

Searchers Comb Mountain for Scout Lost Since Friday

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 23, 1991; JESSE KATZ;

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Search and rescue teams continued to comb the rugged San Bernardino National Forest Monday for a 13-year-old El Monte Boy Scout lost in the wilderness since Friday.

Jared Negrete, who was on his first overnight backpacking trip, was last seen Friday at about 6 p.m. when he fell behind his fellow Scouts on a hike to the summit of 11,500-foot Mt. San Gorgonio.

The eighth-grader, who is 5 feet 2 inches tall and 150 pounds, was wearing green pants and a tan shirt and was carrying a two-quart canteen of water.

"He's young, very shy, a little bit overweight and was allowed to get a little behind the others," said Frank Barney, a bishop at El Monte's Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which sponsors Boy Scout Troop No. 538.

Another group of hikers spotted Jared straggling behind and notified the troop leader at the mountain summit, Barney said. But the leader, an experienced backpacker, said he would pick up Jared on the way down, Barney said.

A Boy Scouts of America spokesman said he hadn't been fully briefed on the incident and was trying to determine whether the troop leader had been negligent.

"Obviously we would be concerned if proper safety procedure was not in fact followed," said Mike Bassett, director of support services for the 387 troops in the Boy Scouts' San Gabriel Valley Council.

As soon as the troop leader realized that Jared had strayed, he accompanied his five other Scouts back to the base camp and then hiked about five miles in the darkness to summon help. San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies, along with search and rescue teams from as far away as Sierra Madre and San Dimas, began searching a 130-square mile swath of the San Gorgonio Wilderness, a jagged, rocky terrain about 17 miles northeast of Redlands.

By Monday their search was focused on a six-square mile area, where a print believed to match one of Jared's high-top tennis shoes was found. At least 70 officers, some of whom were airlifted by helicopter into the dense evergreen forest, tramped through the brush until dusk but there were no more clues. The search was scheduled to resume again today at dawn.

Low temperatures have been around 50 degrees, and officers said that there was sufficient water in the mountains as a result of recent storms.

"They're checking every crack and crevice-anywhere that a 13-year-old boy would go," said Deputy Debra Dorrough. "We're reasonably confident he can survive." Byline: JESSE KATZ

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Jerid Negrete

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Footprints Lift Hopes of Crews Seeking Scout Rescue: Trackers searching for 12-year-old boy lost in the mountains since Friday say weather is on their side.

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 25, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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Search and rescue teams combing the San Bernardino Mountains for a missing El Monte Boy Scout were buoyed Wednesday by continued sightings of sneaker tracks near the Sky High Trail.

The tracks were about three miles from where Jared Negrete, 12, was last seen Friday.

Volunteers focused on an area of thick chaparral in the San Bernardino National Forest southeast of the 11,500-foot San Gorgonio Summit. "It's very slow going up there," said Bill Lenew, senior deputy of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

He said the lead tracker was following a trail through terrain so thick with vegetation that at times he was only able to cover as little as 150 feet per hour.

The tracks, which included some that matched sneakers the boy had been wearing, were the second set reported near a point on the trail known as "The Switchback."

Trackers, including 27 Marines and two dogs from the El Toro Marine Base, were slowed by the thickness of the vegetation and the instability of the rocky terrain.

By late Wednesday, 130 volunteers were engaged in the search. Some were flown in by sheriff's helicopters and others worked the edges of a 20-mile target area on horseback.

A group of 12 volunteers from the Orange County Search and Rescue Team was turned away, Lenew said, because "they lacked certification from the state Office of Emergency Services. Gary Stockdale, the team's leader, said they were a qualified search and rescue team, but the Orange County Sheriff's Department had blocked their certification.

"The men have given up their jobs today to pitch in," Stockdale said. "Sure, their feelings are hurt."

Despite the length of the search, leaders of the effort expressed optimism. "We feel positive," Deputy Debra Dorrrough said. "The weather's been on our side. There's plenty of water up there."

Jared, who was originally reported to be 13, had been on his first overnight hike when he reportedly fell behind his fellow Scouts and was last seen struggling to keep up. Troop leader Dennis Knight, an experienced backpacker, told Boy Scout officials that he decided to pick up Jared on the way down from the summit rather than go back for him.

Mike Bassett, director of support services for 387 troops in the Boy Scouts' San Gabriel Valley Council, said Jared was at least a Second Class Scout.

"He's had basic map and compass training," Bassett said, adding that he did not know if Jared had a map and compass with him. "He has basic skills."

As searchers combed through the forest, Jared's parents, Philip and Linda Negrete, awaited word in their El Monte home. Tris Morris, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which the Negretes attend, said the family felt no animosity toward Knight. "They feel nothing but love and respect for Dennis," Morris said. "They've been over to his house. No one blames him."

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Trail Grows Faint in Search for Boy Scout Wilderness: Efforts to find the 12-year-old will continue into next week, deputies say. Water and resources in area are considered adequate for survival.

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 27, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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Tracks have grown faint in treacherous rock chutes and footprints have led nowhere.

It has been more than a week since 12-year-old Jared Negrete disappeared in the San Bernardino Mountains. But hopes, though growing dimmer, are still alive among the searchers picking through the rocky wilderness in search of the El Monte Boy Scout.

The effort pressed ahead Friday, with 150 volunteers moving slowly through a 45-square-mile target area around the 11,500-foot San Gorgonio Mountain.

"There's plenty of water up there," said San Bernardino County firefighter Bill Garcia, who has spent 14 to 18 hours a day on the search since Monday. "There are even fish in some of the creeks. With a little ingenuity, there are enough resources to live off of. If he keeps his wits, he should be able to get by."

San Bernardino Sheriff's Deputy Debra Dorrough said that the search effort will be carried on through the weekend and into next week.

But some involved in the rescue effort conceded privately that the odds of finding the youth grow worse with each passing day.

Jared's mother, Linda Negrete, awaiting word at her El Monte home, expressed faith that the boy was still alive.

"There are times when I ask God, 'Should we still be hoping?'" she said Friday. "I have thought of all the things that might have happened, but I have faith in God and in Jared. I know he is alive."

Friends at the Negrete home said that he had once read a book about two teen-agers lost in the mountains. He and classmates talked about how they might themselves survive in similar circumstances, said Angelique Molloy, 12, a classmate.

But other family members, upset about the circumstances of Jared's disappearance, fretted about the physical capabilities of Jared, who is described as 5-foot-2, 150 pounds.

"Jared's idea of a good workout," said Jared's 20-year-old cousin, Anthony Negrete, "was to shoot 10 lay-ups at the basket in the back yard, then to go inside for some Doritos and punch."

Jared and five other Boy Scouts were taken by their Scoutmaster, Dennis Knight, on an overnight hike, beginning on July 18. Knight told authorities that the group spent that night at Dry Lake, north of the San Gorgonio Summit, then headed up the mountain the next morning.

They left their packs at a new base camp, about a mile from the lake, and hiked about five miles along the Sky High Trail, most of it at 10,000 feet or higher. Sometime before they reached the summit, Jared, who had been dawdling, lost contact with the group.

Jared's uncle, Ramon Negrete, said one hiker's parent told him Jared was left behind in a race. "Somebody said, 'Let's race to the top,'" said Ramon Negrete, awaiting word at the rescue operations center about 22 miles northwest of Redlands. "He didn't wander off; they left him behind."

Boy Scouts of America officials concede that safety procedures may have been violated on the overnight hiking excursion.

A spokesman at the Scouts' national headquarters in Irving, Tex., said Knight, Scoutmaster of El Monte's Troop 538, apparently had failed to observe the "two-deep leadership" rule, requiring him to bring another adult to help supervise the hike.

Knight also failed to file a description of the planned hike with the local Boy Scout Council and to observe a standard outdoorsman's rule that "the slowest hiker sets the pace," said Scout spokesman Blake Lewis.

Knight could not be reached for comment. Jared's parents, who belong to the same Mormon church as Knight, continued to express support for him.

"Maybe (Jared) stopped to tie a shoelace or something happened, and he was just separated," said Linda Negrete. "We aren't pointing any fingers at this point. We just want for him to be back."

Searchers described the terrain where Jared disappeared as one of loose rocks, slippery slopes and, along the ravines and lower slopes, thick vegetation.

"If you stay on the trail, there's no problem," said tracker Francis Lorson, a member of the San Bernardino Sheriff's Mounted Posse. "But the minute you get off, you can get swept down in a rockslide."

Tracks initially indicated that Jared had been moving down the side of the mountain, possibly in a panic reaction. "Things can get pretty spooky up there," said Garcia.

Friday, however, searchers said they had lost the boy's trail.

The number of searchers, more than 90% of them volunteers, has continued to increase through the week, said Senior Sheriff's Deputy Bill Lenew.

Searchers kept their spirits up by recalling earlier searches that had ended successfully. For example, a 10-year-old mentally retarded boy survived unharmed in a nearby area for five days.

"Any time you find any kind of a little clue, your hope gets rejuvenated," Garcia said. He added that there had been no "indicators" of Jared's death

Search-and-rescue team leaders say that there are no rules as to when to give up a search. "You just keep going until you've searched all the areas where he could be," said Arnold Gaffrey of the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team. "As long as it doesn't involve a great risk to the searchers, you continue."

Lenew said that the leaders of the search effort had compiled a psychological profile of Jared, leading them to be optimistic. "He's no quitter, and he's got a good heart," Lenew said. "He's got spirit."

Times staff writer Anna Cearley contributed to this story.

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Margaret Cortez, aunt of Jared Negrete, leads the night search team in prayer before they go looking for the Boy Scout. The number of searchers, most of them volunteers, has increased through the week. / LORI SHEPLER / Los Angeles Times

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Boy Scout Still Missing; Searchers Find Marijuana Crop

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After an eighth day of searching on Saturday, rescuers still had not found a 12-year-old Boy Scout who disappeared while on a hike with his troop in the San Bernardino Mountains.

An additional 130 volunteers showed up to aid the effort on Saturday, bringing to 270 the number of people combing a 45-square-mile area of the San Bernardino National Forest for signs of Jared Negrete, the El Monte youth who became separated from his troop on July 19.

Officials have escalated the air search and were using five helicopters on Saturday, including three from the U.S. military. They said the search would continue today and there was a good possibility the child was still alive.

Jared was on a hike with five other Boy Scouts and a leader from a troop sponsored by a Mormon church. He had no food or water with him, but rescuers have said there is sufficient water in the mountains and fish in some creeks that the child might be able to catch.

Meanwhile, volunteers searching for the boy stumbled upon a field of marijuana plants fed by a sophisticated irrigation system.

The volunteers "backed out immediately" and called authorities when they encountered the irrigation system, said a narcotics investigator from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department who declined to give his name.

"Somebody's going to be real mad," the investigator said. He said the department had received a tip a month ago about a marijuana field in the area, but had been unable to find it.

On Saturday, narcotics investigators hiked in and found a 100-foot-by-100-foot clearing from which thick vegetation had been hacked away 6,200 feet up the side of Mt. San Gorgonio. An irrigation system that included at least 500 feet of half-inch pipe and automatic timers had been installed, investigators said. Whoever planted the field also had carefully left a canopy of trees that allowed in just the right amount of sunlight for marijuana cultivation, investigators said.

Sheriff's deputies seized 7,169 marijuana plants with a street value of more than \$100,000, investigators said.

Bill Lenew, a spokesman for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, said the marijuana was scheduled to be burned Saturday evening at the U.S. Forest Service station at the bottom of Mt. San Gorgonio.

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Missing Scout Took Picture of Himself Search: His camera is found. Most of the photos were landscape scenes but final shot on the roll of film was of his eyes and nose.

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 29, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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A 12-year-old Boy Scout, lost in the wilderness of the San Bernardino Mountains for the past nine days, may have taken a picture of himself after he became separated from his troop, family members said Sunday.

Twelve snapshots were developed from a camera found by searchers combing 11,500-foot Mt. San Gorgonio on Saturday for Jared Negrete, who has been missing since July 19.

Most of the photos were landscape scenes apparently taken before the boy became lost. But the final picture on the roll of film was a photograph of the Scout's eyes and nose, taken with the aid of the camera's flash attachment, possibly at night after the youth disappeared. Family members said it appeared Jared pointed his camera at his face and snapped the picture.

"Evidently, the flash went off so we determined it was rather late in the evening," said Harvey Beach, one of Jared's uncles.

Beach and another uncle, Leo Cortez, said they believed the boy lost the camera while sliding down a portion of the mountainside within days of his disappearance.

"He was on his bottom sliding down to a lower area and water," Beach said. The camera was found in the same general area where searchers discovered beef jerky and candy wrappers believed to have been dropped by the Scout.

"Jared always carried some goodies with him" and also had a two-quart water canteen, said Cortez, who has accompanied the boy on short hikes.

The film, food wrappers and earlier tracks helped rescuers narrow the search area to the south fork of Whitewater River, north of Mt. San Gorgonio, from the entire brush and boulder-covered mountain face.

And because of the discoveries, about 100 volunteers will continue the search today "full force," said San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputy Bill Lenew.

"There are areas in the south fork where someone could survive an extended period of time," said Lenew, but as time passes "the chances of survival are a big issue."

While nearly a dozen uncles and cousins gathered near the search area, the youth's parents remained at their home in El Monte. The family has been having a "terrible time" since the 5-foot, 2-inch, 150-pound boy disappeared while on a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Scout outing, Beach said.

In addition to searchers on foot and on horseback, helicopters have been used to scan the brutal terrain. Infrared monitors were installed at a number of high points Saturday night in hopes of spotting the boy in the dark. Only deer and other animals were detected by the monitors, authorities said.

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Self photo apparently taken by Scout Jared Negrete. / ROBBIN SLOCUM / For The Times

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Dateline: ANGELUS OAKS

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Mother Joins Air Search for Missing Scout Lost child: She flies in a helicopter on 10th day of hunt, calling to her son over a public address system.

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 30, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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The mother of 12-year-old Jared Negrete, the Boy Scout missing in the San Bernardino Mountains since July 19, circled the search area in a helicopter Monday, calling out to her son over a public address system.

"I said, 'Jared, Jared, come out from where you are hiding,'" Linda Negrete recounted emotionally after her first flight in an aircraft.

"I said, 'This is your mommy . . . these people (the searchers) are not strangers. They are good people who are trying to find you and bring you back home.' "

The El Monte scout disappeared while on a hike near the 11,500-foot summit of San Gorgonio Mountain.

More than 150 searchers showed up Monday, the 10th day of the search, at the rescue command post at the Angelus Oaks Fire Station, about 22 miles northeast of Redlands.

Searchers included 17 Marines from the Twentynine Palms Marine Base, four dogs from the California Rescue Dog Assn. and members of six search-and-rescue teams.

Four helicopters continued the air search, which is now concentrated on the south fork of the Whitewater River, a 22-square-mile, wedge-shaped area south of the San Gorgonio summit. The search was narrowed to that area after the discovery over the weekend of a camera and snack wrappers apparently dropped by Jared as he slid down a slope.

Linda Negrete and her husband, Philip, expressed faith that Jared is still alive, though they said they are "realistic."

The mother, who was visiting the command post for the first time Monday, said she had been "in shock" during the first week of the search.

She speculated that Jared may have taken refuge against heat and cold in a deep ravine and had been "too scared" to come out.

"I'm just waiting for him to come home so I could hold my son in my arms again," she said.

She said she felt reassured after her tour. "I see so many rescuers up there," she said, "so much work going on."

Jared disappeared on an overnight hiking trip led by Scoutmaster Dennis Knight.

Boy Scout officials said they would investigate whether Knight had observed proper safety procedures during the hike. Knight apparently violated the "two-deep leadership" scout policy requiring two adults for overnight trips. Also, the boy apparently was allowed to lag behind Knight and five other scouts as they reached the summit. Witnesses told authorities that the other hikers had planned to pick up Jared on the way back down.

Family members said Knight, who attends the same church as the Negrete family, has periodically joined the search for the youth.

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Dateline: ANGELUS OAKS

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Rain Slows Search for Missing Boy Scout

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Jul 31, 1991;

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Rain in the San Bernardino Mountains slowed the search for a missing Boy Scout on Tuesday, temporarily grounding a small fleet of helicopters that had been transporting searchers into the wilderness.

Despite dimming hopes that 12-year-old Jared Negrete of El Monte would be found alive, leaders of the search opted to continue at least through today. More than 150 searchers reported Tuesday to the search command post at the Angelus Oaks Fire Station.

Although the rain washed away tracks in the upper regions of San Gorgonio Mountain, where Jared disappeared July 19, a search spokesman said no fresh tracks had been discovered in the area for more than a week. "The window of tracking in that area is already almost closed," said San Bernardino County Senior Sheriff's Deputy Bill Lenew.

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100 Marines Join Search for 12-Year-Old Scout

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Aug 1, 1991;

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About 100 Marines from the El Toro Marine Base joined the search for 12-year-old Jared Negrete on Wednesday, bringing to more than 200 the number of searchers picking through a treacherous, rock-strewn 22-square-mile patch of the San Bernardino National Forest.

The El Monte Boy Scout has been missing since July 19, when he became separated from other Scouts while on an overnight hike near the top of 11,500-foot San Gorgonio Mountain.

The odds that the boy is still alive grow worse daily, search leaders said at their command post at the Angelus Oaks Fire Station. But they said the search effort will continue at least through the weekend.

Rain on Tuesday and Wednesday slowed the search, but trackers said they were hopeful that fresh mud would produce fresh tracks. "If he's moving, he may leave new footprints," San Bernardino Sheriff's Deputy Debra Dorrough said.

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ORANGE COUNTY NEWSWATCH

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Aug 2, 1991; Dave Lesh; Bill Billiter;

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AIRLIFT: David Wheatley of Garden Grove was part of the search team combing the San Bernardino Mountains for lost Boy Scout Jared Michael Negrete-until Saturday. . . . That's when he and his horse, Scotch, fell 900 feet into a ravine. . . . Today, a Marine rescue team will airlift Scotch to higher ground. Wheatley was spared injury. Scotch may lose an eye and some teeth. Byline: Dave Lesh; Bill Billiter

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El Toro Marines Join Mt. San Gorgonio Scout Search

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Aug 2, 1991;

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Nearly 100 Marines from El Toro and Twentynine Palms joined the search Thursday for missing Boy Scout Jared Michael Negrete, 12.

Three helicopters and the Marines joined hundreds of others on the 14th day of searching for the boy, who disappeared in rugged terrain while on his first hike.

Search and rescue crews and trackers combed a 22-square-mile area of Mt. San Gorgonio, concentrating on the White Water area and South Fork, where the boy's camera was found Saturday, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputy Debbie Durrough said.

Trackers found a 2-quart canteen Wednesday afternoon that they thought belonged to Jared, who disappeared while on a hike near the 11,500-foot summit of the mountain. But the canteen turned out not to be his.

"We can only cover about 1 mile a day because the terrain is so rugged," Durrough said.

Searchers covered more than half of the 22-square-mile area, she said, and about 50 of them planned to continue the search through the night.

Although rescue teams found no new evidence or leads Thursday, crews remained optimistic that they would find the El Monte Scout, who vanished July 19.

"When the probability of his survival rate is way below zero and we start risking injury to our searchers through fatigue, then we will think about suspending the search," said Durrough, who added that it would "definitely" continue today.

"We take it on a day-by-day basis," she said.

After two weeks of tramping through the rugged country, the risk of injury to the searchers is high, Deputy Bill Lenew said.

"The risk of injury is high because of exhaustion, and we have to careful not to deplete our resources," he said.

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Dateline: REDLANDS, Calif.

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Searchers Abandon Hope for Boy Scout Lost in Mountains Tragedy: The command post is ordered dismantled and the hunt has been significantly scaled back. The youth disappeared July 19.

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Aug 5, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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After scouring the rocky slopes of San Gorgonio Mountain for 16 days, searchers have in effect given up hope that 12-year-old Jared Negrete of El Monte will be found alive.

Leaders of the search Sunday ordered their command post in the San Bernardino mountain town of Angelus Oaks dismantled and significantly scaled back one of the most ambitious searches in California history.

"We passed the point several days ago where we estimated (Jared's) chances of survival were less than zero," said Bill Lenew, senior deputy of the San Bernardino County sheriff's office.

There have been no new signs of the Boy Scout, who was separated from fellow Scouts on a hike to the 11,500-foot San Gorgonio summit on July 19, since a searcher found the boy's camera 11 days ago.

Lenew said that authorities may continue to send small parties of searchers into the area but the state Office of Emergency Services, which Lenew said has administered the "most complex search in San Bernardino County history," will turn the search over to the Yucaipa sheriff's station.

Gloria Avila, one of Jared's aunts, said Sunday that the family still held out hope that Jared would be found alive.

The boy's parents "are waiting at home for a phone call," Avila said. "They still have hope."

Authorities have thrown people, equipment and wilderness know-how into the effort. Hundreds of searchers have shown up every day, most of them volunteers.

"It becomes personal," said Roman Chruszcz, an aerospace engineer from Riverside, weary after five 11-hour shifts on the mountain with the San Bernardino Search and Rescue Team. "It becomes part of your life. I actually believe the kid's there and I want to find him."

Searchers have piloted helicopters, ridden horses, led tracking dogs and driven all-terrain vehicles. They have rappelled down 50-foot drops, picked through vegetation-choked ravines and schussed down treacherous rock chutes.

Some maintained as of three or four days ago that Jared could be alive.

The record in California for length of survival in the wilderness is held by a Marine lance corporal who broke his ankle on a fishing trip in Amador County in 1983, living on moss and ants for 39 days until he was rescued, according to the state Office of Emergency Services.

The terrain around San Gorgonio Mountain is forbidding, with loose-rock slopes, Volkswagen-sized boulders, pine forests and, in the ravines and lower regions, thick chaparral-like vegetation.

There are shady ravines where Jared could find water and protection from the elements, searchers say, and there are places in the 40-square-mile search area that have not been reached by searchers.

"But what puzzles me is that we haven't heard anything from him," said Harry Colby, a member of the Joshua Tree National Forest Search and Rescue Team.

One theory is that Jared was buried in an avalanche.

The sheriff's office has also investigated whether Jared met with foul play, Lenew said, but has turned up no leads.

"There's no evidence to show that Jared is anywhere other than on the mountain," Lenew said.

Dispirited searchers filed into Angelus Oaks on Sunday mystified at their inability to find the boy. "We've been beating ourselves to death and we've beat this mountain to death," said Larry Walsh of the San Bernardino Search and Rescue Team.

More than 2,000 people participated in the search, 44 of them sustaining minor injuries, including altitude sickness, heat prostration and sprained knees.

Angelus Oaks, on the southern slope of San Gorgonio Mountain, has attracted a lot of other people.

Self-described psychics, dreamers and visionaries flocked there, often claiming unequivocally that Jared is alive. "They tell us, I see him behind a tree, I see him behind a rock," a frustrated Lenew said.

One purported psychic was flown across the search area last week as a favor to Jared's family, but she was unable to assist the search.

Parking areas around the fire station where the searchers set up their headquarters have been clogged with television broadcasting trucks and vehicles of sightseers. Firetrucks and rescue vehicles from every county in Southern California arrive and depart regularly, and helicopters fly in and out from a helipad half a mile away.

Some residents of the town of 190 began to feel the stresses of the long search last week.

"I had a number of reservations this weekend," said Steve Delaney, owner of the Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast Inn, next door to the fire station. "I had to call everybody and tell them that, if they were looking for a quiet getaway, this might not be the place."

Jared's relatives have sat in clusters, scanning the sky and the wilderness. A group of 11 cousins, aged 9 to 20, often gathered together, singing songs to improve their spirits.

"The hardest part is at night, knowing he's out there by himself in the wilderness," said Linda Negrete, Jared's mother, who called out to her son over a public address system last week while circling the search area in a helicopter.

The family has stolidly maintained that Jared may have slipped into a kind of paranoia, causing him to hide from the searchers. "Who knows what's on his mind," said Leo Cortez, one of Jared's uncle. "Does he feel he's going to be punished? Some people who have been lost said they felt that way."

The Boy Scouts of America has promised that, once the search is concluded, the organization will investigate the supervision of the hike. "Let's find the boy first," said Blake Lewis, a spokesman for the national organization in Irving, Tex., "then we'll get to those issues."

Dennis Knight, who has led Troop 538 for less than five months but has been involved in Scouting for 15 years, apparently broke a number of fundamental safety rules, Scout officials have conceded.

Knight did not respond to repeated calls to his house.

Philip Negrete, a custodian at a West Covina school, left the mountain for the last time Saturday after exchanging emotional goodbys with searchers.

"He didn't want to leave the mountain without his son-one way or the other," Avila said. "The family's close. It's like

chopping off a part of a body."

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Jared Negrete

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Father of Missing Scout Wants Search Reactivated Wilderness: Philip Negrete asks Gov. Wilson and President Bush for help in finding his son.

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The father of a missing El Monte Boy Scout appealed Monday to Gov. Pete Wilson to reactivate the search for his son, which has been drastically scaled back after hundreds of searchers fruitlessly combed the slopes of San Geronio Mountain for 16 days.

"We're very grateful for the help we've gotten, but I think life is precious," said Philip Negrete, whose 12-year-old son Jared disappeared July 19 while on an overnight hike. "They shouldn't give up."

Negrete also called upon President Bush to send federal aid. "He's a good man," said Negrete, 45, a custodian for the West Covina Unified School District. "He just might hear my prayers. He has sons."

Sheriff's deputies and jail inmates on Sunday dismantled the command post at Angelus Oaks, from which an estimated 2,000 searchers had hiked or flown into the wilderness around the 11,500-foot San Geronio summit between July 20 and Aug. 4. Search leaders said the probability of Jared's survival had dropped to zero last week, making the continued risk of injury to searchers along the treacherous slopes unjustified.

A small team of searchers continued to pick through the search area on Monday, said San Bernardino Sheriff's Deputy Debra Dorrrough. "The aerial search will continue all week, and there will be dogs over the weekend," she said.

Philip Negrete, downcast on the first day of the scaled-back efforts, spoke wistfully about his son, who was lost on his first overnight hike. "There was a glow in his face," he said. "It was the same in his baby pictures. He's a special child."

Negrete said that, for the first time since Jared disappeared, he and his wife ran errands in El Monte on Monday, passing places that the boy had frequented. "We went past the El Pollo Loco on Peck Road, and we cried," he said.

He said that a few days ago, forgetting that Jared was missing, he had called out to the boy. "It was one of his jobs to take out the trash," Negrete said. "I touched the trash can and called to him, but he wasn't there."

The father had kind words for the man who led the hike on which Jared disappeared. Though Dennis Knight, Scoutmaster of Troop 538 in El Monte, had "made a boo-boo" in letting Jared separate himself from the group of Scouts on the trail, Negrete said he still felt warmth for him.

"I went to church and saw him eye to eye," Negrete said. "He feels like we feel."

Knight, who could not be reached for comment, and the Negretes belong to the same church.

Negrete said that his wife Linda, 43, an office manager for a physical therapy firm, was exhausted from the ordeal. It was "a torment" for both of them to leave the search unresolved, he said.

Describing himself as "not rich," Negrete said, "If I was rich, they'd keep on going until they found him, dead or alive." Noting his strong support for the U.S. war effort in the Persian Gulf, Negrete shook his head.

"We can win a war," he said. "We can find this child."

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Philip Negrete on searchers: "They shouldn't give up." / MIKE MEADOWS / Los Angeles Times

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Wilson Won't Reactivate Search for Boy Scout

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Aug 8, 1991;

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A spokesman for Gov. Pete Wilson said Wednesday that the governor will not reactivate the search in the San Bernardino National Forest for a missing El Monte Boy Scout.

Wilson has accepted the opinions of forest experts who have said that the prospects of finding 12-year-old Jared Negrete through a reactivated mass search were "very difficult to guarantee at this time," Deputy Press Secretary James Lee said. The search for the boy, missing since July 19, was drastically scaled back this week after searchers combed the slopes of Mt. San Geronio for 16 days.

At a news conference in an El Monte park on Wednesday, Philip Negrete, the boy's father, repeated an earlier plea to Wilson to escalate the search effort.

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Memorial Service Honors Missing Boy Scout

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Sep 8, 1991; EDMUND NEWTON;

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The family of a 12-year-old El Monte Boy Scout who disappeared in the San Bernardino Mountains in July memorialized his loss on Saturday with anguish and bitterness.

Philip Negrete, whose son Jared was lost July 19 while on an overnight hike near the summit of San Gorgonio Mountain, spoke poignantly of his own and his family's suffering since searchers gave up hope of finding the boy.

"I stand here with a broken heart for the way things happened," Philip Negrete told about 500 friends and fellow Mormons, leaning weakly on a lectern at a memorial service for Jared in a Hacienda Heights Mormon cathedral.

Meanwhile, Negrete's brother Ramon stood moodily in a doorway as the service proceeded, refusing to sit in the cathedral because he blames the church for Jared's disappearance.

"To the day I die, I'll believe that this church and the Boy Scouts of America are responsible for my nephew's death," he said angrily to a dumbstruck elder of the church, which sponsors the Boy Scout troop to which Jared belonged.

The service was the family's first public acknowledgement that they believe Jared died somewhere on the treacherous slopes of San Gorgonio Mountain.

"That hill was a tough hill," said Negrete, who was recently hospitalized with stress-related pneumonia, tearfully recalling the full-scale, 16-day search for the boy. The search, one of the most ambitious in California's history, involved helicopters, dogs and almost 2,000 people combing a 40-square-mile area northwest of Redlands.

"I wanted to go up that hill so bad, as a father. . . . I cried onto those hills, 'Jared, where are you? I miss you so much.' "

A spokesman for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said last week that a scaled-back search continues. "We have people going up at regular intervals," said spokesman Jim Bryant. "On the weekends we have as many as 50 people."

But searchers have not turned up any new leads since candy wrappers and a camera were found a few days after Jared was separated from fellow Boy Scouts as they approached the 11,500-foot summit.

Wilderness experts speculate that the boy died after he fell into a deep crevice, Bryant said. The last footsteps that trackers could identify as Jared's seemed to indicate that he was headed downhill, into steep, rocky terrain. "With the rain and thunderstorms we've been getting recently, everybody says that maybe the body will wash down to a different location."

Sheriff's investigators had considered from the beginning the possibility that Jared was abducted, Bryant said, but they have turned up no evidence of foul play.

Saturday's memorial service included a hymn sung by 10 of Jared's cousins, reminiscences by classmates and an emotional eulogy by Harvey Beach, one of Jared's uncles.

Beach recalled Jared's love for basketball and his dream of working as a Mormon missionary.

Boy Scout officials acknowledged shortly after the disappearance that Scoutmaster Dennis Knight had broken safety rules in taking a group of children into the wilderness without another adult to help supervise the hike and in failing to file a report with the local Boy Scout council before the trip.

Knight was not present at the memorial service, and members of Troop 538 who were there said Knight had been "released" as Scoutmaster.

[Illustration]

PHOTO: Jared Negrete's brother Jeffrey, left, shakes hands with Nathan Morgan, a member of Troop 538, at memorial service.; PHOTO: Jared's father, Philip Negrete, wipes away a tear.; PHOTO: (A2) A Farewell to Lost Scout: Family and friends of a Boy Scout who disappeared in the San Bernardino Mountains mourned his loss at a church service. Jared Negrete, 12, vanished July 19 during a hike. Fellow Scout Nathan Morgan shakes hands with Jared's brother Jeffrey, above. / MIKE SERGIEFF / For The Times

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Missing Scout's Family Hires Private Detective

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Nov 12, 1991;

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The family of a 12-year-old El Monte Boy Scout who disappeared on a hike in the San Bernardino Mountains last summer has hired a private detective to investigate the possibility that the youth was kidnaped.

Detective Logan Clarke, who specializes in child abduction cases, said Monday that there were strong indications that Jared Negrete did not die in the San Geronio Wilderness, where hundreds of searchers concentrated their efforts for 16 days in July and August. Among other things, there were no signs of a decomposing body during that time, he said.

The boy's family, including his parents, Philip and Linda Negrete, will appeal to the Boy Scouts and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to which they belong, for help in financing the investigation, said Harvey Beach, the boy's uncle.

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County Delays Vote on Cost of Search for Scout

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Feb 4, 1992;

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The Los Angeles County Claims Board on Monday postponed a decision on whether to reimburse several agencies a total of about \$450,000 for an unsuccessful search for a Boy Scout who vanished during a summer hike.

The matter will be taken up again in about two weeks at the board's next meeting, said member Nancy Singer.

Jared Negrete was last seen July 20, after he became separated from his troop while on a hike to the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio. Search and rescue teams from three counties, the state Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service looked for the boy until Aug. 4. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department has submitted a bill of \$379,383 for the personnel, vehicles, aircraft, fuel and food used during the search for the 12-year-old. State forestry officials claimed \$59,209 in similar expenses, while the Riverside County and Arrowbear Lake fire departments spent \$2,075 and \$11,677, respectively.

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Los Angeles County Costs of Scout Search Will Be Reimbursed

The Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Los Angeles, Calif.; Mar 11, 1992;

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Los Angeles County supervisors Tuesday approved paying \$428,212 to San Bernardino County as reimbursement for the massive search for an El Monte boy who disappeared while on a Boy Scout trip to the San Gorgonio Mountains last summer.

Jared Negrete, 12, who disappeared July 18, was never found. State law requires a missing person's county of residence to repay another county for its search and rescue costs, according to county attorneys.

Nearly 1,100 workers from nearly two dozen agencies throughout Southern California, including the U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps, took part in the search, mostly as volunteers.

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