

# Speedy Gazette

"Improving Lives... Building Futures"



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

Texas Chapter

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Crosby, Texas 77532  
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December/January 2016

Volume 35, Issue 3

# Open House

Please join us  
from 1 pm until 6 pm  
Thursday, Feb 11th  
when we celebrate the opening of our

*New Facility*

Located at 6418 FM 2100 Rd  
Crosby, Texas 77532

RSVP: 713-520-8782 or [info@texaspva.org](mailto:info@texaspva.org)

**Paralyzed Veterans of America  
TEXAS CHAPTER**

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- Vice President..... Tammy Jones
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- Administrative Assistant/Editor... Sherry Kirkpatrick
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[bbbhouston.org](http://bbbhouston.org)

Please contact me with more information about volunteer opportunities and other ways I can help TPVA!

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

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

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

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

Interests: (Circle all that Apply) Membership /Volunteering  
Donating Sponsorship Other

\*\*Please cut out, and mail back to the Chapter Office at:

6418 FM 2100 Road  
Crosby, TX 77532



***SPEEDY GAZETTE***

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***SPEEDY GAZETTE  
ON-LINE***

[www.texaspva.org](http://www.texaspva.org)

*PVA National [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)*



**We would like to welcome the following new members**

- Paul R. Cryer**
- Kirkland David**
- Guillermo Garcia**
- Kristen Reyna**
- Arthur Ricks**
- Antonio M. Tavor, Jr.**

**PVA Service Officers-see p 27 for detailed contact info**

**Houston-Greg Treacy, SNSO—800-795-3571/713-383-2727**

**Houston-Kimberly Springfield, BA—713-794-7993**

**San Antonio-Armando De la Rosa, SNSO—800-795-3572/210-617-5300 x 1-6819**

**Temple-Jack Soto, VLO—254-743-1686**

**Waco -Dan Meckel, NSO II—254-299-9944, 800-795-3573**

## *President's Report By Anne Robinson*



Happy New Year everyone! 2016 is upon us and we are already very busy. We have set the grand opening for the new office on February 11, 2016, starting at 1pm with a blue ribbon cutting with the city of Crosby. I hope that everyone will take a little time to come out and see the office and what opportunities will be offered now that we have our own space. The archery coaches have already got big plans for the back, so get your bows and arrows cleaned up and ready to go. Please RSVP to the office if you'll be able to attend the grand opening ceremonies.

Rodeo season is upon us and we have bought ticket packages for both Houston and San Antonio. There are a few tickets left for both places, so contact either Sherry at the office for information for the Houston rodeo or Ben Reynaga or myself if you are interested in tickets for San Antonio.

In 2016, PVA is setting aside time to recognize members that are Vietnam veterans. In April, we are planning a special event on the 5th in conjunction with PVA awareness month to recognize our members who gave so much during a time when people were very unappreciative of the sacrifices that were made. If you received a Purple Heart for your service in Vietnam, would you please let us know, as we have an organization that would like to present a "Quilt of Valor," to those who served during this period of time.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Game Packets are available online, please make sure to get it filled out and turned in as soon as possible, as slots fill up quickly for events. This year's games will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah. If you have any questions about the games, please contact the Sports Director, Tammy Jones.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to remember a couple of dear friends that have graduated to heaven this past week. Andy Roca, a longtime volunteer in San Antonio and a mentor to all of us, left us on January 4 and Pete Aguilera, a member from Corpus Christi passed away on January 1. A great thank you to their loving spouses and family members for allowing them to be part of our family.



### **Let's Hear It for Body, Mind, Spirit!** by Roger Rahill

I remember two February federal holidays for Abraham Lincoln's and George Washington's birthdays. George's portrait by Gilbert Stuart hung on the front wall in all my classrooms. I thought he had funny hair, but I celebrated his and Abe's lives and legacies as particularly great men and leaders. Honest George. Honest Abe. Honesty was an important value espoused in my public education. And I got a double dose of "Be honest!" at home. Honesty was modeled and taught as something Godly that ensures integrity and likely to bring a good reputation and success. Dad lived by honesty as the best policy his whole life, and shortly before he died he told me, "I'm probably the most moral man you'll ever meet." Yes, he *did* say that; no brag, just fact. Like George and Abe, Gerry was a fine man to be celebrated and emulated. God help me be like them!

Dad had five Navy commands. George was our first top general, and he and Abe were, of course, Commanders-in-Chief. They were all leaders in war who made tough decisions in tough times. They loved their troops, too. That makes four of us! I didn't command troops, but in combat I endeavored to be a good, Godly and honest man.

In your challenges with spinal cord injury and health care what helps you be moral? Is honesty a part of that? Dad would say following doctors' orders is one sign of honesty. He could preach it because he was always faithful ("Semper Fidelis!"), at home and at sea, always. If you and I could be more honest, in one thing at a time and one day after another, perhaps we would be happier, healthier and maybe, just maybe, models for future school kids to emulate and celebrate. Picture your picture in their classrooms!

## *Secretary By Matthew Bourbon*



Like a shining star sitting atop our TPVA rec rooms' winter holidays trees, our chapter soared high and lit up many lives this season. As our sports season wrapped up, our need to celebrate an awesome year was very apparent in our community and member outreach. At Thanksgiving, we started with our beautiful Hope in the San Antonio area creating 10 food baskets full of everything a family could need for the Thanksgiving dinner. We found individuals and families in desperate need of food and children's presents. Our chapter gave away hundreds of presents and had the honor and pleasure to fill some fridges and freezers, with the help of our Outdoor Sports Directors Alvin, Bradshaw, and our vet hunters with meat from many hunts. The San Antonio Satellite holiday party was absolutely beautiful. It was held at the Hyatt Resort, where the atmosphere was a true Texas Christmas setting.

The live oaks were decorated in lights, and Christmas decorations were hung and standing everywhere. The banquet room was festive and the food was outstanding. Everyone greatly enjoyed themselves, and we had a great gift distributor named Monika who ran non-stop distributing presents. It was an awesome time, and I for one used this party to celebrate my Christmas Day. A big thanks to our President Anne Robinson and our Vice President Tammy Jones, and our great TPVA staff.

If you have not heard yet, our Chapter office moved from an old business building in Houston to a large beautiful house (changed to office) just northeast of Houston to Crosby, TX. Our eyes are on our grand opening on Thursday, February 11th starting at 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Our first board meeting in Crosby was held in December and all board members were and still are in awe of our new home. A real must see.

Just a quick note to TPVA San Antonio archers: We will continue archery practice 18th January 2016, at Harlendale Memorial Stadium, 4002 Roosevelt Ave, in San Antonio. The range is behind the stadium right in front of the concession stands on the east side. Every Monday at 10 am, unless weather or activities cancel it, we invite beginners, bow hunters, and competitive archers.

There is not a day that your TPVA Chapter is not having something local for you to do. Please review your calendar of events and get active. If we don't have participants, programs can be cut. Even if you're a little interested or just want to hang out with your buddies come to as many events as you can. Did you know that Thursdays 10 am-2 pm is our coffee and games time? Our superstar Hope and her helpers put out coffee and treats for us, and at that time pool 9 ball, ping pong, and the singing group are practicing. This a great way to meet others just like you and make some long term friendships. There is no reason to sit miserable in our homes, come on out and have a great time with your fellow Chapter members.

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**By Dan Meckel, National Service Officer: Blue Water Veterans** may soon have their voices heard by the VA after years of denials and rejections. Originally, a Veteran must have stepped foot on the land of Vietnam or served on its inland waterways anytime between 1/9/1962 & 5/7/1975 to be presumed to have been exposed to herbicides. The recent decision, that allowed for the service connection of Agent Orange associated disabilities as related to exposure on C-123 aircraft, has opened the door for the next fight with Congress over Blue Water Veterans.

Typically, a Blue Water Veteran is someone that served aboard open sea ships off the coast of Vietnam but never actually set foot on ground in Vietnam. There are numerous organizations that have been advocating for the rights of these Veterans for a number of years, all to no avail. Yet, the VA has recently conceded that some members of the US Air Force and USAF Reserves are considered to have been exposed to Agent Orange if they flew on or repaired C-123 aircraft. There are other qualifications that must be met, such as unit, occupational specialty, etc. This is a great victory for Vietnam Era Veterans as it brings about further discussion regarding secondary exposure and, most notably, thousands of Veterans that served aboard ships off the coast of Vietnam.

As a National Service Officer for Paralyzed Veterans of America, I have reviewed numerous records for our Veterans that have been denied benefits due to the fact they were considered Blue Water Veterans. These Veterans have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, lung cancer, Parkinson's disease, and other disabilities that Congress has mandated as being caused by exposure to Agent Orange. If you have served aboard a ship in the open seas off the coast of Vietnam, during the Vietnam War, and you are unsure of your disabilities and their relationship to Agent Orange, talk to your Veterans Service Officer and ask them to review your records for a potential claim for benefits.

If you have any questions or concerns about what forms you need to use to file a claim or pursue an appeal, please contact your local service officer. Veterans may also download the forms from [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/) or call 800-827-1000 to have the correct form sent to their home.

Written by Danny Castillo: December 20th the **STRAPS (South Texas Regional Adaptive & Paralympic Sports)** celebrated the holidays with a **Morgan's Wonderland Christmas in the Park and Sports event demonstration!!** Several Adaptive Wheelchair Sports Athletes participated from 3 to 9 p showcasing a variety of adaptive wheelchair sports programs. Several TPVA members participated throughout the day: Brent Norris in Adult Wheelchair Basketball, Gil Garcia coached his team in Junior Wheelchair Basketball and Danny Castillo and Ben Reynaga (San Antonio Satellite Director) participated in Power Soccer. Admission to the Morgan's Wonderland Gymnasium was free and participating athletes and their families did receive complimentary tickets to enjoy Morgan's Wonderland theme park decorated with Christmas lights and ornaments. Everyone enjoyed watching goal ball which is a new Paralympic Sport for visually impaired individuals that play on a basketball court using their enhanced ability to hear as each team tries to roll balls past their opponents to score points. It was remarkable to see wheelchair athletes overcoming their limitations and excelling in sports through hard work (year-round), awesome coaching, supportive family members, care providers, and friends. For all athletes this was a last of 2015's competitive practices and everyone looks forward to a new year of competition in 2016!



## UPCOMING EVENTS (cont'd on p. 7)—pls contact Chapter Office (800-933-4261) to volunteer

### Ongoing Sports – San Antonio Area

#### Sundays

SA Spur's Wheelchair Basketball Team Trng –9-12, 8/23–4/3/2016 Morgan's Wonderland Event Cntr (STRAPS)

Adult Wheelchair Basketball– 9-12, 4/23–8/2016, open gym Morgan's Wonderland Event Center (STRAPS)

Power Wheelchair Soccer–5:00-7:00pm, MWL Event Center, POC Jennifer Weatherford Cooper (STRAPS)

#### Mondays

Archery – 10:00am Harlandale Memorial Stadium POC Matt Bourbon

Operation Comfort Swimming & Aquatic PT -8:00-9:30, Ft. Sam Houston Outdoor Pool POC Todd Erickson

Air Guns– 12:00 –3:00, \*\*24 hr advance notice to Jennifer for location & equipment

Wheelchair Soccer–6:00-7:30pm (Jr & Rec) 7-9p (Open Play), 7/13–2/29/2016, MWL Event Cntr, POC Brooke (STRAPS)

Wheelchair Softball–3/14–6/27/2016 6-8:30p, MWL Event Cntr (Bad weather practice moves inside) POC Brooke (STRAPS)

#### Tuesdays

Boccia – 12:00-3:00pm ALM SCIC Rec Room POC Jose Laguna

YOGA (PIYO) – high impact, 11:30am Jimmy Brought Fitness Center, Ft. Sam Houston POC Jennifer Cooper

Air Guns – 1200 -1500, \*\*24 hr advance notice to Jennifer for location & equipment

BAMC W/C Basketball–1p METC Fitness Ctr Gym, Ft. Sam, POC Troy Hopkins (210-872-7120 troy.hopkins1@us.army.mil) or Abdul Brown(240-338-5717/abdul.r.brown.civ@mail.mil)

Goalball – 10/6/2015 – 3/2016 6:30-8:30pm, Kick off clinic-10/24-25/2015 MWL Event Center, POC Brooke (STRAPS)

Track & Field Practices – 2/2016-6/2016 POC Brooke Matula (STRAPS)

#### Wednesdays

Bowling – 9:30-11:30am Oak Hills Bowling Lanes, POC Jose Laguna

Archery – 7:30-10:00, Ft. Sam Houston Outdoor Archery Range, POC Jennifer \*\*PLS 24 hour advance notice Jennifer for equip

Air Guns – 12:00-3, \*\*24 hr advance notice to Jennifer for location & equipment

Operation Comfort Cycling – Locations chng, POC Janis (210-826-0500/jroz814@operationcomfort.org) to get on email list

Wheelchair Football – 9/30-10/31/6-8p, 11/1/-11/18 & 3/30/-6/16- 5-7p MWL Parking lot, POC Brooke (STRAPS)

Skeet Shooting – Evening, Bandera Gun Club, POC David Bradshaw

#### Thursdays

Wheelchair Rugby – 6:30–9:30pm, San Antonio FIRE Center, POC Gabe Diaz de Leon/Barry Muth

Shooting Sports – National Shooting Sports Complex, Time TBD, POC Jose Laguna/Alvin G

YOGA (PIYO) – high impact, 11:30am Jimmy Brought Fitness Center, Ft. Sam Houston POC Jennifer Cooper

Air Guns – 1200 -1500, \*\*24 hr advance notice to Jennifer for location & equipment

BAMC Wheelchair Basketball – 1300 at METC Fitness Center Gym, Ft. Sam, POC Troy Hopkins (210-872-7120 troy.hopkins1@us.army.mil) or Abdul Brown(240-338-5717/abdul.r.brown.civ@mail.mil)

Kayak – 1300 Olympic Outdoor Center, San Marcos, POC Ben Kvanli (512-203-0093/ben@kayakinstruction.org)

Boccia – 6:00-7:30pm, 10/22/15-6/16 Morgan's Wonderland Event Center POC Brooke Matula (STRAPS)

#### Fridays

Air Rifles - 10:00am-12:00pm ALM SCIC Rec Room POC Jose Laguna

Karate – 0900-1100 at Jimmy Brought Fitness Center, Ft. Sam Houston POC Brad Bowen

Operation Comfort Swimming & Aquatic PT - 0800-0930, Ft. Sam Houston Outdoor Pool POC Todd Erickson

#### Saturdays

Wheelchair Rugby – 10:00am–1:00pm Thousand Oaks YMCA, POC Gabe Diaz de Leon/Barry Muth

Operation Comfort Cycling – Locations chg, POC Janis (210-826-0500/jroz814@operationcomfort.org) to get on email list

San Antonio Sled Rampage, Ice & Golf Center at Northwoods, POC Chris Leverkuhn 210-913-8869/ c.leverkuhn@hotmail.com or www.operationcomfort.org

Table Tennis – San Antonio Table Tennis Center, www.satabletennis.org

## UPCOMING EVENTS (also see p. 6)—pls contact Chapter Office (800-933-4261) to volunteer

### Ongoing Sports – Austin Area

Sled Hockey – Austin Blades, [www.AustinBlades.org](http://www.AustinBlades.org), POC [frank@starskaters.org](mailto:frank@starskaters.org)

### Ongoing Sports – Houston Area

#### Mondays

#### Tuesdays

**Boccia** – 12:00-3:00pm Stude Park, POC Chuck French

#### Wednesdays

**Air Rifles** (1st & 3rd) at West Gray Facility POC Chuck French

**Archery** – (2nd & 4th) 2:00pm at Bass Pro Shop Archery Range POC Frank Ellis

#### Thursdays

#### Fridays

#### Saturdays

**10:00am Team Texas Sled Hockey** at Ice Skate USA, Memorial City Mall POC [skate@starskaters.org](mailto:skate@starskaters.org), [www.starskaters.org](http://www.starskaters.org)

#### POC Information

Tammy Jones – [tammyjtpvasports@gmail.com](mailto:tammyjtpvasports@gmail.com)

Alvin Guerrero – [alvin-guerrero@att.net](mailto:alvin-guerrero@att.net)

David Bradshaw – [dbradshaw1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dbradshaw1@sbcglobal.net)

Matthew Bourbon – [matthew\\_bourbon@yahoo.com](mailto:matthew_bourbon@yahoo.com)

Frank Ellis – [hotwheels0114@gmail.com](mailto:hotwheels0114@gmail.com)

Jose Laguna – [jose.laguna@va.gov](mailto:jose.laguna@va.gov)

Barry Muth – [bmuth@satx.rr.com](mailto:bmuth@satx.rr.com)

Gabe Diaz de Leon – [diazlions@msn.com](mailto:diazlions@msn.com)

Jennifer Cooper Weatherford – 830-377-1238,

[jcooper@afsc.com](mailto:jcooper@afsc.com)

Brooke Matula – 210-336-4135,

[brooke@strapssports.com](mailto:brooke@strapssports.com)

Brad Bowen – 512-988-7711, [bbowen@afsc.com](mailto:bbowen@afsc.com)

Todd Erickson – 210-379-5170, [ticoachtodd@att.net](mailto:ticoachtodd@att.net)

Chuck French – 713-562-4089,

[Charles.french@houstontx.gov](mailto:Charles.french@houstontx.gov)

Troy Hopkins-210-872-7120,

[troy.hopkins1@us.army.mil](mailto:troy.hopkins1@us.army.mil)

Abdul Brown-240-338-5717, ab-

[dul.r.brown.civ.mail.mil](mailto:dul.r.brown.civ.mail.mil)

Chris Leverkuhn-210-913-8869,

[c.leverkuhn@hotmail.com](mailto:c.leverkuhn@hotmail.com)

Janis-201-826-0500, [jroz814@operationcomfort.org](mailto:jroz814@operationcomfort.org)

Ben Kvanli 512-203-0083, [ben@kayakinstruction.org](mailto:ben@kayakinstruction.org)

[www.texaspva.org](http://www.texaspva.org)

[www.texasregionalparalymphicsport.org](http://www.texasregionalparalymphicsport.org)

[www.sanantoniosports.org](http://www.sanantoniosports.org)

### UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

April 2-9, 2016 **30th Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic**. Snowmass Village, CO  
applications due to the Chapter office by November 13th

6/27 – 7/2/016, **National Veterans Wheelchair Games**—Salt Lake City, **Deadline 31 March 2016** to Chapter

#### Membership Events-January

- 22-24 **Jr. Basketball Tournament Morgan's Wonderland Gym**
- 23 **6th Annual Salute to servicemembers 5K & Kids Freedom fun run, Bluebonnet Palace, 17630 Lookout Rd, Selma, TX 78154, 8 a.m. opening ceremonies**
- 22-24 **TX Cup Quad Rugby Tournament, Pearland, TX POC Chuck French**
- 25 **MED VA SCI Site Visit Membership meeting, 4 p, Day Room, sandwiches provided**
- 27 **Houston Satellite Membership Forum, Frank Ellis, MED VA SCI Day Room, lunch 12 noon**
- 28 **So. TX Satellite Membership Forum, John Taylor**

#### Membership Events-February

- 4 **SAS Membership Forum, ALM SCIC Rec rm, dinner 5 p, forum 6 p**
- 7 **Superbowl 50 party, ALM & MED SCIC Dayrooms, times TBD**
- 11 **TPVA Grand Opening new Chapter Office, 1-6 pm, 6418 FM 2100 Rd, Crosby, TX 77532  
RSVP 800-933-4261**
- 12 **TPVA Board Meeting, 11 a.m. Chapter Office**



## Treasurer By Darrell Wilson



Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate that would provide a one-time payment of \$550 to Social Security beneficiaries as well as veteran recipients of compensation and pension to address the fact that the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not pay a cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2016. Because the inflation rate increased only minimally in 2015, SSA announced in October that there would be no increase in Social Security benefits. This has a spillover effect on other federal benefits such as VA compensation and military retirement because their COLAs are tied to those for Social Security. H.R. 4144, the “Seniors and Veterans Emergency Benefits Act,” was introduced by Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) in the House and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. A Senate version of the bill, S. 2251, was introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Rep. James Langevin (D-RI) and Sen. Robert Casey (D-PA) have reintroduced legislation that would provide a veteran first time home buyer or a current veteran homeowner with a refundable tax credit of up to \$8000 for specially adaptive housing improvements. H.R. 3975, the “Veterans Homebuyer Accessibility Act,” and its companion in the Senate, S. 2277, would also allow the veteran, if he or she should choose, to assign the specially adaptive housing credit to another individual making the specially adaptive housing improvements. This latter provision would enable family members to make housing adaptations for an injured son, daughter, or other relative. Unlike the Special Adapted Housing grant from the VA, veterans whose disabilities are not service-connected would be able to take advantage of this tax credit. H.R. 3975 was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee and S. 2277 was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

In December, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced two efforts to address problems in air travel for passengers with disabilities. After several years of delay, DOT published a notice in the Federal Register on December 7 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/12/07/2015-30764/nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-of-disability-in-air-travel-consideration-of-negotiated-rulemaking>) announcing its intent to explore the feasibility of conducting a negotiated rulemaking (Reg Neg) on several issues of critical concern for people with disabilities in air travel. The areas DOT are exploring for inclusion in the Reg Neg include accessible in-flight entertainment, access to in-flight medical oxygen, service animals, accessible lavatories on new single aisle aircraft, classes of service for purposes of seating accommodations, and airline reporting requirements. DOT has engaged the services of a convener who will meet with all relevant stakeholders, including PVA, to develop a report regarding the feasibility of addressing these issues through a Reg Neg. Comments can also be submitted in writing via the regulatory process to be given to the convener for his review.

In addition to the Reg Neg, DOT has also announced that it will be working with stakeholders to create training modules to address the top four areas of complaints received by DOT from people with disabilities. As part of its efforts, DOT will establish focus groups to address the following issues: (1) wheelchair and guide assistance at airports and on aircraft; (2) transport of wheelchairs and other mobility aids in aircraft; (3) accessible aircraft seating accommodations; and (4) travel with service animals. Any resources developed will be primarily for airlines and their contract service providers. PVA and other disability organizations are partnering with DOT in these efforts.

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### IN MEMORIUM

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Dario Aguilar  
Petro Aguilera  
Samuel Calamaco  
William Cibosky  
John Johnson  
John Lee

Hector Marin  
James Martin  
Ronald Maxon  
Andy Roca  
Adolfo Trevino



**DEAR CICI—a Caregivers Column—this column is designed to be interactive. Caregivers please send us your input to [info@texaspva.org](mailto:info@texaspva.org) or fax 713-520-8217. Call 800-933-4261 x0 if you have any questions.**

Dear Cici,

*I am at my wits end. My husband Joe has been in a wheelchair for three years now, and in that time he has gained at least 60 pounds. The doctor has said that he now has diabetes, high blood pressure and if he doesn't try to lose some weight, he'll only get worse. Joe doesn't seem to care anymore. He tells me that he tries, but I see him sneaking snacks of candy and cookies almost daily. It's beginning to be more and more difficult for me to move him into his chair. I'm worried about him. What can I do?*

Melissa

Dear Melissa,

*Weight gain in most wheelchair bound people is an ongoing problem. As you stated, it often results in other more serious problems. One question: who buys the groceries in your household? If you are buying things that are not good for Joe (or you, for that matter) think about alternatives. There are many sugar free products you can choose from. Eating healthily is a wise choice for everyone, but especially for those folks in wheelchairs. You can ask your dietician to give you advice, or you can google healthy eating recipes to get information on how you can help your husband lose weight. There are great recipes for snacks and entrees on many of the sites. Get him involved in choosing the recipes. Along with eating more healthily you could try to eat smaller meals more frequently. Doctors agree that it's advisable to eat six small meals rather than three large ones. Too, serving food on smaller plates will give the impression that you're eating just as much as before. According to health experts, reducing calories is only half the solution. Exercise is vital to maintaining good health and well-being. Establish a regimen of exercises if Joe doesn't already have one and be supportive and encouraging as you both go through establishing a lifestyle that will result in eating and feeling better. It's not easy; it takes commitment, planning and goal setting. BUT it can be done. Give yourselves a timeline and start working toward realistic goals. Good luck. Cici*

**36<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES**

**STRIVE**

**LIVE**

**CONQUER**

**REGISTRATION PACKET**

**SALT LAKE CITY**  
JUNE 27 - JULY 3, 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:  
[wheelchairgames.org](http://wheelchairgames.org)

Facebook WheelchairGames Twitter #NVWG

CO-PRESENTED BY:  
USA Cycling  
USA Powerlifting  
Paralyzed Veterans of America

### Disaster Relief Form

Paralyzed Veterans of America

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

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Second point of contact or location where you can be reached: \_\_\_\_\_

PVA Member: Yes  No

PVA Chapter (if member): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you service-connected: Yes  No

Branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address, and phone number of insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason assistance is required (check all that apply):

Accessibility Modifications  Temporary Shelter  Prosthetic Appliances

Transportation  Medical Supplies  Food

Please attach on a separate sheet an explanation of the damages sustained from the natural disaster and an itemized list of the cost of damages to include expenses paid for replacement items, i.e., cost of repairs to roof, food expenses, etc. Also include the following statement:

*I certify that the assistance requested is the result of \_\_\_\_\_, and that I am not receiving reimbursement of expenses from other sources. If funds are received (from insurance, etc.) in whole or in part, I will reimburse PVA. By signing this application, I authorize agents of Paralyzed Veterans of America to independently verify the truth of the statements I have made both on this application and orally during the application process. I also understand that any misrepresentation of material fact may result in the voiding of my eligibility for funds. I understand that such misrepresentation will require me to reimburse Paralyzed Veterans of America the funds given to me.*

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have sustained damages from natural disasters, go to [www.texaspva.org](http://www.texaspva.org) to download this form and submit to your local NSO**

## *Outdoor Sports Report By Alvin Guerrero*



**HERO HUNT by Steve Holbert**—I'm not what you'd call a deer hunter. I've never been deer hunting in my life. If it weren't for my attempt at wild hog hunting this year, I hadn't ever been wild game hunting with a rifle before in my life. On my first attempt at hunting, the only thing I found was a dead mouse, which earned me the nickname mouse hunter. I had no deer rifle, plus I didn't know how to hunt deer but Alvin said it didn't matter, this is one of the best places in Texas to go to deer hunting. So I agreed. It was a long drive to nearly Laredo. First stop was the Freer Deer Camp, which is a hunting supply & taxidermy

business. These nice folks run their own charity for disabled veterans or veterans families and they donate back 100% of their proceeds to that cause. It was there where I met up with Alvin, Josue & David and signed up for their charity big buck contest. Those good folks not only gave us a hunting cap but offered a mount to the buck we might get on the hunt. Very generous! When we finally made it to the Walker Family Ranch we were met at the gate by Mitch Hoke & Keith. Mitch is the guy who planned & organized the Hero Hunt for us & took care of us all weekend. We stopped at the rifle range to sight in our rifles, then stowed our gear at the lodge & pretty much headed out to our deer blinds.

Mitch took me out to my blind with his pickup mounted & stationary timed game feeders. It didn't take long for the does & yearlings and a couple of young bucks to show up. Like clockwork every day were the small herd of javelina. Not only had I never seen a javelina before, I had no idea what they were. They look a lot like a small bristled stinky pig with a light colored ring around their neck. With the shape of their body & that ring around their neck it reminded me of the crest around the neck of a triceratops. For all I know they could be a descendant of that dinosaur. They would have been any easy kill but Alvin said only his Mom knew how to cook them up to make them taste good. Day two at O dark thirty, I went out with Keith as my guide & after a couple of hours, came back in for breakfast & then back out. In the middle of the afternoon, a cold front blew through & the deer started to become much more active. After lunch, we headed out for the late afternoon, evening round. With the much cooler temps, the bucks seemed to be more active. I saw a number of them but Keith told me they were too young to shoot. And with my Mouse Hunter moniker I didn't want to show up with the littlest buck! Bad luck struck though as several cows wandered down the path towards us & scared off the deer. Keith got out of the small pop up deer blind they had for me & threw some sticks at them trying to drive them off. It sort of worked but they just wandered off down in my shooting lane. As luck would have it a big buck with a huge rack popped out of the brush right near the cows so I wasn't able to safely take a shot. I was able to marvel at him for some time through the scope though. I wished I would have had some pictures of him to back up my hunter's tales at the lodge that evening.

Later they held a banquet type of dinner for us at the lodge. There were many hunters & guests of the Walker family there. They were very generous & gracious in honoring us as vets. It was very humbling. Not only did many hunters donate their time, money, resources & good food, it was a great evening with camaraderie. Sunday morning I was greeted with a chilly 43 degrees, so I dressed with as many layers of clothes as I could & Keith & I headed out. With the cold, still morning air, the bucks were out in force. Both Keith & I were hoping the same big buck would show up & quickly a big buck did show up. I suppose I may have been somewhat hesitant to shoot it. I think Keith had to tell me a few times to take the shot. So squeeze the trigger I did. My first time shooting a borrowed rifle & my first time shooting at a deer, I wasn't even 100% certain of exactly where to shoot. The rifle report & recoil both surprised me. When I was able to refocus through the scope there was no deer there! Did I miss? I didn't think I was that bad of a marksman. Keith asked me if I missed. Now my confidence was dropping fast. I was afraid I may have wounded it & would never find it. Keith waited 20 minutes or so before heading out and after what seemed like an eternity Keith came back & reported he saw a small trace of blood. Keith waited for reinforcements & once Brad arrived they headed back into the brush. In a short amount of time they reemerged dragging the carcass. It was official, I'm a deer hunter. Once back at the lodge everyone was gathering their belongings to leave. Everyone had gotten a buck. Plus the other guys got 4 hogs, 2 javelina & a doe. It just so happened that my buck had the most points on his rack. I told Alvin maybe now instead of Mouse I can be Mighty Mouse!



# San Antonio Satellite Director By Ben Reynaga MD



Although we did not have a regular Members Meeting in December, we enjoyed a fantastic Christmas dinner celebration with some the most delicious food to date. The hotel was warm, friendly and wheelchair friendly. Everyone received a nice Christmas gift. It was very nice for our members to share this special time together. The TPVA is our Family.

Bourbon, Hope, and I were able to collect and deliver some needed household Items and money to one of our members in need. I received a "Wish List" and request for some more needed items from the same member which I will pass on to the Board. Happy New Year to everyone.

## Houston Satellite Christmas Party



**Greg Treacy presents George Ambrose Sands IV - 9 years of service for the VA - Decision Review Officer - Special Operations Team, Veterans Service Center, Houston VA Regional Office**



Honoring our member, Mr. Romero & his family at Christmas with gifts of toys, food, and clothes, TPVA's Carlton Tucker & Sherry worked with Carol & JeMarques from the VA to accept donations from Mr. Durwyn Williams & his son, Basilio.

## *National Director By Darrell Wilson*



On November 18, 2015, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) plan to consolidate all purchased care programs into one new "Veterans Choice Program" (VCP). The Senate Committee followed suit on December 2, 2015. Last year when Congress passed the "Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014" (the "Choice Act"), the law was designed to provide a timely response to well-publicized VA failures to provide access to medical services and other forms of mismanagement. Given the short time frame in which it was passed, the measure was not meant to serve as a permanent fix. As Choice implementation unfolded, Congress, the VA and a variety of stakeholders identified critical issues.

One significant issue was the fact that VA has traditionally used a wide array of programs and partnerships with community providers, each with their own unique requirements. While it expanded VA's ability to purchase care, the Choice Act in some ways exacerbated the complexity of this system. It presented a confusing landscape to navigate for not only veterans and community providers seeking to use the Choice Program, but the VA employees who support them as well. As a result, Congress mandated the development of a plan to consolidate all non-Department provider programs when it enacted P.L. 114-41, the "Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act." The effect would be to establish a new, single program known as the "Veterans Choice Program." The new system would expand access to care by streamlining the process used to determine which veterans receive outside care and by which doctors. Other expected results include improving claims, billing and reimbursement, as well as medical recordkeeping. In developing this plan, the VA relied on numerous sources of internal and external support. It engaged Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), Federal partners, individual veterans, VA leaders, staff and clinicians, health care industry leaders and other stakeholders in a meaningful way. PVA and fellow Independent Budget (IB) members—Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars—met frequently with VA officials throughout the planning process, offering unique insight and expertise regarding proposed aspects of the plan.

A comprehensive independent assessment of VA health care delivery systems and management processes was also conducted as part of the Choice Act requirements. Different aspects of this assessment were contracted out to various organizations. The third-party product encompassed more than 4,000 pages of findings and over 180 major recommendations. The VA combined the input and efforts from these collective assets and submitted its plan to Congress on October 30, 2015. The plan itself focuses on five functional areas. The first area is eligibility. The first enhancement in this area is establishing a single set of eligibility criteria for all community care based on geographic access/distance to a VA primary care provider, wait-time for care, and availability of services at VA. The second enhancement is greater access to emergency treatment and urgent community care. The second functional area is reducing the administrative burdens on referrals and authorizations in order to expedite delivery of care. The third area is the development of a high-performing network. In addition to VA infrastructure, the high-performing network will include a VA Core Network and an External Network. The VA Core Network includes existing relationships with Department of Defense (DoD), Indian Health Services (IHS), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), Tribal Health Programs (THPs) and academic teaching affiliates. The External Network is comprised of commercial community providers.

The reality is that VA cannot provide all forms of care at the highest quality and accessibility to all veterans in all locations. In this light, VA is seeking to leverage components of existing non-Department networks to close gaps in its current infrastructure. By utilizing assessments at the local level, VA can position itself to capitalize on existing strengths within its own infrastructure, as well as those within its Core Network and External Network. By leveraging existing strengths at the local level, VA will be able to eliminate redundancies and focus energy and resources on aspects of care in which the VA excels in that particular locale. It also allows VA to invest in and grow its core competencies, i.e. spinal cord injury care, traumatic brain injuries, and post-traumatic stress disorder. While care received by veterans might end up being provided by the Core Network or External Network, in the context of this high-performing network, delivery of care would be viewed as a direct extension of VA care as opposed to simply outsourcing. This aspect ties in closely with the fourth functional area, care coordination. Improving medical records management and allowing community providers to easily exchange health information with VA will support more effective care coordination. It also provides VA the ability to analyze health care outcomes more effectively and move toward value-based care models. These changes combined with upgraded customer service platforms will offer continuum of care coordination tailored specifically to the veteran's needs, ultimately improving the consumer's overall experience. The fifth functional area is improving provider payment methods. Two critical changes would be moving to a standardized regional fee schedule, and implementing automated adjudication for a high percentage of claims. These adjustments target the current problem of quality providers being unwilling to participate in Choice due to billing, claims and reimbursement failures. Bringing these providers into the fold will be essential to building a high-performing network that maintains VA standards for quality of care.

**CONTINUED ON p. 18**

## *Advocacy Director by Derrick Perkins*



Happy New Year everyone! As we begin 2016 I want to remind the PVA Texas membership about core tenets concerning advocacy from [pva.org](http://pva.org).

"Core to [Paralyzed Veterans of America](http://ParalyzedVeteransofAmerica.org)'s mission is helping veterans and all people with [spinal cord injury](http://spinalcordinjury.org) and [disease](http://disease.org) (SCI/D) enjoy the high quality of life they deserve. Through Paralyzed Veterans of America's Advocacy Program, Paralyzed Veterans offers up-to-date disability rights information and resources on the PVA website. Paralyzed Veterans further advocates for people living with SCI/D through speaking out on Capitol Hill and by working with federal agencies such as the Department of Justice to see that nondiscrimination laws are implemented and enforced."

In February a delegation of PVA Texas Board members will travel to Capitol Hill to participate in the Advocacy/Legislative Seminar and meet with several Senators concerning the PVA membership. The visit will be particularly interesting because this is a Presidential election year. Check [pva.org](http://pva.org) as well as [texaspva.org](http://texaspva.org) for more info and updates.



*More hunting with Alvin at the  
Hank Parker Outdoors  
Three Rivers, TX Jan 1st—3rd  
888 Ranch with Steve Clark, Hank  
Parker, Jared the Cameraman, &  
Jeremecia Perry*



## *Houston Satellite Director by Frank Ellis*



Despite the onset of cooler weather, Houston is still very busy with activities of all types, for whoever wants to participate. The CHL classes have been established and dates set for all three locations; San Antonio, Houston, and Kingsland. Members can now go online to register for the class at [www.rmtexaschl.com](http://www.rmtexaschl.com), click on upcoming classes, and choose a location.

## *Legislative Director By Matthew Bourbon*



Hello to all my fellow TPVA members. I volunteered for the duties of Legislative Director because I wanted more responsibilities and wanted a position that I could work on issues that affect our lives as veterans with disabilities. Bottom line, please contact me on any issues concerning your legislative matters. On November 5, 2015, the Department of Labor held its annual Salute to Veterans. Heather Ansley, Associate General Counsel for Corporate and Government Relations, participated in a panel discussion on behalf of PVA. The theme of this year's event was veterans with disabilities in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Despite all of our advances, veterans and all people with disabilities are still underrepresented in our nation. PVA generally supports the effort to consolidate the various community care programs into a single program. We continue to emphasize the need for the VA to be responsible for coordinating the care and to ensure that veterans are able to access the most appropriate care in the most convenient fashion possible. However, we also believe that VA and Congress need to remain committed to expanding the capacity of VA to provide health care services within the system, particularly with regards to specialized services, such as spinal cord injury. Our Government Relations staff has been directly involved in the ongoing discussions as VA and Congress work to reform the purchased care programs. The plan put forward by the VA will restructure and integrate VA and non-VA health care programs into high-performing networks for veterans. We believe this is an important step to ensuring veterans receive high quality, comprehensive, accessible and veterans-centric health care now and in the future. The VA plan starts to move beyond arbitrary federal standards regulating when and where individual veterans can access medical care, keeping those clinical decisions between a veteran and his or her doctor, without bureaucrats, regulations or legislation getting in the way. However, the plan makes two particular recommendations that PVA, along with our partners in *The Independent Budget*, oppose. While we support the plan to expand emergency treatment and urgent care in the community, the proposal calls for a \$100 co-payment for emergency care and \$50 for urgent care. These co-payments are meant to serve as a perverse disincentive for veterans to utilize these critical services. Moreover, this proposal seemingly makes no exception for veterans with service-connected disabilities or who are currently exempted from co-payments, including Priority Group 4 catastrophically disabled non-service connected veterans. We also oppose granting VA the authority to dis-enroll veterans who do not disclose their private insurance information. Veterans are currently required to inform VA when their insurance information has changed and VA typically asks veterans about any changes to their insurance coverage when they visit a VA medical facility. To preclude veterans from receiving VA health care because they may not have known their insurance status changed or because they did not disclose this information would only harm the veterans VA was created to serve. Beyond these concerns, we believe this plan is worthy of serious consideration. It offers the hope of expanded access to a wide-variety of services both inside and outside of the VA while allowing the VA itself to improve its own delivery of care.

**Federal Legislature:** PVA provided a statement for the record to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on several pieces of pending legislation. Legislation considered included improving the VR&E program, access to tele-health, and education benefit protections. PVA supports S. 2106, the "Wounded Warrior Employment Improvement Act of 2015," which would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop and publish an action plan for improving services and assistance provided through VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program (Chapter 31). Returning to the workforce is a critical aspect of recovery for many catastrophically disabled veterans. This legislation would require VA to evaluate barriers to participation in VR&E and implement efforts to improve counselor training.

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**2016 Elections for President, Secretary & Board Member #1**—FROM THE TPVA SRC Elections: The President, Secretary and #1 Position Board Director election shall be held in even numbered years and terms shall start on October 1<sup>st</sup> for a period of two [2] years. The Vice President, Treasurer, #2 Position and #3 Position Board Director election shall be in odd numbered years, and terms shall start on October 1<sup>st</sup> for a period of two [2] years. Nominations will open after the October Board of Directors Meeting and will close at the end of the April Board of Directors Meeting. The Nomination Committee will prepare announcements for the Chapter Newsletter soliciting potential candidates with the requirements for nomination. The nominations shall be submitted in writing to the nomination committee and include the date of the nomination, name of nominee, the position nominated for and the individual doing the nomination. Nominations may be mailed, faxed, emailed or delivered in person. Incumbents shall have to be nominated within the guidelines of the SRC. Nomination Committee is: Tammy Jones, Chairman; Alvin Guerrero, Derrick Perkins, and Frank Ellis. Send your nominations for President, Secretary & #1 Position Board Director to any Nomination Committee Member.

# Government Relations Report By Kerry Reyna

With all the hustle and bustle of the upcoming holiday season for those of us that have college aged children don't forget some very important deadlines coming up for their Spring 2016 college tuition. Specifically, those of us who are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI/Yellow Ribbon can transfer our eligibility to our children and spouses. Yes, our spouses can go to school on those benefits. Please refer to the Veterans Administration (VA) website [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) under the Education and Training tab, call 1-888-442-4551 or call the TPVA service officers Greg or Armando. Not eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill don't worry you might be able to use the Chapter 35 (Survivor/Dependent Educational Benefits) found at [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) or call Greg or Armando at TPVA.

Don't forget about if you entered the military from the State of Texas you have the opportunity to use the Hazlewood Act or transfer to your spouse/child. For further information go to [www.tvc.texas.gov](http://www.tvc.texas.gov) under quick links click on Hazlewood Act tab or call 210-557-3606. Finally, for those of us who have children going to a private elementary/high school or private/public college you can apply for the Folds of Honor scholarship found at <https://foldsofhonor.org> to apply for a \$5,000 scholarship to be applied to either private school or college tuition. Please be aware of the application process is only open from **1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016**. For more information call 1-918-274-4700 or <https://foldsofhonor.org>.

Wishing you and your family a great holiday season and Happy New Year!

We all get surveys by telephone, mail and email and until I went through my Master of Business Administration (MBA) and realized the consumers voice is really heard I hit delete on the email or threw the paper survey away. When you take that opportunity to respond your concerns are tabulated and statistical results are compiled and it becomes a black and white basis for improvements or staying status quo. Your voice and comments allow the leadership in TPVA to take these issues to local, state and federal officials to develop appropriate legislation for disabled veterans. In that spirit, a survey was sent both electronically and mailed for our female members to voice their concerns on VA healthcare. We only received 10 back out of a population of 47 TPVA female veterans which represents a 25% return. I encourage our female to take another look at that survey and send in your responses. Lost it no problem ask Sherry Kirkpatrick to send you another either by email or mail. I would like to give a report to our membership during the February timeframe.

On 27 January, I will be going to Austin to represent Texas veterans at the Texas Veterans Commission-funding committee to hear different entities requesting grant money to assist veterans. This a public meeting is held in Austin. Further, the first week of March Darrell, Bourbon and I will be visiting legislators to have all TPVA members concerns and voice be heard. As a government relations director I stand committed to conveying TPVA membership concerns and respectfully ask your support in filling out surveys. If you have a concern to discern to the TPVA leadership let us know.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU IN DECEMBER & JANUARY It is never our intention to leave anyone out

William Adams  
Edward Alderete  
Willard Allen  
Billy Anderson  
Tonya Andrews  
Charles Armstead  
Mark Bandish  
Robert Barrera  
Michael Barrychuck  
John Bemben Jr.  
Anthony Bitting  
Jennifer Bowles  
Roy Brown  
Michael Bucciero  
Michelle Bush  
Cornelius Butler  
Edward Caldwell Jr.  
Leroy Clement  
Lawrence Coindreau  
Charley Cole  
Pablo Collazo  
Earl Conner  
Nicolas Contero  
Kenneth Cooper  
Leonard Crowder  
Willie Davis Jr.  
Stephen Dawson

Elizabeth Duncan  
Ronald Emory  
John Gallagher  
Felipe Garcia  
Jesus Garcia  
Lynne Gregory  
Robert Guill  
Mark Hamman  
Jimmy Harris  
Dwight Hayes  
Eugene Hernandez  
Isville Jackson  
Garland Jennings  
Willie Jones  
Don Kennedy Jr.  
Robert Kilpatrick  
Christopher LeFavour  
Jose Liquez  
Jose Lopez III  
Earnest McGrue  
Edward Miley  
Frederica Miller  
William Miller  
Estepan Montes  
Miguel Munoz  
Donald Newerls  
Patrick Norvell

Michael Noyce  
Dean Oliver  
Charlie Parra  
Augustine Pena  
Derrick Perkins  
Jeremecia Perry  
Jessie Poucher  
Robert Preston  
Jose Ramirez  
Michael Read  
Deborah Richardson  
Steven Richardson  
Manuel Riojas  
Michael Robertson  
Melvin Robertson  
Morris Robinson  
Jerry Sanders  
Ernie Sandidge  
Traci Schiska  
Stephen Scott  
Wesley Scott  
James Shelton  
Freda Sherrill  
Ronald Sigur  
Edwin Simmons  
Roger Smith  
Steve Smith

Susan Soto  
Christopher Stanford Sr.  
Clifford Steakley  
Wayne Stukenholtz  
Olen Taylor Jr.  
Jeremie Thiers  
Mylerrie Thomas  
Richard Thompson  
Michael Thornton  
John Toledo  
Albert Tomchesson  
Leon Toulson Jr.  
Candor Tovar  
Kimberly Ulbricht  
Pamela Upchurch-Thompson  
Gary Van Fleet  
Milton Washington  
Theodore Weaver Jr.  
Robert Wheaton  
Kare Wiggins  
Frank Williams  
Billy Wilson  
Rodger Woods  
Randy Zapata

## *Executive Director Report By Amanda Saunders*



Hello Texas Chapter! I hope everyone's 2016 is off to a happy and healthy start. We've been so busy that the month of December came and went and here we are in January.

On December 5<sup>th</sup> we hosted our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Freedom Shoot at the Clay Mound Sports Center in Liberty, TX. I owe a huge thank you to all of our members who came out to the event and all of our loyal sponsors. This was a successful event and I hope it continues to grow in the years to come.

On January 19<sup>th</sup> Alvin, Bradshaw and I will travel to Las Vegas to attend the SHOT Show.

At the show we will have the opportunity to introduce ourselves, and the PVA, Texas Chapter to thousands of potential sponsors. We've made some amazing connections as a result of attending the show the last couple of years. Once I return from Vegas, I will hit the ground running working on our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Kill'n Clays Classic. Alvin was able to work his magic and get this shoot classified as a Registered Shoot again; which should increase shooter participation. I'm hopeful that this year's Kill'n Clays will be our most successful fundraiser yet! If you've not been out to one of our events, you should definitely come check it out.

The Chapter purchased, renovated and moved into our new office in 2015. What a milestone and major accomplishment! We spent months searching and visiting properties and all of our efforts finally paid off! We love our new office and the renovations turned out beautifully. Anne and I worked hand and hand with our amazing General Contractor and we couldn't be happier with the results. If you're ever in the area, please come see us. The Board of Directors and I hope you can join us for our grand opening & ribbon cutting on Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1 pm.

For those of you planning on attending the NVWG's please submit your application to the Chapter office by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Also keep in mind that you are now allowed a travel companion to accompany you.

We now have a large supply of deer meat at the Chapter office available for Houston area members. Please give us a call if you'd like to come by and pick some up.

We also have rodeo tickets but those are going quickly! If there is a show you'd like to attend and we don't have the tickets, you can always use your once per year \$120 entertainment reimbursement.

Please feel free to give me a call anytime. Take care and God Bless, Amanda

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**MEMBERS: this is available in most metropolitan areas.**

**Uber and Lyft are offering rides for veterans going to work, job interviews and other critical transportation at no charge.**

**<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/veterans/2015/11/09/uber-lyft-veterans-rides/75493302/>**

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**Captain Dave is inviting you to go sailing!** I wish to invite you and those in

**your PVA organization to come sailing with us. We have many large boats to accommodate you guys! Have a glorious day, Capt. Dave, Captain Dave McCabe, Founder and Executive Director**

**Sailing Angels Foundation, Serving Special Needs - 281-507-1867c—**

**davemccabe@SailingAngels.org—www.SailingAngels.org—Facebook: Sailing Angels Foundation**

**Office Address: 1714 Festival Drive, Houston, TX 77062— Marina Address: Portofino Harbour Marina, 1 Portofino Plaza, Kemah, TX 77565**

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**We have several different kinds of frozen deer meat in the Chapter Office freezer. Please contact the Chapter office at [info@texaspva.org](mailto:info@texaspva.org) or 800-933-4261 x4.**

**Victoria Adapted Sports Clinics**—Texas Regional Paralympic Sport (TRPS) hosted 2 Adapted Sports Clinics in Victoria, in November. These clinics would not have been possible without the support from Texas Regional Paralympic Sport, PVA, Texas Chapter, Texas Disabled Veterans Association, Victoria ISD, Straight Arrow Archery, Houston Parks & Rec, & STRAPS (South Texas Regional Adaptive & Paralympic Sport). Mr. Gray Moses (Ret VISD superintendent) welcomed coaches & athletes to the Liberty Gym. The Victoria ISD Adapted PE dept brought 6 athletes with physical disabilities & 13 Adapted PE Teachers, PT & OT together. They learned first-hand from the TRPS coaches how living with a physical disability does not have to slow you down or change how you succeed in life. They discovered through sport that independence, acceptance, & dreams do come true as they played wheelchair basketball, experienced archery & tried their hand at track & field. Through track & field these young athletes now have goals to be on their Junior High & High School Track & Field Teams. The UIL of TX is now collaborating with TX Reg Paralympic Sport to mainstream athletes with physical disabilities onto their school based sport teams. In it's third year, well over 50 athletes are participating in their school based sports programs.

The Bad News Chairs, a newly formed Wheelchair Basketball Team in Victoria, tagged onto having the TRPS coaches in the area & organized a community Adapted Sports Day. There were 17 athletes from the Victoria & Corpus Christi area that participated with numerous family & friends there for support & help. Additional instruction was also done by Dan Castillo of STRAPS & The Texas Disabled Veterans Association in both boccia & power soccer.

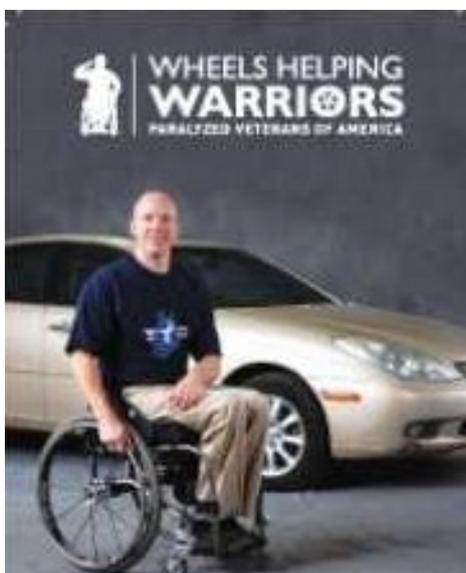
Thank You to the coaches that came to Victoria to share their knowledge & love for sports. Wendy Gumbert (Mgr, TX Reg Paralympic Sport), Jennifer Weatherford (STRAPS Power Soccer Coach), Hanna Walker (Sport Coordinator with Houston Parks & Rec), Adam Saldana (SA Wheelchair Spurs Athlete), Israel Schultz (SA Wheelchair Spurs Athlete), Willie Jackson (SA Wheelchair Spurs Head Coach & STRAPS Wheelchair Soccer Head Coach), & Daniel Castillo (STRAPS Boccia & Power Soccer Athlete).

We appreciate our food sponsors, TPVA & the TDVA & thanks to Peter Piper Pizza & Papa John's for donated pizza. Thank you Bad News Chairs Coach Sandy Wapelhorst for picking up breakfast and VISD for lunch. Each athlete was given a TDVA eco-friendly canvas bag with a T-shirt & a sports backpack from TRPS. TPVA & TRPS provided hotel room accommodations for the visiting coaches & mentor athletes.



**NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONTINUED FROM p.12:** Certainly, overhauling a health care delivery system serving approximately 6.6 million unique patients spread across the United States is a seemingly insurmountable task, especially in light of the unceasing public backlash following the wait-time scandal in Arizona. Despite the common rhetoric these days, VA officials were met with surprising optimism and support from Members when they presented the plan to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on November 18th. While it is important to highlight that the overall tone of the hearing was positive, skepticism was still apparent regarding some aspects, notably the IT portion. Representative Mark Takano (D-CA), noting the VA's past endeavors in the IT arena, stated that he wants something that actually works this time. The other significant concern is the cost to design and implement the new VCP. Multiple members of the Committee made comments on this subject, particularly in light of the unique dilemma VA faces as it finds success. As VA improves health care services, the cost and difficulty reducing the delivery backlog is likely to increase because more veterans are likely to opt for VA care. Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson noted that this effect is already being seen. The House Committee did not invite VSOs to testify at the hearing, but PVA was able to submit in conjunction with our IB partners written testimony stating our position regarding VA's plan. The Independent Budget veterans service organizations (IBVSOs) were, however, invited to present oral testimony at the Senate hearing on December 2nd, along with the American Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and Concerned Veterans for America.

The Senate Committee hearing provided a stark contrast from the tone in the House. Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) exhibited frustration and a lack of optimism in light of VA's failure to launch a long-overdue pilot program in his state. Illustrating the never-ending bureaucratic obstacles VA faces, Undersecretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin explained that the simple explanation for why promises in Alaska had not come to fruition was the unexpected time it was taking to complete the requisite Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) contracts. Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) pointed to the sizable funding request in the plan related to creating an online portal for veterans using the new program. She questioned VA's competence to effectively use that money for IT purposes in light of the failure of VA and DoD to create a joint electronic health record. Sitting alongside fellow IB representatives, PVA's Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Carl Blake, joined the second panel for questions before the Committee. The IBVSOs collectively presented commentary on the plan proposed by VA and expressed a level of satisfaction that many of our key recommendations were incorporated into the new choice plan. Though voicing strong support for the plan's direction, IB representatives also articulated certain points of divergence with VA such as eliminating arbitrary federal standards regulating access to care. Appended to the written testimony submitted to the Committee was the IB Framework for Veterans Health Care Reform. This policy document was developed and based on feedback from the membership of all three organizations as well as the larger veteran community. The vision for reform is based on the understanding that veterans have earned and deserve high-quality, accessible, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care designed to meet their unique needs. To accomplish this long-term goal, the IBVSOs argue that four fundamental areas must be addressed: (1) restructure the veterans health care delivery system, (2) redesign the systems and procedures that facilitate access to health care, (3) realign the provision and allocation of VA's resources to reflect the mission, and (4) reform VA's culture with workforce innovations and real accountability. With regard to restructuring, the IBVSOs recommend establishing local Veterans-Centered Integrated Health Care Networks. These networks would leverage the capabilities and strengths of existing local health-care resources (including VA, other public health care systems, and private providers) to meet the needs of veterans in each uniquely different health care market. This includes increasing capacity to deliver urgent care. As the Institute of Medicine stated in the previously mentioned Independent Assessment, national standards for access and wait-times similar to the Choice Program's 40-mile and 30-day standards do not exist in the private sector. Changes to the system and procedures for accessing health care should be made to reflect this fact. The IBVSOs strongly believe that the focus should shift to clinical need and the interaction between clinicians and their patients. In order to address VA personnel and infrastructure resources, the IB proposes establishing a Quadrennial Veterans Review (QVR) similar to the Quadrennial Defense Review. Utilizing a QVR would enable VA to take the long view of prospective resource needs, ensuring continuity of planning across administrations. Finally, the fourth fundamental area is one in which both prior and ongoing scandals have generated significant media attention and progressively degrading rhetoric regarding VA culture. The Framework explains that any plan for reforming the culture at VA must recognize that the situation is complicated and demands a holistic approach to addressing this critical issue. Instead of focusing solely on firing individuals, there must be a strong emphasis on workforce development that ensures VA's ability to recruit, train and retain quality professionals who are motivated to place veterans' interests first. By comprehensively reforming the delivery model, VA will eventually be able to provide high-quality health care closer to home by seamlessly combining the capabilities of the VA health care system with public and private health care providers in the community.



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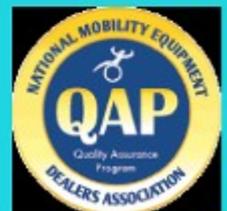
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