



Volunteers Give Heroes a Warm Welcome



Barbara Grover, Virginia Howard and Carol Wynder left to right are among hundreds of volunteers helping out at this week's Games.

Have you seen the sea of purple shirts this week? They belong to the more than 900 individuals volunteering at the Games. The volunteers tell us they have enjoyed helping out in so many areas areas, from driving buses to scoring events; from taking photos to helping with recreational outings. The 2007 volunteer team includes both local and out of town volunteers, all contributing many hours, skills and talents to make sure the activities go as smoothly as possible.

If you ate breakfast, lunch or dinner at the dining hall any time this week, you probably met a few of the dedicated ladies from California and

Virginia who are longtime volunteers at the Golden Age Games and are helping at every meal.

"Every year, we see so many familiar faces and they are like family," said 75 year old Barbara Grover of Costa Mesa, Calif. "I get to greet the veterans coming to get their meals with a smile, starting their day off in good spirits," said fellow volunteer Virginia Howard, 79, of Dallas. Together, Grover and Howard have volunteered for the last 12 years.

Another out of townner is Carol Wynder, 63, of Williamsburg, Va.,

who is enjoying her sixth year volunteering at the Games. Wife of competitor Charles Wynder, Carol says, "This is my way of giving back and saying thank you to our veterans."

Many local volunteers have provided greatly needed assistance to the event. One is Hartwell E. Remsburg, Jr., who moves so fast you might believe this 77 year old volunteer was fifty years younger. About his experience, Remsburg said, "I just wanted to help out and plan to be here all week." Remsburg has worked countless hours helping with the set up of the horseshoes and shuffleboard events at the convention center, escorting veterans to different areas and many other duties. "It was amazing how hard he worked," said Mike Wright, steering committee member from Indianapolis, host of next year's event. Many of the Indianapolis staff have volunteered alongside their Houston counterparts all week, learning the ropes for next year.

Hundreds of employees from the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center have volunteered to pitch in wherever needed. Linda Dean, Glynnell Jones, Helen McGregor, Tony Williams, Kendra Price, Genie

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A heartfelt thank you to



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The Man with the Midas Touch

Robert Hugee seems to have the Midas touch. Every time he competes in a table tennis tournament at the National Veterans Golden Age Games, he wins gold. A five-time consecutive gold medal champion in the sport, he's ready to win again this year.

"While playing a sport I love, I am able to connect with old friends, make new ones and communicate in ways that only soldiers can," Hugee says. "I have always enjoyed athletic competition, the thrill of victory and even the agony of defeat."

Hugee, 60, an Army veteran from Falling Waters, W.Va., uses his hand eye coordination to dominate the competition. Known as "the side winder" to his challengers because of the way he likes to move his opponents from one side of the table to the other, he effectively uses their momentum against them.

Hugee started playing table tennis late in life. In 1992, he was homeless and had a bad drug addiction. A counselor suggested table tennis as an activity that could keep him busy and help him stay clean, and once he picked up a paddle there was no looking back. He began competing at the Games in 2002 and has excelled at the sport ever since.

Now, Hugee believes that table tennis was his lifeline. It has become a positive focal point in his life, and both he and his family are proud of his efforts at the Games. In 1998, he volunteered to work at the event when it was held in Leesburg, Va. It was there that he realized that table tennis was a popular competitive sport among veterans. At the time, he was not eligible to play since he was not of age. He had an epiphany at the event, and after

2 it was over he made a promise that "if God let me live



Once Robert Hugee picked up a table tennis paddle, there was no looking back.

long enough to play, I would win."

An early riser, Hugee prefers to practice in the morning and still gets nervous before his event. In order to keep up his game, he often practices with local college students who have affectionately nicknamed him, "Grandpa." Never content to sit on his laurels, he is also participating in the air rifle and shuffle board competitions this week.

An amateur photographer in his spare time, Hugee likes to take pictures of the other competitors and sends copies of the photos to all of the veterans after the event. For the last five years, he has compiled all of his event photos into an album, helping him keep track of all the friends he has made.

Hugee has also participated in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for the past four years, entering his pieces in the stained glass categories. Having won locally, he is aiming to win the "Best of Show" category this year.

A former infantry sergeant and

squad leader in Vietnam from 1967-1968, Hugee is a disabled veteran. Currently receiving treatment at the VA Medical Center in Martinsburg, W.Va., Hugee speaks highly of his care there. "They have the red carpet out for veterans," he said. "They are 100 percent behind the veterans and I have nothing but high praises for them."

Hugee and his wife, Udora, have a daughter and granddaughter. A member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the last nine years, he is now retired and runs a small stained glass business from his home.

Competing this year in the 60 to 64 age group for the first time, Hugee sees the Games as "old guys having fun." Competing on Thursday morning is his trademark. In his stars and stripes bandanna, Robert Hugee is sure to be a crowd favorite this morning as he vigorously defends his title of champion, and seeks to bring those years of consecutive gold medal wins to six. ★

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Hubbard, Katrina Dale Washington, Denise Meacham Cannon and Ruby Aguilar are just a few of the local staff who have helped with various activities ranging from hospitality to event set up. "It's been a great experience and the veterans are having a wonderful time," said Williams, who is among the many who are working hard to make sure the events run smoothly and the competitors are taken care of.

In preparing for this week's event, Nikki Verbeck, Voluntary Service Specialist at the Houston VA Medical Center, worked all year to recruit the volunteers needed. Critical to making this event happen, Verbeck says she has received many wonderful comments from the volunteers who have really enjoyed their time helping out. "I had a wonderful time volunteering," said Anre de Villiers, who helped at the Opening Ceremonies



Local volunteer Carole Jarrett helps competitor Carol Atkinson at Wednesday's lunch line.

and dance Monday evening. "Everyone had so much fun, and I look forward to volunteering some more this week." Ellen Eastham, another local volunteer, also helped out at the Opening Ceremonies event. "I enjoyed helping," she said. I volun

teered to take pictures of people in front of the Wells Fargo wagon with 'Cowboy Mike' at the dance. We had a lot of fun."

Al Sherrill, Region 2 Regional Director, Office of IT Oversight and Compliance, also found his volunteer experience worthwhile. Sherrill came to help out for a day along with several other employees attending a conference in Houston. He said, "We are very appreciative that we had the privilege to volunteer, and gained valuable experiences assisting in the various events during these Golden Age Games."

Kendra Price, who worked volunteer registration at the Hyatt Regency said, "It was simply a pleasure working with motivated volunteers. Their smiles brought a positive atmosphere to the Games."

Like any large scale national program, the National Veterans Golden Age Games could simply not take place without the numerous jobs and assignments performed with a smile by a team of dedicated, hard working volunteers. Be sure to take the time to thank them for helping make this week a success. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by us all. ★

Sad to Say - Information on Going Home

Most National Veterans Golden Age Games attendees will be flying home over the Labor Day holiday weekend. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials will be providing some extra special services to NVGAG attendees.

TSA representatives will be available in the Hyatt Regency Hotel lobby from noon to 6 p.m., Thursday and Friday to answer travelers' questions regarding security screening measures, and how to make the trip home as smooth as possible.

Additionally, TSA officials will be available at both George Bush Intercontinental and William P. Hobby airports to assist veterans with a rapid check in process during what is expected to be a very hectic and busy holiday weekend.

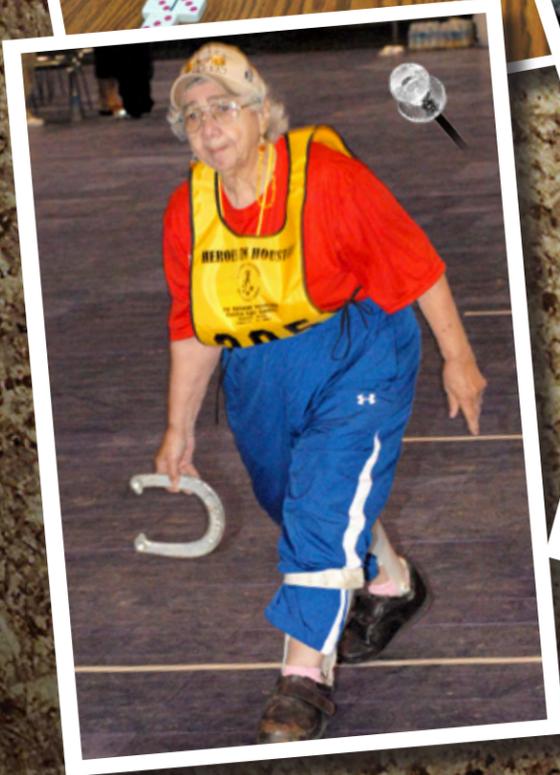
TSA's web site www.tsa.gov reminds travelers to use 3 1 1 for Carry ons = 3 ounce bottle or less; 1 quart sized, clear, plastic, zip top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The three ounce container size is a security measure.

Consolidate bottles into one bag and X ray separately to speed screening.

Be prepared. Each time TSA searches a carry on it slows down the line. Practicing 3 1 1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience.

Come early and be patient. Heavy travel volumes and the enhanced security process may mean much longer lines at airport security checkpoints. ★

Photo Scrapbook



Generations of Serving

Some things change; some things remain the same. For Bennie Yows and his son Charles, serving in controversial wars is something that they will share for their entire lives.

An Air Force combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Yows thought he had left many of his memories of his military war experiences behind him. But after his service, he decided to go to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Today, he works with those who are seeking clearance to return to duty. He knows that one day he may work with someone very close to him.

His job and circumstances often cause his attention to turn to his son, Charles, who is currently serving his third tour of duty in Iraq. He entered the service to pursue higher education wearing the uniform of the Air Force.

Although the miles are many, the internet helps keep them in touch. Yows keeps up the communication with his son through internet messages from his daughter in law. Because he doesn't know when he will return home to his wife and children, the younger Yows has put in his Christmas box request – coffee, tea and candy. The request and the conversations are simple and no one talks about the War. But military service in the Yows' family is a strong tradition.

As we encourage and watch our own, "Heroes in Houston," we can't forget the many heroes who are serving our nation throughout the world! ✪

Beware the "Spudimators!"

You've been spudinated! It's been a common phrase on elevators, events and around the dinner table at these weeks' events. "Spudinated" refers to receiving an Idaho potato pin, compliments of participants from Boise, Idaho. The group includes 17 veterans and 10 volunteers. Last year they medaled in 23 out of 29 possible events. Robert Schaney is an 83 year old Marine Corps veteran who has competed in the National Veterans Golden Age Games five times has won nine medals. He's won a total of four gold medals in bowling. "Bowling just comes naturally to me, but boy I got romped in horseshoes," said Schaney.

Schaney bowls weekly with the Spudimators, which is associated with the Blinded Veterans Association. They also go fishing, shopping, out to dinner and play cards, along with other activities, three to four times each week. "Sometimes I am so busy I don't know if I'm coming or going," Schaney said. The Spudimators, as they affectionately refer to themselves, "feel just like a family," Schaney says.

"These Games keep guys alive; it is a winning deal for VA and the veterans it keeps us physically active and involved. The more we are involved and active, the healthier we are."

Although Schaney broke his leg last year while at the Games, that did not stop him from competing this year in horse shoes, bowling, and shuffleboard.

In order to continue his yearly competition, he went through extensive rehab for three and a half months so he could return home and live independently.

Schaney sums up why he was so energetic to put forth the effort in rehabilitation so he could return to the Games with his family of choice, the Spudimators. "The camaraderie that these Games provide is why I keep coming back. I'm a winner and you're a winner just because you're here. Just the sportsmanship that is shown here alone deserves a medal. I hope they always have these Games!" ✪



From left to right, back row; Marvin Hitcock, Kenny Kraft, Arthur Motz, Al Sedivy, Bob Schaney, Gary Gillen, Jack Kesgard, Norman Addington, and Jim Near. From left to right, front row; George Barnett, Valerie Duffy and Alice Addington

BINGO NIGHT!



Come join in the fun and win lots of great prizes at Bingo Night, Thursday, August 30 beginning at 7 p.m., in the George R. Brown Convention Center, Exhibit Hall B. Competitors must wear bibs to win bingo prizes. This event is sponsored by the Veterans Canteen Service.



Information on Today's Activities

Moody Gardens, Galveston

Water your imagination and travel the oceans of the world at the Aquarium Pyramid®. Step into the Rainforest Pyramid® with thousands of tropical plants, exotic fish and birds. Explore the mysteries of science at the Discovery Pyramid®, and take a rocking and rolling ride through the universe at the Ridefilm Theater. Get in the middle of the action at the 4D Special FX Theater®. See spectacular images leap from the screen of our six story IMAX®3D Theater.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with more than 55,000 works of art, is an exceptional resource for learning about the visual arts from a worldwide perspective. The museum is privileged to acquire outstanding works of art that reflect a wide variety of geographic regions and historical periods. Italian Renaissance paintings, French Impressionist works, photographs, American and European decorative arts, African and pre Columbian gold, American art, and European and American paintings and sculpture from post 1945 are particularly strong holdings. The museum presents more than 30 changing exhibitions each year.

Space Center Houston (NASA)

Space Center Houston is where people can experience space from its dramatic history and exciting present to its compelling future. Space Center Houston is the only place on earth that gives guests an out of this world journey through human adventures into space. Space Center Houston's unparalleled exhibits, attractions, special presentations and hands on activities tell the story of NASA's manned space flight program. Space Center Houston is also the only place where visitors can see astronauts train for missions, touch a real moon rock, land a shuttle and take a behind the scenes tour of NASA. Guests can learn about the past, experience the present and be a part of the future of our country's space program.

Houston Texans NFL Tour

Want to see how an NFL star trains in state of the art facilities, and also see a beautiful stadium that hosted the 2004 Super Bowl? On this tour, you will have a chance to see most of the Reliant Park campus, plus the first class training equipment and facilities, press box areas, and various other parts of the infrastructure you don't get to see during the Sunday broadcasts.

Services and Room Locations

Wheelchair Repair is

located in room 3029.

Medical Assistance is

located in room 3031.

Second Level of Hyatt:

- Cyber Café: *Arboretum 2*
- Hospitality: *Arboretum 3*
- Recreation: *Arboretum 4 & 5*
- Support Group Meetings AA : *Arboretum 1*

Third Level of Hyatt:

- Administration: *Mesquite*
- Awards Ceremony Tuesday through Thursday 3 - 5 p.m. : *Westside of Imperial Ballroom*
- Command Center: *Cottonwood A/B*
- Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner: *Imperial Ballroom*
- Media Center: *Dogwood A/B*

Happy Birthday!

If you have the opportunity to meet the following competitors today, please wish them an extra special happy birthday! Those of you celebrating birthdays this week are invited to stop by the Media Center to pick up a special gift. Happy birthday to:

Alvin E. Cleveland

Clarence E. Dorr

Alonzo Lenoir, Jr.

Today's Weather

Low **73°** High **91°**

Friday Low: 74° High: 92°

Saturday Low: 73° High: 90°

Important Info

Today's Menu

All meals are served in the Hyatt Imperial Ballroom located on the 3rd level of the hotel.

Breakfast Buffet, 6 to 8:30 a.m.

Assorted Chilled Juices
Fruit, Danish, Muffins, Coffee Cake
Scrambled Eggs, Grilled Ham
Grits and Breakfast Potatoes
Starbucks Coffee and Herbal Teas

Lunch Buffet, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mixed Greens and Romaine Lettuce with assorted Dressings
Chicken or Beef Fajitas with all the fixins'

Borracho Beans and Spanish Rice
Spanish Flan, Tres Leches

Dinner Buffet, 5 to 7 p.m.

Mixed Greens and Romaine Lettuce with assorted Dressings
Pot Roast
Grilled Mahi Mahi
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Jasmine Rice
Green Beans Amandine
Rolls
Assorted Desserts

Transportation Information

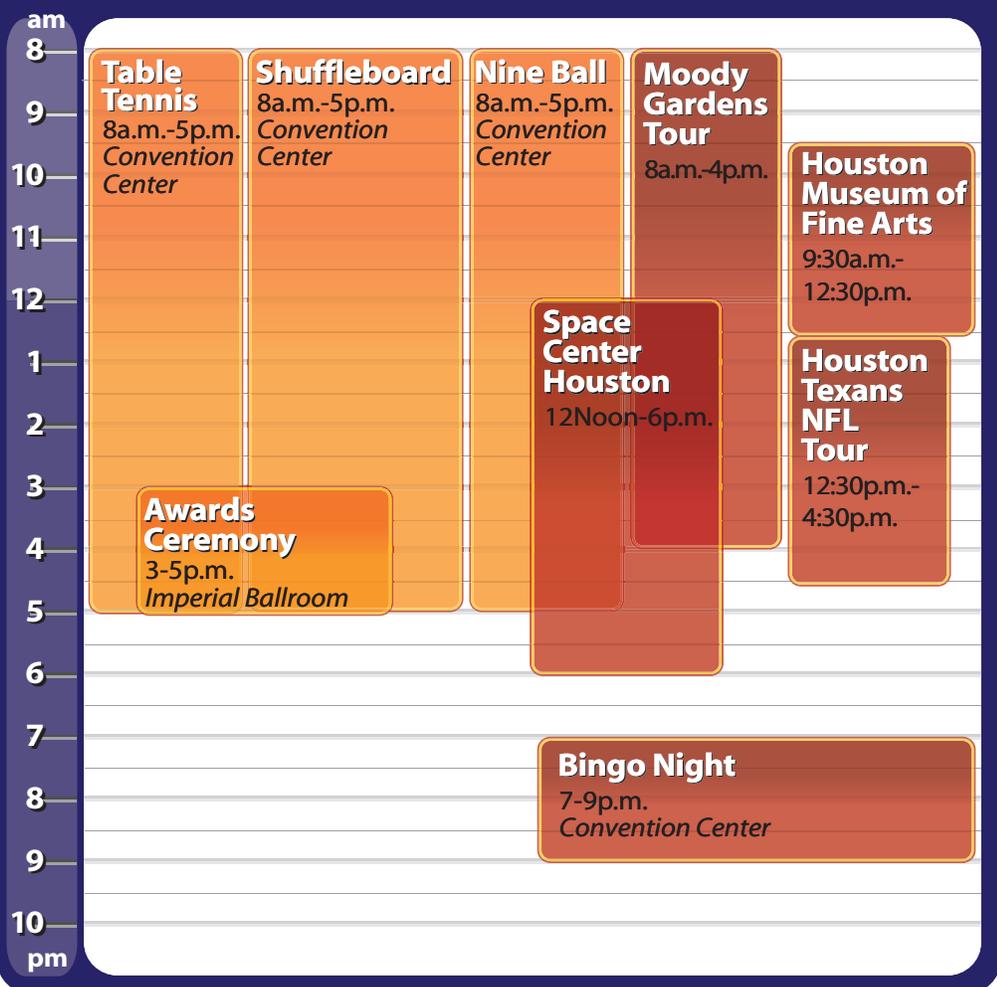
Coach America provides bus service from the Hyatt Regency Hotel to and from all events and activities from the Dallas and Louisiana Street entrance. Riders should be at the pick up point 90 minutes before the start time of the competitive event, and 60 minutes before the departure time of alternate activities.

Volunteer parking at the Toyota Center's Tundra Garage corner of Bell and La Branch, at 1515 Jackson Street, is free on



Today's Schedule

Thursday, August 30



the 4th, 5th and 6th levels. Shuttle pick up is on Bell Street under the skybridge. Shuttle and bus stops at the George R. Brown Convention Center are posted. VA shuttle service from the medical center runs every two hours from the west entrance Transitional Care Center, daily through Friday.

Durable Medical Equipment

Some durable medical equipment items are available for use by veterans at the Hyatt Regency Hotel during the Games, including shower chairs, tub benches, and raised toilet seats. Veterans in need of emergent items such as crutches, canes, manual wheelchairs and other miscellaneous items will be evaluated by the medical staff and items will be issued on an as needed basis.

Wheelchair Repair

Wheelchair Repair is available 24/7 from local vendors. Medical staff will be available to contact the vendors from any venue. Veterans can contact the medical staff directly at extension 3030 or 3031 to request repair services while at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Medical & Emergency Information

Medical staff are available 24 hours a day in Room 3030. Medical staff are also on-site at all venues in bright red shirts. If you experience a medical emergency, please do not wait to find a medical team member. Call 55 within the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Give the nature and exact location of the accident or medical emergency. To prevent further injury, do not move the injured/ill unless necessary.