

Just call her Mrs. Muscle

Belleville woman combines power and femininity

By Paul Svoboda

The Intelligencer

When it comes to female bodybuilding, Sherri Vanhaelewyn says girls should train to be girls, not men.

In other words, once the sport

loses its femininity, she's not interested.

"I want to be muscular," she says, "but I want to stay feminine."

Judges at the recently held South Central Ontario bodybuilding championships in Hamilton had no problem deciding that Vanhaelewyn was muscular enough—and feminine enough—to earn second place in the Open Women's category. It was Vanhaelewyn's second competition in almost four years of training and

her strong finish qualified her for the Canadian championships in October.

Vanhaelewyn, who operates X-Treme Health and Fitness Club in Belleville with her husband Geno, thrives on the challenge and competition of bodybuilding.

"I like to compete, I'm really competitive," she says. "I enjoy the challenge the most. The strict diet, working out and eating on time, the science behind the food. And the discipline."

For the Hamilton event, Van-

haelewyn followed the time-honored bodybuilding formula of bulking up with heavy duty weight training and lots of healthy food. Then, consuming less calories and performing work more aerobically (higher heart rate), she shed more than 30 pounds to arrive at her competition weight.

"I got up to 176 pounds," says Vanhaelewyn, who stands 5-foot-8. "For the competition, I weighed in at 141. I put on 10 pounds of muscle."

Vanhaelewyn, who trained morning and night for the competition, calls her diet "pretty clean.

"Chicken, potatoes," she says, "Just more of it (when bulking up)."

During the trimming phase of her routine, she went on a strict cut-down diet.

"No salt, no flavor," she quips.

Although she could compete this fall at the Canadian pose-offs, Vanhaelewyn indicates she'll pass. At least for a year.

Right now she wants to concentrate on developing other areas of her business.

"I'm looking into nutrition and diets for people and more one-on-one fitness," she says. "Not a lot of people are really interested in competing yet. But I think it will catch on with the girls."

As for advice for novice bodybuilders—men or women—Vanhaelewyn recommends a qualified trainer.

"Grab hold of one and listen," she says. "Everyone is different and everyone has the answers. You've got to pick one and stick to them."

"There's no one answer for everyone, you've got to find out what's best for you."



Intelligencer photo by Paul Svoboda

Sherri Vanhaelewyn flexes a bicep, and flashes a winning smile, after competition in Hamilton. The Belleville gym operator finished second in the recent South Central Ontario bodybuilding finals.

VANHAELEWYN, Sherri

Intell. p. 8 June 11/97