



# Paralyzed Veterans of America

Northwest Chapter



## 2019 Annual Report

*The Moving Wall*

# President's Message



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019 was on balance a good year for NWPVA. We lost some long time members who contributed a great deal to this organization, Chuck Karczewski, Gary Lieberg, and others. But at the same time other new members came and older members stepped up to assume vacant leadership positions. Frequently many of us Officers and Board members have long extended periods of absence due to our catastrophic conditions, but we have been fortunate that the void is always filled with our Chapter members that have a variety of experience in Chapter Affairs.

As you read our Annual Report you will find a highlight this year in the Fundraising Report that we received a large donation from a late members' family. We immediately set out to resolve one of the recommendations from the 2018 PVA SCI Site Visit and that was to purchase a 5 disabled passenger Dodge Promaster 3500 for SCI/D Recreation programs. We also invested into a spectacular Annual Banquet that brought almost 100 of us together to celebrate the successes of our outstanding contributors to our success. Here is the list of awardees:

- Individual Lifetime Veteran Service Award-Ms. Heidi Audette, WDVA
- Corporate Lifetime Veteran Service Award-Absolute Mobility
- Toby Olson Advocacy Award-Director "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos, WDVA
- Glenn Galbreath Legislative Award-Mayor Jimmy Matta, City of Burien
- Brent Gardenia Volunteer Award-Mr. Skyler King, NWPVA
- Speedy Non-Member Award-Dr. Lleana Howard, VAPSHCS
- Speedy Member Award-Mr. Fred Margiotta, NWPVA
- Presidents Award-Mr. Matthew Mickunas, NWPVA

Starting January 1, 2020, eligible Veterans and caregivers can use commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online. Find out if you're eligible and what this access means for you in the New Year!

From all of us at NWPVA, we wish you a Healthy New Year.



# 2019 Accomplishments

## Fundraising

**W**e continue to enjoy the generosity of our donors like Costco and their employees, Seattle Foundation, Absolute Mobility and Kersey Mobility (who also alternate sponsoring our spinal cord injury unit pizza parties), Seattle Police Employees Charity Fund, OthersFirst, and scores of individuals who make small and large donations.

Our partnership with PVA through the *G.I.V.E.* and *Wheels Helping Warriors* programs are fundraising all year long. Our success in fundraising reflects the positive difference we make in the lives of others that enable NWPVA to maintain an excellent reputation for being a good steward of donations to support our programs.

## Chapter Administration

**N**WPVA's Chapter Office maintains its weekday operation from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM (PST) in our own building and rent space to other organizations that share our common values, like the Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter and Disabled Americans Have Rights Too (DAHRT). We continue to be in full compliance with federal, state and local reporting requirements and all reports are available for public inspection by request at the Chapter Office, and continue to be in Good Standing with PVA.

This was our last year to collect medical equipment to give back out to the public as we will no longer have the space to store the equipment. We will be building a three lane competition air rifle range in that warehouse for our membership to practice for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. It was a great program that will be missed.

We have plans to update our chapter parking lot with new asphalt sealing and striping this coming summer. The chapter building will receive a new coat of paint too along with some other necessary maintenance.

We also sponsor a downtown Burien merchant's Halloween *Trick or Treat (Boo In Burien!)* event that brings hundreds of children and their families to the Chapter Office to celebrate community.

## Communication

**O**ur Chapter Newsletter, the *Northwest Outpost* is published bimonthly and printed in-house. More than 600 copies are mailed out to members and other interested parties after each printing. Our newly revised website, [www.nwpva.org](http://www.nwpva.org) is another valued source of information for the public and members alike and is updated monthly. We utilize our newsletter, website and calendar to communicate what is happening with the NWPVA to our members. The chapter has hosted board meetings monthly via an 800 call in line for Directors and Members hospitalized or ill who cannot attend the meeting in person. Finally, our *Annual Report* provides transparency of our operations and we are proud to provide a copy to our community partners and donors to show them how they help us to help others.

This year Acting Secretary, Skip Dreps, in absence of our late Secretary Gary Lieberg, became Secretary. We hope to continue recording the Chapter Board and General Membership meetings Minutes to provide a more complete correspondence record for the archives.

# National Service Office

**F**rom the National Service Officer's perspective, 2019 was an exciting year bringing many challenges with it. Lance Morgan left employment with PVA in January for personal reasons. Secondly, we had to learn about the new Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) that went into effect on February 14, 2019 changing the appeals process and how appeals are handled. The implementation of the Mission Act in June 2019 expanding Veteran Community Care. And finally, Jerrell Briscoe was hired as a National Service Officer Candidate and has been with us since September.

Our productivity numbers did decline some in 2019 compared with 2018, we were still able to increase the number of POAs we took in 2019. However, the total number of clients that were represented declined by 16 to 1045 total POAs. We conducted over 4,200 client contacts through phone or mail correspondence, including 516 personal interviews at bedside, in the Clinics or in the office. We handled almost 800 claims resulting in \$8.08 million dollars being awarded to our clientele by the VA. While this is a decline from the previous year, it is still pretty good numbers especially considering one office was short 1 staff member for a majority of the year. We continue to attend the ALS Clinics at the American Lake and Seattle campuses. We are looking at ways of increasing our presence at the MS Clinics and other ways to increase our outreach efforts and opportunities in 2020.

We are looking forward to challenges 2020 will bring and being even more productive than previously as the offices continue to work together supporting each other while representing the best interests of our clientele, the Chapter and the National Organization.

## Liaison

**T**he Chapter continues to enjoy an active partnership with VA Puget Sound Healthcare System (VAPSHCS) and the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). Our liaisons work with our PVA Service Officers to improve spinal cord injury and disease care at VA Puget Sound Seattle and American lake campuses. They have a scheduled monthly meeting with the Spinal Cord Injury Director to raise issues and concerns from our members.

We continue to support requests for funding for equipment and education as well as providing pizza parties following our Chapter meetings once a month. Our catered Holiday Party at the Spinal Cord Injury Unit and Annual Picnic are always a success and we continue to provide the source of inspiration that keeps the Spinal Cord Injury Unit motivated: coffee!

Our volunteer liaison program extends to WDVA's nursing homes where we have a liaison that is an active advocate for disabled recreation to include fly fishing and various activities.

We were also pleased to appoint Weldon Lee as our primary VAVS representative and Andrew Bechtle as our alternate. Andrew as well as Fred Magiotta are full time VAVS volunteers in VAPSHCS and Spokane VA respectively. Brent King is our appointed VAVS representative at the Spokane VA.



## Sports & Recreation

Our membership continues to be involved in many sports and recreation opportunities throughout the Northwest. We are involved in adaptive golf, curling, hunting, fishing, hand cycling, sled hockey and wheelchair basketball.

We are proud this year to send novice and returning members to the National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. We are dedicated to keeping our membership active and healthy!

# Membership

**M**embership continues to be stable. We have 166 service connected members and 209 non -service connected members. We will continue to increase our membership through our outreach through our service programs.

We remember the passing of two of NWPVA's distinguished members, Chuck Karczewski and Gary Lieberg. Chuck was our Past President and National Director before moving to the Tampa area. Gary Lieberg was our Chapter Secretary for several years. We will miss them both as we will remember all of our members who are no longer with us.

# Advocacy/Legislation

**T**his year, like decades before, our Chapter has sent a delegation of members to PVA's Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in Washington, DC. They spend a week fine tuning their presentations to our Washington, Alaska, and Montana congressional delegations. We normally send four members to cover 18 congressional offices in two days. They put miles onto hours traveling the Hill between House and Senate appointments. Our delegation, together with PVA and all the other chapters, and veterans service organizations that contribute to the *Independent Budget (IB)* have exceeded their goals for the 5th straight year. Although the funding priorities have been different and at times divergent, the VA budget has increased beyond our expectations. More details can be found on our website, but it has been a very good year for federal veterans benefits. Help us make it better by responding to the request to send letters to your representatives.

In Washington State, we advocated for legislation to standardize telemedicine licensing, and SB 5386 was signed into law. Here is what we advocated for to improve our health care for everyone:

*«More telemedicine services could be effectively delivered if more practitioners better understood the basics of delivering safe care through telemedicine. There is potential for growth in telemedicine services and delivery and this bill gets all practitioners on the same page with respect to best practices, laws, and requirements for safe and effective telemedicine delivery. This training that is flexible for health care providers and does not put additional requirements on either the Department of Health or the Medical Commission. Telemedicine is important and benefits Washington's citizens.*

*There is a federal prohibition restricting states from imposing any criteria about telehealth on federal health care providers because it crosses state lines. Ninety percent of health care providers need this certification to be able to practice telehealth and it needs to be part of federal health care providers' licenses to practice. There should be reciprocity so that people are not taking the same training twice. Telehealth should not be the primary means to deliver notice of a terminal condition to a patient. The federal telehealth and telemedicine guidelines should be used".*



Our next three objectives at the state level are: disabled parking placards for re-cal, review, and re-issue disabled privileges; eliminate VA Special Adapted Housing and HISA Grants from property evaluations to reduce homeowners taxes; and promote new National Suicide Hotline (988) as VA transitions from 1-800-232-TALK.

*Access to the Skies* will continue to be promoted at the National and Regional/Local level as a high priority as continued advocacy evolves into legislation.



## Financial Statement

<u>Assets</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 17,412	\$ 31,551
Short-Term Investments: Bonds & Money Market	396,546	326,230
Supplies Inventory	1,537	1,590
Property & Equipment-Net of Depreciation	<u>234,355</u>	<u>242,132</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 649,850</u>	<u>\$ 601,503</u>
<u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u>		
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Accounts Payable	-	-
Funds Held in Trust	6,165	6,165
Payroll Tax Liabilities	155	142
Rent Deposits	<u>1,650</u>	<u>1,650</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>7,970</u>	<u>7,957</u>
<u>Net Assets</u>		
Unrestricted	<u>641,880</u>	<u>593,546</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>641,880</u>	<u>593,546</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 649,850</u>	<u>\$ 601,503</u>
<u>Unrestricted Net Assets</u>		
<u>Support</u>		
Contributions	\$ 212,484	\$ 63,776
Investment Income	7,324	1,359
PVA Grant	142,290	154,148
Lease Income	14,130	15,180
Fund Raising-Newsletter Advertising	200	-
Sports Shooting Entry Fees	-	-
Total Unrestricted Support	<u>376,428</u>	<u>234,463</u>
<u>Expenses</u>		
<u>Program Services</u>		
Membership and Benefits	98,307	100,075
Public Affairs	111,392	69,044
Geo. B. Turner Research & Education	<u>59,631</u>	<u>26,769</u>
Total Program Services	<u>269,330</u>	<u>195,888</u>
<u>Support Services</u>		
General & Administrative	35,103	30,330
Fund Raising	<u>23,661</u>	<u>16,638</u>
Total Support Services	<u>58,764</u>	<u>46,968</u>
Total Expenses	<u>328,094</u>	<u>242,856</u>
(Decrease) Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	48,334	(8,393)
Unrestricted Net Assets-Beginning	<u>593,546</u>	<u>601,939</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets-Ending	<u>\$ 641,880</u>	<u>\$ 593,546</u>



### **Senior National Service Officer**

#### **Michael Killen**

Henry M. Jackson Federal Bldg.  
915 Second Avenue  
Room 1054  
Seattle, WA 98174  
206-341-8210  
800-795-3576

### **Veterans' Health & Benefits Specialist**

#### **Maria Rigolo**

206-768-5415 (VA Hospital)  
206-220-6136 (Fax)

## **NWPVA Officers FY 2019**

President-Robert Brush  
Vice President-Thomas Bungert  
Secretary-Skip Dreps  
Treasurer-Aaron Hastings  
Past President &  
National Director-Michael Partridge

## **NWPVA Board of Directors**

Mike Partridge, Joe Sapienza,  
Russ Norris, Terry Chenoweth,  
Weldon Lee, & Andrew Bechtle,  
Fred Margiotta, Robert Clinton,  
Matthew Mickunas

## **NWPVA Appointees**

Sports Director-Russ Norris  
Fundraising Chairman-  
Brent King  
Membership & Advocacy Director -  
Tom Bungert  
Outpost Editor-Lisa Lawrence  
Legislative Director-  
Michael Partridge  
Seattle VA Hospital Liaison-  
Robert Brush

## **Staff**

Executive Director-Brent King  
Office Manager-Lisa Lawrence

## **Our Mission**

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

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

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

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

*The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) a member chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America accomplishes it's mission by coordinated efforts through programs that:*

- *Provide opportunities for health promotion, recreation, employment, sports and recreation, service and camaraderie for paralyzed veterans;*
- *Elevate society's information level about the attitudinal, physical and legal barriers that confront persons with disabilities in order to influence the removal of those barriers;*
- *Advocate for and monitor the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care benefits and service;*
- *Cooperate with and seek the support of other groups and individuals that share NWPVA's objective;*
- *Educate the public with the current and ongoing needs and current and past contributions of America's veterans.*

## **Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America**

616 SW 152nd Street, Suite B  
Burien, WA 98166  
206-241-1843  
1-800-336-9782

Fax: 206-433-0749

E-mail: [pvachnw@mindspring.com](mailto:pvachnw@mindspring.com)

Web site: [www.nwpva.org](http://www.nwpva.org)