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Lines: The CWA Newsletter

Vol. 4, No. 2

April 2, 2008

Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

We have been hard at work in the Boulder office preparing for this year's Climbing Wall Summit. One month from now, 200 wall vendors, manufacturers, and gym owners will converge on the city of Boulder, Colorado for four days of workshops, roundtable discussions, and fun events put on by our generous conference sponsors.

This year Phil Powers, Executive Director of The American Alpine Club, will be delivering our keynote address on the evening of May 1, 2008 with an opening reception to follow. Phil Powers is an accomplished mountaineer and author and has many years of experience in the outdoor industry. Phil has led dozens of expeditions to South America, Alaska, and Pakistan's Karakoram Range. His inspiring words will be an excellent start to the conference.

For those who have not yet registered for the conference, it is not too late. April 15, 2008 is our next deadline for registration. Walk-ins are welcome but at a higher price. We hope to see you all in May!

Best Regards,

Bill Zimmermann,
Executive Director

Workshops for Everyone

We have put together a solid program of presentations and workshops that should appeal to a wide variety of our members and the climbing community for this year's conference. From pre-conference workshops centered on new business start-up and safety, to regular workshops focused on gear and computer technology, these workshops are sure to entice a broad spectrum of conference-goers.

Cort Gariepy's "Climbing Gym Start-up Planning" sponsored by Rockwerx, is a new pre-conference workshop, designed to help potential gym owners analyze their customer demographic and develop a business plan accordingly. Other new pre-conference workshops include two hands-on workshops developed by Chris Danielson and Mike Helt to teach and inspire routesetters.

Risk management is one of the top concerns of climbing gym owners. The CWA addresses this with several workshops including Jason Noble's "Auto Belay Risk Management" and Dave Secunda's "Real Time Incident Tracking and Immediate Program Adjustment." Attorneys Robert Angell, Charles 'Reb' Gregg, and Michael Beck will all offer workshops addressing legal issues climbing gym owners, manufacturers, and employees might face.

To view a complete list of workshops, [click here](#). To register for the conference, [click here](#). We hope to see you in Boulder this May!

A Climbing Wall in Iraq

When Sergeant Aaron Collins of "C" Company first deployed to Iraq in 2005 he was sleeping outdoors and surviving off of MREs for months. For five weeks, he and the other men in his company didn't have access to showers. When Collins was called up to serve a second tour in 2007, he wasn't thrilled.

The conditions Collins returned to, though, were quite different than his first tour of duty. Marines share rooms in Iraqi buildings and are able to shower every day, provided the water doesn't run out. Buffet lines in the "chow" hall are all-you-can-eat and marines are able to contact family members via telephone and internet. With all his basic needs met, Collins found himself growing restless. The Salt Lake City native and avid climber found his three-day rotating shift as a Watch Officer in the Combat Operations Center (COC) rather lacking in athletic challenges. So Collins did what any die-hard climber would do if they were sent to a desert war-zone where temperatures soar to 120 degrees and daily mortars blasting are the norm; he built a wall.

"I talked it over with my wife and we decided for my own sanity and for the fun of the other marines, I would build a wall to hang a Nicros Hit System," Collins says. "I have projects back home that this whole war thing has interrupted and I didn't want to lose any ground while I'm over here." Collins reached out

to the climbing community on mountainproject.com and rockclimbing.com, asking climbers to donate old holds and equipment they no longer needed.

So far, the response has been overwhelming. "I posted 'Climbers Need your Help' on rockclimbing.com and not five minutes later I got a hit back from a guy wanting to donate some of his own holds. I was in shock!" Collins estimates that climbers have donated over \$1000 in gear, magazines, movies, and holds. Metolius has agreed to sell Collins gear at wholesale prices. Several other companies have provided special rates for people in the armed services on their websites.

Weeks later, Collins completed the wall. "The other marines were so excited," he says. "Every day I see a couple guys out there working through the problems. They are starting to understand that getting to the top is not the only goal. The wall has been very important to the marines here. It allows us to step away from this sandbox, even just for a minute."

If you would like to donate holds, shoes, or other equipment to the marines of "C" Company, please contact Andrea Sutherland at andrea@climbingwallindustry.org.

What Happens After you Learn to Tie the Knot?

I just read an article in dailycamera.com/news (Scripps Newspaper - online) about the effect of rock climbing becoming so popular. The article mentions that volunteers packed out 900 pounds of abandoned rope, toilet paper, wrappings and all sorts of garbage from the base of El Cap in Yosemite. The finger is being pointed at the growing popularity of rock climbing, which is "a fad fueled by the proliferation of urban climb gyms," according to the article. Ouch! Am I part of a growing fad?

After twenty years in the business I do hope it is more than that. I do agree with some of the concerns about newbies going out into the wilderness with their iPods, boom boxes, trampling the vegetation and leaving junk around the base of crags. I have seen it many times. There is a growing lack of outdoor ethics and outright bad manners. I don't believe it is all to be blamed on the growing popularity of rock climbing and climbing gyms.

I was trying to have a pleasant afternoon in a canoe on Cooper Lake in the Cascades a few years ago and had to listen to a jerk's boom box blasting across the lake. You see this lack of manners and ethics in all areas of outdoor activity. What is unfortunate is that places like Yosemite, one of our national treasures, is being affected by this problem, and on top of that it happens to involve rock climbers. I believe there are things that our industry can do in terms of education, and promoting sound outdoor ethics. I am going to put this issue on the front burner in my business. There are some great resources that can help, such as the Access Fund and Leave No Trace. These are great organizations that promote wilderness ethics. Get involved and help out.

Hip with the Times: CWA enters the world of Blogging

Well loyal readers of this newsletter, in an effort to address the issues facing the climbing community, the CWA has set up a blog on its website for members, non-members, and anyone with an interest in climbing.

Rich Johnston, owner of Vertical World and Board Chair of the CWA, will post a discussion point bi-weekly and readers are free to comment and debate as they please. Past topics include "The Heritage of Climbing" and "BH: Before Handholds." Forums for bloggers to post their own discussion topics will be available in the near future. Check out the blog at: climbingwallindustry.org/wordpress.

Member Profile - Nicros, Inc.

For the past 15 years, Nicros, Inc. has been providing quality - quality holds, quality walls, and quality customer service. The vision of the climbing wall manufacturer began with President Nate Postma in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Since the company's official inception in 1992, Postma and the Nicros team have worked hard to provide their customers with the products they need.

In addition to wall installation and handholds, Nicros provides its customers with an Auto-Belay Safety System and comprehensive training programs for wall operators. This year, Nicros just unveiled their two new climbing wall systems: the GymWall™ and the NicrosliteHandSculpted™. Their 2009 handhold and training product list will also be available later this year.

Nicros also adheres to environmentally friendly building guidelines. Nicros builders bring post-consumed material to job-sites for reuse and 65% of its steel is recycled. The company also offers 100% recycled "poured in place" and loose landing surfaces and utilizes a near zero-waste policy in the manufacturing of handholds.

Fans of Nicros walls are numerous. Something they may not know though is the name Nicros is a contraction of Nate's first name and the first handholds he produced, "Micros." Nate's Micros evolved to Nicros and the company has continued to flourish with no end in sight.

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Special Offer: Treadwall PE 6x11

This year Brewer's Ledge, Inc. will be featuring their Treadwall PE 6x11 at the 2008 Climbing Wall Summit. The company will be selling this wall after the summit for a special discounted price.

For a little over a year, the wall was used at a youth activity area that recently went out of business. The treadwall still has a 10-year structural warranty from the original date of purchase (Nov. 2006).

This latest style Treadwall is white with charcoal panels and would be an excellent addition to any climbing gym. If you are interested, please contact:

Conant Brewer
Brewer's Ledge, Inc.
617-983-5244 x12
sales@treadwall.com

Our Price: \$7,500.00 fob Boulder, CO
List Price: \$9,950.00 fob Boston, MA

Reader Poll

2009 Climbing Wall Summit

Where would you like to see next year's conference take place?

Send your responses to polls@climbingwallindustry.org

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.