



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Climbing Alone

California, Matterhorn Peak, Sawtooth Ridge

Early in the morning on Saturday, June 30, Michael Ybarra (45) set out by himself to traverse the Sawtooth Ridge, according to his sister and Alex Few, a friend. He was scheduled to return from his climb by Sunday evening at the latest. After he didn't contact Ms. Few as planned, nor respond to her efforts to call, email, and text him, she contacted local search and rescue personnel on Monday.

Authorities from Mono County and Yosemite National Park conducted a search for Ybarra, including by helicopter. He was located, deceased, on the park side of the ridge, and his body was recovered. He had signed the Matterhorn summit register on June 30 and continued west along the ridge. His rope was found some distance above his body, still coiled. He may have been downclimbing to save rappel gear, but the cause of the accident is unknown.

Ybarra was an experienced climber and had been a journalist with The Wall Street Journal and The Los Angeles Times, as well as author of a book, Washington Gone Crazy. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger, and The Wall Street Journal, July 5, 2012.)

(Editor's note: To his great credit, Ybarra had told his sister of his intentions. Thus, if he had been injured and not killed, there would have been the possibility that he could have been rescued.)

Images

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