

# *It's mountain ambiance or SJS' Bud Winter Field*



While Maren Seidler was shooing a dog out of her shot put pit in the bucolic ambiance of the Santa Cruz Mountains, San Jose State's Essodina Atchade was long jumping at Bud Winter Field, deep in the heart of San Jose at the San Jose Invitational. There were indeed some different strokes for track and field folks Saturday afternoon.

The San Jose meet was a typically urban late April gathering, a serious meet for serious runners and throwers trying to establish marks to get them into the NCAA finals next month, or assert themselves among the best in their fields in the country.

But in the countryside near Los Gatos, at the "Two Big Guys Mountain Meet," there was a festive atmosphere in a meet for shot putters and discus throwers only.

And Mac Wilkins, the world class discus man, and Al Feuerbach, internationally known shot putter, the two "big guys," showed that track and field can be both serious and relaxed.

## **Finns winners in big guys meet**

LOS GATOS (AP) — Finland's Reijo Stahlberg won the shot put with a toss of 68 feet, 5¼ inches, believed to be the best mark in the world this year, at Saturday's Two Big Guys Mountain Games.

Mac Wilkins and Al Feuerbach, hosts for the four-event, throwing meet, both failed to win their specialties, the discus and shot, respectively.

Markko Tuokko, another Finnish athlete, won the discus with a toss of 220-6, which is a national record and also the best reported throw in the world this year.

Lorna Griffin of Seattle won the women's discus with a toss of 186-2. The women's shot was won by American record holder Maren Siedler of Los Gatos with a 58-4 mark.

Women's discus—1, Lorna Griffin, Sports West, 186-2. 2, Helene Connell, Atlantic City Shore Athletic Club, 173-3. 3, Leslie Deniz, unat., 164-1.

Men's discus—1, Markko Tuokko, Finland, 220-6. 2, Knut Hietnes, Norway, 212-1. 3, Mac Wilkins, Athletics West, 207-10.

Women's shot put—1, Maren Seidler, San Jose Stars, 58-4. 2, Jane Frederick, Pacific Coast Club, 50-8. 3, Lynne Winbigler, Oregon TC, 48-6.

Men's shot put—1, Reijo Stahlberg, Finland, 68-5¼. 2, Bruno Pauletto, Canada, 66-1. 3, Al Feuerbach, Athletics West, 64-6.

**T**erry Albritton, a mountain of a man, laughed and the mountainous surroundings for this special day in the life of shotputters seemed to laugh with him.

"We talk about the things we could do in this place all the time," said the former world record holder, who also specialized in film production while at Stanford and was just one of many of the people at the training retreat of Al Feuerbach and Mac Wilkins who gave a visitor to the site a Lilliputian complex. "We want to make a film showing how shotputting was 25,000 years ago. You know — have this whole gang of wild shotputters wandering the hills in packs, coming out to compete and then disappearing back into the hills again.

"Or," he said, "maybe we could make a horror movie. You've heard of *Invasion Of The Body-Snatchers*. Well, we

**John Lindblom**



could have *Invasion Of The Body Weight-Snatchers*. We could have guys jump up from behind those bushes out there and snatch their body weight."

More laughing resounded through the trees just before the wild horde of shotputters did come out from behind the obscurity that is a way of life for them for the first annual Two Big Guys Mountain Games.

The body-weight snatchers invasion Saturday lured just everybody who is or has been anybody in this isolated endeavor. The celebrities included Parry O'Brien and Bill Neider, the gold medal winning rivals of a couple of decades ago who until Saturday had hardly spoken a word in the quarter-century or so since they used to throw barbs about as often as they did the shot — one of the more cutting ones being Neider's assessment that a 64-foot effort that O'Brien had gotten off was probably over a cliff.

The only problem with the "everybody who's anybody" aspect of weight men is that the general public rarely recognizes them. For instance, the little man who looked up from his gardening at the tract down the lane from Feuerbach and the gold medal discus-throwing Wilkins' uniquely equipped headquarters asked, "Wilkins? Feuer. . . Nope, never heard of 'em."

It was of no consequence. This was a day like no day has been for athletes who are like no other athletes. They are equally at home in any surroundings, isolated or not, because they live an isolated existence.

"The thought that I'm up here in these mountains working to beat the whole East German system — doctors, psychologists, technicians, athletes is good enough for me," said

Feuerbach, who bought this tract shortly after coming back from Montreal sans medals. "There has been no exposure to what we're doing, so I can understand why we don't get much notoriety.

"Just to see the thing fly out there and think the guy throws it with his arm is a good way to make people bored with the event. So, what we are trying to do here is make people understand the tremendous athletic ability it takes to be a shotputter. For instance, shotputters have the longest standing long jumps of any track and field athletes, including long jumpers. I've jumped 11 feet myself.

"What we're talking about is physical ability to explode."

The iron ball brigade's obscure existence may be best typified by former San Jose State shotputter Bob Gummerson, who once attended football-zany Oklahoma on scholarship.

"I was the only shotputter on campus," said Gummerson, who left because he couldn't make the Sooner redhots understand that it is as athletic to hurl the 16-pound iron ball around as 180-pound quarterbacks.

"It was at its worst when I'd go ask a girl to dance. She'd assume I was a football player and when she found out I wasn't she was inevitably disappointed. Heck, I knew more about shotputting than my coach did."

Albritton said he had a similar experience when he tried out for the Dallas Cowboys. "When I held the record, I remember a couple of kids recognized me for being in track and field," said Terry. "But when I was with the Cowboys, kids would say, 'Golly, gee, are you a Dallas Cowboy?'"

Wilkins and Feuerbach weren't exactly sure how their event would affect recognition. But the media was well in evidence Saturday. It was perhaps the most genuine recognition the weight men and women had experienced in recent times.

"I've had a taste of notoriety and maybe it's best the way it is," said Albritton. "You realize just how phoney it all is and that our whole culture is geared to making money.

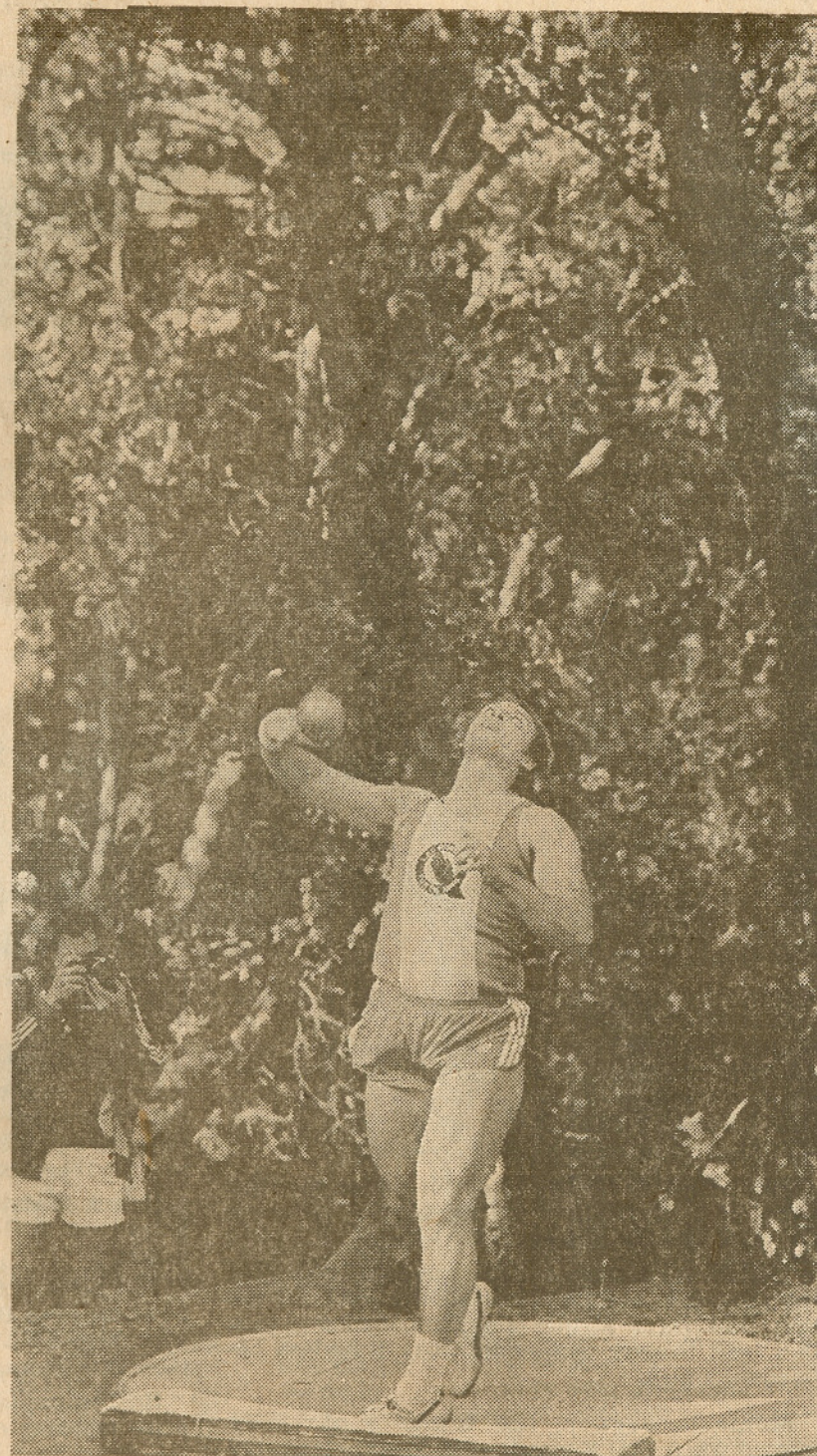
"In the American media the only thing quoted about weight men is use of drugs like steroids or something bizarre like UFOs or Communist scare tactics."

The latter of course, was the subject of Wilkins' last big exposure. Wilkins suggested that the Russians might use some magnetic force to shoot down the discus in Moscow in the 1980 Olympics among other things.

"I didn't want to draw attention to us in that manner," he explained Saturday. "But I've competed in those countries and the second-most used method they have of showing pride and strength is through athletics. The first is through the military.

"But this is the statement I want to make about track and field," he said, gesturing to the unique aesthetic-athletic setting on the plateau below him. "We've said enough negative. We wanted to say something positive."

Indeed, they did.



Fred Matthes — Sunday Mercury News

Bob Feuerbach amid mountain greenery

