



20<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans  
**Winter Sports Clinic**



Snowmass, Colorado ★ April 2 – April 7, 2006

Volume 20, No. 1

Sunday, April 2, 2006

# Welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic!

Whether this is your first time attending this remarkable event or you have been to all 19 past Winter Sports Clinics, you are in for an outstanding time in Snowmass Village this week! Here, you will find first class instructors, outstanding facilities, generous sponsors, friendly and helpful volunteers, and an opportunity to connect with other veterans facing life's challenges just like you.

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1987, when there were less than 90 veterans

learning to ski on the slopes of Powderhorn Mountain near Grand Junction. This year, we expect to see nearly 400 – including more than 50 new skiers who recently served our country in Iraq and Afghanistan. Also registered are nine veterans of World War II, eight from the Korean War, 80 from Vietnam, 30 from the Gulf War, four from other military invasions and conflicts, and more than 250 who bravely protected our nation during peacetime



Monica Pearl of Rochester, N.Y. uses a bi-ski to attack the slopes during last year's Clinic.



Sled Hockey is just one of the sports being offered this week.

or stateside during war. Despite the different branches and periods of service, age, gender or the types of injuries you are overcoming, you all share that important bond of having served your country and protecting our freedom. You are our heroes.

At the Winter Sports Clinic, you will receive expert ski lessons from our outstanding certified ski instructors. You will be able to use the latest innovations in ski technology, on both the Alpine slopes as well as the cross country venue. You will have a chance to hit the pool for scuba diving (to the music of Jimmy Buffett), climb the wall outside the conference center

(singing “Ring My Bell”), go snowmobiling in Aspen (snow permitting of course), take a trip to the hot springs in Glenwood Springs, ride the Gondola on Aspen Mountain and enjoy lunch at the Elks Lodge. You can warm up or cool down with yoga every day, try trap shooting or archery in Basalt, or gear up for a game of goal ball Monday night. On top of all that, instructional workshops will be held in self defense, sailing, using assistance dogs, and other interesting and helpful topics. Other alternate activities will be available all week as well.

Wheelchair fencing is a new activity this year, and adaptive golf is also on the schedule. A special treat this year is a first-ever race training and development program to allow Clinic

See “Welcome,” page 2



## Opening Ceremonies Tonight!



**Hear Ye,  
Hear Ye!**

Come one, come all to the Opening Ceremonies of the 20<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic tonight, which begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. in the conference center ballroom. Be sure to arrive early to get a good seat. Clinton Hale, a participant who has attended all 20 Clinics, will lead us in the pledge of allegiance. VA Secretary Jim Nicholson, DAV Commander Paul Jackson, and Snowmass Mayor Doug Mercatoris will be

among the special guests welcoming everyone to this special annual event, along with inspirational speaker Jack Benedick. Since this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Winter Sports Clinic, a special video presentation commemorating that occasion is also on tonight's agenda. After the ceremonial part of the program, all participants will be meeting with their team leaders and getting to know their fellow team members, who they'll be skiing with this week. Welcome to the Winter Sports Clinic, and enjoy the Opening Ceremonies!



All this week, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Library of Congress invite you to be part of an important

national effort – The Veterans History Project (VHP). If you are new to the Clinic or have never before participated in the VHP, now is the time to do it.

This project honors our nation's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, the VHP needs your story. By participating, you will help make history come alive.

Each 45-minute interview will be recorded, with a copy of that recording given to the Library of Congress. You and your story will then become part of our nation's official historical records. In appreciation, you will receive a DVD copy of your interview, as well as a VHP tote bag and souvenir coin.

Your interview will be scheduled at your convenience all this week. Make an appointment during registration today. Interviews will take place tomorrow through Thursday, April 3-6, from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. On Friday, April 7 (Race Day) they will continue from 8 a.m. until noon. If you are not able to keep your appointment for any reason, please let the VHP team know so another veteran can be scheduled in your place.

Interviews will take place in Janss Auditorium on the second floor of the Snowmass Conference Center. Only you can tell your story your own way, and it's a story worth preserving and sharing with future generations!

### “Welcome,” continued from page 1

participants to develop their skiing skills to an elite level and work toward qualifying for the Paralympics, the Olympic Games for individuals with disabilities.

When you want to wind down and relax, come on back to the conference center ballroom for some great evening activities, including the annual instructor appreciation party, dueling pianos, opening and closing ceremonies, music from Clay Walker, and other events and activities. Be sure to check the *SkiGram* each day for a full listing.

The Clinic would not happen without our two co-sponsors, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American Veterans. Both organizations work hard all year long to make sure that every Clinic participant enjoys a meaningful, educational, therapeutic and fun week. A special thanks to our hosts at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center for once again planning such an outstanding week for everyone here.

See you on the slopes!



## Medical Assistance

**Medical Room phone number  
(970) 923-8330**

The medical room hours are 7:45 a.m. - 9 p.m. If you need assistance outside of those hours, please call the number provided above. If it is an emergency, call 911.



## Secretary Nicholson Visits

We are pleased to welcome the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Although this is his first time at the Clinic, the Secretary already knows how special it is. "For 20 years, the Winter Sports Clinic has been a shining example of VA's commitment to help disabled veterans recover from their serious injuries and illnesses," Nicholson said. "The determination, courage and grace displayed by hundreds of veterans who participate in this exciting event are a true testament to their character and the resolve of the human spirit."

A graduate of West Point, Nicholson served eight years on active duty as a paratrooper and Ranger-qualified Army officer, then 22 years in the Army Reserve, retiring with the rank of colonel. He is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Nicholson is the principal advocate for veterans in the U.S. government, ensuring that they receive the care, support, recognition and dignity they deserve for their service to our country. Last evening, Secretary Nicholson met the sponsors at the annual sponsor recognition dinner and he will also participate in tonight's Opening Ceremonies program. He hopes to speak with as many veterans as possible today and tomorrow before returning to Washington. Enjoy your stay in Snowmass Village, Mr. Secretary!



## The Many Tastes of Snowmass

Whether it's local delicacies or traditional American style food you are looking for, Snowmass Village restaurateurs will have something for everyone this afternoon.

From 3:30–5:30 p.m., the Village Mall will become a colorful mix of skiing attire and delicious aromas as Winter Sports Clinic participants and guests are treated to another "Taste of Snowmass."

Each year, the local eateries open up their kitchens – and their hearts – to the Clinic participants so they can share in good food and good company. Since it began, the Taste of Snowmass has become a favorite tradition of the Clinic for participants,

volunteers, staff and Snowmass locals alike.

Wander through the mall and experience the sights and

aromas of Snowmass. Food vouchers will be available today during registration when you receive your meal tickets for the week. This will be the only meal served today. Don't miss out on experiencing the flavors of Snowmass Village!



## Wheelchair & Prosthetic Repair



If you need assistance with your wheelchair or prosthetic equipment, please go to the Sinclair Room (Host Room), in the

Conference Center right behind the front check-in area.



*Commemorating 75 years of service*

During the week of the Clinic, we will be running a daily column to highlight interesting historical facts about VA, in recognition of VA's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Did you know that the United States leads the world in caring for its military veterans? The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers billions of dollars annually in federal benefits for military veterans and their dependents. VA operates 154 hospitals and hundreds of outpatient clinics, issues millions of checks for education, disability and pensions, and supervises 122 national cemeteries. With more than 230,000 employees, VA is second in size only to the Defense Department among federal agencies. When eligible dependents and survivors are included, about one-third of the nation is eligible for benefits and services from VA.

## Guess Who's Dropping In!

Come to the Village Mall area (during the Taste of Snowmass) at 4 p.m. today, to witness the annual arrival of veteran parachutist Dana Bowman. A longtime participant at the Clinic, Bowman lost both legs in a tragic skydiving accident while serving as a member of the U.S. Army's Golden Knights parachute team. He made his first parachute jump as an amputee in 1995, only six months after he was injured, and continues to be an active parachutist today (as well as a great skier)!





# Today's Schedule

**Sunday, April 2, 2006**

7 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Instructor, Team Leader, Staff and Volunteer Registration Host Room, Conference Center
8 a.m.	Sponsor Registration Campground Room, Wildwood Lodge
8 – 11:30 a.m. & 12:30 – 3 p.m.	Participant Registration Conference Center Ballroom
3:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Taste of Snowmass Snowmass Village Mall
5 p.m.	Coaches' Meeting Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
6:30 p.m.	Opening Ceremonies Conference Center Ballroom
8 p.m.	Team Meetings Conference Center Ballroom



## Monday's Meal Schedule Conference Center Ballroom

6:30 to 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Lunch
5 to 6:15 p.m.	Dinner

(Check tomorrow's *SkiGram* for Monday's menu)



The Public Affairs Team is preparing news releases, writing articles for the daily *SkiGram* and working with local and national media to publicize the events of this week. If you have ideas for news stories, photographs or something you'd like to see in the *SkiGram*, please stop by the Media Center in the Erickson Room of the Conference Center. We'd love to hear from you!



For your reading pleasure...

## Zodi Yak

Preparer of horoscopes and predictor of your future ....

Once again, we have looked to the skies to find the horoscopes for all twelve astrological signs, which will appear in each edition of the *SkiGram* this week. They may not match the ones you'll find in the newspaper, but they should fit in nicely with your week at the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Have fun this week! — **Zodi Yak**

### Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 19)

This water sign will master more than just scuba diving this week! You will experience the beauty of both the land and the water.

### Pisces (Feb. 20- March 20)

"...Like a fish out of water?" That adage will prove false when you are seen flying down the slopes. (Maybe you're really a flying fish!)

### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your great sense of adventure will lead you to some new and wonderful experiences all this week. Take part in them all!

### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Hey, Taurus, enjoy the Taste of Snowmass today. We hear the food is great and there's fun to be had – and that's no bull-oney!

### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The versatile Gemini can't decide to hit the slopes or climb the wall first. We know you will leave no challenge of the Winter Sports Clinic unconquered!

### Cancer (June 21- July 22)

Starting today, you will experience the freedom that comes from letting your spirit float on the fresh mountain air. It might also float in the scuba pool, but you need to get down to the bottom.

### Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Lion King, you will rule at "Taste of Snowmass" today. And you'll look pretty good while you're at it.

### Virgo (Aug. 23- Sept. 22)

Shy Virgo, you will enjoy conversing with many new friends this week! Get out there and boogie.

### Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Let your sense of balance guide you this week – it will give you stability on your skis (we hope) and poise on both snowmobiles and snowshoes!

### Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

What's hotter than the Hot Springs (in Glenwood Springs)? Why it's watching the magnetic Scorpio enjoy new winter sports – as well as great poolside parties – all week, of course!

### Sagittarius (Nov. 23- Dec. 21)

You are optimistic and freedom loving. You have good reason to look forward to your new friends and mountain adventures at the Clinic this week. Have fun!

### Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19)

You will catch that contagious spark of excitement at your first team meeting tonight! Get to know everyone.