



20th National Disabled Veterans
Winter Sports Clinic



Snowmass, Colorado ★ April 2 – April 7, 2006



Volume 20, No. 6

Friday, April 7, 2006

Winter Sports Provide a New Outlook on Life

For the 104 first-timers who are here at the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the event provides a new outlook on life. Those participating for the first time not only include veterans from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, but also some from World War II and Vietnam, as well as the Gulf War and peacetime. While each participant's story is unique, they do have some things in common when it comes to dealing with disabilities. All believe in *miracles on the mountainside*, and we enjoyed meeting them all.

Marvin Burlingame, an 83-year-old Army veteran from Clearwater, Fla., is one of those tackling the slopes for the



Marvin Burlingame of Clearwater, Fla. at the rock climbing wall.

first time. Visually impaired, he is one of seven World War II veterans attending the Clinic this week. Burlingame heard about the event at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center, and his inquisitiveness led him to participate. "I can't see and I can't hear, so I figured why not," he laughed.

Orlando Perez, a 30-year-old Orlando, Fla., resident was injured in the Army at age 19. He is a paraplegic and the father of three. Although this is Perez's first time at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, he is an accomplished wheelchair athlete and has competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games since 1999. In 2005, he received the "Spirit of the Games" award at that event. "I have always wanted to participate in the Winter Sports Clinic and I am finally seeing some things I have never seen before," Perez said.

For 51-year-old Marine veteran, Ken Izdepski of Bisbee, Ariz., participating in the Clinic is more than he could ever imagine. Two years ago, Izdepski was extremely overweight and on medication for high blood pressure and diabetes. After working with the staff at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, he now weighs 173 pounds and is completely off all medication. Feeling that Izdepski serves as a great role model for others, volunteers at the VA facility sponsored his participation in this year's Clinic. "This is the first time I've been in the company of others who fully understand. I can't tell you how much that means to me," Izdepski said.

After being involved in a hit-and-run accident, Robert Dalri, an Army veteran from Castro Valley, Calif., is finding that "being around other people who share some of the same life experiences has been socially beneficial."



Lana Gillaspie from Knoxville, Iowa is assisted down the slope by instructor Tom Holmes from Salt Lake City, Utah.



Richard Farley of Lakewood, Colo., prepares for his turn on the slopes. Instructors John Melville of Culver City, Calif. and Glen Hallberg of Scandia, Minn., assist.

See "New Outlook," cont'd on page 3

Quotes from the week:

Most veterans attending the Winter Sports Clinic here in Snowmass seem to have thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they skied the mountain. True, there have been some falls, bumps and bruise; however, most would agree that they had a good time and are looking forward to returning next year. Here is what a few had to say about their experiences at the Clinic this week:



Alfred Cummings from English, Ind.

Fran Toyaman, Loma Linda, Ca.

“This is my first time at the Winter Sports Clinic. Friends at the VA convinced me that I would have a good time. This is my first time skiing and the one thing I like is the speed — we were not going fast enough!”

Patricia Fuchs, Largo, Fla.

“I’ve attended seven of these (Winter Sports Clinics) and I love it. I look forward to coming every year.”

Alfred Cummings, English, Ind.

“This is my first time. I recommend this to all veterans; they should come to see Colorado if nothing else.”

James Mayo, Butler, N.C.

“It’s my seventh time, and basically, it’s just fun. I meet good people; the instructors are nice and extremely helpful. I would tell other veterans to get up and come on out and enjoy themselves. The experience and the camaraderie make it all worthwhile.”

Jeff Goss, Hernando, Miss.

“This is the trip of a lifetime; I’ve had a fantastic week. The people here are unbelievable. They give 110 percent and the thing about it is that they all seem to enjoy it. That tells a lot about the program. I have seen a lot of paraplegics and quadriplegics doing things that they never thought they could do. This is a great program.

Rodney Sample, Virginia Beach, Va.

On fencing: “This was real fun, very physical. It is a thinking sport as well as physical, and addicting. I will be doing this again.”

Lauren Reddy, New Bedford, Mass.

“This was really awesome to learn to fence. You have to quickly learn your opponent’s tactics. Right now, our skills are not there so this is like an alley cat fight! It seems to be an elegant sport but you have to learn a lot. It would take time to develop your skills, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.”

Josh Sharpe, Navarre, Fla.

“I’m hooked on this — the Winter Sports Clinic gives young veterans an opportunity to fulfill a special need to do something exciting. Just to be able to come here and ski is an amazing opportunity.”



Josh Sharpe from Navarre, Fla.

Orlando Perez, Orlando, Fla.

“I loved the downhill skiing; the instructors here are great and the people are inspiring also. This is great therapy because you see so many other veterans doing things that you and even they thought they could never do. I definitely plan to return next year.

Wayne Beachy, Baltimore, Md.

“I’ve been to the Clinic 17 times and I’ve seen people grow because of just being here. They become more viable, more alive. They gain confidence from being on the mountain. And that translates into their everyday life.”

Darrell Wilson, Dallas, Texas

“I’ve been scuba diving, snowmobiling and skiing, and this is awesome. It is a great opportunity to do things that I wouldn’t normally do, or even get a chance to do. Also, meeting new people and old friends and experiencing the camaraderie is amazing.”



Lauren Reddy from New Bedford, Mass.

History of the Clinic Quiz

How have you done in knowing your Winter Sports Clinic history this week? You know the rules. You have one more chance to test your knowledge by taking the final Clinic History Quiz in today's *SkiGram*. Note: **All forms must be submitted by 10 a.m. today to qualify.** The winner will be notified prior to the Closing Ceremony this evening and answers will be posted outside the Media Center.

1. When did MSNBC visit the Clinic and feature a five-part series on the activities and the participants?
2. Which of the following sports has never been an activity at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic?
 - A. Wheelchair basketball
 - B. Dog sledding
 - C. Mountain Climbing
 - D. Sled hockey
 - E. Trap shooting
 - F. Adaptive Golf
 - G. Horseback riding
3. Name at least three awards that will be distributed at tonight's Closing Ceremony. (Check all that apply.)
 - A. Linnie Howard Award
 - B. DAV Sports Award
 - C. Judy Shawo Award
 - D. Spirit of the Clinic Award
 - E. DAV Freedom Award
 - F. Challenge Aspen Inspiration Award
 - G. Kamikaze Award
 - H. George Gangi Award
 - I. Best Face Plant Award

Yesterday's Winner is:

Alfred Cummings from English, Ind.

Stop by the Media Center this morning to pick up your prize.



The beauty of Snowmass.

"New Outlook," cont'd from page 1

For 55-year-old Navy veteran of Vietnam, Lana Gillaspie of Knoxville, Iowa, the Clinic gives her an opportunity to try an energetic sport again. Prior to being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she played softball, volleyball and cycled long distances. "I intend to stay active for as long as I can, and I have been totally jazzed about this event," she said.

Ginger Morrison, another 55-year-old veteran who served in the Marine Corps, is from North Ridgeville, Ohio. For her, the Clinic opened a door to experience things she had never accomplished, even before using a wheelchair. "I want to know my life can still be full of new experiences even though I am paralyzed. I have looked forward to the thrill of sliding down a hill and feeling the cool wind on my face," Morrison said.

In October 2004, on what seemed like a normal day, first-timer SSgt. Eric Cagle was severely injured when his squad's convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device. He received a traumatic brain injury, is blind in his right eye and also lost vision in his left. Despite those injuries, Cagle has maintained his disarming smile and great sense of humor, which have helped him overcome some difficulty speaking. In honor of the valor he demonstrated in Iraq, the Wolfhound Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, dedicated their new weight room to Cagle.



When it comes to first-timers, Richard Farley, a 53-year-old Air Force veteran from Lakewood, Colo., may have said it best. "The Clinic opens doors and gives us a chance to see what we can do with our lives. We need to see what our abilities are and be a part of the world."

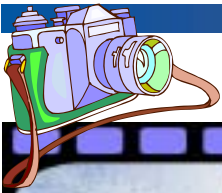
We hope you have enjoyed your first Winter Sports Clinic, everyone!



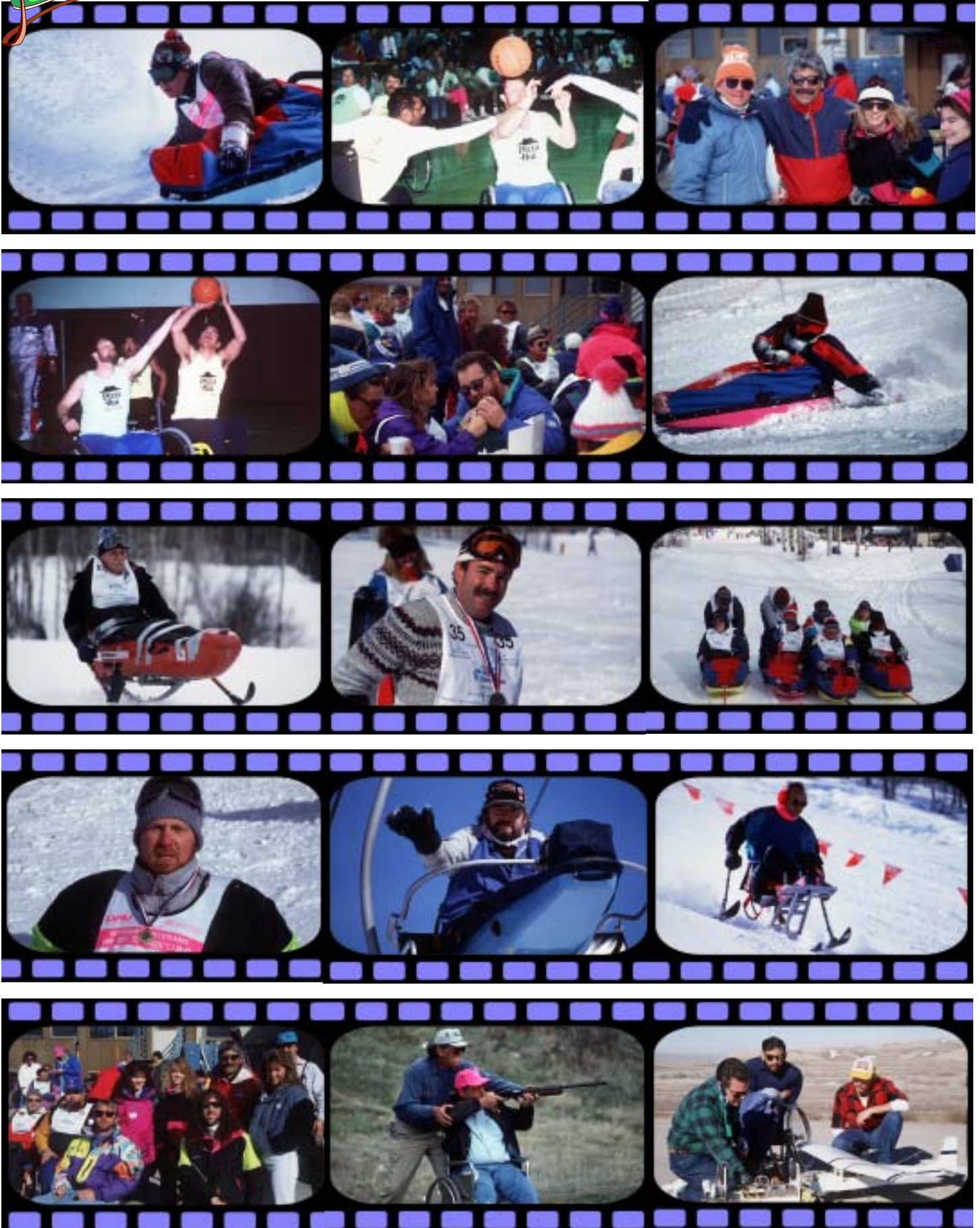
Notice!

Three of the shirts (1987, 2004 and 1005) from our collection of memorabilia from past Clinics are missing. The shirt from the 1987 is irreplaceable. If you have seen them, please return them to Rick Townsend in the Host

Room no questions asked. Thanks!

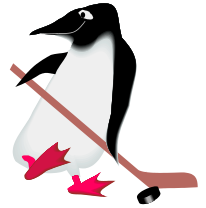


Photos from the early years of the Clinic



Photos at left (page 4):

These historical photos are from the first three years of the Clinic. Note the different equipment and activities. The photos were provided by the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Media Team.



Participant # 48, VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield, receives final instructions from Clinic Director Sandy Trombetta before he takes his run on the slopes Thursday morning.

Miracles on a Mountainside



Aaron Sharp of Bakersfield, Calif., (with instructor Beverly Weaver of Aspen, Colo.), takes it "slow and easy" his first time down the slope.



Albert Huff of Biscayne Park, Fla. takes to the slopes.



The Canadian Seven: (Left to right) 1st row: Bob Gilmour, Michelle Bavington, Paul Bavington and Clay Dawdy; and 2nd row: Glen Hooze, John Stevens and Bob Hodgson are members of the Canadian Association for Disabled Skikers. The "Seven" came to the Clinic the week as instructors.



Veterans enjoy snowmobiling on Thursday during the falling snow.



Donald Grigsby of Homer, Ohio takes aim at the skeet shooting range.



"Snow leopard" Christine Treiber of Greeley, Colo. "roars" down the ski trail.



Thanks from Your Public Affairs Team

It has been our honor to share your wonderful stories with others throughout the week. For those of you who gave us permission to tell your stories in the *SkiGram* and to the media, we thank you!

We invite you to check out the Web site at www.wintersportsclinic.org and be sure to share it with your friends and family. If you gave us permission to develop a news release and we took your photograph, you will see both under [Participant Information](#) on the Web. While we were able to get photos of nearly 95% of the participants who wanted hometown news releases, a few participants did escape our cameras.

Please be assured that we did not release any information about your participation if you did not give us permission. If you plan to attend next year, we ask that you consider allowing us the opportunity to tell your story by checking "Yes," on your Hometown News Release form.

We extend our sincerest thanks to all the staff and volunteers who have helped us throughout the week in tracking down participants for interviews and newsletter stories. You were wonderful!!

From the entire Public Affairs Team, thank you so much for allowing us to share your experiences and tell the wonderful *Miracles on the Mountainside* that happened at the 20th National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic. We leave the Clinic inspired by your courage and commitment and hope to see you next year in Snowmass Village.

The 2006 Winter Sports Clinic Public Affairs Team

Kim Byers, Public Affairs Director, VA National Programs
Jenny Shafer Tankersley, Public Affairs Coordinator, National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
Willie Alexander, Jeff Bowen, Bill Browning, Elaine Buehler, Gene Davies, Katherine Dreaher, Susan Fleece, Wave Greer, Lili Gresham, Mike Hormuth, Lupe Hernandez, Jeff Luginbuel, Scott McGilvery, Jeanne Miserendino, Kristi Nuchols, Joe Nguyen, Richard Olague, Sharon Palmer, Bob Pedersen, Jeannie Riffe, Lana Shuman, Robert Turtill, Jeff West and Marcus Wilson.



Be ready to depart for the airport at least two hours before your flight is scheduled to leave.

When checking your luggage at the Aspen Airport, make sure you do not have CO2 cartridges and matches or lighters of any kind.

At the gate checkpoint, please make sure you remove all laptops from your bags. Some other items that are not allowed at the checkpoint include: knives of any kind, lighters, larger scissors (pointed), and anything that might look like part of a firearm, such as bullet key chains. You are allowed to have tools needed wheelchair repair and prosthetic devices.

If you have questions, contact the Aspen airport at (970) 379-1389.



Don't Miss Today's Closing Ceremonies

Be sure to attend the Closing Ceremonies and Victory Celebration this evening beginning at 7 p.m. in the Conference Center Ballroom. Dr. Michael Murphy, Director of the host VA Medical Center in Grand Junction, will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Special guests include Bo Derek, National Honorary Chairperson for VA Rehabilitation Special Events; Ed Hartman, DAV National Director of Voluntary Services; Dr. Lawrence Biro, Network Director of VA's Rocky Mountain Network; Sandy Trombetta, Director of the Winter Sports Clinic; and Paul Jackson, National Commander of the DAV. The Honorable Gordon Mansfield, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, will also be there to greet participants and their families, sponsors, staff, volunteers and guests.

A highlight of the evening will be the presentation of special awards, and the closing video presentation highlighting activities of this very special week. Following the ceremony, come to the Victory Celebration for dessert and a last chance to mingle with all the new friends you've met at the 20th annual Winter Sports Clinic. Entertainment will be provided by *Take the Wheel*. You won't want to miss it!





For your reading pleasure...

Zodi Yak

Preparer of horoscopes and predictor of your future ...

Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 19)

What a week! Your teammates will always remember your kindness, and you will never forget your accomplishments. Congratulations, Aquarius!

Pisces (Feb. 20- March 20)

There are many fish in the sea, but this week you showed yourself and all of us just what a unique one you are. Nice job on all your accomplishments!

Aries (March 21-April 19)

What an amazing week! Your thirst for adventure was quenched and your confidence has soared. You have also made many new friends, and have so much to be proud of.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

What an outstanding week you have had with all the new skills you have developed and the great friends you have made! You have excelled in all you did. You should be proud of such an amazing variety of accomplishments. Way to go! (This one is for you, Tricia.)

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You feel like the Victory Celebration tonight should be thrown just for you – and we know why. You excelled in every facet of your activities all week. Let that energy rush you experienced in Snowmass stay with you all year!

Cancer (June 21- July 22)

This week inspired your active imagination as you discovered all the amazing things you are capable of. Moonchild, the world is yours to enjoy!

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

This week gave you many rewarding and invaluable experiences. You exercised your social and athletic talents as you made new memories that will last a lifetime. We are looking for a place for you on next years' social committee.

Virgo (Aug. 23- Sept. 22)

You will never forget your week of personal growth and athletic prowess. You've come a long way in such a short time – congratulations!

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

You succeed at any task where you apply the effort. Well done, Libra. You will never forget your accomplishments and memories from this week in mountain paradise.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

You have learned so much this week, Scorpio. You have harnessed the power of your determined mind and tremendous spirit, and now you must know what greatness you are capable of.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23- Dec. 21)

Your optimism has always been one of your strong points, and look how far it has brought you! After a week of freedom in the outdoors, you see the beauty in life more poignantly than ever before. Congratulations on your outstanding accomplishments!

Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19)

You have discovered many things about yourself and your abilities at the Clinic this week. You have every right to be proud, so take your newfound confidence wherever you go. Remember all your *Miracles on the Mountainside* all year!



The Menu for Today

Friday's Meal Schedule

Conference Center Ballroom

6:30 to 8:45 a.m.

Breakfast

11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch

Breakfast Buffett

Fresh Sliced Fruit

Oatmeal with Brown Sugar, Raisins, Sliced Bananas & Skim Milk in a Carafe
Breakfast Breads, Muffins and Biscuits

Breakfast Sausage

Thick-Sliced Ham

Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, Herbal Teas, and Assorted

Chilled Juice

Omelet Bar with Cooked-to-Order

Omelets to include Ham, Cheese,

Asparagus, Mushrooms, Roasted Peppers, Fresh Tomatoes, Green Onions, and Salsa

Taste of Snowmass:

This is the last meal of the day, be sure to enjoy the great offerings at the

Snowmass Village Mall

11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Joey Avellone for being named "Disabled Marine of the Year" as voted by his peers at the Clinic.



Semper Fi, Joey!



The staff of the Veterans History Project want to thank all the veterans who

participated this week. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your experiences in the military. We thank you for your service to your country and wish you all the best in the years ahead.

Race Day Schedule

Friday, April 7, 2006



Race Day

Theme: Time Warp 1987

6:30 - 8 a.m.	Yoga Warm Up: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
6:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast: Conference Center Ballroom
8 – 11 a.m.	Race – Spider Sabich Race Center/Nastar Course
8 a.m. – Noon	Cross Country Race Day (Top of the Village)
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Medal Presentations: Snowmass Village Mall
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Taste of Snowmass: Snowmass Village Mall
1 p.m.	Race – Spider Sabich Race Center
7 p.m.	Closing Ceremonies: Conference Center Ballroom
9 p.m.	Victory Celebration: Conference Center Ballroom with “Take the Wheel”



Medical Assistance

Bedford A Conference Room

The medical room remains open (from approximately 8 a.m.–9 p.m.) for non-emergent care. The Bedford A Conference Room is located one level below the mall, across the street from the Mountain Chalet Hotel.

Van transportation is available from the Silver Tree Hotel to the Medical Room. Catch the medical van in front of the hotel, or call the Medical Room for transportation. Call the Medical Room for recorded instructions on how to contact the on-call medical provider, or dial the hotel operator.

Medical Room Phone — (970) 923-8330

(extension 8330 on conference center phones) For life threatening emergencies, dial 911.



Wheelchair & Prosthetic Repair

Call for assistance today. Hours available: 6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For assistance outside those hours, please call: Wheelchair Repair (Don and Randy at 300-8006) and Prosthetic Repair (Chris at 300-8024).

Yoga Session



Prepare yourself for your day of racing at the yoga warm-up session. Today's session will be held at 6:30–8 a.m. in the Max Park Room at the Wildwood Lodge.

If you have misplaced an item, check Lost and Found located in the Sinclair Room (Host Room).



SkiGram on the Web



Share this newsletter (in full color) with your friends and family. It is

located on the Web at: www.wintersportsclinic.org



Snowmass Weather Forecast

Snow to Rain
Low 27° – High 48°



Happy 75th Anniversary, VA!

VA research achievements have not only benefited veteran patients but have contributed to medical science as a whole. Two VA researchers — Rosalyn Yalow and Andrew Schally — shared the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1977. They top a long list of VA researchers who have been recognized for their advances in medicine and science. VA research, in fact, has led to the successful treatment of tuberculosis, developed the pacemaker and the CT scan, and vastly improved artificial limbs for amputees. VA investigators are involved in studying the aging process, including Alzheimer's disease, as well as AIDS, drug addiction, alcoholism, schizophrenia, spinalcord injury, tissue regeneration and post-traumatic stress disorder. As the research continues, so do the medical advances.