



National Rehabilitation Special Events: Helping Veterans Live Life to its Fullest

by Richard Olague

Any given day at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, you might be surprised to hear a veteran singing down the slopes in perfect pitch, pass by a game of impromptu wheelchair basketball, or perhaps watch a heated exchange of billiards at the Mountain Dragon. That's because many participants here this week attend more than one of VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events.



Charlie Wittwer

There are four national special events co-sponsored by VA, which include the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Each event offers a unique opportunity for veterans to excel in personal growth and achievement, offering a one-of-a-kind brand of rehabilitation.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival fosters creative expression in veterans treated at VA medical facilities across the country. The annual competition begins at the local level, with local winners advancing to a national contest. Medal winners are then invited to the week-long Festival, which offers artistic workshops and rehearsals and culminates in a gala stage performance and art exhibit. It celebrates the veterans' achievements and allows the public to view the incredible creative talents of veterans following disease, disability or life crisis.

Attention Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans

If you are interested in summer sports requiring a wheelchair for competition, there are scholarships available for this year's National Veterans Wheelchair Games, being held in Minneapolis, Minn., June 27-July 1. Sixteen competitive events being offered this year include swimming, weightlifting, track, field, handcycling, archery and wheelchair slalom, among others. Applications for the Games are available on the web site at <http://www1.va.gov/vetevent/nvbwg/2005/registration2005.cfm>. For more information about 2005 sponsor-donated scholarships, which include transportation, meals and lodging for you and a companion, contact the Paralyzed Veterans of America at 1-800-424-8200, and ask for the Sports Department. The application deadline is the end of this month.

Charlie Wittwer, a Marine Corps veteran from Minnesota, is one participant who has also been invited to the Festival several times. Last year, Wittwer won first place in the national dance competition in the wheelchair structured dance category (although he's also won in the comedy category in the past). The Festival is

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Special Events, cont.



are a multi-event program for veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or certain neurological problems. Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, the National

Wittwer is a multi-faceted kind of guy, having also competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The Games always a positive experience for Wittwer. “It feels great to be a national winner and be invited to perform in the Creative Arts Festival,” he said. “I am very proud of myself and my fellow performers. Participating in this event always inspires me to do my best.”

Wittwer is a multi-faceted kind of guy, having also competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The Games are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world, and a number of Winter Sports Clinic participants also attend the “Summer Games.” One is former Spirit of the Games winner Mike Trujillo, an Army veteran of Huntington Beach, Calif. “The Games are more than just a competition, they are an opportunity to meet fellow veterans and push yourself physically,” Trujillo said. A regular Clinic participant as well, he has been to every Winter Sports Clinic but one in the event’s nineteen year history. “Both events offer plenty of activities and camaraderie,” Trujillo added.



Mike Trujillo

If you ever thought that being over the age of 55 was a reason to slow down your physical activity, take a look at what some senior military veterans are doing at the National Veterans Golden Age Games. This event offers competition and social activities for veterans from across the country, and demonstrates that sports and fitness are important for all Americans, at any age. At that event, veterans compete in ambulatory, wheelchair and visually impaired divisions, by specific age groups. A number of Clinic

participants also attend the Golden Age Games, including Henry “Bud” Boyle, 66, of Springfield, Ill. “The Golden Age Games provide a great opportunity for veterans to get together and share their experiences,” said Boyle at the event last summer. “I like being able to meet new friends and renew old relationships, and always look forward to having another exiting week.



“Bud” Boyle

That seems to be a common thread among all four of the national programs. Reminding us that the special events offer opportunities to both heal the body and spirit, Diane Hartmann, Director of VA’s National Rehabilitation Special Events said, “The four special events are an extension of VA healthcare in a non-traditional medical care setting. They motivate veterans to reach their full potential, improve their independence, achieve a healthier lifestyle and enjoy a higher quality of life.”

To learn more about VA’s National Rehabilitation Special Events look on the Web!

- www.wheelchairgames.org
- www.veteransgoldenagegames.org
- www.creativeartsfestival.org
- www.wintersportsclinic.org



Snow Showers / Wind
High 33° F
Low 9° F



Prosthetic and Wheelchair Repair

Conference Center, Sinclair Room
6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For assistance between those hours, call:
Wheelchair Repair (Don at 710-9740)
Prosthetic Repair (Joe at 710-9060)



Heidi Hatch Ford

Remembering a Cross Country Ski Instructor Extraordinaire

by Carol Herrington

We are fondly remembering the spirit of Heidi Hatch Ford at this year's Clinic. One of our energetic Nordic instructors who was part of the Winter Sports Clinic since 1997, Ford graciously surrendered to circulatory failure this past year.

Ford's strong desire to recover and her sense of humor helped her endure endless hours of physical, respiratory and occupational therapy, enabling her to return home to her family for several months.

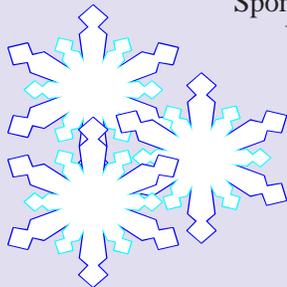
For those who remember her and for those who never met Ford, she was a vibrant spirit with a sense of humor that would leave you hooting with laughter. She had a quick wit, blue eyes that sparkled and a smile that was instantaneous, contagious and full of wattage.



Heidi Hatch Ford served as an instructor since 1997

Ford adored the veterans at the Winter Sports Clinic and the Salt Lake City

VA Medical Center where she worked for nearly a decade as a recreation therapist. She sought ways to bring joy to veterans' lives as she guided them through many cultural, artistic and recreational programs. She brought enthusiasm and a sense of fun, and had a wonderful way of sharing stories.



At past Winter Sports Clinics, she spoke of one day bringing her father and husband to assist with the Nordic events. They are both in attendance this year, and we are honored to be embraced by her family.

With love and warmth, we remember you, Heidi.

'Take the Wheel' at This Year's Instructor Appreciation Party



Each year, to show our appreciation for our wonderful instructors at the Winter Sports Clinic, we throw them a party! There is no cost for instructors, but there is a \$5 entry fee for all others. Come join the fun and thank an instructor!

The party is tonight from 8:00 p.m. to midnight in the Convention Center Ballroom.

Music by John Oats and his band "Take the Wheel" is a special highlight tonight. See you there!

Two Country Stars Share Their Music and Camaraderie

Vince Gill and Amy Grant, two country music entertainers, will be here Thursday, April 7. They will be available for you to meet beginning at 3:00 p.m. in the Village Mall.

Their concert begins at 9:00 p.m. in the Convention Center Ballroom. Due to limited space for the concert, doors will open at 7:30 p.m. for veterans and their family only. Winter Sports Clinic staff, volunteers and coaches can enter at 8:30 p.m. Everyone must have their Clinic ID badges to enter.



Photos from the slopes. . .



Dana Bowman parachutes into Snowmass Village on Sunday.



Flags fly high during the Opening Ceremony

Our WWII veterans lead the Pledge of Allegiance.



Posting of the colors by the U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Office, Grand Junction, Colo.



Photos from the slopes. . .



Bill Sturges, Kevin Foley and John Devine, from the Long Island, N.Y. group.



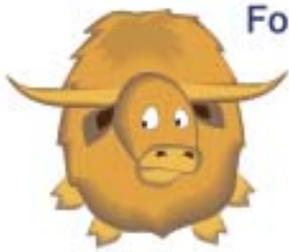
Bill White from Wood Dale, Ill. shares a tender moment with his service dog.



Daniel Young from Cookeville, Tenn., skis downhill with Archie Acquino, instructor.



Peter Coffett from Kansas City, Kan. climbs rock "Mountain."



For your reading pleasure...

Zodi Yak

Preparer of horror-scopes and predictor of your future



The Veterans History Project interview schedule has been filled for the week. As a reminder for those who have appointments, taping is in the Janss Auditorium on the second floor of the Snowmass Conference Center.

Please be sure to keep your scheduled appointment! Your story will become part of our nation's official historical records. In appreciation, you will receive a VHP tote and a DVD copy of your interview before you leave the Clinic.



10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. — Dream It, Design It, Do It!
Kearns Room Conference Center, presented by Mary Ann Loeffler, CTRS

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. — Culture and Therapeutic Recreation
Kearns Room Conference Center, presented by Victor Ramirez-Rios

7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. — Healing Gardens: Considerations for Recreation Therapists in Health Care
Kearns Room Conference Center, presented by Stephen Marmon, Ph.D., CHES

Do You Have the Right Luggage?

Be sure to check your rooms to ensure that you have the correct luggage. If you have equipment or items in your room that is not yours, please contact the Front Desk of the Silvertree Hotel so they can get them to the correct owner.



Please Be Courteous
No smoking within 50 feet of entrances of all buildings.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 – Feb 19)

There's lots of chances to network today – on the slopes, the cross country runs, and later at the Instructor Party. Express yourself!

PISCES (Feb 20 – March 20)

Follow your own guiding light when you ski today in your own unique way. Did you talk with your instructors?

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Conserve your energy today, Aires. There's a big party tonight.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Enjoy the good things in Snowmass – the people, the food, the fun, and oh yea, the skiing!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Listen to your instructors. You are a good student because of your great thirst for knowledge. But you still need to drink lots of water.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Wow! You will go to any lengths to ski. Be proud of your accomplishments today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You ruled on the slopes yesterday. Today you'll continue to be "front & center," just the way you like it, Leo.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Don't worry about how others are doing. Stay on your skis and plunge forward. But not face-first.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 – Oct. 23)

We know you like balance, but it was hard to tell that on the slopes yesterday. Stop falling down!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 – Nov. 22)

"Staying power" is one of your greatest assets, Scorpio. Good time today to try the climbing wall.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 – Dec. 21)

Define and seek your own goals today. Ski well, make friends, and get in by midnight.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)

You are progressing on the ski slopes, cross-country course, and are doing great at scuba. We thought you were a sun sign – are you sure you're not a Pisces?





The Chef's Corner



Today's Meal Schedule

Conference Center Ballroom

6:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
5:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.	Dinner

Breakfast

- Fresh Sliced Melons and Fruits
- Oatmeal with Granola, Raisins, Almonds, Bananas and Skim Milk
- French Toast with Warm Maple Syrup
- Bacon, Breakfast Sausage, Breakfast Potatoes
- Scrambled Eggs with Salsa
- Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaf Coffee, and Herbal Hot Tea
- Assortment of Chilled Juices

Lunch

- Cream of Tomato Soup with Oyster Crackers
- Chicken Caesar Wrap
- Mushroom Wrap with Spinach, Peppers and Goat Cheese
- Vegetable Sticks with Ranch Dip
- Cole Slaw, Potato Chips, Brownies
- Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaf Coffee, and Herbal Hot Tea
- Fresh Brewed Iced Tea

Dinner

- Green Bean Salad, German Potato Salad
- Meat Loaf
- Pork Chops with Sauerkraut
- Red Cabbage with Apples
- Boiled Carrots and Potatoes
- Rye Bread and Butter
- Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaf Coffee, and Herbal Hot Tea
- Fresh Brewed Iced Tea



Medical Assistance

Bedford A Conference Room

A medical room is available each day during Clinic operation hours (from approximately 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 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





Today's Schedule

TUESDAY, APRIL 5

7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	Yoga Warm Up Max Park
8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Snowmobiling T Lazy 7 Ranch
8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Downhill Skiing Rock Island, Granite, Sneaky's
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Trip to Hot Springs Glenwood Springs
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing Top of the Village (lunch)
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Scuba Diving Silvertree Hotel Pool
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Sled Hockey Aspen Ice Rink
10:00 a.m. to noon	Rock Climbing Conference Center Circle
11:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Trip to Aspen Mountain for Gondola and Snow Cat Rides, Lunch — Elks Lodge
11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Shooting Sports and Archery Basalt Trap Club
12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Downhill Skiing Moonshine, Wildcat, Slider
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Rock Climbing Conference Center Circle
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Scuba Diving Silvertree Hotel Pool
3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Yoga Cool Down Max Park
8:00 p.m. to midnight	Instructor Appreciation Party Conference Center Ballroom

Chester's Massage



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 Laurie at 710-9586.

Important Meetings

- 4:30 p.m. **Ski Instructor Meeting**
El Dorado Room
Silver Tree Hotel
- 4:30 p.m. **Team Leader Meetings**
Stone Bridge Inn
Council Meeting Room
- 5:00 p.m. **Coaches Meeting**
Max Park Room
Wildwood Hotel

Cross country skiers:

Load times have changed. We will load at 8:30 a.m. and leave at 9:00 a.m. for the rest of the week.



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



Want to submit a story idea for the daily SkiGram?

The Public Affairs Team will be preparing news

releases, writing articles for the daily *SkiGram*, and working with the 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*, stop by the Media Center located in the Erickson Room of the Convention Center. We'd love to hear from you!



SkiGram is on the Web

Look for the full-color edition of this newsletter on the Web at: www.wintersportsclinic.org