



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

New England Chapter

CORDWORD

The Monthly News Magazine of the New England Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America

PVA'S SAIL TO PREVAIL WEEKEND



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VA SECRETARY

SAIL TO PREVAIL



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PVA President David Zurfluh's response to confirmation of VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

WASHINGTON, DC — Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) released the following statement today from its National President, David Zurfluh, in response to the confirmation of Robert Wilkie to serve as VA Secretary:

"Paralyzed Veterans of America is pleased with the confirmation of Robert Wilkie to serve as the Secretary of the ...continued on page 4.



By Debra A. Freed, Chapter Executive Director.

I had heard so much about this program over the years and timing just wouldn't allow me to attend the PVA Sail To Prevail Weekend. But this year would be different. The weekend in question was June 23rd & 24th, in Newport, Rhode Island. There were to be eighteen who registered. Of the 18, at least five or more are Chapter members. It was a nice turnout. ...continued on page 5.



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, President

Chapter election time is here once again. To see each candidate's election biography please turn to page 8.

Why vote? In a country where every voice has an opportunity be heard, those who vote ensure in at least this one way, their voices are heard. Even more importantly, Chapter members over the years have volunteered and sacrificed their time to ensure you continue to have a PVA Chapter to advocate for you on several fronts from benefits, healthcare and legislation. They also work hard to provide quality-of-life activities such as therapeutic recreation, community meetings and parties, and peer mentoring. I say this because there are many members that do not have Chapters to provide these services and activities for them. Either they simple don't exist or had to be dissolve for lack of participation. So vote when you receive your ballot in the mail vote, because the choices you make matter.

Moving on with the month of July. We have several athletes and volunteers who'll be attending the 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Orlando, FL. I'd like to wish all the athletes great success in their events. I'd also like to thank all the volunteers, who without their help none of this would be possible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael G. Negrete". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael G. Negrete
President and Paralyzed Veteran

From the Director's Desk

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director

I am hoping everyone had a good, healthy, safe, 4th of July. There are many who were not able to be home with their family and friends. We must never forget those who served, who are currently serving and those who plan on serving.

A quick thank you to our Chapter President, his wife and Chapter Volunteer and the number of Board members who attended the Chapter's first ever Comedy Show at Chunky's in Nashua on 6.28. While we didn't fill the house this year, we did at least break even. That is a very good start to what we hope will be an annual event.

Please take a look at my article. It has news about the budget and the pending veterans games. Speaking of the Veterans Games, please remember to thank all those staff, volunteers, and family members who will be giving up a week of their lives to assist our Long Term Care (LTC) Veterans to attend and have a good time. At the same time, we also need to thank all those that remain behind to care for those veterans who cannot participate. Finally, a quick shout out to one of our members who made the Chapter their beneficiary back in April from the Boston Marathon. These funds will go to cover the Veterans Games and the upcoming Annual Chapter Banquet.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra A. Freed". The signature is cursive and elegant.

Debra A. Freed
Executive Director



New England PVA Contact Information

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CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION

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President	Michael G. Negrete
Vice President	Mike Guilbault
Secretary	Peter Moore
Treasurer	Charles Schena
National Director	Neal Williams
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Jerry Cole	Admin/Bookkeeper

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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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Fax: (207) 621-4829
Scott Eggleston, National Service Officer
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Bronx, NY 10468
Phone: 718-584-9000 Ext: 6272
Toll Free: 866-297-1319
Fax: 718-741-4237
Amauris Polanco
Veterans Health & Benefits Specialist II

CordWord is the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America's (New England PVA) monthly magazine that covers news, health, research, lifestyle and issues of interest and concern to Veterans and others with spinal cord injury and disease. Anyone interested in submitting an article to *CordWord* should email media@newenglandpva.org. The assertions and opinions expressed in articles and announcements in *CordWord* reflect the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the New England PVA. New England PVA can in no way whatsoever be held responsible for the content of such views nor can it be held liable for any direct or indirect damage that may arise from such views.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America Responds to Senate Confirmation of Robert Wilkie as VA Secretary

By Dana Kauffman - Public Relations Specialist, PVA



WASHINGTON, DC — Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) released the following statement today from its National President, David Zurfluh, in response to the confirmation of Robert Wilkie to serve as VA Secretary:

“Paralyzed Veterans of America is pleased with the confirmation of Robert Wilkie to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. During the

time he served as Acting Secretary, he showed effective leadership and

provided needed stability to the Department. Of importance to PVA, Mr. Wilkie expressed strong support for VA’s SCI system of care during his nomination hearing, which is critical to the health and welfare of every PVA member. As VA undertakes implementation of a new community health care program, expansion of the comprehensive caregiver program, and appeals modernization, the need for quality leadership at the Department has never been higher. We look forward to working with Mr. Wilkie to ensure that veterans with catastrophic disabilities are able to access the health care, compensation, and other benefits that they have earned and deserve.”

Caring for Your Finances

US Department of Veterans Affairs



The Caregiver Support Program is happy to announce a new series of videos located within our website. The USAA Educational Foundation* teamed up with the Caregiver Support Program to provide a series of videos to assist caregivers in establishing a budget, building an emergency fund, and getting an estate plan together. A budget sheet template is also available to help you get started. Begin by viewing Miki’s story, a caregiver who summarizes the importance of having a good budget, and moving along to videos about the topics listed above.

The videos and budget sheet can be found on our website at:

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/Caring_for_your_Finances.asp

My Life, My Story: Humanizing Care

VA Boston Healthcare System - By Andrea Fitzgerald, Staff Writer, Press Ganey

The My Story interviews foster meaningful connections that transform clinicians’ ability to deliver care by humanizing the patient. “Having these stories helps clinicians understand that the person is not just a veteran, not just a Marine, not just the Vietnam War. Their military experience is part, and often a really important part, of their identity, but there’s so much more to the person,” Dr. Nathan said. “Often, what we might think is the biggest, most defining thing is totally different from what they tell us in their story.”

As health care becomes more technology-driven, even one of the most personal aspects of care delivery—collecting a patient’s history—can feel

transactional. The need to quickly fill in the blanks of an electronic health record can interfere with face-to-face, compassionate communication, leaving patients feeling dehumanized and clinicians underfulfilled.

“As clinicians, we want to connect with our patients. We know how important it is to recognize them as people and not as a diagnosis or problem list,” said Dr. Susan Nathan, a specialist in geriatrics and palliative care at the VA Boston Healthcare System and an instructor at Harvard Medical School and the Boston University School of Medicine.

But a recent study shows that most U.S. physicians have only 13 to 24 minutes to spend with each patient. So how can ...*continued on page 12.*

Pre-9/11 Veterans Now Eligible to Apply for Caregiver Program

Washington Update Volume 24, Number 6

Included in the VA MISSION Act was a provision to expand the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance to Family Caregivers to those veterans who were catastrophically injured before September 11, 2001. However, veterans and their caregivers will not have immediate access to the program. As part of the negotiations for the VA MISSION Act, members of Congress agreed to expand the Caregiver Program only if it was done over a period of time so as to stem costs.

Before any pre-9/11 veteran can participate, the VA secretary must submit

to Congress certification that VA has fully implemented the necessary IT system. We expect this to be completed by May 2019. Then, only those veterans seriously injured on or before May 7, 1975, will be eligible for the program. Two years from that date, eligibility will expand to those injured on or after May 8, 1975. Eligibility for post-9/11 veterans remains the same throughout the expansion process.

PVA's Sail To Prevail Weekend

By Debra A. Freed, Chapter Executive Director



I had heard so much about this program over the years and timing just wouldn't allow me to attend the PVA Sail To Prevail Weekend. But this year would be different. The weekend in question was June 23rd & 24th, in Newport, Rhode Island. There were to be eighteen who registered. Of the 18, at least five or more are Chapter members. It was a nice turnout.

Myself, Chapter Board member Wayne Ross, Chapter members, Roland Filion, George St. Hilliare, & Paul Raiche also attended this weekend. Our first foray, I would share Speedy, the boat the Chapter donated a number of years ago, with Roland Filion and a female veteran. The weather didn't cooperate much on Saturday. It drizzled most of the day and would out and out rain as we were coming in for lunch. It wouldn't have been so bad if it wasn't cold and yes, it was cold.

We were all offered the opportunity to go back out in the afternoon, but it was a group decision not to go back out for the afternoon sail. This would give many of us an opportunity to go back to our hotels, clean up, warm up, and return for the evening's event. I had dry clothing in my van so stuck around. I was glad we chose not to go back out. It worked out well for the staff because they were able to not rush around setting up for the Commissioning of the 2018 Sail To Prevail Program and fundraiser, which we were all invited to attend.

This is a great meet and greet for veterans and those who support the program throughout the summer. Mr. Paul Callahan, CEO and founder of Sail To Prevail. Paul, a quadriplegic and two time USA Sail Paralympian gave a small synopsis of how the program developed and his appreciation for PVA's support. Alex Egan, Chief Operating Officer, and Allie Gray, Director of Program Development. Allie is responsible for keeping the sail boats in good working order as well as hiring the students who will work

during the summer.

The season begins with the PVA Veterans Weekend which we are a small sponsor of and runs through the middle of August. Why so short? One reason is the students who intern and work during the Summer, most head back to school. We had the privilege of working with two young men, Ryland McGinn and Fisher Nathan. We learned they were seasoned sail boaters even participating in a number of races including last year



in Spain. I don't think I can recall much of my late teen years but I know this, I wasn't racing sail boats in Spain. Speaking of racing, Sail to Prevail hosts sail races on Wednesday evenings starting at 5p. I hope to be able to participate at least once more over the summer.

Our Sunday, the weather was definitely better. Again, I was lucky to be paired with Roland & Rachel. We were also lucky to go back out with Ryland. We were lucky to meet his parents the night before at the fundraiser. They are up here for the summer and inquired how their young man had done. He did very well and would have a great future in sailing and support those with disabilities who want the same opportunities. For those who are participating in the New England Summer Sports Clinic, Sail To Prevail has partnered with VA Boston and NEHSA as part of the clinic. I sincerely hope that I can participate at least once more over the summer and again at next year's event.

Connect With What Matters



Being there makes a difference

Recently the Ride-Away team joined forces with MobilityWorks so that we could provide our veterans with the largest selection of mobility solutions that best fit their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together find the best solution. Collectively, Ride-Away and MobilityWorks will continue to build on our mission to help veterans connect with who and what matters most.

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Norwood, MA 02062
781-222-3622

Essex Junction

5C David Drive
Essex Junction, VT 05452
802-222-0265

North Attleboro

57 George Leven Drive
North Attleboro MA 02760
508-859-0940

East Hartford

104 Pitkin Street
East Hartford, CT 06108
860-215-4100



www.mobilityworks.com

www.newenglandpva.org

Ready, Set, Compete & More!

By Debra A. Freed, Chapter Executive Director

Before getting into the meat of my article, a quick thank you and shout out to Chapter President Negrete, his wife Terry, their daughter, and Chapter volunteer Denise Pease & her husband George for working at the Chapter's first ever and hopefully Annual Comedy Show. This was held at Chunky's in Nashua on June 28th. As it was the first, we were fortunate to take in a little bit more than our costs. I also want to thank the number of Board members who supported this endeavor as well: Mike Guilbault - VP, Pete Moore – Secretary, Mike Moran, Wayne Ross, and Jim Wallack with his lovely wife Donna. We hope it will be better next year.

The 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in Orlando, Florida from July 30th through Aug 4th. The general travel days are July 29th and Aug 5th. Yes, the Chapter is sponsoring a truck again for a variety of reasons. It isn't just for the Long Term Care Veterans at Bldg 8, who at this writing number one half of our team. It is for everyone who has medical equipment, medical supplies, sporting equipment, and luggage if they are flying.

I want to take this opportunity to thank a number of people starting with the Chapter Board of Directors. They approve the budget that allows the Chapter to take so many members to the Vet Games, including the truck and now this year, two very special volunteers who are driving down, helping out during the week, and driving back. Yes, yours truly is still going and still driving my personal van down, but as stated, I cannot physically drive truck. We also have a great nurse manager at Brockton who truly understands and appreciates everything the Recreational Therapy and

Rehabilitation group do. If it were not for Recreational Therapy, many if not all of Long Term Care veterans and even some outpatients would not be training at all, let alone the Veterans Games. Finally, I want to thank the veterans themselves. I have had the privilege of training on Tuesdays with them. Those going have been training at ping pong, air gun, bocchia, and if time allows, archery. I look forward to reporting during the week how things are going and what our medal count will be upon our return.

As we head into the rest of July and August, the Chapter Board (who are all volunteers), myself, our bookkeeper, and other volunteers will be working diligently to raise money all the while trying to continue our programs and services for our members for the remainder of fiscal year 2018 and beyond. Our programs and services are for your benefit. Without funding, the most popular programs will continue to be cut back and or even cease to exist. Please remember, while the New England Chapter does work well with the Boston VA Healthcare system, we receive no financial support. Our support comes from donors, without whom, we truly would not exist.

One final note, PVA moved its fiscal year from October 1st to July 1st. It is time the New England Chapter did the same. So, our fiscal year 2019 will start October 1, 2018, then our 2020 fiscal year with start July 1st, 2019. While it may seem confusing, trust me, it is in the best interest of the Chapter to be in sync with the National PVA.



MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TODAY!

Mail your check of any amount to:

New England Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301
West Roxbury, MA 02132

Please write "CordWord" in the memo section of your check.



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

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2019 CHAPTER ELECTION: MEET THE CANDIDATES

PRESIDENT



MICHAEL G. NEGRETE

First, I'd like to say "Thank you" to those who nominated me for re-election as Chapter President. I sincerely appreciate your continued confidence and trust in my leadership and ability to serve and represent our membership. It's without question an honor and privilege to do so.

Please allow me quickly introduce myself to those I haven't met. I served in the Marine Corps as an Infantryman (0351) and Coast Guard as an Electronics Tech/Electronic Warfare collectively for nearly 10 years during the Cold War and Persian Gulf War Eras. After leaving the service I had a progressive and successful career in the hi-tech and Internet industries. I sustained a C5-6 spinal cord injury in 2001 resulting in incomplete quadriplegia. I became a PVA Life member in 2008 when private healthcare let me down and I sought services through the VA. My wife Terry and I live in Milford, NH with our Jack-Russell "Storm", and my daughter Ashley lives in Manchester, NH.

During this past year as President I worked to mitigate the Chapter's loss of \$250K in funding from the termination of our telemarketing program so as not to adversely effect our long-standing member activities like the Winter and Summer Sports Clinics and the National Veteran Wheelchair Games. Each of these were still fully funded so all who wanted to attend had the opportunity to do so.

During the annual Advocacy and Legislative Seminars in Washington, D.C., I've been able to increase the number of face-to-face meetings with our Legislators to express our concerns regarding the issues and challenges facing our members in New England, while also streamlining the number of people and expenses involved.

At the local Chapter office I've been able to add to our operational savings

by leveraging new technologies and services, such as Voice Over IP phone services and equipment, distribution of the newsletter via email and web. I also launched the Chapter's social media presence on Facebook. You can check it out at @NEPVA1947.

In addition to Chapter responsibilities, I also serve on PVA's Budget and Finance Committees where I have the opportunities to weigh in on financial matters effecting PVA as an entire organization.

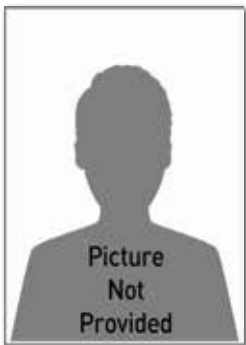
These are just a few areas where I've been able to contribute to the "business aspect" of the Chapter as President. All that aside though, the most rewarding aspect of being President to me is the opportunities I have to help our fellow Veterans. This is true reason I choose to join and volunteer my time to PVA and the New England Chapter.

Circle back to 2008 when I needed to obtain services from the VA. I contacted the Chapter office about joining PVA and how they could help me. At the time, I couldn't tell you who answered the phone or who helped me, all I know is in just a matter of a few days Tracey Presley had all my VA paperwork completed and an appointment for a complete physical in the SCI Outpatient Clinic with Dr. Foo. The care and services I've received since then have been life changing for me and my wife Terry.

To me, this is simply what its all about. Being able to take advantage of the opportunities we're given to make a positive impact in another person's life. Whether its big or small, we can all make a difference in some way. Theodore Roosevelt said it best, "*Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.*" This is my continuing goal in life.

With that, I'm hoping for the continued opportunity to serve each of you as your Chapter President for another term.

I respectfully ask for your continued support and vote in the upcoming Chapter election.



BRAD CARLSON

Hello Everyone. For those who do not know me, my name is Brad Carlson. I am seeking election to the Board of Directors as well as running for Chapter President.

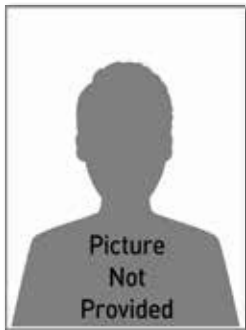
I was a Board member and Sports Director from 2007 until 2015. I went to school for restaurant management and spent most of my adult life owning and/or operating restaurants. I have since left the restaurant business with the hopes of being able to give the New England Chapter more time and commitment. The restaurant business has taught me a lot.

I served our country proudly as a Military Police Officer and Recruiter in the Marine Corps until I was injured in 1986. I sustained a T6-7 incomplete spinal cord injury and was honorably discharged/retired from the Corps.

I would like to work again for you, our members, in all aspects of the Chapter's programs and services. In closing, I would give my all to any position that I am elected to.

Thank you for your consideration.

VICE PRESIDENT



MIKE GUILBAULT

I am an Air Force veteran who became a life member in 1996. I was first elected to the BOD in 1998 and served as Asst. Sports Director until I was made Sports Director in 2001. I've been to DC to advocate for veterans benefits many times and volunteered at our golf tournament and school presentations ever since becoming a member. I am currently a VAVS Rep for New England PVA, the Hospital

Liaison for the Brockton VA, and the New England PVA Peer Mentor Rep. I organize the 'What's it Like' school visit program and enjoy spending time and educating the elementary school children that I believe can then go help educate their parents that being in a wheelchair does not

make us any different from them. We just may have to do some things a little differently. I also get great satisfaction mentoring new injuries and working with the VA Recreational staff to help get our members involved in the many excellent opportunities for recreation as well as team sports. I was the Sports Director who started the Air Rifle shooting program at the VA hospitals in order for our members to practice weekly for the annual wheelchair games event. I have gained much from those who mentored me and got me involved in activities when I was a new injury. I would like to make sure we continue to have quality care and many opportunities to get out and enjoy life through the many recreation and sports programs now available to our members. I am always willing to hear from you if there is something that you think we could add.



JIM WALLACK

I was born and raised in Lawrence, Mass, along with two brothers and a sister. Two weeks after graduating from Lawrence High School in 1973, I was in boot camp in Cape May, NJ with the U.S. Coast Guard. While in the Coast Guard I served on two medium endurance cutters, the Vigilant out of New Bedford, MA and the Durable in Brownsville, TX. I also worked with the Captain of the Port

of Boston. After sustaining a spinal cord injury in 1976, I was retired as a Quartermaster Third Class in 1977.

After rehabilitation at West Roxbury VAMC, I moved to So. California

for the accessibility, college and the opportunity to do some coast to coast driving. After six years New England beckoned and I moved to Connecticut and became a National Service Officer for the Eastern PVA. Two years later I resigned because of an inability to travel after breaking a hip. In 1987 I found some land in New Hampshire, bought it, cleared it, and built a house. Donna Jean became my wife in 1989. Notre Dame College graduation occurred in 1993, and our son Jacob was born in 1997. Around this time I became active in the Chapter, first with the NVWG, then with Sports and Rec. Day, bowling, softball, fishing, and skiing. Our son Joshua came to live with us in 2008. I was elected to the Executive Board of the New England PVA in 2009.

SECRETARY



PETER MOORE

I grew up in Sturbridge, MA, and my wife and I currently live in Tyngsborough, MA. From 1999 to 2002 I proudly served aboard the fast-attack submarine USS Olympia (SSN-717) as a Sonar Man and ship's Diver. My three years aboard that great ship were some of the most challenging and rewarding of my life.

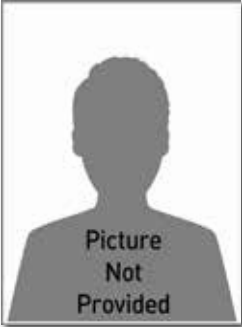
During my freshman year in college, in the fall of 2003, I was involved in a motorcycle crash that left me a T-4 Asia-A paraplegic. As a patient at the West Roxbury VA Medical Center at West Roxbury I was introduced to the New England PVA. I was challenged and motivated by fellow veterans. The Peer Mentor program and the outstanding New England PVA National Service Officers ensured that all

of my and my family's needs were met during that difficult time. I have since mentored several individuals myself, and feel that peer mentoring is one of our most important initiatives.

I returned to college and graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering. I have been employed as a Systems Engineer at Raytheon Company since 2010.

In the disabled community I see numerous opportunities for service and outreach. I believe activities such as the New England PVA Bass Tour, winter sports clinics, and the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games are important for quality of life and camaraderie and that individuals should be encouraged and enabled to participate. I also feel that there is huge value in research into health and life issues.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



PETER FALCIONE

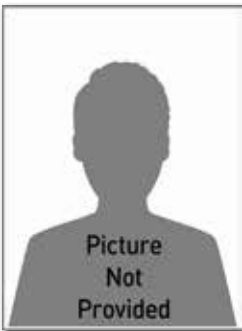
I served in Vietnam with undiagnosed Multiple Sclerosis. Drafted at the age of 25, being wounded during a patrol in my 6th month in country, I was awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. I am currently serving on the board of the mental health community advisory board (MHCAB) VA Conn. In June 2018 I was awarded the Purple Heart Man of

the Year by the Guardians of the Purple Heart. I am a member of the West Haven creative writing group and the West Haven Arts council performing play group. Other organizations, Milford Paralyzed Veterans, W. Haven American Legion, Milford VFW. I lecture at Conn. Colleges (Quinnipiac Albertus Magnus, Yale, Sacred Heart, etc.) on subjects such as PTSFD,

Grief & Mourning, and the progression of MS. I have appeared in a play "Confessions of a War Dog" Co-written with counselor Marylou Larochella at NYU in N. Y. I am one of the founding members of the MS support group at West Haven. The only one of it's kind in the entire VA system. I always find time to help fellow veterans. I am a member of the Conn. Golden Age Games Team.

When someone asks me how do you do all these things at the age of 75, I answer that each day is a new adventure and participation keeps me from dwelling on my own infirmities.

Thank you for your nomination and should I fail to be elected, I will always be proud to have been nominated



PAUL NYERICK

I am Paul Nyerick, a 70-year-old Marine Corps Vietnam veteran forward observer. I live in Granby, CT and Lake Worth, FL, with my wife Jaqueline and dog Coco. I have an MA in Vocational Education Administration from California State University, San Bernardino. I was a firefighter, EMT, public information officer With the Lake Arrowhead, CA Fire

District, Fire Technology teacher with The Rim of the World High School

in Lake Arrowhead, CA and Crafton Hills College in Yucaipa, CA. I was also a Program Manager at the Connecticut Fire Academy.

On April 15, 1991 I was stricken with Multiple Sclerosis. This was a life changer for me. I had to change my whole way of looking at life, but I never have given up on living my goals to the fullest. I am involved in various sports; including the Summer and Winter Sports Clinics, National Winter Sports Clinic and Creative Arts Competition, where I won a silver medal for writing this year. I've also published a novel, Windfalling.



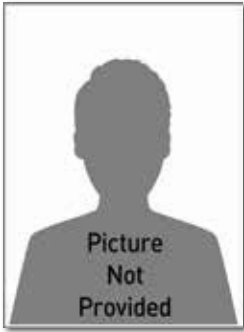
DAN SHAULL

I was born in Omaha in 1949 and raised in rural Nebraska. After school I married and was drafted into the Navy in 1970. I became a single parent shortly after my discharge and raised my son in the south central part of the state until I broke my neck in an automobile accident where I t-boned a stray horse on the roadway.

I was forced to move back to Omaha as a matter of medical necessity. While there my mother and I became interested in a group of parents with disabled children from birth defects. They elected me as the Treasurer and Board Member. The group's purpose was to build a group home when they became unable to care for their children. During that time I suggested that they broaden their vision to create not only a home, but a long term residential facility for others in Omaha in similar family situations and include rehabilitation as part of the program. In 1989 the City of Omaha gave approval to build what is now Quality Living, Inc. The facility has grown from 16 residents to over 50 and has become the number 1 rehab facility within 100 miles or more of Omaha.

During this time I remarried a longtime friend from New York 1990 and in 1996 we left Omaha to be local grandparents to my stepdaughter in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. After several issues with the Albany VAMC respite program, I decided to get into the Brockton SCI Unit in 2009 for my respite stays to give my wife badly needed breaks as my primary caregiver due to a lack of alternative healthcare resources in the area. In 2014 my wife was hospitalized from a mild heart attack and I was brought to Brockton where I have become a permanent resident.

I have been a born-again Christian for almost 38 years. I have never questioned the Lord on where He has led me, thus here I am, running for position on the Board of Directors after 32 years as a lifetime member of PVA. I asked myself what I have to offer New England PVA and my answer is that I've 35 years of experience in dealing with the VA healthcare system. I believe in always doing the right thing, especially when serving others, with a no nonsense common sense attitude with some of my old man's sense of humor, which was welcomed while representing New England PVA during it's annual Advocacy and Legislative Seminar in D.C. as a Chapter Volunteer.



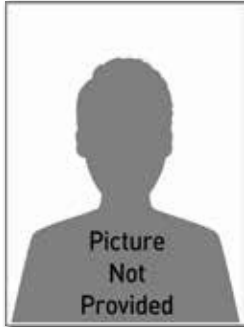
BRAD CARLSON

Also running for election as President. Please see election bio on page 8.



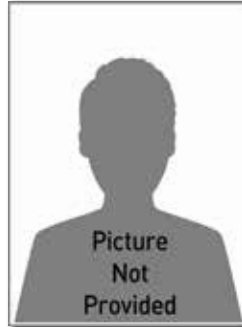
WALTER FARRINGTON

Seeking re-election to the Board of Directors. No election bio provided. Member since 1997. Board of Directors member since 2005.



MIKE GUILBAULT

Also running for re-election as Vice President. Please see election bio on page 9.



MIKE MORAN

Seeking re-election to the Board of Directors. No election bio provided. Member since 2007. Board of Directors member since 2016.



MICHAEL NEGRETE

Also running for re-election as President. Please see election bio on page 8.



MARK SANDERS

Seeking re-election to the Board of Directors. No election bio provided. Member since 1998. Board of Directors member since 2004.



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My Life, My Story: Humanizing Care

Continued from page 5.

providers offer a more personalized experience of care in fewer than 25 minutes?

A VA medical center in Madison, Wisconsin, may have an answer. In 2013, two psychiatrists at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital received a grant from the VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation and created the My Life, My Story program as a way to foster a more intimate connection between VA patients and providers.

The program offers patients the opportunity to share their stories through interviews conducted by a rotating cast of community volunteers, social-work interns, medical students, clinicians and others. Veterans who agree to participate are free to talk about themselves, their families, their military experiences—“whatever they want,” Dr. Nathan noted. “It’s all driven by the veteran, which is different from a usual care visit in which the provider is pushing a particular agenda and interpreting what the patient is saying.”

The interviewer writes the story and then reads it back to the veteran to check whether anything should be changed, added or removed. The story is then added to the VA electronic health record with the veteran’s permission so that any member of the care team can learn more about the patient in fewer than 10 minutes, according to Dr. Nathan.

The program aligned so well with the VA’s mission of honoring veterans’ voices and experiences that it has been rolled out to 18 VA medical centers and recommended for implementation nationwide by the Veterans Experience Office.

Dr. Nathan spearheaded the program in April 2016 at the Brockton campus of VA Boston after happening upon a story in a patient’s chart. “This patient was very ill. He couldn’t talk or communicate. He didn’t have any visitors. He didn’t have any pictures. I knew the facts of his medical history, but I didn’t know anything about the person I was taking care of. Then I read his story, and it just transformed the whole experience of care,” she said. Feeling more connected and resilient, she began integrating this program into her own day-to-day practice and sharing it with other clinicians.

Once the program grew in popularity at the Brockton campus, Dr. Nathan looked to expand it to other campuses as well as various care settings. As a clinician educator, she knew the best way to develop it further would be through “learners”—a comprehensive term referring to students, interns, residents and fellows in various areas of clinical practice receiving training across the Boston VA system. “It grew wherever the learners went and, as a result, is now carried out in the outpatient clinics, physical rehabilitation units, hospice and palliative care unit, inpatient hospital, emergency department and even in veterans’ homes,” Dr. Nathan said.

The My Story interviews foster meaningful connections that transform clinicians’ ability to deliver care by humanizing the patient. “Having these stories helps clinicians understand that the person is not just a veteran, not just a Marine, not just the Vietnam War. Their military experience is part, and often a really important part, of their identity, but there’s so

much more to the person,” Dr. Nathan said. “Often, what we might think is the biggest, most defining thing is totally different from what they tell us in their story.”

According to Dr. Nathan, this insight can also inform the course of care. “Clinically relevant information often comes out when people tell stories about hard times they’ve faced in the past, because we can learn how they’ve been resilient and what inner strength they’ve called upon and may be able to call upon again, in facing their current challenges.”

Dr. Nathan hopes the program will continue to grow, both within and outside of the VA system. “I hope that within the next five years or so, it will become part of the culture. I don’t see why this couldn’t be done anywhere with any patient in any hospital system,” she said. “How do you get to know the whole person? You have to ask them.”

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www.newenglandpva.org

Office Hours
Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 4:30pm



COMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

- Jul 29-Aug 5: National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Orlando, FL
- Aug 8: Chapter Board of Directors Meeting, West Roxbury
- Aug 15: West Roxbury Annual Ice Cream Social
- Aug 25: Lake Hiawatha cookout, boat rides and fishing
- Aug 31: Bellingham Shooting
- Sep 7-9: NEPVA Bass Trail Fishing - Lake Winnepesaukee, NH
- Sep 18: SAVES Bass Tournament Candlewood Lake, CT.
Need to register through Gaylord at sports@gaylord.org 203-284-2772
- Sep 21: Shawme Gun Club Shoot Sandwich, MA
- Sep 26: Brockton SCI Pizza Party
- Oct 5: 71st Annual Chapter Banquet – Moseley’s On The Charles, West Roxbury, MA**
- Oct 5-7: Maine Bass Trail event at Pine Tree Camp
- Oct 12: Bass River Rod and Gun Club Shoot Yarmouth, MA

For more information on upcoming sports events please contact the Chapter office at (800) 660-1181.

*Mike Guilbault - Sports Director
Mike Moran - Asst. Sports Director*



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