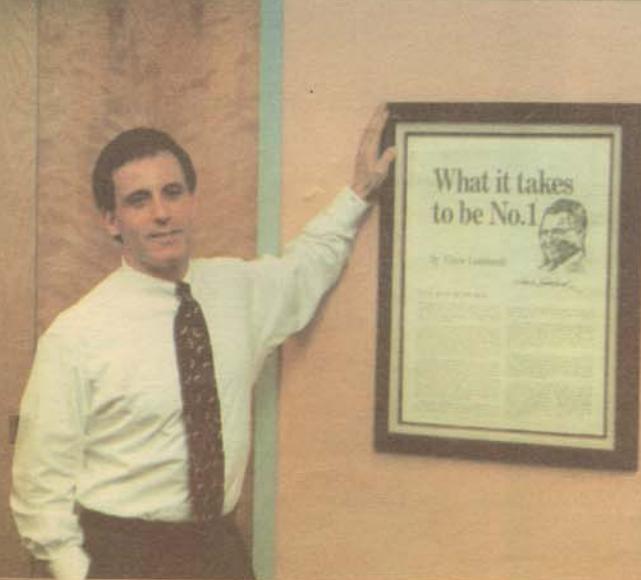


Norm Cates'  
**THE Club Insider**<sup>®</sup>  
**NEWS**

*The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business*

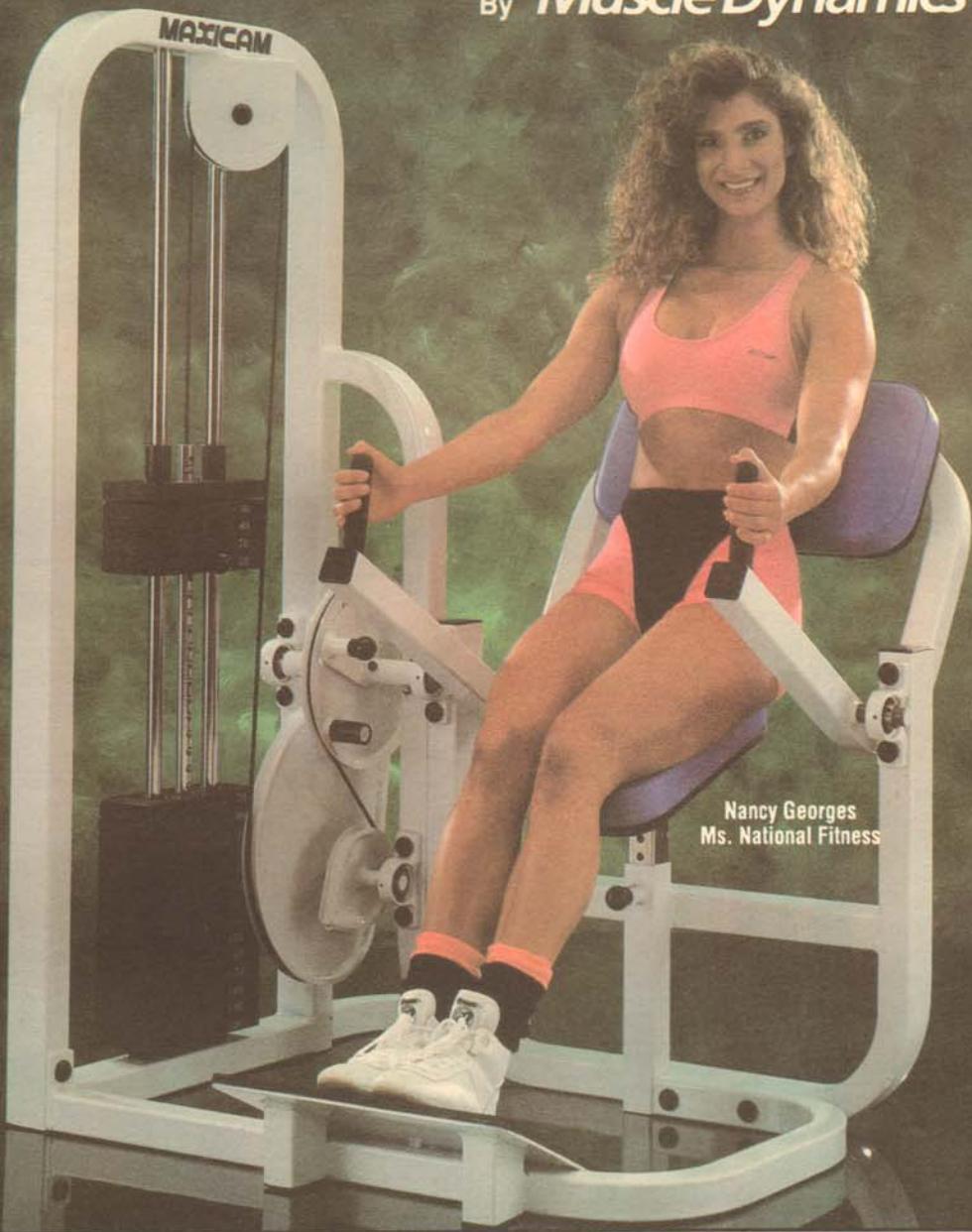
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**Joe Cirulli's  
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Being Number 1**



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# THE Club Insider<sup>®</sup>

NEWS

*The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business*

## Joe Cirulli's Vision... Being Number 1

By Norm Cates, Jr.

**J**oe Cirulli, the "Italian Stallion" of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry, is blazing a trail and providing a model for others who aspire to excellence in the business.

Joe Cirulli is the Founder and President of The Gainesville Health and Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida. Many industry experts agree that he is one of America's top health and fitness entrepreneurs. What he has accomplished in 21 years in this hometown of the Florida Gators is truly remarkable. To learn about the success generated by a dedicated "hands-on" club operator..... read on.

There are few club operators in the business who have obtained the hometown celebrity status of Joe Cirulli. The people in Gainesville, Florida admire and are amazed by what Cirulli has accomplished. He is well known for being a fair and honest businessman, a reputation hard earned, given the history of the health club business in his town before he took control of the undisputed title of #1.

Cirulli came to Gainesville from his home in Elmira, New York. From age 19 he worked in local health clubs..... six to be exact. All six of those businesses went bust, but he had no control since he was not the owner. The sixth facility had filed for bankruptcy and the landlord was in the process of evicting the health club. Through dogged determination, he was able to arrange to take over the sixth club before the landlord, a bank, was able to force it to close. Joe Cirulli's

determination and dedication to success, as exemplified by this beginning, is a terrific model for any upcoming club operator. This man is the real deal!

Instead of allowing the gym to close and putting the members into the street, Cirulli went to the landlord and convinced them to give him 30 days to find a new location to move the 1,500 square-foot club into. He also had to find a bank that would loan start-up capital. Since the Gainesville, Florida health club market had seen nothing but failures, obtaining a bank loan was no small task. By the time he had obtained the bank loan in the amount of \$6700 (which was the balance remaining from a personal loan amount of \$10,000), his 30-day time had run out and he had not found a new location. So he went back to the landlord to request another 30 days. The landlord said no and he did not want the health club operation to continue. But Cirulli persisted. By "begging" the landlord/bank he convinced them to agree to 30 more days. All the while he was working at the club keeping it open. Finally, he found a new location of 1800 square-feet which was suitable for his operation. He had just one more day left to secure the lease on the new space, when out of the blue the landlord for the new location leased it to a "national company" and Joe had to start his search yet again!

### FROM \$1700 TO CLUB ICON!

**W**ith time expired, the landlord in the bankrupt location told him to "give the keys

back".... they were closing it down. Cirulli's response was, "No, I am not giving the keys back..... you need to give me 30 more days because if you close this gym down you will be destroying my chance for a new start and I will tell the entire community how your bank forced the closing and how your bank is responsible." Reluctantly, the landlord/bank gave Cirulli another 30 days! He went back to his lease search and finally found a suitable space. He signed his new lease, but time was flying by as he only had three weeks left to build out his new facility and move the club's equipment, lockers, etc.

He used his \$6,700 loan to pay the new landlord \$3,800 and the old landlord \$1,200 for the last 30 days. This left \$1,700 to build and start his new facility. With a signed lease in hand, Cirulli laid out his facility by placing 2" X 4" boards in place where the walls would go. He then went to a friend who was a plumber and asked him what he needed to do to put in plumbing. His friend told him "you've got to break the slab in the places where you want the pipes to go." That weekend Cirulli personally took a sledge hammer and broke the concrete slab according to the layout established by the

plumber. Ironically, 72 hours later, on his last swing of the slab demolition, he broke the sledge hammer! Three weeks later he had walls constructed, carpets in place and lockers installed.

About that time an electrician brought to Joe's attention the fact that he was going to need some drawings and a building permit in order to obtain his certificate of occupancy. He had built the facility without any architectural drawings or a building permit, so he went to another friend who agreed to do the drawings in exchange for membership fees. When he was ready for power, he had an electrical inspector come in for an inspection. However, this inspector did what building inspectors do best. He treated Joe with contempt and threatened him. Cirulli recalls the inspector's words verbatim, "let me tell you something boy..... if you have one person in here working out before I give you your certificate of occupancy, I'll shut you down in a minute!" Cirulli recalls that within one hour after the inspector left, he had members coming in for workouts. He had no choice because he had to begin making some serious membership sales in order to pay for what he was

building.

In July, 1978, Cirulli opened his 2,500 square-foot facility which he named: "The Gainesville Health and Fitness Center." He had a Universal Gym, Olympic bench press, free weights, dumbbells to 50#s, a "vibrator belt" and "rollers." From July, 1978 to July 1986, he stayed in that location and grew the facility to 10,000 square feet by expanding into the adjacent shopping center spaces. He recalls, "when we began, we were operating on the old 'alternate day system' where three days a week were for men and three days for women. Later, when I decided to make the club co-ed, we had co-ed locker rooms with dressing booths!"

### THINK AND GROW RICH

**C**irulli recalls that when he was 21 years of age he read the book "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill. He comments, "after reading it I wrote out a list of lifetime goals. And, I read those goals every morning and night for years." By age 29 he had accomplished all of the

(See Cirulli page 25)



*Joe Cirulli Above GH&FC Basketball Gym*

### • Inside The Insider •

- The Power Of Listening
- U. S. Total Fitness Sued for \$10 Million!
- Refurbished Times
- Discrimination: An Exercise In Self Destruction
- Skywalker Coming On Strong!

# THE INSIDER SPEAKS

## • EDITORIALS • "INSIDER MAIL" • COMMENTS •

# DISCRIMINATION: AN EXERCISE IN SELF DESTRUCTION

By James M. Evans

**D**iscrimination has always been rampant in the health and fitness industry and remains a serious problem today. Unfortunately, it is swept under the rug and not talked about very much, but it is an insidious problem which

permeates the very core of our industry and will inevitably cause difficulties for the industry in the future if we do not start taking positive action to remedy the situation now. The very nature of discrimination and its consequences demand our immediate attention.

Discrimination manifests itself in many different forms in our employment and membership practices. It involves race, gender,

age, weight, sexual orientation and more. It can be blatant or even subtle; but, sadly, it is a very real part of the fitness industry nevertheless.

### RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

**T**he civil rights movement of the sixties provided the impetus for important changes in

our society to ensure the equality of black Americans (and ultimately, all Americans). However, more than a quarter of a century later there are still very few black employees in the fitness ranks and fewer still in management or ownership roles. Most are relegated to the "physical" positions of aerobics instructors or personal fitness trainers. There is a patent reluctance by the industry to hire and train black employees for front-line positions because of the perceived adverse reaction by the generally white, middle-to-upper class members who make up the demographic base of most health clubs throughout the country.

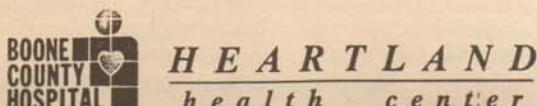
Catering to a predominantly white membership also encourages many clubs to practice discrimination in their membership enrollment policies. I can still remember as a novice sales consultant for a major health club chain in 1968 being told to present the "regular" membership rates to black guests instead of the "discount or special" rates available to white or "preferred" guests. We were also discouraged from touring them through the facilities or otherwise encouraging them in any way to enroll. There was even a special "code" (in this case a question mark -?) to identify black visitors on the guest registration sheet so that they would not count against our sales percentage or cause us to lose our rotation in the "up system." There are clubs which even today use secret codes, signs, or deceptive practices to discourage the enrollment of black members and protect the "exclusivity" of membership for their white clientele.

Hispanics and other nationalities have sometimes been discriminated against too- not so much because of their color but, rather, because of their inability to speak or understand the English language very well. They are co-erced or intimidated into signing a membership agreement (usually a retail installment contract) which they cannot understand, and when the contract is sold to a finance company or other holder-in-course on a non-recourse basis, they are inevitably forced to pay for something that they did not understand in the first place at the threat of damaging their credit or being sent to collection. Of course, the offending club has already been paid by the finance company and has usually been notified to cancel the individual's membership privileges at the first sign of any delinquency, so they have effectively excluded another "undesirable" from the club even while being paid for the membership. In other words, the club can have its proverbial cake and eat it, too.

### AGE DISCRIMINATION

**E**very 18 seconds another person turns 50 years old in this country, and the industry is beginning to respond to this burgeoning senior market through creative programming designed to attract older members. Employment of older people is, however, another story. The majority of employees working in fitness centers across the country are young people under the age of 30. Older job applicants are usually interviewed by younger managers who are intimidated by anyone with gray hair and a few wrinkles. They are even more intimidated by any one with any kind of previous industry experience or previous life experience - even when that experience might be an asset to the employer. The result is that they consistently hire younger employees so that they do not feel threatened rather than hire those

(See Evans page 6)



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February 28, 1996

Malcom W. Arnett  
General Director  
Yakima YMCA  
P.O. Box 2885  
Yakima, WA 98907

Dear Mr. Arnett:

I did not intend for my article "Profits vs. Non-Profits" to be interpreted as an attack on one segment of the fitness industry or another. Nor was it intended to apply to every individual market or situation either. The article is merely an overview of the fitness industry from my personal experience and perspective. I do have some strong personal opinions about the issue of profits vs non-profits and, perhaps, my personal bias revealed itself on occasion albeit unintentionally.

However, to clarify some of the misconceptions in your letter, Heartland Health Center is a non-profit, hospital-based facility - in fact, the largest hospital-based wellness center in Iowa (55,000 sf) - so we are not the for-profit commercial facility that you assumed we were. You can see, too, that some of my comments about hospitals were literally "biting the hand that feeds me" in an effort to be impartial. Ironically the facility was purchased by the county hospital when the local YMCA went belly-up.

I have been employed by and served as an industry consultant to the YMCA, commercial clubs, and hospital-based wellness centers from San Francisco to New York and internationally and have successfully owned and operated my own commercial facilities. Like you, I have seen many changes in our industry over the years, some of which I have endorsed and some about which I might have reservations. The fitness industry has always been in a constant state of flux, and as more different players enter the fray, there will be more confrontations as each group attempts to further its own agenda. Each group will have something to contribute, and the industry will benefit in the long run regardless of how everything finally shakes out.

I am pleased that my article has provoked some commentary, and I appreciate that you took the time to contribute your valuable perspective.

Sincerely,

*James M. Evans*

James M. Evans  
Executive Director  
Heartland Health Center

# •NORM'S NOTES•

**R**ALPH GRIESSE was loved by many people in his community and in the club industry. Our thanks to his friend, **JAKE BURKHARDT**, formerly of Nautilus, for writing and providing the Memoriam to Ralph shown on this page.

**DAVE TOLMIE**, Senior Vice President of Operations for **BALLY TOTAL FITNESS** informs me that **TOM VITACCO**, the man who has spent the last two years developing the Bally Franchise Program, left Bally in December, 1995. Tolmie indicated that they decided that Tom was not

the right guy to sell the franchises. He also indicated that they are "changing the financial requirements" for the franchise in order to expand the potential purchaser numbers. Sources say that not one Bally Franchise has been sold.

**TONY de LEEDE**, owner of Atlanta's Australian Body Works and a native of Australia, has opened his 15th location, this one in the new **HEALTH AND FITNESS MALL** which celebrates its Grand Opening on March 13, 1996. The facility is 10,000 square-feet and offers deLeede's **CARDIO THEATER**, a wide range of aerobics classes,

strength and cardiovascular exercise equipment and supervised child care. **BILLY ROBINSON**, a 25-year club veteran, formerly with **SPORTSLIFE**, has been appointed General Manager. The Health and Fitness Mall will include various health-care clinics, sports related retailers, skin care and health food retailers and natural food restaurants.

**KAREN GREGG**, formerly with the gigantic and wildly successful **EAST BANK CLUB** in downtown Chicago, has joined **LIFE FITNESS** as the new club Marketing Manager. Gregg was a 1992 finalist for the IHRSA Fitness Director of the Year Award.

## Norm Cates' **THE Club Insider** NEWS

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## In Memoriam

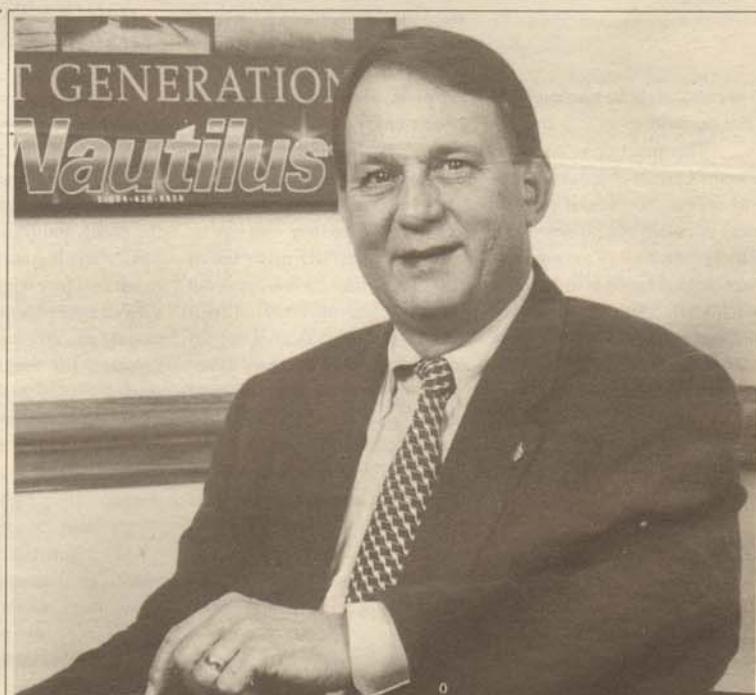
**Ralph H. Griesser**  
1941-1996

**R**alph Griesser, whose career in the fitness industry spanned 22 years, died on January 20, 1996 from complications of cancer at Emory Hospital in Atlanta. A longtime resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, Mr. Griesser was Vice-President of Sales for Nautilus International based in Huntersville, North Carolina. Prior to his career in fitness, Ralph was an exceptional teacher and coach. A three sport star at Western Hills High School in Cincinnati, he would later return, after receiving a BA at the University of Cincinnati and his MA from Columbia University, to lead Western Hills to its first city football championship in twenty years.

His exceptional leadership qualities accompanied by a warm and caring concern for people would make him a valuable asset at Nautilus from its beginning.

At the start, Ralph's background in athletics helped Nautilus gain notoriety in professional and major college athletics. He would later take on the role of Midwest Regional Sales Manager. Ralph's move to senior management came at a stage when Nautilus had serious financial problems. It was his strong leadership that maintained the sales organization's morale and contributed to the successful return of Nautilus to prominence in the fitness industry. His character, sense of humor and distinctive gravelly voice were the trademarks that made him one of a kind. A memorial scholarship is being established by Nautilus International in Ralph Griesser's name through the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Ralph's most treasured possession was his family, and we offer our deepest sympathy to his wife, Dianne, son, Grant, daughters, Ann and Carrie, and grandsons, Jake and Ben Gerber.



**Ralph Griesser 1941 - 1996**



**Norm Cates, Jr.**

presence at the huge IHRSA San Diego Trade Show March 21, 23rd & 24th. Their exhibit will entail 32 booth spaces. In addition, Technogym, U.S.A. has signed on to sponsor the new IHRSA Institute On Exercise and Health.

**KACEY REISTAD**, Director of Public Relations for **WTS INTERNATIONAL**, a Silver Springs, Md.,-based firm which specializes in the design and management of leisure facilities, informs me that they are hosting a special triathlon training seminar with **DAVE SCOTT** and **KAREN**

**SMYERS** on March 30, 1996, at the Asburn Village Sports Pavilion, a WTS-managed club. The seminar will be held from 8:30 - 4:00 p.m. and will concentrate on banishing misconceptions about training, as well as providing advice to participants on proper form and technique. For more information contact: **DAVE UNGRADING**, at (703) 528-4154.

**JEFF STOKES**, Vice President of **CLUB SERVICES** and his associates from their sister company, **RESTAURANT** (See *Norm's Notes* page 27)

# MICROFIT'S HEALTHCARE CONNECTION KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON!

By Neil Sol, Ph.D.

**T**he CLUB INSIDER News is now in its third year of keeping our readers abreast of the dynamic changes that are occurring in the health club industry. Those who have followed the action generally agree that the health club is an integral provider in America's health care delivery system. However, not until recently with the publication of the Surgeon General's Report on physical activity and health did the club industry have available the scientific evidence that exercise is a key factor in achieving good health and that fitness is regarded as a key means of prevention.

In the February issue of CBI Magazine, John McCarthy, Executive Director of IHRSA, indicated that the Surgeon General's Report is going to reposition the way the public views the health club industry. He further predicted that fitness will no longer be regarded as simply being part of the leisure/

recreation industry, but it will become an integral component of the nation's health care system.

Has the health club industry arrived or what?

With the documented evidence of the Surgeon General's Report the path to creating relationships with health care providers such as MD's, hospitals and health insurance companies, has been cleared. Traditional health care providers will realize that with the publication of these reports the American public will seek the health benefits of exercise. It will be incumbent upon the health care providers to make exercise available. Who will they turn to? You've got it.... health clubs! With the publication of these reports, professionally operated health clubs will gain new levels of credibility with all consumers.

The Surgeon General's Report should facilitate the acceptance of health club proposals to hospitals and/or health insurance providers for exercise and related services for their patients/subscribers. The Report should also

stimulate hospitals and health insurance companies to approach health clubs in search of formal relationships for the provision of exercise and related prevention services.

The Surgeon General's Report on physical activity and health has gained the support of influential Americans from all walks of life including doctors, scientists, government and healthcare industry leaders. These individuals are realizing the role of the health club and its services in helping Americans with the goal of obtaining and maintaining health.

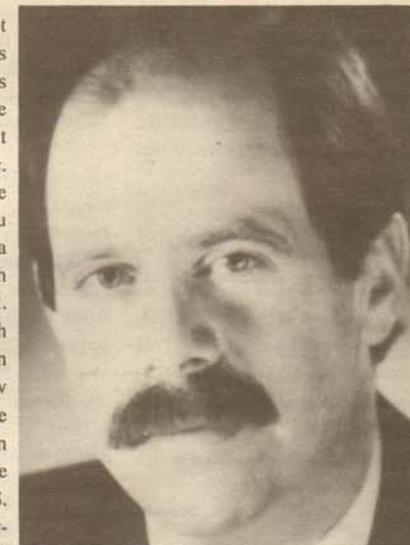
In May, when the results of the Report are announced and made public to all Americans, the opportunity will present itself for the health club industry to leverage its key position in the healthcare continuum. Not only will the public be searching for leadership to reclaim their health through exercise, but potential healthcare providers will also be looking for exercise leaders. The opportunities for all health club operators will be

greater. The grass root message of exercise is good for you and fitness is health will be visible everywhere, TV, print media, the Internet, etc.

Now is the time for those of you interested in creating a relationship with health care to prepare to act. Prepare to approach healthcare decision makers with this new evidence and message of the Surgeon General's Report. Use the backing of the U.S. Government that exercise is good for you and convince healthcare providers that the health

club is the best means to lead the nation to exercise. Club operators everywhere have paid their dues for years. Now is the time to prepare to take advantage of news that we have known for decades..... news that regular exercise is good for your health!

(Neil Sol, Ph.D. is the



**Neil Sol, Ph.D.**

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

## ...Evans

continued from page 4

persons who might be best qualified for that position.

This practice is contrary, too, to the current objective of trying to capture the senior market. Seniors are often not attracted to a facility in which all of the employees are young enough to be their grandchildren. A mature presence on the staff can sometimes be more reassuring than a proliferation of degrees and certifications held by a bunch of youngsters who are still wet behind the ears. It's all a matter of perspective.

## WEIGHT DISCRIMINATION

As implausible as it might seem, the fitness industry often discriminates against obesity. We cater to children, athletes, seniors, pregnant women, singles, families, students, the handicapped and every other special group, but

we remain patently biased against the obese. Why? Probably because society in general rejects overweight people, and we are creatures of society even when it sometimes contradicts our alleged purpose of trying to help all people enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

We simply cannot relate to grossly overweight people. We associate them with weakness and gluttony. When they visit our facilities, we secretly make fun of them and make comments about them to each other behind their backs. If we don't say it, we often think it. Our members sometimes join us in the discrimination by staring at them and mumbling things under their breath.

These people come to us for help but usually drop out after a short time because we try to mainstream them into our general membership rather than establish something specific to their needs.

We have allowed our own prejudice against obesity to prevent us from serving these people even when more than one third of our adult population is now categorized as obese and the percentage

continues to grow.

## SEXUAL (ORIENTATION) DISCRIMINATION

Perhaps nothing has created more controversy in recent years than the gay rights movement. It has also created a climate of discrimination within the health and fitness industry - particularly in conservative communities where homosexuality is viewed as an abhorrent lifestyle. Openly gay men and women are rejected for employment by some facilities solely on the basis of their sexual preference, and these individuals usually have little or no recourse against the discriminating club under most current laws - at least for now.

Sometimes gay individuals are discouraged to enroll as members. Others may be affected, too, when the homosexual label is arbitrarily attributed to them. This is especially true when the individuals are perceived as being unusually masculine or feminine as op-

posed to their gender or because they "look" or "act" a certain way. This is stereotyping of the worst sort. The overriding justification for this practice, of course, is to not offend existing "straight" members even though the practice itself is blatantly biased. We are more concerned with what members think rather than what is right.

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Women have made positive gains in employment in the fitness industry over the years by their patience and dogged persistence. Many are now in top level management positions or own their own facilities. But in an industry in which the majority of its members are still women, employment for women still lags behind that of their male counterparts. Enough said.

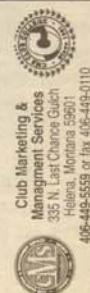
Discrimination in any form and for any reason should be rejected. It has no place in our industry. We should seek the most capable and qualified individuals for employment without regard for

individual differences. We should seek to serve the fitness needs of all persons on the same basis. The practice of discrimination will have increasingly greater consequences to our industry as society in general becomes more tolerant of the many differences among us and the rights of all individuals equally to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

(Jim Evans is a 28-year veteran of the health and fitness industry and a professional consultant specializing in marketing to the senior population. He is Executive Director of Heartland Health Center in Boone, Iowa.)

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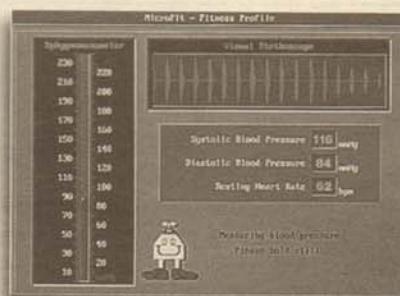
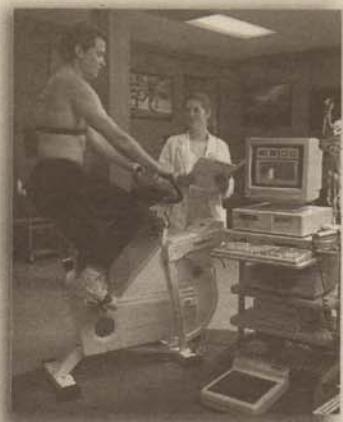
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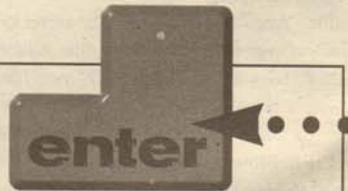
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## MAXLIFE... The Leader In Senior Fitness

**G**oodyear, Arizona - Jerry and Donna Yost are the Directors of MAXLIFE™, a facility established to serve the residents of the Robson Active Adult Community where it is housed. There are four Robson Adult Living Communities with the first MAXLIFE established in the Robson Pebble Creek Golf Resort which has a population of 1,000. Remarkably, over 80% of the residents of the Pebble Creek Golf Resort are participating at MAXLIFE. A second MAXLIFE facility will soon be under construction for the Robson Sun Lakes Community with a population of over 13,000.

"Here, everyone in this program is improving in the areas of range of motion, strength, cardiorespiratory capability and flexibility," Jerry Yost said. "And 100 percent of the participants use resistance training."

The secret to MAXLIFE's success is this: It incorporates education with individually-tailored, fully-supervised exercise programs. It is fast and fun. And it's designed to be anxiety free.

Participants age 40 to 84 are started with an education and physical assessment. After that, each participant is assigned an individualized program aimed at improving overall health and fitness while taking into consideration special needs. The Yosts and their staff take extra steps to ensure that men and women, re-

gardless of their prior exercise histories, overcome fears about beginning a fitness program in a center equipped

with state-of-the-art Universal resistance equipment, the Aerex Body pump and numerous cardiovascular exercise machines.

"We start with the assumption that people really don't know how to exercise," Yost said. (See MAXLIFE page 30)



(L to R) Sandra Perlmuter, Exec. Dir. President's Council on Phy. Fitness, Ed Robson, CEO Robson Communities, Donna & Jerry Yost, MaxLife Directors

# Reebok Skywalker Coming On Strong!

**D**allas, Texas - The Skywalker, a high-tech, easy to use walking exercise machine had taken the health club industry by storm beginning with the CLUB INDUSTRY Show in the fall of 1994. The Skywalker is manufactured by Sports Specific International, a Calgary, Canada based company. The initial development and huge sales volume was directed by long-time industry veteran, Lee Guthrie. But, the problem appeared to be that the marketing was ahead of the product development. By the time SSI began to ship the first of thousands of Skywalker units for which they had orders, it was clear that the machine had several flaws which had to be corrected before they would be acceptable to the commercial market. The primary problem was with the high pressure silicone resistance system which was developing leaks and ultimately causing the machines to malfunction and breakdown.

Fast forward one and one half years. Exit Lee Guthrie. Enter Don Gronachan, formerly of Cybex. Don Gronachan is now the CEO and President of SSI.

Gronachan reports that al-

though "there has been a lot of stress related to the Skywalker... things are looking up. We stopped production longer than we had hoped, but we knew we had only one chance to make the right corrections and get it right. Now, of the 400 units shipped since December, 1995, we have only one malfunction reported and that was caused by an easily repaired loose bolt. Prior to a restart of production and mass shipping, we had 10 test units in the field with the new modification and we experienced no service calls at all."

When asked what had been done to correct the problems, Gronachan explained, "We replaced the original silicone resistance system with a new system. The new system is expensive, but it is much more reliable than the original system. It is still a silicone system, but it is not pressurized and can be serviced very simply if needed."

Gronachan explained that due to the delay time in delivering orders and the problems with the orders that were delivered, a lot of Skywalker orders were cancelled. He explained that the cancellations were certainly understandable. But, he also in-

dicated that the enthusiasm for the revised models which have been delivered is very high and that the club members really like and use the Skywalkers a lot.

In respect to the 600 Skywalkers that had been shipped prior to the improvements, SSI has made a commitment to replace the resistance system of every one of them with the new system and will at the same time be making other modifications as necessary to bring the machines up to par with the new version.

The Skywalker interest level in the media continues to soar. Lifestyle Magazine has given it a great write up. Playboy featured it in their April, 1996 edition, it was featured in Popular Science - "Best of What's New" for 1995, it will be shown in a prominent national commercial in the near future and they have been approached to use it in an upcoming feature film. All of the positive things that are happening now give Gronachan the satisfaction of "seeing the light at the end of the tunnel" and an expectation that the Reebok Skywalker will be as exciting as its original kick-off. Gronachan indicated that they are now shipping ap-

proximately 300 of the revised units per month and when they are at full production capacity, they will be able to ship 1,000 per month. At \$5995 per unit, (slightly less than the average price of the top eight treadmills) that should make the investors of SSI happy.

Unisen, the makers of Star Trac Treadmills, had previously been representing Skywalker in the marketplace, but it was recently announced that the representation agreement between Skywalker and Unisen was being mutually terminated." Gronachan explained, "We all agreed that this was the best thing to do right now and we continue to work closely with Unisen to take care of our

customers and to wrap up this agreement in a friendly-amicable manner. The people at Unisen have been terrific to work with in this regard."

Rarely in the history of the club industry has a product hit the marketplace with such vigor as did the Skywalker by SSI. Although there were unforeseen problems with the initial units shipped, the Skywalker has been perfected significantly since the beginning and it is coming on strong. Don Gronachan is happy to see that they have been able to work through the problems and he expects great things for both the commercial and home model of the Reebok Skywalker.

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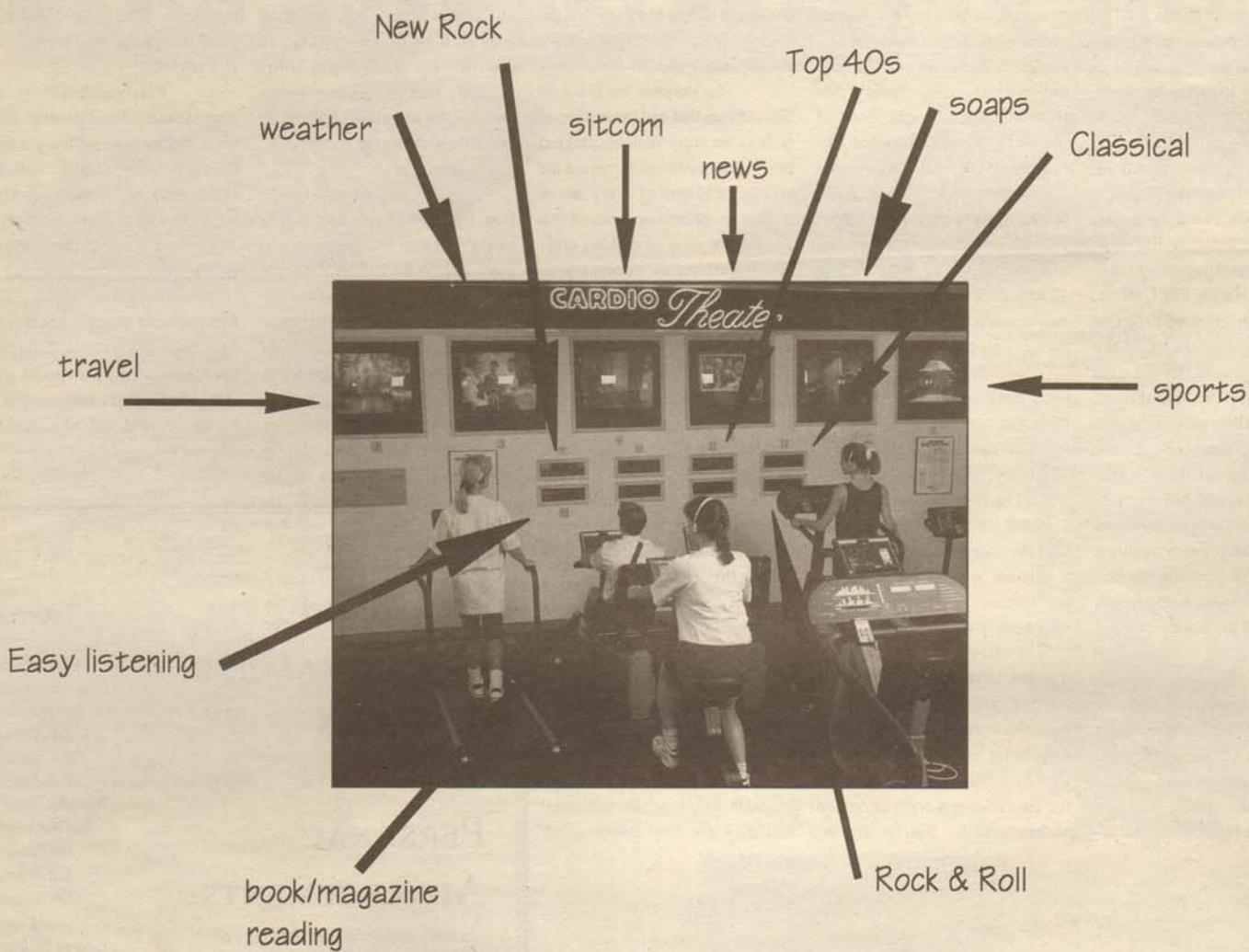


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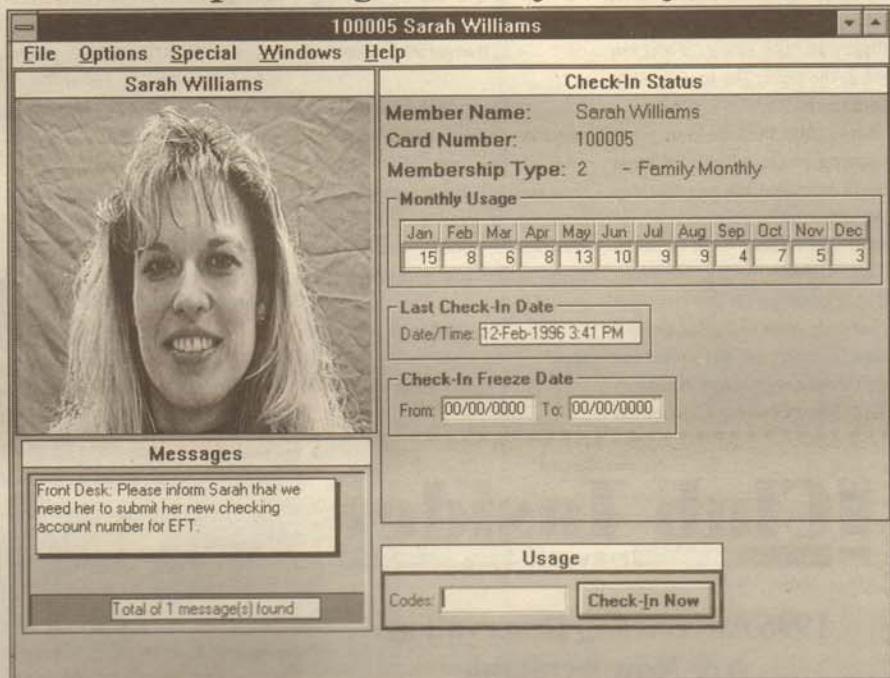
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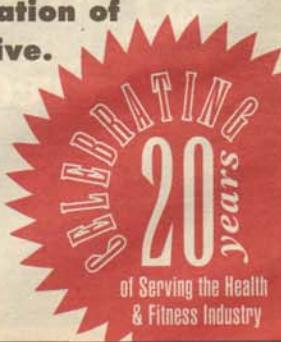
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# MARKETING MATTERS

With Mike Chaet, Ph.D.

Dear Mike,

I am building a new club. Could you give me some advice on pre-opening marketing? When should I start, what is the best strategy, how much should I spend?

Daren Carter  
Nicholasville Athletic Club  
Nicholasville, Kentucky

Hello Daren,

Pre-opening is a very exciting time for every club developer. It is also a time that carries the possibility of both high risks as well as high rewards. Your pre-opening should be well planned and carefully choreographed.

The general strategy is to take a STEP-PHASED approach to the development of your pre-opening promotions. If you have time you should schedule three or four pre-opening phases and one post-opening phase. This will give you at least four to five phases timed with the opening of your club.

To schedule the pre-opening phases start with the projected opening date of your club. Then count backward 60 days. That defines your "last" pre-opening phase, repeat the reverse count two more times. You should now have three 60-day, pre-opening phases. This will provide you with a six-month build-up program. Next, go back to your opening day once again and project forward sixty to ninety days. This is your "Grand Opening Period". Your first three phases will

come before you open your club and may be referred to as the "Charter Membership" phase. Each phase should be "capped" off with some type of party such as a "Sneak Preview", or "Ribbon Cutting" party. Each phase should have a "Special" membership package attached to it that will end at the conclusion of that phase, rolling into the next phase. The theory is "the earlier a person joins, the better the membership package is."

We include one post-opening phase as part of what could be called the pre-opening. We recommend this because we want you to start what is called your "Grand Opening Membership Special" on the day you open your club. This will be capped off approximately 60 days after the club is open with a blow-the-doors out "Grand Opening Celebration".

Party."

Each phase consists of 6 distinct and separate components:

1. The time periods.
2. The special membership name.
3. The membership benefit package.
4. The offer.
5. The cap or final day event.
6. Budget allocation.

By using these 6 components as a guideline in developing your pre-opening marketing period you will have it thoroughly covered. I have a chart which clarifies this article and I will be happy to forward it to you if you would like.

Good luck with your new club!

Mike Chaet

This month's question was submitted by Daren Carter of the new Nicholasville Athletic Club in Nicholasville, Kentucky. For submitting this month's question, Daren will receive a copy of Mike Chaet's latest video entitled: *HOW TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP SALES* (it contains more information on pre-opening strategies). If you have a marketing question for Mike Chaet, please submit it to him by fax at: (406) 449-0110 or mail to: Marketing Matters c/o CMS, Box 1156, Helena, Montana, 59624. For additional information, you may reach Mike at: (406) 449-5559.



**Mike Chaet, Ph. D**

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# Club FM -Wireless FM Entertainment Systems

**C**LUB 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 SILVA/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 is 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 and 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 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 carefully 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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# THE POWER OF LISTENING

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

**L**istening-we do it constantly. So why read an article to learn what we already know how to do?

Listening is natural!

Or..... is it? Ineffective listening is one of the most frequent causes of:

\*misunderstandings

\*mistakes

\*lower employee productivity and morale

\*missed sales

\*lost customers

\*billions of dollars of increased costs and lost profits

\*increased employee turnover

Ineffective listening is also acknowledged to be one of the primary contributors to divorce and to the inability of a parent and child to openly communicate.

And, people view poor listeners as self-centered, disinterested, preoccupied, and social boors!

If all of these negatives result from ineffective listening, why don't we listen effectively?

**1. Hard Work** - Listening is more than just keeping quiet. An active listener registers increased blood pressure, a higher pulse rate, and more perspiration. It means concentrating on the other person than on ourselves.

**2. Information Overload** - In today's society there is enormous competition for our attention from advertisements, radio, TV, movies, reading material, and more. With all these incoming stimuli, we have learned to screen out that information that we deem irrelevant. Sometimes we also screen out things that are important to us.

**3. Rush to Action** - We think we know what the person is going to say, so we jump in and interrupt, rather than taking the necessary time to listen and hear the person out.

**4. Speed Difference** -

There is considerable difference between speech speed and thought speed. The average person speaks at about 135 to 175 words a minute, but can listen to 400 to 500 words a minute. So, the poor listener spends all that time between the speed with which he listens and the speed with which he talks, on daydreams....or on thoughts of what he is going to say next.... or in mentally arguing with the person speaking. It's like listening to two voices at the same time.

**5. Lack of Training** - We do more listening than speaking, reading, or writing, yet we receive almost no formal education in listening. Remarkably, the average student gets less than one - half year of listening education through her first 12 years of schooling!

Although many people assume they are good listeners, few actually are. The average employee spends about three-



**Dr. Tony Alessandra**

age than a number of good listeners can correct.

The normal, untrained listener is likely to understand and retain only about 50% of a conversation, and this relatively poor percentage drops to an even less impressive 25% retention rate 48 hours later. This means that recall of a particular conversation that took place more than a couple of days ago will always be incomplete and usually inaccurate. No wonder people can seldom agree about what was discussed!

Listening well-listening actively - is obviously important, but how does it really benefit you?

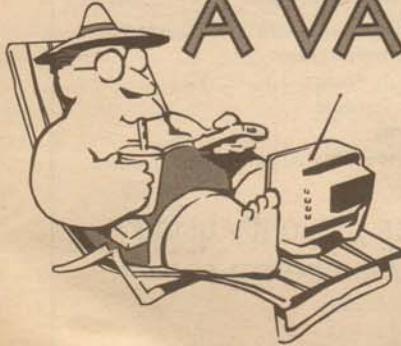
**Active listening:**

1. Improves the environment at work, at home, and in sales.

2. Reduces relationship tensions and hostilities.

3. Saves time by reducing (See Alessandra page 20)

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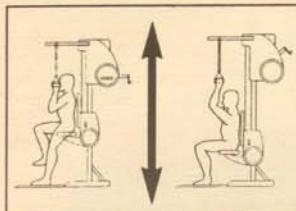
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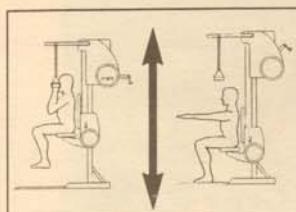


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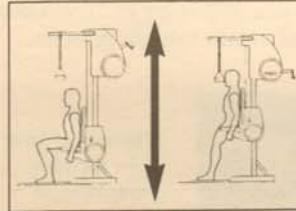
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# U. S. Total Fitness Sued For \$10 Million!

**C**incinnati, Ohio - A class action lawsuit was filed in Montgomery County Common Pleas Court against U.S. Total Fitness of Cincinnati, Inc. on behalf of consumers in Southwestern Ohio who have purchased health club memberships from that organization. The lawsuit makes claims on behalf of two classes of Ohio consumers.

The first class includes all consumers who signed contracts at any U.S. Total Fitness location in Southwestern Ohio which either (i) did not contain a notice of the consumer's right to cancel and obtain a refund within three days of signing the contract or (ii) which included a non-refundable "One Time Membership Fee". The lawsuit seeks the refund of all amounts paid by the consumers in this class and a court order barring U.S. Total Fitness from entering into com-

parable contracts in the future.

The second class includes all consumers who purchased health club memberships at U.S. Total Fitness' planned club in Forest Park Plaza, Dayton, Ohio. That health club never opened. The lawsuit claims that U.S. Total Fitness (i) knew that the Forest Park Plaza location would never open when it sold memberships to that facility and (ii) refused to refund the membership fees it collected for that facility. The lawsuit seeks the refund of all Forest Park Plaza membership fees and punitive damages.

U.S. Total Fitness filed an answer to this lawsuit on February 22, 1996, which denied the allegations of fraud and the use of deceptive acts or practices amongst other denials. Mike Polombo, a Principal of U.S. Total Fitness of Cincinnati, Inc. had not returned numerous phone calls by press time.

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# Olympic Watch: Atlanta Georgia

**ACCOMODATIONS** - If you are coming to the Olympics in Atlanta, you need to hurry as hotel accommodations within 30 miles of the city have been booked for over a year. The only available close-in accommodations are private residences which may be accessed in two ways:

(1) Contact the Atlanta Journal/Constitution Newspaper circulation department at (800) 944-

7363. They have a special Friday edition subscription which includes listings of private residences for rent as well as the latest Olympic news. The cost of this special Olympic subscription is \$31.20 for 8 weeks. Only prepaid credit card orders are accepted.

(2) The Olympic committee has accumulated a number of rental listings for the games. To

obtain information on the available properties, call (214) 851-4010. You should expect to be shocked when you receive the information on these home rentals. Many Atlantans are looking at the home rental program as a good way to "make a fast buck" and are charging exorbitant rates.

popular events are long gone. However, PREMIUM TICKET PACKAGES are still available by calling (404) 548-1596. But, they are only available in corporate group packages starting at \$22,500 each! And, the ONLY method of payment they are accepting is a VISA card.

**HUDSPETH REPORT** the Pulse of Atlanta is a monthly publication providing the best information available on Atlanta's night-life and dining opportunities. Published by veteran Atlanta columnists, Ron Hudspeth, the **HUDSPETH REPORT** will help you maximize your time while in Atlanta. With your credit card in hand, call (404) 255-3220 to order your subscription.

## ...Alessandra

continued from page 14

mistakes and misunderstandings.

4. Reduces employee turnover.

5. Leads to early problem solving.

6. Increases sales and profits.

With all of these benefits, I'm sure you agree that listening is more than just a natural behavior and that it requires some work to improve. But, what's the secret to improving your listening skills? To listen effectively, you must CARESS those you're listening to:

**CONCENTRATE** - focus your attention on the speaker and only on the speaker. This means eliminating or ignoring internal distractions (your own thoughts) and environmental disruptions (noise, passersby, telephone, etc.) If possible, the best tactic is to create a receptive, distraction-free-environment for the conversation.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** - acknowledge your speaker by demonstrating your interest and attention. This should be done both verbally and non-verbally. For example, it's important to let the person know you're listening by saying, "Uh-huh," "I see," and so on. At the same time, be sure to give non-verbal feedback, such as nodding your head, using good eye contact and slightly leaning toward the speaker.

**RESEARCH** - gather information about your speaker through the skillful use of questions and statements. You need an inquiring mind to keep the conversation going so it's a dialogue, not a monologue. Play off the theme of the

speaker's message. Ask questions that increase your understanding and draw the speaker out. Start with broad, open-ended questions, then follow with specific, closed-ended questions as the conversation progresses. Follow each topic of conversation to its logical conclusion. Use questions to expand the discussion, clarify unclear points or redirect the conversation to another topic area. Give verbal feedback that you understand what is being said and felt.

**EMOTIONAL Control** - exercising emotional control means dealing successfully with highly charged subjects or sensitive words and statements in a manner that allows you to remain focused on the theme of the speaker's message. To exercise emotional control, it helps to be aware of your sensitivities, which include disinterest in the subject under discussion, emotionally charged words, bad grammar, a limited vocabulary or topics such as religion and politics. You might also be overly sensitive to the speaker's poor posture, unkept appearance or accent. Being aware of sensitive areas helps you control, or preferably eliminate, your emotional reactions, allowing you to concentrate on the speaker's message.

**SENSING** - keep your eyes and ears open to the vocal and visual messages, in addition to the verbal messages. Be an astute observer of body language - hands, facial expressions, and body postures - to notice departures from the "norm" for that person. In addition, listen for emotions conveyed in the speaker's vocal qualities - speed, volume, pitch, rhythm, inflection and clarity. Taken together, your vocal

**TICKETS** - Virtually all of the good tickets for the most

and visual observations will help you determine the speaker's emotional state and intent, as well as the speaker's content.

**STRUCTURE** - structuring is listening primarily to the verbal component - the content of someone's message. The structuring process revolves around three primary activities - indexing, sequencing and comparing. Indexing refers to taking mental or written notes of the topic or major idea; the key points being discussed; and the reasons, sub-points and/or supporting points. Sequencing is listening for order or priority. Sometimes someone tells you something in which the order is very important or you are given instructions or directions where the order is crucial. Comparing is concentrating on the points that the speaker is making so that you can discriminate between fact and theory, positive and negative, actual and projected advantages and disadvantages. As you listen, you're involved in a continual process of comparing ideas, options, attitudes, facts, feelings and beliefs. Structure or organize the information to get through your listening, observation and note taking. You need to keep track of the speaker's message.

Although the six skills are all relatively simple to learn, implementing them may be a more difficult task, because to do so means breaking through a barrier of poor listening habits that most of us have developed over a lifetime.

The payoff for improving your listening skills and becoming an active listener is obviously enormous. The benefits are yours simply for the - listening!

(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. This article is

from Tony's new audio album *The Dynamics of Effective Listening*. To receive more information and a free video demo, contact Holli Catchpole at (800) 222-4383.

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portance of a MicroFit computerized evaluation - it's truly more than just a fitness test. Show how the Hoist free weight design offers advantages for their benefit.

Most major companies like Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, StairMaster, TrackMaster, etc. have all spent a great deal of time and money researching and improving their products with the members in mind. Do not just talk about the equipment on the tour, however. Listen to their comments and be knowledgeable about how your club's specific equipment can help them meet their own personal goals. Ask the prospect questions and make sure you have correct answers. Study your equipment operational manuals and learn to use it properly. Know your product!

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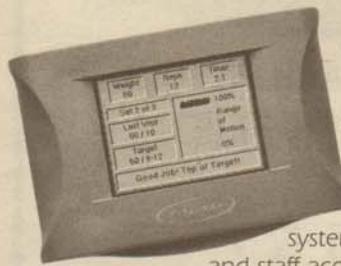
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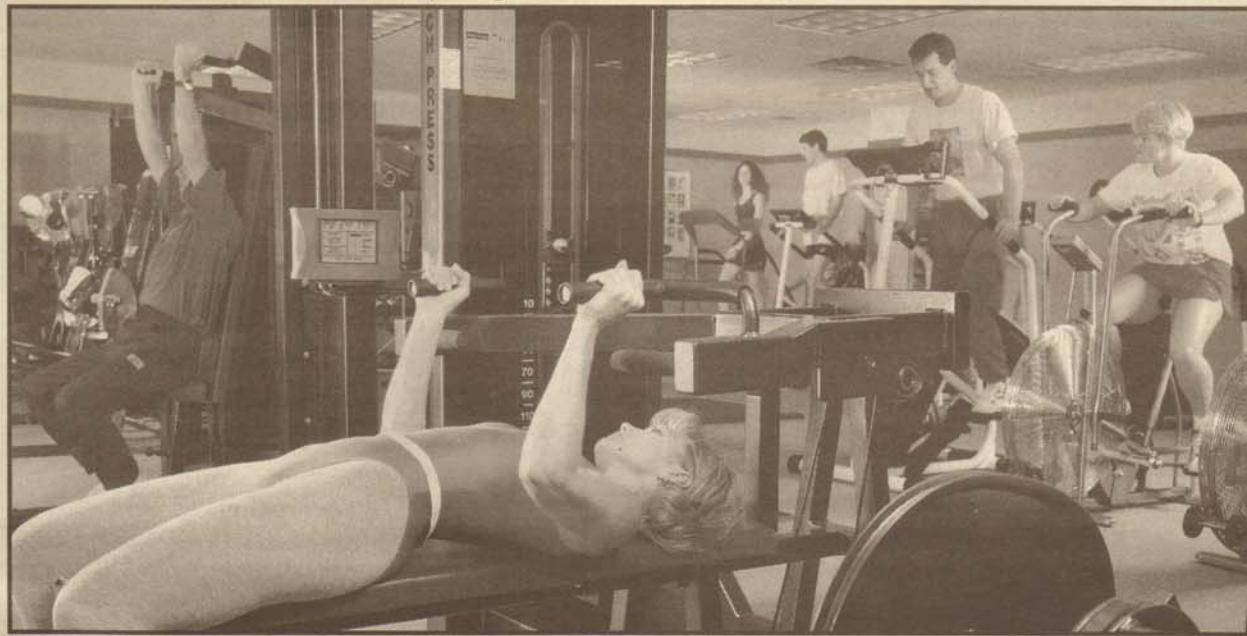
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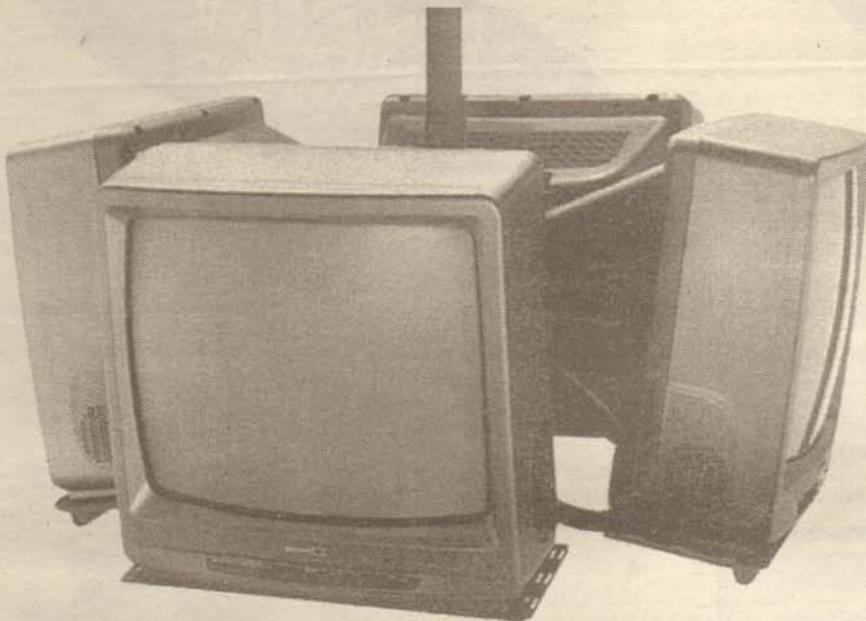
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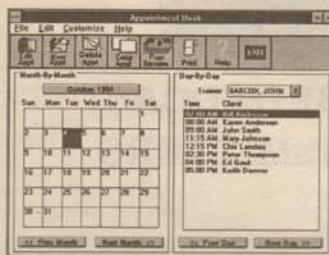
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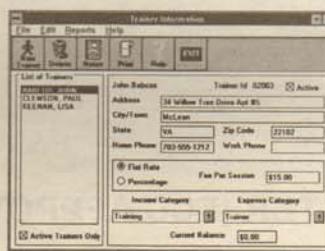
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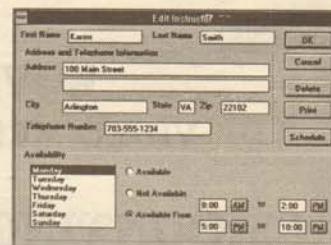
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# ...Cirulli

continued from page 3

things on his list except two. They were to learn how to fly and to have \$1 million in cash in the bank. Within three years these two things were also accomplished. He gives the book "Think and Grow Rich" credit for being a very inspirational tool and he still uses vast reading and self-improvement tapes for personal development of himself and his staff.

In 1984 he had been informed that "outside competition" was coming to Gainesville. It was at that time he decided to build his women's club. Since 1984, his women's only club has been terrifically successful and an excellent compliment to his co-ed club, because the members of his 14,000 square-foot women's club also get membership privileges in his co-ed facility. He believes that this arrangement has been instrumental in giving him a competitive edge in his market.

## FIRST MAJOR MOVE

For years Cirulli had been driving by a Winn Dixie Grocery store located in a local shopping center thinking what a great location it would make for his growing club. One night he got a call from a friend who told him that the Winn Dixie store had just closed that day. He immediately contacted the owner and landlord of the shopping center to attempt to lease the former Winn Dixie space. He recalls, "the landlord was a 78-year old man named Mr. Cone. When I met with him the first time he flatly stated that 'no health club' is going into my shopping center." But, in typical Cirulli fashion, he persisted. He kept going back time and again. Soon, he had made good friends with Mr. Cone's 60+ year old assistant, "Mrs. B.," who became Joe's best ally in his quest for the 22,000 square-foot space. Cirulli spent over four months trying to sell Mr. Cone on the idea of leasing the space to him when one day he decided to try another tact. He decided to "bribe" Mr. Cone. So, first he sent Mr. Cone a box of his favorite cigars. The next day he sent a case of his favorite bourbon. On and on he wooed Mr. Cone with gifts....and each time he would be sure to have the gifts delivered by a beautiful young woman. These gifts and deliveries began to move Mr. Cone in Joe's direction. One day Cirulli was driving through the old Winn Dixie parking lot when he spotted Mr. Cone.

He stopped to talk to him and Cone said, "Joe, I'm leaning toward you." It was then that Joe knew he was going to make the deal. A couple of days later he was waiting for Mr. Cone in his office when he heard Mrs. B tell a caller, "I don't know if a health club will be going into that space, but if one does, it will be the Gainesville Health and Fitness Center. Thanks for calling." Joe told a group of his older members about his quest for the bigger space. It turned out that many of them were old friends of Cone and they all went to his office one day to pitch Cone on leasing the space to Cirulli. After six months of persistence, the deal was done.

Cirulli leased the 22,000 square-foot space and built it out for his club relocation. He moved in July, 1986. Unfortunately, Mr. Cone passed away the week after Cirulli moved in. Cirulli kept on his growth mission for the next ten years expanding the club to 32,000 square feet and capturing the market place in the process.

### MED X and PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER

Joe Cirulli took Karate lessons for four years and obtained his "Black Belt." One day when sparring, his knee was severely injured after his opponent kicked him during a match. He had surgery to repair the damage and began to go to physical therapy sessions for rehabilitation of the knee.

While attending the physical therapy sessions he noticed that the process left a lot to be desired and believed he could do better. Joe ended up going back to his health club and rehabilitating himself. During that timeframe Cirulli had five lines of Nautilus in his new location. But, one day, while flying in the central Florida skies, he decided to "drop-in" on Nautilus inventor Arthur Jones' backyard airport for an unannounced visit. During that visit, which ended up lasting nine hours, Jones told Cirulli about his secret development plans for a new company of both physical therapy and exercise equipment. At the time, Jones didn't have a name for the company. From 1987 to 1992, Cirulli worked with Arthur Jones in developing this new line of machines which were targeted to both the health and fitness world and the physical therapy/rehab business. The name of the new company..... MED X.

Arthur Jones had in-

vented a Low-Back machine which provided greater and faster results than anything available in the physical therapy world. In conjunction with the Low-Back machine he also developed other physical therapy machines for legs and neck.

Since he had been a physical therapy patient, Cirulli had come to understand the deficiencies of a traditional physical therapy center. And, his efforts in development of Arthur Jones' new line of MED X - therapy and exercise machines included extensive testing and fine tuning of the equipment in both his co-ed and women's only facilities. They even used video to help in perfecting the MED X lines. The result has been that MED X exercise machines are as smooth as silk and very easy to use.

While all of this was going on, Cirulli got word that the local hospital was going to build its own fitness center and rehab operations. At that point Cirulli resolved that if the hospital was going to go into "his" business and try to compete with him, he would go into "their" business and compete with them. He was sure he could do a better job of physical therapy than the place did for him while he was a patient. It was in 1988 that Cirulli opened his Physical Therapy Center within his newly expanded club. This move may prove to be one of the most financially rewarding moves in the history of the club industry. Using the perfected MED X Low-

Back, Leg and Neck Physical Therapy Machines, Cirulli began to provide an alternative to the local physical therapy centers around Gainesville. His PT business grew to over \$1 million in revenues by 1994! And, his club continued to grow and prosper as he had developed a terrific system and team for his club operations.

## TENURE WINS!

Red Lerille, of Lafayette, Louisiana, may be the most successful single club operator in the world. He has proven that taking care of your employees and keeping them happy and on board over the long haul pays great financial dividends. Although 1200 miles apart, there are distinct similarities between these two operators when it comes to keeping staff on board for the long haul. Cirulli has an impressive line-up of long term employees with tenure ranging from 20 years for Karen Coley-Canon, 18 years for Lorrie Hannon and brother Danny Cirulli, 11 years for Joe's Dad, Armand Cirulli, Kay Goodrich and Glen Purdy, 9 years for sister, Linda Cirulli-Burton and Danny Stevens and 7 years for Todd Waters. Recently, Jan Matkozich, who had been with Joe for 16 years departed to take on a role with a rehab center in Tampa, Florida. Cirulli has developed a terrific team of sharp, enthusiastic employees who take great pride and enjoy their work.

## A NEW WORLD CLASS FACILITY

Consider this. Consider a guy who started with a 1,500 square-foot facility and only \$1,700. Now, imagine what effort it has taken to open on March 1, 1996, a new-state-of-the-art 51,000 square-foot facility which can best be described as truly WORLD CLASS! The new center has a beautiful peach-colored, Florida styled stucco exterior. It is situated on 11.5 acres and Cirulli has reserved 5 of those acres for the development of surrounding medical buildings. You enter the facility through a grand lobby with elegant finishings throughout. The CARDIO THEATER with 80 pieces of LIFE FITNESS and STAIRMASTER equipment is viewed from the lobby foyer on the left as you enter. The locker rooms adjoin a five-lane, 25-yard lap pool with a huge whirlpool big enough for 20 people. Next to the Cardio Theater is the MED X Exercise floor with 65 new MED X exercise machines. Adjacent to the MED X floor is a 3,600 square-foot state-of-the-art aerobic studio. Just past the MED X floor is a beautiful 6,000 square-foot basketball gym. Upstairs is a large 8,000 square-foot free weight room featuring MUSCLE DYNAMICS and HAMMER STRENGTH equipment. The weight room has a viewing gallery overlooking the CardioTheater - MED X room on one side and the basketball gym on

(See Cirulli page 27)

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# TENNIS PROS 101

By Spike Gonzales

If you manage a club with tennis courts, you've likely had significant challenges in dealing with tennis pros. It's quite possible, in fact, you've gotten on the "opposite side of the fence" from your tennis pros, sometimes finding them an irritant to your business life.

When dealing with disagreeable others, good managers understand there are always two sides of a story. Great managers make the assumption that they can be either wrong or faulty in their own perspective and operate to re-educate themselves.

I frequently encounter managers who've concluded that tennis pros are a non-motivated or unreliable lot. The common scenario: the manager has become accustomed to hearing members complain that pros do not return phone calls on a timely basis. Pros are frequently late for meetings and show up unprepared. They also leave the courts in disarray and barely show up on time for their lessons. They're sloppy with their administrative work. They fall short of what's expected of them in assisting the re-

ception desk in fee collections and being accountable for who's on the courts..... and so on and so on.

For those of us wishing to be great managers, let's take a look at things from the hourly pro's perspective. Here it is:

"To make a reasonable living, I need to work three-to-four-hour shifts on the court, fully immersing myself in educating and entertaining my clients. During this time I'm not only stretched mentally and physically, but don't get to take coffee breaks or even bathroom breaks."

When I get off the court, I've got a dozen details to handle with my lesson scheduling, and I'm lucky if I can find some workspace or an available phone to use. With my lunch hour break, should I go to the bathroom, have lunch, catch my breath — or immediately handle the ten messages the desk has given me? (Unlike my non-teaching associates, I cannot handle inquiries or problems as they arise. Instead these face me in a mountainous bundle when I otherwise could use a break.)

Because of the demands on the courts and the nuances of my clients' schedules, I often start workdays by 7:00 a.m. and finish

some days at 11:00 p.m. My work weeks are at least 5 1/2 days, including at least one of the weekend days. I'm often needed for very long full work weekends when special events are scheduled. Sure, I get flexibility to take a weekday off, but my spouse and friends aren't available then; so I might as well work anyway!

When I go to see the Club Manager, she is always so busy. I have to wait 20 minutes just to see her, and then she seems irritated or rushed. She occasionally asks me to attend meetings with staff members. They're on paid time, while I often have to cancel a lesson and my related pay to be there. And if the meeting is at 11:00 am, I'm criticized for being five minutes late coming from my 10:00 lesson. Should I cancel that one also?"

Sharing the pro's perspective lends to some elementary steps to bring them on to the same side of the fence as management. Some of these steps are:

1. Provide structure for the pros to work around. They should have set weekly times for staff meetings and personal meetings with their managers, and the non-teaching personnel should stretch to have these at times when

the pros wouldn't otherwise be teaching.

2. Be accessible and reliable to them. Their schedules are often rigid. (You wouldn't want them rescheduling lessons as freely as you may reschedule meetings in your routine.)

3. Be sure the pros have reasonable desk space and phone accessibility.

4. Be empathetic to their lifestyle. They should be recognized for their long and varied hours, and rewarded with appropriately tailored perks such as expense accounts and scheduling plans to allow them to go to conferences.

5. Set up administrative procedures for the reception staff to handle lesson scheduling and train desk staff to screen and assist with pro-related issues.

It's not difficult to develop a bias related to tennis pros. They can come across as selfish with their time, irresponsible and non team players. However, the manager attempting to see their perspective can greatly benefit the business with some shared problem solving.



**Spike Gonzales**

(Spike Gonzales has been building tennis markets since 1971. An influential member of the USPTA, USTA and IHRSA, he was involved in bringing those organizations together in founding the National Tennis Rating Program. He presently serves as an advisor to Tencaps R, a USPTA-endorsed tennis handicap and rating system. As President of AD-In Club Management and the owner of The Naples Racquet Club in Naples, Florida, he specializes in the development of pros and managers in the tennis industry.)



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## Alessandra On...

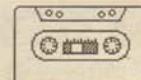
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**...Cirulli**

continued from page 25

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lumbia North Florida Regional Medical Center. After getting to know each other and learning about Cirulli's plans for his new \$6+ million facility, the hospital and Cirulli got together to look at the numbers on a possible "merged" Physical Therapy Center. The initial financial analysis was positive about the economies of a merger of the two physical therapy centers. This led to a deal between the two organizations before the facility plans were finalized, allowing Cirulli to tailor make the Physical Therapy Center within his 51,000 square-foot facility. It is truly a winning proposition for both parties because the hospital is able to focus on what it does best while at the same time enjoying the economic benefits of a first class physical therapy operation run by Cirulli. Cirulli wins because they will be able to grow their physical therapy business

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**Norm's Notes** **Club Insider**

dramatically (Cirulli projects \$3 million in Physical Therapy) while receiving income for his Center for space rental, equipment leases and management fees before the profits are split with the hospital. A second ReQuest Physical Therapy Center opened in the women's-only center, too.

**GREAT  
OPPORTUNITY FOR  
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ENTREPRENEURS**

**J**oe Cirulli now has plans to roll out nationwide this model for a physical therapy center within a fitness center. He feels that after almost 10 years of physical therapy experience combined with 21 years in the fitness business he has developed a formula for success. If properly applied, it will give many club operators a terrific opportunity for increased profits and better service to the communities they serve. Cirulli may be the single most qualified person in the world to provide guidance in this area. He has, as they say, "Been there..... done that!" Arthur Jones and Jim Flanagan of MED-X have a great operator in Cirulli representing the MED-X product line. And, Cirulli has built a true show place for people to see MED-X in action. Not only did Cirulli work with Arthur Jones in developing MED-X, he has purchased and installed nearly \$750,000 worth of MED-X products in his facility. In short, he practices what he preaches.

**A TRULY  
GRAND OPENING!!**

**J**oe Cirulli does every-

**...Norm's  
Notes**

continued from page 5

AND HOTEL SERVICES, were recently showcased on the **OPRAH WINFREY SHOW** as having one of the top ten most exciting and interesting jobs in the world. The show aired on Thursday, February 22, and focused on the company's "SECRET SHOPPER" service. In case you are not familiar with the "Secret Shopper" service you ought to check it out. Jeff can be reached in Fairfax, Virginia at: (800) 777-6699.

My apologies to **ROBERT PRITIKIN** and The Pritikin Longevity Center for misspelling his

thing in a first class manner. Take for example his Grand Opening Celebrations. On Thursday night, February 29th, he hosted the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Meeting with attendance - over 1,500. On Friday night, March 1, 1996, he hosted an Open House for his members and guests. Attendance was over 2,500 even though the attendees had to endure a driving rain storm and a huge traffic jam getting into and out of the parking lot. Cars were backed up for 1/2 mile in either direction with people arriving at the facility.

The facility exterior and decor can best be described as, "elegant, but very functional." It is very well planned. The reaction of the members and guests was excitement and happiness at the prospect of exercising in this new world class place. Maybe the best expression of glee came from one lady who exclaimed immediately upon entering, "Oh..... what a wonderful place!"

The new Gainesville Health and Fitness Center gives you a feeling upon arrival that you have just come to a resort in the Caribbean. On the night of the Grand Opening, Cirulli stationed a five piece Reggae band in the lobby playing lively music to set the tone of the evening. Greeting all guests upon arrival was Bridgette, who did a terrific job of controlling the arrival traffic and accounting for attendance by having guests sign in the register and members check in at the desk. The entire staff of the GH&FC

name in last month's edition. Also ditto apologies to **MIKE SILVA**, of the **HEALTH STAR CLUB** in Ramsey, N.J. and **PETER ZAPELL** of **AEREX BODY PUMP** for misspelling their names in previous editions.

**FAT CITY UPDATE.....** my friend described in our January edition of The CLUB INSIDER News article entitled: "American Boomers In Fat City" informs me that he has now lost 19 pounds and is sticking to his regular exercise program with dedication. He also has signed up for the **NUTREX** Program which is helping people now in over 400 health clubs to modify their eating habits and nutritional plans.

**MARCH ISSUE**

did a tremendous job during the party and everybody who entered was greeted and told goodbye when they departed. Importantly, Cirulli and his staff had just completed a grueling, intense weeklong move from the former facility to the new facility that required twelve (12) - 48' truck loads! So, even though they were all exhausted from the move, everybody was sharp and energized. Cirulli's efforts with this Grand Opening week did not go unrewarded. His sales staff sold over 400 new memberships that week..... including 149 on Grand Opening day alone!

**LEGENDARY  
STATUS -  
JOE CIRULLI IS  
ONE OF THE TOP  
CLUB OPERATORS  
IN THE COUNTRY!**

**T**here are just a few people in the health, racquet and sportsclub industry who can be described as "legendary" because of what they have accomplished. Ray Wilson with 49 years in the business is one. Red Lerille with 33 years in business is another. Joe Cirulli is attaining legendary status in our industry and you should make plans to go to Florida to see his facility and what he does. Cirulli is an honest, down-to-earth, hands-on operator who is always willing to share his knowledge. He is leading the way as the #1 fitness center operator in his market and he is one of the top operators in America.

Congratulations to Joe and his Team from The CLUB INSIDER News!

He plans to begin the Nutrex Program the 1st of April.

**RICHARD TRANT**, our good friend in Boston who had a terrible auto accident on Super Bowl Sunday, is doing very well in his recovery. He tells me he is hearing from people from all over the country due to our note in the February edition and he appreciates the calls and letters a great deal. He projects that he will spend another six to eight weeks in the hospital before he can go home. In case you missed his address in last month's CLUB INSIDER News, here it is again: Mr. Richard Trant, Youville Hospital, West 2- Room 222, Cambridge, Ma. 02138.

# 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

**A**s a club operator you want to maintain your fitness equipment as cost effectively as possible. I want to share a conversation with one of the best service technicians to ever work in the fitness industry. The insight and knowledge he has accumulated with his years of experience will help you get more out of your fitness equipment.

Udo Von Zabuesnig, (we call him 'Udo') has been around the fitness business for years and was the 'top-dog' for service and product research development for the Unisen Company, makers of the Star Trac Treadmills. Working for Star Trac has made him a bit of a celebrity and we were very excited here at Fitness Systems, Inc. when he was put under contract to head up our refurbishing facility. It was very important to us because we saw

the problems with the pre-owned equipment business. They stem from the lack of professional service technicians who are trained on all top brand commercial fitness machines and can effectively (the first time) diagnose immediate and potential problems, then refurbish them properly to eliminate service problems and guarantee an extended lifespan for the pre-owned equipment. It takes years of experience to be able to 'trouble shoot' and not just replace a part that has failed.

Udo's specialty is treadmills, so let's see what he has to say about them.

SP: "Udo, working for Unisen has made you well known in the fitness equipment business. What else have you done?

UDO: Yes, Steve, working for Unisen has made me a bit of a celebrity, but actually that was the easiest work I do. I have been refurbishing fitness equipment to be shipped to Europe for some time. The equipment has to work right because the down time in Europe can be long. I have lots of success stories overseas!

SP: Udo, after refurbish-

ing as many treadmills as you have, what would you say is the number one cause of treadmill break-downs?

UDO: Dirt, actually laziness, or not regularly cleaning your treadmills. The purpose of a treadmill is to move the ground below you so you can jog or walk in place. The electronic components are there to help move the belt and raise the elevation. When the belt moves over (the deck), gets scratched and roughed up, the friction builds up. It's like trying to jog while dragging a 50 lb weight on the ground behind you. Yeah, you can still jog, but you have to work much harder and you will tire and break-down much faster than if you weren't dragging it! Once your deck gets worn, your treadmills have to work much harder, heat builds up and you burn out your electronic parts such as your lower and upper control boards, which is a common service problem. You'll also kick off circuit breakers which shut off your treadmill and can throw your member to the ground. This will also wear out your treadmill's

belt much faster which can be costly.

It's really very easy to maintain your treadmills, as long as you do a little every week!

It's amazing how some clubs ignore any maintenance tasks and then get mad when their treadmills do breakdown. I've had to service treadmills where the deck had 2 grooves in it. And the clubs were angry with the treadmill's manufacturer because they broke down so often. But, after I changed the deck, belt and cleaned it, I showed them how to keep it clean themselves. They rarely had service problems after that..... you need to realize that commercial fitness equipment was built to have its worn-out parts replaced and to be used hard again after refurbishment. That's why they're built so you can easily replace the moving parts that wear out from use. All the moving components on your treadmills will wear out at some point, no big deal, just replace them. But the better you maintain and clean your treadmills, the longer its parts will last. Clean your treadmills underneath the running belt and inside and around the

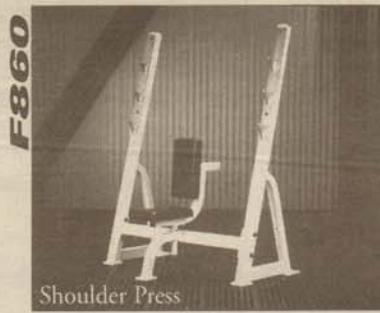
motor and the electronic parts. You can expect to double or triple your treadmill's life expectancy.

Steve, I have a great little report I put together that I can give to your readers. It's a step-by-step, 'how to' guide to change the motor brushes in your treadmill's motor. This will keep their motors running longer and keep the noise way down. If you pay the postage and printing costs for your readers, I will give it to them FREE!

SP: That's great UDO! O.K. readers, please call me at (800) 325-1968 and I will mail you this report. And thanks a lot UDO!

**Tip of the Month:** To get your best prices on replacement parts for your existing equipment and FREE technical phone assistance, call National Gym Supply at (800) 496-7278 and ask for John or Kurt.

(Steve Paterson is the V.P. of marketing and sales for Pre-Owned fitness at Fitness Systems, Inc. (formerly Commercial Fitness Systems) a division of Healthline, Inc. Call (800) 325-1968 for your current, pre-owned inventory price list.)



Shoulder Press

- 180 degree pivoting seat allows rack to be in front or behind body while using adjustable back pad for proper alignment of various body widths.
- 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.
- Adjustable seat for wide range of heights.
- Footrest for better back support and upper chest isolation.
- Unique racking system combines good looks with safety and function. Optional plate holder. (not shown)

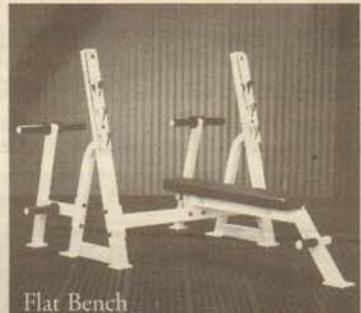
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Flat Bench

- 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 piece pad for better body support. Optional plate holders. (not shown)

# Certification Of Personal Trainers

By Ed Gaut

One of the frequent themes of this column has been the importance of hiring qualified personal trainers. A top-notch personal training program starts with top-notch staff. That is the essential ingredient. While personality and enthusiasm are important qualities in personal trainer, ultimately what qualifies a personal trainer is his knowledge of exercise and fitness.

If your personal trainers do not have the necessary knowledge and skill, they will not be able to train your members safely and effectively. That means at best your trainers will be cheating your members, and at worst, injuring them.

Personal training programs are built on word of mouth. People chose a personal trainer based on recommendations of friends or relatives as much as on anything else. If your facility develops a reputation for personal trainers who know what they are doing, who get results quickly and safely, your program will thrive. If, on the other hand, your facility develops a reputation for having personal trainers who do not know what they are doing or worse, injure people, your program will not last very long.

Remember that injuries in your facility, whether your staff's fault or not, always exposes your facility to potential liability. This is particularly true if a member is injured while under the direction of one of your staff as is the case during personal training. Certification of your personal trainers will put at least one layer of protection between your facility and a lawsuit.

The problem is finding qualified staff. Almost anyone who

has at least six months of experience working out considers himself a fitness expert. Fortunately, hiring qualified staff has been made easier by the development of personal trainer certification programs. Requiring your personal trainers to be certified by one of the major fitness certification organizations is the best way to ensure that your staff has the necessary knowledge and skills.

As demand for personal trainers has grown, so has the need for certification programs. In response, numerous organizations have sprung up in the last few years offering programs. Some of these programs are good, some are not. Unfortunately, many are set up by enterprising individuals and organizations simply as a way to cash in on the demand and make money. It is important to be wary of unknown organizations especially since many have impressive sounding names and acronyms. The following is a list of top certification organizations.

other than those on the list below, there are a number of things to look for: Check the pass rate of the certification test, which is the percentage of people taking the test who successfully pass. If it is high, ninety percent or more, the certification probably is not very rigorous. Check if the certification has a practical, hands-on examination. Again, if it has only a written test, it is probably not as rigorous. Finally, check the prerequisites required by the certification.

The better certifications, such as those listed below, require CPR and recommend a college degree in a related field or equivalent knowledge in order to obtain the certification. They also require continuing education credits and continued CPR certification to maintain the certification.

Also, make sure that the type of certification is applicable

as Junior Trainer and Trainer for non-certified and certified trainers. How much you allow your non-certified trainers to do is up to you. I would be wary of allowing them to train clients by themselves.

Once your staff is certified, they will need to maintain their certifications with continuing education. You and your staff should look upon this as an opportunity, not an obstacle. Taking continuing education fitness courses and attending fitness workshops will keep your staff motivated and provide them with new ideas and techniques for attracting and motivating members.

One of the fitness organizations that is leading the way in education for personal trainers is IDEA (800) 999-4332. They do not certify personal trainers, but they do provide continuing education classes for personal trainers and publish a magazine devoted exclusively to personal training. Once a year, IDEA hosts a Personal Training Summit, which is a convention specifically for personal trainers. While few fitness facilities can afford to pay for even some of their trainers to attend this event, every facility should encourage trainers to attend if at all possible.

While a successful personal trainer must have more than just a knowledge of exercise and fitness, having that knowledge is a necessity. Few fitness directors and club managers can afford the time to evaluate the fitness knowledge of potential staff members, let alone keep up with the changing state of fitness knowledge. Using the certification organizations to ensure that your personal training staff have the necessary knowledge and skills and keep up with changes in fitness training will enable you to provide your members with the best personal training staff possible.

*(Ed Gaut is a nationally known personal trainer and fitness author. He is also Vice President of Willow Creek Publications, maker of Personal Trainer Business Manager for Windows and Fitness Class Scheduler for Windows, software for managing personal trainers and aerobics instructors. Be sure to see the Willow Creek ad on page 24.)*



Ed Gaut

are often hard to find. In reality, therefore, you may need to hire trainers who are not yet certified. You may also have existing staff who are not yet certified.

There are a number of ways to encourage these non-certified trainers to become certified. One way is to provide a probationary period. To do this, hire non-certified trainers based on the requirement that they become cer-

CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATIONS	CONTACT NUMBER	CERTIFICATIONS
American College of Sports Medicine	(317) 637-9200	ACSM Leader ACSM Health/Fit.Inst.
National Strength Conditioning Assoc.	(402) 476-6669	NSCA-Certified Per.Tr.
Aerobics and Fitness Asso. of America	(800) 446-2322	Weight Rm/Resistance Training Certification Personal Trainer/Fitn. Counselor Cert.
American Council on Exercise	(800) 825-3636	Personal Tr.Cert.
National Sports Performance Assoc.	(301) 428-2879	Certified Fitness Inst. Certified Cond. Spec.

You may decide to require your trainers to have one specific certification. It is probably more practical, however, to provide a list of acceptable certifications from which trainers can choose. The certifications above would be a good starting point for such a list. Call up the organizations that interest you and request a description of their certification programs so you know what types of knowledge and skills to expect from trainers with each certification.

If you decide to add certifications from organizations

to personal trainers. Most fitness certification organizations offer different types of certifications for different types of fitness positions. An aerobics certification is not sufficient for your personal training staff. You need trainers with certifications which deal specifically with issues involved in one-on-one training such as weight lifting, spotting, kinesiology, etc.

Ideally, every trainer you hire will already have the required certification. However, with the growing demand for personal trainers, certified trainers

will be certified within a specified period of time. Trainers will procrastinate, so do not make the probationary period too long. On the other hand, you need to provide your trainers with enough time to finish the course work and take the test. A three-month probationary period is probably reasonable.

As an added inducement, consider a two-tier pay scale with certified trainers paid more than non-certified trainers. Nothing will motivate a trainer to become certified faster than the inducement of an automatic raise. Also consider different titles such

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# ...MAXLIFE

continued from page 8

"And we have another assumption: that you really do want to look better and feel better, you just don't know how."

All the participants begin their workouts on a 20-minute aerobic circuit course that exercises all their body parts and their cardiovascular system. After that, follow-up exercises are developed for individual needs.

A golfer would be assigned a program that includes additional work on upper body strength and range of motion. A member with hip problems or arthritis might use the Aerex Body Pump that can simulate the same buoyancy experienced in swim-

ming pools. Someone with back problems might use the recumbent exercise bike for further aerobic exercise.

Each person charts his workouts and the Yosts feed the data into a computer. After every 50 visits to the fitness center, each member is reevaluated. Progress is noted and adjustments to the workout schedule are made.

## ADDRESSING CONCERN OF OLDER AMERICANS

There are many distinguishing aspects to the MAXLIFE Program. The method in which they address the concerns of older adults may be most significant.

"The first thing we do with new members is talk with them about their concerns. We

know they are worried about loss of strength and muscle tone, osteoporosis, loss of flexibility and range of motion, joint instability and declining posture. So we educate them about the many ways exercise can help make them stronger, improve their mobility and agility and let them do all the things they love doing more comfortably and with more energy than they've probably had in years."

"In addition, we recognize that many of our members, 67% of them to be exact, have never exercised in a structured program before. Naturally, they have a lot of anxiety about exercising. So we take the time to explain exactly what they will be doing, why they will be doing it and the kind of results they can realistically expect. Then they can't wait to get started," comments Jerry.

## UNIVERSAL CROSS LINE CIRCUIT AND AEREX BODY PUMP

Jerry Yost emphasizes that health club operators cannot simply expect to bring older adults into a club and expect to mix them successfully with the masses in the average club. He is convinced and he has the results to prove it, that virtually any club can successfully appeal to the older adult market if they will design and install an environment tailor made for them and staffed and supervised specifically for them.

Resistance training is instrumental to the success of the MAXLIFE program. Even though 84% of its members had never trained on weights before, they found great success with the Universal Cross-Line cross-training system which consists of 12 Universal Power Circuit resistive machines, arranged in opposing muscle group order, interspersed with 12 Universal CrossLine step platforms (stationary bikes at MAXLIFE). Participants work for 30 seconds at a resistive exercise station, then move quickly to an aerobic station for 30 seconds, alternating between the two types of activities throughout the circuit.

"We chose the Universal CrossLine circuit for many reasons. The Power Circuit machines in the circuit are ideal for older adults. It's imperative, when working with senior adults, who

for the most part have not lifted weights in their life, to provide equipment that is easy to get on and off, is easy to adjust and easy to use. Many of these individuals have lower back problems, so the equipment has to provide adequate lower back support," says Yost.

In addition to the Universal CrossLine system, the Yosts have had great success with a new piece of equipment.... the Aerex Body Pump. Yost comments, "The Aerex Body Pump is absolutely a wonderful piece of equipment because it allows me to go through a full range of motion and make them weigh what I want them to weigh. We've endorsed it as a perfect machine for seniors because it provides a full range of exercise with multi-joints safely. We discovered the Aerex Body Pump at the Club Industry show and it was a perfect compliment to the Universal CrossLine Circuit."

## SILVER EAGLE AWARD

The MAXLIFE program received the prestigious Silver Eagle Award presented by the President's Council On Physical Fitness and Sports for their exemplary health and fitness program benefitting older adults. Sandra Permutt, the PCPFS Executive Director, presented the award to Robson Communities CEO and founder Ed Robson. The Silver Eagle Award recognizes individuals and organizations for their outstanding efforts in working with "older adults" and developing programs that communities might adopt to increase physical activity among seniors.

## TERRIFIC RESULTS

The participant's are getting great results as evidenced by Ed Curran who after just 50 hours on the program had reduced his percentage of body fat by 19%, improved his resting heart rate by 31%, experienced upper body strength gains of 100% and lower body strength gains of 43%. His aerobic recovery rate has also improved an impressive 174%. Ed Curran's results are typical with

the following average improvements of the MAXLIFE participants who have been re-evaluated after being on the program for 50 or more visits:

- Body fat decreased by an average of 15.77%
- Resting pulse rate improved by 12.35%
- Blood pressure Sys. reduced by 11.07%
- Blood pressure Dis. reduced by 11.07%
- Heart recovery rate improved by 103.14%
- Sit and reach improved by 30.67%
- Shoulder flexibility improved by 35.82%
- Upper body strength improved by 41.15%
- Lower body strength improved by 41.96%
- Abdominal strength improved by 49.05%

Not only are the statistics impressive. The comments of the participants reflects the improvement in their lives that regular exercise has been providing for them. For example:

"When I first came in here I was using a cane. Now I garden every day. I'm walking better, bending better, I have better posture and I feel better." Aria Rosner, age 84.

"MAXLIFE is great. I have lost body fat and have noticed a definite improvement in my upper arms and abdomen. A tightness in the muscles of my upper back and left shoulder, that medical doctors have been unable to improve, has finally disappeared. I feel terrific." Lyn A. Wareham, age 72.

"I was becoming a couch potato without any real drive to start another exercise program. MAXLIFE has shown me a way to better health, more energy and greater mobility. This is an excellent program..... especially for seniors and others who have allowed themselves to become out of shape." Raymond J. Ignatius, age 69.

"MAXLIFE is marvelous. As a recovering stroke patient, I feel that literally a life line has been thrown to a person drowning in an ocean of poor health. It's been two and a half years since the stroke and the healing process has been ongoing and slow. MAXLIFE seems to have accelerated the process both mentally and physically." Margaret (Fuz) Weber, age 75.

If you would like to learn how to convert 2,000 square feet in your club to add successful programs for older adults, contact Jerry Yost at (602) 935-6780.



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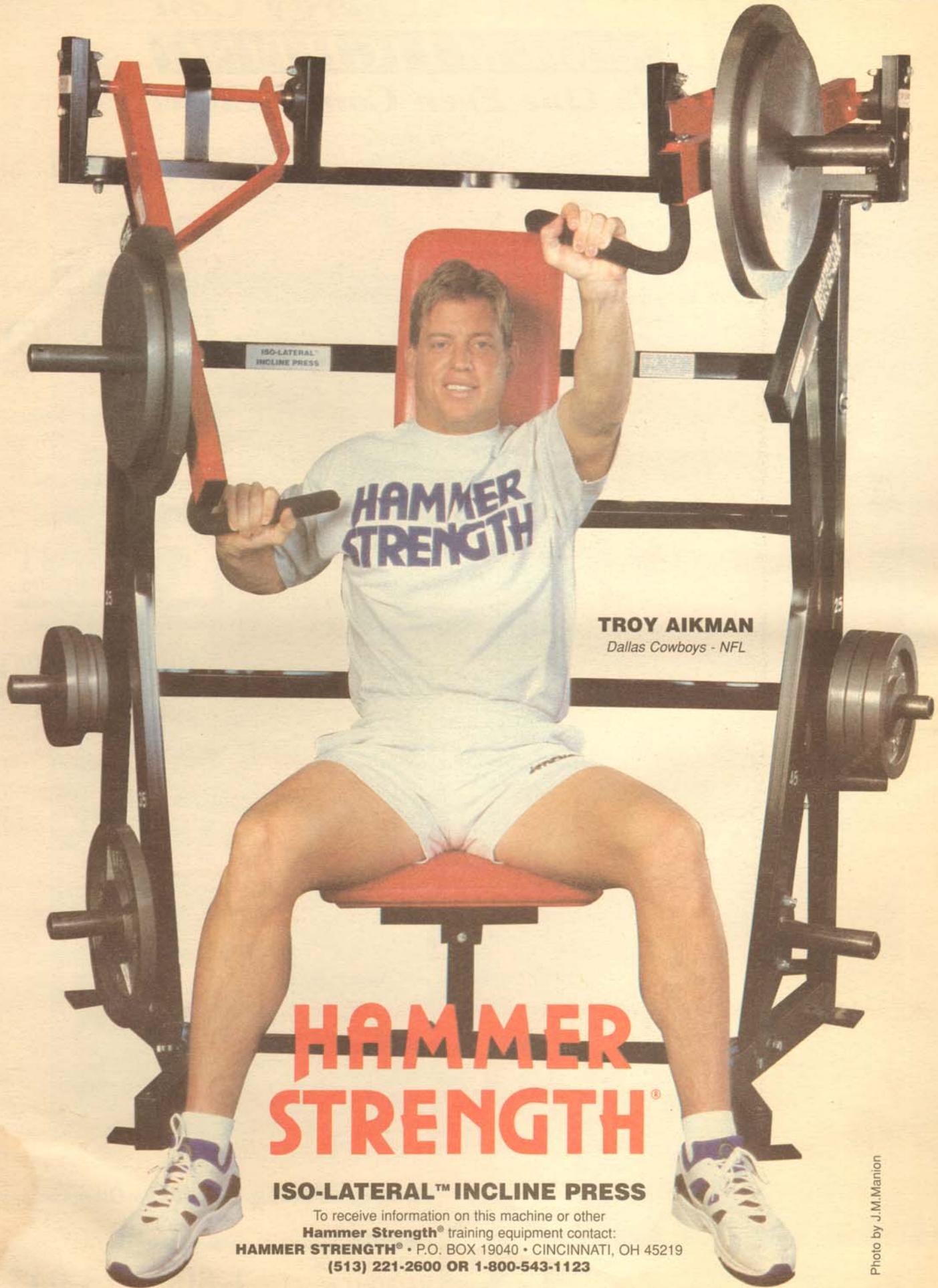
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A man, Troy Aikman, is seated on a red weight bench, performing an incline press on a Hammer Strength machine. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt with 'HAMMER STRENGTH' printed on it and white shorts. The machine is black and red, with a large weight stack on the right side. The text 'ISO-LATERAL INCLINE PRESS' is visible on the machine's frame. The background is a plain, light color.

**TROY AIKMAN**  
*Dallas Cowboys - NFL*

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