



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Nevada Chapter

Elections

It's once again time to start thinking about elections. We are approaching the time for electing a new President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and five (5) members of the Board of Directors for our chapter.

Please get involved and run for office. If you would like to run, please submit your biography to our office, along with a letter of intent advising us of which position you are interested in running for. We will be publishing biographies of all members interested in running for office in our October/November newsletter. Bio's will be due **no later than** September 1, 2017. Ballots will be sent out in December and due back to our office **no later than** January 10th, 2018.

Paralyzed Veterans of Nevada, Nevada Chapter

www.nevadapva.org

704 S. Jones Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89131
702/646-0040 fax: 702/646-3712 866/638-3837

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Lester Wood, Vice President
Ron Cantagallo, Secretary
Marc Fenn, Treasurer

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Marc Fenn

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Mission Statement

The mission of Nevada PVA is to improve the quality of life of U.S. military veterans and others who have spinal cord dysfunction through the use of adaptive sports, recreation, wellness programs, outreach, education, research and support.

Disclaimer

The Nevada Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America is a non-profit organization. We do not ask for or receive any money from any federal or state agencies. All of our funds are received mainly from donations. All members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America have sustained a spinal cord injury or disease. This newsletter is a publication of the Nevada chapter and is meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disabled community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Nevada PVA, its officers, board members, the editor or production staff.



President/ED Report

by Dan Kaminski and Julie Johnson



A big thanks to the Gentleman's League for arranging a charity wheelchair basketball game against the Las Vegas Yuccas. Chaparral High School and the Chaparral High School Cheerleaders we are grateful for your support.

This event raised funds for our programs but most importantly it helped raise awareness in our community regarding life in a chair and how adaptive sports plays such an important role in the overall health and fitness of our disabled community.

La Quinta In & Suites Summerlin Tech invited us to be the highlighted charity for their re-grand opening. We were very grateful for this opportunity to showcase our organization to the local La Quinta, the National La Quinta, their business associates, and the Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting team. The La Quinta Inn & Suites Summerlin Tech looks beautiful. The staff is wonderful and the rooms are spacious and accessible.

The annual kids' summer camp was amazing as always. This year's theme was Star Wars and the staff really out did themselves. It is such a privilege to watch these adorable faces just glow with excitement while they play all the different adaptive sports and activities.

This camp gives the children an opportunity to showcase their talents, learn new strengths, reach new heights, socialization and sportsmanship and let's not forget a great meal which for some is not that easy to come by.

October is the Veterans Service Fair which will be held at Dula Gymnasium, 441 East Bonanza Ave. This event helps homeless ad low income veterans and their families to gain the much needed resources our community has to offer in one central location.

Our Adopt-A-Vet program is in full swing so if you are in need of food, hygiene products or clothing, please call the office or email us at pvanevada@gmail.com so we ca get you enrolled.

As always, stay hydrated and have a beautiful day!

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National Director's Report

By Lester Wood

Hi everyone, we here in Las Vegas are trying to endure some of the hottest days of the year. We have either tied or set daily records during June and July, with no relief in sight. By the time this report is read, we will have celebrated the 4th of July. A belated thanks to our military family and all those that help keep this nation safe, and a special thanks to those that paid the ultimate sacrifice, and those vets that still carry the scars of past wars.

At this time I would like to report on the 71st PVA Annual Convention held in National Harbor, Maryland in May. This trip brought back memories of my military service when I was stationed at Ft. Belvoir, VA and Ft. Holabird, MD., a stones throw away. The Oxon Hill, MD high school choir opened the convention with Chapter Flag Presentation of Colors, Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

Our Keynote Speaker was Dr. David J. Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He has a clear agenda of how to make the Veterans Administration better. He wants to make changes to the Choice Card, hire more doctors and nurses; continue to improve wait time for veterans, and many more things. With the passing of the Whistle-Blower Act, this should make his job a bit easier.

Former Senator Bob Dole was awarded the non-member Speedy Award for his WWII service and injuries. Holly Kosster, the Buckeye Chapter Sports Director, was award the Member Award for 150+ marathons.

We dealt with many resolutions and as always the balancing of the budget. Many executive and committee reports were given. Executive Director, Sherman Gillums introduced the PVA National staff, many thanks to those hard working people that you don't often see, but who keep the PVA a well-oiled machine.

This year it was time to elect a new Executive Board of Directors.

A special thanks to Al Kovach, Jr., for his leadership of PVA these past few years. Our new Executive Board consist of:

President:	Dave (Z-Man) Zurfluh
Senior Vice President:	Ken Weas
Vice President:	Hack Albertson
Vice President:	Charles Brown
Vice President:	Joseph Fox
Vice President:	Robert Thomas
Parliamentarian:	Robert Thomas
Treasurer:	Tom Wheaton
Secretary:	Larry Dobson

Our closing day ceremonies included a brunch and several more awards were give out.

All of the Nevada attendees were surprised and elated to learn that we had won the top President's Award for our Adopt-A-Vet Program. Thanks to our ED, Julie Johnson for her hard work with our underserved veterans in Las Vegas. Julie is a tireless worker when it comes to serving our veterans. Also many thanks to the Nevada Chapter for all their work helping Julie to make these programs successful.

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." *Mother Teresa*



Sports Report

by Marc Fenn, Sports Director

I recently competed in my second National Boccia Championship Tournament. The first day there was apprehension because I was classed up to a paraplegic division even though I'm an incomplete C4 quadriplegic, but I remained confident. During the first two days of individual competition I was able to get to the championship match where I received a Silver medal for the open class. The remaining two days I competed in pairs competition where I was paired up randomly with two other players. Fortunately, we were able to defeat teams that practice weekly with fancy team uniforms and received a bronze medal. I look forward to playing Boccia with fellow PVA members here in Las Vegas. *Leon Bostick*

Our athletes recently returned from attending the **National Veterans Wheelchair Games** where they had a great time. They met up with old friends and made new ones along the way. Our team, though small, came home with a fair amount of medals, below is the breakdown:

Lester Wood Gold in weightlifting
Silver in motor slalom

Mariza Shaffa Gold in slalom
Silver in bowling
Bronze in air rifle

Leon Bostick Gold in Boccia
Gold in shot put
Gold in javelin
Silver in slalom
Silver in discus
Bronze in table tennis
Silver in air pistol

Dan Kaminski Bronze in power soccer



We were recently able, with the help from a grant from Bank of America and other foundation grants, to kick off our summer Adopt-A-Vet Program. We supplied clothing, hygiene products and food to 17 residents of the Help Genesis Apartments. They were so grateful for the items we supplied. Below are a few of their comments.

“Every little bit helps. If not for Help Genesis and PVA, I would be on the street.” *Tom*

“These items are really needed and appreciated. This really makes veterans feel like they have a home.” *Jack*

“I worked all my life and then hit a few speed bumps which caused financial stress in my marriage. I never considered VA benefits until this happened, I was not aware of most of them to which I am entitled. Now I have a roof over my head, I’m looking for a job and now have these items donated from you. I appreciate everything; more than words can express.” *Augustus*

“I now have the resources and a path to follow and have two job offers pending, this helps tremendously.” *Avein*

“This all means a hell of lot to me.” *Gary*

With the help of grants like that from Bank of America we have been able to expand our Adopt-A-Vet Program to year round. If any of our members need help with food, clothing or hygiene products, please contact our office.



Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans. *John Lennon*

Step Outside Program

We had brunch at the Cracker Barrel. The food is super and not that expensive. We ate off the new campfire menu. I had the shrimp dinner, which comes with carrots, shrimp and fresh fruit. My son had the campfire beef which was great. I would highly recommend the Cracker Barrel as you get so much food you can take home what you do not eat.

Went to the Valle Vista Propownersas which is a golf club outside of Kingman, AZ. They are a little pricey but the food is some of the best I have eaten. Their motto is "South of Heaven and North of Kingman". The three of us had prime rib and all I can say is it was so tender you could cut it with your fork. *Mike Stern*

I took my wife and three youngest kids to the Victory Café at the Cannery on Craig Road. The food was very good and the portions were huge. The service was outstanding and the people were very friendly. We had so much food we had to get to go trays to take with us. I have to admit my wife got me out of the house after all this time and this was perfect. I want to thank PVA for helping me and I wish them the best. *Byron Keith Bonaparte*

A good friend and I went for a meal at the Denny's across from Sunrise Hospital (a good friend was having cancer surgery). The food was really good, maybe it was so good because we were worried about our friend.

Went to the buffet at Boulder Station. This buffet was a great place to go after visiting a very sick friend at the hospital. There were many different types of food to choose from, the shrimp was great and the strawberry cheesecake and pecan pie were very good. If it wasn't for this program I could not afford to go out to eat as I am on a fixed income. This program makes a positive difference in my life. *William Frankell*

My wife and I attended the Mariah Carey #1 to Infinity concert recently. It was a show that we've wanted to see since she began her residency at Caesars Palace. Her residency ends later this month so we are glad that we saw her before she leaves. We had a wonderful evening and are eternally grateful to the PVA and especially this program *Michael Romanowski*

"Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace." *Amelia Earhart*

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 11	Veterans Service Fair
October 21	Disability Awareness Day
November 30- December 3	Nevada PVA Annual Bowling Tournament

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS)

Veterans can schedule transportation through their VA primary Care Provider or by calling the VTS office at 1/844-859-5074. Please schedule transportation ahead of your appointment time.

The Power of the Lay Statement – Does this Really Work?

By Ian Kenner, National Service Officer

When it comes to filing claims, a lot of Veterans assume that if there is no medical evidence, then nothing can be done. At times it feels that way, as a claim decision is as fickle as the opinion of a Regional Office veteran service representative (VSR) and rater veteran service representative (RVSR).

However, there is a power a lot of Veterans are not aware that they have, yet hardly utilize: the power of the lay statement.

What is a lay statement, you might ask? A lay statement is a statement from the Veteran (and if desired, from family/friends/fellow Veterans who knew the Veteran in service) that gives support to a claim by providing details that might otherwise not be known.

In the appeal Buchanon vs. Nicholson (please follow the link <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-federal-circuit/1291664.html> for more information), the Board of Veteran's Appeals came to the following:

“III. CONCLUSION

The Veterans Court *erred by affirming the Board's erroneous statutory and regulatory interpretation that lay evidence cannot be credible absent confirmatory clinical records to substantiate the facts described in that lay evidence.* Accordingly, we vacate the Veterans Court decision and remand the case for proceedings consistent with this opinion.

FOOTNOTES

1. Indeed, the examiner's *opinion appears to have failed to consider whether the lay statements presented sufficient evidence of the etiology of Mr. Buchanan's disability such that his claim of service connection could be proven without contemporaneous medical evidence.*”

Essentially, a claim has to be sent for an opinion from a medical doctor due to this mandate, as VSR's are not doctors. The doctors have to review these lay statements as well for supporting evidence. As long as there is continuity from the Veteran's time in service to the present detailed, it is virtually impossible to not be able to allow a Veteran to warrant an exam with personal testimony. (Note: this is for original claims, reconsiderations are a bit more involved.)

As always, feel free to contact your PVA service officer if you have questions. Thank you for allowing us to continue to represent our Veterans – it's truly an honor to do what we do!

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering to help out at any of our events, please contact the office. We are always looking for committed volunteers.

Administration Finally Releases its FY 2018 Budget Request

On May 23, 2017, the President finally released his Administration's detailed Budget Request for all federal programs, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), for FY 2018. The request includes a fair increase for VA programs (despite most other federal agencies getting significant cuts). The budget proposal does include a significant reduction in funding for Major and Minor Construction in VA, as well as cuts to Medical and Prosthetic Research, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and Information Technology.

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs subsequently held a hearing on the President's Budget Request on May 24, 2017 followed by a hearing before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on June 14, 2017. PVA Associate Executive Director of Government Relations Carl Blake testified for the Senate VA Committee hearing. In testimony, PVA expressed serious concerns with the VA's plan for continued funding through a mandatory account. We believe that Congress must reject continued funding of the Choice program through a mandatory account and place it in line with all other community care funded through the discretionary Community Care account established previously.

Additionally, we expressed strong opposition to two legislative proposals that are being used to fund the Choice program continuation—round down of cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) payments to the nearest whole dollar and the elimination of Individual Unemployability (IU) for veterans who reach Social Security eligibility age (62). It is beyond comprehension that the Administration would propose such a benefit reduction in order to pay for a flawed funding mechanism for a program (Choice) that sometimes provides health care access to non-service connected disabled veterans. Eliminating IU benefits for veterans over the age of 62 provokes numerous questions. Will veterans who have statutorily protected evaluations (the 20-year rule) also be subject to reduction? Will those dependents using Chapter 35 education benefits based on their sponsor's IU rating be forced to drop out of school? Will those veterans on IU who are covered by Service-Disabled Life Insurance at no premium be forced to now pay premiums in order to keep coverage? What about state benefits, such as property tax exemptions or state education benefits that are based on 100 percent VA disability ratings? How will this proposal affect efforts to combat veteran suicide and homelessness? The impact of the answers to these questions clearly dictates that Congress should reject this proposal out of hand.

PVA's formal written statement for the record on behalf of *The Independent Budget*—co-authored with DAV and VFW can be viewed at www.pva.org. support for the Senate bill.

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August

Joe R.. Ybanez	04	Susumu S. Arishita	11	Marci L. Piccirilli	22
Larry D. Everett	06	Brandon M. Jones	11	Lester E. Wood	23
Lyndon R. Ruddle	06	Michael C. Stern	12	Timothy Manchego	23
Maria Rietje Skaar	07	Donald W. Pollard	13	Robert S. Butterfield	25
David Fivecoats	08	John D. Lowther	16	Daniel A. Kaminski	28
Ted Perelman	08	Robert J. Priante	18	Joseph W. Boyd	30
James Hoban	09	Fletcher F. Hantke	22	Yusuf Ali	30

September

Ronald J. Cantagallo	05	Thomas H. McNaughton	15	Lee Tolliver	20
Tad R. Stuart	05	Annette McNaughton	15	James M. Wakefield	24
Cedrick J. Arinwine	09	Larry W. Porter Jr.	15	Edrick D. James	25
Robert W. Artz	10	Michael Schacherbauer	17	Shane Derby	25
Dominic C. Cirino	12	Harold Bostick	18	Christopher McMahon	26



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Smith's

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	Southwest Primary Care Clinic 7235 South Buffalo Drive Las Vegas, NV 89113	702-791-9040
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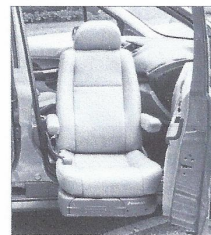
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