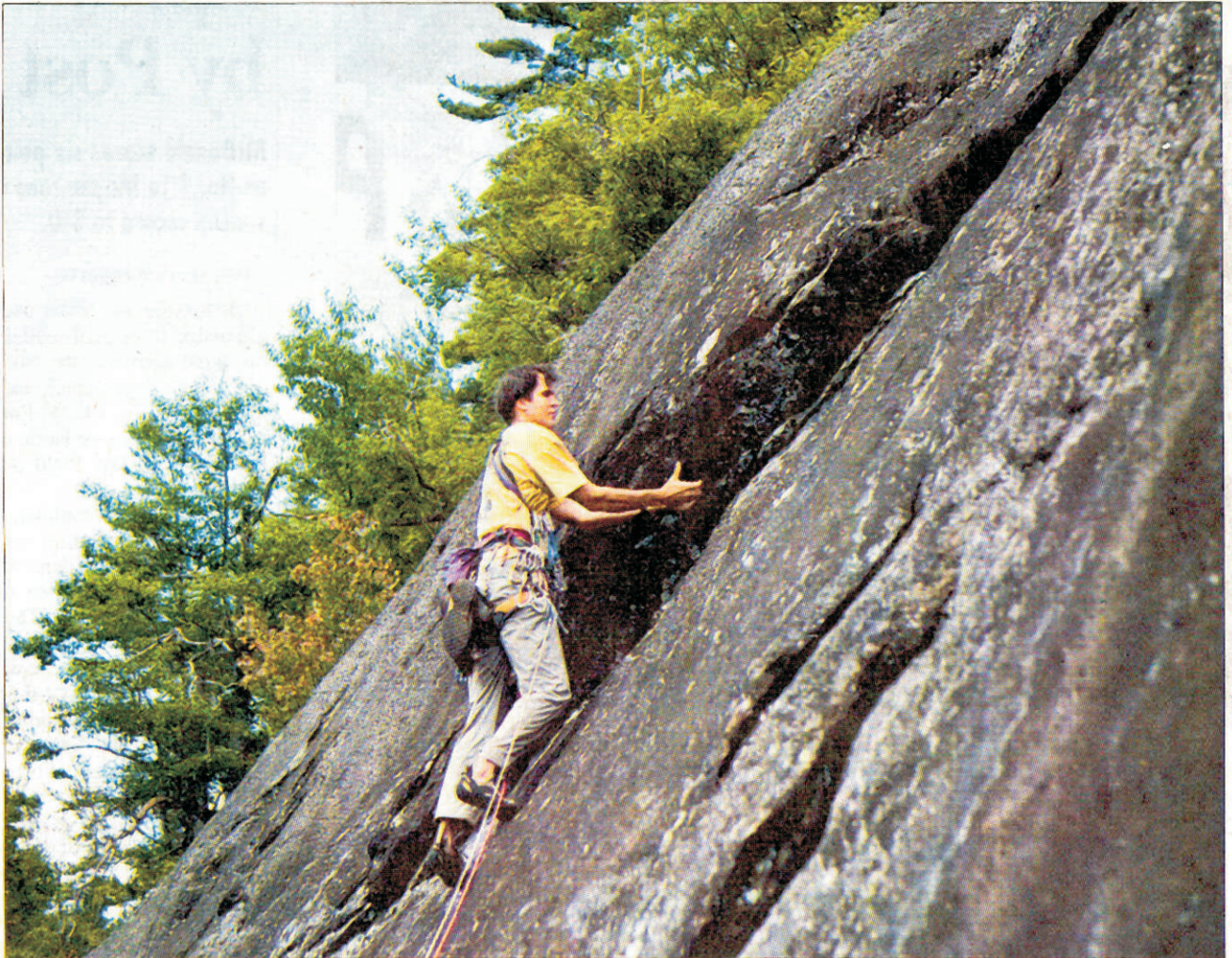


# OUTDOORS



JIM LAWYER, of Pompey, climbs North Hudson Dome in the Adirondack State Park.

Photo courtesy of Jim Lawyer

## Advice Given to Scale

Guidebook breaks down Adirondacks for climbers

By David Figura  
Outdoors editor

Jim Lawyer met Jeremy Haas back in the winter of 1998 while ice climbing the 140-foot cliffs at the Salmon River Gorge in Oswego County.

The differences in their body types was stark.

Lawyer, a computer programmer from Pompey, who admittedly wasn't "bustin' muscles," stood a wiry 6-foot-4 and weighed a little more than 170 pounds.

Haas, then a Cornell University grad student and former high school gymnast, was a compact 5-foot-7 and tipped the scales at about 140 pounds.

It was the kind of difference "that can be played off" while rock climbing.

"He can reach farther than I can, but I can squeeze into places he can't," said Haas, now a Glens Falls resident who teaches science at Saratoga Springs High School.

Both were experienced climbers, and they soon found they had similar friends — and eventually similar interests. They took advantage of each other's strengths to research and scale every conceivable cliff and sizable rock face in public sections of the 5.9-million-acre Adirondack State Park.

Their efforts recently culminated in a 672-page self-published book, "Adirondack Rock," a rock climbing guidebook due to be released at the end of this month.

It outlines 242 cliffs and includes route maps, GPS coordinates and ratings on difficulty; six bouldering areas with 350 bouldering problems; a 19-page photo gallery; and 21 essays by prominent Adirondack climbers.

The book is a follow-up to work done by Don Mellor, a climber who generated three editions of rock climbing guidebooks for the Adirondack Mountain Club. The last one was published in 1995.

"Since that time, there's been a lot of activity around new routes and around new areas that have been recently explored," said Lawyer, 42. "We cover a lot of new activity that Mellor never knew about or chose not to report.

"The area deserved better documentation."

Research included poring through Mellor's extensive files, along with examining the piles of papers, climber's logs and snapshots dropped off at the Mountaineer, a well-known climbing store in Keene Valley in the Adirondacks, and other locations. And, of course, they checked each of the climbs themselves.

The two split up the park and sometimes made their climbs with other partners, often communicating afterward online with their observations and experiences.

Lawyer said he's been climbing 25 years.

"Rock climbing is all about risk management and controlling your natural fear of falling or getting hurt," Lawyer said. "It's a sport that completely relies on some simple technical devices, a harness



JEREMY HAAS, of Glens Falls, scales Stewart's Ledge in the Adirondacks.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Link

**"Rock climbing is all about risk management and controlling your natural fear of falling or getting hurt."**

Jim Lawyer

### Buying the book

"Adirondack Rock," a rock climber's guidebook, will be available March 28 and can be purchased through several local and Adirondack-area book retailers. It can also be obtained on-line at [www.adirondackrock.com](http://www.adirondackrock.com). The cost is \$36.99.

and rope — a rope that you know and believe won't break."

And leave the sneakers at home. He said serious climbers wear special "smooth-soled, sticky rubber shoes."

Both men said they've each had one bad accident, and both rebounded soon after to continue climbing.

Lawyer said a section of rock on Poke-O Moonshine in the Adirondacks gave way and he fell 40 feet. He broke his back in four places, suffered a collapsed lung and damaged his elbow.

Haas recounted how he was 300 feet up on a skyscraper-like tower of rock in Moab, Utah. While trying to negotiate a nasty crack in a rock face, he ended up ripping his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in his knee.

The two men have different approaches when it comes to training for climbing.

Lawyer, who's married, says he trains by climbing year-round. During the winter, he gravitates to ice climbing spots and has written an on-line guide to ice climbing in the Salmon River Gorge area.

He has also traveled extensively, climbing at some 300 destinations on six continents. He's outlined many of his trips in photos on his Web site, titled "Jimbo's World" at [jim.lawyer.com](http://jim.lawyer.com).

Haas, who's single and was born in Ithaca, said he moved to Glens Falls to be close to the Adirondacks. He said he does "a fair amount of calisthenics that I developed as a gymnast, combined with yoga and Pilates — along with extensive climbing and bouldering (climbing boulders)."

"I do a lot of short climbs, focusing on a specific technique you can employ on a longer climb," he said.

Lawyer said the book outlines not only the distance, but the time involved in getting to the site of each of the climbs. Some are relatively close to the road, others are not. The farthest, he said, is a five-hour hike to the back side of Mt. Marcy.

"Getting there can be quite an adventure. A lot of these crags are pretty remote involving long bushwhacks," he said. "You have to be careful. You fall in a hole on the way and break your ankle ... nobody will find you. You're screwed."

He said one of the most difficult climbs is Poke-O Moonshine, located just south of Keeseville, off the Northway.

"It's big and high, and the routes are more than one rope length," he said.

While exploring the climbing sites and comparing their notes with other guidebooks, the two authors often discovered that varying names were given by different climbers to the same locations. They had fun giving new tags to places they discovered.

"One area on Lake George, the Tongue Mountain Cliff, we came up with different names for different climbs," Haas said. "There were a lot of rattlesnakes there so we came up with snake-related names like Snake Charmer, Tongue Lashing, French Kiss, Anaconda and Dark Venomous Dreams."

Along with the challenge, Haas said one of the biggest joys he gets out of climbing is getting up on a cliff, looking out "and seeing nothing but wilderness."

"Totally getting away from man's impact on the environment," Lawyer added.

David Figura can be reached at [dfigura@syracuse.com](mailto:dfigura@syracuse.com) or at 470-6066.