

NAAFA Newsletter

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ERNSBERGER AND HASKEW PUBLISHED

Two years ago, when a National Institute of Health panel announced that obesity was a "killer disease", NAAFA Advisors Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D., (Cornell University College of Medicine) and Paul Haskew, Ed.D (University of Connecticut) began work on a rebuttal of the panel's findings.

Originally they planned to write in layman's terms for publication in the New York Times, but decided that they could accomplish more if their rebuttal was presented in medical terminology to physicians and researchers. (The Times had already published a rebuttal authored by Dr. William Bennett and Joel Gurin.)

During the ensuing months, they created a manuscript of over 86 typeset pages with over 400 references entitled Health Implications of Obesity: An Alternative View. They submitted it to the Journal of Obesity and Weight Regulation.

After going through the usual procedure of having the manuscript reviewed and checked by other doctors and scientists, the Journal editors accepted Ernsberger and Haskew's article for publication.

But an interesting thing happened on the way to the printer: The publisher, Human Sciences Press, decided to publish the article, not only in the journal, but also as a book entitled Rethinking Obesity.

Rethinking Obesity, which will be available soon, is a book for health professional, and would not be easily understood by persons without a background in medical terminology. It is hoped that its publication will help to dispel myths, stereotypes, and out-of-date concepts widely held by practicing physicians. □

HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR EMPLOYMENT SURVEY YET?

By now most NAAFANS should have received their materials for the employment study being conducted by Dr. Esther Rothblum and her colleagues at the University of Vermont. We urge everyone to respond. Please complete your survey and mail it before the deadline. Also, please give the second copy of the survey to a thinner (or heavier) sibling, family member, or friend from a similar background and urge them to also participate. All responses are confidential. □

MICHIGAN MAY REGULATE WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAMS

Legislation is pending in Michigan that would require operators of weight loss programs which use methods that are potentially hazardous to register with the Department of Health. Aimed at controlling rapid weight loss programs, HB 4159 would require registration fees projected to be about \$400.

The Michigan Council Against Health Fraud worked with legislators to produce a bill that would regulate diet programs and products, but during the development stages, the concept was "watered down" considerably. According to Eileen Foulkes Mikus of the MCAHF, the half of the bill dealing with diet products was deleted because of disagreements about what constituted a "diet product".

The section dealing with diet programs was also diluted. Only rapid weight-loss programs are now covered by the bill, and the level of regulation is less than originally proposed.

The proposed bill, which has been sent to the Michigan Senate, has run into lots of opposition from the diet industry. But the proponents of the bill are currently working on bringing the bill to the House, and hoping that the House will "put the teeth back into it".

According to Mikus, "We're looking at clinics and programs that advertise more medical supervision than is actually provided, promise fast results, and don't provide information on long term effects." They are also concerned with the food supplements sold at these clinics, and the fact that many of them charge exorbitant prices.

MICHIGAN NAAFANS CAN HELP

The MCAHF needs people who have had experiences with rapid weight loss programs to provide personal testimony, as well as help from any supporters with letter-writing and other assistance. If you can help, write or call Eileen Foulkes Mikus, MS, RD; c/o Michigan Home Health Care, 6861 Wilson Road, Indian River, MI 49749 (phone 616 238-8971). □

HOLIDAY HAPPENING

JANUARY 1 - 3, 1988

NEW YORK CITY

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NAAFA "STRAW POLLS" DEBUT

Have you ever wanted to express your opinion on some fat-related issue, but just didn't have the time to write us? Or do you feel that no one really cares what you think? Well, now you can express your opinions on a wide range of topics, and it will only take five minutes of your time and a 22 cent stamp to do it.

A NAAFA Newsletter "Straw Poll" will be included in many upcoming issues. The topic of the month will be introduced in the Newsletter itself, and the straw poll form will be attached to the bottom of your Ad Supplement. Just cut off the straw poll form, check the boxes of your choice and mail it to the address on the form. Results will be published in an upcoming issue.

STRAW POLL #1 (OCTOBER 1987)

You have just finished being examined by your doctor, who has once again suggested that all your problems would be solved if you would just lose weight. Or maybe he/she has recommended a "wonderful new" weight loss program which you should "try immediately because obesity is a 'killer disease'."

Our questions this month have to do with a possible response to your doctor's apparent lack of knowledge about your body.

Would you like to hand your doctor a package of materials about fatness, setpoint and the effects of yoyo dieting, written by **health professionals for health professionals**, properly documented and using medical terminology--something your doctor couldn't ignore?

Would you like NAAFA to make such "kits" available for a reasonable fee?

Assuming that this "doctor's packet" would include a lot of material and be very comprehensive on the subject, would you be willing to pay up to \$15 to receive it?

Such a "doctor's packet" is currently being considered, and NAAFA would like to know how much interest there would be in such an item. So please fill out the straw poll form on the bottom of your Ad Supplement and mail it today. ☐

PEOPLE NEWS

Kimm Kastleman (CA) graduated from Corona Senior High School on June 18, 1987. Congratulations Kimm!

IT'S A BOY! Congratulations to Louis R. Brockman and Susan Matthews-Brockman on the birth of their son Jacob Matthew on July 28, 1987.

Our condolences to Dawn Sawdey of Ohio on the death of her 10 year old son Adam in a bicycle-truck accident in May.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Ruth Garwood Perry and H. Arthur Perry of California were married on September 6, 1986 at the Mormon chapel in San Clemente, California. They originally met at an L.A. Chapter swim party. Ruth writes: "We credit NAAFA with bringing us together...I cannot begin to express my thanks for all that NAAFA has given me in the way of self-esteem, fat activism, health information, and lasting friendships..." ☐

1987 ELECTION RESULTS

Paula Dachis and William J. Fabrey, Co-Chairs of the 1987 Election Committee report:

The ballots in the 1987 election for the national Board of Directors were counted on August 1, 1987 at the office of John G. Trapani, Esq., NAAFA's attorney. A record number of ballots (465) were received, although of that number, 56 had to be invalidated due to a lack of signature on the outer envelope or due to a late postmark. According to the committee, the number of invalid ballots is regrettable, but there is no reason to believe that any candidate would have benefited more than any other if those voters had cast their ballot correctly.

Of the 409 valid ballots cast, the count was as follows:

Nancy Summer.....	262
Conrad H. Blickenstorfer.....	255
Robert Bain.....	157
Peggy Williams.....	144
Judy Weeg.....	128
Robert Hartenstine.....	119
Neal Zimmerman.....	104

Since three seats were available, the declared winners were Nancy Summer, Conrad H. Blickenstorfer, and Robert Bain, who will all serve three year terms.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE TO MEET FOR 1988 ELECTION

Nominations for candidates for the 1988 Board of Directors election will be considered at an Election Committee meeting in late November or December. Any NAAFA member who would like to recommend election rules changes, or would like to be considered for possible nomination should write this committee immediately, c/o NAAFA, PO Box 43, Bellerose, NY 11426. Letters should be received by the NAAFA office no later than November 24.

Running for the Board of Directors implies willingness to attend up to eight Board meetings per year held usually in the New York area, (but occasionally in other eastern locations) on Saturday afternoons. Smoking is not permitted at the meetings. ☐

Articles in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of NAAFA, Inc., unless specifically noted. Please contact the NAAFA office about specific NAAFA policies. Commentaries in this Newsletter, unless otherwise noted, were prepared by a member of the editorial staff.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

MANAGING EDITOR: Nancy Summer

ACTIVISM EDITOR: Peggy Williams

HEALTH EDITOR: Paul Ernsberger, Ph.D.

MEDIA EDITOR: William J. Fabrey

SUPPORT EDITOR: June Bailey

by Wayne Wall, D. Min.

The doctor smiled in his smug way.

"It's simple," he says to me.

"Just take in less than you burn up,
And real weight loss you'll see!"

"So, go thy way, be well, be healed--

(Er...that's \$80, please!)--

Now that I've told you the secret you seek,
You'll lose all that fat with ease."

I kissed his hand! For thirty years,

I longed to find the way

To trim my size, and here he solves
My problem in a day.

This profound, all-wise medico,

Whose logic never shirks,

Has shared his magic formula.
Too bad it never works!

If everyone he healed as well--

For him do I have news.

He'd have to find a new career
Real soon, say, selling shoes.

Why won't he tell me, "I don't know.

Nothing we have works yet.

Just save your money 'till we do,
And try hard not to fret."

For others, sick and suffering,

Who trudge up to his door,

He does not treat with platitudes,
Till he has something more. ☐

--LETTERS TO NAAFA--

[The following was on the letterhead of The Refrigerettes, the nationally known Chicago-based cheerleading squad made up of larger women.]

...I must admit that I never really accepted who I was until I became a Refrigerette. Then I was fortunate to have the support of seven other full-figured entertainers who had all gone through the hard knocks that I had in my career. I gained confidence, and I continued to grow with their support. I think that your organization is excellent in that it provides that support to the thousands of everyday people who would otherwise be depressed and abandoned by the constant stream of our popular cultural image in TV, radio and film.

I have met many people in my year and a half as a Refrigerette and most of my stories are positive ones. However, one theme has remained constant throughout the time I have spent as a performer. Not a day has gone by without someone thanking me for the Refrigerettes "being out there" and "being someone for me". We are role models. It is a pretty heavy image to live up to sometimes.

It is because of this that I have started going around to local colleges and women studies groups speaking to them on "Women and their Bodies. Be proud of What You've Got." I have met all sorts of people and I am finding great satisfaction in doing this. I share my life stories and they tell me theirs. One thing I emphasize is NAAFA and the support one can feel by belonging to such a organization...

--Frances Camberis, Refrigerette ☐

Radio Station KHTR
1 S. Memorial Drive
St. Louis, Mo. 63102

Mr. Hyland, General Manager:

I am a philosophy professor and one of the classes I teach is Critical Thinking, which includes a section on the nature of prejudice. I always point out to my students that overweight Americans are among those "minorities" presently having to struggle under the yoke of prejudice in this country.

I was therefore shocked to hear a song (that was highly derogatory of a fat woman) played over the public airwaves on KHTR 103.3 at approximately 9:00 AM on Friday, September 4, 1987.

I found the lyrics highly objectionable, and I imagine they were objectionable to many others. Since one in three Americans is overweight, you have chosen to publicly ridicule a very large group.

I realize that the human race will probably always have to suffer from disturbed individuals yelling out [ethnic, racial and other types of] slurs--but the thought of something like that coming over the air through a CBS affiliate, one of our supposedly most responsible medias, is very disturbing.

What makes this incident doubly unfortunate is that your audience is primarily a young adult/teen group--including overweight teens whose self-image is being systematically eroded by just this sort of thing. I shudder to think of how much mental anguish and emotional pain was caused throughout our area to overweight teens listening with their friends when the song was played.

This kind of public ridicule gives two basic messages. First, to overweight teens it says: you're an object of derision and you shouldn't think well of yourself. And secondly, to the young people who are not overweight, it gives the message that this sort of thing is cool.

I'm very disappointed that you do not have guidelines that would prevent this sort of song from being aired.

--Sharon Miller

Fashion Touch
Designer Circle
Salem, VA 24156

I was happy to receive your catalog and note the growing number of companies who realize they have a good market in larger sizes.

However, I was disappointed to see that every one of your garments was displayed on a thin model! How am I supposed to know how things will look on me if I see them displayed only on skinny women? It is hard enough ordering through the mail without that. What this says to me is that we heavier women are too ugly to display in a catalog, even a catalog of clothes designed for us. Well, I don't think I'm ugly, and other fat women do not seem ugly to me either.

I will not be ordering from your catalog at this time because I really don't know what your clothes look like...

--Catherine Alexander ☐

A MOST ANNOYING DIET AD

An ad was spotted by member Suzanne Shipley of Virginia. The Aerobic Spa and Fitness Center, 4540 Plank Rd. of Fredericksburg, Virginia announced in their ad:

"EXTRA EXTRA, POW RELEASED.

Former POW (Prisoner of Weight) Messina K. has been released from nine years of physical and psychological bondage after dropping 34 pounds in just 2 months..."

This advertisement might be considered just as insulting to families of real POWs as it is to fat people! ☐

DIET FRAUD

by Russell F. Williams

In my opinion most diet programs are a form of consumer fraud. These programs all promise a product--a lifetime of thinness. They are not promising thinness for six months, followed by rapid weight gain. They imply that you will look like the thin model in the ad for the rest of your life.

When the product does not work, when the consumer does not stay thin for life, the seller of the product always claim that the product is fine, but that the consumer has misused it. And even though the products fail about 95% of the time, most diet products consumers accept this placing of fault on themselves.

In other markets, consumers would never accept this 95% failure rate. If it was discovered that 95% of Wis-Bang motor cars have both back wheels fall off within the first 1000 miles, the Wis-Bang motor company can explain all they want that the consumers are misusing the products, but most consumers would refuse to feel guilty about losing the wheels on their new car. They would argue that there is something inherently wrong with Wis-Bang motor cars. ☐

DAMNED IF WE DO, AND DAMNED IF WE DON'T

by Aglaia Koras-Bain

I've really hated most sports all my life. The idea of panting around after a little white ball has never intrigued me. No, I'd much rather have a good conversation, play a piece on the piano, dance, and save the park for more romantic ventures, like a picnic.

As a fat child I was taunted by classmates and gym teachers alike. I couldn't even take my pet dog for a walk without hearing some rude kid yelling, "Hey, girl, you really need the WALKING!" So it wasn't surprising

that I gave up on sports and decided to focus my energies on other fields of endeavor.

Recently, though, having been told by reputable sources that moderate exercise can improve one's health, I decided to try the one activity I knew I could do--swimming. So one hot day this past summer, a fat friend and I decided to check out a local women's gym--one with a swimming pool. We were both dressed attractively and our attitudes were positive. When I spoke to them over the phone I was treated very nicely, but the reception we received when we entered the club was far from friendly.

First we were made to wait a long time, even though we'd already made an appointment. When I went to speak to the instructor, she looked me right in the eye and ignored my questions! (Apparently, she had been so disappointed in what she saw that she called an older, gray-haired instructor to relieve her of the unpleasant task of showing us around.) Something was telling me that we were being discouraged from joining the gym.

The second instructor seemed more friendly at first. But once in the locker room, she insisted on giving me a lecture about why losing weight would be better for my health. While I tried to explain that I was more interested in exercising for fun and for overall health reasons rather than just weight loss, she bantered on insensitively. And as she opened the locker room door, I was shocked at what I saw: a room full of flat-chested, short-haired, boy-hipped females who looked like they'd starved for years! When she brought us to the pool, we could hardly breathe! The air was hot and thick, and we headed straight for the door. It was clear that, fat or thin, this was not the place for us.

By this time the instructor knew we were unhappy. As we left the gym, tears welled up in my eyes. "Damned if we do, and damned if we don't." I thought. The phrase stung my mind. We're damned by society because we're fat, but if we try to exercise in public, we're damned for how we look in a leotard or bathing suit.

My friend tried to console me. "Look at it this way, Ag," she said. "For the price of club membership we could practically have our own pool installed!"

"Let's get our 'skinny banks' out and start saving," I agreed.

Reprinted from FAT-TASTIC, the publication of the New Jersey Chapter. ☐

ERRATA

In the September 1987 Convention Special Issue, we omitted Karen Syken (NY) from the list of our talent show participants. Karen entertained the gathering with a piano medley of popular music. ☐