



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

With climbers needing to access the Bolton Quarry in winter, CRAG-VT has arranged for access road and parking area plowing. In lean snow years like '06-'07, plowing was rarely needed. But during heavy snow years like this past winter, keeping up with the frequent snow is expensive—this year CRAG-VT spent \$700 on plowing! This spring the access road needed regrading and drainage improvements. We plan to fix the road, but must also balance this need with other projects that may require significant funding. *When you join, renew, or make a tax-deductible donation to CRAG-VT, your donation goes directly, dollar for dollar, for expenses like these.*

One additional note about ice climbing in the Quarry: the main ice walls are south facing and get a tremendous amount of sun. In midwinter this is a blessing, since places like The Lake and Smuggs are super-cold and the Quarry provides some relief. But in the late-season when the sun is stronger and the temps are warmer, ice climbing in the Quarry can be dangerous and ill-advised. Be careful if water is running down the flows—this is an obvious sign that it may be too warm. If the Quarry is too warm, try the Town Line flows across the Winooski River—they all face north.

This spring an informal Green-Up Day was done at Prospect Rock in Johnson by local climbers and caring neighbors. Multiple illegal fire rings were removed, signs were posted asking people to not throw objects off the cliff, and broken glass and litter were removed from the base. A return visit will be needed to remove parts of a refrigerator and TV thrown off the cliff.

~ Ross Perry

Smuggs Ice Bash!

The second annual Smuggler's Notch Ice Bash was a great success! On February 16-17th over 50 people signed out gear and participated in clinics to sample some of Vermont's finest ice.

This year the Ice Bash moved from Stowe to Jeffersonville with many of the festivities hosted by the Sunrise Café. Doug Millen of NEIce.com served up the much appreciated hot chicken soup in the Smuggs parking lot as folks were heading home after a long day climbing.

Après climbing fun included Alden Pellett's and Ryan Stefiuk's Newfoundland ice climbing adventure video shown at Stella Notte Restaurant and the sophisticated adult refreshments served at the climber-owned Brewski pub.

Special thanks to Sunrise Café and Natural Foods Market for hosting the demo site and the awesome man-made practice ice pillar. Thanks also to La Sportiva, Grivel, Black Diamond, Petzl, Mammut, EMS, Outdoor Gear Exchange, Climb High, and Sunrise Adventures Climbing School. Expect an even bigger Ice Bash next winter as the event grows!

~ Alden Pellett

ABOVE: Liv Perry chops the Ent Gully at the 2008 Smuggler's Ice Bash. **RIGHT:** The Ice Bash pillar at the Sunrise Café.



Photos by Ross Perry



Liv Perry



To volunteer with CRAG-VT email: info@cragvt.org.

Have a great climbing season!

The sign hung by local climbers Kris Barrowman and Ross Perry at Prospect Rock.

THE CRAG RAG

The **Crag Rag** is the membership newsletter of CRAG-VT. It is published two times/year.

Issue Vol. 6 No. 1 - June 2008

CRAG-VT Board

Travis Peckham - *President*
Seth Maciejowski - *V.P. & Secretary*
Brendan McGuire - *Treasurer*
Ross Perry - *Stewardship Chair*
Paul Hansen - *Education & Outreach Chair*
Alden Pellett - *Access Chair*
Dr. Richard Katzman
Kevin Karn
Chris Bernier
Matt Emelett
Adam Sherman

CRAG-VT is run entirely by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or Board membership, please contact us!

Contact Information

PO Box 614
Richmond, VT 05477
802-899-3455
info@cragvt.org
www.cragvt.org

Meetings

CRAG-VT typically meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Camels Hump Middle School in Richmond, VT. The public is welcome to meetings. Call or email to confirm the time and date.

*Newsletter design by Nicole Ballinger
www.nicoleballinger.com*



A F F I L I A T E

Upcoming Events...

- > June 21-23, 2008: **Women's Rock Weekend**. North Conway, NH. Info: 603-356-7064 or www.ime-usa.com/womensrockday
- > September 6, 2008: **Boulder Bash** (see last page for details)

Conservation Update

Vermont climbing had a great fall and winter, with many first ascents on the rock and ice as well as ascents of the area's classic routes. But beyond the great climbing, CRAG-VT kept focus on the need for ongoing stewardship of the crags and surrounding habitat and continued its efforts to secure local climbing access.

One area of concern has been the endangered or threatened species that reside among the cliffs, including peregrine falcons and sensitive grasses. Even though peregrines were recently removed from federal

protection, ongoing efforts by CRAG-VT, in conjunction with the National Wildlife Foundation (NWF), have allowed the continued study and protection of these magnificent birds. By coordinating with Margaret Fowle of the NWF, we have posted peregrine falcon updates to our online forums. We ask that all climbers respect the temporary cliff closures so that nature can take its course unimpeded by our actions. Climbing on cliffs closed for peregrine nesting can result in serious fines and potential attacks by territorial falcon parents, but there is also a threat to the nesting chicks who, when scared, will sometimes jump off a nest ledge before they can fly.

Threatened and endangered plants that grow on and around the cliffs and boulders are also a concern. CRAG-VT has been working with State Botanists Leif Richardson and Bob Popp on efforts to confirm the presence of endangered plants at popular climbing areas like Smuggler's Notch and Marshfield Ledges. This spring, CRAG-VT volunteers will rappel the cliffs of Smuggler's Notch with Bob Popp to survey sensitive or threatened vegetation. In August, CRAG-VT is planning a trail day with Leif Richardson at Marshfield Ledge to redirect the climber's trail away from an endangered sedge that grows at the cliff base.

Climbers can help protect these fragile species by staying on trails as much as possible and avoiding stepping on obvious growth. Please do not pull vegetation out of cracks in alpine areas like Smuggler's Notch where many rare species have a tenuous foothold. Be careful where you throw crash-pads and try not to boulder where you'll damage plants. If you see other climbers harming plants, please do your best to try to educate them. If you see what appears to be a simple grass or moss at Marshfield or the Notch, you may be looking at one of the only specimens of that species in North America. Please tread lightly.

- Ross Perry



Steve Faccio from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science bands a healthy peregrine falcon chick after being guided to the nest by CRAG-VT volunteers.

Travis Peckham

**CONNECT
WITH VT
CLIMBERS!**

Forums.cragvt.org is a free discussion site hosted by CRAG-VT for climbers and boulderers to talk about the news from Vermont and nearby crags. Contribute to local rock and ice reports, find climbing partners, and learn about CRAG-VT projects and events!

The CHOSS PILE Vermont Climbing News...

Got Choss? We've got it here—a roundup of what's happening on the ice, rock, boulders, and in the gym in Vermont and nearby...

Ice Season

The 2007-08 Vermont ice season brought another year of high-end breakthroughs and the discovery of some great new lines. Although it started late, flows came in big and stayed fat—right up until the season closer: a frightening May 1st attempt on *Grand Illusion* (WI4) in Smuggler's Notch.

Things began with a very early mid-October attempt on Pinnacle gully by two local climbers who were foiled by the lack of proper dry-suits required for the early season conditions. After a brief intermission of a few weeks of warm temperatures, Alden Pellett and Adam Wilson knocked off an ascent of the *Black Dike* in the first week of November. Pellett characterized it as “well bonded, but the gear was pretty useless.”

By December, it was becoming pretty evident that Smuggler's Notch was in for a good winter. Multiple ascents of the rarely formed direct variation (WI4/4+) of *Dominatrix* were nabbed, including at least two solo ascents. Other classic thin lines came in fat and received ascents including *Scream Queen*, *Three Sheets* and *The Rustinator*. Ryan Stefiuk, a former local and Catskills guide, snatched the second ascent of *I Have a Dream* (M7), the intimidating free hanger to the left of *Watership Down*. Fat conditions on the route made for a relatively easy second ascent of this proud line.



David Vuono

Josh Worley sends Vermont's most burly mixed climb: *Solid Gold* (M10/11).

By early-winter Willoughby took center stage with all the classic lines growing enormous amounts of ice. *Bullwinkle*, *Promenade*, *Who's Who In Outer Space* and the mega-classic *Called on Account of Rains* all received early-season ascents by numerous parties. The overhanging ice of *Solstice* (WI6) was repeated by some strong New Hampshire climbers while the coveted *China Shop* (WI5+) pillar made a rare appearance and saw multiple ascents. Meanwhile Mainiacs Jim Ewing and Evan Sanborn scooped the first ascent of *Thanks for the Call* (M5/WI5+) a massive, wildly overhung free hanger spilling from the top of the cliff onto the sidewalk ledge left of *Called on Account of Rains*. Ewing commented that the gear was solid and the mixed climbing relatively easy if incredibly intimidating.

To up the ante, New Hampshire guide and world renowned hardman Kevin Mahoney nabbed two new sustained mixed lines at The Lake with partners Ben Gilmore and Greg Benner. *Kryosonics* takes an independent plumb line between *The Last Gentleman* and *Who's Who In Outer Space* for three pitches at M7+R/WI5R. Mahoney described several low percentage moves far out from poor gear. Later in February, Mahoney returned for *The Lake Effect* (M7+/WI6) a steep corner system right of *Five Musketeers* that offers up gobs of thin

Ryan Stefiuk on *I Have a Dream* (M7) in unusually fat conditions.

Climbing COMMON SENSE

Much of Vermont's climbing is on private land and some is on public land. Access

on private land is a delicate matter. The following guidelines will help ensure good relationships among climbers, landowners, and land managers:

- 1. If you don't know, ASK.** Where to park? Where to hike in from? Is the cliff closed to peregrine nesting? If you don't know, ask the landowner.
- 2. Turn down the volume.** Noise travels easily. Keep noise to the minimum on the approach and while climbing. Leave boom boxes and barking dogs at home.
- 3. Leave No Trace.** “Take only photos, leave only foot prints...” Stay on existing trails. Pack out garbage whether it's yours or someone else's. Don't place or leave fixed anchors without landowner consent.
- 4. Use common sense & courtesy.** Be smart and polite to landowners, neighbors and other land users. Climbing on private land is a privilege, not a right.

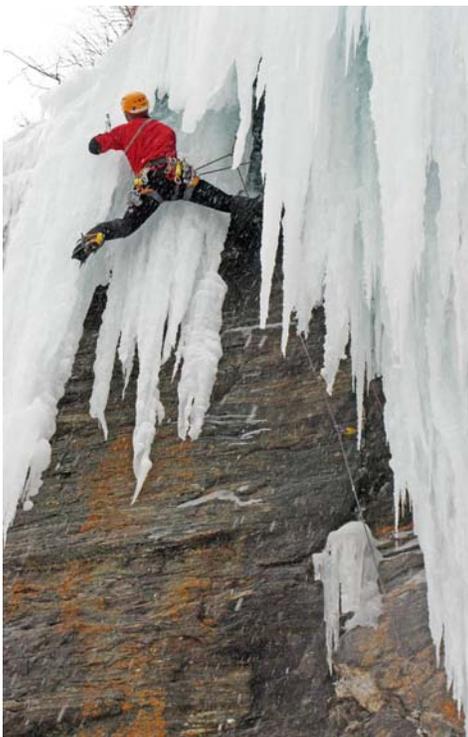
ice and stellar dry-hooking. Mahoney describes the route as, “the best mixed climb I have done in recent memory.” Both of these lines were established ground up on traditional gear.

Not to be outdone, local Will Mayo and Andy Tuthill, went to Cannon Cliff and used the classic hardman's route *Omega* as a warm up for a new line just south of *Omega* on the *Henderson Buttress*. *Mean Streak* offers some very steep sledding at a stout WI6/M7 with a 100' overhanging skinny pillar in a corner as an appetizer for the main course of two more pitches of stout drytooling and welded ice blobs.

This winter proved a quantum leap forward for Vermont in extreme-difficulty mixed climbing with Josh Worley establishing *Solid Gold* (M10/11) at Snake Mountain. Picking its way up radically overhanging limestone, the route forced Worley to use all the tricks of the trade to reach and mount a skinny free hanger 80' up the cliff. This proud, demanding line awaits a repeat. Also at Snake, numerous other new lines were established including *Paradigm Shift* (M6) by Aaron Fournier, and *Dowdy Gets Rowdy* (WI5/M7) by Jeremy Dowdy. With these additions and previously established routes including *Fang Shui* (M9/10), Snake Mountain must be listed among the pantheon of hard mixed climbing crags in North America.

At a heretofore undisclosed location, Seth Maciejowski and Alden Pellett found hun-

Alden Pellett



dreds of feet of unclimbed ice, prime for the taking. Not believing that such a place could still exist in the northeast, they proceeded to nab seven new routes, the best of which include *Goldmine* (WI4 220'), *Canary* (WI5+ R/X), and *The Golden Rule* (WI2+R 800'). *The Golden Rule* is a stand out line rivaling any of the easy classics in the north-

east including The North Face of Gothics and the ice routes of Huntington Ravine. Look forward to more information in the not too distant future on this amazing find.

Finally, even Marshfield Ledge saw a quick strike by Andy Tuthill and Jake Swan who established a new three pitch line, *Wankers in the Kingdom* (WI5/M6/A0) taking a wandering adventure up the center of the main face.

As the season wound down, Smuggler's Notch saw the formation of some enticing drips in mid-March. The often observed ice left of *End of the Beginning* finally touched down forming a direct line to a steep, skinny free-hanger. Several suitors attempted the line before Alden Pellett teamed up with Bert Severin for the FA of *Olog Hai* (M6). Only two days later Maciejowski returned with Pellett to climb *Pebon's Ladder* (M5/WI4-4+) which tackles an awkward free-hanger to a well hidden line of ice right of *Tall Tales*.

Overall, the ice season was exceptional with local climbers establishing new routes of all difficulties and firmly proving that winter climbing in Vermont is still some of the best in the nation.

-Seth Maciejowski

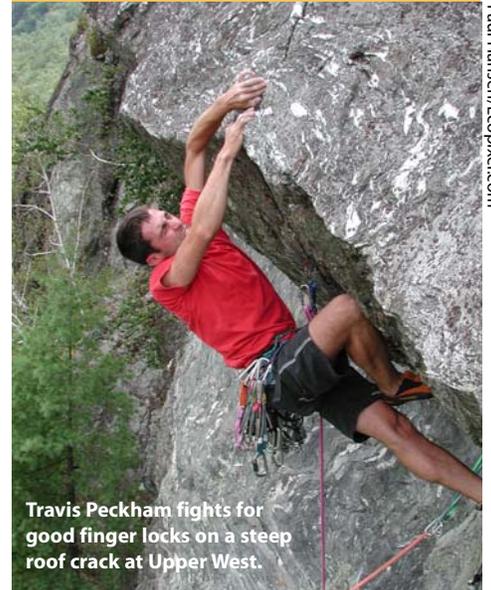
Travis Peckham



Derek Doucet contemplates the Paradigm Shift (M6) at Snake Mountain.

UPPER WEST NEWS

CRAG-VT is very excited about progress we've made during the last several months toward conserving Upper West Bolton, home of the famous *Rose Crack*. The owners have agreed to sell roughly 18 acres which include the entire cliff and surrounding land.



Travis Peckham fights for good finger locks on a steep roof crack at Upper West.

Paul Hansen/Ecopixel.com

The Vermont Land Trust is involved, and we hope to have support from the national Access Fund as well. After purchasing Upper West, our goal is to transfer the property into the adjoining Preston Pond Conservation Area, to be maintained as a recreation and climbing resource forever. We'll start fundraising soon, and will need your help to succeed.

CLIMBING BEFORE ARMAGEDDON — REFLECTIONS FROM LOWER WEST

It's hard to believe, after a great winter of fat ice and deep snow, with the bright days and blue skies of springtime coming on strong and the rock warm to touch again, that the world is truly going to hell. The noisy enthusiasm of my six little grandsons (no girls!) and my desire to get them outdoors seem sweet and real. The muddy road up to the Quarry, which needs work this year, and hints of wildlife as I head up to a favorite crag and my very own "project" are reassuring signs of a new season. But not so the almost daily

images of flooded streets, storm wreckage, barren landscapes ruined by drought or war, people beaten by poverty, disease and hunger in other places.

It's not that I'm a skeptic about global warming. We've all seen changes—the air quality from mountaintops, the lengthening season when stinging insects get you while you're finagling gear on a route, the diminishing number of days in winter when it's so cold and the ice so brittle that it's almost impossible to climb. I try to do the right things, too. I drive a hybrid car, sometimes take cloth bags to the supermarket where I buy produce flown in from around the world, turn the thermostat down, and turn off the light bulbs all over the house. I think about staying close to home instead of driving to the Gunks, the Adirondacks or over to New Hampshire. Lake Willoughby was the Big Trip this past winter.

There's that old slogan, "think globally, act locally." Or is it the other way around? Or is it, actually, that it doesn't really matter now? That it's too late, and our descendants, including my grandchildren, will remember us bitterly because of our inaction. An independent British scientist, James Lovelock, who has been accurately predicting world environmental and economic events for many years, recently described our efforts at living green and

renewably as something like rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*. It's not that obvious to me that things are hopeless. But when he said that by 2020 extreme weather will be the norm and causing global devastation, and that by 2100 he expected 80% of the world's population to be wiped out, it got my attention.

One of the great things about climbing is that it also gets your attention. It's almost effortless, especially when you're on lead, to not think about things like the state of the planet or the politicians or whatever. So I'm going to keep at it, enjoying and caring for our local crags if I can for the next few years until things hit the fan. Maybe by then we'll know better what to do and even have a renewed sense of purpose. Let me know what you think. I'll see you out there.

~ Dr. Dick Katzman, April 2007

Katzman Collection



Dick Katzman "tree-hugging" back in the 1970s on the Pacific coast.

CRAG-VT AND THE VT AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Travis Peckham



CRAG-VT's efforts to protect the endangered peregrine falcon over the last decade were important to showing that climbers are environmentally responsible on state lands.

Last fall it came to our attention that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) had begun discussing the future of climbing on state lands. Some of the land managers were feeling that they had no control over climbing activities and impact, particularly in areas with a recent increase in climbing. As a result, some members of the ANR were looking to develop policy and possibly prohibit climbing as a acceptable recreational use.

CRAG-VT was fortunate to be able to participate in an ANR state land manager's meeting and explain the importance of climbing in Vermont. We spoke about the history of Vermont climbing, dating it back to Fritz Weissner's arrival in Stowe in 1946, and cited areas like Lake Willoughby as being areas of national and historical significance. We gave a show-and-tell with some climbing gear including a 30-year-old quarter-inch bolt placed by John Bouchard in Smuggler's Notch. The ANR land managers were very interested and asked questions about lead climbing and why bolts were sometimes placed instead of traditional protection.

During the meeting we described CRAG-VT's core mission of access preservation, conservation and stewardship, and community. We highlighted our cliff acquisitions and noted that the Bolton Quarry purchase was, in fact, partially funded with an ANR grant. We described our endangered species conservation efforts with Vermont state biologists Bob Popp and Leif Richardson, and Margaret Fowle from the National Wildlife Federation. We showed

copies of our newsletter and described our web site to illustrate our outreach into the Vermont climbing community.

The land managers' concerns about climbing were varied. There were a number of isolated issues of impact, unauthorized camping, event permitting, and some concern about fixed protection. In the end, it seemed clear that the state's primary concern was that they felt that they were not in "in the driver's seat" in managing Vermont climbing. We tried to impress upon them that CRAG-VT is in the driver's seat and that the state should work directly with us to address any management concerns they might have. CRAG-VT offered the ANR an outreach channel into the climbing community and, I believe, this greatly helped mitigate their concerns.

The development of our relationship with the state is critical to maintaining long-term access to climbing on state lands and the importance of CRAG-VT's involvement at this level of state government cannot be emphasized enough. Hopefully, we have set in motion an ongoing dialog that will bring us into a strong partnership that will ensure responsible climbing management in Vermont for the future. CRAG-VT is well positioned to advocate on behalf of climbers and we hope that this process will bring us to an effective and sustainable relationship with the State.

Thank you for your support!

Travis Peckham
President, CRAG-VT

CLIMB LOCAL!

Let's face it, Vermont is a bedroom community of commuting climbers. Most serious climbers leave on weekends for the Whites, the Dacks, the Gunks, and Rumney. I love those places too—I can't deny it. But, for many people these trips may more than double the gas they burn in a week!

Faced with record high gas prices and global climate change poised to wreak havoc in the coming decades, I've become increasingly pre-occupied with conserving energy. An idea that has really impressed me is the "local" movement. I've recently become a huge proponent of things local (especially local food) and it got me thinking, "why not Climb Local?"

Here's a little food for thought (sorry, here comes the bad news). With gas prices over \$3.85 per gallon here's what you'll pay for a round-trip from Burlington with a car that gets 25 MPG:

- ▶ **140 miles to Keene Valley = 5.6 gallons of gas, \$21.56, 106.5 lbs of carbon dioxide**
- ▶ **202 miles to Rumney = 8.08 gallons of gas, \$31.10, 153.5 lbs of carbon dioxide**
- ▶ **290 miles to North Conway = 11.6 gallons of gas, \$44.66, 220.4 lbs of carbon dioxide**
- ▶ **458 miles to New Paltz = 18.32 gallons of gas, \$70.45, 348.1 lbs of carbon dioxide**

Maybe your car gets better than 25 MPG—and I hope it does, but the numbers will still be unpleasantly high. These are long trips even if you drive a hybrid. So—Climb Local! By my count over 100 new climbs have been established in northwestern Vermont in the last ten years—and that number jumps to 200 if you count the Northeast Kingdom and Marshfield. How many of these routes have you done? Our local crags have a lifetime of fantastic climbing yet undiscovered. Granted there's no Vermont guidebook (with many cliffs on private land, many locals feel that a published guide might result in access problems). But even without a book, great local climbing is to easy find. Here's how:

- ▶ **Post threads on CRAG-VT's online forums.**
- ▶ **Talk to the folks at a local stores like EMS, Climb High, OGE, Kingdom Outdoors.**

So this weekend, sleep in on Saturday, have a leisurely breakfast, climb Vermont for the afternoon, keep a few dollars in your pocket, and take a small step towards bringing our planet back into equilibrium.

See you at the crags!

Travis Peckham
Local Climber

CARE FOR YOUR CRAG - BECOME A MEMBER!

Your tax-deductible donation will help CRAG-VT protect existing climbing in Vermont and open more areas to climbing. Mail your membership to PO Box 614, Richmond, VT 05477, or donate online at www.cragvt.org.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Yes, I'd like to join!

\$15 \$25 \$50 other ____

To pay by credit card please visit www.cragvt.org

My check, payable to CRAG-VT, is enclosed.

BoulderBash September 6th!

Mark your calendars—BoulderBash returns this September 6th! We're shooting for a later date this year to avoid the possibly wet June days. Come by for the only event of its kind in the area. This event is for the entire climbing community—including new climbers. There will be LOTS of demo gear, raffle prizes, free bouldering clinics, slacklining, and après climb party on the Sunrise Café lawn. Last year's sponsors included La Sportiva, 5.10, Metolius, Mammut, Black Diamond, PetraCliffs, EMS, and more—look for a bigger and better turnout this year!

Check out www.sunriseclimbing.com for more details!

~ Bert Severin

CRAG-VT Member Gear Discounts!

Thanks to the generous support of local outdoor retailers, CRAG-VT members receive amazing discounts at local stores and gyms with their membership card. *Please bring your card—stores will no longer have lists.*

▶ **EMS:** 15% off anything in the store.

▶ **Outdoor Gear**

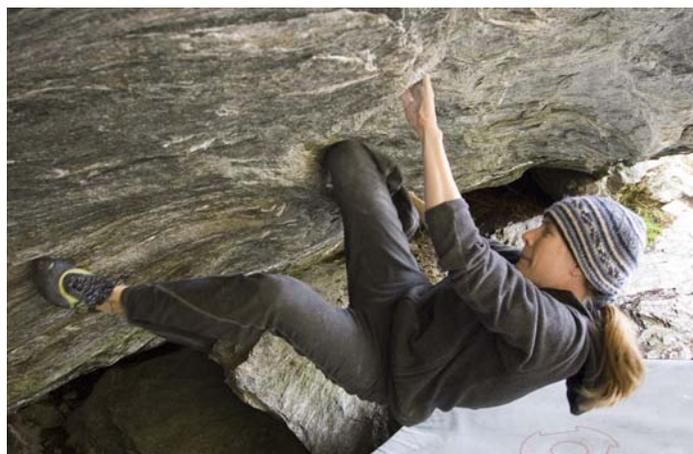
Exchange: 20% off Mammut and 10% off other climbing equipment!

▶ **Climb High:** 20% off Mammut and 10% off other climbing equipment!

▶ **Kingdom Outdoors:** 10% off anything in the store.

▶ **Petra Cliffs Climbing Center:** check cragvt.org for details.

For just \$15 you can help support local climbing and get these awesome discounts! Fill out and mail the form here or join at www.cragvt.org. **CRAG-VT thanks all these businesses for their support. Climb local—BUY LOCAL!**



Irene Utovac of Ottawa, Canada on Skirt Roof (V3) in Smugglers Notch.



P.O. Box 614
Richmond, VT 05477

THE CRAG RAG
June 2008