



NAAFA Newsletter

Official Publication of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance

Fall
2005

In this issue

The Super SIG Newsletter Returns!

2005 Convention a Smash!

Press at the 2005 Convention

Fitness at the Convention

Getting to Know . . . Board Member Peggy Howell

NAAFA Responds to Katrina

Call for Website Volunteers

Starving to Live Longer is Futile

Chapters Honored

The Super SIG Newsletter Returns!



by Phyllis Warr

As members of the Super SIG are fully aware, we have not had one of our wonderful and extremely helpful

Greetings

Another fabulous convention has ended. Many of us met face-to-face for the first time, and made bonds of friendship and fellowship. Workshops, dances, chatting in the hallway, and just relaxing: read more about it below. And make sure to come to the NAAFA website at www.naafa.org for links to photos and media coverage.

• 2005 Convention a Smash!



by Darliene and Peggy Howell

The 2005 NAAFA Convention was not only "Big Enough for All of Us," it provided so many things of interest for all us. Diversity was a major theme of this year's convention and whatever interests you may have around Size Acceptance, you could find it here.

The annual NAAFA Convention was held at the Airport Marriott in San Mateo, California, from August 10 - 14, 2005. The weather was cool, as is often the case in the San Francisco Bay Area, but the event was **HOT!** If you judge by the media coverage of the convention, you would say that Size Acceptance is the current hot topic. There were several documentarians there, local television and newspaper media, and national media was represented by none other than *Inside Edition*.

newsletters in a long time. Our coordinator Sherry Collins-Eckert has not been in the best of health during the last couple of years and has not been able to publish newsletters. Thankfully, Sherry is doing better!

The good news is, the newsletter is back. I am going to assist Sherry in editing the newsletter and getting it out. Those who were members for the last publication are still members. If you consider yourself a Supersized BBW, you can be a member of the Super SIG. There have been a couple definitions for super size in the past. The one we are operating with now is one's personal opinion. So if you ladies think you are supersized, then you are.

Please contact me, Phyllis Warr, at PWarr1995@aol.com if you have ideas for the newsletter or wish to join the Super SIG.

Events of Interest

October 9: SF Bay Area Chapter Meeting, contact Frances White at frances_white@naafa.org

October 19: Love Your Body Day 2005, www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org

October 29: Capital NAAFA Masquerade Ball, www.capitalnaafa.org

October 29: Chicago NAAFA Halloween Bash, www.lindasbigconnections.com

November 12: Chicago NAAFA Cosmic Bowling, contact ChicagoNAAFA@aol.com

November 13: SF Bay Area Chapter Meeting, contact Frances White at frances_white@naafa.org

November 19: Capital NAAFA Turkey Dance, www.capitalnaafa.org

Over the five days of the convention you could avail yourself of any number of workshops, dances, meal events, activism projects, pool parties, a fashion show, vendor trade show, not-so-silent auction, raffles, playing games in the Hospitality Room, or just hanging with friends (old and new) in the NAAFA Lobby. If you arrived early, you could have even taken a fabulous guided tour of San Francisco and a local winery led by the fabulous Frances White.

The workshops were plentiful and wonderful. There were four themes: Body Movement (fat fitness), Obesity Discourse (medical and scientific), the Body Liberator's Camp (activism), and Expressing Yourself (arts and crafts). Workshops from each theme ran concurrently throughout the day. Activism and fitness came together at the Fat Fitness Fest, held in a local park on Saturday.

Special speakers included Lara Frater, author of the new book *Fat Chicks Rule*; Lindsay Hollister, television and movie actress; and Lene Whitley-Putz, Ph.D., our keynote speaker.

Event Coordinators Heather Boyle-Nymeyer and Cecelia Morreo, along with a multitude of volunteers, did an absolutely marvelous job, albeit a big one. My heartfelt thanks to every person that contributed their time and hard work toward making the convention a huge success (pun intended).

If you've never been to a National NAAFA Convention before, it's difficult to explain what makes it such a special event to attend. Perhaps it's the openness of the people that attend that binds you together for years to come. Maybe it's the security of knowing that it's a safe haven for people of size where they can truly be themselves, without even the thought of NOT being accepted because of their size. Or it could be that you learn more about yourself and others like you, which makes you more confident in who you are and what you can do to help build confidence in others around you. Whatever the reason for you as an individual, NAAFA has been providing a place for each of us to "blossom" into the beautiful people we are, no matter what our size.

• Press at the 2005 Convention

The 2005 Convention was a lightning rod for the media, pulling in attention from newspapers, TV, and online. There were four documentary teams at the con, several print media, TV shows, and some walkins. Local Bay Area Channel 2 was there, and Channel 5 had two teams, Dr. Kim and Sue Wong.

Love Your Body Wristbands

Big on Batik has announced the Love Your Body Wristband Project. \$1 out of the \$3 price goes to size acceptance organizations, including NAAFA. Available in hot pink, purple and turquoise in sizes 8", 8.5", 9.5".

For more information, come to www.love-your-body.org.

New NAAFA Board Members

In September, NAAFA had the privilege of adding Phyllis Warr from Chicago and Jason Docherty from Canada to our Board of Directors. Phyllis is an incredible motivator, and

Jason brings corporate communications and website expertise to the table. We are happy to have them both join us!

:: newsletter@naafa.org
 :: www.naafa.org

:: 916-558-6880

Inside Edition

contacted us due to an earlier appearance by Public Relations Chair Peggy Howell on Good Morning America. Telemundo (part of NBC Universal) spoke with NAAFA member and convention volunteer Diana Morreo.



There were three print articles on August 11 alone, in the SF Chronicle, the San Mateo Times, and the San Jose Mercury News. Photographer Mari Simon from the Merc was at the con all week, and is working on an in-depth report on the lives of fat folk.

For links to stories and videos mentioned in this article, come on over to our website, www.naafa.org

• Fitness at the Convention

by *Sandy Schaffer*
Fitness Instructor and
NAAFA Board Member



There was fitness for every body at the 2005 NAAFA convention, with movement classes during all workshop time slots. Cinder Ernst, a certified Medical Exercise Specialist, led a workshop on helping people with knee problems (held twice by popular demand). The workshop gave fun and easy ways to strengthen your body to lessen knee pain and increase mobility. Another workshop by Cinder showed how to safely start a walking program and add movement no matter what your ability or agility level.

Melissa Taylor from Louisiana taught us how to sweat in water with her fun and vigorous water aerobics workout. Because it works with our bodies' natural buoyancy, water aerobics uses water resistance rather than high-impact movements to give a great workout.

Dana Shuster, co-founder of Women of Substance spa, led a class in gentle, practical head-to-toe stretches made doable and easy for everyone. Lisa Tealer, Jennifer Portnick, and Dana Shuster, who teach the Great Shape classes in the Bay Area, offered a free class at the YWCA near the convention hotel. Heather McAllister, founder and artistic director of Big Burlesque and Fat Bottom Revue, gave a workshop as part of the Body Liberation Camp on the art of burlesque.

Marci Getz gave attendees a chance to "Come Home to their Body" in a gentle movement and relaxation workshop. I gave a workshop on breath and yoga. Gina Lovoi, Suzanne Scott, and Lisa Tealer taught us a combination of different dance/movement styles, including hip hop and cool moves for the dance floor, belly dance, swing dance, and even a few boxing moves!

The fat fitness fest gave attendees a chance to play outside on a beautiful sunny day at a park. We then were a movin' and a groovin' with hip-hop, swing dance and yoga. We even had lessons in boxing, not that we were looking for a fight but the boxing lessons made us ready for anything. Next came dancing to the hokey pokey or with Marilyn Wann's new words and Andi Bray's voice, the Body Liberation dance. All I know is it still had "shake it all around."

Being able to move comfortably is a quality of life issue. Moving your body can help regulate blood sugar, lower blood pressure, tone muscles and help give you a feeling of well being. In having so many movement workshops, NAAFA shows a dedication and commitment to living healthy at any size.

- **Getting to Know . . . Board Member Peggy Howell**

I have been fat all my life; in fact my father used to sing the "Too Fat Polka" to me when I was a girl. It's amazing I had any self esteem, or have ever been able to have a relationship with a man, 'cause, after all, who'd want me? But, being the first born of three girls and having a Leo rising sign, I've always had a powerful personality. (Some would phrase it less kindly!) I am outgoing, really like people, and am passionate about my beliefs!



Like most of us, I did the yo-yo diet routine most of my life. I've had my dreadful experiences, like a boss telling me I had to lose weight or lose my job, but at some point, probably at around 40 years of age or so, I just decided I'd had enough and wasn't going to do it any more. I decided that people could like me or not, but I was determined to be who I am, and who I am is a fat woman!

It was our best friend (now business partner too) Dianne who brought a Dimensions Magazine over to my sister's and my house. There was an ad for a NAAFA convention in San

Diego that year, I think it was 1992 or '93, so Darliene (my BBW sister) and I attended. It was definitely a turning point in our lives. We lived in Sonoma County, CA at the time and went to Sacramento to a chapter meeting but felt the drive was too long, so we actually stayed on the fringes of size acceptance for a while.

In 1999 my boyfriend at the time gave me some adorable gifts (candles, spreaders and drinking glasses) that were fat girls in swimsuits in old Hollywood poses. These gifts inspired Darliene, Dianne and me to start a business, www.chunkebusiness.com and take some of the flabulous fat art we found to a NAAFA convention. We introduced ourselves and our new business at the Memorial Day regional convention in SF in 2000.

In 2004 I was inspired to take a leave of absence from my then nighttime job as a bartender in a college hangout in Northern California and travel around the country that summer to BBW bashes and events all over the country. My purpose was to sell product, of course, and get a feel for what is happening in the size acceptance community in the US. I was also inspired to shoot video taped interviews with the organizers of major events and create a documentary about it, which I have done, and it was introduced this year at the BBW Network's Vegas Bash and the 2005 NAAFA convention. It's called *Not In It For The Money* and is a glimpse into the hearts and minds of the people putting forth an effort to create a safe place for fat people.

In January I joined NAAFA's board of directors, and now serve as the PR chairperson. I also brought a desire to bring unity to the size acceptance community by building bridges between NAAFA and the bashes. United we will have a much stronger voice and power to create change!

Oh, that night job I talked about was no longer available when I returned back home, just the Universe's way of kicking me in the ass to get me going in another direction! So my sister and I moved to Las Vegas. (In fact, we're still unpacking!) It's been about a year and a half since I worked a job and I'm really liking the freedom to work for NAAFA and put some time in on my own, small, profitless business. There's still some money to draw from in my savings, so as long as it doesn't run out, I'm going to keep on the way I am. Who knows what the future holds!

- **NAAFA Responds to Katrina**

NAAFA Members responded early and often to the Katrina crisis, donating clothing, equipment, money, and time. Board



Member Frances White reports on one early clothing drive on September 7 in Oakland, California: "Imagine how disappointed I was as I drove up to the Grand Lake Theater that afternoon to see the truck that Rep. Barbara Lee arranged for drive away! Had I missed the clothing drive? No! Two more 40,000-pound trucks drove into parking spots on Grand Avenue.

"I had packed up 8 boxes of clothes and shoes to be donated. The volunteers whisked them out of my car in less than 20 seconds, so the time it took to donate seemed almost anticlimactic. I wanted to savor the good feeling of helping the survivors a little longer.

"When I drove by the next morning, there were signs asking for volunteers and monetary donations. Why? Because there were piles of garbage bags lined up in front of the theater at least 50 feet wide and 12 feet high! I went back that night with more clothes (which was much easier now that I knew that I didn't have to carefully fold and box my donations)."

Member Carol Squires adds: "I too was down there dropping off clothes and a check. Imagine my surprise when our own wonderful Pat Lyons, sporting a fetching "Barbara Lee" t-shirt, was collecting the checks. In addition to all the clothes, I heard on the news this morning that they collected \$20,000. Way to Go Oakland/East Bay!"

Cathy Miller, founder of Big on Batik, says: "Big On Batik sent out a request for clothing donations for victims of Katrina and its aftermath. We included most of the organizations mentioned in the special edition newsletter."

Your response to last month's special edition newsletter, focusing on how NAAFA members can respond to Katrina, has been overwhelming. So much so, in fact, that many organizations cannot handle the volume of large-sized clothing they are receiving. If you still want to donate *non-clothing* items, please contact NAAFA Member Melissa Taylor at relief@sizepositive.com.

Yet, some specialized needs have still not been met. Sleep apnea often afflicts fat folk, and many in the stricken area are without their CPAP equipment. If you have useable equipment that you no longer need, come to <http://www.awakeinamerica.org> to learn how to donate.

- **Call for Website Volunteers**

NAAFA is putting together a team to help build our next generation website. Can you help? We need the following basic skills:

- Working knowledge of HTML
- Working knowledge of (or willingness to learn) Macromedia Dreamweaver
- Understanding of (or willingness to learn) css (cascading stylesheets)
- Working knowledge of Adobe Photoshop or Macromedia Fireworks for image production
- Ability to work with a team
- Willingness to learn new skills

Contact Jason Docherty at webmaster@naafa.org if you wish to join the team.

- **Starving to Live Longer is Futile**

Editor's Note: Thanks to NAAFA Board of Advisors member Paul Ernsberger, PhD for the lead.

A long-held belief that extreme caloric restriction can increase human lifespan to 125 years and beyond has been debunked by research done at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and published in the August issue of the peer-reviewed journal Ageing Research Reviews.

"Our message is that suffering years of misery to remain super-skinny is not going to have a big payoff in terms of a longer life," said UCLA evolutionary biologist John Phelan. "I once heard someone say caloric restriction may not make you live forever, but it sure would seem like it.

"With mice, if you restrict their caloric intake by 10 percent, they live longer than if they have unlimited access to food," Phelan said. "If you restrict their intake by 20 percent, they live even longer, and restrict them to 50 percent, they live longer still; but restrict their intake by 60 percent and they starve to death.

"Humans, in contrast, will not have rodent-like results from dramatically restricting calories,"

he said, noting that "the benefit to humans is going to be small, even if humans restrict their caloric intake substantially and over long periods of time."

Phelan (along with Michael Rose, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of California, Irvine) developed the first mathematical model demonstrating the relationship between caloric intake and longevity, using representative data from controlled experiments with rodents, as well as published studies on humans, diet and longevity.

- **Chapters Honored**

by Sandy Schaffer
Fitness Instructor and
NAAFA Board Member



This year, four awards were given out to chapter leaders for outstanding achievement. The awards went to Sharon Field of New England, Lisa Breisch of Chicago, Nedra De Lima of Washington DC, and Helena Spring of Toronto.

Working to keep a chapter functioning takes a lot of work. It is often held together by one person working tirelessly to keep the chapter moving. According to the nomination letters I got from each of their chapter members, that seems to be the case in most instances. I know that the Chicago Chapter is extremely active and had seemed to find a balance between activism and partying, with many activities in both areas. I have heard that Sharon Field is single-handedly holding the Northeast together. Nedra De Lima can give George Bush a lesson in organizing at the Capitol Chapter, and Helena Spring is keeping Toronto on the map. There will never be enough hours in the day for one person to accomplish all that needs to be done to keep an organization going.

Isolation and burnout are the main reasons that so many chapters fall apart. Other than the Convention or regional conferences, the chapters serve as a way to stay connected to NAAFA. Chapters are truly the backbone of NAAFA, and we cannot survive without them.

I think I can speak for the board when I say that the chapter leaders' hard work is recognized and supported, and we are looking for ways to increase that support. At the convention board meeting there was talk of

adding a chapter page on the website as a way to help chapters learn from each other.

Change can occur, but I need your help. I need people to e-mail me at sandy_schaffer@naafa.org with needs and thoughts for helping to build your chapter. The lines of communication need to be opened and used. The board needs to be a place where people can come with their chapter problems and find solutions or help. There is a need to grow chapters and add new ones. Our goal is to have at least one chapter per state. This can happen, but not by the board alone.

NAAFA, Inc. | P.O. Box 22510 | Oakland | CA | 94609