

# Avalanche's Killer Path

The avalanche began atop Beaver Bowl and roared three quarters of a mile to the lodge

## San Francisco Chronicle

The Largest Daily Circulation in Northern California

118th Year No. 65

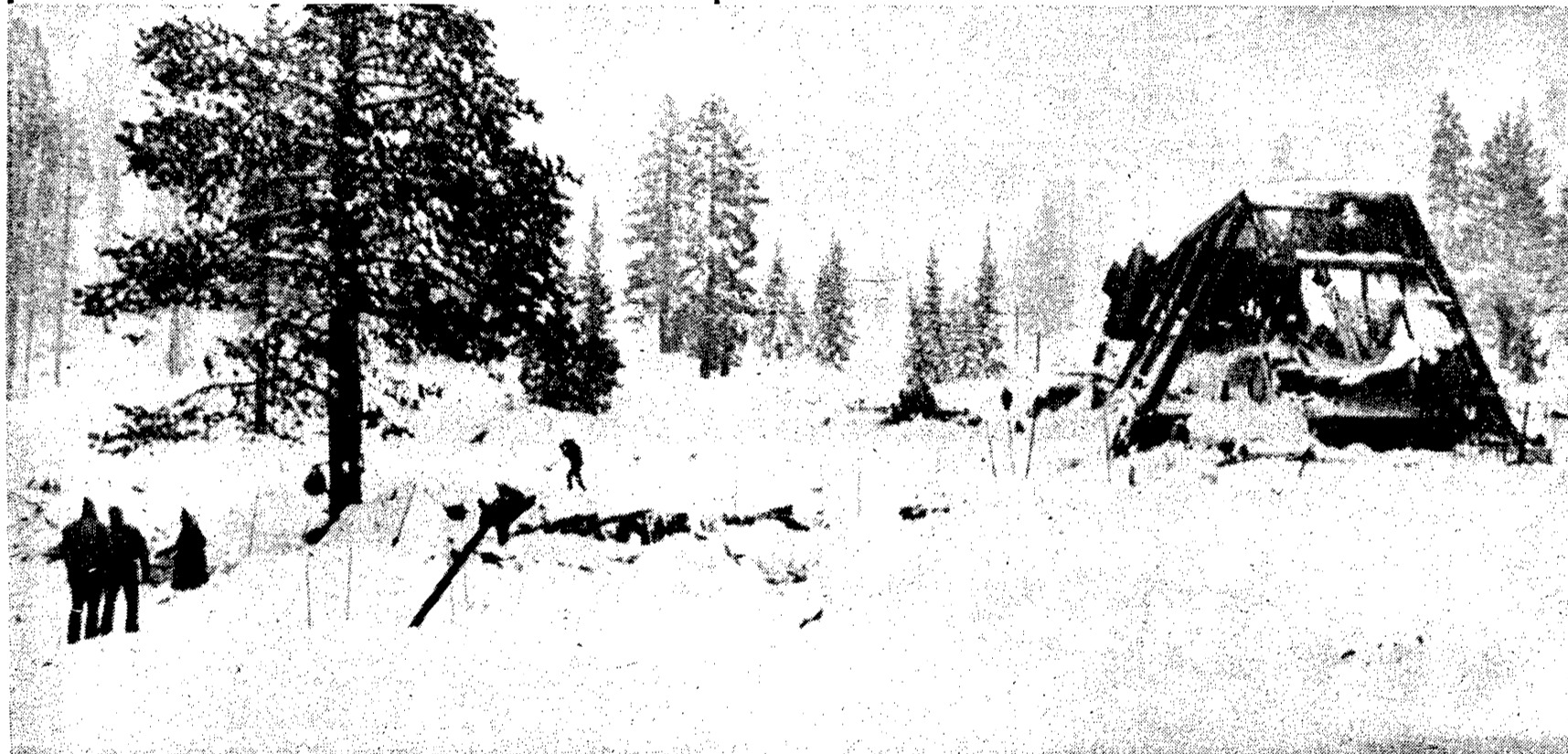
★★★★

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1982

777-1111 20 CENTS

### 'They Just Heard a Roar'

## Three More Bodies Found at Ski Resort



Rescuers searched through the snowy rubble that once was a ski patrol hut next to the tree at left; a chairlift wheelhouse (right) survived, but was battered

By Gary Fong

### At Least 2 Others Missing

By Steve Wiegand  
Chronicle Correspondent

Alpine Meadows  
Placer County

Searchers at this Sierra ski resort found three more bodies yesterday in the wake of a thundering avalanche on Wednesday, bringing the death toll to at least six.

Authorities identified the three dead as Beth Morrow, 22, an employee of the resort; Lauri Nelson, an 11-year-old girl whose father, Dr. Leroy Nelson, was found buried in the slide yesterday; and Frank Yatesman, a Ben Lomond resident who was reportedly a friend of one of the employees at the resort.

Search teams probing the slide speculated there may be more victims buried in the snow who have not been reported missing.

A team of 70 searchers, using sophisticated probes and dogs, found two of the bodies buried 25 feet down yesterday and the third 11 feet deep near the three-story wooden lodge.

Although the search pressed on late into the bitter cold night, authorities stressed that the chance any of the missing will be found alive was extremely small.

"It's very, very remote. I'm sorry," said Werner Schuster, an Alpine Meadows resort official, when asked if anyone could survive very long beneath the snow.

Searchers did find a German shepherd dog yesterday buried but still alive in the debris of the lodge. Sheriff's deputies reported the dog was dehydrated, but otherwise in good condition.

Witnesses who saw the tons of moving snow that collapsed a two-story A-frame ski patrol structure near the lodge and crushed a lodge wall spoke with awe of the force of the avalanche.

"The snow was at least 30 feet deep."  
Back Page Col. 1

## Social Security Report Warns of New Trouble

Washington

The trustees of the Social Security system warned yesterday that without a tax increase or cuts in benefits, the old-age and disability funds will start running out of money late next year, and the Medicare trust fund will go broke between 1986 and 1991.

The trustees also said this year's cost-of-living increase in benefits would be 7.6 percent, payable starting July 3, if Congress makes no change in the law now in effect. That level is 0.5 percent lower than the administration had forecast.

In their annual report, the trustees — the secretaries of treasury, labor and health and human services — said the short-run outlook for the Social Security funds had deteriorated even from last year's worrisome level "because of continuing unfavorable economic conditions."

Inflation drives up Social Security's costs, because benefits rise automatically with prices. Recession pinches the system's revenues, because there are less wages to tax as unemployment rises.

Taken together over the next 75 years, the trustees estimated, the old-age and disability funds will have a deficit of 1.82 percent of covered wages.

What this means is that the two funds combined would have sufficient money only to pay all benefits — under current methods of calculation and the most likely long-term economic and demographic trends — if the Social Security tax rates now scheduled were increased by

Back Page Col. 5

## Slain Killer's Wife Wants S.F. to Pay

By William Carlson

The wife of Ricardo Contawe, who was shot dead by police after he gunned down 10 people in a bloody rampage through a San Francisco office highrise, has charged police with the "wrongful death" of her husband, and demands \$1 million from the city.

Erlinda Contawe, who was severely injured by her jealous husband's gunshots, filed two claims: one for his death, and one charging police with failure to protect her.

Her husband killed two people and injured eight during his 20-minute shotgun assault on the 17th and 18th floors of One Market Plaza January 28.

The rampage started at about 3:45 p.m. when Contawe arrived at

Back Page Col. 1



Rescue workers pulled the body of Lauri Nelson, 11, out of snow in the ski resort's parking lot

Copyright 1982 by Dick Gilmore, Sacramento Bee via AP Wirephoto

## Alpine Meadows Tragedy

### Friends Talk About Victims

By Katy Butler

At 3 p.m. Wednesday, less than an hour before the mountain came down, Jeffrey James (Jake) Smith, 27, a strapping, bearded member of the ski trail crew, met his older brother, Denny, in the Alpine Meadows A-frame ski patrol cabin.

Denny, 28, the resort's superin-

tendent of ski-lift maintenance, was worried about the storm and was leaving early.

"I asked him if he wanted to come home," Denny remembered yesterday, through his tears. "He told me he'd been directed by his boss, Bernie Kingery, who's missing, to go be an avalanche road guard. They had an idea it was going to come down."

The younger brother mounted a snowmobile and headed for Alpine Village Road to warn walkers and skiers to stay out of the danger zone. His older brother started home.

"I heard it on radio about 4 o'clock," Denny recalled. "I turned around and joined up with the

Page 4 Col. 1

## Index

Books .....	61
Bridge .....	30
Business World .....	33
Chess .....	31
Comics .....	39
Deaths .....	42
Entertainment .....	62
People .....	28
TV-Radio .....	60
Weather .....	26

© Chronicle Publishing Co. 1982

Top of the News on Page 16  
Your Name Game, Page 46