

MICHELLE'S TRICEPS CONTINUE TO DISARM CRITICS



Jodi Kantor and Lauren Beckham Falcone shriek insecure scolds about Michelle exposing muscles in February.

Boston Herald columnist Lauren Beckham Falcone wrote to Obama, "It's February. Going sleeveless in subzero temperature is just showing off. All due respect."

But elsewhere, Michelle's triceps are inspiring women to actually exercise.

Rylan Duggan, a personal trainer who runs Go Sleeveless, a blog that instructs women how to tone up flabby arms and "eliminate bat wings," said that in addition to asking how to get "Madonna arms" or "Kelly Ripa arms," clients are now asking about getting "Obama arms."

"The Obama effect has been that women of all ages have been inspired to take responsibility for their health and their body," said Duggan. "As the first lady of the United States, at 44 years old, and with two young children, Mrs. Obama has shown the world that you are never too busy to take care of yourself and look good doing it too," he said.

Exercise advocates are also fans. "She's a great role model," said Jessica Matthews, a continuing education coordinator for the American Council on Exercise. "Women shy away from strength training, because they're afraid of big muscles. She shows nice toned arms and that it's not going to lead to this myth

of a bodybuilder type."

[snip]

But others were amazed, like 25-year-old Jessie Rosen. After seeing Obama at the speech Tuesday, she went to the Adidas store in New York and bought two five-pound dumbbells. "It was her arms being so toned in spite of her life," she said.

"This woman is redecorating White House, trying to raise two children and backseat driving the nation," Rosen said. "She seems to have time to keep her arms toned, so why can't I?"

I can think of many less productive things for a First Lady to do than encouraging women to do the weight-bearing exercise that will help them avoid osteoporosis.

Next thing you know it, though, she'll be encouraging her lanky girls to play hoops. I can see Don Imus now joining Kantor and Beckham Falcone in their shrieks.