

Norm Cates' **CLUB INSIDER**TM

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry



Rob Goldman, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of The Columbia Association

Columbia
Association

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Rob Goldman and The Columbia Association

The Quality of Life People

AUGUST 2013

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

Rob Goldman and The Columbia Association

The Quality of Life People

By: Justin Cates

"There really can be no other right purpose of community except to provide an environment and an opportunity to develop better people. The most successful community would be that which contributed the most by its physical form, its institution and its operation to the growth of people."

-James Rouse, 1963

James Rouse, Founder of Columbia, Maryland, spoke those words

in a 1963 speech, and they eloquently describe the ideal many communities strive to live up to but few truly achieve. The city of Columbia, Maryland is a planned community, designed from the ground up by James Rouse and The Rouse Company. Two years prior to the founding of Columbia, an Association was created to steward the community's perpetual growth into the future. The Columbia Association is that entity and became that steward. To this day, the Association's record of achievement is incredible, evidenced by Columbia, Maryland constantly ranking as



one of the United States' best cities to live.

As a trade journal for owners and operators of health and fitness clubs, we understand that your organization is not

building a community from the ground up.

Nonetheless, there are lessons to be learned from the things The Columbia Association (See **Rob Goldman** Page 10)

Club Industry Returns to Chicago

BOULDER, CO - Club Industry Conference and Exhibition, the premier independent fitness industry event returns to its roots in Chicago, October 23 - 25, 2013, at McCormick Place Lakeside Center.

Club Industry's 27th annual event will bring together commercial club operators with those in the non-profit, corporate, medical wellness, university, government and military markets. The show draws attendees from top facilities, such as Gold's Gym, Life Time Fitness, 24 Hour Fitness, Crunch and Fitness Formula Clubs, as well as executives and staff from YMCAs and Jewish Community Centers, owners of cycling studios, functional training gyms and boxing studios, hotel spa directors, university recreation center directors and personal trainers and instructors from these facilities.

Highlights for Club Industry 2013 include:

•Exhibits and Demos from Legacy Partners, such as Precor, Technogym, Star

Trac, Octane Fitness, ABC Financial and Les Mills, showcasing their products in larger booth spaces and reengaging with invigoration as a part of Club Industry LIVE as well as opportunities for NEW companies to break into the industry as a part of the New Exhibitor Program.

•Special Recognition, a toast and a chance to network with the best in the business at the "Top 100" Fitness Facilities Reception, as recognized by Club Industry Magazine.

•A revamped Education and Training Program featuring Keynote Speaker, Bridget Brennan, who will explore the idiosyncrasies of female buying power and how the Club Industry (owners, operators, marketers, trainers) can capitalize on this prowess to better their business.

•The CEO Summit, which is the only small group symposium where C-level executives within the fitness industry have the platform to share compelling business content, integrated panel discussions, rich peer interaction and discuss how to grow the industry.

Scott Manion Passes On

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Scott Manion, a resident of Charlotte, North Carolina, formerly of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died suddenly on July 28, 2013, at the age of 52. Beloved son of the late James and Jo Anne Manion, he is survived by his brother Mark (Renee) Manion of Delafield, WI; sisters Linda (Tom) Manion Hirst of Whitefish Bay and Nancy Manion Bartley of Denver, CO; and further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and good friends. Scott was born and raised in Whitefish Bay, WI. He attended UW-Stevens Point and became a successful Sales Account Executive at Fiserv, Inc. winning its prestigious Sales Person of the Year award for several years.

Scott enjoyed fishing, mountain biking and watching professional sports. He was a loyal Green Bay Packer fan and was always up for rooting his team on. Scott had a true love for his family, he will be missed more than words could ever express. Even though his physical being is no longer with us, his spirit will forever live on in the hearts of his family and all who had the



Scott Manion and a Friend at Club Industry 2007

privilege of knowing him. Memorials in Scott's name may be made to the Salvation Army of Charlotte, North Carolina or www.castforkids.org/foundation. Feerick Funeral Home, Milwaukee, WI (414) 962-8383, is entrusted with his arrangements.

Inside The Insider

- The Habit of Winning - **By:** Donna Krech
- "New & Improved!" - **By:** Derek Barton
- Five Steps to Championing a Program in Your Facility - **By:** Laurie Cingle
- Membership Doesn't Provide Results... But... - **By:** Maria Parrella-Turco
- Sell Your Health Club For More Than It's Worth - **By:** Jim Thomas
- Leadership and Our Stress Response - **By:** Bill McBride
- Revisiting "10 Characteristics of High Retention Clubs" from IHRSA 2004 - **By:** Chris Werte
- Fitness Management & Consulting Launches Gyms for Sale Website
- Life Fitness *Personal Trainers To Watch* Final To Be Held At Nuffield Health London
- And of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

•**Hello Everybody! This is your CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader since 1993 checking in!**

•This Norm's Note has two parts and shares some very sad news:

•**ROB GOLDMAN**, our cover story interview subject this month, is the **Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of The Columbia Association in Columbia, Maryland**. Rob stunned my son, **JUSTIN**, and me, when he informed Justin at the beginning of his cover story interview on August 5th that his wife, **BRENDA**, had passed away the week before! **Our most sincere condolences go to Rob and his family**, along with my own expression of *total amazement and awe* that Rob had the *willpower and guts* to press on with his cover story interview. **May BRENDA GOLDMAN Rest In Peace.**

•**BARRY BLEUER**, my long-time friend who's now a member of the **Jonas Software team**, informed me via a phone call on August 5th that our mutual friend, **SCOTT MANION**, a very popular and very successful member of the **CheckFree** and **Fiserv Teams** years ago before he left those companies, died from his own action on **Sunday, July 28th**, in **Charlotte, North Carolina**. I had gotten to know Scott over 15 years ago when he worked for what was then **CheckFree**. He was a really **FUN**

guy, and it just breaks my heart that his life had degenerated so badly that he had to end it in this sad, sad way. My most sincere condolences go to his Family (See **Page #3** for **Scott's Obituary**). **May my friend, Scott Manion, Rest In Peace.**

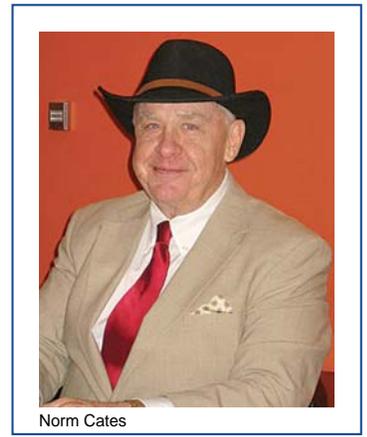
•**Boy oh boy, is America a great country or what? Hmm... Hmm... Hmm!**

•I'd like to send out a special **Thank You** to **CHRISTINA DORT, Director of Marketing for Leisure Sports**, for her kind assistance last month on the production of our **July cover story featuring Leisure Sports**. **Thank you, Christina!**

•**This just in. Blink Fitness**, a product of **Equinox**, held a **Grand Opening of their 2nd club in Brooklyn, New York on August 10th**. The new facility is **15,500 square feet** and joins other **Blink Fitness** locations in the **New York City Triboro area**. **Blink Fitness** debuted its affordable fitness brand just over two years ago and has since grown to sixteen locations with openings scheduled over the next twelve months in **Chelsea, Astoria and White Plains, New York**, which will more than double that number. **Blink's** clean, well-designed workout environment focuses on basic fitness elements: brand-name cardio and strength training equipment, free weights and a dedicated functional training area. **Stay tuned!**

•**Here they go AGAIN! Gold's Gym International (GGI) in Dallas, Texas**, has announced that former hotel man, **JIM SNOW**, is the latest **GGI CEO ejected out of the TRT Holdings, Inc. revolving door of failed Gold's Gym CEOs**. His most recent predecessors include **JAMES WEAVER** and **DAVID SCHNABEL**, and it's going to be fun to see who has the nerve to step in to attempt to survive working for **TRT Holdings, Inc.** for more than two years. During the past eight years, GGI has gone through what could best be described as a *revolving door* with CEOs who haven't made it for one reason or the other. **Should the honest truth be told**, were it not for the **Gold's Gym Franchise Association (GGFA)**, and their terrific **Team**, led by **GINGER COLLINS**, I believe that GGI would be in a *world of hurt*. I believe that were it not for the GGFA efforts of Ginger and her Team working with the *Franchisee-only Board of Directors*, which currently includes: **MIKE EPSTEIN, President; BARRY FIELD, Vice President; ADAM PONZIO; JOHN CUSTARD; ELIUD GARCIA; KIM KENYON; JOE HARRISON; and Directors Emeritus, GORDON JOHNSON and BLAIR McHANEY, the Gold's Gym Brand would be kaput by now.**

More thoughts here that the **Gold's Gym Franchise Association (GGFA)** may actually be doing the work that the Franchisor, **Gold's Gym International (GGI)**, **should be doing**. I do know that GGI is **being PAID by the Franchisors via their Franchise Fees to do the work that's necessary to support and make Gold's Gyms Franchisees**



Norm Cates

everywhere successful. But, I suspect that GGI is not really doing much work for their Franchisees. I only say that because of the wealth of support for the Franchisees that I see produced by GGFA. In my opinion, the **Gold's Gyms Franchisees** have not been getting full value from GGI owner, **TRT Holdings, Inc.** for a long time now. Also, in my opinion, and were I a **Gold's Franchisee**, I would start a never-ending drum beat to get rid of GGI altogether by putting together a group of **Gold's Franchisees** and outside investors as needed to **buy TRT Holdings, Inc., OUT**. Yes, I've said that before, and *I will say it again...* I think the **Gold's Franchisees** should find a way of getting rid of GGI owner, **TRT Holdings, Inc.** Thanks to **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author, DEREK BARTON, the Gold's Gym brand is Legendary and Iconic**. The **Gold's Gym** (See *Norm's Notes Page 6*)

About Club Insider

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20 Years and Counting!

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PUBLISHER and EDITOR - Norm Cates, Jr.
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER - Justin Cates

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CLUB INSIDER
 P.O. Box 681241
 Marietta, GA 30068
 (O): (770) 635 - 7578
 (F): (678) 826 - 0933

www.clubinsideronline.com

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Thank You to Our Contributing Authors

- Rick Caro - President, Management Vision, Inc. - (212) 987 - 4300
- John McCarthy - 25-Year Executive Director of IHRSA
- Joe Moore - IHRSA President & CEO - (800) 228 - 4772
- Andy Graham - Founder, NEXT Fitness - andy@nextfitness.co
- Bill McBride - Founder, BMC3 - BillMcBride@bmc3.com
- Brenda Abdilla - Founder, Management Momentum - www.managementmomentum.net
- Bruce Carter - President, Optimal Design Systems International - (954) 385 - 9963
- Casey Conrad - Communications Consultants - (800) 725 - 6147
- Derek Barton - Owner, Barton Productions - derek@bartonproductions.com
- Donna Kreech - Founder and President, Thin & Healthy's Total Solutions - (419) 991 - 1223
- Dr. Cary Wing - Principal, CHW Global - carywing@aol.com
- Dr. Kevin Steele - Principal, Communication Consultants - kdstelephd@yahoo.com
- Greg Maurer - New Paradigm Partners - gmaurer@newparadigmpartners.com
- Jeffrey Keller - President, Independent Health Club Networking Association - Jeffrey_Keller@msn.com
- Jim Thomas - President, Fitness Management USA - (800) 929 - 2898
- Karen Woodard-Chavez - President, Premium Performance Training - Karen@karenwoodard.com
- Laurie Cingle - President, Laurie Cingle Consulting and Coaching - laurie@lauriecingle.com
- Maria Parrella-Turco - COO, fitRewards! - map@newparadigmpartners.com
- MaryBeth Bradley - Marketing Coach, Susan K. Bailey Advertising - (877) - 749 - 2809
- Michael Grondahl - Founder of Planet Fitness
- Mike Manning - Owner, Strategic Advice - manning@strategicadvicellc.com
- Ron Alterio - Northeast Regional Director of Sales, Visual Fitness Planner - ron@myvfp.com
- Thomas Plummer - National Fitness Business Alliance - (800) 726 - 3506
- Tracey Bourdon - Susan K. Bailey Marketing & Design - (888) 349 - 4594
- Will Phillips - Roundtables for Executives - Will@REXRountables.com



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...Norm's Notes

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brand should be owned and operated by **Legendary and Iconic people, not wannabees**. To find them, all you have to do is look at the roster of long-time Gold's Gym Franchise owners such as **GORDON JOHNSON, BLAIR McHANEY** and other Gold's Gym Franchisees who've lived and breathed the great brand for decades. **TRT Holdings, Inc.** should finally wake up, smell the roses and realize that they are peeing into the wind.

• **JOHN COFFEE** is a long-time gym

owner and leader in the world of **free weight training and competition** in the **Marietta, Georgia** area. He really has worldwide fame in the sport and the word "**Legend**" comes to this author's mind when thinking of the one and only, **John Coffee**. It was recently reported by **The Marietta Daily Journal Newspaper** that **Coffee's Gym** recently took the highest honors in the **United States Women's Weightlifter's Division**, taking their **19th National Championship** at the **USA Weightlifting Senior National Championship**. The Team narrowly missed winning last year's **National Title by just one point**. But, this year, they went

to the **USA Weightlifting Senior Nationals** in **Cincinnati, Ohio** loaded for bear. **Coffee's Gym** women began competition in 1983, and this year's team got separation early and was named the winner after the second day of competition. **John Coffee** was quoted by **ADAM CARRINGTON**, reporter for the **Marietta Daily Journal**, as saying, "We've done a lot of miles on women's and men's weightlifting. We were lucky enough to win it again. Last year, we lost it by one point. We were kind of ready this year." Each competitor got three shots to do their best in the **two Olympic weightlifting moves, the snatch and the clean and jerk**, and points were awarded based on the combined total of the highest two successful lifts to determine an overall result. The winners were: **KELLY REXROAD WILLIAMS** placed 2nd in 105-pound class, **JODIE VAUGHN** placed 2nd in 114-pound class and **SYDNEY GOAD**, placed 6th in the 105-pound class. Sydney is the 16-year old daughter of **ROBIN-BYRD-GOAD**, who competed in the **2000 Olympics**. **RACHEL YORK** placed 4th in the 152-pound class, **RACHEL BOMMICINO** finished 5th in the 145-pound class, **WHITNEY WELSH** was eighth at 138 and **LEANNA LIN** was 15th at 152. **John Coffee** also trained **1996 Olympian, TOMMY INGLALSBE**; **two-time Olympian, BRYAN JACOB**; and **1988 Olympian, MIKE JACQUES**. **Congratulations to John Coffee and everyone at Coffee's Gym in Marietta, Georgia!**

• **Congratulations to legendary club business icon, MARK MASTROV**, as he's now **part-owner of the NBA's Sacramento Kings!**

• During the *nearly 40 years* I've been involved in *our wonderful club industry*, I've visited and toured who knows *how many health and fitness clubs* (I'm just guessing... 3,000). But, suffice it to say, for sure, visiting the clubs of others to see what they're doing, what they've created and to learn what one can duplicate from his facilities has played a huge part in my club career and the careers of every club operator I know of in our industry. Visiting clubs like **RED'S (Red Lerille's) Health and Fitness Club**, now 50+ years running in **Lafayette, Louisiana**; **JOE CIRULLI's Health and Fitness Club** in **Gainesville, Florida**; **DALE DIBBLE and ED and ZOE YEASEY's Cedardale Health & Fitness**, 42-years running in **Haverhill, Massachusetts**; **DANIEL LEVIN'S** fabulous **East Bank Club** in **Chicago**; **LLOYD and ROBERTA GAINSBORO'S** **Dedham Health and Athletic Club**; and **MIKE MINTON'S Sportsplex** in **Texarkana, Texas**, just to name just a few greats, all hold a plethora of **Gold Nuggets of club design and idea creation for the rest of the club world to learn from**. Now, I must add our cover story subject this month to my short list of great clubs that should be visited. That

would be **The Columbia Association's amazing and myriad lineup** of facilities and services, which offer a club designer's dream place for health, fitness, exercise and fun ideas for facilities and services to learn from. So, I **URGE** you to make a point of going to **Columbia, Maryland** to see what **ROB GOLDMAN** and **The Columbia Association** have created. I 'd be very surprised if you spent a day touring their huge lineup of facilities and services and do not come away with some great ideas for your existing club(s) or clubs you're planning to build someday. And, if you've not seen the other clubs I mentioned in this Note, I urge you to get up, get out and go see 'em! **You'll be glad you did!**

• **Welcome to BILL McBRIDE**, the newest member of our prestigious **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team**. **Check out Bill's Inaugural Article on Page #28**.

• **The Medical Fitness Association (MFA)** announced that registration is open for the **5th Annual Medical Fitness Institute (MFI)** to be held at **FirstHealth in Pinehurst, North Carolina, September 18 - 20, 2013**. According to a Press Release from the MFA, the program developed by the MFA will focus on a variety of topics directly related to the operational success of medical fitness centers and the development of industry leaders for this growing field. Seminars will include leadership, clinical integration/physician referral, communicating with your health care partner, aspects of the medical fitness difference, facility certification and strategic planning, all geared to the medical fitness model and medically-integrated facilities. To learn more or to register, go to **www.medicalfitness.org**.

• **Congratulations and Thanks to the Spectrum Athletic Clubs folks in Los Angeles** as they held a fundraiser in all of their clubs to fight the dreaded disease, **ALS, a/k/a LOU GEHRIG's Disease**. They produced nearly **\$40,000** that will go to **Augie's Quest! Good on you all!**

• Another **legendary club business icon**, the one and only **AUGIE NIETO**, creator of **Life Fitness** and **Founder of Augie's Quest**, was recently featured on **CNN**. **Augie and his wife, LYNNE'S** courageous battle to find the **cure for ALS** is an amazing story. **God bless Augie and Lynne** as they move forward in their search for a **Cure for ALS**. To give, go to **www.augiesquest.com**. Also, the annual **Muscular Dystrophy Association's Telethon** will air in primetime on the **ABC Network on Labor Day weekend, Sunday, September 1st** as the network has signed on to air the two-hour **MDS Show of Strength Telethon** on ABC stations across the country, starting at **9PM EST. Stay Tuned!**

(See Norm's Notes Page 7)

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...Norm's Notes

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•Our former May, 2013 CLUB INSIDER cover story folks announced that their Stone Creek Club & Spa had raised \$15,000 for Wounded Warriors Fund. Thanks to LARRY CONNER (Stone Creek General Manager), MARVIN GREESE (Assistant General Manager), STEPHANIE COULON (Sales and Marketing Manger) and their team.

•The American Council On Exercise (ACE) has announced five new additions to the ACE Industry Advisory Panel. They'll help steer the nonprofit organization in its new efforts to build relationships among leaders in health care, corporate America and Government. The panel, comprised of experts in business, education, health care and fitness, serves as a critical asset as ACE continues to make progress in its mission to eliminate the obesity epidemic by 2035. Current panel members, ROBERT BROSNER, BONNIE CASTRO, JOHN GRAHAM, STEVEN TROTTER and ANTONIO WILLIAMS, PhD. will be joined by new panel members, FRED HOFFMAN; previous CLUB INSIDER cover story subject, RICK MAYO; another CLUB INSIDER cover story subject, KEVIN McHUGH; BRYAN O'ROURKE and AMY BOONE. Thanks to all for their past and upcoming service to the industry.

•It was very nice to hear from DAVID HARDY, one the principals of Orangetheory Fitness Franchising and former IHRSA Board Member, that everything's going quite well with their Franchise. He told me they now have over 150 locations and are debuting Orangetheory in London, England. Check out the Orangetheory Ad on This Page and see MARIA PARELLA-TURCO's comments about Orangetheory on Page #24. Stay tuned!

•Welcome to AL and HOSSEIN NOSHIRVANI, the creators and principals of Motionsoft Software. Check out their New Ad on Page #27.

•The Associated Press reported on August 5th that child obesity rates in the United States have dropped in 18 States, indicating that this was the first evidence of a national decline in obesity among children. The report went on to say that, even though this reduction in obesity rates had shown up, 1 in 8 preschool children are obese in the U.S. It went on to state that, "Preschoolers who are overweight or obese are five times more likely than other children to be heavy as adults, which means greater risks of high cholesterol, high blood sugar, asthma and even mental health problems." The new study's data comes from measurements of the height and weight of nearly 12 million low income children in 40 states. The report made clear that those at greatest risk are kids from low-income families.

•A few years ago, I got a phone call from BILLY MARSHALL, a/k/a The "Fabulous Marsh," one of my best friends and football teammates back in the early 1960s in Rome Free Academy High School in Rome, New York. During the conversation, "The Marsh" told me about Pickleball, and I was quite intrigued with his comments. He was as excited as a school kid about participating in the game, a game I had never heard of until his call. A terrific athlete in high school, he was just bubbling with excitement about Pickleball. I looked at the Pickleball Association website, www.usapa.org and there he was, BILL MARSHAL, ranked highly in the Senior Division! I now know a little more about why he was so fired up, as on August 7th, the Atlanta Journal Constitution published an in-depth, front-page story of the Living Section reporting that there are now 150,000 Pickleball players in the United States, according to the USA Pickleball Association! The headline read, "Pickleball for Fitness and Fun," and the article's author, RICK LIMPET, wrote, "Pickleball. Invented in 1965 by the late JOEL BRITCHARD, a Congressman from Washington State, Pickleball takes the best elements of tennis, table tennis and badminton and combines them into a fast paced sport that can be played by anyone old enough to hold a paddle and hit a baseball sized plastic ball." The article closed with something that might come as a nice "TIP" for all of you looking for, as Jeff Stokes puts it, "The next great thing." The comment was, "While every new senior citizen planned community is building Pickleball courts, facilities like the YMCA are also considering adding a Pickleball program to their club menus. As one man, age 88 and World War II Veteran, Atlanta's GEORGE JORDAN, said when asked how long he planned to continue playing, 'I'm not stopping anytime soon. I like to say, 'if you can dance, you can play Pickleball.'" My thought is that someone from both big industry trade shows, The IHRSA Trade Show and The Club Industry Show should reach out to www.usapa.org for contact information and to invite them to Exhibit Pickleball. They say two Pickleball courts will fit onto the space of one tennis court, so many of you might have the right amount of space to crank up a Pickleball program. Stay tuned! And, to The "Fabulous Marsh," I say, "Hey Marsh, I'll see you in August, 2014 at our 50th RFA High School Reunion if the good Lord's willing!"

•Just think about it... By the time you receive your printed edition of this August Edition, good old college football will be very close to starting the 2013 season! If you happen to be a Georgia Bulldawg Fan, look out and cross your fingers because the Dawgs open in Clemson's Death Valley on Saturday night, August 31st! I can tell you from experience (because I played in two games there), that's a really tough

place to play any time, especially on a Saturday night! Plus, Clemson has an All World Quarterback, TAJH BOYD, coming back. This guy Boyd was ACC Player of the Year last year. Then, if the Dawgs make it past their opening game against Clemson, they come home where they will run into STEVE SPURRIER, the old Ball Coach's South Carolina team. This bunch is totally loaded for bear with All World Defensive End, Jadeveon Clowney totally abusing blockers, quarterbacks and running backs. Should the Dawgs be 2 and 0 after hosting South Carolina, they'll get a little break with North Texas coming to Athens,

Georgia the next weekend, so they could be 3 and 0 come Sunday, September 22nd. Then, comes the always tough and butt kicking LSU Bengal Tigers, coached by the "Hat," LES MILES. If the Dawgs can somehow beat LSU, then the preseason Bulldawg ranking of 5th in the U.S. will hold water, and they will have probably risen to 4th or 3rd, even 2nd in the rankings, depending upon what others do. This is all positive thinking, and it's my hope that they're 4 and 0 on September 29th. They will then have a great chance of running the table and showing up undefeated at the Georgia Dome for the Southeast (See Norm's Notes Page 8)



SEEKING FRANCHISEES & AREA DEVELOPERS

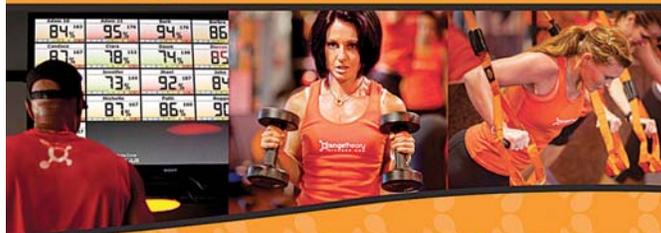
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David Hardy, Partner, Orangetheory Fitness
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...Norm's Notes

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Conference Championship game come December 7th, which all prognosticators are now predicting will be against the one and only **LOU SABAN's Alabama Crimson Tide**. All of the above is what makes college football so much **FUN** and so **intriguing**. So, **stay tuned!**

Oh! I almost forgot! I'd be remiss if I didn't mention and wish my old school, **N.C. State University in Raleigh, North Carolina**. I wish them the best of luck as they have a **new Head Football Coach** named **DAVE DOEREN**. He was a **finalist** for the **2012 National Collegiate Coach of the Year Award**, sponsored by the **Maxwell Football Club last year**. Doeren was named **Head Football Coach** by the **Wolfpack Director of Athletics KAY YOW**, the lovely lady who secured **ACC Championship Rings for our 1965 Wolfpack Team**, **42 years after the**

season ended! Coach Doeren comes to the Wolfpack from his position last year as **Head Football Coach of the #18 nationally ranked and BCS Bowl Team, Northern Illinois University**. So, **I wish Coach Doeren well.**

• **Ahhhh... "Leaving FAT City!" Let me close this 236th Edition of Norm's Notes with this:** Yes, for all of you who've known me for 40 years, and who've read **CLUB INSIDER for 20 years**, you know *I've fought a lifetime battle of the bulge with my weight*. And, many of you know **I've lost 100 pounds two times before in my life**. And, gained it back plus more, both times! For those who've known me all these years, I want you to know that I'm at it again! **I have now lost 31 pounds on my third trip during my lifetime of losing 100 pounds!** I'm walking a fast-paced minimum of 3.2 miles per day, and slowly, but surely, I'm taking it off. From the year 2000 until 2011, I have walked over 9,000

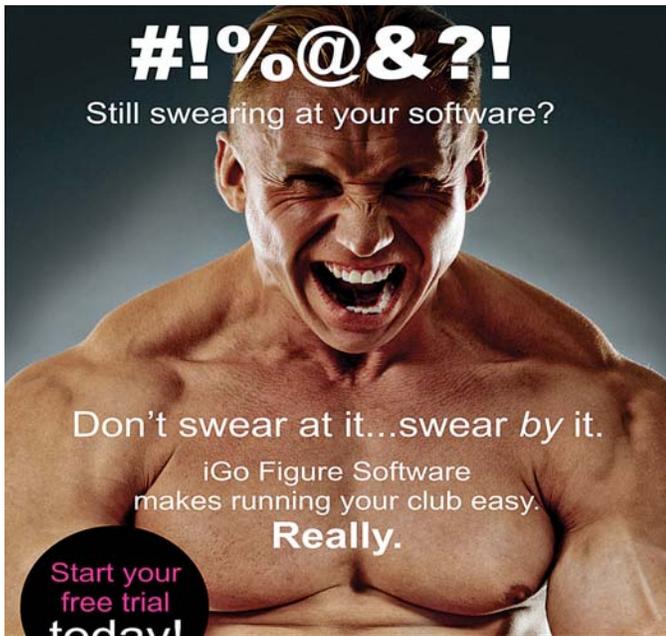
miles while losing 100 pounds and keeping it off for a good while. But, a leg injury sidelined me for a couple of years, and I gained a lot of my lost weight back. But, I'm proud to say that, while it has not been easy so far, this time, it's definitely getting easier every week! By Christmas I intend to be doing 6.4 to 9.6 miles a day. And, I also want you know that I'm going back to the **Iron**, something I've not done since I was playing college football. In those football days, I worked my upper body for 2.5 hours a day, three days a week, doing 10 to 12 sets of six different upper body lifts (Standing Row, Strict Curl, Standing Press, Power Clean, Bench Press and Incline Bench Press). I got my bench press up to 400 pounds, and in nine months during my Junior year, I was able to increase my body weight from 183 (which was the weight I had to reach for my Air Force R.O.T.C. flight physical) and went up to 236 before I weighed in on August 1, 1967 at 220 pounds of mostly muscle. So, when I see you folks at IHRSA next March, I plan to be 100 pounds lighter, much more fit and hope to have awakened and revived some of my dormant upper body muscles that haven't been really challenged lately. I am pretty sure that, at age 68, which I will be come next January, that I will no longer be causing the eye pollution I've caused at the last two or three conventions! And yes, you long-time friends also know I wrote a book entitled, **"Leaving FAT City!"** and I want you to know that, once I have **lost this third 100 pounds and kept it off for 5 years**, I plan to update my book. This time I will call it, **"The Third Time's A Charm... Leaving FAT City! Again!"**

Stay tuned folks!

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• **God bless all of our troops, airmen and sailors and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home** to all of our troops who've served in **Afghanistan** and around the world. **God bless you and your family, your staff, your members and your club(s). God bless America!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 39+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now close to finishing its 20th Year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at 770 - 635 - 7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)



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...Rob Goldman

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does to promote the building of its community. That is because your club company is part of a community, and as such, should always strive to make that community better through positive actions that build a legacy heading forward. This is what The Columbia Association does. More specifically, the Association's largest division, Sports and Fitness, can serve as a vision to strive toward as we continue to build our industry to better serve the population. Beyond the how-to mechanics of some of the things that will be shared in this article, though, a key take-away will be the ideal of building something greater than ourselves and leaving a legacy for the future. That is community.

This month, **CLUB INSIDER** is proud to present an in-depth interview with Rob Goldman, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of The Columbia Association. Beginning his career in tennis clubs in the 1970s, experiencing the transition of tennis and racquetball clubs to multipurpose facilities in the 1980s, giving back to the industry with IHRSA Board service in the 1990s (including a term as its President) and serving The Columbia Association in numerous capacities for almost 25 years, Rob Goldman is a true veteran of our great industry in every sense of the word. We invite you to read on.

An In-Depth Interview With Rob Goldman

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Rob, please tell us about yourself. Where were you born, and where did you grow up?

Rob Goldman (RG) - I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio and was there through high school.

C.I. - Where did you go to college, and what did you study? Did you play any sports?



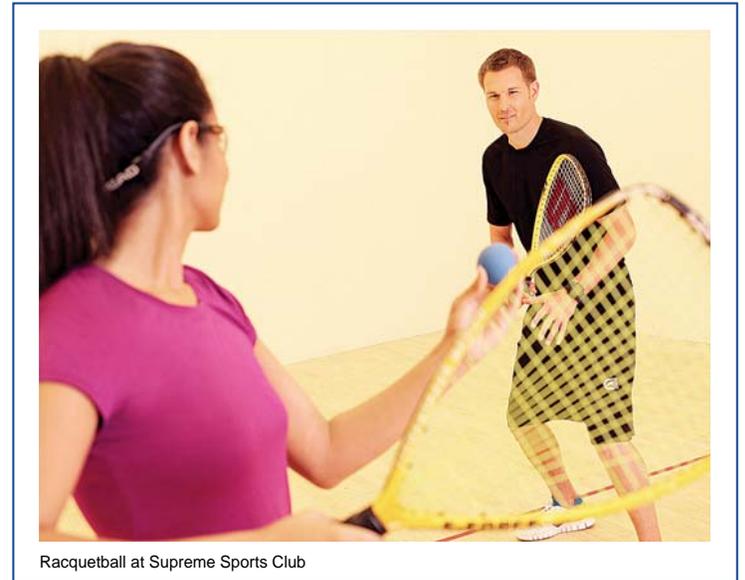
Rob Goldman

RG - I went to Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and played Varsity Tennis there.

C.I. - Please take us through your career prior to joining The Columbia Association.

RG - I came back to Cincinnati after graduating from college, and for ten years, I was the Manager and Head Tennis Pro at an indoor tennis center there called Tri County Racquet Club. At the same time, around the mid-1970s, I was one of the Principals involved in putting together an organization called the *Greater Cincinnati Indoor Tennis Association*. I was the President and Executive Director of that for many years before I left Cincinnati. That organization helped the indoor tennis clubs in Cincinnati all stay in business at a time when indoor tennis clubs all over the country were going out of business. We had very successful interclub leagues and tournaments that generated business and used the courts during the off-hours. That organization is still thriving today.

When I left Cincinnati, I went to Denver and was General Manager of what was then called the Inverness Racquet Club. At the time, it was one of the premier multi-recreational facilities in the country.



Racquetball at Supreme Sports Club

I was there for two years. I was then recruited by TCA, Alan Schwartz' group in Chicago. I worked for Alan for almost five years. My home was in Pittsburgh, and my office was in the City Club of Pittsburgh. I was a Regional Manager responsible for clubs in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Durham, North Carolina; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I also served in the Senior Management group of TCA and spent a lot of time in Chicago with Alan and the rest of the management team.

TCA was going to move me to Chicago, so I thought I should look and see what other opportunities might be around. I saw the opportunity to come to Columbia. This was 1989, and I was hired as Vice President and the Director of the Sports and Fitness Division.

C.I. - For those who have not heard of The Columbia Association, please give us an overview of the organization's facilities, services, programs and other activities.

RG - It is a very unique organization. Columbia itself is a completely planned community of 100,000 people. Part of the developer's plan was to create The Columbia Association to provide cultural, recreation and social amenities. The Columbia Association owns and maintains 3,600 acres of open space. Almost one in every four acres in Columbia is preserved open space, so pretty much wherever you live, you are looking at woods in your backyard. We have a network of 94 miles of pathways and bikeways through the open space and 165 playgrounds for kids in the open space as well.

There are three operating divisions in The Columbia Association:

•Open Space Management - This division oversees the maintenance of the 3,600

acres of open space. We have three large man-made lakes and 40 ponds in addition to 94 miles of pathways/bikeways and 165 playgrounds. We have about 20 basketball courts and ten public tennis courts within the open space.

•Community Services - This division is made up of a lot of different things, including a fine arts center, a teen center and an archive. We have a large before-and-after-school care program. It's a unique partnership with the local school system, and at 17 different schools, The Columbia Association's before-and-after-school staff comes in at 7AM and takes care of kids until school starts. Then, we come back in after school and stay there until 6PM. In Columbia, a large percentage of people work in either the Baltimore or Washington, D.C. area. We are about halfway in between, so to get to work on time, many parents need a place for their children. On a daily basis, we care for about 2,900 kids, and it's also a nice profit center. It's a great service to the community and a unique partnership.

We also have a Summer Lakefront Festival. Every night of the summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, we provide free entertainment on the lake in Town Center. There is a stage and a hillside that create a natural amphitheater overlooking the lake. About five nights a week, it's live music; one night, it might be an open mic night, blues, or a local favorite; and on Monday and Friday nights, a family movie. The division also runs a large summer camp program. We have 24 different camps serving close to 3,000 kids throughout the summer, and many are run in the Sports and Fitness facilities, such as basketball camps, tennis camps and other sports camps. The others are run in the open space, like a nature camp or a sailing camp on one of the lakes. There's one called *Little Explorers*, where they meet and take field trips everyday. It's a very

(See Rob Goldman Page 12)



Basketball at Supreme Sports Club



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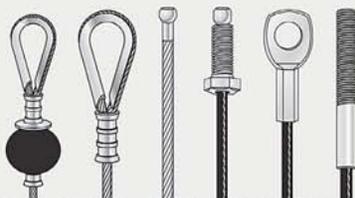
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...Rob Goldman

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large and successful program.

•Sports and Fitness - This is the largest division, both in terms of people served (2.6 million visits last year) and revenue generated (\$23.5 million). This is the division I was hired to run and ran for twenty years. In the Sports and Fitness Division, we have three large clubs, and I will describe those in depth later.

As Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of The Columbia Association I oversee all three of these operating divisions. The Director of each division reports to me.

C.I. - Outside of memberships, how is the organization funded?

RG - If you live in Columbia, on property that is part of The Columbia Association, there are covenants attached to your deed that comes with the purchase of your home or business. A lot of them have to do with architecture, requiring you to keep up your property in a good manner. One of the covenants requires anyone who owns property in Columbia to pay an annual charge to the Association based on how the State values your real estate. Since we are a private corporation, it's not tax; it's an annual charge, but it represents over 50% of the revenue for The Columbia Association, which allows us to provide a wide variety of community services.

C.I. - There are three full-service health and fitness facilities managed by the organization. Please tell us about those facilities (square-footage, services, amenities, etc). How are they different?

•The Supreme Sports Club - This is our largest facility at about 110,000 square feet. It is a unique facility. Originally, there was a privately owned racquetball facility called the Supreme Court, and it was a

16-court racquetball club. It did pretty well for a while, but then, it was failing, so The Columbia Association came in and purchased it. That was around 1981. Over the next seven or eight years, we converted racquetball courts to exercise studios, free weight rooms and turned it into more of a multi-recreational facility. My first big project when I came to Columbia Association was converting the Supreme Court to the Supreme Sports Club. Next door to the old Supreme Court was a roller skating facility called Skate Land. It was also privately owned, and it went out of business. So, The Columbia Association purchased the Skate Land building, and then, we built a third building in between and connected the whole thing. It operates as one large facility now, but it is actually three different buildings that are all connected. We gutted the old Skate Land building and put in a large basketball arena. We have three courts back-to-back, surrounded by a 1/10th of a mile track. On the weekends, it converts to a public skating rink. It has a large snack bar area when it is set up for roller skating, and when it's not roller skating, the snack bar area converts to a large personal training studio.

In the new building, we built locker rooms and an entrance on the first floor. On the lower level, we built an 8-lane, 25-yard indoor pool with a hot tub and a baby pool. In what was the old Supreme Court, there are still seven racquetball courts, two large group exercise studios, and an area we call KidSpace. Parents can drop off their kids for up to two hours whenever they come to work out or play sports. It's separated into different areas based on age; six weeks to two years, two years to seven years, and seven years to thirteen years, each with their own apparatuses, such as rock climbing walls, basketball courts and things like that. Our goal is not just to babysit but also to encourage physical activity while they are there.

We also have a very large exercise



Columbia Athletic Club Indoor Tennis

area with cardio equipment, 2,400 square feet of free weights, a women's gym, and at all clubs, we have a club within the club that we call Package Plan Plus. It is an area that people pay a little bit more for, and they get more personal attention. It has the highest quality equipment, larger towels and other extra touches. If you buy the Package Plan Plus, you get that, the women's gym, as well as some other value-added things.

•The Columbia Athletic Club - This is our oldest club. It is about 40,000 square feet, and attached to it, there is a 4-court indoor tennis facility. It has four racquetball courts and a squash court. It has two group exercise studios, a Pilates studio and a boxing studio. In our most recent renovation, we added a hot water therapy pool that is the largest in the county at almost 2,000 square feet. It has become very popular. A lot of people who would never have come to our clubs before are now coming to exercise in the hot water. This club also has our largest free weight area (3,200 square feet). We don't have a women's gym there, but we do have the club within a club (the Package Plan Plus). And like all of our clubs, we have a large cardio area with a Cardio Theater. We also lease space to a physical therapy organization called Chesapeake Physical and Aquatic Therapy.

•The Columbia Gym - This is our newest club, and it was built in 1999. It is a 3-story facility with a large atrium in the middle of it that is really nice. On the entry level, there is a Package Plan Plus room (a club within a club), a large exercise studio, one very large room where we have free weights, resistance strength equipment, a stretching area and cardio. There is also a

nice conference room there. This facility was built in the newest village in Columbia with a high number of new families, so we have a large KidSpace area here that is two levels. The first level is for infants, six weeks to two years old. The second level has three specific areas. We call one the Game Room, and it has all sorts of games like Ping Pong, Foosball, etc. It has a computer lab with twelve computers. Then, across the hall, we have a Youth Arena, and this is a multipurpose gym that is a little smaller than our full-size gym. It has a sports floor surface so you can do just about any kind of sport there. We have a large closet with soccer nets, lacrosse nets, adjustable basketball nets that go down to six feet, etc. There is one other room there for the three to seven year olds that is for birthday parties, and it has an obstacle course and other apparatus for that age group.

Also on the top floor, there is a high school size basketball court and a smaller exercise studio where we do martial arts, yoga and those types of classes. There is also a personal training studio up there. On the lowest level, we have the locker rooms, the women's gym, a third group exercise studio and our aquatics area, which includes a 4-lane, 25-yard pool and a zero-depth beach entry recreation area, so kids can walk in. A hot tub in the corner overlooks the woods outside.

We consider each of our clubs to be a full-service recreation club. *The Supreme Sports Club* has more of a focus on young adults, with basketball, volleyball, etc. *The Columbia Athletic Club* is our oldest club in an older neighborhood, so it has more of a focus on older adults, especially with the hot water pool. And, *The Columbia Gym* is in a neighborhood that is almost entirely single-family homes with children, so it has more of a family focus.

C.I. - Please tell us about the new club you have in the works.

(See Rob Goldman Page 14)



Columbia Athletic Club Hot Water Therapy Pool

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...Rob Goldman

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RG - It's a great project. Right on the lake in downtown Columbia is where the Rouse Company's world headquarters was for many years. Architect, Frank Gehry, originally designed the building. It's a big, iconic building, and it is currently being renovated. The top two floors will become a Whole Foods Market. The lower floor, which is on the ground level, has large windows that look out on three sides at the lake, a fountain and the stage area I mentioned earlier. We've leased that 27,000 square-foot space, and we are developing a Mind/Body Wellness Retreat. It's going to have three studios for Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Pilates and all the different Mind/Body-type classes.

It will have a large aquatics area with a recreational pool and an exercise pool to do Yoga and Tai Chi in the water. It will also have a large hot tub that overlooks the lake through the windows and a wet wellness area with a salt room, Turkish steam, sauna, cold plunge and tropical showers. In addition, it will have a well-appointed locker room, and we have allocated 4,000 square feet for spa services, as well as integrated wellness services, such as life coaching, nutrition counseling, acupuncture and other things along those lines. We've also already made arrangements with Whole Foods to supply daily to us fresh prepackaged salads, sandwiches, sushi and juices that we will sell from a refrigerator display unit. We will have both indoor and outdoor seating sections for the café area. There will also be a large educational conference room, so those who are providing the acupuncture, herbal medicine and those kinds of things will be able to give workshops to the community. It is slated to open in September of 2014.

C.I. - What other fitness-oriented facilities, services and programs does the Association

own, manage and offer?

RG - In addition to the three clubs, the Sports and Fitness Division owns and manages two golf courses. They are full, 18-hole courses. One is a championship course. We hosted the Senior PGA Tour for three years, from 1999 to 2001. It's called the Hobbit's Glen Golf Club. Our second course is called Fairway Hills Golf Club, and it is run more like a public country club. Both are highly maintained and excellent courses.

We have three tennis clubs. The Wild Lake Tennis Club is a 12-court hard surface outdoor facility. The Owen Brown Tennis Club is an outdoor/indoor facility with seven hard outdoor courts and five courts under an air structure that we keep up year-round. Our third club is called The Racquet Club at Hobbit's Glen, and it's on the premises of the Hobbit's Glen Golf Club. It's a 6-court Har-Tru facility.

Seasonally, we operate 23 swim clubs. They all include large 5- to 8-lane, 25-yard pools with wading pools, and many of them have hot tubs and volleyball courts. Two years ago, we updated two of them, and they are now mini aquatic parks. They each have spray pads for toddlers and large slides, and we upgraded the pool furniture and landscaping. They are all open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. We also have an indoor swim center that has two pools. One we call the Program Pool is a 5-lane, 25-yard pool where we hold a lot of group exercise classes. It is also the home of the *Columbia Clippers*, which is our year-round competitive swim team. We have 360 kids involved year-round. The second pool there is the Main Pool, a 6-lane, 25-yard pool that has a wading pool, and it also has a dual, 4-story tall waterslide. You walk up a 4-story tower and slide down on a large circular raft, doing a 660-foot run in 13 seconds.

Related to aquatics, we also have a very large program called the *Columbia Neighborhood Swim League*. It is intended to allow any child who can swim a lap to be



Columbia SportsPark Batting Cages

involved in competitive swimming. There are 14 teams throughout the community and 2,500 kids involved. They practice starting the first of June and have meets on Saturdays until the end of July. It's great for the kids, and it is also a huge social event. Every team has a volunteer parents group that helps raise money for their team.

We also have an indoor Olympic size ice skating rink that is open year-round and has a full program of hockey and figure skating. Every day, there is at least one open session where anyone can come in and skate. There's skate rental, a snack bar and a skating club that puts on performances throughout the year. We also have a facility that we call the Sports Park. It is a family fun center that has a miniature golf course, batting cages (softball and hardball), two large picnic pavilions and a skate park for skateboarding that has 17 different ramps and jumps. We are in the process of building a new 6-court indoor tennis facility in a field next to the Sports Park. We will utilize the clubhouse and parking lot there, connecting that building to the existing clubhouse and Sports Park. We are doing the engineering and architectural work right now, and we hope to bring the facility online a year from now.

One other facility we own is the Columbia Horse Center, and it is an 88-acre equestrian farm. It is the one facility that we don't manage ourselves. We lease out the management of it. It is a very successful horse farm that includes lessons, boarding, horse shows and camps.

C.I. Wow! That is a little bit of everything! I guess I should have asked, "What do you not do?"

RG - Well, There are two programs that relate to sports and fitness that are huge and should be mentioned. At our Fairway

Hills Golf Club, we are the local home of the national First Tee organization. It is a program that was originally created to teach golf and life skills to children that otherwise could not afford to learn the game of golf. It is heavily endowed by many of the best players on the PGA Tour, including Tiger Woods. Over the years, they have opened it up to any child who wants to get in the program. It's really terrific because about 50% of the time is spent on the course learning golf, and the other 50% is in a classroom. They have a program called *Nine Core Values* where the kids learn Respect, Honesty, Perseverance and other key life skills. They start teaching that to kids five years old *through high-school graduation*. It's remarkable when a 7-year old comes up to you, looks you in the eye and shakes your hand with a firm grip. We put about a thousand kids through the program each year.

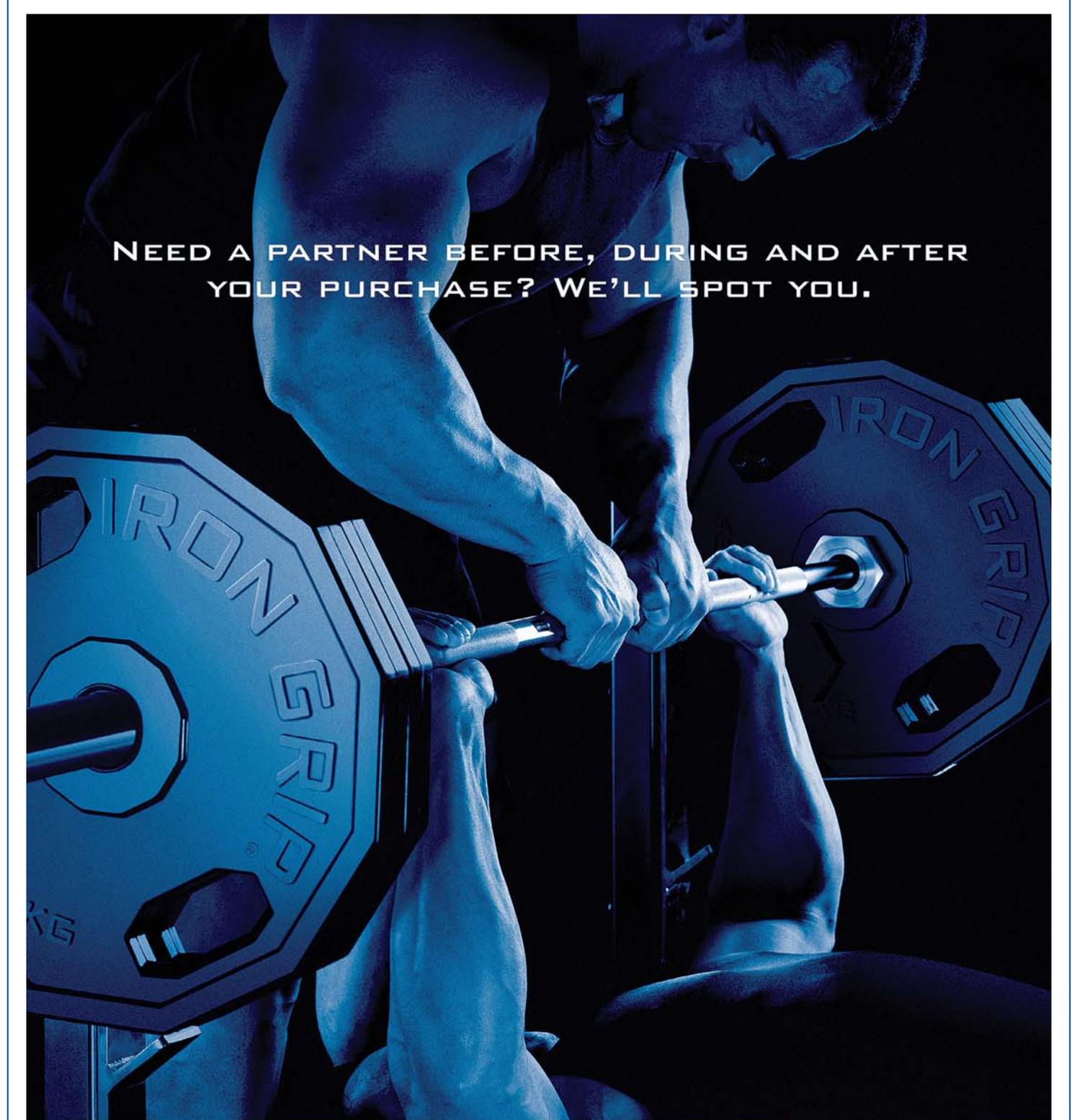
One other program that is huge in Columbia is the USTA League Tennis Program. It is a large tennis league for men and women of all ages and abilities based on the National Tennis Rating Program. So, leagues run at the local level, and you can qualify to go to District, Regional and National Championships, held by the USTA. We now have 2,300 players in the leagues across all age groups and abilities. It is probably the single largest use of our courts because the program has gotten so large.

C.I. - On numerous occasions in **CLUB INSIDER**, we have written about the concepts of community outreach and trust-building activities to better the health and fitness club industry's level of success within those communities, and thus, nationwide. With The Columbia Association's conglomeration of facilities, services and programs specifically geared towards making the community better, how is the community of Columbia, Maryland different because of the Association?

(See Rob Goldman Page 16)



Columbia SkatePark Skateboarder



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IRON GRIP
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...Rob Goldman

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RG - This is one of the really unique things about Columbia. The developer was James Rouse, who is a legend in the development business. He believed strongly in running a good business and making money, but he also believed that it is important to build community. When he developed Columbia, he did lots of things for which their sole purpose was to build community. For example, one thing is the swim clubs... He thought the best way during the summer to encourage people to interact was to have pools in every neighborhood. Another thing is that the mailman does not bring mail to your door or mailbox; there are islands with all the neighborhood's mailboxes. The idea was that people would have to run into each other when they go out to get the mail. He did lots of things to encourage community. Like most other club organizations, we try to be very fiscally responsible, maximizing our revenue and minimizing our expenses really well. An equal or greater goal for us, however, is involving as many people in the community as possible in the programs and services we run and operate. We try very hard to be fiscally responsible, but at the end of the day, it's just as important for us to serve the highest possible percentage of the community and to do it well.

Because of our focus on community service, one of the other things we try to do is make our programs and services available to everyone regardless of income. We have a number of programs that are aimed at making our programs and services affordable. One is simply called an income-qualified membership. It is typically a 50% discount. For our outdoor pools, it is 75%, and we will spread the payment over twelve months. Currently, 5,500 residents are taking advantage of this program. We also have a program called the "Points Club." Elementary and middle school students who qualify by need can earn points through academic achievement and extra reading. At the end of the year, they can trade their points in for passes to our clubs and memberships. Last year, 750 kids earned memberships.

We like to say that we are the *Quality of Life People*. If you live in Howard County, you pay property taxes to the county, and the county provides, police, fire, water, sewer, the school system and the rest of the infrastructure. We supply cultural, recreational and social programs and services.

C.I. - Is there a feedback system to make sure you are doing things well? If so, do you only rely simply on usage rates or do you survey users?

RG - We commission statistically valid surveys every two years to see how well we are serving our members and to see how high the level of satisfaction is in the community. On our website, and by phone, there is also a customer response system

where we will respond within 48 hours.

C.I. - How does The Columbia Association deal with the competitive environment of commercial and other fitness facilities in its market? What are some of its advantages and disadvantages?

RG - There is a Life Time Fitness facility less than half a mile from the Supreme Sports Club. They came here in 2005, and fortunately, we took them very seriously. We came up with an 8-point plan and spent \$6 million to renovate our facilities and upgrade our services to compete with them. It's a great story in how *competition makes you better*. We thought we were doing a really good job before that, and after the wakeup call of their coming to town, we improved our operations in almost every way. We also have a lot of niche competitors, whether it's group exercise studios, personal training studios, Planet Fitness or other low-price providers. There's a YMCA that recently spent \$12 million to upgrade their facility, and they are a formidable competitor.

The advantage we have is the main membership we sell. We call it the Package Plan. If you live in Columbia, you can buy a single membership to any single facility we operate. For example, you can be a member of just the Supreme Sports Club or the Hobbit's Glen Golf Club. But, if you want to use any two or more of our clubs, we have a package available, and the package is priced in a way that it is less than any two of our individual memberships combined. It's a great value. The people that buy the package plan get everything. It includes outdoor pools, all three of the fitness clubs, all of the tennis clubs (indoor tennis fees are additional), and you become a member of the golf courses (greens fees are additional). That is something nobody can compete with.

We also have resident and non-resident pricing. If you live in Columbia and pay the annual charge to our organization every year, we recognize that and give you a discount on all of our membership packages. If you don't live in Columbia, you are still welcome to join, but you pay the non-resident rate, which we try to set similar to the best clubs in the Baltimore/Washington area. It's still a fair price, but if you are a resident, you get a break because you are paying an annual charge. The price for the package is exceptional, and then, we have Package Plan Plus that gives you the club within a club, which I mentioned earlier, and a number of other things, such as the Sports Park with miniature golf and the Splashdown 4-story waterslide.

C.I. - Please tell us about the Association of health clubs in your territory.

RG - About ten years ago, we put together an organization called the Elite Sports Club Network (ESN). There are five club organizations that are involved: The Columbia Association, The Maryland Athletic Club, The Merritt Athletic Club, The LifeBridge Club and The Arena Club.



Fairway Hills Golf Club Aerial

The main program we run is a reciprocal program where, once a month, any member of any club can get three passes to any club in the network. So, if I am a member of The Columbia Association, but I work downtown and want to use Merritt's Downtown Athletic Club during lunch, I can do that three times a month at no charge. For people in this area, work is a considerable distance from home, so it is a way of adding value to our memberships, and it's pretty well used. We've also done some other things together, like group blood drives, and we have a big Toys for Tots program. Between us all, there's about 17 or 18 clubs, so we have been able to maximize the amount we give to the Red Cross and Toys for Tots.

C.I. - Who are some of your key staff?

RG - As I mentioned, there are three main operating divisions of The Columbia Association. All three of our Division Directors are experts in their areas with a large amount of experience, and they are:

- Open Space Management - Dan D'Amore;
- Community Services - Michelle Miller;
- Sports and Fitness - Bob Bellamy;

Each of our major sports and fitness facilities has a General Manager:

- The Supreme Sports Club - Kevin Simpson;
- The Columbia Athletic Club - Leslie Flynn;
- The Columbia Gym - Steve Mendelsohn.

Given our huge commitment to aquatics with the 23 outdoor pools and 5 indoor pools, we have a separate **General Manager for Aquatics**, and his name is *John Herdson*.

C.I. - Rob, please tell us about The Columbia Association's relationship with IHRSA. How does IHRSA help The Columbia Association?

RG - We like to think that we are strong IHRSA members. I've always been very involved with IHRSA since the year it

started. The first year it started, I was running the Greater Cincinnati Indoor Tennis Association. John McCarthy came to Cincinnati and met with me. He told me all about IRSA (now IHRSA), which had just been created, and we got all 13 of our clubs signed up within that year. IHRSA has been terrific. It now creates great educational opportunities for us. We send a good size group of people to the national conference every year. We use the resources and publications, and I call Pam O'Donnell anytime I have a question I can't answer. One of the other things that have been helpful for us is the annual IHRSA Global Report on the state of the industry. The Columbia Association raises money for capital projects by selling bonds on the New York market, so we are always working with the bonding agencies to make sure we have the highest possible bond rating. We always share that report, which shows the strength of the club industry. That's one of the things that help us keep an AA bond rating, which is outstanding for a private corporation and helps us get money at a low cost.

C.I. - I understand you served on the IHRSA Board of Directors. What was that experience like for you?

RG - I was always keenly interested in serving IHRSA and working with John McCarthy, his team and the Board. I was fortunate enough to be on the Board and to be President of IHRSA. I got on the Board in 1992 and was President in 1995 - 96. It was a terrific experience. John McCarthy and his team at the time were great senior staff people working hard to make the industry better. I was fortunate to be President the year that the Surgeon General published his landmark study on the value of physical activity. We worked with the Surgeon General's Office, the President's Council on Fitness and the National Ad Agency Council to promote the study.

The relationships I've built with
(See Rob Goldman Page 18)

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**For further information, please contact:
 Scot MacKay at (949) 255-7391**

...Rob Goldman

continued from page 16

the other members of the IHRSA Board have been really valuable to my career. I am still in touch with many of those people to this day. We talk periodically and trade ideas.

C.I. - What is coming up in The Columbia Association's future?

RG - We have the new wellness retreat and the new tennis club coming online. Part of our open space in downtown Columbia is an area called Symphony Woods Park, and it is about a 20-acre wooded area that has never been developed. So, we are moving forward with turning it into downtown a park, like our own mini Central Park, with pathways, fountains, maybe some museums, and we are talking about moving The Columbia Association's headquarters into the park. That's moving forward in the next five years.

We also have a large commitment to watershed management and have a full-time team member in charge of that. We have a lot of projects and have been getting a lot of grants from the State and Federal Government to shore up our streams and waterways and to improve the environment through how we handle the watershed that flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Along those lines, we also have a large commitment to

energy management. Last year, we hired a full-time Energy Manager to help us use energy as efficiently as possible. We have two solar panel installations. Whenever we have to switch out a hot water heater, we now put in solar hot water. Whenever we can, when we have to replace HVAC units, we try to use geothermal. We are also in the process of changing out the lights in our indoor tennis center, as well as our basketball arenas, using T5 fluorescents that reduce the amount of energy used by more than half. The Columbia Association also has a large fleet of vehicles to do all the things we do. So, as we replace vehicles, we do so with hybrids or electric vehicles. We now provide electrical charging stations at three different locations in town, free of cost, to encourage people to purchase electric vehicles. We are simply-trying to do as many things as we can to be good to the environment.

C.I. - Rob, this has been a great interview discussing the incredibly vast array of facilities, programs and services The Columbia Association offers to the citizens of Columbia, Maryland and outlying

communities. As we close out, is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

RG - One other thing that is probably worth getting into the mix here is that we have a Medical Director. His name is Dr. Harry Oken, and he helped us develop a series of physician-referred programs. Three current programs introduce active, healthy, fun, lifestyle activities to community members who are not currently active and have health and weight concerns. The individualized programs target groups include those who are individuals inexperienced with regular activity or have lapsed from a former active lifestyle; those who additionally have extreme weight loss goals; and youths ages 11-18 together with their families, combatting childhood obesity. He also helped us develop a 17-member Medical Advisory Board with members representing almost every medical discipline. The criteria to get on the Board is that each has to be a thought leader in their area, and they have to be personally committed to a lifestyle of physical activity. So, we have a terrific group of people who understand the importance of

physical activity and exercise. They meet quarterly, they are always available to give us advice and they have been instrumental in helping us develop several programs that bring people to us through doctor's offices, who probably would not come to us through normal marketing channels.

• • •

I would like to sincerely thank Rob Goldman for his time in sharing the story of The Columbia Association with us, as well as his incredible record of service to our industry. Additionally, thank you to Claudia LaFuse for her assistance in providing photos and graphics to accompany this story.

(Justin Cates is the President and Assistant Publisher of CLUB INSIDER and grew up in the health, racquet and sports club industry. Justin was born into a club business family in 1985, and from the age of eight, he spent his non-school and sports hours in a home which doubled as CLUB INSIDER Headquarters. He has lived and breathed this industry for 28 years, since his own day one. Now, he is an integral part of the "Story" of Norm Cates and CLUB INSIDER. Justin may be reached by phone at 770-595-6086 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com)



advice, etc.

Doubled Dues AND Tripled Contract Lengths!

When we added Thin&Healthy's Total Solution, we were able to upgrade people into an agreement for another 12-24 months. That guarantees our revenue for that length of time, so that actually tripled our agreement length, along with doubling the dues amount!

- SHAWN BOLLIG

I looked at Thin&Healthy's Total Solution a few years back and wasn't sure it was the right fit for me. But then I realized, financially, we needed to do something that would make a difference and would have lasting results, and I looked into it again. Frankly, we needed to do something.

We needed to get more people in here. We needed to know how to market to the clientele we want to see in order to have a great impact on more lives. Thin&Healthy's Total Solution has really has done that for us. We now have people come to us that wouldn't have when we were just a fitness center.

We've actually done weight loss here before with programs I wrote and administered myself. But it was really hard because it was just me doing them and

trying to do everything at the club too; running the facility and then putting in all that extra time was really challenging.

The programs worked when people were doing them; they had great weight loss success. But as soon as the program was over, they would lose their motivation; they'd start gaining their weight back and stop their exercise routines. It was really frustrating putting in all that time and effort and really wanting to make a difference, and seeing that nobody was sustaining long-term change.

When I sold fitness alone, we had members sign up for a certain term; then when that time was up, they went month to month. When we added Thin&Healthy's Total Solution, we were able to upgrade people into an agreement for another 12-24 months, which guarantees our revenue for that length of time, so that actually tripled our agreement length along with doubling the dues amount!

Along with profitability, the systems and the training are great. The support site is

wonderful because all the systems are there and training online is easy. I absolutely love the phone scripts that we have to use. That makes a huge difference in being able to let my staff answer the phone and not have to worry that I always have to answer the calls myself.

I really like how everything is covered in the systems, even down to the smallest details. I'm very happy that I can call any time and have my questions answered, as well. Everyone is very kind, helpful and encouraging on the Home Office team.

One of the best things about being a part of Thin&Healthy's Total Solution is that I'm getting results for my clients. I'm happy that it works. I was skeptical of it and really took time to make the decision to add Thin&Healthy's Total Solution into my club.

An important factor for me was the ability to increase revenue without having to add extra staff. I like the fact that, as a company, they care about my profitability. It's nice to have a partnership

with people I can trust, being a business owner all on my own.

The members love the program because they can do it and use regular grocery store foods. When I did my own weight loss programs, I think the members were overwhelmed based on my extreme nutrition and fitness ideals, which a lot of club owners and trainers do. Thin&Healthy's Total Solution helped me meet people where they are at instead of where I think they should be.

Thin&Healthy's Total Solution is a good program with good support and business systems behind it, and it works for our clientele. We all get results! From my personal experience, adding Thin&Healthy's Total Solution was a great decision. Thin&Healthy's Total Solution has had a big impact on my club and I'm very happy. X



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The Habit of Winning

By: Donna Krech

The force of habit is your greatest tool for success. We first make our habits; then our habits make us. It happens subtly, over time, imperceptibly, quietly, beneath the notice of anyone. Habits are like submarines; they run silent and deep. The chains of our habits are usually too small to be recognized until they're too strong to be broken.

I am honored to work with and humbled to have been befriended by Dr. Denis Waitley. You may know Denis as the author of *The Psychology of Winning*, the all-time, best-selling program on self-mastery. You may know him as a past President of Psychology to our Olympic teams. You may know him in any number of ways, since his career has spanned the globe for decades. In the event that you *don't* know him, allow me to say, you are in for a treat!

Denis knows the subject of habits, and he knows how to help anyone create the habits of winning. Whether it's a member you want to help lose weight, someone you care about starting to exercise, or even if the habit you desire is to achieve your own personal goals, Denis's information can get you there. Enjoy his words below and look forward to upcoming information about our new co-authored book!

Listen to this familiar biography:

You may know me. I'm your constant companion. I'm your greatest helper. I'm your heaviest burden. I'll push you onward, or drag you down to failure. I'm at your command. Half the tasks you do might as well be turned over to me. I'm able to do them quickly, and I'm able to do them the same every time, if that's what you want.

I'm easily managed. All you've got to do is be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want it done, and after a few lessons, I'll do it automatically. I'm the servant of all great men and women, and of course, the servant of all the failures, as well.

I've made all the great winners who've ever been great, and I've made all the losers, too. But, I work with all the precision of a marvelous computer and the intelligence of a human being. You may run me for profit, or you may run me to ruin. It makes no difference to me. Take me! Be easy with me, and I'll destroy you. Be firm with me, and I'll put the world at your feet.

Who am I? I am habit.

First, we observe the behaviors of relatives, friends, or role models. We imitate that behavior. Then, we repeat and internalize the behavior, and the idea, notion, act or belief grows layer upon layer from a flimsy cobweb into an unbreakable cable to strengthen or shackle our lives. Unfortunately, bad habits take no holidays. There's no "Thank God It's Friday" for these mindless routines.

Instead, like comfortable beds, they're easy to fall into but hard to get out of. One thing is certain: If we won't master our habits, our habits will master us. When we allow unhealthy habits to be our guide and counsel, we give up control of our actions and find ourselves at the mercy of that blind giant who calls the shots without any concern for our wellbeing.

However, when we begin to deal with the attitudes and actions that bind us, we give ourselves permission to take control and to build new habit patterns that help us perform to our ultimate potential. There is a critical difference between knowing something and learning how to make it part of our everyday game plan.

The secret is repetition, repetition, repetition... Repetition creates habit. Habit becomes conviction. Conviction controls action. Right now, in this instant, you're engaged in one of the best habits of all: Experiencing information that will benefit you, rather than frustrate and defeat you.

Advertising executives bet their entire careers, and their clients' enormous budgets, on the fact that repeated messages cause subconscious decisions. Every Saturday morning, they teach our kids which brands of cereal they should eat, what kinds of shoes are cool, and which video games, cell phones, CDs, DVDs, software and toys they should get their parents to buy.

While our brain receives thousands of inputs each day, it seems that we lock in most aggressively on those that are negative. But, the good news is you can change your life by changing your habits.

Through scores of scientifically validated studies, psychologists now know how to track a habit from the time the sensory nerves carry the message from our hearing, touch, vision, taste and smell to the data processing areas of our brains. The brain then makes a decision, based on this information, and immediately sends the working order through the motor nerves to the appropriate parts of the body demanding action.

It should then come as no surprise that, after the body responds the same way

to identical stimuli 25 or 30 times, a habit is formed. Here is the most interesting part... Because of this repetition, the message from the sensory nerve learns to jump over to the conditioned motor nerve without a conscious decision by the brain. Think about it. Only 25 or 30 repeats for a habit to be formed, and it becomes like a software program installed in the hard drive of our computers. We don't think about it; we just run the program.

While it seems more difficult to replace a bad habit with a good one, I am pleased to report that the development of good habits enjoys the same precise mathematical formulas. It depends on input, practice and supporting environment.

For a habit to become a permanent part of your life, it takes about a year of committed practice to firmly internalize it and about two years for it to override your past experiences and former bad habits that have been developed over a lifetime.

Understanding the **Four Cornerstones of Change** will teach you how to develop healthy habits:

Cornerstone #1: No one else can change you. You must first admit the need for change, give up any denial of your role in the problem, and take full responsibility for changing yourself. You must also understand that you can't change anyone else, either. You can influence and inspire others as a mentor, but they, as individuals, are ultimately responsible for gaining new inputs, practicing them and surrounding themselves with a team of positive supporters.

Cornerstone #2: Habits are not easily broken; they are replaced by layering new behavior patterns on top of the old ones over time. Since many habits have been internalized for years, it's foolish to assume that three or four weeks of training will override the old, destructive patterns. To change any habit, including substance abuse, self-ridicule, eating disorders and any other destructive lifestyles, forget about the 30-day wonder-cures, the 60-day diet delights, and the get-fit, get-rich-quick fads. Give yourself about a year to internalize permanent change. Be patient. It took a number of years and observation, imitation and repetition for you to pick up and store your current habits, so naturally, it will take time to change them.

Cornerstone #3: A daily routine adhered to over time will become second nature, like brushing your teeth, or driving your



Donna Krech

car. Continue to practice your mistakes on the driving range and you'll remain a high-handicap duffer. Learn from a professional and then practice the correct swing with each club as demonstrated by the pro, and you'll become the pride of your foursome.

Practice makes permanent. Practicing negative behaviors leads to a losing lifestyle. Practicing positive behaviors leads to a winning lifestyle. The greatest coaches of the greatest teams, the greatest parents of the greatest kids and the greatest leaders of the greatest companies and countries use the same basic techniques. Explanation, demonstration, correction, repetition and affirmation. Remember, the idea is to replace habits, not erase them.

Cornerstone #4: Once you change a habit, stay away from the old, destructive environment. The reason most criminals return to prison is that they make the mistake of returning to their old neighborhoods and their old friends when they're paroled. No matter how much they regretted their actions while in prison, and want to go straight, they're easily dragged back into their old ways by exposure to the negative environment.

When dieters reach their desired weight, they usually go back to their former eating routines because their new behavior patterns haven't been embedded long enough to make them strong enough to pass by the dessert section of the buffet.

There are **Six Key Points to Ponder**, if you want to be successful:

First, we make our habits; then our habits make us. The chains of habits are too small to be felt until they're too strong to be broken.

(See Donna Krech Page 21)

The Force of Habit: Observation, Imitation, Repetition = Internalization

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...Donna Krech
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Second, much of television and entertainment is a growing ground for destructive habits.

Third, children's habits are a reflection of the significant adults in their lives. They're unaware that habits are being formed.

Four, although most change comes from inner core convictions, it's possible for external environments (having a consistent flow of new, positive inputs) to create new habits and lifestyles.

Five, many habit patterns give way to former destructive habit patterns because the individual attempts to become a new person in the same, old environment.

Six: Habits don't discriminate. They're the masters of every failure, and the servants of every leader who has ever lived.

Clearly, our habits hold the key to winning at life and achieving any goal we desire. So, if you don't have what you want, create better habits and then you can create a better outcome. As Denis said, you need to expose yourself to information that will encourage you instead of defeating you, like so much of the information available today. For a free subscription to my weekly ezine that contains more inspiring and informative articles like this one, visit www.DonnaKrech.com.

Make It Fun!

“New & Improved!”

By: Derek Barton

To rebrand or not to rebrand? That is the question. To stay the way you are and *hope* that people will change their minds about you or rebrand yourself and *inspire* them to change their minds about you?

If you and your company stay the way you are right now, chances are you won't see any changes to your bottom line. People love to see products and services improve, which has led to that age-old advertising line, “*New & Improved.*” That line is still being used today because it still works. People still *want* to believe it!

Great brands are always evolving. They have to in order to be great. Companies are never stable; they're either going up or going down. Great companies are constantly striving to be better! They rebrand or reinvent themselves, trying to stay current and cool while making that emotional connection with their customer.

Recently, I was driving back to Los Angeles from my cousin's wedding in Northern California, listening to a great radio station. They were playing a mix of songs from the '70s to the present. Rod Stewart's first hit song, *Maggie May*, from 1971 played. An hour later, I hear Rod Stewart singing a ballad from his 2002 Great American Songbook collection. These are songs from the 1930s and '40s written by people like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and George and Ira Gershwin. Hardly rockers. But, this rocker, Rod Stewart, whose songs like *Do Ya Think*

I'm Sexy and Hot Legs put him on top of the charts in the '70s, reinvents himself 31 years later with a whole different genre of music. He's back on top of the charts, wins multiple Grammy awards and gets inducted into the Music Hall of Fame.

New & Improved? Some people may think so, but Rod Stewart was just showing us a new facet on his diamond. He dared to be different. He wanted to make an emotional connection to new fans with new songs while keeping his loyal base happy as he had for the last four decades.

You have to have the courage to risk singing a different tune. You have to rebrand yourself and your company from time to time. You don't wear the same clothes decade after decade, right? You change it up, experimenting with different styles of shirts, pants, shoes, eye shadows and lipsticks to appeal to the people around you.

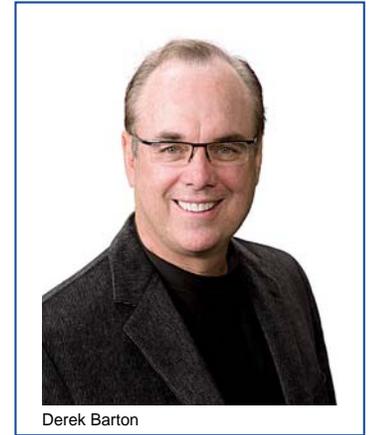
Great brands are incessantly perfecting their look, from their logo, to their products, ads, website and to the interior and exterior of their stores. Look at the evolution of the Pepsi-Cola logo. They have rebranded their logo eleven different times since they began in 1898. Starbucks, Shell Oil and Apple and many others have all made changes to their logos along the way. They continually rebrand their brands!

No matter who you are and what business you are in, ask yourself, “Would I hire me? Do I truly know my business? Am I passionate about it? Do I look the part?” I

see many overweight people in the fitness industry. Not just overweight but obese. What message does that give a potential customer who walks into a fitness center where the owner and staff are out of shape? Human nature says, “If their product and service is so good, why aren't they fit?” Note to self; look the part!

I'm in a networking group, and we meet at a prestigious and successful law firm in Beverly Hills once a month. Twenty-five of us from different industries sit around this huge conference table hosted by the managing partner of the law firm. Nothing is on the walls. No logos. No artwork. Just stark, white walls with a flat screen TV for presentations, and a small spindly \$15 plastic plant on the credenza. I said to the managing partner during my branding presentation to the group, “This room is cold and intimidating. There is no warmth to it. If I feel this way, your clients and potential clients must feel the same. Your lawyers here average \$500 an hour, and you can't afford a real plant?” He laughed along with everyone else at the absurdity of my point. I showed the “before and after” of companies I helped brand. I also showed the group mockups of how much better that single conference room would look with the law firm's logo and tagline on the wall along with a real plant. Needless to say, the “after” pictures showed the value of rebranding.

If you have a health club or training studio, you are trying to inspire and motivate people to work out and get in



Derek Barton

shape and stay in shape, right? Then inspire and motivate him the moment he walks into your place, like a Hard Rock Cafe, a Nike Town, or an Apple Store does. Show him that you “get him” and that you have the kind of place that he won't mind spending time at and giving his hard earned money to. He wants to feel comfortable. He wants a home away from home. Just like every other customer, he wants to know that as he gets better, you will get better. He doesn't want to outgrow you or get bored with you. Like any relationship, he wants it to feel...

New & Improved!

Some fitness centers never get any better from the moment they first open their doors. No thank you! Members want someone who is constantly on the cutting edge, someone who is always finding better ways to help them become *New & Improved.*

Like all customers, he wants to trust you. A great brand is more than a trademark, it is a “Trustmark.” Then, if it continues to emotionally connect with its customers, it becomes a “Lovemark.” And, if you've worked hard to get to that place, you have to continue to work hard to stay there.

The world today is full of 1-hit wonders. Anyone can be great once. It takes real talent, insight and hard work to remain great year after year, decade after decade. So, what kind of music are you making today? Is it the same song over and over again? Are you singing it the same way as you always have? On every occasion, your customers are looking for a new song, a new sound, a new experience. So, give it to them! Rebrand your brand and rock their world!

(Derek Barton is one of the health and fitness club industry's greatest marketing minds. Derek may be reached by email at derek@bartonproductions.com)



The Evolution of the Pepsi Logo (1898 - Present)

Programming For The “Fun Of It!”

Five Steps to Championing a Program in Your Facility

By: Laurie Cingle, M.Ed.

The difference between great programs and okay programs is simply the person who is in charge, the Program Champion.

Here are five easy steps to get you started on the path to becoming a champion of programming...

1. Come Up With a Great Program Idea.

The key to being a Program Champion is the passion and excitement that person brings to the program. Great ideas are usually stumbled upon. Here are some tips to coming up with program ideas:

- What are you passionate about? Dogs? Container gardening? Snow boarding?
- What issues or events in your club and community have members and residents buzzing right now?
- What movies are coming out that have people excited?

•What is hot on television?

•Books, both classics like *Around the World in Eighty Days* or new, trendy books like *The Paleo Diet* make for great program themes.

Important: The program should either be the Champion’s idea or a collaborative effort between him and the team. It is rare that Program Champions emerge from being handed a program that is someone else’s idea and passion.

2. Develop Your Program. Brainstorm to focus the idea into a deliverable program. While each program is different, they all have things in common. Programs must:

- Have a beginning, middle and end.
- Have a goal and/or show results.
- Be developed so everyone clearly knows what the program is, how to do it and why they are doing it.
- Motivate people to go above and beyond

what they would normally do. This doesn’t necessarily mean they will be pushed physically.

•Provide support, structure and tools. Examples are an instructor, educational handouts, checklists, meetings and record keeping.

Important: Clearly defining every aspect is imperative to the Champion’s success. He must be organized, a good communicator and good at administration of the details.

3. Own Your Program. A Program Champion eats, sleeps and breathes his program. When kicking off a program, it should be the top job priority. The Program Champion alone is responsible for its success. Program Champions make no excuses because of their passion and enthusiasm.

4. Get Others to Buy-In. As a true Program Champion, he should develop the great



Laurie Cingle

idea into a deliverable program that he is ultra-excited about. And, he absolutely needs the support of his supervisor and peers. Without support, he will feel like he is pushing a boulder up a hill.

(See Laurie Cingle Page 24)

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Membership Doesn't Provide Results... But...

By: Maria Parrella-Turco

Being in the health and fitness club industry for over two decades, I can say that we have done a great job at perfecting a membership sale. However, what I have also learned is that a membership doesn't provide results. Health and fitness clubs need to get with the "Program." In the last several years, programming has evolved, and consumers are looking *beyond* memberships to small group training experiences that will deliver results and solutions. People are willing to pay top dollar for these programs, too. Let's briefly examine some successful small group training programs and then look at what multipurpose fitness centers can learn from them.

Orange Theory Fitness is a "group fitness concept" that is broken into intervals of cardiovascular and strength training. The classes utilize a variety of equipment including free weights, rowing machines, treadmills and body leverage training. This interactive workout hinges on "the physiological theory of Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption (EPOC), or after-burn effect," according to the company's website. All attendees get a heart rate monitor so that instructors can keep track of where people fall among the five training zones. During a 60-minute workout, participants do "multiple intervals designed to produce 12 - 20 minutes of training at 84% or higher of maximum heart rate." Using this method, it leaves little question about how hard someone is working. The investment ranges between \$125 to \$175 per month.

CrossFit is a strength and conditioning program that focuses on varied functional movements performed at high intensity. Participants complete daily workouts (WODs) posted by a coach or affiliate at one of CrossFit's approximately 6,100 affiliates. A program that positions itself as broad, general and inclusive, the CrossFit prescription is "constantly varied and high-intensity." CrossFit enthusiasts see themselves as being in the "sport of fitness." A drop-in for CrossFit classes typically ranges from \$20 to \$25 and a 3-classes per week commitment will cost upwards of \$150 per month.

Barre classes and spin-offs are gaining momentum. Although there are some variations, this small group training program generally features isometrics, dance conditioning and physical therapy-inspired movements, sometimes in an interval format. Iterations include: The Bar Method, Pure Barre, Fluidity, Dailey Method, BarrePhysique, Karve and many

others. Most of these programs can be traced to **Lotte Berk**, a German dancer who fled the Nazis in the late 1930s and moved to London. After injuring her back, Berk decided to combine her ballet bar routines with rehabilitative therapy to form an exercise system. Barre classes land in the \$150 to \$250 a month range.

Fighting for Market Share

All three of these players and their cousins, in addition to existing Yoga, Pilates and other boutique studios, are chipping away at fitness facility market share. These programs have a few things in common, including:

- A group element that fosters motivation;
- Competition and camaraderie; and
- A coach or system that focuses on results, drive and accountability.

Specialty studios offer coaching to virtually 100% of their clientele, compared to less than 30% of a typical health club population, when you add group fitness, small group personal training and one-on-one training (based on my experience as a consultant). Most of these small group training boutique studios and franchises do not allow their brands to be incorporated into fitness facilities.

Therefore, if multipurpose fitness centers need approximately 30% + of their total revenue to come from non-membership dues in order to be profitable, how can they compete?

A Club Within a Club

The birth of the small group training phenomenon gives fitness centers an opportunity to create a club within a club. In this scenario, you offer the same types of programs that these small boutique clubs offer, with some tweaks. Perhaps, you have a wider array of options. Maybe the programming is more inclusive or focused on special populations. One big perk is that a facility can present all the additional amenities already offered.

For example, Eclipse Fitness Sports and Wellness in Green Brook, New Jersey, had 4,300 hundred members when they realized they were losing members to small group specialty program studios. They decided to convert two racquetball courts to "studios" and offer their members a choice of over 25 small group training classes per week. These programs included everything from heart rate monitoring, battle ropes, suspension training, tire flipping and more. The facility charged \$179 per month for full access to these programs in addition to all the regular benefits of membership, which

included steam, sauna and over 60 group fitness classes.

In order for the club within the club concept to be successful, fitness centers must realize that most of the participants will primarily come from existing members and secondarily from new recruits outside the club. Therefore, a strategic internal and external marketing strategy must be put into place. Request testimonials and offer free demos for existing and new clients. One advantage of this method is that members will be exposed to the activities while they are working out in other areas of the facility. External marketing strategies include social or group buying (Groupon) and traditional forms of mass marketing, including digital means.

What fitness facility owners, operators and managers can learn from the small group training phenomenon is that the consumer is willing to pay for results. People are shifting their view of fitness from the membership model to results-driven programming. The question becomes will fitness centers offer more programming to quench the consumer's growing interest, or will these boutique clubs become the future of fitness facilities?

Information in this article is based on feedback and statistics from the clients of New Paradigm Partner, a fitness industry management and consulting firm.

(Maria Parrella-Turco has been working in the fitness and wellness industry since 1990. She and New Paradigm Partners have assisted hundreds of centers in the aspects of conception, business plan development, finance, facility development, management and staff training. She and



Maria Parrella-Turco

New Paradigm Partners own and operate a highly profitable and successful 30,000 square foot "consulting model" health club that is used as a testing and university center for the firm. In addition, she and her partners own and operate three Crunch Fitness Centers located in New Jersey. Her mission is to optimize her clients mission and profit objectives and her consulting has facilitated increased profitability for many clients. As a Senior Partner of New Paradigm Partners, Maria serves as a professional consultant to the fitness industry and founder of fitRewards! and Honor Yoga. As a facilitator, she is a lead trainer for the NPP University and Franklin Coveys 7 Habits of Highly Effective Health People, Strengthfinders and 5 Dysfunctions of a Team. Maria was featured on the cover of Club Insider in 2008 and Club Solutions in 2010. Maria can be reached by email at map@newparadgimpartners.com and phone at 609-332-5689)

...Laurie Cingle

continued from page 23

Important: If he cannot get buy-in for his program, consider tabling it until a later date when he is better prepared to explain the benefits and when his team is better prepared to hear what he is saying. It may mean the program needs tweaking.

5. Deliver the Program. If he is truly the Program Champion, he delivers the program initially. Don't go through all of the above only to delegate the delivery to someone on his team who doesn't care about it like he does. He should stay close to it until he sees that it is established.

Championing programs requires skill, practice and mentoring. Use these five steps to help him begin to discover his strengths and weaknesses where programming is concerned.

(Laurie Cingle, M.Ed., is a fitness business success coach and club consultant. She has been instrumental in leading highly-successful clubs like the Houstonian Club, the Maryland Athletic Club and Wellness Center and Fitness Formula to break industry records and set them on a path for continued long-term success in programming. Laurie can be reached by email at laurie@lauriecingle.com)

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-Kevin Buck, Owner, Newport Athletic Club

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Sell Your Health Club For More Than It's Worth

By: Jim Thomas

Is it time to go fishing? Would you like to sell your gym? This may be more challenging than you think. Nearly half of all gym owners who try to sell their business can't get it done.

However, if done properly, nearly every gym will sell and many times for the asking price. What's the secret? You need to get the timing right. The biggest mistake we see is that most gym owners do not plan their exit strategy from the very beginning.

We see this over and over... Gym owners wait until something goes wrong. When that happens, the gym is typically trending downward and not making as much money as it once was. The best time to sell your gym is when your business is doing well... when it's trending up, not trending down.

Be Sure You Have Clean Books

If you want to sell your gym for the maximum value, you need to be sure your books are in order. I once asked to see a club's books, and they handed me a shoebox full of receipts. That won't work.

In order to decrease tax liability, many gym owners run personal expenses and non-recurring expenses through the business, such as travel, meals, entertainment, repairs, etc. These are really

discretionary earnings, so we have to go through all the books and records to add those personal and non-recurring expenses back to the bottom line.

It's crucial to know your numbers, and not just tax returns, but balance sheets and profit and loss statements. You also need to track everything you're doing in new member sales and marketing, such as if your advertising is paying off, how many leads you need to get a new member and how much those leads cost you. This should be standard operating procedure.

Know What Makes Your Gym Valuable

In order for your gym to be attractive to a prospective buyer, you will need multiple sources of income, a healthy member dues base and a solid management team in place.

Buyers will look at how well branded the gym is and if that gym has any intellectual property in place. They look to see if the gym has any contracts in place that are perhaps transferrable.

And, if you are your gym's only employee, you don't have much to sell. Buyers want to be sure that the gym has employees and a management team in place because they don't want to buy a job.

Keep It Quiet

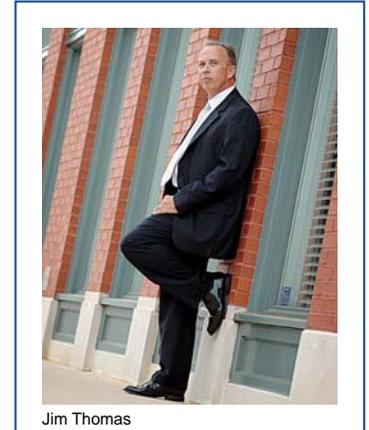
The best way to ruin a gym is to tell people you're selling it because employees, customers, vendors and landlords worry they won't like something about a new owner of the gym. In fact, the only people who are happy to hear that a gym is selling are your competitors who will shout from the rooftops that you're "going out of business," not "selling" your business.

Selling a gym is very different than selling your home. Many people think it's the same, but it's completely different. You can't just put a "For Sale" in front of your gym.

Hire A Good Fitness Industry Business Broker

But, you need to be careful. Many business brokers have about the same rate of success as gym owners do in selling their business. The key is finding a business broker with a proven track record in the fitness industry. To do that, we suggest asking any potential broker these questions:

- What gyms have you sold?
- Do you have a database of buyers?
- What are those buyers looking for?
- Do you own the firm?



Jim Thomas

•If you don't own the firm, who decides how much money is spent on marketing my business for sale?

Most gyms selling for under a few million dollars shouldn't have to pay any upfront fees but will be expected to pay a fee of between 10 - 12% upon completion of a sale.

If now is the time, get your club ready for a sale!

(Jim Thomas is President of Fitness Management USA and may be reached by phone at 800 - 929 - 2898. Check out www.fmconsulting.net/gymsforsale)

Fitness Management & Consulting Launches Gyms for Sale Website

DALLAS, TX - Fitness Management & Consulting announced the launch of its new **Gyms for Sale** website: www.fmconsulting.net/gymsforsale. Fitness Management & Consulting is a full-service consulting and brokerage firm connecting sellers of gyms with qualified, capable buyers and acquisition specialists across the country. The new website is designed to provide individuals who are looking to buy a gym or sell a gym with all the tools and resources they need. This site offers a free registration to notify potential buyers when gyms become available in their desired area.

According to Jim Thomas, "With our all-new Gyms for Sale website, we now offer the ideal complement to our health club consulting services, while offering our clients additional resources to find the gym that is just right for them, including our new gym start up with no franchise fees or royalties."

The Gyms for Sale website was created to provide an easy, affordable way to buy or sell a fitness business. Whether it's a seasoned gym owner who wants to sell a

business or someone who's considering an entry into the fitness business, Gyms for Sale is the ideal resource. "This is the perfect compliment for our consulting services to help gym owners properly enter or exit the gym business," says Thomas.

The extensive background and experience of Fitness Management & Consulting helps to maximize productivity and eliminate all of the guess work for health club and gym owners across the country. The philosophy of treating each club owner like a trusted partner makes Fitness Management & Consulting the ideal business associate. "We have taken all of our knowledge and turned it into an easy-to-navigate, one-of-a-kind website. We pride ourselves on helping gym owners and future gym owners become more savvy about the business side of health and fitness."

Whether you operate a health club, fitness center, gym or other fitness vertical, Fitness Management & Consulting has a program to fit your needs, expand your market base and keep you productive and profitable. Go to: www.fmconsulting.net/gymsforsale

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Leadership and Our Stress Response

By: Bill McBride

There is a common belief that leadership positions carry lower levels of stress than non-leadership positions based on measured lower Cortisol Hormone levels as well as self-reported anxiety levels. This premise was confirmed by an article titled, *Leadership is Associated With Lower Levels of Stress*, written by Gary D. Sherman, Jooa J. Leea, Amy J. C. Cuddy, Jonathan Renshonc, Christopher Oveisd, James J. Grosse and Jennifer S. Lerner - Harvard.

The concept seemed to rest partially in the fact that, even in primates, higher status lowers stress with the findings being that the more sense of control an individual or primate has, the lower their stress level will be.

While this is proven and makes complete sense, my question is what happens to the leader when they are struggling with their sense of control or lack of control? What effect does a stressful event or prolonged stress beyond normal levels cause in judgment, emotional IQ (EQI) and overall ability to prioritize actions and decisions?

According to an article written by Dick Thompson, Ph.D., President and CEO of High Performing Systems, Inc., I learned much of what my instincts have shown me over the years. Namely, when a leader has a significant stressor with prolonged stress levels, their priorities

and judgment are often compromised. According to the research, a person under prolonged significant stress can go from an average EQI of 101 down to 80 with significant impairment in decision making, cognitive analysis and an enhanced emotional state lessening effectiveness and potentially leading to Catastrophic Leadership Failure (CLF). Think of leaders and companies that have imploded under significant stress...

When CLF occurs, it can manifest itself in several non-productive behaviors that affect the leader, team and the organization, including a major mistake, lack of listening, analysis paralysis, reactive nature, fear- or anger-based reactions/decisions, high degrees of emotion, wishy-washy flip-flopping, failure to make any decisions or some form of denial.

All of this is based on neurotransmitters and hormones as well as the body's inability to control areas of the brain during these chemical imbalances. For scientific simplicity, the emotional centers of the brain take over and the higher thinking, more complex logic centers are "hijacked." Typically, this is not a good outcome for anyone involved in the circumstance. While the initial flood of chemicals is good for the "fight or flight" reaction, prolonged exposure erodes cognitive ability.

Stress management isn't a "feel good" discipline, but it is critical to the productivity and success of organizations.

Our industry is a major solution to avoiding CLF. Let's take care of our members and ourselves for the betterment of all. And, think about that extra shot of espresso... Once your stress is under control, consider these characteristics:

10 Leadership Characteristics:

1. Know yourself: Good, bad and unattractive;
2. Know your team: Areas of proficiency, competency, accountability and weakness;
3. Have a strategy that is simple, clear and easy to articulate;
4. Execution without strategy is dangerous;
5. Strategy without execution is worse than meaningless, it causes a lack of faith;
6. Admit your mistakes, "own" them and move on;
7. Make decisions based on what is "right" for the organization not just what is "right" for you or your team;
8. Think through the impact of your decisions to all stakeholders: Organization, Members, Staff, Investors, Community, etc.;
9. If you are experienced, you need to trust your "gut" instincts. If something feels "off," it usually is. If it feels "right," verify to the degree feasible, but don't be afraid to make a decision;
10. Don't try to be all things to all people. Have integrity and stick to your belief and value system.

Leaders have discipline. Being great at 1 - 3 things is much better than being mediocre at 4 - 8 things. Say "No" to



Bill McBride

things that take you off the course of your committed strategic wheelhouse.

Manage your stress, your team's stress and lead with confidence!

(Bill McBride is a veteran club business executive and served on the IHRSA Board of Directors as a Member and as Chairman for four years. He is now IHRSA's Ex-Officio Chairman. Bill recently departed from Club One where he worked for ten years and is now establishing his own club consulting business BMC3: Bill McBride Consulting | Coaching | Club Management. Bill can be reached at BillMcBride@BMC3.com)

Revisiting "10 Characteristics of High Retention Clubs" from IHRSA 2004

By: Chris Werte

Time flies! Eleven years ago, I joined Retention Management. Looking back over this period, I am reminded of all the changes that have occurred both in the fitness industry and how we all do business today.

Back in 2002, mobile phones were just that, phones. If you were doing anything else than calling people, you probably had a Palm Pilot (remember them?) or a very early Blackberry. But, Blackberry then introduced an email capable smartphone. Then, in 2007, the iPhone was launched. As Steve Jobs said, "The phone was not just a tool but a way of life." Before you knew it, we were all texting, checking email and searching the web on our phone. Mobile Apps soon followed in 2008 to make it easier for companies to provide clients an online portal to their goods and services. The latest major change was the tablet, starting with the iPad, which is now changing how we all access digital content (and probably will be the desktop computer killer).

Riding the wave of this

technology was social media. It's hard to remember a day when we were not getting our news through Twitter and connecting with friends on Facebook. But, Facebook has only been open for public use for seven years (at last count it had 1.1 billion users), and Twitter came out in 2006. All of these changes have resulted in a fundamentally different way in which people and businesses interact.

The fitness industry has not been immune to change as well. Think about a club eleven years ago compared to today. Cardio with integrated audio and video; Zumba. It's hard to imagine any club that does not have some social media, including Facebook pages and Foursquare setups.

This brings me to John McCarthy's article on what makes a high-retention club, published in CBI Magazine's December 2004 edition. Back then, there was still a debate on whether a club should focus on retention or new sales exclusively. In noting that the fitness market was maturing, McCarthy stated that it might not be a viable business strategy to just chase after new clients.

Using this as a platform to discuss what exactly a high-retention club is, he made two observations that remain pertinent today.

1. *Clubs with strong member-to-member connections have higher retention than clubs with weak member-to-member connections.*

This fundamental tenet on retention is as true today as it was back then. It is all about community building. But, I smiled to myself as I continued to read; the focus back then was showing how country clubs and tennis-only clubs had a leg up on commercial clubs since they are much more family and community-focused. Today, technology and social media, when used effectively, no longer make that distinction as important.

2. *Retention rates are higher among members who visit early and often.*

The industry was still digesting findings from an earlier FIA study, "Why People Quit," that showed the more a new member attended early, the more likely they would stay a member after one

year. Interestingly, one of the takeaways from this back in 2004 was the need for a "continual flow of incentives" to "launch members successfully."

Today, we know it is not just incentives that lead to improved retention of new members. It is all about building that community connection early. Whether it is a quality orientation program, strong staff/member relationships or purposeful communication and social media usage, today's clubs have a lot more options available.

Although much has changed over the years, John McCarthy hit on some of the fundamentals back in 2004. A successful, high retention club has a strong community of members and staff. To reap the benefits of all the technological advances available to clubs today, keep John McCarthy's findings front and center. Use them to build a strong community and get your new members connected into this community as soon as possible.

(Chris Werte is the Director of Marketing of Retention Management)



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Life Fitness *Personal Trainers To Watch* Final Judging Event To Be Held At Nuffield Health London

SCHILLER PARK, IL - Life Fitness, a global leader in fitness equipment manufacturing, announced that Nuffield Health, the U.K.'s largest healthcare organization, will serve as the global stage for the *Personal Trainers to Watch* live competition, where the world's top personal trainer will be selected. The event, to be held on September 27, 2013, at St. Albans Fitness and Wellbeing Centre, will bring together the competition's top 10 finalists who will compete and be judged based on training technique using the Life Fitness Synrgy360 personal training system.

Global Competition Takes On A Global Stage

Life Fitness will host the first-ever, live global judging event for *Personal Trainers to Watch*, which is now in its third year. Located just outside of London,

the St. Albans Centre provides a unique venue with both state-of-the-art facilities and industry-leading healthcare services across health and fitness. The Fitness and Wellbeing Centre's Life Fitness Synrgy360 personal training system serves as a hub for performing dynamic, state-of-the-art, total-body exercises.

"We are delighted to partner with Life Fitness in the *Personal Trainers to Watch* program," said Rick Crawford, National Fitness and Wellbeing Lead, Nuffield Health. "At Nuffield Health we believe that making small positive changes to lifestyle is the best way to ensure lifelong good behaviors, so people are as fit and healthy as they can be. Our aim is to improve the health of the U.K. and through joined up health and fitness services we are able to improve people's wellbeing. Personal training is a key element of helping people to achieve their health and fitness goals, we're proud to

WHAT WE LIVE FOR

support the profession through working with Life Fitness to bring the expertise of the world's most elite personal trainers to our staff and members."

The *Personal Trainers to Watch* program recognizes and rewards trainers around the world who embody the same passion and commitment to healthy

lifestyles on which Life Fitness prides itself. Nominees are judged on dedication to enhancing client experiences and pursuing continuing education for mastery of the profession, as well as leadership, client motivation, inspiration and previous recognitions.

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Thanks and Appreciation

At CLUB INSIDER, we are excited to be celebrating our **20th Anniversary** of this home-based health and fitness club trade newspaper! The thought that this newspaper was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. I wish to extend our most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone that's made this amazing run possible.

A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to **Rick Caro, Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller** of Atlanta's **Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided us during *our first 8 years of publication*. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our monthly editions! **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **READERS**. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our **CLUB INSIDER Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. It's amazing to know that we have several advertisers with over 15 years of continuous advertising with us. Plus, we have one advertiser, **National Gym Supply**, with over 18 years advertising with us and one, **Affiliated Acceptance Corporation**, with over 19 years as they have advertised in every single edition of **CLUB INSIDER** since the first month that we sold advertising in June, 1994! We also want to say sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Authors**, past and present, who've contributed *hundreds and hundreds* of excellent articles to help our readers with their Best Business Practices. **Thanks and Appreciation** to **IHRSA** for all it does.

Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, Justin, who started working part-time for **CLUB INSIDER** when he was just 8 years old (helping with mailings). This young man, pretty much behind the scenes for 20 years now, has truly been a fantastic partner for his Dad in **CLUB INSIDER**. Justin does our editing, publication layouts, all of our website design and maintenance, all of our bookkeeping and subscription processing work, as well as archive management and anything else that needs doing, including writing eight cover stories per year.

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.

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