

Boston Strong and Big Bass to Boot

Article and pictures submitted by Lori Chase

Boston strong is what you get when you host the 24th annual NEPVA Bass Tournament in Junetober. Also known as June with October weather of 50 degrees and 20 MPH winds on the Charles River. On June 3rd, hosted by the Newton Yacht Club, our paralyzed and disabled anglers

were paired up with boat captains to place and or catch “lunker.”

If there were a red carpet it would have

been rolled out for us. The morning began with a full AYCE hot breakfast, followed by catching up with old and making new friends, of course a few fish stories as well. Hospitality continued as all were treated to a BBQ lunch with their winning and famous clam chowdah’. They are also available to assist with any needs that may come up, including on the water tech assistance. Of course, that may provide a few good stories to tell later.

Our day began with our volunteers providing participants with drinks, rain gear, tournament shirts, hats, fishing towels & PVA swag. Our anglers were assisted on the docks by the Nam Knights M/C, Merrimack Valley & Boston Chapters. They cannot do enough for our anglers and call themselves the “human cranes.” No barriers, if you want to fish, the Nam Knights M/C will ensure that

No Barriers, if you want to fish, the Nam Knights M/C will ensure that happens, often with several holding a boat and several assisting into the boat. All done with skill, expertise, compassion and lots of smiles.

happens, often with several holding a boat and several assisting into the boat. All done with skill, expertise, compassion and lots of smiles. Patrick Devlin from Newton High School graced us with his rendition of the National Anthem and our 18 teams were off to GO FISH.

Back at the docks, our team and volunteers set up the weigh in station, slightly challenging this year due to strong winds. Our 2 volunteer nurses, Sony Fernandez and Stephanie Kealey were on hand for any

assistance that may have arisen including the possibility of hypothermia due to the chilly temps. This is truly a family friendly event as both of their partners Chris Nielson & Dave Bertocchi also attend and volunteer.

Upon arrival back at the docks we welcomed several new anglers as well as boat captains. You

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NEPVA Bass Trail Liaison, Jim Wallack holds up his winning Lunker at the Charles River Tournament with boat captain Zach Cooper.

photo: Harley Freedman



THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ISSUE

- Lori Chase, Fishing article & photos
Gary Jezierski, Sail to Prevail article
Maureen Morrison, Bowling article



As Patrick Devlin from Newton High School graced us with his rendition of the National Anthem the Nam Knights, boaters and volunteers paused to show their respect.

NEPVA

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Executive Director's Report

By Mark Murphy
Executive Director NEPVA

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your family had a happy and safe 4th of July. As I am sure you know by now, we are gearing up for 2 major Chapter events in August: our Annual Chapter Banquet at the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Post 45 in Marlborough, MA on Sunday, August 6th and our Annual Chapter Golf Tournament at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA on Monday, August 28th. We have already received several sponsorships for the golf tournament, and Chapter President Brad Carlson and I travelled to Cape Cod a couple of weeks ago where we personally solicited over \$2,500 in sponsorships from local businesses. I am happy to report that registrations are also coming in quickly. I hope you will join us for both events. For more information on registering for the tournament or to see sponsorship opportunities, please visit: www.pvanewengland.org/activities-events/charity-golf-classic/



I am delighted to share that at our Board of Directors meeting last month the Board unanimously approved our 2024 Fiscal

...the Board unanimously approved our 2024 Fiscal Year budget. As you can imagine, putting together a comprehensive budget that considers all our many programs, expenses, and expected incomes is a herculean task.

Year budget. As you can imagine, putting together a comprehensive budget that considers all our many programs, expenses, and expected incomes is a herculean task. A big thank you to our Staff Accountant Tamara Montgomery and Chapter President Brad Carlson for helping to craft the budget and making the process as painless as possible. We have a solid FY24 budget and have worked diligently to make it much less complicated and convoluted than previous budgets for the Chapter.

The MS and Service Connection virtual meeting with Kristen McCone Gordon on the morning of June 22nd was extremely well received. Kristen worked very hard to ensure that this was an informative and interactive meeting for all who attended. A special thank you to Board member Chuck Houle who has helped launch this new MS program. We plan to offer more meetings and events like this moving forward. In addition to the MS Service Connection event, the annual "Sail to Prevail" event in Newport, RI on June 24th also went very well.

I did not attend the National Veteran Wheelchair Games earlier this month in Portland, Oregon, although I did follow what was happening via social media. I know Brad talks about his experience there in his CordWord column, but we are of course very proud of all our New England members who competed. We are also grateful to our generous volunteers who attended and supported our athletes.

I hope you enjoy these remaining weeks of Summer.

Sincerely,

Mark Murphy
Executive Director



Sail to Prevail

by Gary Jezierski

June 23rd. A dark and gloomy Friday morning at Fort Adams, Newport, Rhode Island. Rain appeared to be imminent. However at around 10:00 AM the people gathered were highly excited. Why?...well it was Sail to Prevail weekend of course!

A fully packed group of gung-ho Veterans were gathered for the annual 2 day sailfest. Disabled, and non-disabled were ready for some fun and weren't about to let overcast skies or rain "dampen" the event. The skies cleared just in time as the sun smiled down on the happy attendee's. Coolers carrying snacks and soft drinks were stowed, sails hoisted, and crews manned the watercraft. Shove off commenced and the smiles grew. A lite and gentle breeze pushed the six person boats all around Narragansett Bay amid oodles of other small craft, and some VERY large ships!

An event that shouldn't be missed next year (hint-hint, wink-wink) to any who couldn't make it this year. Saturday had rain in the morning, but cleared up just past noon. Once again the hardy sailors manned their posts and the wind took us for a pleasant jaunt around the harbor. To anyone looking for a great weekend of sailing, dining, and good times, be sure to sign up for next years Sail to Prevail. (no sailing experience necessary) Hope to see you there.....matey, arrrgh!!!!

PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
New England Chapter

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,

I hope this message finds you well and that you had a nice 4th of July Holiday. I recently got back from the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Portland, Oregon. While it was a very interesting city to visit, the Games themselves are what the week is all about. Myself and our fellow New England PVA athletes participated in opening ceremonies, which was very moving. Throughout the week I competed in billiards, bocce, disc golf, and bowling. In addition to all the sports, the week is also about camaraderie and connecting with PVA members from across the nation. While it was a good week, I was very happy to get home once the Games were done. A special thank you to all our Chapter volunteers who assisted us at the Games, including Denise Pease, Holly Warshaw, Kathy Carlson, and Denise Harvey. We could not have done it without their support!

You will soon be receiving a ballot in the mail for Chapter elections. Please make sure to complete the ballot and mail it back to the Chapter office. Our plan is to announce the results of the election at our Chapter banquet on August 6th. Included in the ballot mailing you will also find a flyer on the Chapter Banquet, which will be held at the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Post 45, 111 Neil Street, Marlboro, MA on August 6th from 12:00-6:00pm. It will be an informal and free event for all. I hope you can join us as it is shaping up to be a great day!

The MS and Service Connection virtual meeting with Kristen McCone Gordon on June 22nd was an enormous success. People attended from across our Chapter and at the national level as well. This new, innovative program is quite simply a game changer, and I am very excited to see where it takes us moving forward. A special thank you to Kristen and Board Director Chuck Houle for all their hard work in getting this new program off the ground.

We are in good shape for our Chapter Golf Tournament next month on August 28th at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA and are working to secure additional sponsors for the tournament. To secure your group, visit www.pvanewengland.org/activities-events/charity-golf-classic/

You will soon be receiving a ballot in the mail for Chapter elections. Please make sure to complete the ballot and mail it back to the Chapter office.

At the June Board of Director meeting I was unanimously voted to serve as National Director to PVA, representing the New England Chapter. I was humbled to be nominated again, and I will continue to work hard in this important role. As always, if I can ever be of assistance to you in my capacity as National Director to PVA or New England PVA Chapter President, please contact me by phone at 508-353-2081 or by email at brad@pvanewengland.org.

I am here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Brad Carlson,
National Director & Chapter President

Government Relations Report

Kristen McCone Gordon
Director of Government and Community Affairs

Dear NEPVA members,

I'm pleased to share the following updates on our Chapter's Government Relations efforts. We have a busy summer and early fall ahead, full of meetings with members of the New England Congressional Delegation. I look forward to discussing the issues impacting paralyzed veterans' lives in New England and updating you on our progress.

With gratitude,

Kristen McCone Gordon

National PVA offering Advocacy Webinar Series

National PVA is offering a five-part webinar series on advocacy to all PVA members. The series began in April and has so far covered the basic fundamentals of government; a holistic view of the legislative process; and most recently, understanding the issues and becoming a change agent. The last two webinars in the series, who is advocating and who with, and the art of advocacy, are scheduled for late July and August. We will be posting the zoom link on Facebook and our website – so please be sure to keep your eyes out for more information!

This is a great opportunity for all NEPVA members to learn more about our advocacy efforts and get involved in the Chapter. As our colleagues in National describe, advocacy is an essential tool that allows individuals to use their voice to promote change and advocate for their rights. By speaking up and sharing your experiences, you can raise awareness about important issues and influence policies that affect lives. Please consider joining these webinars and contact me if you would like to be a part of our growing advocacy team!

NEPVA attends the Massachusetts Women Veteran Network Conference

Along with NEPVA member Debra Freed and Chapter volunteer Denise Pease, I attended the 15th annual Women Veteran Network Conference in Quincy, MA in early June. The conference, hosted by the Executive Office of Veterans' Services and the Women Veterans Network, was attended by over 300 women veterans all eager to network and learn from one another. Veterans had the opportunity to learn of resources available to them, participate in workshops, and hear from expert speakers including the Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans' Services, Jon Santiago.

Debra, Denise, and I engaged with so many veterans and shared the services our Chapter offers to those who qualify for membership. A special thank you to Debra and Denise for their time and willingness to represent the Chapter!



L; Denise Pease, Kristen McCone Gordon & Debra Freed at 15th annual Women Veteran Network Conference in Quincy, MA. R; Debra with Jon Santiago.

Opportunities still available for Rhode Island NEPVA members

Our Chapter is looking for 1-2 interested Rhode Island members to join us in an upcoming district meeting with Senator Jack Reed. We look forward to discussing our legislative priorities with Senator Reed and requesting his formal support as a cosponsor. If you are interested in meeting your Senator and helping our team explain the urgency of issues impacting paralyzed veterans, please contact me today at kristen@pvanewengland.org. No experience necessary – just a desire to share your perspective and advocate for your fellow veterans!



www.pvanewengland.org

NEPVA's Veterans with MS Program

information sharing
&
community building

Hello fellow MS'ers

Our latest Veterans with MS event on June 22nd, MS and Service Connection: What You Need To Know, was spectacular and very informative. Senior National Service Officer Pete DeMarkis is highly skilled at securing benefits for veterans. Pete did a great job putting on an interesting presentation and provided so much useful information to our members. It's always a pleasure having someone who is extremely knowledgeable.

We are excited to keep our Veterans with MS program flying forward! We are committed to providing as much quality information and programming for our members as possible. We are looking to put together a small advisory committee Of NEPVA members with MS to keep expanding our programs and opportunities. It's always good to have a lot of eyes on new information and opportunities available to our members.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Kristen McCone Gordon, the Chapter's Director of Government and Community Affairs, at kristen@pvanewengland.org or myself at chuck@pvanewengland.org.

Veterans with MS Advisory Group – there is still time to join!

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 with the subject line: Veterans with MS Committee. We hope to convene the group in the early fall. Thanks to all who have already expressed interest – more information to follow!

www.pvanewengland.org

Our next Veterans with MS community building event will be at the Chapter's Annual Summer Banquet! Please join your fellow Chapter members on Sunday, August 6th from noon to 5pm at the at Italian American War Veteran Post 45 (111 Neil St., Marlboro, MA).

This will be a relaxing, casual (bring your flip flops!), and fun event with a live band, games, and fun for the entire family. Chowder, steak, lobster, and chicken will be served.

We also have a limited number of Veterans with MS t-shirts which will be distributed to the first to arrive. So please, come join your fellow Chapter members for some fun in the sun!

This event is Free for Chapter members, VA Staff and Volunteers. To sign up, <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/pva-new-england-chapter-66089549973>

Please join us for excellent food and entertainment!

Respectively,
Chuck

VA MS Centers of Excellence MS & Vets Podcast Series

The VA MS Centers of Excellence MS & Vets podcast series discusses important issues related to the health and quality of life for Veterans with multiple sclerosis. During every episode you'll hear subject matter experts weigh in on multiple sclerosis issues and VA services. A new podcast is posted the 2nd Monday of each month.

July Podcast Caregiver Burnout and Self-Care

Information about receiving alerts for new MS & Vets podcasts is on the VA MS Centers of Excellence website. If you missed the last podcast, Pain and MS, it is still available for listening.

Bass Trail

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guessed it, “they are hooked,” and stated they will be returning. This is a common theme as many have been participating with us for over 20 years, several since we began. Our anglers and boat captains travel from as far as away as CT, Cape Cod and the Lakes Region of NH.

Weigh in resulted in some large fish with some die-hard anglers. Many only have this opportunity to fish at our tournaments due to “all bases covered.”

1st Place: Bruce & Steve Carpenter
5 fish, 7.14 lbs

2nd Place: Josh Reece & Joel Robbins
5 fish, 6.28 lbs

3rd Place: Craig Cassella & Bill Wade
5 fish, 6.12 lbs

Lunker: Jim Wallack 2.64

Our day was completed with an awards ceremony, presentation of several donations and a moment of silence for Bob ‘Soupy’ Campbell. Bob passed away earlier this year and was one of the 3 founding members of the trail. He worked tirelessly to make this trail a success and this tournament was dedicated to him. His daughter and long-time volunteer, Laurie Campbell Morin presented us with crates full of Bob’s fishing gear including rods to donate to our participants. Laurie also spoke of the importance of this trail, how much it meant to her Dad and her family.

The overwhelming success of these

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Service Officers Report

The PACT Act, officially The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) act, was signed into law on August 10th, 2022. With the signing of the PACT act, there is an expansion of benefits for veterans who were exposed to toxins while in service. Some of the major changes of the PACT act include expanding VA healthcare eligibility to veterans with toxic exposures, and adding new presumptive conditions and locations.

Although the PACT act brings forth many changes, this article will focus on the expansion of benefits for veterans that were exposed to Agent Orange which may benefit those who served during the Vietnam era. This will include the new presumptive conditions and locations related to Agent Orange exposure.

Historically, the VA has presumed certain illnesses and cancers as being

caused by exposure to Agent Orange. With the PACT act expansion, two new conditions have been added. The following conditions are now presumed as being caused by Agent Orange:

- 1) Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)
- 2) MGUS or Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (a blood disorder which affects plasma within bone marrow).

A more comprehensive list of diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure can be found in 38 CFR 3.309(e).

Additionally, the VA presumes new locations for Agent Orange exposure. Veterans who served in the following locations are now presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange:

- 1) Service in Laos from December 1st, 1965 until September 30, 1969

- 2) Any U.S. or Royal Thai Military bases in Thailand from January 9, 1962 until June 30, 1976
- 3) Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, until July 31, 1980
- 4) Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977
- 5) Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969

These new locations are in addition to the previous service locations for presumption to exposure which include:

- 1) Service in the Republic of Vietnam, or on a U.S. Military

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PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – REGIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS

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Joseph E. Badzmierowski
Director of Field Services
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NEPVA ROLLERS BOWLING LEAGUE

The NEPVA Rollers finished the 2022-23 season with a luncheon and awards presentation at Tommy Doyle's Sidelines. The afternoon was enjoyed by all of the members.

This year we moved from Westgate Lanes to Boston Bowl Hanover due to scheduling conflict. The staff welcomed us with open arms and went out of their way to accommodate the bowlers. Many thanks go to Westgate Lanes for over 35 years being our bowling center.

The first half of the season ended with Rebecca Melvin taking first place. The following finished in order, Denise Pease, John Melvin, Carol Fosdick, Ed Godino, Wayne Ross, Debra Freed and Mark Sanders.



The second half had some team members being replaced due to injuries. Taking first place was a brand new bowler, Ryan Owens beating another new bowler to the league, Judy Young by one point. Debra Freed was third followed by Carol Fosdick, Wayne Ross, Denise Pease, Ed Godino and Judy Godino.

The averages ranged from 74 to 142. High score awards went to the following:

- High Average Judy Young 142
- High Single Ed Godino 202
- High Series Carol Fosdick 463
- High Single/Hdcp Debra Freed 280
- High Series/Hdcp Wayne Ross 704
- Most Improved John Melvin +28.66

The 2023- 24 season will resume on September 5, 2023 at 12:00 at Boston Bowl Hanover. We bowl 30 weeks. Come on down and join in on the fun. New to tenpin bowling, come in and try.



Top; Newcomer Ryan Owens was the second half of the years' best bowler. Right; Veteran bowler Debra Freed.

Service Officer Report

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vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, or on a vessel that operated within 12 nautical miles from Vietnam and Cambodia (Blue Water Navy) from January 9, 1962 until May 7, 1975.

- 2) Service in or near the Korean DMZ from April 1, 1968 until August 31, 1971.
- 3) Service in the Air Force in which the veteran regularly and repeatedly operated, maintained, or served onboard a C-123 aircraft known to have been used to spray an herbicide agent during the Vietnam era.

With the new list of expanded conditions and locations based on herbicide exposure, chapter members who believe that they may qualify for service connection based on Agent Orange exposure should contact their local National Service Officer or PVA office so that they can assist with any actions that may be required.

Important: Any Veteran who believes that they may be entitled to benefits based on exposure to Agent Orange, whether it is due to serving within one of the newly recognized presumptive locations, and/ or due to having a diagnosis of one of the newly recognized presumptive conditions, should contact a PVA office prior to August 9, 2023. If granted, claims filed under the new PACT act prior to the August 9th Deadline, will be backdated to August 10th, 2022, the date of the PACT act being signed into law.

Sincerely,
 Zachary T. Nuetzel
 National Service Officer
 Paralyzed Veterans of America
 245 W. Houston Street
 Room 4W59.50
 New York, NY 10014
 ZacharyN@pva.org
 (212) 807-3011



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bass trail
continued from page 8

tournaments would not be possible without our team; Ray "Hunter" Brunelle, Tom Blanchard, Mark Fournier, Shawn Tibbetts and myself. In addition to loyal volunteers who are part of our bass trail family who are on hand to assist with any request; Ernie Fernandez, Avis Wade, Jim Bateman, Linda Schott Rinaldi, and Liz Tocce, as well as Jim Halpin who provides drone and video coverage. Special thanks to PVA New England Chapter, our boat captains and the Newton Yacht Club. Our team member, Tom Blanchard visited in the AM, giving up the opportunity to fish as he was honored with the responsibility to represent the bass trail at the celebration of life for Captain Lindsay Withers, longtime supporter of the bass trail.

Tournaments of this magnitude could not be possible with out our loyal sponsors; Fish Bandit, Lews, Bass Electronic Fishing,

Look for us on Facebook at the NEPVABASSTRAIL and give us a like please. Our next stop on the trail is Lake Winnepesaukee, Camp Robindel in Moultonborough NH Sept 8-10th. Our tournaments are held at no cost to any participant and family friendly. Happy trails.

Paralyzed Veterans of America
New England Chapter
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800 660-1181
fax: 857 203-9685

Email: info@pvanewengland.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:30pm



New England Chapter

2023 BASS TRAIL DATES

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

**September 29-October 1, Maine Bass
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

July 22, 2023, 10am to afternoon

Disc Golf & Cookout

Brockton VA, Building 8

Brockton, MA

August 6, 2023

Annual Chapter Banquet

Italian American War Veterans

Marlboro, MA

August 28, 2023

Annual Chapter Golf Tournament

Olde Scotland Links

Bridgewater, MA