

RT '22

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Michael Harris, MPVA President, and Bob Vance, MPVA Vice President, present a check to Miguel Teran, Miracle League of Plymouth (MLP) Game Day Manager, to the MLP to help further their mission of providing inclusion and recreation for children and adults with disabilities.



About this Issue:

The MPVA was proud to partner with the Miracle League of Plymouth to host our Annual Picnic this summer! Learn more about this event and all that's happening around the Chapter in 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	

MPVA Staff

Executive Director <i>Jaclyn Kochis</i> jkochis@michiganpva.org	Administrative Assistant <i>Brenda Wheeler</i> chapterhq@michiganpva.org
Director of Government Relations & Advocacy (Volunteer) <i>Michael Harris</i> mharris@michiganpva.org	Development Coordinator <i>Robin Bennett</i> rbennett@michiganpva.org
Sports & Recreation Director <i>Scot Severn</i> ssevern@michiganpva.org	Published by <i>Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America</i>
Financial Officer <i>Linda Highland</i>	

VETERANS BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

McNamara Federal Building, 477 Michigan Avenue, 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	5
From The Development Office	7
Veterans' News	9
Government Relations & Advocacy	11
Sports & Recreation	13

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

46701 Commerce Center Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170
(248) 476-9000

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.
- 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

(734) 678-7928



President's Report

By: Michael Harris, President, MPVA

Decision Represents Major Victory for Survivors of Catastrophic Crashes & their Families

After what seems like endless updates on an unchanging situation, I finally have some news to report. On August 25, 2022, in a major victory for survivors of catastrophic crashes and their loved ones, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that benefit reductions passed as part of 2019 auto insurance reforms could not be applied retroactively.

The Court ruled 2-1 in favor of the plaintiffs in the case of Andary et al. v USAA Casualty Insurance Company et al. The lawsuit was filed in 2019 by guardians of two catastrophically injured auto accident victims — along with the nationally renowned brain injury rehabilitation clinic, Eisenhower Center — and names Citizens Insurance Company of America and USAA Casualty Insurance Company as the defendants. The victims, on whose behalf the lawsuit was filed, are Ellen Andary, of East Lansing, and Philip Krueger, of Ann Arbor.

“The decision will enable thousands of severely injured accident victims to continue receiving medical expense and home care reimbursement at the benefit levels that were legally enforceable under insurance policies that those victims bought and paid for years before the new laws went into effect,” said George Sinas, lead counsel for the plaintiffs in Andary.

Mr. Sinas is also general counsel for the Coalition to Protect No-fault (CPAN). “In addition, the decision will prevent insurance companies from reaping windfall profits by retaining premiums they collected to pay benefits they would no longer be required to provide,” said Mr. Sinas.

Most significantly, the ruling determined that:

- The legislation did not contain specific and

sufficient language confirming that the legislature intended to apply these changes retroactively.

- Even if the legislation contained sufficient provisions intending to apply benefit reductions retroactively, such an application would have been an unconstitutional violation of the Contracts Clause of the Michigan Constitution.
- The trial court improperly dismissed the plaintiffs’ constitutional equal protection and due process challenges—which alleged that such benefit reductions would violate these constitutional provisions if applied to future accident victims—for the reason that such allegations required factual development in the trial court.

Under the Michigan Court Rules, this published opinion has immediate, binding, and precedential effect unless it is overturned by the state Supreme Court.

State Rep. Julie Brixie (D-Meridian Township), along with the late State Rep. Andrea Schroeder (R-Independence Township), submitted a bipartisan, bicameral amicus brief in the Andary case, along with a document signed by 73 current and former lawmakers stating that they did not intend for the law to be applied retroactively.

Although this news represents a significant step forward, the road is still long as the decision will most assuredly be appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court and the short and long-term implications of the ruling are not yet known. The MPVA will continue to inform you of any developments as we learn them.





Salute to Veterans VIRTUAL RUN, WALK, WHEEL

Presented By:
The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America

November 4th-18th, 2022
Visit: www.michiganpva.org

From November 4th — 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 screen shot of your final time and distance along with a photo of yourself after your finish and email it to: chapterhq@michiganpva.org no later than November 18th 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

SPREAD THE WORD:

You can help spread the word social media by sharing the event link along with the hashtags:
[#MPVASalutetoVeterans](https://twitter.com/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 healthy?



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 over 60 years.



Executive Director's Report

By Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, MPVA

MPVA Summer Picnic

My favorite season is upon us—fall! I love the crisp air and seeing the leaves change. We are extraordinarily blessed to witness the beauty in this state, and I personally think fall in Michigan is the best. I would be remiss, though, if I did not mention how fun our summers can be. One such day took place at the end of summer; our Annual Picnic was held at the Miracle League of Plymouth (MLP). The Miracle League has partnered with us for several years, generously offering for us to host softball clinics and fun events, like we had on September 10th.



The Miracle League astounds us with more and more improvements to their fully accessible field. The MLP



not only offers baseball, but they also have fully accessible bathrooms (with adult-sized changing stations), a large pavilion with accessible picnic tables, and music piped into speakers to help pump up the athletes. Most recently, they added a basketball hoop challenge game, hockey nets with hockey sticks and pucks, foosball, and cornhole around the pavilion. This extra touch makes it enjoyable for families attending the field, as there is always something to keep you busy.





We are proud to support the Miracle League with an annual check and this year was absolutely no different. With enhancements and a commitment to serve the community, children, and adults with disabilities, we are proud to have a growing connection with an organization that aligns directly with our mission.

I want to thank all of our members, friends, and Miracle League families for joining us at our annual picnic. We so enjoy being able to get back out with one another after being cooped up for so long during the pandemic. This year felt extra special to us to see the smiles and joy on the faces of all who attended.



I would especially like to thank the Miracle League Executive Director, Stacey Diefenbach, and Miguel Teran, Game Day Manager, for all their hard work at the field and for the community. You rock!



Turn Your Used Vehicle Into Support For Paralyzed Veterans Of America

We'll use the proceeds from the sale of your car, truck, RV or boat to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes.

To learn more, call or visit us online:
877-900-VETS | pva.careasy.org



From The Development Office

By Robin Bennett, Development Coordinator.

#ReservedForAReason

Do's & Don'ts of Disability Parking (How to Bring Awareness & Change)

September is #ReservedForAReason parking awareness month here at the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, and it is also national #SCIAwarenessMonth, so it is the perfect time to put together a list of do's and don'ts for dealing with disability parking (whether you're permitted and doing the parking in a reserved space, or need to learn more about how to #HonorTheSpot).

DO

- ✓ DO Park cleanly within the lines for your designated spot
- ✓ DO Stay aware in parking lots that drivers/pedestrians moving may be below your line of sight
- ✓ DO Understand that some individuals parking in a reserved permit spot may have invisible disabilities. Many with autism, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain disorders, etc. may be eligible under Michigan law for a reserved parking permit
- ✓ DO Keep the access aisle clear!! (The access aisle is the cross-hatched area attached to many reserved spaces to provide room for drivers with ramp equipped vehicles or those that need space for a wheelchair.)

DON'T

- ✗ DON'T block the access aisle in any way
- ✗ DON'T assume someone with a permit may not need it simply because they don't "look" it
- ✗ DON'T leave a nasty note when seeing someone without a permit! Notify the proper authorities to report a suspected violation; never physically confront a driver! <https://soapboxie.com/social-issues/Why-Nasty-Notes-on-the-Cars-of-Handicapped-Parking-Violators-Are-a-Bad-Idea>
- ✗ DON'T be in a hurry! Many drivers have experienced the temptation of "I will just be a second!", however to #HonorTheSpot, please commit to taking the few extra moments to ensure that all drivers and passengers can enjoy access that is often taken for granted

Please follow the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/michiganpva for more tips on how to advocate, as well as Michigan news & event updates for veterans with spinal cord injuries, resources for the disability community, and more!





PVA

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Michigan Chapter

Interested in getting some business recognition? **Advertise with MPVA!**

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is a nonprofit service organization that works to address the needs and concerns of veterans who have sustained an injury or disease of the spinal cord. You may not know, but, the MPVA services the entire state of Michigan!

One of our largest resources in our quarterly newsletter:

"The Rollin' Times."

This magazine reaches out to over 2,000 individuals and businesses throughout Michigan and beyond.

CALL NOW and reserve your spot in MPVA's Rollin' Times Newsletter!

Contact, Jaclyn Kochis, Executive Director, at

(248) 476-9000 ext. 122 or email at: jkochis@michiganpva.org

Advertisement Size	Specifications	Cost
Business Card	3.5 x 2 in; size of a standard business card. Black and white ad that is featured on one of issue.	\$50.00
1/2 Page	8.5 x 5.5 in. Black and white ad that is featured on one page of issue.	\$150.00
Full Page Black and White	8.5 x 11 in. Full page, black and white ad	\$200.00
Full Page Color	8.5 x 11 in. Full Color ad on inside, back cover.	\$300.00
1/2 Page Back Cover/Color	5.5" x 8.5"; Full Color on the outside, back cover. <i>(This is a preferred ad spot as it is located right next to the mailing address!)</i>	\$400.00



By: Kimberly Springfield, National Service Officer

Submitted by: Stephanie Strickland, Senior National Service Officer

Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)

The Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) offers education and training for high-demand jobs to Veterans who are unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Keep reading to find out if you're eligible and how to apply.

Am I eligible for this program?

To be eligible for this program, you must meet all the requirements listed here.

All of these must be true:

- You're at least 22 years old, but not older than 66, and
- You're unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- You're not rated as totally disabled because you can't work, and
- You're not enrolled in a federal or state jobs program

Note: You can't receive VRRAP benefits at the same time as you're receiving unemployment benefits (including CARES Act benefits).

If I'm eligible for other education benefits or VR&E, can I get VRRAP benefits?

No. At the time you apply for VRRAP, you can't be eligible for any of these other benefits:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/>

[education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/](https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/)

- Montgomery GI Bill <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/montgomery-active-duty/>
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/eligibility/>
- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/dependents-education-assistance/>
- Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) <https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/veap/>

Note: You can get VRRAP benefits if you were at one time eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill but you've transferred all of your benefits to family members.

What types of education and training programs does VRRAP cover?

VRRAP covers education and training programs approved under the GI Bill and Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) that lead to high-demand jobs. These include associate degrees, non-college degrees, and certificate programs. The Department of Labor determines what's considered a high-demand job for VRRAP.

Find out which jobs are considered high demand (PDF) <https://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/vrrap-high-demand-occupation-list.pdf>

What benefits can I get through this program?

If you're eligible for VRRAP, you can get:

- Up to 12 months of tuition and fees, and
- A monthly housing allowance based on Post-9/11 GI Bill rates

How long will this program be available?

We'll stop accepting new VRRAP enrollments on December 11, 2022—or when we reach either the \$386 million funding limit or the 17,250 participant limit, whichever comes first. If you're already enrolled in a program under VRRAP, you'll continue to get your payments.

Registration process:

Education Institutions seeking to participate in VRRAP must:

- Submit the Participation Agreement and Acknowledgment Form to the VRRAP processing team at EDUVRRAP.VBAMUSK@VA.GOV.
- The VRRAP team will process the agreement and send the institutions an approval letter and a list of approved programs.
- Upon receipt of approval, the education institutions can submit enrollment certification

For more information and other questions?

You can call us at 888-442-4551 (TTY: 711) For additional information, questions and forms needed. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.



Did you know that the MPVA has a Loan Closet Program? Our Loan Closet Program offers durable medical goods, free of charge, on a first come first served basis. The MPVA qualifies "durable medical goods" as any device that may assist with mobility (wheelchairs, walkers, canes, commode seats, shower chairs, adult diapers, and more). These gently used, donated items, are donated to us and are available for those who may need them. **You do not have to be a veteran to utilize this program and there is no cost!**

To find out more about this program and the items that are available, contact or email Brenda Wheater at:
Phone: (800) 638-6782 or (248) 476-9000
Email: chapterhq@michiganpva.org

Please keep in mind that these items change on a daily basis and are dependent on items that are donated. We also ask that you schedule an appointment to drop off or pick up items.



By: Mike Harris, President, MPVA

Changes Are Coming to Disability Parking Signs

Changes are coming to signs posted in parking lots, near doorways, and on rest room doors that indicate accessibility for people with disabilities in Michigan.

Governor Whitmer signed legislation to modernize the “handicapped” parking sign, emphasizing ability rather than disability. New signs will depict a character leaning forward in a wheelchair with a sense of movement. The signs will no longer use the word “handicapped”, and instead use the word “reserved”. Also, the updated signs will feature the color-contrasting of either a light symbol on a blue background, or a blue symbol on a light background.

The change has been the result of a long-fought battle to bring equality in representation for people with disabilities by many advocacy organizations across Michigan. However, some disability rights activists wanted to keep the original symbol, arguing the new one implies prejudice toward people with serious disabilities. The bill ultimately passed during the most recent legislative session with bipartisan support in both chambers.

Under the bill, which goes into effect immediately, the new signs will only be installed when a new accessible parking space is being created or an old sign needs to be replaced, meaning no additional cost to taxpayers.


This isn’t the biggest or most challenging disability-related issue that we face in Michigan. But words and images have meaning. They can shape our world view. When we change this image that appears passive, to one that implies motion, we more accurately represent the reality that people with disabilities are mobile and lead active lives. Moreover, the changing of the language from “handicapped” to “reserved” reflects a more accurate understanding of the reality of disability needs and of how disability represents a norm of our diverse society.

Hopefully, this can bring greater awareness to other, more pressing disability-related issues that we face, like the misuse of these reserved parking spots or inaccessible buildings that still abound in communities throughout Michigan.



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 Kampfoer, 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 City Competition. We want to congratulate Athanasios Kiriakas, Academic of Belleville for winning the 2014 "Big City Disability Award."

Spring Edition 2014

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




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

November/December 2012

Designing the Rollin' Times since 2008
www.theagency.us | (734) 678-7928


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, Jacye 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 creating around Michigan's Dunes with his son-in-law!

2018 Summer Edition



Sports & Recreation

By: Coach Phil Chester

2022 National Veterans Wheelchair Games



PVA's Treasurer, Tom Wheaton, bumps fists with Michigan athlete, Tony Jungblut, at the NVWG.

Here we are, going into the fall; where has the time gone?! Well, a part of this summer was spent in Tempe, Arizona—at least for your MPVA athletes!

The team this year was made up with Kevin Bradley, James Johnson, Tony Jungblut, and Scot Severn. They allowed me to tag along.

The team did well! This four-man team came away with a total medal count of 14 medals—9 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze.

Of course, there were some obstacles. We had to be bused to all events, so there was a lot of waiting in line. I think we can all relate to that frustration! But the biggest thing was the Arizona heat. A cool day was 112 degrees. We did see some 115 degree days, but it “cooled” off at night to 95 degrees. They say the heat out in Arizona isn’t bad because it is a dry heat; I am here to tell you all—hot is hot! But being the team from Michigan, we persevered.

Kevin Bradley was the big medal count contributor, along with James Johnson, who also medaled. James is



Kevin Bradley and his friend, Craig, take a minute to pose before one of his events.



James Johnson proudly shows off his medal.

a Michigan resident who moved to Georgia and played with the team there. Now, having moved back home, he has joined our team. Tony Jungblut joined our team and was named Sportsman of the Games last year. He



Scot Severn poses for an official photo with his medal.

also medaled in Tempe. Last but not least, Scot Severn medaled to round out the 14 awards! The whole team did really well and I, for one, am really proud of them.

We are still looking for new members to join us! If you have ever thought of joining a sports team, ours could be the one for you...

Next year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be in Portland, Oregon July 4-9, 2023! See you there!

ReWalk®

Are you a Veteran with a service or non-service connected Spinal Cord Injury?

Did you know that the Department of Veterans Affairs has updated its national policy to expand access to ReWalk exoskeletons through a VA SCI Hub and Spoke or the VA Choice Program?



What is ReWalk?

ReWalk is a robotic exoskeleton that enables individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries to stand and walk, and is cleared by the FDA for home and community use.

"Using ReWalk, I have more energy and less pain."

Ret. Army Specialist Gene L.

How Do I Know If I Am a Candidate for a ReWalk?

**Contact ReWalk
for a Free Screening**

**www.rewalk.com/contact
or 508.251.1154 Option 2**

ReWalk Robotics
200 Donald Lynch Boulevard, Marlborough, MA 01752
www.rewalk.com





**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Michigan Chapter

MICHIGAN PARALYZED
VETERANS OF AMERICA
A Member Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America
46701 Commerce Center Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170

Change Service Requested
DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE EXPEDITE!
2022 Fall Edition

A BOT AS **UNSTOPPABLE** AS YOU.

Explore your world - alone and unencumbered. Four modes give iBOT® PMD users unparalleled independence and ease to freely navigate across hills, curbs, and various terrain. **REACH** new heights, **CLIMB** with ease, and **GO** to places once thought impossible.

The iBOT® is covered at **NO COST** to qualified veterans under VA FSS#36F79721D0202. Contact your VA physician or therapist to see if the iBOT® PMD is appropriate for you, or call us at (833) 346-4268

**MOBIUS
MOBILITY**



1-833-3GO-IBOT
(1-833-346-4268)



mobiusmobility.com



info@mobiusmobility.com