



The Wheeled Herald



Published by the Great Plains Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

Omaha, Nebraska

Dec 2011/Jan 2012

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Merry Christmas



and



Happy New Year!



May you have a safe and memorable



holiday season!



Veterans to Receive COLA Increase in 2012

Information from National PVA

On November 9, President Obama signed into law S. 894, the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2011." The legislation was approved by the House on November 2, in conjunction with a roundtable meeting conducted by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) with the leaders of the veterans' service organizations.

Every year since 1976, a COLA was passed by Congress, but for the last two years this increase has been zero percent. The adjusted increase is tied to the Consumer Price Index provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics which also determines the increase for Social Security recipients. This year the Social Security Administration projected an increase of approximately 3.6 percent, meaning that veterans in receipt of compensation, as well as widows who receive dependency and indemnity compensation, should see an increase. The veterans COLA goes into effect on December 1st.

**To receive Great Plains PVA's bi-monthly newsletter via email,
please send your request to Amanda at vazquez@greatplainspva.org.**



President's Message *by Randy Squier*

The holiday season brings family and friends together to share in the spirit of giving. Thank you all for sharing yourself with us. The year has been full of exciting events. We continue exceptional exposure of our organization while having the Great Plains Chapter represented in ongoing VA Hospital updates and Veterans organizational discussions throughout the state. Our continued efforts to have a voice in the room are paying dividends.



Our ongoing events to keep our members engaged are always rewarding. The bowling and billiards tournaments recently held are just a few of the social get togethers. In the upcoming months, we hope you might have time to join us. Check the website for dates and times.



As this year comes to a close,

I'm wishing you and yours a Happy Holiday Season and let's get ready for an exciting 2012.

Chapter Officers

Randy Squier, President
Joe Roberts, Vice President
Vincent "Jim" Toelle, Secretary
Craig Enenbach, Treasurer

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Mike Moore, Director
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Mark Linquist

National Director

Tamara Lawter

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Patrick Reynolds
reynolds@greatplainspva.org

Administrative Assistant

Jane Healy
Building Attendant
David Hansen

Executive Director's Report

by Mary Bushman

Dear Members,

Great Plains PVA is very fortunate to have an active Ladies Auxiliary supporting our members and our Chapter activities. They are a source of ideas, volunteers and program support throughout the year. A very special project of the Auxiliary is its Virginia and Tom Pierce Memorial Scholarship Program. These scholarships are given annually to graduating seniors who have a disability themselves or have a parent with a disability. Since the program began in 1988, the Auxiliary has awarded 57 scholarships totaling over \$20,000. For the past several years, the Auxiliary has funded the scholarship program through its annual fundraiser *Wine & Roses*.

The 2012 event is scheduled for **Sunday afternoon** February 12th from 3:00-5:00. This is a change from the evening times of past years. The event will once again be hosted by WineStyles, but at its **NEW LOCATION**, 1006 S. 74th Plaza. (North side of Pacific Street on 74th.) Reservations can be made by calling the PVA office at 402-398-1422.

Thank you to all the members who helped make this a great year for our Chapter. We hope to see as many of you as possible in the next year. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to everyone!



National Director's Report

by Tamara Lawter

As the year is winding down and we are in the final month of 2011, PVA is still advocating for all members. PVA has been struggling with the reduced numbers in membership. We all need to look at veterans that are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan as potential members. We need to be talking to the newly injured veterans and advocating for them.

PVA's number one priority is to "advocate and monitor the delivery of high quality and appropriate healthcare benefits and services." Members in our chapter need to be helping out National PVA by monitoring the healthcare services that our members receive in the Nebraska VA system. I had the privilege of attending the Health Care Advocates Seminar in October. During the meetings, the chapters were encouraged to volunteer at local VA facilities. These volunteers are known as Hospital Liaison Officers (HLO), and they are to look, listen, and identify any problems that members are experiencing at the VA facilities. Unfortunately for us in Nebraska, we do not have an SCI Center, but we do have SCI clinics, and the care each of us receives at the clinics is critical. If anyone feels they are not receiving the proper care, please contact me or our NSO, John Gogan. We don't want any medical issues to be ignored. And remember, no issue is too small or too big. They are all important because it is your health and well-being.

With the holiday season upon us, remember this is the season of love and giving. Please remember your fellow veterans and their families. We all have gifts that we can share to those in need. Visit veterans in the hospital and take the time to spread some cheer. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Pension Benefits

John Gogan, National Service Officer

I hope that everyone has had time to enjoy the holidays and that you have had special times with family and friends.

It is that time of year for the veterans who are receiving Non-Service Connected Pension benefits to start working on documenting their unreimbursed medical expenses and/or any change in their family income.

When these reports are prepared and ready to be submitted to the VA Pension Management Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, I would appreciate it, if I represent you, that you forward those forms to my national service office in Lincoln for my review and then I will forward the forms on to the Pension Management Center. I ask this so that I can keep a copy of the information provided to the VA. There have been a few occasions where I have had to re-send or fax the client's documents, which were previously submitted to the Pension Management Center. This was done to either keep the processing of the claims going or to re-start the processing of the claims.

I need to point out that the St. Paul Pension Management Center is very slow in processing these claims. I cannot account for why the Pension Management Center is so slow in processing these claims. Hopefully by January 2012 the VA will have the 'old' unreimbursed medical claims processed and be ready to process the 2011 unreimbursed medical claims.

If you have any concerns or questions about what might be counted as a medical expense, please contact the PVA National Service Officer John E. Gogan, (402) 420-4017, or Paralyzed Veterans of America, 3800 Village Drive, PO Box 85816, Lincoln, NE 68501-5816.

7 Health Benefits of Fish Oil

Patrick Reynolds, Sports Director

Research studies show fish oil benefits are down right amazing. Studies are published almost daily as the scientific community discovers more and more of the many extraordinary omega 3 fish oil benefits. If you haven't already been swept up in the net yet, here are 7 proven omega 3 benefits you should know about:

- 1. Less Pain and Inflammation.** Omega 3 fatty acids, particularly EPA, have a very positive effect on your inflammatory response. Through several mechanisms, they regulate your body's inflammation cycle, which prevents and relieves painful conditions like arthritis, prostatitis, cystitis, etc.
- 2. Cardiovascular Health.** Omega 3 fatty acids have also been proven to work wonders for your cardiovascular system which includes your heart, arteries and veins. They help to lower total cholesterol, tryglicerides, LDLs (bad cholesterol) and blood pressure, while at the same time increasing HDL (good cholesterol).
- 3. Protection from Stroke and Heart Attack.** When plaque builds up on arterial walls and then breaks loose, it causes what's known as a thrombosis, or clot. If a clot gets stuck in a blood vessel in your brain, it causes a stroke. When a clot gets stuck in a coronary artery, it causes a heart attack. Research shows omega 3 fatty acids break up clots before they can cause any damage.
- 4. Better Brain Function.** Pregnant and nursing mothers can have a great impact on the intelligence and happiness of their babies by supplementing with fish oil. For adults, omega 3 improves memory, recall, reasoning and focus.
- 5. Less Depression and Psychosis.** Making you smarter is not all omega 3 does for your brain. Psychiatry department researchers at the University of Sheffield, along with many other research studies, found that omega 3 fish oil supplements "alleviate" the symptoms of depression, bipolar and psychosis (*Journal of Affective Disorder Vol. 48(2-3); 149-55*).
- 6. Lower Incidence of Childhood Disorders.** Studies show that children (and adults) with ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia and compulsive disorders experience a greatly improved quality of life when supplementing with omega 3 fish oils.
- 7. Reduction of Breast, Colon and Prostate Cancer.** Omega 3 fish oil has been shown to help prevent three of the most common forms of cancer - breast, colon and prostate. Science tells us that omega 3s accomplish this in three ways. They stop the alteration from a normal healthy cell to a cancerous mass, inhibiting unwanted cellular growth and causing apoptosis, or cellular death, of cancer cells.

Fish oil can be obtained from eating fish or by taking supplements. Fish that are especially rich in the beneficial oils known as omega-3 fatty acids include mackerel, tuna, salmon, sturgeon, mullet, bluefish, anchovies, sardines, herring, trout, and menhaden. They provide about 1 gram of omega-3 fatty acids in 3.5 ounces of fish.

When fish oil is obtained by eating fish, the way the fish is prepared seems to make a difference. Eating broiled or baked fish appears to reduce the risk of heart disease, but eating fried fish or fish sandwiches not only cancels out the benefits of fish oil, but may actually increase heart disease risk.

“CLASS Act” Faces Repeal

Information from National PVA

Last month, the Administration decided to stop work/implementation of the CLASS Act based on reasons that they could not construct a program that would meet the solvency requirement as required by the language of the law. With their decision to stop work, it became an admission that this administration did not know how to solve the Long Term Care (LTC) problem facing our country as now millions of baby boomers are beginning to retire.

With CLASS Act being part of the “Affordable Care Act”, republicans feel that the program should be repealed in order to stop possible future work on this issue. Senator John Thune (R-SD) attempted to pass his bill (S. 720) the “Repeal the CLASS Entitlement Act” by unanimous consent but an objection by Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV) stopped it.

The “CLASS Act” is the first piece of legislation that Congress passed and then was signed into law in more than 20 years that tried to tackle the long-term care crisis that faces our country. It would allow working individuals to take personal responsibility and begin to save for their future needs. A program like CLASS is extremely important because private long-term care (LTC) insurance only has about a four percent take up rate. Most seniors believe there is coverage for LTC under Medicare - but there isn't. Medicaid is the largest provider of LTC but to qualify you must impoverish yourself and spend down to meet eligibility to be placed in a nursing home or put on a waiting list.

To repeal CLASS would end the debate about the problems of LTC setting the country back another generation in facing these issues.

GPPVA Halloween Party



On Friday, October 28th, GPPVA members, auxiliary, and staff gathered for an evening of Halloween fun! Adults enjoyed a game of Blackjack while the kids were busy playing games and making crafts. There were festive snacks and drinks and even a costume contest!



CHAPTER BIRTHDAYS



December

**Alexander M. Tomic * John M. Carey * Richard (Rick) E. Haith * Richard D. Helvey
* James C. Davis * Thomas R. Gerber * Patricia A. Enenbach * Patrick T. Tvrdik *
Stormy D. Brandt * Marion J. Gerstner * Tamara D. Lawter**

January

**Dana W. Monie * James J. Tichota * Richard A. Cornett * David A. Burgess *
Daniel R. Kurtenbach * Richard W. Stokes * Jimmy D. Wise * Charles W. Fattig * James B.
Brown * Kristy O. Leavitt * Keith P. Thompson * David P. Anderson * Vincent J. Toelle *
Kim A. Hanson * Richard Harris * Frank A. Nastase * Joseph E. Roberts * Shawn A. Stencil**

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to schedule or if you have questions.



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ADA & Accessibility Concerns

If you have experienced a situation in which you believe an individual or business is not in compliance with ADA laws, and you would like assistance from Great Plains PVA, fill out this form as completely as possible.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Name of the Individual/Business that is not in compliance:

Description of the situation (including any steps you have taken to address the situation):

Date that non-compliance was realized: _____

If you have pictures or documents that could assist us with your case, please provide copies along with this form when it is returned.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amanda Vazquez at 402-398-1422 or by email at vazquez@greatplainspva.org.

Return form:

by mail: Great Plains PVA, Attn: Amanda Vazquez, 7612 Maple St., Omaha, NE 68134;

by fax: 402-398-1424; or

by email: vazquez@greatplainspva.org

Great Plains

Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Mission

Great Plains Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is a non-profit organization that has dedicated 40 years to helping veterans with spinal cord injuries, as well as other individuals living with disabilities, across Nebraska, Western-Iowa, and Kansas. Great Plains PVA is dedicated to improving quality of life by providing education, promoting equal opportunities, encouraging independence, and enhancing lifetime health and fitness. PVA is at the forefront helping and advocating for the rights and benefits of veterans and all people living with disabilities.