Dear *IGH*:

Congratulations on your new building. Your dreams and hard work are now being realized. The Stark Center will be a great triumph to all your hard work over the years. Both of you will always be remembered by future generations for bringing knowledge of the history of physical culture to the world and for being hard-working and knowledgeable people. I'm honored to be a friend of yours because I've learned so much from *Iron Game History* through the years. In my lectures to our staff I use what I've learned, with respect.

Terry Robinson
Los Angeles, CA

Kind words from Terry Robinson are much appreciated as he's been central to the game for almost three-quarters of a century and he's still going strong. The last we checked—and we always try to visit him when we're in the Los Angeles area—he was still the morning manager for the enormous, very upscale Sports Club/LA. How many men do we have in the iron game past their 90th birthday and still in the very center of things?

Dear *IGH*:

The mention of Charles Atlas, the "dynamic tension method" and Madison Avenue ad-man, Charles Roman, in the article entitled "Yearning for Muscular Power" by Terry Todd and John Hoberman in the Vol. 9 No. 3 issue reminded me of the following. It was in 1952 that I returned from overseas with a rare German car, one of 25, an SS-710 Mercedes. Because of the car I became friends with several people in Brooklyn, specifically a Fred Stevens who, interestingly, knew Charles Atlas and, in fact, reportedly had been a guest in his Long Island home more than once. Charles Atlas was Italian and had a very, very Italian name which I cannot recall. *[Ed note: Angelo Siciliano]* Atlas' home was reportedly loaded with barbell and dumbell equipment, but Atlas himself was anything but "muscle-bound."

When I was twelve, I saved up $3.00 of hard earned money and sent away for the "dynamic tension" course. Within a couple of weeks my $3.00 was returned with a note clearly stating that the course, certainly not clear in the ad, was only available for $30.00! Furthermore, $27.00 of it was apparently to pay for vital information on "sexology!"

In response, I wrote a short letter stating that I was just 12 years old and truthfully only needed the dynamic tension part of the package. Receiving no sympathy whatsoever they again returned my $3.00.

That weight training made you musclebound was hardly my experience. In high school, age 15 and 16, I ran the 100-yard dash in 11.3 and the 440 in 57 seconds. Overseas (Darmstadt, Germany) with just weight training and no running practice whatever I ran a 10.5 against a runner who ran ten seconds flat in high school.

Ted Nolan Thompson, M.D.
Dana Point, CA

Dear *IGH*:

I am so glad you two are continuing with your labor of love (i.e. publishing *Iron Game History*). Jan, I recently re-read your excellent essay on powerlifting and its multiplicity of organizations, etc. It has been a source of wonderment to me to observe the amazing proliferation of nuances (real and imagined) within that sport. There is obviously no shortage of people who want to be "President" or "Chairman" of something, and powerlifting really gave them the opportunity! I limit my own powerlifting activity to the AAU version of the 27 different approaches to that area of the Iron Game.

Terry, I watch the Strongman shows whenever I see them on the TV, and am happy to see you in the background occasionally. It was good to see Phil Pfister win this year—he's a fine representative of the USA.

I am enclosing $100 "for the cause"–although you two people contribute the most precious thing we humans possess–time! Thanks for all you do for us in the Iron Game in all its varieties.

C. Jack Lano
Anaheim, CA

We couldn't agree more, Jack, about Phil. He's a great ambassador for the sport. As evidence of the positive press he's now garnering, we thought you'd like to see the following article from the ***Columbus Dispatch****.*

Humble Hercules: Human Powerhouse Keeps His Strength In Perspective

By Tom Reed, February 28, 2007

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Phil Pfister can carry a 460-pound concrete stone, pull two tractor-trailers with a harness and support eight women standing on a platform. His greatest feat of strength, however, might be his grip on reality.

In late September, on a trip to China, Pfister became the first American in 24 years to win the World's Strongest Man title. Three days later, he was back at work for the Charleston Fire Department.

"Phillip is a realist," said his wife, Michelle. "He enjoys doing the strongman competitions, but he knows the Fire Department is what provides our insurance, our 401(k). If he's on the schedule to work, he wants to be there."

A giant within his sport, the 6-foot-7, 345-pound Pfister hasn't outgrown his hometown—where he remains the neighbor to call when someone needs a sofa or piano moved. He still makes public appearances for a community that supported him financially nine years ago when he started in strongman events. Although he gained national prominence in October for flipping a Pontiac Sunfire on Late Show With David Letterman, he prefers the recognition of Charleston's youth.

"Kids use me as a frame of reference when they see something big," he said. "They say, 'Is that rock too big for Phil Pfister to pick up?'"

Pfister, 35, will bring his power and perspective to Columbus this weekend as part of the Arnold Sports Festival. He hopes to earn another notch in his weightlifting belt competing in a world-class field, including four-time Arnold champion Zydrunas Savickas of Lithuania.

Strongman events, a favorite ESPN filler, feature contestants tugging, flipping, carrying and pushing large and often exotic objects. In 2002 on a New Orleans dock, Pfister harnessed himself to a 300-ton riverboat and pulled it 50 feet in the water. The unusual events sometimes have real-world applications.

Two years ago, his Fire Department unit answered a call in which a 250-pound man had fallen through his front porch. As colleagues devised a plan, Pfister reached down and pulled the man through the floor using only one arm, Capt. Kirk Lilley said.

"Part of strongman's appeal is you can relate to it," said Bill Kazmaier, the last U.S. athlete to win the World's Strongest Man contest, in 1982. "Most people can't grasp a powerlifter pulling 800 pounds on a bar, but what college kid hasn't tried to carry a beer keg or push a truck that has run out of gas?"

Pfister began watching World's Strongest Man events about 10 years ago and thought he could compete. He isn't a typical contestant: He lacks a weightlifting or powerlifting pedigree.

In fact, he passed on organized sports at South Charleston High School, instead dedicating his spare time to skateboarding and rock climbing. He quit football after peewee-league coaches forced him to play on the line.

Strength has been another constant. He chopped wood to help pay his way through West Virginia State College. The son of two physicians, Pfister favors a rugged, bluecollar lifestyle.

Dr. Alfred Pfister recalls watching his son uproot tree stumps and clear 200-pound boulders to build a home in the early 1990s. The young man carried 30-gallon drums of water to a construction trailer, where he lived until the project was completed. "One day, Phil asked me about steroids," his father said. "I told him they shorten your life and shrink your testicles. It was the last conversation we had on the subject." Pfister said he uses no performance-enhancing drugs in a sport that does scant testing for them. He thinks his natural approach will allow him to enjoy a longer career. He has never suffered a serious injury. His biggest advantage might be his large hands, which measure 11 inches with his fingers completely spread.

"Being able to maintain a grip with these big implements is so important in Strongman, and Phil can do that," said friend and fellow Arnold participant Brian Siders, who lives near Charleston.

Pfister trains in several Charleston gyms, including one at the Fire Department, and occasionally works out with strength coach Nick Osborne at Built Solid Fitness Center in Columbus. Maintaining body weight is also difficult. Pfister has gained more than 100 pounds since high school. His wife said he eats 10 times a day, totaling more than 5,000 calories. "Before my metabolism caught up to me, I could eat 3 1 /2 pounds of steak and four baked potatoes for dinner," he said.

Pfister wants to compete for at least five more years and has no plans to parlay his strongman fame into a full-time job, such as pro wrestling. "Who wouldn't want to make millions?" he said. "But 20 years from now I want to get out of bed without hurting all over."

He earned $40,000 for his World's Strongest Man conquest and estimates he could clear $100,000 in year-round competition if he didn't value his time at home with Michelle and their 6-year-old son, Wyatt.

His wife has plenty of chores to keep him occupied: Pfister recently carried a fully assembled treadmill into the house.

Not that her muscular hunk is the only one getting his hands dirty.

"You know," Michelle said, "I take out the trash quite a bit."

Dear *IGH*:

So glad to receive your Christmas Card. The illustration on the front of the card really brought back some old memories. Most people don't or can't remember working out in an old gym with that type of old equipment. When I first started out training at the local YMCA, they still had a set of the old Milo barbells. Of course, the rest of the equipment was York. I had a dumbell set from Good at home. When I read the information inside your card, I was reminded of my days in college. We were taught about the *Turnvereins* and the

William L. Good

Bill Good died on April 19, 2007, just a month short of his 97th birthday, in Reamstown, Pennsylvania, where he was born and lived his long and vigorous life. He was the youngest, but strongest, of the three renowned Good Brothers—Walter, Harry, and Bill—weightlifters all. The last to go, Bill was still driving himself and his girlfriend to a dance every Friday night until late last fall, and his health and strength lasted until he fell in March and suffered a very serious injury to his back. Bill was the dominant heavyweight in U.S. weightlifting during the 1930s, was a member of two Olympic teams—1932 and 1936—and, at about 190 pounds, had an outstanding physique. He continued to train with heavy weights throughout his life, and at the age of 79 he did 79 repetitions with 2150 pounds in a hip-harness lift in which he used the strength of his hips, thighs, shoulders and arms to raise a huge dumbell a few inches from the ground. I first met Bill in 1965, and I visited him quite a few times over the past 15 years. He was in many ways a remarkable man—very modest and unassuming but also very proud of the strength and shape of his unusually able body.

—Terry Todd

gym at Hartford. I graduated from college with a double major of Physical Education and Education.

I'm glad to know that some people still remember me because I hardly remember myself. Now let me explain. Most of the lifting that I did, I don't remember it. Terpak would call me and say, "Hey Jim, Bob needs you to come to such and such place and help the team to win the TEAM TROPHY." For some reason, Bob was always hyper about winning the TEAM TROPHY. I would grab my bag, get on the train or plane, get to the meet and Terpak would say, "go out there and do this," or, "we really need this lift." Most of the time I had no idea what the weight was. In fact, in the 1960 Olympics, Terpak said, "go out there and press this and you'll be set." I didn't find out until the 1980's that it was an Olympic Record. Then Terpak said "Jim, you really need to get this snatch." I said, "no problem." I had no idea how much the bar weighed. The only thing I remember saying to Terpak is, "boy, that was easy." I think the bar weighed 330 ½ or 332 ½. I do remember that lift because the weight just seemed to float up in the air and I had to stop it from going back too far. I didn't know what was going on but Terpak was grinning at Schemansky and Schemansky was mad as hell. I found out years later that my snatch had caused Schemansky to make a try for a 440 or 450-pound Clean and Jerk. I was rooting for him but his knee kept banging down on the platform. He was trying like hell but even Skee couldn't get down low enough. Now I know you don't believe me so I won't even bother to tell you I don't remember winning the Sr. Nationals. Oh Well!

But one thing I want you to help me with—one day I walked into the York Gym (that's what I'm calling it, did you ever see the place?) There was this big dumbell laying on the floor and everybody said, "Hey Jim, do you think you could lift this?" I bent down; picked it up with my left hand, and pressed it. It was easy because it had a thick bar on it and that's when I realized that I had a large hand and that's why I had so much trouble cleaning weights. Of course, everyone knew that I couldn't split worth a damn.

But anyway, do you have any idea what that dumbell was called or how much it may have weighed? And, do you have any idea what happened to the equipment that was in Sig Klein's gym? Well, enough for now.

Jim Bradford
Washington, D.C.

There were several old dumbells that appeared in the York gym over the years, but the most famous one was once owned by Louis Cyr. Unloaded, it weighed a few pounds over 200, and it had a handle that was thicker than that of a standard Olympic bar. To our knowledge—although some have claimed otherwise—no one has ever cleaned and pressed the Cyr bell with one hand because it was so difficult to clean; it had large spheres which made it awkward, a thick handle, and it weighed at least 200 pounds. As far as Sig's famous equipment is concerned, it was dispersed in the mid-1970s, when he closed the gym. Earlier, Bob Hoffman had declined Sig's offer to sell all of the equipment as a package.