

Spring 2024

THE BULLETIN

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Mid-Atlantic Chapter



OUTSTANDING!

- MOST OUTSTANDING PVA CHAPTER AWARD
- OLD DOMINION BRAWL BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT
- 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS & ELECTION
- HONORING WOMEN VETERANS

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Mid-Atlantic Chapter



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OUR PRESIDENT'S WORDS

Jimmy May

Outstanding! For the past month I have used this word proudly and often, and I encourage each of you to do the same. Your Mid-Atlantic Chapter has been honored by PVA National as the winner of the John M. Price Most Outstanding Chapter Award. There are so many folks who were instrumental in this achievement – our passionate volunteers and community partners, our dedicated Board of Directors and chapter staff, but most of all, you, our members. It is your engagement in our chapter and belief in our mission that allows us to flourish and be the best we can be, for you and with you.

Please join me in sharing in the pride of this award and being a part of becoming an even better chapter, a stronger chapter, and a chapter that never stops being innovative and creative. That is why we are the best of the best! To say the least, the spring and summer are going to be very busy for our chapter. On the national level, we will have strong representation at the annual PVA Convention in May, this year being held in Minneapolis. Advocacy and Legislation Week will be in June, with a committed group of Mid-Atlantic members representing our Veterans on Capitol Hill. The strength of our chapter will again be showcased, as many of our members will be going for the gold at this year's National Veterans Wheelchair Games in New Orleans, proudly sporting the colors of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter.

Closer to home, we are looking forward to another memorable fishing tournament, the Old Dominion Brawl, scheduled for June 15th. Last year we had many first-time participants, and again we hope to see some more new faces at one of our featured events.

This will be the second year of our Mid-Atlantic Chapter Scholarship Program. Last year we were proud to award \$5000 in scholarships, so I encourage you and your family members to look at the qualifications, deadlines and application process on our website.

Also, 2024 is an election year for our Board of Directors. The nomination period will officially begin at our Membership Meeting on June 14th – the full schedule of election dates and deadlines is included in this newsletter. If you need more information about the process, including the requirements and responsibilities associated with being a Board member, please call our Mid-Atlantic headquarters. I encourage you to participate in our election process – choosing strong leaders is an important building block in solidifying the foundation of our chapter.

Our staff is also a vital cog in all that we do as a chapter, and I am so pleased to introduce two new members of our Mid-Atlantic Team. Please join me in welcoming Alison Carlin and Julianne Hart as Communications & Event Coordinators. Both have extensive experience in the not-for-profit world and are passionate about supporting Veterans and being there for our members. Alison and Julianne are outstanding additions to our outstanding chapter. Let me wrap-up by simply saying, thank you. On behalf of myself and our Board of Directors, aside from any awards and recognition, our chapter is stronger than ever and we thank you for being a part of that strength. It is all about our shared Mid-Atlantic Pride!

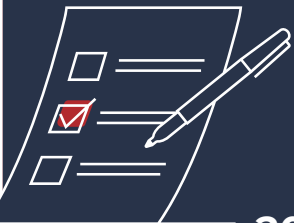
Respectfully,

Jimmy May
President
PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter



Upcoming Events

APRIL 5	2024 NVWG – Registration Deadline
MAY 1	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 14-17	PVA NATIONAL CONVENTION – Minneapolis, MN
MAY 24	MEMORIAL DAY CEMETERY FLAG EVENT – Amelia, VA
JUNE 1	MID-ATLANTIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - Application Deadline
JUNE 5	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 11-13	PVA ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION WEEK – Washington, DC
JUNE 14	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – Hopewell, VA
JUNE 14	BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPEN NOMINATIONS BEGIN
JUNE 14	NVWG MID-ATLANTIC SEND-OFF BANQUET
JUNE 15	OLD DOMINION BRAWL – Bass Fishing Tournament
JULY 3	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 25-30	NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES – New Orleans, LA
SEPT. 27-29	MID-ATLANTIC BOWLING TOURNAMENT



2024 Board of Directors Nominations & Election

June 14	Nomination period opens at Membership Meeting
July 8	Deadline for submitting nominations
July 9-10	Election Committee contacts nominees
July 18	Election ballots mailed to members
August 19	Deadline for chapter to receive ballots
August 20-21	Ballots tabulated
August 22	Fiscal Year 2025 Board of Directors is announced
September 4	Newly elected Directors sworn in at Board of Directors meeting
October 1	Newly elected Directors officially take office



GET TO KNOW

Mark Hartney

DIRECTOR PVA MID-ATLANTIC CHAPTER

Mark Hartney has been a PVA member since 1989 and is in his first term as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter Board of Directors. Among his Board responsibilities, Mr. Hartney was appointed to be the Chair of our Scholarship Committee, starting from scratch in 2023 and developing a scholarship program to benefit our members and their families.

After being encouraged years ago to join our chapter by long standing member Jimmy May, Mr. Hartney says that he feels the most gratified by paying forward - reaching-out and supporting other Veterans and sharing his experiences. When asked what he appreciates the most about being a chapter leader, Mr. Hartney says, "The biggest part is listening to our members and trying to meet their needs, whether it's from a medical point of view or through recreational activities." He has highlighted advocacy for Veterans and those with disabilities as both an interest and passion of his.

The first Mid-Atlantic Chapter event he recalls participating in was our bass fishing tournament, and it opened his eyes to something that surprised him. "The members are far more diverse than I ever imagined, which is a good thing! They're great people to be around, to have fun with, and to work with."

Mr. Hartney is proud of the success and growth of our chapter, and hopes for more of both. "I'd like to see the organization get bigger in terms of numbers. Our financial situation is quite healthy for an organization of this size. Our goal is to keep it healthy and at the same time, continue to strengthen and support the needs of all of our members."

A retired U.S. Army pilot who flew B-52's, Mr. Hartney is the chief instructor of a flight school based in Newport News, VA. When he is not spending time at home or traveling with his wife MeLissa, he enjoys remaining as active as possible, including competitive wheelchair basketball and wheelchair golf - and spending a lot of time at Madison Square Garden cheering on his New York Knicks and New York Rangers.



Mid-Atlantic Chapter

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FOR CAPABLE HEROES

Board of Directors

Jimmy May - President
Jessie Oliff - Vice President
Amy McKee - Secretary
Jeffrey Dolezal - Treasurer
Johnny Holland - Sports Director
Arnold Beard - Director
Bagferry Cruz - Director
Mark Hartney - Director
Ronald Richardson - Director

Staff

Executive Director - Ivan Schwartz
Communications & Events Coordinator - Alison Carlin
Communications & Events Coordinator - Julianne Hart
Bookkeeper - Regina Watson-Fields

National Service Officers

Mike Keba, Roanoke 1-540-897-1707
Chris Custer, Richmond 1-804-675-5316
William Pack, Winston-Salem 1-336-251-0834
Levi Koepp, Hampton 1-757-722-9961 ext. 2943



OLD DOMINION BRAWL BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT

JUNE 15, 2024

Hopewell Marina
1051 Riverside Ave.
Hopewell, VA 23860

Whether you're an experienced angler or just getting started, make plans to join us!

- Spend the day on a bass boat or fishing off the bank.
- Thousands of dollars in cash prizes, weigh-in awards, and a dinner feast.
- Most of all, a day on the water spending time with friends and other Veterans.

PARTNER PAIRING RECEPTION - Friday evening June 14th.

For more information call (804) 378-0017 or email vapva.ivan@gmail.com.





Honoring Women Veterans

On March 21st, the Virginia War Memorial hosted a ceremony honoring Women Veterans and their longstanding history of service in defending our country. Mid-Atlantic Chapter Vice President Jessie Oliff was recognized by Governor Glenn Youngkin and Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears (a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran) for her efforts in unifying the support of our Mid-Atlantic Women's Council to push-forward the introduction a new Virginia license plate recognizing Women Vets. It was a day of celebrating the achievements of Women Veterans, and also a proud moment for our chapter, showcasing the strength of our commitment and dedication to our mission.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

CoStar Group

The CoStar Group is passionate about their support of our Mid-Atlantic Chapter, demonstrating their steadfast partnership with a strong financial commitment and dedicated volunteer engagement. Through their charitable community wing, CoStar Builds, the CoStar team has been invaluable in helping us achieve our mission and our vision for the future. Attend any Mid-Atlantic event and you are sure to meet a CoStar partner. Their teammates display a passionate enthusiasm for our Veterans, being first in line to volunteer their time, while fostering a collaborative and supportive relationship with our members.



Michelle Balangué, Multi Family Research Manager with the CoStar Group, credits communication and a shared mission as the building blocks of the strong relationship between CoStar and the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. She says that the chapter never fails to show its appreciation, often sending photos of events and recognizing CoStar as more than merely a corporate partner. “We really feel like a member of the Mid-Atlantic family,” she says. Michelle’s father is a U.S. Navy Veteran who has also attended many chapter events. Michelle is proud to say that, “PVA Mid-Atlantic is near and dear to my heart”.

The CoStar Group is one of the largest employers in the Richmond, VA area, and is very selective in the organizations they choose to work with. The CoStar Group first became involved with our chapter through the recommendation of one of their managers, Vicente Garces, who has been a faithful volunteer with our chapter for many years.

We are very thankful and appreciative to have the CoStar Group as a loyal partner and member of our Mid-Atlantic Chapter family.



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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JANET GROESSLER

In a well-connected city the size of Richmond, VA, relationships sometimes matter the most. Janet Groessler is a relationship person. She credits Jessie Oliff for opening her eyes to PVA and introducing her to Executive Director Ivan Schwartz. Invitations to chapter events quickly followed, and the rest is history.

You name the Mid-Atlantic Chapter event, and odds-are Janet is a part of the festivities. Whether it's our billiards, bowling or bass tournaments, you can't avoid Janet's bright smile, boundless energy, and encouraging words. Giving back to the community is obviously a big part of what makes Janet tick. Where she finds the time, we'll never know. As the office administrator for the Provost of the University of Richmond, Janet is very comfortable in planning, preparing and executing large events. She carries that expertise to our chapter, sometimes without even knowing it - teaching us the ins and outs of treating members and guests first class.

Janet volunteers with other organizations throughout the community, but says, "The Mid-Atlantic Chapter and its members have my heart". Her family connection with Veterans has made this an easy organization for her to say "yes" to. While we may refer to Janet as one of our more truly dedicated volunteers, she humbly says, "I don't consider it volunteering anymore. It's more like hanging out with friends".

When Janet isn't having fun with her Mid-Atlantic friends, she enjoys the outdoors, especially hiking and kayaking. Her greatest pride and joy though, is spending time with her daughter, Lexi, who is getting an early taste of what it means to help others, often attending our events with mom.

Thank you, Janet. Thank you, Lexi. We couldn't do it without you!





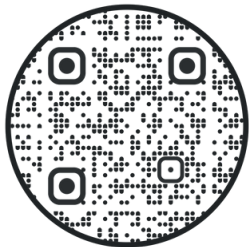
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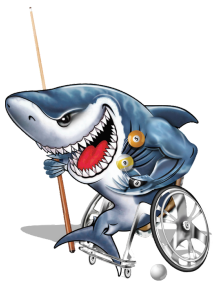
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** A screening process through the VA is required to determine eligibility for use of the Ekso Indego Personal device



CHARLES "CHUCK" WILLIS MEMORIAL
9-Ball Championships
 March 15-16, 2024

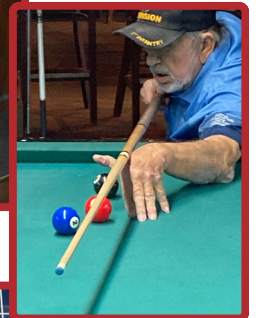


Photo courtesy of Yoshi Fordham



Results

Main Event

- 1st - Kray Mims
- 2nd - Daniel Henson
- 3rd - Jeff Dolezal

Second Flight

- 1st - Mark Jones
- 2nd - Eddie Rowe
- 3rd - Lee Sexton

Novice Event

- 1st - Yoshi Fordham
- 2nd - Aaron Ruffin
- 3rd - Jessie Ollif



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Tom Johnson

Tom Johnson has been active with PVA since 2015, but to say that PVA is the extent of his activity would be a tremendous understatement. Mr. Johnson is non-stop when it comes to being the best he can be. The U.S. Army Veteran and proud member of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter has always been passionate about writing and is taking his love for the written word to the next level. Next up for Mr. Johnson is completing his Master of Arts degree in fiction writing. He was recently accepted into the fine arts program at the New School in New York City, where he will begin in the fall.

Mr. Johnson shared insights into his journey on how he became involved with our chapter. He first learned of the work we do when he was transitioning out of the Army and was in search of disability benefits. He was introduced to a PVA National Service Officer who helped him with the paperwork and exam scheduling, and this experience left a lasting, positive impression. Notably, upon exiting the military, he sought assistance from PVA after realizing the importance of the other work we do. He has since become a strong advocate for PVA, saying, “If any Veteran asks for information about services to help them, I refer them to PVA.”

Expressing gratitude for PVA's support, Mr. Johnson highlighted the many ways in which our chapter has aided his life. “I wish more people knew that you operate as counselors and liaisons”, he said. “Any questions I ask about my status, my case, etc., I can trust that PVA will thoroughly look at my paperwork for me. People don't realize there are agencies that do this. PVA has been the kindest.”

Prior to joining the Army, Mr. Johnson graduated from the University of Texas (Austin) in 2008. He served as a lieutenant for several years. Mr. Johnson currently resides in the DC area, holding a civilian position with the government that he has held for 7 years. He has also received a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University, funded by the GI bill.

We are proud of Mr. Johnson's many achievements, and proud to support him along with each of our 800+ Mid-Atlantic Chapter members.





NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

JULY 25-30, 2024 • NEW ORLEANS, LA

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Out and About Mid-Atlantic Style



A MESSAGE FROM OUR RICHMOND

National Service Officer



As we welcome the vibrant colors and renewed energy of spring, I want to take this opportunity to share some updates from our office here in the Richmond SCI/D Center.

First, we are happy to announce the construction phase(s) for the SCI/D Expansion Project are continuing and we are noticing visible progress being made. There was a significant delay regarding an issue with room design, but with the support of Mid-Atlantic Chapter Board Members, Executive Director Ivan Schwartz and PVA Medical Services, we successfully advocated for this to be rectified promptly and for construction to resume. Within this phase, the addition of a 15-bed unit is anticipated to be opened by Summer 2024. These additional beds will allow for more veterans to receive SCI/D inpatient care and ideally reduce the ever-growing list of veteran transfers awaiting an available bed within the Richmond SCI/D Center.

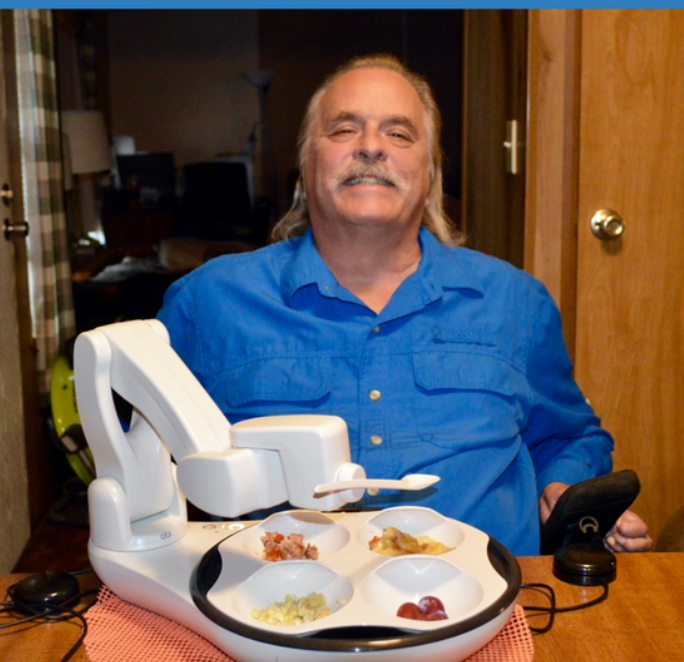
Secondly, at the beginning of this year, many PVA members expressed issues with the Richmond SCI/D designated parking lot being severely reduced in available parking spots. As a result, this reduction created significant delays for veterans who depend upon this lot for easier access to their appointments, and in some cases, causing them to miss their appointments entirely. We advocated for the lot to be restored to full capacity as required by the VHA Parking Design Manual, and almost all of the spots have since been returned. If you utilize this lot and experience parking issues which negatively impact your ability to make your appointments on time or at all, please share your experiences and this will be addressed at our upcoming PVA Annual Site Visit.

Lastly, as we embrace this season of renewal, I want to take this time to encourage PVA members to reflect on any goals or resolutions you may have made for this new year. As we're almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way through 2024, I want to provide this reminder that there is still time to accomplish any goals or resolutions you have set for yourself. For me, I am reminded of my resolution to practice more patience and my goal of improving my physical fitness and overall health this year. Whatever this may look like for you, let this serve as encouragement to continue putting in the effort towards achieving the goals and/or resolutions you have set for yourself in 2024.

I hope you have a spring filled with growth, progress, and new opportunities, while wishing you and your families continued good health and prosperity!

Thank you,

Chris Custer



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PVA Mid-Atlantic Scholarship Program



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Questions? Call (804) 378-0017 or email vapva.ivan@gmail.com.

