

Great Games GAZETTE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin ~ June 19 – 23, 2007

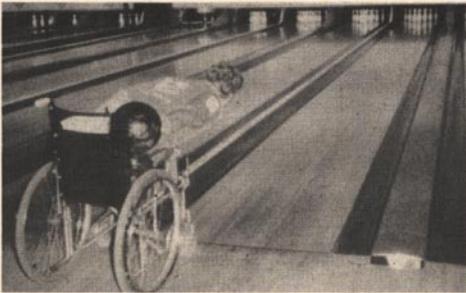


A Publication of the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

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Where were you in '82?

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games, circa 1982



David Schilling, of Wausau, Wis., throws out his first ball in the bowling event at the Bowlero Lanes at the games in 1982.



David Schilling practices for the 1982 track event.



More track competitors test their mettle at West High School in West Allis, Wis.

Wheelchair sports began after World War II, when veterans began playing wheelchair basketball in VA hospitals. Interest soon spread to other sports, such as track and field, bowling, swimming and archery. In 1980, when VA established recreation therapy service, wheelchair sports became a therapeutic tool for treating veterans with disabilities.

In 1981, seventy-four veterans from 14 states competed in the first National Veterans Wheelchair Games at the VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia. Then, in August of 1982, veterans were “Wheelin’ to Wood” as the Milwaukee, Wisconsin VA Medical Center hosted the 2nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games. One hundred seventy five veterans competed that year in archery, basketball, billiards, bowling, trapshooting, weightlifting, table tennis, track, field, slalom and swimming.

Events took place right on the VA grounds, as well as local high schools. Competitors were treated to special activities, such as “spahnferkel” (pig roast), Old Milwaukee beer and brats, and a guest pass to Fiesta Mexicana. Those early Games established the strong sense of common identity and camaraderie among the participants that continues to this day.

In 1985, the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) offered to co-sponsor the Games, which had grown in size and complexity. Today, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the largest annual wheelchair sporting event in the world, with more than 500 participants from all over the United States, as well as Puerto Rico and Great Britain.

The 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will include swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, archery, air guns, basketball, nine-ball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, handcycling, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, a motorized wheelchair rally, track, field and a powerchair relay. Far too large to be held on the VA grounds anymore, events will take place at the Midwest Airlines Convention Center, Greendale High School, Grant Park, Whitnall Park, YMCA Aquatic Center, the Bowlero Bowling Center, Milwaukee County Zoo and Veterans Park.

As exciting as the Wheelchair Games were back in 1982, the enthusiasm has grown greatly over the last 25 years. The National Veterans Wheelchair Games give veterans a chance to show the world all that they are capable of and the atmosphere is one of competitiveness, desire and drive, but perhaps most of all, tremendous pride.

Don't miss it!

New 'Pamper the Caregiver' Event

Spouses and caregivers of veteran athletes (male or female) will be eligible for a unique treat at the 27th National Veteran Wheelchair Games. On Wednesday, June 20 or Thursday, June 21, join us at

the *Posh Pamper Party*, an evening of massage, facials, hair and nail care. Sign up for this free event at on-site registration June 19. More details will follow in upcoming newsletters.



Lake Michigan Fishing Trip

The Milwaukee Great Lakes Sport Fishing Club is offering a salmon and trout fishing excursion on Lake Michigan, to be held Sunday, June 24, from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. Fishing equipment and lunch will be provided.

You should plan to use a manual wheelchair. Everyone must be transferred onto the boat and there is no lift available to transfer a power wheelchair.

Please note: this trip is *not* part of the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. You will be responsible for arranging your transportation to and from this special event.

May 1 is the deadline to reserve your spot. Contact Steve Lapin at (262) 930-9303 (email: slapin@wi.rr.com) or John Greaney at (630) 204-3177 (email: trvlfishman@aol.com).

This is a wonderful gesture by the Great Lakes Sport Fisherman. We hope that some of our guests can take advantage of it and enjoy the experience.

Parking in downtown Milwaukee

Anyone driving to the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games should be able to find a place to park their vehicle for the week. Each of the official Games hotels has a parking ramp and a surface lot within half a block of their main entrance.

Hotel surface lot operators are willing to reserve end spaces for vehicles needing extra space to load and unload. Trailers are also welcome, but remember that they

take an additional parking space and you will need to pay for it.

Another convenient surface lot is the System Parking Lot, located between 4th and 5th Streets and Wisconsin Avenue. This lot is across the street from the Hilton and the Midwest Airlines Convention Center. Call the System Parking Lot representative, Jay Curtiss, at (414) 291-7460 if you want to reserve space ahead of time. You

will need to pre-pay for any reserved parking spaces.

The Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America has information about the maximum height limits for each parking ramp and other parking related questions. For more information, call (414) 328-8910 and ask for Gus Sorenson.

Additional information about parking in Milwaukee is available at www.parkmilwaukee.com

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TO DO IN MILWAUKEE THINGS

Continued from last Gazette...

- 5. **Milwaukee Art Museum** – Explore an exhibit in the stunning Quadracci Pavilion, designed by world-renowned architect Santiago Calatrava.
- 6. **Jazz in the Park** – Jazz in the Park is one of Milwaukee's favorite outdoor music series. Relax to jazz on Thursday evening in Cathedral Square.
- 7. **Eat Custard** – Frozen custard is a Milwaukee staple. Enjoy chocolate, vanilla, or the flavor of the day.
- 8. **Milwaukee County Zoo** – Home to more than 2,500 mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles, a world of adventure awaits visitors to the zoo. (During the Games, softball and Kids Day will take place on the zoo grounds on Friday, June 22.)
- 9. **Milwaukee Brewers Baseball** – Come on out to Miller Park and see the Milwaukee Brewers (the "Brew Crew") play ball.

Stay tuned for more Things To Do...



The volunteer application is now available online:
www.wheelchairgames.org

Volunteer opportunities are available in areas such as meals, hospitality, site set-up, sporting events, transportation and many others. Shifts will generally be four to six hours. Volunteers must be at least 14 years or older. (Anyone 13 or younger must be accompanied by an adult.) For more information, please contact:

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Volunteers Make it Happen at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games!

27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games
www.wheelchairgames.org

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