

## Snowbound In Santa Ritas Without Food Or Shelter

# Big Drifts Maroon Three Tucson Boy Scouts

Three lightly-clad Boy Scouts were marooned—without food or shelter—in heavy snows and below-freezing temperatures last night near the 8,000 foot level of the Santa Rita Mountains.

Three companions — one without shoes — stumbled through three-foot drifts over snow-obiterated trails to the safety of a Madera Canyon lodge yesterday. A ham radio operator brought their plight to the attention of the world.

A sheriff's office rescue team was unable to fight its way through the heavy drifts to the lodge. Another team started out early this morning.

Here's the story the youths who stumbled to safety told—relayed

to Tucson by radio:

The boys all members of Scout Troop No. 70 were taken to Madera Canyon Saturday for an outing and overnight camp. The three lost boys started climbing for the top Saturday afternoon, the other three remained near their base camp.

The missing boys are reported to be Mike Early, 16, of 138 E. 14th St., David Greenberg, 12, of 511 S. Russell Ave., and Michael La Noue, of 733 S. Railroad Ave.

The boys who got back to the lodge—reported to be warm, dry and in good condition late last night—are Ralph Coltrin, 14, of 333 S. 3rd Ave., Louis Burgess, 17,

of 545 S. 4th Ave., and Ronny Sepulveda, 13, of 419 S. Stone Ave.

The Sepulveda youth was found outside the Santa Rita Lodge early yesterday, barefoot and incoherent. He apparently "walked out" of his shoes in the heavy drift. His feet were frostbitten but otherwise he was unharmed.

John Early, father of missing Mike, who took the boys to the canyon Saturday became alarmed at the worsening weather and early Sunday returned to the lodge to look for his son and the other scouts. He got through before the drifts set in.

He was reported to have found the Coltrin and Burgess youths

and helped them to the safety of the lodge.

A ham radio operator, who lives in the canyon, broadcast the first news of the boys' plight on a short wave radio.

His emergency message—sent on two radios—was heard first by a Tucson amateur and then by ham radio operators throughout the U.S. They, in turn, called local authorities by radio and long distance phone calls. However, rescue operations had already started.

The troop's scoutmaster, Steve Zene, of 821 N. Longfellow Ave., said the boys contacted him Saturday about plans to camp overnight

in the mountains. Zene said he cautioned them and refused to sanction the trip.

Apparent hero of the episode was Val Hanson, whose radio messages were heard by scores of ham radio men.

Hanson went on foot from his cabin to the lodge a mile away to send the messages. He operates two sets; one in his cabin and the other—a portable unit—in his car, parked at the lodge.

His first broadcast from the cabin set was heard at 11 a.m. by Orville Bair, of 1250 W. Rogers Rd. He called Dale Adams, of 931 Eli Dr., who put into operation the "Catalina Emergency Net" an

alert system for members of the Catalina Radio Club.

Hanson's next broadcast was from the car portable unit and was the call apparently monitored by radio operators in Des Moines, Iowa; Kansas City, Kan.; Omaha, Neb.; Memphis, Tenn., and Ironwood, Mich.

Sheriff's Sgt. Frank Wootan and Range Deputies Guy Hill and John Walker with Game Warden Levi Packard bucked the drifts on foot until darkness closed in.

The men used in succession a truck equipped with chains, a road grader, and a four-wheel jeep but failed to negotiate the narrow, icy road.