



# Out Front

*Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President*

First, by now, all of you are aware of the events that occurred at our Nation’s Capital on January 6th. Much has already been [said and written, and much more is still coming](#), so I won’t recount what transpired. I do however, join others in their condemnation of the disgraceful behavior of those individuals who took it upon themselves to attack the sacred halls of our democracy in an effort subvert its constitutional process. Nothing is more foundational to our Republic, our American democracy, than respect for the peaceful transfer of power.

We are a diverse nation, just as we are a diverse membership of veterans. This is a strength, but it must be supported so that it continues as a point of pride and unity, not a source of divisiveness. To harness this strength, we need to listen to and respect each other, even those with whom we disagree. We must resist the urge for vengeance, blame or recrimination, and forego the impulse to label and condemn each other individually or particular groups.

Moving on, we are starting a whole new year with the hopes that we will soon see and end to this pandemic, which has caused so much anguish and hardship. As a Chapter, we will continue to be here to support our members however we can, whether through our programs, services or financial aid. To add to this, we will start providing regular virtual meeting, or more casually get together, using the [Zoom](#) platform. The hope in providing these get together with one another is to keep us connected in these continuing times of social distancing and isolation. These meetings will be open forums for any of our members to discuss whatever might be on their minds, be it needing some type of assistance, sharing a personal story or just to listen in on what else might be going on in our membership. We will start off with a single meeting to gauge demand and break-off to start any specialized meeting groups such as, new injuries, MS/ALS, sports, etc. Please check the [Chapter Online Calendar of Activities](#) for coming dates and times. The [Online Calendar](#) also lists an array of other activities throughout New England, both virtual and in-person. There is also information available for [COVID](#), [Caregivers](#), [Sports & Rec](#), [SCI/D Resources](#), [Advocacy](#), and much more! Be sure to [bookmark it](#) and check often.

Also regarding COVID, the VA is working diligently to vaccinate each of us as rapidly as resources and vaccine supplies will allow. For specific details on how the VA Boston HCS has scheduled and is projecting its vaccinations, as well as working with other New England VAs, please turn to [page 8](#). As noted, please keep in mind they have each of us with an SCI/D in their patient registry and will be calling us individually to schedule vaccination appointments as the guidelines vaccination supplies permit. To get the latest updates and [sign up](#) to stay informed about COVID-19 vaccines, visit [VA’s vaccine information page](#).

[Registration opened](#) January 11th for the [40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games](#) being held in New York City this August 8 thru 13. If you haven’t registered, you should do so right away if planning to attend, as there may be some limits on athlete participation due to COVID restrictions. For information about Chapter participation requirement please see [page 10](#).

Talking about opportunities to participate, there is current a Chapter Board vacancy for a Director. If interested in this chance to represent your fellow Chapter members, please turn to [page 22](#) for more information.

Wrapping up here, in my meanderings around the “interweb”, I came across this sign posted in the Indiana University Health hospital. Given the times we are all living in with so much divisiveness, on top of a global pandemic taking nearly 4000 lives a day, we could each apply its intent and meaning to every aspect of our lives, whether virtual or in-person. I won’t add any further ponderings to it here, as I feel it speaks quite clearly for itself.

Michael G. Negrete  
Chapter President/PVA National Director  
and Paralyzed Veteran

