

# The Voice of Experience VETERAN VOICE

35 cents

VOL. 2/ISSUE 6

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2013



There's wide disagreement about what the veterans unemployment rate is. What's not disputed is that veterans — particularly young veterans — are more likely to be unemployed, or underemployed, than their non-veteran counterparts. Federal labor statisticians generally put veterans unemployment at about 10 percent. However, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and some other veterans organizations, hold that it's closer to 15 percent.

## Veterans finding jobs

**Patrick McCallister**

FOR VETERAN VOICE

patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

Workforce Solutions of the Treasure Coast aimed to get at least 30 veterans employed in November.

"We had 108 veterans get employment in November," Jose Tabar, local veterans employment representative for Workforce, said.

Or about 360 percent better than hoped for.

Tabar said things are definitely looking up for veterans seeking employment. One of the local veterans who found work through Workforce last month is 59-year-old Michael Carrano, Stuart. He got a job with Lloyd Johnson Electric.

"They were looking to hire a vet and that helped me get the job," Carrano said. "I was laid off a couple months ago from my other company and it's really hard to get a job in your 50s."

See **JOBS** page 7

## Vets to receive 1.5 percent COLA increase in 2014

FOR VETERAN VOICE

WASHINGTON — Veterans, their families and survivors receiving disability compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive a 1.5 percent cost-of-living increase in their monthly payments beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

"We're pleased there will be another cost-of-living increase for veterans, their families and their survivors," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "The increase expresses in a tangible way our Nation's gratitude for the sacrifices made by our service-disabled and wartime veterans."

For the first time, payments will not be rounded down to the nearest dollar. Until this year, that was required by law. Veterans and survivors will see additional cents included in their monthly compensation benefit payment.

For veterans without dependents,

See **INCREASE** page 11

## Should Veteran Voice cover more Local, State or National news?

Send your thoughts to:

[info@veteranvoiceweekly.com](mailto:info@veteranvoiceweekly.com)

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT AND OUR OBJECTIVE

Veteran Voice is a weekly publication designed to provide information to and about veterans to veterans and to the broader community. Veterans are an integral part of their Florida communities, which currently have individual organizations of their own, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America and many other groups with a narrow focus, but no convenient way to connect to a wider population of veterans and to the community in general within a limited geographic area, their community.

The mission of Veteran Voice is to publish a weekly source of information that will provide, in one place, a listing of resources available to veterans, articles about changes in policies or organizations affecting veterans and events of interest to veterans as well as articles about veterans of interest to the general public.

Veteran Voice LLC is organized as a partnership of experienced newspaper executives with an interest in veterans and in the communities of Florida veterans and friends. Veteran Voice is a start-up intended to address a perceived lack of information readily available to veterans on programs and policies affecting them and objective reporting of veteran affairs to the public. To our knowledge, and based on comments from leaders of local veterans organizations, there was no media or website currently meeting this need until the launch of Veteran Voice.

We hope you agree, and will support this publication with your subscription. Without subscriptions there will be a limited number of people we can help, without which this mission will not be realized. As part of our commitment to supporting local veteran communities, we will donate 10 percent of our profits each quarter to qualified veteran charities recommended by you, our readers and subscribers. Please let us know what you think by emailing [news@veteranvoiceweekly.com](mailto:news@veteranvoiceweekly.com) or mailing your comments to us at **1919 S.W. South Macedo Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.**

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS ...

### County Veterans Service Officers

St. Lucie County, Wayne Teegardin  
Phone: (772) 337-5670  
Fax: (772) 337-5678  
veterans@stlucieco.org

### Dorothy J. Conrad Building

(formerly the Walton Road Annex Bldg.)  
1664 S.E. Walton Road, Suite 205  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952  
By appointment  
Mon., Tues, Thurs, Fri \* 8:30 am-4:30 pm  
Wed \* 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

### St. Lucie County Community Services Bldg.

(Corner of Avenue D and 7th Street)  
437 N. Seventh St., Fort Pierce, FL 34950  
Walk-ins  
Mon. and Fri. \* 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Brevard Veteran's Services Office

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way,  
Bldg. B, Suite 102, Viera, FL 32940  
Office: (321) 633-2012  
Fax: (321) 637-5432  
Mon., Tues. and Thurs., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Wed. and Fri, 8 a.m.-noon  
Manager: Glenn McGuffie

### Indian River County

Joel Herman  
Vero Beach  
2525 St. Lucie Ave.,  
Vero Beach, FL 32960  
Ph: (772) 226-1499  
Fax: (772) 770-5038

### Sebastian Square

11602 U.S. 1, Sebastian, FL 32958  
Ph: (772) 589-6597 Fax: (772) 581-4988

### Martin County

Tony Reese, Veterans Service Office Supervisor  
Nick Ciotti, Veterans Service Officer  
(772) 288-5448

### Veterans Services Office

Martin County Community Services  
435 S.E. Flagler Ave., Stuart, FL 34994  
Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

### VA Life Insurance Ctr., Phil., PA -

1-800-669-8477

### VA Regional Office - 1-800-827-1000

**VA Medical Ctr, W. Palm Beach -**  
1-800-972-8262

### Pharmacy, VA Medical Center -

1-800-317-8387

### Military Retired Pay Activities,

Cleveland, OH - (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force ONLY)  
1-800-321-1080

### Military Retired Pay Activities,

Topeka, KS - (Coast Guard ONLY)  
1-800-772-8724

### Survivor Benefits (SBP),

Denver, CO - 1-800-435-3396

### Stuart VA Clinic - (772) 288-0304

Okeechobee County

### Veterans Services office

(863) 763-6441, Ext 5.  
Fax: (863) 763-0118.

### Orlando VA Medical Center

5201 Raymond St., Orlando, FL 32803  
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### Telephone Care

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### Telephone Care

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### Viera VA Outpatient Clinic

2900 Veterans Way, Viera, FL 32940  
Phone: (321) 637-3788  
1 (877) 878-8387  
Mon. - Fri. - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

### St Lucie County PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) Outpatient Program

126 S.W. Chamber Court,  
Port St Lucie, FL 34986  
Phone: (772) 878-7876

### Fort Pierce Community Based Outpatient Clinic

727 North U.S. 1, Fort Pierce, FL 34950  
Phone: (772) 595-5150  
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### St Lucie Community Based Outpatient Clinic

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The Voice of Experience

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# Petty officer finds Naval career 'inspiring'

By Courtney Scott  
FOR VETERAN VOICE

Garrett Wash, 22, grew up in Stuart with the support of a loving family, a multitude of friends, and a great education from South Fork High School's International Baccalaureate Program. However, although happy, secure, and educated, he graduated feeling a bit uninspired. Now, as a petty officer second class on a nuclear submarine in the United States Navy, he is not only inspired, but is inspiring others as well.

Wash began boot camp on Aug. 22, 2011. Recently deployed, he is now heading for Japan, where he will board the *USS Scranton*.

"I'll only be in Japan briefly," Wash says. "I'm meeting the boat elsewhere, and I can't really divulge any more than that. I'm excited to do my job and see the world. While on the boat, my duties will be to stand watch and operate machinery in the nuclear engine room."

After graduating from high school in 2009, where he was a quarterback on the varsity football team for two years, Wash attended the University of Alabama for a brief time. However, unsure of his career goals, he left school and moved in with his father.

"I decided to join the Navy when I ran out of (career) options in college," says Wash. "As a kid, I wanted to play football. I never thought I'd be in the Navy."

After feeling without direction following high school, the petty officer is now feeling proud and purposeful.

"Random strangers frequently walk up to me and thank me for my service," says Wash.

During a recent trip home to visit his family, he experienced several prideful moments. He



Garrett Wash

attended a group exercise class with his mom to help motivate her.

"A few women actually got teary-eyed when I told my mom to stick with this even while I was away."

His girlfriend relayed another story to Wash, which also made him very proud to be serving his country. After she returned to her car in a grocery store parking lot, she found a note from a Vietnam veteran. The note said, "I saw the sticker on your car about your sailor. Take him out for dinner on me and thank him for his service. — Vietnam Vet." Along with the note was a \$100 bill.

These days, people inspire Wash every day.

"My shipmates and my upper chain of command inspire me. The money I can make after the

See WASH page 11

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# Scenes from the Cocoa Beach Christmas parade

Earl Chaffee, grand marshal and Pearl Harbor survivor, member of VFW Post 8116, Cocoa.



World War II and Korean War vet Bill Logan and World War II vet John Siems garnish the float representing Space Coast Honor Flight.



Above, Cocoa Beach High School's ROTC cadets carry the colors. Below, a member of the Azan Shriners Center of Melbourne shows off his driving skills.



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Veteran Voice is published weekly by Veteran Voice, LLC.  
1919 SW South Macedo Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984  
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# Silent No More

**Patrick McCallister**

FOR VETERAN VOICE

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On Oct. 27, 1990, the *Los Angeles Times* had a small blurb about Dana Liesegang. It was one of those small, easy-to-miss stories that belied its importance.

Liesegang aims to help end any more silence.

The Silent No More Foundation opened a Facebook page about a month ago. The founders, Tricia LaBar and Liesegang, are working to create a toll-free number for military members to be able to call and report sexual harassment and assaults to people, preferably veterans, not beholden to any chain of command.

"So somebody outside the military knows about it," LaBar said in a phone interview. "That way they can't sweep it under the rug."

That 1990 newspaper blurb read, "A 19-year-old naval recruit who fell 75 feet from Sunset Cliffs was in serious condition at UC San Diego Medical Center Friday, police said

"Dana Liesegang, a fireman

**"He was choking me. My guess is he thought I was dead and he threw me off the cliff."**

**Dana Liesegang**

recruit attached to the submarine tender McKee in San Diego, was walking along the cliffs with a friend in the 4500 block of Ladera Street about 10 p.m. Thursday when she fell and landed on the beach below, police said."

That was the story. Liesegang was walking with a friend and she fell.

When she woke from a coma, the sailor had another far more chilling tale that wouldn't make the *Los Angeles Times*, or any other paper.

"I walked off base to mail a letter," she said in a recent *Veteran Voice* interview. "When I walked back on base I got a ride with this young fellow, and we were talking for a little while."

He was drinking, but seemed pleasant enough to spend a bit of time with. Until she wanted to leave. That's when Liesegang says

**See RAPE page 9**



Dana Liesegang spends time with one of her heroes, and fans, human-potential writer and speaker Wayne Dyer. Liesegang was sexually assaulted by a fellow sailor in 1990. Dyer allowed her to tell the story publicly for the first time at one of his events. Liesegang co-founded the Silent No More Foundation, which aims to create a toll-free number manned by veterans for service members to report military sexual trauma.

Photo courtesy of Dana Liesegang



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— *Ellen and Peggy*  
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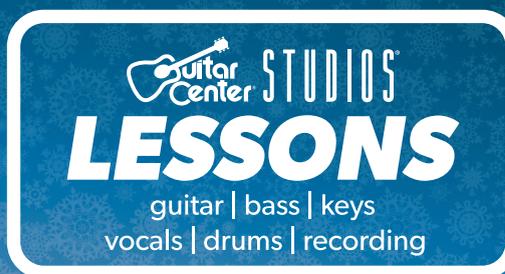
## The Affordable Care Act, VA, and you

FOR VETERAN VOICE

If you are enrolled in any of VA’s programs below, you have coverage under the standards of the health care law:

- Veteran’s health care program
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See HEALTH page 8



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**JOBS from page 1**

Lloyd Johnson said he wanted to hire a veteran from the get go. "I had heard the advertisement on the radio about hiring vets," he said. "I said, 'That's a good idea.'"

Workforce Solutions is a state-supported not-for-profit that helps job seekers and employers in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties. It is one of 24 Workforce Development boards in the state. It has a veterans room at its St. Lucie West office, 584 N.W. University Blvd., and other veterans programs.

Tabar said the local employment picture has been getting brighter for veterans lately for several reasons. He said there have been several national and state initiatives in the public and private sectors that have raised awareness among large and small businesses about hiring veterans, such as the radio ad Johnson mentioned. Additionally, Tabar said Workforce has cultivated more relationships with local employers, and word is spreading.

"That's the big thing I'm seeing — employers, they're engaging us," Tabar said. "It's not just us going out there beating the pavement (to talk to employers). They're calling us and saying, 'I want to hire a vet.'"

Gov. Rick Scott, a Navy veteran, declared November as "Hire a Veteran Month" throughout the state to build on veterans-employment momentum. Jessica Sims, press secretary at the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, said at least about 25,000 veterans have found work through the department's efforts this year.

"The State Veterans Employment Program also assisted Regional Workforce Boards with the placement of more than 600 veterans, on average, each week during 2013, totaling 25,459 employed veterans since January 1, 2013," she said in an email response to queries.

One reason veterans employment is improving is because the job market is better. On Friday, Nov. 22, the Department of Economic Opportunity released its state employment report for October. The department was unable to produce an employment report the previous month, because of the 18-day federal government shutdown.

"The state's October (unemployment) rate was the lowest since August 2008 when it was also 6.7 percent," the report reads.

And only one county had double-digit unemployment: Hendry. The national unemployment rate in October was 7.3 percent, seasonally adjusted. Florida has been below the national average for eight straight months.

There's wide disagreement about what the veterans unemployment rate is. What's not disputed is that veterans — particularly young veterans — are more likely to be unemployed, or underemployed, than their non-veteran counterparts. Federal labor statisticians generally put veterans unemployment at about 10 percent. However, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and some other veterans organizations, hold that it's closer to 15 percent.

So, why the high unemployment?

Numerous reasons are cited for veterans unemployment. What's generally at the center of those explanations are the all-important resume and interview.

"A lot of veterans can't translate their skills into the civilian world," Tabar said in a previous interview. "They don't realize in the outside world, you get paid for those skills."

In short, many veterans are inept at speaking civilian job skills. Conversely, a number of hiring managers don't speak military. In other words, they don't understand how military experiences translate to job skills.

To bridge that divide, veterans advocates such as Bob Ravener, Dollar General's executive vice president and the chief people

officer for Dollar General, have launched employment fair series. Earlier this year, Ravener worked with Scott to declare May 10 as "Paychecks for Patriots Day." The Florida departments of Economic Opportunity and Veterans Affairs teamed up with about 120 employers to host Paychecks for Patriots veterans hiring fairs at 10 locations.

"The one-day event was attended by more than 1,500 veterans and more than 200 employers," Sims said. "Since the May event, 472 veterans have been placed in a job that was advertised at the event."



Jose Tabar

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## HEALTH from page 6

- Spina bifida health care program

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health care available anywhere in the world. America's veterans deserve nothing less.

### It's in the mail

Enrolled veterans will also receive this information through the mail. The letter from the VA is another means to inform you that there is no need to take any additional steps to obtain health insurance to comply with the health care law coverage standards going into effect in January 2014. Letters are being mailed in Priority Group order, starting with Veterans in Priority Group 1 through Priority Group 8. The mailings should be complete by the end of October.

For more information about your health benefits, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits) anytime or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. or Saturdays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

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See HEALTH page 10

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**RAPE from page 5**

she entered an unwanted sorority.

“He attacked me from behind,” Liesegang said.

Liesegang was becoming the latest victim of what’s now called military sexual trauma — irresistible pressure to have unwanted sex, or an outright sexual assault.

During the rape, she lost consciousness.

“He was choking me,” Liesegang said. “My guess is he thought I was dead and he threw me off the cliff.”

The fall, the choking, or both broke her neck, leaving Liesegang an incomplete quadriplegic. She wanted justice. She wanted her attacker arrested and tried. What she got instead, Liesegang said, was a horrific counteroffer from the military.

“They told me, ‘We know it’s foul play, but if you take it to court you’re going to lose and get nothing.’ I was given a choice of getting 100-percent service-connected (disability rating), or go to court and lose.”

No empty threat, Donna Carlsen, commander of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 113, Port St. Lucie, said. Carlsen is a veterans service officer for the DAV. She’s got much experience with filing claims and appeals to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“If she’d been drinking that night, they could have found (her injury) ‘willful misconduct,’ and given her nothing,” Carlsen said.

Liesegang said she was terrified by the prospect of having no financial and medical support. She took the deal and didn’t press for an arrest or prosecution.

Liesegang said her attacker later kidnapped a woman, according to news reports she found online. He died a few years ago, so she asked not to name him.

Liesegang said that since nationally-known author and speaker Wayne Dyer gave her an opportunity to tell the story publicly, numerous women have told her about getting silencing threats after reporting sexual pressure and assaults in the military.

“Plenty of them,” she said. “I haven’t run into very many women who haven’t been assaulted in the military. Everyone is scared to talk about it. Everyone feels they’re alone.”

Since the 1990s the VA has regularly screened its patients for military sexual trauma. About 20 percent of women and 1 percent of men report having been pressured or forced into unwanted sex while in the military. The VA notes that not all self-reporters claimed military members committed the pressure and assaults.



Dana Liesegang

For example, Carlsen said while serving in Operation Restore Hope, Somalia, American service women steered clear of some allies for safety.

“We got hit on a lot by the Pakistanis,” she said.

Carlsen never experienced sexual pressure or assault in the military, but said she was certain other women she served with had. Carlsen’s also certain that many of the women she’s helped file VA claims were victims of military sexual assault. Carlsen believes that being in her 30s when she joined the Army gave her a disposition that warded off potential psychological or physical attackers.

“I didn’t take no (expletive),” she said. “I was no nonsense. Not to be screwed with, and nobody screwed with me.”

Nikki Gibson was in the Army from 2004 to 2011. The 29-year-old served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, among other assignments. Gibson said she never encountered sexual pressure or assault.

“I was stationed in Fort Bragg as an MP,” she said. “Statistically you can put (sexual assaults on base) at the same numbers as any civilian city. I personally worked many cases of them.”

Gibson said she didn’t see evidence of officers and others covering up sexual assaults, or intimidating victims. However, Gibson said it’s possible that some might have regarded them as a form of physical altercation.

“A lot of units try to handle any physical altercations, fights, before calling MPs,” she said. “I do not believe that should be the case. Any assault should be immediately reported.”

To find out more about the foundation, which is applying for not-for-profit status, visit [facebook.com/SilentNoMoreFoundation](http://facebook.com/SilentNoMoreFoundation). More about Liesegang is at [danieliesegangbook.com](http://danieliesegangbook.com).

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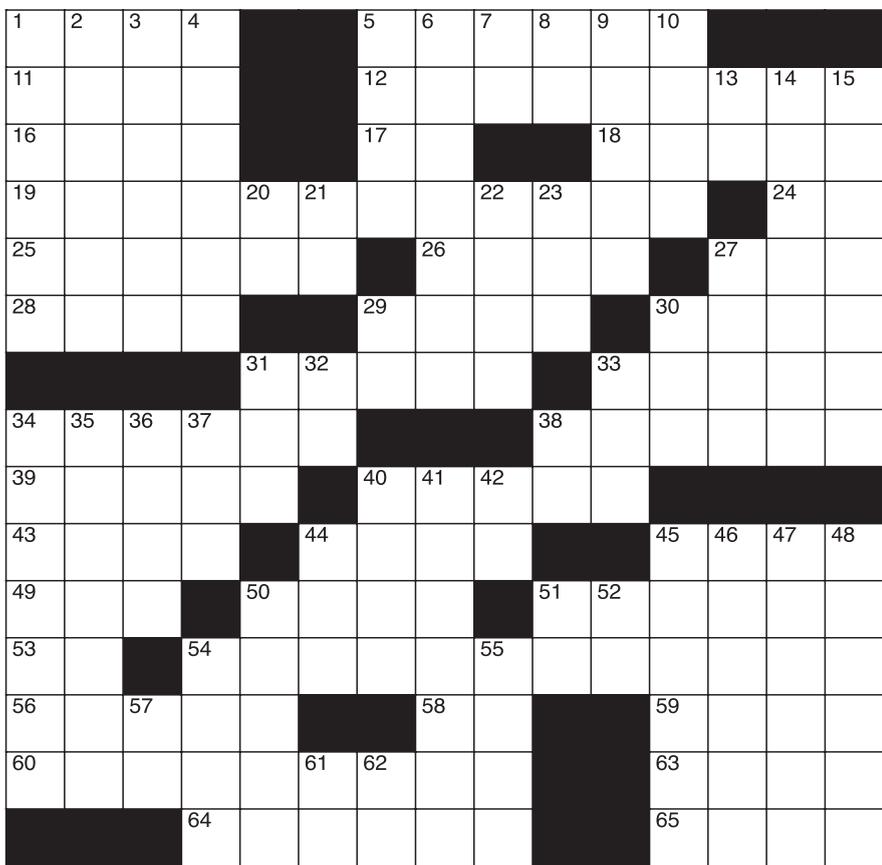
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**CROSSWORD**



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Binder
- 5. Move up and down
- 11. Wild sheep of northern Africa
- 12. Annoys
- 16. An upward movement
- 17. Ducktail
- 18. Town in central Minnesota
- 19. Philatelist's delight
- 24. Carrier's invention
- 25. Foreign travellers
- 26. Aurochs
- 27. Batter advanced score
- 28. Show the way
- 29. Steep rugged mass of rock
- 30. Valley
- 31. Digital data device
- 33. Insert mark
- 34. Breakout
- 38. Dissention from dogma
- 39. Kuhil and clown fish
- 40. Unconsciousness
- 43. Czech River
- 44. Johann Sebastian
- 45. Flows to the Danube at Belgrade
- 49. World data organization (abbr.)
- 50. Comedian Sahl
- 51. Porch furniture wood
- 53. Potato state
- 54. American Pickers
- 56. Yellow-fever mosquitos
- 58. Edison's company
- 59. Axis and offshoot angle
- 60. Standard
- 63. Blame (Scottish)
- 64. Esoteric
- 65. Pronounces

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Any wrist bone
- 2. Baltimore bird
- 3. Czar's nation
- 4. Regulated food
- 5. Space next to someone
- 6. Expunction
- 7. Trauma center
- 8. Spanish yes
- 9. Matters
- 10. Twist out of shape
- 13. Toward
- 14. Renders able for a task
- 15. An extended social group
- 20. Article
- 21. GMA anchor's initials
- 22. Streetcar
- 23. Summer month (abbr.)
- 27. Not widely distributed
- 29. Plays great music
- 30. Female 1776 descendants
- 31. Speed gauge ratio
- 32. Old English
- 33. After B
- 34. Expressing sorrow
- 35. More hearty, firmer
- 36. Taxis
- 37. Single pip card
- 38. 50th state
- 40. A source of worry
- 41. Eight sided
- 42. Highest military valor award (abbr.)
- 44. Former Harvard Pres. Derek
- 45. Drinking tubes
- 46. Loss of coordination
- 47. Self-love
- 48. Talus joints
- 50. Accumulator
- 51. Rural delivery
- 52. Lady Soul's initials
- 54. Prefix indicating abstraction
- 55. Hawaiian goose
- 57. Prince William's mom, Lady \_\_
- 61. Aid organization (abbr.)
- 62. Farm state

**SUDOKU**

7							6	8
	6							
5		8		9				4
4			7					
	9				1			
8		5				2	9	
		4		3			2	
9			1		8			5
						6	1	

**HEALTH from page 8**

Medicaid or TRICARE, you can continue to use VA along with these plans. Remember: it is always a good idea to inform your doctors if you are receiving care outside of VA so your health care can be coordinated.

**Health insurance Marketplace**

Beginning in October, the Marketplace is a new way to shop for and purchase private health insurance (for example, health coverage other than VA health care programs) that fits your budget and meets your needs. People who purchase insurance through the Marketplace may be able to lower the costs of health insurance coverage by paying lower monthly premiums. For more information, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

**Family members and the Marketplace**

Even though you are covered by your VA health care enrollment, your family members who are not enrolled in a VA health care program should use the Marketplace to get coverage. They may get lower costs on monthly premiums or out-of-pocket costs. They could be eligible for free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. Starting Oct. 1, they can submit an application for health care coverage through the Marketplace, and learn the amount of assistance they are eligible for. For more information, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

**Canceling your enrollment ... a word of caution**

If you choose to cancel your VA health care enrollment, you may reapply for enrollment at any time; however, acceptance for future VA health care enrollment will be based on eligibility factors at the time of application, which may result in a denial of enrollment.

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