



Dear *IGH*,

I hope all is well with you. I am sending a photo of Bill Good lifting the "Travis Bell," 2150 pounds at 72 years of age. He could lift it 100 times on birthdays up to 77 years of age. He lifted it at 80 years of age and quit after 60 years. He lifted it 80 times during the year he was 79. Bill was a great inspiration for young men of the world in the 1930s. He was U.S.A.'s strongest for several years, yet only weighed 185-190 pounds.

Harry is now 89. Walter and Bill were lifting way back in the 1920s. They were the strongest brothers on earth. Harry visited Frances and me many times. He could tell many stories of old time strongmen he knew and of the years he worked for the famous York Barbell Company.

I meet young bodybuilders now who never heard of these old timers. What a shame. When I began reading Bernarr Macfadden's *Physical Culture* and Calvert's *Strength* magazine in 1930, I loved reading stories of the old strong men of Canada, England, and Europe. In 20 years I gathered hundreds of magazines and books about them.

I am sending a video tape of a television interview I had on September 14, 1992. I was 80 years of age. This was done in my backyard under the chesnut trees. I first did 51 hanging leg raises then 10 warm up chins, following with 26 chins. I have been doing 60 hanging leg raises and 30 chins this summer, but they only showed a few of each.

I love *IGH* and I love to read about the greats of years gone by. I am using my body to learn what a person can do and as the years pass I can do more leg raises and chins than I could in my teens and twenties, so why quit? I may die today, but I feel wonderful.

Curd Edmunds
Glasgow, Kentucky

Dear *IGH*,

I really enjoyed meeting everyone in New York, and look forward to seeing everyone again next year. It was especially an honor to be able to perform in front of "iron-game-greats." It made me a little nervous to say the least.

I wasn't sure if you would be interested in the enclosed torn phone book, but I figured I would send them just in case. I ripped this phone book like I did in New York, only I tore this one with more duct tape. As I stated there, I would have taped that book more thoroughly, however, time prohibited this. I thought it would be better in New York to have someone remove the books from the plastic, to show that they had not been tampered with, so I was unable to pre-tape one. Anyhow, I wanted to send you an example.

I can rip a phone book pretty fast, and I plan on establishing a speed record of some sort—probably on the amount I can tear in one minute or less. I guess to establish a record that someone could compete against I would have to record the number of pages ripped in a set time. I can also rip much thicker books, but because

of my hand size anything over 2000 numbered pages takes me too long—for performance.

Vic Boff stated that for the size book enclosed (1740 numbered pages), he thought four in one minute would be a record (untaped) and he was talking about ripping it from side to side. I feel confident that I could rip six to eight vertically in this time. If you are interested I will video my attempt, and send a copy to you.

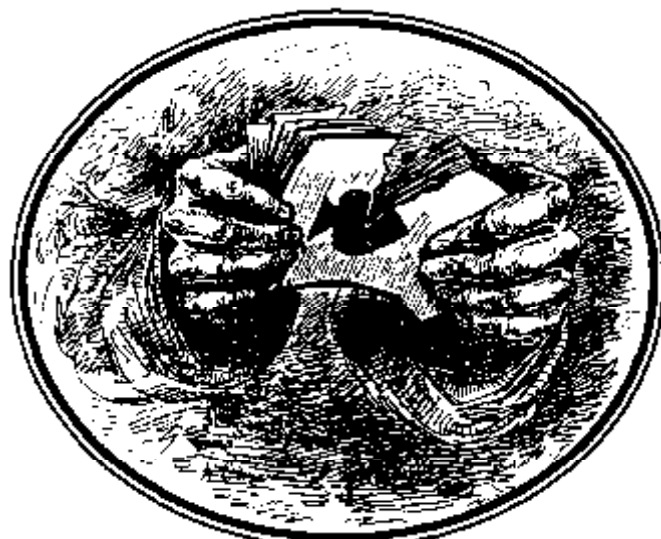
I have also enclosed a deck of cards that I tore in the method I used in New York—with oven mittens on. Although it took me longer in New York, I can usually tear them in this manner in five seconds. I took longer there because I was nervous and didn't want to drop them. In addition, I had only tried that feat one week before the dinner so it was the first time I had done so in performance.

John Brookfield and I have performed twice together since the dinner, and it looks like we will continue to be a team. Last week he bent a 1/2" bar around his neck that was only 16" long—incredible!

John and I would like to continue the strongman tradition and make our mark in the world of strength. Any advice and/or comments you can give would be greatly appreciated.

Dennis Rogers
Fredericksburg, VA

We appreciate receiving the tom phonebook and card deck, and we are proud to add these artifacts to the Collection. Such items are always welcome.



Dear *IGH*,

You published a letter from Roger LaManna asking for more information about Alan Calvert (*IGH*, Vol. 2, No. 3). Mr. LaManna used the correct word in framing his question, the word "mystery". For many of us there is a lot of mystery surrounding the memory of Alan Calvert Not merely a lack of information—rather a *puzzling* lack of information. Many of us know just enough about him to be aware that there is a lot we don't know.

Of course, we know from Calvert's extensive writings a lot about his thinking, but we don't know much about the man and his activities. All we have is fragments of information that have turned up incidentally here and there in the writings of Bob Hoffman, Harry Paschall, Sieg Klein, Ray Van Cleef, Arthur Devan, and others. These fragments do not hold together to give us a coherent picture. Some

are cryptic, raising more questions than they answer, and there are contradictions among them.

Is it really true that Calvert turned *against* weight training in his later years? If so, why? This is the biggest mystery, but there are many others, and it should be possible to dispel some of them. After all, Calvert was involved in weight training from about 1890 to about 1940, and for a lot of that time he was the dominant figure in the field, a pivotal figure, the link between European weight-training and American weight-training, the man who initiated weight-training in his country and got it rolling. He must have had dealings with a lot of people over that fifty year period, so there must be a fair amount of information about him around somewhere. His prominence makes it all the more remarkable that so little is generally known about him—that such a large gap in iron game history has been allowed to remain unfilled for such a long time.

Raymond Rogers
Fullerton, California

*We agree that Alan Calvert has not received nearly the attention he deserves, and we hope in a future issue to feature him. One of the reasons he has been to some extent forgotten is that the magazine most directly involved with weightlifting from 1932 through the middle 1960s—the golden era of U.S. lifting—was **Strength & Health**, published by Bob Hoffman, who decided at some point to promote himself as the “Father of American Weightlifting” and, later, as the “Father of World Weightlifting.” The problem Hoffman had with this particular promotion is that, in three issues of **Strength & Health** in 1940, he had written a series of articles called, “The Father of American Weightlifting.” Although Hoffman concluded his series by naming W.B. Curtis as the “Father of American Weightlifting,” he began the series by saying that Calvert was also deserving of the title. This fact, plus Calvert’s “abandonment” of heavy weight training, helped to keep him from getting the ongoing credit he had earned.*

Dear *IGH*,

I’m glad to hear that you and Jan may be able to make it to Dallas for my testing at the Cooper Clinic. Believe me, I’ll need all the cheering I can get. In 1989, after doing the treadmill test for the second time, I said to myself, “I don’t want to do that again any time soon.” Like most athletic endeavors, especially those of the endurance type, there is a lot of fear involved. You know that the treadmill will always win and that in order to do well you are going to have to suffer. I remember tossing and turning in my bed the night before the last test thinking about those last few agonizing minutes. Actually I think the dread beforehand is worse than the actuality. Anyway, I decided I would take a few years off before taking another crack at the treadmill. I decided to wait until I turned 55 before I tried for another personal best. I needed the time to get my head together and, of course, I knew that conventional wisdom said that I should do worse with age, not better. So I really have more incentive now than if I had tried again in 1990.

Knowing what I am up against, I have been preparing for the treadmill test for some time. Like making a speech or going to court, nothing settles the nerves like being well prepared. Still, I did not want to do the treadmill so much that I would be burned out and hate it before I got to the test so I started out slowly, doing the treadmill only once every two weeks at first and then about twelve weeks out from the test I increased it to once a week, and in these last four weeks I am doing the treadmill twice a week. I suppose that

runners would think that this is hardly training, but I think it is the best way. I focus on intensity rather than volume and include other things such as the Concept II rower, the Air Dyne, Stairmaster, Versa Climber and the Lifecycle to fill out my three endurance training sessions each week. In addition, I weight train on two other days. So I am training five days a week in all.

I have used a periodization approach and I am now completing my second training cycle. I used long phases in the first cycle, eight weeks, and in the current cycle I have shortened the phases to two weeks. As I explained in *Lean for Life* I now do weights and aerobics on separate days. This allows me to give equal emphasis to strength and endurance and keep each training session to one hour or less. Every session is high quality, challenging and quite rewarding. As you explained in *Lift Your Way to Youthful Fitness*, one of the neat things about periodization is that you are always improving. To my way of thinking that is the secret to staying motivated. As I get older I become more and more convinced that continually trying to improve in some way or other is the secret to staying young.

To make a long story short, I am going to be as prepared as I know how to be. I have geared my training for a time of 30 minutes, 1 minute better than in 1989. The way things are going now I think I have an excellent chance of achieving my goal. If I succeed that will put me 3 1/2 minutes above the 99th percentile for my age group. It will also put me ahead of most runners and other endurance athletes whose training volume is probably several times as great as mine. I think strength training gives me an edge, especially when the treadmill is up to the maximum 25% grade and the speed increases each minute. By the way, my weight training sessions are high intensity and short as well. I do only one heavy set of each exercise after a good warmup. My repetitions range from 8 to 20. I focus on building strength, because that’s what weight training does best.

I didn’t mean to get carried away and write a book about my training. Nevertheless, I thought you would be interested in how I have prepared for my third match with the Cooper Clinic treadmill.

Thanks for your letter with the interesting information of Paul Bruno. It sounds like he’s a brute. What a contrast to the “normal” 70 year old. It goes to show that there is a lot of truth in the saying “you are as old as you think you are.”

Clarence Bass
Albuquerque, NM

Dear *IGH*,

Thanks for your letter and back issues of *IGH*. The journal is exceptional not only for its accounts of the iron game past but for its lively writing and rare photos. I’m sorry I didn’t subscribe before; I’m glad I’m doing so now. Enclosed is a check for a Fellowship Subscription.

My one suggestion is that future issues make the connections between iron game history and current views of fitness, sports training, and health. As I said on the phone, when I began lifting in the 1950’s, I took seriously the ideas about lifting, nutrition, and healthy living offered both in the weight training magazines of the time (especially *Strength & Health*) and in earlier magazines (like those published by Macfadden) that I came across (and wish I had kept). Many findings now paraded as new, objective, and scientific—like the value of vitamin and mineral supplements—actually were in the scientific literature decades before, but popular reports of these findings were reported only in the weight training maga-

zines. Moreover, many of the recommendations now embraced within the areas of fitness and sports training were subjectively arrived at by exemplary health and strength enthusiasts like those discussed in *IGH*. Those of us who recognized the valuable advice in the lifting magazines, and who put it to personal use, turned out to be a minority who integrated into our lives practices long thought eccentric but now becoming mainstream.

Because the journal is produced within the Department of Kinesiology, you have the perfect opportunity to serve in a unique way researchers, professional practitioners, and readers concerned with health, strength, and athletics. I would like to see future articles that discuss iron game history **not** as history separate from the present (and certainly not quaint history) but as the roots from which the aforementioned groups could and should benefit.

Gerald Coles
University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey
Piscataway, NJ

Dear *IGH*,

I'm writing you in regard to Joe Roark's request for history on old gyms. In my opinion one of the most interesting personalities of the iron game was Win Franklin. This man operated the Win Franklin Health Club in Plainfield, NJ. If ever a gym served as a prototype of the olde tyme strongman gym, it was Win's.

When I was in my early teens, I walked into his gym. The first floor was both his own health food shop and display for his athletic achievements. Overhead was a painting of Win displaying an extraordinary body.

When I sat down to speak with him, he appeared masculine, intelligent, and kind hearted. Win was a true father figure of wisdom and maturity. I told him that I had been training since I was 12 years old, and had, up to this point, been concentrating on powerlifting. Inspired by such local Jersey men as Grimek, Fred Shandor and Dave Draper, I said that I wanted to switch over to become a bodybuilder. As I was quite short (5' 6"), we agreed that I should concentrate on shape and forgo any delusions of size. Win emphasized that he would train me for health and shape. Win said it did not matter if I won or lost, because my physical health would be more important down the line.

Over to the left, there was a special room set up for women athletes. We walked through the room and saw many attractive women. I commented on their forms, and Win kidded me by asking what made me an expert on the feminine body beautiful. Win's wife Kiki was equally dedicated and supportive of both the gym and him. Although in her late sixties, she was conducting her class of women through a grueling aerobics workout.

Win emphasized a split system, but in the same workout. He would have me work one section of the body, keep the blood there, then move on to the next. Win left me free to develop my own exercises, but the concepts were his. As the workouts were unusually intense, he only allowed me to train 2-3 times per week. I was the only one in the gym to follow his workouts, as they were too painful for most, because of the strict movements involved. Other systems seemed just as effective as Win's but they took longer to produce and required more time in the gym. After two years, he called up York and spoke with Terlazzo. Win said he was entering me in the Mr. World that autumn. When I heard about it, I tried to slip out the front door as I was 17 years old. His wife, Kiki, had to stop me and sit me down. I wanted to get out of it, so I did not get a tan as Win had so instructed me. But he finally caught up

with me and shipped me off to York as white as a marble statue. As I was short and lacking in tan, I did not place that cool evening.

Win did all this for me despite the personal pain he lived with. Several years before, he had been involved in an auto accident. He was thrown completely out of his car upon impact. His muscled body saved his life, but he could no longer use one arm effectively. With his upper body training now severely limited, Win took to the roads to run every morning. He still had legs supported by a beautiful pair of calves. How he could run with one arm was beyond me, but he did. Win's endurance increased, and he planned to run 75 miles to celebrate his 75th birthday.

On the day of his non-stop run, the weather was raw and cold with rain in the air, but he persisted. A tired Win Franklin sat down with holes in his sneakers after completing the run. I believe he damaged his heart by pushing through the bad elements that day. When he was close to 80, Win passed on. I don't believe that any other person had such a constructive influence upon both my life and that of other gym members.

Win Franklin was a strongman, boxer, physique athlete, marathon runner, chiropractor, and an advocate of hope and life in a destructive world.

Steve Borodinsky
Highland Park, NJ

Dear *IGH*,

Hoping this letter will find both of you in the best of health and at work as usual. I want to ask you a question because I'm sure you will have the right answer. The question is: Did Eugen Sandow really have a contest in London at the Trocadero Theatre in 1887 with a man called Goliath?

Biagio Filizola
Sapri, Italy

Sandow did, indeed, appear on the stage with a man known as Goliath, Sandow met "Goliath" —whose real name was Karl Westphal—in Germany in 1889, according to the account given by David Webster on page 17 of this issue. Goliath and Sandow never had a contest, however. According to Sandow, he came upon Westphal one day working in a quarry. Westphal was acromegalic, and Sandow thought he could be useful as an "opponent" in a stage production because of his large size and grotesque appearance. Sandow gives this account: "His head was as huge...as any pantomime mask, with a nose the size of an ordinary fist. As for his fist, it would have made more than three of mine." Sandow gave Westphal's height as 6'2" and his weight as 378 pounds; but although the height may have been accurate, a glance at any of the photographs showing sandow standing next to Westphal is enough to demonstrate that the bodyweight of 378 pounds was greatly exaggerated. No doubt Sandow wanted to make Goliath seem as large as possible, so he advertised him as being much heavier than he was and dressed him in a thick fur costume to make him appear bulkier. Westphal was untrained in any form of athletics, but he did appear in London with Sandow, engaging in mock combat with him and being lifted by him. After appearing for some time with Sandow, Westphal left the show, married his landlady and, with her, began a stage act of his own.