



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

**National Association
to Advance Fat
Acceptance**
February 2013

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Mariano and Reed Added to the Ranks of Shame Police!

When Dr. Connie Mariano and film critic Rex Reed made public statements criticizing the body size of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and award winning actress Melissa McCarthy, they both stepped way over the line and outside their job descriptions, entering the ranks of the Shame Police. The Shame Police are a group of self-appointed, unqualified individuals who believe they are influencing the health of individuals by publicly shaming and embarrassing them about their body size. Reality check, Connie and Rex: it does not work!

"Fat or thin, we all pay dearly for a culture that stigmatizes the diversity of human bodies. Surely the ethical path is to liberate us all from this burden, not to intensify it," states Deb Burgard, PhD., Clinical Psychologist, Eating Disorders Specialist, and NAAFA Advisory Board Member.

NAAFA, a civil rights organization working for Equality at Every Size, wants them to know that fat shaming and public embarrassment do not achieve positive results. They are tools of the dark ages.

"NAAFA urges people to understand and embrace size diversity. We come in all sizes. You cannot determine a person's health, ability to do a good job, or talent based on their body size," stated Peggy Howell, NAAFA's Public Relations Director.

HAES Goes to Washington

[Editor's Note: What follows is the text of the letter that NAAFA sent in support of House Democrats' objection to possible sanctions in some employer wellness programs.]

February 12, 2013

The Honorable Timothy F. Geithner
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Kid President

[February Video of the Month](#)

We all need a little encouragement now and then. Knowing this, Kid President has put together a video you can play each morning as you wake up or share with a friend who needs a kick in the right direction. Take a moment and spread some encouragement. "It's everybody's duty to give the world a reason to dance."
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=L-gQLqv9f4o>

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Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Seth D. Harris
Acting Secretary of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Geithner, Mr. Harris, and Secretary Sebelius,

NAAFA would like to join members of the House of Representatives in support of their January 25, 2013 letter to Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, Acting Secretary of Labor Seth Harris, and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, objecting to possible sanctions held within health-contingent employer wellness programs as outlined in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that "could give rise to discrimination of employees based on health status or disability, thereby erecting new and unintended barriers to health coverage."

NAAFA supports the principles of Health At Every Size (HAES). These principles are aligned with our mission of protecting the rights and improving the quality of life for fat people. Instead of focusing on weight as a measurement of health, the HAES approach removes weight from the equation and replaces it with a focus on overall well being, which includes the full range of body shapes and sizes.

Our objection is not in employers offering wellness programs; it is simply with those that, as stated in the House letter, "allow differential rewards based on health status factors, including a person's cholesterol, blood pressure, weight or body mass index."

A 2002 study, *Evaluating a 'non-diet' wellness intervention for improvement of metabolic fitness, psychological well-being and eating and activity behaviors*, whose objective was "to evaluate the effects of a 'health-centered' non-diet wellness program, and to compare this program to a traditional 'weight loss-centered' diet program;" concluded:

"Over a 1 y[ear] period, a diet approach results in weight loss for those who complete the intervention, while a non-diet approach does not. **However, a non-diet approach can produce similar improvements in metabolic fitness, psychology and eating behavior, while at the same time effectively minimizing the attrition common in diet programs.**"
[Emphasis added]

There are studies that show: dieting results in one third to two thirds of dieters regaining more weight than they lost on their diets (aka yo-yo dieting) [Mann, 2007 and Pietilainen, 2012]; yo-yo dieting has a negative effect on the immune function [Hutchison, 2004]

A 2008 study from Yales' Rudd Center found:

"Weight/height discrimination is prevalent in American society and is relatively close to reported rates of racial discrimination, particularly among women. Both institutional forms of weight/height discrimination (for example, in employment settings) and interpersonal mistreatment due to weight/height (for example, being called names) were common, and in some cases were even more prevalent than discrimination due to gender and race." [*Perceptions of weight discrimination: prevalence and comparison to race and gender discrimination in America*, Puhl, et al, 2008]

The 2011 research report *Gender and Race Wage Gaps Attributable to Obesity* [Dor, et al, 2011] found a 14% wage gap among obese Caucasian females. Additionally, it states "It has been suggested that lower wages may be partially due to higher medical costs of obesity and the interaction of wages and employer-sponsored health insurance. However, even under this hypothesis, obese women face reduced wages exceeding obesity-related increases in medical expenditures, indicating that higher medical costs alone do not explain wage gaps."

Given that the implementation of the ACA will allow insurance companies to raise rates of overweight individuals 30% - 50% in 2014, this further discriminates against the obese and widens the wage gap no matter their overall health or fitness.

As representatives of one of the major stakeholders involved, members and the Board of NAAFA are requesting the re-evaluation of the intent and execution of the ACA Employer Wellness Programs that require measures from *weight loss* or reduction of *body mass index* to measures of increased overall health of the individual employees.

We appreciate the insight of the writers of the letter in bringing this to the attention of Secretaries Geithner and Sebelius and Mr. Harris, and offer our assistance in referring experts that may be of service to you in finding health-based alternative wellness programs.

Sincerely,

The NAAFA Board of Directors

cc: Representative Henry A. Waxman
 Representative Sander M. Levin
 Representative George Miller
 Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.
 Representative Jim McDermott, MD
 Representative Robert E. Andrews
 Representative Raul Ruiz, MD
 Representative Ami Bera, MD
 Representative Dan Benishek, MD
 Representative Paul Broun, MD
 Representative Larry Bucshon, MD
 Representative Michael Burgess, MD
 Representative Bill Cassidy, MD
 Representative Scott DesJarlais, MD
 Representative John Fleming, MD
 Representative Phil Gingrey, MD
 Representative Andy Harris, MD
 Representative Joe Heck, MD
 Representative Tom Price, MD
 Representative David "Phil" Rose, MD
 Representative Donna Christensen, MD
 Senator John Barrasso, MD
 Senator Tom Coburn, MD
 Senator Rand Paul, MD

Wish I Had Said That!



by Peggy Howell

Many of you have written that you are enjoying this column and are suggesting responses to people who make "cutting remarks" to us, whether on the job, on the street or at home. Keep those suggestions coming, and if you have a question or statement you'd like to submit, we'll be happy to include it in an upcoming column and see how our readers would deal with the situation.

Last month's question: Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

Your Responses:

A - No. I'm quite proud of the person that I am.

A - No. Shame has never had a positive influence on me or anyone else.

A - Being big is NOT something to be ashamed of. Judging others because they are big IS something to be ashamed of.

A - No. I love myself.

A - No, I'm loving life and living large!

Comment of the Month:

You're costing me more money for . . . (medical insurance, healthcare, transportation, equipment, workplace accommodations, etc.)

Example Responses:

A - I understand that you have read misinformation from the media; however, I don't feel the need to justify my existence.

A - Cost estimates have been based on erroneous assumptions and are backed by research paid for by the diet industry.

Is this exercise helping you add to your list of responses? Several people have remarked that they appreciate this exercise since they never seem to know what to say when someone makes a rude, inappropriate comment out of the blue.

Send your suggested questions/comments and responses to Peggy Howell at pr@naafa.org

Have You Heard about GoodDining?



by Peggy Howell

Some time ago, we shared with you a great way that you can help raise funds for NAAFA by signing up for and using

GoodSearch (<http://www.goodsearch.com>) and GoodShop (<http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx>) for your online searching and shopping experiences. Reward Network, the creator of these great concepts, has now introduced GoodDining. It's simple to help raise funds for NAAFA by signing up with Good Dining and using your registered credit card at your favorite participating restaurants.

After signing up, I discovered that six restaurants I frequent on a regular basis are participants in the GoodDining program. No more paying cash for me! I'll simply use the credit card I have registered with GoodDining and a contribution will be made to NAAFA on my behalf. Sounds easy? It is! I've already tried it.

Sign up today at <http://www.gooddining.com> then next time you patronize a participating restaurant, bar, or club (they provide a list of participants in your area), use the credit card you have registered with them and earn up to 6% for NAAFA. Be sure to search for participating restaurants when you travel as well! Thank you for your continuing support!

Another Reminder: Help a Student and Benefit NAAFA

[Editor's note: There is a question in the survey that asks if you are a current NAAFA member. If you have ever been a paying NAAFA member or attended a NAAFA event, please answer "Yes" to this question and complete the survey.]

My name is Yurivia Cervantes and I am currently a second year student in the PhD Clinical Psychology Program at the California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) in San Francisco. Under the mentoring of Dr. Michael Loewy and consultation with NAAFA Advisory Board member Dr. Esther Rothblum, I became very interested in NAAFA and its active role in size acceptance. I am writing today to ask you, as a NAAFA member and supporter, to participate in this research. The online survey is completely voluntary, anonymous, will take about 30-60 minutes, and I will offer a \$1 donation to NAAFA for every person who fills out the survey (I'm hoping to get about 400 participants). Please visit the study here: https://alliant.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_dfXpXQpVj30WiTX

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at ycervantes1@alliant.edu

Going Down Stairs Part 2

by Cinder Ernst



Cinder Erndst and Her Dog

Hello NAAFA Friends! This month is Part 2 of exercises that can make going down stairs easier. If you missed the seated Heel Tap in part 1, you can go back and read it here: <http://tinyurl.com/d8d7qf9>

Part 2 is the *Standing Heel Tap*. This is a more advanced move and to prepare for it I'd like you to squeeze your butt right now as you are sitting. This is called a *Butt Bouncer*. Now squeeze one butt cheek at a time. This is called a *Single Butt Bouncer*. To do the *Standing Heel Tap* safely, make sure you can competently squeeze one butt cheek at a time (did I really just say that, ha).

As you proceed it would be great to bring your reading device into the kitchen and try this as you read:

1. Stand up facing into and holding onto your kitchen counter. Your feet should be hip distance apart (about 1-2 ft).
2. Squeeze your butt gently and unlock your knees, now shift your weight to the left leg, keep that left butt muscle engaged. (If you know how to do a "miracle knee", do it on the left leg too.)
3. Come back to center, relax for a moment, then do the other side. The butt squeeze on each side is the stability for this.
4. If/when you are comfortable with this weight shifting exercise; you can add a heel tap. When you shift onto the left leg, tap the right heel.
5. Do not add the heel tap until you can weight shift with confidence and without pain.

You can do weight shifting (don't forget the butt squeeze) whenever you are standing and it will start to make your legs stronger. Always unlock both knees. Next month we will review the Miracle Knee exercise so you can add it into your weight shifting and heel tap.

As always, I welcome your questions and feedback. If something hurts or feels unsafe don't do it. Email me and ask for help, I'm here for you. You can get all my best knee stuff at <http://lesskneepain.com>

Thanks and love, Cinder

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[There's more news at <http://naafa.org>]

December 31, 2012: The amount of money to be poured into the U.S. weight loss industry is estimated to reach \$66 billion in 2013. No cite is given, but the article says, "There are 108 million American dieters, and they make 4-5 dieting attempts per year." How many "dieting attempts" does a person need before they realize the dieter is not the one failing?

<http://www.timesunion.com/business/press-releases/article/U-S-Weight-Loss-Market-Forecast-To-Hit-66-4156531.php>

January 6, 2013: A Los Angeles Times article on type 2 diabetes control at a community clinic starts with public weigh-ins and goes downhill from there. While a quoted expert says, "telling people they need to lose weight and exercise is clearly not working," that's pretty much what the clinic is doing. Even so, records show a 75% success rate in patients getting their diabetes under control, which (although bemoaned by the article) is pretty good if true.

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-me-clinic-diabetes-20130106,0,2996357,full.story>

January 7, 2013: While accusing the fat acceptance movement of ignoring science, Betsy Woodruff's highly anti-fat biased article makes it very clear that it is she who is ignorant of the science of being fat, as well as how articles like hers create more bias against and oppression of fat people.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/336987/fat-politics-betsy-woodruff>

January 17, 2013: A study of lap band surgery patients found that at 15 years post-surgery, the patients (81% of the initial participants) had kept off about half of their pre-surgery "excess" weight. Without looking at the entire study, it is impossible to tell if those patients were in the process of regaining initial weight loss or had maintained weight loss. Also, in the first 10 years almost half of the participants had to have "revisional" procedures.

<http://theconversation.edu.au/lap-banding-a-long-term-obesity-solution-study-11651>

http://journals.lww.com/annalsurgery/Abstract/2013/01000/Long_Term_Outcomes_After_Bariatric_Surgery_.13.aspx

January 18, 2013: Disney's Epcot opens a more sensitive version of the "Habit Heroes" attraction that was closed last February when NAAFA and other fat activists complained about the anti-fat message of the attraction. The new version reminds guests that healthy habits are for everyone. Thanks to Disney for listening.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/the-daily-disney/os-epcot-habit-heroes-reopens-20130117,0,4369198.story>

January 20, 2013: The nation of Israel wins a Healthy Body Image award for its new law banning unrealistic body images from advertising and modeling. Other winners: 14-year old Julia Bluhm, for taking on Seventeen magazine's unrealistically thin images; and Deb Burgard, psychologist and long time fighter against weight stigma.

<http://www.healthyweight.net/hww.htm>

January 21, 2013: More and more hospitals are acquiring equipment that is suitable for fat patients. Even better (and scarcer) than size-friendly equipment, the article focuses on Dr. Hubert Fornalik, a size-welcoming (if not exactly size-positive) doctor in Indianapolis.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/01/21/hospitals-doctors-obesity-equipment/1851299>

January 22, 2013: A recent study concludes that internalization of weight-based bias correlates with impairment of the physical and mental health of fat people, consistent with the associations found in other minority groups.

<http://www.jeatdisord.com/content/1/1/3/abstract>

January 23, 2013: Thanks to Erec Smith (assistant professor of English and director of Ursinus College's Center for Writing) for responding to Ursinus College's position on childhood obesity by providing the other side of the fat story and spreading the word about Fat Studies and the HAES approach.

<http://news.ursinus.edu/2013/spotlight/faculty/the-other-side-of-the-obesity-epidemic>

January 24, 2013: A bioethicist calls for an "edgier" strategy for promoting weight loss: shaming fat people. Of course, American society has been doing this for decades and it hasn't worked yet, but this expert claims that it worked with smokers, except that what actually worked was laws banning smoking in (for example) restaurants. Should we now ban eating in restaurants? PS: Even if it works, IT'S STILL WRONG!

<http://todayhealth.today.com/news/2013/01/24/16664866-fat-shaming-may-curb-obesity-bioethicist-says?lite>

<http://www.thehastingscenter.org/Bioethicsforum/Post.aspx?id=6205&blogid=140>

January 24, 2013: NAAFA joins the Academy for Eating Disorders (AED) and other organizations in supporting Iceland's proposed new constitution to include protection against weight discrimination. If this legislation passes, Iceland will be the first country to protect individuals from weight discrimination.

<http://www.prlog.org/12066291-iceland-puts-the-freeze-on-weight-discrimination.html>

http://www.aedweb.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Resources_for_the_Press&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=3287

<http://yaleruddcenter.org/iceland-considers-proposal-to-prohibit-weight-discrimination-in-new-constitution>

<https://www.sizediversityandhealth.org/content.asp?id=18>

January 25, 2013: A Washington Post opinion piece by Abigail Saguy (author of the book What's Wrong with Fat?) shows how fat bias in healthcare professionals can create issues for both fat and average sized patients. If a healthcare professional believes fat equals unhealthy and thin equals healthy, they may make decisions based on these stereotypes rather than on facts.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-size-profiling-harms-overweight-patients/2013/01/25/7dc9ed3a-602e-11e2-b05a-605528f6b712_story.html

January 27, 2013: Americans are fatter now than we were 40 years ago, and according to this new study of National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) data, our caloric intake has increased substantially over that time as well. One issue: it's based on self reporting of food intake, which can be unreliable.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23324441>

January 28, 2013: Dr. Mehmet Oz is a well respected heart surgeon. He's also a TV show host who promotes the most egregious quackery imaginable. This New Yorker article by Michael Specter (datelined 2/4) explores both sides of Dr. Oz.
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2013/02/04/130204fa_fact_specter

January 28, 2013: Blogger Eliza Barclay disagrees with Abigail Saguy (see January 25 entry), and has latched onto the idea that fat people don't know we are fat and therefore at risk for medical problems. This notion is based on a Gallup survey in which some participants categorized as "overweight" don't consider themselves as such. But since the term implies being at an unhealthy weight, and since their weight hasn't actually harmed their health (in fact, "overweight" people have the lowest risk of death), it's more likely that they feel it doesn't apply to them.
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/01/16/169540265/whats-wrong-with-calling-obesity-a-medical-problem>

January 28, 2013: School bullies are considered "cooler" by their peers whether the aggression is physical or verbal, according to a new study, which suggests it may be more effective for anti-bullying campaigns to focus on trying to get the bystanders to reject and stand up against bullying rather than trying to change the bully.
<http://www.livescience.com/26619-bullying-middle-school-cool.html>
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23275064>

January 28, 2013: Peggy Howell joins Mike McConnell on Chicago's WGN radio to discuss fat stigma and fat acceptance. McConnell seems to have a balanced attitude, asks honest questions, points out that many of the callers were very "nasty", and posits why fat people triggers anger. In the post interview talk, McConnell and his co-hosts show their own biases.
<http://wgnradio.com/2013/01/28/fat-acceptance>

January 30, 2013: An article in the New England Journal of Medicine gets mainstream media attention, as it points out many of the myths about fatness and weight loss. Although the article is less paradigm-busting than it could be, it exposes these among other myths: fat kids would lose weight if there were more physical classes, breastfeeding reduces fatness, and you can lose 50 pounds by walking a mile a day. We say, walking, physical activity, and breastfeeding are worth doing without invoking the fatness boogiemer.
<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/myths-of-weight-loss-are-plentiful-researcher-says>
<http://www.laboratoryequipment.com/news/2013/01/obesity-study-may-be-tainted-authors%E2%80%99-financial-associations>
<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1208051>

January 30, 2013: An article on fatshion talks about how size-positive fatshion blogs do more than provide fashion ideas. They are also good places to learn about self-acceptance and positive body image.
<http://mashable.com/2013/01/30/fatshion-plus-size-beauty>

January 30, 2013: Denver Post columnist Vincent Carroll highlights the editorials written by law professor (and NAAFA advisor) Paul Campos debunking the hysteria about obesity. Mr. Carroll points out that recent studies support what Paul Campos has been saying all along.
http://www.denverpost.com/carroll/ci_22475420/carroll-vindication-obesity-debunker

January 30, 2013: More companies are making fat employees pay a greater share of their health insurance premium, and some even ignore the law requiring them to provide a way to avoid the surcharge, such as participating in some kind of wellness program or Weight Watchers, and simply forcing fat employees to pay more.
<http://money.msn.com/saving-money-tips/post.aspx?post=dad3232a-cbda-4f6e-872e-2df608485291>

February 1, 2013: New NAAFA Advisory Board member Virgie Tovar talks to MTV.com about the new book she edited, Hot & Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love & Fashion. Virgie says, "When people read Hot & Heavy, I want them to think about what their lives would be like if they stopped apologizing for their body (whatever size it is)."

<http://act.mtv.com/posts/interview-virgie-tovar-hot-heavy-lose-the-hate-not-the-weight>

February 2, 2013: Blogger Brittany Gibbons goes on the Huffington Post to talk about why fat shaming doesn't work (see related story above, first January 24 entry). Although at one point she cites weight loss as a sign of improved health, the article is mostly size positive.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brittany-gibbons/fat-shaming_b_2584298.html

February 8, 2013: More from Paul Campos: Time.com presents Paul's opinion piece on the controversy over Chris Christie's weight. Paul points out that while he is not politically a Christie supporter, Christie is less likely to die in office than (for example) Hillary Clinton, based purely on a recent study of the health risks of weight (see last month's issue, January 1 entry). (In the second link, HAES advocate Linda Bacon injects some sanity into a mostly size-negative article on Christie.)

<http://ideas.time.com/2013/02/08/chris-christies-weight-the-issue-that-isnt>
http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2013/02/christies_risky_business_healt.html

February 8, 2013: Artist (and fat woman) Haley Morris-Cafiero explores fat stigma in a photographic series in which she captures the expressions of others who look at her while she is in public. While one can never tell exactly what people are thinking by their faces alone, the fact that we perceive these stares as negative says something itself about the internalization of fat bias.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2275692/Obese-womans-revealing-photography-project-exposes-cruel-judgmental-stares-attracts-people-street.html>

February 12, 2013: A survey of primary care physicians of their beliefs about the causes of obesity and how they affect the medical advice given shows, unsurprisingly, that few physicians cite genetics, family history, or metabolic defect as an important cause of obesity, with most physicians claiming overeating and poor diet to be the main cause.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/256140.php>
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S009174351300025X>

February 13, 2013: Weight Watchers' financial forecast for 2013 is lower than expected as the company faces declines in attendance and lackluster response to its latest diet campaign. Blaming everything from recession to poor advertising, perhaps they should consider that people are finally realizing diets don't work - even when you call it a "lifestyle".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/13/weightwatchers-forecast-idUSL4N0BD7KKG20130213>

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