

# 55 Years of Fun on the Slopes ... And Counting

By Bobbie Dodson



Orinda skier George Jedenoff 97, on the slopes at Alta Ski Area.



George Jedenoff Photos provided

With skis perfectly parallel, Orindan George Jedenoff glides down the run at Alta in graceful 'S' curves, impressing all who are watching as a video is being made of him by Ski Utah to promote skiing for seniors. And he's truly a senior. He'll turn 98 in July.

Jedenoff has been invited to shoot a video in Utah for the past three years. The first two videos had over 100,000 viewers and the new one, only made a month ago, has already had 10,000 hits. To watch this nonagenarian enjoying his time on Wasatch Mountain, simply Google his name and all his videos will show up.

Listening to Jedenoff, his love of life and the joy skiing gives him is apparent. "It's wonderful to be in the out of doors, enjoying the mountain air, the beautiful vistas – and searching out the powder for a really good run," he remarks.

Jedenoff receives large numbers of letters from fans praising

him for his prowess and asking for advice on how to stay on the slopes. "First and foremost, keep in good condition," he says. "I exercise before breakfast 365 days a year for 30 to 60 minutes, doing mostly stretching and limbering (activities). Eat a healthy diet. I like meat, and also include some starch, vegetables and a big salad every day – plain food, nothing fancy."

It was 1960 when Jedenoff took a job with U.S. Steel and moved with his family to Utah. "I asked people, 'What do you do in the winter?' And they suggested bowling, bridge and skiing. I thought skiing sounded pretty good but was advised, 'Don't do that; you might get hooked on it.' But I tried it and indeed I did get hooked on it. I've skied Alta and Snowbird every year since."

Jedenoff says he's had the benefit of being taught by the best. Among them, Al Engen, who was the first American to earn a gold medal in winter sports, and Earl Miller, who made the first really safe ski binding and also invented the "ski stop" – a device that did away with the leather strap that kept you from losing your ski if you came out of your bindings. "Junior Bounous is still living, and I had the good fortune to ski with him for a couple of hours this year," Jedenoff says. "I always learn something new like weight shifting, balance, or getting the skis in the right position. All three of these men are in the Ski Hall of

Fame."

For those who haven't skied in a while and want to try again, Jedenoff says to get out and do it. "You may not be the accomplished skier you once were, but that's all right. Do what you can and enjoy. I was a bit surprised at how well I held up this year as I only skied four days last year and three this time. I guess it's rather like riding a bicycle; you get on and just start going."

Buying some new equipment is a good idea because there continue to be improvements made that make skiing easier and easier. "I still play golf and certainly can't hit the ball as far as I once did, but being out on the course with good friends is still great fun," Jedenoff explains.

Since Barbara, his wife of 72 years, has health issues, she can't join him at Snowbird where they have a condo. He served as head of the management committee there for 10 years and this year again enjoyed being there for the board meeting with longtime friends. His son, Nick, joined him for the trip.

"I do get leg cramps sometimes, or a bit winded a little more quickly, but I don't fight it. I just take advantage of what I can do and am grateful," Jedenoff concludes. "At least I'm not in the stands watching, but still participating."

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