

IRON GAME HISTORY



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ED JUBINVILLE—A MEMORIAL

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Letter to me from Ed on 24 March 1990: "I go for a quad bypass the 28th. Keep in touch."

Ed's doctor had predicted another seven years of life following that operation. Karyn, Ed's younger daughter, had filed that prediction and had hoped it was accurate. It would not prove to be.



Year's ago, when my newsletter, *Musclesearch*, began, the first subscriber was Ed Jubinville, who sent me five times the required money and asked for a one year subscription and that I apply the excess money "for the cause." That was my premier letter from Ed. During these past few years we have exchanged many letters, talked at length on the phone, and eaten some meals together at contest sites. When Dennis Reno telephoned me with the sadness of Ed's passing, it became obvious to me that a major source of information had just vanished, that I had lost a friend, and that the sport's main "all-rounder" would never again participate.

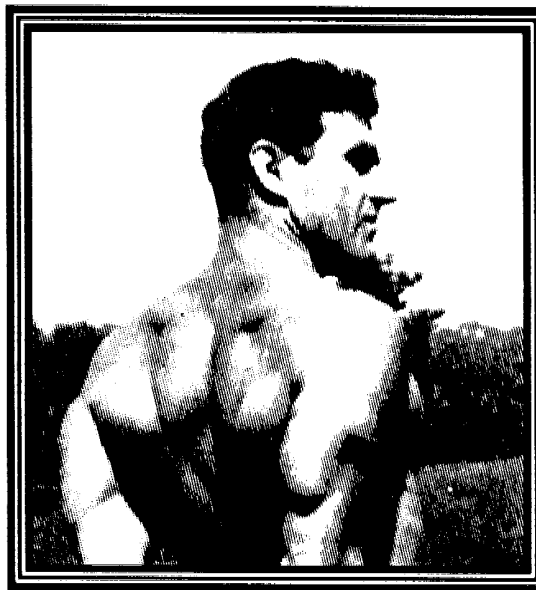
Currently, lifters and bodybuilders endure for a brief spotlighted span in their respective indulgences: Ed had enjoyed a fifty-five year participation which included weightlifting, bodybuilding, powerlifting, equipment manufacturing, and arm wrestling. He was a promoter, a participant, a judge.

Perhaps most famous for his muscle control, a skill he began

in 1938 and continued honing until his death, he kept a journal of all the public performances in which he demonstrated this nearly lost art. To get an idea of Ed's control, imagine flexing your right biceps, and then while keeping one biceps head flexed, alternately relax and flex the other head. You can imagine that; Ed could do that.

Perhaps Ed's most masterful control was over his viewpoint on life: he loved every waking moment of it, and had you spied

him sleeping, probably a smile would be accompanying a snore. Even the stroke which removed his speech in 1981 did not remove his muscle control. His wife Betty worked with Ed on regaining his speech, and six months led to great improvement. Within another six months, full speech was his again, and he was able again to tell those wonderful stories with a flare that only those who have visited the places and people involved could relate them. He was, in fact, one of the handful of remaining connections with the strongmanism of the early part of this century, having flexed shoulders with Siegfried Klein, handled the weights of Rolandow, and chatted with others of that era. But Ed stayed current. You never perceived him as some old guy who was living in the past. In the early 1970s Ed and Lou



Ferrigno toured Italy, and Ed was a friend to all he met. His acquaintances spanned decades of newcomers as he maintained friendships with men in the aging group who had originally inspired him to the iron.

One characteristic Ed never attained was arrogance. He once mentioned that he had not done anything that many others had not also done. He wrote to me on 13 October 1988: "In your newsletter, I couldn't believe what I saw and read about me. I guess I'm a friendly guy, why not, we aren't on earth that long so why not make the most of it. Take the good with the bad and believe it's for the best. God has His ways even though at times we do not agree but it always turns out right." Earlier, on 31 March 1986, he had written: "The more I talk to Vic Boff the more I learn about the oldtimers."

Although he was humble, his sense of humor was exhilarating. 21 June 1985: "I have nine children—no muscle control there." Even *Muscle Builder* magazine reported in March 1964 that in "Holyoke . . . Seems that 'World's Greatest Muscle Control Artist' Ed Jubinville is trying to establish a reputation as 'father with the most children in the bodybuilding world.' The latest addition to the Jubinville clan is his new baby boy, who weighs in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces. That makes 9 kids. Congratulations, Ed. . . we're holding

birth announcement space for you in next year's *Muscle Builder*." This was a reference to the 22 August 1963 birth of Ed's final child, Paul.

Ed's four marriages resulted in nine children, all of whom came through the first two marriages. With Dorothy Pouliot, whom he married on 30 August 1941, Ed had: Edward Jr. (29 July 1942); Richard (3 March 1944; died in a motorcycle/car accident on 2 June 1991); Norman (14 January 1947); and Elaine (22 August 1947). With June Haskell, whom he married on 2 April 1954, he had: David (5 June 1955); Robert (25 March 1957); Karyn (14 March 1959); Ronald (20 May 1961); and Paul (15 August 1963). Ed married Betty Forcier on 14 June 1986. She survives.

Ed began demonstrating his muscle control in 1938 according to his book, *That's Muscle Control*. "In October 1938, a local playground held a sports show and I was asked to perform." That was one month before his eighteenth birthday. Ten years later, *Your Physique* magazine announced in its May issue: "Edward Jubinville,

America's greatest muscle control artist will challenge anyone in a contest in muscle control to prove his supremacy at the coming Eastern Mr. America event to be held May 28th at the Central Opera House in New York City. His story is currently appearing in *Muscle Power* magazine." That would be the June 1948 issue in an article by Martin Franklin about Ed titled, "Muscle Control Phenomenon," which informed us that, "After reading Maxick's book on muscle control, eighteen year old Ed fiddled around with the flexing exercises." Earlier, in 1941, Ed's wife's letter appeared in *Strength & Health* magazine in the December issue.

"Dear Bob Hoffman,

I am enclosing seven photos of my husband and myself. We have achieved much through living the *Strength & Health* way. My husband does not know that I am sending these pictures. I took them without his knowledge. His birthday is in November and I know he would be thrilled to see his pictures in *S&H*. Many people think he has the most unusual control over his muscles.

Mrs. Edward Jubinville
122 Newton Street
Holyoke, Mass."

Ed was no doubt pleased to see the photo published showing him lifting Dorothy overhead. In the March 1944 issue of *S&H*, his own letter to the editor appeared.

"Dear Sir,

I have most of your equipment and books, all of which I have used very much. I have received wonderful results. Enclosed find two pictures taken by Lion of New York City. I would be very pleased if one of them could be published.

I weigh 152 pounds and I can one arm clean 185 pounds. Please ask Grimek as he remembers the muscle-control friend who chatted with him for a full hour when he appeared at the Springfield College in 1940. I remain,

An ardent weightlifting fan,
Edward Jubinville"

Ed's allegiance was to the whole iron game, not to any of its particular vendors. In late 1947 when Ben Weider told Ed that the IFBB would someday be worldwide, Ed paid attention and, in the 1960s, became IFBB director for the New England area. He had not switched loyalty from the AAU; he had added loyalty to another group—the IFBB. Ed perceived the IFBB as being interested in furthering one of the aspects of iron—bodybuilding—that he loved. He later would lose interest in bodybuilding as a contest event because of the drugs, which caused bodybuilding to go as out of control as Ed's muscles were under his own control.

Ed was always his own man. Some may recall that Ed was head judge when Arnold defeated Sergio in Essen, Germany for

the 1972 Mr. Olympia. This was a controversial decision but one which Ed stood by all these years, explaining that after the judges saw both men up close the nod went to Arnold. At one event, a promoter pulled Ed aside before the judging began and refreshed Ed's awareness that one specific bodybuilder had been promoted heavily in articles and ads and it sure would be nice if that bodybuilder could win this contest. The hint was ugly and obvious, but Ed assured the promoter that the bodybuilder would win, if he was the best man on stage. The promoter then knew what Ed had known all his life; Ed Jubinville was not for sale.

Some of Ed's published memories were choice: *Iron Man* (January 1961, page 22): "A few years ago I received a letter from

Lilly Christin (known as the Cat Girl) and a star of Mike Todd's "PEEP SHOW," now one of the nation's top pin-up girls. In her letter she stated how she would like to learn the belly rolls. . . . More than once I've been approached by female strippers asking for pointers on muscle control movements."

Ed wrote in *Iron Man* (March 1961) about the paramount control he had witnessed: "The most unique biceps control it has ever been my pleasure to see is the one performed by one of the all time greats, Marvin Eder, who can flex his biceps and have it move back and forth, first toward the forearm and then toward the shoulder."

Ronald Orlick addressed the issue of who has been our greatest muscle control artist when he wrote an article for *Muscle Training Illustrated* (September 1966): "Was Antone Matysek the greatest muscle control artist of all time? . . . Trying to compare the late Matysek with Jubinville is like trying to compare Jack Dempsey with Cassius Clay—no one will ever really know which is the greatest. My grandfather knew Antone Matysek when he was in his prime and raved about him. My father saw Ed Jubinville perform dozens of times and raves about him."



The morning of 6 October 1993 brought news of Michael Jordan's retirement from basketball. At about the time that Michael

was saddening the fans of that sport, Ed Jubinville was visiting the Jubinville Equipment Company. Two of his children, Robert and Karyn, had been running it for him since he retired in 1985. Ed would stop in most mornings from nine until noon, check the mail, perhaps install a cable on a machine, or help out in other ways. On this particular morning, Karyn trimmed her father's hair, and then Ed headed out the door and pronounced the final words Karyn would ever hear from her father's lips, "I'll see you tomorrow."

Ed drove the five miles to USA Superfitness in West Springfield, Massachusetts. He had joined the gym about five years earli-



ED JUBINVILLE PERFORMING THE MUSCLE CONTROL MOVEMENT KNOWN AS THE SCAPULA SEPARATION

PHOTO: THE TODD McLEAN COLLECTION

er and usually trained there three times a week. His goal that day was to squat with 275 pounds, but into the workout, after he had finished a set of lat pulldowns, Ed was sitting on a bench when witnesses say he grabbed his chest and fell over. Immediately three men ran to his aid: one pushed on his chest and the other two alternated breathing into Ed's mouth with the skills they had learned in CPR class. The ambulance arrived twenty minutes later: fluids were injected. Karyn was unaware of all this until the phone rang at two PM. Ed had died at 1:48, and for the first time in fifty-five years, he no longer had immediate, bewildering control over his muscles.



What follows are excerpts from letters Ed wrote to me through the years, excerpts which help reveal the complex life of this multi-talented man.

21 June 1985: "I've been doing muscle control since 1939. I'm still doing it, last year was on *Real People* TV program."

15 July 1985: "I ran in an 8K race yesterday—right in my neighborhood—could walk to the start. Do some weight training daily—just whatever. Favor at moment equals to 2 full workouts per wk, perhaps . . . chins, dips, variety of presses, gutwork, lower back, neck, legwork. Perhaps lunges or squats sometimes one-legged squats. Leg raises on chin-bar. Best gut exer. in my opinion. Now and then walk/run with weights in hands. Bike some too."

26 September 1985: "Weather is so nice and preparation for winter is reason I'm neglecting my book on M. [muscle control]. Come winter I will try to make up for lost time though it's impossible."

3 March 1986: "Not much new with me, last week was in VA for arm-wrestling meet. If this keeps up I should work for an airline—would be cheaper for me to fly."

29 April 1987: "Figured you would be interested in John Davis, first time I saw him was at Springfield College in an exhibition put on by Bob Hoffman. John did some Olympic lifting and after that did a one hand chin 3 reps while holding a 20 pound plate on the other arm. I was there to see this exhibition, others from York barbell were present including John Grimek (my idol). I skipped school that day and walked nine miles and it was worth it."

25 August 1987: "[It was] Weider's idea about writing a book on Muscle Control way back—I'm writing my book my way. As for muscle control, what I've done in the past performances I still do with more variations. I performed in VA contest 2 weeks ago, this week in Vermont, I like to perform often, this way I am real sharp at it."

9 October 1987: Regarding the 209 pound Rolandow dumbbell: "It wasn't clumsy—JCG [John C. Grimek] will tell you this. Just real compact—I picked it up in hopes of cleaning it—at that time I cleaned a dumbbell weighing 186.5 lbs., and a barbell at 210 pounds. Never did go back to NYC to try it."

31 August 1988: (Ed had just sent me some magazines.) "A few old mags to make your day—enjoy. . . My M.C. book is at the printers—should be ready in three weeks. I refused the 1000 copies done by the first printer I tried. Not what I expected. Pictures with legs cut off, arm cut off, a few with part of my head cut off, asked for white paper and it was published with off-white, etc. . . Went to another printer yesterday and awaiting answer today."

1 December 1988: "Trust all is well with you. Next week I will be in Sweden with our arm wrestling team—19 people. 25 nations competing. Sure will be exciting for a few days—we use sit down tables."

7 February 1989: "The enclosed may help you on [the history of EZ curl] bars. Bob Hoffman sent me a letter, I still have it—Bob bought the patent from Andy Jackson—Springfield, N.J. George F. Jowett had a dumbbell that weighed roughly 165 pounds. Told me nobody ever cleaned and bent pressed same. With my big and strong hands I could not clean it—circumference was too big. Paul Baillargeon a wrestler from Canada could not do it—finally brought it up with two hands to shoulder and then bent pressed easily."

17 October 1989: "Whatever you do keep researching and write articles for mags which are sorely needed. I'm so darn sick and tired of the trash in the muscle mags—I like to read articles that make sense and are entertaining."

1 November 1991: "Hard to believe the shape Jack LaLanne is in—77 yrs. no loose skin on body, fantastic endurance and does water training daily in pool—I saw this. Deltoids like a young man. I compete next week in Fla. Masters P.L. 'Olde gray mare ain't what he used to be.'"

27 June 1992: (In 1973 Lou Ferrigno competed in Switzerland and came in first.) "Two days after the contest I asked Lou to go to Italy with me for a few days. . . Went by train to Florence, found a hotel with one room left so we took it. We had a nice time and took a Gray Tour bus, went to churches, museums, etc. . . In restaurants we couldn't find pizzas, nobody talked English so we ate our share of spaghetti and ice cream. Everywhere we went he was marveled at by the citizens—all knew he was of Italian descent. . . [Here are] A few of the pics I took of Lou while in Italy. That is when I measured his arm with no warm up. At that time he told me he weighed 255 lbs. Keep them."



There is a sadness in me as I sit typing this. I know that never again will Ed turn his back to me and say, "I bet you've never seen this," and then flex the muscles on the back of his neck as though someone reached under them and plucked them. And then smile at me because he knows full well I have never seen such a feat.

Regarding Ed and the fact that I will never again be in his company to enjoy his conversation or to share his smile, or to listen to his wonderful tales of strength stars, I feel inside-out empty. ♣