



Readers who wish to do so may now submit Grapevine items via e-mail. Simply send your comments and questions to j.todd@mail.utexas.edu Be sure to include your full name, your hometown and your state. Letters, of course, are also welcome.

David Chapman recently sent the following notice:

A group of French-speaking barbell men have decided to form a new organization called the *Amicale des anciens culturistes* (The Association of Oldtime Bodybuilders). Like America's own Oldtime Barbell and Strongman Association, this new group is made up of former participants and instructors in the iron game who do not want to lose touch with one another. The inaugural newsletter has just appeared, and the group had its first general meeting near Paris at the end of September 1999.

President Raymond Miskolczi announces that membership in the association is currently hovering around 20 people, but he expects this group to grow quickly. "The legendary individualism of the bodybuilder," he urges in the first editorial, "should no longer be an obstacle for our getting together in order to exchange constructive ideas." He further announces that membership in the *Amicale* "is not reserved exclusively for former bodybuilding champions, but it is designed above all for those men or women who are over fifty and who have retained their love of bodybuilding."

Those North Americans who wish to join this worthy group should write to the following address: *Amicale des anciens culturistes*; 50, rue de Varennes; 36210 Chabris; France. Dues are 140 French francs per year payable in cash or international draft. The newsletter is written in French. -David Chapman



Dear IGH:

I have written to many magazine editors in my life. But I have never been compelled to write as I am right now, to offer huge congratulations on your "John Grimek, the Man" special. What a complete document! What a tribute, so well deserved. I had read so much in

past editions of *MD* and *S&H*, but reading again brought a new excitement. This is positively a thrilling issue and one you can be tremendously proud of.

Robert Kennedy
Mississauga, Ontario

Bob Kennedy, the publisher of *Muscle Mag International*, has been a supporter of our game's pioneers for years. We appreciate his kind words and his support, just as we appreciate the kind words that follow.

Dear IGH:

My good friend, Vic Boff sent me your April 1999 issue that featured our beloved John Grimek. He was a longtime friend and was most supportive of the Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame. I am pleased to enclose some items including our latest newsletter which features my illustration of John and an article I did on a great stuntman, Dave Sharpe, which I would like to share with you. I have also included a few extra prints of my Grimek drawing. Much success to you with your publication.

John G. Hagner
Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame
Moab, Utah



Dear IGH:

Congratulations on the special issue commemorating John Grimek. While inevitably its contributions lacked uniformity of interest, as a whole, nevertheless, they effectively conveyed the peerless subject's multifaceted impact on the iron game.

The four I found particularly praiseworthy, however, were Vic Boff's moving tribute to a departed friend, David Chapman's illumination of the model-photographer pairing that serendipitously produced what Bob Hoffman aptly called "the greatest muscle picture ever made," Joe Roark's compilation of reliable data from a legendary physique career, and John Fair's reminder of the interconnection between bodybuilding and weightlifting that Grimek personified.

The foregoing quote, of course, is from Fair's new *Muscle Town USA: Bob Hoffman and the Manly Culture of York Barbell* (Penn State University Press). Ironically my ordered copies of this valuable book's unjacketed hardcover and trade paperback bindings

arrived shortly after your combined Grimek numbers were placed atop my stack of essential reading. And although I was delighted to find the picture Hoffman referred to reproduced with attribution on the paperback's cover, I was disappointed that its reproduction among the numerous illustrations accompanying the text inside was unattributed. But then none of them are, an odd lapse in publishing standards and a regrettable omission in an otherwise admirably documented study (and one, I hasten to add, that's compellingly written, in itself a notable achievement for a scholarly book).

Admittedly this failure to textually acknowledge Hanagan's work may seem minor to most readers, and indeed he was never part of the "York gang(s)" Fair focuses on. Even so, it's indicative of the larger failure overall to notice the contributions that photographers made in making "manly culture" visible. Undoubtedly Hanagan's classic photograph of Grimek alone galvanized enthusiasm for the York doctrine. And in essence, the role of Hanagan in documenting the allure of bodybuilding's golden age was synergistically comparable to what Grimek accomplished as a stellar physique competitor during the lionized era.

In candor, though, perhaps space constraints in a long book prohibited Fair from paying attention to the photographers York used to attract buyers for its magazines, etc. But had he found space to do so, he might have justifiably noticed Douglas of Detroit, Hanagan's contemporary and fellow *Strength & Health* picture maker. Sadly, Douglas died early this year, however, and I wanted to bring his passing to your attention in case you were unaware of it. Douglas Juleff by actual name, he was perhaps best known for his photographs of Vic Seipke, a leading amateur physique competitor in the 1950s and master's division winner at the 1976 Mr. America contest. *Douglas of Detroit*, a retrospective of his physique images (including one of 1952 Mr. America, Jim Park), was published late in 1997 by Janssen Versand of Germany.

Bob Summer
Nashville, TN



Dear IGH:

I found your address in the *Iron Game History* publication. My name is Arunas Petraitis and I'm a sports journalist from Lithuania. Bodybuilding statistics and history is not only my biggest hobby but it is also important in my work as General Secretary of the

Lithuanian Bodybuilding Federation (IFBB).

I am working on the *Lithuanian Sports Encyclopedia's* bodybuilding chapter now. This book will be published in the year 2000. There'll be a few profiles and bodybuilding history. I'd like to contact Alan Stephan, two time "Mr. America" title winner. Maybe you know that he has Lithuanian background (Albertas Steponavicius) so that is why I want to find him. But I have no address of Alan Stephan (I guess he's still living in the USA) and no idea of another way to look for it. May I ask you or your readers if they can help me contact him. I'd be very thankful.

Arunas Petraitis
Lithuania

If anyone has an address for Alan Stephan, please drop us a line—or an e-mail—and we will forward it on to Mr. Petraitis.



Dear IGH:

The John Grimek issue brought back a flood of memories. When I started weight training as a fifteen year old, it took a year of exercising just to look average because I was so thin when I started.

A source of inspiration were the "magazines." The training information, success stories and the pictures meant a great deal to me. As a young teenager I would ride the New York subways to Manhattan to look for *Strength & Health* and *Your Physique* at the newsstands. For these magazines weren't available where I lived for nearly two weeks, and I couldn't wait. On the ride home, I would force myself not to read these magazines from cover to cover, so I could savor it a lot longer. The Grimek issue I'm reading the same way and that same pure gold feeling I had in the past about the weight game, I've captured again thanks to you.

My first AOBs dinner was about 10 or 11 years ago when I had the privilege of meeting John Grimek. Of course I was in awe of him, but to my pleasant surprise he was approachable and friendly. Through the years I never saw him turn down a request for an autograph or a picture to be taken with him.

I will always cherish the John Grimek issue. Thanks Terry and Jan for a job well done.

Dr. Joseph Sansolo
Bronx, NY

Dear IGH:

I recently received the April edition of *IGH* and just wanted to say that it's the best issue that's ever come out. The photos are outstanding. When I started weight lifting in the late 60s, John Grimek and Bill Pearl were my role models. Al Thomas' article was the best-written tribute I've ever read on another human being, as well as to the sport of bodybuilding itself. I was disappointed, however, that there was not an article dealing with Grimek's life history. I know the basics; but other factors such as when and why he started lifting, where was his wife from, who were his role models, I know nothing about. An article dealing with these and other points would have really rounded out an otherwise excellent issue.

All in all, though, I think you have an excellent magazine. Keep up the good work.

**Brent Laswell
Kingwood, TX**



Dear IGH:

Excellent! In a word, I think the John Grimek commemorative issue of *Iron Game History* (April 1999) meets the standards of excellence developed by the late quality Guru-Dr. W. Edwards Deming. Keep up the good work by continuing the systematic study of physical culture and the improvement of *Iron Game History*.

**Grover Porter, Ph.D.
Huntsville, AL**



Dear IGH:

The John Grimek issue was terrific. He was my inspiration when I started weight training over 30 years ago. I met John Grimek in 1976 and he looked about fifty years old then even though he was 66 years old at that time. The thing I remember the most is his James Cagney way of talking. I still have a photo of him standing next to his life size statue. Nice memories . . .

**Victor Tejada, MD
Durham, NC**

Dear IGH:

I am pleased to see the new feature "Ironclad." Like Joe Roark and many others, I suspect, I get quite annoyed with errors regarding lifts, titles, etc., put out by some magazines. I actually have a copy of *Man's World* (A British magazine of the fifties/sixties) containing a photograph of Clancy Ross with a remark underneath giving his correct name and informing the reader that he (Clancy) had won the Mr. Britain in 1949! I have more of the same. Some might think it is too pedantic to expect accuracy. I think of new enthusiasts who read errors and take them as gospel for ever-afterwards. Anyway, I like the "Ironclad" feature!

Best regards to you both.

**Doug Ewington
Birchmoor, Northern Tamworth, England**



Dear IGH:

Just finished reading your interesting article about Lee Birgir's *Physical Fitness Magazine*. Noticed that Roger Eells' wonderful magazine *Vim* published from February 1940 thru June 1941 was not listed among those in that era that failed. Your article so whet my interest I went to my library shelf and took my like new beautifully bound issues of *Vim* and spent the entire last evening and late into the night rereading this superb publication.

Vim was printed on the finest glossy paper, which was not true of *Physical Fitness* and it was profusely filled with excellent photographs and rich with articles from the leading authorities of the day. Among the contributors were Ray Van Cleef, George Weaver, George Jowett, J.C. Hise, Leo Gaudreau, Harry Paschall, David Willoughby, Dr. LaBerge, Dr. Frederick Tilney, Antone Matysek, Peary Rader, Jim Evans, Earle Liederman, William Oliphant, Arthur Gay, and many more to a total of over thirty of the world's most internationally noted authorities of the day. Copiously filled with advertisements and apparently backed by Eells, who seemed more financially able to have succeeded than most of the others, still it failed. Eells' editorial in the last issue gave no indication of problems and wrote glowingly of things to come.

Eells himself was a noted lifter, especially in the bent press, in which he lifted 270 lbs. officially at a bodyweight of 185. Also, Eells seemed to not have suffered from Hoffman's enmity as others did. In fact I

seem to remember they worked quite well together. I have come to the conclusion that what determined the success or failure of any magazine in those days was whether they could get newsstand distribution.

Hoffman related in *Strength & Health* how the only U.S.A. distributor, or at least the only one of importance delivering to newsstands nation-wide refused to accept *S&H* for distribution at first, because they were already distributing *Strength* and *Physical Culture* and it was their policy to protect the publications they already distributed. This was extremely important to the success or failure of any publication. Hoffman's tenacity and financial strength and the demise of *Strength* opened the field for *Strength & Health* eventually.

Since I made this an epistle I might as well reminisce a little further. One day, sometime between 1939 and 1945 I was walking the streets in New Haven, CT (a practice I enjoyed during those years when I ran my "Palace Academy of Health") when I noted this young fellow coming toward me. His face looked so familiar. With utmost confidence I stopped him and asked, "Are you Bernarr Macfadden's son?" "Yes," he replied. In the conversation that followed I learned that he was on the Yale University swimming team. Yale swimmers were considered the best in those days. His contempt for his father was evident when he said his father had squandered his wealth and barely had a million left. If it weren't for his scholarship he wouldn't have been able to attend Yale. Poor boy, he might have had to go to work after Yale. A fascinating story must lie in researching whatever happened to Macfadden's family in later years.

Alton Eliason
Northford, CT

Dear IGH:

I'm enclosing a copy of the letter I received today from Roy Hilligen. I think he now knows right from wrong!

After our N.Y.C. Oldetime Strongman meeting in 1990 I found Vern Weaver living with his mother in a mobile home in Dover. He had a huge "pot-belly" and rode a big motorcycle. After the visit I told him I would keep in touch—but I didn't! Later he shot himself. I regretted that I had not stayed in touch. Since I had known Roy H. since 1950, I wrote him in jail. In his first letter to me, he made the comment: "What should I do—kill myself?" That shook my memory of Weaver. Deciding not to ignore Roy's statement, I wrote him several letters which leads to the letter I am enclosing! Let's hope he now is now determined to stay "clean!"

Dave Collier
Knoxville, TN

We saw Roy at a recent Oldetime Barbell and Strongman Association Dinner in New York City and he looked very fit and healthy, and in good spirits.



Dear IGH:

I obtained a copy of Jan's new book—*Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful*—and am thoroughly enjoying it. It is a wonderful and fascinating account of the early history of physical education for men and its eventual but reluctant inclusion of women. How it began in Europe, then Great Britain, and finally its introduction in America. The exercise descriptions along with the many illustrations are so interesting and with the amazing pieces of weight lifting apparatus produced in those days, and the fact that some of them were forerunners to a few of our modern pieces in use in many present day gyms is somewhat startling to me. I never gave much thought to this, and how it would really affect our present day inventions!

I am going to deviate to something personal that may interest you. My maternal grandmother attended a Female Seminary in the 1870s (later named Wheaton College and in more recent years it also included male students). I am in possession of the yearly catalogues she received each year (1872 thru 1879—the year she graduated). Although I don't recall any description by her of her participation in either calis-

thenics or gymnastics, her school did offer them under the direction of a special instructor (but no name is given). She was, however, an ardent horsewoman for many years.

Her early schooling was given to her by her mother (who was a former schoolteacher in the 1860s) on board her father's whaling ship during the years from 1864 to 1871 from the age of six until they returned to New Bedford, Mass. in 1871. This home on board the ship—the John Howland—took them around the Horn, to a stopover in San Francisco, then whaling trips down to Baja California, then north to the Arctic water into the Bering Sea, then to Honolulu (another stopover) and came to a close with a long sojourn in Yokohama, Japan and surrounding whaling waters in the late 1860s.

As I read about the early history of physical education for women it brought to mind these catalogues and I became curious so reread them again, though as you mention in your book there is seldom a description of what exercise movements or gymnastics each school taught—this is not described in detail either. Too bad. Even though I had already started my days at Muscle Beach it never occurred to me to ask about that part of her schooling. She died at the age of 93 in 1950.

Jan, your book is wonderful and I am so glad that I have the privilege of knowing you and being able to learn so much. Thank you for sharing your research with all of us.

Pudgy Stockton
Santa Monica, CA



Dear IGH:

The success of the Oldtime Barbell and Strongman banquet is due to a lot of hard work by people behind the scenes that never get the recognition they fully deserve. I know for sure that Vic Boff and a few others put a lot of time and effort into making the annual get together a success, so I just wanted to add my heartfelt THANKS. My family and I reaped the bene-

fits of his hard work and we're all grateful.

Norm Komich
Beverly, MA



Dear IGH:

I really enjoyed the issue of *IGH* with the Apollo article and since it had my "one issue left" warning, I figured I'd better renew.

I'm still hoping you will write your autobiography. It would be the definitive study on strength in the twentieth century from someone who has seen most of the best strength athletes of the second half of the century. In the meantime, how about a collection (reprints) of your previous (*Sports Illustrated*) articles on people like Andre the Giant, Pacifico, etc.?

Also, any tips on researching strongmen or lifters from the Pittsburgh, western Pennsylvania areas? I was going to start with a list of national champs in weightlifting and powerlifting (Russell Knipp, Bob Weaver, Cal Shake, Tony Fratto, etc.) but I'm at a loss as to the old timers, if there were any. Anyway, keep up the great work and I hope to run into you again soon.

Rege Becker
Pittsburgh, PA

Western Pennsylvania has produced a number of strength stars. Although Ottley Coulter wasn't born there, he lived most of his adult life in Lemont Furnace, Pa., just outside Uniontown. And, one of your editors—Jan Todd—was born in Donora. You might also make note of the following letter.

Dear IGH:

My great grandfather was a turn of the century "strongman". His name was Charles McCullough and he lived in Cannonsburg, PA. The photo enclosed, I think, is circa 1915. There is little family history about him. Do your readers have any information or other photos of my grandfather? Thanks for your help.

Mark McCullough
Los Angeles, CA

If anyone knows anything about Charles McCullough, please write us and we will forward it to Mr. McCullough.



Dear IGH:

Do you have all of the back issues for sale? Do you sell reprints of any of the old magazines prior to 1934—*Sandow's Magazine, Physical Culture, Arena, Strength*, etc? I have several magazines, approximately 50, from 1934 to 1964 and am looking for the ones before 1934. Who is McLean? I know Ken Patera and he said Terry Todd and Jan Todd have a great collection. Gary Cleveland told me that also. Ray Van Cleef had several copies of *Sandow's Magazine*. Do you know where I can get reprints? I've read he had a great collection way back. I've tried the Internet but surprisingly not much is on it about old lifters (strongmen and strongwomen). I've called and written several collectors but few go back before 1934, and haven't produced any reprints yet. If you can help me please let me know. Thanks!

Darwin Wilmar
Minneapolis, MN

Back issues cost \$5.00 for Volumes 1-4 and \$7.50 for Volume 5&6. We have original copies still available of all issues except for Vol. 1 No. 1 and Vol. 1 No. 4 and 5. However, we sell a Xeroxed version of those issues for the same \$5.00 price. A full set of all back issues at this point is \$150.00 including postage.

Roy McLean taught weight training at the University of Texas from 1919 through 1965. During his tenure, U. T. had the best-equipped college gym in the country, along with the most classes in weight training of any university (an average of 24 classes with 30 or so students in each class in the 1950s and 1960s). He also had a fine collection of books and magazines in the field of weight training, and he was a great help to me as I began my career in the game and as we brought our own collection back to Austin.

We've looked into the idea of producing some

reprints but copyright laws and the relatively small pool of people interested in reprints didn't encourage us. So, keep searching. We concentrate on collecting and preserving.



Dear IGH:

Many years ago I read the biography of the old-time professional strongman who went by the name of The Mighty Atom. His biographer made a veiled suggestion that besides the usual exercises this Jewish strongman developed exceptional mental focus by the study of the mystical system of Kabbalah. I recently read in a physique magazine that his protege is still giving performances. Can this be verified and elaborated? There is so much talk of "visualization" and "psyching up" for an athletic performance, that I wonder if there may be something to the idea a particular set of spiritual exercises could prepare one for an enormous exertion of strength. More generally, are there plans to profile old-time strongmen such as The Mighty Atom?

C. Verratro
Via Internet

Atom's main protégé is Slim "the Hammerman" Farman, who was honored by the Oldtime Barbell and Strongman Association in 1998. Slim uses visualization himself in his strength feats. However, Dennis Rogers, of Houston, who performs as "The Mighty Mite," is also a spiritual heir of Atom's.



During the past year, we've lost a number of friends in the Iron Game. We thank Joe Roark for providing us with their dates of death: Joe Di Pietro, 84, March 19; John Terlazzo, 83, April 1; Andy Jackson, 94, July 3; Claude R. Barnholth, July 4; Charles Roman, 94, July 16; Curtis Leffler, 36, September 1, and Jack Woodson, 61, October 30.