

RT '12

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



MPVA Board Director, Teresa Kamphorst, gets a golf lesson from Scott Millman of The Simple World of Golf at MPVA's Open House on April 12, 2012.





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



On the Cover:

The MPVA celebrated 51 years of service in Michigan during PVA Awareness Week by hosting their Annual Open House. See the President's Report for more information.

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of America

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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.

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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.

The Ad Agency Design & Art Production



President's Report

By Kevin G. Elya

MPVA Open House a Huge Success!

In April, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Paralyzed Veterans Awareness Week with our national office and the other 34 PVA chapters across the country.



The Rolling Thunder presents the MPVA Board members with a check during MPVA's Open House.

This year's theme Building a Nation Fit for Heroes, spotlights the work of Paralyzed Veterans to empower seriously wounded heroes and their families with the necessary supports needed to live a productive and fulfilling life.

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

PVA Awareness Week is our opportunity to let Americans know we are here and continuing to serve.

This is achieved by planning a week of activities to educate the public about MPVA and to demonstrate how we make a difference in the lives of paralyzed veterans and others with disabilities.

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

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



Patty Soma of SWOCC Studios accepts an award on behalf of the SWOCC team during MPVA's Open House.

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.



Lou Martin of St. John Providence Health System accepts an award during MPVA's Open House for their outstanding service to the community.

On April 12, 2012, 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 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 MPVA to honor all those who have contributed to the MPVA's successes. These individuals have committed their time, talents, and money to allow us to accomplish our mission.

Due to the generous support of the MPVA staff, volunteers and sponsors, this year's Open House was a huge success. We were extraordinarily lucky to have such beautiful weather for our Open House this year and it made the day even better as people were able to enjoy our wonderful and fully accessible deck as well as the rest of our office! We even had a golf exhibit hosted by our friends at The Simple World of Golf which allowed for our guests to try out their "SNAG" (Starting New at Golf) equipment. In addition to golf, our good friend Ed Ptaszniak and Bill Helwig acted as

Pierogi Chef's for the day (and boy, were those Pierogi's good!)

Everyone's contribution truly made a difference and I cannot thank those who came out to support the day enough. At this time, however, I would like to especially thank the list of sponsors who came out that day and supported the MPVA's mission: St. John Providence Health System, Advantage Mobility Outfitters, Bath for All, CAPS Remodeling, Coloplast/Fusion Medical, Creative Mobility Group, Gresham Driving Aids, Mobility Works, RIM Peer Counseling, The Senior Alliance, The Standing Company, Wheelchair Getaways, Athletes with Disabilities Network, Spine Specialists of Michigan, Wright & Fillipis, Sharing Hearts, LLC, and Hollister.

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, The Rollin Thunder—Chapter 5.

Please be sure to see the inside back cover of this issue for photos from our 2012 Open House!



Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris

Architectural Accessibility Seminar Held for Architects

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) in conjunction with the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) presented an Architectural Accessibility Seminar on March 2, 2012, for architects from the Detroit metropolitan area.

The goal of the seminar was to provide architects with the revised regulations implementing the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) which went into effect on March 15, 2011. Compliance for all of the revised regulations were finalized in March 2012 making this training highly important as the revised rules are the first major revision on accessibility in 20 years.

The regulations apply to the activities of state and local governments and place of accommodation, including stores, restaurants, shopping malls, libraries, museums, sporting arenas, movie theaters, doctors and dentists offices, hotels, jails, and prisons, polling places, and emergency preparedness shelters.

The new ADA rules adopt the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, which have been retooled to be more user-friendly for building code officials, builders, and architects, and have been harmonized with state and local building codes. The 2010 standards also include, for the first time, standards on making swimming pools, parks golf courses, boating facilities, exercise clubs, and other recreation facilities accessible

for people with disabilities.

In addition to adopting the new ADA 2010 Standards, the amended regulations contain many new or expanded provisions on general nondiscrimination policies, including the use of service animals, the use of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices, selling tickets for wheelchair-accessible seating at sports and performance venues, reserving and guaranteeing accessible rooms at hotels, providing interpreter services through video conferencing, and the effect of the new regulations on existing facilities.

During the training itself, emphasis was placed on aspects of the code that have changed in the last few years, how new interpretations of the ADA affect current design practices, and how architects should respond. Our major goal in sponsoring the seminar was to help ensure that the rights and protections afforded to people with disabilities in the text of the codes are properly translated to the built environment and to provide architects with a better understanding of their responsibilities under both the federal/state accessibility codes.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to Jennifer Perry, Building Codes & Standards, United Spinal Association, for her very informative presentation. The expertise she brings to the table on accessibility guidelines, both at the state and federal level, would be

very hard for us to duplicate locally.

Also, Usha Menon, Plan Review Division, Michigan Bureau of Construction Codes, discussed the changes in the new 2006 Michigan International Building Codes.

Thanks to Brian Tognetti for his logistical support in coordinating the event between the AIA of Detroit and MPVA.

Special thanks to Providence Hospital for donating their facility to host the seminar and providing attendees with an outstanding breakfast. This is another example of their willingness to give back to their community

in a positive way. By working together, we can create conditions that facilitate the full integration and participation of persons with disabilities into all aspects of community life.

We hope to provide similar training to architects throughout Michigan throughout the new future. Stay tuned.



WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

Curtis C. Thompson

James R. Engel

We are proud you are part of the MPVA family!



Wheelin' Team 457

Nine-Ball

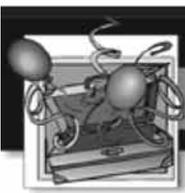


Pool Tournament



March 31 2012





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
 Kenneth M. Painter May 16
 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. Senseke 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
 Tiberia C. Sasu
 James R. Engel
 James D. Minton
 Timothy W. Patrick
 Danny Shumate
 Bonnie L. Welbaum
 Beverly A. Valliere
 Sam A. Bateman
 Monte E. Cooper

JUNE

Rengo D. Garth
 Arthur Mulder
 James D. Darnell
 Charles W. Mouch
 Michael E. Madigan
 Lynn R. Ordiway
 Kevin R. Bradley
 Thomas H. Gibson
 William F. Wilson
 Kristy A. Dubois
 Lyman M. Justice
 Albert Lett
 Mark A. Velthouse
 Byron R. Cook
 Kevin G. Elya
 John D. Edgar
 Tyrone Howard
 Carole L. Halquist
 Dolly Taurence
 Ernest P. Whaley
 Chet D. Kuskowski
 Dannie C. Pauley
 Marvin C. Petty
 Rodney T. Hooks
 Thomas C. McGillen
 Tony A. Rhodes

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 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





Government Relations & Advocacy

By: Mike Harris

Attended the PVA Advocacy & Legislative Conference

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

During the week I had an opportunity to visit with fourteen members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation. The visits allowed us an opportunity to educate them on issues important to our membership. As usual, the issue that dominated the conversation was Veteran Affairs Health Care funding for FY 2013.

On February 13, the President released his Budget Request for FY 2013. In light of the growing pressure to hold down the growth in federal spending, the co-authors of The Independent Budget are pleased that the President's proposed budget has given veterans an overall increase. However, we have a real concern with the minimal increase in Medical and Prosthetic Research and the significant reduction in Major Construction funding.

The President's budget for FY 2013 provides approximately \$64.0 billion in total funding for the VA, approximately \$2.2 billion more than the FY 2012 appropriated level. The Administration's budget includes approximately \$55.7 billion for medical care programs for FY 2013, an increase of \$2.3 billion over the FY 2012 appropriated level and approximately

\$100 million less than the amount provided in the advance appropriation for FY 2013. The Independent Budget recommends approximately \$57.2 billion for medical care programs.

More importantly, the Budget Request also includes advance appropriations recommendations for FY 2014. The President's budget includes \$57.5 billion for medical care programs for FY 2014.

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

For the past 26 years, the Independent Budget has been a blueprint for the resource requirement for the VA. It has served as a voice of advocacy for America's veterans by providing the White House and Congress with a roadmap for funding the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation indicated that they are in support of House Bill 3895, Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012, that exempts the VA from proposed sequestration (mandatory budget cuts) which could force a 2 percent cut in budget and negatively impact the delivery of veteran services.

VA Benefits Backlog Unacceptable

The Department of Veterans Affairs is facing a growing backlog of disability claims, fueled by veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, a policy change making it easier for Vietnam veterans to file Agent Orange-related claims and an aging veteran's population.

I tried to "paint a picture" to members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation on how the timeliness of the delivery of veteran's benefits at the Detroit VA Benefit Center is negatively impacting our membership.

Nationally, the number of pending claims before the VA stood at 850,000, an increase of nearly 100,000 from last year and nearly 500,000 from three years ago. Although the VA has processed nearly a million claims over the past year, another 1.3 million new claims were filed during the same period.

Of the approximately 2.2 million veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 624,000 have filed disability claims and many more are expected. In addition, more than 200,000 Vietnam War veterans have filed claims based on new regulations adopted in 2010 making it easier to get compensation for health problems caused by exposure to defoliants such as Agent Orange.

The VA has been facing a benefits claim backlog for many years. After leaving the military, veterans often have to wait more than a year before they begin receiving benefits. According to the VA, of the 19,000 veterans' claims pending in the Detroit VA Benefits Center, 12,700 or 66.2% are more than 125 days overdue.

The problems we currently are experiencing are a result of the government miscalculations in funding and planning over the last ten years. The initial thinking was that the Iraq and Afghanistan wars would be over quickly. Instead we ended up with the longest wars in

United States history. The government did not budget or plan for the rapid increase in disabled veterans from these conflicts. This resulted in an underfunded VA with more veterans than ever using the VA.

With the record number of claims being filed you have people handling claims that have lack of training and experience that leads to miscalculated compensation amounts and misdiagnosis. In fact 53% of the claims specialists working out of the Detroit Benefits Center have two years or less experience.

The average new claim processing time appears to be 12 to 18 months while appeals may take several years. This backlog is frustrating and unacceptable to all concerned. The reason for this backlog are numerous, complex, and in fairness to the VA, beyond their immediate control. The VA is working hard to correct the problems.

The VA is preparing a new paperless claim processing system that officials say will help the department reduce the backlog by taking months out of the process.

When Veteran Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki spoke to us at the 2009 PVA Advocacy/Legislative Conference he said one of his top priorities was breaking the barriers of the disability claims backlog. His goal was to have claims handled within 125 days and be 98% accurate.

PVA was pleased to see that the Administration VA FY 2013 budget has increased funding for the operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration. Hopefully, this will allow the VA to continue to focus on reducing the claims backlog to a stated goal of 125 days for the initial rating decision.





By: Bonnie J. Williams, Chapter Service Officer

Detroit to host Job Fair for Veterans

With the recent withdrawal of troops from overseas, many veterans returning home are realizing that finding work can be a difficult task. A recent Congressional report found that Michigan ranked as the worst state in the country for out-of-work veterans, with an unemployment rate of nearly 30 percent. This is three times higher than the national average.

Because of the high unemployment rate in Michigan, Cobo Center in Detroit has been selected by the VA to host this year's National Veterans Small Business Conference, on June 25-29, 2012.

The government's premier event for veteran-owned small businesses will also include a "VA for Vets" hiring fair. The conference is expected to attract thousands of veterans, business owners, and federal employees, and bring an estimated \$3 million in direct spending to the city.

Last year's National Veteran Small Business Conference and Expo in New Orleans drew almost 5,000 attendees, and more than 6,000 participants are expected this year.

The Detroit Hiring Fair builds upon the VA's successful fair that took place on January 18, 2012 in Washington at which a partnership of federal agencies and private industry attracted more than 4,100 veterans and resulted in over 2,600 on-the-spot interviews and more than 500 tentative job offers.

This year's conference will include an open house that gives veterans the chance to learn the wide range of resources available to help them with their own businesses. The fair will also present the "VetGovPartner" online platform. VetGovPartner (VGP) is the new portal and social network that was offered at the 2011 National Veteran Small Business Conference. It is a fully-integrated web-application designed to facilitate partnering and networking among attendees before, during and after the Conference. VGP enables attendees to view, create, sign up and track conference sessions between small businesses, large businesses and government partners.

The MPVA Chapter will be hosting a booth at the 2012 conference. Please be sure to stop by our exhibit during your visit to the 2012 National Veterans Small Business Conference in Detroit. For more information, visit: nationalveteransconference.com.



PVA EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Purpose

The purpose of the PVA Educational Scholarship Program is to provide assistance to PVA members and their immediate family members by providing scholarship funds to help with a post-secondary education.

The 2012-2013 scholarships will be in the amount of \$1,000 for full-time students and \$500.00 for part-time students for an academic year. The scholarship awardees' will be required to verify their status as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited college or university.

Eligibility

The scholarship program is open to all PVA members, their spouses and unmarried children under the age of twenty-four (24) and who are dependent (as defined by the IRS) on the member for principal support.

Submission Process

Individuals who wish to apply for the scholarship

program can download the application at www.pva.org or request an application be mailed to them via phone (800) 424-8200 Ext. 776, or via e-mail christih@pva.org. Completed applications MUST be returned to PVA NO LATER THAN June 17, 2012.

Accompanying documents will include an official transcript for EACH school listed in the application.

A personal statement must be attached to the application and may not exceed two pages. The statement should contain intended courses of study and long- and short-term goals. A copy of the personal statement must be attached to each of the six copies submitted.

A letter of recommendation from a faculty member or other school official should accompany the application. Letters should be forwarded directly to PVA for inclusion with the application.





Sports & Recreation

By Scott Millman, USGTF Master Golf Teaching Professional and Certified Adaptive Golf Professional
Guest Sports Columnist

The Simple World of Golf

Many people have stopped and asked me what an Adaptable or Accessible Golf Instructor is or does. Well, I am going to shed some light on not only what an Accessible Instructor is; but exactly why I decided to become one and what I plan to do with it. After 20 years of being in the steel industry and not feeling like I had a direct impact on the world, I decided to get my Master Golf Teaching Certificate through the United States Golf Teachers Federation (USGTF). I have always been inspired with athletes that, despite their limitations, were successful in various sports or challenges they faced in life. So when I learned about an opportunity to earn a certification in adaptive golf I immediately booked a flight and down to Orlando I went. The two day course was facilitated by staff from Penn State, the Salute Military Golf Academy, and members from the National Alliance for Accessible Golf.

Day one introduced us to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the many types of disabilities that exist, different types of prosthetics, and what "inclusive" really means. I met some great people and gained a ton of knowledge. Day two was even better when we got out on the range and were able to experience first-hand the challenges individuals with disabilities face when playing golf. I was very fortunate to spend some valuable one-on-one time with Tom Houston, who, I think with the right number of strokes, would kick my butt on a golf course. Tom plays from an adjustable chair he designed and has a beautiful golf swing. Chris Bowers lost his left leg and still hits his 5 iron 200 yards. Another one of the students had his first experience hitting balls from the adjustable chair and I have never met anyone so excited about improving his game. One of the greatest highlights for me was hitting balls blind, deaf, and with my dominate arm bandaged up. Taking instruction

from my peers really gave me a new perspective on how I teach golf. We were then also given the opportunity to teach individuals with disabilities and learn exactly how we need to adapt our instruction based on the student's limitations.

So now that you know what it is I can tell you what I want to do with it. While down in Florida, I had the opportunity to see the impact golf had on many of the participants and there have been countless other stories about our wounded warriors and how golf has saved their lives since then. From that point on, I knew I wanted to give back to our veterans who so selflessly gave for us, and that I wanted to assist individuals with disabilities experience the joy of playing golf. I wanted to make a difference in people's lives.

The Simple World of Golf and The Millman N.R.G. Foundation - No Restrictions Golf are both in the early stages, but we are already having an impact. Partnering with The Volunteers of America Michigan to introduce golf to our Veterans, we will be holding hands-on clinics monthly at the new housing facility in downtown Detroit. We are also in the beginning stages of what we hope will be a lasting relationship with the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America. The goal is to introduce any person with any disability to the game of golf. We are diligently reaching out to many groups with this message - despite your limitations you can play golf, and we are here to help you in any way we can.



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Excellent Condition

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2012 MPVA Open House





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VETERANS OF AMERICA
A Member Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America
40550 Grand River Avenue
Novi, MI 48375

Change Service Requested
DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE EXPEDITE!
May/June 2012

Valuable Dates for 2012:



Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 24, 2012
Nominations for Board Members
continue. 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

The MPVA Chapter Headquarters will
be closed on: Monday, May 28, 2012
in observation of the
Memorial Day Holiday