



# WHEELS IN MOTION

*July 2022*

**Happy Fourth of July!**

*Poker Run  
Elections*

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**Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Central Florida Chapter  
2711 S. Design Ct.  
Sanford, FL 32773-8120  
Phone (407) 328-7041  
Fax: (407) 328-7139**

August Board Meeting is a **Zoom/Hybrid** - August 11th 10:30 AM.

Website: [pvacf.org](http://pvacf.org)  
Email: [office@pvacf.org](mailto:office@pvacf.org)

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Vice President ..... Roger Sack  
Treasurer..... Brian Terwilliger  
Secretary ..... Eddie Hawks  
National Director ..... Craig Enenbach

Executive Director                      John DeMauro  
Office Manager                              Joanne Poretti

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Jimmy Green..... Class of 2022  
Craig Enenbach..... Class of 2023  
Tim Wolfe ..... Class of 2023  
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David Rountree ..... Class of 2024

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**Mission Statement**

***Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida, is a congressionally chartered veteran’s service organization that provides a platform of advocacy, education and research, communication, adaptive sports and recreation for veterans paralyzed as a result of spinal cord injury or dysfunction, in an effort to afford them with the highest quality of healthcare and life experiences.***



*We take charge of your projects!*



# Steve Kirk Chapter President

Our National Board Meeting was held across the street from Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta. Two years earlier, on May 29, 2020, Centennial Olympic Park was the scene of the start of what was supposed to be a peaceful protest in respect of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota four days earlier. The protest route was supposed to head to the capital and return to the park, but it was stopped at the CNN Center by the Atlanta Police Department. A riot subsequently broke out, resulting in damage and looting to several buildings, including the Omni,



over and was completed during the following year, in 1998, at the cost of \$15 million. The celebrations in the park were marred by the July 27, 1996 bombing which killed two people (one from a heart attack) and injured 111 others. Security at the park and at all sporting venues was subsequently raised to include bag searches and metal detectors at all entrances. The bombing site is adjacent to the Park's "Centennial Tree". It was closed shortly after the Olympics for renovations (including installation of grass) until spring 1998. On July 16, 2016, the park held events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1996 Olympics and Paralympics, including a volunteer reunion, concessions, and a fireworks show. In November, a commemorative plaque honoring the Games was unveiled. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia, the park was closed to the public in July 2020. GWCCA executive director Frank Poe stated that Centennial Olympic Park relied on revenue from events taking place at the Georgia World Congress Center for the park's upkeep. By April 2021, portions of Centennial Olympic Park were reopened to the public; however, the park only operated from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday and public restrooms, visitors' center, the Fountain of Rings, and the amphitheater remain closed. On October 14, 2021, GWCCA officials announced that the park would be open daily from

7 a.m. to 7 p.m. starting on October 18, 2021 and most of the previously closed areas would reopen; however, it was open on our last Friday creating a traffic nightmare. We did get to hear all the music they played without choice. Nonetheless it is a very nice park.

next door to the CNN Center, where we stayed. Centennial Olympic Park is a 22-acre public park located in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, owned and operated by the Georgia World Congress Center Authority. It was built by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) as part of the infrastructure improvements for the 1996 Summer Olympics. It plays host to millions of visitors a year and several events, including a summer popular music concert series which took place the last day of the PVA convention. The park property had previously been a variety of vacant lots and abandoned or run-down industrial buildings. ACOG's chief executive, Billy Payne, conceived the park both as a central gathering location for visitors and spectators during the Olympics and as a lasting legacy for the city. With the park being the showcase to the world during the Olympics, ACOG decided to hold a design competition to lay out and build the park. Landscape Architect EDAA, with the joint construction team of Beers/Russell, were selected to design and build the park by the Georgia World Congress Center Authority. Centennial Olympic Park was constructed in two phases. Phase I of construction was completed July 1996, just in time for 1996 Olympic Summer Games at a cost of \$28 million. During the Olympics, the park contained sponsor exhibits, hosted entertainment and medal presentations, and was a hotbed for pin trading. Phase II construction took place shortly after the Olympics were

over and was completed during the following year, in 1998, at the cost of \$15 million. The celebrations in the park were marred by the July 27, 1996 bombing which killed two people (one from a heart attack) and injured 111 others. Security at the park and at all sporting venues was subsequently raised to include bag searches and metal detectors at all entrances. The bombing site is adjacent to the Park's "Centennial Tree". It was closed shortly after the Olympics for renovations (including installation of grass) until spring 1998. On July 16, 2016, the park held events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1996 Olympics and Paralympics, including a volunteer reunion, concessions, and a fireworks show. In November, a commemorative plaque honoring the Games was unveiled. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia, the park was closed to the public in July 2020. GWCCA executive director Frank Poe stated that Centennial Olympic Park relied on revenue from events taking place at the Georgia World Congress Center for the park's upkeep. By April 2021, portions of Centennial Olympic Park were reopened to the public; however, the park only operated from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday and public restrooms, visitors' center, the Fountain of Rings, and the amphitheater remain closed. On October 14, 2021, GWCCA officials announced that the park would be open daily from

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Comfort the afflicted;  
Feed the hungry  
Clothe and shelter  
those in need

GOD, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change.  
Courage to change the things I can and the WISDOM to know the difference.

HAPPINESS is thinking of others first, yourself last and GOD always.  
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As mankind thinketh in their minds... so they are.

Adversity is Inevitable \*\*\*\*\* Stress is OPTIONAL.

Anything that your mind can DREAM and you BELIEVE, you can ACHIEVE.  
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# *John DeMauro*

## *Executive Director*

Wow! We are half way through 2022! What a year so far! There have been some more changes at the chapter. We replace an outdated security system and added eight cameras on the outside of the building, which can be viewed from our iPhones. While doing so, we discovered that although we had smoke detectors throughout the building, none were wired correctly. That problem has been corrected.

We replaced furniture that has been in the building for over 30 years (although we are still waiting for a few pieces that are on backorder). Although we remodeled the interior of the building last year, we still have a few things that are not yet completed and we hope to get that done soon. We restriped the parking lot and we are in the process of changing the logo on the sign at the street. If you have not yet noticed the new logo,

look at the front cover of this issue of the Wheels In Motion. We are changing our letterhead stationery, the signage on our truck and van, the sign at the street, all of our banners and the logo on our staff and board member's shirts. The National Marketing Department believes that this change will make PVA more recognizable to the public.

Our next project is to erect a 30"x70" steel building at the end of our parking lot to house our 14" truck and our van. We will also house our excess medical durable equipment, two SoloRiders (when not in use), two trailers (when not in use), our field chair, six hand cycles and other equipment in this building. Once completed, we will be able to open up our main building to include indoor recreation such as bocchia, air rifle, ping-pong and billiards. We have begun to expand our recreation program and hope to expand it even further once the new building is completed.

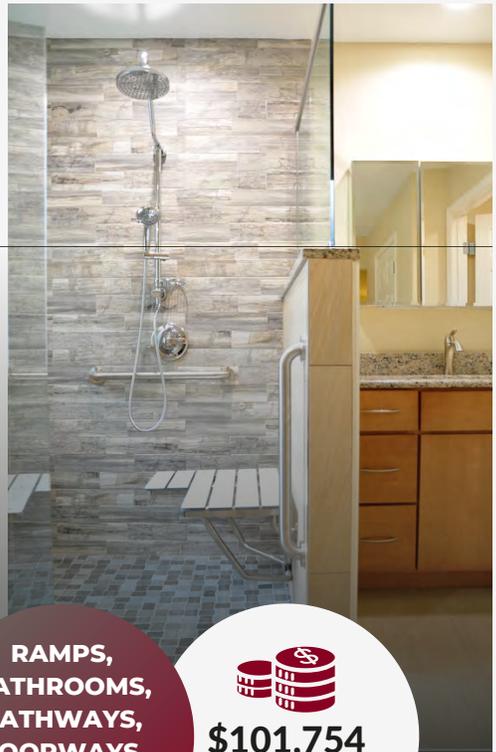
As a reminder, you can go to our chapter website at [www.pvacf.org](http://www.pvacf.org) and under the events tab find our sports and events calendars for you to see what is going on

local to our chapter office. Additionally, I want to remind our members that the chapter will reimburse you for mileage when traveling to the chapter or to any event or activity of the chapter at the government rate of 14 cents per mile. I know with the cost of gas these days, that might not seem like much but it is all we can do according to our policy and procedures. Also, if you live out of the area and want us to plan something out your way, just let us know and we will see what we can work out. Recently a member from Jacksonville visited our office and he intends to contact other members from that area and see if they can get connected and put together some events in their area and maybe even carpool down to the chapter office to attend board meetings or other events. Or to just come down and hang out.

As another reminder, with a new Director of Recreation, the Chapter is planning a fun activity each month. We realize that not everyone is close enough to the chapter to attend. If you live too far from the chapter, we want to hear from you about ways where we can engage with members in your area.

Finally, our Chapter is working together with the Florida Chapter, the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter and our National office in an effort to address a problem one of our PVA members experienced at Disney World. While attempting to get onto one of their rides, he was told he could not use his wheelchair cushion. Although he explained that it was a health issue for him, he was denied access. Together the three chapters and our national office are seeking a solution to this problem. We are reminding Disney of the American Disabilities Act and hopefully we can see a change with Disney's policy. We are also doing the same with Universal Studios and realize that this is potentially a problem across the country with other theme parks.

That's all for now! Enjoy your summer and stay safe!



## GRANT FUNDED RENOVATIONS

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# Poker Run



# Poker Run



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9am The Alibi  
3391 FL-46, Geneva  
Kick Stands Up at 11am  
11:30am Shays  
3730 FL-46, Sanford  
1:30pm Wet Spot  
112 S. Park Ave, Sanford  
3:00pm Wreath Ceremony Veterans Memorial Park  
110 W Seminole Blvd, Sanford  
4:00pm Lies & Alibis  
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6:00pm party at The Shovelhead Lounge  
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SHIRTS ARE \$15 WHILE  
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Be kind to humankind! You can #GIVE back to PVA members by donating your gently used clothes and household goods. Your donation can help a paralyzed #veteran today. To learn more and donate: [https://secure.pva.org/default.aspx?tsid=9491&donationAmount=other&mSource=WEQYYDFW2GPG&\\_ga=2.1705649.1607860698.1552920854-258990882.1542139382](https://secure.pva.org/default.aspx?tsid=9491&donationAmount=other&mSource=WEQYYDFW2GPG&_ga=2.1705649.1607860698.1552920854-258990882.1542139382)



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It is that time of the year again! Time to nominate and elect officers and board members for the coming PVACF Year. We have two open board positions (two board members will be rotating off the board (Ken Weas and Jimmy Green). However, both can be nominated for re-election and can serve again, if nominated and elected. The two board positions are for three years (from October of 2022 through September of 2025). Nominations will be received no later than June 30, 2022 by email, email or at the June Board of Directors meeting. Only chapter members can make nominations. Ballots will be mailed in the first week of August and must be returned by August 31, 2021. An ad hoc committee will count returned ballots before the September Board of Directors Meeting. Those newly elected will be announced and inducted at the September board meeting and will take office October 1, 2021. Please note the requirements for nominations for board membership as per the Policies and Procedures of the PVA Central Florida Chapter;

“Any voting member running for Chapter Office must be a certified member of PVA through the National PVA Secretary and a member of the Central Florida Chapter, prior to being placed on the official ballot. The certification process includes proof of citizenship, proof of Active Duty Service in the Armed Forces and Character of Discharge other than Dishonorable (DD 214), and medical proof of Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Multiple Scleroses or ALS. Documents are to be submitted to the CFPVA Secretary for review and examination before they are forwarded to the National PVA Secretary for member certification. Member certification may take a long as two or more months. Any prospective Board Member or Officer is required to attend six (6) board meetings prior to submitting his/her name to run for a potential Board membership or officer position. A prospective Board Member/Officer may excuse themselves from two (2) meetings due to serious medical complications. These conditions will apply for each fiscal year. Those desiring office should have a working understanding of the Chapter’s Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and the mandated programs required by National. The materials will be made available and can be found at [www.pvacf.org](http://www.pvacf.org)”

## VA SUSPENDS ANNUAL CAREGIVER PROGRAM REASSESSMENTS

Recently, the VA announced it was suspending annual reassessments for participants of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) while the department continues its review of the program. The action compliments the department's March 22 decision to temporarily stop dismissing veterans from the PCAFC while officials evaluate the program's eligibility rules and the fairness and effectiveness of its assessment tools. Facility Caregiver Support Program staff will however continue to initiate reassessments for veterans and family caregivers for certain purposes, such as when a veteran or caregiver requests to be considered for an increase in stipend level or if there is evidence of an increased need for personal care services. The VA will also continue to conduct wellness visits. Appeal and review options for those who disagree with a PCAFC determination remain the same.

## SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HOLDS HEARING ON SOCIAL SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) convened a hearing on June 9 to announce his introduction of the Social Security Expansion Act (S. 4365) and hear from witnesses about the importance of making improvements to Social Security and strengthening its financing. The hearing featured witnesses from Social Security Works, Alliance for Retired Americans, Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, and the Bipartisan Policy Center.

The focus of the hearing was Senator Sander's legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security for 75 years by lifting the premium cap (currently payroll taxes are not applied above \$147,000 in annual earnings) and subject all income, including investment income, above \$250,000 to the Social Security payroll tax. A fact sheet issued by his office says that, under this bill, over 93 percent of households would not see any increase in their taxes. The legislation would increase benefits for anyone turning 62 this year and older by \$200 a month and use the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) as the standard for cost of living increases (COLA). The bill would also update the Special Minimum Benefit so that it is equal to 125 percent of the poverty line and it would restore the student benefit up to age 22 for children of disabled or deceased workers, if the child is a full-time student in a college or vocational school. While several of

Senator Sanders' Democratic colleagues spoke positively about his efforts, Republicans on the Committee expressed skepticism about the prospects for the bill.

## SENATE ISSUES LETTER TO VA TO FIX WEBSITE INACCESSIBILITY

Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) led a bipartisan Senate letter to the VA urging the department to improve website accessibility for veterans with disabilities. Website accessibility is required under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. The VA Website Accessibility Act passed in December 2020, requiring VA to identify inaccessible websites, files, and applications and send a report to Congress on VA's plan to make them accessible.

In September 2021, VA submitted its report to Congress. The report found that only eight percent of VA's internet sites were fully compliant with Section 508. While the Veterans Health Administration provided a detailed remediation timeline, the Veterans Benefits (VBA) and National Cemetery (NCA) Administrations' plans were less than a page long. In the letter, among other things, the lawmakers requested a revised, detailed report from VBA and NCA and for the VA to describe what steps the department is taking or will take to engage groups representing different classes of disabilities. In March 2022, PVA met with Senator Casey's office to discuss website inaccessibility and how it affects PVA members.

## Self-Service Appointment Check-In Coming to Some VA Facilities

Beginning this summer, some VA facilities will allow veterans to start their check-in process up to seven days in advance of their appointment and/or check in at the clinic using their smartphone on the day of the appointment.

## Reading of the Names

As part of the 40th anniversary commemoration of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, each of the 58,281 names on The Wall will be read between November 7-10, 2022, in Washington, D.C. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation is currently accepting applications from volunteers to support this event. Reader registration will close on August 1 and reading slots will be confirmed by early September.

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My name is Robert Fitzsimmons and I am a new member of PVACF from Jacksonville FL which is my hometown where I was born and raised. I have lived in two other cities with my business capacity, Albuquerque and Nashville. From 2007 through 2016 I traveled throughout the United States for three to four weeks per month, also business related. John DeMauro, advised me to mention a little bit about myself. As you read, you will understand who I am.

The journey to become a member of the PVACF chapter has been a long one. I am qualified because of a spinal cord injury dating back to 1977. I was a young man full of it and just shook things off those days. Military time served was 1971 through 1978. The Vietnam era. Lucky for me about six years too young or I might not be here today. My MOS was infantry light weapons expert, paratrooper. Once active duty training was complete, I went back to my duty station, Army SF Jacksonville FL. The government made some changes in the state of Florida. I wanted to stay job status, so I joined up with the Florida National Guard 20<sup>th</sup> SF group until 1978. There was a night jump into the drop zone located at camp Blanding Florida. The Jumpmaster said go to my stick of 10 men too late and we all went into the pine trees. I had to free fall 12 feet to kiss the ground. That night started my road to the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Life goes on, I was blessed with a beautiful family. It was perfect.

I had lower back pain that was always not far away. I played tennis, golf and went camping with the kids. Also, going to the beach was one of our favorite things. April and Williams my daughter and son, are now young adults, but life continues at a rapid pace. June of 2016, out of nowhere, the BAM virus attacked my spinal cord. It is called Transverse Myelitis. I was in a local hospital but then was transferred to Brooks Rehab for the next 28 days. I learned how to walk, move my arms and hands, how to a function with a bladder and colon that were not on the same page as my brain. There was a lot more medical stuff however; I don't want to go on and on a lot about that.

One afternoon, after my second bout with transverse myelitis, I was in Riverside pain clinic in Jacksonville when the doctor asked if I had ever served in the military. I replied of course yes more questions and answers followed until he reached the condition of my spinal cord. This doctor's visit led me to the VA to find records from the night when I landed in the trees. Finding those records was vital to making a case to the VA. Exams, x-rays, letters documented to my community and even a microfiche film was what I needed to make my case. It was in August of 2020 when VA made their decision. It was a learning curve for me that I'm sure many of you can relate to.

Adaptive sports was nothing that I knew anything about, when a friend returning from the Senior Games in 2022, on his way home to Colorado, asked if he could stop by

and show me something. It was a hot Sunday afternoon in Jacksonville. Out of his van, he pulled a recumbent trike along with gold and silver medals. This guy is 76 years old with a past stroke and spinal cord injuries. Roger, my friend, begins to explain to me about the programs and what is available to the military folks with issues. One has to reach out to discover these types of things. In my opinion, God did not create us to sit on the recliner all day and night to watch TV, complaining about what we could do or not do.

Roger let me ride his Trike down the street and back. It was unbelievable. That night I watched YouTube until midnight and the next day I search Google for more



information. I began looking into some of the money I had spent I realize since 2010 not every month but most every month I would send a check to the PBA national as a donation.

Once again, using Google, I started researching things and bingo PVA kept popping up. I though PVA might be able to advise me. I left messages and emails and finally, I did get a response directing me to the local PVA chapter in Sanford FL. I am now their newest chapter member. I did all this typing to tell members to stop into their local VFW, American Legion and talk about PVA and adaptive sports. It also would be good idea to check out the adaptive sports PVACF offers. PVACF offers an adaptive sports program where you can get points to become eligible for all their programs. I plan to write another article next month called "Summer is a State of Mind". Thanks for reading, v.

*Robert Fitzsimmons*

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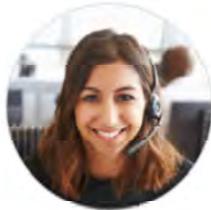
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A robotic device that enables veterans to walk again.

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