

Norm Cates'

THE Club Insider

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

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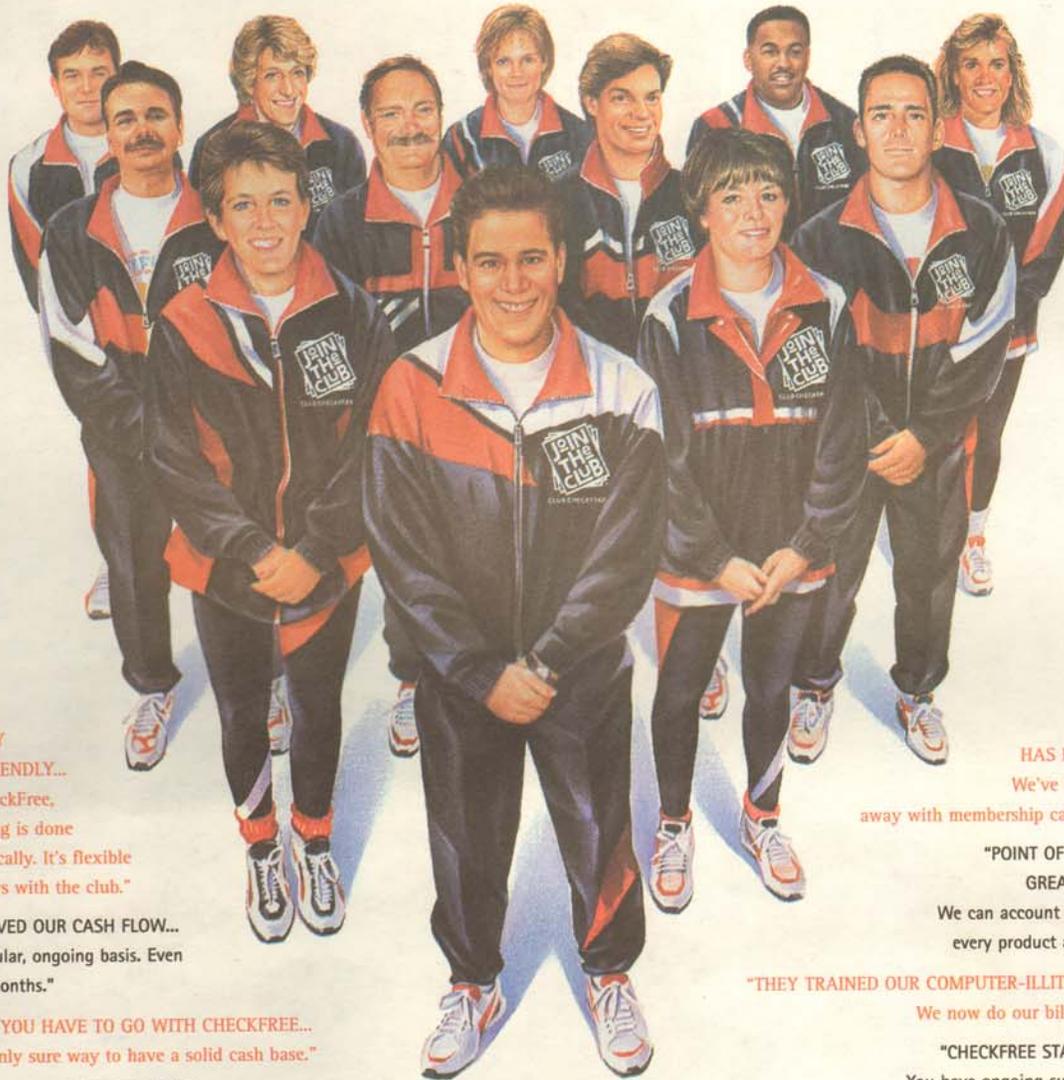
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MARCH 1997
VOLUME IV NUMBER 3



**KAREN WOODARD
'A RISING STAR!'**

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THE Club Insider

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

CLUB SPORTS INTERNATIONAL PURCHASES NORTHWEST RACQUET, SWIM & HEALTH CLUBS CSI Grows By 12 Clubs, 1,400 Employees and 120,000 Members

LATE BREAKING NEWS!

DENVER, COLORADO - March 6, 1997 - Club Sports International (CSI) today purchased Twin Cities-based Northwest Racquet, Swim & Health Clubs, making CSI the nation's largest full-service athletic club operation. Terms of the private transaction were not disclosed. The combined CSI companies will have more than 49 locations in 12 states, 3,500 employees and more than 316,000 members.

The sale concludes an eight-month effort by Harvey Ratner and Marvin Wolfenson, founders and owners of the Northwest Clubs, to identify a buyer who would continue and enhance the position of the group as one of the preeminent health club organizations in America. "We are pleased to become a part of the Club Sports family," said Mr. Wolfenson. "Their tradition of

customer service gave Harvey and me confidence that we are leaving our members, many of whom are our long-time friends, in good hands." Mr. Ratner emphasized the continuity of management, noting that Jerry Noyce, who has been associated with Northwest for twenty-three years, including serving as Director of Operations for the last nine years, will continue in that position. Mr. Wolfenson will also remain on site and serve as a consultant to Club Sports International. Club Sports International said it will invest more than \$3.5 million this year to improve its Twin Cities facilities and add new, state-of-the-art fitness equipment, televisions and additional member services.

Established in 1968 with one club, Northwest Racquet, Swim & Health Clubs now operates 12 clubs in the Twin Cities area. In 1991, as an acknowledgment of and to honor their excellence in the club business, Harvey

Ratner and Marvin Wolfenson were inducted into the CLUB INDUSTRY Hall of Fame alongside industry giants such as Ray Wilson, Alan Schwartz and Jack LaLanne.

The high quality Northwest Club group attracted considerable interest from a broad spectrum of buyers, according to Buccino & Associates, Inc., a Chicago-based financial advisor, which represented Northwest in the sale. Michael Smith, a Managing Director of Buccino, revealed that more than twenty-five prospective buyers received information packages on Northwest and that eight submitted offers for the company. "It was evident from the start of this assignment that the owners of Northwest were seeking a buyer who would value and build upon the tremendous image of quality and service which has resulted in the company being named 'Best of the Twin Cities' for six years in a row and the #1 club in the nation by the United States Tennis Association in 1994. Club Sports

brings the customer service philosophy and the financial resources to continue this tradition."

"Northwest has long been recognized as a model for operating premier athletic clubs," said Tom Lynceis, Club Sports International President. "We're excited about the opportunity to build on that success and offer all of our members nationwide - 12 more top-notch clubs to utilize."

"For more than 29 years, Northwest has been a Twin Cities icon and an international model for operating premier athletic clubs," said Ed Williams, Club Sports International Senior Vice President. "This is a fantastic opportunity for CSI to build on that tradition of excellence and offer even more to our members, especially Twin Cities families. In other markets we've added kids-only gymnasiums, outdoor swimming pools, water

parks and day spas to our clubs. We're already investigating the possibility of bringing these types of added benefits to our Twin Cities members."

According to the most recently published industry data, CSI is the fourth largest chain in the country, with annual revenues of \$74 million. The Northwest group is the 8th largest chain with revenues of \$48 million. The newly expanded CSI should expect future annual revenues of \$125 million or more.

Club Sports International has, for years, been known for the quality clubs that its owns and operates across the continental U.S. and Hawaii. The acquisition of the outstanding Northwest Club group will position CSI even more significantly as key operators of premier athletic clubs around the world. Tom Lynceis, Ed Williams, Bud Rockhill and Art Curtis lead an organization that is truly 'setting the standard' for the club business.

Karen Woodard... A Rising Star!

By Norm Cates, Jr.

There are over 13,000 commercial health clubs in America and in each club there is ownership and management striving for success and profits. All clubs have their own history and challenges and each is seeking to succeed in its own way. This is about Karen Woodard...truly 'a rising star' in the health club industry. Karen is a 12-year veteran

club owner and club business consultant who has developed and currently operates two successful fitness facilities and two indoor sport climbing facilities. Her experience has led her to a rapidly advancing position in the world of club continuing education and consulting.

There are not many success stories in the club industry in America as bright as Karen Woodard's. Woodard, a sharp, focused, articulate and detail-oriented woman, has used a combination of experience and talents

to lead her club organization to success in her very competitive market (23 facilities in Boulder, Colorado, a city of 100,000). Along the way, she has found a new passion. That passion is the world of teaching, sharing of business knowledge and motivating others. She recently gave a presentation at the IHRSA Orlando Sales, Marketing and Programming Convention and received a very positive rating of #3 out of a total of 12 speakers in her category. She is also scheduled to speak at IHRSA San Francisco. Her topic is:

"HOW TO AVOID THE MONSTER MISTAKES IN MEMBERSHIP SALES."

Karen Woodard is the Founder of Premium Performance Training, a club training and consulting firm which specializes in club sales, operational and bottom line consulting and training. This is her story.

EARLY AGE BUSINESSWOMAN

Woodard was born in Norwood, Massachusetts and as a child relocated frequently with her family as her Dad was employed by Hewlett Packard. She lived in Connecticut and a number of other cities and was raised in Fort Collins, Colorado. She spent her childhood differently than others, as she found, at an early age an insatiable interest in business. She commented, "Business always enticed me. In fact, when I was younger, I used to get teased a lot because I carried my Dad's briefcase. When I was 5, I would pick apples and sell them to the neighbors. I was always selling something. My interest in business carried on into high school. I was the President of my high school's business club and was always putting together different business functions in school.

Different programs to get kids involved other than just on an academic level."

ONE OF YOUNGEST CLUB OWNERS & DEVELOPERS

Karen and her husband-to-be, Scott Woodard, along with a partner, started their first fitness center, the PULSE Fitness Center, in Boulder in 1985. She was only 23 years old. That would make her one of the youngest health club co-owners in the country. The PULSE Fitness Center has now been in business for 12 years and is located in a small shopping center that she and Scott own. The facility is 18,500 square feet. The 'feel' of the PULSE Fitness Center is one of a 'No Attitude Fitness Environment'. When this writer visited the facility in late February, I was surprised to see such high usage on a Sunday afternoon. The (See Karen Woodard page 4)

• Inside The Insider •

- Tennis Corporation of America Fosters "Play Tennis Chicago"
- Creating the Partnership Between Membership Sales and Front Desk
- Sales Independence
- Women's Entrepreneurial Awards
- Why Tennis Has Declined
- Health Care Education
- Georgia Health Club Bill

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

• EDITORIALS • "INSIDER MAIL" • COMMENTS •

LEARN! LEARN! LEARN!

Karen Woodard, the President of Premium Performance Training, our cover-person for this month's edition, has a motto on her voice mail that I would like for you to hear and consider. The reason I am pointing this out is that you still have time to make plans to attend the 16th Annual IHRSA Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco, April 9-13th. I've said it before and I'm going to say it again. In addition to the largest club business trade show in the United States, the IHRSA 16th Annual International Convention offers an absolutely unbeatable four-day learning event for professionals in the health, racquet and sportsclub business. Check out the sample list of topics and expert speakers shown below. You can rise to new heights in your business by taking the time and making the investment necessary to attend this convention and trade show. Call (800) 228-4772 for information. I hope to see you there!

KAREN WOODARD'S MOTTO:

Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if all you do is sit there!

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH, RACQUET AND SPORTSCLUB

ASSOCIATION (IHRSA)
 16th ANNUAL CONVENTION
 AND TRADE SHOW
 SAN FRANCISCO,
 CALIFORNIA - APRIL 9-12,
 1997

There will be over 200 topics and speakers and here is a representative sample of them:

WEDNESDAY - APRIL 9th

• Tennis Forum • 4th Annual Leadership Conf. - Strategic Pricing: New Methods For Profits.

• Pre-Convention Workshops - Developing A Creative & Unintimidating Ad Campaign to Reach the Deconditioned Market - Doug Levine & Liz Petersen • An Introduction to Club Finance - The Basics You Must Know - Charley Swayne • Service Breakthrough - Laurie Hammel and Panel

• Strategies For Developing A Hospital-Affiliated Health & Fitness Center - Dave Pickering and Panel

• The Closing Clinic: A Hands-On Experience To Help You Increase Sales - Casey Conrad.

• Determine What Your Club Is Worth - Cecil Spearman and Panel • State of the Industry - Frank Napolitano and Jill Stevens Kinney.

THURSDAY - APRIL 10th

23 years, respectively). The interior is very colorful with a warm, resort-like feel. Close attention to detail is evident in all areas of the PULSE Fitness Center, a key aspect in the success of any business.

HEAVY EMPHASIS ON PROGRAMMING

The PULSE offers a complete line of fitness services including selectorized weight machines, an extensive free weight

• Opening Session - Health & Healing: Discover & Enhance the Powers Within - Andrew Well, M.D.

• Boom, Bang, No Fireworks Here, Just The ABC's of Selling - Charles Lindsey and ACS Team

• Hospital-Based Facilities Forum Session - Wellness: The Key Transformational Agent of Clubs - Jeff Bensky • Anatomy of A Club/Hospital Relationship - Jason Conviser, Ph.D. • Reputation Management - 10 Steps To The Public Image You Want - Michael Hoffman and Seliece Mignogna

• Keys To Excellence In Club Design, Construction & Development - David Armstrong and Donald DeMars

• Lunar Leadership - A Case Study In People Management - Frank Ancharski

• Global Industry Summit General Session - Paradoxes Of Future Health, Fitness & Exercise Markets - Roger Selbert, Ph.D.

• Staffing Your Club: How To Hire & Fire, Legally & Fairly - Helen Durkin

• The Latest News On The \$\$\$ Corporate & \$\$\$ Health Insurer Markets - Dave Pickering

• Team Building For Sales Success - Craig Pepin-Donat • 30 Retention Programs

in 90 Minutes.

FRIDAY - APRIL 11th

• Global Industry Summit Breakfast - "Key Issues Facing The Club Industry" - Tony Harmon and Herman Rutgers

• Global Industry Summit General Session - "The Great Game of Business - Jack Stack

• Small Group Tutorials - Designing & Implementing An Effective Strength Training Program For All Levels - John Philbin, M.A.

• Lighting A Fire Under Your Average Sales Performers - Ed Tock

• Internal Promotions - Making Your Walls Speak For You - Fern Pessin

• A Step By Step Guide To Creating A Home Page For Your Club - Spencer Garrett

• 25 Practical Strategies For Getting & Keeping Long-Term Members - Glenn William

• Concurrent Sessions - New Ways To Compensate Employees - Rick Caro

• Global Industry Summit Open Forum - Key Issues Facing The Club Industry - Facilitated by Stephen Tharrett and Harm Tegelaars

• Concurrent Sessions - How To Plan A Corporate Marketing BLITZ - Brenda Abdilla

• Leveraging A Network Of Family Doctors To Refer New

Members To IHRSA Clubs - E. Lee Rice

• Knock M'Dead Sales & Marketing Tools For In-Club Personal Training - Bob Damashek
 • Around The World In 90 Minutes: Current Trends In The Club Industry - Hans Muench & Panel

SATURDAY - APRIL 12th

• Concurrent Sessions - Practical Applications of the Surgeon General's Report - Jennifer Barry Turgiss

• 12 Sizzling - Hot Sales Tools That Guarantee Increased Productivity - Mike Chaet, Ph.D.

• Creating and Promoting A Successful In-Club Cancer Wellness Program - Julie Main and Eric Durak

• Mentally R.I.C.H.: The Ultimate Peak Performance Training Program (Part I) - Richard Gerson, Ph.D.

• 10 Tips To Improve Your Staff's Attitude & Performance - Jeff Stokes

• Creating Job Value Through Emotional Compensation - David Bradshaw

• Avoiding Monster Mistakes In Sales - Karen Woodard
 • Closing General Session

-The Adventure of Change - Jeff Salz, Ph.D.

.....
DON'T MISS THE IHRSA CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW!

...Karen Woodard

continued from page 3

staff also displays a warmth and hospitality similar to the hospital-ity you get walking into Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club in Lafayette, La. or Joe Cirulli's Health and Fitness Center in Gainesville, Fla. (Red and Joe have been in business for 33 years and

area, a 4,000 square-foot aerobic studio, (80 group classes per week) a spinning room, a stretching/conference room, two cardiovascular equipment rooms, massage therapy rooms, a child care center and locker rooms with coed spa amenities. The club also offers a vast array of programs suited to appeal to the outdoor-oriented clientele of Boulder, an upscale community about 30 miles northwest of Denver. The programs include everything from outdoor inline skating classes to fly fishing! Woodard's concept is to provide the best possible facilities, equipment and services and to add the important ingredient of special, community outdoor programming to suit the outdoor-oriented market that she serves. It is this programming 'differentiation' and the goal of becoming a community resource for health and fitness that is the formula for success that works for the PULSE Fitness Centers in Boulder.

DOWNTOWN PULSE FITNESS CENTER AND ROCK CLIMBING BUSINESS IS GROWING

The success of the first PULSE Fitness Center has led to the development and ownership of three other facilities by the Woodards. 6 1/2 years ago they opened the PULSE Fitness Center Downtown, which is a 10,000 square-foot fitness facility located in an office building. Combined, the two PULSE Fitness Centers serve 4,000 Boulder area members. 6 years ago they built and opened a rock climbing facility in the space next to their first PULSE Fitness Center. And, a little over a year ago, the Woodard's opened a state-of-the-art, 9,000 square-foot rock climbing facility that is a flagship facility for one of the fastest growing sports in the United States, indoor sport climbing. In addition to supervising building and remod-

eling of their existing PULSE Fitness Centers, Scott Woodard built the rock climbing facilities and now has developed an expertise in the installation and operation of rock climbing facilities. The wall business, Eldorado Wall Company, specializes in the installation of new rock climbing facilities on a contract basis. Clubs across the country are installing indoor and outdoor rock climbing facilities inside racquetball courts, tennis courts and other spaces which are available. The sport of rock climbing is actually quite safe, even though at first glance many perceive it to be dangerous. The Woodard's insurance cost for their rock climbing facilities is about the same as for their clubs. Rock climbing is emerging as another potential and safe profit center for club operators to consider. For information on rock climbing facilities, Eldorado Rock Company may be reached at: (303) 447-0512.

Karen Woodard has put a
 (See Karen Woodard page 10)

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•NORM'S NOTES•

SPORTS SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL is the company that launched the **SKYWALKER** machine at the Club Industry Show a couple of years back. The machines that they began to deliver nearly a year after the first orders, turned out to be faulty and had to be virtually rebuilt in the field. Then along came **REEBOK** to reportedly become a partner with SSI to market the Skywalker. Since the alliance between Skywalker and Reebok began, SSI has reportedly filed for Bankruptcy in December, 1996, but I have not been able to confirm that because I haven't but been able to get through the phone lines to confirm any information from them. The lines, including the fax machine, are busy around the clock. A few days ago, I received a call from one of my readers who was upset because he can't get parts or service on his Skywalker machines. He expressed surprise at the status of the Skywalker situation because he felt secure in investing in the Skywalker because the Reebok logo was on the machine. I also spoke with **MINDY PAYNE**, a top manager with Australian Body Works. Mindy informed me that ABW had purchased a number of the Skywalkers and also had no success in getting parts or service. She commented, "We expect to be able to use our Skywalkers until they break down.....at that point, we don't have much hope for fixing them and just plan to remove them from the floor until hopefully something happens to get parts and service on them." I contacted Reebok Headquarters and was told they would 'have somebody get back to me', but I haven't heard anything at press time. Personally, I think it speaks poorly for SSI and Reebok to allow club operators to go high and dry for parts and service, no matter what their problems are! Maybe we can raise enough hell about this to get the giant Reebok Corporation to step in and do the right thing and take care of the people that trusted their reputation when they bought the machines!

P E R - A N D E R S DAGBORN, the owner of the **SPORTS CLUB STOCHHOLM** group of clubs, which are said to be some of the finest in Europe, has done an extensive study on Membership Attrition Rate - Definition and Use, which contains a number of interesting considerations with respect to this very important club business issue. In future editions,

we will be publishing excerpts of his work. P.A. hopes to gather input from operators around the world on the subject. You may communicate your ideas to P.A. at: Fax#: +46(8) 728-8720 or write to P.A. at:

Sports Club Stockholm,
Norrullsgatan 6, 113 9
Stockholm, Sweden.

ICON, the giant home fitness equipment company has taken a step into the commercial world by acquiring **HOGGAN HEALTH INDUSTRIES**. It seems that every month we hear about more consolidation of the equipment side of the industry.

CORY EVERSON'S LICENSING PROGRAM which is being marketed and managed by **CHARLEY LINDSEY** and American Club Systems is cranking out the new locations. In just a year they now have 11 facilities open with a total of 27 licenses sold. 16 new facilities are in various stages of development. The two newest Cory Everson Aerobic & Fitness Centers that opened were in Wilmington, N.C. and Gainesville, Ga. The facilities opened with 601 and 692 members respectively, memberships sold in a short 60 day pre-sale period! In addition to being a fitness guru, Cory is also an artist and her work was displayed at the Ritz Carlton in Atlanta during the Super Show. The success of the Cory Everson Licensing Program is in stark contrast to the **LINDA EVANS Franchise** program which has reportedly stopped selling franchises. It is reported that Linda Evans is now going into infomercial sales.

M I C H A E L HOFFMAN, one of our contributing writers and President of Heart Communications, was spotted on the A & E Network with President George Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger. The scene was on tape compiled for a documentary on Arnold's life. The setting was on the South Lawn of the White House at a fitness carnival called The Great American Workout. Hoffman was shown pressing a Life Cycle button and programing the bike for President Bush who was pedalling without resistance. In the scene, Arnold was observing and said to Hoffman, "Don't get him too fit!"

24 Hour Fitness has named wellness entrepreneur, **KAREN BEHNKE**, of San Francisco, to the Board of Directors of 24 Hour Fitness, Inc.

SALES MAKERS, RAY GORDON AND ED TOCK have a terrific sales training seminar set for May 1, 2 and 3 in Fort Myers Beach, Florida. Check out their ad on page #23.

RON THOMPSON, a long time leader in **RAY WILSON'S Family Fitness Centers** in Southern California, has been appointed President of the Southern Division of 24 Hour Fitness by **MARK MASTROV, CEO**. Also, **PACKY WILSON, LARRY GURNEY AND JOE BARTELS** have been promoted to Vice President of the Southern Division.

RICH O'REAGAN formerly with the BMW Corporation, has been hired as the new V.P. of Marketing for Trotter/Cybox.

BALLY TOTAL FITNESS has opened a new 29,000 square-foot facility in Lakewood, Colorado. Their press release reminds me that since **LEE HILLMAN** took over as the CEO and President of Bally Total Fitness, he has stone walled any communication with **The CLUB INSIDER News**. The experience for me has been amusing, as apparently Hillman either doesn't have anything newsworthy to say or he is still annoyed at me because about three years ago, I reported on all of Bally's legal battles month after month. Instead of returning my calls like his predecessor, **MIKE LUCCI** always did, Hillman, instead, had a PR guy with an attitude call me. The PR guy **MICHAEL KEMPNER** of MWW/Strategic Communications, Inc. called me one day in response to my calls to Hillman. He attacked me like a crazed Pit Yorky, launching into a tirade about how I was going to "make up a story" about Bally Total Fitness and that my facts were not correct, etc. I responded to him that the reason I was calling Hillman was to get the facts exactly right. Well anyway, I have given up any hope of having a civilized dialogue with Hillman. And, I am going to definitely avoid contact with the

(See Norm's Notes page 14)



Norm Cates, Jr.

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Tennis Corporation Of America Fosters "Play Tennis Chicago"

Chicago, Illinois - It wasn't long ago that the youth of this country were batting tennis balls against the wall with visions of becoming the next Jimmy Connors or Billie Jean King. But the times ...they are a changin'. Today, it's more likely that the younger generation have aspirations of dunking like Michael, driving like Tiger or gliding like Flo-Jo.

Given this situation, tennis industry leaders have taken measures to restore the lifeblood of the game of tennis. Armed with a newly-drafted mission statement, the USTA and private industry leaders are determined to "grow the game." The industry consensus is that this can best be accomplished through an aggressive grass roots movement.

In an effort to do just this, Chicago's Mid-Town Tennis Club, the world's largest indoor tennis facility, joined forces with the Chi-

cago Park District, a 61 year-old governmental agency that manages more than 7,000 acres of "green space" throughout the metropolitan Chicago area. Together, they are pioneering a model "grassroots" level tennis program.

Mid-Town, now in the third year of a five-year agreement with the Park District, manages several of the city's court sites and provides professional instruction at low or no cost. With roots in virtually every neighborhood in the city, the Park District views this partnership with Mid-Town as a tremendous opportunity to revitalize the game of tennis in Chicago.

Michael Mahoney, regional General Manager for Tennis Corporation of America (TCA) who owns and manages Mid-Town Tennis Club, worked with Randy Mehrberg, Lakefront Director and General Counsel for the Chicago Park District, to

structure a cooperative relationship between the tennis club and the Park District. Mahoney, a 20-year veteran of the tennis industry, felt a strong affinity for the city's Park District courts. His own love of the game developed on Park District courts in Rochester, N.Y.

"When I was learning to play, the park courts were always immaculately maintained," remembers Mahoney. "They were busy places... you'd have to wait an hour or more just to get a court."

Mahoney wanted to resurrect this same spirit of excitement in the Chicago parks and expose children, who might not otherwise have the opportunity, to the game of tennis. With a steadfast TCA policy of donating 5 percent of their annual net income to the community, Mahoney viewed the ensuing relationship between Mid-Town Tennis Club and the Chicago Park District as the perfect opportunity for the club to make a substantial contribution to the industry movement.

"We've been in Chicago since 1969, and we've always believed in giving back to the community," explains Mahoney. "By focusing on the city's parks, and making low-cost programming more of a priority, there is an opportunity to have a great impact on revitalizing the sport."

Following a major reorganization in 1994, the Chicago Park District began pursuing partnerships with many of Chicago's top businesses to enhance resources and bring in professional expertise. After finding much success through partnerships with various industry leaders such as the Chicago Bulls and the Chicago White Sox (to-

gether, they renovated virtually every basketball court and ball field in the city), the time was ripe for a relationship with Mid-Town Tennis Club.

"As part of our commitment to continually improve the quality of programs offered to Chicago patrons, we were actively looking for someone with the capability to provide top-quality tennis instruction," recalls Mehrberg. "We saw a relationship with Mid-Town as an opportunity to benefit from their expertise and to work with an organization that is a clear leader in the tennis industry."

Not only was Mehrberg in favor of having Mid-Town develop a lesson program, he asked if they would be willing to manage several of the court sites around the city. In short, Mid-Town's responsibilities would include organizing and promoting low or no-cost tennis instruction and providing loaner racquets for participants who didn't have equipment. Both parties agreed that the partnership would be strictly a not-for-profit venture, in the sense that all profits would be plowed back into the program.

Mahoney and Mehrberg, along with a handful of Park District supervisors, nailed down objectives for a five-year agreement. The program's chief focus would be to improve tennis offerings to beginning players and upgrade the programs for existing players - and to do so at low or no cost to the city residents.

The Park District required that Mid-Town provide lessons in all six regions of the Park District. They also asked Mid-Town to actively recruit a professional staff that would be representative of the neighborhoods where lessons would be given.

John Trump, Mid-Town's head Tennis Professional, was in charge of the recruitment process

and with the help of Rex Nyquist, another Mid-Town pro, 25 ethnically-diverse instructors were selected to teach lessons at the different locations. In all, nearly 50 employees were hired for the summer; most were tennis professionals and the rest were stationed at court sites, under the direction of Mid-Town's Dawn Williams, to collect city rental fees. (Two of the recruited pros later became permanent members of Mid-Town's professional staff).

The deal was officially inked in May of 1995, and within weeks, the first summer of "Play Tennis Chicago" was underway.

With the help of the Tennis Industry Association (TIA) and various equipment manufacturers, Mahoney secured the donation of racquets, tennis balls and a \$15,000 advertising budget for an initial free-program launch.

To spread word of the program, Mid-Town's Debbie Kancel coordinated a joint effort between the club's public relations firm, Bev Kennedy and Company, and the Park District's communications department. Together, they arranged television appearances and public service announcements to notify the city's residents about when and where the lessons were held.

"It was truly a team effort," notes Trump. "The combination of our seasoned Mid-Town staff and top quality group of summer instructors made for a very successful first year."

Although it was a bit of a scramble to get things underway the first summer, "Play Tennis Chicago" netted roughly \$20,000 from low-cost lessons and court rental fees. Lessons were taught at more than 30 sites around the city, many of them enhancing existing Park District activities. At one site, (See *Tennis Corporation* page 18)

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CLUB INDUSTRY Magazine to Recognize Leading Business Women

Call for entries for the first annual **CLUB INDUSTRY Distinguished BusinessWoman's Awards** have begun. "The awards will recognize the important role women club professionals play in the industry," said Terry Moffatt, the magazine's Associate Publisher and Editor in Chief. "These important awards will highlight the leadership, innovation, and vision that women bring to the field," he said.

Awards will be presented in the following categories:

BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR - Who is eligible: Fitness facility owner, operator, president or general manager.

This award will recognize an industry veteran who demonstrates the highest level of professionalism and leadership both at her company and in the club industry.

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR - Who is eligible: Fitness facility owner or operator who has owned her company no more than three years. This award recognizes the woman entrepreneur who has successfully developed a member-directed fitness business that reflects the changing paradigm in today's fitness industry, and who represents entrepreneurial spirit and success.

INDUSTRY ENHANCEMENT AWARD - Who

is eligible: Fitness facility owner, operator or senior manager. This award recognizes the woman who is actively involved in advancing fitness and wellness within her community through charitable/volunteer programs.

Candidates can be nominated by their colleagues or self-nominated. A special judging committee will select the finalists in each category. **CLUB INDUSTRY** readers will have an opportunity to choose the honorees from these finalists. Recipients will be honored at a ceremony at **CLUB INDUSTRY '97** in Chicago. — Donna Loyle - **CLUB INDUSTRY Magazine**

THE NECESSARY BALANCE? NEW EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING!

The **CLUB INSIDER** News is made possible every month by the support of our advertisers, our contributing writers and our paid subscribers. As we move rapidly into 1997, we thank them all for their support. Our current advertisers are listed on this page along with their company description and IHRSA San Francisco exhibit number if they are exhibiting.

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(2) **TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE!** Keep your mind open to training opportunities for your employees. The very best club business training opportunity in the world is coming to San Francisco, California, April 9-13, 1997, when IHRSA (The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association) holds its 16th Annual International Convention and Trade Show. Come by plane, train, automobile, wagon, roller blades, bike, on foot or any other mode of transportation, but be there! A small investment to become a member of IHRSA and this huge annual event will pay off 15 or 20 times during the course of a year! And, your investment in becoming an IHRSA Member Club and taking your loyal and key people to the Conventions and Trade Shows will provide you with a variety of training opportunities during the coming year.

For information on IHRSA and the 16th Annual Convention and Trade Show call: (800) 228-4772. Remember.... balance is the key!

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Creating The Partnership Between Membership Sales and Front Desk

By Karen D. Woodard, President of Premium Performance Training

(The following article is the 5th in a six part series on how to maximize the membership sales process).

How many membership sales have been lost at your club before the membership sales staff even got the chance to talk with the prospective member? If that question is unclear to you or you're not sure how that happens, I invite you to read on and stop the leakage.

A few of the ways our clubs lose membership business without even having the opportunity to even talk with a prospective member include reputation, competition, word of mouth, club appearance — which some or all have been touched upon in previous articles. What this article will focus on is how we lose business due to lack of partnership between the Front Desk (FD) operation and the Membership Staff — an area over which we have

direct control.

In a partnership, there are two or more parties who participate and contribute to a joint interest in addition to sharing the risks and profits. Using this definition, how does the relationship between your club's front desk and membership department compare?

If you're seeing qualities such as:

- clear understanding of their role as it relates to membership sales

- accurate information being given by the front desk
- understanding of exactly how much information to give

- consistently positive and friendly greetings
- creating a good first impression of membership rep, then you've got a solid partnership happening. Conversely, if you're seeing things happen that look like this:

- incomplete guest registers
- inconsistent greetings
- inconsistent verbiage
- lack of flow in the

membership process

- inability to take control
- lack of knowledge
- poor attitude toward membership, then energy and focus needs to be put into creating or strengthening the partnership.

Roadblocks to Partnership....

The temporary roadblocks that I've seen in my own clubs as well as those throughout the country are usually due to misperception or lack of communication and are simple to remove. Partnership barriers include:

1. Misunderstanding of the work process in the membership department. Often times I hear desk staff comment "all they (membership reps) do all day is talk on the phone."

2. Lack of clarity on what the partnership should look like and why.

3. Animosity toward membership staff with regard to compensation.

4. Misperception that the membership job is "the cake job" in the club.

5. Lack of integration/communication between membership and other departments.

6. Prima-donna attitude that is sometimes adopted by high producing membership reps.

7. Lack of appreciation to and from membership staff and front desk staff.

8. Lack of support by membership.

9. Misperception of FD role in the sale.

Triple "A" Tools to Strengthen the Partnership....

Strong partnership -- just as lack of partnership -- is a choice that we make and requires consistent awareness, attention and action — what I call the "Triple A". It's not difficult to create if we practice the "Triple A" regularly and that's the key — regularly. Here are some tools you can implement expediently and inexpensively to strengthen your club's sense of partnership.

Communication

1. Choose a liaison representative from the front desk to attend specific membership de-

partment meetings and the same from membership to attend front desk meetings.

2. Issue a weekly update between the two departments that includes promo updates such as where advertisements may be running, when they start, upcoming membership events to be familiar with, upcoming projects the department may need help with (especially if you pay them) — anything you need them to know about and will make them feel more a part of the process in advance rather than "the last to know."

3. Keep a laminated 8 1/2" X 11" appointment sheet at the front desk. As each membership rep comes in for the day, they will write their appointments on the sheet with any special notes the desk staff needs to know about that person. By doing this, the front desk staff feels more clued in to what is coming for the day and can have a more familiar greeting when the prospective member comes in — which will create a much more positive impact on the member. At the end of the day, the closing per-

(See *Sales & Desk Partners* page 22)



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...Karen Woodard

continued from page 4

huge amount of work in the development and training of her staff in all four of their facilities and it is paying off. Combined, the two fitness centers generate revenues of \$1.9 million per year and throw off profits of 8%. Adding the revenues from their rock climbing businesses, the total revenues of the four businesses owned by this young couple are: \$2.7 million. These figures enabled their organization to be listed in the Top 25 up and coming facilities in **CLUB INDUSTRY** Magazine's 100 Top 100 Clubs Survey.

PREMIUM PERFORMANCE TRAINING A PASSION FOR WOODARD!

About a year ago,

Woodard launched a consulting business called Premium Performance Training. In this business, she is available to work with club owners and staff members on sales, operational and bottom line management issues.

In January, '97, Woodard conducted a full-day seminar for the Great Lakes Club Management Association (GLCMA) entitled: "Polishing Your Sales Skills For Shining Success." Shelly Sanders, Executive Director of GLCMA, commented: "Karen received very positive evaluations from our attending members. People liked her and found her easy to approach. She is also very flexible as the airline lost her luggage and she had to conduct the all day seminar with just the clothes on her back! She provided our members with new ideas on how to look at things. She gave insight into how to read prospective members during the sales presentation. She also covered

numerous responses to objections that prospective members typically use to say no. She did an excellent job!"

Julie Main, a club veteran and General Manager of the Santa Barbara Athletic Club comments on Woodard, "She was great! She did a full-day seminar for us with the morning devoted to front desk staff and the afternoon to sales. She is really in tune with the club business. It is great to have a person that is so close to the business to come in and do this training. We had a very good reaction from our staff as they were able to immediately apply what she taught to their daily work. The seminar was very practical, enthusiastic and energetic. In preparation, she even came in the night before and did an informal survey with our members, asking them about any areas that they would like to see addressed. Thank goodness, they praised our staff's performance very highly! I am very careful and selective in my choice of continuing education teachers and after spending a good deal of time with her at IHRSA San Diego last year, I was totally confident that she would do a great job and she did!"

Woodard's new and second business has become a true passion for her. From the beginning of her club career, she has worked in every single department in her centers, including sales representative, front desk attendant, sales manager, general manager, aerobic instructor, fitness instructor, bookkeeper, etc. This experience, combined with her unquenchable thirst for self improvement/education, has given her the ability to work with other club owners to help them identify their problems, create plans to solve those problems and teach staff in those clubs the necessary skills to implement the plans. The words TRUE PASSION, used above, may be understating her level of dedication to this new aspect of her life! Not only does she spend the time and money necessary to attend our industry conventions and gatherings, she is also an active member of the National Speakers Association, the Colorado Speakers Association and the International Dance Exercise Association (IDEA), as well as being an ACE Certified group exercise instructor.

Woodard's dedication and passion to her new consulting business can best be summed up with her comments: "We are in an incredibly positive industry! An energetic industry where if you give a little, you get a lot back. What has always driven me is the ability to give and be able to teach someone to go to a higher level. Whether working with a member that gets to another level with their health or appearance, a staff person that reaches a higher level pro-

professionally or a club that hits the next level of profitability, that has always been very rewarding."

KEY CHALLENGES

Woodard says that "the key challenges in our industry are: (1) Non-profit competition. (2) Developing pricing strategies that allow us to produce a service profitably. (3) Not just getting members, but keeping members and in that process, reaching out to members that are not necessarily the 'high-usage' members. (4) Creating a consistent message about what we offer. Sending a clear message to the non-using public about what exactly our industry has to offer. (5) As an industry, learning how to develop more dollars per member throughout the entire membership relationship. (6) Avoiding a 'myopic' perspective. In other words, to look outside the box for new ideas. I believe most club operators lack fresh ideas. There appears to be an attitude out there of, 'Hey, I know how to do this. I know how to do everything in this club!'

And, being small business owners, we tend to be involved in everything because traditionally we've wanted to and couldn't afford to pay anyone else. Because of that, we limit what we can personally produce and how we can grow."

From the perspective of her organization she states "her most significant challenges to be: (1) To create opportunities for staff to grow. (2) Differentiation in the marketplace. (3) Being able to find staff that we feel fits the vision that we have for our centers. (4) Insuring staff clearly understands the vision for our organization. (5) Getting all staff focused on the objective of bringing our service to a higher level.

WHY SHE STARTED PREMIUM PERFORMANCE TRAINING

When asked, "Why did you decide to develop Premium Performance Training?" she replied, "It relates to being able to help staff and clubs rise to the next level. Over the last 12 years I found what works and more importantly what doesn't work. We waste a lot of time and money doing things that don't work. So, from those 12 years, I've gained the ability to evaluate what club owners/management is doing well or not so well and provide a path and plan for correction. My expertise and experience is in the three areas of sales training, operational training and bottom line consulting. Some consultants are, for a lack of a better description, "Jacks of All Trades". They may

believe and say they can do everything well. Well, I don't say that. In fact, if I don't feel that I can serve you, I will recommend someone who can. I could say that I'm a marketing expert, but I'm not a marketing expert. That's not where my expertise lies. That is not where my expertise lies. My expertise is in sales training, staff operations training and in bottom-line consulting. I started Premium Performance Training because I have a passion for helping people rise to a higher level in their business performance."

GOOD ADVICE FOR CLUB OWNERS/OPERATORS

Asked if she could provide club owners/operators with some good advice about things they can do to bring their clubs to another level, she replied: "Three things: (1) Network - join your Regional Club Association and IHRSA. And, attend all of the IHRSA and CLUB INDUSTRY Conventions and Trade Shows. Visit with other clubs and club owners whenever you can. Go to their clubs and talk with them. (2) Spend a lot of time reading. Not just about our industry, but about other industries as well. (3) Go out and really observe what other industries are doing. We tend to get so focused on our own industry that we forget that there is anything else out there! The reason I suggest looking at other industries is that what generally works well in other industries will work well in ours, if adapted properly. Overall, be open to learning from other club owners, consultants and seek resources not previously sought.

MENTOR PROTEGE PROGRAM INTENDED TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONALIZATION

Woodard has developed, in cooperation with Janet Lossick, a Mentor Program for women. This program is intended to partner women with other women in the industry who seek expertise in a specific area. However, it is not necessarily to match experienced with inexperienced women. Women that are very experienced may be matched so that they can both share their high level of experience in a particular area. If you are interested in the Mentorship Program and are West of Colorado, call Janet Lossick at (714) 644-5063. If you are in Colorado, or East of that state, call Karen at: (303) 417-0653. The program will kick off on March 1st with the distribution of applications. This program stemmed from the Vision In Action Program that Woodard and Lossick developed (See Karen Woodard page 18)

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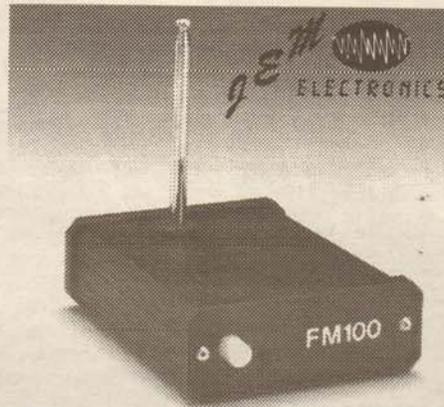
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SALESPERSON... "AMATEUR OR PRO?"

By Jack Tiller

If you are in sales for a living and are satisfied with your sales career, you're at 125% of quota and money is no longer an issue in your life, then turn the page and don't read this article!

Sales professionals are some of the highest paid wage earners in the world; however, the amateurs are some of the lowest paid. So, what's the real difference? I feel it's a combination of self confidence, learned skills, and applied knowledge in a consistent, laser-focused marketing game plan. Many times it's so easy to hide behind the myriad of excuses: "The markets off, the competition is too tough, our prices are too high, etc...."

Here comes the good news. Let's take a hard look at the PARETO PRINCIPLE (80/20 rule). The nation's second largest insurance company, employing literally thousands of sales people, studied their behaviors, attitudes and skill levels and here's what they found. The top 20% of the sales force earned 16 times more money than the average of the remaining 80%. The top 4% earned 32 times more and the top 1% made 54 times more.

You'll be amazed as I was when I share the real "cutting edge" differences; but first, let's explode a few myths. Myth #1 "Practice makes perfect." Not even close! Improper practice with old techniques and faulty communication styles will create average results at best. "Practice makes permanent."

Myth #2 "Hard work and intelligence will make you rich." The world is full of intelligent, hard working people who unfortunately, in 65% of the cases, according to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, will retire with less than \$1,000 a month in earnings. Working smart with predetermined goals and strategies will create incredible results. Myth #3 "It's too late for you to get started and really change or correct your outcomes." Poppycock! Change can be immediate and there are more opportunities in the world today for those who are committed to grabbing "The Brass Ring." Please read thoughtfully the following coaching tips that I send with conviction and passion.

• **SET CLEAR GOALS** - Clearly describe in writing what you really want out of life, where you want to live, who you want to surround yourself with, and the other details of your desired lifestyle.

• **CALCULATE DESIRED INCOME** - Calculate the desired yearly income you seek and then determine the monthly required phone calls, appointments, and presentations to hit that mark. (35% is a great closing ratio for most sales careers.)

• **CREATE A DAILY TRACKING SYSTEM** - Create a visual "tracking" system that holds you accountable for your daily activities.

• **ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE** -



Jack Tiller

Adjust your attitude to an all-time high, stay away from negative substances, people, and environments that bring you down.

• **STAY SOLUTION-ORIENTED** - Stay solution-oriented. Nobody likes a doomsayer-whiner that always complains.

• **INVEST IN PERSONAL EDUCATION** - Invest in your own personal library of books, tapes, and videos to truly become a master at your profession. Learn from the experience of others.

• **BECOME A PROFESSOR OF TIME MANAGEMENT** - Become a professor of time management. The best hand carried system in the world is called a "My Time Success Planner" and can be ordered for about \$50 @ 1-800-678-1689.

• **DEVELOP A DOGGED, NEVER QUIT MINDSET** - Develop a never quit mindset and always build other peoples' and your own self esteem. Praise good works.

• **STUDY HUMAN BEHAVIOR** - Study human behavior and watch for the many "unspoken" messages.

• **BE KIND TO YOURSELF** - Be kind to yourself and reward achievements. Take vacations and learn to relax.

• **AVOID BEING JUDGMENTAL** - Avoid being judgmental. Being right all the time can be a lonely place.

• **WATCH THE "SUPERSTARS"** - Watch the "SuperStars" in your industry and role model their success habits.

It has been a pleasure bringing this to you! I truly hope you find value. Great selling!

(Author - Jack Tiller, The Tiller Group and "Coach" Tiller can be reached at 2900 Delk Rd., Suite 70016, Marietta, Ga. 30067. (770) 984-1112.)

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WHY TENNIS HAS DECLINED

(More Reasons You May Not Want To Hear - Reason 5 of 10)

By Spike Gonzales

Reason #5: "It's just too competitive!" Yes, this is what you hear among those who have quit the game. A lot of people say it. They have negative feelings about the tennis environment, even if they appreciate the health, fitness and recreational attributes of the game.

What are they referring to?

First, tennis is seen as a win/lose activity. You either win or lose. This is not the case in many sports such as skiing, jogging, fishing and hiking. You're a winner by just participating! There is a gain, and nothing to lose. In other sports such as golf and bowling where there are "winners", the partici-

pants' sense of losing is mitigated by being able to measure their performance by averages. They evaluate themselves by how they did against their past personal records, rather than by a hierarchical outcome in relation to another human.

In golf and bowling, further, the sense of losing is not magnified as it is in tennis by the common consequence of being ousted from the activity. In most tennis events, tennis players not only suffer the blow of "losing" directly to someone else, but they are told intrinsically, "They cannot play any more." They're out of the draw.

Administrators have heightened the "win/lose" mentality of tennis in many ways. They have used elimination-based tournaments as the staple

of tennis activity. Players have been penalized by not being able to continue participating if they "lose", so generally, the vast majority of players in an event ultimately feel like "losers!" The more club and park leaders organize tennis events based on ongoing round-robin play or no-elimination formats, the better it is for the tennis culture!

Administrators have also allowed for the "win/lose" mentality in tennis to grow by putting huge external incentives into our playing culture. We probably have to live with the realities of gross prize money for professionals and the exorbitant value of college scholarships for junior players, but do we have to add to the success/failure issues in our own day-to-day events? Do we have to offer valuable racquet frames as prizes for junior tournament winners, or family vacations for adult league and tournament champions? The better alternative: give event participants equal chances to win the material prizes via drawings, while the winners still get token trophies. Reward participation more than winning!

Tennis administrators have also allowed for the development of broad and inflexible categorization of player ability levels. We have created a caste system for our players! People have deep strata of players just "below" them who are labeled as inappropriate partners. It has become an issue in the minds of tennis players as to whether they're called "4.0s" or "3.5's". It has actually become a factor in people leaving the game because of discontent with what they've been labeled!

In the 1979 launch article for the National Tennis Rating Program it was a self-fulfilling prophecy when we wrote:

Avoid the greatest pitfall

Norm's Notes

continued from page 5

Pit Yorke, Kempner! My prediction and this is only a prediction? The next report about Bally Total Fitness you will hear from me will be when I report that they have filed for Bankruptcy after years and years of red ink. If that happens, and again, I am only speculating, I will be able to give you a factual report because it will be recorded in the court records, will be public record and I won't have to put up with Hillman or Kempner's rudeness. Stay tuned.

A CLUB INSIDER News EDITORIAL CALENDAR is in the works and I welcome your input on what you would like to see

that the rating program could bring your tennis, that is attaching your own self-image to your rating. The numerical value given to your playing ability does not "brand" you for life, or even for a moment: it is merely an administrative aid to help place tennis players in appropriate programs and to help individuals find more compatible games beyond their present close-knit circles of playing partners.

The NTRP has been wonderful in helping organize national leagues, but it has fallen far short in its design to help tennis. It was, first of all, meant to be a system of 65 different playing levels, providing categorization in tenths of a point rather than the common half-points such as 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and so on. This would have allowed tennis players to feel a sense of changeability to their ratings, seeing them go up or down slightly according to their current form and effort.

More importantly, it would have enabled tennis organizers to change category levels periodically so players of any ability would have chances to win. Club events, for example, could have been adjusted by administrators to be at 3.7 - 4.2 levels in the spring and 3.3-3.9 in the fall. Players would not have been concerned with being at permanent "labeled ability levels" such as 3.5 or 4.0.

Unfortunately, enhancing the issue of win/lose in the tennis environment is this resultant broad half-point categorization of players (virtually paral-

us cover over the next year. I am always seeking CONTRIBUTING WRITERS who are experts and experienced in a specific area. The editorial lifeblood of THE CLUB INSIDER News is our Contributing Writer Network. No issue or topic that is important to our industry will be ignored, so call me at: (800) 700-2120 or Fax your suggestions to: (770) 933-9698.

WAYNE WESTWOOD, long-time owner of the Griffith Park Athletic Club in Beaverton, Oregon, and former IHRSA President and Board Member, has taken on a club management contract for the Murray Hill Athletic Club. Good luck with the new project Wayne!

Look for a new company



Spike Gonzales

leling the old "A/B/C/D" categorization the NTRP was meant to replace). It places many players into groupings they may deem as "second class." Not only do they feel helpless about their player ratings, they feel like winners or losers according to the label applied to them by some other human beings!

(Spike Gonzales has been building tennis markets since 1971. He was a prime developer of Tennis Corporation of America's® "Tennis In No Time"®, and an advisor to the USTA in starting Play Tennis America. An influential member of the USPTA, USTA, and IHRSA, he helped bring those organizations together to found the National Tennis Rating Program. He presently serves as an advisor to Tencaps, Inc., a USPTA - endorsed tennis rating system, and consults with clubs wishing to improve their marketing, management teams, and tennis professionals. He may be reached at: (941) 774-2442.)

out of Europe called **HYDROFORCE** which will be producing, get this, underwater stationary bikes and cross country ski machines.

DON WHITNEY, the Founder and CEO of Corporate Sports Unlimited, an Atlanta-based company that specializes in Corporate Event Planning and Corporate Fitness Center Management, has created a new - very successful Labor Day Road Race called the U.S. 10K CLASSIC. The race drew over 10,000 participants last Labor Day. Now, Whitney has added The National Inline Skating Championships to the days events.

Congratulations to **TONY De LEEDE** and his **Australian Body Works** team as they celebrate their 15th anniversary!

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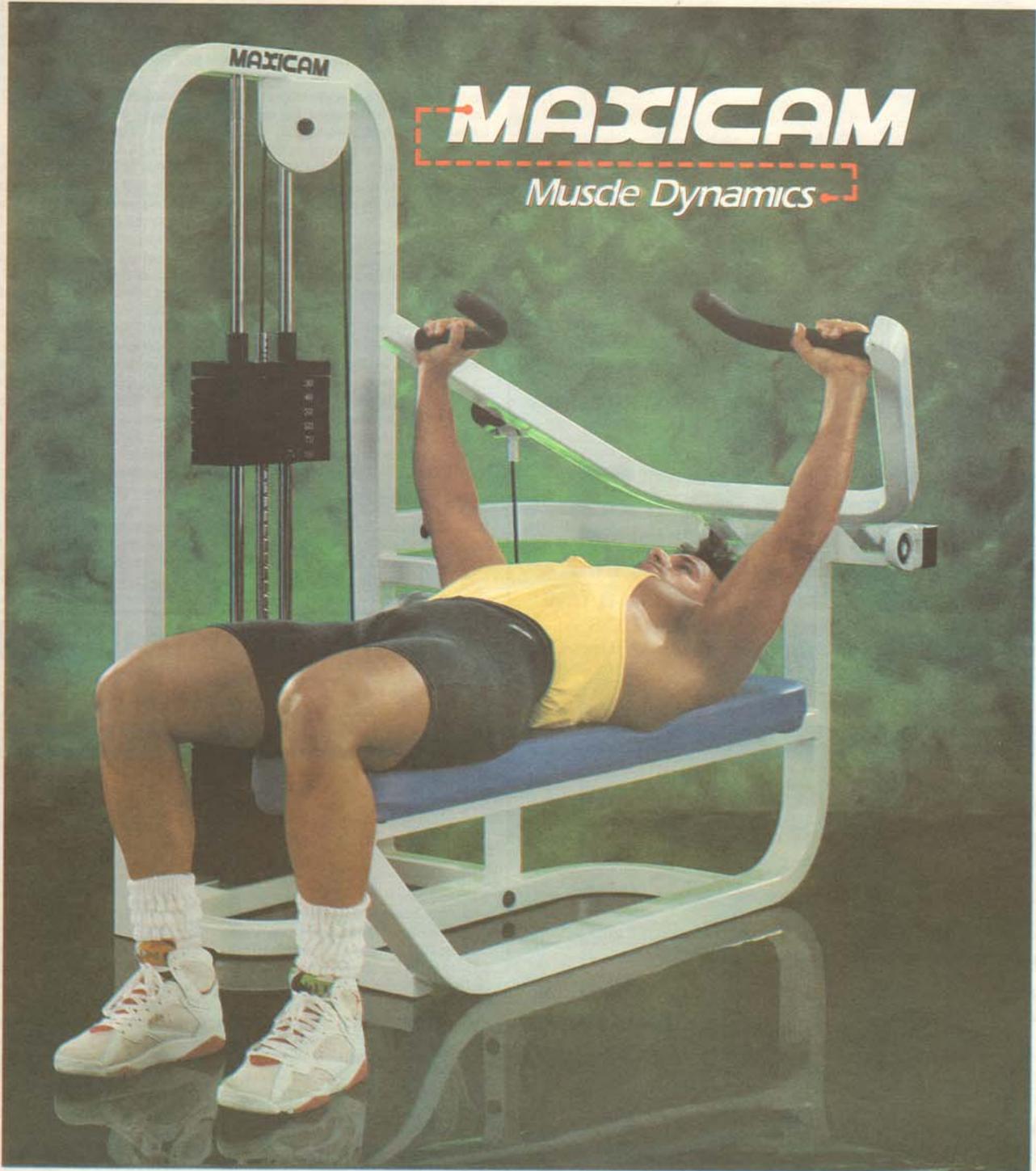
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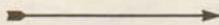
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Georgia Health Club Legislation Introduced

Atlanta, Ga. - House Bill 118, introduced in the Georgia Legislature by Representative Larry Smith, (Democrat-District 109), would allow health club members or operators to cancel a membership contract for any reason upon 30 day written notice.

Under the provision, the member must be reimbursed for any prepayment for unused health club services and a monthly contract could be terminated for any reason.

According to Representative Larry Smith, "The House Bill 118 has been referred to the House Committee on Health and Ecology and will not be heard by the Legislature in the 1997 Session." He added "This bill was introduced to 'get the attention' of the unethical health club operators in Georgia."

The delay and further study of this Bill is wise and appropriate. Because, if it was passed in the original form, it very easily could put a lot of Georgia clubs in serious financial trouble and some clubs out of business altogether.

Among supporters of the Bill were Tony de Leede, the owner of 14 Atlanta area Australian Body Works facilities. de Leede has, for years, been operating his clubs on a monthly dues basis with a maximum timeframe for membership contracts of one year.

Those opposed to the Bill include the Sportslife group (6 locations) and Bally Total Fitness (9 locations). Both Sportslife and Bally Total Fitness sell membership contracts for up to 3 years with no contract cancellation provisions after the 7-day State Law mandated cooling period.

Tim Mansour, the President and owner of 4 Atlanta-area Fitness International facilities indicated that while he did not favor the Bill in the form presented, he would favor some form of state standards criteria to limit the ease of entry into the business by inadequately prepared operators that typically set up shop in strip shopping centers. Mansour indicated that had the Bill been passed as proposed, he would "increase our initiation fees and continue our monthly dues program". He also expressed confidence that the Bill would not significantly impact his clubs because their operation is heavily focused on quality service for the members.

IHRSA, in a memo to Georgia membership clubs, commented on the Bill as follows: "Under this legislation, club operators would not be able to accurately forecast their membership revenue and club members would be forced to pay a higher price for a cancellation option they may not want. While IHRSA recommends that clubs offer a monthly membership option, consumers should be able to buy longer term contracts which offer a better value for health club membership and budgeting reliability for the health club operator."

Atlanta's Australian Body Works Celebrates 15 Years

Atlanta, Ga. - March 1, 1997 - Australian Body Works will celebrate its 15th birthday with a month-long series of community projects, festivities and special activities at each of the 14 locations on Wednesday, March 12, 1997. Australian Body Works opened its first club in March 1982. Today, Australian Body Works boasts the largest number of health clubs owned by a single organization in Atlanta, providing fitness to some 26,000 members through 10 full-service co-ed health clubs, one "Express" facility and three "ABW Women's Fitness Centers," all featuring CardioTheater.

"The fitness industry is a tough business, but Australian Body Works is a strong company that continues to grow," said founder and owner Tony de Leede. "We always want to give something back to the community that has been so good to us."

Australian Body Works will kick off its birthday celebration by sponsoring the USA Indoor Track and Field Championships at the Georgia Dome on March 1, 1997, including holding a "Baby Dash Down Under." Throughout the month, each Australian Body Works club will host at least one free, public seminar on topics such as health and longevity, children's safety, stress management, weight management, and vitamins and minerals. In addition, Australian Body Works will team up with the American Red Cross by hosting blood drives five Atlanta area locations. (March is Ameri-

can Red Cross Month) And, Zoo Atlanta's only pair of Emus from the land "Down Under" will be adopted by Australian Body Works and native Australian owner, Tony de Leede. De Leede will also be visiting different clubs during the month to teach his "Head Roo" double-step class.

On March 12, each club will treat members to a birthday party complete with balloons, cake and prizes. Several locations have other special events planned for that day, including a "Birthday Beauty Bash" at Stone Mountain with free hair, nail and make-up care, and a "Member Appreciation Day" at Parkaire, where member-vendors will be able to set up their crafts to create a mini-market.

As for what the future holds for Australian Body Works, De Leede said, "It will be hard to top providing the first-ever Olympic Village Health Club like we did this past year for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, but I have my eyes on Sydney 2000 of course and there is a lot of uncharted territory in the Atlanta fitness market. In fact, I will be making an important announcement in the next few weeks about a new "concept" club that we think will be the direction for the future of fitness facilities." De Leede has plans to open one, if not several, other new clubs during 1997 and to move the two largest Australian Body Works clubs into new, even larger facilities, "one of which will be a re-creation of our Olympic Village Health Club," DeLeede said. Installations of the Exercise Entertainment system, Cardio Theater, an affiliate company of Australian Body Works, continue to grow and have recently topped 1,200 locations including over 300 in international markets.

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Tennis Corp.

continued from page 6

"Play Tennis Chicago" combined with a Park District day camp and the class size averaged more than 60 children every Friday.

As originally planned, all revenues were plowed back into the program. There was enough generated to resurface nearly 20 Park District tennis courts — some on the north and some on the south side of Chicago.

It's second summer, participation doubled and revenues increased. Again, the money went towards the improvement of city court sites and "Play Tennis Chicago" branched out to cover even more territory.

The partnership between

Mid-Town and the Park District is now moving into its third year and Mahoney expects participation will continue to increase. This summer, they plan to introduce a USTA National Junior Tennis League. The league, which will provide loaner racquets and lessons at low or no cost, fits all the Park District criteria and will increase participation by more than 400 juniors.

"Of course, it's a growing and maturing process," says Mehrberg, "but I consider this program a terrific success. Our relationship with Mid-Town has evolved quickly and broadly and we're very pleased with their product."

Although most would categorize "Play Tennis Chicago" as a picture-perfect model of a

grassroots movement, the program has a few skeptics. As privatization becomes more prevalent in the public sector, some suspect these synergistic relationships are more than altruistic.

"The rap we've taken from some people is that we're doing this to create a feeder system for our club," says Alan Schwartz, Chairman of the Board of Tennis Corporation of America.

Schwartz explains that most participants live in areas quite remote from Mid-Town Tennis Club®, and "a majority of them probably couldn't afford to join an indoor club at this time."

Mahoney points out that, contrary to what some believe, the relationship Mid-Town has with the Park District is primarily a veiled credit to Donna Loyle and a thousand thank yous to Howard Ravis, as they have embraced this project when no other organization did. Howard and Donna have taken on the Female Entrepreneur Awards full force."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Woodard is high on the potential opportunities for women in our industry. She comments, "Being successful in the club industry requires different skills now than 20 or even 10

years ago. Women have a unique opportunity because of the innately feminine qualities of support, nurturing and detail orientation to welcome and integrate the relatively new markets and programs into our business successfully."

hicle to carry out the company's philosophy of doing their share to "grow the game."
 "We see the benefit of a program like this as the chance to increase tennis activities for the existing player and provide opportunities for the non-player," he says. "Assuming there was a benefit of increased memberships, it would exist for all the indoor clubs in the city, not just Mid-Town."

Both Mahoney and Schwartz hope to see "Play Tennis Chicago" develop into a program that other cities could implement.

"With more than 500,000 members nationally, the USTA has a tremendous volunteer core that is looking to thrust themselves into the grassroots movement," says Schwartz, who in ad-

dition to his capacity at TCA is also a current Vice President of the USTA. "If 'Play Tennis Chicago' can serve as a road map for other cities, the USTA can be a delivery arm for this type of non-profit program."

any other industry and those clubs that creatively rise above the standard will succeed. The factors that will continue to be a large influence on our business include: (1) More players than ever in the market. (2) Bigger and better financially backed players such as hospitals, corporate centers and municipalities. (3) Acquisitions and merger of clubs that can create stronger recognition in the market and advantages that single club operators don't enjoy.

With the help of the USTA and the TIA and other private industry leaders, Mahoney is optimistic that the game will indeed grow.

These influences provide both a positive and negative effect. (See Karen Woodard page 24)

...Karen Woodard

continued from page 10

four years ago.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AWARDS

Howard Ravis and Donna Loyle of CLUB INDUSTRY Magazine have embraced the concept of a Women's Manage-

ment Track at CLUB INDUSTRY Conferences. Through the Women's Management Track, Donna and Howard developed a concept of a Women's Entrepreneur Award. If you know of a female club industry entrepreneur that you feel might be deserving, check out the article in The CLUB INSIDER News this month and contact CLUB INDUSTRY Magazine for details on how to enter the woman of your choice for recognition of her efforts. Woodard comments on the development of the Women's Entrepreneurs Awards, "I want to give

PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Woodard has some definite thoughts about the future of the industry and she shared those with us: "The bar is being raised for our industry as it is with

any other industry and those clubs that creatively rise above the standard will succeed. The factors that will continue to be a large influence on our business include: (1) More players than ever in the market. (2) Bigger and better financially backed players such as hospitals, corporate centers and municipalities. (3) Acquisitions and merger of clubs that can create stronger recognition in the market and advantages that single club operators don't enjoy.

These influences provide both a positive and negative effect. (See Karen Woodard page 24)

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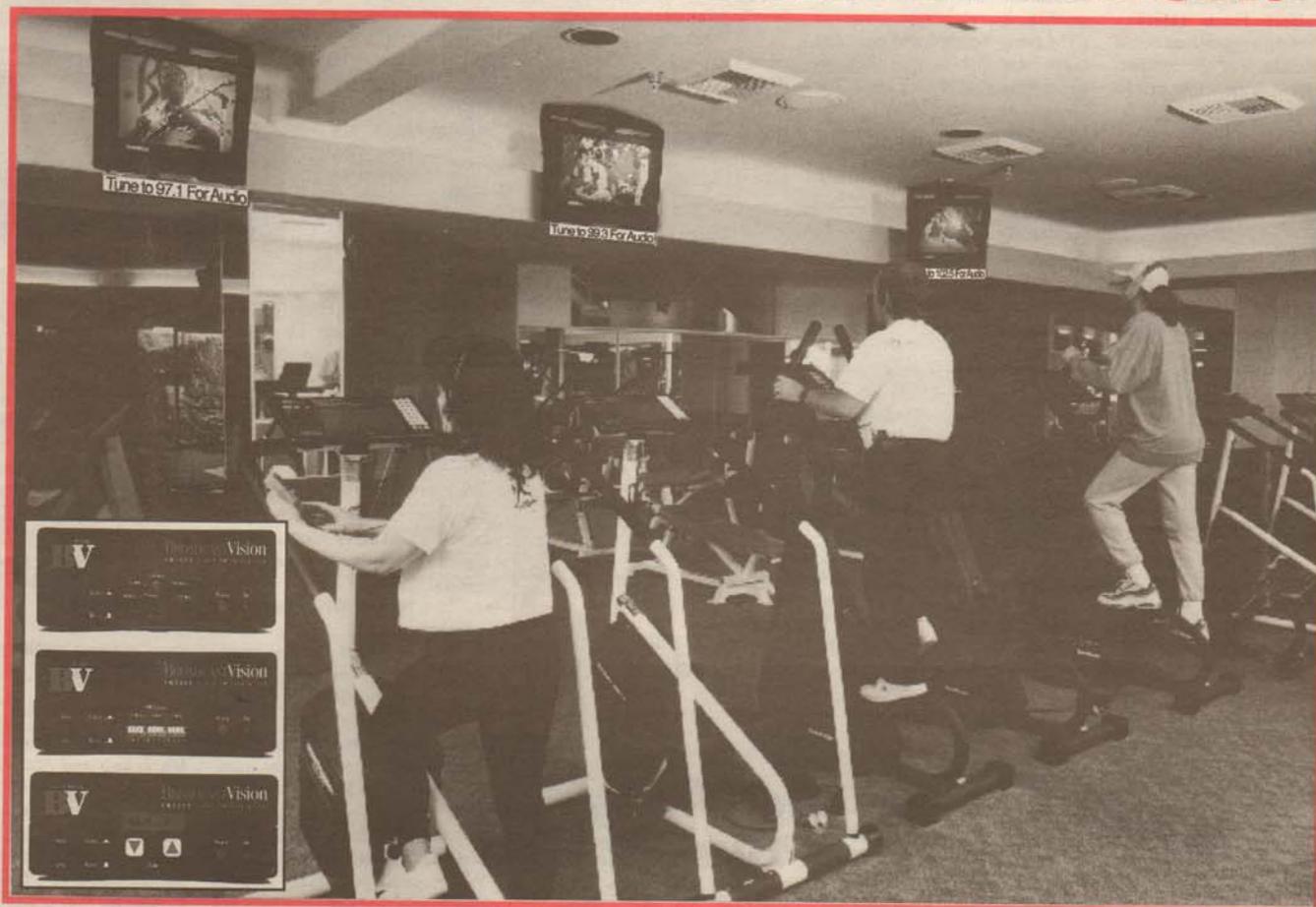
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MARKETING MATTERS

By Mike Chaet, Ph. D.

This **MARKETING MATTERS** contains excerpts of marketing questions asked of Mike Chaet in a recent interview with Hubert Horn, the Publisher of the German based **BODYLIFE INTERNATIONAL** Magazine.

Hubert Horn (HH) - "What marketing suggestions could you give to clubs that are competing with high volume - low priced fitness centers and clubs?"

Mike Chaet (MC) - "First, create a high quality video, which should be the very first thing that

you show a member prospect. This video should be used to presell the prospect and give them an overview of your **TOTAL** product. Second, use testimonials from satisfied clients. Third, always stress the length of time that you have been in business - many of the low-service clubs will be new to the market. Finally, provide a measurable service of the highest quality, develop relationships right from the start and continue these relationships after they become a member of your club. The key to long-term success will be in the relationship building process you have in place."

HH - "What simple mar-

keting tools would you recommend to club owners?"

MC - "Things like 'Do a Friend a Favor' cards are very successful - a simple referral card with five spaces for names and phone numbers. If members return the cards to the club they can get seven-day passes for their friends - the secret is low key, high quality - an easy way of getting members to think of their friends.

Another tool I like is what I call a Four-Week Fitness Planner which can be used while you are showing a prospect your club. This is used by the sales person (who can also be a fitness person) to plan the activity of the

prospect during their first few weeks at the club. This helps give people the security and discipline of a plan which has been tailored to their needs - helps the prospect to visualize their progress."

HH - "What about the quality of prospects from various types of marketing?"

MC - "Good question. The way we break this down is into high profile and low profile prospects. The tools I have mentioned are primarily to provide us with the highest profile prospects. The wonderful thing about using these kinds of tools is that they are extremely cost effective. The

low profile prospects, i.e. people who are less likely to join, will come from promotions like lead boxes. The low profile prospects tend to come from highly discounted membership clubs, and very often, if they do join, they don't stay. "Very often, low profile prospects actually cost your club significantly more, than a high profile prospect such as a referral.

HH - "What about trial memberships?"

MC - "If the trial membership is free, you will generate a lot of low profile prospects. I recommend that you charge up to 125% of the standard monthly dues - for a four week program. If your dues are \$40 per month, a good price for a 'trial' membership would be \$50. The logic behind this is perceived value. When people pay for something, they give value to it, and they are more serious about it. It is also a very good way to get people started on a fitness program without having to make a long-term



Mike Chaet, Ph. D.

commitment.

One word of warning on trial memberships. If you use them, make sure that they are used as part of a long-term marketing strategy. It is also very important that free trials are used at the right time of year - selling a cheap six-week membership in January, for example, simply does not make sense as this is the prime time of year when people are most likely to make a long-term buying commitment. As a rule, schedule trial memberships away from peak times of October, November, January and February.

(Mike Chaet is the Founder and President of Club Marketing and Management Services, a Helena, Montana club consulting firm. If you have a question for Mike, please submit it to him by fax at: (406) 449-0110, E Mail to CLUB1DOC@AOL.COM or mail to: Marketing Matters, c/o CMS, Box 1156, Helena, Montana, 59624. For additional information you may call Mike at: (406) 449-5559.)

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Sales & Desk

continued from page 8

son simply wipes the sheet off and we start again the next morning.

INCENTIVES

Incentives are one of the best ways to create a direct relationship between behavior and results. Isn't that why so many clubs have commission as a large part of their membership compensation package? If the front desk is a partner in membership, then why aren't we compensating them in a similar way? Clearly, it would not benefit the club to have a large part of the FD compensation be commission, however, they should get some perk for the club reaching it's goals.

1. A small percentage of total membership commission split between the FD staff. The split can be based upon the percentage of total hours worked by each FD person.

2. Dinners, movie tickets, club services are also valuable incentives.

3. Don't get stuck on giving an incentive based on the end result. To reach the end successfully, the process has to work well — consider rewarding specific aspects of the process that are crucial at the FD (i.e. greetings, phone verbiage, how they receive prospective members, looking for expired cards, etc.).

4. Make sure all staff that are eligible for an incentive know that they are and how to get it. We often assume that our staff has all the information they need to do their

jobs well when this is not always the case. There are some big gaps out there!

SUPPORT THE RELATIONSHIP

1. The FD is a hectic place throughout the day. When was the last time that you as a membership rep offered to go out and give the FD a break without them asking first? Don't you agree that having someone looking out for you always makes you want to reciprocate? Having the FD look out for us is a good thing. In short, when people feel supported as opposed to always struggling, performance skyrockets.

2. When a FD staff person does something well or verbalizes something just right, let'em know how it was good, why it was good and remember to thank them. Even if they need to improve on something, let them know they "did it 90% right and here's how you can make it 100%". Then model it for them several times.

3. Support the relationship by treating all the FD staff to lunch with the membership staff. Create some camaraderie that sometimes we're too busy to create in the club. At this lunch, recognize one or two of the FD staff for something they do that is particularly outstanding.

4. The most important thing we can do to support the relationship is to make sure that our FD staff gets the appropriate training from the very beginning. What I commonly see is that the FD staff is trained by a FD manager/Opera-

tions manager/Owner and the emphasis is primarily on answering phones, receiving members and guests, scheduling, etc. This is all good and necessary, however, there is very little emphasis placed on the importance of the membership process and how to impact it positively. Incorporate membership and new prospect training into your program by having the membership sales director/trainer do that part. By having the membership staff do this part of the training, a better relationship will begin earlier.

The creation of a partnership is done because one cannot usually do all things well, therefore, there is a need to bring in another whose assistance will allow for a more productive, creative or profitable scenario. It creates synergy. I urge you to examine the strength of the partnership between your FD and membership department. Remember, it's a "Triple A" move and after all, aren't we all really involved in the membership business?

(Article #6 next month will be entitled: "Successful Sales Standards... How Do You Score?")

Karen D. Woodard is President of Premium Performance Training and provides successful sales training, operations training and bottom line consulting to the health and fitness industry. You can phone or fax Karen at (303) 417-0653.

SALESMAKERS Tip Of The Month

Are You A Sales Person?

What does it mean to be a successful sales person? Here's what some experts say:

"Salesmanship consists of having the goods; being enthusiastic about them; telling your story to the customer or prospect sincerely and in the fewest possible words; feeling deep down inside that you are truly rendering them a service rather than merely being interested only in getting his money." - *Jerry Heischman*

"Personal magnetism is a mixture of rugged honesty, pulsating energy, and self-organized intelligence. I believe, absolutely, that the truth is the strongest and most powerful tool a person can use, whether they are fighting for reform or for a sale." - *Arthur Dunn*

"Successful salesmanship is 90% preparation and 10% presentation." - *Bernard Canfield*

Salesmanship is transferring a conviction or belief from a seller to a buyer.

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...Karen Woodard

continued from page 18

operational perspective.

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'A RISING STAR'

Karen Woodard is a 'Rising Star' in the club business and is already one of the top educators/trainers in the trade. Through her ownership and role as Vice President of her centers, she stays in close touch with the day-to-day details of the club business and for that reason will continue to relate well to her consulting clients and seminar attendees. An avid-regular exerciser herself, Woodard 'walks-the-talk'. Her unique role of being one of the few

industry educator/consultants who actually owns and operates facilities on a day-to-day basis differentiates her from most of the competitors in her field. This close relationship between the day-to-day realities of the business and the needs of her students benefits everyone she trains or consults with. She is mature and talented beyond her years and is dedicated to the goal of helping others rise to new levels of success.

(Norm Cates, Jr., is the Publisher of The CLUB INSIDER News, 'The Pulse of the Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Business'. A club veteran of 20 years, Cates was the 1st President of IHRSA and one of IHRSA's co-founders in 1980).



Karen Woodard

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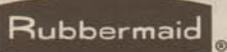
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NEIL SOL'S HEALTHCARE CONNECTION

Health Care - Health Club Education

By Neil Sol, Ph. D.

(Publisher's Note: Be sure to take the time to read this article because Neil Sol has pinpointed a syndrome which is now taking place in the club industry across the country. The syndrome is health club owners/managers who are attempting to engage in an arena in which they are ill prepared to be involved.... the arena? Health care relationships with health clubs. This same thing happened 15 years ago when many health club owners attempted to attract and sell health club memberships to corporations.

At the time, the health club industry was ill prepared and lacked the necessary evidence to convince corporations that fitness was good business. As a result, thousands of club owners/managers spun their wheels to no avail. Shortcut the wheel spinning by reading this article. Consider developing a relationship in health care with the guidance and leadership of Neil Sol, Ph.D. and Dr. Jason Conviser. Be on the leading edge in your community and differentiate your facility from all others in the market. Open your eyes to the vast new opportunities before you! Your time will be well invested!

HEALTH CARE - HEALTH CLUB EDUCATION

One very clear message the health club industry is beginning to understand about American adults is that they have a desire to assume the responsibility for their own health....which includes regular exercise, healthy eating habits and simply leading a healthy lifestyle. But, they lack the know-how and as a result have and will continue to solicit leadership from professionals: the health club and its staff.

What this writer has been realizing is that the health club owner/manager is in a similar position to the American adult. Many want to establish a relationship with a health care institution or provider, because of the obvious benefits to both parties, but lack the know-how to establish and launch the relationship. Club owners and managers should seek leadership from individuals who have a clear understanding and experience in the area of establishing health care relationships.

Since I began writing this column for THE CLUB INSIDER News, I have heard story after story from club owners/managers that have made attempts to create relationships with health care institutions, but have not been successful. And, in the cases where relationships with health care institutions were created, they were often one-sided and in favor of the health care entity. Many have told me that they felt they had no credibility with the health care entity and simply did not even try to create a relationship.

I have also heard stories from health club owners that were successful in establishing a relationship with health care entities. These club owners/managers studied the opportunities for a relationship, obtained information through reading or conference participation, realized their value to health care institutions, and either solicited leadership or negotiated with confidence to create a mutually beneficial and profitable relationship with health care.

As the American adult

has attempted to assume responsibility for their own health by:

- purchasing and exercising with equipment from their local home fitness equipment store

- purchasing exercise videos and/or books from their area Target Stores or WalMart

- becoming devout ESPN exercise show viewers they soon come to realize that the lack of interaction available with the exercise methods shown above leaves them looking for help or quitting. When they seek help, they turn to their local health club professional to provide it.

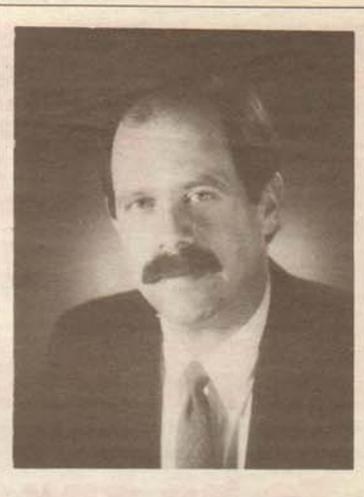
Club owners/managers that are trying to establish health care relationships without help will, in most cases, end up like the home exerciser.....either quitting or eventually giving up the solo effort and seeking help.

THE HELP IS HERE..... THE TIME IS NOW!

This need has become obvious to me as I interact with club owners/managers who are starting to wake up to their need for help. For that reason, Dr. Jason Conviser and I have developed a one day seminar entitled: "Developing the Health Care - Health Club Relationship", where club professionals can learn and understand the opportunities and strategies in leveraging a relationship with health care.

INTERACTIVE EDUCATION

Our seminar philosophy is to limit participation to a group size that enables interaction among the seminar participants and Jason and myself, so that participants can receive the education and direction that is specific to their situation. We believe that sitting in a large lecture hall listening to a speaker on the topic of health clubs and health care is similar to watching an exercise video on your television.... there is little opportunity



Neil Sol, Ph. D.

for interaction. And, individual needs are rarely, if ever addressed.

Our previous seminars have been successful because we encourage and facilitate interaction. We believe the concept of specific interaction is so important that we offer each seminar participant one hour of consultative direction covered by the base seminar fee. This one hour of one-on-one consulting time is provided after the seminar, when ideas and concepts of the seminar have been assimilated by the attendee. Our goal is not just to disseminate information, but to serve as personal trainers to the health club owner/manager interested in establishing a beneficial relationship with health care.

A relationship with health care presents a profitable opportunity for the club owner/manager. It will help insure future success. It will enhance your club's status in the community in which you operate. It will increase sales of all kinds within the club. It will enhance the professionalization of your organization.

Treat your investment in education in this new aspect of the industry as an investment in the future of your club. Your time and dollars will be more than well worth the investment!

(Neil Sol, Ph.D. is the President of Health Vantage, Inc., a consulting firm for the health club industry which specializes in the relationship between the health care community and health clubs. Neil may be reached at: (303) 399-3224.)

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SALES INDEPENDENCE - PART I

By Ben Midgley

Just for a moment, think about membership sales if there were no walk-ins or people calling on the phone. How many memberships would you sell then? Would you still meet your monthly goals?

Lets add to this formula no club-based referral promotions, (win a t.v. or a trip or a free whatever) and on top of that, let's, just for fun, add in that you cannot even ask for the referrals, they have to be given to you!

Does this change your answer at all? It very well may as long as you are being totally honest with yourself. The only way for you to answer I would sell a lot anyway, is if you receive and then in turn sell a large amount of referrals from happy members.

There is a way to confidently say I would sell a lot anyway

if someone were to ask you that question with the restrictions imposed above. It is only when you can positively answer questions like this one without hesitation and without question, that you can be considered an independent salesperson. Once you are an independent salesperson you are not only free from worries of finding someone to sell to, you are also free from worrying about hitting your monthly goals and deadlines, you are free from stress and able to enjoy your position and the people around you much, much more.

In order to accomplish this type of sales independence you need to be a well rounded salesperson. This means you understand the entire process from both perspectives: yours and the customer's. In this article we are going to look at the sales process from the point of view of our customers, the membership prospect.

Two things before we get going. The question is: "How was

your experience at the health club?" and the person answering the question is you, so you need to pretend and set yourself into the role of this person. I will set the stage; your name is Jerry. You work locally, you are married with one child on the way and you enjoy fishing. This article will be written from this perspective from here on. Don't forget to think as if it were you.

Jerry how was your experience at the health club?

Answer: "A friend of mine, by the name of Don, works out at a health club and told me about it. He has been trying to get me to go to the club with him. He mentioned that the club has a lot of equipment, an aerobic studio and a few racquetball courts. Don also mentioned that if I go down to the club I need to see someone named Gary who works there and sells memberships. He said Gary would look out for me.

So one day I went down to the club to take a look around. When I got there, I asked for Gary. Luckily, Gary was in. He came over and shook my hand and asked: "How are you doing and how can I help you?" I told him Don mentioned I should stop by and see him. He kind of chuckled and said that Don was a terrific guy and that he was really enjoying himself at the club. He then asked me what I was looking to do, so I told him I have been very busy at work and my wife and I had a baby on the way. So, I thought it might be good for me to get into a regular exercise program. He congratulated me on expecting a baby and asked what I did for work. I told him I was an insurance adjuster. He said his brother-in-law was also in the insurance field. So, after talking to each other for a little while and seeing the club, he asked if I wanted to see the different membership options and prices. I said yes.

As we were going over the options he offered me a beverage, which I declined. He explained to me that there were several options that might work out well for me; but, he reminded me to keep in mind that I should go with the most economically sensible decision. Also, to make sure if I commit to an extended membership, like a year, that I really be sure that I would use it all. After going over all the pros and cons of each membership option with Gary, I decided that a month-to-month membership billed through electronic transfer from my checking account would be the best plan for me. I felt a little unsure at first about giving my checking account number, but Gary told me if I had any problems to contact him directly and he would take care of it for me. As we were filling out the paper-

work, he mentioned that there was a thirty-day money back guarantee and that I could terminate the agreement during that period if I was not completely satisfied and happy with my membership. That also made me feel very comfortable.

After completing the membership paperwork, Gary shook my hand and thanked me for joining. I then left. I came in about three days later for my first workout with my friend Don, who was glad I had finally joined. After working out for about twenty minutes Gary approached Don and I and said hello to us both by name. He asked if there was anything he could do for us. We replied that we were all set for the time being. He then stayed and chatted for a few minutes. After he left I mentioned to Don that I was surprised Gary remembered my name. Don said Gary knows everybody in the club and that he is always ready to help someone if they need assistance.

I came in again about three days later feeling a little sore. As Don and I walked in we saw Gary on the phone. He still acknowledged us and waved hello while on the phone. We went downstairs and tried out a few machines in addition to our regular work out and had a real good time. We stayed for about forty-five minutes and then as we were leaving Gary was still very busy, but none the less, he said goodbye to us both as we were leaving.

Well, it has been about two months now and every time I am in the club it seems like Gary is right there checking up on me. As it turns out, Gary is married and he and his wife are planning on having a baby too, so he is always asking me about how my wife is doing with our baby. Over the past two months we have really gotten to know each other pretty well. As we were talking I mentioned to him that a friend of mine at the insurance company, who is a salesperson, is very stressed out and that I would like to bring him down to the club. Gary offered to give me a guest pass for him and even offered to meet us at the club when we come down just in case my friend has any questions or needs...he will be right there. He gave me a pass with my friend's name on it and I told him I will call him to set up a time for us all to meet. Gary also gave me a tip on a new fishing lure.

THE WAY IT SHOULD BE... IF YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!

That's how the membership experience could look to a prospect if you make it look that way! What could be better than that scenario? A happy member, a good relationship with that member and a referral to top it off! Very often salespeople get caught in the intricate as-



Ben Midgley

pects of selling and lose sight of the simple things that make a sale. The other problem is that sometimes salespeople feel their job is to sell and not to overdo mingling with the members. They forget to follow-up. Sell the prospect and ask for a referral immediately because they are excited about joining and want to give you the names of their friends and neighbors! NO! If you conduct yourself in that manner, you lose the opportunity to position yourself as the sincere and genuine person that you are. You have then officially placed a dollar sign on the sale rather than a bond of trust. In addition, you make developing a relationship more difficult for yourself.

Spending money to buy something, no matter what it is, is a part of life. You can't have what you want without spending money. You buy things everyday, so do I. The issue is not the money. The point is that people are more concerned about feeling good about spending the money, than spending the money itself. So, don't be worried about getting to the buck..... be concerned about getting to the person.

For years I have seen new sales approach after new sales approach. All of these approaches are designed to outmaneuver the buying defenses of people. This is not necessary. You are not selling to out-think anybody. We are selling to be ethical, professional and concerned about the people we work with.

Ask yourself this question: What qualities would I like to see in a salesperson that I was working with if I was making a purchase? (No matter what that purchase might be, a car, insurance, club membership, etc.)

Now, think about your answer for a moment. How many people out in the world would have said something different than you just did? Honest, sincere, trustworthy. Nobody. Everyone out there to one extent or another has the same wants in life: family, friends, health and happiness just to name a few. So, (See Midgley page 30)

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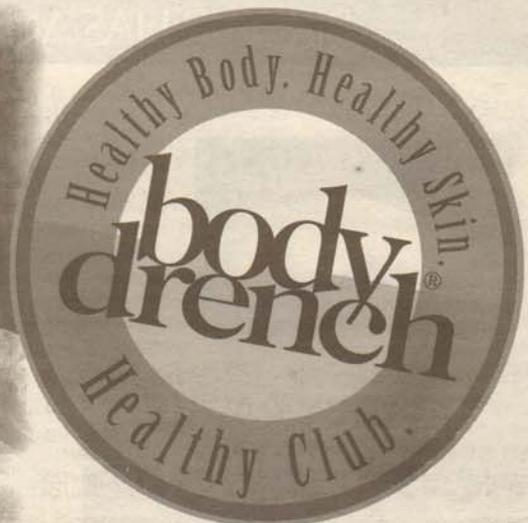
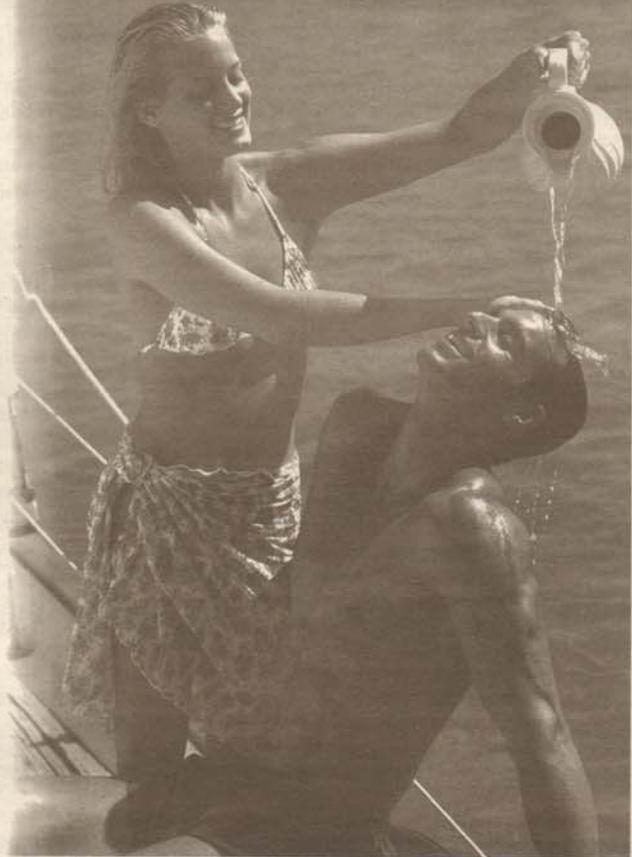
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Midland, Michigan - Brett Hobden is formerly from Australia by way of Vancouver, British Columbia and is the Managing Director of The Midland Community Tennis Center in Midland, Mi.

The Midland Community Tennis Center is in its 25th year of operation. Funded and owned by the Dow Corporation, Dow Corning Corporation, and several related Foundations, the 32-court (16 indoor and 16 outdoor) 100,000 square foot facility recently underwent a \$1.5 million renovation which included the installation of a BEST Lights, Inc. lighting system.

Hobden raves about the quality of the BEST Light Products, the quality of the work performed by the BEST Lights Team, and the actual dollar savings that the BEST Lights Systems is providing. "The Bonus," says Hobden, "is that we expect the payback on our investment, for the entire lighting system, to be within 2 1/2 to 3 years based on the savings in electrical costs that we are experiencing! "Our lighting

costs have been reduced \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year!

Before the BEST Lights installation, the facility had 276 light fixtures generating 50-55 foot candles of light. The BEST Lights System allowed the removal of 100 light fixtures (100,000 watts!) to light the same number of courts. The surprising thing was that after the installation of the BEST Lights System, we increased our lighting levels by 36% to 80-85 foot candles evenly across the court. Hobden is particularly happy with the lighting levels that BEST Lights, Inc. has provided in the "Hard-to-light" areas at the baseline and in the corners of the courts. Hobden comments, "We carefully researched the available lighting systems on the market and we determined that the BEST Lights system produced significantly higher lighting levels than any other lighting product in the market. The concept is simple. The BEST Lights fixtures, because of their unique, Patented

design, simply produce more light for your energy dollar. Our members are particularly happy with the high, even lighting levels along the baseline and in the corner areas which are traditionally darker than the rest of the court. Lighting over the entire surface of the court is significantly better."

Hobden was also happy and impressed with the installation work of the BEST Light Team. Hobden adds, "The owner of BEST Lights, Inc., Gary Yurich, is a really nice guy to work with, and he is an honest professional. He accommodates whatever you need for your facility willingly. For example, we needed to replace the existing ballasts for our lights because of a bad "Buzzing" problem. The job was well done, and completely eliminated the problems we had with the ballasts. The BEST Lights Team provided great service to this club, and I like the fact that they have a relamping program. The program is "Turn-Key", and makes sure that the relamping, which is normally nec-

essary every two years, is done quickly and professionally. We are happy and confident that BEST Lights, Inc. was the best choice in tennis court lighting that there is."

(BEST LIGHTS, Inc. has been an advertising sponsor of The CLUB INSIDER News for over two years. Gary Yurich and the BEST Lights, Inc. team may be reached at: 1-800-KIL-A-WAT or -800-545-2928.)



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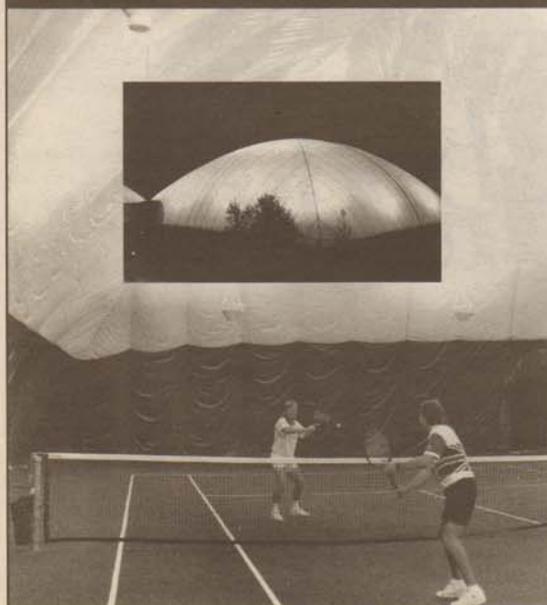
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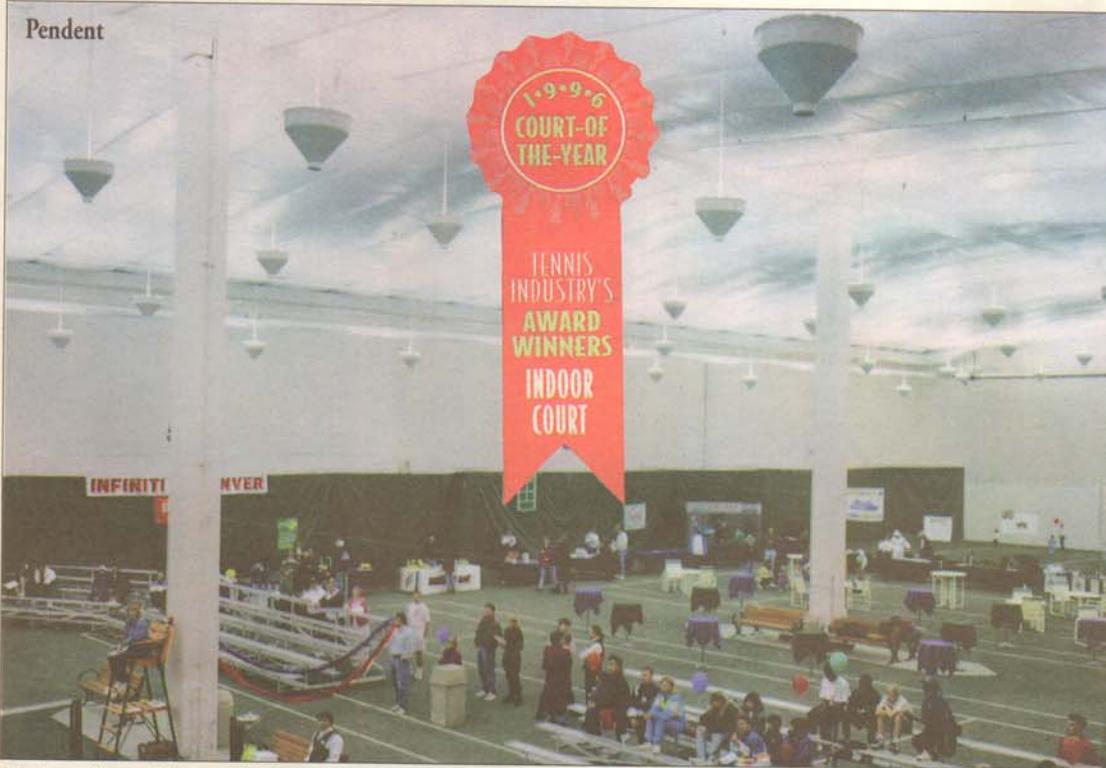
continued from page 28

never for a moment think that you are very different than anyone you sell to. Look out for your prospect's best interest. Be interested in them after the sale. Do everything you can for them and you will stand out. Make your relationship with your members the most important part of your job.

Sales consultants all over the world will argue their techniques until they are blue in the face, but that is a difficult argument for them to win. Stick with what you believe in and what you know is right and you will go far.

(Ben Midgley is the Sales Director and Corporate Fitness Director for Saco Sport and Fitness in Saco, Maine. Ben won the 1995 IHRSA Sales Person of the Year Award by personally selling over 900 memberships in one year! Ben received the last Salesperson of the Year Award that IHRSA will present. The honor has now been changed to IHRSA's Sales Team of the Year Award beginning in 1996. The Sales Team of the Year Award for 1996 was presented by IHRSA in December, '96, to Joe Cirulli's Gainesville Health and Fitness Center's Sales Team.)

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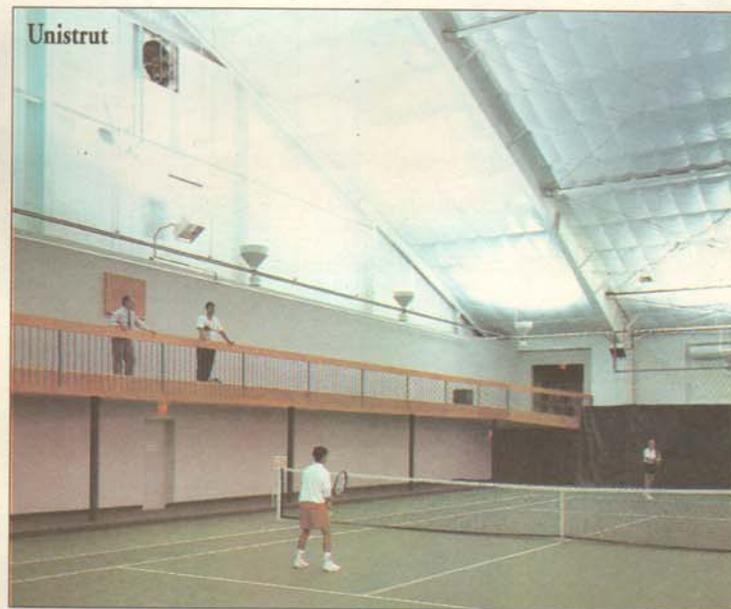


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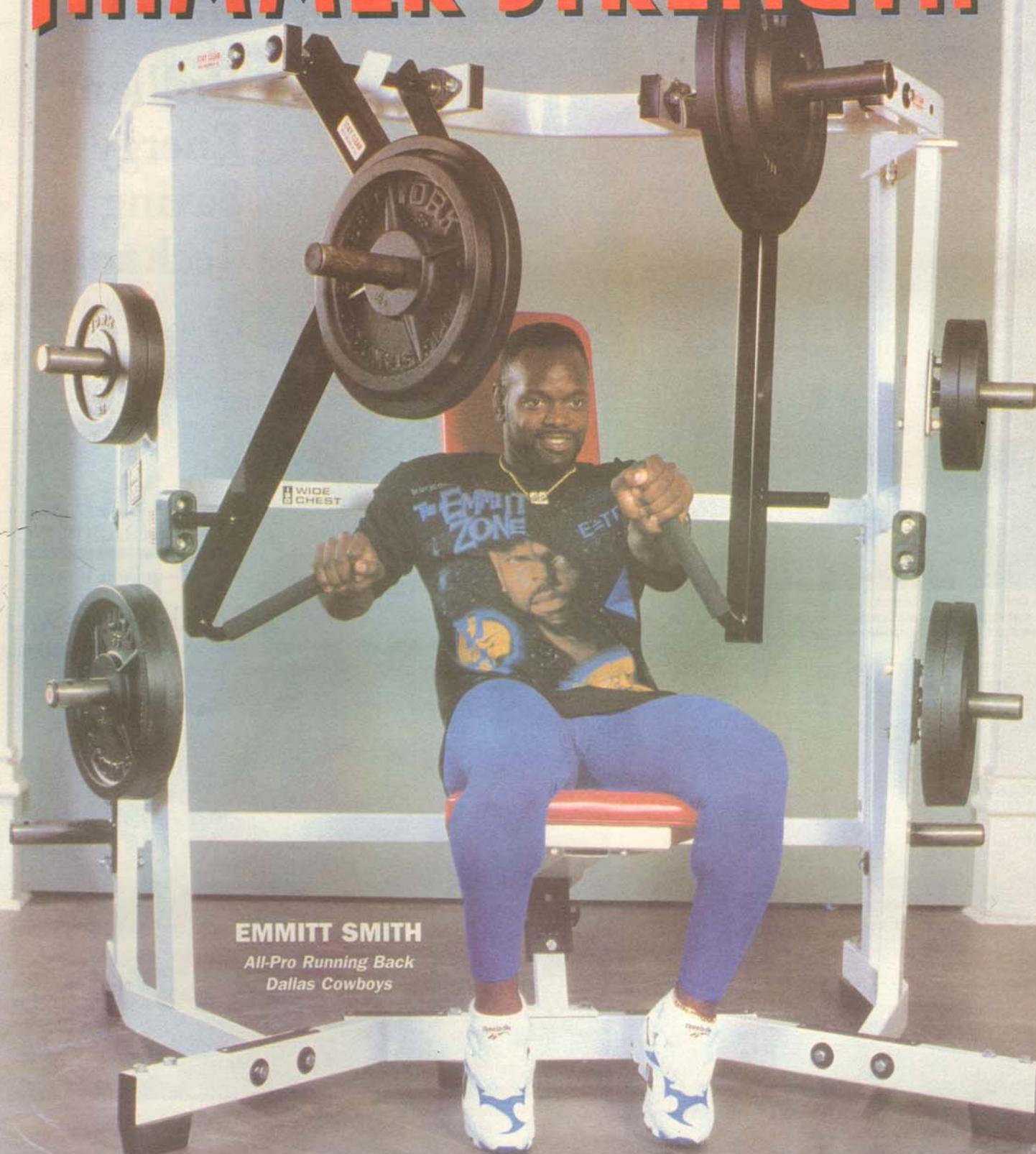
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