
NAAFA

Newsletter

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October 1989

Pan Am Settles Suit

Pan American World Airways agreed on August 31 to pay \$2.35 million to 116 female flight attendants who were disciplined, denied promotion, forced to resign, or fired for being "over-weight."

The agreement was the result of a class action suit, filed against the airline in 1984 by the Independent Union of Flight Attendants. The suit alleged that the airline's weight restriction policy constituted sex discrimination, and therefore violated the U.S. Civil Rights Act.

According to the *Washington Post*, Pan Am's weight policy made it mandatory for female flight attendants to conform to the weight limits defined for "medium frame" on the standard height/weight tables, while male flight attendants were automatically classified as having "large frames," allowing them to weigh more. The union claimed that the airline did not enforce the rules with men, and had no rules at all for ground agents, who also deal with the public. "The only people they were trying to keep slim, trim, and stereotyped were the female flight attendants," said union president Margaret Brennen.

The union won the suit in 1987, but Pan Am appealed. Besides the monetary awards which include compensation, interest and lost pension benefits, the recent settlement also calls for Pan Am to withdraw its appeal, pay the legal fees for the union, and institute a new weight policy. The agreement also specifies that the airline admits no wrongdoing. Court approval is required before the case is closed.

continued page 3

Activism Rally '89

Media Images: The Big Picture

On August 11th, over 200 NAAFans attended NAAFA's second annual activism rally held at the national convention in Los Angeles. This year's rally focused on the positive and negative portrayals of fat people in the media—how they affect self-esteem, how they create and reinforce stereotypes, and how they positively and negatively influence the public.



Video Producer
George Kapoulas

After a speech by Russell F. Williams, emcee Paula Dachis announced the winners of the Big Image and Small Mind Awards. Ballots for the awards were tabulated by Marie Pappalardo (NY).

The award announcements were illustrated with an outstanding video presentation of the nominees and award winners. George Kapoulas (CA) produced and edited the video collage.

Several media representatives were present to cover the event, including a camera crew from Fox Network. ∞

[Excerpts from the introduction to the Activism Rally, given by NAAFA Vice-President Paula M. Dachis. Text prepared by Frances M. White.]



Paula M. Dachis
Vice-President

Fellow NAAFans and ladies and gentlemen of the press: Welcome to the 20th annual NAAFA convention. Long time attendees

know it is a time to renew good friendships and build new ones. For those of you attending your first convention... can you feel the positive energy here? We want you to know that NAAFA wants you to feel good about yourself as a fat person and as a fat admirer. Take the good feelings you gather here at the convention beyond this room. Take them home with you. Spread them around at work, at home, and with your friends.

I'm sure you are thinking, "Easy for you to say. You've been doing this for

continued page 2

Special Rally Issue!

Big Image/Small Mind Awards	page 2
Media and the Fifth Freedom	page 4
Cher vs. Roseanne, and other Media Bits	page 6

Activism Rally '89

continued from page 1

years." Well, it's not easy for me or for any of us. Why? Because so much of the way we feel about ourselves is determined by the media, and not just movies, television programs, newspaper articles, but advertisements as well.

Have you ever stopped to consider how many products are sold by giving you a *negative* self image? They tell you that your career or social life is in jeopardy if you don't buy this product or that service.

***We are consumers.
Our money is just as
green as anyone
else's.***

We've come here today to address this situation. We are consumers. Our money is just as green as anyone else's. We need to stand up and cheer for what pleases us in the media: which performers move us, which ads will make us buy, and what shows make us laugh or cry. We also need to point a finger at what displeases us—which finger is your choice!

So let us begin the presentation of the Big Image and Small Mind Awards as voted by you, the members of NAAFA. These awards were judged by NAAFAs with respect to their treatment (positively or negatively) of size acceptance. Big Image Awards were voted for for the most fat-positive in each category, and Small Mind Awards were for the least fat-positive.

[The nominees appear under each category, with the winner listed first in bold type. Percentages indicate the percentage of votes received in each category.]

**NAAFA:
The National
Association to
Advance Fat Acceptance**

formerly
**The National Association
to Aid Fat Americans**

Big Image Awards

Best Film

Hairspray 39%
Sugarbaby 38%
Baghdad Cafe 23%

Best TV Movie/Special

Babycakes 69%
Karen Carpenter Story 31%

Best TV Sitcom

Roseanne 84%
Gimme a Break 11%
ER 5%

Best TV Drama

L.A. Law 68%
Jake & the Fatman 21%
Perry Mason 11%

Best Actress

Nell Carter 41%
Ricki Lake 37%
Marianne Sagebreht 22%

Best Actor

John Goodman 51%
William Conrad 26%
John Candy 23%

Best Comedian (Male)

Louis Anderson 40%
Jay Leno 33%
Steve Martin 27%

Best Comedian (Female)

Roseanne Barr 91%
Carrie Snow 9%

Best TV Talk Show Host

Sally Jessy Raphael 50%
Phil Donahue 35%
Geraldo Rivera 15%

Best TV Advertisement

Just My Size Pantyhose 86%
Pontiac Grand Am 8%
Kool-Aid 6%

Best Magazine

Radiance 61%
BBW 39%

Best Print Advertisement

Just My Size Pantyhose 87%
Large Corporate Structure 13%

Best Spokesperson

Roseanne Barr 52%
Nancy Roberts 30%
Carole Shaw 18%

Small Mind Awards

Worst Film

Fatso 60%
The Sex O'Clock News 24%
Hamburger: The Movie 16%

Worst TV Movie/Special

Diet America Challenge 91%
Young Again 9%

Worst TV Sitcom

Coach 49%
Mr. Belvedere 34%
Golden Girls 17%

Worst TV Drama

Nightingales 72%
Hill Street Blues 14%
St. Elsewhere 14%

Worst Actress

Cloris Leachman 42%
Lynn Redgrave 40%
Valerie Harper 18%

Worst Actor

Christopher Pruitt 70%
Dom DeLuise 30%

Worst Comedian (Male)

David Letterman 55%
Johnny Carson 28%
Gallagher 17%

Worst Comedian (Female)

Joan Rivers 73%
Judy Tenuta 27%

Worst TV Talk Show Host

Morton Downey, Jr. 60%
Oprah Winfrey 23%
David Letterman 17%

Worst TV Advertisement

Nutri-Systems 50%
Weight Watchers 27%
Just Do It/Nike 23%

Worst Magazine

Cosmopolitan 70%
Ms. 30%

Worst Print Advertisement

Nutri-Systems 64%
Calban 3000 36%

Worst Spokesperson

Dick Gregory 48%
Richard Simmons 30%
Oprah Winfrey 22% ∞

COMMENTARY

I suppose this is a step in the right direction, albeit a small step. The new Pan Am weight policy is that both male and female flight attendants will be classified as having "medium" frames, and that attendants of either sex, whose doctors determine that they have bone sizes over certain levels, will be classified as having "large" frames (meaning that they can be a few pounds heavier and stay within the rules.)

*determining...
job service by the
number of pounds
someone weighs is
totally unfair and is
a practice that
NAAFA opposes!*

If people are to be hired, promoted, or fired on the basis of performance abilities, and performance as a flight attendant requires that an attendant be able to walk down the narrow aisle of a plane, certainly it's fair that some size criteria be established. [The discriminatory nature of narrow aisles in airplanes is a different issue!] But determining hiring, promotions, and continued job service by the number of pounds someone weighs is totally unfair and is a practice that NAAFA opposes!

If an attendant's weight goes from 130 to 135, for example, does this suddenly mean she can't do her job? According to the absurd Pan Am policy it does.

The union's claims all rest on the issue of female flight attendants being used as "sex symbols" on planes. This was a good place to start five years ago. But now we'd like to see a flight attendant's union push for overall performance criteria being used to determine hiring and firing, with weight totally removed from the equation!

We also quibble with the claim that there are no weight limits set for ground agents. The requirements may not be in writing, but they certainly exist. When was the last time you saw a 350 pound ticket agent? ♦♦

Check Here:

- Do I want to compare Leg & Headroom of new cars on the USA market?
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NAAFA Newsletter

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NAAFA: The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt educational, human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people.

NAAFA is not a diet group, but seeks alternate ways to enrich the lives of its members and large people everywhere through public education, research, advocacy and support.

Regular membership in NAAFA is \$35 per year. Other membership categories are available. For more information, contact the Membership Services office:

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Media and the Fifth Freedom

Excerpts from a speech given at the Media Image Rally, August 1989

by Russell F. Williams
Board Member and Co-Chair of
NAAFA's Activism Committee



Freedom. What a wonderful word. What does it mean to you? In 1941, President Roosevelt stated that the objectives of U.S. foreign policy were to gain for all peoples everywhere four freedoms: Freedom

of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear. However, there is a fifth freedom that President Roosevelt did not mention. It is the Freedom to Be; the freedom to pursue our dreams and to be all that we are capable of being. In America, the fat are still largely denied this fifth freedom.

We are in a battle for the Freedom to Be. Our battle is simply another in a long line of battles for human freedom, and we who strive for the dignity of fat people are a new generation in a long line of freedom fighters. Why must we

What do we we fight together for? The rights of all people to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Peacefully and non-violently we can fight for our right to the freedom to be all that we can be, at whatever size we happen to be.

Where does this denial of our rights start? Where does a fat person begin to learn that they are socially unacceptable? For many, self-hatred begins in the home. Unfortunately, examples abound of the ways parents train their children that fat is unacceptable.

In 1979, in an address to a NAAFA convention, Wayne Wooley, Ph.D. (of the University of Cincinnati Eating Disorders Clinic) reported on an attempt to get pictures of children for a study they were doing:

"We went to shopping centers, amusement parks, places where there were many children. We had a brief consent form saying that we needed photographs of children for a study and asked every parent who passed by to let us photograph their children. No parent of a thin child ever refused consent. No parent of a fat child ever gave consent. Sometimes parents permitted their thin child to be photographed, while hiding their fat child behind them."

Suppose a child is lucky. Suppose their family is warm and accepting of their child's size. If the family helps develop the child's sense of self worth, then perhaps the school system or the media will help to destroy it:

Professionals in the educational and other helping fields have been given an assortment of pictures of children with physical difference. The professionals have been asked to rate these children in order of perceived likability. Regardless of the degree of handicap or deformity of the other children, can you guess which child is usually least liked by everyone?

The fat child in school can learn about health from "Slim Goodbody." His show comes on the educational television and is beamed into classrooms across the nation.

The fat child can read the Serendipity Book series available in some school libraries. In *Leo the Lop*, Leo the rabbit has very long ears and the other rabbits made fun of him. The rabbits come to realize, "If we're normal, and Leo is normal, then normal is whatever you are!" Leo soon realizes it, too. No one seems to suggest that he should have his ears cut down.

But in *Catundra*, another Serendipity book, all the forest animals make fun of the cat Catundra because she is so fat. The book ends with, "Most importantly, the other creatures of the forest didn't call her names because she had slimmed down to the prettiest cat they had ever seen." The moral in the Serendipity books, for the fat child who reads them, seems to be that however you look is acceptable, unless you are fat. We fight for schools, TV shows, and books in which the worth of the fat child is affirmed.

Unfortunately, the media must take a large share of the blame for promoting these attitudes to both children and adults. It allows society to hear over and over that the one unforgivable social flaw, the one unforgivable breach of etiquette, the one unforgivable body difference, is fatness. The media is lead by the diet advertisers who emphasize the social unacceptability of fat, and then offer their program to restore self-worth.

Open newspapers, magazines, or watch television and what message will you

Peacefully and non-violently we can fight for our right to the freedom to be all that we can be, at whatever size we happen to be.

all fight? We must fight because lives are needlessly warped, wasted, and ended. We must stand together, because unless we do, we will be destroyed, individual by individual, unhealthy diet program by unhealthy diet program, weight loss surgery death by weight loss surgery death. (When someone says, "Everyone could lose weight if they really tried," we must continue to say, "Well, medical evidence seems to suggest..." We should often start our argument with, "You fool, if you only knew how many innocent people have suffered and sometimes died, yes died, because of such medical fatuity!")

We fight for freedom of fat children, such as these, to be loved and accepted by their families and communities.

I have heard a woman talk of how, when she was a teenager, her mother would lie in bed at night thinking of the disgrace of having a fat daughter. Some nights the mother would jump out of bed, run to her daughter's room, wake her up, tear off her nightgown, stand her in front of a mirror, and scream at her that she was a disgusting child who was a disgrace to the family. We fight to give the adult this child has become her fifth freedom.

see being promulgated? Spokespersons and advertisers do not hold up "before and after" blood pressure readings or cholesterol counts. The media advertisements most always have people explaining how much better they look, and how much more socially acceptable they are since they became thinner.

What is the message here for the fat child and adult? The message is that the fat person is socially unacceptable and that the only way they can become even marginally acceptable is by publicly agreeing with the society that finds them fit objects of abuse.

In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, in the media fat people continue to be stereotyped as overeating, lazy people with poor self-image, who have no self-control, or who are using their fat to hide from their sexuality. All these things may be true of an occasional fat person, but I challenge the media people here today to look, ask and think:

- While civil rights should not be based on perceptions of calories consumed per day, suppose you wonder, "How much do fat people eat?" How much do fat people eat at an open buffet at a fat person's convention? Ask the banquet manager here or at other convention sites. You'll learn that it's no more than most other groups.

- How effective are various commercial diet programs? Ask people here about their dieting histories and how much money they have spent on various products and programs.

- Are fat women ashamed of their bodies? Come to a dance, but be prepared to do a lot of dancing.

- Are fat people using fat to keep from being considered attractive? Be sure to come to a fashion show or a dance, but be prepared to see many glamorous, attractive people.

- Do fat people lack drive? Ask people at this convention what their jobs are, what their educational levels are, and as you listen to the answers, remember that these are people who have accomplished what their have in spite of discrimination they have faced because of their size.

As we know from the prevalence of cigarette advertisements, it is sometimes difficult for the media to bite the hand that feeds it. But could the media not do some further investigative reporting? Of the people who join Weight Watchers, how many are at goal weight three years later? What is the long term success rate of OA? Do these and other organizations have such data, and if not, why not? If a paper carries a story about how someone lost large amounts of

weight, why not do a follow-up story two years later? I have followed up seven cases of people whose weight loss stories were carried in the media. Six have gained back most or all the weight. I know of no media follow-up on these examples of "the rest of the story."

Ultimately, however, we the fat can not blame the media and sit back and wait for it to change social attitudes about us. We must help ourselves by educating society and confronting the stereotypes. We the fat must be informed about our situation, clear about our goals, and refuse to accept abuse. We the fat must realize that every blow struck against the media's negative stereotyping of fat people is a blow struck for the life and liberty of ourselves and our friends.

Letters, calls, and peaceful, legal demonstrations, all done in the glare of the media, are the instruments of social change. Those who oppose us, those who profit from our suffering may well have something to hide, but we welcome the spotlight.

In Oakland, California, newspapers have published letters from people complaining about fat women jogging around Lake Merritt. We fight for the freedom of fat people to exercise in public. We fight for the rights of fat people to freely use the public facilities their tax dollars have paid for. We fight for the rights of fat people to use and be employed by private companies that are protected by the police and fire services that our tax dollars help pay for. We confront all those who would base our participation in the American Democracy on pounds, "pinchable" inches, or beliefs about calories consumed at the previous meal.

The battle for the fifth freedom beckons. We cannot avoid it. Sooner or later we will *all* be attacked. We seek to take no freedoms away from others. We only seek to replace lies with truth. We only wish to be allowed our place in the sun.

Too long have we watched lives warped by a society whose attitudes are shaped by stereotypes disseminated by the media. Too long have we watched lives destroyed by those advertisers who realize that it is very profitable to destroy a fat person's sense of self-worth, and then to convince them that use of their weight-loss product will return that sense of self-worth.

Let the world know that our freedom fight has begun. Let the world know that

Members Invited to Serve on the Board

Nominations for candidates for the 1990 Board of Directors election will be considered at an Election Committee meeting in early November. Any member who would like to be considered for nomination, who would like to suggest the name of a fellow NAAFAn, or who would like to suggest election rules changes, should write the Committee immediately. Members who are in leadership positions in NAAFA, or who have experience on other Boards of Directors are especially encouraged to seek nomination.

Running for the Board of Directors implies willingness to attend nominally four Board meetings per year held in various locations around the country. (Meetings have been held during 1989 in Philadelphia, Charlottesville (VA), Detroit and Los Angeles.) Currently, there is no provision for reimbursement of travel expenses. Smoking is not permitted at the meetings. In addition, candidates for the 1990 election must be at least 21 years old and must have joined NAAFA prior to January 1, 1989.

Those NAAFAns who are interested in Board service should call the NAAFA office for a description of responsibilities prior to submitting their names for consideration. Letters of interest must be received by the NAAFA office by November 1, 1989. ◇◇

Speech, continued

for us the only outcome can be victory. Support and encourage those who advance our cause. Proclaim to those who torment us, who attempt to brainwash us, and who repeatedly publicly humiliate us, that victory shall be ours. We shall have victory however long the struggle, and we shall have victory however great the cost, because without victory there can be no hope, no future, no survival. Come then and let us join together, secure in the knowledge that, however long and hard the course, we shall win. We shall win together, and by winning assume our rightful place among the free peoples of this world.

In brief, my friends, we too shall overcome. ◇◇

Big Image/Small Mind Campaign Donors

Generous NAAFA members donated \$2575 in the Big Image/Small Mind Award campaign. The funds were used to defray the costs of the 1989 Convention Activism Rally, "Media Images: The Big Picture," and will be used to further NAAFA's struggle to ensure that fat people are portrayed in a positive light by the media. We would like to thank the following people for their generous donations:

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In the name of Sue Campbell
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Media Bits

Cher vs. Roseanne

One of the weekly tabloids recently carried an article "Cher triumphs in bitter behind-the-scenes battle with Roseanne." The "battle" turned out to be over who will come in first in this year's Cover Story, a survey which determines the country's hottest celebrity based on appearances on the covers of more than 30 top magazines. Cher easily won in 1988.

It seems Roseanne was ahead this year until Cher broke up with her "young beau" and started dating a member of the Bon Jovi band. Now Cher and Roseanne are both in the running for first place. A marriage for either of them could determine the winner. The writer suggests that a 50 pound weight loss could attract enough attention for Roseanne that she'd win. (Hey, a 50 pound weight gain for Cher could do the same for her...)

Do the stars really care? Does the grocery-shopping public really care? Do you really care? Who knows... But author Harry Gossett (VA) points out one interesting angle on this story about svelte Cher and voluptuous Roseanne: He asks "Three years ago, who would have believed this!?"

TV Guide Guilty of Body Snatching

According to *USA Today*, the cover of an August issue of *TV Guide* featured Oprah Winfrey, but the illustration was a composite of Oprah's head atop Ann-Margret's body.

Designer Bob Mackie blew the whistle when he recognized the dress as one he had designed 11 years ago for Ann-Margret. He called Roger Smith, Ann-Margret's husband/agent, who indeed found a photo of his wife in exactly that pose and dress. Oprah is even wearing Ann-Margret's ring! The artist changed only the skin tone.

Neither star was reported by *USA Today* to be especially upset; however the television magazine's actions were called "extraordinary." The *National Enquirer* had a different angle. They reported that Ann-Margret was furious until she realized that *TV Guide* had

Thank you...

...to the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter for their donation of \$300.

...and to the Charlottesville, VA Chapter for their donation of \$150.

Bits *continued*

used Oprah just like they had used her. Oprah was quoted as telling an inside source that "This is the most embarrassing thing I can imagine. I thought I looked pretty decent, but I guess the real me isn't good enough for *TV Guide*. The whole thing stinks."

What's really odd is *TV Guide's* reaction to their artist's "double exposure." A representative told *USA Today*, "Ann-Margret should be thrilled because she's got another *TV Guide* cover. Oprah should be thrilled because she looks terrific."

Thrilled? And after all that dieting, Oprah. If you had only known how easy getting a new body could be...

A Heavyweight Fight Over Weight Loss

Comic nutritionist Dick Gregory, promoter of Dick Gregory's Bahamian Diet, recently filed a \$50 million lawsuit against Optatrym Diet System. Walter Hudson stars in their commercials, claiming that he lost over 900 pounds using the Optatrym products.

According to an article in the July 31st issue of *The National Law Journal*, Gregory filed the suit in Philadelphia federal court because he claims that Hudson's commercial, "deceptively misleads viewers into believing that Walter Hudson lost his weight through Optatrym rather than through use of my products."

You might remember that Gregory did "help" Walter Hudson with weight loss after Hudson received national media attention after falling and becoming trapped in a doorway. But after several months of dieting, when Hudson refused to leave his Hempstead, New York home and accompany Gregory to his "facility" in the Bahamas, Gregory "washed his hands" of Hudson. Talk show host Regis Philbin stepped in and has continued to provide Hudson with media coverage and some financial assistance.

Hudson himself is not named in the lawsuit. But we have a question for him anyway: If he started out at a little over 1,200 pounds, and he has lost over 900 pounds, how come he still weighs over 600 pounds? Truly a miracle diet, it appears...

Speaking of Walter Hudson...

On a *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee* show in September, Walter Hudson announced his latest venture: a new line of plus-sized women's clothing available by mail. (Men's clothing will be added to the line later.) Despite that fact that the line isn't really new (the featured "Invitation to the Dance" label has been available for several years through retailers and other catalogs), and Hudson is not known to be any sort of a fashion expert, the clothing shown, and the size ranges announced, (and the fact that custom sizes even larger than their standard ones will be available at no extra charge), makes the new catalog appealing.

Following Hudson's fashion show, *New York Newsday* published a feature story about him on September 9. When interviewed for that article, NAAFA's President was asked if she felt that Walter Hudson was a super hero to fat people. Summer responded, "No, I don't think so. He's just one of the (fat) guys trying to survive in a thin-obsessed society." (None of the information or comments obtained from NAAFA was used in the article.)

Sports of the Times

"Fat Can Be Beautiful, Too" was the huge headline of the Ira Berkow column in the sports pages of the Monday, August 7th *New York Times*. The article was about retired pitcher Mickey Lolich, one of "baseball's plumpest pitchers, and one of its best."

Lolich said that during his 16 years in baseball, when he was wasn't doing well people would blame his performance on his being "too fat." But when his pitching was good, they'd say, "He's as strong as a bull."

He went on to say that fat has nothing to do with ball playing skills. "I've seen a lot of lean bellies and bad arms. Don't judge a guy by how he looks. Judge him by whether he gets the job done."

Words of wisdom for Met left fielder Kevin McReynolds whose weight has recently been the subject of media attention. "I've heard reports that I'm 15 pounds over last year," McReynolds said. "It irritates me to have kids come and say, 'You stink, you're fat.'" The fact is that McReynolds has gained only

4 pounds this season. He also said that he felt he was being used a scapegoat for the Met's disappointing showing this year.

Mickey Lolich pointed out some other larger players for the *Times* reporter: pitchers Wilbur Wood and LaMarr Hoyt, Fat Freddie Fitzsimmons, Hippo Vaughn, and current player Rick Reuschel; and outfielders Greg Luzinski, Hack Wilson (of the Hall-of-Fame), and Fat Pat Seerey, (who once hit four homers in one game).

When the reporter asked Lolich for any advice for Kevin McReynolds, Lolich replied: "When people got on me I always remembered that old guy with the big belly."

"Who?"

"Babe Ruth," Lolich said. "He was my idol." ♦♦

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