



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

**Official Publication of
the National
Association to
Advance Fat
Acceptance**
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2011 Convention Registration Now Open



NAAFA is returning to The Hill in 2011 and we are having a convention celebration that you won't want to miss! Make plans now to join us for our annual fund-raising convention being held August 4 - 8, 2011 at the Westin Washington Dulles Airport Hotel near Washington, D.C. You may register through our website at www.naafa.org. With your help and

participation we can make a difference! **We Come In All Sizes!**

We are changing our schedule a bit this year and filling our time with learning, networking, community building, swimming, dancing and more. Our Friday night dance will be sponsored by NAAFA DC, our local chapter. We can't wait to see what fun they have in store for us! Saturday night's 2011 NAAFA Fashion Show and Auction Awards Dinner is promising to be the country's premier plus size fashion show with dinner and fashion, the scholarship awards presentation, plus our well-known Not-So-Silent Auction.

Sunday we will learn from experts the most effective ways of working to change our laws. Then on Monday August 8th, we will visit key representatives and organizations to present our case for changing this country's anti-discrimination laws. You won't want to miss this opportunity to be involved!

We have worked hard to keep the cost of this convention down and have made it easy for you to register for the convention as well as the hotel at

Fat Activism goes BIG

February Video of the Month

The focus of our February newsletter is Activism and Advocacy, which can take many forms. Our video this month is "Fat Activism goes BIG" and features San Francisco Bay Area activists, from dance performers to academics.

You will recognize our very own Marilyn Wann and Sandra Solovay as they share their unique forms of activism and advocacy. What special talents or ideas do you possess that could be used to express your brand of activism or advocacy? Let us know by sharing your story with us at:

[http://www.naafaonline.com/
dev2/global](http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/global)

[http://youtube.com/watch?
v=eKkKBbECfzs](http://youtube.com/watch?v=eKkKBbECfzs)

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www.naafa.org . We encourage you to register for the full package today and to fully participate in this exciting, life-changing event.

Weight Loss Focused Healthcare Proves Ineffective



Paper Co-Author Linda Bacon

A new paper in *Nutrition Journal* cites overwhelming evidence that focusing on weight loss as the route to a healthy lifestyle is ineffective and harmful.

Co-authors Linda Bacon, an associate nutritionist at the University of California, Davis Department of Nutrition, and Lucy Aphramor, an NHS specialist dietician and honorary research fellow at the Applied Research Centre in Health and Lifestyle Interventions at Coventry University, England cite evidence from almost two hundred studies and come to surprising conclusions: a weight loss centered approach is not only ineffective in terms of health and weight outcomes, but also harmful.

Their analysis indicates that researchers have long interpreted research data with an anti-fat bias, and when this bias is removed, it overwhelmingly shows that fat has been highly exaggerated as a risk for disease or decreased longevity, and does not support the following conventional ideas:

- Myth: weight loss will prolong life.
- Myth: anyone can lose weight and keep it off through diet and exercise.
- Myth: weight loss is a practical and positive goal.
- Myth: weight loss is the only way fat people can improve their health.
- Myth: fat people place an economic burden on society.

"The weight-focused approach does not, in the long run, produce thinner, healthier bodies," said Bacon, who wrote the 2010 book, *Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight*, based on research she published in top scientific journals.

"For decades, the United States' public health establishment and \$58.6 billion-a-year private weight-loss industry have focused on health improvement through weight loss," Bacon said. "The result is unprecedented levels of body dissatisfaction and failure in achieving desired health outcomes. It's time to consider a more evidence-based approach."

NAAFA applauds these scientists and encourages others to challenge the "weight loss is the only solution" paradigm. Health At Every Size is possible.

Bacon and Aphramor suggest that the healthcare community adopt a more ethical, evidence-based approach toward public health nutrition - one that encourages individuals to concentrate on developing healthy habits rather than concentrating on weight management. While weight loss may result, the goal is self-care as opposed to weight loss. This weight-neutral practice has become known as Health at Every Size (HAES).

The full article may be found in *Nutrition Journal* at:
<http://www.nutritionj.com/content/10/1/9>

Justice for Us . . . Takes all of Us!

by Lisa Tealer

February is a month when we celebrate a plethora of events: Presidents' Birthdays, Chinese New Year, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day and Healthy



Hearts. We also celebrate Black History throughout the month and highlight and recognize the contributions of African Americans. However, as a woman of color, I am surprised how monolithic our size acceptance movement is and continues to be, basically white and female. Where are the men, the people of color and other people of difference in our movement?

Historically, any revolutionary or evolutionary changes in our society haven't been achieved just by the people that were affected. It was a collective effort by people from various sectors of our society who were committed to equality. Our movement is no different. Last month, I was encouraged to see Democrats and Republicans sitting together at the State of the Union Address; although symbolic, it's a step in the right direction. It will take

both political parties working together to solve our nation's problems.

Solutions benefit from diverse thoughts and perspectives. Check out research by Dr. Scott E. Page, a professor from University of Michigan. He has written about this topic in his book *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools and Societies*.

Stepping out of our comfort zone of like-minded individuals is not easy, especially for those of us who face the potential of ridicule. How our society views and treats fat people is not acceptable and therefore our only option is to forge ahead, learn from our failures, and continue the fight. However, we can't nor should we do it alone. Together planting those seeds of sacrifice and struggle now, allows us to harvest a crop of equality for all later. Recently, The Los Angeles Chapter of NAAFA branched out to the attendees at Club Bounce (a social club for people of size) to highlight the work of NAAFA, to broaden our reach and strengthen our membership. Even small efforts can build toward a bigger goal. Encourage a colleague and/or friend to attend a size acceptance event or meeting, give them a NAAFA membership, donate to other size positive organizations, write to your legislator or local paper about fat rights, and when opportunities come up, speak up and share your story.

Better yet ask people how they would like to be included in the movement.

The sacrifices of people like Eleanor Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Harvey Milk, Martin Luther King, Jr, Harry Wu, Gandhi, and Cesar Chavez and many others have provided opportunities that have benefited us all. We now have a Black President, a Latina Supreme Court Justice, a gay senator and a visually-impaired governor. I couldn't have imagined that in my lifetime.

At our convention this year, I'll facilitate an interactive workshop on diversifying our movement and including others who may not look like us. We'll discuss strategies and specific actions that will require all of us to seek justice for us. I hope to see you there. In the meantime, I call upon you to take steps now. If you have any constructive ideas or suggestions, I want to hear from you! Please contact me at ltealer@naafaonline.com

We Shall Overcome!

Lisa Tealer is a NAAFA Board Member, Director of Programs and co-creator of NAAFA's Size Diversity Tool kit. She is a Diversity and Inclusion professional at a leading biotechnology company. To learn more about Black History, visit <http://www.blackfacts.com>

NAAFA Chapters Moving Forward

After two years of reviewing and renewing, the new NAAFA Chapter system is officially on the move! The Chapter ToolKit, created by a team of board members and chapter leaders, launched at the 2010 Convention has provided the foundation for our first 2 new Chapters, the New DC Chapter--led by Gina Washington, Tony Harrell and Cathy Grinell, and the new LA Chapter--led by Julianne Wotasik, Lesleigh Owen and Imelda Bedolla.

These leaders have been working hard to build a new chapter network foundation, energize their chapter members, and make NAAFA relevant in their communities. The Board thanks them for their outstanding efforts in helping to create the new Chapter Toolkit and for taking the bold steps to form chapters.

We look forward to the exciting events and programs these new chapters will create, as well as strengthening the communication among all the talented individuals that make NAAFA a force to be reckoned with.

Keep a lookout for the new chapter websites in the next 90 days. And if you are near one of our chapters, contact them and see how you can become involved.

Chapter leadership will meet via teleconference a minimum of 4 times per year with the Board, giving input and support to help build a stronger organization.

The Board of Directors encourages interested members to consider establishing chapters in their areas. While it takes work to start and maintain a chapter, the end result is worth the effort. If you are interested, contact Phyllis Warr, Director of Membership, at PWarr@naafaonline.com

"Gordita" Wins!



Those of you who attended the NAAFA 2010 convention had the privilege of experiencing the premier of "Gordita", a short film about a young Latina woman moving past her self-hatred and accepting herself and her body just the way it is now.

Debby Wolfe, creator of "Gordita", wrote an article for our September newsletter and then in October we circulated a message asking you to vote for her short film in the NBC Short Cuts competition.

We've recently received the following from Debby, "I just wanted to write to let you know that 'Gordita' won the NBC Short Cuts People's Choice Award. Thank you so much for voting and helping us spread the word! We are so grateful for your

continued support. :) We're excited to see what the future holds for our film. If anyone is interested in following the progress of the movie, they can fan us at <http://www.facebook.com/gorditamovie>."

Big congratulations go out to Debby for her win and big fat thanks for creating an award-winning short film that helps spread the word that people come in all sizes! If you have a film to suggest for our 2011 NAAFA International Fat Film Fest, please drop us a line at <http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/global/index.html>

The 10 Commandments for Being Your Own Medical Advocate

by Dr. Lenny Husen

1. Love Thyself. This is the answer to the question, "Why go to the doctor when I don't feel THAT bad?" and also the question, "Why take care of myself when it is just so hard and I have so much else to do?" I personally hate going to the doctor, which is why I became one. I wanted to sit on the Roundy Stool. I hate being a patient. I loathe the Waiting Room, I detest judgments about my weight or my smoking, abhor being told what embarrassing test I need to schedule next. But one day I was sitting in the dentist chair, with the spit straw doing its thing, thinking about how much I hate getting my teeth cleaned, and I realized, "This is something I do because I love myself." And suddenly, I could stand it.

2. Understand the White Coat. I am trained to look at numbers. So if I see that someone's LDL Cholesterol is 174, or Creatinine is 3.2, or Hemoglobin is 7.1 or Blood Sugar is 192, my antenna goes up and I know that the person MIGHT be at risk of dying sooner rather than later. I was trained to look at BMI and feel the same way about any number greater than 29. We are brainwashed in Medical School that Fat is A Killer and Diets Are **The** Answer.

3. The Scale is NOT your Enemy. It's not your Friend either. It's never going to start singing, "I love you, you love me . . ." It will never have anything THAT interesting to say to you. If you refuse to get on the stupid



thing, no one will be mad at you. In fact, some of the people whose job it is to weigh you will secretly admire your cojones. If you do "step on the scale" to be "compliant", then be proud and unapologetic. It is deplorable that in this culture we are taught to be ashamed of what we weigh or how old we are if the number is "high". The way to fight this ignorance is to never lie about our weight or age.

4. Teach Your Doctor the Facts of Fat. Dr. Bacon's book *Health At Every Size* has a section addressed to healthcare givers that you can use. In Marilyn Wann's book, *Fat!So?*, there is a great story about how terrible some doctors are. Wendy Shanker's book *The Fat Girl's Guide to Life* includes a splendid chapter about doctors who make an issue of weight. Photocopy something that resonates with you and ask your new doctor to read it. If you don't want your weight treated as a medical symptom, speak up assertively but politely and calmly. This is your time, your body, and your money. Patient Satisfaction matters.

5. If the Doctor is a Stool, Flush Him! If he treats you with contempt or condescension, and you point it out, and there is no apology, hit the Eject Button. You are there because you love yourself, remember? If your doctor is not willing to be educated by each and every one of her patients, she isn't much of a doctor.

6. Exercise is Better than a Gun In Your Hand. Be an example of a patient who is "compliant" in every way you possibly can. If you are able to exercise every single day, for at least 20 minutes, you are doing better than most doctors. Oh, we love to SAY, "Exercise!" but do we DO it? Most of us are too busy and too full of tired excuses. If you can honestly tell your doctor that you are exercising, this gives you a tremendous amount of psychological power. "Hey, Doc, I'm exercising an hour a day. I'm taking all my pills and shots on schedule. I got my colonoscopy. I'm eating as healthy as I can. I go out dancing every week. I love how I look. Can you say the same?"

7. Eat, Drink and Be Merry. Some Don'ts. DON'T listen to crappy music, DON'T watch television shows that are beneath your dignity, DON'T buy any magazine touting thinness as the ideal, DON'T drink any wine before its time, DON'T use harmful legal or illegal drugs and DON'T put anything in your mouth that isn't absolutely 100% delicious.

8. Trial and Error. When I was 18, I had a psychiatrist who liked to flirt. I then found one who was professional but cold. Then I tried a psychologist who insisted I take medicine when I just needed someone to talk to. I tried a series of mental health professionals. Basically none of them were good listeners. The thirteenth one responded to my defensiveness and acting out with gentleness but didn't let me get away with anything. I stuck with Number 13. He saved my life. The message? The right doctor for you is out there. Don't give up.

9. Fight Fire With Fire. The only way to fight someone who thinks in terms of numbers is to wield them yourself. Arm yourself with Fat Stats. Know the percentage of folks who die soon after having weight loss surgery (estimated at 0.5 to 5%), what percentage of fat people have diabetes (only 10 to 25%), what percentage of people who go on diets lose weight and keep it off. Be ready to quote those numbers when your doctor advises you to lose weight.

10. Don't Get Mad, Vent! Who can you vent to? Post an on-line comment that the doctor is not "Fat Friendly" on an MD Rating site. Leave emotion out of it. You can also vent to me. Send any stories about doctors who you loved or hated to me at fatlenster@gmail.com I'd love to hear from you.

Dr. Lenny Husen is a NAAFA member and frequent contributor to the NAAFA newsletter. She conducted a workshop at the 2010 NAAFA Convention on this topic. Her original workshop presentation slideshow is available upon request. Dr. Husen is an Internal Medicine physician who is working as a Hospitalist in the East Bay. (A Hospitalist is a doctor who admits patients to the hospital and takes care of them while they are there.) She does not see patients outside the hospital at this time.

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Editor's Note: The NAAFA News RSS Feed at <http://naafa.org> has the latest news.]

January 2011: Urging further studies into the "obesity paradox" for chronically ill persons, especially as to heart failure patients, an editorial in the *European Journal of Heart Failure* discusses the fact that chronically ill patients tend to have better outcome results if they have a higher than average BMI (whether due to muscle mass or fat). (The editorial includes links to two related studies in the same issue.)

<http://eurjh.oxfordjournals.org/content/13/2/130.full>

January 12, 2011: Canada holds a summit on weight discrimination. Dr. Arya Sharma, Scientific Director of the Canadian Obesity Network, urges legal consequences to weight discrimination because there are numerous reasons a person is fat, weight loss is the exception not the rule, and weight discrimination is rampant.

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/health/WEIGHT+BIAS/4099437/story.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2011/01/17/obesity-discrimination.html>

January 13, 2011: Assemblyman Tick Segerblom (Las Vegas) is reintroducing his bill outlawing bullying in the workplace and making height-weight a protected class in the State of Nevada. The bill was initially introduced in 2009 and never made it out of committee. Some argue that the bill will increase the cost of doing business in Nevada, but Assemblyman Segerblom believes that everybody has the right to a bully-free workplace and that size discrimination is wrong. NAAFA agrees.

<http://workplaceviolencenews.com/2011/01/13/bill-would-outlaw-bullying-protect-short-overweight-people>

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB90.pdf>

January 14, 2011: Looking at the results of the mandatory calorie labeling of fast food menus in King County, Washington shows no difference in the choices made by the patrons of one chain. Eric Finkelstein, Ph.D. (Duke-National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School), who headed this study, suggests further study to see how consumers can be encouraged to switch to healthier options.

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-01/dumc-mml011311.php

[http://www.ajpm-online.net/article/S0749-3797\(10\)00612-4/abstract](http://www.ajpm-online.net/article/S0749-3797(10)00612-4/abstract)

January 19, 2011: A blog post in Psychology Today by medical sociologist Pattie Thomas, Ph.D., provides a unique view on the issues of weight, health, insurance, dieting, and morality. Dr. Thomas promises more blogs on fat issues in the future, and if they are as insightful as this first post, they should be on everyone's must-read list.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/i-take-space/201101/new-years-resolutions-who-is-failing-whom>

January 20, 2011: You may be surprised at how far-reaching NAAFA's influence can be. An article in *The Telegraph* (Calcutta, India) was inspired by a video of a NAAFA fashion show. While applauding fashionable clothing being more available to fat people, the author fears that this is a marketing ploy to capture the fat-community's spending dollars, rather than an actual appreciation of size diversity.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110120/jsp/opinion/story_13464085.jsp

January 20, 2011: While it is nice that Walmart is collaborating with the US government's Let's Move campaign in an effort to lower the cost of healthy food choices, what isn't mentioned in this congratulatory blog post is the company's poor record of providing affordable health-care coverage to its employees, or the stigmatizing effect that Let's Move is having on fat children.

<http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2011/01/25/first-lady-michelle-obama-announces-collaboration-with-walmart-in-support-of-lets-move-campaign>

January 26, 2011: Looking at the roots of fat hatred as well as its effect on people, an article in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* concludes that shaming people into losing weight simply doesn't work. The article encourages healthy behaviors, but (unfortunately) only so people will not be fat.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health/andre-picard/shaming-the-obese---with-photos-like-these---isnt-working/article1883947>

January 29, 2011: *The Washington Post* apparently is catching up on its reading. An article covering the results of a study published in September 2010 (and covered in the October 2010 roundup, first 9/27 entry), discusses the negative impact of being fat on one's paycheck.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/29/AR2011012902553.html>

February 2011: Judith Matz's article in *Psychotherapy Networker* may be a long read (12 pages) but it is worth the time. The article looks at why diets do not work, and why reconnecting with your body's natural messages of hunger is important. While some people think of "intuitive eating" as a weight loss method, Ms. Matz presents it from a weight-neutral standpoint.

http://dietsurvivors.com/Matz_Diets_and_our_Demons.pdf

February 1, 2011: The FDA declines approval for the diet drug Contrave because of concerns over serious side effects, including an increased risk of heart disease. Not only that, it just barely meets the FDA's very low standards for weight loss efficacy. It is uncertain whether Orexigen Therapeutics, Inc. will undertake new studies to address the FDA's concerns.

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/checkup/2011/02/fda_rejects_another_diet_pill.html

January 31, 2011: A study of 1,003 sixth-graders from Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti finds that fat children tend to eat lunches from school instead of packed ones, fail to engage in regular physical activity, and spend two hours daily watching television or playing video games. Authors conclude that lifestyle trumps genetics when it comes to fat kids. What they don't say is that poorer children may be more likely to eat a school lunch and lack a safe place to play outdoors, and the real issue might be social inequality rather than fatness.

<http://www2.med.umich.edu/prmc/media/newsroom/details.cfm?ID=1913>

[http://www.ahjonline.com/article/S0002-8703\(10\)00888-4](http://www.ahjonline.com/article/S0002-8703(10)00888-4)

February 3, 2011: Human beings are becoming fatter - everywhere. Looking at data from over 200 countries, researchers found that weight is going up across the board. Of note, the data also shows slight drops in the prevalence of hypertension and cholesterol.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/PrimaryCare/PreventiveCare/24686>

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2810%2962037-5>

February 6, 2011: We all know that bullying can be a real problem in the life of any fat person, especially fat children. *USA Weekend* offers some excellent advice on how to deal with the situation of someone bullying your child, for whatever reason.

<http://www.usaweekend.com/article/20110204/HOME03/110131001/1003/MDDAY/Help-is-out-there>

February 9, 2011: Several NAAFA members, including Co-Founder Bill Fabrey and Advisory Board member Dr. Deborah Burgard, PhD, have been invited to participate at the Endangered Species: Preserving the Female Body Summit on March 18-19 in New York City. This ground breaking international summit challenges the negative consequences of a society's distorted focus on the ideal female form that teaches women and young girls to hate their bodies.

<http://www.endangeredspecieswomen.org>

February 11, 2011: Big and beautiful actress Ashley Fink of the TV show *Glee* talks to Entertainment Tonight about her character's romantic involvement with *Glee*'s bad boy Puck, being bullied as a child, and representing for the big girls. Delightful!

http://www.etonline.com/tv/107635_Glee_s_Ashley_Fink_People_Fall_in_Love_with_People