

NAAFA Newsletter

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NAAFANS NAMED TO ADVISORY BOARD

In a recent action, Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D., has been named to membership on the Advisory Board, and to chair the group for one year. Dr. Ernsberger recently received his doctorate from Northwestern University Medical School, and is well known in NAAFA circles for his health columns and reports. He has published in professional journals, and in the popular press as well. Recent articles authored by Dr. Ernsberger have appeared in American Health and McCall's magazines.

Another new member of the Advisory Board is Angela Barron McBride, R.N., Ph.D., who is Professor and Chairperson of the graduate department of Psychiatric/ Mental Health Nursing, Indiana University School of Nursing in Indianapolis. Dr. McBride is also an adjunct professor both in the Department of Psychology (Purdue University School of Science at Indianapolis) and in the Department of Psychiatry (Indiana University School of Medicine).

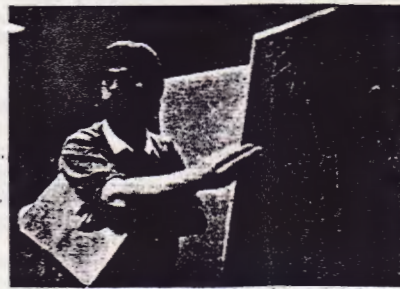
Dr. McBride is the author of The Growth and Development of Mothers (which has been translated into German, Norwegian, Hebrew, and Spanish), and of Living with Contradictions: A Married Feminist. She has also published extensively in both professional and popular magazines. She has conducted workshops and given lectures all over the country, and has appeared on many radio and television programs, such as Phil Donahue, PBS's Woman, and others.

Beside serving on NAAFA's Advisory Board, she is also on the advisory board of the Annual Review of Nursing Research, and serves as a reviewer for Research in Nursing and Health and Nursing Outlook.

Dr. McBride was given a Distinguished Alumna Award by Yale University School of Nursing in 1978, and received a variety of awards, fellowships, and degrees since that time. She joined NAAFA as a Regular Member in January, 1984, and was named to the Advisory Board a few months later.

Dr. McBride authored the review of the book, Shadow on a Tightrope: Writings by Women on Fat Oppression (Aunt Lute Book Co., Iowa City, IA) which appeared in "The Women's Review of Books", in March, 1984. Her review was entitled "Fat Survivors in a Thin Society".

NAAFA's Advisory Board serves in a professional capacity to advise NAAFA's Board of Directors on issues in the health and medical area. Others currently on the Advisory Board include: William Bennett, M.D., Editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter; Abraham I. Friedman, M.D., a practicing physician in the areas of metabolics and bariatric medicine; Harry K. Panjwani, M.D., a psychiatrist; and O. Wayne Wooley, Ph.D., and Susan C. Wooley, Ph.D., Co-Directors of the Eating Disorder Clinic at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. ★



Paul Ernsberger Ph.D. conducts health workshop at a recent convention.

NAAFA TAKES STAND AGAINST WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

The following Health Committee proposal authored by Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D., Chairman of the committee, was passed by the NAAFA Board of Directors at its November 30, 1984 meeting, and thus became official NAAFA policy:

The NAAFA Board of Directors has received a report* describing more than 60 documented complications, many of them fatal, resulting from stomach stapling and other weight-loss operations. Based on this new evidence, the Board concludes that under any circumstances, the risks of weight-loss surgery surpass any possible benefits.

In order to serve the best interests of the NAAFA membership, while affirming the right of the individual to make his or her own informed decisions, the Board feels it must make a strong recommendation against choosing the option of weight-loss surgery.

While not wishing to condemn individuals who have chosen surgery, the Board advises the NAAFA membership to avoid weight-loss operations and to consider alternative solutions to their problems.

The major motivation for surgery is relief from the psychological pain of being fat in our society. Relief from this pain has been a major goal of NAAFA from its inception. Therefore, NAAFA will henceforth devote itself to providing alternatives to surgery. Specifically, NAAFA will apply renewed energy to studying the factors that lead people to consider weight-loss surgery, and to seeking alternative ways of dealing with problems that fat people face.

*Report on Weight-Loss Surgery, P. Ernsberger, Ph.D., NAAFA, Inc. 1984; pp. 1-16

The proposal was passed with six votes in favor and one opposed. Board members present at the meeting included: Conrad Blickenstorfer, Paula Dachis, William J. Fabrey (Chair, not voting), Nellie Hensley, Eileen Lefebure, Nancy Summer, Elisabeth Williams, and Russell F. Williams.

Many positive letters have been received from NAAFA members regarding the Report on Weight-Loss Surgery. Some of the letters will be included in an upcoming Newsletter. ★

SUGAR FIGHTS BACK

The Sugar Institute, a processor's trade association, has begun a \$2 million advertising campaign to fight back against the bad "rep" sugar has received from the diet industry. Their ads ask the public to "Think about it", when choosing between a natural substance and a chemically produced one. They have also filed an appeal with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration last August, arguing that ads for diet sweeteners and low calorie products have been misleading.

An article by Steve Pasto in Food Distributors Magazine reports: The Sugar Institute argues that while sugar is a factor in tooth decay, so is aspartame [Nutrasweet] products such as Equal which is 90% carbohydrate.

As far as sugar making people fat, they argue that sugar, with only 16 calories per teaspoon, has a lower calorie count than that of dietary fats that have 36 calories per teaspoon. Martha Pehl, a registered dietitian who is a consultant to the Food Institute notes, "...Research suggests that obese people tend to eat less sugar than thin people, and that the average person has more of a taste for food with a high-fat than a high-sugar content."

A spokesman for the Sugar Institute explained that the industry has decided to become more aggressive after years of simply monitoring scientific research. The annual per capita consumption of sugar continues to drop while that of saccharin (average 7 pounds per person) and aspartame (average 2 pound per person) continue to rise.

Pehl warns that "the extra money consumers spend on sugar substitutes and sugar-free beverages may be all they part with—not those unwanted extra pounds... Laboratory tests show that saccharin, the leading sugar substitute, does not displace sugar in the diet. Researchers are concluding the brain's appetite center can distinguish between fake and real sweetness—and the body persists in fulfilling its energy needs with real calories." The article concludes: "If you want to lose weight, start with exercise."

COMMENTARY

The annual consumption figures of 7 pounds of saccharin and 2 pounds of Nutrasweet per person is frightening considering that we already know some of the health risks of diet sweeteners. Saccharin is banned in Canada, and the FDA's ruling to remove it from the American grocery shelves was postponed until 1985 by an act of Congress. There has also been numerous reports of possible dangers of Nutrasweet, which seem to have been lost in the shuffle of the monumental Nutrasweet advertising campaign.

But what is even more frightening to me is that, (except in the case of diabetics where the risks of diet sweeteners are outweighed by the health benefits of avoiding sugar,) diet sweeteners may do absolutely nothing beneficial for the average consumer.

Why do people use the products? Obviously to lower their total caloric intake. But as reported, the body will find those calories elsewhere if it doesn't get it from your diet soft drink. So in the end, using diet sweeteners may accomplish nothing for you while exposing you to various health risks.

NAAFA members who are interested in more information on this subject can refer to the book, The Dieter's Dilemma, in which Dr. William Bennett (a member of NAAFA's Advisory Board) and Joel Gurin pointed out the futility of using artificial sweeteners in a weight-loss program. Articles on this subject have also appeared in American Health magazine.

The diet sweetener and diet product industry, through their commercials, have done more to foster anti-fat feeling in the USA and Canada than any other group. One might argue that the insurance industry deserves that title but the insurance industry only set up a set of arbitrary weight standards based on unrepre-

sentative studies. The diet product industry turned those statistics into a daily pop-culture media event, delivered right into your living room via the television commercial. Insurance statistics are boring, whereas sweating fat women with their bottoms protruding conspicuously over the edge of their bicycle seats and bikini-clad blondes gracefully and seductively sliding into hot tubs are not boring at all to the general public.

While the health risks of sugar consumption is another area of controversy, I'm glad the sugar industry is finally fighting back. I am still going to use less sugar than my thin friends, and I am still going to boycott diet products because of their anti-fat propaganda. But I can't wait to see the Sugar Institute's ads which ask the public to choose between the artificial chemicals and the real thing. "Think about it."

—NS

DATELINE: VAGGERYD, SWEDEN

The Associated Press reports: Inger Johansson of Vaggeryd, Sweden is opposing welfare authorities who want to put her 3 year old son Mikael in a foster home because, they say, she is too obese to care for him properly. Officials also said that Johansson's appearance would have an adverse effect on the child because his classmates will attack him about it.

COMMENTARY:

The Chicago Chapter's publication, BIG TIMES, edited by David Whiteis, reprinted this news clipping with the following commentary that says it all:

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

BOY GEORGE

Boy George, of the pop group Culture Club has spoken out in favor of fat people. In several interviews, the flamboyantly dressed lead singer has stressed his belief that people should be more tolerant and accepting of others who are different in appearance or life-style. On the Phil Donahue show in November he said that fat and thin people have the same feelings and should be treated equally.

A National Enquirer article reported that Boy George likes fat people and finds fat women especially beautiful and sexy.

Culture Club's former back-up singer Helen Terry is a fat woman. She sang on two of their albums and appeared with them on their concert tour and cable television special. Unlike many back-up singers who are part of the stage background, Helen Terry was prominently featured center stage just behind Boy George. She has since left the band and is pursuing her own solo career. Culture Club members have written some songs for her.

COMMENTARY

Boy George has millions of fans, most of them young. While some commentators, clergymen, and sociologists are worried about the effects of Boy George's androgenous look, no one has mentioned the effect on all those young concert-goers watching Helen Terry seductively shake-it-up on center stage. Certainly, budding F.A.'s must find it a revelation...and young fat women may be able to identify with Helen.

I wish interviewers would ask Boy George less questions about his make-up and more about his human rights position. He has already displayed sensitivity and intelligence regarding fat issues in some interviews...I for one would like to hear more. ★

—NS

If you would like to help NAAFA stay informed by contributing to the Dr. Ethel Weiss Shed Memorial Library, please send articles and news items to the NAAFA office. Be sure to write, in the margin or the back of the clipping, your name and the date, city, and publication in which the article appeared.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:

As many of you know, this Newsletter has been a while in coming. The winter months for NAAFA are usually financially the toughest, and the Newsletter resources available were used to print the Report on Weight-Loss Surgery late last fall. The choice to put aside the Newsletter in favor of the Surgery Report was an editorial decision that we do not regret, but we are aware that many NAAFA members have sorely missed their Newsletter.

Good news! We are almost completely prepared for the next two Newsletters, and with members' financial support, we hope to provide them to you ahead of schedule over the next few months.

You may have noticed that certain columns are missing in this issue. This is one of several temporary economy measures. (In the next issue, all our regular columns such as Health, F.A. Focus, Publicity Report, Behind The Scenes, Regional News, and The Last Word will be back as usual.) This Newsletter also has fewer photographs and less margin space than in previous issues. Frankly, we would have made the print smaller, but the Printing and Production Committee said that, if we did, we'd have to mail you a magnifying glass along with your Newsletter!

At any rate, we have crammed as much news and as many articles as we could in these pages. We hope that you enjoy them...and we hope that, if possible, you can support the 1985 Fundraising Drive this year! NAAFA needs you! ★

NAAFA NEWSLETTER	
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UPDATE: THE NAME CHANGE DEBATE CONTINUES

by Nancy Summer

Early last year, I suggested a change in the name of our organization from The National Association to Aid Fat Americans to the National Association for the Acceptance of Fat Americans. My editorial stimulated many letters from readers.

Almost everyone responding agreed that NAAFA should change the word aid but there was no clear consensus as to aid's replacement. Acceptance was the more popular choice; however, advancement had a strong following.

Advocates of advancement argue that acceptance is too passive. To quote David Whiteis of Chicago, "I believe that acceptance is more passive than aid—we're acting as if there's an exclusive club out there which we want to join and it's up to them to accept us."

Proponents of acceptance argue that it is more moderate and fits more into our image of a public education organization. To quote Chairman Bill Fabrey, "the word advancement has unfortunately taken on the connotation of a group that seeks to increase its share of the social and economic "pie" without regard for the rights of others. What we really want...is acceptance as equals, nothing more and nothing less." It has also been pointed out that using the word advancement makes us sound like a copy-cat group.

So, in our last regular issue, we took a survey and are now pleased to announce that over one third of our members responded.

The results: There is still no overwhelming clear-cut opinion on the name change.

However, an interesting, new suggestion has been made by several people. "Use both words," suggested Joanne Preissler of New York. And Donna Marie Ryan of Chicago wrote the following:

"The debate on NAAFA's name change has been especially interesting and thought-provoking... A change seems definitely necessary...however, having to choose either acceptance or advancement is a difficult decision, as both words have merit and are descriptive of our efforts.

I would like to propose a name compromise that I feel conveys and enhances NAAFA's meaning:

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF FAT ACCEPTANCE (NAAFA)

Think about it...isn't advancing acceptance REALLY what we're striving for? Not just for Americans, but for everyone, anywhere who's fat and feeling oppressed because of his/her body size. The deletion of the word Americans also removes us further from any comparative connotations related to other minority groups... I think this name also maintains our regard for the rights of others with no inference of "seizing power" or social turmoil, valid concerns of Bill in his article."

I admit that it's a lot to say...The National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance. However, we usually refer to ourselves as NAAFA anyway and Donna's suggestion makes a lot of sense. Acceptance is a little too passive, and advancement is a little too pushy.

But to advance an IDEAL...the ideal of Fat Acceptance, that is almost a perfect description of NAAFA. We are trying to promote (advance) the concept of Fat Acceptance to both fat people and to the general public...the general public of the United States and other countries.

Donna is not the first NAAFAn to recognize the problem of the word American in our name. Our Canadian members have on many occasions commented on it and NAAFA member Eileen Lemke-Mecori of Washington State wrote to Chapter Chatter (our old bulletin for chapter officers) in 1981:

"I am in agreement with the Ontario group that the use of the word American in our common struggles against discrimination is inappropriate and offensive. In fact, I didn't join NAAFA for several months because I felt...its title was not for me...

I ask all my fellow U.S. citizen NAAFAns to join me in supporting a change of title for our organization that reflects, or at least does not negate, our international membership."

I like Donna's compromise name for both reasons:
1) It better reflects our international membership and
2) It advances an ideal, not a group of people.

Changing the name of our organization will cost money...perhaps even as much as \$1000 over a six month period. Certainly, such a name change should not be hastily considered. Whatever we decide, hopefully, will stick for at least another 15 years.

Let's hear your comments on this latest proposal. In the meantime, we are still The National Association to Aid Fat Americans. ★

activism

READ ON:

THE OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS
Publishers of America's Premier Black Newspapers

SEAT BELT ACTIVISM ALERT

The Activism Committee, Louise Wolfe and Russell F. Williams, Co-Chairpersons, has alerted us to the following:

"Attempts are being made in many states to pass mandatory seat belt laws. (Laws have already gone into effect in New York and New Jersey.) Any laws passed should consider the unique situation of the fat, and not punish fat people because the automotive industry has frequently failed to provide seat belts large enough to fit everyone.

We ask that you discuss these problems with your legislators because modifying pending legislation is vastly preferable to using the courts to attempt nullification of legislation after unfair laws have been passed and fat people have been ticketed for disobeying a law that they can only obey by staying out of most cars.

Your discussion with legislators should include the following points:

1. No one extender will fit all seat belts. (Even if you are able to purchase one for your own car, it would probably not fit on any other car in which you might wish to ride.
2. Riding in the back seat, if the belts in the front seat do not fit, is not an adequate solution if:
 - A. You are driving.
 - B. You do not fit in the back seat.
 - C. You are riding in a pick-up truck or sports car.
 - D. You are on a date.

3. How will the law affect your ability to drive a rented car?"

4. How will fat people be able to get exemptions? Will they be required to incur periodic medical expenses in order to keep their exemption current? (New York State law, for example, requires that exemptions be signed by a doctor, whereas the New York State Medical Society has recommended that no one be given an exemption. However, several NAAFA members, who have paid for a visit to their doctor, have received exemptions.)

It is also important to point out that seat belt designs go through extensive testing under extreme "accident" conditions before being approved for use by the public. Any attempt to enlarge a seat belt by sewing two belts together or by any other make-shift alteration, may destroy the integrity of the belt and therefore the belt's potential usefulness during an accident.

If it is true that seat belts save lives, then certainly, fat people deserve the same protection as thin people. However, Russell Williams suggests that "NAAFA's goal in seat belt legislation should be to prevent the enactment of any legislation which further restricts the freedom of movement of fat people in this society." ★

We received a letter from member Kelly Fennessy of Sacramento, California, which is self-explanatory:

Dear NAAFA,

I think I am going to grin continually for the next two weeks (with time off for sleeping). In September, I had a mid-traffic verbal encounter with two guys driving a SACRAMENTO OBSERVER truck. I drove to their office (which was closed) and left a letter describing the offensive fatphobic phrase used, the time and location of the incident, and appearance and clothing of the men involved. Here is a copy of the response I received from their office. (Grin, Grin...) Activism- Don't you just love it when it works!

—Kelly Fennessy

Dear Ms. Fennessy:

Thank you for your letter calling to our attention the incident which you reported on the corner of 28th and S Street.

After carefully investigating the incident, we found that the SACRAMENTO OBSERVER van you were referring to was driven that day by someone not employed by our company and the driver was unauthorized to drive the van. He was in fact helping one of our delivery persons with his paper route. The regular driver has been reprimanded for his part in the incident.

Please accept our sincere apologies for the rude person who verbally attacked you regarding your size. As you pointed out in your letter, The OBSERVER has always been a frontrunner in seeking justice for all people and advocates against bigotry in any form.

Again we thank you for calling this to our attention.

K. Lee
Managing Editor ★

During the 1984-1985 season, Hill Street Blues (NBC) has included several offensive comments about fat and had several episodes where a fat person was featured in a very offensive way. On one show, the police were summoned to arrest a fat man for taking over a salad bar at a restaurant and, in December, a fat loan shark died in the basement holding cells. A number of NAAFA members and others in the fat acceptance movement were outraged enough to write. Here is a sample and the address where you can write, too:

Stephen Bocchco, Producer
Hill Street Blues
NBC Television Studios
3000 W. Alameda
Burbank, CA 91505

Dear Mr. Bocchco:

As a long time fan of Hill Street Blues, I was appalled...by your treatment of the fat character who died (?) in the jail cell. The disregard for this human being's life was not humorous. It was offensive and oppressive in the extreme. As a fat person watching the program, I was told that my life is worthless and my death a joke. The entire incident in the show was contrived and served no other purpose than comic relief for an overly violent and tragic script. It was cruel, exploitive and out of character for this fine program which has dealt with so many oppressions in a sensitive and enlightened manner.

I was a fat child and have been a very fat woman all my life. Your program insulted me and caused me great pain. But you have done worse. You have reinforced the self-hatred of hundreds of thousands of fat people and your example encourages their tormentors to continue their oppression.

You may not be aware of the fact that hundreds of fat people kill themselves each year because of despair over the treatment they receive as pariahs in this society. And thousands become ill or die each year trying to get some relief from the persecution they suffer at the hands of friends, relatives, co-workers and the media, by agreeing to dangerous and often deadly "treatments" to rid themselves of what is really for them, a normal condition. (I am enclosing a recent paper on the effects of weight loss surgery which has just been published by the National Association to Aid Fat Americans.) What do you think makes people willing to seek even high risk surgery, knowing that they might die on the table or be severely disabled? Can you imagine the desperation that must come before such a decision? And can you see how your thoughtlessness has played into the self-hatred of these already suffering

people?

I want an apology, but that is not enough. You cannot undo what has been done, but you can do something in future programs to include positive and humane episodes about fat characters. You know how to do it. You have done it in regard to homosexuals, prostitutes, blacks and other racial minorities, the poor, the disabled, and women.

You wield a lot of power with the tools at your disposal. You have an obligation to use it for good. Do it.

—Judy Freespirit
Fat Activist

cc: Brandon Tartakoff, President of NBC
William J. Fabrey, Chairman of the Board of NAAFA
Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D., NAAFA Health Committee *

From time to time, NAAFA hears of people who are quite active in their local group, but simply refuse to join "national". Occasionally, NAAFans who have decided not to renew their membership will tell us that they only need to belong to their local group. The following is a letter from Activism Co-Chairman Russell Williams written to just such a person. This ex-member decided that she had benefited only from her local group and would not be renewing her national membership. (Her name has been deleted to protect her confidentiality.) We decided to include it in this Newsletter because Russell expresses why a national association is so important, and because it explains some of the activism work that Russell engages in on a day-to-day basis.

Dear Ex-NAAFA Member,

In your letter to NAAFA you stated that you are not renewing membership in the national association because any benefits you have received from NAAFA have come from your local chapter.

A few months ago, I went to a hearing on a phone company request to raise rates. There I argued that before rates were raised, the phone company should assure the public that they were hiring the most competent people, and not just simply those they deemed the prettiest. Because of the national association [NAAFA], when the phone company representatives asked, "Who wouldn't?", I had a good example available of fat discrimination: The Joyce English vs. The Philadelphia Electric Company case. If they had used health issues as an excuse for not hiring fat people, because of the national association, I could have produced a copy of Dr. William Bennett's letter to the Ohio Legislature and Dr. Paul Ernsberger's many reports on fat and health.

Several years ago, when I was battling with a local store over their display of posters ridiculing fat women, and store personnel had reported me to my employer, the local school board, and threatened to sue me, a national officer of NAAFA called the store, identified herself, and told them that the national association fully backed me.

When Weight Watchers magazine printed a survey of the relationship between weight and sexual attraction, because of the national association, my Co-Chairperson Louise Wolfe and I were able to quickly bring this to the attention of activists all over the country.

Thus, the national association provides me with informational resources, crisis assistance, national "clout", and communication channels that I never could have found or created on my own.

United we stand, fight, and occasionally win. Divided, we are innocuous bits of flotsam being rapidly swept over the falls of despair, poverty and medically assisted death, by the torrents of misinformation and lies, within which the dieting and medical institutions force us to struggle for existence.

—Russell F. Williams, M.A., F.A.

[Editor's note: The recipient of this letter later rejoined NAAFA.] *

c.o.b.'s corner



A PLUG FOR HEALTH ACTIVISM

by William J. Fabrey
Chairman of the Board

With Dr. Ernsberger's Report on Weight-Loss Surgery, and our rebuttal to the NIH Panel consensus report (Obesity a "killer" disease!?), we have thrown down the gauntlet in opposition to those in the health and medical professions who choose to ignore all evidence except that which supports their "hard line" against obesity. We are now doing things that may result in the SAVING OF LIVES for our members and others. Rather than "encouraging" people to be fat, as our critics contend, what we are doing is encouraging fat people to give up those widely-promoted practices that threaten their health instead of improve it.

Practices like fad dieting, total fasts, liquid protein diets, weight-loss surgery, yo-yo dieting, and diet pills and medications do more than relieve fat people of their money. They make some healthy fat people sick, and they KILL others! I'm glad to see in NAAFA what appears to be a general consensus that health activism is an important area. While other areas of activity in NAAFA are undeniably important, it's hard to fight for fat acceptance when you are lying on your back in a hospital bed, the victim of an oppressive medical history! *

ACTIVISM...DON'T YOU JUST
LOVE IT WHEN IT WORKS!

PLEASE NOTE! When you write that letter of praise or protest regarding fat issues to newspapers, TV shows, companies, legislators, doctors, etc., please remember to send a copy to the NAAFA office for distribution to NAAFA committees. Not only do committees such as Activism and Health want to be informed, but some letters are reprinted in this Newsletter. Thanks!

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 letter in an envelope that has the proper postage affixed to it and enclose it with the correct fee in a larger envelope addressed to NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426.

Non-confidential mail to committees is forwarded free of charge. This mail should not be sealed in an inner envelope.

Foreign members only: Fees must be paid in U.S. funds only. Also, if your check is not 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.

feature

JOB INTERVIEW TIPS

by Chris Applegate
California

In my last job search, there were many times when I would get a great reception over the phone, or go to a promising interview for which I just knew I had all the qualifications for the position, yet I wasn't hired after giving what I thought was a good interview. This is when the issue of fat discrimination really hits home. The workplace can be a place of subtle and often not-so-subtle discrimination about one's size. Very thin people seldom run into this kind of discrimination, but for fat people it happens in all sorts of areas of employment.

If you are in a job that doesn't require a great deal of "people contact", the employer's concern may not be primarily how you look, but whether your health and therefore your attendance will be affected by your weight. Many employers assume that fat people are unhealthy and take too many sick days; some assume that you tire easily and won't do as good a job as a thinner person.

If you are in a position that requires a great deal of contact with the public, the employer may also think that you won't make a proper appearance and represent their company in the best possible light. They may assume that people will be turned off by your appearance.

Most fat people have run into this kind of discrimination while applying for jobs. Even if the interviewers don't say anything about weight, we know that look of being "sized up" and we can "see" those thoughts running through their minds. I've even had employers merely go through the motions of the interview once they'd seen me. It was painfully obvious that they were not seriously considering me by the way they conducted the interview and the kinds of questions they asked.

There is only one way to effectively combat size discrimination on a one-to-one basis between interviewer and interviewee. You must take the bull by the horns and address the weight issue in the most positive way possible. Whether the interviewer asks direct questions regarding your size, only hints at it, or simply doesn't seem to be taking you seriously, it is your responsibility to bring up the issue of your weight. Don't assume that it is not relevant, or that bringing it up will hurt your chances. I think it will hurt not to mention it if you are really large. The bigger you are, the more concern the interviewer will have, so it can only help to be open and to bring up the issue.

You can do this in a non-threatening way that lets the interviewer know that you have a positive self-image and a good deal of self-respect. Often in the course of the interview you will be asked to tell a bit about yourself, or discuss your good and bad points. You can mention that you realize that you are bigger than some of the other applicants, but that your size has never affected your performance. Also if you have been fat all your life, let the employer know that and state that you have learned through the course of your life to be just as effective as anyone else. You can also stress your other good qualities, such as an outgoing personality or the ability to put others at ease quickly.

You may want to point out that you often work better than your co-workers since fat people sometime feel they have to prove they're better just to be accepted—something like being the only black in a white environment or the only woman in a male-dominated situation: You have to be not only just as good, but better at times. It is also true that jobs are often harder for us to find, so we value them more and are more loyal.

The best way to wrap up such a discussion of weight and/or appearance is to have prospective employers call your references. Assure them that by

asking your former employers about the weight issue, they can ask whether or not your job performance was affected by it. Make sure you have given only very positive references which you know will back you up and tell any prospective employer that you were a good employee and that your weight was not a deterrent to your performance on the job.

I know that this is a touchy issue for many of us and one we are not always comfortable bringing up with a stranger—especially a prospective employer. But I have tried this many times in interviews and I feel that it has helped me gain acceptance and respect from the people interviewing me. It gave me an edge because I did not ignore something so obvious as the fact I was fat. I turned it to my advantage and made the employer see that it wasn't a problem in terms of health or the ability to do the job; that in some cases, being fat could be a motivating factor to help me do a better job.

Every once in a while you may find an interviewer who truly isn't prejudiced, but that's rare. In the meantime it's our responsibility to initiate a discussion about it in the interview. Then, if you don't get the job, you know you've given it your best shot.

Not only do fat people often make good employees, but we can be very good at interviews too...it takes some practice, though! Try out some mock interviews with friends to learn what works best for you. Practice bringing up the fat issue in positive ways.

Of course you will have to take some other basic steps to present your best image. When you go into the interviewer's office, check the furniture and choose a chair that will be comfortable for you and that will be easy for you to get up from. Make sure you're dressed well, you're on time, and enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the job for which you are applying. Then go into that interview as if you owned the world and knew you were the best candidate for the job.

Only by meeting size discrimination and prejudice head on can we change people's minds. First we have to get the job, then we can show the employer that we are just as good, if not better, than our thin co-worker. Self-confidence is truly the key and addressing the issue of size is part of building and demonstrating to the world a self-confidence that will make you feel better and function better in all aspects of life.

[Chris' article was originally published in the Los Angeles Chapter's publication, LIFE IN THE FAT LANE. We have included it in the Newsletter with the permission of the Chairperson, Lana Pajula.] ★

A LETTER... FROM JUNE BAILEY

Dear NAAFA,

I know that I have only been a member for a few years, but I thought that it wouldn't hurt to ask anyway. I am writing to see if NAAFA would like to float a little loan to me. I don't need much, say about \$50,000.

Now don't get upset and say no until you hear about my idea! I read a blurb in the National Examiner which said, "A new slimming device soon to hit the market sets off the sounds of pigs at a trough each time you open the refrigerator door."

I must admit it was a bit of a dilemma as to which direction I should take on this. You see, I could use the money to buy stock in the company which makes this device. I could probably turn the loan into a fast 100 big ones for NAAFA. Some people will buy anything!

Instead, I've decided to use the money to invent my own device. This clever little gadget can be attached to the refrigerator door and when the door is opened, a soothing voice with a sexy French accent says things like, "Bon jour, mon cherie. You are so beautiful. Look into the depths of my soul and you will find cream puffs, chocolate mousse and butter pecan ice cream. EAT! EAT! EAT! Grow more lovely!"

This device could also be programmed to provide other, equally seductive suggestions. Can you imagine what a revelation this would be for fat people? It would be so much better than the sounds of pigs at a trough. Besides, I don't know where "they" got the idea that fat people are like pigs. I never heard even one belch at a NAAFA convention.

While you are considering my "proposal", I must also add that, since NAAFA is devoted to raising the level of self-esteem of fat people, this would be a good way to do it.

Some of the money I'm requesting will also be used to gather up all the "pig sound" devices and dump them in the ocean along with those spoons with the holes in the bottom, the "Fastity belts", body-wrap stuff, plastic sweatsuits, glucomannan, appetite suppressants, liquid protein, calorie charts, diet books, and weight loss "experts". I think this would make the world a much better place for us to live in!

I'll understand if NAAFA can't afford to float such a loan at this time but I thought it wouldn't hurt to ask. So many nice people spend so much money on trying to lose weight, that I thought it would be nice if we could, for a change, spend money on trying to be our own fat, happy selves. Of course, that's what NAAFA stands for anyway, so on second thought, forget about the loan. I'm not very mechanical anyway.

Yours truly,
June Bailey ★

ALL MY CUSTOMERS

(Scenes from a large-size shop)

by Joanne Preissler
as told to N. Summer

NAAFA member and former model Joanne Preissler owns a large size fashion store called Fully Feminine in Farmingdale, New York. Joanne has a number of interesting stories about her customers and the more unusual things that have happened in her shop. The following story is the second installment in our series ALL MY CUSTOMERS.

THE LADY IN THE CAR

One of the saddest experiences I have had with a customer was with "the lady in the car". One morning, I noticed two women parked in front of my shop. From what I could see, one woman was elderly and the other was a very large, unkempt woman. I opened the shop, turned on the lights, but the women made no attempt to come in, even after I opened the door so they would be sure to know that I was open for business.

After a time the elderly lady finally came in and browsed through the racks. She seemed upset by what she saw and started to leave. "You just don't carry anything in my daughter's size. She needs a size 60," she said.

"But I do," I replied and I took her to the section where I keep the "super-size" tunics. She was delighted, and asked about slacks which fortunately I had in stock too. "Why don't you have your daughter come in and try on the clothes, now that you know we have many things in her size," I suggested.

"Oh, no. She wouldn't come in here. She's too ashamed...she's so big."

"But this store is for women her size," I argued. "I have lots of things to fit her. I have extra large dressing rooms. Why, I'm a large woman myself, and I'm the only one here right now."

"Well, I'll try." But a trip to the car and a brief conversation with the girl proved fruitless. The mother reentered the store alone. The woman told me that her daughter was 38 years old and married to a man who "hates" her for "getting so fat" and does not want his wife to be seen in public. On the rare occasions when she does leave the house, it is only when her

mother picks her up. She will not go into a store; she waits in the car. I told the mother about NAAFA and discovered that she was very supportive of her daughter but confused as what to do for her.

We selected several outfits and I suggested that we take them outside for the daughter's approval, but the mother refused. "She made me promise not to bring you out. It would humiliate her. She doesn't want anyone to see her. Please don't even go near the door," she begged. So I let her take the clothes out alone and the woman in the car was delighted with them.

While I was ringing up the sale I said to the mother, "I know you're worried, and all I can tell you is that your daughter is not a 'freak'. If she were, why would I have a store full of clothes to fit her. There are so many fat women, that I make my entire income from selling them clothes. Even her size 60 is not that unusual."

The mother thanked me and left. I'm sure I've seen her at the store again, but she has never returned with her daughter. It's heartbreaking for me to think about how that woman must feel about herself. ★

FATLETS

Words that should be—but aren't—in the dictionary are called SNIGLETS by the cast of Not Necessarily the News, a special feature of cable television's Home Box Office.

Words that should be—but aren't—in the NAAFA dictionary are called FATLETS by the editorial staff of this Newsletter. For example:

The excruciating pain experienced by fat people sitting in armchairs that are too small for them is:
THIGH STRAIN (1)*

That nasty lecture fat people receive from their doctors on the dangers of fatness and the benefits of weight loss is a:
DIETRIBE (1)*

A measure of how a person's fat behaves while in motion is:
JIGGLEOSITY (2)*

And the field of science concerned with jiggleosity and other properties of fat is:
DERMODYNAMICS (3)*

The emotion experienced by male F.A.'s when they attend their very first NAAFA dance and see so many fat women...they become:
FATFOUNDED (4)*

And, if they can't stop telling everyone over and over again how much they love fat women...they are suffering from:
ROTUNDANCY (1)*

Those chic, emaciated, sophisticated, fashionably dressed cover girls are really very:
ELEGAUNT (5)*

And one might also say that they are very:
FAMININE (5)*

The sound that panty hose makes when a fat woman's thighs rub together as she walks is:
HOSE HUM (1)*

* FATLETS in this issue were submitted by:
1. Nancy Summer 2. Jerry Hoxworth
3. Eli Langner 4. Elisabeth Williams
5. Paul Ernberger

Sorry, we don't have any fancy T-shirts to give out to our FATLET submitters...but we will send a NAAFA button to anyone who contributes FATLETS that we use in upcoming issues of the Newsletter. Send your FATLETS to the Newsletter in care of the NAAFA office. ★

TWO POEMS

by EILEEN LEMKE-MECONI
Washington State

GIFTED WITH THE ROLE OF THE OUTSIDER*

They say
that what doesn't kill you
makes you stronger.
I know that is truth
for I am strong
against all odds.
There is within me
a sense of direction
a vision, a far-seeing
clear and vivid
of a world
where the only outsiders
are those who wish
a vacation from normality.

They say
that there is no such thing
as normality.
This too is true
But sometimes
the truth is not important
in a roomfull of hatred
for the deviants among us
the asians, the old folks
the foreign born, the jews
the gay ones, and me
the fat kid.

I say
that being a physical outsider
is a double-edged sword:
that strength, that vision
the oneness with all things living
the wisdom
the never-ending patience
the grand passion for life
the recognition of spirit
all tinged with bitterness
like the dregs of yesterday's brew
undrinkable
except by the desperate.

I say
that fat kids
know much about life
that can never be tolerated
is often not recognized
acknowledged or nurtured
yet hangs in the air
a light for all that look.
I carry my beacon.
If you are kind to me
I may allow you
to worship at my light.

Eileen Lemke-MeconI is the
President of the Washington
State Chapter of NAAFA.

*Images from Martha Courtot's essay "A Spoiled
Identity" in Shadow On A Tightrope.

GENTLE RAGE

To the man who yelled oink oink
leaning out of his truck window
his friend laughing with gusto
as if at a wonderful joke
because I dared to eat ice cream in public
after years of secret consumption
all meals taken in silence, quickly, with great shame
wishing I didn't have to eat to live
wondering if I didn't have to live if fat
I want you to know I have no anger.

To the woman with syrupy eyes
the one in the clothes store who took it on herself
to pat my hand fondly and offer me the diet
her sister-in-law had used to save her life
men flocking to her in droves
and I, simply wishing a pair of overalls
that don't mash in my stomach
and a little privacy, to try on clothes
without complete strangers offering their advice
I want you to know I have no anger.

To the young ones at the gym
wild, bored, looking for a way to pass the time
finding me in my bathing suit
an easy target: I've been primed
years of younger brothers taking turns
sibling rivalry to find just the right insult
to crush what little spirit remains
it only takes looks now, not even words
Disgust passes from eye to eye
I wonder only if there are any more pools left
I want you to know I have no anger.

To the doctor so well-intentioned
careful to tell me he has my interests at heart
as he lectures with anger about lack of respect
I feel bad to take his time
I can get this lecture at home just as easily
though it doesn't work there either
it takes five more years before I discover
by accident, that my feet hurt
due to bone structure not weight
a condition that clears with exercise
how can I be angry? I'm sure there's some reason
why daily pain would be a good reminder.

To the men resting on their worksite *
consuming lunch and women's bodies
judging female shoppers as they walk by
who say of the fat ones: "That object should be shot"
What are my choices: catcalls or bullets?
boys will be boys and men will be men
in some essential regard this is the worst of it
having to choose the flavor of abuse
or killing isolation as the world shrinks further
I walk a different route now
it takes a little longer but I have no anger.

To the fat woman who dared to write
"I look forward to the day
I no longer can control my rage." *
I am shocked, embarrassed, maybe a little intrigued
this is not the way to win people over
quiet now, let's be sensible, educate
realize that people do their best
I have strong hands and an old house in the country
and, by the way, maybe a little anger
if you don't tell anyone about me
we can bury the bodies in my back yard. ★

GRANTS NEEDED!

Anyone who has information regarding available
grants or experience with grant writing is urged to
contact Chairman Bill Fabrey. NAAFA needs your help.



NEXT ISSUE

SEAT BELTS! PEOPLE NEWS F.A. FOCUS LETTERS
MORE FROM PAUL ERNSBERGER AWARDS ANOTHER WEDDING!
SPOTLIGHT ON A CHAPTER CHAIRPERSON AND LOTS MORE!

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

There is an old story about the elephant and the blind men in which the blind men attempt to determine the appearance of the elephant by touching it. Of course, the blind men cannot agree on a description as each man is holding a different part of the elephant and no one can see the elephant as a whole.

NAAFans can learn a lot from this story. After talking to NAAFans around the country, it's apparent to me that we are all blind men grasping parts of fat liberation...with only a few of us seeing the totality.

This phenomenon is quite natural. How could it be otherwise? After all, NAAFA is an interesting melange of people...all sizes, both sexes, from various backgrounds, with different interests, different concepts of what NAAFA means to them personally, and different expectations for NAAFA. This great diversity is one of our major assets. Unfortunately, it can also often be the backbone of internal strife.

NAAFA is concerned with three major areas: SUPPORT, EDUCATION, and ACTION. Each area is valuable, each area appeals to a different type of NAAFA member, but each one is only a facet of the total NAAFA experience.

SUPPORT includes social events, programs that help people meet each other, rap sessions, etc. Local chapters and Special Interest Groups are important providers of support.

EDUCATION is perhaps the prime focus of the national association. This Newsletter, Health Specials, workshops at conventions, etc. are NAAFA's ways of educating its members. Public appearances, advertising, and the dissemination of NAAFA literature are some of the ways that NAAFA educates the public.

ACTION is the focus of the Activism Committee which reports on its actions to the members through this Newsletter and through press releases to chapter publications. Special areas of activism are the focus of specialized committees, (for example: The Health Committee handles health activism).

The survey taken last year asked NAAFA members to rate, in order of importance to them, these three facets of NAAFA. The results were interesting. It appears that NAAFA members break down into two major groups: those who rated SUPPORT first and EDUCATION second, and those who rated ACTION first and EDUCATION second. Well, at least we have education in common!

I think we should rejoice that there are NAAFA members who are willing to work in all three areas. I call this concept "Balance", and the Board of Directors passed a proposal last year calling for "balance" in Newsletters (except for those labeled "specials" such as health specials or convention specials), in convention schedules, in our description of NAAFA in publicity contacts, and in our leadership training for chapter officers.

Unfortunately, some NAAFans who become specialists in just one area, refuse to accept those who are working in the other areas. Some activists "look down their noses" at those who need NAAFA as a social outlet. Some social-oriented NAAFans think that activists are a bunch of radicals who are always on their "high horse" about something. Then there are the NAAFans who joined for social reasons, met someone and settled down, and now, as fat activists, sneer at those people still attending NAAFA for social reasons. Give me a break!

We do not all have to share the same expectations for NAAFA, or work in the same areas, but I think it vitally important, in the struggle with our real enemies, that we at least validate the interests and work of our fellow NAAFans. This validation should carry through in our dealings with other "fat liberation" or "fat acceptance" groups, as well.

This movement is less than two decades old. Our enemies have a considerable head start on us and, as an oppressed group, we have a lot to overcome, even within our own people. Divided: we are playing into the hands of those who seek to exploit us. United: we can and will achieve our goals! ★

1985 CONVENTION NEWS

The Board of Directors has announced that the 1985 National Convention will be held in Los Angeles from Friday noon, August 23rd through Monday night, August 26th. (This is the weekend before the Labor Day weekend.)

Three excellent bids to host the convention were considered at the November 1984 Board meeting: The San Francisco bid for the Clarion Hotel, the Northern Ohio bid for the Cleveland Airport Marriott, and the Los Angeles bid for the Los Angeles Marriott. In a close vote, the Los Angeles bid was accepted.

Tentative plans include a cocktail reception, dinner dance, workshops and rap sessions, leadership training sessions, a fashion show, and a private pool party luau. Sightseeing tours will be available for the days after the convention. It is suggested that those NAAFans wishing to make the 1985 Convention part of their vacation plans should take the last week of August as a vacation week.

While the contracts have not yet been signed as of this writing, the Los Angeles Marriott has agreed to a \$55 per night room charge with convention rates in effect for two days before and two days after the convention. Full details about the Convention will be available in a spring mailing to all current NAAFA members.

The Board of Directors thanks both the Northern Ohio and the San Francisco chapters for their bids. While no formal plans have been made regarding the 1986 convention, the Board expressed a warm interest in considering the Cleveland bid for next year. ★

election

ELECTION NOTICE

The 1985 Election Committee (consisting of C. Blickenstorfer, W. J. Fabrey, E. Lefebure, N. Summer, E. Williams, and R. Williams) met on February 16 to discuss possible rules changes and to nominate candidates. Eileen Lefebure was elected to chair the committee.

According to Eileen, "This year, three seats on the nine-seat Board of Directors must be filled. We are recommending that the election ballot-counting be held later than usual, in early August, to make it possible to mail the ballots by non-profit bulk mail instead of the usual first class, saving NAAFA several hundred dollars." Eileen pointed out that all NAAFans get to vote in the election, and that bulk mail takes several weeks for the post office to distribute.

The nominees for this year's election are:

Paula Dachis	Maryland
Nellie Hensley	Maryland
Jerry Hoxworth	Ohio
Joyce Malony	New York
Linda Martin	New York (formerly Missouri)
Adrienne Placek	New York

It is not known as of this writing which of the nominees have accepted and will be running.

There is a procedure for nomination by petition. Those interested in running for the Board by this method should contact NAAFA immediately. ★

ARTICLES THAT APPEAR IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICIES OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC. UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED. PLEASE CONTACT THE NAAFA OFFICE IF YOU REQUIRE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFIC NAAFA POLICIES.

The generosity of more than 100 NAAFA members and non-members helped to make last year's annual fund drive a success, and to keep NAAFA's doors open, says Bunny Peckham, chairperson of the Fundraising Committee. According to Bunny, more than \$1,900 in cash donations and monthly pledges were received between April and December of last year, plus another \$1,000 in matching funds provided by the Long Island chapter.

The following list includes most of those who contributed. (Those donors who declined to receive the committee's public thank you were not listed, but NAAFA is grateful for their support in any case.)

HONOR ROLL (\$100 or more)

June M. Bailey (OH)	Davea & John Fisher (Canada)
Gerri Bettino (NY)	(PEOPLE AT LARGE)
Conrad Blickenstorfer (NY)	Robert Half (NY)
Lenard Brechner (NY)	Lillian Nielsen (IL)
Lisbeth Fisher Burns (NY)	Susan Tenzer, M.A. (PA)

SUPPORTERS (\$25 or more)

John Baker (CA)	Jane Kettell (MA)
John W. Beattie (NY)	Los Angeles Chapter (CA)
Belco Associates, Inc. (CA)	Lynn Meletiche (NY)
Amy Berk (NY)	Rita Montana (NY)
Anna Cannizzaro (NY)	Robert Murphy (MD)
Neil & Paula Dachis (MD)	Fully Feminine, Inc. (NY)
Nancy Fleischmann (NY)	(Joanne Preissler)
Andrea Fuehrer (NY)	Mark Rubin (TX)
Helen Gabler (CA)	Ernest Schraeter (NY)
Wayne Gehres (OH)	Eric Steinberg (NY)
Elizabeth Gillen (PA)	Carol Sternhell (NY)
Lourie Greenblatt (NY)	Marcella M. Sutak (MI)
Robert Hartenstine (NY)	Andy Swetnam (WA)
Jerome Hill (KS)	Helen B. Syfan (OH)
Arnold L. Holtzman (FL)	John G. Trapani (NY)
Lloyd Ingram (NY)	Ann Turner (CA)
Olaf Jorgensen (Barbados, W.I.)	Sue P. Waller (MD)
Walter Kauzmann (NJ)	Frank R. Wood (VA)

DONORS (\$5 or more)

Jeanette L. Apprill (NM)	Jennie Mathew (OH)
Irish Barder (PA)	Ardyce Milton (WI)
Rhea Bardin (NY)	Harvey Parker (NY)
Bonnie Baskin (TX)	Janice C. Potter (OR)
Arlene Carter (CT)	Guy Russo (CA)
Barbara Cleaver (PA)	Michael J. Schmit (WI)
Bonnie S. Cohen (MD)	David & Karen Southcomb (MS)
Carol L. Dunlap, M.D. (CA)	Marilyn Spevack (NJ)
Charlotte M. Gaugh (MD)	Ethel B. Stark (NY)
Dr. David C. Greenwood (DC)	Mary Taylor (CA)
Dorothy Harbeck (IA)	Donna Torres (NY)
Karlene Izerhower (WA)	Elizabeth M. Vanditti (PA)
Robbie Kassell (NY)	Darlene Wiedman (WI)
Cheryl Klein (OH)	Robert M. Williams (TX)
Estelle Margolin (NY)	

GIFTS IN MEMORIAM

Included in the above listings were several gifts that were made in memoriam for the following: Reanne Fagan, Lillian Greenblatt, Marvin Grosswirth, and Bruce McElney. ★

FUNDRAISING DANCES ANNOUNCED

Bunny Peckham, Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee has announced plans to hold six national fundraising dances during 1985. These dances are scheduled to be held in the New York metropolitan area.

At least two of the dances will be run and sponsored by the Fundraising Committee. The other dances will be run by volunteer local chapters with the net proceeds to benefit NAAFA under a new program just approved by the Board of Directors.

Flyers for most of these dances will be mailed only to NAAFA members living in the area within a six hour drive of New York. However, all chapter chairpersons and chapter editors throughout the country will also be informed of these events. NAAFA members living outside

of the mailing area who are planning a trip to New York during 1985 can check with the NAAFA office for dates of these dances.

Some members have asked why all these events have been scheduled for the New York area. The new program is designed so that chapters across the country can sponsor fundraising dances for NAAFA. However, to date, many chapters have not been able to hold large enough dances in their area to generate surplus funds. It is hoped that as chapters grow in the future, some national fundraisers will be held outside of the metropolitan New York area as well. ★

TREASURY NOTES

A local chapter received a letter from a former NAAFA member. The disgruntled ex-member asked to be removed from the chapter's dance mailing list and explained that she dropped out because she felt NAAFA put too much emphasis on social functions and not enough on the real issues. "Save your 20 cents [postage]," she said. "Oh well, you'll only use it to pay for the next dance anyway", she concluded.

Some NAAFA members feel that there is too much time and money spent on dances and other social functions on both the national and local levels. There are two main questions about this perception: 1) Is it true that there is too much emphasis? and 2) Why do we have social events?

First, we should define "social events". NAAFA works in three main areas: SUPPORT, EDUCATION, and ACTION. Social functions such as NAAFA-Date, national and local dances and parties, and some aspects of our convention fall into the area of SUPPORT.

Considering that one of the major forms of discrimination against fat people is social discrimination, it is only natural that NAAFA offer alternatives. We haven't all been affected by social discrimination...or all affected in the same way...but I think we can agree that it exists and hurts many fat people. So, to meet the needs of our members, we must have social events, national and local, as part of SUPPORT programs. (The argument really starts when we discuss those people who use NAAFA solely for social purposes and choose to ignore any of the other issues...)

Another reason why we hold some of our social events is to raise funds. "National" does not hold dances solely for social reasons. They are advertised as fundraisers. Frankly, NAAFA needs the money. If it wasn't for the revenues received from the convention and national fundraising dances, NAAFA would have to either seriously cut back on EDUCATION and ACTION programs—programs that cost money without any offsetting revenues—or double the membership dues. Both of these alternatives are unacceptable.

But are some NAAFA members correct when they claim that there is too much emphasis on these events? I think it's just a matter of advertising. A social event must be widely advertised for it to be a success.

But we don't advertise for everyone to join in a telephone meeting of the Activism Committee...or the Health Committee...or to a paste-up of the Newsletter...or to the NAAFA office to help with a public education program. True, all NAAFA members are invited to join NAAFA committees and to volunteer their services. But those activities, for the most part, are not glamorous and do not earn money as social events do.

The Newsletter attempts to keep NAAFA members informed of the many non-social activities in which NAAFA is involved. NAAFA members who are not interested in promotional mailings for fundraiser dances are encouraged to ignore them and to donate to NAAFA in other ways. Financial contributions earmarked for specific activism, educational, legal or health-related projects are always welcome.

—N. Summer, Treasurer ★

Winners of the 1984 national raffle were chosen at the Convention in New York in September. The raffle was run by Ruby Greenwald, the committee chairperson.

The winner of the \$500 cash grand prize was Walter Bellisio of Huntington, N.Y. Mr. Bellisio, a non-member, purchased his winning ticket from member Bunny Peckham of Long Island. Bunny, who is NAAFA's national fundraising chairperson, won a \$25 prize for selling the winning ticket; she promptly donated it back to NAAFA.

Other winners included members Emma Rumsey of Pennsylvania, Nonie Loreen Smith of California, and Marie Limmer of Maryland who all won NAAFA gift certificates.

An artwork, donated by Fran Crider of Ohio, was won by Karol Boyer, also of Ohio, and a hand-crafted quilt, donated by Mary Jane Grace of New Jersey, was won by Lloyd Ingram of New York.

Lloyd Ingram was also the high-seller of tickets for the second year in a row. Lloyd graciously donated his \$25 award to NAAFA. The Putnam County Chapter, one of New York's newer chapters, was the chapter high-seller and also won a \$25 prize.



THANK YOU!

The Raffle Committee thanks all the members who participated in the national raffle. The Raffle Committee also thanks the prize donors, Mary Jane Grace and Fran Crider, as well as Lloyd Ingram and Bunny Peckham, for their donations. An additional thank you goes to June Bailey who donated two handcrafted dolls that were auctioned at the convention as a fund raiser.★

PEOPLE NEWS

DEANNE E. DANIELL, of Georgia, who works as a bookkeeper for her county Board of Education, has been elected President of the Georgia Association of Educational Office Personnel. Previously, she had served as President of her local association. "You can't keep this size 26 1/2 down!" she said in her note to the Newsletter.

PAUL ERNSBERGER has received his doctorate and has moved to New York to work as a research fellow at Cornell University. He has continued his writing career with an article in American Health magazine. The article entitled "Yo-Yo Hypertension... The Death of Dieting" appeared in the January/February 1985 issue.

NELLIE HENSLEY of Maryland has been appointed by the superintendent of schools of her local district to serve on a system-wide Equity Advisory Council. The council was formed to, among other things, "encourage employees and students to adhere to a standard which promotes respect and individual equity and opposes discrimination..." and "explore ways that encourage appreciation of various heritages and differences and common links among all people."

RITA MONTANA, a high school teacher from Long Island, received two honors during the last school year. First she was named "Teacher of the Year" of her school, and then the high school yearbook was dedicated to her as one of the senior class advisors.

LOUISE WOLFE of California was featured in an article in "Creative Times" the house organ of the corporation where she is employed. The article described her as one of the company's top data programmers and went on to tell about her work with the Fat Lip Readers' Theater and NAAFA.★

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS



Christine Cook and Randall W. Applegate were married on May 5, 1984 at the First Congregational Church in Corona, California.

Chris and Randy are both members of the Los Angeles Chapter. They met at the chapter's annual luau in the summer of 1983, and became engaged at Christmas that year.

Carol Kaser, another LA-NAAFA member, served as Maid of Honor.

The couple continues to reside in southern California.



Barbara M. Donahue of Woodhaven, New York and George M. Mills of Concord, California were married on June 16, 1984 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Woodhaven.

Barbara and George met at a Manhattan chapter dance in 1981 and remet several times at regional gatherings and conventions. It wasn't until the 1983 convention in New York that they decided to marry.

They were attended by NAAFA member Dianne Rubinstein, who was the Maid of Honor, and the groom's brother John, who was the Best Man.

The couple currently resides in Woodhaven, New York.★

If you have an announcement of a promotion, a new job, an award you received, or a graduation...please share it with us. Your accomplishments may encourage someone else to follow in your footsteps. Please send your announcements, as well as any birth or marriage announcements (with wedding pictures, please!) to People News, c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426.

news flash!

OBESITY A KILLER DISEASE?

REBUTTAL BEING PREPARED...

On February 13, a panel of doctors and other health professionals, under the auspices of the National Institute of Health, held a press conference that resulted in headlines such as "Government Panel Calls Obesity a Killer Disease". The news stories went on to report that the 14 members of the panel had drafted a statement that took a "hard" line on obesity, proclaiming that anyone 20% or more over his or her "ideal chart weight" is obese, and subject to health risks.

Notably absent from the announcement was advice on how to effectively combat the "killer disease". Also notable, considering the great pessimism of the report on the subject of the physical health of fat people, was the remarkable statement that "the enormous psychological burden [of being fat]...may be the greatest adverse effect of obesity."

According to the NEW YORK TIMES account of February 14, "The panel arrived at its consensus after listening for one and a half days to often-conflicting presentations." The TIMES headline read, "Panel Finds Obesity a Major U.S. Killer Needing Top Priority". Some scientists familiar with the manner in which research is conducted in the U.S. have privately suggested that the headline should have read "Panel Finds Obesity a Major U.S. Killer Needing More RESEARCH FUNDS". Nonetheless, one cannot dismiss the findings of this panel lightly, as some well-known names in obesity research were involved.

However, Dr. Paul Ernsberger and Dr. Susan Wooley, members of NAAFA's Advisory Board, along with a third health professional, are drafting a rebuttal to the panel's announcement. Support from others in the medical and health community is expected. Primary points of dispute include the following:

- 1) The sensationalist wording of the announcement including the use of the phrase "killer disease";
- 2) The fact that there are important studies, including government-funded studies, that contradict the panel's findings;
- 3) The panel's heavy reliance on life-insurance data, considered by many to be a notoriously bad basis for forming medical conclusions;
- 4) The fact that some members of the panel, by allowing their names to be linked to the report, appear to be refuting research findings they published and positions they took in the recent past; and
- 5) The fact that no studies to date have taken into account the undesirable effects on health of the extreme measures taken by most fat people to lose weight, including fasts, fad dieting, liquid protein diets, surgery, diet pills, and the effects of yo-yo dieting itself. In fact, evidence exists that implicates these practices as the actual cause of most health problems associated with obesity, and that being fat, in itself, may rarely be a cause of ill health. It is highly probable that the studies that link health problems and obesity are tainted by the preponderance of veteran dieters in any group of fat people considered in the study.

Any rebuttal prepared by Ernsberger and Wooley will be reprinted in this Newsletter, and will be disseminated to the media as well. Meanwhile, as predicted, diet hucksters are already attempting to capitalize on the panel's report. In Long Island, the "Physicians Weight Loss Centers" in Bayside, Queens, is advertising, "OBESITY KILLS - NEW YORK TIMES - February 15, 1985 - Yes, you will lose 25-35 pounds by April 26 and...we guarantee it!" [The ad was printed on March 9.] And, an article on Personal Health by Jane E. Brody in the NEW YORK TIMES (February 27) discussed some pros and cons of the panel's report, with this headline: "Are those 10 extra pounds actually harming your health or merely your appearance?" [emphasis ours] No further comment on this headline is necessary in a publication read by NAAFA members!

NAAFA-GRAM - Recently, a need has developed for a bulletin with up-to-the-minute news in the fat acceptance movement. The new tri-weekly NAAFA-GRAM began publication in January, and is mailed to all Supporters, Benefactor, Life and Patron members; committee heads, chapter chairpersons and bulletin editors; and those who donated \$25 or more during the last year. NAAFA-GRAM carries brief news items on a single sheet of paper sent by first class mail. The same items in greater detail are to be in subsequent Newsletters.

INTRODUCTION TO FAT AWARENESS - This 18-month program for new members will begin soon. It consists of a review of the concepts of fat acceptance, and includes important reprints of past Newsletters and other mailings, and some new material as well. New members who join, paying the \$5 initiation fee, are automatically enrolled in the program. Others can receive the same mailings (even though they may already have a good grasp of the subject) by paying the same fee of \$5. ★

advice

by June Bailey
Support Editor

Dear NAAFAAdvice,

I can't think of a good comeback when someone asks me, a fat woman, if I am pregnant. Do you have a snappy answer for this crude remark?

Fat, Not Pregnant

Dear Not Pregnant,

There are several ways of answering such a question depending on how well you know the questioner.

If the person is a complete stranger, it's best if you simply not answer at all. Change the subject immediately. This will give you control of the conversation. Only the most persistent person would broach the subject the second time but, if that happens, keep changing the subject until you get your point across.

If the person is someone you know casually, you may wish to answer in a humorous way. "Do you think so? Perhaps I better look into this," should end the conversation. Saying "yes" might be fun, but be prepared for further questions.

A good response is always another question. "Why do you ask?" would force the questioner to verbalize the fact that you look pregnant to them (i.e. your stomach looks big to them). If they appear to be judgemental about your size, you can say with a smile, "No, I'm just fat, and if you'll forgive me for being fat, I'll forgive you for being rude." That should squelch any further discussion.

Remember that prejudices against fat people are learned and that people who make crude comments have not reached the level of sensitivity you have. Grant them the compassion you want for yourself and use the opportunity to educate them.



Do you need some advice? Do you have a question about personal relationships or emotional issues? You can write to Ann or Abby, but June knows that "FAT IS WHERE IT'S AT" and will use her personal experience as a fat person to answer your questions. Mail them to NAAFAAdvice, PO Box 43, Bellerose, N.Y. 11426 and send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a personal reply from June.

All letters will be held in strict confidence. ★