

OVERLOOK

Ragged Mountain Foundation Newsletter Fall, 2004 www.raggedmtn.org

Upcoming Events

Events have become a major source of income for the RMF. Last year we raised will over \$2000 from the Banff film festival, the Everest show, and other events. If you would like to help the RMF with publicity for an existing event, or would like to arrange a new event at a new venue, please let us know by indicating this on your RMF membership renewal, or email us directly at info@raggedmtn.org

Staying Informed

If you have not yet joined our electronic mailing list, please put your email address on your membership renewal or go to www.raggedmtn.org and sign up electronically. All of our events are announced through this list—the best way to stay informed about RMF events is by email.

RMF to Visit Connecticut Gyms

One of the primary goals of the RMF is increase our membership to involve more of the local climbing community in our work. This winter we will be visiting all Connecticut climbing gyms to recruit members and get the word out about our work. Stop by and hear the latest access news, renew your membership, and buy tickets for upcoming RMF events. If you climb in Connecticut, we need your support. Look for the schedule on our website. We will be visiting Go Vertical, Stone Age, Ollies, All Adventure, and Prime Climb.

RMF Winter Party

Come join the RMF in January at our annual winter party. As before, the party will be at Prime Climb. This year the party is scheduled for Thursday, January 20. The party will get started around 6:30 an the free pizza will arrive at 7:30. There will be a raffle at 8:30.

Connecticut Everest Presentation

The Connecticut Everest Expedition would like to thank

the RMF for their generous support and special grant of \$500 from the James Wilcox Fund. In return, Chuck Boyd will be recounting his successful ascent of Mt. Everest to benefit the Wilcox Fund. The show will be presented at Yale University on February 3rd at 7:30. Tickets will be \$8 (\$6 for students), and all proceeds will go to the RMF.

Yosemite Climbing Ranger To Talk

On February 10th, Lincoln Else will be presenting a talk at Yale on his experiences in Yosemite to raise money for the RMF. After getting a philosophy degree from Yale, Lincoln Else headed to Yosemite to "climb for a summer." Five summers later he's still there working as the park's head climbing ranger. He's been featured in Rock and Ice, Time Magazine, and National Geographic Adventure for his work with the Yosemite climbing community, and he'll be back in New Haven this winter to give a slide show and talk about his experiences. His presentation will center on Yosemite's search and rescue operation and the challenge of "climbing management" in an international climbing destination. He'll also pass on some stories from other climbing adventures, including a season filming on Mt. Everest, and a few of the more amusing stories he's picked up working as a government subsidized climbing bum.

Banff Film Festival Coming To New Haven February 28

Mark your calendars! On Monday, February 28, the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour will again make a stop in New Haven. North Cove Outfitters, the RMF and Yale climbing club will again present a showing of the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour at Harkness Auditorium on the Yale campus in New Haven.

(Continued on page 8)

Remembering Eric Tishler

By M. Stokes

On August 18, 2004, CT lost a good climber and friend. Eric Paul Tishler, 44, died when he fell from Castle Rock in Colorado. Eric was on a business trip when he decided to watch the sunset from the top of Castle Rock. On the descent, Eric slipped and fell off. He leaves his loving parents Sheila and Irving Tishler, brothers Mitchell and Jason, daughter Jessica, nephew Bryce Tishler, and nieces Brielle, Jenna and Aleah Tishler and his best friend and partner Cindy Arminio.

Eric graduated from Norwalk High in 1978 and from the UCONN School of Engineering in 1983. Eric also served on the RMF Board of Directors.

Eric had long dreamed of moving west but work and family commitments kept him in Connecticut. It was Eric's dream to live "somewhere I can just step out my backdoor and begin an adventure without having to climb on a plane or plan a vacation." His business trip to CO was to be the start of a new adventure for Eric: a new job offer and a chance to move to one of the best climbing locales in the US.

Eric enjoyed the outdoors since childhood, camping and hiking all over the northeast and started climbing in the 1980's. Climbing took Eric all over the United States and Europe. Eric ticked major technical rock and ice routes all over in places like El Cap, Cirque of the Towers, Mount Ranier, the Matterhorn, Italy and England.

He also enjoyed winter camping and ice climbing in the Adirondacks, one of his favorite places. Eric and I had a great ice climbing weekend there this past winter, climbing Chouinard's Gully and Roaring Brook Falls. The weather was great and Eric had finally broken down and bought new ice tools. (If you didn't know Eric well, all of his gear was from the early 80's, much of it held together with duct tape.)

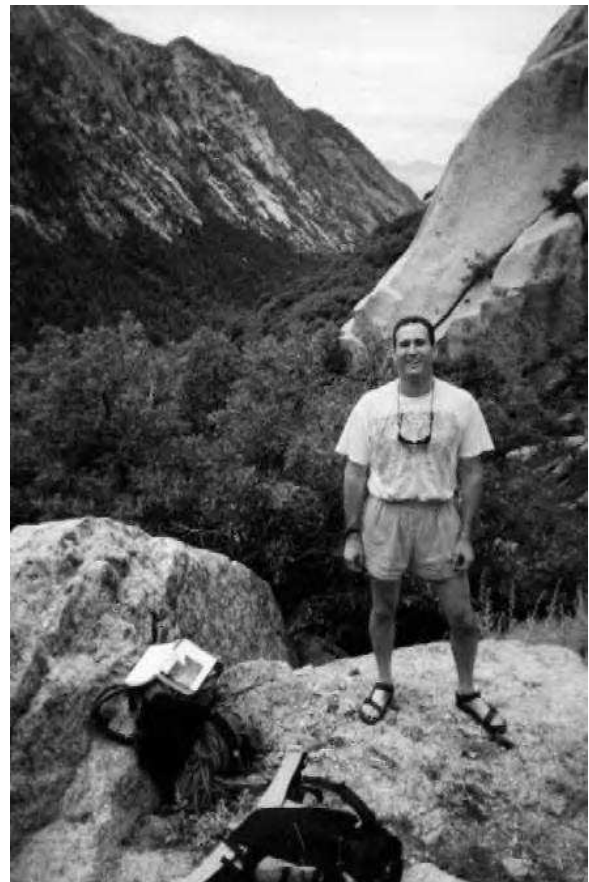
Although suffering from Stage Two MS, Eric lived every day to the fullest. His condition did not stop Eric- he climbed whenever he could and refused to let his disease interfere with what he loved to do.

When Eric was not climbing, he was an admirer of contemporary jazz and his love of music led him to original keyboard compositions. He was a ferocious reader, particularly science fiction, and wrote several children's books along with stories of his climbs. Eric's website (www.haskell.org/tishler/vertical.htm) chronicles some of his adventures along with many great photos.

Eric was loved by many people and will be missed by many friends. Memorial gifts for MS research in Eric's memory can be made to:

Multiple Sclerosis Society
Western CT Chapter
1 Selleck Street
Norwalk, CT 06844

Mike Stokes is the RMF Treasurer



Work Continues at Ragged Mountain

National Trails Day, June 6 2004-

As part of the RMF's annual National Trails Day event, about thirty volunteers worked on June 6th to restore and maintain trails at Ragged. Worked was done in the North Gully, piling rip rap in the gully to help disperse runoff. Work was done along the Undercliff Trail in the Unconquerable area.

A set of stairs and retaining walls were installed. The staircase defines a stable walking path for approaching the routes and stabilizes the slope. Rock was piled onto the slope to stabilize the hillside and help disperse run-off. Work was also done on the South Gully, replacing a step which had been dislodged and clearing the water bars.

A small team of volunteers returned in July to complete the staircase. Thanks to Gary St Amand, Steve Lawlor, Geoff Anderson and Aiden Baume.

Boathouse -

The RMF property includes the old cabin / boathouse on the western shore of the pond. The structure was proposed to serve as a caretaker cabin in early plans for the property. As a result, the boathouse was conveyed on Stanley Hart's original donation to the Nature Conservancy, then passed to the RMF when we took ownership of the property in July of 1999.

The small building is in very poor and unsafe condition: the foundation is cracked, the porch and porch roof are collapsing, the main roof needs replacement and there are holes in the exterior walls. The structure's unsafe condition represents a liability risk to the Foundation. Estimates at restoring the structure are cost prohibitive and any restoration would have the first step of tearing the old structure down, since it is not in compliance with current building codes. In addition, the boathouse lies on a portion of the property not easily accessible without crossing private property, so the Foundation cannot realistically make any use of it.

Because of all these factors, The Board of Directors has made the decision to demolish the existing structure, while reserving the right to build a similar structure in its place should the membership decide such a project is in the best interest of the Foundation. The upper portions of the structure will be torn down and carted off via dumpster. Fill

will be brought in to bring the hole up to grade, the ground will be graded and grass will be planted.

Hart Pond Dam -

Earlier this year, the RMF received notification from the CT DEP's Inland Water Commission that the RMF is the owner of a dam. It turns out that the pond on our property is not natural, but was formed by the construction of an earthen dam on its southern end.

An inspector from the DEP toured the site with RMF members and outlined certain maintenance steps that were needed for the dam. As owners of the dam, should the dam fail and damage other properties downstream, the RMF would be financially responsible for that damage. While a failure of the dam is unlikely, it is simply prudent maintenance to carry out the items recommended by the DEP. This work will take place during the fall and winter. This work will include:

Clearing rocks and other debris from the dam's spillway area (the concrete bridge by the pond spans the spillway). This will help prevent blockage to the outlet of the pond.

Clearing all brush and trees from water and downstream sides of the dam. This is to prevent a breach in the dam should one of the trees growing from the dam fall over.

Roadside Trash Cleanup—Spring 2005

Sometime before the poison ivy and vegetation grows back in the spring, volunteers will be needed to help remove trash from the frontage section of the RMF property along Andrews Street. As a good will gesture to our neighbors, we will take the opportunity to also clean up any trash along , Andrews Street, Carey Street and Sheldon Road.

Schedule of these work events will be posted on the RMF website once the plans are finalized and an email notification will be sent out. Any help on these important property maintenance projects would be most appreciated!

Rock Climbing Legends, Mysteries and Unusual Stories

Terry Sutton

Hart Hollow

Judging by the attire of the gentlemen in the picture, it's obvious this photograph (see page 9) was taken in the first quarter of the 20th century. The place is Hart Hollow. It's located in the town of Goshen in Litchfield County. The cliff looks to be at least fifty feet high with several roof problems and many possible routes. You may ask yourself, why nobody has ever heard of this crag? There's a tragic reason- it was flooded to make way for a reservoir. If you still want to do a first ascent on this crag, bring the scuba gear.

Colebrook Cave

For almost two hundreds years, there have been rumors of a vast cavern hidden in the side of a mountain in the town of Colebrook. Legend has it that in certain parts the cave is 80 feet wide and up to 30 feet high. It supposedly lies inside a cliff about 100 feet high with several giant boulders at its base. The entrance to this cave is rather small, but still large enough for a young adult to enter. Stories relay that the cave might reside in Knapp Hill or another place called Witches Retreat. For the last few decades curious explorers have tried to find this elusive cave. So far, no one has found it, or if they have they're not telling.

Washington's Head

One of the most recognizable cliff profiles in history fell to earth in 2003. The Old Man in the Mountain had his likeness on license plates and even on the New Hampshire state quarter. But Connecticut too has its own man in the mountain. More known for its routes like Pegasus and Danzig, Cathole Pass is also known locally as "Washington's Head". When looking at the cliff from Route 71, look at the right edge of the cliff near the Pegasus area. The profile resembles that of our first president. The Old Man of Meriden or better known as Washington's Head.

Lantern Hill

This climbing area in North Stonington is known more for its owners, the wealthy Mashantucket Pequots, than for its moderate amount of mediocre routes. But what many do not know about this area is how it got its name. With a four-state view and location near Long Island Sound, it was first used by the native Indians to scout out approaching enemies. These cliffs got their name when in the War of 1812; the residents of Stonington were warned of the impending arrival of British soldiers by several tar barrels that were lit on fire on the summit of the cliffs. The fires looked like giant lanterns to the residents and they and their town escaped serious harm. After their lucky retreat, the cliffs were then

named in honor of this incident.

Dead Man's Cave- Sleeping Giant

There's no question that when looking at Sleeping Giant from a distance, it resembles a person lying on their back and staring at the sky. A place of Native American legend, Sleeping Giant Park contains over 30 miles of hiking trails and is home to some of the earliest known rock climbing in CT. On Mount Carmel, also known as the Giant's Hip, is a small stone castle. Beneath the castle is a 60-foot cliff with a detached 20-foot spire. There are also two caves in this cliff. The more visible of the two caves is called the Dead Man's Cave. It is the size of a small room and descends only a few feet down into the cliff. Many people do not know how the cave received this name, but according to legend, a relative of the famous P.T. Barnum went insane and camped out in this very cave. He was eventually found dead inside it and so the name was given.

Baskin and Robbins Cliff

Once upon a time, rock climbing was allowed by the Metropolitan District Commission on its West Hartford Reservoir property. With decent-sized crags with interesting names like Sun Lover's Rock, Killenny Rock and Finger Rock, there was no shortage of creativity in the naming of these crags. But the most creative naming of these crags belongs to the Baskin and Robbins Cliff. Named by a few local climbers who liked the variety of flavors offered by an ice cream shop of the same name just a few miles down the road in West Hartford.

Who's the Real Dummy?

Many climbing areas in Connecticut are on private land and over the years there have been periodic spat between climber and landowner. Perhaps no landowner has been more confrontational than owner of Winter Wall. The eighty-foot crag in Berlin was one of the more popular winter areas before its closure. It was not unusual for the owner to fire his gun in the direction of the cliff and shout expletives at the climbers, and this would happen every so often.

One day, some local climbers took matters into their own hands and attached a dummy in climbers clothing to the face of the cliff. The story goes that the owner saw this climber (dummy) and screamed at this individual who would not leave his cliff. After a few days of screaming and firing his gun, the owner decided to get a closer look at this brave climber who would not heed the warning of his shotgun. Once the landowner found out who really was on his cliff, he may have asked himself: Who's the Real Dummy?

Adopt-A-Crag 2004

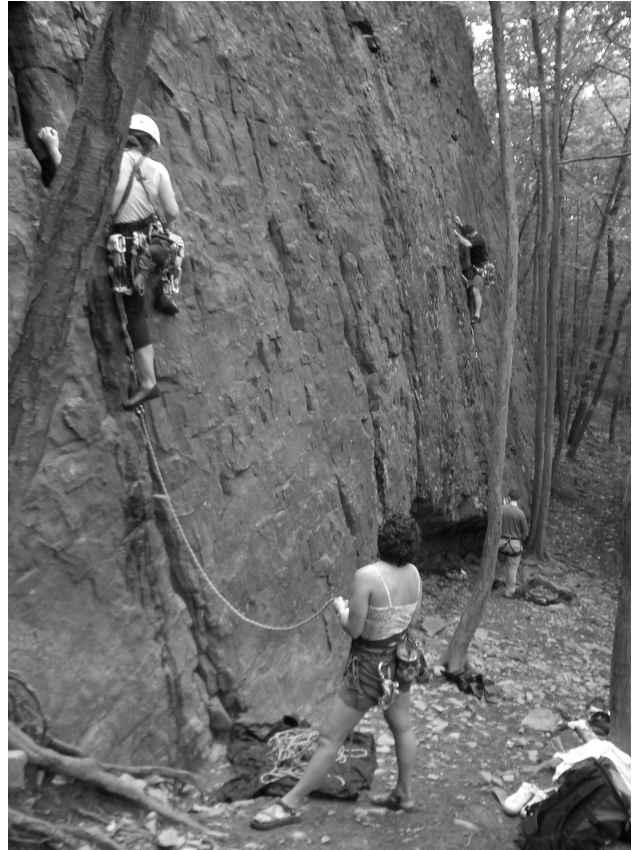
As part of the Access Fund's 2004 Adopt-A-Crag effort, RMF volunteers spent Saturday September 11th cleaning up Pinnacle Rock in Plainville.

Pinnacle is a great climbing spot. Unfortunately it is also popular with the local party crowd, whose frequent "campouts" consist of drinking around a large campfire and then throwing the bottles and cans off the cliff. This causes an otherwise great location to be habitually littered with trash and broken glass.

About ten volunteers spent a few hours cleaning up trash, about 10 bags worth. Some curb walls were also constructed along the slope under the cliff to help curb erosion. Over time these barriers will catch and fill in with eroding soil and help to stabilize the cliff base below the climbing routes. Fire rings were also dismantled.

After the work, the volunteers shared some pizza and spent some time climbing in the newly improved surroundings.

The RMF would like to thank everyone who helped out to make Pinnacle a better place. It's been a constant battle over the years to keep Pinnacle clean, but the results, even if they are relatively short-lived are worth it.



Climbers enjoy improved surroundings at Pinnacle

Meet the Board - RMF Board Members



Stacy Kellogg

Hi, I'm Stacy Kellogg. A life-long CT resident, I decided to try climbing while looking for some new outdoor activities after graduate school.

Needless to say, I was hooked after my first beginner's day with the AMC and bought all of the equipment that night. (Lucky for me it was Club Day at EMS).

Since then, I have been a regular climber with the CT AMC and a participant in RMF events. I also co-chair the CT chapter of "Sheclimbs Inc." (www.sheclimbs.org), a national grassroots women's climbing organization.

Climbing Access Updates

NBWD Lands: As most of us are aware, despite various efforts over the last three years to persuade the New Britain Water Department (NBWD) to allow climbing on their property, climbing is still officially banned. Does this mean that the NBWD is run by bad people? No. Their primary job is to provide safe, clean drinking water to seven towns. The department's land holdings (currently over 3000 acres in central CT) contain the reservoirs and buffer lands to protect those water resources. Providing recreational opportunities for the communities they serve is not a primary component of their mission. NBWD allows hiking along the Metacomet Trail through their properties and that's it.

The biggest issue remains NBWD concerns over liability should someone be injured while climbing. Various ideas were presented a group of climbers, including representatives from the RMF, AMC and the Access Fund, as ways to reduce the department's liability exposure from climbing. These ideas have included everything from liability waivers to a permit system. None of the ideas presented to date have been enough to convince the risk management team in the NBWD that climbing could occur without creating adverse liability exposure.

The RMF raised the idea to purchase cliff-bearing parcels from NBWD, but they will not sell to a non-profit group. There is a possibility that NBWD could sell parcels to the CT DEP. For example, the DEP recently purchased 330 acres of NBWD land in Burlington, adjacent to DEP's Session Woods facility.

Various utility companies, like NBWD, advise the State when they have surplus land available for sale. At that time, various disciplines at DEP review the properties and based on desirability, assign a priority rating. If the properties get a high enough priority and funds are available, the DEP will pursue acquisition. The upside for climbers in this process is that climbing is allowed on DEP lands. However because of the current budget situation in CT, there is very little funding for open space purchases.

So what can you do to help? Take a few minutes and do the following.

1. Contact your state legislators and respectfully urge them to restore full funding to the DEP's Open

Space Acquisition Program. If you don't know who your state senators and legislators are, go to www.cga.ct.gov to find their contact information

2. Contact the DEP and let them know that the NBWD properties are important recreational resources in central CT and that you would like the properties purchased through the DEP's Open Space Acquisition Program. The more people that express support for the purchase, the more likely it is that DEP will give the purchase of the land higher priority.

Some people you should contact include:

David Leff- DEP Deputy Commissioner
david.leff@po.state.ct.us

Elizabeth Brothers- Land Acquisitions
elizabeth.brothers@po.state.ct.us

Thomas Morrissey- Parks & Recreation
thomas.morrissey@po.state.ct.us

Please be respectful in all your correspondence with your legislators and DEP officials. The quickest way to get someone to do nothing for you is to be adversarial.

MDC Crag: Liability also remains the primary obstacle to climbing on Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) property. Despite a long history of climbing on their property, the MDC chose to prohibit climbing as a high liability activity in the wake of the Conway versus Town of Wilton decision several years ago.

Since that time, the RMF has worked to maintain a dialog with the MDC and educate them on the true nature of climbing in the hope that climbing could be reinstated as a recreational activity on MDC land. Despite the efforts, MDC has failed to make any changes. Climbing remains the only recreational activity banned on MDC property.

Last year, after being run off of Beech Rock by MDC police, local climber Chris Marks started a petition drive, asking the MDC to drop their ban on climbing. The RMF assisted in placing copies of the petition at Prime Climb and Stone Age rock gyms and collecting the completed petitions. Over 1500 signatures were collected and turned over recently to management at the MDC. Thanks to everyone who signed the petitions and to Prime Climb and Stone Age for helping out. Despite the strong response from local climbers, the MDC remains reluctant to make changes to their anti-

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Rainier - Three Times is a Charm!

By Leslie Brown

Now that we live in the Cascades, Claude and I have enjoyed great mountaineering right outside our door. Mount Rainier is the prize, and its presence is everywhere, including the license plates of our car. Of course, we have to climb it.

Our first attempt came in 2002, and was thwarted by altitude sickness affecting 5 of the 8 on our two ropes. Turning around with only 1,000 vertical feet to go was very difficult, especially on a sunny and windless day. Realistically, we had no choice.

On our second attempt, we took every precaution to acclimatize. Some limited research shows that taking ginkgo for five days prior to ascending reduces the likelihood of altitude sickness. We also booked rooms at the Paradise Inn, elevation 5,500 feet, for the evening before our trip. A full 30-hour layover was planned at Camp Muir to allow some adjustment to 10,200 feet.

The preparation paid off, and the team felt great on summit day. The weather gods were not so kind. On summit day, we awoke to the sound of our neighbor's tent being ripped out of the snow and tangling in our fly. As we jumped out, the winds dislodged our neighbor's tent and sent it out of sight down the glacier. High winds knocked us off our feet repeatedly as we started our climb. Once we gained the ridge of Disappointment Cleaver, the route was an icefield with no possibility of self-arrest. Winds were even harsher, and we reluctantly turned around, as did all other parties that day. While the rest day ensured that the entire team was healthy, we missed the weather window.

Again we took out our crystal ball on April 1st and faxed in our reservation for a climbing permit. We headed up to Muir on June 18th and pitched tent. Every scrap of information we got about the weather was analyzed, discussed with the Rainier Mountaineering's Guides, and the climbing rangers. The reports were mixed – afternoon thunderstorms, clearing at night, very warm mornings. The time frames would be very tight for climbing. The team's decision was to get up at midnight and go if we could see the stars.

After a wild afternoon of thunderstorms, I was amazed to see stars that first evening. So with a mere few hours at Muir, we suited up for the summit attempt. Claude decided he needed a full day of rest at high camp. The others all wanted to go.

Despite an agonizingly slow tie in process, we finally

got started. The initial traverse to Cathedral Gap and run up the scree field felt easy. The winds were light, and the route was very smooth under our feet. Feeling good, we bypassed a break to make up some time. It was now after 4:00 AM, and we no longer needed our headlamps. The snow was still firm as we crossed a few thin snowbridges on the Ingraham Glacier and gained the fixed line on Disappointment Cleaver. The fixed line was in much better shape than the previous year and added to our confidence. We took a quick break after reaching the ridge top and watched the sun rise over Tahoma Peak.

The steep route on the ridge was a little tricky to follow. As the route finally eased up, I began to move more quickly, but the group was not able to do so. Two were feeling the effects of altitude. We decided to evaluate the situation over the next 500 vertical feet. Our very slow progress made it obvious that we could not safely summit and return. Reluctantly, one man made the right decision to untie. He scrambled back to the warm shelter of a rock pile at the top of Disappointment Cleaver to wait for us. Now we know why this formation is called Disappointment Cleaver – it is the point where reality sets it.

Now we made quick progress up to the Balcony, a flat spot at 13,500 feet that lies below a huge crevasse which guards the summit slopes. We took our last break here and had our last view of our companion below. A couple of parties were already on their way down and offered to check on our friend and bring him down to Ingraham Flats. This eased our guilty minds.

Over the course of the last 900 vertical feet, the three of us began to feel the altitude. I became a slave driver and was worried about our time. Conditions under our feet remained ideal, styrofoam snow. The winds picked up as we gained height. When we crested the summit crater, our faces were sandblasted by the full force of the winds, which carried ash from the bare crater floor. In my imagination, I planned to fully enjoy the summit, the views and explore the ice tunnels on the crater. Reality was quite different. We tagged the top, took a couple of pictures, and got out as fast as we could. Despite fatigue, we didn't want to stop until we got out of the wind. In one tiring push, we scrambled all the way back to the Balcony.

Below the Balcony, the snow was quickly turning to corn snow. We planned a short break at the top of Disappointment Cleaver to collect our strength. We needed to move quickly and carefully through this-

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dangerously loose and exposed section of the route. We were surprised to find our friend still waiting for us. He was feeling a little better while resting and refused offers for a trip down the Cleaver.

Now we had two weakened climbers to move through dangerous terrain. We reversed order, and those team members were moving at the head of the rope. The strong, big, young man was directly behind the tired men, and I took the rear position. Ben and I were careful to always have the team "anchored" as we moved down the steep slopes on the Cleaver.

Some thought we'd be home free after reaching the Ingraham Glacier. But the snow was so soft, and avalanche conditions were extraordinarily high. Just two days before, the entire Liberty Ridge area was swept by an avalanche that killed two people. I looked up at the steep snow and overhanging seracs on the headwall of the Ingraham and felt afraid for the first time of the day. The two men in front wanted to stop frequently to catch their breath and were a bit wobbly on their legs. Again, the slave driver took over and pushed for no rest until we reached the safety of Ingraham Flats. The snow bridges that we crossed in the morning were now disintegrating, and we had to take a new route around the crevasses for the return trip. This brought us further up the glacier and closer to those dangerous seracs. Finally we stumbled through the soft and bottomless snow to reach the flats. I could breathe again.

We took the final leg of the trip at a very casual pace. When we got to camp, Claude had melted water and started dinner. As we ate, the afternoon thunderstorms rolled in, and we were unanimous about spending the night at Muir before packing out.

We scrambled down to the trailhead in brilliant sunshine. Success in the mountains seems to be a combination of preparation and luck.

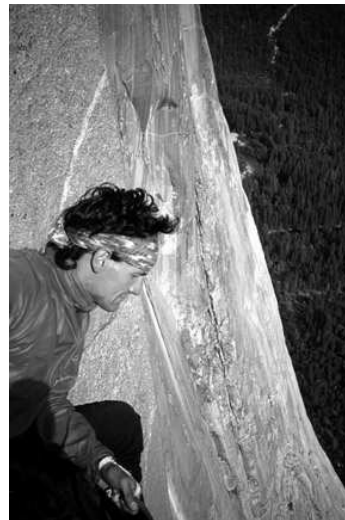
First James Wilcox Awards

The annual James Wilcox Award is designed to help support small teams tackling big walls or big mountains in the great ranges of the world. This year the RMF made the first awards from the Wilcox fund. The first ever award went to Anthony Anagnostou and Adam Nyborg.

Anthony and Adam are former Yale students who share a commitment to climbing and the outdoors.

Their proposal was for a trip to the Bugaboo range in British Columbia. Unfortunately they were not able to make the trip together in 2004 but will instead use their award in 2005. Anthony was able to do a short recon trip to the Bugs in August and came back with renewed enthusiasm for the project next year.

A special grant of \$500 was made to the Connecticut Everest Expedition. The Wilcox award is a memorial to James Wilcox. It is administered by a committee that includes Julia Wilcox, Chad Hussey, and members of the RMF board. All of the money in this fund was donated to the RMF in Jim's memory. Membership dues and general contributions to the RMF are not used for the Wilcox Fund.

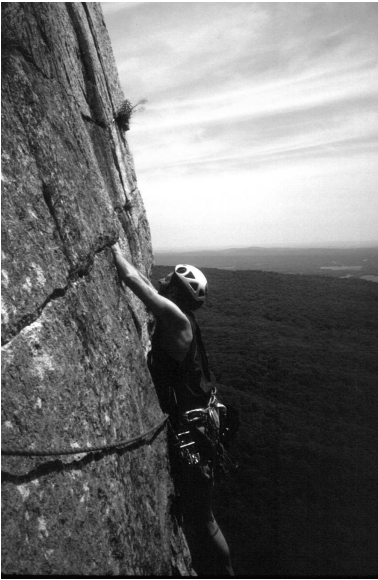


We will be taking applications for the 2005 award starting in January and applications are due by May 1. The 2005 award will be announced at the Annual Meeting in June. Any RMF member can apply for a grant of \$500 to help fund a climbing adventure. Please watch our website for more details.

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The Banff Mountain Film Festival is an international film competition held each year at the Banff Center for Mountain Culture in Alberta, Canada. This year's festival takes place from October 30th – November 7th. After the competition in Alberta, the Banff Festival goes on the road, traveling to locations around the globe showing the winning films from the competition as part of their world tour. Our event in New Haven is one of the stops on the tour. Last year's event was very well attended and raised over \$1400 for the RMF. We attempt to put the best of the climbing features on our showing. Remember that each showing has a different program. Check the RMF website or sign up for the RMF email list for updates on this event.

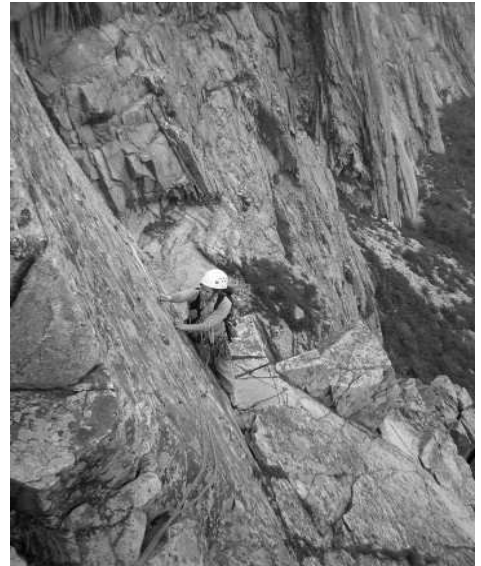
"Out and About" Photo Gallery



Brien Roscetti on CCK



Working the slabs at
Whitehorse



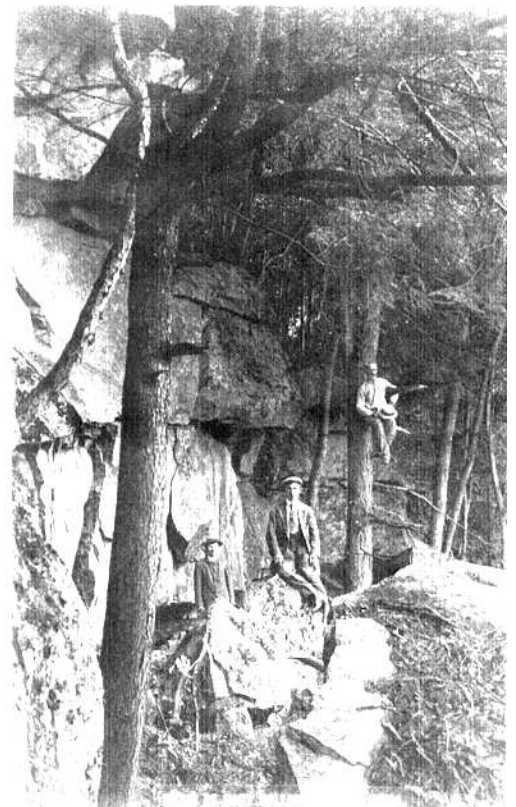
Stacy Kellogg on Whitney-Gillman



Bugaboo Panorama by Anthony Anagnostou



Geoff Anderson on the "Big Flow" at Beacon Falls.



Early Climbing at Hart Hollow

Meet the Gunks Climbers Coalition

Located within a few hours drive of most places in Connecticut, the Shawangunks ridge is one of the most popular climbing destinations on the east coast. On any given weekend hundreds of climbers, many from Connecticut, can be found working boulder problems along the carriage roads of the Mohonk Preserve, or enjoying classic routes at every grade. Outside the preserve there are numerous other climbing areas where access is a bit more difficult.

The Gunks Climbers Coalition (GCC) was formed to represent climbers interests and promote responsible climbing throughout the Shawangunks area. Similar in scope to the RMF, the GCC sponsors trail work days, organizes cleanups, and works to resolve local access issues. If you climb in the Gunks, please consider lending your support to the Gunks Climbers Coalition.

Why Join the GCC

Access is the main problem facing climbers today. The Gunks are the East's premier climbing area, where climbers have enjoyed a long and storied relationship with the Mohonk Preserve. But access off the Preserve has been lost on some of the best crags in the Gunks. And camping on the ridge – already inadequate – is threatened with closure. The time is critical for all who love climbing in the Gunks to advocate together and preserve this legendary climbing resource. The Gunks Climbers' Coalition is the local branch of the Access Fund, a national organization representing climbers' interests: investing in the GCC and the Access Fund is investing in your future.

Our stewardship efforts – organizing chalk and trash clean-ups, trail maintenance, and minimizing climbers' impact on the crags – will ensure climbing in the Shawangunks by improving relations between climbers and landowners on the Shawangunk Ridge. We provide an “ear to the ground” for the national Access Fund, acting as a liaison between climbers, land managers, and other user groups in the Gunks. One of our more important functions will be to provide input for a Master Plan to newly added acquisitions at Minnewaska State Park. These extensive lands hold many potential climbing opportunities. The continued success of Peter's Kill climbing at Minnewaska – supported by GCC clean-ups and advo-

cacy - may open areas currently off-limits to climbers.

Since our formation last year, the GCC has established chalk clean-ups at the Preserve and at Peter's Kill, supplemented Dick William's trail crew, hauled garbage for the Open Space Institute at Shevchenko (a 2000 acre parcel now part of Minnewaska), begun access dialogues with Ridge land managers, incorporated as a 501c3, identified projects for 2004 like the camping crisis at the MUA campground on Rt. 299, and held promotional events with Gunks legends John Bragg and Russ Clune.

When you join the GCC you will receive our quarterly newsletter, *Talus*, as well as more frequent e-mail News Flashes, keeping you current as to our activities, events, and the most pressing issues facing the Gunks climbing community. You will also receive a membership card, which entitles you to discounts at popular climbing stores. And, we'll happily invite new members to lend their experience and passion to our project sub-committees.

GCC yearly membership: 20 dollars. We are a 501c3 organization beginning in the current tax year; Membership and donations are tax deductible. To join simply download our membership form from www.gunksclimbers.org and mail form with your check to:

Gunks Climbers' Coalition
P.O. Box 325
Gardiner, NY 12525
e-mail: gcc@gunksclimbers.org
www.gunksclimbers.org

(Continued from page 6)

c l i m b i n g p o l i c y .

What can you do to help? Contact the MDC and let them know that you would like climbing privileges restored on MDC properties. If you live in one of the communities served by the MDC, contact your representative on the MDC Board and discuss the issue with them. (For more information on the MDC and its Board of Directors, check www.themdc.com)

Anyone who has been climbing in CT long enough knows that these access efforts have taken a long time. But solving these problems requires patience, planning and an attitude of not giving up. The RMF will continue to engage in dialog and education in the effort to

To All Commercial Users of Ragged Mountain

The Ragged Mountain Foundation is a nonprofit organization that owns and maintains a 55-acre parcel of land in Southington, CT. This land contains a popular rock climbing area, the Main Cliff of Ragged Mountain. The purpose of the RMF is to preserve the natural features of this area and support recreational use by climbers and hikers.

The RMF maintains the property per a conservation easement written in conjunction with The Nature Conservatory and the Berlin Land Trust. Under this easement, the RMF must strive to sustain the natural condition of the area. Please be aware that commercial groups are limited to six people (including guides). We have not had any problems with commercial users thus far and hope that you will continue to respect the rules that govern our property and help us educate all users of Ragged Mountain regarding these rules.

To fulfill our obligations the RMF has an annual operating budget of about \$5,000.00 that pays for insurance, trail maintenance, cleanups, and other expenses related to the property. We have recently seen a marked increase in usage by commercial users of

Ragged Mountain even as membership in the RMF has remained relatively constant. We respectfully request that all guides maintain current membership in the RMF (just \$10) and encourage their clients to do likewise. This helps us financially and, more importantly, puts us in contact with you so that if there are any problems or issues regarding the use Ragged Mountain we will have an avenue of communication. We also appreciate any help you can give us, whether through cash donations or help in organizing and promoting events such as trail maintenance and cleanups.

The RMF is committed to preserving the special character to Ragged Mountain and keeping our users free of unnecessary hassles and restrictions. We are also a strong advocate for climbers statewide and have been working to open new areas for climbing. We fought hard to allow commercial use the Main Cliff and we hope that you will help us continue this fight in other areas of the state as well as assist us with our ongoing obligations at Ragged Mountain. If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact us at info@raggedmtn.org or through the message board at www.raggedmtn.org.



RMF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Annual Dues: \$10.00

Note: All memberships and donations are tax deductible.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

(if you are not on our email list already)

DUES ENCLOSED \$ _____

DONATION to the RMF (optional): \$ _____

DONATION to the Adair Fund (optional): \$ _____

DONATION to the Wilcox Fund (optional): \$ _____



Please mail to
 Ragged Mountain Foundation
 PO Box 948
 Southington, CT 06489

You can also apply or renew your application on-line at www.raggedmtn.org

Mailing label Here

Ragged Mountain Foundation
PO Box 948
Southington, CT 06489

Upcoming RMF Events

Winter Party. January 20, Prime Climb

Wilcox Benefit: Chuck Boyd Everest Climb, Feb 3, Yale

Banff Film Festival, February 28, Yale

Climbing Gym visits (Dates TBA)

Tales of a Yosemite Climbing Ranger, Feb 10, Yale