Welcome to Parallel Lines™!

We are pleased to present our members with this online and user-friendly newsletter. Our goal is to provide our members with an easy-to-read periodical that reflects the more modernized world in which we live.

In this edition of Parallel Lines, we announce the 2016 Keynote Speaker and will be sharing other information about the upcoming 26th Annual International ACCT Conference & Exposition, ACCT Brand Perception, Membership Auto Renewal, and other great information.

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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THE NEXT ISSUE OF PARALLEL LINES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER. ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 15, 2015.
About ACCT

The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) is an Accredited Standards Developer (ASD) by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and was responsible for the development of the first Challenge Course Technology standards originally published in 1994. These internationally recognized standards are currently being maintained by ACCT through our accredited ANSI public comment process.

ACCT serves as the leading trade association for the Challenge Course and Aerial Adventure Course industries. ACCT has 41 accredited Professional Vendor Members (PVMs) and more than 2,600 members globally (including the United States, Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Korea, and Central America).

What is a Canopy Tour?
A guided aerial exploration or transit of the forest canopy, most commonly done by means of a series of zip lines or aerial walkways with platforms.

What is a Challenge Course?
A facility or facilities consisting of one or more elements that challenge participants as part of a supervised educational, recreational, or therapeutic curriculum.

What is a Zip Line?
A lifeline (typically sloped) suspended between support structures that enables the participant, who is attached to a pulley, to traverse from one point to another.

Conference Registration Brochure Going Digital!

The ACCT Conference Registration Brochure is GOING DIGITAL! We’re excited to announce that this year ACCT will be conserving resources by releasing our Conference Registration Brochure in digital format.

Please note that this announcement is only regarding the Registration Brochure that is sent out before the conference, NOT the Conference Program that is given out at the conference.

The decision to go digital with the Registration Brochure means that we will be able to:

- Use considerably less printed materials
- Save significantly on postage costs
- Forego the use of a paid mailing service
- Avoid the stack of brochures that are “returned to sender” at the ACCT office each year
- Distribute the brochure in a more share-friendly format

We feel this is a responsible and smart choice regarding how to effectively use the resources at our disposal. As we consider our members’ needs, however, we recognize that some members have a strong preference for a paper registration brochure. If you would like to still receive a registration brochure in the mail, please let us know no later than August 15, 2015.

To make your request known and provide your mailing information to us, PLEASE CLICK HERE. We’ll be happy to mail your brochure to you once it is ready for release later this summer.
Dear ACCT Member,

We at the Association of Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), the professional trade organization for the adventure park, zipline and challenge course industry, offer our thoughts and prayers to all who have been affected by the recent accidents within our industry. While our industry has a great safety record and our members take the safety of their guests and patrons very seriously, these recent accidents should remind us all how imperative it is to be vigilant in addressing the safety of our guests.

ACCT, with over 2,600 members in 20+ countries, has developed some of the most comprehensive standards for the installation and operation of challenge courses and other adventure activities. Our Members have a long history of providing a safe experience for millions of challenge course patrons throughout the United States and abroad each year. Professional Vendor Members of ACCT have gone through a rigorous review process and are credentialed by the association.

ACCT will continue to monitor and try to understand the causes of these incidents and identify what changes might be made to our Standards to reduce the risk of similar incidents in the future. Further, at the request of various individuals and legislative bodies, we will continue to work with key stakeholders to assist in research, development, and implementation of good regulation and oversight by various governmental bodies.

We urge all of you to continue to look at your own systems, policies and procedures as well as your courses and equipment with a fresh perspective focused on reducing the risk of injury to your guests.

We believe in the skills and expertise of our members. We believe in our technology and will continue to promote this industry and the good work we do. Our family enjoys Aerial Adventure Courses and Zip lines and will continue to be patrons without hesitation.

Respectfully,

James Borishade
XOLA
BOOKING & MARKETING SOFTWARE
FOR ZIP TOURS & CHALLENGE COURSES

SPECIAL OFFER FOR ACCT MEMBERS
ONE MONTH FREE
CODE: AUSTIN
A few issues ago we considered what I described as “Bad Words” - written and spoken words that can get us in trouble. I promised at the conclusion of that article that we would, later, consider good words -- words that are helpful, and even important. Here are some of those words. They and others will be found most often in your description of activities and risks, and may appear at your website, Visitor Agreement and/or signage at the activity site.

Good words inform and warn your visitors and, importantly, contradict misplaced expectations. You must be as aggressive in announcing what you cannot, or will not, do as you are in describing what you will do.

For openers, how about, “We may make some stupid mistakes and really hurt you.” Okay, I’d suggest different words, but the message is a good one, and honest. You are telling your visitors that they may suffer some loss and that errors of staff may contribute to that loss. Honesty (transparency) of this sort creates trust – you want the visitor to know about the experience and the visitor respects your willingness to describe both the good and the bad. I still, occasionally, run into some resistance when I urge the use of the “n” word (negligence) and the “d” word (“death”), but I think folks are getting smarter about their importance. (And, so we can move on, I’d suggest something like this: “The activities will expose you to certain risks including, among others.......carelessness (or, better, “negligence”) of staff.” And: “These and other risks may result in.......and, in extraordinary cases, even death”.

Risks described should be identified as inherent in the planned activities and moving about the premises. Your visitor deserves to know that the risks you describe, and others, cannot be eliminated without changing the nature of the visit, and its value to the visitor. And, you are not legally obligated to protect another from inherent risks -- those which simply come with the territory.

Good words related to your activities would include acknowledgement that visitors may not be directly engaged in a scheduled or supervised activity -- in fact may be simply hanging out (as opposed to hanging on) and otherwise moving about the premises, including following an activity from which they have opted out. Such “good words” make clear that your Visitors Agreement covers such people.

If you have limited, or no emergency medical capabilities, or if your location will create delays in getting medical attention, say so. If you have been advised of a level of medical screening appropriate for your site and activities, ask those questions. In any event seek an agreement that the visitor has no mental or physical condition that would create a danger to the visitor or others. Be clear about your weight, height and other requirements.

If it is true that visitors, including active participants in your activities, will not be constantly observed or supervised, say so.

Be aware of areas of sensitivity and possible anxiety -- including heights, reliance on others, close personal contact and inadvertent touching. Warnings about such...
2016 Keynote Presenter

Treehouse Masters’ - Pete Nelson

The ACCT and CAA Speakers are very pleased to announce that the Keynote for the 26th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo will be delivered by Mr. Pete Nelson. Mr. Nelson is sure to amaze and delight our attendees with his adventurous stories and incredible pictures. Be sure to join us in Austin, Texas for this amazing presentation!

“The Treehouse Guy” Pete Nelson is the star of Animal Planet’s Treehouse Masters. Pete runs Nelson Treehouse and Supply, the company responsible for designing and building some of the world’s most incredible treehouses. He and his wife, Judy, currently own and operate Treehouse Point in Washington state, a retreat featuring a half dozen treehouses for guests to rent.

With a reputation for limitless imagination and incomparable skills, Pete is widely known as the best treehouse builder in the world. Living by the motto “if you dream it, you can build it,” he constantly pushes his clients’ treehouse expectations to the max. With a arsenal of experience Pete continues to design and build treehouses the world has never seen before.

Pete also teaches people how to safely design and build their own treehouses. He has shared his breadth of knowledge in the coffee-table staple New Treehouses of the World and Treehouses: The Art and Craft of Living out on a Limb. His creations have been featured on countless TV shows and newspaper articles. He continues to challenge himself and his team to build the most luxurious lifestyles in the lofty heights of trees around the world.

Pete currently resides in Fall City, Washington.
Three Steps Operators Should Take Now to Improve Program Quality and Reduce Risk

by Mike Smith
ACCT Board Member

Recent, highly-publicized accidents and near-misses have raised concerns about increased regulation, the likelihood of rising general liability and workers compensation premiums, and have left many operators worried about how they can best mitigate risk and prevent an accident occurring at their program. For much of the ACCT’s history, standards development has focused heavily on design, installation, and inspection of challenge course structures. Most operators have adopted these standards and participate in annual or semi-annual technical inspections of their challenge course structures by accredited builders or certified inspectors. In more recent years, training and staff certification has become a more important part of the standards, leading to further consistency among operations. While each of these strategies are effective in mitigating risk and improving program quality, they often do not address the more holistic concerns covered only by program review.

Programs seeking to mitigate risk and improve the quality of their programs should add program review to their budget and organizational review process. An informal review of many of the best programs in the industry—educational and commercial—shows that there are three steps operators should take now to improve their program and reduce risk.

1. Engage a professional operator to review your program. Located within the ACCT 8th edition standard, Chapter 3: Operations Standards, is standard A2.5 “The organization SHALL engage in periodic external organizational review.” This is further explained as; Periodically the organization engages persons outside of the organization to review organizational practices and/or programming for the purposes of better managing risks and improving program quality. External organizational review may be formal, as in accreditation, or less formal, as in peer review. The frequency of external review may increase or decrease according to variables, such as the longevity of management, changing practices, and staff turnover.

While it is recommended that careful attention be given to engaging the right professional to perform a third-party review, years of experience in the challenge course industry should not necessarily be the key determinant. In fact, some of the most valuable third-party reviews I have participated in have been with professionals from related adventure industries or stakeholders in the operation—insurance auditors, underwriters, banking professionals, legal counsel, product manufacturers, regulators from other industries, and consultants. There is great benefit to conducting multiple reviews with both professional operators from within the industry and stakeholders who are trained to ask good questions and challenge operational practices.

In developing an agenda for a review, provide ample time for the auditor to experience each of your programs first hand and to observe operational procedures from a distance. Too often, I have witnessed programs put forth only their most senior and experienced staff. Little is

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The Hocking Hills region of Southeast Ohio is among the state’s most scenic. Shear cliffs, deep gorges, and recessed caves dot the area, most formed by tough-as-nails Blackhand Sandstone—an erosion-resistant substance that lends itself to prominent natural structures. Two nature preserves, a state forest, and several state parks, including the 2,356-acre Hocking Hills State Park, are located here, and tourists in the form of birders, campers, hikers, and boaters fill hundreds of Hocking County rental cabins each summer.

It’s not surprising then, that Ohio’s first treetop canopy tour opened in 2008 among the area’s resident maples and oaks. Hocking Hills Canopy Tours operates in the small town of Rockbridge, named after a 100-foot natural sandstone bridge that stretches over one of many local ravines.

At the time, the park’s six owners had zero professional experience with adventure parks or the tourism industry. All had been tourists, and some had ridden a zip line—in Alaska, in 2007—and liked it. So much so that within months after that trip, they’d purchased land near Hocking Hills and enlisted Colorado-based Bonsai Design to consult on, and eventually build, the park’s first feature. The Zip Line Canopy Tour opened to the public eight months after the initial site visit. Owner Julieann Burroughs says it was the first true canopy zip tour in the Midwest.

Burroughs says that opening the park on the heels of the 2008 stock market crash could have backfired. Instead, it worked in the group’s favor. “Fortunately for us, it worked out well,” she says, “because no one was travelling far, they were doing day trips or weekend trips.”

Since then, the park has blossomed, garnering top reviews as a number-one regional attraction. The six—Burroughs along with sister, Jodi Burroughs, Jodi’s husband Ray Smolinski, Dan Eckel, and Larry and Joyce Gerstner—continue to own and operate it, with help from four year-round managers and 80 employees at the height of season. Staff trainers and the park building crew are now in house.

The owners subscribe to a smart growth philosophy, and Burroughs says their goal has always been to add one feature each year. After the success of the Canopy Tour, and in answer to a myriad of “further, faster, higher” requests, the SuperZip

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**“Hocking Hills by Air”... Continued from page 9**

was built in 2010. The quarter-mile SuperZip, also a canopy tour, reaches speeds of up to 50 MPH and incorporates a series of elevated walkways, tree platforms, and an 85-foot tower.

Next came the 43-acre X Tour, a hybrid offering that incorporates trees as well as towers, and highlights the best of the surrounding scenery, including the Hocking River. At one point riders zip into a recessed cave, come to a ground landing, and walk to their next line.

In answer to the age-old question, “What do you have for kids?” the DragonFly Zipline Adventure was incorporated in 2012. The DragonFly targets kids between 5 and 12, who can safely ride the eight zips solo on a continuous belay system, with the highest point a 25-foot sky bridge. Parents can follow, encourage, and snap photos from a designated ground path below. The DragonFly has seen steady growth every year, says Burroughs.

On weekend nights for four weeks during the summer, the park also offers guided nighttime “Moonshine Rides” on its Canopy course. Users are given a headlamp and glow stick for the half-tour that’s about half the cost.

One of the park’s unique new attractions has nothing to go with getting off the ground. Guided Segway tours have been offered since June 2014, with a fleet of 10 machines. Users take a 1.5- to 2-hour eco-tour around park grounds on a designated trail. Burroughs says there are hiccups—battery life of the machines, for example, or folks just not getting the hang of operating them. But for the most part, the tours have been a good option for people looking for a different activity.

Sometimes it’s the simple things that please customers most, and Hocking Hills Canopy has seen good success with rentals of helmet-mounted GoPro video cameras, a “hot-ticket item,” according to Burroughs. For $35 per day ($25 for SuperZip rides only), visitors rent the camera and are allowed to keep its 16GB card when finished. Some days the 10 cameras sell out, so more are being added. Burroughs says the marketing value is exponential, with social media sites ripe for video sharing.

In 2011, Hocking Hills Canopy Tours partnered with the Columbus Zoo to open another course, the WildZip Safari, on leased land at The Wilds, a private, non-profit animal reserve on 10,000 acres of reclaimed mine land in Cumberland, Ohio, 83 miles northeast. Strip mining at The Wilds ceased in 1991, when it became a private partnership involving the Ohio Departments of Natural Resources and Development, the Columbus Zoo, and the private sector. The first species—wild horses—were released to pasture in 1992 and today a variety of species call The Wilds home, including buffalo, rhinos, and ostrich.

The Wild Zipline Safari is a fully guided 2.5-hour eco-tour with 11 zips and a rappel built on a series of observation platforms overlooking the grounds. With the opportunity to see an occasional free roaming endangered or rare animal, the activity provides what Burroughs calls “zip lining with a twist.”

Burroughs says tourism is a vital source of revenue not only for her business, but the state. She says the ROI in promoting tourism is 14 to 1. To help facilitate this, several of the company owners sit on tourism-related boards. Julieann sits on the Friends of the Hocking Hills, a non-profit Board dedicated to raising money for the Hocking Hills State Park. Jodi Burroughs sits on the Ohio Tourism Board, a state-level advisory board that helps to promote tourism throughout the state.

Hocking Hills Canopy is also staying on top of potential regulations, after the Ohio Department of Agriculture opened discussions on legislation for zip lines. To be proactive, the company teamed up with three other zip tour operators to form the Ohio Zip Line Association (OZLA). The group has been working closely with the state to identify where zip lines may or may not fit into their regulations.

“We’d rather be proactive versus reactive,” says Burroughs. “We want to help build those standards, and help the state understand what they don’t understand.”

The OZLA has worked with the state extensively in the past few years, even bringing in ACCT board members to meet with state officials. “We want everyone to be on the same page when it comes to regulations,” says Burroughs. “If we have standards in place and a new mom-and-pop operation decides to open, we want them to have a set of guidelines. We’re trying to be pioneers in the industry so that we’re working with, not against, the state.”
Unwind at Lost Pines . . . join us in January!
by Melissa Webb
ACCT Events Manager

I’d like to cordially invite each and every one of you to join us in Texas this January for our 26th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo! I’d love to take some time to share with you specifics about the location for this event. The host hotel is The Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa. This is a beautiful property located approximately 40 minutes from downtown Austin in the Lost Pines Region. The property itself is nestled on approximately 405 acres adjacent to a 1,100 acre nature park – McKinney Roughs.

While the resort is not an urban area we hope the rustic feel of the hotel, along with the abundance of outdoor activities offered, will be a welcome change for our group. Recreational activities offered at the Hyatt include bike rentals, bird watching, horseshoes, horseback riding, lazy river, paddle trips, stargazing, live music and much more! But most importantly you’ll want to make time to snap a picture with Ribeye and T-Bone, the hotels Texas Longhorn mascots!

What’s this McKinney Rough’s place all about? The 1,100 acre nature park backs up against the Hyatt Lost Pines. Managed by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), they have approximately 18 miles of hiking trails, 12 miles of horseback trails, a natural science center, recreational programs, as well as team building on their challenge course. Additionally, ACCT is working with their team to offer economically friendly dorm style housing as an option for our attendees. More information about the dorms as well as our partnership with McKinney Roughs to come – stay tuned! For those of you that prefer to “rough it” during the conference the camping opportunities with cabins, rv hookups, and campsites 20 miles or less from the Hyatt: Lake Bastrop, South Shore & Lake Bastrop, and North Shore. Click HERE to make reservations at one of these parks:

a. Lake Bastrop, South Shore
b. Lake Bastrop, North Shore

Now that we’ve convinced you to join us in January you may be wondering...How do I get there? Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) is the closest airport to our host hotel. The Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa is approximately 20 miles (30 minutes) from the airport. The airport services numerous airlines including American Airlines, Air Canada, Alaska Airlines, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, United, and US Airways. For those of you driving in the property is within a few hours of Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. Super shuttle provides airport transportation to the Hyatt 24-hours a day, every day. Reservations can be made by dialing 1-800-BLUE VAN (258-3826). 24-hour advance notice is recommended for trips from the hotel to the airport. Taxis are also available on the baggage claim level at the airport.

There is certainly plenty to do for those of you that are interested in coming in early or extending your trip for some sightseeing! Downtown Bastrop is a quaint small town that likes to showcase local artisans, culinary, as well as live music. Visit the Lost Pines Region of Texas for some more local flare! However, you’ll be so close you won’t want to miss out on visiting all of the hot-spots in Austin while in town. The Austin CVB is a great resource for trip planning and learning about what the “Live Music Capital of the World” has to offer!

READY....SET....GO....Advertising, Exhibitor and Sponsor registration is now LIVE! If you are considering exhibiting at our upcoming conference you won’t want to delay registering. Booth selections are made directly in the registration portal at the time of registration. Booths are available on a first come first serve basis. We are thrilled to be partnering with HPN Global as our Exhibit Management Company for our 2016 event. Please feel free to contact them directly should you have any questions about the upcoming show!

Continued on page 12 . . .
ACCT Exhibit Management:
Andy Saavedra
HPN Global
Phone: 480.998.9770 x 228
Fax: 480-948-7742

The Conference Committee is currently reviewing proposals for 2016 workshops. If you submitted a proposal, the Workshop Coordinators will be in touch with you in the next few weeks about the status of your submissions. Please check the ACCT conference website often for conference updates, deadlines, and information including applications for a conference Scholarship and Service Crew.

If you have any ideas, feedback, or suggestions you would like to share with the Conference Committee for this event or upcoming events, please forward that information to Melissa Webb, ACCT Events Manager, at melissa@acctinfo.org.
And then there are those times when peoples’ perception of our organization doesn’t meet (and in many cases can’t meet) with their perceived reality of what our organization stands for and what it does.

This has always left me in a quandary. I, personally, like to think I’m capable of looking at issues and problems from many different perspectives to try and understand all the parties issues before I attempt to help solve a problem or move things forward, whatever the case may be. But, I will be the first to admit, having been a PVM for 13 years and now serving my fifth year on the Board, sometimes it is difficult for me to understand why someone would think the way they do about our organization or our industry...I’m just too close to it. Those are good moments. The kind of moments where you get to take another look...in someone else’s shoes.

Probably my utmost favorite entrepreneur/inventor/engineer, the most risk-takiest businessman I’ve ever read about, is Elon Musk. If you get a chance to read his new biography, please do. I like Elon’s take on perception and brand: “Brand is just a perception, and perception will match reality over time. Sometimes it will be ahead, other times it will be behind. But brand is simply a collective impression some have about a product.”

Thinking about that statement makes me ask the question about where we (ACCT as an Organization) are right now related to our members and stakeholders perception of who we are and what we do. Before writing this little piece, I decided to ask a few folks inside the organization (PVM’s, former Board Members, etc), folks inside the industry (course operators, consultants) and folks outside the industry (zipline tour guests, some stranger I asked just to look at our website) three questions: 1.) Who/What is the ACCT?, 2.) What do they do?, and 3.) What affect do they have on our industry? “Results may vary” is an understatement to the answers I received. Most folks have a pretty good idea of the basic facts that we are AN Organization that has members but that’s about where the similarities end. My issue is that of all the answers I received, and taking my own perception (opinion) into account, I don’t really think anyone was wrong. What I did get out of this exercise was that I think we need to work on clarifying our Brand, that we need help from everyone in this exhaustive and ongoing exercise, and that we need to have a more clear goal in mind about who we want to be in the public’s eye (not just our members).

While everyone was aware that we are a trade organization made up of members supporting the challenge course and adventure park community, many folks had opinions of what we DO that were much more broad and grandiose. A lot of folks said that we were the “Governing Body” for the challenge course world while others were adamant that we “had no governing power.”

This one I found particularly Continued on page 16...
The Association for Challenge Course Technology and the Research Advisory Committee are pleased to announce the 2015 ACCT Research Grant has been awarded to the team of David P. Schary, Seth E. Jenny, and Geoffrey S. Morrow for their proposed project titled, “Winthrop Inspiring a New Generation of Students (WINGS): Increasing the Long-Term Outcomes of Challenge Course Programs.” Congratulations!

The proposed project goal is to increase the long-term effects of a challenge course program with guided classroom reflection-based activities. This is an important and timely topic for the industry because over the past 15 years researchers have questioned the positive psychological and educational effects of challenge course programs. In a meta-analysis, Gillis and Speelman (2008) found that challenge courses are an effective tool for impacting a variety of educational and psychological constructs, but the mean effect sizes were only small to medium in magnitude (i.e., \( d = 0.01–0.48 \)). In addition, Gillis and Speelman (2008) found that long-term effects were significantly lower, and few of the reviewed studies (27.3%) even collected follow-up data. Hatch and McCarthy (2005) also found minimal long-term effects from a low-element challenge course program. More recently, Schary, Lewis, and Cardinal (2015) reported immediate positive short-term gains in communication, group, and leadership variables following a challenge course program, yet the gains returned to pre-program levels at the three month follow-up.

Results of the grant will be presented at the 2017 Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo. We look forward to seeing the results of this valuable research.

Specific questions about the research grant can be sent directly to the Liz Speelman, Chair of ACCT’s Research Advisory Committee, at liz.speelman@gcsu.edu.

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**ACCT Facebook Competition**

**Where are you Wednesdays!**

Submit a picture of where you are on Wednesday and if your picture is selected you will WIN some ACCT swag! Don’t miss the FUN!

Go to: [https://www.facebook.com/acctinfo](https://www.facebook.com/acctinfo) and participate!

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**2015 Member Survey**

It’s almost time for the 2015 ACCT Member Survey. We know you are busy with your summer season so we are waiting for fall to arrive to distribute the survey. Please plan to take a few moments and provide us with your valuable feedback. Thank you!
learned from third-party reviews which are staged. In fact, staging or front-ending reviews can lead to staff behavior and organizational actions which cover-up deficiencies that might otherwise be caught and corrected.

**TIP:** In lieu of specific forms, use Chapter 3: Operations Standards to guide a formal discussion once the reviewer has spent time assessing the operation. Request a written report and use the findings as a roadmap to address delinquencies and celebrate successes.

### 2. Engage a secret shopper.

For a modest fee, it is possible to engage a professional secret shopper to participate in your program and provide a detailed assessment. If you would prefer a view from within the industry, I recommend networking at industry gatherings and posting notices on the list-serv. Over the years, I have participated in many secret shopper programs. As an operator, I welcome other operators and builders as secret shoppers. In some cases, a complimentary tour for the shopper and their family is exchanged in return for a few hours of conversation and feedback. As a frequent traveler, I often call operations that I will be passing during my travels and trade a complimentary tour for a letter and feedback. The potential rewards are numerous, ranging from new marketing and staffing ideas to changes in policy and procedure which are uncovered through critical questioning and debrief.

**TIP:** Be careful not to inform programming staff of a secret shopper. When programming staff know that they are under performance review, common behaviors are often hidden from the shopper and additional attention to details, which might otherwise be overlooked, are scrutinized. Instead, let staff know when they are hired that third-party reviews will occur. Request that the secret shopper not identify themselves as a reviewer. As a program manager, do not alter your role. If you are normally the one to greet a group, cover staffing briefings, or handle difficult customers, do not remove yourself from the position that staff count on you to fill in daily operations. Ask the secret shopper to provide a brief letter summarizing their findings. Documentation demonstrates compliance with A2.5 and will help during risk management reviews and technical inspections to target specific concerns and areas for improvement.

### 3. Challenge yourself and your staff to participate in other programs annually.

Whether as a secret shopper, reviewer, or paid participant, set a goal to participate in 5 or more programs per year. I am frequently caught off-guard by the responses I receive from owners, course managers, builders, trainers, and staff when I inquire as to how often they frequent other courses. Many of my most successful marketing implementations, programming adaptations, and “ahh-hah” moments regarding risk management have come from participating in other programs. As a course operator, I frequently encourage my staff to participate in other courses and reimburse them for their direct costs, or I work out exchanges with other operators to offer complimentary tours to one another’s staff. Experiencing new models may not always lead to new improvements in your program, but critical examination and reflection are key skills to hone in any risk management environment.

**TIP:** Be mindful not to make judgements in advance of the program, but to be open-minded to new and unique experiences. Challenge yourself and staff to try course types and experiences which your program does not offer as well as programs similar to your own.

The Association for Challenge Course Technology Board of Directors has set Program/Operator Accreditation as a top priority for this fiscal year and a pilot program is expected in the coming months. Core to Program/Operator Accreditation is the requirement for third-party reviews. Operators who have not recently participated in a third-party peer review are encouraged to plan the review into their budget and schedule opportunities. Operations interested in participating in the pilot program, or individuals interested in assisting in the development of the program are encouraged to contact Executive Director, James Borishade, at james@acctinfo.org.
interesting as I have personally (and maybe naively) referred to the ACCT using that exact phrase. So, I looked it up: “Governing Body - a group of people who formulate the policy and direct the affairs of an institution in partnership with the managers, especially on a voluntary or part-time basis.” Is that what we (ACCT) are? I think it fits, but I totally understand folks’ resistance to feeling like someone else had any authority over them (especially us Americans!).

Another perception that seemed to be less than accurate is that we investigate accidents and police our members. Although this has been discussed at the Board level for years, it is not our current practice to do this, nor is it in our mission or bylaws. Regarding policing our members, to my knowledge, the only policing we do is around improper use of the ACCT logo which is our duty as the holder of that Intellectual Property. Should we be investigating accidents? Should we do more to police our members and enforce our standards (do we have the authority to do so?)? Should we leave these duties to existing governmental authorities and stay focused on our Members and our Goals? At the Board level, we’d love to hear your feedback on these issues.

One other key issue was collecting data. Accidents, user numbers, number and type of courses, etc. Many folks felt like the ACCT was doing this and many more folks felt like if we weren’t, then we should be. I couldn’t agree more. Data like this exist in almost every other sector I can think of. The NACS, the trade organization for Convenience Stores and Gas Stations, can tell you how many people are walking down nearly every sidewalk in the US each day. That kind of data really helps their members make key business decisions. While we probably don’t need to go that far, understanding the number of users, number of accidents, demographics of users, etc. will only help us make better decisions about our industry.

Finally, several folks indicated that the ACCT “certified their course.” Right now, this is not possible. However, in response to a growing need from regulators and course owners, in 2016 the ACCT will begin implementing a course “Accreditation or Endorsement (name TBD)” model which will allow course operators to use the ACCT Branding and require basic minimum standards from its Accredited operators such as having insurance and regular inspections. This will also allow the ACCT to begin collecting basic data on users (anonymously of course) so that we have a better understanding of our industry and, as the “Governing Body”, make better decisions for our members.

We will need your help in the future making sure that our Brand fits the reality of what we do. I think the most intelligent folks are the ones that ask the right questions and not necessarily the ones that have all the answers. Let’s strive to be brave and bold in what we want this association to be now and in the future by asking the right questions and attempting to look at all the different perspectives to determine which path is best for our industry.
When Quality Matters

Choose an ACCT Professional Vendor Member (PVM)
Design | Performance | Inspections

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ACCT Logo Usage Policy
by the ACCT PR & Marketing Committee

The Association’s logo is a trademark and the property of the ACCT. However, ACCT may grant a license to use the ACCT member logo to specific members that are in good standing.

To use the ACCT logo, Organizational and Professional Vendor Members must receive written consent from ACCT’s Main Office. Permission may be granted for use on business cards, letterheads, websites, and brochures.

When using the logo on printed material and websites, please consider including the following statements that are appropriate to explain your relationship to ACCT.

Organizational Members
We are an Organizational Member with the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) and our products and services are independent from those offered by the ACCT. We are not an agent of ACCT nor does the ACCT warrant, endorse, or approve any product or service offered by us.

Professional Vendor Members
We are an Accredited Professional Vendor Member (PVM) of the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT). Our company has undergone an extensive peer review process and has been accredited to provide practitioner certification trainings, course installation, and course inspections. Insert the option(s) that is appropriate for your company.

If permission is granted to use the member logo, the ACCT member logo should be printed using the ACCT member logo received from the ACCT and not a newly rendered logo. The logo can be used in black and white or grayscale. The right to use the ACCT member logo shall terminate and be revoked upon the authorized member’s failure to remain in good standing, in the event of misuse by the member as determined by the ACCT, or any other breach of this Policy for Use. Upon such termination and/or revocation, the unauthorized member will remove the ACCT member logo from all materials, products, and services, regardless of whether such materials, products, or services are preprinted or preexisting at that time.

Legal action can be taken against anyone who uses the ACCT member logo in violation of the above policy. For permission to use the ACCT member logo, please contact the ACCT Business office.

ACCT MEMBERSHIP

Student/Senior Membership
Any individual participating in full-time studies at a recognized educational institution. Proof of student status required. Senior status applies to individuals who provide proof they are 60+ years old.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: $65 USD

Individual Membership
Any individual interested in being connected to the ACCT community and gaining access to the professional challenge course industry and its resources. Membership benefits apply to one person.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: $85 USD

Organizational Membership
Any organization interested in being connected to the ACCT community and gaining access to the professional challenge course industry and its resources. Membership benefits apply to the organization and its employees.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: $275/USD $200 Non-Profit USD (Must provide proof of non-profit status)

Professional Vendor Member
Companies who have successfully completed an ACCT application for Professional Vendor Member status. Membership benefits apply to the company and its employees.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: $1,800 USD

ACCT Membership Office
The ACCT Membership Office handles membership services, conference coordination, registrations, standards sales, and general office duties for the ACCT.

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Facilitators Toolbox: Cultivating Creativity

Excerpt from The Inspired Educator, The Inspired Learner by Jen Stanchfield

Play Dough Pictionary is one of my favorite community building and training/content review activities. One of the reasons it stays on the top of my list is that it has led to many meaningful discussions about creativity. After playing the game (see description below), I will often ask the group to share one word to describe the activity. The words imagination and creativity come up regularly. When I ask participants “How many of you consider yourselves creative?” something interesting happens. When I ask the question of 3rd graders almost everyone raises their hand. When I ask the same question of 8th graders, high school students or adults, very few do.

Children will give many examples of using creativity whether it is in making up a game, working out a conflict with a friend, or building a fort. Older students or adults will often only refer to artistic ability. When asked why they didn’t raise their hands they will say something like, “Well I am not a good artist.”

This is a great opportunity to explore the true definition of creativity and help them reflect on examples in their day-to-day life when they ARE creative. These examples of creativity have a wide range (e.g., figuring out a way to effectively work out a conflict with a peer or family member, finding a way to fix something when they don’t have “right” tools, making an argument to persuade their parents to see something their way, writing a paper in English, working out a system for keeping group members accountable in a group project). I try to help learners realize that everyone has the ability to be creative, and that it is a skill that can be practiced.

Creativity:
The ability to make new things or think of new ideas. The ability to produce something new through imaginative skill, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. The term generally refers to a richness of ideas and originality of thinking. Synonyms: cleverness, ingenuity, inventiveness, originality, imagination, innovation, Cultivating Creativity

– Merriam Webster Online Dictionary

Dr. Jonathan Plucker a leader in the study of creativity and learning from Indiana University defines creativity as “the production of original, useful things.” (Wirthy, 2002).

One of my strongest reasons for promoting experiential approaches to teaching and group work is that they promote creativity and creative problem-solving skills. Creativity, in my view, is one of the most important life skills. Proponents of the 21st century skills movement would argue one of the top skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century workplace.

Fifty years ago E. Paul Torrance pioneered the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. In longitudinal studies that followed, there was a strong correlation between high scorers on this test and their success and accomplishments as adults. When Jonathan Plucker reanalyzed the data in 1999, the correlation to lifetime creative accomplishment was more than three times stronger for childhood creativity than childhood IQ. (Bronson & Merryman, 2010)

As educators we can cultivate creativity in learners by engaging them in insightful problem-solving tasks, giving them opportunities to experiment, collaborate, explore, make metaphors take ownership over their learning, take risks in learning, and by asking more questions than giving answers.

“Children will give many examples of using creativity whether it is in making up a game, working out a conflict with a friend, or building a fort. Older students or adults will often only refer to artistic ability.”

Continued on page 20...
Find ways to intentionally structure opportunities for inquiry, exploration, creating meaning from metaphor. Educators cultivate creativity when they are willing to go with the flow of lessons being created by their students and take advantage of unplanned opportunities for learning that arise. When your group takes and activity or discussion somewhere unexpected, be flexible enough to go with it if appropriate. Being open to these opportunities and knowing how to guide them is one of the qualities that makes for a successful educator. Nurturing creativity in learners is what experiential education is all about.

**Facilitation Suggestions:**

* Divide participants into groups of 5-6
* Have each group select a “team name” (practicing consensus/decision-making) possibly using a topic area related to what you are studying in class or reviewing in training. Inviting group members to choose team names with a reasonable structure is a playful way to give them a sense of ownership.

* Give each group a can of play dough.
* Have each group select a first sculptor.
* The sculptors from each team go to the leader/facilitator who gives participants a word such as bike, ice cream cone, whale, giraffe, etc. to the sculptors. For curricular content review use objects and concepts related to what you are studying in class or reviewing in training. Inviting participants a word such as bike, ice cream cone, whale, giraffe, etc. to the sculptors. For curricular content review use objects and concepts related to what you are studying in class or reviewing in training.

* The sculptors then return to their teammates who try to guess what it is before the other teams figure out what their own sculptor is making.

* The group that guesses correctly wins that round. I have the team members raise their hands when their team guesses the word as a visual cue for me as the leader to “judge” the winners during this fast paced game.

* Every group has an opportunity to show off their sculpture and receive appreciation from their classmates/group members.

* A new sculptor from each team then comes up for the next word. Like many competitive games, turn-taking is part of the lesson. This is a great opportunity for younger participants to practice the important skill of compromise, patience, self-regulation and taking turns. More reluctant group members don’t have to take a turn as a sculptor. There is choice involved in this activity about the roles participants take. Guessing is as important as sculpting.

* I regularly have individuals switch teams throughout the game (for example every other turn I’ll ask “anyone who has blue on”, or “anyone with a spring birthday” to go to the team next to them clockwise). This increases the cooperative aspects of the activity and maximizes the movement and social interaction. I don’t keep score, and groups rarely notice as they are caught up in the play itself!

**References:**


**Playdough Pictionary**

**Learning Through Play, Blending Community Building With Academic or Training Content Review**

Play dough Pictionary has been one of my favorite “go-to” activities for years. Though I first started using it in team-building programs I found that it is an active, multi-sensory approach to curricular content review as well as a community and group building activity. The game encourages creativity, consensus building, social interaction, communication, cooperation, appreciation of others, play, and pro-social group work. This is a playful approach to differentiation, and can be a fun and useful formative assessment for teachers and trainers.

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**References:**

I adapted this activity from a game listed in Quicksilver by Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler who credited Ann Driscoll of the University of New Hampshire Brown Center. This variation appears in Tips & Tools: The Art of Experiential Group Facilitation.


Membership Auto Renewal
by Trudy Robbins
ACCT Membership Manager

In June 2014, ACCT migrated to a new web platform. A new membership benefit that was gained with our migration was the Auto Renewal feature. A year into our migration, the Auto Renewal feature is live and active!

This feature automatically activates when a member pays for their initial membership registration, or their annual membership renewal, with a credit card. The system then takes that information and automatically creates a dues invoice for the next year. The transaction will process on the date of that “Open (Awaiting Auto Bill)” invoice, which can be located in your Member Profile under “Invoice/Payments.”

If the credit card used for the transaction expires by the renewal transaction date you will be sent an email notification. To update the information go to the ACCT website at www.acctinfo.org and click on the “sign in” link in the upper right hand corner to log into your Member Profile. Click on “Manage Profile” in the blue box on the right and then scroll down and select “Invoice/Payments” from the list on the left. You will see a filter box at the top of the page. Select the “Open (Awaiting Auto Bill)” invoice. If there is an Auto Renewal Invoice it will appear. Open the invoice and update the credit card information.

If you would prefer to pay by credit card but cancel the Auto Renewal option you can delete the open invoice from your ACCT Member Profile (same location as above) or by contacting the ACCT Membership Department. If you have questions, problems, or would like assistance, please contact the Membership Department by calling +1-800-991-0286 Ext. 914 or emailing membership@acctinfo.org.

“Good Words” . . . Continued from page 6

matters are smart, and fair, and, from the legal liability standpoint, allow you to argue that the risk or circumstance was understood by the visitor, and assumed, and included within the scope of your Release/Waiver document.

If you are using independent contractors, say so (and avoid conduct which would reasonably cause a visitor to believe that those contractors are employees). Again, it’s fair (and smart from a legal perspective) to alert your visitors to the fact that some “staff” are not trained or supervised by you, and that, under the law, a dispute about his or her performance is between the visitor and the contractor -- not you (unless it can be shown that you selected the contractor carelessly).

If your activity has an instructional or self improvement aspect to it— that is, it is not simply entertainment -- say so. The negligence laws of many states make allowances in the duty of care owed by you if the service can be shown to have some social utility.

In your consideration of these and other “good” words, have in mind a goal of preventing a visitor’s complaint, after the bad thing happens, that “I never dreamed I would be doing such a thing.” Or, “I had no idea that….could happen.” Between “Yeah, I can see that,” and “No way could I see that coming,” is the minefield that can produce claims and recoveries against you. You, and your visitor, are well served by your efforts to shrink that minefield. Words matter.
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Get Involved!

ACCT Volunteer Opportunities
Would you like to be a part of an ACCT committee or work group? How about becoming a Task Force member? ACCT is currently taking applications for various committees, work groups, and task forces. Please see the ACCT website or contact the ACCT office for an application.

Fun Facts
by Trudy Robbins

JULY
• JULY is Picnic Month – Who doesn’t love a picnic? They’re fun any time of year, but Picnic Month is a great excuse to celebrate and be creative. While the classic picnic foods, fried chicken and potato salad, will always remain favorites, there are lots of great themes to be explored!
  • Friday, July 3rd is “Compliment Your Mirror Day.”
  • Sunday, July 12th is “Etch-A-Sketch Day.”
  • Sunday, July 27th is “Parents Day.”

AUGUST
• AUGUST is Golf Month – The sun is shining, and the grass is green – celebrate Golf Month by getting out on the course!
  • Monday, August 3rd is “Watermelon Day.”
  • Saturday, August 15th is “Relaxation Day.”
  • Saturday, August 29th is “Individual Rights Day.”

SEPTEMBER
• SEPTEMBER is Chicken Month. Chicken is a staple food of many western countries, and often taken for granted. Chicken Month aims to bring the humble chicken off the back-burner and into the spotlight, highlighting the versatility, value and importance of the original white meat.
  • Friday, September 4th is “Newspaper Carrier Day.”
  • Thursday, September 10th is “Swap Ideas Day.”
  • Monday, September 21st is “International Day of Peace.”

Did You Know?
In 1998 the German Ropes Course Association (GRCA) was founded by 18 people (building companies, ropes course operators and trainers).

1999 was charcterized by compilation of the first edition of GRCA standards. The ambitious goal was to publish the first edition in the next year (2000). This goal was achieved and the GRCA standards were duly published - including the chapters ‘ethics’, ‘operation’ and ‘building’. Furthermore a working group was started to plan the compilation of the ‘training’ standard.

The success achieved through standards development resulted in an increase in the number of German and international members. In 2003 the decision was taken to embrace other European countries and it became know as the European Ropes Course Association (ERCA).

Today ERCA has more than 430 members from around 34 countries and the community meets once or twice a year. ERCA runs a certification system for training and inspection.

For more information visit their website at: www.erca.co.uk/
Parallel Lines Ad Space
Advertise Your Products & Services in Parallel Lines

Parallel Lines (ACCT’s Quarterly Newsletter) circulates to all ACCT members and customers quarterly. This communication tool keeps recipients up-to-date on educational opportunities and industry happenings.

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Additional Advertising Opportunities

Showcase Your Products & Services on the Zip Line Listserv

The Zip Line listserv website is not only an information source, but also provides an opportunity for networking and purchasing. Banner ads throughout the site connect buyers to your products at the click of a button. www.ziplinelistserve.com

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Founded in 1993, The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) is the world’s leading and largest American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accredited Standards Developer focused specifically and solely on the challenge course industry. It is the mission of the organization to establish and promote the standard of care that defines professional practice and effective challenge course programs.

The Association for Challenge Course Technology is a non-profit trade association with a main office in Illinois and satellite offices in Maryland and Washington. Parallel Lines is the organization’s publication sent to all of our affiliates and friends. With member organizations across the United States, Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Korea, Central America and worldwide, ACCT is the leading organization dedicated to supporting professionals in the challenge course industry.

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All parties interested in submitting materials for publication in Parallel Lines are encouraged to send them to the Main Office, Attention: Editor. We reserve the right to refuse or edit any materials submitted. Photos should be submitted with article submissions. For more information contact us at +1-800-991-0286 between 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m., CST. Our 24-hour fax number is +1-800-991-0287.

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