



# SnowLine

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

**T**he next meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is Monday night, **February 4**, 6:30 PM at the Granlibakken Ski Hut. Last month's meeting was pretty much standing room only and I expect the next one to be also. So show up early, grab a beverage, and seat yourself next to one of your handsome fellow Team members. At 7:00 sharp the curtain goes up, lights go on, and Team President Joe Pace will be center stage for our enjoyment. If the Chairman isn't feeling especially wordy that night—well, that's the pleasure of being the boss—he'll just delegate. Contributions from the floor, invited or otherwise, are never in short supply.

## Member Profile

One guy we haven't seen at a Nordic Team meeting in a while is Charlie Kellermeyer. Though Charlie's presence at Team functions isn't always physical, I've always felt his watchful eye on all the Team does. Charlie seems to own a watchful eye on most around him. Charlie has been involved with Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team since its inception, he is no stranger to who we are, what we do, or where we do it.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 90s Charlie would give an annual hypothermia talk to the Team. He often referred to this as his "traveling road show." He'd draw time and response curves—often with his finger onto thin air—depicting a cooling lost person's descent into shivering, disorientation, and unconsciousness. To the Nordic Team he introduced what has become the last-ditch mantra of hypothermia treatment: No one is dead until they are warm and dead.

Charlie has been at the center of some of Lake Tahoe's hairiest rescues. He was part of the ski team who located and rescued a family of four off the backside of Alpine Meadows during winter 1980, the infamous "New Yorker Search." This was during a horrific storm, and the entire family owes their lives to Charlie and crew. In April 1978 the lower car on Squaw Valley's tram line was sliced in half by a derailed cable. Charlie was among those who descended to the mangled car, treating and lowering the survivors to safety. The torn and rent tram car hung limply from

the cable the following summer, the drama of the accident and rescue revealed by the tram car's location: just below Tower 1, the tram line's most precipitous location. A couple summers ago while Charlie was kayaking around Emerald Bay a power boat roared by. Charlie looked up just in time to see a young child tip over backwards and fall into the water off the fantail. The boat's occupants were oblivious to the accident, motoring on. Charlie paddled over to the small boy and stabilized him until the boat driver realized they were one crew short. The boat operator displayed his seamanship as he backtracked, spotted Charlie and his partially drowned mate, and swamped them as he roared in. I'm sure the incident did a lot for Charlie's appreciation of speed boats on Lake Tahoe.

On December 31 of last year Dr. L. Charles Kellermeyer retired from his medical practice. If Charlie was never your physician, he probably was the person's sitting next to you.

On January 20 Charlie Kellermeyer will ski the Olympic torch across Squaw Valley, on its way to the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City.

*Skiing with Charlie is always a trip in itself. He's sort of the great philosopher and ski guru, who, if you strain your ears to listen, you will get some pretty good insight into what to pack in your bag, what ski to ski on and which political party to affiliate with. If John Muir was skiing today I'm sure he would be hooked up with Charlie, skiing Jake's Peak or kayaking Emerald Bay. If I had to choose one ski, kayak or hiking partner, Charlie would be in the top three. For smooth telemarking skills that blend with any mountain or snow condition, Charlie's style always impresses me.*

*But there was one head-plant in a tree—well on the trip into Banner and Ritter that stands out as a time his smoothness met the mountain. With a heavy five-day winter pack,*



*Squire, Kymber Lee, Scott Schroepfer, Randall Osterhuber, John Harding, Doug Read, Peter Klaussen, and Charlie Kellermeyer, Independence Mountains, Nevada, January 1986.*

*Photograph by Randall Osterhuber*

**Next General Meeting is Monday, February 4, 2002, 6:30 pm at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut**

Charlie was stuck upside down with little more than his lower legs showing above the deep powder. We all gathered around to enjoy the laugh but quickly realized Charlie was unable to extricate himself. Fortunately, we pulled him out before he inhaled all the powder.

Another trip I remember was on the Green River where Charlie introduced us to power lounging. Eight of us were in canoes but Charlie ended up in Rolf Godon's one-man kayak and the only paddling strokes he made were to come ashore at night. Watching Charlie, we quickly realized that clothes were superfluous on this trip and our trip doctor knew how to enjoy the Utah high country to the fullest.

Charlie has certainly prepared himself for "retirement" with trips to Europe, a great cabin away from civilization and a good group of friends to draw from when he needs a ski or kayak partner. Get ready gang, Charlie is out there. No more excuses of hospital duty or office hours. I look forward to returning from Switzerland and getting a call from "the Doc."

—Skip Reedy

"...What I remember is when Charlie put his klister in his pants before The Great Ski Race to warm it up and forgot it was there. It leaked all over him...OUCH!"

—Kate Fay

A few of Charlie's finest moments at Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue meetings: presenting the latest findings on hypothermia physiology, admonishing rescuers who failed to trade ski boots with victims, counseling fiscal prudence from the back of the room when the bank balance hovered insecurely at four figures. Charlie seems to me the incarnation of our Team's volunteer community roots—husband, father, outdoorsman, talented professional, compassionate human being.

Don't look for Charlie at Team meetings these days. You'd be more likely to find him on Jake's Peak, or lapping the Red trail. Better yet, join him on an overnight tour to some out-of-the-way place. I have vivid

mental snapshots of Charlie emerging from the bunkhouse into zero-degree morning sunshine at Vaquero Cow Camp, and hunkered down all steamy and self-satisfied in a remote Nevada hot spring. A few years ago we hiked on autumn snow up the head of a Norwegian fjord, and that night drank gin and ate grilled laks in an Oslo apartment while our boots dried on the steam pipes.

One dark and stormy day Charlie led a training from his Squaw Valley office over KT-22 into Five Lakes Creek. Heavy snow was fogging our goggles, and far down the drainage one skier broke a 3-pin binding plate. Nothing ruffled Charlie's contentment. We ate a relaxed and convivial lunch, made the repair, and skied out into a perfectly clear and frosty powder evening. Next day I realized I'd hurt my arm, so of course I went in to see Charlie. No drugs, no specialized referrals, no pricey procedures—no more than a few quiet questions, careful examination and casual advice to ski without pole straps for a few weeks. Afterwards I asked him if I should start getting annual physicals. He looked into me with those deep, diagnostic eyes and, like God calling off the Grim Reaper, said, "Nah, wait a few years. You're still healthy."

—David Fenimore

## Team Trainings

Training organizers really really want you to call in advance to let them know you will be attending, so don't let them down.

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

February 8: Randall Osterhuber (546-4491) will lead an advanced avalanche transceiver practice. We'll focus on deep and multiple burials, and discuss the latest theories of transceiver operation and field techniques. Meet at the Central Sierra Snow Laboratory (426-0318; parking very limited, please carpool) at 8:00 AM.

February 10: Mark Johnson (583-1308) will lead a Homewood Mountain Resort terrain

familiarization training—both in-bounds and out. Meet at the south base of the ski area at 8:00 AM or at the Team garage at 7:30.

February 12: John Pang (581-2641) is organizing a get together with the CalStar helicopter folks—and their machine—at 5:30 PM, weather permitting. The LZ will be either in the Squaw Valley or Homewood parking lot. Stay tuned for further details.

February 16: Steve Twomey (525-7280) conducts a field training on Donner Summit today, specifically the Castle Peak area. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or at Wild Cherries Coffee House in Truckee at 8:00. The word: all day, all terrain.

February 18: Joe Pace (583-1806) says he's organizing a training "somewhere" on the West Shore. [?] Bombarding him with phone calls will force him to go public with the specifics.

February 24: Dirk Schoonmaker (583-2929) is directing a training at Kirkwood ski area. Dirk's working on getting the Eldorado County search team involved with this training too. Meet at the Team garage at 6:30 AM.

Wishing wine grew on trees (whoops, it does!, sort of...),

—Randall Osterhuber

## 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
	Randy Sharp	587-2877
	Russ Viehmann	582-1695
	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
	Douglas Read	583-6381
Directors-at-large	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).

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