



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

p.o. box 745
westbury, ny 11590

newsletter

VOLUME IV

FEBRUARY, 1975

ISSUE No. 2

ACTING EDITOR: CATHLEEN MCLAIN

editorial ...

BY CATHLEEN MCLAIN
ACTING EDITOR, BOARD MEMBER
AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE
CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

This newsletter is the first under NAAFA's new system of acting monthly editors. I feel very strongly that the News letter is the lifeline of NAAFA. Not only does it reach those members in areas where there are no local chapters and those who cannot attend national functions, but it is also the tangible part of what you receive for your \$10.00 membership fee (above and beyond services like NAAFA-Date, Pen-Pal Service, and Book Service). Beside its informational aspect, it is our signpost, our periodic reminder that there are people who believe that "fat" is a viable state of being and who are working to educate the public on just that subject.

We are all too aware that NAAFA is an all-volunteer organization. Unfortunately, this has come to mean that a few very dedicated people have had to undertake the bulk of a very large task. I was distressed at the infrequency of the newsletter, and proposed to the Board Of Directors that we divide the editorial workload. So here I am!

Frankly, I cannot take credit for the majority of the articles herein. They had already been prepared for another issue which lacked space in which to print them. What I have done are the "mechanics": the typing, paste-up, and running to the printer. I am brimming with topics I feel should appear in print, but I will submit them to the next editors. Any one-man publication could potentially become a forum for a narrow range of interests. A variety of editors will keep the Newsletter fresh and "moving along".

Still more important, in my opinion, is the "pulse of the membership", what they want to appear in the Newsletter, and their feedback. I would like to encourage you to submit articles, letters to the editor, cartoons, suggestions and ideas to the NAAFA office.

report... ON THE NOW BODY FAIR

BY KAREN W. JONES, NATIONAL CHAPTERS
CO-ORDINATOR AND CONN. CHAPTER CHAIRPERSON

What's a "Body Fair?" That's what I wondered when I learned that NAAFA had been invited to take part in one; the answer, I soon found out, was a women's health conference sponsored by the Long Island Chapter of NOW (National Organization for Women). For NAAFA it represented official recognition of our purpose and was an important first: the first time we have been asked to participate in an organized conference on an equal basis with well-established (and funded) large, non-profit agencies like the American Cancer Association and the March of Dimes.

Maybe you can imagine the anticipation of the three of us, Rhea Bardin, Dianne Rubinstein, and myself--early on the morning of Saturday, November 2, as we drove through the gates of New York State University at Farmingdale, two card tables, three chairs, and a shopping bag of NAAFA literature in the trunk of Rhea's old green Dodge! Once inside Roosevelt Hall we hurriedly began setting up our tables in the building's circular gym; people from other booths started stopping by to examine our display of literature even before we had everything out. What followed was a busy day for us and for NAAFA.

Nearly everyone who attended the fair came by our booth and sampled some of our literature. Considering that our simple crepe-paper adorned tables vied for attention with slide or video presentations of such organizations as Planned Parenthood, the Kidney Foundation, and Department of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, among others, our popularity surprised, I think, even us. The real excitement was in meeting the people who stopped by to talk. We left only the initials NAAFA on our sign under the assumption that if we did not spell the full title, more people would stop and ask just what the letters stood for. Individual reactions varied--some at first thought we must be another diet club; most expressed surprise at our purpose when we explained it ("Why, I never thought about it that way before!").

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

letters...

WHAT EVER BECAME OF SLIM NEWS?

Dear NAAFA,

Enclosed is \$2.50 for 1974 "Hilda" calender. Also while I'm corresponding--over 6 months ago I sent a check for subscription to "SlimNews" at that newspaper's address. I recieved neither an issue nor my returned check. Could you tell me if that publication is still in print? If so I'll resubscribe assuming that my letter and check were lost at that time. Thank you.

Dianne N. Berry
Jacksonville, Ill.

[ED: Many NAAFA members have asked the above question. The Fabreys talked to the Editor of "Slim News" (and NAAFA member) Randy Wicker. They were informed that the type was set for two more issues but the publisher had changed the format to a magazine-style semi-annual. Wicker said that subscribers will be kept on the mailing list. Since the status of the publication has been in question since July, "Slim News" has not cashed any new subscription checks or answered any mail; this should change shortly. Note: New NAAFA members who don't know what "Slim News" is all about are welcome to one or two of the first issues FREE: Please send 25 cents each in stamps or coin, however to pay for postage.]

BEAUTY QUEEN'S WEIGHT HER OWN BUSINESS

Dear NAAFA,

Being one of the newest NAAFA members I would like to contribute this story to The newsletter. It's something I think belongs in "Ripley's Believe It or Not".

"MISS WASHINGTON'S WEIGHTY DECISION:

KATHLEEN BETH MOORE, 1974'S MISS WASHINGTON STATE HAS RESIGNED HER POSITION OVER THE ISSUE OF WEIGHT, WHICH THE WASHINGTON PAGEANT BOARD SAYS SHE HAS TOO MUCH OF.

MS. MOORE FINISHED AMONG THE TOP TEN IN THE MISS AMERICA PAGEANT THIS YEAR, BUT SINCE THEN HAS PUT ON ABOUT TEN POUNDS. THE STATE PAGEANT BOARD TOLD HER TO LOSE IT, BUT AFTER LOSING EIGHT

OF THEM MS. MOORE DECIDED TO "FORGET IT."

SHE SAYS THE STATE QUEEN SHOULD BE A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR, NOT JUST A SO CALLED "BEAUTY QUEEN". THE BOARD SAYS THAT'S OKAY, AS LONG AS SHE'S A SKINNY AMBASSADOR. MS. MOORE WAS ADAMANT SAY-" MY WEIGHT IS MY OWN BUSINESS." SO WAS THE BOARD. THE TITLE WAS PASSED TO MS. CHARLENE MYERS, RUNNER-UP.

Well there it is....another example of the crazy mixed-up world we live in. I hope those NAAFAns out Washington way will contact Ms. Moore, and relate our messages of sympathy and best wishes.

Sincerely,
Ike Smith
Louisville, Ky.

STILL ANOTHER COMMENT ON "PAT AND FEMALE" ARTICLE (SEPT-OCT. ISSUE)

Dear Ms. Jones,

I was so pleased to read your article in the NAAFA Newsletter. I heartily agree with all of your statements. It has long been of interest to me when noting pictures from some parts of Europe (and behind the Iron Curtain countries) that many of the women pictured in the market place and near their homes are on the heavy side to say the least. They do not go by "haute coutourier" standards and just live their lives the way it is dealt to them on a day-by-day basis. Perhaps that is why so many of them are excellent seamstresses also and can tailor any pattern to fit their individual needs. (I envy people who can sew for it seems that when it comes to this talent I have ten thumbs!). When I was more actively involved in the business world (do part time legal secretarial work from my home now) I was very careful to try to keep my weight within "acceptable" bounds dictated by society--for the discrimination is very real. Was particularly offended by Jean Niditch's quote which was copied on the next page of the NAAFA Newsletter. Thank you for speaking out so freely in our behalf. Only wish that we could be as acceptable to society as our thin counterparts are!

Elanor S. Truitt
St. Petersburg, Fla.

[ED: Dianne Rubenstein will be giving workshops on sewing and pattern-making for larger sizes in Manhattan starting in February. Local members may contact her through the New York Chapter.]

REVIEW OF FAT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL, BY ABRAHAM I. FRIEDMAN, M.D.
 reviewed by Karen W. Jones

When I was asked to write this review, I didn't see how I could do it without giving the book a black eye; what could I write, I wondered, that would be favorable, considering my reactions on reading it? Yet, to pan Dr. Friedman's book---how would that look for NAAFA's newest advisor? Much soul-searching (perhaps two minute's worth) ensued. Since you're reading this now, I won't keep you in suspense. But as to whether I succeeded in balancing honesty with fairness I'll have to let my readers be the judge....

Perhaps I ought to begin by admitting that a habit I have of reading a book back to front rather than the more conventional way may have prejudiced my judgement of the work as a whole; the last few chapters made me so angry that it was some time before I could bring myself to look at the rest of the book. Chapter XIX (Fashion Hints) is probably the book's worst-- patronizing in tone, oppressive in content; why can't doctors stick to their own field? However I finally gave the book a second try (from the front, this time!) I realized that only the few final chapters emphasize what I consider the book's major defects.

Dr. Friedman does not expound: he lectures; this, combined with his persistent use of the term "obese" when "fat" would have done just as well (clinical this book is not), is enough to put off any fat reader with a minimum of self-respect. As for the long-anticipated medical breakthrough this book was to represent, that proved the biggest disappointment of all. Slogans on the cover ("Stop dieting, start living") and publicity notwithstanding, Dr. Friedman's seal of approval seems to be reserved for the select few, weight-wise: fat can be beautiful--and healthy--according to his calculations, largely for those who are no more than 20% "overweight", he says. For the 40 to 50 million of us "obese" beyond the pale of these limits, his advice varies little from conventional medical doctrine. He even has his own diet to recommend, along with the traditional platitudes about sensible eating and exercise. All of which goes to show we can't afford to wait around for approval by the medical establishment. Everything favorable to fats, in fact, has already been said in Fat Power by Lew Louderback and Fat Pride by Marvin Grosswirth--books I regard as much superior to Fat Can Be Beautiful.

The real value of this book (and I do believe it has value) must, I think, be measured not in terms of what it says or

how it says it, but rather in terms of who is saying it. The medical mystique, like other myths, dies hard, and while it's still around a book on "obesity" written by a doctor carries more weight qualitatively than a similar book by a non-medical author especially one who is also fat (and presumably biased). Putting it another way, anyone being sued by Dr. Robert Atkins (of Diet Revolution fame) can't be all bad! I mean this seriously: Dr. Atkins' action indicates how great a threat Dr. Friedman's book is considered to be--conservative, even reactionary, as some of us find it--to the diet and reducing empire's dominance, that it should so quickly have called forth the ire of one of its high priests.

So, while most NAAFANS will probably find Fat Can Be Beautiful's message at best repetitious (the title, after all, came from NAAFA!), we must acknowledge the significance of its contribution to educating public awareness toward acceptance of fat as a physical characteristic; since for reasons cited above far more people (fat and thin) are likely to read Dr. Friedman's book than have ever heard of the other two mentioned above. If you feel Fat Can Be Beautiful could benefit you, and are willing to put up with the book's flaws, by all means read it: in any case, whether you need it or not, I highly recommend that you get your doctor to read it!

[ED: A rebuttal to this review by Bill Fabrey will appear in the next NAAFA Newsletter.]

"NAAFA ALMANAC" IN FORMATIVE STAGE

NAAFAN Rich Cundari is currently doing research and collecting information for a publication which will be called the NAAFA Almanac. It is planned to be both a review of NAAFA "history" and a handbook of facts, observations and hints helpful to fat people. Rich asks NAAFA members and friends to submit items and suggestions such as: tips on where to get large-sized clothing, shoes etc; poems, stories, essays; original artwork, also news and magazine clippings on related issues. Or perhaps you might have a question or problem you would like a solution to. Rich says he will try to look into these, as well, and print them in the Almanac. Please address all inquiries and contributions to:

Rich Cundari
 P.O. Box 2
 Andover, Conn. 06232

BALLAD OF THE SAD YOUNG MEN

I have seen your eyes shine with desire
As you gazed upon my naked body,
And downcast with shame
As we walked along the street....

I have heard your cries of passion
As we melted into each others' flesh
And your tense words of anger
As in confusion you lashed out at me.

I have felt your strong arms around me
As the taste and smell of you made me giddy,
And together we found joy
When the world was far away....

I have seen you go to the ends of the earth,
From job to job,
From psychiatrist to psychiatrist,
From woman to woman,
From marriage to marriage,
Seeking acceptance with someone smaller,
Or existing in loneliness and isolation,
Submerging yourself in anything
That gets your mind off
What really matters....

I have seen you pull your hat down
And your collar up,
As you left my room in the cold light
of early morning,
Running from the truth....

We are one.
There is no other way.
And I love you, my brother.
But you must love yourself
Before you are free
To ever
Really....
Love me.

Ellen Dobson

(BODY FAIR CONT')

Several professional people in different areas---guidance, nutrition, physical education--- took literature to use in their work. A local crisis/hot-line service, Middle Earth Switchboard, in addition to taking a number of brochures, approached us for a resource person (to whom teenagers and others with weight related problems could be referred). Other results were that an article from our table, "Fat Women and Feminism" was taken for publication in the newsletter of a large women's center on Long Island; and that we were asked to provide a NAAFA spokesperson for an area radio talk show.

Beside the personal enrichment we all derived from our participation in the Body Fair, we feel we succeeded in opening a lot of eyes to the fact that an alter-

native exists to society's doctrine of THIN! This was borne home to me while I was waiting for my train home, Saturday evening. Sitting in the Amtrak passenger lounge, I was approached by the woman at the information desk: Prefacing her remarks with, "You can tell me to mind my own business, but..." she began to give me a pitch for Overeaters Anonymous, telling me that she was a compulsive overeater who had recently lost a great deal of weight through "OA". I began to tell her about NAAFA, and talk soon shifted from eating to discrimination and Fat Pride (I was still wearing my "Fat Pride" button, which she noticed). As my train pulled into the station we hurriedly exchanged addresses and I promised to send her some NAAFA literature. Later as I watched Penn Station roll by my window, I kept thinking that the encounter was a "piece de resistance" for the day: "Watch out world," I almost sang aloud, "Fat Power is here to stay!"

The New York Chapter of
NAAFA will hold a
pre-Valentine
fund-raising
WINE & CHEESE
PARTY

in *ny*. february 8, 1975

Proceeds will go toward
establishing a NAAFA
hotline in Manhattan
for public information
and crisis counselling.
for details + reservations

call: (212) 799-7297

Note: the above announcement has been inserted at the request of the chapter concerned. Similar paid announcements for other chapters will be carried if submitted at least three weeks prior to the publication date.