



The Spirit

Fall/
Winter
2013-14

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center

A Sunny, Sell-Out Summer

If we were all still little kids we would be throwing a tantrum, as the summer season has come and gone. The first snow has already fallen and the phones are starting to ring with eager participants waiting to make their winter program reservations. To help us all transition to colder,



Cliff and Christine with yet another rainbow colored dinner-guest-to-be.

snowier times, it helps if we can get some closure through reliving and recognizing some of the moments and people that made this past summer magical.

The first thing everyone noticed this year was the weeds along the lake shore. With a mediocre winter, there was minimal runoff and the lake waters warmed up more quickly than usual, promoting the plant growth that seemed to multiply daily. No biggie, USARC activities pretty much leave the shore behind, so there was plenty of sparkling blue water from which one could hear the peals of laughter and whoops of confidence.

The trout were practically jumping out of the cold water and into the fishing boats on some days (so we helped them warm up on the campfire grill later) while water skiers and wake boarders zoomed back and forth behind USARC's white and green Nautique, nicknamed "Shrek."

(Continued on page 3)



Tubing is just one of many ways that family members like Quinn and Marta can play at the USARC.



There is a certain term for the experience that comes in the form of a sandwich where a little criticism comes between two compliments. What the inverse of that colloquialism would be called is unknown, but whatever you get when you put something good between two not-so-desirable things, could be used to characterize this year's recently completed Peak to Peak Pedal.

(Continued on page 3)

Chill out with USARC this Winter



Kim and Taylor smiling and doing that bi-skiing thing.

The snow was already falling fast and furious even before October came to an end, so it's no use ignoring the signs. Just like Santa Claus, the ski season is coming to town and we hope, in one way or another, that you will be a part of it.

The hustle and bustle of chairlift testing, slope preparations and facility maintenance around Bear Mountain Resort are telltale, and in the little USARC program office things are no different.

(Continued on page 4)

A Note from the Executive Director

Time flies. As I sit to write this it is not even Halloween, yet the resort's slopes are a Pinto patchwork of brown and white after one of winter's forerunners blew through the mountains late yesterday and last night. Actually this was the second harbinger (an even snowier storm rolled across the San Bernardino range on October 9; check out the P2P19 article,) and hopefully part of a pattern that auspicates a good, deep winter.



Tom Peirce
USARC Exec. Dir.

The fact that we are barely one month into Autumn notwithstanding, realists understand that change often comes when least expected, and expectations can be the currency of the foolhardy. It seems I occasionally fall into that latter group, as I found myself wearing shorts and flip-flops and climbing out of my truck into that recent snowstorm. You would think I hadn't just learned the "expectation" lesson shortly before.

Being one who enjoys sailing, I ventured north under September's serotinal sun to my beautiful hometown of San Francisco to watch the America's Cup contended between two amazing teams and vessels, Oracle USA and Emirates New Zealand. If you've never seen wind powered craft move at 50 mph, I can assure you it is a spectacular sight, so much so that I didn't really mind when Oracle began the regatta by getting soundly thumped by Emirates on a nearly daily basis.

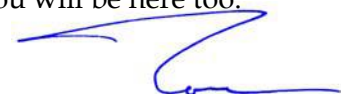
I emailed, texted or posted everybody that I was having a grand time despite fully *expecting* the carnage to continue until a defeated Oracle team limped back to shore in their inferior boat and hauled her into dry dock, succumbing to Emirates' catamaran-cum-scythe wielded by its grim-reaper crew in their black habiliments. Then, while on the edge of elimination day after day and race after race, Oracle's team worked to tweak this equipment and modify that tactic, and they found the formula that enabled them to win one race after another, and ultimately, victory. So much for my expectations. Oracle had, quite simply, adapted.



Oracle had no expectations, but they adapted, and in the end, they took no prisoners.

Expectations can be funny that way. Some people get locked into them, to the extent that adapting never enters their mind. I am always surprised (pleased, but still surprised) when a random person comes into our little program building to praise the USARC and what it does, because I don't understand why they wouldn't expect somebody with a disability to ski. After all, as Winter Park's Hal O'Leary once asked, isn't *all* skiing adaptive?

Yep, time flies. I didn't expect to be here for USARC's 25th Anniversary winter season but I am, and I hope, in one way or another, you will be here too.



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Summer Fun (cont.)

When the wind came up, the sailboat “Indepen-Dance” took to the white-capped waters, while the paddlers in kayaks and SUPs were able to follow the shoreline and/or stay in protected bays.

For those who chose the additional fun of camping with the USARC, there were S’mores a-plenty under starry skies, and either the spectacular exploits of two Frisbee dogs, Tango and Cash, or the less than spectacular entertainment of the



USARC staffer John and Jonna take a Kawasaki-sponsored Jet Ski through its wet and wild paces.



Bob and Michael glide across the gentle blue ripples along Big Bear Lake’s shoreline.

USARC staff’s Vaudeville slapstick skits. The USARC was proud to renew its partnerships with Kawasaki Jet Skis, Big Bear Marina, B’s Backyard BBQ, Cantrell’s Guide Service and the Big Bear Lake Municipal Water Department.

Believe it or not it’s time to think about joining USARC next summer, as virtually every session sold out this summer.

With crowds that

size it was nice that the thunderstorms held off, but let’s all hope Mother Nature and Old Man Winter decide to have some cold, drenching offspring this winter.

Then, with a full lake (hopefully) next summer, we can count you among all the great people who love to play in these beautiful mountains, and we will do it all again.



Is the USARC going down hill? Hopefully. We pulled our “Chariots” out of storage for testing this fall, and we hope to add them to the program next summer.

P2P19 (cont.)

Cold grey skies replete with raindrops and snowflakes were the bookends on the journey to Mammoth this year, although in both cases riders dodged the brunt of either weather system. The silver, or more apt, golden, lining came in the form of the three days in between where a bright sun shone down on canary colored sagebrush blooms and aspen leaves. The USARC is so very

thankful for the 35 riders and two dozen volunteers who took to the highways this year and in the process raised over \$105,000 in support of USARC programs. Check out the next issue of *The Spirit* for their names, rankings, awards, more photos, experiences and milestones, such as the first rider with autism to complete the ride, as well as the youngest rider ever to do it, at age 13!



Most of the riders pose for a quick photo before being chased out of Big Bear by a snowstorm!

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An Intern's Perspective

During college at SUNY Cortland I couldn't imagine a better place to do my internship than California. I had always wanted to move there and I thought

my internship was the exact time to do just that.

So following graduation, I packed up my bags and hit the road to be the newest United States Adaptive Recreation (USARC) intern! It was hard at first, moving to a state thousands of miles away for almost 4 months, but my new family at USARC welcomed me with open arms and I felt at home immediately.

The first month was the hardest. Prepping for the program was a huge task and quite frustrating due to the fact that I was so excited to start the actual program and finally do what I came all the way out here to do. The weeks went by coming with it hard work and



USARC's summer intern, Alexa Lynam, put smiles on many faces, and always had one of her own.

patience, when finally July was upon us and our program was ready to begin.

Program days were unequivocally the best part of my entire internship. I was able to meet different parents/guardians and participants each day, while also learning about a disability and how it manifests itself differently through each person. It was such a refreshing feeling knowing that everyone there was there because they wanted to and were there to have a ton of fun. A feeling of happiness and excitement encompassed every day I worked with our participants, which in turn made for a happier, healthier me.

While in Big Bear, I saw something firsthand that I had been preaching throughout my years at school; no matter the disability, if you have the courage and drive to succeed at something, you'll always find people willing to help make those dreams a reality. Some participants can't thank us or tell us how much fun they'd had after program, but that's just fine and dandy to us because we know their lives are little bit fuller after our programs.

I want to thank USARC so much for having me during the summer and helping me grow as a person and a recreational therapist. "Often the right path is the one that may be hardest for you to follow. But the hard path is also the one that will make you grow as a human being." I made a hard decision leaving New York and my family, coming to Big Bear Lake and knowing no one, but after my summer there I know that so long as there's a USARC, I have extended family nestled in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Winter (cont.)

We are busy scheduling lessons for both groups and individuals, sprucing up the facilities, inventorying and ordering equipment, scheduling staff and recruiting volunteers.

As soon as those first storms rolled through our telephone began ringing off the hook, with winter very much on the mind of everyone who is ready to strap on skis or snowboard and glide effortlessly down the hill with skilled USARC instructors.

The dates have been set for reservations, trainings and special events. Whatever it is you enjoy we have something for you!

Participants: Reservations have been accepted since November 5th. Remember, you can sign up for up to 3 days at a time. The USARC is proud to say its winter fees remain unchanged for the 8th straight year!

Volunteers: Training sessions are all set! New volunteers must attend a free 4-day training clinic

starting on Thursday and ending on Sunday. Two such clinics are scheduled, one in December and one in January. Please see the calendar on page 8 or check out www.usarc.org for up-to-date information.

Ski-A-Thon-ers: For those of you who enjoy the Special Event of the winter, the Ski A Thon is slated for March 8, 2014. This day is a day to come out and ski with friends, family or whomever and raise some money!

Pick your passion and call 909-584-0269 today!



25-year volunteer John shares his monoski expertise with Erick.

Volunteer Profile – Lexie Egerer



One would think the smile would disappear after 6 hours in a dripping wetsuit; not with Lexie!

It's a family affair at the USARC, and we don't just mean the families that come up to play each summer. Lexie Egerer finally joined the USARC team as a junior volunteer this summer, after growing up around the program thanks to her mother Shelly, USARC's Administrative Assistant. Lexie always wanted to be a volunteer and her dream came true this past summer. She did such a great job, her mother even let her skip school (shhhhh) to volunteer at a few of the sessions (don't worry, she got credit for it!) We think Lexie was a great addition, but let's hear what she thought...

The Spirit (TS): So Lexie, how was your first summer with USARC?

Lexie Egerer (LE): Awesome! I had so much fun, and I was really sad when I had to go back to school.

TS: What was your favorite thing to do while volunteering?

LE: My favorite thing to do was jumping because I loved to watch the participants succeed in something they are cautious about at first.

TS: What are your plans for the future? College? Career?:

LE: I want to be either a recreational therapist (like Sara and Tom) or an occupational therapist, but haven't decided yet and I'm not really sure what college I'm going to attend yet. I'm only a Junior so I have another year to see.

TS: You have been around the program since you were a little girl, what was it like to finally be a volunteer?

LE: It always felt like I was going to be waiting forever to volunteer, so when the time actually came, I almost thought it was too good to be true. I had a pretty good idea of what to expect. Being around USARC so long helped me learn the ropes before I was even old enough. But I really enjoyed it and will definitely be back next summer!

TS: How would you describe to people what you did on the lake?

LE: Basically that I assisted participants getting the ski into the water and then followed I got behind them to help them get started and balance him out. Once they were moving, I got on the back of a jet ski and jumped off if they fell. It was pretty cool.

TS: Do you have a stand-out moment from the summer?

LE: One of the students, Harold, was water skiing and we were trying to teach him to pick up the handle and after eight attempts he finally did it!! It was so exciting, we all were cheering for him.

TS: Who do you like better, Tom or Jerry?

LE: Tom, of course!



Lexie is no dummy, but she played one as the USARC staff rehearsed various lifeguarding scenarios.

The USARC wants to thank the following cadre of volunteers who helped make summer a season of wonder for each and every program participant.

John Alderete
Debbi Armenta
Steven Betance
Richard Beynon
Daniel Brown
Jeffrey Buys
Claude Ciocan
Jack Cooperman
Lexie Egerer
Katherine Eisenbrand
Kristina Eisenbrand
Jean Evans
Mark Heinold
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The USARC proudly salutes these 2013 fiscal year donors!

If your donation between 7/1/12 and 6/30/13 is missing please accept our apologies and contact us so we can correct our records.

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Scott enjoys the boat ride back to the dock after another successful water skiing session.

Participant Profile – Skiing Junkie Scott McCall

Scott McCall, at 31 years-old, has been participating in USARC programs for close to half of his life. This seasoned veteran of the USARC programs, Scott is usually the first one to show up for his lessons and the last one to leave. His waterskiing skills are gradually catching up with his proficiency as a snow skier, and there’s no doubt he really loves skiing of any kind! A former Special Olympics Winter Games athlete, Scott routinely brought home gold medals. Now employed at TJ Maxx, he took a little time to share his thoughts with us

The Spirit (TS): Hey Scott, so how long have you been coming to USARC?
Scott McCall (SM): I have been participating well over 10 years, since 2000.

TS: We know you love to ski both on snow and water, but which one is your favorite, and why?

SM: I love both, but I like water skiing a bit more because it’s warmer outside. I



Skiing or SUP-ing, Scott is always ready and willing for action.

like to be on the water and love the Jet Ski rides and the stand up paddle boarding (SUP).

TS: What sports do you do other than skiing?

SM: I like to play basketball and softball. I also go bowling and I am learning to surf.

TS: What is your favorite subject in school?

SM: Math and yoga classes.

TS: If you were able to go anywhere in the world, where would you go? What would you do there?

SM: I would like to go back to Hawaii and snorkel. We went there and I love looking for turtles.

TS: Do you tell your friends about USARC? What do you say?

SM: I always tell my friends they should come up with me and ski. I love the volunteers, they make my day wonderful. I like that everybody knows me and asks “Hey Scott, do you want to paddle, ski or Jet Ski?”

TS: Who is your favorite volunteer at USARC?

SM: I don’t think I could pick any ONE person, I enjoy everyone and wouldn’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings!

TS: Will you come up this winter?

SM: Of course. I love to snow ski with my family. I learned to ski real well and I “graduated” from the ski school



Scott sporting some gold “bling”.

The USARC website features a navigation menu with links for Home, Participants, Volunteers, Support, Press, Media, Resources, Calendar, Sign-ups, Contact, and Staff. The main content area includes a sign-up notice for 9:00am, a history of the center, and a list of services. A prominent blue sidebar on the right contains the website URL www.usarc.org and a message: "Don't forget to check out the new USARC website, masterfully crafted by USARC's own Sara Rosell and volunteer Claude Ciocan. While still undergoing refinement, it has all the information, forms, links and more that you could possibly ever want!"

so now I ski with my mom and dad. Right now I can beat my mom down the mountain, and I am trying to beat my dad. I will beat him one of these days!



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Online Survey Saves You \$\$

The USARC provides services for about a tenth of the price that somebody without a disability would incur. The fact that our winter fees have remain unchanged for eight seasons is testament to our successful special events like the Ski-A-Thon and Peak to Peak Pedal, but also by our successful grant writing program, an integral part of which is your opinions and testimonials. Please help us help you by completing a brief online survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/USARC_Participant_Evaluation. Thank you for your important feedback!

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 usarc@willrahill.com, 909.645.1949, or www.SearchBigBearRealEstate.com. Property prices and rates are still low, so please help Will help the USARC, thank you.

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

With Sympathy

The USARC wants to express its condolences and support to the USARC's extended family members who lost a loved one in the past months.

Volunteer Dave Norman and participant Therese Coppi, for the loss of their wife and sister, respectively, and one of the most amazing USARC volunteers ever, Mary Norman.

What's ahead at USARC?

DECEMBER

- 4 First day of lessons (weather permitting)
- 9-10 Returning Volunteer Training
- 12-15 New Volunteer Training
- 14-15 Returning Volunteer Training
- 25 USARC Closed

JANUARY

- 1 USARC Closed
- 9-12 New Volunteer Training
- 11-12 Returning Volunteer Training
- 13 Group Lessons Begin
- 26 PSIA So-Cal Session Winter Clinics

MARCH

- 4 PSIA Adaptive Exam Registration Deadline
- 8 2014 Ski-A-Thon
- 22 USARC Volunteer Party
- 25 PSIA Adaptive Exam Week (Mt. High)
- 30 Last day of Lessons

APRIL

- 5 19th Annual Peak to Peak Pedal Slideshow

Thanksgiving & the Holidays

are awesome opportunities 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. (USARC's NPO # is 80843).



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!