

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

P.O. BOX 745

WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590

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Acting Editor: Joyce Fabrey

CONVENTION '74

by

Florane Sclar, Chairperson

I have good news about our gala two-day ANNUAL CONVENTION being held at the Skyline Inn in New York City on Saturday and Sunday, October 26th and 27th, 1974. Here is how it is shaping up:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26th: "Rap" sessions and workshops are being planned for the afternoon, from 2-5 PM, covering a number of consciousness-raising topics of vital concern and interest to both men and women, fat and thin, some to be led by professionals. The evening is yours; you'll have time for dressing up and a leisurely dinner before the Hot Buffet Party beginning at 9 PM, featuring "live" music, dancing, fun, games, and really getting to know each other.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27th: The Official Banquet begins at 1 PM, with activities that include, in part, guest speakers of distinction, door prizes, raffles, music, and, back by "popular demand", a fashion show once again being coordinated by Ms. Eileen Lefebure. Incidentally, those women who are interested in modeling, please take careful note of the article on the fashion show, below.

In addition, the idea has been proposed to have an Arts & Crafts exhibit by our many talented members (we know you're out there), which would include paintings, sculptures, drawings, and other varied crafts. This one, however, is UP TO YOU since it would solely depend upon your response. So please, we're very interested - we hope you are too! Let us know, as soon as possible, where your talents lie and what you have to offer, by writing to me at G.P.O. Box 819, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202.

That's the up-to-the-minute convention news. More activities may be added before the entire program is finalized. You'll be kept closely informed. A registration form will be mailed to all members by September 20; any last-minute information will be printed in the next Newsletter which will appear (I am promised) before the Convention.

WE WANT YOU

By popular demand, we are hoping to again put on a fashion show as part of Convention '74. But we cannot go searching for models this year, as we were forced to do last year. Many of the models felt shy at first, but we believe all who took part in the show thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

This is a FORMAL REQUEST for models. ALL sizes are needed! We cannot and will not have a show without you. There is no way we can know you're interested unless you tell us. Don't miss

out on the fun! The only prerequisite is that you be able to attend a meeting in New York City in early October and a rehearsal on Saturday morning, October 26.

As a special part of this year's Fashion Show we are inviting all members who sew and/or design their own clothes to add their fashions to our show. The garment must be made and/or designed by a NAAFAn, but can be modeled by someone other than the designer. All styles will be officially entered in the show on October 26 at the rehearsal.

Interested? Why not participate? Send a note to Eileen Lefebure (Fashion Show Coordinator) at 55 Perry St, N.Y.C. 10014, or call her at (212) 741-3702, or contact the NAAFA office. Do it now! The show depends on you.

--- NAAFA Convention Committee

SHERATON HOTEL ACCUSED OF DISCRIMINATION

In a recent action, NAAFA brought charges against the Sheraton Hotel chain, in the form of a press release that was sent to more than 100 of the leading newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio news departments. The text, which is self-explanatory, is as follows:

"The National Association to Aid Fat Americans, Inc. (NAAFA), an organization made up of 1000 members in the United States and Canada, says it has just experienced a taste of the discrimination that it claims is the lot of most overweight citizens today. The five-year-old association, based in Westbury, New York, says that it was recently turned down when it attempted to reserve banquet facilities in the Sheraton Motor Inn at 42nd Street and 12th Avenue in New York City.

At first the rooms were shown to the group and offered to them as a site for their annual convention, to be held this fall. However, when their convention chairman tried to reserve the facilities, she was informed that they had already been booked to another group. Subsequent telephone calls and a visit by two persons posing as an engaged couple revealed that in truth, the facilities were still available. A final check by the chairman verified that the Sheraton still would not rent the hall to NAAFA, the only national organization that represents the overweight minority.

NAAFA President William J. Fabrey, a slim man married to a fat woman, explains that letters to the Sheraton Corp. in Boston went unanswered, and that an appeal to established

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agencies dealing with discrimination was made to no avail. The various city and state legal offices, the licensing bureaus, and the private organizations involved in cases of this kind all turned a deaf ear, or at most, referred the complaint to the New York City Commission on Human Rights. This last agency expressed sympathy, but said that the law makes it illegal to discriminate against people in jobs or housing due to their age, sex, race, religion, or national origin, only. Discrimination due to body build is allowed.

In summarizing the situation, Mr. Fabrey says that the shoddy treatment by the hotel is "yet another case of unfair and unwarranted discrimination against fat people" and that "similar problems exist in employment, in social situations, in clothing stores, and in medical care. The association has active programs devoted to alleviating these and other problems faced by the overweight American or Canadian."

Noting that recent medical research seems to indicate that about 20 - 50 million people are, for metabolic and hereditary reasons, likely to stay fat permanently, NAAFA feels that "the only fair solution to these problems is to eliminate discrimination wherever it exists." ***

As stated above, this press release was sent out only after normal channels of action were exhausted. Some of the agencies to which formal complaints were submitted, and from which no satisfaction was received, were the following: District Attornies of NYC, and NY State; NYC and NY State Divisions of Human Rights; Better Business Bureau of Metro. NY.; NY Civil Liberties Union; NYC Consumer Affairs Dept.; NY State Consumer Protection Board; and several others.

Since the release was issued, several publications have expressed interest, but only one or two have really investigated the story. The Sheraton Corporation headquarters have refused to talk to the press, saying they must remain silent on the advice of their attorney, apparently fearing a potential lawsuit. NAAFA, of course, is in r.o financial position to even consider undertaking any form of legal action other than that already completed. Even simple courtroom procedures are expensive, and as yet NAAFA has no legal defense fund.

As this issue of the Newsletter goes to press, NAAFA continues to use the Sheraton example in its occasional interviews with the press, when asked for examples of discrimination, even though many publications are hesitant to carry articles that are uncomplimentary to major advertisers. One interesting development: A letter just received from the Sheraton Corporation counsel in Boston has requested that NAAFA refrain from any more adverse publicity until the matter is fully discussed and negotiated with the manager of the local Motor Inn in question. Any further progress will be the subject of future articles in this Newsletter.

There is no god but Thin, and Ridicule is its prophet.

--WFK

1974 ELECTION RESULTS

NAAFA held its annual election in June. All members were sent a ballot by mail; there were 105 ballots returned. The official count was done on June 28 by the Election Committee in an open meeting. The results were:

Karen Wynne-Cohen	69
Florane Sclar	64
Cathy McLain	57
Ernest Harff	51
Natalie Allon, Ph.D.	46

Wynne-Cohen, Sclar, and McLain were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors; the terms expire on June 13, 1977.

NAAFA NOTES

TEEN-AGE PEN PALS

In October, the Rochester Chapter of NAAFA, under Karen Wynne-Cohen, Chairperson, will be initiating a Teen-Age Pen Pal Program for teens who have responded to NAAFA's Overweight Teenager brochure. The project has already received the approval of the Board of Directors, and more than 100 teen-agers have already requested application forms. Further details will be available soon.

RECORDING SECRETARY NEEDED

The NAAFA Board of Directors is in urgent need of a Recording Secretary for regular board meetings. Applicants should be able to attend meetings approximately ten times a year on Friday nights in the New York Metropolitan area; and should be able to take minutes (shorthand not a must) and type them afterward. Interested NAAFA members are invited to contact Vice-President Eileen M. Lefebure, c/o NAAFA Office in Westbury.

MELANIE FRANCOES

NAAFA extends good wishes to Ethel Weiss and her husband Jim on the arrival of their new daughter in late August. Dr. Weiss is Chairman of NAAFA's Advisory Board.

A Poem

by Judy Freespirit

Fat and round and beautiful
 I sit and walk and dance
 With grace and charm
 With eager mind
 And loving heart
 Yet find no joy
 In the normal world
 Which turns to me
 A cold, thin back
 And tells me I
 Should have more self control
 And be like them.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Fabrey

WE MOURN THE PASSING OF CASS ELLIOT, SINGER

As most NAAFA members are already aware, Mama Cass, or just plain Cass, as she preferred to be called, was fatally stricken by a heart attack after a successful two-week engagement at the London Palladium Theatre.

The news, which came on July 29, was sad and shocking to us for many reasons. One was that Cass Elliot was perhaps the most memorable member of the rock singing group, "The Mamas and the Papas" that was so popular in the late '60s. After the group split up, she was successful in maintaining her popularity, and she remained in the public eye as visible proof that a fat person can be successful and yes, even pretty; some would say, beautiful! And, it was a beauty of spirit and personality, not just of the skin-deep characteristics by which people usually judge beauty.

Another reason why the news was so shocking is the way in which Cass left this world. Neither the initial speculation, that she may have choked on the ham sandwich she had been eating, nor the eventual pathologist's report of the heart attack that took her life, surprised anyone. We suppose that the public accepted the fact that either way, food had been involved. It was a terrible thought that was on the mind of many, I'm sure.

Any fat person can't be blamed for wondering if the fate of Cass Elliot awaits everyone who doesn't keep weight from exceeding "acceptable" levels. Especially when the headlines, by August 6, read that "overweight killed Mama Cass." That was the unfortunate effect created by the coroner's report in the City of Westminster, England.

Pathologist Keith Simpson testified that the singer was killed by fat, even though she had recently lost 70 pounds. And, nobody raised a dissenting voice, even though her manager testified that "she always seemed to be on a diet of some kind or other, always losing and gaining weight." The report, in effect, provided plenty of evidence for those who like to proclaim that fat is harmful, regardless of circumstances.

Fortunately in this country, Dr. George Mann, a heart specialist at Vanderbilt University, denounced the report, saying that it stated an old-fashioned Victorian concept; he said that the conclusion was improper; "to know whether obesity was a contributing factor, we would have to know something about Miss Elliot's cholesterol level and whether she was hypertensive." He also stated that there is no evidence that obesity in itself is responsible for a coronary heart attack. It's too bad that Mann's statements did not receive wider circulation.

When I asked NAAFA advisor Abraham I. Friedman, M.D. about the case, he concurred with Dr. Mann, and said that he thought the wide fluctuation in Cass Elliot's weight provides a possible clue; her heart attack may well have been caused by a life history of fad diets and the losing and regaining of large amounts of weight. It is a good possibility, he said, that Miss Elliot might be alive today if she had not gone on diet after diet,

but rather had worked to "contain" her weight, to limit her weight to some level that was comfortable to her. Of course, he added, an actual diagnosis is impossible without knowing more about the background of the individual.

In his book, Fat Can Be Beautiful, Dr. Friedman quotes Cass Elliot as follows: "For too long, we've been taught to think that people who are fat can't cope - that fatty tissues are an admission of neurosis. That's nuts! - Some women were made fat, and some were made thin, and there's no reason why fat women should take the back seat and leave the driving to the skinnies."

I think that her opinion would have been the same even if she could have foreseen the future. We will miss Cass Elliot.

MADELINE WOLFE LOSES SUPREME COURT FIGHT

On December 17 of last year, the Supreme Court of the United States decided against NAAFA member Madeline Wolfe in her two-year battle with Metropolitan Dade County, Florida. The court decision on case number 73-548 was to merely decline to review a lower court decision (Florida Supreme Court) which in turn, had declined to interfere with a still lower court (Third District Court of Appeals), which had decided that Dade County has the right to inflict an arbitrary set of height-weight standards on its employees, and to fire Mrs. Wolfe, who exceeded these limits.

For reasons which NAAFA has not yet determined, the justices sitting on the Supreme Court (with the single exception of Justice Douglas) decided that no constitutional rights or misapplication of the law were involved in this case; that Florida apparently has the right to make weight a criterion for hiring or even job security. Other implications of the court decision remain to be seen.

Unfortunately, NAAFA became involved in the case late in the two-year proceedings, and was able to provide only limited support. When NAAFA was (as usual) unable to enlist the aid of the New York Civil Liberties Union to file the appropriate papers supporting Mrs. Wolfe's action, we then turned to a well-known firm of attorneys for advice. The advice was negative, stating that Mrs. Wolfe had little chance of winning in the Supreme Court, especially since she had been a temporary employee with the county (albeit with the highest job ratings as a fire dispatcher). The expense that NAAFA would have incurred in preparing the proper brief to the Court was held to be prohibitive. Unfortunately, NAAFA has no legal defense fund to shoulder expenses of this kind.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Wolfe had prepared, at her own expense, the necessary documents to pursue the matter with the highest court of the land. Before the final decision had been handed down, she told the NAAFA office that she was determined to do anything necessary to "make public jobs, especially, safe for fat people." She felt very strongly that nobody with her weight of 194 pounds should be prevented from competently performing any job, especially when that job is at a desk. "Even though a favorable decision might come too late to help me," she said, "I feel an obligation to try anyway, on behalf of the millions who have problems similar to mine."

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I came to know Madeline Wolfe as a most courageous and good-hearted person, a NAAFA member who we would all do well to emulate. We are sorry that there was no victory for her in court. Hopefully, several million readers of newspaper accounts of Dade County's injustice will at least have been made aware of what fat people have to put up with in this country!

LETTERS

JAW-WIRING, CONTINUED...

Dear Editor,

The article on jaw-wiring on page 2 of the last Newsletter refers to Ann-Margaret's accident and her 10 lb. loss due to this procedure. Very few "compulsive over-eaters" or those very much overweight could identify with Ann-Margaret or her lovely figure. I think if you check into the research on this desperate measure you will find that England has been doing this for quite awhile.

The first person to do this was a woman who had her jaws cemented shut - rather drastic, one would admit. The wiring was a later refinement of this technique... all recorded in the National Enquirer (Lake Worth, Fla.) It seems that England is way ahead of us in trying for a solution to our problem.

My daughter who is 18 has lost 76 lbs. to date with this technique (under both an MD's and an oral surgeon's care). She has approximately the same amount to go. She has had excellent care (and has healthy teeth and jaws) so she has in no way endangered her health. In an emergency she could remove the rubber bands and open her jaw with difficulty.

Her teeth are cleaned professionally once a week by the oral surgeon and she uses a water-pik each day. The first few days were rugged and the surgery involved is not at all pleasant - but to her, the results are worth it. She has been overweight all her life, and has literally tried everything else! I just thought you might be interested.

Eleanor S. Truitt
St. Petersburg, Fla.

P.S. I find your Newsletter most interesting and informative.

[ED: We're glad that your daughter's experience, so far, has been worthwhile. However, we still feel that for most people, jaw-wiring still remains a questionable means of losing weight permanently. The September issue of the Journal of Oral Surgery reports that many oral surgeons have been flooded with requests to wire teeth ever since the recent accounts in the media of several women who are still losing weight by this method.

In the above article, Dr. Daniel M. Laskin writes that "People who need a gimmick such as wiring of the teeth to lose weight are probably so poorly motivated in the first place that long-term success with weight control is extremely doubtful." Dr. Laskin is a professor of oral surgery at the University of Illinois School of Dentistry. We feel that it is more than a simple matter of motivation, but that the Doctor is still basically correct.]

DR. ATKINS vs. DR. FRIEDMAN

Dear Editor,

A few days before July 4th, Mr. Fabrey called and informed me of the fact that Dr. Friedman was going to have an informal debate with Dr. Atkins of "Diet Revolution" fame on the Phil Donahue Show, a syndicated TV talk show that originates here in Chicago. Mr. Fabrey suggested that I attend the broadcast in order to have NAAFA represented at the proceedings, and he asked that I write to the Newsletter about the program.

Along with Doctors Atkins and Friedman, the guests on the program included a girl who had her teeth wired together in order to lose weight; and Bonnie Kahn, who has a boutique called "Fat's Where It's At" located in Skokie, Illinois.

On the program, Dr. Friedman stated that it may be more harmful to be continually losing weight and gaining it back than to remain overweight, and that there were many people who are simply "born to be fat." Dr. Atkins disagreed, and claimed that there is no excuse for anyone to be overweight; and that his diet can help anyone! Both Phil Donahue and Dr. Friedman pointed out that according to the American Medical Association (AMA), Dr. Atkins' diet is possibly harmful to people with heart trouble and other ailments because of its high cholesterol content. Dr. Atkins denied this.

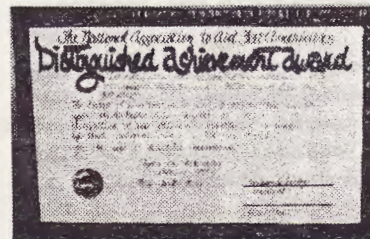
A member of the home audience phoned in to say that fat people are subjected to a great deal of discrimination and just plain cruel treatment by the so-called "normal" portion of the population. During the audience participation portion of the program I was able to agree with this and tell how I was recently told by a counselor for the Illinois State Employment Bureau that very few employers would be willing to hire me due to my weight. (I have been unemployed since March.) I was also able to ask Dr. Atkins how his diet would help the psychological eater. He claimed that his diet decreases the appetite, period.

On the subject of whether doctors are overly hard on fat people, Dr. Atkins allowed that it was a doctor's duty to embarrass, insult, harrass, and do anything necessary to get a patient to lose weight. This prompted Ms. Kahn, the owner of the boutique, to suggest that Dr. Atkins must hate fat people very much. I agreed.

At the end of the program, Dr. Atkins pulled a real grand-stand play by announcing that he was going to sue Dr. Friedman for libel, pointing out a part of the jacket blurb of Dr. Friedman's book that mentions the recklessness of the Atkins diet.

To me, Dr. Atkins has all the attributes of a snake-oil salesman!

Ms. Karen Reetz
Chicago, Ill.



COME TO
CONVENTION '74!
FIND OUT WHO
WILL WIN
THIS YEAR'S
AWARDS!