

# NAAFA Newsletter

VOLUME XV

ISSUE NO. 6

JUNE 1988

## Corporate Fitness Programs on Rise

Wellness and fitness programs are hot news in corporate America. More and more big companies are starting such programs for employees. Many such programs simply make exercise time and equipment available to workers, but some include weight loss programs. Some programs are available for a fee, others are paid for by the employer, and in some cases, employees are told that they **must** participate. Employees who prefer not to take advantage of such "perks" are often discriminated against, embarrassed, or "encouraged" to partake.

NAAFA's Sue Ellen Hiers of North Carolina works for a firm with a "health center". The health center markets a weight loss program called the "setpoint" diet as "finally, a diet that works" and is "scientifically tested". Last fall, Sue Ellen asked about the five year success rate of the diet, but all she got was "blank faces" and was told that she better sign up fast because space was limited.

So Sue Ellen wrote her firm's health program. She concluded her suggestions by referring the health center to NAAFA and to **Radiance** as resources for further information on exercise and health of fat people.

Sue Ellen Hiers' guidelines for her firm's health center are excellent. All wellness, fitness, or exercise programs in America should hear such information. Does your employer have such a program? If so, consider passing on these guidelines. Fat people have the right to wellness and fitness without discrimination or pressure! ♡

### NAAFA Convention

August 31 - September 5, 1988

Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor  
Baltimore, Maryland

## Guidelines for Fitness Programs

by Sue Ellen Hiers (NC)

I would like to see a change in attitudes towards fat employees. I would like to see the health center focus on empowering fat employees. The health center would be of value to me if the following changes were made:

- 1) Provide exercise equipment with seats big enough to comfortably support a fat person.
- 2) Recognize that clothes appropriate for exercise are not available to all fat people.
- 3) Recognize that because of the tremendous oppression fat people live under, we may not have positive (or any) body awareness and that programs should be designed with this in mind.
- 4) Become aware that the research on health and fatness is mixed and so refrain from advertising a diet "that works" and is "scientifically tested" if you have no long term follow-up data and cannot reference a reputable journal where the "scientific test" can be reviewed. Referring to a book put out by the company promoting the diet is hardly acceptable.
- 5) Use images of fat people in positive ways as active, valuable people.
- 6) Stress that exercise, recreation, body movement and awareness are important, and of themselves, for **everyone** not just those in pursuit of a socially acceptable body type.
- 7) Stress that exercise is beneficial even in the absence of weight loss and that exercise does not always result in weight loss.
- 8) Make the health center a safe place for fat employees and advertise this fact (if it is true). Possibly have times that the exercise room is reserved for fat employees only.
- 9) Educate the staff about the oppressive environment that fat people live in and its effect on our health. Educate the staff about the controversy surrounding the treatment of obesity, and the fact that some in the medical profession are questioning if treatment is even ethical given the track record of current weight loss procedures and the sloppiness of weight loss research.
- 10) Don't use the hatred fat people have internalized as justification for oppressive programs. ♡

## Media: Good News and Bad News

**The Good News:** Major retail chains are using more plus-size models. Recent ads from Sears and K-Mart have used larger models (wearing shorts and sleeveless tops, no less) to advertise summer clearances. The Activism Committee invites you to participate in a special "advertising watch". We would like to determine the retailers and geographical areas where such positive advertising is used. Send your listings and clippings to the NAAFA office—your materials will be sent to the appropriate committees.

**More Good News:** Sally Jessy Raphael just reran the show featuring NAAFAns

Geneva Chapman, Sally E. Smith and Nancy Summer. NAAFA's address was given and the phones rang off the hook at the NAAFA office once again.

**The Bad News:** Both the Oprah Winfrey Show and Phil Donahue have had disturbing shows recently. A number of members have called to register their dismay. If you saw these shows and reacted the way many NAAFAns have, we strongly suggest that you write directly to the show—and send a copy of your letter to NAAFA.

The Oprah Winfrey Show "sponsored" a diet war between the residents of Durham

## Media, continued

and Raleigh, North Carolina. Several thousand people went on diets to lose as much weight as possible in 30 days. [Didn't anyone ever tell them that the faster you lose it, the faster you gain it back?] With 6,254 pounds lost, Raleigh beat Durham which only lost 5,064 pounds. Perhaps Oprah might consider doing follow-up shows next year and five years from now—to see how many pounds were actually kept off. You can write Oprah Winfrey in care of WLS-TV, 190 North State Street, Chicago, IL 60601.

Dick Gregory (minus Walter Hudson) made a revisit to the Phil Donahue Show. This time Gregory, promoter of the Bahamian Diet, had thirteen super-size fat people with him—all who are attempting weight loss on his program. Particularly upsetting about the show was the focus on blaming the victims. All the problems faced by the fat people were blamed on their weight. No one said that a bigoted society, or lack of suitable public accommodations and appropriate medical care had anything to do with the difficulties they face.

While statistics were given regarding the incidence of obesity, no figures were given as to the success rate of Gregory's or anyone else's diet. No distinction was made between eating disorders and being obese. Dick Gregory also told viewers that he has declared war on obesity *and wants public funding to help finance his war*.

Donahue, who has been exposed to many NAAFA's over the years, said some very unenlightened things, including the statement that fat people don't have a group to represent them! [Suffering from a little memory loss, are we Phil? We didn't think that it was that easy to forget Susan Mason's recent appearance.] You can write to Phil Donahue at NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020. ♦♦

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## Constitution Ready

NAAFA's Constitution, complete with all amendments, has been typeset and is ready for printing. Any member who would like a copy of the Constitution can receive one by writing the NAAFA office. The mailing is scheduled for late July.

A big thank you goes to Chairman Conrad Blickensorfer, Secretary Mary-Jane Grace-Brown, Lisbeth Fisher Burns, and others for their work on this project. ♦♦

## COMMITTEE NEWS

by Dan Davis (CA)

1988 may well be remembered as the year NAAFA came of age. In January the organization appointed its first Executive Director who, with the help of the Marketing and Advertising Committee, promptly kicked off an aggressive growth campaign. In March the Board followed up by overhauling NAAFA's committee structure to improve and integrate services.

Now it's your turn. NAAFA is looking for committed volunteers to serve on committees, chair committees, and help with programs. These jobs are not cosmetic; they require self motivated people who are willing to spend a few hours each week working toward improving life for fat people. Here are some of our openings:

**EMPLOYMENT:** The Employment Committee needs a chairperson. Its most pressing mission is to develop a workbook to help fat job seekers and employees. The committee will also compile and report on information about employment practices as they relate to fat people. Applicants for this position should have a background in personnel, labor relations or a related field.

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:** If you're experienced in raising money for non-profit agencies, the Resource Development Committee can use your help. The committee is charged with developing and carrying out a comprehensive fund raising program, including (but not limited to) grant applications, corporate and individual donor programs and special events. The committee's chair is vacant.

**HEALTH:** Vicky Reed, chair of the Health Committee, would like some help from a registered dietician.

**PRINTING AND PRODUCTION:** The co-chairs of the Printing and Production Committee are looking for volunteers with typesetting or desk top publishing experience and equipment.

**SECRETARIAL HELP:** Several NAAFA officers/committee heads need "administrative assistants" or "secretaries". You can work at home. Good typing or word processing skills, and ability to take dictation from tapes or over the phone are important. There are openings for volunteers from the east and west coasts and midwest. ♦♦

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# Editorial

by Nancy Summer, Managing Editor

Whenever NAAFAnS gather there is a risk that we will run into bigoted people who might be insulting or rude. (We all face that—collectively and individually.) After experiencing some problems in the late 70's, NAAFA event planners have learned ways to usually avoid potential trouble. For the most part, we have been successful because providing a safe environment for members is a prime consideration.

Sometimes our efforts have involved personal interaction by NAAFA leaders. On one occasion we switched our convention hotel during the planning stage. And always, we take a hard line with hotel management during planning—and hotel management has in turn held pre-convention staff meetings to make sure that all employees know what we expect.

But no hotel can guarantee the behavior of all their guests. And in Hagerstown in May at the Cumberland Valley Regional Gathering, NAAFAnS were treated rudely by other guests. Some of the members of an adult softball league, apparently under the influence of alcohol, had moved tables and chairs into the hallway, and were rudely accosting all the fat people who entered the area. While there was a lot of confusion and misinformation, apparent indifference from a skeleton hotel night staff, and a perception that the local police were not sympathetic to our problems (after all, there are no laws against insulting fat people), some very positive things came of the incident.

"The only appropriate response to oppression is anger," Dr. Alfred Zielke told attendees of his workshop at a 1987 NAAFA event. It was very important, healthy and appropriate that we NAAFAnS got angry in Hagerstown. We didn't slink through the hallways. We didn't cower in our rooms, hurt by the comments. We didn't let the rudeness go unchallenged. We got angry and felt our power, and in that there is victory.

Our anger was appropriate, and our actions, from calling the police to arguing with the softball players, were appropriate. And our actions continue: A number of our members have already written complain letters to the hotel chain. While it was unfortunate (and unavoidable) that a pleasant, well-planned weekend was marred by some body-bigots, we emerged stronger and more united. There were no fat victims at the Hagerstown Howard Johnson hotel that night. ∞

# The Battle of Hagerstown

by Russell F. Williams (MD)  
Unofficial Battle Historian, NAAFA

Field dispatch from Hagerstown Maryland NAAFA Army of the Cumberland Valley Headquarters Unit.

The fields of battle were the first and second floors of a local hotel. Not counting preliminary skirmishes, the battle lasted from about midnight to 3:00 a.m. Monday, and included two major actions with skirmishes in between.

Starting about midnight, elements of the NAAFA Army of the Cumberland Valley were returning from a dance and were going into bivouac on the second floor. It was then that it was discovered that elements of an adult men's softball league had occupied the southern end of the field in force and were ready to attack. As the opposition opened the battle, they fired loud "moo's" and occasional "buffalo butt's" as NAAFAnS walked by. There were also reports of softball players being able to so completely control the second floor hall that at times NAAFAnS were unable to proceed to assigned bivouac areas (their hotel rooms).

Led by Suzanne Shipley, elements of the NAAFA army launched a surprise flank attack that carried to the front desk from which police were called. This attack stunned the members of the opposition who fell back in disorder into their bivouac area (at police request). When the police left, elements of the opposition re-grouped and attacked again. This time they resorted to new and terrible weapons. Using the V-1 inter-hotel phone system, epithets were fired by phone directly into individual rooms, while a simultaneous assault on a reinforced NAAFA command bunker (the Dawson's room where a NAAFA party was being held) was made by pouring V-2 fluid under the bunker doorway. (V-2 fluid is code named BEER.)

Suzanne Shipley again led a charge to the very breastworks of the front desk, where, in the face of perceived heavy blasts of indifference and misunderstanding, she held her position while reinforcements were being brought up. The police were again called and enforced a truce on the first floor. During discussion, a delegate of the opposition came to explain that it was normal for young adults to make remarks to fat people, and then filed a complaint that the softball players were being disturbed by NAAFA

men patrolling the battlefield. (When young adults are denied their rights to harass fat people you truly realize that war is hell.)

Finally a full truce was put into effect which held until the opposition quietly withdrew from the field the following morning.

In the field dispatches, the following individuals should be mentioned for outstanding performances:

—To Suzanne Shipley, (Williams' division) for twice leading a charge to the front desk, and in the face of indifference and unconcern, holding the position long enough for the successful flank attacks to be organized.

—To David Craig (Meyers' Division) for volunteering for sentry duty and spending most of the battle in the heart of the action.

—To "nurses" Susan Mason and Janet Meyers for entering the battlefield during the action, so they might provide aid to the about-to-be-wounded.

--To Officer Peggy Williams for invoking the sacred rights of motherhood in threatening severe consequences to anyone harming her daughter Lori (USO Division).

—To Medical Officer Stuart Dawson (Hartenstine's division) for, under field conditions and without proper instruments, quickly analyzing the yellow V-2 fluid seeping into the command bunker, and promptly taking the correct actions to maintain the safety of the bunker's occupants.

—To Officers Bill Fabrey and Nancy Summer (member Joint Chiefs of Staff) for immediately reinforcing the front desk position established by Shipley, and the second floor battlefield, respectively.

As Activism Co-Chairman, Russell F. Williams said to the veterans and their friends at the reunion brunch the next day...

"The Declaration of Fat Independence says that we have the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and calls on us to confront all those who would deny us our inalienable rights. Let the world note that on May 30th, 1988 at Hagerstown, Maryland, we stood together and fought for our rights. Too long have we watched lives warped and destroyed by an uncaring society joined with a perverted medical establishment. Let the world know that the fat "wars" have started and that the only outcome can be victory: Victory, however long the struggle, and victory, however great the cost, because without victory there can be no hope, no future, no survival. So let us join together and gird ourselves for that struggle, secure in the knowledge that however long and hard the course, we shall win and assume our rightful place with the free peoples of the world." ∞

# Donors Continue Support

The response of NAAFA members and supporters to the fund drive and Major Donor Program has been excellent. Mid-way through the year, we are happy to report donations and pledges of almost \$8,000. We would like to thank our members for their generous donations. The continued support of our donors enables us to make progress in the struggle for size acceptance.

The following list includes those who have contributed to date:

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Gifts were also made in the names of the following:

Bob Bain and Aglaia Koras-Bain  
Dr. Conrad Blickenstorfer  
Barbara and David Colgin-Vance  
Joyce and Barree Owen-Williams  
Nancy Summer and Bill Fabrey

There were also twelve individuals who gave anonymous gifts. ♦♦

## Give a Gift of Size Acceptance

Next time you want to give that special someone a distinctive gift, give the gift of size acceptance. You can make a donation to NAAFA in the name of your friend or colleague, and they will receive notification of your generosity. This is a great way to give a unique gift and show your support of the movement at the same time.

You might also consider NAAFA when making memorial gifts. Many members have used their gifts to remember their loved ones. ♦♦