



**national association  
to advance  
fat acceptance**

## NAAFA Newsletter

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

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### Tell *Biggest Loser* to Stop Promoting the Bullying Cycle



NAAFA strongly condemns the upcoming season of *The Biggest Loser*, which will include teenagers. *The Biggest Loser*, well known for its abusive tactics, should not be allowed to profit off the bullying and stigmatization of fat kids. That this series would be developed despite the evidence of the harm done to children by focusing on body size and weight loss is unconscionable. There is no doubt that the primary purpose of this television show is not to promote a healthy, long-term lifestyle, but to grab ratings and profits for the network and producers.

"I am concerned that *The Biggest Loser* promotes short-term weight loss and does long-term harm to the bodies, minds, and spirits of many of its contestants and viewers--precipitating eating disorders, weight gain, depression, and weight-based bullying. That they are now involving teenagers is appalling," states Dr. Barbara Altman Bruno, Ph.D., LCSW, author, and NAAFA Advisory Board member.

Numerous studies have addressed the issue of focusing on children's weight and body size. These studies indicate:

- Fewer calories are consumed by overweight and obese children than by average weight counterparts beginning at around seven years of age, according to a 2012 study of caloric intake in a large, nationwide population of children and adolescents. (Skinner, Steiner and Perrin, Sept. 2012)
- Greater weight gain occurs among young people engaged in weight-control practices regardless of baseline weight, compared to those who do not engage in such practices (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006).
- The more weight per se is talked about; the more likely teens are to adopt dangerous dieting behaviors. The focus needs to be on health much more than weight, based on results from a population-based, longitudinal study

Flabulous!

#### January Video of the Month

Two thumbs up for the students from Tamalpais High School who made this video featuring one of our NAAFA members, the flabulous fat activist Marilyn Wann! It's not a new video, but even if you've seen it already it's worth seeing again. I know you'll enjoy hearing from Marilyn.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=F59weTEA2gA>

#### Quick Links

[NAAFA Home](#)  
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with 2,500 teens conducted at the University of Minnesota. (Newmark-Sztainer et al., 2006)

- Media and cultural obsession with weight loss actually undermines motivation to adopt healthy lifestyle habits according to a study from UCLA. (Yancey et al., 2006)

We need to create environments in which children and adolescents do not feel shame or guilt about their bodies but are instead motivated to enjoy healthful eating and active living habits regardless of their body size or shape.

This television show will add to the already pervasive bias against fat children, and it is logical that bias begets discrimination. NAAFA opposes discrimination in any form. Discrimination is wrong and must stop now!

Visit the NAAFA homepage at [www.naafa.org](http://www.naafa.org) to view the NAAFA Child Advocacy Toolkit. This groundbreaking toolkit shifts the focus from the war on childhood obesity to a health-centered focus embracing children of all sizes. Even more importantly, it demonstrates how to design programs and approaches that will improve the total health of all our children.

#### CALL TO ACTION

NAAFA encourages all to contact the following people to express your concern about the damage that will be done by this offensive television series:

Shine America  
Attn: Eden Gaha  
[contact@shineamerica.com](mailto:contact@shineamerica.com)

25/7 Productions  
10999 Riverside Drive, Suite 100  
North Hollywood, California 91602

3 Ball Productions  
3650 Redondo Beach Ave  
Redondo Beach, CA 90278  
<http://www.3ballproductions.com/contact.html>

Jill Carmen  
Senior Press Manager  
NBC Entertainment Publicity  
(805) 376-1962  
[jcge@earthlink.net](mailto:jcge@earthlink.net)

Julie True  
Director, Photo Production  
NBCUniversal Photography & New Media  
(818) 840-4405  
[julie.true@nbcuni.com](mailto:julie.true@nbcuni.com)

## A Moment for Clarification

In last month's newsletter, we presented an article with a recipe that was intended to be inclusive for people who can't typically enjoy desserts during the holidays for health reasons (diabetes, allergies, etc.), to allow them to enjoy pumpkin pie without sugar or gluten. Because the recipe was presented as a "fabulous fake" and recommended the use of artificial sweeteners, some people have expressed that the framing of this article triggered a negative response for them.

It was never anyone's intention to cause problems for people who are triggered by talk of limiting or excluding any foods. We apologize if the article caused anyone difficulties or created misunderstandings. We appreciate the constructive feedback.

NAAFA does not support any method designed for the purpose of weight loss. For more than 40 years, NAAFA has been on the front lines on a daily basis fighting for Equality at Every Size.

NAAFA wishes everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

## Wish I Had Said That!

*by Peggy Howell*



I'm glad to see that many of you are enjoying and participating in this column and 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:** Have you thought about having weight loss surgery?

**Your Suggested Responses:**

A - Yes, I have. (I said nothing more and neither did my nephrologist.)

A - Why would I want to pay money to harm my health?

A - Yes, and it's incompatible with my sanity.

A - Yes, but I know too many people who died from it.

A - Yes, and I understand many people regain the weight they lose. I suspect that would happen to me.

A - My digestive system is one part of my body that works reasonably well, and I'd rather keep it that way.

A - Yes, and from what I understand, many people have lifelong side effects that are worse than the conditions they were trying to fix by having WLS.

A - Yes, and I'd rather have a thoroughly studied condition with many treatment options (diabetes) than WLS, because we don't know the long-term effects of WLS. People lose weight when they get older . . . what will happen to the ones who had WLS?

A - No. Studies have shown that maintaining your weight, even a higher weight, is healthier than dieting or weight loss surgery.

A - No. I practice Health at Every Size where the focus is on health not weight, intuitive eating, and enjoyable movement.

A - Surgery is recognized as the highest mortality risk for weight loss efforts and its effectiveness has been seriously challenged.

A - Weight-loss surgery intentionally damages healthy organs in order to force adherence to a restrictive diet and incurs a host of short- and long-term risks including death and malnutrition.

One reader wrote, "I had a doctor who I sought treatment for an eye infection. He wrote on my bill = you must lose 100 pounds in 6 months or YOU WILL DIE. I responded to him 'I came to you to treat my illness, not my fatness' and dropped him as a doctor. I am still alive and healthy and fat and happy at age 70 with a younger husband I met in NAAFA in 1990."

**Question of the Month:**

Q - Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

**Example 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.

Well, did you read something here that you might like to 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 responses to me at [pr@naafa.org](mailto:pr@naafa.org)

## Reminder: First 2013 NAAFA Teleseminar



Don't forget, we are hosting our first teleseminar of the year on Tuesday January 22, 2013 at 5:30pm PST/8:30pm EST, NAAFA will proudly present its first teleseminar with NAAFA Board Member and Director of Programs Lisa Tealer, and knee friendly fitness coach Cinder Ernst. Join us for:

### **Top 3 Tips to Get Stronger and Be Fit to**

### **Fight Fat Discrimination**

This fun and interactive seminar will help your body get stronger and your knees hurt less, so you will have more stamina to live your life and fight for what matters to you.

Sign up here: <http://tinyurl.com/naafa-fitnessclass>

## Reminder: Help a Student and Benefit NAAFA

[Editor's note: In case you missed it in last month's issue . . . .]

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\\_dfXpXQpvj3OWiTX](https://alliant.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_dfXpXQpvj3OWiTX)

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [ycervantes1@alliant.edu](mailto:ycervantes1@alliant.edu)

## Going Down Stairs

*by Cinder Ernst*

Late last year I asked what activities of daily living (ADLs) were the hardest for my readers. The answer that I got most was going down stairs.

This month I am going to give you the first step in the training routine to make going down stairs easier.

If you have a knee injury (or back, or hip, or foot) that has you go sideways or just one leg at a time, please continue doing that.

In the meantime, here is a fun little exercise that works for most people, and can be done to the beat of a favorite song.

### **The Heel Tap**

Sit on the edge of your chair in the 90 degree rule position (knees over ankles). Straighten your right leg and gently tap your heel on the floor, then return to 90 degrees. Now do the left. Alternate legs rhythmically (this is where a favorite song comes in handy). Start with 5 on each leg and build up slowly.



This exercise will start to build strength in the muscle in the front of your thigh. And the rhythmic motion may help to lube up your knee a bit. Remember: motion is lotion.

Don't forget to join Lisa Tealer and me for an action packed teleseminar on Tuesday January 22nd at 5:30PM Pacific called:

### **Top 3 Tips to Get Stronger and be Fit to Fight Fat Discrimination**

Reserve your spot now at:

<http://tinyurl.com/naafa-fitnessclass>

## Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

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

January 2012: Yes, this item is a year old, but NAAFA member Elyn Satter pointed us to this elegant study (led by Eric Matheson of the Medical University of South Carolina) that shows that healthy habits (eating fruits and veggies, exercising, reducing alcohol consumption, and not smoking) are linked to a decrease in mortality regardless of weight.

<http://jabfm.org/content/25/1/9.short>

December 10, 2012: Dr. Paul Ernsberger, Associate Professor of Case Western Reserve University and NAAFA Advisory Board Member, and Dr. Eileen Seeholzer, Director of Obesity and Weight Management Program for Metrohealth, are interviewed for *The Sound of Ideas* on NPR about a focus on health instead of weight. While Dr. Seeholzer still has a weight-loss focus, her focus is on improving health, not becoming thin. She also seems to agree with Dr. Ernsberger more often than not. Once the calls start, however, the show devolves into diet talk.

<http://www.ideastream.org/soi/entry/50778>

December 19, 2012: Hedge fund manager Bill Ackman short-sells diet product company Herbalife, saying that the company's business model is actually a pyramid scheme that "takes advantage of desperate and unsophisticated people".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/20/us-ackman-herbalife-idUSBRE8BI1MZ20121220>

December 21, 2012: Ms. Elsie Scheel is back in the news after a 100 year hiatus. At 5' 7" and 171 pounds, Elsie Scheel would be considered overweight today, but in 1912 she was deemed to be the most nearly perfect physical specimen of womanhood, with the same proportions as another famous beauty of antiquity, the Venus de Milo.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2251920/171-pounds-pear-shaped-body-taste-beefsteak-Meet-Elsie-Scheel-Cornell-student-declared-1912s-perfect-woman.html>

December 21, 2012: An article in *The Conversation* provides lots of predictions how being fat will eventually reduce life expectancy, after admitting that people the world over are living longer than ever, and people the world over are fatter than ever.

<http://theconversation.edu.au/obesitys-paradoxical-impact-on-trends-in-life-expectancy-7981>

December 26, 2012: The *Never Diet Again UK* blog posts instructions for participating in Project Not This Year 2013. In case you missed it in the last newsletter, the Project calls for making 2013 a year of self acceptance. Projects include creative methods of getting rid of your old diet books. Let the creativity begin!

<http://www.neverdietagain.co.uk/project-not-this-year-2013-be-a-part-of-it>



December 28, 2012: It's that time of year again. Time for the 24th Annual SLIM CHANCE Awards, singling out the worst diets, gimmicks, quackery, and fraud. Topping the list is (drum roll please) Dr. Oz with the worst weight loss claim of 2012.

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

January 2013: A study of students across the United States shows that fat students receive significantly lower grades than non-fat students but that intelligence or achievement test scores show no significant difference between these students. The researchers propose that the lower grades may reflect peer and teacher fat bias rather than lack of ability.

<http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v37/n1/full/ijo201247a.html>

January 1, 2013: A research team led by Katherine Flegal of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms previous findings that those in the "overweight" and "grade 1 obese" categories have lower risks of dying than those of "normal weight", based on a review and meta-analysis with an impressive 2.88 million sample size across several countries. Not clearly reported in the press, however, is that the differences among weight categories are fairly small, with a 6 percent lower risk for the "overweight"; a 5 percent lower risk for grade 1 obesity; and a 29 percent increased risk for grades 2 and 3 obesity."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/02/health/study-suggests-lower-death-risk-for-the-overweight.html>

[http://www.digitalnewsrelease.com/?q=jama\\_3867](http://www.digitalnewsrelease.com/?q=jama_3867)

<http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1555137>

January 3, 2013: Two size acceptance heroes, Marilyn Wann and Paul Campos, provide their takes on the new Flegal study (see January 1 entry above). Marilyn is unsurprised by the findings, and points out that the main health risk to being fat is weight bias from health care providers. Paul points out the hypocrisy of our top public health officials stating that Americans are too fat when the science says that weight isn't a health issue for most Americans.

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/03/opinion/wann-fat-and-fit-study>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/03/opinion/our-imaginary-weight-problem.html>

January 3, 2013: *Huffington Post* blogger and head of *Never Diet Again UK* (see December 26 entry above) Angela Meadows looks at the negative spin and misleading information in a report on fatness by the UK's Royal College of Physicians. She says, "Let's not make 2013 another year of scaremongering and fat blaming, but concentrate our efforts on ensuring equitable access to healthy environments and decent healthcare for all." We agree.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/angela-meadows/obesity-weightloss-new-year-same-old-nonsense\\_b\\_2395273.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/angela-meadows/obesity-weightloss-new-year-same-old-nonsense_b_2395273.html)

<http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/resources/action-obesity-comprehensive-care-all>

January 4, 2013: A *Los Angeles Times* op-ed piece by author and sociology professor Abigail Saguy tells how America's obsession with weight loss is fueled by fear of fat bias rather than concerns about health. Instead of a new year's resolution to lose weight, she recommends a resolution "to stand up to intolerance and bigotry in all its various forms." Dr. Saguy also appears on public radio show *Word of Mouth* (second link), discussing how weight has become medicalized and how this affects how fat people are viewed and treated.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jan/04/opinion/la-oe-saguy-weight-loss-20130104>

<http://nhpr.org/post/are-we-obsessed-obesity>

January 4, 2013: Rebecca Jane Weinstein, author of *Fat Sex: The Naked Truth*, is funding her next book, *Fat Kids: Truth and Consequences*, through Kickstarter. Whether or not you wish to help financially, the video (also viewable on her website; see second link) is worth watching.

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1222517018/fat-kids-truth-and-consequences>

<http://www.peopleofsize.com>

January 5, 2013: NAAFA's condemnation of the new season of *The Biggest Loser* gets major press, as the *Los Angeles Times* writes about how the show's network and producers are now manipulating children for profit.

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/showtracker/la-et-st-biggest-loser-20130105,0,11512.story>

January 7, 2013: A common side effect of WLS is runny bowels, which can lead to embarrassing consequences. TV weatherman Al Roker candidly relates his first hand experience with this.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/07/al-roker-i-pooped-my-pants\\_n\\_2427003.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/07/al-roker-i-pooped-my-pants_n_2427003.html)

January 7, 2013: A tiny bit of good news: Fewer American women are dieting this year than before, according to a new survey. Better yet, the same survey also says that the number Americans who think that thin = beautiful is also dropping. (Note: for an opposing viewpoint, read the article comments.)  
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/01/04/168635366/skinny-isnt-all-that-survey-finds-fewer-american-women-are-dieting>

January 7, 2013: Blogger Julie Gunlock on conservative website *National Review Online* defends the fat acceptance movement by calling us "obscure" and "pretty marginal". Um, thanks? To her credit, she also says that the bigger threat is anti-fat messages from the White House and Hollywood, although she does so for the cause of laissez-faire conservatism rather than civil rights.  
<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/337316/fat-activism-big-fat-non-problem-julie-gunlock>

January 8, 2013: The man who invented the Segway is now marketing a do-it-yourself stomach pump that allows you to remove undigested food from your stomach through a surgically implanted tube and abdominal port. Called "Aspiration Therapy", it is available in parts of Europe. Ugh.  
[http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/01/08/dean\\_kamen\\_stomach\\_pump](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/01/08/dean_kamen_stomach_pump)

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