

RT '19

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Jaclyn Kochis, MPVA Executive Director (Left) and Brenda Wheater, MPVA Administrative Assistant (Right) pose with our 2019 Salute to Veterans Keynote Speaker, Tyrone Chatman, United States Army Veteran and CEO/Executive Director of the Michigan Veterans Foundation.





**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**
Michigan Chapter

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER

www.michiganpva.org



About this Issue:

The MPVA's Salute to Veterans event took place on Veterans Day! Be sure to read the Executive Director's article for all the details!

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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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Veterans of America*

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The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is a chapter of the 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 Plymouth, Michigan. Our service officers are based out of the McNamara Federal Building in Downtown Detroit.

The Ad Agency

Design & Art Production 734-678-7928



President's Report

By: Michael Harris, President, MPVA

The winner of the Wheelchair Division sets a course record at this year's Marathon

This year's Detroit Free Press/Chemical Bank Marathon took place on October 20th, 2019 and welcomed over 40 hand-cyclists and wheelchair pushrim racers to take on the 26.2 mile course that twists throughout Detroit and Canada. Once again the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America were proud sponsors of the Disability Division of the race.

MPVA had the opportunity once again to greet the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans who brought veterans from across the country to participate in this year's marathon.

The temperature at the start of the race was unusually warm which made it an enjoyable experience for everyone involved in the hand-cycle portion of the Marathon.

With an official time of 1:05:12, his fastest ever, Tom Davis, 42, of Fremont, Indiana, won the Disabilities Division of the Detroit Free Press Marathon. It was his seventh win in eight shots at Detroit's 26.2-mile marathon on his hand-cycle, and it set a record for the event. In second overall was hand-cyclist Omar Duran with a time of 1:15:54 followed by the third place finisher with a time of 1:22:33, Kenneth Bestine.

Corey Peterson was the first female hand-cyclist to finish with a time of 2:06:21, followed by last year's winner Holly Koester with a time of 2:18:47. It was great to see that six females participated in this year's Marathon. Andrew Barnhart was the first wheelchair pushrim racer to reach the finish line with a time of 3:39:19.

Guiding the handcyclists were more than 60 bicycle escorts supplied by cycling clubs across southeast Michigan, and coordinated by the Royal Oak-based Wolverine Sports Club.

The addition of the bicyclists seemed to be a hit with the participants who can sometime encounter problems with their race equipment ranging from flat tires or broken chains that can hinder their race time. Likewise, the bicycle escorts came across the finish line expressing their admiration and marvel over the tough feat that hand-cyclists and wheelers has accomplished.

Jaelyn Kochis, MPVA Executive Director, stated "I am always impressed by the athletes that participate in this race. Each year, I witness the work that goes into the race from both planning for the event and for the dedication and commitment that the athletes go through to complete the marathon."



Tom Davis races to the finish to break his own record!

There are only 50 spots available for the wheelchair division so if you want to guarantee participation in 2020 Marathon than I would recommend that you register as soon as possible.

competed in this year's Marathon. We look forward to next year's event and supporting the 2020 Disability Division.

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America would like to congratulate each and every person who



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Executive Director's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

Reflecting on Veterans Day 2019

On November 11, 2019, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Veterans Day by hosting our Annual "Salute to Veterans" event, at the Suburban Collection Showplace, in Novi.

It is safe to say that this year's event will be unforgettable! Early morning this past Veteran's Day, a record breaking snow storm hit. By day end, the Novi area and surrounding suburbs would be impacted by 7-10 inches of snow! The conditions certainly made us worry about guest arrival and the safety of those who would be out on the roads. Our team had made our minds up that there was no way to cancel the event without taking a complete loss. We decided to show up, make the best of it, thinking that few would want to venture out onto the messy roads.

However, our supporters and sponsors did not disappoint. Over 100 guests braved the conditions and proved that they would not miss an opportunity to pay tribute to our service men and women, regardless the treacherous weather. That, not the snow, sent chills up my back in a good way!

Our event proved that so many truly believe that Veterans Day is not a day off from work or an opportunity to take advantage of sales at stores. It is a day to properly thank veterans for their service to their country. It is a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

We could not appreciate the efforts of our Keynote

Speaker, Tyrone Chatman, more! He, too, faced the snow storm to make it to our event and other Veteran's Day events as the day went on. And, his message did not disappoint!

When he enlisted in the United States Army in 1970, Tyrone Chatman had never even heard of Vietnam. As a seventeen-year-old east side kid and a first-hand witness to Detroit's 1968 riots, he figured that the military might be a way out of some troubled waters, ones he was experiencing personally and within the city of Detroit.

In ways it was, but in other ways, his war experience affected every aspect of his life and personality, and continues to affect him to this day.

His story may not be typical of all Vietnam vets, but it is a riveting overview of the experiences that many dealt with, especially African Americans. His return to the United States after ten months in the country was filled with the same lack of respect and gratitude that most Vietnam vets suffered, but as a black man, he came back to a country that continued to treat him as a second-class citizen.

As such, he went through a long period of insecurity and nearly 're-upped' for another tour. During that period, he became acutely aware that the help that many Vietnam vets needed (this was an era before 'post-traumatic stress syndrome' was a widely understood affliction) was simply not available. Today, with over three decades of social work behind him, Tyrone is the CEO and Executive Director. This non-profit agency offers counseling,

substance abuse treatment and housing along with other services to Michigan vets, regardless of the conflict in which they served.

Tyrone maintains, "This has been an incredible opportunity to me; I would work with these vets for free if I could figure out how to manage it... This is a chance for all of us who have served our country to come together and meet our challenges as a team. That, more than anything else, is the lesson I learned as a soldier..." and it serves me to this day."

I would be remiss if I did not take time to say thank you to some other very special people for making this event possible. I would like to thank Rich Luterman for his continued support to our organization as the events Master of Ceremonies! Rich really is as nice of a guy as you imagine him to be from watching him on FOX 2 news delivering the weather! His first words out of his mouth as he brushed snow off his jacket were "Jackie, how can I help?" We could not be luckier to have you as a part of our event each year, and I hope you are always able to do so!

I would also like to recognize the Novi High School Choir for joining us and singing our nations anthem! This group of students is so unbelievably talented and we were awed by their gift of song!

We are also so indebted to our bagpiper, Jim Lyon, who has joined us now for countless Salute programs! He is so wonderful and talented.

Last, but certainly not least, we are so grateful to our dedicated group that makes up our Color Guard from AMVET Post 2006! Our friends that join us to post our nations colors deserve such respect as they continue to serve and make their way to countless events every year! Thank YOU to all of you for making our program special!

Everyone's contributions truly made a difference! I would especially like to thank the following list of sponsors who made our event possible:

Ascension Health
Brain Injury Association of Michigan
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Clark Shuler
Darrel Quinn
Eisenhower Center
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles
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The Googolian Law Firm
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NuStep
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Origami Rehab
Quality Home Medical
Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan
Sinas Dramis
Suburban Collection Showplace
Tim and Sally Agajejian
Todd Wenzel
Walk the Line

See the inside back cover for photos from this year's event!





Photo: Stephanie Strickland, PVA Service Officer

VA strengthens Caregiver Support Program and expands timeline of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

On September 23, 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced actions to strengthen the Caregiver Support Program and establish a timeline for expanding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) in accordance with section 161 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (MISSION Act: <https://missionact.va.gov>).

This is a process that will be done over time in order to implement every improvement possible to best improve the lives of all caregivers and for those that they care for. At this time the PCAFC is only available to eligible veterans whom have been seriously injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001.

Since December 2018, the VA has met with a number of stakeholders and caregivers to have discussions on what they can do to boost operational capacity and to ensure that VA staff is equipped to do their jobs properly and efficiently. The VA has provided training and education to its staff and caregivers and have also committed to hiring more than 680 new staff.

The VA has also implemented a new Caregiver Record Management Application (CARMA) that started in October of this year to its system. Phase two and Phase three will be deployed between January and mid - summer of 2020. This Caregiver IT system will be adopting in two-phases to ultimately allow caregivers to apply for benefits online.

The VA must first perform tests to verify that the

system functionality before expanding the program as required under the Mission Act.

Apparently, in the first phase, PCAFC will be expanded to eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975.

And the final phase of the expansion will begin two years later, allowing eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty after May 7, 1975 –September 10, 2001.

The VA is working very hard in developing changes to its current policy in order to ensure that all veterans and caregivers have a positive experience when working with the VA and its staff so that veterans can remain in their homes and their communities as long as possible and to also receive proper care as well.

These improvements include:

- Providing home and community-based care alternatives through the Choose Home Initiative at 21 VA medical centers.
- Establishing the Center for Excellence for Veteran and Caregiver Research named after Senator Elizabeth Dole.
- Expanding tele-health services to enable Veterans and their caregivers to get care in the comfort of their homes.
- Delivering valuable programs for caregivers such as peer support mentoring, a Caregiver Support Line, self-care courses and

educational programs to help caregivers succeed. To learn more about the many support services available for caregivers of Veterans, visit www.caregiver.va.gov or call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.

Note: Resources for this article was provided

by the Office of Public Affairs Media Relations Department.



Picture Perfect

RT '11
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hubbard and his young daughter join him for the last few steps of a 23 mile march he did with Sgt. First Class Jason Holley and Sgt. First Class Russell Tansey in order to raise funds for the MPVA!

July/August 2011

RT '16
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Take a look inside this issue and learn about the MPVA's Annual Picnic at the Miracle League of Plymouth (photo above), what 20 years of dedicated service to the MPVA looks like, the opening of a new Veterans Service Office in west Michigan, and much more!

Summer Edition 2016

RT '14
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

MPVA Vice President, David Peck, takes a moment to test drive an Action Track wheelchair at MPVA's Annual Awareness Day this past spring.

Summer Edition 2014

The Ad Agency

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.

May/June 2012

RT '14
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Once again, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America presented a special award to the school that created a Future City that best addressed the challenges faced by people with disabilities at the 2014 Future Cities Competition. We want to congratulate Athanasius Kircher Academy of Belleville for winning the 2014 "Best City Disability Award."

Spring Edition 2014

RT '12
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Scott Severn, MPVA Sports Director, wins bronze medal in 2012 Paralympic Games

Photo Courtesy of Anne Beck, Berks County Advertiser

November/December 2012

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Government Relations & Advocacy

By: Mike Harris, Executive Director, MPVA

Ann Arbor VA Announces Location of NEW Canton CBOC



VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System announces the location of its newest Community Based Outpatient Clinic, a 40,000 square foot facility in Canton, Michigan.

The Ann Arbor VA Healthcare system announced the location of a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Canton Township, off N. Lotz Road, near the intersection of Ford Road and I-275, behind the Super Walmart.

Once built, the almost 40,000 square foot clinic will serve Veterans in Western Wayne County, and will allow for the full implementation of the Patient-Aligned Care Team (PACT) model of care delivery, improving operational efficiencies and the Veteran experience. Not only will the new clinic provide Primary Care, but it will also include Mental Health, Laboratory and Pathology, and Imaging services to Veterans in a right-sized, state-of-the-art, energy efficient health care facility serving over 14,000 Veterans.

“We began work on this project back in 2014,” said Medical Center Director, Dr. Ginny Creasman. “Getting a new clinic approved is a big deal and involves a lot of stakeholders. So, we’re honored to be able to get this done and bring our services closer to home for so many of our Veterans. It’s going to make it so much more convenient for them to get the care they’ve earned.”

Johnson Development, LLC of Birmingham, AL was awarded the contract. Design of the \$9M project will begin in October with anticipated completion in late 2021. The site was chosen based on many factors including; a demonstrated need to serve more veterans in the Plymouth/Canton area and ease of access with very close proximity to the I-275 and Ford Road interchange. Finally, the biggest challenge is finding a suitable location that fits within the defined limits.

VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System has clinics in Flint, Jackson, and Toledo, Ohio and serves more than 69,000 veterans in the Southeast Michigan-Northwest Ohio region.

Thousands rally at Capitol, pushing for lifetime health coverage for auto crash victims

On September 25, 2019, over 3,000 people joined together to march in protest to changes made to the Michigan No-fault insurance law. The rally was organized by groups representing doctors and health care providers in Michigan as well as no-fault auto insurance protection groups that are going to be negatively impacted by the changes made.

On behalf of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) I want to personally thank everyone who participated in the Michigan Auto Promise Rally at the State Capitol. It was the largest turnout I've ever seen at an event held at the Capitol.

It was a truly amazing sight to behold to see thousands of people walk in one continuous line that stretched from the Lansing Conference Center down Michigan Avenue and to the steps of the Capitol, all chanting in unison, "Fix the Fix!" By the time everyone arrived, the entire front lawn of the Capitol was filled with people all the way back to the Capitol Avenue sidewalk.

I was asked to give a speech on how MPVA members who have been seriously injured in an automobile accident have benefited from the personal injury protection (PIP) benefit provision under the Michigan No-fault insurance law. Legislators, industry professionals, survivors and caregivers gave impassioned, heart-wrenching, personal testimonials on how Michigan, unlike any other state, has created a wonderful industry to support and rehabilitate auto accident victims.

The changes to Michigan No-fault ends mandatory unlimited medical coverage in favor of allowing motorists choices in how much coverage they want and installs a fee schedule on how much health care providers or attendant care workers can charge for care. It also bans several non-driving factors in the

calculation of rates and places a cap of \$250,000 on care for most uninsured persons injured in traffic crashes.

MPVA has gone on record asking legislators to address the unintended outcomes of Public Act 21 of 2019 and determine what changes are necessary to ensure reforms protect consumers from serious auto accidents while at the same time reduces rates. We believe that there are a number of deeply flawed policies based on misinformation and a lack of understanding of the true benefits of the no-fault system.

Our members have survived a great deal throughout their lifetime, which has motivated MPVA to be an advocate for the rights of veterans with a spinal cord injury. Becoming disabled was not on our list of plans, but it is the one club you do not have to be born into to join. If you're lucky enough to live to an old age, you will likely develop a disability.

There's no question that some aspects of Michigan's auto no-fault system need reform, but lifetime medical coverage does not. Unfortunately, those of us who have sustained life-changing catastrophic injuries have had to find out the hard way just how critical this benefit is. Simply put, it allows the person to be able to focus on living as opposed to surviving.

The majority of MPVA members that have a non-service related spinal cord injury are a direct result of an auto accident. The Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage provided by the Michigan No-Fault law has been a tremendous help to our members. The outstanding medical care provided has enable our members to achieve maximum recovery, including the possibility of becoming productive citizens in the communities that they reside in.

That is why it was so personal to MPVA when legislators from both Houses made radical changes to Michigan No-fault that were not necessary. We believe, that they could have come up with ways to reduce rates without impacting the "integrity of the program."

MPVA believes the new fee schedule for non-Medicare coded services creates an unsustainable environment

regarding the ability for accredited specialty rehabilitation clinics to survive as a viable business.

Beginning in July of 2021, the new law will put a hard limit on how much clinics can charge Michigan No-fault insurance for these types of services: 55% of whatever amount each clinic billed at the start of this year, eventually decreasing to 52.5% of that amount by July of 2023.



Amora Harris and her mother Emmy Gillen took a moment to pose with me at the Rally. Amora was also injured through an auto accident.

Michigan No-fault is valuable because it is able to provide specialized health care for the unique medical issues that someone seriously injured in an automobile accident face, such as spinal cord and traumatic brain injury care. If specialty care rehabilitation medical facilities are forced to go out of business because of the lack of funds then Michigan would lose an irreplaceable health care asset.

Because of Michigan No-fault, we have more accredited facilities, programs and professionals here in Michigan than anywhere else in the United States. Just as important, a cutting edge spinal cord/

brain injury rehabilitation industry has been created allowing Michigan to become a spinal cord/brain injury rehabilitation center of excellence which has allowed our citizens to return to their communities as productive citizens. All of this is truly our legacy that everyone in Michigan should embrace.

Recovery from a spinal cord injury (SCI) involves significant challenges and important choices – and where an individual goes for treatment can make all the difference. Our comprehensive spinal cord injury rehabilitation programs helps patients continue to build strength, gain function and mobility, and maximize independence.

The Michigan system has often been recognized as being the nation's best for effectively taking care of people seriously injured in an automobile accident. There are a large number of spinal cord and brain injury experts that have grown out of the Michigan no-fault system.

Even the Department of Veterans Affairs took notice.

When thirty percent of the soldiers returning from Iraq/Afghanistan were diagnose with a traumatic brain injury this presented an enormous challenge for the VA.

Even though the VA has made tremendous strides in medical care for traumatic brain injury, they were often not equipped to understand the complexities associated with this injury and how to maximize recovery that restores quality of life and independence.

With this in mind, the VA started a pilot program that helps veterans return to civilian life through participation in rehab settings other than a hospital. The VA partnered with twenty-one civilian providers throughout the United States who specialize in post-acute brain injury rehab services.

Five out of the twenty-one rehab facilities selected by the VA were from Michigan. This is an acknowledgement by the VA that Michigan is recognized for having great rehab facilities because of its long history of supplying health care to automobile accident victims under its unique auto no-fault program.

Unfortunately, the majority of our Legislators gave in to political and public pressure to “do something.” They were given the legislation a few hours prior to the vote so the majority of legislators voted on something without fully understanding the consequences of their actions to both patients and providers.

It’s not too late for legislators to “Fix the Fix” — to insure this new plan will protect the thousands of current auto accident victims and so many yet to be injured in the future. President Kennedy, while speaking before the American Newspaper Publishers Association, stated the following, “An error doesn’t become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.” Let’s take what President Kennedy said in 1961 and apply it to the debate currently taking place regarding Public Act 21 of 2019.

Legislators still have an opportunity to ensure that reforms made to Michigan No-fault guarantee that drivers have rate reductions on the entire bill, not just for personal injury protection, along with the peace of mind that they can still access the insurance coverage that provides the care they need to recover in the event of an auto accident.

MPVA has no interest in putting insurance companies out of business. They provide a valuable service. But

they need to be held accountable. We owe it to all Michigan residents who have been and/or will be seriously injured in automobile accidents in the future to find meaningful solutions that maintains the integrity of the program while at the same time reduce rates.

For MPVA, health care is not a political issue. In many cases, it is literally a matter of life and death. We are unconcerned with partisan arguments or political affiliations. We simply want our legislators to get it right. They need to be honest about what’s working, what needs fixing and how to fix it.

It is important that everyone realize that compassion and the regard for the plight of others, is not a Republican or Democratic feeling. It’s who we are as Americans! It’s the ability to stand in other people shoes. A recognition that we are all in this together; that when misfortune turns against one of us, others are there to lend a helping hand.

MPVA stands ready to work with both parties on legislation that puts Michigan residents seriously injured in an automobile accidents first, not the special interests.



**Paralyzed Veterans
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Sports & Recreation

By: Ray Brown

Independence Hunt

This year's Independence Hunt was held on October 16-20 and we had a group of 26 awesome hunters who scored 13 bucks and 3 does.

While I can say that the whole event was a success, there are some highlights I would like to note:

The first deer in was scored by Andy Winter with his guide Bradley Allen. His deer was a nice 7 pointer. Our Director of Hunting, Roger Wilcox, harvested a 9 pointer while Andy Winter, guided by Bradley Allen, conquered a 7 pointer. Joe Shumacher, guided by Jason Stockdale, harvested a 3 point buck with a huge body! Stan Cydjeckonailed marked a 3 pointer late in the game. Air Force veteran, Mike Leonard, captured an 11 point buck and won our "Big Buck" award. I was assisted by

Guide Roger Wilcox, and found a 110 yard shot to capture a 10 point buck. But, none of us expected to what Scot Severn seized—an outstanding 16 pointer! Scot was most deserving and we were all very proud of his harvest!

At the end of our hunt, we joined together with a group of 80 supporters, sponsors, family and friends to have our Harvest Hunt Dinner and shared our stories. Nothing beats that time to get together and share a meal with each other.

Join us on our next Wheelin' Team event! Email for more information at: chapterhq@michiganpva.org!

That's how we roll!







2019 Salute to Veterans





**Paralyzed Veterans
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Valuable Dates for 2020



Holiday Office Closure:

December 20th at Noon—January 3rd, 2020 at 8:30 AM



Martin Luther King Day Office Closure:

January 20, 2020



MPVA Valentines Holiday Party

Saturday, February 15th

11 AM — 3 PM

Lunch Served at Noon, games and raffle to follow
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Plymouth, MI 48170

RSVP to: Brenda Wheater at (800) 638-6782 or

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Presidents Day Office Closure:

February 18, 2020



MPVA Bowling Membership:

Revel & Roll, Ann Arbor, MI

Date: March (TBD)