

## NEPVA meets with Congressman Magaziner (D,RI)

Along with Brad and Kathy Carlson, I had the pleasure of meeting with Congressman Seth Magaziner (D,RI) in his district office. As a new member of Congress, we wanted to ensure that the Congressman knows of our organization and the needs of our members both in Rhode Island and throughout New England.

We found Congressman Magaziner and his district staff to be very knowledgeable and passionate about the issues facing the veteran and disabled community at large. We discussed the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act, The Elizabeth Dole Act, and the Veterans Infertility Treatment Act of 2023 and asked for his support. We are thrilled to report that the Congressman agreed to cosponsor all three bills!

We look forward to a collaborative and productive relationship with his office. A special thank you to Brad and Kathy Carlson for their effective and passionate advocacy on behalf of the Chapter!



*Above: Chapter President Brad Carlson, Chapter Volunteer Kathy Carlson, and Director of Government and Community Affairs Kristen McCone Gordon meet with Congressman Magaziner to discuss issues impacting our RI members. We thank the Congressman for his willingness to cosponsor the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act, The Veterans Infertility Treatment Act, and the Elizabeth Dole Act on our behalf. Thank you for your support of paralyzed veterans!*

### National PVA Presents: A Webinar Series on the Art of Advocacy

PVA's National Government Relations Staff has launched a webinar series about the basics of government. The 5-part series will culminate with a session on how to advocate for your cause at various levels:

- » **Fundamentals of Government**
- » **The Legislative Process**
- » **Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent**
- » **Who is Advocating and Who With**
- » **The Art of Advocacy**

Please keep an eye out for more information on this opportunity on our website and in your emails!  
Any questions? Contact [LisaE@pva.org](mailto:LisaE@pva.org)

## Join Us Outside this Summer

- **Sailing in Newport**
- **Disc Golf at the VA**
- **Fishing in MA, NH & ME**

*more info on all our Summer events inside...*



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

Mike Guilbault, Fishing article



*This will be the scene June 3 as the Nam Knights assist the disAbled anglers onto the bass boats for a great day of fishing on the Charles River. Sign up on the Chapter website.*

**NEPVA**

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Acting Vice President, Mark Sanders  
Acting Secretary, Mike Moran  
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Denise Harvey                Holly Warshaw  
Maureen Morrison

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*Cord Word* is published twelve times a year by the New England Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America, 1208 VFW Parkway, Ste 301, West Roxbury, MA 02132 in the interest of Chapter members. Membership in NEPVA entitles you to a free subscription to Cord Word. Articles published in Cord Word do not necessarily reflect the views of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, New England Chapter. NEPVA neither endorses nor guarantees any of the products or services advertised herein.

**Executive Director's Report**

By Mark Murphy

Executive Director NEPVA

Dear Friends,

From May 8-13<sup>th</sup> I was in Omaha, Nebraska for the PVA National Annual Convention. I attended along with Chapter President and PVA National Director Brad Carlson and his wife Kathy. We had a solid and productive week, and these were several highlights:

- Overview of PVA National fundraising work, including their direct mail campaigns. On the Chapter level we too are planning to use direct mail now and moving forward in the hopes of receiving more donations, so hearing about their strengths and challenges in direct mail was helpful.
- We had a one-hour presentation from the United States Secretary of Veteran Affairs Denis McDonough. He gave a compelling speech and graciously took questions from the PVA Directors for over 20 minutes.
- A presentation on the FY24 PVA budget. After some minor amendments, the budget was passed.
- PVA National staff were present to answer programmatic questions on legislative advocacy work, healthcare, sports, architecture, VA benefits assistance/NSO's, and more.
- A myriad of resolutions to the PVA By-Laws were presented and spoken about. Some were passed, defeated, or withdrawn.
- Election of new Officers on the PVA Executive Committee.

As you can see it was a very busy Convention. Beyond the work of the week, it was nice to meet National Directors, PVA National staff members, and various Chapter Presidents and ED's. Many people commented to Brad and me about how well our Chapter is doing given some of our recent challenges over the past year. It was nice to get this positive encouragement from so many of our PVA friends across the nation. Next year's Convention will be held in Minnesota.

There are two upcoming events that I would like to highlight. First, we are having our Sail to Prevail weekend coming up next month in Newport, RI. For more information visit [www.pvanewengland.org/event/sail-to-prevail/](http://www.pvanewengland.org/event/sail-to-prevail/). Also, registration is now open for our Chapter golf tournament at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Please email [golfclassic@pvanewengland.org](mailto:golfclassic@pvanewengland.org) if you would like to register and/or be a sponsor.

Until next month I hope you and your families remain healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Mark Murphy



*...registration is now open for our Chapter golf tournament at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA on August 28th.*



Scan the QR code above to find out more about our golf tournament





# ANNUAL BANQUET

Awards, Food, Music, Dancing, Fun for All

Get out your flip flops out and plan to dance the afternoon away! Our Annual Membership Banquet, which is always a great time to get dressed up and share a night of dinner, dancing, and prizes with our Chapter members and VA Staff is going casual this year! Chowder, steak, lobster, chicken, and all the accompaniments! Live band, games, 50/50 raffle, cash bar, lots of fun!

## SUNDAY AUGUST 6

### Noon to 5

Italian American  
War Veteran Post 45  
111 Neil St., Marlboro, MA

Free for Chapter members and spouse, VA Staff and Volunteers  
Please sign up by Monday, July 24th  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/pva-new-england-chapter-66089549973>

## From the President's Desk

by Brad Carlson  
NEPVA President

Dear Friends,

It was my honor and privilege attend PVA's Annual Convention from May 8-13 in Omaha Nebraska with my wife Kathy and our Executive Director Mark Murphy. It was my second time in Omaha as several years ago we had the National Veterans Wheelchair Games there, so it was nice to be back in the Midwest. The days were long at this year's Convention as there was so much business for us to cover. As you know, in addition to being our Chapter President, I also am a National Director to PVA. My primary responsibility in this role is to prepare for and participate in all regular and special meetings of the National Board of Directors. I also must cast the Chapter's vote in matters requiring a vote by the PVA Board, which I did several times throughout the Convention. After several amendments we passed the PVA FY24 budget, which is one of the more important votes of the week as it is a multi-million-dollar budget with thousands of line items and expenses. I also voted on several By-Law revisions as well. As I said, it was a busy but good week. We made sure to get some nice Omaha steaks while we were there!

You will soon be receiving a notice in the mail which outlines our process for upcoming Chapter elections. If you are interested, a member of good standing of the Chapter, and eligible to serve as an Officer or Director, you will need to inform us in writing by June 7, 2023, of your intention to run. We need members to step up in these roles, especially as Directors. You do not need experience in non-profit Board management to serve. For more information on the roles and responsibilities of Chapter Board members, please refer to the Chapter By-Laws as listed on our website: [www.pvanewengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/New-England-Chapter-Bylaws-2021.pdf](http://www.pvanewengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/New-England-Chapter-Bylaws-2021.pdf). We also included in the mailing information about our new Chapter MS program. Please make sure to check that out.



Here are some  
upcoming events to mark on  
your calendar:

- On June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00am there will be a disc golf demonstration at Building 8 in the Brockton VA with an 11:30am cookout followed by more disc golf.
- All rooms have been booked for the National Veteran Wheelchair Games in Portland, Oregon from July 3-12. Please contact me additional more information.
- Chapter Banquet at the Italian American War Veterans Post 45, 111 Neil Street, Marlboro, MA on August 6<sup>th</sup> from 12:00-6:00pm. It will be an informal and free event for all. We would love you to come!
- Chapter Golf Tournament on August 28<sup>th</sup> at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA

*As you can see, we have several exciting and fun-filled events ahead. Look forward too seeing you soon.*

Sincerely,

Brad Carlson  
National Director & Chapter President

## Government Relations Report

Dear NEPVA Members,

I'm pleased to share the following updates on our Chapter's Government Relations activities. Our team is busy planning district meetings for the summer and fall. If you are interested in joining me, and meeting your Representative, please reach out at your earliest convenience. No experience is necessary – just a desire to advocate for paralyzed veterans!

With gratitude,

Kristen McCone Gordon

### Policy Spotlight: The Elizabeth Dole Act

As previously reported, our Chapter is advocating for the passage of the Elizabeth Dole Home and Community- Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act of 2023 (H.R.542/S. 141) in the 118th Congress. This legislation would make critically needed improvements to home and community-based services, including raising the cap on non-institutional care, expanding the Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program, creating a pilot program to address direct care worker shortages, improving family caregiver supports, and paying for caregivers serving hospitalized veterans in the VDC program.

We have been telling congressional offices that many paralyzed veterans, particularly in New England, prefer to receive non-institutional care or home and community-based services but access to these programs must be expanded. Also, more must be done to address the nationwide direct care workers shortage. We've spent a lot of time emphasizing how important caregivers are to the daily functioning of our members, and shared personal stories that our members endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. These stories really seem to resonate with members of Congress and their staff.

I'm very pleased to report that there is a growing number of New England Congressional Delegation members who are now cosponsors of this bill. Additionally, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee recently advanced many of the provisions of the legislation, signaling that a vote on this issue is likely imminent.

While we appreciate the growing support from our congressional delegation and are optimistic about the recent developments in the senate, our work is far from over. We believe every Representative from New England should publicly support this bill and we need your help. **If your Representative is NOT on this list, please help our efforts by sending an email to their office today. All of the information you need to take action is available here: <https://www.votervoicenet/PVA/Campaigns/100718/Respond>**

Kristen McCone Gordon  
Director of Government and Community Affairs



### New England Congressional Delegation Cosponsors of the Elizabeth Dole Act

#### MASSACHUSETTS

Congressman McGovern (D,MA),  
Congressman Lynch (D,MA)

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Congresswoman Kuster (D, NH),  
Senator Hassan (D,NH)

#### CONNECTICUT

Congresswoman Hayes (D,CT),  
Senator Blumenthal (D,MA)

#### RHODE ISLAND:

Congressman Ciciline (D,RI),  
Congressman Magaziner (D,RI)

#### MAINE

Senator King (I, ME)

#### VERMONT

Senator Welch (D,ME)

## NEPVA's Veterans with MS Program

BUILDING COMMUNITY ← → INFORMATION SHARING

### Zoom: MS and Service Connection: What you need to know!

An informational zoom with PVA's Senior National Service Officer, Pete DeMarkis.

All NEPVA members with MS are invited to an informational zoom on June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am featuring Senior National Service Officer Pete DeMarkis. Mr. DeMarkis and his colleagues are highly skilled at securing benefits for veterans with MS. Co-hosted by NEPVA Director Chuck Houle, the zoom will include a brief presentation on navigating MS and service connection followed by an informal Q&A with Mr. DeMarkis.

Join Zoom Meeting here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82015061262>

Meeting ID: 820 1506 1262

### Join: NEPVA's Veterans with MS Committee!

We are so excited about the launch of our new Veterans with MS program and are committed to providing quality programming for our members. We are looking to form a small committee, composed of NEPVA members with MS, to help advise us on what opportunities and information would be most beneficial to our members. Previous experience is not necessary – just a desire to join an inclusive and motivated group of people committed to serving other veterans with MS and having some fun along the way!

If you are interested in getting involved and hearing more about this opportunity, please contact Kristen McCone Gordon at [kristen@pvanewengland.org](mailto:kristen@pvanewengland.org) with the subject line: Veterans with MS Committee.

### Subscribe: to NEPVA's Veterans with MS distribution List!

Our Chapter is busy preparing events and opportunities for our members with MS. We want to ensure that our information is reaching you! Please subscribe to NEPVA's Veterans with MS email distribution list by emailing Kristen McCone Gordon at [kristen@pvanewengland.org](mailto:kristen@pvanewengland.org) with the subject line: Subscribe to the Veterans with MS list. In the meantime, be sure to follow our Chapter on Facebook!



find out more by  
scanning this QR  
code and visiting the  
Chapter website  
[pvanewengland.org](http://pvanewengland.org)





# Fishing with Mikey G!

by Mike Guilbault

## Fishing season is here!

Hello fellow anglers, fishing season has started once again. The Tournaments organized by Gaylord Sports Association held their first one on Candlewood Lake in Danbury, CT May 9th. They will be hosting another at Congamond Lake in Southwick, MA later in the fall. Fishing from shore for trout is always a good time.

Anglers in the CT area can always reach out to the Major Stephen Roy Andrews Fishing Outreach program. The NEPVA has been supporting the program for a dozen years at least. In addition to working with Gaylord on the Tournaments, Sarge also takes out veterans one on one many times a year. Check out their website in order to contact Joe if you're in CT and would like to try some bass fishing with him. Here's the website to check it out and get contact info for Sarge: <https://www.fishingoutreachprogram.com/>

*Enjoy the warm weather and get out there and bend a rod.*

Also I have often taken my rod with me when attending VA Boston kayaking events. The Paddle the Charles Days have been good to me and if there is another paddle on Wallum Lake that also is a great place to fish and I've been able to bring a rod and kayak fish there as well. There are quite a few areas that have made accessible fishing areas from Cape Cod to multiple ponds in MA and there is always Long Pond in Plymouth, MA and the Wachusett Reservoir that have areas one can wheel to which are flat and hold great fish, some big trout as well as bass and other species. Enjoy the warm weather and get out there and bend a rod. Tight lines everyone!



## 2023 BASS TRAIL DATES

**June 3, Charles River NEPVA Bass Tournament at Newton Yacht Club**

**September 8-10, Lake Winnepesaukee NEPVA Bass Tournament, Camp Robindel, Moultonborough, NH**

**September 29-October 1, Maine Bass Tournament, Camp Wavus, Maine**



Nice 8 pound Brown trout from accessible shore fishing spot.



Mikey caught this bad boy at the Candlewood Lake Tournament.

Visit the Chapter website at [pvanewengland.org](http://pvanewengland.org) to register for the Bass Trail.

**NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES**

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VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
PVA Paralyzed Veterans of America



*...get to know your PVA service officer as they can help you navigate through the questions you may have on disability ratings and navigating the VA system.*

**NSO Report May 2023**

**H**ello CordWord readers and my fellow New Englanders! I hope you've all made it through the winter safe and sound and are ready for the upcoming year. I start by bringing great news for Veterans receiving care in the Massachusetts-based VAMC; The West Roxbury SCI/D Entrance is no longer being used for COVID testing and is now accessible for entry/exit of the building – feel free to stop by my office on your way in/out! Other MA-based VAMC are working on reopening all entry/exit points in the immediate future as well.



As COVID numbers continue to decline, restrictions are finally loosening up! Although admission testing and monitored testing is to continue for the time being, employee surveillance-based testing in the Boston-based hospitals have decreased, asymptomatic testing for all outpatient procedures have been dis-

continued, and visitations are now allowed per pre-COVID guidelines. That all said, norovirus numbers are steadily on the rise – be on the lookout for symptoms, as this is also a highly contagious virus. Hand sanitizer and personal space continue to be our friends. Finally, VAMC throughout MA no longer mandate the wear of masks in lobbies, waiting-areas, hallways or elevators. You will still have to wear a mask in clinical, treatment, inpatient and residential areas, and if you're experiencing COVID symptoms or if you have other viral respiratory infections. It has been over three years since COVID and the accompanying restrictions impacted all our lives - thankfully, change is on the horizon.

*...great news for Veterans receiving care in the Massachusetts-based VAMC; The West Roxbury SCI/D Entrance is no longer being used for COVID testing and is now accessible for entry/exit...*

10 years. Unfortunately, the 10-year rule does not start until 10 years from the date of enactment (i.e. JAN2033). In addition, nonarticulating trailers specifically designed and used to transport mobility devices, are now considered authorized auto-adaptative equipment (AAE), and can be prescribed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). For those of you who tow/transport your mobility device, reach out to your local PVA NSO or VA Prosthetics Representative for additional information.

In other VBA news, Boston Regional Office (VBA) reports over 487,000 PACT claims received and processed since August, 2022, with an approximate 80% grant rate – meaning, 80% of the Veterans filing claims for benefits under the PACT Act are now receiving the benefits in which they'd applied for. If you believe your current illness is related to some form of environmental or toxic exposure during service, or if you have any questions regarding the PACT Act, the Auto Improvement Act, or any other VA healthcare or benefits-related inquiries, please contact your local National Service Office.

On January 5, 2023, Congress enacted the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022, [PL 117-333](#). What does this mean for you? Well, if you used up your Automobile Allowance, a.k.a. Auto Grant, entitlement more than 30 years ago, you are now eligible for another grant. And, additional grants will now be allotted every

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**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – REGIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS**

**BOSTON VA REGIONAL OFFICE**

Joseph E. Badzmierowski  
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BOSTON, MA 02203  
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phone: (718) 584-9000 ext. 6272

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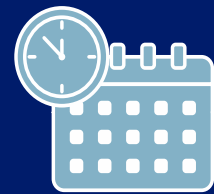
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**Katrina Stephens**  
Retired Colonel, USAF



**Commander Billie J. Farrell**  
USS Constitution



**Susan Wornick**  
Former Channel 5 News Anchor



### REGISTRATION



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/599067064717>



# The 5 W's



**The who, what, where, why and when of our government and the art of advocacy**

Join PVA National Government Relations staff for the second webinar in our series about the basics of government.

★ **The Legislative Process**  
May 30, 3 pm (EST)

[Click here to register](#)

#### Upcoming Webinars

- ★ *Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent*
- ★ *Who is Advocating and Who With?*
- ★ *The Art of Advocacy*

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- Soccer (Blind)
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- Soccer (7-a-side)
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- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Taekwondo
- Track & Field
- Triathlon
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Wheelchair Fencing
- Wheelchair Rugby
- Wheelchair Tennis

### The Winter Sports:

- Alpine Skiing
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- Biathlon
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- Bobsled
- Snowboard
- Skeleton
- Wheelchair Curling
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## New England Chapter

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NEPVA Bass Tournament, Camp  
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Tournament, Camp Wavus, Maine**

[https://www.pvanewengland.org/activities-  
events/adaptive-sports/fishing/](https://www.pvanewengland.org/activities-events/adaptive-sports/fishing/)

## **Join Us at Our Upcoming Events**

**June 24-25** Sail to PreVail  
Newport, Rhode Island

**July 4-9** Wheelchair Games  
Portland, Oregon

**August 6, 2023**  
Annual Chapter Banquet  
Italian American War Veterans  
Marlboro, MA.

**August 28, 2023**  
Annual Chapter Golf Tournament  
Olde Scotland Links  
Bridgewater, MA.