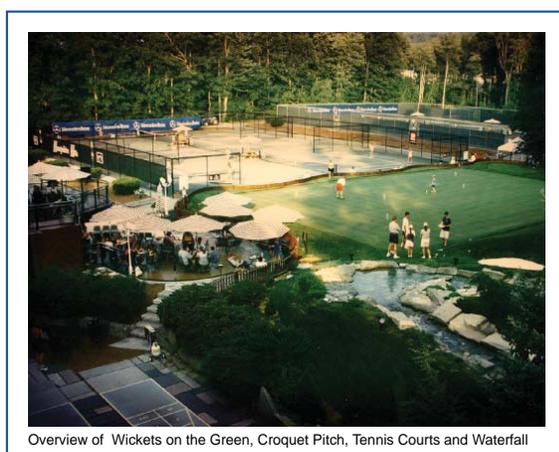


Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

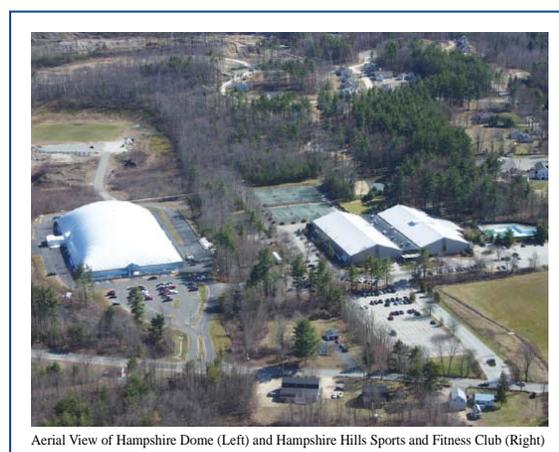
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

The Life and Times of Rick Holder, Owner of Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness

Growing One of the World's Top Sports and Fitness Clubs to Award Winning Status



Overview of Wickets on the Green, Croquet Pitch, Tennis Courts and Waterfall



Aerial View of Hampshire Dome (Left) and Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness Club (Right)



One of Four Hampshire Hills Pools



Winter Time at Hampshire Hills

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

The Life and Times of Rick Holder, Owner of Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness

Growing One of the World's Top Sports and Fitness Clubs to Award Winning Status

By: Norm Cates

Norman "Rick" Holder, Jr., age 67, has raised seven children with his wife Laurie. They have been the owners of Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness in Milford, New Hampshire since 1993. His life and times with the club have been a truly remarkable journey for Holder, a young man who took his dreams and created a world class health and fitness complex that just gets better and better over the years.

Imagine a huge, multipurpose club on 77 acres with a 117,000 square-foot main building and a nearly 100,000 square-foot air-supported dome that alone, cost a little over \$4 million. That

is Hampshire Hills and the Hampshire Dome. Hampshire Hills also has several outbuildings including four lodges that are used by summer camp attendees, an outdoor bar/restaurant, the Courtside Café and the Wickets on the Green Restaurant. All of this make up the Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness Club, one of the largest in America.

Hampshire Hills has 6,500 members, represented by 2,400 membership accounts. Daily club member traffic is 2,400 to 2,500.

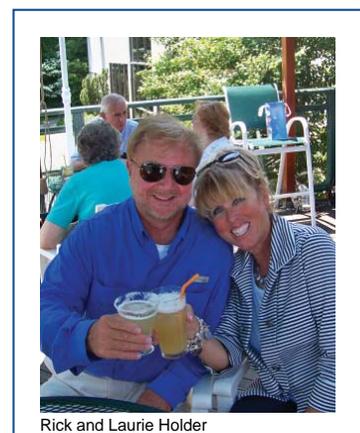
Rick Holder considers his Father, the late Norman Holder, Sr., and his Mother Virginia (Ginny), as his greatest mentors in life. Remarkably, his Mom still gets out and enjoys kayaking at the age of 101!

We contacted Rick Holder by phone at the Hampshire Hills Club in Milford, New Hampshire and the interview that follows reflects the experience and thoughts of an amazing entrepreneur and veteran club owner/operator. Rick is truly one to learn from.

An Interview With Rick Holder

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Rick, please tell us about yourself, your youth, education and early work years before getting into the club business. Are you married and do you have children?

Rick Holder (RH) - My major mentors and influencers were my Mom and my
(See Rick Holder Page 10)



Rick and Laurie Holder

Breaking News: LifeTime Fitness Acquires 9 Lifestyle Family Fitness Clubs!

LifeTime Fitness, the Chanhassen, Minnesota-based upscale club company will acquire nine Lifestyle Family Fitness Centers in Ohio, North Carolina and Indiana. Lifetime Family Fitness, a St. Petersburg, Florida-based, 55-club chain, has entered an acquisition agreement in which LifeTime Fitness will acquire nine Lifestyle Family Fitness Centers and nine Lifestyle Fitness Centers in the same markets will close. Geoffrey Dyer, Founder of Lifestyle Family Fitness will acquire two of the clubs in Columbus, Ohio. A total of 35 Lifestyle Family Fitness Centers in Florida will continue operation as normal.

The companies are currently finalizing the acquisition and lease negotiations associated with the transaction, which is scheduled to close in

December, 2011. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Bahram Akradi, Founder and CEO of LifeTime Fitness, commented to Businesswire on November 15th, "Consistent with our long-held strategy, the acquisition and operation of these clubs, which are similar to our existing, smaller format LifeTime centers, brings an infill opportunity to markets in which we already operate large LifeTime destinations." He continued, "We are excited to extend our Healthy Way of Life programs, services and certified experts to a new base of members as we further expand in these current LifeTime markets via this agreement. Once we absorb the integration costs associated with this transaction, we expect the acquisition to be neutral to

slightly accretive to our 2012 earnings."

CLUB INSIDER contacted Geoffrey Dyer, Founder and CEO of Lifestyle Family Fitness, and he commented, "What's happened is LifeTime Fitness has executed an agreement to purchase most of the clubs that Lifestyle Family Fitness owns and operates outside of the State of Florida. That includes clubs in North Carolina, Indiana and Ohio. They're not buying all of the clubs. Some of the clubs are being shut down, and those members are being accepted in the LifeTime clubs. I think that as far as providing opportunity for your members and employees, you couldn't wish for a better partner than LifeTime. Of all the brands to buy your clubs, Life Time would be the best, wouldn't you agree?"

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Well, I'll tell you. If my son, Justin's feedback is any metric for that --he and his new wife, Danielle, recently joined the LifeTime Fitness Club near their home in Alpharetta, Georgia-- and they are just raving about it!

GEOFF DYER (GD) - You and I both know that they are a company built on quality and over-the-top value. They've always maintained the price integrity and avoided the price wars that this industry has had to go through over the past five years.

With this move, LifeTime Fitness is essentially announcing that they are getting into the small club business. That creates a lot of opportunities in a lot of cities around the country, I'm sure.

Whenever you have this kind of
(See LifeTime/Lifestyle Page 6)

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Norm's Notes

•**Hello Everybody!** This is your **CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in on the **19th Anniversary of CLUB INSIDER!** The very fact that we're now starting our 19th year of publication is, to me, clear proof that there is a **God**. Otherwise, how could you explain a guy who flunked English 101 while a freshman college football player ending up being a newspaper publisher for 19 years!? It seems like yesterday that I started this newspaper so that I could become a "**Mr. Mom**" for my 8-year old son, **JUSTIN CATES**. Now, 215 monthly editions later, here we are! Before I go any further, I want to **Thank You all** for reading **CLUB INSIDER!**

I try hard every month to deliver a quality industry publication. I also want to thank all of our **Advertisers and Contributing Authors** since **Day 1** for your support of **CLUB INSIDER**. Without your advertising support and article contributions, **CLUB INSIDER** would not exist. Importantly, I want to **Thank my son, Justin** for his hard work all of these years. He started at age 8 by helping me with monthly mailings. Since then, he's done it all with respect to production of **CLUB INSIDER**. He's now President of **CLUB INSIDER** and plugging away each month helping me meet the never-ending deadlines. So, as we move into this month's **Norm's Notes**, I invite you all to *read on, enjoy and Stay Tuned!*

•**Is America a great country** or what? **Hmm...Hm... Hm!** As I write this, today is **11/11/11...** what a day to remember! It's also **Veterans Day**. So, from one military veteran to all of you vets out there, I want to thank you for serving our great country, and I wish you all a **Happy Veterans Day! May God bless and help America!**

•**Now is a great time to BOOK** your hotel in **Los Angeles** so you can be right next door to the **L.A. Convention Center for IHRSA's 31st Annual Convention and Trade Show!** I just booked my room at the **JW Marriott at L.A. Live, the Convention Headquarter Hotel**. Check out www.ihrsa.org/convention for convention registration, hotel and travel information. This will be **IHRSA's first stop in Los Angeles**, and as with all previous **IHRSA Conventions and Trade Shows**, this is a **must attend** event if you want to learn more about our industry. Or, if you don't want to learn but just want to party and have a good time, what better place to be than **Los Angeles at L.A. Live!**? I'm looking forward to being one of the few people in our industry who attends and who has never missed an **IHRSA Convention** in 31 years! There are just a hand full of us who've never missed one, and we all want you to be there too, for the good of your career! **Stay tuned!**

•**RICH SYNNOTT** has been the **Executive Director at Weymouth Club** in **Weymouth, MA** for **12 years**. **Rich** resigned and has accepted a new job as **Executive Director for the Upper Valley Aquatic Center in White River Junction, Vermont**. **Rich's** email announcing his move also mentioned that his **Assistant Executive Director, JEFF LINN**, will become the Executive Director, so the **Weymouth Club** now has an opportunity for someone to become the **Assistant Executive Director**. **Rich** indicated he is staying onboard through **Thanksgiving**. To reach **Rich** about the **Assistant ED job**, his email address is ed@weymouthclub.com.



Norm Cates

•**Augie's Quest** has now raised **\$30,752,950**, and **AUGIE** and **LYNNE NIETO** and all of us who know and love them are living everyday with the **hope and prayers** that a cure for **ALS**, also known as **Lou Gehrig's Disease**, can be found. **Save the Date for March 16th, 2012** because the **7th Annual Bash for Augie's Quest** will be held in conjunction with **IHRSA31** on **Friday evening, March 16, 2012. Stay tuned!**

•**Cardinal Fitness** has **closed six** of their clubs in **Indianapolis**. This leaves six of their locations still in business in **Indianapolis**, and if their website is correct, it also leaves **48** open in **Illinois** and **4** in **Ohio**. A call to several **Cardinal Fitness** clubs shown on the web resulted in learning that the remaining **Cardinal Fitness Clubs** in **Indiana** are now called **Charter Fitness**

and their website indicates they have **40** locations in **Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin** and **New Mexico**. It also boasts of a **\$10 per month price point**, which means that the low-cost copy cats mimicking **Planet Fitness** crisscrossing **America** continues. I'm going to have to go back and update my scorecard on the low-price club movement because it's changing so fast. **Stay Tuned!**

•Speaking of **low-price adopters**, **Bally Total Fitness** has had the **Grand Opening** of their first **BFit Club** in a suburb of **Chicago**. The **18,000 square-foot club** now offers a **\$59 enrollment fee** with **\$5 biweekly dues**.

•Don't miss the **31st Annual Athletic** (See *Norm's Notes Page 7*)

About Club Insider

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19 Years and Counting!

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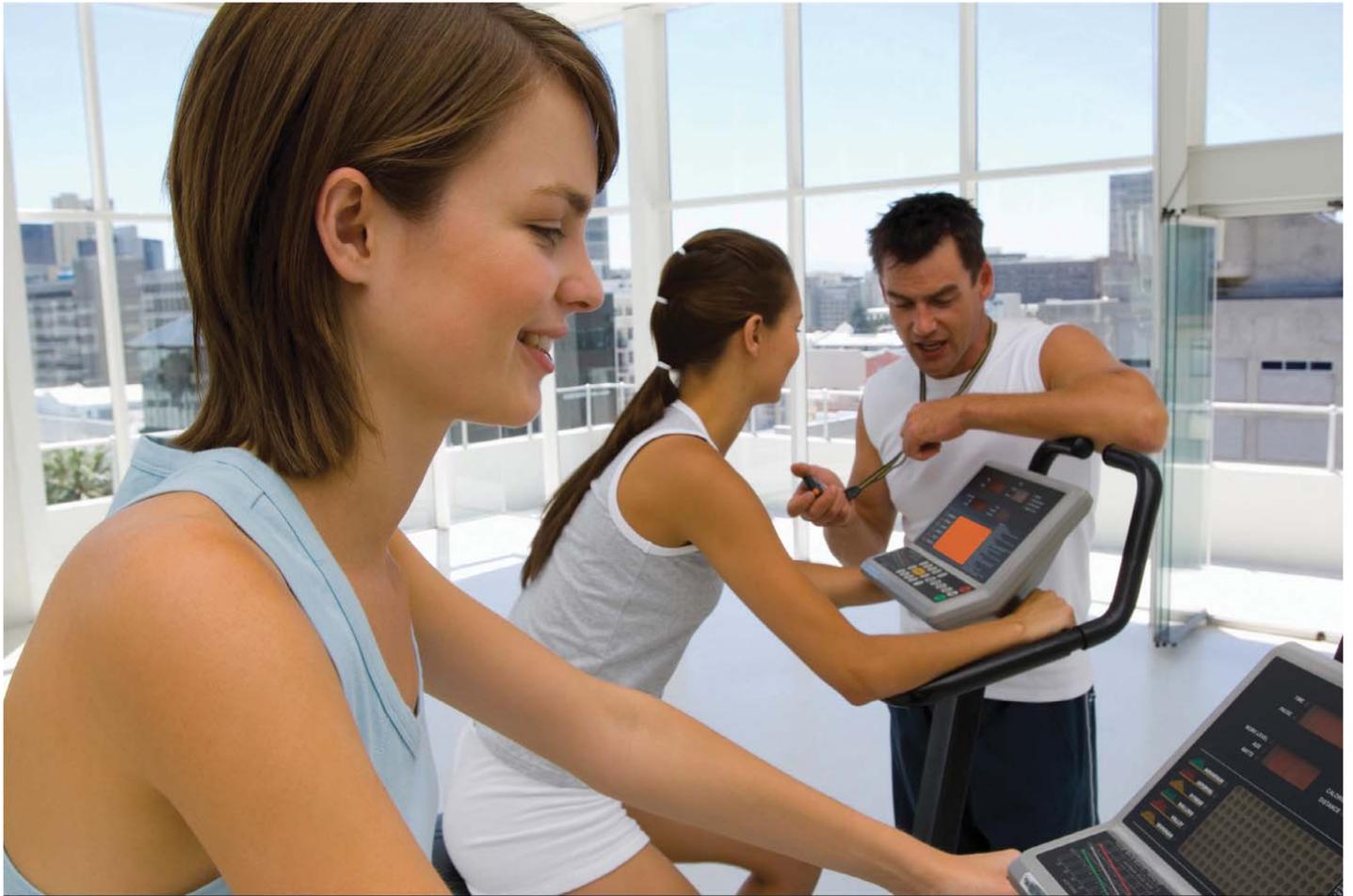
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The “Insider Speaks”

Think Steve!

By: Derek Barton

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward.

Maybe they have to be crazy. How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

We make tools for these kinds of people. While some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

• • •

That was the original ad copy from Apple's famous 1997 *Think Different* campaign. One of the people who worked on that campaign gave me a framed copy of it, which proudly hangs on my office wall.

Is it any wonder that those words reflect Apple's leader, Steve Jobs? And, even more important, is it any wonder that it reflects the feelings of Apple's loyal customers, like me?

I'm one of those crazy ones, a misfit, a rebel. I definitely am not fond of rules, because if someone makes them, then they can certainly be broken. How many times does a company's staff respond to our complaints about their products or services with that old line, "Sorry, those are the rules." Every time, I answer with, "I make the rules at my company and allow my staff to break them when appropriate to satisfy my customers."

I see things differently too and have no respect for the status quo. Visionaries and innovators like Steve Jobs have taught me to *think different*, which has helped me tremendously in my marketing career.

Upon Steve's return to Apple in 1997, when the company was in trouble, he said to his team, "Our goal is not just to make money, but to make great products." Who in the health club industry shares that goal? Certainly not the majority, which may be one of the big reasons why 85% of Americans don't step foot inside fitness centers.

Unfortunately, the health club industry has not figured out how to deal with the fact that most people don't want its "memberships." Even when people do join, 42% don't come back after 30 days. Further surveys have revealed that the health club industry is the 3rd worst business for retention. That's sad considering there is nothing more important on earth as people's health and fitness.

In response, gym owners have created cheaper memberships and "no contracts" to get people to join. We continue to find new and old ways to make money. We don't make the fitness experience better, just cheaper, which still is not winning over that 85%. So, it's time to ask, "What would Steve Jobs do?"

For starters, Steve would build incredible gyms with genius bars. Just look at his 300+ Apple stores around the world, which are packed with excited people day and night. He would use his brilliant marketing to move and inspire people to WANT to work out in his gyms. Steve would never copy someone's "low cost" model. He would not advertise price because he always believed, as I do, that if price is all one focuses on, people will think that's all you have to offer. As Steve resuscitated the music industry, he would get with all the fitness associations around the world, like IHRSA, and motivate them to start a real fitness movement. "Got Fit?"

From Apple's beginning, Steve set out to make products that would help us become more productive and more creative. With every release of an Apple product, he made you feel like a kid on Christmas morning. Now, we camp out overnight on the sidewalk outside Apple stores waiting for our new toys. People even wait in line for a new Apple store to open. When was the last time you saw a line around the block waiting for a new health club to open? Thanks to Steve, we listen to music again. Thanks to Steve, we take our kids to see *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, *Wall E*, *Up*, *Cars* and all his other movies that emotionally connect with us.

Thanks to Steve, he knew what we wanted before we did. No market research, no surveys, no focus groups, ever. He often said, "People really don't know what they want until we show it to them." He knew instinctively. He trusted his instincts. Steve looked at other products in the marketplace and said, "We can do better." That mantra gave the world the best computer, the best portable music player, the best notebook, the best smart phone, the best tablet, the best apps, the best music download site and the best animated movies. The hits just keep on coming.

Steve Jobs always challenged himself and his team to make something better, even if it was one of his own products or services. To Steve, it was all about simplicity and ease of use, while making sure it was designed like no other. All of that comes with a price, a price all of us Mac fans gladly pay because we, too, want something better. So do people who are overweight and obese, but they are not knocking down our gym doors.

If you own an Apple product, or know someone who does, isn't it amazing how passionate we are about those devices? How many people brag about their membership to your health club?

How many of your members are like us Apple users, trying so hard to convert people? In the health club industry, we have many member referral programs, but they seldom work.

Apple became the most valued company for one simple reason, the CEO wanted to change the world. He did, and by doing so, he changed our lives. And for that, we have always loved and respected Steve Jobs.

That's why people the world over shed a tear when he died. Have you ever seen more news about the death of a CEO or witnessed millions of fans around the world putting flowers and Post-It notes on his stores thanking him for all that he did for them? I bet that most health club members don't even know who the owner of their gym is.

We have taken the passion and



Derek Barton

excitement out of our health clubs and reduced it to a commodity. People would rather take diet pills, or drink "magic potions" or even have their stomach stapled than come into a fitness center and lose weight the right way.

If we don't think differently, we may all become irrelevant one day and wonder what happened. It's time to rally around our own Steve Jobs in the health club industry. Yes, we do have our own visionaries and innovators, but we need more!

It's time to "Think Different." It's time to "Think Steve."

(Derek Barton is the CEO of Barton Productions a California-based marketing firm. To contact Derek by email at derek@bartonproductions.com)

...LifeTime/Lifestyle

continued from page 3

merger, you want to make sure that the people are taken care of, as you well know. I've been here for these meetings with the members and employees, and they have been very well informed in their communication from Life Time. It was done in a first class way. They had people on the ground to answer questions of members and staff. Of course, they did it across multiple markets, and they are still doing it, two days for each market. They have their COO and Vice President of Human Relations attending these meetings to make sure the communication is a positive one.

So, this is the situation. We have six clubs in North Carolina. They are buying five of those and closing one. They're closing the one in Cary, N.C. because they already have a club in that market. In Indiana, they're buying two clubs and closing two. In Ohio, we have ten clubs in the Columbus market, so they are buying two, closing six and I'm actually going to buy the two remaining clubs. I'm getting back in the day-to-day

operations world, Norm!

Right now, I'm out here just making sure that people aren't upset. At the end of the day, LifeTime is honoring all of these members in all of their clubs, so the members will be taken care of. Some of the staff are obviously our concern, but the good news is they've got 164 job openings between their Indiana and Ohio clubs, so there's plenty of opportunities for them to fill positions.

C.I. - What about the Florida Lifestyle Family Fitness Clubs?

GD - We have 35 clubs in Florida and those clubs will continue to operate under the Lifestyle Family Fitness brand. The expectation is the company can now manage those clubs more efficiently. A lot of our growth took place in the Northern markets, so we had higher rents and bigger clubs than we really needed. Then, of course, we've had this economic slowdown. But, the Florida clubs have always performed at a very high level, and they will continue under the Lifestyle Family Fitness banner.

Stay Tuned!

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

Business Conference in Orlando, Florida, November 30th - December 2nd, where the **Medical Fitness Association (MFA)** will also be meeting! For information, go to www.medicalfitness.org.

• **PHIL WENDEL**, the owner of **Atlantic Coast Athletic Clubs** has broken ground on a **57,000 square-foot club** in **Richmond, Virginia** that's projected to cost **\$16 million**. **Good luck with the new Richmond club, Phil!**

• The **Gold's Gym** brand continues to experience losses. For example, a Gold's operator in the **Marietta, Georgia** area where I live has dropped their Gold's name and changed their three Gold's locations to **LifeQuest Fitness**. A call to the club seeking the owner's name resulted in the employee telling me she didn't know the name of the club owner.

• **MARIA PARELLA-TURCO** has announced that **fitRewards!** has integrated the **Club Ready** club management software program to make their awards program fully automatic for their client clubs. According to **RACHEL O'HOLLA**,

Marketing Director of fitRewards!, "Now, clubs can automatically reward members for behaviors that they are tracking inside their **Club Ready** software." For more information, contact Rachel at rachel@fitrewards.com.

• **LARRY GURNEY**, owner of the 23-location **Rush Fitness Complex** chain based in **Knoxville, Tennessee**, has donated the used equipment from their recently remodeled and reequipped **Rush Fitness Alcoa** location to several local high schools. I remember back in 1984 when I sold one of my clubs and **donated 16 Nautilus machines** to my high school, **Rome Free Academy in Rome, New York**. The equipment was greatly appreciated and **is still being used 27 years later!** 15 years after my donation, I visited **Rome's new \$47 million high school**, and there the machines were in the school's new gym! Clearly, that was a gift that's kept on giving, and I would recommend equipment donations to schools to anyone who's re-equipping their club!

• **IHRSA** is now accepting applications for the **4th annual Julie Main Woman Leader Scholarship** and the **Outstanding Community Service Award**. The **JULIE MAIN Emerging Woman Leader Scholarship** is given each year to a female candidate who exemplifies what Julie stood for; courage, perseverance, excellence and professionalism. **Julie was an IHRSA Board Member, Co-owner of West Coast Athletic Clubs and Founder of the Cancer Wellfit Program**. She passed away in May, 2009 after a long battle with breast cancer. The **Outstanding Community Service Award** is presented to an IHRSA member who has made a longstanding commitment to making a difference in, and beyond, their community. The deadline to apply is **December 31, 2011**. Recipients will be presented at **IHRSA2012 in Los Angeles**. IHRSA's **TARA VERITY** will be coordinating the Julie Main and Community Service Awards this year, and her email is tv@ihrsa.org. For more information on both Awards, go to www.ihrsa.org/awards.

• **Congratulations to JILL STEVENS KINNEY** as she's been honored for the second time this year for her achievements as a successful woman entrepreneur. In

June, The **North Bay Business Journal** selected her as one of the **2011 Women in Business** at a gala in Sonoma County. On November 15th, the **Women's Initiative** honored Jill as one of the **2011 Women Entrepreneurs of the Year**. As **Managing Director of Clubsource Development Partners**, Jill's recent projects have generated over **200 jobs** and an estimated **\$35 million** in new revenues in Sonoma County according to the **Sonoma School of Business and Economics**.

• The **Sports Clubs/LA** and **Fila** have entered into a mutually beneficial arrangement. Check out the story on **Page #25**.

• **SPRI Products, Inc.**, a leading distributor of rubberized resistance products and fitness accessories, was named the **#1 selling brand** of fitness accessories in the **2011 Specialty News Fitness Retailer Survey**. This was the **seventh consecutive year** that SPRI has been honored. **Congratulations to the SPRI folks!**

• Club owners in **Maryland** should batten down the hatches because a **Maryland Sales Tax Expansion** is likely to be addressed in 2012. Maryland lawmakers wrapped up their special session in October without addressing any tax proposals. **GOVERNOR O'MALLEY** had called the special session in order to remap Maryland's congressional districts in anticipation of next April's Presidential primary elections. IHRSA alerted Maryland members in July when the session schedule was first announced, at a time when a sales tax expansion, including health club memberships, was on the table. It's now likely that the tax debate will renew at the start of the 2012 legislative session in January. IHRSA is preparing for the likelihood that clubs will have to defend against an additional sales tax. Working with their lobbyist in Annapolis, they have begun advocacy efforts and will continue to alert Maryland IHRSA members of any updates. Shortly after the 2012 session begins, IHRSA will provide avenues for clubs to come together and take action against any proposed tax. **Stay Tuned!**

• **Thanksgiving** is next week, and as I close these **19th Anniversary Norm's Notes**, I must tell you all a quick story. A long time

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)

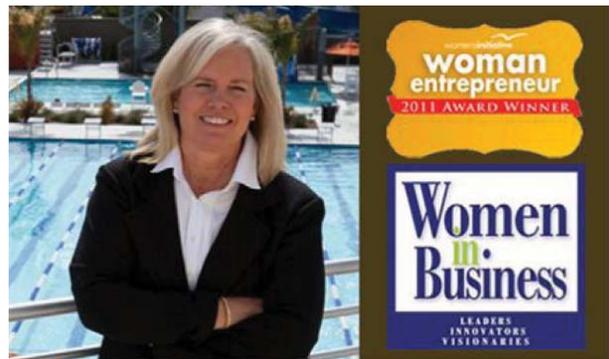
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Hampshire Hills Staff Comment About Rick Holder

Rick has always thought big! 17 years ago, when I started to work at Hampshire Hills, his ideas were so big that I wondered what I had gotten myself in to! Rick is an astute business man, but the majority of his business initiatives involve some sort of community value. Programs we offer, at Rick's direction, have had huge positive health benefits on our community. Offering affordable membership options through the help of benefactors to our town emergency service providers and school teachers has made major differences in the lives of these people. He has never turned away a child in need. He figures out a way to get them in to camp, programs, a membership, etc... Rick is likely the most kind-hearted business person I have ever met and is still able to offer these incentives and continue to manage a successful business. He is always forward thinking, which allows us to keep Hampshire Hills ahead of the curve and bringing the newest and best training to New England!

Wendy Friemann

Director of Sales & Marketing, F & B,

Salon & Spa Services, Member Services

Rick Holder is a visionary. He strives to be on the leading edge in everything our company does. There is not a day that goes by that I do not admire and respect where Rick has brought our company. He is supportive and available at all times to both staff and our members. We are lucky to have him as the captain of our ship!

Rachel Robichaud

Director of Junior Activities

Rick Holder is always looking for the newest trends in the fitness industry. He wants Hampshire Hills to lead, not follow. Whether with the newest facilities, programs or staff, he is always looking for ways to improve the offerings to our membership and the community. The general sense of service is imparted on us as staff. We service our members every minute of every day; this in a time when the fitness industry seems to be getting away from service. Service is what we do; everything else is secondary. Rick is the reason we continue to move forward and succeed.

Jeff Cushman

Director of Fitness

Rick continually demonstrates that taking care of other people is at the forefront of his mind. Whether it is through the various new and challenging programs we offer to our members; the care and support he has towards his staff during difficult times; promoting a healthy balance between family and work for his team; or the innumerable community outreach projects he has led to ensure our greater community thrives, Rick leads from the heart.

Christine Cate

Director of Human Resources

Rick's vision is a place where everyone --staff, members, guest-- feel they belong to an extended family that is always there for them. It is people connecting with people on a clean, vibrant, beautiful campus. Hampshire Hills is where people go for all their wellness needs; fitness, recreation, emotional well being,

healing, celebration, and community. It is a place where a variety of things are happening at the same time. The parking lot is full, everyone who comes in the building is welcomed with a smile, participates in a variety of fun, cutting edge programs, are serviced by caring, professional staff and leave feeling good about themselves. Although our members have privilege, they are proud to know that, in times of need, our entire resources are available to all surrounding communities.

Rick's skill at identifying, attracting and retaining the management and staff who have the ability to implement this vision has resulted in Hampshire Hills becoming the epicenter of the 13-town Souhegan Valley, helping to make it one of the best places in the United States to live, with an outreach that extends throughout southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts. We are proud to be a part of this family.

Tom Sapienza

Director of Operations

ACAC Breaks Ground On New Richmond, Virginia Club

RICHMOND, VA - ACAC Fitness & Wellness Center broke ground on its new health club in West Broad Village in Richmond, Virginia. ACAC owner Phil Wendel welcomed Governor Robert F. McDonnell, Henrico County Supervisors David A. Kaechele and Frank J. Thornton and many West Broad Village neighbors to the ceremony.

In his remarks to the crowd, Governor McDonnell thanked Wendel for his investment in Virginia, noting that this new club will bring another 150

permanent jobs to the area and provide high-quality health and fitness services.

Located a quarter mile from Short Pump Town Center, the new ACAC club will cost approximately \$16 million. The three-story, 57,000 square-foot facility will have every modern fitness amenity, as well as singles and doubles squash courts, an indoor aquatics center with warm water pools, ample functional training space and three mind-body group exercise studios. In addition, the club's rooftop will boast a heated pool and platform tennis.

When completed, this building will be a premier destination for area residents seeking to improve their lives and their health through exercise and wellness.

In his address, Wendel noted that ACAC has been uniquely successful in building very strong relationships with the medical community.

"In the past six years alone, we've received over 15,000 physician referrals to our clubs," said Wendel. "We've built a fitness facility with a significantly broader welcome mat. At ACAC, members of all

ages and stages of health feel confident and comfortable learning how to exercise."

The West Broad Village club will be ACAC's second location in the Richmond area. ACAC currently operates a 100,000 square-foot facility in Midlothian and recently received the 2011 Innovation Impact Award in Chesterfield County's annual First Choice Business Awards for the success of its physician referred exercise program.

...Norm's Notes

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industry friend of mine, **TERRY ROGAN**, has had some really tough times with his eyes over the past 15 years and actually has been legally blind for years. However, this morning, Terry, who had worked for both **Nautilus** and **Muscle Dynamics** in his career, called me to let me know that he had a recent surgery that had improved his eyesight to the point that he could catch up on reading some of his past **CLUB INSIDER** editions. **Congratulations Terry!** In particular, Terry was calling about the loss of our friend, **STEVE WILLIAMS**, who had called Terry way back when Steve was considering joining TechnoGym to

get Steve's take on the Italian company. Terry told me about a time when he and Steve were at a trade show somewhere in Europe, and somehow one evening, he and Steve ended up walking back to their hotel together. Terry recalled them stopping at a street vendor cart to get something to eat. Terry was laughing and marveling at that experience because, when he read my story about the wonderful Steve Williams, he recalled that walk and how Steve had gone ahead and bought something to eat from a street vendor, even though, as Terry put it, "Steve was a gourmet dining kind of guy." Terry told me that he both laughed and cried tears while reading Steve's wonderful story. Terry's comments made me realize how totally thankful I should be for the past

19 years serving you all as **Publisher of CLUB INSIDER**. To end these Notes, I want to thank Terry for his call and for helping me be **Thankful this Thanksgiving** for the blessing of serving you all for the past 19 years. **Happy Thanksgiving!**

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•**God bless our Troops** in the **Middle-East** and all around the world. And, may **God bless** you, your family and your club(s). **God Bless America!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 37-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 19th 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 770-850-8506 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)



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...Rick Holder

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Dad. My Dad, Norm Holder, Sr. and my Mom, Virginia (Ginny) Holder, were wonderfully active in the seashore town of Wells, Maine, where I grew up. Dad was the High School Principal, taught two subjects, coached several sports and taught night school. He taught me how to hunt, fish, garden and take care of animals. Almost everything I ever learned I learned from those two people. I owe them for the way I am entirely, not just genetically, but because they were so caring, their kids learned how to be self sufficient and to enjoy and be interested in life. My Dad passed away at age 79. He had a heart condition that he didn't know about that ruined his kidneys.

My Mom is 101. She loves life and her family. She still goes out in her Kayak whenever she can! Mom was the school nurse at my school, Wells High School. I spent my summers working in the summer camps my Mom and Dad ran each year. My early childhood was spent at the Camp on the Cape that they ran. Then, from age 5 on, I was at Camp Wells by the Sea, which was right across the street from our home on the beach. My Dad was the Camp Director, and my Mom was the Camp Nurse. There were 150 kids from New York City, who went to this beautiful camp. When I was 14, I became the camp dish washer, and then, I got a promotion! I got to run the laundry! Plus, I also had ten lawns that I cut. During the summer, I would do haying when it was time to bring in the hay. I really liked working to earn money, and that was what made me tick back then.

Then, I got out of college at the University of New Hampshire where I had studied speech pathology and early childhood education. In college, I worked at night on the loading docks through the school year to earn enough money for my college education. I spent my summer

months directing children's camps. So, I was the Assistant Director for a couple of years, and then, I became the Director of a children's camp. The year I graduated from college, I found out about an opportunity to purchase a children's camp that was also a day school. I went into partnership with my British Literature professor, Gordon Lameyer, with whom I had a great relationship. He was the financial base, and I was the operations guy. So, one year out of college, I'm running my own corporation. Fast forward 20 some years, and my wife Laurie and I both work at Hampshire Hills. We have seven children between us, and we've raised all of them to enjoy an active lifestyle. It's been a wonderful experience. I think the common denominator that makes sense of all of this is that my experience was so happy growing up and having access to all the sporting events, hanging out at the gym, my heroes were the Varsity players at school and so on. I wanted to be part of that all of the time. So, while I was in college, I vowed that when I had kids I would raise them with those opportunities if I possibly could.

C.I. - Well Rick, you've had an amazing youth that truly prepared you very well for the great career you have in our club industry. How did you actually get into day-to-day club operations?

RH - I had gotten into the sports industry in 1973/74 by developing the Hampton Indoor Tennis Center adjacent to my school. In 1982, I had an opportunity to sell it and get into something bigger, which I did. I was actually on the road consulting in the industry. That was a lot of fun. Then, in 1984, the opportunity to get involved in Hampshire Hills came along, and in 1985, I took over as General Manager. It wasn't until 1993 that I purchased the facility. Milford is actually the hub of the Souhegan Valley. It's a town of 16,000 people, but it's surrounded by several of those quintessential small New England towns. They're absolutely gorgeous in



Rick Holder's Mom, Virginia (Ginny) Holder, Age 101

the foothills overlooking the Monadnock Mountains. The towns surrounding Milford are anywhere from 4,000 to 12,000 people. Then, there are a couple of other towns in our demographic that have about 25 to 30,000 people. Also, there are a couple of big cities on the extremity where we actually have members coming from but not as much penetration because they're 15 to 20 minutes away.

C.I. - Having opened in 1973, your Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness Club in Milford, New Hampshire is nearing 40 years in business. Please tell us about your vision for Hampshire Hills, Milford, New Hampshire and the market you serve.

RH - The progression we've made was based on my vision and the vision of John Barretto, who owned the Barretto Granite Corporation. He'd been involved in a small swim and tennis club that he had helped operate as the General Manager of the quarry. But, back in 1972 and 73, when tennis was taking off nationally, he just thought it would be great to build a really beautiful tennis club. The club offered tennis and swimming, a small fitness area and a restaurant. By 1985, when I got here, tennis was falling off some. Racquetball and Squash were in their prime. But the economy had fallen off badly, interest rates were 20 to 22% and unemployment was high.

Just before I came here, they had closed the restaurant because it cost too much to operate. So, when I got here, I decided to change the way we were operating, and we went to one membership that covers everything. It used to be that you could have a swim membership only or a tennis membership only or a fitness membership only. Or, you could have a combination. There were 28 different membership possibilities you could end up with! The problem was the people who felt like they could cheat a little did a little bit of everything. Other people strictly followed the rules and would never enter into any

area they didn't feel like they belonged in. The dichotomy was those who should belong to one thing and those who shouldn't might also be there. Well, that was a mess! It didn't promote any crossover at all. So, what I did was say, 'Okay, we'll come up with one fee, and when you come in that door, you can do everything here whether it's indoors or outdoors. You're going to get serviced to death. We're going to teach you about fitness and wellness; we're going to make you healthy; we're going to provide smoking cessation classes; and we're going to do everything we can to help you have a happy and healthy lifestyle where you're just active because it's FUN! It resonated with them! We picked up more and more memberships, and we became profitable.

C.I. - Viewing the Hampshire Hills website, www.hampshirehills.com, is very impressive, citing 117,000 square feet located on 77 acres along with a 100,000 square-foot Dome. WOW! That's quite a development. What's the history? Was it all built at one time? Or, if it has grown in phases, please review those growth projects.

RH - Hampshire Hills was originally set on 14 acres of farmland overlooking the Souhegan Valley and Monadnock Mountain range to the West. In the 1990s, I actually acquired an additional 105 acres of abutting land parcels on which I would develop recreational playing fields, hiking trails, cross country ski trails and the Hampshire Dome Complex. After I took over in 1985 and made those membership bundling changes, we added a basketball gym in 1986, we added a suspended cushioned running track with banked corners around the top of the gym and we also added a 25-meter, 5-lane lap pool. We followed that by adding three racquetball courts and one squash court, bringing our total to five and three respectively. We already had five indoor tennis courts and six outdoor Har Tru courts. In 1987, we added four kilometers (2.5 miles) of lighted cross

(See Rick Holder Page 12)



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...Rick Holder

continued from page 10

country ski trails. I even bought an alpine slope groomer to groom our Nordic trails.

From a programming standpoint, in 1988, we began doing dance marathons for High Hopes and the Make a Wish Foundation. We were on the Today Show with Willard Scott. In 1988, Hampshire Hills spearheaded the drive to create the Milford/Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. I served two terms as President, and in two years, we grew from 38 business members to 362 members! That was during the 1989/90 down economy. In 1988, we added two outdoor lighted basketball courts and two lighted volleyball courts. Also in 1988, we opened a non-affiliated phase 3/phase 4 cardiac rehabilitation program. In 1989, we expanded our summer day camp and built three new age appropriate playgrounds and four multipurpose lodges.

In 1990, we entered the Smith Kline Beecham *Heart Patient of the Year* awards contest. Out of more than 200 hospitals and clinics, we came in first. We landed in *USA Today* and on the *Larry King Show*. In 1992, we opened the Hampshire Hills Clinic for Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine. In 1995, we opened the first spinning studio in New England. In 1997, we began the site development for the Hampshire Dome. In 1998, we installed croquet pitch and putting greens and a bocce court. The following year we added a three leveled deck restaurant overlooking the greens, tennis courts and our "grand" cascading waterfall. In 2000, we were one of the first in America to train our full staff of first responders on using AEDs and four weeks later, we saved a 70-year old man's life. Since then, we have had four additional saves. In 2005, we added the Hampshire Dome with 100,000 square feet of indoor multipurpose sports space. Since then, we have been adding features to all of our areas including new athletic fields and trails.

C.I. - What are you most proud of at Hampshire Hills? I'm sure that's a tough question to answer with all you've achieved.
RH - No, it's not; it's easy. I'm most proud of my Team and how they reach out to our members and other clients and customers every day of the week. I would say there are two things that keep us in the #1 position. First, trying my hardest everyday to mentor my Team Members about being passionate and giving of themselves to others, not only our members, but everyone they come in contact with because they really represent the Hampshire Hills Family at all times. The other thing that keeps us number one, is a quote from Lee Iacocca, 'Business can either Lead, Follow or Get out of the way.' We're going to lead.

C.I. - Rick, we want to recognize your key and long-tenured Team Members. Thanks for providing the info on the sidebar on this page identifying your key players (See **Sidebar on This Page**).

C.I. - When a club such as your Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness Club becomes what I call an 'Institution' in a marketplace, one reason it holds that standing is because of the relationships it has with the community it serves. In addition to your work with founding and serving the local Chamber of Commerce, please share and illustrate some the other things Hampshire Hills does to help your community.

RH - We specialize in donating facilities and meeting rooms to local organizations. We donate memberships to local charities to auction off for fundraising or use for prizes. We do job shadowing for kids in the different high schools and career days. We did the High Hopes Balloon Festival. We've raised a lot of money for charity through dance marathons. We provide discounts for town employees. We've donated Dome space for weather rainouts and National Guard events. We've done opportunity networks for hiring the handicapped. We do lock-ins for overnight fundraising. We



Ladies Tennis at Hampshire Hills

provide practices fields for different teams when their fields are under renovation. We do high school and college internships. We do Adopt-A-Highway, Holiday Toy Store and we support the Share Program where we adopt families during the Holidays. We help out with the Pumpkin Festival, which is a huge thing here in our area.

We also participate on many different Boards. I've been on the Governor's Council On Physical Activity and Health since it started in 1991 I've been the President of the Chamber of Commerce two terms since we started it. We hosted the Milford Economic Development Commission, and Tom Sapienza, our Director of Operations, chairs that Board.

I'm currently the incoming Chairman of the Board of Triangle Credit Union. In 1990, we won the National *Heart Patient of the Year* Award. In November, 1990, we were CBI Magazine's 'Outreach Capital of the United States, and in 1994, we were named the USTA Organization of the Year. We were the New Hampshire Business of the Year in New Hampshire in 2000, and we were named one of the Top 5 Places to Work in 2002 by New Hampshire Magazine. I was also given the Hero of the Year Award by the American Red Cross because we housed about 400 linemen who were here during the tragic ice-storm of 2008, and there is more.

(See **Rick Holder Page 14**)

20+ Year Staff Veterans of Hampshire Hills

Dan Catherine - 1986
 Grounds Superintendent

Wendy Mace - 1986
 Marketing & Forever Fit Coordinator, PT, Group Exercise

Alex Holder - 1987
 Head Tennis Pro

Ellen Trembly - 1987
 Junior Activities, Camps, FAST, Kindercenter, Nursery

Christine Cate - 1987
 HR Director

Ilona Fino - 1989
 Accounting Coordinator

Tom Sapienza - 1991
 Director of Operations

Wendy Friemann - 1992
 Director Sales & Marketing, F & B, Member Services, Salon & Spa

Dave Bourgault - 1992
 Beverage Manager



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cables online!

...Rick Holder

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C.I. - Following up on the previous question, please tell us about Hampshire Hills recently winning seven Best of Souhegan Valley Region Awards recently given at the 2011 Southern New Hampshire Business Expo.

RH - Of the 4,500 businesses in the 13 towns of the Souhegan Valley, 50 categories are voted on, and we won 7 Best of Awards out of 50. They were: #1 Fitness Club, #1 Massage Therapy Center, #1 Hair Salon, #1 Yoga Studio, #1 Best Dinner Restaurant, #1 Luncheon Café and the #1 Day Spa!

C.I. - Rick, please tell us more about the Hampshire Dome. Who owns it, when was it built, how is it used and how does it tie in with and compliment the Hampshire Hills Athletic Club?

RH - I started a company called Eastern Olympic Sports with the idea that the company would specialize in performance training for anything from skiers to basketball players to football players. It's similar to the Velocity Speed School except that we have a huge facility with ball fields and running tracks, hurdles, high jump and so on. Can you imagine a 100-yard hurdle track straight away indoors? How about our full field, full height soccer/baseball field? Oh, and we have a 1/4-mile indoor bicycle track with 14 degree banked turns that you can rollerblade, roller skate, roller ski, skateboard. Also we have an indoor golf driving range that is 320 feet long and 70 feet high.

C.I. - Do you have any long term plans? Growth? Expansion? New merger thoughts? New clubs? Acquisitions?

RH - I would love to be able to merge with somebody that has my vision because I've got ideas that I will never be able to do in my lifetime. It takes capital, but it also takes a dedicated visionary group to really

make something take off.

C.I. - In five years, what will be different/better about Hampshire Hills?

RH - I would say to you that we will be better across the board in the utilization of the largess of our facilities. For instance, the Dome right now is just packed with business (95% utilization from the end of November through the end of April). But, I've got six months of the year that the utilization is far less than it needs to be. So, I'm working on some really neat things to bring into the Dome, which are fundraising types of things and the utilization by camps and school groups, different things that we've never really worked on before. Plus, I've got two groups that want to produce a concert series there. The opportunity for functions is great. On the waterfront, we certainly will expand with splash pad areas and slides and an indoor putting green in the Dome.

C.I. - As a truly seasoned industry veteran, Rick, you still attend learning events such as the Club Industry Conference, where I met you in October, and IHRSA's Annual Conventions. Tell us your thoughts on the process of staying current and in the game, and please share with us your thoughts on the importance of an IHRSA Membership.

RH - Norm, meeting and talking with friends who are long-term industry veterans like you, Rick Caro, John McCarthy, Ed and Zoe Veasey of Cedardale, Ada McKenzie, Greg Herbert out of Cedardale, Keith Callahan of the Manchester By the Sea Club, I trust their opinions because they have the history. It's in their DNA! Of course, I talked about my Mom and Dad being mentors, but I've got to tell you about another mentor of mine, Dick Trant. Dick Trant's vision for indoor tennis in New England was amazing. His first one was a bubble over pavement in a parking lot. It was the loudest thing you ever saw in your life, but the fact that it was there gave me goose bumps the first time I saw it! He went



Special U.S. Military Event at Hampshire Dome

on to improve indoor tennis immensely.

• • •

Rick Holder is one of the most enthusiastic guys about his club business that you'll ever talk to. Take the energy you get from reading this terrific cover story with Rick's comments and multiply it by five, and you'll get a true sense of the enthusiasm Rick Holder shared with me in our one hour and fifteen minute conversation. The amazing progression of events Rick shared with us about his career and the evolution of his mega-club in the hills of beautiful New Hampshire is remarkable.

Rick Holder's very special Hampshire Hills Sports and Fitness Club is a shining example of a great guy bringing a

great club operation to a great community, and we wish Rick and his Team all the best in the future. Sincere thanks to Rick for his interview time and assistance with production of this cover story.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 37-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 19th 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 770-850-8506 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

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Simon Walker	Text Message	Other	Today	Incoming Leads	Today	Today's Call
Frank Elias	Text Message	Other	Today	Incoming Leads	Today	Today's Call
Don Albano	Text Message	Other	Today	Incoming Leads	Today	Today's Call
Warren Webb	Text Message	Other	Today	Incoming Leads	Today	Today's Call
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The Secret to Achieving Any Goal

By: Donna Krech

You know the Albert Einstein quote, "The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again expecting a different result." What you may not know, however, is that quote holds within it the key to your future wealth in the club business and your life success. This article will not only give you the key, but also provide the steps to follow to take advantage of that key in your own life and career.

When I entered this industry, I didn't have enough money to buy milk for my baby. Even though today my husband and I own multiple companies and have been through every difficulty, from life-threatening disease to near bankruptcy, the memory of not having money to feed our baby is still what propels me forward the most. How can such a painful adversity be turned into something so wonderful? I've simply reflected back, during my career, on what I did NOT want to see repeated and avoided it and repeated the things that brought me success. Today, I share that key to succeeding at any goal set with you. It's the key to turning the adversity you've lived through into rocket fuel for your success.

Goals

Let's talk about goals. We have all heard the studies and read the reports, goal-setters succeed! They succeed at career objectives, finances, weight loss and life! Listen to an Olympian or professional athlete, a best-selling author, a successful professional, business owner or entrepreneur, they all talk about dreams and goals! No, not the dreams and goals they fantasize about occasionally or think about every now and then or just simply hope for. Instead, these dreams and goals have created passion in their lives, moving them into daily, monthly and yearly action. They bring emotion because of the clear sacrifices that have been made preceding long aspired victories. Yes, dreams and goals create miracles and accomplishment. Equally important, dreams and goals can create balance, priorities and life enhancement. So yes, I'm excited about goals!

My friend and mentor, Jim Rohn, often said, "The major reason for setting a goal is for what it makes of you to accomplish it. What it makes of you will always be of far greater value than what you get. That is why goals are so powerful. They are part of the fabric that make up our lives, and goal-setting is where we create our goals.

Goal-setting can be so powerful. It provides focus. It shapes our dreams. It gives us the ability to hone in on the exact actions we need to take in order to get

everything in life that we desire.

Goals are exciting because they provide aim for our lives. Goals are great because they cause us to stretch and grow in ways that we never have before. In order to reach our goals, we must become better. We must change and grow.

There are three components to a powerful goal:

1. It must be inspiring.
2. It must be believable.
3. It must be one that you can act on.

When your goals inspire you, when you believe them and when you act on them is when you will achieve them! Goals also provide long-term vision in our lives. We all need multiple powerful, long-range goals to help us get past short-term obstacles. Life is designed in such a way that we look long-term and live short-term. We dream for the future and live in the present. Unfortunately, the present can produce many hard obstacles. Fortunately, the more powerful our goals (because they are inspiring and believable), the more we will be able to act on them in the short-term and guarantee that they will actually come to pass!

Goal-Setting

So, let's take a closer look at the topic of goal-setting and see how we can make it forceful as well as practical. What is a key aspect to learn and remember when studying and writing our goals?

The most important one is many times overlooked. It is evaluation and reflection. The only way we can reasonably decide what we want in the future and how we will get there is to first know where we are right now, and secondly, what our level of satisfaction is for where we are in life. Every time I set goals, I begin with wanting to give the world I am blessed to touch all the information I possibly can to help them become all they were created for. As we focus on goal-setting, the first order of business is about taking some time for evaluation and reflection.

The basis for knowing where we want to go is knowing where we have come from and where we are now. It is also knowing how well we have achieved the things we have previously set our eyes on. This is the basis of evaluation and reflection. We need to understand how to look at what we have done and use it as a platform for what we want to do.

The process of evaluation is relatively simple, but there can be a few basic variations. The important point, though, is that you have a process!

Here is a basic process of

evaluation and reflection taken directly from our *Life Success program* featured in *Success Magazine*:

1. Find a quiet place. Reflection is best done away from distraction. It gives you the mind space to think.
2. Take a regular time. Whether it is once a week, every other week, once a month or quarter etc., be sure to set aside a regular time at regular intervals to evaluate and reflect.
3. Look at what you have accomplished and where you are. Be specific. Be honest. Be ruthlessly truthful.
4. Write it down. Keep a record. This gives you the chance at the next stage of evaluation to see exactly where you were last time. This keeps it as objective as possible.
5. Look forward and set your next goal. Stretch yourself according to what works for you.

The above is a the basic version of the process of evaluation and reflection. If you have not done this before, then this will get you going. Be sure to follow the general idea and set aside time for yourself.

The purpose of evaluation is twofold. First, it gives you an objective way to look at your accomplishments and your pursuit of the vision you have for your life. Secondly, it is to show you where you are so you can determine where you need to go. In other words, it gives you a baseline from which to work.

We have all heard the quote that the unexamined life is not worth living. To evaluate and reflect brings us face to face with who we are and what we have become. More importantly, it allows us the time to dream and create a vision for what we want to become! Only when we take time out of our busy schedules can we get into the state of mind and quietness of heart that we need in order to find that inner place where we see what we are and what we will become. Those who never take time to evaluate and reflect will blow to and fro through this life, living by the forces of culture, circumstances, societal pressures, and unfortunately, personal weaknesses. Those who take the time to evaluate, however, will find that they are like an oak tree in a storm. They have a firm foundation. They will know where they are going, how to get there and that they will ultimately get there, no matter what comes their way!

I can tell you from first-hand experience that when time is given to reflection and honest appraisal of 'me,'



Donna Krech

miraculous things have happened. This is one of the KEY factors I attribute my success, health and happiness to. Not sure you believe it's applicable to you? Try it for one month; you'll find making money will happen quicker, great relationships will form faster and life will be easier.

Allow me to encourage you to take an hour this week to evaluate and reflect. See where you are and note it in a journal so that as the months progress and you continue a regular time of evaluation and reflection, you will see just how much ground you are gaining, and that will be exciting!

Let's look at some questions from *Life Success* that will help you think deeper about goal-setting, and then, we will put some action steps together that will cause you to put into action a goal-setting machine!

Questions for Reflection:

- Do you have an evaluation process currently in place in your life? Do you regularly take time to reflect on your life and goals? What is your process? How often do you do it?
- Do you understand the purpose for evaluation and reflection? What specific purposes do these two disciplines serve in your own life, especially as it relates to goal-setting?
- How important have you made the process of evaluation and reflection in your life? If we were able to look at your schedule, would we be able to see that times of evaluation and reflection are important to you?
- Are your goals self-serving or do they have an element in them that makes you a giving person?
- Do you know exactly what you want out of life? Have you set goals to achieve that?
(See Donna Krech Page 19)

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TOTAL SOLUTION IN FITNESS UNLIMITED

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Total Solution Sales

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Variable Expenses: 1 Mo./20 Sales

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Misc. Fees
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CoGS
Payroll

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\$1,800
\$3,000
\$3,000
\$1,500

Total Expenses

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Learn How To “Get Out Of The Box, Set It On Fire and Roast Potatoes On It”: *Double Digit Club Growth*

By: Will Phillips

We do not see the world as it is, we see it as we are. - ANAIS NIN

We all know that when you keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a different answer, you are insane. If your health club has had slack growth over the last two or three years, you have explored different ways of solving this and you have not moved into double digit growth, you may be insane!

Your club may be in a prison, or better said, your mind may be in a prison called a mental model. It is the room in which you think, decide and problem solve. The walls are built from your experience, your knowledge, your assumptions and your beliefs about health clubs, business, your market, your staff and yourself. It is a peculiar and dangerous room because the walls are invisible to you. They do not appear as barriers. Yet, they restrict the room you have to make decisions and solve problems.

We like our mental model room since it gives us safety and confidence, but when times change, or when our solutions do not work and our decisions have shortfalls, we may have to step out of this room. This is hard to do.

Example: The music industry in the United States was stuck in a mental model in a world that passed it by. When NAPSTER started responding to the needs of music listeners by sharing music, the music industry decided to sue their customers and took thousands of them to court. During this period, the music industry refused to change its mental model of how things were supposed to work. As a result, it is estimated that the industry lost \$10 billion during a few short years. As one of the outside consultants who worked with ASCAP, I can attest to the fact that the Board of this music organization was filled with pre-Internet men and women who love music and loved the way the system worked to provide income for them. They looked on the upstart music sharing business, epitomized by NAPSTER, which then evolved to Kazaa, as an evil revolution upsetting the order of the world. In fact, you could take the exact words from the dictators who fell in the Arab Spring from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, and they were the same phrases that were used to describe the upstarts in the music industry.

Only when Steve Jobs created a new way of meeting the needs of the music industry and the users in iTunes was a new mental model created.

Another Example: The next example begins in Baltimore on a talk radio show that was quite popular but in a secondary market. The host was invited to take her talk show to Chicago on a major market TV station. This was when the networks were big and there were fewer cable stations. Within one year after taking over a failing talk radio show in Chicago, her new mental model of talk radio was being rebroadcast and syndicated in some 140 countries around the world. Now, that's real organic growth! So, what happened? Oprah created a new mental model for the talk radio show. Instead of my interviewing you, instead of the interviewer being the unflustered person with authority in command who was probing your inner life, Oprah moved from sitting across the table and sat next to her interviewees. They had conversations which were equally exposing about her life, as it was about the person being interviewed. A new mental model, new growth rate, overturned the industry.

The Health Club Mental Model: Each health club, each owner and each manager in a health club has his own mental model, so I'm presenting a generality here. But, I will make a list of the invisible walls in the health club box, in which all of our thinking tends to be done. It consists of our experience, our training, the traditions and the assumptions which tell us what we can do and what we can't do. It has to do with pricing models, facility design, equipment selection, program design, how to market and sell and how we define a member. Every one of these words is bounded by a set of assumptions that create a box or mental model. Industry publications, associations, conventions, consultants, and yes, even this publication all reinforce the assumptions and strengthen the walls. Youngme Moon, in her book *DIFFERENT*, calls this *industry flocking*.

Example: In the health club world, it is standard practice to have your own sales force, whereas in another industry, that wall has come down and the members are the sales force. The members have extensive training, meetings, support, coaching on how to sell, but the business does not have a sales force because the customers of the business are the sales people for future customers. Which business? Amway, Mary Kay, etc. It's interesting to note that Amway is the only Fortune 500 company that is debt free. **Beware:** In looking at sales forces composed of the users, you have stepped outside of the mental model or box that our industry resides. This is like opening the door of a warm, cozy winter cabin in a blizzard. As soon as the cold

and snow blast through the doorway, your inclination is to step back inside your cabin and slam the door shut. This is why the club industry is in the box!

Example: We now have several clubs with a new model consisting of 100% online sales and zero salespeople. Once again, the natural game on hearing this is to find reasons why it won't last or won't work. We just have an overwhelming ability to deny whatever is outside of our box; *of what we are used to, of what we know, of what we are comfortable with*. This is the reason why real innovation in all industries normally *comes from outside the industry*.

To Review, if you are not making progress in penetrating your market, in increasing sales and reducing attrition and if believe your mental business model is preventing progress, then you are ready to get out of the box. Here are the steps:

1. Identify the walls of the box. For Example: A membership card can only be used by a single person, the member. We sell memberships, not programs. Our salespeople do the selling. We cannot rely on members to sell members. No one else is growing net members, so we cannot. All our sales people do a good presentation and a thorough close. Our product is so complex and poorly understood that a personal sales experience is required, and there are hundreds more.

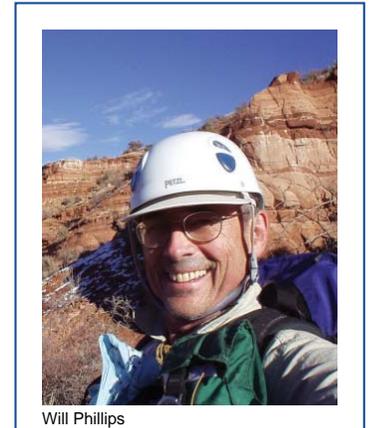
The following list of mental virtues will enable you to get out of the box and think freshly.

2. Suspend these assumptions. Give yourself and your team permission to violate them. Literally *suspend* them. Write them on large sheets and hang them above your heads in your meeting room.

3. Look for anomalies, outliers and exceptions in this and other industries. Encourage wild ideas to address the problem. Go to industry conferences in other industries. Learn how other industries solve the problems you are facing. Assign each person on your management team to research another industry. Read general business magazines for ideas: *INC, Fast Company, Business Week, Forbes, Fortune, Wall Street Journal*.

4. Respect any new ideas as they arise instead of dismissing them as silly, ineffective, juvenile, unsophisticated, not workable, etc. Do not be dismissive.

5. Consider the problem, the anomalies and wild ideas as mysteries that you



Will Phillips

do not understand. Approach them with curiosity. Open your mind, ask questions, inquire and do not rush to judgment.

6. Avoid jumping to action and cutting off the inquiry into the mystery.

7. Act at all times with humility. This means don't make assumptions about what works and what does not *unless* you have good data that what you say is so. This keeps you out of the box because, as soon as you are comfortable back in the box, you lose.

So let's learn to gleefully get out of the box and explore how to understand our challenges and problems with fresh eyes. As my daughter, Anna, said on my 75th birthday, "**You taught me to not only think outside the box, but to set the box on fire and roast potatoes on it.**"

Design Rifle Shot experiments to explore and test how well you understand the mystery. A rifle shot is low-cost, low-risk and low-disturbance to the business. It is an experiment to see if you can hit the target with your new, out-of-the-box approach to solving the problem.

This is **Part I** of a guide for club owners in finding effective, new ways to grow sales, penetrate markets and retain members. There are specific, actionable steps you can take. REX has begun this process in a two-day retreat with a leading health club. Both they and us have very strong early signs that it is as revolutionary as I have outlined above.

Here are the resources for Do-It-Yourselfers:

- Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*;
- Ian Mitroff, *The Unbounded Mind: Breaking the Chains of Traditional Business Thinking*;

(See Will Phillips Page 19)



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Or, stick your head back in the sand and hope your competitors don't read this and beat you to the punch!

...Donna Krech

continued from page 16

•Do you have someone in your life who will keep you accountable to your goals?

Action Steps (any or all of these are great ideas to get you moving toward your goal):

1. Take at least an hour this week to sit down and evaluate and reflect.
2. Seriously consider whether or not your past goals have been too low, and if so, how you can stretch them and thus stretch yourself. Also, be sure that they reflect exactly what you want to achieve in life.
3. Write down three main purposes you have for your time of evaluation and reflection.
4. Write down why you think goal-setting is going to be important to you in accomplishing all that you want to accomplish.
5. If you'd like to know more secrets to making goal getting easier, we'd like to offer these free gifts; Bob Proctor and Jim Rohn audio on Goal-Setting. Simply call us at (866) 260 - 8446 to say you'd like them. Begin listening the moment you get them!

(Donna Krech is the Founder and Owner of Thin&Healthy Total Solutions and she may be reached at Donna@DonnaKrech.com)

...Will Phillips

continued from page 18

- Jerry Wind, et al. *The Power of Impossible Thinking*;
- Jim Collins, *Great By Choice*;
- Youngme Moon, *Different*.

If you'd like to get out of the box and solve the intractable problems in our industry, send me a list of the assumptions your club is built on.

(Will Phillips is the CEO of REX Roundtables For Executives and may be reached at: Will@RexRoundtables.com)

Make It Fun!

Turn Yourself Into A Trusted Brand In Your Health Club

By: Jim Thomas

Health Club salespeople who still view themselves as an employee are in trouble in the new world of health clubs. Unless you have actual ownership in the health club you represent, you no longer have a "job" or a "career." You are now a business and the health club you represent

is the platform on which you sell and market. Now, if all you want is a job, read no further.

So, how do you compete in this *new health club world*?

Like any other business in the fitness and gym industry, you'll need an internet presence. All the tools to establish one are free with Facebook, LinkedIn,

Twitter and YouTube. Also, you'll need to establish a personal fitness brand that offers unique value in your health club.

Building Your Personal Fitness brand

Building your personal fitness brand, developing your health club expertise and telling the world about both will take some effort. The payoff is tremendous, though, and the short-term effort will lead to very long-term gain.

To propel yourself to the top of the health club industry, take the following steps:

Create a Website. Once your website is complete, you should include the following information on it:

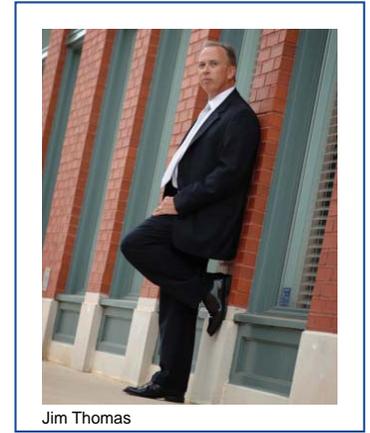
●**Professional Health Club and Fitness Bio:** Talk about who you are, your education, work experience, some thoughts on the health club industry that you are working in and something personal, such as your hobbies.

●**Member and Client Testimonials:** Create a link called, "*What My Clients Say*" that includes quotes and video of clients and members saying what a great job you did for them.

●**Client list:** People like buying from people who already have experience with others like them.

●**"Contact me" link:** At the top of your home page, include a link with all your contact info, including your office phone number, cell phone number, email address, mailing address, fax number and so on.

Start blogging. This is your *online diary*, where you write about what's going on in your health club and the fitness industry, the problems your members are having and how you can help solve them. For the next 90 days, write at least three blog posts per week on issues relevant to your health club and members. You'll be amazed at the viral effect a blog can have. Just make sure you keep your blogs **entirely professional**. Do not bash your health club, the competition or the boss. Your blog is all about creating business, and the way to do that is to keep it on the high road and topic focused at all times.



Jim Thomas

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Host a webinar. One of the fastest ways to become a resource in your health club or fitness industry is to teach people something they need to know. Webinars are one of the best ways to bring your expertise to potential new members. Just be absolutely sure your presentation is not a sales pitch but focused on helping members and non-members with a pressing fitness or weight loss issue.

Write articles and distribute online. Write some short articles sharing your insights on different issues your members and clients face and post them online. Then, submit them to industry blogs and discussion groups. Published articles give you strong credibility and increase leads.

If you're worried your health club or gym won't let you do all this, don't be. I have yet to see a health club policy that says you can't have a website about yourself. Policy may dictate what you can say about the health club, but that's fine. The important thing here is to *just do it*. Your potential members and clients will buy from the person they see as the most visible and having the most health club and fitness expertise in any given market. When you take the steps outlined above, that person will be you.

Now, go turn yourself into a trusted fitness brand!

(Jim Thomas is the President of Fitness Management USA and may be reached at 800-929-2898)

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Why Should Anyone Listen To You?

By: Misti Burmeister

It's not news to anyone that today's job market is a tough one, but this challenging business environment is also a great opportunity for motivated employees to shine while everyone else wastes time complaining.

One of my readers recently asked:

Will you address the young professionals who have been burned in the system? Benefits are being cut, as are jobs, and the outlook for people who have been working for less than 15 years doesn't seem bright. Many people under age 35 have already had 7 to 10 different positions with corporations where they have given their all, just to have their positions outsourced or their voices go unheard.

This question highlights a conundrum I've been pondering lately: In a business climate where companies are scaling back on employee retention and loyalty efforts (my bread and butter), how do I get my clients to care about what I have to offer?

In all fairness, some companies do see the huge return on investment

when they demonstrate a commitment to employees, especially during tough times. Others need more convincing. So, instead of throwing in the towel or scaling back, like many of my competitors, I'm seizing this opportunity to push myself harder, to learn more and to clarify my messaging so that I provide more value. Rather than saying, "Listen to my great ideas, which will help you retain and motivate your workforce," I'm *listening* to my clients. In doing so, I'm discovering their major challenges and struggles and asking myself, "How can I help solve those particular problems?"

So, to those who share my reader's concerns above, I suggest looking at this uncertain and tumultuous job market as an opportunity to sharpen your skills, strengthen your network and look for ways to communicate your value. If you want to stand out, skip the pity party (they're never much fun anyway) and *listen*. Then, look for ways to strengthen the bottom line. When you want to get your voice heard, it's best to think, "What's in it for *me*?" but only share what's in it for *them*.

Fortune recently listed the top traits that recruiters from its "Best Places to Work" look for in potential employees or new leaders. The top two: A positive attitude and the ability to solve problems.

Those who succeed know the overarching vision of their organizations and can clearly see how they contribute value. They do their research, stay on top of what's happening and consistently look for ways to help, even if what's required isn't fun or isn't in their job descriptions.

To discover/strengthen your value, get some clarity on the following questions:

1. What's my company's vision?
2. How does my company make money? How do I help them make money? How can I help them make more money?
3. What skills/experiences do I want to gain over the next year? How will those skills add to my organization's bottom line?

Get the answers to these questions and you will be more present in your work, do a better job and reap tremendous rewards. When you approach your job frustrations in this light, you'll be putting yourself into a whole new category, that of the self-led, self-motivated professionals who know their value and know how to communicate it.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I don't always remember the value I bring. Sometimes I need a reminder or two (or four). When this happens, I do two things.



Misti Burmeister

First, I open my "testimonials" file for encouragement and re-read my vision statement for inspiration. Then, I remind myself that my success is not all about *me* getting what I want; it's about providing value to my clients and to the world, and that's motivating!

(Misti Burmeister, best-selling author of From Boomers to Bloggers: Success Strategies Across Generations, may be reached by email at mb@inspirationllc.com)

IHRSA Launches 2012 Campaign for the Industry Defense Fund

BOSTON, MA - The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) has launched the 2012 Campaign for the Industry Defense Fund to Promote and Protect the Health Club Industry. The goal is to receive at least a \$100 contribution from every North American health club.

IHRSA's Industry Defense Fund was established eleven years ago by a group of concerned club operators, referred to as the Public Policy Council, to ensure that IHRSA would have the financial resources necessary to protect fitness clubs in all fifty states against unwarranted regulation and taxation, while also positioning the fitness industry at the forefront of health promotion and wellness policy.

It is thanks to the Industry Defense Fund that IHRSA is able to protect the industry on a daily basis from harmful business regulations, including proposals to tax health club membership dues, restrict or prohibit automatic membership renewals, mandate personal trainer licensure and mandate defibrillators in health clubs without adequate liability

protection. In addition to protecting the industry from threats at the state level, contributions also support IHRSA's ability to actively seek passage of federal and state legislation that will create incentives for Americans to exercise, such as tax credits, the WHIP and PHIT Acts and comprehensive obesity legislation.

IHRSA's Public Policy team, based in Boston and Washington, D.C. with lobbyists in D.C. and 10 additional states, monitors over 300 pieces of legislation affecting all regions of the country. Many of these 300 bills have the potential to drastically affect a club's ability to serve its members. "The Industry Defense Fund has been truly helpful in Maryland. In addition to confronting and defeating burdensome or poorly written legislation on instructor certification, and AED's, etc., the Fund and IHRSA's legislative team have been instrumental in preventing a (frequently proposed) sales tax on health club dues. If passed, that would be a horrific blow to our industry and to those who use our clubs to get healthy and fit," said Tim Rhode, Owner of the Maryland Athletic Club &

Wellness Center In Timonium, MD.

Despite the tough economy, Meredith Poppler, IHRSA's Vice President of Industry Growth, is optimistic that the 2012 goal of \$1.3M will be reached, "Over the past three years, fitness industry leaders have contributed more than \$3 million to support our advocacy efforts. This year I am hopeful that even more fitness businesses will feel compelled to participate at any level. As club operators learn about the issues IHRSA is fighting for and against and realize their potential to profoundly and dramatically affect all of their businesses, I hope that every operator in North America will feel compelled to contribute at least \$100 per club to our efforts," said Poppler.

"As a small independent club owner, the Industry Defense Fund is vital to the success and survival of my business. Joining forces with club owners and operators around the world to fight issues that could threaten our industry is crucial to the growth of every club regardless of size," said Susan Cooper, Owner of BodyBusiness Health Club & Spa in

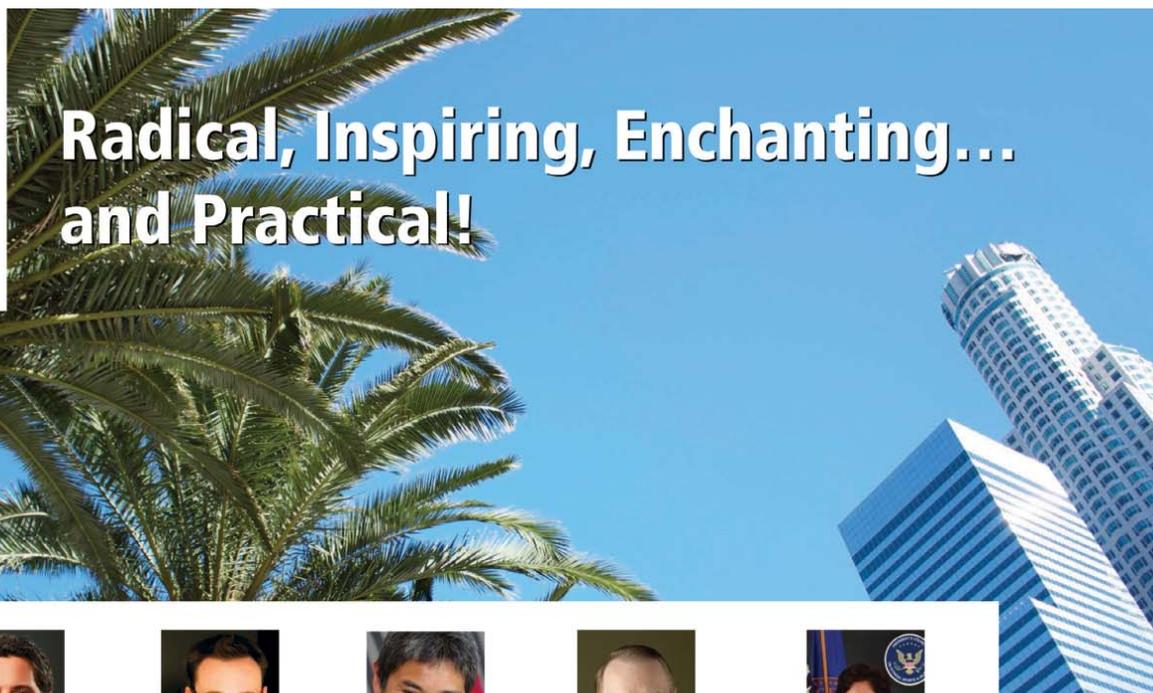


Austin, TX.

Contributors to the Industry Defense Fund come in all shapes and sizes, from major industry chains and franchise groups to small training studios and industry suppliers. A complete list of 2011 contributors is posted at www.ihrsa.org/contributors. Companies and individuals that contribute to the Industry Defense Fund receive special contributor-only communications, private meeting invitations, convention passes and industry research data. Benefits depend on the level of contribution.

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That's the kind of advice you can expect to get when you invest a few days in attending IHRSA's 31st Annual International Convention & Trade Show in sunny southern California. With more than 130 learning opportunities, IHRSA 2012 will feature General Session presentations focused on helping you grow your business, including:

- **Practically Radical: Transforming Your Company & Challenging Yourself** – William Taylor (sponsored by Matrix Fitness)
- **How Great Leaders Inspire Action** – Simon Sinek (sponsored by Precor Incorporated)
- **The Art of Enchantment** – Guy Kawasaki (sponsored by Technogym®)
- **State of the Industry Report** – Joe Moore, President and CEO, IHRSA
- **Plus a special Open Forum with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition** led by the Council's Executive Director, Shellie Y. Pfohl, (sponsored by SPRI Products)

As always, IHRSA's Convention program features the industry's best and brightest entrepreneurs and executives who will share their business acumen and profit-generating advice. The IHRSA Trade Show features over 350 exhibitors and showcases the latest innovations, the coolest products, and the hottest trends.

So, join your industry colleagues in Los Angeles! Thousands will be present, but it's the quality that counts. IHRSA attendees are the leading health club owners and operators, consultants and suppliers, making the IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show a can't-miss event for those that take the business of fitness seriously. Plus, L.A. offers very affordable hotel rates! . . . visit ihrsa.org/convention for event details.

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- > Contact Nicole Johnson at nj@ihrsa.org or 800-228-4772, ext. 197 (US/Canada).

For the complete program, please visit ihrsa.org/convention.



“IHRSA 2011 was a great conference. A true reminder of why I have chosen to be in this industry for the past twenty years! Great presenters and a fantastic trade show made the trip well worth it!”

~ Holly Stover
Columbia Association, Maryland, USA

Paying Attention to Mr. Jones

By: Tony Torre

It's a typical Monday morning, and Mr. Jones just joined your club over the weekend. He walks into the club at 6:00 AM looking to workout. He is eager to start his week, his new life! As he approaches the front desk, he swipes his card, puts on his headphones and begins his makeshift workout routine. Before leaving the house, he kissed his wife, the kids and the dog good morning, started to answer emails on his blackberry, drank his \$5.00 coffee and drove to the club.

An hour later, he leaves the club and heads to work to start his day... his week... his new healthier life!

It sounds like a typical morning, with a typical new member in a health club right? So, let's look at this from a different perspective. Did we ever stop and think about Mr. Jones? What is his experience during his short hour with us? Did we make his workout experience really unforgettable? Did the front desk say hello? Did we offer him any of our assistance? Did he meet with a trainer? Did he buy a recovery shake at our juice bar? Did we say goodbye and have a great day? Or, did we just assume that he will come back tomorrow for another workout?

As owners, we know that, if we don't offer any assistance during his first six weeks of membership, there is a real good chance that Mr. Jones's will drop out and cancel! Yet, as professionals, we continue to just assume that our club is different! "He will never leave!"

The industry states that the average club will have 60% of their

members drop out or stop coming to the club during the first six weeks. Why? Let's think about it... It hurts to work out! It takes time, energy and patience to see results, and most people only train at most one hour a day! If you're a club looking to get that member the best return on their investment, then let's talk about how to service that member the other 23 hours of the day. Think about it. What are the most important needs in Mr. Jones's life? Maybe it's faith or his family, or his career, and yeah, the gym, to lose that weight the doctor told him he needed to. We practice faith all day... We live for our families, all day. We work and think about our careers, most of the day, but we come to the gym at best, one hour a day!

Ironically, members believe that their results should come from that one hour in your club. So, how do the most successful clubs across the nation solve this? Do they just hope to sign up more members than they have cancellations? NO! They solve this by servicing that customer 24 hours a day, not just the one hour they're in the facility! This creates a winning situation for the club and a caring culture at the facility with the members for many years to come! They see results, their family and friends see the results and your retention and business grows. I always ask trainers, how many hours a day do you train your client? Hopefully, they respond as the great ones do, with 24 hours a day!

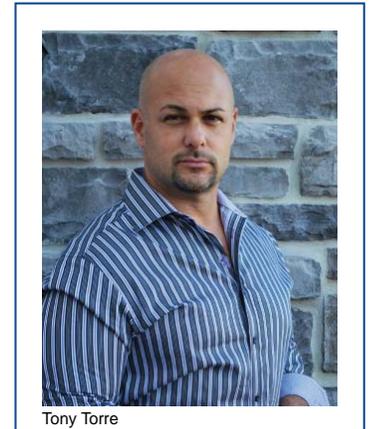
So, how do you go from being good to being great? Think about integrating your valuable services as part of your offerings. Is it super-sizing or just fact-finding? Begin at POS and then offer

these services during the new member orientations as well as with retail on the gym floor. If you don't ask, we don't receive.

Multiple times, I have heard a worried owner say that their primary focus is "getting that member in the door to sign up now!" Or, "I don't want to offer too many solutions at Point-of-Sale (POS)." Or, "It will confuse the customer with all of these choices." And finally, my favorite, "the customer only has X amount to spend. I want to make sure I get the money!" This tells me that there isn't an effective sales process in place and that the club is dependent on the limited skills of the advisor. There really isn't any real mission or desire to service that member. As owners, we must always manage the positive and offer that complete solution all day long, every day, to every member!

Let's start with two of the most popular offerings, Personal Training (PT) and Nutrition. It's been referenced by a major club chain that if a member gets involved with PT, let's say at POS, they will stay in your club two times longer! If that same member gets involved with an individualized nutrition program and PT, they will stay in your club four times longer. Why you ask? Attention and Professional Assistance = Results!

As a club owner, if we don't do this, are we really providing a complete fitness solution to that member? Or, are they setting up that member to fail while creating a losing situation for health clubs across the nation? That member comes in for results, and we offer weights, cardio and maybe group exercise? The member has no real direction and is probably



Tony Torre

intimidated to step into class. Remember, it *hurts* to work out, results take time and members have daily responsibilities, career objectives, family and their faith that needs attention. Who has time to work out and maybe get results?

If all of us in the industry just gave a little more attention to each member, while providing a results-based solution and make it part of our club's DNA, culture and sales process, Mr. Jones will achieve the results he truly signed up for.

We are now enhancing Mr. Jones's fitness experience, while significantly building our brand. Hey, we just might create fans for life!

(Tony Torre is the National Sales Manager for Visual Fitness Planner and may be reached by email at torre@myvfp.com or phone at 631-521-5412)

Millennium Partners Announce Art Curtis Resignation Veteran To Open a Health Club Consulting Business

NEW YORK, NY - Millennium Partners, a nationally recognized developer of luxury mixed-use properties and owner of five Sports Club/LA locations in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Washington, DC, as well as Reebok Sports Club/NY, announced that Art Curtis has left to start a health club consulting business. Art's new venture will focus on providing expertise in the areas of strategy, management development, value creation and acquisitions, as well as new health club development for club companies, developers, investors and health

care organizations.

Dr. Curtis began his tenure with Millennium Partners in 2005 as a consultant, assisting the company with due diligence and the subsequent acquisition in 2006 of six health clubs from The Sports Club Company. Following the acquisition, Art joined as Chief Executive Officer of the company's new subsidiary, Millennium Partners Sports Club Management LLC, in Boston where he remained through January of 2011. During that time, he designed and implemented the company's infrastructure including IT and HR, recruited the senior

team and deployed over \$35,000,000 in capital to upgrade and expand several of the clubs.

"We greatly appreciate Art's numerous contributions to Millennium Partners and our subsidiary, Millennium Partners Sports Club Management LLC," said Mario Palumbo, partner, Millennium Partners. "During his tenure as CEO, the business performance of our company's sports clubs was substantially improved. I am pleased that Art will continue to serve Millennium Partners as a consultant, providing expertise

as we focus on growth of our company's club business," added Palumbo.

"I am grateful for my experience at Millennium Partners where I was given the unique opportunity to work with such a talented team of professionals to manage the gold standard for health clubs," said Art Curtis, Ph.D. "I look forward to working with Millennium Partners and others so that I can help even more people live healthier lives," added Curtis.

In Recognition of Veterans Day, Fitness Clubs Provide Free Health Club Memberships To Military Families as Part of *Joining Forces* and *Let's Move!* Initiatives

BOSTON, MA - This Veterans Day, a day in which all Americans celebrated and remembered the men and women who have protected and defended our nation through military service, IHRSA, the International Health Racquet & Sportsclub Association announced that over 1,000 health, fitness and sports clubs across the United States are providing complimentary 6-month memberships to military families through the IHRSA *Joining Forces* Network.

Six months ago, in conjunction with the *Joining Forces* initiative of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition invited IHRSA to engage the fitness industry to support military families throughout the country. *Joining Forces* is a comprehensive national initiative launched by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden to mobilize all sectors of society to give our service members and their families

the opportunities and support they have earned. The invitation grew into a great opportunity for the thousands of health clubs in the IHRSA family to "join forces" with the White House and Department of Defense to support our nation's troops.

Today, through the IHRSA *Joining Forces* Network, fitness facilities from coast to coast have responded to the call and are providing free memberships to the immediate family members of actively deployed Reservists and National Guard members. Eligible family members are invited to locate or recommend participating clubs in their area at www.healthclubs.com.

While many IHRSA members have long shown continued support through complimentary or reduced memberships and services to the members of the military and their families, the IHRSA *Joining*

Forces Network now represents the first time that the entire industry has united in a coordinated effort on behalf of our nation's military families.

"Through the IHRSA *Joining Forces* Network and the health club industry's united support and recognition for our country's reservists and National Guard members, we hope thousands of families will benefit and enjoy the health and wellness services our member clubs can uniquely offer," said Joe Moore, IHRSA President and CEO.

The IHRSA *Joining Forces* Network hopes to offer at least 100,000 free health club memberships throughout the country, the equivalent of more than 18 million days of free access to health clubs and an estimated value of more than \$30 million.

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The Sports Club/LA Partners With Fila

BOSTON, MA - The Sports Club/LA, announced a partnership with Fila, a leading athletic apparel and footwear brand. The unique partnership was launched at five Sports Club/LA locations in Boston, Miami, New York-Upper East Side, San Francisco and Washington D.C in early October.

As partners with like-minded health and wellness philosophies, the companies will collaborate to bring added value to both members of the five flagship Sports Club/LA locations as well as Fila customers. Highlights of the partnership include:

- Development of signature co-branded classes for multi-functional conditioning and for specific sports activities;
- Fila clothing, ranging from general fitness to attire specially designed for yoga, personal performance/toning and tennis will be available in the clubs' retail shops;
- Creation of new, exclusive uniforms for health club staff that include private trainers and reception staff;
- Promotional events held at the Clubs including product launches and athlete appearances;
- Creation of health and fitness content for multiple mediums;

● The Sports Club/LA fitness professionals will be a key resource for Fila in product testing development focus.

"As the premier brand in health and fitness clubs, I am thrilled to partner with Fila, a brand synonymous with performance and sophistication," said Teresa Coffey-Gordon, Chief Marketing Officer, Millennium Partners Sports Club Management. "I strongly feel that collaborating with Fila to create innovative programming, as well as providing access to Fila's high design and functional products, will help our members and employees better achieve their health and fitness goals," added Coffey-Gordon.

"Our partnership with The Sports Club/LA is a key strategic initiative for the Fila brand," said Danny Lieberman, Fila's Vice President Apparel. "Fila has received a tremendous response to its Body Toning and Personal Performance product lines, and we feel the best-in-class fitness professionals at The Sports Club/LA will be a valued research and development resource as we expand our apparel offering and fitness program. We look forward to working with The Sports Club/LA as a platform to create new product ideas for the future."



Programming Tip of the Month:

On A Scale From 1 To 5

By: Sandy Coffman

On Thursday, December 1st, I'll be delivering a seminar at the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) in Orlando, Florida, titled *Fun and Fitness for the Aging Population*. The seminars and the trade show will offer an infinite number of programs and marketing strategies for all the attendees to take home and add to their 2012 curriculum. I truly believe that our industry has much room for improvement in getting the older adult, Baby Boomers and beyond, into our clubs in the first place and then keeping them coming back regularly. I have been a judge in several contests over the years to identify the most successful senior programs in our industry. I can highlight some exemplary programs and their results, but first, I'll ask you to consider rating your programs (and your facility in general) by *objectively* viewing your programs using the following criteria:

- Program popularity;
- Adaptability of Programs;
- Innovation;
- Marketing;
- Effectiveness;
- Knowledge and Experience.

Use a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = poor/needs attention; 5 = excellent/consistently growing):

Program Popularity: How many members in your club are 60 and older? What percentage of that number participate in scheduled programs? What was the growth rate, new participants, in the past year?

Adaptability of Programs: Do you include cross generational experiences in your programming? For example, frequent social events to promote special event walks incorporating 1K, 3K or 5K distances? Do you specifically train your

staff to identify the older members and note differences in ages, interests, abilities, schedules, genders and personalities?

Innovation: Are you a pioneer of new ideas using old programs or recreational programs? For example, racquetball can be a game taken up for the first time at any age using a multi-bounce or a two-bounce rule. Do you have "sneak previews" of classes that may interest your seniors?

Marketing: Do you have:

- Specific in-house news and information bulletin boards for the aging market;
- Specific programs partnering with HMOs;
- Social hours with "sneak previews" and educational seminars regularly scheduled;
- Costume parties, crazy hat days, etc;
- Pictures of participants in events and activities;
- Health fairs, craft fairs;
- A "Fun and Fitness" class.

Effectiveness: The programs you offer must achieve results and/or changes.

- Do your classes continue to increase in size and participation?
- Do you have testimonials concerning increased energy, lower cholesterol, weight loss, enhanced general well being? If so, are you using these testimonials as marketing tools?
- Do members who began with one activity add cross training programs to their routines?
- Is there a significant increase in the amount of laughter throughout your club when your aging market is present?

Knowledge and Experience: Does your



Sandy Coffman

staff have sufficient knowledge to produce safe, *effective* programming? Do you train and evaluate your staff in interpersonal skills, communication skills and displaying engaging personalities? Does your staff attend workshops and conferences to network with other leaders and learn about new equipment specifically designed for the aging market?

If you find that you have earned all 5's on the **scale of 1 to 5**, you're probably on an ego trip (*Just kidding!*). Seriously, if you scored high, you're definitely on the road to successful programming, and you are obviously committed to this market and to our industry. Congratulations! Keep moving your programs forward and evaluate your performance. You can guide this market toward a quality of life and a longevity rate never before reached or imagined.

(Sandy Coffman is the Dean of Club Programming and she can be reached at scoffman@aol.com)

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