



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



Snowmass, Colorado ★ April 2 – April 7, 2006



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Thursday, April 6, 2006

## National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic's Twenty Year Veteran

For Clinton Hale, a 57-year-old combat veteran of Vietnam, attending the 20<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is reason to both celebrate and reflect. Twenty years ago, Hale participated in the very first Clinic on the slopes of Colorado's Powderhorn Mountain, and the camaraderie he discovered there has brought him back every year since. "The friendships you make here are forever," Hale said. "Some of the greatest people in the whole world are here...and they are all real heroes." Though Hale can't recall all of their names, the faces are unforgettable. "They really get you pumped up, he said. Even after 20 years, he feels the same.

In addition to the many athletic benefits the Clinic provides, which include for Hale the thrill of the downhill event, he sees an even deeper, more challenging reason to participate. "I'm competitive and enjoy sports, but the Winter Sports Clinic is true rehab – it's definitely the event to do." Hale, who lives in Mary Esther, Fla., is quite familiar with challenges. As an 18-year Air Force veteran, he recalls the day he was injured, while engaging in an 'airfield seizure package' – an exercise where troops parachute in to take control of a runway. Now a paraplegic, he uses Canadian crutches to get around and skis with a mono-ski. Recalling his early years attending the Clinic, Hale said, "You see those mountains and think, 'how the heck am I going to do *that*?' But by the end of the week, the mountain is conquered. The challenges are both mental and physical. You have to prepare yourself to want to do it, and then pursue it with vigor."

Hale has seen many changes in the Winter Sports Clinic over its 20-year history. "There are more people, veterans with more severely traumatic injuries, and improvements are made to the event every year. It's amazing to think that this many people can come together to make this week work like a well-run machine." Hale thinks that perhaps the greatest improvements are in the type of adaptive equipment used by the veterans. "At my very first Clinic, I used a piece of equipment called an 'Aurora' – I skied downhill in what looked like a kayak with a tarp draped over my legs, and used short ski poles called 'picks.' These picks did not have a cutting edge, made for sloppy turns and increased the likelihood for wrist and shoulder injuries."

He is impressed with the improvements made in adaptive equipment since that first experience – from the Aurora to other devices and finally, to the skis used today. "This state-of-the-art equipment meets the needs of people with varying



Clinton Hale of Mary Esther, Fla., shows his skill in downhill skiing.

abilities," Hale said. "Now, they can adapt a piece of equipment to get any veteran skiing."

So, what's to look forward to after 20 years at the Winter Sports Clinic? For Clinton Hale, it is giving back to others the things that have inspired him over the years. "I want to leave knowing that I touched just one person, letting them know that their life may have taken a different path but it is just starting, and will be just as challenging."

# The Therapeutic Benefits of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

“The Clinic taught me that life is not over after an injury, it’s just the beginning, and now I’m doing more than I ever did,” said Mark Mix, a 35 year old Navy veteran from Frazeyburg, Ohio. “We are still the same on the inside. Every time I strap on my skis, it brings a sense of freedom and lets me forget about my disability.” The National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (NVWSC) provides disabled veterans with opportunities for self-development and challenge through sports and leisure activities. This event promotes recreational therapy through which disabled veterans practice movement and exercises that help them improve their motor skills and independence. In addition to the physical benefits, the veterans improve their emotional



Robert Byrd of Virginia Beach, Va.

and social well-being by relating to fellow veterans participating with the same or similar physical limits.

Sandy Trombetta, national director and founder of the National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, stated that the original mission of the event hasn’t changed from 20 years ago. “I wanted to make these sports and recreation events possible for this disabled population. The original goal remains the same...to provide a challenging experience to show the participants the

possibilities despite and beyond their injuries.” It is clear that the focus at the Clinic is about, “what you can do, not what you can’t do!” When asked what the key therapeutic

benefits of the Clinic are, There are so many. “This event makes the veterans realize that with an adaptation, regardless of the injury, they can lead a healthy, rewarding lifestyle,” Trombetta said. Sometimes injuries can preclude you from being involved in the community. This event is the perfect vehicle to get the veterans involved in the community around them. The key is to motivate the veterans in the beginning and help them to realize that there is life after an injury!” he added.



Mark Mix of Frazeyburg, Ohio

Overcoming an injury takes courage, inner strength and the support of others. The veterans participating in the Clinic are the epitome of courage and inner strength. When you wander around Snowmass Village you feel the camaraderie, support, and sense of personal achievement floating in the air. The veterans arrive in Snowmass ready to overcome their disabilities in the most amazing way...by taking on the slopes. “The Clinic is a trial of one’s spirit,” said Robert Byrd, a 61 year old Navy veteran from Virginia Beach, Va. “Regardless of having a disability, the sky is the limit and all things are possible. That’s what taking on the mountainside is all about, possibilities. The failures and successes on the mountain are just like life, with or without disabilities. Never give up!”

## Don’t Forget to Vote!

The Public Affairs Team has shared many wonderful stories through the *SkiGram* this week about participants, instructors and volunteers who have touched lives of the veterans in extraordinary ways. Now, you have the opportunity to highlight someone who has made a difference to you during this week’s Clinic by casting your vote for those who have gone above and beyond. During Closing Ceremonies the following awards will be presented:

- The Linnie Howard Spirit Award recognizes the participant who best exemplifies the spirit of the Clinic;
- The Judy Shawo Commitment to Excellence Award is awarded to the volunteer who demonstrates the highest commitment to the Clinic;

- The Sid Ford Award for Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty, recognizes the VA employee who demonstrates the highest level of dedication to the Clinic;
- Best Downhill Ski Instructor Award;
- Best Cross Country Ski Instructor Award;
- Best Team Leader Award.

If you haven’t voted yet, please stop by the conference center lobby. Ballot boxes are located on the table by the Host Room. The deadline for voting is today, Thursday!



# History of the Clinic Quiz

Won any prizes yet for your knowledge of Winter Sports Clinic history? Test your knowledge two more times when you take the Clinic History Quiz in the last two *SkiGrams* this week. Submit an entry form with the most answers and you will win a prize!

Quiz entry forms are located in the Conference Center Ballroom at mealtimes, or you can pick one up in the Media Center, located in the Erickson Room. Drop your entry in the box located outside the Media Center. Forms must be submitted by 11 a.m. to qualify, and the first form with the most correct answers wins. Today's winner (and the correct answers) will be announced in tomorrow's *SkiGram*.

1. The Clinic was held in Snowmass Village one time before the current contract began in 2001. When was that?  
A. 1991      B. 2001      C. 1992      D. 1990
2. Which famous country music stars attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in 2005?
3. Name at least three former DAV Freedom Award Winners.

4. When was adaptive snowboarding first tried at the Winter Sports Clinic?

BONUS: Who was the first veteran to try it?

**Yesterday's Winner is:**

**Keith Wetzstein**

**Stop by the Media Center to pick up your prize!**

Yesterday's quiz answers:

1. Country Music Star Travis Tritt was the special guest at the 1992 Clinic.
2. The first sit ski that was used in the early days of the Clinic was called The Arroya.
3. The Grand Butte was the main hotel when the Clinic was held in Crested Butte.
4. The Clinic was held in Crested Butte for eight (8) years, from 1993–2000.

## Race Day 2006: Looking Back 20 Years!

Race Day 2006 is the time to strut your stuff and show everyone what you've learned this week at the Clinic. Races begin promptly at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning. The theme this year is "Time Warp, 1987." Instructors, volunteers and team leaders will all be dressed to reflect the theme, and all skiers are invited to take part. Whether you are skiing downhill or cross-country, enjoy your last day at the 20<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, and be sure to stick around to cheer for your fellow veterans as they complete their run down the slopes or through the track. Then, get your medal at the Snowmass Village Mall, and enjoy another Taste of Snowmass before you leave. Remember, that is the last full meal for the day, so eat up! Honorary Chair of VA's National Programs, Bo Derek, VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield, DAV National Commander Paul Jackson, and other special guests will assist with medal presentations. Have fun as we wrap up a wonderful week in Snowmass Village. See you tomorrow morning!

*Race Day Tomorrow*



**We are so embarrassed!  
We misspelled one of our  
sponsors' names in the  
Wednesday *SkiGram*.  
Our apologies to Northrop  
Grumman Corporation!**



## Bo Derek Shares Passion for America's Disabled Veterans



Photo of Bo Derek taken at 2005 Winter Sports Clinic.

Actress and humanitarian Bo Derek is among the many special guests attending this year's Winter Sports Clinic. As honorary chairperson of VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events, Derek is meeting with and encouraging veterans, one by one, during her stay on Thursday and Friday. She has been a frequent visitor to the Clinic the past several years.

Nearly three decades after starring in the hit movie, "10," Bo Derek has proven that true beauty is deeper than a person's external appearance, devoting her time to supporting animals, caring for other people and doing her part to serve America's veterans.

Born Mary Cathleen Collins in Long Beach, Calif., Derek is no stranger to veterans. Her father, Paul Collins, was a radio operator during the Korean War. Both her stepfather

and her late husband, John Derek, were also veterans. Her love for the armed forces inspires her to perform the duties as national honorary chairperson with passion and ease.

Derek also has a compassion for animals that led her to create "Bless the Beasts," a line of pet products sold in stores nationwide. She donates a portion of all sales proceeds to Canine Companions for Independence, a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support.

In 2002, the Special Forces Association named Bo Derek an honorary Green Beret, one of only four other Americans who have been so honored. She was recognized for her efforts on behalf of America's men and women in uniform as well as our nation's military veterans.

Look for her today by the slopes and at other Clinic activities. Tomorrow, on Race Day, she'll be distributing medals and taking part in the Closing Ceremonies. Go say hello – she would love to stop and visit.

## Clay Walker Comes to the Winter Sports Clinic

So, where do you plan to be at 9 p.m. tonight? If you answered, "What's it to you?" chances are you are planning to be front and center at country music star Clay Walker's performance at the Silvertree Conference Center.

Walker's 1993 recording "What's It To You?" was the first of his 11 number one singles. With four platinum and two gold albums, Walker has clearly earned the title "superstar." He is one of only a handful of performers to have a song listed on Billboard magazine's year-end Top 10 country list for five consecutive years.

You may even have seen him on TV a few years ago winning the Pebble Beach Celebrity Challenge golf tournament with actor Bill Murray. Walker donated his first-place prize money to the "Band Against MS Foundation," a nonprofit organization he founded in 2003 to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research.

When this native of Beaumont, Texas, sings about facing life's challenges and knowing what really matters, he knows what he's singing about. In 1996, at the age of 26 and his professional career in full swing, Walker was diagnosed with relapsing/remitting multiple sclerosis. (More than 30 participants at this week's event share that diagnosis.) Though Walker's disease is in remission, his efforts to raise awareness about MS – and the funds to combat it – have not subsided.

In 2003, Walker received the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's highest award, Ambassador of the Year, one of only five people ever to receive the award since the organization was founded in 1946. He has said that raising awareness about MS and its ability to be treated is "something I feel like I was chosen to do – it is bigger than me. I want to inspire others with MS to take an active role in treating the disease because the worst thing they can do is nothing."



Tonight, though, it's all about the music, enjoying every moment and living life to its fullest. As Clay Walker sings in his number one hit, "Live Until You Die:"

*I don't want to think about tomorrow  
I don't need anything money can buy  
I don't have to beg, steal, or borrow  
I just wanna live until I die.*



Concert doors open this evening at 8 p.m.



Frank Washburn of Lancaster, N.Y., snowboards down the slope.



Visually impaired skier Gary Bulger from Benton, Maine, shows his skill on the hill followed by instructor Russell Attema from Denver, Colo.



(Left) Laniel Carrero from Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., "hits" the slopes in real time!

(Right) Dana Liesegang from Grand Junction, Colo., practices her moves on the cross country trail. She is assisted by instructor James Morgan from Ashland, Ore.



(Left) Going tandem is the score for Ronald Smith from Parkersburg, Iowa, and Mark Mix from Frazeyburg, Ohio.



"Take The Wheel" entertains at the Instructor's Party on Tuesday night. They will be back Friday night!





In recognition of VA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, another interesting fact...

In 1971, Congress provided a program of mortgage life insurance for severely disabled veterans who receive grants for specially adapted housing to accommodate their disabilities. Known as the Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance program, the insurance covered mortgages up to a maximum of \$30,000. By 1992, coverage had increased to \$90,000. Check out the following Web site for more information: <http://www.insurance.va.gov/inForceGliSite/buying/VMLI.htm>

## National Veterans Wheelchair Games Coming Up in Alaska!



Interested in signing up to compete in the 26<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games taking place July 3-8, 2006, in Anchorage? If you use a wheelchair to compete in sports, stop by to see Doug Beckley from the Paralyzed Veterans of America, who will be available during lunch in the conference center ballroom through Friday.



### Notice!

Three of the shirts from our collection of memorabilia from past Clinics are missing. The shirts from the 1987, 2004 and 2005 Clinics. These shirts are irreplaceable, if you have seen them, please return them to Rick Townsend in the Host Room no questions asked. Thanks!



For your reading pleasure...

## Zodi Yak

Preparer of horror-scopes and predictor of your future ....

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

They don't call one of our Alpine teams "Sheer Bliss" for nothing. Yes, you're ready for it! Today's your day on the slopes, no matter what team you're on.

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

You are somewhat of an escapist, Pisces, but creating your own hidden trail in the mountainside is more work than you think. Spend your down time in the Hot Springs today.

### Aries (March 21-April 19)

We know you're a daredevil, but base jumping from a moving gondola is not one of the Winter Sports Clinic's activities. How about a Snow Cat ride up the mountain instead?

### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Patience is one of your virtues. Exercise it by snowshoeing or cross country skiing to the top of the village, where you can experience the breathtaking scenery.

### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You thrive in any situation. Go all out today! Exercise your body and your wit in true Gemini fashion.

### Cancer (June 21- July 22)

We know that crabs enjoy hot weather – is that why you looked so hot today on the slopes? You are looking good.

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

You sure you're a lion? You were closer to a social butterfly last night. Today, you will have just as much fun chatting with your new friends as you will cruising the slopes.

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

You will discover your hidden talents on the slopes today. Take a camera to capture your new moves.

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

Libras are associated with scales because of their ability to balance. This does not mean that you are a scaly fish who can live in the swimming pool. Grab a towel and go back to the slopes – and stay balanced!

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

You have met winter sports' challenges just like we knew you would. Relax and reward yourself tonight in true Scorpio fashion.

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

Give your spirit endless opportunities to soar: conquer one or all six of today's downhill slopes.

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

When we told you to set your goals high, we didn't know you would tackle the highest slopes after only three days! Nice job, you old goat.



### Bedford A Conference Room

A medical room is available each day during Clinic operation hours (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. There is stairway access from the mall next to Christy Sports. For wheelchair access, please use the elevator above the main bus terminal (at the far end of the mall) to get to the medical room level.

### Transportation to Bedford A Conference Room

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.

### After Hours Medical Help

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

Conference Center, Sinclair Room  
6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For assistance in outside those hours, call:  
Wheelchair Repair (Don and Randy 300-8006)  
Prosthetic Repair (Chris at 300-8024)  
Please do not call after 6 p.m. unless it is an emergency.



6 - 7:30 p.m. - CEU Educational Workshop: “The Magic of ‘Rock n’ Roll’; Music in any Recreational Setting” — Presented by Cristal L. McGill, Ph.D., Kearns Room, Conference Center.

7:30 – 9 p.m. - CEU Educational Workshop: “Yoga: A powerful tool to use with veterans” – Presented by John C. Dozois, Kearns Room, Conference Center.



## The Menu for Today

### Thursday’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

### Breakfast Buffet

Fresh Sliced Fruit  
Oatmeal with Brown Sugar, Raisins, Sliced Bananas and Skim Milk in a Carafe  
Scrambled Eggs with Ham  
Croissants, Muffins, Biscuits  
Bacon, Thick-Sliced Ham  
Home Fried Potatoes  
Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, Herbal Teas and Assorted Chilled Juice

### Lunch Buffet

Tuna & Chicken Salad on Croissants  
Soup

### Dinner Buffet

Spinach Salad with Artichokes and Mushrooms with Ranch Dressing  
Trout Amandine with Rice Mushroom Pilaf  
Herb Crusted Pork Loin with Braised Red Cabbage  
Au Gratin Potatoes, Vegetables  
Rolls and Butter  
Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, Herbal Teas, Iced Tea



Informal  
TBI Discussion Group:  
Tonight!  
6:30 p.m.  
Conference Center  
Meal Area

(Moderated by Sandy Trombetta)



# Today's Schedule

**Thursday, April 6, 2006**

6:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast: Conference Center Ballroom
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Yoga Warm Up: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
8 – 11:30 a.m.	Snowmobiling: T Lazy 7 Ranch
8:15 – 11 a.m.	Sled Hockey: Aspen Ice Rink
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Skiing Downhill: Grey Wolf, Naked Lady, Sunnyside
8:45 a.m. - 3 p.m.	Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing (Top of the Village, Lunch - Elks BBQ)
9 - 11 a.m.	Wheelchair Fencing: Conference Center Ballroom
9 – 11 a.m.	Scuba Diving: Pool, Silver Tree Hotel
9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	The Hot Springs Glenwood Springs
10 a.m. - Noon	Rock-Climbing: Conference Center Circle
10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Gondola Trip to Aspen, Lunch at Elks Lodge
10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Shooting Sports/Archery: Basalt Trap Club
11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch: Conference Center Ballroom
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Skiing Downhill: Bonzai, Free Fall, Sheer Bliss
1 - 3 p.m.	Rock-Climbing: Conference Center Circle
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Adaptive Golf: Conference Center Ballroom
1:30 – 3 p.m.	CEU Educational Workshop: “Using Water Massage for Therapeutic Purposes” Wildwood Pool Presented by Mary Ann Loeffler
2 - 4 p.m.	Scuba Diving: Pool, Silver Tree Hotel
3 – 4:30 p.m.	Yoga Cool Down: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
4:30 – 5:15 p.m.	Ski Instructor Meeting: El Dorado Room, Silver Tree Hotel
4:30 p.m.	Team Leader Meeting: Stonebridge Inn Council Meeting Room
5 p.m.	Coaches Meeting: Max Park Room Wildwood Hotel
5 -6:15 p.m.	Dinner: Conference Center Ballroom
5:30-6 p.m.	Friends of Francine Berger Celebration: Kearns Room, Conference Center
6 – 7:30 p.m.	CEU Educational Workshop: “Balancing Your Life by Focusing on the “Stuff” that Matters” Kearns Room, Conference Center Presented by Mary Ann Loeffler
7:30 - 9 p.m.	Instructional Workshop: “Self Defense for the Visually Impaired” Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge Presented by: Special Agent Mark Copanzzi United States Secret Service
9- Midnight	Clay Walker: Conference Center Ballroom

## 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](http://www.wintersportsclinic.org)

If you have misplaced an item, check Lost and Found



located in the Sinclair Room (Host Room).

## Yoga Sessions

Prepare yourself for your day on the slopes at the daily warm-up and cool-down yoga sessions held through today.



Sessions will be held at 7–8:30 a.m. and 3–4:30 p.m. in the

Max Park Room at the Wildwood Lodge.

Come to yoga and work on those forward bends!

## Complimentary Massages



Complimentary massages are available by calling and scheduling an appointment. Massage is located in the Lower Level Lobby of the Silvertree Hotel in the Cabaret Room. Appointments can be made by calling (970) 361-6829.



## Snowmass Weather Forecast

**Heavy Snow During Day  
and Overnight  
Low 28° – High 35°**