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Spring/ **Summer** 2014

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center



Playing in cool water under a warm sun

Melted Snow Has Its Place Too!

As Olaf (the snowman in Frozen) would say, "Oh, I don't know why but I always loved the idea of summer and sun and all things hot!" Well, summer is here, or it will be soon. The lake is warming up, the boats are coming out of storage and kayaks are already being paddled. Soon enough, the program will be in full swing, ready for you to come up and join the fun!

Reservations are already being taken, so call in and book your spot today! See the calendar on page 8 for program dates. Once again, participants can enjoy day sessions consisting of water skiing, Jet Skiing, stand-up paddle boarding, and kayaking. For those wanting to spend more time outdoors, there are two 48-hour sessions that add fishing and sailing to the mix, based around evenings spent at accessible Serrano Campground.

puts a smile on your face. Just ask Matthew. Valued volunteers are needed to help make the program run smoothly and safely. A one-day training will be held on June 28th and is mandatory for

new volunteers, and recommended for returnees. Volunteers are asked to commit to six days during the summer, including four day sessions and one overnight session.

Summer sessions fill up quickly, so to book your spot or get more information, please call 909.584.0269 today!

Darius' Milk-Like Universe



Darius and volunteer Demitrio are all your name?" smiles after hitting it off on the slopes.

It's white and wide, I run around trying to catch something, I caught the snow... and it's so cold! I can't feel my fingers. But this is not what I wanted to catch and feel, I wanted to get close to this milk-like universe!

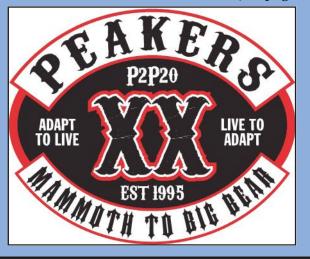
But it's so wide and doesn't have walls around that I could refer to. I saw a guy. He asked me: What's

(see page 5)

Ride with the USARC Biker Gang in P2P20!

In the early part of October, you can be a part of history as the 20th Annual Peak to Peak Pedal rolls south from Mammoth to Big Bear, five days and 335 miles that transforms the riders who participate and, in turn, enables the USARC to transform lives through its summer and winter programs. For more information and a review of last year's ride, please read on.

(see page 7



A Note from the Executive Director

Please allow me to share what I said to our wonderful volunteers after this past winter, our 25th...

I quote Dave Barry: "Aside from Velcro, time is the most mysterious substance in the universe. You can't see it or touch it, yet a plumber can charge you upwards of seventy-five dollars per hour for it, without necessarily fixing anything."

Yep, I think time is pretty funny stuff, or at the very least, paradoxical. We've all been there, maybe somewhere or with somebody or under circumstances that, for whatever reason, rendered the passage of time seemingly interminable. Not only does the clock appear to cease all forward movement whatsoever, it almost moves in reverse. Then there are



Tom Peirce USARC Exec. Dir.

those other moments. The moments, whether because of whom you are blessed to be sharing them with, or because of the beauty of the place in which you find yourself spending them, or perhaps a combination, that whiz by like a brilliant but ephemeral shooting star.



United States Adaptive Recreation Center

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In actuality, neither of those types of moments is any longer than the other. However apocryphal it may sound, theoretical physicists will tell us that with enough gravity, the fabric of time itself can be warped and bent back upon itself, allowing us to move to and five between the past, present and future. But until we figure out how to do that, every minute is like every other minute, with the only difference in their apparent length being the way we choose to spend them.

"How did it go so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has flewn. How did it get so late so soon?" - Dr. Seuss

So why the variance in those perceptions? With all due respect to the erudite Isaac Newton, my two cents is something a little more detailed than the old "time flies" thing. I think the difference lies in the powerful pull of the enjoyable moments, versus the repellent effect of those less enjoyable. Think of the word "gravitate" as a derivative of the word gravity, meaning a tug, or an attraction, toward something. It may be that person, that place or that event I referred to above, but the greater the attraction or the pull, the faster we move. Things with a lesser pull, be it traffic, the dentist, or that chatty guy in the seat next to you on the plane, draw us through those experiences more slowly.

We Were the Lucky Ones

It is with a heavy heart that the USARC family bids farewell to our long time friend and supporter Scott Hoffman, whose many talents were rivaled only by his magnanimity. All who knew him were blessed by having shared even a small fraction of his awe-inspiring life. Look closely at Heaven's white clouds, and if you see beautiful S-shaped tracks in each one, they are likely from an angel named Scott.



But rather than going all noetic on you, I would like to hope that if this winter really did fly by for you, then it did so because the people and moments you experienced during its passage truly drew you in, captivating you and capturing you in their collective gravity. And what was the real indicator that this may have been happening? That you didn't even notice it **was** happening.

In his book The Timekeeper, Mitch Albom wrote, "When you are measuring life, you are not living it."

Well I think that may just be exactly what happened this season, and for some of us, the last 25. So thank you for your gravity, for your pull, for inexorably drawing me in once again this winter. You are the people, and yours are the moments, that lend substance and weight to this life, to my life, and to the lives of each and every one of your students. Good people doing good things in a good place for good reasons; is there any better panoply of elements to validate time well spent?

I value every minute each of you devotes to the program, and while I wish they would stretch out much longer in order to savor the selfless miracle that is each of you, I am glad they rush by because now I understand why, and I hope you do too.

The "Sprinter" of 2014

Ha! So Mother Nature, you call that a winter? It was more like spring all winter, aka "Sprinter".

This past ski season will definitely be going into the history books as the worst "un-winter" the USARC has seen in 25 years at Bear Mountain. No Geronimo, no Super-pipe, no powder days. Basically, no natural snow to speak of. Everybody faithfully kept waiting for Mother Nature to bring on the big blizzards, but they just never came. Instead, while most of the country had the harshest winter in decades, the southwest basked in mid-60 degree weather in early February.

Fortunately, the USARC wasn't too badly affected though! The irony is that while most non-mountain people thought there was literally no skiing due to the lack of storms, Bear Mountain's awesome snowmaking system ensured that all of the trails needed for the USARC program were open most of the year. Plus the roads were wide open virtually every day, so getting here was easier than ever! Let that be a lesson for future "dry" winters; the USARC adapts!

Despite the slow start and early end to the season, the USARC's reservation book was full of eager winter fanatics ready to come up and ski in the beautiful Big Bear weather. The amazing USARC volunteers must have felt the same as they too had a great turnout this year, showing that it's clearly not just epic ski conditions that motivate them. By the way, congratulations to Bill Yaeger for joining the 25-year volunteer club!

Fortunately, there was enough snow for the Ski-A-Thon in early March, but it was melting fast by the volunteer party at the end of the month, and eventually Bear Mountain had to waive the white flag (or would that be the "Lack-of-White" flag?) and close early. While not the best of winters, the USARC did what it does best, adapt, and taught people to "Feel the Freedom" by redefining what is possible. Now it's on to summer, as soon as this winter-like spring, "Sprinter", passes by.



Volunteers Bob and Melissa take in the view of the relatively snow-less 11,500 ft. Mt. San Gorgonio with Kyle.



Jackie tethers Tina as they managed to find some decent snow on the Learning Curve run.



John smiles and waves to the camera as staffer Jeff steadily guides him down Inspiration.

Our Apologies

Managing several databases between multiple platforms occasionally disrupts the USARC's exemplary accounting practices. Our mea culpa to the following donors omitted from the prior issue of The Spirit.

David Bell	\$100.00	Robert & Heather Otwell	\$100.00
Daniel Brown	\$300.00	George Otwell	\$250.00
Julie Chmielewski	\$100.00	Carolyn Peirce	\$100.00
Applied Materials	\$100.00	Millie Rader	\$100.00
Tommy Courtney	\$200.00	Amy Scobey	\$100.00
Marge Galindo	\$500.00	Carol Sorensen	\$150.00
Paul Mattos	\$100.00	Natalie Spore	\$100.00

Volunteer (of the year) Profile-Jeff Buys

Not only did Jeff teach over 20 days of teaching, but he did so after fighting a case of pneumonia. The illness had him out for almost a month, but he came back strong! Jeff not only volunteers for the winter program, but virtually every day in the summer, and while an emergency called him away while volunteering for the Peak to Peak Pedal, he plans on coming along this year.



Sunny or stormy, tough lesson or easy, Jeff is always smiling.

The Spirit (TS): Why volunteer for USARC?

Jeff Buys (JB): I have skied all my life. When I moved to San Diego, the closest place to ski was Big Bear. I remembered how much fun I had with Buddy Werner in Colorado teaching

young kids how to race. I saw an adaptive program in Breckenridge and thought it would be great to do that. TS: How does the title "Volunteer of the Year" make you feel?

IB: Overwhelmed. The 1st year I worked on getting my adaptive level 1 certification and I only volunteered a few days a month. This year I wanted to refine my skills in all the different techniques so I volunteered as much as possible. It makes me feel very compassionate for other people.

TS: What is your favorite part about being a volunteer?

JB: All the smiles you see, and how students progress over different trips to Bear. Ilove the hugs, too. I am impressed at the fearlessness and determination of some of my students in overcoming their disability.

TS: If you could live amountere, where would it be and why? **IB:** If I were rich, I would winter in Valdez, Alaska for all the powder skiing, and summer in South Baja for the fishing. TS: Do you have a favorite story?



Jeff and Bronco take their skier up for another run!

Peter de Viso*** Dianna DiGiandomenico Jill Drawbridge Vicki Faraca Bronco Farwell** Charlotte Freeman Matt Fukushima*** Mike Gabelman **Julius Garcia** Richard Gonzalez Tim Guebert*** Elizabeth Halikis Donna Halpin** Frank Hamilton*** Jerry Hammerle** **Dori Harris** Mark Harris* Sarah Heacox*

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JOHN ALDERETE

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Robert Allen***

Ron Andrews*

Debbi Armenta*

Valerie Baggett

Steve Barker*

Jill Bazemore

Greg Benson

Steven Betance*

Daniel Brown

Jeffrey Buys

Demitrio Camarena

Claude Chirico

Claude Ciocan

Jack Cooperman

Gilbert Cortez***

Jacklyn Cruz

JR Davidson

Mark Heinold

Scott Hepner*

Mark Hopkins

Daniel Homer

Michael Horner

fun and learning-filled experience for each and every program participant. Harry Pearce* Murray Jacobson Monica Jan Tom Pollard*** TJ Johnson Cheryle Potter DIANE JORDAN David Price JOHN PRICE Arttu Kaariainen Lori Kenuk Paul Priest Allen Klicka Eli Reinach Bob Knight** Tony Rogers Mary Kay Sachs-Chirico** Kay Kobayashi Marc Kolodziejczyk Melissa Schmitt** Matt Kolodziejczyk Don Schroeder Bobiane Kupfer* Matthew Schwier Benson Lam*** Colin Santence **B.A Laris** Bill Shamhart* **Edward Lauth** Joseph Shay Kam Lawrence*** Holly Shelton Tayla Shepard Debbie Leong* Windy Sirignano Reed Leong Fred Liebel* Neil Slate Kim Light* Susan Slesinger Ray Locascio*** Ceylan Sonmez **Bob Lombard**** Carol Sorensen* Jenn Long* Roger Sorensen* Susan Mason Steven Stapleton Greg Matson*** Jamey Starcher** Amy Stone Janet McCord MELISSA MCFEDRIES Karyn Strong Kim McRae** Josef Szigeti* Rose McShane* Kathy Tejano Andy Templeton*** Kim Meares* John Melville*** Charles Thompson Sue Mendoza* **Edward Tran Gary Mertens*** Casey Valek Paul Van Wig Davey Miller Jeff Mills* Jay Vickers*** Joshua Miner Tracy Walton **Bill Wandner** Katelyn Miner Jeff Warhol Michael Moniak* Daniel Warner Sara Monsoor Paulette Moore George Watson-Jones Karen Mora*** Sue Wellman Rene Mora Donald B. Whitbeck Wendy Winters Debby Mote Ron Newport*** BILL YAEGER

The USARC salutes and thanks the following volunteers who, through fulfilling their time commitment, ensured the 2013-14 winter was a safe,

Rodney Hsueh Brent Norcutt Tamisha Jackson* Sandy Pappas* Matt Pawley** Italics = 25 years *** = 15+ years CAPS = 20 + years** = 10+ years

Darren Young Underline = 10+days Bold = PSIA Certified

Connie Ybarra

San Diego Veterans Hospital and had a T-4 spinal cord injury. We were moving his bi-ski ahead to unload and he said, "I may be paralyzed, but if I fall, I know it's going to hurt." But he came back the next year and asked for me! TS: What are your other hobbies?

* = 5 + years

IB: Fishing, collecting ski memorabilia, camping, hiking, and skeet shooting. TS: What would you tell a potential new USARC Volunteer?

IB: You need to be compassionate and have a sense of humor. You also need to be able to help out anywhere and at any time you are needed. It is a lot of work and takes a serious commitment, but it is a very rewarding experience!

Milk White Universe (cont.)

I said "Darius!" He said: "Are you going to ski?" I said: "Yes!" He said again: "It's cold, do you want hot chocolate?" "What a nice guy!" I thought.

Everyone is smiling around me and smiling to me. At least I can feel people around me, but still not the field. At this time my mom came it was time for ski lesson.

The snow field is still wide for me, nothing around to refer until my coach Demitrio said "let's go ski."

He started talking to me, I think he felt that I was anxious he said "look we have the same color glove!" He's right we both have blue gloves. I was better as I was hanging on to his voice which is more real. He helped me put my ski shoes and my shoes clinged in the ski and I started walking.

I think I started feeling this wide universe from the bottom of my feet and I looked down, the white ground is now closer than I thought! And Demitrio took me up high where I can see the blue sky on top and the white ground at the bottom close to each other... and in the middle I was sliding down with all my body, I was in heaven! I heard Demitrio's voice saying: "Good job Buddy! You did it!"



The "Easy Street" run became exactly that with Darius' learning acument and Demitrio's teaching abilities.

"Thank you Demitrio!"

*Editor's note: And thank you Darius. Darius is a 10 year-old boy with autism who responded to the USARC participant survey email asking him to rate his experience and, if he desired, to write something extra, which he did with excellence. The USARC received numerous inspiring testimonials and wants to thank everyone who shared their experiences.

To share your perspective, please go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/USARC_Participant_Evaluation. If we use your words in a future newsletter you will receive a complimentary one-day lesson for the winter or summer. Thank you.

The USARC is grateful for these 2013 calendar year in-kind donors* whose support significantly defrays USARC's expenses and facilitates the success of programs and events.

Ron Andrews
Bear Valley Bikes
Big Bear Marina LLC
Big Bear Mountain Resorts
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Cantrell Guide Service
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^{*} If your support is not listed please accept our apologies and contact us so we can correct our records.

Jordan Edwards: My Life as the "Intern"

As my senior year at Texas State University started to drift away I had an important decision to make: Where do I want to do my internship? There were several options: Texas, of course, Utah, California, Colorado, etc. What I

When not teaching, interns have other important responsibilities.

decided first off was that I wanted to do my internship out of state and I wanted to do winter sports, so immediately Texas was off the table. I applied to several facilities and programs but the one that stood out to me the most was the United States Adaptive Recreation Center. It was the one interview I felt most relaxed for and I was assured that I would not just be "another intern." I would be thrown right into the mix of being another staff member

and that is what I wanted, I wanted to be an integral part of the USARC family. Another aspect of the program I admired was the reliance on volunteers. USARC only has 6 staff members, but it has 150 plus volunteers that take time out of their lives to come and give our students the time of their life.

When I first arrived I was a little apprehensive, I'm not the biggest extrovert, but I was soon welcomed into the USARC family by all the staff. They could not have made the transition easier, I was soon being invited to all the parties, to go chop wood, play golf and snowboard; it was a whirlwind of activities and I had only been there two

Congratulations to the following USARC instructors who passed their certification exam as Level 1 PSIA Adaptive Instructors. Well done!



Jill Bazemore Jordan "Intern" Edwards Dori Harris Mark Hopkins John Matz days! Soon the lessons started and I was off to the races, learning everything from the "CASS hold" to "horse and buggy" to tip connectors and bi-skis. It was a lot of information but I was eager to learn and I soon was out on my own, teaching my own students. The greatest part of any day was seeing the smile on the student's face, when you realize that these students love being out here and you have made an impact on their lives.

Two days that stick out to me are when I passed my PSIA Level 1 Bi-ski Instructor exam and when George and Paul (a monoskier) almost killed me. The exam was an all-day event, filled with questions on disabilities, medications, precautions, teaching scenarios and skiing demos. It was exhausting and nerve-racking, but by the end of the day, when I had passed my exam and was being congratulated by Dan (the examiner) it was all worth it. I could not have done it without the tireless

efforts of the USARC staff, namely Jeff and George.

Speaking of
George, this entire
season I have been
skiing all day and
then working out
afterwards.
However, one of
the last days this
season I had to
stop at the top of
the hill, put my
hands on my
knees and catch
my breath.



In a manner of speaking, interns are the sorcerer's apprentice.

George and I were on a monoski lesson with Paul, a 5th time mono-skier who was totally ripping up the entire mountain. I could barely keep up and of course George was having the time of his life, whereas I was bringing up the rear. It was a rare occasion when, at the end of the day, I simply stated "I'm tired. I'm going home." Two occasions out of numerous others, where the day was long and difficult, but well worth it.

I want to thank all of the USARC staff, Sara, Shelly, Tom for an amazing internship and an amazing way to end my college career.

Frank, Dave and Millie in the

Peak to Peak, Past and Future

Event organizers, especially multi-day outdoor event organizers, go through rolls of TUMS as if they were candy. As the weather reports materialized over the days leading up to the 19th Annual Peak to Peak Pedal, the USARC staff was formulating contingency plans and strategies at a pace that make the machinations of the CIA and NSA look like child's play.

Even on departure morning, USARC televisions and computer monitors were tracking the radar returns of the rapidly approaching storm front, but thanks to the preparation of all the riders and volunteers, the ride rolled out of Big Bear before the first flakes started to fall, flakes that eventually totaled about a half foot of snow. At least it had everybody

anticipating an epic winter (see page 3 for that lead balloon.)

Fortunately, while the winds were a little crazy, everybody made it to Barstow without incident. Of course, glowing entrance to Lake Diaz. it was shortly after everyone arrived that the Horse's *ss award was

already locked up, so to speak. Pat Follett managed to lock up several bicycles, only to discover he had lost or never had the key! Nice.



Maryann, John, Cassie and Tom pace-lining north under the majestic snowcapped Sierras.

Brothers on and off their bicycles, John and Paul Mattos.

The next few days were "weather-free" as the 35 riders headed north under the sunny

cobalt ceiling and a snowy Sierra crest. The mercury started to drop again on the last day, and there were even teeny little raindrops and snowflakes falling as the cyclists reached Mammoth. Undeterred, everyone completed the ride, including the first ever rider with autism, Madison Meares, and the youngest rider ever, at age 14, Jasmine Partain. Ultimately, such is the paradox and the unique-ness of the Peak to Peak Pedal ride. It's many different types of people and riders moving through a variety of different climate zones, temperatures, elevations and latitudes, so you just

never know what to expect.

What you can expect is to push yourself, to feel pain, to question your capabilities, to not know if you will succeed,

Top Ten P2P19 Fundraisers Frank Elliott \$10,640.00 KelLe Malkewitz Tom Peirce Ken Klein Robert Allen \$5,635.00 Debbi Armenta Dan Stormer \$4,200.00 \$3,440.00 Robert Otwell \$2,900.00 Tricia Bland \$2,702.50



to know what it means to face challenges while being supported by friends, family, other riders and awesome volunteers, to overcome



The crew regroups to finish together at Mammoth Mountain.

obstacles, to know accomplishment, to feel elation. In short, Peakers are able, in some small way, to understand what many USARC program participants experience. Add to that the making of new friends, and the renewal of old friendships, and it doesn't get much better.

Heading from Mammoth to Big Bear this year, P2P20 is just around the corner. It's never too early to get started (if you don't believe how time flies, read the Executive Director's letter on page 2,) so please go to www.firstgiving.com/usarc/p2p20 and register to ride or volunteer now, or make a donation in a rider's name. For a review of P2P19 or a primer for P2P20, go online to www.hoffmanmediaandgraphics.com/p2p-movies.html. See you in October!

E-dition ***E-dition***



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PLEASE NOTE: <u>The Spirit</u> is considering switching to an exclusively electronic format, with issues sent via email and posted on our website. While the intent is to better utilize the resources contributed by so many, the USARC welcomes your feedback on this topic prior to making a final decision. Thank you.

Attention Big Bear Real Estate Buyers & Sellers!

USARC staffer and real estate agent, Will Rahill, 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 <u>usarc@willrahill.com</u>, 909.645.1949, or on his awesome website at

www.SearchBigBearRealEstate.com

Please like the USARC on Facebook!

Simply log on, then go to www.facebook.com/usarc1 (or you can type in our entire name:



United States Adaptive Recreation Center) and, once there, click on the little
"Like" (thumbs up) symbol.

Not only can you keep up to date on USARC happenings but

you can help the USARC win important support and funding. Please ask all of your Facebook friends to like USARC too.

Don't forget to check out the USARC website, where you can find details on program dates, special event information, registration forms, volunteer applications, newsletter archives, links to other programs and adaptive equipment, and more than you could ever want!



WWW.USARC.ORG



REALLY?

And who did you expect?

The undisputed Queen of the Ski-A-Thon, Michelle Jameson retains the "Top Fundraiser" title for the 2014 Ski-A-Thon and the 4th year straight! Congrats Michelle!

Memorial Day & 4th of July...

are awesome holidays to grocery shop for the USARC!

For Ralphs patrons, 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.

Only 10 (USARC's NPO # is 80843).



VONS

For Vons and Safeway patrons, log onto www.escrip.com and under "Make a Difference in Four Easy Steps", and follow the prompts! (USARC's group ID # is 152931854).

Thank you, please tell a friend!

What's ahead at USARC?

MAY

13 Summer Reservations accepted at 9:00 AM IUNE

28 Summer Volunteer Training (Big Bear)

9-10 Summer Day Sessions

- 16-17 Summer Day Sessions
- 23-24 Summer Day Sessions
- 30-31 Summer Day Sessions

AUGUST

- 5 Summer Volunteer Training (Long Beach)
- 6-8 Land Meets Sea Camp (Long Beach)
- 13-14 Summer Day Sessions
- 17-19 Summer Overnight Session 1
- 20-22 Summer Overnight Session 2
- 27-28 Summer Day Sessions
- TBD Summer Volunteer Party

OCTOBER

8-12 20th Annual Peak To Peak Pedal (P2P20)