

Call to Order



As PVA celebrates its 60th anniversary of advocating the rights of veterans and all people with disabilities, delegates met this past summer in sunny California to chart the course for the organization's continued success.

*photos by
Bill Fitz-Patrick*

"We gather in San Diego

for PVA's 60th Annual Convention to discuss many important topics, all of which relate to our primary objective—to ensure quality healthcare and services for our members. That's been PVA's objective since 1947, when seven chapters met to form our organization. Today, at 34 chapters strong, and after many significant changes at PVA this past year, our clear objective continues to be to protect the availability of quality healthcare for our nearly 20,000 PVA members."

So said PVA President Randy Pleva in the 2006 President's Message column in the convention journal. The Annual Convention, held August 26–September 2, took place at the Westin Horton Plaza in beautiful San Diego, Calif. (See "Convention Call: PVA Revisits San Diego," July *PN*.)

Pleva's words are not so different from Harry Schweikert's, recorded in the July 1971 *PN* about PVA's first convention in 1947:

"Although legislation and sports seem to have dominated the attention of the delegates, the omnipresent subjects of medical care and rehabili-



PVA's 60th Convention and Annual Meeting opens with an unforgettable Welcome Reception on the USS *Midway*, permanently moored in San Diego.

tation were discussed. The convention went on record urging the creation of domiciliary care in the VA hospital system, liberalization of the auto grant to enable eligibility for quadriplegics, the standardization of procedures for transporting the disabled aboard all national airlines, and the creation of a special spinal-cord research foundation.”

Following the conclusion of World War II, veterans with spinal-cord injury (SCI) faced a country unprepared to deal with them or their needs. In addition, these veterans presented the medical profession with many new challenges. Although the advent of antibiotics was critical to initial survival of someone with SCI, the secondary conditions that paralysis caused, such as pressure ulcers and urinary conditions, meant long-term and specialized care.

In January 1946, seventy paraplegic patients at Birmingham General Hospital in California, including emissaries from another loosely organized paralyzed veterans group, decided to “found the nucleus of an organization to safeguard the



Despite some lengthy sessions, PVA National President Randy L. Pleva Sr. keeps the business meeting on track.



Guest speaker Congressman Bob Filner (D-Calif.) (left) told convention delegates that PVA members might have to “circle their wheelchairs” around the U.S. Capitol in order to make a major impression. PVA directors elected Bill Lawson (right) as a national vice president for the 2006–2007 term.



Are Barbra Streisand and Neil Diamond warbling “You Don’t Bring Me Flowers”? Nope—PVA Meeting Services Director Gwen Davis harmonizes with a Diamond look-alike during a spouses’ gathering.



Following his remarks to convention delegates, VA Secretary Jim Nicholson (right) is tete-a-tete with PVA Acting Executive Director Homer Townsend Jr.

Dollars and sense: A major portion of the business session was discussion of the budget presented by PVA Chief Financial Officer John Ring (left) and Treasurer Craig Enenbach.



interests of all paraplegic patients in the nation.” These veterans requested permission of the hospital’s commanding officer to send, through channels, all matters pertaining to the new organization to all paraplegic patients in other medical centers around the nation.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America was born, and with it came much needed representation and advocacy for millions of people with disabilities around the country.

Let’s Get Started

An unusual twist to this year’s convention was its traditional Welcome Reception, held aboard the USS *Midway* San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum. The ship, now moored in San Diego harbor, served in battles from World War II to Desert Storm (1991).

After the reception, it was down to business for convention attendees. The annual meeting provides a forum for PVA representatives from around the country to discuss topics of concern to PVA members, other veterans, and often members of the entire disability community.

The business agenda featured discussions about healthcare, the Outdoor Recreation Heritage Fund, and numerous PVA programs’ involvement over the past year. On Wednesday came the always exciting annual presentation of



Looking forward to the job ahead are the organization's leaders for 2006–2007 (front row, from left) Vice President Rick Glotfelty, Senior Vice President Gene Crayton, President Randy Pleva Sr., and Senior Vice President Jack Franklin; (back row, from left) Vice President Gregory Joyce, Secretary Carl S. Flemons, Immediate Past President Joseph Fox Sr., Treasurer Craig Enenbach, and Vice President Bill Lawson.

Welcome Aboard!

During the San Diego Convention, two new PVA officers—Rick Glotfelty and Bill Lawson—came on board:

Glotfelty joined PVA in 1978 as a national service officer (NSO) based in Pittsburgh. He held various positions at the Tri-State chapter. At the National Office he was Veterans Benefits Department associate national service director for training and associate national service director for operations, followed by appointment as VBD associate executive director. After retiring from that position, in 2002 he became Southeastern chapter national director.

Glotfelty served in the U.S. Air Force in 1966–1969 and retired after sustaining a spinal-cord injury in the line of duty.

Lawson returns to PVA after serving as national vice president in the mid to late 1990s. He was a founding member of a Disabled American Veterans (DAV) chapter in northwest Oklahoma and served as its commander in 1981–1984. In 1994, he was appointed to a healthcare task force chaired by Congressman Bill Brewster (D–Okla.) and participated in the Long-Term Care Campaign, headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Lawson served in the U.S. Army in 1968–1979 at bases in the United States, Germany, and Japan.

Down to Business

During the business session, delegates debated and passed the following resolutions. The Resolution Committee is tasked with making changes to PVA governing documents to implement these resolutions.

PVA Audit Committee

06-A-4: President as Ex Officio Committee Member and California Law

The PVA president will be the chief executive officer of the corporation and shall be an ex-officio member of each committee established by the Board of Directors, with the exception of the Audit Committee.

06-A-9(S): Amendments to the Audit Committee Charter

Authorizes changes in the Audit Committee portion of the *PVA Administrative Guide*.

Executive Committee

06-A-13: Chapter Contribution Percentage—Chapter Amendment of Chapter Administrative Manual
Changes *PVA Chapter Administrative Manual*.

Executive Director

06-A-7: Dwain Taylor Award for Voluntary Service

New wording for the *PVA Administrative Guide*

06-A-17: Chapter Volunteer Program

Amends the *PVA Chapter Administrative Manual*.

06-A-23: Performance Management System Policy

Amends the *PVA Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*.

06-A-24: Information Technology Policies

Amends the *PVA Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*.

06-A-25: Employee Leave Donation Policy
Adoption of policy

06-A-26: Personnel Policies and

Procedures Manual Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees; Health and Dental Insurance; Exemplary Service Award Program; Victor S. McCoy Award for Excellence

Amends the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*.

Finance Committee

06-A-10: Revised Investment Policy
Amends the *PVA Administrative Guide*.

Resolution Committee

06-A-18: Introduction to PVA Program Policy Manual

Amends the *PVA Program Policy Manual* introduction.

Chapter Monitoring Ad Hoc Committee

A6-A-19: Chapter Articles of Incorporation

All PVA chapters will retain local legal counsel for the purposes of amending the Articles of Incorporation to include specific language.

MS Ad Hoc Committee

A6-A-20: PVA Five-Year Plan for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Program Building and Health Care

BOD approval of a five-year plan for the MS Ad Hoc Committee.

Florida Gulf Coast PVA

A6-A-22: Emergency Electrical Generators

The PVA Government Relations associate executive director will petition the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and/or Congress to provide portable gas and/or oil generators to veterans who need electricity for life-saving medical equipment and medical supplies prescribed by a physician.

Northwest Chapter

06-A-0-1: Identity Theft

PVA should develop solutions for protecting veterans' identity and promote these ideas to VA and report actions to the PVA Board of Directors.

Puerto Rico PVA

06-A-0-2: Puerto Rico National Cemetery

PVA will contact VA and congressional officials to advocate the establishment of a new or expansion of the current veterans cemetery in Puerto Rico.





Delegates' spouses enjoy an outing in San Diego while their husbands are hard at work on PVA business.

Resolution 06-A-0-3

The PVA Board of Directors (BOD) pays tribute—on behalf of the members, staff, and ourselves—to those spouses and significant others whose care, compassion, and support have contributed to the organization's success. The *PN* editor is directed to publish such a tribute at an appropriate time and in a conspicuous place.

Editor's note: This is the 33rd year the PVA BOD has passed this resolution.

You're the Best!

During the 2006 convention, various PVA chapters received prestigious awards:

- **John M. Price Most Improved Chapter:** Mountain States
- **John M. Price Most Outstanding Chapter:** New England
- **Membership Award:** Iowa
- **Veterans Administration Volunteer Service (VAWS):**
Ralph Smith (Colonial)
- **Annual Chapter Volunteer Service:** North Central
- **Sports Award:** Buckeye
- **Bob Webb Excellence in a Newsletter Award:**
Oregon PVA *Paralog*, Kristin Chiles, editor



The 2006 Speedy Award (member category) is PVA's thank you to former PVA National President Homer Townsend Jr., (right), who recently served as acting executive director. PVA Immediate Past President Joseph Fox Sr. performs the presentation honors.

chapter contributions to the organization's Research and Education foundations. Special speakers during the convention were Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary R. James Nicholson and Congressman Bob Filner (D-Calif.).

While their loved ones were engaged in the many long meetings, participants' spouses could get away from it all and take part in various interesting and informative activities. A Spouses' Lounge was set up in the hotel for daily rest and relaxation.

When it was time for elections, a couple of changes took place in PVA's leadership. Officers for 2006-07 are President Randy L. Pleva Sr.; Senior Vice President Gene Crayton; Vice Presidents Jack Franklin, Greg Joyce, Rick Glotfelty, and Bill Lawson; Secretary Carl Flemons; and Treasurer Craig Enenbach. All were incumbents except Glotfelty and Lawson (see "Welcome Aboard" sidebar); Crayton moved from vice president to senior vice.

Winners All

The Closing Awards brunch is a special event taking place at the end of the week. During this time several outstanding individuals receive recognition.

Speedy Winners

The Speedy Award is PVA's highest honor, conferred on people annually for making significant contributions to improving the lives of America's paralyzed veterans. Recipients for 2006 were **Homer S. Townsend Jr.** (member), **Alan Anderson Reich** (member, posthumous), and **Anthony J. Principi** (nonmember):



An important convention highlight is presentation of contributions to PVA's Research and Education foundations. These chapter reps brought a total of \$268,150.

■ **Townsend** served as PVA national president (October 1998–September 2000), senior vice president for two years, and national vice president for four years. He has chaired the Long Range Planning and Field Advisory committees.

Originally from Woodland, Maine, Townsend joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He moved to Mesa, Ariz., after being medically retired after serving five and a half years as an aircraft electrician and retiring as a staff sergeant. He worked on F-4 Phantoms, A-4 Skyhawks, A-6 Intruders, and AV-8A Harriers.

In addition to his PVA responsibilities, Townsend has also been a member of the President's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities (1992–1996), the Arizona Governor's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities (1992–1996), and the Mesa Mayor's Committee on Handicap Awareness (six years). For his dedicated service, he received the key to the city from the mayor.

■ In 1982, **Reich** founded the National Organization on Disability (NOD), the largest umbrella group for disability activists, and served as its president until shortly before his death in 2005. As U.S. Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons president (1981), he was the

first wheelchair user to address the United Nations General Assembly.

Born in Pearl River, N.Y., Reich graduated from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where he was an all-American track and field athlete. He received a master's degree in Russian literature from Vermont's Middlebury College (1953), a diploma in Slavic languages and Eastern European studies from the University of Oxford



Gay Reich's uplifting remarks rivet the audience as she accepts the 2006 Speedy Award (member category/posthumous) on behalf of her late husband, Alan Reich, National Organization on Disability founder.



For his many years of dedication to improving the lives of paralyzed veterans, former VA Secretary Anthony Principi (left) receives PVA's prestigious 2006 Speedy Award (nonmember category).

(United Kingdom) the same year, and a master's in business administration from Harvard University (Massachusetts) in 1959.

Reich was working as a Polaroid Corporation executive when, at age 32, he sustained a disabling neck injury. Told he would not drive or walk again, he relearned both skills, returned to his corporate job, served in the federal government, and founded a number of organizations. His name was not often in the public eye, but his influence behind the scenes was significant.

■ A native of New York, **Principi** is a 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., and first saw active duty aboard the destroyer USS *Joseph P. Kennedy*. He later commanded a River Patrol Unit in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. During his service in Southeast Asia, he

received the Bronze Star with combat "V" for valor and several other military decorations.

Upon returning from Vietnam, Principi earned his law degree from Seton Hall University (New Jersey) in 1975 and was assigned to the Navy's Judge Advocate General Corps in San Diego. In 1980, he was transferred to Washington, D.C., as a legislative counsel for the Department of Navy.

Prior to his nomination as VA secretary, Principi was QTC Medical Services, Inc., president. Currently senior vice president of Governmental Relations for Pfizer, Inc., he serves on the boards of directors of Perot Systems, Inc., and Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company.

Patriot Awards

The prestigious Patriot Award recognizes donors' significant financial contributions toward advancing the organization's mission and goals.

Mrs. Lucille Farrow received the *Individual Giving Patriot Award*.

Farrow says she admires and respects veterans and the countless sacrifices they have made. She realizes our freedom came at a huge price and through



"Through my contributions, I can show my support of our veterans, especially those with spinal-cord injuries," says Individual Giving Patriot Award winner Lucille Farrow.

much sacrifice, and she shows her appreciation by being a generous supporter of PVA, a member of the Legacy Circle, and by taking special interest in the PVA Research Foundation.

One of the highlights of Farrow's life, she says, was attending the 2003 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Long Beach, Calif.

"I was so emotionally moved," she says. "It left a profound influence on my life. One of the

speakers' challenge to 'focus on the possibilities and not their disabilities' instilled a new optimism and deep appreciation to me."

The 2006 *Corporate Patriot Award* went to **Dr. Joseph M. Cahalan**, Xerox Corporation vice president of communications and social responsibility. PVA's relationship with Xerox goes back to 1989 when Bob Gudger was company vice president. Xerox expressed interest in an event—the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG)—that moved around the country, allowing its employees to get involved as volunteers, and signed on as a Bronze Medal sponsor.

Linda White,
Xerox Corporation
account general
manager—
Department of
Veterans Affairs,
accepts PVA's
*Corporate Patriot
Award* on behalf of
Dr. Joseph M.
Cahalan, a
dedicated PVA
supporter.



An active promoter of disability needs since 1970, George B. Lewis, FAIA, advises Oklahoma City officials on accessibility concerns. PVA Executive Director Louis Irvin (right) presents the Schweikert Disability Awareness Award to this distinguished architect, an Americans With Disabilities Act supporter.

In 1994, Gudger retired, and his position was absorbed by Cahalan, whose responsibilities include managing Xerox community investments. This year at NVWG in Anchorage, Alaska, with the continued loyalty and dedication of Cahalan, a Vietnam veteran, The Xerox Foundation became a Denali sponsor. Xerox's long-standing support of NVWG has had a significant impact behind the scenes as well, where the business of NVWG is conducted, by providing employee volunteers, loaned copiers, and fax machines.

Schweikert Award

George B. Lewis, FAIA, an active promoter of people with disabilities, is this year's recipient of the Schweikert Disability Awareness Award. Lewis is a licensed architect and a fellow in the American Institute of Architects. He was one of the leading supporters of the Americans

With Disabilities Act's (ADA's) passage and has made presentations relative to ADA's requirements to various civic groups.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Lewis has received several awards for his work with people with disabilities from organizations such as the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Organization, the Governor's Committee on Disability Concerns, and Goodwill Industries.

Movin' Out West

It's on to Oklahoma City for next year's big pow-wow. So don't forget your cowboy hat, boots, and chewing tobacco—and get ready for some Mid-west hospitality ya'll!

Contact: PVA Meeting Services, (800) 424-8200. ■

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