

Newcomers Get a Warm Welcome

By Cindy Butler
VA San Diego Healthcare System

While many of the veterans at the Golden Age Games have participated before, each year we welcome some novices to the event. Perhaps a friend, a VA counselor or a coach has said, "This is a great event—you need to



William Barnett

get involved!" Here are the stories of four veterans joining us for the first time.

William Barnett, 60, of Los Angeles, said with a big smile, "I'm here for the competition, and to have fun, too." He used to pitch horseshoes many years ago, and said

he was "pretty good at it." So now he's been practicing, and is hoping for a comeback. He is also participating in bowling and croquet.

Barnett said he first heard about the Golden Age Games from a counselor at the Los Angeles VA Medical Center. "The staff at the VA have provided good care—they've been good to me," he said.

He's surprised at how big the event is. "I knew there would be a lot of people, but I didn't expect this many," Barnett said. Adding that he is already among friends with his Los Angeles team of 22, he said he's enjoying being around so many other

veterans and sharing stories. He served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1963 to 1967 and is hoping to reunite with someone he served with.

Barnett said he is looking forward to participating in the Games next year in Los Angeles, in his own backyard. "I won't have to pack or travel," he explained.

"I'm enjoying the Southern hospitality and camaraderie, but I'm still trying to learn how to say 'y'all,'" said **Bill Barrett**, 60, from Huntington Station, N.Y. "One of the guys from my softball league, Bob Schiebe, has been coming to the Golden Age Games for years, and he encouraged me to sign up this year." He got involved with the bowling team from the Northport VA Medical Center, and the next thing he knew he was signed up for the team with 21 other members all headed for the Games in Duncanville.



Kenny Rogers

Barrett agreed with Barnett that the Games are much bigger and more involved than he imagined. "I'm really impressed with how nice all the people are, and how well they treat the veterans," he said. He said he's also enjoying "meeting guys from the service, and chatting up old stories." He served in the Marine Corps from 1958 to 1962.

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Newcomers (cont.)

Since retiring, he has stayed very active in athletics. He goes to the gym at least three times a week, plays in a softball league, bowls, and plays tennis. He is participating in the pentathlon and table tennis at the Games this year, and said he's looking forward to the competition.

"The surgeon told me I would never walk again after my brain surgery," said **Hans C. Nelson**, 57, from Gainesville, Fla. It was at that moment, in 1991, that he

made up his mind that he *would* walk again. His decision started a long journey of rehabilitation at the VA medical center, where he progressed from a wheelchair to a walker to a cane, and this week, to participating in the Golden Age Games. He said the recreation therapist at the VA medical center encouraged him to join their team of five, which is believed to be the first Golden Age Games team from Gainesville. Nelson is participating in the pentathlon, croquet, shuffleboard, and

horseshoes.

The combat-wounded Vietnam veteran served in the Army for 23 years. After retiring from the military, he worked for a bank holding company with responsibility for all of the securities.

Kenny Rogers, 75, from Las Vegas, has been a performer and athlete for most of his life. He has led the glamorous life that most of us only dream of. As a professional ice skater for 20 years, and a member of the "Holiday on Ice" team, he traveled to more than 75 countries. Teaching skating in Switzerland for three years, he learned to speak five languages. Later, he was an ice rink manager, and taught skiing and served on the Ski Patrol at Mammoth Mountain in Southern California.

While on ski patrol 28 years ago, he was injured by an avalanche control activity that left him with a spinal cord injury. Since that time, he has participated in eight National Veterans Wheelchair Games and 70 to 80 wheelchair sports events across the country.

Rogers said he was staying at the San Diego VA Medical Center Spinal Cord Injury Unit for his annual check-up this year when the recreation therapists encouraged him to sign up for the Golden Age Games. He said he is here because he loves the competition and camaraderie, and enjoys seeing his old buddies. The World War II Navy combat veteran is competing in the pentathlon, dominos, and swimming.

Announcements

Going to Billy Bob's? The first bus for tonight's trip to Billy Bob's will leave the high school at 5:00 p.m. and the last bus will leave at 6:00 p.m. No exceptions!

How did you do? Results from the events will be posted on the wall between the Command Center and Wheelchair Repair in Building #10.

Check your e-mail Laptop computers with Internet access are available in Room 908 of Building #9. The room is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for athletes and staff to check messages and communicate with family and friends back home.

Medical Assistance



The medical suite in the east cafeteria (Building #10) is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For overnight medical needs, a medical suite at the Ramada Inn in Duncanville is staffed from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00

p.m. Nurses are available overnight at the Motel 6 in Duncanville and the Quality Inn & Suites in Grand Prairie, and a shuttle runs between the hotels between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. each day to transport participants who need medical assistance to the appropriate location.

• Today's Schedule •

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Horseshoes
(65-69; 60-64; 80+)

DHS Bldg. #13 Field*

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Horseshoes
(55-59; 70-74; 75-79)

DHS Bldg. #13 Field

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Shuffleboard
(65-69; 60-64; 80+)

DHS/Bldg. #10 Gym/High Hat Gym

1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Shuffleboard
(55-59; 70-74; 75-79)

(wheelchair and visually impaired events to be held in High Hat Gym #9)

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Checkers
(55-59; 70-74; 75-79)

DHS #10, Classrooms 1020, 1023

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Checkers
(65-69; 60-64; 80+)

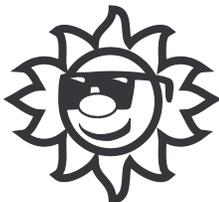
Billy Bob's, Fort Worth

7:00 p.m.

Fort Worth
Stockyards Trip

**Duncanville High School*

Beat the Texas Heat



It's hot out there, so it's important to take precautions to protect yourself from the effects of that strong Texas sun when you're participating in outdoor events. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Drink plenty of water both before and during your event.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat whenever possible.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible before your event.
- Bring a towel to dry off and a clean shirt to change into so that you can stay dry.
- Wear loose, light-colored clothing, preferably cotton.

Golden Age Games on the Web

Do you have family and friends who couldn't make the trip to Texas with you? If they have Internet access, they can keep up with the week's activities by visiting the Golden Age Games Web site at www.va.gov/vetevent/gag/2001.

They'll find daily news about the Games, a Games schedule, event results, athlete profiles, a photo gallery and more. Coverage is provided daily throughout the Games, so your family and friends can visit each day for something new. And check it out yourself on the computers in Building #9 (Room 908) at the high school.

Learn to Speak 'Texas'

Here's Part 2 of our short course on how to speak like the natives:

All - petroleum

*"They found **all** on mah land!"*

Wunst - one time and no more

*"Call me that again, **wunst** more!"*

Node - past tense of "know"

*"Ah **node** ah shouldn't of bent over in these ol' britches."*

- from *The Illustrated Texas Dictionary of the English Language*, by Jim Everhart

Golden Quotables...

“This is my fourth time participating in the Games, and being able to go is the highlight of my life. I look forward each year with high expectations to coming to the Games and renewing old friendships.”

—*Gladys Hungling, Sebring, Fla.*

“The Games are a very good way to stay in shape. The competition is great, and it’s fun to bring the video home to show your family what you’ve been up to. Thanks to all the recreation therapy services at the VA medical centers. They do a great job.”

—*Steve Alexander, Northport, N.Y.*

“I look forward to the Golden Age Games all year long. It takes a lot of commitment over the year to keep in shape to try to take home a medal. I can’t say enough about the good the Games have done for me in promoting better physical and mental health. I’m in my seventies now and feel better than when I was in my fifties due to the exercise and commitment to good health habits induced by the Games.”

—*Charles Chapman, Springhill, Fla.*

“When I first started going to the Golden Age Games as a ‘youngster’ in my fifties, I never dreamed I’d still be here, healthy enough to be competing in my seventies.”

—*James Gilly, Geneva, N.Y.*

“The National Veterans Golden Age Games have inspired me to live my motto, ‘plan your work, work your plan.’ I’ve looked forward to connecting with my team, and socially reconnecting with the competitors from previous years.”

—*Clarence Braxton, Hampton, Va.*

“The Golden Age Games are exciting to those who participate in it, because it lets us keep up with the people our own age. I enjoy being around people with similar interests. Thanks to all those who are involved to make these Games happen. It motivates me to exercise and challenges my mental capacity.”

—*Helen Mackey, Mountain, Mo.*

“The Golden Age Games is a wonderful program that enables our country’s veterans to get together, meet new friends, and share memories. Participating also keeps the competitive juices alive!”

—*Bill Barrett, Huntington, N.Y.*

Fascinating Fact

The staff of the VA North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) are an experienced crew when it comes to hosting the Golden Age Games. The Dallas VAMC previously hosted the 1995 Games at Southern Methodist University, and the Bonham VAMC hosted the 1990 Games in Sherman.

Dallas VAMC also hosted the 1986 Wheelchair Games at the University of Texas at Arlington, and the staff also helped out at last year’s Wheelchair Games in San Antonio.

On the Menu...



Breakfast (6:30-9:00 a.m.):

Frittata, Breakfast Casseroles, Omelets; Cereal, Oatmeal; Pancakes, French Toast; Breakfast Breads; Assorted Fruits; Beverages

Lunch (11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) & Dinner (4:00-6:30 p.m.):

Assorted Salads; Leek & Saffron Soup with Sauteed Shrimp; Deli Pastrami & Provolone on French Roll, Panther Burger, Hickory Bacon, Lettuce & Tomato Sandwich; Glazed Roasted Salmon; Chicken Fried Steak with Peppercorn Cream Gravy and Whipped Potatoes; Italian Meat Sauce and Pasta; Red Snapper with Drawn Lemon Butter; Cantonese Stir Fry Station; Greek Pasta Station; Assorted Vegetables; Breads and Rolls; Desserts; Beverages