

PARALLEL LINES

The Newsletter of the Association for Challenge Course Technology, Inc.

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Summer 2010

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How About a Little Midwest Hospitality?

by Cynthia Paris, Conference Committee Chair

Your conference committee has been busy planning, and now that we have reached summer, things have really picked up! Summer in the Midwest is when ropes courses and zip lines are busier than ever. People plan all winter for the outdoor activities, and when the weather turns warm, it seems as though everyone is outside. Minneapolis is the cultural capital of the Midwest, and while the city has a distinct artistic, musical, and cosmopolitan flavor, it's clear that outdoor adventure is part of the lifeblood of residents and visitors alike. Business suits give way to hiking shoes and cargo pants with zip-off legs. SUVs aren't all shiny and pristine, but instead muddy and packed with camping gear, bikes, and canoe racks.

I imagine this is what drew the committee to select Minneapolis as the host city for ACCT's 21st Annual International Challenge Course Symposium and Conference, which, in addition to challenge courses, includes canopy and zip line tours. Adventure lovers already gather indoors here during "winter planning time" and share ideas and camaraderie.

The Hyatt Regency Minneapolis is our host for this year's conference to be held on February 3–5, 2011. As part of our conference planning, our new Executive Director, James Borishade, and I visited the hotel to map out logistics. We were instantly greeted and treated to wonderful Minneapolis hospitality. If you have never been in this part of the country, you will be pleasantly sur-

(see Midwest on page 7)



Photo by Brenda Reed

21st Annual International
Challenge Course Symposium
and Conference
Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 3–6, 2011

From the Board Chair

by Erik Marter

Work

The ancient Greeks used to say that *community* is reached when a group of people is willing to plant trees knowing they will not enjoy the fruit or shade.

*When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,
pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the angry Poseidon—do not fear them:
You will never find such as these on your path,
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,
if you do not carry them within your soul,
if your soul does not set them up before you.**

Work—a four-letter word—the thing we do so that we can do the things we want to do, the place where we spend so many of our waking hours.

We have gotten ourselves into this interesting method of thinking—we go to school and learn, learn, learn everything we need to know for our life, then we get a job and work, work, work to save up money so we can take care of our basic needs, buy the things we want, and set ourselves up for retirement, that time of life where we work hard not to be productive.

If you take a look into the natural world, we are very different in this thinking—no other creatures set up their lives in this manner. In fact, I am pretty sure that it doesn't even work for us. From the little I know about human beings, it seems to me that we are designed to learn, work, live, and thrive for our entire life. Our brains need constant challenge and growth to keep it working well, our bodies need activity to continue to regenerate appropriately, and our spirits need to feel a sense of belonging to a community or a culture. We need to be productive, in our mind – body – spirit, as well as in our communities.

I am seeing more and more people who go to work and expect that they should be reimbursed for *being* at work. At the same time, more and more employers in these tough times are looking for people who come to work to create, build relationships, accomplish tasks, and solve problems, not just show up. Workers blame employers, and employers blame the workers with little or no visible outcome.

Every now and again we run into a company or a group of people where things get done, the work place feels like a community or a family, and everyone works together towards a common goal (sounds like what our industry was designed to help with). The thing I have noticed about these companies is that the company itself is set up to help people get their needs met. I think when people have the opportunity to provide for themselves, work in a place and in a way where they can continually grow and learn, and challenge themselves daily, they thrive. I think that the bigger picture is PURPOSE. When I understand how the work I do solves a bigger problem, when I understand how my efforts contribute to my community, I thrive.

So back to the Greeks. If we can focus our lives on making our community better, it seems we will live a fuller and happier life. If we then focus on making our community better for the generations who will follow in our footsteps (people, animal, vegetable, mineral, and so on), then we will live in harmony with the rest of the planet and leave a strong and healthy forest for all the generations to come.

And now to Ithaca. When we put a goal in front of us and work towards it, we can accomplish anything. To truly live, though, we must learn that it is the journey that really matters, not the destination. When we live in the journey and expect the unexpected, we will learn to enjoy the good with the bad—the fish head sandwiches and the mangoes.

So make your work the journey—live every day in the present—learn to challenge yourself and grow as much as you can with every step of the way, and when you have that figured out, be a conduit for others to do the same.

It was also said by the ancient Greeks that a true community not only plants trees for generations to come, but they constantly acknowledge those who planted the trees that provide fruit and shade for our current generation.

*Always keep Ithaca on your mind.
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.
But do not hurry the voyage at all.
It is better to let it last for many years;
and to anchor at the island when you are old,
rich with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.*

*Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.
Without her you would have never set out on the road.
She has nothing more to give you.**

*These selections are from the poem "Ithaca," found in *Collected Poems* by Constantine P. Cavafy. Translated from the Greek by Edmund Keely.

The Extra Degree

by James Borishade, Executive Director

I trust that you are having a fantastic summer and are now gearing up for a wonderful fall. I've taken some time to read this summer, and the other day I found myself reading a book by S. L. Parker called "212° the extra degree." I couldn't help but think about ACCT while reading it. The premise behind the book is that at 211 degrees, water is hot, but at 212 degrees water boils. And we all know that with boiling water you get steam (think of all the things in our society past or present that are powered by steam). In a nutshell—the extra degree makes all the difference! Why am I telling you this? Read on.

As I sit back and reflect on the various projects and activities of our association, I can't help but smile knowing that ACCT is at an exciting point in our growth and development. During my last article I shared that we will be focusing on three overarching organizational priorities. Those priorities are

- Expanding upon the success of the international ACCT brand
- Building an interim strategic plan for the upcoming fiscal year
- Growing our infrastructure

I am pleased to report that we are working toward our first priority of expanding upon the success of the ACCT brand. Working hand-in-hand with our PR/Marketing Committee, we are in the process of updating our corporate identity, which includes logo, letterhead, envelopes, and various other marketing materials.

We have also completed our interim strategic plan and have taken steps to grow our infrastructure with the addition of an organizational intranet for our various committees and leadership. The intranet is designed to help us standardize a number of our documents, forms, and other materials, which will help with the efficiency of our meetings, conference calls, and projects of the association.

As we continue to grow our infrastructure, we recognize that our membership continues to grow as well. I have asked our team to thoroughly vet our current membership benefit structure. The goal is to dramatically increase the benefits of being a member of ACCT. This is probably one of my most exciting tasks because our members mean the world to our organization. I will share more information about how we plan to increase membership benefits in an upcoming issue of Parallel Lines.

In addition to our listed organizational priorities, our committees are hard at work contributing to the day-to-day operations of our association. I extend my gratitude to the men and women on all of our committees. Your time, energy, and efforts help create the steam that powers the ACCT engine. Your commitment is nothing short of 212 degrees!

Workshop Suggestions & Presenters Wanted for Canopy/Zip Line Tour Track at Conference

For the 2011 ACCT conference in Minneapolis, the Canopy/Zip Line Tour Committee wants suggestions on the kind of workshop that would be interesting to you on a topic related to canopy/zip line tours. The committee is also looking for presenters for workshops. Each workshop runs for an hour and a half. We will have a track of workshops relating to canopy and zip line tours, so think about topics that you are knowledgeable about that we could include. Contact Victor Gallo, the chair of the committee, with your ideas and proposals. (vgallo@adventureplaygd.com)

PVM Symposium in Alta

The 2010 PVM Symposium was held at Alta Lodge in Utah and was a huge success! The staff at the Alta Lodge was excellent, and the PVMs had a blast! A special thank you to our presenters, Kathy Haras, Ph.D. (Adventureworks! Associates, Inc.), Michel Goulet (Petzl America), and Lois McCurley (PMI). ACCT would also like to thank the volunteers of the PVM Symposium Planning Committee—Jennifer Marter, Mike Anderson, Jennifer Stanchfield, Gary Cwidak, Bill Weaver, and Michelle Hepler. If you are interested in helping to plan future symposiums, please contact James Borishade at ACCT's main office. A special thank you goes to Stratus Insurance, Inc., who was the dinner sponsor at this year's PVM Symposium.



Share Your Wealth of Knowledge at the ACCT Conference

The Call for Presenters form for the Minneapolis conference is available on the ACCT website. Submit one for YOUR workshop idea by October 1, 2010.

Membership Survey a Success!

by Niels Damman, Chair, Membership Committee

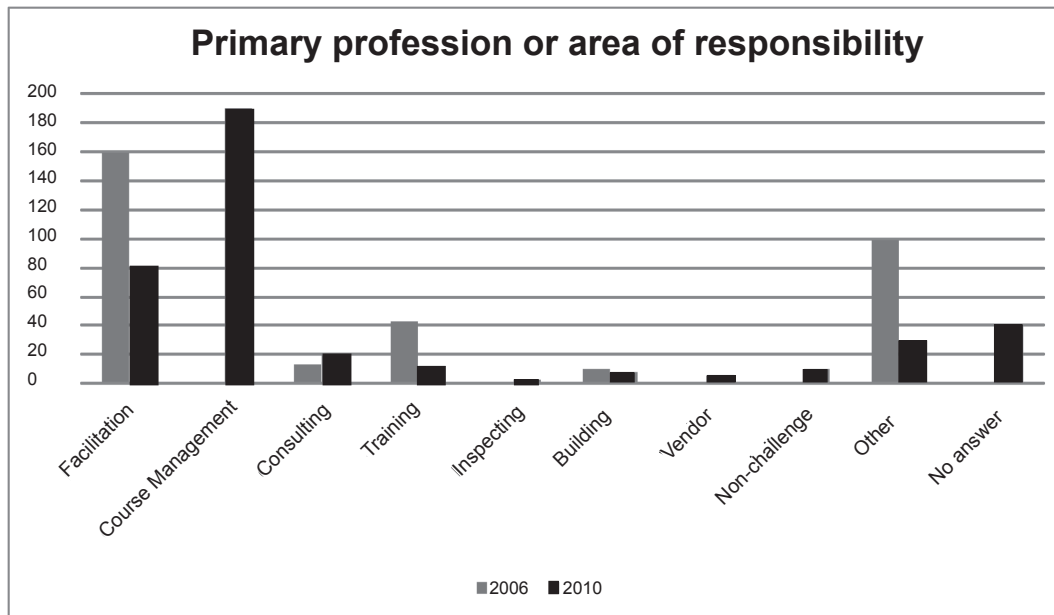
First off, thank you to the 402 respondents of the 2010 Membership Survey. This survey will help us determine a direction for our committee as well as research ideas for future membership benefits. In addition, this survey provided us with much insight as to the quality of ACCT membership services and the overall view on ACCT in regards to the rest of the industry. When we compare this data to the 2006 survey answers, we can see the

trend of our quality of service to members and the industry. In addition, we received many great ideas and suggestions for improvement or addition of services.

As the Membership Committee, it is our goal to compile data into a report for members to access on the ACCT website. Information will also be distributed to committees and the board to help inform plans for the continued success of our association.

Considering the wide range of questions and answers, this may take a while to compile, so we will also keep you updated in Parallel Lines. As a teaser, here is a graph of the areas of responsibility the 402 respondents claimed.

In addition, the Membership Committee is pleased to welcome Lysa Holladay, Carolyn Beisiegel, and Lori Schaeffer to the committee. We also want to give Tim Rhodes a belated thank you for all the support he provided.



ACCT Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tours Standards

the ACCT office. Contact the ACCT office to order more than 5 copies.

*Checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and purchase orders (U.S. only) are accepted. A copy of the purchase order must accompany any order.

The Seventh Edition of the ACCT Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards is available from the ACCT Membership Office. Individual copies are \$60 US, plus shipping. Discounts are available for multiple copies. Order online or use the order form which is posted online and available from

Keep on Rolling

*Another article in the series, "Things We Learned the Hard Way"
by Adam Bondeson*

It is generally accepted that staff who work on challenge courses are more likely to get hurt than participants. Although the possibility is still very low on a well-run challenge course, it is very important that staff take their responsibilities seriously and take measures to protect themselves. The following is a combination of several true stories that I've been told. Some of the stories ended in an accident and some did not due to good training and reactions.

Joey was out early setting up the challenge course at Camp Great Fun. The course required staff to climb and set up tethers as well as other gear. Joey was climbing from element to element checking things and enjoying the early morning cool. Once he was satisfied that the equipment was ready for the day, he traversed the last element back to the start of the course.

Participants exit the course by a Giant Swing, leaving from a platform. Since Joey was alone with no one to help him exit, he decided to rappel off of the platform. He fed his rope through and tossed both sides down to the ground. After taking one more look around, Joey sat back on the rope and weighted it. When he sat back, something gave, and Joey's rope started to fall with Joey connected to it. Fortunately, Joey had stayed clipped in with one end of his crab claws when he put his weight on the rope. When he leaned back, the rappel line gave, and he swung to the right until his claws caught him. He was a badly shaken, but sustained only a few bruises.

Joey was a seasoned staff who knew the course. His first mistake was

to feed his rappel rope over a cable that was only secured with electrical tape. The end of a cable had been terminated and wrapped around the tree and then taped to hold it in place. It turns out that this was an adjustment that was made by Joey earlier in the summer when he tightened a cable. Obviously, Joey should have inspected the anchor that he chose to rappel from more closely. However, as a climber he was in the habit of always staying clipped in to one anchor as he tested his weight on a new anchor. When traveling around a course on crab claws, the procedure is to stay clipped to one anchor and transfer to another before unclipping. When staff sets up a new system, like a rappel, the new system is untested, and therefore needs to be examined carefully. As a challenge course staff member, it is easy to assume that every cable or pulley is life support. When transferring onto a new anchor, especially one that will soon be taking your full weight, it is critical to load the anchor and test it before unclipping.

The habit of weighting the rappel rope before unclipping his crab claws saved Joey from the possibility of a 40-foot fall.

One of my first mentors ground into my head to double check every connection point that is part of the belay system for a participant. It is easy to remember to double check carabiners, harnesses, ropes, and helmets. Staff need to never rise above checking themselves and, when possible, having another staff double check. "Check it, check it twice, and then check it again."

DID YOU KNOW?

A job board is on the ACCT website. For a nominal fee, jobs can be posted there. No fees for job seekers!

Welcome to the Board, Jamie!

The Board of Directors of the Association for Challenge Course Technology is pleased to announce the election of its newest board member, Jamie Barrow, who was voted in by ACCT's general membership.

Jamie has over 17 years experience in the challenge course industry, holding various positions with camps, corporate training programs, and school-based programs. He currently serves as the Manager of Omada Teambuilding, a program housed in Trinity Western University's School of Human Kinetics, in Langley, British Columbia, Canada.

Jamie resides and works in British Columbia, Canada, where he enjoys the outdoors with his wife, Laura, and two children, Emma and Joshua. Please join us in welcoming Jamie Barrow to the ACCT Board of Directors.



Facilitator's Toolbox

by Jennifer Stanchfield

Processing in the Middle of the Experience

(This article originally appeared in "The Inspired Educator Blog," June 4, 2010, at www.experientialtools.com/blog.)

Often when we facilitate reflection with groups, we make time after the experience or lesson is completed to review and reflect. Many educators describe their reflective practice with groups as "debriefing"—a word that originated in the military for the act of eliciting a report from a soldier to officers after a mission was completed. I have never been a big fan of the term "debriefing" in the education field for many reasons, most importantly because it seems limiting. "Reflection" can be much more dynamic than sitting a group down after an activity to be questioned and report out to the facilitator.

About ten years ago during a conversation at a conference about group facilitation and processing, Luk Peeters, a therapist and experiential educator from Belgium, shared with me that he believes that the optimal place to capture a lesson is *while* it is happening.

His comments really sparked my thinking about how to take advantage of those opportunities. I had been occasionally stopping groups in the midst of an activity to discuss and reflect, but usually only when things weren't going well. I asked myself, Why not stop a group midway when things are going beautifully so they can remember what it felt like, looked like, and sounded like?

I started trying to weave in some brief "stop actions" in the midst of a challenge for groups to stop, look around, and identify what is working. Or I'd stop briefly for a group that had struggled at the begin-

ning and was now moving forward to identify what it was that had changed within their group process. It seemed that stopping in mid-activity allowed group members to take mental snapshots of key learnings and better apply them in subsequent activities. (In challenge course and other adventure learning situations, make sure the group is in a physically comfortable/safe spot before stopping for this mid-activity reflection so participants can fully attend to the conversation.)

One day not long after being inspired by Luk's comments, I was facilitating a group of students in a challenge course class in a high school in Middleton, Wisconsin. I decided to place a set of Chiji cards (image cards) on the middle "island" of the group "river crossing" challenge (see a post on my blog for more information on card and object reflection activities). My co-teacher, Donna Richter, and I were trying to adapt the challenge course activity Nitro Crossing so that 25 students would be able to participate safely and still feel challenged and involved throughout the experience. So we brainstormed ways to keep students spread throughout the "islands" so there wasn't a lot of waiting at the swing rope area.

The students had a variety of tasks to complete on their island journey, including retrieving the swing rope they were using to cross to island one, building a puzzle "bridge" to get to island two, and transporting water to island three.

After contemplating the idea of having participants process mid-stream, we decided to set out a deck of Chiji cards on the third island. As participants passed through island three, we asked them to use the cards to tell the story of their island journey. I was impressed by the students' engagement in this task—the insights and observations they communicated about their group's strengths, weaknesses, and goals—as they pulled together their story using the cards. The dialogue developed through the cards, and the story connected what they were learning with the real-life issues of accomplishing school coursework, preparing for graduation and college, and working out conflicts with peers. The story continued to develop as each group passed through island three. At the end of the activity, the group was excited to share the entire story (without any prompting from me or Donna).

As homework, we asked them to journal about their river crossing, and we found that the Chiji images and their connection to real-life goals were represented in many of the students' journals. The next time the group engaged in a challenge together, they seemed to be more adept at employing the skills and attributes they had discussed during the island crossing challenge.

After this experience, I continued to use metaphoric image cards and objects as a way to process mid-stream in a variety of ways (see post on the blog). This included laying

(see Processing on next page)

Processing

(continued from previous page)

out cards or objects at a transition point in the middle of a program and asking groups to come to an agreement on three cards that represent three important skills they used in the activity that they thought would be useful in upcoming activities. I often have them carry these cards or objects with them to the next activity (especially with younger groups), and I've noticed they pull them out mid-activity as a reminder when the group starts falling into old habits. I often find a way to integrate them into the next activity or refer back to them to illustrate transfer of skills/learning to future situations.

Other opportunities for weaving reflection into the activity include using them when frontloading an activity. For example, have group members choose objects that represent goals for their program, workplace, or other situation, and then make them part of the challenge itself in some way. You can integrate reflective practice in many creative ways into the action phase of learning. Regardless of how you do it, I think you will find that groups engage in more meaningful reflective discussions spontaneously throughout their learning experiences if you "mix up" your approaches to facilitating reflection.

"In order for change to happen, the optimal time is whilst experiencing, and at that time being able to open up for the new or the not-alike. Afterwards we often "think" we have learned something, but in the next situation we do exactly as before, and that is because the actual emotional schemes that direct our behavior have not changed. It is like trying to change a software program in a computer. That is only possible if the computer is up and running." –Luk Peeters

Midwest

(continued from page 1)

prised and may discover these are your kind of people! Everywhere in the Midwest you will hear a friendly "Hi!" "Hello!" and "How are you?" And here, when they ask, people actually stop and wait and expect you to answer. Whether it's the taxi driver, the front desk clerk, waitress, or maintenance worker, a genuine smile and warm greeting will await you.

Speaking of warm, that is one thing Minneapolis in winter is not. However, that doesn't slow down this city one bit. Our hotel is connected to a maze of indoor, elevated walkways that connect the entire downtown area. Often referred to as the "hamster Habitrail," this walkway is eight miles long and interwoven to most popular locations. It allows you to get to restaurants, bars, and stores in 65° F comfort, even when the outdoors is barely breaking the zero mark.

The hotel itself is modern with a wonderful conference area, plenty of gathering space, and even a huge fitness gym. Our exhibit hall is one of the largest we have ever had and will allow us to offer meals and some activities in the same space (including the wildly popular Builders' Olympics!). Outside the exhibit hall lies our ballroom area and a large private lobby filled with plenty of casual space to meet and chat. An onsite restaurant and bar area has excellent food and Midwest-sized large portions!

By popular request, this year's conference will include a special workshop track especially for those interested in canopy/zip line tours. We are expecting to have at least one workshop on this theme for each session. We will continue to offer sessions in Facilitation & Programming, Industry Business, Operations & Management, and Technical Topics. Please consider attending one of the Extended Learning Workshops on Sunday morning, which are included in your registration fee. To help you plan ahead, we will be listing topics for that day in the registration brochure.

Please consider contributing your insight this year by leading a workshop in your area. Call for Presenters application forms will be available on the ACCT website. We are looking forward to hearing from both experienced ACCT conference presenters and from those of you who have not yet presented. Your knowledge as an industry professional might be exactly what someone else has been searching for! If you need help formulating an idea or have a suggestion for this year's conference, contact the ACCT office or one of us on the Conference Committee. (Find the committee contact information on the website under Leadership – Committees.) We are always looking for your input as we plan your conference.

Watch your e-mail, regular mail and post, and the ACCT website for updates as we continue to plan pre-conferences, keynote speakers, workshops, and other events that make the annual conference one you won't want to miss! Can't wait to see you in Minneapolis! Till then, happy adventures!



Photo by Janice Grunewald



Builder's Toolbox

by Adam Bondeson

The Wonders of Camphor

Here's an old trick passed down from generations past. Camphor is an herbal remedy used to soothe muscles and itching (and other ailments), and it is also used for its scent, as an ingredient in cooking (mainly in India), as an embalming fluid, in religious ceremonies, in fireworks, and as a moth repellent. In addition, the camphor oil is used as a plasticizer and has other industrial applications. The oil is mixed with wax to form solid bars. These bars give off fumes that adhere to steel which forms a protective barrier that prevents rust.

You can protect your tools from rust using the solid camphor. Get a small, plastic container (such as a film container or pill bottle like those used for prescription medications), drill a few holes in it so the fumes can escape, and put the small block of camphor inside. Throw this into the bottom of a toolbox, and it will protect your tools from rust for months. The camphor will slowly evaporate and will need to be replaced eventually. This is also a great way to keep silver from tarnishing and to clear your sinuses if you are sick!

CAUTION: Camphor fumes can be dangerous under certain conditions, so be sure to read and understand all of the instructions that come with the camphor prior to using it.

Camphor blocks can be bought at local drugstores or from woodworking suppliers. I found one-ounce blocks for sale on Amazon.com for \$3.25.

Being a lucky duck isn't the only way to win

Ray Smolinski of Hocking Hills Canopy Tours in Rockbridge, Ohio, may have been "born under a lucky star," but that's not how he won a free registration to the Minneapolis conference on February 3–6, 2011. (Congratulations, Ray!)

lucky duck
 charmed
 hit it big
 jammy
 ¡qué suerte!
 victorious
 get a break
 good fortune

Each year at ACCT's annual conference, a person is chosen at random to receive a free conference registration. To be eligible, all you have to do is fill out a conference evaluation and return it while at the conference.

Why don't you plan to be in Minneapolis? You may be a lucky duck and win for next year. We hope to see you there!

Technical Bulletins are issued periodically by e-mail to our members and then posted on our website. These may be recalls of equipment or information about usage of specific pieces of equipment. Please make sure we have your correct e-mail address so that you can receive these e-mails directly.

ACCT Membership**Associate Membership**

This level is open to all interested individuals and organizations. Associate Membership benefits include a copy of the ACCT Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards at the time of joining; a subscription to our newsletter, *Parallel Lines*, that is published three times a year; a discount for the annual ACCT conference; and access to the ACCT-sponsored insurance company coverage for challenge course programs. *Membership period:* 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$75 USD

Institutional Membership

This level is open to any interested organization. Institutional membership benefits include four copies of the Standards at the time of joining; four copies of *Parallel Lines*; and discounted rates for four employees to attend the annual conference.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$250 USD

Professional Vendor Member (PVM)

Professional Vendor Members are challenge course service providers who have successfully completed the ACCT PVM accreditation process, accumulated the required number of days of experience, and who provide challenge course and/or canopy/zip line tour installation and inspections, and/or practitioner training and certification services. Contact the Professional Services manager for additional information.

Membership period: 1 year
Annual Membership dues: \$1,500 USD

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FAQs from the Installations Standards Committee

Please send any questions that you would like to have answered in this format to the Installation Standards Committee, c/o Rich Klajnscek, Chair; rich@seafoxconsulting.com

Belay Backups—When, Where, How?

Do I still need to back up all belay cables?

The new standards treat backups in a completely different way from previous editions. Now, you need to refer to Installation Standard C5 (Verification of Critical Cable and Anchor Integrity) to figure out if a backup is needed or not. Obviously you have already determined that the belay cable is a critical cable—all of them are. A backup is only needed if you cannot check off one of the four other criteria given on the list in standard C5. They are

- Proof testing. A static test load SHALL be applied to simulate the operational conditions of the system as closely as possible and be equal to two times the EXPECTED LOAD with no deformation or displacement in the anchor or its components. The EXPECTED LOAD SHALL be determined by a QUALIFIED PERSON.
- An acceptable QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS was followed in the manufacture of the anchor and fasteners.

An example of this is a belay cable that is terminated on a welded steel tab with a hole in it. The belay cable is terminated with a swaged eye (two copper ferrules) and a wire rope thimble. The eye is linked to the welded tab with a *Maillon Rapide* link. If the weld has been done and inspected by a certified welder, no backup loop is required for the tab. If the link that was used here was not a proof-tested link, then a backup for the link would be needed. Of course, we are assuming that all components in the system are of appropriate size for the *Expected Load*. In the case of belay cables, the breaking strength of all components used is five times the *Expected Load* (as determined by a *Qualified Person*).

- The anchor is part of an ENGINEERED SYSTEM.

If you look at the definition section at the beginning of the standards, this should be clear if you are using an *Engineered System*. It is defined as hardware and/or equipment that is assembled and used as an integral part

of a *challenge course* or canopy/zip line tour installation. It is designed and used for a particular purpose and generally used as a complete assembly without substantive changes to the component parts. An *engineered system* is designed or inspected by a *Qualified Person* and installed and used for its designed purpose. Some examples are cable grabs systems (including the grab), continuous *belay cable* systems, overhead beam/trolley systems, fall arrest systems, and so on.

- The anchor has unquestioned strength to support the predetermined load, as determined by a COMPETENT PERSON.

This point was added to allow for situations such as the use of a tree limb to support a belay for a high element. A *Competent Person*, by definition, has the knowledge from previous experience to determine if a limb is large enough to handle the belay load without any calculations needed. This is only true if the limb is much larger than minimum size—unquestioned strength.

It's important to know that you may easily find yourself in over your head when determining if a backup is required in a particular system. The best advice is to have an engineer and/or the manufacturer review the systems that you intend to use to determine if all of the components meet the criteria in this standard. Whenever there is doubt—back it up!

One of the criteria in Installation Standard C5 is for a full-strength backup. How do you define a full-strength backup?

A full-strength backup is one that is 100% of the required strength of the system in question. As an example, if you were backing up a guy or activity support cable system, the full-strength backup would need to be a minimum of two times the *Expected Load* in that cable. If it were a belay cable, the same backup would need to be five times the *Expected Load* in that cable. It's important to keep in mind that the backup strength is based on loads, not the size of the components used to create the system.

Government Relations Committee Monitors Continuing Regulation Activity

by Gregory J. Allen, Chair, Government Relations Committee

Over the last several months, the Government Relations Committee (GRC) has witnessed nationwide activity surrounding the challenge course and canopy/zip line tour industry. There have been reports of governmental activity from states such as Missouri, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and others. The activity which is evolving ranges from minor communication from states about the possibility of regulation surrounding the industry to more stringent enforcement of new and existing regulations regarding the same.

As a response to this increase in activity, the GRC, with the intense help of ACCT professional staff members and passionate members of the PVM community, is doing the following:

- Attempting to establish communication with each of the states and regulating bodies in question to get a clarification of exactly what is happening in that area.
- Attempting to keep the lines of communication open between the regulating bodies and ACCT, and offering out our position and standards as a resource to those entities.
- Working on dialing in a position paper/statement to be used as a foundation for how we approach these issues in the near future.
- Working on revamping how the GRC may function in the near- and long-term future so it can be as efficient as possible in dealing with these types of issues.
- Continuing to update an informational database specifically targeting contacts and where to find information on specific regulations.

If you have any questions or information regarding specific regulations in or around your area, please contact your Professional Vendor Member immediately or me at greg@visionaryadventure.com. We will keep you updated as things become more clear.

Rebranding of ACCT

by Lindsay James, Chair, PR/Marketing Committee

The PR/Marketing Committee has been spending the past few months working on the early phases of rebranding the association. As a committee we have been collaborating with James and a design team to finalize the look of the new logo. We look forward to unveiling the new logo in a couple weeks. Once the logo has been finalized, we will begin the next part of the rebranding phase by updating ACCT's corporate identity (letterhead, envelopes, business cards, and other marketing materials). In addition to rebranding the Association, in the coming months we will be changing and updating the ACCT website. It is our hope that this new website will be more user friendly and provide educational and helpful information to our members and the community at large. We are excited about our current projects and can't wait to share them all with you!



**HELP
WANTED**

If you are interested in serving on an ACCT committee, you can find an application in the Leadership section of the ACCT website on the committee page or e-mail James Borishade (james@acctinfo.org) for an application. Openings are available for

Operations/Certification

Standards Committee—

looking for people with experience in canopy/zip line tour operations and training

Ethics Committee—two openings

Come One, Come All— It's Time for the 2011 Board Elections!

Serving on the ACCT Board of Directors represents a great opportunity to serve the challenge course industry and the association as well as a substantial commitment of time and energy. Board members are involved in all aspects of the governance of the association.

Expectations

Attendance at all board meetings is mandatory for all members. The board generally meets face-to-face four times a year with at least two additional meetings by telephone conference call. Board members are also expected to attend all ACCT functions, which include symposia, events at the conference, and other events as scheduled. Some, but not all, travel expenses to board meetings are reimbursed. Prospective candidates should understand that service on the board will represent a significant investment of time and energy and sometimes includes a financial cost.

All prospective candidates should mark their calendar for the first meeting in 2011. This meeting will be held on Sunday, February 6, the last day of the ACCT conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It will be the first meeting for all newly elected board members. Additional meeting dates will be set at that meeting.

Positions Available

This year four board positions are open for election. Three of those positions are elected by the Professional Vendor Member community, and one position is elected by Associate and Institutional members.

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 in nomination for a position on the Board of Directors.

Associate and Institutional Members Seat

Associate and Institutional members are electing someone to a new slot on the board. Last year for the second time, these members elected a board position. This seat will fill the three board seats for Associate and Institutional board members. In 2009, Gary Cwidak was elected to a three-year term on the Board, and in 2010 Jamie Barrow was elected to a three-year term.

A candidate must be an Associate or Institutional 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 submit a 400-word statement to James Borishade by December 11, 2010. This statement must be submitted electronically to james@acctinfo.org.

Voting for this position only will be conducted both online (similar to absentee or early voting) prior to the conference or in person at the conference. A member may cast one vote using one of these two methods. Online voting will be available from December 16, 2010, until January 16, 2011. Voting in person will take place using a paper ballot at the Annual General Meeting at the conference on Thursday, February 3, 2011. When the polls are open, an e-mail will be sent to all members—another great reason to make sure we have your correct e-mail address! (Please contact Sonny at

info@acctinfo.org if you want to find out what address we have on file for you.)

While the majority of the people who have served on the Board of Directors have been affiliated with Professional Vendor Member companies, quite a few have not. Michelle Hepler, Jamie Barrow, and Gary Cwidak currently serve on the Board and are excellent examples. They are willing to answer questions about their perspective on board service for those who might be interested in talking about it. You can reach Michelle at mhepler@co.iredell.nc.us, Jamie at jamie.barrow@twu.ca, and Gary at gcwidak@aurora.edu.

Professional Vendor Member Nominations Instructions

Candidates do not have to be affiliated with a PVM company, but will be elected by PVMs. For candidates for these two positions, the nominating process will be held in a slightly different way this year. All nomination statements (maximum of 400 words) must be submitted electronically to James Borishade by December 21, 2010. In accordance with the current ACCT bylaws, all nominations for positions voted on by PVMs shall be submitted to the Vice Chair by at least forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled election. Last minute ballots will not be accepted. Elections will be held in person using a paper ballot during the Annual General Meeting on February 3, 2011. Election results will be announced at the conference. For any additional information about submitting a nomination for board service, please contact Keith Jacobs at 219-864-8343 or keith@experientialsystems.com. For information about accessing the Members Only portion of the website in order to vote, please contact Sonny Oztas at 847-325-5860 or info@acctinfo.org.

Poetry Works!

by Faith Evans and David Markwardt

Sometimes fear snaps us awake in the middle of the night. We may feel paralyzed by panic or terror. Some of us may think we should always sleep like a baby. We may have been told “that’s how things should be.”

But if we are taking risks, pushing our lives forward, and not sitting on our hands, we’ll encounter fear. It’ll cause anxiety and keep us up.

Whatever your sleep habits, most people, when faced with fear, will choose one of two lousy options: fight or flee. And most of the time, you’ll either lose the fight or won’t be able to run fast enough to flee it.

Which brings us to a third option: embracing it.

On challenge courses people often feel fear. Standing on a zip line platform or on the Pamper Pole disk, they may stare fear in the face. People may want to climb back down. They may want to rush through the event to get it over with. Powering through, they may have no conscious or felt experience of the event.

Which brings us back to that third option, found in a poem. Challenge course practitioners can help participants think of their fear as a wolf. Encourage them to get as close to their fear as possible. Embrace the fear. Encourage them to go ahead—lick the snout of the wolf.

Faith Evans is the owner of PlayFully, Inc. (faithevans@aol.com); and David Markwardt is the Teamwork in Action Director at Santa Fe Community College (davidmarkwardt@comcast.net).

THE WOLF AT TWO A.M.

Snapped awake
again, hail him with a smile and a slap
on his frizzled back.
He has come to remind—
anxiety is a favorite cousin
of being alive. Breathe his hot breath
till it blends your own.
Ask permission to lick his snout.
Will he cower you into terror?
Will he tear you to shreds?
Escort him to your kitchen.
Whip up a meal,
whatever he wants. When you can look
unflinching in his piercing eyes, when so close
you see his jagged teeth are
your edge, you are close.
Open a bottle of wine.
Toast, clink glasses, laugh.
Belly laugh until dawn’s breaking light.
If not this dark night then another.

—David Markwardt

Questions to consider:

- What choices do you have when you feel fear?
- How can you look unflinchingly at fear?
- Where does the poem intersect with your life?
- How does the poem’s message relate to being on a challenge course?

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Research Advisory Committee
Chair to be determined

Review Committee
Kennerly de Forest, Chair
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ACCT Committees

Challenge Courses and Higher Education

Higher Education Challenge Course Survey

by Kristina A Riggs, M.S.



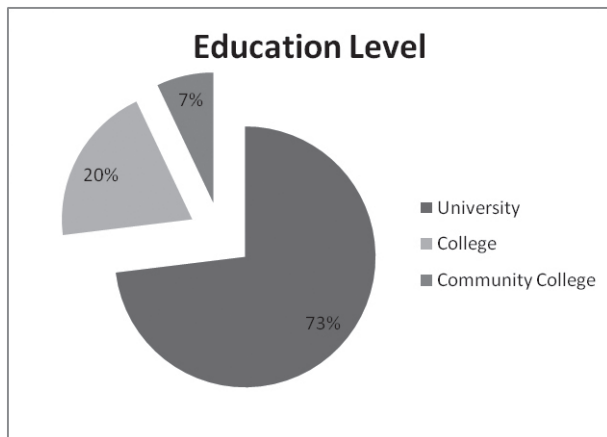
The challenge course field has expanded over the years with users, at first, interested in pushing comfort zones and creating opportunities for reflection and change. More recently programs have developed new markets for therapy, amusement, and further education. Recognizing that there is little documentation of the industry as a whole, a research study focusing directly on how challenge courses are being used in higher education (university, college, and community college) was undertaken. This is the first national sample study concerned with establishing an

survey inquired about the institution itself, the programs utilizing the challenge course as a tool, and the course itself. Wordage used in the survey, such as types of operating systems, corresponds with language used in the Association for Challenge Course Technology's (ACCT) *Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards, Seventh Edition* and *Challenge Course Experience Portfolio* formatted by ACCT (ACCT 2008).

Results

Of the 250 surveyed, 154 institutions responded to the survey as having a challenge course, using a course at a different location, or providing academic courses and/or programming utilizing a challenge course. Of the 154 participants, 36% were located in the Southern Region of the United States with North Carolina and Texas having the largest number of participants. Of the institutions, 38% designated as private institutions. Student body population (small, medium, or large campus population) was roughly distributed into thirds. The distribution between type of institution (university, college, or community college) showed that 73% of university institutions had and utilized challenge courses in some manner.

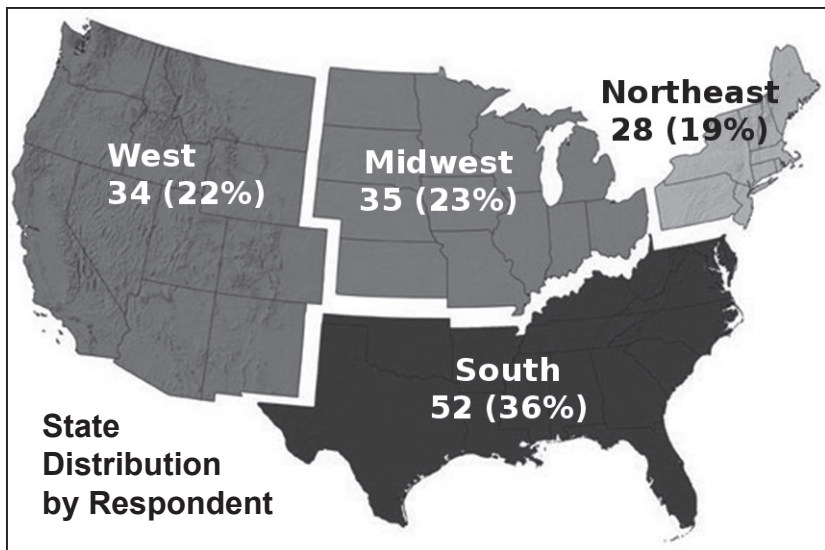
Predominant operating systems are low course, portable, dynamic, and static, respectively. Specialty
(see Survey on next page)



information database and methods for further research. Facts such as staffing, operating systems, objectives, academic relations, and demographics are reported in the finding. The following is a brief summary of the information found in the study and plans for further research.

Methods

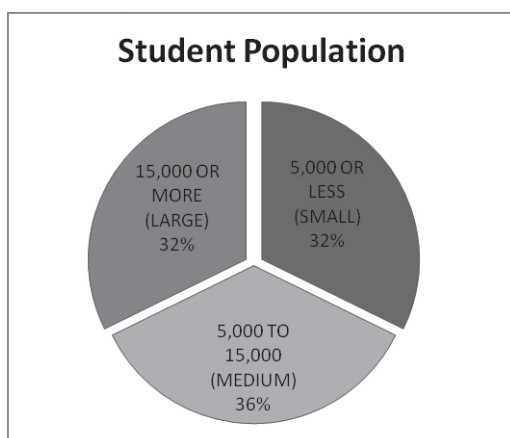
Participants for this study were chosen through Professional Vendor Member (PVM) reference, AEE membership directory, and professional reference, which produced a collection of 250 higher education institutions with challenge courses, program offerings, and/or associated academic classes. The



Survey

(continued from previous page)

elements (giant swing, zip line, rappel, and climbing tower) were reported by all but 28 institutions, and most reported having more than one specialty element. The main types of staffing utilized by programs were combinations of students, faculty/staff, and outside professionals. Populations served by institutional programs varied with 60% serving youth, teen, college, adults, corporate, and non-profit. The challenge courses were reported to be within walking distance of the campus in 72% of participants, 43% of which were less than a 5-minute walk.



Of the participants, 113 reported providing academic courses using their challenge course with a wide frequency of use with at least one academic course using it regularly (6–8 times per semester). Program operation in the institution was housed in one of three services: Academic Affairs, Student Services, or Auxiliary Services. As expected, Student Recreation or Student Services was the most common placement.

Thirty programs reported providing purely service programs (programmed experiences for school

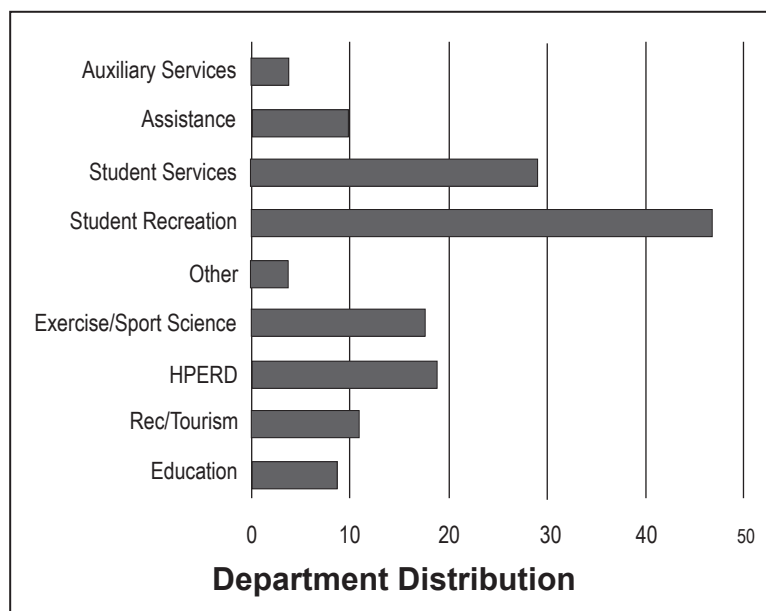
and surrounding communities, not in connection with an institution’s academics, utilizing aspects of the challenge course). The primary focus of programs was on education, recreation, professional/corporate, and therapeutic. Sixty-one percent (61%) of service programs traveled more than 30 miles outside the city to accommodate surrounding populations.

Discussion

As there are approximately 6,551 post-secondary institutions in the United States (2009 Digest of Education Statistics), *this* preliminary study is a sampling that aims to demonstrate the usefulness of such information and the need for a more comprehensive study. In institutions of higher education, the use of challenge courses is growing, providing room for further development in leadership, personal growth, and professionalism.

Further analysis will look for trends and possible comparison to other higher education programs in the United States, but this has not been completed at this time. Future research on this topic hopes to include additional educational programs and locations (such as Canada, Mexico, and others) for a broader spectrum of challenge course application. A database supported by this research is under construction and hopefully will be available in the next year for use by the challenge course and higher education communities.

*If you are affiliated with a university, college, community college, or lab school and did



not receive this study but would like to be added to the findings, please contact kristina.a.riggs@gmail.com with your information.

Kristina Riggs has a master's degree in experiential education. She currently resides in Colorado and is a trainer with Adventure Experiences, Inc.

Announcements

The Call for Presenters application for the Minneapolis conference is due on October 1. Go to www.acctinfo.org for more information.

All conference information will be posted on the ACCT website as it becomes available (www.acctinfo.org).

ACCT is pleased to welcome Bonsai Design (John Walker and Thaddeus Shrader), our newest Professional Vendor Member as of August 4, 2010.

Please note new phone numbers for the ACCT office and staff. (See page 9.)

Calendar of Events

Date	Event
October 18, 2010	Board Meeting
November 1, 2010	Parallel Lines Fall Issue deadline
December 1, 2010	Parallel Lines Fall Issue published
December 11, 2010	Deadline for Associate & Institutional nominations for the Board of Directors
December 16, 2010– January 16, 2011	Associate & Institutional members vote online
December 21, 2010	PVM nominations for Board elections deadline
January 31, 2011	Board Meeting–Minneapolis
February 3–6, 2011	ACCT Conference–Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 6, 2011	Board Meeting–Minneapolis

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