



Five-foot-six inches tall, 123 lbs., 64 years young – and would you believe a Champion Powerlifter? So you cheated and saw these most fetching photos and said, “What the hell is Hope *doing?*” That was probably immediately after you thought, “Nice outfit!”

There I was a couple of months ago at my twice weekly workout with fitness trainer David Bickel. David owns Complete Balance Fitness. We work out. We chat.

“What’s Lisa up to?” I asked.

“She’s training to compete in a Powerlifting meet.”

“Lisa is doing *what?*” His wife, an attorney and mother of quadruplets is a little bit of a thing. Merely 4’10”.

There’s a married couple, also clients of David, in their 50’s competing, he tells me. This is a first for all of them.

The entire world has gone mad.

“What’s involved in Powerlifting?” I was making conversation.

Dave explains.

“You could do it, too.”

You have *got* to be kidding! I have never competed athletically in *anything*. I was the kid who was always chosen *last* for the baseball team, the dodge ball team, the volleyball team. Any team. Every team. The team that was unfortunate enough to get me always did so grudgingly – complete with sighs, “O.K. *we’ll* take her.” Talk about affecting a child’s self-esteem!

I was not interested in *me* doing it. *Just making conversation!*

Then Dave said those four little words that made my heart flutter: Competition is judged by “weight and age class.”

How many 64-year-old women do *you* know who Powerlift? I thought so. Sign me up!

“What do you wear when Powerlifting?”

“A singlet.”

“What’s a singlet?”

Sort of looks like a bathing suit from the ‘30s (see photo!). Women wear tee shirts under them so no inappropriate or provocative skin shows. Provocative in this outfit?

*is important!*

On a Saturday morning six weeks later, there we were. The “newbies” in our eye-catching singlets. Four attractively attired Powerlifting virgins accompanied by Coach David at the NASA (Natural Athlete Strength Association) Regional Meet and 2008 Submasters/Masters National Championship Powerlifting Competition.

Some mouthful.

*I am ready!*

We entered individually in several categories and as a team. “Team CBF!” (Complete Balance Fitness.)

Talk about being out of one’s comfort zone. Hope the Athlete.



Team CBF NASA Champions are Lisa Bickel, Hope Ozer, David Bickel and Rae and Frank Rader.

Not a chance.

“You have *got* to be kidding!” (My now customary refrain.) Me? The fashionista. Wearing *this* get up?

“That’s *not* important,” per David. Well, it *is* to *me!*

Impulsive. Spontaneous. Impetuous. I am the dictionary definition of an Aires.

It was time to mix it up a little. Try something new and challenging. What’s life about anyway if you can’t stretch? It was time. I was in training. And needed to find lipstick to match the singlet. Hey, this stuff

I was impressed by the warm welcome we received from the organizers and the contenders. One of the most striking and unexpected aspects of this experience was the orientation talk by organizer Marty Einstein. Paraphrasing, Marty advised the group, “We have several women competing today at NASA. We want them to feel comfortable and want them to continue to participate. To that end, we will not tolerate any inappropriate language or behavior. Anyone found to behave in any way inappropriately

will be instructed to get your gear and leave.” WOW! Impressive.

I was further challenged: Had to watch *my* “she can swear like a sailor” mouth!

There were participants from across the country. Every age, weight and body type. A 71-year-old man competed. See! I wasn’t the *oldest* person there. Two of the women I spoke with have been competing for several years and are also breast cancer survivors. Yet one more thing we have in common.

What a high. What a feeling of accomplishment. Me. An athlete only five months away from Medicare!

David had prepared us well. I was so focused on staying tuned in to what I was to be doing that I never heard the announcer declare, “Another State Record for Hope.”

You heard right!

When the meet was over, collectively we walked away with six individual First Place Awards in the National competition, 10 individual First Places in the Regionals and 21 State Records! Two of those State Records were MINE! (Not a whole lot of seniors competing!) I had one First Place in the Nationals and two in the Regionals And... tada...as a team we received First Place for both a Regional *and* National Titles!

I am hooked! I AM AN ATHLETE! Who ever would have thunk?

Gonna buy a trophy case!

As we approach the New Year, my friends, try something different. Be renewed and energized. Take a risk. Reach beyond your comfort zone. Have fun.

I will.

Wishing you and yours a blessed and happy holiday season.

Warmest Regards,

Hope H. Ozer  
Publisher