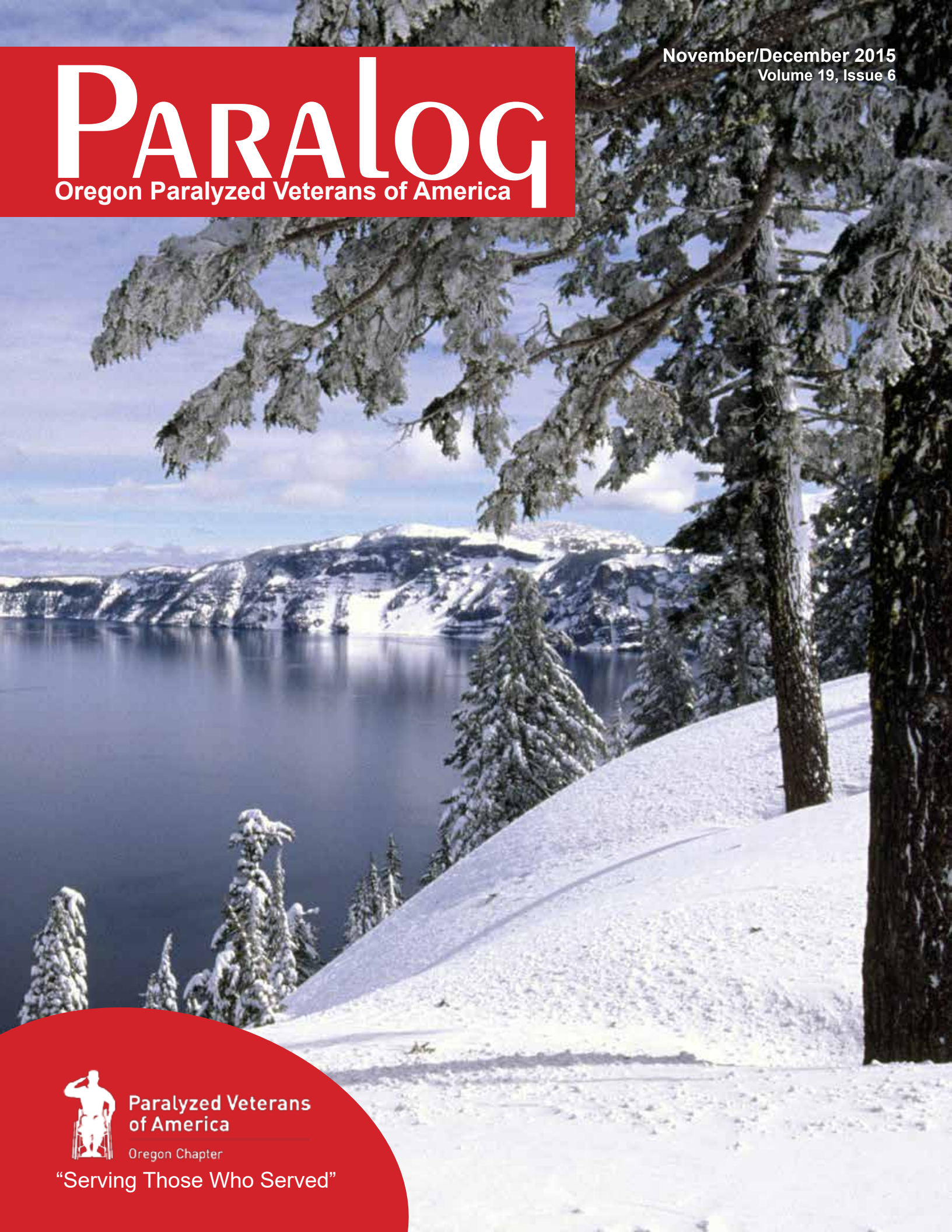


November/December 2015  
Volume 19, Issue 6

# PARALOG

Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

Oregon Chapter

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Oregon Chapter



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- For more information, please visit [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards).

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### OPVA Mission

Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America is committed to taking those actions necessary to improve the quality of life and to protect the rights of spinal cord injured or neurologically impaired veterans through: veterans benefits protection; advocacy; legislation; sports and recreation; hospital liaison and spinal cord research.

### Vancouver VA Primary Care Contact Phone Numbers

(360) 696-4061  
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Do you need assistance with your claims  
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The views and opinions expressed in the Paralog are not necessarily a direct representation of the views or ideas of the Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America who hereby disclaims any responsibility for opinions expressed by contributors and printed in the Paralog.

# Pontiac Solstice



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

Oregon Chapter

# 2006

## Tickets \$10 each or 5/\$40

Drawing August 13, 2016, 2:00 P.M. at  
OPVA 2016 Car Show at  
Home Depot 3795 Hagers Grove Rd SE,  
Salem OR 97317



## OPVA Raffle Car

Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America • 3700 Silverton Rd., Salem, OR 97305  
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# President's Greeting

Bill Blake—President

Let the New Year begin!!  
Welcome to fiscal year 2015/2016, which began October 1st. We are looking forward to a great New Year. We want to encourage you to help as much as you can. This publication, "The Paralog" is one of the ways we communicate with you. Please take the time to look through the publication, noting the articles and ads by our sponsors. Most important is to look at the events scheduled and mark your calendars. We hope to see you at many of the events.

Many of you have met me in the past. I am William Blake, but call me Bill. I started in PVA back in 2004. I have Multiple Sclerosis and have been in a wheelchair since 2005. I started out as Membership Director, then Treasurer and Vice President. I was proud to be elected President in September 2015. Terry Brown, our past President, did an outstanding job and has set the bar high for me. With your help and the help of the

Officers and Board Members we hope to place the Oregon Chapter at the top of the PVA list of Chapters.

The list of new Board Members and Officers are: Mike Rosenbalm, Vice President and continuing as Hospital Liaison; Dave Parker, combined Secretary and Treasurer; Bill Gray, Board Member and National Director; Larry Gardner, Sports Director; Jack Howell, Board Member; Roger Robinson, Membership Director, and Government Relations Director; Sue Holt continuing as a Board Member and working on Membership M.S. Liaison, and finally Toby Newton as past President. What a great group. I feel very fortunate to have them on board. There is always a need for addition volunteers and associate members. Tom Hurt joined us as Development Coordinator this past year and has done a fantastic job. The first task on our agenda is to update our website and make it more current. Francisco Navarro is





THE WHOLE IS GREATER  
THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS!!!



now on staff as our Graphic Designer. He will help with many tasks, and we are happy he is with us. Very soon we will be finishing a 2016 Calendar and mailing it out to all members. There are going to be several bylines in the Paralog. Dan Service, a member, will be writing a series of articles on Emergency Preparedness for the disabled that will help advise us as to what we need to do in case of natural disasters. Louie Grimmer, who was on the Board of Directors for over 20 years will be writing articles titled "As I See It". Each of the program directors will also be writing articles. So, the Paralog and website ([www.oregonpva.org](http://www.oregonpva.org)) are tools available for you to use.

We had a great year end banquet and Members Meeting at the Quality Inn in Keizer. We think the location was better than Spirit Mountain, but we would like to hear back from you before we settle on next year's location. Late summer weekends seem to be full of things to do. We would like your input on the OPVA Summer picnic. The last two years we held the event in Salem at Cascade Gateway Park.

We are thinking of having the picnic in late June or in July for this coming year. Email, call or write in your comments to help us schedule the Picnic. I am excited about this year, and with your help we can make it an exception year.



# Vice President's Greeting

Mike Rosenbalm—Vice President

Welcome to a New Year with a new President, Vice President, Sports Director and a couple new Board Members. As your new Vice President, I will work closely with the President so that in the case of his absence, I can provide a continuity of leadership.

With the changes in the President, Vice President, Sports Director and Board Members, I like to say it's a new day at Oregon PVA. With new leadership there is often a change in culture. Hopefully, any change in culture will be positive. That said, I would like to encourage any chapter member that has any concerns, questions or suggestions to call me at the office 503-362-7998 or on my cell phone 360-713-3075 as we are here to serve you.

population of our members some of my personal goals are to increase membership and volunteer-ism.

Therefore, if you know of a Veteran with a spinal cord injury or disease, please have the Veteran contact the Chapter office at 503-362-7889 or 1-800-333-0782 and we will give him/her a Membership Application to complete.

**Volunteers make their communities a better place to live**

Becoming a Paralyzed Veterans volunteer has never been easier. Each PVA chapter offers its own volunteer program with a variety of opportunities to contribute, plus you can commit to as many hours as you choose.

Call the Chapter at 503-362-7889 or 1-800-333-0782 for an Activation Form and get involved!

Paralyzed Veterans of America volunteers do invaluable work that makes a real difference to veterans, their communities and Paralyzed Veterans' Chapters. Volunteering can change your life, too.

Why is it so rewarding? Volunteers make their communities a better place to live.

You can work for an organization and mission you believe in. Having a positive impact on others feels great. You can meet new people and develop new leadership skills.

Family volunteering lets you spend time with loved ones while helping others.



Terry Langston, Renee Robinson and Joy Robinson. OPVA Volunteers

Some goals for the year are to plan some pizza meet and greets in different areas of the state. This way we can meet with our members face-to-face and hear what your concerns are and how the chapter can better serve you. In addition, with the aging



# 2015 Gun Raffle



**The raffle will be held at 1:00 P.M.**

## **Glock Pistol**

**\$5.00 per ticket**

Raffle will be held on **November 23** at the OPVA office.

### **Models to choose from:**

G-17/17Gen4, G-19/19Gen4, G-26/G-26Gen4, G-22/22Gen4, G-23/23Gen4, G-27/G-27Gen4, G-31/31Gen4, G-32/32GEN4, G33/33GEN4, G-42

### **Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America**

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Don Linwood and Jessie Turman (friend Ron's nephew)



## Recreation Fund

Don Linwood—Member

Please find enclosed a receipt for just a few fishing tips I took this summer. One was a two day trip out of Newport for some fantastic Tuna fishing! The other trip was out of Coos Bay a little later in the summer. I am really grateful for my friend Ron Turman, for inviting me along. Tuna fishing for me is probably my most enjoyable fishing pursuit! Just hearing the reel clicking go off and seeing the line just peel off the reel is quite the rush for me! I am so grateful that despite my spinal injury. I get to partake in these fishing trips.

Another bonus is seeing the jars of Tuna stored in the pantries and sharing with others.

I enclosed a few pictures of our bounty. Without the recreational fund my time enjoying these fishing trips would be less numerous. Thank you for let me have access to this fund.

**Tuna fishing for me is probably my most enjoyable fishing pursuit!**





## Free Fishing Day

Roger Robinson—Membership Director

During last summer the free fishing event went on as usual, however Detroit Lake was at it is lowest in years, which made it difficult for the kids to fish. The attendance was lower than previous years, less than a half of years before. We will pray for higher water next year. Everyone loved the lunch of hot dogs and salads (salads donated by Resers). We partnered with US Forest Service to give each child a free shirts this year.

Membership as of September 30, 2015.  
366 members. 13 deceased

## Remember to Use **Your Recreation Fund**



Oregon PVA members are eligible to **receive \$250 each year** through the Member Recreation Reimbursement Fund.

It begins October 1st and runs through September 30th each year.

Simply send in your receipts along with a one to two paragraph description of what you did to have fun with your friends and family. We like pictures too, they may make it into the Paralog. All receipts must be dated within this current fiscal year and used within this current fiscal year, mail to: the Oregon PVA, **3700 Silverton Road NE, Salem, OR 97305**

**No later than September 30th**



Please contact the office at 503-362-7998 or 1-800-333-0782 if you have any questions or require additional information



**Paralyzed Veterans of America**

Oregon Chapter



# Greetings from the Development Department

Tom Hurt—Development Coordinator

Greetings from the Development Dept. as we close out 2015 I want to thank everyone who made me feel welcome to the organization, we have put on some very successful events in these short 6 months.

I have been putting pencil to paper, and scheduling dates for 2016.

Currently we are working on the *OPVA Abilities Expo* coming up in April, as well as the annual Golf Tournament and a Car Show.

We are looking for members who would like to get involved and participate on the committees planning these, as well as other upcoming events. For these events to be successful we are going to need the members to be involved, if not in the planning please come and enjoy, remember we are doing the events for YOU.

The OPVA Abilities Expo is set for April 16th, so the time is now to get things going. Another event that is scheduled is the OPVA Show and Shine Car Show on August 13th. This is going to be held at 3798 Hagers Grove Rd., Salem (The Home Depot). This event is slated to run from 9 am to 2 pm on Aug 13th, we are going to need approximately 18 to 20 volunteers for this event, so don't wait to get on the planning committee.

As I reflect on the last two months, we ended up finishing the State Fair with a decent amount of raffle ticket sales for the Pontiac and the Glock, considering the amount of rain and the wind storms that took out a number of vendor tents.

If you get an opportunity you need to extend a thank you to the Parkers for putting together the Members Banquet, it was a true Hawaiian Theme, right down to the Hula Dancers. A great time was had by all. Also in September was the Hot Dog Feed at The Dalles Veterans Home, Thank you to Larry Gardner and Roger Robinson for making that happen again this year.

**We are doing the events for YOU**

As always we are looking for other venues to promote OPVA as well as fund raise. If you have any suggestions for events please don't be shy, whether it be Bowling, a 5K event, Disc Golf Tourney, or insert your idea here. If it is something you enjoy others will as well.

The Development Dept. is here to work for you the members. Please feel free to contact me at: [development@oregonpva.org](mailto:development@oregonpva.org) or contact me in the office at 503-362-7998

# SUPPORT LOCAL HEROES

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# DONATE NOW



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## Donation Form

Oregon PVA is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit. Federal Tax I.D. # 93-0713859

To mail in your donation, fill out this form and make checks payable to **Oregon PVA** or visit our website, [www.oregonpva.org](http://www.oregonpva.org) to set up a payment or reoccurring payment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Program requested support:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation      | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation         | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sport            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Liaison | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy           |  |

Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America, 3700 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97305. Tel: (503) 362-7998





**64<sup>th</sup> ALBANY**  
**VETERANS DAY**  
**Parade**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**11:00 A.M.**

## **Oregon's Veterans Day Parade**

Bill Blake—President

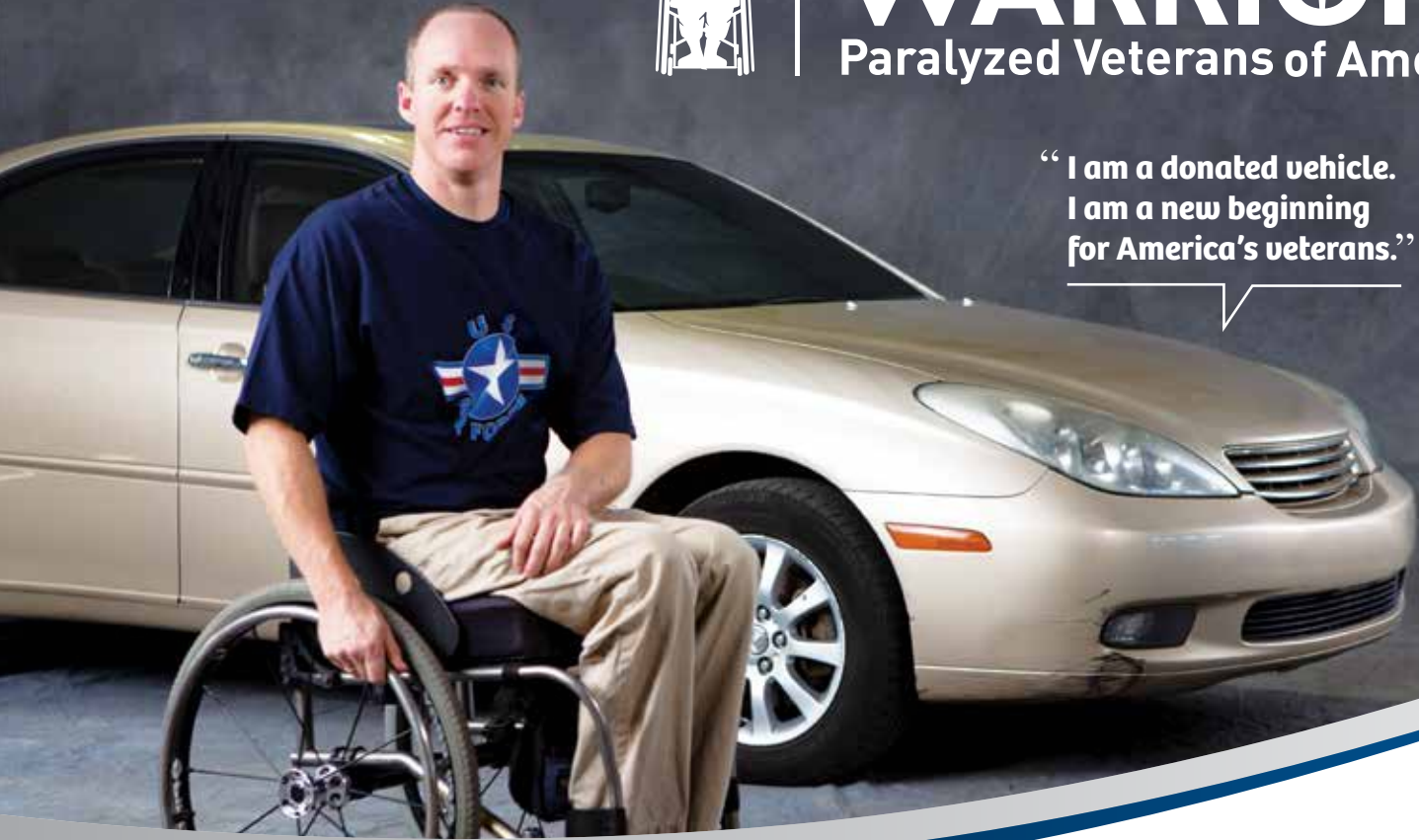
One of the most outstanding events that we participate in, is the Veteran's Day Parade in Albany, Oregon. It is the largest Veterans Day Parade west of the Mississippi River. There are 10's of thousands of people lining the streets of Albany, all saluting Veterans and Active Duty Military. It is one of the most enjoyable events I have ever experienced. For us Vietnam Vets, it is the parade we never got.

We will be pulling our trailer with the red OPVA van, and there will be up to eight wheelchairs on the trailer. We are even going to have hoops and a cover in case it rains. Lucky for all, it hasn't rained on the parade in several years. I would encourage all members and families to attend.



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Paralyzed Veterans of America



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Through your vehicle donation, you'll make a difference to veterans suffering from spinal cord injury or disease.

You may even earn a tax break, too!

### Donate today!

Call or visit us online to donate your vehicle today:

**855-744-0782**

**[wheelshelpingwarriors.org](http://wheelshelpingwarriors.org)**

## NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH 2015

By Sue Holt

Something funny happened at the Vince Gill concert at the State Fair. I fell in love with my husband all over again. We've been married thirty five years and had the normal ups and downs any family might having been tested many times along the way. Boom, 2008 came and was a busy year for us all.

Our older son got married, our youngest one was about to move out of the house. We became empty nesters until Multiple Sclerosis decided to make an appearance.

It was then my husband became my caregiver... and I can't begin to tell him how much he has meant to me with all the encouragement given to me these past seven years. So take the time now and let your caregiver know what they mean to you... I've included a few tips gleaned from an article that I found while researching this subject...

Are you listening Dave?????



## Caring for the Caregiver

(<https://www.sharecare.com/health/multiple-sclerosis-ms/health-guide/stay-strong-with-multiple-sclerosis/caring-for-the-caregiver>)

### Stay strong and healthy with these 4 tips to prevent caregiver burnout.

Being a caregiver is never easy, and caring for someone with multiple sclerosis is certainly no exception. Living with MS can be incredibly challenging for both the patient and the caregiver. Damage to the nerves caused by the disease leads to an array of physical symptoms, including difficulties walking, fatigue, dizziness and bowel and bladder dysfunction. MS can also cause a host of emotional, mental and cognitive changes.

People with MS are prone to depression, anxiety, grief, irritability and mood swings.

“Certainly, living with any physical illness or impairment can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression, but with MS these feelings can also result from the effects of the disease on the nervous system as well as the medications used to treat the disease,” says Alexis Abramson, PhD, a care giving expert and author of *The Caregivers Survival Handbook* (Perigee Trade). “People with MS may experience severe depression or mood changes.”



For the caregiver, these difficulties can be exhausting and exasperating. They can also trigger symptoms, such as depression, fatigue, insomnia and shortness of breath.

“A caregiver may be prepared for the tough physical work -- helping their loved one into and out of bed, for example, or getting to the bathroom -- yet be completely caught off guard

by the emotional challenges of caring for their loved one with MS,” Abramson says. As a caregiver, you need to take good care of yourself, too.

***Share this article with your caregiver and let them know how much they are appreciated!!!***

To stay strong, here's what you can do:

## **4 Tips to Prevent Caregiver Burnout**

- 1. Take a break. Make time for yourself away from the person you're caring for. Build in time for yourself during the day, even if it's a short walk or a cuddling up with a good book.**
- 2. Get help. Care-giving of any kind is not a one-person job. Enlist support from friends, family members, community organizations or home health agencies, so you can take some extended time off.**
- 3. Join a support group. Spending time with others who are taking care of someone with MS provides a place for you to share your frustrations and learn coping skills. Your loved one's doctor can help you find a caregivers' support group. So can organizations like the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.**
- 4. Look out for your own health. Eat nutritious foods, get regular exercise and try to get enough sleep. Try to spend some time with friends, and make time for relaxation. Taking care of yourself helps prevent caregiver burnout so you can continue to take good care of your loved one with MS.**



## Sports Updates

Larry Gardner—Sports Director

Greetings from the sports desk.

Well here we are looking at winter moving in, but here at OPVA we have winter sports still available for our members and their families. Some of our events do include your motel and meals for the weekend of fun. Also Trap shooting is still going on, so if interested please call for more details.

The Oregon PVA trap shoot fund raiser held on August 22nd was a success, not as many as expected but still a really good family event for all ages. We also had Laughing Lunch Box there with their food truck for breakfast and lunch and that was very good food, [thank you Sarah]. This trap shoot was my first time ever, and I'm here to tell you if you haven't tried it give it a chance its lots of fun, if you like to shoot at moving targets.

I recently sent out a survey to all members to get an idea of sports and events of interest, so far I have received about ¼ of the surveys back, so if you haven't returned it yet it would be real helpful in planning and working on some new events so I know what you're interested in, and if not interested check [not interested] and mail it back. I really need your input to make this happen, the survey will also let me know who to contact about events you have interest in. If you want more information about sports programs and events coming up please call me at the office – 503 362-7998 or email – [sports@oregonpva.org](mailto:sports@oregonpva.org).

We can always use more volunteers at our events and also I am wide open for any input that may help me out. Thank you very much everyone.

# RECREATION FUND



By Bill Blake

We are in the middle of football season, with basketball coming up. It is GREAT time to use your **Recreation Fund** to enjoy some sports.

I am a big Beaver Believer, so this article is about Oregon State Sports. I am in a power wheelchair and I love sports. Over the past several years I have attended football games at Oregon State.



They have a wide assortment of handicapped seating located in various spots in the stadium. You do not have to have season tickets.

Just go to the ticket booth the day of the game, or call into 1-800-GOBEAV and have them waiting at will call. If you are in a wheelchair you can get one ticket for yourself and companion ticket for a friend. It gets better for basketball. Most of the handicapped seats are on the main floor, and they are not very expensive. Probably best to call in to have the tickets waiting for you at will-call. Now, the best news.

You have a Recreation Fund of \$250 per year, with the fiscal year starting in October. You have to buy the tickets and then send in the receipt with a brief explanation of what you did. You could even go down early and go out to dinner before the game. Come see me. I will be on the Northeast corner of the main floor by the Beaver bench. Go Beavs!!!



## Funeral Planning Guide

Daniel Service - Member

What a wonderful opportunity for me to share with you information that we hope you will take heed of. As posted above, my name is Daniel Service.

I retired with 20 years of active and reserve service in the Army, I received a BS degree in Management of Human Resources, I have Multiple Sclerosis, and I am the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Brush Hills Ward of the LDS church.

I have been asked to share information that will help everyone get prepared for unexpected emergencies. Most of the information I will be sharing comes from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) [fema@service.govdelivery.com](mailto:fema@service.govdelivery.com), and Ready.gov, and I encourage you to follow those sites on a regular basis.

But first things first. Are you prepared for life's unexpected circumstances?

We suggest everyone prepare themselves and see to it that their family members are prepared for the day when each one of us leave this existence on earth.

This is done by organizing all the information needed. If you have not already done this, stop by any funeral home and pick up what may be called an "Advanced Planning Funeral Guide" or go on the internet and put in "Funeral Planning Guide" and get a free pdf that can be filled out with all the important information that will be needed.

This will include information on people to be notified, like family and friends, along with their addresses and phone numbers; your vital statistics listing name, address, SS#, date of birth, birthplace, education, military information; location of important paper such as birth certificate, life, home and auto insurance policies, will,

checking/saving account passbooks, stock and bond certificate; a brief biography of your life including different organizations you have belonged to, business associates, family activities or special family functions you participated at, hobbies and personal interest and activities, favorite song/music/flower/color, what message you want to leave to your family and friends; the funeral service such as the place of the service, place of interment, religious service, music, flowers, special requests (clothing, etc.), pallbearers; cemetery instructions are where you give direction of the disposition to be made of your remains; information that may be put in a newspaper, such as parents, children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters; and any other prearrangements that may have already been made. Now that you have completed this, put it in a place where others can get to it, such as home safe, a fire proof filing cabinet, give a copy to your attorney, and give a copy to those that take care of you.

Next, contact your local hospital and find out what information they will need to have if life puts you in

a situation where you cannot give direction on your desires pertaining to your life. They may ask you to fill out an "Oregon Advance Directive, or ask you if you have a "Durable Power of Attorney".

**Are you prepared for life's unexpected circumstances? We suggest everyone prepare themselves and see to it that their family members are prepared for the day when each one of us leave this existence on earth.**


By having this information completed and a copy given to your doctor, attorney, the hospital, and anyone else who cares for you, you will be better prepared.



# November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Saving Time Ends	2	3 Election Day	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29	30					

 Office will be closed



**Mark your Calendar**  
 11/11 - 64th Annual Albany Veterans Day Parade  
 11/19 - Board of Directors Meeting (10:00 A.M.)

**Happy  
Thanksgiving Day**





# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		



Office will be closed

Merry

Christmas

& Happy New Year



# OPVA Birthday List

Richard Kyser	11/2	Steven Terry	12/9
Paula Fox	11/3	Jarlin Medlock	12/10
Ken Allen	11/5	Ivan Nance	12/10
Martin Halsey	11/5	Louis Hatfield	12/11
Lynette Nobel	11/5	Loyal Rookhuyzen	12/12
Louis Grimmer	11/7	Thomas Dove	12/12
Irwin Storer	11/10	Scott Larsen	12/13
Linda Jespersen	11/12	Brian Price	12/13
Jack Howell	11/13	Angel Enriquez	12/13
Edward Lanssens	11/13	Edmon Gillespie	12/14
Dennis Harbour	11/20	William Hauser	12/14
Steven Ross	11/21	Robert Harreschou	12/15
David Peddicord	11/22	Donna Schymanski	12/15
John Balbin	11/22	Paul Dahlke	12/16
Carl Hay	11/23	Vernon Sheldon	12/19
Theodore McBroom	11/24	Paul Donovan	12/21
Hal Fernandez	11/24	Duane Ingersoll	12/22
Daniel Brophy	11/27	Brian Barlow	12/24
Robert Haberman	11/27	James Ledridge	12/25
Michael Olin	11/30	Richard Dean	12/30
Joseph Theriot	12/1	Michael Mayea	12/30
Ronald Latham	12/4	Cornelius Depuy	12/31
Kathryn Shear	12/4	Edward Lawrence	12/31
Patrick Cain	12/5	Jeffery Cox	12/31

## Volunteers Needed

Volunteers needed for all events.

Please contact the office for how you can volunteer.

Office: (503) 362-7998

Or visit our website: [www.oregonpva.org/Programs/Membership/](http://www.oregonpva.org/Programs/Membership/)

scroll down to Volunteer Opportunities,

click on the Link

“Volunteer Application Form”

and mail to OPVA,

3700 Silverton Rd., Salem, OR 97305





# Visit our website for more information



**Paralyzed Veterans  
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## www.oregonpva.org



**This month we recomend click on:**

- Resources/ Links/Disability NEWS for October
- Resources/ Links/October 2015 Veteran Connection
- Events/64th Annual Albany Veterans Day Parade
- Events/2015 Gun Raffle (Nov/23/15)
- Store



<https://www.facebook.com/Oregon-Paralyzed-Veterans-of-America-OPVA-742777699067200/>

# Filing a Personal Injury Claim in Oregon

Auto accidents are one of the biggest causes of spinal cord injuries and paralysis. If you have been severely injured due to an auto accident, there may be financial resources available to you to help with medical bills, lost wages, and more. A personal injury claim has helped millions of Americans get the assistance they need.

## Fault and Personal Injury Claims

Before considering filing a personal injury claim, you will need to be able to show that you were not at fault for the accident. In an auto accident, the driver at fault will be the driver who broke a law, such as driving through a stop sign or driving on the wrong side of the road. Here are some rules of the road that you should always follow in Oregon:

- **Signaling:** Motorists in Oregon must signal at least 100 feet ahead of time before making a turn.
- **Lights:** Motorists in Oregon cannot use high beams when another vehicle is approaching 500 feet away, or 350 feet behind another vehicle.
- **Drinking:** The legal alcohol limit in Oregon is .08% for an adult age 21 or over, .04% for someone who is a commercial driver, and .00% for anyone under the age of 21.

Proving that you were not at fault in your accident is extremely important, because Oregon will reduce any settlement you may earn by your percentage of fault. If you are more than 50% at fault for an accident, you will not receive any financial compensation at all. Here is an example of how fault could affect your claim:

Delilah was driving to work when she was rear-ended by a large truck. She suffered a serious spinal cord injury and lost most of the mobility in her legs. She had \$10,000 in medical bills, plus months of physical therapy. Delilah filed a personal injury claim for \$30,000 to pay for her medical bills, future bills, and pain and suffering. In her case, it was determined that her brake lights were not working. Delilah was found to be 10% responsible for the claim. Delilah won her case, but her settlement was reduced by 10% to \$27,000 to compensate for her own fault.

## How to Start the Claim Process

If you became paralyzed in a car crash, your first step will be writing a demand letter to the insurance company of the driver at fault for the wreck. This letter will list the exact medical bills you've paid, plus any lost wages or future medical bills. Since you've lost a great deal of mobility as well, you should demand a sum for pain and suffering. Consider contacting a personal injury attorney in your area to discuss what a fair compensation would be for a demand letter.

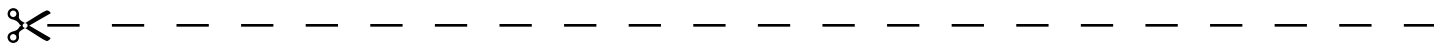
If the other driver's insurance company denies the claim, you will need to take the claim to court. Be sure to document any bills or materials related to your injury. You will have two years in the state of Oregon to file a personal injury claim. Be sure to look at Oregon's courthouse information on-line to determine where you should go to file a claim. With any luck, your demand letter will be accepted and you will not need to step foot inside a court house.

### Veterans' Benefits and Personal Injury Claims

There are two forms of disability benefits for veterans: Veterans Disability Compensation and Veterans Disability Pension. Veterans Compensation requires that an injury or disability incurred while on active duty in the military and has no financial requirements. A personal injury settlement will not affect Veterans Compensation.

Veterans Pension is for disabled veterans who did not necessarily become disabled while on active duty, but are low income. A settlement could definitely affect any veteran on Veterans Pension, because the program is needs based.

This article was not written by an attorney, and the accuracy of the content is not warranted or guaranteed. If you wish to receive legal advice about a specific problem, you should contact a licensed attorney in your area.



## OPVA Members

**Please update your information:**

(Please Print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Return to:**

Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America, 3700 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97305

or email the information to [oregonpva@oregonpva.org](mailto:oregonpva@oregonpva.org)



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

Produced by the Paralyzed Veterans of America • Government Relations Department

# Washington UPDATE

*Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.*

October 15, 2015

Volume 21, No. 10

## Commission on Care Begins Work

In August, the Commission on Care began meeting to examine access to VA health care and to develop a plan to organize the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and determine how best to allocate resources to ensure access to care over the next 20 years. The Commission was established by P.L. 113-146, the “Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA).” The Commission is comprised of health care professionals and business leaders appointed by the White House and the majority and minority leadership in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Commission held its first public meeting in September. During the meeting, they received the full Independent Assessment conducted by the CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare as mandated by the VACAA. The Independent Assessment analyzes 12 specifically identified areas that Congress mandated for review. These assessments range from veteran demographics to staffing levels in the VA to business processes and construction management. PVA participated in the interview process for the assessment to offer insight on the demographics of our membership.

The Commission is required to report to Congress within six months on its proposed plan to address the issues that have been identified in the VA health care system. We will continue to keep PVA members updated on the work of the Commission as it proceeds with its meetings.

## House VA Committee Conducts Hearing to Examine Independent Assessment

On October 7, 2015, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs conducted a hearing to examine the Independent Assessment that was produced by the CMS Alliance in accordance with the provisions of P.L. 113-146. The Committee received comments from VA Secretary Robert McDonald as well as two representatives of the corporations and blue ribbon panel that developed the assessment.

Secretary McDonald emphasized that the VA is already taking many similar steps to those outlined in the assessment as part of the MyVA transformation. He also stressed to the Committee once again that part of the transformation must include budget flexibility that does not fence off portions of the VA appropriations account for specific purposes. The Committee has been resistant to give the Secretary universal flexibility to manage the department’s budget.

One part of the assessment that the Secretary expressed disagreement with is the recommendation to create an independent governance board that would development policy, define strategic direction and ensure accountability within the VA. The Secretary stated that he believed that this is the responsibility of the authorizing committees in Congress, and the members of the Committee generally agreed. PVA believes this is an intriguing idea because it would remove VA from the politically-motivated policy that Congress often forces upon the VA.

Washington Update  
Produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America

A representative of the Mitre Corporation, one of the companies that conducted part of the assessment, suggested that comparing the VA health care system to the highest performing health care networks in America remains a complicated task. Mitre found that the VA generally ranks among the nationwide average in performance when compared to health care networks. However, what sets the VA apart from virtually every health care network in the country is its research and education and training missions. The Mitre representative explained that the highest performing health care networks do not come close to matching the VA in those areas of responsibility.

The one area that generated the most heated discussion during the hearing involved the culture at VA. Representative Tim Huelskamp (R-KS) and Representative Mike Coffman (R-CO) both expressed serious doubt that the right steps are being taken to fundamentally change the culture at the VA. The Independent Assessment highlighted the fact that the VA has a “leadership crisis.” Additionally, the culture of the VA is characterized by “risk aversion and distrust” that stymies innovation and maximized performance across the entire health care system. PVA believes that changing the culture of the VA remains the biggest challenge facing the Secretary and his leadership team; however, we also believe that the Secretary is committed to making necessary changes for the better.

The hearing likely sets the stage for continued oversight as the VA works towards improving the system. The VA is set to release a plan to completely re-engineer its community care programs in November. The Committee will be particularly interested in that aspect of VA’s transformation. As VA makes more specific changes to its organization and operations, PVA will update our members so that they are informed about how those changes might impact them.

## **Congress Authorizes Funding to Complete New VAMC in Denver, SCI Construction Project in San Diego**

At the end of September, Congress approved and the President signed into law P.L. 114-58 (S. 2082), the “Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015.” The law includes numerous provisions extending authorities for programs managed by the VA health care and benefits systems. The law also includes a couple of provisions particularly important to PVA.

First, the law authorizes the VA to spend the resources necessary to complete construction of the new VA medical center in Aurora (Denver), Colorado. The VA was previously authorized to spend up to approximately \$1.1 billion on the project, but that limit was set to be reached by the start of the new fiscal year on October 1. The new authorization limit sets total final cost for the project at approximately \$1.7 billion. This project has been a high priority for PVA and its members in the Rocky Mountain region from the beginning because it includes a brand new spinal cord injury center.

The one troublesome aspect remaining with this project is where the funding will come from to complete the program. Congress made clear that it has no intention of providing additional appropriated dollars to complete the project. As a result, VA will be responsible for identifying more than \$600 million from its existing resources to complete the hospital. PVA believes that VA will be forced to take money from resources devoted to the purpose of providing services to veterans in other areas of the country. We also believe that this is very likely to lead to another budget shortfall by next spring or summer, particularly when coupled with what is believed to be insufficient funding being considered by Congress in the House and Senate appropriations bills.

## Washington Update

### Produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America

The law also includes authorization to replace the building that houses the SCI center at the San Diego VA medical center. Included in this project will be 30 acute care beds and 20 SCI long-term care beds. PVA has worked closely with VA senior leadership to see this project come to fruition.

### National Disability Employment Awareness Month Turns 70

The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is to educate people about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. This year's theme is "My disability is one part of who I am."

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"This year's theme encapsulates the important message that people with disabilities are just that — people," said Jennifer Sheehy, acting assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "And like all people, we are the sum of many parts, including our work experiences. Disability is an important perspective we bring to the table, but, of course, it's not the only one."

Resources, tool kits and other information about NDEAM can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/> and at <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/>.

### Legislative Plan:

Goal: Develop and pass legislative reforms to the ACAA.

Steps:

- Engage stakeholders and PVA members.
  - Receive stories illustrating the personal difficulties people with disabilities encounter in air travel.
- Develop legislative language and justification.
- Foster congressional support for proposal.
- Proposed congressional briefing and/or oversight hearing.
- Implement advocacy plan to engage grassroots and communications strategy.

Potential Legislative Language:

- Reevaluation of DOT's enforcement and complaint adjudication process.
- GAO report on ACAA training and enforcement.
- Private right of action, including damages and attorney's fees.
- Requirements for standards on next generation aircraft to ensure enhanced accessibility.
- Increased access to in-flight entertainment systems and kiosks.

Initial Time-line:

- September
  - Finalize initial strategy.
  - Develop feedback loop for stories.
  - Schedule and invite disability community stakeholder for October meeting.
- October
  - Meet with disability community stakeholders.
  - Implement feedback loop for stories.
  - Develop legislative proposal.
- November/December
  - Finalize legislative proposal with stakeholder buy in.
  - Receive and package stories for Hill support.
  - Seek congressional support for proposal.

## PVA Advocacy Program Preparing Air Carrier Access Act Legislative Plan

The Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) was signed into law on October 2, 1986 (P.L. 99-435). This legislation was introduced by Former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) in response to the United States Supreme Court decision in *Department of Transportation v. Paralyzed Veterans of America* (No. 85-289), which held that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act applied only to airlines receiving direct federal financial assistance. As originally passed, the ACAA guaranteed that people with disabilities would receive consistent and nondiscriminatory treatment when traveling on domestic air carriers. In April 2000, P.L. 106-81, the “Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21),” extended ACAA requirements to foreign air carriers.

Despite decades of enforcement, many passengers with disabilities routinely encounter problems in air travel. In July 2015, the Department of Transportation (DOT) released the latest Annual Report on Disability-Related Air Travel Complaints. In Calendar Year (CY) 2014, passengers filed 27,560 disability-related complaints as reported by 173 domestic and foreign air carriers, which represents a nine percent increase over CY 2013. Of those complaints, U.S. carriers accounted for 24,046 disability-related complaints. Top complaints with U.S. carriers for passengers with paraplegia or quadriplegia include failure to provide assistance, seating accommodation, and storage and delay of assistive devices.

To address complaints against air carriers, passengers with disabilities have few options. A passenger with a disability may file a complaint with the air carrier. Passengers with disabilities may also file complaints with DOT.

Prior to April 2001, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth and Eighth Circuits had found that

although not explicitly stated, Congress had created a private right of action under the ACAA. A private right of action allows an individual to bring a lawsuit to enforce a right. However, an April 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision in a non-ACAA case held that in order for a private right of action to exist, Congress must have explicitly created it. Subsequently, the Tenth and Eleventh Circuits have held that the ACAA does not provide a private right of action to passengers with disability-related complaints.

At the most recent DOT forum on improving air travel for passengers with disabilities, attendees participated in breakout sessions on wheelchair stowage and assistance, assistive technology, and service animals. The top three issues identified by the wheelchair stowage and assistance breakout were passengers with disabilities being forced to wait for assistance after all other passengers had deplaned, damage to wheelchairs, and ad-hoc requests for wheelchairs that made it difficult for airlines to fulfill requests. Issues identified by the assistive technology and service animal breakouts included in-flight entertainment touch screens and the number of service animals per passenger.

Looking to the future, passengers with disabilities seek improved structural access to aircraft. Opportunities for improved access include in-cabin wheelchair restraints, accessible lavatories on single aisle aircraft, and fully accessible in-flight entertainment systems and kiosks. Better training for air carrier personnel and their contractors focused on implementing industry best practices will be key to closing remaining gaps in access to air travel for passengers with disabilities.



**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
Government Relations Department  
801 Eighteenth Street, NW • Washington, DC 20006  
(800) 424-8200 • (800) 795-4327 • [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)



## Hospital Liaison Report

Mike Rosenbalm - Hospital Liaison

On August 17, 2015 the VA announced new regulation regarding service animals in VA facilities. These new rules go into effect on September 16, 2015. See the VA press release that follows:

WASHINGTON – Today the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has revised its regulation regarding the presence of animals on VA property. The updated regulation will ensure VA practices remain consistent with applicable federal law. It will also assist individuals entering VA facilities in developing a clear and consistent understanding of the criteria governing facility access for service animals.

“As I have traveled to VA facilities throughout the country, I have heard from many Veterans about what a vital role their service animals play in their lives,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “The revised regulation will ensure Veterans and employees have clear guidance regarding the presence of service animals in our facilities. VA remains committed to ensuring America’s Veterans have access to the health care benefits for which they are eligible.”

Under the revised regulation, only dogs that are individually trained to perform work or tasks on behalf of an individual with a disability will be considered service animals.

Other animals will not be permitted in VA facilities, unless expressly allowed as an exception under the regulation for activities such as animal-assisted therapy or for other reasons such as law enforcement purposes. The regulation further confirms that service animals may access VA property subject to the same terms that govern the admission of the public to VA property, and may be restricted from certain areas on VA properties to ensure that patient care, patient safety, and infection control standards are not compromised.

In accordance with required practices, the revised regulation was published in the Federal Register in November 2014, to obtain feedback from Veterans, advocacy organizations and other stakeholders.

Over the next thirty days, VA will provide training to front-line employees and ensure policies at all facilities are consistent with the new regulation.

Source: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2723>

Remember the chapter is here to serve you. We would love to hear from you about your experiences with the SCI/D care you receive from Seattle, Vancouver or Outpatient Clinic. Let us know if you have had delays in receiving your healthcare and/or prosthetic equipment as well as if you’ve had exceptional service from a program and/or employee.





# PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

An individual is eligible for membership by meeting the following criteria: (1) is a citizen of the United States; (2) was regularly enlisted, inducted, or commissioned, and was accepted for or on active duty, in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States or an ally of the United States; (3A) was separated from the service in the Armed Forces under conditions other than dishonorable; or (3B) is on active duty or must continue to serve after the cessation of hostilities; and (4) has suffered a spinal cord injury or disease (such as MS, ALS), whether or not service connected in origin. Membership is free. Complete and mail the application to: PVA Membership Department, 801 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 or to the chapter of choice. Providing the requested information is entirely voluntary but required for membership with PVA.

800-424-8200 • www.pva.org

Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
month date year

Male  Female

Are you a United States citizen?  Yes  No

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## VETERAN STATUS INFORMATION

DATE(S) OF MILITARY SERVICE		TYPE OF SEPARATION Discharge (D) or Retirement (R)	BRANCH OF SERVICE	
Start Date month/date/year	End Date month/date/year		Copy of DD214 showing type of discharge or VA Medical Services Card Required (attach a <u>copy</u> to application)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Still on Active Duty *Proof of Active Duty status must be verified prior to approval	
		<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Army <input type="checkbox"/> Air Force <input type="checkbox"/> Navy <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Corps <input type="checkbox"/> Coast Guard	
		<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Army <input type="checkbox"/> Air Force <input type="checkbox"/> Navy <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Corps <input type="checkbox"/> Coast Guard	

Have you ever been discharged under conditions that are less than honorable?  Yes  No

Is your spinal cord injury or spinal cord disease service connected?  Yes  No

## DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION

### SPINAL CORD INJURY

(Complete ONLY if you have a traumatic spinal cord injury)

Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Injury Level:  C1-C08 Cervical  T01-T12 Thoracic

L01-L05 Lumbar  S01-S05 Sacral

Cause of SCI:

- Vehicular (auto, motorcycle, aircraft, bicycle, etc.)
- Violence (gunshot, stabbing, explosion, etc.)
- Pedestrian (hit by car, etc.)
- Sport or recreation (swimming, diving, etc.)
- Flying or falling object
- Medical-surgical complications
- Other traumatic injury \_\_\_\_\_
- Unknown

### SPINAL CORD DISORDER

(Complete ONLY if you have non-traumatic spinal cord disorder)

Date of diagnosis/onset of condition:

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Specific disease:

- Multiple Sclerosis (involving spinal cord)
- Poliomyelitis
- Amyotrophic diseases (lateral sclerosis, transverse myelitis)
- Syringomyelia
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## LEVEL OF FUNCTION

Indicate your level of function: **\*\*If no paralysis, medical documentation must be submitted indicating spinal cord involvement**

- Paraplegia       Tetraplegia (Quad)       Hemiplegia       No paralysis at this time

## GENERAL INFORMATION (Optional, not required)

Please check the appropriate box or fill in the blank of each of the categories that best describes your present status. This important information enables the PVA to compile data for the effective implementation and support of our programs.

### EDUCATION (highest level)

- Less than high school graduate  
 High school graduate/GED  
 Some college or trade school  
 Associate's degree  
 Bachelor's degree  
 Attended graduate school  
 Graduate degree  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- Employed full time  
 Employed part time  
 Self-employed  
 Unemployed  
 Unemployed due to disability  
 Retired  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### MARITAL STATUS

- Divorced  
 Married  
 Never Married  
 Separated  
 Widowed

### RACE/ETHNICITY

- Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Black, not Hispanic/Latino origin  
 Hispanic/Latino  
 Native American or Alaskan Native  
 White, not Hispanic/Latino origin  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF RESIDENCE

- Apartment  
 Assisted living facility  
 Single-family home/condominium  
 State/veterans retirement home  
 Nursing home  
 VA hospital  
 VA nursing home  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### SOURCE(S) OF INCOME

(check all that apply)

- Employment  
 Gifts/Other  
 Private pension  
 Social Security  
 VA compensation  
 VA pension  
 Worker's compensation

The Veterans Benefits Department advocates for quality health care for our members and can assist you to obtain the appropriate benefits available as a result of your military service. Is PVA presently your benefits representative?  Yes  No

If yes, I have no objection and hereby permit PVA Service Officers to provide information to the PVA National Membership Department that pertains to my qualifications for membership.

I declare that I have read and meet the qualifications. I understand that my membership could be revoked if any information provided is inaccurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

12/9/14

Office Use Only

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Member ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Processed Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM



The Veterans Choice Program provides eligible Veterans the option to receive VA Community Care from approved providers in their communities.

## Am I eligible?



Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that they can't schedule your appointment **within 30 days** of the clinically indicated date or if no such date can be determined, your preferred date?



Is your current residence **more than 40 miles** from the closest VA medical facility?



Do you need to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your home?



Do you face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on the presence of a body of water or a geologic formation that cannot be crossed by road?

If you were enrolled in VA Health care on or before Aug 1, 2014 or you are eligible to enroll as a combat Veteran, and answered

# "YES"

to any of the questions, you may be eligible!

## How do I set up an appointment?

Call:  
**866-606-8198**

# 1

Gather your information about any other health insurance coverage you may have (e.g., employer, union-based health plans)



# 2

Call 1-866-606-8198 to make sure you qualify + schedule an appointment. When you call, we will walk you through the following steps:

- You will be asked to enter your ZIP code, and first and last name.
- We will check to make sure you are eligible for this program.
- We will check which of your needs are covered by the VA.
- You will be asked for your address and the name of your preferred VA Community Care. Unfortunately, not all providers will be eligible to participate so if your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.



# 3

We will then work with you to schedule an appointment.



This hotline is exclusively for making sure you are eligible for the Choice Program and setting up a VA Community Care appointment. If you have questions about other aspects of your VA medical care or want to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, please visit [www.va.gov/health](http://www.va.gov/health).





**Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America**  
3700 Silverton Rd. NE  
Salem, OR 97305

**Address Service Requested**

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Permit #779

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