

RT '25

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



The check presentation at the annual MPVA Membership Picnic at the Miracle League of Plymouth Field. Back row left to right: Brian VanSingel, Executive Director, MPVA, Molly Wheeler, Operations Manager, Miracle League of Plymouth, Nichole Bateman, Event Coordinator, Miracle League of Plymouth, Front row: Bob Vance, previous President, MPVA, Tim Agajeenian, Treasurer, MPVA



About this Issue:

The MPVA has had a very eventful fall season! Be sure to read this edition to find out what we've been doing and what is coming up!

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Vice President..... Bob Vance	Director David Peck
Secretary..... Clark Shuler	Treasurer..... Timothy Agajeenian
Director Monica Munir	

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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.
- 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

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Attention Readers!!!



The MPVA would like to take The Rollin' Times Newsletter to **exclusively electronic format**. This means that readers can receive their copies of the Rollin' Times **via email**.

If you would like to help the Chapter cut costs of printing and mailing and receive your Rollin' Times newsletter electronically, please send to Brenda Wheater
at:

chapterhq@michiganpva.org

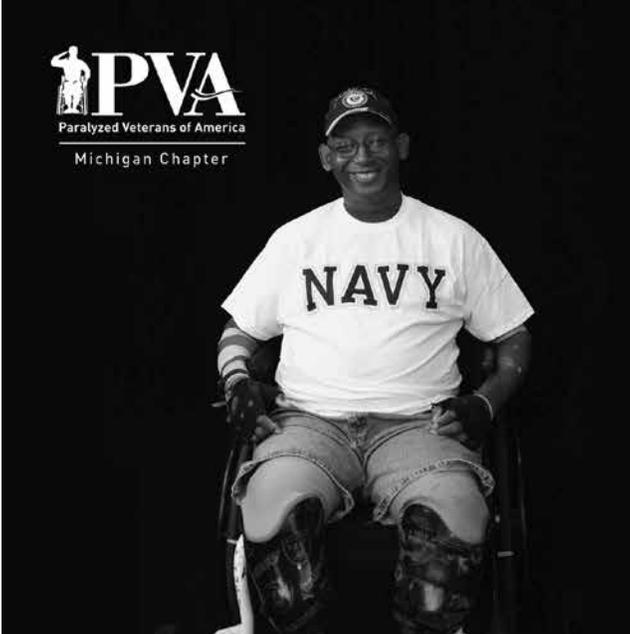
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To learn more, call or visit us online:
877-900-VETS | pva.careasy.org



How it works!



1. Simply call or complete our form online.



2. Schedule your free pick-up.



3. Receive a donation receipt.

Vehicle donations to PVA are tax-deductible! Most vehicles are sold through local used-car markets. Our Vehicle Donation Program works to get the highest return per vehicle and handles all the paperwork, too!

Call 877-900-VETS or donate online at pva.careasy.org



Executive Director's Report

By: Brian VanSingel, Executive Director, MPVA

A New Chapter for MPVA: Continuing Our Mission of Service and Strength

As I step into the role of Executive Director of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA), I am deeply honored to follow in the footsteps of Jaclyn Kochis who dedicated 17 years to serving our members and advancing our mission. On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, I want to extend heartfelt appreciation to Jaclyn for her years of committed leadership and tireless advocacy on behalf of Michigan's paralyzed veterans.

I am Brian VanSingel, and as the new Executive Director, it is my privilege to lead this organization into its next chapter. After retiring with over 25 years of military service, I've seen firsthand the courage, resilience, and camaraderie that define our nation's veterans. MPVA embodies those same qualities, and I am deeply committed to carrying forward its mission of empowering veterans with spinal cord injuries or dysfunction.

MPVA has a long and proud history of standing up for accessibility, healthcare equity, and veterans' rights. As we enter 2026, my focus is on strengthening our reach, deepening our advocacy, and expanding opportunities for connection among our members and partners across the state. In the coming year, MPVA will focus on several key priorities:

- **Member Engagement:** Expanding outreach to eligible veterans and ensuring that every eligible individual in Michigan knows that MPVA is here for them and the resources MPVA offers.
- **Advocacy and Accessibility:** Strengthening our voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C. to protect the rights and benefits our members have earned.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Deepening our relationships with VA medical centers, rehabilitation

facilities, and community organizations that share our mission.

- **Events and Community Building:** Increasing opportunities for participation in MPVA events, recreational activities, adaptive sports, and programs that foster camaraderie among our members and our families.
- **Communication and Modernization:** Enhancing our website and digital communications to make it easier for members and families to stay informed, share their stories, and get involved in upcoming events.

I am inspired every day by the determination of our members and by the compassion of those who support our mission through volunteering, donations, and advocacy. I'm especially grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and donors who make everything we do possible. Your continued generosity sustains our mission and allows MPVA to reach veterans across Michigan.

As I take on this new role, I invite every member to be part of MPVA's ongoing story. Reach out with your ideas, attend an event, volunteer for a program, or simply share your experiences with us. This organization belongs to all of us, and its strength lies in our shared commitment to each other.

Thank you for welcoming me into this new role. I look forward to meeting many of you in the months ahead and to continuing the proud legacy of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America. Together, we will honor our proud history, serve those who served, and strengthen the future of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America.



Congratulation to the 2026 Board and Directors of the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America!



Top left, Ray Brown, Sports Director, top Center, Clark Shuler, Secretary, Bob Vance, Vice President, Center-Tim Agajeenian, Treasurer, Bottom left, David Peck, Officer, Bottom Center, Monica Munir, Director, Bottom Right, Scot Severn, President



Introducing MPVA Board Member: Monica Munir

Monica Munir is an Army Veteran who served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1993 to 1997 as an Operating Room Technician. She later served on active duty from 1997 to 1998 as a Switchboard Operator and Maintainer.

While stationed in Germany, Monica injured her back and was misdiagnosed for approximately 18 months. She was eventually discharged because she was unable to complete the physical fitness test run requirement. After returning home, she sought treatment at the University of Michigan, where doctors discovered three herniated discs.

In early 2001, Monica moved to Washington State and later joined the National Guard Try-One program, serving in a Military Intelligence Unit. During that time, she assisted with state forest-fire operations. Following the events of 9/11, she was assigned to the Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) to assist in operational support.

In 2002, Monica moved back to Michigan to pursue higher education. She earned her EMT and Paramedic licenses while completing her Associate's Degree. In 2007, she moved to New York and enrolled at Mercy College, where she entered into the Homeland Security program eventually earning a Bachelor of Science degree. She went on to earn a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from the same institution.

Soon after graduation, the VA informed Monica that she needed back surgery. Her first procedure, a laminectomy at L2-L3, was performed in 2011. In 2012, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 Lymphoma. Her care team at the Ann Arbor VA referred her to the University of Michigan due to the complexity of her condition. Later



Monica Munir, Director

that year, she was hospitalized after her left foot dropped and subsequently underwent a stem-cell transplant at the VA in Tennessee in 2013.

In December 2013, Monica underwent an emergency laminectomy after losing the ability to walk. Following surgery, she experienced permanent loss of sensation on her left side and had to relearn how to walk, often unsure if her foot was touching the ground.

Although she held both a B.S. and an M.S., Monica's health challenges limited her career options. Undeterred, she began a second master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, specializing in Military and Family Life.

In 2019, she had surgery to remove skin cancer on her upper back. In 2022, she underwent her third back surgery, a total spinal fusion from

L2 to L4. In 2023, she was admitted again to UofM Hospital after her left foot dropped once more, leading doctors to perform a discectomy at L4-L5. Although the surgery initially seemed successful, her right foot dropped shortly afterward. She then underwent an emergency fifth surgery, another fusion between L4 and L5, which resulted in an incomplete spinal cord injury, leaving her paralyzed from T6 down.

In 2024, Monica traveled to San Diego, where she connected with the PVA through their VSO. There, she became actively involved with the organization. She later transferred to the Michigan Chapter of PVA in June 2024. Since

joining, Monica has participated in two PVA Women Veterans Empowerment Retreats and attended her first National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) last year.

Recently elected to the MPVA Board of Directors, Monica is eager to give back and help others in any way she can. She looks forward to representing our members and participating in upcoming events, including the NVWG in Detroit this summer





President's Report

By: Scot Severn, President, MPVA

National Veterans Wheelchair Games July 9-14, 2026, Detroit Michigan

Happy fall to all of you. My name is Scot Severn, and I am proud to represent all of you as your new MPVA president. I am deeply honored to have been chosen and elected to this role and hope to serve you all well. I have served on the MPVA Board of Directors for 20 years and also served as the Sports Director for most of that time. I hope to continue my service for many more years. I have some pretty big shoes to fill, considering our former president, Mike Harris, who had been with MPVA in one role or another for as long as I can remember.

I was injured in 1989. While on duty with the 4/38th Field Artillery unit at Camp Grayling, I was struck by lightning. The direct hit I took left me as an incomplete quadriplegic. One of my visitors at the hospital was a man named Mike Houge, who was there to sign me up for MPVA.

MPVA represented me very well over the years. In the early 2000s, I attended an MPVA bowling tournament and was soon recruited as an athlete by Ray Brown for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG). Since that time, I have been named to the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 Paralympic teams. I have also been part of five different world championship teams and two Parapan American teams over the years.

Enough about myself. I want to invite all of you to come out and share YOUR story with MPVA.

Additionally, I invite you to become part of the Michigan PVA team at the NVWG in 2026. The games are

coming to Detroit on July 9-14. The NVWGs are PVA's premier event each year, giving every competitor the chance to showcase or learn their talents. Registration is open to virtually all disabilities and requires medical clearance from your doctor (preferably a VA physician) by April 1st.

These games were the beginning for me, and they can be for you, too. There is something for everyone, whether you're a hardcore athlete or just out to try something new and fun. These games provide it all, from wheelchair basketball to hand cycling to table tennis, cornhole, and everything in between. It doesn't matter if you've done it before or not. It's the opportunity to try something new and be surrounded by other veterans just like yourself. If you don't know how to do it, no problem, we'll teach you how.

The friendships with veterans from around the country are one of the most rewarding experiences you'll ever have. The NVWG was responsible for starting my own career in wheelchair sports, and I sincerely hope you will give them the chance to be responsible for yours. Check out the Games at wheelchairgames.org and start the next chapter of your life.



MPVA Annual Picnic

A Day of Baseball, Food, and Friendship

In September, we gathered for our annual picnic at **The Miracle League of Plymouth** in Plymouth, Michigan. We couldn't have asked for better weather! The day was filled with sunshine, baseball, delicious food, and the kind of camaraderie that defines our MPVA family.

The highlight of the afternoon included some impressive hitting, with **former MPVA President Bob Vance** knocking two home runs over the wall! In addition to a friendly game of baseball, we were proud to welcome our new Executive Director, **Brian VanSingel**, along with his wife Kristin of 20 years, daughter Vera, and extended family. It was a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and meet new ones, including our longtime friends Bonnie Gibbs, former PVA VSO, and Willie DeBerry, former MPVA Facility Manager.

Our sincere thanks go to The Miracle League of Plymouth for once again hosting us and providing access to their incredible field and pavilions. Established in 2011, the Miracle League of Plymouth is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the community through inclusive recreation and baseball programs for individuals with special needs and their families. Their mission is to foster friendships and remove barriers to play through peer "buddy" interactions and accessible facilities.

MPVA has partnered with the Miracle League for several years, and our annual picnic—complete with baseball, food, and fellowship—has become a **cherished tradition**. As part of that tradition, we proudly presented the Miracle League of Plymouth with a **donation** to support their ongoing mission. We were honored that several Miracle League players and their families joined in our game after their own earlier matchup, adding even more joy and connection to the day.

We are also grateful to the volunteers who crocheted and donated **beautiful Afghan blankets**, which picnic attendees received as heartfelt tokens of appreciation and care.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who made this event possible—and to the Miracle League of Plymouth for their continued partnership. We look forward to seeing everyone again at next year's picnic for another unforgettable day of community, friendship, and fun.

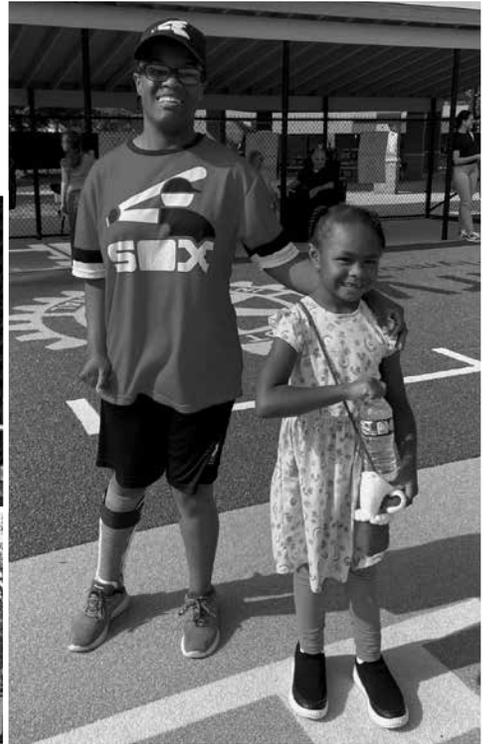
To learn more about The Miracle League of Plymouth, visit www.plymouthmiracle.org



MPVA Picnic



MPVA Picnic





Sports & Recreation

By: Ray Brown, Sports Director, MPVA

The Standing Vehicle Hunt

The Standing Vehicle Permit, issued by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), allows qualified individuals with permanent mobility impairments to hunt safely and independently. According to the DNR, “a person who, due to injury, disease, amputation, or paralysis, is permanently disabled and unable to walk in a hunting situation may apply for a permit to hunt from a standing vehicle.” This permit authorizes eligible hunters to hunt and shoot from a legally parked motor vehicle or off-road vehicle (ORV), ensuring greater access to Michigan’s outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities.

A Hunt to Remember

Hunters who hold a Standing Vehicle Permit are eligible to participate in both the **Michigan Liberty Hunt** in September and the **Michigan Independence Hunt** in October. This year, our generous sponsors chose to back the *Independence Hunt*—and what a weekend it was! Twenty-seven hunters and their guides gathered at **Green Deer Ranch in Caro, MI**, kicking things off with an awesome pizza feast. Our guides provided instruction on sighting in the challenged hunters and adapting high-tech equipment needed to ensure a safe and ethical harvest.

Celebrating 20 Years of Tradition

This marks the **20th year** that **Wheelin’ Team 457**, under the current direction of Marine Roger Wilcox, has proudly hosted this event. Friday and Saturday (October 17–18) brought crisp mornings and mild afternoons in the 50s and low 60s.

Our **Line of Duty Hunter, Lane Smith** (U.S. Navy), made a truly memorable harvest—a magnificent bison—using his grandfather’s classic .30-30 rifle on the fields of Green Deer Ranch. Throughout the weekend,

one by one, hunters called in their results, each adding to the excitement and camaraderie that make this hunt so special.

Thanks to the team’s refrigerated trailer, harvested game was safely stored until Monday (October 20) and then transported to **Coursers Deer Processing** in Columbiaville, who graciously offers the team a discounted rate.

Harvest Dinner & Heartwarming Moments

Despite Sunday’s rain (October 19), a few determined hunters ventured back into the woods while volunteers and officers prepared for the highly anticipated **Harvest Dinner at Bear Lake Camp/Lodge**. Ninety people came together to celebrate, with a live auction helping to offset the cost of the dinner and prizes.

Our oldest hunter, was 76 years old, and our youngest, just 12 years old, both proved to be crack shots. One of our 14-year-old first-time hunters from Flint used adaptive equipment to take home an impressive eight-point buck—his mother proudly said, “Kid be hooked!” Another participant, **15-year-old Jackson Picklo** of Rochester, was chosen as our **Best-Spirited Hunter**. Outfitted head-to-toe in new hunting gear, Jackson summed it up best when he said, “It was like Christmas!” **Special congrats to Chris Baran**, who took home our **Biggest Buck Award** with a huge-spread, thick 8-pointer.

A Community That Rolls Together

In total, **11 deer and one bison** were harvested during this year’s Independence Hunt.

Thanks to the **Michigan Chapter of PVA**, we were able to build many memories and make new friends... **It’s how we roll**. If you would like to apply for a Standing Vehicle Permit, you can find the necessary forms on the Michigan DNR website.

Standing Vehicle Hunt





Photo: Stephanie Strickland, Senior National Service Officer

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Legacy Participants Program Extension through September 30, 2028

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) for legacy participants was set to expire on September 30, 2025; however, the VA has extended the program through September 30, 2028. The Veterans Administration (VA) announced an extension to ensure eligibility for PCAFC would continue while the VA considers possible changes to the program.

For many years Veterans and their families that participate in the program rely on the stipend and other PCAFC benefits. This extension allows participants to continue receiving these benefits while the VA considers implementing changes which may include eligibility criteria for legacy participants.

The PCAFC program started with a 2010 federal law that established benefits for family caregivers of eligible veterans with serious injuries incurred in the line of active duty on or after September 11, 2001. In 2018 the program was expanded to include Veterans who have a serious injury in the line of duty before September 11, 2001, and established new benefits.

In 2021 VA identified a legacy cohort for participants and family caregivers that were approved under previous eligibility criteria. The legacy cohort consists of those who applied for PCAFC before October 1, 2020. A one-year transition period was established

through September 30, 2021, for the legacy cohort to ensure participants would continue to receive PCAFC benefits. Additional extensions have led to the current extension that keep legacy participants eligible through September 30, 2028.

PCAFC provides Veterans family caregivers with the necessary training to ensure proper care for seriously injured Veterans and mental health counseling. Additionally, primary caregivers can receive a monthly stipend, Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHMPVA) enrolment, free legal and financial advice for the needs of the injured Veteran and access to military commissaries, exchanges and recreational facilities.

For more information about PCAFC you can visit the VA website at [VA Family Caregiver Assistance Program | Veterans Affairs](#) or contact your National Service Officer.





The Ad Agency

CALL: (734) 678-7928



Support your local veterans by partnering with the Paralyzed Veterans of America through our G.I.V.E. Clothing Donation program!

Through the Paralyzed Veterans of America's G.I.V.E. 'Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere' clothing donation program, service never goes out of style. Generous donations of clothes, small appliances, and gently used household goods help improve the lives of severely injured veterans and strengthens the fabric of our community. We're looking for community partners to join us by getting involved in the G.I.V.E. program locally. **By doing so, you're changing lives!**

Ways to Partner

- Residential pick-up
- Drop box

The Impact

- Currently active in 12 states:
 - Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Washington
- Funds raised through partnership are put directly back into programs/services provided FREE to our members:
 - Veterans Benefits
 - Medical Services
 - Research & Education
 - Sports & Recreation
 - Government Relations & Advocacy
 - Architecture

Becoming a G.I.V.E. partner requires just a few steps:

- Express interest at your local PVA chapter
- Review logistics with G.I.V.E. program coordinator
- Execute contract process through National Office
- Finalize program details with all involved parties
- **START PROMOTING!**

For more information on G.I.V.E., please contact Tara Shishmanian at taras@pva.org or (202) 416-7733.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

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*Please join us in congratulating MPVA Athlete - James Johnson
for completing the Marine Corps Marathon and the Detroit
Free Press Marathon in the Adaptive Athletes Division!*

James, you always make us proud!





MICHIGAN PARALYZED
VETERANS OF AMERICA
A Member Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America
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2025 Fall Edition



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.

Please help in spreading the word about this program!

Thank you so much!

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America
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www.michiganpva.org