



# The Spirit

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center

## Take a friend to Italy with the USARC

The Gondola Company of San Diego, owned by ex-USARC staffer, and proud father-to-be Sean Jamieson, invites you to an evening of romance and relaxation to benefit the USARC. On Friday, April 21, 2006, he proudly presents the second edition of "For the Love of Skiing" from 3 pm to midnight. As your gondolier rows you through the quiet canals of San Diego's Coronado Cays, you and your significant other, family, group of friends or business associates will enjoy an experience for which most people travel thousands of miles. Whether it's six friends, or just two of you looking for some private time together, this delightful evening will enchant you while benefiting the USARC.

- Friday, April 21, 2006; 3 pm to Midnight (cruises are approximately one hour in length)
- Passport Cruise for two - \$85 (\$20 for each additional guest, up to six total per vessel)
- Each gondola can accommodate up to six passengers
- Soft, warm blankets are provided
- Cruises include a complimentary appetizer or dessert plate
- Complimentary bottle of wine provided to each couple (or you may bring your own)
- Ice buckets, glassware, and wine openers are supplied
- Reservations required (call 619.429.6317, or click on [www.gondolacompany.com](http://www.gondolacompany.com).)



Italy is really just a short drive away!  
Please join us to support USARC.

## Splash into Summer

Imagine zooming around the lake on a water ski or a jet-ski this summer, or just floating leisurely along on a kayak or sailboat, or landing a wiley trout to cook up as an appetizer! Well, this could be YOU! The famous sunshine of Big Bear's summer (there's a reason a solar observatory is located here) is just around the corner. With that sunshine also comes an abundance of laughter, splashing around, and tons of fun in USARC's summer program.



Araceli Gutierrez's smile shows waterskiing is fun and easy!

Once again the USARC summer program will feature outdoor aquatic adventures including water-skiing, kayaking, sailing, fishing, camping, and Jet-Skiing. Oh, did we mention tubing? Our range of adaptive equipment makes it possible for just about anyone to experience the joy of water sports here at beautiful Big Bear Lake. The lake is enormously full, once again, providing extra room for our water-based program. You don't need to be a strong swimmer to participate, but you must be comfortable in the water and able to right yourself from a face-down position. Of course, as part of our Safe Boating partnership with the California Department of Boating and Waterways, everybody must wear a life jacket.

Day sessions focus on waterskiing and Jet-Skiing exclusively, while the overnight sessions provide an introduction to all the above sports, plus the wonderful opportunity to camp in the great outdoors and make new friends. Big Bear summer evenings feature starry nights, the fragrant smell of the pines (and smores), and relaxing time around the campfire making new friends. The campground is wheelchair accessible and even feature hot showers! Remember, unlike the winter program, friends and families are welcome to participate as well!

Check the schedule on page 8, including USARC's partnership with Casa Colina (call 909.596.7733) in Long Beach in August. Space fills up quickly, so beginning May 16th, 2006, call 909.584.0269 to register for Big Bear sessions, and dive in!

## Annual Volunteer Rafting Trip on June 3 & 4

On the weekend of June 3rd and 4th, USARC volunteers and friends are invited to join Robert Allen and experienced river guides on the rapids of the Kern River in the Southern Sierra. Robert donates the minimal fees to the USARC. This is not a USARC event, and interested participants must contact Robert directly at [allen6441@sbcglobal.net](mailto:allen6441@sbcglobal.net).

## "Sunshiny" Vols Wanted

To help our participants enjoy hot summer days, cool lake temperatures and tons of aquatic fun during the months of July and August! Summer volunteers help out with our water-ski, kayak, fishing, camping, and sailing programs, both in Big Bear and in Long Beach. New volunteers attend one day of training at the end of June and then help out for two overnight sessions and two day sessions. USARC's summer program is a great way to spend time here in Big Bear, make new friends, and help others. Please call at 909-584-0269 for an application or download an application at [www.usarc.org](http://www.usarc.org).

# Thoughts from the Executive Director

Dear USARC Friends,

Wow, I guess time still flies even when you're not having quite as much fun! Fortunately, I am reminded how fortunate I am to be involved with USARC, for beyond my inbox full of accounting, insurance, budgetary, legal and other paperwork, I live vicariously through the amazing people who make this program great!

For example, this winter we were fortunate to be graced once again by so many wonderful folks who play the roles that keep this program going on a daily basis: the volunteers who donate their priceless time, the participants who bring their enthusiasm and energy, the families so full of encouragement, and the generous supporters who gave to our annual membership campaign and the USARCFest '06.

"In like a lion, out like a lamb", hardly applied to this March, when we received more natural snow in a week than the preceding months had delivered in total! The upside was great conditions for our two student-staffers, Sara Rosell and Elena Messenger, who successfully completed their Recreation Therapy internships, as well as the challenge of the PSIA Adaptive Certification exam.



**Tom Peirce**  
Exec. Director

I am likewise proud of the job our rookie staffers did on the hill, as they not only improved and matured throughout the winter, they brought new perspectives and hunger to their positions. Despite the inevitable bumpy road of such transitions, I want to thank the veteran instructors and volunteers who stood by them and helped refine their teaching skills daily.

So, with summer just ahead (if this winter ever ends), I invite each of you to step into one of the roles listed above, so that when I take off my "adminiglasses" I'll see and remember what fun is all about! Whatever your choice, thank you!



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## The Only Constant is Change

The winter of 2005-2006 was memorable for many reasons, most of all its transitions. First, Mother Nature wasn't all that kind in the beginning of the season, but she sure came around in the end. Even with good snowmaking, February's sunshine and warmth had people dubious. Then came March, with storm after storm after storm, depositing a good 3 feet of snow in just a couple of days, pretty unusual for Southern California. Everyone was bundled up in layers, with hand-warmers in their gloves, unlike the t-shirts of just a few weeks before!



**Intern (aka - Sara Rosell) heads up the chair with Hannah Kololia-Faith.**

Another major transition was that of personnel, but over the course of the winter, under the patient tutelage of veteran staffers and volunteers, they blossomed from bewildered rookies to confident pros. They had little choice, as the aforementioned mild weather kept the roads open, and along them flowed a steady stream of group and private lessons. The groups came during the week and kept us busy and the privates on the weekends were always a joy.

One last evolution was the many staff members and volunteers who undertook Adaptive certification by the Professional Ski Instructors of America. An intimidating process, requiring knowledge and courage, it brings credibility and validity to the USARC, because pass or fail, the following people have become better instructors. Kudos to staffers Sara Gordon, Jamie Hoffman, Caryn Krasne, Elena Messenger and Intern (Sara Rosell), as well as volunteers Jeff Palmer, Kim McCrae, Farid Mosher, Derek Kemper and Micheal Trobisch.

What didn't change? The dedication of some 130 volunteers, whose names you see on page 7, that fulfilled their commitment to the USARC and poured every variety of blood, sweat and tears (and bones, Tim) into each lesson. The backbone of the program, they contributed to approximately 4,700 hours and 1,900 lessons this winter, and without them, the USARC would be incomplete. Our endless thanks and deep appreciation goes out to each of them.

With its snowy finish, everyone was sad to see the season end. Nonetheless, it has topped off the lake for summer, and hopefully serves as an indication of Mother Nature's inclination for next winter. See you then, or sooner!

# Participant profile: Alec “Hot Wheels” Kassorla



**Alec obviously can't wait to go play in the powder!**

Alec Kassorla may look like any other shy, cute little seven-year-old (well, almost eight) mortal boy in our program, but get him out onto the hill in a bi-ski and lots of magic takes place! Alec is a very smart child who happened to have sustained a spinal cord injury at the age of three. He cruises around in his sport chair with ease, and loves the freedom that skiing gives him. Alec and his family come up skiing several times each season. While Alec spends his day bi-skiing, his sister takes ski school lessons, and sometimes they take a run or two together.

Alec is passionate and knowledgeable about tractors, trains, and, most recently, “Hot Wheels”. To that end, his instructors try to make his time here more than just about skiing by taking him all around the mountain, not only to ski through the Super-Pipe, but to visit all the snow-cats and tractors near the runs. Sometimes, they’ll visit a tractor, put Alec on top of the tractor seat, and take a photo. In spite of his relative shyness in the ski school, when on the chairlift he talks endlessly about the different tractor types, giving long exposés about which one is a loader

or an excavator and about the type of attachments on each one. He also loves to carry snowballs and ice blocks on his lap while he skis, the bigger the better! Even if those snowballs are intended for us, we hope to give Alec many more runs of “going fast” and lots of smiles in the years to come! Read on to learn a little about this future ripper.

**The Spirit (TS):** Hey Alec, what do you like most about skiing?

**Alec Kassorla (AK):** Going fast!

**TS:** What else?

**AK:** (very shyly and with a big smile) The Super pipe!

**TS:** So how long have you been coming here?

**AK:** One year, no, two years, no, three.



**USARC Staffer Jamie “The Squatter” Hoffman and Alec head for the wall of the Superpipe.**

**TS:** So, Alec, what do you want to do with skiing when you get older?

**AK:** Go Fast.

**TS:** What else do you like about skiing?

**AK:** Well, sometimes my sister and her friend come with me.

**TS:** Is that pretty cool?

**AK:** Yeah.

**TS:** Who’s your favorite instructor here?

**AK:** (complete, non-committal, silence)

**TS:** What do you like to do at home after school?

**AK:** I like to have friends over and play.

**TS:** What do you play with your friends?

**AK:** With Hot Wheels. Oh yeah, the Hot Wheels movie

and cars!

**TS:** Do your friends know that you ski?

**AK:** Yeah.

**TS:** Say, your wheelchair looks pretty cool, do you have any more at home?

**AK:** (short silence, broken only with bribery with Cheetos) I have 3; a red one, an orange one, and this one. The orange one helps me stand up, the red one goes off road.

**TS:** Cool. Well, we sure like having you here, Alec.

**AK:** (more feigned shy silence, with a mischievous smile, and an eye on the bag of Cheetos!)



**Volunteer Sean Peterson and Alec pausing during a run for a Snow-Cat fix.**

## Thanks to our Grantors

The USARC expresses heartfelt gratitude to the following foundations and organizations that contributed to the USARC summer and winter programs, since the last edition of *The Spirit*:

**Anthony Arthur Foundation**  
**Calif. Dept. of Boating & Waterways**  
**Dreyfus Foundation**  
**Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation**  
**Sherry Griswold Foundation**  
**Kimley-Horn Foundation**  
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**UPS Supply Chain Solutions**

Each of these organizations is a partner in daily achievements and life changing experiences for our participants. Without their support and others like them, we could not keep lesson costs affordable, offer state of the art equipment and keep up our high caliber of staff and volunteer involvement and training. Their giving has measurable impact!

# Volunteer (of the Year) Profile - Diane Jordan

Diane Jordan has been with the USARC since 1993, and during that time has evolved from a one-dimensional, one-season volunteer into a multi-talented, year-round resource who helps bring success to each USARC venture she joins! A career flight attendant for United Airlines, her recent retirement has enabled her to regularly volunteer for the USARC, regardless of the time of year. While passing summers at their beautiful home high in Moonridge, she and her husband Ed spend their winters in Rancho Mirage. The common link between the two very different locales is a golf course, where both excel as accomplished regulars.



**Diane and volunteer Rob Hoopengartner with student Austin Parrish.**

Despite the commitment required to become a low-handicap golfer, Diane finds time to volunteer in the summer, winter and seasons in-between. When the snow flies, she teaches numerous adaptive disciplines and can help with them all, befitting her nearly 15 years of experience with the program. Her flight attendant background is apparent during the summer program, where she typically helps on the dock, ensuring participants are comfortable, safely prepared for a “water landing”, and minimizing any program turbulence. Have a read to learn about this worthy addition to USARC’s Volunteer-of-the-Year membership.

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

**Diane Jordan (DJ):** My husband Ed and I saw a fellow skiing, wearing a vest that read “Blind Skier Guide”, and following him was a skier with a vest stating “Blind Skier” on it. We skied down to the little school house (USARC) building and were enlisted on the spot. In those days we lived here full time and were on the hill most every day I wasn’t flying. Ed taught 30+ days that first year!

**TS:** Do you remember the first lesson you taught?

**DJ:** I remember my first V.I. (visually impaired) lesson; I had been recently trained and was expecting to observe someone for my first lesson. To my great surprise, I had my own V.I. student, who also had a developmental disability, but Tom told me he had every confidence in me. Ultimately, it wasn’t a hard student, and my confidence soared.

**TS:** Describe your best day of teaching.

**DJ:** It was late in the season and raining. My student was one of three brothers with Autism, and using a tip connector and tether he did great. His parents were watching and were sobbing when they related they had never had an activity in which all three boys succeeded together. I had been muttering to myself about the weather and expected a miserable day. It was far and away the most rewarding day!

**TS:** Okay then, your most challenging lesson? ([see Volunteer, pg. 5](#))

**Our congratulations and deepest thanks to these wonderful volunteers, each of whom fulfilled a commitment to teach six days this winter and, in turn, ensured the fulfillment of our mission.**

<i>John Alderete</i> ***	<i>Tim Forrest</i> **	<i>Kam Lawrence</i> *	<i>Vanessa Paulson</i> *	<i>Joseph Shay</i>	<i>Ryan Vallone</i>
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*Italics* = PSIA Certified / Underline = 10 days or more / \* = 5-9 years / \*\* = 10-14 years / \*\*\* = 15 years or more

# The USARC salutes these in-kind donors!

In-kind donations are products or services, in lieu of cash, for which the law permits a tax deduction. If your contribution **between 1/1/05 and 12/31/05** is missing please contact us to correct the omission.

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## Volunteer Profile (cont.)

**DJ:** I had a non-verbal student who did not want to ski that particular day. I encouraged him, and we made it to the top of Inspiration, where he sat down. I tried to get him up, and he threw up! I flagged down another volunteer and we tried to pick him up, with no success, and ultimately it took three of us carry him to the bottom! It is much funnier now than then.

**TS:** How about your most creative experience with duct tape on a lesson?

**DJ:** That would be duct-taping the gloves to the sleeves of a student with a developmental disability so he could not remove them from his hands!

**TS:** Other favorite stories from your time with USARC?

**DJ:** During the Peak to Peak Pedal, I am one of the "Lunch Ladies". My favorite memory is this last year when Gerard Moreno pulled into the Jenks Lake lunch stop on his hand-cycle with a HUGE "semi" blocking five other vehicles from running him over. The driver waved and had a big smile. I took a photo of Gerard and his cycle and smile every time I look at it.

**TS:** When you're not volunteering for USARC, what are your hobbies and interests "down the hill"?

**DJ:** I joined Dusty Wings (a group of former and current flight attendants in the Coachella Valley) five years ago and help make baskets for their annual fund-raiser, but my big passion is cooking. I typically bring cookies and on occasion, even lunch, for the USARC staff and volunteers. During summer sessions I usually bring dinner the first night of the camp-out.



**Diane hanging out with some guy during her flight attendant career.**

**TS:** What motivates you, or might motivate others, to make the drive up the hill to volunteer for USARC?

**DJ:** In summer, it's the faces of the participants during the campfire skits, making S'mores, and seeing the animals brought over from the Moonridge Zoo. In the winter, it's the smile of a developmentally disabled girl after her first day of learning to ski, when she told me she had found something she was good at. If life gets any better and more rewarding, I don't know how.

## Your groceries can easily feed the USARC!

Register your **Albertsons/Sav-on** card on the Community Partners page of their website, [www.albertsons.com](http://www.albertsons.com), and designate the USARC (ID# 49000119060) as your charity.

For stores such as **Vons, Safeway, Pavillions, Wild Oats** and many more, log onto [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com), and follow the prompts to register your card(s). (ID # 152931854).

Do your Internet shopping through [www.i-give.com](http://www.i-give.com), where you can shop at countless major retailers who in turn make a donation to the USARC, without charging you more.

Call USARC (909.584.0269) with your **Ralphs, King Soopers** grocery card information and the chain will donate a percentage of your expenditures to the USARC.



# From Ski to Shining Sea - Peak to Peak 11

After 10 years of traversing the high desert toward and into the high Sierra, the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Peak to Peak Pedal (P2P11) took a very different turn, literally and figuratively. In response to so many past riders who had indicated a desire for something different, the popular annual fundraiser changed course, heading south from Big Bear to Encinitas. Inexplicably, nobody recalls any of those folks showing up to ride, but those who did enjoyed an experience unequalled in the history of this ride.

The short eastern traverse of the Big Bear Valley that initiated the first day, turned into a steady, lung-stretching grind up the



**Riders and volunteers ready for their journey.**

8,500 ft. Onyx Summit. Under one of those immeasurably blue October skies, those who hadn't spent a little time training focused on the expansive vistas to the desert and beyond as a distraction. However, once that lofty saddle was behind their saddle, they rocketed downward mile after mile, pausing for lunch near Angelus Oaks, before continuing a brake withering descent toward Cherry Valley. After one last uphill grind, it was down into the oasis of Highland Springs Resort, with its cool green grass, immense eucalyptus, turquoise swimming pool and steaming hot tub for the first night.

Wildfires in the area had the potential of shortening the second day's route, but were extinguished overnight, leaving the roads passable, albeit surrounded by scorched earth and a sooty redolence. The riders soon wished the fires had raged on, saving them precious energy for the afternoon section of day two. After a mostly flat and circuitous approach into and through Hemet, most arrived early at lunch, where they were encouraged to fuel up for P2P11's biggest challenge, the ascent of highway 74 to Idyllwild. While the elevation was lower than the first day, the warmth of the day and the grade of the hill threw a challenge at even the most stalwart cycling veteran. Nonetheless, with regular rests and water refills, most riders arrived before the mandatory sunset sag-ride at the Idyllwild Pines Camp, a rustic reminder of childhood summer camps. If anybody didn't sleep soundly that night, they should be in Hawaii at the Ironman.



**Gerard Moreno puts one very high hurdle behind him.**



**Rex Lewis, Tim Goforth, Tom Caldwell and Don Robertson giving a paceline clinic.**

If they didn't struggle to get up on day three, they should go hang with Lance. At about 70 miles, the ride to Lake Henshaw was the longest leg of P2P11. It began with a downright chilly descent through some of the winding curves they ascended the day before (payback), before a short up-and-over into the beautiful Garner Valley. Under the peaks of San Jacinto, passing livestock dappled fields of verdant hay accented by whitewashed fences, many riders enjoyed this quiet, flat, scenic road in small conversant groups. Turning westward, through the recently earthquake-rattled community of Anza, riders had their first taste of the coast: a west wind through which

many drafted and, on the horizon beyond, a fog bank. A few daring souls, for whom riding 250 miles isn't exciting enough, stopped for sailplane rides at the Warner Springs airport, where one particular P2P veteran was grateful the plane had a little bag on board! The roads of the broad valley beyond were tailor-made for some big-gear spinning to the Lake Henshaw Campground, where night three was spent below San Diego County's towering Mt. Palomar.

On the last day of the ride, the rural two-lane highways gave way, via a g-force-inducing, hairpin-filled descent, to the outskirts of civilization, replete with traffic and stoplights! A detour past the breeze ruffled blueness of Lake Wohlford, followed by yet another swooping descent through the canyon below its dam, landed the riders in Escondido, around the fringes of which the cyclists skirted, ever closer to the Pacific. (see *From Ski*, pg. 7)



**Jim Fitzpatrick and Jake Schetter grinding ever upward to Idyllwild.**

**P2P11  
Gold  
Jerseys**

According to the last calculations, the following riders achieved Gold Jersey status (and more!) Please note, regardless of jersey color, each rider's efforts make a difference, and it is often the smaller donations that truly add up to a successful event!

Don Robertson - \$9,750	Gigi Morley - \$2,770
Fred Liebel - \$5,455	Tom Caldwell - \$2,600
Rex Lewis - \$3,175	David Rader - \$2,070

# USARCFest '06 - The Snowmaker

Shortly after March decided to make up for a desiccated December, January and February, the clouds parted long enough to allow the USARCFest '06 to come off without a hitch. Was it simply chance that so many good vibes coincided with winter's return? We think not.



**USARC Board Member Bill Webster (r), with his wife Mailyn, and son Danny, bask in the sunshine of USARCFest '06.**

Thanks to the generosity of Big Bear Mountain Resorts, who donated not only lunches and lift tickets, but also line-cutting privileges, the dozens upon dozens of USARC supporters showed up to enjoy about as many runs as their legs could handle. In addition to skiers and snowboarders, there were adaptive skiers of all types, mono-skiers, bi-skiers, 3-trackers, 4-trackers, and even 2-trackers, who spent the day carving and skidding telltale arcs down the snowy pitches of Bear Mountain.

Winning a trip for two on Southwest Airlines for a four-day vacation at Northstar at Tahoe was reigning champion Michelle Jameson, who raised \$5,470! Pam Cochran also reprised her (very admirable) role as runner-up, raising \$2,000. Third place goes to first-year USARC volunteer, Dave Armstrong, who raised \$1,520! Kudos to the Inland Empire Parrothead Club who once again came away with the Club Challenge honors (whatever happened to Team El Niño?) Of course, whether victor or not, every participant's contribution helps, and they all deserve recognition.

Special thanks to musician Jerry Gontang, who with his diverse repertoire and (not-too-shabby) auction skills, kept the apres-ski festivities lively, colorful and profitable. It's nice when something that achieves such good is also so much fun. Let's set a goal for USARCFest '07 and have everybody there this year bring one friend next year.

## From Ski to Shining Sea (cont.)

The USARC acknowledges these USARCFest '06 and Peak to Peak Pedal 11 sponsors. Please remember their loyalty the next time you require similar products or services.



**Fred Liebel adds a little body English as he dives into a curve.**

groves of fragrant eucalyptus trees, past which the riders wheeled, undistracted by the beautiful flower beds of the vast estates along the winding streets. A few final turns to the coastal bluffs and then, suddenly, the limitless horizon of the Pacific Ocean, thundering out its rhythmic greeting with each wave. A short stop to regroup, followed by

The rains of the prior winter had filled the fishing and windsurfing playground of Lake Hodges to the brim, with the river draining its west end serving as a beacon for the final miles of this adventure. With the moist climate of the coast came



**Jyl Rogers enjoying her daily dose of Vitamin C.**



**Seana Green and Karen Mora are all smiles (on the flat roads!)**

the ceremonial "parade lap" into the campground and the ubiquitous champagne showers, and this unique adventure was over. A mind- and body-cleansing romp in the waves provided the perfect wet and salty exclamation point to a Peak to Peak Pedal truly unlike any other.

Cycling season is here; so where do you want to ride to in October? The coast, Mammoth, or...? Let us know and we'll see you then!





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Get *The Spirit* early and help us conserve resources.  
 Give us your email address so we can email your future issues.

**HELP WANTED:** The USARC is seeking to fill its **OUTREACH COORDINATOR** position. This full-time, year-round position with benefits focuses on volunteer recruitment/supervision, special events and community involvement.

### Big Bear Real Estate Buyers/Sellers



Will Rahill, now selling Real Estate for Prudential Properties of Big Bear, will donate 10% of his earned commission from any transaction to USARC if the lead comes from a USARC member. If you have any leads please contact Will Rahill on his mobile phone at 909.645.1949, or office at 909.752.2058, or by email at will@dansmithandassociates.com.

### Volunteers are needed

for many fun USARC programs and activities.  
 Please call 909.584.0269 for details!

### USARC Wish List

Late-model Full-size Pick-up Truck  
 Videographic Production Services  
 LCD Projector

The donation of these items/services will improve the USARC's service to its membership.

### What's up at the USARC?

- May**
- 16 Reservations begin for Summer Program
- June**
- 3-4 Volunteer Rafting Trip (Kern River)
- 24 Volunteer Training (Big Bear)
- July**
- 5,6 Waterski/Jetski Day Sessions
- 12,13 Waterski/Jetski Day Sessions
- 23-25 Overnight Session #1
- 26-28 Overnight Session #2
- August**
- 2,3 Waterski/Jetski Day Sessions
- 7 Volunteer Training (Long Beach)
- 8-11 Land Meets Sea Sports Camp (Long Beach)
- 16,17 Waterski/Jetski Day Sessions
- 20-22 Overnight Session #3
- 23-25 Overnight Session #4
- 26 Summer Volunteer Party
- October**
- TBD 12th Annual Peak to Peak Pedal