



THURSDAY EDITION • APRIL 3, 2008

Rock It Out with the Kickin' Cajuns

With songs like, "Dance all Night" and "Step it Fast," Jamie Bergeron and the Kickin' Cajuns will surely get your toes tappin' and fingers snappin'.

This Gulf Coast band has seven members, all with unique backgrounds and a wealth of musical experience. Over the years, the Kickin' Cajuns have become one of the most popular acts playing along the Gulf Coast, and that's why you'll find them every weekend playing their unique music somewhere in the country. Today, they will perform at the Après Ski party at the Cirque from 4-6 p.m., and they'll also liven up the victory celebration tomorrow evening with their upbeat zydeco songs (honoring this year's Race Day Mardi Gras theme).

Jamie Bergeron, the band's vocalist and accordion wiz, was raised in a French-speaking Cajun family. While growing up, he always heard his dad playing the accordion during family gatherings, and that is when his musical interest began. Other members of the group, like Jason Lewis (electric guitar), Chance Gonzalez (drums) and Jason Bergeron (fiddle) also discovered their love of music and developed their talents before the age of 10.

The band's three remaining members, Michael McCann (keyboards), Sal Melancon (acoustic guitar and vocals) and Robbie

...continued on page 2

In Today's Issue:

- 2009 NPSE Eventspage 7
- DAV Commander.....page 3
- Educational
 - Opportunities page 7
- Interested in Flying?.....page 6
- Make the Most of It.....page 2
- Massage Therapypage 8
- Medical Clinic.....page 8
- Menu.....page 8
- Prepare for Departure .page 3
- Snow Snaps..... page 4-5
- Sponsorspage 6
- Today's Schedule.....page 8
- Transportation
 - Schedulepage 8
- Veterans History
 - Project.....page 3
- Vote for Clinic Awards.page 2
- Welcome Secretary.....page 2
- Wheelchair & Prosthetics
 - Repairpage 8

WEATHER



TODAY

Partly Sunny

High: 36°

Low: 23°



TOMORROW

Mostly Sunny

High: 45°

Low: 13°

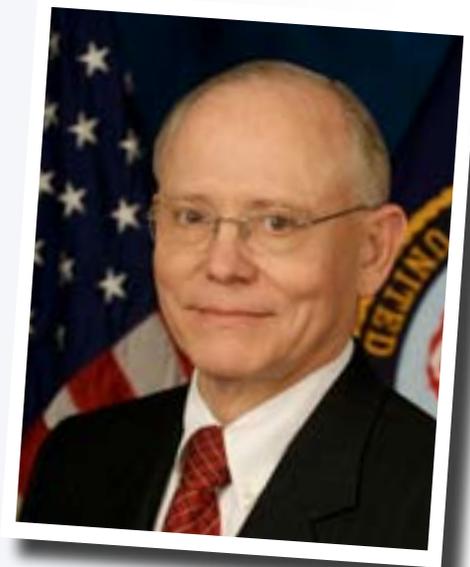
Welcome to the Winter Sports Clinic Mr. Secretary!

We are honored to welcome the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable James B. Peake, M.D. to the 22nd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. A physician, Peake was unanimously confirmed to this position by the U.S. Senate and sworn into office in December 2007. As Secretary, he is the principal advocate for veterans in the federal government.

A St. Louis, Mo. native, Peake received his Bachelor of Science degree from U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1966 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Infantry. Following service in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division (where he was awarded the Silver Star, a Bronze Star with "V" device and the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster), Peake entered medical school at Cornell University and was awarded a medical doctorate in 1972.

Peake began his Army medical career as a general surgery resident at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in Texas. He retired from the Army in 2004, following service as a cardiac surgeon and commander in several medical posts, culminating in his appointment as U.S. Army Surgeon General from 2000 to 2004. Prior to that, he served as Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School, the largest medical training facility in the world. After retiring as a Lieutenant General, he went on to hold leadership positions in Project Hope, a non-profit international health foundation, and QTC, one of the country's largest private providers of occupational health and disability services.

With his impressive credentials, we are thrilled to have the Secretary with us at the Clinic. He will greet all of this year's participants at the closing ceremonies tomorrow, and will also help



The Honorable James B. Peake, M.D.

distribute medals earlier in the day. Let's be sure to give Secretary Peake a warm welcome to his first national rehabilitation special event! ♦

Kickin' Cajuns

...continued from front page

Buller (base guitar) have all previously worked with some of country music's greatest performers. McCann has shared the stage with singers such as Joe Diffie, Garth Brooks and Diamond Rio. Melancon's father played with Willie Nelson in the 1950s, and Melancon himself has opened shows for Alan Jackson, Brad Paisley and Joe Nichols. Buller played on stage at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry and has appeared with Merle Haggard and Tanya Tucker.

With so much talent and energy, Friday night's show is sure to be amazing. Please come by the conference center ballroom at 9 p.m. with your Mardi Gras beads in hand to hear this amazing Cajun band. There's no way to really explain why or how their music attracts you. ♦

Correction

In Tuesday's issue of the Ski•Gram, a "Save the Date" notice was run for the National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues in Washington, D.C. However, the date was not listed.

The dates for the summit is **June 20-22, 2008**.

The served announcement also failed to mention that the summit is free and limited to only 300 participants. Acceptance to the summit will be based on a first come, first served basis.

We apologize for the oversight. ♦

Make the Most of It

One way to continue making the most of your experiences this week is to spread the word after you get home about all of the Miracles on a Mountainside that have been happening this past week in Snowmass Village. Tell your friends and family about it and have them visit the Clinic Web site to learn more. Watch the DVD of the closing ceremonies video when it arrives and relive the fun you had while you were here. Bring a copy of your hometown news release to your local newspaper, radio station or TV channel, and encourage them to run a story about this fantastic event for veterans. Bring a copy as well to your veterans service organization for their local newsletters, or the publications at your office, college or church. Best of all, tell other veterans in your area about the Winter Sports Clinic and encourage them to sign up next year. Enjoy the rest of the week and continue making the most of everything available to you here in Snowmass Village. ♦

Vote for the 2008 Clinic Awards

If you haven't done so already, please make sure to stop by the conference center lobby to vote for the 2008 Winter Sports Clinic awards. Among the many other awards, the below awards will be presented at the Closing Ceremonies Friday night.

These traditional awards have a long history at the Winter Sports Clinic that date all the way back to the first event in 1987. Your taking the time to recognize some outstanding individuals by voting is greatly appreciated. You will also be helping make these special awards an exciting part of Friday night's closing ceremonies and the 22nd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. If you've voted already, thank you! ♦

It's a Wrap!

There are only two days left to share your story of service with the Veterans History Project (VHP). The VHP is a national effort to record your stories of service and sacrifice to make sure they live on for future generations.

Each 45-minute interview is recorded, with a copy given to the Library of Congress. Your story then becomes part of our nation's official historical records. For your time, you will receive a VHP tote bag, souvenir coin and DVD copy of your interview.

Interviews take place today from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and tomorrow until noon in the Janss Auditorium, on the second floor of the conference center. If an interview is in progress, please leave your name, hotel name and room number for the interviewers. Remember to contact the interview team if you need to cancel your appointment.

Don't miss this final opportunity to make history! ♦

Preparing for Departure

Advanced check-in (for those flying United Airlines only) is being offered to participants who are departing from the Aspen Airport on Saturday. It is recommended that you take advantage of this opportunity to check your baggage and receive your boarding passes early. Advanced check-in is scheduled for Friday from 2 – 6 p.m., in the Eldorado Room on level 4 of the Silvertree Hotel. Remember to bring a government issued photo ID to receive your boarding passes.

It's important that you check as much baggage as possible in advance. Anything not received in advance must be processed at the airport the day of departure. Necessary items like medication, should be put in a carry-on bag in the event of any travel delays.

Buses will begin departing for the airport at 5 a.m. Saturday from the Silvertree Hotel. Many of the other properties also offer transportation to the airport. Be ready to depart for the airport at least two hours before your scheduled flight. We hope you to have a safe and pleasant trip back home. ♦

DAV National Commander Comes Full Circle

Fifteen years ago, Rob Reynolds nervously eyed the seemingly infinite whiteness below as he prepared for his first run down the slope at Crested Butte, Colo., where the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic was being held. He was exhilarated.

"That's saying a lot for a guy who had made a living jumping out of airplanes," said Reynolds, who served in the 82nd Airborne and with the Special Forces during his six years in the Army. "I had skied some pretty treacherous terrain and pretty much lived fast and hard before my accident. "But as a participant in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic staring down that mountain, I felt that kind of excitement that stays with you for a lifetime."

Like thousands of disabled veterans who have attended Winter Sports Clinics over the past 22 years, Reynolds made the decision to face his fear, test his injured body and carve up the mountain.

A native of Arlington, Va., Reynolds enlisted in the Army right out of high school and found a home as an Airborne soldier. His military career came to a crashing halt when two parachute accidents in 1987 and 1988 claimed his knee and his back.

Partially paralyzed and out of the Army, Reynolds faced a tough period of introspection. "A large part of my identity was tied up in my 'alpha male' world," Reynolds said. "Hunting, fishing, motorcycles, guns, explosives, jumping out of planes, raising hell – all of

that was gone. "The jump that fractured my back almost broke my will to go on."

Reynolds was able to rebuild his life, thanks in large part to his involvement with Disabled American Veterans. "The DAV provided me with support when I needed it most," he said. "My story is the same as millions of other veterans for the past 86 years. When I needed help the most, DAV was there."

Reynolds also found a home in VA, working in the Veterans Benefits Administration since 2000. Through the DAV and his VA therapists, he learned about the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Although he never thought he would ski again, he soon found himself in Crested Butte ready to take on the challenges of the Winter Sports Clinic.

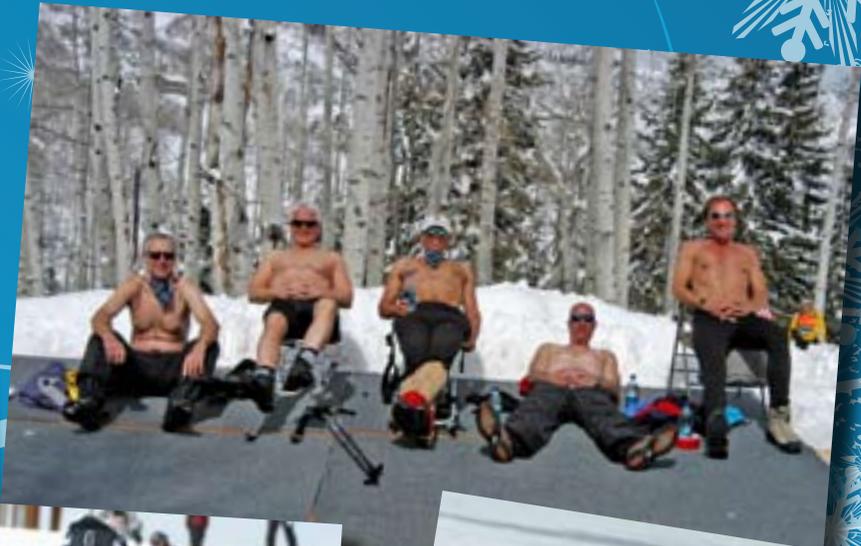
He found the experience so rewarding, he returned as a volunteer and later as a ski instructor. For 15 years, Reynolds returned to help other veterans discover their own "Miracles on a Mountainside" and rediscover their abilities. This year, he returns as the National Commander of the 1.3 million member Disabled American Veterans. "I feel in some ways as if I have come full circle," Reynolds said. "When I came to that first Clinic, I never imagined I'd return one day as the National Commander of the DAV. "But I'm excited to be here with my fellow veterans. They know I'm one of them. I've been where they are and I know the DAV and VA will be here for them every step of the way." ♦



Robert Reynolds, DAV National Commander, welcomes participants during Opening Ceremonies. Reynolds is excited to be here with his fellow veterans. "They know I'm one of them. I've been where they are and I know the DAV and VA will be here for them every step of the way."

Snow Snaps!





Sponsors: They Get More Than They Give

Wikipedia has a 300-plus word discussion about sponsorship. It says that sponsorship is “more commonly used to derive benefit from the associations created for a company’s brand or image.” Nowhere does it mention the incredible, personally rewarding experiences that sponsors of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic enjoy! Go figure.

Over many years of attendance at this event, sponsors have been humbled by the expressions of appreciation they hear from participants. According to many sponsors, it should really be the reverse. “We should be thanking you,” one sponsor said. “It means so much to us to be here and be part of a sadly small group of Americans who get a real opportunity to show our appreciation for what you’ve done for us.”

Over the past few days during conversations with a number of Clinic sponsors, a repeating theme is how being at this event is one of the best things they do in their professional lives. When they return home, their coworkers and family members just can’t seem to understand their elation about “going on a business trip.”

So what is being a sponsor really all about? Sponsorship activities come in lots of forms – like the counselors from Health-Net’s MHN Government Services who are on-site to provide service to participants and their families. Sponsorship is the work that Larry Corey and Tori Hobgood of Sprint, and all the folks from Cisco do during the days leading up to the event, setting up a fully integrated communications network, running T1 lines to enable networking, providing computer equipment and wireless phones. One sponsor, Mike Weiss, is an endurance cyclist who just wanted to do something that demonstrated his feelings about the returning

sp•on•sor: (noun) an individual or group that supports an event, activity, person or organization, financially or through the provision of products or services. *The snowboarder’s sponsor provided his helmet.*

veterans, and what they have done for him and for the country. Imagine gathering donations for a 100-plus mile bike ride in the Sierras simply because supporting the Winter Sports Clinic is the right thing to do and its participants inspire you. That reflects sponsorship in its purest sense.

Many sponsors make connections with the veterans and look forward to seeing them each year. Some sponsors talk about how they want to contribute more the next year. As David Meyer of Vangent said, “Once you come to this event and have the opportunity to help these men and women who have given us so much, you just want to keep coming back.”

Sponsorship also can lead to other activities. Sponsor companies have become active partners with VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment programs to help veterans find employment – often within the sponsor companies. Some sponsors also see opportunities to provide services to the Disabled American Veterans to facilitate their efforts and act on them. Some sponsors go on to support

VA’s other national rehabilitation programs or local VA activities in their areas.

Some sponsors are veterans themselves and many speak of honoring the contributions that a father, a sister, a spouse or a friend made in the military. Whatever their personal story, sponsors are unified in the common belief that they get a whole lot more out of the Winter Sports Clinic than they give. Then again, isn’t that the thing about giving? It comes back to you in spades!

“This Clinic has been blessed by so many generous sponsors. They know the challenges our disabled veterans face on their road to recovery and lend their generosity to help make the ‘miracles’ possible,” said Ed Hartman, DAV National Director of Voluntary Service.

Sponsors all have great stories to tell about their experiences skiing with the participants, snowmobiling, curling, scuba diving and volunteering and invariably, someone says, “Boy are they living up to the DAV National Commander’s direction at the opening ceremonies – they are kicking butt!” ♦

Interested in Flying?

You are invited to meet three experienced wheelchair pilots on Friday, April 4 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Aspen Airport. In addition to meeting these accomplished pilots, you’ll have an opportunity to view aircraft outfitted specifically for wheelchair pilots.

Chad Colley, a triple amputee and Army veteran, Peter Axelson, an Air Force veteran with a spinal cord injury and Jim Finch, a disabled pilot will discuss how wheelchair users who

have a love of flying can continue to pursue their passion. Colley, Finch and Axelson are all members of the International Wheelchair Aviators, a worldwide organization of disabled and able-bodied pilots promoting aviation for people with disabilities.

Through informal discussions and demonstrations, attendees will learn about how to get a flight physical, instruction on hand controls, get in and out of small aircraft, and learn more about the International Wheelchair Aviators organization. You will also be

able to view the low wing Piper and high wing Cessna aircraft on display.

The event is free to all Winter Sports Clinic participants. To attend this event, take the Silvertree Shuttle to the Aspen Airport to the Aspen Base Operation Fixed Base Operation (FBO). Do not go to the passenger terminal.

Please note this is not a Winter Sports Clinic event. For further information, please call Peter Axelson at (775) 790-1210. ♦

Mark Your Calendars for 2009! You Don't Want to Miss Next Year's Events

Now that you've experienced "Miracles on the Mountainside," you may want to check out VA's other national rehabilitation special events.

Why does VA believe in, and support these special programs? Because physical activity, friendly competition and recreation therapy engage the mind as well as the body, and can contribute significantly to an improved quality of life. To this end, VA's four national rehabilitation special events provide veterans with

challenging opportunities to accomplish feats many may have believed were not available to them because of their disabilities or their age. These sports, recreation and artistic activities provide veterans with unique opportunities for self-development, camaraderie and a well-earned sense of accomplishment.

For more information on VA national rehabilitation special events, check out: www1.va.gov/OPA/speceven/index.asp.

In the meantime, here are the 2009 dates and locations for the four VA national rehabilitation special events, and a 'snapshot' of information about each of them.



National Veterans Wheelchair Games

July 13 – 18, 2009
Spokane, Washington

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is a multi-event sports and rehabilitation program for military service veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or certain other neurological problems. It is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world.



National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

March 29 – April 3, 2009
Snowmass, Colorado

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is the world leader in promoting rehabilitation by instructing veterans with disabilities in adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing, and introducing them to a number of other adaptive recreational activities and sports.



National Veterans Golden Age Games

June 1 – 5, 2009
Birmingham, Alabama

The National Veterans Golden Age Games is the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program for veterans in the world, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.



National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

October 5 – 11, 2009
San Antonio, Texas

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is the celebration and grand finale stage and art show which are the culmination of talent competitions in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music for veterans treated in VA's health care system.

Educational Opportunities:

Tai Chi and Therapeutic Recreation

Exercise Your Mind and Body with Tai Chi

The session takes place from 1:30 – 3 p.m. in the Cabaret Room, on the lower level of the Silvertree Hotel.

This class incorporates a short Tai Chi Moves session to help students understand how to integrate Tai Chi into any exercise program. Tai Chi is a beautiful synthesis of the mind and body working together for strength, flexibility and well being, Cari Schurman will show you how Tai Chi can be done successfully by anyone, no matter how well they move.

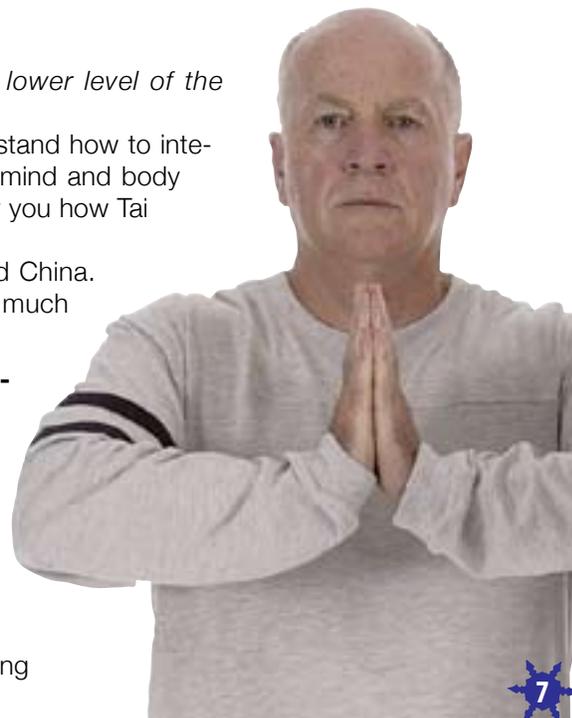
Schurman, a teacher for more than 30 years, studied Tai Chi in the U.S. and China. She has developed a simplified program called Tai Chi Moves that make it much easier for all to experience the benefits of this ancient Chinese exercise.

Build Relationships Between Therapeutic Recreation and Adaptive Programming

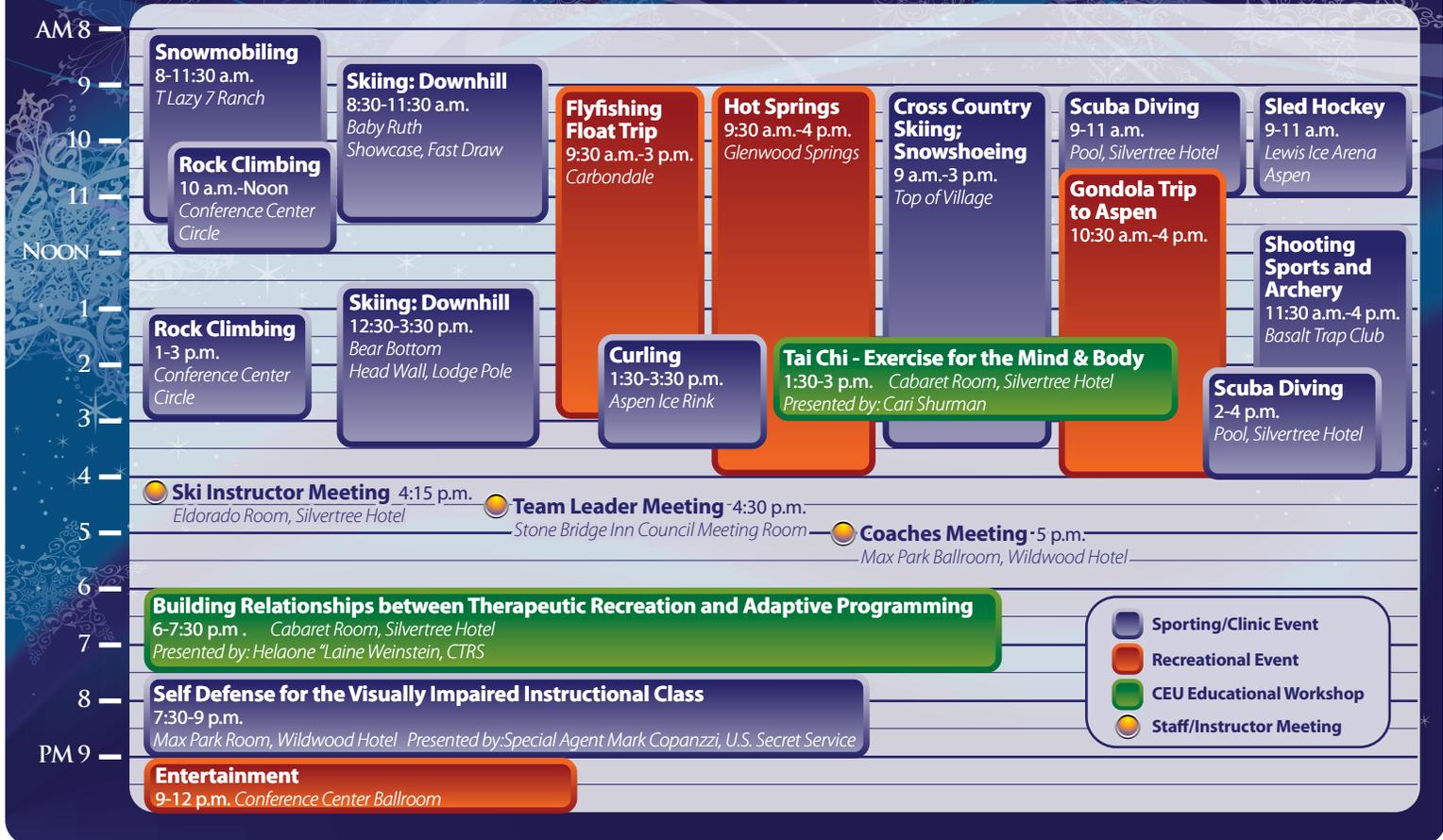
The class is from 6 – 7:30 p.m. in the Cabaret Room, on the lower level of the Silvertree Hotel.

Explore the therapeutic recreation process and learn how it is implemented into aspects of adaptive recreation programming with this class led by Helaine "Laine" Weinstein.

Weinstein, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist, joined the Challenge Aspen Recreational Education and Cultural Programs team in 2006. As winter program coordinator, she is responsible for planning, implementing and operating all of Challenge Aspen's winter camps and special events.



TODAY'S SCHEDULE Thursday, April 3



GENERAL INFORMATION

Medical Clinic information

For life threatening emergencies, dial 911.

Medical room phone: (970) 923-8330

Located in the Bedford A Conference Room, one level below the mall across the street from the Mountain Chalet Hotel. Stairway access from the mall is next to Christy Sports. *Wheelchair users must use the elevator at the far end of the mall, above the main bus terminal.*

A transport van is available from the Silvertree Hotel to the medical clinic at the front of the hotel, or call the medical clinic.

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

Wheelchair and Prosthetics Repair

Located in the conference center Host Room.

Hours (daily): 6:30 - 8:45 a.m., 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

- For wheelchair assistance between hours, call Don at (970) 710-1336.
- For Prosthetics Repair (Joe), call (970) 710-1426.
- After 6 p.m., emergencies only please.

Transportation Schedule

Buses load at the conference center circle.

Snowmobiling

First Trip: Load, 6:45 a.m.

Second Trip: Load, 9 a.m.

Sled Hockey:

Load at 7:45 a.m.

Cross Country Skiing

Load at 8:15 a.m. and throughout the day

Hot Springs Pool Trip:

Load at 9:30 a.m.

Trapshooting:

Load at 10 a.m.

Gondola Trip:

Load at 10 a.m.

Curling:

Load at 12:40 p.m.

Fishing:

Load at 8:40 a.m.

Massage

Complimentary massages are available by appointment in the Elbert Room at the Silvertree Hotel. You can call for an appointment, (970) 710-1080, beginning at 9 a.m. Monday until all slots are full.

TODAY'S MENU

Breakfast Buffet

Fresh Sliced Fruit
Oatmeal with Granola, Raisins, Sliced Bananas, Almonds
Scrambled Eggs
Croissants, Muffins, Biscuits
Bacon, Thick-Sliced Ham
Potatoes
Coffee, Herbal Teas, and Assorted Chilled Juices

Lunch Buffet

Garden Salad with Vinaigrette
Penne Pasta with Marinara Sauce
Bow Tie Pasta with Alfredo Sauce
Garlic Bread and White Bread
Assorted Chips

Dinner Buffet

Spinach Salad with Artichokes, Mushrooms, Ranch & Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing
Trout Amantine with Rice Mushroom Pilaf
Herb Crusted Pork Loin with Cider Bourbon Sauce
Sweet Potato Casserole
Green Beans & Red Bell Peppers
Rolls and Butter
Coffee and Herbal Teas