

# Alternative Rock

## NEW ROUTES AND RECORDS FOR A CLASSIC CLIMBING BOOK

By Michael Virtanen

**LIKE MINERS, JEREMY HAAS AND JIM Lawyer** are prospecting in the Adirondack forest for its hidden wealth of crags. Last year and again this season they are collecting new climbing routes and remapping old ones for *Adirondack Rock*, the successor to a venerable series of guidebooks, which they plan to publish in 2008.

"We have many cliffs that are well hidden way in the woods, and a large part of our fieldwork is locating these cliffs," Haas says. "We need to be pretty savvy about the time of year because of leaf cover, and we're getting very good at bushwhacking and thinking more like woodsmen than the sort of rock climber many people envision."

The authors are asking other technical climbers to add to the roughly 175 cliffs and thousands of routes they've identified, many of them outside the popular climbing destination of Keene Valley.

"There's a big list on the Web site [[www.adirondackrock.com](http://www.adirondackrock.com)]," Lawyer says. "It doesn't tell you where the crags are. But somebody looks at that list and says, 'Oooh yeah, Mitchell Ponds Mountain. I've been there. I'd better get my route in.'"

Haas, 33, a science teacher at Saratoga Springs High School, is also a part-time climbing guide for

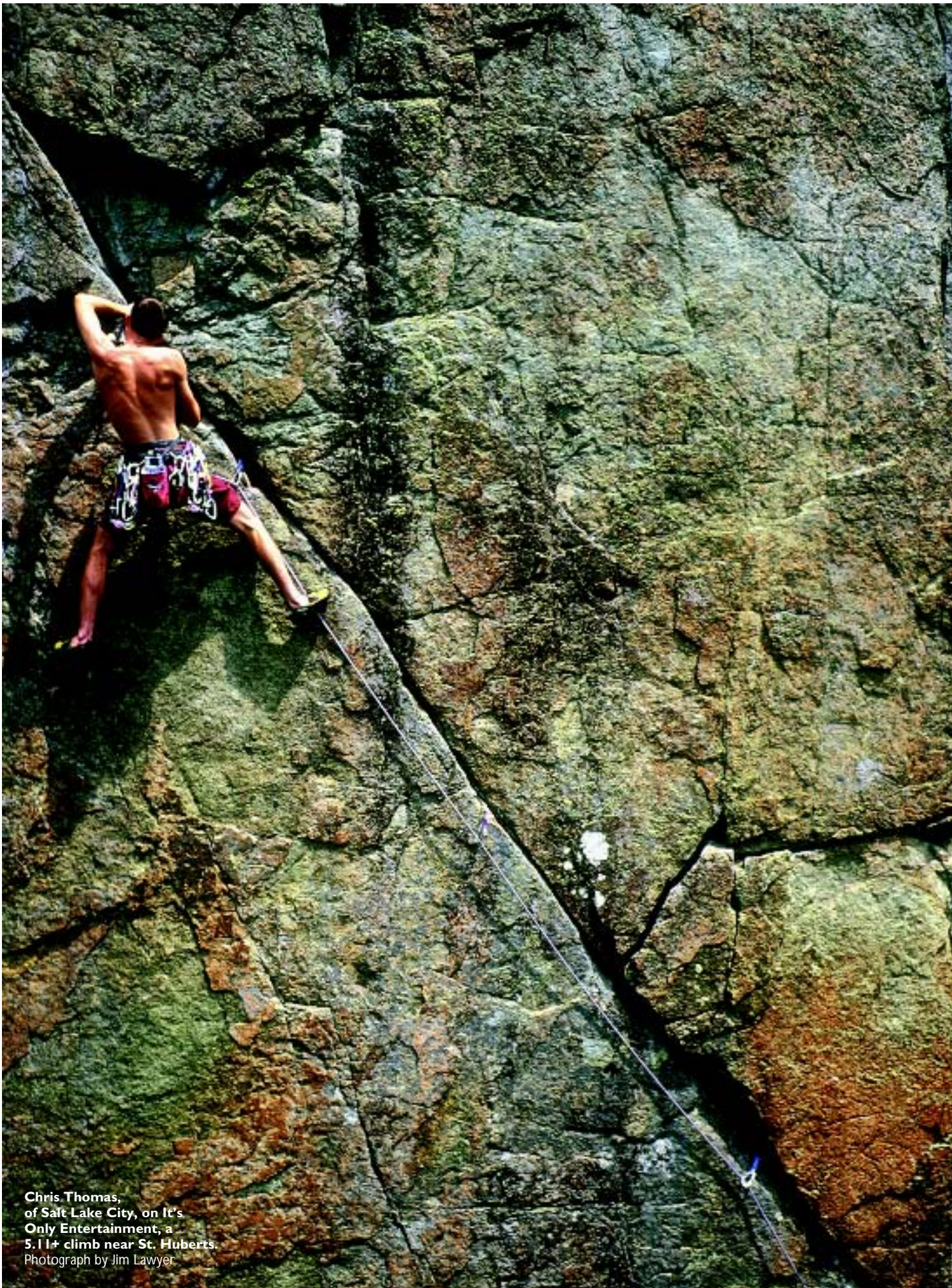
Adirondack Rock and River, in Keene. Lawyer, 41, retired six years ago from his computer software job in the Syracuse area. After he built a house in New Russia, the guidebook became his new project.

The two have ascended many routes up to 5.11 difficulty (the range is 5.1 to 5.15, and only a handful of climbs rate harder than 5.11 in the Adirondacks) and talked with other climbers, including those credited with first ascents. Their goal is accuracy in route descriptions and consistency in difficulty ratings. They are making topographical maps and diagrams that note natural features as well as existing hardware (bolts that climbers hook onto).

"There's an untold number of new places in the south," Lawyer says, such as crags on Pilot Knob and Stewarts Ledge on the east side of Lake George. "Lake George is going to be a big destination after this book comes out."

Another discovery is Potash Mountain near Lake Luzerne, in Saratoga County. "The bottom of Potash probably has 20 routes 5.10 and up, and they're all good. Jeremy developed almost every one," Lawyer says.

"There's a dozen cliffs in the Indian Lake area," Haas adds after a spring day snowshoeing to check out two. The southern mountains have fewer trails



Chris Thomas,  
of Salt Lake City, on It's  
Only Entertainment, a  
5.11+ climb near St. Huberts.  
Photograph by Jim Lawyer



