

Norm Cates'

THE Club Insider[©]

NEWS

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

SEPTEMBER 2000
VOLUME VII NUMBER 9



"Casey Conrad: She's Not Weighting For Business!"

CASEY CONRAD

TALENTED...DRIVEN...RESPECTED

Invented in 1978.



The famous Pullum Slotted Grip Plate: Invented in 1978 by Wally Pullum, nephew of the internationally acclaimed English Strongman of the early 1900's, W.A. Pullum. First published on the cover of Weights magazine, #10, Jan. 1981.

Perfected in 2000.



U.S. Patent # D421,076
other U.S. and foreign patents pending

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NEWS

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

CASEY CONRAD... Talented... Driven... Respected

An Interview With Club Business Guru Casey Conrad

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Talented, driven, respected are just three of the many adjectives that come to mind when describing club business wizard Casey Conrad. Other words that come to mind are: well prepared, smart, energetic, workaholic, go-getter, forward thinker and organized.

If you are in the health, racquet and sportsclub business, you may already know Casey Conrad. You may have heard her speak or maybe you have read one of her terrific articles in The CLUB INSIDER News or other club industry publications.

Regardless of what you know or don't know about Casey Conrad, read on here; this is one great

story about a person that is helping the health, racquet and sportsclub industry every day and is launching a project that could have a huge impact on profits in health clubs world wide.

Conrad was born on September 1, 1964, in Portland, Maine, where she arrived two months prematurely, weighing only 2 pounds. When she was nine months old, her family moved to Wakefield, Rhode Island, where she grew up and graduated from South Kingston High School. She graduated from The American University in Washington, D.C. in 1986 with a major in International Service. In 1998 she completed four years of night school to receive a law degree from Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol, Rhode Island.

She is now licensed to practice law in Rhode Island, but has stayed focused on her club consulting business, Communications Consultants, Inc., full time until now.

"Born For Business"

Casey Conrad began her business career at age 8 when she and a friend of hers would make necklaces and sell them in rented booth space at local fairs and other events. Also at age 8, Casey was the first girl to break into Little League Baseball in Rhode Island! While in high school she was a very active Amway Sales Representative as well as a competitive athlete. She put aside her athletic focus when she went to college so she could "apply herself." That

resulted in her earning an academic scholarship to American University. But, being away from athletics didn't last too long as she became involved in competitive martial arts, earning her Black Belt in karate, competing on the East Coast. Because she was a self-confessed "scrawny kid" needing to add some size to her frame so she would be more competitive in karate, she joined a gym and began lifting weights. That weight training resulted in her becoming an amateur bodybuilder with aspirations of one day turning professional. She became the Manager of the karate studio where she trained. That marked the beginning of her involvement in the fitness industry on a formal basis and she spent two years in that job.



Casey Conrad

We contacted Casey (See *Casey Conrad* page 7)

Ivanko And Iron Grip Settle Lawsuit Out Of Court

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Ivanko Barbell Company and Iron Grip Barbell Company have settled their lawsuit out of court. Iron Grip and Christopher Anastasi sued

Ivanko for: (1) A utility patent infringement; (2) A design patent infringement; and (3) A claim that Ivanko Plates might cause confusion with Iron Grip Plates.

Iron Grip officials commented, "The settlement between Ivanko and Iron Grip was devel-

oped and agreed to by both parties and was intended to resolve the various issues between the two companies in a legal and binding manner. As a result, the legal dispute is behind us. We are pleased with the outcome of the dispute and remain committed to honor the

terms of the settlement. We assume that Ivanko intends to abide by the terms of agreement and turn its attention towards the business of developing and producing commercial free weight equipment."

Counsel for Ivanko, Jeffrey Sheldon, of Sheldon and Mak

commented, "Basically, the two sides went their own way. Ivanko may continue making and selling the product it has been making and selling all along. For a limited period of time, it will not make a 2 hole plate that looks the same as the Iron Grip

(See *IVANKO* page 4)

Booming Health Clubs, Slipping Fitness Participation And Healthier Diets All Coexist In The Overweight Society

New Study Tracks History of the American Fitness Revolution - A Maze of Contradictions

Inside The Insider

- *Industry Consultant Casey Conrad Opens National Chain Of Weight Loss Centers*
- *IRHSA and The YMCA- Non-U.S. Member Advisory*
- *Handling Objections On The Tour*
- *Customer-izing Your Club*
- *Programming For Fun*
- *The CLUB INSIDER News World View*
- *The Importance Of Supervision In Exercise*
- *IRHSA's Capitol Report*

HARTSDALE, N.Y.

Sept. 8, 2000— True or False? "One of the most profound changes in American lifestyle and culture over the past 30 years has been the emergence of a fitness revolution." Answer: True, but not lately, according to American Sports Data, Inc. which has tracked U.S. fitness trends since 1987. The fitness phenomenon peaked in 1990, and has remained on a plateau ever since, becoming an increasingly complex tangle of sub-trends which have obscured the overall direction and

intensity of our collective physical fitness behavior.

According to ASD, the present-day fitness movement is a direct descendant of the 1960's counter-culture. Many of the embryonic attitudes and lifestyles conceived in that turbulent era and embraced by only a small minority of the population were to become mainstream American values in the 1970's. One of the most important trends to emerge from this period was a new focus on self-fulfillment and a heightened interest in self-improvement — an

outgrowth of which was a growing awareness of personal health and physical fitness.

This nascent fitness consciousness grew slowly but steadily throughout the 1970's, achieving critical mass toward the end of that decade as the Running Boom — spearhead of the revolution. This "original" fitness activity, the forerunner of a wider fitness movement, peaked during the early 1980's, but not before giving rise to a second generation of other strenuous activities, such as High-Impact Aerobics, (See *Sports Data* page 6)

• NORM'S NOTES •

• It looks like those mates from "Down-Under" are off to a terrific start as the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony was truly spectacular indeed! Amazing to see a country of only 18.9 million population pull off such an event as the Olympic Games. It just demonstrates their national dedication to sport.

• Congratulations to my friend, ALAN SCHWARTZ, Chairman of The Tennis Corporation of America as he has been named First Vice President of the United States Tennis Association. That places Alan, barring the unknown, in position to serve as President of the USTA from January 1, 2003 to January 1, 2005.

• It is great to see that IHRSA is launching a thrust to improve the image of the health club industry and that is good. It is good because right now, we only have about 16 million commercial health club members out of 275 million people! One reason that is true is that all commercial clubs must attract new members to come in and join. The problem is that many of the people clubs are marketing to have had a bad experience with a commercial health club or knows someone who has. You've probably heard the old saying that every "unhappy camper" will tell at least 10 others about their experience in a short time. Also, there are millions out there that still have the old image of a health club as a place packed with nothing but musclehead, juiced up beasts. They don't realize that "average" people, like themselves, are frequenting health clubs everywhere now. So, this image remake project is a terrific idea and is long overdue. STAY TUNED.

• Speaking of IHRSA, check out the article on page #12 written by highly esteemed IHRSA Executive Director, JOHN McCARTHY, explaining why YMCA of the USA should pay taxes. Also, don't forget to make plans to attend the IHRSA/Athletic Business Conference and Trade Show in Orlando, Florida, November 29th-December 1st. And, you just should not miss the Convention and Trade Show of the year, IHRSA's 20th Anniversary Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco, March 22-25th. September 30th is the deadline for the special \$250 price for convention attendance, the same price charged 20 years ago. For information on both events and IHRSA Membership information call: (800) 228-4772.

• The Step Company has developed "The BTS Challenge-Moving in the Spirit" (BTS-Body Training Systems) to raise money for "Moving in the Spirit", a non-profit organization created to provide

inner city kids with a healthy after school environment. Their mission is: "To instill workplace values through the spirit of dance." The BTS Challenge will be the ultimate test of endurance, STRENGTH and agility. CATHY SPENCER, NATHANIEL LEVIAS, MOLLY FOX, MIKE McSWEENEY and the National Training Team will teach 5 Group Fitness Classes back to back on Saturday, November 4th, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Georgia World Congress Center Rooms (313 & 314) in Atlanta. The goal is to raise \$20,000. For information on how you and your club can participate, even if you can't come to Atlanta that day, call: (800) 729-7837 or go online at: www.bodypump.com

• LOU HUDSON was a star basketball player in the NBA for years. Lou's and Bernadette Hudson's son, Louis C. Hudson, Jr., 18, was an aspiring athlete attending Riverwood High School in Atlanta when he died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism during his senior year. In honor of their son's life, the Hudsons established the Louis C. Hudson, Jr. Scholarship Fund, Inc. which, since 1996, has provided 13 college scholarships to students who are "average" in academic achievement and have been accepted to accredited institutions in the U.S. Coaches in the Atlanta recommend students to the Scholarship Committee which is led by Hall of Famer and Braves baseball great, PHIL NIEKRO. The Lou Hudson, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament will be held just outside of Atlanta, October 6th. For information on the tournament or on contributing to the Scholarship Fund, contact MARY GREEN ROBINSON or BERNADETTE HUDSON, at (404) 344-4921.

• BURNETT DONAHO held the title of CEO of Club Sports International, now known as The Wellbridge Company for 1 1/2 years. Donaño has now departed the company and club veteran and co-founder of the company, ED WILLIAMS, is now serving in that leadership capacity as the company moves on. The Wellbridge Company had been in play for acquisition during Donaño's tenure and has now been removed from the market, resuming its growth roll through acquisitions and new developments. Since it is pre-election season, I hereby nominate my friend, ED WILLIAMS, to be named as the permanent CEO of the Wellbridge Company. STAY TUNED.

• LA FITNESS is on a growth tear, recently acquiring 22 Atlanta-area Australian Body Works clubs from our mate from

'Down-Under', TONY deLEEDE who is, as this is written, in Sydney Australia, serving on as an Ambassador from the U.S. during the Olympic Games. Last week it was announced that LA Fitness had signed agreements for 3 more Atlanta locations... But, don't tell anyone because LA Fitness bigwig, PAUL NORRIS, wants no publicity for the company!

• Almost 4 years ago, former IHRSA Board Member, TIM RHODE and his lovely wife, LIZ, opened the Maryland Athletic Club (The MAC) and Wellness Center in the Baltimore, MD. Area. (Timonium). The Rhode's were assisted in the development of their outstanding facility by, RICK CARO, the Co-founder of IHRSA and former President of the Association. To say that the MAC has been successful is a huge understatement! They have exceeded their projected revenues and membership numbers by huge margins each year of operation and have now embarked on a \$2.5 million, major expansion which will increase the MAC size by 40%! Good luck Tim and Liz!

• Congratulations to ROBERT RICE, who recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award at WALLY BOYKO's National Fitness Trade Show in Las Vegas. Also, congrats to the Distinguished Service Award Winners this year: PETE ASISTIN, V.P. Sales and Marketing, Task Industries, TOM LINCIR, President, Ivanko Barbell Company, ANDY RICHTERS, V.P. of Key Accounts, Unisen, Inc., RUSSELL SQUIER, EVP Brand and Market Development, Fitness Products International, JON THORSELL, Director of West Coast Commercial Sales, Life Fitness and DOUG WERNER, V.P. International Sales and Marketing, Nautilus.

• Last month, just after our deadline, it was announced that the merger deal between Healthrax and the Health Fitness Corporation had been cancelled and that HDC Founder and CEO, LOREN BRINK had left the company.

• Jazercise, Inc., the world's largest dance-fitness program, recently celebrated the Grand Opening of its new International Headquarters in Carlsbad, CA with a live, on location taping of over 300 Jazzerisers at LEGOLAND California and a sign unveiling at the new Jazercise Headquarters later in the day. Over 500 people joined Jazercise Founder and CEO, JUDI SHEPPARD MISSETT as she coronated her new digs. Congratulations Judi and Shanna and Jazercise Team!

• ACE, The American Council On Exercise, has launched a Group Fitness Specialty Training Program with an eye on train-

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ing and educating fitness professionals teaching popular group fitness trends. ACE has released seven ACE Group Fitness Specialty Books to augment the program.

• DOUG LEVINE, Founder and Chairman of Crunch Fitness, has named JAMES SOLOMON as President and CEO. Solomon came to Crunch from Converse, where he was Senior Vice President of Global Marketing and Sales. Good luck James as you take on your role of leadership of one of the most unique club companies in the business.

• Don't miss the Club Industry Conference and Trade Show in Chicago, October 25-28th. For information call: (800) 927-5007 or visit www.clubindustry.com

• 24 Hour Fitness continues to gobble up clubs in the biggest health club consolidation period in the history of the industry. 24 Hour recently acquired 5 clubs in Texas, bringing their Texas total to 36 clubs and in a country smaller than Texas, Germany, they acquired 3 clubs. Their totals are: 283 in the U.S., 125 in Europe and 8 in Asia, easily making 24 Hour Fitness the largest club company in the world.

• COLIN MILNER has left the Keiser Corporation for the position of Vice President of Sales and Marketing at IDEA. Good luck at IDEA, Colin.

• Club Corporation of America has announced the formation of P-Co, a new electronic procurement company established in partnership with Marriott Hotels and the Hyatt Corporation. The new company will ultimately

serve the entire hospitality industry.

• The market share of tax-paying fitness facilities continues to grow. In figures through January 1, 2000, tax-paying facilities increased their market share from 61.2% to 63.1% while tax-exempt saw their market share drop from 38.8% to 36.9%.

• While most of the activity around the country in respect to the YMCA Tax Free issue is showing victories as numerous YMCA's are being placed on the tax roles, there was one recent setback in Tennessee. Though Tennessee's Department of Equalization had declared that 15 of the 17 Central Tennessee YMCA's were not fulfilling a charitable purpose and further, there was "probable cause" to revoke the charitable tax-exemptions of these YMCA's, the Tennessee Legislature passed a law that specifically exempts YMCA's in the State of Tennessee from paying property taxes. The Governor, most likely a Democrat, signed the measure on June 28th. IHRSA and the Tennessee clubs will challenge the new law.

• MEL ZUCKERMAN, the Founder, President and CEO of Canyon Ranch, has announced the building of two Canyon Ranch cruise ships! The vessels, scheduled to launch in 2002, will feature 54,000 square feet of fitness/wellness and spa space! Gourmet Magazine recently voted Canyon Ranch the #1 destination spa in the world. Congratulations Mel and Canyon Ranch Team!

• I hope to see you in Chicago in October, Orlando in November and definitely San Francisco in March!

STAY TUNED!

against Icarian (Jade) and Hampton remain unsettled and appear headed for trial unless the parties can reach settlement terms that satisfy their interests.

It appears to this observer that the only true and real winner in these cases might just be the lawyers.

...IVANKO

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2 hole plate. Essentially, it was a peace treaty. Both sides took a little and gave a little."

Two other patent lawsuits filed by Iron Grip Barbell Company

Norm Cates' THE Club Insider NEWS

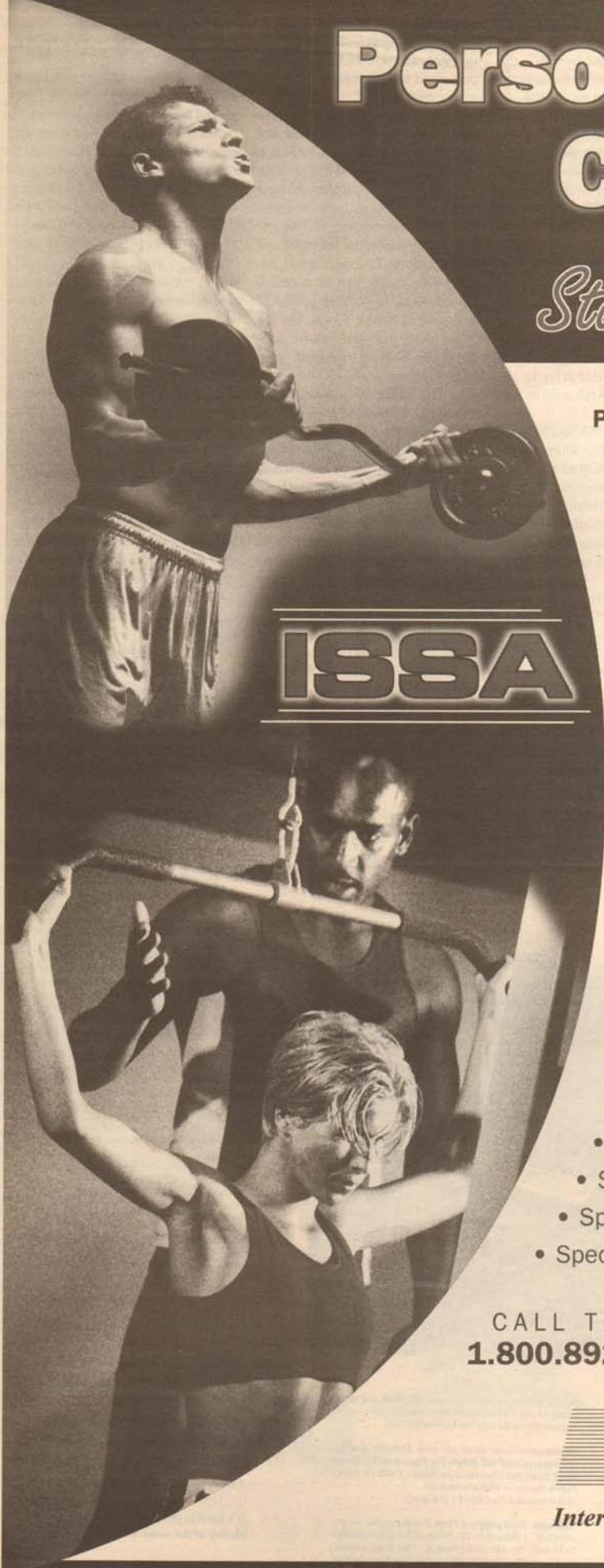
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...Sports Data

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Fitness Biking and Triathlons.

The late 1980's ushered in a third generation of potentially easier, less stressful low-impact exercise opportunities such as Fitness Walking, Soft Aerobics, Stationary Cycling and Treadmill exercise. These activities were less threatening and more user-friendly to a large,

sedentary element of the population who may have been intimidated by earlier "hard-core" fitness trends. Consequently, this third wave of the fitness boom — the overweight, unathletic, (and, in many cases, older) segments of the population — was the real revolution, because it made fitness available to everyone.

By 1990, 51.5 million Americans over the age of six or 23.2% of the population participated in at least one individual

physical fitness activity on 100 or more occasions. But by 1997, the incidence of frequent exercise in the U.S. had declined to 21.8%. In 1999, there were still 50.4 million frequent exercise participants, although a growing population pushed the participation rate down even further to 20.5%. By contrast, membership at health clubs jumped from 20.7 million in 1990 to 30.6 million in 1999, an increase of 48%. Even more ironically, the number of people who worked out frequently at clubs (100+ days) per year, soared by 84% during the same period. This was just one paradox found in a Tracking Study of Physical Fitness Behavior in the U.S. (1987 - 1999) released in July 2000 by ASD.

Other health and lifestyle indicators offer little illumination. Against the backdrop of a thriving health club business, robust sales of home exercise equipment, and a general (albeit declining) enthusiasm for exercise, looms the incongruous portrait of a seriously overweight nation.

A 1998 consumer study by ASD found that 59% of all adults 18+ considered themselves overweight. The 1998 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System conducted by the Centers for Disease Control pegged the figure at 54% — based on calculated body mass index. Even more disturbing was the CDC finding that 18% of all American adults are not only over-

weight, but obese — up from 11% in 1991. In the ASD study, 14% perceived themselves as "considerably overweight".

But in the face of this obesity epidemic, Americans are making some effort to improve their eating habits. The average percentage of our calories derived from fat has declined, vitamin consumption is ascending, and we enjoy an unprecedented smorgasbord of low-calorie, fat-free, "light", sodium-free foods, not to mention liquid diets, high-fiber products and special health foods. On the other hand, our total caloric consumption is on the rise, nullifying many of these potential benefits.

There is however, one reconciling factor: overweight people can be quite active. Quite simply, the overweight population — barring those classified as obese — boasts a surprisingly high percentage of sports/fitness participants. Whereas 59% of the population perceives itself to be "a little" or "considerably" overweight, the overweight percentage for very active people reaches 51%. But those who deem themselves "considerably" overweight have a much lower participation rate than their slightly overweight or "normal" counterparts.

The paradox of a fitness-conscious society that doesn't look the part is best explained by the great gulf between consumer attitudes and actual be-

havior. According to ASD President Harvey Lauer, "The Master Trend of physical fitness in the 1990's was bound to be misinterpreted because it was both complicated and counterintuitive. But most of the contradictions can be resolved in just two words: good intentions and good marketing. One of our cardinal statistics is that 62% of the U.S. population acknowledges the benefits of exercise, knows it should exercise more, but never does. Health clubs and equipment manufacturers have been phenomenally successful because American attitudes have already changed. But permanent behavior is another story. Annual health club turnover rates hover around 30% - 40%, and we all know the industry joke about how long it takes for a piece of exercise equipment to become a clothes-horse! Let's not forget what we're up against here. We're trying to persuade people to defy the Pleasure Principle — to do something painful, inconvenient, time-consuming, or all three. The big prize will go to the product, system or concept that unlocks this motivational secret."

For more statistical information, please contact Harvey Lauer at American Sports Data 914/328-8877.

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The whole operation is a huge undertaking. With over 25 employees and a monthly payroll around \$50,000. More than \$30,000 in building leases. Over \$20,000 a month is spent on replacement parts to refurbish the equipment. The cost to buy this depreciated equipment is over \$150,000. The point is we have made the necessary investments to insure a consistent and reliable product for you.

We've put ourselves in a position that forces us to perform for you or we don't make a profit. I'm not trying to impress you but I want you to see our commitment. We must satisfy you so you will buy from us on your next fitness room project and refer more customers to us. We can't service out huge overhead without repeat business.

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We warranty this equipment, give you a National service technician network, and give you 24 hour technical information on our award winning website. You see, the only equipment we sell is the top brands: **LifeFitness, Cybex, StairMaster, Trotter, Precor, Star Trac, Paramount, Tectrix, Quinton** and others. These manufacturers have built a national service network that we have access to when our customers need service. It's as easy for us to repair a treadmill in New York as it is in California. We take care of your business.

We Have Over 1,300 Customers That You Can Speak With To Give You Buying Confidence

In today's business climate you have to protect yourself from mis-information. You can't take advertising statements as fact. We understand this, and make accessible to

you our past customers so you can make your own judgements, we don't want you to make a mistake. We want to make sure this is the right buy for your business.

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(Mike Boccieri is the CEO of 5 YMCA's)

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(Stephen Priest, MS, Fitness Health Club)

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When you receive your packet you'll get a follow up call from your customer assistant to answer any questions. When all your questions are answered and your proposal looks better than any of your other options, you can get the deal started by faxing us a copy of your 50% deposit. Technology has provided a time saving payment solution called "Checks-By-Fax". Of course you can mail your deposit if you want. **This way your order starts immediately.**

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Sincerely
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P.S. It's hard to grow a business and waste money at the same time.

Casey Conrad

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Conrad at her Corporate Headquarters in Rhode Island to hear what she had to say about her career and to learn more about her newest venture, "Healthy Inspirations, Inc."

Q. Casey, tell us about your work history since graduating from college?

A. Well, even before college I worked almost full time. I was a co-op student for two years with the International Trade Administration (ITA) in Washington, DC, helping small to medium-sized businesses export products out of the US.

When I graduated from college the ITA offered me a permanent job, and I moved back to Connecticut to work out of the Hartford branch. Subsequently, I moved back to DC and continued working for the ITA for a total of 8 months after graduating. At that point I couldn't stand working for the government anymore and also missed fitness, but I knew the martial arts industry was just not where I wanted to go for the future. As a result, I looked in the Help Wanted ads, found a health club that was hiring salespeople and was hired. The correlation between a karate membership sale and a small health club sale is very similar. So, I gave my two weeks notice and it was adios to the US government. The club chain was Spa Lady and they owned 42 clubs in the Washington, DC area.

I quickly moved up the ladder with the company, going from salesperson to Assistant Manager to General Manager to District Manager and Sales Trainer.

In 1989 I left Spa Lady and started my own consulting company. Of course, I didn't have a business plan, any savings or any clients, but at age 24 was crazy enough to do it anyway! At that time, because I wasn't earning much as a fledgling consult-

ant, I got involved in an Associate Distributorship Program with Anthony Robbins, where we sold and gave video-based seminars of his in the DC area. We also sold tickets and sponsored his Fire Walk Seminars in the area. I did every single course he offered and became totally involved in personal development.

In late 1990 I moved back to Rhode Island to work on my book. It was then, off of a referral from an IHRSA client in Maryland, that I contacted NEHRSAA and IHRSA. As they say, the rest is history.

Q. What gave you the idea that you had enough knowledge and experience to become a club consultant?

A. Youthful arrogance. When I was in high school I was a Junior Achievement geek. Although I was an athlete, I walked around high school with a brief case. Junior Achievement was a program where kids formed and ran their own company. We had to sell stock to raise capital, manufacture a product, sell the product door to door and then give stock dividends (or losses), pay wages and close out the books. I was very, very involved with this program. For three years I was the State's highest salesperson. In addition to Top Salesperson of the Year (volume), my last year I won the State awards for VP of Marketing of the Year, Salesperson of the Year, Speaker of the Year and runner-up for Outstanding Young Businesswoman of the Year. All three years I attended the National Junior Achievers Conference in Bloomington, Indiana. Throughout those three years I attended dozens of classes on being an entrepreneur, how to sell, how to market, etc.

I always knew I wanted to own my own business and for two years during high school I was very, very active as an Amway rep-

resentative, giving seminars on starting a business. Even younger than that, at ages 8-12, a friend of mine and I had a jewelry making business where we would take Wampum (quahog shells) and grind them down and set them and then put them on necklaces. We also did Indian beads and interesting stones that had gone through the rock tumbler. We would set up booths at local fairs and county shows. My mom says I have been selling something since the time I could talk. I was a strange kind of kid.

Q. What year did you get the idea of becoming a consultant?

A. I think it was 1988. When I was attending the "Date With Destiny" goal-setting workshop in California with Tony Robbins I actually set the goal for myself of starting my consulting company. I loved health and fitness and knew I could help businesses do a better job; hence the consulting path.

Q. Who were some of your first clients?

A. One of my early clients was the Columbia Association. I worked with Sabrina Wallach. She is now Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Club Management Association (MACMA). Sabrina recalls, "Casey was the first professional trainer I hired for the Columbia Association back in 1990. She did a presentation on sales, specifically on 'matching and mirroring', one of her favorite sales concepts. I can still remember her coming in and introducing herself to the crowd. She told them that she was an amateur bodybuilder aspiring to be a professional one day. That got their attention quick. She hooked them from that point on with her enthusiasm, sense of humor and overall high level of energy. She hasn't slowed down since."

Jane MacFarlane, an early-on client in Maryland, was

originally one of my bosses with Spa Lady. She had bought some of the clubs when Spa Lady folded and I did some seminars for her and her partner. Jane remembers her days working with Casey, "I first knew Casey Conrad when she managed a club for me in the mid-eighties. She was great! She had unlimited energy, determination and chutzpah. She was full of ideas and, of course, personality. The only thing she had trouble with was understanding other people who were not as determined and smart as she was. But, that is not really a bad thing! When Casey went off on her own to form her consulting business I knew she would be as successful at that as she had been in her own club.

The qualities that we need in this business are energy, determination, faith, belief and brains. Casey had them all in spades. She does not give up, and she is very open to new ideas. Whatever she puts her mind to, she will accomplish. I am very excited about Healthy Inspirations. We really need a way to help people lose

weight with the exercise component as an integral part of the process. We're all excited about this new chapter in Casey's career, and we wish her all the success in the world."

Jamie Fairley, General Manager of Court House Plus in Connecticut, comments, "Ten years ago I was blown away by Casey's fresh and exciting approach to health club sales. We immediately hired her to help us transform our hiring, training and management of our sales force. Our sales team and sales production has never been as successful. Her sales systems and ongoing training, supported by the in-house videos and workbooks she has produced, help us everyday."

Casey Conrad has worked with many of the biggest club groups in the industry. For example, the Tennis Corporation of America. TCA's, National Director of Sales, Gary Polic, comments, Casey Conrad routinely takes sales and marketing teams to a new level of excellence, both in skills and desire to win. Her innovative strategy and tactics em-

(See *Casey Conrad* page 8)



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"August, 2000 Graduating Class For Sales Boot Camp"

(L to R-Back row) Jim Bonica, Linda Lefevre, Christine DeLuca, Gigi Zimmerman, Cindy Drollette, Steve Juengert. (Front row) Casey Conrad, Terry Hartman-Lindsey, Tracy Locke, Todd Murray, Tracey Bennett, Norman Blake.

Casey Conrad

continued from page 7

power each team member to immediate improved activity and results. Casey produces results for club owners that will continue to pay positive dividends for years to come.

Q. Tell me about your Communications Consultants Company. When did you start the company? How many total clients have you had? How many countries have you worked in? What is the scope of your work?

A. Communication Consultants started off as mainly sales consulting in clubs, but now the company has four distinct divisions. The first is, of course, the in-club consulting, seminars and lectures, which would include convention speaking. The second division is our product line. I now have created and produced 20 different books, tapes and videos specific for the health and fitness industry. We sell this through our catalog, our Web page www.communicationconsult.com or www.caseyconrad.com and at conventions. The third division is our marketing materials. I create a variety of marketing pieces and campaigns, which I sell to clubs throughout the U.S. Finally, there is Health Club University. HCU provides monthly seminars at our corporate office in Rhode Island.

I have over 300 clients that I have worked for personally as a consultant but I have over 2,500 customers in the U.S. who have purchased one of my products, bought a marketing piece or attended HCU. I don't track international purchases but my book is translated into two other languages and I have distributors for the products in five other countries. To date, I have spoken in 16 different countries.

Q. Tell me about your Health Club University set-up. When do you conduct classes? Who attends those and what classes do you offer? What is the capacity for the sessions? How do you promote those classes? How much do you charge for the sessions?

A. Health Club University is a business training center where health club operators can come to or send their employees to receive education and training in various aspects of working in and operating a health club. I started the university in response to client's need of having to constantly train employees in our high turnover industry. Many clients couldn't afford to have me come out as often as they had new employees. This is particularly a problem in the sales area, where turnover is astronomical.

The concept behind the University is to offer programs on a monthly or quarterly basis so club owners could make hiring decisions around the ability to send an employee right away and get them off to a good start.

Once I purchased my office building and had a nice conference center to do the trainings at, I began Sales

Boot Camp, which is a two-day intensive training course that brings salespeople through the 8 steps to successfully selling health club memberships. I chose the sales program as the first course for a number of reasons. First of all, it is my favorite topic. Second, it is the area that has the most turnover directly affecting revenue. Third, I already had all the materials developed; I just needed to package them.

Participants in the Sales Boot Camp receive an extensive manual with scripts and step-by-step instructions, there are lots of hands on role-playing and interaction and participants are tested. In addition, everyone goes home with a review tape program to reinforce their new skills along with a 30-day plan of action. Finally, post-seminar testing outlines are sent to the management to create accountability for the skills after leaving the program.

The cost for attending Sales Boot Camp is just \$295, which includes continental breakfast and lunch both days. Rhode Island is a Southwest Airlines destination so many people fly in for very reasonable rates. We have had people from as far away as Brazil, California, Florida, Colorado and Canada attend. At present, the capacity for the conference room is 12 but I am still in the midst of building out our new conference center from an existing building that is on my property. I hope to have it done by year's end, as our capacity will increase to 40 then.

In addition to Sales Boot Camp we have our Customer Service training program, which is a one-day program run by two of my employees, Susan Johnson and Laura Ferry. This program is offered quarterly at the moment. Once it gains in popularity it will be offered every month. This program is just \$79.

After the conference center is done, other classes are on the docket to be added to the University. An Advanced Sales Course, a Sales Management Course, a Marketing Course and a Selling for Personal Trainers course are done and ready to go once the Center is completed. We will add these gradually.

At the moment, the only way that I have promoted HCU is through fax broadcast to about 300 of my customers. With just that, the program continues to be sold out every single month. Once I can take more people I plan on advertising it more extensively.

Q. When did you join IHRSA?

A. Well, I joined NEHRSA (New England Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association) first, in 1991. I don't think I joined IHRSA until 1993 when I came out with my book and began getting booth space.

Q. Share with me your feelings and experiences with NEHRSA and IHRSA?

A. Because I am in New England, I really see IHRSA and NEHRSA in the same light. Jan Woodman, the Executive Director for NEHRSA, has been my biggest supporter since Day One when I moved

back to New England and made the contact in Boston. John McCarthy and the entire staff at IHRSA have been extremely supportive to my entire organization and me. I have had nothing but good experiences with them. I have spoken for them for years at both conventions and the Institute.

As far as an organization, NEHRSA and IHRSA do important work. They provide a wealth of information to club operators worldwide. As someone who speaks all over, I have seen the impact they have had internationally. As I move into my new venture and am considered a club operator I hope to get more involved with the organization.

Jan Woodman, Executive Director of NEHRSA, comments about her experience with Casey, "Casey has presented at many NEHRSA Conferences and Workshops and written numerous articles for NEHRSA NEWS over the past nine years. We keep asking for her help again and again because she continually draws a large audience and gets great reviews! She's an excellent presenter and we are fortunate to have her right here in New England!"

John McCarthy, Executive Director of IHRSA, says, "Casey is a hands-on tactical genius. When it comes to teaching people how to sell club memberships, Casey is a superstar. Not surprisingly, she works with many of the top club companies in the industry - in Europe, Asia and North America."

Q. How long is a typical workweek for you?

A. 7 days. Okay, I admit it. I'm a workaholic. Until recently when I entered into a significant relationship, I would work from 7 or 8 in the morning, till 10 or 11 at night. Of course, if I wanted to take a break in the middle of the day to go roller blading or such, I would. That is the upside to owning the company. But I work a lot because I love what I do.

Q. Are you ever going to let up a little?

A. Now that is a good question. I keep saying to myself, "next year I'm going to slow down a bit" and then next year becomes next year, etc. However, I honestly love, love, love what I do! I don't consider what I do work, really! That said, with the new project, I am going to shift gears a bit. I won't be able to travel quite as much as I have, which has been 20 days a month for a number of years now. I am actually looking for a partner for Communication Consultants because I have to turn down way too much work and there is so much more

that I have in my business plan for this portion of my business that I need someone who wants an emotional and financial tie to the company. So, I won't lie to myself and say that I'll let up any time soon because I feel I have a lot more to give our industry and society.

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Well, let me start off by saying that I consider what I do every day fun. I love to laugh and I love to have fun no matter what I'm doing. As far as recreational time is

concerned, I will be the first to admit that over the last 10 years while I have been growing the business I haven't spent enough time relaxing and doing recreational things. However, that is changing as I am adding more balance to my life in 2000, which was my New Year's Resolution. I love being outdoors, almost anything outdoors. Some of the things that I really enjoy doing are roller blading, which I do about two or three times a week (when I'm home) on the wonderful bike paths we have in RI. I also enjoy sailing and I have a small Sunfish. I live right on the water, which is nice. In the winter I ski, which I've been doing since about age 4. I also like to hike and bike. I do a lot of things, nothing too serious or competitive, just to enjoy and be active. Of course, I work out about 5 times a week, three of which are BodyPUMP workouts and two of which are cardio. On a totally different pace, I really enjoy reading, usually two books at once. One on some sort of business or personal development and the other a crime or murder mystery-something for mindlessness on planes and such.

Q. What was the toughest time in your business career?

A. The toughest time in my business career was at year four of my consulting. I can remember it vividly. I had gone from owning a beautiful house in Maryland and driving a 528e BMW to driving around in my 1977 CJ5 Jeep and waiting too long for haircuts because I was pretty broke, living with my grandfather to help him out. I had 25K in credit card debt and very few clients. It was a real turning point for me. Everything in business related to sales had always come easy for me, and this was really the first thing I found I had to work for. Of course, I can say all this now looking back. I probably wasn't too happy about it at the time, nor honest about it. I don't believe in bankruptcy and I don't believe in failure, so I dug in and turned it around. A big part of that was finishing my book, which I had been working on for far too long. Once I came out with that, which I self-published, that was the real turning point. The book got me the exposure I needed to get more clients.

Q. Summarize your business philosophy and state your company's Mission Statement (if available).

A. It's not very technical but it has served me well.

My philosophy is: "Do nothing less than your best. Plan on making a difference in the lives of others. Leave the world a better place & have fun in the process."

Communications Consultants Mission Statement is "To help businesses grow profits by providing the highest quality training materials, marketing and management tools available."

Q. You have informed us that for the past two+ years you have been working on a new, revolutionary weight loss company. How did you develop the idea and when? When is the project rollout?

A. The idea for the weight loss centers has really been a progres-

sion over the last two years. As you know, my first introduction into the world of health club memberships was for a ladies-only chain in DC. So, I have an extensive background with that market and their obsession with weight management. As a consultant I have the benefit of being able to see much of what goes on in the industry from more of a Macro perspective. Over the last four years I have seen an explosion of the women's market, particularly the "boutique" center that caters to the totally de-conditioned market. About two years ago I put together a business plan to open a regional chain of ladies only facilities that operate on the simpler is better model. That is, an express circuit of equipment (and that's it), no showers, locker rooms or group fitness room. Just a simple circuit where the average woman, who is totally intimidated by a health club, could come in and begin enjoying the benefits and privileges of a regular exercise program in a comfortable, friendly environment. This, as you know, is the popular model followed by the Curves, Shapes and Contours Express chains, which are all successful and growing rapidly.

Where I saw the big opportunity though was to add the one dimension that wasn't being served: weight loss. Not weight loss as the result of someone exercising if they made that work for them, but real solutions to weight loss with an actual program that members could participate in and follow. As you know, obesity is at an all time high in America, with 59% of the population being clinically obese or overweight. Between 1985 and 1995 there was a 100% increase in teen obesity. And, even with the growing awareness of fitness and healthy choices, I don't see the problem getting any better, but rather, worst. That means an incredible opportunity to help people and make money in the process. I had seen a number of weight loss programs in our industry that were supposed to work but didn't really take off. Programs like Think Light, which are great, were very labor intensive with a dietitian or nutritionist. Programs like Apex really catered more to the younger, serious gym user."

Conrad comments further on Health Inspirations. "I have put an incredible amount of development work into what we now call "Healthy Inspirations" and we are now beginning our nationwide rollout." (Publisher's Note: The article on page #10 contains all the details of the new "Healthy Inspirations Program" and information on how you may investigate installing "Healthy Inspirations" in your club or as a stand alone facility.)

Casey Conrad is one of the most gifted people in the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. It is easy to see why. She truly is talented, hard working and motivated. And, much more. Stay tuned.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is the Publisher and Editor of The CLUB INSIDER News. Cates, a 27-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry, was the 1st President of IHRSA and a Co-founder of the Association in 1981).

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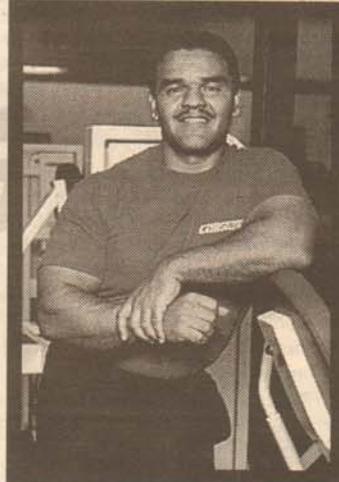
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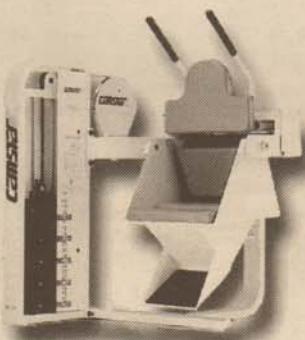


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Owner / Operator
Lifestyles 2000 Fitness, Utah
Better Bodies Fitness, Colorado

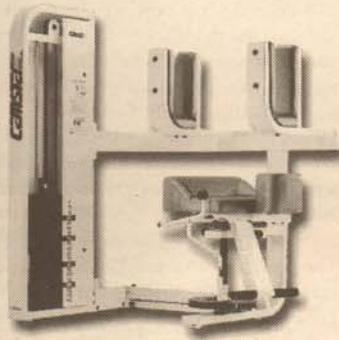


they keep coming back!"

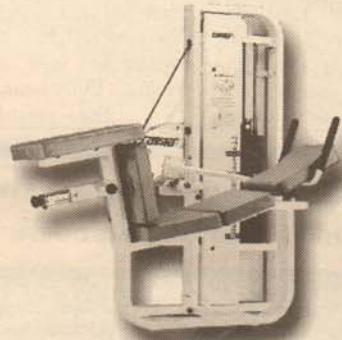
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INDUSTRY CONSULTANT CASEY CONRAD OPENS NATIONAL CHAIN OF WEIGHT LOSS CENTERS

Wakefield, RI - August 25th, 2000 - Industry Consultant Casey Conrad has announced the creation and opening of a national chain of centers called "HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS, Weight Loss and Lifestyle Centers." The first corporate owned center opened in a pre-sales situation three weeks ago in El Paso, TX. Two other centers, which are licensees of the turnkey program, will open in late September within existing health clubs. Conrad plans on the opening another location in New England by late November, with a projection of 10 centers in the next 24 months along with numerous licensees nationally and eventually internationally.

The HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS program consists of 4 major components: nutritional counseling, exercise, Tranquillity treatments and Synergie. The program guarantees clients that they will lose between 2 and 3 pounds per week while keeping food intake well above a safe 1200 calories per day mark and eating grocery store foods, a big plus for clients' long-term success.

The nutritional portion of

the program has four distinct stages that a client goes through. **HEALTHY QUICK START**, which lasts only three days, prepares the body for fat burning and boasts an average client weight loss of 3-5 pounds, depending on gender. Clients eat an unlimited amount of certain foods and a minimum 64 oz. water intake ensures no dehydration occurs.

The second stage, **HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS**, is where clients lose their unwanted pounds. Having been given an individualized eating plan based on their weight, age and medical status, clients are taught how to eat the correct number of servings of different food groups daily. Food choices come from grocery store foods and clients are given the opportunity to use hundreds of recipes that taste good and stay within the program guidelines. During their weight loss period, clients visit the center a minimum of three times per week. These "Daily Visits," as they are referred to, are conducted by Lifestyle Consultants who weigh in clients and monitor their food intake by reviewing a Daily Journal.

The third stage,

HEALTHY BALANCE, is where clients have reached their goal weight and are now ready to re-introduce higher caloric and fatty foods into their diet. This 8-week period provides continued counseling and coaching to teach clients how to modify their daily intake when they make higher fat food choices, in order to ensure that they keep their weight balanced.

The final stage, **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**, is a full 12-month period where clients continue to visit the center for counseling a minimum of once a week to be weighed in and coached. During the entire program, clients also participate in the other three components of the program-exercise, Tranquillity and Synergie. Notes Conrad, "This program is a long-term solution for weight loss that gets clients to focus on a total lifestyle approach, NOT a quick fix."

The amount of time a client commits to on the program will depend upon their weight loss goal but the absolute minimum for someone who only wants to lose 10 pounds would be 15 months. Adds Conrad, "What many people don't realize is that those who have struggled with their weight feel more confident when they hear the program is not a quick fix. The average 'dieter' has done so many quick fix things, they know the difference between a real solution and another gimmick."

Although the nutritional component is the core of the program, what makes **HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS** a "lifestyle center" is the other three components. The first is exercise. Centers utilize an express circuit philosophy, keeping the combined resistance and cardiovascular session to just 29-minutes. This popular set up allows clients new to exercise to feel comfortable and relaxed, and the time factor makes it more realistic for clients to get in for their three time a week minimum because they are at the center for their Daily Visits anyway.

Another component to the program is Tranquillity treat-

ments, which utilize the Tranquillity chair manufactured by Tosa Trading Company. These chairs, which utilize the principles of Shiatsu Massage, combine pressure points and compression at just the right points, allowing the body to relax naturally and reduce stress, which is commonly associated with overeating. Placed in a private room, in addition to the chairs, clients get the added benefit of relaxing music as well as aromatherapy.

The final component of the program, which is optional to clients, is Synergie. Synergie refers to an aesthetic massage device that has been cleared by the FDA as a method for the temporary reduction in the appearance of cellulite. The device combines vacuum massage with applied pressure to deliver a non-invasive deep massage with optimal stimulation, stretching, and pressure to sub dermal tissues. The result of the treatments is a reduction in the dimly appearance of cellulite, as well as a toning and firming of sagging skin, which can often occur with substantial weight loss.

Although she has been working on the core business plan for two years, until this past March Conrad hadn't found the nutritional component she felt would work in both a stand-alone center as well as in an existing health club. Then, at the IHRSA show in San Francisco, Conrad was re-introduced to Donna Furr, an individual she hired some 13 years ago when she was a District Manager for the popular 42-club women's only chain Spa Lady in Washington, DC. Furr, who left Spa Lady shortly after Conrad departed to start her existing consulting company, has worked exclusively in the weight loss industry for the past 11 years, opening over 33 locations in the DC area. "Donna is a wealth of information in the weight loss area. She had the missing piece that was needed to create a nutritional program that would work both in and out of the health club environment," explains Conrad. "Once that piece was obtained I knew it would be a very short time before the centers began to open,

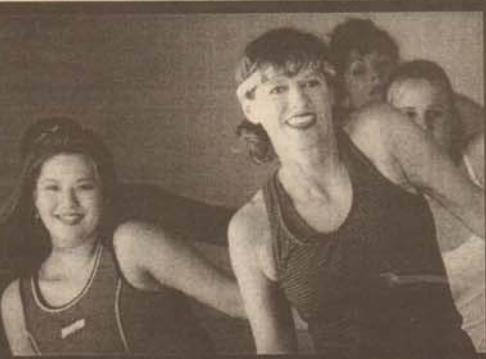
because Communication Consultants already has the sales, marketing and operational information to provide operators." In addition to currently managing the El Paso location, Furr is Vice President of **HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS**, LLC and is the one primarily responsible for working with the nutritionists on the development of the program food plans.

Weight loss has always been an area that health club operators have wanted to tap into. According to a recent IHRSA report, almost 85% of health club members cite weight loss as one of their primary reasons for joining. The economics are compelling as well. The health and fitness business is an 10 billion dollar industry while the weight loss industry boasts 50 billion in revenues annually. "Therefore, a program that can easily fit into a health club, guarantees results for members and generates a substantial income is long overdue for the industry," notes Conrad.

Of course, the health club industry has seen many weight loss and nutritional programs come and go without much success. According to Conrad, "There are two primary reasons weight loss programs have failed in the club environment and they are inseparable. One, the programs have been dependent upon highly educated nutritionists, creating a dependency between that (usually) one person and the long-term success of the program. Second, that person or persons who are running the program are traditionally not salespeople, but rather are educators. Unfortunately, substantial sales figures will only come from a program that revolves around a sales-based system, which is exactly what **HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS** does. We find qualified employees who can sell and teach them how to follow the guidelines, rules and educational pieces established by a nutritionist. The result is having a full staff that can sell and make the entire program run, so if one person leaves it doesn't kill the program."

For existing clubs or stand-alone facilities that license (See *Casey Conrad* page 22)

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IHRSA And The YMCA - Non-U.S. Member Advisory

By John McCarthy
IHRSA Executive Director

Outside of the U.S., many IHRSA members are either amused or dismayed by IHRSA's long-standing conflict with the YMCA.

To some, this conflict appears to be the fitness industry's equivalent of the feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys, in which neither party can remember exactly how or why the trouble began.

To others, it looks like another American "arms race," in which both sides compete without ever looking at the larger picture.

But the issue goes to the heart of America's tax system. The U.S. government grants tax exemptions to organizations that qualify as "public charities." Such organizations pay no property taxes, no sales taxes, and no state or federal income taxes. In addition, they can raise capital by soliciting tax-deductible donations.

These exemptions, that

can cumulatively add up to 25%-35% of total expenses, are granted on the grounds that the organization is focused on a charitable mission, i.e., on helping people who can't help themselves.

IHRSA contends that the Y's upscale adult fitness centers are not charitable enterprises at all. Rather, they're out-and-out commercial businesses and, therefore, don't merit tax exemption.

IHRSA further contends that, in claiming tax-exempt status, YMCAs unfairly increase the tax burden on every other citizen and every other corporation in the community.

Increasingly, public officials are beginning to see the issue in the same way. In Tennessee, in Wisconsin, in Pennsylvania, and in California, public officials are now questioning whether or not these upscale adult fitness facilities are truly public charities.

But our argument with the Y goes beyond the tax issue. Our argument, we believe, goes to the heart of the matter.

The fundamental pur-

pose of tax exemption is to foster charitable enterprise. With respect to fitness facilities, the fundamental purpose of tax exemption is to provide fitness facilities for communities that, otherwise, might not have such facilities. The fundamental purpose of tax exemption has never been, nor will it ever be, the replication of fitness facilities for the affluent.

Nonetheless, the Y, in community after community, is walking away from its charitable mission. In so doing, they are also walking away from the industry-wide objective of "fitness for all." Rather than developing facilities for the poor, they are replicating facilities for the affluent. This, we believe, is wrong.

The Y maintains that it uses the money it generates from fitness to subsidize its charitable programs. While this may sound noble, a close examination of the books at upscale Ys tells a different story. Sadly, many of these facilities

simply pour dollars into higher salaries, more fitness equipment, and plusher locker rooms. Typically, any charitable activities that take place at these Ys are funded by the United Way and other charitable organizations. This too, we believe, is wrong.

We believe it is unfair to the American taxpayer. We believe it is unfair to the poorer communities, for whom the concept of tax exemption was created. We believe it is unfair to other charities, whose reputations are tarnished by association with a rogue charity that is often, in our opinion, no charity at all.

This issue is larger than IHRSA. It is an issue of fair play in a pluralistic society. The Y, we believe, has broken its compact with the American people. The Y, we believe, is a tax-exempt organization that is oper-



John McCarthy - IHRSA Executive Director

ating without a compass.

We intend to fight it.

(John McCarthy is the Executive Director of IHRSA and can be reached at jmc@ihsra.org.)

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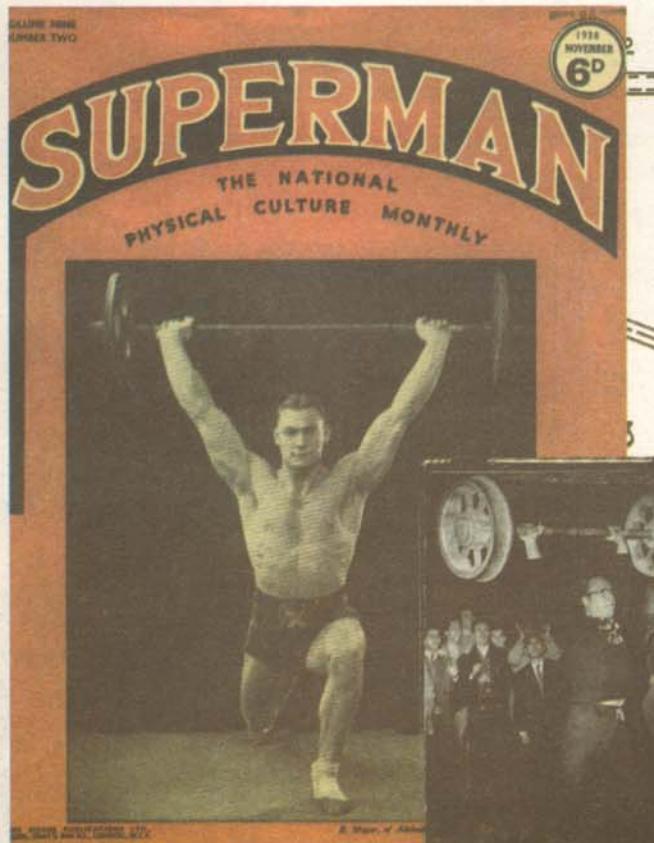
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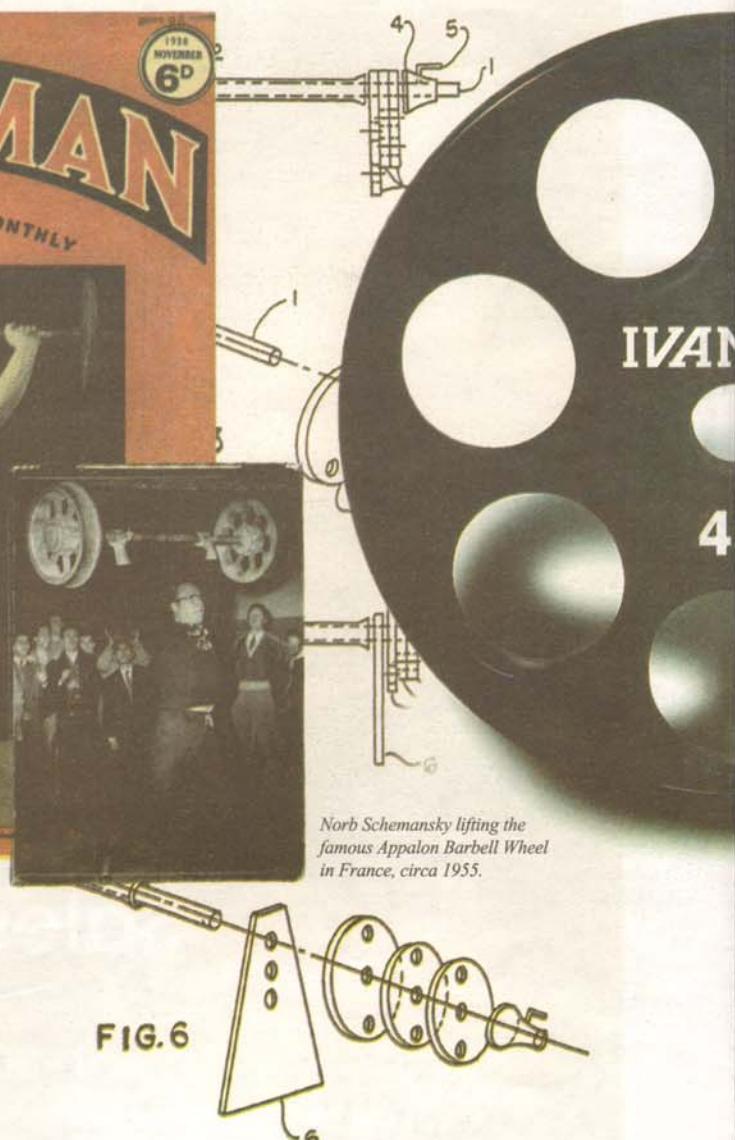


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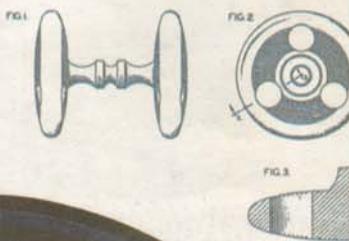
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Norb Schemansky lifting the famous Appalon Barbell Wheel in France, circa 1955.

FIG. 6



Right: Bill Jelley, English strongman, circa 1936.



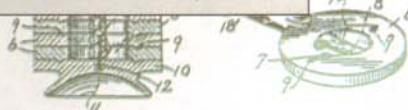
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1. *J. Roberts Manufacturing Company, circa 1967.*
2. *From a French collection, circa 1920's.*
3. *The famous "Pullum grip Plate" invented in 1978 by Wally Pullum, Luton, England.*
4. *From a French collection, circa 1920's.*
5. *York Canada, original pattern from Jackson Barbell Company, circa 1940.*
6. *Scientific Barbell Company, from the famed Eastside Barbell Club, circa 1948.*

For more information, contact Ivanko Barbell Company at 1-800-247-9044.



Swansea Weightlifting Club, circa 1935.

Handling Objections On The Tour

By Karen D. Woodard, President
Premium Performance Training

Historically and notoriously the majority of membership sales representatives (MRs) have handled objections in two ways: 1. At the end of the tour or 2. Not at all. Neither of these choices are optimal - the second choice for obvious reasons, and the first choice because it is tiredly predictable and tends to build pressure for both the buyer and the seller.

Why do we do this? Typically we fall into this habit simply because we have not done our due diligence and therefore do not have the tools to know what the concerns are, and because there is also a part of us that does not want to hear "no". It's the old "no denial" syndrome.

As a more effective alternative, enhance your sales skills by handling objections while on the tour versus waiting till the end of the tour. In a moment we will present how to do that. In the

meantime, let's acquaint ourselves with the benefits of doing so.

The benefits of handling objections on the tour include increased comfort, less pressure, more conversational style and a lighter energy which all add up to a more conducive buying scenario. Picture this: You are walking through the club with the prospective member (PM) showing him the elements of the club that are building his desire to be a Member. You know he had a concern about whether he can fit club use into his schedule. At that point, a conversation such as the following maybe appropriate:

MR "Susan, I was thinking about what you said earlier about being able to get into the club as much as you want. It really strikes me that with how much you like this area, it will be a motivator for you to come into the club. What are your thoughts on that?"

Susan "You're right, I do love it. I'm still a bit con-

cerned that I'll join and not come in enough to get my money's worth."

MR "Hmmm. I can see what you're saying. It sounds as though it is a valid concern for you. Is there anything else that might hold you back from feeling that the club would work for you?"

Susan "No - that's it."

MR "OK - would it be all right if we took a few minutes to see how this could work for you?"

Susan "Yeah - I would really appreciate that."

MR "Super - I'm glad you're willing. Let's start with small steps. We want you to be successful and feel good about your decision with the club. Let's figure out where we can find an hour twice a week in your schedule. When do you typically have the least amount of activity or demand on our time?"

Susan "That's a hard one - I'm always on the go. I

have meetings in the evenings; my lunches are usually scheduled as well. I'm all over the place."

MR "It does sound like you're busy. Susan, let's go for two mornings a week before work. Come in by 6am and we can make sure you get your spin class in and have a strength workout before we have you to your office by 8am. How does that work for you?"

Susan "6am? I can't commit to that twice a week."

MR "OK. Let's do one day during the week at 6am and then a weekend day of your choice for a more leisurely pace. How does that sound for starters?"

Susan "Oooh - I like that. I can do that."

MR "Excellent - I know that you'll be happy with that decision."

In this conversation, the



Karen Woodard

MR handled the concern in a matter of one to two minutes in a very conversational way as she and Susan were in an area that was particularly appealing to Susan. The conversation could occur as you are standing in the area or perhaps (See Karen Woodard page 20)



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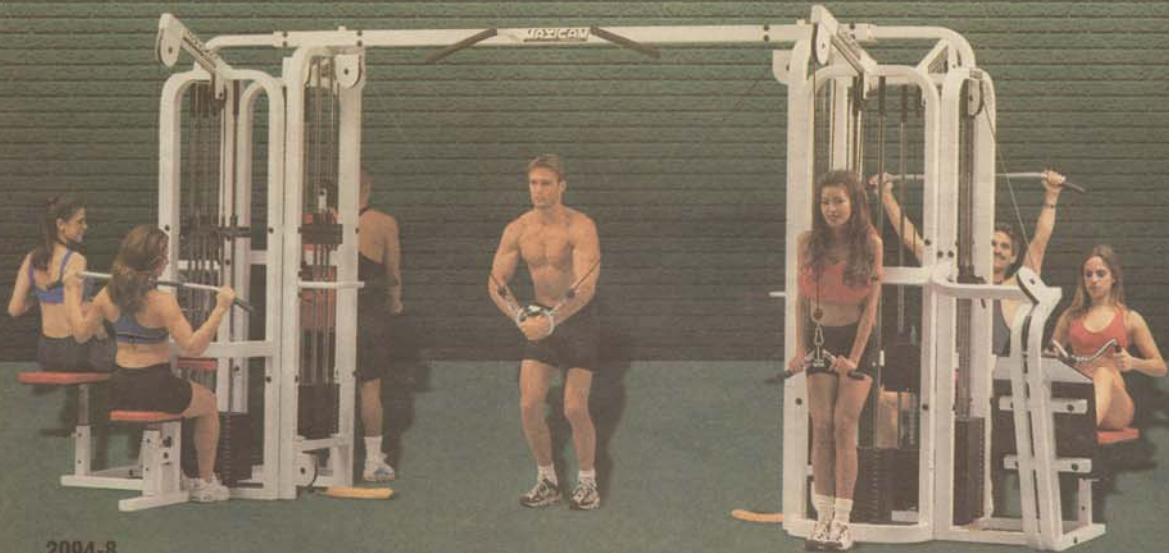
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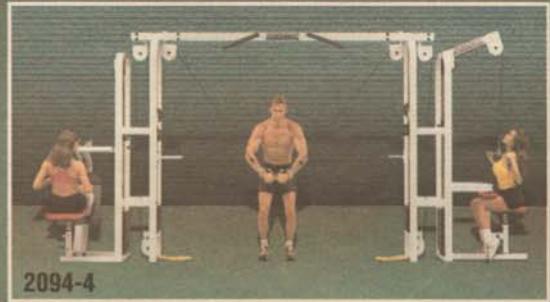
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Customer-izing™ Your Club

By Mikki Williams, CSP

Jay Leno once chided a supermarket clerk for failing to say thank you, and she snapped back at him, "It's printed on your receipt!"

I personally would prefer the warm smile and kind words of a person who genuinely loves his job and was truly happy to know that he had a significant role in making me a satisfied member. While the common theme of "caring" has pervaded many of the recent issues of Club Insider News, I thought it most appropriate to contribute an article on customer service. After all, what tells your members how much you care faster and more efficiently than great customer service?

Customer service is like brushing your teeth-no matter how well you do it, you have to do it again and again... and often.

As a professional speaker, trainer, consultant and coach, I have the opportunity to experience customer service do's and don'ts in a variety of venues-from all modes of transportation to all varieties of lodging, dining and through "customer service encounters of the strangest kind". Pun intended! I have experienced Aha's, gained insights and yes, endured outrages when I would have preferred outrageous service. The greatest advantage I have when consulting or speaking at clubs or conventions is that I bring a perspective from outside the industry that can be mirrored to one's advantage. A Club based on Disney service or The Ritz-Carlton standards would be a distinctive leader. Are you willing to go outside the box? When will a fitness organization win the coveted Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award? Will you at least aspire to that level of service? Will you invest in your people and your members as you do in your equipment and supplies? Customer service is about human dynamics and not just the cleanliness of your facility or the uniforms of your staff.

Good service addresses the customer's perception and not always the reality. On a consulting assignment at an upscale health club, I overheard a mem-

ber complaining to the Pool Director that the temperature of the pool was too cold. He replied that it wasn't and it was exactly the temperature it should be. At which point, the member became incensed as his opinion was devalued, and he was not "a happy camper." The director should have realized the member's perception was more important than the reality of the situation, by acknowledging his feelings, and offering possible solutions. These might be "I can appreciate how you feel, I can raise the temperature or I can suggest alternate usage times when the temperature is more comfortable and convenient. Ask for suggestions, collaborate on solutions or use humor to diffuse. The possibilities are endless and should be in sync with the your club's service strategy, mission statement and visions and values. I have given Customer Service seminars from Senior Management to line workers, from South Africa to New York and in my experience, the organization's commitment to quality service is based on the value that is placed on it by the leadership, the comprehensive training and the hiring of the right people.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotels won the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige Award, one of this country's greatest achievement honors for customer service. Keith Beatty is the Director of Human Resources at one of The Ritz-Carlton Hotels and a testament to their service philosophy. I met Keith when I spoke for SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) annual convention, and then he hired me to do a motivational presentation for his staff. From the greeting at the front door and throughout the hotel by passing employees, to the name recognition, the attention to service detail and the "attitude of gratitude" that permeates the hotel and it's employees, The Ritz-Carlton should be used as a model for all businesses. You don't have to be an upscale service provider to provide upscale service. Perhaps it is due to their Credo, part of which reads" The Ritz-Carlton experience enlivens the senses, instills well-being, and fulfills even the unexpressed wishes and needs of our guests" or their Three Steps of Service, or the 20 points that comprise The Ritz-Carlton Basics or their motto,

"We Are Ladies And Gentlemen, Serving Ladies And Gentlemen". Whatever it is, this company has made a commitment to quality service and it is written, practiced, recognized and valued. While walking through the lobby on one occasion, I stopped a young dining room waiter, and asked for the nearest pay phone. Imagine my delight when he said, "Let me take you to it". What impressed me most was the employee empowerment towards guest satisfaction, uncompromising levels of cleanliness and friendliness and Keith's commitment to his internal as well as external customers. All great customer service organizations have visionary leaders like Keith. Do you have a service strategy in addition to your mission statement? Do all of your staff and members know what it is?

The unexpected often creates what Ken Blanchard calls "Raving Fans". At a recent visit to the Adam Broderick Salon in Ridgefield, Connecticut, I completed my services and went to pay at the front desk. As the receptionist was looking over my "traveler" (salon lingo for the service and costs that 'travel' with you from service provider to cashier), I was getting my money ready to pay and as I looked up at her to tell me the amount, she glanced back at my "traveler" and smiled and relayed this message, "Adam said, "have a great day-no charge". Is it any wonder this magnificent looking salon won "Salon of the Year" and numerous other accolades? I'm not saying you have to "give away the store," but it was the surprise element that was the WOW!

Our parents and teachers told us we learn by example, so let me share some of my other WOW's with you that will hopefully inspire Aha's that will initiate, "I can do that".

I ordered a mattress for my Mom from Dial-A-Mattress and on delivery day, they were slightly behind schedule and called to ask if it would be too inconvenient to be two hours late.... and it was not. Within a day of delivery, I received the following letter;

Dear Customer:
(would have been even better, had they used my name)

It has come to my attention that your recent purchase from Dial-A-Mattress was delivered later than promised. Although there will always be unforeseen problems and mishaps, Dial-A-Mattress considers late deliveries to be a serious inconvenience to you our valued customer.

Please accept our apologies and this \$25 coupon, valid towards any future purchase of a premium set of bedding, etc...

After staying at the Irvine Marriott in California, when I checked out, I told the front desk how terrific the entire staff had been. She must have relayed this to the General Manager, and within a week, I received a handwritten, personal note from him, expressing his gratitude.

Customer service is the differentiating factor today in staying ahead of the competition. Ron Zemke said, "It's not how you manage the organization, it's how you manage the customer's experience with the organization". All things being equal, hotel to hotel, gas station to gas station, we must remember in customer service, a hotel is not just competing with another hotel. The health club I work out in today is being measured against the hotel I stayed in last night or the restaurant I dined in or the taxi I rode in. If I receive great customer service at that hotel, then my expectation level is high and my next service provider, be it the health club or my local cleaners will be expected to at least meet, if not exceed, those expectations.

It's about expectations as well as perception. One of my favorite examples is the airline that starts the luggage belt before they even have the luggage.

They realize that they can't possibly exceed expectations in this area so they are at least trying to meet them. When the passengers see the belt is moving they are happy thinking that the luggage must be on its way.

Whatever your business is today, it can and should evaluate what other businesses are doing to excel at customer service. Too often, clubs are tun-



Mikki Williams

nel visioned and only look at their competitors in their field where much can be learned from outside your industry. Stew Leonard's, the famous Supermarket in Norwalk, CT, profiled in countless magazines and books as the ultimate in customer service, prides themselves as the Disneyland of Dairy Stores and as such, created a Disney-like atmosphere with a live petting zoo outside for the kids, musical characters that sing in the store and WOW the Cow who walks around like Mickey at Disney. They didn't model themselves after another supermarket just because they were one, but rather after a company like Disney, famous for their customer service, employee attitudes and cleanliness. Even if you're a funeral parlor, be the Nordstrom's of funeral parlors, be the Ritz-Carlton of taxi drivers, be the Land's End of car washes, the American Airlines of computers,..... adapt, adopt, model, learn from and create your own uniqueness and differential advantage as a customer service provider.

American Airlines sends its customers, "You're someone special" stickers so that whenever they get great service, whether on the phone with someone they haven't met or in person, they can give them a sticker which the employee can use to redeem great gifts. This idea has provided great inspiration to some of my club clients in how to recognize employee efforts for giving great service.

Good customer service is (See Mikki Williams page 26)



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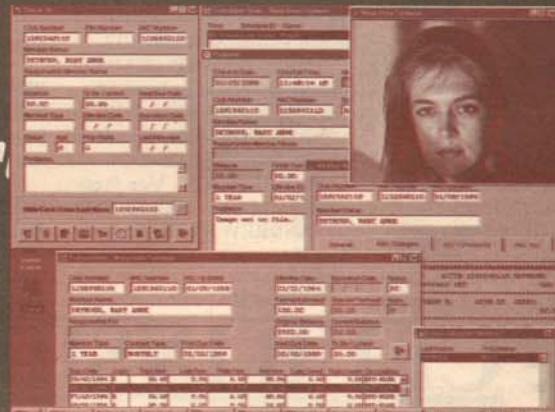
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**...Karen
Woodard**

continued from page 16

walking and talking. By doing so, there is not the anticipation or built up pressure of sitting down after the tour to go over concerns or handle objections.

If you recall in this conversation as well, the MR proactively brought the concern to the surface versus waiting for Susan to bring it up at the end. This style eliminates pressure from the buyer and the seller because the element of "surprise" is removed. We are simply discussing a point in a conversation that was brought up earlier. Hmm. Brought up earlier? Let's look at this...

To be able to handle objections on the tour successfully, there are a few things you will need to do prior to the tour and on the tour. Those activities include:

1. Qualify before the tour.

Qualifying questions differ from needs assessment questions in that needs questions tell you why the PM wants to join the club. Qualifying questions tell you what might hold the PM back from joining today. This is critical information to have. The sooner you have it, the more time you will have to work through these concerns on the tour. Therefore, ask these questions before the tour and this is also critical - bring the concerns back up while on the tour similar to the example above with Susan.

2. Use 5 - 9 trial closes on the tour. Remember that trial closes assist you in accomplishing 4 things: affirming enthusiasm, uncovering remaining concerns, entree to handling objections on the tour, and assessing the buyers position. By asking trial close questions, you can unearth a wealth of information that will allow you to move forward. When asking trial closes, you will get one of three answers, which include very enthusiastic, lukewarm or

disinterested. If you get anything but enthusiastic it is critical for you to probe the answer.

3. Use the 7-Step Method for handling concerns as outlined below:

1. Listen - listen to the concern with no interruptions.

2. Paraphrase - paraphrase the concern so you know you understand what was said and the PM knows you understand. The verbiage would be: "Susan, it sounds like your concern is about value."

3. Isolate - isolating the concern means you are going to determine that what was expressed is the only concern or that there may be more. The verbiage would be: "Other than your concern about value, is there anything else that makes you hesitate?"

4. Question the concern - questioning the concern simply means that you will ask if it is appropriate to find a solution. The verbiage would be: "Susan, would it be OK if we took a few minutes

to find a solution for you?"

5. Provide a solution - here is where you will continue to probe and you will ultimately come to a solution that works for both the PM and the club. The solution may be right on the tip of your tongue or you may need to be a little more creative. Take your time here - it is not a race to see who can speak first or fastest.

6. Confirm the solution - you will simply confirm with the PM that the solution you offered works for them. The verbiage would be: "Susan, how does that work for you?"

7. Offer to join again - once the solution has been confirmed, you ask them to join or ask them to join again.

By handling the PMs concerns on the tour, you change the entire dynamic of the sales process for both you and the buyer. The result is a more comfortable buying scenario, which typically results in more buying. We all know that when the buyer trusts the seller they are more likely to pur-

chase. Handling objections on the tour gives you the power to be more trustworthy, more professional, adds an element of differentiation from your competitors and produces more first time closes than handling objections at the end of the tour.

To incorporate this style into your sales presentation practice these simple steps: qualify before the tour, bring the concerns up while on the tour, ask trial close questions to probe, and use the 7-Step Method. Give yourself 30 days to become proficient with this style and you will experience a noticeable difference in your sales results.

(Karen D. Woodard, President of Premium Performance training in Boulder Colorado is an international author, speaker and consultant. She has owned and operated clubs since 1985. Karen provides successful on-site marketing, sale, service and management training and consulting to clubs. Additionally, he provides, books, manuals and audiotapes for staff training. She can be contacted at 303.417.0653.)

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The CLUB INSIDER News World View

Congratulations again to **MIKE BALFOUR**, Managing Director of **Fitness First** in the United Kingdom as he was recognized as one of the United Kingdom's **Top 100 Entrepreneurs**! The honor was bestowed on Mike on September 8 at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London. Of the Top 100 Entrepreneurs, Balfour ranked #1 in the Leisure/Travel category, #3 in Revenue Growth Rate and #8 in Employment Growth Rate. Fitness First operates 68 clubs in the UK, 28 in Germany, 4 in Belgium plus clubs in Hong Kong and Thailand.

• **HARM TEGLARS**, President and CEO of London-based **Cannons Cannons, PLC**, announced plans to invest \$165 million in opening at least one club per month over the next 24 months. Cannons currently operates 32 facilities in the UK with a recently opened club and four more planned clubs in Holland. Revenues at Cannons were up 61% to \$74.5 million for the first six months of the year.

• **Esporta** announced that for the first six months of FY 2000 pre-tax profits rose to \$6.75 million, 73% higher than the \$3.9 pre-tax profit for the same period last

year. Esporta now has 26 clubs and 126,000 total memberships and it plans to open four more clubs by the end of 2000 and seven during 2001 with a goal of 46 clubs by the end of 2002. Membership is up 2% since January 1, 2000.

• **Hail to the Chief!** In San Salvador, El Salvador, **PRESIDENT and MRS. FRANCISCO FLORES** attended the Grand Opening of the country's newest and largest club, a 30,000 square-foot **World Gym**.

• **MINTEL**, a UK market research group reports that UK fitness membership has risen 50%

in the last six years, now reaching 2.44 million. The total UK population is 59.6 million. By 2003, UK fitness membership is projected to reach 8% of the 18-64 age group.

• **In Brasil, RICHARD BILTON**'s Sao-Paolo-based **Companhia Athletica** opened its 7th club, a 55,000 square-foot multi-sport facility in Brasilia and will open its 8th club in Belem in December and its 9th in Horizonte next April. Monthly dues are \$70 to \$90 U.S.

• **The People Company** in Japan, owners of 114 clubs, had net sales of \$262.2 million and pre-tax income of \$28.2 million and net income of \$14.1 million for the 1st

half of 2000. People Company now serves 464,878 members.

• **ALAN FISHER'S** London-based **Holmes Place, PLC** announced that for the first six months of the year net sales were up 48% to \$48.95 million. Holmes Places owns 59 clubs serving 164,793 members. Holmes Place will open 7 additional clubs in the second half of 2000, 5 in the UK and 2 in Continental Europe.

• Next month we will have a report on the first ever IHRSA Convention in South America.

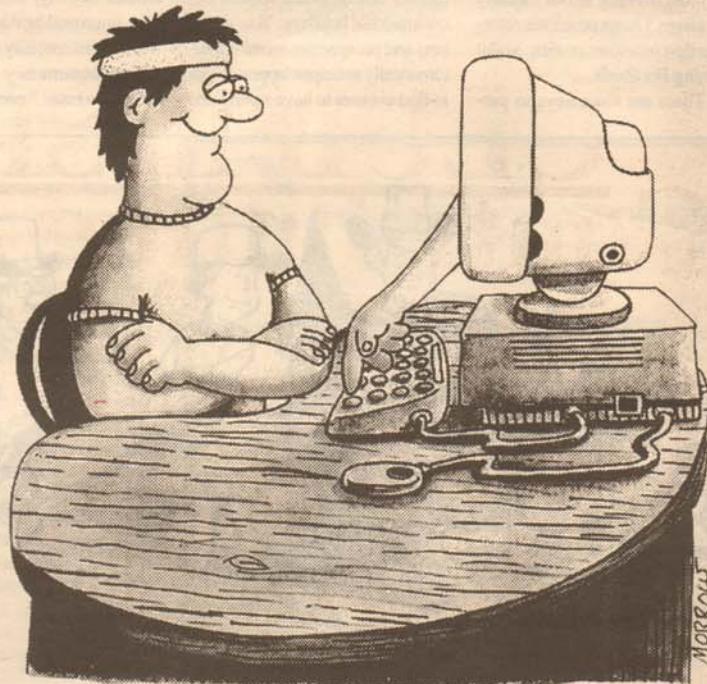
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(World View courtesy of IHRSA.)

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MAKE IT FUN!!!

Programming For Fun!

By Sandy Coffman

Programming for fun can get addictive. Once you experience the joy of being creative with finding excuses to make people happy, you tend to try to out do yourself every time. The programmer should realize in our business that whatever you do to make people happy will result in making people healthy too. What a combination!

From strictly a business point of view, programming in our industry promotes usage. Usage promotes retention. Retention promotes profits. Voila! Programming For Profit.

There are three keys to pro-

gramming for retention:

1. Make it VISIBLE
2. Make it MEMORABLE
3. Make it EXAGGERATED!

The good news is that, for the most part, if you are very creative and energetic for a year, you can simply repeat most of your programs on an annual basis watch the usage, the growth and the retention grow. The most visible, memorable, and exaggerated programs are theme based, and easiest as well as the most exciting themes can be based around our own national holidays. Your members and prospective members automatically anticipate opportunities to find excuses to have a party and

have fun at holiday times. Why not educate them to anticipate that party and fun environment at your club?

The good news, too, is that with little effort, you can even create a holiday just by checking with your local library for all the special monthly observances available, and you can even zero in on National Health Observances if you would like. For example, every November our country celebrates The Great American Smoke-Out. Here is an opportunity to create a program around activity, education, and a new, improved healthy lifestyle too. If you enlist specialty speakers along with a community "Walk Away From The Habit," event, you will en-

sure lots of new leads from prospective members and have the opportunity to get lots of free media action too. That's MAKING GOOD BUSINESS FUN and MAKING FUN GOOD BUSINESS! For a list of other national health observances, you can contact the American Hospital Association, in Chicago, at 312-422-3737.

Special programs run in any activity area of the club and could begin on November 1st and end at Thanksgiving time with a turkey going to the winners. Round robins and specialty tournaments are perfect examples of these annual events and are sure to grow in popularity year after year if you take pictures of your members holding their turkeys and display the pictures at least three to four weeks prior to the event every year. Everyone will want to get into the fun.

My favorite holiday theme of the year, however, is Halloween. You may think Halloween is a one day event, but I think it should be celebrated for a full week. The opportunities to MAKE HALLOWEEN FUN are endless and provide innumerable promotional opportunities. For the full week of Halloween, the staff should wear costumes and masks. You should change them around, too. Take pictures of them and be sure to display them for the full month of October and half of September next year. Halloween is perfect for kids programs and well as adult programs, and best of all, you will find your seniors will have a ball!!!

- Pumpkin carving
- Costume contests

Sandy Coffman

- Bobbing for apples
- Making taffy apples
- Creating fall centerpieces
- Black light classes
- Making "healthy treats"
- Hiding "tricks" in lockers
- Special Halloween "Thriller"

music throughout the club as well as in classes

•Specialty "Ghostaerobic" classes - perfect for providing a fun environment to get people to come into class for the first time. If they try it, they'll like it!

Remember the most important ingredient of all. YOU have to have FUN!. If you enjoy coming up with these programs, decorating your club with ghosts, goblins, spiders, bats, hats, and pumpkins, then your members will enjoy your club and your activities too.

If you enjoy having fun, then you can MAKE IT FUN! Happy Halloween. Bo-o-o-o!

(Sandy Coffman is the world's leading professional in programming for clubs and the President of Programming For Profit. Sandy is an international speaker and author. Sandy may be reached at: (941) 795-7887.)



Happy Halloween!

Happy Halloween Aqua Exercise!

...Casey Conrad

continued from page 10

the program, Conrad is in the process of completing extensive training materials that combine detailed manuals, audio tapes and videos. "If you don't McDonaldize it, it isn't worth anything. The system MUST be easy to follow, easy to duplicate and leave no room for error or interpretation. The materials for the licensees have everything they need to run a center.

Every concept, question and concern will be covered, along with all the sales and marketing materials to drive the sales in the door," explains Conrad.

Ken Ryder, owner of both Bull Run Athletic Club in Manassas, VA and four Contours Express ladies-only facilities throughout VA, says this about the program. "I have been searching for over 2 years for a simple, yet effective weight-loss program to implement in my clubs. I wanted something more than just nutritional shakes and bars. With HEALTHY INSPI-

RATIONS you have a true system in which clients are held accountable and therefore get results. Having been a client of Casey's for 5 years, it was no surprise that the training and support we have received has been first-class. Finally, there is an easy to follow system, which enables me to offer a great weight-loss program for my members and serve as an incredible profit center for my clubs."

Tasso Kiriakes, owner of Bodez by Tasso in Daytona, FL, feels the same way. "For 12 years I have been looking for a structured, duplicatable and

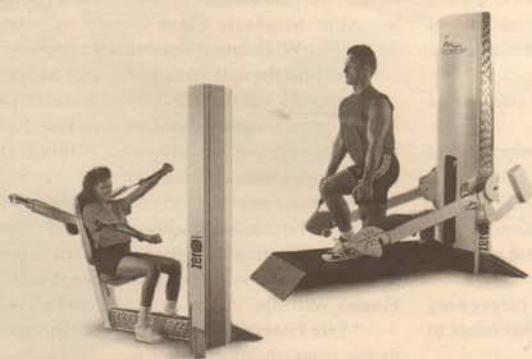
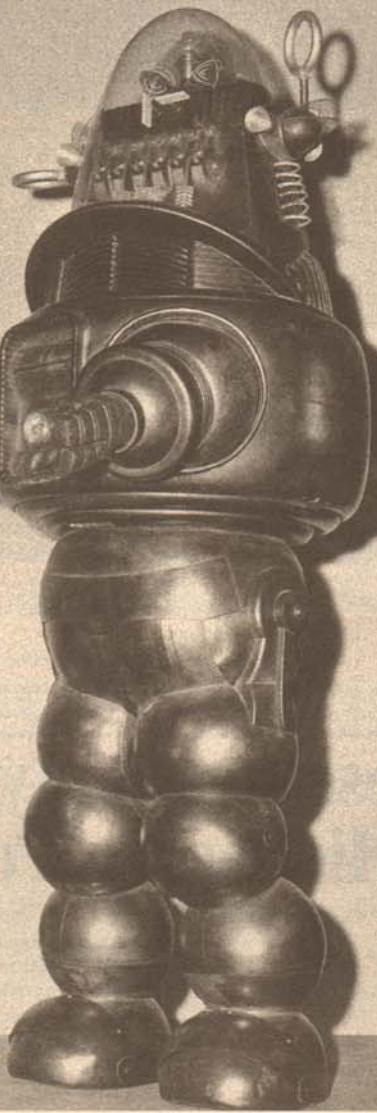
idiot-proof system to deliver weight loss and weight management information that also provides accountability education and motivation. My staff and I feel this is the program that will do it. And revenue-wise, because so many people want a weight loss solution, this could far exceed our personal training profits, which are quite high. We are excited and feel that HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS will do for weight loss in health clubs what BodyPUMP and Body Training Systems has done for group fitness - deliver a consistent, quality product that brings in tons of new members and prospects."



(Conrad is President of Communication Consultants, a company that provides the fitness industry's most comprehensive system of live training seminars, tapes, workbooks, textbooks, on-site club consulting and trade show lecturing, with more than 20 products in use in over 1,600 clubs worldwide. She is creator of Health Club University, a training center in RI that offers monthly sales, marketing and management programs year round. She is now President of HEALTHY INSPIRATIONS, LLC. In addition, Conrad is an attorney, licensed in the State of Rhode Island.)

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The Importance Of Supervision In Exercise

By Ted Lambrinides

The importance of quality supervision, teaching, coaching, and/or leadership can often be illustrated in the athletic arena. An excellent teacher/coach comes in and turns things around in a remarkable fashion. It wasn't necessarily the X's and O's the teacher/coach used which created the turnaround but the communication, motivation, and leadership skills employed.

Supervision can take a different form depending upon the subjects(s) being trained. Supervision may need to take on a teaching/coaching form if training someone new to strength training. Supervision may need to be more of a motivational (sometimes-prodding) style if training individuals who need to strength train but do not particularly like the activity. Supervision is not sitting in an office and handing out computer tear sheets of a pre-planned workout based off a maximum lift. Supervision makes sure that what is supposed to happen in the weightroom (proper speed of movement, repetitions, exercise order, intensity,

etc.) in fact happens.

I have always believed that supervision is a critical component of a resistance-training program. While I have ample empirical evidence to support my contention, there does not exist a large number of formal investigations examining the importance of supervision and the outcomes of a resistance-training program. One study compared the effects of supervision on neck strength. This research was performed on members of the Army football team. One group was supervised (pushed) through each workout while the other group received only minimal input from an instructor during their actual workout. The group that was supervised each workout increased their neck strength by an average of 91.9% in six weeks while the non-supervised group increased their neck strength by an average of 56.7% during that same time. Another study found no difference between supervised and unsupervised cardiovascular training programs for improving physical fitness. However, in a recent issue of Medicine Science in Sports and Exercise researchers at Ball State University com-

pared changes in maximal strength, muscular endurance, and body composition after 12 weeks of heavy resistance training directly supervised by a personal trainer versus unsupervised training.

Twenty moderately trained men approximately 24 years of age were randomly assigned to either the supervised or the unsupervised group. Both groups performed identical resistance training programs using free weight and variable resistance machine exercises. The subjects were tested at the start of the investigation and after 12 weeks of training. Although both maximal squat and bench press increased significantly after training in both groups, the results were significantly greater in the supervised group. It was concluded that directly supervised resistance training in moderately trained men resulted in a greater rate of training load increase which resulted in greater maximal strength gains compared with unsupervised training.

This information is important to convey to prospective customers that the supervision provided by your facility has the

potential to produce better results than if they train in an unsupervised fashion.

Many times in reading the methods/procedures section in a research paper supervision is mentioned but not expanded upon.

Ted Lambrinides

Supervision in most research cases is somebody (anybody) in the room at the same time the subjects are training. The significance of human interaction is rarely mentioned or considered significant to many exercise physiologists. The psychological factors associated with supervision should not be underestimated. Imai and Steinhaus performed a study that examined the influence of psychological factors upon the expression of strength. They tested the subject's maximal strength then repeated the maximal test while a gun was fired and while someone shouted.

The researchers found that strength went up when a motivational stimulus was presented to the subjects. These research-



ers and others stress the importance of motivation for the development of strength.

Supervision involves teaching, coaching, motivating, and knowing when to make the appropriate changes in an individual's workout routine. Proper supervision can allow results to flourish and make the strength training experience pleasurable. Improper supervision (poor communication skills, poor motivation skills, negative attitude) can poison a program and cause individuals to reject training altogether. Supervision is more than handing a trainee a workout on a piece of paper, that part is easy. The nuts and bolts of supervision are an art which need to be performed on a day to day basis...it is hard work. Regardless of what training protocol a coach/school/gym may follow the real key is SUPERVISION.

(*Ted Lambrinides is the Director of Education for MEDX Corp. (800) 876-6339.*)

Life Fitness Academy Calls For Letters of Intent For Michael L. Pollock Research Grants

FRANKLIN PARK,

III. - Sept. 13, 2000 - The Life Fitness Academy Scientific and Medical Advisory Board (SMAB), which includes 30 of the country's most renowned professionals in exercise science and sports medicine, announces the call for Letters of Intent for the annual Michael L. Pollock Memorial Grants. Since 1993, the Life Fitness Academy has awarded \$140,000 to 40 grant winners.

A total of \$20,000 will be awarded for research to be conducted in 2001-2002. Two grants of \$5,000 each will be awarded to junior investigators (individuals who have finished their formal training within the past three years) and four grants of \$2,500 each will be awarded to graduate students (advisors

must co-sponsor the study).

The grants will support applied human studies focusing on the effects of physical activity on various health states. Grants also can support product development opportunities such as running surfaces, functional strength training, rehabilitation and senior exercise, and should be related to or transpose into applicable information for exercise programming.

The project to be supported by these monies may be part of another project funded by a different source. However, the specific component of the project to be funded by this grant must be a unique component of the total research project, and the idea for the project must be the original thought of the graduate student or junior investigator.

Researchers interested

in applying for the grants must submit a two-page Letter of Intent to Life Fitness postmarked by November 15, 2000. The Letter of Intent must include:

- * Name, address, phone number and e-mail address of principal investigator and institution.

- * Name, address, phone number and e-mail address of faculty advisor for graduate students

- * Statement of purpose of study.

- * Short description of project, including specific goals and methodologies.

- * Short description of significance of study and why it is of value.

- * List of key references (published papers) that relate to this work.

- * NOTE: This is a request

for Letter of Intent only, not for proposals. No review or feedback will be provided.

- * Information about the grants can be found at the Life Fitness Web site at http://www.lifefitness.com/comm_sponsorships_spon.html

- * Letters of Intent also can be sent to: Life Fitness

Attn: Stephanie Vlach
10601 W. Belmont Avenue
Franklin Park, IL 60131
FAX: 847-288-3762

Upon submittance of the Letter of Intent and as a potential grant winner, the following guidelines apply:

- * Life Fitness is authorized to promote biographical and research information on the Life Fitness Web site.

- * Life Fitness is authorized to use research information to create Life Fitness educational

material.

- * The grant winner can convert scientific research information into professional applicable information in abstract form.

- * A copy of the completed study should be sent to the Life Fitness Academy. Life Fitness has authorization to copy and distribute it (following publication).

Grant winners will be announced at the American College of Sports Medicine (ASCM) Annual Symposium in Baltimore in June 2001, with grants funded in July 2001.

For additional information about the Life Fitness Academy Scientific and Medical Advisory Board grants, contact Stephanie Vlach at 1-800-735-3867 x3642 or stephanie.vlach@lifefitness.com.

IHRSA's Capitol Report

Capitol Report Reprinted Courtesy Of IHRSA

PROGRESS MADE ON MASSACHUSETTS FAIR COMPETITION BILL

During the last few days of the Massachusetts legislative session, a key fair competition bill gained momentum. Senate Bill 55 would limit the ability of colleges, universities, and tax-exempt hospitals to sell fitness memberships to the public if there is a health club located within 10 miles. The bill would also require that a system of mandatory arbitration be established to settle complaints from small businesses.

SB 55 received a favorable report from the Joint Committee on Commerce & Labor. Although the formal session ended before the legislature could vote on the bill, the significance of this progress should not be understated.

IHRSA commends the New England Coalition for Fair Competition for convincing key legislators that such protective measures are needed, and encourages them to continue their efforts to educate lawmakers on the issue of tax-exempt competition. Contact IHRSA Public Policy (gr@ihsa.org) for a copy of Senate Bill 55.

SHASTA YMCA REMAINS TAX-EXEMPT

The California state Board of Equalization has upheld the tax-exempt status of the Shasta Family YMCA.

We reported in June that the Board planned to review 12 aspects of the Y's operation, including membership dues and fees for swimming lessons.

Board tax counsel Susan Scott released the six-page decision nearly two months after she visited the facility.

Complaints by Mark Lewis, general manager of Kangaroo Kourts in Redding, Jim Howard, co-owner of Total Fitness in Redding, and other IHRSA members led to the decision to send state board representatives to visit the Y.

Ironically, Lewis said, in her letter, Scott makes the exact point that was made by private club operators. "A scanning device shows that between 26 percent and 32 percent of daily-member usage is by youths under 18," Scott wrote.

"That's exactly our argument. If you do the math, that's 74 percent adult usage a day," Lewis said. "Financially able adults using the YMCA — that's income that should be taxed."

The Shasta Y's membership has grown from 800 in 1995 to nearly 9,000 today.

HOSPITAL-OWNED FITNESS CENTER'S TAX-EXEMPT STATUS AT RISK

Indiana's Fitness Pointe may find itself back on the tax rolls if the Lake County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals heeds the opinion of an advisor who contends that the hospital-owned facility is actually a for-profit health club.

Consultant Terrence J. Bronowski has urged the Board to scrutinize Fitness Pointe's application for exemption as it did that of Omni 41, a fitness center located in Schererville.

In December, the board voted to return Omni 41, which is owned by St. Margaret Mercy Healthcare Centers, to the tax rolls, requiring it to pay roughly \$200,000 in annual property taxes. Hospital officials have appealed to the State Board of Tax Commissioners.

In the Omni 41 case, the hospital bought the previously existing club without making significant changes to justify its tax-exempt status.

In the case of the 84,000

square-foot Fitness Pointe facility, "It does not appear that even 50 percent of the...building is directly used for health care," Bronowski wrote. "This may cause the exemption to be denied."

Bronowski informed the board that of Fitness Pointe's 3,700 members, only about 750 are physical therapy or cardiac patients. He also noted that 77% of the facility is devoted to general fitness, and 4.1% consists of a spa, cafe and pro shop.

The Assessment Board's president has suggested that as a courtesy to the hospital, the Board table the matter and invite a hospital representative to defend the application.

Bronowski said, "I think that the board is trying to be fair with all the taxpayers and do what's right, and it would be the board's opinion to give everybody a fair shake."

According to Fitness Pointe's application for exempt status, the hospital asked that:

Land, carrying a taxable property value of \$146,650, be 100% exempt. The building, carrying a taxable property value of \$1,210,950, be 98% exempt, reducing the taxable value to \$24,219.

The center's equipment, carrying a taxable property value of \$208,910 be 98% exempt, low-

ering the taxable value to \$4,178.

IHRSA & TENNESSEE CLUBS TO CHALLENGE UNFAIR LAW

You may recall that in 1999, an attorney for the Tennessee Board of Equalization determined that the mission of 13 facilities operated by the YMCA of Middle Tennessee was to compete directly with taxpaying clubs.

The Board had before it a recommendation to revoke the tax-exempt status of those facilities and appeared ready to put several Y's on the tax rolls. Unfortunately, this summer, a bill granting the Y a blanket property tax exemption was quietly rushed through the Tennessee legislature.

When IHRSA members discovered what had happened, they asked the Attorney General to rule on the validity of the proposed exemption. A week later, the Attorney General ruled that the bill did not grant the Y a special right in violation of a state law which prohibits the legislature from passing any laws that would benefit a particular group of people without being extended to the entire community.

IHRSA and Tennessee club operators will continue to challenge this new law.

IHRSA LAUNCHES ACCESS TO POINT-TO-POINT DRIVING DIRECTIONS ON HEALTHCLUBS.COM

BOSTON - September 12, 2000 - The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) announced on September 12, 2000 a new feature to its healthclubs.com website that not only enables users to easily locate fitness facilities worldwide, but now also provides nationwide point-to-point driving directions. The launch of this new service comes during the second most popular month for consumers to join a gym (January is the most popular).

Healthclubs.com has been a one-stop place for fitness enthusi-

asts to be able to access a database of fitness facilities, making it even easier for them to find a new club, or for business travelers, to find a club away from home. Now, healthclubs.com goes the extra step in providing users accurate and easy to read driving directions to these clubs from any point nationwide.

"The launch of this new feature comes at the perfect time. As our studies have shown, September is a highly popular time for people to start looking for and joining a gym," said John McCarthy, executive director, IHRSA. "With

all the detailed information on healthclubs.com, IHRSA's members, and fitness enthusiasts alike, can find a club without the hassle of locating the club on their own."

For even more convenience, IHRSA and healthclubs.com have partnered with high-profile consumer fitness websites such as Asimba.com, TheWorkout.com, Webgym.com, fitforall.com, reebok.com, Russell Athletics' website, getfit.com and one of the most frequented consumer fitness sites, Thriveonline.com.

The partnership integrates this new technology onto these other

popular sites, giving consumers more access to healthclubs.com.

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Mikki Williams

continued from page 18

not a cost, it is an investment and training your people to be the best service provider is the return on that investment-a satisfied customer. Anyone can copy your product and delivery-those are mere components of service-the unique factor is in developing a service mindset.

One of my careers was in the entertainment industry, where it's been said "all the world's a stage and everyone is a player" or in today's terms, when a Disney employee was asked how he liked being a street sweeper, he replied, "Oh, I'm not a street sweeper, I'm in show business, I'm part of the act". Make all of your employees part of a quality service team so they truly feel "part of the act".

When I returned to The

Ritz-Carlton to give a half-day training in teamwork, I couldn't help but notice the consistency of great service. How many times have you been to a restaurant and bragged about it to your friends and clients, only to return and be embarrassed by a marked difference in consistency and quality of service?

I called Tarala Electric in Norwalk, Connecticut when I was not satisfied with the electrical contractor who had been involved in the construction of my home. All of his technicians were always neat, friendly and efficient-the key words here are all and always. I found out later that Bill Tarala rewarded them in many ways from recognition trips to events that fostered teamwork. Two incidents stay with me in particular. Many of his electricians, while working in my home for a few years must have noticed that I collect

Norm Gales' Club Insider NEWS

lips. No, not real ones! Hey, some people collect butterflies, cars, stamps, I collect lips-lip phones, towels, magnets, I even have a lip toilet seat and 5 foot red lip couch. If you're wondering why, well, that's another article. Anyway-one day, I came home and noticed a gift wrapped package with a big red bow on my front porch. I opened it and found a framed graphic print of various shaped lips with a note that read, "We were wiring an art gallery, saw this, chipped in, thought of you. Enjoy. The guys at Tarala." WOW!

When I was building the house, I had a very large bill and very limited cash flow and when I called to ask Bill if I could pay it out, he replied, don't bother, just pay everyone else you need to and pay me when and how you can. No wonder I still use this company after 20 years and refer them to everyone I know. Just like many of us in today's fast-paced society, too many businesses look for the initial sale and forget about the long-term

relationship.

Then there was the time I was staying at a hotel in Boston and called to get driving directions. I asked for the Concierge and the receptionist said, "What room are they in?"

Or how about the time my driving service dropped me at the wrong airport. I missed my flight, had to take a taxi to the right airport, I lost time, money and was stressed to the max, only to return home, expecting to find a note of apology, and possibly a free trip, when to my dismay, I received a bill and a follow-up call blaming me. Needless to say, I never used them again and told as many people as I could. And folks, giving bad service to a professional speaker is worse than giving it to a mystery shopper, because we speak to thousands of people who might use your product or service. The point is you never know who that customer is, and they should be treated with consistently awesome service.

Is everyone an expert at your business? Can they answer questions or will they ask me how to spell Concierge so they can

look it up on the guest list? (She really did, I couldn't possibly make that up!) Is everyone empowered like they are at Nordstrom's department store, another icon of great customer service, where everyone is responsible for satisfying customers and you can shop to live piano music in the background. Is everyone trained, recognized and rewarded for great customer service experiences, not just sales? Do you provide training in personal and professional development so your employees have good communication skills? Creativity, problem solving, self-esteem, positive attitude, motivation, teamwork..... they all contribute to the overall success of a great customer service company. Technology may lead us into the 21st century..... it can never replace the warmth of the human smile, the kindness of the human heart and the spirit of giving a joyful experience to another human being.

Don't forget to brush your teeth!

(Mikki Williams, CSP

(certified speaking professional, only 300 worldwide) is an international speaker, trainer, author, consultant, coach, entrepreneur extraordinaire and "mensch". An inspirational humorist and business motivator, known for her outrageous style and flamboyant personality, she offers keynotes and workshops in personal productivity and business dynamics and consults and coaches individuals and organizations at all levels of their business. A former club owner, professional dancer, fitness instructor, IDEA's BusinessPerson of the Year, Club Industry's Entrepreneurial Women and IRSHA presenter, she is one of the highest rated presenters in the industry worldwide. In addition to her firm, Mikki Williams Unltd. she is the CEO of Six Degrees of Wellness, a natural health products and services company. To inquire about her services or order her book, "Only the Best in Customer Service", contact her at P.O. Box 475, Wilton, CT 06897 or phone: 203-762-2526, fax: 203-762-2494, email: mikkiwill@aol.com, web: www.mikkiwilliams.com and www.enrich.netmikkiwill. iams (c)2000 Mikki Williams Unltd.)

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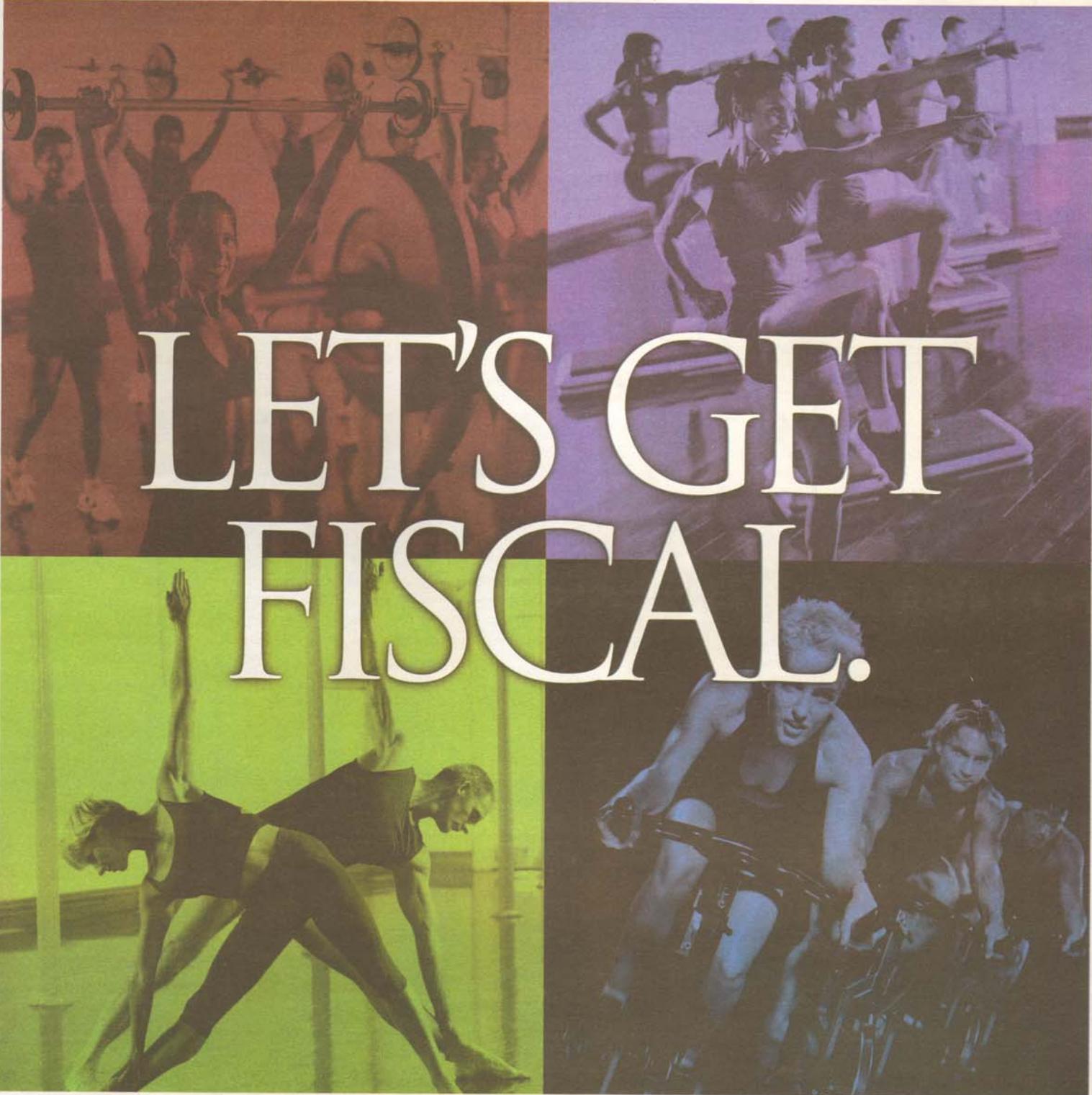
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PROFILE
No. 124

Cathy Zelinski

title	Fitness Manager/Loyola Center for Health & Fitness, Chicago, IL.
competitive edge	Passionate about fitness. "Drill Sergeant." Believes in a total solutions approach. Relies on Life Fitness for valuable insights.
personal profile	Voracious reader. Loves to tap along with Fred and Ginger. Country music fan. A total health and wellness freak.

"It's not enough to talk the talk. You have to walk the walk. You have to do the things you hate the most until you learn to love them. Then you'll be great."

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