The next meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is a very important one. Monday night, March 1, 6:30 PM at the Granlibakken Ski Hut will be the final planning meeting for the 28th Annual Great Ski Race, the Nordic Team’s main fund raising event and the largest cross-country ski race in the western United States. The race starts at 9:00 AM—SHARP—Sunday, March 7. Your participation in the meeting March 1—and the race—is vital to the Team’s ongoing success. Please attend!

The Team Answers

- Even after being forewarned of unstable snow by the Sugar Bowl ski patrol, local skier Scott Thelin, 21, began descending the “heart,” the steep cirque at the top of the northeast face of Donner Peak. It was late in the afternoon of January 29, and sure enough he triggered an avalanche. The heart ends in a tight pinch in red fir at the bottom, with cliffs below. Scott ended up in this pinch when the slide stopped. The force of the avalanche ripped apart all the ligaments around one knee and severely tweaked one of his forearms. He was skiing alone. After coming to, and realizing his peril, Scott began a highly motivated and determined self-rescue. For the next seven hours, he inched his way back upslope, circling the top of Donner Peak, and by traversing around the north end of Mt. Judah, managed to slither through the Sugar Bowl ski area boundary. There, he made his way into the ski patrol shack at the top of the Judah chairlift, finding some blankets. His swollen knee was now the size of an October pumpkin. Scott motored around the two mountains by laying on one of his skis and pushing himself backward with his good leg. He accomplished most of this in the dark, reaching the patrol shack at about 10:45 PM. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team was called after one of Scott’s friends realized he was a no-show, but just as Team skiers began combing various flanks of Donner Peak the word came that Scott had flagged down a Sugar Bowl snow groomer working the Judah ski runs.

- The Team was next called late the afternoon of February 5 to look for a missing snowboarder last seen high in Blackwood Canyon. Ray O’Brien was snowmobiling in the area and responded. By 5:30, the lost guy had been located by his buddy, the reporting party.

- The Team pages next went off at 3:30 AM on February 8. Two snowmobilers—a man and a woman—were reported missing by one of their riding companions. They were all riding off of Little Truckee summit and the duo failed to materialize at day’s end. The RP, snowmobilers and the Team snowcat responded. After several hours of searching in very cold temperatures (-17° C (2° F) when the searchers headed out), Ray O’Brien and crew located the search subjects in a summer cabin several miles beyond Jackson Meadows Reservoir. The lost couple had got their snowmobile stuck, then walked back and broke into a cabin they remembered passing. In a feeble attempt to get warm, they lit a fire in a steel garbage can inside the cabin, providing little heat but copious amounts of smoke. They were located just before sunrise.

Another callout for a missing snowmobiler came later that night, at 10:30 PM. Josh, a 26 year old volunteer firefighter from Sierraville, had separated from his buddies while they were all riding in the Kyburz Flat area. The Team snowmobilers and snowcat responded once again. After many hours and many miles, Team searchers Scoop Remenich and Tony Bochene were driving up the Sagoehack Creek road (in the Team snowcat) when they spotted Josh’s tracks. In a few moments they had voice contact with Josh. The volume and intensity with which Josh answered alarmed both Scoop and Tony, who figured his “death scream” was a precursor to finding him in deep trouble. When they found him, he was wallowing in deep snow; the most obvious danger stemmed from the cold and the fact that Josh was adorned almost entirely in cotton. He was brought to safety just before first light.

- The Team responded next at 12:30 AM on February 14, as a report of two missing cross-country skiers on Donner Summit hit the airwaves.

Two 50 year old part-time Sonora residents had gone out for a ski at the end of their road and never returned. With lots of ski tracks to follow up on, the Nordic Team searched had their work cut out for them as they covered a wide radius on the Summit, including much of Royal Gorge ski area and down to the Cedars. Team skiers Steve Twomey, Ron Driller, and...
Russ Viehhmann finally located the gentlemen on the road above the Onion Creek snow survey cabin. The misplaced Summitteers had become turned around, and instead of heading back to Serene Lakes, they were traveling deeper and deeper into Sara Norvill (the subject of our March 4-6, 2000 search) territory. They were cold and tired, but otherwise rescued in good health.

These were the Team's ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth responses of the season.

**Team Events**

A valid OES card is required to participate in any Team search or training, but not silly, you don't need any laminated credential to help with The Great Ski Race. The Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station.

**February 2:** Terrain familiarization around Alpine Meadows. At the February 2 Team meeting, someone asked if backcountry equipment is needed to participate in this training. You never need to ask that question! We're a backcountry ski team, so the answer is always ABSOLUTELY! Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the bottom of Alpine at 8:15. Sarah Barrett (583-2994) is the contact.

**February 28/29:** Tony Bochene (426-3619) will lead an overnight outing to Martis Peak, or you can ski in for the day. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM (Feb 28) or the bottom of the Martis Peak road (north side of Brockway Summit) at 8:15.

**March 1:** Great Ski Race planning meeting at Granibakken, 6:30 PM.

**March 4:** Great Ski Race racer bag stuffing at Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area, 5:00 PM or (as soon as you can make it). We really need a lot of folks to show up for this annual frenzy of readying 1200 racer bags and T-shirts!

**March 5 (noon) - March 7 (8:55 AM):** Great Ski Race registration, Tahoe XC.

**March 7:** The 28th annual Great Ski Race, 9:00 AM—SHARP!

**March 14:** Bob Wright (546-7273) will lead a ski tour from the Mt. Rose area to Diamond Peak ski area. Meet at the Team garage at 7:00 AM, across from the Kings Beach Safeway at 7:15, or up at the Mt. Rose meadow at 7:45.

**March 20:** A ski tour (destination to be announced) somewhere above Tahoe's west shore. Gerald Rockwell (583-5376) is leading this one. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

**March 28:** Granite Chief and Beyond. That's the tour of the day led by Bernie Mellor (546-2238). Meet at the garage at 7:15 AM, or in front of the tram building at Squaw at 7:45.

**April 3:** More beyond. Sarah Lagano (775-745-7037) will lead a ski tour of Rubicon Peak and Beyond. Meet at the Team garage at 7:00 AM.

From Tahoe Vista, and thence,

—Randall Osterhuber

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**Team Officers**

- President: Steve Twomey 535-7280
- Vice President: Russ Viehhmann 554-6798
- Treasurer: Scott Schroepfer 546-2809
- Secretary: Terri Viehhmann 525-6978
- Board Members: Karen Honeywell 546-8609
  - Sarah Lagano 775-745-7037
  - Ray O'Brien 583-4338
  - Dirk Schoonmaker 583-2929
  - Randall Osterhuber 546-4491
  - Joe Pace 583-1806
  - Doug Read 583-6381
  -erald Rockwell 583-3756

**Committee Chairs**

- Cuisine: Debra Schroepfer 546-2809
- Dispatch: Jackie Thomas 587-2687
- Education: Karen Honeywell 546-8609
- Equipment: Russ Viehhmann 525-6978
- Great Ski Race™: Doug Read 583-6381
- Randall Osterhuber 546-4491
- Randall Osterhuber 546-4491
- Scoop Remenih 583-1684
- Ray O'Brien 581-4338
- Gerald Rockwell 583-5376
- Paul Honeywell 546-8609
- Bernie Mellor 546-2238
- Peter Snyder 583-0588

**Website:** Peter Snyder 583-0588

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**Number of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team's rescues**

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**Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.**

Post Office Box 7703
Tahoe City, California 96145

(530) 581-4038

www.tahoenordicsar.com

www.thegreatski.com

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**MARK JOHNSON**

PO BOX 8258
TAHOE CITY CA 96145

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**28th Annual Great Ski Race**

**Sunday, March 7**

**Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area**

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**please keep us informed of your correct address!**