

Missing hunter found dead

By Molly Maeve Eagan, Freeman staff

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HUNTER - A hunter missing since Saturday was found dead Tuesday morning at the bottom of a cliff, apparently the victim of a fall, police said.

The body of Roger Riccomini, 33, of Saugerties, was found by fire and rescue workers about 11:30 a.m., according to state police Senior Investigator Dave Darlign.

The search for Riccomini began Saturday night after his hunting party reported he had not emerged from the woods and returned to the parking lot where they were waiting. The search intensified over the next two days and by Tuesday, police said, with still no sign of Riccomini, efforts were stepped up to include 300 people from as far away as New Jersey.

The search was a non-stop effort with rescuers using night-vision equipment, helicopters and dogs, as well as large ground parties.

Darlign said Riccomini's body was found about 80 feet from state Route 214, just north of Notch Lake, at the bottom of a 100-foot cliff. He was found beneath two ledges, and police believe he struck one on the way down, Darlign said, adding that Riccomini probably died instantly.

"There is no evidence that he survived the fall," Darlign said.

State Forest Ranger Rick Dearstyne said Riccomini's personal belongings were strewn above and below where his body was found.

Dearstyne said Riccomini probably was walking in the dark along a ridge that leads to the parking lot, missed a sharp left turn and fell. Darlign said police do not believe foul play was involved.

Riccomini's body was taken to Albany Medical Center, where an autopsy was planned.

Riccomini was the head of the Cairo-Durham High School music department and led the school's band. He and his wife, Lisa, had been married for five years.