



# 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 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 the afternoon of January 29, and sure enough he triggered an avalanche. The heart ends in a tight pinch in red firs 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 seriously 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 motated 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 in 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 pagers 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,

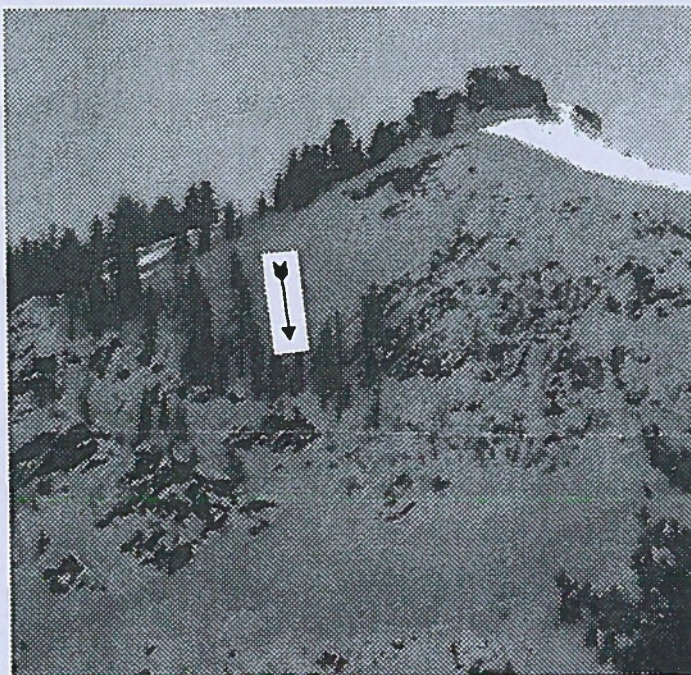
snowmobilers and the Team snowcat responded. After several hours of searching in very cold temperatures (-17° C (2° F) when the searchers headed out), Ray O'Brien and crew located the search subjects in a summer cabin several miles beyond Jackson Meadows Reservoir. The lost couple had got their snowmobile 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 Remenih and Tony Bochene were driving up the Sagehen 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 Serene Lake 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 searchers 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



*The northeast face of Donner Peak and the site of Scott Thelin's accident after triggering an avalanche, January 29.*

*Photograph by Randall Osterhuber*

who called 911 from Incline Village, had his call directed through Washoe County, the Truckee Police department, Nevada County, and finally Sierra County, before that agency was identified as the proper bureau. The Nordic Team was also called: four Team



Russ Viehmann finally located the gentlemen on the road above the Onion Creek snow survey cabin. The misplaced Summiters had become turned around, and instead of heading back to Serene Lakes, 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 no! 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 22:** 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 Bochen (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 Granlibakken, 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 rearing 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 beyonds. 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,

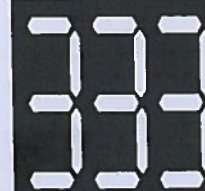
—Randall Osterhuber

## Team Officers

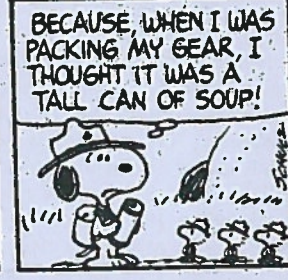
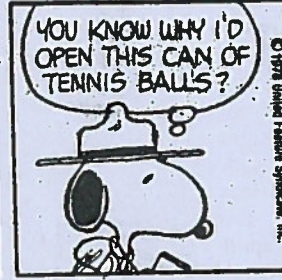
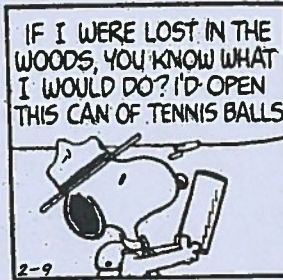
President	Steve Twomey	525-7280
Vice President	Russ Viehmann	525-6978
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
Secretary	Terri Viehmann	525-6978
Board Members	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
	Sarah Lagano	775-745-7037
	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
Directors-at-large	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
	Joe Pace	583-1806
	Doug Read	583-6381
	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376

## Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
Equipment	Russ Viehmann	525-6978
Great Ski Race™	Doug Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
Snowcats	Scoop Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Technology	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
	Bernie Mellor	546-2238
Website	Peter Sporleder	546-0588
All phone numbers area code (530) unless otherwise noted.		



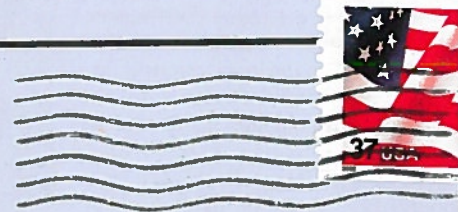
Number of Tahoe Nordic  
Search and Rescue Team's  
rescues



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MARK JOHNSON  
PO BOX 8258  
TAHOE CITY CA 96145



28th Annual Great Ski Race  
Sunday, March 7  
Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area

please keep us informed of your correct address!