

The 661 BUGLE

News and Lifestyles of Scouts, Scouters and Friends of Troop 661

This issues theme:
"Brave"
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Scouts and Scouters face devastating conditions - Survive annual "Survivor Scout" adventure



BRAVE SCOUTS DIG OUT AFTER A LONG COLD NIGHT OF HEAVY SNOWFALL

WATCH FOR THESE
IN FUTURE EDITIONS:
Our newest Eagles
Mountains to the Sea
bike ride
Dutch Oven delights
Photo Contest



The Survivor Patch: was it worth it?

Did you attend the Survivor Campout? Tell "The Bugle" in your own words about your trip. Our readers want to know about how you stayed warm (or didn't), what you ate, where you went, and most importantly, was it worth it? Send your stories to Mr. Smith

Survivor Scout 2010 - Mt. Pinos in the Depths of Winter

Story and photos by David Berschauer
On the scene reporter

"It was a dark and windy night" and the snow fell relentlessly almost to spite the mysterious 'land of the whispering secrets.' Twenty or so brave Scouts slept warm in their shelters, painstakingly constructed out of ice and snow, oblivious to the storm that raged just outside their ramshackle shelters. When they awoke the next morning the snow was still falling, in near white out conditions they packed their gear as it was Sunday and time to head out.

Troop 661's second "Survivor Scout" camp out was an awesome adventure not soon to be forgotten. The boys got to use their wilderness survival skills in a real world setting, something of a cross between television's "Survivor Man" and "MacGyver". The goal of course was to simply have a good time. The method was to have the Scouts break up into small high functioning Patrols and plan a course of action for survival in cold weather conditions. They knew in advance that each Patrol would get an identical box of unknown group gear, and that they had a very short list of special survival items that they could choose to bring. Everything else remained a mystery until they arrived. There were unique Patrol names, flags, t-shirts, and Patrol Spirit abounded.



STAYING WARM BY THE FIRE BEFORE THE NIGHT SNOWFALL



AN "IWO JIMA" MOMENT - SCOUTS POST AND SECURE THE FLAG OF OUR NATION

The boys elected "JB" as their SPL for the outing, and conducted an awe inspiring flag ceremony in the snow on Saturday morning before breakfast. Thereafter the boys proceeded in earnest to build and fortify their shelters for the upcoming night. That night two brand new Scouts, Jake Park and Jason Mendenhall, truly earned their Troop Neckerchiefs when they spent their first night camping with Troop 661 on this outing. Patrol competitions were planned in advance, but like all plans reality often gets in the way. Due to the advancing storm front the Snow Orienting course and the Peak Hike were cancelled, as every good Scouter knows that discretion is the better part of valor. Instead the Shelter Building Competition was given two categories for prizes - "coolest" (no pun intended) shelter (the "Viking Gods of Metal" Patrol), and most environmentally friendly shelter (the "Duct Tape" Patrol). The "BSA Iron Chef" competition this year included rabbit as the mystery meat. As usual the boys from Troop 661 put the "BAM!" into their work, cooking stuffed rabbit, fried rabbit, and rabbit stew. Needless to say no one went hungry. The senior most Scouts (the "Wolf Pack" Patrol) out of good sportsmanship voluntarily decided to withdraw from these competitions and allow the younger Scouts and their Patrols to compete for the prizes on a fairer playing field.

Sunday morning we all awoke to find that the storm had dropped more than 14 inches of snow on top of everything, and the snow continued to fall heavily producing low visibility beyond fifteen to twenty feet. JB's leadership and experience rallied the Scouts to pull their gear together and get the coldest and most tired Scouts across the snow field to the Nordic Ski Patrol Hut to warm up and rest - hot cocoa provided free of charge. The rest of the Scouts and Scouters, with much appreciated assistance from the volunteers of the Mt. Pinos Nordic Ski Patrol dragged, carried, and slogged the rest of the equipment across the approximately quarter mile distance to the Troop trailer.

During this awesome adventure a number of Scouts stood out for their acts of kindness, bravery, and helpfulness: Alex Mendenhall (bravery), John Letona and Donovan Decair (kindness and helpfulness), TJ Crockett (bravery, Jake Park (cheerfulness and helpfulness), and senior Scouts Kai Harris and "JB" Jonathon Berschauer (on multiple points). The "Yeti Patrol" consisting of the crazy old Scouters had a most excellent time enjoying their coffee, and laying around camp doing as much of nothing as they could while watching the boys work and play hard in the snow. This was truly Scouting in action!



SCOUTS AND SCOUTERS MUSTER FOR THE MORNING FLAG CEREMONY



THE AWESOME POWER AND BEAUTY OF NATURE ARE REFLECTED IN THIS PHOTO OF THE AMERICAN AND TROOP FLAGS STANDING PROUD IN SPITE OF THE BRUTAL CONDITIONS