



The Daily Navigator

13th National Veterans Golden Age Games

Monday, August 9, 1999

Rain Doesn't Dampen Spirits of First-Timers

By Anita Healy

VA Maryland Health Care System

It takes more than a little bit of rain to dampen the spirits of National Veterans Golden Age Games participants. When the rain started falling shortly before yesterday's Opening Ceremonies were ready to start, event organizers quickly regrouped and moved athletes and their coaches to a covered tent.

Anticipation filled the air as 1999 Games coordinator Dave Krueger welcomed participants to "a week-long voyage of competition, camaraderie and companionship." Enthusiasm spilled over into cheers and applause when teams heard their state announced during the parade of flags.

The excitement of opening day touches everyone — athletes, coaches and volunteers. But there's a special brand of magic felt by one unique group of athletes — those participating in the Games for the very first time.

"I'm not going to let anything rain on my parade," said first-time participant Ken Zavis, 61, from the Hines, Ill., VA Medical Center. He says he worked hard to get here and intends to savor every moment of this adventure. In addition to competing in billiards, croquet, checkers and bowling, he's looking forward to meeting the other athletes here.

Two years ago, Zavis weighed 550 pounds. He's now down to 290, thanks to "exercise, watching what I eat and water — lots and lots of water!" He credits VA staff with "giving me the push and the encouragement to get where I am today." A Marine Corps veteran who served in Vietnam and Okinawa, Zavis receives physical and occupational therapy at Hines VAMC, where his therapists preach the importance of daily exercise.

Another first-timer, Kitty Britt, 77, of the Yountville State Veterans Home in California, echoes that advice. She swims five to seven days every

single week. Ten years ago, she had both knees replaced and returned to the sport she first enjoyed as a child. "I needed to do something to keep my knees — and my body — going, so I started swimming again, with a passion!" She'll have the opportunity to demonstrate that passion in this year's swimming competition.

Coast Guard veteran Britt attributes her presence at this year's Games to a combination of luck and pluck. That's because the Yountville State Veterans Home drew names this year to determine which five residents would represent them. Residents who scored well in their event received an extra chance, so Britt, a WW II veteran, had two chances to win.

Britt, who says this is the first time she has ever won anything, even feels lucky even about something most of us would consider bad luck — lost luggage. That's because one of her suitcases arrived here safely, and, "fortunately, that's the most important one — the one with my bathing suit!"

Aaron Maxey, 66, from the Dallas, Texas, VAMC, feels lucky too, as he prepares to compete in his first Games. He feels grateful just to be alive. Sharing competition and stories with other veterans offers an extra plus for this Korean War veteran, who served 13 months in combat. Speaking about his combat experiences, he said, "I didn't think I would ever see this side of the world again, never in my wildest dreams."

A spinal injury in the service halted athletic competition for Maxey — until now, that is. He says he's missed that, and can't wait to compete again in this year's Games. He plans to play dominoes, checkers and billiards — and he intends to win!

Another newcomer, Solomon Steplight, 56, of East Orange, N.J., plans to "go for the gold" as well.

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First-Timers (cont.)

Although this is his first year, he's an old hand when it comes to athletics. "I've played sports my whole life — football, track, baseball and golf," just to name a few. While he was stationed in Germany with the Army during the Vietnam era, he played basketball for both his barracks and post team.

Steplight will compete in billiards, ping pong, horseshoes and bowling. In addition to the competition, he's looking forward to making new friends and seeing different parts of the country. And he plans to do lots of traveling to future Golden Age Games. As he says, "This may be my first time at the Games, but it sure won't be my last!"



Shuttle Schedule

Transportation is available not only to get you around the Hobart Campus, but also to other locations such as a local supermarket and plaza to pick up forgotten items, or to a movie theater to see a show. Shuttles will run continuously from **6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.**

All shuttle service buses will cover the same route. Those displaying a **red** color-coded sign in the front window will provide transportation for wheelchair and some ambulatory participants. Buses having **blue** color-coded signs will transport ambulatory (those who do not require a wheelchair) participants. These shuttles will stop at, or near, each on-campus event site.

Transportation information and loading times for all alternate activities and off-campus events is available in all dorms and in the Scandling Center. All alternate activities trips, Golf and Bowling (ambulatory) will depart from Pultney Street in front of the Scandling Center. Wheelchairs for those events will load from Hale/Bartlett/Durfee and Medbery Visitor parking lot, across from the Scandling Center.

Fascinating Fact!

So far this week, 671 volunteers have donated 7,390 hours of their time in support of the 13th National Veterans Golden Age Games.

Important Departure Information



Believe it or not, even though the Games are just getting underway, it's already time to start thinking about the trip home. If you will be flying home after the Games, you will need to get the following information to the Information Center at the Scandling Center **by noon on Tuesday:**

- Your Name
- Airline
- Flight number, date and time of departure
- Airport location (Rochester/Syracuse).

Evening Activity

Tonight: The Comedy Company
7:30 p.m. in the Quad
(In case of rain, Scandling Center Dining Hall)

You've heard the expression, "Laughter is the best medicine." Undoubtedly, many of you are still dragging from that long trip to Geneva, or you haven't quite figured out how to get a good night's rest in a dormitory bed, or it is too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry (although it's doubtful anyone thinks it's too dry after yesterday) or you simply wish you could get from one place to another without any inclines. Whatever the case, put your mind at ease for an evening of chuckles and humor.

Danny Kiberto, an Air Force veteran, will host your evening with his fast-paced, high-energy performance delivered in a perpetual dynamic motion. Kiberto has enjoyed tremendous popularity on the college circuits and in many comedy clubs across the United States and Canada.

Tim Thomas provides observational humor from college days through marriage and fatherhood, his current infinite source of material. Tim has also appeared on many college campuses and performed in various Northeastern Clubs for Hysterical Management.

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Schedule of Events

Tuesday, August 10

8:00 a.m.	Billiards – 8 Ball (65-69)	Bristol Field House
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Pentathlon (All Divisions)	Alumni Field
8:00 a.m.	Checkers (70-74)	Winn-Seeley Gym
10:00 a.m.	Billiards – 8 Ball (55-59;75-79; and 80+)	Bristol Field House
10:00 a.m.	Checkers (60-64)	Winn-Seeley Gym
10:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Race Track Trip	Finger Lakes Race Track
11:00 a.m.	Billiards – 9 Ball Exhibition	Bristol Field House
1:00 p.m.	Billiards – 8 Ball (70-74)	Bristol Field House
1:00 p.m.	Checkers (65-69)	Winn-Seeley Gym
2:00 p.m.	Billiards – 9 Ball Exhibition	Bristol Field House
3:00 p.m.	Billiards – 8 Ball (60-64)	Bristol Field House
3:00 p.m.	Checkers (55-59;75-79; and 80+)	Winn-Seeley Gym
4:00 p.m.	Daily Medal Ceremony	Smith Library Patio
7:30 p.m.	Evening Entertainment Program	Hobart Quad

Evening Activity (cont.)

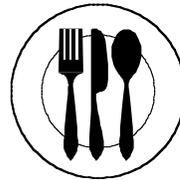
Nick Siracuse has opened for top acts such as Rosie O'Donnell, Englebert Humperdink, Patti Labelle and Billy Ray Cyrus. He was a staff writer on the David Brenner talk show "Nightlife," where he also performed. He has also written on the shows, "Into the Night" with Rick Dees, and "The Arsenio Hall Show." He has lent his writing skills to the monologues of John Mendoza and Joan Rivers. Currently, Nick is writing for Jay Leno. His unique style of comedy can only be described as quick-witted and fun.



Medical Assistance

The Hubbs Health Center is located on St. Clair Street. There will be support on duty 24 hours a day.

There will also be a mobile medical unit located on campus next to Hubbs Health Center on St. Clair Street, from 8:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.



On the Menu...

Lunch (11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.): Meatball Sub; Vegetable Paella; Chicken Paprikash; Fluffy White Rice; Cauliflower w/Broccoli

Dinner (5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.): Savory Baked Chicken; Plain Baked Chicken; Eggplant Parmesan; Armenian Rice Pilaf; Stir Fry Vegetables

Standard Daily Breakfast Offerings: Egg Whites/Egg Beaters; Hot Cereal/Fruits; Pastries/Cereals; Yogurt (*breakfast is served from 6:30-8:30 a.m. every morning*)

Standard Daily Lunch Offerings: Full Deli/Salad Bar; Hot Soup/Cereals; Fresh Fruits; Desserts/Ice Cream

Standard Daily Dinner Offerings: Baked Potato; Hot Soup/Cereals; Full Salad Bar; Dessert/Ice Cream

Standard Daily Lunch & Dinner Offerings: Pizzas; Pasta; Vegetarian; Firehouse Grill; Vegetables

Quotables...

“Despite my age and my aches and pains, participating in these Games proves that I’m still not too old to compete.”

- *Ramon Myers, Temple, Texas*

“It’s always a great pleasure to participate in the Golden Age Games. It’s a time to meet old friends, a chance to see how my Wellness Program works and training has helped me during the competition, and a chance to, once again, compete for the GOLD with my fellow veterans and peers.”

- *Phil Piskura, West Haven, Conn.*

“For American veterans who are 55 years or older, the VA wellness programs not only improve their health, but add an important dimension to the overall quality of lives. Through physical, occupational and recreational therapy, these programs encourage even the most handicapped to keep active, stay healthy and have fun in the process.”

- *Martin Onieal, Hamden, Conn.*

“The Golden Age Games give me a good excuse to stay in shape year ‘round. I also get to meet some very good and friendly people — athletes, coaches and leaders.”

- *Everett Houk, Canton, Mich.*

“My annual participation in the Golden Age Games encourages me to engage in sports all year, keeping me active and healthy. Having the chance to meet and enjoy old friends and new friends from VA hospitals across the country is something we all look forward to. Without the VA, so many seniors would be without dreams and encouragement to live healthier, happier lives.”

- *Beverly Smith, North Babylon, N.Y.*

“The Golden Age Games are great. It gives us old codgers an opportunity to participate and win medals. I haven’t won any medals yet, but I’m looking forward to winning some this year!”

- *David Aragon, Granada Hill, Calif.*

“This is a terrific opportunity for senior veterans. It gives me a sense of worth and a challenge to maintain fitness.

- *Rino Rimoldi, Garden Grove, Calif.*

Educational Sessions

All participants, coaches, volunteers and support staff are invited to attend any of the educational sessions offered. Certificates of Training, which identify the number of contact hours for each session, will be given upon completion. If you are interested in attending any of the following sessions, please register with the Information Center in the Scandling Center.

Today (10:00-11:00 a.m.): Long-term Care Planning and Medicare Supplement Information, presented by Buzz Ferweda in the Sanford Classroom at the Warren Hunting Smith Library.

Today (1:00-2:00 p.m.) and Tuesday (2:00 -3:00 p.m.): Self Defense for Seniors, presented by Steve Mumby in the Sanford Classroom at the Warren Hunting Smith Library.

Tuesday (10:00-11:00 a.m.): Nutrition, Wellness and Aging Diet: Developing Intelligent Eating Techniques, presented by Cindy Dahl in the Sanford Classroom and the Warren Hunting Smith Library.

Odds & Ends

EMERGENCY CONTACT: Emergency calls should be directed to the Command Center at (315) 781-4351. Non-emergency phone calls can be received in the Information Center at the Scandling Center at (315) 781-3512.

WHEELCHAIR REPAIR: The wheelchair repair room is located in Hale Hall, Room 104.

LOST & FOUND: Open 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. in the Information Center at the Scandling Center.

MEDAL PRESENTATION CEREMONIES: All medal award ceremonies will take place at 4:00 p.m. every day outside the south entrance to the Warren Hunting Smith Library. If it is raining, the presentations will take place in the Library Atrium. Medals will be presented today for shuffleboard, horseshoes and dominoes.