

Access Anything:

The Traveler



ACCESS ADVENTURE

*Drive a team of
horses behind
your own
wheelchair
pg 4*

Also Inside:
Sierra Club
Travels in a Blue Chair
Networking Companies



AccessAnything:

The Traveler

The Access Anything Online Family:

www.accessanything.net

www.ckconsultingonline.com

<http://accessanything.blogspot.com>

<http://accessanythingreviews.blogspot.com>

www.youtube.com/accessanything

<http://www.xable.com/videos/100382>

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On the Road

Access Anything's look ahead: 2008

We are excited to announce to all you powder hounds that Steamboat has officially broken its 447.75" record annual snowfall this year, and at the time of publication, we are at 450 inches and we still have until April 6th to accumulate more! It's been an amazing year here in The 'Boat, and we're sad to take off on our travels and miss the final week of skiing. But Travel We Must!

The next few months have much in store for Access Anything, and we can't wait to tell you all about them in our next issue! We begin our travels on March 27th, heading to the largest annual Abilities Expo in New Jersey, which sees an average of over 12,000 visitors. We hope to share our books, knowledge and assistance with as many of these eager minds as we can! If you're in the area, don't miss this huge event from March 28th-30th in Edison NJ. <http://nyc.abilitiesexpo.com>

Following this event we get to begin adding our two-cents to Continental Airline's new disability advisory board, with our initial meeting and training as we sit in on Northwest's board meeting in Detroit, April 1st & 2nd. We plan to keep you all posted on the progress that Continental makes with accessibility, and hope to bring you frequent exciting updates on the topic.

Next, our travels take us to New York for the 7th Annual Scott Remington Fundraiser for Spinal Cord Research, benefiting the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation on April 5th. This event is thoroughly impressive, raising more than \$40,000 per year, and we're excited to be present once again! To donate to spinal cord research, check out www.scottrem.com.

The final leg of this trip brings us closer to home for the annual Colorado Scenic Byways Conference in Denver where we spend two days sharing our observations from 2006 and brainstorming on new ways to make the byways even better for people with disabilities. And yet our travels don't end there!

Our May and June newsletter will bring exciting information on Tanzania as well as the Abilities Expo in Southern California... stay tuned as always, and send us your updates as well!



Best wishes from **The Access Anything Team**



ACCESS ADVENTURE

Challenging the Limits of Disability



In 2001, John Muir's great-great grandson Michael had the idea to lead a horse-drawn carriage across the country and follow the wagon-prints of his ancestor's path. Because of his own struggle with MS, Michael was not only re-enacting history, he was making it.

Access Adventure now operates on the [Solano Land Trust](#) in conjunction with the [Muir Heritage Land Trust](#) in Contra Costa County outside San Francisco CA, operating on more than 16,000 acres of preserved open space lands. Solano Land Trust's Rush Ranch, located near Suisun City on 2,070 acres, straddles the Suisun Marsh, and is the headquarters for Access Adventure. The Muir Heritage Land Trust hosts Access Adventure as a user group on the spectacular properties they protect. Both land trusts have ample areas to explore with the horse drawn carriages of Access Adventure.



Access Adventure provides [weekly events](#) of recreational carriage driving, [special events](#) featuring historical horse farming, youth programs and unique educational opportunities relating to preservation, ecology, wildlife habitat and rangeland management.

The programs of Access Adventure are provided **free of charge** to anyone living with a condition that affects their ability to get around. The uniquely designed vehicles offer a safe and comfortable ride, providing access to anywhere horses can go.



Access Adventure doesn't yet maintain a stable of driving horses to serve the program, but depends on volunteers with suitably experienced horses to work when needed.

They have a variety of driving horses to draw on, including Morgans, Standardbreds, Belgians, Percherons, Stonewall Sporthorses and cross-breeds. They come in different sizes and colors, but share a gentle, reliable nature and a good work ethic. These stalwart workhorses are the backbone of Access Adventure.

Access Adventure is a volunteer, grassroots organization promoted through community outreach and sustained by local support.



Regular Programs for People with Disabilities

From late April through October, programs of recreational carriage driving for individuals and groups are offered to people living with mobility challenges, their caregivers, friends, family and supporters. Access Adventure can accommodate up to six wheelchair riders at a time. The Thornlea carriages have solar powered, battery operated wheelchair lifts that can handle up to 500 pounds. The lifts are also helpful to anyone with limited mobility. And of course they don't limit their program to wheelchair users!

With innovative design and technology, their horse drawn carriages lift aboard people with mobility challenges, accommodating wheelchairs, providing recreation and educational opportunities relating to nature.

Equestrian Groups

Access Adventure also offers monthly events for equestrian groups at the Rush Ranch, from late April through October. Carriage Clubs, Training Clinics, Draft Horse groups and trail riders are all welcome to participate.

Where to Go

Go to www.access-adventure.org for information, directions, articles and more.



Sierra Club: Inclusion in the Outdoors

Awarded one of National Geographic Adventure's top adventure travel companies of 2008, the Sierra Club has a lot to boast this year as usual, but luckily for adventurers with disabilities, they're sharing the wealth. They've been leading tours for over a century now, and do it out of sheer love for the land. "We just want to get as many people into the wilderness as possible," states Tanya Tschesnok, publicity and media manager of the Sierra Club. But where some with disabilities think that adventure trips like Sierra Club's are just out of reach, Sierra Club makes a point to include. With volunteer leaders, who truly make the club worth its weight in gold, showing you the way and helping to make sure you're as able as the able-bodied are, there's no reason to exclude yourself from such wonders as the Sierra Club offers, and at a reasonable price at that.

We first heard of Sierra Club's inclusion from a volunteer leader, Greg Pflug, who spends his down-time kayaking the waters of central Florida, and who was an integral part of helping us offer adaptive recreation options to the SATH World Congress in Orlando (January). After hearing of the Sierra Club's inclusion policy, I had to do a little more digging myself to see just what's out there in the world of adventure with this top-notch agency.

Coincidentally in conjunction with Michael Muir & Access Adventure's horse-drawn accessible carriages (see page 4), the Sierra Club began running the "Memories of Muir" week-long outing last year, and it was a huge success. Muir helps guide the trip along with occupational therapist Jan Lockie, who helps tailor the trip to people with disabilities because of her own passion for the cause. Muir shapes the trip by telling stories around nighttime campfires of growing up in the Muir household and what it means to truly be one with the wilderness.

The Memories of Muir trip spends seven days and six nights in the Tahoe National Forest taking day hikes around two base camps in the area. The trip is very flexible, and the trails are along fire/logging roads wide enough for Muir's horse-drawn carriage, complete with a solar powered lift. The longest day hike is eight miles, and nights are spent camping and sharing great food in the Sierra wilderness.



But that's not all the Sierra Club hopes to offer people with disabilities. As each trip is catered to its clientele by the volunteer leaders, if you have a disability that you don't think will compromise the rest of the group, you should consider any of the outings. Likewise if you have a mobility-disability and would like to try a Sierra Club Outing, the kayaking trips with Greg Pflug would be the way to go.

Sierra Club Outings offers around twenty kayaking trips a year, about half of which Pflug leads, and many of which would be suitable for someone with a disability. Pflug, and other leaders, would consult with Lockie in adapting the trip to accommodate someone with a disability if necessary. Some trips are not as accessible, but if you know your abilities as well as limitations, together you can make it work...

For more information on the Sierra Club Outings programs, see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/> or contact the office directly to discuss the Memories of Muir trip: 415-977-5522.

Memories of Muir in an Accessible Sierra, California; September 7-13, 2008

Price: \$1,095 Deposit: \$200 Capacity: 9

Leader: Jan Lockie

Highlights:

- Hear stories of the Muir family from John Muir's great-grandson, Michael Muir
- Ride in a horse-drawn wagon or hike among the Sierra forests and granite
- "Backcountry accessible" campsites and considerations

Includes:

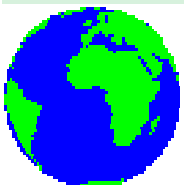
- Horse and wagon on trip transportation
- Group camping equipment including "backcountry accessible" restrooms
- All meals

NETWORKING WITH OTHER TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

One sure way to get the most out of your travels is by networking with people who have already “been there, done that.” There’s nothing more valuable to us than this growing network of travelers with disabilities, a little healthy competition, and the motivation of knowing someone else is doing what you want to do!

Wherever we go, and whatever we do, we gather names, emails, websites, and information on other travelers with disabilities with the main hope that we are all helping to expand this market and the possibilities within in.

So here are a few highlights of blogs and websites that we watch, read, and network with in order to fulfill our own traveling needs! We’ll continue to fill this page with people and companies that aim to assist!



[GLOBAL ACCESS NEWS](#)

Sure this site could use a graphical upgrade, but the information is there, it’s easy to find, and the font is big, which is way more than we can say for many sites. Find books, articles, trip planning, links, accommodations, and more at this hot-seat for sitters. Access in Israel? Who knew? [Global Access](#) has it all!



[THE ROLLING RAINS REPORT](#)

Scott Rains’ blog center is a wealth of information on many topics including traveling with a disability and universal design. Scott spends much of his time on the road and has seems to prefer the international ones. At this site, Scott has developed a webring for people to keep in touch, a photo-sharing place on Flickr.com, and spends every day putting something valuable into his blog. Sure, you’ve got to do some digging in that information haystack, but it’s led us to many interesting people, websites, and story-leads. Stop in and visit [Scott Rains](#).



[OPEN DOORS ORGANIZATION](#)

We’ve mentioned them before in a company highlight, but this company is worth mention in *every* issue. ODO are well known globally for their statistical efforts in fact gathering on travelers with disabilities. They’ve put this niche on the map for the industry and we visit their site frequently for updates on stats, new guides, companies, speakers and articles on traveling with a disability. When we’re asked who’s paving the way? We say [Open Doors](#).

THE ADVENTURER

Walt Balenovich Travels in a Blue Chair

After his first visit to Alaska with his family as a child, Walt Balenovich says he was hooked on travel. Although he says spending the first five years of his life in a Canadian hospital with Polio was just like having friends around all the time, being confined had to give his soul the need for freedom of the open road.

Balenovich began to travel as a bench-warming athlete and coach, in wheelchair basketball, rugby and sledge hockey, and as a volunteer in disabled sports, as the Athletic Director of the Niagara District Wheelchair Sports Association and V.P. of Development for the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association.

Now Balenovich spends his days at home as an I.T. consultant, which gives him the freedom to take several months off at a time wetting his wheels on foreign soil. His travel list is extensive, "from Alaska to Zambia," Balenovich seems to have seen it all, and has finally put it down on paper.

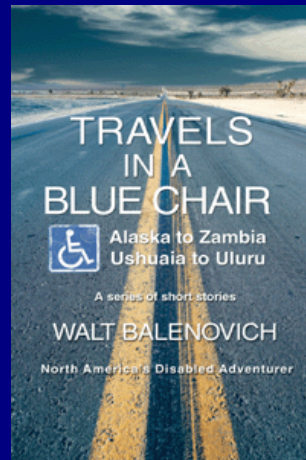
Last year Balenovich released Travels in a Blue Chair: Alaska to Zambia, Ushuaia to Uluru, and is working on his second novel, Blue Chair, Blue World: One Year Around the World in a Blue Chair, which he hopes to accompany with a documentary.

Stories of his travels in Kenya, Japan, and Indonesia can be read online, but as for the other dozens, you'll have to buy the book!

www.bluechairbook.com

Balenovich currently lives in Toronto and enjoys camping, canoeing, and hand-cycling to keep fit for his travels.

View the interview of Walt Balenovich online at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKFxrr6bHMY>



Traveler's Calendar

March

28-30: [Abilities Expo](#) NYC, Edison NJ

30-4: [22nd Annual National Disabled Veterans Clinic](#), Snowmass, CO

April

30-4: [22nd Annual National Disabled Veterans Clinic](#), Snowmass, CO

5: [9th Annual Scott Remington Fundraiser](#), Brant Lake NY

May

18: [SATH Seminar on Traveling with a Disability](#), Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

28-1: [Abilities Expo](#), Southern CA

June

22-28: [Bike Tour of Colorado](#), Adaptive Cycling Team with Adaptive Adventures

July

10-11: [World Congress on Disabilities](#), Reading, PA

24-26: [Extremity Games 3](#), Millinton, MI

Online Destinations

Access Anything's Video from the SATH Congress: <http://www.xable.com/videos/100382>

Accessible Fun in Florida: www.wheelchairsonthego.com

Amsterdam for Disabled Travelers: <http://www.amsterdamby.com/transport/trans11.htm>

Egypt for All: <http://www.egyptforall.net/>

One Minute Languages in Podcasts: <http://www.oneminutelanguages.com/>

Wheelies Handbook of Australia: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~wheelies/>

Wheelchair Foundation: just \$75 can help a child in need: <http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org>

Destination Motivation

The future depends on what we do in the present.
- Mahatma Gandhi

The Crip's Tip

What Motivates Me?

Sometimes I have more motivation that I can handle, but other times I just don't feel very motivated at all. In less motivated times I try to remember how lucky I am to be alive after all that I have been through and how important it is to keep pushing forward no matter what. I honestly believe that my accident (skiing) was nothing more than an opportunity. I wouldn't be the person or business man that I am today if not for this wheelchair (and my beautiful wife 😊). So keep your heads up and keep moving forward!



www.accessanything.net

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