

Boy Scout Troop stuck in snow

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By Rick Pohlers

Real early Sunday morning, I was awakened with an invitation to go hiking. 'You gotta be kidding, I said, 'It's pouring out. What nerd got himself hung out in this weather?'

A whole group of Boy Scouts stuck in the snow near Cornell Peak was the story. It's tough to leave a nice warm bed so early in the morning to expose oneself to such a cold, nasty, 'hike'. 'Who's in charge of this outfit anyway?' I grumbled as I drove off to the tram to meet the other grumpy, bleary eyed fellow rescuers.

The little troopies had started out in the marginal weather Thursday, which got worse. By Saturday morning they were up to their little eyeballs in nice, soft, fluffy, white snow for which they were woefully unprepared. In addition, on Saturday afternoon they had strayed from the beaten path and were somewhat lost in white, fuzzy world of swirling snowflakes, (the flakes were not alone).

Realizing they would soon be over their heads, two leaders stumbled off into the flurry and eventually got to the ranger station in Long Valley. With news of their dire plight, ranger Rick Brown and a fellow ranger set off with stoves and tents to lead this little forelorned group out to warmth and safety. However upon somehow finding the group they found that it would take more than two guys to get a cold, hungry, whimpering bunch of troopies going. Since it was getting dark they decided to keep them all from turning into popsicles in the night, and call for reinforcements in the morning. And that's where we come in.

We got most of this story at the Long Valley ranger station, which was in radio contact with ranger Rick. He needed snowshoes and help to get these guys on the road again. The ranger people rounded up the shoes for us, and off we went. Pete Carlson and Bernie McIlvoy lead since this was in the area that they frequently ski. Others included Walt Walker, Randy Iwasiuk, Joe Erickson, Kevin Walker, Larry Roland and yours truly. This was our first Winter rescue and it was snowing nicely. We were all pleased to be out in the snow, and not in the rain as we had feared. It did not take long to reach the group as they were fairly close, but there was some searching and navigating in the weather. Some folks get confused with map and compass stuff, but we eventually found them despite their confusion.

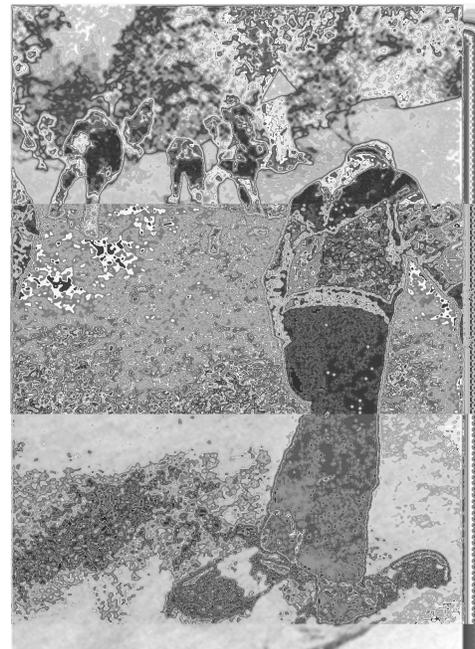


Kevin Walker

PREPARED FOR WHAT? - It seems that this bunch of troopies just weren't prepared for what Mother Nature had to offer. A few RMRU members can be seen trying to get the group organized for their trip out to the tram.

The camp was a disaster area with packs, tents, boots, pants and pathetic shivering scouts scattered everywhere. They were supposed to be packed and ready to go by the time we got there, but such was not the case. Some 'you know what's' needed to be kicked to motivate these little munchkins out of their cold stupor, and that's what we did. Walt, 'Mr. Bad' (now that he has a beard again), assigned us to pack gear, strap on snowshoes and start herding scouts up a small hill above their dismal camp. Bernie was surprisingly affective in motivating scouts, and we were soon ready to go, sort of. In my long experience with scouts, I found that there is bound to be some whiners and criers in every troop, and this was no exception. We herded the group off downhill but didn't get more than ten feet before we had a breakdown. Oh boy, this is going to be a long hike out. Since this was their first time out on snowshoes we expected to go slow, but flopping down every ten feet was ridiculous.

While the rest of the mob trooped on, some of us hung back to shepherd the wimpy ones. Pete was very patient and encouraging, but eventually gave up



Kevin Walker

MUSH YOU TROOPIES - RMRU member Bernie McIlvoy (arrow points to), helps to motivate the cold Boy Scouts up the hill away from where they had spent a cold night.

and went on ahead carrying the kids pack. I found a sharp stick, and the little bugger' started to move out, while Walt, Joe and Kevin half dragged one down the hill.

We eventually got them to the tram, which graciously provided hot cocoa and donuts for all. We left them at the bottom tram station to sort out their soaked equipment. But they were lucky, they were still alive, with no frostbite. In years past we have gone after ill-prepared scout groups, and found both. I wish scout leaders would take the scout motto seriously, we do.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.