

# NAAFA *Newsletter*

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## Fat Activists Bring Message to NOW

California fat activists, including NAAFans Louise Wolfe and Sally E. Smith, and the members of Fat Lip Readers Theater, were instrumental in bringing about passage of an anti-size discrimination resolution by the California National Organization for Women.

The resolution, authored by Louise Wolfe, with help from Doris Stott and Feminist SIG Coordinator Carrie Hemenway, was presented to California NOW on May 15th at their statewide conference. Members of Fat Lip Readers Theater performed at the conference, and also presented a workshop on fat issues. Not only did their participation in the conference allow the resolution to be presented, it is also reported that their well-received performances influenced and educated the NOW attendees to the extent that the resolution was passed with only two dissenters out of well over 100 voters.

The resolution begins:

Whereas fat people face daily discrimination in the areas of employment, insurance, medical treatment, education, adoption, access, and social interaction;

Whereas, women are the main victims of discrimination based on size;

Therefore be it resolved that California NOW shall be officially on record as opposing all size discrimination...

The resolution then goes on to make the following points:

- that NOW will not discriminate against anyone based on size;
- that NOW will make a public statement condemning size discrimination;
- that NOW will be in favor of adding the words "size" or "height and weight" to existing anti-discrimination laws;
- that NOW will endorse future local, state, or federal laws banning size discrimination;
- and
- that NOW will present this resolution at the national NOW conference in June.

"It's important to get other people to support us, especially powerful people and groups," Louise told the Newsletter. "This has been a goal of mine for several years and I'm very pleased that we were finally able to do it. But Carrie Hemenway and I feel that this is just a first step."

Members of NAAFA's Feminist Caucus (SIG), including Carrie Hemenway (MA), Sheila Pigford (NY) and Victoria Reed (CT) are attending NOW's national convention in Buffalo, New York in June. Their plan is to present the resolution (along with California NOW); to run a special issues workshop; and to staff an exhibition table where NAAFA literature, Feminist Caucus materials and *Radiance* magazine will be available. If the resolution passes at the national level, fat women will have a powerful supporter in the 150,000 member National Organization for Women. ♦♦

## Are Kids Getting Fatter?

Are American children getting fatter? According to Tufts University Diet and Nutrition Letter, the answer is yes.

Tufts reported on the findings of Dr. William H. Dietz, Jr. of the Tufts New England Medical Center. According to Dr. Dietz, the prevalence of obesity in children age 6 to 11 has increased as much as 54% since 1963. In the 12 to 17 year age group, the increase is 39%. "Superobese" children (defined by Dr. Dietz as children who have more fat on the upper arm than that of 94% of the general peer population) is an even faster growing group. In children 6 to 11, the rate of increase is 100%, and in children 12 to 17, there is a 64% increase in "superobesity."

While Tufts warns of the increased health risks to "overweight" children, they do not recommend putting moderately fat children on diets. "Unless the child is severely obese (a diagnosis that only a pediatrician should make) do not put him on a weight-loss diet no matter how strong your inclination to do so."

They recommend treating fat children like everyone else in the family with respect to food, encouraging them to be active, limiting television time, making minor changes in cooking procedures (i.e., cooking with less fat, and serving more fruits and vegetables and less processed foods), and not completely banning high-calorie foods. "Parents should not nag an overweight child...even with subtle looks or comments, nor by bringing up the fact that he is fat. Fat children, especially once they enter school, are all too aware of their condition. They do not need to hear about it from the very people who are supposed to be a source of comfort to them."

## COMMENTARY

While we applaud the advice offered by the Tufts University Diet and Nutrition Letter, we wish that very fat children were included in all their recommendations. No matter how large the child, he or she needs to be treated like other children and given love and support at home. Equally important, we are skeptical that putting very fat children on diets (with all the special treatment that implies) will make for a thinner adult in the long run, even if recommended by a pediatrician. ◇◇

## —COMMITTEES—

### The Teen/Young Adult Committee

by Dan Davis (CA)

Your teen years were the best years of your life. If you don't believe me, tune in to the media, or remember what your parents used to tell you. Check out the blurbs from the ex-jocks and cheerleaders organizing your high school reunion. Relive your memories of the glory years.

Maybe you buy all that, especially if you're an ex-jock or cheerleader. But most of us were unhappy as teens, and those of us who were fat were often downright miserable.

Dolores Foust (MD), newly appointed chair of NAAFA's Teen Committee, wants to improve life for fat adolescents. She and her committee members Diane-Jo Moore (MI) and Linda Mosbarger (CA) are updating NAAFA's current teen brochure and are working on a brochure for parents.

"We receive requests for information on how to deal with school, doctors, 'friends', relatives and strangers as they interact with fat teens," says Dolores. "Parents need advice on what to say and how to support their children.

"I want the brochure to include current research findings and practical advice on what to do when your child is suffering."

Dolores would like to hear how other parents have handled problems with people and institutions who belittle fat teenagers. Both successful and unsuccessful approaches are solicited. She also would like to see clippings touching on any and all aspects of the fat teen experience.

Future Teen/Young Adult Committee projects will include a pamphlet aimed at counselors, teachers, and other professionals, a

teen/young adult newsletter and, possibly, some activism involving confronting those who make fat children miserable.

"It is my hope that eventually the Teen/Young Adult Committee will be composed mainly of teens," says Dolores. "They know what's happening and what they need more than anyone."

Want to help? Send clippings and/or descriptions of your experiences to Dolores Foust in care of the membership services office (NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426). Your input will be appreciated. ◇◇

### "Fat Magnet" Restrained by Post Office

The widely promoted "Fat Magnet" diet pill has become the target of action by Los Angeles Postal Inspector W.J. Maisch. On February 12, Maisch obtained a temporary restraining order on mail being received by a Beverly Hills company promoting this dubious product. The Post Office alleges that the solicitations contain false representations, three of which are: 1) "Overweight people can continue to eat in excess and can lose weight;" 2) "Body fat is secreted into the intestines;" and 3) "The substance in the Fat Magnet "can attract, bind, and flush out body fat."

[Editor's Note: Recently, when I mentioned this product, one of my F.A. friends said, "Fat Magnet???" Where can I get one? But seriously—NAAFA takes an active interest in the battle against health frauds, including weight loss scams, and we maintain a membership in the National Council Against Health Fraud. NAAFA is occasionally asked to provide expert opinion in diet-related health fraud matters.] ◇◇

### Marketing Report

Our new NAAFA promotional literature is finished! NAAFA members will soon be receiving two copies for their own use and distribution. Kudos to Randi Hertz Suriano and Jim Brown, Co-Chairs of the Marketing and Advertising Committee for a fine job.

Thanks to the generosity of NAAFA Harry Minot (CT), NAAFA now has a public service announcement which will soon be distributed to radio stations around the country. The text was prepared by our Marketing and Advertising Committee, and professional announcer Harry Minot taped the message and donated 150 copies for distribution. ◇◇

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## Barbara Colgin - David Vance Wedding

Barbara Colgin of Mentor, Ohio and David Vance of Macon, Georgia were married on March 26, 1988. The wedding, which was held in the Cleveland area, was attended by over 100 NAAFA members.

The bride wore a floor-length gown with train, made of pale pink lace with tiny pearls sewn on the bodice. The gown was designed and fashioned by NAAFA Suzanne Shipley of Virginia. Barbara's 10 bridesmaids and her flower girl wore alternating rose and royal blue gowns. The groom, his 10 attendants, and the ring bearer wore black tuxedos.

Many NAAFA members played a part in the wedding, either as attendants, as readers during the ceremony, or in helping with preparations. Family members and other friends were also included in the wedding party.

Barbara and David met in 1986 at a regional gathering sponsored by the Ohio and Northern Ohio chapters of NAAFA. They were engaged last June. Barbara is the former Chairperson of the Northern Ohio Chapter, and currently serves as NAAFA's SIG Coordinator and as a member of the Convention Steering Committee. She is studying hotel and motel management. David is a software engineer and designer.

The couple resides in Macon, Georgia, and Barbara will be using the surname Colgin-Vance. ♦♦

**Just Married?** - Send a wedding photo, along with the date, and a description of your wedding and how you met, and you will receive a one-year membership renewal, along with a joint membership for your spouse. Notice of your marriage may be used in the *Newsletter* or a future yearbook. (We are unable to return your photo.) Sorry, no engagement announcements—only actual marriages may be published. ♦♦

## Wedding Inspires Dear Abby Column

Chris Mohan, one of the bridesmaids and a member of NAAFA's Activism Committee, wrote Dear Abby about the Colgin-Vance wedding. Her letter was published nationwide in May!

Dear Abby,

My hat is off to you for the response you gave that woman who asked for a tactful way to tell her two large sisters, whom she wanted to be her bridesmaids, to lose weight before the wedding (supposedly because of difficulties in finding dresses to fit them). You said there was NO tactful way. You were right—and then you reminded her that beauty comes in all sizes. Of course, larger dresses could have been made without too much difficulty.

I was recently one of 10 bridesmaids, some of whom (myself included) weighed more than 300 pounds.

We all had beautiful matching gowns made either by the bridesmaid herself or a seamstress, and if I may say so, I think we all looked wonderful. Not only does beauty come in all sizes—so does love and romance. The bride weighed over 300 pounds, too!

Signed, A Big Fan in Butler, PA. ♦♦



Bridesmaid Chris Mohan (PA) and Robbie Kassell (NY)

## Condolences

The *Newsletter* staff would like to express condolences to the following NAAFA volunteers on the passing of their fathers: to Chairman Conrad Blickenstorfer (NY), to Jim Brown (NJ), and to Lisbeth Fisher Burns (NY). ♦♦

—ACTIVISM LETTER—

## ABC Skating on Thin Ice

Dear ABC Sports,

I was delighted as usual by your excellent coverage of the 1988 Winter Olympics. I especially enjoyed the figure skating. However, one incident spoiled my glowing feeling at the end of the women's individual figure skating finals on Saturday, Feb 27. Jim McKay went to Jack Whitaker and asked for his feelings about the tension of waiting for Debbi Thomas's performance. Mr. Whitaker said, "It was like waiting for an obese dinner guest to go home."

Why is it that Al Campannas gets lambasted for his remarks about Blacks on "Nightline", and Jimmy the Greek is publicly chastised (and fired) for his statements, but it's okay to pick on large people and perpetuate cruel stereotypes? Large people still seem to be fair game for writers, cartoonists, comedians, talk show hosts, and others in broadcasting and journalism, as well as the general public. The media could set an example of sensitivity, understanding, and intelligence, and perhaps help to influence change in the public's attitudes.

Please discuss this topic with your broadcasting staff so that they may exhibit more thoughtfulness in the future.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Signed, Sandra Pomerantz (PA) ∞

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## —MINI-MINUTES—

### Board Meeting of February 13, 1988

The meeting was held at the NAAFA office in New York. All Board members were present: Voting Board members for this meeting were Robert H. Bain, Neil Dachis, Paula Dachis, William J. Fabrey, Jerry Hoxworth, Nancy Summer, and Russell F. Williams. The Chairman, Conrad H. Blickenstorfer, votes only to break ties or to make a 2/3 or 3/4 majority as required by the Constitution. Executive Director Sally E. Smith and Secretary Mary-Jane Grace-Brown were also present.

A number of committee reports were given and discussion was held on several topics

including NAAFA's Five Year Plan, a possible Thanksgiving weekend fundraising event in the New York area, the progress of the 1988 election, and reports from the Health, Activism, and Marketing and Advertising committees. None of these discussions required a vote.

#### MOTIONS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE:

P. Dachis (Chair of the Awards Committee) moved to award a Distinguished Achievement Award to the persons responsible for the episode "Beauty and the Obese" of L.A. Law; and to recognize the actress, Susan Peretz, with a Distinguished Achievement award for her performance in the above mentioned episode.

Two constitutional amendments were acted upon. (These required a 2/3 majority for passage.) NAAFA's Constitution mandated that if a Board member or officer resigned during his/her term, that a replacement must be appointed and approved by the next regular meeting. This has not always been possible in the past. Occasionally a seat has been left vacant until the next election, (rather than the Executive Committee/Board appointing someone to fill the seat until the next election.) Proposals to change the language of the Constitution from "must be appointed" to "may be appointed" for both officers and Board members were passed unanimously.

A proposal from the Local Chapters Committee to change the name of the Southern California chapter to the "Inland Empire" chapter was passed at the chapter's request.

An application to form a chapter was presented by the Local Chapters Committee for Susanna Worley (TN) and Barbara Colgin-Vance (GA) to start a southern chapter. Approval of the application was passed contingent on their selecting a name for their chapter and presenting it for final approval at the May Board meeting.

Fabrey presented a proposal regarding chapter waivers. [Chapter chairs must sign a waiver agreeing to hold NAAFA's mailing lists confidential, and to waive the liability of NAAFA Inc. for financial obligations incurred by the chapter.—Ed.] In essence, the proposal created an optional type of waiver for chapters to use.

Fabrey, on advice of NAAFA's attorney, also proposed two new rules to be added to "Rules for Local Chapters" to in effect further protect NAAFA, Inc. from financial and legal liabilities incurred by chapters

acting without the expressed approval of NAAFA's Board of Directors. The rules, which were approved unanimously, are 1) No chapter shall buy or sell alcoholic beverages at any official event, due to legal liabilities created by host liquor laws in many states. 2) Any written contract entered into by any chapter with a vendor of goods or services (hotel, etc.) shall contain a statement that "This contract shall be between the chapter and the party of the first part (the hotel, etc.), and shall not involve NAAFA Inc. in any way" or words to that effect.

[Editor's note: Alcoholic beverages are never dispensed by NAAFA at events sponsored by NAAFA, Inc. ("national") due to financial liabilities. Such beverages are sold on a "cash bar" basis directly to guests by the hotel or hall management. NAAFA receives no financial benefit from the sale of alcohol. Chapters are advised to either conduct their activities in the same fashion or provide no alcoholic beverages. All NAAFA leaders and members are encouraged to be aware of persons who might become intoxicated at an event, and to stop those persons from leaving the premises and driving while drunk.]

#### MOTIONS PASSED BY SPLIT VOTE:

A proposal was made to appoint Delores Faust (MD) as Chair of the Teen/Young Adult Committee, and Dianne-Jo Moore (MI) as Vice-Chair. Before a vote was taken, an amendment to the motion was made to appoint Linda Mosbarger (CA) as a member of the committee. The vote on the amendment was all in favor except for Williams who voted against. The vote on the amended motion, (appointing all three people to the committee) was passed with all in favor except for Bain who abstained.

Last year, in a split decision, the Board approved a special discount at national events for Board members. The proponents of this policy felt that Board members incur many unreimbursed expenses (traveling to meetings, housing, telephone, etc.) and that there is pressure on Board members to attend all national events—convention, fundraisers, etc. The discount allowed Board members to pay NAAFA's actual cost for events. However, a proposal by Fabrey to abolish the Board discount for national events was made at this meeting, and passed in a split decision. The vote was 3 Yes: Bain, Summer, and Fabrey; 2 No: N. Dachis, and Williams; and 2 abstentions: P. Dachis and Hoxworth.

Mini-Minutes are verified by Maryann Valerio and NAAFA's Secretary, Mary-Jane Grace-Brown., both of New Jersey.∞