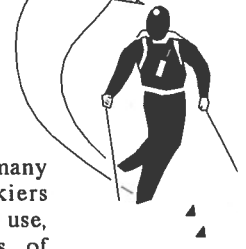


SnowLine

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

Lake Tahoe • Truckee • Donner Summit



Sunday, March 5, 9:00 AM SHARP! will begin the twenty-fourth "running" of The Great Ski Race. Not only is The Great Ski Race the main fund-raising event of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, it is the largest Nordic ski race in the western United States. Preparations for the race and post-race activities have been underway for many months; the final organization meeting will be held Monday night, 6:30 PM, February 28, at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut. This will, of course, be coincident with the next general meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. Please plan on attending: your help is crucial to the success of the race and ultimately the life-saving efforts of the Team. See you there!

behaves more like a plastic (sometimes pliable, sometimes rigid) than a cotton ball. And even though throwing snow at each other remains a requisite pre-mating ritual for adolescents, snow as a projectile is best targeted toward your enemy: dash him in the head with a slush ball!

As snow is deposited on steep mountain slopes, subtleties of temperature, humidity, wind, and radiation all exert their influence on the snow crystals and grains; the fruit of these cultivations are remarkably unique layers. A healthy mountain snowpack may consist of thousands of individual strata. Because of structural differences some snow layers will bond poorly to others. When slabby snow accumulates above a weak interface and a trigger is introduced (e.g. a Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team skier), failure may occur. Snow avalanches come in all sizes: from sloughs that entrain a handful of crystals to those that literally move mountains.

discipline with many unknowns, Team skiers have to be trained in the use, and carry the tools of avalanche rescue: transceiver, collapsible probe, shovel.

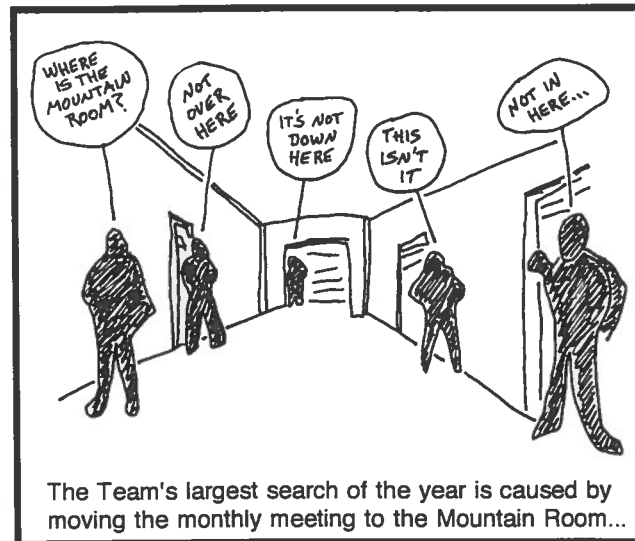
The false security endowed by skiing in a group (large groups=large loads=large/many triggers), clear blue skies, or crystalline powder snow has more than once caused several of our skiers to be blinded to the avalanche hazard around them. One of the first "decrees" of effective rescues is to consider the safety of the rescuers. We cannot expect to take care of others if we cannot protect ourselves. From a snow safety standpoint that means *always*—winter, spring, sun or storm—being aware of the snow environment and your position within it. And *always*—winter, spring, sun or storm—carrying and using a transceiver, collapsible probe, and shovel.

Heads Up

As an all-volunteer non-profit group, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team acquires its money through various fund-raising events and personal and corporate donations. The Nordic Team becomes custodian of these funds and is responsible for feeding this money back into the community. The Team does this by producing public education programs, and effectively training, equipping, and fielding a mountain rescue team. Training the members of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team remains the most important and vital use of the Team's cash resources.

One of the many challenges facing a search and rescuer in a mountainous, winter environment is unstable snow. Nordic Team skiers and all-around good-guys Tony Bochene, Cory Engles, Mike Kennett, John Pang, and Steve Reynaud will be attending snow avalanche safety courses this next month. They are being sponsored by Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team through the Bernie Kingery Fund.

Almost universally mislead in our youth by our parents, we grow up thinking snow is a cute fluffy substance that's fun to throw at friends. It doesn't take long as a resident of the snow zone to realize Sierra snow more commonly resembles mud than feathers, and



Cartoon by Matt Rusenoff

Recognizing the potential for injurious or destructive avalanches is a very necessary skill for Nordic Team skiers.

Our skiers must be able to distinguish weather events that contribute to instability, the signs and symptoms of weak subsurface snow layers, and what is avalanche terrain and what is not. And because snow science is a

Search And Rescue

Canadians Chris Hodgkinson and Dan Kossowski, both 21, were skiing and riding Alpine Meadows on January 29 when they misinterpreted the ski area's trail map. Trying to head for the "back bowls", they took a wrong turn and found themselves outside the ski area boundary and inside the Granite Chief Wilderness.

After a long descent, Chris, on downhill skis, and Dan, on a snowboard, realized their mistake and started heading back uphill toward Alpine Meadows' Ward Peak. Sidestepping on his skis, Chris quickly outdistanced his friend who postholed to his knees. Seven hours later Chris made it back to the ski area; Dan was nowhere to be seen.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team was dispatched at 8:00 PM to locate and bring back Canadian Dan. The report was that the Alpine Meadows ski patrol had located Dan's out-of-bounds track and had established voice contact with him.

By about midnight, Nordic Team skiers (led by Joe Pace and Jim Granger) located Dan atop a knoll more than two kilometers from the ski area. Indeed, an area patroller had been yelling back and forth with Dan (telling him

Next General Meeting is Monday, February 28, 2000, 6:30 p.m. at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

to stay put)—this was possible as the surface snows, winds, and sparse cloud cover all somehow conspired into a perfect acoustic lens. Dan had become exhausted posting through the deep, wet snow and stopped at a vantage point where he could see the lights on Ward Peak. He'd dug a preface to a snow cave, and stomped S-O-S into the snow.

The searchers strapped Dan into snowshoes, Granger and Russ Viehmann giving up one each of their ski poles to help Dan with his ascent. All parties reached the ski area by 2:30 AM.

Other participating Nordic Team searchers included Tony Bochene, Ron Driller, John Pang, Doug Read, Gerald Rockwell, and Steve Twomey. This was the Team's sixth search and rescue of the season.

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

President	Joe Pace	583-1806
Vice President	Steve Twomey	525-7280
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
Secretary	Terri Viehmann	582-1695
Board Members	Steve Matson	546-7968
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
	Medora Weiser	583-2620

Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
The Great Ski Race™	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
	Scoop Remenih	583-1684
Newsletter	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Snowcats	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
Snowmobiles	Bernie Mellor	546-2238
Training	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
Truck/Equipment	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage		581-4038
All phone numbers area code (530).		

Team Goings-On

February 11: Fourteen members of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team traveled to Alpine County and met with a sheriff's deputy and the ski patrol from the Bear Valley Ski Area. Bear Valley was the scene of two searches that have raised the attention of the Nordic Team: a search on January 30 for a lost out-of-bounds skier who was found and rescued by a CHP helicopter the next day; and a woman skiing out-of-bounds last winter who became lost, and died of exposure. Her body was not found until summer.

Alpine County is a mostly rural county with some exciting mountain terrain but has few backcountry search and rescue resources to call upon. (On dry roads, the Nordic Team's response time to Bear Valley is about five hours.) Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team thought it valuable to introduce ourselves and get acquainted with the ski area's boundary and surrounding landscape. We had a couple hours of good visibility before the ceiling lowered, allowing the ski patrol to point out terrain traps, likely exits from the ski area, and potential difficulties in searching the immediate backcountry.

Many thanks to the Bear Valley Ski Patrol and Alpine County for hosting us.

February 19: A mountain skills/terrain

familiarization training on and around Mt. Tallac. Steve Reynaud (587-4723) will lead this day in the mountains. Meet at the Team garage (223 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City) at 7:30 AM.

February 26: Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team will participate in this year's Snowfest parade through Tahoe City. If you'd like to be part of the skier "drill" team, show up at the Safeway parking lot (Tahoe City) at 9:00 AM. Wear storm gear, headlamp, backpack, and skis suitable for the pavement. Think kick-turns in formation.

February 27: Bernie Mellor (546-2238) will lead a Team ski tour from Sheep Flat (big meadow off Mt. Rose Highway) to Kings Beach. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or up at Sheep Flat at 8:15.

February 28: Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team monthly meeting and Great Ski Race coordination meeting, 6:30 PM at Granlibakken's Ski Hut.

March 2: Goodie bag stuffing for The Great Ski Race, 5:30 PM at Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area.

March 5: The 24th Annual Great Ski Race, Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area, 9:00 AM, SHARP!

"Skiing has always been as much about style as about sport."

-National Public Radio
All Things Considered
January 20, 2000

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc.

Post Office Box 7703

Tahoe City, California 96145

www.tahoenordicsar.com

**THE 24TH ANNUAL
GREAT SKI RACE**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2000
TAHOE CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA
9:00 AM, SHARP!**

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