

# REMEMBERING DAVE BLUMENTHAL

On Thursday, June 24, 2010, the world lost a great cyclist, outdoor adventurer, artists, husband and father. Dave Blumenthal sustained terminal injuries when he collided with a pickup truck while descending a mountain pass in Colorado while competing in the annual Tour Divide, a 2,700 mile bicycle race that runs from Canada to Mexico.



Dave and Eric Nelson during the Tour Divide



Dave with Newborn daughter Linnaea



...on a Vermont adventure



New England Fleche, May 2010. Dave Blumenthal, Robert Dillon, David Tremblay, Randy George

## Missing Dave:

Having only known Dave for 3 years, I wish I had known him longer, or had the chance to have done so. What I can say is that he was one of those rare individuals who managed to achieve perfection on multiple levels - not only was he an awe-inspiring athlete, but he was a gifted artist, a writer, a skilled builder & carpenter, and a community leader...the list goes on. One of his last selfless acts before he left Vermont to spread his wings and fly the length of the Continental Divide was to help our small non-profit organize a fund-raising bike ride event to help create safe routes to local schools. Dave, we miss you very much and wish you well. – *Eric Scharnberg, Executive Director, Cross Vermont Trail Association*

## The Confluence Remembers Dave Blumenthal:

When we started our workouts in Hubbard Park exactly one year ago, Dave was showing up regularly to join our fledgling CrossFit group. I have known Dave, his wife, Lexi and their 4 year old daughter, Linnea for many years after meeting through Onion River Nordic Ski Club. My first encounter with Dave was on a moonlit night at Morse Farm while leading a night ski. My first impression was, "that's a big dude" (Dave ran 6' 6" - 215 lbs), and my second impression was "that's a big FAST dude" as he easily kept up with our fast paced skating group...on classic skis, which tend to be significantly slower. From that night on, whether on skis, bikes or in the gym, Mr. Blumenthal was always "Big Dave" to me, and through the years I have learned to recognize Dave without a headlamp, and appreciate his friendship in many, many ways. But back to Hubbard Park...

Dave repeatedly attacked our outdoor WODs with vigor. Whatever the biggest weight that I brought was, Dave would lift it. When I built a ridiculously huge sloshtube (the 9 footer in the corner that nobody touches), Dave wrestled with it. And despite his significant mass, Dave pulled himself up to that makeshift bar under the shelter with minimal inner-tube assistance. The image I will always have of Dave during the summer/fall workouts was that moment of pause he would always take mid-workout, out of breath, bathed in sweat and deep in the Pain Cave, where he would carefully remove his glasses, allowing them to de-fog while he enjoyed a brief respite from the harsh onslaught of lactic acid build-up and oxygen deprivation. Then the glasses would go on and the work would continue until complete.

As we prepared to make our move to 188 River St. there were plans laid to build a climbing cave for kids. As it turned out, Dave had designed climbing gyms before. In fact, he designed the walls at Petraciffs. This is not too much of a surprise until you realize all of the other things Dave designs, and builds. Tents, backpacks, furniture, websites, signs, museum models, and the list goes on. So after a few measurements and a bit of discussion, Dave returned with a beautiful scale model of our present climbing gym that served as a perfect tool for our carpenter, Mark White, to replicate in real life. And Dave also handily produced the sign that hangs over the porch at the gym. I don't believe I have ever met a person with such a broad range of skills as Dave, and we are thankful to have benefited from his talents in many ways.

At the Confluence, Dave showed us all what it was to be strong. When Lisa and I wrote a number on the board, Dave lifted it. When Dave got done with a workout, his name got a star next to it. Dave set the bar for us, proving that those numbers in parenthesis were attainable, and I am proud to see member after member now adding stars to their names on a regular basis. Of course the real goal is not the number, it's the effort put forth. So for every one of you who takes that moment of pause mid-workout to mutter "holy crap," or pant like a dog with your hands on your knees, or lay on your stomach mid-burpee thinking you'll never get up again, think about Dave and his glasses...they always went back on his face and the workout was always completed.

Many of you never got to meet Dave as his time in the gym tapered once the cycling season began. In Dave's place we were honored to start seeing Lexi come to the workouts and rise to the challenge of CrossFit. And Linnea has been a regular mid-morning gym rat as well. We hope that when life finds its new point of equilibrium for Lexi and Linnea, they come back to join our Confluence community and find support in the sharing of good, hard workouts among friends. In the meantime, Lisa and I will begin work on a new named WOD for our gym - "Big Dave" - which will hopefully reflect the unique combination of sheer power and delicate touch that Dave brought to life. Once we have that workout crafted we will run a memorial WOD, and hopefully bring you all to that point where you need to take off the proverbial glasses and find the courage to finish. You will also soon see "The Blumenthal" mounted on the wall - this was the jump rope that none of you ever used...you know the one with the knots where we had to lengthen the rope. That was Dave's.

Thank you, Dave, for sharing your time and skills, your creativity and work ethic, and your wonderfully calming demeanor with The Confluence. You will be missed dearly. And thank you Linnea and Lexi for sharing your dad and husband with us - we are honored to offer your family a place to play, and hope to share many more experiences with you both in the years to come.

Here's to Big Dave...TIME!

- Nick Pettersen, Director, The Confluence, Montpelier, VT



Dave "in the pain cave", Hubbard Park Crossfit, Summer 2009

## Remembering Dave:

I had the opportunity to ride with Dave on a 24 hour team event earlier this spring. Although the rules of the game (a fleche, for those of you familiar with randonneur events) dictate that the team stay together, it was clear from the start that Dave had the ability to ride away from us all if he was free of these constraints. He possessed a rare natural strength which, combined with his height and ability to consume unbelievable quantities of food, really did give the impression that this guy was of another breed. But what is most remarkable was that he never showed any kind of competitive edge... he was out there to enjoy himself and it didn't seem to bother him in the least that he could have finished hours ahead of us if only he was allowed to. (His performance in this year's Tour Divide was proof of his super-human strength.) Furthermore, our team was saved by the fact that Dave was so organized and prepared that when our cue sheets failed us, his GPS saved us time and again. On June 9th, when Dave came by the bakery to meet David Tremblay on their way to the airport and eventually to the start of Tour Divide Race, Dave showed me his pages of laminated cue sheets and maps which marked every water source and brew pub on the Tour Divide route. The guy was the epitome of good preparation. Again, how could things go wrong for a guy with such immense mental and physical abilities? I have been checking in a few times daily with his progress and up until yesterday it had been nothing short of incredible - not only in terms of his place in field, but also in his almost daily upbeat call-ins. This was one of those rare people who, although he was a true contender at a high level, was really out there because he absolutely loved it. If you didn't know that he was not far behind the leader of what some call the hardest bike race in the world, you would think that these call-ins were from an enthusiastic and adventurous tourist. I only knew Dave a little bit outside of the world of cycling, but he was a regular customer at our bakery... usually arriving by bike with Linnaea in tow (literally) where he would sit by the window and teach her about bread baking and read stories to her. He was also a regular fixture at our local farmers' market, where I don't think I ever saw him in street clothes. He would stop just long enough to eat one pastry and pack another for the road while telling us where he was headed. The guy just loved life. This makes the fact that life has been taken from him all the more tragic and incomprehensible. He has been an inspiration to so many... Tonight I'm raising a glass to Dave, and extending all my love and condolences to his wonderful wife Lexi and sweet, sweet daughter Linnaea. A great adventurer, husband and father has been lost. - *Randy George, owner of Red Hen Bakery, Middlesex, VT*

## We Will Sorely Miss you, Dave:

Dave, you and Lexi were the first couple Melissa and I met when we moved into our Montpelier neighborhood three and a half years ago. Aside from your unusual hugeness, I was taken by your vigor for life and learning. You and Lexi had recently restored your 1800s home into a solar powered, wood-pellet powerhouse. And that multi-colored paint job cheered up the entire neighborhood. Dave and Lexi fabricated a bouldering wall in their attic, installed beer taps on their kitchen counters (Dave and Lexi brew their own beer and cider), and cultivated a yard full of vegetables and flowers, and even grapes for wine. Dave dove into everything he did with immense enthusiasm and drive - it was contagious. Tonight, after hearing of Dave's passing, the sun broke through the Vermont cloud cover and illuminated Dave and Lexi's home in evening light. A rainbow arched over their house. My family sat out on the porch to silently watch and Machlan, my 10 year old son, looked at the rainbow and said, "Look Mom, it's Dave." We all lost it again. When life's twists and turns feel so utterly unjustified, I at least feel some condolence that Dave was pursuing one of his dreams. I imagine a second's delay in that morning's routine could have made all the difference. It's haunting to think about. Dave was 37 and such a positive force in this world. I can't make any sense of it. Lexi, we will help you through this, all of us. We love and support you. – *Kip Penniman, Montpelier, VT*

## Dave's Green Mountain Club Legacy:

Dave was amazing, a beautiful man, and the Green Mountain Club has lost one of the most gifted, generous, multi-talented superpeople ever to set foot on the Long Trail.

Dave was a GMC board member, along with his wife Lexi Shear he founded the Montpelier Section's Young Adventurer's Club, he served on various committees. He was the project manager for A Century in the Mountains, our centennial coffee table book. He was the artist who created the Long Trail poster. The watercolor images he painted during his end-to-end hike are the division headers in the Long Trail Guide. He was the creator of the beautiful relief map table in GMC's visitor center in Waterbury Center, Vermont. He edited the maps for recent editions of the Long Trail Guide. He designed the Traveling Displays which will be on display at libraries throughout the State of Vermont during the coming year as part of the Long Trail's centennial... the list of Dave Blumenthal projects goes on... in a nutshell, he was a renaissance man. We have lost somebody who cannot be replaced.

– Ben Rose, Executive Director, Green Mountain Club, Waterbury Center, VT



Dave at work in his Calais studio.