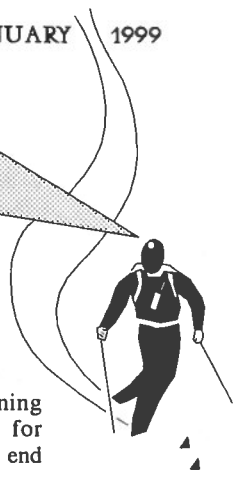


SnowLine

The Official Newsletter of the
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.

Lake Tahoe · Truckee · Donner Summit



hough Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has yet to log the first search of the 1998-1999 winter season, we are prepared. The Truck and Equipment committee, headed by Team skier Russ

Viehman, has been busy. The Team's search and rescue equipment is buffed, polished, and at the ready. Organization of maps, headlamps, batteries, radios, climbing skins, avalanche transceivers, etc., goes a long way toward flattening the frenzy curve when a search is initiated. An important reason Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has been so successful in the past is because of our quick response time: we've located and rescued most individuals from the backcountry before they've completed their first night adrift. When cold and wet, a lost guy's chances of surviving a second night in the snowy mountains is exponentially thinner than surviving the first. Organizing our initial response saves time, and I will argue, saves lives.

The Team's Dispatch committee, responsible for alerting the skiers on the Team roster, is also ready. Lead by Team secretary Jackie Thomas, the committee can call on all 40 of the Team's skiers, the Team snowcats and snowmobiles, and support personnel in a matter of minutes. When a search is initiated, the Dispatch committee will relay when and where to meet, and any other pertinent information. Remember, when you receive a "callout", don't expect to chat and tie up valuable phone time. Though I'm sure Jackie bakes a mean apple pie, she's not your mother. Where tracks were last seen, what the weather forecast is, or what weight polypropylene panties you should wear are not items of discussion for the busy dispatchers. Just take their information and run with it.

The snow machines dedicated to the Team are also reported ready to go. Ray O'Brien informs us that the snowmobiles are in top shape, and Scoop Remenih and his snowcat(s) are, as always, poised for the next search. (Scoop maintains his machine without the benefit of a "committee", and as such, works a lot behind the scenes. If you know Scoop, you know he's never been shy about operating his machine orders of

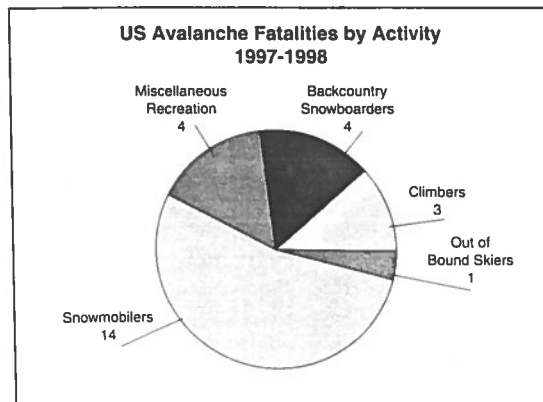
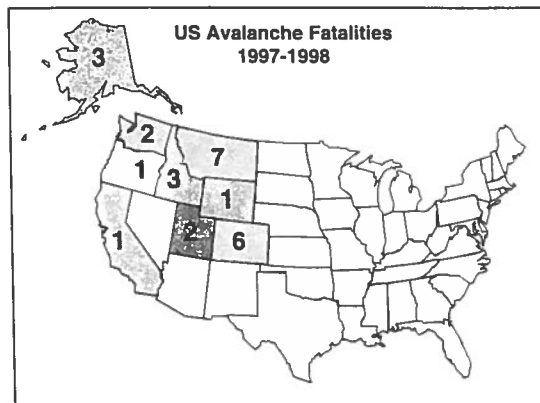
magnitude beyond any recommended envelope. The history of him pushing his Thiokols up to (and sometimes over) the edge is a thick tome indeed. The guy goes through trans-axles like you and I go through laundry soap.)

Because we're not yet searching does not mean we're not training—*au contraire*.

rescue. Upcoming training exercises scheduled for January are listed at the end of this newsletter.

For more than two months now, Education committee chairs Whitney Foehl and Karen Honeywell (the 1998 Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Members of the Year) have been busy organizing Winter Awareness programs at the local grammar schools. These programs will occur throughout the month of January. As a Team member and community member, your help and dedication are needed for these events. To sign on for a morning session call Whitney or Karen and/or attend the next Nordic Team meeting on **January 4**. As Whitney reminded us at the November Team meeting: "There is no "I" in TEAM."

Everyone involved with Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is urged to join and participate on a Team committee. It is a quick and easy way to become involved and to learn all the different facets of what Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team does. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is an all-volunteer group—there is always much to do. If you aren't going to do it, it probably won't get done. Join a committee event today.



The above figures (from the autumn issue of *The Avalanche Review*) illustrate a few points. 1.) Even though the Sierra experienced an above average snowfall season during 1997-98, and is seeing an increase of winter backcountry enthusiasts, only one avalanche fatality (see the March 1998 issue of *Snow Line*) occurred in the range. One, of course, is one too many, but the fact that numerous skiers and boarders are ignorantly working the steep and deep, unaffected by avalanche, is demonstrative of how stable our snowpacks are compared with those of the colder, continental mountain ranges. 2.) For at least two years running, snowmobilers are the leading demographic of US avalanche fatalities. The new easier-to-ride snow machines with high power-to-weight ratios have far outpaced their riders' understanding of the snow avalanche phenomenon. 3.) Kansas, Indiana, and Georgia are still safe states in which to ski.

Training committee chair Paul Honeywell has already organized more than 13 training exercises this season ranging from terrain familiarization to first aid to avalanche

January Trainings

At least two Team training sessions are scheduled for each month, often more. To participate in these exercises, as well as any search and rescue, you must possess a civil defense or "OES" card. OES stands for Office of Emergency Services, an agency aiding in, and sometimes coordinating, county, state, and national level emergency and disaster relief. Obtaining an OES card will not cost you anything but a few minutes. You won't have to wear or display any junior-deputy pot-metal badge or succumb to a John Glenn haircut. (On the other hand it won't take any heat off your speeding tickets either.) By signing up for the card you obtain medical insurance (workers' compensation insurance) covering you during any Team training or search, and medical/equipment coverage during any Team search. OES cards need renewing/updating every couple years. If you're not sure about your current status, Team director Dirk Schoonmaker usually has a

Next General Meeting is Monday, January 4, 1999, 7:00 p.m. at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

current list. Give him a ring. If you know you need to renew your card, you can do so at the police station in Tahoe City between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM, seven days a week. For new applications it's advised to make an appointment with Keith Shannon. Call Keith at 581-6312.

(At the end of last season it was suddenly announced that we needed *another* OES card if we were going to search in Nevada County. Evidently the deputies at the eastern end of Nevada County are under some enigmatic mandate to form *another* search team based in Truckee. Obviously their superiors down below are unaware that Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has been searching for, and successfully rescuing dozens of lost and injured persons in the mountains of Nevada County for the past 23 years. Though many of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team's searches are in Placer County, we make ourselves available autonomous of any one police department, and will continue to do so. We continue to operate successful searches in Amador, Douglas, Eldorado, Placer, Nevada, Sierra, and Washoe Counties regularly, as well as in rural incorporated Carson City. And we have searched and rescued much farther yet. The explanations I have received from local Nevada County deputies as to why a "Truckee" rescue team must be assembled have been highly unsatisfactory. The mountain search and rescue resource we make available in the North Lake Tahoe/Truckee/Donner Summit area is well established and highly experienced. Why this resource is to be diluted instead of strengthened by the actions of our tax-supported civil servants is yet, in my mind, to be justified. As mandated by law, the sheriff of the county in which a search and rescue operation takes place is in charge of overseeing the search effort.

One of the elementary responsibilities of a deputy search coordinator is to know—and effectively use—what resources are available. If, as a resource, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is either not recognized, or not effectively used, the ultimate loser is going to be the person lost in the woods. Hopefully it will never come down to this, but one can easily visualize numerous scenarios where a novice search team will be confronted with serious obstacles, obstacles Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has overcome decades ago. A representative from the Nevada County Sheriff's department will be on hand at the **January 4** Nordic Team meeting to help clarify this issue. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team welcomes this clarification.)

The Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team

garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, behind the Tahoe City Chevron. Training exercises scheduled for January 1999 are:

January 9: A four-hour long CPR course at Tahoe Forest Hospital. Pre-register by calling (530) 582-3483.

January 9: Map and compass training. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM.

January 10: Backcountry ski instruction for beginning skiers. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the Donner Summit Castle Peak trailhead 45 minutes later.

January 16: First Aid/CPR combination course. Eight hours of instruction at Tahoe Forest Hospital. Call to pre-register.

January 19: Another chance for a CPR course at TF Hospital. Four hours. Pre-register by calling (phone # above).

January 23: Mock search. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

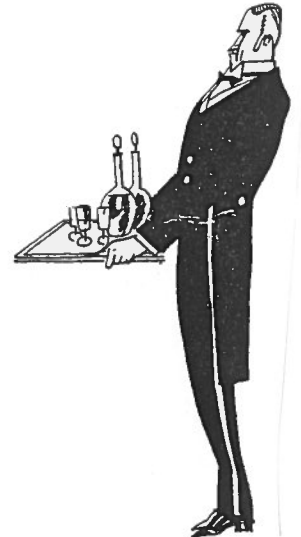
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

President	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376
Vice President	Joe Pace	583-1806
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
Secretary	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Board Members	Steve Matson	546-7968
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
	Steve Twomey	525-7280
	Medora Weiser	

Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Whitney Foehl	(702) 322-4368
	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
The Great Ski Race™	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Snowcats	Tony Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
Truck/Equipment	Russ Viehman	582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage		581-4038

All phone numbers area code (530) unless noted otherwise.



Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc.

Post Office Box 7703

Tahoe City, California 96145

Happy New Year!

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit #135
Truckee, CA
96160

please keep us informed of your correct address