

Rescuers Fear For Lives Of 3 Lost Scouts

Massive Search Launched In Santa Rita For Trio Missing Since Saturday Night

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all members of his troop, not to make the hike at this time of the year. They went anyway, however. They were driven to the end of the Madras Canyon Rd. early Saturday by Mike Early's father. He was to return Sunday morning to take the boys back to Tucson for a birthday party.

His son had his 16th birthday Sunday while David Greenberg was 15 Saturday. The boys were to celebrate a double birthday party with ice cream and cake at the Early home Sunday afternoon.

When Early appeared at the head of the canyon Sunday he found only three tents—and they were in trouble. They were Ralph Collins, Jr., 12, Louis Burgen, 11, and Homer Lepuluck, 11.

Snow starting at midnight, had blizzarded their carrying site and caused one boy to lose his shoe. Another boy had already started for help when he encountered Early.

They said they had turned back Saturday afternoon just short of the top of Mt. Baldy. The others decided to press on in the face of deteriorating weather in order to reach to cabin.

Early searched the remaining Scouts in the Santa Rita Lodge and spread the alarm. But by this time the heavy snow had closed

the Madras Canyon Rd. and trapped them also.

Fortunately a ham radio operator, Val Hanson, lived a mile from the lodge. He broadcast the first alert from a radio in his cabin. The message was heard in Tucson at 11 a.m. Sunday by Orville Barr, chief of W. Rogers Rd.

He called Dale Adams, of 811 Hill 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 a portable radio in his car. That call, whether through a telephone frequency or an atmospheric condition, was heard by ham radio operators throughout the U. S.

He, in turn, called local authorities by radio and sent distance glass calls.

Sherriff's deputies made the first attempt Sunday afternoon to reach the lodge. The road is successful, a pickup truck equipped with chains, a four-wheel drive with chains, and a road grader.

All became stuck on the narrow, icy road. Despite attempts to work within four miles of the lodge before being turned back, deputies managed to take in early Saturday and the road was opened about 10 a.m. Help quickly arrived.

Del Gilson, of 2222 Parkway motor sergeant at D-M, and vice president of the club, broke trail with their skis for Sheriff's Sgt. B. C. Hickey, Deputy Bill Thomas and volunteers, John McGeer, and Don Lindon, who were on snow shoes.

The group traveled upward through 2-foot drifts for almost two hours before fatigue called a halt somewhere near the 1,000-foot level of the mountains.

Since Forest Ranger Bill Anderson and three members of the Pinal County Sheriff's Office posse, Tom Ruzick, Kenneth and Cliff Foster, managed to reach the top of Mt. Baldy with horses.

Their feet were credited through the awkwardness of their mounts who had to struggle through 3-foot drifts on the mountains top.

Nine Scouts and an adult from Boy Scout Troop No. 8's Mountain Branch Team scoured the slopes also.

Ahead the D-M posse were Capt. Robert Johnson, pilot; Lt. L. Dale L. Eppinger, pilot, and Lt. Col. George S. Scherer, commander of the D-M base hospital. Also aboard as observers were Sheriff's Capt. Frank Harrison and Deputy Dave W. Orr.

Unexpectedly they plucked two unidentified persons out of the snow-choked canyon and carried them to safety. The men, named by the stragglers, had six eyes been reported missing.

Range Deputy Gay Hill, in charge of the rescue operation, credited the two ham radio calls in Tucson—Old Pueblo and Catalina—with facilitating the many aspects of the search.

Old Pueblo member Rev. George Whitney and Dale Adams of the Catalina Club spent almost every waking hour since the search began at their nets. They were invaluable in taking in aircraft and in weather-radio equipped ground parties.

Heading by in case needed are units of Arizona National Guard and the Southern Arizona Rescue Area.

Mountain Top Held Hopes Of Father

What does a father do when his only son is lost on a mountain top in freezing weather?

He hopes—against hope. "The boys have to be on top of that mountain. They have to because we've looked everywhere," John Early said yesterday. "Everyone is peeped out now. Tomorrow we start up again and make it to the top. You know no one has been able to get up there today. The road," he said. "They must be up in that cabin. There's no place else for them to go."

The cabin is an old ranger cabin on top of Mt. Baldy. No one had told Early yet that a party of men on horses had climbed to the cabin and found it empty.



Search Goes On In This Formidable Stretch Of Mountains

Somewhere in this maze of tortuous trails and tricky rock formations three Tucson Boy Scouts have been lost since Saturday night. A search for the trio, in the snow-jammed recesses of the Santa Rita mountains, has centered on 9,400-foot Mt. Baldy, indicated by Figure 1. The boys were last seen in Josephine Saddle, just to the left of the black arrow, by three companions

who turned back down the hiking trail and eventually made their way to the Santa Rita Lodge, in center of the circle. Figure 2 shows Mt. Hopkins, the second highest point in the Santa Ritas. Mt. Hopkins' highest elevation is 8,800. (Aerial Photograph by Jack Sheaffer)



Horsemen Return From Mountain Top

Three members of the Pinal County Sheriff's posse and a forest ranger are shown as they returned to the Santa Rita Lodge after reaching the cabin near the top of Mt. Baldy without finding any sign of the three missing Boy Scouts. The men are, left to right, forest ranger Bill Anderson, and Emmett Rankin, Cliff Foster and Tom Rankin, members of the posse. (Jack Sheaffer photo)



Fathers Await Word Of Missing Sons

Fathers of two of the boys lost in Madras Canyon conversed softly as they waited for word on the search at the Santa Rita Lodge. John Early, left, is the father of Mike Early, 16, and Bruce E. La Noue, cabin is the father of Michael J. Noue, 13. (Jack Sheaffer photo)