

# Snow Job

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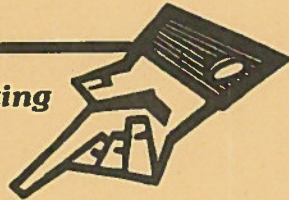
North Lake Tahoe - Truckee

February 1989

**Next General Meeting**

**IMPORTANT!**

**Monday, Feb. 27, 7:00 p.m.**



The next General Meeting of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is Monday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Granlibakken Ski and Racquet Resort. The meeting is one week early due to the Great Ski Race on Sunday, March 5. The meeting is the one where all the plans are finalized, assignments made and last minute details are ironed out for the annual race. This is the major fundraiser for the team and everyone's help is needed. If you need entry blanks contact the Tahoe Nordic Ski Center. Don't miss the meeting or the race!

## TEAM TRAININGS ON TAP

The next team training is Sunday, Feb. 26 at Alpine Meadows. Leading the training will be our fearless leader, President Doug Read. The training starts at 8 a.m. and will be a familiarization of the ski area and a tour to Grouse Canyon, Five Lakes Creek, Diamond Crossing and then to Squaw Valley. Doug recommends bringing your ski skins and a big lunch. This could be a long day.

On March 26 there will be the annual Norm Wilson avalanche training. This on-skis seminar begins at 8 a.m. at the Castle Peak Sno-Park area. Learn all about snow and avalanches, or at least learn something about them. Bring a lunch, skis, boots, poles, avalanche transceivers, shovels, day pack, hat, etc. This could also be a long day. To sign up, come to the general meeting or talk to Scott Schroepfer.

## BILLY DUTTON BENEFIT A SUCCESS!

The benefit for team member Billy Dutton was a success, raising \$30,000 to help defray medical expenses. More than 800 people packed into the Olympic Plaza Bar. Billy is back in Squaw Valley, looks good and is doing well. Best wishes, Billy, from all of us and thank-you, everyone, for your support.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE SCHOOLS PROGRAM A SUCCESS

The Education Committee did a great job this year with the education program in the schools. They taught winter awareness and survival techniques to the students at Sierra High School, Tahoe Lake School, Incline, Kings Beach and Sierra Mountain schools. A special thanks goes to project coordinator Toni Barr.

The Schaffer Lake area (USFS) has ordered 4000 winter awareness brochures to hand out to the backcountry users in that area. If you know of any groups that would like the brochures, contact the education committee.

## GREAT SKI RACE

The 13th Annual Great Ski Race is Sunday, March 5, 1989. The race could be the largest in its history with the great ski conditions in the area. Encourage your friends and family to take part in this event. Entry fee is \$13 before Feb. 26, \$16 if received before March 5 and \$20 on race day. Encourage pre-registration to help ease the registration process on race day. Don't forget, the race starts at 9 a.m. sharp. Try to car-pool if possible. And don't miss the post-race party at Hilltop (Cottonwood's Restaurant).



## BACKCOUNTRY SKIERS DO ALMOST EVERYTHING RIGHT

Over 190,000 avalanches occur there every year, catching between 35 and 59 skiers and killing 4 to 11 of them. The place is famous for particularly vicious and persistent depth hoar.

These statistics didn't discourage four skiers led by a NOLS instructor last month from daring a shortcut on the popular Commando Run backcountry route near Vail, Colorado. They watched another party successfully traverse the steep slope and figured they could handle it too.

A 100 foot-wide section of the snowpack slid, burying three of them including the leader, 27-year-old Jono McKinney. Fortunately all were wearing transceivers and carrying shovels. In a few seconds the fourth member dug out McKinney, and they used their Pieps to locate and rescue the other two.

Susan Smith, 24, was buried the longest, for about 20 minutes, and when she was extricated in an unconscious state the other three treated her for hypothermia. They built a fire, administered hot liquids and dry clothing, dug a cave, gathered extra wood, and prepared to spend the night.

By 4:30 p.m., two of them skied towards the Vail area, breaking into a lift shack and calling for help. The patrol sent a snowcat and the entire party was safely off the mountain by 9:30 p.m. Vail billed them \$3,000 for the rescue, an amount claimed by the ski area to be a flat coverage of costs incurred.

"B---s---," say two Vail employees. "If the county's volunteer SAR team had responded, there would

have been no charge. Vail's just trying to discourage backcountry skiing near their area."

Vail's trail map states clearly that skiers are permitted to ski out-of-bounds as long as they leave the area before 3:00 p.m. from specific exit points. Although the McKinney party did not embark from the Vail ski area, their experience has been singled out in the local press as representative of the possible fate, both physically and financially, of Colorado backcountry tourists.

—adapted from *Rocky Mountain News* reports and personal interviews by David Fenimore

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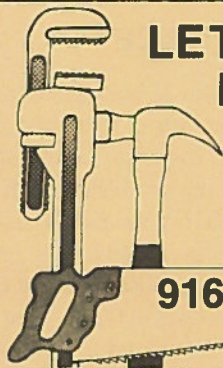


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