



CLIMBING WALL ASSOCIATION

# Lines: The CWA Newsletter

**Vol. 2, No. 1**

**February 28, 2006**

## Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of Lines for 2006! You will find important stories on standards for the design and engineering of manufactured climbing structures, a government affairs update, and other news in this issue.

Please consider submitting articles to Lines. You can submit feature articles, short articles, news briefs, notices, and reviews. Submit your articles or your suggestions for articles to:  
[bill@climbingwallindustry.org](mailto:bill@climbingwallindustry.org).

Help the CWA grow, forward this e-mail to anyone you think might be interested in the CWA or manufactured climbing walls. One can also subscribe to Lines on the CWA web site. Thanks for your support!

Regards,

Bill Zimmermann,  
Executive Director

## **CWA Acquires Design and Engineering Standards: ASTM International Assigns Copyright to CWA**

The Climbing Wall Industry Group (CWIG) specifications for Artificial Climbing Walls were developed under the auspices of the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) in the late 80's and early 90's. With the dissolution of the CWIG, the Outdoor Industry Association Board of Directors transferred the "CWIG Standards" and the standards development process to the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), now known as ASTM International.

The draft standard and working documents became the intellectual property of ASTM International and went through a number of revisions in the ASTM process. The subcommittee responsible for further developing the design and engineering standards effectively ceased work on the standards in 2002. The lack of any readily available and agreed upon standard for the US market became increasingly problematic.

During the summer of 2005 the CWA polled builders regarding what should happen with standards for the design and engineering of artificial climbing structures. As a result, the CWA requested the copyright for the standards being developed for artificial climbing structures. ASTM international agreed to the request and transferred copyright to the CWA on November 22nd, 2005.

The CWA intends to coordinate bringing new engineering standards for climbing walls to the market as soon as possible. We receive a number of calls from architects and engineers asking for standards pertaining to the design and engineering of walls. We believe it is in the industry's interest to make these standards available to serve as a guide for architects, engineers, and regulators.

The draft standard titled "CWA Standard Specification for the Design and Engineering of Artificial Climbing Structures" will continue to be developed and should be published within the year. CWA members will be notified of the formation of an engineering standards committee and will be given the opportunity to comment on draft standards prior to publication.

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## **Government Affairs: Massachusetts Regulation Update**

The CWA continues to track an important regulatory development in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Public Safety (DPS) will begin to regulate artificial climbing structures in the Commonwealth as of April 1st, 2006. Initially, artificial climbing structures, regardless of type of venue, location, or type of use will be licensed under the existing amusement licensing statute.

Given that many artificial climbing venues are not operated as amusements, the CWA has been working on alternative legislation and regulations to license climbing facilities outside of the amusement arena. We feel it is very important that climbing facilities used as sporting venues are not considered amusements.

The CWA held a member meeting in Boston on December 9th, 2005 to discuss the regulatory issues in Massachusetts and to hear member concerns. The CWA also attended the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Amusement Advisory Board on December 12th to represent our member's concerns at the advisory board meeting.

The CWA has been working on crafting draft regulations, in cooperation with a broad coalition of organizations, which will eventually enable climbing facilities to be classified as distinct from amusements. The draft regulations have been sent for comment to major manufacturers and to CWA members in the Commonwealth and throughout New England. Interested members can view the draft regulations at the link below.

Discussions between the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety and the CWA are ongoing. A conference call to discuss the draft regulations is scheduled for Thursday, March 2nd.

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### **Climbing Equipment Manufacturer's Roundtable: CWA Sponsors Meeting of Suppliers to the Manufactured Climbing Wall Industry**

The CWA will be sponsoring a roundtable discussion for manufacturers of climbing equipment at the conclusion of the Summer Market Outdoor Retailer show in Salt Lake City. The roundtable will provide a forum for equipment manufacturers to discuss trends and issues related to the indoor climbing market, the diversification of that market, and the implications for equipment manufacturers. The agenda is being developed in conjunction with the roundtable participants, some issues to be discussed include the use and management of auto belay devices, proper harness use in indoor climbing, and appropriate training for and use of belay devices with self-locking mechanisms. CWA member organizations that manufacture climbing equipment such as carabiners, harnesses, belay devices, and ropes as well as major manufacturers will be invited to attend the meeting.

## **Climbing at Torino Olympics: A Demonstration Sport at the Turin Olympics**

The 2006 Winter Olympics which were held in Turin, Italy from February 10th through February 26th showcased indoor climbing for the first time as a representative sport (ice climbing was a demonstration sport at the 1988 games in Canada).

The International Olympic Committee granted the UIAA's Climbing Council (formerly known as the ICC) permission to run competitive climbing events in conjunction with the snowboarding events that were being held in the neighboring town of Bardonecchia. The Climbing Challenges were held throughout the course of the Olympic Games and included traditional bouldering competitions between the invited climbing athletes as well as climbing challenges between climbers and snowboarders.

The UIAA Climbing Council allocated 35 spots to member countries. The USA was granted 2 invitations. Emily Harrington and Vadim Vinokur represented the USA. Debbie Gawrych, the President of USA Climbing, traveled to Italy to convene with other officials to work toward the long-term goal of climbing becoming an official sport of the Olympic Games.

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## **CWA Operations Standards Committee: CWA Seeks Nominations for Standards Committee to Revise the Industry Practices**

The CWA continues to seek nominations and applications for membership on the operations standards committee. The committee will be responsible for reviewing, maintaining, and revising the Industry Practices.

Applications for committee membership must be made in writing to the CWA in Boulder, Colorado. Knowledge of standards or common practices in the management and operation of climbing facilities will be essential for successful candidates.

Please click the link below or contact Bill Zimmermann for more information about the Operations Standards Committee.

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

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