

editorial

By Margo Mercedes Rivera

Welcome to the Fatgirl Sports and Swimsuit issue. I confess, I'm the one who begged the other collective members to do this topic. My interest was entirely selfish, of course. Since we are constantly bombarded by images of Barbies in bathing suits, I wanted to see some juicy women in skimpy outfits for a change. And, I wanted to transform the swimsuit edition idea (ala Sports Illustrated) which is traditionally geared for straight men into something positive for fat dykes.

Additionally, my own participation in sports has been fraught with some kind of shit related to someone's fat phobia. Whenever I'm publicly participating in sport, I'm just waiting for the stares, laughs, hoots, whistles, or comments. Putting yourself out there as an active and happy fat woman instead of hiding indoors wearing concealing garments, just tweaks fatphobic pinbrains.

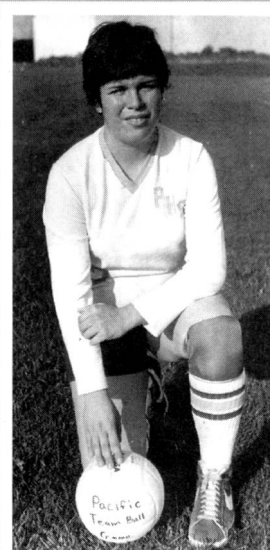
This desire to see fat women active and sexy has been incubating for quite a while. It became necessary after yet one more trip to my gym where I was the fattest woman by far. The ONLY time I have seen anyone bigger than me there was when I brought my lovely wife. It fucks with my head to be the only fat one there all the time. It pisses me off to see Twiggies look away in disgust in the locker room. It infuriates me that some of the "instructors" there do not take me seriously. Once during an orientation on the weight machines the instructor kept skipping the advanced machines. Even though I told her I had been lifting weights for years she showed me how to use these machines very reluctantly, chastising me for using too much poundage. By the end of the "lesson" she was barely speaking to me. It angers me that do-gooders come over to me to encourage me to persevere with my workouts. One woman who was sure I was a rank beginner because I hadn't yet "trimmed and toned" my body almost had a heart attack when she saw I had been leg pressing 400 pounds. In the sauna, trying to relax, I hear the skinnies sitting there whispering about their caloric intakes and their cellulite.

AAAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHH.

It is no wonder I feel as if I am entering enemy territory every single time I open the door to my gym. And, this is the most comfortable gym I've ever been in — not a 24-hour pink and lime green spandex hetero pickup joint. I wanted to see what other fat women were experiencing when they participated in sports, so I asked them — see the survey results on pages 16 - 23 in this issue.

As fat women we have been told repeatedly to exercise in order to facilitate weight loss. From some of the survey responses, it seems that many of us have a love/hate or hate/hate relationship with athletics. And still, many of us overcome the negatives to enjoy the thrill of playing and sweating with our fat bodies.

The dykes who answered the survey all identify as being fat. Most live in the SF Bay Area, one in another state, one in England. 75% are from a lower class background. More than one-third are women of color or mixed race women. One-sixth are super size. Age ranged from about 25 to about 55. One-seventh identify as disabled or partially disabled. I would be interested to hear from other women — feel free to send your comments to FaTGIRL.



Margo at seventeen...