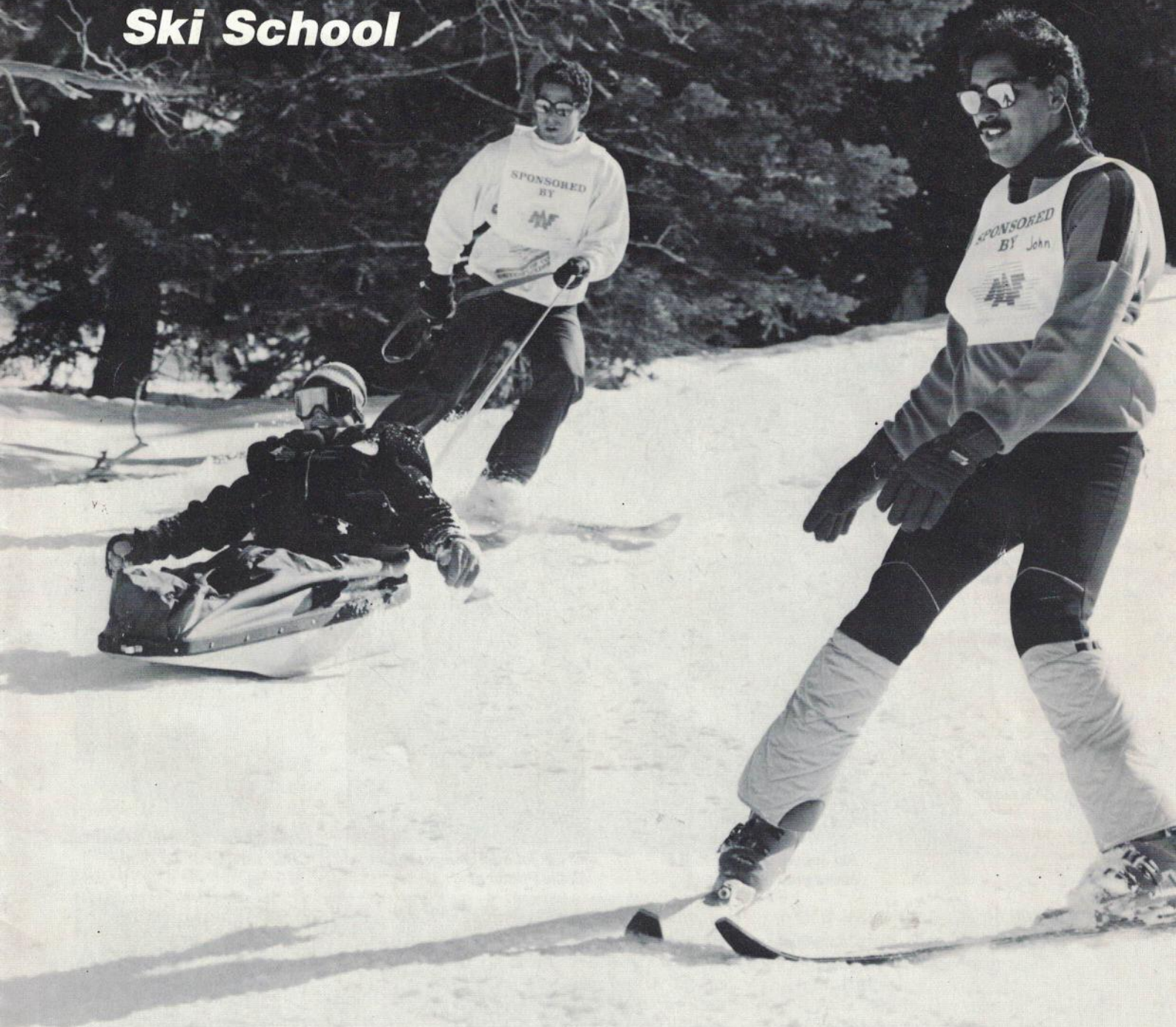


# Starting a Special Ski School



March 17, 1989

# EDISON NEWS





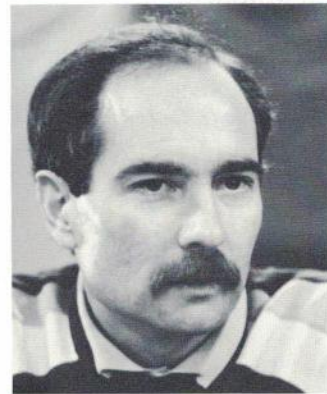
*First, the kids must get the feel of their boots, skis and the snow.*



**Ski school director Kelle Malkewitz**



**CHSF founder and president Sallie Pritchard**



**CHSF trustee David Briery**

*Anxiously awaiting their turn on the sit-ski.*



#### **ON OUR COVER**

SCE's John Alderete clears the trail for handicapped sit-skier and instructor. As a volunteer instructor Alderete underwent four days of intensive training for certification. (Photos by Greg O'Loughlin.)



***"Imagine for a moment a young child who can't walk across a room because of severe physical disabilities. Then imagine that same youngster on a pair of skis after a few lessons. When you see the excitement in a child's face at the completion of a ski run, you know all your work was worth it."***

## **Edison Employees Start Ski School for Handicapped**

**S**kiing is the most adaptable sport for the handicapped, according to Sallie

Pritchard, Law Department legal assistant and president of the California Handicapped Skiers' Foundation.

"Gravity pulls everyone equally down the hill according to their weight. The snow doesn't care who's disabled or not. Teaching amputees, or people with cerebral palsy or spina bifida how to ski gives them a sport in which they can participate with their friends and families for the rest of their lives."

Pritchard formed the foundation in 1983 with the help of recreational skiers from Pasadena's Kronenstadt Ski Club. Today, three other Edison employees are trustees. They are David Briery, Corporate Communications; Don Clary, Law Department, and Herk Rainey, Controller's.

Last year, the foundation ran a four-day learn-to-ski clinic at Goldmine Ski Area (now called Bear Mountain Ski Resort) at Big Bear Lake, Calif. The success of the clinic helped convince the foundation's trustees of the need for a permanent ski school for the handicapped in Southern California. Currently, there are four others in the United States; three in Colorado and one at Alpine Meadows at Lake Tahoe.



*The joy of skiing shines on the faces of both the student and instructor.*

At last year's clinic, a physical education teacher for handicapped children told Pritchard that she would like to bring her disabled students from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to the slopes in 1989. The board of education made skiing for the handicapped part of its academic curriculum for handicapped children.

Since many of the students recently arrived from Latin America, and their families have very limited financial means,

they knew little about snow or mountains. Many had neither seen snow nor been in the mountains.

As a result, the district created "Project Snow" to teach the youngsters about the mountains, snow and, of course, how to ski. But putting Project Snow to work on the ski slopes would be no easy matter. "Somehow we had to get money for equipment, a staff of instructors, lift tickets, in-

*Continued on page 4*





**John Alderete, Transmission/Substation, matches ski length with skier.**



**Briery selects proper boot for skier. The foundation collected clothing, equipment and money from many sources, including Edison's Information Services, which donated \$300.**

## *'The point of no return was near...'*

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surance and who knows what else," says Pritchard.

"Herk Rainey pored over the financial books and said there's no way we can do it," continues Pritchard. "I then said to David Briery, 'Well, you're a writer, get us some grants.' So he applied for one from the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) of Los Angeles, the organization which holds much of the surplus funds from the 1984 Olympics."

"Several weeks later," recalls Briery, "I was home on vacation painting my house when Sallie called. She was screaming and nearly incoherent. 'You didn't ask for enough money! They liked our proposal, but said we need to ask for more money.'"

Adds Pritchard, "We finally determined that we would need \$30,000 for our first year. We also needed insurance, but AAF grants do not provide for insurance. Getting insurance for a handicapped ski school is not like getting car insurance from State Farm. Don Clary spent months negotiating with Lloyds of Lon-

don before we had a policy we could afford.

"The AAF board members were to be asked to approve our grant at their quarterly meeting on December 7. This would just be enough time to hire a ski school director and begin training instructors before operation of the school in February," Pritchard says.

Around Thanksgiving, the foundation was informed that the meeting had been canceled and that the 17 board members would be asked to vote on the proposal by proxy. The vote had to be unanimous among such well-known figures as Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, film producer David Wolper and baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth, who understandably had higher personal priorities than to respond immediately to the proxy.

As the days went by without a decision, the situation became desperate. If the school were

going to operate in February, a director had to be hired and instructors trained. The point of no return was near, and yet there was no assurance of funding.

"Finally, we asked the AAF if they couldn't phone their trustees," said Pritchard. "At first there were 10 yeses and 7 not heard from. Every couple of days we would hear that one more member had phoned in his vote. On December 22 when I left for a Christmas holiday in Innsbruck, there were only two votes outstanding. When I was about to board my plane, I heard that Tom Bradley had given his approval. That left Peter Ueberroth who was in New York.

She could barely stand the suspense. "On Christmas Eve in Innsbruck," Pritchard continued, "I was having dinner with nearly 300 people in my hotel's dining room when the deskman delivered a handwritten note that said, 'David Briery called to say the grant is approved.'"

"I jumped up and down, turned to people behind me — perfect strangers — hugging them and exclaiming, 'Do you know what this means? This is so exciting! I ran off across the street to Christmas Eve Mass, and when I returned the "perfect strangers" had ordered champagne in ice buckets to toast the grant on Christmas morn."

### **TV Salute**

Sallie Pritchard and the California Handicapped Ski School will be honored by KNBC, Channel 4 on a "Spirit of Southern California" segment airing Saturday, March 18 at 5:29 p.m. and Sunday, March 19 at 5:29 p.m.



**Many of the children are deaf and present special balance challenges because of inner-ear problems.**