

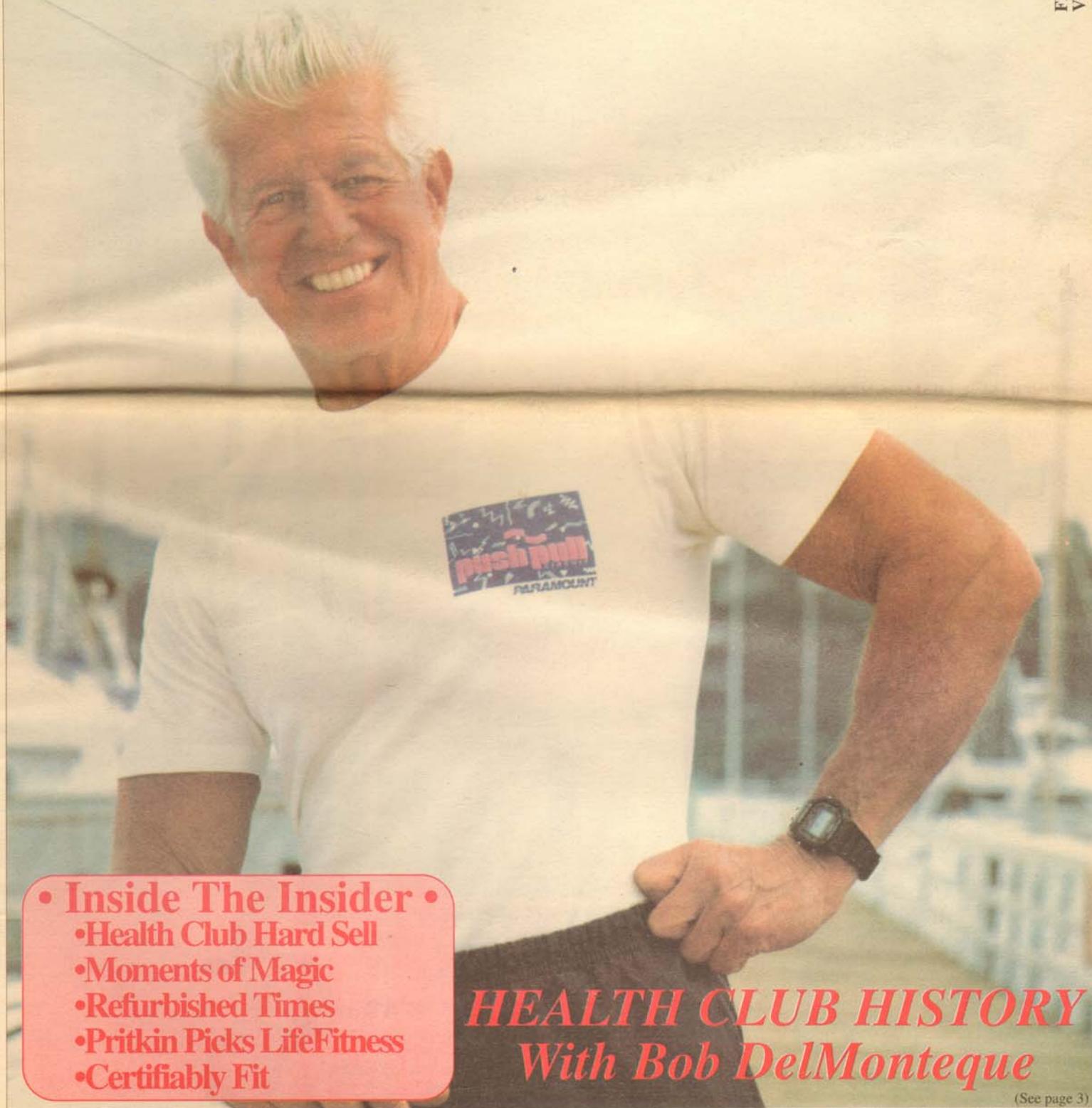
Norm Cates

THE Club Insider[®]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

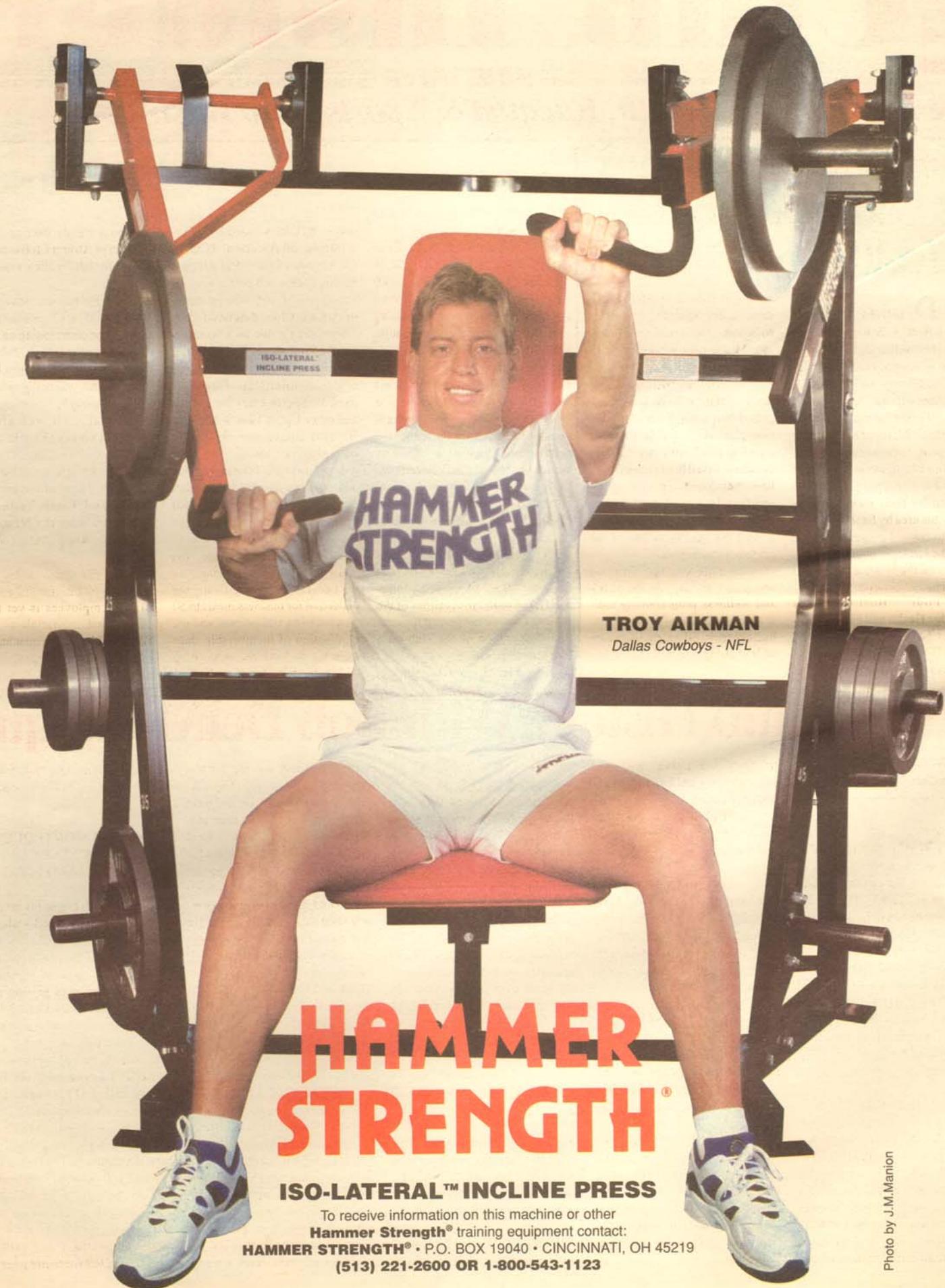
FEBRUARY 1996
VOLUME III NUMBER 2



- Inside The Insider •
- Health Club Hard Sell
- Moments of Magic
- Refurbished Times
- Pritkin Picks LifeFitness
- Certifiably Fit

HEALTH CLUB HISTORY
With Bob DelMonteque

(See page 3)



A color photograph of Troy Aikman, a Dallas Cowboys NFL quarterback, sitting on a red and black Hammer Strength Iso-Lateral Incline Press machine. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt with "HAMMER STRENGTH" printed on it and light blue shorts. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The machine has large black weight plates and a red frame. The text "ISO-LATERAL INCLINE PRESS" is visible on the machine's frame. The background is a plain, light-colored studio backdrop.

TROY AIKMAN
Dallas Cowboys - NFL

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Photo by J.M. Marion

THE Club Insider[©]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

Montsanto Company Broadens Focus On Health And Fitness

Deerfield, Ill. - Feb. 13, 1996 - Nicki L. Schuh, the President of The WellBridge Company Division, announced today that additional WellBridge Health and Fitness Centers will not be developed or acquired in the future. Schuh explained that, "Monsanto, a Fortune 100 company, remains committed to developing a business in the area of health and wellness programming as evidenced by their recent investments in this area by Searle, another Monsanto owned company. This shift in the strategic plan will focus on efforts on the broader health and wellness business opportunities."

Four Boston area WellBridge Health and Fitness Centers, as well as the joint venture with the Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, will continue to operate under the super-

vision of former IHRSA President, Larry Krieger. According to Schuh, "these businesses have met Monsanto's strategic and financial expectations."

The WellBridge Company initiative have been integrated into a much broader business plan which will be focusing on integrated health care delivery systems. WellBridge will continue their focus on providing scientifically based health and wellness programs to positively impact the quality of life of the customers/members.

This strategic shift by Monsanto, to focus on the health and wellness programming side, is a thrust chosen after Monsanto had experienced nearly five years of WellBridge operations.

New York's Atrium Club Closes

New York, N.Y. - The Atrium Club opened on 57th St. in New York in 1975. The swank club was well received in the area with its luxurious social club, a dining room and a top-flight gymnasium. But, the club came on hard times and was closed without notice on February 1, 1996. Locals wondered why it took so long to close and wondered even more about why it was closed with no notice to the members or employees. Security guards barring the 8th floor entrance to the club and a "Dear Member" letter were the only signs of the club closing for the numerous members and employees that arrived on a cold winter morning. The letter taped to the marble Atrium Club walls read in part: "Dear Member, Unfortunately, the economic realities of the Atrium Club do not permit the continued operation of the club on a free-standing basis."

The Atrium Club stock is

owned by Dallas-based Club Corporation of America, (CCA). CCA is one of the world's largest health, fitness and golf operators, but James Maser, vice president of Atrium Club, described Club Corporation's role as a "consultant." Maser also blamed the closing of the club on increasing upscale competition from the Reebok Sports Club New York and other Upper East Side clubs. He also linked the closing to changing tax laws. The club charged up to \$1,000 initiation fee and monthly dues of \$110. But, according to Maser, "It closed because the economics of the business would not allow it to continue." Specific reference was made by Maser about changes in the Federal tax laws reducing the deduction for business meals to 50 percent from 100 percent and the elimination of membership dues from tax deductions. According to Maser, those tax law changes

caused a steady decline in the number of Atrium Club members using the club for client entertainment.

However, Joseph F. Blumenthal, a 12 year member, blamed the club closing on years of poor management. "All the members I knew left when it was clear the club was being managed very poorly", commented Rosenthal. "It was always treated as a black sheep in a very large family," he added. The club had been for sale since November, 1995. Negotiations between the landlord, Laszlo Tauber and Associates with the New York Health and Racquet Club are under way.

The status of the estimated 1,500 members and 55 Atrium employees is yet to be determined. Officials at New York Health and Racquet had not returned calls by press time.

Health Club History With Bob DelMonteque

By Norm Cates, Jr.

primary objective was the strengthening and building of abdominal muscles.

DelMonteque describes some of the first gym/health clubs in America:

STILLMAN GYM - 8th Ave. and 42nd St. - New York, N.Y. Early 1900's. Primarily for boxers, wrestlers and "strongmen" training in Vaudeville acts. No body building was present at this point in time.

GEORGE BOTHNER'S GYM - 42nd St., - New York, N.Y. Early 1930's. "Medicine Balls", workout tables, and "Indian Clubs" which looked like small bowling pins were popular.

TERRY HUNT'S GYM - 32nd St. - New York, N.Y. Mid 1930's. One of the first to offer the "black-iron", i.e. weights and dumbbells. Terry Hunt is now in his mid-80's and still works at the Centurion Club in Century City, California.

SIG KLEIN'S GYM - 7th Ave. and 49th St., New York, N.Y. It was the first "modern gym" of its kind, opening in 1935 with mirrors and even had red carpeting. DelMonteque recalls, "Sig made you remove your shoes before coming into the gym. He was big on keeping it clean. He was one of the strongest men of his era. He was continuously smoking a cigar and often drank beer while working in the gym. His gym was the first in history to offer "black iron." His gym was truly "state-of-the-art" for its time. Sig lived to be 91.

FRED YOUNG'S HEALTH SYSTEM - Opened in 1945. There were 22 locations in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Denver. His facilities were upscale executive clubs which offered a swimming pool, steam room, sauna and massage.

BERT GOODRICH'S GYM - Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Ca.

- 1950's. Burt was the 1st Mr. America and a world class athlete. Bert once took on the great Olympian, Jim Thorpe, in an athletic contest and won. Bert worked out with 220 pound's for curls. A natural athlete, he developed an amazing hand balancing act and later he became a cowboy stunt man in Hollywood. He was one of the early developers of health club sales technology employing the principals of "Think and Grow Rich." He sold his gym to Ray Wilson in 1955. A good friend of Bob DelMonteque and Ray Wilson, Bert passed away in 1991.

MCLEEVY'S SALONS - 100 locations nationwide for women. These facilities offered the "pony barrel rollers", upright rollers, vibrating belts and Schwinn bikes which were real popular with the women of the era. However, McLeevy was put out of business after ten years by the government because he could not prove that there was any

health benefit to these "roller racks" or the vibrating belt systems.

BOB DELMONTEQUE'S EARLY START IN STRENGTH AND FITNESS

Bob began his involvement in training at age 13 when he ordered the famous Charles Atlas mail order system. He explains, "I wasn't your typical 98-pound weakling who was getting sand kicked in his face..... instead, I was a young Texas boy who wanted to be an excellent high school athlete..... so I ordered the system for \$19.95. I began with the basic course called DYNAMIC TENSION which provided 12 charts depicting the various exercises including "pulling towels" and dips between chairs. In 1933 when I had reached 160 pounds, I ordered the 310-pound weight set which included such accessories as a handgripper, neck strap, iron boots, dumbbells, nutrition and exercise (See DelMonteque page 30)

EARLY HEALTH CLUBS

In the early 1900's, the first U.S. gym/health clubs began to appear. These facilities were not for the average person, but instead, for the boxers, wrestlers and "strongmen" of the era. They all had boxing/wrestling rings and exercise tables staffed with trainers whose

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

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March 20-23, 1996, nearly 10,000 health, racquet and sportsclub professionals from all over the globe will convene at the 15th Annual IHRSA Convention and Trade Show in San Diego. This event has become the #1 educational and buying gathering in the United States and provides a terrific opportunity to learn a lot

about the business you are in and meet new industry friends.

The **CLUB INSIDER** Advertisers listed below are exhibiting products at the IHRSA Trade Show. Their exhibit numbers are listed as well. Clip or Copy this list and take it with you when you go to San Diego. Your club does NOT have to be an IHRSA member for you to attend the Trade Show as a buyer. But, if your club is not an IHRSA member, you are missing a great opportunity to improve your club's financial picture, i.e. "the bottom line."

To join IHRSA and/or to register for the March 20-23rd IHRSA Convention and Trade Show, call: (800) 228-4772. And, no matter if you go to IHRSA San Diego or not, PLEASE CONTACT OUR ADVERTISERS! WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU APPRECIATE THEIR SPONSORSHIP OF THE **CLUB INSIDER** News!

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Norm Cates' **Club Insider** NEWS

Mr. Larry Krieger
WellBridge Health and Fitness
Newton, Ma. 02159

February 6, 1996

Dear Larry,

I received your letter dated January 23, 1996. First, thank you for your praise relative to The **CLUB INSIDER** News! And, thank you for your "constructive" criticism. Feedback, both positive and negative helps The **CLUB INSIDER** News to "sell it like it is!"

In respect to my taking the credit for the reversal of the IRSAs Board's decision to change the name of IRSAs to Exercere, I apologize to you and anyone else that might have interpreted my writings that way. However, I think you must have missed the June, 1994 edition of The **CLUB INSIDER** News. On page #1 of that edition I stated: "IRSAs President, Larry Krieger and the IRSAs Board of Directors are to be CONGRATULATED for taking a difficult situation and making the most of it!"

I have no doubt that you and IRSAs Executive Director John McCarthy met on January 7, 1994 to discuss member objections to the new name EXERCERE. However, my recollection is that you did not divulge that information to me or anyone else until after my January, 1994 edition publicizing the objections was mailed in late January, 1994.

For the record The **CLUB INSIDER** News January, 1994 edition was the first time any objections to the name change to Exercere were made known to all members. You may recall mailing, five separate letters to the membership during your campaign and Brian McBain's article about the name which was published in CBI. The opposition's position was not mentioned even once.

Larry, as I said in my June, 1994 edition, you, John McCarthy and the IRSAs Board were "Good Guys" in this situation because of how you handled the member objections and came to a "very good decision" at the end. But, in my opinion, the truly "Good Guys" were the IRSAs members like Cecil Spearman, Alan Schwartz and Tom Lyneis and many others who spoke out against Exercere long before you announced the Open Forum to hear member feelings about this "done deal."

In respect to your opinion that the IHRSA Board has made a bad move by Amending the IHRSA By-Laws to prohibit any 501 (c) 3 organizations from membership.....I will look forward to reading and publishing your writings about that issue.

Best regards, *Norm Cates, Jr.*

The WellBridge Center

135 Wells Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts 02159
617.244.7882
617.244.7739 FAX



January 23, 1996

Norm Cates
The Club Insider
PO Box 671443
Marietta, GA 30067-0025

Dear Norm:

Congratulations on a great two years. It is always difficult to find the right niche to fill as journalist but you hit the nail on the head. I always enjoy reading The Club Insider and feel that you have provided all of us in the industry with vital information.

As someone who has both been vilified and praised by your paper I feel that a little constructive criticism is in order. I specifically refer to The Club Insider taking credit for convincing the Board to hold off ratifying the name change until after the first ever open forum at the IHRSA Convention in March of 1994. First of all the name change did not need to be ratified, the membership voted on the name change and it was a fait accompli and/or done deal. On January 7, 1994, I had a meeting with John McCarthy and we decided to have an open forum for the membership in order to hear one more time from the members on the very volatile issue of the name change. Let me remind you once again that at that point in time the name change was a done deal and only the Board could change that decision. The reason John and I decided on the forum was because we were concerned about the fax to the IHRSA office, to my office, as well as a great deal of phone calls. In spite of the fact that the name change was passed in accordance with the associations bylaws as well as the vote of the membership the Board was concerned with the future of the organization and thought it wise to discuss the matter further. Norm, 100% of your rhetoric concerning the name change was after January 7, 1994. The redirection of the name change was already in motion. I am glad to let you take all the credit you deserve for telling it like it is and influencing others but in this instance the credit belongs to John McCarthy and the Board of Directors of IHRSA.

I remain a loyal reader.

Larry Krieger
Larry Krieger
Former IHRSA President

P.S. I have just volunteered my services to the European Community to help them come up with a name for their new currency. Perhaps EXER-Euro or Euro-Sarah might work.

•NORM'S NOTES•

NEW FRONT PAGE

FORMAT - Beginning this month, we have added a new color photo for our front page and have made the inside front page available for four color advertising. Notice the terrific condition of **SUPER SENIOR - BOB DELMONTEQUE**, age 75! If you are looking for ways to increase your club's annual revenues, consider educating yourself in all aspects of programming for seniors. The perfect opportunity comes March 8-10th at **John Rude and Associate's** seminar: **Mind • BODY • Spirit: Tapping the Potential of the 50+ market.** To register call: (800) 929-2719. The seminar will be conducted at **JOE CIRULLI'S** brand new 50,000 square-foot facility, **The Gainesville Health and Fitness Center** in Gainesville, Fla. You can

bring your family and let them go to Disney World while you attend the seminar.

DICK TRANT is the owner of the **WESTON RACQUET CLUB** in Waltham, Ma. and after being in business for 30 years has emerged as one of the great industry leaders and knowledgeable club operators in America. He is the **MASTER OF MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**. Trant charges \$175 per month dues and his operation is one of the most classy and unique clubs you will find anywhere. Dick was one of the Founding members of IHRSA and years ago, at an IRS Convention in New Orleans, Dick dressed up in a Wolf's Suit and walked around the convention warning the "For-Profit" IRS Members about the risks of the

"Not-For-Profit" sector and urging them to organize in opposition. The FUND is now the internal IHRSA organization which has dedicated resources to the opposition of "non-profits" and governmental problems with clubs. Tragedy struck our good friend Dick on Super Bowl Sunday as he was driving to the grocery in a Boston suburb. Traveling alone, he hit a patch of ice, lost control of his car and the resulting crash caused numerous injuries including: broken ribs, 2 broken vertebrae, 2 broken shoulders, broken hip and a broken pelvis. Dick had surgery on Wednesday, January 31st to begin the long path to recovery. Please take a moment and send a letter or get well card to this great club industry icon at the following address: Mr. Dick Trant,



Norm Cates, Jr.

Youville Hospital, West 2 - Room 222, Cambridge, MA 02138. It is estimated that he will remain in the hospital for two or more months during his recovery, so he will have plenty of time to read his mail from us. Those of us who know Dick Trant love him and wish him the best of luck and good fortune as he recovers.

the non-profit sector than to fight them. Healthy Harford, Inc. and what they are doing is living proof that it can be done. It just takes leadership! Congratulations to Roger and Lyle and the rest of the group for your success.

ED WILLIAMS of Denver-based **CLUB SPORTS INTERNATIONAL** informs me that CSI has recently acquired the

40,000 square-foot **Aurora Athletic Club** in Aurora, Colorado. That brings to 38 the number of clubs that **TOM LYNEIS**, **ED WILLIAMS** and **BUD ROCKHILL** of CSI own and/or manage. Ed and his partners at CSI have indicated that they plan to acquire two or three additional clubs by mid-1996. If you want to reach Ed, who is in charge of acquisitions for CSI, call: (303) 866-0800. CSI has just completed the remodeling of the 40,000 square-foot **HONOLULU ATHLETIC CLUB** in Honolulu, Hawaii. (See *Norm's Notes* page 31)

ROGER RALPH, the Founder and President of the **BEL AIR ATHLETIC CLUB**, Bel Air, Maryland and **LYLE E. SHELDON**, the President/CEO of **UPPER CHESAPEAKE HEALTH SYSTEM** have teamed up to lead a coalition of community-minded groups to form **HEALTHY HARFORD, INC.** Check out the article entitled "RECYCLE YOUR CYCLE" in this edition. About one and a half year ago Roger wrote a two part article for **The CLUB INSIDER** News explaining his view that it was better to work with and co-operate with

January 2, 1996

Mr. Norm Cates
The Club Insider
P.O. Box 671443
Marietta, GA 30067

Dear Norm:

For some time, I have read with great interest your frequent reports of CEO Mike Lucci's attempts to clean up Bally's act with regard to its sales practices. From where I sit in Massachusetts, there continues to be evidence of the contrary.

Last spring, I testified before our state legislature's Joint Committee on Commerce and Labor in favor of House Bill no. 498. This health club consumer protection bill was sponsored by the New England Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, IHRSA's regional affiliate. If enacted, the bill would make illegal numerous anti-consumer sales practices which have damaged the reputation of our industry. The IHRSA clubs in Massachusetts have overwhelmingly supported the consumer protections contained in the bill, with minimal concern for the impact it might have on the way our clubs operate.

Testifying along with me at that same Commerce and Labor Committee hearing, but in opposition to House Bill no. 498, was a gentleman who identified himself as an attorney representing Bally.

Recently, as you reported, Bally agreed to pay a \$300,000 fine and make restitution to hundreds of consumers as an out-of-court settlement of a suit brought by the Massachusetts Attorney General for Bally's alleged violation of a consent decree entered into as a result of its sales practices. Bally, I suspect, will contend that this settlement represents payment for its past sins and is not indicative of the way it currently operates. However, If I am to accept that the above characterizes the old Bally, please explain their more recent opposition to the health club consumer protection bill which is now jointly sponsored by NEHSA and the state Attorney General's Office (see the attached editorial).

Perhaps, your publication of this letter might serve as an open invitation for Mr. Lucci's organization in Massachusetts to jump on the consumer protection bandwagon, thereby providing substance to his supposed attempts to, as you put it, set Bally "on the right path".

Very truly yours,
[Signature]

Robert M. Schwartz
Senior Vice President &
Chief Financial Officer

and Legislative Chairperson
New England Health, Racquet and
Sportsclub Association

Norm Cates' **Club Insider** NEWS

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MICROFIT'S HEALTHCARE CONNECTION

Establishing Confidence In Our Healthcare Partners

By Neil Sol, Ph.D.

Establishing confidence with both the health care provider and the end user subscriber should be a key consideration for health clubs. Timing could not be better for establishing a relationship with a healthcare provider. However, regardless of the current paradigm shift to prevention and the club's obvious role as key source of preventive services, clubs may have to overcome a less than positive image with healthcare providers. This image has been handed down from times when health clubs fo-

cused on selling of lifetime memberships instead of providing great service and results.

One very important way to express the club's interest in providing professional, safe and healthcare accepted preventive services is for the club to employ certified professional staff. Healthcare providers, institutionally, are comprised of licensed professionals and as such, the healthcare provider, in an attempt to ensure quality, would require similarly credentialed professionals to be employed by their preventive partners. In as much as the health and fitness professional does not offer licensure, professional peer accepted certification

would be viewed positively by health care providers.

Clubs should consider only hiring certified professionals. Not only to instill confidence in potential healthcare partners, but because research has shown that the vast majority of potential club members are also interested in club staff possessing professional certification.

Numerous acceptable national certifications are available to club staff. These certifications document that a staff person has the base level of knowledge recognized as appropriate for the delivery of health and fitness (preventive) services. Certification does not replace academic preparation, but actually complements it, by standardizing the variation of thought taught at different academic institutions. In other words, one can be sure that all Aerobic and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) certified professionals have a similar knowledge base at a similar level of certification, regardless of where they obtained their degree.

National groups such as: American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM); American Council on Exercise (ACE); National Association of Sports Medicine (NASM); National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA); AFAA and others offer quality certification that would help a potential health care partner feel a sense of confidence in the services rendered by those club professionals.

It is these certifications that may serve as the criterion for health insurance companies to reimburse the cost of preventive procedures in that they would believe that the services provided by a certified professional is quality and will result in a positive cost effective outcome.

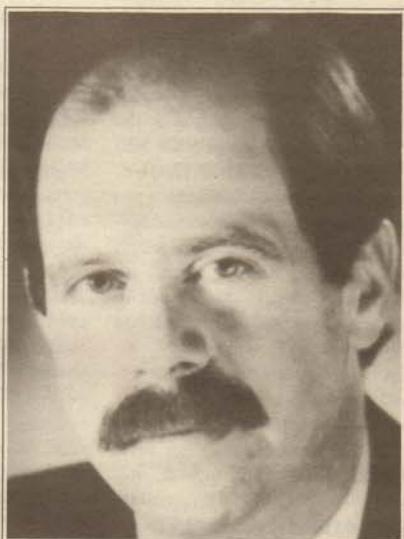
Additionally, the future suggests that networks (directories) of preventive health providers, not unlike the networks of clinical providers (MD's)

that currently exist, will be developed by health insurance companies and made available and endorsed to their subscribers, encouraging subscribers to obtain preventive services from a listed network provider.

It may very well be that to be included in the directory, a provider will have to be certified by one of the above national groups.

These preventive network directories will list providers by their certification title as that would identify their service expertise ranging from personal training, to weight control and overall life enhancement.

Only in recent years has the certification focus shifted from very specific ability such as aerobic instruction, to a more general universal view of overall preventive health leadership. Good evidence of this shift is the new AFAA



Neil Sol, Ph. D.

Fitness Practitioner Certification.

Suffice it to say that when third-party payors (health insurance companies and/or the government) begin to regularly reimburse preventive services, the insurance companies will dictate the credentials required of the provider employee. It is, therefore, prudent to hire only certified professionals who will offer confidence and credibility and be attractive to future health care partners.

(Neil Sol is the General Manager of the Cherry Creek Sporting Club in Denver, Colorado and the President of Health Vantage, Inc., a club consulting firm. Neil is one of the industry's leading experts in the field of healthcare as it relates to clubs. He may be contacted at: (303) 399-3050 or Fax #: (303) 388-7923.)

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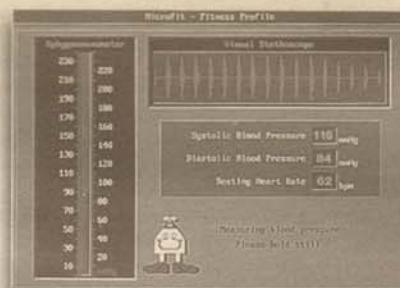
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MICROFITTM

MOMENTS OF MAGIC

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

Differentiation is the key to survival and success in any business. There are three key fronts on which you can fight the differentiation battle: Price, quality and service. Your ability to compete on price is limited. You can cut your margins just so far without jeopardizing your operation. It's difficult to compete on quality, too. Modern technology has caused most products to become commodities; hence, there is often little difference between Brand A and Brand B. Service is, therefore, the best strategy for competing in the marketplace. Being on par in terms of price and quality only gets you into the game. Service wins the game.

MOMENTS OF MISERY

In 1981, Jan Carlzon took over as chairman of one of Europe's most poorly rated airlines, Scandinavian Airline Systems (SAS). Carlzon quickly implemented many changes, the most important of which was to manage the interactions that SAS employees had with its customers.

In 1987, Carlzon wrote a book entitled, *Moments of Truth*, in which he said, "Last year, each of our 10 million customers came in contact with approximately five SAS employees, and this contact lasted an average of 15 seconds each time. Thus, SAS is 'created' in the minds of our customers 50 million times a year, 15 seconds at a time. These 50 million 'moments of truth' are the moments that ultimately determine whether SAS will succeed or fail as a company."

Carlzon hit upon a concept

that is simple, yet profound. Every single contact between any employee and a customer is an important contact, regardless of its length or content. The term "Moment of Truth" describes a contact that is neutral in nature.

As we all know, however, there are other kinds of interactions between employees and customers. "Moments of misery" describe interactions that have negative outcomes. A "Moment of Magic" is an interaction that exceeds the expectations of your customer and leaves him/her with a positive impression.

Moments of misery are a fact of life because people and companies are not perfect. Mistakes happen, which is unfortunate, because research has shown that customers tell an average of 20 people about moments of misery; but they tell only ten people about moments of magic. To break even, therefore, you have to create twice as many moments of magic. Of course, the point is not to stay even, it is to stay ahead by managing interactions and making them moments of magic.

How are moments of magic consistently achieved? The bottom-line answer is that a company has to be customer-driven versus operations-driven, where it puts the needs of its customers first. An operations-driven company puts its needs, policies and procedures first. A customer-driven company may bend its own rules to please its customers. An operations-driven company uses its policy manual as its Bible and will, if necessary, disappoint customers by invoking the most ignorant excuse on the face of the earth:

"I'm sorry, it's against company policy."

HOW TO BECOME CUSTOMER-DRIVEN

Since the middle of the 1980's, a lot of companies have talked about becoming customer-driven. Everyone aspires to becoming the next Nordstrom, Federal Express or L.L. Bean. The transformation has worked for some, but for others it has been only talk. Talking the talk does not transform a company. Real change takes a concerted effort that requires Commitment, Communication and a system for Conflict Resolution.

THE FOUNDATION: COMMITMENT

Without commitment, customer driven service will be just another flavor-of-the-month training that will sharpen the skeptics' barbs. Customer-driven service requires a 100 per cent commitment throughout the organization, starting with the CEO. This top-down company strategy must include people who interact with customers, and employees who serve in support positions. The reason is simple: customers must be defined broadly, and that definition must include "internal customers." Interactions between departments are analogous to interactions with external customers - they are subject to moments of magic and moments of misery.

The commitment to customer-driven service requires four very important steps:

1. Set clear objectives and service standards. High quality service must be defined so employees know what it looks like and how to provide it.

2. Train well. The commitment must include the time, money and effort necessary to train employees properly. When service expectations are raised, employees must be given whatever skills needed to meet or exceed those expectations.

3. Monitor and measure service. Service has to be made concrete so that it can be monitored, measured, and made a part of everyone's performance review. In general, there are three ways to monitor service: 1) Ask customers for feedback. 2) The observations of management; and 3) The use of "mystery shoppers" who pose as customers and rate service on many dimensions.

4. Reward or retrain. People who excel at providing excellent service should be rewarded;

those who need help should be coached or re-trained. Your goal is to empower people to be creative, resourceful and autonomous in their jobs. If they are punished for mistakes, they will become defensive and stop thinking creatively. The better approach is to coach, retrain and show them better alternative solutions.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Dr. Tony Alessandra

One of the goals of customer-driven service is to change the service provider's focus from individual transactions to long-term relationships. Effective communication is the key to building and maintaining long-term relationships and can be looked at from two perspectives: the macro and the micro. The macro level is the communication strategies used to stay in touch with customers. The micro level is the communication skills used when interacting with customers.

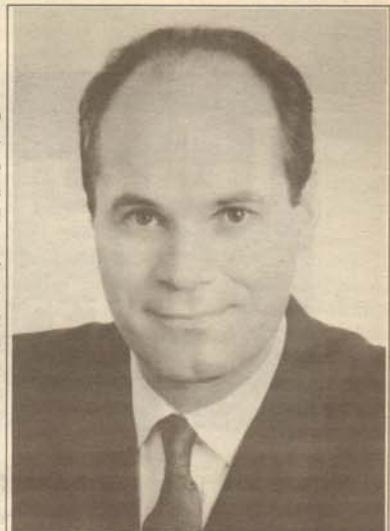
Customer-driven companies encourage communication in which customers feel comfortable giving feedback on how well the company is doing its job. This feedback should be solicited on a regular basis.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEM

The third major building block of customer-driven service is a system for turning moments of misery into moments of magic. We have already conceded that moments of misery are bound to happen. Every company must, therefore, have a set of guidelines that helps employees "right the wrong." Customers do not expect companies to be perfect. They do, however, expect imperfections to be corrected quickly, painlessly and fairly.

Every moment of misery is different, but there are some general guidelines that will give you insight into turning them around. When a problem occurs, listen actively, ask questions and mentally trade places with your customer. Then, determine the severity of the problem and a fair solution. Incorporate the following steps into your conflict resolution system:

1. Handle the person first, then the problem. Let angry people vent their frustrations by listening to them before trying to



solve their problem. This alone will go a long way toward resolving the problem.

2. Apologize. Offer a sincere, personal apology that shows that you are committed to the relationship.

3. Show empathy. Validate customers' emotions by letting them know that you would feel the same way if their problem happened to you.

4. Find a solution. Resolve the problem with your customers, not for them. Ask questions that get them involved in the solution process.

5. Offer compensation. If the moment of misery was severe enough, you need to say and show that you are sorry. Compensation should be immediate (no time-delays) meaningful (high perceived value), and consumable (something that can be used or eaten soon so that the incident is forgotten).

6. Follow up. After resolving a problem, you must follow up to make sure everything is satisfactory from the customer's perspective.

Meeting standards of excellence in business has always been important, but in today's increasingly competitive marketplace, it is absolutely essential for your company's survival and success. To meet those standards of excellence, your company and every one of its representatives in every one of its departments must have a *customer-driven* orientation and provide consistent moments of magic.

(Dr. Tony Alessandra, CSP, CPAE has been recognized by *Meetings and Conventions Magazine* as "one of America's most electrifying speakers." Tony can help your organization improve sales, communication and customer service. To receive more information and a free video demo, contact Holli Catchpole at (800) 222-4383.)

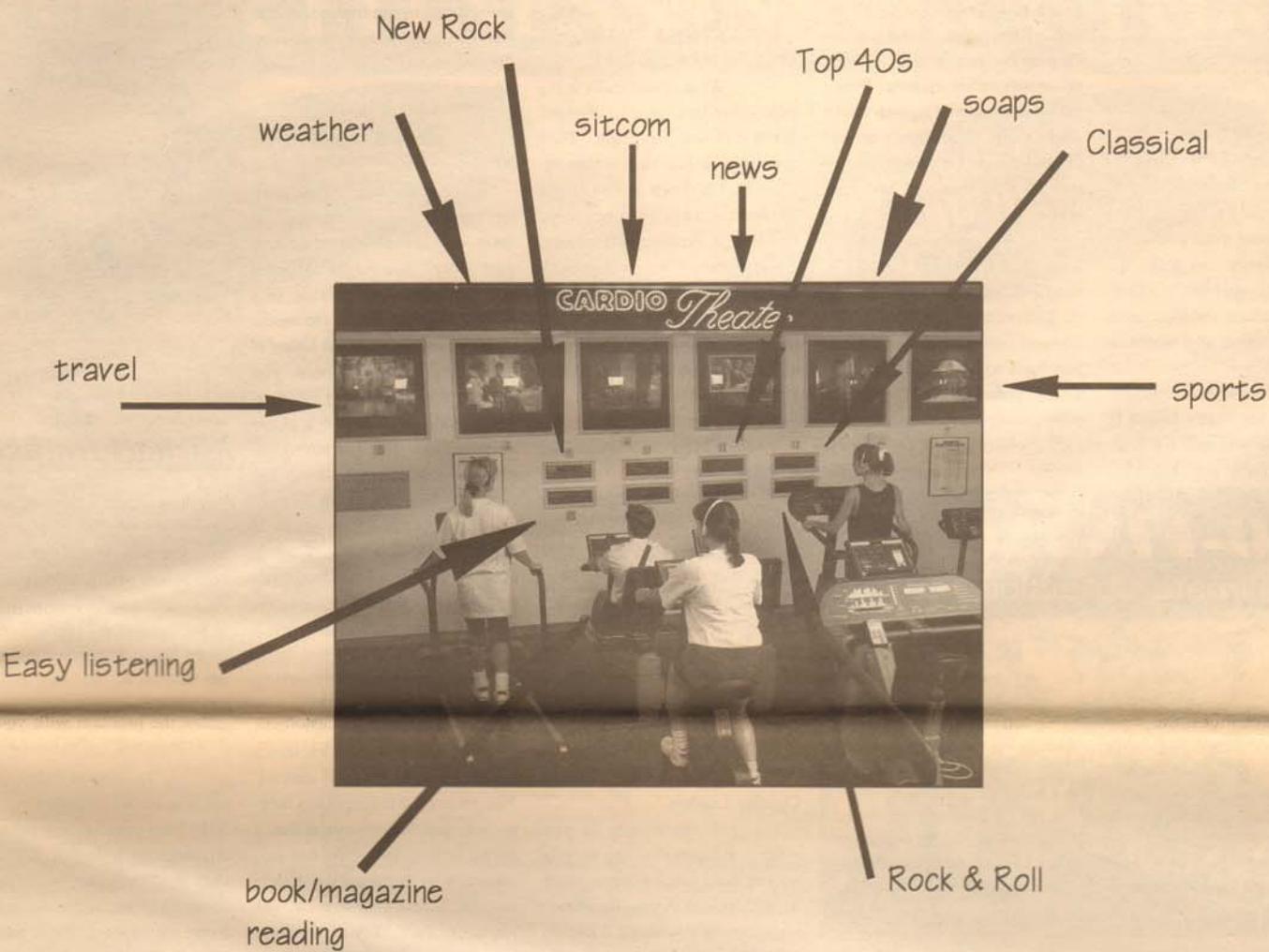
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PR 101 - THE CHALLENGE MATRIX

A Secret Weapon For Reputation Management

By Michael Hoffman,
Heart Communications

Here's a PR secret for you. It's the A#1 most potent way to make impactful PR moves and to be absolutely sure your press coverage accomplishes your goals. It's called the Challenge Matrix - a fool-proof way to create the awareness and club reputation you want. It works like this.

At some point in time, and hopefully not too many points in time, your club will face the challenge of changing a "less than best"

image to a "good as can be" image. Reputation problems can crop up innocently, such as when an unreasonable member files a business complaint against you or when a city street repair project closes your parking lot access for much longer than you had been told.

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Step 1 - Writing the Challenge Problem.

What, specifically is the perception you want to change? Write it in one paragraph. Then rewrite it in just two sentences. Then boil it down to one single sentence. This becomes your Challenge Problem statement. The purpose of the writing exercise is to get rid of corollary issues and get to the heart of the problem. Without focus, you can't pinpoint your subsequent actions.

Step 2 - Writing the challenge goal.

What exactly do you want public perception to become? Again, write out a paragraph, then two sentences, then one single, potent statement of exactly what you want people to think and say about you. Imagine you could put words in their mouths regarding the problem you are trying to change.

Step 3 - Targeting the Opinion Leaders.

Whose minds do you want to influence? Who exactly do you need to tell your message to in order to shift your reputation back to what you want? Make an exhaustive list of every possible opinion leader. This means reporters, of course, but also elected community officials, VIP members and Chamber of Commerce members. When you think your list is long enough, make it longer. Then let it sit for a few days and go over it once more. Make sure every name is relevant.

Step 4 - Compiling the Distribution List.

What media will carry your message best? This doesn't mean just radio, TV and newspapers. Think about each opinion leader. What other mediums affect their perceptions? For Chamber of Commerce members it might be their monthly newsletter, or even a luncheon speech you deliver. For your VIP members, it could be a personal letter. You need special weapons here, since there is no guarantee that your opinion leaders will read or hear

news items in the traditional media. The more resourceful you are, the more powerful your Challenge program.

Step 5 - Selecting the News Formats.

Now decide what written, taped or live presentation formats you should use to deliver your story. You might choose a standard prose news release, or a briefer outline format - the media alert - if you're in a time bind. If your story is highly visual, you might complement your news release or media alert with a photo news release. This is a strong action photo, with an extra-long caption. Papers love them as eye-catchers for section front pages. If you think TV or radio coverage is essential for impact, produce quality tapes or pitch the stations on taping your story themselves.

Step 6 - Delivering Your Message.

Always, always, always hand-deliver your news items when the story topic is crucial. You get to meet the reporters face-to-face, and this always makes a strong impression. You can emphasize how important the story is to you when you are on the journalist's turf. You can also extend a personal invitation to them to visit your club to see the news for themselves.

Step 7 - Following Up.

When you are delivering your news, ask the reporters for their policy on follow-up calls to check on when a story will be covered. Some do not mind, but some absolutely hate it. You should always ask, in order to monitor the results of your efforts and to get to know more about the individual reporters themselves. Just be sure not to push too hard. Journalists do not like to be told what to do; they prefer to rely on their own news judgment.

Step 8 - Evaluating Your Campaign.

How do you know if your Challenge campaign is effective? You can measure the straight advertising equivalency of your press clips and tapes, but this only tells



Michael Hoffman

you how much attention you received, not whether your story was told the way you want it. You should add content analysis, too. Read each clip and view or listen to your broadcast tapes and write down the message as the journalists offered it. Did they tell your story in a manner that repairs your reputation?

You should finish up with opinion leader interviewing. Ask VIPs from your list how your news coverage or speeches influenced their opinions. You will find out instantly how effective your Challenge efforts were. Write a careful review of what worked and what didn't to prepare yourself for the next time you need to use the Challenge Matrix.

Is all this too much work? Is it really worth the time? You know the answer already. You cannot just sit by and let the public draw its own conclusions about your club in times of crisis. If you don't jump into the fray and manage your reputation yourself, you take big chances. Remember the Tylenol scare? Johnson and Johnson ran a masterful Challenge Matrix campaign and saved their image with the public. You can too.

(Michael Hoffman is the President of California-based Heart Communications and can be contacted at: (714) 831-7971; Fax: (714) 643-1891; e-mail: heartcomm@aol.com. This is #5 in the PR 101 Education Series from Heart Communications).

REFURBISHED TIMES

You have a big investment in your facility's fitness equipment, managing that investment is very important to your bottom line.

By Steve Paterson

As a club operator you know how much money you put into your fitness equipment. With a little regular attention you can get the most out of your investment. I have been selling pre-owned commercial fitness equipment for over 6 years. And since the beginning I have been shocked at how much new equipment costs and why most clubs don't take care of their fitness equipment.

Not a service technician myself, I have spent hundreds of hours around the best commercial fitness equipment service tech in the business. I have seen over 900 treadmills and more than 5,000 pieces of weight equipment go through a complete refurbishing. This experience has taught me that

commercial fitness equipment is built to be refurbished. That is, to have its worn components replaced with new parts like a race car pulling into the pit stop to have its tires and other parts replaced. The race car is fine, it just needs a little maintenance to keep it going hard. The race car driver doesn't wait for his car to break-down before he pulls into the pit stop. Your fitness equipment should be treated the same way. I also learned that a little preventive maintenance can triple the life of your fitness equipment - and most important, keep your equipment from breaking down. Sharing with you the tips, and techniques that can save your club thousands of dollars in repair costs and prevent equipment "break-downs" is the focus of **REFURBISHED TIMES**.

ADD YEARS TO YOUR TREADMILLS!

Most likely, you already know that you will spend more money on each of your

treadmills than on any other piece of exercise equipment in your facility. So it's smart to give them the most prevention attention! Treadmills need to be cleaned of dirt and debris regularly for them to operate efficiently. Realize this fact.... every member who gets on your treadmills have some dirt and/or pebbles stuck to the bottom of their shoes. When they run or walk on your treadmills this "stuff" will come off their shoes and onto your running belt, where some of it will get under the running belt. This debris acts like sandpaper on your running decks and will "ruff up" the surface. This increases the friction between your belts and decks. From this point on your treadmills will operate "hotter", use more electricity and work harder. **This leads to mechanical failures!**

When broken treadmills are brought into our refurbishing facility they usually have a worn deck and belt. Some decks had grooves in them the size of tennis shoes. Their prob-

lems range from bad lower control boards, upper control boards, fuses or something else electronic that was burned out. Once the friction builds up under the belt it increases the amperage draw which burns out these electronic parts. And, every treadmill I've ever seen with a bad motor had a worn deck and belt. Once the belt and deck are replaced and the bad components

changed, the treadmills run great again. I've seen clubs who keep their treadmills clean of dirt and debris who have experienced flawless operations for 3 years.

The most used method for cleaning out from between your deck and belt is to loosen up the belt. Then take a dry towel and dust out the dirt. Tighten up the belt and you're done. This method works, but it is time consuming. The easiest way is to use Treadmill Saver (800) 505-6691. With a Treadmill Saver, you don't have to loosen the belt. Just push it under the belt from the side and turn the treadmill on. It takes only 30 seconds for each treadmill which means you're more likely to do it everyday like you should.

I can't wait until next month to give you more money saving tips!

(Steve Paterson is the VP of Sales for the pre-owned fitness equipment division of Commercial Fitness Systems West. A division of Healthline, Inc. (800) 325-1968 for a current inventory list.)



Steve Paterson

Recycle Your Cycle Day In Maryland

Bel Air, Maryland - Healthy Harford, Inc., a non-profit corporation initiated by Bel Air Athletic Club and Upper Chesapeake Health System, succeeded in obtaining 190 pieces of used fitness equipment donated for use in middle and high schools on "Recycle Your Cycle Day" in Harford County, Maryland.

Bel Air Athletic Club President, Roger Ralph said Healthy Harford, Inc. is a coalition of tax-paying businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies working cooperatively to help make Harford County the healthiest in the State of Maryland by the year 2000. The president of the local hospital system is the chairman of Healthy Harford, Inc. and its officers include Roger Ralph representing the tax-paying, private sector and senior executives from the YMCA, the YWCA, the county recreation department and the county health department.

Ralph said, "Recycle Your Cycle" day represents an attractive model that can be readily copied by many cities and counties throughout the U.S. Harford County, Maryland's first "Recycle Your Cycle" day was held on a Saturday

morning in October, 1995 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. One high school and three middle school sites were utilized as drop-off locations. Donors were provided with a tax deductible receipt while school system professionals screened the equipment for safe use and the appropriate equipment was subsequently distributed to physical education departments throughout the system. Six high schools and eight middle schools received the equipment. Equipment parts from exercise pieces not suitable for heavy use provided a spare parts inventory.

In addition to "Recycle Your Cycle," Healthy Harford, Inc. has compiled a Fast Food Guide and distributed 50,000 copies to the counties' youth and adults. Harford County Health Offices, Tom Thomas said the Healthy Harford Fast Food Guide has been a tremendously successful project and informing to

the public about nutrition options. The Fast Food Guide - designed to fit in car glove compartments - makes it easy for kids and parents to know that a Big Mac and medium fries has 44 grams of fat and 810 calories vs 25

grams of fat and 520 calories for a cheeseburger and small fries. This is a good public service given the recent increase in the percentage of American children who are overweight. For further information about the Fast Food Guide or

the Recycle Your Cycle Program, contact Carol Rader, Club Administrator, Bel Air Athletic Club, 658 Boulton Street, Bel Air, Maryland, 21014.



Lyle Sheldon, Dr. Ray Keech, Roger Ralph, Sandy Long and Rhonda Ludwig

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PRICING AND INFORMATION

Hoist Fitness And Healthline Sign Agreement

HHealthline - San Diego, Ca. - Hoist Fitness Systems announced today that it had signed a representation agreement with the Healthline Corporation, a California-based nationwide merchandiser line of commercial fitness equipment.

In a separate move, but one linked to Healthline's desires to have a full package of products for club buyers, Healthline has also signed an agreement with SCIFIT Corporation of Richardson, Texas, a manufacturer and seller of cardiovascular exercise equipment including stationary bikes, treadmills and stairclimbing machines.

Healthline will now be representing Hoist Fitness Systems, Scifit and the Centaur Flooring products company, giving them the ability to serve club buyers with

a virtually complete line of products for new clubs or those acquiring additional products. To further facilitate this new arrangement, Hoist and Scifit have selected side by side exhibit spaces at the upcoming IHRSA Trade Show in San Diego, California, on March 21-23, 1996.

This new nationwide thrust with Healthline is further evidence of Hoist Fitness System's move into the commercial equipment sector in a big way. Eight months ago, Hoist hired club veteran, Steve Datté for the position of National Sales Manager. Since that time, sales in the commercial division of Hoist have increased dramatically. And, it is projected that the new arrangement with Healthline will cause additional market gains nationwide for Hoist, Scifit and Centaur.

MAKE IT FUN!

**Seeks
Contributing
Writers**

**Contact:
Norm Cates, Jr.**

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- Adjustable seat for perfect use of various racking points. Optional plate holders. (not shown)



Incline Bench

- 30 degree angle for maximum peck isolation without deltoid involvement
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- Unique racking system combines good looks with safety and function. Optional plate holder. (not shown)

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Flat Bench

- 11 gauge steel design
- Raised foot rest for better back support and chest isolation
- Angled chrome racking mechanism for good looks and safer racking for years to come
- Shown with optional plate holders for better use of floor-space.



Decline Bench

- 15 degree angle for low chest isolation with minimal shoulder involvement
- Adjustable raised knee leg support aligns low back allowing better peck isolation
- Multi sized two pieced pad for better body support. Optional plate holders. (not shown)

**Norm Cates'
THE Club Insider
NEWS**

Health Club Hard Sell - PART II

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Last month in Part I of our front page story entitled: "HEALTH CLUB HARD SELL" we reported on a report in the January, 1996 Consumer Reports Magazine. Included in Part I were opinions by this writer about health club membership sales which were based upon 20 years of experience as a club owner/operator in one of the most intensely competitive health club markets in the world, Atlanta, Georgia. While some club operators might not agree with those opinions expressed in Part I, they represent this writer's candid assessment of some of the problems associated

with the "old ways" of the health club industry trying to fit into the 90's.

Part II is based upon a two-part TV Report presented by Atlanta's WSB Channel 2 and veteran news anchor, Don Farmer. Farmer presented a candid and "in your face" report (as far as many club operators would view it). While the "bad guys" in his report were in one case interviewed and in the other case named and covered in the report, Farmer made numerous references to some of the "good practices" of local operators, but did not name the operators.

In this article you will find a portion of the "verbatim" transcript from the report. Due to length, a lot of the less interesting

report information will not be covered here. And, the local operator is XYZ operator and the company mentioned and interviewed is XYZ national chain. Since we are trying to teach here and not ridicule individuals or specific companies, those parties are not identified except as XYZ.

The general tone seemed to be an effort on behalf of the station to truly expose the "Health Club Hard Sell" practices employed in many Atlanta area clubs. Hidden cameras and audio recordings were made and when shown during the report were accompanied by the text scrolled across the screen. The end of the report was probably the worst part of the presentation as far as the potential impact to club operators. From a PR standpoint, the two personal interviews with one local operator may have been the most damaging because of the things said and inability of the club operator to "look the camera in the eye" without consistently "looking over his shoulder." He should have never agreed to the on camera interview.

There is no telling what percentage of the 3 million Atlanta area viewers and others statewide saw these reports which aired on the 5:00 and 11:00 news. But, suffice it to say, it could not have been good for the health club industry in general, even though Don Farmer repeatedly referred to some of the good practices of some local operators. Here are the report excerpts:

TV REPORT DAY #1 HEALTH CLUB HARD SELL

Reporter/Don Farmer - "This Channel 2 Special Assignment report is about The Health Club Hard Sell. The health club industry is one with a big turnover. There are some long-standing and some fly-by night operations. And, if you want to get physically fit, there are some things you need to know to avoid financial unfitness. That's the subject of my special assignment report."

Two ladies were then interviewed about their experiences when shopping for a health club membership. And, comments from Barry Reid, the Director of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs were shown.

Farmer - "Hard sell - pressure - vague promises - the State agency has heard the torrent of complaints we have heard. Two ladies joined different clubs but both said the sales offices were pressure cookers!"

Lady #1 - "The whole thing is pressure. They don't want you to leave because if you leave, you probably are not going to sign up."

Farmer - "And, they say they were given verbal promises, but never got those promises in writing."

Lady #2 - No, I had been promised that if I did move (which in fact I was planning to move), I could transfer my membership.

Farmer - "But, when she moved and tried to transfer she says, 'they would not accept it.'"

Farmer - "Despite what those consumers were told verbally, it does cost money to cancel or transfer. Georgia has the toughest law in the country (NOT true) when it comes to health club sales contracts. You have seven days to cancel (maybe longest in U.S.) your contract after you signed it....you should use those seven days to read the contract very carefully because a lot goes on inside the sales office."

"At one spa, our producer (and secret reporter) initially was offered a 3-year membership for \$799. Before she left, she was offered this deal:

Salesman/Hidden Camera - "If you are in a position to do a \$419 payment all at once, you get two years."

Farmer - "And, at another fitness club, more fast talk and a lot of numbers."

Salesman/Hidden Camera - "We went and have a little "cash kick" we're calling it. Instead of paying me by the month that times eight is \$1,064. O.K., we said go back and see if they'll do this. If they joined last week it would have been \$198 for two years."

Farmer - "But, this week, if we signed right now....only \$240! The experts say that remember.....the sales people are there to sell-sell-sell! The President of XYZ club told me how it works at his clubs."

XYZ President - "They are on a base salary plus commis-

sion and sometimes that does create overzealousness." (I personally know this fellow and know for a fact that he teaches overzealous!"

Farmer - "We cannot repeat often enough that you have seven days after you sign a contract to change your mind. That's state law. So, take the time-read the contract....every word. Tomorrow at 5 I'll look at the controversy over health clubs automatically taking payments from your checking account and I'll show you an alternative to the private health clubs if you've just got to get fit. That's tomorrow on Channel 2 Action News."

TV REPORT - DAY #2 HEALTH CLUB HARD SELL

Farmer - "Still here on Channel 2 Action News at 5 we'll visit some health clubs and hear from customers who say they got the "Hard Sell" from high pressure sales people. It's my special assignment report coming up."

"When you join a health club here in Georgia you have seven days to change your mind and get out of it. At least one club here offers 15 days to get out of the deal. But, some clubs don't tell clients about the escape clause even though it is in the contract. And, how some clubs handle the contracts and payments is at the top of the list of complaints filed with the consumer agency. That is all part of my special report."

They then showed interviews with two people whose monthly term contracts had been paid off in full. These people were concerned to find that the clubs were still collecting the monthly dues amount stipulated in the term contract. Upon reading their contracts again, they learned that the contracts clearly stipulated that after the term of the contract, the same monthly dues would continue to be drafted on a month-to-month basis until such time as the member notified the club in writing that he/she wanted to terminate the membership and the dues payments. There seems to be a clear problem with this portion of the contracts because both parties indicated a lack of knowledge of it, however the contracts were clear in their language.

XYZ Chain Member - "Why didn't they explain this to me when I joined?"

(See Hard Sell page 29)



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ACE SAYS TREADMILLS BURN MORE CALORIES THAN AEROBIC RIDERS

San Diego, Ca. - Results of a new study by the not-for-profit American Council on Exercise (ACE) say while novice exercisers will get the most out of the aerobic riders, consumers who are already fit might be better off working out on a treadmill versus some of the most popular aerobic riders on the market.

The study, sponsored by ACE and conducted by the Department of Kinesiology, Exercise Physiology Lab at California State University Northridge, will be published in the March/April issue of ACE's new publication, ACE FitnessMatters™.

A group of college-age women were monitored for heart rate and oxygen consumption while using each of the three popular aerobic rider machines. An earlier test on a treadmill, however, brought about significantly higher maximum aerobic capacity values than

Ask Mike About Marketing Matters

Mike Chaet, Ph. D.

Dear Mike,

I'm planning to reprint my club brochure. How important is a club brochure and what quality should I be looking for?

Rich Marshel
Paeardgat Athletic Club
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Rich,

Thanks for the great question. We've been asked this many times by many different club operators.

Your club brochure can be an important tool if you use it correctly. On the other hand, if used incorrectly, it can be your sales person's worst enemy.

A club brochure should be a sort of mini-tour of your facility. Anyone thumbing through your brochure should get the feeling they are

walking through your club with a tour guide. The tour guide is describing all of the wonderful facilities and benefits of being a member. The quality of your brochure, in regards to overall image, should be at least 50% higher quality than that of the actual image of your club. The job of the brochure is to paint an image picture of your club. You might just as well paint the best picture possible.

Problems arise in the way the club brochure is actually used. If a person walks into your club to see it and they are handed a brochure, it gives them the perfect excuse to take a quick look around and leave so they can review the brochure. This short-stops the selling process. I've seen this happen quite often. The prospect walks in, is handed a brochure and other materials, is shown around the club and says thank you and that they would like to look over the materials and would be back. This is especially true and even more risky if prices are given with the brochure.

Rather than give out a brochure as part of the tour I would suggest you do the following:

1. Use your brochures without prices as mail out piece to people who might be interested and as of yet have not come in for a tour. In this way it is a tool used to get them in for a tour.

2. Only give out a brochure if the prospective member is not going to join the club at that time. As they are walking out, offer to give them more information and offer to make a follow-up appointment either for a guest workout or to continue the discussion regarding membership.

3. Finally, the brochure may be used as part of the "new member" package, to be given to them after they join. In this way, it helps confirm that they made the right decision in buying a membership at your club.

A FEW MORE POINTS:

• **N**ever leave your brochures out at the front desk where a person can just grab one and run, or worse yet have the front desk atten-



Mike Chaet, Ph. D.

dant hand it out.

• Brochures may be used as handouts when you are away from your club such as a healthfair promotion, or off-premises promotion to corporations. Remember, the objective is to get them in for a tour of the club on an appointment basis. Brochures, when used

properly, can be an invitation to come visit the club, a confirmation of a sale, or even a chance to make a second appointment. However, if misused, they can be a perfect excuse to avoid joining your club.

Make your brochure work for you. Not against you.

This month's question was submitted by Rich Marshel of the Paeardgat Athletic Club, Brooklyn, New York. Rich will receive a copy of Mike Chaet's 101 GREAT MARKETING IDEAS for submitting this month's

question.

(If you have a marketing question for Mike Chaet, please submit it by fax at: (406) 449-0110 or mail to: Marketing Matters, c/o CMS, Box 1156, Helena, Montana, 59624. For additional information call Mike at: (406) 449-5559.)

Become a *Master of Change!*

Over the past 15 years Faust Management Corporation has been the lead consultant in dozens of long term, organization wide change programs. Doing this we have learned how to implement change. Regardless of whether you are implementing a strategic plan, a new structure, TQM or re-engineering there are three basic essentials you must start any change effort with: *appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes*. Initially, an external consultant or consulting team can provide much of these to launch the change process. The successful implementation over the long haul can not be dependent on the external consultant. The change process must be internalized. We have discovered the two critical factors for internalizing the change process. More recently detailed research has substantiated these elements.

The first critical factor is creating a critical mass of internal people with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage change. The second critical factor is the development and support of internal change agents to lead the change process at the executive and middle management levels. Faust Management has designed and refined a program to develop Masters of Change. The curriculum develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes for mastering and leading change. The curriculum applies these three areas to organization design, problem solving-decision making and leading people in the midst of change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MASTERS OF CHANGE

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The **Masters of Change Program** is presented by Faust Management and consists of three sessions over the course of one year with each session two and one-half days long. The participants are a small group of executives, key managers and consultants who are dedicated to leading change in their organizations or with their clients! In addition to the instructor designed curriculum, each of the three sessions will devote significant time focusing on each participant's particular issues and change agenda back home. With the same group meeting over the course of a year you have a program which is focused on *implementing change* not just studying change!

The **Masters of Change Program** has three instructors: Dr. Gerry Faust, William H. Phillips and Richard Lyles.

The **Masters of Change Program** begins March 7, 1996!

There is no place on earth like Costa Rica!

Villa de Papagayo El Ocotal, Costa Rica

Villa de Papagayo is a brand new luxury four-bedroom, four-bath villa with full staff (cook, maid and butler) located on the Pacific Ocean in beautiful Costa Rica. The view from the villa is revered as one of the most beautiful in the world.

The lushly-landscaped villa includes an oversided deck with swimming pool and waterfall. There is also a spectacular great room with 32-foot ceilings, TV, VCR stereo and air-conditioning. Guests at the villa also have use of the amenities at the nearby Ocotal Resort Hotel, which includes three swimming pools, tennis, scuba diving, snorkeling, beach and health club.

Also available are the world's best sports fishing for marlin and sail, rain forest, volcano and giant sea turtle tours, birdwatching, horseback riding, whitewater rafting and various other nature tours.

An all-inclusive plan provides all your food and drink (an open bar) during your stay at Villa Papagayo. The staff is there to provide for your every need and you will enjoy daily wonderful meals of fresh seafood, fresh vegetables and fruits like you've never tasted before. The villa is ideal for parties of four, six or eight persons. Beds can be arranged as kingsize or single for your personal needs.



Villa de Papagayo's giant terrace overlooks the Pacific Ocean and includes a pool with swim-up bar, waterfall and ranchero. In the evening guests dine outside under the stars.



Those who have seen the view from Villa de Papagayo call it one of the most spectacular in the world. With parrots and monkeys in nearby trees one soon realizes he or she is in a nature's paradise.



The great room has spectacular 32-foot ceiling, French doors opening to the ocean, a catwalk with spectacular views, television, VCR and stereo.

The villa has four bedrooms, including three master suites with ocean views, private terraces, air conditioning, overhead fans and full baths. A fourth bedroom has a full bath and bunkbed.



For availability call (404) 255-3220

Informed Managers Can Perform Miracles

By Jeff Stokes

Webster defines a manager as, "one in charge of a situation." Does this apply to our industry? Today, it's simply not possible for managers to keep tabs on everything that goes on. However, do we empower them with all the tools necessary to direct and control certain situations? How can we better prepare them? How can we improve profitability, cut losses and cost, and gain better control over our operations? How can we create AWARENESS?

These questions and various others are answered by many organizations through the use of a professional "Shopper" program.

Regular "Shopper" reports allow managers to create a perception of awareness and control. Employees, like employees everywhere, are acutely cognizant whenever the "boss" is around, and are typically on their best behavior when they know they are being observed. Traditionally, it's when management is not around when something goes wrong. By exposing your staff to a professional "shopper" program, their level of performance will immediately improve. Dave Barlock, owner/man-

ager of the World Gym Fitness Center in Sterling, Va., says, "No one likes to fail a test, therefore the risk of being caught doing something wrong keeps them on their toes. Our level of service throughout the club has improved dramatically and we plan to keep the "shopper" program as an ongoing part of our staff's training.

USING SHOPPERS TO IMPROVE SALES AND SERVICE

Once you have found a firm that meets your criteria, you should experiment with a few reports before you set up an agreement with the company. After your receive the first report, you should:

- Carefully go over the information and locate specific examples of the kind of behavior you want to encourage. If the report reveals some negative issues, talk to that associate in private and share with them ways in which he or she can improve for future evaluations.

- Next, call a meeting of all your service staff and department heads and announce the start of the program. Create healthy competition between departments or employees. Use peer pressure amongst the group to your advan-

tage. Have all the department heads return to their staff and announce the program.

- Now, organize a staff meeting with the entire staff. Call upon an individual that did an exceptional job on a report. Have them stand in front of the entire group, read the part of the report that makes them look good, and compliment them on their accomplishment. Ask for a round of applause and explain why you feel this is good behavior.

- Finally, explain to your staff that you will be getting reports like this on a regular basis. Let them know that the results from future shopper evaluations will be shared at upcoming meetings.... whether the report was good or bad!

WHY USE A PROFESSIONAL SHOPPER SERVICE

Many will say, who needs to pay money when I have plenty of friends and associates who could shop my club for free. Why hire a professional service when I can do it internally? Simon Meredith, the General Manager at the prestigious East Bank Club, in Chicago, Il. says, "We genuinely accept any feedback, whether from

members, friends, associates, etc. However, it's

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seen a marked upsurge in employee related suits. Dismissal of an employee is a serious and complicated matter. Still, dismissal may be necessary if you find major impropriety. An objective report from a professional 3rd party can be your only protection against wrongful dismissal suits or frivolous suits that claim racial, sexist, or age related claims as a smokescreen to block dismissal.

In conclusion, using a professional independent research company to survey and shop your club will open doors to many new exciting ideas in regards to customer service. More and more fitness professionals are taking notice of this important fact and are taking steps to keep their clientele satisfied - physically, financially, and emotionally. Remember, "A club's perceived value is created through the service you supply not the equipment you offer."

Supply your management team with the information needed to perform miracles and provide the top notch service you expect.

(Jeff Stokes is the Vice President and Co-Founder of Club Services, a national customer research group located in Fairfax, Virginia. To learn more about Club Services, please contact Jeff at 1-800-777-6699.)

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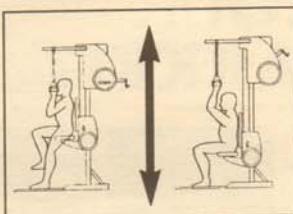
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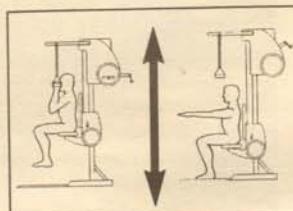
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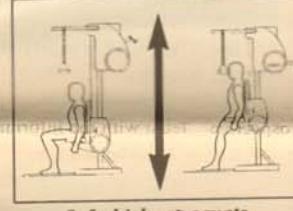
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And they are spending like crazy to try revolutionary new exercise machines! People want something different, better than before, not just new bells and whistles.

New hopes, new motivation, if you will. That's the way people are. So, what's REALLY new at your club?

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CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

- Learn "new" aging principles.
- Discover current research on activity and aging.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

- Develop effective programs for mid-life to older adult consumers.
- Observe "live" land and water exercise programs.

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

- Discover the values and motives of mature adult consumers.
- Learn how to attract and retain the 50+ market segment.

FEES:

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Gainesville, Florida, March 8, 9, & 10 1996

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Club FM - Wireless FM Entertainment Systems

CLUB FM is an affordable and efficient way to entertain your members and give them a choice.

CLUB FM takes the sound portion from a TV, CD Player, Cassette Deck or Motivational Video and transmits the sound to your member's personal Walkmans. These FCC Approved systems are designed to make your members' workouts more enjoyable and at the same time, keep within a facilities budget. As compared to other similar systems, there are no necessary hardwiring/installation and maintenance costs - which can add up to a lot of dollars and maintenance headaches. This innovative system is installed in hundreds of health clubs across the USA (and abroad).

Here are some of the reactions of club owners presently utilizing CLUB FM:

Health Star, Ramsey, N.J. - "Our members really took to the system. They enjoy their cardio workouts more now than ever. The system was easy to set up and very cost effective. It is a great investment." - MIKE SILVE/Owner

Hollywood Health Spa, Lawrence, N.Y. - "We really like the CLUB FM System. We presently have a hard wired system and are thinking about scrapping it and replacing it with CLUB FM. It was also very simple to install." - ROZ WOLFF/Owner

Galaxy Health Spa, Guttenberg, N.J. - "I have CLUB FM and another one made by an outfit in California. Both are in the same room, hooked up to the same model TV, space about 20ft. apart. CLUB FM is smaller, less expensive, less complicated to hook up and the reception is twice as good!" - MIKE FARKAS/Manager

"One of my philosophies for our CLUB FM Systems is once I sell a system, I want to ship it to the customer and never see it again. That is why we take the time to test

the systems before they ship out. I want the CLUB FM Systems to be as hassle free to the customer as possible. I feel this is an affordable alternative to hardwired systems. A lot of club owners hear that interference is an issue - if that was the case, we would have been out of business a long time ago. Our sales staff, I feel, is one of our strongest aspects. Everyone involved takes that extra step to keep the customer happy so that they choose our system over other similar systems. They work great and

we are eager to supply these CLUB FM Systems to even more locations." - Alice H. Lance, Partner - A.P. Acoustics, Inc.

"The salespeople provided good, informative customer service. The CLUB FM System is easy to install, worked well with no problems. I chose CLUB FM over a hardwired system because it gave me more flexibility in setting up the cardio room and it allows my members to listen to the audio without having to be on the

cardio equipment. The price was competitive and fair." - MARTY FINK, Executive Director, Greater Hartford, Ct. YMCA.

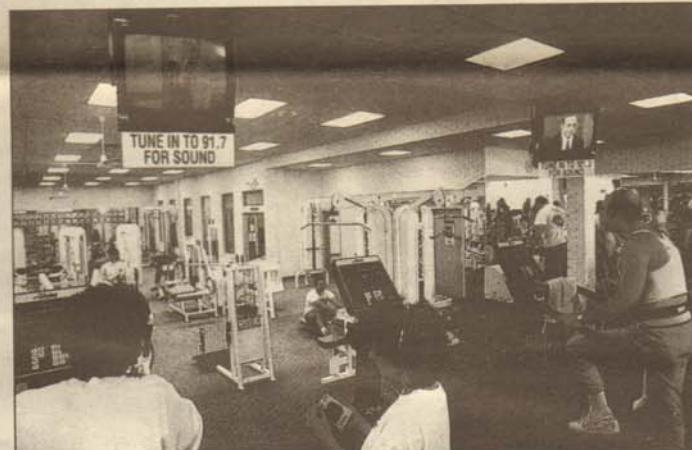
"The bottom line is that we chose this system over a hardwired system because we had heard from reliable sources that moving equipment around is not as easy with other systems as it is with CLUB FM. CLUB FM is easy to install, no running wires and mainte-

nance free. The CLUB FM System has been great and they last a long time! The price was the lowest and we did not need the bells and whistles that other systems offer!" - DENNIS KAUFMAN, Twin Arbors Athletic Club, Lodi, Ca.

"I have researched this to nausea and found that CLUB FM had the best price and the best quality. It is a simplified unit..... you don't need anything else!" - PETE PETERSON, FROG'S Athletic Club, Encinitas, Ca.

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**MAKE
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QUALITY DRIVES RETENTION

But How Do You Control And Assure Quality?

By Keith Camhi

ADVERTISEMENT

A Product Profile: The FitLinxx (TM) Interactive Fitness Network by Integrated Fitness Corp.

Retention rates have been a significant issue in the fitness industry for years now. Extensive studies have been conducted of what makes members drop out. Managers and staff go in droves to seminars and workshops on retention. Some owners have even hired full-time retention specialists to focus on controlling the attrition rates within their clubs.

Total Quality Management (TQM) processes have been implemented to address similar issues in other industries. TQM teaches that before attacking the symptoms of high member turn-over, it is important to dig into and understand the underlying causes. Only then can you truly institute the systems and tools needed to improve retention rates.

MEMBER ATTRITION AND QUALITY SYSTEMS

A Attrition can be grouped into two broad categories, controllable and uncontrollable drop-outs. Uncontrollable drop-outs include members who do things like relocate. There's just nothing the club can really do to keep them there.

Controllable drop out is everyone else who leaves. Ulti-

mately, these are people who have become dissatisfied with the value they are getting from the club (relative to the price charged and possibly the competition in the area). In most cases, they simply aren't seeing the results they expected when they joined.

In a fitness center, quality can be loosely defined as effectively helping members get results from their fitness program, thereby, delivering a high rate of customer satisfaction. In clubs that consistently have the highest member satisfaction and lowest drop-out rates, the quality process starts from the moment a new member walks in the door, and continues with regular, meaningful and targeted follow-up along the way at key points: such as when a member hits a plateau, when form falters, or at periodic reassessment times.

In the clubs that consistently deliver the highest level of Quality, there are three aspects to the process that add up to managing the members' experience in the club:

1. Quality Systems.

First, clubs must develop (or borrow or steal) proven systems that, if followed by the staff, will yield high quality results for the member. This includes systems for the initial assessments, introduction to the equipment and development of a workout program, training, and most importantly, ongoing follow-up to as-

sure that results are matching goals (and if they're not, a system for modifying the program and working with the member to get things back on track.)

Having a Quality System generally means that you can point to a specific and documented program for delivering a personalized, high-quality service that should be followed for all members (note that although the system is consistent, the particular needs of the members will vary greatly and the system must accommodate flexibility.)

2. Quality Assurance Tools.

The execution of the Quality System is assured only if there is a means for incorporating the Quality System into the daily operation of the club. That is, you must give the staff the training and the tools needed to execute the systems in a reliable, repeatable way with every member.

In most cases, the technology available to the club's staff is sufficient for the orientation to the club, but is lacking for the important follow-up phases. There just isn't enough information available to know who needs help and what kind of help they need. Rather than asking for help, many members simply get dissatisfied with their lack of results and drop out, without giving the club's staff the opportunity to assist them.

Despite the fact that the club may feel it has High-Quality Systems and well-trained staff, because of the lack of Quality Assurance Tools the actual quality of service delivered to the member is unsatisfactory.

3. Quality Control Tools.

The final aspect of a Quality program is giving management the ability to inspect that a consistent, high-quality service is, in fact, being delivered to all members, and if applicable, across all sites. Other than being able to review drop-out rates and some customer satisfaction surveys, most clubs have a difficult time objectively reviewing the different staff members and different facilities in much detail.



Keith Camhi

That is, there are relatively few ways to inspect quality.

Well intentioned clubs often have #1, Quality Systems, in place. But only an elite few clubs have mastered Quality Assurance and Quality Control within their clubs and truly closed the loop on member retention. This has been a very difficult process in the past, involving manual, paper-intensive systems, like frequent workout-card reviews and subjective evaluations. These systems are tedious, time-consuming, and prone to error and oversight. In addition, they rely on the member to do a good job tracking his or her results, which is generally an unrealistic goal.

This is where systems like the FitLinxx (TM) Interactive Fitness Network can have an impact. Technology products, like the FitLinxx system, can deliver the tools that effectively and effortlessly track and analyze information, for members, staff and management. Technology cannot make a club which does not value a Quality System in a Quality Club. But once a club has made a commitment to deliver high-quality service to its members, a product with the various elements of the FitLinxx system can help the club and the staff with Quality Systems, Quality Assurance and Quality Control.

PRODUCT PROFILE:

The FitLinxx (TM) Interactive Fitness Network

Integrated Fitness Corp. was founded in 1993 with the vision that advanced computer tech-

nology, properly applied, can help people lead healthier lives. IFC's mission in creating FitLinxx(TM) Interactive Fitness Network has been to provide information to help people and organizations make fitness a lasting and valuable part of their lives.

Information, when properly channeled, can truly empower and can lead to dramatic results at many levels. The feedback from the FitLinxx system empowers members to get an effective workout every visit and stay motivated to continue exercising. It empowers staff to help members get results. It empowers management

to quantify results and hold the staff accountable for achieving them. It empowers facilities to attract a new segment of the population to fitness who may have been intimidated previously. Finally, the detailed outcomes database the FitLinxx system provides is the type of information the fitness industry needs to truly fulfill its potential of being an integrated element of the health care industry.

No More Record Keeping, No More Guess Work

The Fitlinxx system has been designed and extensively tested to make workouts simpler. Members are liberated from having to carry around a card and pencil. They don't need to remember seat settings or range of motion guidelines. They don't even need to count their reps anymore. It's all taken care of automatically.

Step 1. A Personalized Workout

Each member starts by getting a completely customized workout set up by an instructor. During this orientation visit, the FitLinxx Training Partner computer at each machine "learns" every element of the member's workout - including set, weight and rep targets, seat settings, lift speed, range of motion, and exercise order - all based on the instructor's guidelines. This takes no longer than it used to take to set up a workout. But now, instead of the member having to remember how to use each machine, the machines remember the member.

Step 2. Eliminates Guess-work

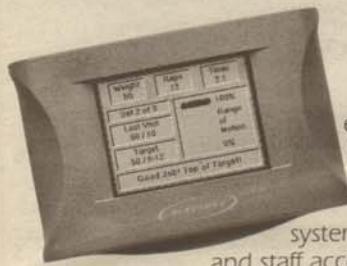
(See Fitlinx page 32)

Club Owners' Perspectives On The FitLinxx System

"FitLinxx fundamentally changes the potential of the health club industry. FitLinxx gives a club the tools it needs to fulfill the goal of being a real partner in the members' achievement of their fitness goals. Good clubs have been trying to do this for years, but finally the enabling technology is here to make it a reality." - Bill Beck, General Manager, Club Fit, Briarcliff, New York.

"In my 22 years as a fitness professional, I have never been more impressed than I am with FitLinxx! Computer technology and personal service have now been combined in a way that affords our fitness staff the opportunity to take the effectiveness of a personal exercise program to a level not previously possible." - Joe Caposella, Classic Athletic Club, Mahwah, N.J.

The FitLinxxTM Interactive Fitness Network Was Designed With One Overriding Goal In Mind: To Help Achieve Results Quickly And Safely.

FitLinxx
Training
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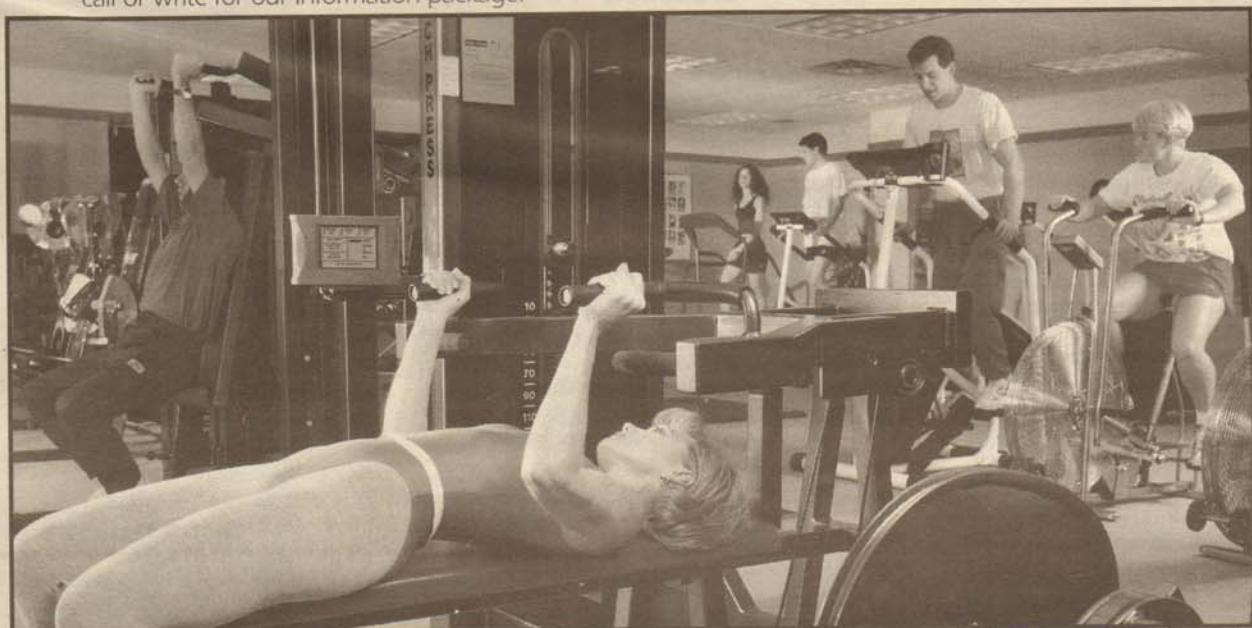
The FitLinxx Training Partner adds computer feedback to existing weight stack equipment to provide instantaneous feedback on both users' form and their achievement of goals.

By automatically collecting workout data from FitLinxx Training Partners and other fitness equipment, the FitLinxx system eliminates the need for a workout card and gives members and staff access to a wealth of information. Instructors can easily identify members who need help, and members can see their progress in graphs, reports, competitions, and in comparison to norms at the FitLinxx Workout Information Center.

The outcome is that members do the right workout, do the workout the right way, and stay motivated to keep working out.

It all adds up to getting results.

If you wish to know more about how the FitLinxx system can help deliver results in your setting call or write for our information package.

FitLinxx
Workout
Information
Center

The FitLinxx Interactive Fitness Network gives a club the tools it needs to fulfill the goal of being a real partner in the members' achievement of their fitness goals.



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Corporate Fitness Alive And Well In North Carolina

Lumberton, N.C. - The Total Elite Fitness Center in Lumberton, North Carolina has set out on a mission of "fitness-affordability" for everyone in the community, making it easier for all to enjoy the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. "When it comes to working out at a fitness center, price can be a major issue", comments Trevor Kracker, General Manager of Total Elite. "Everyone should be able to afford to be fit," adds Kracker, "but

sometimes that just isn't a realistic statement. We are in the process of making it a reality."

Total Elite owner, Chris Parker and Kracker have zeroed in on corporations in their area. "Health plays a major role in the business world. Many companies are enrolling their employees in wellness programs. These programs keep employees healthier by providing affordable and easy access for their employees to fitness facilities and services," Kracker explains.

Current corporations with Total Elite membership includes: Converse, Willamette Industries, Ted Parker Homes, Southeastern Academy, Accent Dye and Finish, Elkay Southern, Peterson Homes Carrollton, the Chamber of Commerce, Fabtex, 211 Quick Check, Westpoint, Elizabethtown, Robotex, Nash Finch, Peterson Toyota, DuPont, N.C. Cancer Institute, Kingsdale Manor and the U.S. Cold Storage. Kracker adds, "corporate memberships promote

teamwork on the job by facilitating employee bonding off the job."

Total Elite has dropped its initiation fee for all corporations who enroll and they have expanded the facility by adding a 4,000 square-foot addition, providing more cardiovascular equipment and a new line of 16 Badger Magnum 2001 belt-driven machines. The result of these moves and an aggressive corporate marketing campaign has been a doubling of the membership in the past twelve months. Chris Parker says, "if we see that the demand

is continuing to increase and over-crowding becomes a problem, we will expand again. We are here to meet the demands of the people!" In addition to cardiovascular and free weight and selectorized weight machines, Total Elite offers an aerobics studio, tanning beds, personal trainers, a steam room, jacuzzi and massage therapy. The Total Elite facility has also become a Showroom for the Badger Magnum equipment company for the Georgia, North and South Carolina territory.

NORDIC TRACK SETTLES WITH FTC

February 16, 1996 - Nordic Track, Inc., a division of CML Group, Acton, Ma., reached a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission prohibiting it from "misrepresenting" weight-loss claims in its advertising. The FTC said NordicTrack had "made false and

unsubstantiated weight loss and weight maintenance claims," based on "faulty surveys," that it "mischaracterized," in its advertising. Nordic Track paid no penalties in the settlement. A spokesperson for NordicTrack said the agreement covered ads that haven't run

since the fall of 1995. The FTC indicated the disputed ads cited studies involving only a highly selected population, didn't account for dietary habits and relied on the subjects own reports.

Former owner of 100,000 square-foot multi-sport club with annual revenues of \$1.2 million IS SEEKING GENERAL MANAGER'S POSITION

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Collaborative Selling Video and Workbook

Today's customers are better educated, more informed and more demanding of sales people. The old razzle-dazzle sales pitch and 25 power closing techniques won't get the job done. Join Tony in this one-hour session on the collaborative sales process as he covers the importance collaborative vs. traditional selling. Topics include: Knowing Your Competitive Advantages; Using Personal Marketing to Generate Leads; The Direct Mail System; Exploring Customer Needs; Asking Questions; Addressing Customer Concerns; Servicing the Customer; Enhancing the Customer Relationship; and Expanding Business Opportunities. (\$89.00; 60 minute video; 66 page workbook; Reminder Card)

Alessandra On...

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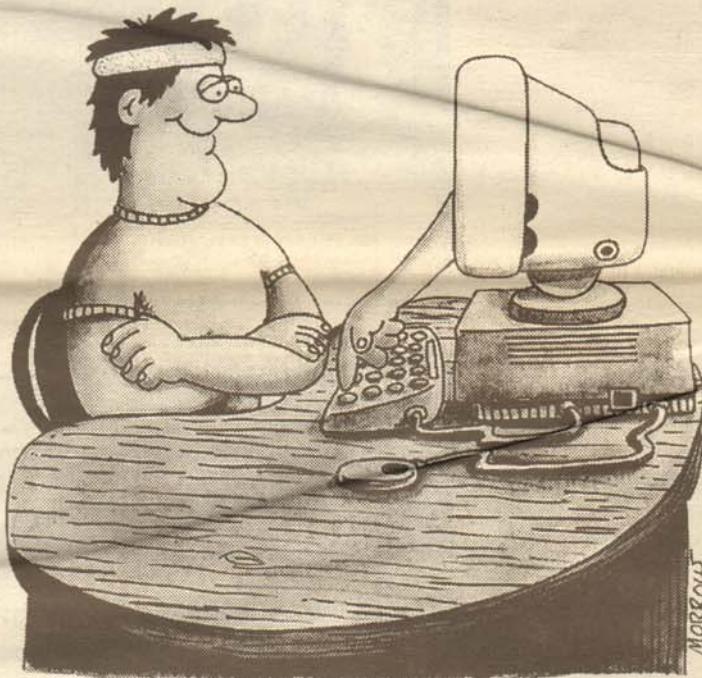
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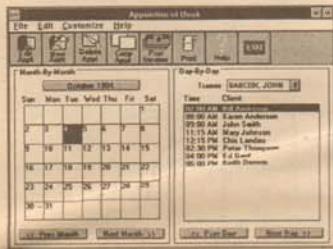
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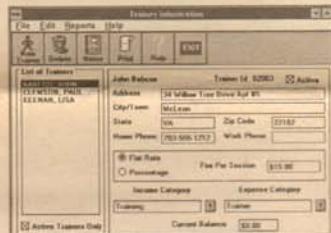
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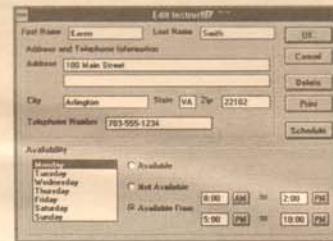
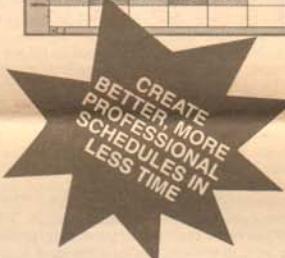
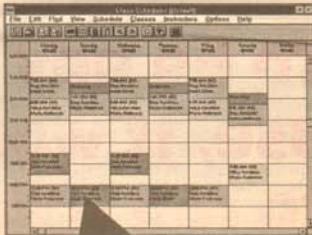
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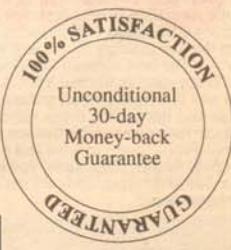
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January 30, 1996

Mr. Norm Cates
CLUB INSIDER

Dear Mr. Cates:

This letter is in response to an article in the January issue of **CLUB INSIDER** entitled, **Profits vs. Non-Profits: The Coming Armageddon** by Mr. James M. Evans. Although Mr. Evans certainly made several good points in his article, I do think, at least when it comes to the YMCA, he may have overstated or incorrectly left the wrong message in his article. Even the use of the word **Armageddon** in the title of the article, leaves a wrong impression. (By the way **Armageddon** is spelled wrong in the title of the article.) The dictionary defines **Armageddon** as a "... final and conclusive battle between the forces of good and evil." I hope Mr. Evans isn't implying from the use of this word that the for-profits are the good guys and the not-for-profits the evil guys. After spending 32 years with the YMCA I would like to think that maybe both the for-profits and the YMCA are good guys and that both have a unique place in the communities in which they serve.

Unlike Boone, Iowa, where Mr. Evans is the Executive Director of Heartland Health Center, the community of Yakima does have a vibrant and active YMCA. There is also an active and vibrant for-profit club in Yakima. Although the owner of the Yakima for-profit club, who was a member of the Yakima YMCA for many years prior to building his club in 1979, took the YMCA to task over the unfair competition issue three years ago. He had discovered that both his club and the YMCA can co-exist in the community with each carrying out their respective missions and still be financially successful.

Because every YMCA is autonomous and sets its own policies in the communities it serves, Mr. Evans makes a very broad statement when he says....."the YMCA fired the first volley back in the seventies when it began to lose many of its adult members to the commercial health clubs." The YMCA has been in the Yakima community for 90 years and had done a major update to its facility in 1974. This was five years before the for-profit club was built. When the for-profit opened its doors in 1979, the YMCA saw many of its members leave and join the for-profit club. There was a need for a second facility in the community because of the overcrowding at the YMCA.

Mr. Evans leaves the impression in his article that the for-profits have an exclusive right to the health and wellness industry and that YMCA's came along and stole their market. I don't recall the many for-profits being around in 1844, when the YMCA was founded, serving the communities with the only gyms, swimming pools, and health centers in town. Every YMCA I have served over the years all had fitness equipment, fitness classes, health centers and a staff of qualified YMCA professionals serving the needs of its members. We had steam rooms, saunas, racquetball courts, locker rooms as part of our member services. YMCA members have every right to have improved facilities and the latest fitness equipment just as the for-profit clubs do.

I would like to think that the very nature of fitness is part of the YMCA mission and is not the exclusive realm of any organization. It has been my observation where the for-profits clubs are well managed, they will get their share of the health and wellness market. Our for-profit club in Yakima appeals to a different population base for the most part. To be sure there will always be some overlap, however, the for-profit club in Yakima is doing an excellent job, and so is the YMCA. We both have top notch facilities. Quite the contrary to Mr. Evans's statement, "exploiting its advantage by expanding its influence in major markets where it can fill its coffers at the expense of the commercial clubs and get away with it", most YMCA's are earning their not-for-profit status everyday by serving those special populations in our respective communities. Populations I might add that are not, nor should be, served by the for-profit clubs. Funds to serve these special populations comes from adult membership revenues, United Way, and other contributions.

I do agree with Mr. Evans when he says, "hospitals may be the greatest threat of all to the commercial health club industry in the long run.... and to other non-profits as well...." However, I do think that this threat is more pronounced in larger population areas and not so much in small communities like Boone, Iowa or Yakima, Washington. As hospitals look to other ways to generate revenues, the health and wellness potential is on the front burner. Although hospitals certainly can do what they do under the banner of health and wellness, they nevertheless need to be followed. Clearly hospitals should be the focus of greatest concern in the years ahead, not the YMCA. From my view the YMCA and fitness have been a natural partnership for 152 years. We're not the newcomers on the block.

I hope that Mr. Evans and other for-profit clubs begin to look for ways to find common ground and rise above the "unfair competition" issue. It seems to me all the money, time and energy being expended to put the local YMCA out of business could be better spent on building a positive image of the for-profit industry in the USA. The overall bad feelings being created from all of the rhetoric of recent years may in the end backfire. It's been my experience that in the long run those who choose the negative or reactive approach to problem solving, always lose in the end. As the Bible states, "let he who is without sin cast the first stone." Nationally, the YMCA is trying to do its part to be "fair competition." That's all we ask of the for-profit industry is fairness too.

Thank you for your newspaper. I enjoy reading it.

Sincerely,

Malcolm W. Arnett, General Director

MWA/cvs

February 12, 1996

Mr. Malcolm W. Arnett, General Director
Yakima YMCA
P.O. Box 2885
Yakima, Washington 98907,

Dear Mr. Arnett,

Thanks for your letter dated January 30, 1996. I have several comments.

I agree that the for-profit clubs should look for ways to find "common ground" on which to co-operate in communities. Roger Ralph's Bel Air Athletic Club and the Healthy Harford, Inc. (see Recycle Your Cycle this issue) is a prime, but one of the few examples of such cooperation that I am aware of.

You have indicated your belief that "YMCA's are earning their not-for-profit status everyday by serving those 'special populations' in our respective communities. I agree and I disagree. While many YMCA's serve 'those special populations' in respective communities, many YMCA's are NOT serving youth and the underprivileged (per their charter), but instead are appealing to high income - upscale residential communities and corporations. Check out the Embarcadero YMCA in San Francisco with marble lobby floors and about 150 cardiovascular machine or how about the East Cobb YMCA in Marietta, Georgia, built on about 10 acres at the cost of \$7 million right in the middle of a neighborhood of \$200 - \$350,000 homes. "Special populations" all right!

Please understand that those for-profit operators who fight the "unfair competition" issue with YMCA's are not doing this for the fun of it. Many of these club operators have their families' financial futures on the line in their clubs. They are at risk of losing everything if and when YMCA, a public recreation fitness center or a hospital with unfair advantages on taxes, fund raising and Public Relations comes into their markets. Executive Directors and board members of YMCA's have nothing on the line in terms of risk and yet these operations often do have undeniably "unfair advantages."

The best solution I can think of to get rid of the "unfair competition" issue would be for all of the fancy-marble floored YMCA's (who no longer follow the Y's Mission Statement of helping the youth and underprivileged) voluntarily agree to begin to pay real estate taxes, sales taxes, the same utilities and interest on funds raised through their fund raising activities. Or, those same YMCA's could use the power and influence of their board members to obtain local governmental approval for the "For-Profit" clubs to have and enjoy the same advantages, such as no real estate or sales tax. Now, that would be fair! Of course, you know that "ain't gonna happen" so the for-profit operators have no choice but to continue their efforts to fight this gross inequity however and whenever possible. Can you blame them?

Sincerely yours,
Norm Cates, Jr., Publisher and Editor, The **CLUB INSIDER** News

P.S. You misspelled rhetoric.

IHRSA And Fitness Products Council Reveal Logo

SUPER SHOW - ATLANTA,

GA. , Feb. 6, 1996 - A group of leading fitness and sports organizations has formed a coalition to help persuade Americans to improve their health by putting more physical activity into their lives. The Fitness Products Council, an association of some 140 companies that manufacture exercise equipment, and IHRSA, an Association of 2,800 health, racquet and sports clubs, both founding partners, today announced plans of the initiative at THE SUPER SHOW, a sporting goods exposition here.

As a preliminary objective, coalition members will work together over the next two to three years to promote the findings of the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, which is expected to be released early this summer.

The coalition will also recruit other organizations to join the campaign—health clubs, retailers, schools, coaches, health-care providers and community groups. Other major industry partners taking leadership roles in the campaign are the U. S. Olympic Committee, the U. S. Tennis Association, the National Federation of State High School Associations and Oshman's, the nation's third-largest sporting goods retailer.

DISTINCTIVE LOGO

The symbol of the coalition will be a distinctive logo with changing slogans that all participants will use in their advertising and promotional materials. Created by the Fitness Products Council, the logo is an exclamation point on an inverted pyramid. For example, if justified by the Surgeon General's findings, one slogan might read:

"The Surgeon General has determined that lack of physical activity is detrimental to your health."

"We expect that thousands of manufacturers, retailers, health clubs and non-profit organizations will use this logo and slogan", said Tony Harmon, president



The Surgeon General has determined that lack of physical activity is detrimental to your health.™

of FPC and president of Polar Electro, makers of heart-rate monitors. Other slogans also will be developed based on the report.

"The long-range goal is behavioral change," Harmon continued. "Most sedentary Americans know that exercise is good for them, but they haven't been motivated to change. As they realize that inactivity is actually unhealthy behavior, we can get them up and moving."

The Surgeon General's Report is expected to be one of the strongest policy statements ever made by the U. S. government on the benefits of physical activity.

"I believe this report will be an historical turning point," John McCarthy of IHRSA said. "It will redefine physical activity and exercise as a key component to health promotion and disease prevention. Our goal would be for every physician to read the report and recommend physical activity and exercise to his or her patients. Every managed-care group will create programs to inspire their members to be active. The long-term effect of this could be extraordinary."

The coalition's first priority will be to broaden awareness of the report and its second to implement programs to encourage physical activity.

As part of the second priority, FPC will create manuals based on the report that cooperating organizations may use for educational programs in their local communities. FPC has budgeted \$300,000 over the next 18 months on the campaign. "Our main thrust is to create a domino effect," Harmon said. "We want many other organizations to join the campaign for a healthier America."

IHRSA, The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, also plans to mobilize its membership to spread the word through special programs to be conducted in the clubs and the community.

...Hard Sell

continued from page 14

XYZ Collection Operator - "I don't know and I get a lot of calls everyday from members who didn't know that." (About continuing dues collection.)

Farmer - "Those calls probably come from customers who may not have read their contracts carefully."

XYZ President - (With a wry smirk on his fact). "Part of it is for us (i.e. continuation of the monthly dues) because we like the cash flow and part of it is for the consumer because it guarantees them that dues price."

Reid(Consumer Affairs) - "I'M a strong believer in today's market place that a consumer is much better off giving as little information as possible about their finances."

Farmer - Still most health clubs in the area offer you a better deal if you give them your account. Reid also recommends looking for a health club that will not hold you to a long term membership contract.

A BOMBSHELL CLOSING!

Farmer - (Backdrop is a

beautiful six lane indoor swimming pool.) "There are several spas in the metro area that will allow you to join on a month-to-month basis. One obvious alternative to joining a health club is the YMCA. The Y has 8 full facility health clubs around Metro Atlanta. The Y costs are comparable to the private clubs and the YMCA is very CONSUMER FRIENDLY."

YMCA LADY - "People don't have to sign a multi-year contract so they feel its a better value because they don't have a commitment for such a long period of time."

Farmer - "And that's important because most people find that when they join a spa, their payments last a lot longer than does their enthusiasm for working out. But, at the YMCA..... if you quit at the end of 3 months and you paid for a year, do you forfeit the balance of that money?"

YMCA Lady - "On the annual membership you may get your money back.... it's satisfaction guaranteed."

Farmer - (Closing comments). "There are other non-profit organizations that have fitness facilities..... religious groups and so forth. An XYZ national

chain says its salespeople are instructed to be straightforward. Also, not all health and fitness clubs are getting a lot of complaints. At least one long-time club here in Atlanta never demands long-term contracts, so you should ask about that when you shop for a club."

"The good clubs and the not so consumer-friendly clubs agree on three things you should do before you sign up, and pay up and try to muscle up. Here are the three things: read the contract, read the contract, read the contract!"

If you are a consumer-friendly club operator, the following is a little tool for you to give to your prospective customers as you compete for market share in your area with less consumer friendly operators. I invite you to reproduce these check-points with your logo and telephone number and maybe you ought to even provide a one-week guest pass for those that elect to walk out of your club without joining on their first visit.

If you are not a consumer friendly club..... read the following..... weep.... then come on and join us all in the 90's health club world!

The CLUB INSIDER'S Choosing A Health Club Guide

1) **LOCATION** - Is the club conveniently accessible to your home or place of work?

2) **FACILITIES and SERVICES** - Does the club provide the facilities, equipment and services that you want? Is it clean, properly air conditioned, is there enough equipment and is it well maintained?

3) **CROWDING** - Be sure to visit the club for a "trial workout" during the time frame(s) you will be using the club. Overcrowding and waiting lines are good reasons to look elsewhere.

4) **CONTRACTS** - Does the club require a contract commitment for over 12 months? Does the club assign or "sell their contract" to a financial institution for "cash up front." If so, you must carefully study and understand the terms and ramifications of the contract.

5) **EMPLOYEE TENURE** - Ask about the tenure of the employees working at

the club. Beware of an older club with high employee turnover.

6) **EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATIONS** - Inquire about the certifications of the instructors. If you hear of ACE, IDEA, AFFA or ACSM you are dealing with a higher quality club.

7) **COOLING OFF** - You should carefully read the contract before signing and especially understand the legal time limits for you to change your mind and rescind the agreement.

8) **CONSUMER AFFAIRS CHECK** - Contact your state's office of consumer affairs to see if the club has outstanding/unresolved or frequent complaints against it. Check Better Business Bureau as well.

9) **ASK FOR THE OWNER'S NAME** - Ask for the name of the owner/owners of the club. If individually owned, check to see if the owner's name is listed in the telephone book. If it is not.... check the club more carefully before joining.

Star Trac By Unisen Honored In California

Tustin, California - STAR TRAC(R) by Unisen was recently honored with a distinguished service award from the California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. The award was accepted by Jim McPartland, Star Trac chief operating officer, and presented by Judi Missett, founder and president of Jazzercise, Inc. and Jack LaLane, the Godfather of fitness.

"The award is presented to individuals and organizations who have supported the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and the principles we stand for," reports John Cates, Governor's Council executive director. "The tremendous success of our program is a direct result of the enthusiastic support of companies like Star Trac."

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DelMonteque

continued from page 3

books... all for only \$9.95! This was at the beginning of the York Barbell Company which had been developed by Bob Hoffman, the Founder of Strength and Health Magazine and the owner of the York Air Conditioning and Heating Corporation from which the York Barbell name came in the 1930's.

The young DelMonteque installed his free weight system in the barn on the farm where his family lived. He bailed hay and shoveled manure when he was not working out on his weights. He grew to be big and strong and at age 16 could clean and jerk 300 pound's, bench-press 250 and military press 210. The farm on which his family lived was 8 miles to his school, so he ran or walked to and from school

PERSONAL TRAINER FOR THE STARS

DelMonteque went into the service and when he got out he went to Hollywood where he had been invited to try out as a "cowboy" actor. He found Hollywood to be very different from what he had visualized. The producers wanted the actors to work 16-18 hours per day without proper rest, exercise or nutrition and that was just not for him. Dropping his acting hopes, he and Terry Hunt got a contract with the studios to train the Hollywood stars who were being influenced by the bad Hollywood lifestyle.

He trained a number of stars:

CLARK GABLE - Bob recalls, "I would be pulling towels with Clark Gable and his teeth would rattle..... he had false teeth and I told him to take them out while we were working out. His response was 'Oh No! What if someone sees me with my teeth out!'"

ERROL FLYNN - Bob's most vivid memory of Errol Flynn was that his breath was absolutely horrible. Bob quips, "He had a terrible lifestyle..... drinking, smoking and late night carousing and his breath showed it!"

JOHN WAYNE - Bob says, "John Wayne was a 220-pound, barrel-chested, former University of Southern California tackle who could easily bench press 250 pounds."

PAUL NEWMAN - "Paul's objective was always keeping his waistline slim and trim. He carried a folding ab board and would always do at least 100 sit-ups before retiring each night."

ROCKY MARCIANO - "Rocky Marciano was an amazingly driven athlete. He trained intensely doing such things as putting a 150-pound man on his shoulders and climbing sand dunes. He could run six miles in under 30 minutes. He gave a total commitment of his mind and body to his goal of being the heavyweight boxing champion. He was a great one!"

JOE WEIDER HIRES DELMONTEQUE

DelMonteque credits "The Master Blaster", Joe Weider, with giving him a great opportunity and inspiration when in 1952 he hired Bob to work for his new magazine, Your Physique, Joe's first bodybuilding magazine. In the beginning, he worked with Joe and his brothers Ben and Ed as they started publishing from Joe's home. DelMonteque says, "We didn't have a nickel for a cup of coffee back in those days. Today, Joe Weider's success is legend and his publishing empire is vast and tremendously successful." DelMonteque is still employed by Weider Publications as the Senior Editor and a consultant on fitness.

RAY WILSON AND BOB DELMONTEQUE TEAM UP

In 1953, Ray Wilson came to meet with Bob and said

to him, "Bob, I'm going to make a millionaire out of you! We're going to build a chain that has mirrors, carpeting, chrome equipment and even air conditioning to remove the smell! I need you to work for me as a physical culturalist. Think about it for 24 hours and call me!" Bob adds, "Ray Wilson is a real charmer and as he was walking out the door I yelled, Ray, come back here..... I've thought about it long enough..... you've got a deal!"

This meeting resulted in a friendship and partnership between Ray and Bob which has lasted for 40 years. In the beginning, they opened 300 locations across America called either the American Health Studios or the Silhouette Studios. The clubs were upscale just like Ray said they would be. And, they were the first to advertise on a "mass" basis by splitting the ad costs amongst a significant number of locations in each market. "Ray Wilson was and still is one of the greatest visionaries in the world" adds DelMonteque.

"SPA WARS" BEGIN

V

ic Tanny came along and invaded virtually all of their territories and a serious "Spa War" between them broke out. Price cutting was the name of the game..... intense competition. Ray Wilson reflecting back on those times, "I wish we had never gotten into those price wars with Vic..... in later years I got to know him and found him to be a great guy." Wilson and DelMonteque sold the American Health Studios to their partners in the various markets.

INTERNATIONAL FITNESS

H

owever, these two partners had no plans to stay out of the business. They decided to test the water in the international market so they picked two very strong demographic areas, San

Paulo, Brazil and Mexico City. They flipped a coin and Mexico City won. DelMonteque recalls, "Ray went to Mexico City on a Tuesday, signed a deal on the following Friday and we were open for business and pre-selling memberships on Monday!" In Mexico City they built their largest facility ever..... their Robert DelMonteque's Centro de Salud Y Boliches (Center of Health and Bowling) which was a 100,000 square-foot facility which attracted 10,000 people per day! This facility offered a wide array of workout and exercise areas, a restaur-

rant, a barber shop and of all things, a huge bowling alley! The Centro had a swimming pool, saunas and a steam room which would accommodate 150 people!

DelMonteque recalls, "One day a guy from the Mexican government came in and said we had to pay fees to the government to stay in business. We ended up paying a number of these Mexican officials every week. Later, a local union official came in and told us we had to join the union. I was a little cocky in those days and I told him to take a hike. One hour later there were 25 Mexican union people waving red flags and protesting outside our building.... blocking the way of our members and guests who were trying to enter.... we joined the union. Later, in an effort to deal with the government, we took in a Mexican citizen as a partner, but that didn't last long and we ended up selling our facilities to that investor for a nice profit. We had three facilities in Mexico City, the Centro, the Silhouette for Women and the Club Internationale. We also had several other Silhouette's and Club Internationales (an executive men's club) in Monterrey and Guadalajara, Mexico.

TRAINING THE ASTRONAUTS

Returning to the U.S. in 1962, Wilson and DelMonteque opened a chain of "Swim and Trim Spas" in San Antonio, Texas. These facilities were their first foray into "feel good" facilities which featured the high-powered whirlpools they had first seen at Joe Everson's Palm Springs Spa in Palm Springs, Ca. The facilities also featured steam, massage, sauna and "cold water" plunges. At the same time, they opened the President's First Lady chain in Houston and "The Executive Club" in Indianapolis, Indiana. The President's First Lady chain was opened in partnership with Dick Minns in Houston.

In downtown Houston, they opened the President's Health Studio, a men's executive club. The initiation fee was \$1,000 and monthly dues were \$60. The club was so popular that they had a membership waiting list! It was at the downtown President's Health that DelMonteque became the personal trainer for the first group of Astronauts which included Deke Slaton, Gordon Cooper, Scott Carpenter, Wally Shira, Gus Grissom, Alan Shepard, John Glenn and Shorty Powers. DelMonteque recalls, "these guys (See DelMonteque page 31)

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AAC... "We're Here To Work"

DelMonteque

continued from page 30

were in great shape overall..... everyone of them had resting heart rates of 50 or less." He also worked with the second group of Astronauts which included Jim Lovell (of Apollo 13 fame), Frank Borman, Neil Armstrong, Ed White, Tom Stafford, Charlie Conrad and James McDevitt. Alan Shepherd and Jim Lovell remain great friends of DelMonteque.

TIME TO "SMELL THE ROSES"

Wilson, Minns and DelMonteque sold the Houston's President's chain in 1969 for \$13

Norm's Notes

continued from page 5

LETIC CLUB at the cost of \$3 million. Heavy focus was put on increasing the cardiovascular and strength training space and they upgraded virtually every square foot of the facility. Their Grand Re-Opening Party attracted 1600 people! Membership sales at the club are more than doubled and they expect great things with the HAC.

Tragedy has struck the VAIL RACQUET CLUB as its owner, WALTER KIRSCH, an expert skier, was killed when he hit a tree while skiing. Our sincere condolences to his family and all of those associated with the club.

AUGIE NIETO, the President and CEO of Life Fitness has hit another Public Relations home run. First, he provided Life Fitness exercise equipment for the jurors of the **O. J. SIMPSON** trial. Now, he has shipped more than 100 LifeCycle aerobic machines to Bosnia for the troops there on the peacekeeping mission to stay fit. "If we can help by giving them the opportunity to continue their physical training and perhaps even take their minds off the matters at hand, we're happy to do so," said Augie Nieto.

LARRY CLINE is a co-owner of the Lakewood Athletic Club in Lakewood Colorado. My apologies for misspelling his name in the bio of last month's article entitled: Unfair Competition in Colorado.

3 Out of 4 in U.S. are in "FAT CITY" - Last month we reported on "AMERICAN

million. At that point, Bob decided to retire and "smell the roses." He and his lovely wife Madeleine have now been married for over 50 years and they felt it was time to take life a little easier. But, that did not mean that Bob would ever stop training or training people.

Ray Wilson went on to build 146 European Health Spas and sold them to U.S. Industries for \$46 million. Later, Wilson, in partnership with Bill Hubner, developed the LifeCycle aerobic bike. Wilson also built the Family Fitness Center chain which he has recently sold controlling interest to Fitness Holdings, Inc. Wilson credits Bob DelMonteque for getting him in top shape. Ray quips, "One day DelMonteque said to me, "Ray, you're a 'big-

BOOMERS IN FAT CITY". Now, a LOUIS HARRIS and Associates poll says that more of us are getting fatter every year. The Harris poll reports that 74 percent of Americans 25 or older are overweight, up from 71 percent a year ago, 69 percent in 1994, 66 percent in 1992 and only 59 percent 10 years ago. 1,005 randomly selected adults were asked by the Harris Poll about their weight and their responses were compared to the recommended weight ranges for various heights and body sizes from **METROPOLITAN** Life insurance tables. Additionally, the survey taken January 18-22 says that 24 percent of adults are over the recommended weight range by 20 percent or more which puts those individuals into the generally accepted definition of obesity. How many people do you know who are within the height/weight confines of insurance companies? And, who is winning this nationwide battle of obesity.... could it be Satan? Or, could it be McDonald's?

Speaking of **FAT CITY**.... here is an update.... the guy described in our January article entitled: "AMERICAN BOOMERS IN FAT CITY" has in fact broken through the barrier of non-exercise and has been doing 3 walking miles a day on a treadmill for the past three weeks. He also modified his diet and reports that he has lost four pounds to date! And, he says he is working his way through the "soreness stage" and is beginning to feel much better already. Stay tuned.

JIM GERBER the President of **WESTERN ATHLETIC CLUBS**, has decided to close down the Texas Club in Houston, Texas. Jim explains that

fat-slob' and you ought to cut your weight and get in shape!" At the time, Ray Wilson had been a professional wrestler, weighing over 200 pounds and was lifting a lot of weights for large biceps, etc.... Ray took Bob's advice, cut his weight to 165 pounds, focused on cardiovascular training and until this day is in terrific shape at age 68!

While Bob DelMonteque is the Dean of American Personal Trainers, he quickly credits Ray Wilson, Bill Hubner and Donahue Wildman for the tremendous impact they have had on the health club industry in America and on his life. He considers those men to be his best friends.

Bob DelMonteque, at age 75, is one of the world's best examples of the positive results of a lifetime of health and fitness. He

the downtown market in Houston was just not strong enough to support the 73,000 square-foot-high end facility and the several other upscale downtown locations. He has made an arrangement with **CLUB CORPORATION OF AMERICA** to take over the membership servicing for the displaced Texas Club members at their same dues rate. And, he says that they will pay the lease on the deal until they put together a sub-lease for a new operator to take over. In that regard, he has a plan to separate 30,000 square feet for office use and reduce the club space for a new operator to lease 43,000 square feet for a higher-volume, lower-price fitness facility. If you want to contact Jim about a sub-lease, call him in San Francisco at: (415) 781-1874. Also, Jim tells me that they are closing on the various parcels of land for their new mega club in the Portland, Oregon. This facility will be an improved and expanded (in some areas) version of their truly world-class **PACIFIC ATHLETIC CLUB** in Redwood City, California. The Western Athletic Clubs, along with **CLUB SPORTS INTERNATIONAL**, **THE SPORTS CLUB COMPANY**, **CLUB CORPORATION OF AMERICA** and **TENNIS CORPORATION OF AMERICA**, all IHRSA members, have a lock on the mega club market in the U.S.

WEIDER PUBLICATIONS, INC. has purchased the subscriber lists of **LONGEVITY** Magazine which recently discontinued by General Media Corporation. **MICHAEL T. CARR**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Weider Publications announced that the 358,000 Longevity subscribers would begin to receive **Living Fit** and **Prime Health** and

has a physique that even a 25-year-old would kill for. He is moving full steam ahead and his book, **LIFELONG FITNESS: How To Look Great At Any Age** is an excellent guide for anyone who would like to become and stay physically fit. His next book, **The Miracle of Feeling Good** will be available in July, 1996.

DelMonteque gives a few tips which are good for all health club operators:

• "Have a passion for and enjoy life!"

• "Enjoy people."

• "Remember that the health club business is all about the 'Hello and Good Byes' with your members. In other words, get in the habit of knowing and calling them by name.

Fitness effective with the May/June editions.

Make them feel good." "People must like you. Make them feel important. Compliment them."

• "Give them results!"

• "Remember..... a man who sits on bottom..... ends up on bottom!"

(Our thanks to Bob DelMonteque for providing us with this historical perspective on the health club industry in America! And, also, special thanks to Bill Hubner and Ray Wilson for their assistance. To order a personally autographed copy of Bob's book: **LIFELONG FITNESS**, send \$19.95 (includes shipping and handling) to: Bob DelMonteque, 23916 Deville Way, Malibu, Ca. 90265. (Add \$6 to payment to receive a bonus book: **Rock Hard Abs**)

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What It Takes To Be Number 1

By Rocky Marciano

There is no doubt that man is a competitive animal. And there is no place where this fact is more obvious than in the ring. There is no second place. Either you win, or you lose. When they call you champ, it is because you don't lose.

"A professional prize fight can last forty-five minutes. That's a long time to keep going. You have to be physically prepared. And you have to be mentally prepared. That means you have to understand pain. There is pain in training. In running that extra mile, when your legs feel like logs. In the dull, monotonous grind, at the light bag and the heavy bag. But there's a reason for it. The

moment you step into the ring, you know it was all worth it. If you've pushed your body into its best shape, there's one thing less to worry about. Maybe it will give you one minute's more stamina. That minute can win you the fight.

"Then there's the fear. That's always there. You're not in the ring to demonstrate your courage. You're in there to win the fight. So you handle the fear, maybe even use it. It's out of sight, somewhere behind you, but if you're not completely prepared, it pops up in front of you and then you're finished.

"To win takes a complete commitment of mind and body. When you can't make that commitment, they don't call you champ anymore."

changes are based on guidelines set by the instructor in advance, they are always safe and consistent with the member's goals. Since members will be lifting the correct weight, using perfect form on every rep, and will consistently have their workouts updated, there is never a wasted workout. Results come quickly and efficiently.

WORKOUT INFORMATION CENTER

Seeing progress helps maintain members' motivation. But physical results aren't generally apparent over short periods of time. That's where the touch-screen FitLinx Workout Information Centers come into play.

The Info Center allows members to see their day-to-day progress on both strength and CV workouts in many different forms. Members can see graphs and reports of their improvement, participate in competitions, view messages from instructors, etc. Each workout also advances members' standing in the FitPoints (tm) award program, allowing them to earn awards for

Pritikin Picks Life Fitness

Franklin Park, IL (January, 1996) - Pritikin Longevity Centers®, the premier healthy lifestyle management facilities, have announced that they are replacing all of their existing exercise equipment with products manufactured by Life Fitness.

The Pritikin Longevity Centers will use Life Fitness cardiovascular equipment exclusively, including treadmills, recumbent Lifecycle aerobic trainers and stairclimbers, as well as the Lifecircuit® computerized strength training system.

The Pritikin Centers have also installed a Lifecenter® interactive training system for exercise prescription and workout tracking and documentation, effectively making the center a Pritikin Personal Performance Center (PPC). Life Fitness created the PPC, a "club-within-a-club" concept as a way of allowing facilities to offer their customers an exclusive exercise area featuring premium, state-of-the-art fitness equipment and counseling.

The marriage of Life Fitness and the Pritikin Longevity Centers further validates the fact that the best way to maintain a healthy lifestyle is through a combination of diet and exercise—not one or the other. Robert Pritikin, Director of the Longevity Centers,

their adherence and progress.

Empowering Instructors To Get Results and Retain Members.

Of course, the real key to delivering a Quality Program, and to achieving long-term member motivation and retention, is instructor involvement. Too often, members who are not getting results simply stop working out, not realizing that their form is wrong or that they've reached a natural plateau. Ideally, an instructor should be involved before motivation wanes to this extent, but it's nearly impossible today to identify the members who need help before it's too late. For instance, it would take hours of looking through workout cards to find members who have reached a plateau, and that only works if they keep accurate records. That's where FitLinx's extensive instructor software tool set comes in.

Once members are identified, the FitLinx system gives instructors an array of tools for getting them back on track. Instructors can do anything from leaving simple text messages, to revising weight and rep targets, or creating full new workouts for the member.

also cited Life Fitness' technological superiority as the primary factor in his decision, "Consistency and quality were paramount in our decision," said Pritikin. "When you look at the combination of features and the fact that Life Fitness' reputation for quality and reliability is fantastic, well, we just saw that no one would be better at serving our customers' needs."

"We are tremendously excited about our association with the Pritikin Longevity Centers," said Life Fitness President and CEO Augie Nieto. "The Pritikin Longevity Centers have made terrific strides in educating people about the positive benefits of eating healthy foods and maintaining a properly balanced, low-fat diet, and they also recognize the importance of incorporating an exercise program into their new, healthy lifestyle."

"At Life Fitness, we feel that information and documentation are the keys to long-term behavior change. We also believe that our products and Personal Performance Center "club-within-a-club" are the ideal vehicles to drive the exercise portion of the equation that works so well for the Pritikin Longevity Centers' clients in short-circuiting what they refer to as "the Fat Instinct."

Specifically, Kevin

Easily Finding Members Who Need Help

FitLinx Performance Filters™, for example, can comb through the entire database of user records at the touch of a button to identify members who need attention or who could be dropout risks, such as members who have reached plateaus, who have been using poor form, or whose attendance rate has decreased.

Once members are identified, the FitLinx system gives instructors an array of tools for getting them back on track. Instructors can do anything from leaving simple text messages, to revising weight and rep targets, or creating full new workouts for the member.

ADDS UP TO RETENTION

In addition to getting a

Wiser, President of the Pritikin Longevity Centers, pointed to Life Fitness' heart rate training capability on all its products and exclusive FlexDeck™ shock absorption system technology on its treadmills as key factors.

"Because Pritikin Longevity Centers deal generally with an aging population, many of whom have problems with their knees, backs or perhaps hips, we took a long hard look at some of the emerging exercise technologies," said Wiser. "We were particularly interested in heart rate feedback systems. Many of our clients are heart patients, and for them staying within their heart rate zone isn't just a matter of training—it's a matter of life and death. The Fat Burn and Cardio programs on Life Fitness products addressed that concern and virtually eliminated it. We use treadmills to introduce people to exercise when they come here," explained Wiser. "Many of our clients are deconditioned, have never exercised or are intimidated by exercise. Life Fitness treadmills with the heart rate technology engages people and gets them charged up and excited about exercise. This is particularly important in influencing our clients to maintain their newfound healthy lifestyle when they go home."

potentially discouraged member back on track, this type of targeted, meaningful interaction between staff and members can have an enormous impact on tightening the bond between the members and the staff and the club itself, which helps keep members coming back.

The net effect is, the combination of a Quality System, Quality Tools and a qualified, dedicated staff can deliver results to members that will keep their satisfaction rates and your retention rates high.

(Keith Camhi is the president of Integrated Fitness Corp. He received a BS in Computer Science from Cornell University, and an MS in Management and an MS in Computer Science from MIT. Before becoming involved in the fitness industry he worked on TQM systems at Digital Equipment and Polaroid Corp.)

FitLinx

continued from page 22

Every time the member shows up and enters a personal ID number, the machines are ready. There's nothing to remember. Seat settings, targets, and last visit results all appear on-screen.

Step 3. Encourages Perfect Form

As the member begins to lift, the Training Partner records the weight being lifted, counts reps, and "coaches" performance based on the staff's guidelines. By coaching every repetition for proper lift speed and range of motion, the Training Partner helps keep the member using proper form.

Step 4. Improvement is Built In With CAPST™

To fill in the gaps between sessions with a staff member or personal trainer, FitLinx's innovative CAPST™ (Computer Assisted Progress System) technology continually fine-tunes the member's workouts based on his or her performance. Since all weight and rep

OLYMPIC WATCH: ATLANTA, GEORGIA

ROOMS RELEASED

One good thing for potential Olympic attendees without a place to stay happened this month. There are at this time nearly 170,000 families coming to Atlanta who have yet to book a room for the Olympics. The good news is the organizers have released 7,215

rooms which had been held in reserve. The rooms are in 98 hotels throughout the Southeast - mostly in middle and south Georgia. Call (404) 744-1196.

TICKET SALES BY PHONE BEGIN

If you thought it was

too late to obtain tickets to the Summer Games, think again. On Saturday, February 10th ticket sales by phone began with tickets for baseball, basketball, canoe/kayak, equestrian, field hockey, gymnastics, modern pentathlon, rowing, shooting, soccer, softball, volleyball and wrestling still available. Ticket buyers are cautioned about dealing with ticket

brokerage houses because several brokers have been accused of selling ticket packages they do not have. To order tickets by phone, call: (404) 744-1996.

port..... the Pulse of Atlanta provides monthly coverage on all of Atlanta's night-life and dining opportunities. Published by veteran Atlanta columnist, Ron Hudspeth, the Hudspeth Report will prepare you to maximize your time while attending the Olympic Games. With you credit card in hand, call (404) 255-3220 to order your subscription.

SALESMAKERS Tip Of The Month To Create Dymanic Sales People:

- I. Start them out right, the first 90 days are critical.
- II. Hands on training is best.
 - A) Product knowledge
 - B) Sales skills
 - C) Benefits
- III. Standards of performance must be set.
 - A) Define their output responsibility of sales in both numbers and dollars.
 - B) Define their activities:
 - 1. Phone calls
 - 2. Thank you notes
 - 3. Presentations

- 4. Appointments, etc....
- C) Check them daily, weekly, monthly.
- D) "Inspect what you expect."
 - 1. Give good, honest, consoling and review.
 - 2. One Minute Manager Theory with guest log:
 - a. What did you do right?
 - b. What would you do differently next time?

"People stay where they learn, and leave when they stop learning." - Mike Vance, Walt Disney Corporation

Negative stereotypes cause 3 problems:

- 1) Not enough training.
- 2) Too much product training - they talk too much and forget about the customers needs.
- 3) Inappropriate sales training - win; lose; pitches; deals; 1,001 closes; overcome any objection, etc.

Many sales managers, being former sales people, have not been "trained" to be sales trainers.

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How Active Do We Have To Be In Managing Tennis?

By Spike Gonzales

Some clubs seem to thrive with their tennis, while others seem to have ongoing struggles with their members, tennis staff and profitability. A common difference between the first group and the latter is the level of "activeness" of their club management with respect to tennis.

Inactive club managers

expect tennis to run itself. The management perspective: "We're renting out real estate with lines and nets on an hourly basis." In their clubs the administration personnel are often not tennis players; and if there are any professional staff at all, they are simply renting court time for their own independent and non-coordinated lessons or programs.

Reactive managers are on hand to handle routine administrative and problems as they may arise. "It's like running a

bowling alley. We have to open and close the doors, handle the daily transactions and be there for the customers." Pros and programs are allowed by independent contractors, and the only interaction between their staff and management happens if problems develop.

Active tennis club managers get far more involved with the administration and management of the tennis environment. They designate Head Professionals or Tennis Directors, although in many cases, these personnel may still be independent contractors. These managers frequently see the value of offering lessons and programs, and frequently get involved with the establishment of pricing and club usage policies.

Proactive tennis club managers take interest in developing a healthy tennis culture. They are usually tennis players or pros themselves, and understand the needs of staff training and the development of organized and coordinated programs and services for their clientele. They, in particular, see the need to continue to build the tennis market, bringing new players into the game. Their tennis staff are employees of the club, often enjoying vacation, health insurance and sick leave benefits.

Proactive managers

have regular operational, planning and developmental meetings with their tennis staff. They understand the constancy of change and the needs for innovation. Rather than having their personnel "penalized" with lost teaching revenues for going to conventions and seminars, they encourage and financially support their tennis staff to stay

updated in teaching and programming standards and in the club industry.

Tennis is unique. It needs proactive management!

Why? First, tennis players are a special and particular breed. They are usually upscale clientele, professionals, highly educated and programmed with high expectations of service and attention.

Most of us already know the unique challenges of dealing with tennis clientele, but perhaps we are not aware of the challenges the nature of the game thrusts upon us. Simply put, tennis is not user friendly!

While tennis is one of the most valuable recreational activities, it requires a lot of handholding for its participants up to the higher levels of play. First, tennis does not provide aerobic fitness at the lower levels. Players need to be nurtured through the beginner and advanced beginner levels or they give up the



Spike Gonzales

game for other activities providing a more immediate fitness benefit.

Second, unlike other recreational sports such as golf, skiing and bowling, tennis requires compatible matching of participants. Each player simply isn't going to enjoy the game when pitted with the 90% of the playing population outside of his or her range of compatible play. Finally, again unlike the other recreational pursuits, tennis breeds winners and losers. Players have to face the outcome of becoming one or the other, and through the process of "civilized conflict" against each other.

Club owners and managers who don't recognize these unique aspects of the game will understandably take less than a proactive role in managing the culture. However, when their clubs are not fortunately placed or timed in the midst of extremely high demand, they will be condemned to struggling with their profitability!

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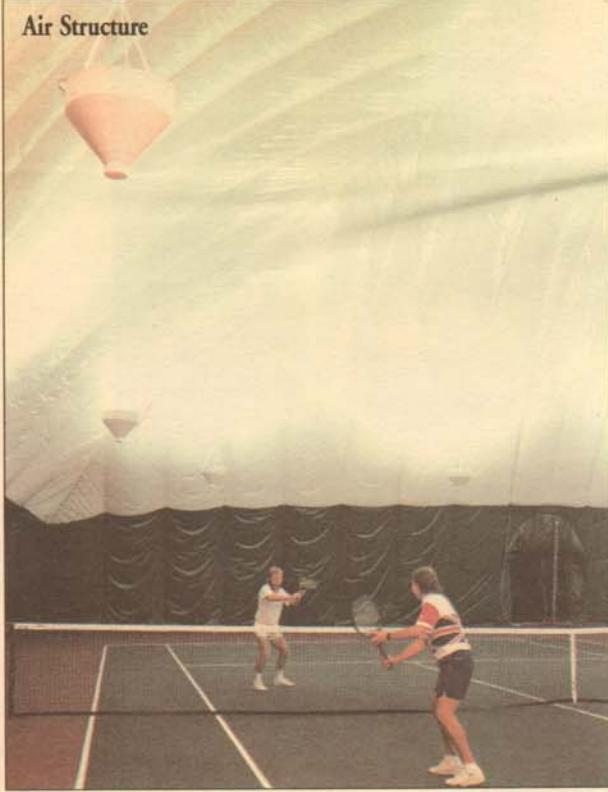
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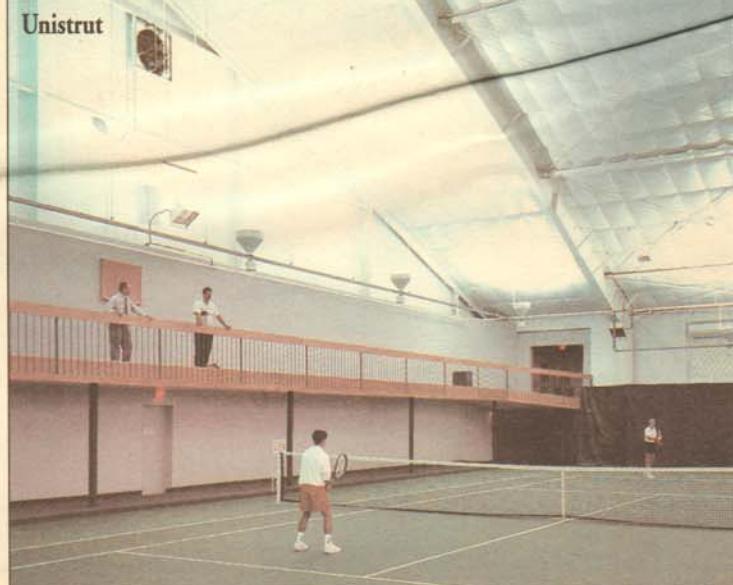
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