

NORTHWEST OUTPOST

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Inside this issue:

President's Column 4

*Women Veteran's
Column* 6

*PVA National Service
Officer Candidate* 7

*Executive Director's
Column* 8

Team River Run 9

*National Veterans
Wheelchair Games* 12

George Turner Award 14

Events Calendar 16

Birthdays 18



Flooded area of Big Bear Lake Regional Park Trail



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Our Mission

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, has developed a unique expertise on a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of our members-veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

PVA will use that expertise to be the leading advocate for:

- Quality health care for our members,
- Research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction,
- Benefits available as a result of our members' military service,
- Civil rights and opportunities which maximize the independence of our members.

To enable PVA to continue to honor this commitment, we must recruit and retain members who have the experience, energy, dedication, and passion necessary to manage the organization and ensure adequate resources to sustain the programs essential for PVA to achieve its mission.

The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) a member chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America accomplishes it's mission by coordinated efforts through programs that:

- Provide opportunities for health promotion, recreation, employment, sports and recreation, service and camaraderie for paralyzed veterans;
- Elevate society's information level about the attitudinal, physical and legal barriers that confront persons with disabilities in order to influence the removal of those barriers;
- Advocate for and monitor the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care benefits and service;
- Cooperate with and seek the support of other groups and individuals that share NWPVA's objective;
- Educate the public with the current and ongoing needs and current and past contributions of America's veterans.

Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Matthew Mickunas What's on the Presidents Mind?



Did you know June used to be the 4th month of the year? Before Julius Caesar came to power, the calendar year only had 10 months. June is a time of extremes. If you live in the northern hemisphere, then it's a time when summer is really starting to get into full swing! Every day lasts just that little bit longer, making breezy summer evenings a real treat. If you live in the southern hemisphere though, then it's a time when winter starts to set in properly. The days are shortening, and the nights are becoming fresher and fresher. No matter where you are in the world, the end of June marks the end of the first half of the calendar year, so it's a time to reflect on the year so far.

June is PTSD Awareness Month: Let's Talk

"I just couldn't sleep because every time I closed my eyes I was back in that truck."

"How was I gonna be able to be a dad to my kids if I was so angry all the time?"

"I felt like the part of him that was him was gone, and I have no idea how to get him back."

Each June we observe PTSD Awareness Month to draw attention to the collection of symptoms that can affect the lives of service members and their families well after their military service ends. PTSD is a treatable condition, and there are resources available to start your journey toward wholeness.

What is PTSD?

Posttraumatic stress is a real, treatable mental health issue that affects many in the veteran community. Service members in every branch may experience traumatic, often violent, events during their military careers. Whether in the form of combat, assault, disaster or accident, many survivors have some stress reactions after a trauma. These experiences can be difficult to process, and can result in a veteran re-living the event, avoiding reminders of the event, feeling anxious or experiencing negative changes in beliefs and feelings. Veterans who suffer from posttraumatic stress report feeling jumpy, experiencing a sense of constant danger or looming threat, having nightmares of traumatic events and feeling emotionally numb. Some sufferers self-medicate with alcohol or drugs to relieve these symptoms, which can lead to addiction and other health problems, and make it difficult to get or keep employment.

How is PTSD treated?

No single treatment will work for every person. However, many therapies have proven particularly effective with veterans. Medications such as antidepressants have been shown to be beneficial. Various psychotherapies have also proven to be effective, including several approaches to Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is based on the idea that our thoughts cause our feelings and behaviors, not external forces such as people, situations or events. CBT is a talking therapy that can help patients manage fears, anxiety, depression and anger problems by coaching them to recognize their emotions—as they're feeling them—and choose a behavior that redirects their response. The benefit of this thought model is that survivors can change the way they think, in order to feel or behave differently; even if the situation does not change. Veterans living with PTSD aren't the only people impacted by the struggle; it can ripple through families as well. Living with someone who has nightmares, who is emotionally withdrawn, irritable, easily upset or even violent can become impossible. Relationships can become frayed and unravel due to the symptoms of untreated PTSD. Caregivers need, and deserve, care themselves.

(Continued on page 5)



NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

July 7-12, 2022 • Tempe, AZ

(Continued from page 4)

What Resources Are Available?

The Veterans Administration has developed an on-line decision aid to help veterans and their families learn about effective PTSD treatment options, available at www.ptsd.va.gov. There are many places within VA that provide PTSD treatment and mental health services including VA medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics and Vet Centers. Located within the community, Vet Centers provide information, assessment and counseling to any veteran who served in a war zone, as well as services to families of veterans for military-related issues. While June is set aside to observe PTSD Awareness Month, it is a condition that doesn't know a timeline. If you or someone you care for needs help, now is the time to get information about the available resources for veterans and their families.

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

{Posted By PVA Admin}

Tracy Storms

Women Veterans' Message



Women Veterans, [womenshealth.va.gov](https://www.womenshealth.va.gov) is your guide to women's health care at VA. This newly refreshed website has been updated to better meet your needs. Each page details health concerns specific to you and gives you clear guidance on how to access care and services at VA.

What changes were made?

Every page has been refreshed to highlight the information you are looking for. It makes complex health care information easier to understand and even easier to act on. On each page, you can find a list of the services VA offers as well as how to access these services.

You can find health care services by clicking on Services by Health Topic in the menu on the left side of the page. A drop-down menu will open for you to click on the topic you want.

What other resources are available for women Veterans?

In addition to our refreshed website, other resources for women Veterans include:

- [Women Veterans Call Center](#) is your guide to VA. It is a free and confidential service available to you, your family and caregivers to answer questions via call, text or [online chat](#), as often as you need. Call or text 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636). The Women Veterans Call Center will help you navigate VA, point you in the right direction, and connect you with the Women Veteran Program Manager at your local VA medical center. All calls are answered by women, some of whom are Veterans themselves.
- [VA Women's Health Transition Training](#) is designed for service women planning to leave the military and recently transitioned women Veterans. It is an online, self-paced training module available for service women and women Veterans to take any time, any place.
- [VA Women's Health Reengagement Training \(heaRT\)](#) is a free, interactive virtual class designed for women Veterans who have left the military and either never engaged with VA health care or are recently enrolled. This course includes information on women's health services, eligibility and how to enroll in VA health care.
- [Center for Women Veterans](#)' mission is to monitor and coordinate VA's administration of health care, benefits, services and programs for women Veterans.

As the number of women Veterans grows, VA continues to expand its health care services and resources targeting women Veterans.

[Our refreshed website](#) is part of this effort, so head there to learn more about the women's health services that you've earned and deserve.

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/>

Information from the Department of Veterans Affairs

By: Daniel Stewart



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently rolled out enrollment verification requirements to Post-9/11 GI Bill® students at Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) and Non-College Degree (NCD) facilities as mandated by the Isakson and Roe Act.

Students are required to verify their enrollment at the end of each month to continue receiving their Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments. We have communicated the requirement to students through direct email, social media, and communications through their School Certifying Officials.

To help you better understand and communicate this new requirement with Veterans and GI Bill students, we wanted to share a [Monthly Enrollment Verification Communication Toolkit](#). You are a trusted source of information for those who may be affected by this new requirement and can help us avoid any Veteran or their family member experiencing disruptions in the payments they rely on.

In this toolkit, you will find common questions and answers, an outline of key processes and dates, and pre-drafted email and social media messaging that you can use or adapt to communicate with GI Bill students. You can also explore our Enrollment Verification [website](#) and [FAQs](#) for additional information.

We appreciate your help in supporting current and future GI Bill beneficiaries. Your collaboration is crucial in ensuring students continue to receive their payments.

Are you eligible?

To assist unemployed Veterans who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP).

VRRAP provides up to 12 months of tuition and fees and a monthly housing allowance to eligible Veterans training towards employment in a high-demand occupation.

Approved VRRAP schools are nationwide and offer education for associate degrees, non-college degrees, and certificate programs. More information is available on our website.

At VA, outcomes are driving what we do, and Veterans returning to the workforce after completing a VRRAP program is a top priority. To assist Veterans in finding the right job after completing their training, VA has partnered with Hiring Our Heroes to offer support and guidance and to provide employment assistance. Through network events, outreach forums, lunch & learns, job previews and resource fairs, Veterans can utilize Hiring Our Heroes career connectors, resume engine, resources and other tools to find a job.

If you are an eligible Veteran, VRRAP is an excellent option to help overcome the impact of COVID-19 and seek a new career opportunity. From business operations and construction to education and social services, a new path awaits. Applying online is quick and easy. In this short video, learn how over 4,100 fellow Veterans have already started utilizing the benefit!

Visit the VA VRRAP website for more information and on how to apply.

Brent King

Bear Lake Regional Park Parkway Repair & Reconstruction

Project Intro: The Bear Lake Regional Park Trail Fix Project will involve remodel / minor alteration of two sections of existing 8'-wide public recreation pathway at the NE end of Bear Lake with the goal of restoring public access around the lake during times of high water. One section of the reconstructed pathway (approximately 53'-long), at the wetland crossing at the very North end of the lake, will be elevated in order to provide for a walking surface that does not flood seasonally. The second section of reconstructed pathway (approximately 305' long) will have the centerline shifted landward, will be elevated to avoid typical seasonal flooding, and will include native restoration plantings and seeding along the abandoned trail section.

This is the project that I sent a support letter in from the chapter. We requested that they perform ADA updates on the accessible fishing dock and also a fishing area that gave way not too long ago with one of our members going into the lake in his power chair.

If you have any public projects in your area that you think need our input or a letter of support, please let us know. We are always looking to make anything more accessible!



Blue arrows show areas in need of repair



The invisible wounds....

“Before my trip with Team River Runner, I was honestly contemplating suicide. Time and time again, I told myself, *you are too strong for that, that will not be your fate*. But as we all know, depression and divorce have a funny way of making the strongest man feel alone and abandoned.” **A.R.**

“Team River Runner has changed my life. It has given me a chance to make new friends who have been there to hold me accountable and there to listen when I am down. Getting involved with TRR has helped me immensely through the physical and mental aspects of my injuries. It has helped me relate to others and strengthen my body.” **M.P.**

“Thank you for providing an outlet for us suffering from the invisible wounds of war. It is good to be around people, without a need to explain my behavior. PTSD not only impacts me but impacts my entire family.” **Anon**

The ***invisible wounds*** of war! For far too many of our courageous veterans, the war did not end on the battlefield. While countless veterans thrive when they return home, many do not and there is a growing number of those that need our help.

A recent survey of post 9/11 veterans indicated that over 90% reported experiencing post-traumatic stress, TBI or other mental health injuries during their service. A staggering 83% reported experiencing more than one of these injuries. Our veterans made the sacrifice with a sense of pride to protect America’s freedoms, but often face substantial and difficult challenges when they return to civilian life.

Through Team River Runner’s adaptive and adventure paddling program, we offer our wounded and disabled veterans an opportunity to reconnect with the community, forge new friendships and feel a renewed spirit and sense of self-worth. They deserve our respect and deserve our support. During Mental Health Awareness Month we are asking you to invest in our veterans and show them your respect for what they have sacrificed to keep us free and keep us safe? Your support will allow a veteran to enjoy one of our countless paddling adventures and clinics and bring hope to many who too often feel hopeless!

Below are links to two videos of two powerful testimonials of many on how TRR has changed their lives, Eric Guzman and Brian Harris. We recently lost Eric Guzman - but his legacy to TRR will never be forgotten.

<http://bigcedarmedia.com/films-page/2019/2/15/eric-guzman-team-river-runner-nonprofit>

<http://bigcedarmedia.com/films-page/2019/2/15/brian-harris-team-river-runner-promo-video>

If you would like to help us continue our mission please go to www.teamriverrunner.org, click on DONATE NOW and support our veterans on their road to healing and wellness from their invisible wounds....



NATIONAL VETERANS **WHEELCHAIR GAMES**

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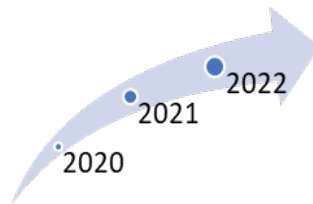
WheelchairGames.org • [#WheelchairGames](https://twitter.com/WheelchairGames)





We Salute You!

A special thank you to all our donors who continue to make the programs at Paralyzed Veterans of America, Northwest Chapter thrive and grow stronger.



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King County
Amazon



Opportunity to Support Fellow Veterans



Veterans and their family members are invited to participate in a national mental health awareness campaign

WHO:

Veterans of any age or branch of service — including National Guard and Reserve and their family members.

WHAT:

Professionally facilitated discussions about

Veterans TRIPS & EVENTS



VETERAN'S PICNIC @ SEAHURST PARK*

Join us for a picnic to celebrate Veterans and their family members. Enjoy lunch and entertainment by the banks of the Puget Sound. Shuttle between the upper lot to the lower lot will be provided. **Must register by June 6.**

Age: 50+ years

Wed 11:30 am-2:00 pm

Jun 15 #6380

FREE

*If inclement weather occurs, event will be moved indoors at the Tukwila Community Center, from 12-2:30 pm.

SEATTLE MARINERS VS NY YANKEES GAME FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY

Veterans and their family members are invited to a day at the "park" to enjoy a game between the Seattle Mariners and the NY Yankees. A gift card for lunch and transportation will be provided from Tukwila Community Center to T-Mobile Park and back again.

Age: 50+ years

Wed 11:00 am-5:00 pm

Aug 10 #6382

FREE

WATERWAYS LUNCH CRUISE

Veterans and their family members are invited to a day on the water to enjoy a classic Seattle dining cruise. Lunch and transportation will be provided from Tukwila Community Center to the Seattle Waterfront and back again. **Must register by August 15.**

Age: 50+ years

Wed 11:00 am-4:00 pm

Sept 7 #6383

FREE



King County

Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy



To register, call the Burien Community Center at 206.988.3700 or Tukwila Community Center at 206.768.2822

Operator Teshim Awalom Receives Award for Assisting Disabled Rider in Snow

By: Al Sanders



Operator Teshim Awalom and DeeAnne Cooper with the Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

May 19, 2022

Pictures courtesy of: Thomas Hawthorne, King County Metro

Last New Year's Eve, while driving Metro Route 5 in north Seattle, Operator Teshim Awalom saw a pedestrian trying to recover their walker, which had fallen in the snow. Teshim worked with the person to locate the walker, helped them onto his bus, and asked if they needed any medical assistance.

On May 19, King County Metro General Manager Terry White recognized Awalom's actions that snowy day, presenting him with the George Turner Award, given by the Northwest Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Chapter member DeeAnne Cooper was at Metro's Central Base to congratulate Awalom for the award.

The award acknowledges a transit operator who best exemplifies a positive attitude and awareness of the elderly and disabled communities. A passenger on Teshim's bus as he assisted the person in the snow sent in a commendation for Teshim, saying that he had all the essential qualities to be honored with this award: "humanity, care, respect, politeness."

"Our operators have a number of responsibilities whenever they are behind the wheel, but they understand the special obligation that comes in assisting seniors and all riders who have mobility issues," White said. "Teshim saw a person struggling in the snow and did what was needed to make sure

they were safe. Teshim's deserving of the George Turner Award and his response on that cold December day reflect the dedication all of our operators have to the passengers they serve every day."

A champion for people with disabilities

George Turner was an active voice for those with disabilities in our community. Decades ago, before accessible buses were available in the United States, Turner put those principles into action, protesting the lack of wheelchair access on Metro buses by chaining himself to a bus.

Turner served as a president of the Northwest Chapter of the Par-

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

alyzed Veterans of America. The organization has recognized his memory by dedicating this award in his name.

Serving those in need

Teshim was hired as a part-time operator in October 2017 and went full-time in July 2018. He has earned several Safe Driver Awards and five commendations. Teshim became a transit operator to fulfill his longtime wish to help people in need and meet people of different backgrounds and cultures.

Born in Eritrea and raised by a single mother after his father was killed, Teshim moved to the United States in 2010 as an asylum seeker. He went to college and earned a degree in nursing. He also attended media school for video production.

Teshim is happily married to his high school sweetheart, and they are blessed with two daughters. In his spare time, Teshim enjoys community service, especially related to giving ADA and mental health support. He also likes biking and watercolor painting.

Teshim, who dedicated the recognition to his fellow operators, said his job is “challenging and fun.” He encouraged everyone to “look for those who are in need of your help. Put yourself in their position and you will be happy and thankful.”

Tim Flanagan, Metro’s director of Bus Operations, echoed the praise heaped on Teshim. “I’m so proud to be part of an organization that takes pride in recognizing and celebrating operators that display amazing customer service to our elderly and disabled communities,” Flanagan said.

Metro’s legacy of support for accessible transit

Metro’s history of providing accessibility for all riders extends back nearly 50 years. In 1979, Metro ordered our first accessible coaches and started testing different wheelchair lift systems. Metro was the first transit agency in the country to successfully get a lift working so well it could be used in service. When the Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990, Metro was well on its way to offering accessible service. By the end of the last century, all King County Metro buses were equipped with lifts or ramps to provide easier access for our riders with mobility challenges.

Passenger input had a role in the selection of the recipient of the George Turner Award. Please let us know about the actions of transit operators that deserve recognition by leaving a comment on our website.



King County Metro Operator Teshim Awalom

June

14th Flag Day

16th BOD/General Membership
Meeting
1:00 PM

19th Father's Day

21st Summer Begins



July

4th Independence Day

14th US Army Birthday



Members Missing in Action

Does anyone have any information on these Members below??
They are due to be dropped from the PVA National & Chapter Membership Rosters' if we can't find them due to undeliverable mail and incorrect phone & email. Please contact the Northwest PVA office at (206) 241-1843 if you are able to help. Please mail, call, or email us too if you change your phone, address, or email; Please let us know today.

*Daniel C. Underwood
*Wallace Carlson
*Ranulf Muir
*Charles Salley
*Steven Hathon



With the great amount of information flow the chapter receives by email, we encourage every member to have at least one email per membership family for contact. When you have an email address on record, your Northwest Chapter has the ability to keep you informed & updated on special events, activities, and important membership information. Please take a moment to find a simple email partner like Gmail, Yahoo Mail, or others. Once you sign up, please send us a simple email with your name & phone number so that we are able to update our records at pvachnw@mindspring.com.



Andrew Bechtle

NORTHWEST PVA IS MISSING SEVERAL WORKING EMAILS WITH YOUR ESSENTIAL INFO AND NEEDS YOUR HELP PROVIDING IT!!!! OUT OF **OVER 600 REGISTERED** WITH THE NORTHWEST PVA CHAPTER, WE ONLY HAVE APPROXIMANTLY **250 EMAILS ON FILE**. TIMES ARE CHANGING AND WITH THE INFLUX OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR OUR GENERAL MEMBERS, ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, AND OUR INPORTANT SUPPORTERS, WE MUST HAVE AN AVENUE TO SHARE INFORMATION IN LIEU OF A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER! OUR NEWSLETTER IS GREAT INFO, BUT SOME INFORMATION WE HAVE OR NEED TO SHARE CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE IS SENT OUT! PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR WORKING EMAIL ADDRESS & ESSENTIAL INFO BY SENDING US A MESSAGE TO:

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(IN THE SUBJECT LINE PLEASE WRITE): UPDATED NWPVA INFO

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- *PLACE YOUR AWESOME TITLE: (MEMBER, ASSOCIATE MEMBER, OR SUPPORTER)
- *FIRST, LAST NAME-
- *PRIMARY ADDRESS-
- *PHONE: CELL#, HOME# & ALTERNATE PHONE #(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Supporting Northwest PVA Veterans Through Amazon Smile

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

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How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?

On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make through AmazonSmile will result in a donation. AmazonSmile will occasionally contact you about donation amounts disbursed to your chosen charity or about the program.

Place: **Northwest Paralyzed Veterans of America** when you search for a charity.



Happy Birthday!

June

Tony Nicholas	Frederick Swoopes
Larry Hendrickson	Ricky Gilliland
Richard Gates	Miguel Davila
William Stanton	James Unruh
George Vermef	Anthony Marx
David McCoy	Stanley Caban
Mike Hazzard	Timothy Hogan
Gary McCann	Matthew Mickunas
William Jones	Walter Voll
David Carpenter	Darren Hughes
David Stebbins	George Gillen
Mark Harris	Melissa Lyon
Ronald Zubrick	Nicolas Woodard

July

John Jacobson	Stephen Arnold
Robert Smith	Sherri Bowen
Merwyn Pettyjohn	JR McCorkindale
Preston Nelson	Bruce Neff
Judy Rogers	Nicholas Aldridge
John Woodburne	Jesse DeCoursey
Kenneth Comley	Darol Kubacz
James Steinauer	Jason Morse
Michael Metcalf	Nathan Brookshire
Chili Perez	Gregory Anderson
George Strampher	Gregg Morris
Kenney Hickey	Kenneth Schoenlein
Tamarah Baldwin	David Becker
Thomas Grieb	Charles Burch
Jack Carrick	Kevin Clark
Gary Pearson	Joseph Page
William Grandon	Scott Smith
Lynn Mathers	David McPherson
David Birmingham	Mark Godfrey
George Michael	Judith Lebret
Douglas Mitchem	David Baxdendell
Paula Litch	Gordon Davis
Thomas Tilden	



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Vehicle Donation Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America has been on a mission to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes—to empower these brave men and women build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes—to empower these brave men and women with what they need to achieve the things they fought for: freedom and independence. They returned to a grateful nation, but also to a world with few solutions to challenges they faced. They made a decision not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society. They created Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization dedicated to veterans service, medical research and civil rights for people with disabilities.

Have an old car taking up space in your driveway? Donate it to Paralyzed Veterans of America! Call us: 877-900-8387. <https://pva.careeasy.org/HOME.html>



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