



The Spirit

Fall/Winter
2010

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center

Thrillin' as a USARC Volunteer!

After last winter's massive storms, many of us were asking ourselves what is in store for the 2010/2011 season? Will it be cold and wet, or warm and dry, or some other combination? Although there is no way to know, one thing is certain and that is that the USARC will once again be providing thrilling and life changing experiences on the slopes. With the help of volunteers, adapted lessons are available in skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing when Ol' Man Winter shows up, in whichever guise.

That means volunteers, the heart and soul of USARC programs, are needed for the rapidly approaching winter. With their help, and hopefully YOU are one, we can continue to serve the tremendous number of participants who have turned to the USARC to improve their quality of life for the last 20+ years.

Volunteers are asked to teach six days between January 10 and March 18, after completing one of the free training sessions (Dec. 9-12, 2010 or Jan. 6-9, 2011.) Snowboarding volunteers are welcome but need to be willing to learn how to ski. There are many perks and benefits, the most important of which is changing a life (which may be your own!) Please, download an application at www.usarc.org/files/2011W_VolyPacket.pdf or give the USARC a call at 909-584-0269.



Using a variety of teaching tactics, Hailey has Tiffany in great form.

Skillin' down the Hill

Anyone who attended the 2010 Winter Paralympic games in Whistler and Vancouver last season became instantly aware that there is a world of possibilities awaiting the adaptive athlete ready and willing to go the extra mile (or vertical foot) with their skiing skills.

Not only that, but the U.S. Paralympic Committee is now turning to smaller adaptive programs for help. For example, the USARC, and the annual winter skills/race camp, is being regarded as a conduit for adaptive athletes to move forward from the development clinics to the regional and national stages, with the potential to take it to the international level.



With the skills learned in the winter race camp, everything else is a blur for mono-skier Danny.

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(See Skillin' on page 4)

Chillin' on the Lake

The unseasonably cool weather of this summer past meant the deep snows from last winter would take their time melting, while the little springs and rivulets that typically dry up shortly after spring continued to burble and trickle their way down slope toward the lake.

The upside was a nearly full lake not just at the beginning of the USARC summer program, but it remained that way for virtually the entire summer, whereas it usually begins to drop significantly by August. Of course, all that steady runoff ensured water temperatures that were cooler than average, so kudos to all the eager participants who dove into the variety of activities, not to mention the volunteers!



Robert steadily paddles through the waves even as son Zach has fun rocking the boat.

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(See Chillin' on page 4)

A Note from the Executive Director

Dear USARC Friends,

Inclement weather is part and parcel to what we do here at the USARC. Summer thunderstorms may temporarily drive us off the lake with their lightning and downpours, but they help ensure that this high alpine blue jewel is replenished and full enough for USARC, and everybody else, to use in the future.

Winter blizzards may make it difficult to get to the mountains and they can create a downright chilly experience during a ski or snowboard lesson, but the deep snows they leave on the runs are why, and how, the USARC (and the resorts themselves) can introduce to people the freedom of soaring down the slopes year after year.

Ultimately, a great many wonderful things are attained only with some degree of struggle and challenge. Ambrosial as we would like our personal or professional existences to be, we have to respond to those hurdles in ways that are not always easy or painless, so when the global economic downturn found its lupine way into the fold of the USARC, the difficult choice was made to eliminate a staff position.

The contributions of Ralph Aros to the progress of the USARC will hopefully continue either in his guise as a seasonal staffer or a volunteer, but no matter the form or direction his future takes, he has left his mark on many, many people, and we wish him well in his pursuits.

We also bade farewell to a non-employee, our outstanding summer Recreation Therapy intern (from Cal State, Sacramento.) Known during her service as "Intern" (as is the tradition,) Lauren Moore made her mark on the USARC legacy and is ready to become a capable Recreation Therapist.



Tom Peirce
Exec. Director



"Intern" Lauren Moore proudly demonstrates the kayak paddle support she built for USARC summer participants.



United States Adaptive Recreation Center

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Fond of Foundations

Thanks to the following foundations from FY10, whose vision matches their generosity, the USARC created life-changing experiences during the winter and summer.

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San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
Team Up For Down Syndrome

Lest this missive begin to resemble some sort of threnody about tough times and people moving on, rest assured I have great faith that the USARC, just like the two aforementioned individuals, will turn out just fine. Times may change, but the mission and accomplishments of the USARC will continue, thanks to the devoted support of our extended families, including you.

I look forward to your continued involvement and partnership, for which I thank you.



Volunteer Profile - Debbi Armenta



Debbi pausing on day two of the 16th Peak to Peak Pedal, with the previous day's snow visible on the peaks beyond.

Debbi Armenta has been involved with the USARC for 10 years. Originally starting as a winter volunteer due to her background as a ski instructor at Snow Summit, Debbi has also become a valued member of the summer volunteer corps. Now, she has capped those commitments with having completed this year's 16th Peak to Peak Pedal! Debbi's attitude is as infectious as her smile, and we thought we'd share this wonderful volunteer with you.

The Spirit (TS): Do you remember your first lesson, or a particularly memorable lesson?

Debbi Armenta (DA): I remember one lesson with a visually impaired student, and I remember feeling very apprehensive about taking her out. We were talking before heading out on the slopes and she asked me, "How does my hair look?" I couldn't believe it! That comment put me at ease so fast that I didn't even think of her as someone with a disability. It also made me realize that kids are kids no matter what!

TS: What does volunteering do for you?

DA: Volunteering for USARC makes me so appreciative for what I have in my life, such as my children and health. Volunteering also teaches me patience and to learn how to adjust my pace. In regular ski school you can go at your own pace, but at USARC you have to take a minute and adjust your pace to the student. It's very magical.

TS: You recently took up a new hobby this year, would you like to comment on it?

DA: I began stand-up paddle boarding this year. I saw it at Captain John's Marina and thought it was very cool. So I tried it and was surprised on how easy it was, and ended up buying my own.

TS: Cool, what do you like most about it?

DA: That you're exercising, but it really feels like you aren't! You can chat with somebody else while you paddle. I also like the fact that almost anyone can do it, even dogs!

TS: You said it helped condition you for riding in the Peak to Peak Pedal; what did you think of the ride?

DA: The best experience of my life! It was also the hardest thing I have ever done. I had heard about the ride over the years and just thought I could never do that, but then I realized that so many of our students do stuff when they come to Big Bear they never thought they could do. So I did it!

TS: Yes you did! And you were an inspiration to a lot of people! Are you going to ride P2P again?

DA: Absolutely! Rebecca (a friend) and I are already planning training rides. I can't wait until next year!

TS: Here's an off-the-wall question; if you were an animal what would you be a why?

DA: A cat. They are my favorite animal, I have 5 at home. They are just so intuitive and know exactly what your thinking and how your feeling. They are very special animals.



Self-portrait of Debbi and her ubiquitous smile alongside one of her lucky students.

The 16th Annual Peak to Peak Pedal is in the books, and will be remembered for many reasons, one of which was the only detoured start ever (due to snow.) A full recap will be found in the Spring issue of *The Spirit*, but in the interim, the USARC wants to express its thanks to all the riders, volunteers, sponsors and donors who contributed to the success of P2P16.



TS: What would you tell people that are interested in volunteering or getting involved with USARC?

DA: Do it! USARC is such a great program! Come out and get involved! You will get more out of it than you put in.

TS: Thanks Debbi, see you when it snows!

Skillin' (cont. from pg. 1)

With that in mind, the USARC is prepared to facilitate the creation of new Paralympians through the return of the annual Skills/Race Camp in February.

The race camp coaching staff is looking for select mono-skiers and standing skiers who, with the help of on-hill drills, tasks and instruction, "classroom" discussion and video-analysis, improve their skiing and learn the fundamentals of racing.



Steven carves a turn with the skills and confidence honed during the 2010 camp.



Hermes emerges from a white-out with a nice crossover move.

and maybe, possibly, launch a whole new career! Please call the USARC at 909.584.0269 for details.

The camp is open to both new and returning "campers" as long as they can comfortably handle intermediate terrain and possess a desire to learn. The interesting aspect of many of the Paralympic medalists last March is that they were not a bunch of "spring chickens," proving you are never too old to participate

Chillin' (cont. from pg. 1)

Trout like cooler oxygenated water, so the skill of professional guides John Cantrell and Cliff Fowler, as well as the "non-pro" volunteers, ensured campfire dinners were complemented by tasty, fresh rainbows! Sailing was equally exciting when steady breezes filled in, and when they didn't, well, there were always shanties to be sung or boating terminology and safety to be learned. While kayakers leisurely explored the shorelines and found Intern's paddle adapter to be a wonderful addition, water skiers and Jet Skiers fulfilled their need for speed.



Professional guide John Cantrell shows off a couple rainbows that will be joining campers at dinner.



Charles gets the basics dialed in on the boom before moving to the rope behind the boat.

The USARC was excited to receive grant funds to be used exclusively for acquiring a new ski boat, so it will be added to

the vessel line-up for next summer. We hope to see you behind it then, on what may be an even fuller (and warmer) lake!

Fall is Workplace Giving Season



MATCHING GIFTS - Many employers will "match" a gift that is made by an employee to a non-profit 501(c)(3). Ask your employer and then contact the USARC to follow through.

EMPLOYER VOLUNTEER SUPPORT - Many employers support volunteerism through time off or a donation based on volunteer hours donated. If so, contact the USARC so we may provide required documentation to your employer.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS - Many employees pick charities randomly. Share your passion for the USARC and request that they consider designating USARC as their charity.

PRINT OUR FLYER - www.usarc.org/files/wpgposter.pdf, if appropriate, to let your colleagues know more about the USARC and how a workplace contribution is utilized.

CALIFORNIA STATE & FEDERAL EMPLOYEES - USARC is on the approved lists for the California State

Employees' Charitable Campaign (CSECC) and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC # 43930) in California! Please designate the USARC as the recipient of your contribution.

LIC & UNITED WAY - Look for the United States Adaptive Recreation Center alphabetically in your campaign booklet or under "Local Independent Charities of America." To designate USARC as for your **United Way** gift (although the USARC is **not** a United Way Agency) complete the pledge form with USARC's name, address and EIN, 95-3872771.

The USARC proudly salutes these 2010 fiscal year donors!

Individuals and organizations donating products or services ("In-Kind" donations) are listed in the winter edition of *The Spirit*. If your FY09 (between 7/1/09 and 6/30/10) contribution of \$100 or more is missing, please contact us to correct the omission.

Philanthropist \$10,000+

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California Dept. of Boating & Waterways **Dan Stormer Trust**

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Please join USARC at the 2011 Ski-A-Thon on March 5!

Now is a good time to mark your calendars for the first Saturday in March, and start planning your Ski-A-Thon participation.

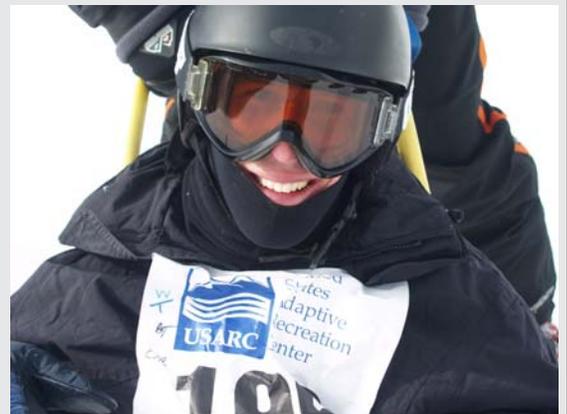
The Ski-A-Thon has been a part of USARC tradition since the inception of the program, and is an integral part of the support machinery that keeps the USARC running! Even with its noble and shared purpose, the Ski-A-Thon is really just a day of skiing or snowboarding fun on the slopes, with a little pomp and pageantry thrown in for good measure.

The day's format is simple: teams of four skiers and/or snowboarders garner sponsorship donations (either per run or just a flat pledge) for the USARC, and then spend the day playing together on the slopes of Bear Mountain.

In addition to goodies such as a full-day lift ticket to Bear Mountain (with priceless line-cutting privileges), participants receive a survival kit including beverages, snacks, sunscreen and more; a lunch voucher for Bear Mountain; a Ski-A-Thon t-shirt; apres-ski party with silent auction items, opportunity drawings, food, drink and musical entertainment.



Sara's grin is further proof that the Ski-A-Thon is a fun and memorable day!



Danny may be bundled up in his bi-ski, but his smile shines during the 2010 Ski-A-Thon.

All abilities are welcome and the more teams, the merrier! You should not only start planning your foursome, but start issuing challenges to other teams for the Top Team Title on the perpetual plaque at the USARC! Throw down that challenge to your friends, colleagues, other departments, business competitors, other clubs or club chapters, sororities, fraternities, other classrooms, other schools and even your in-laws!

Please join in this fun and memorable event, knowing that, in the end, everybody wins, especially those served by the USARC.

Participant Profile - Elenda Flores

Elenda Flores first came to the USARC when she was 12 years old as one of the LA Orthopedic Hospital clients selected for the winter trip. While many of her peers have come and gone since then, Elenda is a die-hard for the experiences offered by USARC, and she comes back year after year and just keeps getting better and better. She is an ideal representation of the transformative programs at the USARC. Read on to learn about this remarkable young woman.

The Spirit (TS): How did you hear about USARC?

Elenda Flores (EF): - I was at Orthopedic Hospital when the Director came in and started talking about the program. He showed us a video and it looked really cool, so I signed up.

TS: Do you remember the first time you came to the USARC?

EF: Yeah, it was a winter trip. It was a pretty big group and everyone had been before so they all knew what to expect. I was a little nervous, but when we got to USARC everyone was so nice that it put me at ease right away. It was my first time away from LA, so it was completely different from what I am used to. I started out in a Bi-Ski and now I ski in a Mono-ski!



Elenda samples the glassy water outside the Nautique's wake.

TS: You sure have come a long way! What about the summer?

EF: The summer trip is my favorite. I like to water ski and especially Jet Ski. On a jet ski I get to go explore the whole lake (almost). The camping part is really fun; I love the skits and the campfire, and especially the stars. I never knew there were so many stars out; you never see them in LA!

TS: So what do you do when you're not at the USARC?

EF: I go to Santa Monica City College. I am working on my Child Development degree right now and then I want to get my art degree down the road. My goal is to open an art studio for children.



Elenda and her instructor, Ray, in between runs during a mono-ski lesson at Bear Mt.

TS: What kind of art? What else do you like to do?

EF: I like to use clay in my art; I'm into claymation right now. I also like music and discovering new bands and hanging out with friends like Stephany, whom I met at camp. Also just exploring and being outside.

TS: Sounds like fun. So what is your favorite food?

EF: Right now I LOVE Hot Dog on a Stick (yes, the one with the funny hats). Its so good, I go all the time! They also have the best lemonade!

TS: What would you tell someone who was thinking about coming up to the USARC?

EF: Go! It's an experience you will never forget. Its so much fun and you meet so many cool people and its just beautiful!

TS: Indeed it is! Well Elenda, any final comments?

EF: No, not really, but I will be back this winter!

The USARC is honored to recognize the following Big Bear Lake summer program volunteers who fulfilled their time commitment to the USARC and its participants.

Robert Allen	Kevin Dumler	Caryn Krasne	Bob Mourino	Tayla Shepard
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*****Internet Edition*****

**You are invited to the
 ACRE Holiday Party!**

Join USARC and the Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives (ACRE) at Kimera Restaurant in Irvine on December 7! ACRE supports USARC programs through the success of this fun evening of food, drink, auctions and the opportunity for you to score some tremendous holiday shopping deals! Call the USARC at 909.584.0269 for details or reservations.



**Big Bear Real Estate
 Buyers/Sellers**

USARC staffer, Will Rahill, is an agent with Keller-Williams of Big Bear, and he will donate 10% of his earned commission to USARC if a lead comes from a USARC associate. If you want to sell or purchase a home or property, please contact him at usarc@willrahill.com, or 909.645.1949, or go to www.SearchBigBearRealEstate.com



Help Wanted! The USARC is seeking qualified seasonal staff instructors for the 2010-2011 Winter!

So... what is up???
We can do BETTER!

The USARC has thousands of households on its database, but only a fraction of you have signed up for the FAST, EASY and FREE rewards programs that donate to USARC every time you go shopping!

For Ralphs shoppers, log onto www.ralphs.com and click on the "Community Contribution" link, then click "Enroll" or "Sign In", whichever is appropriate, and follow the prompts. (USARC's NPO # is 80843).



VONS For Vons and Safeway shoppers, log onto www.escrip.com and under "Make a Difference in Four Easy Steps", follow the prompts to do just that! (USARC's group ID # is 152931854). You can also enter many other loyalty cards on the same website!



Thank you for participating!
 (but we'll keep reminding you until everyone is enrolled!)

What's ahead at USARC?

- DECEMBER
- 4 Winter lessons begin (snow permitting)
- 7 ACRE Holiday Party (Irvine)
- 9-12 New Volunteer Training
- 11-12 Returning Volunteer Training
- 25 Christmas Day - USARC CLOSED
- JANUARY
- 1 New Years Day - USARC CLOSED
- 6-9 New Volunteer Training
- 8-9 Returning Volunteer Training
- 10 Group Lessons Begin
- TBD PSIA "Welcome to Adaptive" clinic
- FEBRUARY
- 11-13 Skills/Race Camp
- TBD PSIA Adaptive Exam Prep
- MARCH
- 5 2011 Ski-A-Thon
- 26 Winter Volunteer Recognition Party
- 30 Last day of winter lessons
- TBD PSIA Adaptive Exams
- APRIL
- TBD P2P16 Reunion Party
- TBD PSIA Adaptive Exams