

NAAFA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.

P.O. BOX 745

WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590

(212) 877-4441

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Editor this issue: W. J. Fabrey

THE STEWARTS REVISITED



BETH STEWART



BOB STEWART

Beth and Bob met through NAAFA-DATE; after getting married, they became active in the Greater NYC Area Chapter, with Beth serving as Secretary for the past year. Currently, they have relocated in the Albany, NY area, and hope to form a new chapter there.

In the last issue of the Newsletter (Vol.V, Issue 3, May-June, 1976) they were interviewed about their experiences and opinion of the NAAFA-DATE program.

EDITOR: Beth and Bob, in your recent interview were you really as critical of the dating program as you appeared to be?

BETH: No. Even though I had some criticisms of NAAFA-DATE, I really feel that N-D can be an important program and can help a lot of people. We had some negative comments on the problems of using N-D, but we really can't complain since we met and married each other as a result!

BOB: I think that an improved version of N-D could help many NAAFA members.

ED: As you may know, we are about to come out with an improved N-D. Now, isn't it also true that even though the N-D program took too long to provide you with matches, they did try to provide service and answer the questions and complaints that you had?

BOB: Yes, that's very true.

ED: Beth, isn't it a fact that any dating program tends to attract all kinds and types of people? Surely N-D isn't unusual in this respect.

BETH: I agree; I don't think it is very different from any other dating program in attracting a great variety of people.

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MEDICAL FOUNDATION HITS BYPASS OPERATION AS DANGEROUS AND INEFFECTIVE

In an article titled "Bypass operation loses favor in obesity treatment" the official publication of the American Medical Association (JAMA, 12/13/76, page 2729) has published evidence that surgery may be on the way out as a method of losing weight.

The article reports that the Cleveland Clinic Foundation has abandoned the jejunoileal bypass due to "high levels of morbidity and mortality. In a report on 27 surgical patients with 22 to 57 months of postoperative follow-up, Eugene I. Winkleman, MD, said that the result was unequivocally good in only 11 cases."

The doctor told a recent meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology that "We have been troubled in how to classify those who have lost weight, but whose life-style has been altered adversely by the side-effects and complications of this procedure - and who nevertheless profess to be happy."

All patients in the study had satisfied the Cleveland Clinic's strict requirements, which were "(1) at least twice the ideal weight, (2) failure of the usual means of weight reduction, (3) inability to maintain weight loss, (4) no obvious medical or psychiatric contraindications for the operation, (5) good motivation, (6) willingness to accept the risk, and (7) were not children."

Dr. Winkleman's report summarized the Cleveland results as follows:

"Three patients died of the surgery or its complications. One death occurred 15 days after bypass surgery and was related to breakdown of the anastomosis. The two other patients died 7½ and 8 months after surgery, one of them because of liver dysfunction (cirrhosis) and the other as a result of fatty metamorphosis and portal fibrosis."

"Surgical complications included hepatic failure (four cases), ventral hernia (seven cases), arthralgia (four cases), renal colic disease and calculi (two cases), severe perianal disease (two cases), and chronic magnesium and calcium deficiency. Also, in apparent contrast to many reports, 16 of the 24 surviving patients have significant persistent diarrhea."

(continued on page 2)

STEWARTS REVISITED (continued)

ED: Finally, I would like to ask what to me is the most important question of all: If you had it to do over again, would you join NAAFA-DAIE?

BETH: Yes, absolutely!

BOB: I certainly would.

WOMAN GETS JOB BACK
BY CLAIMING DISABILITY

(New York Times - 10/28/76)

RANDOLPH, N.J., Oct. 27 (AP) - A librarian assistant who was discharged on her first day at the County College of Morris because she had failed a physical examination has been reinstated.

The assistant, Ellen Rivellese, who was hired and let go in January because she was overweight and hypertense, filed a complaint with the State Division of Civil Rights, alleging that she had been "discriminated against because of her physical handicap."

The college physician told the division Mrs. Rivellese was "suffering from high blood pressure and weight in excess of 300 pounds."

The college trustees adopted a resolution that offered her "similar employment after the second week in January, as soon as there is a similar opening and provided she is physically able to engage in such employment."

Mrs. Rivillese said she was satisfied with the settlement. "I have what I wanted, just my job back."

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NAAFA'S TELEPHONE NUMBER

A JUICY TALE

A turkey's life has small appeal
But there is one marvelous facet-
How nice to be one of a breed
In which plumpness is ever an asset.

--Rosemarie Williamson

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BYPASS OPERATION (continued)

"While 13 individuals did lose one-third or more of their weight, only nine came within 25% of their ideal weight. Dr. Winkleman and his colleagues consider ten of the cases indisputable failures; and since three additional patients had very little weight loss and a fourth one expressed dissatisfaction with the operation, the investigators say that a success rate of 52% is the best they can claim."

The doctor has also followed up on 20 bypass operations performed elsewhere. The article reports that "significant diarrhea persisted in 11 of the 18 survivors." And, that "seven of these patients experienced social problems because of odor and flatulence and, despite weight loss, eight patients were unable to go back to work."

The article estimates that between 5,000 and 20,000 such operations are performed in the United States each year.

Even those who defend the operation, such as Frank Iber, MD, of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, admit that "No one disagrees that there are many complications of this surgery and no doubt even more will appear in time." (emphasis ours) Dr. Iber, who believes (rightly or wrongly) that very heavy persons have a higher mortality rate that may justify the risks of the operation, points out that "in private practice you get pushed much more to do the operation." It would appear that many patients apply pressure to their doctors to accept them for such surgery, often without being aware of the risks.

This Newsletter finds the facts cited in the above article to be very disturbing. Several present and past NAAFA members have had the bypass operation, with various results. NAAFA often gets requests from its members for information about the operation; thus the publication of the above facts. In the March-April, 1972 (Vol. II, #2) Newsletter the death of NAAFA member Howard Brooks was reported. The following issue (Vol. II, #3) reprinted an article from TIME Magazine titled "Dead End", the nightmare account of how a surgeon performed dozens of bypass operations in a way that resulted in unnecessary deaths for several.

Reprints of that article, as well as the recent one by the American Medical Association, are available to any NAAFA member free of charge, if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with the request.

The Newsletter welcomes letters from those who have had experience on the subject, either positive or negative.

NAAFA-DATE REVISED -

EXPANDED TO COVER ENTIRE U.S.

by Lisbeth Fisher

For some time now, the Board of Directors of NAAFA has been aware of some dissatisfaction with the NAAFA-DATE program. Although this is a unique and special dating program, the likes of which can be found nowhere else, there were some "bugs" that had to be exterminated.

Several months ago I was appointed Chairperson of the NAAFA-DATE Revision Committee. I met with the members of my committee (Peggy Greensfelder, Ernest Harff, Karen Scott-Jones, Matt Madigan, Joyce Maloney, and Mike Simpson) shortly thereafter, and we attempted to make the necessary changes. I also contacted Susan Blowers, who is currently managing the program, so that we could get her suggestions. Our proposal was presented to the Board at a recent meeting, and most of our recommendations were passed.

We had hoped to have the new NAAFA-DATE literature and applications enclosed with this Newsletter. However, we have run into some technical difficulties that we had not anticipated. Since NAAFA-DATE is one of NAAFA's most important programs, we want it to work for you as well as possible. It is our every expectation that the February mailing of the Newsletter will contain the new NAAFA-DATE material. I can tell you that the application has been revised, and several new categories have been added. Also, we have made arrangements for INSTANT MATCHING! That's right! When you join NAAFA-DATE, your application will be processed within four to six weeks. You will be informed who your matches are, if any. From then on, whenever someone new joins NAAFA-DATE, you will shortly thereafter receive his or her name, if you both match. No longer will you have to wait for matching periods. You will be checked with every new member of NAAFA-DATE as they join, and all you will have to do is renew each year.

You may, of course, ask to submit a new application at any time, if you feel you wish to change some of your answers on the application. We have also opened up NAAFA-DATE to the entire United States, so that all NAAFA members (except in Canada) may participate if they so desire. We realize that many of you travel and would like the opportunity to meet other members. Also, many of you would like to be matched up with people from your own geographical areas. Since NAAFA now has enough members in many areas to make this possible, you will be able to indicate such a preference on the application.

Although NAAFA is fighting fat discrimination in many ways, we know that many of you joined primarily for social purposes, and we shall do our best to get NAAFA-DATE functioning at its best for you.

LOBBYING NOW PERMITTED

A new law permits non-profit, tax-exempt organizations such as NAAFA to spend up to 20% of their revenue on lobbying (attempting to cause or influence legislation). In the past, such organizations could not formally work to bring about favorable laws, or changes in laws already on the books. Effective Dec. 31, 1976, NAAFA will be able to be active in the legislative area without endangering its tax-exempt status.

NEW NAAFA CHAPTERS

San Francisco and Pittsburgh now have new NAAFA chapters. The San Francisco chapter, chaired by Karen Baird, has just been formed and looks forward to a busy slate of activities. The Pittsburgh (and Western Pennsylvania) area chapter, under the inspiration of Kenneth Woessner, hopes to attract members from the wide geographical area surrounding Pittsburgh, including three surrounding states.

Until mailing addresses are established by the new chapters, they can be reached by letters addressed to NAAFA's Westbury address.

1976 ELECTION RESULTS

NAAFA held its annual election in July. All members were sent a ballot by mail; there were 122 ballots returned. The official count was done on August 12 by the Election Committee at a public meeting. The results were:

Lisbeth (Coleman) Fisher	89
Joyce Fabrey	80
Naomi Shadowitz	72
Matthew F. Madigan	71
Michael Simpson	49

Since three seats on the Board of Directors were available, Fisher, Fabrey, and Shadowitz were declared to be the winners of the election.

SEEN ON THE BACK OF A
NAAFA MEMBERSHIP CARD

N A A F A --

Is a non-profit, tax exempt organization.

Promotes tolerance and understanding in society toward the larger-than-average citizen.

Works to increase the self-esteem of fat people.

Is dedicated to the proposition that fat can be beautiful.

Has fat and thin members throughout the United States and Canada.

LETTERSCLORIS LIKES NAAFA

Dear NAAFA,

Please let me say how happy I am with the article by Naomi Shadowitz in your NAAFA Newsletter. (Vol.V, #3, May-June, 1976, titled "Cloris Capitulates...")

I feel totally "understood."

I also am very impressed with the creative attitude about fat. You have my total support, and I feel I have yours.

Cloris Leachman
Los Angeles, CA

GIVES 'GONG' TO GONG SHOW ON TV

Dear NAAFA,

On the Gong Show of October 7, I heard something that offended me, and I think it would offend any NAAFAn. Their opening act (it's a talent show) was a very fat woman who sang a comic song about unsuccessful dieting. Halfway through the song, J.P. Morgan gave her the gong. When the emcee asked why, she replied, "I think she should become a condominium."

This remark angered me so much that I wrote a protest letter. The woman auditioning wasn't a very good singer or comedienne, but I felt that Ms. Morgan should have said something to that effect instead of targeting her weight to get a cheap laugh.

The Gong Show is produced by Chuck Barris Enterprises in Hollywood and is distributed through the Firestone Syndicate. I'm sending my letter to the former. I hope other NAAFAn's will write, too.

Mary McDermott
Orleans, MA

[The Gong Show has shown several times that it doesn't mind putting a fat person on the show provided that it's done for laughs - usually at the expense of fat people everywhere. If the practice continues, NAAFA will doubtless consider some form of organized opposition to the show. - ED.]

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF NAAFA?

The mail we receive indicates that many non-members read the NAAFA Newsletter. If you haven't yet joined NAAFA, isn't it about time you participated in the fight against fat discrimination?

For more information about NAAFA, write for a free brochure to NAAFA, Box 745, Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

CARL KAUFFELD

Staten Island - Services were held several months ago for Carl Kauffeld, retired Director of the Staten Island Zoo, who died of complications from acute emphysema. He was 62.

Kauffeld was NAAFA's first Life Member, joining in 1970. He was of average weight and build, but was well known among his friends and associates as a man who admired fat women. Known to a few NAAFA members by the nickname "Max", he was thoughtful to donate his private papers and library on the subject of fat to NAAFA in 1972, when his health began to fail.

A man of unusually high principles in his relationships with people, he left behind an unpublished paper dealing with the connection between fat and beauty, and the needless problems fat people have living in a slim world. This Newsletter is considering the publication of his paper, either in edited form or as a special supplement.

Kauffeld had a national reputation as an expert on reptiles, and was the author of a popular book on snakes. After his retirement as Zoo Director in 1972, he lived the remainder of his life quietly, with his wife, on Staten Island, New York.

--ED

NOTICE

There was no July-August Newsletter this year, due to summer vacations. This issue has been delayed by many factors including a change in intended editors at the last minute in November. The current editor accepts full responsibility for delays since that date.

In order to partly compensate members for these delays in their Newsletter, another issue will be forthcoming in several days; NAAFA places a high priority on regular publication of the Newsletter, and will be making every effort to make regular mailings in the future.

Publication of the Newsletter every two months is considered normal.

PEN PAL PROJECT BEING REVISED

NAAFA's Pen Pal Project, originated by the Rochester, N.Y. chapter, is in the process of being revised. Those members who are currently in the program will still receive their quota of matches under the old program, and are advised to expect the next mailing in early February, 1977.