

RT '11

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



The Rollin' Thunder—Chapter 5 presents Michael Harris with a check at the MPVA's Annual Open House





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



On the Cover:

MPVA's Annual Open House took place on April 14, 2011 during PVA Awareness Week. The event was a tremendous success! See the President's Report 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

MPVA Open House a Huge Success!

In April, Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Paralyzed Veterans Awareness (PVA) Week with our national office and the other 33 PVA chapters across the country. This year, the MPVA is proud to announce that it has served in the state of Michigan for 50 years!



BAE Systems presents a few of MPVA's Board Members with a check during the Annual Open House.

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

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

PVA plays a role in meeting the full range of our members needs. Our members, staff, partners and volunteers work throughout the year to make a positive

difference in the lives of our paralyzed veterans and all people living with disabilities.

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

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

On April 14, 2011, the MPVA and our participating vendors sponsored an Open House held at our Chapter office in Novi. The turnout for this year's event was



Jaelyn Kochis and Michael Harris pose with our Rollin' Times Graphic Artist, Bill Campbell, during the Annual Open House.

outstanding as MPVA members, community leaders and the attending public had an opportunity to compare and review independent and assisted living products and services.

This was an opportunity for the MPVA to honor all those who have contributed to the MPVA's successes. These are individuals who have committed their time, talents, and money to allow us to accomplish our mission. Here are the 2011 award recipients during PVA Awareness Week:

Brooks/Royal Award: is the highest honor bestowed by the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans America (MPVA) in recognition of their significant contributions of improving the lives of America's paralyzed veterans. This award was given out to a MPVA member and a non-member of the MPVA. Those individuals were:

Mr. Michael Hogue
Mr. Mark Finnegan

Birdsong Memorial Service Award: is given to an individual in recognition of their outstanding service to the veterans of the State of Michigan. This award was given to:

Mr. Rick Briggs

Lee Doser Public Servant of the Year Award: is given to a public official recognizing their efforts in effectively advocating on behalf of paralyzed veterans and people with disabilities. This award was given to:

Mr. Doug Spade
Mr. Mike Clement

Florescu Sports Achievement Award: is given to a disabled athlete, member or non-member, who has demonstrated exceptional ability and enthusiasm in wheelchair sports. This award was given to:

Mr. Adam Rose

Patriot Award: was created exclusively for recognizing significant and dedicated donors to the MPVA based on their long term support to the MPVA and its programs. This award was given to:

Project12Baskets

Certificates of Appreciation: the MPVA also recognized 3 individuals and 1 business for their unselfish contribution to furthering the goals of the MPVA. Those awards were given to:

Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone
Amanda Raine

SWOCC Studios

Brian O'Hara

All of these individuals, generous supporters, MPVA staff, volunteers and sponsors, helped to make this year's Open House a huge success. Everyone's contribution truly made a difference and I cannot thank those who came out to support the MPVA enough.



Mark Finnegan receives MPVA's highest honor, The Brooks Royal Award.

I would, however, like to especially thank the list of volunteers and sponsors who came out that day and supported the MPVA's mission: American House Senior Living, Gresham Driving Aids, Advantage Mobility Outfitters, Athletes with Disabilities Network, EZ Able, Fusion/Level Eleven Physical Therapy, National Rehab, NuStep, The Senior Alliance, The Standing Company, Vitas Innovative Hospice Care, Wheelchair Getaways, Wright & Filippis, Creative Mobility Group, Hollister, Ford Mobility Monitoring, Tony Soma, SWOCC Studios, Jody and Alex Iovan.

I would also like to thank the following organizations for their generous financial donations that were presented to us at our Annual Open House: Foundation for American Veterans, BAE Systems, Susan Burstein, The Rollin Thunder—Chapter 5.

Please see the outside back cover of this issue which features photos of the MPVA's 2011 Annual Open House.





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

MPVA Educates Michigan Businesses on ADA Tax Incentives for Accessibility

A couple years ago I attended a conference on diversity where I had an opportunity to introduce myself to Susan Gibson who works with the Michigan Business and Professional Association (MBPA) and the Michigan Food & Beverage Association (MFBA) (their corresponding websites are: www.michbusiness.org and www.michfood.org). The MBPA is a trade association that represents over 20,000 medium to smaller business members throughout the State of Michigan.

While talking, I had informed Susan that there were tax incentives for businesses that strive to remain in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Susan informed me she was not aware these incentives existed for businesses (of any size) to help offset some of the costs of improving accessibility for customers with disabilities.

Unfortunately, most businesses are not aware that tax breaks are available to help them offset the cost of compliance. Compliance with the ADA is not difficult. Since many businesses cannot afford to make significant physical changes to their place of business to provide accessibility for wheelchair users and other people with disabilities, the ADA has established ways for businesses to recover their cost.

Since the ADA went into effect, thousands of businesses have managed to comply with the civil rights legislation. For those businesses which still do not understand their responsibilities under the law, renewed commitment to educational information is the key to increasing compliance.

With that in mind, Michigan PVA and MBPA have agreed to collaborate on educating their membership to the advantages of ADA compliance and the tax incentives that are available for doing so. This will be accomplished by allowing us to reach out to their

members through various forms of electronic and print media. My experience leads me to believe that the majority of small businesses want to do what is right, but don't know how.

The MPVA/MBPA partnership will provide the springboard for businesses throughout Michigan to meet their obligations under the ADA. This will be accomplished by increasing awareness and knowledge with the ultimate goal of achieving voluntary compliance with the ADA.

Here is a breakdown on what will take place between the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) and the Michigan Business and Professional Association (MBPA):

- MPVA will provide MBPA with copy/existing promotional materials and any appropriate web links for their members to get additional information.
- MBPA will create a dedicated web page with this information and keep it up on our sites (public and secure).
- MBPA will send out (1) e-mail blast and (1) fax blast to all members sometime during the March – August 2011 period.
- MBPA will create an article to run in our Association Spotlight newsletter in either our April or August issues.
- If MPVA will provide flyers/literature, MBPA will make them available at our main membership table at any large events scheduled within that six month time frame.

The theme of this partnership will be focused on the ADA tax incentives for businesses to remove barriers. Many people do not understand that barrier removal is an ongoing obligation by law—even when profits are down, barrier removal may be reduced or delayed.

Businesses are expected to remove barriers in the future as resources become available.

To help businesses welcome customers with disabilities, the IRS offers two tax incentives to help cover costs of making access improvements for customers with disabilities. These incentives can be explained as:

- A tax credit for small businesses who removes access barriers from their facilities, provide accessible services, or take other steps to improve accessibility for customers with disabilities
- A tax deduction for businesses of all sizes that remove access barriers in their facilities or vehicles

A business that annually incurs eligible expenses to bring itself into compliance with the ADA may use these tax incentives every year. The incentives may be applied to the costs of new construction. All barriers removal must comply with applicable federal accessibility standards.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is changing the landscape of America. In the last 20 years since being signed into law, people with disabilities now expect, as a popular bumper sticker proclaims, "To boldly go where everyone else has gone before."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the demographic for Americans with disabilities currently represents 54 million people, or about 20% of the population, which means that 1 in 5 American households have a member with a disability. These figures demonstrate the true impact of accessibility; an issue that forces many to question "where am I going to be able to dine today? Or shop? Or travel? Or..."

Moreover, as our population ages, the number of consumers with physical and sensory restrictions will continue to rise. By 2020, it is projected that 1 in 6 Americans or approximately 53.7 million will be age 65 and older. Therefore, it is crucial that these accessibility issues are focused on now as we continue to grow and change in numbers.

ADA accessibility does more than simply accommodate those with disabilities; it also is convenient for the elderly, children and people carrying heavy loads or pushing strollers. It is a business advantage to create an environment that accommodates all ages and people. Providing accommodations can create a positive image and deliver a favorable message about a business.

It is a misconception that businesses are required to spend excessive money to make their existing facilities

accessible. The ADA recognizes that altering existing structures is more costly than making new construction accessible. The law only requires that businesses remove architectural barriers in existing facilities when it can be done without much difficulty or expense. Businesses are only required to do what is "readily achievable" at that time.

Success shines in ordinary accomplishments. I can go to the grocery store in my wheelchair and not be blocked by a turnstile. I can get on a bus that has a lift and go across town. I can go to a movie and not be limited to sitting in a corner at the back of the theater. I can go shopping and use an accessible fitting room. I can travel and find an accessible hotel room at my destination. I can go to the bathroom at the airport and use an accessible stall.

Before the ADA, these activities could not be guaranteed. Much has changed for the better, but there is still so much that remains to be done. We must continue to build on the important foundations established by the ADA. Too many Americans with disabilities remain isolated, dependent and deprived of the tools they need to enjoy all that our nation has to offer.

Most Americans will be touched at some point during their lives by the affects of living with a disability. Because Americans are living longer, eventually you or someone you know will become disabled. It is important that we all understand why the ADA is essential in leveling the playing field for those who need it, and not wait until we are personally or directly affected.

MPVA wants to thank MBPA for their willingness to share in our vision of ensuring that the built environment is accessible to people with disabilities. 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.





From The Development Office

By Jaclyn Kochis & Robin Bennett

In trying to maintain the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America's (MPVA) Facebook page, I am able to keep up with some of our followers, members and friends in a very unique way. More specifically, I am able to see the pertinent information they are posting about their businesses and lives.

Just a month ago, Robin Bennett, who most of you may remember as the very talented woman who volunteered to assist in maintaining our 2010 Salute to Veterans Gala Online Auction, posted a blog about some of the

obstacles she deals with as a person with a disability.

Robin, who is now working with the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, is undoubtedly a very gifted writer and we just had to share some of her work in our Rollin' Times Newsletter! Please take a moment to read Robin Bennett's article about her "Spinning World" below.



My Spinning World: My Social Network

By: Robin Bennett: Twenty-Something, Blogger, and Volunteer Coordinator



As a woman with a disability, it is a daily struggle to join my peers in the socially-driven culture of the twenty-something Ann Arborite. Nights sitting in my apartment alone browsing Facebook or re-reading my favorite novel can only get a young woman like me so far. I know this is a common symptom of disability for the young, and honestly, for all ages. However, it is the young men and women searching for how to unlock who they are and grow in the relationships that are the building blocks of a future that independence is distinctly meaningful.

In the fight for independence, there are no "excuses," per se. There are, however, factors that contribute to making social, career and other opportunities seem unattainable to a young person with a disability. These "symptoms" of disability are many and fluctuate with each individual experience. A few tend to reappear as a common strain from case to case: lack of adequate transportation, an inaccessible social stage, and dependence on others.

From A to B

One of the largest contributing factors is transportation.

Whether for school, a job, or to have any sort of social life, finding a way to reliably get there and get back is as important as coffee at a Starbucks; you can't have one without it.

Living in Ann Arbor (or Ypsilanti), those with disabilities (particularly those with mobility challenges) often rely on a selection of different para-transit services: an accessible vehicle whose driver picks and drops off its rider at the door. These services are truly door-to-door service, but they do come with drawbacks. It can be equated to taking a prescription drug: it may alleviate one problem, but brings with it a whole host of others.

- Unreliable (they'll always get you, it just sometimes a question of when)
- Constrictive (you may want to stay at the party later, but you're working on their schedule, not yours)
- Inconvenient (perhaps the best single word to describe relying on these services for transportation). The best two words? Necessary evil.

Another element making transportation the leading barrier against independence is how expensive and

difficult to obtain modified vehicles are. A wheelchair user, like myself, is looking at a price tag of \$30,000-\$50,000 for a new, ramp- or lift-equipped van. With student loan bills piling up on my kitchen table, I—like many other young people—do not have the credit, collateral, or ability to take out a \$50,000 loan. Yes, there are loans and grants out there that may help towards this end, but they are few, difficult to come by, and take a lot of painstaking struggle with red tape to secure.

Bringing Home the Bacon

The inaccessibility of public places proves to be a leash on my independence in several aspects of life for a person with a disability—particularly one affecting mobility. After graduating college I secured a job with an accounting firm (I know, I know! What was I thinking?), and during my first trip to the bathroom, I realized that the “Handicapped” stall was not wheelchair accessible. I explained this to my supervisor, who gave me a puzzled look and pointed at the stick figure in a wheelchair on the restroom door. I responded by wheeling into the restroom, opening the stall door and demonstrating how, once in there, there was no room for my legs and no ability to turn the wheelchair or shut the door. She apologized repeatedly and offered to try to have the problem corrected. I appreciated very much that they were willing to do this, but as it would take some time to renovate the restroom and I might need to use the bathroom while at work from time to time before that, I let that day be my first and last. That’s right—my reason for leaving my place of employment? Couldn’t use the bathroom.

The Social Stage

A distinctly annoying stumbling block in the quest for social independence is the inaccessibility of bars, clubs and music venues. If I had a nickel for every bar with its bathroom down some tiny, dark hallway, a club with a flight of stairs separating dance area and tables, or a restaurant featuring cramped floor space, I’d have a nice chunk of change for my piggy bank.

Once when meeting a friend for lunch downtown, I encountered a “nickelworthy” barrier. The establishment

was known for its fairly priced cuisine, not its four-wheel friendly entrance. The door to satisfying my hunger stood atop a foot high step. Now, I’m pretty good in my chair, but my Jedi-like skills were not getting me over that lip. With my friend nowhere in sight, I was forced to be creative. It’s kind of like being Macgyver—using the resources at hand to solve a seemingly insurmountable obstacle. Well, the “resources at hand” happened to be a gang of leather clad, goatee rockin’, motorcycle riding men. I waved one over, put the challenge to them, and got a smile in return. Needless to say, I got inside and did quite enjoy the ride up.

The Mooch

When going out, I have to rely heavily on the kindness of friends (and on occasion, heavily tattooed strangers) to push me from parking garage to restaurant or across snowy streets or bumpy, uneven walkways. I quickly become a mooch. This is completely my opinion — I have never been called a mooch and my close friends would guffaw at my statement. But that is how I feel. I don’t want to rely on a friend to put my wheelchair together in the freezing cold or help me in an inaccessible bathroom. I desperately want to be on the same playing field as my peers, not looking up at them as I sit and wait for my needs to be taken care of. But, this is how it is. Here is the moment that I accept my limitations and allow others to be a part of my independence. Now, all I can do is pray for good friends that will stand by me, even as I can’t.

In the fight for independence, there are no excuses; I realized long ago that I must diligently pursue the social opportunities, career goals, and lifestyle that I desire. Therefore, I see the struggle for what it is: difficult, sometimes beyond my ability to conquer, but worth the sweat for the potential gain. There are no excuses, but there are however factors that make it seemingly impossible, and often the factors win out. But I will never concede, independence is not impossible.





Government Relations & Advocacy

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

State and National Summer News

Since our last Rollin Times issue, there has been an abundance of historic news happening across the world. We have witnessed a devastating tsunami, earthquake and nuclear malfunction in Japan. In the Middle East, the United States led the way as NATO attacked Libya. There is much criticism and uncertainty about the U.S. involvement in Libya, and tensions are flaring as Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi, who has been the leader of Libya since a military coup on September 1, 1969, seeks his continued fight against the rebels and external forces. Furthermore, gasoline prices are once again hitting an all time high with fuel stations charging up to as much as \$4.00 a gallon, if not more, across the country.

As all of this has taken place, it is hard to believe that there is even more happening here at a state or national level. Please be sure to take a moment and read about some of the issues I have highlighted for you below:

State Politics - State capitols, like ours in Lansing, have been making national news as angry picketers have flooded their properties demonstrating and expressing their dissatisfaction for new proposed budget cuts for teachers, union groups, government workers, and ordinary citizens.

Our newly elected Governor has upset many with his intentions for the state budget cuts, and his support of the new emergency financial manager's law. The Snyder-approved new emergency financial manager's law gives expanded powers to emergency managers appointed by the state to facilitate financially struggling schools and local governments. The ability to toss out union contracts and strip power from elected officials is among those powers. *According to the Associated Press:*

The City of Detroit's two pension boards have filed a lawsuit seeking to block the state's new emergency financial manager law, calling it unconstitutional.

The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press report the lawsuit was filed on Monday [April 18, 2011] in U.S. District Court and names Governor Rick Snyder and Treasurer Andy Dillion. The lawsuit claims that emergency financial managers could remove pension board members for no reason.

Snyder's office says the governor believes in the constitutionality of the law, otherwise he wouldn't have signed it.

In addition, a petition was filed to repeal the law by a group called the "Michigan Citizens United" in Washtenaw County. Dependent on the passage at a hearing scheduled for April 29, 2011, recall supporters could begin collecting voter signatures starting as early as May. The group would need 806,522 valid signatures of Michigan voters to make the ballot in November.

Census Count - Following the census data released last month, Michigan legislative and congressional districts are now working on the tedious process of redrawing the lines for legislative and congressional districts. It is required by state law that district lines be drawn by November 1st of the released census year. Reported numbers showed a drastic population loss in Detroit and what experts called substantial population shifts throughout the state. What's more, the city's population decreased by about 54,000 between 2000-2010.

Continuing Budget Resolution - The 7th Continuing Federal Budget Resolution, funding through April 15, 2011, passed on April 9, 2011. This continuing resolution followed a deal on the full annual budget which was made with just hours remaining before a government shutdown. It contains an additional \$2 billion in cuts. Senate Democrats had previously rejected a Republican-backed resolution passed by the House before the deal, which would have funded the government for another week and cut an additional \$12 billion from 2010 levels.

VA FY Budget 2012 - Somewhat spared this time, the 2012 VA budget calls for \$132.2 billion in VA funding with mandatory benefits such as disability compensation and pension getting \$70.3 billion, and \$61.9 billion for discretionary funding which will mostly be for medical care. This proposed amount is less than the \$65.3 billion for discretionary funding requested in the Independent Budget, co-authored by AMVETS, DAV, PVA, and VFW. The Governors' budget recommendation continues the \$3 million in State grants in each of the next two years for the service program as it is now. Executive recommendation provides for \$66.3 million in funding support for the Grand Rapids and Jacobetti Veterans Homes which provide care for 875 veterans.

National Caregiver Support - Congress continues to push the VA to implement the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act (Pll 111-163) which was signed last May and promised to provide training, education, a stipend and mental health counseling for primary caregivers of severely disabled veterans requiring daily care. The new law was supposed to have taken place by January 31, 2011 but the specifics are still not completely worked out. The VA has, however, created a toll free resource phone number (1-800-260-3274) to recognize contributions made by caregivers allowing veterans to remain home surrounded by family and friends. Caregivers may call **Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (EST)**. The National Caregiver Support website can be found at: www.caregiver.va.gov.

Physical Disability Board of Review - Service members medically separated since Sept 11, 2001 will have an opportunity to have their disability ratings reviewed. The new Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) will examine each applicant's medical separation, compare DoD and VA ratings, and make a recommendation to the Service Secretary (or designee). A disability rating cannot be lowered and any change to the rating is effective on the date of final decision by the Service Secretary. To be

eligible for PDBR review, a service member must have been medically separated between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009 with a combined disability rating of 20 % or less, and not eligible for retirement. Visit the DoD Forms Management Program website and fill out application (form DD-294) or contact our local Service Office by dialing (800)795-3608.

DoD, VA and E-Records - The US Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs have created a platform common to each for their electronic health records. The venture is due to be implemented in early May. Lt. General Eric Schoomaker, an Army Surgeon, said that it will be much easier to transfer patient data while increasing the amount of patient information shared between the two departments. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki agreed to the sharing platform in a meeting last month.

Lastly, I would just like to remind everyone of the Memorial Day Holiday which is often marked as the beginning of summer, as Labor Day marks the end. However, beyond the barbecues and pool parties this important United States Federal holiday, formerly known as Decoration Day, commemorates U.S. soldiers who died while in the military service. Many do not realize that it was first enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War. It was extended after World War I to honor Americans who have died in all wars.

Please take the time to thank a service member for their duty to our county. Have a safe holiday weekend and be sure to share what Memorial Day means to someone you know.



Sincere Condolences to the family of:

George G Wood

Orville Hoath Jr



By: Bonnie Williams, PVA Chapter Service Officer

DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation)/Widows' Pension

Have you ever wondered what happens after your spouse passes away? Let me tell you about a few entitlements below:

DIC Eligibility

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors if he or she:

- validly married the veteran before January 1, 1957, OR
- was married to a service member who died on active duty, OR
- married the veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated, OR
- was married to the veteran for at least one year, OR
- had a child with the veteran, AND
- cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND
- is not currently remarried.

Note: A surviving spouse who remarries on or after December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.

The surviving child (ren) if he or she is:

- unmarried AND
- under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school.

Eligible Survivors:

DIC is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of the following:

- Military service member who died while on active duty, OR
- Veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease, OR
- Veteran whose death resulted from a non service-related injury or disease, and who was receiving, or was entitled to receive, VA Compensation for service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling
 - o for at least 10 years immediately before death, OR
 - o since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR
 - o For at least one year before death if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999.

DIC Payment Rates for currently Surviving Spouses*

Basic Payment Rate: \$1,154.00

Each Dependent Child: \$286.00

Special Allowances: Add \$233.00 if the veteran was totally disabled eight continuous years prior to death. Add \$250.00 to the additional allowance for dependent children for the initial two year for entitlement for DIC awards commencing on or after January 1, 2005.

In some cases, some spouses may not meet the necessary requirements for DIC benefits, and they may be eligible for the following benefit.

Death Pension

The VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service. Surviving spouses may also be entitled to higher level of payment if they are living in a

nursing home and in the need of aid and attendance or permanently housebound.

If you are unsure if you qualify for either benefit, please contact your Paralyzed Veterans of America service office at 800-795-3608, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have on these benefits or any other VA benefits.



Valuable Dates for 2011:

- **Membership Meeting**

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Nominations for Board of Directors

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)

- **Memorial Day**

Monday, May 30, 2011

Office Closed in Observation of Holiday

- **Tight Lines For Troops**

The Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) and the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) are co-hosting the 2nd Annual Tight Lines for Troops charity fishing tournament on May 21 & 22, 2011 on Lake Michigan in Manistee, MI. This event is free for veterans! Tournament Registration Forms are available online at www.michiganpva.org. Priority for this event will be given to Purple Heart veterans and disabled veterans.

- **Rediscover Your Abilities Expo**

Level 11 Physical Therapy and The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) welcome you to join them for a day of hands-on activities that will better your knowledge of what the human body is capable of. Individuals with disabilities often face

stereotypes from others, and even set boundaries in their own minds as to what they are truly mentally and physically capable of doing. The Rediscover Your Abilities Expo is an opportunity to challenge that way of thinking and open your mind up to a whole new world of possibilities. You will also have an opportunity to tour Level 11 Physical Therapy's brand new facility.

Saturday, June 25, 2011, 9:00 AM—3:30 PM

Level 11 Physical Therapy

10293 S. Saginaw St., Holly, MI 48442

FREE TO THE PUBLIC!

Visit: www.michiganpva.org for more details

Email Jaclyn Kochis at: jkochis@michiganpva.org

- **MPVA Annual Membership Picnic**

Saturday, July 16, 2011 12:00 PM -2:00 PM

Kensington Metro Park (Near the east boat launch area shelter—Martindale Beach A) Food will be catered Come and join the fun! There park provides nature trails, bike trails, and a swimming area! RSVP BY: July 11, 2011 Call: 800-638-6782 Email:

chapterhq@michiganpva.org





Sports & Recreation

By Scot Severn, Sports & Recreation Director

2011 Summer Sports Events

The National Junior Disability Championships



Many of our MPVA members and Rollin' Times (RT) readers may not know about the National Junior Disability Championships (NJDC) and I thought that this issue of the RT may be a good time to focus on them as they are being

held right here in Michigan at Saginaw Valley State University July 16-23, 2011.

The NJDC began in July of 1984 and consisted of only three events sanctioned by Wheelchair Sports, USA for

wheelchair athletes ages seven to nineteen. Since that time, the NJDC has grown to include over 250 athletes with spinal injuries, cerebral palsy, visual impairments, amputations, limb deficiencies, and other congenital anomalies from all over the United States and several foreign countries. The age range for participation is now 7-21 years old. The NJDC is owned by Wheelchair Sports, USA. At each NJDC, competitions are held in Olympic-style events including track, field, pentathlon, swimming, archery, table tennis, 3-on-3 wheelchair basketball. Throughout its history, the NJDC has been hosted in the following places:

- 2011 – Saginaw, Michigan (Saginaw Valley State University)
- 2010 – Chicago, Illinois (Deer Field, Illinois)
- 2009 – St. Louis, Missouri (St. Peters Rec Plex, St. Charles West HS)
- 2008 – Piscataway, New Jersey (Rutgers University)
- 2007 – Spokane, Washington (Spokane Falls Community College and Gonzaga Prep HS)
- 2006 – Tampa, Florida (New Tampa YMCA, Freedom HS, Shriners Hospital)
- 2005 – Tampa, Florida (University of South Florida, New Tampa YMCA)
- 2004 – Mesa, Arizona (Mesa High School)
- 2003 – New London, Connecticut (Connecticut College)
- 2002 – New London, Connecticut (Connecticut College)
- 2001 – Piscataway, New Jersey (Rutgers University)
- 2000 – San Jose, California
- 1999 – Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1998 – Bellevue, Washington
- 1997 – Mesa, Arizona (Mesa High School)
- 1996 – Birmingham, Alabama
- 1995 – Ft. Collins, Colorado (Colorado State University)
- 1994 – Edmond, Oklahoma (University of Central Oklahoma)
- 1993 – Columbus, Ohio (Ohio State University)
- 1992 – Orlando, Florida (Walt Disney World)
- 1991 – Princeton, New Jersey (Princeton University)
- 1990 – Ft. Collins, Colorado (Colorado State University)
- 1989 – Cupertino, California (De Anza College)
- 1988 – Johnson City, Tennessee (East Tennessee State University)

1987 – Lawrenceville, New Jersey (Rider College)

1986 – Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

1985 – Fishersville, Virginia

1984 – Delaware

For more information on the 2011 NJDC, please visit: <http://www.njdc.net> or contact Jeff Coupie, Director of Michigan Sports Unlimited, at (989) 771-5530, or at his email: jeffcoupie@misportsunlimited.com.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that Saginaw Valley State University will also be hosting the Annual Thunder in the Valley Games which will take place June 2-5, 2011. For more information on the Thunder in the Valley Games please visit: www.thunderinthevalleygames.com.

Tight Lines for Troops



The Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) and the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) are partnering together for the 2nd Annual Tight Lines for Troops charity fishing tournament in Manistee Michigan for Michigan Veterans

and military service personnel.

The Tight Lines for Troops event is presented by the Little River Casino Resort, and will offer participants an opportunity to enjoy a day of free charter fishing donated by 40 boat Captains from the Manistee area on Sunday, May 22, 2011 on Lake Michigan. All the meals for the Manistee Area Veterans Council "Captains" registration dinner, the Little River Band Warrior Society "BBQ", and the Little River Casino Resort's "Awards Banquet" are donated. Other activities are planned for families of the participants including canoeing, a classic car show, a walk along the boardwalk, tours of Manistee, and other activities.

The goal is to provide the event for free for veterans; however it takes a lot of public support. Everyone is encouraged to join this salute to Michigan Veterans by sponsoring or donating to help put on this special event.

"Donations will first cover the expenses of the tournament participants based on need, including transportation and lodging, with the residual proceeds to benefit the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Manistee County Veterans Endowment Fund, and the Brain Injury Association of Michigan Veterans Program to help our returning combatants." stated Rick Briggs, Major USAF (Ret) and manager of the Veterans Program at the BIAMI.

Tight Lines for Troops tournament information and registration can be found on the MPVA's website: www.michiganpva.org and www.tightlinesfortroops.com. Sponsorship and donation opportunities are available. For more information, please contact Bob Guenthardt at 231-723-3282 or Rick Briggs at 810-229-5880.



Motorized Wheelchair for Sale

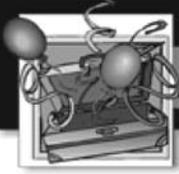
**METRO' POWER 111
POWER WHEELCHAIR**



Barely used, excellent condition. Battery pack included. Owners manual available. Can remove battery pack, fold wheelchair, and place in the trunk of car.

Asking price: \$3,200.00

Contact: (313) 831-0039



BIRTHDAYS

MAY

Alonzo Baker May 02
 Glenn B. Hall May 02
 Ronnie D. Adkins May 03
 Charles O. Sheridan May 03
 John E. Senn May 04
 Theresa Smith May 04
 Rolland M. Butler May 05
 John L. Ramgren May 06
 Arthur J. Evans May 08
 Herbert A. James May 09
 Stanley C. Macey May 10
 Kevin G. McCrory May 10
 Harvey D. Slotman May 11
 Thomas A. Driver May 12
 Johnny R. Miles May 12
 Martin Erickson May 13
 Roger W. Loyer May 13
 Mark P. Hogue May 14
 Ann Chisholm May 15
 Yvan C. Laine May 15
 Charlie L. Potts May 15
 Kenneth M. Painter May 16
 Milton Kaunitz May 17
 Paul W. McIntosh May 17
 Charles Kaye May 18
 Marshall A. Jackson May 19
 James F. Lear May 19
 Willie E. Buchanan May 20
 Florian C. Rabineau May 20
 Paul H. Senske May 20
 Thomas E. Delleruyelle May 21
 Ida N. Harper May 22
 Andrea C. Trimmingham May 22
 Charles E. Williams May 22
 Donald S. Desmarais May 23

Joe M. Rodriguez May 23
 Patrick J. Towers May 23
 Neil L. Begin May 24
 Earl E. Gunnels May 24
 Linda May May 24
 Thomas L. Melin May 24
 Tiberia C. Sasu May 24
 James D. Minton May 26
 Timothy W. Patrick May 26
 Danny Shumate May 26
 Bonnie L. Welbaum May 26
 Beverly A. Valliere May 29
 Sam A. Bateman May 31
 Monte E. Cooper May 31

JUNE

Rengo D. Garth June 01
 Arthur Mulder June 01
 Michael E. Madigan June 04
 Lynn R. Ordiway June 04
 William F. Wilson June 05
 Kristy A. Dubois June 06
 Lyman M. Justice June 06
 Albert Lett June 06
 Mark A. Velthouse June 06
 Byron R. Cook June 07
 Kevin G. Elya June 07
 John D. Edgar June 08
 Carole L. Halquist June 09
 Dolly Taurence June 10
 Ernest P. Whaley June 10
 Chet D. Kuskowski June 11
 Dannie C. Pauley June 11
 Marvin C. Petty June 11
 Rodney T. Hooks June 15
 Thomas C. McGillen June 15
 Tony A. Rhodes June 16

Charles T. Stedman June 16
 Michael P. Cope June 17
 Thomas D. Holcomb June 17
 Almarie D. Veitenheimer June 17
 Bernard P. Wein June 17
 Esther S. Karp June 18
 Barbara J. McCrary June 19
 Edward L. Wilmers June 19
 Dani M. Deline June 21
 Jeremy A. Ramirez June 21
 Jerry R. Martineau June 23
 Eddie L. Cheese June 24
 Steve J. Jarmosco June 24
 Randy S. Galbraith June 25
 John E. Hockstadt June 25
 Michael A. Wood June 25
 David C. Kiel June 26
 Jon M. Crocker June 27
 Robert L. Davis June 27
 Melvyn J. Mandell June 27
 Michael H. Weaver June 27
 Dale L. Larson June 28
 John P. Mihal June 28
 John C. Muns June 28
 Danny D. Pryor June 28
 George A. Bolden June 29
 Brett D. Howd June 29
 Jerry Spearman June 29
 Daniel R. Porterfield June 30
 Judy M. Ross June 30



Share life experiences with other Veterans and their families.

Independent Living | American House is built on a foundation of INDEPENDENCE: Your own private apartment with your own bedroom, bath, living space, and many with kitchens. You can drive your own car, cook your own meals, and even have small pets. Yet moving into American House also means access to the following amenities and services should you want to take advantage of them:

- **Veteran Benefit Services** (See reverse side of document for more information.)
- **Access to Our Greatest Generation Community Room in Southfield**
(The Community Room is a special gathering place for veterans and their families to share life experiences with each other. It was created to honor our efforts in WWII abroad and on the homefront. The Room houses museum quality World War II artifacts from *Yankee Air Museum* and other valued sources.)
- **Restaurant-Style Dining for Three Meals a Day**
- **Housekeeping**
- **Laundry Service Available**
- **New Friends, Social Activities**
- **Scheduled Transportation and Outings**
- **Fitness and Wellness Programs**
- **Continued Education (American History Lessons)**
- **Month-to-Month Leasing**
- **Small Pets Welcome**
- **24-Hour Staffing**
- **Emergency Response Systems***
- **Living Assistance Available** (Services range from medication reminders, bathing and dressing assistance, and mobility assistance to visiting physicians, dentists and physical therapists. Services are provided on-site through third-party professional resources.*)
- **Short Term / Respite Stay** (Seniors can stay for just a couple of days, either to sample American House living or to have an enjoyable place to stay while caregivers go on vacation or need a respite from care-giving for a short period of time.)

In addition to our own veteran events, we sponsor several in the veteran community. Our goal is to raise awareness, and hopefully in some small way, express our appreciation for the sacrifices and contributions of all veterans and their families.

For more information, contact an American House community listed on the back of this page.

**American
House** 
SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES
americanhouse.com



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American House
 SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES
americanhouse.com

*Chaplain David McClary, Resident of American House Southfield
 Teaches American History at multiple American House communities
 Leads monthly veteran meetings at American House Southfield*

FREE veteran benefit services.

All honorably discharged Veterans are eligible for medical care through the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) based on many different qualifiers. Knowing what those qualifiers are and how they apply to the individual Veteran can be very difficult which is why there are specially trained people to help the Veteran file a claim with the VA. Most people doing claim work provide their help free of charge. The most common name for these professionals are "Veteran Service Officers" (VSOs) and they work for one of the many different Veteran organizations, but many counties also have "County Veteran Counselors".

American House works with various Veteran Service Officers and County Veteran Counselors to provide FREE veteran benefit counseling. Please note that the spouse of a Veteran who is or has been receiving a "service connected" disability check from the VA may also qualify for benefits.

American House also assists with "**Aid and Attendance**", a little-known VA benefit which can greatly improve the quality of life for both the Veteran and his or her spouse. "Aid and Attendance" helps the Veteran or the spouse of a Veteran pay for additional help if he or she needs it. Based on the Veteran's medical condition and income this monthly benefit will help pay for his or her care. Once the Veteran passes away, this same benefit can apply to the spouse of the disabled Veteran. It is the same benefit, but upon the death of the Veteran it is called "Death and Indemnity Compensation" (DIC). The Veteran Service Officers working with American House are skilled in applying for both the "Aid and Attendance" and "Death and Indemnity Compensation" benefits.

For more information, call the Executive Director at one of our communities listed below.

Genesee County

Grand Blanc (810) 694-7300
 North - Flint (810) 733-8900

Washtenaw County

Carpenter - Ypsilanti (734) 677-0071

Macomb County

East I - Roseville (586) 776-8500
 East II - Roseville (586) 778-5070
 Lakeside - Clinton Twp (586) 263-0081
 Sterling I - Sterling Hgts (586) 978-1060
 Sterling II - Sterling Hgts (586) 979-5340

Oakland County

Farmington Hills (248) 471-9141
 Hazel Park (248) 545-0707
 Elmwood - Rochester Hills (248) 852-1980
 Stone - Rochester Hills (248) 853-2330

Oakland County Cont.

Village - Rochester Hills (248) 853-6000
 Royal Oak (248) 585-2550
 Oakland - Pontiac (248) 335-7020
 Southfield (248) 353-5835
 Troy (248) 589-3555
 West Bloomfield (248) 538-5283
 Regent St - West Bloomfield* (248) 683-1010

**Licensed Assisted Living / Memory Care*

Wayne County

Dearborn Heights (313) 278-6430
 Livonia (734) 425-3050
 Riverview (734) 479-1010
 Southland - Taylor (734) 946-9900
 Westland Hunter (734) 728-8670
 Westland Joy (734) 454-9838
 Westland Venoy (734) 326-7777

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