

Masterton lifters flex muscle

By Nathan Crombie
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Masterton powerlifters seized victory at the inaugural Novice Powerlifting Competition held in the town on Saturday.

Organiser Tim Hintz said the event, held outdoors at Wai Weight Private Gym in Bentley St, attracted a field of 17 powerlifters including his son Joel Hintz, a sub junior national record-holder.

World-class Masterton powerlifting champion Brett Gibbs, a junior world record-holder, was also on hand to help set weights and backstop competitors.

Mr Hintz said the greater-than-expected field of central districts powerlifters came in most part from Wellington and also included a sub-junior lifter from Palmerston North.

He said up to 100 spectators had at different times during the duration of the competition watched the powerlifting battles unfold and a pair of Masterton competitors had come out at the head of the pack in their weight divisions.

Powerlifting consists of three events — the squat, deadlift and bench press — during which competitors lift successively heavier weights in three attempts. Their best lift from each of the three events comprise an overall total.

Competition is divided into two categories; equipped lifting that allows a supportive bench shirt or squat and deadlift suit or briefs, and raw lifting that is performed without the specialised clothing.

The event on Saturday had been held to help attract



POWER POSE: The Masterton camp of powerlifters, veterans and newbies, who attended a Novice Powerlifting Competition at Wai Weight Gym in the town on Saturday included Sheldon Hokianga (left back), sub junior national record-holder Joel Hintz, gym owner Bevan Mackenzie, Kathy Groenewald, Tim Hintz, and junior world record-holder Brett Gibbs (left front) and Tony Oliver.

PHOTO/JENNA ATHOW

newcomers to the sport and also was an opening fundraiser for Gibbs and Hintz junior to attend the International Powerlifting Federation world championships in Johannesburg in June.

Mr Hintz, who also will accompany the pair to South Africa as coach, said the novice contest had been an unalloyed success for spectators and competitors alike and successful as a fundraiser as well.

Novice Masterton powerlifters to take the winners podium on the day included Sheldon Hokianga, who won the

120kg men's open division with a 180kg squat, 140kg bench press and 220kg deadlift, and Kathy Groenewald who placed second in the open women's 83kg class with an 80kg squat, 55kg bench press and 110kg deadlift.

"It was a fantastic day all around and our lifters performed extremely well for their first time out."

Mr Hintz said his son Joel had achieved "unofficial" record lifts at the meet, registering a 250kg squat, 160kg bench press, and 240kg deadlift.

Lead sponsors for Gibbs and

Hintz, Bevan and Rachel Mackenzie, owners of Wai Weight Gymnasium, also will be holding a fundraising event for the pair at Regent 3 Cinema in Masterton in April, Mr Mackenzie said.

The event will include the screening of a weightlifting documentary and an exhibition of powerlifting in the cinema foyer.

■ For more information call Tim Hintz at 027 458 4003 or Bevan Mackenzie at 027 254 5848.

Wage rise 'sensible'

A rise in the minimum wage is sensible, but could cause small local businesses to delay hiring extra staff, the Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce says.

"I think any increase is a good thing as long as it doesn't put businesses out of business because that's helping nobody," chief executive Stephanie Gundersen-Reid said.

The comments follow Prime Minister John Key's announcement that the minimum wage would rise by 50c an hour to \$14.25 from April 1.

The "starting out" and "training" minimum wages — for youth workers and workers on industry training — will increase 40c an hour to \$11.40.

Mr Key said there was a balance between raising the minimum wage and putting jobs at risk, but he believed the 50c rise would have a negligible effect on the availability of jobs.

According to Statistics New Zealand, 17,200 people in the wider Wellington region earn between \$13.25 and \$14.25 an hour.

Miss Gundersen-Reid agreed with Mr Key that the 50c rise would not have a significant impact on available jobs but said some smaller businesses such as a small store or 'one-man-band' builder could delay hiring extra staff for a few months.

"[The increase is] fair from a business perspective because it is going up quite regularly after not going up for such a long time."

However it was "still not a huge amount of money for a family to live off", she said.

Employers and Manufacturers Association chief executive Kim Campbell said for people at the bottom end of the pay-scale, even small amounts of \$20 extra a week to their take-home pay could make a big difference.

Other "safety net" measures were available for low-income earners such as taxpayer-funded Working For Families payments and tax credits.

Most employers would be able to handle the increase because it was a manageable rate, but anything higher could have been a struggle for sectors such as hospitality, he said.

Living wage campaigners, who believe \$18.80-an-hour is the bare minimum needed to support a small family, have called the increase a step in the right direction.



KIWI STRENGTH: Young competitor Brett Gibbs, 22, of Wai Weight, prepares to "raise the bar" at Saturday's novice powerlifting event.

PHOTO/CHRIS KILFORD



CONCENTRATION: Kathy Groenewald of Masterton competes in the dead lift event, lifting an impressive 80kg.

PHOTO/CHRIS KILFORD

Help pours in for family

By Don Farmer
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A Masterton family cleaned out by burglars who attacked their pet dogs in the process has been inundated with help and support.

Bruce and Rebecca Robertson lost computers, a television, cameras, their passports and family heirlooms in the daylight burglary and their dogs Pepper and Penny were bashed.

Yesterday Mr Robertson said that after the Friday burglary he wondered "what sort of society we have out there" but subsequently people's kindness has been overwhelming.

"We have had loads of people coming up to us offering support, people I hadn't even met before.

"On Friday night we had a hot lamb and chicken roast dinner brought to us, there has been bottles of wine and offers of help cleaning up in the aftermath of the burglary."

Mr Robertson said Victim Support had been in touch and the police had been keeping in close contact.

"It has made us realise there are some really neat people out there," he said.

The two dogs — a sheepdog and an old labrador — were recovering and all that was left was their injuries were "a few bumps".

The lost items included family holiday photos and Mr Robertson grandfather's satchel with a collection of old photographs inside which he said were a really loss to the family, and irreplaceable.

Ainslie Hewton

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