You've had a busy month, I know. What with handmade all your gift wrapping paper and spot welding those new cookie cutters out in the old metal shop, who has time for search and rescue? YOU DO BABY! And there is no better stage from which to put your time and energy on display than the next meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team: Monday night, January 6, 6:30 PM at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut. As the snows pile deeper and the ice grips the hemlocks, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team comes into full flower. Ski trainings, searches, education programs, The Great Ski Race: the next Team meeting has something for everyone.

Lost Biker, Boarders

On November 29, visiting Londoner Peter Street, 56, was be-nighted (not to be confused with knighted) after failing to find his way out of the Miller Lake/Barker Pass area. His forward progress via bicycle had been thwarted by a maze of dirt roads, snowed-over pastes, and nightfall.

Upon being reported overdue by a relative, Placer and El Dorado Counties initiated a search.

ATV, bicycle, and ground searchers responded, including about 10 Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team members. At 10:00 AM the next morning (November 30), Peter was spotted and rescued by the Placer County Eagle Helicopter crew. Peter had bivouacked under a rude shelter he erected near Bear Lake. The temperature that night touched the low 20s°F. Peter Street suffered due to the cold and hunger, but was otherwise OK.

During the afternoon snowstorm of December 19, two 18th-year-old snowboarders, Beavis and Brainsquare (not their real names), from Windsor, apparently ducked several CLOSED AREA signs at Northstar to access the north side of Lookout Mountain. Northstar was running only four lifts that day due to the ski area's still being without electricity following the particularly violent winter storm of the previous weekend. Beavis and Brainsquare, both season pass holders at Northstar, figured they'd poach some attached. In short order, however, B and B found themselves lost in the low visibility. Even though it was only 2:30 PM, and their tracks would have led them right back to the operating ski area, they decided to dig in, erecting what Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Secretary (and Northstar administrator) Terri Viehmann would describe as a "snow tunnel." After the boys did not show up at day's end, one of their grandmothers contacted the sheriff. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team was dispatched at 1:00 AM on December 20; twelve searchers responded.

The brainchildren hunkered down (they both were dressed well) until the storm seemed to abate a little (3:00 AM), a bright moon now illuminating the snowscape. What Beavis and Brainsquare did to keep themselves occupied for those long hours is up for speculation.

Northstar snow grooming machines were doing passes on the lower slopes of Lookout Mountain when a driver spotted the two leaden young men a few minutes after 5:00 AM. The groomer picked them up, and ferried them on their ride of shame back to the awaiting sheriff. Evidently the boys will be cited for naughty playground behavior, and have had their season passes revoked. Their trespass violation comes on the heels of another closed-area snowboarder at Mt. Rose ski area (the previous weekend) who perished in an avalanche.

These were the second and third search and rescue operations for the Nordic Team this season.

To Probe (Or Not)

Like it or not, as explorers of winter mountains we depend a lot on our gear. If suddenly thrust back in time 150 years, some of us would fill the Jeremiah Johnson mold better than others. The plastics of today (how much of your backcountry equipment is not synthetic?) allow even the dandiest among us to skip through terrain that rarely saw the likes of the beaver-greased mountain man. Even though the "modern" days of 60/40 parkas and hotdog avalanche transceivers are far behind us, some gear is still slow to evolve. Case in point: avalanche probes.

For the most part, every probe marketed today works, at least temporarily. Traditionally made of lightweight alloy, the probe your local mountain shop will sell you will break in short order. But only if you use it.

Over the years, I have seen every brand—every brand—of collapsible probe fail. This...
The sched:
December 28: Jeff Rieger (916-769-5462) is leading an all-day ski tour—several route options are being considered. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

January 4: A training up in the Mt. Rose area with Gerald Rockwell (583-5376). Meet at the garage at 7:30 AM or at the parking lot across from the Kings Beach Safeway at 8:00.

January 8: Karen Honeywell (546-8609) will offer a crash-course in educating fourth-graders on winter awareness. If you’ve signed on to help with the Education Committee (and I’m happy to learn you have), this training will streamline your shelter and signal pitch, your S.T.O.P. delivery. Meet at the USGS office on North Lake Blvd at 7:00 PM.

January 11/12: A two-day avalanche safety field course with Dick Penniman. Dick will address backcountry snow safety topics specific to our rescue and rescuers. As of this writing there are about 8 slots left for this course. To reserve yours, send Karen Honeywell a check for $100 (PO Box 368, Carmelion Bay, CA 96140, phone 546-8609) made out to TNSAR. When you complete the two-day course your cash will be refunded to you.

January 14: Russ Viehmann (525-6978) will lead a GPS training at the Team garage. We’ll do field practice behind the garage, so leave the street clothes in the closet. Meet at 6:30 PM.

January 18: Steve Twomey (525-7280) is organizing a ski tour to Rifle Peak and beyond. This will be a joint training with the Team snowmobilers. Meet at the garage at 7:15 AM or at the top of highway 267 at 8:00.

January 26: Peter York (583-0465) is leading the Team in a ski training in and around Squaw Valley. We’ll ski as a group for a while in-bounds (no lift tickets issued), then punch into the backcountry. Meet at the garage at 7:15 AM or at the bottom of the tram at 7:45.

February 2: The sister training to the above, only this time at Alpine Meadows. Jim Granger’s (581-1251) the contact. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM, or the bottom of Alpine at 8:00.

Confused as to why real estate agents insist upon publishing photos of themselves,

—Randall Osterhuber

Team Officers
President Steve Twomey 525-7280
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Technology Gerald Rockwell 583-3376
Training Paul Honeywell 546-8609
Bennie Mellor 546-2238
Website Peter Spalding 546-0588
All phone numbers area code (530).

THE UNDRESSING PARADOX
My phantom companion
speaks German
and tells me to strip.
In one encounter he had ice-blue feet
and a fixed expression on his face.
The interpretation: I am letting go.
The drift is this.
Give the hypothermic girl
a stiff hot drink.
The mouth of a stranger is a pocket of
breathable air.
The spit is a warm vital flow.

—Dana Goodyear

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