles International's Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans tried to convince Koulchar that tackling a marathon in a hand-crank wheelchair could be a springboard to a new life. For most of those months, the wounded, heavily medicated veteran dismissed the sales pitch.

Then last winter, as his doctors dialed down the pain pills and antidepressants and anti-anxiety meds, Koulchar began emerging from the haze, and agreed to try the hand-crank.

His first race was in June, through Central Park in New York City. His next race is Sunday, through the streets of Detroit and Windsor, where the 28-year-old will attempt his first marathon in the 33rd Detroit Free Press Marathon.

There are thousands of reasons we pursue 26.2 miles of concrete and pain, and surely most of them will be on display this weekend, surging right alongside Koulchar, a young man rediscovering how to live again.

Roll of his life

His job was called "route clearance," which means, Koulchar explained, that "most of the time you are driving really slowly, hoping nothing happens."

This is exactly what he was doing Aug. 25, 2008, in a Baghdad suburb known as Sadr City, driving slowly, looking for roadside bombs, hoping nothing happens, clearing the way for combat operations pulling up the rear. Suddenly, a bomb exploded 30 yards from the road. This particular explosive was designed to throw a directional blast. Koulchar's vehicle received all that force, strong enough to penetrate the armor and essentially ping-pong within.

"I was the gunner, standing up top when it hit me in the legs," he recalled.

He tried to climb out but fell down as soon as he shifted his weight. He saw his legs were still there, but he knew "they were done." He dragged himself out and was eventually loaded onto a helicopter.

"The last thing I remember was staring at the stars in the night sky," he said. "I was thinking of my brother."

His brother, Mike Koulchar, was preparing to start fall classes at Saginaw Valley State. Nick had encouraged Mike to attend college, and tried to send money when he could. His own academic career fell apart when their father died in 2002, when Nick was just short of his associate's degree at Mott Community College in Flint.

He quit, took a general laborer job in Detroit ripping out asbestos in abandoned homes and old schools, and tried to make payments at his father's house in Montrose, a small community 20 miles northwest of Flint, where he and his brother had grown up. Their mother had left the family picture when they were toddlers.

Koulchar spent the next four years in a kind of aimless stupor, grieving his father's death, uncertain where he should turn. Unable to keep up the mortgage, he lost his home to foreclosure in 2006. He knew he needed a shake-up and figured the Army would provide it.

He left for basic training in Missouri before spending 11 months in Germany. In early 2008, he was sent to Kuwait for staging, then pushed into Iraq and began looking for bombs.

It's not easy when you seek out the thing that ends up tearing you apart, but Koulchar learned to digest the daily tension during the roadside bomb sweeps.

"I tell people that 95% of the time, you are just trying to stay alert," he said.

That other 5% is where a life is quickly altered -- or ended. Koulchar understands that he was fortunate to survive the bomb that cost him his legs. Sometimes, it just takes awhile to get there and realize it.

When he woke up a couple of weeks after the starry-skied helicopter ride, he told the doctor standing over him at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington that he wanted to go back and finish the fight.

He knew his legs were gone. "But I didn't want to believe it," he said. "It's hard to explain."

For the rest of 2008 and most of 2009, Koulchar lived at Walter Reed, endured dozens of surgeries and took an 18-pill regimen to fight everything from infection to depression to post-traumatic stress syndrome. Much about that time is fuzzy to him. But he knows a few things about it: that he spent excruciating time in physical therapy, he befriended a handful of fellow soldiers also trying to learn to re-enter the world, and his brother was always at his side.

Mike left Saginaw Valley State as soon as he got word that his brother had been injured. He met Nick at Walter Reed and was there when he awoke from the coma. He lived with him in family housing at the complex and lives with him still -- the two moved to an apartment in nearby Silver Spring, Md.

The toughest part for Nick is that "it's like starting all over as a baby," he explained. "But you have this life you have already lived, so you know it can be done in an easier way -- only now you can't do it."

Mike, 26, is there to help his big brother fight through that and spends most of his day with him. He is part errand-runner, part cheerleader, part chauffeur, part counselor. The brothers live on Nick's Social Security and a few dollars Mike makes moonlighting as a goodwill ambassador at a local restaurant.

Both know it won't always be this way; that Nick eventually will learn to use his prosthetic legs; that he will work again; that Mike will get back to school some day. That future is what helps them get up every day and get to physical therapy

at Walter Reed.

Racing helps, too. After rebuffing offers from Achilles International's Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans to compete in marathons using a hand-crank wheelchair, Koulchar decided to give it a shot last winter. By June, he was racing on a 5-mile course in Central Park in New York City, the wind whipping his face, ripping through a place bursting with possibility.

"It gave me a sense of independence," he said. "It was just outstanding."

The surge Koulchar said he felt in New York buoyed his commitment, and he began spending hours every week riding the chair or working a stationary hand-bike at Walter Reed. Eventually, he called Achilles and asked if they would help him race in the Detroit Free Press Marathon. He wanted to go home.

Koulchar, 28, spent all day Thursday riding with his brother from D.C. to Michigan. Unfortunately, he'd made the same trip just a week earlier, to attend the funeral of Alex Knapp, a fellow double amputee he'd befriended at Walter Reed. Knapp, who'd grown up in Shelby Township, died of a heart attack Oct. 2 while playing sled hockey in Big Rapids. He was 24.

"I'd only known him about two years," Koulchar said of Knapp. "But we went through the same thing. A lot of us meet when we are most vulnerable."

Doctors suggested Knapp's heart attack might have been related to his injuries. That news jolted Koulchar, who remains heavier than he'd like to be.

"It most definitely motivates me to want to continue stay active," he said. "It's kind of an eye-opener and makes me curious about my own situation."

His long-term goal is to learn to walk by next summer and move to Florida, possibly Tampa, and enroll in college. He wants to study hospitality management and open up a casual place where customers can get a good plate of food and a beer. His brother will enroll again, too, and study photography. Whether he graduates and returns to Michigan, he doesn't know -- he still has cousins in the Flint area.

Koulchar's short-term goal begins Sunday morning, in the dark, on Fort and Second, surrounded by thousands of competitors. He expects his brother to be among the throng cheering him on, along with a few of his cousins and the Knapp family.

"I will try to (finish) in two hours," he said.

"After that, the road is wide open."





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

MPVA Files Complaint against the Palace

In the summer of 2009, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America filed a complaint with the Department of Justice (DOJ) against the Palace of Auburn Hills claiming that they have not met their obligations under Title III of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

On August 26th, 2010, investigators from the DOJ conducted a survey of the Palace to gather evidence of potential ADA violations. Because of the enormity of task at hand the final report probably will not be completed until sometime next year. Prior to conducting the site review we informed the investigators that the Palace has similar issues that the University of Michigan football stadium had: the lack of wheelchair seating properly dispersed throughout the seating bowl.

Attending events at the Palace has been a very frustrating experience. Wheelchair users have been excluded from the most popular sections. They are routinely left to sit in wheelchair seating locations behind both backboards (sections 107 and 120) or in the concourse area next to the press box (sections 203 and 229). These locations offer poor views to the basketball floor and isolate wheelchair users from enjoying the basketball experience in the same manner as the rest of the spectators. In fact, televisions were placed in the wheelchair sections so people attending the game could have a better perspective of what was taking place on the court.

This violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which states that "facilities with more than 300 seats," such as The Palace of Auburn Hills, "are required to offer wheelchair seating so that persons who use wheelchairs have a range of admission prices and views from which to choose from." Also, the seating capacity of 22, 076 at the Palace does not meet the 1 percent wheelchair seating threshold. Currently, there are only

about 30 wheelchair seating locations.

According to ADA provisions, every business is under at least some obligation to become accessible.

Title III of the ADA requires businesses to remove physical barriers so that persons with disabilities can access the same goods and services as non-disabled individuals. Businesses housed in facilities constructed before 1992 must only make changes that are "readily achievable." This means changes are required if they are easily accomplished and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.

A common misconception about the ADA is that a "grandfather clause" exists that exempts businesses based on the time they have been in operation from having to comply with the ADA. While it is true that this clause requires buildings constructed and occupied prior to January 26, 1992 to make only "readily achievable" changes, no such exemption exists for businesses themselves.

In 1989, MPVA filed a lawsuit in Michigan Circuit Court alleging the Palace of Auburn Hills was in violation of Michigan Barrier Free Design Guidelines. Michigan laws require anything built after 1974 to be done so in compliance with Michigan Barrier Free Design Guidelines.

MPVA ended up dropping the case because of a lack of confidence that we would get a successful outcome. The prevailing belief was that the Barrier Free Design Board would have granted the Palace an exception of having to comply with Michigan accessibility guidelines. This process of allowing the Board to grant an exception was created by the Michigan legislature in 1974.

Now in its 20th year of operation, according to their press guide, the Palace has undergone more than \$107

million in renovations and improvements to uphold its reputation as one of the world's premier entertainment arenas. The original cost to construct the facility in 1988 was \$70 million.

In 2005, the print media reported that the Palace was in the process of undertaking its largest enhancement project since its opening. At MPVA, we saw this as an opportunity for the management at the Palace to address existing deficiencies in and around the arena that we had identified for years of not being in compliance with federal/state accessibility guidelines.

With this in mind, we sent a letter to Tom Wilson, President, Palace Sports & Entertainment, informing him that the current construction project was a golden opportunity for the Palace to address the concerns that were outlined in our correspondence. Unfortunately, we never received a response from the Palace management.

After unsuccessfully trying to resolve this problem it became apparent that the only recourse at our disposal was to have the DOJ intervene on our behalf to bring closure to an issue that should have been resolved years ago.

The "Big House" renovations are completed!

I attended my first football game at Michigan Stadium since the completion of the renovations to the stadium. In the true spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), fans with and without disabilities will be able to watch games at *The Big House* with the same level of enjoyment.

With the addition of 152 permanent wheelchair and companion seats located throughout the stadium, Michigan's newly renovated arena has become the premier accessible college football venue in America for all spectators to attend a game.

What a beautiful site it was being able to sit at the 50 yard line from a wheelchair. Even when the spectators stood I was still able to see the action on the football field. This was a result of the settlement agreement between the University of Michigan and Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America. In the agreement, the University agreed to add more wheelchair seating locations and make significant changes to stadium facilities.

Football fans required to use a wheelchair for mobility now will have access to prime sideline seating locations throughout Michigan Stadium. Wheelchair seating locations will be dispersed throughout the seating bowl that allows spectators a choice in prices and viewing experiences.

With the completion of the renovation there now are 81 wheelchair locations in the end zones, 96 seats along the east sideline in row 54, 24 seats in the student section and 56 seats along the east sideline in row 72. Newly renovated concourses, concessions, accessible parking, and accessible restrooms that will not only improve the game experience for those with a disability, but for everyone.

I want to commend all those responsible for making Michigan Stadium one of the most accessible stadiums in the country. Especially with the challenges of trying to make something completely accessible that was built in 1927. The University of Michigan has set the accessible standard for all other college campuses throughout the country to duplicate.

When wheelchair seating was added at the stadium in 2008 critics argued that the demand would not meet the supply. However, contrary to the criticism, despite disappointing 2008 and 2009 seasons for the team, the disabled areas were filled. Paralyzed veterans and people with disabilities could now see the team they loved without having to suffer the frustrations that a lack of accommodations for someone in a wheelchair often brings.

The Big House will now be seen as a showcase of inclusion and accessibility for disabled individuals in public facilities. Accompanying a friend with a disability or family member to a game can now be an inspiring experience. It allows for the opportunity for people to connect and root for the team that they love in an environment where the welcoming mat truly welcomes everyone with "open arms." *Go Blue!*

Thank You Leslie Tire/Michigan Tire & The Michigan Recreation Division for Your Support!

On a final note, I just wanted to take an opportunity to thank Leslie Tire of Michigan for hosting a Golf Outing on Tuesday, September 14th at 10am at Greystone

Golf Club in Romeo. Proceeds from this event went to two charities and the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America was one of the charities chosen to receive funds from this event.

I was able to attend the outing and thank all the men and women who came out and contributed to our organization! It was an outstanding event that resulted in a donation of nearly \$2,000! Please see the photo of Kevin Elya, MPVA President, receiving a check from Jeff Ziegler, of Leslie Tire/Michigan Tire at a recent MPVA Board Meeting.

In addition, the Michigan Recreational Division was able to support the MPVA with a check that was split with the Brain Injury Association of Michigan this past summer! Their support raised \$1,600 for the MPVA through a fishing tournament! The check was presented to the MPVA and the Brain Injury Association in front of our State Capitol! Thank you to the Michigan Recreational Division for your support!



Valuable Dates for 2010:

- **MPVA Salute to Veterans Gala Online Auction**
November 3-17th, 2010
There will be tons of outstanding items for you to bid on! Visit: www.biddingforgood.com/mpva/mpva-2
- **7th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala**
Wednesday, November 10, 2010
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College
18600 Haggerty Road
Livonia, MI 48152
- **Veterans Day**
November 11, 2010

MPVA Chapter Headquarters Closed in Observance of the Holiday

- **Thanksgiving**
November 24-25, 2010
MPVA Chapter Headquarters Closed in Observance of the Holiday
- **MPVA Holiday Party**
Saturday, December 4, 2010, 6:00 PM
Bakers of Milford
Please RSVP to Jan Black at (248) 476-9000 ext. 00





From The Development Office

By Jaclyn Kochis & Sue Burstein-Kahn

By: Jaclyn Kochis

In this issue, we are able to read about a very important organization that many of you may be familiar with—ALS of Michigan! This article was written by a very avid supporter of the MPVA, Ms. Sue Burstein-Kahn, who is the Executive Director for ALS of Michigan.

Sue is a member of the MPVA'S Advisory Committee and has helped to advocate and sustain the MPVA's

mission through her various commitments. Her knowledge and expertise in advocating and serving individuals with ALS is outstanding! The MPVA is so glad to have her as an Advisory Committee Member and friend. Please be sure to take some time and read all about ALS of Michigan by Sue Burstein-Kahn below!



ALS of Michigan

By: Sue Burstein-Kahn

Lou Gehrig, the famous New York Yankee, in his farewell speech at Yankee Stadium on July 4, 1939, proclaimed himself “the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.” Little did Gehrig know at that time that he would forever be associated with the disease that would rob him of not only his career, but also his life at the age of 37. Today ALS is best known by the name given to it by baseball’s “greatest first baseman” – Lou Gehrig’s Disease

ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) is a progressive neurological disease that affects the motor neurons in the brain and spinal cord. These are the cells that transmit signals down axons (long filaments) that attach to the muscles. With ALS, these motor neurons die and the signal is no longer transmitted down the axon to the muscle. When the brain can no longer communicate with the muscles, they atrophy from lack of use.

Most people who are diagnosed with ALS are between the ages of 35 – 70, although both younger and older people are affected. Of the people who are diagnosed, 10 -15% have an inherited form of ALS, while the majority has sporadic ALS, where there is no identified cause.

There are two types of ALS: Limb Onset, which begins in a hand, arm, foot or leg; and Bulbar Onset, which first affects the neurons that control speech, swallowing and

breathing. Generally, both forms of ALS will progress to the entire body. Once diagnosed, the prognosis for the disease is 2 – 5 years, and as of today, there is no known cause or cure for ALS.

In the majority of cases, ALS eventually results in the inability of our pALS (patients with ALS) to move, speak, swallow, and eventually breathe. Most pALS will require 24-hour-a-day-care in the latter stages of the disease, and this care is most often provided by a family member. There is little argument that ALS is one of the most difficult diseases with which families will have to cope with.

In response to the tremendous needs that ALS places on families, ALS of Michigan was founded in 1978 by a group of individuals comprised of family members and friends of people with ALS. They recognized that community support was critically needed as families traveled the difficult road of ALS.

Today, our Mission is to provide programs and assistance to Michigan residents diagnosed with ALS, their families, and their caregivers deal with the medical issues associated with ALS. All of our services are provided free of charge to pALS and their families, and are made available through the financial support of individual donors, foundations, and corporations. Every dollar raised stays in Michigan helping our Michigan ALS community.

Through an active volunteer Board, dedicated staff and selfless volunteers, we have been able to build an impressive complement of core programs to meet the needs of the ALS community. Programs and services include:

Multi-disciplinary Clinics: ALS of Michigan is affiliated with premiere ALS Clinics including the Harry Hoenselaar ALS Clinic at Henry Ford Hospital and the Hiller ALS Center at the Detroit Medical Center.

AAC Center: ALS of Michigan hosts the only Alternative and Assistive Communication Center (AAC) of its kind in Michigan. Patients receive evaluations on a variety of the latest communication devices, loan of assistive speech generating devices and training on the provided equipment by a Speech and Language Pathologist who specialty is communication services. Our goal is to keep our pALS "connected" with the world around them.

Respite Care Assistance Program: In collaboration with local home health agencies, we provide in-home respite care services to help families with the 24-hour-a-day labor of love caring for loved one with ALS.

Patient and Caregiver Support: Our professional social work staff provides individual counseling services,

information and referral services, and general support to our ALS community. They also provide the social work services at the ALS Multidisciplinary Centers where we are affiliated.

Throughout the year we host a wide range of workshops, seminars, and support groups geared to helping patients and caregivers find answers to questions that surround living every day with ALS.

Home Visits: Our professional social work staff provide home visits for any patient or family (if they so desire) to discuss individual needs, and to help families evaluate what other resources they may require now and in the future.

Equipment Loan Closet: We maintain a comprehensive loan closet of hundreds of durable medical equipment items that are provided free of charge to those who need it, for as long as necessary.

Until there is an effective treatment, until there is a cure, ALS of Michigan will be here to support pALS and their families throughout Michigan to live life as fully as possible. For more information please visit our website at www.alsofmichigan.org or call us at 800-882-5764.



2010 PVA SPEEDY AWARD



The "Speedy" Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, was presented to Mary Huber and her entire family in recognition of Ken Huber for his significant contributions to improving the lives of America's paralyzed veterans.





Government Relations & Advocacy

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

Where Has the Time Gone?

Hopefully you found time to exercise your right to vote. Whatever the outcome, there is sure to be many new changes in both houses in Washington, D.C. as well in State Capitols throughout the country. With this being the last edition of the Rollin' Times for FY 2010, it is hard to imagine everything that our Chapter office has been involved in. This office is constantly organizing events that keep us busy throughout the year.

In this past month alone, I attended two days of advocacy training on veteran's benefits, along with about 150 other veterans, service officers and lawyers at Laurel Manor in Livonia. There was a lot of information and interest in hearing the guest speakers, as well as opportunity to network and learn more about what is available and where to find it. The event was sponsored by the Canton Community Foundation and the Fausone Bohn, LLP Partnership. That same week, I attended the Annual Brain Injury Association of Michigan Conference at the Lansing Civic Center. This two day event was packed with valuable information, vendors, and classes on different topics concerning catastrophic injuries, Michigan No-Fault Insurance, ADA updates, and caregiver issues.

About the time this issue of the RT is being mailed to you, our Salute to Veterans Gala will be taking place! After so much preparation, I hope you are able to join us at this year's event. MPVA's patriotic annual event is our way to take time out and remember the men and women who so honorably served our country and pay tribute to Michigan's fallen heroes. This is my 3rd dinner as an employee, but I have been involved in the color guard with American Legion Post 216 for all but the first Salute. I would like to say a special "thank you" to everyone involved in the posting/retiring of the colors prior to the start/completion of the event. We get many compliments on how important it is to have the posting/retiring of the colors be part of the event.

I hope everyone has a very happy and safe holiday

season, and I would also like to encourage everyone to take a moment and read up on some very important issues that could be pertinent to you below!

Veterans Legislation—A Look Back

Thus far, 2010 has brought forth an extraordinary amount of new legislation for veterans. Because of the support and advocacy of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, the MPVA, and other veterans service organizations, are finally getting the benefits and hospital care they deserve for their service to our country.

There is a push to change the culture within the VA with better ways of serving and meeting the needs of today's veterans. The plan is to listen more and implement suggestions from both VA employees and veterans that utilize the VA for their health care. In addition, this administration plans on using TV, radio and newspaper ads to encourage all veterans to inquire about any military benefits. If you have any questions about benefits that you may be entitled to please feel free to call our Service Benefits Department at 1-800-795-3608.

Veterans Urged to Claim Stop Loss Bonus as Deadline Looms

In 2001, 145,000 military personnel were forced to remain on active duty beyond their original discharge date. During this time, Congress approved back pay of \$500 for each month held over for involuntary service. Average checks were for \$3,500 to \$3,800. The cutoff date for this benefit was October 21, 2010. This is one reason it is so important to stay on top of ongoing changes with the VA. The military processed about 55,000 claims or about \$210 million in back pay. Still, there was \$324 million dollars left unclaimed.

VA FY2011 Funding

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a \$125 billion

dollar budget for 2011; 10% higher than 2010. Of that, \$145 million will be used to upgrade its information technology with paperless records. Next year, the VA Healthcare system expects to treat 6.1 million patients, including 439,000 veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Secretary Shinseki said his goal for 2011 is to process all claims within 125 days and achieve a 98 percent accuracy rate.

Additionally, 50 years after the start of the Vietnam War the decision has been made about the VA compensating Agent Orange claims. The VA will devote \$9 million to “fast track” an expected 250,000 new Agent Orange claims based on the inclusion of three additional conditions — Parkinson’s disease, hairy cell leukemia and ischemic heart disease — to its list of 15 Agent Orange-presumptive illnesses. A presumptive illness means veterans do not have to prove any connection between their military service and their illness; just that you actually set foot on ground in Vietnam and that you have a disability because of it. There has been \$13.4 billion allocated to start this compensation and payments have already started to be sent out as of last month. The VA is continuing to expand and make improvements and deserve recognition for it!

The Social Security Agency Published Final Rule Helps Veterans

The Social Security Agency has recently published final rules about the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act. Michael Astrue, the Commissioner of Social Security, said this act changes the way the agency treats certain cash payments to members of the uniformed services and veterans under the Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) program, enabling some veterans to continue to receive government disability benefits and others to receive a higher benefit amount. Aged, blind, or disabled individuals with limited income and resources can qualify for monthly SSI benefits from the Social Security Administration and Medicaid from the states. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Area Coordinator O’Brien Robertson, in Pontiac at 866-299-3777, # 28448.

DOJ Issues Updated ADA Regulations and Standards

On September 15, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) published updates to its ADA regulations and adopted

new design standards based on guidelines previously issued by the Access Board. The DOJ revised both its title II regulations for state and local governments and its title III regulations for places of public accommodation and commercial facilities in the private sector. The revised regulations include new provisions covering the sale of tickets for accessible seating in assembly areas, service animals, powered devices used as alternatives to standard wheelchairs, use of video remote interpreting to provide effective communication, reservation policies governing accessible accommodations in places of lodging, dwelling units made available for sale by government entities, and detention and correctional systems. The updated regulations take effect in six months.

The DOJ’s regulations implement updated ADA standards for new construction and alterations. Compliance with the 2010 standards will be mandatory in 18 months (beginning March 15, 2012) based on completion of the permit process or, if no permit is required, the start of construction. Immediate use of the new standards is allowed as an alternative to the original 1991 standards. The 2010 standards are closely based on the Board’s ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines, but the DOJ’s regulations include additional design requirements that supplement provisions in the standards concerning:

The DOJ’s regulations provide instructions on use of the standards in new construction, alterations, and existing facilities. In general, the regulations stipulate that facilities that were built, altered, or retrofitted in compliance with the original standards do not have to be modified to meet the 2010 standards. However, this “safe harbor” clause does not extend to residential facilities or to certain recreational facilities or elements newly covered in the 2010 standards, as detailed in sections of the DOJ regulations covering removal of barriers in existing places of public accommodation and program access by state and local government entities.

For additional information or guidance on the 2010 standards, visit the Board’s website at www.access-board.gov/ada, or contact the Board at (202) 272-0080 (v), (202) 272-0082 (TTY), or ta@access-board.gov. Information on DOJ’s new regulations and use of the standards is available from DOJ at www.ada.gov or by calling (800) 514-0301 (v) or 800-514-0383 (TTY).





By: Bonnie Williams, PVA Chapter Service Officer

Autonomic Dysreflexia: Things You Should Be Aware Of

With the changing of the seasons, spinal cord injured veterans begin to wear more clothing, such as scarves, hats, thicker socks, etc. which lead to my topic: Autonomic Dysreflexia

This problem affects people with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) at or above the T-6 level. It can be life-threatening and can require quick and correct action. Unfortunately, many health professionals aren't familiar with this condition. It's important that family members are aware of Autonomic Dysreflexia so that, in case of emergencies, they can inform health care professionals who may not be familiar with this condition.

Autonomic Dysreflexia is an abnormal response to a problem in your body below your SCI. The cause is often an overfull bladder or bowel. Because of your SCI, your body can't respond to signals that something is wrong. The most important thing for you to know is the fact that Autonomic Dysreflexia can be dangerous!

What Are the More Common Warning Signs?

Although it's possible to have no symptoms, most people do. Watch for one or more of the following more common warning signs:

- A fast, major increase in blood pressure - 20-40 mm Hg higher than usual.
- A pounding headache
- Heavy sweating
- Flushed or reddened skin
- Goose bumps
- Blurry vision or seeing spots
- A stuffy nose

- Anxiety or jitters
- A feeling of tightness in your chest, flutters in your heart or chest, or trouble breathing

If any of the above signs appears, follow the steps below.

1. Sit up or raise your head to 90 degrees. (Important: You need to remain sitting or upright until your blood pressure is back to normal.)
2. Loosen or take off anything tight.
3. Monitor your blood pressure about every 5 minutes.
4. Check your bladder for drainage.
5. Call your health-care professional even if warning signs go away.
6. If warning signs return, repeat steps, call your health-care professional, and go to the emergency room.
7. **At the emergency room, tell staff you need immediate care:**
 - o May have dysreflexia
 - o Need blood pressure checked.
 - o Need to remain sitting up.
 - o Need causes of the problem sought

You need to recognize the warning signs and get the right medical attention immediately.

REMEMBER, AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY!





The MPVA would like to
thank Mary Strang for
all her hard work
making dozens of
Afghans that will keep
many Michigan veterans
warm this winter!



Sincere Condolences to the family of:

Richard A. Davey

Joseph Franz

Thomas E. McGowen

Calvin Schaub



Sports & Recreation

By Scot Severn, Sports & Recreation Director

Wheelin' Team 457 7th Annual Deer Hunt

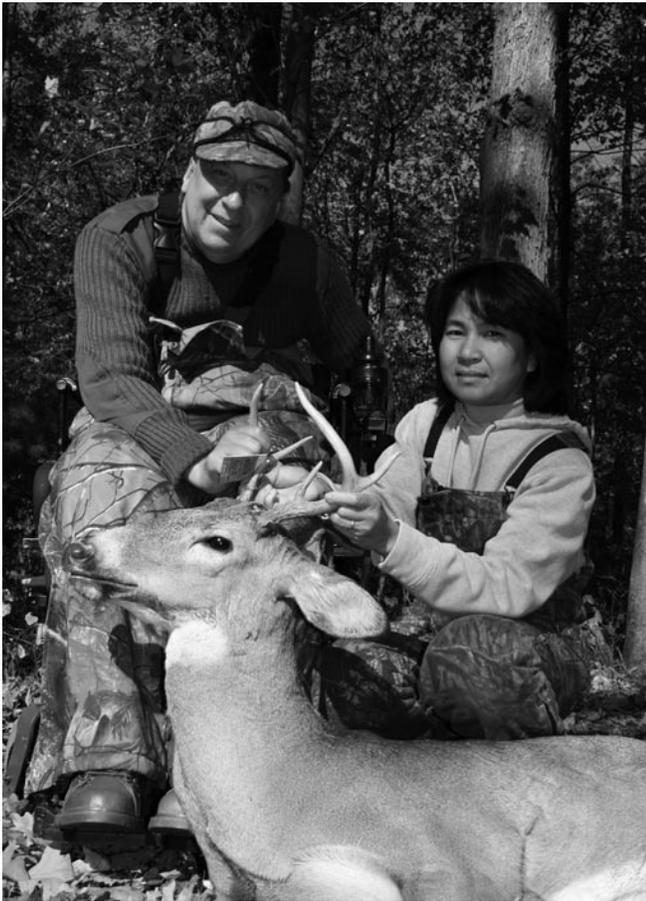


Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America were among the sponsors that helped send 27 hunters out into the woods on the 7th Annual Wheelin' Team 457 Deer Hunt. The special disabled deer hunt went from October 14th-17th and allowed non-ambulatory hunters to hunt deer on private property with a firearm. "Lions Bear Lake Camp" in Lapeer, Michigan, served as home for out of town hunters and guides as well as a meeting place Friday night and for the Banquet on Sunday.

This season saw 8 deer taken over the weekend long hunt. Hunters ranged from age 15-65, and all had a good time. Guides came in from as far away as Toledo, Ohio, and several land owners donated the use of their property to make the hunt possible. Steve Sharp from the National Wild Turkey Federation was on hand to

take pictures and ensure the event through the Wheelin' Sportsmen program. "Ray C's Extreme" from Lapeer donated the use of all terrain vehicles to help transport hunters in and out of the woods and several Ray C's employees donated their time as guides and helpers back at camp. Terry Cavanaugh of "TC Taxidermy" in Metamora, Michigan, donated 3 antler mounts to the successful hunters. "Bowmans Archery" of Lapeer, Michigan and "C & L Sports" of North Branch also helped with the hunt and equipment

Dave and Carol Clemens from "Motion Machine" in Lapeer worked tirelessly for several months before the hunt to make sure everything ran smoothly. It takes about twice as many volunteers as hunters to make this event possible. From the guides to the landowners to the volunteers at camp that did everything from take



pictures to butchering the deer, this hunt would not be possible without all of you!

Wheelin' Team 457 also puts on a wild game dinner in April and a spring turkey hunt in early May. For



more opportunities with Wheelin' Team 457 contact Ray Brown at 989-225-9259 or Dave Clemens at 810-728-3166.



Thank You MPVA Member Marva Ways!

Marva was honored at Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan's Celebrity Wheelchair Basketball Game on September 23, 2010 with the Weusi Olusola Spirit Award. In honor of this award, RIM donated \$100 to Marva's charity of choice which happened to be MPVA!



MPVA's Salute Veterans Gala & Online Auction Final Reminder!

The MPVA is hosting their **7th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala** on November 10, 2010 at the VistaTech Center located at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, MI! Contact Jaclyn Kochis ASAP at 248-476-9000 for more details!

There will also be an online Auction during the following dates:

November 3, 2010—November 17, 2010

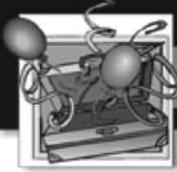
There will be hundreds of outstanding items at various values for you to bid on! Not only will you have a chance to win some fabulous prizes, but, you will be supporting a great cause!

So, what are you waiting for? Visit:

www.biddingforgood.com/mpva/mpva-2

Make a gift donation or check out the prizes before the auction has even begun!





BIRTHDAYS



NOVEMBER

Andrea M. Grubbe	November 01	Michael J. Hornick	November 21	Richard L. Fezatte	December 07
Norman S. Pearson	November 01	Angela B. Humphries	November 21	Michael Miller	December 08
Charles R. James	November 02	Robert W. Jenkins	November 21	Dollie Linton	December 09
Arthur D. Radford	November 02	Dickie J. Mahlum	November 21	Ralph Beuhler	December 10
Rudolph M. Sexton	November 03	Lorie Walton	November 21	Robert T. Reed	December 10
Anthony J. Borum	November 05	Sanford Kornwise	November 22	Peter C. Scavarda	December 10
Gerald Weber	November 05	James E. Spears	November 22	James Faust	December 11
Ronald J. Buhl	November 06	John D. Acker	November 23	Michael A. Armitage	December 13
Gordon K. Davis	November 06	Leslie G. Sanford	November 23	Jackie L. Cobb	December 13
William J. Rudd	November 06	Dennis R. Beaudoin	November 24	Edward Price	December 13
Randy M. Krampien	November 07	Richard K. Pavley	November 25	Paul A. Etenhoffer	December 14
James P. Ford	November 08	Robert A. Warren	November 26	Andrew Bell	December 15
Timothy H. Friske	November 08	William S. Williams	November 27	Robert D. Boyd	December 15
Dennis Mingus	November 08	Kathy A. Adams	November 28	Steven T. Rekuc	December 15
Roberta S. Dodea	November 09	Ronald M. Dennis	November 28	Paul H. Hickman	December 16
Robert L. Hopkins	November 09	Brenda J. Klemon	November 28	Bradley D. Houston	December 16
Robert C. Rayl	November 09	Joseph M. Little	November 28	Robert A. Alpeter	December 17
John K. DeBono	November 10	Joseph Sutika	November 28	Sam C. Clymer	December 19
Steve H. Young	November 10	Virgil D. Deselm	November 29	Michael F. Delaney	December 20
Brian L. Gripentrog	November 11	James E. Isaacs	November 29	Nancy R. Langley	December 20
Daniel D. Hicks	November 11	James C. Pampu	November 29	Randall C. Bowers	December 21
Stanley Kirkpatrick	November 11	Bernard J. Stanaway	November 29	Daniel A. Schoene	December 21
Theodore C. Nardin	November 11	Philip Walker	November 29	Robert A. Miller	December 22
Harold A. Walton	November 11	Thomas R. Willard	November 29	Russell D. Miller	December 22
Wilbert E. Carr	November 12	Garand F. Rowell	November 30	David E. Neeson	December 22
George F. Fogel	November 12	Quintin Williams	November 30	William Barz	December 23
Rodney E. Clark	November 13			Darel D. Bowman	December 23
Henry W. Mitchell	November 13			Ronald Draheim	December 23
Louise E. Ware	November 14	Mark Lasker	December 01	William W. Messeroll	December 23
Zachary Hampton	November 15	Juanita D. Oleson	December 02	Charles J. Henning	December 24
Alexander Jefferson	November 15	Wesley M. Russell	December 02	Spencer Payne	December 24
Richard J. Martindale	November 15	Clifton L. Howard	December 03	Calvin L. Tatum	December 24
Sandra H. Bennett	November 16	Raymond D. Vachon	December 03	Stefan Florescu	December 26
Robert Bryant	November 16	Carulus E. Giddings	December 04	Edward M. Gentile	December 28
Shane M. Ranta	November 17	Leonard J. McCulloch	December 04	Ronald J. Muschong	December 28
Vincent R. Koster	November 19	Alphonso Riley	December 04	Randall F. Miller	December 30
Thomas J. Lahaney	November 19	Carl F. Bachle	December 05	Donald J. Riggins	December 31
Brian A. Davis	November 20	Robert C. Calderon	December 06		
Solomon Gilmore	November 20	Johnnie Holmes	December 06		
James H. Taratsas	November 20	Anthony C. Quaizer	December 06		

DECEMBER



2010 Disabilities Division results

Courtesy of The Detroit FREE PRESS STAFF

WHEELCHAIRS

1. Grant Berthiaume	Tucson AZ	1:59:40
2. Steve Trahey	Romulus	2:55:16
3. Andrew Barnhart	Reading	3:28:43

HAND-CYCLES

MEN

1. Adam Rose	Shelby Twp	1:34:00
2. Michael Welch	Chicago IL	1:50:12
3. Glen Ashlock	Brooklyn	1:51:50
4. Louis Pierre Dube	Victoriaville QC	1:52:29
5. Kenneth Rowe	Canton	1:52:31
6. Jeffrey Bielecki	Madison Heights	1:57:40
7. Doug Finkbeiner	Saginaw	1:57:54
8. Bradley Baumann	Zeeland	1:59:49
9. Tim Grzankowski	Warren	2:09:13
10. Keith Schuring	Farmington Hills	2:10:37
11. Tom D'Ambrosio	Houghton Lake	2:17:15
12. Nick Koulchar	Silver Spring MD,	2:17:50
13. Brad Erlandson	Clarkston	2:21:18
14. Joseph Fenech	Clinton Twp	2:35:11
15. Travis Peruski	Linden	2:47:42
16. Chris Brooks	Ann Arbor	2:52:58
17. Anthony Rennpage	Grosse Pointe Woods	2:57:28
18. Robert Boyd	Hazel Park	3:24:46

WOMEN

1. Dodi Blumstein, 27	Far Rockaway N.Y.	4:06:09
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A Member Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America
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November/December 2010



MPVA Holiday Party
Saturday, December 4, 2010
6:00 PM
Bakers of Milford
Please RSVP to Jan Black
@
(248) 476-9000 ext. 00

