

Ski Gram

WEDNESDAY EDITION • APRIL 2, 2008



Timothy Thrift straps on the snowboard and takes to the mountain.

Shred It!

Winter Sports Clinic veterans take to the boards and claim the slopes as their own.

Growing in popularity here at the Winter Sports Clinic, snowboarding promises to provide veterans with excitement on the slopes. "Snowboarding at the Winter Sports Clinic is so much fun," said long time participant Christopher Semple. An Air Force veteran from Hampton, Va., Semple added, "Every time I go out snowboarding, it feels brand new and exciting." He began snowboarding at the Clinic four years ago. "With the injuries I have, I feel like I have more control snowboarding than skiing. When I began snowboarding, a guide went down with me on the slopes. Now, I can go down by myself with the use of a ski pole." Semple's advice to new snowboarders? "Try it," he said. "You'll fall down, but when you get back up and try it again – it will be fantastic."

Similar to skiing, snowboarding is inspired by surfing and skateboarding. It was developed in the United States in the 1960s and 70s, and became a Winter Olympic sport in 1998. "I prefer snowboarding to skiing," Richard Pineda said, a Marine Corps veteran from Los Angeles, Calif. "There is more of an adrenaline rush and excitement to snowboarding." This is Pineda's second year at the Clinic. "I've had a couple of nasty wipeouts, but you've got to

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Make the Most of It!

As this special week continues, we hope you are meeting lots of new people, learning to ski and trying out some of the other sports and recreational activities, taking the opportunity to socialize and getting out and about to enjoy this beautiful area.

Today and tomorrow, instructional workshops on self defense will be taking place from 7:30–9 p.m. in the Max Park Room of the Wildwood Hotel. Today's session is for everyone, while tomorrow's is geared for people with visual impairment. Both are being presented by Special Agent Mark

WEATHER



TODAY

High: 48°

Low: 29°

Sunny with PM Showers



TOMORROW

High: 42°

Low: 21°

Clouds with Rain & Snow Mix



Department of Veterans Affairs



Hollywood Returns to the Clinic



John Corbett and his band perform at the 2007 Winter Sports Clinic. The band will make a return appearance tonight to entertain you.



Bo Derek presents an award to a Winter Sports Clinic participant last year. She returns again this year to present awards at Closing Ceremonies Friday night.

This week, some of Hollywood's excitement, glitz and glam return to the Winter Sports Clinic. After an amazing experience last year and at previous Clinics, Bo Derek and John Corbett return to the magnificent slopes of the Rocky Mountains to pay tribute to our nation's veterans.

"Bo and John love coming to our event, as they are truly committed to supporting all of our veterans," said Clinic organizer Teresa Parks. "They can be seen everywhere during the time they're here and they always enjoy spending time with the participants."

Derek is perhaps best known for her role in the 1979 movie "10," and more recently starred in My-Network TV's "Fashion House," where she played the cutthroat mogul Maria Gianni in the evening soap opera. A published author, animal lover and humanitarian, Derek is a true beauty both inside and out. Her heartfelt advocacy for veterans has been apparent since attending her first Winter Sports Clinic in 2000.

Born Mary Cathleen Collins in Long Beach, Calif., Derek has a deep connection to veterans. Her father, Paul Collins, served during the Korean War as a radio operator, and both her stepfather and her late husband, John Derek, were veterans.

Derek has served as the honorary chair of VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events for several years. Her involvement has increased awareness of veterans' issues and promoted participation in the national events. She is passionate about helping disabled veterans improve their independence and quality of life.

The John Corbett Band will once again present a rockin' concert dedicated to the event's participants. The band will perform tomorrow night in the Conference Center Ballroom from 9 p.m. until midnight.

This is Corbett's fourth year at the Clinic. Fans of "Northern Exposure" remember him fondly as radio DJ Chris Stevens. He also played the boyfriend of character Carrie Underwood (played by Sarah Jessica Parker) Aidan Shaw on "Sex and the City. On the big screen, he played Ian Miller, the loveable non-Greek American who marries into a Greek family in the hit film, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding."

"Last year John told me he wanted to be the least expensive band that has ever played at our event and he was, and is again this year," said Parks. "Plus, they played three hours straight!"

At tomorrow's concert, the John Corbett Band will perform songs from their most recent album, simply entitled, "John Corbett." Make sure you don't miss tonight's concert!

Derek and Corbett will be with us through Thursday. Both love to talk with veterans during their time here, so be sure to stop and chat if you see them on the mountain. ♦

Educational Opportunities:

Rock Climbing, Theater & Photography

Witness the Complexity of Choice with Elements of Choice: Part 2

10 – 11:30 a.m. Climbing wall, circle in front of the conference center.

Explore the complexity of choice, goal setting, communication and supportive team relationship with use of an outdoor climbing wall during this class led by Tom Leahy.

Leahy, president of Leahy & Associates, Inc. has more than 30 years experience using the outdoors as a classroom. He is on the Board of Directors of the Association for Challenge Course Technology and has been awarded the Michael J. Stratto Practitioner of the Year Award by the Association for Experiential Education.

Note: you do not have to attend Part 1 in order to participate in Part 2.

Train Your Imagination by Learning More About Theatre

7:30 – 9 p.m. Cabaret Room, on the lower level of the Silvertree Hotel.

This is your second opportunity to experience how the power of theatre arts can help provide self-motivation and promote self-confidence. Acquire these communications skills during the Disability and Theatre: How Arts Training Can Benefit Persons with Disabilities in Their Everyday Lives class led by Michael Duran and Jason Matthews.

Duran, directing producer of the Boulder Dinner Theatre, was awarded Top of the Rocky for Best Director by the Rocky Mountain News and has many Broadway credits, musical tours and television appearances in his career.

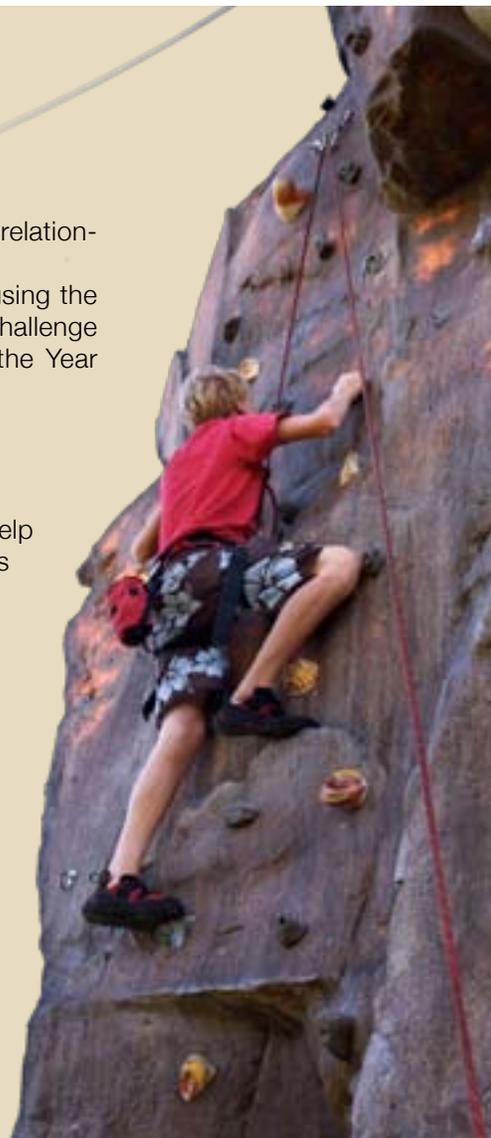
A former member of the 11th Special Forces Group, Matthews is currently Dean of Students/Admissions – National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped. He has directed and performed in many nationally recognized shows and programs.

Test the Limits of Your Camera While Learning More About Photography

7:30 – 9 p.m. Cabaret Room, on the lower level of the Silvertree Hotel.

Learn a variety of techniques to enhance your picture-taking abilities while photographing moving objects or outdoor snow scenes during our Photography class led by Ronald “Doc” Ross, a 40-year photography veteran.

Ross purchased his first camera at the PX in Vietnam and has enjoyed photography ever since. Now retired, he will teach you how to determine the capabilities of your camera to see just how effective a photographer you can be.



Shred It!

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pick yourself up and keep going.” Pineda credits his success in snowboarding to the coaches and instructors at the Clinic.

“Snowboarding is an activity that is very popular with people who do not feel that regular skiing is lethal enough.”

—Dave Barry,
Author and Humorist

“We have great teachers! As a first-timer, listen to their advice and instruction. They are very patient and understand what you are going through.”

“To my fellow veterans, try snowboarding,” encouraged Pineda. “Go out with no fear and experience the freedom and rewards.” ◆

Happy Birthday!

We’d like to wish a happy belated birthday to

Darrel McCauley and Jeremy LeGrand

who both celebrated a birthday yesterday! We apologize for missing your birthdays in yesterday’s newsletter.

Happy Birthday to **Javier Torres** who celebrates his special day today

Thanks to the Veterans Canteen Service, he has a birthday gift waiting for him in the Media Center, in the Erickson Room.

We hope you have a happy birthday and a wonderful Winter Sports Clinic! ◆



Don’t Forget to Vote

If you haven’t done so already, please stop by the Conference Center lobby to vote for the 2008 Winter Sports Clinic Awards. Among many other awards, the below awards will be presented at the Closing Ceremonies Friday night. Voting is open for:

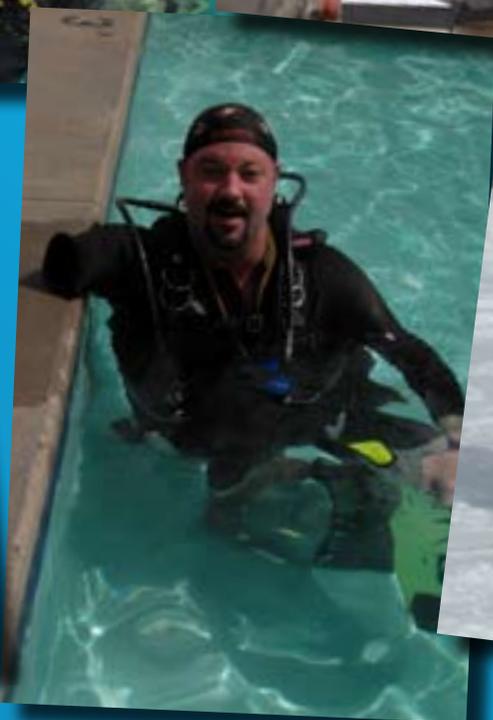
- The Linnie Howard Spirit Award (*awarded to a participant*)
- The Judy Shawo Commitment to Excellence Award (*awarded to a volunteer*)
- The Sid Ford Award for Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (*awarded to a VA employee*)

These awards have a long history at the Winter Sports Clinic dating 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 to 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! ◆



Snow Snaps!





Aspen Gondola Is an Experience Unlike Any Other

OH! I HAVE SLIPPED THE
SURLY BONDS OF EARTH.
AND DANCED THE SKIES...

JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE, JR



Imagine yourself riding on air, literally. That's what many participants at this year's National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic are experiencing. Riding up the side of the majestic Rocky Mountains on a gondola is one of the many activities the Clinic offers.

"I tell all the first-timers that they have to go on the Aspen gondola trip," said Gwendolyn "Wendy" Clouser, a 14-year Army veteran and long-time participant at the Clinic. "It's unlike any other experience they'll have while here," added Carol Schultz, an Army veteran, who has also made the trip several times.

"What's great about the gondola trip is that regardless of your injuries, the staff find a way to get you up there," said Clouser. "And once you're up there in the sky, it's like you're above everything and your injuries just go away.

"I'm not a religious person, but it really is spiritual when you're up there," Schultz added. "The view from the gondola is outstandingly beautiful and can't be compared to anything or anywhere else. I know, because I live in Denver and drive up to Mount Evans, 14,264 feet above sea level, and even it doesn't come close to what you experience on the gondola here at the Clinic."

Although she is a first-time participant, Tatiana Reyes has heard the stories about the gondola trip from several other veteran participants. She said her motivation for going on the trip is more about experiencing everything she can while she's at the Clinic. "I came here to see all the sports and to prove to myself I can still do things," she said. "This is one more thing to do and I've been told it's beautiful up there, so I'm also hoping to catch some Kodak moments."

"It's completely different," said Schultz, "Like Wendy said, you really do leave your disabilities behind." ♦

Snowshoeing and Cross-country Skiing get your heart pumping

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are definitely not for wimps. Although downhill skiing and snowboarding may no longer be on your list of things to do at the Clinic, you can still enjoy the thrill and excitement of outdoor adaptive sports.

Just ask Hardy Alexander, an Army veteran from Hampton, Va., who enjoyed some perfect snowshoe conditions on the mountain Monday. With the snow pouring down, gliding through the beautiful mountainside seemed like paradise – even for the visually impaired. "Although I'm totally blind, I can feel the depth of the fresh fallen snow and it's beautiful," Alexander said.

David Schlinkert, a Marine Corps veteran from Rapid City, S.D., echoed those sentiments when speaking about cross-country skiing at the Clinic. "This is my first experience at cross-country skiing," said Schlinkert. "My guides were awesome, especially Carol Harrington who really put me at ease. I found it exhilarating. The tracks were in excellent condition and I found it a very touching experience."

More exhilarating experiences were described across the mountainside as another group of participants put on their outrigger gear and headed for the snowshoeing tracks. Among them were Robert Paredes, an Army veteran of the Korean War from Chicago, Ill, who said that he'd never felt so alive. "Cross-country skiing is so much fun," he said. "It's one of my most favorite parts of the whole week."



Hardy Alexander pauses for a photo during yesterday's cross-country trek. "Although I'm totally blind, I can feel the depth of the fresh fallen snow; and it's beautiful," says Hardy.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing continue through Thursday, with more exciting and exhilarating experiences ahead. If you think your winter sports activities are over, think again. There's a whole new world of white out there just waiting for you! ♦

Veterans History Project Wraps Up Tomorrow

Have you seen those blue “I Made History” tote bags around the slopes? Or maybe you’ve seen the beautiful Veterans History Project coins shining brightly in the hands of a proud history-maker.

If you’d like to make history (like fellow veterans have already), sign up soon for the Veterans History Project (VHP). The VHP is a national effort to record the stories of service from our Nation’s heroes.

During your interview, you will be asked a variety of questions about your military service. The filmed interview is then sent to the Library of Congress, but you will also get a DVD copy. Histo-

ry-makers also receive a VHP coin and tote bag for their efforts.

Interviews are taking place today, tomorrow and Friday morning in the Janss Auditorium on the second floor of the conference center. Appointments are available from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. through Thursday, and Friday morning until noon. Should an interview be in progress, leave your name, hotel name and room number for the interviewers. They will contact you to schedule an interview if a time slot is available. If you need to cancel your appointment, please let the VHP team know right away. ♦

Make the Most of It!

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Copanizzi of the U.S. Secret Service. Tomorrow, an après ski event will be held at the Cirque from 4-6 p.m. offering drinks, appetizers and entertainment by the Kickin’ Cajuns.

On Friday, Race Day, our Alpine skiers will make their final runs down the slopes while the Nordic skiers will visit the Spider Sabich Race Center and Nastar course. It’s a Mardi Gras theme for this year’s Race Day, so break out those beads and masks and give our photographers some great shots. Following your last time skiing, all skiers will be given their 2008 Winter Sports Clinic participation medals on the mall in Snowmass Village, presented by Secretary of Veterans Affairs James B. Peake, M.D., DAV National Commander Robert Reynolds, and other notable visitors. The Taste of Snowmass will be going on from 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., offering another chance to sample some of the great food choices available at the local restaurants in the village, so don’t miss it!

Learn Self Defense

The U.S. Secret Service team will teach a session on “Self Defense for Everyone” at 7:30 p.m. tonight in the Max Park Room of the Wildwood Lodge. Learn self defense moves for people with disabilities that could prove helpful if you are faced with a threatening situation.

Tomorrow, the Secret Service team will teach a second session on self defense for the visually impaired. That session will also start at 7:30 p.m. in the Max Park Room.

These courses are always popular educational sessions at the Clinic, so be sure to attend one! ♦

Order of the Purple Heart

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is holding a meeting on Wednesday, April 2, for veterans who have received a Purple Heart medal or are the immediate family member of a Purple Heart recipient. The meeting takes place in the lobby/common area of the Silvertree Hotel in front of the fireplace at 7 p.m. The get-together provides an opportunity for individuals to reunite, introduce recipients who are new to the Clinic, share experiences and offer support to one another. Organizers and past attendees all look forward to meeting any newcomers at this meeting. ♦

By the Numbers

391

Total number of participants

49

Number of female participants

342

Number of male participants

3,233

Largest number of miles traveled to Clinic (Hawaii)

44

Number of states represented

20

Age of the youngest participant

85

Age of the oldest participant

13

Number of veterans from the Korean War

51

Number of veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom

18

Number of veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom

42

Number of veterans from the Gulf War

96

Number of veterans from Vietnam

6

Number of veterans from World War II

133

Number of first time participants

66

Number of Air Force veterans

182

Number of Army veterans

5

Number of Coast Guard veterans

60

Number of Marine Corps veterans

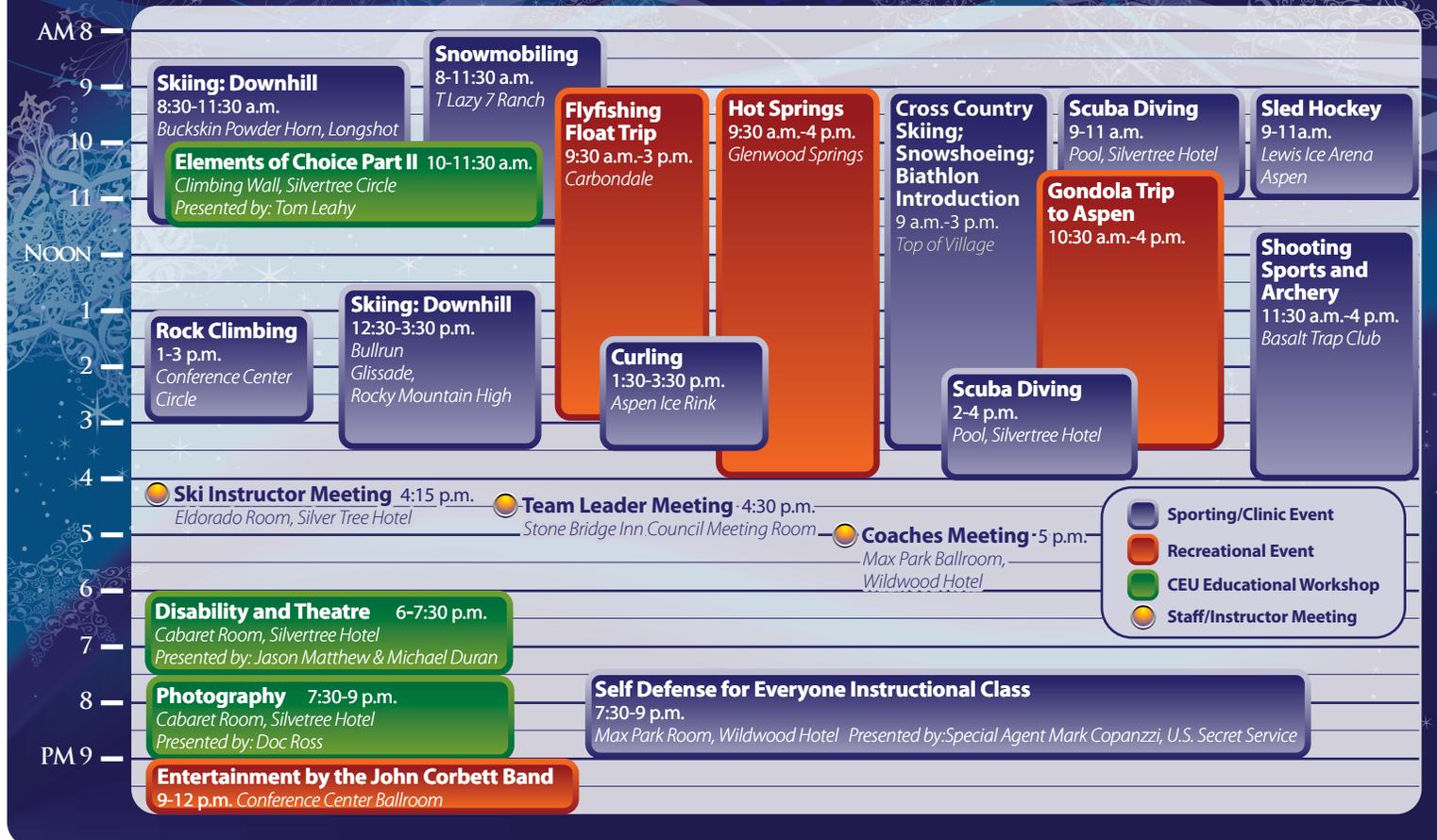
66

Number of Navy veterans

6

Participants who served in multiple branches

TODAY'S SCHEDULE Wednesday, April 2



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, Almonds, Bananas
Breakfast Breads, Muffins & Biscuits
Breakfast Sausage
Thick-Sliced Ham
Potatoes
Coffee, Herbal Teas, and Assorted Chilled Juice
Omelet Bar with Cooked-to-Order Omelets to include various meats, vegetables, cheese and salsa

Lunch Buffet

Tomato Cucumber Salad
BBQ Chicken with BBQ Sauce
Beef Short Ribs
Assorted Chips
Granola Bars

Dinner Buffet

Roast Turkey & Roast Beef Dinner
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
Vegetables
Salad with Assorted Dressings
Roll/Breads with Butter
Desserts
Coffee and Herbal Teas