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Lines: The CWA Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 3

November 23, 2005

Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the third edition of Lines, the Climbing Wall Association newsletter. You will find some important news about buying general liability insurance, volunteer opportunities on the Board, the formation of an operations standards committee, and government affairs in this issue.

If you have suggestions or content for future issues, we would love to hear from you! Submitting articles to Lines is easy, and there's virtually no limit to what you can write. All we ask is that your article align with CWA's mission, and is of interest to our members. Issues of Lines may include feature articles, news briefs, profiles, notices, and reviews.

This is your chance to let the indoor climbing community know about the news, events, and people everyone should know about. Submit all content to bill@climbingwallindustry.org, and please include your contact information.

If you are not a writer, not everyone is, one thing you can do to support the CWA and Lines is to forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested. Just use the link at the bottom of the newsletter.

Thanks for reading! Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Bill Zimmermann,
Executive Director

ClimbSmart!™ Program -- New Version of the ClimbSmart!™ Poster Released!

The Climbing Wall Association purchased the rights to the ClimbSmart! Program in July of 2005. The program is a public information campaign maintained by the CWA addressing the risks involved in climbing sports, climber safety, and the need to take personal responsibility for one's actions and choices.

The CWA has developed a universal four point warning for climbing sports:

1. Climbing is Inherently Dangerous;
2. Qualified Instruction is Required;
3. Use Equipment In Accordance with the Manufacturer's Instructions; and
4. Your Safety is Your Responsibility.

The ClimbSmart!™ campaign summarizes the universal warning into four simple points for individual climbers to remember. The message of the ClimbSmart!™ Program is that climbing offers many positive benefits and rewards such as adventure, enjoyment, fitness, and success; and it also offers risks which cannot be entirely eliminated from the sport. One must be willing to accept both the risks and the rewards of climbing. We hope the program will assist you in communicating that your patrons should acquire knowledge about climbing, learn good climbing skills, and develop good judgment in order to be safe and responsible climbers.

The revised poster was distributed to all current members of the CWA in August and September. Revised brochures on a number of topics, bookmarks, and stickers are also planned. If you would like to receive additional posters or know of someone that might want the poster, contact the CWA office to order. One or two additional copies are free to members and are available to non-members for \$10.00 each, plus shipping and handling.

Board of Directors Election Call for Nominations & Applications for CWA Board

The Climbing Wall Association (CWA) Board of Directors is seeking nominations and applications for membership. The Board consists of up to seven members for terms of four years. Nominations for membership must be made with the nominee's knowledge and consent. Applications for Board membership must be made in writing to the CWA office in Boulder, Colorado. Knowledge of and experience in governance, management, finance, government affairs, law, or the climbing industry are assets and will be considered in the selection process.

Considerations For Selection Include:

- 1) Current CWA membership is not required but certainly preferred;
- 2) Sufficient knowledge and professional experience to be an active and productive member of a non-profit board of directors;
- 3) Ability to work constructively within a trade organization representing a broad range of diverse business and member interests with, integrity, fairness, and professionalism;
- 4) Ability to meet the legal, fiduciary, and ethical requirements of a non-profit board member;
- 5) An identified area of expertise in a field or discipline needed for the management of a non-profit organization;
- 6) Working knowledge of the current range of issues facing the manufactured climbing wall industry;
- 7) Organizational/Institutional support for your participation;
- 8) Ability to attend periodic meetings of the Board;
- 9) Ability to complete Board work on time;
- 10) Ability to promote the CWA.

Please contact Bill Zimmermann for more information and an application form.

Standards Committee Charter Approved CWA Forming a New "Operations Standards Committee"

The Board of Directors approved a charter for a new "Operations Standards Committee" at its last meeting. The CWA is seeking nominations or applications for membership. The committee will consist of up to nine members initially appointed by the CWA Board of Directors for staggered terms of up to three years (thereafter, the committee will manage its own nomination/application process).

Applications for committee membership must be made in writing to the CWA office in Boulder, Colorado. Knowledge of standards or common practices in the management and operation of climbing facilities, familiarity with CWA's Industry Practices, and management experience are assets and will be considered in the selection process. Roughly two-thirds of the positions on the committee will be reserved for individuals representing various industry sectors. Consideration will be given to candidates with expertise in various related disciplines such as business administration, recreation management, and law. Consideration will also be given to members of the general public that would like to participate.

Considerations For Selection Include:

- 1) Current CWA membership is not required but certainly preferred;
- 2) Sufficient knowledge and professional experience to be an active and productive contributor to a national standards effort;
- 3) An identified area of expertise in a field or discipline related to climbing;

- 4) Working knowledge of the current range of acceptable practices in the climbing industry;
- 5) Ability to work constructively as a member of an association committee;
- 6) Organizational/Institutional support for your participation;
- 7) Ability to attend periodic meetings of the committee;
- 8) Ability to volunteer the time needed to complete committee assignments on time;
- 9) Willingness to abide by CWA's bylaws, policies and procedures;
- 10) Ability to represent CWA and the industry with integrity and professionalism.

Please contact Bill Zimmermann for more information about the committee.

Government Affairs - Massachusetts Department of Public Safety Steps Up Enforcement

The CWA has been tracking an important regulatory development this summer and fall in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the agency of government that regulates amusement parks in that state. As you also know, some amusement parks include climbing walls as attractions. As a result of some accidents at amusement parks over the last couple of years, at least one involving a climbing wall this summer in Massachusetts, the Mass DPS now intends to regulate climbing walls in the state as amusements.

The CWA has written to and met with officials from the Massachusetts DPS to communicate the position that climbing gyms are not amusement parks and should, therefore, not be subject to regulation as amusements. The CWA argument appears to have failed in Massachusetts. The DPS intends to regulate climbing walls, regardless of location, context, or type of use, as if they were amusements in Massachusetts. An informal working group has begun to organize to address the situation in Massachusetts. This group includes representatives of the Climbing Wall Association, the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), the YMCA, and Project Adventure, Inc. (Challenge courses will also be affected by the stepped-up enforcement of these regulations).

To date, the superintendents of public schools and YMCA's in Massachusetts have been notified that their walls are subject to inspection and licensure. There are a number of requirements under the amusement park regulations that might affect gym operations, including issues such as annual facility inspection, training and testing of staff and patrons, and required record keeping.

Whether you operate a facility in Massachusetts or not, whether you are subject to state inspection and licensure or not, these developments have obvious implications for your business or climbing program. We have identified this type of regulation as a trend across the country, and expect this type of regulation to have an eventual impact in other states, especially states in the north east corridor and in California.

The CWA, and your colleagues operating facilities in other states, need your assistance and support on these issues. In order to be effective in dealing with these types of regulatory efforts, the industry needs to begin to organize and address these problems proactively. The CWA will be organizing a Government Affairs Advisory Committee and will be holding a member meeting in the Boston area to discuss the situation in Massachusetts in the near future. Please contact me at the CWA if you are concerned about this issue, if you would be willing to learn more, and if you would be willing to participate in some way to affect the outcome of these types of developments.

Insurance - Buying Good Quality General Liability Insurance

Business liability insurance, generally speaking, protects your business in the event of a loss, claim, or lawsuit. Losses can result from death, personal injury, property damage, and other causes. If you operate a climbing facility, general liability insurance is the primary type of coverage used to protect your business from these types of losses. This type of insurance pertains to losses or claims arising out of your liability for injuries or damage caused by ownership of property, sale or distribution of products, the provision of services, or advertising claims. General liability insurance or commercial general liability (CGL) may be the only type of business liability insurance you need depending on your business situation. However, if you provide professional services or manufacture products you may also need, or at least should consider, other forms of insurance such as professional liability insurance or product liability insurance.

Most businesses in our industry carry general liability insurance regardless of the form of the business. All types of businesses: sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability entities, and corporations face risks and have the potential to generate losses or claims. One of the fundamental strategies of risk management is to "transfer" risk from one entity to another, buying insurance is an example of this strategy. So it pays for you to understand what you are buying when you purchase insurance. If you would like more information about general liability insurance, including buying tips for policies, you can find information on the CWA website.

Red Rock Rendezvous - It's Vegas On Belay

The third annual "Red Rock Rendezvous" rock climbing festival, sponsored by Mountain Gear, will return to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas on March 24-26, 2006. The proceeds of the event will benefit The Access Fund, The American Alpine Club, and local non-profit organizations. This year's event offers even more traditional, sport, and aid climbing sites and routes than in prior years. Also for the first time in the event's history, the festival will offer a Friday "Intro to Climbing at the Red Rocks" clinic day for less experienced climbers and those who have never attempted the difficulty levels of the Red Rock Canyon.

The festival will also offer clinics for beginning, intermediate, and advanced climbers taught by world-class climbing athletes that include Roxanna Brock, Greg Child, Jim Donini, Mark Synnott, and Cedar Wright on Saturday and Sunday. Registration is \$60 per person for the Saturday and Sunday events, and \$159 per person for the Friday "Intro" day and Saturday and Sunday clinic combo. Registration includes the Friday night opening celebration, free climbing at Red Rock Canyon when not in formal clinics, a dinner buffet on Saturday night, demos, comps and mini-seminars by event sponsors, a blow-out party and slide show on Saturday night, pancake breakfast Sunday morning and service projects to assist in the environmental conservation of the Red Rock Canyon and Spring Mountain. For more information, including a downloadable flyer to post at your facility, visit the website or call 800-829-2009.

About the Climbing Wall Association, Inc. (CWA). The CWA is a 501(c)(06), non-profit, trade association incorporated in May of 2003 for manufacturers of climbing wall equipment, builders of climbing walls, operators of climbing walls, and others involved in the climbing industry.

The CWA is the only trade association addressing the needs and interests of the climbing wall industry and climbing wall operators. The mission of the Climbing Wall Association is to support the growth, health and independence of the climbing wall industry, and to promote the sport of climbing.