

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 26 YEARS OF TRUST

Ruth Stricker *The ICON of The Marsh!*



Ruth Stricker Receiving Life Cast of Her Hands by World-Renowned Sculptor, Don F. Wiegand on August 9, 2019



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Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 26 YEARS OF TRUST

Ruth Stricker *The ICON of The Marsh!*

By: Norm Cates

During the past 26 years of publishing **Club Insider**, I've had the good fortune of chronicling the careers and businesses of some of the best health and fitness club developers, owners and operators to ever be in this business. It's been my great pleasure to get to know these folks during our conversations and to bring you, our readers, into each relationship by producing in-depth cover stories such as this one, which is *as special as any we've ever produced and published*.

Many of the folks whose clubs and careers we've chronicled in our in-depth **Club Insider Case Studies Cover Stories** are long-time leaders in our industry. They are the folks who have helped make our industry the booming business it is today. Their leadership has made a huge difference in our industry's growth and change over many decades. This list is impressive, and there are many truly great health and fitness club owners/operators in America on it. On that list is **Ruth Stricker**, and in my opinion, she is one of the very best, not just in America, but in the world! I say that for many reasons that you will discover as you read this illustrative and amazing *second Club Insider Cover Story on Ruth Stricker and The Marsh*.

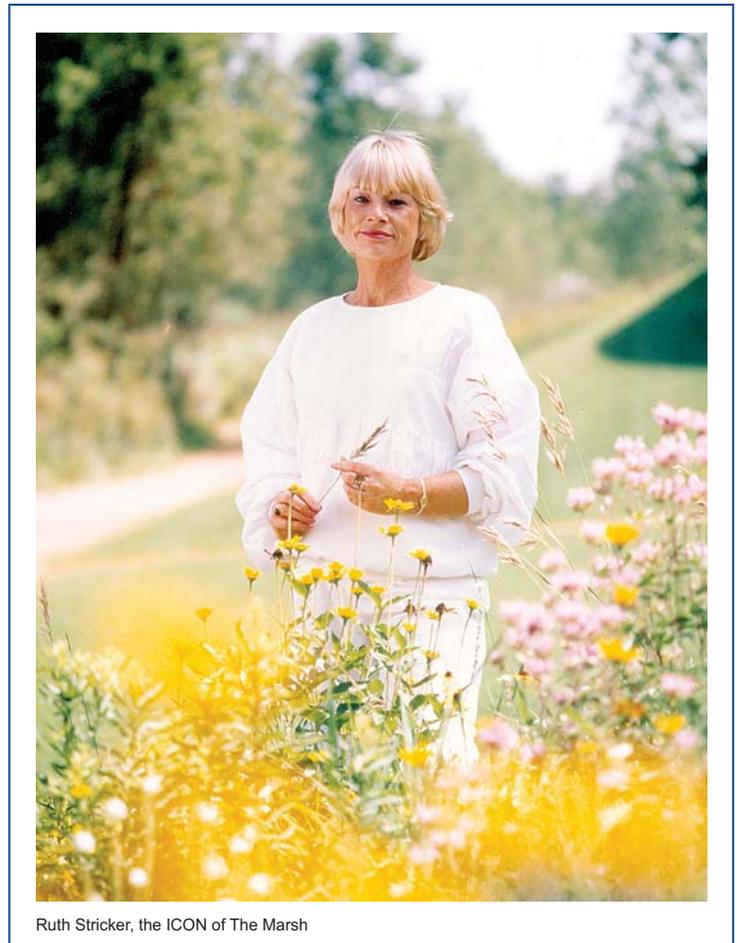
You may have noticed that I wrote *second Club Insider Cover Story*. Yes, this month, that's the case. And yes, I bet you're thinking, "Norm, why are you doing a second cover story on *The Marsh, Ruth Stricker's operation?*" My answer to that question is that the first cover story,

published in July of 2008, focused primarily on *Ruth's business, The Marsh*. This cover story, however, is not going to focus purely on *The Marsh*. It's going to focus on *Ruth Stricker, the human being...* The **AMAZING HUMAN BEING and the ICON of The Marsh!**

But, 2008 was not the first time Ruth's photo appeared on **Club Insider's** front page. The first time was in our **4th edition**, in 1994, before we started doing cover stories. Her photo accompanied an article that **The Marsh Staff** had sent to me for publication as Ruth was being honored as a *Healthy American Fitness Leader*, an honor given to ten Americans by the **President's Council on Physical Fitness** in Palm Springs, California, on September 16, 1994. **John McCarthy** had nominated Ruth for that special honor, and the award placed her in very special company because other winners included *former, and now late President, Ronald Reagan; former Apollo Astronaut, James Lovell, Jr.; and the "Father of Aerobics," Dr. Kenneth Cooper*.

John McCarthy commented in his nomination letter to the President's Council on Physical Fitness, "*Among fitness leaders worldwide, there is no more persuasive or eloquent spokesperson for the role of exercise in healing and integrating mind, body and spirit than Ruth Stricker.*"

Ruth Stricker, The ICON of The Marsh, is one of the most highly honored and decorated individuals in the history of the health and fitness club industry. During Ruth's career, she's received many honors, awards and accolades of all kinds, not just
(See **Ruth Stricker Page 10**)



Ruth Stricker, the ICON of The Marsh

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- How Trainers Can Get Better With Referrals - By: Michael Gelfgot
- FlexIt is Pushing the Envelope, One Push Notification at a Time
- Positive Power - By: Karen Woodard-Chavez
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- The Sales Professional's Checklist - By: Casey Conrad

Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your Club Insider Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with Club Insider Edition #309! Happy Football Season, Y'all!

■Is America a great country, or what?

■This month, it's our pleasure to do something that we've very rarely done, and that's to present our second Club Insider Cover Story on RUTH STRICKER, the amazing lady who created and has owned and operated The MARSH in Minnetonka, Minnesota for over 34 years. I chose Ruth for this month's Cover Story because she was again honored in her community for what she's done there for everyone. So, starting on Page #3, be sure to take the time to read about Ruth Stricker's career and life. It's a very interesting story.

■I sit here happily today on this September 2nd, 2019 Labor Day, working on these Norm's Notes for you folks who're SO important to Justin and I, and doing the things that need to be done for us to go to press one week from tomorrow, September 10th, when we will print our 309th monthly edition of Club Insider! Yahoo! While sitting here for the last couple of hours, I've received emails from MIKE ALPERT, our good friend and Club Insider Contributing Author, with four articles for his Page #6 Exercise IS Medicine column. Folks, I'm proud to be able to say that if the good Lord's willing,

come December, I'll have been at this job for 27 years. But, I can honestly say I've NEVER had one of our great Club Insider Contributing Authors do what Mike has done today when he sent four articles for all four months of the rest of the year! So, I want to give Mike a HUGE SHOUT OUT SAYING, "THANKS MIKE ALPERT," for your great contributions today and every month for the past several years. And, folks don't miss the article on Page #6 that DAVID JOHNSON wrote in collaboration with Mike.

■I got a phone call a couple of minutes ago from my long-time friend, and former employee, DOUG MILLER. For the past year, Doug's been fighting cancer. The news he shared on his call to me from England, where he now lives, is great because he told me that, as of September 6, he was declared CANCER FREE! Yahoo! CONGRATULATIONS to YOU, DOUG! Doug's a terrific guy in the world of club membership sales, having been The Sales Makers operator for Europe for years, and he's now looking to get back to work. So, if you have a possible job opportunity in Europe for Doug, please pass it on to me, and I'll be sure he gets it.

■The following memo is from our friend, the one and only, AUGIE NIETO. While we're at it, let me remind you that AUGIE'S QUEST is going to celebrate its 15th Anniversary at the IHRSA Convention

on Friday Night, March 20th in San Diego. DON'T MISS IT! Here's what Augie wrote about his thoughts on the Ice Bucket Challenge: "Reflecting on the Ice Bucket Challenge... This month, many in the ALS community are reflecting back on the Ice Bucket Challenge. It's hard to believe it's been five years since this social media mega-fundraising trend hit our newsfeeds, tempting so many of us to drench ourselves with a cold bucket of water, all in the name of ALS. At the time, a lot of people had never even heard of this horrible disease. This awareness phenomena gave way for people to share their very personal experiences with ALS, like our friend Pat Quinn, Co-Founder of the Challenge, and Anthony Carbajal, whose unique story and bright spirit in the face of ALS charmed the likes of Ellen (See the segment at bit.ly/clubinsider66). Anthony joins us today as our guest author; thanks for looking back with us, Anthony, but more importantly, looking forward to a time when ALS doesn't stand a fighting chance." - Augie Nieto

■We're pleased to welcome AUSTIN COHEN and his growing company, FlexIt, as a new Club Insider Advertiser! Check out Austin's full-page FlexIt Ad on Page #17. To be very clear and accurate with our welcome of Austin's FlexIt company here today, I've asked him to write a brief description of FlexIt. So, Austin wrote:

FlexIt is a no-cost marketing technology



Norm Cates

for club partners. FlexIt functions as a true marketing extension of its club partners, generating exposure and visibility for the clubs in its network, in addition to incremental revenue and new members. FlexIt enables these leads to sample clubs and pay for their time in the facilities, clubs set the rates and every user pays on his first visit. FlexIt has a unique strategy of entering into partnerships with companies that have large user-bases in adjacent businesses that are engaged with ideal health club prospects. FlexIt has 700+ clubs in its network, including Mountainside Fitness, Gold's Gym, Youfit Health Clubs, Retro Fitness and more. FlexIt is currently (See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 26 YEARS OF TRUST

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Exercise IS Medicine!

By: **Dave Johnson**

(In Collaboration With Mike Alpert)

Mike Alpert: I thought that it might be a good idea to have a medical professional write, in his words, his thoughts on how important exercise is and *why exercise really IS medicine*. So, here are **Dave Johnson's** words. Dave is the *Owner and Physical Therapist of Evergreen Physical Therapy*.

■ ■ ■

"There are a few situations that people find themselves in where exercise *may not* be good medicine. However, those situations are few. At least, they are fewer than some think. At some level, with moderate dedication and clear guidance, most conditions that people face in their lifespan would be best served with a good and regular dose of exercise. And, the perks far outweigh the risks.

As a physical therapist for nearly three decades, my eyes have seen, my ears have heard and my hands have touched thousands upon thousands of individuals suffering from some sort of pain, mobility challenge or a post-operative state. One learns a lot along the way. I'd dare say that, at this stage of my career in healthcare, I've learned as much or more directly from the people in front of me than from my formal education. My patients teach me daily. We help each other learn.

That said, most of the people seeking help in a physical therapy clinic realize that exercise is warranted, and it is about to be prescribed. Many don't like it, but they're aware that they might be in our office due to that very fact. Many people have some sort of vague "wish" that they would have done something earlier or differently. Nearly all have questions about causes and effects that caused their problem. A good number arrive with some worry about the future or of a recurrence.

Daily, we hear of folks near a point of giving up or accepting their state as "*it-is-what-it-is*." In those with Parkinson's disease, and most other chronic conditions, physical therapists are alert to issues of "*cognitive fatigue*." Brain research looks at the "load" of accomplishing tasks. When simple tasks are not automatic. In other words, when they require a great deal of cognitive effort, then there is a very real grain "bandwidth" shortfall, which may create a barrier to exercise. As amazingly complex as it is, the brain can only do so much, and great effort in merely standing, walking or avoiding falls can cause a mental taxation that is very real. Even if the fitness space is accessible physically, the barrier may be a cognitive staircase without rails.

On a side note, did you know that even concussion-recovery science is changing rapidly in terms of *Exercise IS Medicine*? When my eldest son had a football-related concussion eight years ago, the recommendations for concussion treatments then was "*shut them down*" a.k.a., put him in a dark bedroom, avoid computers or screens and just let him rest. The thought was that a brain metabolic crisis was occurring and still is, so a "*shut down*" was necessary to conserve fuel for healing. Fast forward, great strides are being made in return to activity and learning with graded and monitored exercise and learning exposure 48 hours after the impact. With an initiative of providing clarity of evidence-based practices, the *UCLA Steve Tisch Brain Support Concussion Champions Program* is educating professionals to change their thinking. **Drs. Giza/Babikian, et.al** highlights a growing body of evidence that long-term complications can result by avoiding activity and delaying some return to normalcy early in the recovery process.

So, in a collective voice, there are many who are suggesting *Exercise IS Medicine*, especially in terms of prescription, monitoring and encouraging. I applaud the *College of Sports Medicine* for taking the lead in their initiative to prescribe exercise with great clarity, simplicity, yet specificity. **Exerciseismedicine.org** has provided valuable tools for prescribing exercise



Dave Johnson



Mike Alpert

as medicine without a bottle, including dosage and authority for many complicated conditions. I'm equally inspired by the likes of **Mike Alpert** and **The Claremont Club**, who have envisioned access to exercise, especially for those with significant barriers. People faced with staircases like cancer, spinal cord injury or lower income are being given a "ramp" by vision.

Now, for those perks that far outweigh the risks... I like to call them "side effects." They are larger than the muscle mass and flexibility gained. They even surpass greater balance and agility. They may touch the pain of a poor prognosis.

They go beyond *machines and weights*. They involve an increase in bandwidth for that brain to "*enjoy*," "*have hope*," "*think possible*," "*try once again*," "*never give up*," and highest of all, "*to be engaged in a community of living*." That's an addiction worth pursuing.

Exercise IS Medicine!

(*Dave Johnson, PT, is the Owner and Physical Therapist of Evergreen Physical Therapy, a Los Angeles-based PT provider. Dave can be reached by contacting Mike Alpert at malpert@claremontclub.com.*)

FlexIt is Pushing the Envelope, One Push Notification at a Time

NEW YORK, N.Y. - FlexIt Inc. is an innovative club access and sampling platform. The FlexIt mobile app delivers qualified prospects to clubs at no cost by providing consumers with a discovery tool that enables them to scan in and out of clubs and pay only for the time they use the club. With over 700 clubs in its network, FlexIt features partners across the country, such as *Mountainside Fitness, Gold's Gym, Youfit Health Clubs, Retro Fitness*, and makes finding the right club easier than ever before.

FlexIt is introducing its new and proprietary in-app promotions technology that allows fitness club operators to push highly targeted messages to users after checking out facilities through the FlexIt mobile app. The app's newest feature takes customer engagement a step beyond merely introducing users to a club, as it encourages users to redeem special perks and become repeat customers via sleek in-app notifications programming, extending the reach and delivery of club partner engagement.

The in-app promotions feature provides early adopting partners with the opportunity to promote to FlexIt users at no

cost and in a highly targeted manner. When a user checks out on the FlexIt app, the app considers usage history at that particular club. For example, after a user's first ever check-out, a club can offer a percentage off of a smoothie or merchandise. After a user checks into a single location multiple times in a defined period of time, he may be offered a discount on personal training, no initiation fee or one month of free membership if he chooses to convert.

"FlexIt is one of the first marketing technology for clubs built around the owner/operator perspective, developed by fitness industry leaders. FlexIt caters to current Millennial and Gen Z consumption trends of mobile, local and on-demand, which in turn enables FlexIt to deliver highly qualified leads to its partners," says **Austin Cohen, Founder and CEO of FlexIt**. "In-app promotions is just one of many current and future advancements that will help clubs to interface with users and prospective members."

FlexIt has reimagined the try-before-you-buy model: "The pay-per-use model powers FlexIt as a marketing extension of its partners, making sampling clubs easier and more seamless than

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ever before. FlexIt's high-touch and multi-faceted partnership approach is focused on garnering enhanced visibility and exposure for its partners," says **Justin Turetsky, Director of Business Development for FlexIt**.

In July 2019, FlexIt announced its dynamic pricing system that automatically displays by-the-minute rates in real time, delivering an optimal experience for both gym-goers and fitness clubs. With dynamic pricing, clubs can increase traffic during off-peak hours. Dynamic pricing embodies that FlexIt is not a discounting service, but that it is a tool that enables its partners to maintain their brand integrity.

Currently available in 10 markets, including New York, Los Angeles and Miami, and rapidly expanding. FlexIt is currently available for download in the *App Store* and *Google Play*. To learn more about FlexIt, visit www.flexit.fit.

See FlexIt's Ad on Page #17.

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

available across the United States. Austin can be reached at austin@flexit.fit.

■ **Have you registered for the Club Industry Show yet?** If you've not registered, or you would like to bring along some friends or co-workers, there's still time to save! Go to www.clubindustryshow.com to register before the advance pricing ends on September 26th with promo code: **CLUB19FREE**. Registration includes **FREE** exhibit hall admission. I

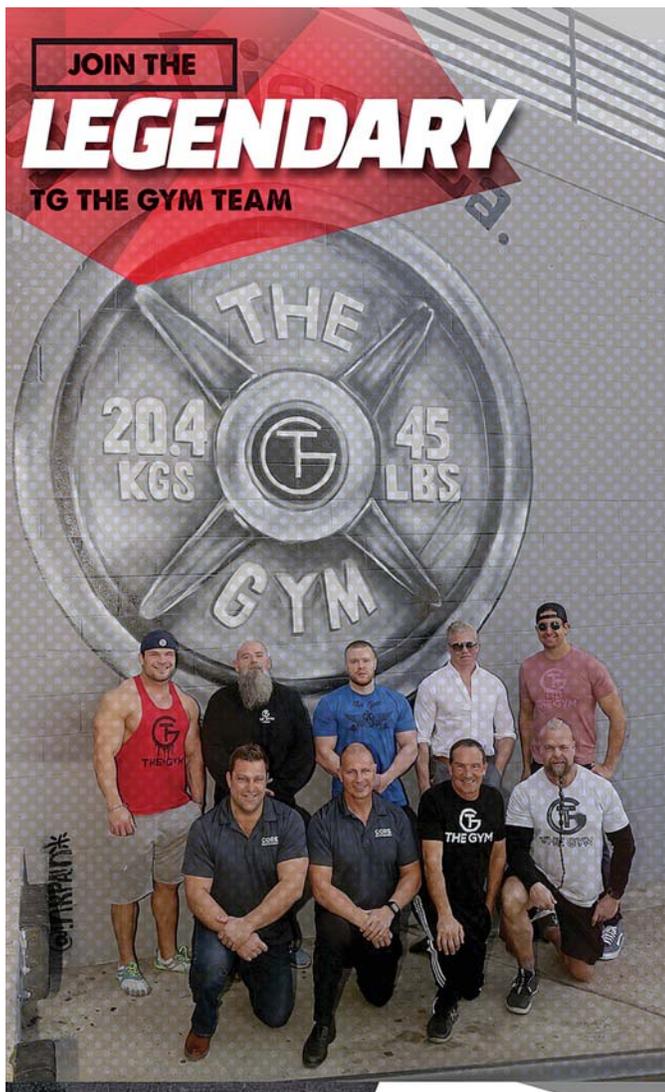
hope you will drop by our **Club Insider Booth #416** and that you will visit our **Club Insider Advertisers: ABC Financial at Booth #402** and **Sports & Fitness Insurance at Booth #401**. I look forward to seeing you there! See the **Club Industry Ad on Page #19**.

■ **Speaking of Conventions and Trade Shows, don't miss IHRSA's 39th Annual Convention and Trade Show**, to be held in gorgeous **San Diego, California, March 18 - 21, 2020**. And, if you're a vendor or equipment supplier, be sure to contact **TOM HUNT, IHRSA's Vice President**

of **Exhibit Sales to book your exhibit space at the world's most expansive and powerful trade show for the health and fitness club industry**. Trust me when I say that **YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!** Tom can be reached at **(800) 228-4772** or **(617) 951-0055 Ext.152** or by email at teh@ihrsa.org.

■ **It was GREAT to see our friend, KEVIN McHUGH, COO of The Atlantic Club**, on the **Cover of CBI Magazine's September, 2019 Edition!** Kevin McHugh is a **Renaissance Man** with a single defining purpose: *to help others!* The Atlantic Club

is a best-of-class, multi-facility and multi-dimensional business; the champion of several charitable organizations; and a staunch supporter of the health and fitness club industry. And, I would be goofing off were I to fail to mention that my friend, **PATRICIA LAUS, the Creator and Owner of the fabulous Atlantic Club in Manasquan, New Jersey** has done this world a huge favor with her **Atlantic Club**, because **Pat and Kevin** have given everybody else a very clear example of what **GREAT TRULY IS** in our industry! **Way to go, PAT and KEVIN!**
(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)



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"We would recommend Bill McBride/BMC3 to any organization that is looking at improving sales, customer service and team engagement."

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"His approach was thorough and the implementation plan resulted in a dramatic increase in performance including, membership, personal training, member experience (NPS of 58.4%), retention, operations and net income. The team responded well to Bill's collaborative leadership approach and delivered. The result was a ten-fold increase in net income. Under his leadership, we surpassed our budget and were extremely pleased with the results he and our club teams accomplished. I highly recommend Bill as a consultant and operator."

- Private Health Club Owner Client of Two Sites in the Midwest, U.S.

"I highly recommend Bill McBride/BMC3 on all challenges club operators face with their business. He relates well with the on-site team, ownership and is collaborative in delivering best practices. His expertise, authenticity, integrity and follow-through are beyond reproach. I trust him greatly."

- Private Health Club Owner Large Commercial Club in the Pacific Northwest, U.S.

...Norm's Notes

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■ Welcome back to *previous Club Insider Advertiser FIBO*, as they prepare for their 2019 United States show, to be held in **Miami, October 16 - 20**. This year, taking place **October 16 - 17**, the **American Health + Fitness Forum** has been added, assembling a inspiration faculty of global leaders who are pioneering marketing, sales and operational strategies that genuinely engage customers across the ever-evolving connected world. The American Health + Fitness Forum is included in the **\$295 FIBO**

USA All-Access Pass. You can view the full schedule, learn more about each session and its speaker, as well as **Register** by going to **fibousa2019.com/ClubInsider**. And, be sure to check out the **FIBO Ad on Page #23**.

■ **The 28th Annual Medical Fitness Association (MFA) International Conference** will be held at my friend **PETE BROWN's Athletic Business Conference** in **Orlando, Florida, November 13 - 15, 2019**.

■ **ERIC SCHREIMANN** has been named by the *Club Fitness Board of Directors*

as their new **CEO**. Schreimann has been serving as *Club Fitness Executive Vice President and CFO*. Eric has a background in commercial and retail banking, and he was hired in 2015 to start the **Club Fitness' Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP)**. Club Fitness was founded in 1983 with a single location in **Florissant, Missouri**, and it's **100% locally operated and employee-owned**. Club Fitness now owns and operates **24 locations**, including a new **Maplewood, Missouri facility**. Schreimann spearheaded Club Fitness' recent growth, including plans for new facilities in **Fenton, East Alton and O'Fallon, Illinois** that will open later this year. In his role as CEO, Schreimann *will retain his responsibilities as CFO* as well as overseeing the **Executive Leadership Team**. "Eric is committed to maintaining and preserving *Club Fitness Founder, JOHN CROCKER's* legacy, passion and vision for the company he founded over 35 years ago," said *Club Fitness Director of Marketing, MICHELLE MICHELETTI*. "We are fortunate to have strong leadership that enabled growth and expansion through financial profitability, member centric service and technology innovations. Eric has been instrumental in getting us to our current state, ready to take on the future and fired up for another strong year of growth and successful member services, including the launch of Personal Training." For more information about Club Fitness and their locations, visit **www.clubfitness.us**.

■ **NICK BOLLETTIERI**, *the famous tennis coach*, and the **Professional Tennis Registry** are excited to jointly release a new program called: **'Tennis in a Can'**. The program is ideal for high school tennis coaches and is available now, just in time for the high school tennis season! 'Tennis in a Can' is an 11-week online program developed specifically for high school coaches. It features week-by-week lesson plans, videos and templates for challenge matches, drills, court diagrams and much more. From try-outs to play-offs, 'Tennis in a Can' will give coaches everything they need to run and manage a successful high school season. The 'Tennis in a Can' program and all accompanying resources can easily be accessed from any device, including iPad and mobile, making it a perfect complement for on-court coaching. "High school and middle school sports' budgets are very limited, yet many coaches need coaching expertise for their

teams," explained Bollettieri. "PTR and I want to provide a complete tennis coaching curriculum for those who will be coaching a scholastic team. That's why we've made 'Tennis in a Can' very affordable for all schools and coaches. At **\$39.99**, 'Tennis in a Can' is a perfect program for the high school or middle school coach." This program will be an asset to every tennis coach and can be purchased at **www.ptrtennis.org** (\$39.99 PTR member price; or \$129 for non-members, includes PTR Scholastic Coach membership).

■ **JUSTIN** and I want to say **Thanks for reading Club Insider!**

■ **Club Insider** is a **Paid Subscription based Publication with a money back guarantee on all new subscriptions**. Are you a **Paid Subscriber?** If the words **PROMOTIONAL COPY** appear above your name and address on the cover of this month's edition, *you are not a Paid Subscriber*, and you are not enjoying the *full benefits of a Paid Subscription to Club Insider*, which includes **one year of new editions** (print and online) and **online access to all previous 26 years of Club Insider's 309 archived monthly editions**. So, *don't delay!* **Subscribe today for just \$89 for one year, \$149 for two years or \$10 a month** by going to **www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe**.

■ **God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who've served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. God bless America's Policemen and women and Firemen and women and keep them safe. God bless you, your family and your club(s). God Bless America! Laus Deo!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 43-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of Club Insider, now in its 26th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. In 2017, Cates was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. Cates can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)



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Plus, we knew we weren't reaching all the people we wanted to reach. We were only reaching just a sliver of the people, and so we were looking for more ways to help more people in East Texas as far as weight loss, fitness and health overall.

"...in the first month, we made over \$250,000 just with the 20/30 program!"

We had just gotten back from IHRSA. The week before that, Aaron was sitting in bankruptcy lawyer offices. It was very scary at the time. We didn't know what our future was going to be.

I was terrified. We didn't have the money to do this license, and then the home office wanted me to come and ask these people that didn't have any money, to drop this amount of money on a 30-day program, because

at the time I didn't know it was a long-term program. They wanted me to do this and I thought, "Who's going to work this stuff and we're going to run a boot camp and I have a son, and we have a marriage. I don't even understand. Where is your mind in all of this?"



Jennifer Stafford - 20/30 Fast Track Licensee

...now we have people that would have never stepped foot into a gym."

I had NO IDEA how simple it all really was going to be.

"Within the first year, we put over 1,500 people through the program..."

You actually get to DO the program before you introduce it to your club. So, I said, "If I lose 15 pounds, it would be a win. The first week I was down 13 pounds and super excited, pumped! and They said to me, "Oh, you've only got two pounds to go and you'll be at your goal." Of course, I'm competitive, so I thought, "Oh no, we'll see how far we can take this!" By the time I got to training, I was already down 20 pounds in two weeks!

"We produced 1.6 million the first year! It's just been phenomenal."

From that point, we got introduced the 20/30 program and in the first month, we made over \$250,000 just with the 20/30 program!

Our clientele now is completely different than the clientele we had before. We had people that were

interested in fitness, and now we have people that would have never stepped foot into a gym. They would not have even considered it. It was the last thing on their mind. They wanted to lose weight before they got into the gym.

Within the first year, we put over 1,500 people through the program, and it's just continued to progress. We produced 1.6 million the first year! It's just been phenomenal.

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...Ruth Stricker

continued from page 3

from our industry, per se, but from society in general. Ruth has been the recipient of many national honors, including the *IDEA Association for Fitness Professionals' Chris MacIntyre Award for Overcoming Obstacles, Setting High Standards, and Providing Inspiration Within the Fitness Industry*; the *International Spa Association's 2004 Humanitarian Award*; the *IHRSA Vanguard Award in recognition of Leadership and Contribution to the Health and Fitness industry*, and as I mentioned earlier, she has been named a *Healthy American Fitness Leader by The President's Council on Physical Fitness*.

Ruth received her most recent honor on **August 9, 2019** with the unveiling of a **Life Cast** of her hands by world-renowned sculptor, **Don F. Wiegand**. Her hands were cast in the fluid movement of Tai Chi, chosen to symbolize her life's work dedicated to balance (See **Cover**).

Don Wiegand commented, *"It is an honor to celebrate Ruth Stricker and the extensive impact she has brought to humanity through her many and varied lifelong contributions. Life casting is a 7,000-year-old process used to honor and memorialize Presidents, Popes, great leaders, as well as famous and unsung heroes throughout history. Unlike sculptures crafted to represent individuals, life casts are exact replicas of an individual's iconic features. The life-casting process is both an artistic as well as spiritual experience in which the person actually engages with the casting material and participates in the process that honors them."*

Ruth now has many years of owning and operating her fabulous creation, **The Marsh**, a 67,000 square-foot facility located in Minnetonka, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. The fabulous Marsh facility is now a 34+ year running institution. A truly intergenerational facility, the



average age of the members of The Marsh is 66. For individuals, The Marsh charges a \$200 Initiation Fee and Dues of \$97 per month, up from \$93 in 2008, when we did our first story about Ruth and The Marsh. For couples, the Initiation Fee is \$400 with Dues of \$145 per month. Household Membership charges are the Couple Dues plus \$50 per month per additional person. The Marsh currently has 2,126 members. Related to staffing, The Marsh has 46 full-time employees and 142 part-time employees for a total of 188 staff members. Remarkably, 47 of those 188 employees have 15 or more years at The Marsh and eight have over 30 years. In fact, the four staff members I interviewed back in 2008 are all still there!

Ruth Stricker's life story is truly a very special story to behold... a story that gives me great joy to be able to share with you because Ruth's life story is incomparable to any other life story I know of in our wonderful health and fitness club industry. Or, anywhere else, for that matter. I predict that, someday, a feature movie about the life of Ruth Stricker will be made. I, for one, will be in line to buy a ticket!

I invite you to read on, as I'm very



The Marsh Entrance

pleased to present the following in-depth interview with the one and only, the **ICON of The Marsh, Ruth Stricker**.

An Interview With Ruth Stricker The ICON of The Marsh

Club Insider (C.I.) - Ruth, I wanted to do this second Cover Story with you for a couple of reasons, and they are: (1) I wanted to congratulate you on your latest of many honors you've received during your life and career, which was the beautiful **Life Cast** produced by world-renowned sculptor **Don Wiegand** and unveiled to you at a ceremony on August 9, 2019 (See **Cover Photo**). (2) This rare second Cover Story will allow us to share more about the amazing life you've lived. I want to do that because in your first Cover Story, we focused primarily on The Marsh business, without enough focus on your extremely interesting and amazing life story. We will correct that in this writing. So, first, let me ask you to please tell us how you feel about receiving the honor of the Life Cast created by Don Wiegand.

Ruth Stricker (RS) - It was a great honor to be selected by Don Wiegand to receive this life cast. Having only met him the day the castings were made, it was very strange that I felt like I had known him for years. After learning about his values and mission, I realized how much we had in common. We revealed one of the original castings from its mold at a luncheon on March 12, before he took them back to his studio for mounting. It was almost embarrassing because at this wonderful gathering of many of our community leaders, I looked around and every one of those people

could have received the award. So, I turned it into a community celebration of how we need each other. I felt good about it, because rather than dwelling on me, I had the privilege of changing the focus to everyone in the room, including my staff, which made it very special. I am grateful and realize that anyone receiving an award is there only because they are surrounded by supportive and loving people.

C.I. - Ruth, how did Don Wiegand become aware of your story?

RS - It was actually through **Michael Tompkins**, a *wellness visionary and Executive Recruiter with Hutchinson Consulting*. We met through the International Spa Association and have known each other for nearly two decades now. Michael had started a program, which I eagerly supported, called **St.ART** in St. Louis, an art festival that harnesses the power of renowned street artists to celebrate diversity, bridge socio-economic and racial barriers, and unify the community. It was through this program that Michael met sculptor Don Wiegand and learned about me and my story. Michael was the emcee at both the Life Cast reveal on March 12 and the unveiling of the final mounted pieces on August 9.

C.I. - Ruth, please tell us about **"the resilience of the human spirit."**

RS - Norm, I mention it every time I talk. It's what I'm known for. We cannot accept that we can't do something. It comes from within. It's not even bouncing or springing back. It is reaching deep. A more formal description is that it's a motivating life force... coping with, recovering from and growing as a result of stress or adversity. An example is in the *Norm's Notes* of your August Issue, where you refer to yourself as a "Geezer" and want to start a conversation about the experience of aging. I've always said, **there** (See **Ruth Stricker Page 12**)



The Marsh (Rear View)





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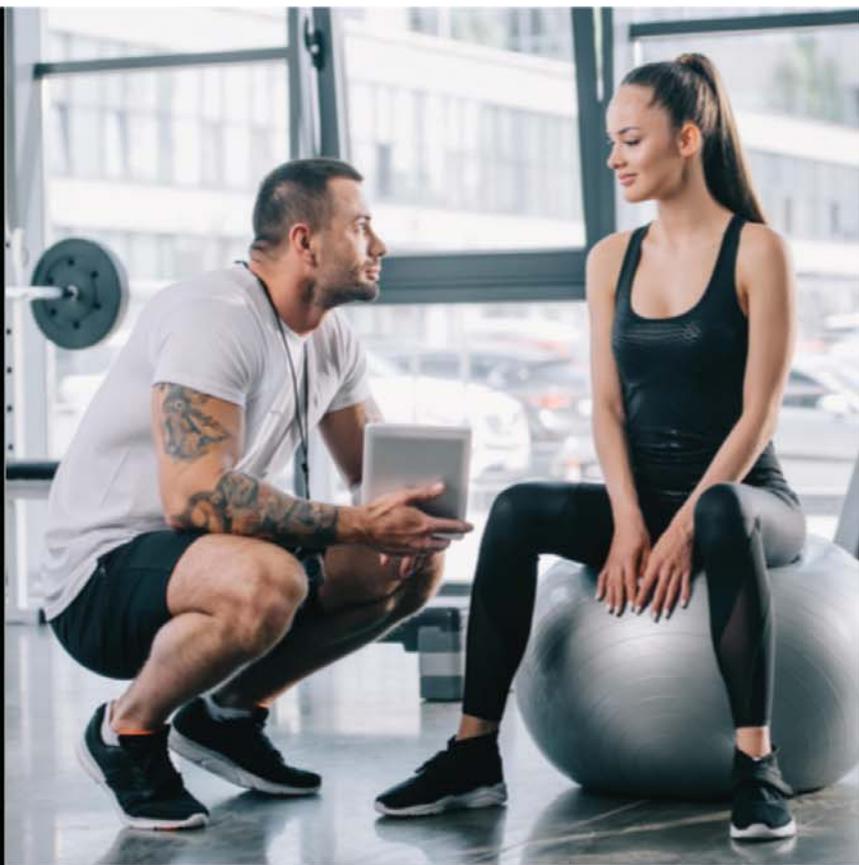
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...Ruth Stricker

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are two things in aging: (1) **Our Health** and (2) **Our Attitude**. And, we can do something about both of them. *The human spirit IS resilient; IF we tap into it, it carries us through life.*

C.I. - Ruth, the amazing thing I've observed is that as I've gotten older, I've learned more and more about the *attitude* part you mentioned here. Those who have the mindset that **they will NEVER GIVE UP are the ones who emerge**. And, it seems to me **you've had that attitude all of your life!**

RS - It IS attitude, Norm. **Bruce Dayton, my husband who died at age 97 just three years ago said it all the time. He said, 'Attitude is 99%'**

C.I. - **WOW!** That's an amazing run Bruce had on this earth! **May Bruce Rest In Peace!** My Dad made it to 92, and I pray that I can be blessed to get anywhere near that!

RS - Norm, you just keep on reaching out and believing the way you do.

C.I. - I think I'm going to keep on doing that because one of the greatest joys of doing what I do with **Club Insider** is having the

opportunity to communicate with and get to know people like you, Ruth. But, in your case, people like you is a **very singular thing! That's because there is no one like you anywhere that I have found!**

RS - Norm, you are much too generous in your remarks about me. Just think of your mission. What you're doing. You're reaching out every day. I can read between the lines, and it is very obvious... **Your Values and Your Faith.** That comes across, so you're doing a wonderful job. **You're an inspiration for all of us!**

The Beginning

C.I. - Thank you very much, Ruth. So, in the very beginning, how did you go about conceptualizing and where did you get your vision for *The Marsh*?

RS - Right out of college, I directed a YWCA Camp working with physically- and mentally-challenged people at a very young age. I was also the *Health Education Director* at a YWCA in Chicago. During two sabbaticals at Dartmouth and University of Massachusetts, I had the opportunity to work with **Bonnie Prudden** in her *Mind/Body Institute*. I moved back to Minneapolis in the mid-1960s, teaching classes to diverse groups of people. My classes were a little bit of Yoga, a little bit of Tai Chi, etc. But, I talked about life all

the way through the class. After class, we would all go in a lounge and sit down to talk some more. *From this, I realized that, when we move physically, it opens up our heart and soul.* From that realization came my mission. That's when **Bruce Dayton** first heard me speak on the mind-body connection, and Bruce said to me, **'I don't care about fitness, but I would like to provide a platform for your philosophy.'** So, we started looking around for a place to do this. As it turned out, right across the street, there was a whole row of buildings, and behind them was this lovely expanse of marshland (See **Photo on This Page**).

That's how it all started. We had the opportunity to travel to Asia and Europe to see what was happening there. Many of those traits are now in our buildings. We figured out that the Europeans knew what fitness was because they did it just walking to the meat market and schools. It was just part of their lifestyle. So, we had a pretty good idea of what to do. I had actually drawn the original plan for *The Marsh* on the back of an envelope!

C.I. - Ruth, do you still have that envelope?

RS - You know what? I DO, Haha! (By now we are both laughing about how we save things!) But, Norm, that's how we got started. And, the other thing about it, of course, is that I didn't have a dime! But, Bruce Dayton did. Before his death, he had given to many causes. He had been heard to say that of all the things he had given his money to, **'The Marsh was the greatest!'** So, Bruce was there, fully engaged, and we had a wonderful architect and a great contractor who believed in the vision. We had to do a lot of work with city hall, and that's a story in and of itself! The *journey* was more fun than *maintaining it*. The city said, **'You can't sell wine and beer in the same building where you have massage,'** and **'Well, now, you'll have to cut off the bottom of every door so there's no hanky panky in there!'**

C.I. - Ruth, I know we covered this in your first Cover Story, but I want to hit it again here. When you were just getting started, how long did it take you to complete the planning process, and how long did it take to build *The Marsh*?

RS - About a year and a half. We started in a temporary building in a little red house. We doubled the size later, and we are at about 67,000 square feet now. It is much like a village. It's all built with a view of the 65 acres of marshland behind the multiple buildings, thus our name: *The Marsh*. Dr. Andrew Weil has described **The Marsh as a "center of the future... a combination of spa, hospital and health club."**

C.I. - The Marsh is a remarkable place. Within five miles of *The Marsh*, there are 21 major competing facilities Life Time Fitness, LA Fitness, Planet Fitness, YMCA's, Anytime Fitness and Snap Fitness clubs, and on top of that, there are more boutique fitness facilities than you can count! How does *The Marsh* fit into this?

RS - I must point out that there is room for all of these fine clubs in the Twin Cities. We at *The Marsh* are no better than others and do not see them as competition. We are not a fit for everyone, but for those who are looking for a holistic philosophy and 'a liberal arts approach to health,' my best description of who we are is a little something I wrote titled **"The Marsh is..."** (See **Poem on This Page**)

34 Years Later

C.I. - Congratulations, Ruth! You now have 34 years of operation behind you and your Team at *The Marsh*. What was the single most difficult time for you and your Team that you can remember at *The Marsh*?

RS - It was dealing with City Hall and the Planning Commission, especially the complexity of being the first business in the city of Minnetonka to apply for multiple (See **Ruth Stricker Page 16**)

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Ruth Stricker

Ruth Stricker
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Deck View of the The Marshland

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...Ruth Stricker

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licenses including massage, restaurant, beer and wine and overnight guest rooms.

C.I. - In contrast to dealing with City Hall, Ruth, what was the most exciting and joyous time for you and your Team at The Marsh?

RS - Well, it *still* is. It is seeing the people experience The Marsh and finding out that they belong here. We have a wide front door and welcome all. It's just always **SO REWARDING**, especially when people describe The Marsh as their "second home."

C.I. - It's really the **BIG PICTURE** you're talking about, isn't it, Ruth?

RS - Yes, it is. People tell me that The Marsh has *changed their life*.

C.I. - Well, Ruth, to me, the greatest part of your answer is that, whenever the time comes that the good Lord takes you, you're going to leave a **GIANT FOOTPRINT on this Earth!**

RS - Norm, I've been mentoring like mad. And, I think about my mentors, people who stretched me early in my life and helped me along the way. Among my mentors are **John McCarthy, Kofi Annan, Bonnie Prudden and Chungliang Ai Huang**. In fact, there's no way I can pay them back for all they've done for me.

C.I. - Please tell us about your sponsorship of the three-year research project on mindful exercise. And, in particular, please share with us how in August, 1992, you announced the findings, which indicated that combining exercise with a cognitive strategy is superior to exercise alone in terms of promoting psychological benefits.

RS - Oh, yes, that's a good story of IHRSA (then IRSA) and going to a breakfast meeting there. Someone stood up to announce that

the theme for that was '**Commit to Get Fit.**' At that point, I stood up and said, "I believe the only people who're going to do that are the people who're already fit!" After that convention, I happened to ride home on the airplane with **Dr. Jim Rippe**, and I explained my thoughts to him on what had been discussed. Later on, I even went to Boston to see him. They couldn't believe it. They said, 'You're not selling designer water or designer shoes?' I said, 'No, this is what I would like to prove: If you are in your favorite jacket, with your favorite friends, walking in your favorite woods, it is so much more psychologically effective for your health than if you're in a sterile lab on a treadmill gritting your teeth, saying '*This must be good for me!*' And, we proved it!

I sponsored the research project in collaboration with **Jim Rippe, M.D.** from the *University of Massachusetts Medical School*, **Herbert Benson, M.D.** from *The Mind/Body Institute at Harvard Medical School*, **T. George Harris** from *Psychology Today* and *American Health* magazines, and The Marsh. This project was the largest of its type ever undertaken to explore mind-body interactions associated with exercise. We presented the findings at the national conferences of the *American College of Sports Medicine*, the *American Psychological Association* and the *International Spa Association*. In addition, we found anecdotal evidence which showed that people's anticipation of coming to The Marsh elevated their mood even before exercising!

A Worldwide Message

C.I. - Ruth, please tell us about your work in the former Soviet Union and in China. I know those two subjects alone are huge and probably worthy of a book all by themselves, but please do go ahead and touch on some of the things you did to help train the young Russian physicians, whom upon their return to Russia, described their



Ruth Stricker Practicing Rooftop Tai Chi

work with you at The Marsh as getting "**happiness lessons.**"

RS - I had a meeting in Minneapolis with two Russian doctors. Diabetes was rampant in their country, and they had never heard of exercise being helpful with fighting it. After this meeting, Bruce and I were asked to go to Russia and were given the '*royal treatment.*' This was just before the end of the Soviet Union when they began referring to the country as Russia. We traveled extensively in Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad with professional exchanges in each city. I was also asked by the *Ministry of Health* to advise and teach on chronic health conditions and assisted in establishing a wellness center in the Crimea peninsula for patients with chronic conditions. Before we even got home, the doctors had written to me telling me they would like to send a number of young doctors to the United States. So, we hosted them at The Marsh. They picked up on the things we were teaching to help

people take care of themselves. But, they made a comment that really sticks with me and that was, '**You know what this is? It's 'Happiness Lessons!'**' This was not long after the disaster at Chernobyl, so naturally, they were very attentive.

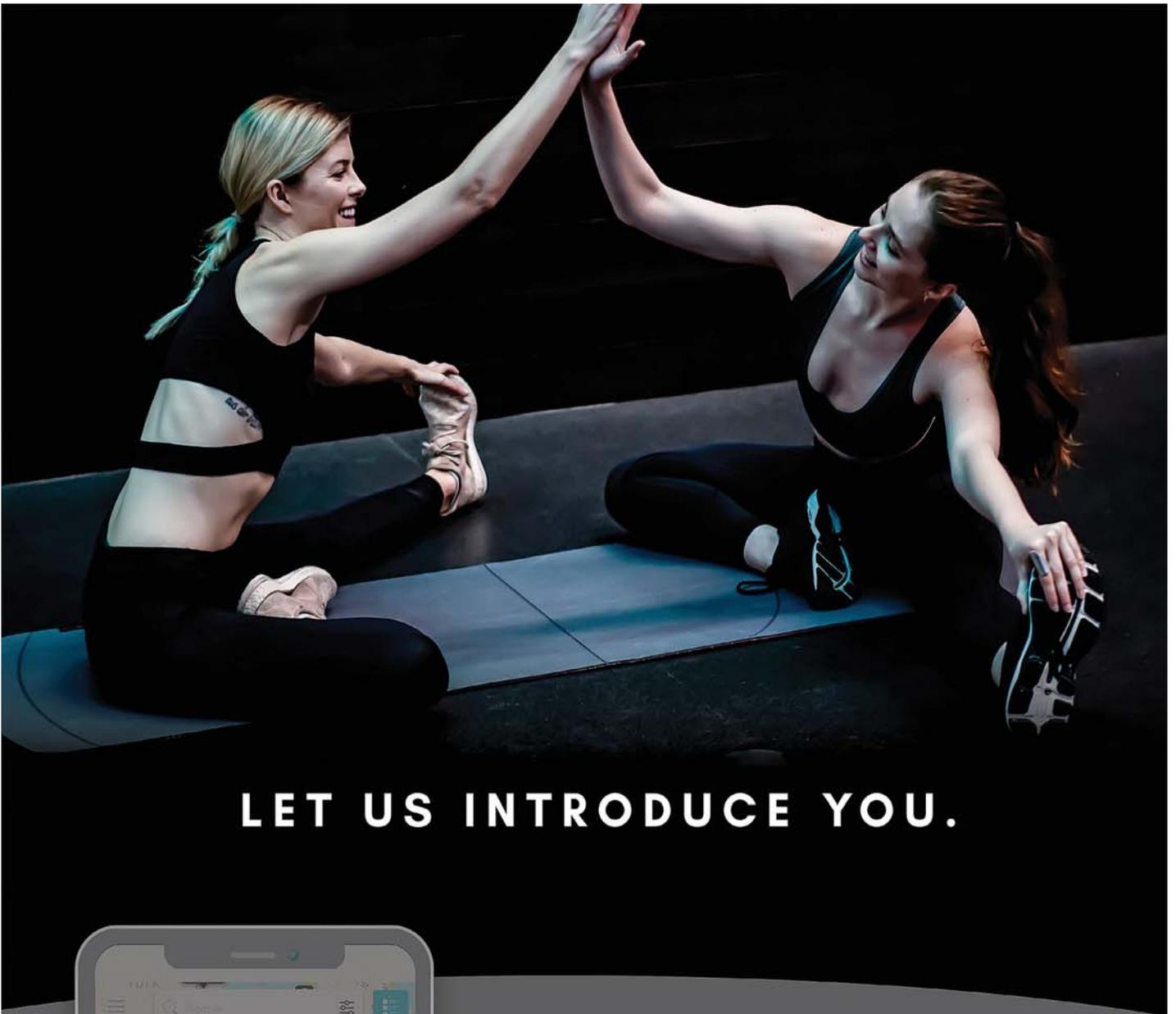
C.I. - Ruth, please also touch on you and your late husband, **Bruce Dayton's** more than a dozen trips to The People's Republic of China.

RS - When Bruce and I married, he wanted to go to Paris where he was recognized and well regarded as an art collector. I was less interested in Paris and thought it would be stuffy. I wanted to explore the world beyond Paris and convinced him to go to China with me and a group of women. By the time of our second trip, we had friends in China whom we continued to visit during ten more trips. We funded a three-year research project at the *Beijing Institute of Technology* to study Qigong as it relates to general health, and specifically, recovery for cancer patients. On another trip, I traveled to Shanghai with 18 health professionals to study the healing aspects of Chinese medicine and exercise. Bruce and I also provided financial support to the *Shanghai Art Museum*, and informally adopted a young Chinese man who we supported through college and graduate school. He is very talented, and we have some of his art on display at The Marsh. As you can see, China has played an important role in our lives.

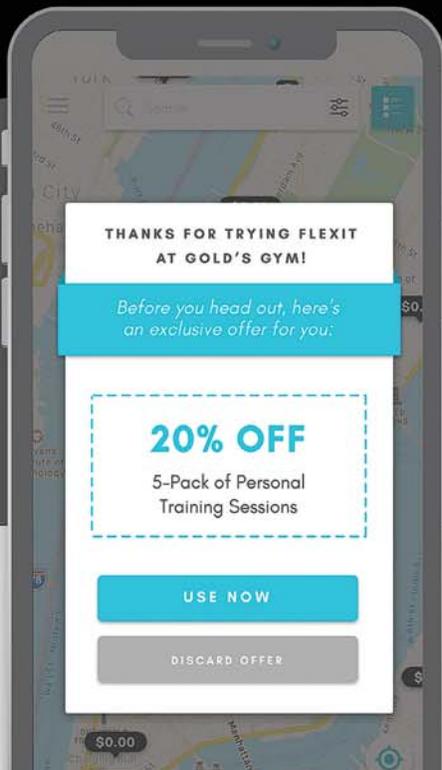
C.I. - Your history of leadership and contribution is quite diverse and global. As one example, please touch on your
(See **Ruth Stricker** Page 18)



Key Marsh Staff Members (L to R) - Meg Young, Liz Anema, Molly Wheatley, Evan Strewler, Cece Jacox, Colleen Hagerman, Tom Dalum, Heidi Moon, Tim Mortenson, Carol Pehle, Stephanie Olson and Frank Chase



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...Ruth Stricker

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experience and support of **Architects for Peace through Relationships and Knowledge (ARK)**, an international youth group that aspires to achieve global peace.

RS - This is their **50th Anniversary!** It's a group of young people from around the world, led by a woman in Minneapolis. They meet every year to seek freedom from the threat of war, equity and justice for all. They were supposed to expand their work into Armenia this year. I supported their trip, but at the last minute, things got very dangerous over there. So, they all met here in St. Paul for ten days. They're just wonderful, and I am happy to help them.

C.I. - Please tell us about your work to help advance the role of integrative medicine with *Duke University* and the *Mayo Clinic*.

RS - I did a lot of speaking at both Duke University and the Mayo Clinic. Duke flew six doctors out here in a private plane for two days to study The Marsh. I was also among the *Founders of the Center for Spirituality and Healing at the University of Minnesota* and sponsored a mind-body lecture series there for 27 years. However, I've been spending more of my time recently working with the **International**

Spa Association (ISPA). During the course of my early leadership at ISPA, I introduced the Board of Directors to **Dr. Brent Bauer** from the Mayo Clinic, who is now their Medical Director. ISPA is a wonderful organization.

Additional Awards and Recognition

C.I. - In 2018, you were honored with the *Board of Trustees Award for Meritorious and Distinguished Service* at your alma mater, **Macalester College**, in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the **Ruth Stricker Dayton Student Center** was named in honor of your lifetime achievement. Please tell us about that special honor.

RS - Well, I was a Trustee there for 40 years. And, I was Vice-Chairman of the Board for three years. I was always very active on campus. Every five years, they give this *Meritorious and Distinguished Service honor* to someone. My role has always been to keep everyone *wrinkled up!* They would talk about programs and money, and I would ask, "Where is the soul? Where is the soul of the institution?" So, I was known for that! I had served on the Board for several years with my good friend, **Kofi Annan**, and helped welcome him when Macalester renamed the *Global Institute for Citizenship* to the *Kofi Annan*

Institute for Global Citizenship. He passed away about a week after this ceremony.

C.I. - Ruth, I think it is SO cool to have read in your bio that you are an *Honorary Board Member* and "*Luminary*" of the *International Spa Association Foundation*. **Michael Tompkins** has also referred to you as "*the conscience of the spa industry,*" "*the Founder of 'the center of the future'*" and "*the creator of Mind-Body.*" Plus, I will note here that you are an inductee of the *Washington Spa Alliance Inaugural Hall of Fame*, honoring visionaries and contributors to the spa industry. And, it seems that, for your entire life, you've pursued a fabulous life of **giving, giving, giving!** For example, please tell us about how you and your husband Bruce have offered support to promote mental health, addiction services, the establishment of a neurological care center, heart research, women's heart health, vascular programs and internship programs. Additionally, you and Bruce were among the *Bravewell Collaborative*, a community of leading philanthropists. Please help us understand how you have **done it ALL, Ruth.**

RS - Well, I'll tell you how I operate. Is that a good word for it? It's more in my later years, I would say from age 60 on, that I've come to understand that, if you know something, you must share it... you must say something. And, I have enough life experience to speak my piece... I don't do it in an abrupt, argumentative kind of way, but I do speak out now. The other thing I do is what I call mental rehearsal; you can call it prayer, or you can call it meditation. I call it mental rehearsal... Every night, I go over the next day so there are no surprises. It's like: Oh, now it is time for that! What is that? Intuition? Belief? I really operate on that, Norm.

C.I. - You appear to have an instinct for it that drives you, Ruth! *You really do... in your SOUL! It's incredible. I have said this before, and I will say it again... The Lord works in mysterious ways! I can tell you this. After knowing you all these years, going way back, 35 years or so, and after this update with you for this second cover story during the last few days, I'm fully and totally convinced that you, Ruth Stricker, are Divinely Guided! Ruth, I have friends here whom I try to explain to them my thinking about God and this Earth. And, Ruth, my thinking is that we were ALL put here for a REASON. And, IF you have a feeling in your heart and mind that your reason for being on this Earth is to HELP people, then you are OBLIGATED TO HELP PEOPLE! That's what drives me with Club Insider because I believe in my heart that the 10,000 copies of Club Insider that we mail all over America and around the world every month is helping people help people everywhere... by helping club owners and operators get better at what they do! That's my true passion, and I don't know how to explain my existence on this Earth any better than that. I don't know how to explain my passion, except to say that it BURNS in my SOUL, Ruth!*

RS - Of course, Norm, that's WHY you're

here! You don't play around with it. You put it out there! I have a feeling that I know you quite well, even though we don't spend a lot of time together.

C.I. - Ruth, I don't want anybody in our industry to miss out on what we are doing. It is important to me that you and your Team, and our readers, realize that this cover story with you, in my opinion, is going to turn out to be a treasure, not just for the health and fitness club industry, it's going to be a *treasure for the world because I'm learning things from you in this conversation that we can share with people that they can then share with their members everywhere.* **RS** - Norm, I agree, and that's why I didn't have any hesitation when you contacted me to arrange to do this second cover story. *We all have legacies, and it's so important to get them out there.* We just must. There are people who are listening, and I think this will have an impact. We both have the same mission! We're on the same path.

C.I. - Ruth, here we are at the end of another wonderful conversation, and to close this interview, I want to ask you to make any closing comments you might wish to make. **RS** - I have had this huge opportunity to do what I have done with my life. Many people have good ideas who are never able to realize them. I was able to make The Marsh a model for other places. It wasn't even for the local people; it was a model in which I have taken responsibility for that opportunity. I have always thought of myself as a "**Worker Bee,**" and I've never used the fact that I'm the owner of The Marsh as an advantage. I had an amazing opportunity to create The Marsh, and I wanted to share it as a model.

C.I. - I think we will make sure that happens. And, let me close by saying this to you: **Ruth, congratulations on your truly outstanding life and career!** And, thank you for letting me chronicle your career in Club Insider. You should always know that our world is far better off because of you. And, I, for one, want to Thank You! **RS** - Thank you, Norm, for this opportunity.

■ ■ ■

Thank you to **Ruth Stricker** for everything she has contributed to the human race through her service to our great industry and the mind-body connection. Thanks also to **Heidi Moon** and **Molly Wheatley** for their assistance throughout the cover story production process. And, of course, thank you all for reading!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 43-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of **Club Insider**, now in its 26th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its **DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award**, one of its highest honors. In 2017, Cates was honored with *Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award*. Cates can be reached by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com.**)



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Balance Bylines
By Ruth Stricker

After an unruly Spring we are feeling an urgency to recapture lost time for all things summer. Marathoners are making up for lost training time; the bikers and paddle boarders are in full force; gardeners have their tomatoes and flowers in; barbecues and potato salad returns; the walleyes are biting; golfers are teeing up; cabins and "up north" adventures take on new energy and appeal... and our Minnesota Twins are having a good season!

"Living above the chaos..."

Some of you tell us of your success in achieving fitness goals in order to compete as an athlete, or to recover from an injury or live with a chronic health condition. Some of you tell us that The Marsh is a life-changing environment and that you come for support and encouragement... a place to share anxieties and fears as well as celebrations... a place to sustain our body, mind and spirit as our world unravels.

As our world unravels... we are keenly aware of what is ahead for us... disturbing political chatter, deep chasms of anger, dissension, stresses that permeate our daily lives. There is no doubt that the psychic energy we expend on the trauma and dark media messages takes its toll on our bodies, behavior and our attempt to live normal, everyday lives. Perhaps this is where our wellness lifestyle comes in, beyond medically oriented prevention and health education... choosing to live above the chaos by looking for opportunities rather than threats, embracing the power of kindness and decency. The well person celebrates good health, the search for meaning and purpose, humor, adventure and all that is in our power for becoming the best kind of person that our potentials, faiths, circumstances and fate will allow.

Yes, Mr. Collins, I think it would matter if The Marsh disappeared. Sharing and learning together enriches our purposeful lives. We all celebrate a belonging place where we together can practice life lessons and enjoy summer!



The Marsh Monthly Newsletter - July/August 2019



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How Trainers Can Get Better With Referrals

By: **Michael Gelfgot**

All studios and gyms know that referrals, word-of-mouth advertising, is the way to go. In fact, according to the *Association of Fitness Studios (AFS)*, up to 70% of studio business comes from referrals. All studios and gyms also realize that, in order for there to be a referral, bottom line, clients **MUST** be moving in the right direction; they **MUST** be seeing results. And, in order for there to be results, any great coach knows that they must set goals with each client then review, interpret and put forth a new plan every eight weeks if the client is not on track.

It's the interpretation and the plan that most coaches are not so good at. Almost all coaches take initial measurements and do some baseline evaluations of movement and performance. Very few coaches, when redoing the evaluations, know how to tactfully have a conversation with their client in such a way to have them realize and verbalize that the reason why there was no weight loss is because the client didn't follow through with their nutritional obligations agreed upon eight weeks

earlier (or whenever the client had their first fitness evaluation).

So, next time there is a fitness evaluation and the client didn't progress like he was supposed to, try using *The Feedback Model* to have the right conversation:

Step 1 | Ask permission to speak freely - Before you have a difficult conversation with your clients, ask permission to speak freely, candidly, about the situation at hand. Make sure your client first hears about your intentions. Make sure the client knows and is reminded where your hearts lies, meaning, tell the client how much he truly means to you and how much you genuinely care for them as a person before you drop the hammer. In order for relationships to form, there must be trust; there must be a certain level of vulnerability which is how one individual forms a trusting relationship with another. In order for anyone to be vulnerable with you, he **MUST** know your intentions, and he **MUST** understand your heart.

Step 2 | State the problem very clearly and project the problem out over the

next six months - Only after Step 1, once you get permission to speak freely, can you be specific, stating the problem very clearly. Be very direct and very specific. It's important to project this no more than six months because most people have a hard time grasping more than that. Most people are more motivated to avoid pain than to be in pleasure. Pain is a very effective way to help people change behavior. Here are a few examples:

■ Mr. Jones, you have gained five pounds of body fat since our last evaluation. I feel that, if you keep going in this direction, you will get discouraged, frustrated, and worst of all, think, "Here we go again, I tried that fitness thing again, except this time with a coach, and it didn't work for me."

■ Mr. Jones, over the past three fitness evaluations, you have stayed the same knowing that your goal is to lose 35 pounds by the end of the year. I feel that, if you keep going in this direction, you will get discouraged, frustrated, and worst of all, think, "Here we go again, I tried that fitness thing again, except this time with a coach,



Michael Gelfgot

and it didn't work for me."

■ Mr. Jones, you have missed eight out of 24 workouts in the past eight weeks. I feel that, if you keep going in this direction, you will get discouraged, frustrated, and worst of all, think, "Here we go again, I tried that fitness thing again, except this time with a coach, and it didn't work for me."

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...Michael Gelfgot

continued from page 20

coach, and it didn't work for me."

Step 3 | Ask the client for feedback. Identify the problem that prevented the client from progressing like he was supposed to. The client MUST take personal accountability - Ultimately, it doesn't matter what you think. What's more important than what you think is what your client thinks. Does the client have the same evaluation of the problem as you do? Does he agree with you that there is a problem, or is he blaming other people, events and circumstances for the lack of progress? This is a critical step in the dialogue. The client MUST take ownership of the situation, and you as the coach must be curious, empathetic a great active listener. Applying an *OARS principle* (*Open Questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening and Summary Reflections*) from a book entitled, *Motivational Interviewing*, could be the lynchpin that will keep a client for a long time or the client not showing up for your next session.

Step 4 | Brainstorm 3 - 4 solutions to the problem that was discovered in Step 3 - Sometimes, when our clients are faced with a ton of day-to-day stress, they become

extremely unresourceful in solving their own problems. What's critical here is that you don't tell your client what the solution to his problem is. But, you question the answer from your client. Here are a few examples:

Don't Say: Mr. Jones, the reason you gained weight is because you've been eating at McDonalds four times per week, so you need to stop eating at McDonalds.

Do Say: Mr. Jones, I am curious, what do you think you can do to make sure you don't visit McDonalds four times per week?

Don't Say: Mr. Jones, you just need to get in here right after work before you go home; that way, you and I can work out an additional one time per week.

Do Say: Mr. Jones, what do you think might need to happen to your schedule for you to get in here one more time per week?

When appropriate, make sure to always suggest if seeing you an additional 1 to 2 times per week would help to keep the client motivated. You are not asking them to pay you more money. You are merely suggesting a solution that might work to get the client headed in the right direction. Make sure you don't leave this step until you have at least four solutions to

the problem that was identified in Step 3.

Step 5 | Have a client pick one or two solutions he will execute on - Once you have at least 3 - 4 solutions discussed, having the client pick the course of action he thinks is most suitable is the best way to keep the client in charge of his own destiny. Your guidance and leadership throughout the entire conversation is vital.

Step 6 | Set up a time in four weeks to review the plan - Once the client picks the plan, set up a time to review this plan halfway between your fitness evaluations. If the plan is working, congratulate the client. If the plan is not working, go back through the steps and set up a different plan of action. Always make sure to put extra face time with you as one of the proposed solutions. At some point, the only obvious solution will be to work with you

more frequently. The best part about that decision is that the client came up with that decision all on his own.

■ ■ ■

In the end, if you are not getting referrals with your personal training clients, it's a safe bet to assume that your trainers are either not asking for them or are all simply not coaching your clients through the challenges that stand in the way. Using *The Feedback Model* is a great start in getting more referrals from your personal training clients.

(Michael Gelfgot is a veteran Anytime Fitness franchisee who contributes his experiences to help Club Insider readers advance the state of the art of their club businesses. Michael can be reached at mike.gelfgot@icloud.com.)

Make It Fun

Positive Power

By: **Karen Woodard-Chavez**

As you read the title of this article, you might be doing a bit of eye rolling and thinking to yourself, "Oh no, here come some tired platitudes of 'fake it 'til you make it,' 'plaster on a veneer smile,' or even, my favorite, 'pooping rainbows.' That is not what this article is about. Instead, you will get some simple tools to polish up the

positive in your organization.

Think about this. There is a lot of discouraging activity happening in the world right now. But, there are a lot of positive things happening in the world, as well. However, what we are bombarded with on a minute-by-minute basis is the negativity. If you think that does not take a toll on you, your staff and your loved ones, that is simply naïve or perhaps denial. Many of

you in your organizations are going through mergers, acquisitions, cost cuts, job cuts, etc. All of these actions add up and can have a distracting and negative impact on you and the staff. Thus, we all need to take time to "**Polish the Positive**" on a regular basis to combat the negativity.

Think, again, about the following: How are you feeling right now, positive or negative? What does that feel like? Take a minute and articulate how you are feeling, either positive or negative, to yourself. Next question, are you at your best when you are positive or when you are negative? Most people answer that they are at their best when they are positive. To prove that point, why do so many high performing athletes psych themselves up with positive energy before their event and eliminate any negative energy from their focus? Because it works! We are at our best when we are feeling positive.

To that point, who do you like to be around the most, positive people or negative people? That is not a trick question. I ask some obvious questions, because with so many organizations that I consult and train with, I witness that they tolerate negativity. We will address that in a moment.

When I am doing a training on eliminating negativity with my clients, I start with an interesting experiment. I ask them to respond to a series of photos aloud with whatever emotion the photo elicits. The initial photos are very joyful happy photos, and everyone is engaged with shouting out their emotions, smiles on their faces and connecting with each other. We then progress to more indifferent, angry, negative photos of people. The response is dramatically different. Participants are withdrawn, not smiling, not even offering their observed emotions. The experiment shows what the power of negativity does to us versus the power of positivity. With photos of positive people, we are engaged not only with the photo but with each other because we like sharing positive things. The photos of the indifferent, angry and negative people make us withdraw; we become quiet and disconnected. It is such a perfect activity/experiment to make the point of how both positive and negative energy impact us that I encourage you to try this with your team as well.

The next two questions that should be posed are: (1) Do you have negative people in your organization? And (2) What do you do about those people? The answers usually are: (1) Yes. And (2) "Nothing," "look the other way," "avoid them," "sometimes they are people in authority so there's nothing we can do." **These are not the most desirable answers.** Blinding flash of the obvious, eh? This is a real problem. The statement



Karen Woodard-Chavez

that most illustrates this is: "One person does not make a team BUT one person can break a team." A few negative people or even one negative person can chase customers, members, and your good staff away. Yet, we do not do anything about it?

If you have negativity in your workplace and want it to be a more positive environment, consider the following five tools:

Communicate to Connect - Too often, we go into survival mode in our businesses because we are wayyy too busy. Perhaps, we are under-staffed, we are trying to meet goals, trying to meet deadlines, etc. When we are in survival mode, we tend to communicate in the bare minimum mode, such as emailing or group meetings. And, when we do meet eye-ball to eye-ball, we communicate the outcomes we want to achieve, forget to have discussion to ensure everyone is clear on what has just been communicated, and we forget to truly connect with the people we are communicating with. When we fail to connect with our people, we do not build commitment to what we want them to do. What will be more effective is to slow things down a bit, and before you communicate what needs to be achieved, spend a bit of time exploring how the person you are speaking with is doing, what is going on in their world, where their head is today, and what they might be struggling with and need help with. When you do this, you create a sense of connection, and connection creates commitment. When you do this, you increase the success of what you want to have achieved. Communicate to connect rather than spewing objectives.

Leave the People or the Place You Work With or In Better Than You Found It - We all have those days when the day didn't go as expected. We did not get anything done, and perhaps, our workspace looks like a bomb went off. If we leave it that way for
(See **Karen Woodard-Chavez** Page 23)

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...Karen Woodard-Chavez

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the next folks coming in, it creates a burden for them to be their best, because they are cleaning up a mess made by someone else, and they also have to provide service or create sales, etc. To create positivity, when your day has gone nothing like you planned, take a few moments before you leave to make sure the next staff coming in has everything they need to be successful. Regarding the concept of leaving people in a better state than you found them, consider the concept of meeting as strangers and leaving as friends. How can you learn more about someone today that allows you to make work easier for them or serve them in a more focused way? What can you do that makes them feel that working with or being served by you is the best part of their day?

Be a Problem Solver Not a Problem Creator - Every organization has issues that need to be fixed, and often times, staff will bring the issues to the attention of their supervisor. However, how much more effective would it be if, when someone brought a problem to the surface, they also brought a solution to the table? If that were the case, you would have a staff of problem solvers. Doesn't that feel

much more positive? Create a program in your organization that no one can bring a problem without a solution, and if you implement the solution, there is recognition, celebration, and perhaps, reward.

Eliminate Emotional Vampires - Most organizations have their *Emotional Vampires*. That behavior cannot continue to exist. The behavior has to go, and if the behavior does not change, then the Vampire must go. A simple way to eliminate the behavior is to have an agreement with all staff that negative, gossipy, whiny, etc. behavior is not acceptable. When the Vampire is negative, gossipy, whiny, etc., then the person who is on the other end of it has to say, "Pat, I am sorry, it sounds like you have an issue with your supervisor. I encourage you to go and speak with him about your concerns. Please do not pull me into this," and then, walk away. When all other staff commit to doing this, it will shut down the Vampire behavior. When no one will listen, then the Vampire stops the behavior. That should take care of it. If it does not, then the Vampire is being destructive and needs to be disciplined. If that does not eliminate the behavior, then the Vampire needs to seek his success elsewhere.

Pursue Excellence - If each one of us makes a commitment to pursue excellence, personally and professionally, then that creates a very stimulating and positive environment where people feel supported in their pursuit. Consider defining what excellence looks like for every position and job in your organization. I know that sounds obvious, but to many, it is not clear. Also, consider understanding how the pursuit of excellence is defined by each staff person in their personal lives. Encouragement is a key part of the pursuit of excellence.

Now that you have five tools that can be used to increase positivity, I encourage you to do the following small group exercise to evaluate how your organization currently stands.

Small Group Evaluation Exercise:

1. Appoint a scribe and a spokesperson.
2. Rate on a scale of 1 - 10 how you, as a TEAM, do consistently with the behaviors to increase positivity.
3. If anything is less than a 10, why?
4. Please list two things you can agree to doing consistently to getting that behavior

to a 10.

5. No sideling; everyone in the group has valuable thoughts and insights.

6. Report back to the group as a whole.

In closing, consider the analogy of a magnet. The positive energy of a magnet (positive people) naturally attracts people and holds them in its force field. The negative power of a magnet repels people. It is a deliberate, intentional decision to NOT allow negativity to impact you, personally or professionally, and it requires regular check-ups. As Zig Ziglar used to say, "You might need a check-up from the neck up." When you make the decision to not allow negativity in your organization and only allow positivity, your organization will become a magnet that attracts the best staff and more customers or members.

(Karen is President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado and Ixtapa, Mexico. She has owned and operated clubs since 1985 and now consults with and trains club staff throughout the world. She provides her services on-site, online, by phone and through her books, CDs, DVDs and manuals. She can be contacted at 303-417-0653 or karen@karenwoodard.com.)

The Sales Professional's Checklist

By: **Casey Conrad**

If you are in fitness sales, you probably have had a friend or family member ask you, "When are you going to go get a 'real' job?" Thirty-three years ago, my father asked me the same question after I left the international business job that reflected my degree but I was miserable doing. For years, I would get the same question at family

holidays. Although the health and fitness club industry was much less of a "profession" back then, the question and the insinuation that selling club memberships wasn't a "real" job really angered me. Ironically, I was putting in more hours as a fitness salesperson than I was as an International Trade Specialist!

Three decades later, there is *still* the perception that health and fitness club sales isn't a profession or a career path!

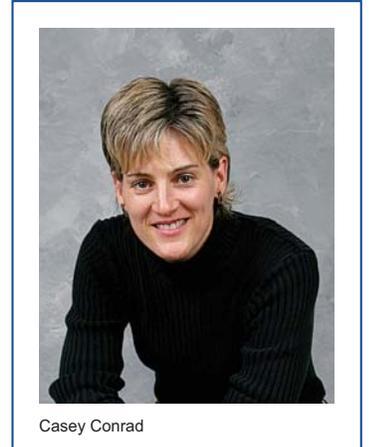
Most of these beliefs are due to lack of understanding by others, but some of it is deserved, because as an industry, there is no formal training for the job. Pharmaceutical sales reps go through a grueling 6- to 8-week training program, most often away from their home and with extensive testing. If they pass that aspect of the training, they will spend the next 12 months of their life riding shotgun with the regional rep. This allows the salesperson to model excellence and the manager to ensure proper training as well as personal introductions to existing accounts. The bottom line is that the pharmaceutical companies recognize the value of every doctor recommending (or not) their drugs, and they go to great lengths to make sure their salespeople know their product, know their job and are competent before unleashing them solo on a client.

Compare that with health and fitness sales. A club hires a new rep, has them shadow a veteran for a few days, has them meet with the Sales Manager to train for some number of hours the first week or two, and then, BAM, they are taking a walk-in. Even if your club does have a formal training program (or uses my online system, which is 14 hours over two weeks), it is still very "light" compared to the training many other "professional" salespeople receive.

What's the point? First, ensure that every salesperson gets the proper sales skills training, with role-playing and testing *before* they are allowed to work with a club-generated lead. Second, health and fitness salespeople should make it their *mission* to display the attributes of a true professional. Let's outline three key aspects that will impact every fitness salesperson's level of success.

Industry Knowledge - Although there is much about the health and fitness club industry that has remained the same, it is a dynamic market that is constantly evolving. It's important that you stay up to date on trends and happenings. One way to do that is by reading industry magazines and blogs. If your facility is a member of the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), it should receive *CBI Magazine* monthly. Other notable publications are *Club Insider*, *Club Solutions* and *Active Aging*. All of these focus on the business side of the industry. And, *Club Industry* has a fantastic online portal that keeps visitors up to date, and you don't need to be a member to have access.

Club Knowledge - It's shocking how many times I'll be mystery shopping a club and the salesperson won't know something about his facility, a program or a policy. You have to know your product inside and out. If you are a new employee, you should have been brought through a training program that covered the basics. The challenge, of course, is during an orientation it can feel like "information by fire-hose," hence,



Casey Conrad

overwhelming. There will be a lot that isn't covered and even more that you probably won't remember.

I encourage all employees to self-audit their club knowledge by creating checklists for themselves. Go through your facility as if you were training a brand-new employee and ask yourself what you need to know about:

- **Each physical area of the facility** - Circuit, free weights, aquatics, group exercise, locker rooms, etc.
- **Each service and program the facility offers** - Personal training, small group training, child-care, kids' programs, massage, nutrition, special population classes, body composition testing, infrared sauna, etc.
- **Memberships offered in addition to the standard ones you may be selling** - For example, out of town guests, short-term visitors/workers in the area, students, seniors, etc.
- **Policies and procedures** - Depending upon your facility size, this could be a lot. Member check-in guidelines, age requirements, guest policies, membership add-ons, holds, cancellations, etc.

Another important aspect of club knowledge is the timeline for the facility: knowing when your facility opened, how it has evolved, renovations that have occurred, etc. This is particularly helpful with selling to previous members and missed guests (people who had toured previously but did not buy... yet!).

Every profession has events and associations that allow like-minded people to gather and share information, insights and learn from one another. *IHRSA* has an annual convention and trade show every March, and their sister associations have events regionally throughout the year. *Club Industry* has one in October and now partners with *SCW Fitness* at regional events throughout the year. *IDEA* also has one or two large shows that include business topics in addition to group exercise and personal training.

(See **Casey Conrad** Page 26)

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Respondeat Superior and Vicarious Liability for Employee Conduct

By: **Paul R. Bedard, Esquire**

There are many circumstances that may result in an employer being vicariously liable for its employee's conduct. Public policy dictates that, under certain circumstances, the party who suffers harm should be able to obtain redress from the enterprise that benefits from the employee or agent who inflicted the harm. Public policy aims to minimize the recurrence of the conduct at issue while also providing victims an increased ability to obtain compensation when attempting to be made whole from a legal standpoint.

Vicarious liability applies to employer-employee relationships and other situations involving a third party that possesses the right and the duty to direct the actions of the negligent person. Federal, state and local laws impact the causes of action available against an employer due to an employee's negligent conduct. One of the fundamental doctrines in this regard is the doctrine of **respondeat superior**.

Respondeat superior is Latin for "let the master answer." The master in this context is the employer. Under the theory of vicarious liability, an employer is deemed liable for the conduct of its employee for acts committed within the employee's "course and scope of employment." This legal theory rests upon the premise that the employer has the right, duty or ability to control the actions of the employee. When the employer authorizes the employee's actions, or when the employee's actions are related to an approved action, these actions are generally considered to be within the employee's course and scope of employment.

Whether or not an employee's actions are conducted within the employee's course and scope of employment is pivotal in determining whether employer liability exists under the doctrine of respondeat superior. Although one might think that defining what constitutes "course and scope of employment" would be straightforward, courts have varied in this regard. Therefore, there are different legal rules and standards. However, from a practical standpoint, there are factors worthy of consideration when trying to determine whether an employee was acting within their course and scope of employment:

Employee's Intent - When an employee intentionally deviates to some degree from an employer's explicit instructions, the employer may still be vicariously liable. However, if this same employee disregards the employer's instructions entirely, it is unlikely that the employer will be on the hook for the employee's actions. For example, if an employee is instructed to visit a corporate membership client and come directly back to the health club, but

they strike a person with their automobile while detouring into the parking lot of a coffee shop on their way back to the club, then this accident will likely be viewed as having happened within the employee's course and scope of employment. However, if this same employee visits a corporate membership client and then has an automobile accident while driving twenty miles out of their way to visit a friend, this accident will likely be deemed as having transpired outside of the employee's course and scope of employment. The employee's intentions can also be viewed more literally. If the employee described above intentionally decides to commit a tortious act that has no causal relation to the employee's employment, a court may hold that such actions were driven by the employee's motives rather than the authorization or the direction of the employer. One example would be if the employee drove outside of their sales route to confront an ex-spouse. A victim's harm or losses suffered will generally not be assessed against an employer that neither benefited from nor gave rise to the actions at issue.

Employer's Reasonable Expectations - Whether an employer should reasonably expect an employee to commit certain incidental acts is also a factor for consideration. Using the previous example involving the employee's stop at the coffee shop, it would not be unreasonable to expect that the employee may take the detour to grab a coffee on the way back to a health club. However, if the employee drove outside of their sales route to commit a burglary, it is unreasonable for the employer to anticipate the employee's actions. Therefore, these actions would almost certainly be viewed as occurring outside of the employee's course and scope of employment.

Nature, Time and Place - The nature, time and place of the employee's actions must be weighed. If an employee generally works from 9AM to 5PM while visiting local corporate membership accounts within a five-mile radius, and the employee engages within a fistfight twenty miles from the health club while still in uniform at 10PM, it is unlikely, regardless of the uniform, that this conduct would be viewed as happening within the employee's course and scope of employment. However, if the fistfight occurs during lunch hour within a few miles of the health club, an investigation of the details of the incident would be required to determine whether the fight occurred within the employee's course and scope of employment.

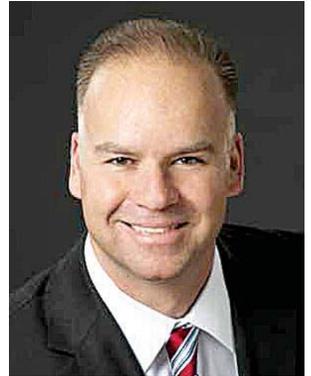
Time Spent - The amount of time the employee spends deviating from the

employer's instructions may also play a role in determining employer liability. To use the coffee shop example, if the employee briefly stopped at the coffee shop where the accident happened on their way back to the club, the accident would likely fall within the employee's course and scope of employment. However, if the employee stopped at the same coffee shop and stayed for hours beyond their regular shift before being involved in the accident, the accident will likely be found to have happened outside of the employee's course and scope of employment.

In Summary

Federal, state, and local laws give rise to the various causes of action available against an employer due to an employee's conduct. However, the law in this regard is complex, and jurisdictions vary widely. Although the above scenarios are somewhat exaggerated and dramatic for illustration purposes, most cases are much more nuanced. Therefore, a fact-specific analysis through the lens of the governing jurisdiction is always required. **This article is not intended as legal advice. These comments should be viewed as an educational guide. Please consult an attorney for specific direction.**

(Paul R. Bedard, Esquire has nearly twenty years of management, leadership and operations experience in the health and fitness industry. As a practicing attorney, Paul's health and fitness industry



Paul R. Bedard, Esquire

experience provide him with a unique perspective when advising health clubs regarding employee training, handbooks, policies, contracts, disputes or premises liability claims. When not practicing law or spending quality time with his wife and daughters, Paul strives to be active in his local community. Paul serves as the current Assistant Town Attorney for the Town of Southington, Connecticut, and has previously served on the Southington Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. Paul is also a partner at Sheffy, Mazzaccaro, DePaolo & DeNigris, LLP, in Southington, Connecticut. You can reach Paul at pbedard@smddlaw.com or 860-620-9460 x109.)



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...Casey Conrad

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Personal Appearance - It goes without saying that you should *look* professional. This conversation always creates some interesting reactions from people who highly value personal expression. I sometimes receive a rogue email from a salesperson who informs me that I'm being "out of touch" with societal norms when I say, "remove the tongue and eye piercings." I am all for personal expression on your own time. The reality of the situation, however, is that, in sales, you have seconds to make a good first impression. People are judgmental. When someone feels as if you are "like them," rapport is established more quickly. Consider who is the ideal prospect in your market and what he looks like. If he has purple hair and ten facial piercings, then go for it. Otherwise, blend! It will result in greater

rapport and more sales.

Next, how is your personal grooming? If you are a man, are you clean shaven? If you have a mustache or beard, is it trimmed? Women, if you have long hair, is it pulled back or styled in a way that is professional? Are your nails neat and tidy? Is your breath fresh? (**Hint:** Coffee on your breath smells bad to non-coffee drinkers.) Have you showered to ensure you don't have any body odor? This is especially important if you work out before your shift. Also, be mindful that any fragrances you wear shouldn't be too strong. Some people are very sensitive to smells, even an expensive perfume or essential oil. Of course, you should be dressed professionally. I'm not talking about business suits or dressy clothes. Here, I'm referring to clean, pressed clothing and a name tag. Whether your facility has a uniform shirt, jackets or sweatshirts, make sure you look professional.

Another touchy subject is your fitness level. I am a firm believer that you need to be a "product of your product." I'm not talking about being skinny or buff muscularly, just fit. Do you exercise regularly? Does that show in your appearance? Let me be clear, some of my very best salespeople were a bit overweight. The key was that they were in better shape and weighed less than before their exercise lifestyle began. Having a salesperson who may not look super fit but has an inspirational story can be very influential in health and fitness sales. The majority of people walking through the doors do struggle with some weight issues. This means they can relate to the person who has also struggled. Perhaps, they still do. So, if you are on your own weight loss journey, let's say you've successfully lost 50 pounds and have 50 pounds to go, it pays to tell (or show) prospects.

Prospects Buy YOU! Consumers, in general, don't like salespeople. At the end of the day, the saying, "*People buy from people they like and trust,*" holds true. As a fitness professional, you need to be on top of your game with every interaction, being certain that your behaviors are representative of what people want and expect. Perfecting your sales craft, having industry and club knowledge and exemplifying the qualities of a professional are critical to your success. Remember, you represent the name above the door of your facility. Take that seriously, and not only will you make a lot more sales, but you'll gain a lot more respect in the process.

(Casey Conrad has been a consultant in the health and fitness club industry for over 30 years. She is the author of many books and speaks internationally. Her materials, including her new book and her online training programs, can be found at www.CaseyConrad.com.)

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Thanks and Appreciation

At **Club Insider**, we are excited to be in our **26th Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. I wish to extend our most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone that's made this amazing 26-year run possible.

A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to **Rick Caro, Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, of **Atlanta's Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our **309** monthly editions! And, of course, **Thanks and Appreciation** to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions out to our **10,000 readers!** **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **READERS**. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. It's amazing to know that we have several advertisers with over a decade of continuous advertising with us. We also want to say sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present, who've contributed *thousands* of excellent articles to help our readers with their Best Business Practices. **Thanks and Appreciation** to **IHRSA** for all it does.

Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, Justin, who started working part-time for **Club Insider** when he was just eight years old (helping with mailings). This young man, pretty much behind the scenes for 26 years now, has truly been a fantastic partner for his Dad in **Club Insider**. Justin does our editing, publication layouts, all of our website design and maintenance, all of our bookkeeping and subscription processing work, as well as archive management and anything else that needs doing, including writing a majority of our cover stories each year.

Last, but surely not least, this writer who refused to fear failure when many told him he didn't have a chance of surviving the publishing business for even a year did survive. And, he would like to give sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to the power that made that survival happen: **God**.

Very sincerely, with love in my heart for you all,

Norm Cates, Jr.

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