



The Spirit

Summer
2016

of the United States Adaptive Recreation Center



Hope and Petras are all smiles during a lesson.

Participant Profile - Petras Vasiliauskas

Petras started skiing with USARC 10 years ago, and has improved considerably over the past few winters. That may be because he is extremely curious and never stops asking questions. We thought we'd turn the inquiry tables on Petras to help you get to know him.

(see Petras on pg. 6)

Summer Lovers Rejoice

Mark your calendar for **May 17th at 9:00 AM**, when the USARC starts accepting reservations for its super summer sessions. A disappointing winter notwithstanding, the USARC is gearing up for what is always a fantastic summer program. The lake may be low, but it still has plenty of water for USARC athletes to get out and enjoy a variety of sports in the beautiful high country summer.

(see Summer on pg. 6)



Choyee at the helm of a Kawasaki PWC under the watchful eye and tutelage of USARC staffer, Lexie.



Bill provides the cheers as volunteer Bob carves Danny through a big bi-ski turn.

A Drought, by Any Other Name, can Still be Fun!

A great deal of fun was had coming up with ways to modify the term 'El Niño' to reflect what really happened this past winter. El No-no, El Nada, El None-o, El Negativo, and even El Neener-neener-neener (sounded out in a teasing, nasal, sing-song tone) were all terms that came to mind.

Poor, confused Mother Nature, primed like a meteorological prom queen, amid all the hype that this was supposed to be "the year", that El Nino was finally going to hit Southern California, and in a big way. Weather channels and climate nerds jumped on her bandwagon with endless graphics of ocean temperatures and probable storm tracks. The drought-buster winter was

finally materializing, and indeed, one early season storm that dumped over three feet of snow had powder hounds drooling! Then the sun came out and seemingly stayed out, the pattern to be for the rest of the season.

(see "Winter" on pg. 8)

A Note from the Executive Director

Driving through some parts of the Southland, I observe many deceptively green hillsides, spawning cinematic images of the Hibernian countryside and almost leading one to believe we just experienced the long, deep, rainy winter postulated by so many weather forecasters, and awaited by hopeful skiers and boaters. Several months ago I, like so many others, had heard the name “Godzilla” applied to the expected winter storm pattern. Despite wonderful visions of pillowed blankets of white encasing every feature of the landscape, muting all sound but the rumbling omnipresent snow plows, I grew weary of the psittacistic discourse of the local meteorologists as I sat waiting for the storm door to open. Waiting, waiting, waiting...



Tom Peirce
USARC Exec. Dir.



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Many of my Northern California family and friends would report their nearby long-empty reservoirs were filling so quickly they had to release water as fast as they could in order to make room for even more runoff on the way. While in Big Bear, it seemed the big, tough, scaly old lizard known as Godzilla was really just a giant, soft, fuzzy butterfly known as Mothra fluttering about in aimless circles around the ever present sun. Still, I have come to appreciate the symbolism of the butterfly, what it signifies in terms of change, its insouciant patience as it both crawls around



A little boy points out a Monarch caterpillar, soon to become something even more beautiful.

the garden, then locks itself away, to eventually emerge as something quite beautiful. It even factored into my end-of-season speech about transitions to our wonderful volunteers.

My son eagerly stalks the Monarch caterpillars in our garden, and he loves pointing at the butterflies dancing between flowers. He is blissfully unaware of the connection between the two,

and therefore marvels at both, showing no impatience with the renascent process. Ultimately, I realize it is up to each of us to find the same imperturbability shown by the butterfly, understanding that things rarely manifest themselves as fast as, or in the way that, we expect or hope. That applies to winter snows or life in general.

Be it a glorified aeromancer calling for epic blizzards, the supercilious and intransigent owner who says one thing and does another, or the sudden redirection of our lives and the challenges that arise from that change of direction, with time and patience (and maybe with a little help from the USARC) we may just discover wings we never knew we had before.

Congrats to the USARC volunteers and staffer who passed their PSIA Adaptive Instructor exam!



Level 1

Ginger Caples-Urode
Keith D’Avingnon
Linda Griffith
Bobiane Kupfer
Susan Mason
Austin Rist
Holly Shelton
Bill Wandner
Claire Youmans
Level 2 (ID/VI)
Debbi Armenta

Volunteer Profile - Billy Yaeger, One of the First

Bill Yaeger has been a USARC volunteer for 26 years. He has been a staple in the volunteer corps ever since 1990, and has seen a lot of change over the years. Often dropping whatever he's doing to help out in a pinch, Billy has excelled in the technique of bi-ski, helping participants learn how to ski it themselves, or giving those with less ability the thrill of a lifetime. We sat down with Billy to understand his longevity with the USARC.

The Spirit (TS): So Billy, how did you first learn about USARC so many years ago?

Billy Yaeger (BY): I was a ski school instructor at Bear Mountain, back in the days when it was Goldmine Ski Resort. When the program started out I decided to give it a try. This is way more fun!

TS: You have been a volunteer for over 25 years, what still draws you to USARC?

BY: I am addicted to helping the adaptive skiers and I love seeing the smiles on their faces, or their parents.

TS: I know you must have many stories and moments; do you care to share one?

BY: Skiing a bi-ski in the half pipe with the parents of the participants standing in the middle, usually taking pictures.

TS: What would you tell someone that was interested in volunteering?

BY: USARC is the most rewarding and fun experience you will ever have on skis!



Good thing Grant is not a beginner skier, nor is Billy a beginner volunteer.

TS: If you had a superpower, what would it be?

BY: Having no fear and not getting hurt.

TS: How has the USARC evolved over the years?

BY: It has been getting more fun every year.

TS: Would you rather teach on a hot day or a cold snowy day?

BY: I like warm days, better for our students.

TS: We're sure our athletes agree! Thanks Billy, we'll see you next winter for your 27th!

Your Input is Needed Now!

In addition to participants completing our important survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/usarc_participant, it would help the USARC if our participants and supporters were to write letters of support to the management of Mammoth Mt. and the Big Bear resorts.

With Mammoth taking ownership of Bear Mountain and Snow Summit, it has become clear that if the USARC is to have a place in the big changes they have planned, YOU need to share the importance of USARC to you and your family and friends with the Mammoth management team.

In addition to any inspirational stories and positive comments, letters should ideally contain the following.

- Simply and clearly illustrate your gratitude for their support of USARC programs and facilities
- State the importance of the USARC to your quality of life, both recreationally and otherwise
- Specify if the USARC is a primary reason you and yours come to Bear Mountain or Snow Summit (vs. competitors as Snow Valley, Mt. Baldy or Mt. High)
- Outline any collateral expenditures you make while at the resort

Please direct any correspondence to:

Mr. Dave Likins, COO
Big Bear Mountain Resorts
PO Box 77
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Mr. Rusty Gregory, CEO
Mammoth Resorts
PO Box 24
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Please send or email a copy to USARC as well, and thank you for your help in facilitating our continued success.



“Déjà vu all Over Again”

As streaks are wont to do, the 2015 Ski-A-Thon saw an end of the multi-year Top Fundraiser dominion of Shelly’s FUNdraisers. Of course, that means a new streak had begun, and one could only guess how long the new champion’s reign might last.

Well that streak lasted one year as the 2016 Ski-A-Thon, presented by Anthem Blue

Cross, once again saw the championship plaque change hands, straight back into those of the team of Shelly’s FUNdraisers, who raised \$8,825!



Sarah waves as Karen provides some speed control on the way down.

Shelly’s hiatus from the top spot had been short-lived, but certainly not because Team Briana (the 2015 Champ) hadn’t tried. The latter was a very respectable third place in this year’s fundraising efforts, having raised \$5,750. Splitting the difference between the top three was the Parrot Head Club Team, raising \$6,100.

The USARC is not only thankful to its top fundraisers, but to all the other Ski-A-Thon participants and sponsors who contributed to the nearly \$75,000 raised this year, funding that helps pay for extensive volunteer training, expensive state-of-the-art adaptive equipment, and partial or full scholarships on every lesson taught by the USARC!



Carol delivers a thrill ride and gets a huge smile in return from Briana.



Champion once again, Shelly Jameson.

This consistent and valuable support has enabled the USARC to keep its winter lesson prices unchanged for 10 years, and the lowest of any professional adaptive program in the west! Please consider you and your team invited to join us next winter for the 2017 Ski-A-Thon.

The USARC is grateful for our 2015 calendar year in-kind donors* whose generosity facilitates our success.

- The Agency Brands
- Big Bear Disposal, Inc.
- Big Bear Marina LLC
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- Bishop Waste Disposal
- Cantrell Fishing Guide Service
- Clif Bar & Co.
- Club G
- Ethan Estevez
- Finish Line Technologies, Inc.
- Matt Fukushima Photography
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- Goldsmith's Board Shop
- Heritage Physical Therapy
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- John Wayne Cancer Foundation
- Jones Bicycles II - San Marino
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- Mishjacks Catering
- Lagunitas Brewing Company
- Lakeside Boathouse Tavern
- Bob Lombard
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
- Marker-Volkl USA
- Medieval Times
- New Belgium Brewing Co.
- Jonathon Nourok Photography
- Paceline Products
- The Pines Lakefront Dining
- Dave Rosell
- Sam Enterprises
- Sock Guy
- Stonepier Graphic Design
- Andy Templeton Photography
- Paul Van Wig
- Donald Whitbeck
- Robbie Young

If your support of goods or services is not listed here please accept our apologies and contact us so we can correct our database records.

Friends, Food and Fun on P2P21



Soothing shade trees welcome riders to Lake Diaz.

Big or small, crowded or not, new riders or old, the annual Peak to Peak Pedal is always an experience full of challenges, rewards and feel-good. While the 21st iteration of the ride did not have the same number of riders as its predecessor, it more than made up for it in other ways.

As with any adventure ride, nothing is ever going to be perfectly easy every day. While there were heat and headwinds testing the mettle of many on the first day or two, by the end of days three and four there were more moderate temperatures and glorious ego-stroking tailwinds. For all but one of the riders (ahem), the last day was once again a beautiful, if always demanding, unfolding of one panoramic vista after another.

What started as a couple dozen riders took its first hit when long-time participant Frank Elliott and

his crew of three other riders were waylaid by issues before the ride even started. Then, on the second day, another rider experienced a recurrence of another ailment and had to withdraw from the ride, and because his wife was riding with him, she had to leave as well. On the last day, a seasoned rider took a little tumble and, while nothing extremely serious happened, he remained off the bike for precautionary measures.



Dan and Kim get ready for the long downhill ahead.



Paulette and KelLe pause to pose beneath Mt. Whitney.

So when the small group actually finished about 25% smaller than it started one might be inclined to think the event was unsuccessful. Yet here is where it gets interesting; even including the riders who never started the ride itself, the proceeds raised per rider were the highest ever, validating the efforts of those who did ride and the intent of those who were unable to do so.

Oh yes, the food. Did we mention the food? After a decade of delicious devotion by our prior “chuck wagon crew”, USARC upped the ante by engaging the services of Tamisha Jackson’s

Mishjacks Catering, Cordon-Bleu trained no less. Her offerings were not only plentiful and magnificent on the palate, they were tailored to meet the nutritional

needs of the long-distance athlete. Rounding out an already memorable adventure with yet another unforgettable facet, lucky were the riders and volunteers who were able to savor her creations! And by the way, she will again be aboard for P2P22; we hope you will be too.

As famed filmmaker Warren Miller always said, “If you don’t do it this year, you’ll just be one year older when you do.”



Starry skies prevail.

Top Ten P2P21 Fundraisers	
Tom Peirce	\$11,476.00
Kelle Malkewitz	\$9,690.00
Frank Elliott	\$9,160.00
Glen Bland	\$9,000.00
Debbi Armenta	\$7,465.00
Kim Meares	\$4,050.00
Paul Mattos	\$3,815.00
Gary Steube	\$3,300.00
Robert Otwell	\$3,115.00
John Mattos	\$3,065.00

 = Sara Rosell

Summer (cont.)

Water skiing, jet skiing, kayaking and more await the eager participant trying to beat the heat and escape the smog!

Single day sessions are available on Wednesdays and Thursdays during July, while an overnight option adding camping and fishing to the mix is available in August this year. Once again, USARC will collaborate with Casa Colina Hospital at their Land Meets Sea Camp in Long Beach during August. Call their Outdoor Adventures program for more information.



Mikey and Jared enjoy a placid paddle on the sapphire waters of Big Bear Lake.

The USARC session dates are listed on the calendar on the last page of this newsletter, but they do fill up quickly. So remember that reservations will begin May 17th at 9:00 AM (do not call any earlier!)

Volunteers Wanted!

The summer program is a whole different program than the winter program. It takes about 10 people to get one person water skiing when you factor in the boat crews, dock help and swimmers.

Accordingly, volunteers will once again play a vital part in the program's success. A one-day volunteer training will be held on June 25th in Big Bear. You will see how the program works and get a chance to experience every aspect of the program. You do not have to have water skiing experience, just a great attitude! If you are interested [click here for a Volunteer Application](#) or call us at **909-584-0269**.

Petras (cont.)

The Spirit (TS): What is your favorite hobby?

Petras Vasiliauskas (PV): My favorite hobby is swimming, in pools, lakes, and in the ocean. It's refreshing and great exercise. I also love technology. I am an iDevice beta tester. When I don't have any homework, I enjoy listening to YouTube videos.

TS: How does skiing make you feel?

PV: Skiing is very exciting! It also makes me feel like I am gliding into relaxation. It feels so nice and relaxing. When I am skiing I don't think about other things and stress disappears. I especially like the long runs and listening to the reggae music at the top of chair 6. I like the feel of the snow falling. Snowstorms are fun too.

TS: What subject do you like most in school?



Petras showing his excellent form!

PV: My favorite subject this year is English. First I really enjoy Wednesday meditation. I also enjoy free writes on Friday and creative writing.

TS: If you could travel anywhere in the world where would you go and why? I would like to travel to Mexico. I would eat lots of Mexican food, learn to speak Spanish, and enjoy the music.

TS: Tell us something interesting about yourself.

PV: I love to surf, paddleboard, kayak, to go hiking and snowshoeing, camping, and jumping on my trampoline. I like game night and reading night with my family. I hope to attend computer science camp this summer in Northern California to learn about computer programming and I am excited about attending the Buddy Program camp at the Louisiana Center for the Blind to have fun and focus on my blindness skills.

TS: How would you describe the skiing experience to somebody that had never done it?

PV: Skiing is so exciting! It's energizing and relaxing and great exercise. The (USARC) instructors at Big Bear Mountain are lots of fun!

A New Yorker in Big Bear, Intern: Austin Rist

I cannot believe my time here as “Intern” at USARC has come to an end already. I began my search for a Recreation Therapy internship last year, but honestly had no luck finding my dream internship and came to the conclusion that I would end up at a hospital near school. I was so upset and did not know what I was doing with my life, but then my department gave me a list of approved sites for our internships and I found three that weren’t in the clinical setting.



Intern (with his leprechaun hat) and Brady ride the chairlift for another run.

One was where my girlfriend wanted to go so I automatically crossed it off the list. The next one was in Las Vegas. Then I found the United States Adaptive Recreation Center and I was officially in love. I had found something that I already sort of knew about. Skiing was something I started in 7th grade and although I hadn't done in a few years, I knew I could get back into it. So after looking at what USARC was all about I had an interview with Tom

and Sara, followed three weeks later by a call to offer me the position, which I instantly accepted!

I then had to plan out a road trip across the country from NY to CA, something I always wanted to do. It was a really fun trip and I got to Big Bear in about six days. I stopped by USARC to see where the building was and to meet some people and I was so excited and nervous because I did not know what to expect. Also, I did not want to slip up and reveal my real name (NOTE - USARC tradition has interns going by the moniker “Intern” until the end of each summer or winter season. Many are the tricks used to trick an unwary intern into revealing their true identity.)

My first day I tagged along on a lesson with this young girl who gave me the biggest hug at the end of the day. It made me feel so good! After a few lessons with participants, seeing the smiles they always had on their faces, and hearing their comments like “I never thought I would do something like this in my lifetime,” I knew exactly why I was here and how much I loved what I was doing.

I learned so much during this internship including what adaptive technology exists in the snowsport world, how to work with the equipment and the amazing participants we serve, how to work as a team with such wonderful people and many other things that have helped me and prepared me for my future.

While I could keep listing all the things I learned, maybe the most important lesson was that I will never find a crew as loving, passionate and dedicated as I did with the USARC staff and volunteers. Everyone was so great and helpful in getting me through my internship, especially the staff who helped me to get through my PSIA Adaptive Certification.

At the beginning I didn't know what to expect from this internship, and I did not even know if I would like to teach skiing, let alone adaptive skiing. Now that it has passed, I can proudly say that it is the staff, participants and volunteers that I was around every day who made it all worthwhile and something that I have fallen in love with. This has been the best adventure of my life! Thank you USARC for everything you have done for me and I will see you again during the 2016/17 winter season as a staffer (with a name!)



Intern knows to best teach mono-ski, one must mono-ski.

What's ahead at USARC?

MAY

17 Summer Reservations 909-584-0269 (9 AM)

JUNE

25 Summer Volunteer Training (Big Bear)

JULY

6, 7 Summer Day Sessions

13, 14 Summer Day Sessions

20, 21 Summer Day Sessions

27, 28 Summer Day Sessions

AUGUST

2 Summer Volunteer Training (Long Beach)

3-5 Land Meets Sea Camp (Long Beach)

10, 11 Summer Day Sessions

14-16 Summer Overnight Session 1

17-19 Summer Overnight Session 2

24, 25 Summer Day Sessions

26 Summer Volunteer Party

OCTOBER

5-9 22nd Annual Peak To Peak Pedal (P2P22)

How can I help USARC?

This is a frequently asked question. Frankly, the answer is quite simple; 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.amazonmile.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, ETC.

Cars, RVs, and boats [donated in the name](#) of USARC are sold, with the proceeds defraying USARC’s operating costs and you receive a tax deduction! Click on the logo to get started.



Please like 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 and special events, but you can help the USARC win important support and funding. Don’t forget to ask all your Facebook friends to like USARC too. 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 usarc@willrahill.com, 909.645.1949, or www.SearchBigBearRealEstate.com