

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

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Editorial Committee: Sheila Goodman; Ernest Harff;
Matthew Madigan; Naomi Shadowitz; Michael Simpson.

BEST OF NEW YORK WEEKEND

by Sheila Goodman

An Inside View



Joyce Maloney casually models evening pants by Karen Jones.

As one of the organizers of the BONY weekend (the Saturday Night Champagne Party was my "baby"), I remember my hysteria after finding the location for the dance. "Would it be alright?"; "Would everyone like it?". As the date drew near my anxiety grew greater.

The Weekend came and Saturday was a glorious day: clear and sharp and not too cold. With great anticipation I went to meet the bus for the Tour. I figured it would be o.k., and I owed it to NAAFA to be there, and after all, Naomi (the tour guide) is my friend. Two hours

later I was one of a busload of really happy people. We were entertained, informed, and given two hours of thorough enjoyment. "Well," I thought "What a terrific start. Maybe everything will go this well."

Saturday night arrived; I had my usual headache, dizziness and nausea which attacks me every-time I get tense and anxious. I arrived early at the Dance Hall to discover the elevator was BROKEN. I figured that this was just a warning of what was to come. However, from my post at the front desk I had an opportunity to look at and listen to the people at the Dance and they seemed to be having a very terrific time. The ladies looked beautiful: dressed up, made up and feeling "up". The guys were all spit and polish. The champagne flowed, the canapes were being devoured, and laughter and song and love really did seem to fill the room. The dance went on until the small hours of the morning.

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BEST OF NEW YORK WEEKEND

by Marvel Abayomi-Cole

A Visitor's View

On December 6th and 7th I attended my first NAAFA affair since I became a member one year ago. It was sponsored by the New York Area Chapter. I must say that there were positive vibes coming all through the weekend. The atmosphere at the first Rap Session I found pulchritudinous. A group of people of differing backgrounds had gathered together to talk about a problem they all shared - obesity. It was the consensus of the group that the brunt of the matter did not rest with them entirely: the burden shifts heavily to the general public with whom they have to come in contact every day. The denial of job opportunities, smirking salesladies, jeers from passersby---all of us have experienced these.

A tour of New York City was next on the list. Naomi Shadowitz, our NAAFA guide, was an excellent narrator and held our interest throughout the trip.

The big dance? Well, it proved two things certainly: one does not have to be thin to go braless; and, not only the slim are good dancers.

The climax of the two day affair was the Luncheon and Fashion Show. The models, who were all members of NAAFA, delighted the guests (and NBC-TV News) with tasteful NAAFA-made designs from bikinis to formal dresses.

In conclusion, I say in unity there is strength. Fat people all over the world must continue to join together and let other people know that we wish to stand up and be counted not as a "fatty" caught up in the deadly crossfire of customs and traditions, but as useful citizens with all the capacities of complete men and women.



Naomi Shadowitz designed and models her own grecian suit.



Beth Stewart created this lovely gown for her own wedding.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by William Fabrey

Fat People in Advertising

Is it my imagination, or is my wife Joyce correct - that there are more fat people being used in advertising on television, and in magazines and newspapers? We think that, as part of a trend toward realism, Madison Avenue is using more average, real-looking people in much of its advertising. It wasn't so long ago that the only human beings that were shown in ads were movie stars, models, or rugged-looking cowboys.

For years, Madison Avenue has been convinced that people only buy products from those manufacturers who advertise their use by Beautiful People with whom the average consumer would like to identify. They thought that you'd rather buy a cigarette that is preferred by a famous person, or large-sized clothing shown on a fashionably thin model.

Now there seems to be a second school of thought - that average consumers would rather identify with people like themselves. Thus we now see construction workers, housewives, grandmothers, blacks, and, thankfully, fat people, too. I think that it's a very healthy trend!

HELP STAMP OUT DEBT

by Ernest Harff

The Fund Raising Committee is starting a major drive to raise badly needed funds for NAAFA. By raising more money NAAFA will be able to be more active in important areas such as education, job discrimination and many others.

How do you help?

NAAFA is always in need of postage stamps. So send us your 10¢ stamps and save yourself the trouble of buying 3¢ stamps. Naturally, we will graciously accept 13¢ stamps as well.

If you have any suggestions about things you can do locally or we can do nationally, please let us know.

You can send your contributions and suggestions to me:

Mr. Ernest Harff
47 Lorraine Terrace
Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553

We will periodically keep you informed of the Committee's activities and progress.

THE CONVENTION IS COMING!!!!!!!

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MENS' FASHIONS

by Dianne Rubinstein

Whoever said that "Clothes make the man" must have had some pretty big men in mind, judging from the Brooklyn Museum's exhibit "FOR MEN ONLY". Historically, the well-dressed man was often a fat man. It is only logical that this would be so. At a time when all clothes were custom-made, the most beautiful and elaborate suits could only be afforded by the very rich - and to our ancestors fat was a symbol of wealth.

The Brooklyn Museum in Brooklyn, New York - famous for its costume exhibits - ran the mens' clothing exhibition for several months this fall. The garments shown were actual antique pieces dating back to the pre-Revolutionary period. Upon entering the exhibition, the eye - especially the NAAFA eye - was caught by the size of the clothing. The first displays (mostly 18th century pieces) had beautiful suits resplendent in both their size and magnificence. Black silk waistcoats, worn with hand-loomed lace shirts and heavily embroidered vests, alongside velvet britches and brocade suits; and, many of them were comparable to our modern day size 60 and beyond. Looking over the historical trend I noticed that the clothing of the early 19th century did not pale in its opulence; but, the 20th century fashions were another matter. As the years grew greater, the clothing shrank, and became less elegant, less splendid...and smaller.

Unfortunately, 1970s prejudices invaded the whole exhibit. The subliminal "thin" message was there throughout. The large size clothing was shown tacked up on the wall or laid out on display cases. The message? Nobody nowadays is large enough to actually wear such clothing. And, in truth, they probably could not have bought mannikens large enough to show them anyway. It is a paradox of our society that there are plenty of specialty stores and customers for "out sized" clothing, but no big models or mannikens for them. Anyone who has ever seen a Jimmy "J J" Walker sized person being used to advertise a William Conrad sized suit knows exactly what I mean.

I suppose it was ever so. In Tudor England, some years after the reign of Henry VIII (who was among Britain's greatest and fattest of monarchs), when fat was still a sign of nobility and droit de seignor, Shakespeare was writing in "Love's Labor Lost":

"Fat paunches have lean pates; and
Dainty bits make rich the ribs,
But bankrupt quite the wit."

There was weightism even then.

THE NAAFA COOKBOOK

by Michael Simpson

One of the many ideas of the NAAFA Fund Raising Committee is to create a NAAFA Cookbook. We hope that all of you will send in your favorite recipes which our judges will test, and make their final selections from. Ultimately we will sell the Cookbooks to NAAFAs and friends in order to increase our coffers as well as our appetites. Below, to pique your interest and taste buds, is an early submission.

Baked Macaroni Mousse

Ingredients: (T=Tablespoon, t=teaspoon)

- 1 cup macaroni (ziti)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup soft, day-old bread crumbs
- 4 T butter or margerine
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- 1 can pimento, chopped
- 1 t parsley
- 1 t onion juice
- 1 t salt
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Yield: 1 quart

Boil the ziti or macaroni in two quarts of boiling salted water until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain and cut into 1" pieces. Scald cream and pour over bread crumbs and butter. Combine eggs and remaining ingredients. Combine macaroni, cream and cheese mixtures. Grease a 1 quart mold; line with buttered paper. Pour macaroni mixture into the mold and bake in a pan of hot water at 400 degrees for one hour. Unmold and serve hot.

If you would like to submit a recipe please send it to:

Ms. Sheila Goodman
57 West 84th Street
New York, New York 10024

Sheila will clip off your name and make copies of the recipe which will then be given to the judges for testing. In the meantime we will print promising entries in the Newsletter.

Good eating!

THE CONVENTION IS COMING!!!!

ARE YOU????

UPDATE ON EDITH PAREDES

by Naomi Shadowitz

Edith Paredes, the New York NAAFAN who was the focus of a recent letter writing campaign on her behalf, has attained a partial victory in her effort to be rehired by Maimonides Medical Center.

Ms. Paredes, in a recent telephone interview, advised us that the union requested and obtained an arbitration hearing for her with regard to ALL FIVE jobs for which she was rejected. Thus, the letter writing campaign was significant. Before our support Edith had been advised by the union that they would not fight management rejection of her for any of the jobs. The change in their attitude is a testament to our organization. When Ms. Paredes was just another laid off worker they did nothing; when they were made to realize that she was a member of a powerful national group that would fight for her, they also deemed it wise to fight for her.

Ms. Paredes has been advised by the union that the Center will be calling her to discuss a job in exchange for her dropping the arbitration hearing. She is now gathering information in order to determine on what grounds she might do this, if at all.

Whatever her decision, we know that she has greater bargaining power because of our efforts: directly by virtue of the actions of both union and management, and psychologically because, as she said, "I wish you could come in there with me." Her fight is our fight and she knows she is not alone.

CONCIOUSNESS RAISING

The Greater New York Area Chapter has initiated a series of Consciousness Raising sessions in order to enable NAAFANS to begin to explore collectively the problems which they face as a group and, perhaps, arrive at some common causes and solutions. The C/R Committee, headed by Gail Gold, the Chapter Vice-Chairperson, uses a format based on that devised by the New York Radical Feminists for women's c/r meetings. Presented in questionnaire fashion, the format explores several areas, from childhood through maturity, with emphasis on societal and familial influence, medical stereotyping, media bias, and so on, in an effort to get through the myths about fat people and find out who they really are.

The group currently meets once a month and hopes to help create new groups in the fall.

If you would like a copy of the format for use either individually or for a group, send 50¢ to cover handling and mailing costs for each copy to:

Ms. Gail Gold
1850 Ocean Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11223

by Naomi Shadowitz

I could not make the Rap Sessions on Sunday morning; but, I got to the luncheon bright and early in order to set up my table to take tickets. After some initial hassle with the management (which was quickly taken care of) things began to run smoothly. There was food a-plenty, salad galore, all the birch beer we could drink, and, I think, good company.

We distributed questionnaires and when these were returned that afternoon we learned: some NAAFans thought the room too large, too separated; some thought the salad bar separated us from one another; some did not like the chicken, others the steak, and for a few, nothing pleased them entirely. But the vast majority of NAAFans enjoyed the luncheon and without question the biggest hit of all was the all-NAAFA fashion show. I had a wonderful time as both a model in the show and a viewer seeing what wonderful ideas NAAFans came up with, and how liberated we have become in our dress.

I remember when everyone had left the restaurant except for the half-dozen of us who were most intimately connected with organizing BONY. We sat in a back-booth and held what is generally known as the "post-mortem". The tiredness reached from our minds, through our bodies, to our bones. We realized then that we had put over a successful NAAFA function -- not only financially, but, we felt more importantly, in bringing NAAFans together in a feeling of peoplehood and common cause. We wanted our fellow NAAFans to remember a weekend of happiness, a time of growth and the creation or renewal of friendships.

As far as I am concerned, BONY fulfilled my expectations and, in many instances, surpassed them. I spent two days with fat people who enjoyed themselves, who were unafraid of being themselves, and who were proud of themselves. In that kind of atmosphere, all of us who were there are better and bigger than we were. We all made each other "more". I am glad that BONY came to pass, and my fervent desire is that all of you who attended BONY feel the way I do. I am looking forward with great expectation to the next NAAFA function - I want to see again the people I met at BONY - I want to share with them. I hope it will be soon.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF NAAFA WILL BE ON:

SUNDAY, MAY 16th

in

NEW YORK CITY

RESERVE THIS DATE - DETAILS WILL BE IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

Five members of the N.Y. Chapter of NAAFA offered to be responsible for this and the next two Newsletters. We hope you like them. Please let us know your ideas and feelings about any changes we have made.

It is the feeling of this Committee that the Newsletter should act as a forum for all of our members, their gripes and satisfactions, their problems and solutions. Towards this end we would like to begin a column called "PLUS AND MINUS" in which we hope to draw your attention to organizations, individuals, professionals and merchants who go out of their way to please or anger fat people and those who support fat liberation. If you know of someone deserving of our praise or our wrath, let us know and we will try and print it.

For example, we would like to issue a list of physicians who do not practice fat discrimination. While NAAFA cannot determine the credentials or abilities of an individual physician, we can compile a list of those who do not alienate fat people by their negative approach. Too many fat people go to doctors as rarely as possible and then only in dire circumstances. Naturally this inaction is not in the best interest of any individual. In addition, it allows the medical community to examine fat people only when they are quite ill, since we avoid going for run of the mill situations or general annual check-ups. As a result we contribute to the negative attitude of the medical world and bias the nature of their research.

Perhaps if we knew that a doctor would not harass us about our weight but would refer to it only when it was germane, we would be less reluctant to go. Thus we would help both ourselves and the fat liberation cause in general.

Send us the name of a physician(s) who you feel has treated you with concern and lack of prejudice. Include the address, specialty (if any) and other pertinent information (telephone number, fees, hospital affiliations, etc.) and we will list it. Ultimately we hope to publish a complete listing and we will all benefit.

Send those cards and letters to:

Ms. Naomi Shadowitz
151 Norfolk Street 4B
New York, New York 10002

Lisbeth Fisher, NAAFA's Executive Secretary, was interviewed on Midday Live, WNEW-TV, in New York. The taped show is shown at noon on Channel 5 in the New York area and, we are advised, should be aired on March 15.

So, look for Liz on Midday Live.