

# parallel lines

A RESOURCE FOR CHALLENGE COURSE PROFESSIONALS

VOL. 18 / NO. 1 / WINTER 2018

## 10 TIPS

**Improve how  
you Facilitate**

## ANSI/ACCT STANDARDS

**Now Available  
in Spanish!**

## PLUS

**Government  
Relations  
Update**

**Nominate Award  
Candidates by  
January 7**

**Members Dish on Why  
They Joined and What  
They Get From ACCT**

**Keynote Nate  
Regier on Creative  
Conflict Resolution**

**ACCT** Association for  
Challenge Course  
Technology®

## Letter from the Executive Director

Welcome to our newly redesigned Parallel Lines. We're making a concerted effort to craft a publication with content that is more relevant, informative, and engaging for our members. We hope you like it!

I'm excited to extend an invitation to join us February 1-4, 2018 in Fort Worth, TX for the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference and Expo. The conference is shaping up to be our best one yet, and you can read more about some of the conference happenings in this issue. Please join us, and I look forward to seeing you in Fort Worth!

Please join me in welcoming the Weiss Group, and Jason Keith Consulting, two external consulting firms providing ACCT with PR/Marketing and Government Relations support respectively. You can [read more](#) about them in this issue.



ACCT reached a milestone with the recent publication of our ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 Standards in Spanish. By making our standards available in Spanish, operators, government bodies and regulators in charge of permits for challenge courses, aerial adventure parks, and zip lines are now able to reference and adopt our standards as the industry grows. Equally important, travel agencies, insurance companies, and the public throughout Latin America will now have a technical reference for the industry. [Here's more detail.](#)

If you're interested in serving on the ACCT Board of Directors, I encourage you to submit a nomination form by the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. This year three positions are open for election. Two positions are elected by the Accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVMs), and one position is elected by the Individual and Organizational members (B2B, B2C and Stakeholder/Affiliate). Online voting for the seat elected by the individual and organizational members will take place from December 11, 2017 until January 12, 2018. Information about voting will be emailed in early December to all ACCT members in good standing.

The Accreditation and Certification Committee (ACC) has been diligently working to put the final touches on our program accreditation model, and ACCT will be conducting a pilot program before December 1 to take what we've developed, go through the process, gather feedback from the program, and learn what modifications and improvements need to be made. At the time of this writing the ACC is in the process of making a final company selection for the pilot program.

Finally, I want to remind you to visit our [website](#) on a regular basis for the latest news, board meeting minutes, monthly financial statements, executive director reports, our revised volunteer chart, career center for job postings, the calendar of events, and more!

Lastly, please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything on your mind that you would like to share or discuss with me.

All the Best,

  
Shawn Tierney



# parallel lines

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# Industry Updates



## Nominate Award Candidates by January 7

Remember to nominate our talented ACCT members for the [5th annual ACCT Awards](#). The awards include seven categories: Outstanding Structure Design; Outstanding Marketing/Promotional Video; Outstanding Marketing Collateral (non-video); Outstanding Fund Raising Campaign; Outstanding Special Event; Outstanding Website; and Outstanding Program Impact Award.

Whether it's for commercial, recreational, or educational use, each year designers, builders, operators, and other professionals submit award applications on behalf of themselves, or others, to share (and show off) the work they have done. Award winners will be given an ACCT Award to display in their office and the award is a wonderful accolade to share on a business website.

Submissions are due by 11:59 pm Eastern, January 7, 2018. All nominations must be based upon work that was performed during 2017. For more information, or to apply go to [5th annual ACCT Awards](#)

Awards will be announced and presented on February 4th at the [28th Annual International ACCT Conference and Expo](#) at the Fort Worth Texas USA Convention Center.

## ACCT Makes Progress with Government Relations and Policy

We are working in conjunction with consultant Jason Keith, attorney and owner of Jason Keith Consulting, LLC, on [government relations and policy](#) for the past several months. Here's an update on what's been accomplished, and what lies ahead.

Keith is focusing on helping us revise our position statement on regulation, updating that statement for the organization's government and partnership relations work. Keith is also working with ACCT to develop a government relations and policy plan to assist with messaging to regulators, internal and external stakeholders, positioning, and creation of resources for the ACCT website and local stakeholders and operators.

Key items for this plan include representing and advocating for ACCT Standards locally and nationally, and developing a statistical analysis of the challenge course technology industry for course and user numbers, and for incident rates. This plan will also seek to create a model and template that can be used throughout the country on a regional basis to support regulatory initiatives when and where they occur. It will also develop a toolbox of information for locals to use when approaching regulators and legislators contemplating new rules, policies and laws.

This plan is in development with key assistance from ACCT's internal network of staff, volunteers, and advocates, and should be completed by the end of 2017. The plan will solidify ACCT's government relations strategy and effectiveness regarding current industry issues and how the industry is regulated, and develop a list of priorities for the next two years.

## ACCT Working with Experts in Government Relations and PR/Communications

Small changes, resulting in big impact, are afoot within ACCT. Two outside vendors are assisting us in these essential areas: Improving our regulation position statement, and improving marketing and communications materials.

We've contracted with Jason Keith, owner of Jason Keith Consulting, LLC, a government relations firm catering to mid-size non-profit and public interest organizations with a need for federal and state level representation on a variety of policy issues. Keith is an attorney and 16-year veteran as National Policy Director at the [Access Fund](#). He is also the co-founder of the non-profit Public Land Solutions, an organization dedicated to providing comprehensive recreation planning and stakeholder coordination that supports effective and sustainable public land solutions. Through this work, he negotiated national agreements with the US Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management, submitted congressional testimony on public lands legislation, founded and represented non-profits on federal agency

rule making, and submitted dozens of NEPA comment letters concerning public land management proposals around the country. Keith is working with ACCT to revise its position statement on regulation. He will work with the ACCT team to update the statement for the organization's work with government and partnership relations.

ACCT is also collaborating with [The Weiss Group, LLC](#), a full-service content company that helps large and small companies develop and improve their marketing strategies, messaging, brand storytelling, websites, social media, and publications. Jean Weiss, the founder and principal, has a deep and broad background in media, marketing, and communications. Weiss has held numerous Editor in Chief, Vice President of Content, Managing Editor, and Senior Editor positions in marketing, communications, content, and brand management in the healthy and active lifestyle genres, including as a senior features editor at Outside magazine. Weiss encourages ACCT members to chime in on the type of stories they'd like to see in Clipboard and Parallel Lines, and the type of information they'd like to see in ACCT social media and on our website. Please send thoughts and feedback [here](#).

Both companies have been working with the ACCT staff, with ACCT volunteer groups, and interacting with the ACCT community when necessary.

## Enjoy Conference "A La Carte" Program

What does conference registration include when you sign up as an attendee? Attendees get admission to the opening ceremony, keynote address, and exhibit hall, which hosts more than 100 exhibitors on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, February 1-3. They also gain first come, first serve access to over 110 workshop sessions on Friday and Saturday, admittance to the ACCT Olympics, as well as entry to the ACCT awards and closing ceremony on Saturday evening.

In addition to all of this, we are offering our "a la carte" program that provides opportunities for a deeper dive into specific topics. There will be 12 certification and training courses offered before the conference, as well as the Inspector Certification Program prep course, followed by the ACCT Inspector Certification exams on Sunday. There are numerous pre-conference and post-conference workshop choices this year. Pre-conference sessions will take place 8 am to 3 pm on Thursday, February 1, and the post-conference sessions will be held 8 am to 12 pm on Sunday, February 4. These learning opportunities provide a chance to explore a topic in depth with an experienced presenter.

All certifications, trainings, pre-cons, and post-cons do require additional "a la carte" registration items. Exhibit-hall-only passes grant admittance to the exhibit hall during show hours only, as well as access to the ACCT awards and closing ceremony.

### Remember to Pre-Order Your Conference T-shirt

A gentle reminder: This year's conference T-shirts are available by pre-ordering only. They will not be for sale at the conference. The 2018 tee is unique and memorable. Capture your conference experience with a \$20 wearable souvenir. T-shirts are available for purchase through this registration [link](#).



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## Inclusive Programming Workshop Held Again at 2018 Conference

The pre-conference session “Adaptive Challenge Course Programming” with Melanie Wills, Director of Outdoor Education & Professional Services, Bradford Woods, Indiana University’s Outdoor Center, and Ryan Craven is back by popular demand. Come explore the topic of inclusive programming on high and low challenge courses.

Sometimes we need to adapt programs using specific gear to make the program accessible for people with special needs or disabilities. This session discusses ways to adapt activities to meet all participant needs, and offers the chance to play with some gear that could work on high challenge courses, too.

Attendees will learn disability awareness and inclusive programming on challenge courses, and gain understanding of the types of gear that work well for adaptive climbing. There will be opportunity to practice examples of effective programming and staff training.

Wills hosted this course a few years ago at McKinney Roughs in Lost Pines, TX and it was a great opportunity for participants to gain hands-on knowledge of inclusive programming. Wills and her team at Bradford Woods adapted aspects of their own challenge courses and zip lines for clients with special needs. For more, check out our story about [Melanie Wills](#) in this issue of Parallel Lines.



## Industry Technical Standards Now Available to Spanish Speakers

The Association for Challenge Course Technology, (ACCT), has translated the ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 Standards into Spanish. The translation includes standards for design, performance, inspection, operations, training, definitions of terminology and appendices that include discussion of conventional challenge

need for translated standards in Spanish-speaking countries where growth of the challenge course and adventure park industries has soared, due to increased tourism, yet thus far no standards have been accessible for Spanish speakers. “Tourism has created this growth and need for standards available in Spanish,” says Gaitan. “When you think of Europe, you think of culture, museums, great food. When you think of Latin America, you think of adventure and nature, along with great food and culture.”

The Spanish standards will now define parameters for government bodies and regulators in charge of permits. They will also provide guidelines for builders and park owners to comply with, help travel agencies and the public identify safe vendors, and help insurance companies advise their clients on best practices. “The Spanish language standards are important because they show the international aspect of ACCT as a resource for standards and quality assurance, and accesses new industry markets that may have felt the standards only applied to English speaking countries,” says Gallo.

**“Having these documents in Spanish opens the challenge course, canopy tour, and zipline tour industries for more inclusivity across demographics.”**

—JOSE GONZALEZ, ED. D., CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

course design, zip line brake systems, and information about the functions of a challenge course facilitator.

The standards were translated by ACCT members Victor Gallo, owner of [Adventure Playground](#) in Santa Ana, Costa Rica, Jose Gonzalez, Ed. D., California State University, Northridge, Pavel Gaitan, Director of Operations at [Cabo Adventures](#) in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and Luis Acevedo, CEO of [Aire Libre Inc.](#) in Puerto Rico, who was unavailable for comment for this story. All four have seen the

Standards translated into Spanish will help the native Latin industry self-regulate, rather than having under-informed external agencies mandating what we do, says Gonzales, Ed.D. “Having these documents in Spanish reaches farther and opens the challenge course, canopy tour, and zipline tour industries for more inclusivity across demographics,” he says.

Click [here](#) for a link to the ACCT press release announcing the translated standards. The ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 Standards Spanish version is available [here](#).

FEATURE STORY

## 10 Tips to Help You Know Your Group

Do your research ahead of time to nurture the emotional safety necessary for effective facilitation.

By Jennifer Stanchfield

I recently met a corporate executive who, when he found out what I do for a living, groaned and said, “Oh that team-building stuff is sooo painful. I am the guy in my company who is in trouble for not participating when our staff does that kind of program. I’ve become the bad guy at work for not buying in.”

My first thoughts were, What did they do to him? What negative experience did he have? When I asked him to elaborate, he explained that the facilitator of a corporate team-building program he attended last fall asked the group to pass an orange, neck-to-neck, around the circle as an ice breaker. I was astounded. The last I’d heard of that activity was in *Mad Men*, season 4, episode 2, “Christmas Comes but Once a Year,” when the advertising company was trying to impress a new client with their “wild party antics” circa 1965!

My next thoughts were that, here was another example of a group of people being put in a situation where emotional safety was not considered. And now, a person who was concerned about boundaries was regarded as the bad guy for speaking up about an activity that didn’t feel appropriate. The facilitator clearly did not know the group. The result is that a key executive who could have facilitated change within the company instead moved

away from the opportunity for growth.

I find myself, when I hear stories like this, becoming more passionate about promoting the importance of taking a step back as a facilitator and asking myself, “Why this activity?” Once the answer is clear, I then ask myself, “How do I make it palatable, meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all?”

I originally collaborated with Gretchen Newhouse, Ph.D., of the Recreation Management/Therapeutic Recreation Department of the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, on a list of questions to share with our fellow facilitators in my column Facilitator’s Toolbox in the 2002 spring issue of *Parallel Lines*. Our list has been updated, since then, so I wanted to share those updates. Here’s what we’ve found to be successful to help you know your group.

### 1. Check in with the Group Representative

The first step to know your group is communication with the group representative. Asking good questions will help you gather the answers that will guide your preparation. For long-term settings like schools and treatment programs, these questions can be asked of therapists, counselors, and teachers. With corporate groups it is usually the Human Resources department contact. I try to communicate with more than one person from the team—and at least someone who is directly part of the group that is coming to the program, as their goals and expectations are often different than the person who scheduled the day. The best outcome is when a few stakeholders discuss these questions with you as part of program planning prior to coming.

### 2. Make a List of Key Questions to be Answered

To effectively plan a sequence of meaningful and relevant activities, facilitators need to know basic information about their groups. These questions might seem obvious, but busy programs and facilitators can miss addressing these and end up playing catch-up during program time, sometimes with less-than-desirable outcomes. Some facilitators work with the same group





repeatedly; however, many facilitate work with a new group daily or weekly with little background information. Knowing your group is imperative, regardless of your circumstances. Here are examples of questions you may want answered to design a quality program:

- Who is the group and why are they in this program?
- What is the group's purpose or mission? What goals and expectations do they have for the day?
- Are there pre-existent individual or group needs to be considered?
- What previous group-building or training have they experienced?
- What do they hope to take away from the day?

### 3. Find Out Group Demographics

What is the background of the group? What are the demographics—age, gender, cultural background, geographic location, etc.? When facilitating a group from a background different than your own, do some research. Keep in mind the cultural differences in language and slang terms—some words and names commonly used in games and activities could be offensive or hurtful. There are also cultural differences around what is considered appropriate touch. For example, some cultures or religions frown on physical touch between different genders in public. Adapt by using icebreakers or games where touch is not involved, or use a prop such as a pool noodle or bandana to adjust that aspect of the

game. When working on a challenge course, be thoughtful about how you assign groups for spotted activities involving touch, for example, requiring physical touch for safety.

#### 4. Ask About Special Requests or Needs

Is there information about accommodations or accessibility issues? Verify specifics by asking if there are any special requests or needs within the group. Knowing this information will provide integral information for planning activities in which the entire group can participate.

#### 5. Get Details About the Group Itself

How well do group members know themselves? What is the usual setting or work situation of the group? For example, a group that has worked closely together on a project for the last five years will have some skills working as a team, both positive and negative. With this group, you can plan a higher level of problem-solving and reflection activities earlier in a program than with a group coming together for the first time.

#### 6. Ask About Prior Experiences

What is the group's previous experience with experiential education activities? What kinds of training or group-building has the group participated in prior to your program? Build upon previous experiences. If the group has participated in activities with your program or organization in the past, contact previous facilitators for more information.

#### 7. What are goals of the workshop?

What does the group want to accomplish? Does the group want to focus on a specific topic, issue, or simply have fun and build the team? Knowing if there is a difference between the group representative's goals and group member goals may be part of the puzzle. This information can be utilized from the beginning. Presenting the representative's goals for the group enables participants to understand the purpose. By receiving confirmation from the participants about the goal, you have also gained their commitment and understanding. The group representative, may say the group needs to work

## FACILITATOR'S TOOLBOX

*Example of a Form to Send to Your Group*

**GRETCHEN NEWHOUSE** and I continue to send a questionnaire to the client or group leader when we schedule a program and follow it up with a phone call before the group session. This process has many benefits for the client as well as the facilitator, helping them distill their own goals and needs. Our form is based on a similar form by Pam McPhee at the University of New Hampshire Browne Center Program in Durham, NH. I have adapted a version to use for my own direct service programming. We put our name and contact information at the top of the form, along with some simple information, like "Answering these questions about the nature of your group and your goals and vision for our upcoming professional development experience will help us design an effective program for your staff." Then we ask the following questions, allowing enough space below for questions:

CONTACT PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRAM DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BACKGROUND: Please describe the nature of your group:

**What is your program's mission and vision?** How long has your group been working together? What dynamics exist within the group that may have an impact on the experience?

**Goals:** What do you wish to accomplish with your team via this experience? What are tangible "take-aways" you would like the group to leave with?

**Prior Experience:** Describe any recent team-building, trainings, or professional development this group has participated in that you would like this program to build upon.

**Special Requests:** Please explain any special requests or needs your group may have.

**Next Steps:** How does your organization plan to follow up on this experience?



their expectations as a consumer of your program. Clearly communicate your program's philosophy and methods. Avoid uncomfortable situations in which they are expecting you to provide something you don't feel comfortable providing, or are not equipped to deliver.

### 10. Know Big Picture Goals and Desired Follow Up

How will the group follow up on this experience? How does this experience fit into the bigger-picture goals for the group and how can you help them carry the experience forward beyond your time with them? This question might even lead to the group choosing more programming with your organization.

These ten questions provide a useful resource for preparation. Remember to be flexible and adjust your

on self-esteem, for example, when many of the group members may feel the true goal is communication. A discussion of the goal agreed upon by the entire group will enhance buy-in and commitment.

### 8. Find Out the Level of Buy-In

What information has the group received? Did participants choose this experience or did their leader? What information have they received about the activities? Is this a professional development or team-building experience arranged by their supervisor without their input? If possible engage in conversation with group members as they arrive about their expectations and understanding of the day. Adjust your introduction with the group based on the feedback. If they were told nothing about the day, explain the activities and the purpose. Give them the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings they may have. Is there information about the group's dynamics, conflicts, or concerns that are relevant to your program planning? Remember you are hearing the perspective of the people sharing the information, so continue to be open to what you observe as well.

### 9. Clearly Communicate What You Offer

Do your clients know what services and programs you do and do not offer? Make sure to communicate with the group leader about

facilitation plan based on the changing needs of the group. You may want to include additional questions that reflect your unique facilitation style or program. ■

**We've explored**, in past editions of *Facilitator's Toolbox*, how thoughtful sequencing empowers participants with a sense of choice and control essential to building comfort and rapport in groups. In the Summer 2017 issue of *Parallel Lines*, we discussed knowing the "why" behind what we do and the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness of the varying needs of group members. These aspects of facilitation should be applied to all of the choices we make when designing and implementing a program. Taking time to know about your group prior to a program is a key step in this process.



## FEATURE PROFILE

# Q&A with Nate Regier, PhD

Co-Founding Owner and CEO, Next Element.  
ACCT 28th Annual Conference Keynote Speaker.

**NATE REGIER PHD**, the keynote speaker at ACCT's 28<sup>th</sup> annual conference, is an expert in social-emotional intelligence and leadership, group dynamics, and interpersonal and leadership communication. Regier recently published his second book [Conflict Without Casualties: A Field Guide for Leading with Compassionate Accountability](#) (Barrett Koehler Publishers, 2017) We caught up with him before the conference to find out more about the transformational work he does.

**ACCT: Let's start with the basics. What do you do, and how did you get into doing it?**

**REGIER:** My official title is CEO and co-founding owner of Next Element but I call myself a recovering psychologist. I value what I learned to get my doctorate in psychology. I use those skills every day, but I've learned to live as a psychologist in a different way than I was taught.

I don't believe that people are broken and need to be fixed.

**ACCT: How, then, did you transition to your current work?**

**REGIER:** I was practicing psychology at a large behavioral health organization and they happened to have an adventure course. Through that work, I realized I wanted to work with a broader non-clinical population supporting communicating and healthy ways to build teams, so a group of us took our skills and knowledge and founded Next Element in 2008. What we do now is leadership training, particularly in communication and conflict skills, and we also certify trainers and facilitators in these leadership tools. For the first few years, we were closely connected with the ACCT population and are excited to return.

**ACCT: What are common issues you notice with people and groups?**

**REGIER:** One, lack of communication or miscommunication. Two, personality clashes—differences in personalities cause so many problems. Three, destructive conflict—we call it drama—is really common. And four, problems with teamwork. A whole host of issues comes from people not working together well. Personality clashes aren't understood or dealt with well and then there is drama, and that drama causes miscommunication and then things just break down.

Personality clashes aren't understood or dealt with well and then there is drama, and that drama causes miscommunication and then things just break down.

**ACCT: What do you see as solutions?**

**REGIER:** Our solution starts with self-awareness, regardless of whether we are doing individual coaching or formal team-building training. We must first understand ourselves in this whole mess. How do I communicate? What do I contribute? Next, we focus on communication skills, and then we offer training in healthy conflict. Very few people have the skill to actually engage in conflict that builds instead of destroys.

**ACCT: What is drama training?**

**REGIER:** Drama training is growing up in a dysfunctional family! We do drama resilience training. We want to train people how *not* to do drama. We help people leverage the positive power of conflict to create, rather than destroy.

**ACCT: In your work, you talk about compassionate accountability. What does that mean?**

**REGIER:** Compassionate accountability is about mashing together two things that don't seem like they should coexist. Compassion without accountability isn't enough. You can't "nicey nice" your way through. Accountability without compassion gets you alienated. They are two opposite truths that have to be reconciled. The Latin root of compassion means to struggle with, it means to co-suffer. It's not about struggling against, which is drama, or about struggling instead of, which is enabling.

**ACCT: Can you give an example of compassionate accountability in action?**

**REGIER:** Let's say that one of my colleagues and I are at the ACCT conference talking to a potential client and my colleague says something too personal for the setting. Instantly, I feel embarrassed. If I respond compassionately, without accountability, I'd say 'I guess that's okay. She meant well.' Accountability without compassion would be to throw my colleague under the bus, and say something in the moment like "Awkward!". [Using both together](#), I'd wait until after the situation and say something like, 'I felt embarrassed when this happened and want to explore options for us to get clear on how we interact at trade shows. It's critical to me that we present a unified and professional image.' Then I'd check back in with the person by saying "How does that resonate with you?"

**ACCT: You say conflict does not have to be destructive.**

**REGIER:** There are several big myths around conflict, and one myth is that conflict is destructive. People have a lot of negative associations with conflict growing up. There is the perception that conflict needs to be managed, or controlled, or reduced. All those words make conflict out to be the bad guy. What we've tried to do is reframe conflict, help people view conflict as the gap between what you want and what you are experiencing. It's just a gap. And there is a ton of energy in that gap. It's not good or bad. The real question is how am I going to use that energy. Drama is when I use that gap energy destructively to feel justified and compassionate accountability is when I use that creatively and positively to be effective. It starts with reframing conflict, not as the enemy, but as a source of energy.

**ACCT: How do people respond to this?**

**REGIER:** Compassionate accountability requires being

open, persistent, and resourceful. People can usually do one of the three skills well. But it's all about blending all three. The meek and mild people that think they never have conflict are just as challenged as the hard-driving CEO who doesn't know how to be open.

**ACCT: How does your message fit with ACCT?**

**REGIER:** The purpose of conflict is to create. People who are a part of ACCT get this in their bones. Adventure and experiential learning have so much to offer in terms of conflict. The whole industry leverages conflict as a tool for growth. It's all about creating a gap between what we are experiencing, and what we want. A gap that's not too big to overcome.

We must take great care in how we handle it, because it can be very powerful. We have to be careful that we create, and not destroy.

**ACCT: How would you like to see the ACCT community transform?**

**REGIER:** Our world is more diverse and divided than ever. People are craving effective, meaningful connection and creative dialogue. The ACCT community should embrace conflict as a productive resource for community. There is too much destructive conflict in our world, not enough creative conflict. We must defeat the myths of conflict, and instead develop and promote conflict transformation as a key tenant of the industry.

**ACCT: Does your method apply to facilitators?**

**REGIER:** The term facilitator is a great term. It fits most closely with the definition of compassion, which is about struggling with, when compared to a teacher, or a trainer. Facilitator most closely captures this notion of journeying together. Our most important role is to enable healthy growth and transformation through conflict. Helping a team push itself through a breakthrough performance. Getting over a wall they never thought they could get over. We really believe the tools we have can turbocharge a facilitator's ability to harness the potential of people. ■

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS DETAILS**

**TIME:** 5 pm to 6 pm

**DATE:** February 1, 2018

**PLACE:** Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom  
Fort Worth, TX



Bradford Woods figured out a safe rigging system that made it possible for their special needs campers to zip.

**ACCT: Tell us about Bradford Woods.**

**WILLS:** Bradford Woods is Indiana University's Outdoor Center. The Bradford family entrusted 2,500 acres of land to Indiana University in 1941, so we have a unique historical story with the family and the land and their initiative to provide for the education and recreation for children of Indiana. We offer five different program areas—adventure education, environmental education, recreational therapy, military and family programs, and retreats. We serve approximately 20,000 people a year through those five different areas and have been doing programming since 1955.

**ACCT: How have your programs evolved over the years?**

**WILLS:** At first, we were known for our recreational therapy programs, and soon after that our environmental programs. The last three decades we've also focused work on challenge education and adventure education that captures the challenge course initiative and leadership development, as well as retreats. More recently, we began focusing some of our programming specifically on military families. We tend to do more education work, less recreational. We work with our clients to provide goals that create an intentional learning outcome.

## FEATURE PROFILE

# Q&A with Melanie Wills

Director of Outdoor Education & Professional Services, Bradford Woods, Indiana University's Outdoor Center

**ACCT EDUCATOR MEMBER** Melanie Wills is the director of outdoor education and professional services at [Bradford Woods](#) and has been with the organization since 2008. Wills is a certified EMT/WEMT and instructs classes in wilderness first aid and lifeguarding. She is earning an MPH at Indiana University, with focus on the benefits of outdoor physical activity, including resiliency programs that can be used in nature-based therapy for military veterans. Wills grew up in northwest Indiana and studied international economics at Valparaiso University. We caught up with Wills as she was gearing up to celebrate Bradford Woods' 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary offering Environmental Education Programs.

**ACCT: How did work with military programs come about?**

**WILLS:** We started working with the Wounded Warrior Project a few years ago. We did a pilot program in June 2015, and it springboarded from there. We do around 12 to 13 odyssey programs each year. They are week-long programs for combat veterans, individual odysseys for men and women, or for couples. A lot of it is adventure therapy—a recreational therapy and adventure combination. We just said goodbye this morning to ten warriors from all over the region. We have also worked with

Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Indiana Veterans Association. The weekend Family Battle Buddies programs have potential for growth this next year.

**ACCT: Why is Bradford Woods a member of ACCT?**

**What is the benefit?**

**WILLS:** There are different reasons it's important for Bradford Woods to be a member of ACCT.

ACCT helps us network with likeminded people. It is imperative to connect with others in the industry on a consistent basis, to lean on when things come up. Another side is the standards ACCT provides. We abide by the ACCT standards for our building and maintenance, inspections and training. Being a part of the university, it's important to keep safety and risk management at the forefront of our decisions. ACCT provides the industry support we require—we wouldn't want to operate without it.

We share what we are doing with the ACCT community, different themes with universal design including rigging systems that address the needs of varied populations, the idea of inclusion, other practices that are important to us. We want to be able to share our discoveries, to help support others, but also learn ourselves. We connect on a yearly basis at the international conference, at minimum, and share information that we know but also learn a ton while we are there. The networking at the conference, being together with one another, outside of the formal presentations, is fantastic. You can't get that anywhere else.

**ACCT: What's an important lesson you've learned in the work that you do?**

**WILLS:** Simple adjustments can create big change. If you tweak something just a little bit, you'll be amazed at the change that one small action can create. When we think about changing patterns in our lives, on any level, it doesn't have to be all or nothing. It can be the little things along the way. Whether it be a shift in attitude, or even just being able to realize you are slightly short-staffed, and need one person to come in for just a little while to relieve the burden, or it's taking time to sit down with a staff member for a little while. It makes a huge difference.

**ACCT: Is there a work moment that stands out for you as particularly meaningful?**

**WILLS:** Yes, there was a moment with a client group, CHAMP Camp, a camp for kids, that have respiratory

challenges and some who use ventilators 24/7. I've worked with them the last five years. The co-founders are always asking the kids what do they want to do when they come back the next year, and one of the kids said, "I want to zip." I remember this request being in an email at first, and thinking, 'How in the world are we going to do this?' and we continued to problem solve and figure it out, through a couple of phases. The year we first used our new zipline that we built in conjunction with CHAMP Camp and The Finish Line Foundation, we had our first camper up there, ready to zip. It was amazing. To be able to feel that what we are doing is pretty significant and perhaps life-changing for a child that uses a wheelchair and a tube to breathe; it was impactful for me to be able to see that. Being able to rig a system, being in the outdoors, getting a child up into the tree canopy. We quadruple checked everything. It was a pretty cool success, being able to zip that first one down. The kids look forward to camp every summer, and it's a highlight of my year, to be directly involved with them.

**ACCT: Do you have any tips for attracting business?**

**WILLS:** Honestly sharing your story through word-of-mouth networking. When you are teaching a group, allow that group to learn and grow, but share what else you are doing. We probably get more groups, and individuals within those groups, coming back for a different course. We share what has impacted different people to come through Bradford Woods. I don't like to sugar coat it. I just say, 'Hey, if you want an amazing impactful experience, check it out.' You have nothing to lose, and maybe something to gain.

**ACCT: What do you see as the future for ACCT? What is hopeful?**

**WILLS:** The continued membership growth is hopeful. To continue to get people connected, on a professional level—even for a small business or individuals, or students. And to continue to work with the emerging leaders. They are the future of our industry. The trajectory of the industry is in their hands. I am hopeful our industry continues to have a good mix of recreation and education and that one doesn't top the other. I hope there continues to be a balance of support and representation. That we don't end up following the money more than the need. There is value in every aspect of what the industry supports. My hope is that we don't lose focus on the educational value of what we do. ■



**FROM THE ACCT  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

## In Appreciation of Volunteerism

By Ben Kopp

**D**o you ever wonder what you are doing here? How you are affecting your community, neighborhood, family, our industry, or even the world? Do you ever feel like you are just a hamster on a wheel, running fast and getting nowhere? Hopefully, you know a positive answer to all of these, but, if not, here is one. Get out there and volunteer!

The great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, *“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve ... You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”*

**“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”** —ELIZABETH ANDREW

Having just returned from our September face-to-face ACCT Board of Director meetings that were held at the Hyatt Regency Convention Center in Denver, volunteerism is at the front of my mind. Our time together as a Board was productive and fruitful. We spent much time, as a Board, discussing the beginning of the new fiscal year and the many accomplishments that have been made on the goals set forth earlier this year by the Board. We also marveled at the great progress, already being made on the upcoming 2018 conference. The Board spent a considerable amount of time discussing the next steps for us as an association. As we are concluding our

current strategic plan, the conversation inevitably turns to what we, as an association, are going to be in the next three, five, or even ten years. As in the past, this work and this drive to continue to be the leading association within our industry, will be led by our volunteers.

Hearing from the different committees, taskforces, and other volunteers, it is encouraging to see the many different projects that these groups are already working on. While I will never be able to mention all of the great work happening within the association, some of the highlights are the consensus group, where the work of the industry standards is being completed, in conjunction with a great group of people within the Standards Writing Committee, and the people who make up the writing groups around them.

Another example of the work being completed is

**“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”**

—SHERRY ANDERSON

within the Accreditation and Certification Committee and the panels who support them. The work the Accreditation and Certification Committee is doing around the upcoming program accreditation is a monumental task that is making great strides forward and takes the immeasurable sacrifice of folks who volunteer their time, energy and ideas.

The final group I would like you to think about is the great group of volunteers who worked behind the scenes to ensure the success of the recent translation of our [standards into Spanish](#). This is a wonderful step forward in the mission of our organization.

The volunteers and the experts in our industry, on these and other Committees, Work Groups, Panels, Task Groups, and Affinity Groups, are what make our organization successful, and we always encourage you to be looking for the next place you fit into our organization. Whether it is your very first time volunteering with the association, or you have been putting your name into the hat since the beginning, please volunteer to get both your name, and your skills, out into our community. On the [acctinfo.org](#) website, you can find a [link](#) to information around volunteering, as well as the current volunteer structure, to see where you might best fit. ■



**BOARD VICE-CHAIR UPDATE**

# 2018 ACCT Board of Directors Election Approaches

By Bahman Azarm

I hope all of you had a productive summer season. It is time to begin preparing for the 2018 ACCT Board of Directors election. This year three positions are open for election. Two positions are elected by the Accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVMs), and one position is elected by the Individual and Organizational members of ACCT (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 1, 2017. The nomination form must be submitted electronically to [elections@acctinfo.org](mailto:elections@acctinfo.org) and must include the following:

### Nomination Statements must include

- Full name and headshot photo
- Brief work history
- 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

## 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 11, 2017 through January 12, 2018. 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](mailto:elections@acctinfo.org) by Friday, December 1, 2017. 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](mailto:elections@acctinfo.org) no later than forty-eight hours before the scheduled election to be held 1:00pm on Friday, February 2, 2018.

### Nomination Statements must include

- Full Name and headshot photo
- Brief work history
- 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 Friday, February 2, 2018. Election results will be announced at the conference at the end of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). For more information about submitting a nomination for an open seat on the ACCT Board of Directors, please contact Bahman Azarm, ACCT Board Vice-Chair at [bahman.azarm@acctinfo.org](mailto:bahman.azarm@acctinfo.org).

All nomination forms can be found [HERE](#). [Please visit the elections page on the ACCT website for more information.](#) ■



**LEGAL**

# Messaging Without Messing Up

By Reb Gregg

The words and images you use to inform and attract potential participants to your program can increase enrollment and revenues, but what you say and show of your program can also lead to surprises, disappointments, and lawsuits. Your priority, of course, is to run a quality program that does what it says it will do, and takes reasonable steps to reduce surprises and disappointments. Here's what you need to know to protect yourself and your business in advertisements, articles in industry publications, signage, formal contracts, and even social media conversations.

## Know the Why Behind Your Message

Your message must have a distinct purpose and intent. A general rule is that your messaging should increase in detail and intensity as the reader's participation becomes more imminent. A random ad in an industry magazine, for example, may lack some of the detail of the actual participant agreement, or signage at the site. Messaging intended for Potential clients should be informed of significant matters sufficiently early to avoid surprises when they show up at the site.

## Clearly Address the Needs of your Audience

Whatever the medium or content, your message must be clear. Use language and terms that will be understood by your audience and will produce the response you want. Parents, for example, have different concerns than their children.

## Avoid False Promises

The public will tolerate a certain amount of "puffing," for example, saying this will be "The best time you will

ever have!" but what you consider harmless hyperbole may be described to a judge and jury as an intentional lie designed to attract persons to your program.

## Avoid Misrepresentations of Safety

Safety is a term that indicates an absence of risk of harm, and is a word to avoid when describing your activities or site. You must be able to defend a representation, if stated, of "a fully trained staff," or "a staff capable of responding to all emergencies." If your program or staff hold certain credentials, like accreditation or certification, for example, be sure those credentials are current and pertinent before describing them.

## Be Transparent with Your Audience

Anticipate what might surprise your audience, and eliminate the surprises. The participant, or parent, must understand that an agreement limiting the liability of the site is a condition to participation. Be clear and honest about hazards and risks, like uneven and steep terrain; the possibility of injury because of the acts or omissions of others, including staff; plants and animals which might cause harm. Refer explicitly to the possibility of negligence, serious injury, and even death. Clients appreciate honesty and, as noted above, have a good nose for when they are being over-sold, or under-informed.

## Include What You Will Not Do

Be as clear about what you will do, as you are about what you will not do. For example, describe your ability to respond to a medical emergency, which most likely will be limited; and, if true, that a participant will not be constantly supervised, or even observed, while on the site.

## Be Image Aware

Carefully screen photos, videos and other images used in your messaging. Images should be accurate depictions of an activity, structure or site. Do photos show that participants and staff are wearing helmets? Is access to the elements, including the design of platforms and towers, shown to comply with preferred practices? Are the activity sites clean and orderly, without potential dangerous features?

## Screen Messages with an Experienced Team

Run your messaging by members of your staff for a reality check. Or, form a panel of advisors that represents the clientele you serve. ■

**EVENTS: MELISSA WEBB**

## Experience Authentic Fort Worth!

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**W**e look forward to welcoming you to Fort Worth in February! One of my favorite things to do when exploring a new area is experience a city's local flavor. If you are the same, here are some tips on how to eat like a local, play like a local, get outside like a local, and tour like a local.

Who doesn't love some good food? Paco & John's Mexican Diner, located a couple blocks from Magnolia Ave. in the Near Southside, may seem deceiving with its former convenience store disguise, but inside you'll find delicious street tacos. Kincaid's, a former grocery store along Camp Bowie's bricks, is known for its Fort Worth history and famous burgers. Railhead BBQ, near the Cultural District, draws crowds that are known to wrap around the corner. Farm-to-market goodness shines in every dish crafted by chef-owner Molly McCook, at Ellerbe Fine Foods; and be sure to try Maw Maw's Bread Pudding. Yum!

Wander through the oldest botanic garden in Texas, the [Fort Worth Botanic Garden and Japanese Gardens](#), or explore the Fort Worth Water Gardens, a unique park and urban oasis on more than four acres, located downtown, adjacent to the Fort Worth Convention Center (FWCC) and the [Sheraton Downtown Fort Worth](#).

In need of a change of scenery? Grab your hiking boots and explore more than 20 miles of trails at the [Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge](#) where you can watch for wildlife or launch a canoe along the [Trinity River](#). Of course, no visit to Fort Worth is complete without seeing the [Stockyards](#) National Historic District, a great place to buy cowboy or cowgirl hats and boots. Don't forget the [Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo](#) is in town during the conference!

Enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of [Sundance Square](#) and [Bass Performance Hall](#), consistently rated as one of the top ten opera houses in the country. Enjoy five world-class museums, all located in the Cultural District, then get a refreshment at [Acre Distilling and Coffee Co.](#), [Firestone and Robertson Distilling Co.](#), or [Trinity River Distillery](#). [Billy Bob's](#), the world's largest honky-tonk, has free line dance lessons every Thursday night and attracts big name country artists.

For a guided tour, Fort Worth has bus tours, scavenger hunts, walking tours, or the ever popular [Cowtown Cycle Party!](#)

If, you're a sucker for a good deal, Fort Worth has a great program for conference attendees called "Worth Saving." Present your official conference badge, upon arrival or when ordering, and receive discounts from participating stores and restaurants. We will include more about this in the conference app!

**OPERATIONS: BILL WEAVER**

## Vendor Accreditation Panel, & Korea Visit

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**T**he ACCT Vendor Accreditation Panel met on September 18-19, 2017 in Hagerstown, MD. The panel welcomed two new members, Alicia Bourke, and Andrew Hubert, and panel member Lye Yen Kai video conferenced in from Singapore.

During the meetings, Preferred Vendor Member (PVM) Applications were reviewed for six companies in the vendor accreditation process with ACCT. The PVM review site visit schedule for 2017 consists of 13 site visits on a three-year cycle. We reviewed current policies in the PVM annual report, with edits to be incorporated within the 2017 report, as well as notes made for proposed edits in 2018. The panel also reviewed workshops for the 2018 ACCT annual conference and discussed vendor accreditation category expansion. The panel will be drafting a recommendation to the Accreditation Certification Committee based on their discussions when completed.

ACCT conducted the first Vendor Accreditation site visits September 23<sup>rd</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Korea for PVM Applicants. *Adventure.kr* and *Zipline Korea* were the two sites we visited. An international review team comprised of Kathy Haras from Canada; Terence Low from Singapore, and ACCT's Director of Operations, Bill Weaver, representing the United States, visited numerous sites throughout Korea. The review team also met with Dr. NamJeong Kim and Hank Chay, representatives of the Korea Youth Work Agency (KYWA), and with Jeff Jung, Chair of the Korea Descent Leisure Association (KODLA).



A guest enjoying the zipline at Devil's Thumb Ranch.

**ACCT CONVERSATIONS**

## Why be a member of ACCT? We asked. You answered.

**MARCUS HANSEN**, PhD Candidate  
Manchester Metropolitan University, Nottingham, England  
ACCT Individual member



**Why are you a member of ACCT?**

"For me, When I was an operator, and now as an individual, being an ACCT member helps me keep in touch with the industry, not just to be up-to-date on the standards, but to stay in touch with the entire industry, which is so important because of how fast it's growing and all the changes that are occurring."

**MARIE-ANGE ANDERSON**, Recreation Manager  
Devil's Thumb Ranch, Tabernash, Colorado  
ACCT B2C Member



**Why are you a member of ACCT?**

"ACCT provides us with resources and gives us access to information designed to keep us updated and also ensures we follow ACCT standards."

**RANDY SMITH**, President  
Vestals Gap Ventures, Purcellville, Virginia  
ACCT PVM and founding member



**Why are you a member of ACCT?**

"ACCT is the heart of the industry. It is the voice of the industry, it is the evolution of the industry, and so things that are needed to move the industry forward, to solve problems, to create new opportunities, those come from ACCT."

ACCT develops standards that work, keep things safe, and are practical. That helps me as a business person.

You can't join ACCT and say, "What do you have for me?" You have to join in and say "How can I help?" If you help you are going to gain benefit and have an influencing voice.

I've put a lot into ACCT over the years but I've gotten an awful lot back. Standards development, information and training. ACCT is always running symposiums and workshops where I can learn. I learn something new every day.

The biggest benefit are the people I've met, the friends I've made, and the things I've learned from those people."