

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Athlete Profile (Local)

### Stanley Hunt – *When Life Hands You a Lemon – Make Some Lemonade!*



Stanley Hunt at a recent car show where he was a first prize winner.

In June, race car enthusiast Stanley Hunt will compete for the first time in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Don't be fooled by his rookie status though – this is one athlete who is quite familiar with competition and more than ready to meet the Games' competitive challenge. "As you can see, I am prepared and in good shape – with muscles of steel!" Hunt laughed.

A 64-year-old Army veteran who served in Vietnam, Hunt was born and raised in Chicago and moved to Milwaukee in 1988. He is very familiar with both of the local organizations hosting the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, taking place in Milwaukee, June 19-23. "The Milwaukee VA Medical Center and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America are wonderful organizations," he said. "They have helped me improve tremendously, both mentally and physically." To prepare for the upcoming Games, Hunt stays in shape by working out two days each week in the VA Medical Center's physical therapy department.

Hunt served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1971. After his discharge from military service, he returned to his former job, working for the railroad for some 20 years. In 1989, he was seriously injured when a train derailed from the track. His back was broken in two places from the accident. Since then, Hunt has lived life as a paraplegic. "In the beginning, it was hard to adjust to my new lifestyle – but sometimes hard is good," he said. "Everyone needs to know that it is very important to work hard. If life hands you a lemon, make it into lemonade. Every day can still be exciting." For this first-time participant, thinking about the competition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is one way to prove the point. "Doing something I never did before makes me really excited," Hunt said. At the event, he will compete in the track 2000-meter race, field events, nine-ball and bowling.

Hunt is the proud father of five children and has 11 grandchildren. To assist other individuals who have received new spinal cord injuries, he has spent some time volunteering as a peer counselor at Froedtert Hospital.

In addition to his other interests, Hunt is active in drag racing and is well known for his race cars. "This spring I competed in a big drag race in Bowling Green, Kentucky," he said recently. "It is unusual to see someone in a wheelchair compete in drag racing." He is especially proud of his Buick Grand National. "My car is rare; there were only 547 built in 1987 and they all have individual numbers and posters. I have car number 311," he said. In June though, Stanley Hunt will work on being *number 1* in his events at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.