



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

November 19, 2024

2024-2025 Board Members

President Kim Brattain

Pres Elect Patrick Baker

Past Pres Edwin Peacock

Secretary Bill Gill

Treasurer Craig Field

Sergeant at Arms

Mike Wollinger

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2023-2025

Linwood Bolles

Terri DeBoo

Andy Dinkin

Donna Dunlap

Joel Ford

David Head

Directors 2024-2026

Woodson Bradley

Benton Bragg

John Cantrell

Tish Atkins Charles

Dena Diorio

Stuart Hair

Jesse Hite

Virginia Owen

Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



Jennifer Thompson *11-time International* *Powerlifting* *Champion*

by **Bill Barte**

Strength. Its genesis, purpose, and cultivation were all on display during Jen Thompson's conversation with Charlotte Rotary Executive Secretary, **Christine Cipriano**. The two have been friends and acquaintances since the Cipriano children had Thompson as a teacher. She has been a teacher for 28 years. The first portion as a math teacher, but now teaching electives. However, the evolution of Jen Thompson into one of the top powerlifting athletes in the world was the amazing personal story that she brought to our audience.

Thompson is an 11-time International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) World Champion and recognized globally for her accomplishments and advocacy for strength, health, and fitness. The mother of two was introduced to weight-lifting by her future husband and his invitation to lift and work-out in their home gym.

The sport has grown in popularity with the advance of CrossFit across the country. However, many CrossFit athletes seeking to escape the aerobic portion of the workout are drawn to Powerlifting. Powerlifting includes the three disciplines: Squat, Bench Press, and Deadlift.

Women, who at one time weren't attracted to lifting weights due to the "fear of looking too masculine", are now participating more in the sport which is welcoming to any gender. Thompson put the ratio of participants

at 55% Male to 45% female with a surge in ladies in their 50s in the sport. Many see the demographic shift from those that seek the sport due to its comradery, competition, and the added health attributes of joint health, bone density, and cancer prevention. It also tones and strengthens the body in appearance.

Thompson explained her high school years as a runner which she did with her father. However, the discovery of powerlifting, its ability to enhance her body and mind through strength, discipline and empowerment won her over.

She began powerlifting in competition in 1999 when at age 27 she entered a national event that included 25 contestants. She finished third. A few years later she broke the Michigan Female record. Since that time, she has won many competitions and continues to compete at the highest level in the Open division. She is also a well-regarded powerlifting coach.

Her training is an eight-day rotation of two days of workouts followed by two days of rest. It includes eating a lot of protein and “real food” as opposed to processed foods. “You should eat one gram of protein for every pound that you weigh”, Thompson explained. Eating correctly is an important part of her preparation. A balance of fats, carbs, and protein because “nutrition sets you a part.”

Her success in her sport has brought Thompson many accolades. Besides her championships and recognition, she has also become a successful businessperson, social media contributor and influencer. Her social media platforms include over 16,000 YouTube, 95,000 TikTok, and 165,000 followers, respectively. Many times her content will include her husband and two sons. Thompson is proud that 60% of her social media following are male, providing a point that proper style and encouragement isn't bound by gender.

Most importantly, Thompson's messaging to her family, her students, her followers, and to Charlotte Rotary is one of overcoming the obstacles to her success.

She shared in closing that “accomplishments build body, mind, and confidence.”

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With slides: <https://vimeo.com/1044795053>

Without slides: <https://vimeo.com/1044801659>

The introduction started at 23 minutes and 50 seconds.