

Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America

2311 South 108th Street
West Allis, WI 53227-1901

(414) 328-8910
(414) 328-8948 Fax
info@wisconsinpva.org
wisconsinpva.org



Non-profit organization

US postage paid Milwaukee, WI

Permit No. 1092

SPINAL CORD INJURY SERVICE INFORMATION

This is a statewide resource that is available to all qualified state residents

Please call 414-384-2000 or 888-469-6614 (toll free) and appropriate extension for services needed.

Department/Office	Ext	Department/Office	Ext
General Information	41288	Prosthetics	42607
SCI Clinical appointments	41230	Recreational Therapy	42156 & 41245
Physical Therapy	41126/41128	VA van travel	42057
Occupational Therapy	41142/41886	Patient Advocate	42064
Admissions ER	41885/41886	National Service	414-902-5655
Out of State supplies & med. refill	47229	Officer-PVA	or 800-795-3580
In State supplies & med. refill	41236	In state social worker	42244
Out of state social worker	41841	SCI Center	41236

Published by Creative Graphic Imaging, 8728 West Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI 53214, 414-456-1282



“Wisconsin PVA Annual Banquet 2009”

Gustave R. “Gus” Sorenson

Milwaukee — On Saturday, September 26, 2009, the Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America held its annual banquet in a new location, the Clarion Hotel Airport.

Our annual banquet is a time to renew old friendships and make new ones. It’s also a time for our regular members to meet some of the associate members who volunteer on the SCI Unit and help WPVA in other ways.

This year the President’s Award went to Ken Matthews, the Falkner Award to Kim Michalowski, the Wiseman Award to Ron Borowski, and the Schmidt Award went to Harold Hack. A special award went to Marc Koepsel and we recognized VAMC retirees Nancy Mueller, Mark Frankowski, and Sadhana Bienen. Certificates of Recognition or Achievement went to Paul Averdung, Milt Rosenberg, Pat Bragdon, Bob Wolfram, Sandy Hammersley, Jim Lutzen, Jim Fuller, Sara Grenzow, and Cindy Huber.

Inside This Issue

- 3 President’s Page
- 4 Director’s Reports
- 5 From Our Members
- 6-7 Events



WHO WE ARE

OFFICERS

PresidentPhillip Rosenberg
 Vice PresKen Matthews
 SecretaryJames Rutledge
 TreasurerHarlyn Gerritsen
 Govt RelationsGus Sorenson

DIRECTORS

August KrieserManitowoc
 Lawrence Ramirez.....Milwaukee
 Russell WorthBrown Deer
 Al RevolinskiWest Allis
 Michael ThomasMilwaukee
 Jack StonePoynette

STAFF

Paul LehmanOfc EC Liaison
 Teresa PeetMembership

SUPPORT

Wayne DakeIT Support
 David EllsworthWebmaster

RECREATIONAL THERAPY

Joyce CaseyC.T.R.S.
 Sara GrenzowMS/RT

NAT'L SVC OFFICE

Keith SorensonNS Officer
 Linda RobertsOffice Sec'y
 Call: (414) 902-5655 or Toll
 Free: 800-795-3580



WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

The Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America [WPVA] will improve the quality of life of United States military veterans and others who have spinal cord dysfunction through the use of education, communication, advocacy, legislation, research, and sports & recreation.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America [PVA], a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, has developed a unique expertise on a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of our members - veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

PVA will use that expertise to be the leading advocate for:

- Quality health care for our members,
- Research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction,
- Benefits available as a result of our members' military service,
- Civil rights and opportunities which maximize the independence of our members.

To enable PVA to continue to honor this commitment, we must recruit and retain members who have the experience, energy, dedication, and passion necessary to manage the organization and ensure adequate resources to sustain the programs essential for PVA to achieve its mission.

Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America

2311 South 108th Street
 West Allis, WI 53227
 (414) 328-8910
 (414) 328-8948 (Fax)
 800-875-WPVA
 wisconsinpva.org

NUMBERS

Members at Large

285

Associate Members

282

Officers & Staff

14

Survey Snip

2008 WPVA Survey
 260 Respondents

Use Web Site	90%
Not at Member Mtg	92%
Likely to Contribute	57%
Likely to Volunteer	47%
Educate the Public	39%
Keep Up The Good Work	22%

Annual Holiday Dinner/Membership Meeting

Thursday, December 31st, 2009
 Location: SCI Unit, Zablocki VAMC
 Contact: WPVA Office, (414) 328-8910
 email: info@wisconsinpva.org

The WPVA Membership Meeting date has been changed to New Year's Eve Day, Thursday, December 31, 2009. We are doing this in conjunction with our annual holiday dinner. We will have lunch begin about 12:30pm or so and it should last approximately 1 1/2 hours with a very quick membership meeting to follow. Everyone should have enough time to get home before "Amateur Night" begins.

Please call the office if you can make it so we can have an accurate head count for the food. Hope to see you there.



Mariette Firecloud with her new van with members of the WPVA Board of Directors, from left to right, Chancy Williamson, Michael Thomas, Ken Matthews, Mariette Firecloud, Jack Stone, Phil Rosenberg, and Jim Rutledge.

Your Contributions

Bruce Barr, Betty Wheeler, Billy T. Tourtillott, Jean Zaupa, and Allan A. & Jeanett Acker .

Key Contributors

Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America and its members would like to thank the *Wisconsin Wheelchair Sports Association* (\$2,000), *Independence First* (\$1,500) and *Bruno Independent Living Aids* (\$2,500) for their generous support of the softball program.

Neighborhood Campaign

Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America and its members would like to thank the following contributors as part of the Neighborhood Campaign:

O'Reilly Auto Parts, American Advantage, Harlan & Yvonne Lewitzke Fund, James P. Lombardo "In Memory of Robert Tussler", Agnes Gobeli, Marvin Freedman, Elizabeth Zabel "In Memory of Robert Cowen", .

It's people like **you** that make the world a better place.



Events

You can register online for major events on our web site at wisconsinpva.org/events.html

December	January	February
<p>8 WPVA Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, 1:00pm Chapter Office</p>	<p>1 New Year's Day holiday observed, WPVA Chapter Office Closed</p>	<p>9 WPVA Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, 1:00pm Chapter Office</p>
<p>24-25 Christmas Holiday Observed, WPVA Chapter Office Closed</p>	<p>12 WPVA Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, 1:00pm Chapter Office</p>	<p>15 President's Day holiday observed, WPVA Chapter Office Closed</p>
<p>31 WPVA Christmas Party for SCI Unit, Noon, Zablocki VAMC WPVA Membership Meeting, (follows party), Zablocki VAMC New Year's Day holiday observed, WPVA Chapter Office Closed</p>	<p>18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday observed, WPVA Chapter Office Closed</p> <p>26 WPVA Membership Meeting, 4:00pm, Zablocki VAMC</p>	<p>23 WPVA Membership Meeting, 4:00pm, Zablocki VAMC</p>



Construction progress pictures of the project underway on the new SCI Center

What's a monthly WPVA Membership Meeting like? Special speakers, opportunity for YOUR input, sharing ideas and hearing progress of ongoing projects that affect all members. One special thing that is done that you might want to know about in advance is the *"Incentive Program."* A name is chosen at random from the entire WPVA Regular Member roster. If that individual is present when his or her name is selected, they win that month's prize money. There are two chances to win this award. Check the calendar, come to the meetings, and make your voice heard!

"much more activity"



Phillip Rosenberg, President
Phil.Rosenberg@va.gov

Veterans Day is November 11th and I encourage you all to get out and attend some Veterans Day activity. It is important that we do this to insure our legacy as the protectors of our freedom, and we cannot forget about the sacrifices others made in doing so. It use to be that Veterans Day was treated no differently from recycling day, and no big deal. That attitude upset me very much. Things have changed a little for the better with our current military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. The wars may be a bit unpopular, but nothing like the Viet-



nam War. Now we are constantly reminded of military service with nightly stories about the course of these wars on the news, and discussion of benefits available to our service men and women when they return home. The annual Milwaukee Veterans Day Parade will be held on Saturday November 7th at 9:30 a.m. in downtown Milwaukee. I'm encouraged about participating in the parade, as it has been well advertised

throughout the city. For the first time ever in my life the local news broadcast has encouraged the public to attend the parade and give veterans the recognition they deserve. Along with that I see the commercial where Appleby's is again giving out free meals to veterans on Veterans Day again this year. This could be the start of something where a grateful Nation recognizes the sacrifices of its Veterans.

There is not a lot of activity at the chapter office as we make the transition into the new fiscal year. The budget has been approved and submitted to National PVA for their approval. We now begin to focus on the makeup of our various committees and their members. The Sports committee has already held a meeting to set up fundraising events with the trap shooters for the next year. I expect to see much more activity once the committees have been selected.

I recently took some time off and traveled to Montana to go on a special deer hunt for disabled hunters. This was at the Beaver Creek Rendezvous with Leonard Livingston running the operation. As you may recall Jim Rutledge attended this hunt a few years ago. The hunt was well organized and I really enjoyed myself as I got a 10 point mule deer the first morning. I want to thank Leonard and his staff of volunteers for all their hospitality. There are many of these special hunts set up, and if you want to see about attending one call the office.

That is about it for this month, stay warm, and I will tell you some more exciting tales from the office of WPVA again in the next issue.

Your Life. Your Ride.

Over 300 new and used vehicles in stock.

Great deals on '09 models:
Dodge/Chrysler minivans start at \$41,760*
Honda minivans start at \$48,900*

*Includes mobility rebate

Your Pick
Over 300 full-size and minivans in stock ready for immediate delivery, including Honda, Chrysler, Ford, as well as a large inventory of quality refurbished vehicles.

Factory Direct
With Rollx you buy directly from the manufacturer, which means no middleman and more money in your pocket.

Personal Touch
Rollx is the only manufacturer that features at-home delivery and at-home service.

QAP Certified
Rollx holds the highest Quality Assurance Program certification by the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association.

VA and State Agencies
We simplify the process by working directly with Veteran Administration, state and county agencies, and other third party groups on your behalf.

Find your ride. Live your life.

Visit www.rollxvans.com for the latest inventory, pricing and rebates.
Or call 1-800-956-6668.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

"A Major Accomplishment"



Gus Sorensen, Govt. Relations Dir.
gsorensen@wisconsinpva.org

New SCI Center Update: Do you remember what was the first thing I asked you last month in this column? If you said "When is the last time you saw the north side of the Zablocki Medical Center?" The same holds true this month. They are moving at warp speed getting everything ready for the actual construction to begin and it is extremely difficult to picture what that area looked like just a few short months ago.

A lot of you have seen the temporary parking lots installed around the VA Hospital. Although this helps the VA employees in my opinion it isn't doing much for those of us driving wheelchair lift equipped vehicles. Although we are supposed to have our regular [or as close as possible] parking back by January 2010, I can't help but feel a lot of us are going to be downright frustrated and highly irritated by this problem. I am hoping Dr. Lee can help us either find a solution or a tolerable method of dealing with handicapped parking during the next several months.

Again, I will ask that you put your thinking caps on and work on a solution for this problem. It's one thing to point out a mistake but if we can present a viable and cost effective solution it just might push the "Powers That Be" into some positive action.

Also, you still have another chance to tour the "mock up" of a single patient room in the old Laundry Building. It will amaze you. As mentioned many times, there are many mostly small or relatively minor changes needed, but both Ken Matthews and I liked what we saw. If you are interested in seeing this room please contact Joyce Casey as soon as you can.

We want as many pairs of "SCI Eyes" to inspect this room and add their two cents worth. Obviously not every suggestion can be incorporated but the more perspectives we have, the less chance we have of missing something. So far everyone has been most accommodating to our questions, comments, and suggestions. We should make the most

of their offers as this will be one of those once in a lifetime shots where we have a say in the future of SCI Medicine and Rehabilitation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In the very near future our Chapter President and Board of Directors will filling Committee slots whose members will have a large say in what our organization does and where we want to be in five years. Is WPVA too much into Sports? Not Enough? What about Scholarships and Education? How do we do a better job of reaching out to ALL of our members?

These are difficult questions and not everyone is going to like the answers. Do not be afraid to make your voice heard! Contact a BOD member, come to a meeting, or write [or e-mail] a letter. Get involved with your chapter and make a positive difference. Talk to you next month.

No More Homeless Vets



Jack Stone, National Director
sweetjack@prodigy.net

The National Directors have just been notified the PVA National Board that a Directors meeting (teleconference) will take place on December 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. The agenda item will be the resolution 09-A-10 passed at the last BOD meeting. The resolution states that due to the economy downturn, "the Executive Director will develop a business expense policy utilizing an appropriate per diem rate for consideration by the Board at the fall meeting".

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki has ordered a high level, quality management team to investigate serious problems at the Marion VA Medical Center in southern Illinois. A review of the hospital's records indicates inconsistencies reporting deaths and patient safety. At least nine (9) deaths in 2006 and 2007 resulted from substandard care. Further surgeries have been discontinued at the hospital. Be aware the VA hospital system may be reported by journalists and reporters as poor, giving the VA another "black eye". We veterans who use our near VA facilities know the quality of the care we get.

VA Secretary Shinseki also recently announced an ambitious plan to eliminate the homeless veterans with a 5 year plan. An estimated 131,000 veterans are homeless, according to the VA, and that number could increase by as much as ten (10) to fifteen (15) within the next 5 years. The homeless veteran population in 2003 was as high as 196,000.

Secretary Shinseki's plan is to include \$3 billion on homeless programs in federal & state endeavors to increase education, housing and proper medical and psychiatric care in the 5 year plan. VSO's are encouraged by the Secretary's plan but concerned the money may not be available in future federal or state budgets.



The Term "Disability"



August Krieser, I/A Chairman
adkrieser@att.net

ADVOCACY REPORT

In the Senate, two provisions that affect long term care for persons with disabilities and senior citizens are included. The Senate Finance Committee's bill includes the Community First Choice (CFC) option. This provision will grant the states that provide Medicaid home or community based services (as opposed to nursing home or other institutions) an increased federal match for those services.

The Senate Health Education, labor, and Pensions include the Community Living Assistance Supports and Services (CLASS) Act. This provision is a long term insurance program (beneficiaries will receive a cash benefit to help meet their activities of daily living in order to prevent them from becoming impoverished and spending down to Medicaid levels.

On September 30th, PVA staff, other disability and aging organizations stopped at all Senate offices, urging the Senators to maintain the CFC Option and the CLASS Act in the final Health Care Reform bill. PVA Chapters, as well as state independent living councils, participated in a national call-in to Senate offices on this issue.

Two federal agencies have requested comments on proposals in September. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) proposes to revise its ADA regulations and guidance in order to implement the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). The ADAAA changes the term "disability" by turning away the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and parts of the EEOC's ADA regulations.

The effect of these changes is to make it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he/she truly has a disability within the meaning of the ADA. A primary change in the regulations states that mitigating factors (i.e. assistive devices, medical equipment) are not to be considered in determining whether or not the

individual has a disability. Comments are due by November 23rd. The Department of Transportation (DOT) requests comments on whether to develop a proposed rulemaking.

An advocacy group representing the use of psychiatric service dogs petitioned the DOT to revise the Air Carrier Access Act regulation. This provision presently permits air carriers to require documentation and 48 hour advance notice for users of psychiatric service animals. Presently carriers are not permitted to do this for service animals in general. The advocacy group requesting the revision believes the DOT has no basis for this distinction.

Carriers have counteracted by claiming that passengers are seeking to transport pets by claiming they are emotional support animals.

This is not a notice of proposed rulemaking. The DOT is merely requesting comments on whether to grant the petition to change the regulation. You may contact Senior Advocacy Attorney Bob Herman National PVA via telephone (202) 416-7699 or by e-mail at bobhn@pva.org if you have any questions or interest in these issues.

GRO REPORT

On October 22nd, the President signed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2010 into law. Again, this was another late action that began in Congress. In July, the House passed its version (H.R. 1032); however, the Senate took no action on their version (S. 1407) until the present federal fiscal year started on October 1st. The House and Senate versions virtually "mirrored" each other with few minor exceptions.

The Senate bill also included a \$48.2 billion in advance appropriations for the VA medical care accounts. As of October 1st, Congress approved a continuing resolution setting funding levels at FY 2009 levels until at least October 31st. Fortunately, the House/Senate conference committee settled the minor differences in mid October and the bill was signed into law on October 22nd. Specifically, the law provides \$55.9 billion in budget authority for the VA.

This includes \$53 billion in discretionary funding and approximately

\$2.9 billion in medical care collections. This amount exceeds the recommendation of the Independent Budget (\$54.6 billion) for the second year in a row. The law also includes approximately \$48.2 billion in advance appropriations for VA medical care accounts for FY 2011. This marks a major accomplishment for the VA and all veteran service organizations because the Appropriations Committee supported this new direction. With this advance appropriation for FY 2011, the VA will have the ability to better plan for hiring new staff and addressing the demand on the VA health-care system. It will also allow the VA to work more closely with Congress to ensure that its resource needs are met well in advance for the start of the next fiscal year.

On October 1st, PVA testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health on pending legislation. The hearing addressed eight bills, as well as several drafts focusing on homelessness veterans' issues. PVA gave its support to H.R. 2504, a bill that would increase the annual amount authorized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out homeless veteran programs from \$150 million to \$200 million. PVA also supported H.R. 2559 (Help our Homeless Veterans Act). This is an outreach program to inform homeless veterans of their rights and benefits. H.R. 2735 was also supported, but with some reservations. This bill makes improvements to comprehensive programs to homeless veterans.

This legislation would increase rates of payment to reflect anticipated changes in service costs in certain geographic areas; however, PVA expressed concerns about the long term effects of this legislation on funding. Other legislation PVA supported included H.R. 1017 (Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act), H.R. 1036 (Veterans' Physical Therapy Act of 2009), and H.R. 3441 (Automatic Enrollment of Veterans Returning from Combat Zones into the VA Medical System).

See more Legislative/Advocacy issues on Augie's Page online:

wisconsinpva.org/groreport