



## **The Student Becomes the Teacher**

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The Winter Sports Clinic is an inspiring event for anyone associated with it. For some, it's a reminder of the tenacity of the human spirit. For others, it inspires a new passion for sports. For two participants, they've absorbed so much at the Clinic that they've now become instructors, and work to instill that Clinic hope and inspiration in others.

When you ask disabled Army Veteran Chris Jefferson about monoskiing, his entire face changes. His eyes light up as he talks about the freedom of cruising down a mountain. It reminds him, he says, of the days when he used to ride his motorcycle.

Jefferson got serious about skiing as a participant at his first Winter Sports Clinic in 1994. He learned the technical aspects of the sport, but he also learned how it can change a person's perspective. "I loved the camaraderie of the Clinic and learning what kind of options were available to me," Jefferson said. "It really helped me become a more upbeat person."

Jefferson became a certified ski instructor in 2004, and now spends his time on the slopes teaching others how to experience that freedom. For him, it was an important way to help his fellow disabled Veterans. "That's my favorite part of being a ski instructor," he says. "I love watching these younger guys' faces light up the first time they experience the independence of skiing."

One of Chris' students, Army Veteran Luke Murphy, agrees. "Being on the ski, all alone with no one holding you up, it really gives you a sense of freedom," he said.

Throughout his instructing career, Jefferson estimates helping 40 disabled skiers learn the sport, including Serbia's first Paralympian Jasmin Bambur. His favorite students though, are fellow Veterans at the Winter Sports Clinic.

Three years ago Lewis Stamatelos was lost in the bars of New England, wondering where he would go or what worth he still possessed. The former Marine caught a sniper bullet in Iraq, flat-lined four times on the operating table and left the service with no use of his right hand, a traumatic brain injury and impairment of his right lung.

Last year, Lewis attended the Winter Sports Clinic for the first time. This year, he returned as an instructor, hoping to instill the same direction and hope in fellow Veterans he found through rehabilitative sports.

“Three years ago, the voluntary service chief at the Boston VA Medical Center told me about a winter sports clinic in New Hampshire,” Stamatelos said. “I tried it and it was all it took to get me out of the bars and going again.”

Now, Lewis is a regular volunteer instructor in snowboarding and kayaking for the New England Handicapped Sports Association. He studies political science at New England College and this week, he’s carving up the slopes while showing other Veterans how it’s done.

“It’s different as an instructor than as a participant last year,” Stamatelos said. “Now I get to have my fun but I also get to see someone else excel, which is twice the fun for me. I see a Vietnam Veteran smiling after trying this for the first time and I see myself three years ago. It’s powerful stuff. It’s awesome.”

## Blind Skiers Tackle Bigger Challenges

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Skiing down a hill for the first time is a daunting experience. Skiing down a hill with vision impairment presents an even bigger challenge.

First time Clinic participant and Navy Veteran Lawrence Giddens said that standing on skis for the first time was exhilarating and fun. He has macular degeneration.

At 6 feet 7 inches tall, Giddens said the biggest challenge learning to ski with vision impairment is maintaining balance. Just as he was learning to stop on his skis, gravity brought him down. “Seeing little kids go by on skis motivated me,” he said.

Both Giddens and George Pyle, a 75-year-old Army Veteran who also has macular degeneration, said the instructors are the key to success.

Veterans are attached by tethers to instructors who ski alongside or behind to guide them. “I have confidence in the instructors. They help build my confidence,” said Pyle.

“It may take two or three trips down the hill to get the hang of it, but the idea is to slowly work our way off the tethers with the instructors who then ski next to or behind you,” Pyle said. “It may seem impossible, but it’s not.”

## Cactus Jack Performs Tonight

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Jeff “Bodene” Fuhr, a Vietnam-era Veteran, started the band in 1977. The four-member band has been a staple of the Denver music circuit ever since.

This evening, Winter Sports Clinic participants and guests will enjoy an evening of music, including classic to contemporary country and classic rock ‘n roll. “We will be playing something for everybody,” said Fuhr.

Cactus Jack has worked a number of famous entertainers including the legendary Kenny Rogers. The band also composed the soundtrack for a made-for-TV movie “Escape from Terror,” that aired on the NBC network.

Fuhr said his band is honored to play for the Veterans. “We owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who served. It’s a pleasure to serve them.”

## Paralympics Conference

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Clinic participants are extended a special invitation to attend the 2010 Developing Amazing Leaders Paralympic Conference, April 30 – May 3 at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. The goal of the conference is to provide coaches, therapists, educators and other interested parties the tools to implement a successful Paralympic sports program in their communities. Interactive sessions offer opportunities to build a new program, or grow a program currently running. The basics of a variety of Paralympic sports will be taught and sessions will help develop leadership skills.

For more information, contact [amazingleaders@usoc.org](mailto:amazingleaders@usoc.org).

## Vets: It's Not Just About You

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Veterans today confront many issues, both physical and emotional. Often overlooked are the effects of these issues on a Veteran's relationship with others.

Tonight, married couple Chad (a disabled Veteran) and Betty Ann Colley, share their experiences with Chad's injuries and provide advice to others facing a similar situation. Betty Ann says, "Our discoveries came over 42 years, and we look forward to sharing with other couples what worked and what didn't."

"Marriage is an adventure. Throwing a disability into the mix adds extra complexity," said Betty Ann. "At the core of our difficulties following my rehab was my not understanding her needs," said Chad. "I failed to appreciate how different we were."

Experience teaches, and tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the Aspenwood Condos meeting room (on Fall Lane), the Colleys are happy to let you learn from theirs.

## The Prosthetics Post

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Welcome to another edition of the daily "Prosthetics Post" column in the Ski•Gram! This is where you can get answers to your frequently asked questions regarding VA Prosthetics Service. Don't forget, prosthetics professionals are here this week to answer your questions. Make sure to visit the information booth at meal times. Our Web site is always available for more information: [www.prosthetics.va.gov](http://www.prosthetics.va.gov)

Question of the Day

Dear Prosthetic Post,

I have a left lower leg amputation and wear a prosthetic limb. Am I eligible for clothing allowance?

*Sincerely, High-Tech Amputee*

Dear HTA: You may be. Veterans who have a service-connected disability that requires the use of a prosthetic that wears out or tears clothing are eligible for a clothing allowance. The allowance may also be paid if the Veteran has a service-connected skin condition which requires the use of a prescribed medication which causes irreparable damage to the Veteran's outer garments. (NOTE: Irreparable damage does not include stains that are removable through regular laundering or dry cleaning.)

## What Did You Say?

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Every day this week, we'll go out and ask one question. Here are your responses.

Today's question is: "If you had a time machine, where in time would you go and why?"



Raymond Warren  
Ventura County, Calif.

*Marines*

"I would first use it to buy a house and pay off bills."



Clarence Mattison  
Baltimore, Md.

*Army*

"I would use some of it to take care of immediate needs, then I would give the rest of it to good charities."



Gwendolyn Clouser  
Lucerne Valley, Calif.

*Army*

"I would buy a condo in this area for Veterans and kids to participate in clinics like this one."



Michael Petlansky  
Bishop, Calif.

*Army*

"I would help the people who have the greatest need for the money."



Dan Cole  
Cincinnati, Ohio

*Air Force*

"I would use it so that Veterans could come to this event every year."



## We Love Our Dogs

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Assistance dogs and their owners form a special bond and share a love like no other.

It seems you are unable to walk more than a few steps here in Snowmass Village without seeing a Veteran accompanied by an assistance dog. Loyal and trustworthy, they stand by their owners at the ready to help them with their particular disabilities. Dogs can be trained to aid with vision, mobility, seizure alerts and more, and their breeds widely vary. Let's take a look at some of the amazing pooches (and their owners) who are here this week.

Chris Gray, an Army Veteran from Portland, Ore., has an undiagnosed, progressive neurological disorder that slurs his speech, impairs his balance and gives him an unsteady gait. Walter Reed Army Hospital matched him with his black Labrador Retriever, Thomas, now seven years old. Steady as a rock, Thomas assists Gray with mobility but when his harness is removed, the dog gets the message that he has switched from work mode to play, and exhibits all the body language of a dog ready for fun. Tail-wagging, a joyful bounce in his step, Thomas moves from person to person, eager for the pat he is not allowed while on duty. Gray's four daughters are his constant playmates at home in Portland.

Lucy is a Chow mix who works with Irma Proffitt of San Bernadino, Calif., providing both stability as well as a calming presence for her as she deals with a traumatic brain injury as well as post-traumatic stress. Proffitt served 23 years in the Army, four of which were in Iraq, until the vehicle she was driving was t-boned by an Iraqi tractor trailer. Her disabilities cause her great anxiety and make it difficult for her to leave home. "Lucy and I are a team; without her, I'd be a hermit," Proffitt said. "Coming here this week is a major step for me, to be among strangers." She rescued Lucy from a local dog pound and they worked together with a trainer from Rim of the World Comfort Pets ([www.comfortpets.org](http://www.comfortpets.org)) to bring Lucy's skills up to snuff.

Jeffrey Hackett of Seattle, Wash., served six years with the Navy and recently acquired his first service dog to assist him as his vision diminished due to retinitis pigmentosa. He had resisted getting a dog, relying on a cane, until he decided it would be easier to make the transition to a dog while he still had some eyesight. He teamed up with Casanova two years ago, a yellow Lab from Guide Dogs for the Blind, and has never regretted his decision. "The biggest change is how people approach you. When you use a cane, people are hesitant and don't know what to say. But Casanova really opens the door for socialization; you have to take a dog out for walks, after all." Hackett has found no downsides to working with a service dog. Casanova travels like a pro, clearly enjoys his work and provides constant companionship.

More and more organizations are training dogs specifically to serve Veterans, and with apparently great results. If you or someone you know is interested in the possibility of getting a service dog, an internet search will provide you with a number of organizations with information.

## The Bulletin

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### Massage

Complimentary massages for participants are available by scheduling an appointment. Massage is located in the Elbert room in the Silvertree Hotel. Please call (970) 589-2434 for an appointment after 9 a.m. Appointments will be accepted until all slots are full.

### Wheelchair and Prosthetics Repair

Located at the Host Room in the Conference Center.

Repair hours are:

6:30 - 8:45 a.m.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

4 - 5:30 p.m.

In between these hours please call (970) 589-2154 for wheelchair assistance, and (970) 589-2519 for prosthetics needs. Please do not call after 6 p.m. unless it is an emergency.

### Medical Room

For emergencies dial 911

Medical room phone: (970) 923-8225

The medical room is located in the Bedford A conference room, one level below the mall, across the street from Mountain Chalet Hotel. Stairway access from the mall is next to Christy Sports. Wheelchair access is by elevator at the far end of the mall above the bus terminal.

Transport: Van transport is available from the Silvertree Hotel to the medical room. Find the medical van in the front of the hotel or call the medical room for transportation.

After hours, please call the medical room for recorded instructions on how to contact the “on call” medical provider. If unsuccessful, call the hotel operator.

## Today's Menu

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### Breakfast

Fresh sliced seasonal melons & fruits  
Oatmeal with granola, raisins, almonds, bananas  
Scrambled eggs  
Croissants, muffins, biscuits  
Biscuits and gravy  
Ham and bacon  
Breakfast potatoes  
Coffee, tea and juices

### Lunch

Garden salad with vinaigrette  
Pastas with marinara or alfredo sauce  
Garlic bread and white bread

### Dinner

Caesar salad  
Trout almandine with rice mushroom pilaf  
Herb crusted pork loin with cider bourbon sauce  
Sweet potato casserole  
Broccoli, carrot, cauliflower medley  
Rolls and butter  
Cherry cobbler crisp  
Caramelized apple pie  
Fruit cups  
Ice cream and brownies

## Transportation Schedule

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Event	Load Time	Depart Time
Snowmobiling Trip 1	6:45 a.m.	7:15 a.m.
Snowmobiling Trip 2	9 a.m.	9:30 a.m.



Event	Load Time	Depart Time
Sled Hockey	7:45 a.m.	8:15 a.m.
Fly Fishing	8:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m.
Cross Country Skiing Trip 1	8:20 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
Cross Country Skiing Trip 2	1 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
Hot Springs	9:30 a.m.	10 a.m.
Trapshooting	10 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
Aspen Gondola	10 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
Curling	12:45 a.m.	1 p.m.

# Today's Schedule

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Time	Event
6:30 – 8:30 a.m.	<b>Breakfast</b> in the Conference Center Ballroom
8 – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Snowmobiling</b> at the T Lazy 7 Ranch
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	<b>Skiing Downhill</b> Teams Baby Ruth, Showcase and Fast Draw
9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	<b>Fly Fishing Float Trip</b> on the Crystal River in Carbondale
9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<b>Glenwood Springs</b> at Hot Springs
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	<b>Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing</b> at Top of the Village
9 – 11 a.m.	<b>Scuba Diving</b> in the Pool in the Silver Tree Hotel
9 – 11 a.m.	<b>Sled Hockey</b> in the Lewis Ice Arena in Aspen
10 a.m. - Noon	<b>Rock-Climbing</b> in the Conference Center Circle
10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<b>Aspen Trip</b> , Aspen Mountain Gondola Ride
11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b> in the Conference Center Ballroom
11:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<b>Shooting Sports/Archery</b> in the Basalt Trap Club
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.	<b>Skiing Downhill</b> Teams Bear Bottom, Head Wall and Lodge Pole
1 – 3 p.m.	<b>Rock-Climbing</b> in the Conference Center Circle
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	<b>Curling</b> in the Aspen Ice Rink
2 – 4 p.m.	<b>Scuba Diving</b> in the Pool in the Silver Tree Hotel
4:15 – 5 p.m.	<b>Ski Instructor Meeting</b> in the Eldorado Room in the Silver Tree Hotel
4:30 p.m.	<b>Team Leader Meeting</b> in the Stone Bridge Inn Council Meeting Room
4:30 – 6 p.m.	<b>Dinner</b> in the Conference Center Ballroom
5 p.m.	<b>Coaches Meeting</b> in the Max Park Room, Wildwood Hotel
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.	<b>CEU Educational Workshop: Pain and the Military</b> Aspenwood Meeting Room; Fall Lane
6:30 – 8 p.m.	<b>CEU Educational Workshop: Self Defense for the Visually Impaired</b> Max Park Room Wildwood Hotel
7:30 – 9 p.m.	<b>CEU Educational Workshop: Veterans – Not Just About You</b> Aspenwood Meeting Room; Fall Lane
9 p.m. - Midnight	<b>Cactus Jack Concert</b> Conference Center Ballroom