

1987—YEAR IN REVIEW

With the new year upon us, we can take one last look at the fat news of 1987—taken from the front pages of the NAAFA Newsletter:

January: "Does Obesity Kill? Physicians' Newspaper Publishes Point-Counterpoint" was the lead article in which we reported on the continuing debate between health professionals on the dangers of obesity. But we concluded our commentary with "Nothing in the debate about fat and health should be allowed to interfere with the pursuit of self-respect and dignity for fat people!"

February: "New Study Announced: Size Affects Salary": Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh released findings of a study of employment histories of graduates of the school's MBA program. Men who were at least 20% "overweight" made \$4000 less per year than average sized men. There were no findings regarding weight and salary for women graduates because there were not enough fat women in the group to draw any conclusions.

March: "Prominent health writer opposes compulsive dieting" reported on two articles written by nutrition expert Jane Brody and published in the New York Times in March. "For women who haven't gotten the message yet: Thin isn't necessarily in" not only presented enlightened health information, but also mentioned Fat is Where It's At by June Bailey, Breaking All the Rules by Nancy Roberts, and NAAFA.

April: In April we announced that Alice Ansfield of Radiance magazine would be the keynote speaker at our upcoming convention, and in a second article we covered the special issue of the feminist publication Matrix which devoted an entire issue to fat pride.

May: Our May issue was devoted to letters written by NAAFA members to the media and commercial concerns. [Often the Newsletter reprints such letters, and we encourage you to share your letter writing with us—Ed.]

June: "NCAHF sets weight-loss promotion guidelines" reported on 11 rules set by the National Council Against Health Fraud for evaluating diet programs and products. We also featured a review by Karl J. Nieder-shuh of the NBC News special "Life in the Fat Lane" hosted by Connie Chung which aired on June 3rd.

July: NAAFA celebrated its 18th birthday in June and we covered the event with an article by Founder William J. Fabrey about the early days of NAAFA. We also featured a story on Heidi Knapp, the 210 pound Ohio high school junior who was kept off the school's majorette squad because of her weight. [The case is still in progress and is being handled by the ACLU.]

August: Our Achievement Awards for 1987 were announced, and we were delighted to print Jane Brody's acceptance of her award. In an article entitled "NAAFAs participate in employment study" we announced the upcoming study being conducted by Dr. Esther Rothblum of the University of Vermont—which was being partly funded by NAAFA.

September: This issue was our convention special and included a brief review of the convention and excerpts from the major speeches—by Alice Ansfield, Bill Fabrey, and Eileen M. Lefebure.

October: "Ernsberger and Haskew published" reported that two of NAAFA's advisors have written a book entitled Rethinking Obesity, a book that tries to present enlightened health information to health professionals. We also reported on developments

in Michigan on legislation to regulate weight loss programs.

November: we featured an article by Noelle Sewell, "Let's not forget our large homeless brothers and sisters"—reminding us that an estimated 2% of the homeless population is fat and, among other things, in need of donated plus-size clothing. □

NAAFAN GIVES WORKSHOP AT ANOREXIA CONFERENCE

Susan Tenzer, MA., of the Center for Personal Development in Allentown, Pa., was chosen to present a workshop at the Sixth National Conference on Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia last October. Her workshop was entitled "Group Treatment For Obesity—A Non-Dieting Approach to Physical Wellness, Insight and Self-Acceptance."

Tenzer told the Newsletter: "It gives me great pleasure to know that perhaps we are pioneers in the field of treating eating disorders to break through the ranks of conventional and misinformed thinking in order to approach the issue of obesity from a physiological and acceptance standpoint.

"Given the information and exhaustive research of NAAFA and its supporters, I hope that more and more eating disorders conferences will include workshops such as these. Our goal is to re-educate and redirect the efforts of those responsible for its treatment (or perhaps more correctly, its non-treatment.)"

She also reports that the conference included a debate between Drs. Craig Johnson, David Garner and Kelly Brownell on "Should Obesity Be Treated?" Dr. Garner took the position that given the methods available to doctors now, obesity should not be treated. □

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

by Nancy Summer, Managing Editor

This issue marks the beginning of our third year as a monthly publication. We have received a lot of complimentary letters about the Newsletter—and we must admit a complaint or two—and we thank you all for your comments and support.

This issue also debuts a new three column format which we think is easier to read and looks more professional. I'd like to thank Conrad Blickenstorfer for his continued support in helping to improve the Newsletter. Conrad has been responsible for much of our new look. (With a little help from Amplestuff's Macintosh Plus!)

I'd also like to close this year with my thanks to the people who have contributed their original writings to the Newsletter, and to our department editors. Your support has made this effort possible. Thank you to all the following people:

June Bailey (OH), Support Editor
Aglaia Koras-Bain (NJ)
Kimm Bonner (NJ)
Paul Ernsberger (NY), Health Editor
Bill Fabrey (NY), Media Editor
Harry Gossett (VA)
Robert Hartenstine (NY)
Carrie Hemenway (MA)
Karl J. Niedershuh (PA)
Donna Marie Ryan (IL)
Karen Scott-Jones (CT)
Noelle Sewell (PA)
Sally Smith (CA)
David Whiteis (IL)
Peggy Williams (MD), Activism Editor
Russell F. Williams (MD)
(I hope I didn't leave anyone out!)

Thank you to all the members who have mailed us magazine and newspaper clippings—we need your help to keep us informed. And thanks also to those members who have sent us copies of their letters to editors, companies, and television shows. We haven't been able to publish them all, but they have kept us informed and aware of just how much action is being taken by members all over the county.

So on that note, I'd like to wish all the members a happy new year, and ask you to keep those cards, clippings, letters, and straw polls coming!

STRAW POLL #3:

Should NAAFA change its name, and if so, to what? The response form with all the questions is located at the bottom of your Ad Supplement. Please voice your opinion by mailing your Straw Poll form today.

RESULTS: STRAW POLL #1

Our first straw poll (October 1987) was on the development of a "doctor's kit"—a packet of information that a fat patient could give to his or her doctor.

Only 4% of the membership responded to the poll and it is not known whether the minimal response was due to lack of interest in the packet, or simply because this was our first straw poll and readers were not used to looking for the form on the bottom of the advertising supplement.

However, of those who responded, 98% wanted such a kit to give to their doctors (with 2% unsure); 100% wanted NAAFA to make such a packet available to members for a reasonable price; and 73% were willing to pay up to \$15 for such a packet (with 2% against a packet at that price, and 25% not sure).

Quite a number of respondents wrote additional comments that included: "Great idea! Doctors need educating!" and "I would find it a great help. I seem to get flustered in the doctor's office and unable to present the information I'd like to in a coherent fashion." And, Harry Gossett, author of Fat Chance wrote that he was at an ear doctor recently who recommended stomach stapling!

A disabled member reported that his vocational rehabilitation counselor needs to see such a packet. The counselor has said that she will not work to place him in a job until he consents to weight loss surgery, because his "morbid obesity is an obstacle to [his] employment".

One of the more interesting notes was from a member who wrote, "I've been feeling very depressed the last few days because I had just received my very first 'weight lecture' from a doctor. When I tried to discuss genetics and setpoint with him, he dismissed it as the work of 'dishonest men who only make up a new theory so they can write books and make money'. I now feel empowered again just by the thought of having a doctor's kit. Please follow through with this—it's fantastic!"

All surveys and notes will be forwarded to Victoria Reed, R.N., the Chair of NAAFA's Health Committee.

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1987 FUND DRIVE SUCCESSFUL

The generosity of NAAFA members in the annual fund drive was unprecedented this year, according to Bunny Peckham. Peckham, who is Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee, recently announced the results of the Campaign '87 drive: So far, it has raised donations and monthly pledges of \$8,010, up from \$6,252 last year, and \$2,000 in 1985. The donations came from 148 NAAFAs or friends of NAAFA, up from 98 last year and 41 in 1985.

The following list includes most of those who contributed. [It does not include 21 donors who declined to receive the committee's public "thank you", but NAAFA is grateful for their support in any case!—Ed.]

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GIFTS IN MEMORIAM

Included in the above listings were gifts that were made in the fond memory of the following: Cynthia B. Altman, Ken and Madeion Close, Betty J. Cordell, John and Harriet Fabrey, Mary M. Foran, Marjorie Lindecker Garwood, Jackie Gleason, Dr. David Greenwood, Marvin Grosswirth, Wilma Kuns, Bruce McElney, Roberta H. Segal, Naomi Shadowitz, David Smilow, Sharon Wachtel, Dr. Ethel Weiss-Shed, and Betty Welcome.

Thank you to all our donors!

As promised, all donors will be receiving a special publication of NAAFA humor and satire. We anticipate mailing it before the end of February.

If you haven't donated to Campaign '87, and you would like to receive a copy of this special publication, there's still time to reserve your copy. Your donation of \$10 or more, received by February 15th, will put your name on the mailing list for this special publication.

1987 SERVICE AWARDS

Service awards for 1987 were presented to the following NAAAFans:

SERVICE AWARDS:

Jim Brown - Printing and Production
Mary-Jane Grace-Brown - Board Secretary
Lisbeth Fisher Burns - Membership
Paul Ernsberger - Chairman, Advisory Board
Eileen M. Lefebure - Publicity
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Noel Nyman - NAAFA-Date
Bunny Peckham - Fundraising/Convention
Nancy Summer - Newsletter/Convention
Elisabeth Williams - Pen Pal

HONORABLE MENTION:

Kimm Bonner - Fashion
Neil Dachis - Legal Action
Ruby Greenwald - Local Chapters
Carrie Hemenway - Workbook
Russell F. Williams - Activism
Margerie Wilson - Workbook
Louise Wolfe - Activism

...and for their activities on the Convention Committee:

Bob Bain
Marilee Cacciabauda
Aglaia Koras-Bain
Cary Lutwin
Barbara Novack
Randi Hertz Suriano
Maryann Valerio
Peggy Ventura

The Awards Committee, made up of Chairperson Paula Dachis and members Conrad Blickenstorfer and William J. Fabrey, presented these awards at the 1987 Convention in September.

—Paula Dachis

THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL UNOFFICIAL BEST AND WORSE LIST OF 1987

BEST:

Best Decision by a Television Producer: goes to those producers who have invited Susan Mason to appear on their shows.

Special Awards for Continued Excellence: to Nancy Roberts (Breaking All the Rules) who continues to be an excellent spokesperson for the movement; and to Just My Size Pantihose, whose television and print advertising just keeps getting better and better!

Best Comedians: Roseanne Barr—she's funny and doesn't put herself or other fat people down; and Jay Leno, who told the Tonight Show viewers that beauty comes in all sizes and that the American culture is obsessed with thin beauty unlike many other cultures in the world.

The Best Decision by an Airline Passenger: goes to Susan Dubin (CA) who, while in route to the convention, was told by Continental Airlines that she would have to pay full fare for a second seat or get off the plane. Susan refused to do either, claiming that the plane was not full and that there was room enough for her. She told the boarding agent, "If you want me off, you'll have to carry me off." He didn't try.

MS. HIPPS 1987 FATastic Image Awards were given to: NBC for its news special "Life in the Fat Lane"; "The Cosby Show"; BBW and Radiance magazines; and to L'eggs and Certs for showing active fat people in their TV ads.

Best New Magazine: goes to Magna and publisher Marlene Soloman, for this great publication for big and tall men.

The Better Late Than Never award: goes to all those doctors who have finally discovered 'set-point'.

WORST:

The "There Ought to be a (L.A.) Law" award: to Stephen Bochco for producing the most obvious fat prejudice on the networks. His shows (Hooperman, L.A. Law, Hill Street Blues) portray members of minorities (Blacks, Jews, short, retarded, or elderly people, etc.) positively, but often uses fat people in negative or unsympathetic situations. Anti-fat prejudice oozes out of almost every show he produces.

The Worst Decision by Airline Personnel: goes to the the airline that, after flying NAAFA Activism Co-Chair Louise Wolfe to the Grand Canyon, told her that she weighed too much to be allowed on the return flight home. (Louise stood up for herself, got on a later flight, and the airline didn't charge her any extra for her missed connection as threatened.)

The Do Unto Others award: goes to Joan Rivers who, after years of gross insensitivity toward others—especially fat others—is now crying about how insensitive the press has been towards her since the death of her husband.

The "Fast Shuffle" award: goes to Richard Simmons for "Deal A Meal", his

new diet plan in which dieters ante up cash to Richard and he deals out some color-coded menu cards. The rule of the game, however, is that whether the dieter wins or loses, Richard still wins the pot.

The "Fool Them Once, Fool Them Twice, Fool Them as Many Times as You Want" award: We have two recipients of this award this year. The first is Weight Watchers for twenty-five years of encouraging Americans to yo-yo diet. Every time people get discouraged with the program and sales slump, WW simple re-packages it. Their motto should be "Betcha can't join just once!"

The second recipient of this award is again Weight Watchers for their line of pseudo-foods. There are more chemicals, preservatives, and sodium in a typical WW frozen entree than there are calories. They're great products—if you want to lose weight and embalm yourself at the same time. (Okay, I'll admit that all the polysyllabic additives are approved by the FDA.)

The "Better Living Through Chemistry" award: to none other than the FDA for caving in to pressure from food processors and chemical manufacturers—allowing so many food additives of questionable safety and merit, such as sulfites, food colorings, and aspartame (Nutrasweet).

The "Incredible Shrinking Customer" award: goes to the Brylane Corp. (Lane Bryant, Smart Size, etc) for continuing to cut back on the large end of their size ranges. I guess we'll all have to diet to keep up with them—or better yet, just find other places to shop!

AND MS. HIPPS THINappropriate Media Image awards went to: Ann Landers for advising that anything—including stomach stapling—should be risked by fat people in order to become thin; to the writers of ABC's "Mr. Belvedere" and "Head of the Class" for making fat characters the butt of fat jokes; and to the producers of "Designing Women".

[Awards were compiled by the editorial staff, with help from Russell F. Williams, and Paula Dachis. Ms. Hipps 1987 Image Awards is the creation of Geneva J. Chapman of Ohio.] □

Articles in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of NAAFA, Inc., unless specifically noted. Please contact the NAAFA office about specific NAAFA policies. Commentaries in this Newsletter, unless otherwise noted, were prepared by a member of the editorial staff.