



SnowLine

The Official Newsletter of the
TAHOE NORDIC SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM, INC.
 Lake Tahoe • Truckee • Donner Summit

Winter 2007 commences Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team's 31st season, and the future of the Team looks bright indeed. To date, the

Nordic Team has conducted at least 210 search and rescue operations resulting in the recovery of 376 individuals (some information from the Team's early years is sketchy; these numbers are minimums). Today, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team is a highly trained, competent, and skillful mountain rescue team with vast and varied resources—and a lot of experience. Please come join this group and support mountain adventure, mountain safety, and *your* community. The first Team meeting of the season is Monday night, **October 2, 6:00 PM** at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut. The Team will provide dinner, drinks, and cutting edge (if not, quirky) entertainment. There's a place for everyone here, especially *you*!

Accolades

Team member Steve Twomey was honored at the May 2006 Nordic Team meeting with the Team's highest citation: the *Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team Member of the Year*.

If you've followed any of the Nordic Team's exploits over the past decade, you've no doubt followed the actions of Steve. From Team member to Board member to Team President—all the while spearheading Team trainings, searches, and The Great Ski Race—Steve's accomplishments have pushed the Nordic Team into the 21st century and saved many lives. Congratulations and thanks, Steve!

Late Spring Search

On June 10, 2006, a husband and wife team visiting the Tahoe Basin made a plan to do

separate trail runs, meet each other in the middle of their routes—at the summit of Twin Peaks—then continue on to each other's car. The wife left her car at 64 acres; the husband was to leave his on top of Barker Pass. Neither ever made it to Twin Peaks. By late afternoon, the woman,

flagged down and been ferried across the lake by a fisherman. Hell Hole Reservoir is below where Five Lakes Creek runs into the Rubicon River (both flowing full throttle) and reaching it involves one rough route from the Barker Pass area. The lower you get back there, the more difficult the terrain.

There are no established trails, but there are oceans of brush and lots of steep, cliff-pestered topography. I assume the search subject's T-shirt and running shorts provided the minimum of body armor for this two-day trek.

This was the Nordic Team's ninth and final search of the 2005/2006 season.



*Norm Wilson is tossed explosives during cornice control at Alpine Meadows, February 1984.
 Photograph by Randall Osterhuber*

who had descended to her husband's car in Blackwood Canyon (the closed gate and snow kept him from driving to Barker Pass), reported her husband missing and a search was initiated.

At least 20 searchers from Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team responded along with personnel from the Placer County Sheriff's Department, Eldorado Search and Rescue, Fallon Naval Air Station, and the CHP. While many areas of the Sierra crest were free of snow, north-facing terrain was still 100 percent snow covered. The air and ground search continued into the early morning hours of June 11 with no conclusive leads.

At noon, the search command post received a call notifying that the search subject had reached Hell Hole Reservoir. He had

tenure with the Squaw Valley ski patrol in 1957. He, along with Monty Atwater and several others, were in charge of avalanche control during the 1960 Winter Olympic Games in Squaw. With that event, they ushered in the modern use of explosives and military artillery for avalanche control in the Tahoe Sierra. Norm went on to be ski patrol director and then mountain manager of the new Alpine Meadows ski area. Norm spent the last 30 years of his career as a snow and avalanche consultant and educator, working extensively throughout North and South America, Europe, and Alaska. Norm spent decades teaching backcountry avalanche safety courses in many mountain ranges of the West, and was a mentor to many local skiers, including myself. Even as late as the early 1980s, if you took an avalanche safety course in

Milestone

On June 28 of this year, longtime Tahoe/Truckee/Donner Summit resident Norm Wilson died of ALS. He was 76.

Norm was a pioneer of snow avalanche research, control, and safety, starting his local

Next General Meeting is Monday, October 2, 2006, 6:00 pm at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

the western United States, you probably took it from one of three guys. Norm was one of them. Norm was extremely generous and openhanded with his comprehensive knowledge of in-bounds snow safety and backcountry snow conditions, offering up advice to me and many other members of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team during and after our diciest operations. Norm was one of only a handful of individuals whose snow safety careers spanned the era from leather alpine ski boots to the modern day. To those of you who didn't know Norm, you drive and ride by his old house every time you ascend Donner Pass. Norm and his (then) wife Betsy built the stone house halfway up the east side of the pass, still the only house on the grade.

Norm is survived by his two daughters who live locally, and hundreds of friends and colleagues worldwide.

Trainings

Team Training Committee chairs Mike Kennett (581-2101) and Bernie Mellor (546-2238) urge you to participate in organized Nordic Team trainings. If you're new to the Team it's a great way to get oriented and involved. If you're a Team veteran, it's a great time to hone your considerable skills. If you're somewhere in between, the Team trainings are a terrific way to build your backcountry skill set. Mike and Bernie also remind you to sign up for an OES card (call those guys for details) before attending any Team training exercise. It's the only "bureaucratic" requirement of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, and a pretty easy one to take care of. Also, please let the specific training organizer know you plan on attending. RSVPing is not only a good idea, it will earn you some serious Miss Manners points.

As always this time of year, our backcountry trainings could turn from a hike to a ski overnight. Be as hip to the weather as you are to those bell-bottom jeans of yours.

Here's the up and coming...

October 1: Bernie Mellor (546-2238) will lead a hike/exploration in the Mt. Rose environs. Meet at the Team garage (223 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, behind the Chevron station) at 8:15 AM, or at North Tahoe Beach (across from the Kings Beach Safeway) at 8:30, or somewhere (?) up on the Mt. Rose Highway at 9:00.

October 5: Dirk Schoonmaker (583-2929) will orient all who care to the Team's garage, truck, and equipment. This will be both a great time to figure out what is where, and to take inventory of the gear that needs-a-whippin' into shape for the winter season. Meet at the Team garage at 6:30 PM.



October 14: Mikey Kennett (581-2101) will lead a trek up toward/to/around the east shore's Snow Valley Peak. Meet at the Team garage at 8:15 AM, or North Tahoe Beach at 8:30.

October 22: A hike from the Powderhorn Creek watershed to Five Lakes Basin via Diamond Crossing, Whiskey Creek, etc. Jim Rienstra's (546-7188) the contact for this one. Meet at the Team garage at 8:00 AM.

October 28: A hike along the Sierra crest from Donner Summit to Squaw Valley. Gerald Rockwell (583-5376) will be leading. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or the top of Donner Pass Road at 8:15.

November 4 and 5: The Team is hiring wilderness first responder instructors from Crested Butte Outdoor for a private first aid class. Certificates will be issued to all who

complete the course. There's room for 20. To reserve your spot, send a check for \$200 (fully refundable to you when you complete the course), made out to TNSAR, to Mike Kennett at PO Box 922, Tahoe City 96145. Mikey's cell phone is 386-4202. The class will be held at the Squaw Valley fire station. Count on devoting these entire two days to the course. Call Mikey for more beta.

Any last minute changes to the above trainings will be listed on the Nordic Team's website at www.TahoeNordicSAR.com.

Starting to feel good about you,

—Randall Osterhuber

Team Officers

President	Russ Viehmann	525-6978
Vice President	Brian York	583-0465
Treasurer	Scott Schroeffer	546-2809
Secretary	Pam LeFrancois	546-7393
Board Members	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
	Mark Johnson	583-1308
	Mike Kennett	581-2101
	Sarah Lagano	775-745-7037
Directors-at-large	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
	Joe Pace	583-1806
	Doug Read	583-6381
	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376
	Steve Twomey	525-7280

Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroeffer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Jim Coffey	583-1276
Equipment	Brian York	583-0465
Great Ski Race	Doug Read	583-6381
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	546-4491
Snowcats	Scoop Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Technology	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376
Training	Mike Kennett	581-2101
	Bernie Mellor	546-2238
Truck	Peter York	583-0465
Website	Mark Johnson	583-1308
All phone numbers area code (530) unless otherwise noted.		

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.

Post Office Box 7703
Tahoe City, California 96145
(530) 581-4038
www.tahoenordicsar.com
www.thegreatskirace.com

MARK JOHNSON
PO BOX 8258
TAHOE CITY CA 96145

THE TEAM'S
31st SEASON!

please keep us informed of your correct address!