Cory Smith, 24, of Park City, Utah, stood shy and reserved in the shadow of his companion at the race registration desk. His coach was inquiring (thick Norwegian accent) if Cory could be seeded among the elite racers. No one in the room had heard of Cory. He is a fast skier, the size of Easter eggs. The beer flowed, the pasta steamed, the band rocked. Such was the excitement of the 1999 Great Ski Race, the largest Nordic ski race in the western United States, the biggest participation event of the North Lake Tahoe SnowFest Winter Carnival (though one of the few without the DeKuyper course by "liquid sunshine"). The polite weather allowed most everything to be outside—the food service, beer service, award ceremony, retail sales. The finish area had a great "ski race village" feel to it this year. For the first time in race history we polished off all 10 kegs of beer. The price racers had to pay for that privilege was a five minute wait, cross legged, in line at the outhouses.

All the buzz this year on the course was Soup Station 2. A veritable oasis at 23 km, Soup Station 2, coordinated by Team members Ray O'Brien, Bryan DeVore, Shawn Kelly, Rod Mayne, Bill Koplin, and Jeff Rieger (many others too) outdid themselves offering dined Snickers bars, sectioned oranges, lemonade, Kool Aid, cookies, and hot soup in an all-you-can-eat fashion. The crew also constructed signs to get and keep the skiers psyched, placing them in the preceding kilometer. Many skiers commented on the affect of the signs: made them dig just a little bit harder. With the aid of snowmobiles, the Soup Station 2 gang transported two skiers off the course: one woman with a shoulder injury and one stray snowboarder (see next story). When asked (jokingly) if the lead racer (Cory) stopped for a bite to eat, Ray commented, "I don't think he even noticed us."

"Girls" present), and main fund raising event for the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. The weather for race day was stellar: cool, mostly clear, and warmed just enough by the Great Ski Race cheerleaders (fueled throughout success. This only was possible because of the unselfish support of the community. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team wishes to thank all the volunteers and participants of the race, and the raffle prize donors. Special
Errant Boarder Rescued

Upon reaching the finish line of The Great Ski Race, several skiers had casually mentioned something about "... that guy walking on the course, with a snowboard." Sure enough, Kevin Smith (no relation to Cory), 23, had strayed from the backside of Northstar and had wandered around for a couple hours before he stumbled across a groomed snow trail with hundreds of skinny skiers whipping past, all of them wearing numbered bibs. Nordic Team member and Great Ski racer Kelley Clare came upon Kevin and chatted with him enough to figure out what had gone down. When Kelley reached Soup Station 2 she informed Bryan DeVore of Kevin's whereabouts and Bryan snowmobiled up-course. When Bryan spotted Kevin, he had to stop his snowmobile and flag him down—Kevin was on his board riding out a downhill. After snowmobile delivery to the finish line, I spoke with Kevin for several minutes. He seemed fine but said he was pretty tired, "I walked quite a ways." Surrounded by the melee of The Great Ski Race finish area, Kevin in his baggy outfit and snowboard in hand looked about as out of place as a plumber in a lingerie store. I called a taxi cab to take him back to Northstar.

Dr. Light I Presume

Eliot Light, the subject of our February 3 search, attended last month's Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team meeting at Granlibakken. Eliot stood before the group and spun the tale of his two nights out, his fall into Five Lakes Creek, and his subsequent rescue. Eliot was dramatic, funny, and full of praise for all who had helped. He said the most poignant moment in his life was when his daughter was born, and a close second was seeing the bobbing headlamps of our searchers come into view on the slope below. Eliot came bearing gifts: a thank you letter from his mother, a cash donation to the Team, and a special present for the searchers wrapped in Christmas paper. While telling his story, Eliot revealed that after the searchers found him they seemed to take a few too many minutes to kick up a bonfire. (When you've spent two nights in the snowy mountains with only the clothes on your back, no fire is ever lit too soon.) I guess the fire-starting shrink-wrapped "hamburgers" that are carried by several of our searchers didn't exactly behave like napalm when a match was put to. The present Eliot lightheartedly passed on consisted of a couple of fruit cakes (for fuel), bunches of (ahem, functioning) disposable lighters, and a bottle of Meyers 151 Rum (for kindling fires from within). Also in attendance that night was the camera crew from the television tabloid show Inside Edition. Complete with umbrella lights and a feather duster audio boom, the crew was sent to scrambling as their camera ran out of tape just as Eliot was telling the crux of his story. Look for Inside Edition's interview with Eliot and the Nordic Team searchers soon.

(From the Any Excuse for Insomnia Department... I sat up in bed that night wondering: after the meeting, who walked away with the bottle of 151?)

Thanks Eliot!

Honorable Mention

At the February 1 general meeting Team President Gerald Rockwell presented honors to two Team members whose efforts have been significant in bettering the Team and the community. Dirk Schoomaker was honored for his contributions—I kid you not—too many to count. They would literally fill this page. Most recently, Dirk has participated in and coordinated more Winter Awareness presentations at the local grammar schools than any other Team member. Jackie Thomas was also honored by Gerald for her work as Team Secretary and head of the Team Dispatch Committee. Jackie writes numerous letters on behalf of the Team every season and keeps minutes from all the General and Board meetings. Under Jackie's direction, the Team's skiers, snowcats, and snowmobiles are all called in a matter of minutes at a: the commencement of a search. Great job Dirk and Jackie!!!

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

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Vice President Joe Pace 583-1806
Treasurer Scott Schoomaker 546-2809
Secretary Jackie Thomas 587-2687
Board Members Steve Matson 546-7968
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Tony Remenih 583-1684
Ray O'Brien 581-4358
Paul Honeywell 546-8609
Russ Viehman 582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage 581-4038

All phone numbers area code (530) unless noted otherwise.

Trainings

April 10: Carl (530-525-7548) from the Meeks Bay Fire Department will lead a multi-agency training focusing on the avalanche potential and agency response to avalanche incidents in the Emerald Bay area. Meet at the Team garage (223 Fairway Drive, behind the Tahoe City Chevron) at 8:00 AM to carpool, or the Meeks Bay firehouse at 8:45.

April 17: Russ Viehman will lead an on-the-snow training in the Mt. Rose area. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or at Sheep Flats at 8:15.

Tahoe Forest Hospital is offering CPR and CPR/First Aid classes on April 10, April 17, and May 18. Call (530-582-3483) for more info or to sign on.

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