

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS INC

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BOX 745 WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590

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Editor this issue: W. J. Fabrey

STUDY FINDS ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES UNRELIABLE

AFTER INTESTINAL BYPASS OPERATION

Two research scientists in Sweden have recently published data pointing to another difficulty facing those who survive the bypass operation to accomplish weight loss.

In a letter to the official publication of the American Medical Association (JAMA, 12/20/76), Drs. E. Johansson, PhD, MD, and J. Krai, PhD, MD, of Sweden, have questioned the safety and effectiveness of oral contraceptives for jejunoileostomy (bypass operation) survivors.

According to Drs. Johansson and Krai, "The question was asked whether oral contraceptives are effective after intestinal bypass operations. The consultant did not know of any study on the subject, but wisely advocated caution in the use of the pill as a contraceptive on the assumption that the reduced absorptive capacity of the shortened bowel would impair the uptake of the estrogen and progestin used in these preparations.

We have just completed a study on seven fertile women (age 19 to 44 years) after end-side jejunoileostomy for obesity." The authors go on to cite detailed measurements of the absorption of the hormones in the test group, and they compare them to results in a control group of women who had not had bypass surgery.

Johansson and Krai conclude with the statement that "Whatever the mechanism, our data clearly show a reduced plasma level of oral contraceptive in patients operated in this way. Indeed, oral contraceptives can not be considered safe after intestinal bypass!"

This Newsletter is continuing to print information about the bypass operation due to interest on the part of some NAAFA members. We are not qualified to form medical judgements, but we note with dismay the large number of such operations in the United States each year (between 5000 and 20,000) and the growing pessimism of many medical writers about the long-term safety of the procedure.

In the light of mounting evidence against the operation, we are forced to recommend that NAAFAs who are seriously considering such surgery in order to lose weight, should consider very carefully whether the short- and long-term risks are in any way justified by a possible loss of weight. Yet another case of a NAAFA member who has lost her health, but very little weight as a result of bypass surgery, has recently come to our attention.

Before making such a decision, members are welcome to any reprints of articles that we have, free of charge, if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with the request.

NAAFA OFFICE MOVES TO OSSINING, NEW YORK

In an important move designed to improve membership services and to speed the flow of mail and membership questions and complaints, NAAFA has established a new office in Ossining, New York under the direction of Lisbeth Fisher, Executive Secretary.

For the first time since 1969, the year NAAFA was formed, mail will be answered promptly and efficiently on a daily basis. According to Liz, who is understandably enthusiastic about the move, "We hope to be able to provide 48-hour service for all membership services, questions, and requests for literature."

The move has already taken place, and the office is now operating on schedule. It is open during various hours in the day and evening, and can be reached by telephone at (914) 941-8808. All NAAFA mail should now be addressed to:

NAAFA
Box 132
Ossining, N.Y. 10562

The only exception to the above is mail relating to public relations, fund raising, medical research, legal matters, and submittals to the Newsletter. Such mail, and also letters addressed to NAAFA's President, should still be sent to the old address: NAAFA, Box 745, Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

NEW NAAFA CHAPTER FORMED

Wichita, Kansas, now has its own local chapter of NAAFA.

The Wichita chapter, chaired by Rex Reed, hopes to accept responsibility for the Pen Pal Project from the Rochester, New York, chapter, which originated the program and ran it successfully for several years. Rex's wife Kathy, who has been doing the actual pen pal matching for several months, looks forward to managing a new, revised Pen Pal Project this spring.

A Newsletter article about Rex and Kathy Reed appeared in the Summer, 1975 (Vol. IV, #5) issue.

NOTICE

In March, 1977, NAAFA will begin using its newly-acquired non-profit bulk mailing permit in mailing this Newsletter. By putting this change into effect, the Association has been able to postpone an increase in the annual dues of \$10, which has remained the same even as postal rates have been climbing steadily from 8¢ to 10¢ to 13¢ for a first class letter.

With further postal rate increases in the offing, NAAFA felt that use of the non-profit tax-exempt status would be the only means to keep the organization in the black and even allow for more frequent mailings to the membership.

However, use of the bulk permit has two potential problems for some members: bulk mail sometimes moves slowly, taking up to 30-45 days in some post offices; and envelopes using the permit must carry the full name of the organization in the return address, showing "National Association to Aid Fat Americans, Inc." instead of "NAAFA" as it presently reads.

Those members who wish to receive their Newsletter via first class mail can send payment of \$4 (or \$2 for those having less than 6 months remaining on their membership) payable to NAAFA, Box 132, Ossining, N.Y. 10562. The additional payment represents the increased postal and clerical costs to NAAFA of handling some members on a special basis.

NAAFAs who hold Supporting Memberships (\$25/year) or Life Memberships (\$250) will continue to receive their Newsletter via first class mail at no extra cost.

1977 ELECTION COMMITTEE FORMED

Rules for the upcoming annual election in June, and determination of a slate of nominees for seats on the Board, are the main items on the agenda of this year's Election Committee. The Committee, consisting of Board members E. Dobson, J. Fabrey, W. Fabrey, L. Fisher, S. Goodman, K. Scott-Jones, and N. Shadowitz, would like to hear from any NAAFA member who would like to be considered for possible candidacy in the election.

To be eligible for a seat on the board of Directors, one must be at least 21 years of age and have been a member of NAAFA for at least one year.

Anyone not selected by the Election Committee as a candidate can still appear on the ballot by submitting a petition signed by 25 members of NAAFA, prior to the May 1 deadline.

LETTER BLASTS TV NEWSMAN'SVIEWS ON FAT POLICEMEN

The following reproduces the text of an interesting letter recently mailed to a television newsman in Washington, by one of NAAFA's Washington area members:

Mr. Nick Thimmisch
WRC-TV (4)
4001 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Thimmisch,

I am writing you to say that I am very grieved and offended by your rather cruel television editorial on, or rather, against "fat cops." Not only do I disagree with the drift of your thought on this matter, but I think the tone and tenor of your presentation is highly offensive. I am an officer in the Baltimore-Washington Chapter of NAAFA (National Association to Aid Fat Americans) and in their behalf I deplore such statements as "nobody wants a fat cop" and that people want policemen who "look like policemen."

In my mind's eye, a policeman looks like my father. My late father, Sgt. C. Bernard Ruffin, Jr., was a member of the Metropolitan Police Department for a quarter century. He was the first Negro to attain a uniformed rank above private when he was appointed corporal in 1952. For many years he was the director of Division II of the Metropolitan Police Boys Clubs. He was widely considered an ideal "cop." Yet he stood 5'10" tall and weighed 205-240 pounds. His weight in no wise hindered or impeded his work.

I must take exception to your statement that fat people are less fit and less competent than persons of slender build, and that "all they need to do is exercise a little control", thereby implying that the stout are weak-willed and irresolute. Any impartial investigation and study would reveal this not to be true.

With regard to the policemen in Washington, the criterion should be how well the man (or woman) is able to perform the job, and none other. Just because there are officers on the force that weigh 267 pounds (you pronounced that figure as if you believed it more appropriate to an elephant than to a man) does not mean that they are incompetent. The Police Department should hire and maintain its personnel, regardless of weight, and solely on the basis of how well they are able to perform the job; that should not matter, whether the officers weigh 70 pounds or 700 - their performance should be the only criterion.

Once again I must say that I very much regret your insensitive and in many ways destructive attitude, in that it tends to harass and hinder many competent individuals.

Sincerely,

C. Bernard Ruffin

CONNECTICUT CHAPTER PUBLISHES OWN NEWSLETTER

Connecticut's publication "the fat review", begun in April, 1976, has a good circulation among NAAFA members around the country, according to Barbara Anderson, Connecticut chapter chairperson. Boasting an outrageous style of reporting all its own, the review has a no-holds-barred approach to the trials and tribulations of fat people in general and NAAFAs in particular. Ms. Anderson says that a sample copy of the review is available to anyone requesting it, writing to Connecticut Chapter, NAAFA, Box 263, Milford, CT 06460.

TEXT OF RESIGNATION LETTEROF VICE-PRESIDENT FLORANE SCLAR

Having been beset with numerous critical decisions for the past several months, complicated by ongoing personal problems, it has become necessary for me to curtail my activities in a number of areas.

After much thought and deep soul-searching, one of the most difficult decisions which I have had to make is with regard to my involvement in NAAFA. In all fairness to the organization and to myself, I must at this time ask that you accept my resignation from the Board of Directors and as Vice-President.

At the risk of sounding a bit melodramatic, I want you to know that my heart and soul will always belong to NAAFA. I shall continue to support its principles, ideals and goals in any way possible, for I owe NAAFA my self-esteem as a worthwhile human being. That's not a debt not easily paid, but for the present, I will do all I can from the sidelines to fight the good fight for the rights of all fat people to live in dignity and with self-respect, not only within the confines of the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area, but throughout the entire country and Canada. It is a total commitment that all of us who have joined NAAFA should and must make in order for us to go forward and get NAAFA's message across to those who need us so desperately and to others who so desperately need to be re-educated.

Hopefully, as complications begin to abate, I will, from time to time, be available to assume the responsibility of some small project - you have but to ask. It will also be my pleasure to attend meetings whenever possible.

Perhaps in the near future, I may once again have the honor and opportunity to serve NAAFA with greater vigor and enthusiasm than heretofore.

--Florane Sclar

OPEN BOARD MEETING DATES

The next two meeting dates of the Board of Directors are as follows: March 11; and April 15. Members who are interested in attending should call (212) 877-4441 or (914) 941-8808 to confirm dates, times, and meeting locations. Attendance is limited to current members of NAAFA.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED

NAAFA members Joyce Maloney (New York City) and Howard Clist (Long Island) have been confirmed as replacements for seats on the Board of Directors recently vacated by Michael Witty and Florane Sclar, both of whom resigned recently.

Ms. Maloney had been serving as NAAFA's Recording Secretary, but had not been an actual voting Board member. Mr. Clist was active in Board affairs in the past, until June of last year.

Mr. Witty will continue as NAAFA's accountant and Chairperson of the Auditing Committee. Mrs. Sclar hopes to become active again in several months.

LETTERSWHERE IS ALMANAC?

Dear NAAFA,

I would like to know if the NAAFA Almanac is ready for sale yet and the price of same. Thank you.

Irene Deezik
Hartstown, PA

[The Almanac project is temporarily grounded due to lack of an editor. The Almanac is planned as both a review of NAAFA history and a handbook of facts, observations, and hints helpful to fat people.

--ED.]

LIKES NAAFA

Dear NAAFA,

Thank you for a great organization!

Geraldine A. Ford
Mishawaka, IN

ACTRESS ENJOYS NAAFA MEMBERSHIP

Dear NAAFA,

Am enjoying your monthly Newsletters. I notice you have a book section. I have come upon a new discovery which is beginning to sweep the country. You may have heard about it already.

In any case, IT WORKS!

The book is called: Dr. Siegal's Natural Fiber Permanent weight-Loss Diet, by Sanford Siegal D.O., M.D.

I would like to offer this as another option to enhance our lives.

I am spreading the word about NAAFA in my travels around the country.

You're doing a terrific job!

Cloris Leachman
Los Angeles, CA

DISLIKES RECENT NEWSLETTERS AND OTHER THINGS

Dear NAAFA,

I have been a member of NAAFA for many years and have rarely written to complain about the way things have been done, but upon receipt of a recent Newsletter (May-June 1976) I decided it was time.

Most members look forward to receiving this publication since it is the only contact we have with the organization. That Newsletter was the worst I have seen.

First, it seems to me that the past few Newsletters (except for Sept.-Nov. 1976) seem to have been mislabeled, because they read like a New York Chapter report. There are other people in NAAFA who are important besides those who live in the New York area. Somehow I have the feeling that New York thinks they are the only ones who count.

As always, I attended this year's "Convention." It appeared to be more like a New York Party since every other Convention I've attended had speakers, guest and otherwise, who reported on the condition of the organization, what had been happening during the past year, and what the members could do to help the organization grow. This "Convention" lacked all of those things and therefore to me, and to many others to whom I spoke, it did not feel like the real thing. Why was the New York Chapter permitted to steal the organization's format in their "Best of New York" weekend held a year ago? That was the real Convention; this thing in May was a New York party.

The play [Fatling in the Cellar] as performed by the Chapter was enjoyable, but had no place at the "Convention." It also seems to me that the New York Chapter is out for themselves and their Chapter, and the National organization comes in last on their order of priorities.

The interview with the couple who met through NAAFA-DATE seemed like a terrific idea until I got into the interview. It was the most negative thing I've ever read. Instead of being happy about their meeting and subsequent marriage, they took the opportunity to tell what was wrong with the program. Was this perhaps because the interviewer wanted this tone? Personally, I know that the dating service has been a boon to the members and many people have had many happy experiences from the service. If I were a new member reading this interview, I'd never join NAAFA-DATE and perhaps would withdraw from NAAFA.

The image of NAAFA is at stake. How do we know who reads our Newsletters? Isn't there any control over what is put into print? We need more articles about what's being done to help fight the discrimination we are all subjected to, what fat people across the country are accomplishing personally towards that goal, how the membership can help, we need to know about medical breakthroughs. In short, we want to know what's going on with regard to fat people. Why should three pages of a six page Newsletter be devoted to an interview that was uninteresting and negative?

Come on, NAAFA, we know you can do it. Get some imaginative people involved who are interested in the entire membership, not just the New York members.

As a New Yorker, I would like to see all or part of this letter printed in a future Newsletter so that our members can see that not all New Yorkers are interested only in themselves.

--An Interested and Loyal
NAAFA Member (name withheld by request)

[The writer of the above letter is referring to three issues of the Newsletter (Jan-Feb, Mar-Apr, and May-June, 1976, Vol.V, Issues 1, 2, and 3). These were edited by a committee consisting of five members of the New York local chapter who offered to produce three issues as a special project after I and others on the Board were unable to "get out the Newsletter." It is worth noting that the five members of that committee are also active in national affairs, two of them occupying seats on the Board of Directors at the time. The Newsletters in question were reviewed by the national Publications Committee prior to being printed; and in looking back at them now, I see a mixture of news items, both of local and of national interest.

Personally, I am grateful that the Committee of five made the decision to help rescue the Newsletter from oblivion; if some readers detect an excessive amount of New York-based news or a New York bias in reporting, it is regrettable. We shall continue to strive for a balance of news from all localities; certainly we must report on those events and activities in New York that are newsworthy.

We shall be happy to print other points of view about this subject from members who write to us.

--ED.]

RESERVES WIDE SEATS IN ADVANCE

Dear NAAFA,

Thank you so much for my membership card and Newsletter. I am very interested in our organization and its people.

I don't think we have a chapter here in eastern Pennsylvania, and I would be willing to try to set one up. So far, every time I have mentioned NAAFA, people think I am joking; that's why I say "I will try". I belong to the Pennsylvania Federation of Women's Clubs and many other organizations; this may be of some help.

I would also like to give credit where it is due. I have great difficulty sitting in airplane seats. In fact, I cannot get in between the seats and require the front seat on an airplane. This will be our second trip to Las Vegas with the Globe Travel agency in Philadelphia and Mr. Gil Benedict has gone out of his way each time to ensure me the first seat on the plane. This is quite a thing to do since they are charter flights and it is first-come, first-served.

People claim to be interested in the wellbeing and dignity of all our citizens, regardless of race or religion. How about adding "or size"?

Edith Callahan
Broomall, PA