

Bridge City POST

PITTSBURGH, PA | AUGUST 4, 2011



Taking the Shot

Presented by Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Department of Veterans Affairs

IN THIS ISSUE



« Dynamic Duos



Years of
Experience



Dom's Dilemma

Games Online

Stay on top of all the Games action with #NWWG on Twitter!



NWWG

www.wheelchairgames.va.gov



VAPHS

www.pittsburgh.va.gov/NWWG



Facebook

www.facebook.com/VAPHS



Twitter

twitter.com/VAPittsburgh

A Young 87

The Games energize World War II Veteran Doris Merrill

Amanda Wilczynski, Writer-Editor, VA Butler Healthcare



Merrill in the motorized slalom at last year's Games.

nickname, Pepper, Paul brings her to all the Games and is her No. 1 fan.

This year, Merrill will be competing in five events, including what she describes as her best one: bowling. She looks forward to the motorized wheelchair rally every year, she said.

"If I don't win, it will be alright with me," she said. "I feel joy watching others win."

Merrill is most excited to see all the friends she's made over the years. Spending time with her comrades and cheering them on are two of her favorite things to do at the Games.

"When I see everyone, my heart just jumps," she said. "Just being here, being with people like myself, is a bridge to the walking world. I really love being here." ■

On the Cover: One of Wednesday's quad rugby matches.

Spirit of the Games

Don't forget to vote for your pick for the Spirit of the Games Award, which recognizes the athlete who epitomizes excellence, sportsmanship and strength of character. Pick up a ballot at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center hospitality table today! **All ballots must be in no later than 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 5.**

WORD on the Burgh

A daily dose of Pittsburghese

dill: deal, as with cards, not pickles

redd up: to clean or tidy an area

pop: soda or soft drink

At age 87, Navy Veteran and athlete Doris Merrill doesn't feel old.

In fact, the two gold and two silver medals she racked up during the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games last summer prove she's far from slowing down.

Merrill, who served in naval intelligence for the WAVES during World War II, is the oldest female athlete competing in this year's Games.

"When I participate in the Games with everyone, I feel invigorated," said Merrill, who lives in Nanticoke, Pa., and has attended 11 Wheelchair Games all over the country and in Puerto Rico.

She's won many medals—mostly gold—an achievement she attributes to her coach and son, Paul. Better known by his

Kids Day

About 20 Pittsburgh-area children in wheelchairs will have the chance to learn from the experts—that is, Games athletes serving as mentors—during this year's Kids Day. Swing by to see these youths try their hand at basketball, slalom and T-ball.

When:
Friday, Aug. 5,
9–11:30 a.m.

Where:
Shady Side Academy



Visiting the Games Today



Attention, NASCAR fans! Keep an eye out for Toyota driver Martin Truex Jr., who is making an appearance at the slalom event today. Truex will sign autographs before and after the event.

31st NWWG by the Numbers: 129 rolls of medical tape at the ready |

 34,560 bottles

Dynamic Duos

Heroes forge special bonds on and off the playing field

Mentor (n):

a trusted counselor or guide; tutor, coach

Many athletes can point to a specific person, or several people, who first told them about the Games, urged them to participate and encouraged them to train and push themselves to do things they never imagined possible.

These individuals—call them mentors, friends, coaches—supply the kind of support that helps Veterans come out of their shell and perform what can be truly extraordinary feats. They tell them to give archery a try, despite that weak arm. To angle that javelin just a little bit differently on the next throw. Or even to take on the challenge of flying with a wheelchair for the first time.

Here are a few of these dynamic duos that you may see competing—one perhaps for the 10th time; the other, possibly for the first—throughout this week.

Continued
on p. 4



Gina Fraley (Army) and Octavia Mitchell (Army) | Illinois

I sang at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for years. Then I lost my voice. I was devastated and basically becoming a recluse. Octavia felt almost a necessity to pull me out....I have an enormous amount of trust in her not to steer me wrong and set me up for disappointment....I've got a friend to do this with me. We're working together as a team.

Gina trains real, real hard. This week, I'm here to cheer her on, and she'll be able to cheer me on. Whatever we go home with, we're going to celebrate....When I look at the Veterans with disabilities, I see past that. So when somebody—like Gina—says, "I can't," I say, "Come on, give it a try!" We've come too far to give up.



John Novicki (Navy) and Todd Kemery (Marine) | Minnesota

I think it's paramount to have someone like Todd, I really do. He is like a bad penny. He kind of keeps coming around. If you don't mention anything for a while, he'll mention it...and he understands the trials and tribulations of a disease [multiple sclerosis] like mine in a way some of my other friends don't.

John was a new guy to our PVA chapter, and we are always looking for guys to play rugby. He was receptive right away....When you're new to a chair, your world has pretty much come to an end. Once I started to see the benefits of sports, it just became a natural thing to talk about to other people who are struggling.

It's great—very satisfying—to see somebody excel like John has.



Darrell Fisher (Air Force) and Centra "CeCe" Mazyck (Army) | South Carolina

"Cece knows a lot more than I do, so I sit back and let her explain things. She tells me, 'You know you have to work at it.'

My attitude toward a lot of things is great now, especially because now I know there's things out there for us. I try to tell a lot of the guys I see here in wheelchairs to pick up a sport.

I'm climbing a ladder now....I hope to be a Paralympian one day.



"When I met Darrell, he wasn't active at all. I thought he had potential, so I just worked with him.... Then he went to the Wheelchair Games for the first time and fell in love with it.

He has made tremendous [strides]. He's more toned. His throwing technique has improved tremendously. Now we can critique each other, and we train together every day.

I believed in Darrell, and that's what we need to do with other Veterans...give them time and a listening ear."

Ed Leeper (Air Force) and Tom Strang (Navy) | Pennsylvania

"I've been in PVA for three years, and my health wasn't right for the last two—or maybe my attitude wasn't. This year was my chance.

Tom has been helping me with air rifle. I know how to shoot, but precision shooting is different. It's very intense.

When you're in a chair, it takes such effort to go out. Tom sets an example. There ought to be a medal for that.

Having these opportunities...it's a saving grace.



"I told Ed about the Games being in Pittsburgh, not far from his home. I got him involved in an air guns seminar. He got to shooting, and then he went ahead and bought an air gun.

Now, Ed's going to see all these hundreds of people here at the Games. It's an eye-opening experience.

Helping other Veterans makes you strong. Once you get hooked, it's really good for you—mentally, physically. It keeps me going.



1,200 bottles of hand sanitizer |



1,000 flags waved by fans in the stands |

2,500

On the Menu



Thursday's Meal Schedule

Breakfast: 5:30–9 a.m.

Lunch: 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Dinner: 4:30–6:30 p.m.

Athletes and coaches can use their WePay debit cards to buy breakfast, lunch and dinner at the restaurant of their choice or on the convention center's second-floor concourse.

Breakfast

Cheese-filled omelet with roasted potatoes and sausage

Cinnamon French toast with bananas Foster topping

Lunch and Dinner

Pulled-pork sandwich with chips

Pasta marinara or Alfredo with mixed green salad

Pizza with mixed green salad

Special Events



» Pickup for today's Pirates game will be in the convention center's east lobby, starting at 3:30 p.m.

» Pickup for today's flyfishing trip will be at 8 a.m. in the convention center's west lobby.



Dom's Dilemma

Follow 7-year-old Dominic Ruperto as he picks the brains of Games athletes throughout the week.



Q: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. What is the breakfast of champions?

Anthony Radetic

Army Veteran | Abbeville, Ala.

A: Fruit—apples, oranges, strawberries.



Karen Van Benschoten

Navy Veteran | Racine, Wis.

A: Wheaties!

Susan Macaulay

Air Force Veteran | Juneau, Alaska

A: Cereal and half a banana.



Roger Hanks

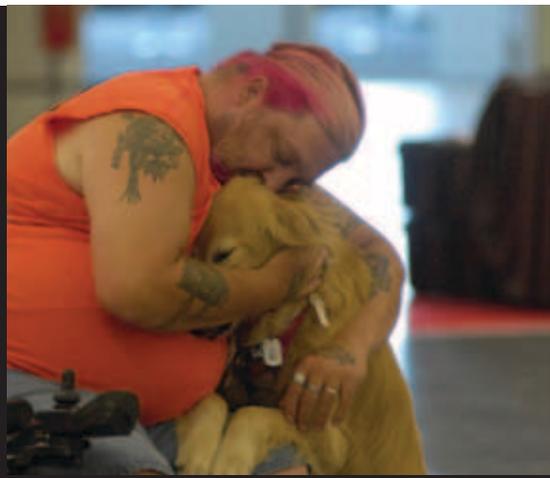
Army and Navy Veteran
Granbury, Texas

A: Grapefruit.



When he's not reporting, Dom, a soon-to-be-third-grader from Verona, Pa., plays wing for the Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins sled hockey team.







PITTSBURGH

where **HEROES** become **LEGENDS**



Games Schedule

Be sure to **arrive at your events one hour before** they start.

Thursday, Aug. 4		
8 a.m.	Table Tennis (IV-V)	DLCC - Hall D
	Nine-ball (IA-B-C)	DLCC - Hall D
	Slalom (II-III)	DLCC - Hall B
1 p.m.	Table Tennis (IA-B-C)	DLCC - Hall D
	Trapshooting (Assigned Times)	CSC
	Softball (Games 1,2)	DLCC - Hall A
3 p.m.	Super "G" Slalom (Finals)	DLCC - Hall B
	Trapshooting (Assigned Times)	CSC
7 p.m.	Basketball (Games 7, 8)	DLCC - Hall BC
	Power Soccer (Consolation)	DLCC - Hall B
7:05 p.m.	Pirates vs. Cubs	PNC Park
8:30 p.m.	Basketball (Games 9, 10)	DLCC - Hall BC
	Quad Rugby (Game 2)	DLCC - Hall B

DLCC - David Lawrence Convention Center; CSC - Clairton Sportsmen's Club



See the Pittsburgh Pirates in one of their most remarkable seasons in years, as well as a special on-field salute to Games athletes.

Odds and Ends

- » Athletes and coaches: Be sure to get **separate checks** when **paying with WePay cards**.
- » Need help? Stop by a **hospitality table** or pull aside one of our roaming concierges—wearing black "Hero Helper" aprons.
 - » Westin: 7 a.m.–9 p.m.
 - » DLCC: 7 a.m.–9 p.m.
- » Hop online at **HP's computer workstations** on the DLCC's second floor, outside Hall A. Open during DLCC hours.
- » **Wheelchair Repair**
 - » Westin: Pennsylvania Room, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.
 Minor repair service at DLCC and all off-site venues during events. Emergency repair: 1-800-272-3233.
- » **Medical Suites:**
 - » DLCC: Room 330, 7:30 a.m. until last event ends
 - » Westin, Room 2322; Omni, Room 1540/1550. 7:30 a.m.–10:30 p.m.
 Staff will be on-call 10:30 p.m.–7:30 a.m. and can be reached by calling your hotel's front desk.
- » **Durable Medical Equipment:** On-call: 206-972-1621/1620. Westin, Allegheny Room I, ext. 6426; Omni, Riverboat Room, ext. 5035. Return all DME upon checkout or by 12 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 7, at the latest.
- » **Transportation:** Boarding for shuttles to events will begin 60-90 minutes beforehand.
 - » Pickup and drop-off: DLCC east lobby entrance
 - » Trapshooting shuttle: 11 a.m.–5 p.m.
 - » Pirate game: 4–11 p.m.
 - » HERL open house: 3–7 p.m.
 - » Omni to DLCC: 5 a.m.–11 p.m.
- » We will hold **specialty chairs** in a secure area in Hall B. They will be available for pickup one hour before your event. Only athletes or authorized individuals may pick up the chairs (bring valid ID). Be sure to return chairs after your event.
- » **Lost and Found:** DLCC, second floor, show office C. 6 a.m.–10 p.m.

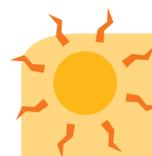
Award Presentation Schedule

Medal presentations will take place on a special awards stage located in the concourse on the DLCC's second floor.

Thursday, Aug. 4	
9:30 a.m.	Archery
11 a.m.	Table Tennis (IV-V)
	Nine-ball (IA-B-C)
	Slalom (II-III)
1 p.m.	Air Guns
	Bowling (II-III)
3:30 p.m.	Table Tennis (IA-B-C)
8:30 p.m.	Swimming

These presentations will take place at the event location immediately after it ends:

Thursday, Aug. 4	
4:30 p.m.	Super G (Slalom)
8 p.m.	Power Soccer (Consolation)



Weather

High: 83°F | Low: 68°F
Chance of rain: 10%

Get Your Legend-Worthy GAMES GEAR

On sale at the convention center while supplies last!

Plus: Swing by a souvenir booth every day for a new free button pin. Quantities limited.



Take Pittsburgh home with you!

Stop by Hall A for a souvenir photo with a magnificent city view in the background. 1–3 p.m.

