

NAAFA

p.o. box 745
westbury, n.y. 11590

newsletter

VOLUME IV

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ACTING EDITOR: KAREN W. JONES

EDITORIAL: VOLUNTEERS AND NAAFA

I feel compelled to begin this with an apology for monopolizing the editorship of the Newsletter two months running. The system of having Guest Editors was meant to provide a forum for many different points of view, to decentralize the Newsletter operation from an overburdened office staff, and to give NAAFans an opportunity to put their talents to use for NAAFA's benefit. Unfortunately, the person who volunteered to do this issue decided at the last moment not to, and the rush job of throwing everything together in time to get a Newsletter out this month fell to me.

In a small organization like NAAFA, virtually all work is accomplished by volunteers who try to sandwich NAAFA in between jobs and families, and we inevitably feel the squeeze; only a few hours of clerical help each week is paid for. Hopefully, this shortage of money will be remedied eventually through fund-raising; but as long as we are still "flying by the seat of our pants", many projects we would like to undertake are beyond our reach--pursuing a test case through the courts, for example, or mounting the kind of educational campaign that might be effective in getting our point of view across. Still, while our scope may be limited by a lack of funds, the number of things that can be accomplished through volunteer efforts alone is not: there is always more to be done than there are people to do it, and the need for new volunteers is perpetual.

In the past a few very dedicated individuals have shouldered the burden of responsibility for keeping NAAFA going. As the organization grows, with the influx of new people with abilities that can benefit NAAFA, more of the workload can be divided more equally among a larger number of volunteers. We are beginning to see this happening now: if such an all-volunteer system is to work, two things are essential--communication and dependability. Where the efforts of a number of people are interrelated, communications must be open for things to

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ELECTION NEWS

Each year at about this time a NAAFA Elections Committee, comprised of all Board members whose terms are not expiring, meets to decide on the nominees for the June elections. Eileen Lefebure, Chairperson of this year's committee, reports that the following people have been nominated to run for the Board of Directors: Rhea Bardin, Ellen Dobson, Bill Fabrey, Joyce Fabrey, Sheila Goodman, Ernest Harff, and Karen Jones.

Anyone not on this list who would also like to run can do so by submitting a petition for his or her candidacy to the committee signed by 25 members of NAAFA; to be eligible, one must be at least 21 years old and have been a member of NAAFA for at least one year, and the petition must be received by May 1. Petitions should be sent to Eileen Lefebure, 55 Perry St., New York, NY 10014.

Because of an amendment to NAAFA's Constitution passed at the April 4th. Board meeting which increases the number of Board members from 9 to 11, instead of the usual 3 vacancies there will be 5 seats to be filled in June.

PEN-PALS DELAYED

Karen Wynne-Cohen, Coordinator of the Pen-Pal Program, reports that matches due to be mailed out this month will be delayed until about mid-May. She apologizes for the delay, and thanks all participants in the program for their patience!

[ED.: Karen has recently recovered from a long accident-related illness to resume her former NAAFA activities. We all welcome her recovery with gratitude for her continuing dedication to NAAFA, and wish her only the best of health from now on!]

FAT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL--
DR. FRIEDMAN REPLIES

I read with interest the recent review by Ms. Karen W. Jones of my book, Fat Can Be Beautiful. To say that I was shocked would be putting it mildly. I did not anticipate universal acclaim of the book or its theme, but I did expect a kinder reaction from the book reviewer of the Association whose cause it espouses. My first reaction was to ignore the matter completely. After all, everyone is entitled to his or her opinion, and Bill Fabrey's rebuttal was quite adequate. But then I decided to reply to some of Ms. Jones' charges, not because of any pique on my part, but because I sincerely feel that her review does a great disservice to your membership, many of whom would greatly benefit from reading my book.

Almost the entire review has negative overtones, indicating what is wrong with the book or what it does not contain. Ms. Jones fails to mention any of the positive things which this book says and does, namely:

1. It explodes the medical myth that all types and degrees of excess fat are dangerous and require eradication.
2. It affirms that obesity is not as harmful or as deadly as we have been led to believe, and that it is not a major risk factor in coronary heart attacks or strokes. This is certainly a departure from conventional medical doctrine. (By the way, I fail to see Ms. Jones' objection to the use of the term "obese", since obesity and fatness are synonymous, and I have used these terms interchangeably in my book.)
3. It indicates that at least 1/3 of our overweight population or roughly 20 million Americans are genetically predisposed to be fat, due to factors beyond their control, and that society should therefore be more tolerant and less critical of them for it.
4. It points out that for many people overeating and the state of fatness is an important emotional adjustment to life, and that dieting for these people is inadvisable and fraught with danger.

(continued next column)

5. Finally, it makes an effort to help many fat people, who find it difficult to overcome the castigation and ostracism of society because of their excess weight, learn to better cope with their obesity and feel less guilty and "uptight" about being fat.

I particularly resent the implication that the only merit the book has is the fact that it displeases Dr. Robert Atkins and is the source of a suit against me by him. That comment sounds rather facetious, although it may have been intended as a negative compliment. I would much rather dwell on the positive acclaim the book has evoked, not only from members of NAAFA but from many people who have written to me to express their appreciation for the book's message.

As far as Ms. Jones' suggestion that you get your doctor to read it, I have good news for you. Many doctors, including members of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians (obesity specialists), have ordered the book and hopefully their attitude toward the fat population will begin to change as a result of Fat Can Be Beautiful.

Abraham I. Friedman, M.D.

[ED.: It must be obvious by now that opinion in NAAFA is considerably divided over Dr. Friedman's book. By presenting both sides of the controversy in the Newsletter, the final decision is left to each NAAFAN.]

CHAPTER NOTES

Baltimore--Peggy Greensfelder, Chairperson of the Baltimore-Washington area Chapter, reports that regular meetings are now under way! The first one was held last month at Peggy's home, and one is planned for this month in Virginia. The Chapter recently was spotlighted in a half-page article in a local paper.

Detroit--Dorothy Hafeli was appointed Chairperson Pro-Tem of the incipient Detroit Chapter earlier this month; names and addresses of all area members have been forwarded to her, and meetings will be initiated shortly.

[ED.: For information on anything related to Chapters, write to me at the address below:

Karen W. Jones
Chapters Coordinator
44 Lakeside Drive
Andover, CT 06232]

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Bill Fabrey

NAAFA-DATE MATCHES WENT OUT

More than 200 new matches were provided recently to those NAAFA members currently participating in NAAFA-DATE. After five years, the program must still be considered an experimental (but sometimes useful) part of NAAFA's program. Don't forget, if any questions or complaints arise with regard to your matches, please make the NAAFA-DATE Committee aware of them. Write to the committee, marking your envelope "For NAAFA-DATE Only".

CAN FAT BE MORE "EMBARRASSING" THAN SEX?

These days the news gets more and more unbelievable! I picked up a newspaper the other day, and read the following about a woman named Julie Roy, who was suing her psychiatrist for malpractice: "During nine days of testimony, in which embarrassing details of her sex life and emotional problems were unveiled in minute detail, Julie Roy maintained her composure, because the detail she is most sensitive about was never mentioned. 'I'd have fallen on the floor if someone had said I was fat,' she said..." Etc., etc., etc. It's amazing how in this "liberated" age, people are losing their inhibitions with regard to race, religion, sexual practices, and many other formerly taboo subjects, yet are still completely uptight about fat.

TALL PEOPLE AND NAAFA

From time to time, special-interest groups inside and outside NAAFA make note of the things that NAAFA and those groups have in common. Women, blacks, Mexican-Americans, the handicapped, the poor, and other groups have suggested that NAAFA join forces with them for special reasons. Now comes a new group that may interest you: TALL people. Yes, the Florida Skyliners of Miami (a social club for tall people), its founder, and a group of some of its members wish to join NAAFA as a Miami Chapter!

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE NAMED

Members of a three-person committee which will be responsible for approving all NAAFA publications were named recently by Bill Fabrey. Those appointed were Marvin Grosswirth, Joyce Fabrey, and Cathleen McLain; the appointments were confirmed by the Board at its meeting in February.

OPEN BOARD MEETING IN MAY

The next open business meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, May 9, 1975, at the West Side YMCA, 5 West 63 St., in New York City. The meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. in room "D" in the basement. All members of NAAFA are invited to attend.

NAAFA TO HOLD ART AUCTION

An Art Auction has been planned for May 18 by the Fundraising Committee. It will be held in Manhattan, at 18 East 17th. Street, with a showing at noon of the works to be auctioned off, and the auction itself between 1 and 5 p.m.

Members of the New York Chapter are arranging for publicity for the event, which will include a display ad in the New York Times' auction section.

This is NAAFA's first fundraising venture--New York area NAAFans take note, and plan to support the effort. Why not get your friends and relatives to come, too? With their checkbooks, of course!

POLL DUE

If you joined NAAFA before December of 1974, you received a poll sent to all members to be filled out and returned to the Westbury P.O. Box. If you haven't returned yours yet and want your responses to be tabulated along with others', you must return your poll to NAAFA by April 30!

Dr. Natalie Allon, sociologist and NAAFA Advisor, has kindly agreed to tabulate the polls, and a review of the results will appear in the Newsletter later this year.

1975 "HILDA" STILL AVAILABLE

The remaining "Hilda" calendars are now available at the reduced price of \$1.25, postpaid, from NAAFA's Book Service.

-- LETTERS --

Dear NAAFA,

I recently read with interest the last NAAFA newsletter. The letter from Eleanor Truitt was particularly interesting. I sew for myself because I want to dress in my own style of high fashion. I can see no reason why we should sit back and accept the usual "store rack fare" of "circus tents" and mourning apparel that is offered in anything above a size twelve. It galls me to pick up a fashion magazine and read some article in which a noted clothing designer states that there are no truly "chic" women above a certain size or weight.

Perhaps the people who need help most are fat teenagers. I know that until I caught onto designing my own clothing, I was stuck in "old lady" styles; usually in drab colors. Things shouldn't have to be this way. When one is a teenager it is particularly important to "belong."

It has long been my dream to help put together a fashionable magazine for us. I believe "if you've got it, flaunt it." There seems to be a crying need for such a publication. We need models and personalities with whom we can identify. I am sure that within the ranks of NAAFA, we could find plenty of talented designers and models.

Is anyone else out there thinking along the same lines?

Sincerely,
Janice E. Griffin

[ED.: Your letter brings up several issues to which more space should be allotted than that available here. Fashion is an area in which NAAFA is very much interested, for precisely the reasons you cite so cogently. Many of us in NAAFA, like you, design and/or sew our clothes; last fall's Convention, in fact, included a fashion show that featured several members modelling their own creations. Sources for patterns in large sizes--to 60 and over--are currently being sought out (anyone with information on such sources, please send it in!), and a "Pattern Project" is being planned by two Chapters as a service for members.

Personally, I find your idea of a fashion magazine for fat people very exciting, though in view of the fact that even large-size clothing operations like Roamans and Lane Bryant display their fashions on average-size models, perhaps it is too much to hope for--yet. In the meantime, how about a regular column on fashion for the Newsletter? I'd really be interested in other readers' reactions--let's hear from you!]

Editorial (continued from p. 1)
run smoothly; those who volunteer must, in turn, try to be dependable, since one person's "copping out" can jeopardize an entire project. While such a system inevitably has its drawbacks, it also offers NAAFA a unique opportunity for growth.

Karen W. Jones

ALMANAC COMMITTEE NEEDS CHAIRPERSON

Richard Cundari, former Almanac Committee Chairman, has resigned from the project after two months of research and copious note-taking. NAAFA is grateful for his efforts in getting the Almanac off to a start; anyone interested in taking over where he left off should write Bill Fabrey, care of the Westbury box number.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: handmade, hand-embroidered Mexican pantsuit, about size 22½-24½, at cost--\$50.00. Call Dianne at 212-853-1638.

(non-commercial ad rate: 10¢/word, minimum 10 words; department number available for \$2/issue.)

CORRECTIONS

The following corrections should be noted for the article in last month's Newsletter entitled "Constitution Amended" (page 1, column 2):

1. The amendment which begins, "Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 14" should instead read, "Constitution, Article VII, Sec. 1".

2. The following amendment was omitted:

June 2, 1974
Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 14 (p.1): Delete the entire section.

MOVING? Be sure to let NAAFA know your new address! (Participants in NAAFA-DATE should include the new telephone number as well.) Your prompt attention to this small detail will ensure that you receive all NAAFA mailings without delay.
