

SnowLine

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

Lake Tahoe · Truckee · Donner Summit



October 1999 starts the twenty-fourth season for Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. If you look into the future of the Team through the curved lens of space-time, you will be staring point blank at the back of your own head. It is *you* that will make the Team function; *you* that will teach our citizens to be winter aware; *you* that will save lives. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is just that: a Team of individuals that makes a difference. The Team goes nowhere without you and your ideas, your energy, your enthusiasm. Please attend the **October 4** meeting and volunteer your time and animation toward a great cause. There is a place for everyone. Need more convincing? Dinner will be served! See you there!

After three years of commendable leadership as President of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Gerald Rockwell is stepping down from the post. Gerald has been a Team member for 18 years and used that experience to lead the Team through three successful seasons of searches, education programs, and Team fund raisers. Gerald will of course still be involved with the Team, but now has earned his place in the back of the meeting room, drinking beer and heckling those up front. Gerald was honored for his presidential tenure at the May Nordic Team meeting by being granted the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Member of the Year award, the Team's highest citation. Many thanks for a great job, Gerald!

Also retiring from the Board of Directors is Jackie Thomas. Jackie has been Team Secretary since 1994 and has headed the Team's Dispatch Committee for many years. She'll continue leading the dispatch team, producing the Team callout list, and helping put on The Great Ski Race. She is resigning her Secretary position to Terri Viehman. Thanks to you too, Jackie, for all your hard work over the years!

Gerald's successor to the presidential post is Joe Pace. Joe is also a long time member of the Nordic Team, both as a Team director (since 1993) and as a searcher (since forever). Like Gerald, Joe possesses a quiet strength that promises to be a great attribute as leader of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. Joe is married to Team skier Colleen Connors-

Pace, the two of them arguably North Lake Tahoe's most fit couple. Make sure to attend the **October 4** meeting and show your support to the Team and President Joe Pace.

Milestone

The community and Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team suffered a great loss this summer with the death of Bob Williams and Bob Dobbins. "The Bobs," as we called them, were long time members of the Placer County Communication Reserve and Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. In the early 1980s, Bob and Bob were almost solely responsible for the building of the Placer County Communication Van, the "Comm" van we so depend on today. No single infrastructure is more important to rescue work than ready and reliable radio communication; there is little doubt that the majority of the Nordic Team's successful search and rescues could not have taken place without the direct or indirect

their ultra-stretch four-wheel-drive Econoline van seem small. The van would buzz all night with radio transmissions, CB broadcasts, phone calls. I remember the late Team member Billy Dutton sheepishly returning a borrowed radio the morning after the Paris Richards search. He'd dropped it in McKinney Creek the night before. "Aha!", Dobbins blurted laughing at the tale, "We'll just take it apart and put it in the oven. You can play basketball with these things!"

While all our searchers seemed full of excitement and unchecked exuberance, the Bobs always permeated that unflappable cool-as-a-cat attitude. That attitude was especially broadcast through the radio. The Bobs both had great radio voices; listening to one of them over the handy-talky was like listening to a DJ on the midnight jazz show. As a skiing searcher all night in the storm, those confident and smooth voices coming back at you through the radio were absolutely invaluable. The Bobs are sorely missed.

For his devotion to the cause, Bob Williams was awarded the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Member of the Year award in 1986.

Bob Williams died July 25 at age 60; Bob Dobbins on August 16 at age 68. Their deaths were unrelated except by cruel coincidence. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team extends its condolences to their family members and many friends.



Bob Williams keeps the crew entertained with his "Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters", in 3D, after a successful search in 1987.

Photograph by D.P. Stewart

involvement of Bob Williams and Bob Dobbins. But these guys were more than radio techs: search after search, year after year they anchored our backcountry activities with humor, spirit, and professionalism. Every stormy search night the Bobs would be there, handing out fully juiced radios and bits of sage advice. Both big men, the Bobs made even

Team members Russ Viehman and Gerald Rockwell began searching their way up-canyon at first light. Gerald headed up toward Mountain Meadow Lake, Russ toward High Camp. An hour or so later Russ, now in a full aerobic lather, was just cresting the last rise to High Camp when he spotted the upper tram car leaving its mooring. Inside the tram car, pressed to the window facing Russ, was

Summer Search

The Nordic Team was called July 16 at 1:00 AM by Placer County to search for a missing 41 year old woman, Marsha, from Washington D.C. She was known to have been hiking in Shirley Canyon.

Next General Meeting is Monday, October 4, 1999, 6:00 p.m. at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

right. But as a rescue team we must always assess conservatively and consider the missing person *lost* in the woods or mountains. Finding people lost in the mountains *is*, after all, our expertise. Each search is unique and the one thing that can be learned from all of them is that people lost in the woods are highly unpredictable and just when you think you've seen it all, the most unexpected occurs.

Jill McGregor, Molly Mellor, Lin O'Kelley, Laura Read, Marilyn Stack, and Jackie Thomas conducted the callout. Team searchers were Kelley Clare, Colleen Conners-Pace, Paul Cushing, Ron Driller, Cory Engles, Steve Matson, Jim Meskiman, Randall Osterhuber, Glen Poulsen, Doug Read, and Randy Sharp. This was the Team's second search of the season.

November Trainings

At last month's Team meeting, Training Committee co-Chair Bernie Mellor spoke of the importance of the Nordic Team's training sessions. A skier must pass no tests or formal rights of initiation to become a searcher for the Team; he or she must, however, demonstrate competence at the backcountry skills required by our often rigorous search and rescues. These skills include being a strong backcountry skier, navigating in the mountains, assessing snow stability, first aid, search techniques, rescue techniques, and efficiently applying various resources to the search and the rescue. The training sessions the Team holds throughout the season stress learning and enhancement of these skills, plus more. Many of the trainings take place in areas where searches take place. Familiarization with the topography and geography of the Tahoe Sierra is an essential component of our fast, efficient rescues. By participating in the Team trainings, searchers get to know you, and you other searchers. This leads to camaraderie and team work and fun. Contrary to what Hollywood and the Fox Network may try to feed you, search and rescue work can not only be exciting and rewarding, it can be lots of laughs too.

Participants in the Nordic Team trainings are expected to come equipped with food, clothing, and gear appropriate for the outing. If you do not own the sometimes specialized gear required for an activity it can almost always be checked out of the Team truck for the day. Team trainings happen regardless of that day's weather. Some people on the Nordic Team remain caninephobic, so unless the training deals specifically with your search and rescue dog, pet dogs are to stay at home. And if you haven't already, remember to sign up for an OES card at the Placer County Sheriff's substation in Tahoe City.

November trainings are as follows (the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive, behind the Tahoe City Chevron station):

November 6: Terrain familiarization and search techniques in the Castle Peak area. Donner Pass's Castle Peak and environs attract numerous winter recreationists, many

of whom are novices to the backcountry. Long lines of blue jean-clad skiers heading for the Sierra Club's Grubb Hut is a common sight on mid-winter Saturdays. We've had many searches here. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the bottom of the dirt road into Castle Valley (I-80, Castle Peak area exit) at 8:15.

November 9: Map and compass training. You don't have to be Bjorn Kjellstrom to understand and use a map and compass. Being able to navigate during searches is not only nice, it's critical. Topographic maps and magnetic compasses are neither complicated or confusing. Come find out why. Meet at Kings Beach Elementary School, (portable) room M9, at 6:30 PM.

November 13: A training in the area of the upper Mt. Rose Highway. Like the Castle Peak area, Sheep Flats (aka Tahoe Meadows) is a Mecca for winter enthusiasts, many of whom are poorly equipped for the season. We've had numerous searches in this area. This training will cover many aspects of the search and rescuer's craft. Travel will be on the long boards if there's skiable snow. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or up at Sheep Flats at 8:15.

November 20: An ascent of Billy's Peak. Billy's Peak is named after Tahoe

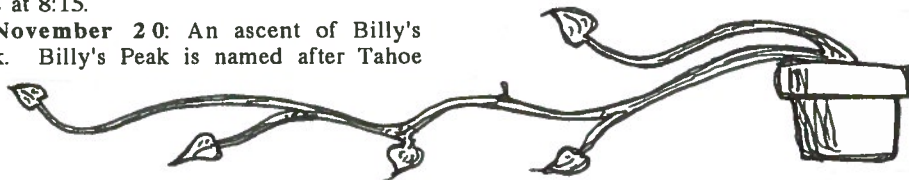
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

President	Joe Pace	583-1806
Vice President	Steve Twomey	525-7280
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
Secretary	Terri Viehman	582-1695
Board Members	Steve Matson	546-7968
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
	Russ Viehman	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
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Snowcats	Tony Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
	Bernie Mellor	546-2238
Truck/Equipment	Russ Viehman	582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage		581-4038
All phone numbers area code (530).		

Nordic Search and Rescue Team founding member Billy Dutton who died of cancer in 1989. Billy's Peak lies on the Sierra crest south of Tinker Knob and near the Pole Creek/Deep Creek divide. This seldom ascended mountain is a spectacular free-standing cone of basalt with a fantastic summit view. Training exercises en route. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the intersection of Highway 89 and Deep Creek at 8:15.



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