

# SnowLine

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

Lake Tahoe • Truckee • Donner Summit



**D**uring this, the season of low light days and carbon black nights, the weather bears down on us and there is much to do. As the search season shifts into high gear so too does Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. Search maps are unfurled, CPR cards renewed, ossified Clif Bars excavated from the rescue truck. Rescue work is more a product of preparedness and training than unshaven, square-jawed brawn. So to get ready this fall you can either attend some Team meetings, participate in the trainings, and volunteer your effort toward a great rescue group, or smoke some Winstons and go rappelling.

Karen Honeywell, the Nordic Team's Education Committee Chair, requests you bring your baby-faced wisdom to the next meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, **December 6**. Guided by Karen, the Nordic Team will conduct Winter Awareness programs for local fourth graders during January. On **December 6**, Karen will begin taking sign-ups for each of the schools. If you can't make the **December 6** meeting, be sure to call Karen and volunteer your time.

Also at the next meeting Team member John Pang will present his second in a series of First Aid lectures to the Team. John keeps these talks short, interactive, and informative. As searchers we've dealt with everything from blisters and burns to broken limbs and hypothermia-induced unconsciousness out in the field. The majority of us are trained in first aid but not exhaustively practiced. It is imperative for each of us armchair first-aiders to assimilate the knowledge that Team members John and Diane Pang, Dirk and Marty Schoonmaker, Paul Cushing, Colleen Connors-Pace, and Ray O'Brien—all medical professionals—bring to the Team.

And for your **December 6** entertainment... local climber Dave Nettle will show slides documenting his ascent of Nepal's *Pumori* (7161 m) during May of this year. See you there!

## Three More Searches

- Rose Toloy, 43, Erica Phipps, 34, and Ernesto Rodriguez, 11, all of Sacramento, got in a little over their heads on a recent hike from Donner Summit to Squaw Valley.

The Placer County Sheriff's Office received a cellular telephone call from the group about 7:00 PM (dark) on October 26. The three hikers had become separated from the rest of their group, and even though they were still

them about 10:00 PM. The three were a little whipped but sound enough, except for Rose, who complained of a gammy knee (which grew steadily worse in short order). A Careflight helicopter was called in and Rose was flown to Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee where she was diagnosed with a sprained knee. Erica and Ernesto completed the hike down to the valley floor guided by the Nordic Team rescuers.

- Just before the witching hour on October 31, a northbound sheriff's patrol car on Highway 89 near Hurricane Bay passed a southbound Subaru wagon doing about twice the legal speed limit. The cop swung a U-turn to give chase but before he could get up to speed the Subaru veered off the road and

creamed a telephone pole, splitting the pole clean in half. The dust not even settled, the cop jumped out of his patrol car and approached the wreck, only to find the Subaru... unoccupied. A hasty search around the crash site revealed nothing unusual *except* a severed telephone pole and a driverless Subaru at midnight on Halloween. You make the call.

The deputy requested ground searchers to help find the (undoubtedly) injured driver, who, it was feared, was thrown far from the vehicle and lay unconscious somewhere. Seven Nordic Team searchers (Ron Driller, Jim

Granger, John Pang, Colleen Connors-Pace, Joe Pace, Gerald Rockwell, Russ Viehmann) responded, combing the area for well over an hour. No person was ever found.

Sidestepping any and all moral and ethical judgments on driver safety and proper etiquette when dealing (or not) with the police, all that can be said is that the shattered



Fun, eh? Team President Joe Pace charms the Canadian snows. Esplanade Range, British Columbia. Photograph by Randall Osterhuber

on the trail and near a trail sign, were unsure of the route down to Squaw Valley. They weren't far from Mountain Meadow Lake at a location where the lights of the valley below could be seen.

Team members Joe Pace, Gerald Rockwell, Matt Rusenoff, and Jill Wilson responded. The Team searchers kept in phone contact with the stranded group until they located

Next General Meeting is Monday, December 6, 1999, 6:30 p.m. at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

telephone pole lays as a testament to the Subaru wagon as the vehicle of choice at North Lake Tahoe for more than twenty years.

The woods above and in back of Kings Beach had a bit of a Blair Witch Project feel to them the night of November 12: the forest growth is second and third generation, huge decay-free cedar stumps remain, and many, many dried branches and sticks double and triple their numbers as shadows are cast from your roving headlamp. Placer County deputies had warned us to be cautious of the young man we were searching for. Ian Moore, 18, from Lake Oswego, Oregon, was missing, and he, according to the cops, had a history of "unstable" behavior. Hunger, thirst, fear, dark, and cold do odd things to humans in the woods, and even when searching for someone deemed "sane" there is always a small chance of having to go *mano a mano* with some crazy

guy in the shadows.

Commencing the search at 6:30 PM, we split into three teams of two: Randall Osterhuber and Joe Pace; Bernie Mellor and John Pang; Dirk Schoonmaker and Steve Twomey. Following up on a lead from a search dog a couple hours earlier, Dirk and Steve went searching the farthest east, at the base of the stateline ridge.

At 8:30 PM Dirk radioed that they had heard a response to them calling "Ian!" A few minutes later Dirk reported they had found him. "We're with the victim. He seems fine; he's coherent, and... naked." Sure enough, there was Ian, in the woods, naked as a baby possum. Ian was glad to see the two of them and asked them what they were doing out there.

"We were looking for you," Steve responded.

They got him dressed in some extra clothes, but not having any extra shoes Ian had to make due with two pair of heavy socks. As the three hiked slowly (and gingerly) to a rendezvous with an ATV, Ian turned to Steve and asked what they were doing out here.

"We were looking for you," Steve repeated.

Ian had arrived at Lake Tahoe just that afternoon from Oregon, planning on spending the winter. Obviously elated with his choice of residence, he walked to the edge of the pavement at the end of Bear Street, took off all his clothes (an entire Star Trek uniform, complete with Spock ears (hey, I'm not making this up)), and walked into the woods. Tiffany, a young woman

residing nearby, and a friend of a friend of Ian's, witnessed this spectacular departure and had the conviction to call the police when the sun set and Ian had not returned. This act could have very well saved Ian's life. Though the night was as mild as could be expected for the middle of November, it was cold indeed and only to get colder. We have no information on the exact temperature when naked Ian was found. We could infer; but Dirk and Steve, both engineers versed in the equations describing a body's cubic contraction (i.e. shrinkage due to decreased temperature), have, when speaking of the find, conspicuously avoided mathematical expressions such as "unit length." If they acquired any direct measurement from Ian, they have yet to share that data.

As the ATV was approaching to transport him out of the woods, Ian turned to Steve and asked: "What were you guys doin' out here?"

These were the Team's third, fourth, and fifth searches of the season.

## Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

President	Joe Pace	583-1806
Vice President	Steve Twomey	525-7280
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
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Board Members	Steve Matson	546-7968
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
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## Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
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Education	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
The Great Ski Race™	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Snowcats	Scoop Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
	Bernie Mellor	546-2238
Truck/Equipment	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage		581-4038
All phone numbers area code (530).		

## December Trainings

Additional information on the upcoming month's trainings will be available at the **December 6** meeting. The Nordic Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive, in Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station.

**December 9:** A discussion of basic snow safety skills and avalanche awareness. Meet at Kings Beach Elementary School, Room M9, 6:30 PM.

**December 12:** Map and compass practice in Blackwood Canyon. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the bottom of Blackwood Canyon at 7:45.

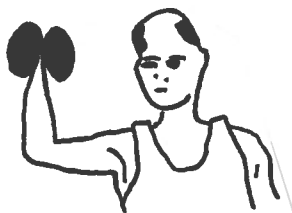
**December 16:** Wilderness first aid. Meet upstairs at the Kings Beach Fire Department, 6:30 PM.

**December 19:** Terrain familiarization around Martis and Rifle Peaks. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the top of Highway 267 (on the north side of the pass) at 8:00.

## Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc.

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