

# RT '21

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



The MPVA was thrilled to host their annual picnic at the Miracle League of Plymouth this past summer! MPVA President Michael Harris, Vice President Bob Vance, Executive Director Jaclyn Kochis, and Administrative Assistant Brenda Wheater presented The Miracle League of Plymouth's Operation Director, Stacey Diefenbach, with a check to support their mission that also happens to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities! Learn more about the MPVA's partnership with the Miracle League by visiting: [www.michiganpva.org](http://www.michiganpva.org)



## About this Issue:

The MPVA has been busy transitioning back to some face-to-face events as we slowly emerge from the pandemic. Learn all about what is happening this fall and some more face-to-face and virtual events you can join by reading this edition of the Rollin' Times!

### MPVA Officers and Directors

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

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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

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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.
- 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*

[www.theagency.us](http://www.theagency.us)

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# President's Report

By: Michael Harris, President, MPVA

## Detroit's Mayor Duggan Creates "Office of Disability Affairs"

For months, advocates and survivors of catastrophic auto accidents fought against a no-fault auto insurance reform that cut money for certain specialized rehabilitation services.

Their mission is to increase independence, opportunity, community participation, safety, and wellness for persons with disabilities in the City of Detroit, and to ensure inclusion, representation, and equity for persons with disabilities as it relates to City employment, programs, and services.

Over the years, I have written letters to Mayor Archer, Bing, and Kilpatrick advocating for the creation of an office that would function as a liaison between City government and the disability community. Unfortunately, none of these mayors ever responded! This could have better helped meet the needs of the more than 126,000 individuals with disabilities who live in Detroit.

Communities throughout the United States face difficult choices about how to grow, plan for change, and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, as well as those who may develop disabilities over time. The population of people aged 65 and older is growing rapidly. Many cities, such as Chicago, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Houston, and San Francisco, have had the vision to create an agency within City government that focuses on making sure policies and programs address the needs of people with disabilities.

I had the opportunity to introduce myself to Jamie Junior, Community Coordinator for Detroit's Office of Disability Affairs and congratulated her, on behalf of the MPVA, on being appointed to the position by Mayor Duggan.

Jamie indicated that this department would have an active role in ensuring agencies within City government are

establishing policies and practices, as well as developing or adapting programs, that facilitate the full integration of persons with disabilities into all areas of economic, political, and community life.

I let it be known the important role MPVA advocacy programs have had on the "quality of life" for our membership. I also educated her on how we have served Michigan since 1961, making a difference in the lives of veterans, their families, and the public.

I detailed MPVA's history of working closely with public and private entities in Detroit to make positive changes that resulted in equal access and participation by people with disabilities. Our history has included involvement on a wide variety of projects in Detroit, ensuring that they were built in compliance with federal/state accessibility guidelines. Some of these projects have been:

- Comerica Ballpark
- Ford Field
- Cobo Hall Center
- Little Caesar Arena
- Detroit River Walk
- Wayne State University

I expressed to Jamie that MPVA is on board to provide support, both at the chapter and national level, to bring success to the life-changing work being done by their department on behalf of Detroiters with disabilities. It is in everyone's best interest that they succeed in meeting their mission!

Once again, I want to congratulate Detroit for having the foresight of creating an agency within City government that will have a positive impact for ALL Detroiters.



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# Salute to Veterans

## VIRTUAL RUN, WALK, WHEEL

Presented By:

# The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

November 1st-18th, 2021

Visit: [www.michiganpva.org](http://www.michiganpva.org)

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From November 1<sup>st</sup> — November 18<sup>th</sup>, the MPVA will be hosting a virtual “Salute to Veterans: Run, Walk, Wheel” event. Participants will have an option of selecting a 1 mile race, 5K race, or 10K race.

### WHAT IS A VIRTUAL RACE?

A virtual race is a race that you can run, walk, bike, jog, or wheel from any location you choose. For example—you can run, jog, walk or wheel on the road, on the trail, on the treadmill, around your home or even on the track. You get to run your own race, at your own pace, and time it yourself.

### HOW WILL MY TIME AND DISTANCE BE RECORDED?

You can use a smartphone app or device of your choosing to record your distance and pace. Simply take a photo or screen shot of your final time and distance along with a photo of yourself after your finish and email it to: [chapterhq@michiganpva.org](mailto:chapterhq@michiganpva.org) no later than November 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM EST.

### PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE:

- Participation medal
- Social media buzz
- A great feeling for supporting the MPVA’s mission
- A great way to remember Veteran’s Day

### COST FOR PARTICIPANTS:

\$40 flat fee

### WHERE TO REGISTER:

You can register at: [www.michiganpva.org](http://www.michiganpva.org)

### SPREAD THE WORD:

You can help spread the word social media by sharing the event link along with the hashtags:  
#MPVASalutetoVeterans

Results of the races will be posted on MPVA’s Facebook page upon completion! We encourage you to challenge your friends and family to join you! After all, Veteran’s Day is not just any ole’ day of the year—it’s a day to take time out and remember those who so honorably served. What better feeling than supporting service men and women on Veteran’s Day while staying safe and healthy?



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**  
Michigan Chapter

*Proceeds from this event support the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America’s (MPVA) mission of enhancing the lives of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. The MPVA is a nonprofit, 501 (c) 3, organization that has worked to make a difference in the lives of veterans in the state of Michigan for 60 years.*



# Executive Director's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

## Salute to Veterans: Virtual Run, Walk, Wheel is BACK!



**W**hile we are slowly moving towards more face-to-face events and emerging from the pandemic, the MPVA has opted to remain cautious during our colder months (when we know we likely won't want to gather outside). We have chosen instead to provide some virtual events to ensure safety during this time. That, however, does not mean that we will not be honoring Veterans Day!

From November 11th-November 18th, the MPVA will be hosting a virtual "Salute to Veterans: Run, Walk, Wheel" event. Participants will have an option of selecting a 1-mile race, 5K race, or 10K race.

### WHAT IS A VIRTUAL RACE?

A virtual race is a race that you can run, walk, bike, jog, or wheel from any location you choose. For example—you can run, jog, walk, or wheel on the road, on the trail, on the treadmill, around your home or even on the track. You get to run your own race, at your own pace, and time it yourself.

### HOW WILL MY TIME AND DISTANCE BE RECORDED?

You can use a smartphone app or device of your choosing to record your distance and pace. Simply take a photo or screenshot of your final time and distance along with

a photo of yourself after your finish and email it to: [chapterhq@michiganpva.org](mailto:chapterhq@michiganpva.org) no later than November 18th at 5 PM.

### PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE:

- Participation Medal
- Social Media Buzz
- A great feeling for supporting the MPVA's mission
- A healthy and safe way to remember Veteran's Day

### COST FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- \$40 flat fee

### WHERE TO REGISTER:

Last year, this fun virtual event welcomed nearly 50 participants and raised approximately \$10,000 that went directly back to serve the MPVA's mission of enhancing the quality of life for veterans with spinal cord injury or disease throughout the state of Michigan! We believe we can raise even more awareness for Veterans Day and for our mission! But we can't do it without your help! Join us this fall in honoring Veterans Day! You can register by visiting: [www.michiganpva.org](http://www.michiganpva.org).





**Salute to Veterans**  
**VIRTUAL RUN, WALK, WHEEL**  
Presented By:  
**The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America**  
November 1st-18th, 2021  
Visit: [www.michiganpva.org](http://www.michiganpva.org)

You can help the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) in their initiative to Salute Veterans this fall by acting as a sponsor of the MPVA's Salute to Veterans Virtual Run, Walk, Wheel! Proceeds from this event go on to support the MPVA's mission of advocating for civil rights, assuring quality health care, exploring continuing research and education, and encouraging the healthy living of veterans with disabilities throughout the state of Michigan!

**SPONSOR LEVELS:**

**Wicked Wheeler: \$250**

- Recognition on MPVA's social media page
- Recognition in all event email communications
- Spotlight on MPVA's Salute to Veterans Virtual Run, Walk, Wheel event page
- Acknowledgement in race medal mailers to all participants

**Speedy Sprinter: \$500**

- Recognition on MPVA's social media page
- Recognition in all event email communications
- Spotlight on MPVA's Salute to Veterans Virtual Run, Walk, Wheel event page
- Acknowledgement in race medal mailers to all participants
- Half page ad in MPVA's Winter Edition of the Rollin' Times Newsletter that reaches nearly 2,000 homes and businesses throughout Michigan

Sponsor payment can be made by visiting: <https://www.michiganpva.org/support/online>. Upon entering your donation amount, please select "Salute to Veterans" under "choose an event" dropdown option.

Questions? Contact Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, at: [jkochis@michiganpva.org](mailto:jkochis@michiganpva.org)

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The mission of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is to enhance the quality of lives of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease, as well as all citizens with disabilities, by: advocating for civil rights, assuring quality health care, supporting continued recreation, research, education and healthy living.



Photo: Stephanie Strickland, Senior National Service Officer

## New Conditions on the Agent Orange Presumptive List

**D**ue to the passing of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, there are now three new conditions on the Agent Orange presumptive list. These conditions include:

**Bladder Cancer:** A type of cancer that affects the bladder where urine is stored before it leaves the body.

**Hypothyroidism:** A condition occurs when the thyroid does not produce enough hormone.

**Parkinsonism:** A condition with symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, including tremors, impaired speech, muscle stiffness, and slow movement.

The addition of these conditions means that more veterans will be eligible for VA disability benefits. For veterans who filed a claim for one of these conditions in the past that resulted in a denial, the VA will automatically review their case to determine if they are now eligible.

The full list of 17 Agent Orange presumptive conditions are as follows:

- Al Amyloidosis
- Chronic B-cell Leukemias
- Chloracne
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin's Disease


- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas
- Bladder Cancer
- Hypothyroidism
- Parkinsonism

If you have a diagnosis of one of these conditions or have questions concerning VA benefits, please contact the VA at: 800 827-1000.



# 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 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 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 Athanasios 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




Scot Severn, MPVA Sports Director, wins bronze medal in 2012 Paralympic Games  
*(Photo Courtesy of Gene Ryle, Herald County Advertiser)*

November/December 2012

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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 Veteran Tribute being built in Oakland Township

2017 Fall Edition


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



Executive Director, Jaclyn Kochis, signs documents during the closing of our Chapter building sale as President, David Peck, watches over.

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, pictured above, taking advantage of the summer by cruising around Michigan's Dunes with his son-in-law!

2018 Summer Edition





By: Mike Harris, Executive Director, MPVA

## The MPVA's Prediction of Auto No-Fault Catastrophe Has Come True!

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) and advocates for survivors of catastrophic auto crashes have warned that Michigan's auto no-fault reform law would negatively impact access to medical care that many of them need to survive.

Unfortunately, the worst predicted side-effects of Michigan's 2019 car insurance reform are coming true.

The Michigan Brain Injury Provider Council (MBIPC) launched the *#MICareCrisis Dashboard* on July 29, 2021. The dashboard tracks key metrics stemming from the fallout due to changes in Michigan's no-fault insurance law.

According to the data collected so far, at least 746 patients have already lost access to medical care, 45 Michigan-based care companies have had to either close their doors or discharge patients receiving benefits via auto no-fault insurance, and 1,545 health care jobs have been lost because of the changes. The dashboard is updated weekly and sent to legislators every Wednesday.

This fallout was a result of the reform law allowing auto insurance companies to reduce payments to medical providers, particularly those who care for the most severely injured. Many of those most affected have been spinal cord injury victims, brain injury victims, and those with other complicated and comprehensive medical care needs. They have all been faced with the reality that, after July 1, 2021, their reimbursement amount would be cut by 45%.

Many of the providers can't survive on half their former revenue. What business could?!

This is just the beginning. The health care business closures are expected to continue, leaving thousands of the state's vulnerable citizens without care. Long-term care providers do not just provide care to people seriously injured in an automobile accident, but to others in the disability community like seniors, veterans, and persons with other serious challenges, including the effects of COVID-19.

In 1987, Clark Shuler's life changed forever when he was catastrophically injured driving from Selfridge Air National Guard base during his service in the Michigan Air National Guard. His injury left him as a C-6/7 Quadriplegic.

Clark has been a MPVA member since 1991. He has actively served the Chapter in many capacities, including as Chapter President. He is currently the longest-serving Director of the Board and brings a wealth of knowledge that comes from his years of experience as a husband, father, business owner, and advocate.

On July 1, 2021, his life once again changed forever when no-fault insurance reforms went into effect, reducing the amount auto insurance pays to his caregivers by 45 percent. Clark relies on 24-hour attendant care to survive, but after the fee schedule went into effect, his care was upended.

Clark was promised lifetime benefits at the time of his automobile accident and has not been given the truth about no-fault reform. Technically, one can say that

people still have lifetime benefits, but the long-term care benefits will be paid at only 55 percent going forward, which removes true access to long-term care. These benefits do not have value if there is not a care provider to accept the extremely low payment.

The majority of MPVA members that have a non-service-related spinal cord injury acquired their injury because of an auto accident. The Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage provided by the Michigan No-Fault law had been a tremendous help to our members. This coverage had benefited us in dealing with the many physical, psychological, and financial aspects of this life altering condition.

MPVA members, including myself, paid all insurance premiums on time before an auto accident disrupted our lives. At the time of our accident, our no-fault coverage guaranteed that all necessary medical care in case of a catastrophic auto accident would be provided for as long as it was needed.

These policies allowed our members to be reimbursed for all reasonably necessary attendant care services, regardless of the identity of the attendant care provider, and for all reasonably necessary medical treatment, regardless of any government-imposed fee schedule. These were the benefits in place since the dates of our accidents, most of which took place many years ago.

Now the government is retroactively altering those rights in violation of the pre-existing contractual obligations between the injured individual and their insurance company. At MPVA, we believe that the retroactive application of these two main provisions to individuals injured in an automobile accident prior to the date the new law went into effect is unlawful.

The Michigan no-fault auto insurance was designed to make patient care the priority. What is the value of such a policy if it does not have the coverage and resources one would need if seriously injured in an automobile accident? It has no value. Therefore, it is insulting for insurance companies to take citizens money and give them no value in return.

In Michigan, the VA reimbursement rate for skilled home care for paralyzed veterans is \$30 an hour. There is no reason that companies providing specialized care should not be reimbursed under Michigan no-fault at the same rate.

Everyone deserves blame for the crisis that we are currently experiencing. Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and House Speaker Jason Wentworth have refused to move legislation that would protect accident victims.

Governor Whitmer should not get a pass, either. She could have vetoed this awful bill in 2019.

What Michigan lawmakers need to understand is how they have negatively impacted an already fragile home health care industry by reducing car accident benefits by 45 percent. Just wait until another vulnerable population has difficulty in getting in-home care.

The Michigan Legislature has the power to right this wrong while still maintaining the objectives set forth with the auto insurance reform of 2019. For survivors of catastrophic auto accidents, waiting is not an option.

We at MPVA are asking legislators to fix the law and ensure that people who need specialized care receive it now. After all, the consequences of inaction are unacceptable.





# Sports & Recreation

By: Coach Phil Chester

## National Veterans Wheelchair Games



*Congratulations to Tony Jungblut for winning the Spirit of the Games, at Home Edition, at this years NVWG!*

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) was hosted in a hybrid setting this year to offer participants the opportunity to compete in New York or at home virtually from August 7-14, 2021. There were certainly some highlights from the week!

Judy Ross has brought home a medal from each event she competed in—a bronze in power soccer, a silver in slalom! Great work, Judy!

Tony Jungblut is new to our team. Tony is from Holland, Michigan. We are glad to welcome Tony aboard. Tony competed as a Novice IV-V. He medaled in two events. Something that Tony did that no other novice has ever done. He was selected as The 2021 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Spirit of the

Games - atHome Edition! A tremendous feat for a first timer!

The NVWG will be in Tempe, Arizona from July 7-12, 2022! Will you be there to compete? Join us! Email [chapterhq@michiganpva.org](mailto:chapterhq@michiganpva.org) to find out how you can get involved in wheelchair sports!





*Judy Ross poses with one of the medals she won at this years NVWG!*



Throwing in the towel on an old motorcycle that won't run or looking to get rid of an ATV? In all situations, Paralyzed Veterans of America's Wheels Helping Warriors Vehicle Donation program is a perfect outlet for your generosity. It's easy to donate. Be sure your title is on hand, fill out the online form at [PVA.careasy.org](http://PVA.careasy.org) or call (877) 900-8387 (877-900-VETS). We will schedule the pickup free of charge and donors receive a tax deduction for the donation.



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the courage and loyalty of our troops, now and in the past.  
Thank you.



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MPVA's 2021 Membership Picnic at  
The Miracle League of Plymouth





**Paralyzed Veterans  
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Michigan Chapter

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2021 Fall Edition

## CONGRATULATIONS, SCOT SEVERN



**FOR COMPETING IN THE U.S. PARALYMPICS  
TRACK & FIELD IN TOKYO THIS PAST SUMMER!  
YOU MAKE US PROUD!**