Next month starts the 30th year of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, a landmark that’s not only significant but one to be proud of too. The Team has come a long way in three decades both in terms of organization and skill level. This has translated into faster and safer backcountry search and rescues, which has always been—and will continue to be—the primary mandate of the Team. Please show your support for Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team’s past and future by attending the next Team meeting, Monday night, October 3, 6:00 pm at the Granlibakken Resort’s Ski Hut.

As is tradition for the first meeting of the season, dinner and libations will be served. Nordic Team President Russ Viehmann informs me that we’ll enjoy ourselves around a bonfire, so please bring warm clothes and, if you’d rather not park yourself in one of the Ski Hut’s safety-orange plastic chairs, a sit-upon of your choice. Russ will do his best to take control of the raucous crowd, and then lead us in a discussion of current Team searches, rescues, and goings on. We’ll also be preparing and scheduling for the upcoming Winter 2006 ski season—training and educational projects will be announced. So, sounds like an evening, eh? If you think you might have something better to do that night, like watching Monday night football (heaven forbid), here’s what you do: Put on your safety goggles, back up five feet from your TV, and with a full wind-up, hit a framing hammer directly into the shirtyacket screen. Brush the glass off your hush puppies and make your way to Granlibakken. See you there!

'76-'05 Wrap-Up

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team conducted 10 search and rescues last winter for 25 different individuals. Three of these responses were for people who had died (an avalanche victim, a pilot of a crashed plane, and a skier who hit a tree), an unusually high number of fatalities for a single season. The Team’s credit, we’ve never had a patient die while under our care. Of the 359 search subjects, one (0.3 percent) has never been found. (A skier thought to have been lost from Squaw Valley in 1982 remains missing to this day.) These are gloomy statistics gleaned from gloomy events, but they’re certainly not representative of the exciting work the Team does, or its fun, positive energy. Due in great part, I believe, to our training, readiness, and quick response, the majority of our rescues end on a very happy note.

When the rescues are happy, the rescuers are happy. One thing that keeps everybody on both sides of a rescue smiling is talent. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is always seeking talented dispatchers, fundraisers, educators, snow machine operators, backcountry skiers, or anyone who is eager to develop their skills in these areas (and more!). There is a place on the Nordic Team for everyone.

Team veterans and freshman both will tell you that no two searches are alike, so it must be true. To date, the Team has responded to at least 201 different searches/rescues. You’re wondering… besides camaraderie, adventure, fun, and fitness, are Team searchers compensated for their work? You betcha. The pay scale’s been standardized across the ranks into what we refer to in the rescue business as PMATFEBYE (Pretty Much All The Frozen Energy Bars You Can Eat). So, the people are capable, the action is first-rate, the pay is great. What are you waiting for? Please join Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team today.

Honored

At the May 2005 Nordic Team meeting, the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Board of Directors bestowed the honor of Team Member of the Year 2005 on Jim Coffey, the leader of the Team’s Education Committee. Jim took over the Education Committee a couple years ago.
ago and infused it with a high level of organization. Now, our local school kids have
an engineer on their side, directing them on how
to build emergency shelters, what to stuff in
their pockets on winter days, and what to do if
lost. Jim’s also been key in managing the
Team’s truck and keeping The Great Ski Race
running smoothly. Congratulations, Jim, and
thank you!

Team Training

One of the easiest ways to become
involved with Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue
Team is to participate in Team training
programs. Throughout the autumn and winter
the Team averages about one training per week.
They’re fun, informative, and often challenging.
If you haven’t done so already, please complete
an application for a Civil Defense card (issued
by the California Office of Emergency Service
(OES)) before attending a Team-sanctioned
training. Details on this will be available at the
Team meeting October 3.

The following are upcoming highlights.
These autumn hikes will focus primarily on
terrain familiarization, though undoubtedly
some backcountry skills training will be
addressed along the way too. Each training
organizer will smother you with praise if you
call beforehand, show up with the appropriate
clothing and equipment—and arrive on time.

The Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue
Team garage is located at 223 Fairway Drive in
Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station.

October 6: Bernie Mellor (546-2238) will
lead an orientation and straightening up of the
Team’s rescue equipment. This is a great time
to learn or re-learn where everything is stored
on the Team truck and to help whip the equip
back into shape. Meet at the Team garage at
7:00 PM.

October 8: Mike Kennett (581-2101) will
lead a hike down Powderhorn Creek and onto
the Five Lakes Creek trail, the scene of many a
rescue. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM.

October 16: Karen Honeywell (546-8609)
leads a hike up the east shore’s Snow Valley
Peak today. Meet at the garage at 7:30 AM or
North Tahoe Beach (across the street from the
Kings Beach Safeway) at 7:45.

October 22: Another hike, this time up Mt.
Rose. Sue Duerksen (587-7289) is the contact.
Meet at the garage at 7:30 AM or North Tahoe
Beach at 7:45.

October 30: Polly McGhee (583-7291) is
organizing this hike from Donner Summit to
Squaw Valley along the Pacific crest. Meet at
the garage at 7:30 AM or the top of Donner Pass
Road at 8:15.

Best,

—Randall Osterhuber

Team Officers

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Vice President
Brian York 583-0465
Treasurer
Scott Schreepfer 546-2809
Secretary
Sue Duerksen 412-3816
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Committee Chairs

Cuisine
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Education
Jim Coffey 583-1276
Equipment
Brian York 583-0465
Great Ski Race™
Doug Read 583-6381
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Newsletter
Randall Osterhuber 546-4491
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Scoops Rennich 583-1684
Snowmobiles
Ray O’Brien 581-4358
Technology
Gerald Rockwell 583-5376
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All phone numbers are area code (530) unless otherwise
noted.