

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

P.O. BOX 745

WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590

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Editor this issue: Joyce Fabrey

FALL LUNCHEON CANCELLED; NATIONAL EVENT IN SPRING SEEN AS A POSSIBILITY

The Fall Luncheon, a national event that was to have been held in New York City on October 12, has been cancelled. It was to have been publicized in a special July mailing of the Newsletter.

The Fall Luncheon Committee, chaired by Dianne Rubinstein, failed to submit a contract for the luncheon site in time to meet the deadline of June 30 established by the Board of Directors in its meeting of June 20. The Committee had been originally created by the Board at its April 4 meeting.

The subject of a Spring Convention, or Luncheon is likely to be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Board meeting. Meanwhile, the Greater New York Area Chapter of NAAFA is considering the possibility of its sponsoring some type of chapter function, perhaps in November, to replace the cancelled Luncheon. The outcome will be reported in this Newsletter.



MEET REX AND KATHY REED!

In February, 1974, NAAFA members Rex Reed and Kathleen Machado were married. Rex is from Kansas, and Kathy is from Massachusetts; they met through the NAAFA Pen Pal Project! Recently they visited the NAAFA office, and we thought it might be a good opportunity to ask them a few questions for the readers of this Newsletter.

Ed: Kathy and Rex, when and where did you first hear about NAAFA?

KR: I saw an article about NAAFA in Parade Magazine, sometime in 1973; I joined the same year.

RR: In my case, I saw Bill on the TV show To Tell the Truth. My membership began in 1971.

Ed: Why did you join NAAFA? Be honest!

KR: I joined because I thought it was a good idea to have an organization that would try to improve people's attitudes...to help me work with being fat instead of against it. I never would have worn an outfit like this (a white pantsuit) before joining NAAFA! I have courage now---I don't mind standing out in public.

RR: I wanted to help change society's view about fat; I didn't feel sick, weird, or unhealthy being fat myself, or in my liking for fat ladies. I was very happy to learn that others felt the same as I did; I wanted to communicate with them. Nowadays I can share my views with other people without feeling ill at ease!

Ed: You two met through the Pen Pal Project. What made you enter that program?

KR: Frankly, I wanted to find a husband.

RR: I wanted to correspond with any NAAFA member.

Ed: Exactly how did you meet?

KR: We exchanged letters for a while; then I called him up on the phone; subsequently I went to visit him in Wichita and I guess you could say that "love bloomed"---we really hit it off.

RR: Yes, and we were married several months later in Massachusetts. I took Kathy back to Kansas with me, and we settled in Wichita.

Ed: We're very happy for you. There is one question that bothers us a little. The Rochester Chapter, which runs the Pen Pal Project, recommends that NAAFA members not use the program as a date bureau. On the other hand, there have been more engagements and marriages caused by that program than through NAAFA-DATE. Do you have any comments about this?

KR: Well, there are drawbacks in trying to get to know a future mate through the mail. Sometimes Rex and I feel that we never really had time to get to know each other sufficiently well, even though it has worked out for the best! My advice would be to avoid marriage unless you both can spend some time living in the same city. This isn't possible for all Pen Pal participants.

(continued on p.2)

RR: Don't forget that without the Pen Pal Project, we never would have found each other. As I understand it, the NAAFA-DATE program is still confined to the greater New York area.

Ed: We appreciate your comments. By the way, what are you doing now in Wichita?

RR: I am working full time, and also taking a Bell & Howell training course in electronics.

KR: I'm keeping house, I'm very active in several other things, and I swim at least three miles per week. Before NAAFA, I wasn't always happy at appearing in public dressed for swimming. I'm sure most of our NAAFA members know what I am talking about.

Ed: We're sure they do, and that they appreciate your willingness to tell us about yourselves.

1975 ELECTION RESULTS

NAAFA held its annual election in June. All members were sent a ballot by mail; there were 125 ballots returned. The official count was done on June 20 by the Election Committee at an open Board meeting. The results were:

William J. Fabrey	95
Karen Jones	89
Ellen Dobson	88
Sheila Goodman	86
Ernest Harff	77
Joyce Fabrey	70
Dianne Rubinstein	60
Rhea Bardin	56

William Fabrey was re-elected; Karen Jones, Ellen Dobson, Sheila Goodman, and Ernest Harff are the newly elected members of the Board.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Fabrey

ANDREW SAMUEL FABREY

Now Joyce and I have a son! He was born on August 6 and is doing fine. Our daughter Melissa, 7½, couldn't be happier. I see two other recent birth announcements from NAAFA members---my congratulations to them all!



THE VOLUNTEER

Almost all work in NAAFA (perhaps 50 hours per week) is done by volunteers. The only minor exception is the high school girl who does some clerical tasks

a few hours a month. NAAFA volunteers are an unusual bunch: They type letters, compose Newsletters, mail NAAFA literature, organize conventions, appear on radio or TV, match pen-pals or NAAFA-DATES, and meet at inconvenient times to discuss annoying subjects; they receive no pay at all, other than the satisfaction of finishing a particular job.

Sometimes they hang in there for years, and are rewarded by losing an election. And a few have great ideas and ambitious plans for the organization, but run into problems in relating to other volunteers, and in following through in making their concepts become reality.

NAAFA volunteers are trying to alleviate the problems of fat people in the U.S. and Canada; their work is demanding, and calls for extreme dedication. Stopping pollution or solving the energy crisis sometimes appear to be easier tasks by comparison!

WANTED: FAT HUMOR

Mr. Ernest Harff, a NAAFA Board member, has suggested that as a movement, we tend to take ourselves too seriously. What is missing from many organizations, including NAAFA, according to Ernie, is a sense of humor.

How true this is! Unfortunately, "fat jokes" as we know them, have always been extremely offensive. The late Jack Benny, a comedian I have always enjoyed, used to have a put-down of Don Wilson, his fat manager, on almost every show. We are all familiar with the night-club act one-liners that put down fat people; they appear in print and on TV constantly.

Marvin Grosswirth has said, in his book Fat Pride, that any joke that "puts down" any group, whether it is mothers-in-law, fat people, Jews, etc., is an offensive form of humor. Marvin tried a different approach in his book: he actually tells of more than one anecdote in which the fat person comes out on top, and is seen as an individual, not a stereotype.

Who else among us can help provide the sense of humor needed? How about some humor for our Newsletter?

NAAFA'S INTERNAL POLITICS

Few subjects are as boring as the various organizational problems that NAAFA struggles through. It has long been Newsletter policy, as I understand it, to refrain from reporting in minute detail the nitty-gritty of everyday difficulties. Unfortunately, the lofty ideals on which this association was founded (by myself and others) frequently suffer as we try to implement them. Like most other organizations, internal conflicts occasionally draw our attention away from the problems that NAAFA was created to solve. It's a real shame!

OPEN MEETINGS

Recently, a Board meeting was disrupted by a NAAFA member who became so incensed by the controversial nature of the discussion that the member had to be expelled from the meeting; subsequently, a security guard on the premises had to be summoned to prevent further disruption.

We are required by the Constitution to have one open Board meeting a year. There are practical reasons why, in the past, most Board meetings were closed ones. Several months ago, the Board voted to experimentally open most meetings and permit any NAAFA member to attend, except for private "Executive Sessions" whenever they are required. I doubt if the recent disruption will kill the idea of open Board meetings; most of us still prefer such meetings to permit non-Board members to express their opinion on the topics under discussion.

It would be too bad if the actions of a single NAAFAN were to cause the Board to be less accessible to the membership.

NAAFA NOTES

OPEN BOARD MEETING IN OCTOBER

The next open business meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, October 3, at 8:30 PM at the home of Board member Ernest Harff, at 47 Lorraine Terrace, Mount Vernon, N.Y. All members of NAAFA are invited to attend. Those who are coming should be prepared to present their NAAFA membership card or other proof of paid-up current membership, and to call (914) 699-7735 for travel instructions and last-minute meeting changes, etc.

LOCAL CHAPTERS

Interested in forming a local chapter in your area? It can be very enlightening to get together with other NAAFANS. For information, write to the Chapters Coordinator: Ms. Karen Jones, 44 Lakeside Dr., Andover, Conn. 06232

HILDA '76

The NAAFA Book Service is happy to announce that the HILDA calendars for 1976 will be available after November 1, for the same postpaid price as last year. The cost is still \$2.50.

NAAFA ANNOUNCES TEENAGE PEN PAL CLUB

A new pen pal club for fat teenagers has begun. Originally the brainchild of NAAFANS Rhea Bardin and Karen Wynne-Cohen, the new program is being administered by Lisbeth Fisher. It is designed for young people between the ages of 11-18 only, and costs \$2.

Patterned after the adult NAAFA Pen Pal Project, but without membership as a requirement, the Club informs potential applicants who write in for teenage NAAFA material, that "whether or not you are now on a diet is not important as far as the aims of this project are concerned...we only want to help you correspond with others who have similar problems as yours."

Members who think that the Club may be of help to some teenager they know, are welcome to write in for the application material.

FALL MATCHING FOR PEN PAL PROJECT DELAYED

The Rochester Chapter has notified this Newsletter that the Fall matching, usually scheduled for September, will be postponed until late October, due to the long accident-related illness of Karen Wynne-Cohen, the project's coordinator. If all goes well, participants should receive their matches at that time.

ADAM MARK GROSSWIRTH

NAAFA extends good wishes to Marvin and Marilyn Grosswirth on the arrival of their new son in August. Mr. Grosswirth, a long-time NAAFA member, serves NAAFA as Public Relations Consultant.

JORDAN RANDALL STONE

NAAFA extends good wishes to Roberta and Jonathan Stone on the arrival of their new son, in April. The Stones have been members of NAAFA for several years.

SUMMER MATCHING FOR NAAFA-DATE POSTPONED

Due to an unusually hectic schedule, the NAAFA-DATE Committee has been unable to complete its summer matching. Current estimates put the new matching date at the end of October. By that time, participants should be receiving list of their current matches' names.

The mailing of this Newsletter has been supervised by Ellen Dobson.

LETTERSCLOTHES HARD TO FIND

Dear NAAFA,

I agree wholeheartedly with Janice E. Griffin's letter in the April Newsletter. Fashionable clothing for fat women is hard to find and like Janice we all seem to find the solution in making our own clothes. The problem is not only one which hits teenagers but any woman who wishes to dress young. The problem with ready-made clothing from the two stores who cater to larger sizes is not only that they lack youthfulness but lies also in the fit. For example, a woman who has large bust and hips does not necessarily have shoulders ten feet wide!

The idea of a regular fashion column for the Newsletter is a very appealing one. It could be a wonderful medium for the exchange of ideas such as solutions to problems in making one's own clothes.

Cynthia L. Clark
Princeton, N.J.

MEMBER OBJECTS TO COLLEGE STUDY

Dear NAAFA,

I found this story run recently by the Associated Press. It's entitled:

"Spouse, Fat Friend, May Be Wrecking Your Diet Plan"

"Ann Arbor, Mich. (AP): The next time you're on a diet and don't seem to be shedding any pounds, you might blame your spouse or your fat friends.

So say two college professors who run the Institute for Behavior College here. University of Michigan psychologist James McConnell and Wayne State University psychologist Chauncey Smith set up the Institute to help people understand why they overeat, bite their nails, or smoke.

The researchers say many people unconsciously discourage dieting out of love and jealousy. The pair say a spouse may want to keep the husband or wife fat to keep the mate faithful. On the other hand, people want their spouse fat to use it as an excuse for being unfaithful.

The researchers say fat friends may want to keep you fat because they'd feel threatened if you lost weight."

I'm anxious to see what kind of comments we'll get from other NAAFans on this one. I've got to say it really infuriated me. The great fallacy of "if you're fat you've got to be unhappy or are trying to get slim" strikes again! I think this kind of story lets us know what NAAFA is up against, but through strength in numbers maybe someday we'll see our efforts fulfilled through basic changes in attitudes.

Ike Smith
Louisville, Ky.

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On Being Fat

fashion decrees that thin is in
and hides its skinny bones in maxi-clothes
so that flesh cannot reach fabric
and touch it

I hugged a slender person once
and found it brittle and unsatisfying
I was afraid she'd break

have you ever tried to sit on the lap of a person
who has none
or needed cuddling in the softness of a bosom
and got bone-bruised instead

who is causing all the trouble
me and Sara Lee ?
chocolate cake relieves frustrations
peacefuler than guns

believe it or not
fat people
are slobs in the same proportion as
thin people

certain of the thin ones
purse their lips at us so hard
that they can't open wide enough
for anything but a celery stick
and they call it will power

does their phrase for us
letting yourselves go
refer to more than food
do they wish that they could, too

in a world where sharp-edged people write the menu
and roundness is a sin ?

Roslyn Baker
July, 1975