

THE

DESERT ORACLE

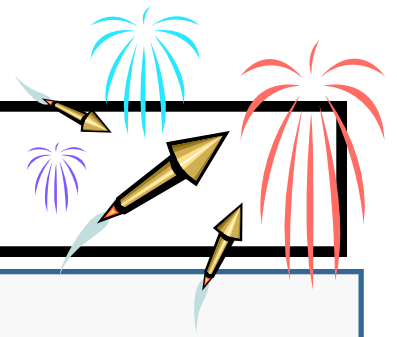
A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America

July-August 2010 Vol. 12 Issue 6



**Happy
Fourth
of July**

Arizona Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America



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The views expressed in the articles of the Desert Oracle are the opinions of the author and not necessarily the opinion of the AZPVA. Any article not attributed to an individual / group was compiled with available information by APVA staff/members. The Desert Oracle does encourage our readers to submit their articles, interests and/or rebuttals.

Ok, it's summer in Arizona and we no longer get to laugh at the others who spend 5 to 6 months of their year shoveling the winter weather out of the driveway. So stay in the A/C and out of the sun; while consuming plenty of water. If we get some decent monsoon weather, it will be a quick 4 months and then we get to enjoy the start of the snow season again.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games start in a few weeks in Denver, CO. We are expecting 22 athletes; 3 of them being novices. We wish them all the luck in their events and a safe journey. In the past few years the teams have all been housed in separate hotels; however this year 500+ wheelchair athletes will share the same hotel. Quite possibly the elevators will present the largest competition of the games. Good luck to all our novices, athletes, coaches and support staff. We wish to thank those whose efforts all year provided the needed funding such as, but not limited to, Joe Chitty, Steve Hymers and John Tuzzolino.

We are presently looking for a Trap Committee to run our Trap Shoot scheduled for February 17th-19th, 2011. The Chapter has been without a Trap team for quite a few years and Chapter President Gordon H. Moye is interested in starting a traveling team. If you are interested in shooting please contact Gordon at the Chapter.

The date to submit requests for funding for the 2011 Fiscal Year is past. The Chapter will be voting on a budget on August 10, 2010. That will be a tentative budget because the National Convention being held in Rhode Island is not until August 23rd-26th. However we are required to present a budget to National PVA by September 15th.

We are in the process of getting a new NSO. He is a member from Florida and will start training hopefully in July. NSO training is a combined OJT/classroom type program that usually takes 18 months to complete. We are also hoping to fill the second spot ASAP and get back up to full strength with our Service Officers. The NSO Office Secretary Jackie is doing all she can to maintain and supply Marco Rossi with the needed information when he comes to town the third week of each month. Marco will also be visiting each hospital during his week here.

The Chapter has been for sometime been trying to find a better, safer location closer to the Central Phoenix area. The cost of purchasing is simply cheaper than leasing sufficient space with reasonable parking. We are tentatively looking at office space comparable to what we have now, diagonally across from a light rail stop, with a bus stop directly in front of the building. It has a few covered spots for lower vehicles and more open air spots for full size vans. We expect to finalize negotiations in a few weeks and hope to be there by October 1, 2010.

If you have any questions please contact the Chapter Office (602) 244-9168 or az-pva@azpva.org.

Hello to all PVA members; those that I've known, and those that I will meet at future engagements. I've written to you people several times from various articles taken from periodicals i.e. MS Lifeline, Action, and PN Magazines', regarding Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and getting permission from the writers of said articles to write my articles to you. Well now I'm going to try a different approach and write about someone I've known, who is a lot closer to me than any other. This is how my own personal battle with MS began, and has progressed.

After being discharged from the Army, (1983), living in Phoenix, Arizona, where I worked at a cabinet manufacturing company as their driver, (not laborer). While driving on the freeway to deliver said cabinets to various construction sites, I began to notice my vision was going double. Well, I somehow managed a doctorate degree from somewhere, and diagnosed myself with having pulled my back out of line with the lifting of cabinets.

Naturally after my YEARS of medical schooling (Not!), the double vision simply began to fade away. Whew, thank you Jesus. One day while delivering said cabinets, I stopped by the Arizona State Hospital (ASH), on Van Buren Ave, and picked up an application for employment. Hey, way better pay, kind of a "government job", and after prior experience working with patients in New Mexico, I felt I had it made. Well, I did get hired to work on the Geriatric unit with elderly patients, who required more physical attention than on other "less hands-on", more ambulatory units.

I slowly began to ease my way into other positions for higher pay, easier hours, and not so physically demanding, and I thought "yeah Baby", I've got it made in the shade. While working, I began to notice my feet weren't feeling up to par. Then it came to my legs, hands and fingertips my fingers, all the way up to my chest. Well do you guys remember the "doctorate degree" I told you about earlier in this article? Well I self diagnosed myself again with "over-work-it is". It's very common, it's in the book. This time, I went to a female Chiropractor, who treated me in the manner that Chiropractors' do. It was in meeting with this Doctor, I was referred to a Neurologist (she suspected MS from my symptoms, from the very beginning).

Now we're back at the State Hospital again, while attending a staff meeting for one of the patients, I recognized the Case Manager in the meeting, who said he worked at a place called ComCare. Anyway, to make a too long story long, I learned where to pick-up an application for work as a psychiatric case manager. This was at a place called ComCare at that time. This place was very low-maintenance, no more hands-on patient management.

After reviewing the MRI with my Dr. Perlow, he informed me that the white blotches on my photos was MS, and this is what he detected in my brain, and onto my brain stem. Well, I was in a relapsing/remitting stage of this disease. Some days I'm up and chipper, and other days, I'm down and out in Beverly Hills, (I think there was a movie by that name). Since being diagnosed, I've been through the A.B.C drugs, (Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone,), which are self subcutaneous injections, (self-given) Another treatment I tried was Novantrone, which is an I.V. drug given in a hospital setting. Well, nonetheless, I write you this article while I do still have MS, but MS does not have me. Currently I'm in a Secondary Progressive stage of this sickness, and I will do all that I can to raise awareness for people, young and old, that are seeking treatments and organizations for such diseases, (e.g. National MS Society, Neurology Now, MS Lifelines and Paralyzed Veterans of America), to become more informed about this disease, either for them selves, or for a loved one.

Thank you all so much.

As many of you may already know, Elleen Pierce SCI NP will be retiring on August 31st 2010. While we are excited for her and she begins this new journey, we are also saddened as her departure will be a great loss to our clinic and to the many patients that she has taken care of over the years. Elleen began her career at the VA in 1992, assuming the SCI NP position after Helen B. Remington retired. Under her direction, the clinic has continued to grow and expand beyond what she thought possible, this has not been without her hard work, dedication and I'm sure, a few tears. Elleen has worked tirelessly to educate staff, peers and the medical center on the unique needs and challenges our SCI population faces every day. This has helped ensure the longevity of the SCI Clinic and the continuation of patient centered care.

Although we are in the process of filling her position, please understand that this will take some time and we ask for your patience during this transition period. You can continue to call, schedule appointments, etc as this will not change. Please remember that when calling the SCI Clinic you may reach our voice mail, feel free to leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Retirement isn't the end, but only the beginning of something new and exciting. We wish Elleen well as she takes the next step. Thank you Elleen, we love you and will miss you greatly!

Updates:

The following are a list of web sites that provide useful information on veteran's benefits as well as sites that explain how to obtain books, military/medical records and how to appeal a denied claim with the VA.

Aid and Attendance Benefits www.va.gov

ALS www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1583

Appeals http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch05.doc

Board of Veteran's(tm) Appeals <http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/>

Center for Women Veterans <http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>

Compensation Rate Tables, 12-1-10 <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/comp01.htm>

Department of Veterans Affairs Home Page <http://www.va.gov/>

Directory of Veterans Service Organizations <http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=view>

Disability Examination Worksheets Index, Comp <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/exams/index.htm>

Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=315

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents 2010 http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf> OR, http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm

Forms and Records Request <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

Homeless Veterans <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>

HSR&D Home <http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/>

Index to Disability Examination Worksheets C&P exams <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/exams/index.htm>

Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans VBA <http://www.vba.va.gov/EFIF/>

Medicare www.medicare.gov

PICNIC IN THE PINES

Its was June in Arizona, and time again for the Board of Directors' Meeting in Prescott. As every year, we hold a BBQ Picnic right after the meeting at the Ramada on the VA grounds. Again this year Allison Kitchens hosted the event. She does such an amazing job of setting up shades, tables and services, plus providing us with a live band, the Navatones.

Now let's talk about the weather! Everybody in Arizona knows it is HOT in June, sometimes hitting 122 degrees. Well, this year is the exception, we had a little cold front come through. We appreciated it, Thank you Mother Nature. But the threat of "rain" did scare some of you, didn't it? It rained in Prescott Valley and Chino Valley, but it did not rain on the VA grounds or on our picnic. Missed were some of our long time friends who thought they may get wet, but our new dry friends made the day.

Another important feature at a BBQ/Picnic is the food. Yes, Clarence was our cook again. This year we had barbequed beef, pork, chicken, brats, and the old favorite hamburgers. Everything was perfect! Thank you once again Clarence!

We also held the 2nd annual "home made" pie contest. And the winner was KarlaTuzzolino, with a very delish Lemon Meringue Pie, in perfect condition. The first prize was a \$25.00 gift card to Wal-Mart.

Congratulations Karla! We won't even talk about your competition, you blew them out of the water with their "knock-off" pies from a retail market. See picture below.
Pat & Jackie pies.



The Navatones: live entertainment under the canopy. See the sky, the storm is coming.



A great picture of John Tuzzolino, Peter Quinn and Dianne Brunswick. We don't often catch these three together!

PICNIC IN THE PINES

Here are a few more pictures of the BBQ/ Picnic that we would like to share with our readers. We all had a great time and hope to see all of you there next year. Have a wonderful summer!



Regarding **vehicle adaptive equipment for Non-Service Connected veterans**, the VA will only authorize adaptive equipment for a vehicle to insure that the veteran's vehicle can safely transport the veteran to and from home for VA medical appointments. The way the law is interpreted, the only part of the vehicle that is allowed to be adapted is as if the veteran is a PASSENGER in the vehicle. In other words, the vehicle will be adapted so a veteran will be able to safely ride in his own vehicle as a passenger. Hence, door locks and window controls on the passenger side, ramp/lift to get the veteran's (if applicable) wheelchair in and out of the vehicle and air conditioning, if prescribed by the veteran's doctor, can be authorized (see your VA hospital's SCI clinic re air conditioning). No hand controls will be authorized.

Also, this adaptation can only be done every 4 years and only on 1 vehicle every four years. If the veteran had a previous vehicle that had been adapted, the veteran must show proof that he/she no longer has that previously adapted vehicle, even if it's past the 4- year window.

Please note that in a case where a Non-Service Connected veteran only happens to go to the VA hospital about once a year for any kind of medical appointment, he/she may not be afforded ANY adaptive equipment.

Regarding vehicle adaptive equipment for **Service-Connected** veterans, it's 2 vehicles every 4 years and you can get adaptive equipment necessary if you are the **driver**, which means hand controls, etc. **HOWEVER, if you will NOT be the driver**, then you will only be afforded equipment as a passenger only.

If you need to obtain a copy of a death certificate or birth certificate, you can obtain a copy by going to the Internet. Go to the "Google" site. In the Search Box, type in "State of AZ, Department of Public Health", then click on "Vital Records , Health Data". Of course, if the person did not die in AZ, you would go to the particular state where he/she died, etc.

As of 5/5/10 the **HISA (Home Improvement & Structural Alterations) grant** is now \$6,800 for service-connected vets and \$2,000 for non-service connected vets. This, of course, applies to grants filed AFTER 5/5/10. Previously, it was \$4,000 and \$1,200 respectively. If you're interested, you should apply through your VA hospital, Prosthetics Dept. ****Unfortunately, to date, if you've used this benefit in the past (even if you didn't use it all) you're NOT eligible for the increased amount. But that could change, and we shall keep a watch out for any news of any change.****



The Carlos Story

I am a single mom of two wonderful boys, Carlos, 14 years old and Kenneth, 8 years old. Kenneth is an extremely active and happy child who enjoys anything that keeps his heart rate going. Carlos is just as happy as Kenneth is and probably has the same amount of energy as Kenneth. The difference between the two is Carlos is disabled.

Carlos's diagnoses are a seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. The diagnosis has a wide range of severity. In Carlos's case, he is completely dependent for all his needs. He is non-verbal and has a difficult time expressing his needs and wants. Carlos's level of understanding is higher than he can communicate. Carlos is non-ambulatory, when in the home he moves around by scooting on his stomach. This is not ideal for a few reasons. Carlos develops redness and rashes from the carpet and his positioning has caused his legs to turn in causing his hips to become very tight. For school, he is transported in a wheelchair, however, this is not ideal for home. He is able to propel his wheelchair but it takes a great deal of energy. Carlos tires quickly and then must rely on someone to push him.

Thank you AZPVA, Carlos can now experience greater independence while working on his fine motor skills. The motorized scooter is an exciting challenge for him. Carlos does not have safety awareness so someone is with him if we venture past the front door. In the house, he enjoys moving around the house with great speed and laughs if he runs into a wall. We will soon incorporate the scooter into therapy with hope he will learn control.

Thank you just isn't enough to express the joy in Carlos's laugh.

Your Friends,
Shani, Carlos, and Kenneth



Carlos and his new donated power wheelchair



Welcome to the Medical Library

Location: Third Floor, Rooms 3403 & 3116.

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. excluding federal holidays.

In addition, 24-hour access is available to staff via HID card system.

Phone Numbers:

Inside Medical Center: ext. 6411

Outside: 602-222-6411

Services Offered

The Phoenix VA Health Care System Medical Library provides the following services to Veterans and staff:

Medical Reference Library

Located inside Room 3116, this room contains medical reference textbooks, journals (microfilm and hardcopy) and six LAN based computers. Materials found in this room do not circulate but may be copied using the photocopier in the

Patient Education Resource Center

The PERC is located in Room 3403, it contains books, magazines, computer resources, and DVD/videos to help you understand your diagnosed illness and assist in disease prevention. If you cannot find your health information, the Library Staff will perform a search on the internet. The PERC is located inside Room 3403.

HealthVet

Two dedicated computers are available in Room 3403 and another in the ACC Lobby. The Library Staff provides one-on-one assistance for MHV services. The MHV program may also be found at www.myhealth.va.gov, when using any internet access computer .

Computers


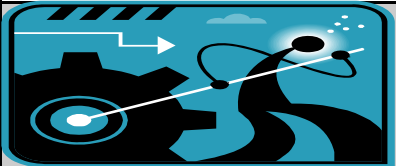


In addition to the six computers in Room 3116 for medical center staff, the Library offers three internet access computers in Room 3403 for patients and their families to help with medical information and word-processing needs, (VA Directive 6601 prohibits removable storage media such as, thumb drives).

Book Racks

Four locations:

- 1st Floor near LSU
- 1st Floor - ACC Entrance near information booth
- 2nd Floor - outside elevators 3&4
- 2nd Floor - top of ACC staircase

2010 Calendar of Events

| When | What | Where | Who |
|-----------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| July 4th 2010 | Happy Independence Day APVA Office Closed |  | |
| July 4-9 2010 | The 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games | Denver, Colorado | |
| August 10th 2010 | APVA Board of Directors Meeting @ APVA office | APVA Office 8126 N 23rd Ave Suite J | APVA Office 602-244-9168 |
| September 6th 2010 | Labor Day APVA Office Closed |  | |
| October 2010 | APVA Board of Directors Meeting @ APVA office | APVA Office 8126 N 23rd Ave Suite J | APVA Office 602-244-9168 |
| November 2010 | Happy Thanksgiving |  | |
| December 2010 | Christmas Party @APVA Office |  | APVA Office 602-244-9168 |

MEMBERSHIP REPORT from The Arizona Chapter

The Arizona Chapter voting membership stands at **541** as of June 2010.

National and APVA records show our voting membership as:

307- Service Connected 234 - Non-Service Connected

The Arizona Chapter encourages each of our members to contact the Chapter and let us know how you are doing, and if we can help you in any way. If you know of any of our members who have passed away, or if you have an address/phone change, please contact the Chapter as soon as possible. Also, if you would like to receive the Desert Oracle Newsletter by e-mail, please call or e-mail the office with your e-mail address.

Do you know a veteran with spinal cord dysfunction who isn't a member of the APVA?

Let us know at the Chapter office by calling

602-244-9168 or 1-800-621-9217 e-mail: azpva@azpva.org

Happy Birthday August

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Marco Rossi | Debra Garcia | Gerald Bachman | Sandra Easterwood | Robert Malone |
| Harold Frandsen | Raymond Zeravsky | Dale Pyle | Nestor Chavez | James Sumner |
| Homer Townsend, Jr. | Harry Morgan | Peter Quinn | Bryan Tubbs | Richard McCarthy |
| William McCormack | William Harper | John Lain | Michael Ryan | Donald Ferguson |
| Horace Ricks | Susan Wudy | James McDonald | Amina Kruck | Richard Glen |
| Glenn Dunn | Thomas Nielson | Joseph Barnett | Diego Suazo | Patrick Tee |
| Vicki Elder | Steve & Jackie Hymers | Thomas Bell | Bridget Bauer | Lowell Beilsmith |
| Steven Hardy | Bennie Houser | Faith Smith | Timothy Adkins | Wilbur Evrard |
| Jeffery Karry | Gordon Holway | Danny Kunkel | Beverly Hall | Darol Kubacz |
| Gilbert Portillo | Kenneth Rollins | Paul Winger | Bruce Emeson | Christopher Rose |
| Joseph Strifler | Dennis Jett | Cullen Child | Paul Morrison | |
| George Fox | Leonard Smith Sr | Thomas Collins | Jeffrey Odom | |
| Kevin Finnegan | Thomas Martin | Carl Kelly | John Gallegos | |
| David Souther | Alexander Bocz | John Cerna | Larry Everett | |
| Leonard Carter | Rudy Villanneal | Gary Campbell | Randolph Wright | |
| James Huffstidler | David Jean Rodocker Jr | Edward Taylor | Carl Benda | |
| Ronald Dufresne | Harry Bell | Jacob Brookins | Peter Yampieri | |
| SheriLynn Cavaliere | Leon Knox | Carl Benda Jr. | Cheryl Henson | |
| Mark Ippolito | Raymond DeWolf | Perry Dahlgren | Derrell Austin | |
| Samantha Shank | Thomas Otte | Jesus Olivas | James Farnsworth | |
| Robert Wiora | Ken Hart, Jr | Lawrence Styden | Louis Hoel Sr. | |
| | | George Clay | Amy Rocker | |



CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

1998 Ford Econoline 150 Van Cranberry Red, Excellent condition, 30K original miles, sliding passenger door. Both driver and passenger seats can be removed (Independent lock downs) Passenger side space in the couch area with tie downs. Drop floor/ New Tires/A/C works. The lift is a UVL –Under Vehicle Lift. Original Owners maintenance record. This is a must see vehicle. **\$15,000 OBO**. Call the APVA office for an appointment to see this vehicle. **602-244-9138 or 1800-795-3582**

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Prescott, Arizona

Completely Accessible Cedar 3bdr/2bath Home designed and built for paraplegic. Roll-in shower, 100% Accessible Kitchen, Hardwood floors, Vaulted Ceilings, **Views**, located in the cool pines of Northern Arizona next to the National Forest.

See

www.2940wcrestview.com