

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH ...

BETH AND BOB STEWART

by Editorial Committee



(Beth and Bob met through NAAFA-DATE and since moving to the NYC area have become active members of the local Chapter.)

EC: First, we would like to ask you to tell us some general information about yourselves--your age, where you grew up, your current career, or career goals.

BOB: I was born in New York and I've lived in New York all my life. Greenwich Village--my mother was born there--was where I grew up. I went to school in the neighborhood until I went to college. I graduated in 1973 from Manhattan College with a B. S. in Chemistry. Right now I work for Ciba-Geigy Corp. in Westchester as an analytical chemist.

BETH: I was born in 1949 in Corpus Christi, Texas, and lived along the Gulf Coast from Houston to Corpus Christi, back and forth until I was 14. Then we moved to New Orleans and lived there for 6 months. That's where I had to get an affidavit that I was white in order to get into junior high. We moved to Virginia when I was a freshman in high school and we lived there all through my high school and college years. I graduated in 1971 from Madison College with a degree in Home Economics. Then I went to work for Penn. State as assistant manager in a dining hall. I worked there for 4 years and lived in a small town called Mon Alto. I started writing to Bob and we were married on June 14, 1975. Then we moved to Yonkers, New York.

(con't. on p. 5)

CLORIS CAPITULATES

APOLOGIZES TO NAAFA

ON CARSON'S SHOW

...THEN JOINS!

by Naomi Shadowitz

Cloris Leachman, the well known movie and TV actress, who was the object of a national letter writing campaign by NAAFA, has gone on record in favor of NAAFA. Ms. Leachman became the target of the NAAFA movement after several sources (L. A. Times, Rona Barrett) reported that she had made a number of disparaging statements about fat people while she was attending a press party.

Ms. Leachman, who recently filed her application to become a member of NAAFA, called the national office after receiving many letters condemning her alleged comments. While it still is not clear exactly how she became involved in what she claims is misrepresentation, she has stated quite firmly that she does not feel fat, or fat people are ugly. "Fat is fat. It is neither ugly nor beautiful; it just is. It cannot exist without comparison."

In an effort to clarify what had become a nationally aired argument, Ms. Leachman went on the "Tonight Show" and offered an apology to NAAFA and to all fat people. Despite Mr. Carson's persistent attempts to thwart her serious discussion, Ms. Leachman was quite emphatic in her feeling that she had been misquoted and unjustly assailed. She claimed that the statement with regard to "fat people (should) be caught in nets and forced to diet" was never made by her. She said she was at a loss to explain how it was attributed to her. With regard to the statements that "fat people pollute the aesthetic environment" she tried to explain how this was an amalgam of several statements made by several people within one newspaper article.

The Board of Directors is now composing a press release which, it is hoped, both parties (NAAFA and Ms. Leachman) will sign and distribute in order to clarify the matter.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bill Fabrey

NAAFA ABANDONS HILDA

That's right, HILDA will not exist next year, not for NAAFans, anyway. I first saw a HILDA calendar in 1971. It was put out by Brown and Bigelow for gir-dle companies, laundry chains, and anyone else who would pay for at least 150 imprinted copies. I felt that HILDA was an ideal bridge between the slim world, and the ideals of beauty many NAAFA members defend. The Board of Directors agreed, and we had the NAAFA imprint put on calendars from 1972 - 1976.



However, sales of the calendar have declined while costs and postage have increased. Last year we didn't break even on the expenses, although orders still come in for back issues (\$1.50 each for

1972, 73, 74, 75, and 76).

So, with some sadness, Joyce and I were forced to recommend that no order be placed for 1977. The Board again agreed with our suggestion, because in addition to the financial issues involved, there have been many criticisms of the calendar itself. Some say that HILDA is not sufficiently fat to merit our attention. Others have complained that HILDA is a "sexist and exploitative treatment of the female body, as are all nude or semi-nude female" calendars. Still others object to some of the verse that accompanies each picture of HILDA, saying that it is derogatory.

The best comments I have heard, however, have been from non-members; a typical comment was, "maybe fat can be beautiful, after all." That's what I hoped to accomplish with HILDA.

Ultimately, HILDA's membership in NAAFA is up to you. If you would like to see a calendar for 1978, or if you have other ideas, please drop me a line. We need your opinion on this subject!

THRIFT SHOP OPENS

by Karen W. Jones

How would you like to be able to buy clothes--in your size--at a fraction of what you would expect to pay at your favorite department store? Well, now you can, because NAAFA is starting a Thrift Shop.

Here's how it will work: you can donate your used clothes in good condition (remember those things in the back of your closet that don't fit anymore?); in return, NAAFA will give you a receipt for the value of your donation, which you will be able to deduct from your tax return next year. All donated clothing will then be sold to NAAFA members and others through the Thrift Shop, which will be located in my Queens, N.Y. home (with hours by appointment).

What kind of things can you expect to find at the Thrift Shop? That all depends on you. Right now our stock consists largely (no pun) of an array of spiffy shirtwaist dresses around size 22 1/2. We also have one brown doubleknit man's suit that looks brand new, plus other assorted items for men and women. As more clothes come in I will keep you posted on what is currently available (with sizes where possible) through this Newsletter. Prices will range from \$1.00 for some dresses to \$5.00 for items in perfect condition like the suit mentioned above. All proceeds will go to NAAFA.

If this idea appeals to you, I can only say we need you to make it work! Anyone in the New York metropolitan area who wants to donate clothing or make an appointment to browse or buy at the Thrift Shop can call me at 212-592-8608. Those outside this area can make donations or even purchases through the mail. Drop me a line at the address below for more information:

Karen W. Jones
50-14 97th St.
Elmhurst, N.Y. 11368

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ethel Weiss-Shed and James Shed announce the birth of their second child, Eric Henry, born March 25, 1976. Eric joins his sister Melanie Frances.

INTERVIEW...

EC: How did you become members of NAAFA? When and why?

BETH: When I was living in Pennsylvania I was on Weight Watchers and off Weight Watchers. My mother saw an article about NAAFA in the Washington Post and sent it to me. So I wrote and found out there was a NAAFA-DATE and I said "Oh, boy" and joined immediately. That was in 1972 and I joined primarily for NAAFA-DATE, although when I had read the article I somehow became very relieved to find that there was such an organization and I thought I would like to become a part of it.

BOB: I think I joined in 1971 in January. I found out about NAAFA because I was lying in bed one night and my parents were watching TV and there was a report on one of the conventions. I didn't catch the name of the organization but I did get the address. As I was primarily interested in the dating service I wrote to "DATING SERVICE", Westbury, and I got back all the information! It said it cost \$10 to join and I thought "Well, that's not too bad", and I sent it. Then later on I sent in my NAAFA-DATE application which then cost only \$4, and I promptly got back no matches...was very upset about that. But the next session I did get quite a number.

EC: Had either of you ever belonged to any other dating service, computer dating or listings like the Little Black Book?

BOB: I had. Sent in my \$15 to a computer service that guaranteed I'd be satisfied or they'd refund my money. So I got one girl's name in Brooklyn and I finally worked up the courage to call her up and she said "This is Bruce isn't it? You're kidding me...this is Bruce...cut it out Bruce". And I said "No, it's not Bruce, it's really not..." So that kind of turned me off to that. I figured I'd wait and I got another name but I didn't have the courage to call her after "Bruce", so I wrote her a letter which she never answered. I wrote the dating service and said "I'm here for my refund" and surprisingly enough they sent me a check very promptly. I think they are called Phase II. They advertise in the Village Voice and I think it costs \$40 now.

BETH: When I was in college I joined a computer dating service and I wrote to several different guys, but I only met one and I dated him on and off for two years. I wasn't really satisfied with the service.

EC: How long did it take after you joined NAAFA-DATE until you got your first list of matches?

BETH: It was several months before I got one letter saying "you didn't get any matches but we're going to do it again". And it was 3-4 months and then I did get a list with about 4 names.

BOB: It must have been close to a year. As I said, I got a letter saying there were not any matches, and I got a little upset and I wrote a letter to Bill (Fabrey) saying "...the promo for NAAFA-DATE implied you would be deluged with names and I am very disappointed." He wrote me back saying more women had joined since my application had been processed, and why didn't I try it again - no charge. I did get 5 or 6 names after that and then at various intervals I got more.

EC: Was your spouse on the first list you received?

BOB: Well, my first list had nobody. But the first list that had names on it - she was there.

BETH: Yes.

EC: Did your matches meet your specifications?

BOB: I tried to be as general as possible but there was only one match within my [NYC] area. I was still in college and didn't have much money and even Long Island was quite far and expensive. Other than that they were what I was looking for.

BETH: I had one letter and one phone call from my other matches, and I was so turned off by them I didn't bother to find out if they were within my specifications or not.

EC: When you got your list from NAAFA-DATE did you find it easier to respond to than other computer services? Were you less up tight?

BOB: When I got my list of matches I figured "What's the use, these people are on the other side of the world as far as I'm concerned," so I just let it go. I guess I was still very up tight about it. But my

INTERVIEW...

wife sent me a letter, just a nice friendly letter, not let's run away together or anything like that. I wrote back to her (I had made up a little form letter saying I am 21 years old, etc., etc., and I sent it to everybody). Suprisingly enough all but one wrote back immediately and I carried on letter conversations with 4 of the matches. So in that respect it was easier, but only after someone else made the contact.

BETH: All during college I'd been in the habit of writing letters to people I knew nothing of, guys in Viet Nam and so on, and so I didn't have any trouble at all writing to someone in New York. I wrote to all of the matches and I heard from all of them. So that didn't bother me, but when it came time to meet them - seeing them face to face - I was a little hung up.

EC: After you finally got your first list, did you ever get a follow-up with more names?

BETH: Yes, I've gotten several lists over a period of a couple of years.

BOB: Yeah, so did I. Not another list, but one name at a time.

EC: What suggestions do you have for improving NAAFA-DATE?

BOB: Well, from my own experience I remember I was very upset that I didn't receive any communication from NAAFA DATE. I got this letter at first saying there were no matches this period, and then I didn't hear anything else until I initiated the contact. I think that would be one way service could be improved. Also, it wasn't clear to me where the matches were going to be - close to me or all over the country. When I got my first list of names one was in the general New York area and the others were in Pennsylvania and other places equally exotic to me. I had never been out of New York in my life at that point. I think it ought to be pointed out that if there is a chance you will be matched with someone from Kansas City, or something like that, it should be made abundantly clear - that this possibility exists.

EC: Is there anything else you want to tell us about that we have not covered?

BETH: Is there anyway to keep it from being a meat market type of thing? All except for Bob, the letters that I got and the phone conversations made me feel that the men were desperately interested in how much I weighed, and how old I was - "send a picture immediately" and all this kind of crap. That's not why I joined NAAFA-DATE. I joined to find someone who would want me for me and not look at my fat first. Maybe its my own head, but I felt like it was some kind of fetish...kind of perverted.

EC: One last question: did either of you join Pen Pal?

BOB: I never joined Pen Pal, but I have seen the application, and I think it should not make any difference whether your pen pal is a man or a woman.

BETH: I'm pretty naive; I joined NAAFA-DATE because I wanted dates. I had had enough of writing to people and I assumed that if you wanted a pen pal you got a pen pal and you didn't get dates from it.

P L U S A N D M I N U S

++++ The King-Size Co.
Brockton, Mass. 02402

(Catalog) Extensive, wide selection of men's clothes in high fashion, also standard-type stuff, including work clothes, shoes, etc. Prices moderate. Mail order service is superb compared to other mail order establishments, and their customer service department lives up to its names. Any fat man not on their mailing list is missing out.

---- The King-Size Co.

(Retail stores) The two retail stores I have visited should be closed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Intelligence. Avoid them like the plague except for sales, where you can sometimes pick up a bargain.

Evaluation by Marvin Grosswirth

(212) 877-4441

NAAFA'S NATIONAL TELEPHONE NUMBER