

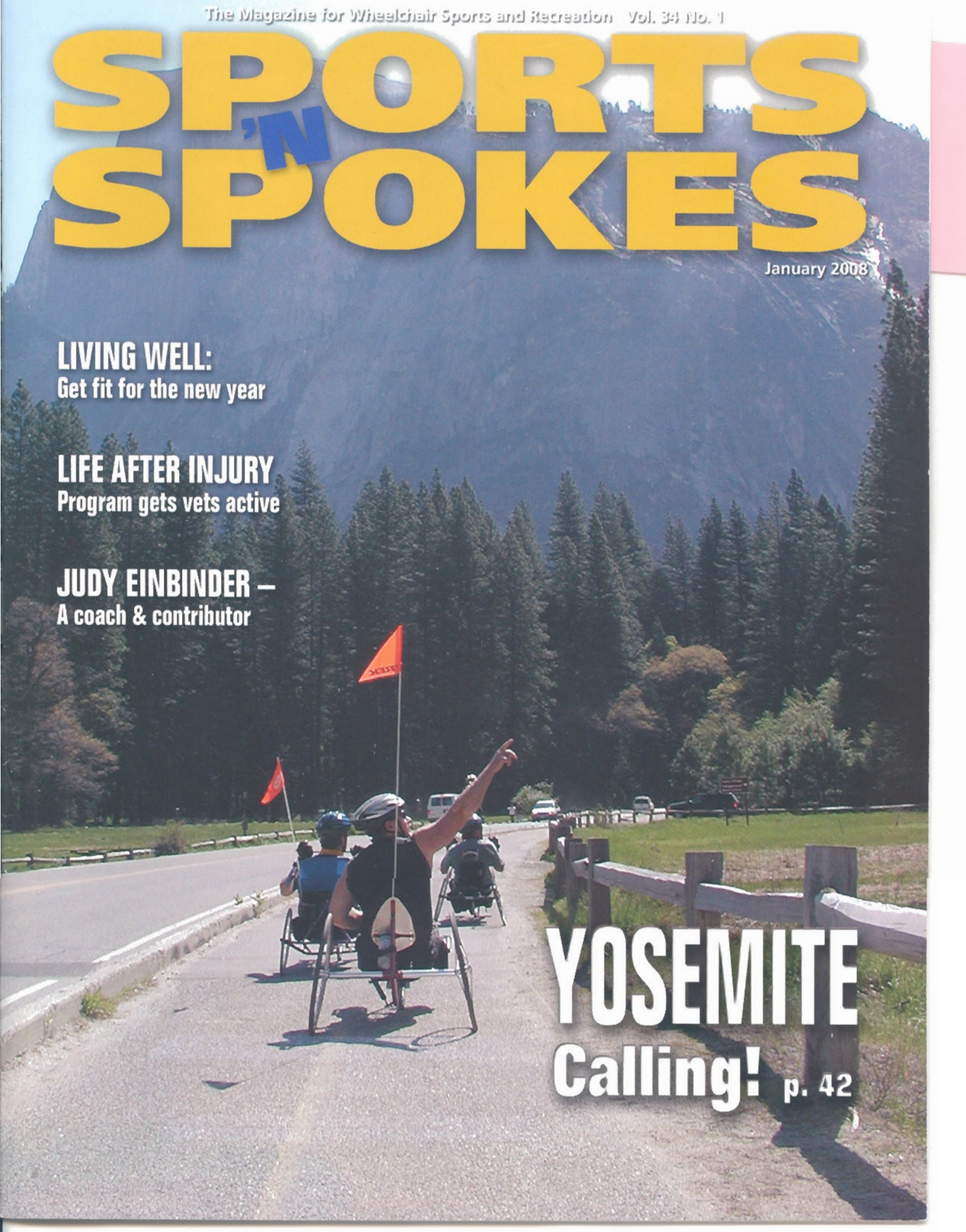
# SPORTS 'N SPOKES

January 2008

**LIVING WELL:**  
Get fit for the new year

**LIFE AFTER INJURY**  
Program gets vets active

**JUDY EINBINDER —**  
A coach & contributor



**YOSEMITE**  
Calling! p. 42

## GO DEEP

**T**heir ability levels varied, but one thing was the same—they all had a fantastic week of scuba diving in Bonaire in the Netherlands Antilles Islands. On September 22–29, 2007, a group of people with spinal-cord or brain injuries participated in one to three dives each day, exploring different coral reefs and shipwrecks. They managed to get in a night dive as well.

The Bonaire trip was sponsored by the Therapeutic Recreation Department at Shepherd Center and Divers@Sea, both located in Atlanta. Shepherd Center sponsors this trip and others like it throughout the year to provide opportunities for people who have sustained injuries to participate in recreational sporting activities.

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## SPORTS CAMP

**T**he 7th Annual AllSports Camp took place at Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation in Warm Springs, Ga., October 26–28, 2007. This year's event, sponsored by Shepherd Center in partnership with BlazeSports, featured approximately 30 participants from 8 states, 15 volunteers from the University of South Alabama, 10 coaches, and 6 staff members.

This annual camp offers a three-day sports-packed weekend where participants receive instruction from top coaches. Available sports include track, field,

The AllSports Camp features a wide variety of sports and recreational activities including track and field, basketball, rugby, over-the-line, tennis, golf, handcycling, swimming, scuba, football, canoeing/kayaking, and fencing.



During a scuba trip to Bonaire, participants had the opportunity to take part in dives and explore coral reefs and shipwrecks.

basketball, rugby, over-the-line, tennis, golf, handcycling, swimming, scuba, football, canoeing/kayaking, and fencing.

Participants have the opportunity to explore new activities, learn new skills, and meet new people. It is designed for people with spinal-cord injury, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, post-polio syndrome, amputation, Guillain-Barre syndrome, transverse

falls of this magical national park.

Cars arrived at the campsite, and various versions and genres of handcycles were unloaded along with camping gear. It was a curious mix of handcycles, including state-of-the-art handmade models and a 24-year-old handcrafted prototype of today's style. The camp was nestled among towering pine trees along the Merced River,

myelitis, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

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## YOSEMITE '07

by Rick Mason

**A**s the van crested the mountaintop, the road leading to Yosemite National Park, Calif., revealed a vast forest of treetops, surrounded by massive granite walls leading to the serene valley floor below. A group of 12 cyclists spent the next few days (April 30–May 3, 2007) cycling among the granite monoliths and wondrous water-



which was filled with the melting snows from the surrounding mountains.

The group settled in and greetings were exchanged, new friendships begun, and long-ago acquaintances renewed. Around the roaring campfire that evening, everyone shared stories of cycling adventures and discussed plans for the next morning's ride. As the flame dwindled, folks slowly drifted off to sleep under the full moon's warm glow.

The next morning the sun filtered through the trees, and riders poked their heads out of their cabins while the squirrels scampered around looking for leftover morsels. After a round of coffee and a light breakfast, activity slowly picked up, and final adjustments were made to bikes. Following some last-minute instructions, we headed down the bike path, weaving through the towering pines and huge boulders littering the valley floor.

Around every corner the trees opened to reveal a new breathtaking view of the surrounding granite structures. Mark Wellman described various points of interest and shared his years of experience in Yosemite, as a ranger and rock climber. While we were parked at the base of Half Dome, he told us about his 13-day adventure scaling the imposing sheer granite wall. He recounted the journey to the base of the wall, two days spent stuck on a portable ledge waiting out an unexpected snowstorm, and the final cresting of the peak.

The ride continued past the base of thundering Yosemite Falls and then wound through a serene meadow with the first blossoms of spring emerging. That evening featured a presentation of high-intensity cycling adventures, with images projecting through the sky. Sleep came easy that night.

The next day brought a change in weather. The air was brisk and full of moisture, and clouds covered the previous day's sun-filled skies. Rider preparation included rain gear and a reminder that the day's ride included travel on

MATT STRUGAR-FRITSCH



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A ride through Yosemite National Park brought many amazing sights and sounds.

active roadways and a warning to watch for tourists taking in the sights.

The first stop was El Capitan. As we viewed the imposing structure, small colorful dots were evident on the earth-tone face of granite. Climbers hung like spiders from the rock, planning their next detailed movement. Wellman provided insight into the possible thoughts going through their heads while suspended hundreds of feet in the air with rain (and possibly snow) in the forecast.

As we rounded the west end of the valley, Bridalveil Falls gushed with the melting snow, and the first raindrops began to fall. The pace of the ride quickened with each additional drop, and the riverside picnic was shifted to the camp.

In the afternoon the group took a break from cycling to visit the Native American

Ahwahneechee Village for a presentation about life for the valley's original inhabitants. A descendant from the Miwok tribe shared stories about the influence of the indigenous peoples on the evolution of Yosemite. That evening, with a steady rain falling, the group huddled under the cabin awning around a barbecue grill that had been converted to a firepit for warmth. When someone mentioned the climbers hanging on the valley wall in the rain, suddenly the night became a little warmer.

The following morning, remnants of the storm slowly left the sky. The day's ride was optional, with several people staying to further explore the valley while others packed for the return trip home.

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