



NAAFA Newsletter

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In Memoriam: Jan Andrus



Jan Andrus

[Editor's Note: Apologies for neglecting to put this item in the previous issue.]

Rocky Mountain Chapter NAAFA Member Jan Andrus passed away on February 20, 2009. From the RMNAAFA Yahoo Group: "Jan always had a smile and friendly word for everyone she met. She truly gave to others, whether it was her work with Meals on Wheels, taking care of her son, or opening her home to allow RMNAAFA members to get together for lunch. She was never afraid to speak her mind and did everything with such an air of vitality and zest for life. She was one sassy, fun, loving lady who could never be replaced."

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2009 Convention Wrap-Up



NAAFA celebrated our 40th anniversary at an annual fund raising convention July 31-August 3 in Dulles, Virginia, near the nation's capital. The convention ended on a high note as NAAFA and ASDAH sent teams to visit more than 30 U.S. Senators and Representatives, as well as the USDA, delivering the message that healthcare reform legislation must eliminate weight loss as a measure of success in healthcare and wellness programs, and that we must put an end to discrimination against people of size.

The convention commenced with a tribute to the past, as members shared photos and stories of NAAFA's beginnings as well as the growth and progress experienced during the past 40 years. NAAFA founder Bill Fabrey shared that he never imagined the organization would still be going strong all these many years later, but that he was proud of all of its accomplishments and looked forward to the next 40 years.

During the Annual General Meeting on Friday morning, co-chair Jason Docherty highlighted the accomplishments of the past year, such as the creation and distribution of the NAAFA Size Diversity Toolkit to over 96% of the Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. He continued by sharing some of our strategic plans for the coming years.

During Saturday's Size Diversity Super Workshop, Dr. Linda Bacon opened our eyes to the concept of "thin privilege", that is, unjust advantage of the thin at the cost of others. So many conclusions are drawn about our health, habits and capabilities based solely on the size and appearance of our bodies. These assumptions lead to discrimination in employment, compensation, promotion, healthcare, housing, public accommodation and more. Dr. Bacon encourages people of all sizes to work to end this discrimination because "it's the right thing to do."

Sondra Solovay, Esq., discussed fighting size discrimination in the work place from a legal perspective, and highlighted best practices in Human Resources in regards to size discrimination. Sondra encouraged employers to take advantage of NAAFA's Size Diversity Toolkit and not make costly HR mistakes. Sondra concluded by reminding us of a lesson she learned on how to ride a motorcycle, "Don't look where you are, look where you are going."

At the Saturday night Awards Dinner and Masquerade Ball, NAAFA honored key individuals that have made major strides for the movement over the past 40 years:

- The Legislative Pioneer Award was presented to Mr. Sterling Tucker, who was responsible for adding height and weight to the anti-discrimination laws of Washington, D.C. in 1977.
- The Size Acceptance Vanguard Award went to our own Bill Fabrey for being the founding father of NAAFA in 1969.
- Dr. Linda Bacon was the recipient of the Trend-Breaking Research Award for her work in Health At Every Size.
- Dr. Lily O'Hara received the International Size Acceptance Trailblazer Award for her work in a country that has no size acceptance movement.

"Obesity causes \$147 billion per year in extra medical costs in US" hit the headlines during the NAAFA convention and reporters began calling and

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writing, asking for our opinion of this announcement. NAAFA members Dr. Deb Burgard and Dr. Linda Bacon fielded interviews with NPR and CNN and our position on this important issue was clearly stated in a most timely manner. Dr. Bacon's interview followed one given by the CDC's Dr. William Dietz who agreed during the NPR interview that "people can be healthy at any size!"

Brandon Macsata, founder and president of the Association for Airline Passenger Rights (AAPR, www.flyfriendlyskies.com) with whom NAAFA has recently formed a strategic alliance, joined us for breakfast on Sunday as we began our day of training for the all so important visit to The Hill on Monday. Mr. Macsata shared tips for improving the quality of our travel experience and reinforced his commitment to fighting discrimination.

Activists and lobbyists Joslyn Smith and Noreen Banks teamed up with representatives from NAAFA and ASDAH to organize and coordinate advocacy training on Sunday afternoon and schedule our appointments with key players in the health care debate on Monday. The entire Advocacy Team invested many hours in research, planning, appointment setting, preparation of materials, and training which resulted in a truly historic visit to The Hill on Monday.

But these visits are only the beginning. We must continue to follow up with our legislators and provide them with more information to reinforce our commitment to size equality. NAAFA encourages you to email or call your legislators today. If you aren't sure what to say, contact NAAFA (www.naafa.org) and we'll be happy to assist you with important speaking points. We must provide a unified message. We come in all sizes. Understand it, support it, accept it!

Passenger Rights Association for Airline Passenger Rights Advocate Joins NAAFA Advisory Board

NAAFA is proud to announce that Brandon Macsata, Executive Director of the Association for Airline Passenger Rights (AAPR), has agreed to join its distinguished Advisory Board. This volunteer board consists of experts in their fields who are periodically called upon to advise NAAFA on its projects, policies, initiatives and specific media inquiries.

Earlier this year, NAAFA formed a strategic alliance with AAPR to further strengthen our commitment to eliminate discrimination. Macsata was a guest speaker at the 2009 NAAFA 40th Anniversary Convention (see article above).

Brandon Macsata is widely recognized for his ability to connect national, state and local stakeholders interested in influencing public policy. He has extensive experience working with political candidates, national and statewide trade associations, and other corporate entities. Macsata has dedicated much of his professional and personal life advocating for persons with disabilities, persons living with AIDS as well as seniors. It is not only his broad experience as an advocate and activist, but his compassion for others that makes Brandon Macsata a perfect addition to NAAFA's Advisory Board.

Book Review: Lessons from The Fat-O-Sphere

by Kate Harding and Marianne Kirby
Reviewed by Bill Weitze

This is a great book for those who are just starting along the road toward self acceptance. (Or even those of us who need a reminder now and then.) It's aimed at the fat person who knows that our society is nuts when it comes to fatness, but isn't sure how else to approach the issue.

Based on the title, I was expecting lots of quotes from the blogs of each author, plus framing text with the same no-holds-barred style. The actual book is more of a beginner's guide to fat acceptance, with much of the blogs' profanity and meandering styles tamed. That's probably not a bad thing.

It covers a lot of ground for such a compact book (about 220 pages),

with 27 chapters plus three appendices. With so much ground to cover, it can't really go into the nitty gritty of how to arrive at self acceptance, but that process is going to be different with every individual.

Book Review: FatLand

by Frannie Zellman
Reviewed by Darliene Howell

Welcome to FatLand where people find a safe haven from government enacted "Pro-Health Laws" and discrimination against people of size. But is there trouble in Paradise? Frannie Zellman guides us on a trip through the lives of FatLanders and "Other Siders" that leads to political intrigue and even murder! Come along, I know you'll enjoy the ride to FatLand.

Frannie received her MA in creative writing from Boston University in 1980 and blames none of her professors for what she has done or written since. She is a member of NAAFA and has taught writing workshops for people of size. She is the editor of *Fat Poets Speak: Voices of the Fat Poets' Society*, also published by Pearlsong Press. She has recently started an online fiction writing group called the Fat Fiction Forum.

Book Review: Booby Trap

by Sue Ann Jaffarian
Reviewed by Phyllis Warr

Booby Trap, by Los Angeles area author Sue Ann Jaffarian, is the fourth in a wonderful series of novels about an adventurous and ever so curious (OK, so maybe nosey is the right word for her) paralegal named Odelia Grey. One thing that makes Odelia different from other sleuths we've seen in fiction is that she is plump, fat, a BBW, a chunky chick, who accepts herself as she is. While she generally follows HAES policies of movement and eating a healthy diet, she does have the occasional slice of cake without being angry with herself.

In *Booby Trap*, Odelia gets roped into another mystery, finding out if a friend's son is the serial killer, the Blond Bomber. She risks her life, but is supported in her work by her handsome husband and friends who love her, think she is a little nuts, but understand why she does what she does.

Odelia Grey's efforts to prove that her friend has no worries about her son lead her to a complicated and absorbing story with many twists and turns. As a seasoned mystery reader, I read this page turner hungrily, adding clues together as I went, yet found that I didn't know "whodunit" at the end of the book.

I loved Sue Ann's earlier works: *Too Big To Miss*, *The Curse of the Holy Pail* and *Thugs and Kisses*, and am looking forward to the next in the series, *Corpse on the Cob*, due out in 2010. Avid Jaffarian readers will not have to wait until next year to read her next book though. She is beginning a new series with, *Ghost a la Mode: A Ghost of Granny Apples Mystery*, which is due out in September.

Fun With Health and Weight Statistics

by Paul Ernsberger, PhD

[Editor's Note: Paul is a nutrition researcher for the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, and is a member of NAAFA's Board of Advisors.]

[Additional note for readers of this archive edition: The 2008 data discussed in this article is no longer available at America's Health Rankings; the reader is encouraged to examine the 2010 data linked below.]

The website America's Health Rankings (www.americashealthrankings.org/glance.aspx) ranks states of the US by a health score, determined by prevalence of smoking, fatness, cancer deaths, air pollution, health insurance, and so on. Now, state rankings don't mean much, and tiny changes from year to year mean even less. Nonetheless, the website has nice tables that are amenable to copy and paste. So I plugged the data into my stats program.

First, I did what I suspect all the obesity scare mongers would do. I correlated obesity rate with overall health score. The correlation value (Pearson's r) was -0.73 . This means that fatter states have worse health.

Then I looked at a very good measure of population health: life years lost to premature death. This is calculated by giving every death a score. If the death was in someone 75 or older, the score is zero. It's considered a normal death after a full life. If an infant dies before its first birthday, the score is 75. That means 75 years of potential human life were lost when the baby died. A death at age 50 counts for 25 points. This years-of-life-lost score is also correlated with obesity ($r=0.75$). This means that the more fat people in a state, the greater the number of premature deaths.

Now I could stop there and write a paper with a catchy headline like "Obesity Causes Poor health and Premature Death". I could even make a calculation from the r number and say "Obesity accounts for 56% of all premature death in the U.S." That would be a defensible statement from the statistics.

But there are other variables to look at. Let's try smoking. There is a strong positive correlation between obesity rates and smoking rates ($r=0.67$). Right away that tells you that looking at state rankings is not like looking at statistics for individuals. Smokers tend to be slightly lighter than non-smokers, something that Harvard researchers Walter Willett and JoAnn Manson love to emphasize. But states with more smokers have more fat people. Part of the reason is that the fattest states are in the Deep South, where more people smoke.

Binge drinking is more common in fatter states ($r=0.69$). So is air pollution ($r=0.52$). And fatter states have more childhood poverty ($r=0.61$) and violent crime ($r=0.35$), while having fewer people that have finished high school ($r=-0.35$).

Positive health factors are lacking. The fatter the state, the lower the availability of primary care physicians ($r=-0.45$).

Fatter states have higher rates of infant mortality ($r=0.71$). If you were from Harvard, you would say it's because fat mothers give birth to sickly infants. But others might argue that smoking, binge drinking, poverty, crime, pollution and lack of medical care might have more to do with it.

So to sum it up, the more fat people a state has, the more likely is the following:

- More smokers
- More binge drinkers
- More air pollution
- More poverty
- More violent crime
- More high school dropouts
- Fewer primary care physicians
- Higher infant mortality

Now, why do you think that states with more fat people have more sick people? Is it the fat that is making them sick?

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Editor's Note: You'll find the latest size acceptance news, good and bad, at the NAAFA News RSS Feed at <http://naafa.org>]

September 11, 2008: LiveScience's Bad Science Columnist Benjamin Radford writes "Why Thin Will Always Be In". But here, the "bad science" is Radford's column. Starting with a study showing that it's possible to be fat and fit, he refutes hard science with soft opinion by stating that evolutionary pressures will always force humans to prefer average-sized mates. Tell that to the millions of fat admirers!
<http://www.livescience.com/health/080911-bad-fat-thin.html>

December 2, 2008: The *International Journal of Obesity* presents a

study on weight-loss maintenance of "successful" WLS v dieters, and find that there is little difference between the two methods; with both groups having significant weight regain (reducing overall loss to approximately 10% of the initial bodyweight) even with increased energy expenditure.
<http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v33/n1/full/ijo2008256a.html>

December 3, 2008: United Health Foundation health ratings for the United States make for some interesting reading. As Kelly Bliss M.Ed, A.C.E. points out, the chart indicating "Improvements Since 1990" is constantly moving up, at the same time that body size has also increased. Also of note, Vermont (rated the healthiest state) moved up in the rankings with an increase of obesity, while Colorado (with the lowest obesity ranking) moved down in health. [See related article by Paul Ernsberger above. Comments based on 2008 data.]
<http://www.americashealthrankings.org>

December 3, 2008: While there's no evidence that fat kids are significantly more aggressive than their "normal" weight peers, they are more likely to be bullied or to bully others. And yet a study has been performed to show that getting some regular exercise may reduce the acting out in anger by fat children. Other variables (increased attention, less violent TV, etc.) may also have contributed to the reduction in acting out in anger. But maybe fat kids are angry because of how they're treated, and we should be addressing that problem as well.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE4B27JA20081203>
<http://journals.humankinetics.com/pes-back-issues/PESVolume20Issue4November/AerobicExerciseProgramReducesAngerExpressionAmongOverweightChildren>

December 9, 2008: Oprah put back all the weight she dieted off. Why is this news? Why is she surprised --- worse, why does she say she feels "embarrassed"; and "just wants to disappear"? It is too bad that this woman is caught up with her own self-denial of being a fat woman, but what is worse is what her reaction to this (almost inevitable) weight gain does to the average person.
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28139107>

December 22, 2008: A new study led by Elizabeth Cashdan (Univ. of Utah) questioned the longstanding idea that there is an evolutionary explanation for the preference of some men for a woman with an hourglass figure. The study found that there are some evolutionary advantages for women with thicker waists, who tend to be stronger, more assertive, and more resistant to stress.
http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2008/12/22/evolutionary_curveball_for_curvy
<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/593036>

December 31, 2008: In a study led by Dr. Hugh M. Ehrenberg of Ohio State University Medical Center in Columbus, of 253 women, all of whom were considered to be a higher-than-normal risk of preterm delivery, excess weight seemed to lower the risk. It appears that for unknown reasons, fat women have fewer contractions between the 22nd and 34th weeks of pregnancy.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE4BU41Z20081231>
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19104359>

January 2009: A study published in the journal *Circulation* following 21,000 "overweight" doctors over a period of 20 years finds that exercising only *once a month* can reduce the risk of heart failure by 18%. Exercising 5-7 days a week reduces the risk by up to 30%.
<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/119/1/44>

January 5, 2009: *Alas a Blog* quotes an article from the November/December *Diversity Women* where, out of fear of the word fat, NAAFA is changed to "NAAPA" to match their naming of the organization as National Association for the Advancement of Plus-Size Acceptance. Funnier yet, the Los Angeles Chapter's Fattitude Festival becomes the . . . yep . . . "Plus-Sizeitude Festival". And, sadly, quotes from heroes like Marilyn Wann and Pat Lyons are garbled by the editor's search-and-replace frenzy.
<http://www.amptoons.com/blog/archives/2009/01/05/many-criinge-when-they-see-how-their-article-was-edited>
<http://www.lindabacon.org/SizeDoesntMatter.pdf>

January 7, 2009: "People Who Live Large Can Be Happy, Group

Professes" in the *Oklahoma Gazette* begins with some truly lame jokes about overeating, then goes on with an odd mix of positive and negative fat comments. Our Peggy Howell provides the positive information and Gary E. Raskob (Dean of University of Oklahoma College of Public Health) provides the negative, claiming to just be concerned about fat children and the rise in health costs due to fat folk.

<http://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/article-3083-people-who-live-large-can-be-happy-group-professes.html>

January 7, 2009: In an excellent article about the UK's war on obesity and its Change4Life program, authors Patrick Basham and John Luik list 5 problems with the program and proceed to expose the bad science upon which it is based. Basham and Luik do a great job in providing the sources and data to back their arguments.

<http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?site/article/6083>

January 7, 2009: A UK study led by Andrew J. Calder concludes that some people are more susceptible to cravings just from seeing or smelling appetizing food. The study includes only 21 people (with a mean BMI of 24), and only traces the brain's reaction to stimuli, without showing whether or not the person would act upon the stimuli by eating.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28794584>

<http://www.jneurosci.org/cgi/content/full/29/1/43>

January 14, 2009: Paul Campos' opinion piece in the *Rocky Mountain News* is a great read, using the ongoing Oprah brouhaha to show just how unrealistic our government's concept of "normal" weight is.

<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2009/jan/14/campos-what-is-normal-weight>

January 15, 2009: Binghamton, New York joins the few cities in the US that has a law on the books banning employment discrimination based on weight and height. Sam Narisi also gives examples in *HR Recruiting Alert* how employment weight and height discrimination might be deemed illegal.

<http://www.hrrecruitingalert.com/city-outlaws-weight-bias>

January 20, 2009: A study by Brookhaven National Lab led by Gene-Jack Wang concludes that men and women's brains react differently when they try to suppress hunger. This set off a whirlwind of severely flawed news articles stating that men are better at controlling hunger and which explains why more women are fat (which isn't true anyway; see second link below). Can anyone say "confounding variables"?

<http://www.pnas.org/content/106/4/1249.full>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5536a1.htm>

January 20, 2009: A Las Vegas father shackled his 15 year old daughter and beat her because he felt she needed to lose 20-25 pounds. The father stated he didn't think he was committing a crime and was acting in his daughter's best interests. NAAFA's Peggy Howell contacted the DA to encourage him to prosecute the father to the full extent of the law and to offer help to the daughter. Result: On April 15, the man was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

<http://www.fox5vegas.com/news/18526796/detail.html>

<http://www.fox5vegas.com/news/19179328/detail.html>

January 22, 2009: While Reuters' article "Obesity Epidemic Shows Peril to Health Reform" discusses fat bias and discrimination, once again the fatty is blamed. The focus of the article is that insurance companies can reduce the high cost of keeping fat people alive by covering WLS. The ineffectiveness of WLS and the high cost of WLS complications is not addressed.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE50L02X20090122>

January 22, 2009: In Ohio State's Student Paper, *The Lantern*, Sarah McCaslin's article addresses the problem of size discrimination and fat bias, and lauds NAAFA for its work. Unfortunately, she couldn't resist including the obsequious warning that being fat is unhealthy and not being fat is better. Sigh.

<http://media.www.thelantern.com/media/storage/paper333/>

news/2009/01/22/Arts/Acceptance.No.Matter.The.Size-3592271.shtml

January 22, 2009: Instead of complying with the Canadian Transportation Agency's "one person, one fare" ruling; the airlines seem to be trying to find ways to avoid compliance. MSNBC reports that

passengers now need to provide a medical form (developed by the airlines), which includes a diagram of how the doctor should measure the patient's behind! As Dr. Arya Sharma comments, "You don't need go to medical school to figure out if someone can fit in an airline seat."

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28777115>

January 26, 2009: *The New York Times* reports on a study which concludes that restricting calories may lead to memory improvement in humans. The article points out, however, that other studies have shown calorie restriction causes a decline or no change in memory.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/27/health/research/27diet.html>

<http://www.pnas.org/content/106/4/1255.full>

January 25, 2009: Ken Carlson's report "Bariatric Surgery's Complications Devastate Some Patients" tells the story of a woman with life threatening complications from WLS; and provides some interesting discrepancies on WLS statistics. He also states the *improved* rate on WLS complications is reported at 30%.

<http://www.modbee.com/2369/story/576733.html>

January 28, 2009: The *Journal of Nutrition* publishes a study on food addiction that concludes that foods are not addictive, per se, but that addiction-like behavior appears after a restriction/bingeing pattern of consumption. In other words, dieting is causing the problem it purports to solve.

<http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/abstract/139/3/617>

February 2009: *Statistics Canada's* article "Obesity on the Job" purports to show that fat employees are less productive and more expensive to society as a whole. Both Deb Burgard, PhD and Paul Ernsberger PhD found the methodology inconsistent and the analysis slanted to reach unwarranted conclusions. One problem: the fatter workers tend to older and in more hazardous jobs.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2009102/article/10789-eng.htm>

February 3, 2009: The president of a dietary supplement manufacturer is sentenced to 50 months in prison for selling generic drugs without prescriptions on the internet. The company was also accused of spiking its dietary supplements with ephedrine alkaloids (banned by the US FDA in 2004) but such assertions were not prosecuted.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28983195>

February 4, 2009: A new study on older and healthy men published in *Journal of Gerontology* those men who were fattest but fit had the lowest mortality risk, warranting further investigation of fitness, fatness and mortality in older persons.

<http://biomedgerontology.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/gln039v1>

February 5, 2009: *Radaronline* reports NAAFA's stance that Jessica Simpson's weight is not a gauge of her talent and it is time for the nation to move past its weight obsession.

<http://www.radaronline.com/exclusives/2009/02/fat-acceptance-group-has-simpsons-backside.php>

February 8, 2009: Two lovely, talented fat women win top honors at the 2009 Grammy Awards, with Jennifer Hudson winning Best R&B Album, and British singer Adele winning Best New Artist and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance.

<http://www.grammy.org/recording-academy/awards>

February 10, 2009: A study conducted on 98 pairs of twins find that after age 55 a more youthful appearance can be (at least partially) attributed to being fatter.

<http://www.plasticsurgery.org/Documents/news-resources/press-releases/Twins-PRS-Study-2009.pdf>

February 19, 2009: Although disorganized and self-contradictory, an article in the *Chicago Free Press* on weight and lesbianism includes reasonable voices such as Marilyn Wann and Esther Rothblum Ph.D, as well as reference to Linda Bacon's book *Health at Every Size* and the benefits of HAES in general.

[Editor's Note: The *Chicago Free Press* closed its doors May 2010; the article is no longer available.]

February 22, 2009: *The Observer* reports on the World Cancer Research Fund's (updated) Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention report. In reviewing the report, Deb Burgard recommends you "follow the money". (Fear of fatness = more research funds.) A look at the WCRF website shows that their priority in research funding concerns finding a link between diet, weight and cancer.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/feb/22/cancer-obesity-link>
<http://www.wcrf.org>

February 25, 2009: *The New York Times* presents an article about children suffering from anxiety due to pressure by their parents to avoid "bad" food; the anxiety can lead to an eating disorder where the child is so fixated on eating healthy that they reduce their food intake to dangerous levels.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/26/health/nutrition/26food.html>

February 26, 2009: The Academy for Eating Disorders issues Guidelines for Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs by Sigrún Daniélsdóttir, Cand.Psych., Deb Burgard, PhD, and Wendy Oliver-Pyatt, MD that are both HAES- and size-friendly. Thank you ladies!

<http://www.aedweb.org/media/Guidelines.cfm>

February 26, 2009: A new study reported in *New England Journal of Medicine* states that a comparison of different weight-loss diets showed all to have the same level of efficacy. Of more interest, in the same issue, is Martijn B. Katan, PhD's editorial which points out that, basically, the diets were all equally *ineffective* for long term weight loss.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/360/9/859>
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/360/9/923>

March 10, 2009: The *International Journal of Obesity* reports on a study that found use of acupuncture in addition to diet and exercise has no positive or negative effect on weight loss.

<http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v33/n5/abs/ijo200941a.html>

 www.fineboots.com