

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

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Co-Editors this issue: William J. Fabrey and Lisbeth Fisher

TIME TO LEAVE FAT PEOPLE ALONE, SOCIOLOGIST SAYS

[The following article is reprinted from the DES MOINES (Iowa) REGISTER of 9/17/76, and was an Associated Press Release.]

"CHICAGO, ILL. (AP)--Sometime in the last century a wit is reported to have remarked that inside every fat man there is a thin one signalling wildly to be let out.

That thin man is the target of much dieting currently, but one sociologist believes the anti-fat mania has gone too far.

It's time to leave fat people alone, says Dr. Natalie Allon of Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y. Bodies come in many shapes and sizes, and one is not necessarily better than another, she says.

In a telephone interview Allon said, 'People in this country have a mania about eating and dieting. There is such a panic about being too fat and, occasionally, too skinny.'

She blamed the fashion industry and advertising for perpetrating the notion that everybody ought to have 'a stick figure' and look like a 'walking hanger.'

Allon, who has been studying social reactions to overweight people for more than 10 years, presented a study of reactions toward fat people at a meeting of U.S. and Canadian nutritionists at Michigan State University.

She said her studies have involved mostly women, since she interviews them in health spas and exercise classes. Women, she said, are most concerned about appearance when they try to lose weight, while men's concern most often is health.

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Sheila Goodman, 1977 Convention Chairperson, busily prepares for the festivities.

COME TO THE CONVENTION!

The 1977 Convention is really shaping up into something special. Reservation forms have been mailed, and new members will be sent them as they join. You must have your reservation in no later than May 15, unless you are a member who has joined after that date. Because food and drink are involved both Saturday and Sunday, we must know how many people to plan for.

Saturday night there will be a wine and cheese party and dance. During the evening, various members will present a "Non-Gong" talent show. With the talent we have in NAAFA, it promises to be a fun-filled evening.

Sunday morning, rap sessions will be conducted, free of charge, on a variety of interesting subjects.

Sunday afternoon, following a buffet, James E. Nelson, Ph. D., who was one day vice president of an advertising agency and the next a graduate student in psychology, will address us on the subject of "Feeling Good About Yourself." Dr. Nelson, who resides and practices in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, is a licensed psychologist who specializes in counseling and clinical psychology.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Fabrey

PHYSICIANS NEEDED!

One of the most common complaints we receive is that the fat person who goes to his or her doctor with a complaint is treated with abuse and lack of understanding. It is common for doctors to blame almost any physical ailment on the patient's weight, although an increasing number of doctors are beginning to have greater insight into the problems of fat people.



A tragic consequence of the situation is that many fat people avoid going to the doctor at all costs; not wishing to suffer humiliation and embarrassment, they let medical problems go undiagnosed and untreated, sometimes with fatal results. On the other hand, treatment by a physician with a poor understanding of fat patients can possibly be fatal, too!

There are some good, competent, understanding doctors around, and the best thing that a NAAFAN with a medical problem can do is to find such a physician, and stop consulting the doctor who is creating so much grief.

Many NAAFA members write to us asking for a list of such sympathetic physicians. Naturally, we will never be able to determine the abilities of individual doctors, but we have long been considering putting together a list of practitioners who, in the opinion of specific NAAFA members, are not hostile toward fat patients. Publication of such a list would have to receive approval of our Board of Directors and legal counsel. In the meantime, please send us the name(s) of physicians who have treated you with concern and lack of prejudice.

In the Jan.-Feb. 1976 Newsletter, Naomi Shadowitz made this request, but she has received very few letters on the subject. We are again asking that you help us make other members aware of the names of sympathetic doctors. If you know of any, please share your knowledge with the rest of us!

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Then, after a "State of NAAFA" report by President, Bill Fabrey, Distinguished Achievement Awards will be presented to James Coco and Albert Innaurato for their acting in and authorship of, respectively, THE TRANSFIGURATION OF BENNO BLIMPIE, one of a pair of plays dually entitled "MONSTERS," which was reviewed in the last issue of the Newsletter; NAAFA member, Wilma Kuns, for her long-term devotion and concern for NAAFA; and Clairol for its "big fat beautiful hair" advertising.

Finally, the ever-popular fashion show will be presented by our beautiful NAAFA models. Outfits this year will be supplied by Lane Bryant, Outrageous Fashions (run by NAAFA member, Dianne Rubinstein), and possibly others not confirmed at press time. Joyce Maloney and Lisbeth Fisher are co-chairing the female portion of the show, and Matt Madigan has agreed this year to chair a male portion of the fashion show. So, all you female and male models let us know who you are, so we can include you.

Anyone wishing more up-to-date information on the convention can call Convention Chairperson, Sheila Goodman, at 212 580-7597 evenings and weekends, or Liz Fisher at the NAAFA office at 914 941-8808 at all kinds of hours (just keep trying!). See you soon!

BULK MAIL NOTICE

This is the first issue of the Newsletter to be mailed via our non-profit mailing permit. We sincerely hope it will not take too long to reach our members by this method, but it is a definite savings to NAAFA and has helped us avoid an increase in membership dues.

We have good news, which is contrary to what we previously reported to you. The U. S. Post Office in New York City originally informed us that we must print the full name of the organization on our mailing envelopes, in order to use this bulk rate. However, further investigation by our Ossining office has uncovered a post office that will permit us to use only our initials (NAAFA) on the mailing envelopes. Therefore, the permit was purchased in Ossining, and all bulk mailings will emanate from that point.

ANOTHER PEN PAL MARRIAGE!

We are pleased to announce the marriage on March 20 between Bonnie Helene Navis and Daniel L. Duarte. Mr. and Mrs. Duarte met through NAAFA's Pen Pal program and are presently residing in Roanoke, Virginia. The Newsletter staff plans an interview of the happy couple in a future issue of the Newsletter. Much love and happiness to you, Bonnie and Dan!

LETTERSGRATEFUL FOR NAAFA

Dear NAAFA,

I'm so grateful to this organization. I need your support.

My husband is thin, and he doesn't like my being fat; neither do my kids. I would like to hear from some of the members as to how they handle this kind of thing. I have qualities to be admired. I've learned to accept my weight. The real person is not his looks. My family has society's attitude--thin is in. I've been under a doctor's care for my nerves and see a counselor once a week. What I don't need is put-downs.

I've read FAT POWER, FAT PRIDE and FAT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL--they have encouraged me and given me self respect and a feeling I'm okay.

A friend of mind just recently made a comment that I shouldn't sit on one end of her couch, that I might break it, and went on about other fat people. Well, I was caught off guard and didn't say much at the time; but I got to thinking about it later, and I told her I didn't appreciate it and her tact was something less to be desired. I told her being fat had nothing to do with a person, and thin people don't have life's answers either. I I said things to this effect calmly and confidently. She said that she meant nothing by her remarks and has treated me with greater respect since then. I am pleased that I got the nerve to tell her.

My family seems more difficult to stand up to. Will there be a day that their attitude changes? I wonder. Could anyone help me in what to say or do or give me a bit of encouragement. My husband says he

thinks I'd be better off thin and I can't do anything he likes to do. I love to read--I devour books; I love to cook, work in my home, and wear pretty clothes in spite of my weight. I'm happy being this way and not worrying about my size all the time. I've been all sizes for years--it didn't change the quality of life. I still had the same problems. My husband isn't Mr. America, but I love him just the same and wouldn't change his looks for anything. We live in a youth-oriented society, which also makes it difficult for aging.

Thanks for listening. I feel better for having written this letter. I hope you put it in the Newsletter soon.

Deloris Staley
Newton, Illinois

[Response from Lisbeth Fisher, Executive Secretary]

Dear Mrs. Staley,

Thank you for your letter, and congratulations to you for having the courage to stand up to your thoughtless "friend." This is just what NAAFA is trying to do for its members--to raise their self-esteem and help them to not allow society to put them down.

As for your family, you might ask them whether they'd rather have you the way you are or not at all. That might give them some pause for thought. You have a right to exist however you please, and you do not have to put up with the criticism of others.

[Reply from Mrs. Staley]:

Dear Mrs. Fisher:

I would like my previous letter in the NAAFA Newsletter. Perhaps there would be response from other members on the situations I mentioned.

Thank you, and let's keep up the good work! Since I joined NAAFA, I look at people differently, as well as myself. My outlook has changed.

Respectfully yours,

Deloris Staley

AIRLINE SEAT WIDTHS CHARTED

by Michael Simpson

Several months ago, as Chairperson of the Anthropometrics Committee, I wrote to 20 airlines (both domestic and foreign) to ask them the width of their seats on the different types of aircraft they use. Only 6 airlines replied, but these helped us to give you some information about airplane seating.

As most people know, first class seats are much larger in width and leg room than those in economy class, but who wants or can afford them? Here are a few pointers about economy class:

1. On 747's, DC-10's and other wide-bodied planes of that size, avoid window or aisle seats. The seats in the middle of the plane are wider by almost 1 1/2 inches.
2. The seats right behind the partition between first and economy have more leg room, as well as the seats back by the galley and exit doors.
3. All airlines have seat belt extensions on their planes, but if more than one heavy person is flying with you, they recommend that you reserve an extension when you make your flight reservations.
4. In all planes, the arm rest will lift up in the economy section; they are removable in the first class section, except in Pan American 747's.
5. The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) has set the fare rates for a person who requires more space than one seat. The first seat is full fare, and the second is half fare.
6. They all stated that, if the seat next to you is vacant and not filled at the time of departure, you may use the next seat by raising the arm rest and not pay the extra charge. However, if the plane is full, you just might not get aboard if you have not paid for the extra space.

As these standards for the extra charge and seat widths have been set by the CAB, it is they to whom we should be sending our letters of complaint, and not to individual airlines.

In the near future we hope to begin asking bus companies, railroads, and movie

and theatre owners about their seat sizes. Our aim is to publish all the public places that are comfortable and those that are not.

We would like to hear from you about anything you might be able to add to the list, or a place that you would or would not recommend. We can accomplish this goal only with the help of all NAAFA members.

[Ed. Mr. Simpson's committee received several responses of interest from the airlines, which he shared with us.

One representative of Allegheny Airlines stated that he is 6' 2" and weighs 267 pounds, and encounters no problems in travelling on his airline. Eastern Airlines was kind enough to point out that their seat belt is 45" in length, and securely holds a weight up to 2,000 pounds; and that up to 3 seat belt extensions may be added for a total girth of 114".

To determine if you will be comfortable in seats of the width shown in the chart accompanying this article, sit down in an armchair that is just barely comfortable and is almost too narrow for you. Then get up and measure the width of the chair with a tape measure or yardstick at the narrowest point between the arms. You should not choose an airline that has only seats smaller than the one you find barely comfortable!

The Anthropometrics Committee is continuing its survey, but has made its initial findings available as a possible aid to NAAFans who are making summer travel plans.]

POWER OF THE PEOPLE

Recently, TV GUIDE Magazine reported that a leading advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, has advised its clients that a significant percentage of viewers not only dislike violent programs, but refuse to buy products advertised during the programs.

NAAFA has tried to use a similar tactic with regard to advertising and programming that is offensive to fat people. We believe that we have, at times, been successful, and we hope that you will write sponsors when you find something offensive being aired. Also, if you will write the NAAFA office with the details, we will take action, when possible.

SEAT WIDTH INCHES IN FIRST CLASS											
AIRLINE	747	707	737	727	L1011	DC-10	DC-9	DC-8	BAC1-11	CV580	FH-227
EASTERN				21	21		20				
KLM ROYAL DUTCH	20 1/2						20				
NATIONAL				21- 24			20- 25				
PAN AM	21*	22									
UNITED	21- 22		21	21		21- 22		20- 22 1/2			
SEAT WIDTH INCHES IN COACH/ECONOMY											
ALLEGHENY							18		18	18	
EASTERN				17	17		18 1/2				
KLM ROYAL DUTCH	17- 18 1/2						*17- 18 1/2				
NATIONAL				17- 18			17 1/2 -19				
OZARK							18				17
PAN AMERICAN	17- 17 1/2	17		17							
UNITED	18 1/2		16 1/2- 17 1/2	16 1/2- 17 1/2		18 1/2		16 1/2- 17 1/2			

*Armrest not movable.

LONG ISLAND PHYSICIAN TO LOSE LICENSE

(NEWSDAY, 9/28/76, Susan Page)

"The Board of Regents has voted to bar a Patchogue (L.I.) physician from practicing medicine in New York State.

The physician, Joseph Greco, 46, was found guilty of unprofessional conduct and fraudulent practice because he dispensed amphetamine 'diet' pills to patients he had never seen. Greco also faces misdemeanor and felony charges for the illegal sale of amphetamines. He was indicted after cooperative investigations by the Suffolk County Police Department and NEWSDAY.

The New York action would not affect Greco's professional status in other states, State officials said, although under a Federal procedure, New York's findings against Greco are automatically forwarded to other states."

BOARD ELECTS NEW TREASURER



Ernest Harff has been chosen as the new Treasurer of NAAFA, to fill the recently vacated position. Harff, who won a seat on the Board in the 1975 election, has also been active as Chairperson of the Fund Raising Committee. He was elected by the Board to his new position by a unanimous vote on April 15.

The vacancy was created by the resignation of Joyce Fabrey, who was a Co-Founder of NAAFA in 1969, and had served as Treasurer since March of 1970.

COME TO THE CONVENTION!

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Many physicians consider obesity unhealthy because it contributes to heart disease and other medical problems.

But some fat people are happy and healthy and it's time to overcome the stereotypes about them, the sociologist said.

Dr. Allon said not all overweight people are interested in losing weight and people should not condemn those who are different.

'Some people have red hair, some green eyes,' she said, noting there is no stigma attached to such differences.

But obesity carries a stigma and for many fat people it is a powerful barrier to personal development. The condition is viewed, she said, 'both as a physical deformity and as a behavioral aberration.'

They are made to feel like sinners and criminals, she said, and are regarded as immorally self-indulgent and lacking in will power."

[Dr. Allon has been a member of NAAFA and of its Advisory Board for several years. Her work in the study of fat people and their problems has received much attention, both in the United States and abroad. Her statements in defense of being fat have been widely published in magazines, newspapers and academic literature.

Please note that in the article reprinted above, the statement that "obesity contributes to heart disease" is the opinion of the Associated Press. Cardiologists (heart specialists) seem to be divided on the issue, and several public statements have been made by cardiologists that obesity, per se, does not cause or contribute to heart disease.

--Ed.]

CONNECTICUT CHAPTER HOSTS PICNIC-PARTY

The Connecticut Chapter of NAAFA is sponsoring what it calls a "Second Annual Picnic-Party." Barbara Anderson, Chapter Chairperson, advises that the event will be held in West Haven, Connecticut, on Saturday, June 4, with a rain date of June 5.

NAAFA-DATE REMINDER

The NAAFA office is receiving many NAAFA-Date applications. The NAAFA-Date Committee would like to remind you that the initial match will take 4 to 6 weeks, to allow as many people as possible to join at this time. From then on, you will receive the names of any new NAAFA-Date members with whom you match.

Most of the applications being received are from new members, and previous NAAFA-Date members are reminded that, if they wish to renew their NAAFA-Date membership at the \$10 rate, they must do so by June of 1977. Thereafter, they will be considered new members and will have to pay the \$15 initial fee. The renewal rate is \$10 per year.



Joyce Maloney and Lisbeth Fisher, Co-Chairpeople, 1977 Convention Fashion Show

**FAT
CAN BE
BEAUTIFUL**

OPEN BOARD MEETING DATE

The next Board of Directors meeting will take place on Friday, June 17. The ballots from the upcoming election will be tallied prior to this meeting. Any NAAFA member is welcome to attend the ballot counting and/or the meeting. Please call 212 877-4441 or 914 941-8808 a day or two before the meeting to ascertain the time and place.