



YOU CAUGHT THE SPIRIT...NOW

CATCH the NEWS

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2005

Issue 1

Monday, June 27, 2005

Welcome to Minnesota—and Catch the Spirit of the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games!



Members of the Local Organizing Committee for the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

The Local Organizing Committee of the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games welcomes you and your family to Minnesota—land of 10,000 lakes and miles of beautiful scenic highways and trails. Steven Kleinglass, Director of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, and Charlie Wittwer, President of the Minnesota chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) are honored to have these organizations co-hosting this year's event.

Through the many months of planning for this huge endeavor, the local staff have been proud to spread the word about so many of

our nation's veterans competing here this week. The Twin Cities community has been anticipating your arrival for many months.

We received overwhelming support from our local VA and PVA staff, local and rural communities, federal and state agencies, corporate, civic and veterans service organizations, and many others. It is why the people of our state are sometimes referred to as "Minnesota Nice," generously giving of their resources, time and talents to make events like this one a success.

Many activities are planned for you this week, beginning with

the Games Kick-off and Opening Ceremonies today, a wheelchair sports demonstration at the Mall of America on Wednesday, our Music in the Park event and Kids Day activities on Thursday, and on Friday, the team finals and Closing Ceremonies. In between all that, there will be exciting sports competition starting first thing tomorrow morning and running through Friday afternoon.

While you are here, we hope you can also take some time to see the local sights. You are within walking/rolling distance to the Nicollet Mall area that has lots of trendy shops and restaurants, or you can take the Lightrail to the Mall of America—the largest indoor shopping and entertainment complex in the country. The Twin Cities area is a vibrant metropolis that is the entertainment and cultural center of the upper Midwest. It is also home to professional sports, restaurants, riverboats and many historic landmarks.

"Catch the Spirit" of the Games this week in your quest for the gold, silver and bronze! We hope you will experience all that Minnesota has to offer while you are here.

Sharon Skoblik
Coordinator, Local Organizing Committee, 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Schedule of Events for Today and Tomorrow

MONDAY, JUNE 27*

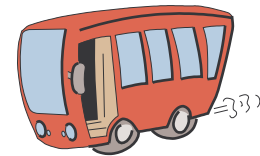
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Games Registration & Expo	Level 1, Halls B/C
11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Games Kick-off	Peavey Plaza
1 – 2 p.m.	Coaches' Meeting	Mezz. Level, Room M100I
6 – 7 p.m.	Opening Ceremonies	Level 1, Hall D
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Level 1, Ballrooms A/B

TUESDAY, JUNE 28

6 – 8 a.m.	Breakfast	Level 1, Ballrooms A/B
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Late Registration	Level 1, Room 101H
8 a.m.	Bowling (IV-V)	AMF Southtown Bowl
	Bowling (II-III)	Brunswick Bowl
	9-Ball (IA, IB, IC)	Level 1, Hall D
10 a.m.	Air Guns	Level 1, Hall D
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch	Level 1, Ballrooms A/B
1 p.m.	Air Guns	Level 1, Hall D
	Weightlifting Weigh-In	Level 1, Hall D
	Bowling (IA, IB, IC stick/handleball)	Brunswick Bowl
	Bowling (Ramp)	AMF Southtown Bowl
	9-Ball (IV-V)	Level 1, Hall D
	Softball (Games 1, 2)	Level 1, Halls B/C
3 p.m.	Air Guns	Level 1, Hall D
	Softball (Games 3, 4)	Level 1, Halls B/C
4 p.m.	Quad Rugby Clinic	Level 1, Hall B
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Dinner	Level 1, Ballrooms A/B
6:30 p.m.	Basketball (Games 1, 2, 3)	Level 1, Hall B
	Quad Rugby (Game 1)	Level 1, Hall B
7 p.m.	Air Guns	Level 1, Hall D
8 p.m.	Basketball (Games 4, 5, 6)	Level 1, Hall B
	Quad Rugby (Game 2)	Level 1, Hall B

***All events are at the Minneapolis Convention Center unless otherwise noted.**

Bus Schedule for Tomorrow



Time	Departure Site	Event	Destination
6:30 a.m.-12 noon	Convention Center	Bowling	AMF Southtown Bowl, Bloomington
6:30 a.m.-12 noon	Convention Center	Bowling	Brunswick Bowl, Eden Prairie
12 noon-5 p.m.	Convention Center	Bowling	AMF Southtown Bowl, Bloomington
12 noon-5 p.m.	Convention Center	Bowling	Brunswick Bowl, Eden Prairie

Note: Buses will line up directly in front of the Minneapolis Convention Center. Banners identifying their destination will be hung on the ramps.

Kick Off the Games Today!

If you've already registered (or plan to register later this afternoon) be sure to stop by the Games Kick-off this morning, beginning at 11:45 a.m. at Peavey Plaza, located between 11th & 12th Streets next to Nicollet Mall, just a few blocks from the Minneapolis Convention Center.

At this annual event, some of our Games competitors will demonstrate wheelchair basketball to the citizens of Minneapolis, while local officials welcome this wonderful event to the Twin Cities area. This is an excellent opportunity to show the local

community just one of the 16 competitive events taking place this week.

Lots of sidewalk vendors and restaurants are located in the area in case you get hungry around noontime.

Now in its fifth year, the Games Kick-off is on its way to becoming a tradition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games—so bring your friends and family for an early taste of what's in store later this week. Follow the signage from the Convention Center to the Kick-off. Hope to see you there!

How to get to the Kick-off

Exit the main entrance of the Minneapolis Convention Center, turning right. Go half a block to 12th Street, and take a left. Go two blocks to Nicollet Mall. Peavey Plaza is across the street on your right, next to the Minnesota Orchestra Hall building.

Catch the Spirit at Opening Ceremonies Tonight!

The Opening Ceremonies for the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held this evening in Exhibit Hall D of the Minneapolis Convention Center. Seating for spectators and guests begins at 5:30 p.m., with the event commencing promptly at 6 p.m.

To make sure we get started on time, all athletes and coaches need to be in Exhibit Hall C for staging by 5 p.m. for staging the parade of athletes. (You may want to grab something to eat before you head to the staging area at 5 p.m., since food won't be served until the ceremony is over.) Competitors will be grouped by state in the staging area, which is fully air-conditioned and has lots of space for socializing. Please get there early to help us make sure

the event is on time and runs smoothly. Area youth groups and active duty personnel will lead the teams into tonight's event. Army Reserve Specialist Christine Tollison will sing the National Anthem this evening. A junior at Winona State University, Tollison served in Iraq and has twice been featured on the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Many other special guests and dignitaries will also attend tonight's event.

Immediately following the ceremony, a festive welcome reception will be held in Ballrooms A/B. At the reception, a variety of foods will be available to give everyone a real taste of Minnesota. The Rich Lewis Band is on the entertainment agenda for this first-night gathering. See you there!

On the Menu ...



The food options available to you at this year's Games should really please the palate! Meal service begins Tuesday morning, June 28, in Ballrooms A/B on Level 1 of the Convention Center. Breakfast will be available each day from 6-8 a.m.; lunch from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; and dinner from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

There will be some standard items offered each day. At breakfast, these include assorted pastries and fruit, cereal, yogurt and beverages. At lunch and dinner, a soup of the day, cold sandwiches, entrée salads, side salads, fruit, desserts and beverages will be available every day. Hot items will change daily.

In addition to the meals in the Ballrooms, there will also be concession stands and gourmet plus stations available for use with your voucher or cash. Both of these options will be available throughout the day in case you miss the meal in the Ballrooms or you would like a burger, chicken strip basket or other fare typically offered at concession stands.

Vouchers for meals will be issued at a table outside the Ballrooms. Your meal card with the schedule on the back will be used as confirmation that you should receive a voucher. Please be sure to have this with you throughout the Games. Plans are made so that athletes will be eating at the Convention Center. If for some reason you are at a venue during meal service, accommodations can be made at the off-site location, but your meal card will be needed at off-site locations as well. Bon appetit!

What's Where?



Durable Medical Equipment: Located in the Hilton Hotel, Hennepin Suite, second level. Hours of operation: Monday, June 27, 7:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Tuesday, June 28, 7:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Wednesday, June 29, and Thursday, June 30, **CLOSED** (Available by phone – contact the hotel operator for assistance); Friday, July 1, noon-10 p.m.; Saturday, July 2: 5 a.m.-11 a.m.

Hospitality: Today, the Local Organizing Committee's hospitality team will be stationed at the Hilton Hotel from noon to 8 p.m. to provide you with lots of information about local areas of interest, sights to see and special events going on around town. All week, be sure to stop by the hospitality table at the Convention Center between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. for more information about special activities, drawings for prizes, downtown maps, newsletters and other general information. The hospitality team will be located right inside the Grant Street entrance, in front of Ballroom A. They are looking forward to seeing you!

Internet Café: You are far from home and just won a medal—how do you let your friends know back home? Come to the Internet Café and send them a message, of course! This year, the Internet Café will be located in room 101G at the Convention Center. Café hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Ten computers and one printer 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.

Medical Emergencies and Assistance: There will be a medical suite in Room 101F of the Convention Center. It will open daily at 7 a.m. and will remain open until all events are completed. The medical staff will treat athletes for minor injuries or illnesses. A life-threatening emergency will require an emergency call to 911.

Medical support at the Hilton Hotel will be in a designated suite, and the room location will be displayed on signs in the hotel. More information is also available at the hospitality desk. This medical suite will be open daily from 7:30 a.m. to midnight. It will not be open on Saturday, July 2.

Please note, there will be no “house calls” to athletes’ rooms. A Games physician and registered nurse will be on call each night *for athletes only* and can be reached by calling the hotel operator. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, ask the hotel operator to dial 911.

Medical staff will also be present at each Games venue, and are easily identified by their red shirts with a white cross on the back. Severe injuries or illnesses will be referred to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center or a local emergency facility, if necessary.

Wheelchair Repair: Located at the MSP Airport, Lindbergh Terminal, and at the Hilton Hotel, Carver Suite, second level. Monday, June 27, through Friday, July 1: 8 a.m.-11 p.m. (Hilton Hotel); Saturday, July 2: throughout the day (airport). Wheelchair repair will also be available at the Convention Center and the off-site events.

Welcome to the North Star State

More than 20 veterans from the state of Minnesota are registered to compete in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games this week, along with other local team members from surrounding states. As clients of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and members of the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) team, all are eager to share their beautiful state with their fellow athletes during a week of fierce competition.

“Our chapter and our local VA medical center are proud to host this year’s event,” said Eric Webster, of Lafayette. “We get to showcase the great state of Minnesota, the friendliness of the people here, as well as our outstanding medical facilities.”

Charlie Wittwer, Minnesota PVA chapter president, is looking forward to the competitive spirit exhibited every year by the athletes. “I have been to some of VA’s other national programs before, but the Wheelchair Games are the most athletically challenging for me,” Wittwer said. “They are both mentally exhilarating and physically draining, but I always have a great time.”

Many of the Minnesota veterans have been attending the Games for years, but they now have a behind-the-scenes understanding of just what it takes to put on this extraordinary event. Ric Jost, Minnesota PVA’s executive director (and one of the 74 original competitors at the first National Veterans Wheelchair Games), has been deeply involved in the planning of the 2005 event. “I feel honored to be a part of the local planning committee,” said Jost. “Most athletes attend year

after year without any idea of the tireless efforts of the planning committee. This experience has been incredibly satisfying and is certainly the high point of my career.”

The local athletes are especially proud to play host at the 25th year of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, which is a testament to the therapeutic and athletic value of the event. “It’s truly amazing to see how the Games have grown over the years,” said Nicholas Suckow, a Wisconsin member of the local team. “Twenty-five years

is an extremely successful milestone, and we feel privileged to be able to host this year’s Games in Minneapolis.”

“Competing in sports makes you feel good about yourself,” said Oliver Skov of Minneapolis. “You get to meet new friends and learn from them.” Like many of the local athletes, Skov is excited to be able to show all visitors a great time in Minnesota. “All the athletes come to town with the idea that they are going to have a good time at the Games,” he said. “And we’re sure going to show it to them!”

What Makes Minnesota Unique?

With acknowledgements to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, January 30, 2005, which listed the following areas as being uniquely Minnesotan:

Harmony, Minnesota – There is a cave here called “Niagara,” that is so big it holds a 60-foot underground waterfall and wedding chapel, where more than 400 weddings have been performed. (Tours are held April through October and off-season by appointment.)

Minneota, Minnesota – Home of Box Elder Bugs Days, held the first weekend after Labor Day, complete with thrilling races of the little bugs. This started in 1990, after the locals decided its “Town and Country Days” lacked a little luster (Sounds buggy, doesn’t it?)

Walker, Minnesota – The 26th Annual International Eelpout Festival was celebrated here this past February. It is held on Leach Lake and below, where human swimmers make a polar plunge below the ice. Because the eelpout may be nature’s ugliest fish, people usually don’t like to catch them – but wonderful trophies are given for the best catches at this annual Minnesota event.

Lake City, Minnesota – Did you know that this is where waterskiing was born? In 1922, 18-year-old Ralph Samuelson strapped a pair of pine boards to his feet and was pulled out of the water behind a motorboat. *And the rest, as they say, is history.*

Rothsay, Minnesota – This town lays claim to the largest prairie chicken, a 9,000-pound statute made of steel and plastic for the nation’s Bicentennial. Go figure.

(continued on page 6)

Minnesota cont.

Effie, Minnesota – Home of the world’s largest mosquito. It is lifelike, 6 feet long and hungry-looking. It can be found next to the “Welcome to Effie” sign. (Is it true that the mosquito is Minnesota’s state bird?)

Eveleth, Minnesota – Home of the world’s first polka mass, held May 5, 1973, at Resurrection Catholic Church. Praise be, and pass the Polish sausage.

Fountain, Minnesota – Sinkhole capital of the U.S.A. Formed from limestone bedrock, caves and caverns can be viewed from a platform near the Root River Trail head. If you want to see a sinkhole, this must be the place!

Minnesota Weather

Welcome to the land of 10,000 lakes—and mosquitoes! Daytime high temperatures in late June are typically in the low 80s and evening lows are between 60 and 62 degrees. In June, humidity tends to be higher in the early morning hours than in the early evening hours. The 10-day outlook from *weather.com* says to expect temperatures ranging from the low 80s to the low 90s, with isolated thunderstorms. Enjoy the sunshine but please remember to wear your sunscreen and keep hydrated while you’re out and about in Minnesota.

Award Schedule for the Week

Awards will be presented inside Halls B/C at the following times:

Tuesday, June 28, 2005	9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday, June 29, 2005	11 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Thursday, June 30, 2005	9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Friday, July 1, 2005	11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

After the Closing Ceremonies, final awards will be available in the lobby of the Hilton Hotel. There will be no photos taken at this time. This is a last chance for any athletes who were unable to pick up their medals earlier in the week.

Spirit of the Games

Each year, one athlete is selected at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to receive the “Spirit of the Games” award. This very special award is given to a veteran who clearly demonstrates not only athletic competence, but also sportsmanship and strength of character. You will probably meet some athletes this week who meet these qualifications. If so, please nominate them for the 2005 Spirit of the Games award. Nomination forms will be available starting tomorrow, and will be located where the meals are being served in Ballrooms A/B. Forms may be dropped off in one of the Spirit of the Games ballot boxes, also located in the dining area and in the Command Center, Room 101H. All ballots are due Thursday, June 30, by 8 a.m.

Beat the Heat

It’s important to take precautions to protect yourself from the effects of that strong summer sun when you’re participating in outdoor events. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

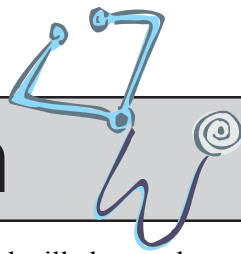
- Drink plenty of fluids both before and during your event.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat whenever possible.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible before your event.
- Bring a towel to dry off and a clean shirt to change into so that you can stay dry.
- Wear loose clothing.

If you feel any of the following signs of heat-related illnesses, be sure that you drink water, get out of the sun and get medical help immediately: dry mouth, weakness, nausea, clammy skin or confusion.

Golf Update

A golf tournament is being offered this week as an exhibition event, taking place on Thursday, June 30, at 12:30 p.m. at Braemar Golf Course. If you signed up for the golf tournament, be sure to check in at the Golf Exhibition Booth (Stop 9) during Games registration today. The golf tournament is limited to 45 participants, five to a group, which have been accepted in the order in which the Games registration forms were received and the equipment needs of individual participants. Because of the level of interest, plans were being considered to develop a list of back-up golfers, in the event of late cancellations. The option of practice time for driving balls is also an alternative. Check in at the Golf Exhibition Booth today for updated information.

Ask Dr. Dan



Dear Dr. Dan:

“Summers in Minneapolis mean dealing with mosquitoes. What diseases should I be concerned about, and what tips do you recommend to keep those nasty bites at bay?”

- *Itchy in Isabella, Minn.*

Dear Itchy:

While mosquito-transmitted disease is not as common in Minnesota as it is in tropical climates, there are several diseases of potential concern to Minnesota residents. West Nile virus was found in Minnesota in 2002, and could continue to be a public health concern in future years. Also in Minnesota, mosquitoes can transmit encephalitis to people. To reduce your chance of getting these diseases, do the following:

- Apply mosquito repellent to your skin and clothing if you are spending lots of time outdoors when mosquitoes are around.
- Products containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) are the best insect repellents on the market, according to one *Consumer Reports* cover story.
- If you've gotten a mosquito bite, follow these tips to treat those uncomfortable bumps left behind by those buzzing pests:

- Wash the infected area with mild soap and water. This will provide temporary relief from the

itch and will also wash away any bacteria on the skin.

- Try to avoid scratching the bitten area. Excessive scratching can cause damage to the skin and sometimes cause bleeding.

- Try applying a cool compress on the bite such as an ice pack wrapped in a towel or a washcloth soaked in cold water to keep yourself from scratching.

- Anti-itching medications such as calamine lotion and cortisone creams can relieve itching for a significant period of time. Homemade remedies can also be helpful. Applying vinegar or a paste made of baking soda and water to the bite is effective.

- If the itch is unbearable, topical anesthetics containing pramoxine take away pain and itching. Such medications include PrameGel and Caladryl.

- If you are one of the unlucky few who experience allergic reactions to mosquito bites, anti-inflammatory medications containing ibuprofen, such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve, can reduce redness, pain, itching, swelling and fever.

- If you feel dizzy or nauseated after you have been bitten, it could be an indication of a severe allergic reaction. It is recommended that you seek medical attention immediately.

While Minnesota is the “Land of 10,000 Lakes,” some of the locals say it’s also the land of 10 Million mosquitoes. (And we hear that Alaska also has its share!) So while you’re at the Wheelchair Games and also when you get back home, do your best to avoid them!

Dr. Dan

Veterans History Project

During the 2005 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Library of Congress invite all veterans to be part of an important national initiative – **The Veterans History Project (VHP)**. The opportunity to participate is open to athletes, volunteers, staff or guests who are veterans of the U.S. military.

This historic project honors our nation’s veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, all veterans are invited to share their story with our VHP program staff this week at the Games, **and make history!**

As part of this project, a 45-minute interview will be videotaped and given to the Library of Congress, where it will become part of our nation’s official historical records. Each participant will also receive a DVD copy of their interview and a souvenir VHP tote bag.

Please sign up today at the VHP booth at Games Registration, or at the VHP interview room in the Minneapolis Convention Center, Level 2, Show Room B. Interviews begin tomorrow morning, June 28, and continue through Friday morning. The VHP interviews will be conducted this week by Butch Miller, Veterans History Project Coordinator, and videotaped by Bill Browning from the Detroit VA Medical Center.

Only you can tell your story, and your story is worth preserving and sharing with future generations. Be a part of this important project. For more information, visit the Veterans History Project web site: <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/>.

Hometown News at the Games

For many years at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the public affairs team has operated a “Hometown News” program to let your local newspapers know about your participation in the Games. Through this effort, we prepare an individual news release for any veteran requesting one, which is placed on the Games web site later in the week to make it available to your local media. For anyone who asked for a news release, we hope to have them posted on the web site by Thursday or Friday (see www.wheelchairgames.org, on the “Athlete Information” page).

All week, our photographers will also be taking action photos of as many athletes as possible. If you requested a news release, our goal is have your best photo on the web site by the time you leave. We also hope to provide you with one 4x6” print of that photo, along with a copy of your personal news release.

The web site makes your information much more accessible to local media in your area. We will also be calling hundreds of media outlets all week to let them know that you are here and competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Unfortunately we can never guarantee that a story will run, but we do our best to make the information available to local media throughout the country.

Don’t forget to check out the Games web site when you get home so you can see your news release and photo, along with your event results. Also, please help us spread the word to the newspapers and other media back home about this great story—all about you!

25 Years of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games

History of the Games Quiz

Think you know your Games history? Test your knowledge by taking the Games History Quiz featured in each day’s newsletter this week. Submit an entry form with the correct answers and you could win prizes!

Quiz entry forms will be located in Ballrooms A/B, where meals are served, or you can pick one up in the Media Center, Room 101A. Drop your entry in the box located outside the Media Center. All forms must be submitted by 11 a.m. each day to qualify, and the first form with all of the correct answers wins. Winners (and correct answers) will be announced in the next day’s newsletter.

So come on, history buffs, put on those thinking caps and see how much you know about the National Veterans Wheelchair Games!

Here’s the first quiz. Good luck!

1. Which Games had the largest number of athletes attending—where and when were they?
2. Where and when was the exhibition event “Over the Line” offered?
 - a. 16th NVWG – Seattle, 1996
 - b. 23rd NVWG – Long Beach, 2003
 - c. 17th NVWG – San Diego, 1997
 - d. 6th NVWG – Arlington, 1986
3. Have any athletes attended the National Veterans Wheelchair Games all 25 years?

Yes No
4. Name 5 of the 14 states represented at the First National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 1981 in Richmond, Va.
5. What was the slogan from the 1987 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Ann Arbor, Michigan? [Bonus: what other host site used this same slogan?]