

Fun in the Sun at the 2022 Summer Sports Clinic

By Mike Guilbault

We had great weather for this year's Summer Sports Clinic (SSC) held July 11-15. Participants arrived Monday morning and registered at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, RI and then we headed to the Button Hole Golf Course in Johnston for lunch and some golfing. They had a few paragolfer chairs for us wheelchair users to be able to stand and drive some balls.

Tuesday the buses headed off, taking half the participants to Fort Adams State Park in Newport for surfing with



AmpSurf at 2nd Beach in Middletown and the other half sailing with the Sail to Prevail program in Newport Harbor. I was on the Wolves team and we sailed in the AM, ate lunch and then went surfing afterwards. The other team, surfed in the AM and were going to sail after lunch. There were plenty of wonderful volunteers to make the activities very enjoyable for all involved no matter how disabled the participant. I sure had a blast trying surfing for the 1st time!

The other two teams were bused to Barrington where they each had a chance to cycle on the East Bay Bike Path and then do some kayaking on Brickyard Pond the other half of their day. Thanks so much to the volunteers from NEHSA for helping out with both activities. I believe almost everyone who kayaked was able to see the bald eagle that called the pond home. I was lucky enough to see him fly into a tree near shore and as I paddled near he took off again; wow, what a huge wingspan he had. Eagles are very big!

Wednesday the teams switched up and those who went

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Murphy Returns to Lead NEPVA

"I am delighted to have now returned to the Chapter, and I am excited about what lies ahead. Thank you to everyone who has so warmly welcomed me back, and I look forward to working with each one of you."

SUMMER SPORTS CLINIC



More photos page 8



**THANKS TO ALL
THOSE WHO MADE
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TO THIS ISSUE**

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Vice President, Wayne Ross
Acting Secretary, Debra A. Freed
Treasurer, Vacant

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John Melvin
Mike Moran
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Executive Director's Report

By Mark Murphy

Executive Director NEPVA

Hello Members and Friends of NEPVA,

On August 16th I happily returned to the Chapter as Executive Director. Many of you will remember that I had previously served in this same role from December 2019-August 2021, when I went to work for another non-profit organization in full-time development and fundraising. For those of you who do not know me, I am a veteran of the Massachusetts Army National Guard and I have worked in the non-profit sector for over 10 years in various administrative, fundraising, and project management roles.

As the Chapter has been in a period of Board and staff transition over the past weeks and months, Brad Carlson approached me in July to see if I might be interested in considering a return to the Chapter staff. After thinking it over and consulting with friends and mentors, I happily accepted Brad and the Board's offer to come back. I understand there have been several challenges in the Chapter in recent times, but I am confident that with the Board and staff we have in place now we have legitimate reasons to hope that we will grow as an organization and continue to have a positive impact in the lives of our members.

I am overjoyed to be working closely with Brad Carlson as our Board President. Brad is a solid leader, does not have an ego, and he understands that service to the Chapter and our members comes before all else. I can confidently say the same about the rest of our Board members – both old and new Board members fully understand and appreciate the New England PVA mission and are dedicated to seeing us

flourish and grow to become one of the best PVA Chapters in the nation. We can do this together, along with our incredible volunteers and hard-working and capable staff members in Kristen and Jerry.



Some of my immediate priorities as I resume my work on staff is working on developing a new strategic fundraising plan, getting a sense of current Chapter and PVA legislative and advocacy priorities, and helping the Chapter get on a more solid financial and administrative footing given all of the staff/Board turnover and difficulties we have recently encountered. I look forward to working with everyone who has a vested interest in the well-being of our Chapter. As of the writing of this article, we are still working out our new staff and Board emails. In the meantime, if you ever need to reach me feel free to call or text me at 781-710-4895.

Again, I am delighted to have now returned to the Chapter, and I am excited about what lies ahead. Thank you to everyone who has so warmly welcomed me back, and I look forward to working with each one of you.

Sincerely,
Mark Murphy
Executive Director

...both old and new Board members fully understand and appreciate the New England PVA mission and are dedicated to seeing us flourish and grow to become one of the best PVA Chapters in the nation.

Government Relations Report

*Kristen McCone Gordon
Government Relations Director*

New England Congressional Delegation members pledge support to NEPVA legislative priorities

We are thrilled to announce that the list of co-sponsors on our legislative priorities continues to grow. We appreciate the responsiveness and leadership of the New England Congressional Delegation in pledging their support for issues that directly impact our members lives. However, our work is far from over.

As a Chapter, we will continue to advocate for paralyzed veterans in New England through the end of the legislative session but we need your help! Please review our legislative

priorities below, and contact your Representatives if they are not listed as a cosponsor.

All of the information you need to take action on any of PVA’s legislative priorities, including those listed below, is available here: <https://www.voterveice.net/PVA/campaigns/78011/respond>. Please take a moment to fill in your information so an automated email in support of these issues will be sent directly to your Representatives in Congress.

AUTO for Veterans Act

The AUTO for Veterans Act would allow eligible veterans to receive an Automobile Allowance Grant every ten years for the purchase of an adapted vehicle.

Access to an adapted vehicle is essential to the mobility and health of catastrophically disabled veterans who need a reliable means of transportation in order to work, attend medical appointments, and maintain independence. The substantial costs of modified vehicles, coupled with inflation, present a significant financial hardship for our members who need to replace their primary mode of transportation once it reaches its lifespan. Our Chapter also advocates for the needs of our members with non-service-connected injuries, and believes they should receive the same type of adaptive automobile equipment as veterans with service-connected injuries.

Current New England Congressional Delegation Cosponsors of the AUTO Act: *Senator Susan Collins (lead Senate sponsor); Senator Hassan; Senator King; Senator Whitehouse; Senator Blumenthal; Congresswoman Pingree; Congressman Golden; Congressman Moulton; Congresswoman Pressley; Congresswoman Hayes; Congressman Himes; Congresswoman Kuster; and Congressman Larson; Congressman Cicilline; Congressman Langevin; and Congressman Welch.*

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The Veteran Families Health Services Act

This legislation would repeal VA’s ban on in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and make these services a regular part of the medical benefits package available to veterans. This bill would also authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care who are living with infertility, including the authorization of service provision to non-veteran partners.

Current New England Congressional Delegation Cosponsors of the Veteran Families Health Services Act: *Senator Warren; Senator Markey; Senator Sanders; Senator Blumenthal; Senator Shabehn; Senator Hassan; Senator Whitehouse; Senator Murphy; Congressman McGovern; Congresswoman Hayes; Congressman Moulton; Congressman Auchincloss; Congresswoman Trahan; Congresswoman Pressley; Congressman Himes; Congresswoman Kuster; Congressman Larson; Congressman Pappas; and Congressman Welch.*

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Washington Update

PACT ACT NOW LAW

On August 2, the Sgt. First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act passed the Senate and the bill was signed into law by the President on August 10 at a White House ceremony. The PACT Act is the most comprehensive toxic exposure bill for veterans in history. Ultimately, the PACT Act will expand VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances.

The PACT Act impacts both the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Veterans Health Administration. It adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions related to burn pits and broadens coverage for Vietnam-era veterans exposed to Agent Orange, radiation exposure, and other toxins. Presumptive conditions are medical conditions that VA presumes to be related to military service. Some of the new presumptive conditions under the PACT Act are brain cancer, glioblastoma, gastrointestinal, lymphatic cancer, as well as several respiratory cancers. Illnesses such as chronic bronchitis, chronic rhinitis, constrictive bronchiolitis, and pulmonary fibrosis have also been added to the list. You can go to this website to determine if you have a condition that is now considered to be related to military service. Additionally, the PACT Act requires VA to provide toxic exposure screening to every veteran enrolled in VA health care.

For veterans who have not enrolled in VA health care that separated from the military before October 1, 2013, VA is offering a special enrollment period from October 1, 2022, until October 1, 2023. To be eligible for this enrollment period you must have served in a theater of combat operations on active-duty after the Persian Gulf War or during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and were discharged or released between September 11, 2002, and October 1, 2012.

If you have a claim pending with VA that concerns a condition that is now considered to be a presumptive, you do not have to do any additional paperwork but you should receive a letter from VA recognizing the presumptive status of your claim. If you need help filing a VA claim or have questions about a presumptive condition, reach out to a PVA national service officer (NSO) to assist you. You can go here to find a PVA NSO in your area.

Other provisions within the PACT Act will help VA bolster its workforce and enable the department to treat newly eligible veterans. These include requiring the VA to establish standard qualifications and performance metrics for HR positions as well as developing a plan to improve hiring for those positions; expedite the hiring of recent college graduates for certain positions; enhance or create a number of special pay, incentive, bonus, award, and student loan repayment authorities department-wide; and raise pay caps on certain medical positions. Others require training for VA and civilian providers to better understand or treat veterans' exposure concerns and authorize 31 new, major medical health clinics and research facilities in 19 states.

In the coming weeks, VA will be hiring health professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who will specialize in conducting patient assessments regarding the health effects of military exposures. Also, by January 2023, the department expects to have a fully operational call center and network of experts to help veterans concerned about environmental exposure and provide consultative services to veterans in primary care clinics.

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LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE TO IMPROVE HISA

In early August, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) introduced legislation which aims to make much needed updates to VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grant program. The HISA grant provides financial assistance to veterans and servicemembers to allow them to make medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to their primary residences. Updating this important grant program is a top legislative priority for PVA because its outdated rates are failing to provide veterans the level of financial assistance needed to modify their homes.

S. 4721, the Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act, would increase the amount available under the HISA program from the current ceiling of \$6,800 to \$10,000 for veterans with service-connected conditions and \$5,000 for those with conditions unrelated to military service. It also ties these amounts to a formulation so future rates remain current. The new bill is the companion measure to H.R. 5819 which Representative Al Lawson (D-FL) introduced last November. This is one of several issues that may receive attention by Congress in the fall. Please contact your members of Congress urging them to increase HISA grant rates.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW IMPROVING ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) passed late last year allocates funding for a variety of grant programs that will improve transportation access for people with disabilities. For example, between fiscal years (FY) 2022 and 2026, a total of \$5 billion will be available to provide competitive grants for airport terminal development projects that address the aging infrastructure of the nation's airports. In early July, the Federal Aviation Administration announced grant awards of \$1 billion for FY 2022. Of the grants awarded, 73 include projects that will improve airport access for people with disabilities.

The BIL also includes funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the PVA-supported All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP). On July 26, FTA announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$343 million in ASAP grants that will be available for FY 2022.

The main purpose of the program is to provide funding to states, territories, the District of Columbia, and local governmental authorities to help finance capital projects to upgrade the accessibility of legacy rail fixed guideway public transportation systems (e.g., subway, commuter rail, light rail) for persons with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs, by increasing the number of existing stations or facilities, such as outdoor light-rail boarding and alighting areas, that are fully accessible.

VETERANS EDUCATION PROVISION HEADED TO THE PRESIDENT

The Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act of 2022 (S. 5548) passed the House last week by unanimous consent. The bill will improve access to high-quality educational programs for student veterans using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. It previously passed the Senate and will be headed to the President's desk for signature.

After the creation of the Montgomery GI Bill, the VA discovered several educational facilities that were filling their classes with veterans receiving educational benefits, but not providing a quality education. The 85/15 rule was established to require that for a school to collect VA education benefits, the student body could not be comprised of more than 85 percent of student veterans receiving education benefits.

The Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans' Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 updated scrutiny of the 85/15 rule and several institutions of higher learning were running into certification issues, many based on smaller programs offered within larger campus structures. The Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act of 2022 will address some reporting barriers, allow college campuses to apply for a waiver for programs with smaller enrollment numbers, and hopefully ensure a smooth enrollment period for student veterans in the upcoming academic year.



Sail To Prevail is a nonprofit that improves the lives of more than 1,000 children adults and veterans, each summer, through sailing on their fleet of specially adapted, 20-foot sailboats.



SUMMER SPORTS CLINIC



A few NEPVA members enjoying the SSC. Clockwise from top left: Mike Guilbault at the helm in Newport sailing with new Boston VA Chief of CDCE Matt Edwards enjoying the cruise up front; Elias Rojas with a black sea bass he caught; Paul Nyerick, kayaking on Brickyard Pond in Barrington, RI; Paul Raiche, handcycling on the East Bay Bike Path in Barrington, RI. **A special shout out to all the nurses and doctors along with Team leaders and many more VA employees volunteering to help make it happen.**





2022-2023 ANNUAL CALENDAR



PVA BASS TOURNAMENT SERIES

Mid-America Bass Tournament
September 16-18, 2022
Eufaula, OK

Vaughan Bass Tournament
October 7-9, 2022
Rend Lake, IL

Southeastern Bass Tournament
September 30-October 2, 2022
Evans, GA

**Florida Gulf Coast Bass
Tournament**
March 24-26, 2023
Kissimmee, FL

**Kentucky-Indiana Bass
Tournament**
April 21-23, 2023
Kuttawa, KY

Mid-Atlantic Bass Tournament
June 2-4, 2023
Hopewell, VA

Capital Clash Bass Tournament
June 9-11, 2023
Waldorf, MD

PVA BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT SERIES

Mid-South Billiards Tournament
October 28-29, 2022
Memphis, TN

**Mid-Atlantic Billiards
Tournament**
March 17-19, 2023
Richmond, VA

**Mid-America Billiards
Tournament**
June 16-18, 2023
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Buckeye Billiards Tournament
June 24-26, 2023
Columbus, OH

AIR RIFLE & PISTOL PROGRAM

National Postal Matches
November 2022 – March 2023

Wisconsin Air Gun
March 11-12, 2023
Milwaukee, WI

*Additional in-person events
coming soon!*

PVA BOWLING TOURNAMENT SERIES

**Great Plains Bowling
Tournament**
July 28-31, 2022
Council Bluffs, IA

**Mid-Atlantic Bowling
Tournament**
September 9-11, 2022
Richmond, VA

Nevada Bowling Tournament
December 2-5, 2022
Las Vegas, NV

**Florida Gulf Coast Bowling
Tournament**
February 23-25, 2023, Tampa,
FL

**Mid-America Bowling
Tournament**
March 31 – April 3, 2023
Oklahoma City, OK

PVA NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CIRCUIT

North Central Trapshoot
September 9-11, 2022
Sioux Falls, SD

Oregon Trapshoot
September 23-25, 2022,
Oregon

Wisconsin Trapshoot, May
19-21, 2023, Green Bay, WI

Cal-Diego Trapshoot
March 17-19, 2023
Redlands, CA

Nevada Trapshoot
March 31-April 2, 2023
Las Vegas, NV

Vaughan Trapshoot
May 26-28, 2023
Elburn, IL

Iowa Shooting Trapshoot *
June 16-18, 2023
Cedar Rapids, IA
**Year-End Tournament*

BOCCIA

**New England Boccia
Tournament**
November 5-6, 2022
West Roxbury, MA

**West Virginia Boccia
Tournament**
December 3-4, 2022
Charleston, WV

Bayou Boccia Tournament
February 3-5, 2023
Gulfport, MS

Gateway Boccia Tournament
March 17-19, 2023
St. Louis, MO

HANDCYCLING

**Echelon Racing League Virtual
Paracycling Series (Online)**
November 2022 -February 2023

**PVA High Performance
Off-Road HC Camp**
August 13-18, 2022
Crested Butte, Colorado

**Off-Road Handcycling
Championships**
August 19-21, 2022
Crested Butte, Colorado

Pocahontas Off-Road Camp
September 29 – October 2, 2022
Chesterfield, VA

Tampa VA Handcycling Clinic
January 21, 2023
Tampa, FL

PVA High Performance Camp
January 30 – February 3, 2023
Brooksville, FL

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

**PVA – NWBA Lakeshore
Basketball Camp**
August 4-7, 2022
Birmingham, AL

Bay Area & Western Disc Golf
August 19-20, 2022
San Jose, CA

New England Disc Golf Clinic
September 10, 2022
Ft. Devens, MA

PVA Rugby Clinic
September 16-18, 2022
Phoenix, AZ

New England Basketball Camp
September 23-26, 2022
New Haven, CT

**PVA Wheelchair Rugby
Invitational**
February
New Haven, CT

NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES



July 4-9, 2023
Portland, Oregon

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR AN EVENT: [PVA.ORG/ADAPTIVE-SPORTS](https://pva.org/adaptive-sports)

Service Officer's Report

Introducing Pete Demarkis, Sr. NSO

Pete is an Iraq War Veteran, having served with the US Army and Army National Guard from 1999-2007. Shortly after discharge, Pete began working in the Veteran Services field, and has obtained a Masters degree in Mental Health and Veteran Psychology. Over the past 15 years, Pete has continuously and tirelessly served and advocated for the Veteran population and their dependents in VHA and VBA systems navigation and benefits applications, and has worked in schools, jails, homeless shelters, VA buildings and other government funded housing. Pete is well-versed in all-things-VA and is very passionate about his service and dedicated to the populations he serves.

Pete has offices in both West Roxbury and Brockton, MA VAMCs and represents Veterans across New England. Pete can be reached using the below contact information.

Pete Demarkis
Senior National Service Officer
Paralyzed Veterans of America
1400 VFW Parkway, AG-60
West Roxbury, MA 02132
857.203.6091
peted@pva.org

“Having been given the opportunity to serve with PVA has been great, to say the least. I am grateful to be part of a tight-knit community, with some of the most knowledgeable, dedicated, and caring Veterans’ representatives in the field. I am devoted to my brothers and sisters, I am dedicated to sharing the knowledge that’s been shared with me and fighting for what is right, and I’m still driven by the values that were instilled in me during Basic Training: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. I imagine I always will be. I truly believe these same values and passion are at the core of PVA, and I am proud to be part of such a team.”



PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – REGIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS

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J.F.K. Federal Building - Room - 1575 C
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Michael Snape, National Service Officer II
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fax: (207) 621-4829
Serving Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont

BRONX SCI

Amauris Polanco, National Service Officer II
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Serving New York & Connecticut

SYRACUSE VAMC

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Syracuse, NY 13210
phone: (315) 425-4400 ext. 53317
fax: (315) 425-2940
Serving New York & Western MA

A PVA New England Veteran Assists Navy WWII Veteran in Celebrating his 100 Birthday!

by Debra A. Freed

Eddie Dusick, long time Chapter member who hails from Milford, CT found out through neighbors that there would be a small celebration for a gentleman named Roy Green. Mr. Green, a WWII Navy veteran, would be turning 100 years old on Aug 6th, 2022.

After Mr. Green left his military service, he would spend many years working with the Girls Scouts. The Girls Scouts had plans to get an ice cream truck for their celebration. Eddie, getting wind of the mini celebration felt that Mr. Green definitely deserved better.

So, he called a friend, Chris Staley, who works for the city of Milford's Public Works Dept. Mr. Staley contacted the Mayor's office, the Police and Fire Departments and within an hour, all three contacted Eddie. The Police and Fire Department called and asked what time they could conduct a drive-by and they were given the address and the time would be 5pm.

The Mayor's office was looking for details. Mayor Ben Blake who showed up in person would present a proclamation declaring Aug 6th, 2022 Roy Green Day in Milford, CT. Then, at exactly 5p 8 police cars with lights flashing but no sirens (so they wouldn't scare the neighborhood) came down the street, wishing Mr. Green Happy Birthday as he stood in his yard to watch the procession. Unbeknownst to Eddie and to everyone else, the police officers parked their cars, walked back to Mr. Green so they could shake his hand, thank him for his service, and wish him Happy Birthday in person, and take a group photo.

As the police were leaving, two Milford Fire trucks with lights on pulled up, stopped their trucks in the middle of the road and proceeded to thank Mr. Green for his service, wish him Happy Birthday and have a photo taken with Mr. Green.

This left the remainder of the group, about 100 neighbors and Girl Scouts to sing Happy Birthday to Mr. Green.

This is what PVA New England Chapter is all about. It is more than just a member driven organization. It serves to support its members, veterans, and the disabled community throughout New England.



Summer Sports

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to Newport Tuesday headed to Barrington and visa versa. Thursday was a day of choice, many of us chose to wake quite early and bus to Galilee to head out on the ocean to fish for some good eating fish. There were plenty of delicious black sea bass caught along with some scup, flounder, bluefish and a few striped bass. Many thanks to all the captains and crews who volunteered their boats and time to put us on the fish.

Those who chose not to go fishing had a beautiful day to go to Colt State Park in Bristol for a great day of fun in the sun. Plenty went into the water for a swim and to stay cool. Some played corn hole, tossed the football or frisbee and even do some skate boarding.

Thursday evening was the Banquet Dinner and Matt Edwards, the new Chief of CDCE was the MC and presented the award for sailing, I was lucky to have him on the boat I sailed and he told quite a story about our time on the water. There were some of the AmpSurf volunteers who made it to the banquet to present the surfing award and many of the cycling and kayaking volunteers were there to present the awards for those activities. There was also an award given for the best volunteer. It was a very enjoyable week and we had breakfast Friday morning and then all headed back home.

The award winners were:

Biking – Nancy Beman

Kayaking – Gary Moreau

Sailing – Mike Guilbault

Surfing – Lloyd Asbury

Volunteer – Emily Ostroff

Working to Better Serve Our Members Throughout New England & Beyond!

By Debra A. Freed

Hello! We hope this finds many of you continuing to stay safe and healthy. It seems like forever that we have not been able to get out and do things. While Covid-19 is still prevalent, society is moving forward in its return to our former way of life.

Many of you should have received PVA's letter that the Chapter is on monitoring. However, the PVA is overseeing what the Chapter is doing, the Chapter will continue to conduct business which means holding monthly Board meetings, supporting our sports programs, and continue to work with local, state, and federal legislators on issues that pertain to our members and the disabled community.

Our Chapter Board of Directors has some new and returning members. As some of you may have seen in the June issue, Mr. Negrete resigned his Chapter Presidency to return for

another year as a National Vice President. The Chapter President is Brad Carlson. Mr. Wayne Ross won his election as Vice President. Mark Sanders was also re-elected. I too, won election as a returning Board member. I truly appreciate it and look forward to serving our members & the disabled community again. However, the prior Board had some resignations and even with the recent election, the Board would be short of the minimum 7. So, at the May meeting, Mr. Negrete prior to leaving, appointed Mr. John Melvin, an Air Force Veteran, Mr. Chuck Houle, a Navy Veteran, and Mr. Dan Shaul. All were approved. At the Aug 16th Board meeting, the Board voted to make me Acting Secretary.



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Indego® Gets Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again

NEW VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® exoskeleton at NO COST!



What's the Indego exoskeleton?

It's an FDA-approved robotic device that enables spinal cord injury patients (level T3-L5) to walk again.

- ✓ Regain your independence
- ✓ Enjoy eye-level conversations
- ✓ Improve your cardio & bone density



Scan with your mobile phone to receive information or schedule a demonstration.

Contact us today to find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton at no cost.

Phone: 844-846-3346

Email: support.indego@parker.com



Washington Update

continued from page 5

Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust

This legislation would strengthen and enhance Social Security benefits by ending the five-month wait for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); eliminate the SSDI “cash cliff,” which hinders the ability of beneficiaries to return to work; provide credits under Social Security to ensure that caregivers are not penalized in retirement for leaving the workforce to provide care for children or other dependents; and make other needed improvements and reforms.

Current New England Congressional Delegation Cosponsors to Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust: *Senator Blumenthal (lead Senate sponsor); Senator Whitehouse; Congressman Larson (lead House sponsor); Congressman Neal; Congresswoman De-Lauro; Congressman Courtney; Congressman Himes; Congresswoman Hayes; Congressman Auchincloss; Congressman Cicilline; Congresswoman Clark; Congressman Keating; Congresswoman Kuster; Congressman Langevin; Congressman Lynch; Congressman McGovern; Congressman Moulton; Congresswoman Pingree; Congresswoman Pressley; Congresswoman Trahan; and Congressman Welch.*

NEPVA meets with Senator Sanders staff in Vermont

Along with NEPVA Director Chuck Houle and his wife Eileen, I had the privilege of meeting with members of Senator Sanders’ DC and District staff members in White River Junction, VT. We discussed the work our Chapter does to support and advocate for paralyzed veterans, emphasized the need for quality healthcare for our members in VT, and requested the Senator’s support as a cosponsor on the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act and the AUTO Act.



I would very much appreciate the opportunity to hear more from our VT members on their needs, challenges, and how the Chapter can best be of assistance. If you are a VT resident and willing to share your feedback with me, please contact me at our Chapter Office.

PACT Act passes Congress

Earlier this month, President Biden signed the bipartisan Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act into law. The PACT Act is the most significant expansion of benefits and services for toxic exposed veterans in more than 30 years.

The PACT Act will:

- Expand VA Health Care Eligibility for Veterans Potentially Impacted by Toxic Exposures;
- Make It Easier for Veterans to Qualify for VA Services;
- Remove the Burden of Proof for Certain Veterans Diagnosed With 23 Conditions
- Strengthen Toxic Exposure Research
- Improve Toxic Exposure Care
- Build Critical Capacity at VA

Our Chapter is grateful for the work of our national PVA office in pushing for this legislation, particularly after the Senate originally failed to close debate so that a vote could take place on its final passage.

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The Chapter also has a returning face, Mark Murphy graciously returned as Chapter Executive Director! Ms. Kristen McCone-Gordon is the Chapter's Government Relations Director and come early September will add to her role Community Relations while continuing to work diligently with our New England delegation as well as many state and local leaders. And Mr. Jerry Cole has agreed to stay on through the end of 2022, which is very, very good for us. Jerry, Mark, and the Board will get us through our annual audit.

So, what can the Chapter do for you? Are you looking for information for benefits? Are you looking for activities to do with the Chapter or on your own? Please keep in mind the Chapter offers a program called Individual Allotment. This can allow a member to participate at an event and then be reimbursed for their expenses. However, one must request such funding in advance. There will be no advancement of payment and no retroactive reimbursement. You can contact the Chapter office for details.

There are a fair number of events coming up here in Massachusetts but a super huge one will be in Connecticut in late September. The Chapter's partnership with the American Eagle Bass Association who hosts the Chapter's 3 Bass Trails has worked and continues to work exceedingly hard to continue its trail. To their credit, they have done a great job. The Newton Yacht Club June 4th tournament had a good turnout. The next two Bass Trail events are Sept 9-11 at Lake Winnie, and the 3rd will be at a new place in Maine, the last weekend in September 30 through Oct 2nd.

The Chapter has partnered with PVA Sports to bring a Wheelchair Basketball Clinic to Southern Connecticut State University, the weekend of Sept 22 through Sept 26. September 26th is the Chapter's 2nd Annual Golf Tournament, which will be held in Marlborough, MA. For more information on these two major events and other events that you may

be interested in, please check out the PVA Sports calendar.

While Sports is an integral part of what the Chapter does, please keep in mind that without Government Relations and the work to push for better accessibility, you would probably not be able to access many of them. Soon, our Govern-

ment Relations Director will add another title to her name, Community Relations. With your help, Kristen and the Chapter can move forward with working together with local, state, and federal legislators to make universal access the norm.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter. If you would like to only receive an email version, please notify the Chapter office.



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Paralyzed Veterans of America

New England Chapter

Join Us for the following Sports & Recreation Events

NEPVA Rollers Bowling Season begins September 6th, 2022 and runs 35 weeks - Lanes TBA

**Chapter Bass Trail: Camp Robindel
Lake Winnepesaukee - Sept 9 through 11**

**New England Disc Golf Clinic
Ft. Devens, MA Sept. 10**

**New England Basketball Camp
New Haven, CT Sept. 23-26**

**2nd Annual Golf Classic: September 26th
Marlborough Golf Club - 11am Shotgun start**

Chapter Bass Trail: Maine, Sept 30 - Oct 2

**New England Boccia Tournament
West Roxbury, MA Nov. 5-6**