The Spirit

Summer 2020

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center

A Wonderful and Weird Winter

As strange as the end of the season was for the USARC, the beginning was quite promising. With nearly four feet of snow over Thanksgiving, we were all hoping this would be a winter we would not forget. Sadly, the Thanksgiving Day storm would be the most snow we would see all season.

December started off with eager USARC Staff members coming back, excited to see what the 2020 season would bring. Holiday visitors came and went, with happy memories of their time at Bear Mtn. and the USARC. January brought us Lauren Wiggers, our intern for the season. Full of energy and excitement, Lauren quickly found herself a part of the USARC family. Both group and individual lessons kept us busy as we went about our days.



A strange winter, but USARC's staff, athletes and volunteers grin and bear it.

Tom Perez Photography

Thank you to the selfless hours and time our volunteers gave to us this season. As the lifeline of the USARC, without them we would not be able to accomplish a fraction of what they allow us to do. Our participants bring us joy and smiles as they continually push themselves out of their comfort zone.

As we prepared and readied ourselves for our annual Ski-A-Thon, the World was facing a different challenge. The Coronavirus pandemic had started, forcing USARC to make some changes, or "adaptations" to the fundraiser. Thankfully we were able to hold the Ski-A-Thon, bringing participants and their families up to enjoy a beautiful day of skiing. Thanks to those who persevered, the event was still fun and successful.

Unfortunately that would be the last day of the season. Bear Mountain got word that the parent company had closed all resorts due to the Coronavirus. As this is being written, we are all working from home practicing our Safe-At-Home orders. Looking forward, whether a summer program happens or not, we are staying on course and preparing for whatever the future brings. After all, adapting is what we do best!

No Summer? Just a Brief Bummer!

It is with heavy hearts that the USARC has to face the sad truth that due to the Covid-19 virus and our concern for the safety and well-being of our participants, volunteers and staff, our traditional water sports programs will not be held this year. Stay tuned to our various social media feeds for updates so we can all stay in touch. Remember, as the saying goes, this too shall pass. When it does, be that later this summer, fall or next winter, the USARC should be ready to go and looking forward to welcoming you all back to our little recreational oasis in the sky. Until then, just know we will miss your laughter and smiling faces!



Jim shows Matt how to drive a Kawaski PWC.

Executive Director's Note

"If I leave here tomorrow, would you still remember me?" So begin the lyrics of Free Bird, Lynyrd Skynyrd's signature song and among the anthems of my youth. Like most teenagers, I was under the delusion that nothing was going to tie me down, change my soi-disant path or prevent me from doing anything I wanted to do.

Of course, that little thing called reality just quietly sat in the corner, chuckling at the air-guitar gyrations of me and my friends, letting us enjoy our ignorant bliss. Still, you can believe me that I definitely gave ol' Mr. Reality a run for his money. After all, I dropped out of college, peregrinating to the Sierras and Rockies to become a ski bum, working night jobs at restaurants and ski shops to ensure I could ski 100, 110 or 120 days a season.

Suddenly a light bulb went off in the mind of Mr. Reality and he slyly found a way to corner me, simultaneously allowing me to play the rebel role. While ski-bumming, I discovered adaptive skiing and all the wonderful people and moments associated with it. In the process, I became aware of this little profession called Recreation Therapy.

Armed with my discovery, and with a desire to return to my matriculation, when the time came to renew my studies, the major and degree I decided to pursue were axiomatic.



Tom Peirce
USARC Exec. Dir.

To make the proverbial long story short, after graduating and working as a Recreation Therapist along the coast, I agreed to move to Big Bear for five years to help USARC get started. Somehow that evolved into three decades spent in the mountains, sustained by being surrounded by similar wonderful people and moments in which I found inspiration.

Within this program I have played many roles, evolving (I think) from volunteer to seasonal instructor, thence to Program Director and eventually to Executive Director. I have witnessed countless magical moments and I have helped to facilitate countless more. I have been through times both good and bad, weathering many storms, both real and situational, always to be greeted by warm sun, blue skies and an inflorescence on the other side.

Thanks to USARC's staff, volunteers and participants, and its myriad supporters, I have led USARC to its historically strongest position as we all move forward into a strange and uncertain zeitgeist. It is a future most of us, including this writer, are entering with recalibrated values and perspectives about how our time is best spent and with whom, especially those in whom we find the love, loyalty and integrity we all deserve. I wish you all the same clarity and epiphany as you reflect accordingly.

"A cloud does not know why it moves in just such a direction and at such a speed, it feels an impulsion… this is the place to go now. But the sky knows the reasons and the patterns behind all clouds, and you will know, too, when you lift yourself high enough to see beyond horizons."

Thank you Richard Bach, for that simple, yet sagacious, quote. For those who desire to see beyond, first you have to be willing to wonder and wander. As you do so, this ski bum bids you a bon voyage, while he simultaneously gives Mr. Reality a little wink, "'cause I'm as free as a bird now and this bird you can not change."

United States Adaptive Recreation Center
USARC

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MOVE UNITED MEMBER

Participant Profile: Colette Payne


Collette readies for another thrilling descent.

While this winter was Colette's first time with the USARC, she made such an impression on her instructors that we chose her to be our highlighted participant. She had such a great time zipping down the slopes and singing with instructors that we wanted to share a little bit more about her with you. Along with some help from her mom, here is what Collette said…

The Spirit (TS): What did you think of your first time skiing?
Colette Pyne (CP): It was good because the people were nice. I liked going on the chair lift. I liked going fast.
Colette's Mom: (Mom): Colette was hesitant to go off on her own at first but once she got to know the people going down with her she was more comfortable and "pumped up," excited to go! :) they held her hand on the chairlift and sang her favorite song's with her and that made all the difference! Colette had a blast and wanted to go again the next day!
TS: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
CP: I like to play Barbies and I like to swim in the ocean and the pool with my family.
Mom: Colette loves playing pretend in any way she can and spending time with her brother and sister. She's also an expert at finding rolly pollys.
TS: What was your favorite part about your day with USARC?
CP: Going down the big hills because it's fun.
Mom: I think Colette loved being a big girl and having independence while going down the hills without mom and dad.


Collette makes everyone smile, including her instructors Emily and Intern.

TS: If you could have an animal of your choice, what would it be?
CP: A puppy because their cute. We would play ball.
TS: What do you want to be when you grow up?
CP: I want to be a ballet dancer because I am good at dancing ballet. I would also want to be a doctor so I can fix patients.
TS: What is your favorite movie?
CP: Cinderella because I like princesses and because she is pretty.
Mom: Colette also loves the Frozen movies and singing along to all the music.
TS: Thank you so much for taking the time! We'll see you next season!

Thank You to USARC's Winter 2020 Volunteers!*

UNDERLINE = Taught 10+ days **_ITALICS_ = PSIA Certified Instructor**

30+ YEARS
John Alderete
Bill Yaeger

25+YEARS
Claude Chirico
Gilbert Cortez
Matt Fukushima
Bob Lombard
Karen Mora
Will Rahill
Andy Templeton
Paul Zamoyta

20+YEARS
Tim Guebert
Kam Lawrence
Ray Locascio
Tom Pollard

15+YEARS
Steven Betance
Mary Kay Chirico
Frank Hamilton
Bob Knight
Kim McRae
Jeff Mills
Michael Moniak
Tom Perez
Neil Slate
Carol Sorensen
Alpha Starcher
Andrew Suzuki
Josef Szigeti

10+YEARS
Scott Adler
Valerie Bagget
Steve Barker
Richard Beynon
Tom Delgado
Soo Jeong Lee
Debbie Leong
Kimberly Light
Jim Ortiz
Sandy Pappas
Bill Shamhart
Holly Shelton
Roger Sorensen
Jack Walser
Danny Warner
Paul Van Wig
Tracy Walton

5+YEARS
Marilyn Capel
Alexandria Fabbro
Cathy Ghazal
Mark Hopkins
Kay Kobayashi
B.A. Laris
Susan Mason
Josh Miner
Rene Mora
David Price
Don Schroeder
Windy Sirignano
Kathleen Snow
Mark Uthus
Bill Wandner
Darren Young

1+ YEARS
Olivia Anderson
Robert Anderson
Thomas Ahola
Samantha Bakas
Justin Barnette
James Benson
Haylee Beynon
Curt Cattau
Megan Coble
Genevieve Cook
Julie Dawson
Sara Gordon
Tina Green
Sarah Greene
Rebecca Jaffe
Michael Kriegsman
David Leong
Alex Luna
Dennis Mataviesko
Michael MacMahon
Davey Miller
Kenny Minnick
Marlene Mourtzikos
Theo Myers
Tosh Neminsky
Aimee Newell
Ted Oden
David Ohl
Chuck Orozco
Graciel Plascencia
David Pearson
Colette Pfiffer
Christopher Pierre
Gil Ramos
Dallas Rahill
Jason Schetter
Morgan Schetter
Riley Schetter
Patricia Simpson
Magali Stein
Oliver Stein
Michael Stoll
Larry Stratton
Eric Vasiliauskas
Lisa Marie Vath
David Walden
Jeff Weber
Kim Wolmerath

*For any discrepancies or omissions, please accept our apologies and contact us so we can correct our records accordingly.



Stuart and Samantha sum skiing up nicely.



Volunteers Kam and Debbie with monoskier Sally.

Tom Perez Photography



Tommy, Ted and Renee at the top of Chair 9.

Tom Perez Photography

P2P26 is "Virtually" Here

Whether "virtually" is literal or figurative, this year's Peak to Peak Pedal, still over four months away, is closer than it seems. USARC is still planning the ride as usual, while strategizing ways to keep it safe and compliant with any health guidelines. If real roads aren't viable, we may utilize online resources for riders to do their own 335-mile rides, logging it using Strava, Zwift, etc. No matter what, we still need to begin tracking potential riders, donors and volunteers so please go to **https://www.firstgiving.com/event/usarc/p2p26** and register or donate today, because the one thing that won't change is the need for USARC's services by the athletes and families we serve.

Volunteer of the Year Profile: Tracy Walton

Tracy Walton is this year's Volunteer of the Year. Tracy has not only become a highly valuable volunteer but has brought friends and family into the USARC family. Tracy is always willing to help whenever she can and we are honored to call her the Volunteer of the Year for 2020.

The Spirit (TS): How long have you been volunteering at USARC?
Tracy Walton (TW): This was my 10th year!
TS: How did you feel when you were named USARC's Volunteer of the Year?
TW: I was shocked, just doing something I love.
TS: When you first started volunteering, how did you hear about USARC?
TW: I was a ski instructor at Goldmine Ski Resort in the late 1980"s early 1990"s. I saw USARC when it started up and I said "I am going to that someday". As soon as my life allowed it, I started with USARC. I am so glad I did.
TS: What do you think is the most important skill when volunteering with USARC?
TW: Patience and a good sense of humor. Oh and maybe being able to ski.
TS: When someone asks you about USARC, what do you say?
TW: I volunteer a lot with different organization in the Big Bear Valley and USARC is by far my favorite. It is so rewarding, I walk away a better person with each lesson. When a student says "This was the best day of my life", can it get any better than that?



Tracy, a magnificent skier, very much in her element.



What goes down, must go up. Tracy is a stud.

TS: If you could travel anywhere in the World, where would you go and why?
TW: I was lucky to do a lot of traveling in my 20's, all over Europe, New Zealand and Australia. I would like to travel Peru (Mauhu Picchu), Safari in Africa, hike in Nepal, etc.
TS: During this unprecedented time, what are you doing to stay busy?
TW: Well, I am not too good at this social distancing thing. I have been hiking and mountain biking here in Big Bear and in St George, snowshoeing, working out via videos on YouTube, taking care of my family and continue to work at my other volunteer jobs.
TS: Will you be joining us for the Summer program this year?
TW: I would love to join the summer program. I enjoy water sport on Big Bear Lake. But with summer vacation being so short for Bear Valley students. I am usually out of town. My son will be out of the house in 2 years. So I will most likely see you that summer!

"In-Kind"ness

USARC's events and programs succeed thanks to these generous in-kind donors of goods and services from the 2019 calendar year. Please remember them with your patronage when possible.

572 Social
Acatmeowz Graphic Dezignz
Alpine Slide at Magic Mountain
Heritage Physical Therapy
Big Bear Bowling Barn
Big Bear Cycling Association
Big Bear Marina LLC
Big Bear Wellness
Bishop Waste Disposal
Cantrell Guide Service
Clif Bar
Coola Suncare/Bare Republic
Dank Donuts
Elevations Day Spa
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Jones Bicycles II - San Marino
Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA
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Davey Miller
Jean Mitry
Mountain Bar and Grill
Murray's Saloon
Jonathan Nourok
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Pacos
Stonepier
Pickle Power
REI Arcadia
Dave Rosell
Sam Enterprises
Saucy Mama's Pizza
Andy Templeton
Jim Tennigkeit
The Agency Brands
Paul Van Wig
Wend Wax Works
Donald B. Whitbeck
Wyatt's Grill & Saloon
Robbie Young

Ski-A-Thon Wins in a Photo Finish!

USARC's final day of on-snow programming was also the day of the 2020 Ski-A-Thon, which also just happened to be the final day of operations at Bear Mountain resort.

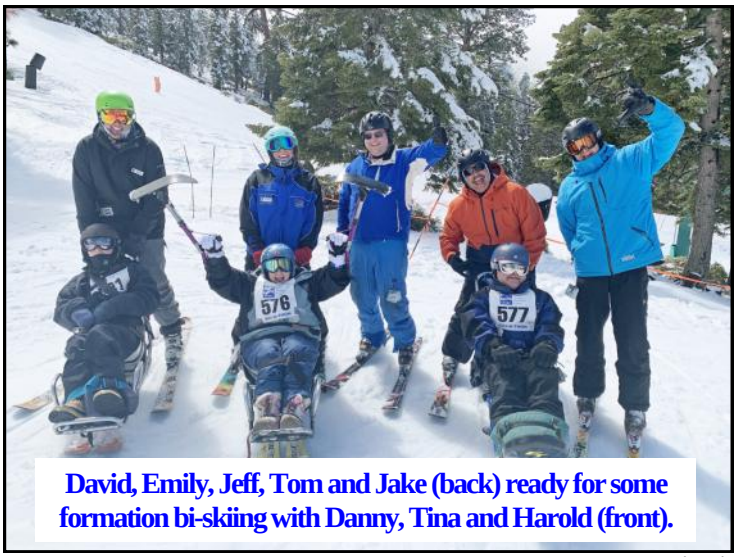
As that day ended "social distancing" became a reality rather than just a concept, but not before USARC's skiers, volunteers and supporters carefully and safely enjoyed the day on the slopes to help support the mission of the USARC and those it serves as they raised nearly $45,000 for the program.



Harold, in good hands with volunteers Jake and Tom.
Tom Perez Photography

While there may not have been a fun and festive finale in the form of an après-ski party, auction and entertainment at the day's end, the fundraising efforts of each individual and team are what really shone brightly, rather than the cloud of having to curtail the event.

Showing their tremendous fundraising mettle once again was Shelly's FUN-raisers, easily garnering 1st place with $17,989, with the podium rounded out by 2nd place team The Guys at $1,456 and 3rd place team Snow Surfers with $1,350.



David, Emily, Jeff, Tom and Jake (back) ready for some formation bi-skiing with Danny, Tina and Harold (front).
Tom Perez Photography

Here's to the 2021 version of USARC's Ski-A-Thon returning to its former glory and we hope to see you then and there!

"From NY to CA" - An Intern's Perspective

If someone told me (Lauren Wiggers) last year that I would be living in California while completing my undergrad degree, I would consider them to be a little crazy. I am the type of person who is fairly used to change and adjustments in my life, but to move across the country from NY, knowing no one, may just be a little out of my comfort zone.



Lauren, Official Recreation Therapist.

I am from Long Island, NY and am currently a senior attending East Carolina University. My whole life I feel like I had to make a decision on what I wanted to do for the future as my career. After exploring my options, volunteering at nursing homes and day cares, coaching gymnastics, and much more involvement, I chose to pursue Recreational Therapy. I knew in the back of my mind that adaptive sports were a major interest of mine. I grew up as a competitive gymnast and even began coaching during high school, so naturally this was right up my alley. Helping others is a trait that has always came naturally to me regardless of where I am, what I am doing, and who I am with. When applying to internships I saw there was a very well-known adaptive sports program in California, and I wanted to challenge myself and go for it.



Gael and Lauren head up for yet another go-down.

My family and friends thought I was crazy to move across the country for a few months to complete this internship. I told myself and others that sometimes you have to make sacrifices and take chances in order to do what you love. I'm not going to lie; the move was a bit scary. I did not know who I was living with nor did I know anyone living in California, let alone I had never even been to the West Coast.

The first day I walked into the USARC office, I was welcomed with open arms. I went around to introduce myself to each staff member and volunteer as "intern" which felt a little weird to me at first. As days and months went on, USARC grew to be family to me. There was such positivity that cycled through the staff, volunteers, and students along with their families. The smiles, laughs, and optimism I see within the students reminded me every day why I chose to do what I love. Regardless of barriers that may get in the way of some individuals lives, USARC provides the opportunity to ski with an open spirit and improve their well-being right here on the mountain. I believe that every volunteer and staff member at USARC has a special kind of heart to do what we do every day. This program has so much to offer providing all different types of equipment and techniques that can be used for any population. We adapt to what we need, use what we have, and make it work no matter what.



Jeff teaches Lauren about mono-skiing.

Tom Perez Photography

As cliché as it sounds, I am a big believer in the saying "everything happens for a reason." I learned so much in the short time interning at USARC from every single person I encountered with along with my experience out on the mountain each day. The love I received from Big Bear is like no other, this place became a second home to me that will hold a special place in my heart. Thank you USARC for making these few months in my life so memorable. I will take what I learned and apply it to my life in every which way I can. Always remember to do what you love, and when you do, love every second of it.

The USARC is honored to have received donations in the name of someone held close to the heart of the donor and/or their family and friends. We are proud to see that many of the names listed below are current or former members of the USARC family, all of whom have contributed to the success of the program. Thank you all.

MEMORIALS

Dave Norman and Michael & Alessandra Alves celebrating the life of
MARY NORMAN

Michael & Alessandra Alves celebrating the life of
MIKE COPPI

John Price in memory of
GIL FLORES

Marilyn Capel in memory of
GORDON CAPEL, AKA POPPA

Bill Wandner in memory of
JACOB WANDNER

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JANICE SCHAFER

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ROGER LEE

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TRACY MOORE

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CASEY KLAWIKOWSKI

Don & Barbara Hughes in honor of
ELIZABETH HUGHES

Barbara Snyder in honor of
ERICK SNYDER

Alexandra Franklin in honor of
JACKIE HILTON

Sherri Brady in honor of
LAUREN MESSER

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John & Nancy Shirbroun in honor of
SHELLY EGERER

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DONNA HALPIN

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GENIVIEVE COOK

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DANI WELLMAN

Sheila Driscoll, Mathias Kristensen, Sue Wellman & Dorsey Wellman in honor of
HAYLIE WELLMAN

Joelle Gonzales in honor of
MATTHEW LEITNER

Sue Wellman & Linda Martinez in honor of
JOHN PRICE

How can I help USARC?

Since this is an oft-asked question we will continue to run this page in every newsletter because, quite frankly, YOUR options are numerous. In addition to volunteering, there are many ways to financially support the USARC!

DONATE ONLINE IN YOUR NAME OR AS A TRIBUTE TO A LOVED ONE

Clicking on the logo below, or via the Donate Online tab on the USARC website, www.usarc.org, will take you to a secure and reliable website where you can use your credit card to make a tax deductible donation in your name or in recognition of another.

PARTICIPATE IN THE ANNUAL SKI-A-THON OR PEAK TO PEAK PEDAL

Under the Support tab at www.usarc.org are the web pages for these respective special events. Held annually in March and October, respectively, these unique and fun events allow you to support the USARC while engaging in activities they love, be it snow sports or cycling!

SHOPPING PARTNERSHIPS

The USARC can be named as your partner when you shop at numerous retail outlets, at both online and "brick and mortar" stores. AMAZON's charitable arm (www.amazonsmile.com), and a variety of online retailers you can find through www.igive.com and www.escrip.com allow you to select the USARC as a beneficiary of your shopping forays. If you patronize RALPHS, MACY'S, and many other retailers, you can select the USARC to receive a portion of your purchases.

PLANNED GIVING IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST

The USARC can be named as a beneficiary in your estate planning, enabling you to support the important and life-changing programs of the USARC well into the future. Consult your tax and legal professionals or call the USARC and we can put in you in touch with somebody to guide you through the process.

DONATE YOUR OLD CAR, BOAT, RV ETC.

Cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats, trailers and RVs donated in the name of USARC are sold, with the proceeds defraying USARC's operating costs and you receive a tax deduction! Call 855-500-7433 or click on the logo to get started.

Please don't be distant; Keep in touch with USARC on Social Media

One lesson we've all learned is that physical distancing should not be confused with "social distancing." Perhaps now more than ever we truly understand the importance of keeping tabs on one another. Please stay in contact with USARC and let us know how you are doing, and we'll do the same.

FACEBOOK: Find us at 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.

TWITTER and **INSTAGRAM:** Log into your account and search for @USADAPT
These are great ways to stay up to date on USARC happenings but they can also help the USARC win important support and funding. Don't forget to ask all your friends to do the same, thank you!

USARC Calendar

JUNE
27 Volunteer Training (CANCELLED)
JULY
8,9 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
15,16 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
19-21 Overnight Session 1 (CANCELLED)
22-24 Overnight Session 2 (CANCELLED)
29,30 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
AUGUST
4 Volunteer Training (CANCELLED)
5-7 Land Meets Sea Camp (CANCELLED)
12,13 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
19,20 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
26,27 Day Sessions (CANCELLED)
TBD Volunteer Party (CANCELLED)
OCTOBER
7-11 26th Peak to Peak Pedal (STILL ON!)

YOUR ACTIONS SAVE LIVES



STAY ACTIVE

Keep walking, jogging, hiking and biking. Watch for one-way trails.



STAY SAFER AT 6FT

Maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more. No gatherings, picnics or parties.



STAY CLEAN

Be prepared. Bring soap/sanitizer and pack out all trash.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS SINCE 1864

Parks.ca.gov/FlattenTheCurve