

# NAAFA Newsletter

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## 1986 IN REVIEW

With the New Year upon us, and the usual supply of "year end reviews" of news, music, etc., one more review seems appropriate--namely, a review of 1986 NAAFA news:

January: Our headline read "IS FAT SO BAD? NATIONAL NEWSPAPER QUESTIONS OLD ASSUMPTIONS". Advisory Board Chairman, Dr. Paul Ernsberger was widely quoted in two USA TODAY articles. NAAFA advisor Dr. Susan Wooley of the University of Cincinnati's Eating Disorders Clinic was also quoted as being in agreement with his conclusions. She added, "There are some risks to being overweight, but the cure may do more damage than the affliction. Even the best diets have a 95% (long-term) failure rate, and there is good evidence that weight fluctuations can be hazardous to your health...It does no good to make people feel more anxious and more guilty about their weight, increasing the stress on them, when we don't have anything better to offer."

February: GENETIC FACTORS DECLARED LEADING CAUSE OF OBESITY BY RESEARCH GROUP reviewed the findings of Dr. Albert J. Stunkard and others that heredity may play the primary role in obesity, whereas family environment during childhood may have little or no effect at all.

March: ARIZONA WOMAN FILES SUITS IN WEIGHT DISCRIMINATION CASE which reported that Lauren L. Sawicki of Arizona had filed a \$19.25 million lawsuit against the physician who made a health report to her potential employer in which he concluded, without actually giving her an examination, that her weight was a health risk. She also filed a \$17 million suit against the city of Mesa, Arizona which denied her the job.

April: We ran an exclusive story entitled "HOSPITAL REVEALS TRUE PRIORITIES IN MEMO ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM. The program? A marketing plan with strong emphasis on advertising for the gastric balloon--and total lack of reliance on physician referrals. The goal for participating patients was weight loss maintained for at least one year!

May: NEWEST MEMBER OF NAAFA'S ADVISORY BOARD: DR. PAUL HASKEW, Ed.D. in which Dr. Haskew said "I have become firmly convinced that the vast majority of eating and weight disorders are intimately connected with a discrimination against heavy people that has given rise to widespread fat phobia. The most direct way to alleviate the pain that is inflicted on, and self-inflicted by millions of Americans is to fight that discrimination in every possible way."

We also reported in May: BALLOON PROCEDURE BEING WIDELY PROMOTED--BUT LONG-TERM SUCCESS DOUBTED, in which our commentary included the suggestion, "Don't do it yet!"...a statement that proved to be good advice in light of the news that broke in September.

June: A lead article entitled THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT, with an artist's (Susan Mason) suggestion that the Statue of Liberty's base should read, "with liberty and justice for all, regardless of shape or size."

August: OUT OF COURT SETTLEMENT MADE IN HEALTH SPA LAWSUIT...an exclusive interview with Ira Sprintzen who settled his size discrimination lawsuit against Jack LaLanne for an undisclosed sum and an apology. Sprintzen's life membership at Jack LaLanne's had been terminated after only one day because the other members allegedly found his size to be esthetically displeasing.



September: FDA INVESTIGATES GASTRIC BUBBLE...The Food and Drug Administration, which in fall 1985 approved the gastric bubble (balloon) for use, began an investigation into the safety of that weight loss device after receiving 54 complaints including one of a balloon-related fatality.

October: Our lead article was the DECLARATION OF FAT INDEPENDENCE by Russell F. Williams and we also reported on MEMBERS PROTEST WINFREY REMARKS ON NATIONAL SHOW...protests which lead NAAFans June Bailey and Geneva Chapman to be invited to appear on Oprah's show.

November: DIETING A DISASTER, OBESITY CONFERENCE TOLD...an article about Dr. William Bennett's remarks to a conference on human obesity at the New York Academy of Science. In an exclusive interview with Dr. Bennett, he clarified his remarks about diet-based studies: "...To be ethical, research should be conducted with follow-ups for a minimum of three years, preferably five..." and researchers "should present the program as being experimental and advise participants that the method of weight loss is not proven" and that if they fail to achieve permanent weight loss, they should not necessarily feel that they are to blame for the failure.

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## THE BEST AND WORST OF 1986: THE EDITOR'S UNOFFICIAL LIST

Best TV commercial showing a fat person in a positive way: Roy Rogers; Runner-up: Just My Size pantyhose  
Best books: Breaking All the Rules, by Nancy Roberts; and Fat Chance, by Harry Gossett.

Best magazine: Radiance

Best television show: Sally Jesse Raphael's show about F.A.'s.

The Sensitivity award: to the Bill Cosby show for editing negative fat comments out of their scripts before they could be aired.

The "You've got guts" award: to Carole Shaw who appeared on Joan Rivers' show in December...Carole took a deep breath and made all her points before a semi-dazed Joan could respond.

Best "wise decision" of 1986: made by Nell Carter who is said to have announced that she had given up dieting and was going to just be herself. (She's great just the way she is!)

Most embarrassing moments on television: any time Oprah Winfrey engages in public self-flagellation about her weight. Give yourself a break, Oprah!

Worst Rock Video: David Lee Roth's "Going Crazy", in which he tastelessly plays the fat Picasso brother, a record producer, with a series of low-class fat jokes.

Worst TV show premier: Joan Rivers' Late Show. Not only did we have to see Joan, but one of her guests was David Lee Roth who brought a film clip of his rock video "Going Crazy".

The "Ship It All Back" award: to Lane Bryant/Roamans, for continually sending me merchandise that is either substandard or doesn't fit!

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'87 CONVENTION ANNOUNCED - The 1987 national convention will be held at the Newark Airport Marriott on Labor Day weekend. The Board of Directors approved the bid made by Bunny Peckham, Nancy Summer, and several members of the New Jersey chapter to hold the convention on September 3-7 at the hotel which is located within the airport grounds. Further information about the convention will be announced as the plans are finalized.

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### MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR... by Nancy Summer

Due to the holidays, NAAFA's Holiday Happening, and illness on our **Newsletter** staff, this December issue has been slightly delayed. However, we are pleased to announce that an expanded January, 1987 issue is in the making, and will be out soon!

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