

NAAFA Newsletter

VOLUME X

ISSUE # 4

JULY 1984

convention special !

A TINY SLICE...

I had just finished sorting through the convention pictures while preparing this issue, when it hit me. I was feeling it again...that warm, glowy feeling that I felt during the last few hours of the 1983 Convention.

There I was, back at the La Guardia Marriott, surrounded by my family of NAAFA friends. In the photo collection, the smiles will always be on the faces, the fashion show models will always be beautiful, the workshops will always be in session, and the dancers will always be dancing. (Just as I was about to get really melancholy, I remembered that in only a few weeks, we're going to do it all again at the 1984 Convention!)

The Convention Special Newsletter is always a difficult issue to prepare. Not only is it technically complex, but it is also difficult to compress five days of intense feelings and action into just a few short pages. The 1983 Convention Special has been doubly so for me in two ways.

First of all, I was one of the three Convention Co-Chairpersons which makes me question my objectivity. I've solved that problem by using other people's words: quotes from letters and other publications about the convention.

Secondly, the 1983 Convention had the largest attendance in NAAFA history, and as they used to say on Dragnet, "There are 5 million stories in the Naked City..." I have solved that problem by using another old quote: "One picture is worth a thousand words," and have relied on many pictures to tell the story.

So here it is...a tiny slice of the 1983 Convention for you to savor. It is NAAFA's official chronicle of a very important event and a preview of what's to come at the 1984 Convention.

--Editor ❖



CONVENTION DIARY

THURSDAY

Magic time...the start of a NAAFA convention. The La Guardia Marriott was turning into a special world where fat was accepted and admired. People began drifting into the hotel, some to enjoy a day of relaxation and visits with friends, others to use the hotel's beautiful pool.

Thirty sightseers took the Circle Line Tour, a boat trip that completely circles the island of Manhattan. It was a day of sun, ocean breezes, and panoramic views of the skyline and bridges.



CONVENTION COMMITTEE...



Co-Chair Nancy Summer with
Founder Bill Fabrey



Co-Chair Bunny Peckham with Marco,
Marriott's Banquet Manager



Co-Chair Susan Hoey
with Aloysius Hoey



Bruno Allix on bus tour



Bunny Peckham at registration



Neil Dachis (left) leads men's sexuality rap (above)

SATURDAY

Workshops began the day, with separate men's and women's Sexuality raps (led by Neil Dachis and Ruby Greenwald). Later the two groups joined to share insights in a session led by June Bailey.

The buffet brunch and Annual Meeting included the presentation of Distinguished Achievement and Service Awards by Paula Dachis.

The keynote speaker was William Bennett, M.D., co-author of The Dieter's Dilemma and Editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter. A surprise guest speaker was Dr. Bennett's co-author, Joel Gurin, who is also the Editor of American Health magazine.

Founder and Chairman William J. Fabrey gave his annual address, this year entitled "Fat Pride, Fat Power, and YOU".

[The text of convention speeches will be available soon.]

CONVENTION DIARY CONTINUED

FRIDAY

The day started early with a sightseeing bus tour of Manhattan. All day, more and more NAAFA's arrived until there were almost two hundred of us. Registration was followed by an orientation meeting (led by Nancy Summer) that was helpful, not only for first-timers, but for experienced conventioners as well. A workshop on dancing tips was also held (led by Peggy Fox).

A cocktail reception was held in the evening. Background music conducive to conversation was replaced by dance music at 10, and we danced until midnight.

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

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to Aid Fat Americans, Inc.

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Introductions by Nancy Summer



Guest speakers Joel Gurin and William Bennett, M.D. with Board member Elisabeth Williams



NAAFA members listen to speeches



Paula Dachis announces awards



Chairman William Fabrey and NAAFA Advisor William Bennett, M.D.



Bunny Peckham (far left) and Angela Capiello (left) receive awards

SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED

A number of service awards were distributed at the 1983 convention. The awards are given each year to officially convey NAAFA's gratitude for volunteer work performed by the recipients.

Pence Service Awards were given to the following volunteers:

Angela Capiello - for general committee work and secretarial services at Board meetings

Paul Ernsberger - for writing in the Newsletter and handling correspondence as Chairperson of the Health Committee

Susan E. Hoey - for service as Assistant Treasurer or Treasurer for two years

Noel Nyman - for setting up and maintaining all computer data processing for the Membership Committee; service as Co-Chair of the NAAFA-Date Committee; and for work on the AMPLE APPLE Bulletin, publication of the Washington State Chapter of NAAFA

Sue Nyman - for more than 18 months continual editing and monthly production of the AMPLE APPLE, and donation of two editions for national mailings

Bunny Peckham - for work as Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee on the Atlantic City fundraiser, and the CAMPAIGN '83 fund drive

Elisabeth Williams - for two year's work as Chairperson of the Volunteer Service Committee

Peggy Williams & Russell F. Williams - for work on the Activism and NAAFA-Date committees

Awardees received a quartz clock or other ornamental object installed on a base made from Cruzian mahogany, and donated to NAAFA by Fletcher Pence, founder and director of the St. Croix LEAP (Life and Environmental Arts Project, Inc.). Pence, a Patron member of NAAFA, originated the service awards concept in 1979.

Additional Certificates of Recognition were given to several members for their considerable time spent on the Volunteer Service Committee, assisting with mailings or other work: Patricia Coles, George Hammel, Robbie Kassell, Pat Maas, Annette Paffen; also, members Valerie Corcoran and Robbie Kassell were given certificates for their unusually extensive newspaper and magazine clipping for the NAAFA library. ❖



Louise Wolfe leads rap (above)



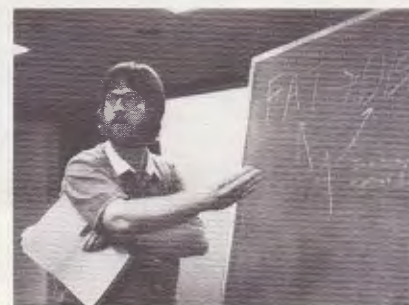
Russell Williams at activism workshop (left)



Ira Cohen, Ann Burleson, Lloyd Ingram, and Laurel Linck at chapter workshop (below)



Workshop leaders June Bailey (left) and Paul Ernsberger (below)



CONVENTION DIARY CONTINUED

Afternoon workshops included Activism (Russell Williams and Louise Wolfe), Emotional Support (June Bailey), and Setting Priorities In Health (Paul Ernsberger).

The Dinner Dance began at 8 PM. The crowd was the largest and perhaps most beautifully dressed in NAAFA history. Three hundred people danced to the sounds of M&M DJs.

Unofficial room parties were held...don't ask us what went on...but at one party the application-petition for the new F.A. SIG was drafted.

AT ROOM PARTIES...



Louise Wolfe and Wayne Heinmiller (left) and Joni Ingersoll, Russell Williams, and Angela Capiello (above)

cartoon by Conrad Blickenstorfer





Angela Capiello (NY) and Peggy Williams (MD)



Laurel Linck (TX) and Ira Cohen (NY)



June Bailey (OH)



Sherry Kessler (MI), Joann Callahan (OH), and Sally Rapley (MI)



Seth Earley (MA) and Elisabeth Williams (NY)



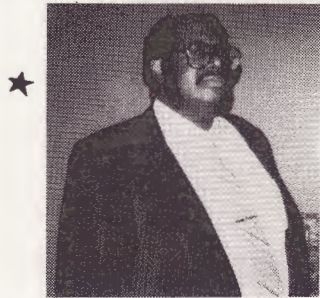
Ruby Greenwald and Marcia Koslo (both IL)



Mickie Chappell (MO), Pete Schlinger (NY), and Linda Martin (MO)



Fletcher Pence (St. Croix, VI)



Lloyd Ingram (NY)



Linda McElney (CA), Barbara Novack (MD), Janice Potter (OR), and Wilma Kuns (CA)



Angela Capiello (NY) and Neil Osbourn (CT)



Howard Kwart, Debra Kurtz, Erich Goode, and Rose O'Reilly (all NY)

NAAFA NIGHTLIFE



Jane Kettell (MA) and
Neil Osbourn (CT)



Lisbeth Fisher Burns and
Saul Jecies (both NY)



Standing: Mariza Campbell (NY),
Fletcher Pence (VI), and Yolanda
Campbell (NY); Seated: Jean DuBose
(OH), and Irene Mitchell (NY)



Standing: Angela Capiello and Peggy
Fox (VA); Seated: Bunny Peckham (NY),
Dr. David Greenwood (DC), and Roseann
Solnica (NY)



Bunny and Fletcher



Laura Brown (NY)



Susan Mason (NJ) and Bill
McCauley (IL)



Louise Wolfe (CA)



Elisa Wry (NJ), Betty Dandino (NJ),
and Joanne Preissler (NY)



Irene Formato (CT)



Barbara Donahue Mills
and George Mills (both NY)

VERY SPECIAL THANKS...
to ANNA CANNIZZARO and IRA COHEN for their
substantial photographic contributions to
this Newsletter Convention Special...
and to LINDA MCELNEY for taping and
transcribing speeches and other events.

NAAFA FORWARDING SERVICE
Often, our readers wish to write to NAAFA
members who are featured in this Newsletter.
NAAFA's mailing list is strictly confidential,
but our office is able to forward such mail for
a \$5 fee for each letter forwarded. The fee
covers expenses and includes a tax-deductible
donation of \$3 to assist NAAFA in its general
purposes.
If you wish to use this service, seal your
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NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426.
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Foreign members only: Fees must be paid in
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drawn on a U.S. bank, please include an
additional \$10 per check to cover international
bank charges. Do not affix postage to the
letter(s) being forwarded.



President Shiela Goodman, Chairman Bill Fabrey, Vice President Paula Dachis and Elisabeth Williams at the Sunday Special Board meeting.

CONVENTION DIARY CONTINUED

SUNDAY

A Special Policy Board of Directors Meeting was held in the morning. Topics discussed included future plans regarding a code of ethics for the diet industry and whether or not non-NAAFA members should be allowed to officially join local chapters.



The Fashion Show finale.

The Fashion Show followed a luncheon, and was covered by the local ABC-TV affiliate. The models and clothes were beautiful. Produced by Bunny Peckham, the show was directed by Joanne Preissler and narrated by June Bailey. Garments were supplied by Fully Feminine and Phyliss' House of Style. Several catalogs, such as Fantasies by Linda (Linda Blackmon), supplied additional lingerie.

Afternoon workshops included Relationships and Mating (Karen Syken), Snappy Comebacks (Louise Wolfe, Ruby Greenwald), Fat Parent and Child Relationships (Susan Hoey, Cary Lutwin), Employment (Sheila Goodman), and Introduction to Fat Leadership (Eileen Lemke-Meconi).

The pool party and barbecue got off to a late start but it was worth the wait. The pool and fenced backyard were all ours. We dined on the lawn, relaxed in the whirlpool, and swam until well after 1AM.

FASHION SHOW PHOTOS

1. ARLENE KEMP (NJ) wearing a burgundy "one-size fits all" float by St. James.
2. NELLIE HENSLEY (MD) models a black nightgown.
3. PEGGY FOX (VA) in a "peaches & cream" peignoir from Undercover Wear (available to size 3X).
4. ELISABETH WILLIAMS (NY) in a white hand-embroidered granny gown (to size 4X).
5. ELISA WRY (NJ) models jeans by Youngstuff and a sweatshirt by Knet Knit.
6. JERILYNN CARMICHAEL (OH) models a black bikini with eyelet cover-up (custom designed by Jan Taylor of By Yours Fully of Ohio).
7. NELLIE HENSLEY wears a black evening shirt from Lady Romance (to size 4X).
8. BETTY DANDINO wears a black and taupe striped dress by St. James.
9. DENISE TROMBETTI (NY) in a black evening skirt and bronze metallic blouse (both to size 4B).
10. ELISA WRY modeling a georgette 2 piece dressing from Tomorrows Dream (to size 46).
11. ELISABETH WILLIAMS wearing a beige teddy and coat from Formfit Rogers (to size 4B).
12. BARBARA DODD (NY) modeling a quilted jacket over a magenta pullover top and navy pants.
13. ELISABETH WILLIAMS in a black glitter blouse that can be worn on or off the shoulder.
14. DENISE TROMBETTI wears a painter's coat of cherry red corduroy over a camisole and pants.
15. ELISA WRY models a beige toga (to size 4X).
16. ARLENE KEMP is photographed in a paisley print float from "A" Dressing.
17. LIZ MCCARTHY models a silk polka dot dress.
18. BETTY DANDINO wearing an hawaiian print caftan by St. James.
19. LIZ MCCARTHY modeling a purple velour lounging robe by Lisanne (available to size 4X).
20. JERILYNN CARMICHAEL in a french cut bathing suit and cover-up (custom made in your size from Jan Taylor of By Yours Fully of Ohio).



6



6



7



8



9



10

FASHION SHOW



11



12



13



14



15



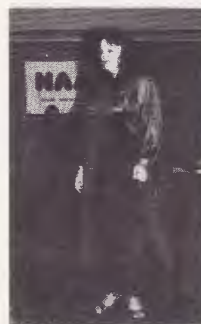
16



17



18



7

19



20



Elisabeth Williams, R.N., checks blood pressures



President
Sheila Goodman



TV crew from CNN covers Paula Dachis' comedy routine

FAT PRIDE, FAT POWER, AND YOU

By William J. Fabrey
Chairman of the Board

Abridged from a speech given on
September 3, 1983 at the NAAFA Convention

First of all, the term fat pride causes confusion in the minds of many people. If you use the expression at your next family reunion when your Uncle Henry notices that you've put on a few pounds, he's likely to say, "What do you mean, 'fat pride': Are you proud of being fat?"

When we refer to "fat pride", I believe that we are saying that we are proud of being ourselves and that we happen to be fat, and so what? I'm proud to be associated with the fat liberation movement--that's a form of "fat pride." I'm proud to be married to an attractive, intelligent fat woman. I'm also proud to be in the company today of people like Dr. William Bennett and Joel Gurin (co-authors of The Dieter's Dilemma).

I'm proud that NAAFA has lasted fourteen years and has some accomplishments and will have more in the years to come. I'm proud to be a NAAFA member. I am also proud that I can be a fat admirer without having any hang-ups about it!

These are all examples of fat pride. We aren't talking about the kind of pride that makes us ignore change or be inflexible in all circumstances. This is the kind of pride that really means self-respect, dignity, and a sense of being your own person.

For most fat people, and I suspect for many of their admirers as well, having self-respect and pride in oneself seems like an unattainable goal, something akin to winning the Irish Sweepstakes or being an astronaut. "That's for other people," they think. "I'll feel good about myself just as soon as I lose weight!" So they put off for tomorrow living that should begin today...

How does someone get some of this "fat pride?" Getting pride, or making any radical change in your life requires courage. Not everyone has such courage and initiative. It requires courage to be a fat person in 1983. It takes courage to say, "I will begin my life today, not next week or next month, and not when that magic day arrives when I wake up 20 or 200 pounds lighter!"

It requires courage to realize that you may never be thin and that the odds are against it with most safe weight-loss methods currently known. For some people, it requires courage to be seen in the company of a fat person, even when that person is someone whom they are attracted to, or love very much.

Okay, if you need courage to get "fat pride," how do you get courage? I wonder how many people would have courage without seeing it in others? We learn best by example. I get my courage by observing that trait in other people whom I admire.

It may be worth making a list of people you admire the most, a list of your heroes. My list includes people like Dr. Jonas Salk, Ralph Nader, Margaret Sanger, Gandhi, Bella Absug, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that unlikely character of fiction, Don Quixote, and many more. These people were not perfect, but they all had courage!

You can add my parents and grandparents to the list, if you like. None of them were world-famous, but they all have or had the considerable courage that it takes to survive in the world, and make their own unique contributions.

8 Make a list of your own heroes and find out how they got the courage to win their battles-- then apply

CONVENTION DIARY CONTINUED

MONDAY

Monday began with a Blood Pressure workshop where Elisabeth Williams, R.N., checked pressures using the correct sized cuffs. Scales that weigh up to 600 pounds were available for those who wished to check their weight.

Bill Fabrey led the Chapter Officer's Meeting and Eileen Lemke-Meconi gave a workshop on Fat Leadership for chapter officers.

Luncheon was served and President Sheila Goodman gave a speech. Paula Dachis entertained us with comedy, and her routine was videotaped by Cable Network News.

Afternoon workshops included a Convention Rap-Up led by Peggy Fox and a five hour Fat Leadership Training program by Eileen Lemke-Meconi. Many people enjoyed some free time in the afternoon visiting with friends and, sadly, some had to leave for home.

A second pool party was held on Monday night. Pizza was served and a hearty game of water volleyball began. As the last few minutes of the convention ticked by, people were reluctant to get out of the pool. No one wanted it all to end.



Although no cameras were permitted at the pool parties, an enterprising photographer caught Louise Wolfe just before a party...

TUESDAY

The convention was officially over. Many NAAFA members met in Benjamin's restaurant for buffet breakfast or waited in the lobby to say their goodbyes. The magic was over...until next year! ❖

their examples to your own life. Surely it should be easier for you to attain fat pride or help instill it in somebody else than it was for Winston Churchill to lead Britain during the darkest days of World War II!

Most heroes are ordinary people like you and me who become elevated to heroic acts of courage at various times in their lives due to unusual circumstances.

Another way you can get courage is through religious convictions; still another is by reenforcing your courage by becoming a "fat activist" and joining with others to win some battles, even little ones at first. NAAFA and the other fat activist groups function partly in providing such mutual support.

I'd like to emphasize the importance of becoming a fat activist, of doing something positive in the struggle for everyone's fat pride. It will change your life as it has changed mine.

Regardless of your success as a fat activist, you should know that you are a special, worthwhile human being. I still remember the advice of Mrs. Enid Knapp Botsford, my seventh grade dance class instructor. (She probably taught self-respect better than she taught dancing.) Mrs. Botsford always told the class, "No matter what the circumstances, hold your head high. Don't ever forget who you are!"

I believe that her statement is good advice for anyone. I was not born a Rockefeller or Vanderbilt, and I've sometimes had to struggle to find the best goals in life for myself, but I have never forgotten who I am.

Now, I'd like to go on to the subject of fat power. We know that our movement has certain things in common with other groups of oppressed people, such as gays, women, blacks, hispanics, American Indians, Japanese-Americans during World War II, the elderly, abused children and so forth. To borrow an analogy from another great civil rights movement, fat people would like a seat on the bus that fits them.

However, we "fat pride" and "fat power" advocates are not unanimous in the public stance that should be taken on issues affecting fat people. Which methods used by other oppressed groups to better their conditions will work for us? Obviously, certain things like "fat sit-ins" or hunger strikes might not be taken seriously. But other kinds of activism can be more successful.

"Fat power" includes letter-writing campaigns, press releases, well thought out and persuasive letters from individuals like yourself, publicity, occasional legal action, and lobbying for the addition of height and weight to the list of those characteristics already protected under law from certain forms of discrimination.

Fat power can also include books and articles by fat activists; personal example set by "liberated" fat people everywhere; perhaps even future advertising by NAAFA.

It is also an example of fat power that an article appeared in the September (1983) issue of Weight Watchers magazine about discrimination, quoting NAAFA as an authority! That's the same magazine that, years earlier, rejected an article written by [the late] Marvin Grosswirth, on the grounds that it was a nice article about large-size fashions for men, but that he was a fat man, which might result in bad public relations for the publisher...

It is a manifestation of fat power when magazines like BBW and It's Me (focussing on large-size fashions for women) appeared on newsstands several years ago, and became commercial successes. It is a sign of fat power when the Attorney General of the State of New York, Robert Abrams, accused the Nutra-Systems weight-loss chain of fraud several days ago.

It's evidence of fat power that a major PBS television series like NOVA can put out an enlightened, authoritative show about obesity, and receive an award from NAAFA for their efforts. It is a sign of fat power when the NEW YORK TIMES publishes yet another article by Jack Rosenthal supportive of fat people, this time in commenting that on broadcast television, only six percent of the men and two percent of the women are fat, unlike real-life people.

It is a form of fat power when the NATIONAL ENQUIRER (read by millions) publishes a serious article saying that in a few years fat will be considered beautiful again in this country. It is fat power when a leading book publisher in the women's movement comes out with a collection in book form of writings by women on fat oppression, called Shadow on a Tightrope. It is fat power when at least three of the women featured in the book are in this room today, at this convention!

There is a hint of fat power revealed in the anger of a woman I know who has been repressed about her size all of her life, who reacted to a newspaper ad for Diet Center. The ad shows the silhouette of a very round woman with a diagonal red bar across her body. I say that we are in the middle of a fat revolution, but because there is no violence, picketing, or civil disobedience, few people know that it's a revolution!

Be a part of the revolution. Develop fat pride in yourself and help others to do so. Help us to continue the struggle for fat power, along the lines I've already discussed, or by inventing new ways. Become a fat activist in any form that feels right to you. Renew (and even upgrade) your NAAFA membership when it comes due.

Do any or all of these things, but do something soon, or the revolution will go on without you, and we'll both be the loser! ❖



CONVENTION AFTERTHOUGHTS
FROM ELISABETH WILLIAMS

On my first day back to work after the convention, I spent my workday in a daze staring out the window. My duties were interrupted by fleeting images:

---Handsome F.A.'s standing together openly sharing about their preference--sometimes distracted from their conversations by large, sensuous women sauntering by in bathing suits...

---Cheers for our Founder, champagne for raffle winners and comradery among fat activists...

---Stimulating workshops, scintillating speeches, sensational late night parties...

---Smiling faces, lots of laughter and plenty of big, fat NAAFA hugs!...

I also daydreamed Bill Fabrey's dream of a place where fat people could grow and play and live and love and die with the same care, nurturing, opportunities and respect as average-sized people. It was fun. Later I cried little girl tears of impatience and sadness. ❖



Karol Boyer (OH) (left)

Susan Hoey and Angela Capiello (both NY)
(lower left)

Barbara Colgin (OH)
(below)



FROM RUSSELL WILLIAMS:

Convention. There are no words to adequately describe convention. Rooms full of fat people sharing their joys and sorrows. Three days away from the world. Three days in a world where a thin weight-lifting woman goes to the workout room and makes passes at three thin muscular men. She leaves in a state of shock after the third man in a row has informed her that he is only interested in beautiful fat women.

A convention is many intertwined experiences. It is dances with hundreds of people who are fat and/or want to dance with fat people. It is F.A.'s with dazed smiles on their faces at the actualization of their teenage fantasies. A convention is fat people who suddenly realize that they have been lied to all their lives. It's fat people who leave secure in the knowledge that there are people who love the fat person's size and see it as a thing of beauty.

More than anything else, convention is a time for each of us to affirm or reaffirm our worth as humans...a time to learn how joyful existence can be...and a time to renew our commitment to change society in ways that allow us to live, work and love without harassment for the other 362 days a year. ❖

[Russell's comments were originally published in the Cumberland Valley Chapter News Bulletin.]



Bernie and Linda Sherman (PA)



Dale Silverberg (PA)



George Hammel (NJ), Nellie Hensley (MD), and Carolyn Monroe (MD)

REFLECTIONS
FROM BARBARA COLGIN OF OHIO

It was with great anticipation that I attended the NAAFA Convention in New York City. I really did not know what to expect but I certainly did not come away feeling disappointed.

I cannot begin to describe the happiness I felt on my arrival at the Marriott when I saw 200 NAAFA members together--living, loving and laughing! I felt that I had come home.

I loved the positiveness of the group which made me realize, even more, that our personal happiness should not be measured by the fat we have on our bodies. Life should be lived to the fullest and each moment savored.

The workshops and rap sessions were wonderful. Those meetings dealt with all aspects of fatness, from how to deal with put-downs, to sexuality and relationships, to fat activism. The honest, gut-level sharing of our members touched me greatly.

Most importantly, I came home with the awareness that we can no longer sit back and hope that someone else will champion the cause of fat rights. If we become involved, we can win this battle. We all have something to contribute.

Needless to say, the NAAFA Convention was a terrific experience that I will never forget. I am so grateful that this organization is leading the way in fat rights and showing us that FAT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL. ❖

[Barbara's entire article was originally printed in the Bountiful Buckeye Bulletin, published jointly by the Ohio and Northern Ohio Chapters of NAAFA. Barbara is currently the Chairperson of the Northern Ohio group, and the 1983 Convention was her first.]

FROM ALICE MASTERSON OF NEW JERSEY:

My first exposure to NAAFA as a new member was the 1983 Convention. My road to that convention was long and hard. It was probably very similar to what brought a great many other women to NAAFA.

It was wonderful to learn at the convention that I was not alone any more. It was wonderful to see rooms full of beautiful, intelligent, warm and creative fat women. It was exciting to see that fat women can attract men. But what was most wonderful was to feel that it was OK to be fat. I'm sure I still have a long way to go with my self-acceptance, but the convention helped a lot.

The changes in my attitudes have taken a long time to develop and they are still developing. The convention helped to solidify them. ❖

[Alice's complete comments were printed in the October 1983 issue of THE FATTASTIC FORUM, the New Jersey Chapter's publication.]

CONVENTION NOTES
FROM KAREN SYKEN OF NEW YORK

Convention means different things to each person who attends. However, if most people saw, felt and experienced things similar to what I did, I can tell you they had a great time--a time they will always appreciate and remember for years.

I went to the convention with so many expectations that dissatisfaction was almost guaranteed. I was surprised that this did not happen. That it didn't was due to a few things I'd like to tell you about.

As one gets older it seems there is less and less to laugh about. Domestic and work pressures take their toll. I can go for days without laughing and I hate that. Well, I laughed Friday night through Monday evening. It felt so good to share my laughter with friends.

I discovered so many new facets of NAAFA this weekend. I renewed my feelings of gratitude to the organization and its basic tenets and emerged more self-confident for the experience. I realized, during the marvelously unborring, empathetic speeches that there is much important work we've done but much more left to do and I knew I had to do my part.

I felt the closeness of all those who attended the workshops. One could feel that a lot of people were attempting to soak up a year's worth of hope, confidence, good and helpful ideas and solutions and just plain old verbal "strokes" before they left for their respective homes... ❖

[Reprinted from INFATUATION, the publication of the Metro-NY area SIG for People with Partners.]



Cindy Miller (NY),
Guy Russo (CA), and
Deb Albright (WA)



Standing: Bruno Allix (France), Peggy
Fox (VA), and Fletcher Pence (VI); seated:
Cary Lutwin (NY) and Linda Blackmon (VA)



Conrad
Blickenstorfer (NY)

A LETTER FROM CONRAD BLICKENSTORFER

Dear NAAFA Friends,

I would like you to know that the 1983 NAAFA Convention was one of the greatest things that has ever happened to me. From the moment I stepped through the doors of the Marriott I felt absolutely wonderful. It appeared as if everyone was part of one big family. I've never experienced such sincere and positive feelings towards so large a group in my life.

Time, of course, flew by much too fast and, as predicted in the orientation pamphlet, I crashed when it was all over. I miss everyone very much.

When I first joined NAAFA it was absolutely wonderful to simply know that the organization was there. I met a lot of nice people through Pen Pal, but now I am sorry I didn't become more active sooner.

Thanks so much for everything! How about having two conventions a year, or 6 or 12... ❖

A LETTER FROM SALLY SUTAK OF MICHIGAN:

Dear Convention Committee,

On Labor Day, I attended my first NAAFA Convention and I can't remember when I've met so many nice people all together at one time. The workshops, the rap sessions, the fashion show, the dances and the pool parties, plus the people, were the best, the greatest, the nicest and the most fantastic ever. No wonder you leave with a big "high"; it's impossible not to.

What else can I say but thank you. I'm looking forward to attending next year's convention. ❖

A LETTER FROM AMY BERK OF NEW YORK:

Hello NAAFA!

I'm overwhelmed! After attending the convention at the Marriott and meeting such warm people, I've begun to feel different about myself. What a relief, not to have to wonder if I'd fit in a chair or if a fat roll was showing--no one cared! What a profound experience to have spoken to and smiled at men who didn't respond to me with distaste.

I was impressed at the respect that was shared with each other no matter what level each of us is on. By this I mean that some are comfortable wearing revealing clothes--some not, but each is respected for their choice. It typifies to me part of what NAAFA is trying to achieve--the ability to rejoice in our own diversity as human beings and that everyone is special in their own way, regardless of outer appearance. ❖



Tony and Karen Syken (NY)



Ken and Sharon
Wachtel (NY)



Karen Syken, Wayne Siddons,
and Carol McKeon (all NY)



Evie and Paul Cohen (NY)



Bonnie Baskin (TX)



Standing: Annette Paffen (NY),
Amy Berk (NY), Guy Russo (CA),
and Rita Cruz (NY); Seated: Bob
Monnone (NY) and Sue Nyman (WA)



Donna Marie Ryan (IL)



Nancy Summer, Harvey Parker, & Cindy Miller (all NY)



Linda Ward (PA)



Marie Skokan (NJ)



Laurel Linck (TX)



Joann Callahan (OH)



Ann Burleson (TX)



Cary Lutwin and Peter Silver (both NY)



standing: Rita Cruz (NY), Guy Russo (CA), Eileen Lemke-Meconi (WA), Deb Albright (OR); seated: Sue Nyman (WA) and Karen Scott-Jones (CT)



Anna Cannizzaro (NY) & Bill McCauley (IL)



Calvin Spradlin (OH)



Lillian Nielsen (IL)



Ruth Swider (NJ)



Joni Ingersol (CA)



Cindy Miller (NY)



Mary Jo and Jerry Hoxworth (OH)



Wilma Kuns (CA)