Paralyzed Veterans of America
Central Florida Chapter

Wheels in Motion

NOVEMBER 2026



PVACF
Annual Holiday Party

Saturday December 19, 2026
11:00AM – 3:00 PM

200 West Warren Avenue
Longwood, FL 32750

Wear your festive attire for pictures at the photo booth. We will have food, drinks and exciting games.

Please RSVP by Dec 1, 2026
407-328-7041.

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

November Board Meeting has been cancelled

Chapter Officers 2025-2027

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Vice President ..... Tim Wolfe
Treasurer..... David Rountree
Secretary ..... Eddie Hawks
National Director .....Amy Patterson
Executive Director .....John DeMauro
Administrator .....Joanne Poretti
Administrative Assistant ..... Stacie Woodworth

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Government Relations Director ..... Tim Wolfe
Sports Director .....Jimmy Green
Volunteer Coordinator..... Stacie Woodworth
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National Service Officers:

David Ray (407) 631-1835
David Leebert (813) 978-5841

Website: pvacf.org
Email: office@pvacf.org

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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.



Adaptive Sports Expo

Join the professionals from Orlando Health Advanced Rehabilitation Institute to learn more about adaptive sports and recreation. The event is free, and all are welcome to participate.

Come and learn more about adaptive sports and recreation opportunities in Central Florida.

Opportunities Include

- Basketball
- Boccia and Cornhole
- Cycling
- Disc Golf
- EcoRover Chairs
- Fishing
- Golf
- Paddling
- Tennis
- Track and Field

Saturday, November 14, 2026

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Barnett Park | 4801 W. Colonial Dr. | Orlando, FL 32808

Scan the QR code for directions.



In partnership with Orange County District 6 Commissioner Mike Scott.

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For more information, contact
R-AdaptiveSports@OrlandoHealth.com

Gargoyles on American Buildings



Chapter President
Steve Kirk

Perched above city streets, staring down from stone ledges, or reaching outward from historic rooftops, gargoyles are among the most intriguing features of American architecture. With fierce expressions, exaggerated bodies, wings, horns, and animal-like faces, they seem to belong to a world of myths and legends. Yet these unusual figures have a long architectural history and purposes that go beyond decoration.

Gargoyles reflect practical engineering, European traditions, religious symbolism, artistic expression, and a fascination with the mysterious. They invite us to consider why architects gave stone such extraordinary forms.

A true gargoyle is a sculpted architectural feature designed to carry rainwater away from a building. It projects from a roofline or wall, allowing water to flow through its mouth and fall clear of the masonry. This helps reduce water damage to walls and foundations. The word is associated with the French gargouille, meaning "throat" or "gullet," a reference to the passage of water through the figure.

Not every frightening stone figure is technically a gargoyle. A creature that serves only as decoration is more accurately called a grotesque. Both may depict monsters, animals, human faces, or imaginary beings. The essential difference is function: a gargoyle channels water, while a grotesque does not.

Gargoyles became prominent in medieval European architecture, especially on Gothic churches and cathedrals. Builders combined elaborate carving with practical drainage, creating figures that were useful and visually dramatic. As European traditions spread to North America, these forms gradually appeared in American design.

Their popularity grew during the nineteenth century, when Gothic Revival architecture became fashionable. Inspired by medieval churches and castles, the style featured pointed arches, towers, and elaborate stonework. American architects adapted it for churches, universities, libraries, museums, government buildings, and commercial structures. Carved figures could suggest permanence, learning, spiritual meaning, or civic importance.

Why Did Architects Use Gargoyles?

Their purposes varied by building and period. First, some served a practical role. As waterspouts, they directed rain away from vulnerable masonry, particularly before modern drainage systems became common in many types of construction.

Second, they could carry symbolic meaning. In religious settings, frightening creatures have been interpreted as reminders of evil, temptation, spiritual danger, or the contrast between sacred and worldly life. Some people also view them as guardians that frighten away harmful forces. These ideas are not universal, however, and no single explanation applies to every figure.

Third, gargoyles displayed artistic skill. Detailed faces, twisting bodies, wings, and claws demonstrated a sculptor's craftsmanship and helped distinguish one building from another.

Finally, these figures gave buildings personality. A row of severe faces or fantastical beasts could turn an ordinary roofline into something memorable. On prominent structures, elaborate ornament could communicate ambition, wealth, tradition, or a commitment to distinctive design.

The creatures range from recognizable animals to imaginary beings. Lions may suggest strength, eagles power or vigilance, and dragons danger or the supernatural. Human faces can express wisdom, amusement, anger, or fear. Yet figures do not always have fixed meanings; sculptors might follow tradition, respond to a patron, or simply use their imagination. Sometimes the original intention was never recorded.

Gothic Revival buildings are among the most recognizable settings for American gargoyles. The style's pointed arches, towers, and ornamental stonework create a dramatic setting for expressive figures. In the United States, it became especially popular for churches and educational institutions, where medieval-inspired architecture could suggest solemnity, scholarship, and historical depth.

New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral is a prominent Gothic Revival landmark with elaborate carved details. Gargoyle-like figures also appear on some university buildings, where medieval forms suggest tradition and institutional identity. In these settings, carvings may contribute more to atmosphere than drainage.

GARGOYLES_Continued on Page 6

Final Sports Report of 2026



Sports Director
Jimmy Green

As 2026 draws to a close, we have some exciting opportunities available. First, let me wish everyone a great holiday season and an excellent start to 2027. Now lets jump *into* the sports opportunities.

Air Rifle / Boccia continue on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at the chapter. Check the website calendar for times.

Bowling every Tuesday evening at Alamo Bowl from 6:30 – 8:30pm. Call the office for further details.

Bowling at Boardwalk Bowl on Dec. 16th starting at 11am. Lunch included. Check the website for details.

Adaptive Sports Expo Nov. 14th 10-4pm. Check flyer below for info.

Wheelchair Tennis event Nov. 7th 1-4pm. Check flyer below for info.

Free Magic tickets for Vets and family Nov. 2nd. Check flyer below for info.

Happy Thanksgiving

GARGOYLES_Continued from Page 5

Gargoyles and grotesques also appear beyond religious architecture. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, architects added sculptural ornament to commercial buildings, civic structures, and grand residences. New York's Woolworth Building, completed in 1913, is a celebrated example of Gothic-inspired skyscraper design. Its decorative details reflect the ambition and visual richness of the period.

Fantastical figures helped commercial buildings stand out, gave civic structures a sense of permanence, and let private homeowners display resources or interest in historic styles. Their meaning depended on the setting.

Gargoyles are often described as guardians, an image reinforced by folklore, literature, film, and modern decorative art. Some religious interpretations connect frightening figures with the struggle between good and evil, while other accounts treat them as protective presences. Claims that all gargoyles were intended to ward off evil spirits should be treated cautiously. The evidence does not support one universal explanation. Practical design, religious imagery, folklore, and artistic imagination sometimes overlap, but the purpose of a particular carving depends on its history.

Today, gargoyles offer clues about historic materials, techniques, and tastes. Their placement can reveal how drainage worked, while their designs show how American architects adapted European traditions. Weather, pollution, frost, and time wear away stone, so preservation may involve documenting carvings, repairing masonry, and managing runoff. Even when a figure no longer carries water, it can remain part of a building's identity.

Gargoyles capture the imagination because they occupy a space between the familiar and strange. Part animal, part human, and part fantasy, they seem frozen in stone yet full of emotion. Their high positions encourage passersby to look up and notice details that connect everyday life with architectural history.

Gargoyles on American buildings are far more than frightening faces carved in stone. They reflect practical needs, European influence, religious ideas, artistic ambition, and the desire to make buildings memorable. Some carry rainwater; others are decorative grotesques. Many invite thoughts about protection, authority, and mystery. The next time you pass a historic church, university, courthouse, or old commercial building, look toward its roofline and corners. You may discover a creature watching from above. Whether designed to carry water, express an idea, or delight the imagination, it offers a small but revealing window into the history of American architecture.



Executive Director
John DeMauro

The fiscal year has ended for our chapter, and our financial position remains stable. Our net assets have changed very little since last year's assets. Our audit will be started soon, and we will produce an Annual Report in late January. In its October board meeting, the board voted to go to bi-monthly newsletters. The next newsletter you will receive will be in January and then again in March, May, July, September and November in 2027. The board also passed a policy that will require members to rsvp when attending events that involve the chapter purchasing tickets or paying fees on behalf of our members. The policy reads as follows;

"In an effort to be responsible to our donors and chapter membership, any member and/or caregiver who signs up to attend an event that requires the chapter to use chapter funds to pay for the cost for that member and/or caregiver to attend the event, will be required to RSVP. If the member and/or caregiver does not attend the event without a valid excuse for their absence (validity will be determined by the Chapter Board of Directors President or Executive Director). That member will be required to reimburse the cost to the chapter in order to remain a "member in good standing". Members must be considered a "member in good standing" for any funding, according to our policies and procedures."

The intent of this policy is not to prevent members from attending events but to be frugal in our use of funds available. On occasion we have had members commit to attending an event where we have paid the costs of their attendance and then without any notice to the chapter just not show up. Had we been aware of their not attending, we could have recouped the funds spent. We recognize that emergencies can change someone's plans, and we will certainly recognize that when those things happen.

The chapter has also launched a new website with a new look and many new features. The new website will be public but will have a member portal that an only be accessed by PVACF members who have signed up. The member portal will be password protected and every member who signs up will have their own password. The member portal will allow them to receive emails from the chapter through the website and will allow members to make comments and send messages to the chapter. There are many other features to this website that are further explained by our Web Master (and chapter member) Charlie Merritt in a separate article in this newsletter.

Sports provide an opportunity to set goals, learn new skills, overcome challenges, and experience accomplishment. Reaching a personal goal—such as improving a wheelchair racing time, learning a new swimming technique, or helping a team win a game—can build confidence and self-esteem. The sense of achievement that comes from participating in sports can help people recognize their abilities rather than focusing solely on their limitations.

Another major benefit is social connection. Paralysis can sometimes lead to isolation, particularly when people have difficulty finding activities that are accessible and inclusive. Adaptive sports bring people together in an environment where participants can share experiences and encourage one another. Teammates, coaches, families, and other athletes can become an important support network. Friendships developed through sports can extend beyond practices and competitions, helping participants feel connected to their communities.

Adaptive sports can also promote independence. Learning how to participate in a sport often requires athletes to develop problem-solving skills and become comfortable using adaptive equipment. These experiences can increase confidence in handling challenges in other areas of life. Athletes may become more willing to try new activities, travel to competitions, participate in community events, or pursue personal and professional goals.

Participation can also change the way people view disability. Adaptive athletes demonstrate that paralysis does not eliminate a person's ability to compete, lead, achieve goals, or contribute to a team. Their accomplishments can challenge stereotypes about disability and encourage greater understanding and inclusion within communities. Adaptive sports therefore benefit not only the athletes but also the people who watch, volunteer, coach, and support them.

For veterans and civilians living with paralysis, adaptive sports can provide a particularly valuable sense of purpose and community. Programs offered through rehabilitation centers, community organizations, schools, and sporting organizations can introduce athletes to activities that may become lifelong interests. Competitive opportunities can range from local recreational programs to national and international competitions.

Adaptive sports are not simply modified versions of traditional sports. They are opportunities for people with disabilities to discover what they can accomplish. Through physical activity, teamwork, competition, and personal achievement, adaptive sports can improve fitness, strengthen confidence, reduce isolation, and promote independence.

Ultimately, the greatest benefit of adaptive sports may be the opportunity they provide to focus on ability rather than disability. With appropriate equipment, coaching, accessibility, and support, people with paralysis can participate, compete, build relationships, and achieve goals they may once have thought were out of reach. Adaptive sports demonstrate the power of physical activity to improve quality of life while creating communities where everyone has the opportunity to play, compete, and succeed.



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A New Way to Stay Connected with Your Chapter

The new PVACF website and member portal

We have been working on a redesigned chapter website with a simple goal: make it easier for members to find information, keep up with activities, and get involved. The new website and member portal will bring chapter events, resources, forms, and Wheels in Motion together in one place.

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The new homepage connects members with chapter events, resources, and the member portal.

Wheels in Motion Online

Wheels in Motion will also have a dedicated home on the website. Members will be able to read the magazine online, browse previous issues, and return to articles or information they want to revisit. Having those issues available online will also make it easier to share chapter news with family, caregivers, and others interested in our work.

Adaptive Sports

For members interested in adaptive sports, the Sports Hub will provide information about different activities and ways to express interest in participating. It will give members a starting point for learning about something new or staying connected with a sport they already enjoy.

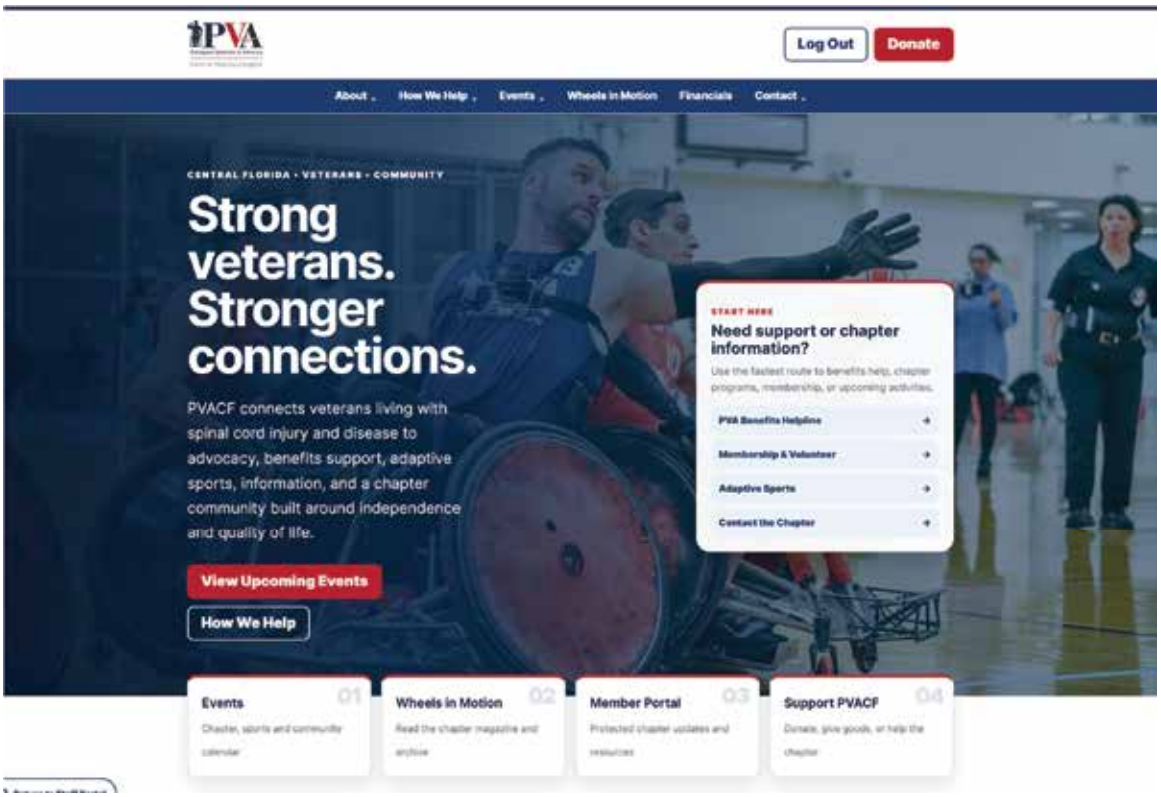
The Events Calendar

One of the most useful features will be the events calendar. Members will be able to browse upcoming activities, move between months, and filter events by category. Whether you are interested in adaptive sports, social gatherings, chapter meetings, or advocacy, you will have an easier way to see what is coming up. Individual event pages will provide details such as dates, times, locations, contact information, and registration or RSVP instructions when applicable.

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The new homepage connects members with chapter events, resources, and the member portal.

Wheels in Motion Online

The chapter calendar offers a monthly view with filters for different types of activities.

You will also be able to add events to your Google, Outlook, or Apple calendar. That makes it easier to plan ahead, coordinate transportation or caregiver schedules, and keep chapter activities alongside your other appointments.

Email Updates Based on Your Interests

Members will have more control over the event information they receive by email. You will be able to choose the categories that interest you and update those preferences as your interests change. If you want to keep up with everything, you can do that too.

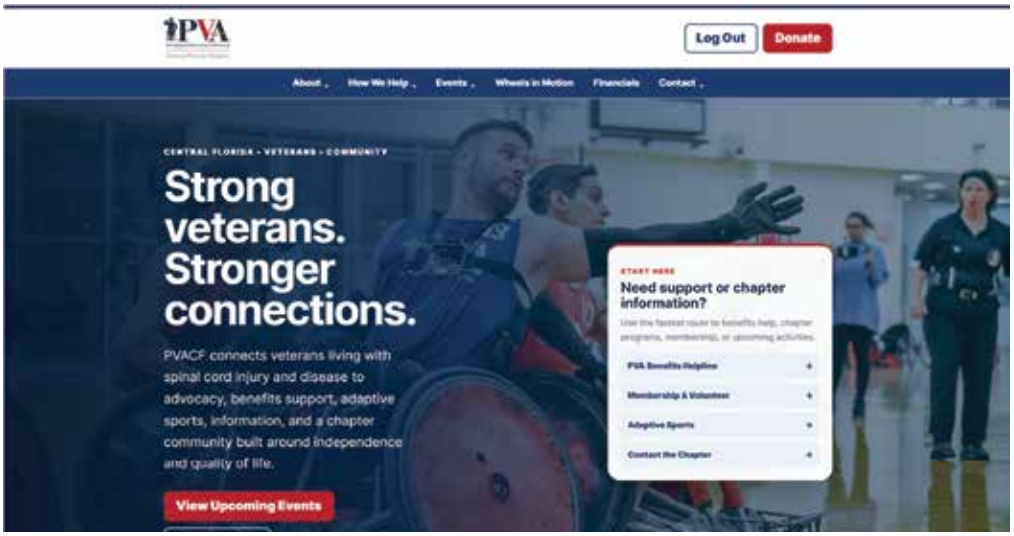
Your Member Portal

The private member portal will give members a central place to access chapter information and forms. It will bring together tools for submitting event ideas, completing volunteer paperwork, and providing reimbursement documentation. The goal is to make these everyday tasks easier and reduce the time spent tracking down the right form or figuring out where something needs to go.

A New Way to Stay Connected with Your Chapter

The new PVACF website and member portal

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A New Way to Stay Connected with Your Chapter

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The member portal brings chapter forms, program requests, and frequently used links together.

Accessibility and Ease of Use

Throughout the redesign, we have focused on clearer navigation, accessibility, and usability across computers, tablets, and phones. The website is being built around the people who will use it and the practical things they need to accomplish.

Getting Started

As we complete the transition, we will share instructions for accessing the new website and getting started with the member portal. We encourage members to explore the features and let us know what is helpful and where we can improve. Your feedback will help us continue building a website that serves our chapter.

1. National Update -Air Travel Accessibility

Heather Ansley provided updates on air travel accessibility, including the 40th anniversary of the Air Carrier Access Act and new lavatory accessibility rules.

- Thanked attendees of the Access to the Skies event in Colorado Springs; noted good in-person and online attendance.
- Marked the 40th anniversary of the Air Carrier Access Act, acknowledging PVA's direct role in its passage.
- Outlined new requirements effective October 2nd related to onboard wheelchairs and new aircraft accessibility features, including a visual barrier for lavatories on new aircraft. Full accessible lavatory requirements begin in the early 2030s.



Government Relations
Tim Wolfe

2. National Update -Veteran-Focused Legislation

Morgan Brown provided updates on several key issues affecting veterans.

- The Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA), which consolidated 63 individual measures, stalled and was not brought back to the floor before Congress recessed. Next opportunity is likely December, though the Senate currently lacks the votes to pass it.
- The Act for ALS Act was passed by the Senate on the 28th, extending critical research and expanded access programs through 2031. The bill now awaits presidential signature.
- The Veterans Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) final data point will be revealed October 14th.
- Chairman Bost is term-limited and stepping down; Representative Bergman is positioned for Republican leadership. Staff director changes are also anticipated.
- Several Democratic committee members are vying for positions on other committees, signaling potential turnover on the Veterans Affairs Committee.
- The Senate side is expected to be more stable regardless of chamber control.
- PVA is beginning to prepare the President's statement for the March joint hearing and is seeking member examples in three key areas: VDC denials, problems accessing community care, and VA dental care issues.

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Congratulations to our Chapter Administrator Joanne who tied the knot with Mike Pope on October 24, 2026












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Achilles International is a nonprofit that empowers people with disabilities to participate in adaptive running and endurance sports. We support youth, adults and veterans with disabilities through our 60+ chapters around the world, including in Orlando, FL.

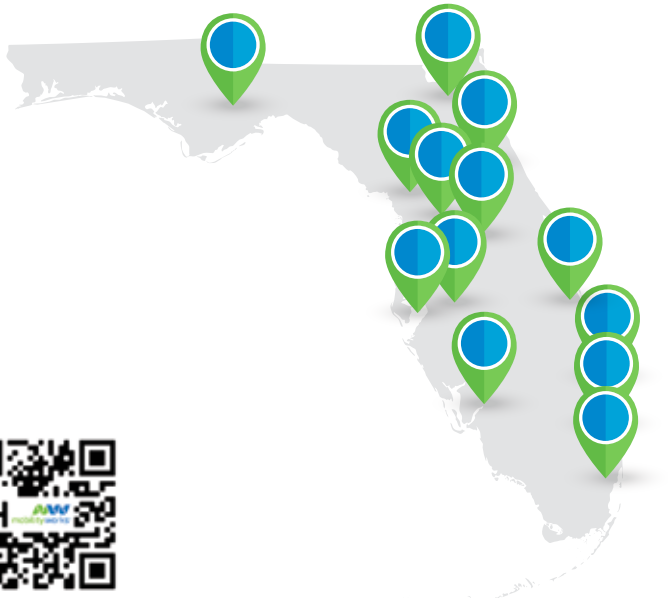
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MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation's veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

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