



# Midnight Sun

A Daily Publication of the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Issue 3

Wednesday, July 5, 2006

## Athletes Travel Near and Far to Chase the Midnight Sun

**N**o matter how you did it—by plane, train or car—getting to Anchorage was a journey. If you flew from San Antonio, that's 4,500 Eagle Points, and 4,800 Sky Miles from Tampa. If you came from Baltimore or Washington D.C., you spent at least eight hours in the air. From London's Heathrow Airport, it took the British Team nearly 16 hours to get here—excluding layovers!

For a few folks, however, the Games are happening right in their back yard. "I live right by the VA clinic (in Anchorage) and I'll be driving around 15 minutes to my competition venues," said Vern Bussing, 63, a local Navy veteran. "It is great for other veterans to see this part of the country. It's a back door to the wilderness and to America. It won't happen at every Games that you can go three blocks from your hotel to catch a King Salmon!"

Bussing is one of 14 Alaska veterans competing this week—the most ever.

Although many live in or near Anchorage, one Alaska veteran, Susan Macaulay, hails from Juneau—915 miles away (almost as far as New York City is to Jacksonville, Fla.). Like the other Alaska athletes, she's excited the Games are here. "We have so many wonderful things to see and do here," Macaulay said. Another Alaska veteran, Larry Crothers, comes from even further—Petersburg, a

thousand miles from Anchorage. "I've lived mostly in Alaska since 1973 so I know Alaskan hospitality is second to none," he said. "Win, lose or draw, I'm here for the journey, the camaraderie and the fun."



**Tim Kelly, of South Hadley, Mass., drove all the way here with his father.**

One athlete who has been to Alaska before is Diane Marsh, an Army veteran from Denver, who spent time training at Fort Greeley in Fairbanks in 1977. "I've been to the Games eight times and I'm thrilled at the opportunity to compete in Alaska," she said. Marsh was especially excited about handcycling yesterday on the Alaska terrain. "It isn't too hot, we have short nights and long days, and it is fantastic exploring the Last Frontier. What a special place for novices to experience life after an injury or illness."

One veteran who was especially eager to get here was Timothy D'Aubert, an Army and Marine Corps veteran from Lindsay, Calif. "Alaska is the only state I had yet to visit," he said. "Now, all

50 are complete. While I'm here, I want to take one

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### Today's Weather

Partly cloudy; high 71 degrees, low 55 degrees; 20 percent chance of rain.



## Schedule of Events for Today

6-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast		Hotels
8 a.m.	Air Guns		Egan Convention Center
9 a.m.	Bowling	II, III	Polar Bowl
	Slalom	Motorized (hand control)	Bartlett High School
	Table Tennis	IV, V	Egan Convention Center
	Quad Rugby	Games 1 & 2	Sullivan Arena
10 a.m.	Air Guns		Egan Convention Center
12-2 p.m.	Lunch		Box Lunch
1 p.m.	Air Guns		Egan Convention Center
2 p.m.	Bowling	IV, V	Polar Bowl
	Slalom	IA, IB, IC	Bartlett High School
	Power Soccer	Games 5, 6	Sullivan Arena
3 p.m.	Air Guns		Egan Convention Center
4 p.m.	Power Soccer	Consolation Game	Sullivan Arena
5:30-7:30 p.m.	Dinner		Egan Convention Center
6:30 p.m.	Bowling	Ramp	Polar Bowl
7:30 p.m.	Air Guns		Egan Convention Center
	Quad Rugby	Consolation Games	Sullivan Arena
	Slalom	IV, V	Bartlett High School
	Table Tennis	II, III	Egan Convention Center

## Awards Presentation Schedule

As always, medals are being awarded two ways. For sports events with a clear winner, medals will be awarded at the venue immediately after the event. These include: handcycling, slalom, table tennis, power soccer, quad rugby, weightlifting, basketball and softball. If you are unable to accept your immediate award after the event, they will be available at the next scheduled awards time at the Egan Center, or for pick-up prior to the Closing Ceremonies.

If results must be tabulated, medals are delayed. They will be presented at the awards table in the Egan Center during the following times:

Air Guns & Bowling: July 6, 4:30–8 p.m.

Track & Field: July 7, 4:30–8 p.m.

Archery & Swimming: July 8, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Motor Rally: July 8, 4–7 p.m. **at Sullivan Arena**

Award photos are being taken and printed right at the awards area (one per athlete). Results are being posted on bulletin boards in the Egan Center lobby. Please pick up your medals promptly to avoid a long line the last day.

### Ticket Sales for Closing Ceremonies

Tickets for Closing Ceremonies go on sale today for **athletes and qualified coaches** at the Egan Center hospitality desk. The cost is \$15. **Quantities are limited.** If any tickets remain, family and friends who would like to attend can purchase tickets tomorrow at the Egan Center hospitality desk. The cost is \$25.

## On the Menu ...



### Breakfast (6-8:30 a.m. at hotels):

Menus vary by location.

### Lunch (12-2 p.m. at Bartlett High School and Egan Convention Center):

Box lunch with smoked turkey and bacon sandwich on ciabatta bread, pasta salad, apple, chocolate chip cookie; assorted beverages.

### Dinner (5:30-7:30 p.m. at Egan Convention Center):

Caesar salad; Alaskan Halibut Newburg; rice; steamed broccoli; coconut cream pie; assorted beverages.

*\*Note: Some menu items may be subject to change at the chef's discretion.*

## Near and Far cont.

of the glacier tours. The beauty of nature here is just amazing.” D’Aubert says the Games give veterans memories that last a lifetime. “For me, it is an amazing opportunity and one of the best possible therapeutic events. You take these memories with you for life.”

Alex Schied, from Buhl, Idaho, is returning to Alaska for the first time in 20 years. Shied grew up in Ketchikan, Juneau and Fairbanks, and is attending his 20th high school reunion in Fairbanks right after the Games. “I have really looked forward to showing my wife where I grew up,” he said.

Another veteran with Alaska ties is Timothy Kelly, from South Hadley, Mass., who drove all the way here with his father. “This is my first time competing in the Games, and I’ve looked forward to testing myself in competition against

## Homecoming for a Wounded Alaskan Warrior

The Alaska Native community is honoring Army veteran Latseen Benson, who is returning to his home state this week for the first time since he was injured in Iraq last November. They also wish to welcome all veterans taking part in the Games this week. The Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood as well as members of the Tlingit and Haida community will be assisting with food and support.

This special homecoming will take place at 6 p.m. this evening at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, located at 8800 Heritage Center Drive in Anchorage. To get there from downtown Anchorage, take 6th Avenue (one-way heading east) which turns/curves into Glenn Highway. Go 3.2 miles. Exit north onto Muldoon Road, and follow the signs.

my peers and learning a thing or two,” Kelly said. “I have always had an affinity for adventurous outdoor sports since my father was stationed at Fort Wainwright in the early 1970s when I was a child.” Kelly, who was also stationed there years later, worked in the same aircraft hanger as his dad until he was injured in a motorcycle accident five years ago. “My father was planning to visit me until my injury canceled those plans. When I learned that Anchorage was hosting the Wheelchair Games this year, our plans were back on.”

Once again, the British team traveled the farthest to attend the Games. “It’s been 11 years since I last competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games so I never thought I would experience

another, least of all in Alaska,” said Ian Stuart, a Royal Navy veteran from Cumbria. “My previous visits to these Games with the Great Britain Team have been very rewarding and contributed toward my perceptions of my capabilities. Now, years down the line and realizing that many things are possible through wheelchair sports, I am glad for the opportunity to experience the Games in Anchorage set in these beautiful surroundings. Sports do make a difference and help people deal with their injuries, increasing the motivation factor.”

Whether you came from Great Britain, Puerto Rico, Alaska or the 45 other states represented this year, enjoy your time in the 49th state, *chasing the midnight sun!*

## Check Your Hotel Bill

Please check your hotel bill today or tomorrow to ensure that you are being charged the correct nightly rate, and that you are not being charged for phone calls you did not make or other extra charges. Do not wait until Friday or Saturday to check your bill so that any problems can be resolved prior to check out. Don’t be surprised to see an \$8 portage fee on your bill at check-out time. This fee will be charged to each athlete for baggage handling.

## Birthdays This Week

Happy Birthday to the following athletes:

**Lance Kepler**, Brooklyn, Ohio, July 2, 58  
**William Sturges**, Ronkonkoma, N.Y., July 3, 42  
**Joseph Tompkins**, Prophetstown, Ill., July 3, 50  
**Kenneth Force**, Garden Grove, Calif., July 4, 49  
**Jerome Payton**, Walnut Grove, Miss., July 5, 43  
**Gary Pearson**, Seattle, Wash., July 5, 51  
**Lee O’Brien**, Las Vegas, Nev., July 5, 52  
**Donald Plunkett**, New Windsor, N.Y., July 5, 62  
**Anthony Bryant**, Stockton, Calif., July 5, 74  
**Alice Barszcz**, Manahawkin, N.J., July 5, 84  
**Charles Brown**, Loxahatchee, Fla., July 6, 40



Stop by the hospitality desk at your hotel to pick up your special birthday gift from the Games! *Thanks to the Veterans Canteen Service for providing these birthday items.*

# What's Where?

**Durable Medical Equipment (DME)** is located at the Marriott Hotel in the Skagway Room; the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel in the Kuskokwim Room; and the Howard Johnson Hotel in the Anchorage Room. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through Friday and from 12 a.m. Saturday to 12 a.m. Sunday. The phone number for DME is (907) 382-2934 or (907) 382-2942.

## **Hospitality**

Hospitality desks are located in each hotel lobby and at the Egan Convention Center through Sunday, July 9. Hours are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. A wealth of information is available at each of these desks, such as recommended restaurants and places to shop, things to do in Anchorage, maps with driving directions, the Games schedule, transportation schedule, departure information and extra luggage tags, lost luggage forms, Spirit of the Games Award ballots, and optional tour information.

## **Internet Café**

You are far from home and just won a medal—how do you let your friends back home know? Come to the Internet Café and send them a message, of course! This year, the Internet Café will be located in the lobby of the Egan Convention Center. Café hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Computers and printers are available, compliments of longtime Games sponsor Hewlett-Packard. Staff will also be available to help with questions. Also, be sure to tell your friends and family back home about the Games Web site. Results, news releases and photos will be posted starting mid-week, at [www.wheelchairgames.org](http://www.wheelchairgames.org).

## **Medical Emergencies and Assistance**

Full medical suites are available only at the following hotels: Marriott, Sheraton Anchorage and Howard Johnson. These medical suites will be fully operational through July 8, ending at 10:30 p.m. The medical suites will be open for athletes each day from 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. for treatment of injuries and illnesses. If you have a medical emergency after the medical suites are closed, contact the operator at the hotel where you are staying. That operator will take the athlete's name and room number and communicate with the physician or nurse on call.

**Do not call 911 unless there is a life-threatening emergency!** If this occurs, please have the hotel operator contact 911.

**All other hotels will have** nurses on duty after hours only. It is the same procedure for contacting the hotel operator for medical emergencies after 10:30 p.m. If medical issues arise during the day, athletes need to go to the medical suites at the Marriott, Sheraton or Howard Johnson, or be evaluated at the various venue sites where medical teams are also stationed. The medical staff will be easily identified by their red shirts with a white cross on the back.

Only registered athletes or volunteers on duty will be treated by VA medical staff in the hotels or at the venues. If family members need medical assistance, a list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available at the hospitality desks.

## **Wheelchair Repair**

Wheelchair repair is available through Sunday, July 9, for emergencies only. The main wheelchair repair station is located at the Marriott Hotel. Invacare personnel are also available at most sports venues for emergency repairs. Contact the hospitality desk at your hotel for specific locations or for after-hours emergencies. The hospitality desks are open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

# Transportation

## Hotel Transportation to Main Transport HUB

There are three main transportation loops from the hotels to the Egan Center, which is the main transportation hub. All hotel buses go to the Egan Center. **You must transfer at the Egan Center** to be transported to your event venue.

**Red Loop** – hotels located on the east side of downtown, which include:

- Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
- Clarion Suites Hotel
- Howard Johnson
- Aspen Hotel (must push to the Clarion to pick up transportation)

**White Loop** – hotels located on the west side of downtown:

- Hawthorne Suites Hotel
- Marriott Hotel

**Blue Loop** – hotels located in midtown:

- Hilton Garden Inn
- Homewood Suites
- Motel 6
- Fairfield Inn



## To & From Sporting Venues

Transportation departs from the Egan Center starting **one hour** prior to game time. Please plan ahead when departing from your hotel to the Egan Center.

**Please plan ahead ...** Athletes need to be at their respective sports venues at least a half-hour before start time. It is **strongly recommended** that you depart from your hotel two hours prior to start time. If your sport is at the Egan Center (weightlifting, table tennis or air guns) you only need to depart from your hotel one hour before.

Remember, when departing from your hotel you will be taken to the Egan Center where you will transfer to another bus that will take you to your event. For Opening and Closing Ceremonies you will be taken directly from your hotel to that venue site.

## Egan Center distances from hotels:

*Sheraton Anchorage Hotel* – 7 blocks

*Clarion Suites Hotel* – 3 blocks

*Howard Johnson* – 2 blocks

*Hawthorne Suites Hotel* – 9 blocks

*Marriott Hotel* – 5 blocks

*Aspen* – 7 blocks (no transportation is available from this hotel. You must push to the Clarion (2 blocks) for transportation.

*Hilton* – 2 blocks (no transportation is available from this hotel. You must push to the Egan Center for transportation.

*Hilton Garden Inn* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Homewood Suites* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Motel 6* – 2 miles (not pushable)

*Fairfield Inn* – 2 miles (not pushable)

## Celebrating America's Independence at the Wheelchair Games



**The crowd cheered as hundreds of wheelchair athletes rolled down the streets of Anchorage as part of the city's annual 4th of July parade. Though the Games have been held the week of the 4th many times before, this was the first time the participants were invited to help lead a parade.**

Yesterday, veteran wheelchair athletes from across the country celebrated their independence as they rolled down the streets of Anchorage in the city's annual Fourth of July parade. The crowd cheered as hundreds of athletes proudly displayed their patriotic

colors, winding their way down the city streets.

Vern Bussing, 63, an Anchorage resident and Navy veteran, said this year's parade was "unbelievable!" He commended the efforts of organizers and said there was nothing more fitting than to have

### **Sixth Annual Kids Day is Tomorrow!**

The 6th annual "Kids Day at the Games"—a special event for local Anchorage children with disabilities—takes place tomorrow from 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m. at the track venue, located at Bartlett High School.

Kids Day is an opportunity for our competing wheelchair athletes to introduce the wonderful world of adaptive sports and recreational opportunities to local children with disabilities from the Anchorage area.

At the event, 12 mentoring athletes will offer first-hand instruction to more than 40 local children who will participate in

events such as t-ball, relay races and a mini slalom course. The day's events will conclude with a special award ceremony where the children will receive a Kids Day medal for their participation.

Our mentors know that being involved in sports and recreation is good for the mind, body and soul—and builds not only strength and coordination, but also confidence and character. They are looking forward to sharing their experiences with the participating children from Anchorage.

We invite you to come and cheer on the participating children at Kids Day!

veteran athletes recognized by the city on Independence Day. "Without veterans we would have no independence, no parades. Veterans should be front and center,"

Bussing said. "These veteran athletes gave everything they had for this country and yesterday, the city of Anchorage gave them the proper recognition. I was proud to be among my fellow comrades." Bussing is competing in bowling, air guns, field events and the motorized slalom this week.

Orlando Perez, 31, 2005 Spirit of the Games winner, held the honorable and first-ever Games position of Grand Marshal of parade festivities. Perez traveled with his family from Florida (and Puerto Rico) to attend this year's event. Family involvement is central to Perez's pursuit of athletic success. "When I compete, I think of my family," he said at the Games last year. "The vets are my family too, and I am humbled to serve in this position of honor." As Perez waved to the crowd, his family beamed with pride as he rode by.

While the parade may be an annual event in Anchorage, it has never included the inspiring sight of 500 wheelchairs rolling in the lead. "When we scheduled the Games several years ago and realized our event was going to coincide with July 4th, the local organizers really wanted the Games to play a part in the day's local celebrations," said Tom Brown, Director of the Games. "It was such a natural fit, and we were happy to be able to do it."

The Games have taken place over the 4th of July many times in the event's 26-year history, but this is the first time veteran athletes helped lead a parade. A fitting tribute, indeed!

## Ask Dr. Dan



*Dear Dr. Dan,*

What should I do as an athlete to keep myself properly hydrated? I get so busy concentrating on my sports, sightseeing and catching up with old friends that I forget to drink water.

**Thirsty**

*Dear Thirsty:*

It is important for both the seasoned athlete and those new to the Games to be aware of their fluid intake during their activities. Not being properly hydrated can be life-threatening, and ignoring the early signs of dehydration is the quickest route to the hospital.

Drink as much or more liquid than you will lose through sweat. Staying hydrated helps maintain athletic performance and reduces the risk of exertion-related illnesses such as cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Don't wait until you are thirsty before taking a drink. Thirst is an

indicator that you are already becoming dehydrated. Also, avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks, which tend to dehydrate you. You may be surprised to find out how many drinks do contain caffeine, like soft drinks and some sports drinks or fruit-flavored waters.

Try to drink eight to 10 ounces of water eight times a day. During athletic activity, we suggest an additional seven to 10 ounces of liquid every 10 to 20 minutes. One regular Styrofoam cup of liquid is about 8 oz., so when you are offered fluids, take at least one of these for each half-hour of activity.

To prevent the worst consequence of dehydration, recognize the symptoms. The first signs are usually thirst, irritability and general discomfort. If this isn't treated, it can lead to headache, cramps, chills, nausea, vomiting, a sensation of heat in the head or neck, decreased performance, dizziness and even fainting.

Even though you're in Alaska and the thermometer may read in the 60s, it tends to feel warmer. Heat exhaustion is the most common exertion-related heat illness. This results in profuse

sweating, pale, cold and clammy skin, cramps, fast pulse and feeling faint. If you experience any of these, get out of the sun into a cool, dry place, and drink lots of fluids, even if they are not ice-cold.

Heat stroke is the most serious of the heat-induced illnesses. It is marked by hot, dry skin. The body's evaporative process has shut down, so most have stopped sweating. Body temperature can rise to as high as 105. This is a medical emergency and requires immediate transportation to an emergency room.

**-Dr. Dan**

## Spirit of the Games Award: We Want You to Vote

When it comes to the "Spirit of the Games" Award, there are no "ifs, ands, or buts" about it. It's all about the vote!

Since 1987, one athlete has been selected each year for the "Spirit of the Games" award at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games! This very special award is presented to an athlete at the Closing Ceremonies, who clearly demonstrates athletic excellence, sportsmanship and strength of character. Who is it going to be this year? Do you know someone who is the picture of these qualifications?

Please nominate that person for the 2006 Spirit of the Games Award! It can't happen without your vote!

Nomination forms are available in the dining area (Egan Center) and the hospitality desks at each hotel. Please submit completed ballot in the Spirit of the Games ballot boxes clearly marked, "SPIRIT OF THE GAMES," in the dining area. All nominations are to be submitted by noon tomorrow.



## Special Games Cancellation Stamp First Time at the Games!

A special United States Postal Service (USPS) official postmark will be available for letters and postcards today in the lobby of the Egan

Convention Center. Anyone with a letter or postcard with a first class stamp on it may stop by the USPS table between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. to get the special cancellation. Envelopes, postcards and stamps (flag



**2006 National Veterans  
Wheelchair Games**

NVWG Station  
Anchorage, AK 99501

stamps and Purple Heart stamps) will also be available for purchase at the table if needed. USPS will also display an enlargement of the Purple Heart stamp and a framed "Honoring Veterans" stamp print. Those prints will be available for purchase on a limited basis at the Downtown Post Office, located at 344 West 3rd Avenue.

# *Opening Ceremonies and Fourth of July Parade*

