

INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

SUE ELYWN

as interviewed for PL USA by Pat Cuntrera

PC: Can you give the readers some background information on yourself?

SE: My name is Sue Elwyn. I'm 49 years old and I live in Marlborough, MA. I work for the Post Office. I have a BA degree from the University of Massachusetts. I have been lifting since I was 15.

PC: How did you get started in Powerlifting?

SE: I started training the powerlifts in 1975. I worked out to build strength for Judo. A powerlifter suggested I try the powerlifts and that I would do well at them. I used the routine he gave me since it was good for Judo. A year later, I separated my shoulder performing Judo. I felt I was likely to re-injure my shoulder at Judo, and when it healed, I decided to try a powerlifting meet.

PC: Could you name some of the contests you have competed in and titles you have won?

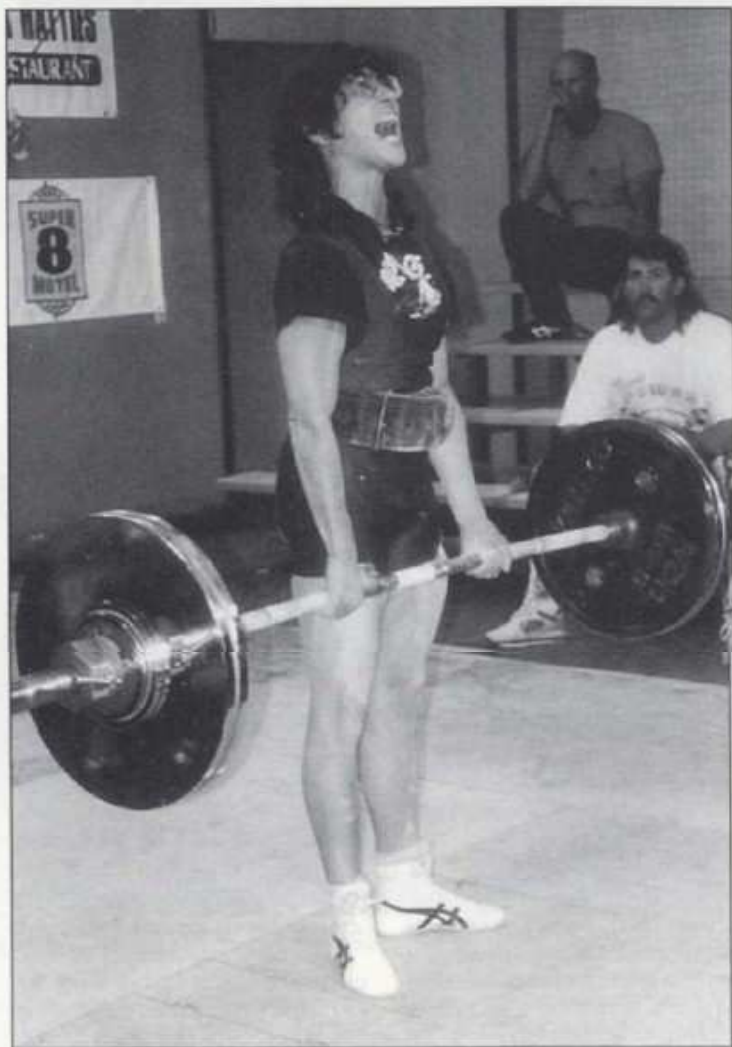
SE: I've competed in about 10 USPF Nationals, 2 IPF Worlds, several ADFPA Masters Nationals, one Masters Worlds, the AAU Masters/Women's Raw, the 1995 AAU Masters, and the Lifetime Drug-Free Nationals in 1996. I've also competed in many local meets.

PE: What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in this sport?

SE: I am most pleased with my win at the 1980 Women's Nationals. It was just before the really heavy drug use started, so it was a fair competition. There were some good lifters so I had to use strategy and make certain lifts to win. In the gym, I was most pleased with a strict 185 lb. bench press at 114 lb. without a bench shirt. When I started powerlifting this had been one of my biggest goals.

PC: Why did you choose to compete in the AAUPC?

SE: I've competed in the AAUPC, ADFPA, and still belong to the USPF even though the heavy drug use has made me avoid competing with them for many years. I



Sue Elwyn deadlifting at the 1995 National Masters Championships

joined the AAUPC because my friend Larry Larsen asked me to. He is very active in New England lifting. I try to help out at the local meets. I don't care which association I help out in as long as it puts on a good meet for the lifters. I feel the AAUPC would give the powerlifting group a lot of credibility since it does most of the amateur sports in the U.S. Also, I know the people running the AAUPC and know they have strict standards for judging. Also, the drug testing is for real. We've caught several people at our local meets.

PC: Could you tell the readers a

little about your training methods?

SE: I bench on one day and squat on another. If I deadlift, it's sometimes after bench presses or squats, or on a third day. My training is flexible, depending on how my body feels. Off season, in both bench presses and squats, I'll do a few warm-up sets, then three or four sets of ten with moderate weight. I might do two or three assistance exercises, performing two or three sets of 10 to 15 reps on each. If I deadlift, I'll do three to five sets 10 off of a 6" block. This gives me a better workout with less weight than regular deadlifts. It saves my bad back. I

like to pause between reps on the deadlift. This stops me from bouncing to get the reps off the floor. When a meet is near I will add weight each week. I will continue with the sets of ten reps. As the weights increase, the reps naturally decrease. Just before the contest, I will do sets of two to three reps. I always try to squat deep. After my heavy sets, I'll drop the weight and rep out. Then I'll do a set of deep pauses. I train light in the deadlift because of my back. Block deadlifts give me good speed off of the floor. This helps me through any sticking points.

PC: Is there any advice you would like to give the beginning lifter?

SE: Learn proper form and use it. Train without gear, other than a small belt. Don't be concerned with how much weight you are using; don't miss workouts and the weights will increase. Don't overtrain and don't train to failure. Always feel you can do one more rep and you will, next time. Don't waste time on bodybuilding exercises. Just a few sets of two or three assistance exercises for each lift will work your weak points. Remember, everyone is different. What works for others might not work for you. If a routine works, stay with it. When it doesn't, change it. What you change it to doesn't matter. What is important is that you make the change so your body doesn't stagnate. Finally, before a contest, test out the gear. Learn the contest rules and signals. Practice them in the gym for all three lifts. Use contest form and have someone acting as head referee giving you the signals. Not knowing the signals is why most lifters miss lifts in their first contest.

PC: If you could change one thing about powerlifting, what would it be?

SE: It would be nice to have one organization with strict standards for the lifts and to get rid of the supportive gear except for belts. That way, if you won a meet, you'd know you really were the best that day; not the person with the best gear or the most drugs in your body. This will never happen. There are too many egos and different ideas about lifting.

(article continued on page 76)

PRICE BREAKERS

Tanning Beds
Cardio Equipmt.

1-800-897-5059

Still, that's what makes our country the best. We all have a right to our opinion and to find an organization we agree with.

PC: What are some of your interests outside of the sport?

SE: I play several other sports including soccer, softball, basketball, volleyball and golf. I have several motorcycles and enjoy riding them. I like hiking with or without my dog. I like music; preferably folk, jazz, and a few other kinds. When I have the time, I like to read, watch television, and go to the movies. I like to travel and powerlifting is a great excuse for me to travel more often.

PC: Powerlifting, as a sport, seems to hold more interest with men than women. Why do you think this is so? Do you see this as a problem and how would you like to go about generating more interest among women?

SE: Women have been taught from birth that their goal in life is to land a man. They are taught that if they are stronger than the guys and beat them at anything, they won't achieve that. Strength sports are the most absolute measure of masculinity, so most women are afraid to get involved. Our culture discourages women from being strong and having muscles. Now that colleges offer athletic scholarships for women, things are changing. Money talks.

It is now more acceptable for girls to excel in sports. The best way to get women involved is to introduce powerlifting in the schools to young teens. Having powerlifting competitions on television will help but only if the women look like women. If the competitors have five o'clock shadows, or other masculine traits, viewers might think it's from the lifting, not knowing about anabolic steroids.

PC: What is your ultimate goal in this sport?

SE: My ultimate goal is to out bench John Redding in a contest. He used to be my competition. On a bad day, he would only make his 185 lb. opener. That's why a 185 lb. bench was an important accomplishment for me. I've won most titles so that is the only thing left.

PC: Would you like to make any final comments?

SE: Twenty years ago, when Powerlifting USA was new, Mike Lambert interviewed me. At the time, circulation was small, so not many people read the article. I'm honored to be re-interviewed now when the magazine has a larger circulation.