

**STAN**



**POWER:** You are the most explosive squatter I have ever seen. However, "Bombs" never exploded so big as when you bombed out at "The Backyard Meet of the Century" last November. Tell us what happened mentally and physically in your first attempt to break the world record.

**STAN EFFERDING:** I wish I had some great excuse, but it was really a few stupid mistakes that ruined the whole day. I've always prided myself on being very disciplined in and out of the gym. I track every meal, supplement, glass of water, hour of sleep and every workout. I time my rest periods, get regular rehab and therapy, and on and on. I track everything on a spreadsheet and I carefully analyze and optimize it on a regular basis as the meet approaches.

The prep for the November meet was my best ever. I was flying up to train with Super Training in Sacramento every other week. My gym lifts were at all-time highs, having hit a 905 training squat and an 815 deadlift on three different occasions leading up to the meet.

I even bought my own Monolift, Olympic plates, and squat and deadlift bars so I could train with the same equipment here in Vegas that I would be using at the meet. I was 100-percent healthy—and injury-free, but what happened was nothing short of embarrassing.

I pulled a brand new pair of squat shoes out of their box I'd never worn before and, against your advice, I started warming up with them. I've always struggled with my balance on squats due to my hip impingement. The Asics wrestling shoes have a sole smaller than my foot, so there's lots of rollover from side to side. The new squat shoes had a larger, flat sole to help with my stability. But they weren't broken in and they hurt my feet terribly.

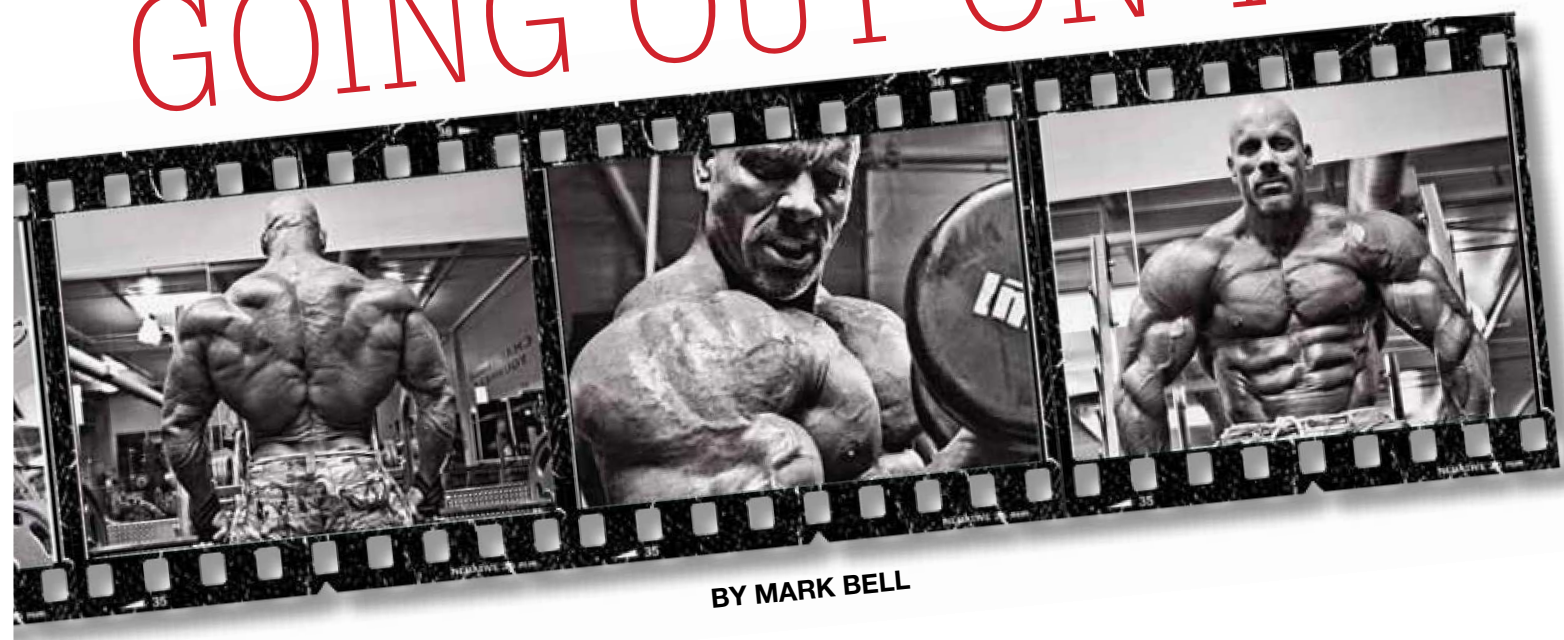
Then I got behind on my warm-ups and, just as I hit a 700 warm-up back stage, I hear over the microphone, "Stan, you're four out." I take at least 10 minutes between sets, so I already knew I'd have to scratch the first lift. I didn't have time to hit an 800 in warm up so I went

from a 700 back stage straight to a 905 on the platform. I got off balance coming down with the 905, so I stood up well before I reached parallel and decided to try it again on the third attempt. By then, I think I had lost my mental edge. Even though I was able to find the hole and come out, I just didn't fight hard enough on my final lift to finish it. Just stupid mistakes.

**POWER:** Clearly the mistakes you made and the resulting failure only added fuel to your fire. Take us through some details that helped you claim the all-time raw world record total.

**EFFERDING:** I think you hit the nail on the head. I found motivation in my failure. I admit that I didn't have the same drive going into November that I had in previous years. I was fortunate to have accomplished more than I had expected, particularly considering my age. Training with Flex Wheeler, I was able to earn my IFBB pro card on my first try. Training with Super Training, I was able

# EFFERDING GOING OUT ON TOP



BY MARK BELL





Stan with his Rolls Royce Phantom

to set huge PRs and break world records well past my prime. I won the World's Strongest Bodybuilder title on stage at the Mr. Olympia and was signed by Weider to a Flex Magazine contract - all after the age of 40.

Even more importantly, my daughter was born in early 2012 and I really hadn't planned on ever competing again. I didn't feel like I had anything left to prove to myself or anyone in the industry, so I retired from competition after the Flex Pro in February 2012 and was planning to relax by my pool all summer with a box of Bon Bons.

Unfortunately - or fortunately, depending on how you look at it - I met Creed at the gym where I was doing my metrosexual P-90x style, man-kini training. Creed slowly and ever so deliberately began talking in my ear about John Cole's record, how close I potentially "was" to a 2,300 raw total, etc. It wasn't long before I started believing it was possible.

But they were still just numbers, and I lacked a strong personal motivational force. I was also much lighter and weaker than I had been in years after dieting down to almost 250 for the Flex Pro and staying there afterward,

settling into my new semi-retired role as Mr. Mom. Although we trained harder than ever for the November meet, for the first time in my life I really depended on someone else to keep the fire hot. Creed brought out the best in me and kept the goal alive every workout for many months while I slowly brought my weight and strength back up to the point where I could see that 2,300 was within my reach.

I missed achieving that goal in November, which was particularly disheartening because I had hit all the numbers in practice and I watched all that hard work go down the drain over a few rookie mistakes. I had promised my girlfriend going into the meet that this would be my last shot and I would retire. For me to compete at this level is incredibly time consuming and self-absorbed. It's constantly painful and exhausting and it requires all of my time and energy, which isn't fair to my family. So I promised I was done.

Needless to say, I was extremely disappointed after the meet. My girlfriend, being a true veteran of my competitive past, allowed the requisite "48 hour rule" to transpire, during which time she remained quiet as I reflected on

the agony of my defeat and repeatedly assured her of my commitment to hang it up. It was eerily quiet in my house for those 48 hours and then, just as the clock ran out on my two days of self pity, my girlfriend said, "You can't go out like this." Nothing more needed to be said. I thanked her and immediately texted Creed that we'd be de-loading for the month of December and starting Jan. 1 back on the road to 2,300 for March Madness at Supertraining Gym. I had found fire in my failure.

**POWER:** What type of training does a 46-year-old do to make such great gains after already being at an elite level?

**EFFERDING:** I've actually had to continue to do less as I've gotten older, and focus more on recovery (sleep, nutrition, water, rehab). I had an MRI on my hip over a year ago after getting to a point where the pain was keeping me up at night, and that's where I discovered I had a hip impingement that was causing my femur to grind against my hip socket. I was tearing labrum every time I squatted. The doctor said I needed a hip replacement and I was no longer able to squat heavy without debilitating pain, so I decided to just bodybuild using partial range of motion leg presses and the leg-extension machine. When Creed and I decided to try for 2,300, I knew I needed help.

I reached out to Eddie Coan, who has actually had hip replacement surgery after suffering from years of progressive hip pain. He turned me onto a friend and former training partner, former pro Strongman and head strength coach for UNLV - Mark Phillipi.

I have a degree in exercise science and I've been training professional athletes for more 20 years, so I like to think I know a few things about training and rehab. But I was extremely impressed with Phillipi's training institute and his vast knowledge of strength training and rehab. He implemented a program of stretching, balance, core work and strengthening weak supporting muscle groups. Initially we trained twice a week, and within 60 days my pain had subsided and I was able to squat to depth again - though we did have to adjust my stance so it was even more pronated than in previous meets. There's a video on YouTube of our routine, which doesn't



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Stan benching his way to a world record total!

look like much physically, but it was very demanding for my body and extremely helpful. Even after the pain subsided, I continued with Phillippi on a weekly basis for the entire year, through both meets in November and March. I only squatted every other week and then I only deadlifted on the alternate weeks that I didn't squat. Hard to believe I squatted a 905 only squatting twice a month, but that's how I did it. I benched once a week and even then, only heavy every other week. That was it. Squats or deads on Saturdays and bench press on Mondays. Wednesday was rehab with Phillippi and the rest of the time was CNS recovery (sleep, drink, eat).

**POWER:** You have a way of simplifying what can sometimes seem so complex. What do you like for assistance work?

**EFFERDING:** I do very little assistance work during the 10-week prep for a meet. I've come to believe that you get a big squat by squatting, a big bench by benching and a big dead by deadlifting. I stopped box squatting a couple years ago because I can't release and re-engage my hips any more due to the

impingement. I also felt I was just using the touch-and-go box squats as a crutch so I didn't have to man up and do 800-plus pound squats with nothing between me and the floor but air.

I like the way Eddie Coan viewed assistance work as another powerlift and didn't just go through the motions with some bogus set and rep scheme. He strived to lift big and set PRs like when he was behind-the-neck-pressing 405 lbs. With that theory in mind, I would only do one or two "assistance" exercises at most after my basic movement and usually after a brief warm-up. I'd do just one balls-to-the-wall set to failure and be done. A warm-up isn't four sets of 10 reps with ascending weight, either. That's an enormous waste of time and yields no strength gain, while putting plenty of repetitive strain on the joints.

To be specific, my assistance exercise of choice for back on weeks that I don't deadlift is T-bar rows after I squat. I'll do one rep with three plates, one with five, one with seven, then do one set to failure of as many reps as I can with 10 plates and I'm done. That's my assistance work for squat day.

On deadlift day, I'll hit some front squats afterward, just be three reps each plate until I hit 405 for three or 495 for three, depending on how I feel, then one set of chins to failure after I'm done. And even then, that's only if I feel like it. If I hit an 815 dead, I might just call it a day and go eat. I warm up for deads using a band. I drape it over the bar and stand on it as you've demonstrated in your videos. That helps me stay tight throughout the lift while I'm warming up to 315 or so, then I go straight weight doing singles until my max single or double, depending on the day. It's instinctual at that point.

For bench I'll go heavy one week, then the alternate week I'll try heavy inclines followed by triple board presses, then push the leg press sled with my hands for some shoulder work. That's really it. T-Bars, chins, incline presses and some band work. I only want to do exercises that yield an additional benefit from my basic movements. If I'm benching 550 for a triple, what good does it do to follow that with a few sets of triceps push-downs on the cable machine? There are a million examples of wasted



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effort going on in gyms all across America, where lifters do work just to do work but it does nothing for their size or strength. All of my assistance work is done with the same intensity and pyramid scheme as power lifts. If I'm not pushing myself to improve on those lifts like I do on the basics, then it doesn't make any sense to do them at all.

**POWER:** What do you feel was a key factor in that historic 837-lb. deadlift that locked in the 2,303 total? That was around a 40-lb. full meet PR. What did you do to pull this off?

**EFFERDING:** My deadlift had been steadily improving since I started widening my stance, pushing my knees out into my elbows and standing over the bar in more of a leg press position. I had tried for two years to sit down behind the bar and pull, and it just didn't work for me. There's a YouTube video where I absolutely smashed a 765 pull in 2009 when I got a 2,070 total, and my chest was almost parallel to the floor when I initiated the pull. I attempted an 830 that day and it came off the floor, so I knew historically that I had it in me to pull in the 800s. It's just a strong position for me to "leg press" the weight off

the floor. Push, then pull.

I think tearing my hamstring on my last attempt when I totaled 2,226 was a blessing in disguise because it forced me to widen my stance and press the weight, which reduced stress on my hamstrings. It was a long time coming, but it wasn't a Hail Mary; I had hit 815 in training before the meet real solid on three different occasions and pulled an 835 to lockout when my grip slipped. I had the utmost confidence I would get that lift. That makes a big difference.

**POWER:** How do you manipulate your weight so much? You mentioned weighing 250, then you sky rocketed back up to 290-300. Now you're out of the fat boy clubhouse and your Swole Patrol membership card was re-issued now that you're a jacked and tan 265 lbs. What in the heck is going on? Are there big changes made to your diet and training in these different phases?

**EFFERDING:** I'm a hard gainer, so to gain weight I have to drastically increase my calories, particularly fats, and reduce my workload. I don't run if I can walk, don't stand if I can sit and I don't stay awake if I can sleep. I eat before and after I train, and I train as little as I can to

get the results I need so I'm building size and strength not tearing myself down.

Dieting and getting shredded is easy for me. 1. Eliminate carbs. 2. Sprint stairs every other day.

Protein remains high and I eat plenty of good fats. I train using the same powerlifts and supporting exercises, but I can't lift as heavy at a reduced body weight. I only do sprints (HIIT training) because it doesn't catabolize muscle tissue and it increases the metabolism for prolonged fat burning effects. Endurance cardio, like 60 minutes on a treadmill, will burn as much muscle as fat, doesn't stimulate the metabolism at the mitochondrial level and stops working very rapidly. That's it!

**POWER:** You mentioned how diligent you are with your food. Can you give us some general principals that you use for yourself and try to teach others?

**EFFERDING:** I eat five to seven meals daily, depending on whether I'm gaining or losing. I eat high quality animal proteins like steak; chicken; eggs; 2 or 3.25 percent Greek yogurt, which helps keep my fats high, along with coconut oil; and I use carbs like potatoes, rice and carbolyn (a supplement). I don't believe you can reach your potential on vegetable proteins like soy or peanut butter or even from drinking a bunch of shakes or eating protein bars. I eat real food and lots of it to build quality muscle. Even when I'm gaining weight I don't jam down pancakes (white flour), pizza, mayo, etc. Not all foods and calories are created equal. I don't overload my system with difficult foods to digest that compete with my ability to eat more quality muscle building foods. It's not complicated, it just takes an enormous amount of consistency and effort to eat enough food. It's a lot harder than training.

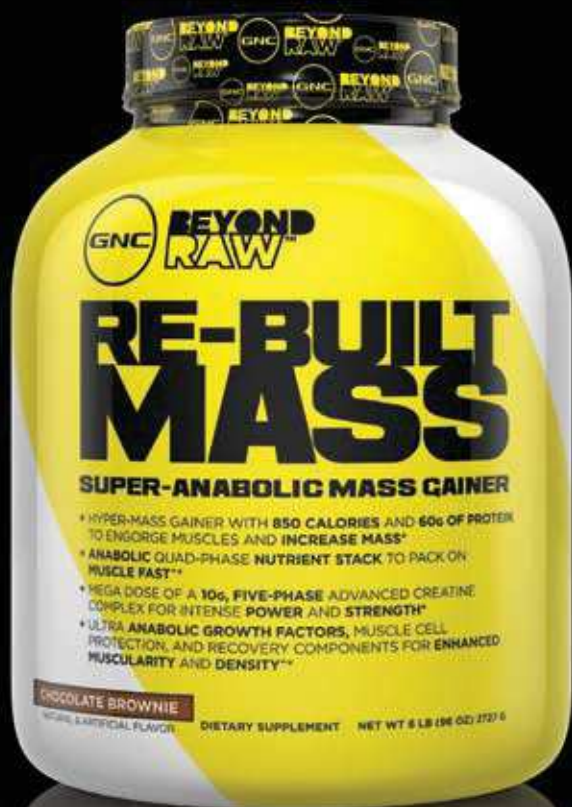
Training is the easy part, the fun part. All you do when you train is break down muscle tissue. Muscle growth happens during the recovery phase, eating and sleeping. I focus the vast majority of my efforts where I get the actual results: eating and sleeping. That simply means I'm never up late and never miss a meal.

**POWER:** Recovery is crucial and you want to get stimulation without annihilation. It seems easy for you to say, "rest and grow," now that you have a base that has been built on



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Stan and Malia with baby Milani



Malia and Milani

**30-plus years of athletics and training your nuts off. What does the guy who weighs 180 to 200 lbs. and is kind of “skinny-fat” do?**

**EFFERDING:** I know from experience that results come from the same basic principles of creating a stimulus for growth and then eating and sleeping to grow. I started lifting seriously when I got to college in 1985 and I was 145 lbs. soaking wet. I couldn't bench press 135. I had to take the 45s off and put 35s on just to bench. That was embarrassing.

After three years of training nearly seven days a week, two hours a day — with endless sets and reps of every exercise in Arnold Schwarzenegger's Encyclopedia of Bodybuilding — I competed in my first bodybuilding show in 1988 weighing just 156 lbs. Why was I so light? Because you don't grow in the gym, all you do is break down muscle tissue. I over-trained and under-ate.

The promoter of that show, Mark Delp, invited me to train at his hardcore gym after the show, and that's where I learned the error of my ways. I cut training back to three days a week of basic multi-joint mass building movements like squats, deadlifts, rows, bench, dips and chins, and I started eating and eating and eating.

I drank a gallon of whole milk a day (2,400 calories), and made huge shakes with ice cream, peanut butter, a banana and weight gain powder (crap). I would chug these giant blender-sized drinks so fast, sometimes they would come right back up. When that would happen, I'd

make another one and drink it again. I had a large pizza with extra cheese every night before bed and basically ate as much as I could every day, all day. It took me some time to learn the value of quality foods, but I was young and I was growing for the first time in years. I gained less than 15 lbs. in my first three years of over-training and under-eating, but the next three years of heavy basics and lots of food and sleep yielded almost 50 lbs. of muscle. I stood on stage in 1991 at 203 pounds and won the Mr. Oregon title.

It sounds like a lot, but it was really only 1 lb. a month, and every day of every month was 100% focused on eating, sleeping and training. I finished college and worked full time, but I never missed a work out, a meal, or a full night's sleep. Beginners should learn the meaning of intensity and maximum effort so they don't waste time doing lots of sets and reps that don't create a stimulus for growth.

**POWER: Why did you switch to a wide stance conventional deadlift?**

Efferding: I didn't have a choice. After I pulled my hamstring on my last deadlift attempt of the 2,226 total, I couldn't just muscle up deads any more without feeling it pull on my hammy when I got close to 800. My squat was stronger than ever and I felt really explosive and powerful out of the hole with the wide stance, so it just made sense that I should try to squat (push) that weight off the floor and use the momentum to power through my sticking

point at the knee. I only deadlift twice a month, so it wasn't a fast transition, but it came together right before the meet and I had a lot of confidence in the stance.

**POWER: Walk us through that epic day and legendary 2,303 total. It wasn't all fun and games back stage for you and at one point you almost dropped out of the competition. What happened?**

**EFFERDING:** Once again, I was prepared. I was strong and healthy, hit all my lifts in training and felt confident that this would be the day. Usually after a powerlifting meet, I drop 30 lbs. and step onto a bodybuilding stage. When I bombed in November 2012, I stayed heavy and focused on powerlifting for the March meet. By the time I lifted in the Animal Cage I had my morning weight up to 287 and evening weight up to 295 after eating and drinking all day. I looked like a fat-ass in the cage, but the water retention, bloating and distention was all intentional for maximum strength. There's a video of me weighing in at a meet and I have a six pack, but the next day it looks like a beer belly stuffed full of food and water, and my belt strapped underneath it with a huge inhale for internal pressure. It serves a purpose. I was ready. The heavier body weight forced me to drop more water than usual for weigh ins.

Twelve lbs. is nothing for most experienced powerlifters, but it was a lot for me and that's where my problem started. After I made weight, I wasn't

able to put it all back on during my re-feed. I wasn't able to hold water, even though I was drinking Gatorade and lots of water and food Saturday and back stage at the meet. And no, I didn't take any diuretics to drop weight. At first it didn't seem like a big deal, but I kept sweating during warm-ups and I just didn't feel as powerful as usual. My 800-lb. warm-up squat wasn't as fast as usual, and my body was tightening up. Fortunately, I hit my 865 opening squat with good speed, but I knew I wasn't 100 percent. After missing the 887 second lift, my body started locking up; I had to skip the third lift.

Jesse Burdick was working cramps out of my lower back while I was warming up for the bench. I was drinking a full bottle of water between every warm up set but peeing it all out just as quickly. The water was just dehydrating me more because I didn't have enough minerals and electrolytes in me to hold the water. After a few sets, my hands started cramping so badly I literally had to pry my fingers away from my palms and lay them flat so they wouldn't lock up into a fist again. Two more sets, two more bottles of water and two more trips to the bathroom later, my legs went. Hamstrings and quads, at the same time, locked up hard. I couldn't straighten or bend my legs without pain. I hobbled to the car outside and told my girlfriend to get the keys and take me to the hospital ASAP. She brought you and Jesse instead of the keys because she would be dammed if I bombed again — this was all or nothing.

Jesse went into action and grabbed a handful of powerful hydration tablets loaded with minerals and electrolytes called "NUUN" tablets and crushed them into two liters of water, which I chugged down in about 30 seconds. After 5 minutes, when I didn't have to run to the bathroom, I knew I had a chance. Within 20 minutes my body started to relax and the cramping had subsided. I had just enough time to hit a 500 warm-up bench and opened with 574 on the platform, and hit it relatively solid. I missed 600 on my second attempt but was able to regroup and hit it on the third. It would take another hour of drinking NUUN tablets and eating sandwiches to reach full strength, but by the time I started warming up for deads I knew I

## "BEGINNERS SHOULD LEARN THE MEANING OF INTENSITY AND MAXIMUM EFFORT SO THEY DON'T WASTE TIME DOING LOTS OF SETS AND REPS THAT DON'T CREATE A STIMULUS FOR GROWTH. THEN THEY SHOULD EAT AND SLEEP TO GROW"

was back and still had a good chance at John Cole's record and an outside shot at 2,300-plus. Deadlifts were almost euphoric. I never felt so good. I pulled a 705 warm-up back stage so fast I thought it was going to hit me in the chin.

Creed has watched every pull of mine for the previous year. His eyes were like saucers after I hit that 705, and he just started laughing. We both knew immediately that my opener was going to be a piece of cake. On the platform the 799 opener came off the floor so quick you can see me starting to laugh during the lift because I knew I smashed it. 837 would get me over 2,300 and I didn't even hesitate, I knew I could get it so I put it in for my second. It was harder than I thought, but I never lost confidence, I've pulled a million slow deads and I always grind it out when necessary. I had enough in me to celebrate a little at the top before I set it down. Jesse and his "NUUN" tablets saved the day. I ordered a few cases when I got home and I still use them daily. I couldn't have been happier, even with all the ups and downs through nearly a year of training and two meets. I finally surpassed my goal and I got to go out on my terms. After 26 years of competitive bodybuilding and powerlifting, it was all over in a split second when I set the 837-lb. deadlift back down on the platform, shook Eddie Coan's hand and got a man-hug from you and Creed. So glad it's finally over. Don't call me, I'll call you!

**POWER:** So the curtain is closing, the crowd is heading toward the exit and the lights are getting shut down.

**Is there any more lifting or bodybuilding in the future of the Rhino?**

**EFFERDING:** I'll lift forever. It's in my blood. I want to be the best 50, then 60, then 70 I can be. But my focus will have to be on longevity and overall health that includes cardio (HIIT), weight training, a healthy diet and a manageable body weight. I want to be able to keep up with my daughter Milani as she grows up. My baby girl and my longtime girlfriend Malia Tasi have really changed my former life as a rich, jacked and tan bachelor for the better. For example I used to have a Rolls-Royce Phantom and now I have a minivan. Seriously though, without Malia by my side I would not have broken that world record. She was fully supportive, even with an infant attached to her hip 24/7.

I was fortunate in powerlifting not to have blown a gasket pushing myself that hard at my age, and I don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth. Since the meet I dropped 30 lbs. in 30 days and I intend to stay in this condition for the long term. I'm still lifting big on the basics, just a few more reps with as much weight as I can handle. That's simply the most effective way to get results from training, so I'll continue to train that way. Lastly I would like to thank my good friend and longtime training partner back home in Washington, Leo Wells. **PM**

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