

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

# Ski Groom

TUESDAY EDITION • MARCH 29, 2011

## Clinton Hale: 25 Years, 25 Clinics

## History of the Clinic

Clinic Inspires  
DAV Leader



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# 25 YEARS

## The Winter Sports Clinic . . . Then & Now

2011 marks the 25th consecutive year of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (NDVWSC), with nearly 400 Veteran athletes from 42 states (plus Puerto Rico) expected to participate, along with more than 600 volunteers and instructors. Even though this event has been in existence for a quarter of a century, for some participants, this will be their first time using adaptive equipment in winter sports. For others, this year is a chance to improve their skills, reunite with old friends and commemorate this remarkable achievement.

Founder and director, Sandy Trombetta, didn't set out to make the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic the huge success that it is today. As a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, he simply wanted to get a handful of Veterans up on the mountain so they could learn how to ski with disabilities. Back then, Trombetta's work with Veteran patients in nearby disabled ski programs proved to enhance their rehabilitation and the word spread. That handful turned into 100, and the number of participants has continued to increase since the event's inception.

Today, the Clinic has expanded into a much-anticipated national winter event for Veterans of all eras, both male and female, and of varying abilities. Trombetta remains an integral part of the planning and operations, as does Teresa Parks, the Clinic's director of operations, and the Grand Junction VA Medical Center which has remained as the host medical facility for 25 years.

So why do they come year after year? The Veterans say it's a combination of friendship, adventure and personal determination that lure them in. Adapting to the changes brought about by their disability, this Clinic gives Veterans the tools they need to enjoy an active lifestyle and participate in novel leisure activities. The week-long Clinic, jointly sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), offers Nordic and Alpine ski instruction as well as opportunities to rock climb, scuba dive, snowmobile, fly-fish and more. Educational courses, music, and social activities provide even more opportunities for participants to grow.

While the Clinic is designed to provide instruction, the alternative activities, and resulting fun, serve to enhance the Veterans' rehabilitation. Perhaps one of the greatest bonuses is the inspiration these Veterans offer to others in our Nation who face physical, psychological or emotional obstacles in their own lives. Having served our country and now overcoming personal challenges, the Veteran participants continue to demonstrate perseverance and courage as they tackle the defiance of the mountain. In doing so, they provide images of hope to countless others and proof that having a disability is not a roadblock to a life of freedom.

For 25 years, the Disabled Veterans Winter Sport Clinic has been helping Veterans find adventure in the mountains of Colorado. And for 25 years, Clinton Hale has experienced it.

Hale has been a participant in the Winter Sports Clinic every year since its inception in 1987. “Early on it was just a few of us...maybe 50. Now, it’s huge!” he says.

Hale makes the journey to Snowmass from Florida each year, eagerly waiting his turn to hit the slopes. He’s learned a lot during the various Clinics, like the wisdom of waiting inside where it’s warm instead of standing in line in the snow for his gear. When it comes to ski equipment, he prefers the monoski because “it looks cool,” but for him, the trip to the mountain each year isn’t just about the skiing.

“When I come here, I make it a goal to impart some of the lessons I’ve learned in life to some of the new guys,” he says. “And I learn from them, too. They know things that I’m still trying to figure out.”

He certainly has some life lessons to offer. Hale entered the Air Force as a Combat Controller in 1966, and in 1983, he injured his back while on a training exercise. “Life has inherent risks. You just deal with them as they come.”

The Winter Sports Clinic has been a source of motivation and encouragement for him. “My first trip here, I learned that I can do anything that I set my mind to do.” For Hale, that means working, staying active, and helping to raise funds for his Florida team to come each year.

That also means skiing with a broken leg. “I broke it trying to ski on my own the first year that the Winter Sports Clinic was at Snowmass,” he says with a laugh. “They put a cast on it and I was skiing again the next day.”

The Winter Sports Clinic has seen many changes over the years. There have been great snow days and not so great snow days. Warm days and freezing days. And after 25 years, what’s the best thing about the Winter Sports Clinic? “The camaraderie,” says Hale without hesitation. “I have developed some great friendships. I love to see some of the old-timers and make new friends. It’s like a family here, it really is.”

That’s what keeps Hale coming back, and what drives him to spread the word to other Veterans who are eligible to attend. His message to them is simple: “Get out here! You just don’t know what you’re missing. It’s the best event that VA has.”



# CLINTON HALE

THIS AIR FORCE VETERAN HAS ATTENDED EACH AND EVERY CLINIC FOR ALL OF ITS TWENTY FIVE YEARS







## Instructor Appreciation Party

Show your appreciation and enjoy the smooth sounds of Hazel Miller

Please join us tonight to honor the instructors who work so tirelessly to help our Veterans overcome some of their own challenges out on the mountain. Sure to be a great time, the Instructor Appreciation Party is from 8 - 11 p.m. in the Conference Center Ballroom.

Hazel Miller and her band will be there to provide the entertainment. Her voice has been called "stunning, moving and powerful." The former Rocky Mountain News called her "a force of nature."

Miller has been a much sought after performer in Colorado for

the past 25 years. Whether she is singing blues, jazz, pop, or Gospel, her voice charges the songs with a primal dose of genuine soul and unfettered passion.

Miller began her 39-year career in Louisville, Ky., where she rose to the top of the music scene. She has since opened for world-renowned artists such as Mel Torme, James Brown, the Temptations, Earl Klugh and Bob James among many others.

Tonight, stop by to show your appreciation for your instructors and top off your hectic day with the one and only Hazel Miller.

## TBI Support Group

This evening, from 6 to 8 p.m., there will be an open session for any Veteran with brain injuries and their family members. The session will be moderated by Cheryl Lynch, mother of brain injury survivor Chris Lynch, and founder of American Veterans with Brain Injuries. This organization was founded in 2004 as a grassroots effort to share information and assist other service members and families who are dealing with brain injuries. This is the fifth year this peer support session has been held at the Winter Sports Clinic and the number of participants grow each year. Tonight's session will be held in the Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge.

## What Are You Saying?

If you could be any cartoon character, which would YOU be?



**Glenn McClary**

US Marines  
Jacksonville, NC  
"That's easy, I'm a lot like Bart Simpson since we're both hopeless clowns."



**Paul Miosek**

US Army  
Glenville, NY  
"I hope I'm like Sponge Bob, 'cause he's funny as hell!"



**Lynn Mathers**

US Air Force  
Arlington, WA  
"Sponge Bob... he gets away with everything, but then he makes everything all right."



**Evangaline Cohen-Douglas**

US Army  
St. Helena Island, SC  
"Tazmanian Devil... outwardly calm and meek, but inside... I'm a badass!"



**Evan Graves**

US Navy  
Kenton, OH  
"I'd have to pick the Road Runner... I'm always being chased!"

# Clinic Inspires DAV Leader

NATIONAL COMMANDER Wallace E. Tyson

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) National Commander Wallace E. “Wally” Tyson witnessed his first “Miracles on a Mountainside” at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic three years ago. He made the trip to Snowmass Village as a representative of the DAV Department of North Carolina, his home state’s department and a sponsor of the Clinic.

“I grew up in Florida, where skiing was something done behind a boat. I had never seen snow until I was 22,” Tyson said. “I’ve seen some world-class skiing during my travels with the Army, but I had never seen anything as amazing as this Clinic.”

That is high praise from someone who watched Olympic skiers training in Austria for the 1980 winter games.

“There is something about this Clinic that has a profound impact on not only the participants, but anyone

who witnesses the athletes in action,” Tyson added.

Tyson, a service-connected, disabled Vietnam era veteran with more than 12 years service in the United States Army, was elected National Commander of the 1.2 million-member DAV at the organization’s 2010 National Convention in Atlanta, Ga.

National Commander Tyson is a life member of DAV Chapter 46, Fayetteville, N.C. He joined the DAV in 1985 following medical retirement as an Army sergeant first class and began his DAV service as a Chapter Service Officer and Chapter Adjutant.

Tyson said he is looking forward to interacting with all the participants this week. He feels they are a source of energy and inspiration.

The future of the DAV is also on Tyson’s mind, which is why he greeted every participant during

registration and offered free trial memberships to those who are not signed up with DAV. Membership in the DAV not only benefits the individual veteran, said Tyson, but also helps ensure that all disabled veterans will have someone speaking out for them at the national level.

Like the Winter Sports Clinic, which has seen a large influx of veterans from the Gulf War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the DAV is also looking to younger veterans for leadership.

“Every generation puts its own spin and brings its own unique energy to the DAV’s core mission of building better lives for America’s disabled veterans and their families,” Tyson said. “I’m anxious and excited to see what our OIF and OEF-era veterans bring to the table.”

“This is their organization just as much as anyone else’s.”

## Prosthetics Post

**The Prosthetics Post is the place to get the answers for your most frequently asked prosthetics questions.**

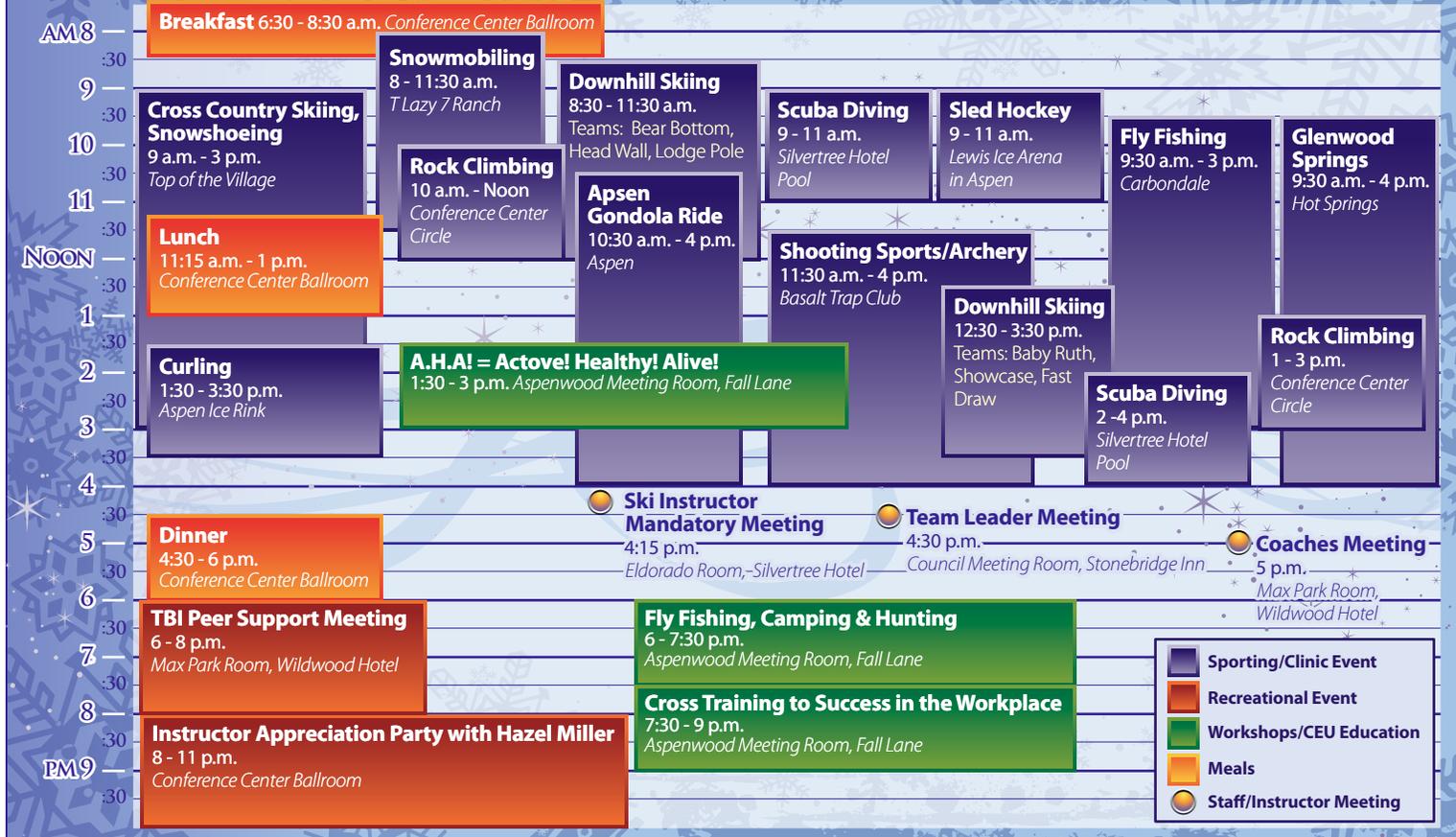
Dear PDP,

I use my manual wheelchair full-time. What happens if my wheelchair breaks?

Sincerely, Veteran on Wheels

*Dear Veteran on Wheels: Veterans issued a manual wheelchair by the VA are eligible for a spare wheelchair and cushion. Additionally, Service-Connected Veterans issued a wheelchair by the VA will be provided a Prosthetic Service Card (PSC). The PSC provides emergency funding should your wheelchair need repairs after hours or on the weekends. Additionally, PSCs are also available to Veterans that have blind aids and/or braces, as well as artificial limbs. The intent of the PSC is to provide greater flexibility while the Veteran is traveling, and in the event something goes wrong with their device after hours. Please note that the PSC only covers minor repairs to the device listed on the card. Emergency repairs are paid, but the Veteran is responsible for contacting a Prosthetic Representative where they received their PSC. It is also a good idea for a Veteran to see their clinician in the event of a major malfunction to ensure proper assessment of the Veteran and his/her needs. Contact your local Prosthetic Representative for more information. [www.prosthetics.va.gov/](http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/)*

# Schedule for Tuesday, March 29



## Odds and Ends

### MEDICAL ROOM

**For emergencies dial 911**

Medical room phone: (970) 923-8330

**Location** The medical room is 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 access is by the elevator at the far end of the mall above the bus terminal.

**Transport to Medical Room** Transport is available in front of the Silvertree Hotel, or call the medical room to arrange transportation.

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

### WHEELCHAIR AND PROSTHETICS REPAIR

Location: Host Room, Conference Center.

Hours are: 6:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m., 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

In between these hours, call (970) 430-9417. Please do not call after 6 p.m. unless it is an emergency. To contact the Prosthetics Repair person (Joe) please call 970-430-9415.

### MENU

**Today's Lunch**

Hot Dogs, Hamburgers & Veggie Burgers  
Vegetable Sticks with Ranch Dip  
French Fries  
Cottage Cheese

**Today's Dinner**

Coleslaw  
BBQ Chicken & Rosemary Chicken  
Beef Short Ribs  
Corn Bread

**Tomorrow's Breakfast**

Fresh Sliced Fruit  
Oatmeal with Granola, Raisins, Almonds,  
Bananas & Skim Milk Breakfast  
Scrambled Eggs  
Croissants, Muffins and Biscuits  
Biscuits & Gravy  
Bacon  
Ham  
Breakfast Potatoes  
Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated  
Coffee, Herbal Teas, and Assorted  
Chilled Juice

### TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE

Event	Load
<b>Snowmobiling</b>	
First Trip	6:45 a.m.
Second Trip	9 a.m.
<b>Sled Hockey</b>	7:45 a.m.
<b>Fly Fishing</b>	8:30 a.m.
<b>Cross Country Skiing</b>	
First Trip	8:20 a.m.
Second Trip	1 p.m.
<b>Hot Springs</b>	9:30 a.m.
<b>Shooting Sports</b>	10 a.m.
<b>Aspen Gondola</b>	10 a.m.
<b>Curling</b>	12:45 p.m.

### MESSAGE

Complimentary massages are available, by appointment, from 1 - 4 p.m. and 6 - 9 p.m. Massage is located in the Elbert room in the Silvertree Hotel. Please call (970) 430-9373 to schedule an appointment.