

S.L. Youth Rescued From Mine

By George A. Sorensen
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COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS — A 17-year-old Salt Lake City youth was rescued unhurt from the Jefferson mine about 8 p.m. Monday — but not until he spent four frightening hours perched on a narrow ledge.

Salt Lake County Sheriff's deputies lowered Benjamin Suazzo, 646 W. 1300 West, after Deputy Verl Buxton worked his way up the shaft. The rescue took place 500 feet inside the mine. Deputy Buxton had to drive mountain climbing tools into the side of the shaft to lower the youth in a special harness.

The youth was one of five to walk into the mine through a tunnel. They found the four-foot diameter shaft rising to the surface on the mountain above.

The Suazzo youth climbed up the shaft to tie a rope to a beam.

When he climbed to the break, he found that it wasn't safe, according to a companion Cal Sanders, 18, 873 S. 1500 West.

"I froze. I was too scared to come down," Mr. Suazzo said. That was about 4 p.m.

The rest of the party tried to rescue him, but couldn't. They called the sheriff from nearby homes.

Neighbors have tried to get the mine
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Emerging happy after his four-hour ordeal, Benjamin Suazzo is lowered to safety after Verl

Buxton worked way up shaft. The youth was in a party of five. Ten deputies helped rescue.

Youth is rescued from mine 1

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Trapped for 4 Hours

S.L. Teen Rescued From Mine

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sealed but county officials have taken no action. It's just up the mountainside from 9022 Kings Hill Dr. (3455 East).

Went In 300 Feet

Residents fear a child could fall into the mine or become trapped.

"We went in about 300 feet to where the mine tunnel splits and took the left hand tunnel for about 200 more feet when we came to the shaft. Benji was in the lead at the time and went up the shaft," Mr. Sanders added.

"I clung to the beam and stood on a narrow ledge and all I could think was 'get me down, get me down,'" a smiling Benji said as he emerged from the narrow opening.

Some 10 deputies and the county's

search and rescue team helped.

The five said they'd explored the mine before. Benji said he doesn't plan a quick return.

"Some other (mine) perhaps, but not this one for a while," he said.

Others in Group

Others in the party included Guy Defa, 17, 1456 W. 300 South; Justin Sirianni, 20, 615 Stewart St., (1400 West); and Randy Dell, 18, 1344 W. 8th South.

An area oldtimer, Elbert Despain, 9334 S. Little Cottonwood Rd., remembered the old mine shaft was sunk for gold. "It didn't pan out," he said.

But area farmers get water there now, Mr. Despain said.

Youth is rescued from mine 2

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