

Friday, April 4, 2003

Vol. 17 Number 5

U.S. Top Doc Watches Miracles Happen on the Mountainside

Kim Byers, VA Special Events

Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S, Surgeon General of the United States (and Acting Assistant Secretary for Health), visited the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic on Thursday, met with the veterans, got a tour of Clinic facilities, and even took a quick trip down the mountain in a mono-ski.

Invited to the Clinic by senior VA officials after a visit with Secretary Anthony J. Principi, Dr. Carmona is glad he came. "I am thrilled to be here," he said. "This is absolutely astounding, outstanding, -- I've never seen anything like it. There's so much passion from the instructors and the staff here. They just love their work and the veterans seem to be overwhelmed by the attention they receive. There's a really nice synergy here from a lot of different disciplines who are all working together to support the veterans."

Discussing the benefits of skiing as therapy, Dr. Carmona sees "huge tangential benefits. This isn't just about skiing -- it's about empowerment and emancipation and appreciating all you can do in spite of having a disability."

Dr. Carmona has years of experience with the Department of Veterans Affairs, as a patient, a medical student, and an instructor. When he was named the 17th Surgeon General of the United States in 2002, one of his first official stops was visiting VA headquarters in Washington, D.C. A disabled veteran himself, Dr. Carmona is also a long time member of the Disabled American Veterans.

Born and raised in New York City, Richard Carmona dropped out of high school and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967. While enlisted, he received his diploma, joined the Army's Special Forces, and ultimately became a combat-decorated Vietnam veteran. After completing his education, he began his distinguished career in medicine.

Dr. Carmona was full of praise for the instructors who helped him navigate his mono-ski Thursday morning. "I'm not a skier, but the instructor was just outstanding. He had me balancing myself and coming down the hill without being a hazard." He says he learned a lot from the experience and got a better understanding about being disabled.

To the Clinic participants, this U.S. Surgeon General says he is "overwhelmed by their determination, the resilience that they have to come back and become part of society at the highest level they're capable of. We have here an example for the young soldiers who will come back from this war (in Iraq), and we have a group of role models who have bridged the gap and come back into society, dealt with their disabilities and gone on with their lives. There are so many dimensions to what I see here. These veterans really set an example for all of us."

Dana Bowman of Weatherford, Texas, will parachute into the Winter Sports Clinic today at 4:30 p.m. by the lower staging area. Bowman, a double amputee, is a former member of the U.S. Army Golden Knights. He was injured in a parachute accident in 1996.

Prosthetic & Wheelchair Repair
Carroll Room, during meal hours,
thru Friday, and till noon on
Saturday.

Web site for the
Winter Sports Clinic:

[www.va.gov/vetevent/
wsc/2003/](http://www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2003/)

Lost & Found

LOST

- Minolta camera in black case

FOUND

- Chair cushion, red & white
- Green ski cap
- Black left mitten
- Black right ski glove
- Smith goggles from snowmobiling
- Child's black glove
- Pair of light brown gloves
- One pair clip-on sunglasses in case
- Black fleece jacket, size M
- Navy fleece jacket, size S
- Arctic Zone water bottle

See the Host Room staff to drop off or claim items.

CEU Educational Workshops

6:00 - 7:30 p.m. - Kearns Room
Hometown Heroes:
Living Your Legacy, Part 2

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. - Kearns Room
Sports Medicine for Disabled
Individuals

**Self Defense for the
Visually Impaired!!!**

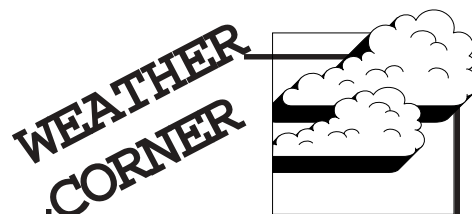
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Max Park Room

Special Agent

Mark Camillo

U.S. Secret Service



Partly Cloudy

UV Index 7 - High

**20% Chance of Early
Snow Showers**

Today's High: 40

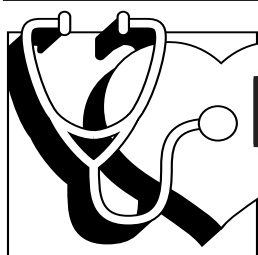
Tonight's Low: 18

Menu

Lunch today (11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Ham, Turkey and Salami Subs; Vegetarian Subs with Grilled Vegetables; Cole Slaw; Potato Salad; Brownies.

Dinner today (4:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.) Spinach Salad; Roasted Pork Loin; Roast Beef Au Jus; Mashed Potatoes; Vegetables; Rolls.

Breakfast tomorrow (6:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.) Fresh Fruit; Oatmeal; Scrambled Eggs; Ham and Sausage; Breakfast Breads; Coffee, Tea, Juices.



Health Watch

Tips for Today

First ice, then heal! When you strain a muscle or joint, think ice for the first 24-48 hours. Although the hot tub may seem enticing, warming those injuries can cause increased bleeding into the area. That can lead to increased swelling and soreness. Stick with the ice to reduce swelling and bleeding, then ease into that hot tub later.

Drink plenty of fluids! Because of the low humidity, along with the strenuous exercise you will undertake this week, it is very easy to become dehydrated. Always carry water with you and drink it! If you hit the lounge *apres ski*, make sure that you drink a glass of water in between alcoholic drinks. This will help to keep you hydrated, as well as happy!

Medical Information for Participants

PHONE: 970-923-2000, Extension 381

Medical Emergencies:

- Call 911 for an ambulance for transport to the local emergency room.

Non-Emergent Care, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.:

- Bedford A conference room, one level below mall, across the street from Mountain Chalet Hotel. Stairway access from mall is next to Christy Sports.
- Wheelchair access must use elevator at far end of mall above main bus terminal to get to medical room level.

Transport:

- Van transport is available from Silvertree Hotel to medical room. Find medical van in front of hotel, or call medical room for transport.

After Hours:

- Call medical room for recorded instructions for contacting "On Call" medical provider. If unsuccessful, call the hotel operator.

Important Travel Information for Participants

Flight Information

It is very important that you call and confirm your out-bound flight itinerary. Your flight out of Aspen may be the same, but your connections may have changed. Please call **1-800-241-6522**. These changes are directly related to the war effort, which has reduced flights. United is very sorry for any inconvenience.

Additionally, weather may affect your departure this weekend. The following information numbers may be helpful:

Aspen Airport	970-920-5380
Local Roads	970-920-5454
State Roads	303-639-1234

Luggage Information

All veterans need to have their bags packed, labeled, and left outside their hotel doors (at the Silvertree or the Wildwood) no later than **four hours before** their flights. If you are on a flight between 7:00 - 9:00 a.m., luggage will be picked up starting at 4:00 a.m. Every piece of luggage must be clearly identified with both your full name AND flight number. Additional identification tags are located at the bell stand at the Silvertree. Luggage will be picked up by hotel staff and brought to the lobby for transport to the airport. All luggage must be unlocked for security screening. If your luggage is locked, the locks will be broken by airport security personnel. If you have any questions about airport transportation, please contact the Host Room and ask them to contact the Clinic Transportation Coordinators.

Don't Forget to Vote!!!

At the Closing Ceremonies, six individuals will be recognized for unique contributions to the Clinic. How are they selected? YOU choose them! Stop by now in the lobby of the Conference Center and the Host Room to vote for your candidates to receive the following awards:

- * Team Leader Award
- * Downhill Ski Instructor Award
- * Cross Country Ski Instructor Award
- * Judy Shawo Commitment to Excellence Award
- * Sid Ford Award for Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty
- * Linnie Howard Spirit Award

Voting ends at NOON today, so be sure to cast your vote for your favorites now!

Quotable Quotes

“Attending the Winter Sports Clinic is like going to a ‘mental health festival’ ...”

Terry Livingston, #30, Seminole, FL

“If you don’t have a good time at the Winter Sports Clinic, you had better check your pulse...”

Randall Sirbaugh, #328, Grand Junction, FL

“This was the most fabulous thing I’ve ever done. I’ve never experienced anything like it.”

John Thornton (skiing for the first time at age 76), #61, Denver, CO

“This is the scariest and most fun thing I’ve ever done, all at the same time.”

Myron (Tony) Whitman, #366, Aurora, CO

“If I had any more fun, it just wouldn’t be fair...”

Michael Wilson, #368, Springfield, NY

“*Miracles on the Mountainside* is truly just that.”

Michael Wynegar, #375, North East, MD

“This charges my batteries and I get both physical and social benefits from being here.”

Robert Holt, #20, Layton, UT

“This was the biggest rush of my life...”

Steven Selden, #320, Miami, FL

“I always wanted to do this...This is what life is all about.”

Dwayne McLetchie, #296, Miami, FL

“Coming to the Winter Sports Clinic is a highlight of my whole year.”

Mark Smith, #58, Lytton, IA

“Impossibilities are simply not an option at the Winter Sports Clinic...”

Ruth Kult, #232, Fairview Heights, IL

“I used to ski before my accident. It is such a thrill to be able to do it again. It chokes me up.”

Philip Irons, #211, Athol, IA

“This makes me remember the time when sex was safe and skiing was dangerous.”

Russell Worth (age 79), #373, Brown Deer, WI

“If you ain’t never done it, you shoulda, oughta do it!”

Unknown participant

“I hit (fell) hard, but I’ve been hit harder!”

Unknown participant

Dog lovers, veterans, VA staff and volunteers, appreciate the beauty and intelligence of the service dogs present at this week's Winter Sports Clinic. Many of these four-legged comrades are repeat visitors to the event. Some of the owners were contacted to comment on their dog's experiences during the week and to interpret what their dog would say "if they could talk."

Hovi, a three year old black male German Hovawart, is assisting owner George Jones of Mountain Village with the veterans scuba diving program. Jones said that Hovi, a search and rescue dog, was bred to party. "He loves people and having a good time," said Jones. He adds that Hovi can't really be German "because he doesn't like to drink beer."

Danny Garrison of Albany, New York, can't bend over without the risk of falling down. He said he used to fall down every day until he got Samson, a three year old black male Labrador Field Retriever, seven months ago. Samson or "Sammy" knows 25 commands, and does all of Garrison's picking up and retrieving. Sammy opens doors, picks up nickels, dimes, quarters, pennies and other items from the floor, fetches Garrison's sack lunch or a drink from the refrigerator and even gives his checkbook to the bank teller. Garrison said that Sammy is enjoying playing in the snow. When asked what Sammy would say if he could talk, Garrison replied with a smile, "Get it yourself!"

Alex, a 2 1/2 year old male black Labrador belonging to David Wilson of Davie, Florida, is a special canine friend to Sammy. Mrs. Wilson said that the two dogs wrestle and play together in the snow. If Alex could comment on his trip to Snowmass, Mrs. Wilson indicated he would say, "I'm having a ball!"

Jean Van Trump of Lake Park, Florida, said if her Golden Retriever, Jonah, could speak, he would have exclaimed, "Oh Boy, Snow!" "He has been pulling me like a champion," said Van Trump. "Being from Florida, going up and down the hills here has been extra work." Van Trump added that Jonah loves rolling and playing in the snow.

Moss is a 5 1/2 year old yellow Labrador Retriever seeing eye dog belonging to Bob Holt of Salt Lake City. This is Moss's 6th Winter Sports Clinic. Holt indicated that he introduced Moss to Bo Derek this week, and when Bo kneeled down to pet him, "Moss kissed her right on the lips." Holt also stated that he has noticed that working dogs interact more respectfully with each other than they do with pet dogs.

If Dudley, a yellow Labrador seeing eye dog could speak, owner Michael Somsan of Tucson, Arizona, said Dudley would proclaim, "The prime rib is really good!" Somsan said that Dudley has been eating plenty of prime rib this week!

According to Andrew Roca, his dog Jake would say, "I'm having a blast!" Jake, a 3 1/2 year old Husky/Golden Retriever, also helps Roca, of Converse, Texas, write up their travels for the Texas Hearing and Service Dog Association Newsletter.