

## New Studies Link Fatness, Metabolism and Heredity

"Two new studies have provided the strongest evidence yet that many people become obese more because their bodies burn calories more slowly than because they eat too much." This was the opening paragraph in a New York Times article reporting on the results of studies released in the February 25, 1988 New England Journal of Medicine.

The two studies were conducted independently: One in Cambridge, England focused on infants, and the other focused on adult Pima Indians in Arizona. Both studies showed that lower metabolism, rather than food consumption, is the primary factor in obesity, and that lower metabolism runs in families.

The English study focused on the infants of 6 thin and 12 fat mothers selected soon after birth. Metabolic tests were taken during the babies' first year. According to study director Dr. Susan B. Roberts of the Dunn Nutrition Unit in Cambridge, England, the babies who became obese ate no more than those who did not. After one year, the babies born to the "overweight" mothers (and who had the lowest metabolic rates) were fatter than the babies born to the thin mothers. None of the babies born to thin mothers had low metabolisms or became fat.

"We were surprised by our results," Dr. Roberts told the Times reporter. "The general feeling that obese people eat too much pervades obesity research." But this study showed that the amount of calories burned (metabolism), was far more important than calories consumed, and that metabolic rate is an inherited factor.

In the Arizona study, Dr. Eric Ravussin and colleagues at the National Institute of Health, Phoenix office, measured how many calories 95 adult Pima Indian men and women burned in 24-hour periods. Subjects were isolated in special chambers during the 24 hour sessions and were told to engage in

no strenuous physical activity. The Pima Indians were chosen for this four year study because 80-85% of their population is fat. Most subjects had other family members in the study, which gave researchers information on familial connections.

"We have shown for the first time that slow metabolic rates are important in obesity," Dr. Ravussin said. "People who become obese have low metabolic rates to begin with." The people who gained the most weight in the study burned 80 fewer calories per day—enough, according to Dr. Ravussin to cause a nine pound gain per year. Furthermore, the researchers found similar 24-hour metabolic rates among family members, in agreement with previous studies showing that a tendency to become fat is an inherited trait.

Dr. Jules Hirsch of Rockefeller University, the Chairman of the NIH panel that declared "obesity a killer disease", told the Times, "Obese people are born with a handicap. Just like people born with other handicaps, obesity-prone people will have to learn to live with theirs and correct for it."

### COMMENTARY

It's gratifying that researchers are finally proving what many of us have believed all

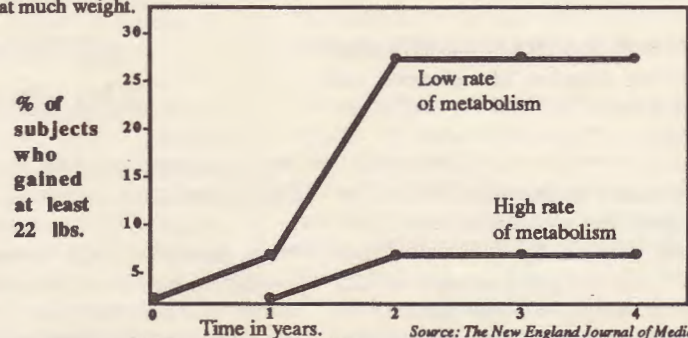
along—that fat people are fat mainly because of reasons other than overeating. Hopefully, these studies will prompt other researchers to continue studying genetic factors.

But it's disappointing to us that of all the medical experts in the field, only Dr. Jules Hirsch's editorial review was included in the New England Journal of Medicine. Hirsch, who believes that even moderate obesity is a health hazard would, of course, consider "fat" genes to be an inherited "handicap". Other medical experts, who do not agree with his opinion on the dangers of obesity, (such as Drs. Paul Emsberger and Paul Haskew, authors of Rethinking Obesity) can point to these studies as further proof that fatness is simply another body type—an inherited physical trait. It is likely that the medical community will continue to discuss and debate the meaning of these results for some time to come.

In the meantime, no matter how you view it—handicap or not—let's hope that an increasing number of fat people come to accept the news that they may not be to blame for their size. Size-related guilt has always been a major obstacle to achieving self-acceptance and developing a desire for fairer treatment from society. ∞

### Metabolism and Obesity

After two years, nearly 30 percent of the subjects who had low rates of metabolism when resting had gained at least 22 pounds. In contrast, fewer than 5 percent of the subjects with high metabolic rates had gained that much weight.



Source: The New England Journal of Medicine

©1988 by NAAFA, Inc., PO Box 43, Bellerose, N.Y. 11426. Nothing may be reprinted without permission except for noncommercial purposes, providing suitable credit is given. The NAAFA Newsletter is published monthly for the members of the National Association to Aid Fat Americans, Inc. Back issues are available in six issue volumes.

Regular membership in NAAFA is \$35.00 per year. Other membership categories are available. For further information, call 516 352-3120.



## Eating Disorder Awareness Week April 24-30

Susan Tenzer, M.A. has advised us that the week of April 24-30 is Eating Disorder Awareness Week. EDAW is a national effort sponsored by mental health and medical professionals, support and self-help organizations, dentists, educators, athletes and the media.

It has a seven-fold purpose:

- 1. To increase efforts to prevent the development of an eating disorder.
- 2. To educate the public and professional communities regarding warning signs and appropriate interventions...
- 3. To increase awareness of qualified specialized treatment programs and support services.
- 4. To encourage awareness of healthy attitudes toward psychological and physical development, body image and self-esteem by influential individuals (i.e. parents, educators, and health professionals).
- 5. To challenge cultural attitudes regarding thinness, perfection, achievement, and expression of emotion which contribute to the increasing incidence of eating disorders.
- 6. To improve the ability of professionals of all disciplines to provide effective treatment and support...
- 7. To promote a compassionate, non-judgmental, public understanding of eating disorders.

NAAFAn Susan Tenzer, M.A. is the Director of the Eating Disorder Treatment Center of the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania; she is also a member of the EDAW fundraising committee. Funds are needed to accomplish these goals. If you can make a donation to EDAW, please send it to EDAW, c/o John A. Atchley, M.D. Treasurer, 3 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10021.

[Editor's note: Some NAAFAn have asked what eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia have to do with fat people and NAAFA.

There are many people who suffer from bulimia, symptoms of anorexia, or malnutrition who are actually over their "chart weights". Externally they appear to be fat or of average weight, while in fact they are suffering from the same eating disorders we associate with very thin people.

Awareness needs to be raised so that eating disorders can be spotted in people of all sizes. ] ♦♦

--CALL FOR ARTICLES--

## Women and Therapy Special Issue on Women and Weight: Internal and External Oppression

by Esther Rothblum (VT)

The journal Women and Therapy is planning a special issue on the topic of women and weight, to be co-edited by Laura Brown and NAAFAn Esther Rothblum. We are interested in articles on any aspect of this topic, such as employment, social stigma, health risks of dieting, and critiques of the weight-loss movement and/or weight loss programs, particularly recent "medically supervised fast" programs. Articles that consider cross cultural comparisons of groups such as women of color, lesbians, older women, teenagers, and children, are especially encouraged. The articles can focus on personal accounts, review of the literature, clinical case material, or research findings. We encourage submissions from women who have personally experienced society's oppression on account of weight.

Prospective authors should submit three copies of a one-page abstract, including name, address, professional affiliation if any, and phone number by June 1, 1988 to Esther Rothblum, Dept. of Psychology, John Dewey Hall, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405.

[ Editor's note: The following advertisement was spotted in another publication by NAAFA's Executive Director Sally Smith. She sent it to the Newsletter with the hope that NAAFAn will submit some positive material...]

## ATTENTION BIG WOMEN!

Do you hate your body? Do you worship it?  
Do you care?

Marta Rojas, Woman's Studies major, is researching how large women feel in this culture, and she would like your creative input. Artwork and written work will remain your exclusive property, but with them she will create an anthology. Please send creative works to Marta Rojas, 1830 Hausler Drive, Davis, CA 95616. ♦♦

## NAAFA, Inc.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sally E. Smith

### FOUNDER (1969)

William J. Fabrey

### OFFICERS

Conrad H. Blickenstorfer, Ph.D.,

*Chairman of the Board*

Nancy Summer, *President*

Paula Dachis, *Vice President*

Robert H. Bain, *Treasurer*

Mary-Jane Grace-Brown, *Secretary*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert H. Bain

Conrad H. Blickenstorfer, Ph.D.

Neil Dachis

Paula Dachis

William J. Fabrey

Jerry Hoxworth

Nancy Summer

Russell F. Williams

### ADVISORY BOARD

Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D.

Biomedical Research

*Chairman of Advisory Board*

William Bennett, M.D.

Editor, Harvard Medical

School Health Letter

Abraham I Friedman, M.D.

Metabolics and

Bariatric Medicine

Paul Haskew, Ed.D.

Psychologist

Univ. of Connecticut

Angela Barron McBride

R.N., Ph.D., Professor

Dept. of Psychiatric Nursing,

Indiana Univ. School of Nursing

Harry K. Panjwani, M.D.

Psychiatry

O. Wayne Wooley, Ph.D.

Susan C. Wooley, Ph.D.

Co-Directors, Eating Disorder Clinic,

Dept. of Psychiatry, Univ. of Cincinnati

College of Medicine

### COUNSEL

John G. Trapani

### CO-FOUNDERS

Susan A. Blowers

William L. Blowers

Joyce Fabrey

Gilberto Granadillo

Eileen M. Lefebure

Ann Louderback

Llewellyn Louderback

### HONORARY TRUSTEES

William L. Blowers

Llewellyn Louderback



## “Thirty-five dollars for a Newsletter?”

by Randi Hertz Suriano (NJ)

No. No! You've got it all wrong!

Maybe it's our fault. We've always emphasized what you get for the cost of your dues. Logically, this would lead people to calculate if what they're getting is worth what they're paying.

If this is how you feel, I'd like to ask you to re-think your reasons for joining and remaining a member.

NAAFA is the only national organization working exclusively for size acceptance. So whether you are fat or a fat admirer—this is your cause.

We are not a newsletter subscription. We are not a dating service. We are not a social club.

We are a non-profit human rights group, and while we may provide such services directly or indirectly, we **NEED** you and your support to continue our fight. We don't make a “profit” from your dues, in fact, only a fraction of what you pay actually helps fund the cause. The balance covers the cost of having you as a member—printing and postage costs for mailings to you, and more.

If you feel strongly about NAAFA's “message” and our work to end size discrimination, and if NAAFA has changed your life—even the tiniest bit—for the better, then consider your dues and donations your way of showing gratitude and support, thereby enabling us to reach more people.

As I said, this is your cause. If you believe in our purpose—support us—and stop looking at NAAFA as a product with a price tag.

Remember, when we say “together we can make a difference” we mean it. We rely on the strength and support of our members to continue our fight. We are reaching new people every day, and once we touch someone's life, we hope to become a permanent part of it, at least in spirit.

Join us. Grow with us. Stay with us and together we will make a difference. ♡

## The Marketing and Advertising Committee

by Dan Davis (CA)

*“Together we can make a difference.”*

Some of us have been saying that for years. Now it's the theme of a Marketing and Advertising Committee marketing program being put together by Jim Brown and Randi Hertz Suriano, co-chairs of the committee.

The Marketing and Advertising Committee was born at a “think tank” held November 21, 1987, and it hit the ground running. The committee has already submitted new ads to Magna and Radiance magazines, created a public service announcement, and prepared a special promotional mailing to former members of NAAFA. It has also prepared a report on why some members don't renew.

According to the report, many dropouts thought there was too much emphasis on social activities. Others felt there were problems with their local chapter, or left because there were no chapters in their areas. It was evident that many members left because they related to only one aspect of NAAFA. When that one aspect didn't meet their expectations, they dropped out.

“We need to promote NAAFA as a multifaceted organization,” says Jim Brown. “We're not just a social club, or an information service, or a matchmaking society. We need to make prospective members aware of everything we do rather than emphasizing only one or two of the programs.”

The committee is working on a coordinated marketing program which will include print ads, public service announcements, and recruitment materials for local chapters. Additional tools will include a new package for prospective members and a regularly scheduled program for recovering those who have dropped out. All Marketing and Advertising Committee materials will emphasize the new theme: “Together we can make a difference.”

According to Randi Hertz Suriano, “Our primary motivation is to increase and strengthen membership. We want to increase the number of members, and just as important, strengthen the loyalty and commitment of those people who already belong. This concept is behind every project we develop.”

When asked how members could help with marketing, Brown suggested they talk to others about NAAFA. “Word of mouth is the best way to increase our membership. Tell your friends about NAAFA, and don't just confine it to one program. We can all be recruiters, and of course the more members we get, the more effective NAAFA can be. Expansion will benefit all of us.” ♡

### NEWSLETTER STAFF

MANAGING EDITOR:  
Nancy Summer

DEPARTMENT EDITORS:  
ACTIVISM Peggy Williams  
HEALTH Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D.  
MEDIA William J. Fabrey  
SUPPORT June Bailey

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. ♡

### Travel News

Piedmont Airlines has been named the official airline of the 1988 national Convention. Piedmont is offering special discounts to convention travelers flying their airline to Baltimore between August 26 through September 8, 1988.

The convention discount will offer a 5% savings off any published, promotional, round trip fare within the continental United States. For attendees unable to meet restrictions for promotional fares, Piedmont will offer a 35% discount off the standard round trip day coach fare. There are also other discounts available to Canadian travelers.

To obtain a discount, your reservations must be made through a special Piedmont toll free number. Call Convention Co-Chairperson Peggy Williams (301 790-0547) for details.

♡

Recruit a member... Share the Newsletter!



## Mini-Minutes Return

"We would like to see more information in the Newsletter about the Board of Directors—what issues are considered at the meetings and how did Board members vote." This comment was offered by Maryann Valerio of New Jersey at the "Town Meeting" held at the Holiday Happening fundraiser in January.

And so we decided to include "Mini-Minutes" once again as a feature of the Newsletter. (Mini-Minutes were published from 1981 to 1984.) This time, however, we'll be including the voting records of the Board members as suggested by Maryann.

Mini-Minutes will be a condensed version of the official minutes taken by NAAFA's Secretary Mary-Jane Grace-Brown. Mary-Jane has the job of condensing a four-to six hour meeting into several (or more) written pages, which are then approved by the Board of Directors at their next meeting. The Mini-Minutes articles will be based on the Secretary's approved official minutes.

For the most part, only actual motions will be included. (Committee reports and announcements often are covered elsewhere in the Newsletter.) Since voting records will be published, we thought it was important to have some special proof-readers of the column. Both Maryann Valerio and Mary-Jane Grace-Brown have volunteered for this assignment, and will be reviewing Mini-Minutes prior to publishing.

Only after this double check is completed, and the Board has approved the official minutes on which the article is based, will the Mini-Minutes be published in the Newsletter. We hope that you'll find them informative and interesting. ◊◊

Reprinted with permission from the Queens Quill, the publication of the Queens, N.Y. chapter.

I was really moved by a scene at the beach the other day. About fifty sea gulls were clustered together on a stretch of sand. These gulls were different in size, color, and gender, but this didn't stop them from going about their business together. Some looked for food, others rested, and still others stretched their wings to fly. The fattest gulls didn't seem to be self-conscious about their size; quite the contrary—they strutted by confidently, for a large sea gull is usually one who has been able to survive the winter, one who is strong and fit. And the darkest in color didn't seem to be attacked by the lightest in color, or vice-versa. These birds were just there, coexisting—allowing themselves to just BE.

I hope that one day we humans will be able to peacefully coexist without prejudice over size, color, gender, ethnic background, race, religion, age, general appearance, or handicaps. Until that day comes, we would do well to take a lesson from our feathery friends. ◊◊

## —Mini-Minutes— Board Meeting January 1, 1988

The meeting was held at the La Guardia Marriott in conjunction with the Holiday Happening. All Board members were present: Voting Board members for this meeting were Robert Bain, Neil Dachis, Paula Dachis, William J. Fabrey, Jerry Hoxworth, Nancy Summer, and Russell F. Williams. The Chairman, Conrad H. Blickenstorfer, votes only to break ties and to make a 2/3 or 3/4 majority as required by the Constitution.

A number of committee reports were given and discussion was held on several topics that required no vote.

### MOTIONS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE:

The proposal to appoint Sally E. Smith as NAAFA's Executive Director—with semi-annual review—with a mandate to focus on fundraising for the first four month period, was approved.

Barbara Colgin (OH) was appointed the chair of the SIG Committee.

A new membership application form was presented to the Board. While it required no approval, discussion was opened regarding the prices of certain membership categories. Bain moved that the new form be reviewed by the Finance Committee for updating [of prices] and that the committee will confer with the Executive Director and the Marketing and Advertising Committees.

Candidates in the annual election are asked to answer specific questions as part of their election statements. Revised questions (proposed by the Election Committee) were approved for use in the upcoming election.

### MOTIONS PASSED BY SPLIT VOTE:

Changes to NAAFA's election rules were presented and discussed. The changes mainly involved a stepped-up timetable for candidates to accept their nominations and to present their election statements and for committee response. These rules were proposed by the Election Committee to further speed up the preparation time of the election. Vote was all in favor, with the exception of Williams who abstained.

### MOTIONS DEFEATED:

It was suggested by a Board member that the order in which candidates statements appear in the election materials might effect the number of votes received. In response to that discussion a motion was made to end the practice of presenting candidates in alphabetical order, and present them instead in an order chosen by lot. The vote was YES: Fabrey; NO: N. Dachis, P. Dachis, Hoxworth, and Williams; ABSTENTIONS: Bain and Summer.

### NAME CHANGE DISCUSSION:

The matter of the name change of NAAFA was considered. After reviewing the report of the Name Change Committee, Fabrey moved to amend the Constitution (subject to court approval) to change the name of the organization to NAAFA, Inc. (dropping the full name National Association to Aid Fat Americans, Inc.). [NOTE: Constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority for passage.]

However, Summer moved to amend the motion to include that the full name of the organization be "National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance", this name shall be used secondarily to NAAFA, Inc., and only when a full name is required.

The vote on the amendment to the original motion was passed by simple majority: YES: Bain, Fabrey, Summer; NO: P. Dachis, and Williams; ABSTENTIONS: N. Dachis and Hoxworth.

The vote on the amended motion, to change the name to NAAFA, Inc., (with National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance used secondarily) was defeated. Vote was YES: Bain, Fabrey, and Summer. NO: N. Dachis, P. Dachis, Hoxworth, and Williams. As a result, no change in NAAFA's name was approved. [However, the Newsletter Editor was asked to conduct a straw poll on this subject in the Newsletter. This poll has now been conducted and results have been forwarded to the Board.] ◊◊

## A Feathery Lesson

by Aglaia Koras-Bain (NJ)