

The Chronicle Outdoors Page

New guidebook for Adirondack rock climbers

By Dan Ladd
Chronicle Outdoors Editor

You only have to drive around the Adirondacks to see some of the many cliffs and rock faces that are part of the region's geological culture and history. On a fair weather day a closer look might reveal people on these rocks miraculously making their way from bottom to top.

Wherever there is a cliff, boulder or open rock face, there is a strong possibility that someone has climbed it, whether it's alongside the road or miles back in the woods.

Glens Falls resident Jeremy Haas is one of those climbers. Haas, a 34-year-old Saratoga Springs High School science teacher and part-time rock climbing guide, has co-authored a new guidebook entitled *Adirondack Rock: A Rock Climber's Guide*.

Haas and co-author Jim Lawyer of Pompey, N.Y., officially released the book two weeks ago, nearly two years to the day after beginning the project.

This was no small feat. The two writer-climbers did some serious legwork, nearly doubling the number of climbs documented in their book compared to previous guidebooks.

Adirondack Rock spans 672 pages and is loaded with photos, detailed maps, il-

lustrations and most importantly the information that Haas believes beginning and experienced climbers alike are looking for.

It is comprehensive to say the least.

An overdue project

"It's been 12 years since the last climbing guidebook had come out," said Haas, referring to Don Mellor's *Climbing in the Adirondacks*, which was first printed in the late 1970s and is now published by the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). Mellor wrote the foreword to *Adirondack Rock*.

Haas says, "There's a long history of (climbing) guidebooks in the Adirondacks going back to about 1965, and Don had done just a tremendous job of documenting and being the guidebook person, and then he hung it up."

"The years went by and the more climbs that were done, the less informa-

tion was being collected and it was getting to be of a concern with who was going to do it. It's a big job. I kind of stepped up initially and then realized I needed a co-author."

Haas found a confidant in fellow climber Lawyer, a software engineer.

"Jim was somebody I climbed with for a number of years and he's very knowledgeable, with a long history of climbing in the area," says

Haas of his partner. "He's a computer expert, and it quickly became apparent that we would be a good match. So we made a commitment to get it done in two years."

At first the two tackled the climbs together, then realized they could get more accomplished if they split up.

Says Haas, "We realized we could come together for big projects and more complicated cliffs, but we basically took the remaining cliffs and divided them. There were people that went out into the field with us to go climbing and all the bushwhacking. It was really a team event."

The efforts paid off, and the two climbers were able to present information on both new and classic climbs in a very detailed format. Topographical maps are provided along with aerial photographs of several climbs. Matching illustrations show everything a climber looks for, including vegetation, corners and ledges, to name just a few. The topo maps can make all the difference for the backcountry climbs.

"Guidebooks of the past kind of read more like a hiking guidebook — a lot of narration, writing and very little photographs and the line drawings of the cliffs," says Haas. "So guidebooks have become much more visible; you can present a lot of information in a photograph."

"So, that was a huge undertaking to photograph the cliffs, to create the topos and to make better maps, because some of those approaches are four hours long with hours of bushwhacking."

"Even though climbers of the past have found these places with just a map and some instinct, we provided more information for those people who want a better chance of getting to the cliff."

Of the nearly 2,000 climbs documented in *Adirondack Rock*, Haas says that he and Lawyer combined have actually climbed about 50% of them and that they visited the base of every cliff.

They also possess years' worth of notes and essays written by other climbers, paramount in their research. Haas says some of these notes go back 100 years.

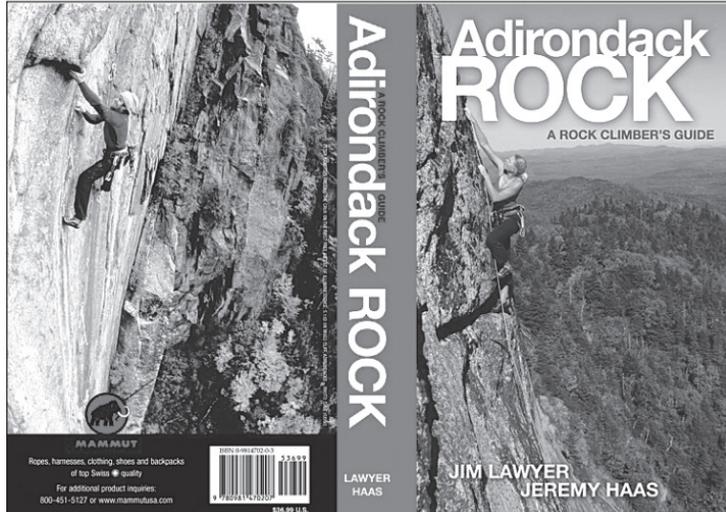
Advice for beginners

For those just getting started in climbing, *Adirondack Rock* should serve as a basic introduction to the sport, with an obvious emphasis on the Adirondacks. A thorough read of the book's first 30 pages quickly gives the reader an idea of the equipment that climbers use and the etiquette of the sport. Difficulty ratings and a star rating system are also included.

"We have a list of local resources in the back that will help steer you towards shops, climbing gyms and guide services," says Haas.

"This book is doing a great job of pulling together a community of climbers and resources for the climbers. It's giving the new climber a lot of options."

Somebody who wants to try climbing may have, before this book, said, "I've got to go to Lake Placid because that's where



Rock climbers Jeremy Haas of Glens Falls and Jim Lawyer of Pompey, N.Y., have combined to write 'Adirondack Rock,' a guide to rock climbing throughout the Adirondacks.

all the climbing happens.' Now you could go 20 minutes from here and be at Stewart's Ledge."

As with many outdoor pursuits, Haas feels people living around here are lucky.

"To have the opportunity to start climbing in the Adirondacks is fantastic," he says. "What cliff you start at is likely one that is close to the road. Those cliffs are pretty well traveled, and it's easy to figure out where to go because there are people nearby."

But he suggests getting educated. "The instruction that happens is usually understanding the safety system with the rope and the knots, the harness and learning how to belay," says Haas. "The rope techniques that are taught are those that are used in the event of a fall. The rope is there for safety, not for upward progress. I could find a cliff that pretty much any person can get up."

Instruction for beginners can come at an indoor gym or by employing a guide service to take you out. "Many people don't have a choice. They begin to climb indoors," says Haas. "They develop the strength, the interest and the skills. Then they go somewhere. For those who can start outside, there is a more close connection to nature from the start."

Haas says the sport of climbing could use some newcomers. Although it is popular in North America, he says participation has decreased somewhat in the Adirondacks. Just as when a hiking trail goes unused, it will become reforested, an unused climbing route regains lichens and moss. Safe route use is encouraged.

Places to climb

Although Haas says the Lake Placid area is still the most attractive to climbers, *Adirondack Rock* covers climbs in the entire park. The section on the cliffs of Poke-O Moonshine in the Champlain Valley eats up nearly 100 pages and serves as an example of the details presented in this guidebook and the number of routes available in one general climbing area.

Other notable climbing areas are around Chapel Pond and Giant Mountain along Route 73 in Keene. Of course, the High Peaks region gets its share of ink.

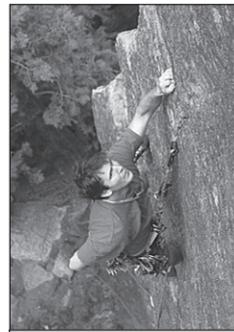
A section called Adirondack Climbing Chronology points to the Trap Dyke on Mt. Colden that was climbed by Robert Clarke in 1850. It's considered the first documented climb in the Adirondacks.

Locally, Haas and Lawyer have included climbs on Tongue Mountain and near Buck Mountain and Pilot Knob. Stewart's Ledge is one that quickly comes to mind and is laid out in *Adirondack Rock*. However, Haas has other suggestions for an area climb, even for first-timers.

Rogers Rock a '5-star cliff'

"Rogers Rock is a five-star cliff, and it's not because of difficulty," says Haas. "To be on Rogers Rock is a fantastic experience of putting the boat in the water, canoeing out in the lake and having this slab of rock that is unique. There are not too many places in the United States where you can do that."

"Because the climbing isn't too difficult, it makes it approachable by a lot of climbers. That would be, with a guide, an incredible first climbing experience for somebody who is athletically capable. If you can only do one rock climb in the Adirondacks it would be hard to beat that."



Co-author Jim Lawyer. Photo by David Le Pagne

Tracks 'n' Trails...

Trail use workshop: The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has scheduled

workshops across the state to discuss trail development in state parks. The purpose is for the public to review inventory and mapping work completed by the agency and to discuss future trails. In this area, the meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 22, at 6 p.m. at the Saratoga State Park Administration Building's Gideon Putnam Room.



Dan Ladd

Also in Saratoga, this weekend:

The 3rd annual **Adirondack Sports & Fitness Expo**, Friday through Sunday (April 18-20) at the Saratoga Springs City Center. Info: www.adksportsfitness.com.

The **"Meet the Clubs" weekend** takes place Friday and Saturday at the Saratoga EMS (Eastern Mountain Sports) store in Wilton. Info: 580-1505

Reach Dan Ladd through *The Chronicle* any time at (518) 798-4807, ext. 33; by e-mail: buck@adkhunter.com and through his Web site, www.ADKHunter.com.

The Almanac



Full moon	Last quarter	New moon	First quarter	Full moon
April 20	April 28	May 5	May 11	May 19



	Sunrise	Sunset
Th.....	6:08 A.M.	7:40 P.M.
F.....	6:07 A.M.	7:42 P.M.
Sa.....	6:05 A.M.	7:43 P.M.
Su.....	6:03 A.M.	7:44 P.M.
M.....	6:02 A.M.	7:45 P.M.
T.....	6:00 A.M.	7:46 P.M.
W.....	5:59 A.M.	7:47 P.M.

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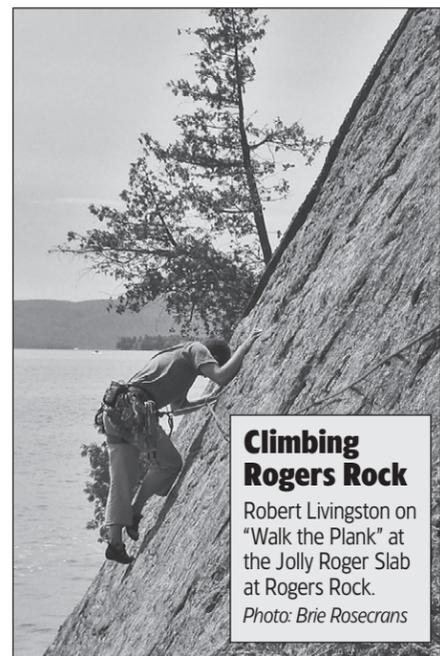
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Climbing Rogers Rock
Robert Livingston on "Walk the Plank" at the Jolly Roger Slab at Rogers Rock. Photo: Brie Rosecrans

Adirondack Rock sells for \$36.99 and is increasingly becoming available at local outlets, especially in the Adirondacks. For more information visit their Web site, www.adirondackrock.com or call 315-677-5272. Whether you are a climber or not, the book is worth adding this title to your Adirondack collection.

The authors will be doing a book-signing at Sportsport Climbing Gym, adjacent to The Sports Page store on Quaker Road in Queensbury, Tuesday, April 22, 7-10 p.m.

Another book signing is set for the Electric City Rock Gym, Schenectady, Thursday, April 24, 7-10 p.m.

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