A

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

October 2001

Snow

Line

Established 1976

n hour after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team
was informed that the skyscrapers of San Francisco
were chock full of elevators
stuck in their shafts. And within those
elevators hundreds of office workers stranded. Help
was needed. As I gathered my climbing
gear, I was constructing rope systems in my
mind with which I could rappel greasy
elevator shafts, bust into the top of the cars,
and lower secretaries and junior executives to
safety. These procedures, I felt, were totally
within my capability, and clearly outside of my
experience.

Rescue scenarios vary widely.
from elevator evacuations to car
wrecks to the lost or injured
in the winter backcountry. And
even though the stage for a particular
venue may have repeating
themes, each rescue is unique.
Unique in respect to rescuers,
resources, medical concerns,
availability of resources,
weather, environment, etc. The
challenge of rescue is quick and
efficient adaptation to these
various tasks. Meeting this
challenge successfully is a
combination of organization,
experience, and training.

The call soon came back that
Bay Area elevators were in fact
functioning properly, and the
Nordic Team was called off.
Twelve years later, the horrific
evacuations of collapsed buildings in
New York and Arlington make
me think about what it would have been like to
descent the dark and gritty arteries of a
 wrongly high-rise. As a backcountry person
would have been able to decipher the metal
maze of urban rescue? How far does one's
experience carry?

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team
would take your rescue experience to carry far.
Joining the Nordic Team now is a great way to
give back to your community—and to yourself.
It is extremely rewarding work that for the most
part is fun and stimulating. By the yardstick
of a modern SUV, it's a rock's throw from the
up pre-meeting by the homespun bluegrass
band Bluegrass Storm. What does bluegrass
music have to do with rescue? Heck I don't
know, I'm only the messenger.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team
needs your talent. No matter what that talent
may be (e.g. banjo, fiddle) there is certainly a
place for you on the Nordic Team. The Team
conducts backcountry search and rescue,
educates the public on issues of winter safety,
and orchestrates the largest Nordic ski race in
the West, The Great Ski Race™ (March 3,
2002). Many positions within the Team need
to be filled. In addition to much footwork in
the mountains, there are innumerable solid
-ground jobs—all that lead and buttress the
Team’s efforts. Please attend the October 1
meeting!

Goings On

On June 2, 2001, Nordic Team member
Dirk Schoonmaker organized a garage clean-up
and construction day. The effort put a lot
of final touches on the Team’s equipment
storage and left things in a highly ordered
fashion.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team owns
the 1100 square foot garage in Tahoe City
built on land leased to us by the
Tahoe City PUD. The garage was constructed in the
mid 1990s almost entirely by
volunteer labor and has
enabled the Team to operate
at a very high level
of efficiency—and speed! The
garage houses the Team’s
rescue truck and equipment, a
Thiokol snowcat, Great Ski
Race paraphernalia, much of
the Team’s paperwork,
memorabilia, and just gobs of
search and rescue winter ski
detritus. The garage has, at
times, operated as a command
post for searches, a
classroom for first aid
instruction, yard
sale/fundraiser headquarters,
bivouac (two bunks upstairs),
and rendezvous for lovers
(one bunk upstairs). It’s been
kind of like a fire station but
without the required haircut.

Dirk was joined June 2 by Team members
Dave Gleseke, Amy Horne, Mark Johnson,
Kathy King, Steve Matson, John Pang, Marty
Schoonmaker, Larry Seviston, and Bob
Wright. Hats off to you all!

This was by no means Dirk’s first foray
into the streamlining of the Team’s ready-
gear. As a previous equipment manager for
the Team, Dirk was instrumental in rebuilding
the Team truck into a rather voluminous
utility vehicle (complete with heated rear-
view mirrors) and setting up the increasingly
complex radio-battery analyzer—critical to our modern operation. Dirk painted that cool red stripe on the floor so we didn’t have to back the truck into Great Ski Race signs and beer coolers anymore. In fact, many of the small day-to-day items in the garage we now take for granted (shovels, brooms, garbage cans, hoses, Easy Cheese) were put there and organized by Dirk. Dirk’s activity on the Team doesn’t stop at the garage door. He’s been a lead skier for the Team for some time and has participated in and led numerous trainings (two years as Training Committee Chair) and searches. As a member of the Team’s Board of Directors for six years, and one of the busiest organizers of The Great Ski Race, Dirk has earned an important place in the Team’s past and future. Thanks Dirk!

Team Trainings

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team holds several training sessions every month throughout the autumn, winter, and spring. Training exercises vary from the ubiquitous terrain familiarization to first aid, avalanche safety or backcountry navigation. The Team trainings are designed to be fun and informative and all Team members are encouraged to attend. For insurance purposes, every participant of a Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team training must sign on for a civil defense card issued through OES, the Office of Emergency Services. Placer County is the local issuing agency for the card; so if you need to sign on please call the sheriff’s substation in Tahoe City for more information.

Each training participant is asked to call the training organizer and let him or her know you plan on attending. Some trainings require the coordination of special equipment or vehicles for shuttling folks to and from. Also, it is up to the whim of the training organizer to change and/or modify the activity schedule of any specific training, sometimes at the last minute. Weather, or simply a mood swing, may be enough for the venue to be changed.

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

**October 6:** Audrey Staples (587-6895) will lead a hike up Billy’s Peak. Billy’s Peak is a free-standing cone of andesite and basalt on the Sierra crest just south of Tinker Knob. The mountain was named after Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team founding member Billy Dutton who died of cancer in 1989. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

**October 9:** Bernie Mellor (546-2238) is hosting the annual Team equipment once-over, 6:00 PM at the garage. The Team’s equipment has grown increasingly complex over the years. New radios, pagers, various brands of avalanche transceivers, GPS units, software programs and the like all require an updated knowledge to be operated correctly. While not a specific training for any one piece of gear, this evening will be spent learning what’s in the truck, where it’s stored, and a general overview of operation and maintenance. Getting intimate with the Team’s equipment is imperative for searchers and support people alike. If you’re new to the Team, this is a great event to attend. If you’re a Team veteran, this is an essential event to attend.

**October 13:** Steve Matson (546-7968) will lead a hike up to and around the Marlette Lake environs. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM or at the North Tahoe Beach Center parking lot (across the street from the Kings Beach Safeway) at 8:30.

**October 20:** The often wind-swept and always beautiful Sierra crest between Donner Summit and Squaw Valley will be the route for the day. Hiking through the dried mule’s ears promises to be loud; the roof on the Benson Hut promises to be new. Randy Sharp (587-2877) is your contact for this 23 km hike; meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

**October 27:** Starting at the Bay View trailhead, the Team will head up and into Desolation Wilderness for a variety of adventures. At least two parties will operate somewhat independently today: one group doing a shorter hike, another spending as much time and energy as group consensus dictates. Marty Schoonmaker (583-2929) and Terri Viehmann (582-1695) will lead the day’s activities. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM.

Yours always,

—Randall Osterhuber

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269 number of people Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has rescued

### Team Officers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Joe Pace</td>
<td>583-1806</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Steve Twomey</td>
<td>525-7280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Scott Schroepfer</td>
<td>546-2809</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Terri Viehmann</td>
<td>582-1695</td>
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<td>Board Members</td>
<td>Karen Honeywell</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ray O’Brien</td>
<td>581-4358</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Randy Sharp</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Russ Viehmann</td>
<td>582-1695</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directors-at-large</td>
<td>Randall Osterhuber</td>
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<td>Douglas Read</td>
<td>583-6381</td>
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<td>Gerald Rockwell</td>
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### Committee Chairs

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<tr>
<td>Cuisine</td>
<td>Debra Schroepfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispatch</td>
<td>Jackie Thomas</td>
<td>587-2687</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Karen Honeywell</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Russ Viehmann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Ski Race™</td>
<td>Douglas Read</td>
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<td>Randall Osterhuber</td>
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<td>Newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snowcats</td>
<td>Scoop Remenih</td>
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<td>Ray O’Brien</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>Paul Honeywell</td>
<td>546-8609</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bernie Mellor</td>
<td>546-2238</td>
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All phone numbers area code (530)

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Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.

**Post Office Box 7703**
**Tahoe City, California 96145**

(530) 581-4038
www.tahoenordicsar.com

**FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR:**
**OCTOBER 1**

Please keep us informed of your correct address.