

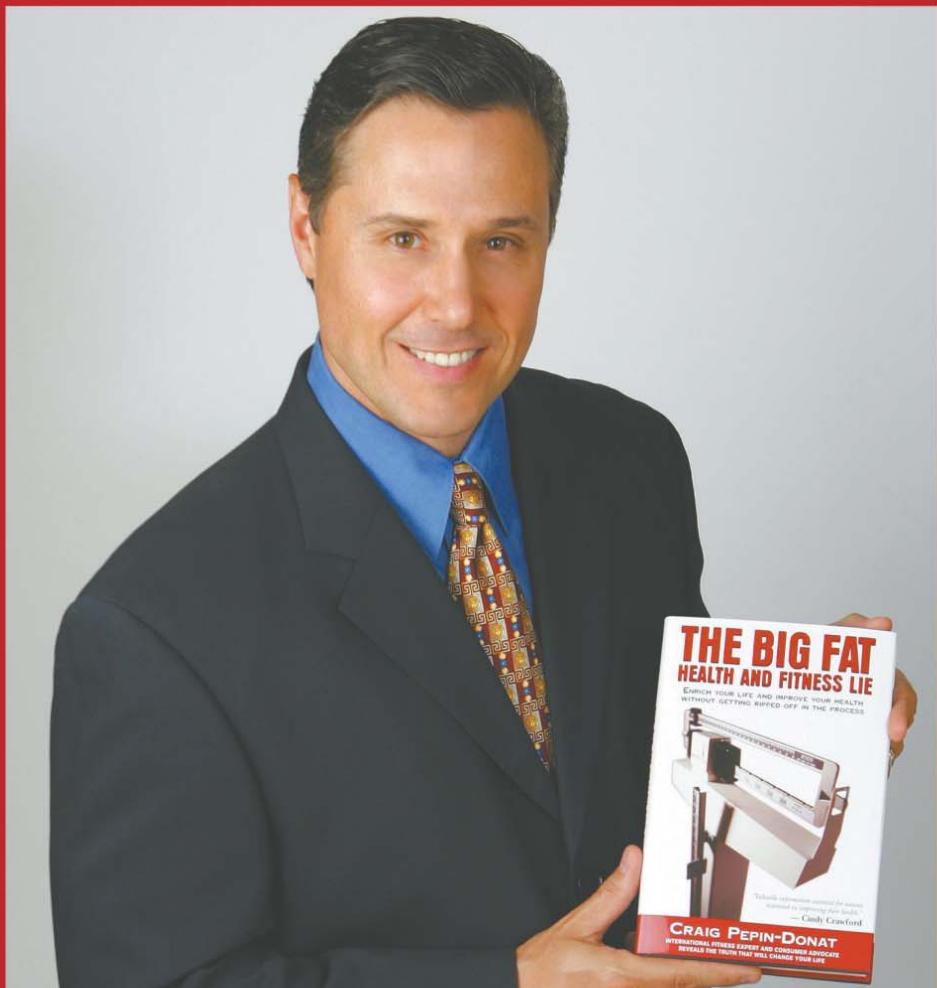
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Norm Cates:

# THE Club Insider

## NEWS

MAY 2007



# Craig Pepin-Donat

## EXPOSES THE BIG FAT HEALTH AND FITNESS LIE

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# THE Club Insider NEWS

## Craig Pepin-Donat

### EXPOSES THE BIG FAT HEALTH AND FITNESS LIE

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Featuring an illuminating interview with book Author and FitAdvocate.com Founder

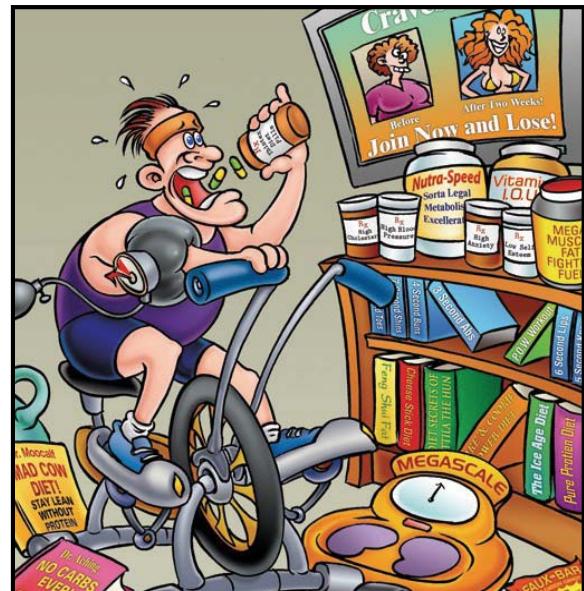
Craig Pepin-Donat's new book, *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie*, exposes a variety of industries and even government agencies that undermine the efforts of people who want to improve their health and level of fitness. In the ever expanding world of health and fitness, it is an unfortunate fact that there are those who prey on the frailty and weaknesses of human beings. What's even more disturbing is the blind patronization of many consumers.

Chapter six entitled: "The Fitness Fabrication", delves into methods and tactics quietly used by some health clubs organizations. In the same chapter, he writes: "Joining a fitness center may prove to be the best solution

for the average person." So, clearly in his writing in chapter six he provides consumers with inside information about unspoken health club tactics that really are old fashioned, but none the less, are deeply entrenched in many club operations. Importantly, he addresses what most club operators feel is one of the biggest problems and a bane of the health/fitness club industry: *the unused membership*. He writes: "All my experience tells me that if you have the right mindset and focus on changing your lifestyle, a quality fitness center probably provides the best opportunity to achieve lasting results — with one small caveat: you have to use it."

Pepin-Donat has clearly set out to reduce the predatory behavior of the industries he addresses in his book: His all-out frontal attack on the pharmaceutical industry, the diet and weight loss industry, the supplement

industry and the home exercise equipment business will truly help consumers who read and heed his words. Clubs within the fitness industry who still use high pressure tactics and sales tricks to enroll new members may also view his writing in Chapter Six as a *frontal attack*. But club operators who have embraced a consumer friendly sales approach will likely applaud a message that many will view as long overdue. With intriguing first and last chapters, Pepin-Donat has created a powerful bookend to his impressive work. Starting with his first chapter: "How Addiction Feeds the Lie", Pepin-Donat discusses why we are in such poor shape and how many of our health conditions are "self-inflicted by our toxic lifestyle choices." The last Chapter called: "The Truth about Fitness" is a very well written, plain spoken explanation of how a person can make specific lifestyle chang-



es to improve their health and their life.

Craig Pepin-Donat, age 46, has invested virtually all of his adult years in the fitness club industry. It would have been much eas-

ier for him to write a book just about the industry where his lifetime experience is so deep. He did not because our industry, in fact, is still such a small segment of the  
(See Pepin-Donat page 12)

## Bally Delisted from New York Stock Exchange Acting CEO Barry Elson Steps Down and Bally Agrees to Sell 16 Clubs

Bally Total Fitness announced on April 26, 2007 that it was notified by NYSE Regulation, Inc. that trading in Bally common stock would

be suspended prior to the market open on May 2, 2007. The NYSE also took action to formally delist Bally's common stock.

NYSE Regulation indicated that its delisting determination was a result of Bally's failure to satisfy the NYSE's continued listing standards, including minimum market capitalization and minimum average share price requirements. Additionally, NYSE Regulation considered the Company's failure to timely file its 2006 Annual Report on Form 10-K and its stated liquidity position. The company had been in communication with NYSE Regulation regarding the company's noncompliance with continued listing stan-

dards, but was unsuccessful in its efforts to avoid suspension and potential delisting. The Company does not intend to appeal the NYSE's determination.

On the heels of the Bally NYSE suspension and delisting notice, it was announced that Barry R. Elson will step down as acting CEO effective May 31, 2007. He will facilitate a transition of his responsibilities by providing the company consulting services over the following 90 days and by continuing to serve as a Director. The company, which has an ac-

tive search ongoing for a permanent CEO, said that Don R. Kornstein will assume the new role of Chief Restructuring Officer, continue to serve as interim Chairman of the Board and facilitate the transition relating to Mr. Elson stepping down as CEO. Mr. Kornstein stated, "On behalf of the Board of Directors, senior field and corporate management and the entire Bally staff, I wish to acknowledge Barry's outstanding contributions to Bally Total Fitness as acting CEO. Barry's strong commitment  
(See Bally page 6)

### • Inside The Insider •

- **They Who Adjust ... Survive**  
By Ray Gordon
- **A blockbuster Norm's NOTES writing!**
- **Club Programming Success—GUARANTEED!** By Sandy Coffman
- **NEW! CLUB INSIDER News Crossword Puzzle**

# Norm's NOTES

## Thank You

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• **Hello everybody!**  
 This is your **CLUB INSIDER** News Publisher Since 1993 checking in!

• **CRAIG PEPIN-DONAT**'s cover story is intriguing. His book is really a movement toward greater consumer awareness. I believe that ultimately, and in the long run, Craig's book, "**The BIG FAT Health and Fitness Lie**" will help the health and fitness club industry. I believe the book will save many consumers from doing business with what I refer to as "old school" health club operators. Operators who still employ the retail installment contract where, if a member no longer wishes to be a member, he will be sued and his credit will be damaged if he quits paying. It will warn consumers about certain "old school" sales techniques, such as the infamous "turnover". (T.O.) It will give consumers "inside" information on what "old school" operators are thinking and how they view consumers actually as "just another number." Perhaps most importantly, Chapter Six of Craig's book will give people the understanding that there are other health and fitness club membership options in America now: the option called the "month-to-month" membership. In a soon to be produced writing I intend to set forth a document entitled; "**The CASE for Month-to-Month Memberships.**" So, please do read Craig Pepin-Donat's cover story and buy his book on amazon.com And....**STAY TUNED!**  
 • **Hmmm**. I have some

concerns about some things I see going on in our industry right now. Should I express my concerns today? I think I should and I think I will. So, here goes. **Let's just ALL get along!** I am aware of big-time industry leaders who are at each other's throats over issues that really should not be happening. One of those disputes has landed in court. In my view, based upon what I have learned from all of the parties involved, it could be easily settled out of court. My thought here is these parties should just sit down, have a beer together and work these things out! And, I am aware of other issues between big-time players who have gotten their "core club businesses" mixed up with a "crossover sideline business". Over a year ago I predicted trouble for this "crossover crowd" of prominent club owners who have ventured over to the vendor side, a side that is now making them have conflicts with the very customers they are selling to and trying to sell to on the club side. I predicted that these arrangements were going to cause big trouble between club owners across the U.S. And, that trouble has arisen now and proves my prediction flatly has come true. The bad news is that first big conflict has arisen. The good news is that I am told now that the conflict has been satisfactorily resolved. But, it says here that: "**There will be more and more.**" And, it says here that those club owners who've mixed their core club businesses with

this "crossover sideline business", are involved in a business where it is very easy for them as club owner/operators to encroach on and compete with the very customers they are selling their service to in their "crossover sideline business". Folks, nothing good is going to come from this. So, I kindly suggest to this "crossover sideline business crowd" to please rethink the complexity of what you all are doing. Please rethink the return on your investment of your own valuable time that you are spending each month to be doing what you are doing. Please rethink the loss of your own personal involvement in your core club business because of your fid-dlin' around with the "crossover sideline business". My friends...be your own judges. But, first, please reexamine your wisdom, your involvement and your continued play with your "crossover sideline business." And, to all **CLUB INSIDER** readers, I will simply say to y'all please do **STAY TUNED!**

• Don't miss **CLUB INDUSTRY East's Reshaping the Future: Eight to Eighty Conference** in Orlando, Florida, June 6, thru 9<sup>th</sup>. The event will be held in Orlando for the first time at **Disney's Coronado Springs Resort**. I'll be there at **Booth #102** so come on by and chat! **CLUB INSIDER** News advertisers who will be exhibiting there are listed on this page. Please visit and buy from these great folks. They will take good care of your needs. And, mark your calendar now and make reservations for **Club Industry in Chicago, IL.** October 10-13<sup>th</sup>. It will be another blockbuster as it always is. See you there, too!

• Now...the latest news. As I write this, **PRESIDENT BUSH** has declared the month of May as the **National Physical Fitness & Sports Month** and **IHRSA** has launched the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual "Get Active America!" Campaign**. And, as I write today, over 150 very dedicated and bright club industry professional owners/operators/managers are **representing**



**Norm Cates, Jr.**

**YOU** and **our industry** in Washington, D.C. This **tiny little segment of true leaders** in our industry are in the D.C. for **IHRSA's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Summit**. These true leaders deserve all of our thanks for their involvement, their work and their leadership. Also, please do credit the sponsors of this important event: **ABC Financial, American Council on Exercise, American Specialty Health, Aon, CheckFree, CSI Software, Cybex, GlobalFit, IdeaCast, Nautilus, Philips, Precor, SPRI and Yamaha**. Highest on the IHRSA Summit "to do" list is the **WHIP Act**. The **Workforce Health Improvement Program (WHIP) Act** has now been reintroduced in the **110th Congress**. Under current tax law, **businesses are permitted to deduct the cost of onsite exercise facilities and the benefit is not taxed as additional income to the employee**. However, if an employer provides this same benefit at an **offsite facility**, **it cannot take advantage of the tax deduction and must bear the administrative costs for complying with IRS rules**, while employees who take advantage of the benefit must pay **income tax on the value of the subsidy**. The WHIP Act would **eliminate this inequity**. WHIP would provide **balanced tax treatment of health club memberships as an employee benefit** - re-affirming the employers' **right to deduct the cost of providing health club benefits to their workers and would** (See Norm's Notes page 8)

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The screenshot displays several windows of the Visual Fitness Planner software:

- Top Left:** A 3D model of a female member with a BMI chart and a "LIFESTYLE" section.
- Top Right:** A 3D model of a female member with a "INDIVIDUAL FITNESS" section showing enrollment options (12 Months, 24 Months) and monthly dues.
- Middle Left:** A "DISEASE RISKS" chart showing risk levels for various conditions like Heart Disease, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Stroke, and Cancer across different BMI categories.
- Middle Right:** A "RECOMMENDED CHANGES" section with a chart showing projected BMI changes from 10 to 70.
- Bottom Left:** A "Health Age" calculator showing Actual Age (35), Current Health Age (46), and Goal Health Age (32).
- Bottom Right:** A "3D Health Club" section with a 3D model of a male member and a "3D Health Club" chart.

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**...Bally**

continued from page 3

ment, leadership and focus on operational improvements are resulting in significant changes across the company and we appreciate his efforts

and look forward to his future contributions. By building on Barry's accomplishments and working with our creditors, we look forward to establishing a strong and stable financial foundation and implementing a new vision for Bally Total

Fitness."

Mr. Elson added, "Over the past nine months, we have been aggressively pursuing literally dozens of initiatives to enhance the Bally Total Fitness member experience. As a result of comprehensive marketing research studies, the Company is significantly better positioned to more effectively target its marketing and retention efforts. We now have for the first time a much richer understanding of our members' needs and what we have to do to retain more of our existing members and who to target as our better prospects. Bally Total Fitness has a strong brand franchise and customer base and both of these factors will be leveraged in moving the company forward."

Mr. Kornstein was elected to the Bally Board of Directors in January 2006 and was named interim Chairman in August 2006. He is founder and managing member of Alpine Advisors LLC, a strategic, financial and management consulting firm serving a broad range of companies. Prior to founding Alpine Advisors, Mr. Kornstein served as

Chief Executive Officer, President and Director of Jackpot Enterprises Inc., a New York Stock Exchange-listed company. Mr. Kornstein was also a Senior Managing Director in the investment banking department of Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. for 17 years.

Bally had announced on April 25, 2007, the day before the NYSE delisting notice, that it has entered into agreements to sell its 16 Toronto, Canada facilities to Extreme Fitness, Inc., which is acquiring six of the facilities, and GoodLife Fitness Centres Inc., which is acquiring ten of the facilities. The properties include nine Sports Clubs of Canada and seven Bally Total Fitness clubs. The transactions are subject to customary closing conditions, including lease negotiations. Terms of the transactions were not disclosed.

The sales are part of the Company's strategy to divest non-core assets in order to focus on the core Bally Total Fitness brand and operations in the United States. Proceeds from the transactions are estimated to be approximately \$19.6 million (Canadian) and will be avail-

able to support operations.

"These transactions are important steps forward in Bally's business and financial restructuring initiatives. The proceeds will enhance Bally's liquidity in support of the Company's ongoing efforts to negotiate a consensual restructuring with our debt holders," said Don R. Kornstein, Bally's interim Chairman. "I would like to acknowledge all of our Canadian employees for their dedicated service to Bally Total Fitness and wish them continued success."

**STAY TUNED!**

Norm Cates  
**THE Club Insider**  
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*Seeks Contributing Authors!*

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# *They Who Adjust ... Survive*

## *Resolve to be a master of change rather than a victim of change."*

*~Brian Tracy*

**By Ray Gordon**

Like a giant wave slowly rising and affecting everything in its path, the fitness industry is definitely changing. As a result many owners, investors and managers are going to have to make decisions that will greatly affect the financial status of their business. At the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual IHRSA Convention in San Francisco in March, I had the opportunity to talk to a lot of owners and managers of clubs from all parts of the United States. One common thread that many brought up with regularity was either that memberships were down and/or that major competition from a lower priced "big box" competitor was occurring.

More than a few conversations were from happy people who had achieved their membership goals fairly consistently for the past couple of years. Why are they

so happy? What are they doing different or extra? The effective clubs build on their strengths and take advantage of opportunities in their situation.

*"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it or work around it."*

*~ Michael Jordan*

Here are three questions to ask yourself:

1. Have you had a lower-priced competitor move into your market within the last two years?

2. Do they have at least an equal amount of fitness equipment available?

3. Was part of your solution (or gut reaction) that you considered lowering your prices to compete with them?

Lowering your dues

to meet the competition can create more problems than solutions if your facility and business is not prepared or designed for the changes lower pricing will bring.

Rather than reacting to this changing trend by lowering prices or cutting services, it would be more advantageous to take a proactive position. Those who increase their facilities' perceived value will hold a profitable market in the near future and will not only survive, but in the long run, will actually thrive.

How does your club distinguish itself and prove to be a more valuable and justifiable decision to the average member?

**The 3 R's; Reputation, Referrals and Retention.**

*These three factors are all critical to obtaining maximum membership prof-*

*its. One would have to have an IQ equivalent to room temperature NOT to be aware of the health benefits of exercise. It's virtually everywhere you look today from both the media and health care professionals.*

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

*~ Maya Angelou*

What are you doing to increase your reputation, referrals and retention? The three are tied very closely together. Reputation (not just expensive advertising) should be the cornerstone of any solid business. True, the credibility of yourself and your entire staff is being tested every day by dozens of regular members, but how does your reputation hold up with new members starting an exercise



**Ray Gordon**

program AGAIN? Your reputation will prove itself every time you provide the services as promised with integrity, respect and consistency.

One component you need is to make all new members feel comfortable, special and informed. You need to increase the percentage of new, non-exercising, prob-

*(See Ray Gordon page 18)*

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### ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

exclude the wellness benefit from being considered additional income for employees. Passing of the WHIP Act will happen someday. When it does it will be **HUGE** for our industry. The bill had originally been introduced by now long-time supporters **Rep. ZACH WAMP (R-TN-#)** and **Senator JOHN CORNYN (R-TX)**. But, it had stalled and was taken off the agenda. During the last session of Congress, the WHIP Act garnered broad, bipartisan support with over 100 co-sponsors. IHRSA is asking all fitness professionals to join the recently launched **Grassroots Initiative** to speak out together in a unified voice in support of health promotion bills. [Learn more](#) about the Initiative and how you can speak out for the WHIP Act by going to: [ihsra.org](http://ihsra.org) I am asking you to do this, for your club's own good and future.

• The core of the **Legislative Summit** attendees are members of **IHRSA's Industry Leadership Council**. Please become part of this group. The ILC mission is to protect the industry from harmful regulatory and legislative proposals and to advance the industry's public policy agenda. Here too, IHRSA and I are asking for your support. But, beyond just clicking on an internet link, learning how to communicate with your elected **Congressmen** and **Senators** and contacting them directly, I am asking you now for the contribution of some of your money to **support the ILC cause**. Yes folks, I'm talking about...moola contributed by you to this very important industry cause. **That's because the ILC is the only organization in the U.S. that does what it does**. The ILC is **Chaired by BAHRAM AKRADI**. The **ILC Fund Raising Committee** is **Chaired and well-led by MICHAEL LEVY, IHRSA Chairman**. **RICK CARO, JULIE MAIN** and yours truly, make up the **ILC Fund Raising Committee**. The ILC is raising money to very aggressively pursue and follow-up on all that is happening right now in Washington, D.C. So far this year, the ILC has reached **\$1.2 million** with the goal of **\$2 million**. *This money will be well spent*. That's because it is clear that the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Washington Summit was be just that, a Summit meeting of those that truly understand and care about influencing our government to provide tax benefits to Americans so they truly get into the obesity pandemic fight. But, **follow-up** is the key to all of this. So we may get our government's leaders to really understand and get involved, we must get their attention and get them to pass the WHIP Act first and then pass the **PHIT Act**. *Your contributions to the*

**ILC will be dedicated to following up and achieving these and more goals.** Please contact me on the phone or the internet, so we may discuss how you might pitch in and help. I promise not to "strong arm" you too much! Plus, we can talk about your club businesses! **NORM CATES** – **770.850.8506** or [clubinsidernews@mindspring.com](mailto:clubinsidernews@mindspring.com)

• The 5<sup>th</sup> annual **SIBEC** event will be held September 27-30<sup>th</sup> at the **Scottsdale Fairmont Princess Resort** where leading vendors will have a unique opportunity to develop and further grow relationships with a targeted set of club leaders. This is one of the most effective events of its kind. For further vendor information, contact **DANELA GUSMAN** at: (954) 942.8743 or [daniela@mcleanevents.com](mailto:daniela@mcleanevents.com)

• Speaking of Florida, • **Florida is getting it right!** As reported on May 18<sup>th</sup>, progressive **Florida Governor CHARLIE CRIST** has signed a bill that requires elementary school students in the state to have at least a half-hour of physical education each. **HOORAY Governor Crist!** Historically, Florida has left curriculum decisions to individual school districts.

• **Congratulations to DONNA KRECH of Thin & Healthy Total Solutions** (see her ad on pg 21), as her **TSTN Network Television Show** has been picked to become a 5 day a week show to run for 52 weeks and beyond. She's already one busy gal and now her schedule is becoming a monster! **STAY TUNED!**

• This just in...**HARVEY LAUER**, Founder and **President of American Sports Data, Inc.**, has written a new book entitled: **The New Americans: Defining Ourselves through Sports and Fitness Participation**. Check out Harvey's new book press release on page #28. Harvey Lauer, Founder and President of **American Sports Data, Inc.** ([www.americansportsdata.com](http://www.americansportsdata.com)) – is the most widely quoted and definitive source of sports and fitness participation data in the U.S. Harvey Lauer, a **CLUB INSIDER News** subscriber, wrote to me by email this morning that "My latest projection on health club members is **42,685,000**, and that's where it'll stand until the next annual study. The total club # I have is **29,357** as of 1/1/07, and that comes from the **Yellow Pages** compilation of **InfoUSA** (roughly 70% are bona fide commercial clubs)."

• The health and fitness club industry now has a brand new industry newspaper published by the 25+ year running **United Publications, Inc.** It's called: **"Fitness Business News"**. Folks, with much dedication to our industry and 33+ years of involvement in it, including about 20 years as an *(See Norm's Notes page 10)*



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**...Norm's Notes**

continued from page 8

owner/operator of clubs and now after 14.5 years publishing more than 160 monthly editions of **The CLUB INSIDER News**. I know a good thing for our industry when I see it. Sure...**FBN** will be a new competitor for my home-based CLUB INSIDER News. But, hey...that's America. I've never shied away from being an intense competitor in any realm. I have an interesting perspective about all of my competing publications: **I support them all**. And, I'm going to support FBN, however I might. So, I don't mind saying FBN will be good for our industry. It is my deeply held belief that it is my true blessing to be able to do what I do for you all. Truthfully, only that belief has kept me plugging along all of these years. And, it is also my belief that virtually all trade publications in our industry are good for our business. That's because our industry is still just a baby. And, because all of us in this great industry have things to learn to get better at what we do. Our industry is only 60 to 70 years old, compared, for example, to the hotel or restaurant industries that are at least a couple of thousand years old. So, think of what they have learned during all of those years and think of what we have learned. So, I know we all still have a lot to learn. Therefore, I wish **United Publications FBN Publisher RICK RECTOR** and **Editor, JOHN CRAIG**, and all of the folks at **FBN** the best of success with their now

2 issues old monthly newspaper. Rector and Craig are excellent writers and I am really looking forward to reading FBN every month. I have subscribed for free online. You may subscribe for free online, too: [www.fitness-businessnews.com](http://www.fitness-businessnews.com)

• **P.S.** I don't have a big publishing company like **United Publications, Inc.** backing **The CLUB INSIDER News**. Justin Cates' dog, **"Mr. Bill"** (see photo) and I need your **PAID subscription support and your advertising**, if you have a


**"Mr. Bill"**

company that is an industry supplier. What do you get each month? Read on. But to summarize, you get my viewpoints on important industry issues and the latest happenings with people and companies in my **Norm's NOTES** each month, my occasional **"Insider Speaks"** editorial columns, excellent case study cover stories and outstanding educational articles from our **Contributing Author Team**. So, please send paid subscription moola today folks! Just **\$89 for 12 months or \$119 for 18**

**months.** You may subscribe online at: [clubinsidernews.com](http://clubinsidernews.com) or send a check using a photocopy of our subscription form (please don't cut up your valuable CLUB INSIDER!) on page #6. And, please do **STAY TUNED!**

• **DANIEL MORRISSEY**, the fast-burner of **XSport Fitness, Inc.**, a Big Rock, Illinois-based mega club company, announced that it has just signed its **24<sup>th</sup>** and **25<sup>th</sup>** club deals in Deerfield, and Skokie, Illinois. The new **Xsport Clubs** will range from approximately 44,000 square feet to 62,000 square feet. They will feature 150 pieces of state-of-the-art cardio equipment with personal flat screen televisions, 300 strength training machines, extensive free weight areas, 2 group exercise studios, a four-lane lap pool, a luxurious whirlpool, sauna and steam rooms, basketball courts, and a three story rock climbing wall. A VERY competitive club product, is **XSport Fitness**.

• **SIR RICHARD BRANSON's Virgin Life Care** has won five awards at the **Spring 2007 National Wellness, Prevention & Fitness Conference Awards**. They are: **"Best of Show"** in recognition of the company's innovative health rewards program, **HealthMiles**, and first place honors for: **Best Initiative to Promote Wellness in the Workplace, Best Program for Improving Employee Health**, and second place awards for: **Best Self-Monitoring Health Initiative or Device and Best Fitness/Exercise Program**. Congratulations to Virgin Life Care, one of many companies of the man who may be the worlds great entrepreneur, Sir Richard Branson!

• Congratulations to **JOHN BROWN** as he has continued in the club consulting world and joined **SCIFIT** and **DENTON SMITH's Scifit Team**. Check out the SCIFIT ad on pg 11.

• **MICHAEL LEVITT, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary**, has announced the names of the members of the new **Advisory Committee** that will make recommendations on the development of the first federal guidelines to focus on physical activity. They

are: **ROD K. DISHMAN, Ph.D.**, professor of exercise science and director, **Exercise Psychology Laboratory, Department of Kinesiology**, University of Georgia, Athens, GA., **WILLIAM HASKELL, Ph.D.**, professor of medicine (active emeritus), Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, CA., **EDWARD HOWLEY, Ph.D.** professor emeritus, **Department of Exercise, Sport and Leisure Studies**, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN and **WENDY KOHRT, Ph.D.**, professor of medicine, **Division of Geriatric Medicine**, University of Colorado at Denver and **Health Sciences Center, Denver**.

The goal is to issue the guidelines in late 2008. However, I do hope they can beat that timetable! That's because two-thirds of Americans really need help and are continuing to gain weight every month. Secretary Mike Levitt commented on his team, "These experts have a broad array of knowledge of the health value of physical activity. I look forward to working with them to develop evidence-based guidelines on physical activity levels." **STAY TUNED!**

• **AUGIE NIETO**, is the man who, while a college student, launched **Lifecycle** with **RAY WILSON** and then later founded **Life Fitness**. He is now **Chairman of Octane Fitness**. Augie and his devoted wife, **LYNNE**, have pressed on amazingly with **Augie's Quest**. Augie's Quest has, in 19 months and as of May 17<sup>th</sup>, raised **\$9,945,967** to find a cure for **ALS!** (**LOU GEHRIG's DISEASE**). That amount includes the **\$2,105,530** raised at **Augie's Quest's Black and Blue Bash**, on March 30, 2007 at **IHRSA 2007 in San Francisco**. Augie and Lynne have set a goal of raising **\$19 million** over the next 36 months to find a cure for ALS. **Keep the HOPE and God bless** you, Augie and Lynne! **JOE MOORE, IHRSA President/CEO**, recently announced that IHRSA has established **AUGIE'S LEGACY** to provide scholarships to students who are planning to go into the club industry. The first scholarship has been established for a student to attend **Carroll College** in Helena, Montana. Helena is

the base for **Clubdoc, MIKE CHAET's CMS International** organization and CMS is sponsoring a trip for each selected student to visit **IHRSA** headquarters in Boston. Additionally, a friend of mine, **PATRICK O'RIORDAN's** wife, **KAREN**, is training now for the **Iron Man Triathlon** in Hawaii. There this Fall the event will raise money for the fight against **ALS**. So, folks, please go to: [www.augiesquest.com](http://www.augiesquest.com) and make a contribution now, no matter how small, to help find a cure for this dreaded and devastating disease, ALS!

• **Woodside Health and Tennis Club**, a staple in the Kansas City community for more than 30 years, has undergone a **\$2.5 million renovation**. The Woodside Club provides 17 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, five pools and two buildings with numerous health and wellness amenities. The completed Phase One of the renovation to the 10-acre facility focused specifically on the interior development of the club's North building and provided aesthetic improvements, as well as expanded and even new services. The \$2.5 million renovation is the first of several phases of renovations that are set to take place in the near future. Phase Two, a major renovation of the pool area, will get underway within the next year. **Reinvestment**, is a key to staying in the game for the long haul! So, kudos to **BLAIR TANNER, Woodside Club owner** for making such great improvements happen for his current and sure to be many future members! Tanner commented: "The vision for Woodside is to evolve into a modern day 'country club' as opposed to a more traditional one whose main amenity focuses on one sport like golf or tennis as its centerpiece."

• Hey folks! Check out our new **CLUB INSIDER News crossword puzzle** on page #26. It covers subjects from our April, 2007 edition. Produced by **MYLES MELLOR** of California based **Theme Crosswords**, ([www.themecrosswords.com](http://www.themecrosswords.com)), you too might have your own crossword puzzle in your club newsletter or magazine.

(See Norm's Notes page 18)


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**...Pepin-Donat**

continued from page 3

over health and fitness world. Instead he took on a much deeper mission by crafting a book that really is universal in many ways. Universal, in the sense that it will be helpful for consumers across the world in helping them avoid the senseless waste of their time and money, often a repeated waste, without any results whatsoever.

To write his book Pepin-Donat employed his 26 plus years of knowledge and experience and shared his opinions on all of these industries and health and fitness related topics. But, he did not produce his book alone. He did extensive research and wisely used the expertise of a number of experts on each of the industries he addresses.

As an ongoing vehicle to help consumer's worldwide to learn about health and fitness and attain their goals, Pepin-Donat developed a new web based business, [www.FitAdvocate.com](http://www.FitAdvocate.com) and he will comment on his business in this interview.

You and your club business and staff will surely benefit from the reading of ***The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie***. But, before that, you will benefit from reading this very illuminating interview with Craig Pepin-Donat. Your comments and feedback are welcome by both Craig Pepin-Donat and this author.

**An Interview with  
Craig Pepin-Donat**

**Q-** Craig, tell us about yourself. Where were you born and where did you grow up? Tell us about your

family, please.

**A-** I was born in Tucson, Arizona but moved East soon after and spent most of my life growing up in the New York Tri-State area. My sister and I were raised by a single mom. We moved over 30 times before I was 15 years old. We didn't have a lot of money so I learned early in life about working hard. I remember having one of the largest paper routes in the area when I was 11 years old and making a business out of selling coffee and sandwiches from a shopping cart to people waiting in line for gas during the energy crisis in the late 70's. That led to a job in a local sandwich shop during high school and later to a short career in fast food management. I grew up motivated to make money because we never had any. I was fortunate to find my way into the health and fitness business where I had the opportunity to earn money while helping people. Now I have my own company, I just finished writing my first book and launched my new Website [www.FitAdvocate.com](http://www.FitAdvocate.com). I have a beautiful wife named Lisa and we have two stunning daughters: Siena who is 3 years old and the newest member of the family born in April named Capri.

**Q-** You have very strong, hard-earned credentials in the fitness/health club industry. How did you get into the industry, what was your first job and where did that start take you later on?

**A-** I lived in California for a little over a year while experiencing the negative effects of working in the fast food industry and smoking a pack of cigarettes

a day. I decided I had to get back into shape so I joined a local fitness center and within a few weeks I knew that I wanted to work in that business for life. I packed everything I could fit into my little Datsun 2000 Roadster and drove cross country by myself to New York City. For some reason I had that song, "New York New York", in my head and I really convinced myself that "if I could make it there, I'll make it anywhere." It may sound like a cliché but that is actually how it happened. When I arrived in New York, I called the first club in the Yellow Pages and with no relevant experience I was hired as a personal trainer making \$3.50 an hour. I still have a copy of my first paycheck for \$111.17 in net pay. Within a few months I was managing the club. I always knew I could be successful if I just stuck with it so I kept working hard, learning and thinking big. My first big break came in 1987 when Tom Gergley and Kevin Saghafi hired me at the New York Health and Racquet Clubs (HRC). During my 7-year run with HRC, I was Sales Director, Vice President and when Tom left the company to work for Mark Mastrov at 24 Hour Nautilus, I became President. Tom and Kevin were very important mentors in my life. Through my friendship with Tom, I met Mark and in 1995 he recruited me as president of 24 Hour Nautilus. That was a big move because I never thought I would leave New York. Mark painted a picture about growing the largest health and fitness chain in the world, and it sounded like an incredible opportunity. It turned out that Mark knew what he was talking about. When I started with the company 24 Hour Nautilus had 31 clubs and before leaving I was Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing worldwide for the newly branded company 24 Hour Fitness. We were operating over 430 clubs in 11 countries. Working with Mark to build an international brand with 24 Hour Fitness was the best business experience of my life. I had the opportunity to travel all over the world and work in different cultures and learn things that most people could only dream about. It was a great international run,

and we helped change the lives of millions of people.

**Q-** Your new book, *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie* and business, FitAdvocate.com, both speak of big, big thinking. Where and from whom did you learn to think so big?

**A-** I have always dreamed about doing great things. I still have handwritten notes of big ideas from 20 years ago. I have never been satisfied with a title and a large paycheck. I walked away from my position as President of New York Health and Racquet Clubs because I felt there was no growth and opportunity. I walked away from millions of dollars in potential income and stock options with 24 Hour Fitness to pursue my dreams. Over the years I have seen many people in the industry stay in the same positions, and that's great for those who like their jobs and security. For me, that was never enough. I also learned that the fitness industry is relatively small and that I was limited with the number of people I could reach. I always tried to "think outside the box." With my book and website I took it one step further and got completely out of the box. As "The Fit Advocate" I can communicate directly with health and fitness consumers with no limits and no restrictions. It all came about by pushing my own thinking about how I could help the largest amount of people possible, followed by years of agonizing work, research and a lot of anxiety and frustration while not earning a single paycheck as an employee.

I've learned that unless you are willing to dream big and take risks, you will never give yourself the opportunity to achieve great things. I have yet to achieve all my goals but I am willing to take a chance.

**Q-** The title of your book in my first read caused me to immediately think that the entire book was solely about the health and fitness club industry, and that was far, far from correct. In fact, your book addresses multiple industries whose practices prey on the frailty of humanity and does not at all focus on just the health and fitness club industry. It truly focuses


**Craig Pepin-Donat**

on the health issues of all Americans and others around the world. From reading your amazing book, it is very apparent to me that you have an extraordinary understanding of humanity when it comes to what makes all of us tick.

- My question, Craig, is: "How and when did you decide to write such a book, how did you develop this depth of understanding and mindset of concern for humanity and what were and are your motivators and goals for your book?"

**A-** Your initial thoughts about the book are not unlike many others in the industry who didn't know what to expect. Mark Mastrov read it and emailed me saying he thought it was "amazing" and that "it was like a Google for anything you ever wanted to know about health and fitness." That's a pretty good endorsement from one of the most prolific club operators in the industry. It's not what I call another happy healthy fitness book. It covers a wide range of serious health and fitness issues that people need to be aware of.

The book is also endorsed by Cindy Crawford, several best selling authors, including Dr. Henry Lodge who co-wrote *Younger Next Year* and was a key-note speaker at a recent IHRSA convention. The book is also endorsed by other renowned physicians, authors and dozens of health and fitness professionals.

To my knowledge, this is the first time a top industry insider has stepped out and written a book on issues that extend far beyond the club industry. I don't think most people within the industry will get the extent (See Pepin-Donat page 14)

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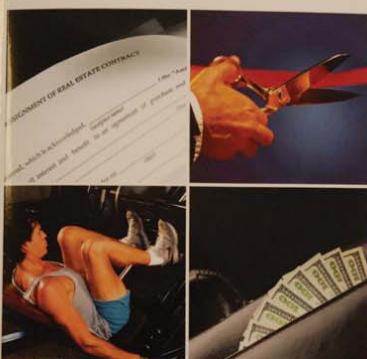


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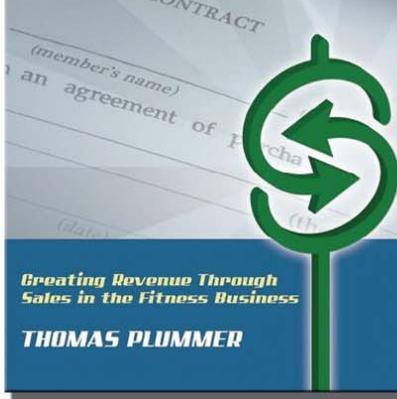
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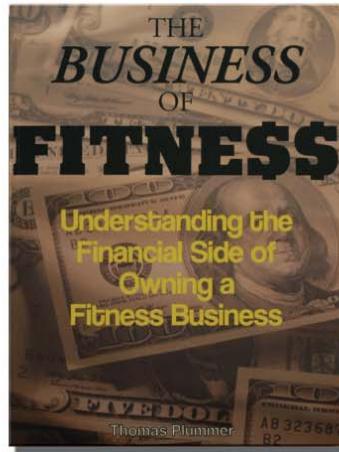
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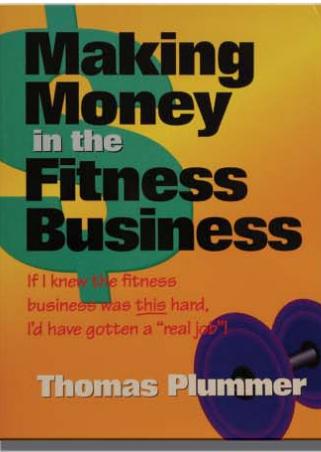
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**...Pepin-Donat**

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of the information until they take the time to read it. Norm, you are really one of the first people within the industry to 'get it' and realize the importance of the work. I thank you for taking the time to help me deliver the message to the industry. I urge every person within the industry to read the book. We spend so much time trying to convince people to spend money to improve their health through fitness, and here is a book that will help the industry do that. The book retails at \$24.95 but is available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) for \$16.47. That's a small price to pay to learn about important issues that could change the way you think about health and fitness.

Developing the concept for the book didn't happen overnight. It's taken a lifetime of experience and deep thought and consideration about how to best apply everything I learned. During my career I've spoken to thousands of people who had the desire to improve their health but didn't know how. I have performed focus groups and market surveys about what consumers are looking for, and I became a student of the psychology behind what triggers health and fitness buying decisions and what prevents people from acting on their desires to change and improve their health. I have also read thousands of articles, white papers and studies and evaluated health and fitness trends worldwide to better understand why we are in such poor health, even with all the so called "solutions" available to people.

The more I learned, the more I was amazed at the number of people who would fall victim to quick-fix solutions and gimmicks that have no chance of helping them. I would watch people jump from one failed solution to another while ignoring the cause of their ill health. I decided that I had to do something radical to reach as many people as possible and to become a resource for those who wanted to know the truth about what works and what doesn't work within the world of health and fitness. To achieve this goal I came up with the idea of doc-

umenting everything I learned about why most people never achieve their health and fitness goals along with the real world solutions and principles I had developed that people can follow to improve their health, with no tricks and no gimmicks — for the rest of their lives. Before I wrote one word, I came up with the title *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie* along with the phrase "The path to improved health and fitness starts with the truth."

But writing a book wasn't enough. I needed a vehicle to drive the message and to continue to deliver updated information. So I simultaneously developed a web-based platform called FitAdvocate.com to support my book and mission of protecting and enhancing the lives of health and fitness consumers. Now the book is published and the Website is launched, and I feel like my work has just begun.

**Q-** Some people might initially believe your book contains only your own passionate opinions. But, that is clearly not true, either. In fact, your book contains your opinions, but your work is strongly and well supported with testimony and research from many other experts on the issues you cover in the eight chapters.

In fact, David Rippe of Celestia International, writes in the Foreword in your book, "You hold in your hands a truthful book --- one that provides innumerable insights into how you can attain and maintain optimal health. As Craig Pepin-Donat ably illustrates in *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie*, there are powerful forces aligned against your interests — and may actually be purposely trying to benefit from your ill health."

**- My question is:** "Please tell us about the experts and resources used for the research for the book?"

**A-** My experience told me that the cause of most of our health problems is the result of what I call our own self-inflicted toxic lifestyle choices that feed the big, fat health and fitness lie. It gets into some pretty heavy issues related to addictions, toxic exposure, stress, eating disorders, prescription drugs,

over-the-counter drugs and other lifestyle choices that are the cause of many of our self-inflicted diseases and conditions. I wanted to make sure my theories were sound so I interviewed a variety of top health and fitness professionals who helped shape my message. People who provided information and feedback included; Dr. Hyla Cass, a 20-year integrative psychiatrist and author of *Natural Highs and 8 Weeks to Vibrant Health*, David Rippe, an award winning writer and author of *The Flip: Turn your World Around*, Randall Fitzgerald a 35-year journalist and author of *The Hundred Year Lie: How Food and Medicine are Destroying our Health*, Antonia Demas PhD; Founder of the Food Studies Institute and author of *Food is Elementary*, Dr. Robert Rosati who runs the Rice Diet Clinic at Duke University and Kitty Rosati, M.S., R.D., D.D.N, who is the Nutrition Director for the Rice Diet Program and best selling author of *The Rice Diet Solution*. I also received invaluable information from Neal Spruce, founder and CEO of Apex Fitness and Chairman of the National Academy of Sports Medicine. I had input from equipment specialists Mike Feeney from 24 Hour Fitness, Ed Trainor from New York Sports Club and Rande LaDue from Pro\* Fitness Enterprises. My close friend Charles Damiano gave me a ton of support on a variety of health, nutrition and equipment issues. Charles is a 27-year health and fitness expert with a B.S. in Nutrition, and he was also the 2004 Grand Master Champion of the Body for Life contest. Beyond that, I interviewed people from many government agencies, consumer advocacy groups and even people from IMS Health, one of the leading global sources for pharmaceutical market intelligence and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. I also assembled a research team that digs out facts and sources for information I write about along with compiling a list of valuable resources I list in the book and on my Website to help people on their path to improve health and fitness. My research efforts were exhaustive.

**Q-** Craig, without

disclosing the content of your chapters (because our readers truly will benefit from buying and reading your book), please briefly share the basis of your thinking for each chapter and where, if examined and used carefully, how the writing in the chapters listed below might provide tools for my readers, the owners and operators of health and fitness clubs.

**Chapter One: How Addiction Feeds the Lie ---**

**A-** As I outline in my book, we are addicted to a toxic lifestyle. 80 percent of all disease is a result of stress and Americans are the most stressed out people in the world. We are juggling endless to-do-lists, trying to keep up with the job, trying to maintain a relationship at home and keep up with the kids, pay the bills and deal with all the negativity in the media about war, the economy, the environment and hundreds of other negative messages we are exposed to everyday. The escape mechanisms we use to deal with all the stress are that we overeat and we eat the wrong things, we smoke, we drink alcohol, we take drugs, we surf the Internet and the average American watches over 4 hours of TV everyday. These and other types of addictive activities do nothing to enhance our health or enrich our lives. Instead, they make us fat, lazy and out of shape which opens the door for companies and industries to sell the big, fat health and fitness lie with solutions to our own self inflicted condition that have no chance of helping us.

**Chapter Two: The Prescription Drug Disaster ---**

**A-** With over \$275 billion spent in 2006 on over 3.7 billion prescriptions written in the US, the pharmaceutical industry has contributed more to our toxic lifestyle than any industry. We have been conditioned through marketing to view drugs as normal and safe. It's a big, fat lie which I expose in my book. There are over 200 million diagnoses each year in the U.S. for conditions that could be largely mitigated through lifestyle choices and

those choices extend beyond exercise and eating right.

**Chapter Three: The Supplement Scandal ---**

**A-** This \$23 billion dollar industry mushroomed from a simple idea in 1940 of the one-a-day-vitamin supplement. Today this highly unregulated industry can peddle products that claim or imply to make people look better, feel better, live longer or enhance physical performance. We want to believe we can achieve our health and fitness goals by taking a pill. It doesn't work that way and millions of people are being duped into a pill popping mentality.


**Chapter Four: The Weight Loss Lie ---**

**A-** Unfortunately when people think about losing weight, they don't think about exercise. They think about going on a diet or taking a weight loss pill. What most people don't realize is that losing weight is not about looking better. When people lose weight, they feel better about themselves. What people really want is to feel better and weight loss alone will never achieve this goal.

**Chapter Five: The Diet Deception ---**

**A-** The diet industry is a \$40 billion dollar scam designed to make people think they can quickly melt away fat in four to six weeks. Over 50 million people resolve to lose weight each year by dieting but sadly, fewer than 5 percent of those people will achieve their desired weight, and most will gain all the weight back and then some.

**Chapter Six: The Fitness Fabrication ---**

**A-** *The Big, Fat*  
(See Pepin-Donat page 16)



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**...Pepin-Donat**

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*Health & Fitness Lie* continually reinforces that for the average person, joining a quality club may be the best solution to attaining longterm results, with a few caveats. It has to be a quality club and that varies widely within the fitness industry. You also have to know how to navigate through all the tricks and gimmicks used by many clubs. Once all the tricks and gimmicks are exposed, the only tools left for sales success are truth and integrity...as it should be.

**Chapter Seven: *Horrid Home Equipment* ---**

**A-** The majority of home equipment available to consumers use deceptive marketing claims, if not flat out lies, to sell their products. Most home equipment will never help people achieve their total health and fitness goals, but it has been proven that you can sell more products with deception and lies than you can with the truth. I expose a number of these scams.

**Chapter Eight: *The Truth about Fitness* ---**

**A-** *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie* outlines six specific principles along with specific tips, recommendations, real life stories people can relate to and hundreds of resources that will help people enrich their lives and improve their health.

**Q-** Let's talk now about your new business: FitAdvocate.com Tell us how your book and your new business will work together, how both club owner/operators and consumers may benefit from your book and your company and what your overall goals are, for both?

**A-** The book provides the foundation for what people need to know in order to improve their health and change their lives for the better. FitAdvocate.com is a support mechanism designed to provide updated information, articles, links, book recommendations, resources, best and worst product reviews and Fit Advocate Approved products. FitAdvocate.com

endorses quality products and services with our Fit Advocate Approved icon. I am currently in the process of endorsing the best clubs in the industry and I will do everything I can to promote quality clubs to consumers. My promise to consumers is that "If it's Fit Advocate Approved—It Works!"

We are even in the process of finalizing a Podcast for special interviews with experts in various health related fields that will provide valuable information. FitAdvocate.com also has an Advisory Board with top health and fitness professionals who write articles, help with research and provide feedback on product reviews. All of this information is designed to save people both time and money while identifying real health and fitness solutions that work.

For industry operators and club staff the book provides a wealth of information that will change the way they think about health and fitness. FitAdvocate.com offers ongoing educational information for anyone interested in expanding his knowledge base on important health and fitness issues. I would say that's important for anyone working in the fitness industry.

**Q-** Chapter Six goes directly to our industry. Please list the multiple industry practices you discuss, why those practices are not good for the consumer and why club owners now still employing such practices should examine them and consider changing to new methods?

**A-** There are so many. On my website under the best and worst section, I list the top ten worst gimmicks and tricks used by the club industry. Reading that would be a good start for club operators, but it just scratches the surface. All clubs need to make the change to month-to-month memberships where you can pay as you go and stop when you want. Clubs like Bally Total Fitness have played the term contract game with high interest rates and aggressive sales tactics for years, and they are now paying the price. I would like to see the industry get away from the old school sales tactics and instead offer a

consumer-friendly approach. This starts with how you take a telephone inquiry, how you greet a guest, the qualification process, the tour, price presentation, close and follow-up. Recently, I was asked by Mark Mastrov to do some consulting for 24 Hour Fitness to help identify areas within the sales process that could be altered, changed and improved to make the entire sales process more consumer friendly. As a result they have undertaken a full-scale sales simplification initiative. I am also doing extensive consulting with California WOW, which is the largest and most successful chain of clubs in Thailand. I will continue to consult with any fitness organization that is serious about improving their sales and marketing approach while helping the largest number of people possible to get started on the path to improved health. I am not interested in working with companies that want a flyer program or other tricky marketing strategies. I only work with companies interested in significant system improvements coupled with a training platform that will improve the financial results of the company while providing a positive environment for prospective members.

**Q-** Craig, please close this very illuminating interview with comments for our readers from your heart and mind about any topic, but for sure, closing thoughts on how our industry can learn to change for the better.

**A-** The most important thing we can do as health and fitness professionals is to continually raise the level of awareness about the importance of people living a healthier, more active and vibrant life. We also have to understand that this mission extends beyond teaching people how to exercise and eat right. If it were that easy, Americans and many around the world wouldn't be in the worst shape in the history of modern civilization. There are other important factors that are aligned against the best interests of those who want to improve their health. My approach to deliver this message is designed to get people to take charge of their own health and lives and to make positive decisions that

will enable them to live better, healthier and happier lives.

The club industry should naturally benefit from this positive message. I think it's important for the industry not to be one dimensional. We need to be creative in

both inside and outside our industry. This report gives you the basis for change for you and your club operations shared by a top club industry insider, Craig Pepin-Donat, who gives his all in his new book. Now, it's up to you to

# THE BIG FAT HEALTH AND FITNESS LIE

ENRICH YOUR LIFE AND IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH  
WITHOUT GETTING RIPPED OFF IN THE PROCESS



*"Valuable information essential for anyone interested in improving their health."*

— Cindy Crawford

**CRAIG PEPIN-DONAT**

INTERNATIONAL FITNESS EXPERT AND CONSUMER ADVOCATE  
REVEALS THE TRUTH THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

the ways we can help people change and improve their lives. It seems to me that the majority of articles written in industry trade publications continually focus on how to get referrals, how to improve your closing ratio or how to improve your personal training program. I would like to see more information about the root cause of our ill health, how addictions and toxic exposure play a major role in our deteriorating health, how prescription drugs can harm our health and how to avoid the quick-fix mentality so many Americans have fallen victim to. If we can do that, we may be able to create a tipping point for change with the health challenges we face in our society. After all, isn't that why we all got into the business in the first place?

The health, racquet and sportsclub industry has many people who've achieved great things in the industry. Those that have achieved greatness have not done so in a vacuum. Those that have achieved greatness have learned from others. Others,

invest in Craig's book, to read it and study it and to decide for yourself how his work may be best applied to your quest for greatness. We only stop growing when we stop learning. Any level of success and greatness you or your club operation has experienced will only be reinforced with this knowledge. Go to: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), buy the book and read *The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie* today.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 33-year veteran of the health, racquet and sports club industry. Cates is the Founder and the 14+ year Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1<sup>st</sup> President and a Co-founder of the Association in 1981, with Rick Caro and five others. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE S. DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached at: 770.850.8506 or email: [clubinsidernews@mindspring.com](mailto:clubinsidernews@mindspring.com))

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"...ANYONE WHO HAS WALKED THROUGH  
 OUR DOORS...**HAS BEEN AMAZED!**"  
 JOHN GROSSI, GOLD'S GYM METHUEN

THE CUTTING-EDGE BOUTIQUE FACILITY  
 PROVIDES "A WORKOUT ENVIRONMENT THAT IS  
 NOT ONLY **MODERN AND STYLISH, BUT**  
**FUNCTIONAL & MOTIVATING,**  
 SAYS OWNER CRAIG LASKOW."

FITNESS MANAGEMENT, MARCH 2007

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**...Ray Gordon**

continued from page 7

ably overweight members who feel they have made significant progress toward their goals. There are two distinct teams who must work together to enhance your reputation, referrals and retention and develop creative new ideas to keep your existing and new members talking about your club.

At the recent IHRSA convention I had the opportunity to see a sneak preview of **Sandy Coffman's** new book **"Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas."** Wow! If you were to use just one of the many programs she outlines, this is a tremendous bargain! I also spoke with several owners who praised **Casey Conrad's** "Take It Off" as a weight loss program that really does work. A conversation with **Rich Boggs**, Founder of **Body Training Systems** reveals that they have perfected programs and classes to help the non-exerciser get started on the

right foot. Find the things that make your club special and unique and be sure your members and local community know and understand what those differences are. What do you offer that is specific to your facility?

This brings us to the other component; the membership staff and their direct supervisor. The membership staff should be gathering personal information that can be used to encourage, educate and motivate your new members to use the club regularly. Don't just gather goals and exercise history to make the sale. Use this vital information to communicate and be their psychological "coach". Phone calls, e-mails, congratulatory notes, featured articles and testimonials should be a part of the daily membership system and must be regularly inspected for excellence and consistency by management.

Don't just track the lead follow-up efficiency of your sales team. Also track the consistency of that follow-up, especially with the new members who were not

regular exercisers when they walked through your door. It is not the number of phone calls made, rather the quality and content of those messages.

It is an easy sequence:

- 1) A new member is trying something new, awkward, sometimes even embarrassing and painful.
- 2) You make a consistent effort to help.
- 3) Although it isn't yet a habit, they are starting to notice some positive changes.
- 4) You make a consistent effort to help.
- 5) They start to see some physical changes and notice some health benefits.
- 6) You make a consistent effort to help.
- 7) You re-inspire their pride in your club by getting a testimonial.
- 8) They are proud of their success and refer their friends.

Members will refer new members whether they are at step 1 or 20, but don't expect a lot of referrals

who hardly make it to step 3. Members who are using the club will tell others why the decision to join your club was the best choice they ever made. On the other hand, members who have failed in their quest to get healthy at your club usually are not giving glowing recommendations. A member who has achieved success through his regular exercise program is a virtual walking billboard. He is telling everyone! His friends, family and business associates all know how you helped them to succeed.

**"Two little words that can make the difference:**

**Start Now."**  
**~ Mary C. Crowley**

How would a net gain of 100, 200 or 400 members reflect on your bottom line? There are thousands of people in your market area who would become raving fans of your club if you could be the answer to their 'lack of exercise' problem. Michael Craig Miller, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of the Harvard Mental Health

Newsletter, stated in the March 26 issue of Newsweek (an excellent article on how exercise affects the brain) that **"Whoever finds the starter motor, the genetic wellspring of motivation, will have found the key to good health".**

Managers, remember:  
**Inspect what you expect.**

(Ray Gordon, Partner of Sales Makers is an experienced industry leader in innovative membership sales training systems. Ray believes that the majority of independent clubs could dramatically increase their market share with the implementation of the **Sales Makers "Proven Profit Procedure" Systems** to guide them to success. Ray can be reached at 800-428-3334 or [ray@sales-makers.com](mailto:ray@sales-makers.com))

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**...Norm's Notes**

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**International Alliance for Life Founders**

(L to R) Casey Conrad, Rich Boggs, Michele Melkerson-Granryd, Donna Krech, Denton Smith, Lynette Flynn, Shawn Vint, Fred Elias, Daron Allen, Norma Jones & Norm Cates, Jr.

• The **"International Alliance for Life"** is the name chosen for "Our Group" at our Founding meeting on the morning of March 28<sup>th</sup> at IHRSA San Francisco. (See photo) This is a group of wonderful, caring industry professionals whom I am very honored to be associated with. They are setting aside time from their busy work and personal lives to develop this alliance to save 200 million Americans and others around the world from the obesity pandemic. This is a diversi-

veterans. None of us are compensated. No money is involved. **CASEY CONRAD** has secured the name, and **SHAWN VINT** of **Greenapple Wellness** in Canada, has provided a first group of logos for our consideration. **STAY TUNED** folks as we develop the International Alliance for Life and reach out to you for participation and support with your involvement. Note also that this has not, is not and will not ever be intended to compete with IHRSA or Club Industry. We will have

no trade show. What we will have is ideas, a network for distribution and help for those afflicted by the obesity pandemic. **STAY TUNED!**

• **RICK DEVEREUX**, now retired from **IHRSA** with **BIG JOHN McCARTHY**, has continued to be active in both **Yoga** and **tennis**. From these two lifetime pursuits, Rick has produced a new DVD entitled: **"Yoga and Yoga Stretches for Tennis"**. Appropriate for tennis players of all ages and ability levels, Rick's DVD offers something for everyone: non-yogis will learn an improved way to loosen-up in five minutes before hitting balls, thereby lengthening and energizing their muscles. This not only allows them to perform more safely and effectively, but also to relax both physical and mental tension. Individuals looking for longer yoga routines will learn how to improve strength, flexibility and balance on the court. Individuals in need of spot work on tennis trouble areas, from the neck down, will learn helpful stretches. The setting for the first on-court segments is one of the premier tennis facilities in the world—the **Longwood** (See Norm's Notes page 22)

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*Mark and Karen Steinfield*

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# *My member said:*

## **“Why didn’t I do this years ago?”**

**By Donna Krech**

Virtually everyone has lost (or attempted to lose) weight at one point or another. Far fewer people are in the weight loss business. And even fewer people than that have successfully taught others how to lose weight and maintain the loss. While I can say I have experienced the pain of carrying too much weight and then the exhilaration of life after losing it. I can also say I've taught people around the globe to shed millions of pounds. Today, I want you to hear from some of those people directly. Their stories are not unlike those of your members, and they are exactly like those of the members you will attract in the future. Their stories may even be yours.

People have done all things imaginable with regard to dieting. They've counted everything from calories to carbs to fat grams to the tears they shed when nothing yields results. Yet our country continues to gain weight. Interesting, yes?

Obviously dieting is not the solution. People have purchased DVDs and infomercial products. They've read books, watched talk shows, bought home exercise equipment and formed walking clubs with their neighbors. But obesity continues to climb and enrollments in health clubs have just started to grow a bit after being stalled for two years. Clearly, exercise isn't the solution either. It may be for some of us, but let's think about those who are gaining weight. They perceive fitness facilities as places of punishment for being overweight, as opposed to being somewhere that offers hope. So, they don't come.

Let's talk about the member who isn't joining the gym right now. Overweight prospective members come with all kinds of stories. Some have gained weight due to having a baby. Some have put on pounds as a result of aging or their metabolism slowing for another reason. A

horrifying 97% have lost before only to regain, and many have simply been overweight their entire life.

What's the reason we're not finding the real solution? There is a component missing. It's not the nutritional aspect and it's not even the exercise. There's more to what a member needs in order to achieve real, lasting results and, because they've tried so many things, they want more than just a nutritional program or an exercise regime. Imagine how easy it would be for you to sell something the prospect not only needs, but wants!! Become the total solution to this prospective member and watch pounds shed, hope be regained, memberships soar and profit accumulate.

So, let's meet some members. Their stories will convince you there are people out there in your community right now searching for a real solution. I wrote the following words in my last article and they bear repeating. If you don't add Thin&Healthy's Total Solution to your facility, add something. There are lives to be saved, money to be made and expertise in your community on which to build.

Of course I'm going to say our program is great because I own the company. Read the story from a different perspective, one that addresses the questions in your mind about the overweight person. Today, we share an interview with real members who just a short while ago weren't getting results and weren't coming to a club.

Meet Nikki, Connie, Kelli and Scott. They've tried all kinds of ways to lose weight and have not been enthused about a fitness membership. I'm happy to report they've not only lost their weight, but they are also actively involved in their fitness facilities where none of these folks had ever been a member of a facility before.

Donna - Ok Gang, our readers have been told they'll meet real members.

That's you. Nikki, if someone asks you about your results, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

Nikki - Why didn't I do this years ago? I began to see significant results in just two weeks.

Donna - Had you tried to lose weight before?

Nikki - I tried Atkins briefly, but I love pasta too much to completely give it up! Slim Fast didn't address the meals I was supposed to eat when I wasn't drinking the shakes, so I ended up eating burgers, fries and other unhealthy foods for my one meal a day. I even tried to just not eat. Obviously that didn't last because I got hungry! The last thing I tried was Weight Watchers because everyone in my office was doing it. The point system didn't provide the structure I needed, and I was frustrated with my lack of results. So, I joined Thin&Healthy.

Donna - Connie, what has your journey to uncover the magnificent you been like?

Connie - It has been a process of peeling away the layers that contributed to why I was heavy. It's not just the food or exercise. It's figuring out what I should be. I needed to be slimmer and active. My energy is 4x higher than what it used to be. This has helped me refocus on and learn all the areas of my life.

I began to understand the reasons behind why I was eating and I realized the journey would be forever...I will never "arrive" at a place where I don't have to do this anymore. That's one of the most important elements. I'll always have to follow a healthy lifestyle, but it's something I really want to do. This is a solution, not another problem; we're not shifting the problem. The problem before was the weight. This is a new lifestyle.

I couldn't have done it on my own. I tried Weight Watchers and other things and lost a little but always gained it back. There's something about this one-on-

one coaching that's special. It's so much more than a diet. I attribute my ability to lose 60 lbs and 83 inches and keep it off to one thing: Life Success!

Donna - Kelli, I hear the best thing about losing weight for you has been making money! Tell us about that.

Kelli - After I lost 50 pounds my income increased almost \$30,000 from the year before! In addition to going from a size 18 to a size 8, my confidence went up and I started to meet more new friends and business associates than I ever thought possible. I became way more focused, motivated, and just generally a happier person that others wanted to know.

Donna - Scott, what kinds of foods have you been enjoying while losing?

Scott - Spaghetti and beef are my two favorite foods and I get to eat both of them on the Thin&Healthy program. The meals are structured so I can eat plenty of food and be full and satis-



focus more on my food choices. They didn't offer anything like that at the gym.

Connie - I did some exercise here and there but not a whole lot, and definitely not on a regular basis.

Kelli - I was not physically active and joined Thin&Healthy strictly for weight loss.

Scott - I was completely inactive and weighed 348 pounds.

Donna - For those of you who never joined a fitness facility, what was it like being overweight and why didn't you join?

Connie - Being



**Connie Garber Before**



**Connie Garber After**

fied without sacrificing my health.

Donna - How involved were all of you in fitness before you lost weight?

Nikki - I was a member at a women's gym for awhile, but I knew I needed to

overweight was hard. Just walking would get me out of breath. I used food because I was emotionally upset. I crammed food into my face rather than facing my issues.

I didn't care enough about

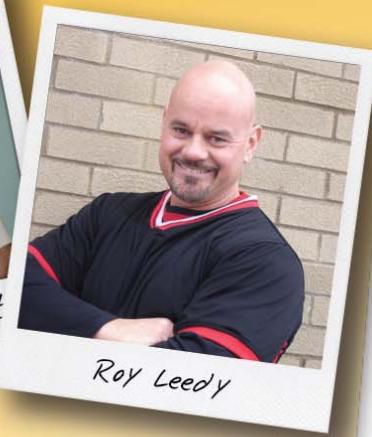
(See Donna Krech page 22)

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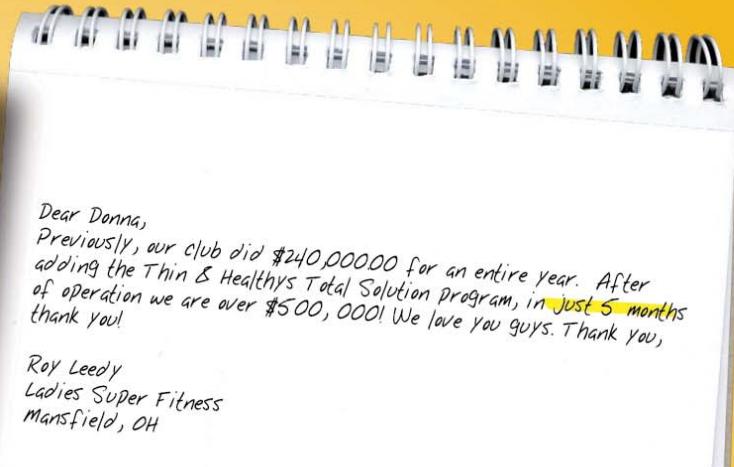
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Donna Krech  
Founder/CEO  
Thin & Healthy's Total Solution

## ...Donna Krech

continued from page 20

myself to join a gym. It really seemed like too much work. I didn't see any benefit in it.

Kelli - I'm a marketing specialist at Maverick Media so I deal with people all the time. I never realized all the relationships I was missing out on until after I lost weight. I never joined a gym because I just figured I needed to diet to lose weight.

Scott - It was hard for me to even do my job as a convenience store manager, let alone work out in a gym. I was taking six medications,

sleeping on a C-Pap machine, and I knew I was headed for an early grave.

Donna - Connie, what would you tell someone who's just sick and tired of trying to lose weight only to discover they're right back where they started?

Connie - You have to care enough about yourself to work at it, to know that you are not doing it for anybody but you. It's not for your mom or your husband. I think when you gain your weight back you don't care enough about yourself. It's the Motivation Assassin of Habit. It's so easy to fall back into the old

habits when your new habits haven't taken over yet.

Donna - Finally, what has been the BEST THING about losing weight?

Nikki - I love how my clothes fit now, I feel 100 times better than I did before, and I actually crave healthy food instead of junk food.

Connie - I feel great about myself. I didn't lose weight for anyone else. I did it for me. I didn't do it to get a job like I did 15 years ago. I did this for the right reason: to feel super great about myself! How could I ever go back to a size 18? No way!

(See *Donna Krech* page 30)

## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 18

**Cricket Club** outside Boston, host to national tournaments. The DVD features renowned tennis commentator **BUD COLLINS**, who is depicted

on the DVD cover and opens the DVD with a welcome, setting the scene for you to experience yoga. As the DVD emphasizes: **"Yoga is for anyone, any time, any place."** To order go to: [www.coacheschoice.com/product.cfm?pid=4094](http://www.coacheschoice.com/product.cfm?pid=4094)

**Pura Vida Fitness and Spa** will install a 30,000 square-foot facility in **Cherry Creek, Colorado**. The principal participants in the project are **J. MADDEN**, the project's architect and founder, and **SCOTT SCHLEY** and **LARRY ENGELKEN**, both partners and investors. **MOLLY KEMMER** has been hired as the General Manager. Best wishes to all!

**The National Fitness Trade Show and IHRSA's Club Business Entrepreneur Conference** will be held at the **Rio Conference Center, Hotel and Casino** September 4-7<sup>th</sup>. This is the only venue in the industry that is all under one roof and one magnificent place is the Rio! Excellent keynote speakers, **THOMAS PLUMMER**, **of the National Fitness Business Alliance**, **Clubdoc MIKE CHAET** of **Club Marketing and Management Systems**, **Fish Philosophy author, STEVE LUNDIN** and **PAUL BROWN**, of **Face To Face Retention Systems**, will all target profit and business success for independent club owner/operators. Industry icon and legend, **BILL HUBNER**, also the Founder of **Paramount Fitness**, will be honored with **WALLY and MESCHELLE BOYKO's NFTJ Lifetime Achievement Award**. I'll be there, too and hope you make it. Let's catch up. **IHRSA's Success By Association** rolls on!

Even though I do hope Bally does not have to file for bankruptcy, my back-up hope is that someone at **Bally Total Fitness** is developing a special Bally Total Fitness **Bankruptcy PR**



## Roundtables for Executives

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Joe Cirulli  
Gainesville Health & Fitness  
and REX Member

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**Campaign** designed to facilitate consumer understanding of continued operations should Bally finally be forced into bankruptcy and that filing does provide for a continuation of many of their operations. Should such an event happen, **a PR campaign prepared in advance**, would be a good tool to help those continuing Bally Total Fitness clubs deal with existing members and with continued new membership marketing. But, to me and I have been saying this for years and years, the single biggest thing Bally Total Fitness could do for its future would be the outright elimination of their retail installment contract and switching to easy to enter month-to-month memberships with low enrollment fees, basically the same plans employed by companies such as **24 Hour Fitness, Lifestyles Family Fitness** and many **IHRSA** clubs across America and around the world. **STAY TUNED!**

I now think of our super April issue as the **first name misspelling** edition from **hell!** That's what I now call my fabulous **JIM BOTTIN/ABC Financial World** cover story April, 2007 edition. I am very purposefully hard on myself every month. I seek perfection for you every month. I now think of my April edition this way because in that one issue **I made two first name spelling errors of friends of mine!** On the page #3 photo cutline for the shot of **IHRSA Chairman, MICHAEL LEVY and GREG LAPPIN, IHRSA's 2007 DALE S. DIBBLE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE Award** winner, I misspelled Greg's first name with two

(See *Norm's Notes* page 28)

## A Message from

### Fitness Management & Consulting...

When The Going Gets TOUGH The Smart Get Help™



Jim Thomas

What's been your experience with training programs? Did some group or some person come to town, share some selling tips with your people, and get them interested? Then, after he or she left town, did your people return to their old ineffective ways of selling?

We can change all that for you - by delivering highly effective training that measurably increases your membership sales results. Here's a comment from one of our clients:

"As an owner of an independent club, I found myself somewhat isolated within the world of health clubs. Jim gave me a window into the entire industry. In doing so, he was able to directly affect the large increase in our sales and to streamline our expenses. The end result was a 22% profit margin. If you can get him, get him!!"

What do we do that's different? We provide topnotch training combined with regular follow up training with each member of your team. This follow through reinforces skills and measurably increases your sales results.

Whether you operate a health club, fitness center, gym or other type club, Fitness Management and Jim Thomas have a program to fit your need, expand your market base, and keep your members and staff productive and enthusiastic. Jim Thomas may be reached at 800-929-2898, [jthomas@fmconsulting.net](mailto:jthomas@fmconsulting.net) or [www.fmconsulting.net](http://www.fmconsulting.net).

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# CLUB PROGRAMMING SUCCESS - GUARANTEED

By Sandy Coffman

If I had to rename the about-to-be-released book, "Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs:101 Profitable Ideas," I could name it "Make It Fun," because that's exactly what great programming does for the fitness clubs of our industry. Programming is the part of our business that taps into your creative juices and allows you to truly bring the world of exercise, fitness, and wellness into an enjoyable, fun and social experience for your member. The results are happy, healthier members and a growing, profitable business for you. How's that for a win-win situation!

Although programming is fun and innovative, make no mistake that it is also big business. Professional leadership, marketing techniques, communication skills and proven systems for implementation and evaluation are needed to ensure the success of every program. The word-of-mouth referrals that most clubs rely on account for at least 60% of their new business.

Quality referrals come from members sharing their positive experiences with their family, neighbors, relatives and co-workers. Great programs provide those kinds of experiences.

Conversely, programs that don't provide an enjoyable, club-like experience can provide a negative word-of-mouth reaction which can be devastating to your business. Don't let that happen. Provide your staff, your program directors, instructors and trainers with tools that will launch every program into a successful experience for your member as well as your business.

Let's look at just four points to consider if you would like to *kick your business of programming up a notch*.

**1. Develop Excellent Program Directors**  
 You can not "assign" programming duties to just anyone on your staff and expect a program to be a success. Programming is more than an idea. It takes careful planning and an understanding of how your facility, your staff and your clients interact. Very often we sell memberships or

activities in terms of the type of equipment available or the amount of it. Although physical characteristics are important, it is the personality of the club that will keep people coming back. Your active long-term member measures the value of your club in terms of recognition, relationships, and camaraderie. These are the attributes of programming. You can provide a fitness evaluation, and three workout sessions with an instructor, but the majority of members won't commit to coming back on a regular basis. Take that basic program and add some fun, in the form of contests and recognition. Give awards or prizes to a variety of people and for various achievements, include a social component, and you will have more members participating regularly and enthusiastically. Oh yes, they will probably tell others about their experience too.

Set your programmers up for success so they can provide successful programs to your members. Give them systems and training on how to give energetic, friendly greetings, how to give compliments, how to make suggestions, how to promote new programs and how to award prizes enthusiastically. Teach them how to deliver the ultimate promotion – a party! These systems are as important as knowing how and when to increase weights, reps and sets. Programming includes developing personalities as well as exercise routines.

**2. Put People Together** Every program is not for every person, but instead, a program is created for a specific group of people who share a common interest in the activity. The groups that I am referring to also share common skill levels, schedules, personalities and/or ages, and maybe even genders. These are the qualities that form relationships and friendships. Create programs for specific groups of people that share these commonalities and you will be assured

of programming success and retention.

Putting people together is what the club business is all about. A club experience is all about "joining." Your members are joining a club to join a smaller group of people that they can all relate to. Your programs then become clubs within your club. When people exercise together in a group environment that promotes camaraderie and friendships you will achieve the goal of programming which is *retention*. Why? Because people don't quit friendships!!

So you see, successful programming includes niche marketing techniques in order to provide the programs that will be fun for the members and build your business too.

## 3. Program To The Members Who Want You And Need You Most

Clubs are very aware of their members who work out regularly and diligently. Employees and trainers are quick to compliment or even offer suggestions to those who are obviously receptive to fitness challenges, new pieces of equipment or the latest group exercise class. Programs for these people are not difficult to come up with, because most of those members are much in tune with the trainers themselves.

Actually, programs are often not even necessary for the more advanced, already fit members to keep them active. But does that mean you are serving the *majority* of your members? Probably not. Statistics tell us that we may only see 20% of our members on a regular basis. The *majority* of your members are not at your club – but they would like to be.

Intimidation, insecurity, lack of knowledge or looking lost are horrible feelings. Yet the *majority* of your new members and perhaps the *majority* of your older members fall into that category. The *majority* of your members are probably inactive – those who may have joined months ago but never come in. They are



**Sandy Coffman**

not experienced in a fitness club environment and would most likely fall in the category of beginners. Yes, the *majority* of your members need to be put together with others like themselves. They need to feel a sense of belonging that joining a club promised to provide. They need leaders that encourage laughter, friendship and enthusiasm. They need programs that put exercise routines into contests, games and social experiences that they look forward to revisiting every week. They need programs that make their exercise experience FUN! Programming is for the majority of your members who want you and need you most.

## 4. Provide Programs In Every Activity Area And Timeframe

If you truly want to grow your business, help your members achieve success, and be a part of this industry that is making a difference in the world. Programming should be part of your club's culture, not just a project at certain times of the year or for individual groups of members. If you are a small facility with one line of equipment, you can create programs that attract members with common interests and who will use your club in specific timeframes. Early morning risers, second shift workers, professional groups, 60+ members, sport-specific enthusiasts or people who share overweight challenges are all potential exercise enthusiasts if they (See Sandy Coffman page 30)

**Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs**

101 Profitable Ideas

**Sandy Coffman**

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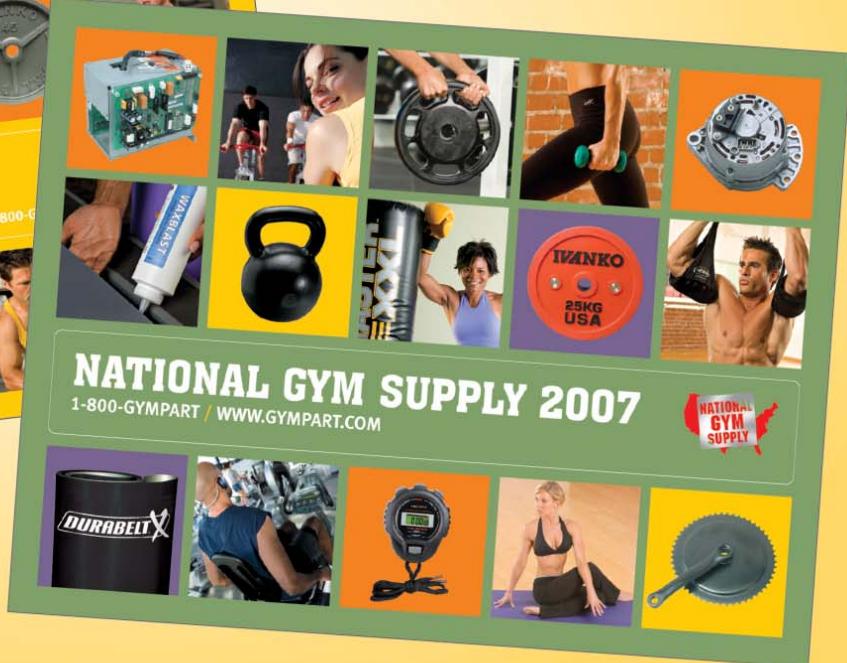
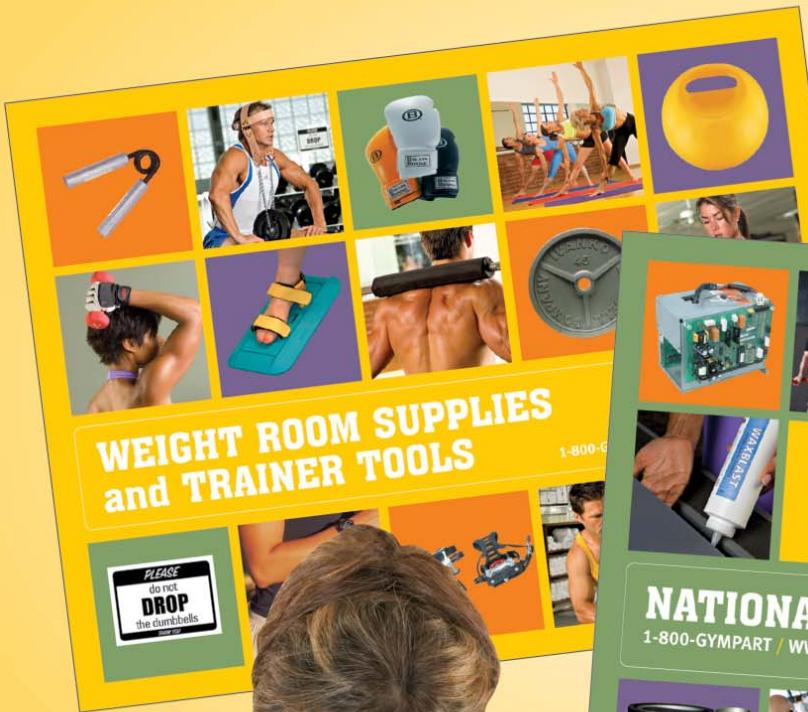
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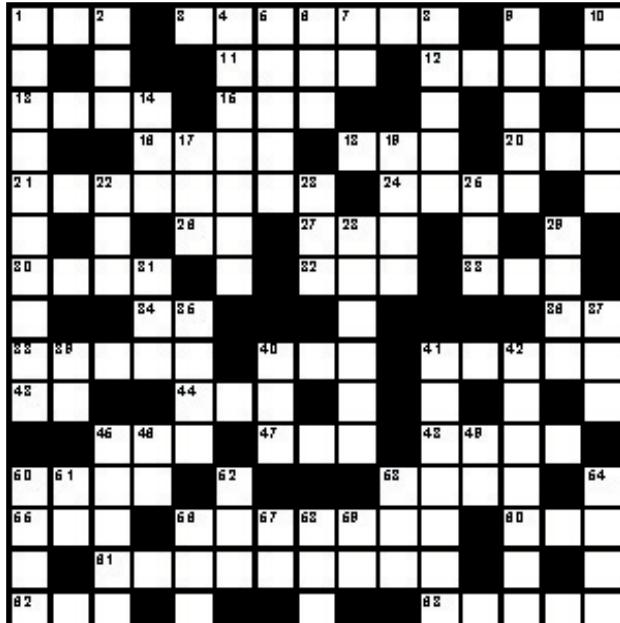
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#### Across

- Augie's Black and Blue Bash raised over 2 million dollars at IHRSA 2007 to find a cure for this disease
- Writer of "Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas": Sandy \_\_\_\_\_
- Olympic event

#### equipment

- Joe Moore is its President/CEO
- He won the Dale S. Dibble Distinguished Service Award at IHRSA 2007: \_\_\_\_\_ Lappin
- Have a snack
- New York's coast
- Expression of surprise
- Spanish for sun

21. Vital to anyone's health

24. In good health

26. Alien movie

27. Highway abbr.

30. Independent Club Operators Association, abbr.

32. What you do on a treadmill

33. Drink cooler

34. Nanosecond, abbr.

36. Accounts payable, for short

38. Plan for major club expansion (goes with 47 across)

40. Company named to IHRSA's Hall of Fame in San Francisco.

41. Work \_\_\_\_\_: advice to health club owners

43. Operation, for short

44. Retirement account

45. \_\_\_\_\_ Rich, panelist at the Annual Financial panel of the IHRSA show

47. See 38 across

48. Rick \_\_\_\_\_ held his 11th Annual financial panel at the IHRSA show

50. Look for

53. Microphone problem sometimes

55. Body soothing liquid

56. Try to constantly \_\_\_\_\_: advice to health club owners

60. Short term for body

61. Comes up with new ideas and tries them out

62. Jim Bottin's \_\_\_\_\_ Financial World

63. Wear with shoes.

Down

1. Courageous individual leading the way for research to find a cure for 1 across (2 words)

2. Observe

4. Child \_\_\_\_\_ is a problem being addressed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

5. Exploits

6. You can burn off \_\_\_\_\_ in a health club

7. Millimeters, abbr.

8. Find your \_\_\_\_\_ in the market

9. Needs to be earned by a club with its customers

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Total Fitness

14. German, for short

17. Serve that made money at the Midtown Athletic Club Super Service Charity Fund Raiser

19. Get a new club into operation

22. Concept of self

23. Make a mistake

25. Measure for capital expenditures

28. Many clubs only need fine \_\_\_\_\_ to become a lot more profitable

29. Equipment

31. Columnist Landers

35. Under the \_\_\_\_\_ (in essence)

37. Parent and Teachers' Association

39. Printer maker

40. Taxi

41. Ideal goal for all club owners

42. Relating to exercises to strengthen the heart and lungs

45. Memento

46. Approve

49. Expression of relief

50. Society for financial awareness, abbr.

51. Emotional intelligence, abbr.

52. Spanish for I love

53. Just before

54. Opposite to subtracts

56. Hotel

57. Present value, for short

58. Moved fast

59. Overtime, for short

**Answers to CLUB**

**INSIDER Crossword**

**Puzzle in our June, '07 issue.**

**Produced by: Theme Crosswords' Myles Mellor**

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**Thomas Plummer,**  
The Thomas Plummer Company  
*Failure is Not an Option: What it Takes to Succeed as an Independent Owner in Today's Market.*



**Mike Chaet, Ph.D.,**  
CMS International  
*Club Management for the Independent Club Operator*



**Paul Brown,**  
Face2Face Retention Systems  
*Playing for Keeps!*



# SPORTS RESEARCH BOMBSHELL:

## A MORE ENLIGHTENED, TOLERANT AND PERMISSIVE AMERICA!

Sports Participation Trends  
 Parallel Evolution of Larger  
 Society

**CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y. --** The idea of a more tolerant and permissive society seems outrageously counterintuitive in 2007 -- especially through the prism of anger, incivility and aggressive behavior that reflect our daily frustrations. But through a different lens, another image -- one of the 1960's Cultural Revolution fast-forwarded to the present -- reveals a more tolerant and humanistic nation. The rules of society -- written and unwritten -- are being transformed.

Harvey Lauer, Founder and President of American Sports Data, Inc. ([www.americansportsdata.com](http://www.americansportsdata.com)) -- the most widely quoted and definitive source of sports and fitness participation data in the U.S. -- has just explicated this premise in a new book. Based on primary research in the service of more than 200 corporate, governmental, media and sports organizations over the past quarter-century, "The New Americans: Defining Ourselves Through Sports And Fitness Participation", is a seminal collection of 33 articles, interviews and essays written by and about

Mr. Lauer. He concludes that after religion, not only is sport

the second most powerful force in American culture -- it is also a precision index of changing values and behavioral norms.

In a startling introduction to this Bible of sports participation research, Lauer identifies the surprising but unifying theme linking sports participation and social analysis: a new social morality, reflected not only in American cultural change, but also in sports participation.

Forty or fifty years ago, many more people than today smoked cigarettes in the U.S., and a far greater proportion of non-smokers were forced to inhale secondary smoke. Most women didn't work outside the home, open interracial dating was rare, gay marriage unheard of. Anti-gun legislation, affirmative action and Medicare were non-existent. The disabled had few special conveniences, and we certainly didn't take our daughters to work -- much less our dogs. The air we breathed was arguably less clean, and -- though an unrelated and rarely-mentioned tidbit of social history -- we even bathed less frequently than is the present custom. Physical fitness would be the gift of a distant future.

That future is today -- a time when we care more

about people's rights, our environment, our bodies, our relationships, and are less beholden to authority and formality in all its guises.

Hunting and Fishing once reigned supreme; but today, the "Blood" sports are in severe decline. From 1987 to 2004, the number of Hunters in the U.S. declined by 40%, while "bloodless" shooting sports such as Sporting Clays and Paintball fare better. We also smoke less (a decline of about a third in two decades), exercise more (but not enough), have more female sports participants, safer sports rules and better equipment. But even as we exercise more -- 80% of all athletic shoes and apparel never witness perspiration in a new casual world that was unthinkable a half-century ago.

Ironically, even the phenomena of "fan violence" in professional sports and Little League "misbehavior" (the latter a much-exaggerated notion, according to ASD) are themselves manifestations of our new permissive culture. "Forty or fifty years ago" says Lauer, "we were far more respectful of authority figures -- be they politicians, priests, baseball coaches or celebrity athletes."

In a bygone era, women who lifted weights in-

vited a spate of gender-specific epithets; but for many of today's men, toned muscles are an ideal of feminine attractiveness. From 1987 - 2005, the number of women who trained with free weights tripled from 7.4 million to 22.6 million.

It is safe to deduce that in the 1950's or 1960's, few people exercised; baseline fitness-consciousness was just above zero. Today, 20% of the U.S. population works out on a regular basis, while an additional 60%+ can be classified as what Lauer calls "Consciousness III" -- those persuaded of physical fitness, but who by their own admission, don't get enough exercise. As behavior lags enlightened attitudes, 4 out of 5 adult Americans are true believers in exercise and fitness.

But we also eat more and paradoxically, have grown obese. The average adult female weighs 165 pounds -- a development that has more to do with a failure of self-discipline than enlightened values. Men tip the scales at well over 190 pounds, and the proportion of overweight children has quadrupled since the 1960's.

If in the 1950's or 1960's one of our grandmothers looked out the kitchen window and saw a gray-

haired man running through the streets in his underwear, she had one option -- to call the police! Her reaction would have been a proper civic response to a sight that at best, seemed faintly deviant. Today, that phone call would provoke a class-action by thousands of older fitness aficionados. Indeed, from 1987 - 2005 health club membership among people over 55 zoomed by 422%.

These are just a few examples of how U.S. sports participation has traced American cultural history in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Tackling a comprehensive array of sports participation topics which include the Fitness Revolution, Youth Development, Team Sports, Generation Y, Obesity, Sports Injuries, Health Club Trends, Psychological Stress, Outdoors pursuits, research methodology and much more, Lauer has fashioned a work that does double-duty as a reference manual for marketing professionals and as the framework of an educational curriculum. It is also a breakthrough in sports sociology.

For more information on "The New Americans: Defining Ourselves through Sports and Fitness Participation", log on to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). (If out of stock, call 914-461-3271).

### ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 22

mile visibility, an engine shut down due to a fire and a hijacker with a gun in the back of the plane. So, I pledge to all of you that I will do better! The next time you see any typo or other error in The CLUB INSIDER News I invite you to send me an email to: [clubinsidernews@mindspring.com](mailto:clubinsidernews@mindspring.com) with the following subject: **Hey Norm...YOU CRASHED! (LOL)**...see page #\_\_\_\_, column \_\_\_\_ line \_\_\_\_!

• I've tried my best to stay out of political commentary for 14.5 years now so I am not going to mention politics in this. What I am going to mention here is that I truly believe that the War in Iraq is going to go down in history as

pivotal to America's future. I know and yes, I agree...it's a mess over there. But, in case you do not keep up with what is going on around the world, but you value safety, security and peace for your family in our wonderful American homeland, I invite you to view this link. Once you've seen this I believe you will think what I think. I think that America is in the middle of, not just a **War in Iraq**, but for sure, a **global conflict with Islamic Fascists**. **Fascists who are engaged in a Jihad against all Jews and Christians** on earth that could dramatically engulf America much sooner than we all might think. The mission of this Jihad is to: **Destroy America**.

But, please go to and view this link and just be your own judge. It will take you about 4 minutes to

view: [www.terrorismawareness.org/know-about-jihad](http://www.terrorismawareness.org/know-about-jihad) To me now, it is not impossible to think that the best reason in the world for Americans everywhere to lose weight and become fit will be to prepare for war in our streets. Think about it.

• **God bless our troops, airmen and seamen** as these brave men and women risk life and limb everyday for all of us. **God bless their families** for the sacrifice they make for all of us. **God bless the citizens of IRAQ** as they deal with death and destruction from suicide bombers every day. **God bless** you and your family. **God bless America.**

- Norm Cates, Jr. - **The CLUB INSIDER News - Publisher Since 1993**

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**...Sandy Coffman**

continued from page 24

would be invited to a fitness program that is designed to accommodate their wants and needs. Help them to enjoy the experience of fitness together.

If you are a large multi-purpose facility, give your staff the tools to develop programs in every activity area – court sports, the

fitness center, the pool, the gym and the group exercise studio. Create programs in each area that accommodates the wants and needs of each group of members as listed above. Once you find your niche at implementing programs effectively, you will be able to create programs that are sure to be successful. You will find that most programs can be adapted to any facility, any market, or any ac-

tivity. Your entire staff should get good at learning how to **make fitness fun**.

You can get people to come through your doors, but changing what they do inside the building – programming – is how to keep them there.

(**Sandy Coffman** is the **Dean of Programming** in the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. She has the greatest experience base, 101 of

the best ideas for success in club programming and the most dynamic teaching style for club operators who seek to make advanced programming an integral component in their club success. She will present a full-day seminar at CLUB INDUSTRY East along with Michael Scott Scudder in Orlando on Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. Sandy's new book entitled: **"SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS FOR FITNESS"**

**AND HEALTH CLUBS: 101 PROFITABLE IDEAS** will be available for delivery this July. Sandy is the President of Programming for Profit and may be contacted at: [SLCoffman@aol.com](mailto:SLCoffman@aol.com) You also may order her book at that address for July, 2007 delivery or by going to [www.HumanKinetics.com](http://www.HumanKinetics.com)

**MAKE IT FUN!**
**...Donna Krech**

continued from page 22

Kelli – Making more money than ever before and looking great while I do it!

Scott – I got my pilot's license, which was medi-

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(Donna Krech has empowered and equipped people from around the globe to lose millions of pounds and make millions of dollars. She can be reached at 419-991-1223 or [mbigler@thinandhealthy.com](mailto:mbigler@thinandhealthy.com))

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finishing our 14th year of publication!  
All of you are on the "Team" that makes CLUB  
INSIDER. We will be grateful to you forever. I  
appreciate and LOVE 'ya!  
Very sincerely, Norm Cates, Jr.**

April, 2007

**"SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS FOR FITNESS AND HEALTH CLUBS: 101 PROFITABLE IDEAS"** by Sandy Coffman, Programming For Profit [SLCoffman@aol.com](mailto:SLCoffman@aol.com) or [www.HumanKinetics.com](http://www.HumanKinetics.com)

**Programming Tip of the Month**

It would only be fitting to begin our monthly program tips with **MAKE IT FUN!** There are many ways and many programs that will *make fitness fun*, but the first and most important key to fun is hiring fun people to run the programs. To deliver fun, you must be fun, and you must have fun yourself. Programs that are boring are usually run by boring people. High energy, enthusiasm and engaging personalities will be your best marketing tools and deliver your most productive promotions. Learn how to interview, then hire correctly, and finally, how to train the best leaders that will result in retention and growth. Important! You must follow the systems and use productive evaluation tools as you implement the programs, but the good news is.....you will be guaranteed success!

# GUARANTEED RESULTS



GROUP POWER®

"I have never seen anything else in the industry have such a high impact on guest traffic, member retention, member satisfaction and profits. In just three years with BTS, we've increased monthly group participation from 800 visits to 6,000 visits, added over 2,600 new members, increased retention from 50% to 73%, **increased revenues by \$1.2 million and increased profits by over \$400 K!**"

-John Bonica, Owner of Global Fitness Center

To learn more call **1-800-729-7837 x230**  
or visit [www.bodytrainingsystems.com](http://www.bodytrainingsystems.com)

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systems



# Running A Health Club Is Hard Work

We know because that's where we started.



"As industry veterans, many of the leaders of ABC know exactly what you are going through. Our business is focused on your business and we have an appreciation for your daily challenges. We are health club people working for health club people. Every aspect of our business, processing payment services, club management software, and marketing/retention materials were designed and intended to help your business succeed! It all begins and ends with you!"

*Paul Schaller  
President, ABC Financial Services*

## Our Experience Comes From Over 25 Years Of Managing Our Own Health Clubs

We've been there. We know what it takes to succeed. We know the tools you need. We know what works and what doesn't. The solutions we can offer you are experience-based and have been time-tested in our own businesses for many years.

## Full Service Club Management Assistance With Solutions That Work

Getting the tools you need to manage your club is key to your bottom-line profits and no one can deliver the complete club management solution you need better than ABC Financial. We know how to maximize your profits from each member. We know how to help you generate more revenue and retain more members. We know because we've done it... Just like you.

- Full service accounts receivable processing: EFT, Credit Card, Payment Book, Pay Online, Pay-By-Phone
- Online Business Center
- DataTrak Software, including POS Inventory Control System and Front Counter Check-In System
- Customized Club Marketing Solutions

## NEW TO ABC!

Electronic Agreement Entry  
Scheduling



**You need them.**

**SOLUTIONS**

**We have them.**