

RT '19

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Michael Harris, MPVA President,
smiles in front of our Nation's
Capital during PVA Awareness
Week in Washington, D.C.





Paralyzed Veterans of America

Michigan Chapter



PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER

www.michiganpva.org

About this Issue:

This spring will be full of exciting things for the MPVA! Be sure to read through this issue to catch up on all that is happening!

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Vice President..... Bob Vance	Director..... Scot Severn
Secretary..... Clark Shuler	Director..... David Peck
Treasurer..... Timothy Agajeenian	

MPVA Staff

Executive Director Jaclyn Kochis jkochis@michiganpva.org	Administrative Assistant Brenda Wheater chapterhq@michiganpva.org
--	---

Director of Government Relations & Advocacy (Volunteer) Michael Harris mharris@michiganpva.org	Financial Officer Linda Highland
--	--

Sports & Recreation Director Scot Severn ssevern@michiganpva.org	Published by Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America
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VETERANS BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

McNamara Federal Building, 477 Michigan Avenue, Room 1233, Detroit, MI 48226

Phone: (313) 471-3996 or (800) 795-3608

Service Officer Stephanie Strickland
Service Office Secretary Marilyn Kittrell
Central-Central Area Manager Anthony Steele
(202) 374-2032 Washington, D.C

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.

Inside this Issue

President's Report	3
Executive Director's Report	7
Veterans' News	11
Sports & Recreation	13

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

46701 Commerce Center Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170
(248) 476-9000 Fax (248) 476-9545
Toll free: (800) 638-MPVA (6782)

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

PVA Advocacy & Legislative Training Conference

The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) Chapter Advocacy/Legislative Training Conference was held from Monday, March 4 to Thursday, March 7, 2019. PVA Chapter representatives from across the nation descended on Washington, DC to educate their members of Congress about issues of importance to PVA, its members, and all veterans and people with disabilities.

Following two days of education and training, PVA members and Chapter representatives spent two days on Capitol Hill meeting with their legislators about PVA's priorities. I met with 12 members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation. Presentations to legislators focused on PVA's top two policy priorities: Resources & Eligibility for the VA Comprehensive Caregiver Program and improving the air travel experience for people with disabilities.

Resources and Eligibility for the VA Comprehensive Caregiver Program:

On June 6, 2018, President Trump signed into law the VA MISSION Act, authorizing the expansion of eligibility to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (Caregiver Program) to those injured before September 11, 2001. Since the program began in 2010, it had been restricted to veterans injured on or after 9/11.

Upon verification of the program's Information Technology system, expected October 2019, the program will be open to those veterans catastrophically injured in service on or before May

7, 1975. Two years from the day of that expansion, those injured in service during any era will be eligible to apply. This will finally correct a shameful inequity that has gone on for too long, and asked caregivers and veterans to endure far too much.

Caregivers are the most important component of rehabilitation and eventual recovery for veterans with catastrophic injuries. Their well-being directly impacts the care veterans receive. The quick and efficient implementation of this program's expansion is critical to ensuring veterans' quality of life.

The program currently provides respite care, a monthly stipend, paid travel expenses to attend veterans' medical appointments, and health care through CHAMPVA. Without these services, caregivers are likely to exhaust their savings, experience burnout, or suffer their own injury or illness. This means the veteran is more likely to be placed in an institutional setting that is far more costly to taxpayers.

As the largest cohort of veterans, Vietnam era, ages, the demand for long-care resources will continue to grow significantly. By providing their caregivers the means to care for them at home, with family, they will live more fulfilling lives while also delaying the costs of institutional care.

That is why MPVA urges Congress to properly resource the Caregiver Program and to pass legislation that would also open eligibility to those veterans whose catastrophic illnesses (ALS, MS) are a result of service. Additionally, Congress must make the stipend eligible for income credits for the

purpose of Social Security, so as to not endanger the financial well-being of those caregivers who may spend their lives in such a role.

PVA endorsed the VA MISSION Act because it addresses long-standing concerns for our members. Now that the Act has been signed, our efforts shifts to an oversight and advisory role as the law's many provisions begin to be implemented. But, in order to ensure that VA executes this law as it was intended, Congress must engage in rigorous oversight. Furthermore, Congress must provide sufficient funding for its provisions to ensure none of them are hindered by a lack of resources.

Improving Access to Air Travel:

Over 30 years ago, President Ronald Reagan signed the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) into law. The ACAA prohibits discrimination based on disability in air travel. Despite progress, too many travelers with disabilities still encounter significant barriers, such as damaged assistive devices, delayed assistance, and lack of seating accommodations.

Many of the difficulties that travelers with disabilities encounter in air travel are not sufficiently addressed by the ACAA and its implementing regulations. Damaged assistive devices, inadequate training for airline and contractor personnel, and inaccessible airplanes result in missed flights, injuries, and delays that lead to lost time and missed opportunities for people with disabilities.

Enforcement of ACAA protections is limited to administrative action and civil fines. Unlike most other civil rights laws, the ACAA lacks a guaranteed private right of action, which means people with disabilities receive limited redress of their grievances.

On March 6, 2019, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) reintroduced her Air Carrier Access Amendments Act to protect the rights of disabled airplane passengers, improve air travel safety and close service gaps that passengers with disabilities frequently encounter in air travel. Companion legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI).

The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act will address these problems by:

- Strengthening ACAA enforcement by requiring referral of certain passenger-filed complaints to the Department of Justice and establishment of a private right of action.
- Ensuring new airplanes are designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities by requiring airlines to meet defined accessibility standards. These standards will address safe and effective boarding/deplaning, visually accessible announcements, seating accommodations, lavatories, and better stowage options for assistive devices.
- Requiring removal of access barriers on existing airplanes to the extent that it is readily achievable – easily accomplishable and may be done without much difficulty of expense.

It is an unfortunate fact of modern life that air travel has lost virtually all of the glamour many of us once associated with flying. Airports are frantic places where getting through security can be a real nightmare, decent food and courtesy seem to be in ever diminishing supply, flights are cancelled without notice or adequate explanation, and departure gates are likely to change just about the time you arrive at the service desk.

That why it is important to know the rights that the Air Carrier Access Act guarantees to you as a person with a disability. Expect the airlines to accommodate you, and if they don't, or if they are reluctant to do so, insist they do. By knowing your rights and doing your part through simple communication you can ensure that you have an enjoyable flying experience.





Paralyzed Veterans
of America

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Executive Director's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

Navigator Upper Elementary School & Pathfinder Middle School wins "Best City Disability Award" in Future City Competition



It was an intense competition, with students from 25 Michigan elementary and middle schools coming together to compete in this year's Michigan Regional Future City Competition, sponsored by the Engineering Society of Detroit. This year's Michigan competition was held on January 29th at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

The mission of the Future City Competition is to provide a fun and exciting educational engineering program for seventh and eighth grade students that combine a stimulating engineering challenge with hands-on application to present their vision of a city of the future.

It's a team-based program consisting of students, a teacher and an engineer mentor. Each team creates detailed, often

fantastic, cities of tomorrow that give intriguing insights to how young minds envision their future. At the same time, their bold designs and innovative concepts provide a refreshing, optimistic, appreciation of how our nation can realistically deal with the many challenges facing its cities, including: environmental disasters, crime, urban decay and urban sprawl. The students then have to present and defend their city to a panel of judges at the competition.

This year's theme: *Powering Our Future*, challenged students to design a resilient power grid for their future city that can withstand and quickly recover from the impacts of natural disaster.

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. We want to congratulate **Navigator Upper Elementary School and Pathfinder Middle School, Pinckney**, for winning the 2019 “Best City Disability Award.”

The “Best City Disability Award” recognizes the school that not only addresses the everyday challenges facing the disability community — but more importantly, provides a blueprint for accessible solutions to these challenges. This special award prompts the students to include the disabled community in their thought processes when creating their future cities.

St. John Lutheran School, Rochester, once again won this year’s Michigan Regional Future City Competition, earning them the right to represent Michigan in the national contest in Washington, D.C. in February.


Once again, I want to congratulate the talented team from **Navigator Upper Elementary School and Pathfinder Middle School** and all the students who participated in this year’s event for a job well done!



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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 Tansy 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 26 years of dedicated service to the MPVA looks like, the opening of a new Veteran 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 Kanphorst, 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 addresses the challenges faced by people with disabilities at the 2014 Paralympic Games. We want to congratulate Adamson Kirtley Academy of Belvidere 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 Karen Bick, North County Advertiser)

November/December 2012

Designing the Rollin' Times since 2008
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RT '17
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 Veterans Tribute being built in Oakland Township.

2017 Fall Edition

RT '18
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Executive Director, Jaslyn Koehl, signs documents during the closing of our Chapter building with President, David Peck, in the office.

2018 Spring Edition

RT '18
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

Being in a wheelchair does not mean your world must be limited. The possibilities are endless and MPVA members always prove that! Check out President David Peck, proving a dune riding advantage of the summer by conquering annual Michigan's Dunes with his son in law!

2018 Summer Edition



Photo: Stephanie Strickland, PVA Service Officer

Written by: Anthony Steele, Central-Central Area Manager



Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC)

Application Planner

Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses, or “VET TEC” is an educational program designed to quickly upskill Veterans with the knowledge and experience needed to land jobs in the high technology workforce. Part of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, (also known as the “Forever GI Bill”), the program is a five-year pilot offering eligible Veterans opportunities to enroll in non-traditional educational programs that will prepare Veterans for jobs needed in today’s economy.

Qualified Providers

To participate as a training provider in this program, your program must:

- Be a “high technology program of education,” providing instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information science
- Have been in operation for at least two years
- Have successfully provided the program for at least one year
- Not be an institution of higher learning or lead to a degree (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, etc.)
- Have set term dates
- Not be self-paced

Program Payment Structure

- When a Veteran begins the program, VA will pay 25 percent of the tuition and mandatory fees
- When a Veteran graduates, VA will pay another 25 percent
- When a Veteran finds employment in his or her field of study, VA will pay the last 50 percent of tuition and mandatory fees

Veterans will receive a monthly housing allowance while in training.

VA will begin taking Training Provider applications in early 2019. As part of the application process, VA will need and review:

- The date the facility began offering training. You will need to show proof of the Qualified Providers bullets above
- A catalog, brochure, or other formal document that provides:
 1. Facility’s name, address, and telephone number
 2. Identifying data such as volume, number, and date of publication
 3. The mission/purpose of the facility
 4. The academic calendar(s) for the period(s) covered in the catalog

5. A general description of the facility including the enrollment capacity of classrooms
6. A listing of administrators
7. A listing of faculty showing degrees earned
8. Admission requirements and policies
9. Graduation requirements
10. Grading system - method of recording grades and furnishing grades and transcripts to students
11. Academic probation, suspension, and re-entrance policy
12. Listing of tuition, fees, and other charges
13. Refund policy (if any)
14. Attendance policy (if any)

- Policy and regulations relating to student conduct and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory conduct
- Support services for students (if any)
- The number of credits or clock hours needed for a student to be considered full time

Note: If the facility's catalog does not contain all

the above information, an addendum on facility letterhead signed by the Chief Administrative Officer may substitute.

- Copies of the catalog or other publication(s) for the last two academic years. If the facility collaborates with the technology industry to create curriculum for its program, proof of the collaboration
- Evidence that clearly demonstrates that the facility is financially sound and capable of fulfilling its commitments for training (examples of documentation include copies of tax returns, bank statements, or financial reports – covering the Facility's last two years of operations)

Copy of the facility's student enrollment contract

Thank you for your interest in this program. As a training provider, you will enable our Veterans to prepare for the next chapter in their lives after service.





Sports & Recreation

By: Ray Brown

Rabbit Hunt



The morning sunshine and 28 degree weather found the dog handlers and volunteers excited for our Rabbit Hunting event this past winter!

Adam Shiver, our Water Fowl Director, took time to snap a photo of the group right before the kickoff. Off the group went with the Argo, a hunting vehicle. On the ready, hunting directors mapped out the strategy of the hunt. It was decided that it would be best to divide the groups with three dogs leading the pack of guys to disperse through the huge 400 acre farm.

The morning hunt produced 18 rabbits with 10 more for



the afternoon hunt. We all agreed this was the perfect day for our event!

I want to give a shout out to Navy veteran, Tom



Walraven, who seized the day in his track chair and scored a successful hunt. Tom bagged bunnies in both the morning and afternoon hunts.

Come out and join our Wheelin' Team 457 for our events! You won't want to miss the fun we have!



Do you live with a spinal cord injury (SCI)?



Adults who have spinal cord injuries may face different aging challenges than those adults without SCI. The purpose of this research study is to understand how living environments and surrounding neighborhoods affect the health of people aging with SCI in Michigan.

Who can participate?

If you are over the age of 45 and have been living with a spinal cord injury (SCI) for over ten years, you may be eligible to participate in this study.

What is involved?

If eligible, you will be asked to participate in a short phone interview (approximately 1 hour). Participants will be compensated \$25 for their time.



IRBMED: HUM00149430

For more information:

phone: 734-763-6189
email: Healthy-Aging-SCIStudy@umich.edu
visit the web: umhealthresearch.org/HUM00149430



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**
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2019 Spring Edition

Valuable Dates for 2019



MPVA Annual Awareness Day!:

Thursday, April 11th

10 AM — 3 PM

Free to the Public

Networking

Food and Refreshments

MPVA Office

Michigan Life Science and Innovation Center

46701 Commerce Center Drive

Plymouth, MI 48170



MPVA Membership Meeting:

Thursday, June 20th

Location: TBD

Have a suggestion for a Membership Meeting location?

Contact us at 800-638-6782



Memorial Day Office Closure:

Monday, May 27, 2019