

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014



# VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND



## 2014 Walk4Vets Marks Tremendously Successful Event

**N**early 500 people turned out to show their support for our country's finest men and women and make the 3rd annual Walk4Vets a tremendous success! The event took place on Saturday, September 13th at City Park in Parkersburg, WV, and raised approximately \$25,000 for this year's beneficiary: West Virginia University at Parkersburg Veterans Corps, which supports Veterans and their families through a variety of notable community service efforts.

The patriotic themed event featured plenty of food, fun, and entertainment for the whole family, including a 5K Fun Run, Patriotic Opening Ceremony, Mountain River CrossFit Obstacle Course Competition, Berkshire-Hathaway Corn-Hole Challenge, Water Balloon Toss, Tug-o-War, SuddenLink Children's Activities, Cutest Dog Contest, Walking Laps Honoring Each Branch of the Military, Live Musical Entertainment,

featuring Plan B Band, and Mike Starkey & Bruce Edward Haas Acoustic Duet, Car Cruise-In, Camden Clark Medical Center Health Fair, Silent Auction, Free Refreshments, Various Vendor/Exhibit Booths, and a whole lot more!

Created by the team at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law as a way for everyone in our community to help recognize and honor local Veterans for the sacrifices

they have made to serve our country and protect our freedom, this year's Walk4Vets included the following sponsors:

### 5 Star Sponsors

- Camden Clark Medical Center
- Family Carpet
- S & P Harley Davidson
- United Bank
- WesBanco

### 4 Star Sponsors

- Berkshire-Hathaway Real Estate Center
- Marietta College
- Sudden Link
- Ralsten Properties

### 3 Star Sponsors

- American National University
- Kiger Insurance
- PM Company
- Rhododendron
- TLN, Four, Inc.

The event was an incredible success, and the entire Jan Dils team was proud of the tremendous show of support for our Veterans.



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*Jan Dils*







# JAN'S LETTER

It's hard to believe, but this is our last VA newsletter for the year! I am amazed at how quickly the time has gone by, and at how much we have been able to accomplish for the Veterans we serve. 2014 was one of our best years to date, and I am incredibly grateful for our team's hard work and never-ending dedication. After sacrificing so much for our country's freedom, our clients deserve the very best. And this team makes sure they receive the very best every day.

As I look back, our Walk4Vets event stands out as one of the highlights of 2014. The community really came together to show an amazing amount of support of the annual event, making it possible to honor our Veterans and raise money to help fund initiative throughout the year. Our first article here gives a more detailed description of the event, so be sure to keep reading!

We've also included an article that covers the basics on eligibility for a C8 claim. If you believe that you or a loved one may be entitled to compensation, please feel free to call us and we will be happy to help.

And, to end the year's last newsletter on a great note, our last article outlines the VA's success in approving a record-breaking number of Veterans for benefits, with an average wait time reduction of approximately 4 months. That's good news for 2014, and the trend is expected to continue into next year, as well.

As we head into the holidays, I also wanted to let each and every one of you know that you are in my thoughts and my prayers. I am so thankful for the opportunity to hear your incredible stories of sacrifice for the freedoms we all too often take for granted. I speak for our entire team when I say thank you—it is our honor and privilege to serve you.

Happy holidays!

Sincerely,  
Jan Dils



JAN DILS brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. Her knowledge across vital areas – including Veterans' benefits, disability benefits and related appeals and claims – and a practice that focuses on the people, ensures you get answers and the right results.

## VA Processed Over 1.3 Million Veterans' Claims in 2014 Fiscal Year.

**M**ore than 1.3 million Veterans received decisions on their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation and pension claims in fiscal year (FY) 2014 – the highest number in VA's history, surpassing last year's record-breaking production by more than 150,000 claims.

This second year of record-breaking production comes as VA continues to transform the way it provides benefits and services, to deliver faster and higher quality decisions, to Veterans, their families and survivors. At the end of the year, the disability claims backlog (defined as any disability claim pending longer than 125 days) was reduced by 60-percent from the peak backlog in March 2013 and is at its lowest number in nearly 4 years. Veterans waited, on average, 119 fewer days for a decision on their claim than Veterans did in FY 2013. VA is on target to hit its 2015 goal.

These improvements were not made at the expense of quality. The accuracy of VA's decisions continues to rise from an 83-percent accuracy level in 2011 to a 90-percent accuracy level today. When focusing specifically at the medical issue level, accuracy is at 96 percent.

"I am so proud of our employees – more than half of whom are Veterans themselves – who continue to work tirelessly to

deliver the benefits our Veterans have earned through their service to our Nation," said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "But we all also recognize there is still much more work to do to better serve Veterans."

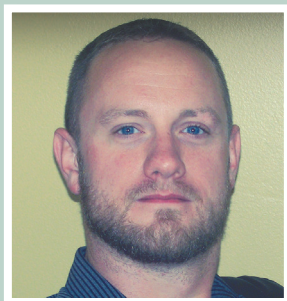
**"I am so proud of our employees – more than half of whom are Veterans themselves – who continue to work tirelessly to deliver the benefits our Veterans have earned through their service to our Nation"**

ALLISON A. HICKEY - SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS



VA's move to a web-based electronic claims processing system has enabled a quicker, more accurate and integrated benefits delivery. VA once processed 5,000 tons of paper annually – today it processes 93 percent of Veterans' disability claims electronically. One in seven Veterans who submit a claim to change the status of a family member now does so online and more than half of those are paid in one to two days. VA's progress would not have been possible without the support of its strong partners. Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) and State and County Veterans Service Officers embraced the Fully Developed Claim (FDC) program, which enables VA to make faster claim decisions when Veterans submit their claims with all available evidence and certify they have no more evidence to submit. Now, 37 percent of the claims received are from VSOs are FDCs. In FY 2014, more than 4.5 million Veterans and survivors received more than \$72.7 billion in VA compensation and pension benefits.

(Source: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2645>)



### SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE

#### Bill Lowther

An Air Force Veteran who served 6 years in active duty, VA Case Manager Bill Lowther is far from ready to call it a day. As a VA Case Manager, Bill has chosen to continue to serve those who served by fighting to help service-members receive the benefits they deserve. A West Virginia native born and bred, Bill received his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice before joining the Jan Dils team earlier this year. When he's not combing through every detail of his clients' files to ensure that each case is the strongest it can be, Bill enjoys playing guitar, golfing and football, and spending time with his 4-year old daughter Lilly. Please join us in thanking Bill Lowther for all of his hard work, and for the difference he makes in the lives of our veterans each day!

## BRAIN GAME

A wuzzle is a saying/phrase that is made up of a display of words, in an interesting way. The object is to try to figure out the well-known saying, person, place, or thing that each wuzzle is meant to represent.



ANSWERS: 1. Tennis Shoes 2. Teeny Bopper 3. Blank Look 4. One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

## OFFICE INBOX

### STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE

*Want the scoop on what's new with our business and the team? You can find it right here, so stay plugged into the practice.*

**And the Apple Goes To...** Jan Dils Team member Cheryl Wingrove had the honor of presenting the very first Golden Apple Award of the new school year to **Mrs. Tina Lowers** of Greenmont Elementary School in Vienna, West Virginia. The nomination form for Mrs. Lowers, who teaches Pre-K, noted that she always has a smile on her face and is always willing to help and lend an ear. The nomination went on to say that "her personality and character stand out, and that is pretty outstanding in a school that is full of wonderful teachers. Every school would be thankful to have a Mrs. Lowers on their staff. Luckily we can call her ours!"

Please join us in thanking Mrs. Lowers and all of our wonderful teachers for their hard work that makes such a difference in the lives of our community's children!

#### Lots of New Additions to the Jan Dils family!

Social Security Case Manager **Amber Sims** and husband Jacob welcomed their new baby girl, Kinsley on October 15th. She weighed in at 8lbs, 8oz... Attorney, **Angie Thompson Lowe** and husband Jeraude welcomed their new baby, Benjamin Michael Lowe on November 1st. He weighed 6 lbs and was 20.5 inches... **Camy Dight** in the Leads Intake Department will welcome a baby girl in November... Attorney, **Ross Miltner** and his wife, Ashlie are expecting their first child December 8th. It's a BOY!... Attorney **Kevin Walker** and his wife Janelle are awaiting the arrival of their third child in February... And Social Security Case Manager **Kayla Cox** is now Kayla McCoy—she was married on 8/23/14.



### "Fast food" takes on a delicious new meaning, thanks to Cheeseburger and Fries Casserole!

The votes are in and Jan Dils team member Christy Roseberry's recipe takes top honors this month. It's sure to become a family favorite—so don't expect to have leftovers!

#### INGREDIENTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 ½ pounds lean ground beef                | 1 can (10.75 oz.) condensed cheddar cheese soup                         |
| ¾ c chopped green sweet pepper (1 med)     | ½ c light dairy sour cream  |
| ½ cup chopped onion (1 med)                | 4 c frozen French-fried shoestring potatoes (can substitute tater-tots) |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced                    | 1 tsp seasoned salt (optional)  |
| 1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained |   |
| 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste                 |   |

**Directions:** Preheat oven to 350. In a very large skillet cook beef, sweet pepper, onion, and garlic over med heat until meat is brown and vegetables are tender. Drain fat. Stir undrained tomatoes and tomato paste into beef mixture. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat. Simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. Spoon beef mixture into the bottom of an ungreased 2-quart rectangular baking dish. In a medium bowl, stir together soup and sour cream; spread over meat mixture in baking dish. Sprinkle potatoes over top of soup mixture. If desired, sprinkle with seasoned salt. Bake, uncovered, for 40-45 minutes or until heated through and potatoes are golden. If desired, serve with assorted toppers such as ketchup, pickle slices, yellow mustard, and/or chopped fresh tomato. Dig in and enjoy!



## IT'S TIME TO...

...Fly your flag and remember all who served. **November 11th is Veterans Day.**

...Forget about your diet and have another slice of pie. **November 27th is Thanksgiving Day.**

...Set your alarm and get ready to join the crowd. **November 28th is Black Friday.**

...Take a moment to remember "the date which will live in infamy". **December 7th is Pearl Harbor Day.**

...Gather with family and friends to celebrate the gift of love. **December 25th is Christmas Day.**

...Say "so long" to 2014! **December 31st is New Year's Eve.**

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014



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## IMPORTANT VETERANS BENEFITS NEWS FOR EVERYONE

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**T**he answer could be yes if you have one of the six conditions that the C8 Science Panel has linked to C8 exposure. You may also be entitled to compensation if you are a family member of someone who had one or more of the linked conditions and passed away.

### Which diseases may entitle you to compensation?

The diseases linked to C8 exposure by the C8 Science Panel are:

1. Kidney Cancer
2. Testicular Cancer
3. Ulcerative Colitis
4. Thyroid Disease
5. Pregnancy Induced Hypertension (including preeclampsia)
6. Hypercholesterolemia

To make an individual personal injury claim under the C8 class action, you must have acquired your drinking water from one of the included water supplies for a year or more before December 4, 2004, and

## MAKING A C8 CLAIM.

Do you have a potential claim for compensation due to C8 exposure?



your disease must be included among the six diseases listed. The affected water districts are (1) Little Hocking, Ohio; (2) Lubeck Public Service District, West Virginia; (3) City of Belpre, Ohio; (4) Tappers Plains, Ohio; (5) Mason County Public Service District, West Virginia; (6) Village of Pomeroy, Ohio. Water from certain private drinking wells within these areas, including DuPont's Washington Works Plant, is also included.

You will not qualify for compensation under the class action if your disease is not on the above list or you didn't acquire your drinking water from one of the included water supplies for a year or more before December 4, 2004.

If you or a family member have suffered from one of the listed diseases related to C8 exposure, the Jan Dils team is happy to answer your questions about the class action, and help determine if you may qualify for compensation. Contact us today to get started.