



SnowLine

The Official Newsletter of the
TAHOE NORDIC SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM, INC.
 Lake Tahoe • Truckee • Donner Summit

An hour after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team was informed that the skyscrapers of San Francisco were chock full of elevators stuck in their shafts. And within those elevators hundreds of office workers stranded. Help was needed. As I gathered my climbing gear, I was constructing rope systems in my mind with which I could rappel greasy elevator shafts, bust into the top of the cars, and lower secretaries and junior executives to safety. These procedures, I felt, were totally within my capability, and clearly outside of my experience.

Rescue scenarios vary widely, from elevator evacuations to car wrecks to the lost or injured in the winter backcountry. And though the stage for a particular venue may have repeating themes, each rescue is unique. Unique in respect to rescuers, rescues, medical concerns, availability of resources, weather, environment, etc. The challenge of rescue is quick and efficient adaptation to these variables. Meeting this challenge successfully is a combination of organization, experience, and training.

The call soon came back that Bay Area elevators were in fact functioning properly, and the Nordic Team was called off. Twelve years later, the horrific images of collapsed buildings in New York and Arlington make me think about what it would have been like to descend the dark and gritty arteries of a cracked high-rise. As a backcountry person would I have been able to decipher the steel maze of urban rescue? How far does one's experience carry?

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team would like your rescue experience to carry far. Joining the Nordic Team now is a great way to give to your community—and to yourself. It is extremely rewarding work that for the most part is fun and stimulating. By the yardstick of a modern SUV, it's a rock's throw from the

urban jungle of the city to the conifer jungle of the Sierra. And it is precisely a niche within the latter that Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team occupies. The Team is here in the Tahoe Sierra to provide search and rescue to any and all. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team commences its 26th year and you are invited to be a part of something important. The Team has its first meeting of Winter 2002 on Monday night, October 1, 6:00 PM at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut in Tahoe City. As per many years of the past, complimentary dinner and libations will be served followed by a Team introduction and business meeting. The group will be warmed

to be filled. In addition to much footwork in the mountains, there are innumerable solid-ground jobs—all that lead and buttress the Team's efforts. Please attend the October 1 meeting!

Goings On

On June 2, 2001, Nordic Team member Dirk Schoonmaker organized a garage clean-up and construction day. The effort put a lot of final touches on the Team's equipment garage and left things in a highly ordered fashion.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team owns the 1100 square foot garage in Tahoe City built on land leased to us by the Tahoe City PUD. The garage was constructed in the mid 1990s almost entirely by volunteer labor and has enabled the Team to operate at a very high level of efficiency—and speed! The garage houses the Team's rescue truck and equipment, a Thiokol snowcat, Great Ski Race paraphernalia, much of the Team's paperwork, memorabilia, and just gobs of search and rescue winter ski detritus. The garage has, at times, operated as a command post for searches, a classroom for first aid instruction, yard sale/fundraiser headquarters, bivouac (two bunks upstairs), and rendezvous for lovers (one bunk upstairs). It's been kind of like a fire station but without the required haircut.

Dirk was joined June 2 by Team members Dave Gleske, Amy Horne, Mark Johnson, Kathy King, Steve Matson, John Pang, Marty Schoonmaker, Larry Severson, and Bob Wright. Hats off to you all!

This was by no means Dirk's first foray into the streamlining of the Team's ready-gear. As a previous equipment manager for the Team, Dirk was instrumental in rebuilding the Team truck into a rather voluminous utility vehicle (complete with heated rear-view mirrors) and setting up the increasingly



up pre-meeting by the homespun bluegrass band *Bluegrass Storm*. What does bluegrass music have to do with rescue? Heck I don't know, I'm only the messenger.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team needs your talent. No matter what that talent may be (e.g. banjo, fiddle) there is certainly a place for you on the Nordic Team. The Team conducts backcountry search and rescue, educates the public on issues of winter safety, and orchestrates the largest Nordic ski race in the West, The Great Ski Race™ (March 3, 2002). Many positions within the Team need

complex radio-battery analyzer—critical to our modern operation. Dirk painted that cool red stripe on the floor so we didn't have to back the truck into Great Ski Race signs and beer coolers anymore. In fact, many of the small day-to-day items in the garage we now take for granted (shovels, brooms, garbage cans, hoses, Easy Cheese) were put there and organized by Dirk. Dirk's activity on the Team doesn't stop at the garage door. He's been a lead skier for the Team for some time and has participated in and led numerous trainings (two years as Training Committee Chair) and searches. As a member of the Team's Board of Directors for six years, and one of the busiest organizers of The Great Ski Race, Dirk has earned an important place in the Team's past and future. Thanks Dirk!

Team Trainings

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team holds several training sessions every month throughout the autumn, winter, and spring. Training exercises vary from the ubiquitous terrain familiarization to first aid, avalanche safety or backcountry navigation. The Team trainings are designed to be fun and informative and all Team members are encouraged to attend. For insurance purposes, every participant of a Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team training must sign on for a civil defense card issued through OES, the Office of Emergency Services. Placer County is the local issuing agency for the card; so if you need to sign on please call the sheriff's substation in Tahoe City for more information.

Each training participant is asked to call the training organizer and let him or her know you plan on attending. Some trainings require the coordination of special equipment or vehicles for shuttling folks to and fro. Also, it is up to the whim of the training organizer to change and/or modify the activity schedule of any specific training, sometimes at the last minute. Weather, or simply a mood swing, may be enough for the venue to be changed.

Please call ahead. The Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station.

October 6: Audrey Staples (587-6895) will lead a hike up Billy's Peak. Billy's Peak is a free-standing cone of andesite and basalt on the Sierra crest just south of Tinker Knob. The mountain was named after Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team founding member Billy Dutton who died of cancer in 1989. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

October 9: Bernie Mellor (546-2238) is hosting the annual Team equipment once-over, 6:00 PM at the garage. The Team's equipment has grown increasingly complex over the years. New radios, pagers, various brands of avalanche transceivers, GPS units, software programs and the like all require an updated knowledge to be operated correctly. While not a specific training for any one piece of gear, this evening will be spent learning what's in the truck, where it's stored, and a general overview of operation and maintenance. Getting intimate with the Team's equipment is imperative for searchers and support people alike. If you're new to the Team, this is a great event to attend. If you're a Team veteran, this is an essential event to attend.

October 13: Steve Matson (546-7968) will lead a hike up to and around the Marlette Lake environs. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM or at the North Tahoe Beach Center parking lot (across the street from the Kings Beach Safeway) at 8:30.

October 20: The often wind-swept and always beautiful Sierra crest between Donner Summit and Squaw Valley will be the route for the day. Hiking through the dried mule's ears promises to be loud; the roof on the Benson Hut promises to be new. Randy Sharp (587-2877) is your contact for this 23 km hike; meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

October 27: Starting at the Bay View trailhead, the Team will head up and into Desolation Wilderness for a variety of

adventures. At least two parties will operate somewhat independently today: one group doing a shorter hike, another spending as much time and energy as group consensus dictates. Marty Schoonmaker (583-2929) and Terri Viehmann (582-1695) will lead the day's activities. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM.

Yours always,

—Randall Osterhuber

269

number of people Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has rescued

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	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Directors-at-large	Randy Sharp	587-2877
	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376

Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
Equipment	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
Great Ski Race™	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
Snowcats	Scoop Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
	Bernie Mellor	546-2238

All phone numbers area code (530).

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.

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FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR:
OCTOBER 1

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