

# NAAFA Newsletter

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## DECLARATION OF FAT INDEPENDENCE



by Russell F. Williams (Maryland)

July 4, 1776, Philadelphia. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

With these brave words men set out to make a new country and to establish a new social order: a social order that eventually had as its goal equality of opportunity for all citizens. Eleven years after the American Declaration of Independence was signed, the Constitution was written and, soon after that, the Bill of Rights was added. At first, only white, landholding, Christian men were fully protected by the nation's legal system; but, very slowly, the Constitution, Congress, and the courts began to protect the rights of other groups. Slavery was ended and black men were theoretically allowed to vote. Later women, native Americans (Indians) and, finally, southern Blacks were given the actual right to vote.

But people came to realize that there was more to full freedom of opportunity than voting and the Bill of Rights. It became obvious to most people that true freedom consists of more than allowing a person to complain that their children are uneducated, starving, sick and discriminated against. For a child to have life and to have a full, rewarding one, to have the liberty of many life choices, and for that child to be free in its adult life to pursue happiness, the child must be properly housed, fed, and educated. Furthermore, once the child reaches adulthood, employment opportunities should be available to them on the basis of competency factors.

It has taken 200 years, but now the three ideals set forth in revolution that hot July 4th in Philadelphia are pursued by our society for all its citizens. Our society tells all its citizens that, regardless of their circumstances of birth or their genetic differences, they can call on the help of the government when anyone attempts to deprive them of their revolutionary and constitutional right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. We now believe that all people have the right to live, even if the medical treatment is more than they can afford. Our society believes that all people have the right to liberty, and so buildings and public accommodations are being made accessible to the handicapped. Our society knows that it is stronger if all its citizens are educated and free to strive for excellence. Thus, there is universal compulsory public education and it had become illegal to discriminate against various social groups on any basis other than competency. Now no citizen need hang his/her head in shame because they are not white, male, Protestant, or are not landowners. All groups of citizens can now walk secure in the knowledge that there is no more second class citizenship--but is this true?

There are a few groups who are still second class citizens. We, the fat people of America, are members of such a group! We are still denied the rights proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and which have slowly been extended by the Constitution, Congress and the Courts to others.

We, the fat people of America, are often denied our right to life, and thousands of our lives have been sacrificed needlessly on the American altar of thinness. Hospital emergency rooms have been known to refuse to treat fat people. Many doctors still demand that we be thin before they extend to us our inalienable right to the protection of the greatest medical system in the world.

We, the fat people of America, are denied our right to liberty. We are considered proper objects for ridicule as we travel on public accommodations. Those on crutches, in casts, and in wheelchairs are not resented because they take up extra space in public. A handicapped person, facing a turnstile they cannot negotiate, does not feel ashamed. Paraplegics do not hang their heads and go quietly away rather than ask for a way through. We do. We alone feel guilty about asserting our inalienable right to the liberty of freedom of public movement.

We, the fat people of America, are denied our inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness. We are not free to be all that we can be. We fat citizens can be discriminated against on the basis of factors other than competency. The blind are not told that their variation from the physical average renders them morally inferior. The paraplegics are not belittled for their failure to walk. Blacks are not refused employment because insurance tables suggest reduced life expectancy, yet all these things happen to us because we do not meet the socially established standards of body fat.

Now is the time for the revolution of the fat people of America! It is time for our declaration of independence. Let the world know that we have the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and that we will challenge all those who would deny us the rights that have been extended to other social groups.

The next time someone, by word or deed, tries to deny you life giving or enriching medical treatment, or the right to travel about this land of ours, or the education or jobs that you are competent to undertake and which you feel will help you achieve happiness, do not hang your head in shame. Confront those who deny your humanity and demand your inalienable human rights. □

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## MEDIA AND PUBLICITY WATCH

Two members of NAAFA's Advisory Board, Dr. Paul Ernsberger of Cornell University Medical College, and Dr. Paul Haskew of the University of Connecticut have had a letter published in the New England Journal of Medicine (July 10, 1986), in which they challenged a previous editorial by Dr. Theodore Van Itallie. Citing a number of research studies, Ernsberger and Haskew disputed the assumption of a general risk factor associated with genetically-determined obesity, and cited evidence that health complications often associated with obesity may be more dependant on the exact cause of the obesity, and not with the obesity itself.

The Summer/Fall issue of Radiance magazine is so full of notable articles, and so many NAAFAn subscribe to Radiance that this column will not list them in detail. NAAFA authors featured in the issue included Dan Davis (CA) ("Fat Admirers: Problem or Solution?") and Dr. Paul Ernsberger ("Fat and Health: Biological Roots").

NAAFAn Nancy K. Bierlin (PA) authored a group of articles that appeared on Aug. 13 in the Times Chronicle of Jenkintown, PA, as well as several other affiliated newspapers. The articles included a poignant story about how the author discovered NAAFA and it improved her life; one about men who prefer to date fat women; one about the current activities of the Greater Philadelphia chapter; and one consisting of an interview with a physician with a lot of negative things to say about fat and health, with relatively little to say about yo-yo dieting and its effects...too bad that Nancy had to get that assignment!

An article appeared in Ebony magazine in April. Titled "Fat is Back!", the article gives excellent coverage of the movement, and interviewed Chairman Fabrey and Advisory Board Chairman Paul Ernsberger. Black citizens (or groups including blacks) who exemplify the goals of the movement were signaled out as including the Chicago Bears' William (The Refrigerator) Perry; the Chicago Refrigerettes; the Fat Boys; Fred (Re-Run) Berry; Nell Carter; model Denise Barros, of Pat Swift's Plus Models Management; Martha Wash and Izora Armstead (The Weather Girls); and several others. Of course, wanting to make everyone happy, the same issue of Ebony carried an article about a black Baltimore woman who lost 210 pounds...

A story in the October issue of American Health, promoted with large headlines and art work on the cover, deals with "THINNESS MANIA: Why are successful women starving themselves?". Written by NAAFA advisors Drs. Susan C. Wooley and O. Wayne Wooley, of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, the article states that "for high-achieving young women, thinness has become a symbol of success. Result: Millions diet their way to eating disorders...In one study, two women said they were willing to die to become thin" (p. 68).

NAAFAn Dan Davis appeared with his wife on ABC television in San Francisco on Sept. 26. The subject was the ample figure and those who appreciate it.

Last month, this column mentioned the Phil Donahue show that aired on September 30, with delayed broadcasts in many cities. The show featured Rosezella Canty-Letsome and her exercise group, and Nancy Roberts. Some who saw the broadcast felt that it was the most positive Donahue show ever done on the subject of large-sized people...Several NAAFAn appeared on the Cleveland show Morning Exchange, on a morning during the annual convention in August. The list includes NAAFA President Eileen M. Lefebure (NY); Harry Gossett (VA), author of Fat Chance; Northern Ohio publicity chairperson June Bailey; and Kathy Plain-Martin (OH).

**NOW IN PREPARATION** - Forbes magazine writers are preparing a piece about exercise and chief executive officers of corporations; a sidelight or even a future article may be those who've made it up the corporate ladder despite lack of exercise or despite being "overweight." NAAFAn already interviewed by Forbes include Sue Waller (MD) and Bob Bain (NJ), as well as NAAFA President Eileen M. Lefebure. By the way, they are having a hard time finding any CEO's who don't claim to exercise regularly...

The news department at WTVJ-TV in Miami, FL is preparing coverage of job discrimination based on size, including reference to some of the past court cases of interest. They may have already broadcast the piece...

Stories written with assistance from NAAFA have either appeared recently, or are about to appear in the Washington Times (DC), the Detroit News, the Oakland Tribune (CA), and the Los Angeles Daily News.

**OTHER MEDIA ITEMS** - Look at copies of the November issues of Family Circle and Reader's Digest, which have "must read" articles of interest to NAAFAn--details in our next issue.

A second issue of Vogue magazine has featured a special supplement on large sizes. Ever since Vogue made the shocking discovery that a substantial portion of their female readership wear size 16 or larger, it has been apparently trying to deal with that portion of the market (and their advertisers!) The supplement of last March, which was the first of such efforts (see cover story, Newsletter, March, 1986), has been followed by their September supplement. The Editor of the supplement is still Hara E. Marano, who has been able to include larger models in this issue than were used last time.

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### MEMBERS PROTEST WINFREY REMARKS ON NATIONAL SHOW

Several members have complained about the Oct. 6 edition of Oprah Winfrey's nationwide TV program, in which Oprah is said to have announced that she cannot believe those who say that they are happy being fat. Apparently, a telephone caller referred to people who are fat and happy, which prompted Winfrey's response. It was a very negative show, and prompted a number of people to write to the show with their opinion. Good coverage of the event was provided in the Bountiful Buckeye Bulletin (Oct./Nov.'86) of the Ohio and Northern Ohio chapters, in which it was revealed that the caller to the Oprah Winfrey show was none other than Geneva Chapman (OH), talented artist and playwright responsible for the Ms. Hipps cartoon series and the show "All Fat Ladies Ain't in the Circus", that was put on at the Cleveland convention. Ms. Chapman has since written to the show; the BBB editor, June Bailey (OH), has also written a patient, educational, but firmly worded letter to Oprah Winfrey. NAAFAn who saw the show and would also like to write can send letters to Oprah Winfrey, PO Box 909712, Chicago, IL 60614 (with a copy to NAAFA if possible.) Of course, the kinds of letters that are most likely to be read and taken seriously are short, typed or written in good handwriting, and are persuasive but not threatening. Meanwhile, NAAFA's official response may depend on Winfrey's reaction to letters like the above...a discussion at the October Board meeting focussed on Winfrey's erratic attitude about being fat.

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### ADVERTISING NEWS

The Summer/Fall issue of Radiance magazine included the usual 1/3 page display ad for NAAFA, as well as other NAAFA ads in the Classified section. Similar ads are slated for appearance in the upcoming Winter issue, scheduled to be out around Nov. 20; the display ad will have improved typography, thanks to Printing and Production Committee member Jim Brown (NJ).

A display ad for NAAFA is slated to be run in an upcoming supplement of California Apparel News. The supplement, which will be out the same week this Newsletter is mailed, will be devoted to the "large size market", which is also the subject of the show at the California Apparel Mart on Nov. 9-11. The supplement will be received by 24,000 apparel buyers, retail store owners, and manufacturers. California has an important concentration of large size clothing designers and manufacturers.

NAAFA's Advertising Committee is tentatively planning to place a display ad in Ms. magazine classified section in their February issue. Other tentative advertising plans for the next several months include Magna magazine, for big and tall men; USA TODAY; the National Enquirer; and others.

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Articles in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of NAAFA, Inc., unless specifically noted. Please contact the NAAFA office if you require information about specific NAAFA policies. Commentaries in this Newsletter were prepared by the Editor, and/or Chairman Fabrey.

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## ELECTION RESULTS

**ELECTION COMMITTEE MEETING:** During a special meeting held on October 18, 1986, ballots were counted by the Election Committee in the election for three seats on the Board of Directors. With 330 ballots returned, the results was as follows: William J. Fabrey, 239; Eileen M. Lefebure, 218; Neil Dachis and Russell F. Williams tied with 164; and Carrie Hemenway with 160.

Since there was a tie for the third available seat, the Election committee also reviewed the election rules which calls for ties to be broken by a secret ballot of all the members of the Board of Directors. The Committee presented the results to the Board at a regular Board meeting held directly after the ballot counting.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** After hearing the report of the Election Committee the Board considered the matter of the tie for the third seat. Two alternatives were considered: The first was to break the tie by secret ballot as prescribed by the election rules. The second alternative was to amend the Constitution to reactivate a ninth Board seat, a seat which was terminated in 1984. After discussion, a unanimous vote of the Board amended the constitution, opening the ninth seat, and allowing both tied candidates to serve as Board members.

William J. Fabrey (NY), Eileen M. Lefebure (NY), and Russell F. Williams (MD) are incumbents and will continue their Board service. Neil Dachis (MD) will be sworn in as a new Board member and will take his seat at the next regular meeting.

It was pointed out at the Board meeting just how important one vote can be in a NAAFA election. This is the third time in 17 NAAFA elections where two candidates tied for a seat on the Board. Yet two thirds of NAAFA members do not exercise their right to vote. A reason frequently given by some nonvoters is that they doubt that their vote could make a difference. There are also always a few voters who do not follow the instructions for casting eligible ballots and their votes are disqualified for various reasons. □

Next issue: Some answers to questions about how NAAFA's election is conducted.

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### COB'S CORNER...by William J. Fabrey, Chairman of the Board

**HOORAY FOR THE SIGS!** - NAAFA's Special Interest Groups are doing an excellent job. I'm proud of our SIGs. In fact, NAAFA has members who join or renew mainly due to their activity in a SIG!

It was only three years ago that the SIG concept was brought into NAAFA. The very first one, the FA SIG, under the leadership of its coordinator, Conrad Blickenstorfer (NY), has become a role model for other SIGs who want to achieve their goals through publications. The FA SIG has succeeded in putting out a regular publication of outstanding quality every two months--it just came out in its 17th issue! The FA SIG focuses its interest in Fat Admirers and those who enjoy being admired. Another important SIG activity is the holding of workshops and seminars at regional and national NAAFA events. The last time I heard, more than 200 NAAFA members were paid subscribers/members in the SIG...

Some other SIGs have shown very encouraging activity. The Feminist Caucus (SIG), coordinated by Debra Bieber Ernsberger (NY), is perhaps not as active yet as the FA SIG, but has succeeded in holding meetings and mailing material to its members. The Singles SIG, under Barbara Colgin (OH), has done likewise. That is not to minimize the activity of the SuperSIG (for women size 48 and over). Currently coordinated by Mary-Jane Grace-Brown, it too has succeeded in holding several meetings at conventions, and made mailings to its members.

The award for the fastest-growing SIG publication must undoubtedly go to the Fat Men's Forum, coordinated by Jerry Lamb (MI), whose third issue, out recently, is must reading for all NAAFA men who do at least some of their shopping in the portly department. I have discovered another sense of community between myself and other NAAFA men that, until recently, came only through the FA SIG or from the general goals of NAAFA. Now I can also talk to other men who, like me, have had the experience of a little kid saying "look at the fat man" as I walked my 200-220 pounds past them on the sidewalk...

Two other SIGs are currently in their infancy: Jerry and Mary Jo Hoxworth (OH), who coordinate the Couples SIG, have held meetings at national events, but haven't yet had any activity (or volunteers) with a publication. And my Leadership SIG held one meeting, and plans its first bulletin on Nov. 15.

There is enormous potential in NAAFA for other SIGs. What surprises me is that there haven't been requests lately to start any new ones. Anyone want to form a new SIG? Write to Eileen M. Lefebure, SIG Coordinator, c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426. □

## IT'S TIME TO GIVE EMPLOYMENT A HIGHER PRIORITY!

an editorial by Nancy Summer, Managing Editor

Recently I had the opportunity to review all of NAAFA's literature, Newsletter articles and special publications and sort the material by topic. I was amazed at the quantity of original health-related material we have and surprised at just how little we have on employment. Of course, NAAFA has been fortunate to have some excellent and prolific writers in the health field and health is a very basic issue. It's hard to deal with employment issues if you're not healthy enough to work. It's also hard to promote the hiring of fat people to employers who think fat people are unhealthy, if you don't have some health statistics to back up your argument to the contrary.

But I think that it is time, without dropping the reins on health issues, to focus more attention on employment. We have the tools and we have the talent--let's use them to develop as much in the field of employment as we have in the field of health.

What could be the goals of a campaign to deal with employment issues? After reviewing those things that have already been done and talking to several interested NAAFAn's, a number of goals can be listed. And I'm sure that other NAAFAn's can add to this list:

- 1) Gathering data from our members on career opportunities and job discrimination;
- 2) Educating our members on how to choose careers, present themselves at interviews, get promotions, or to develop the self-esteem to look for better employment;
- 3) Surveying employers, employment agencies and counselors on their attitudes about fat employees;
- 4) Educating employers regarding the myths that exist about fat employees.

There are several steps that NAAFAn's can take to make such a campaign a reality. First of all, I'm pleased that NAAFA's long dormant Employment Committee is now in the capable hands of Jerry Lamb of Michigan. Jerry's work in NAAFA has shown a level of professionalism that I'm sure will be apparent on the Employment Committee. Carrie Hemenway (MA), a career counselor, has offered her support to the Committee. Some of the exciting goals and ideas were suggested by them.

Are there any other qualified NAAFAn's that might wish to volunteer to help the Committee? I would like to encourage anyone with expertise in the field of employment to consider volunteering in some way. You can contact the Chairperson by writing him at PO Box 943, East Lansing, MI 48823. The focus of your interest can be in collecting data on employment, educating NAAFA members in this area or educating employers about hiring fat people...or offering ideas on other facets of the problem. We need to hear from you.

Secondly, I've noticed that all the members of NAAFA's Advisory Board are in the health field. Perhaps this was by design, but I'd like to suggest that NAAFA leaders consider adding an employment professional to the existing advisory board or set up a new group of advisors in non-health related areas. Are there any professionals that might be candidates for such an Advisory position?

I've heard that there are few studies about fat employees. NAAFA is aware of the "Report on the Study of Weight and Size Discrimination" published by the state of Maryland, and Robert Half's informal study on the effects of weight on salary and promotion at the executive level. There may be others, but they are not well known.

This raises some interesting questions. Has anyone ever gathered statistics with regard to myths like "fat people are lazy", "fat employees take more sick time than thin ones", "fat employees have no self-discipline", "fat people are stupid", "hiring fat people causes group insurance rates to increase", "fat employees will repel your customers", etc. Can we find a researcher to study these myths? Do these myths have any basis in fact? If not, we should work to destroy the myths and stereotypes. If, however, any of these myths prove to be supported by fact, then we should look for solutions to the problems.

I also think that NAAFA needs a slogan or motto that is employment related. I've considered and discarded several unlikely candidates such as "Fat workers can be good workers" or "Hire a fat person today". They just don't quite make it. Do you have any suggestions? Send them to the Newsletter and we'll publish the best ones.

Of course, NAAFA cannot be an employment agency, any more than it can offer a free doctor or lawyer. But there is a lot that can be done in this area, both nationally and on the chapter level. It might take as much as five to ten years to accomplish these goals. So, let's give employment a higher priority in NAAFA and let's get to work!

RESETTING YOUR SETPOINT: PART 3

Some people might ask, "What is nutrition advice doing in the NAAFA Newsletter? Haven't fat people already been saturated with such information from diet books and magazines?" To some extent, this is true. However, much of the information that fat people have gotten from the media and the weight-loss industry has been incorrect or even dangerous. Even when a reducing diet offers balanced nutrition, it can still be unsafe because it encourages an on-again off-again cycle leading to a yo-yo pattern of loss and regain, leaving dieters even fatter and at the same time, more unhealthy.

A few popular books on nutrition have put primary emphasis on health rather than slenderness. These books have advised gradual, lifelong changes in eating and exercise habits instead of crash programs that are nearly impossible to sustain. Recent books by Covert Bailey and Jane Brody fall into this category, but both express strongly negative attitudes towards fat people. The title of Bailey's first book, Fit or Fat?, wrongly implies that fitness can be judged by the size of a person's waistline.

In my series on "Resetting your Setpoint", which concludes this month, health is the priority. Gradual weight loss is possible (if desired), but is a by-product of a healthier lifestyle. The more gradually you change your eating and exercise habits, the more likely you are to make each change permanent. Each week, you can cut back on a less-healthy food and replace it with an equally satisfying amount of a food lower in fat, cholesterol, sugar, and salt, and higher in nutrients and fiber.

My last column discussed high-protein foods (the meat group). I'll finish with the other three Basic Food Groups.

DAIRY foods are an easy place to start cutting down on dietary fat. After the meat group, dairy foods are the largest sources of fat in the American diet. Butterfat is highly saturated, and may therefore be a factor in heart disease.

Try switching from whole milk to 2% milk for a month or two, then switch to 1% and skim milk. After changing gradually, I now dislike whole milk, because it tastes like heavy cream to me. A number of low-fat cheeses are available, although the taste takes some getting used to. Fresh, moist cheeses like mozzarella are lower in fat than hard cheeses, such as cheddar, or creamy cheeses like camembert or brick, which are all about three-quarters fat. Swiss cheese is a little better, providing two-thirds of its calories as fat. The worst is cream cheese (92% fat), which should be used sparingly, like butter. A recent commercial that claims cream cheese is lower in fat than butter (which is 100% fat) is somewhat misleading.

Yogurt is usually thought of as a diet food, but most brands on the shelves are not low-fat. Yogurt made from whole milk is 49% fat. Likewise, 36% of the calories in creamed cottage cheese comes from fat. A hint: look at the fat and protein content listed on the label. If the number of grams of protein and fat are about equal, then the product is made from whole milk. If it has more protein than fat, then it's low-fat.

Ice cream is high in fat (49%) as well as sugar. The expensive premium brands have an even higher fat content (65%), and most of the remaining calories come from sugar. Premium ice creams get my nomination as the "food most likely to raise your setpoint". Sherbet, frozen fruit bars, Italian ices, and frozen yogurt are good low-fat alternatives, although some are high in sugar.

GRAINS AND STARCHES such as bread, potatoes, pasta, and rice should make up most of your diet. These foods are very low in fat and are often rich in fiber. For many years, dieters have been wrongly told that these foods are "fattening"; such advice may have helped expand many waistlines.

The only problem with starchy foods is what we put on them. Potatoes are covered with gravy or sour cream (plain yogurt is a good substitute), and butter or margarine is spread over most starches. Dry toast may be hard to get used to after a lifetime of buttered toast, but I've found I don't miss the butter any longer--especially since I can eat twice as much un buttered toast for the same number of calories, to the benefit of my setpoint and arteries.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES are almost always low in fat and high in fiber. Avocado is high in fat, but it's still a good substitute for sour cream dips and spreads. As with starches, the greatest problem is what we add--butter, salad dressings, or oils for frying.

This ends my suggestions for selecting foods from the Four Basic Food Groups that can help improve your health while lowering your setpoint somewhat, and stabilizing your weight, all without going hungry. Besides knowing what to eat, we also need to learn when to eat. We should eat when we're hungry, but after years of denying hunger and eating according to a diet sheet, it's hard for many fat people to get in touch with their body's internal signals. Susan Kano's Making Peace With Food (\$16.45 from Amity Publ., Box 933, Allston, MA 02134) is one place to go for more help. □

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In an upcoming issue, Dr. Ernsberger will discuss the effects of weight on the menstrual cycle.