

OUT & ABOUT



By Gayle VanVooren, Mascot Editor

I came to a startling revelation over the three-and-a-half day wrestling tournament — I am definitely not as young as I used to be. And one thing is for sure, I am not happy about it. If you are down on the main level of the Xcel Center, all those steps can be daunting if you've climbed them several times in one day. That book about the little red caboose begins to run through my head, "I think I can, I think I can..."

Of course, there's an elevator that I finally found, but that somehow seemed liked cheating when we're at an athletic event. We should be fit enough to do the stairs.

But the really tough part for this photographer is when you're forced to sit on the floor between mats in order to follow your wrestler. There is just a smidgeon of room and way too many photographers.

You get in your spot, find the angle you want, and notice that your legs are falling asleep. There goes the attention span.

Suddenly the photo isn't as important as the thought of how in the heck a person is going to get up and out of there.

Would anyone notice if you sat there all day? And then crawled out after the last match was done?

I had it pretty easy this year. Our matches were on mats that were relatively close together so we didn't have to all out run to be on time for our wrestlers.

But there was a time of sitting on the floor and I was more than a little nervous about it. But a sweet young gal taking photos for the Guillotine was more than understanding.

We chatted a bit, and she simply gave me a hand-up when I was ready to move. That simple

gesture was all I needed and I was on my way again, dignity intact!

Another thing that was bothersome was the food diet at the tournament. While everything is mighty tasty, it is not the kind of food that is good for an older digestive system.

These wrestlers are used to pasta, fresh fruits, good food that won't pack on pounds. The food at the tournament is anything but that.

And you aren't allowed to bring in anything with you. Mike said, remember?

So what do you do? Nibble a little of this, try a bit of that, and soon nothing looks or tastes good and your diet is way out of whack.

I was amazed at the number of flavored drinks that passed by constantly. These iced treats were some kind of flavoring, a banana, and ice all blended up. They had to have sold thousands of them over the weekend.

But the smell that is still in my system is the grease from the mini doughnuts. I love those things when they're made outside at Bug Days.

But smell them first thing in the morning when you enter the building, and you know it's going to be a long day. That smell alone almost put me on a diet.

I chalk this all up to getting older. Can't be good — but I'm not about to quit at this point.

It's way too much fun following these high school kids and the wonders they make happen. Oh, to be so youthful again.