

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

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Co-Editors this issue: Lisbeth Fisher and Rosalie Radcliffe

Tenth Anniversary Convention Celebration



JOYCE MALONEY

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE CONVENTION (AND WERE NOT AFRAID TO ASK)

By now you should have all received the information about the fantastic Gala Convention Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of NAAFA.

Joyce Maloney, Chairperson of the Conventions Committee, and this year's Vice Chairpeople Linda Blackmon and Edith Callahan are working very hard to make this a very special occasion. They, together with the other members of their committee, have put together an exciting weekend package to celebrate a very important milestone in NAAFA's history.

The beautiful Convention invitation, containing information about all the special events of the celebration, together with a convention reservation form and room reservation form were mailed to every NAAFA member by first class mail on June 29. If you have not received your invitation and wish to attend, contact the NAAFA office immediately, as there are reservation deadlines.

Some of the questions you have asked are answered here. What is a sponsor? Unfortunately, we ran out of room in the Convention literature to explain this more thoroughly. A sponsor is a NAAFA member who has attended one or more NAAFA or chapter functions and who is at ease with other NAAFA members. A sponsor is someone who is willing to be available to another NAAFA member who is new to NAAFA functions and perhaps somewhat shy about meeting others (haven't we all been through that at one time or another?!). A sponsor does not have to spend every minute with the member being sponsored. However, a sponsor will be asked to "show the ropes" to a newcomer, answer questions, and be sure that the newcomer attends all functions with another NAAFA member, so as to feel more comfortable and self-confident. Convention reservations are pouring in, but so far there are far more requests for sponsors than there are volunteers to be sponsors. Come on all you "old-timers," give someone else a hand, like someone did you when you became involved.

Must I wear a bathing suit to the Luau and/or Pool Party? Of course not! However, many members discovered last year that by the time the Pool Party rolled around, they were so relaxed and unself-conscious, they wished they'd brought their suits. It's a wonderful feeling to discover that, because of the camaraderie of other members, if you like the water but have avoided it for years because of fear of stares and ridicule, you can not only finally don a bathing suit and swim in unembarrassed pleasure, but actually be ogled and admired! Either way, don't let a bathing suit stand between you and either of the above events. Both are social events at which swimming is not the only way to have a good time.

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What if it rains or the weather is bad?
Arrangements have been made to move both parties indoors in the event of inclement weather (which can't happen to NAAFA on such an important occasion!). Although we are confident of having lovely, moonlit skies both nights (yes, we've even checked to make sure the moon will attend), there will still be lots of good times without the swimming if necessary.

Will NAAFA provide a roommate for me?
NAAFA will take absolutely no responsibility for getting you a roommate. However, if there is no other way you can attend and afford it, we will put you in touch with another NAAFAN who is looking for a roommate, if there is one. It will be up to the two of you to make the decision of whether or not to room together. NAAFA will not vouch for the character of any person with whom it puts you in contact, and you room with a stranger at your own risk.

Please clarify the room rate. Many members have friends they have met at previous conventions, at chapter functions, or through other means, such as Pen Pal. The rate for a room for one night is \$28.34 including tax, for up to four people in a room. Thus, if you choose to room alone, the room will cost you \$28.34 per night. If you room with two others, you will split the cost three ways, etc.

Can I bring my raffle tickets and money to the Convention and turn them in then?
Yes, as long as you pay by cash or money order, and give them to no one other than Lisbeth Fisher by noon on Sunday, September 2. If you are not attending the Convention, your stubs and money must reach the NAAFA office no later than August 30, or they will not be included in the drawing.

I have clothes for the used clothing sale, but I won't be at the Convention. How can I donate them to NAAFA? Clothing will be accepted at the Convention in the Hospitality Suite until 10 a.m. Saturday, September 1. If you cannot attend the Convention, simply ship the clothes to the NAAFA office via parcel post, and they will be taken to the convention, and you will receive a receipt for tax purposes. Any clothing received after August 30 will have to be used at a later date.

At the rate Convention reservations are coming in, it is expected that attendance will far exceed prior conventions. Members from as far away as California, Canada, the Virgin Islands, and even Belgium are clamoring to participate in this exciting and historical event. See you there!

EDITORIALS

A FINAL FAREWELL

In the last issue of the NAAFA Newsletter I announced my reluctant decision to give up the editorship of the Newsletter, due to the ever-increasing demands of the office workload, interviews, and work on discrimination cases. I am very gratified by the number of letters I have received from members, complimenting me on the job I'd been doing; and, although I cannot name each and every one of you, due to lack of space, I want to thank you all. Your kind thoughts and comments have been very heartening.

Also reported at that time was that we have been very fortunate in obtaining the volunteer services of NAAFA member Rosalie Radcliffe, who has agreed to take over this very time-consuming, but rewarding position.

Once the decision had been made and the appointment confirmed by the Board of Directors, Rosalie traveled all the way from North Carolina to attend the April Board meeting and spend some time in the NAAFA office learning all she could about the enormous job of putting together a Newsletter. Since there were many articles left over from the last Newsletter, for which there was no room, it was decided that Rosalie and I would co-edit this issue. Now that Rosalie's "gotten her feet wet," future issues will be under her sole editorship. Recounted below are some of Rosalie's experiences in traveling to New York last April and a commentary on some of the pitfalls that might be encountered by a fat traveler.

'Bye for now, although I'm sure you'll be reading articles from time to time that have been written by me. It really is hard to give it all up!

--LF

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President's Message

BILL FABREY

THE SINGLES SCENE--NAAFA STYLE

One popular reason for joining NAAFA-- for some, the only reason--is that we provide the opportunity for fat women (and men) to meet their admirers in a climate of social acceptance.

Our literature refers to this, so when a new member joins and begins to participate in social activities (local meetings, dances, NAAFA-Date, and whatever else is available in their area), what does she (or he) find?

If the new member is a woman, she usually finds new friends, acquaintances, and an organization that goes to bat for her in a think-thin society. She also sometimes realizes for the first time that she is a worthwhile human being and a woman, and has the same rights as thin people.

Unfortunately, she also discovers that the NAAFA "singles scene" is often no different from the singles world outside NAAFA, except that in NAAFA, fat is an asset instead of a liability!

Otherwise, the same kind of insincerity, jealousy, competition, rude behavior, and exploitation often exists, just as it does in the social world elsewhere.

This doesn't seem to have harmed the sixty or so singles who, through the years, have met at NAAFA activities and struck up a rewarding relationship, some thirty of which have actually married each other. But for the majority of NAAFA singles, the social scene leaves a lot to be desired.

I am very concerned about what it's doing to other, less fortunate single women in NAAFA! Much of the blame should be assigned to NAAFA men, at least those who are in NAAFA mainly to date fat women. A disturbing number of these men are too ex-

ploitative, don't know how to act in public, and don't know how to treat a woman like a person. Some of these guys, I'm convinced, are not even F. A.'s (Fat Admirers), but just like to exploit vulnerable women. And for this, some fat women meet their requirements perfectly. I wish such men would either shape up or ship out!

NAAFA and its members are harmed by the presence of this kind of person, but it's difficult to get rid of members who don't commit offenses specific enough to be grounds for expulsion. And why do you think such men stay in NAAFA? They stay because many fat women they meet in NAAFA are so vulnerable after a lifetime of social deprivation that they will tolerate almost any offensive behavior on the part of a man as long as he pays attention to her. Some men are so obnoxious at our social functions that some female members have been known to leave in tears, or swear that they will never come to another dance or even belong to "an organization that allows such behavior to exist."

Men: If you regard a woman only as a sex object, and cannot treat her with respect, do us all a favor and don't bother to renew when your membership has expired.

Women: Please don't lower your standards because you are fat. A good man may be hard to find, if that is what you are looking for, but he does exist. He may or may not be a NAAFA member, and he is definitely not all this organization has to offer you. Keep your standards high and refuse to be exploited. A woman's self-esteem should not be based on her "market value" on the singles scene...

As for myself, I admire fat women (or "plumpkins" as I affectionately like to refer to them), and I'm not ashamed to be an F. A.; but the day I come to value a woman for her body alone will be the day that I, being unfit to help fat people, submit my resignation to the Board of Directors. And that's a promise.

I'll say more on this subject in another column, when more space is available. Meanwhile, are you able to come to the Convention? If so, I'll see you there--I wouldn't miss it for the world--not even the dance!

NAAFA'S BOOK SERVICE IS THE PLACE TO GET GOOD BOOKS AT A DISCOUNT--FOR KEEPING AND FOR GIVING...

SOBIAL NEWS



CLIFF AND SUZY FOLSOM

NAAFA-DATE DOES IT AGAIN

Cliff and Suzy (nee Thomas) Folsom of Hayward, California, were married on September 16, 1978, in Reno, Nevada. Both are members of NAAFA who met through NAAFA-Date. Cliff, who is the recently-elected Chairperson of the San Francisco Chapter, relayed his feelings to us in a letter. Some excerpts:

"We were NAAFA-Date matches and corresponded for 4 1/2 months before I met her in person in Evansville, Indiana, the Monday after the convention in D. C.

"When I first set eyes on her at the airport, I knew then that she was the one and only for me. She has the sexiest brown eyes in the whole world, and when she smiles, her whole beautiful face lights up! I love her so very much and will always be in debt to NAAFA for bringing us together to be man and wife. I also now have a beautiful stepdaughter, Rhonda, which makes us a nice family.

"The interesting thing is that she wrote me first, so out of courtesy and curiosity, I wrote back, and our relationship has grown sweeter ever since."

--

Florence Peek and Marvin Lindemann sent us a beautiful, rainbow-hued invitation to

their wedding which took place on February 17, 1979, in Redmond, Washington. Below are excerpts from one of the bride's letters to us.

"When you said that NAAFA-Date uses only absolute matching, you weren't kidding! On August 1, I met my 'perfect match' from NAAFA-Date--Marvin Lindemann. We are so similar in our likes and dislikes and philosophies of living that we decided there was no need to meet any other people--for dating purposes, that is! So, on September 5, we became engaged to be married.

"Thank you for the NAAFA-Date program. It's about time someone realized that fat people need love, too. Keep up the good work. It probably takes a lot of someone's free time after their regular job, and we'd like you to let them know that their efforts are truly appreciated. But please remove our names from the program!"

[Ed. Note: NAAFA-Date's absolute matching, of course, refers to the specific questions on the NAAFA-Date application. Marvin and Florence also found that, by getting to know each other, they had many other similarities as well. We'd like to wish them and the Folsoms much happiness in the future.]

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JOHN AND MATTHEW LAND

THE FIRST NAAFA-BABY

In the November-December 1977 issue of the Newsletter, we reported the August 6, 1977, marriage of Phillip W. Land and Shirley Bundick. They met through the Baltimore-Washington Chapter, and they have just given us news of what we believe is a NAAFA first.

During the terrible snowstorm that

plagued the Northeast, Matthew Wade Land was born on February 19, 1979, in Maryland. He weighed in at 8 pounds and measured 20 3/4". Mother, father, and brother (8-year-old John Wade Land) are doing fine (now!), and we wish them our heartiest congratulations!

To clarify, although there have been children born to NAAFA couples, this is the first baby (to our knowledge) born to a couple who met through NAAFA.

IN MEMORIAM



NANCY BIERLIN AND THE LATE
MARION BIERLIN AT THE '78 CONVENTION

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Marion Bierlin on October 25, 1978. Many of you may remember her from the "60 Minutes" segment on NAAFA that was aired on December 10. Her daughter, Nancy, finally convinced Marion that she was definitely not "too old" to attend the 1978 Convention in D. C. For that, Nancy will be forever grateful.

There were several mother-daughter teams at the convention, and during one of the rap sessions Nancy broke down and cried that her mother was the only one who hadn't given her a hard time about her weight (unlike the personal histories of many of our members). Unbeknownst to the viewing audience on December 10, Mike Wallace also shed a few tears at that moment, climaxing a very fulfilling series of rap sessions.

Nancy writes: "My mom got such a huge kick out of the whole convention and such

a thrill out of meeting Mike Wallace and being on '60 Minutes' and meeting all the nice NAAFAs. Talking about it and telling all the nurses and technicians and doctors about her adventures helped a lot to get her through some of the bad times during her final weeks and days before she died. The nurses were calling her their 'tv star,' and I honestly believe she was hanging on, hoping the program would be shown in October. Perhaps that convention literally gave her some extra life--it certainly seemed to, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

Nancy also asked if "a personal testimonial of some kind, sent along with the formal NAAFA literature, would be of any help? If so, perhaps I could write one. Truly, I feel that I had a renaissance of a sort when I got into NAAFA--a slow but certain changing of myself, culminating in the Washington convention. It truly has changed my way of thinking about myself--nothing big or dramatic or miraculous or anything like that--but I have found that I am less ashamed of being fat, less defensive; that I have met lots of nice people, not only in NAAFA, but BECAUSE I'm in NAAFA. I feel that I'm an average and typical middle-aged lady who is finally realizing that there are lots worse things than being fat and that I should learn to go with what I've got, not worry away about what I haven't got [something a dear NAAFA friend taught her]. That in itself was quite a valuable lesson."

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SHADOWITZ FUND ANNIVERSARY

On June 14, 1977, NAAFA Board member and Parliamentarian, Naomi Shadowitz, passed away.

Naomi was loved by many, and the Board of Directors established the Naomi Shadowitz Memorial Fund in her honor. Members of the committee administering the fund are Sheila Goodman, Chairperson; Carlos Allen and Michael Simpson.

The monies in the fund have been earmarked for special projects, such as the FAT CHANCE magazine and national advertising, all of which it is believed Naomi would have favored. It is currently collecting interest in a savings account until enough funds are raised to initiate one of the projects. All donations to the Naomi Shadowitz Memorial Fund are tax deductible and should be made payable to and mailed to NAAFA.



SHEILA GOODMAN

NAAFA-DATE NEWS

Sheila Goodman, NAAFA's Vice President, has been appointed to administer the current NAAFA-Date program and matching.

Prior to Sheila's appointment, the matches were being made by Beth and Bob Stewart, who themselves met and married through NAAFA-Date. Having done an excellent job of this time-consuming and demanding task, they had to give it up due to conflicts with other personal commitments.

Sheila has asked us to advise all NAAFA-Date participants that she would like to hear from anyone who might be having a problem or is dissatisfied with NAAFA-Date. She will respond to all letters, which can be sent to her through the NAAFA office.

In the meantime--although, as you can read elsewhere in this Newsletter there have been many NAAFA-Date success stories--there are also still problems. Because of this, Ken Wachtel has been appointed Chairperson of the NAAFA-Date Study Committee, which is looking into such things as the possibilities of using data processing; changing the application form; making NAAFA-Date a separate corporation from NAAFA; etc.

We have received many letters, pro and con, about NAAFA-Date. Ken and his committee will make use of these letters, as well as data compiled from the current and past NAAFA-Date programs. It is expected that the study will take about a

year, and Ken asks that any participant, past or present, of a NAAFA-Date program write to him at the NAAFA office with any recommendations.

(EDITORIALS continued from Page 2)

NEW EDITOR CLIMBS ABOARD

No one needs to tell a fat person in today's America that he pays extra because of his size. The cost of larger clothing and automobiles diminishes his income. Prejudice and ridicule undermine his self-esteem. Insensitive medical personnel and inadequate insurance place his health in a very vulnerable position. Another expense the fat of the land must frequently pay is the cost of anxiety in circumstances which present problems only for large people. I received vivid reminders of this on a recent trip to New York.

Now in honesty I must admit I often worry. Consequently, I usually plan very carefully all details in any situation for which I have responsibility--especially if it involves unfamiliar experiences. When buying my ticket, therefore, I checked thoroughly with the travel agent all the information needed to make my flight as hassle-free as possible.

It was financially necessary for me to travel economy class where the seats are small, but I knew the aisle would provide some of the extra hangover space that my seat denied. Such strategy, nevertheless, required that I reach the desk early enough to reserve an aisle seat. My anxiety started when my friend arrived late for the drive to the airport. I breathlessly rushed to the boarding area in time to obtain one of two remaining seats on the aisle.

Later, as we boarded, the first embarrassing situation developed. The steps to the plane were not wide enough for both me and my small suitcase. This meant climbing the steep stairs sideways, making balance difficult and poise simply vanish.

Upon request for a seatbelt extension, the stewardess first couldn't find one and then didn't know how to operate it after finally locating one. The man in the next seat quickly figured it out, fortunately, and I buckled up as we taxied down the runway.

We took off into beautifully clear skies. Although I was wedged so firmly into my seat I couldn't lean over to see the ground receding or reach the book in my purse on the floor, the discomfort was minimal, so I relaxed and enjoyed a favorite pastime of people-watching. My reverie was soon disrupted by the attendants serving an in-flight snack. The food was quite good. Neither my digestion nor my dignity were aided, however, by having to synchronize movement of my make-it-yourself sandwich, my drink, and my tray, which rose and fell in rhythm with my breathing as it rested on my stomach for lack of space between the seats.

Upon reaching LaGuardia Airport, my anxieties were merely the normal ones for someone deplaning and having to discover the way around a strange airport. My relative calm was brief, though, and broken by an attempt to maneuver myself and my suitcase onto a crowded, narrow escalator. I gave up and took the stairs, where there was lots of room because everyone else had taken the alternative route of descent.

Finally, I reached the street, where my hostess and her car soon rescued me. The rest of the weekend was a very busy, yet enjoyable and relaxed time. My visit was marred only by occasional, momentary relapses of anxiety when realizing at least some of my former experiences would no doubt have to be repeated on the return flight home.

--RR

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[Ed. Note: As a "veteran" traveler, I couldn't resist a few comments, particularly for those of you who are making arrangements to travel to the Convention by means other than an automobile. Some airlines now allow you to reserve your seat assignment when you purchase your ticket in advance, but you should check this prior to making your final flight arrangements. You are allowed to carry a small bag on board, but you can check all your luggage, enabling you to climb aboard gracefully. However, this will necessitate your walking the usually long distance to the baggage claim area after you land, where there is sometimes a lengthy wait, although most times not.

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, the seats in the first class section are usually wider and more comfortable. However, even these are often too confining.

If you wish to assure yourself of having an empty seat next to you in coach, you must pay for a seat and a half and be sure to request that the two seats be next to each other. However, the cost of a first class seat is usually less than a seat and a half in coach. If you find that the seats in the coach cars of Amtrak are too narrow, you can pay the premium for the very comfortable club car seats. In any case, be sure to get yourself a reserved seat, or you may find yourself standing all or part of the way to your destination, particularly in these lean gasoline days. Speaking of which, you'd also better make your reservation far in advance--rumor has it that Amtrak trains are sold out well into the future.

Note: If you're taking a plane, try to arrive early and ask if the flight is crowded. If it's not, ask the clerk to "block out" the adjacent seat. This will assure that the seat next to you will be the last seat assigned, and if there is no one on board to take it, you've got your extra space without paying for it. Furthermore, if you are one of the first on board, you can raise the arm rest between the two seats, and it's possible that, if you do end up with someone next to you, they won't insist that the arm rest be lowered.

By the way, the stewardess who was unable to show Rosalie how to use the seat-belt extension, thus causing her more embarrassment, should receive 20 lashes with a wet noodle. Any flight attendant who does not know how to perform such a simple task, drawing as little attention as possible to the passenger's predicament, should be reported to the airlines.

One final word: If you've ever tried to use the bathroom on any of the public conveyances, you'll know that it is advisable to try to use a public restroom prior to boarding. No matter how comfortable the arrangements have been made for your seating, nothing has ever been done to enlarge the tiny lavatories encountered on public transportation. Even our thin friends find they have to go through all kinds of contortions to get through the door and turn around. Good luck!--LF]

PHOTOGRAPHER NEEDED

If you are attending the Convention and have photography skills, please contact the NAAFA office immediately. Your talents are needed to capture this important occasion on film.

PERSONAL ADS

Attractive, 32-year-old single woman would like to meet an attractive, intelligent single man. I weigh approximately 200 pounds, and I'm 5' 7" tall. Please reply--I'm sure a nice relationship could come about. Send responses to Mary Ellen Marmo, P. O. Box 51, Riverdale, New Jersey 07457.

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Attractive, intelligent divorced woman, 40, just under 200 pounds, good cook, likes theatre, travel, restaurants, wants to meet intelligent man, 35-55, with similar interests in Roanoke, Virginia, or Metropolitan New York areas. Interested in long-term relationship, not one-night stand. Reply to Department 111, NAAFA, P. O. Box 43, Bellerose, New York 11426.

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Dear NAAFANS, Regretting that I was not at your first and following conventions, I anticipate meeting many of you at our Tenth Anniversary Convention. You may identify me by the Crucian mahogany pendant inscribed "Fletcher--St. Croix, Virgin Islands--I have yet to meet a woman too large for my taste." Fletcher Pence, Box 245, Frederiksted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00840.

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Large, pleasant, attractive woman, mid-30's, interested in sharing rewarding relationship with pleasant, mature man. New York, New Jersey. Reply to Department 112, NAAFA, P. O. Box 43, Bellerose, New York 11426.

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Warm, affectionate, quiet 300-pound lady from Northern Ohio, preferring the simple things in life, wishes to meet a warm, sincere, relationship-minded man between 35-45. Reply to Sarah Taylor, RD 2, Joppa Road, Vermilion, Ohio 44089.

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Marriage-minded, attractive, trim, intelligent Jewish man seeks very fat, 300 to 400 pounds or more, gentle, intelligent, stable Jewish woman, age 20 to 30, for lasting relationship. Please, serious inquiries only, go ahead, take a chance.

Reply to Neil Dachis, 3304 Whiteway Drive, Austin, Texas 78757.

In Memory

of

STANLEY FISHER

December 22, 1966 - May 12, 1978

Only 11 years old, he wanted to be President of NAAFA when he grew up.

Will anyone who ordered the magazine "LARGESSE" advertised in the 1977-8 Abundantly Yours catalog, due to have been published in January-February 1978, please contact us. We have never received our copies, although we sent in our money. We wish to know whether others like us have been "ripped off," so that we can report the matter to the proper authorities. Reply to Department 113, NAAFA, P. O. Box 43, Bellerose, New York 11426.

CLASSIFIED AD RATES

Commercial Ads: 50 cents/word, 10-word minimum. Department number available at \$10/issue.

Non-Commercial Ads: 25 cents/word, 10-word minimum. Department number available at \$5/issue.

All ads are accepted for publication provided they are not against NAAFA's purpose. They may include personals, wanted to sell or buy, employment notices, meeting notices, and many other items.

HELP YOURSELF--HELP SOMEONE ELSE--
HELP NAAFA--GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP!

LIBERATED QUOTES

At a recent New York Chapter meeting, Harvey Parker said, "I'd like to see a PLAYBOY centerfold that folds out, folds out, folds out, folds out...!"

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