

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

P.O. BOX 745

WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590

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Acting Editor: Joyce Fabrey

EDITORIAL

If you noticed the above date, you might begin to wonder what happened to your December Newsletter. Yours did not get lost in the mail. The demands of other NAAFA business during the month of December, combined with the normal hectic holiday season, caused us to postpone the issue. Hopefully, at least until the difficult summer months, you will now receive your Newsletter each month.

---J.F.

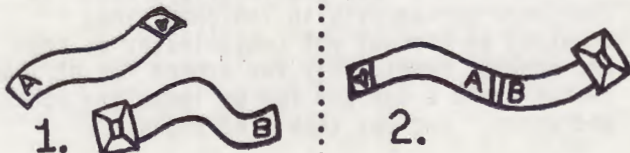
1974 CONVENTION

Only 7 guests attended the open board meeting that was held on Jan. 18. The main topic open for discussion was the 1974 convention. After an open discussion, it was decided that the national convention again be held in New York City, this year on OCTOBER 27. Reserve the date now in your calendars. More information about the convention will be carried in coming Newsletters.

MAKE YOUR OWN SEATBELT EXTENDER

If your car's safety lap belts aren't long enough to fit around you, here's a do-it-yourself tip for an extender that's simple to make and really works. Cut off the set of belts that is least-frequently used in your car--if there are 3 sets in the back seat, cut off the center set. Then, overlapping the cut ends (see diagram below), stitch them securely together on a sewing machine using heavy-duty thread, or have a shoe-repair place do it for you; the result is an adjustable lap belt extender that can also be switched from one set of belts to another within the same car.

If you must replace the set of belts you cut off to make the extender, Sears, Roebuck, and Co. carries a standard automobile safety belt to fit any car for \$4.49 which you can order from their current catalog (p. 773). If your car has no safety belts, order two of these and make one into an extender for the other!



(Reprinted from 10/73 Connecticut-NAAFA News, c/o Karen W. Jones, Editor, 44 Lakeside Dr., Andover, Conn. 06232)

NEW AREAS OF DISCRIMINATION

New forms of discrimination are constantly being brought to NAAFA's attention.

One lady called the office to say she feels discriminated against in the better beauty parlors. She feels the more qualified the hairdresser, the less interested he is in making an effort with her hair. In questioning one rather arrogant young man after handing him an excessive tip, he commented, "Why should I work hard on you, Mrs.----? Anything I do won't really help you anyway!"

A similarly outrageous example of discrimination of a form few people are aware of, was written up in the October, 1972 Newsletter: a landlady refused to rent rooms to fat tenants.

NAAFA would like to hear from other members who have experienced forms of discrimination not often mentioned. NAAFA believes that problems of this kind are better dealt with when they are brought out in the open.

WITTY RESIGNS FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NAAFA Accountant and financial advisor Michael J. Witty has resigned from the Board, giving business reasons and transportation problems as the cause. Originally elected to the position in June of 1972, Witty plans to continue as NAAFA's aide in all financial matters.

Mike Witty has been cited in past Newsletters as having been chiefly responsible for NAAFA's achieving tax exempt status. With his wife, Katherine, he has also been notable as the first marriage resulting from NAAFA-DATE.

CLIST APPOINTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Howard L. Clist has been appointed by Pres. Fabrey to fill out a recently vacated seat on the Board. Clist brings with him experience gathered as former Chairman of the New York City Chapter; he has also worked extensively with the public relations efforts of the NAAFA office. With his wife Natalie and daughter Stephanie, his picture recently appeared on the front cover of the New York Times Magazine (Jan. 6).

His appointment was confirmed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Once again the NAAFA Office is in great need of weeknight volunteers. No experience necessary, but office volunteers must be able to travel to Garden City, Long Island. If interested, please contact NAAFA, Box 745, Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

Editor's Note: The following article was sent to NAAFA after Gabriel Laub's English translator, Ewald Osers, read about the Association in the German magazine, Der Spiegel. Mr. Osers was kind enough to get the author's permission to reprint his work, and has provided us with the brief biography, below:

Gabriel Laub (himself an enormously fat man) was born in 1928, studied social and political science, worked as a reporter, film journalist, columnist, satirical writer and translator. He left Czechoslovakia in 1968, after the Soviet invasion of the country. He is a member of the P.E.N. Club. In Western Germany, where he now lives, his books of aphorisms and funny short stories have been enormously successful. Many of them have been broadcast, and one has won a major international prize (even though the Soviet member of the literary jury walked out in protest when it was awarded to Laub).

The Right to Be Fat is printed here in English for the first time. In the original German it forms part of the book Die Enthüllung des nackten Kaisers, Hanser Verlag, Munich, Germany.

THE RIGHT TO BE FAT

by

Gabriel Laub

I once ordered a slogan button "I am fat. So what?" I was getting rather fed up with always hearing the same kind of talk: "My, how you have put on weight again! Why don't you do something about it?" I have no intention at all of doing anything about it. I feel just as happy with my generous shape as Twiggy does with her lean figure although I do not earn any money with my vital statistics.

To criticize someone for his corpulence is not only tactless but also illogical. If his ample figure is normal there is nothing to talk about. If it is a disease or some organic malfunction - would we say, for instance: "I say, your goitre has grown again!" or "Your limp's got worse hasn't it?" We don't tell a man with a congenital blemish: "Gee, what a long nose you've got!" or ask a girl: "Why don't you have a bosom?"

I can't see why I should not be fat. I don't propose to leap about the tree tops, I am not dreaming of a career as a sprinter or of a young male lead on the stage. In my profession my corpulence does not worry me at all.

Democracy grants every man the right to be as he is. He is free to be a woman, a negro, a nudist, a radical, a Yoga practitioner, and no sensible person would blame him for any of these. Only the fat are denied the right to be fat; they are attacked in private conversation and in newspaper articles, and entire propaganda campaigns are mounted against them.

Fat men of all weights, unite to defend your rights! Statistics show that in all civilized countries we are in the majority over the lean. Why should we let ourselves be persecuted?

It is said that obesity runs counter to the ideal of beauty. But consider:

First, this has not always been so. For many oriental nations ample proportions of the body are a sign of beauty and respectability. The Venus de Milo or Homer's Helen were no ironing boards, any more than Rubens's beauties were. And if the ideal of beauty changed in the past it may well do so again.

Secondly, who has ever strictly followed all ideals? In our twentieth century the ideals of justice, humanity, morality and freedom are being violated - so why should the ideal of beauty be an exception?

After all, only masturbators or the odd millionaire can afford the luxury of a love object that matches up to the ideal. Everybody else loves the men and women that life offers them. Let's leave ideals to the teenagers. They will grow out of them as soon as they have got used to life and begun to put on weight.

Thirdly: Who prescribes these ideals of beauty? At one time they used to be thought up by consumptive starved poets who knew women only from the angle of their little basement windows. Now they are invented by short baldheaded film producers over a rich dinner in an expensive restaurant. I can't see why we should be the victims of other people's complexes.

Doctors have scientifically proved that obesity is not healthy. One should never argue with policemen or doctors - and besides I lack the scientific evidence to question their claims. I can merely refer to an old Polish proverb which says: "Before a fat man has grown thin a thin man will starve to death."

There are many things in life which are bad for one's health and we don't necessarily therefore give them up. It is far better for your health to walk than to travel by car or plane; it is bad for your health to work in a factory and it is bad for your health to work in an office; it is bad for your health to sit up late at night reading or to dance in a nightclub until the small hours of the morning. Cinema and television are bad for your eyes, life in the city is bad for your nerves. Altogether life is not good for your health since it is guaranteed to lead to death.

Without any doubt the healthiest way of life was that of our prehistoric ancestors. They were permanently in the open, they breathed an air not yet contaminated by soot and exhaust fumes, they ran around for at least twelve hours a day and fed on lowcalory roots and worms. And yet they died young.

It is no accident that all those things which are nowadays claimed to be bad for you are products of civilization, the fruits of mankind's efforts over many thousands of years.

Nowadays when the human organism is unable to adapt itself fast enough to the rapid changes in civilization, the inventors of formulas choose the path of least resistance. Instead of racking their brains about how to adapt the human organism to present-day needs and possibilities, they try to adapt present-day life to the organisms of a prehistoric hunter or root gatherer.

Are we to say therefore that our ancestors were their own enemies when they invented solid houses, mechanical means of transport and various foods, and are we to give up all this and climb back up into the branches and feed on hard apples?

The first prehistoric gourmet who discovered that meat could be roasted on a fire was probably, if not fat, at least endowed with a tendency towards obesity. He became not only the founder of gastronomy but his discovery of a more nutritious and more digestible kind of food led to a more rapid development of the human organism and above all the human brain.

It seems likely that the man who disliked running and therefore invented the wheel, the foundation of all subsequent technical development, also tended towards fatness. Quite certainly that ancestor of ours who invented the sedan chair and persuaded two thin men to carry him was himself fat; this invention marked the beginning of all subsequent social developments all the way to our political parties, governments and international institutions.

I don't wish to get involved in an examination of the role of fat people in the history of mankind since it is always possible to find enough instances of anything in history, both positive and negative. Balzac and Einstein were not exactly slim, Napoleon was short and fat, and even Stalin, according to Milovan Djilas's testimony, was short and had a big paunch although this was not allowed to be shown in official photographs. But one could probably find the same range of examples among thin people. After all, most fat people started life as slim youngsters - a point I can confirm from my own experience.

The learned Professor Kretschmer divided men into different body types, without claiming that it was better to be an asthenic than a pyknic, or the other way round. After all, the sanguine nature associated with the pyknic type is not a bad characteristic. There is a Czech proverb which claims that "a vicious man never grows fat" because his own viciousness consumes him. But even if a tendency to obesity is not inborn and even if we acknowledge that it is really necessary to struggle against fatness - what means are we offered? Abstinence and continuous control. One's whole life is to be subjected to watching one's health. What use is a long life if one is not allowed to live it the way one wants to?

Two and a half thousand years ago the Chinese philosopher Yang Chu wrote: "A hundred years is the upper limit of human life but it

is reached by only one in a thousand. Half this time is taken up by impotent childhood and frail old age. Of the rest of the time, sleep at night and trivial affairs during the day take up one half. Grief, worries, bereavement and mourning take up a good half of what is left. I do not know whether in the ten years thus remaining one can find a single carefree hour to enjoy the pleasures of life."

The pleasures of life have not increased in number in the twenty-five centuries since Yang Chu. But one of them is good food, and it is one that is relatively easy to come by nowadays. Why should one give it up?

Stanislaw Jerzy Lec said: "Fat men live less long. But they eat longer."

Of course one can find a substitute for anything. We have got quite a lot of substitutes already: Coffee without caffeine, cigarettes without nicotine, petting, fruit juice without fruit, cocoa drinks without cocoa. Soon perhaps we shall have brandy without alcohol. It is possible to invent food without calories, just as food without flavour has long been invented and introduced into our daily lives. With such substitute food it would be possible to provide a substitute human life with a substitute pleasure in a substitute life.

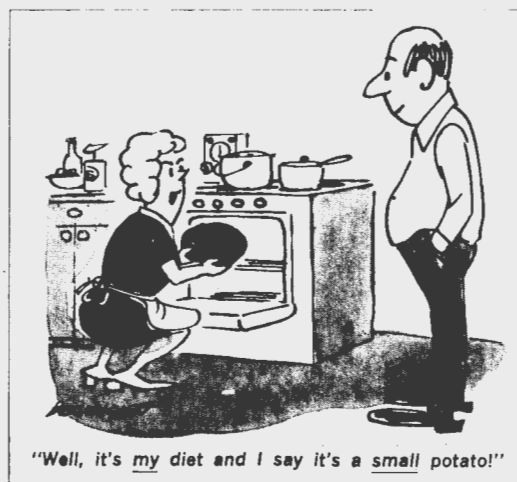
I'd rather be fat.

(Translated from the German by Ewald Osers)

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HILDA STILL AVAILABLE

Our 1974 "HILDA" calendar is still available at \$2.25, postpaid. She's a cheerful way to keep track of the year.



Reproduced by permission from the October, 1972 issue of Good Housekeeping Magazine. © 1972 by the Hearst Corporation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORSLIM NEWS MAGAZINE THANKS NAAFA

Editor,

First of all, I want to thank you for your generous and warm support of my publishing efforts with SLIM NEWS. After much soul-searching, I have decided to become a member of NAAFA.

I would have joined last summer except for two considerations: (1) I felt that perhaps as a "journalist" in the field of diet and weight, joining NAAFA would "taint" my objectivity, that I should join nothing that had strong views one way or the other in the weight control field; and (2) knowing my own neurotic relationship with food and obesity as someone who went through an obese period (because of adolescent turmoil and pressures since resolved) and who struggles daily to be, perhaps, what Lew Louderback calls "a thin fat man," I suspected I might harbor a deep emotional bias against fat people which might make it impossible to live up to NAAFA's standard of "promoting tolerance toward fat people."

However, the more I have researched the literature, the more convinced I have become that NAAFA's essential message of self-respect is vitally needed by millions of fat people in this country.

Likewise, as my knowledge has grown, I find pompous, judgemental, moralistic, intolerant, ill-informed and misinformed fat-hating hysterics genuinely annoying...both those who have never dealt with an obese lifestyle, and those who hate themselves for being overweight.

As a result of NAAFA's mailing of a free copy of SLIM NEWS to all its members, I've received some 65 subscriptions. Things have been moving slowly. As you may know, the first issue did not sell well and for a while I had serious reservations about continuing.

Fortunately, in mid-December, SLIM NEWS was cleared as a trademark. We have now filed incorporation papers for the new corporation, Fat and Thin Publishing. All the type for issue no.2 is set. I have ordered photos for the next issue. Everything appears set to go at last.

At this moment, my layout includes coverage of the NAAFA convention, with photos. I have also secured Louderback's permission to reprint his Saturday Evening Post "Speaking Out" piece entitled "More People Should be Fat!"

Nearly losing my "baby", so to speak, as well as a good hunk of my shirt has given me something of a fright. Economic realities seem to dictate that "before" and "after" pictures, promises of new and perhaps "easy" ways to lose weight dominate our future covers in order to attract a larger readership. In this field, as in others, it pays to cater to prejudices (Lose weight fast! Read this paper and wear a bikini to the beach this summer--and look 25 years younger too!)--or feed the reader fantasy instead of hard cold truth (The Secret Wonder Diet that takes off 25 pounds in just 5 days!) Those kind of coverlines won't ever appear (hopefully) on SLIM NEWS but we will deal with that kind of mentality on the part of the buying public with features like: "operations that Melt Away Fat" (legitimate story on pros and cons of intestinal by-pass operations - the coverline may be enticing but after reading the story, no

one would ever want to have the operation. The story includes the material reprinted in the NAAFA Newsletter about the wrong "hook-ups" in Canada (Vol.II, Issue 3); the typesetters said the story was "repulsive..." or "The Diet That Makes You Too Thin" (feature on the macrobiotic diet and case studies of malnutrition caused by it), etc.

In looking back over the past year, my contact with NAAFA and the encouragement and support NAAFA members have given me is one of the truly bright spots.

In short, I want you to know how much real encouragement you and NAAFA have given me. I also want you and those who subscribed to know that whatever happens, their subscriptions will be honored or refunded--and that SLIM NEWS will continue with its investigation into diet and weight and will continue to cover the fat lib viewpoint, no matter how unsaleable or unpopular that viewpoint may be with some readers.

May we both grow and prosper in 1974. Enclosed is my membership application. I want to spend 1974 working with you toward achieving a better life for Fat Americans.

Randy Wicker
Editor, SLIM NEWS
New York, N.Y.

DOWN ON CAROL BURNETT SHOW

Dear NAAFA:

I would like to know if you write to TV stations expressing the NAAFA view of FAT in Skinny America. I am referring to the Carol Burnett show. On a few of her programs she has portrayed a fat girl as the brunt of the most sickly jokes. On one program in particular, there was a skit of a former ballerina gone fat. This little ball of pillows was clumsier than a clown, more immature than a child, and squeekier than a mouse.

The image given to fatness by C. Burnett is one lacking any consideration or respect. If you can not or will not write to her program, could you please refer the address to me, or suggest where I might get it? Thank you.

Kathleen A. Machado
New Bedford, Mass.

[We have mixed feelings about C.B.'s show. Much of her material has put fat people in a very unflattering light. On the other hand, the format of the whole show is one of irreverence, and practically every group of people gets spoofed from time to time. And, she has had some good, fat entertainers on her show. Last week, she was very hard on diet and health clubs, and the people who patronize them. What do other NAAFA members think about the Carol Burnett show? -- ED.]

N.Y. CITY CHAPTER

The next meeting of the New York City Chapter will be on Sunday, Feb. 17, at 1:00 PM, at 75 Henry St., Brooklyn, N.Y. Installation of the new officers will be held, and plans for the coming year's activities will be made.

Note: The above announcement has been inserted at the request of the chapter concerned, and paid for at the classified advertising rate. Similar paid announcements for other chapters will be carried if submitted at least 3 weeks of the publication date.