

# inside GRANGER

November 2010

Granger's Monthly News Magazine **46530**



**Practicing  
Medicine,  
Playing  
Rugby**

**New England  
Thanksgiving**

**Handmade  
Works of Heart**

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## Thought for the Month

"Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude."  
~ Denis Waitley

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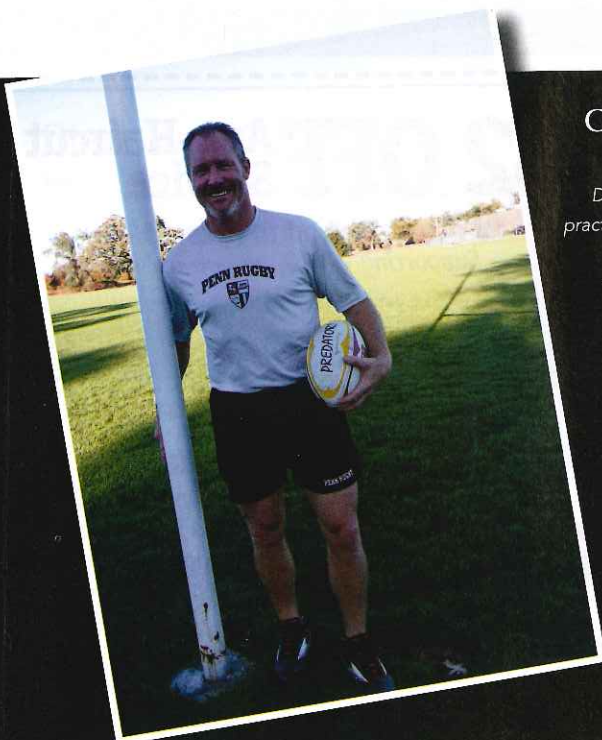
Publisher David C. Ray  
Director Michael Pozzi  
Editorial Coordinator Judith Hizer  
Advertising Sales  
Kelly Youts  
Leisa Heintzelman  
Jennifer Schmidtendorff  
**574.235.6600**  
Flagship Graphic Designers  
Joseph Hektor, Tim Stonecipher  
Ad Services Graphic Designers  
Joel Foreman, Shelly Jackson

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[flagship.feedback@sbtinfo.com](mailto:flagship.feedback@sbtinfo.com)

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### COVER IMAGE:

Photo By: Gene Kaiser

Dr. John Graham at Rugby practice at the Elkhart Moose.

# Practicing Medicine, Playing Rugby

Sports doctor sees both sides of the game

By: Gene Stowe Photos By: Gene Kaiser

Instead of just standing out in the rugby field, where he is team doctor for Penn High School players, Dr. John Graham rucks and scrums with the adult Michiana Moose Rugby Club as wing forward, sort of like a football linebacker.

Graham, a running back on Penn's 1983 state championship football team, figures rugby is a natural transition — and professionally, he's seen that it's safer because players without pads and helmets tend not to take excess risks.

"There are several similarities and several differences," he says. "It's full-contact, but there's no pads, no blocking, and no forward passes. Essentially, the ball is moved forward by backward lateral passes or you can kick for field possession. Anybody can carry the ball.

"I see a lot more injuries in football than rugby. They aren't protected, so they don't go running into each other like they have helmets and shoulder pads, like they're invincible."

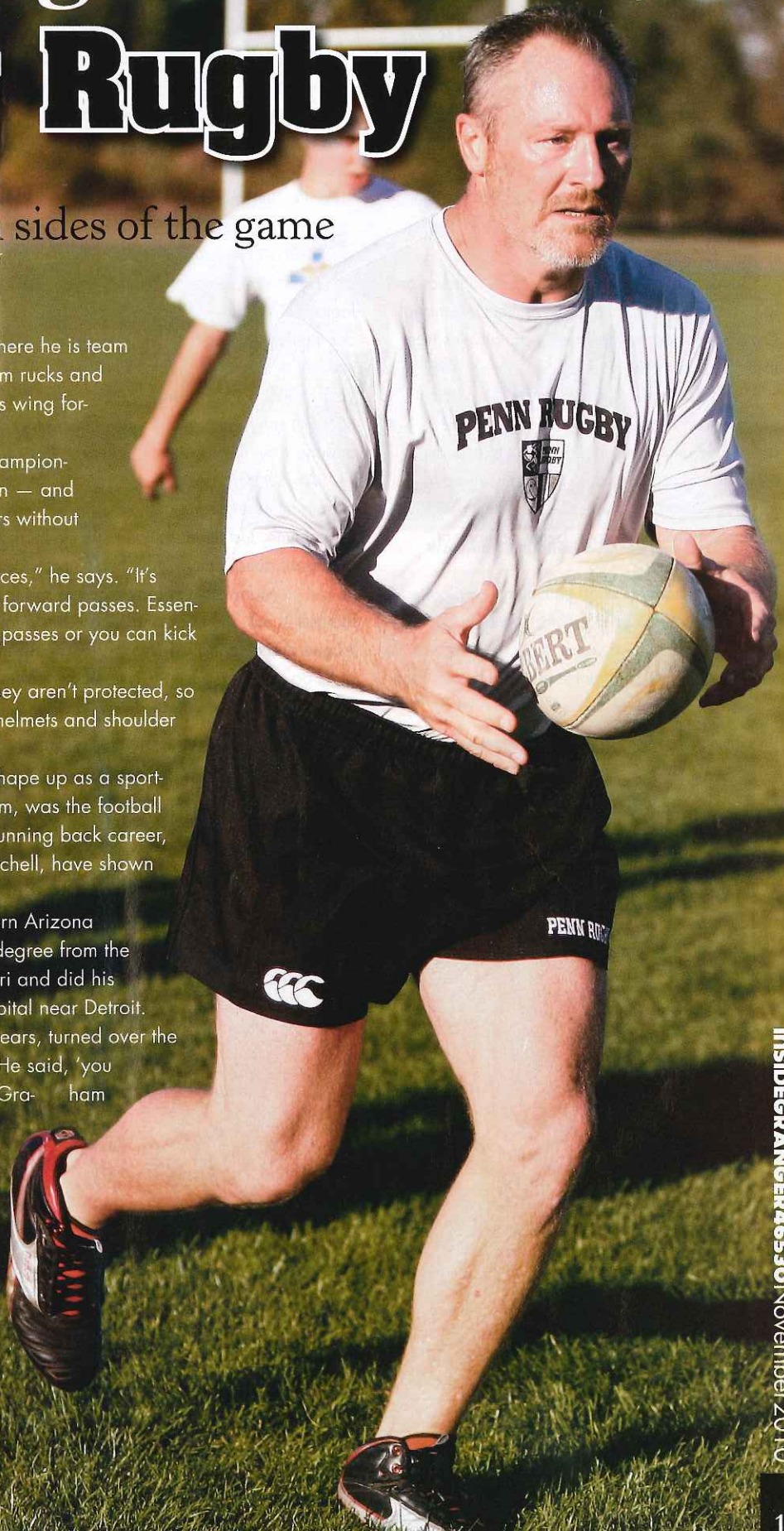
Graham is the second generation of what could shape up as a sport-doctor dynasty at Penn. His father Dr. John K. Graham, was the football team doctor for 35 years, including Graham's own running back career, and his athletic sons, junior Tyler and sophomore Mitchell, have shown interest in medicine.

He graduated in 1985, studied biology at Northern Arizona University and Ferris State University, got a medical degree from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Missouri and did his internship and residency at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital near Detroit.

His dad, a family practitioner in Osceola for 39 years, turned over the football team duties when he came home in 1998: "He said, 'you go stand out on the field in the snow and the rain,'" Graham recalls.

Rugby coach Bart Bottorff, a Penn graduate whose wife Lisa a classmate of Graham, called for help with the rugby team in 2001.

"I didn't know anything about it until Bart called me," Graham says. "I went out and watched a couple of games," where teams ruck to recover loose balls and scrum to restart play — both involving massive convergence of the bodies on the field.



Dr. John Graham at Rugby practice at the Elkhart Moose.

Bottorff, director of the U.S.A. Under-17 rugby team, also recruited him to be that team's doctor from 2007-2009, including tours in England with a team that included several Penn players.

Athletics accounts for about one-fourth of his medical practice, Graham says.

"I do general orthopedic, so I do sports injuries, fractures and traumas through the emergency room, I do joint replacements, essentially the full gamut," he says.

Because of working with the Penn athletics and in the area, I get a lot of Jimtown kids, Memorial, Central, Marian, Mishawaka. I get athletes from most of the schools around."

The medical field has advanced significantly.

"I think the main way it's changed is we're able to do more surgeries with less exposures, more arthroscopic repairs, minimally invasive joint replacements, smaller incisions with better implants, better hardware, better equipment," Graham says.

"We're required to do continuing medical education courses, to get a specific amount of education hours every three years. Most of the orthopedic equipment companies offer courses to help

improve techniques or learn new techniques."

Rugby players need his services less than football. Although Penn's three teams played a total of 45 games — with 30 players on the field and one referee — only two players were injured severely enough to keep them out for more than two weeks. One broke his clavicle, and another broke his ankle during indoor practice.

That compares to five or six football players sidelined every week, Graham says.

"I see more shoulder injuries, head injuries in football," he says. "With rugby, I see more shoulder injuries from contact with the ground, facial injuries — lacerations, banged-up nose — and your typical ankle sprains. I don't see the knee injuries I see in football because of the blocking and the way they tackle.

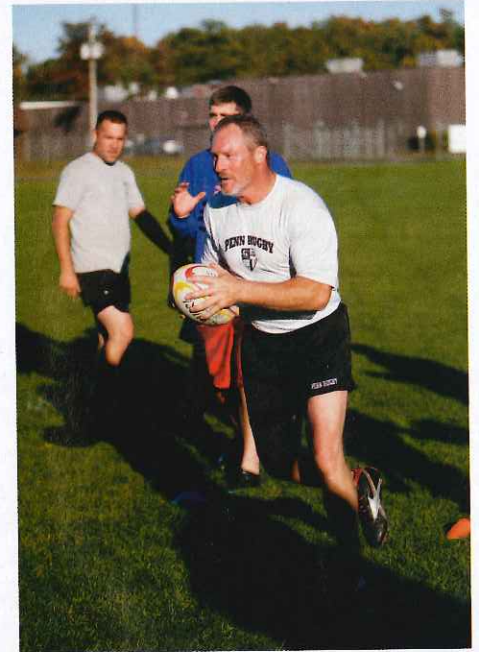
"We get bangs and bruises, but not typically the big injuries that keep you out for a long period of time. Just because you have the football helmet on doesn't mean your head's protected."

Many athletes play rugby in spring, football in fall. The Michiana Moose has a fall league and a spring league.

"I do a lot of the hitting, a lot of the tackling,

less of the ball carrying," Graham says, recalling when Botorff and others coaxed him onto the team.

"I was hanging around the rugby guys. They said, 'why don't you come join us?'" he recalls. "They said, 'you're going to be here all the time, you might as well play.'" **TC**



# Heritage Square Holiday Illumination

Saturday, November 20  
Tree Lighting at 6 p.m.

Complimentary Horse  
and Carriage Rides  
Free Visits with Santa

## Black Friday

\*Spend \$100 at two  
or more stores and  
receive a \$20 Gift Card


Shop Between 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.



\*Martin's Super Market receipts do not count toward the receipt totals and cannot be applied to this promotion. Receipts must be from two or more Heritage Square merchants and dated November 26

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