

# Snow Job

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North Lake Tahoe - Truckee

October 1988

## MOUNTAIN BIKES

This summer was the first summer of an "Official" mountain bike search and rescue contingent of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, but bicycles have been used for these purposes for some time now, as well as military purposes, as you'll read in the following article. Please take notes so you'll know what kind of mountain bike to buy next summer.

### To Scare the Enemy, They Attack With Baseball Cards in the Spokes

By Margaret Studer

*Special to The Wall Street Journal*

Rumendingen, Switzerland — Let other soldiers dream of SDI and Stealth bombers; those on maneuvers here have their bikes. "Our code of conduct dictates that no one else uses my bicycle," says Capt. Dieter Schneider. "This seat has my shape. It's as personal as underwear."

But Capt. Schneider may soon have to break in another. After years of pedaling into harm's way aboard the same model, the Swiss Army's three bicycle regiments are reluctantly getting replacements. HEADLIGHTS ARE FOR WIMPS

The model now in use, a black-framed workhorse that has no gearshift and weighs a hamstring-popping 28 kilograms (62 pounds), has hardly changed since 1905. Over the years, a third brake and lights were added—but only at the expense of some controversy. "A cyclist doesn't want to be seen," complains First Lt. Beat Wernli. "We can see in the dark."

The infantry on wheels is even more skeptical about the prospect of an entirely new vehicle. The Swiss Defense Department has told companies bidding for the contract that the bicycle must weigh no more than 20 kilograms. As a gesture to modernity, the department also requested that it have two or three gears.

Wouldn't it be easier simply to draft some of the so-called mountain bikes already on the market? "They're too delicate," maintains Maj. Urs Ursprung. "We have to be able to throw our bike around." First Lt. Stefan Flueckiger notes that his bike has "never even had a flat tire" in two years of service.

Indeed, the army's demand that the new bike be as "solid" as the old one—in other words, that it remain dependable for at least 30 years—has been the hardest to satisfy. "Today, finding components to last that long is almost impossible," says Raymond Schaller, an engineer at Condor, maker of the current bike. RESPECTED AND COOL

The idea of soldiers on bicycles—old or new—may seem a bit silly nowadays. But the Swiss consider the regiments, founded 100 years ago, invaluable for defending one of the densest networks of forest trails in the world. "We are the poor man's mobile troops—forward with muscle power, not gas," says First Lt. Flueckiger. In fact, officers say the bike troops are now trendy. "Recruits used to want to go to the tanks," says Capt. Schneider. "Now they all want to come to us. We fit in with environmental protection."

## FIRST TRAINING SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

The first training of the 1988-89 ski season is Sunday, October 16.

The training will begin at 11 a.m. at two locations, depending on if you want to hike or mountain bike. For those locations you have to contact Doug Stewart (hikers) or Carl Toepfner (mountain bikers). Doug's number is 582-1021 and Carl's is 587-4545.

The training will be held in the Martis Peak/Klondike Meadows area with a barbeque at 2 p.m. following the hike and mountain bike into Klondike Meadows. The team will provide the beer and chicken, team members should bring a salad or dessert, compass and map. The 15 minute Truckee topo or 7.5 minute Martis Peak topo has the area we'll be training in.

The team truck will be available for those team members who need maps, altimeters, etc. Also the new avalanche transceivers will be there for everyone to use and become familiar with.

The training will be held rain, shine or snow (depends on how much). If you can only make it to the party at 2 p.m. it is possible to drive to Klondike Meadows, just check with Susan Antipa (587-4846) for what food you should bring.

RSVP to Doug or Susan if you will be coming to the party/training.

## SKI SEASON IS HERE

It shouldn't be long now and the Tahoe/Truckee area will be covered with snow, we'll all be digging out our cars every morning and rushing to our favorite ski spots.

If you need to beef up your arsenal of equipment, whether for track, skating or telemarking, check out the Tahoe Nordic Ski Center Ski Swap November 5 and 6.

## NEXT GENERAL MEETING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

The next general membership meeting of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc. is Monday, November 7 at 7 p.m. at the Granlibakken Ski and Racquet Resort in Tahoe City. President Doug Read promises an entertaining and informative program. The next team Board of Director's meeting is Monday, October 24 around 7-ish at Scott Schroepfer's house.

## IDEAS-IDEAS-IDEAS-IDEAS-IDEAS

Now is the time to dust off those great ideas you thought of last year for trainings, meeting programs and new equipment for the team and items for the newsletter.

We will once again have two trainings per month, and anyone can help in this area. If you have ideas contact Scott Schroepfer.

If you have ideas for general meeting programs contact Doug Read. If you have ideas for new equipment contact Randy Osterhuber. If you have items for the newsletter contact Mike Wolterbeek.

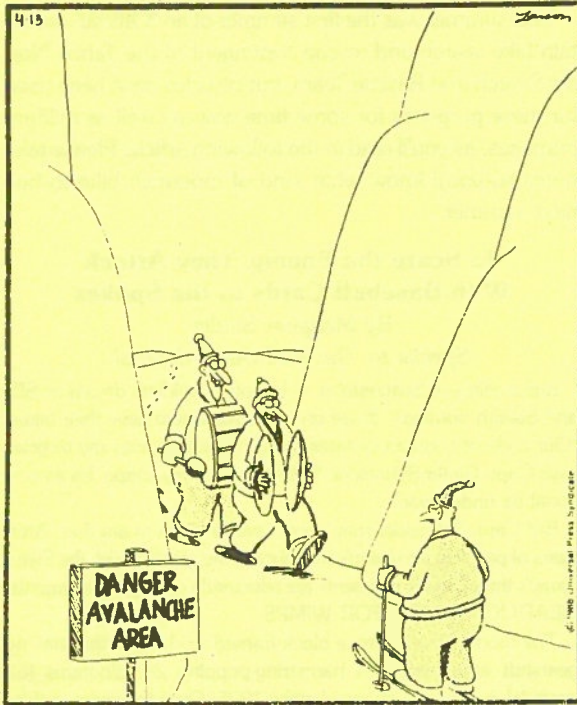
If you have other ideas bring them up at the general meeting at Granlibakken on November 7. See you there.

## NEW AVALANCHE TRANSCIVERS

The team has purchased 12 new avalanche transceivers this season and is selling some of the old ones. The Pieps transceivers are the ones being replaced, and they are on sale now at \$35 each. For more information on the Pieps call Randy Osterhuber at 587-4838.

**THE FAR SIDE**

By GARY LARSON



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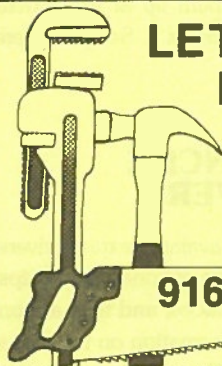


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