

NAAFA Newsletter

VOLUME X

ISSUE # 2

FALL 1983

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PRESENTED

Recently, at the annual convention in New York City, two individuals were honored by NAAFA as recipients of its Distinguished Achievement Award. The awards, lettered on parchment certificates, were presented by NAAFA Vice-President Paula Dachis at a ceremony held on September 3.

One award, given to the late actor Oliver Hardy, of "Laurel & Hardy" fame, took place because the Board of Directors agreed with Barbara Jo Campbell, Chairperson of the local chapter in Santa Barbara/Ventura Counties, California, that such recognition was long overdue. Ms. Campbell, in making the nomination several weeks earlier, had pointed out that Hardy's biographers state that "he had deep, hidden feelings of inadequacy and inferiority due to other people's reactions to his weight" yet went on to present himself with "dignity, grace, charm, warmth, and good humor."

Hardy, it was pointed out, "excelled in his craft and became a 'star'. He went against tradition whereby fat people were stereotyped as clumsy, foolish buffoons with little character to speak of."



MRS. LUCILLE HARDY PRICE (l.)
ACCEPTS AWARD FROM NAAFA
BARBARA JO CAMPBELL (r.)



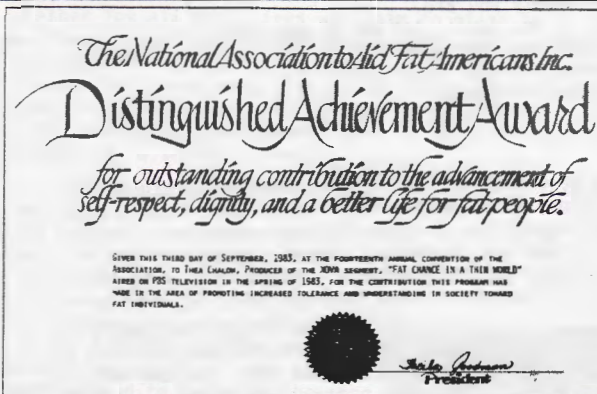
OLIVER HARDY

The actual certificate was again presented on October 15, when Barbara Campbell handed it to Mr. Hardy's widow, Mrs. Lucille Hardy Price. The occasion was the 13th annual Laurel & Hardy Fan Club banquet held near Hollywood, California. The room was filled with celebrities from the past and present. When Mrs. Price accepted the award on behalf of her late husband, she smiled and said, "Babe (Oliver) would have been thrilled!"

Another award was given to Thea Chalow, producer of the public television segment called Fat Chance in a Thin World on NOVA, an award-winning science series, aired in the spring of 1983. The segment, still being repeated in many parts of the country, vividly demonstrated how untrue are many of the myths surrounding the subject of weight loss and diets. It called upon leading medical researchers and professionals to help dispel those myths, including Albert J. Stunkard, M.D., Jules Hirsch, M.D., NAAFA Advisors Wayne and Susan Wooley, PH.D., and many others.

The award recognized Ms. Chalow and NOVA for the "contribution this program has made in the area of promoting increased tolerance and understanding in society towards fat individuals." The show received "rave" reviews from many NAAFA members who saw it and wrote NAAFA to report on what they saw.

[Official transcripts, word-for-word, of the NOVA program, are available for \$3 from the publisher, WGBH Transcripts, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134. -Ed.]



AWARD PRESENTED TO THEA CHALOW (actual award is 10" x 15")

A third award--offered to Carole Shaw, Editor-in-Chief of Big Beautiful Woman magazine--was declined. The object of the award was to recognize "the contribution that this magazine has made in the area of fashion awareness and a positive projection of the fat person." In her letter of June 13 to Paula Dachis, Ms. Shaw thanked the Board of Directors for their consideration, but declined to accept the award.

When asked for comment on her action, NAAFA Chairman William J. Fabrey replied: "I am myself a BBW reader. It's had a marvelous effect on the well-being of millions of fat Americans, and "fat admirers" as well. Carole Shaw is clearly a great asset and a constructive force in the Fat Pride movement. It's a great shame that she decided not to accept our award, as she is obviously deserving of it."

He went on to say that he suspects that the source of the problems may lie in some misunderstandings that apparently occurred early in the BBW-NAAFA relationship. "I hope that any misunderstandings can be cleared up soon, as we are all part of the same great movement," he said.

The Distinguished Achievement Award has had many worthy recipients in the past, including medical and health editors like William Bennett, M.D. and Joel Gurin, playwrights like Albert Innaurato, actors and actresses like James Coco, Shirley Stoler and Nell Carter, newsmen like Jack Rosenthal of the NEW YORK TIMES, legislators like Michael Schwarzwald of Ohio and Raymond Dypski of Maryland, and many others. ★

WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY TO BE CONSIDERED

The Health Committee (Paul Ernsberger, Chairperson) has announced that it is in the final stages of preparation of HEALTH COMMITTEE SPECIAL '84, which will be mailed to all NAAFA members in the spring. The primary emphasis of this publication will be a balanced coverage of the pros and cons of weight loss surgery, especially stomach stapling. "Any NAAFA members or their friends who are thinking about having staple surgery might consider waiting for the mailing, which may contain information that could affect their decision," says Paul Ernsberger. The special coverage is to be between 8 and 12 pages in length in typical Newsletter format, and is to consist of a thorough review of medical and lay opinion on the subject. ★

activism

IN CASE YOU DON'T KNOW

by Susan Dubin
California

"I find it hard to believe you don't know
The beauty you are.
But if you don't, let me be your eyes
A light to your darkness, so you won't be afraid...
Please put down your hands
'Cause I see you."

"I'll Be Your Mirror", Lou Reed

Let me explain a little about what fat activism means to me. I've spent my life as a doer, with a somewhat mad dedication to accomplishing wonders. I could generally manifest anything I wanted, except in two areas: weight loss and romance. Previously, being fat for me also indicated being invalid sexually, profes-



sionally and personally. I was in the odd position of being very involved with the world and yet not part of it, an outcast by both myself and society. I gave to ideals and groups I perceived as being worthy. Perhaps I felt that by being selfless, by giving to these worthy groups, I myself would become worthy.

I have a picture of myself taken when I was fifteen years old and 160 pounds. I am holding a Donovan album in front of my stomach. I remember that when the picture was taken, I felt like I weighed 2000 pounds. I grew up to my current 374 pounds before discovering NAAFA.

But something is happening inside me. I do not hide any part of my body when a photo is taken. My face looks strong and happy. I'm proud to be who I am!

I have been in NAAFA for ten months. Each day is a challenge. What can I do to change myself? Will I exercise? How much? Will I balance my diet? What will I learn to cook? Will I be in a situation where I will need to challenge a person on fat issues? How will I handle it? Will I write something today? Will I confer with other NAAFAs? Will I attend a social event? How can I grow today? Will I research medical journals to become more attuned for discussions with physicians? How total is my commitment? Can I touch another person's life?

This is the greatest revolution of my life. To me, NAAFA is a wonderful gift, and I plan to take it to the limit.

A year ago, I felt that people in the "fat is beautiful" movement simply did not wish to take responsibility for their lives. I checked into NAAFA with the sort of mild curiosity one might indulge in at a grocery check-out stand. However, when I read one of David Whiteis' articles in the Newsletter on fat activism, put together with the medical information, general intelligence and sensitivity which was being put forth, things began clicking together in my head like wildfire.

My life is changing radically. Even my face in the mirror seems unfamiliar at times! I have clothes made which please me. I date interesting men and I am beginning to be comfortable at social events. I put a swimsuit on for the first time in sixteen years and am attending swimnastic classes. I am taking yoga (something I thought I was too fat for at 160 pounds) and belly dancing classes. I started a NAAFA Chapter and am West Coast Editor for the Newsletter. I have begun research on my Ph.D. in Psychology, with a specialization in fat issues. My writing which had been blocked for

sometime, is beginning to flow like a river. Suddenly, I have a life that is my own.

I am so thankful to people like Bill Fabrey who took the original steps to get things started and has kept them going all these years. I am grateful to activists like David Whiteis, Louise Wolfe, Russell Williams, Paul Ernsberger, Ruby Greenwald, Nancy Summer, Joyce Rue, Sue Nyman, and Joanne Mangiameli (the list could go on ad infinitum) who have touched my life and the lives of many others. They continue the struggle, having the courage to both grow themselves and reach out to others. Thank you is not enough -- the only way I can show my gratitude is to become part of the flow, part of the learning and giving.

What I'm trying to say is: This is NAAFA. This is what it can be to every person who elects to let go of the old concepts, allowing themselves to live fully.

Being an activist in NAAFA means a total, rewarding commitment to personal change and fulfillment. Realization of your own potential and beauty awaits you. Are you ready? ★

AFTER THE PARTY

by David Whiteis
Illinois

"Either a thing means, or it does not mean; and if a man is the kind who is looking for meaning, he will grow until the road is a handy size."

--Jack Gady

There are a lot of reasons why people join NAAFA. Some, like me, have high-falutin' ideals about fat liberation, civil rights, and societal change. Others --also like me-- are irresistibly attracted to plump, cuddly, loving ladies. A great many people who join NAAFA are irresistibly attracted to men who are irresistibly attracted to plump, cuddly, loving ladies. (Viva la difference!)

Then there are all the people who simply want to hang out in the company of intelligent men and women who have learned not to discriminate or pass judgement against others because of their size. These people are seeking friendship and support --whether or not it's in the form of a "significant other"-- and probably account for the great majority of our members.

However, there seems to be an all-too-common pattern in many chapters. [and on a national level too--Ed.] Membership tends to peak--often after some kind of media coverage--which results in a flurry of phone calls and new members, and then, after a few months, it falls off. A core handful of True Believers keeps it going until the next TV spot or magazine article, and then the whole cycle starts over again.

It's a major problem for us, and the reasons are quite complex. But

I tend to believe that a large part of the difficulty is due to what I call the "after-the-party syndrome".



PEOPLE WHO JOIN NAAFA FOR STRICTLY SOCIAL REASONS TEND TO GET REALLY SATISFIED OR REALLY DISAPPOINTED IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME.

People who join NAAFA for strictly social reasons tend to get really satisfied or really disappointed in a relatively short time. Either they meet their friend/lover/circle of friends/circle of lovers and decide that they don't need NAAFA any more, or else they don't find what they were looking for, and they get disillusioned. Others, it seems to me, join with the idea that a magic wand will be waved which will make them "love themselves" overnight, thus making NAAFA unnecessary. Obviously, this rarely happens, and these people often get disillusioned and leave, as well.

In other words, when the party's over and there's nothing left but a haze of smoke and lipstick-smudged cigarette butts in the ashtrays, Peggy Lee comes on the radio asking, "Is that all there is?" and too many of us shrug our shoulders in resignation, mutter "Yeah, I guess so!", empty our glasses, and go home.

But I'd like to propose that there is more; a lot more. I remember a teacher of mine back in college in Vermont who held a workshop on the subject of "Community". I learned some important lessons from that, and I'd like to share them now.

The college I went to was small, relatively homogeneous and apparently tailor-made for a real neighborhood feeling of support and togetherness. But the reality of the situation was that a disproportionate number of us felt extremely alienated and alone up there, and nobody knew what to do about it.

The Student Council and various planning committees held dances, film festivals, classical music concerts, jazz concerts, even an avant-garde one-man show which consisted of a man sitting twenty feet up in a tree for about three hours, dressed in a witch's robe and a hat with a five-foot-long black feather in it, writing cryptic notes on tiny shreds of paper and dropping them down to the crowd below. But nothing seemed to be able to pull the people together, or to get any kind of a feeling of "community" going.

So this particular professor got a group of us together to brainstorm about the problem, and he ended up imparting to us some very wise, valuable advice.

"Everyone here is involved in consuming things together," he told us, "but the only way you'll really feel like a community is if you work together on producing something. You've got to be active with one another; not passive."

Well, our initial reaction was a horrified gulp -- no one had told us that this thing was gonna mean work! But of course he was right. We all have different tastes: Those of us who would be enthralled by a jazz concert might be utterly bored by a black-robed artist sitting in a tree, and vice versa.

But to work together on something, to find a common goal which had meaning to each of us, and then to join forces in an attempt to bring that goal about -- this was, almost by definition, an experience of solidarity and sharing.

As I recall, the idea never took hold, at least not among most of us. We held fast to the notion that work and fun don't mix, and we kept on consuming whatever the planmakers threw at us. By the time we got hip to the truth in what that professor had said -- usually about halfway through our senior year -- it was too late to do anything about it.

But I think NAAFA can learn from those collegiate mistakes. If we're going to survive and grow as a viable organization, we're going to have to pay a lot more than lip service to our notions of common struggle and a common goal. In the words of writer Langston Hughes: "No more payola and sayola; it's time for some do-ola!"

When people first join NAAFA, they're often surprised to learn that they can get together with a group of predominantly fat people and not feel like they're at some kind of a "losers' convention". The idea that fat people can actually get together and celebrate life is an incredibly difficult one for some people to accept, and may in fact be a major obstacle in our drive for new membership.

IS THERE A DEEPER MEANING TO OUR MEMBERSHIP IN NAAFA? DOES IT GO BEYOND "ME"...

But it's an important first step in the idea I'm trying to describe. This common celebration should be the first step toward moving us along the road to working together for all the things we claim to stand for -- freedom from fat discrimination, oppression, etc. -- rather than simply a way for us to get or find something or someone for ourselves. True, a lot of us are looking for something or someone, but that should be part, not all, of our reason for being in NAAFA. If not, then our organization is in serious trouble.

Is there a deeper meaning to our membership in NAAFA? Does it go beyond "ME" -- "my" self-image or "my" social life or "my" relationships -- to something as large as an ideal, or a philosophy? Are we willing to roll up our sleeves and work for a cause larger than ourselves, which is to say pretty damn large? Are we willing to stay around after the party and put our shoulders to the wheel, working and fighting so that someday people will join NAAFA because they want to, and not because they have to have NAAFA around to carry on the good fight?

In short: Do we truly believe in our stated ideals, or is this just a way for each of us to "get mine" and then move on?

In the name of millions of people who struggle against exploitation, harassment, discrimination, ruined bodies, and shattered lives, I say that we'd damn well better believe, and we'd better start working together toward that larger goal. If we don't, I see little hope for the long-term survival of our organization. I see even less hope for ourselves. ★

HOW TO GET INVOLVED...

(AND MAKE MORE OF YOUR NAAFA MEMBERSHIP)

There are many ways to become part of the NAAFA community by getting involved in some of our projects. You can commit only a few hours a month -- or dozens if you choose. Some projects require specific talents or education; others are "no experience necessary" projects. Whatever your background and interests are, there may be a project where you can be of service to both NAAFA and yourself.

There are four major areas for you to consider: 1) personal activism, 2) Local Chapters, 3) Special Interest Groups, and the subject of this article, 4) NAAFA Committees. [Personal activism has been the subject of several Activism columns in previous Newsletters, and information on SIGs is available in the advertising supplement of this issue. Information on Local Chapters is available from the NAAFA office.--Ed.]

NAAFA has over 30 committees that are engaged in research, publications, emotional support, activism, information, and the day-to-day operations of the organization. Some committees are in need of a Chairperson. All listed committees can use the extra hands of qualified volunteers.

DO YOU HAVE TO LIVE NEAR THE NAAFA OFFICE IN NEW YORK TO JOIN A COMMITTEE?

Absolutely not. There are only a few committees that actually work out of the NAAFA office. Almost all the committees on the list work through the mail or over the telephone.

DO YOU GET PAID IF YOU WORK FOR A COMMITTEE?

Sorry, No. NAAFA is an all volunteer organization and none of the committee members are paid... at least not in cash. There are some intangible good feelings that can result from committee work.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP ON A COMMITTEE?

If the committee is chaired, write the Chairperson

in care of the NAAFA office. If the committee is currently unchaired, write Angela Capiello, NAAFA's Committee Coordinator. Please outline your talents and background (education or work experience) in the letter, and explain why you wish to join the committee and what ideas you have regarding its work.

HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON?

There are a number of committees that need chairpersons. If you are interested in chairing one of them, please write Angela Capiello. Again, include in your letter information on your professional/educational background, your talents, why you wish to chair the committee, how much time you feel you will be able to give, and an outline of your plans for fulfilling the committee function.

Committee Chairpersons are appointed by a NAAFA Officer and approved by a vote of the Board of Directors. Chairpersons are also reviewed by the Board every six months as to activity and progress and can be removed from the committee by a Board vote if necessary. For this reason, it is important to review the amount of time you have available to devote to the committee before volunteering to chair it.

DO NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS OR CHAIRPERSONS GET ANY HELP OR ADVICE?

Of course. If you are accepted on a committee with a Chairperson, that's who you should contact for assistance with a project. If you are a new Chairperson, either a NAAFA Officer/Board Member or a former committee Chairperson will be available to help you get started.

UNCHAIRIED COMMITTEES

If you are interested in serving on or chairing one of these committees, contact Angela Capiello.

COMMITTEE	OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<u>ANTHROPOMETRICS</u> unchaired	Updating airline chart; preparing "Measure America" proposal; research escape hatch sizes and ladder weight limit, turnstiles, etc.	<u>ANTHROPOMETRICS</u> : An ability to make, measure or design things required. Chairperson should have engineering or related background. (Special background not required of committee members.)
<u>EMPLOYMENT</u> unchaired	Studies employment problems.	<u>EMPLOYMENT</u> : Chairperson should be familiar with hiring process. Personnel, union or Dept. of Labor background helpful.
<u>LEGISLATIVE</u> unchaired	Study of laws, arranging for expert testimony, administers Legal Research and Defense Fund, answers correspondence from people with size-related legal problems.	<u>LEGISLATIVE</u> : Legal or para-legal background preferred for Chairperson. Committee members should be able to evaluate cases as to what help NAAFA can offer. Also a listing by state of state laws relating to fat people is needed. Letter writing and organizational abilities required for this committee project.
<u>TEENAGE</u> unchaired	Update Teenage brochure and other youth oriented material (distributed to grades 7-12); also prepare brochure for parents of fat children.	<u>TEENAGE</u> : Experience with fat teenagers required in either a professional or personal way. Some education experience helpful (i.e. teaching background).
<u>GRIEVANCE & MEDIATIONS</u> unchaired	Active only when internal grievance cases are referred to it. Helps to mediate problems between NAAFA members.	<u>GRIEVANCE & MEDIATION</u> : A good dose of common sense required and a background in mediation, legal process helpful. Contact Bill Fabrey for details.
<u>LOCAL CHAPTERS</u> unchaired	Report on and administer to Local Chapters and their problems. Advises new chairpeople on chapter operations; to prepare Local Chapter Handbook.	<u>LOCAL CHAPTERS</u> : Experience with local chapters necessary. (Preferably a former Chapter Chairperson.) Must be able to write or organize Chapter's Handbook. Ability to make long distance calls important.
<u>SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS</u> unchaired	Same as Local Chapters Committee except works with Special Interest Groups	<u>SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS</u> : Same guidelines as for Local Chapters Committee. This committee requires less work than Local Chapters because currently there are fewer SIGs than Chapters.

COMMITTEES WITH CHAIRPERSONS

If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, contact the Chairperson listed.

<u>FASHION</u> L. Fisher Burns, Chair	Prepares clothing directory; distributes used clothing; researches large size clothing sources.	<u>FASHION</u> : Members in the fashion industry are welcome to contact the Chairperson with their ideas.
<u>INSURANCE</u> Paula Dachis, Chair	Prepares proposals for group insurance; researches weight restrictions in the insurance industry.	<u>INSURANCE</u> : Recent report indicates there is no reasonably priced insurance for large people. Further study required. NAAFANS in insurance, please contact Paula for details to obtain additional quotes.
<u>SIX HUNDRED POUND SCALE</u> W. Fabrey, Chair	Find, develop, or solicit bids to make a 600 pound scale available for those members who wish to buy one.	<u>SIX HUNDRED POUND SCALE</u> : Mechanical or electrical engineers with an interest should contact Bill Fabrey.

COMMITTEE	OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<u>CRISIS</u> Sheila Goodman, Chair	Helps reply to mail and calls from persons in crisis.	<u>CRISIS</u> : Empathetic and understanding NAAFans with good letter writing ability needed. Some professional background preferred but not necessary.
<u>FUND-RAISING</u> Bunny Peckham, Chair	Originate and administer fund-raising drives, raffles, donations, and other events.	<u>FUND-RAISING</u> : NAAFans with fund-raising ideas who are willing to actively participate in the program are encouraged to contact Bunny Peckham.
<u>NEWSLETTER</u> N. Summer, Chair	Publishes <u>Newsletter</u> and other publications.	<u>NEWSLETTER</u> : New writers always welcomed. Long Island typist with IBM Selectric II or III urgently needed.
<u>PRINTING & PRODUCTION</u> W. Fabrey, N. Summer, Co-Chair	Creates headlines and typeface; does paste-ups and mechanical work preparing publications and other literature for printer, does artwork.	<u>PRINTING & PRODUCTION</u> : Artists needed, especially for figure and face designs. Also needed, <u>Newsletter</u> illustrator.
<u>VOLUNTEER SERVICE</u> Elisabeth Williams, Chair	Performs office work and mailings that can be performed by volunteers.	<u>VOLUNTEER SERVICE</u> : Members in metro-NY area needed for mailing team. Members outside of NY needed for typing letters from dictation tapes and other work. Contact the NAAFA office.
<u>ACTIVISM</u> Louise Wolfe & Russell Williams, Co-Chair	To actively search for and battle against size discrimination; to encourage the membership to do same and to report to the membership current battles and future strategies in the fat liberation struggle.	<u>ACTIVISM</u> : Send copies of all your activist letters to the NAAFA office for forwarding to the Activism Committee. If you have a specific project, contact Louise or Russell.
<u>HEALTH</u> Paul Ernsberger, Chair	Finds ways of helping members to better health; recommends NAAFA's stance on subject.	<u>HEALTH</u> : Health professionals and fitness and nutrition experts are encouraged to send resume to the Chairman.



f.a. focus

VIVA LA DIFFERENCE!

by C. H. Blickenstorfer
New York



As a Fat Admirer, I have often thought about the advantages and disadvantages of being different, whatever that difference might be. I certainly do not see being different as an overwhelming problem as long as there is a positive attitude about what sets one apart from others.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that I see the benefits of having deep and affectionate feelings towards fatness clearly surpass any potential problems such as those that might, and sometimes do, arise from either not being understood or not being accepted.

Needless to say that I am biased in my point of view. For all I know I probably never experienced the attraction that non-FAs surely must feel for the beauty of a thin woman. Personally, I find fat women infinitely more beautiful, desirable, and attractive. The rewards of having found my way to NAAFA and to a conscious realization of my own preferences regarding beauty are exceedingly positive, and I would not want to miss them for anything in the world. To me, the impact of a fat woman's presence and truly feminine appeal is fulfilling and satisfying in an entirely unique way.

That's why I decided to devote a good part of my free time to coordinating the FA-SIG, the Special Interest Group for Fat Admirers. The SIG will feature a publication for FA's of both sexes, and those who like to be admired by us. The great majority of all FAs I have met are refreshing, interesting personalities to whom I feel a brotherly bond based on our common preference. FAs, for obvious reasons, often find it impossible to share opinions, feelings and experiences with other men. I hope the FA-SIG will serve as a much needed instrument for discussion and source of information for those who disagree with the thin beauty standard. Viva la difference. ★

**I go for
WOMEN
in a 899 way**

ONE OF THE SLOGAN CARDS INCLUDED WITH
NAAFA'S FUNDRAISING KEYCHAIN. (See ad
supplement for ordering details.)

BIG BEAUTY PAGEANTS AROUND

After years of only being allowed in the audience, big women will be center stage vying for beauty queen prizes this year. Reports of three separate pageants have been spotted in the press.

Carole Shaw announced in a recent issue of BBW that the magazine is sponsoring "the first national BBW Beauty and Fashion Pageant". This event is scheduled for June, 1984 in (where else?) Atlantic City.

Ann Harper, former full-figure model and author of *The Big Beauty Book*, is organizing a Ms. Fuller-Figure America Beauty Contest. Information about the contest is included in her book.

Finally, according to TV Guide, Mary Jo Catlett, who plays the housekeeper on *Diff'rent Strokes*, is one of the sponsors of the Big Is Beautiful Contest. Entrants must be 175 pounds or larger to be eligible for this event that is planned for television. Ms. Catlett said about the pageant that "it would help big women feel good about themselves. It might help erase the social stigma against big people..."

[Thank you to Rita Montana of New York for the news tip.]

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

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NAAFA FORWARDING SERVICE

Often, readers of this Newsletter wish to write to NAAFA members who are featured in photos or articles. However, NAAFA's mailing list is strictly confidential. Fortunately, NAAFA's office is able to forward such mail. A \$5 fee is charged for each personal letter that is forwarded. The \$5 fee covers office expenses and includes a tax-deductible donation of \$3 to assist NAAFA in its general purposes.

Members who wish to have personal letters forwarded should seal their letters in an envelope that has the addressee's name and proper postage affixed to it. Enclose this envelope and mail it to NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426, along with the proper fee.

Non-confidential mail to committees is, of course, forwarded free of charge. This mail should not be sealed in an inner envelope.

Foreign members only: To use the forwarding service, either send the fee in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank or financial institution, or send the fee in U.S. funds drawn on a foreign bank, and add \$10 to the total amount of the fee to cover foreign interbank clearing charges. Also, do not place postage stamps on the envelope to be forwarded.★

editorial



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

An Editorial
by Nancy Summer
Managing Editor

There's a small, but powerful, three letter word in our name, The National Association to Aid Fat Americans, that I think needs to be changed.

Before you argue that we can't change our name, let me assure you that, of course, organizations can change their names. For example, *Fat and Fabulous* of Canada recently changed their name to *People At Large*. Founders Davea and John Fisher explained to me that the former name was turning off the very people they wanted to attract to their organization. Let's face it...it's a very long leap from barely being able to admit that you're (gulp!) overweight, to announcing to your family that you just joined FAT AND FABULOUS. "People At Large" is an easier first step, and knowing John and Davea, the word "fat" will continue to be used quite freely in the group. I wish them well under their new name.

It has long been suggested that NAAFA drop the word "fat". I suppose we could change it to "ample" or "abundant" but then we would be NAAAA. Naaaa?! No good.

Actually, it isn't the word "fat" I want to change. It serves a very good purpose tucked in there near the end after two polysyllabic words. Besides, if you are not ready to use the word "fat" loudly in conversation, you can always just admit to belonging to NAAFA or THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID fat AMERICANS. You can work up to the national association to aid FAT americans in time.

No, the small, but powerful, three letter word I'd like to change is "aid". Boy, I hate that word in our name and I have several good reasons for feeling this way.

1. The name, "The National Association to Aid Fat Americans", sounds like it's an organization of some really together, professional do-gooders (national and local) who are helping out a bunch of lost, lonely charity cases. It implies that NAAFA is powerful and that our members are not.

Think how the word "aid" is used. Foreign aid: Big, powerful governments send money to poor, starving undeveloped countries. Medicaid: Government funded medical care for low-income people and welfare recipients. First aid, even Band-aid, implies that there is someone injured, bleeding, maybe unconscious, and someone else (who isn't hurt) helping them. Mommys are always putting band-aids on kids' knees.

Well, that doesn't accurately describe NAAFA. We are an all-volunteer organization. No one has a monopoly on self-confidence, self-acceptance or pride. We are all on a path to these ideals. Some of us are further along than others and can lend a helping hand some of the time...but we all run into our rough times and reach out for help too. I've had the experience of giving support and advice to a chapter chairperson who has called me in need of my help, only to hang up and call my own chapter's chairperson for her support and advice about a personal fat-related problem.

There is a pervasive feeling in society that fat people need to be aided...usually with weight loss or therapy that will lead to weight loss. In fact, there are countless people and groups out there who want to "aid" us fat folks (usually for a large fee). To this end,

they have invested lots of advertising money to convince all too many of us that we are weak-willed, undisciplined, impotent people who have no control over our destinies or waistlines.

But lurking inside most of us are the tools and the power to take charge of our lives and to make some very positive changes...if we just stop believing the diet promoters' descriptions of us. NAAFA can educate us and help us reevaluate ourselves to find that power that has been there all along. NAAFA isn't powerful. NAAFA is you and me and it draws its power from us. We aid each other and ourselves.

2. The word "aid" in our name can be misunderstood to mean that we are in the business of dispensing aid (legal, medical, whatever) to individuals. While we (volunteers on committees or in chapters) can often help people with specific problems, NAAFA is much better equipped to deal with the problems of fat people as an oppressed minority group rather than the personal problems of any one person.

For example: NAAFA spends a significant percentage of its funds on the reeducation of the public about fat people and fatness. We do this through literature, press kits, interviews, etc. We hope to change the climate surrounding such issues as job discrimination. However, if a fat person requests specific AID because he or she has been denied employment on the basis of weight, we are limited as to what aid we can give. We can't supply an attorney. We can't fly Bill Fabrey to El Paso, Texas or Boise, Idaho to make court appearances. And without qualified volunteer help in this area, we are certainly not qualified to make legal recommendations as laws vary from state to state. So what good are we? Well, if the person has hired a lawyer or is being represented by their union or state's human rights commission, we can discuss the case with them, make some referrals, and supply various pieces of literature, articles, studies, etc. that might help the case. NAAFA, like the Lord, helps those who help themselves.

NAAFA gets letters every week from members and non-members with real problems who expect that NAAFA can AID them in very far-reaching, expensive ways. We do what we can, but often the person becomes disillusioned with NAAFA.

A \$25 NAAFA membership is not an insurance policy that entitles anyone to free legal aid or a free medical check-up if needed, so our name shouldn't be open to such interpretations.

3. The word "aid" in NAAFA almost invites people to join as what David Whiteis would call a passive consumer rather than as an active producer. (David has a great article called After the Party elsewhere in this issue, on just this topic.) In other words, many people join NAAFA and expect someone else to DO for them. They are just along for the ride...for the aid. What they fail to realize is that their NAAFA membership would hold much more meaning for them if they were part of things by helping in some way.

SHE POKED HER FINGER IN MY FACE AND SAID,
"LOOK....I JOINED THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
TO AID FAT AMERICANS. NOW AID ME!"

I was a chapter chairperson for two years and during that time I had some very strange conversations with people who wanted us to do something for them. The most unpleasant was with a woman who cornered me at a dance, complained bitterly about her job, her family, even her auto mechanic. Then she asked me what I was going to do about it. When I replied that I really didn't know how I could help, she announced that NAAFA was no good because we were unable to help her. She poked her finger in my face and said, "Look...I joined the National Association to Aid Fat Americans. Now AID me!" O.K., she was an extreme case. But I had other conversations like the one with a man who complained, "Why don't YOU PEOPLE have dances in my home town?" He lived 300 miles away in another state and wanted my chapter to have dances that would be convenient for him. When I suggested that he might like to start a local chapter in his area, he looked at me in amazement and huffed off into the crowd.

"YOU PEOPLE" is an expression that I hear quite a lot. "When are YOU PEOPLE going to have a pool party?" "How come YOU PEOPLE put the sandwiches out so late?" "How come YOU PEOPLE don't have anything for seniors/gays/students/diabetics?" I'd love for someone to explain to me just who YOU PEOPLE are! What about US PEOPLE? What about, "When are we having a pool party...I'll help to locate a pool," or "If I help with the sandwiches next time, can we put them out a little earlier?" We would both benefit from that.

That little word "aid" implies that someone (probably YOU PEOPLE) will be taking care of everything. It doesn't imply that we are an association of equal partners who can be sharing the work and the fun. It doesn't imply that we can all be writing letters, washing dishes, setting up decorations, writing articles, stuffing envelopes, or just bringing the cookies to the next meeting. The truth is we can all be part of NAAFA if we just stop waiting for YOU PEOPLE to do it.

That's why I think we should get rid of the word aid. Of course, if we do, what do we replace it with? According to Founder Bill Fabrey, the original discussion about the name included his suggestion of "The National Association of Fat Americans" but it was discarded because it implied to some that only fat people could join the fledgling organization. Bill also remembers envisioning NAAFA as an organization that would dispense aid as part of the program. However, it became apparent through the years that an increasing amount of NAAFA's energy and motivation was coming from the members themselves, with less emphasis on direct forms of aid from NAAFA to its members. Perhaps that is NAAFA's biggest success.

Our new name should accurately describe who we are. All of us (fat people, fat admirers and supporters alike) want a world where fatness is accepted. If fat was accepted, weight-related job discrimination wouldn't exist, peer pressure on F.A.'s would stop, families wouldn't harass fat people...in fact most, but not all, problems facing fat people today would be solved. That's why I propose that we change our name to "The National Association for Acceptance of Fat Americans". I think it says it all...and we don't even have to change our acronym. We would still be NAAFA! ★

c.o.b.'s corner

NOT FAT ENOUGH FOR NAAFA?

by William J. Fabrey
Chairman of the Board



A NAAFA member who says she weighs 230 pounds wrote to the AMPLE APPLE (Washington State Chapter bulletin) bemoaning the fact that she is too fat for society, but when she turned to NAAFA for acceptance, she encountered men who did not think she was fat enough for their taste.

She was quick to point out that she was not blaming NAAFA for this problem. I'm glad she did, because NAAFA is a self-help, civil rights organization whose members engage in social interaction as well. The social life in NAAFA is important, but it is not NAAFA.

Anyway, I can sympathize with the writer of the letter, and am writing a response to the APPLE. Meanwhile, the subject is raised once again, as it is from time to time: Just who is not fat enough for NAAFA, and why?

First, let's get the matter of taste out of the way. My taste in beauty, like everyone else's, is unfair and undemocratic. Nobody I know, F.A.'s included, sits down and decides how to make his or her taste in beauty, and sexual preference, fairer for all concerned. None of us

is personally responsible for escorting, dancing with, or stroking the ego of, everyone. We all have to make some choices, as cruel as that may seem. And none of this is the responsibility or concern of NAAFA, the organization.

Second, not all F.A.'s confine their interest to those at the upper end of the weight "spectrum." I know some F.A.'s who primarily date those below 250 pounds. And it is a rare man or woman who has no physical preference at all.

Third, the situation is not confined to male F.A.'s and their taste in women. I weigh 220 pounds at 5' 10" in height, and I have dated NAAFA women, themselves fat, who thought that I was too fat for their taste! Larger men than myself have written to complain of the same problem. So who's being unfair?

What do these problems have to do with NAAFA? Absolutely nothing, if you view NAAFA as an organization that is fighting the oppression of fat people and their admirers; as a means of learning to come to terms with your own weight or weight preferences; as a place where you can make friends of both sexes; and so forth. However, of those NAAFA's who join for the sole reason to have romance, to date, to get married, etc. etc., some will get what they are looking for, and some will not. I'm not saying that dating and romance are not valid interests--just that when they are your only interest in NAAFA, you may be doomed to disappointment.

Look, things are tough all over! If an average-sized woman walks into a single's bar looking to meet someone to be interested in her, and she is unsuccessful, should she blame the bar? Better to go into the bar with a friend, enjoy your drink, and if you don't meet Prince or Princess Charming that night, at least you have a night out with a friend and a good drink...

There is a reverse discrimination in NAAFA unrelated to dating and sex, although it also occurs in the social environment (meetings, workshops, local and national events, etc.)--I am talking about the attitude of a few of NAAFA's fatter members towards those who weigh less, usually under 250 pounds. Women especially, who are much smaller than the average NAAFA female, often hear something like "why are you in NAAFA? You don't look fat enough to have any problems" or words to that effect.

Sometimes it is meant as a compliment of sorts, but the message of rejection that it delivers hurts just the same. I wish it were possible to get a message across to everyone in NAAFA who has ever told someone that he or she is "not fat enough for NAAFA." The message (and I don't want to sound pompous about it) is that your thinner acquaintance is still considered "obese" in the outside world, even if he or she appears small when standing next to other, larger NAAFA's. Unless she or he is an anorectic and genuinely thin, they have probably experienced much the same ridicule and anguish about their weight that larger NAAFA's have.

If you are one of NAAFA's larger members, do you remember when you were in 10th grade and weighed 180 pounds, and were told that you were the "biggest blimp on the block?" Well, 180 pound women (and 250 pound men) still get treated that way today. Please don't add to their misery by making them feel like misfits in NAAFA!

And a final message for those who encounter rejection or putdowns from men and women in the social arena of NAAFA due to their fat-but-not-fat-enough size: Recognize that people are entitled to their taste, ignore the nitwits who are rude or thoughtless enough to make you feel out of place, don't blame NAAFA itself for any of those problems, work on your other attributes (dress, grooming, personality, intellect, whatever you like), make friends, and be a friend. Some of the finest people in the world are here in NAAFA. Find them.

FAT BEAUTY CONTESTS

As a young adult F.A. I used to moan and groan about the fact that the various beauty pageants (Miss America, Miss World, Miss Universe, Miss Galaxy, ad nauseum) had no fat contestants. After a few years, I decided that the feminists were right, that such contests were degrading to women. This year I have a great opportunity

to test my decision, which might, after all, have been a case of sour grapes...because wonder of wonders, we are to have no less than three fat beauty contests, perhaps within the space of a year. For 80 years, nothing, and now three in one year? Gimme a break!

O.K., so they had one in Manilla, Phillipines, and also in Cleveland, Ohio not long ago, and the world did not come to an end. But, according to the article elsewhere in this Newsletter, these three coming sound like they will be well promoted, and perhaps even well put together. So how do I feel, and how does NAAFA feel about fat (oops, big) beauty contests?

I know how the Board of Directors feels. When asked whether NAAFA would endorse the contest held in Cleveland, they decided to refrain from any involvement in beauty contests, but to offer a gift membership in NAAFA to the winners; nobody could be hurt by receiving a gift membership in NAAFA, they felt.

But what of my opinion on the subject? Well, I know that it's time that fat beauty was recognized, and the upcoming pageants may help do that in the eyes of the public, if they are run "properly", whatever that means. And I will try to view them with an open mind, to see if any benefits to the fat pride movement accrue afterwards.

However, even as an F.A., I don't feel that beauty can be measured in pounds, or even judged objectively. I am inclined to judge buildings, not people. I certainly have my private notions of what is attractive and what isn't, but that isn't the same as a public contest.

A reporter called recently, and asked whether NAAFA was involved in one of the upcoming pageants, and since it was not, how did I feel about such contests? I replied that by its very nature, NAAFA must take the position that anyone can be beautiful, and therefore, has refrained in the past from involvement in such contests. The reporter (female) seemed pleased with my statement.

Meanwhile, a lot of energy gets expended by those who are opposed to beauty contests (as reported in the last Newsletter). Does any of the debate affect the average man or woman on the street? Probably not. I hope that the upcoming fat beauty contests do not cause us to use up energy in conflict that could be used to greater benefit elsewhere!

THE NAME CHANGE

Elsewhere in this issue, an editorial suggests that the words "to Aid" in NAAFA's name be replaced by "for Acceptance of." Speaking as someone who was there when the original name was adopted, I have to agree that the word "Acceptance" is much more fitting to describe what NAAFA is all about, than is the word "Aid." Not only that, many minority and handicapped groups no longer wish to be aided. They seek acceptance as equals whenever possible. Acceptance is a word for the 1980's... let's adopt it as soon as we can. ★

ELECTION NOTICE

The 1984 Election Committee (consisting of Angela Cappiello, Paula Dachis, William Fabrey, Susan Hoey, and Russell Williams) report that there will be four available seats on the Board for the June, 1984 election. Candidates have not yet been selected, so anyone interested in running for the Board should contact the NAAFA office immediately. To be eligible for the Board of Directors, one must have been a member of NAAFA for at least a year as of the date of nomination, be at least 21 years old, and be able to attend 7-10 meetings per year, usually held on Friday nights in the New York metropolitan area.

There is also a procedure for nomination by petition. Such candidates must present a petition for his or her candidacy signed by at least 25 members of NAAFA, along with certain balloting material, no later than April 1, 1984. Those who are interested should request a copy of the election rules, available from the NAAFA office. ★

health



WILLIAM BENNETT, M.D.

In order to satisfy this Newsletter's ambition to print regular information on the subjects of health and fat activism, we are proud to reproduce the letter written by NAAFA Advisor William Bennett, M.D., in support of proposed legislation in the State of Ohio. It was written on July 16, 1983, and is said to have helped gain passage of the bill in the Ohio Senate.

Quite simply, it may be the most eloquent and authoritative piece of writing ever created in support of such anti-discrimination legislation, and also in condemnation of anti-fat employment practices.

The letter is as follows:

Senator Michael Schwarzwald
Ohio Senate
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Senator Schwarzwald:

I am writing with regard to Senate Bill #130, which would introduce the words "height" and "weight" into Ohio's civil rights legislation.

In particular, I wish to address the question of discrimination on the basis of body weight or, more accurately, fatness. In the course of some four years of reviewing the literature on weight control and interviewing national authorities on the subject, I came to the conclusion that weight discrimination is pernicious and unjust (and, indeed, that it is a major contributing factor to the current epidemic of anorexia nervosa and bulimia). The background for this opinion is detailed in The Dieter's Dilemma: Eating Less and Weighing More (New York: Basic Books, 1982), which I wrote with Joel Gurin, who is now editor of American Health magazine.

The major points that I shall make are the following four:

1. It is impossible to formulate a general definition of "overweight" that can be applied equally to all individuals, so there is no consistent standard by which to judge whether a person is or is not "normal." Thus, distinctions based on body weight must be arbitrary, and they create the potential for yet other, subjective kinds of discrimination.

2. Discrimination on the basis of weight affects women more than men and potentially works against certain ethnic or racial minorities as well. Thus it becomes a doubly invidious burden.

3. In any case, discrimination against individuals termed "overweight," simply on the basis of their weight, cannot be rationally supported. The claim that it can be justified by the poor health status of fat people is invalid for two reasons. First, there is no solid body of evidence behind the notion that a fat person, just because he or she is fat, will enjoy worse health than average. Although there are statistical associations between weight and various clinical conditions, even when valid these statistical connections do not implicate all fat people. Moreover, in some cases, the statistics are in serious dispute or are demonstrably biased. Second, even if we were to accept the notion that potential ill health is a sufficient reason to discriminate against people, in all fairness, we ought to use "potential for ill health" as the criterion for judging them -- not fatness per se. This would mean screening all people for a variety of risk factors and basing our judgements on those that are most important: smoking (first and foremost), alcohol consumption, high blood pressure, diabetes, a family history of

heart disease and certain cancers, possession of firearms, use of seat belts, and, perhaps, weight. To single out weight is really just to choose a visible characteristic -- and one that is relatively minor among the predictors of ill health. (Incidentally, the life expectancy of blacks in the U.S. is less than that of whites. Does this fact justify discrimination against blacks -- or does it serve as an argument against such discrimination?)

4. The belief is widespread that body fatness is subject to voluntary control. But much evidence indicates that fatness is not voluntary -- particularly the more extreme degrees. Yet it is the very fat people, whose condition is least likely to be self-imposed, who suffer most from discrimination. Moreover, there is no published proof that any of the recommended methods of weight control, including the so-called "sensible" ones really work as they are claimed to.

Now I would like to go into each of these points in more detail.

1. Any evaluation of a person's weight is necessarily arbitrary. There is no conceivable standard that can be used to distinguish one individual as "overweight" and another as "normal." To cite a classic example: In 1942, two physicians for the U.S. Navy took careful measurements of twenty-five professional football players. Seventeen of these athletes could have been classified as unfit for military service because they were more than 15 percent above the "average weight for height" determined from insurance company tables available at the time. The men were, as the doctors observed, in "prime physical condition." Their weight came from big muscles, of course (W.C. Welham and A.R. Behnke, "The Specific Gravity of Healthy Men," Journal of the American Medical Association 118:498-501, 1942). As recently as 1981, the Defense Department was still grappling with this problem. The results of a three-year study had shown that heavy people, including many who did not meet current weight standards, were stronger than lighter individuals. For such chores as opening hatches and unlocking watertight doors, heavy people proved superior to those meeting arbitrary standards.

Obviously, it would be possible to measure people's fat content rather than their weight. But where are you going to set the limit if you use one of those elaborate measurements of body fat? How are you going to decide that one person, at say 28 percent, is "normal," whereas another, at 29 percent, is not? Until this question is addressed and fairly answered, there is no conceivable way that a just distinction can be made between people solely on the basis of body composition. And I know of absolutely nothing in the scientific or medical literature that gives us a basis for drawing a neat line that would separate all people into two groups. Thus, calling any one individual "overweight" and another "normal" is no different from attempting to decide on the basis, say of parentage, that one person is "white", whereas another with one-eighth African ancestry, or one-sixteenth, or one-thirty-second, for example, is black.

Indeed, there is no accepted medical definition of overweight or obesity. When it is necessary to use these terms in the medical literature, standards derived from the insurance industry are most commonly used. The insurance industry has developed tables which claim to identify "desirable weights" for people, and its premiums are set accordingly. But using these tables as a standard for distinguishing "overweight" from "normal" individuals is impossible.

The definition of "desirable weight" is, in the first place, statistical. It is, ostensibly, the typical weight (for any given height) at which the mortality rate is lowest. This actuarial definition may hold for a group of people who are similar in all characteristics to the insured population, but it does not necessarily hold for an individual member of that group or for members of dissimilar populations. Furthermore, there are many reasons to think that the statistics themselves cannot be generalized to the population at large.

(a) The tables are based only on the experience of people who take out life insurance policies -- not a valid sample of all Americans.

(b) For many decades, insurance companies have publicized the fact that they regard "overweight" people as bad risks. Agents have known this, and we must assume that they have systematically avoided selling policies to people they perceive as overweight. Thus, the insurance companies' sample of "overweights" is likely to include a larger number of people who are actively seeking life insurance, and are willing to pay a higher premium for it. This type of bias is known to create unfavorable mortality statistics in the affected group. Thus, to take an historical example, throughout the last century and the first quarter of this one, insurance companies' records showed that women had a shorter life expectancy than men -- even though vital statistics records made it clear that the reverse was true. Because the companies avoided encouraging a large spectrum of women to buy policies, insurance was sold only to those women who actively desired coverage. This group of women, for obvious reasons, proved not to be as healthy as women in general, and thus a self-fulfilling prophecy was created.

(c) Insurance examiners' measurements of height and weight are not carefully controlled. There is reason to question whether they are based on anything but the applicant's own assertion in many cases. Even when weights are actually taken, they are measured in street clothes, for which a fudge factor is allowed, and they often appear to be rounded off in recording. The reason for emphasizing this point is to make it clear that the numbers in an insurance table are necessarily quite soft. If you are going to base a distinction between "desirable" weight and "overweight" on these tables, you can't seriously take the upper boundary (say 154 pounds for a man of medium frame who is 5'7" tall) as defining a precise limit. Moreover, "frame size" is a concept that has no scientific meaning. There is no way to prove that someone is small-framed as opposed to large-framed. Thus, the insurance numbers cannot be read literally.

Thus, even if it is the case that, on the whole, insurance numbers reflect a real tendency of "overweights" to suffer premature mortality, we must admit that a sharp boundary cannot be drawn between those of normal life expectancy and those who are at higher risk.

...I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY CONCEIVABLE WAY TO JUSTIFY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FAT PEOPLE, BECAUSE THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY TO DEFINE, FAIRLY AND HONESTLY, WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "OVERWEIGHT" OR "TOO FAT."

Then how is the boundary between fat and thin defined in practice? How much extra weight might be allowed for the possibility of error? What do we do with someone who weighs only a pound or two more than the upper boundary that we choose? Is discrimination against the person we finally say is "too fat" really justified on the basis of a measurable decrease in life expectancy. Or have we made a purely arbitrary judgement. Unless these questions can be given a fair and consistent answer, I don't think there is any conceivable way to justify discrimination against fat people, because there is simply no way to define, fairly and honestly, what is meant by the term "overweight" or "too fat."

2. In fact, the judgment of whether someone is "too fat" or not is based mainly on appearance. In practice, moreover, this form of discrimination is applied to fat women more than fat men, as Stanley Garr and his colleagues have shown ("Level of Education, Level of Income, and Level of Fatness in Adults," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 30:721-25, 1977), and more recent work has confirmed. Men are generally judged by what they can do, not how they look; women are still subject to intense discrimination on the basis of personal appearance. Moreover, the prevailing expectation is that women should maintain an abnormally thin physique.

The pressure on women to be preternaturally thin translates into job discrimination against even those women of normal weight, and it has formed the basis of the current epidemic of anorexia nervosa and bulimia, which are pathological attempts by women of normal weight to meet a distorted cultural standard of physical attractiveness.

Moreover, as I will point out in the last section of this letter, certain racial and ethnic groups have a genetic predisposition to become fat. Thus, they are also potentially liable to double discrimination if their weight is held against them.

3. The assertion is sometimes made that the poor health status of fat people justifies discrimination against them. This proposition may have either of two meanings:

(a) The fat person is unable to do a particular job adequately because of his or her poor health,

or

(b) The alleged fact that a fat person faces a shorter life expectancy with abnormally poor health means that he or she will be an economic liability, say to an employer.

The first proposition can be dealt with briefly. If a fat person indeed cannot adequately do a particular job, then there is no need to consider his or her size at all. The question is one of performance, not physical attributes. (I personally believe that fat people are, however, entitled to due consideration for their size, as are people with other physical limitations. It would be unfair to ask the person in the office with a bad back to carry a filing cabinet upstairs; likewise, it would be unreasonable to expect a very fat person to look for something in the far corner of a crowded supply closet.)

The second of these two propositions is somewhat more problematic. The underlying notion is that an employer, for example, has the right not only to select employees on the basis of predictions about how long they will live or how healthy they will be, but also is entitled to select criteria arbitrarily as the basis of these predictions.

If true and consistent criteria can be found for predicting an employee's long-range potential for good health and longevity, I suppose it might be fair to use them. (But I have serious reservations on this point. I think there are deep practical and ethical problems involved in making such judgments about someone who is currently in reasonable health.) If an employer really intends to distinguish between potential employees on the basis of the statistical likelihood that they will suffer increased morbidity and mortality, then that is what he or she should do. But then the appropriate criteria should be chosen, and not some arbitrary factor.

What about fatness as a risk factor? Is it the only one that should be used, the main one, or even a major one? The insurance companies have argued that "overweight" or "obesity" is a risk factor for early death, but as I have pointed out already their methods are highly suspect. The distinguished epidemiologist, Professor Ancel Keys of the University of Minnesota and his colleagues have conducted a major, ten-year survey of coronary heart disease and the associated risk factors in seven countries located on three continents: Yugoslavia, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, the United States, and Japan. They considered "overweight and obesity" as possible independent risk factors, but when the analysis was complete, they reported: "In none of the areas of this study was overweight or obesity a major risk factor for death, or the incidence of coronary heart disease. In most of the areas the probability of death in ten years appeared to be least for the men somewhat over the average in relative weight or fatness. Findings in other prospective studies support the conclusion that overweight and obesity are much less

serious risk factors than popularly supposed and suggested by the older reports from the life insurance industry" (Ance! Keys, Seven Countries: A Multivariate Analysis of Death and Coronary Heart Disease, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 194-195).

The insurance companies themselves have recently revised the "desirable weight tables" upward. The significance of this change has been much discussed and commented upon. One faction has actually argued that the revision should be ignored, and the old tables kept, because it is bad for people to be at the higher weights, even if the actuaries are no longer able to show that it is bad. This sort of argument is obviously nonsensical. The important point to make about the Society of Actuaries' 1959 and 1979 build studies is that the latter failed to replicate the earlier one. If strict scientific standards are maintained, a failure to replicate data means that you cannot draw conclusions from either set of results. You have to go back and do more work until you have accounted for the difference or produced repeatable findings.

A remarkable attempt to bail out the 1959 tables has just been published by Garrison and colleagues "Cigarette Smoking as a Confounder of the Relationship between Relative Weight and Long-Term Mortality: The Framingham Heart Study," Journal of the American Medical Association 249:2199-2203, (1983). In this paper, the authors claim to "validate" the general conclusions of the 1959 insurance tables by showing that cigarette smokers (1) are thinner than nonsmokers and (2) have a much higher mortality. Thus, the very high death rates of the thinner smokers tends to obscure the slightly higher death rates of the fat nonsmokers. From this finding, the authors conclude that the insurance studies have been right all along. But they simply ignore the fact that the insurance companies' investigation was based on a mixed population of both smokers and nonsmokers. Thus Garrison et al. are purporting to confirm the insurance data by using a differently selected population. Moreover, their results contradict an earlier paper on the same group of people, the residents of Framingham, Massachusetts (Paul Sorlie et al., "Body Build and Mortality: The Framingham Study," Journal of the American Medical Association 243:1826-1831, 1980), but the authors do not comment on this divergence from their own colleagues' findings.

THE EVIDENCE THAT "OVERWEIGHT" IN AND OF ITSELF LEADS TO HIGHER THAN NORMAL MORTALITY RATES IS NOT BASED ON SOLID, STRAIGHTFORWARD EVIDENCE.

I go into this subject in such labored detail only to make a fundamental point: the evidence that "overweight" in and of itself leads to higher than normal mortality rates is not based on solid, straightforward evidence. The question is at present highly controversial, and there are many anomalies in the data.

Moreover, although fat people are statically more likely than thin ones to develop diabetes and high blood pressure (both of them serious diseases), and this association has been clearly demonstrated, even here the relationship is not a simple one. As Richard Havlik et al. report in a paper on "Weight and Hypertension" (Annals of Internal Medicine 98(part 2): 855-859, 1983), the age at which weight is gained may be more important in the development of high blood pressure than the absolute weight at a given time. In particular, weight gained during young adulthood is most likely to be followed by hypertension. In other words, even where there is a valid statistical association, the connection may be so complex that it is impossible simply to weigh and measure someone and make a decent prediction about that individual's prospects of developing a subsequent illness.

Now, if an employer wished to justify weight discrimination on the grounds that it represents a poor health

risk, he or she should first consider much more important variables--notably cigarette smoking, which has a vastly more significant effect on health and longevity than body weight. Indeed, any employer who tried to justify excluding fat people as health risks could only defend that policy by excluding cigarette smokers and individuals who consume more than the equivalent of four beers a day--both of them more serious risks than typical degrees of "overweight." And, of course, the same employer should exclude people with diabetes, high blood pressure, high serum cholesterol levels, and a strong family history of certain diseases.

4. "But," it may be objected, "the conditions listed in your last sentence are involuntary, whereas the fat person brings on his or her own problem." In reality, however, there is a substantial body of evidence indicating that fatness is not, in the majority of people, subject to much voluntary control. There is solid evidence from animal studies, which Mr. Gurin and I have summarized in our book, that the fundamental mechanisms controlling the amount of fat an organism maintains are built into its body and brain--and are very resistant to change. There is also evidence from human studies (which are much more difficult to conduct) that the same is true of people.

It seems very likely, on the basis of the few studies that are available, that fatness has a strong genetic basis. I recommend the cautious summary by Terry! Foch and Gerald E. McClearn, "Genetics, Body Weight, and Obesity," in Albert Stunkard's volume Obesity (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1980). The report, from estimates based on studies of fraternal versus identical twins, that a person's degree of fatness may be as much as 70 percent inherited. To simplify somewhat, this implies that if one person is thin and the other fat, about 70 percent of the difference between them can be attributed to their different genes, and only the remaining 30 percent to experience, habits, or environment.

Now it is very clear from studies of certain ethnic groups, such as American Indians (particularly the Pima of Arizona) and Samoans, that obesity emerges as a problem when they move from a relatively primitive economy to a relatively modern, urbanized lifestyle. That is, while living perfectly normal lives--even somewhat rigorous ones--and eating normal amounts by prevailing American standards, these peoples suffer a very high rate of obesity. Discrimination against fat people would automatically penalize these people, who have a clear genetic propensity to obesity when they are living in a standard American environment. (It might be possible for them to return to their ancestors' physiques, but only if they were to go back to an arduous lifestyle, with long days of hard physical labor in an environment threatened by frequent droughts and famine. Can we fairly ask this of them?)

The unsupported and erroneous belief that fat people can make themselves thin by an act of will is fostered by an enormous number of advertising claims for weight-loss and weight-control plans. The fact of the matter is that no diet or weight-control program of any kind has ever proved that a majority of the people who try it can achieve and maintain clinically significant weight loss for a period of, say, five years. Yet the fundamental standard by which we would judge any treatment program for a chronic medical condition requires just such proof.

Remarkably enough, common assertions--frequently made by experts--such as "Permanent weight loss can be attained through permanent change in eating habits," have never been backed up with anything like adequate research. Although this particular statement is freely made, and often appears in standard textbooks, I have never seen any evidence that backs it up. Studies of long-term weight regulation are virtually nonexistent, and follow-up studies of weight-loss programs rarely extend beyond six months. Those that do have consistently shown poor results. Thus, it appears that current "medical treatment" for obesity is based on theory, not experience. It is probably ineffective in the large

majority of cases.

I am not saying that no one can or does lose weight-- or even keep it off for years at a time. What I am saying is that this does not appear to be the case for the majority of people who try, and even though some may succeed, we really don't know how they do it. People who maintain weight loss often attribute their achievement to a diet, but close questioning may reveal that other significant aspects of their lives have changed, and the diet may have been quite incidental.

Until we can clearly say to fat people, "There is a proven method of long-term weight control that works for at least a majority of the people who try it," we cannot ask them to hazard their health and their lives on the endless gimmicks and hoaxes which are fattening the profits of publishers and diet entrepreneurs without slenderizing the customers whose pain and suffering are exploited by them. Yet, by permitting discrimination on the basis of body size, that is tacitly the situation that we are endorsing.

I hope these comments are helpful to you. I regret that my schedule would not permit me to come to Columbus in person to discuss the matter in more detail.

Very truly yours,

William Bennett, M.D.
Acting Editor

P.S. I have written this on letterhead to identify myself. My opinions and views are my own and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter or its board. ★

feature

SWIM STORY

by Susan Dubin
California

"If you want to sing out, sing out,
And if you want to be free, be free.
Cause there's a million things to be,
You know that there are."

Maude's Song, Cat Stevens

What can you say about a fat woman who swims? That she is self-confident, beautiful, strong and brave? You bet you can!

All across the American continent fat women are making waves by reclaiming their rights to enjoy aquatic sports and pleasures. And swim we do.

"You get twenty fat women in an olympic-sized pool and we move that water!" exclaims Sue Nyman of Seattle's Maxi-Swim.

Each group has its own method of utilizing swim time. Long Island meets several times a week with its concentration placed firmly on exercise. Seattle combines exercise with free time. San Francisco enjoys free time in the water with the option of lap swimming and volleyball, while Kansas City and Calgary both feature exercise regimens. But whatever the orientation of the particular chapter, the fact that they are participating has made changes in peoples' lives.

Many of those who engage in the exercise programs receive what Nancy Summer of Long Island calls "a feeling of exhilaration" after a good workout.

"I find myself driving home in my car, whistling to myself, experiencing a wonderful sense of well-being and euphoria."

The exercise programs vary, but generally consist of a combination of lap swimming, swimnastics, and, in some

instances, aerobic exercises. Swimnastics generally involve exercises which emphasize the weight of the water being measured against the weight of the body. Lifeguards at all the centers have been particularly helpful in building up a feeling of confidence and self-worth in the women. They devote programs which are sensitive to individual ability and build gradually to greater expenditures of energy. Lynn Martin of Calgary reports that their lifeguard is "particularly helpful and supportive." She assists in aquasizes, group and synchronized swimming. All organizers concur that the sensitive, attuned lifeguard is an important adjunct to the success of the program.

While most of the groups are open to women outside of NAAFA, they are all limited to women participants, although there is some discussion in Calgary about opening up the classes to FA's who have expressed an interest in attendance.

Nancy Summer commented on the fact that women outside of NAAFA tend to show up in black one-piece suits to begin with and generally "identify themselves by what diet program they are currently participating in." They apparently also distinguish themselves by running for the scales the minute they leave the water. However, Nancy reports that after awhile, the colors begin to emerge as women become more comfortable with themselves and their bodies.

A current running through all the programs is the change in women's attitudes towards themselves physically. Often there is a shyness and awkwardness in the lockerrooms at first which in a few weeks is replaced by laughter and openness. Some amazing transformations have occurred as a result of participation in these groups. Linda Martin of Kansas City reports that, "One of the women had a health problem. She is in her 50's and works in a hospital and was unable to walk up the steps. She started out swimming once a week, then came twice a week. Her stamina increased and she was able finally to walk up the steps at the hospital."

In Long Island, a woman joined the program who was suffering from agoraphobia (not able to leave her home) and who had a problem in her legs after a car accident. Swimming was her first step out, and after a few weeks in the program, she blossomed, got a job, made many new friends, and began sewing clothes for a number of women in the group.

In Calgary, a woman who felt unpopular was surprised to learn that she was very well liked by the group, and in fact was just about everyone's favorite person! Many women in all the groups had not put on a swimsuit since childhood or their teens. These programs provide the opportunity to enjoy swimming without harassment. Some people now feel confident enough to swim in public after their experiences with the group.

In Kansas City, Linda Martin tells about a very special program that has begun--the nude swim.

"A lot of the women had never felt the freedom to swim in the nude. It is a feeling of reclaiming another part of our lives, claiming back the right to do that. Most of the women had never done that before. This group provides a safe situation for women to participate in an activity that seems to usually be reserved for thin women."

The groups range in size from 6 to 50 with Long Island being the largest.

"When we started out we had to beg people to join, but now everyone clambers for space at the side of the pool!"

Dr. Bennett [William Bennett, M.D., co-author of The Dieter's Dilemma and a member of NAAFA's Advisory Board] suggests that it would take three rigorous swims a week to begin to make a difference in weight setpoint. However, an important adjunct of these programs is the fact that there are offshoots that often grow from the swim program. San Francisco boasts both dance and aerobic classes and each group I spoke with informed me of some kind of exercise program available outside of the swim class.

This all seems like a great beginning towards reclaiming a right which should have been ours all along. Let's get out and start swimming for freedom...and swimming for health! ★

MMMM, MMMM, GOOD?

by June Bailey
Ohio



I would like to report a case of child abuse, please. (Actually, I wouldn't like to, it's just that I must.) It's bad enough that the poor CAMPBELL KIDS are seventy-nine years old...but now the Madison Avenue Image Molders (commonly known as M.A.I.M.) think the kids are too fat and want to slim them down.

Sure, the thing to do with fat kids is to put them on a diet. While you are at it, send them to a fat camp, give them thyroid pills and amphetamines, force them into joining the Little League, browbeat and ridicule them by calling them nasty names. Be sure to tell them that nobody is going to want to marry them when they grow up, they will never have any friends and they will have to spend their lives alone, unhappy, unhealthy, unwanted and unloved. Reinforce the guilt by teaching them that fat is ugly, too. Don't forget to remind them that they won't live very long.

But the CAMPBELL KIDS are different. The CAMPBELL SOUP COMPANY wants to put them on a diet...but all they need to do is put the M.A.I.M.'s in charge. Campbell's, it seems, wants to give the kids a new image to fit our changing society which is weight-conscious and emphasizes nutrition and athletics.

Paul Mulcahy, managing director of advertising for Campbell's says he will make no overt effort to "bring them into this decade. We're not going to make any radical changes, but they will be 'slimmer'." He assures us that they will never look skinny. "The configuration of their faces is such that they will always look pudgy and healthy," he said. They will have a few less bulges and be able to wear stretchy, tight-fitting outfits to portray figure skaters and winter sports enthusiasts.

A Campbell's spokesman, Don Dollack said, "Way back when these kids were conceived, if you were chubby, you were healthy. Today, there's a different outlook on what constitutes physical fitness. Contemporary standards are different." (They sure are.)

The kids underwent a facelift in 1951 and had their clothes updated. They have already been through one slimming program during the '70's when the company introduced their "light" soups. The soups were so light they must have floated away. I don't see them anymore.

Before Dollack shut up he said, "We've changed the pudginess of the kids to make them a little more athletic looking. You don't make abrupt changes. It's going to be a gradual thing." Dollack seems to be contradicting Mulcahy. If the kids' faces will remain pudgy and healthy why doesn't the same rule apply to their "bulges". I don't understand. Fat faces look healthy but fat bodies don't?

Before we go any further with this, let it be known that Campbell Soup is sponsoring the U.S. National Figure Skating Team and is the official soup of the 1984 Winter Olympics. Please understand that money has nothing to do with this. (The Easter Bunny brings you a basket of candy, too!)

I can just visualize these M.A.I.M. child abusers sitting around a highly-polished conference table over there in Camden, New Jersey thinking up ways to sell soup, figure skating, the Winter Olympics and stretchy, tight-fitting outfits. They are probably munching on Presidential vodka-laced jelly beans all the while. (Status, you know.) I know they have to sell their soup. I wish I could sell mine too, but then who would want to buy soup from a fat lady and end up looking ugly? (My soup is good, though. Especially the vegetable soup...

big chunks of carrots, onion, melt-in-your-mouth potatoes, silky noodles swimming around and lots of stringy beef. Huh? Oh, yeah. We were discussing the M.A.I.M.s.)

Well, there they sit in Camden, New Jersey, inventing ways to satisfy the skinny, soup-slurping society. Since they are sponsoring the Winter Olympics, which will command the attention of a vast television audience, they can't be flashing these fat, unhealthy kids around the tube. Yet, they can't go too far or nobody will recognize their trade-marked kids. (Sounds like they want their soup and eat it too.) What a dilemma!

Two pounds of vodka jelly beans later they decided on a compromise. They will keep the faces but trim the bodies. Poor kids. Now they'll have to walk around with those great big heads precariously balanced on skinny bodies!

I guess I'm taking all of this seriously because I remember the Campbell Soup Kids from my own childhood days. Those chubby faces with their adorable expressions peered out at me from the magazine ad and I could really relate to them. Those faces and their softly rounded bodies and dimpled knees were just like mine! They were a solace to me in my world which rang with the sound of "Fatty, fatty, two by four." I was eighteen before I realized I could get through the bathroom door. I guess I just don't want to see them subjected to the same abuse I suffered.

Since my own kids are grown up and gone from home, and it gets quiet around here sometimes, maybe I could fix up the spare room with kid curtains and bedspreads, and adopt the Campbell kids. If they lived with us, I would be really good to them and make them big pots of homemade soup that wouldn't have any yeast extract, hydrolyzed plant protein, monosodium glutamate or potato starch in it. (That stuff is all listed on the Campbell's Soup label.) It will have lots of Vitamin C, Thiamine, Riboflavin, Calcium and Iron unlike the Campbell's which doesn't have any of these things. Read the label: for your 60 calories you are getting 2 grams of protein, 7 grams of carbohydrates, 3 grams of fat and 2,225 milligrams of sodium. No wonder the darn thing fizzed when I opened the can. It has high blood pressure from all that salt!

I'll show my Campbell Kids a lot of love, care for them and keep them safe. I'll teach them that differences in body size should be accepted and respected. I'll equip them with love, compassion and kindness and I'll teach them not to allow themselves to be manipulated by the M.A.I.M.s who prey upon impressionable minds in order to boost television ratings for sports events. I'll help them stamp out the cloying, dim-witted advertising persons and their big piles of money.

I think I'll also enlist their help in rounding up those M.A.I.M.s, stuffing them into stretchy, tight-fitting skating outfits, transporting them to the Arctic and letting them skate their way back to New Jersey.

Meanwhile, I'm buying generic soup. I think I'll buy generic jelly beans, too. After all, I'm just plain folks. You can write to the Campbell Soup Company, Camden, NJ 01801. ★

"QUOTABLE QUOTES"

"TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING CAN BE WONDERFUL!"

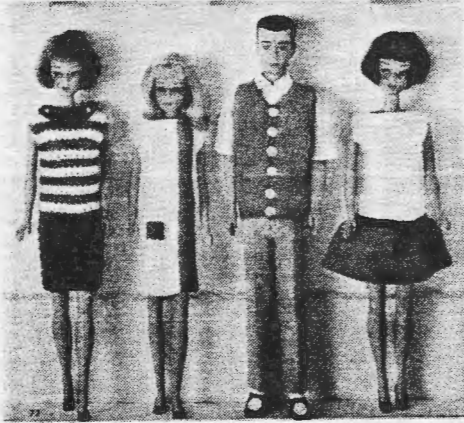
"ONE FIGURE SOMETIMES ADDS UP TO QUITE A LOT."

--MAE WEST

ARTICLES THAT APPEAR IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICIES OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC. UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED. PLEASE CONTACT THE NAAFA OFFICE IF YOU REQUIRE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFIC NAAFA POLICIES.

BODY IMAGE

by Nancy Summer (11/80)



I. BARBIE

Barbie is 23 this year.
A long legged beauty
with full pointed breasts...
tiny waist.
Soft, thick brown hair
falls on shoulders,
frames a lovely face...
dark lashed eyes,
red painted lips.
Barbie is perfect.
Beyond the perfection
of the centerfold,
For even they must be retouched,
a dot, a brush stroke,
in the photographer's lab.
But not Barbie.
No mole, no little scar, no freckle
disturbs the perfection
of her creamy skin.
Barbie is 23 this year.
Barbie is a doll.

Plastic, lacquer, acetate, paint...
squeezed into molds.
Drops of glue hold hair in place.
Legions, rows and rows
of perfect little Barbies,
lined up, belted, traveling
to quality control.
Too small breasts,
too heavy thighs...
Unfit Barbies
plucked from the line.
Discarded in the trash bin.

II. AMY

Amy is 14 this year.
Not a child, not quite a woman...
confused, learning.
Stands naked
before the mirror
before the dance.
Reflections:
Her room, her life,
yellow gingham and lace,
posters of rock stars,
stuffed animals,
Barbie Dolls watch on...
superior with their eyebrows raised.
Nail polish, mascara, new dress...
Armor for the sophomore hop.
Touches blemish concealer to her face.
Stops, frowns.
Can't hide the freckles...
Hair isn't right...
too red, too curly.
Too big, too fat
to go
to dance?

Young breasts, rosy tipped,
(not as big as Joan's or Sue's)
and worried:
The right one's smaller than the left.
Do they even out in time?
And legs and stomach, too fat.
Fear.
Dresses...
Too late, time to go, anyway.

Rows and rows
of imperfect little women,
lined up
waiting to be asked to dance.
Too small breasts,
too heavy thighs,
Unfit Amys
plucked from the line.
Discarded wallflowers.
Maybe next year
they'll bloom.

III. SANDY

Sandy is 31 this year.
Confused.
Hurt on the outside,
angry within.
Too many contradictions...
wonders if she's crazy,
(her therapist says she's not.)
Girlfriends married.
Left alone...
the unchosen single woman.
Loss or blessing?
She doesn't know.
Bright
Pretty
Funny
Full of life, bursting...
all potential buried under
FAT.
Disappointed in herself,
Dieting, trying, fails again.
Cold stormy November day,
she sits in the attic.
Sleet, raindrops
clatter on the roof.
Digs through old boxes:
Holds her teddy bear,
rocks back and forth.
All those years...gone.
Her Girl Scout badges,
symbols of so much success...
that stopped.
Her doll house, the homemaker's dream,
complete with miniature crib and baby.
She pushes it aside.
Too dusty, too many spider webs.
Albums:
Photographs of chubby little girls,
and plump teen-agers.
All her:
The Fat Lady.
A lace dress,
(the Senior Father-Daughter Dance?)
Was she ever that thin?
Remembers...feeling so fat then.
"My God...What am I now?" she asks.

A box of dolls.
Barbies.
Still young, unchanged by time.
With gold lame gowns
and ruffled nighties.
Stripped naked...
Still perfect!
She picks them up.
Cold November day,
stands in her nightgown, crying
in the pouring rain
back by the woodpile...
and chops up Barbie
with her father's axe.

EPILOGUE

I wrote Body Image in 1980 (shortly after joining NAAFA), and promptly lost the scraps of paper I wrote it on. One year later, in November 1981, I found those scraps and was amazed at how much my feelings had changed in only 12 short months.

I considered writing a fourth (and more positive) verse but I didn't want to change the poem. Those feelings are for living. They develop by chopping up your old negative body image and developing a new one that allows you to be what ever size you are. They develop by learning about your body and realizing that people don't fail diets; diets fail people. They develop when you stop waiting and start living. They develop when you turn the anger inside out toward the real enemy and start loving yourself. Write your own fourth verse: Let go of the old standards and the old hurts and let in joy, success and love with your own definition of your body image.★

POSTSCRIPT

Bill Barton, co-designer of the Barbie Doll made by Mattel, was reported in Newsweek to have described the Barbie as "more of a curse than a blessing." He also said that he felt the Barbie was an obsession with little girls, and that the current plague of anorexia in young women may partly be due to Barbie's idealized slenderness. He went on to say that he has never given a Barbie doll to his granddaughters.

According to Newsweek, Mattel, who produces over 20 million items of doll clothing every year, may be the largest manufacturer to womens' wear in the world.

Thanks to June Bailey for this news tip. ★

people

WEDDING BELLS



Lynn Royster of Pennsylvania and Mike Safdia of Queens, New York were married on March 20, 1983 in Philadelphia.

Lynn and Mike originally met at a Long Island Chapter dance in May of 1982.

The couple currently reside in the Philadelphia area.

NAAFA COUPLE TO WED

Marie Butcher of Glen Cove, Long Island and William L. McCauley of Joliet, Illinois have announced their engagement and forthcoming marriage.

The couple met at the 1983 Convention in New York last September.

An April wedding is being planned.

WE CAN BE...ANYTHING WE WANT TO BE

IN A SUPERVISORY POSITION... Ruby Greenwald of Chicago has accepted a new position as supervisor in a market research firm. Sheila Goodman of New York is now Supervisor of Legal Services in a Manhattan firm. Lisbeth Fisher Burns has been promoted to Office Manager of a prestigious New York law firm after having been with the firm less than six months. Best wishes in your new positions.

Karen Syken of Brooklyn, N.Y. has been employed by the Elementary School System of New York City as a Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention Specialist. Good luck, Karen, with this challenging work!

Frequent Newsletter contributor, June Bailey, is now writing a column for her local newspaper. June covers local news, politics and special events for her Cleveland suburb.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! Jennie Mathey of Ohio recently graduated from Hocking Technical College's Nursing School and will be working as a Practical Nurse.



Dorothy Rakus of Connecticut, who not only raised 8 children, but also had a career with the U.S. Postal Service and edited the Post Office's local newsletter, has just graduated from Morse Business School in Connecticut. Dorothy shared her graduation photo with us.

If you have an announcement of a promotion, a new job, an award you received, or a graduation...please share it with us. Your

accomplishments may encourage someone else to follow in your footsteps.

Please send your announcement, as well as any birth or marriage announcements (with wedding pictures, please!) to People News, c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426. ★

OBITUARY



REANNE FAGAN

of Los Angeles, California died on November 2, 1983 after a long illness.

Her friend and Los Angeles Chapter Chairperson Ronda Wood reports:

"West Coast Editor Susan Dubin called in December to ask what was happening in LA-NAAFA and I drew a blank. It feels like nothing important has happened in the chapter since the death of Reanne on November 2. Her friends, family and the group as a whole still feel the effect and shock of her death.

Reanne was one of the original members of the Fat Underground, a fat activist group formed here in L.A. over ten years ago. Those of us who have come to know her over her years in fat activism understand what this loss means." ★

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO MARVIN GROSSWIRTH

by W. J. Fabrey

As this Newsletter was going to press, a phone call informed me that Marvin Grosswirth had just passed away. Marvin probably had more to do with the quality of writing in this Newsletter since 1976 than anyone else, and he was always in favor of brief obituaries. Here, then, are only a few of the many observations I could make about Marvin Grosswirth.



MARVIN GROSSWIRTH

He was a capable writer and author, with a number of magazine articles and books to his credit, including *Fat Pride*. (He was one of the three greatest influences on my own writing style.)

He was a loyal supporter of NAAFA, having joined in May of 1970, after I "recruited" him from the MENSAs organization. As a fat man, he often experienced rejection because of his weight, at least until he came to terms with it, and learned how to cope with his adversaries. He had already learned this by the time he joined NAAFA, so he brought to us his own insights and inner strength on the subject.

He was a devoted husband and father, being survived by his wife Marilyn and an eight-year-old son, Adam. His exact age is unimportant, but he was in his late forties when cancer robbed us of this man.

As NAAFA's Public Relations Consultant, and as a member of the Publications Committee, he received a Pence service award in 1981. He was really happy to receive the Cruzian mahogany clock in recognition of his many years of service, which also included a stint on our Board of Directors some years ago.

There are probably only a handful of NAAFA's today who have personally met Marvin Grosswirth, yet we are all beneficiaries of his work. NAAFA was all the more fortunate in having access to his talent in view of his extensive activities in other organizations. One organization in particular, American MENSAs, published a regular column by Grosswirth until he became ill last April. His writing in that column almost always displayed one of the most important aspects of his personality--his sense of humor. Grosswirth was famous for his intellect and his way of adding humor to many of life's problems--an ability that is not immediately obvious from his stern expression in the above photograph!

Grosswirth served as the Chairman of American MENSAs a few years ago. With 47,000 members, that organization is the U.S. branch of the international association for persons with a high I.Q. (A number of NAAFA's are MENSAs members as well.) Recently, MENSAs elected Marvin Grosswirth to receive their Margot Award, the highest service award they offer. It was on this occasion that I was asked to write a mention for the PEOPLE column of this Newsletter--and at the last minute I must sadly write a different kind of article.

I believe that Marvin Grosswirth would have preferred that we mark his passing in some constructive way, perhaps with some kind of creative writing program within NAAFA. As a professional writer, he would have attested to the value of money as an incentive for good writing, which is time-consuming by its nature. He was a long-time booster of good writing in this Newsletter. Perhaps a "Grosswirth Memorial Creative Writing Award" with cash prizes for the best creative writing within the "Fat Pride" movement, would honor the man and help the movement at the same time.★

REGIONAL NEWS

WEST COAST NEWS

In Santa Barbara, a support group for male F.A.'s is forming to discuss some of the questions and concerns F.A.'s face. Interest in the group has been generated from as far away as Los Angeles, so it is expected to be a good meeting place for discussion.

The Santa Cruz chapter is in the midst of a mail and telephone blitz to the media, local therapists, and physicians, informing them of NAAFA events and fat-fitness programs being offered. The programs include a free yoga class, a swim class, and future modern and belly dance classes.

San Diego NAAFA member Joyce Rue, who heads a local support group called *Abundantly Yours*, appeared on a TV talk show whose other featured guests were the Chippendale Dancers (male strippers). Joyce made a good impression, and at the end, came out to dance with the Chippendale gents. It appeared to be a very positive show, and Joyce has been invited back.

In Los Angeles, attendance at special events continues to rise, with upwards of 50 people participating. There is usually an even balance between men and women.

--Susan Dubin

MID-WEST NEWS

Recent media coverage and advertising in Chicago has brought an influx of new members. One of the popular local events is a readers' group which recently focussed on the book, *The Dieter's Dilemma*.

The two Ohio chapters held a joint Regional Gathering over New Year's weekend which featured raps, pool parties, and social events. A chapter award was presented to U.S. Congressman Mary Rose Okar from Cleveland for her work in the area of the dangers of PPA/caffeine diet pills. The chapters are also continuing their work on Ohio anti-size discrimination legislation.

EAST COAST NEWS

The Long Island chapter has added a "First Friday Dinner" to its usual schedule of dances. The chapter also held a workshop on "Willpower, Binge Eating, and Setpoint." A February weekend gathering is planned.

The New Jersey chapter is holding regular events and is working to find new members.

WELCOME TO NEW CHAPTERS

Applications from four NAAFA members to form local chapters have been approved by the Board of Directors. They are:

Susan Dubin (Santa Cruz/Monterey Bay chapter, CA)
Linda Martin (Mo-Kan chapter, Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri)
Adrienne Placek (Putnam County chapter, NY)
Linda Ward (Western Pennsylvania chapter)

There are currently 22 chapters of NAAFA in the U.S. and Canada. The news reported above is just a sampling of some of their many activities.★

BEHIND THE SCENES...

Much of what goes on in NAAFA is actually "behind the scenes" and involves people who have little time to stop and write articles about their work for this Newsletter. Since many members express curiosity about what "goes on" in NAAFA, the following list will serve as a sampling of some of the things that do go on, week in and week out.

These examples are chosen so as not to include routine work of an internal, organizational nature--or extra fee programs like NAAFA-Date or Pen Pal.

1. In October, after national columnist Ann Landers wrote a column that, among other things, described fat admirers as being perverted and sick, many NAAFA members wrote letters of rebuttal to Ann, and sent copies to the NAAFA

from the committees

PUBLICITY REPORT

office. More followed suit, after the Activism Committee (Louise Wolfe and Russell F. Williams, Co-Chairpersons) and the Newsletter cooperated in producing a NEWSFLASH! supplement to the Newsletter, mailed in November (Vol. X, Issue #1). To date, little has been heard of any response from Ann Landers, although a form letter was received in NAAFA headquarters after a letter and envelope full of NAAFA material was sent to Ann by Chairman Bill Fabrey.

The content of those letters that were sent to Ms. Landers may be the subject of a future article in the Newsletter or 'Xtra.

2. Also in October, a NAAFA member called and requested advice in handling a disability case, in which she received an injury in a public place, and was mistreated and misdiagnosed ever since. She was able to speak at length to a NAAFA officer, who offered some advice about her problem.

3. In November, Chairman Fabrey represented NAAFA at a special ceremony at Hofstra University in Long Island, honoring Sociologist Natalie Allon. The ceremony for Dr. Allon, which was attended by many guests inside and outside of the academic community, was held to celebrate the first awards given by the Natalie I. Allon Endowed Scholarship in Sociology. Dr. Allon, who was a member of NAAFA's Advisory Board, was incapacitated several years ago after an automobile accident, and was unable to attend the ceremony herself. NAAFA donated a check for \$100 to the scholarship fund, and the Pence Service Award (clock) which was won by Dr. Allon in 1981 but never delivered due to her accident, was formally handed by Mr. Fabrey to Mr. Samuel Allon, representing his daughter. Fat activist Karl Niedershuh also attended.

4. In December, NAAFA was approached by the national sales manager of the Clinical Division of the Detecto Scale Co., suggesting that NAAFA might help them market their physician's scale, with an optional extra counterweight, which will weigh up to 450 pounds. The request was referred to the 600 Pound Scale Committee, which is considering other possible designs for expanded-range scales.

5. In December, an ex-NAAFA member called to complain about her experience in a well-known hospital, which had humiliated her by being unable to provide her with a large enough hospital gown during her stay at the hospital, and she had to remain half-undressed for several days; and her doctor had confirmed that there is another hospital nearby, lesser known, that is able to perform CAT scans on very fat people, something that many major hospitals have been known to refuse. A NAAFA officer took notes of the conversation for future referral to the Anthropometrics and Health Committees.

The five examples given above represent only a few of the NAAFA "doings" for the period, most of which never get reported. We hope it helps to explain part of "what NAAFA does to aid fat Americans." ★

BOARD NOTES

BOARD VACANCY CREATED

At its October 1 meeting, the Board accepted with regret the resignation of Lisbeth Fisher Burns from her seat on the Board. It was noted that Ms. Burns had served continuously as a Board member since June, 1973. She stated that the demands of her career prevented her from continuing on the Board at this time, but she will continue to take an interest in NAAFA, and will retain her responsibilities as chair of the Fashion and Membership Committees.

OFFICE OF RECORDING SECRETARY CHANGED

At the October 28 Board of Directors meeting, the office of the Recording Secretary was expanded to include other duties beyond the taking of minutes. Angela Cappiello, who has served as Recording Secretary since last year, will continue to serve in the new office of Secretary.

The office of Secretary is not to be confused with that of NAAFA's Office Supervisor, Elaine Mann, NAAFA's employee. ★

One of NAAFA's goals is to "educate the public" toward the acceptance of fat people. Such education is often assisted by publicity that NAAFA receives in the media (radio, television, magazines, newspapers, books, etc.). Such publicity also results in new NAAFA members, especially when NAAFA's mailing address is included in the item seen by the public.

NAAFA and its chapters have always received some publicity, and the last several months of 1983 were no exception. The most notable exposure was the "Dear Abby" column, run in more than 900 newspapers. Most of them appear to have carried mention of NAAFA on September 6 in the form of a letter to Abby from a NAAFA member, and praise by Abby of both NAAFA and OA (Overeaters Anonymous) along with addresses for both.

NAAFA received over 1000 requests for our literature, and so far about 35 joined NAAFA as a result. Requests are still coming in!

In October, NAAFA Board Chairman Bill Fabrey received invitations to speak on a number of radio talk shows. He was interviewed on the following stations: WCFL, Chicago; WINZ, Miami; FM-96, Calgary, Canada; WCAU, Philadelphia; KTOK, Oklahoma City; WAAM, Ann Arbor, MI; WRTA, Altoona, PA; WQEK, Albany, NY; WKBN, Youngstown, OH; WRKO, Boston; and WBBF, Rochester, NY.

Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter Chairperson Dale Silverberg, New Jersey Chapter Chairperson Betty Dandino, and some members of their chapters appeared in the audience on a New Jersey Network (public television) show called "In Your Corner". Among the guests on the show was Carole Shaw, Editor-in-Chief of BBW Magazine. The show was aired on several UHF stations on November 8.

An article, written by NAAFA member and Newsletter contributor David Whiteis, appeared in THE FADER, a Chicago newspaper. David interviewed Chicago Chapter Chairperson Ruby Greenwald, Paul Ernsberger, Nancy Summer and others for his in-depth article on the problems faced by fat people and NAAFA's positive influence on them. The publicity caused a flurry of telephone calls from potential new members in the Chicago area.

A crew from Japanese national television took some footage of NAAFA President Sheila Goodman, Ann Marie Budano, and Lourie Greenblatt in November. The National Enquirer interviewed Bill Fabrey in November for a possible upcoming listing of self-help groups in the United States. As of this writing, it is due to run in late Feb. Bill was also interviewed by HEALTH Magazine for a possible article in February or March of 1984.

Several NAAFAn's, both adults and teenage, were interviewed by TEENAGE magazine for a possible piece in March, 1984. An upcoming article on the Rubenesque figure in PLAYBOY magazine, which reportedly quotes NAAFA, is slated for publication in the March issue. An article mentioning NAAFA as an alternative to some diet groups was due to appear in February, 1984 SHAPE magazine.

An interview taped with ABC Radio (network) by NAAFA Co-Founder Eileen Lefebure is due for national airing sometime in February.

An interview with Chairman Fabrey, some members of the FAT LIP READERS THEATER (including NAAFAn Louise Wolfe) from San Francisco, and NAAFAn Joyce Rue's San Diego organization, ABUNDANTLY YOURS, is due to appear in the March 26 issue of US MAGAZINE.

Many other media exposures occurred or are about to occur. Those that come to our attention will be mentioned in the next Publicity Report in this Newsletter. ★

RAFFLE REPORT

The winners of the 1983 National Raffle were chosen on November 26, at the Holiday Happening Dance at the Vista Hotel in New York City. Over 175 people attended the dance and witnessed the exciting selection of the raffle winners.

The grand prize of a \$500 gift certificate was won by Phyllis Bettino, daughter of Westchester, N.Y. member Gerry Bettino. The seller of the winning ticket was the Westchester Chapter of NAAFA which will receive the \$25 award.

The first prize of a portable radio-cassette player (\$200 value) was won by non-member Connie Macaraeg--ticket sold by Brooklyn member, Lloyd Ingram, and the second prize of an original artwork by NAAFA member Susan Mason was won by Francis Gilman of Maine.



LLOYD INGRAM

The two high seller awards were won by the Ohio Chapter of NAAFA who will receive \$25 in addition to the money they already earned with their ticket sales, and by Lloyd Ingram of Brooklyn, New York who also received \$25. Lloyd sold well over 200 tickets, mainly to his fellow employees at a major New York publishing house where Lloyd has been employed for over 12 years.

Many thanks are owed to the donors and supporters of this year's raffle. First, to all those people who purchased and sold raffle tickets, with a special thanks to Lloyd Ingram and Lisbeth Fisher Burns (Liz sold only a few less tickets than Lloyd and was the runner-up high seller). A big fat thank you for your support!

Thank you to our prize donors:



Susan Mason, for an original artwork. (A sample of her work is pictured here.) Susan creates greeting and note cards with her designs, and she donated a larger work to the raffle.

June Bailey, for copies of her book, FAT IS WHERE IT'S AT and subscriptions to her Fat Is Where It's At Newsletter.

Mary-Jane Grace, for two beautiful handmade winter scarves.

Lisbeth Fisher Burns, for four hand-hooked rug/wall hangings.

Wilma Kuns, for an assortment of kitchen items, including a

"Skinny Cooks Can't Be Trusted" apron.

Additional prizes were donated by Bunny Peckham and the Sterling Optical Corp., Needlecraft Today magazine, and A&S Department Stores.

The raffle raised about \$800 for NAAFA, and earned the participating chapters 25% of their gross ticket sales. ★

TREASURY NOTES

The Finance Committee (Nancy Summer, Chairperson) and the Auditing Committee (Ira Cohen, Chairperson) have announced that the first independent audit of NAAFA's finances by a Certified Public Accountant has been completed.

This first audit was a particularly extensive and time-consuming one, since this was the first time NAAFA's records had been reviewed by a non-member accountant, and also because a certified financial statement was produced.

What does this mean to the average NAAFA member? First, a NAAFA member can now have full assurance that money sent to NAAFA has been used properly. Second, it is now possible for NAAFA to file grant applications. (Without a certified financial statement, it is impossible to apply for grants or other outside support.) Because of this, NAAFA, which has been struggling along for years on members' dues and donations, may be able to afford expanded programs with the help of outside funding.

Third, New York State law required that NAAFA submit, as part of its annual report to the state, the certified financial statement for 1983. Thus, NAAFA will continue to be in full compliance with laws governing non-profit tax-exempt organizations.

NAAFA members with experience in obtaining grants, or who have information about specific grants, are urged to contact the Finance Committee as soon as possible. ★

LOCAL CHAPTER COMMITTEE REPORT

Should NAAFA membership be required of chapter members? "Yes," says the Local Chapters Committee. NAAFA's Board recently reviewed the rules, after asking local chapter officers around the country for their opinions. It was determined that NAAFA membership was a fair requirement, but that chapters should allow non-members to attend meeting as guests.

The Board defined "chapter membership" as "the ability to vote in chapter elections, to hold chapter office, to edit the chapter publication, and to be included in local publicity."

A majority of those chapter officers who responded to the Board's request for opinions requested that the membership rule be retained. ★

convention

1984 CONVENTION PLANS ANNOUNCED

The 1984 Convention Committee has announced that the 1984 Convention will be held on Labor Day weekend at the La Guardia Marriott in New York City.

Bunny Peckham, Co-Chairperson of both the 1983 and 1984 Committees explained, "We received so many compliments about the 1983 Convention, the Marriott and its staff, that it seemed like a natural thing to return in 1984."

Many of the features of the 1983 Convention will be repeated but there will be a few additions this year. A cabaret is planned, a hospitality suite will be available, and a celebration of NAAFA's 15th anniversary will be held.

Sightseeing trips will begin on the Thursday prior to the Convention and the Convention will begin on Friday afternoon with an orientation and a reception cocktail/dance party in the evening.

The hotel has contracted for the same guest room rates as last year: \$55 per night. However, due to the various food shortages and rising food prices, the cost of the events and meals will be slightly higher than last year.

The Convention Committee hopes to have full details in time for a spring mailing.

[Watch for the next issue of the Newsletter which will be our 1983 Convention Special. If you were unable to attend the 1983 Convention, it should give you a good idea of what to expect in 1984. --Ed.] ★

advice

Dear NAAFAAdvice,

I am a woman who weighs 398 pounds and I have a boyfriend who weighs about 145. We have a little problem. He always wants me to sit on his lap, and he would like to try to carry me. Now, I don't want him to get hurt, but I also don't want to deny him his desire. Do you think we should try?

Signed,
Too Big To Carry!

Dear Too Big To Carry,

Let's start out by correcting one thing. You are not too big to carry. I know some guys who could do it without much effort. Because I don't know the physical condition of your lighter-weight boyfriend, I am assuming that you are afraid that he won't be successful. Perhaps you should try first in the swimming pool. The water will buoy you up and he may be able to build up his strength until he might try on land.

Of course, you can sit on his lap. If you do it slowly and ever-so-gently, not resting your full weight on him until the last, blissful moment it could take a long time and, if you're serious about it, it sounds like it could be fun. Just be able to jump up quickly if he develops symptoms such as shortness of breath. Maybe this is just a fantasy of his and he'll be satisfied with your half-sitting on his lap.

I would also examine his motives. If he's putting you on, this could damage the relationship, not to mention other things. But if he's sincere, and this is something he really wants to do, I think you have one of the most fun relationships I have heard of. Hang on to him; he sounds like fun!

Do you need some advice? Do you have a question about personal relationships or emotional issues? You can write Ann or Abby...but June knows that "FAT IS WHERE IT'S AT" and will use her experience as a fat person to answer your questions. Mail your questions to NAAFAAdvice, c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426. Letters will be held in the strictest of confidence. Be sure to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a personal response from June. ★

FOLLOW-UPS

The situation at the Great Falls High School in Great Falls Montana has not changed. ("Great Falls...nothing to Cheer About!", Newsletter, Vol IX, Issue #3, Dec. 1982) There are still discriminatory and punitive weight restrictions on the young women who belong to the school's drill team. The restrictions apply only to those girls who are "overweight" and not to those who are below their "chart" weight. While there have been some personnel changes at the school, the restrictions continue.

You can write the Activism Committee for more details, or you can write The Principal, Great Falls High School, 20th Street and 3rd Ave South, Great Falls, MT 59405:

New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams is once again in the news. In our last issue we reported that he had filed charges against Nutri/Systems for consumer fraud. Recently it was announced that 4000 participants of the Quick Weight Loss Center, Inc. were entitled to refunds that totaled \$45,000.

The basis of this award was much the same as in the Nutri/System case. Quick Weight Loss Center had charged a \$40 fee for lab tests that were required for all new patients, but only paid \$10 to \$15 to the National Health Laboratories for the tests. Under New York State law, this is illegal.

Patients who attended the Centers between December 1980 and March of 1982 should contact the Attorney General's office for a possible refund.

One interesting fact was reported in this story. Quick Weight Loss Center has been unable to locate many of the eligible patients. Patient follow-up and the ability to monitor long-term results appears not to have been one of their priorities.

Dooley, Nancy Summer's fat Great Dane, is fatter than ever. ("Dooley's Diet, Vol IX, Issue #4, Jan.-Feb. 1983) Dooley, who ate "Fit and Trim" dog food for a number of months, lost a pound or two, but rapidly regained her weight. She is now on a "cookie" binge, refusing to eat her dog chow and begging for "Meaty Bones" dog biscuits constantly. Her weight is estimated by critics as that of a small Clydsdale.



The National Enquirer recently ran an article entitled "Five Simple Steps to Slim Down Your Overweight Dog". Unfortunately, most of the steps are impossible for Dooley. "How am I going exercise with Dooley?" Summer asks in reference to 'step 3'. "I swim, and Dooley just won't wear a bathing cap in the pool."

Asked about the Enquirer article, Dooley commented, "I think it's bad enough that you humans are obsessed with your own weights. Look, the only time I worry about pounds is when the dog-catcher is around. Keep your paws off my Purina." ★

letters

[In this department, we reproduce excerpts from letters received by NAAFA and the Newsletter. Letter writers are identified by initials only unless permission has been received to use the writer's full name. --Ed.]

Dear NAAFA,

I am so glad that your organization exists. I heard Bill Fabrey's interview with Bruce Hallenbeck on Radio station WQBK today, I believe you have changed my life (for the better) forever. I no longer feel isolated or humiliated for being fat.

Also, I am thrilled that you have a dating service! I am an attractive single woman in her 40's who hasn't had a meaningful relationship for a long time. I feel this may be due in part to my guilt feelings about my fat and in part to the negative reaction by men to fat women.

I would appreciate your sending me an application to join NAAFA and to become part of your dating service.

Again, thanks for your support and good will.

Sincerely,
N.W.
New York

Dear NAAFA,

Keep up the good work. I enjoy NAAFA--it gives me a sort of confidence where there was only self-consciousness about being heavy.

Also, I've had a number of comments on my key chain. I just love it.

Thanks,
Jennie Mathey
Ohio

In our last issue we printed a copy of a letter from a woman to her doctor regarding the doctor's insensitive treatment of her during a medical crisis. Her doctor chose to discuss her weight during a time when she was suffering emotional and physical pain due to a miscarriage.

After reading the article, Verna Ferrero sat down and wrote her own doctor a letter. She mailed us a copy with the following cover letter:

Dear NAAFA,

First I want to thank you for the Newsletter with its valuable articles and information. It is a big help to me because I am crippled and cannot get out to meetings and such. That, besides being female, old, and fat, makes it necessary that I fight all the harder for my rights!

This letter is to tell you that I clipped out the letter someone wrote to her doctor and sent it to my doctor because even though the circumstances are different, the treatment is the same: cold, unfriendly and vile. My doctor really talked terrible to me, such as "If you were ten years younger, I'd staple your stomach," and "You're heading for a massive coronary," etc. I am sending you a copy of the letter I wrote to him.

Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Mrs. Verna Ferrero
Washington State

Dear Doctor,

This article [the Newsletter clipping] is exactly what you did to me, although the situation is different. I came in to check my diabetic condition and because I'd been sick. You hardly looked at my diabetic record and went on to give me the standard lecture, with your added bit of venom. And for this I paid for an office call!

I already know I'm fat, although I know that [my fatness] developed after I had two serious surgeries, and you must know I've tried everything. You consider alcoholism a disease--why don't you give the same consideration to those of us with a metabolic disorder?

I am disappointed in you, Doctor, and I think you should know the damage this kind of treatment does.

Mrs. Verna Ferrero

Dear NAAFA,

Having more than ample qualifications to join your group, please forward to me all information concerning same.

I, too, am tired to death of trying every new fad diet that comes along, and of feeling "second rate" in today's society. I desperately want to feel good about myself.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
R.S.
Ohio

Dear NAAFA,

You folks should be congratulated for the effort that is being put forth to make NAAFA a success. I never realized the strength of the organization. I must admit my reluctance to join NAAFA but now I feel good about my feelings as well as the organization.

Just wanted to send this quick note with a donation. Hope it helps. Thank you for your time and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
M.B.
Texas

Dear Editor,

I wanted to take a few minutes to send my personal thanks to you for the tremendous job you did on the latest Newsletter. It just keeps getting better. The mix of humor and seriousness is just perfect! I can only imagine what you would accomplish if you had the facilities for producing a Mc Fat's or Fatties Home Journal, not to mention Fatbook or Fatopolitan magazine. Don't stop me, I'm on a roll. How about Faturday Evening Post, Fatties Day, Fatweek, Fatemoiselle, Fat Housekeeping, Fatties Bazaar, or the Fatties Science Monitor. Don't forget Fats Illustrated, Fatology Today, Fatties Digest, The Fatties Universe Bulletin and The National Fatographic.

Again, that was a terrific issue and thank you for your labors.

June Bailey
Ohio

[Flattery will get you everywhere, June. Actually, we have to thank you for your delicious sense of humor in your contributions to this Newsletter. There are so many serious aspects to fat oppression and our struggle against it, that it's refreshing to be able to laugh too.--Ed.]

Dear NAAFA,

Your Summer 1983 issue (Volume X, Issue #1) of the Newsletter was the best and most professional one you've done yet. NAAFA really seems to be growing up.

D.D.
California

[The Editor wishes to thank those NAAFA's who have sent complimentary letters like the one above. No publication can exist without the support and input from its readers, and volunteers who work on this Newsletter and chapter bulletins need all the support and encouragement you can offer.]★

the last word !

One night, after attending a local club, Chicago Chairperson Ruby Greenwald and her friends put on their coats and prepared to leave. As they were walking out of the club, Ruby became aware of two men who were pointing at her and laughing. The one man nudged the other and said to his friend, "Hey! There's a girl for you."

Ruby looked at the men, walked over to them, and said to the speaker, "How many times have I told you I don't need you pimping for me. I can get my own guys!"

The man was quite embarrassed and his friend was more amused by that than he was by Ruby's size!

Bill Blass, designer of everything from clothes to sheets, is now touting his new perfume. In a recent ad, Mr. Blass listed "What I like and don't like so much in a woman."

Number 1 on the list of DISLIKES was "A woman who talks about dieting all the time." Number 3 on the same list was, "A woman who jogs and tells." On his list of LIKES was number 7, a woman "Who's a big eater."

OK Mr. Blass...you don't like diet or exercise talk, and you like women who are big eaters. So how come you're not designing clothes in size 52?

[Got a snappy comeback you'd like to share with us? Send it to THE LAST WORD! c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, N.Y. 11426. We'll be featuring a snappy comeback in this department in all Newsletters.] ★

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next issue: convention special !