



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Keystone Chapter

THE PARASCOPE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KEYSTONE CHAPTER
OF THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
VOLUME XXII, ISSUE 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

This issue contains the Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023 starting after page 7

Presentations made in Poster & Poem Contest

Awards for five of the six Poster and Poem Contest winners were made at their schools in December 2023.

Two of the six winners were in third grade at the Hopewell Elementary School in the Hopewell Area School District in Beaver County, Pa. In the top photo, Keystone PVA officer Bill Jakovac (center) delivered the awards to recipients Lucy Olson (holding award plaque at left, with her parents) and Gracey Dunning (at right, with plaque and her mother).

In the bottom photo, Chartiers Valley Intermediate School fifth-grader Ava Bauer reads her winning poem in the 5th-6th grade poem division to her fellow students and teachers. Chartiers Valley School District is in Allegheny County, Pa.

More on page 2



The next Membership Meeting will be on Saturday, 10 February 2024! Details on back page

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Keystone Chapter

Chapter founded 1960

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Mark O. Rosensteel

Vice President

Sean M. Ferry

Secretary

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Agnes Strang

National Director

William D. Jakovac

National Service Officers

See page 10

Executive Director

Joseph W. Dornbrock

Membership and Projects Coordinator

Emma R. Goldstein

Bookkeeper

Nancy F. Campbell

Annual independent audit
conducted by

Kimberly Y. Donovan, CPA

You can contribute to SCI research

As the Keystone Chapter's Advocacy Director, I am pleased to let you know about new advocacy and educational opportunities available to you as a Keystone PVA member.

In October 2023, Cheryl Vines, Director of Research and Education at PVA National and Lisa Elijah, PVA's Grassroots Advocacy Manager, published a webinar entitled "Research is the Foundation of Successful Advocacy." The webinar is available to view on PVA's website at pva.org/research-resources/disability-rights-advocacy/webinars/.

During the webinar, we are introduced to the North American Spinal Cord Injury Consortium and a new educational program, the NASCIC "SCI Research Advocacy Course." The course is comprised of 12 modules, covering a range of topics including research advocacy, SCI biology, neuroprotection, neuroplasticity, and many others. The course takes approximately six hours to complete and can be found on the NASCIC website: nascic.org.

The purpose of the course is to familiarize you with the issues that SCI research is addressing, and to better prepare you if you wish to participate in that research.

The course is available to you, your caregivers, and other interested individuals free of charge. **You can register using the information on the next page.**

I expect to complete the course soon. Hopefully, I will have additional information to share in time for the next newsletter! In the meantime, if you have any questions, you can contact me:

Peter Townsend, Advocacy Director, pktownsend@hotmail.com

Chapter establishes support group—all members and caregivers invited!

Keystone PVA has established a "support group" meeting via Zoom every fourth Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. These meetings have grown into a forum for members' challenges and issues. National Service Officers attend to answer your questions. We send out an email with the contact info to all members with email. Join us monthly!

More Poster and Poem awards presentations

Another school had two award winners, Belle Vernon Middle School in the Belle Vernon Area School in Belle Vernon, Fayette County, Pa. In the photo, Bill Jakovac is with two eighth-graders: Brooklyn Steeber, who took the award for her poem in the 7th-8th grade division, and Grant Einodshofer, who was recognized for the best poem overall.

Awards Summary:

1st-2nd grade poster: **Willow Kurek**, 2nd grade, Hutchinson Elementary, Laurel Highlands S.D., Uniontown, Pa.

3rd-4th grade poster: **Gracey Dunning**, 3rd grade, Hopewell Elementary, Hopewell Area S.D., Hopewell, Pa.

Best poster overall: **Lucy Olson**, 3rd grade, Hopewell Elementary.

5th-6th grade poem: **Ava Bauer**, 5th grade, Chartiers Valley Intermediate, Chartiers Valley S.D., Scott Township, Pa.

7th-8th grade poem: **Brooklyn Steeber**, 8th grade, Belle Vernon Middle, Belle Vernon Area S.D., Belle Vernon, Pa.

Best poem overall: **Grant Einodshofer**, 8th grade, Belle Vernon Middle.



The award to Willow Kurek will be presented later in 2024.



NASCIC
SCI RESEARCH
ADVOCACY COURSE

Dissemination Partner :



Register for free today for the SCI Research Advocacy Course to increase your knowledge about spinal cord injury research, the research & development process, and how to have meaningful engagement and partnerships with the SCI community.



About the Course

The North American Spinal Cord Injury Consortium (NASCIC) has developed a free online educational course to increase knowledge of the research process so that individuals with SCI and caregivers feel prepared to serve as research advocates and that SCI researchers, healthcare providers and industry stakeholders are better able to effectively partner with the SCI community.

The SCI Research Advocacy Course includes input from leading clinicians and researchers, as well as the guidance of a large community of people with SCI lived experience.

This is a program that was created by the community, for the empowerment of the community.

COURSE FEATURES :

- ✓ 12 COURSE MODULES
- ✓ MODULE QUIZZES
- ✓ GLOSSARY OF TERMS
- ✓ SUPPLEMENTARY LEARNING MATERIALS



*Scan to
get started!*



North American
Spinal Cord Injury
— Consortium —



For more information please contact Barry Munro (bmunro@csro.com)



Sports and Recreation Report Dane Smith, Sports Director

Fishing and hunting reports are by Tom Strang, Associate Sports Director. The bowling results are from Bill Jakovac. Dane and Mark Rosensteel coordinate the chapter's participation in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Mark also reports on shooting sports. David Gifford submits information on handcycling.

Adaptive Air Rifle Clinic and Competition set for 23, 24 March

The annual Adaptive Air Rifle Clinic and Competition will be held in March 2024 on the weekend of the 23rd and 24th, again at the Encompass Health rehabilitation hospital, 320 Guys Run Road, Pittsburgh PA 15238. This is in Indiana Township, Allegheny County, about 4 miles from the Pennsylvania Turnpike exchange in Harmarville.

The event is primarily organized by Chad Evans, who is a recreation therapist at the Heinz Campus of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. Also involved in organizing the event are this chapter, the HOPE Network, and Encompass Healthcare.

The flyer on the opposite page provides all of the information you need to participate. Be sure to contact organizer Chad Evans to reserve your place ASAP.

For the second year, financial support for this event is being provided by Altamira, Ltd., a Pittsburgh-based firm that supplies mobility and adaptive equipment. All of the organizers, especially the Keystone chapter, which has picked up all of the expenses in the past, appreciate the generous sponsorship!

Reimbursement for travel expenses should be sought ASAP.

Bowling league invites members to join them in Erie in February

Keystone Paralyzed Veterans' small but eager troupe of bowlers invites members to join them in Erie for the 20th Annual Hometown Heroes Bowling Tournament on Sunday, 25 February 2024.

The registration form is available from the chapter office.

Bill Jakovac, who regularly bowls and provides the scoring reports for this newsletter, is a regular participant in the Erie event and calls it "a fun time for all." Other members of the Keystone PVA bowling league—Mark

Rosensteel, Sean Ferry, John Kellner and new league member Bill Jackson—plan to make the trip this year.

The deadline is past for seeking chapter underwriting of the membership fee and mileage of a personal vehicle from home to Erie and back, and one night's lodging in or around Erie, for this event. The chapter needs 45 days to make sure that a funding request is properly reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. Keep this in mind if you wish support for the Air Rifle Clinic or any other chapter recreation activity.

2023-24 season Keystone PVA bowling scores

	High Game	High Series	High Average	Strikes	Games	Average
Sean Ferry	172	462	154	18	18	127
Bill Jackson	147	429	143	9	3	143
Bill Jakovac	133	367	122	13	15	105
John Kellner	182	475	159	126	84	140
Mark Rosensteel	152	442	149	4	3	147

*Reported as of December 2023.
Bowling year: 01 Oct-30 Sep*



We welcome Erie resident Bill Jackson to the Keystone PVA bowling league!

Life members can bowl anytime from any bowling alley close to home.

The Keystone chapter will reimburse up to three games per week.

Contact Mark Rosensteel (724-875-1086) or Bill Jakovac (412-916-9261) or the office for details.

ADAPTIVE AIR RIFLE CLINIC AND COMPETITION



Instructional Clinic:
March 23, 2024
Equipment and lunch provided.

Competition:
March 24, 2024
Air rifle 3-position competition.
No fee. Includes awards banquet.

**BEGINNERS
WELCOME!**

Reserve your spot
today, contact:

Chad Evans
412-822-2123
chad.evans2@va.gov

Encompass Health Harmarville Rehabilitation Hospital
320 Guys Run Road | Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Sponsored by
Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America and Hope Network

Funded in part by VA. Opinions, findings and conclusions of the Hope Network, Paralyzed Veterans of America and other partner organizations do not necessary reflect those of VA. VA does not expressly or impliedly prefer, sanction, or endorse any outside entity, to include the Hope Network or Paralyzed Veterans of America.

VA



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Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

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Keystone Chapter Health and Recreation Points System

To be eligible for chapter sponsorship to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and other recreational programs, a member may earn points by participating in these activities. Sponsorship by the chapter requires 12 points per EACH event.

Attendance at a Keystone PVA membership meeting	3 points
Attendance at a Keystone PVA membership activity, <i>e.g., Easter Bag distribution, Fish for Fun, Kennywood Picnic, Annual Awards Banquet</i>	2 points
Return SCI Survey following Annual SCI Appointment	2 points
Volunteer at a V.A. Hospital (4 hours or more)	2 points
Volunteer for Keystone PVA (4 hours or more)	2 points
Work out at V.A. or Rehab center with coach or therapist	1 point
Participate in a Keystone PVA sponsored sports or recreational activity, <i>e.g., bowling, fishing, hunting, trapshoot, etc.</i>	1 point
Sign up a regular voting member	2 points
Represent Keystone PVA at community functions, <i>e.g., Sharing and Caring, Soldiers & Sailors, United Cerebral Palsy, Veteran Support Groups</i>	2 points
Ride, walk or roll in a Veterans Day Parade	3 points

- ☛ Members are required to attend at least one Membership Meeting prior to attending a sponsored event.
- ☛ To receive credit for mileage, volunteer time & points, member MUST forward a Time Sheet—Volunteer Program Report (formerly titled the “Keystone PVA Volunteer Expense Voucher”) and an After Action Report to the chapter office by the close of business on the 7th day of the following month. If the office is closed on the 7th, expense vouchers are due by the close of business the next working day.
- ☛ All volunteers at the VA Medical Centers must complete volunteer training and receive a volunteer ID card. The volunteer hours MUST be in the name of PVA. Volunteer is responsible for forwarding the monthly VA Volunteer by Organization Report (VS26) to the chapter office by the end of the following month to receive travel expenses.

For more information on chapter programs, refer to Operations Manual Section 8, which you may request from the chapter office.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

- ☛ All receipts submitted for reimbursement must be dated within the Chapter’s current fiscal year, 01 October—30 September.
- ☛ The Chapter has an annual picnic at Kennywood Amusement Park and an Annual Awards Banquet.
- ☛ Keystone PVA will reimburse voting members for their annual **resident hunting license**, with a limit of one (1) Antlerless Deer License annually. Member must send a copy of all licenses and a receipt to obtain reimbursement. The cost of a **resident fishing license** will be reimbursed. Members may also be reimbursed for their membership dues for sports club memberships.
- ☛ **Member Recreation Reimbursement Fund.** Keystone PVA will reimburse voting members up to \$100 for attending any recreational event one time during the fiscal year or until the fund is depleted. Member must send receipts within 30 days of the event to the chapter office including a short description of the outing; good photos appreciated. This benefit is intended for members who do not take advantage of reimbursements and chapter payments for hunting and fishing licenses, or participation in recreational programs such as the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.
- ☛ **Fitness club membership.** The Chapter will reimburse members quarterly for memberships in nonprofit or for-profit organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Planet Fitness or LA Fitness up to \$10 monthly or \$30 quarterly.
- ☛ **Weekly bowling league** available to members as a recreational activity and to practice for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG). Scores are in the newsletter and awards will be presented at the Chapter annual banquet.
- ☛ Reimbursement for hunting, shooting and fishing programs that Keystone PVA supports or sponsors.
- ☛ (Currently, this rule remains suspended.) Members that accumulate 12 points or more by attending membership meetings, attending Chapter functions, volunteering at VA medical centers, etc., qualify to participate in the Keystone PVA Sports and Recreation Program.
- ☛ All program expenses must be approved by the Keystone PVA Board of Directors.

The Keystone PVA Board of Directors, Fiscal Year 2023



The 2023 Board of Directors included these paralyzed veterans pictured here.

Left: President Mark Rosensteel.

Top row, left to right: Vice President Bill Lightner, Secretary Dane Smith, Treasurer Bill Jakovac, and Joseph Dunn.

Bottom row, left to right: Sean Ferry, Chris Fidler, David Gifford, and Tom Strang.

Contact information for the 2024 Board of Directors

To provide for easy communication with members of the Board, the current (FY 2024) officers and directors are providing home telephone numbers. They ask that people respect the opportunity and first try to reach them through the Chapter office.

Mark O. Rosensteel, President
Apollo, Pennsylvania
phone 724-478-4805

Sean M. Ferry, Vice President
Erie, Pennsylvania
phone 814-790-0474

Dane R. Smith, Secretary
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
phone 412-512-6295

William D. Jakovac, Treasurer
Allison Park, Pennsylvania
phone 412-487-2422

Joseph A. Dunn
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
phone 717-575-4992

Christopher A. Fidler Sr.
Jonestown, Pennsylvania
phone 717-813-2219

William D. Lightner
Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania
phone 814-932-5269

Tom Strang
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania
phone 724-350-7955

Peter K. Townsend Jr.
Meshoppen, Pennsylvania
phone 570-833-5623

VA Voluntary Service representatives as of 30 September 2023

James E. Van Zandt VAMC, Altoona
William D. Lightner, representative

Butler VAMC
John Kellner, representative

Erie VAMC
John Larese, representative
Rexford Nichols, deputy
Sean Ferry, deputy

Lebanon VAMC
Chris Fidler, representative

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Tom Strang, representative

Wilkes-Barre VAMC
Peter Townsend, representative

How do chapter members become Board members?

They get elected, each for a three-year term starting on 01 October each year. Most candidates self-nominate by submitting a candidate statement (saying why he or she wants to be a Board member), a passport-style photo of her or himself, and a letter to the chapter membership officer saying that he or she wishes to become a candidate. Submission deadline is a drop-dead 15 June of each year.

President's Report Mark O. Rosensteel

I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023, reflecting the progress and achievements of our chapter. As president, it is gratifying to report on our endeavors in advocating for the health care and healthy activity of all veterans, especially paralyzed veterans, whose military service was devoted to preserving the freedoms we cherish. Here are highlights from the year beginning on 01 October 2022 and ending 30 September 2023:

Outreach Activities

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we successfully resumed almost all face-to-face activities. Notable among these was the delivery of "Easter" bags of personal needs items to fellow hospitalized veterans across various VA medical facilities in Pennsylvania, including Altoona, Butler, Erie, Lebanon, and Pittsburgh, and including the Commonwealth's Southwestern Veterans Center in Pittsburgh. We endeavored to make our fellow veterans feel valued, to reinforce that they are not forgotten.

Legislation and Advocacy

Our collaboration with the National PVA on promoting important legislation has not only benefited veterans who have spinal cord injury or disease (SCI/D) but has also positively impacted the broader disabled community.

Sports and Recreation

- ▶ We co-sponsored the resumption of the Air Rifle Clinic and Competition, a weekend event for disabled veterans held in the Pittsburgh region.
- ▶ Several of our members traveled to Ohio to compete in the Buckeye Wheelchair Games.

- ▶ We hosted two successful bass tournaments in West Brownsville, fostering a sense of camaraderie and achievement among participants.
- ▶ In July, four of our members traveled to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Portland, Oregon, successfully competing and winning in several athletic event categories.
- ▶ Our annual Kennywood Park picnic also took place in July for about 75 members and their families.

Annual Banquet

The October annual banquet surpassed expectations, even considering the additional challenges posed by Covid restrictions. New directors for the Board were elected and sworn in for their three-year terms, strengthening our leadership.

Veterans Day activities

Our chapter proudly entered groups of members in Veterans Day Parades in Erie and Pittsburgh, joining our larger community of veterans, marching down these cities major boulevards, accepting the recognition of the public that turned out to watch. Many of our members participated in other activities in their own regions of Pennsylvania on 11 November.

I extend my gratitude to all members for their unwavering support, dedication, and enthusiasm through the year. Together, we have overcome obstacles and achieved significant milestones.

Looking forward to 2024, I am confident that, with the commitment and involvement of our members and volunteers, our chapter will continue to thrive and make a positive impact on the health and activity of our own paralyzed veterans and the much larger community of vets.



Keystone Chapter President **Mark Rosensteel** (at right in photo) administered the oath of office to re-elected Board member **Sean Ferry** (at left in photo) and newly-elected Board member **Peter Townsend** (center) at the Annual Awards Banquet in October 2023, which also celebrated the accomplishments of chapter members in the just-ended fiscal 2023.

FIVE FACTS you ought to know about Paralyzed Veterans

Fact One:

Paralyzed veterans help themselves.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life of paralyzed veterans by

- l Encouraging and supporting spinal cord injury and disease research;
- l Improving access to health care and other veterans' benefits;
- l Assisting in the expansion of opportunities in wheelchair sports and recreation; and
- l Advocating for the rights of disabled people, including the reduction and elimination of barriers to accessibility and mobility.

Fact Two:

Paralyzed Veterans of America and its chapters are NOT parts of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

We couldn't do our jobs if we were. A major part of our health care advocacy involves keeping tabs on how our fellow paralyzed veterans are being treated in VA hospitals and other medical facilities. We report, without undue influence from VA officials, about the care our members get—or sometimes don't get, and we work for better treatment.

Fact Three:

Paralyzed Veterans of America, its chapters and its partners provide strong guidance to Congress and the VA in writing the \$132.38 billion VHA budget.

In partnership with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), PVA and its chapters biennially write the **Independent Budget** (the IB), which Congress and the VA use as their guide for writing the budget for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Together, we have the expertise to effectively guide the VA and assist the Congress in appropriating the right funding for veterans' care. **Keystone PVA contributes to The IB** through its Hospital Visitation and Service Program, in which our own members

monitor the health care of our fellow veterans and report what they see, through the chapter, to the national PVA's national service officers, two of whom are posted in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia and Pittsburgh—see the NSO reports on page X. Then we personally visit our members of Congress to let them know how the taxpayers' dollars are being spent by the VA.

Fact Four:

PVA punches way above its weight class.

For a small veterans' service organization (VSO), we pack a powerful punch. Consider our dominant role in writing the Independent Budget (Fact Three): half of the IB's authors are from PVA. That budget doesn't just address the health care needs of paralyzed vets; it is a budget for ALL veterans who use the VA's medical centers and community health services.

And our advocacy to advance accessibility, mobility, and compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) helps the millions of Americans to live their lives more in the mainstream than ever before.

Though there are many organizations in the U.S. that try to help vets, **only 38 VSOs can legally represent veterans to the VA in order to get the benefits to which the vets are entitled, and PVA is one of them.** PVA's national service officers specialize in obtaining much-deserved benefits for vets and their survivors.

Fact Five:

Keystone PVA gets no tax dollars. None. Our chapter's small budget depends on some support from the national PVA, proceeds from the sale of goods by the American Thrift Center, and private donations.

Because Keystone PVA is a charity organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, and because we are approved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable, nonprofit organization, your donation is tax deductible on your federal tax return if you itemize.



(Left to right) Keystone PVA Legislative Director **Chris Fidler.**, Site Leader (for Wilkes-Barre) **Peter Townsend,** and President **Mark Rosensteel** prepared for Congressional office visits in March 2023 by attending the PVA Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in Arlington, Virginia. They and other Keystone chapter members meet monthly throughout the year with the Government Relations staff of the national PVA office and other chapters' members to plan advocacy for legislation important to veterans.

Treasurer's Report; Fundraising Report Bill Jakovac

Treasurer's report

Keystone PVA's Fiscal Year 2023 records and practices were inspected by Kimberly Y. Donovan, CPA. The auditor's opinion letter is located on page AR-10, followed by statement of activities and financial position.

I am responsible for the funds of the chapter, but our financial recording and reporting security is based on having four people involved with overlapping responsibilities: the treasurer, the president, the bookkeeper, and the executive director. All are involved in the financial accounting process in significant ways. All are encouraged and empowered to call attention to and investigate anything that seems amiss.

Though separately incorporated from the national Paralyzed Veterans of America, the national office rightly requires (as part of its financial support) that each chapter arranges for an annual independent audit, plus reports on programs and fundraising that the chapter does. The national PVA office of the chief financial officer has always been accessible, responsive and helpful.

An important part of our financial process is to acknowledge donations. Our thank-you letters, personally signed by the president and me, also serve as a record of donations for the donor's tax records, since all donations to support Keystone PVA programs are federal income tax-deductible for those who itemize.

Investments include certificates of deposit, money market funds, and equities. Most of our equity investments are managed by Robert W. Baird & Co., which acquired Pittsburgh-based Hefren-Tillotson in late 2022. Baird's approach to financial advice and planning is reasonably conservative, which is compatible with the chapter's needs. Our Baird account managers meet with our Board of Directors annually to review our investment status and strategy.

Fundraising report

American Thrift Center, whose store is in West Mifflin, Pa., collects donated second-hand clothing and household items for resale, and the chapter receives a percentage of the gross sales. The American Thrift Center continues to increase the number of its red collection boxes located in high visibility areas in southwestern Pennsylvania and increasingly northward. The chapter name and/or the national/chapter logo appear on all four sides of the boxes. American Thrift also provides replacement household items and clothing within its inventory for Keystone members who have suffered a catastrophic loss. They also provide a 50% discount to Keystone PVA members. The American Thrift Center is owned and operated by James V. Zeik, whom we thank for his commitment to the support of paralyzed veterans.

We also receive donations through "ammo" donation boxes placed in various locations where customers can deposit their change.

We are a participant in the United Way of Allegheny County and appreciate the support of donors through that program.

In Fiscal Year 2023, The Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America received no funding from local, state, or federal governments.

Charities are sometimes criticized for spending money on fundraising. To reach potential donors to ask for their support, money must be spent, or an active, willing and capable corps of volunteers must be recruited, trained, and engaged. Always be suspicious when you are told that "no or few funds were spent for fundraising." Except in rare cases where very few very large sums of money from few sources are committed to a project or cause, a lot of people willing to support a cause must be contacted at some significant cost. Then there are the costs of follow-up, accounting, reporting and other compliances. There is no free lunch.

We are pleased to recognize many individuals foundations, and other veterans service organizations who have provided support for the Keystone chapter's paralyzed veterans; please see the donors report starting on page AR-8.

Keystone PVA is most grateful to all of its donors. They allow us to focus more on our mission to serve veterans, less on the time needed to raise funds for it.

Sharing & Caring, etc.

Keystone PVA is one of 17 organizations of the Sharing & Caring Committee; I represent the chapter on it and I have recently become its chairperson. Sharing & Caring helps hospitalized veterans. For the four days following each Labor Day, we take hundreds of veterans from the area's VA medical centers and nursing/personal care homes out on the Gateway Clipper's *The Empress*. For three hours, these veterans are treated to a buffet lunch, entertainment, dance contests, and sightseeing on Pittsburgh's three rivers.

In other activities, I often staff an exhibit table at outreach events, and I help present awards at schools to winners and finalists of the PVA Poster and Essay Contest and recognize their teachers.

National PVA Board of Directors

The Paralyzed Veterans of America is governed by a Board of Directors (BOD) and an eight member Executive Committee. Each of the 33 chapters elects a member to represent them on this board as a National Director. The officers are elected annually by the BOD. Together, we set the direction, policies, and programs of PVA. Our actions must always be in the best interests of the PVA.

PVA holds three BOD meetings each year. These meetings always include reports from national elected officers and staff department heads. These set the stage for discussion and votes on business resolutions concerning programs, policies, and funding of PVA.

The Fall BOD meeting was held in Orlando, Florida, and I was joined by chapter Secretary Dane Smith.

The midwinter BOD meeting was held by teleconference.

At the Annual Convention, we meet to elect national officers, acknowledge organizations and people for their work and support of paralyzed veterans, and discuss/vote on resolutions that concern the operations of PVA. The FY23 convention was held in Omaha, Nebraska, and I attended.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Membership Tom Strang, Membership Officer

Members who have passed on to the Eternity Chapter

FY 2023 : 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023

All towns of residence are in Pennsylvania except where noted

- Edward H. Bosak, Erie, Air Force Veteran and 23 year member, on 23 October 2022.
- Kenneth R. Walters, Carlisle, Air Force veteran and 31 year member, on 01 November 2022.
- Robert C. Szoszorek, Pittsburgh, 9 year associate member, on 11 November 2022.
- James D. Simmons Jr., Charleroi, Navy veteran and 29 year member, on 20 January 2023.
- Douglas Dean Jr., Charleroi, Navy veteran and three year member, on 20 January 2023.
- Larry D. Parisi, Center Township, Army veteran and 1 year member, on 06 February 2023.
- William K. Schenker, Allison Park, Air Force veteran and 34 year member, on 27 February 2023.
- Paul R. Gray, Washington, Navy veteran and nine year member, on 10 March 2023.
- Thomas E. Mossellem, Scott Township, Air Force veteran and 3 year member, on 31 March 2023.
- John W. Fisher, Lititz, Air Force veteran and 19 year member, on 05 May 2023.
- John Schultz, Erie, 8 year associate member, on 05 May 2023.
- George A. Shumac, Ashville, Marine Corps veteran and 2 year member, on 08 July 2023.
- Paul N. Carruolo Woodbury New Jersey, Navy veteran and 40 year member, on 25 July 2023.

The following passings prior to FY2023 were reported during the last year:

- Dan P. McDonough, Leesburg Florida, Navy veteran and 11 year member, on 16 August 2016.
- Dale W. Kunkle, Indiana, Navy retiree and 26 year member, on 27 April 2019.
- Robert A. Mike, Lower Burrell, Army veteran and 26 year member, on 30 August 2020.
- Michael C. Filer, Grove City, Army veteran and 1 year member, on 28 December 2020.
- William H. Johnson, Lexington, Kentucky, Army veteran and 15 year member, on 06 August 2021.
- Donald E. Paden, Steubenville Ohio, Navy veteran and 25 year member, on 17 October 2021.
- Steven Price, Pittsburgh, Air Force veteran and 25 year member, on 16 November 2021.
- Alex J. Skupnik, Smithfield, Army veteran and 9 year member, on 21 January, 2022.

Military veterans who have a spinal cord injury or spinal cord disease, and who were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions are welcome to join the Paralyzed Veterans of America free of charge.

Direct benefits of membership include hospital liaison for in-patients and out-patients, representation to the Department of Veterans Affairs (the “VA”), discounted or no-charge recreational activities, and participation in the operation and governance of the organization. Membership programs are listed in detail in every issue of the chapter newsletter, The Parascope. All members receive The Parascope six times a year, and receive a copy of PN magazine from the national PVA each month.

Indirect benefits of membership, which may be more important to a member in the long run, include the work of the PVA and the Keystone PVA in advocacy, legislative affairs, and support for research. More members make the chapter more influential.

It is important for current members to keep the chapter informed of changes to addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers to keep in touch. And, as always, Keystone PVA’s membership lists will not be shared outside the PVA.

Keystone PVA also offers associate memberships to individuals who do not have a spinal cord injury or disease. The dues for associate membership are \$25.00 per year. Lifetime associate membership is available for a one-time fee of \$250.00.

Membership as of 30 September 2023	
Life members, service connected	144
Life members, non-service connected	<u>99</u>
Total life members:	243
Associate members, annual	18
Associate members, lifetime	<u>66</u>
Total associate members:	84
TOTAL CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP:	327

- Dennis A. Naugle, Altoona, Air Force veteran and 28 year member, on 27 February 2022.
- Paul S. Gatafski, Bethel Park, Marine Corps veteran and 11 year member, on 15 July 2022.
- William R. Lint, Derry, Army veteran and 25 year member, on 25 July 2022.

Hospital Visitation and Service report

Keystone PVA maintains good relationships with six VA medical centers, especially spinal cord injury (SCI) clinics, and other medical facilities, with an eye to insuring the best possible medical care for paralyzed veterans. Observations and concerns are passed along into the lines of authority that the chapter has, through the PVA's National Service Officers (NSOs) and through the Board of Directors, and through the National Director, to the national PVA office.

Also, our members maintain cordial relationships with VA staff so as to be helpful at appropriate times. They encourage the chapter to provide inpatient recreation support, such as funds for bingo prizes, and "Project Easter Bag," which provides inpatients with personal use items that are not provided by the VA.

Keystone PVA's "point people" at each VA medical center are known as "site leaders," who are also usually the chapter's VA Voluntary Service representatives. They, the NSOs assigned to Pennsylvania service offices, and the chapter leadership meet quarterly to share information and concerns and to decide if special coordinated action or communication is necessary for any issues that may arise. This enhances the chapter's ability to keep everyone "in the loop."

Site Leaders

Altoona: Bill Lightner, 814-932-5269, wlightner@gmail.com

Butler: John Kellner, 724-664-7016, lightning_rod5@hotmail.com

Erie: John Larese, 814-602-5417, ljohnlarese@aol.com, and Rex Nichols, 814-664-9013, rnichols12@verizon.net

Lebanon: Chris Fidler, 717-813-2219, teamfidler@aol.com

Pittsburgh: Contact the chapter office, 412-781-2474, keystoneparavets@comcast.net

Wilkes-Barre: Peter Townsend, 570-833-5623 (h) or 570-240-3493 (c), pktownsend@hotmail.com

National Service Officers (NSOs)

are direct employees of the national Paralyzed Veterans of America with offices in 61 American cities from which they serve members, especially in resolving claims, assisting with members' VA benefits, and monitoring health care. To be represented by an NSO for many of these services, a member needs to formally give the NSO the member's power of attorney. Contact the appropriate NSO closest to the member's residence.

National Service Office—Western Pennsylvania

Marissa Sabatucci, Secretary

Paralyzed Veterans of America

1000 Liberty Ave., Rm. 1602, **Pittsburgh** PA 15222

800-795-3629 office, toll free

412-395-6255 office, local

Fax: 412-395-6266

National Service Office—Eastern Pennsylvania

Joseph Weeks, Senior National Service Officer

Violet Graham, Senior Secretary

Paralyzed Veterans of America

5000 Wissahickon Avenue, **Philadelphia** PA 19144

800-795-3628 office, toll free

215-381-3057 office, local

Fax: 215-381-3468

During calendar year 2023, the Pittsburgh office added 35 new clients, 16 of whom are eligible for membership or already members. As a result of the claims we filed, our clients have been granted 3.3 million dollars total in monetary benefits; 98.5% of the awarded money went to M/MEs. Additional benefits of VA health care, medical and mobility equipment and home and vehicle modifications is not reflected in this number but has saved our veterans monetarily and aided them in maintaining an independent lifestyle.

Our office can be reached at 412-395-6255 or by emailing our administrative staff at MarissaS@pva.org.

Keystone PVA note: We bid a regretful farewell to Brent Madison, whose work as the Pittsburgh-based National Service Officer has been appreciated and roundly praised. We thank him for serving our paralyzed veterans and wish him well in the new opportunity that has come his way.

The Philadelphia Service Office provides assistance to any Veteran who requests it. Our clientele is comprised of members (M), those eligible for membership (ME), survivors, and nonmembers (NM).

We have added 72 new clients, 68 of whom are eligible for membership.

As a result of the claims we filed, we secured 8.1 million dollars in monetary benefits for our clients; 93 percent of the awarded money went to M/MEs.

This figure does not account for the monetary value we have saved our clients by ensuring VA provides them with quality & timely health care, needed durable medical equipment, and home/vehicle modifications allowing them to maintain an independent lifestyle.

Annual Benefits Increase: The following benefits and grants have increased since my last report. Here are the 2023-2024 valuations.

- Compensation increased by 8.7 percent
- Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) - \$117,014.
- Special Housing Adaptations (SHA)-\$23,444.
- Automobile Grant-\$25,603.02
- Single Clothing Allowance – \$ 999.51

If you have questions about your eligibility for these benefits, please contact us and we would be happy to explain the criteria to you. Feel free to contact our office.

Program reports, continued

Sports & Recreation

Dane R. Smith, Sports & Recreation Director

The mission of the Keystone PVA Sports and Recreation Program is to improve the quality of life of paralyzed veterans and other persons with disabilities. This is achieved by assisting with expansion of both the quality and quantity of opportunities in sports and recreation, especially with those activities which enhance lifetime health and fitness.

We have a program for members to use our sports and recreation travel fund to attend regional and national sports and recreation events, such as the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (held in Portland, Oregon in 2023) and the Buckeye Games held at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio.

Now and then organizations such as the Pittsburgh-Allegheny County Sports and Exhibition Authority, which owns and operates major sports and events venues in Pittsburgh, generously provide tickets for games and concerts, usually for seats in luxury suites, for our members on a last-minute, first-come first-served basis.

Our members may participate in track, field, road racing, weightlifting, swimming, trap shooting, air guns, hunting, fishing, hand cycling, bowling, billiards, quad rugby, basketball, scuba diving, power soccer, table tennis, slalom, bocce, and the list keeps growing. Our chapter offers a bowling league, a bass tournament, hunting, and our Kennywood Park picnic. The chapter will reimburse members for regular hunting and fishing licenses.

We have opened up more opportunities by working closer with the disabled groups in our area. In 2023 we provided assistance to the Pittsburgh Steelwheelers, which conducts a quad rugby tournament and a 5K walk/run/roll race. We also reminded our members of the opportunities at the national level in bass fishing, bowling, billiards, trap shooting and hand cycle racing.

The chapter especially encourages participation in:

Bowling ... Several members of Keystone PVA participate in bowling. Our chapter reimburses members for up to three games per week; we report scores in our newsletter and present prizes to the highest scorers at the Annual Awards Banquet.

Team Bass Tournament ... takes place twice a year, in June and September, on the Monongahela River at the marina of American Legion Post 940 in West Brownsville. Paralyzed veterans and boat captains compete in a day-long competition that concludes with prizes and a picnic.

Kennywood Park Picnic ... is a one-day event for members, their families and friends each summer. The chapter sponsors admission and dinner for our group. The event enables our members to enjoy the sights and sounds of an amusement park and share camaraderie with others. Many members bring children and grandchildren.

National Veterans Wheelchair Games ... are held in the summer in a different U. S. city each year. If a member is interested and can be cleared medically, the chapter will pick up the costs of travel to and from the event and for lodging there for the athlete and an attendant for up to seven days.

Volunteers

Agnes Strang, Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer hours for the 12 month period ending 30 September 2023 for non-VA service as tracked by the chapter and national PVA totaled 2,126. Twenty members and 17 volunteers contributed these hours in service.

The volunteers of Keystone PVA deserve a special thanks for their precious time and energy given with the aim of helping our veterans, and help they do. All volunteer time must be received in the Keystone PVA office by the 7th of each month so it can be submitted to the National PVA office in a timely manner.

Several of our volunteers have served with Keystone PVA many years. We continue to serve because of our commitment to our veterans. Volunteers are rewarded by the smiles, tears, and many warm hands we hold at the VA medical centers and nursing homes when they are open. On behalf of the Board of Directors and members, thank you for your time given to help others. We value your time and encourage our members' family, friends, and neighbors to also become involved by giving some time to help our veterans.

Volunteers are the hallmark of our organization!



Keystone PVA members in the Lebanon area produced bags of personal items for hospitalized veterans at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. (Left to right) **Anne Zimmerman, Constance Snavely, Joe Dunn, and Chris Fidler** participated in the chapter's "Project Easter Bag," which is organized in five VA medical centers in Pennsylvania.

Keystone PVA thanks you for your generosity

These people and institutions made **direct donations** to the Keystone PVA in our **fiscal year 2023 (01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023)**. We thank you for your generosity in contributing to the many works that support paralyzed veterans. We publish only names and communities of residence. Monetary donations are always acceptable and are preferred due to their flexibility in providing services. Because of space limitations and appropriateness to the mission of the Keystone PVA, not all nonmonetary donations can be accepted.

We strongly suggest that those who have gently-used home furnishings, clothing and shoes donate them to the American Thrift Center, a second-hand-goods store based in the Village Shopping Center, 1806 Homeville Road, West Mifflin PA 15122. Donations and sales there benefit the Keystone Chapter. For pickup of larger items in Allegheny County, Pa., and parts of surrounding counties, call the American Thrift Center at 412-469-9663. Or place clothing and shoes in one of over 800 red boxes in Western Pennsylvania, two samples of which are pictured on the next page.

All locations are communities or postal designations in Pennsylvania unless otherwise noted.

UNRESTRICTED DONATIONS

American Legion, Post 285, Waterford
American Legion, Post 978, Weedville
American Legion Riders, Monroeville
Veronica McDonough Anchors, Pittsburgh
John Bartlett, Seattle, Washington
Raymond Boea, Pittsburgh
Edward M. Casper, Mt. Lebanon
Donald and Phyllis Diller, Lancaster
Arthur Eime, Bath
Adam Flanagan, Glenshaw
Karen & Gary Gajdzik, Cranberry Twp, Butler County
George & Gail Goldberg, Warminster
Estate of Vera Karge
Eugene Klaber, Slippery Rock
L. Krishnamoorthy Foundation, Wilmington, Delaware
David & Michele Laurinaitis, Jamison
Luzerne Assembly of God Church, Wilkes-Barre
S. Gary Miller, Cape May Point, New Jersey
Mount Parnell Lions Club, St. Thomas
Robert & Sharon Moyer, Lancaster
Norman G. M'sadoques
Rosalie Murrer, Pittsburgh
Giap Nguyen, Manvel, Texas
Anna & Douglas Ohar, Pittsburgh
Others First, Rick Frazier, Rochester Hills, Michigan
PA to Go Advisory Panel
Ron Salomon, McDonald
Mary Schlichter, Birmingham, Alabama
Angela Summers, Clairton
Sharon Tripodi, Hazleton
Sam & Susan Weber, Coraopolis
YTS Wealth Management, Export

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In memory of Joshua Mikeasky
Noriko Mikeasky
In memory of James Riemer
Hartzell Family Trust, Butler
In memory of William K. Schenker
Robert Alcorn, Oakmont
Carol Allen, Champion
Frank Balesieri, Avalon
Marvin Balliet, Bethlehem
Savannah Barnett, Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Rick & Patrica Beggs, Greensburg

James & Janet Dean
Joseph & Nancy DiBucci, Pittsburgh
Janice Exler, Pittsburgh
Sandra Hobson, Dunwoody, Georgia
Anne Kiren, Trafford
Carol Kunic
David & Ellen Lavender
Donna & William Lennon
Antoinette & Richard Matessa, Columbus, Ohio
Eldon & Diane Moses, Wakefield, Massachusetts
William & Janet Narr, Bethel Park
Presbyterian Church of Pitcairn
Edwin Purviance, Pittsburgh
Norma Jean Schweibinz

RESTRICTED DONATIONS

In support of the Adapted Air Rifle Clinic and Competition: Altamira, Ltd. and Joe Kramer

*In support of the Team Bass Tournaments:
The Tom Landish Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation*

NON-CASH DONATIONS

Gloria Atherholt, Danville
Mrs. Atherholt makes colorful, often Pittsburgh Steelers-themed crocheted throws, which are given away as door prizes at the Annual Awards Banquet.

LOCATIONS of COUNTERTOP "AMMO" DONATION BOXES

American Fuel, Worthington
American Legion Post, Aspinwall
American Legion Post, White Oak
Beer and Beyond, Springdale
Best Feeds Garden Center, Ross Township
Captain Ron's Deli, Ashville
Castriota Metals, Pittsburgh
Dave's Country Meats, Valencia
Keystone Iron & Metal, Pittsburgh
King Lanes, Kittanning
Novotny's Grocery & Pizza, Worthington
Sharpsburg Borough Building, Sharpsburg
Thomas Toth, DMD, Ross Township
VFW Post 894, Natrona Heights
VFW Post 4315, Ashville
VFW Post 4843, Ford City



Donation boxes in Southwestern Pennsylvania

Most of the outdoor donation boxes that benefit the Keystone Paralyzed Veterans are red, and look like the example shown here. All are imprinted with “Paralyzed Veterans of America, Keystone Chapter,” and have the phone number of the American Thrift Center, which operates the boxes and its thrift store in West Mifflin, Pa., 412-469-9663. Keystone PVA is the sole charitable beneficiary of the American Thrift Center.



Keystone Paralyzed Veterans also places countertop donation boxes in businesses that generously provide counter space for their equally generous customers. A list of those businesses is at the bottom of page AR-8.

Thank you!

Communications

The Parascope

The chapter’s newsletter, The Parascope, remains the chapter’s main tool for communicating large quantities of information to our members, associate members, and volunteers. We also send it to all PVA chapters and the national PVA, as well as allied organizations and businesses. The Parascope provides regular reports on advocacy, legislation, sports and recreation, membership, chapter events, veterans’ benefits, other issues and other items in which the readers may have an interest.

During the peak of the pandemic, much of the production of the Parascope was via email. In late 2022, the printing, labeling, and mailing was outsourced to reduce the amount of time that staff and volunteers had to do this work, but all members with email also continue to receive The Parascope electronically. All content is produced by chapter staff and members. The chapter accepts some unsolicited photos, but due to quality or appropriateness issues, not all find their ways into publication.

E-mail, keystoneparavets@gmail.com

Web site, www.kpva.org

Our web site has been in the care of webmaster and member Bill Hoffman for about three years. He maintains it, adds information routinely, and often makes improvements to its functionality.

Videoconferencing

Keystone PVA was among the many people and organizations around the world pushed into using computer-based videoconferencing, and Keystone PVA was no exception. Our platform of choice was Zoom, though we successfully used other organizations’ video platforms. This moved all of our Board meetings into “Zoom rooms” and most of our Membership Meeting participants gathered that way. Limited in-person meetings were held, and when they were, they involved only a few people. But now we are able more effectively to bridge the gaps conveniently from Erie to Lebanon, from Pittsburgh to Wilkes-Barre. Hybrid meetings are now the most common type.

The “Five Facts Flyer”

The chapter continues to produce its “Five Facts You Ought to Know About Paralyzed Veterans” flyer, of which a shorter version appears on page 4. Our experience is that the public does not know much about the Paralyzed Veterans organization, and worse, has several misconceptions. We have found that communicating these facts — especially the ones that we are NOT a part of the VA and DO NOT get tax funding — generates important, positive support for our veterans and their needs. Even more importantly, we communicate that paralyzed veterans **themselves** do so much of the work of the organization. This fact is a hidden gem that needs to be more vigorously promoted.

Advocacy Report

The PVA conducts an Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in March of each year. In March 2023, PVA conducted the seminar in person in Arlington, Virginia for the first time since March 2020. Attendees from the Keystone Chapter are pictured at the bottom of page AR-3. Msrs. Fidler, Townsend and Rosensteel met with members of Congress from Pennsylvania and/or their staff specialists in their Capitol Hill offices. As usual, they focused on the high points of the Independent Budget, thanked the members for fully funding the Veterans Health Administration and a two-year rolling budget, and strongly recommended that Congress passes important pending legislation, especially for women’s health care, for adapted automobiles, and for caregiver support.

Keystone PVA leadership also engaged with local VA management through monthly virtual meetings. Actual in-person visitation was still limited due to coronavirus mitigation.

For many years the chapter has had ongoing relationships with the spinal cord injury teams, voluntary service offices, and management of five VA medical centers in Pennsylvania in Altoona, Butler, Erie, Lebanon, and Pittsburgh, and in 2022, added Wilkes-Barre. The list of our VA Voluntary Services representatives and deputies is on page AR-1.

Independent Auditor's Report and Financial Statements

The Keystone Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (Keystone PVA) engaged Kimberly Y. Donovan, CPA, to perform its Fiscal Year 2023 audit. The following opinion letter, Statement of Activities, and Statement of Financial Position are the highlights of the results of the FY 2023 audit. To see the complete audit, including supporting notes, contact Keystone PVA.

Kimberly Y. Donovan
Certified Public Accountant

771 Davis Road
Ellwood City, PA 16117
724-674-9882 cell
kimberlydonovancpa@hotmail.com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc. (a non-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of September 30, 2023, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

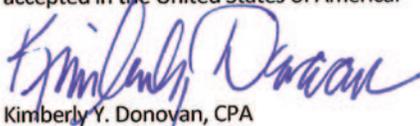
My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit includes performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, I express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc., as of September 30, 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.



Kimberly Y. Donovan, CPA
Ellwood City, PA
January 9, 2024

KEYSTONE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended September 30, 2023

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Operating Activities</u>			
National PVA Contributions	\$ 150,655	\$ -	\$ 150,655
Thrift Shop Fundraising, net	140,443	-	140,443
General Contributions	32,122	-	32,122
Pittsburgh Foundation Grants	33,156	-	33,156
Kennywood Picnic Donations	236	-	236
Banquet Donations	842	-	842
Membership dues	175	-	175
Newsletter Advertising	1,220	-	1,220
Ammo box donations	1,745	-	1,745
Shooting and Fishing Programs	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>
Total support and revenue before releases	361,594	-	361,594
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue and support	<u>361,594</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>361,594</u>
<u>Expenses</u>			
Program services:			
Membership and benefits	93,033	-	93,033
Public affairs	102,932	-	102,932
Research	<u>4,207</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,207</u>
Total program services	200,172	-	200,172
Support services:			
General and administration	50,902	-	50,902
Fundraising	<u>7,256</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,256</u>
Total support services	<u>58,158</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>58,158</u>
Total expenses	258,330	-	258,330
Change in net assets from operating activities	103,264	-	103,264
<u>Nonoperating Activities</u>			
Interest income	5,920	-	5,920
Investment return, net	<u>112,567</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>112,567</u>
Change in net assets from nonoperating activities	<u>118,487</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>118,487</u>
Change in net assets	221,751	-	221,751
<u>Net Assets</u>			
Net Assets, Beginning	<u>1,753,945</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,753,945</u>
Net Assets, Ending	<u>\$ 1,975,696</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,975,696</u>

KEYSTONE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
 For the Year Ended September 30, 2023

	<u>2023</u>
Assets	
Cash and equivalents	\$ 374,197
Certificates of deposit	408,235
Fundraising receivable	14,279
Prepaid expenses	<u>5,787</u>
Current assets	802,498
Investments, at fair value	1,052,227
Property and equipment:	
Building and improvements	322,178
Equipment and furniture	15,171
Vehicle	84,008
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(274,345)</u>
Property and equipment, net	147,012
Total assets	<u>\$ 2,001,737</u>
Liabilities and net assets	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 26,041
Total current liabilities	<u>26,041</u>
Net assets	
Without donor restrictions	1,975,696
With donor restrictions	<u>-</u>
Total net assets	<u>1,975,696</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 2,001,737</u>

Administration and staff report

The main purpose of the chapter staff is to provide support for the leadership, which is made up of members, the paralyzed veterans themselves. That support is mostly administrative work and facilities maintenance, plus filling in for members when they aren't available. Keystone PVA staffs its office in Sharpsburg, Pa., 40 hours a week, every week of the year except for holidays.

Over the years, what used to be a large number of incoming phone calls has been transformed into a sometimes overwhelming number of email messages. Even after weeding out the "spam," the number of email messages is difficult to handle with the small staff. However, requests for veterans' benefits are quickly referred to PVA's outstanding national service officers; offers of donations of goods are handled either through referral to the American Thrift Center or by offering to pass the donation offers to our members via

bulk email.

The pandemic reduced the office staffing to one full time person during half of FY2020 and all of FY2021. In August 2021, the chapter hired part-time bookkeeper Nancy Campbell, who remains on staff. Finding a full-time person suitable to fill the job of membership and project coordinator proved difficult, but in August 2023 the chapter brought in Emma Goldstein for the job, and she remains on staff.

Staff also supports outreach exhibits, in which we provide literature, displays and promotional items for events such as "veterans expos" and "health fairs." Our active chapter members staff these events, in which they engage with dozens or even hundreds of members of the public, explaining the mission of the Paralyzed Veterans and sharing their own personal stories.

Participants Needed for Spinal Cord Injury Assistive Tech Research

Train with electromyography (EMG) wristband for precise hand control in immersive tasks through the use of virtual reality (VR) despite hand paralysis



You May Qualify If You

- Are 18+ years or older with spinal cord injury (3+ months post-injury)
- Have impaired wrist/finger movement.
- Are comfortable with wearing VR headset and EMG wristband.
- Can look at a screen for more than an hour.

Potential Benefits

Participation in this study may help you learn EMG control for gaming and occupational tasks in an immersive setting, with potential therapeutic benefits.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Jenn Shanahan at 724-259-7748, email Jenns@andrew.cmu.edu

Participation Involves

- Calibration experiments to isolate EMG activity and training to master EMG timing and intensity control.
- Utilizing a head-mounted display for immersive occupational virtual tasks
- One or more testing visits per week for up to six months

Location: 4805 Frew St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Participants will receive \$20 per hour. Study will cover transportation costs. We can arrange transportation via ACCESS or reimburse your expenses if you prefer.

Principal Investigator: Douglas Weber, PhD

Happy Birthdays!

February

02 Laurence Q. Pates
 07 Marvin Vought
 08 Frank Lowe
 Rexford Nichols
 Lawrence Smith
 09 Mary Amaditz
 10 Crystal Atherton
 Linda Berty
 11 Kenneth Anderson
 Michael Sims
 Richard Townsend
 12 John Brockman Jr.
 Abbey Strang
 14 Jon M. Schnaars
 15 Peter Matthews
 15 Robert Moyer
 16 Kurt Feathers
 18 William J. Anderson Jr.
 20 Thomas A. Strang
 William W. Wheaton
 22 Joseph G. Jenkins
 27 Frank Kenesky
 28 Donald Corson
 28 Suzanne M. Frye

March

03 Gerald Jordan
 04 Clifford Bateson
 05 Andrew Borkowski
 William Jackson

06 John McKee
 09 Earl Stufflebeam
 Raymond Weigand
 13 Gordon Geer
 Duane Woodley
 14 Nevin Maurer
 17 Stephen Bickle
 18 Michael Brown
 20 Patrick Bush
 Norman Eicher
 21 Bill Jakovac
 24 Michael Crow
 Jeanne Keenan
 William Shingler
 25 Diane Polensky
 27 Gary Jenkins
 29 Randall E. Moyer
 31 John Berkavich

If we missed your birthday, let us know!

Give us a ring at the chapter office, 800-775-9323, if you spot an error.

Many happy wishes to all our members, associates, and volunteers!

April

01 Robert Christman
 02 Yaseen Bey
 Theresa Crow
 03 Mona Gutshall
 04 Christine Lieberman
 06 Dario Diaz
 07 Sandra Saffell
 Dillard Saleem
 08 Frank Steck
 10 Richard Mazzur
 11 Albert Seidel
 13 Danny Cullen
 16 Kenneth Lott
 17 Lynnette Ferry
 21 Alicia Pastva
 23 Robert Coret
 Ernest DiMeglio
 Joseph Dunn
 24 Ronald Nemcik Jr.
 Carl Shenk Jr.
 25 David Fry
 26 Daniel Cillo
 26 Christopher Burtch
 Tara Lightner
 George Neelan
 28 Allen Myers
 Fred Penzenstadler
 30 Nick Gallick

PHOTO CREDITS: (Photos taken or provided by) Page 1, top, Hopewell Area School District. Page 2, Belle Vernon Area School District. Page AR-7, Chris Fidler. Page 11, top, Sylveff Wideman. Page 11, bottom, Bill Jakovac. All other editorial photos by Keystone PVA staff, are file photos, or were submitted anonymously.

ADVERTISING in THE PARASCOPE

The Parascope is published bi-monthly. Deadline for submission of ad copy for the March-April issue will be 20 February.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING: The charge is \$20.00 for 15 words (each additional word is \$.35). Your name and address or phone number counts as five words. CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR PAYMENT TERMS—412-781-2474.

REGULAR MEMBERS of Keystone PVA qualify for up to a quarter-page advertisement free of charge. Members' ads larger than a quarter-page will be half the price of the regular page. DISPLAY ADVERTISING RATES:

SIZE OF AD	One issue	Three issues	Six issues
1/8 page	\$ 20.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 90.00
1/4 page	\$ 40.00	\$100.00	\$180.00
1/2 page	\$ 80.00	\$200.00	\$360.00
Full page	\$160.00	\$400.00	\$720.00

Membership Report Tom Strang, Membership Officer

Membership Meetings will be held as “hybrid” meetings for the foreseeable future, all of which will be available via some form of video such as Zoom videoconference, and with a “primary” in-person location.

The 10 December meeting was held mostly on Zoom, though Chapter President Mark Rosensteel presided from the Chapter office in Sharpsburg. Approximately 20 people were present. Compliments to guest Chris Coyle of BioServo, who waited through much discussion of chapter activities and issues before he could give an on-screen presentation of his company’s Carbo Hand assistive device, a glove-like device that increases a person’s grip to useful strength. President Mark has been following up on the possibilities that this device may present, especially to quadriplegics.

Details for attending the next Membership Meeting, on Saturday, 10 February 2024, are on the back page.

We welcome new Life Members—
*all communities are in Pennsylvania unless noted;
military branch is where each served:*

David A. Cope of Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland, Navy
Rhonda Davis of Dunlo, Cambria County, Army
Richard K. Garrison of Dilliner, Greene County, Army
Bruce Migota of Ambridge, Beaver County, Navy

We mourn the passing of members

Jeremy R. Pritts of Normalville, Fayette County, on 25 December 2023, a Marine Corps veteran who joined in 2022.
Larry G. Binger of Shelocta, Indiana County, on 04 January 2024. He was a Navy veteran and a member of PVA since 1988.

UNDELIVERABLES — MIAs

Have you seen or know the whereabouts of the following members? They may be dropped from the PVA Membership Roster unless we can find them. Please call us, write or e-mail the chapter office if you are able to help. Contact information for the chapter is on the back page.

Richard L. Anderson, John H. Beitler, John H. Conrad, James D. Evans, Jerald R. Johnson, Donald G. King, Michael A. Offen, and Gary Robertson

**MEMBERSHIP TOTALS AS OF
12 DECEMBER 2023**

Service connected	145
Non-service connected	<u>99</u>
TOTAL	244
Annual Associate Members	16
Lifetime Associate Members	<u>70</u>
TOTAL	86

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICES
for members in Pennsylvania and western and central New York State:

Western Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh, 412-395-6255
1000 Liberty Avenue, Room 1602, Pittsburgh PA 15222
Marissa Sabatucci, Secretary

Eastern Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, 215-381-3057
5000 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19144
Joseph Weeks, Senior National Service Officer; **Violet Graham**, Senior Secretary

Western New York: Buffalo, 716-857-3353
130 S. Elmwood Avenue, Suite 621, Buffalo NY 14202
Matthew Wezka, National Service Officer II; **Victoria Gawne**, Secretary II

Central New York State: Syracuse, 315-425-4400, ext. 53317
800 Irving Avenue, Room C419, Syracuse NY 13210
Charles Tocci, Area Manager

Donated, gently-used household goods support Keystone Paralyzed Veterans



Two donation boxes grace 123 E. Lincoln Avenue in McDonald, a borough on the southwest boundary of Allegheny County and northeast boundary of Washington County, Pennsylvania. Thanks to Darnley's Barber Shop for giving folks there the opportunity to give used household goods a second life. Since the mid-1990s, the American Thrift Center has made the Keystone Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America the sole beneficiary of its work, donating a significant percentage of its gross revenue to the chapter. Each of its over 800 donation boxes in western Pa. is marked to show that our veterans benefit from those donations.

If you have gently-used household items you would like to donate, and they are a bit too cumbersome to take to a collection box, call American Thrift at 412-469-9663 to arrange a pickup. You can also find out what goods they can accept.

AMERICAN THRIFT CENTER

Quality Pre-Owned
Merchandise

Village Shopping Center
1806 Homeville Road
West Mifflin, PA 15122

412-469-9665 or 412-469-9663

The American Thrift Center has been a professional fundraiser for Keystone PVA since 1990. Keystone PVA members are cordially invited to visit our store. Lifetime voting members: Present your PVA membership card and receive a 50% discount on all purchases.

**Also, by donating items to
the American Thrift Center
you are supporting
Keystone PVA!**

Jakovac artwork places third in national competition



Congratulations to Keystone PVA's treasurer, national director, fundraising coordinator, Sharing & Caring representative and artist Bill Jakovac for recognition in the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition! His "Tumbling Blocks" needlepoint (*at left*) came in third place nationally.



Date: January, 2024

Subject: 2023 Veterans Creative Arts Show/Competition

To: Pittsburgh Local Art Show Veteran Participants

Dear Mr. Jakovac,

The 2023 National Veterans Creative Arts Competition has been completed. This year over 6,000 entries were submitted by nearly 3,000 veterans were submitted to the NVCAF from 125 VA facilities across the country. As the host and facilitator of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's local art show, I would like to thank you for taking the time and effort to express yourself through your art work and to share that creative expression with peers, staff and guests within VA Pittsburgh during this year's art show. It is my pleasure to express CONGRATULATIONS, as your piece in the Original Design Needlework category, "Tumbling Blocks", placed 3rd in the 2023 NVCAF competition. As always, it was a pleasure and honor supporting your creative endeavors. I encourage you to continue engaging in the art making process moving forward. I look forward to seeing your creative expressions of art, music, dance, drama and creative writing during the 2024 Veterans Art Show!

Sincerely,
Krystal Neal, MA, ATR-BC, LPC
Art Therapist



Keystone Chapter

1113 Main Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15215-2407

Phone 412-781-2474 or 800-775-9323

Fax 412-781-2659

www.kpva.org

keystoneparavets@gmail.com

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

VAWS representatives serve veterans at these VA Medical Centers on behalf of the Keystone Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans.

James E. Van Zandt VAMC

2907 Pleasant Valley Boulevard

Altoona PA 16602-4377

877-626-2500

William D. Lightner—VAWS Representative

Abie Abraham VA Healthcare System

353 N. Duffy Road

Butler PA 16001

800-362-8262

John Kellner—VAWS Representative

Erie VAMC

135 E. 38th Street

Erie PA 16504-1559

800-274-8387

John Larese—VAWS Representative

Sean Ferry, Rex Nichols—

Deputy Representatives

Lebanon VAMC

1700 S. Lincoln Avenue

Lebanon PA 17042-7529

800-409-8771

Chris Fidler—VAWS Representative

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

University Drive campus

University Drive C

Pittsburgh PA 15240

800-309-8398

H. John Heinz III campus

1010 Delafield Road

Pittsburgh PA 15215-1802

800-309-8398

Wilkes-Barre VAMC

1111 East End Boulevard

Wilkes-Barre PA 18711-0030

570-824-3521

Peter Townsend—VAWS Representative



The next Keystone PVA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

will be on **Saturday, 10 FEBRUARY 2024**
(Lunch 12 noon; meeting 12:45 p.m.)

Primary site: **Keystone PVA office,**

1113 Main St., Sharpsburg (Pittsburgh PA 15215)

Join by Zoom videoconference.

Members who reside outside the Pittsburgh region are invited to join online via the Zoom link that will be emailed to members.

(The chapter will not reimburse travel to and from the event for attendees.)

If attending in person PLEASE

RSVP by 02 February 2024

to **412-781-2474** or **800-775-9323**

Attendance will be limited due to office size.

The mission of Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America is

to improve the quality of life of paralyzed veterans by

- Encouraging and supporting spinal cord injury and disease research;
- Improving access to health care and other veterans' benefits;
- Assisting in the expansion of opportunities in wheelchair sports and recreation; and
- Advocating for the rights of disabled people, including the reduction and elimination of barriers to accessibility and mobility.

Articles published in The Parascope, even by officers and directors, do not necessarily reflect the views of the Keystone Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Keystone PVA neither endorses nor guarantees any of the products or services described or mentioned in The Parascope.