



First-timers, Seasoned Vets Glide Into Snowmass

by Mario Rossilli, VA Jackson

For Pat Sapp, goalie for the Gold Medal winning U.S. Paralympic Sledge Ice Hockey Team, the journey to victory began here 10 years ago when the then-nervous paralyzed veteran took to the slopes.

“I was scared to death but I didn’t express it. I was a Marine Recon. You don’t express fear,” says Sapp, 48, of Rockwall, Tex. “I thought, coming out to Colorado and skiing on a mountain – you’ve got to be nuts! You don’t want to get killed. Getting in a swimming pool is hard enough, but skiing down a mountain!”

Sapp is one of the more than 350 disabled veterans who will participate in this year’s 16th annual National Disabled Veterans Winters Sports Clinic.

“This program is to challenge you and to make you aware that just because you have a disability, it doesn’t mean you can’t live a very productive, normal, happy, incredible life,” says Sapp.

Indeed, with Sapp in the net, the USA team carried out its own “Miracle on Ice,” reminiscent of the 1980 Olympics. Prior to the Olympics, the sledge hockey team only defeated an international opponent once in the entire history of the sport.

Sapp, who at 19 became paralyzed after a parachuting accident during the Vietnam era, credits the Winter Sports Clinic, an event sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American Veterans, for turning his life around.

Ten years ago, Sapp was lost in frustration about his disability, about living in a world that seemed to have forgotten him. “I could identify,” Sapp said, recalling his first visit. “I wasn’t the only one here with a disability.”

Disabled veterans attending the Clinic for the first time this week can identify with the fear and nervousness Sapp experienced on his first visit to the Clinic.

“They tell me it can be kind of scary for folks,” said Danny Taylor, 44, a visually impaired veteran from Ogden, Utah.

Taylor, an Air Force veteran, began losing his sight in 1983. Last year, his driver’s license was taken from him. “I’m going blind. I’m losing my independence,” says Taylor. “For me, the Clinic is to prove that I can still do something. It’s for my own self-esteem.”

See “Glide to Snowmass” page 4



TODAY'S SCHEDULE

6:30 - 8:30a	BREAKFAST: Conference Center
8-11:30a	Downhill Skiing: Grey Wolf, Naked Lady, Sunnyside
8-4:00p	Horseback Riding & Fishing: Basalt
8:30-3p	Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing
9-1130a	Trip to Aspen Scuba Diving: Silver Tree Hotel Pool
9:30-11:30a	Sledge Hockey: Aspen Ice Rink
10-12 noon	Rock-Climbing: Conference Center Circle Hand Cycling: Conference Center
11:30-1:00p	LUNCH: Conference Center Ballroom
11:30-4p	Shooting Sports: Basalt Trap Club
12:30p	Downhill Skiing: Bonzai, Free Fall, Sheer Bliss
1-3:00p	Rock Climbing: Conference Center Circle Hand Cycling: Conference Center
2-4:00p	Scuba Diving: Silver Tree Hotel Pool
4-5:15p	DINNER: Conference Center Ballroom
4:15p	Ski Instructor Meeting: El Dorado Room, Silver Tree Hotel
4:30p	Team Leader Meeting: Stonebridge Inn, Council Meeting Room
5:30-7:00p	CEU Educational Workshop: Adaptive Team Building Through Group Challenges Presented by Mary Ann Loeffler, CTRS
7-8:30p	CEU Educational Workshop: Benefits of Equine Assisted Therapy Presented by Pat Horwitz, Director, Sopris Therapy Services, Jennifer Cockrell, M.S., P.T., Amanda Moody, M.S., OTR, Betsy Wedemeyer, C.C.C.-S.L.P., Jennifer Menke, B.S., P.T.

Chester's Massage Bunch is Back!

Kearns Room, 2nd Floor
Conference Center
Elevator past the Erickson Room

Mon-Thurs, 9-5
Friday, 9-12

Sign up in the Host Room

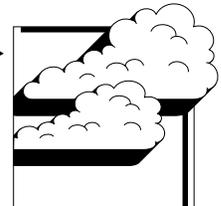
“Remember Me?!”



**Look for
Spilzie Beans
tomorrow!**

...

WEATHER CORNER



Mostly Sunny

UV Index 8 - High

Today's High: 57
Tonight's Low: 31



HealthWatch

Welcome to the Altitude

It's your first day on the mountain. If you live at lower altitudes (as most of us do), here are some tips to keep you healthy and feeling great in a high altitude environment:

- ◆ Drink lots of water--coffee and soft drinks don't count and can even dehydrate you even more.
- ◆ Take some down time. Rest and let your body get acclimated. Don't try to do too much all at once.
- ◆ If you have any shortness of breath, ask for help.
- ◆ Wear sunscreen. The air is thinner up here and your chance of getting sunburn is much greater.

Stay tuned for more medical information in this column.

Medical Triage Information for Participants

Medical Emergencies: Call 911 for an ambulance for transport to the local emergency room

Non-Emergent Care:

7:30am-9:30pm:

Send individual to Bedford Medical Room,
or call the medical room for instructions:
direct line 291-9501

After hours:

First, try the doctor-on-call, at 291-9501

If no answer, call the Mountain Chalet desk: 923-3900.
They will have on-call night information.

Odds & Ends

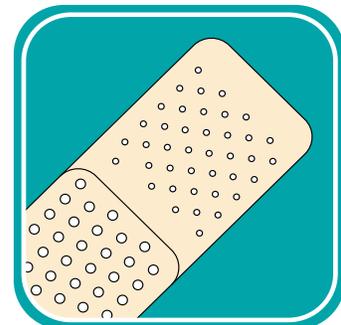
- If you haven't registered as a participant yet, please make sure you go to the host room and get checked in.
- The Lost and Found will be located in the Host Room all week long.
- Workshops are not just limited to participants—*everyone* is welcome to attend these fun evening educational event.

Prosthetic & Orthotic Repair

Max Park, Wildwood Bldg.

Open 7-8am & 2-4pm,

or as needed



—“Glide to Snowmass” continued—

Mary Kailihiwa, a visually impaired Army veteran also attending the Clinic for the first time, says she’s nervous but ecstatic. Without even setting foot on the slopes, Kailihiwa has already decided she’ll return for next year’s Clinic. “It’s good for morale,” says Kailihiwa, a Turlock, Calif. resident.

Sapp still identifies with the fear and uncertainty that first-timers will face this week. “I was there at one time, I know those emotions. I know those feelings, I know those fears. Don’t just look at this week as the work,” Sapp says offering advice. “Take the time to step back and watch people challenge themselves. When you get at the bottom of the mountain look up and say ‘I did this.’ It’s unimaginable. I did something I never thought I could do. If I can do this, I can go shopping for myself, I can have a career. I can go to college.”

Sapp adds that there are plenty of stories out there about veterans who have triumphed after they attended the Winter Sports Clinic.

“I’m not any different than any veteran who has rolled in here and has gone through this,” Sapp says. “I’m just one of many, many stories of changed lives.”



Eats

Menu for Today

Lunch (11:30a.m. - 1:00p.m.): Grilled Chicken Teriyaki; Brats with Sauerkraut; Marinated Vegetable Salad; German Potato Salad; and Granola Bars.

Dinner (4:00p.m. - 5:30p.m.): Boston Lettuce Salad; Veggie Crudite with Ranch Dressing; Hickory Smoked Baby Back Ribs; Meat & Spinach Lasagna; Garlic Mashed Potatoes; Grilled Veggies; and Rolls w/ Butter.

Breakfast for tomorrow (6:45a.m. - 8:30a.m.): Sliced Fresh Fruit; Oatmeal with Raisins; Sourdough French Toast with Syrup; Sausage & Bacon; Potatoes O’Brien; and Chilled Juices.

In the Presence of Heroes

I come to the mountains annually to witness heroism. Some of the most courageous people I’ve ever met in my life, I met on slopes like these. Year after year, I see something that most people would call impossible. Attending the Winter Sports Clinic, to me, is much more important than just having fun, because it is not so much what I do on the mountain as what I take home from the mountain ... that driving reaffirmation that there is no obstacle too great to overcome. I go home with stories about what I’ve seen, only to find there are no words to describe what I’ve felt; and the pictures of the smiling faces does the Clinic no justice whatsoever. From participants to volunteers, we are an amazing lot, and I am proud to be a part of this magic. Yes, another year has put us all to the test, but we still stand prepared to enjoy another reunion. As we look around, we are reminded that, yes, we too are somebody’s heroes. Life is sweet. And I do so enjoy sharing this week with you.

To my heroes – you know who you are.

Derek Thomas, #364
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