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Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



MPVA Board Member, Michael Harris, participates in a ground breaking ceremony this past August for a Veteran Tribute being built in Oakland Township







About this Issue:

The MPVA had a busy summer chock full of events and news! Be sure to look through this issue to find out more.

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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.



President's Report

By David Peck, President, MPVA

Good Bye Summer, Hello Fall

as I look back at the last few months, it seems like the summer has absolutely flown by! It's hard to believe we are now welcoming the fall months and are accompanied by a jam-packed season of events ahead.

This summer, the MPVA enjoyed an awesome day for our Membership Picnic at The Miracle League of Plymouth. For the past few years, the Miracle League of Plymouth has been incredibly kind in allowing the MPVA to use their completely accessible field for a morning of baseball followed by an outstanding lunch prepared by New Venture Café and Catering.

In addition to the great time we had playing some ball and visiting with our fellow members and their families, we were blown away by the improvements the Miracle League of Plymouth has made! Not only did the Miracle League add on a beautiful, accessible, pavilion adjacent from the field, but they also added an adult-sized changing table in one of their many accessible bathrooms. This feature is truly impressive and we applaud all of the magnificent work the Miracle League of Plymouth does! I would just like to thank all of our friends at the Miracle League for their continued generosity and support of the MPVA. We are very lucky to have such a great relationship with you and for the work you do on behalf of those with disabilities. (Please see the inside back cover of this issue for photos from our Membership Picnic!).

As I look forward to the coming months, the Chapter will be working feverishly towards our November 10th Salute to Veterans Gala which will be held at the Suburban Collection Showplace from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Novi, MI. We are pleased to announce that our very good friend, and longest-serving Board Member, Clark Shuler, will be our Keynote Speaker.

MPVA Member since 1991, Clark Shuler has actively served the Chapter in many capacities including: Chapter President, Chapter Board Member, and Chapter Secretary. He brings a wealth of knowledge that comes from his years of experience as a husband, father, business owner, and advocate.

Clark has worked hard over the years to exemplify that life with a disability should know no bounds. In 1987, Clark was catastrophically injured while driving from base during his service in the Michigan Air National Guard. His injury left him as a C-6/7 Quadriplegic. Despite his injury, Clark has undoubtedly kept a wonderful spirit and excellent sense of humor. He brings that attitude wherever he goes (which is not a short list) including his volunteerism at not only the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, but the Center for Independent Living. His advocacy and expertise has been acknowledged as he was bestowed the MPVA's highest honor in 2002, with the Chapter's Brookes-Royal Memorial Award. His wife, Amy, and he keep busy as their twin daughters, Julia and Brooke, attend college and travel up-north when time permits.

All of us at the MPVA are thrilled to have Clark as our 2017 Salute to Veterans Keynote Speaker.

Additionally, Mr. Rick Luterman, of WJBK Fox 2, will return as our Master of Ceremonies. Rich, who is most known in and around the metro Detroit area as a Meteorologist, is also a U.S. Air Force veteran. All of us are so pleased to have Rich joining us as he always does such a phenomenal job!

Last, but certainly not least, I want to let you know that the MPVA will be hosting our online auction in conjunction to the Salute to Veterans Gala in hopes to raise more funds that will directly

of all different values. Each contribution will be recognized on the auction site until it closes—this means that you or your company can receive lots of additional exposure! Furthermore, your donation can be made tax-deductible, and most importantly, you will be helping a really fabulous cause!

As you can see, we have so much to look forward to this fall. I can't wait to see everyone at the upcoming events, and as always, thank you for all your support!



Here I am presenting a check to Deb Madonna for the Miracle League of Plymouth with her grandson and fellow Board Members Mike Harris and Clark Shuler.

serve our mission. The Salute to Veterans online Auction will open on November 3, 2017 and will run until November 17, 2017 via the website: www.biddingforgood.com/mpva/2017. After seeing last year's auction items, I am really getting excited to see what this year will bring. I don't know about all of you, but I plan on purchasing some holiday gifts from this site!

You can help make The Salute to Veterans Online Auction a success by passing along this information to your friends and family and assist in obtaining items! We are looking for donations Register as a dinner guest for the Salute or be a Sponsor! Dinner registration is \$120.00 and sponsorships vary! Please contact Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, at (248) 476-9000 ext. 06 soon—seats are filling up fast!



Vice President's Report

By Bob Vance, Vice President, MPVA

71st PVA National Annual Convention

he National Staff this year hosted The Paralyzed Veterans of American 71st National Convention on May 16-21 2017. It was held at the Beautiful National Harbor Convention Center in Oxon Hills, Maryland: located 5.5 miles south of Washington DC on the Potomac River.

Along with National Directors from 32 of the 34 Chapters, our Executive Director, Jaclyn Kochis and I enjoyed the Opening Ceremonies with the Oxon Hill High School AFJROTC presenting the Colors and the Oxon Hill High School Choir singing the National Anthem. Awards were given out to Chapters for "Most Improved" (West Virginia), "Most Outstanding" (Texas), "Best Membership Development" (Vaughan), "Outstanding Chapter Volunteer Service" (Iowa), and "Best Sports and Recreation" (Mid-Atlantic). Former Senator Robert J. Dole was also in attendance to receive the "Speedy Award" for all of his excellent leadership and passionate advocacy on behalf of the disadvantaged and disabled.

National President, Al Kovach, Jr., welcomed the board and announced that he was retiring from the position and showed the Year in Review video which included the Michigan Chapter. After a short break, the board was called to order and we accepted the previous Meeting Minutes. We listened to all the reports of the Executive Committee and had an opportunity to meet the National Staff followed by a Welcome Reception.

Wednesday reported that the Editor for PVA Publication is now Tom Fjerstad as former editor Richard Hoover retired after 10 years. Tom informed us that the PN and Sports 'N Spokes magazines are now available in both hardcopy and App form. PN App is free for all members but you need your membership number to access it and Sport 'N Spokes App still requires a subscription and confirmation number. Judicial Committee Chairman,



Jim Russell, and Audit Committee re-elected Chairman, Kenny Lloyd, spoke about the ongoing issues. Reports from the Executive Directors and the AED Program Directors continued through the various presentations of the PVA Research Foundation, Education Foundation, Yale, and HERL Check. In the end, the Michigan Chapter provided a \$1000.00 check for the PVA Educational Foundation.

Since Maryland is renowned for its fresh delicious blue and soft shell crabs, convention participants enjoyed these delicacies in the National Market of the MGM Casino and at many local restaurants. Likewise, participants could also spend time and money at the MGM Casino or watch La La Land at the Outdoor Plaza Movie Theater. Some people particularly enjoyed the dueling piano players at Bobby McKey's and the local DJ's spin on music along the Potomac River. The Convention Center also had such amenities as a sports bar, relaxation spa, and gift shop.

Thursday provided a day of new business resolutions that

either the resolution was amending, passed, failed, or refered to a committee. Everything went smooth. We were not the only ones having conventions - CSPA (Consumer Specialty Products Association) and Marijuana Business Conference & Expo 2017 also enjoyed the Gaylord National Harbor Convention Center.

Friday the FY 2018 Budget was the topic of the day. With Sad News the Zia Chapter was dissolved and money was moved to support other areas in the budget. Stan Brown of the Gateway Chapter led the way for a balanced budget.

The Election of Officers finished the day and included:

- Al Kovach now Immediate Past National President
- David Zurfluh voted in as our New National President
- Ken Weas was voted in as the National Senior Vice President.
- Hack Albertson re-elected as a National Vice President
- Charles Brown re-elected as a National Vice Presidents
- Joe Fox, Sr. re-elected as a National Vice Presidents
- Robert Thomas voted in as a National Vice Presidents
- Tom Wheaton acclamation National Treasure
- Larry Dodson acclamation National Secretary

Saturday was the PVA Closing Awards Brunch. Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Bob Molinatti, introduced the following Awards:

Speedy Award (Member)	Holly Koester – Buckeye Chapter	
Speedy Award (2 Non-Members)	Dr. Kenneth Lee – Milwaukee VAMC	Dr. Gary Goldish – Minneapolis VAMC
Dwain Taylor Award (Member)	Stan Brown Gateway Chapter	
Dwain Taylor Award (non- Member)	Patricia Griffith – Central Florida Chapter	
VA Volunteer Service Award	Mary Ellen Haran – Tampa VAMC	
Bob Webb Excellent Newsletter	West Virginia Chapter	
Chapter Website Award	Texas Chapter	
PVA Individual Giving Patriot Award	First Lieutenant Vernon Reid. USA (Ret.) (Posthumous)	
PVA Corporate Patriot Award	Nadeem Butler, President & CEO Technatomy	
Richard Fuller Outstanding Achievement in Government Relations Award	Scott Ellis	
Harry A. Schweikert, Jr. Disability Awareness Award	Stanley D. Brown – Gateway Chapter	
President's Award	Nevada Chapter	

I returned home safely on Delta Airlines where they have a new policy for checking in wheelchairs with a Bar Code Tag that identifies the chair to a customer's ticket. Hopefully, there will be no more lost wheelchairs. The next meeting will take place in San Antonio, Texas in October.





Executive Pirector's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

Marva Ways: A Life of Service

he Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America is deeply saddened by the recent loss of our longtime friend, Marva Ways. Marva passed away from complications from a respiratory illness on July 29, 2017.

After a serious automobile accident in 1976 which robbed Marva Ways of the use in her legs/arms, Marva refused to



let it rob her of a purpose for her life.

For Marva, that purpose was advocacy on behalf of people like herself. For nearly four decades she counseled patients with spinal cord injuries at Rehabilitation of Michigan and the University of Michigan. She tried to help quadriplegics understand that they could have fulfilling lives despite their disabilities; that life was about possibilities, not limits.

Marva was born in 1949 in Quincy, Florida. She

attended and graduated from Jewett Senior High School in Winter Haven, Florida in 1967. While in high school, she was a part of the Young Adults Choir and Captain of the Cheerleading Team. After high school Marva attended Polk Community College.

In 1970, Marva moved to Michigan with her husband, Eddie Lee Ways where they had two children, Eddie Lee Ways Jr. and LaTronda Michelle Ways. Marva worked for the Westwood School District as an early education teacher in the Head-Start Program until an unexpected incident changed her life.

On July 27, 1976 Marva was involved in a tragic automobile accident. This accident resulted in the death of Marva's only son, Eddie Lee Ways Jr. and left her a quadriplegic. To no one's surprise, she turned her tragedy into triumph and over the years became a very dedicated advocate for disability rights. Marva's life work was not to champion the causes of those with wealth or power or special connections. It was to give a voice to those who otherwise would not be heard.

She was a steadfast humanitarian who served as an example to all, with a multitude of achievements and accomplishments. Marva served on numerous disability advisory boards, was inducted into the Athletes with Disabilities Wheelchair Hall of Fame and played an important role in the development of the "C" League for wheelchair basketball.

It's not often a person can be defined by one word. But this is the case for Marva Ways. The descriptive word in this case is "service". Her remarkable record of service reminds us all that one person's efforts can have a positive impact on the quality of life of many.

Marva lived over 40 years after her injury and was an inspiration to us all, a perfect example that life does not end after a serious injury. Marva did not let her disability define her, she defined her disability.

Rather than to react with anger or despair to her traumatic injury, Marva treated it as a call to action. Her work has given opportunity to the disability community and she has left a legacy of service that will continue to touch lives for years to come.

Some folks may never know that their lives are better because of Marva Ways. But that's okay. Certainly for Marva, acclaim was never her motivation for helping others.

I, along with others, will miss my dear friend. But, I know that her spirit and legacy will live on forever in the

multitudes of lives that were touched by her compassion and commitment. The best compliment I can give Marva is that she left this world a better place to live then when she entered into it.

We join in extending to the members of her bereaved family our heartfelt sympathy.

Rest in peace, my friend!!







By: Stephany Strickland, PVA Service Officer

Paralyzed Veterans of America Applauds Veterans Appeals Improvement & Modernization Law

Veterans organization that specializes in complex appeal cases calls it a 'significant win'

Paralyzed Veterans of America Executive Director, Sherman Gillums Jr., released the following statement this past August, after witnessing President Trump sign the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act:

"The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Law represents a major step toward ensuring justice for the veterans, dependents and survivors who believe in their entitlement to a denied benefit. These people aren't asking for a handout; they simply want fairness and timely review when they file appeals. Paralyzed Veterans of America fights on behalf of the most catastrophically disabled veterans with the most complex claims in the system. Our unrivaled expertise is often challenged by a labyrinthine, protracted review process where a growing backlog, coupled with inconsistent and arbitrary decisions, hurt

those who rate the benefits they're pursuing. For those appellants who choose to file without an accredited representative, it's nearly impossible to get a fair decision. We commend the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for hearing our concerns and working with us to preserve due process and develop new and improved standards. This new law is a culmination of those efforts. It is also a significant win for President Trump and VA Secretary Shulkin, both of whom are keeping their promise to veterans with the passage of this law."

Please feel free to contact us at our Service Office Headquarters regarding your VA Benefits at: (800) 795-3608.





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Government Relations & Advocacy

By: Mike Harris

The Veterans Tribute of Oakland Township

n August 30, 2017 the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America participated in the ground breaking ceremony for the construction of a Veterans Tribute Memorial to honor the patriotism and valor of military veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

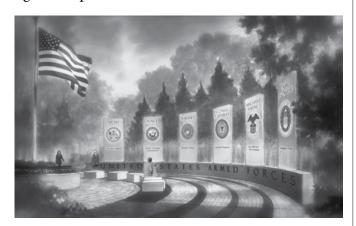
This outstanding tribute actually stemmed from a disagreement with the Oakland Township. As you may recall, the MPVA filed a lawsuit in December of 2014 against Oakland Township in Federal Court stating that the Township had violated the Federal Fair Housing Law and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The complaint charged that the Township discriminated by means of highly restrictive and exclusionary zoning by refusing to grant a reasonable accommodation to paralyzed veterans, other disabled persons, and the older adults.

Nearly five years later, in February of 2016, a settle agreement was reached for a state-of-the-art housing project for disabled veterans in Oakland Township that provided for an expansion and a long list of community amenities. Among those amenities was this extraordinary tribute! Oakland Township residents worked to form a Michigan non-profit corporation, The Veterans Tribute of Oakland Township (VTOT), with the goal of erecting a lasting tribute to military Veterans in the Township.

The focal point will be six massive glass panels, 14-feet tall and 4-feet wide, one for each of the Military Services – Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, and Air Force in ascending order of their dates of commission. Each glass panel will be laser inscribed with the Service crest, the date the Service was established and the Service's motto. These glass panels will be lit with internal LEDs so each will glow with the etchings highlighted.

The glass panels will rise from a semicircular granite base on which the words, "UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES" will be inscribed in large letters. At the center of the radius will be a large American flag in a granite base with the words "FOR GOD and COUNTRY" as well as an inscription to honor Disabled Veterans. Walkways and the Tribute grounds will be paved with bricks, which can be purchased and laser-engraved for individual recognition.

The residents of Oakland Township and Oakland County have been extremely generous. Local and regional businesses have been equally generous – having contributed material, services and pledges to construct significant portions of the Tribute.



Artist Rendition of the Tribute

Hopefully future generations will be inspired by the sacrifices made on their behalf that they will honor their memory by giving back to their communities. If the veteran's memorial can achieve one thing it is elevating the idea of service to our country, making it something meaningful, something to be proud of.

It is our responsibility to ensure that our children and grandchildren appreciate the sacrifices made by those serving our country and never forget them. Each year,



Congressman Bishop takes a moment to address the crowd at the VTOT groundbreaking ceremony.

as the percentage of our population who has worn a uniform declines, fewer and fewer individuals and families have a personal connection with the military. Instilling in America's youth an awareness of the contributions of veterans past and present becomes even more important.



Channel 7, WXYZ, News Anchor, Dave LewAllen, interviewing me at the VTOT groundbreaking

Even though many Americans will not serve, knowledge of those who have served is essential. The traits we learn from veterans - courage, honor, duty, sacrifice, patriotism, heroism - are characteristics that make us better citizens. Their everyday acts inspire us to reach beyond our limits. Their losses remind us to live a life worthy of their sacrifice. And through their service on

our behalf, we remember the obligations we owe. These are important lessons only a veteran can teach us.

We would like to thank Timothy Reese, Director of VTOT, retired Army Colonel, businessperson, and Township resident for his hard work thus far with this project and for the coordination of the groundbreaking this past August! We would also like to recognize all the business partners and Congressman Bishop for their support of such a magnificent tribute!

We would especially like to thank the Moceri Companies, who donated a five-acre parcel of land to the Township on the west side of Adams Road, just south of the intersection with Silver Bell Road on which to construct the tribute. They also donated seed money to get the project started. Without the hard work of the Board of Directors at VTOT, its many supporters, and the Moceri Companies, this immense and patriotic honor for our nation's heroes would not exist.

The MPVA looks so forward to the completion of this project-- the dedication ceremony is expected to be held in 2018, perhaps as early as Memorial Day. For more information, or to donate to this project, visit: http://veteranstributeoaklandtwpmi.org.

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Sports & Recreation

By: Coach Phil Chester

2017 National Veteran Wheelchair Games



Inally, a short ride for the Michigan Veterans Wheelchair Team—Cincinnati, Ohio! A five person team participated in this year's games that took place on July 17-22, 2017. The team consisted of Captain Ray Brown, followed by team members: Kevin Bradley, George Coward, Dave Cutsinger and Judy Ross.

We may be smaller in number of participants, but we certainly aren't less mighty! By the end of the week, with

record high temperatures and aggressive competition, we managed to rack up some medals:

- Twelve gold medals
- Three silver medals
- Four Bronze

The 19 total medals were awarded through: ramp bowling, motorized rally, motorized slalom, power soccer, air pistols, air rifle, archery, bocce ball, trap shooting, discus, javelin, shot put, softball and weightlifting.

Our team was proud to represent you and proud of each other for pushing through any aches and pains! These games are truly inspirational and prove that life with a disability does not limit what you can do! We are always looking for new team members! Join us in 2018 at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Orlando, Florida on July 3-August 4, 2018. Registration will begin at right around the first of the year!

Congrats to all of our team and everyone who participated in the 2017 National Veteran Wheelchair Games!











MPVA'S SUMMER PICNIC AT THE MIRACLE LEAGUE OF PLYMOUTH









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2017 Fall Edition

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Valuable Dates for 2017

Columbus Day

Office closed October 9, 2017 in observation of holiday

Veterans Day

November II, 2017

Thank those who have served, are serving, and remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice

Salute to Veterans Gala

November 10, 2017 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

The Suburban Collection Showplace 46100 Grand River Ave Novi, MI 48375 Register Today! Dinner tickets are only \$120.00 and sponsorships vary! Contact Jaclyn Kochis at (248) 476-9000 or at ikochis@michiganpva.org for more details.

Thanksgiving

Office closed November 23, 2017 in observation of holiday