

# Skiing is Believing

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A fun article I wrote back in 1994 about a ski trip experience that took place. Group magazine published it in their "Strange But True" section.

## SKIING IS BELIEVING

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BY JOHN LEHMBERG

A seasoned veteran of youth retreats and an avid snow skier, I set out with my senior high group for a five-hour drive to our annual ski weekend in West Virginia. We were excited, but I felt a little edgy as we left because it had begun to snow-anything could happen.

And it did. At our first pit stop, the van I'd begged to borrow from a parent and had promised to return unscathed was hit by one of my youth worker's cars. Fortunately, the damage was minor (several hundred dollars' worth).

We continued on our way, and as it approached midnight, we had one last hill to climb-Mt. Storm. I found that this "hill" was aptly named, as those last 10 miles took us approximately one and a half hours to climb. In blizzard whiteout conditions, I'd lost sight of the other two cars in our caravan. Fortunately, I was in communication with the last car via an old CB radio, so I called back, "Where are you guys?"

No reply.

"Kevin, are you there?"

No reply.

"Kevin!!!"

Finally a reply: "We're here...the other van is stuck in a drift... they can't get out...I'm trying to push them with my car."

Ugh. Kevin's car was brand new. So was mine.

We all finally arrived, exhausted and ready for a good night's sleep. But there was just one small problem-the room they gave our girls was occupied by a group of junior high boys! I returned the key and was given another, but now the girls were sharing a room with a group of Boy Scouts!

I returned the key again and finally got this reply: "There's no place else for them to stay."

I felt like Joseph at the inn in Bethlehem. The girls all slept with one eye open.

Everything always looks better in the morning, right? Wrong! As I returned to my car for my skis, I noticed pieces of red plastic on the ground-my car's taillight!

A woman came up to me and said, "I saw this four-wheel-drive come through, slide across the lot, and hit your car."

"What color was it, or what kind of four-wheel-drive was it?" I asked.

"Oh, well, I don't remember...it had a West Virginia license plate."

That narrowed it right down, since we were in West Virginia. All I had to do was look for a four-wheel-drive, of some color, of some make, with red paint on it, taillight shards in its bumper, and a West Virginia license plate. I was not a happy camper.

I figured the best I could do was pray for patience and take out some of my aggravation on a couple of black-diamond hills. I was about to step into my binding when out of the corner of my eye I noticed the ski patrol carrying someone down on one of their stretcher-type sleds. I glanced at the girl's face as she went by...SHE WAS ONE OF MY KIDS! She had a twisted knee but would be fine.

That night, a meeting room was supposed to be available to us, but as an "oversight" the lodge double booked it, so we had to meet in the ski rental shop. It was tough to talk about a personal relationship with Christ over the noise of skis being returned. It was tough to talk about anything.

Our weekend-long (or was it 20-year-long?) adventure was now over. It was a memorable trip despite the mishaps...or maybe because of them. Every year, the same ski resort calls and asks if they can send me information about their place. I tell them no every time! I've learned my lesson.

John Lehmborg is a youth pastor in Maryland.