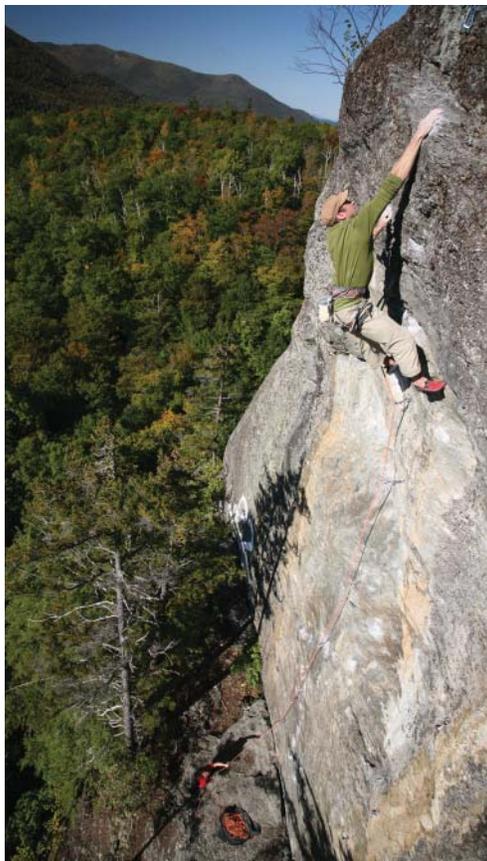




PHOTO: DAVE LUONO / DAVE LUONO.COM



Aaron Fournier slaps the Doggfather (5.12b) at the 82 Crag.

Vermont's 82 Crag Protected!

Through the combined efforts of the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and CRAG-VT, climbing at the 82 Crag in Bolton, Vermont has been permanently protected. Very recently, the VLT helped the ANR acquire an easement ensuring conservation and public recreation rights on the land where the cliff is located. CRAG-VT was able to work with the VLT and the ANR to make sure climbing access was included in these protections.

To assist with the logistics of the easement, CRAG-VT granted the ANR written permission to cross its adjacent Bolton Quarry property. This permission allows the ANR the access it needs to monitor their new protections on the landlocked parcel hosting the 82 Crag. Without obligation to CRAG-VT, the VLT and the ANR graciously agreed to work with the land owner to incorporate climbing as an expressly permitted recreational activity; the land owner agreed and the language was added to the easement.

These protections come at a critical time. With its close proximity to Burlington, this area of forestland has been especially at risk for development. The conservation of this land

is part of the Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project—a cooperative effort by many local groups and statewide organizations and agencies to conserve the ecological integrity, rural character, and working landscape of the northeastern uplands of Chittenden County.

“The Vermont Land Trust is working hard to protect large parcels of forestland—they are essential to our land-based economy and provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities,” said Bob Heiser, project manager for the Vermont Land Trust.

The 82 Crag is one of the best climbing areas in Vermont, hosting many classic climbs from 5.8 to 5.13 including many of the area's best 5.12s on the “Steep Wall”. This project is a great example of how conservation groups like the ANR, the VLT and CRAG-VT can work in partnership to protect Vermont's climbing and conserve undeveloped lands. CRAG-VT would like to extend its gratitude to ANR and the VLT for understanding the importance of local climbing resources and for the hard work it took to make this a project a success.

- Travis Peckham

Protect Upper West!

CRAG-VT has received approval from landowners and the Bolton Select Board to subdivide and purchase Upper West Bolton Cliff, one of Vermont's most popular and historic climbing areas. It features sport climbs, traditional climbs, ice climbs, an exceptional boulder field, and routes ranging in difficulty from 5.2 to 5.12. With fantastic views, four-season hiking and a treasure trove of botanical specimens, it is truly an area for everyone.

Generations of climbers have enjoyed this fantastic crag. For over 40 years everyone from absolute beginners to climbing legends have become a part of the cliff's colorful history. John Bouchard cut his teeth on the green schist of Upper West before establishing himself as one of our country's most accomplished alpinists. Bouchard made an indelible mark when he established *The Rose* (5.10a) and *The Thorn* (5.11a); routes that have become two of the most treasured northwestern Vermont classics. These routes clearly represent some of the best crack climbing the northeast has to offer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2....



John Tomb on *The Rose* crack (5.10b).

THE CRAG RAG

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

Issue Vol. 6 No. 2 - November 2008

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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. Please call or email to confirm the time and date.

Newsletter design by Nicole Ballinger
www.nicoleballinger.com



Check us out online!

- www.cragvt.org
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"UPPER WEST" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1....

Upper West would be worth acquiring to protect *The Rose* and *The Thorn* alone, but the 200' tall cliff hosts dozens of great climbs. Classics like *Chockstone* (5.8) and *5.7 Corner* (5.7) are among the areas best moderate trad climbs with good protection, fantastic rock, and amazing views. More recent contributions to the cliff have included excellent sport climbs ranging from the popular romp *Private Property* (5.8+) to powerful cranking on *Oompa Loompa* (5.11d).

Putting aside its obvious value as a rock climbing resource, Upper West is an important conservation target for many reasons. Here are just a few:

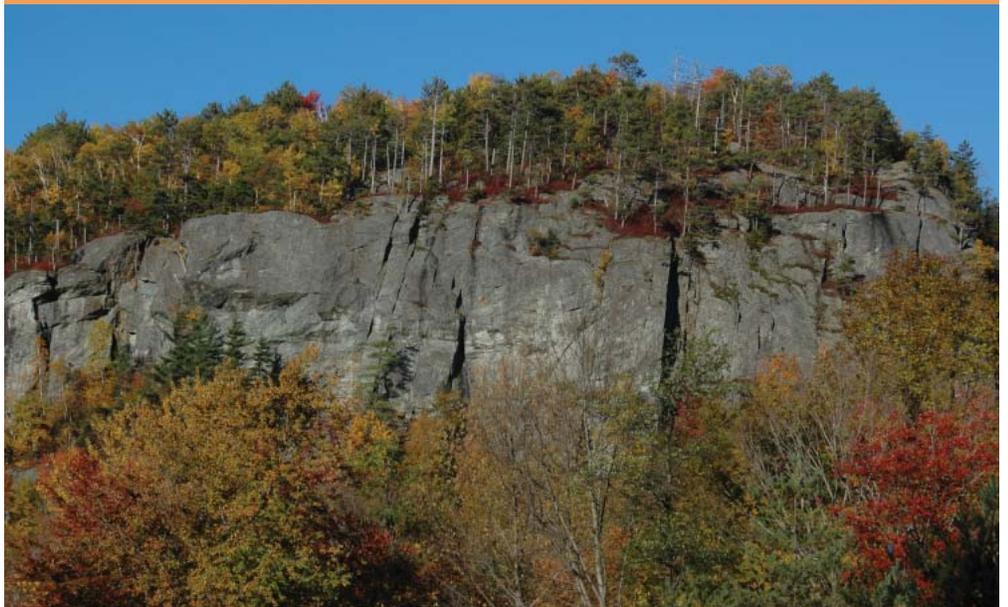
- Hiking trails provide a great summit destination for walkers in the adjacent Preston Pond Conservation area.
- The ridge-top provides wonderful views of Mount Mansfield, Camel's Hump and the beaver ponds that extend down the Bolton Notch valley.
- The red pine community at the top of Resin Ridge has been identified by the Vermont Natural Heritage program as a very rare, statewide-significant natural community and an important conservation target.
- Snowshoeing, skiing and bird watching are only a few of the activities CRAG-VT is working to ensure.

In the recent past, Upper West Bolton Cliff has been closed to climbing. A decade ago, future CRAG-VT board members worked

with landowners to restore access to the cliff. CRAG-VT has maintained positive relationships with the landowners since then and we are now in a position to ensure permanent conservation by acquiring the cliff. Through a minor subdivision CRAG-VT has an opportunity to purchase a total of 18 acres from two landowners. This land will include the entire cliff, hilltop and boulder fields. We must take advantage of this opportunity; someday this land will change hands and access will again be at risk. Successful completion of this project guarantees that Upper West Bolton Cliff cannot be closed to climbing and recreational use in the future; we have an amazing opportunity before us that may never come again and we need to act now.

CRAG-VT is working to mobilize local climbers and outdoor enthusiasts to participate in fundraising and project awareness efforts. We need your support! Please contact us if you have a fundraising idea, would like to make a donation, or if you can volunteer your time to make this project a success. With your help, we can purchase and protect this land forever. Please visit our www.cragvt.org to learn more and make an online donation.

~ Travis Peckham



The cliff face at Upper West Bolton.

Safety at the Crag – It’s All In Your Head

A hhhh, it is autumn in New England. Cool crisp days make for sticky fingers on rock that has been cleansed by the summer rains, a bit of sunshine and welcomed drying conditions (not to mention a bit of foot traffic or a toothbrush or two). While the conditions are ripe for first ascents or revisiting the classics, I find myself immersed in the unfortunate reality of this time of year—work.

It’s not that I am complaining (I have a pretty sweet gig), it just is that time of year that I find myself talking more about climbing than actually climbing. I’m not just talking about “spray” (which I have been known to release on occasion), rather, I am tasked with challenge of helping undergraduate students understand why people seek adventure, and how adventure can lead to educative and potentially transformative experiences. It’s not that bad really—we simply extrapolate ideas from psychology, sports psychology, brain-based research, philosophy, anthropology and history, shake them up with a helpful dose of personal experience and voilà, “adventure education theory & practice” is the result. As you might imagine, there is a decent amount of information here, so I’ll just focus on the personal experience piece with a smidge of theory to chew on.

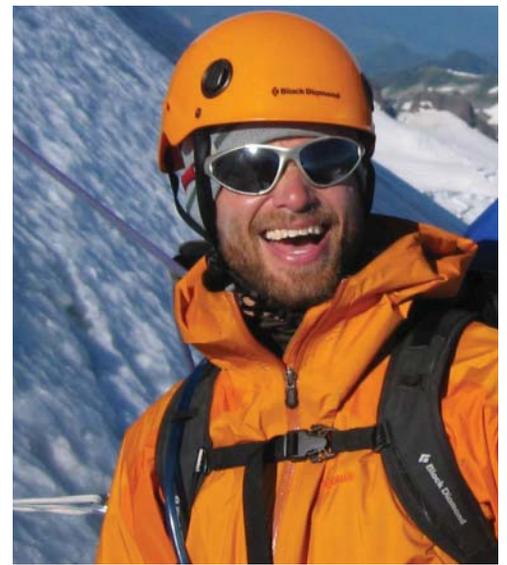
In class yesterday I was recounting one of my experiences climbing in Smuggler’s Notch a few years back. It went something like this: As I was standing under the overhanging arête I focused on the quickdraws dangling in space as the banded schist reared into the blue sky, obscuring much of my view, as white clouds rapidly moved on by. I began sending the route but found myself pretty pumped at the crux moves near the fifth bolt. I yelled “falling” and Travis, my trusted belayer (motivator and sandbagger) caught my fall. As I sat there, “hang-dogging” and contemplating my next moves I felt a bit uncomfortable in the harness region. I looked down and noticed that I had

tied in to the leg loops only, without being attached to the swami belt whatsoever! I quickly remedied the problem by clipping into the bolt and re-tying into the harness. After that, I finally managed to grovel to the top of the route, clean it, and continue the afternoon of belaying and attempting to get up routes that were well beyond my ability.

Why the story? I used this example to illustrate how arousal, or brain stimulation, can relate to performance and how fear, or too much arousal, can diminish one’s performance and potentially lead to a misadventure, or even worse, devastation and disaster. The link is that I was so focused on that intimidating route that I neglected to pay attention to the critical detail of tying in. (I might also use that theory to justify that my performance was compromised, which is why I did not send the route, but that would be cheesy!) Our brains (at least most of them) are super powerful and anyone that climbs knows how important it is to have your head in the game. Just be aware that when the brain gets too much stimulation the body responds with diminished performance.

Ironically, later that afternoon (after my class discussion on the above mentioned theories and experiences) a different student told me about a ground fall he took just days before. He was on a route that he had never climbed and had clipped the first two bolts, but as he was climbing towards the third he slipped and fell to the deck about 15 feet below. Luckily, he is ok and just a bit shaken up and bruised, not to mention the nice cut and swollen “egg” on his forehead. He assured me that there was no belayer error and when I asked him if he had climbed past some potential gear placements he said “maybe.” His helmet was in his pack, not on his head.

Was his brain over-aroused? Was the route well within his ability, yet his performance was diminished due to brain stimulation? Perhaps



BEN TRAXLER

Brad Brad Moscovitz guiding the North Ridge of Mount Baker, Washington.

he was too focused on reaching the third bolt to consider placing gear. Or, was he overly confident, purposefully leaving the helmet in his pack to experience the “freedom of the hills” in a purer way (that weaves in a whole other set of theories!)? I really don’t know. I was not there and I was not in his head (although based on the decisions he made I might find the space somewhat comfortable).

But I do know one thing. If I ever get myself out to the crag this fall I am going to do my best to keep a level head, to screen out unnecessary thoughts (brain stimulation), to focus on the task at hand, and to not forget about the details regarding safety. I guess I’ll be tying into the harness and checking it twice, and I might even wear that brain bucket. I suggest you do the same. Climb On!

~ Brad Moskowicz is an Associate Professor of Outdoor Education at Johnson State College where he teaches classes in backcountry travel, climbing, ropes course facilitation, backcountry skiing, wilderness leadership and adventure education.

PHOTO: TRAVIS PECKHAM



CLIMB LOCAL ON YOUR DESKTOP

Visit www.cragvt.org to download the latest CRAG-VT wallpaper for your computer desktop. And don’t hesitate to send us your images if you have something you want to share with local climbers.

Kevin Karn on 5.7 Corner at Upper West.

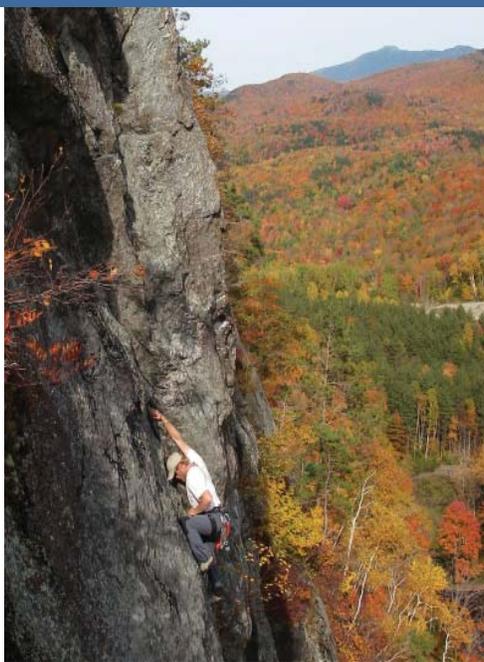
THE CHOSS PILE: Vermont climbing news...

While the rainy months of July and August derailed some of the season's momentum, a sunny spring and a spectacular autumn still brought about some great accomplishments. Many of the fantastic routes established last year were repeated many times, while some climbers began searching out new climbs for inspiration.

On the Main Face of the 82 Crag, Dr. Dick Katzman climbed a new route called *Fernwood Manor* (5.8). Named in honor of the Bolton trailer park, Fernwood starts at the two-ring anchor at the base of *Cats on Broadway* and climbs face, cracks and corners on great rock to the top of the cliff. "I climbed it on Friday the 13th with Graham Govoni," said Dr. Katzman, "I'm guessing it's about 5.8, based on the few harder moves. Now that it's done, I can see the possibility of another line continuing straight up... it's probably way more difficult." On the left end of the Main Face, Seth Maciejowki and Alden Pellett added the *Dirty Duo* (5.9) near the approach trail. The route starts near the boulder-cave follows great rock up finger cracks on an off-vertical face. "It's still pretty dirty and will probably get a little easier once it's a little cleaner," said Maciejowski, "but it's about '5.9 dirty' right now."

Early in the season, Dave Vuono found a small outcrop above the 82 Crag he dubbed "The Chapel". Here Vuono established *Alterboy* (5.10d) and another route I'll just call "...the Priest" (5.12b) to protect Vuono's future career in public office.

After many years of relative quiet, the Carcass crag has yielded another fine new route. *Community* (5.12b) starts with a powerful 20-foot boulder problem before gaining a no-hands rest under the *Worthless Stud* roof. From this stance, a complex crux sequence leads sideways out a 130-degree overhang. A bucket rest then leads to airy climbing on a smooth



Brennan Severance enjoys a perfect autumn at Upper Upper.

wall and a heady mantle to the anchor. Travis Peckham managed to unlock the crux after exchanging creative ideas with a number of friends attempting the route. "The roof seems almost impossible to grade," said Peckham, "It took us a lot of tries to figure out, but now it seems quite reasonable. I personally couldn't imagine on-sighting it; it will be amazing when someone does!"

Peckham also teamed up with Denis Delay to establish *Sweet, Sweet Choss* (5.10a) at the Bolton Quarry. This vertical line makes fun moves up black quarried rock just left of Second Thoughts. Occasionally questionable rock in the first half is redeemed by a steep climactic finish on chunky, positive holds. Delay promptly styled the second ascent despite being dazed from having donated a pint of blood just a few hours earlier.

On the Catamount Wall, the steep cliff across the river from The Cut, Dave Vuono established *Bum Hunter* (5.11a). The line climbs steep limestone near *Pump and Circumstance* left of the big cave. Also at the "Cat" Wall, Josh Worley donned *Bum Undies* and Ivan Tighe equipped and led *Jenkim* (5.11b) and *For the Love of the Game* (5.10c). Some of these routes entail amusing rappels over the river to hanging belays just a few feet above the drink. These routes are not advisable if you're not sure you can climb out; swimming in the Winooski River doesn't look very tempting.

Late this summer, to the surprise of many, bolts appeared on *The Petal* at Upper West. The steep face climb between *The Rose* and *The Thorn*, established by Jamie Brownell years ago as a top rope problem, is now a sport climb.

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.

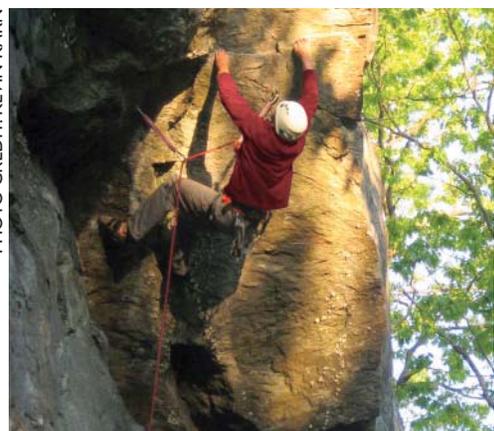
3. Leave No Trace. "Take only photos, leave only foot prints..." Stay on existing trails. Pack out garbage whether it's yours or someone else's. Don't place or leave fixed anchors without landowner consent.

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.

Locals report that the route is fun and about 5.12b. The people I spoke with felt the bolts were not offensively close to the classic crack climbs nearby. It's not clear how local climbers will accept new bolts on this established climb, we'll have to wait and see. However, it should be mentioned that the land owners of Upper West have indicated that they do not want bolts placed in the cliff without their permission. CRAG-VT is making great progress toward permanently protecting this cliff for climbing and adding new bolts to Upper West could put this project at risk. Please consider this potential access issue and stick to established routes or new routes that can be gear protected while climbing here.

The Petal is just one example of a number of routes that may challenge our community. This summer, bolts were added to a number of existing top-rope climbs and sparse gear leads. At Upper Upper, *Sling the Horn*, an established Kris Barrowman trad line was substantially intersected by new bolts. Without a guidebook or recorded history of the area, it can be very difficult to tell whether a route has seen a previous FA, but ask around. Local climbers, online forums, local gear shops and Petra Cliffs are all places to learn about established routes. Please respect existing climbs and the style in which they were established.

- Compiled by Travis Peckham with thanks to DV, SM, IT, KB, EW, DK, JT, AP and others.



Dennis Delay looking to join the "Community" (5.12b) at the Carcass crag.

Sensitive Plant Surveys in the Notches

From time to time, CRAG-VT is asked to help check on the status of sensitive, threatened, or endangered species that exist among the crags of Vermont. We've worked with groups such as the Vermont Institute for Natural Science, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation on issues ranging from peregrine falcon banding to sensitive plant and grass surveys.

This past summer, CRAG-VT worked with Vermont State Botanist Bob Popp at two sites within Hazens Notch and Smugglers Notch. At both locations, we focused on the diversity, population density, and resilience of many sensitive grasses and sedges. The numerous species of grass and sedge undergo a variety of stresses ranging from the seasonal changes in weather and climate, natural rockfall in cliff areas, land movement in the gullies, and human impacts through tourism, hiking, and climbing. We found conditions to be satisfactory since many of the species in question exist away from frequently-traveled areas. We did find some difficulty with locating certain species due to poor accessibility and lack of flowering due to the late season.

Work at these and other sites will continue during each growing season so conditions can be observed and any positive or negative trends can be tracked. CRAG-VT will continue to address these issues when needed, and will surely keep you posted on our findings.

~ Ross Perry



Bob Popp examining grasses in a Smuggs gully.

Local Faces: Bob Timmer

While pondering a person who has made significant contributions to Vermont climbing, one seemed to stand out. This issue's focus on a local face is Bob Timmer, who has quite a personal history and who has put up many first ascents over the years.

"I started climbing because I never liked competitive sports with others; I preferred competing with myself. I have always enjoyed how climbing is both mentally and physically challenging, and how it makes me feel. I also like the people I meet who are associated with climbing."

"I've been climbing in Vermont for over 20 years, all of which has been in the Smugglers Notch area. I also enjoy climbing in the Adirondacks or New Hampshire, but when it's winter, I stay primarily in Vermont. When given the choice, I prefer ice climbing over rock. I also am a certified AMGA Rock Guide as well as an Austrian High Alpinist, and have worked at one time or another for every guide service to serve Smugglers Notch."

"Climbing in Vermont has definitely changed over the years. When I first started climbing in Smugglers Notch, you'd be lucky to see another party out on a weekend. Obviously, that doesn't happen anymore. But before my time, there clearly were climbers getting out. I once found an old handmade piton at a currently-closed local crag, and I also found the sole of an old Swiss-nailed boot up in one of the gullies at Smugglers Notch. As far as early ice gear goes, I started out using straight-shaft ice tools, strap-on crampons, and used galvanized screws with welded-on threads. It's quite a difference from the equipment of today."

"Now retired from the Army, I served 23 years in total. For my first four years, I worked with the 3rd Infantry Presidential Escort under President Reagan. Following that, I spent 19 years with the Mountain Warfare School in Jericho working as an instructor. I have taught everybody from regular service members (from all military branches) to the FBI to many foreign services. Thanks to the military, I've been fortunate to have climbed in Pakistan, Italy, France, Austria, Spain, the Canadian Yukon, and all over the United States."

"I have been in a long battle medically with a brain tumor that was found years ago. My problems began when I started having double-vision on my left side, which was later found to be a brain tumor. So far, I've been through radiation therapy twice, and I'm now going through my third year of chemotherapy. Through it all, I can always say that I've gotten out to ice climb every single winter, even if it was only one day."



BOB TIMMER COLLECTION

Bob Timmer at Ouray Ice Park in Colorado.

"I am active with an organization called Gimps on Ice, which during the '07-'08 winter held an ice climbing event for paraplegics and amputees at the Uncompahgre Gorge, better known as the Ouray Ice Park. It was made possible by Paradox Sports in Boulder, CO." According to their website, "Paradox Sports provides inspiration, opportunities, and adaptive equipment to the disabled community, empowering their pursuit of a life of excellence through human-powered outdoor sports."

"I currently work as Climbing Director for Northern Lights Rock and Ice, located at the Inn at Essex in Essex Junction. We offer a facility that provides team building, leadership development, and general recreation for people of all ages and abilities. Our ropes course is set up to be universally accessible, so individuals with special needs can fully participate as well. We also provide year-round ice climbing, thanks to an artificial ice-foam panel wall from Entre Prises and our on-site ice-making for our real ice wall once temperatures permit." If you have a need for climbing away from the Inn at Essex location, we also have a 24-foot tall portable rock wall for use."

"My favorite local climbs on ice are Ragnarock (NEI 4+) and Elephant's Head, South Face (NEI 4, M4), both at Smugglers Notch. For rock, my favorites are *The Rose* (5.10a) and *The Thorn* (5.11a), both at Upper West Bolton. My favorite climb in the northeast would be *Primal Scream* (5.10-, A4), which is located on the steep face to the right of Pinnacle Gully in Huntington's Ravine."

"I enjoy climbing with my son Joshua Tree, who happened to make it into the Burlington Free Press last winter while ice climbing."

Bob Timmer lives in Cambridge with his wife Cathy, sons Jacob and Joshua Tree, and his three dogs. Bob can be reached at 802-730-3560 or bob@northernlightsvt.com.

~ Ross Perry

NEW CRAG-VT T-Shirts!

Renew your membership at the \$40 level this fall and get a CRAG-VT T-shirt!

1. CRAG-VT membership (includes newsletter and great discounts!) - \$25
2. CRAG-VT membership & cotton "Select Climbs of Upper West Topo" T-shirt - \$45
3. CRAG-VT membership & cotton "Select Climbs" OR "Climb Local" tech-T- \$55

Existing members can buy shirts directly from CRAG-VT. \$20 for cotton T's and \$30 for tech-T's. Please go to www.cragvt.org for to learn how. Please indicate shirt size (S. M. L. XL) and men's or women's style.

Proceeds go to support the Upper West acquisition project. Climb Local!

Thanks to Kevin Karn for the excellent designs: www.kevinkarn.com.

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