Monday night, May 3, at 6:00 P.M. is the final meeting of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team for the Winter 2003 season. And what a season it's been. The Team conducted 15 operations searching for and/or rescuing 28 individuals. Very few of the rescues seemed to be the "formula" chase-the-sweatsuit-clad-snowboarder-down-Five-Lakes-Creek-find-him-at-midnight-near-Diamond-Crossing search. Not that those strapping young souls aren't worth the effort—au contraire! But many of this season's rescues touched on the unusual: avalanche victims (and survivors), an apparent suicide, young kids lost in the winter woods, and more than a couple lost snowmobilers. The Team's response, both in time and numbers, has been impressive. More than a dozen skiers have responded to many of the searches, and the Team snowmobilers and snowcat drivers—well, don't even get me started about those guys! You never quite know where they all are lurking (deep in their oil-changing pits, or maybe at a metropolitan opera house somewhere, who knows?), but we have a search and WHAM!, there they are, gussied-up, helmeted, ready. They have not only logged a lot of miles on the new Team snowcat, but they've logged a lot of successful miles, finding lost guys leagues from anywhere, anywhere, anyone. The Team snowmobilers and snowcat drivers are an outstanding group that enable the Team with a diversity of resource far beyond what any backcountry skier, or group of backcountry skiers, can provide.

This winter the Team also put on the biggest Great Ski Race in history. It was hands down an allday, financial, and buzz—fun success. The Great Ski Race remains the nexus for cross country skiing in the West.

In between races and rescues, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team has kept itself occupied with eight training sessions per month, equipment upkeep and upgrading, community outreach (including hitting every North Lake Tahoe and Truckee fourth grader over the head with a gentle (but firm) dose of Winter Awareness), minding two web sites, and a ludicrous number of phone calls, meetings, emails, letters, and I don't know what all! Today, right now, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is at the peak of its power, the top of its game. If you think that just sounds like so many gin-soaked lyrics from a Frank Sinatra ballad, come find out for yourself, Monday night, May 3. Did I mention the Team will provide dinner?

Do Award

At the last Team meeting of each year, the highly coveted Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Member of the Year is granted to the least suspecting, most deserving Team player. Nominated this year are Jim Cofey, Larry Sevion, Doug Read, and Mike Kennett.

Jim has the Team's Education Committee in high gear these days. He has coordinated all the Winter Awareness programs at the local elementary schools for several seasons now, and that program is stronger than ever. Jim also does invaluable "behind the scenes" work for The Great Ski Race, all with that calm, measured demeanor of an engineer.

Larry and Doug are the only two founding members still active on the Team. The Team has changed a lot over the decades—and continues to move fast-forward—it's not an organization where one can rest on one's laurels for long. But even though these two guys have warehouses full of laurels, they remain on the Team's front line. Larry secured a new snowcat for the Team this year, then pilots it on search and rescues. Doug's out there too, on skis of course, plying the mountains of the Tahoe Sierra on search and rescues—still. He's also the director of The Great Ski Race and a main functionary (emphasis on func) of much the Team says, does, and is. Both these guys have been at it since 1976.

Mike Bennett, Mikey, not only achieved instant notoriety this winter due to some impressive stunt driving, he has become a stalwart of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. Skier, climber, searcher, and dude, the only Team searches or trainings that Mikey missed this year were while he was in Jackson, Wyoming—on Team business!

Congratulations—and many thanks—to Jim, Larry, Doug, and Mikey.

Summer

Steve Twomey (525-2780) and Brian York (863-0465) are organizing four training sessions this summer on the first Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M at the Team garage. The dates are June 7, July 5, August 2, and September 6. They will each be a couple hours in length and cover topics relevant to (duh) search and rescue. More specifics about each training can be had from the Team website (tahoenordicar.com) or by giving Steve or Brian a call. Keep in touch amigo.

Please avoid Michael Jackson this summer. —Randall Osterhuber

Next General Meeting is Monday, May 3, 2004, 6:00 pm at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut
Team Officers

President: Steve Twomey 525-7280
Vice President: Russ Viehmann 525-6978
Treasurer: Scott Schroepfer 546-2809
Secretary: Terri Viehmann 525-6978
Board Member: Karen Honeywell 546-8609
Sarah Lagano 775-745-7037
Ray O'Brien 581-4358
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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 581-3687
Education: Karen Honeywell 546-8609
Equipment: Russ Viehmann 525-6978
Great Ski Race™: Doug Read 583-6381
Randall Osterhuber 546-4491
Snowcats: Scoop Rememih 583-1684
Snowmobiles: Ray O'Brien 581-4358
Technology: Gerald Rockwell 583-5376
Training: Paul Honeywell 546-8009
Bernie Mellor 546-2238
Website: Peter Sporleder 546-0588
All phone numbers area code (530) unless otherwise noted.

Seven Gables and V Lake.
Photograph by Randall Osterhuber

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