

parallel lines

A Resource for Challenge Course Professionals | Vol. 16 No. 3

Fall 2016



Welcome to Parallel Lines!

We are pleased to present this online and user-friendly newsletter to our members. Our goal is to provide our members with an easy-to-read periodical with the latest association and industry news.

In this edition of Parallel Lines, you will find an exclusive interview of our new Executive Director, Shawn Tierney by Rick Kahl of Adventure Park Insider. You will also find a President's Report from our Board Chair, Micah Henderson regarding the current priorities of ACCT, along with informative articles by Jen Stanchfield, Reb Gregg, and Todd Domeck. You'll also find information about the upcoming 27th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo, and much more.

We encourage you to share Parallel Lines with your colleagues in your community. Remember that you can also view the publication on our website at www.acctinfo.org. As always, let us know if you have a program, member, or topic that you would like to have included. We can be reached at membership@acctinfo.org.

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Important Dates

December

December 15 - 19, 2017

Training/Certification level 1

December 19, 2016

Advanced Skills Workshop and Level 2 Certification Testing

February

February 11-12, 2016
& February 18-20, 2017

Training/Certification level 1

February 20, 2017

Level 2 - Certification Testing



Letter from the Executive Director

by Shawn Tierney

ACCT Executive Director

I hope everyone is enjoying the fall season and looking forward to the upcoming Holidays and spending more time with family and friends, and perhaps even undertaking a few adventures of your own! Things have been incredibly busy at ACCT and major preparations are underway for the 27th Annual ACCT Conference and Expo in Savannah, Georgia. Please join us! You can read much more about that in this issue of Parallel Lines, as well as the latest updates on ACCT priorities and other initiatives in our President's report.

You will also find our revised volunteer committee chart in this issue as well as a general "call for volunteers." There are currently a number of opportunities to lend your expertise to a committee, panel, or staff work group -- so please consider getting involved with other like-minded professionals to advance the industry! This year there are also three positions open for election to the Board of Directors -- please refer to the Board elections announcement in this issue for more details. You'll also find a "somewhat serious discussion" from outgoing Board member Todd Domeck to

"Make the ACCT Great Again."

In other news, I'm extremely pleased to report that ACCT scored a major victory in the state of Tennessee on September 13th when the Tennessee Elevator and Amusement Device Safety Board voted unanimously to recommend that the state legislature officially adopt the ANSI-ACCT 03-2016 standard for use in inspecting challenge courses, zip lines, and adventure parks in the State. ACCT already has recognition as a certifying agency in TN, meaning that ACCT certified inspectors have been authorized to inspect in the state, but inspections were required to follow the ASTM F2959 standard only. The recommendation from the Safety Board would allow ACCT inspectors to follow the ACCT standard. It's yet unclear as to whether the state will retain use of the ASTM standard in their regulations. Because regulations are a matter of law the issue will now move to the State Legislature for consideration, and hopefully official adoption.

ACCT would like to thank Don Stock and Ross Ogle representing

local Tennessee stakeholders, and Kathy Haras, ACCT volunteer, for their role in presenting convincing information to the Safety Board at the September 13th public meeting. Other industry stakeholders and several ACCT PVM's were also in attendance at the meeting.

Going forward, ACCT will continue to strengthen and build upon the work of the Government Relations Committee with the overall goal of developing a proactive strategy for addressing regulatory issues along with developing helpful online resources that stakeholders at the local level can easily access.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if there's anything on your mind that you would like to discuss or share. I would love to hear from you.

Finally, I'm really looking forward to seeing all of you at the 27th Annual Conference in Georgia!

Warm Regards,

Shawn Tierney
Executive Director



27th Annual ACCT Conference & Expo

by Melissa Webb
ACCT Events Manager



Savannah, GA is the host city for our 27th Annual ACCT Conference & Expo! The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa is the host hotel for our event. The property is just a short ferry ride from the historic Savannah riverfront where attendees will have a multitude of pubs, restaurants, and shops to explore! If you have not already booked your hotel accommodations I encourage you to do so soon as I anticipate the Westin will book fast. The last several years our group block has sold out and attendees have had to make alternative arrangements. For booking information please visit www.acctconference.com and

click on the venue tab to learn more about each of these opportunities.

On behalf of the Conference Committee we are pleased to offer multiple intermediate or advance level trainings and certification opportunities at the 2017 event. Along with the ever popular OSHA 10 Construction Course and Petzl PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) training courses we have added Commissioning: It's not an Inspection, It's a Process, Wood Pole Inspection & Safety, as well as a few offsite courses: The Fundamentals of Rigging and a Machine Operator

Certification Course. The ACCT Inspector Certification program will include the Prep Course on Thursday followed up by testing on Sunday morning. In addition to these selections attendees have the option to choose from up to 9 Pre-conference Sessions which will occur on Thursday prior to the conference. Jennifer Stanchfield is wrapping up things up with "Inspired Facilitator, Engaged Learner" and session attendees will receive a copy of her latest book released just weeks ago!

We are excited to kick off our opening ceremony on Thursday

with Keynote Speaker Jonathan Ronzio an adventurer, international speaker, and entrepreneur best known for directing and starring in the award-winning adventure philanthropy documentary, "Between The Peaks." He is the founder of the blog and expedition series, Explore Inspired, as well as the co-founder of fitness-meets-entrepreneurship workshop, Startup MVMT. We hope you'll swing by the ACCT booth to meet Jonathan and join us in the Expo as we take a look back at those who have steered this ship in the right direction & celebrate of all the amazing work that everyone has put in keeping the boat afloat with our "Preserve the Past" reception.

Friday will be a busy day full of educational opportunities as we have over 120 ninety minute

workshop sessions geared towards all faucets of the industry. When reviewing proposals this year the committee was pleased to have submissions from several returning presenters, but also look forward to welcoming many new presenters to our line-up. Friday Night Reception's theme is "Embark on the Journey of a Lifetime" - Where are you steering your ship?

Lastly, after wrapping up the workshop sessions on Saturday afternoon we plan to bring back some friendly competition with the ever popular ACCT Olympics. We have already planned out numerous activities for the games and look forward to seeing you in action! It is not too early to register your team and start training for the games. Official ACCT conference festivities will wrap up Saturday

evening as we look forward to celebrating with everyone during the Awards / Closing Ceremony where we will "Sail into the Future" - Bon Voyage!

Last, but certainly not least... **REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!!** Be sure to register!

On behalf of the ACCT Board of Directors, Staff, and Conference Planning Committee we look forward to welcoming you to Savannah in February as we "Search for Adventure"!





President's Report

by Micah Henderson

ACCT Board Chair

I hope everyone is enjoying the fall season! I know I am enjoying the cooler temperatures and the beautiful fall colors on the trees. Things with the ACCT Board of Directors have been significantly quieter with the addition of our new executive director, Shawn Tierney. He started work at the beginning of May and has been settling into his new position which has allowed the Board to step away from much of the day-to-day management of the association. We were lucky enough to meet face to face as a Board with Shawn, the entire ACCT staff, and our management company in Reno August 23-25th. It was the first time for many of the group members to meet each other face to face. We all got to know each other better and are excited to hang out with the ACCT community at the upcoming Savannah conference. The Board met for 2 days and the staff and management company were able to meet and do some professional development for an additional day. The entire group was able to share an excellent patio dinner on the river walk of downtown Reno, NV where we celebrated the recent ANSI Board of Standard Review's (BSR) appeal decision in support of the ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 Challenge Course and Zip Line / Canopy Tour Standard.

The Board meeting was very productive because we were able

to turn the page on our recent transition period and focus on the priorities for the ACCT moving forward. We were able to identify several projects that had stalled during the transition and create a plan to get some of them across the finish line before the end of our current fiscal year in June 2017. The past several years, the Board has identified a minimum of 5 priorities per year from our Strategic Plan that we want to see significant progress or completion. It is always a difficult task to limit the priorities to 5 because there are so many exciting projects to consider. Even though these priorities are chosen, the day-to-day business of the ACCT continues as usual. The priorities are projects that require additional work outside the day-to-day tasks. During the Reno meeting we chose the following projects to be the most important between now and June 30th, 2017:

1. Committee Structure Implementation
2. Government Relations Strategy
3. Membership Growth Plan
4. Program Accreditation
5. ACCT University
6. Marketing Strategy

Our amazing ACCT staff is currently putting volunteers and resources in place to accomplish these projects. I know the ACCT will be proud to report progress to all of you when we meet together in Savannah. I

thought it may be helpful to briefly describe each of the projects below. Feel free to reach out to the ACCT staff or a Board member for additional information.

Committee Structure Implementation actually began in 2014 after the completion of the current ACCT Strategic Planning process. The goal was to clarify the names and roles of the various volunteer groups within the association and determine who was managing each group. Our hope was to encourage volunteerism within the ACCT and clarify the needs and expectations for each volunteer opportunity so that each of you could find a place to get involved, if desired. The ACCT has always valued the industry input of our members and cannot be successful without your contributions. The goal with this priority is to have this structure communicated clearly to all current volunteer groups and prospective volunteers by the Savannah conference.

The Government Relations Strategy has been in existence for many years at ACCT, but it has become apparent that it is time for it to be further developed in order to be proactive instead of reactive when issues arise in the states, provinces and countries where our members are located. This strategy will require volunteers from different parts of

the world to be successful as well as a clear leadership and direction from the ACCT staff.

The Membership Growth Plan is possible due to the partnership with our association management company, Managing Matters. They have created a comprehensive plan to recruit members to better reflect the vast industry we all work in. The new membership categories that were established early in 2015 have led to clearer data about who our members are and what great things they do within the industry. This data helps the ACCT make decisions about membership benefits, educational opportunities and future programs. We are working hard to create more useful industry data to promote the industry and each of your businesses.

The Program Accreditation task

group has completed their task and delivered an excellent work product to the Board. The Board has tasked the Accreditation and Certification Committee and the ACCT staff to work together to present an implementation plan for approval. We are all hoping to have a pilot program rolled out early in 2017.

ACCT University is a concept to provide online and classroom educational opportunities in addition to the annual ACCT conference. There is currently a task force being populated to sort out the logistics of online learning platforms as well as identify content that would benefit industry professionals. If you are interested in getting involved with this task group, please contact the ACCT staff.

Marketing Strategy- I will be the

first to admit that I know very little about marketing, but our incredible PR Marketing work group, management company and ACCT staff are committed to developing a strategy and implementation program. The plan will include reaching out to new groups and people within our industry and enhance the consistency and professionalism of all communications from ACCT. The entire Board of Directors is excited about the future of the ACCT and is looking forward to continued growth and involvement within the Challenge Course and Zip Line / Canopy Tour industry. We hope to see all of you in Savannah GA February 2-5 2017. I hope you are all able to get outside and enjoy the new fall season this weekend!





Facilitator's Toolbox

by Jen Stanchfield

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The Improvisational Facilitator

Excerpt from Tips & Tools for the Art of Experiential Group Facilitation, Second Edition Jennifer Stanchfield
jen@experientailtools.com

One of the aspects of facilitation I most appreciate is the ongoing creative energy and adaptation that it both requires and inspires. I enjoy experiencing live music, of all genres, for the same reasons. Musical improvisation fascinates and inspires me—that moment when a musician departs from the notes on the page, plunging into a thematically relevant, completely spontaneous composition in relation to communicating with the audience.

Successful improvisation is the hallmark of a dedicated and seasoned musician who is immersed in the recordings of his/her chosen genre, accumulating more notes,

chords, progressions, and ways to combine them. Scientists believe that through constant practice, these processes get pushed down into the subconscious, and the performer is able to free-associate (Martinez, 2010). When artists, writers, musicians, or any kind of language learners achieve fluency, they can later draw upon and recombine structures and phrases to improvise.

I see improvisation as an essential part of facilitation. As facilitators continue to practice and immerse themselves in the language, theory, and research of their field; learn various activities and strategies from others; and observe all kinds of groups and experiences, they hone this ability to improvise, create, and adapt. Improvisation has a lot to do with this experience, but also attitude—a willingness to experiment, learn and try new things, collaborate with others,

and truly dedicate oneself to the field. Most importantly, successful improvisation in facilitation requires paying close attention to the needs of the group and working off of the amazing material they have to offer.

References:

- Martinez, A. (2010) "The Improvisational Brain" SEED Online Magazine December 14, 2010. Retrieved June 1, 2016 http://seedmagazine.com/content/print/the_improvisational_brain/
- Stanchfield (2016) *Tips & Tools for the Art of Experiential Group Facilitation, Second Edition*. Bethany, OK: Wood N Barnes Publishing.

Join me at the annual conference for the Facilitators Toolbox Live session and add some inspiration to your group facilitation.



ADVENTURE PARK INSIDER

Exclusive Interview: Shawn Tierney

by Rick Kahl, Editor, *Adventure Park Insider Magazine*

The new executive director of the Association for Challenge Course Technology talks about his past and outlines his goals for the future.

It would be difficult to conjure up a more likely candidate for executive director of the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) than Shawn Tierney. He has served as director for several non-profit outdoor organizations, has worked in the outdoor industry as a professional mountain guide and, briefly, as a challenge course instructor. And has experience in the development of industry standards. Did we mention he first attended his first ACCT conference decades ago, and is familiar with the organization's role? All in all, his resume reads like an ACCT wish list.

Beyond all that experience, though, his calm, confident demeanor may be his greatest asset. We spoke to him toward the end of the summer, as he was getting comfortable in his new role, to learn how he plans to lead the organization.

What have the first few months been like?

Tierney: It's been going really well. We've focused on transition items, and that is nearly finished. The first three months are a challenging

time. I've been learning about the various internal groups and committees, and who the industry stakeholders are. Now, though, we have moved our headquarters from Chicago and we have a small office in Boulder, just me at the moment. But we also have staff in different parts of the country.

I'm still in the process of evaluating what will be the optimal organizational structure. What we have in place will serve us well for the year ahead however. Then we can see how we might want to add a staff member, for example.

What are you focusing on first?

Tierney: Growth. The industry, which is comprised of many different elements, has seen a lot of growth in past five years or more. We can position ourselves to increase membership. We have tremendous value in our products and services, networking, and events such as the international conference. I see huge opportunities in training, accreditation, and being a strong advocate for the industry as more regulation comes down the pike. We can take the lead as a vital trade association. There is a lot that we can offer to members to serve them well.

More broadly, we haven't even touched on growth internationally. Whether it's China, Japan, Singapore, or Korea, we're seeing growth in the industry there. Even in South and Central America. That will continue as well. We have some operator members from these areas already.

U.S. regulatory bodies are already citing ACCT standards. That's something that will continue, and we'll see that internationally as well.

Looking ahead, I want to make sure we have all the resources needed to act on a strategic plan that was developed before I arrived. We have revisited that and established our priorities for this fiscal year.

Where are some of the specific opportunities to invest and grow?

Tierney: Program accreditation is one. That will be ready to roll out early next year. We will conduct several pilot programs first. That will be a great opportunity to gather feedback on the process. Operators are going to be really interested in the credential.

Program accreditation could become an important function for ACCT as more pay-for-play

operations enter the industry. It elevates professionalism and recognizes operators' moves toward excellence. There are also other opportunities for education and professional development. Credentialing will be important for the industry going forward.

All that ties back to membership. And we have lots of affordable membership categories. A big piece now is we're ANSI-accredited; that is huge. We have an American National Standard, and a lot of people have purchased and are using our standard. We offer

discounts for members, and that has enticed people to join.

Explain a bit of your background and how it will inform your work as executive director of ACCT.

Tierney: Part of my work as a risk manager was as director of accreditation for the Association of Experiential Education. I worked with various industry groups to develop consensus standards. Those are different standards, of

course, but the process is similar. I'm familiar with the process.

My background includes several non-profit organizations, and touches on HR, marketing, strategic planning, and the budget. It's essential to ensure that the association stays on sound financial footing. You have to align your resources with your actions, such as providing professional development and maintaining government relationships, among other things.

In working for a climbing and



advocacy group, I worked with land managers and agencies regarding climbing issues. We want to be at the table and have stakeholder representation with the various regulatory bodies, and I have experience in that.

No one candidate is going to embody every quality the association needs, but at the end of the day, we have all that individual expertise on the board and in the committees. What I bring is the organizational background. The experts are the volunteers; my role is making sure we stay financially strong and build toward the future. That's a different skill set.

You spent more than a year as Emergency Services Coordinator in New Orleans after Katrina. What did you learn from that?

Tierney: First of all, it was very humbling. I intended to work a few weeks with the Red Cross, but wound up spending more than a year there. I coordinated efforts with government agencies that were providing services and relief efforts for an incredibly impacted community. We helped people work through the maze of bureaucracies. That role gave great insight into how those agencies functioned. I also assisted local business communities to spotlight their needs, and performed a lot of logistical support to provide basic necessities. In all, it was in an entirely new and different environment and setting.

Finances have been an issue for ACCT in the past year. How will

you address that? What in your background helps with it?

Tierney: We've already addressed it. We're on a July 1 fiscal year, and just wrapped up 2016 with a healthy surplus. We've already budgeted for 2017. We worked through the budget process and analyzed how we got into that situation. Then we asked, "how do we prevent that, how do we create a realistic budget going forward?"

Essentially, you have to estimate revenues conservatively, and then stay within your budgeted expenses. Then you can look for ways to exceed your revenue projections.

Just because we're a non-profit doesn't mean we can't make a profit. We just have to direct any surplus back into products and services for our members and the industry.

How do you view the role of annual conference?

Tierney: It's a huge opportunity to get people together. We offer a ton of workshops and the expo will include more than 100 exhibitors, so there will be a wide range of products and services for attendees to experience. It's a tremendous networking opportunity as well as being a huge amount of fun.

It's a great group of people that work in this industry. We're not always in complete agreement, but people are very devoted and committed to what they do. Many of us might not see each other

except at the conference, so it's a place and time to develop working relationships, too. And the conference is growing as well.

How can ACCT help operators handle insurance and related risk management issues?

Tierney: The insurance situation is a really complex issue. Operators are concerned about costs, of course. We've tried to provide some guidance. Hibbs Hallmark has been a key player for many years; they know the industry and discuss it at the annual conference. They help educate operators about their choices, the costs, and other factors. But it's a constantly changing landscape, and we as an industry have only so much control.

There will always be an element of risk in adventure parks, as in many things. When it comes to risk management, we have to help jurisdictions avoid knee-jerk reactions to incidents. We have to analyze and, where needed, take corrective action.

Last thoughts?

Tierney: For those who are not familiar with ACCT, the website is a great resource. And if you are in the industry, you really need to be a member. There's no rationale for not being a member!

To speak with Shawn Tierney yourself, contact him at shawn@acctinfo.org or (303) 328-5978.

Make the ACCT Great Again

A somewhat serious discussion about volunteering for the Organization by a Lame Duck Board Member.

Todd Domeck

First, a definition:

sat·ire
/ˈsɑ, tɪ(ə)r/

the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding vice, folly, etc.

Lets Get Started

In this election year, it's important to think about where our country has come from and where we are going. But that's really hard, and kinda depressing with these two candidates. So lets, instead, think about our little trade organization and its good parts and bad parts, and what we can do to make it great (or great again, depending on your political leaning). Personally, I think its already pretty great.

That being said, there's always room for improvement and ALWAYS room for new ideas, innovation, and communication so that we can grow and promote an industry, not just our organization. Trust me. It's gonna be great.

Our Forefathers Were All Volunteers

I'm always impressed by the number of volunteers we have at our trade show. It's much easier there to be impressed. The minions are all wearing bright yellow hats! For

most of you reading (full disclosure: we don't really have readership numbers on this publication but it would be a good idea), you probably have no idea of the hundreds of volunteers it takes to keep this place running. I would guess that nearly every single day there is a committee meeting, a PR article being written, a standard agreed to, a conference workshop developed, or a financial model analyzed. The vast majority of that work is being done by volunteers, and has traditionally, been done by volunteers. But it used to be MUCH more of a sacrifice for a few... and some folks still take on too much (COUGH...Micah).

Did you know?

- The ACCT corporate office used to reside in a PVM's office to save us some dough? (thanks Michelle)
- Rich Klajnscek has been on an ACCT volunteer committee since 1968
- In 2003 Jim Wall was tasked with riding a horse from ropes course to ropes course yelling, "ANSI is coming, ANSI is coming." A task he only recently completed in 2016 (6 horses later), hence the ANSI/ACCT Standard. On a timeline note, the growth and popularity of aerial adventure parks was partially to blame for Jim's 13-year timeline.

Ask Not What the ACCT Can Do for You

I'm seriously sick of this s&%t. And I'm too young to be this fed up with it. Most of you have REALLY strong opinions about what is right/wrong with our industry and our association but the biggest critics are often the ones who are not involved as Volunteers, PVMs, Board Members, and Exhibitors. Why is this? Because it's the easy way out, it makes you look smart at ACCT parties, oh.... And there are some legitimate things to complain about. But that's how our organization changes: FROM Within!

Case and Point: We no longer have two different levels of PVM Accreditation. This was a previous bad idea that was changed from within the volunteer community. You're welcome.

The most annoying thing I hear lately is the answer to this question:

Todd: *"Hey non-PVM Company who Designs, Builds, Trains and Inspects courses. Why don't you get involved in the PVM process? We'd love to have you. Clearly you are doing great work and adhering to the standards. What's the holdup?"*

Non-PVM respondent: "Well, because of all the hard work of the volunteers in the past who virtually created an industry, worked their balls off to develop standards, assist with regulation, keep our insurance rates reasonable, I can now operate my \$5MM Company without having to go through that process or let anyone review my work. So, I'm good."

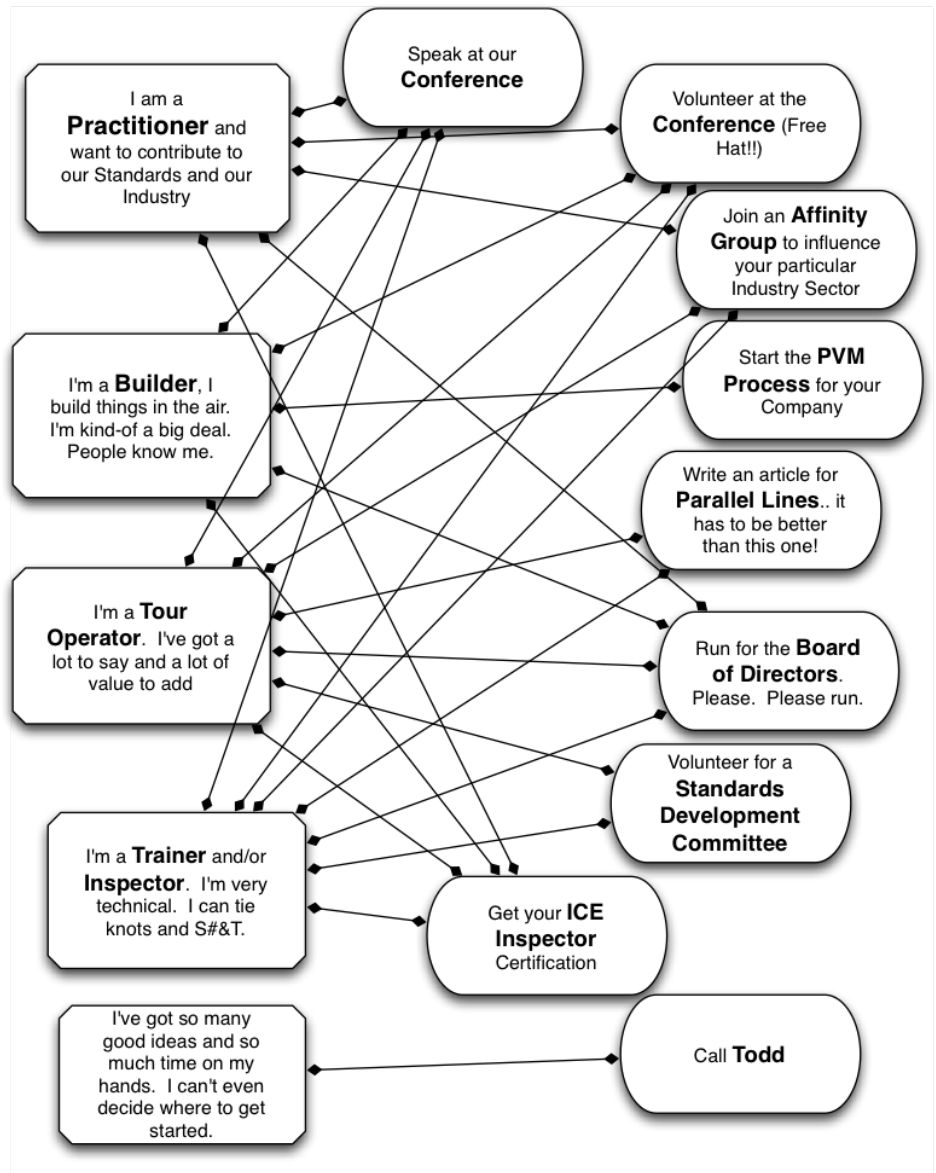
Todd: (Angry face, holding it together) "But seriously, having others review your work and you taking the opportunity to do the same should be the foundation for constant improvement for all of us. It will make us all better. Including you. Further, just because you are making a buncha money in a growing industry does not mean you are doing everything right. We've all got a lot to learn. And improvements to make - which is what the process is about, right?" (now with a grin feeling pretty good about myself.)

Non-PVM respondent: "Yeah, I see your point. I just don't see the need for it because no government authority or insurance company is making me do it (note: clearly NOT seeing my point). So I'm not really interested right now."

Todd: (Back to angry face with a little bit of defeat in his eyes)

Lets face it, the PVM's and their employees are still the backbone of the volunteer effort in this organization. But that needs to change. Unless we get a bunch more PVM's, which would be ideal (wink, wink, nudge, nudge: you know who you are).

In all seriousness, if you care a little bit about this industry. Please get involved. I've prepared a small diagram on how you can help.



Now, some of you may put up one of three arguments:

1. That you "have tried and can't get on a committee." Well, I'm personally sorry about that and would ask that you please try again. We will do a better job of responding and get back to you. We need you.
2. "I think its BS that the committees aren't just open to everyone." METOO! With slight exceptions. If you believe this too, please

volunteer and make your voice heard.

3. Or the best one, "I thought it was all just a "Good Ol' Boys Network..." Lets discuss below.

The Good Ol' Boys Network

Look, despite the grey in my beard, I am one of the younger guys in this organization. "Back in my day" a lot of guys complained about the "Good Ol' Boys" network so I feel it's appropriate to address it here.

Although most people will have some level of denial of its existence, lets be real here. An organization like this doesn't get started without a LOT of work. And when an organization is new, the burden of that work is put on just a few volunteers. Those volunteers either:

- A) Get to know each other really well, become best friends and continue to work together when possible in the future (thus forming an unofficial GOB network) or
- B) Quickly grow to dislike one another and don't want to be in the same room.

We all know this industry and our organization is very odd when it comes to competitors being friends and genuinely liking (if not loving) each other. It's weird. So, yes, there WAS a Good Ol' Boys Network. But you have my word that:

- 1. They never meant any harm.
- 2. They were always makin' their way the only way they knew how.
- 3. Which MAY have been a little bit more than the law would allow.

Where Are We Now?

- 1. Financially a lot stronger than we were a year ago... a lot!
- 2. Still reveling from our victorious "debate" appearance with ANSI.
- 3. In need of new volunteers

to help get us to the next level. Millennials, we are really sorry about Bernie. But if you really want to help, especially if you have skills in writing, web development, graphic design, consensus building, PR, Marketing, etc... we will gladly accept your help!

Where Do We Want To Be?

Without making it seem like the sky is falling, here are MY top three things I'd like to see the organization get ahead of in the next two years. And it will take some skill and a lot of volunteer work to get there.

- 1. I'd like to see us more focused on Membership Services while still maintaining our Standards Development Mission. This will give us a war chest of capital that will allow us to provide better services to our members in a rapidly changing industry.
- 2. Its time for Program Accreditation. We will need volunteers to help roll this out and lots of feedback from everyone. This will be instrumental in dealing with regulators in the United States and beyond.
- 3. Get ahead of regulation. Stop reacting to inquiries from government bodies and start engaging them before an accident alerts them to our industry. This will have to be accomplished through good PR and a small group of skilled individuals in that particular

municipality that can put the industry's interest ahead of their own.

What Can You Do To Help?

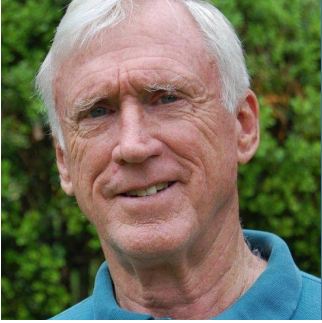
Seriously, y'all? Just volunteer. Pay your dues (in the correct Membership category this year). And give us feedback.

The Closer

In all seriousness, we need to strategically become the one-stop shop for all challenge courses and aerial adventure parks. This will mean implementing things like Program Accreditation, Accident Reporting and Prevention, Association Controlled Group Insurance Programs, ACCT Administered Certifications and Testing and providing more and more benefits to our members so that everyone in this industry, world-wide, knows about us and sees the value in our existence. This is a tall order and will take a new breed of Volunteers and a new way of thinking about our trade organization. I hope y'all are up for the challenge.

Todd Domeck

The opinions expressed in the article are not necessarily the opinions of the ACCT or its Board of Directors.



The “Operator Error” Net – Are You in it?

by Reb Greg

A preliminary assessment of “operator error” is not necessarily a free pass to others whose design, construction, training, inspection or other services (including standards setting!) contributed to the circumstances surrounding the bad event.

One method of identifying factors in an incident review is to start with the mechanism of injury (or other loss) and expand outward in increasing concentric circles, from the most clear and proximate of possible contributors to the uncertain and remote. Your analysis will include, basically, people, places and things: what happened, the complaining party, other participants, staff, structures, gear, weather, practices, policies and standards...you get the picture.

An investigator, considering targets (deep pockets) for a law suit, will study these and other possible contributing causes. Similarly, a party against whom a claim has been made will look at the same pool of candidates to identify others to share, or take over, responsibility for the alleged loss.

ACCT facilitators and our peers are on the front line of the “operator error” charge, but a number of folks and services are right behind us, the quality of whose performances may have created challenges for the site and operator.

Consider the course or facility designer. Are the inherent risks of the activity enlarged by a design feature? Have defects in construction increased the risks of use? Is gear appropriate for the activities contemplated, in good condition and being used as directed by the manufacturer? Is the facility staff competent and properly trained and credentialed for the activities? Did the original commissioning or subsequent inspections overlook or fail to deal properly with a structural or operation problem?

Even a not very creative attorney can find a way to implicate others in what may at first appear to be an “operator error” scenario. As noted above, others before that operator may have created conditions which add to the claimed loss. And even if fault is not found, those other players can be dragged through a law suit that is not properly their responsibility.

A few tips, to reduce your chances of being caught in the operator error net:

Perform your services pursuant to a written contract. Be sure that contract sets out clearly the scope of your services. In describing responsibilities, be as clear in describing what you will not do as you are in describing what you will do.

If you are training, disclaim any responsibility for identifying and reporting unrelated issues. If you use independent contractors, identify them and require an agreement that any dispute arising out of their services will be resolved between the client and that contractor -- not you. Require the client to modify or cease operations if you discover a condition (structural, operational or personnel) that warrants such action. Reserve the right to report findings of a certain sort to local or state agencies, if required by law or regulation to do so. Require immediate notice of any real or suspected problem with your services.

If training, deny any responsibility for second generation trainees. If inspecting, be specific about what is and isn't being inspected (all gear/selected gear? Logs showing the history of use?) and the nature of the inspection (visual/tactile?) Be cautious of inspection language that may commit you to a risk management review.

Most importantly: require the client to agree to protect you from all claims arising from future operations except (for example) those which arise solely and directly from a defect in your performance.

These suggestions are not exhaustive and are not guaranteed to keep you out of the “Operator Error” net, but they will help.

North Carolina Regulatory Update

by Ken Jacquot, President NCAAA

Dear ACCT Community,

I want to update everyone on where things stand with possible zip line and adventure park regulations being adopted in the State of North Carolina.

As a summary

A zip line death in NC last spring, at Camp Cheerio led to much press and public interest within the southeast region. A motivated representative that has a connection to the family, Rep. Ted Davis passed a bill that required the North Carolina Department of Labor to do a thorough study on zip lines and adventure parks in the state. As a response to this action a group of commercial builders and operators came together in 2015 and started North Carolina Aerial Adventure Association (NCAAA). A state focused professional trade organization working on industry improvements, promotion and regulatory input. To date we have a website, hired a lobbyist, met and negotiated with key departments, regulators and representatives.

The study by the NCDOL and its result were published and distributed February 2016. The study by the NCDOL demonstrated

one of the most complete and comprehensive study's to date within the US. See link to review report. The four key points are as follows:

- Participation on a zip line or challenge course is a sport (active entertainment), not an amusement (passive entertainment), thus the industry should not be regulated as an amusement device.
- Existing regulatory mechanisms already provide a layer of safety – both in the underlying insurance marketplace and under G.S. 89C-3(6), which provides that the design of these structures must be approved by a Professional Engineer.
- Though no database exists to account for all accidents in this industry, anecdotal evidence suggests that most incidents are caused by human error – not equipment failure.
- Participation assumes an inherent risk (evidenced by waivers typically required before participation) – no amount of regulation will remove all risk, and the department is not convinced that additional regulations will create a safer industry.

Following this report and the NCDOL findings Rep. Davis decided to pursue the development of regulations NCDOL to draft regulations based off of the amusement standards. Upon this effort and with no process for time or input from key stakeholders Rep. Davis submitted HB1043 in the House Judiciary III Committee. We provided Rep. Davis our thoughts and input and heard from numerous legislative members that were not supportive of this approach and the bill.

The 2016 North Carolina General Assembly legislative session ended when the House and Senate adjourned the session July 1st. The proposed zip line and challenge course regulation bill introduced by Representative Ted Davis was not considered further after the hearing a few weeks ago in the House Judiciary III Committee. NCAAA and our lobbyist have been very active in our opposition to this bill over the last few months. Because the 2016 legislative session has ended, the proposed bill is now considered dead. The potential exists, however, that the bill could be reintroduced and considered in the next session.

The 2017 legislative session will

begin in late January. NCAAA has received encouragement from several sources within the legislature to draft proposed legislation that we support. NCAAA will work with other industry stakeholder organizations within North Carolina to develop proposed regulations that are appropriate, practical and effective, with the goal of working with key legislators who

will introduce it as a bill early in the 2017 session. A draft of acceptable standards has been developed by NCAAA but has yet to be shared or vetted by other stakeholders. Our first approach will be to work with North Carolina Insurance Regulatory & Rate Commission to introduce insurance and ACCT standards as requirements for all operators. (This would be a similar

approach as used in Texas)

If you are interested in joining or following NCAAA please check out our website at: <https://ncaaa.net>

Sincerely

Ken Jacquot
President NCAAA

ACCT Volunteer Committee Chart Updated

ACCT committees, work groups, panels, task forces, and affinity groups provide guidance, research, and work product to assist the Association in fulfilling its mission. ACCT has made some recent revisions to our volunteer committee chart and is currently in the process of implementing the changes. To view the revised chart, click [HERE](#).

Current committees/work groups seeking volunteers:

- Leadership Development (experience with BOD development, nominations process/elections, etc.)
- Research (must be working in an academic environment)
- ACCT University (in-depth knowledge of creating and developing e-learning opportunities, webinars and live workshops)
- Program Accreditation (seeking operator of zip lines, aerial adventure park, etc.)

Requirements for volunteer service include:

- Current ACCT member
- Vested interest in the challenge course field and the particular Committee, Work Group, Panel, Task Force, or Affinity Group
- Writing skills in most cases
- Two year minimum commitment for most committee positions, time frame varies with task forces
- Experience and patience with group process
- Management/leadership experience a plus
- Dedication to the work of ACCT

Members who have an interest in serving on a committee or participating in the Association at a higher level are encouraged to complete a volunteer application and submit it to ACCT. Click [HERE](#) to download the application!

27th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo

Westin, Savannah | Savannah, Georgia
February 2nd - 5th , 2017



Please visit <http://acctconference.com/> for more information and to register for the conference.



PEACE OF MIND

As defined by Meg, Customer Service Supervisor at Mount Hermon Adventures

noun

1. The feeling you get when you grow online bookings 60%, increase online revenue 20%, and say 'Yes' to the love of your life, all in one summer.
2. Having confidence in your present and your future.

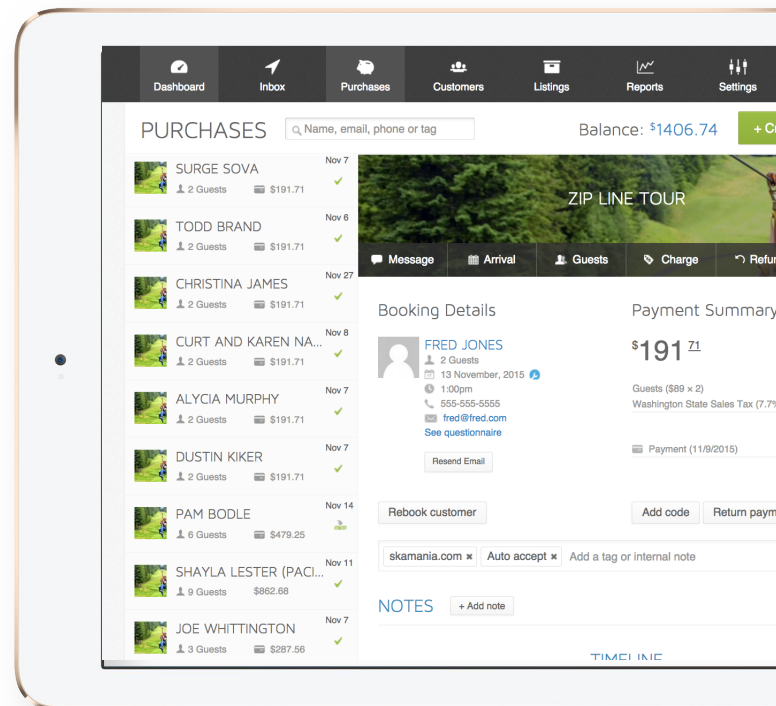
"Xola gives zip lines and challenge courses peace of mind."

RATED 5-STARS BY ZIP TOURS
& CHALLENGE COURSES



XOLA Stay in peace.

The official booking software of ACCT



parallel lines

Presenters Wanted

Online Workshop Opportunities!

Are you an ACCT Member that would like to share your expertise with the international challenge course, zip line, and aerial adventure community? If you're interested in providing an online webinar or workshop that you feel would be valuable to our members, please contact us so we can talk! Contact: ACCT PR & Marketing Chair Mandy Stewart at mandy@experientialresources.net



ANSI BSR Upholds Its Prior Decision to Approve ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 As An American National Standard

On August 24th, 2016 the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) was notified by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Board of Standards Review (BSR) that the appeal filed by the Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA) in connection with the BSR's decision to approve ACCT 03-2016 *Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards* as an American National Standard (ANS), has been denied. **As a result, the BSR upheld its prior decision to approve ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 as an ANS.**

In its conclusion, the BSR found that "PRCA had not provided sufficient or compelling evidence to warrant the withdrawal of the approval of ACCT 03-2016 as an American National Standard. Accordingly, in light of the written evidence and oral testimony presented by all parties and based on the specific discussions set forth earlier in this decision, the ANSI BSR Panel denies the appeal and finds that its prior decision to approve ACCT 03-2016 as an ANS was appropriate."

On September 29th, 2016 PRCA filed an appeal of the BSR decision, this time to the ANSI Appeals Board. The Appeals Board is the final level of appeal within ANSI. According to the ANSI Appeals Board Operating Procedures: "The Appeals Board shall consider an appeal based on the evidence before the body of ANSI that made the decision from which the appeal is taken (e.g., ANSI Board of Standards Review, ANSI Executive Standards Council). Any decision that is appealed shall not be reversed by the ANSI Appeals Board unless the Appeals Board finds that such decision was clearly erroneous. The burden of persuasion shall rest with the appellant. Pending resolution by the Appeals Board, the original action of the decision-making body shall stand unless the decision-making body determines otherwise."

ACCT will keep you informed when we are notified of the Appeal Board's decision.

OSHA Zip-Line Pamphlet

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently released a pamphlet entitled "Protecting Zip-Line Workers" The pamphlet was produced with input and assistance from the ACCT Employee Workplace Safety Task Force, chaired by Jim Wall. ACCT would like to thank the Task Force for their work in contributing to the pamphlet! You can view a PDF of the pamphlet [HERE](#).

Board Elections Announcement

Dear ACCT Members,

I hope all of you had a productive and busy summer season. It is time to begin preparing for the 2017 ACCT Board of Directors election. This year three positions are open for election. Two of those positions are elected by the Accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVMs), and one position is elected by Individual and Organizational members (B2B, B2C and Stakeholder/Affiliate).

Election Procedures:

According to the current Association for Challenge Course Technology bylaws, any member of the association may nominate an individual, with that person's permission, to serve on the Board of Directors, and any member may place his/her own name up for nomination for a position on the Board of Directors.

Individual and Organizational Nominations:

A candidate must be an Individual or Organizational member of ACCT and may not work for a Professional Vendor Member. Candidates in this part of the election may not run for a seat elected by PVMs in the same election. Anyone wishing to run for this Board seat must send in a nomination form by Friday, December 2, 2016. The nomination form must be submitted electronically to elections@acctinfo.org and must include the following:

Nomination Statements must include:

- Full Name and headshot photo
- Brief work history as related to the challenge course industry
- Previous volunteer experience (within and/or outside of ACCT)
- Qualifications
- Position statement including pressing issues, or hot topics you are passionate about in our industry

Nomination forms can be found [HERE](#).

Voting for a Board Member Elected by the Individual and Organizational Members:

Voting for this position only will be conducted online prior to the conference. A member may cast one vote. Online voting will be available from December 12, 2016 until January 13, 2017. Individual and Organizational Member voting will be completed electronically ONLY. There will NOT be ballot election at the Annual General meeting. Information about voting will be emailed to all ACCT members in good standing.

Accredited Professional Vendor Member (PVM) Nominations:

Candidates wishing to run for this position must fill out a nomination form, which includes a nomination statement (maximum of 400 words), and must be submitted electronically to elections@acctinfo.org by December 2, 2016. Candidates do not have to be affiliated with a PVM company but will be elected by PVMs.

In accordance with the current ACCT bylaws, write-in nominations or candidates for positions voted on by PVMs shall be submitted to elections@acctinfo.org no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled election to be held approximately 3:00pm on Thursday, February 2, 2017.

Nomination Statements must include:

- Full Name and headshot photo
- Brief work history as related to the challenge course industry
- Previous volunteer experience (inside and/or outside ACCT)
- Qualifications
- Position statement including pressing issues, or hot topics you are passionate about in our industry

Last minute ballots will not be accepted. Elections will be held in person using a paper ballot during the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, February 2, 2017. Election results will be announced at the conference at the end of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). For any additional information about submitting a nomination for an open seat on the ACCT Board of Directors, please contact Ryan Olson, ACCT Board Vice-Chair at ryan.olson@acctinfo.org.

Nomination forms can be found [HERE](#).

Please visit the election nominations page on the ACCT website for more information.

Thank you,

Ryan Olson
ACCT Board Vice-Chair
Ryan.olson@acctinfo.org

ACCT Research Grant

The ACCT Research Grant was created to further research in the challenge course industry by providing financial assistance (up to \$1,500) to individuals conducting challenge course research. Proposals will be accepted November 1 - December 31, 2016. Notifications about the winner will be announced at the end of January, 2017 and at the ACCT International Conference.

All submissions are reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee. Grant awardees will be expected to present their research at a future ACCT conference.

Proposals should not exceed 5 pages and are expected to include the following:

- Title of the research project.
- Purpose of the research (including how this is related to the challenge course industry and a literature review).
- The problem or issue of focus and the research questions being asked, and how this research will benefit the challenge course industry.
- The research methodology being used.
- The proposed budget for the research project (indirect costs are not permitted).
- Project timeline and IRB approval.
- List of relevant documented references/works cited (may include those used to justify proposal and potential references). These are not personal references.

Specific questions about the research grant can be sent directly to Lizzie Lange (bluegrasslizard@yahoo.com), Chair of ACCT's Research Advisory Committee.

Rubric for assessment of research proposals - [click here](#)

2015 Grant Winner Proposal - [click here](#)



ACCT Mission Statement

The Association for Challenge Course Technology establishes and promotes the standard of care and measure of excellence that defines professional practice and effective challenge course programs. ACCT develops, refines, and publishes standards for Installing, maintaining, and managing challenge courses; provides forums for education and professional development; and advocates for the challenge course and adventure industry.

ACCT Vision Statement

The Association for Challenge Course Technology is the undisputed industry leader, advancing the industry and enabling members' on-going success.

ACCT Board of Directors

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Our email address is info@acctinfo.org We are also accessible through our website at: www.acctinfo.org