At precisely 10:49 pm on March 19, Lake Tahoe's position on Earth passed through the vernal equinox. Now with the sun in Pisces, water is the call of the moment. Liquid water, that is. Unprecedented warmth has put the snowpack into a serious temperament of melt. But there's some fat-deep snow in them there hills. Don't let the balmy days of spring tempt you into missing the tail end of the snow season. The next meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team will help ease the transition. The meeting is Monday night, April 5, 6:30 pm at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut. There'll be a wrap-up of this year's Great Ski Race, nominations for Team elections, and many other assorted delights. April 5!

28th G.S.R.

With the Great Ski Race always scheduled for the first Sunday in March, this year's race—March 7—was the latest the race could be held. During most years a week makes all the difference in the amount of snow the Truckee end of the course can hold on to. There just can't be too much snow on the tail end of the Great Ski Race course! Serendipitously, one of the winter's more powerful snow storms held over through March 2, followed by coolish weather up to race weekend.

Race day was like none other this year. Clear, calm, and cloudless, no weather could have been more appropriate. Sure the snow got soft mid-afternoon, but it hardly affected the winning time. Scott Loomis, a Subaru Factory Team skier (Subaru was one of this year's Great Ski Race's major sponsors) won the race, crossing the finish line after 1:10:06, a minute or so off record pace. Near the end, he never had to look over his shoulder; no need, as there were no other skiers in sight. Brooke Baughman of Ketchum, Idaho, won the women's field—and claimed her second Great Ski Race victory— with a time of 1:17:13. In all, 974 skiers completed the course; 1038 registered for the race. Both these numbers are records.

The buzz this year among the skiers was the first ever wave race start. Six waves, each starting 3 minutes apart, kept the start safe, sane, and fast for everyone. Nordic Team President Steve Twomey worked the numbers, and of the 974 skiers to reach Truckee, more than 88 percent crossed the finish within one wave or less from which they started. That's a pretty good indicator that the majority of racers were properly seeded, I think. With almost no exceptions, the wave start was received enthusiastically by everyone. Long gone are the days of 1000 skiers vying for position all at once.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team offers a hearty THANK YOU to all the race participants, volunteers, and sponsors for their support of the biggest Great Ski Race ever. Special thanks to Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area, Cottonwood Restaurant, and Northstar-at-Tahoe for their long-term commitment to The Great Ski Race, and in turn their support of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team's life-saving efforts.

Two days after the race, the finish hill in Truckee had melted off in a big way, looking less like a ski course and more like the scrub sage that it is.

Searches

The Nordic Team was called to Northstar the evening of February 19 to search for two missing young girls. Sisters Brittany and Nicole, 11 and 9 years old, had been snowboarding together at the resort but failed to meet their parents at lunch time. Evidently one of the girls' snowboards had slid away from her, the board coasted out of sight under the ski area boundary rope on the north side of Lookout Mountain. They both chased after it; they never reentered the ski area.

More than 14 searchers from the Nordic Team responded, along with many Northstar personnel. By 9:30 pm, Team skiers had picked up the girls' tracks and were chasing them down. An hour and a half later, leapfrogging the Team skiers, Dan, a Northstar patrolman on a snowmobile, caught up with Brittany and Nicole. They were all the way into Lahonton development, at a logging site about 3.5 km WNW of
Creek from the upper environs of the Rifle Peak cabin is no easy circuit. Steep, rocky, brushy, narrow, and mostly without trail, Jim managed to descend the entire 11 km route by the wee morning hours, seriously tired, seriously scratched.

The Nordic Team snowmobilers and snowcat put in long hours on this search. These were the Team’s fourteenth and fifteenth responses of the season.

**Last Trainings**

The last scheduled Team trainings for the snow season are as follows. Any additional training exercises added to the calendar will be announced via the monthly meetings and/or by telephone. Keep in touch. The Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station.

March 28: Bernie Mellor (546-2238) will lead a ski out to Granite Chief—and beyond. Meet at the Team garage at 7:15 AM or in front of the Squaw Valley tram building at 7:45 AM.

April 3: Sarah Lagano (775-745-7037) will lead a ski to Rubicon Peak—and beyond. Meet at the garage at 7:00 AM.

Always nostalgic at season’s change,
—Randall Osterhuber

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**Team Officers**

- **President**: Steve Trowemey
- **Vice President**: Russ Viehmann
- **Treasurer**: Scott Schroepfer
- **Secretary**: Terri Viehmann
- **Board Members**: Karen Viehmann, Sarah Lagano, Ray O'Brien, Dirk Schoonmaker, Gerald Rockwell

- **Directors-at-large**: Joe Pace, Doug Read, Gerald Rockwell

**Committee Chairs**

- **Cuisine**: Debra Schroepfer
- **Dispatch**: Jackie Thomas
- **Education**: Karena Honeywell
- **Equipment**: Russ Viehmann
- **Great Ski Race™**: Doug Read
- **Newsletters**: Randall Osterhuber
- **Snowcats**: Scoop Remenih
- **Snowmobilers**: Ray O'Brien
- **Technology**: Gerald Rockwell
- **Training**: Paul Honeywell
- **Website**: Bernie Mellor

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

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