



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Lawrence Grassi, Canmore Wall, New Winter Routes**

Canada, Canadian Rockies

**This past winter a few friends and I did something unusual. Rather than further support the petro-state of Alberta by driving the six-hour round-trip to the Ice Fields Parkway or four hours of off-roading into the Ghost, we approached the mountains right above home. Canmore has a plethora of limestone cliffs crowding it. We started joking that we were busy in Canmonix.**

Recently, the mixed game in town has regressed to hanging upside-down on drilled pockets and clipping bolts. In contrast, if one goes mountain climbing up the steep, alpine faces above town when they are covered in snow, there are new lines full of excitement and adventure. It helps that the approaches to the north face of Mt. Lawrence Grassi (2,685m) and the Canmore Wall (a large face between Ship's Prow and Ha Ling Peak) are quite short.

Partway up Lawrence Grassi is a 10m-diameter hole through the cliff; this feature was first on my list. By traversing above this hole the previous summer with Sam Eastman, then traversing through it from the other side with Raphael Slawinski in winter, I finally figured out how to make a direct ascent with David Lussier and Jay Mills in December. The result is The Hole (300m, M6). This nine-pitch route is memorable for the experience of climbing through one of the most interesting natural features in the Bow Valley.

Next up on the tick list was to finish a route just left of The Hole that had been attempted and named almost a decade earlier: Town Gash. Rob Owens and Sean Issac had started up the most obvious gash on the north face of Mt. Lawrence Grassi, just left of the gully taken by the Hole. On my only attempt, with Sam Eastman and Raphael Slawinski, we quickly got past the previous high point, after two mixed pitches, and then Raph got to work bolting the steepness above. He has returned another three times as of this writing, equipping it for the future send.

Maybe it was my schedule, the prevailing avalanche conditions, or my general dislike for projecting, but by February 2015 my focus had moved to the Canmore Wall. My partner, Alik Berg, had climbed 19 El Cap routes, up to A5, so he was simply fooling himself into thinking he wasn't ready for the big faces of the Rockies in the winter. He asked to warm up on something smaller. We hiked uphill for two hours from the Peaks of Grassi subdivision to the base of the summer rock route Kurihara (430m, 5.10d). From there we'd aim for a weakness to the left of that route on the upper wall.

On our first try we encountered the leading edge of a five-day storm and made it up to some technical, cruxy dry-tooling in a finger-crack-size corner. From the wall, I tried to hype our efforts by tweetering #CanmoreWall, a scant month after Obama and Ellen jumped on the #DawnWall bandwagon. But in spite of my best efforts at generating social media buzz, only one of the multitudes of alpine climbers in Canmore responded to the call. I knew it was cheating, but I invited the "Real Rockies Ringer" along. On our next attempt, Raphael Slawinski camped out on the nonexistent feet to make it through the crux, Alik trundled death blocks visible from the coffee shops of Main Street, and I chimneyed up the gully we had been aiming for once it got dark. With the lights of Canmonix glowing below we topped out on Perpetual Spring (350m, M7).

Reflecting on a nearly nonexistent winter, this style of winter drytooling on fresh limestone might become more prevalent, especially as the tar sands continue to expand and we all enjoy living in the fishbowl.

– Ian Welsted, Canada

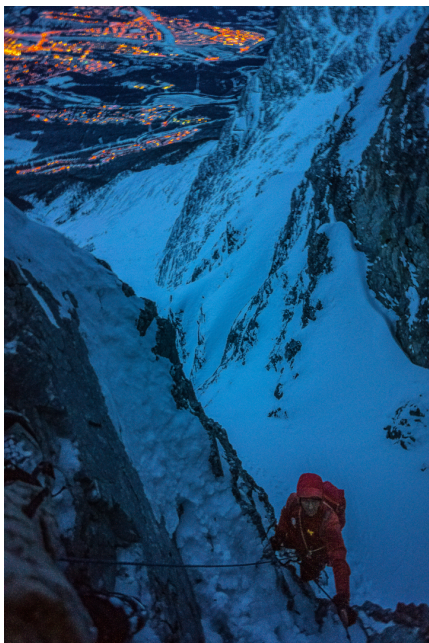
## Images



Alik Berg on pitch seven of Perpetual Spring (350m, M7).



Perpetual Spring (350m, M7), on the Canmore Wall (red line) and the approximate line of the summer rock route Kurihara (430m, 5.10d) in blue.



David Lussier exiting the new route the Hole (300m, M6), on the north face of Mt. Lawrence Grassi, with the lights of Canmore below.



Jay Mills exiting the hole, on the Hole (300m, M6).





Raphael Slawinski climbing through the crux (pitch five) of Perpetual Spring (350m, M7) on the Canmore Wall.



Raphael Slawinski makes way through The Hole.



The north face of Mt. Lawrence Grassi, showing Raphael Slawinski and Ian Welsted's indirect version of the Hole (red line), The Hole (300m, M6) which was climbed by Welsted, Jay Mills and David

Lussier (yellow line), and the unfinished line Town Gash (orange line).

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