

# cooties

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#7



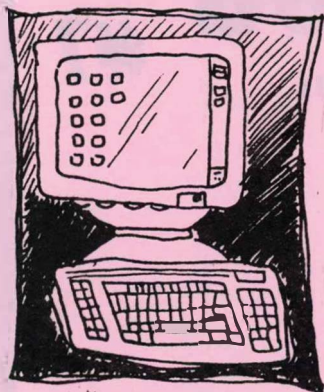
this issue:  
fat liberation;  
straight-edge;  
pornography;  
whores' uprising;  
punk identity &  
scene ethics; and  
more recipes for  
yummy vegan  
vittles.

\$2

# Intro

welcome to cooties #7.

I should put on my best southern Baptist preacher voice for you and shout "Hallelujah! I have been *rerieved!*" cooties was saved. This issue has been absolutely plagued by computer problems (chronic printer disorders and the very costly demise of my motherboard) and at one point, the computer crashed and I thought that everything on my hard drive had been lost. Asshole that I am, I hadn't backed up anything to diskettes. But this zine has proved to be a literary cockroach, and it somehow managed to escape total annihilation. A few months behind schedule, but otherwise unscathed.



This issue has a three-way split theme, between fat lib, straight-edge & the sex trade. Hopefully that means that there's bound to be something in here which you can relate to and enjoy. and on top of that, this time around, a number of contributors have helped out, which means there's more variety to the opinions and outlooks presented in cooties. one of my reasons for presenting such diverse issues in one zine, rather than breaking it up into smaller issues, is that I wanted people interested in one issue who might not have picked up a zine about another of the two to be exposed to ideas that they hadn't thought about before, or had been shielding themselves from. Let's face it, how many straight-edge zines out there are pro-sex, let alone pro-prostitution *and* take a feminist stance on the issue? Likewise, some of my favorite zines on sex-work do have an obvious bias towards skinny people in their graphics, and that doesn't give a full representation of this community... so I'm trying to blend these things together in this zine because they're blended in my real life. I'm trying to fill up some shortcomings I feel exist in what's already out there.

I've carried over writings on the FNB/rape fiasco from the last issue. When cooties #6 was put out, it was done right in the middle of the big debates about my situation, and I felt a need to print a letter I wrote to my attacker as a continuation of the writings I had already done. There's also some personal writing in regards to a side-issue that occurred between me and a friend because of what I published in #6.

There's been a letters section added. I wanted to print what others had written regarding this zine, because the letters and feedback I get from doing this really inspire me to greater heights & they get the creative juices flowing, so to speak. I hope that reading other people's ideas will inspire you to write me and tell me yours. Be sure to tell me if you *don't* want your letter printed here, otherwise I'll have a tendency to trust that it's okay for me to do that.

## Zine Notes

This issue wouldn't have come together so well without the help of the following contributors. My thanks to everyone who lifted a finger to do something for this zine, and to Max Airborne (formerly) of Fat Girl zine for letting me reprint some of her works here. If you like something done by one of my contributors, make their day and write 'em a letter telling them so. And if you like anything that doesn't have their names on it, then it's mine and you can write me a letter. :)

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I'd like to make the next issue **The Eerie Issue**, with a collection of ghost stories, urban myths, and various legends. Other focuses will be on **abortion**, and **veganism**: philosophies on which may or may not tie together. There's also always going to be plenty of room to devote to **sex work** and **fat lib** - just like in this issue.

For the **eery** articles, pretty much anything goes, although I'd really like to do a series about true hauntings, I'm at the mercy of what people tell me, so I can't promise anything. Fiction is okay, but I will give priority to real life creepiness. Also, if you have any monster clip-art, especially kitschy '50s stuff, it would make my day for you to send it. Recommendations & reviews of horror movies are good to go, as well.

On the topic of **abortion**, I'm of a radical perspective (who woulda guessed?) and that will be my slant, but I'd also like to contrast that with others' opinions and experiences, especially if they've worked in the field or have had the surgery.

**Veganism**: I was promised an article on veganism & protectionism by a former animal rights activist. He seems willing to take on a big philosophical discussion and it looks promising. I'm also wanting vegan

recipes, stories of direct actions you may have done and/or knowledge of ALF actions you've heard about (as I don't think anyone reading this zine could possibly be involved in criminal activity, no, of course no one reading this would stoop so low) and also, I'm probably going to print a list of things commonly thought of as vegan safe which either are questionable or just outright aren't vegan, and the opposite list of stuff commonly shunned which actually is vegan... if you have anything to add, please send it my way.

It's kind of odd that I find myself writing this intro & stuff about veganism today, because it's the one year anniversary of the break-in of an Iowa animal shelter where two sixteen year olds beat to death sixteen cats with a baseball bat. On March 8, 1997, Chad Lamansky and Daniel Myers of Davis County, Iowa, broke in & brutally murdered these sixteen animals for their own entertainment. When they went to trial for it, the jury decided that the cats had a value less than \$30 each, ruling out the possibility of a felony conviction.

**'Free' Stuff Isn't Really Free.** it costs me money to mail out copies of *The Period Conspiracy* and other stuff I get requests for. You can greatly decrease the time it takes to get a response from me by sending an SASE along with your requests for information, TPC & other small projects and letters.

**Trades:** Here's a dilemma that every zinester knows. I open up my mailbox, and sitting inside is a 16 page halfsize zine of 14 pt font and more run on sentences than could be created by a 10th grade remedial English class. worse yet, it has poetry in it. (ugh. retch.) Generally, there's a half-sheet of paper inside with a letter about how the author saw an ad for cooties & would I please send them a copy of my zine in exchange for theirs, yes, they know theirs is a "horrible" zine, but they hope I like it anyway. Oh, and if I don't like it, at least don't give it a bad review. [I feel like a large portion of the makers of these zines do them just so they can say "I do a zine" and it doesn't actually mean anything to them. They just do them to get free stuff, which gives them bragging rights, which makes them... cool? fuck that.] What am I supposed to feel like when I get an unsolicited zine by someone who acknowledges the fact that they do a half-ass job on it? I feel insulted when people expect me not only to give them something of I work hard on as part of an **exchange**, but to spend my money on stamps getting it to them in exchange for something which the **author** thinks is crap. If you don't like your zine, I'm not going to either. Don't expect it to be an incentive for me to spend my money on stamps so I can fulfill my half of this bargain.

Lauren Martin brought up this dilemma in one of her zines, and had a more positive way of dealing with it than I might have thought of. I usually just don't send anything and then feel like I'm being an asshole for letting these kids down (despite the fact that their lack of love for zines lets me down). Lauren's trade policy is that if you want to trade with her, you still have to send \$1 or 3 or 4 stamps for postage. I think that's a fair way of dealing with it. So kids, if you initiate a trade, help cut down on the mailing and/or printing costs of the people you want to trade with and **send us stamps!**

**mailing rates for zines:** in the US, 5 sheets of 8½" x 11" paper is one ounce, and costs 32¢ to mail. each ounce after that is 23¢ extra in postage. When you're sending for a half-size zine like this one, count the pages and you can figure out the mailing rate.

- 4 - 20 pages = 1oz = 32¢
- 24 - 40 pages = 2oz = 55¢
- 44 - 60 pages = 3oz = 78¢
- 64 - 80 pages = 4oz = \$1.01

and anything from 5 - 16oz is \$1.25. also, if a zine's at the top of one of these ranges, and the editor ships in envelopes, the extra weight can push it into the next price range. like if I send my 60 page zine to an inmate and have to ship under CM Press to avoid the zine being confiscated, I have to slap on an envelope and it costs \$1.01. keep this stuff in mind and you'll make the lives of zinesters a little easier.



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cover photo: Ernest James Bellocq. 1912. from the Storyville series.  
back cover photo: kate cooties. 1996. baltimore.

# THOUGHTS ON FAT LIB.

## WHY THIS IS NECESSARY.

When I decided to do fat-lib stuff in this zine it was mainly because there is so little out there for us. This is my attempt to fill a void that's in the consciousness of most people, regardless of size, but especially of other fat people. I see fat people divided from ourselves and each other because we're only allowed to accept parts of ourselves, rather than the whole. Hell, we're not even allowed most of the time to identify as "fat" unless we're apologizing for it. Think about it, when was the last time you heard someone say "I'm fat" without it being followed by a tirade on how awful they thought their body was, how they were going to go on a diet to 'fix' that, or how it was an excuse for that laziness or gluttony that all fat people are supposed to be part of. When was the last time you heard "fat" said, where it was devoid of a negative judgment, let alone a positive thing? I'd wager a guess that it's been a while. I can't even say "I'm fat" in a matter-of-fact sense, without people jumping in to *defend* me against my own description -- "You're not fat, you're chubby/ pleasingly plump/ fluffy/etc." the word *fat* has such deeply ingrained negative connotations that *I can't even describe my body* without someone interpreting it as me insulting myself.

I find that insulting. That people buy into this belief that fat is the *worst* thing you could possibly be, and therefore, fat people can't even acknowledge their size. We can bring up anything about ourselves *except* our bodies... those we're only allowed to talk about if we're being self-deprecating. And it's not like it's something that no one notices even if you keep your mouth shut about it, it's still there -- everyone still knows -- but it's such a dirty word that fat people aren't allowed to talk honestly about their bodies. That's wrong.

It sucks to be so alienated from one's own body, and to be divided from one's physical self. I don't ever want to hear another fat person apologize for not living up to "perfection." And I'm not going to put up with that shit anymore! I defy a single person on earth to tell me *who* has a 'perfect body' and what makes that body better than mine, or better than the fat girl who thinks the most surefire way to change her life for the better is to lose weight.

Biologically, thinness is certainly *not* considered anywhere near the perfect body. For bodies to function at peak performance, they have to have -- by today's standards -- relatively high levels of body fat. And for most of the earth's history, voluptuous and fat women were sought after as examples of great beauty and prosperity. If a woman was well-fed, it meant she did well for herself.

Where did we lose that?

## ESCAPING FAT-HATE.

Someone I'd asked to write for this zine told me that as she was growing up, she would daydream about self-mutilating -- about slicing open her thighs and peeling out the fat. Carving herself skinny, if you will.

I daydreamed about not being fat. Glorified dieting and would deny myself half or more of my lunch every day because I was too young to go on the liquid fasts my friends' mothers were on. Sometimes I day-dreamed about being dead, because then I wouldn't have to deal with the fat jokes and the chants of "boom-bobba boom-bobba" when I walked down the breezeway at my school.

I was so relieved when we got a transfer student in the middle of my 3rd grade year, because when I passed the

classroom she was in, I saw another fat girl. I knew we'd be friends, if for no other reason than that there was now someone to share the burden of being the class fat-kid with. She was gonna get joked too.

We actually were best friends for many years after that. We both still hated being fat, but dealt with it in our own ways. In junior high school, she started going on crash diets, and eventually her mother let her go join some pseudo-scientific diet club, which eventually went bankrupt due to the lawsuits against it. She lost a lot of the weight... got quite skinny in fact, but I never really saw her that much. Before you start to think it's a case of skinny-friend suddenly thinks she's too good for fat-friend, it wasn't. We just had traveled down divergent paths as far as interests go, and I moved out to the boonies with my mom.

Our mom's ran into each other a couple months ago, and I caught up with this girl for the first time in years over Xmas break. She's still really skinny, and blames a lot of her problems in the past on her being fat. She felt insecure then, but now seems self-assured, at least in so far as she doesn't appear to worry about much except the loose skin on her belly & becoming fat again. She even blamed her asthma on her fat, saying that it went away when she got skinny, so she took up cigarette smoking at 19 in order to stay skinny.

We talked about how we'd both beat fat-hatred in our own ways, and did things to make ourselves feel better than we had in elementary school. I told her about my belief in fat-acceptance, and how it gives me self-worth to tell the world it has to take me as is. She found it in dieting and making herself thin so that she didn't have to face what she once did. I can't condemn her for that, because I lived out the same emotions and experiences that she did, and I wanted to escape from it too. We agreed mainly on one thing, that it wasn't being fat that was so bad, it was the way people treated fat people that made it a hard way to live.

Ultimately, I don't think that dieting is a viable option. It's kind of like putting a band-aid on something that needs a tourniquet. It might work for one individual, if that person can keep it up, stay on the diet and somehow still manage to function and be happy while they attempt to starve their body down to a size that's not natural for them; (and I have yet to see anyone do all of that) but that won't change the attitude with which society regards fat people, nor will it change that the dieter is still a fat person -- they're still biologically destined to be fat, and if they come off the diet, they will be fat again. This is why I believe wholeheartedly in fat-lib.

## WHAT IS FAT LIB?

Fat lib is being pro-fat & pro-natural body-size. I want this movement to be less about establishing the fact that some people can't help but be fat and less about establishing that fat people are *really*, truly oppressed, and

more about building self-esteem for people who are fat & also more about being proud of being fat.

Let me explain some of the above paragraph... we know that some people are born destined for fatness just as some are destined for thinness, but in some of my would-be defenders all I hear from them is "she can't help but be fat." as if the only reason to be for fat-lib is because we were born this way and can't help ourselves. fuck that. with that attitude, it leaves us with the implication that if someone chose to be fat, it *wouldn't* be okay, and that really negates a large (pun intended) part of our struggle. As for establishing our oppression, I feel like it's definitely been done, but not necessarily in a large enough spectrum. I may already be preaching to the converted (certainly, I would be if I were publishing *The Fat Kid Chronicles* or something of the like in an NAAFA publication or a zine like *Fat Girl* or *Fat!SO?*). And I feel like we should be presenting examples of how we're oppressed, but jeezus, that does not mean I want to revel in the idea of being a victim. I'm not a victim, and I'm not going to sit here and let anyone tell me I am. if you even try it, i'll fucking sit on you! (the threat worked in third grade, I hope it hasn't lost it's efficacy.)

We've all got to stop apologizing for our size, start calling people out on their fat-bashing bullshit when they make cracks about fat people, make fat into a word with no negative connotations, and start acknowledging ourselves as a whole, rather than making excuses for one large part of ourselves.

The fact that this childhood friend took up smoking at nineteen bothers me on numerous levels. Like, the fact that an asthmatic took up smoking to keep off weight & blamed her asthma on her fat should prove to anyone how skewed this situation really is. The few studies which have been done on fat people living in cultures where fat is *not* a reason for ostracism (like in asian islander countries, and especially Fiji & Samoa) people who are fat don't have the same physical ailments which are reputed to be common here in the western world where fat IS persecuted. And here, people who belong to persecuted-groups who aren't fat also have the same ailments which are "related" to fat, and this would tell me that physical maladies have much more to do with stress than they do with being fat: and the fact that fat people suffer from these ailments says that our society has done a real fucking great job of ostracising fat people and making us miserable. This is what I feel is the cause of this friend's sudden disappearance of her asthma as she got thinner. And the fact that she would *take up smoking* as a way to avoid being fat is just so sick... At 19, any person not living in a cave would have heard how damaging smoking was to the human body, yet she intentionally picked it up to avoid being fat. *That's* how maligned fatness is in our culture. Gilda Radner once

made a joke of it in a skit she did about saccharine in diet drinks, saying that "men prefer skinny women with cancer over healthy fat women." And I guess this girl was just taking that to heart, because it's obviously touching on a very disturbing truth.

## HOW FAT IS FAT?

It may seem a silly question, but it can be a rather arbitrary decision. In *I'm So Fucking Beautiful*, Nomy had said that she considered herself fat, and therefore, of course everyone larger than her was fat. The tougher part was acknowledging how other people measured up -- or out, as it were. And I've seen this in a lot of other pro-fat types of publications as well, where fat people are acknowledging that they (we) don't have a corner on the market, yet they have trouble accepting people thinner than them as having the same problems. That's kind of the perspective I'm coming from too. It would be rather arrogant to say outright that my size is the cut-off point to what is and isn't fat, and it's not that simple.

One publication defined fat as '200 lbs' or heavier. Well, who gets to make this arbitrary definition? 200 lbs looks very different on different body frames. How does 200 lbs look on someone who's 5'3" as oppsed to someone who's 6'2" and how much of that 200 lbs is allowed to be fat and how much is allowed to be muscle? There are so many problems with this. I looked a lot fatter at 5'6" and 180 than my friend who was 5'5" and 210, but who did weight-lifting and had some heavy muscles under her fat, but yet, she would be considered fat, and I technically wouldn't be. So, because I didn't reach the numerical cut off point, I guess I'm not really oppressed, and suddenly all the stores are going to carry clothes that fit me, and have bras in my size and nobody will point and stare when I wear my brand new designer I'mNotFat bikini to the beach? FAT Fucking Chance!

I recognize that I have a lot more privilege than someone who is much bigger than I am. I can still sometimes shop in 'normal' stores, although I can't usually find the trendy types of clothes that I might like to wear, and I can fit in just one seat on buses and subways and other forms of public transport. not always comfortably, but I can do it. Unfortunately, I'm too big to squeeze through the subway turnstiles with any of my friends, so yeah, us fat kids have more trouble pulling off some seams than thinner people. That's something i've never heard addressed in the scamming discussions or zines or what-have-you, but I know I'm not the only one to be concerned about it. A friend up in New England had told me that she felt a little left out when our pals were sneaking through the metro turnstiles and we both had to pay full fare because we were too big to do it. And she's considerably smaller than I am, but can I consider her fat because she also misses out on this treat because of her size? And would it even matter?

Someone was telling me about another fat-activist she knows, who has this fatter-is-hetter attitude. The way it translates is that this person automatically gives the benefit of the doubt to anyone who is fat -- fat being the same size or larger -- but makes people who are smaller prove themselves before any meaningful interaction can take place. The thinner the person is, the more hoops they have to jump through.

I kinda feel this way about some of the "super-size" activists I've interacted with, or read the philosophies of... the kind of "how dare she presume she knows what fat oppression is" attitude some of them have towards those of us who are fat, but not nearly as fat as they are. How can someone (me) under 200 pounds relate the life experience of someone who is 300? 450? 600? 700? And trying to look at it through their eyes, it must not feel any different to them than it feels to me when a thin person says to me that it's so hard being a woman because they always have to worry about getting fat, and

diating to keep themselves at their current body size. That absolutely makes me feel like SHIT. How else am I supposed to feel when a thin person standing next to me, says something awful about how fat they are? It implies something about me, that's for sure, because if I'm twice their size, and they hate themselves for being fat, they must hate me twice as much. For being F-A-T.

Don't call yourself fat, and certainly don't say degrading things about being fat, if you're NOT fat. That type of behavior belittles fat people, and it trivializes what we live through every day of our lives. It's not cute.

This summer I was staying with someone on the opposite end of the body-size spectrum. She's just naturally very skinny, and I'd say that she gets the same attitudes and types of treatment that any fat person is subject to on a bad day, only with different adjectives. "You're so skinny, you need to put some meat on your bones."

We had stopped to talk to someone peddling his wares on the street one afternoon, and as we were leaving he reached out and grabbed her arm, and pleaded with her "Eat something."

She shook him off and walked away, pissed. And justifiably so. He could've just as well grabbed me by the arm and pleaded with me to go on a diet. Both of us would've had people justify his action as an extension of his concern for our health. But what it really comes down to, when it's a stranger on the street, is that they know little or nothing about the lifestyles of the people they're making this judgment call about, and it's *not* out of concern for our health -- it's a judgment on our bodies.

So basically, fat lib isn't just for fat people. It's for skinny people, medium sized people, short and tall people. I call it fat lib because I'm fat, and that's what I get judged for the most. That's what I see the dirtiest attitudes towards in our culture. And we really do have such a rotten attitude towards fat in our culture, it's so repulsive that people starve themselves, purposefully addict themselves to drugs in the hopes that they'll change their metabolism, undergo costly, dangerous ineffective surgeries to suck the fat out of their bodies, and convince themselves that they are a failure if their body doesn't cooperate with societal standards. I've never seen someone embarrassed of their height aspire to slice parts of their legs off so that they could be a more acceptable height. It's a ridiculous notion that someone would try to deny their natural height... and if you put some thought into it, it's equally ridiculous that someone would starve themselves down to a size which they were not meant to be. What it really boils down to is that it's body-acceptance, for all body types. Every one of us has a right not to make excuses for our bodies.

"There's too much prejudice in this world for us to not look like this and feel good about ourselves... Whether it be the size or the color that I am, I am big and I am beautiful and I'm gonna show it! I'm the new and improved Barbie. I can't help it if I can't fit all this personality into a size 6.

-pro-wrestler Kelle 'Beastie' Boeninghaus.

## AFRAID TO TAKE UP SPACE

In Kim Chernin's *The Obsession: The Tyranny of Slenderness*, she makes mention of starvation as a method of thwarting the feminist movement. Thin bodies did not come into style until the time of the suffrage movement. When women got the vote, the curvaceous, womanly figure went out of fashion, and thinner (and thinner, and *thinner*) came en vogue.

It's a way of staying crippled. When women finally posed a real threat to the power structure, we were encouraged to put ourselves back into our places -- and we were our own worst enemies. Women of the day embraced the unnaturally thin figure, and it ruled their worlds. You can't think about fucking up the power structure when you're starving.

Wait, no... the way I've put that is too cliché and dogmatic. So Chernin thinks, and it sounds quite plausible to me, that eating disorders and the diet industry sprang up to encourage women to *stay small*. With all the advances that the women's movement has made in the past century, women deny themselves their rightful places of power in the world through staying small, staying starving and undeveloped. They prolong girl-hood, stay as children who don't have to face up to their fullest potential. It makes sense. Women are discouraged from living up to a potential which might threaten dominant (say it with me now) straight-white-male-culture. One way of doing this is to hinder their size, not to take up space -- because out of sight is out of mind. If they stay small, they're less likely to offend. and we all know, fat women are offensive.

Fat people who know their strength push our buttons. Roseanne -- beloved by an enlightened few, hated by many. She put forth a great image in the mainstream media of a smart, funny, sexy & *realistic* fat woman. Andrea Dworkin -- I hate her politics with a passion & she's way off base, but she is extremely persuasive. She's changed law in two countries without any substantial facts to back up her reasoning... now *that's* power!

Small women don't seem as dangerous; and women who purposefully keep themselves small are even less so, because they become too preoccupied with not taking up any physical space that their whole beings are hindered from growth. Stopping growth of the body eventually stops the growth of the mind and soul as well.

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# The Fat Kid Chronicles.

(zk = Zann Katt; kc = kate cooties; L = Lisa)

## age 8

I was sitting in my driveway listening to my very first cassette (Cyndi Lauper She's So Unusual...plug for Cyndi) and this boy from down the road rode by on his Huffy and yells "you fat faggot". He was a "friend" of mine and now, as I look back, that's the ONLY thing I ever remember him saying to me, even though we were neighbors for 5 years. (ZK)

## age 9

Reading Archie comics at a friend's house, the storyline for one is about dieting. Veronica Lodge gets on her scale for a weekly weigh-in & finds that her normally 105 lb frame has "blimped up" to 110. Panel after panel depicts her frantic, anorexically obsessed exercising, her denial of food even at a lavish table-setting, and even her refusal to go out in public or to be with friends because she considers herself too fat and disgusting to be seen.

The story ends with her finding out the scale was broken, and so Veronica's not really fat & disgusting... she just would be if she really HAD gained five pounds. I love kids comics. (kc)

## age 9

I was walking back into the school from recess and this boy came up to me and kissed me on the face. I pushed him off of me and he said "we belong together...we're both chubby". That was devastating to me.

What did he mean? Would only other "chubby" people like me? Why wouldn't I "belong" with a skinny boy? (ZK)

## age 10

By my 10th birthday, I had grown to completely loathe my body. I remember counting calories, weighing food, exercising excessively, and begging my mother to take me to her weight watchers meetings. She wouldn't at first, but eventually gave in because my doctor assured her that a good healthy diet couldn't possibly affect my health negatively. She also thought that it wouldn't hurt to "get me started" early.

So, I went to the meeting. I was 11 or 12, and everyone else was at least 40. I was weighed in front of the entire group, which was humiliating, and my present and "goal" weights were recorded in my personal diet diary. I was instructed to write down everything I ate, but would often leave things out. I was ashamed.

The meetings were long and boring, and I couldn't sit still. I would fidget around for awhile and sometimes fall asleep. I think they were on Thursday nights, around 8 or 9pm. It took about a couple month's worth of meetings before I started throwing up. My mother became very concerned. She would ask me how I felt about the meetings, and tell me that she wasn't sure she was doing the right thing by bringing me to them. Of course, I told her that everything was fine and that I had never felt better. I continued the meetings, continued the puking, and eventually started cutting myself. Then mom threw out my diet diary. (L)

## age 12

I was the third fattest girl in my grade in Jr. High. The other two were in the "special" PE class, while I was in the normal class. That made me the fattest kid in my PE bell. It was bad every day, but it was worst on that second week of class, where we had our semester weigh-in in front of all 4 overcrowded PE classes that took place that period. I asked the gym coach if I could stay after class to get weighed, but he just glared at me and said I was no different from anyone else (not that you would've known that from the way the other kids looked at me) and he wouldn't give me any special privileges. The whole gymnasium held it's breath as I walked down to the scales, and they watched the surly coach move the weights over. Past the 150, past the 200. One of the older boys hissed "moooo" and the coach announced my weight to everyone in the gym.

I shook my long hair over my face and hunched my shoulders down as I slunk back to my seat. I wished I was invisible... especially when one of the skinny girls whispered to her friend, "I'm so glad I'm not that fat." (kc)

## age 15

The dreaded physical fitness assessment in gym. Everyone's in line waiting to step on the scale and I was flipping out knowing people were going to see how much I weighed. I stepped on the scale and the gym coach moved the weights over...and over...150. He looked at me and said "you weigh THAT much?". (ZK)

age 15

I had contracted mononucleosis as a result of my starvation dieting, and ended up at my family physician's office for the first time in years. The nurse led me down the halls to the scale, where she measured & weighed me, glancing at the last markings on my charts.

"Well, you've lost a lot of weight since your last visit!" she chirped, "Congratulations." (kc)

### age 19: Stealing Signs for Revolution.

Yesterday, I stopped my car and removed every Lose Weight Now! and LOSE 30lbs in 30 DAYS! sign that I saw. I can't stand the commercialism which preys off of fat people's conditioned self-loathing. The signs portray skinny, triumphant women holding out the waistbands to huge stretch pants, always proclaiming, in deed if not in words, that those models are better people than they had been before -- when they were fat. "Being fat is bad, and it makes you unhealthy & unhappy," the posters say, "buy our product & you'll be thin." This is presented as the panacea. Their pills are not a panacea, because removing fat (as if it even stays off with those scams) doesn't remove the absurd belief that fat is the worst thing which one could possibly be -- which means that those of us for whom the diet schemes and scams don't work are held up as examples of failure. For the fat person who refuses to live in a constant state of semi-starvation, ridicule is commonplace. She doesn't measure up unless her measurements go way down. if fat people are unhappy, it's because we are regularly assailed with the message that we are failures; if we're unhealthy, it's likely because our immune systems have been weakened by living in a state of perpetual starvation and lifetimes of yo-yo dieting. Being fat isn't bad -- but being told we are bad because we are fat is reprehensible. (kc)

### age 19: a boy and his liposuction.

my friend confides in me that his upcoming doctor visit is for an evaluation for the liposuction surgery he's always wanted, but never told anyone about. he's afraid that the reason he doesn't get many dates is that girls are turned off by his chest. he's not very fat, but he's got breasts, and he feels humiliated by them. other boys at his school joke him about his "tits."

I ask him a lot of questions, and suggest he read the book I just finished (fat is Not a Four-Letter Word) about the medical realities of fat, surgeries and diets. Liposuction killed 9 people in it's first year of practice in France, where it was invented. I offer him my support no matter what choice he makes, but inside, I hope that he won't go through with the surgery. (kc)

age 19

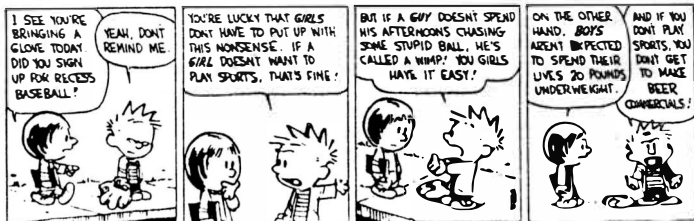
a woman I had asked to write for my zine confides in me that she used to daydream about slicing off her fat. she'd fantasize about taking razor blades to her flesh until she'd carved herself into a thin person. she came close to trying it, from what I gather. (kc)

### Forcibly Slender.

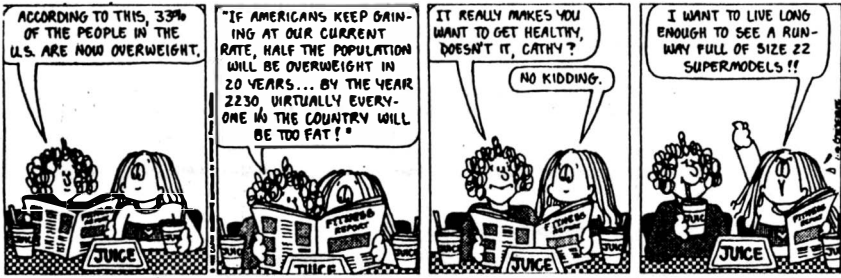
My half-sisters' mother will lose her job if she gains more than 5 pounds. This is legal. No one says a word about the ethics of this dilemma. Because it's in the job description.

When you're in your 50s, the job market isn't as open a place as you once knew it to be, and this is what she faces. She's relegated to a weight range far below the average for women her age, and also below what is healthiest for her as an individual. She is under the duress of an eternal diet. She's had the job for a long time, yet seniority counts for nothing, and size counts for everything. Her income depends upon her continued starvation. She watches her body every day, she cannot afford to be less than fully aware of every ounce, every calorie she puts into her mouth at mealtime. She weighs in at work in front of her bosses at least once a week. If the needle on that scales moves more than a fraction to the right, there's a pink slip with her name on it. 5 pound margin.

She works for Weight Watchers. (kc)







I was always a fat kid. And that's just the way it was. I didn't eat large portions of food, I didn't sit and watch tv all day long, I didn't eat candy and cupcakes constantly, that's just how I was. I'd see my friends and wonder why I didn't look like them. I didn't do anything differently then they did. When you're a little kid, you don't understand the world and you especially don't understand why other kids are mean to you. More than that, you absolutely don't understand what's happening when you begin to hate yourself because of the way you look.

I remember the first day of school in 2nd grade. I walked into the class and there were two seats left....one was next to two girls that I knew but they weren't my friends, the other was next to a yucky boy that I knew I didn't like at all. I chose the seat next to the icky boy because I was afraid the girls would make fun of me and not like me. Even when people would tell me I was pretty, I wouldn't believe them...I thought they were just saying it to make me feel better because they knew (and they knew I knew) that I was fat. I wouldn't go swimming at other people's houses and I'd never go to the beach. I couldn't stand it if anyone would touch me, even if it was a hug, I knew that they would feel my fatness. I hated eating in front of people because I thought that they were looking at me saying to themselves "why is she eating, she's fat already". All through school I'd look around the classroom and see if there was another fatty in there. If I was the fattest one, I would feel uncomfortable the entire year because I thought that other people scouted out the classroom just like I did to find the fattest person. I wouldn't run in PE because I thought people would laugh at me. I had a group of close friends (4th-9th grade) that always had little parties and stuff...I would think that they were just inviting me because they felt obligated not to leave me out. All these things were before I was 14 years old. Most of them before I was 12. The list goes on and on. The most disturbing thing is that I wasn't really that fat.

I stressed the "knew" and "thought" because those two words are crucial. I was watching Oprah one day a couple of years ago and she had guests on that were willing to have a very large scar constructed on their faces with makeup. Then they were going to go out in public and document how people reacted to them and how they were discriminated against (because of this

horrendous scar on their face). The show cut to the next day, and the guests returned to describe how appalling it was... how people stared at the scar and talked about them behind their backs. How they were treated more poorly than if they wouldn't have had the scar. The catch...the makeup artists removed the makeup completely before they went out in public. These people were so self conscious of this scar (which they didn't even have) that they thought people were staring, etc. This is so important. The hell I went through as a kid was mostly in my own head. Of course I got comments from other kids (and adults). But not nearly to the extent to which I hated myself for what I thought was going on. Through Jr. High, High School, and college I always had friends, boys calling me, boyfriends, and compliments on my looks, but it was always lurking deep inside of me that I was fat. I've been a size 12 for about 4 years. That's not huge. But I am still self conscious about my weight. 15 years of self-degradation doesn't go away quickly. I am now 21 and I'm just starting to come to terms with who I am, and in turn, my physical appearance. I've tried every diet and failed, but now I know the reason...I was trying to lose weight for other people. Now I go to the gym and work-out every day (screw the diets)...and I do it for me. Because I want to be healthy, because I want to be strong, and because I feel damn good when I walk out of that gym. There aren't going to be any more psychiatrists feeding me pills and saying "well, you don't look fat to me", there aren't going to be any more 115 lb. therapists insinuating that I went through some kind of "traumatic experience" that caused me to overeat and become fat. Um...being fat was the traumatic experience. Or telling me to concentrate on every single bite when I eat (because obviously if I'm fat I eat like a pig and just scarf it all down in one gulp, right?). No more "counselors" arguing with me about my feelings. Ugh.

I am sick to death that things like this happen. When I was a little kid, I didn't know any better. Kids are so fragile, so susceptible. Now it's my choice, now I am fully aware of what is going on and what I need to do to stop it...and that's exactly what I intend on doing.

Zann kat  
Zannkat@aol.com

# ★ FAT KIDS REVENGE ★

"Boom-bobba! Boom-bobba! BOOM!"

It was one boy who'd start the taunting, who'd get the other kids in our class riled up against me. When I walked alone down the pathways around our elementary school, he'd chase after me, hollering, "Boom! Boom-bobba! Boom-bobba! BOOM! You're gonna break the sidewalk! You're so fat the sidewalk's gonna cave in!!"

Little heads would stick out from behind door jambs, and other kids followed his example in the jeers, while I rushed away, trying to find somewhere I could be alone & in peace. The adults never did anything to stop it. My friends, all in different grades, were never around during my class' recess. The jeers echoed around me, reverberating off the walls and cutting into my soul.

I hated that boy.

Every time he chased me down, glaring at me and conducting that cruel chorus of biting voices, I hung my head low -- self-consciously willing my belly not to jiggle as I pounded quickly along the pavement, stretching out the hem of my shirt, hoping that I could make the cloth not cling so tight. I wished I could stretch my shirts big enough to hide inside.

This happened every day for years. Ignoring him only made it worse, and adults refused to intervene -- feeding me lines such as "Boy's will be boys. learn to ignore it." and they ignored me when I said that I already had, and it made it worse.

Then one day, when the teacher had excused our class to recess on the playground, I stayed behind in the room, not having the capacity to go through it again. The teacher left for the office, while I drew at my desk. And that boy stuck his head in the door, sneering at me again.

"What're you doing, Fat Girl?"

"Go away."

"What's the matter, Fat Girl?"

"Leave me alone!"

"You couldn't come outside cuz you'd crack the stairs, you're so fat!"

"You better leave me alone or you're gonna get it!," my tiny 7-year-old knuckles tightened white around my art supplies.

"Whatcha gonna do to me, Fat Girl?"

★★★☆☆☆☆SNAP☆☆☆☆★★★

My little hands clenched into fists, one of them clutching a stubby pair of safety scissors. His taunts whirled around in my head: fat girl. fat girl! Fat Girl! Fat Girl! Fat Girl! FAT GIRL! FAT GIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL! FATGIRL!

Hate matched against hate. He would pay for hurting me. I leapt from my desk & gave chase. He ran, toppling the little desks between us to try to keep me at bay, but as the fear flashed through his eyes, I knew I'd get my long-awaited revenge. I grabbed him by the chest of his shirt, stretching it as much as my shirts had been stretched while trying to hide myself from him, reeling him towards me and drawing my fist back, ready for my first punch. With his shirt twisted tight up by his neck, his dread was evident -- he wasn't calling me FAT GIRL now. And as I gripped those scissors high above my head, I felt my RAGE give me back the dignity that he had repeatedly stripped me of.

Just when I was about to send those stubby little safety scissors hurtling down, adult hands wrenched them from my determined fingers. The teacher painfully twisted my arm behind my back and marched me death-squad style to the principal's office.

My tormentor brushed himself off, laughing at me again.

"You're gonna get it now, Fat Girl!"

The decision was immediate. The principal was harsh, glaring down at me from behind an intimidating desk, while lecturing sternly: "I can't have you in my school if you're a threat to the other students."

I hung my head as if he were in the room still chanting: "Fat Girl! Fat Girl! Fat Girl!" at me -- and he was, in my head. He'd won. He'd taunted me right out of the second grade.

In a whisper barely audible in that grim office, I defended myself one last time: "They were a threat to me."



So there's the story of how I got kicked out of the 2nd grade. I've never forgotten that boy, who nurtured the seeds of fat-hate in me, and taught me to translate fat-hate to self-hate. He pushed & pushed & pushed until I snapped, violently. School taught me the first lessons about abuse of authority that I ever learned: adults never help when they're asked, they only belittle problems, and willfully ignore any abuse which doesn't threaten their positions of power. And when the abused is pushed to the breaking point, it's treated as if it came out of nowhere. It never spontaneously manifests. It's fighting back -- against whoever has made you hate yourself. I'm trying hard to unlearn this self-loathing.

I don't like that this culminated in a violent way. I don't like that I have that kind of inclination in me at all, or that I ever did; but I'm going to be honest about it. it felt good to fight back. and yeah, I think he deserved it. kids are awful to one another, I don't get this romanticized view of childhood that most people seem to hold. I certainly didn't live a care-free childhood, and I'd wager a guess that most people didn't. granted, the vast majority of childhood cares are probably less serious than attempted maiming with safety scissors, but it was a constant push. verbal violence, intimidation, sermons at humiliation... they all lead up to physical violence. having lived this out, makes me all the more resolute in that I never want to see this cycle repeated, and I have to talk about it. the adults around us let it go on, because they believed that "sticks and stones" bullshit. and it is bullshit. they let it get way out of hand, and expected a bunch of 7-year-olds to know how to cope with that!? what the fuck!? mob rule doesn't work for adults, let alone for second-graders.



He'll never respect me, thats what he said. as long as i'm fat i'll never have his respect. i'll never be a true success as long as i'm overweight, according to him.

all my life i've been aware that i was overweight. as a kid it was only the other kids at school that who seemed concerned, i still had my fair share of friends and the teachers loved me because i always knew the answer. it wasnt until my twelfth birthday birthday that it became such an issue with my father. i'm sure that it all began before that, but thats the time i remember his obsession affecting and hurting me.

since then i've had millions of lectures on being fat, on being lazy, on being a failure. i've had my bloodwork done to check my health, the plan being if my cholesterol, blood pressure, or anything was too high then i would be forced to diet. i've even written a research paper, assigned by my father, on the affects of being obese.

maybe i've never lose weight because i'm happy. maybe its because i'm lazy and a failure as my father chooses to believe. quite possibly its simply because i'm content with this aspect of myself, not unhappy enough to change it or to be influenced by the wants of others.

it used to tear me up inside to know that my own father could only see my exterior and condemn and despise me for it. i've changed a lot since i was that scared, crying twelve year old. i'm content with the person i've become, for in my father's hatred i found strength.

Yes, there's a world of fat-hate out there. These are some clippings from the FaT GiRL website (<http://www.fatso.com/fatgirl/>), which were originally compiled by Max Airborne, Sondra Solo, Barbanism and Devra, which demonstrate what fat folks are up against, and what we're doing about it. It's....

# Fat Watch!

## Fat @ppression Kills Again -- 12 Year @ld Dies

1996: Samuel Graham killed himself in his Florida backyard just hours before he was to start his first day of class at Parkway Middle School. He told his family earlier that he did not want to go to school because he was afraid he would be picked on because of his weight. His two younger brothers found him hanging from a tree early Monday, August 26. Samuel was 12 years old.

## Sympathy for Supermodels

"Hostility against thin people is at an all-time high, and fashion models are taking the brunt of the criticism." Rebecca Johnson of Vogue magazine, expressing concern for "weight oppression."

## Gain a Pound, Lose a Crown

The 18 year old Miss Universe is likely to lose her title if she does not lose weight. Officials have told Venezuelan Alicia Machado she has 2 weeks to lose 27 pounds or her crown will go to the runner-up. "She has various swimsuit contracts and they're not happy that she has gone a bit chubby," a pageant representative said. (Rumor has it that she may not be fat, but pregnant. If so, she may be able to keep the crown.)

## Lead Me Not Into Temptation

"I've lost 128 pounds! It's only through obedience to God that I've done it," proclaims one of twelve people in Belmont Church's Dieting for Jesus program. Similar "Slim Down with Jesus" organizations currently exist in more than 3,000 American and European churches. Leader of another program, The Weigh Down Workshop Inc., Gwen Shamblin, explains her basic philosophy: "Eat what you want whenever you want and ask God to help you stop when you've had enough." The cost of her audio tape weight loss regimen, with revival rallies included, is \$100.

## Fat Phobia Behind Bars

In Georgia, prisoners who are not deemed to be in good enough physical condition will be forced to shape up by the system. Prison Commissioner Wayne Garner, who believes the inmates are not in adequate shape, will force them to exercise. "There's 30 to 35 percent that ain't fit to kill," he says. His plan requires the prisoners to dig ditches, then fill them back in. "When they get out," he predicts, "they're not going to want to come back."

## Sick Kid Tidbit of the Month

There is a new arcade game out called "Feed Big Bertha." It consists of a large three dimensional doll with a gaping mouth (somewhat reminiscent of a blowup doll), small arms with hands clenched into fists, and a tent-like dress. She is set back a few feet in a cage. The object is to quickly throw balls into her mouth. Because of the height and distance of the target, the balls must be thrown quite forcefully. A shot into the mouth registers on an LCD screen as "weight gain." When enough points accumulate, Bertha responds by lifting up the front of her skirt to reveal her stomach and underwear. Thus, as the game is played, Big Bertha alternates between being hit repeatedly in the face by the balls and exposing herself to the ball-thrower. What is most disturbing about seeing and playing the game is the clear connection between violence against fat women and the joke it makes of fat women's sexuality.

## Stop The Hypocrisy: Ms. Weighs In

Although the choice of cover story about TV character Xena seemed absurd to me, I bought Ms. magazine. It was the Special-Six-Advertisement-Free-Years-Anniversary-Edition and I wanted to show my support for their efforts- they usually manage to have some good stuff in each issue. What I found left me so angry and disappointed I couldn't even talk about it for days.

The anniversary issue claims it is celebrating the theme "Building Bridges." To this end they introduce two consecutive articles writing, "We have seen how the politics of fear thrives on scapegoating and dividing people. In these mean-spirited times, the following two articles serve to remind us of the importance not only of proclaiming our movement's moral vision, but of really walking the walk. Ms.'s commitment to "walk the diversity walk" ends abruptly, however, for all who read the next article -- a three page interview with Susan Powter. Painting her as an "advocate of feminism" while referring to her earlier weight gain as "ballooning," the article is a

free ad for Powter. There is no investigative journalism, no hard-hitting, probing questions, just a forum for Powter to spread her verbal violence against fat people, women in particular. Thanks to Ms., readers needing and expecting reliable information are instead instructed to, "Tell the truth to somebody who weighs 350 pounds. Here's the bottom line. You can be fat and love yourself. You can be fat and have a great personality, you can be fat and do whatever you want, but you cannot be fat and healthy. You cannot! Fat kills, it clogs, it destroys...So don't tell me that you love yourself."

"The other day I was looking through the newest version of *Our Bodies, Our Selves*...and I found something as offensive as I find in *Playboy*. Every woman in there looked like a sack of shit."

Susan Powter talking about fat and feminism in *Ms.* magazine.

Ironically, in the first *Building Bridges* article just pages before, Audre Lorde specifically identifies the Mythical American Norm as "white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, and financially secure." I guess Powter was too busy doing sit-ups to read Lorde's piece. Note also that the graphics for the two diversity articles show 19 silhouettes of people of different races and ethnicities. None of the silhouettes are fat. Not even one.

Lest you think *Ms.*'s publication of Powter's opinion is an aberration, consider the dialogue in the letters section of the same issue. Activists Cheri Erdman and Pat Lyons wrote to encourage *Ms.* to do an investigative report on the politics of fat oppression. They conclude, "We, as fat feminists, would like to feel represented within your pages, including photos of large women on the covers." *Ms.* defensively responds, "We have profiled two activists on the issue of fat oppression in the past three years." Wow. Now that's a statistic to be proud of! Not.

One of those two stories was a reprint of a piece by the wonderful 20 year old Nomy Lamm (*I'm So Fucking Beautiful*). While her fantastic piece was crammed onto one page, *Ms.* devoted that much room to a big photo of Powter's face alone. Can this possibly get any worse? Yeah, it can. Turns out *Ms.* has not actually paid Nomy the money they owe her for her piece. When she calls, as she has been for months, the man in charge of payment is always out of the office. He has yet to return her calls.

Gee, I wonder if Powter's interviewer is still waiting for her money.

To let *Ms.* know what you think about all this write to:

Letters to the Editors "Ms."

230 Park Avenue New York, NY 10169

or email: [ms@echonyc.com](mailto:ms@echonyc.com)

Update June 1997: Nomy reports she has been paid.

## Twisted Justice

October, 1995: John Rossi worked at Kragen Auto Parts in Berkeley and San Francisco, CA for 10 years. Then he was fired because he weighed 400-500 pounds. He successfully sued and was awarded \$1 million for emotional distress and lost compensation and benefits, which is the first major CA verdict involving an employee dismissed due to obesity. But this is not the revolutionary case that it could be. Under the CA Supreme Court's mean-spirited and flawed 1993 decision, Rossi had to prove that his obesity was a physical disability by showing it was a physiological disorder. Had it been simply discrimination because of his size, rather than discrimination because of his condition, he would not have prevailed. John Rossi, who is frank when he states, "I don't want to be a symbol, I just feel justice was served," says that with the \$1 million he will now be able to afford the medical treatment that he feels he needs. If you want to share what you think about Kragen Auto Parts' decision to fire Rossi because he is fat, feel free to call them at (510) 649-9007. You might want to also mention whether or not you will shop there in the future.

## You Must Be Saved, Even If It Kills You

Reinaldo de Carvalho, the Rei Momo (Fat King) of Rio de Janeiro's Carnaval celebration, died trying to lose weight. Carvalho entered a weight-loss clinic in Rio and died after losing 66 pounds in 30 days.

## Twisted Profits

You think it's hard being fat now? Imagine the pressure to lose weight and fit in that will exist if a daily shot of "medicine" can make you thinner. Well, this problem may be very real in the near future. It depends on Leptin. And Amgen, the CA biotechnical company which paid Rockefeller University \$20 million to be able to make "obesity gene"-related products like Leptin, is depending on Leptin to make big profits.

What is Leptin?

Leptin is a protein that was discovered by inserting the recently discovered obesity gene (or ob gene) of naturally thin mice into bacterial cells.

What does it do?

26 Back in the 1960s a researcher from the Jackson Laboratory surgically joined the blood vessels

of living fat and thin mice. He found that the fat mice lost weight, implying that something in the blood affected weight. Three sets of researchers agree that Leptin is the blood factor that makes fat mice thin. Nobody knows how it works, but some researchers suspect it may be a hormone that acts on the brain to control metabolism and appetite. More Leptin means faster metabolism and higher body temperature. And since Leptin is made in fat tissues, the fatter the animal is, the more Leptin should be produced. The more Leptin is produced, the higher the metabolism becomes and the less appetite there is. Fat mice given daily injections of Leptin lost 30% of their size and ate less.

People have an ob gene similar to mice. Nevertheless, most experts think "defects" in the ob gene are not likely to be a major reason for obesity in people. There may be many more, maybe 100 more, genes in people that relate to weight and obesity. Also, the mice that lost weight had low Leptin levels. Many fat people have elevated Leptin levels.

Whether Leptin will cause weight loss in people will probably be discovered in the human trials Amgen will start in 1996. It could be available on the market as early as 2-10 years later. So it remains to be seen whether Leptin, which would be injected daily or implanted under the skin of the patient, is a safe, effective treatment or is simply another "miracle" produced by the diet and drug industry such as saccharin, aspartame and amphetamines whose dangerous long-term effects are ignored or unknown. Sadly, many fat people subscribe to the belief that it is better to be dead than fat and will flock to trade the title "fat pig" for "guinea pig."

## **Sick Mother/Daughter Tiddit of the Month**

On the Montel Williams show about overweight teens who fight with their moms one mother said to her 13 year old, 350-pound daughter, "Do you feel if I took you back tomorrow you would lose weight? If you would I will."

## **Poster Child of the Month**

Emaciation Stinks posters of Obsession waif Kate Moss were plastered all over San Francisco this September. SSIC, the Stop Starvation Imagery Campaign, aims to fingerprint the distortion of women's images in the media and combat obsession with bodies as objects for products. The posters target Calvin Klein's ad campaigns in an attempt to reach teenage girls who are most susceptible to the influence of the diet industry. As founder Kathy Bruin emphasizes, for teenagers it is "do or die." SSIC is raising awareness for women of all ages and encourages the boycotting of bad companies. Bruin advocates for women to "exercise their integrity and their personal individuality." Their next poster campaign will be "Bodies aren't fashion accessories," and SSIC has future plans to speak in schools and at fairs. The public is hungry to participate in this dialogue-response to their action has been intense, with hundreds of positive calls and letters as well as national press attention. Interested in raising awareness in your community? Write or call SSIC at PO Box 77665, San Francisco, CA 94107, (415) 436-0212, uvula@netcom.com. Donations for posters accepted.

Update May 1997: SSIC is now called About Face. Contact them through their web page, <http://www.about-face.org>.

## **Fat Visibility?**

One of Tokyo's latest popular video games, Fat Floater, requires players to use a joystick to maneuver a fat woman out of a lake and into a slim canoe. The game is lost when the fat woman drowns.

## **My peers? Yeah, right.**

California's 1st District Court of Appeal has upheld the Superior Court's decision to allow Alameda County Deputy District Attorney William Tingle to remove three jurors in an attempted murder case because one was "grossly overweight," one had braided hair, which he found "somewhat radical," and the third because of her "braids, obesity, size, and manner of dress." Tingle said he has "never liked young, obese black women, and I think they sense that." All three of the excused jurors are black, as is Tingle and the defendant in the case in question. According to California law, race is not a valid reason for dismissing a juror. Not so with fat: In 1989 there was a state Supreme Court decision rejecting a challenge to a prosecutor's removal of a juror. The court in that case said the prosecutor explained that the juror was "overweight and poorly groomed, indicating that she might not have been in the mainstream of people's thinking."

## **Fat folks screwed -- again**

A recent study by researchers at Rockefeller University shows two results: 1) the body adjusts its metabolism to maintain its natural weight and 2) fat people get manipulated and short changed because of their body size by all sorts of people, including Rockefeller University researchers. In what is regarded as a thorough study, researchers found that the body burns calories more slowly when weight is lost, and more quickly when weight is gained. The metabolism slows down or speeds up by 10-15% to return to the body's natural weight. The study rejects the theory that

excessive dieting upsets the metabolism because the metabolic rate changes were consistent whether or not the participant had dieted in the past. How was the study conducted? 41 people were recruited. They lived at the clinical center and for the 1st four to six weeks ate only a liquid diet. They then gained weight by consuming 5,000-6,000 additional calories per day. After they weighed 10% above their normal weight, they again ate only the liquid diet for 4-6 weeks. Finally, they lost weight by consuming 800 calories/day until they were 10% below their normal body weight and again ate only a liquid diet for 4-6 weeks. The "normal" weight participants received \$40/day. The "obese" patients received no money whatsoever, but were allowed to continue at the clinic on a special diet until they were not fat. Many of the 18 fat people got to within 20-30% of their recommended body weight, but none were able to maintain the weight loss. That the fat volunteers were not equally compensated financially is not surprising--after all, fat women in the United States have a household income that is, on average, \$6,710 less than thin women and fat women are 10% more likely than thin women to live in poverty regardless of their teenage achievement test scores or how and where they grew up.



## “You’re Not **Fat**, You’re Living in the Wrong Country.”

That was the headline on a group of articles in the February, 1998 issue of Maric Claire. I bought it just for the novelty of seeing a fashion magazine that mentioned fat in a context other than open condemnation, but I have mixed feelings about the articles that they presented. I like it that they showcase other cultures where fat is considered attractive: Nigeria, India, Mali, and Fiji; but the writers they sent on these missions do little to rid themselves of misogynist bias. In Mani, women are force-fed because a fat, complacent woman is considered the ideal; and that’s no worse than dieting in the western world because thin, complacent women are considered the cultural ideal. The story from Nigeria had a triumphant ending which wasn’t presented as such. Florence, the young woman who was undergoing a ritual fattening ceremony, Iria, which is a marriage preparation. The catch is, she agreed to do Iria on the condition that she not be married afterward -- she wanted to complete her education & have a career. In Fiji and India, western culture has seeped in, and is corrupting young women into thinking that anorexically thin is the ‘ideal’ body. The native cultural ideals are for women’s bodies to range from plump to fat; in Fiji, weight is a symbol of the community’s prosperity. If women are fat, it means that they eat well, and their community takes care of each other. In India, fatness is a sensual pursuit, recognized as pleasing to the touch and very sexy. Young girls in both cultures are watching American television, and starting to go on diets as a result of the confused values.

## **The Drew Carey Show**

I don’t watch television but I’ve seen the Drew Carey show once before, (the Viva Las Vegas issue, of course) and I really like it. It’s funny, and it’s got a saucy, sexy fat broad on it. Mimi rocks. Anyway, one of the fat-lib writers this issue mentioned to me that Drew’s girlfriend on the TV show was getting fat. Supposedly, she was fat before her character made an appearance on the show and she was introduced after she slimmed down. Now she’s plumping up again and Drew’s decides that he’s going to stick with her in their relationship whether she’s fat or not. Yeah, it shouldn’t even be an issue, but this is television, and for TV that’s pretty fucking revolutionary. It’s the *Ellen* episode for fat people.

## **As if Starvation Imagery werent enough**

In cooties #5 I awarded my first SOCK IN THE JAW award to Calvin Klein. He earned the distinguished honor of inspiring my bloodlust with his comments regarding his glamorization of the anorexic body: “The reason I do not make clothes over a size fourteen is that women should not be over a size 14.”

# Fat and Fit: at the same time

By Dave Platt

People are surprised when I tell them I exercise every day. Friends with miracle metabolisms - the types that can eat junk and never gain weight -- look at my fairly soft body and marvel at the idea of me doing any sort of strenuous activity. I listen to these comments, but I'm learning how to ignore them.

There's no "good" time to gain a lot of weight, but one of the worst times has to be adolescence. My own teenage experience was one of fighting a losing battle with my weight. I had a beer belly before I could drink beer, and developed breasts that would be the envy of most girls but were utterly humiliating for a teenage boy. I spent the ages 13 through 19 hiding behind baggy T-Shirts and avoiding beaches and swimming pools.

The major cause of my weight gain was a sedentary lifestyle. I always preferred reading a book or watching TV to running around with a football or a basketball. I was never good enough to compete, so why bother?

There were several attempts to get into shape, with diet soft drinks and a sorry excuse for a running regimen. The excuses outweighed the will to succeed, and I pretty much gave up. It didn't help that my older brother was a fitness nut, and my mother -- seeing my portly grandfather in my own physique -- tried desperately to get me to exercise. Being fat was a form of rebellion.

I know that as a guy weight is not as much of an issue for appearance, but my soft body has never been seen as desirable or attractive.

When I reached my 20s, I decided to change things. I would really become fit once and for all. My parents had recently bought a Nordic Track, and I would finally conquer my belly.

It didn't quite work out that way. Once I got past the initial clumsiness of the apparatus, I could develop a rhythm, but I could only manage ten minutes before I would get winded. I was ready to

give up. But for some reason, I decided to keep it up.

Slowly, I began to get the hang of it. I found that I wasn't getting tired after ten minutes, so I tried fifteen. Then twenty. Then twenty-five. I'm currently up to thirty minutes everyday. In the summer, when the weather is good, I ride my bike.

If this were a commercial for fitness equipment, you'd expect a miracle weight loss at this point. Pardon the pun, but fat chance. I still weigh in the same 250-260 range I did before I started doing this regularly. My body still has its soft, puffy parts. So why do I keep it up?

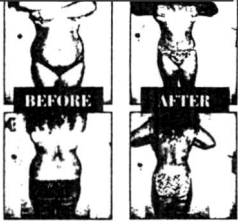
Frankly, because I enjoy it. When I get up, sometimes I dread exercising, but I always feel better afterwards. It's as much a mental exercise to keep up with this strenuous task, to push yourself to ignore your own feelings of exhaustion. There's no sense of competition; it's just you on your own, at your own pace.

Occasionally, I do resent the fact that friends who do no regular exercise, who smoke and drink and eat the same fried foods I crave, manage to maintain their trim physiques. Yet a visit from my brother for the holidays put it into perspective. As I told him about my exercise, he said "you may have crossed the threshold." What threshold, I asked. "The threshold between fat and fit," he explained. This was a revelation: you can be overweight and be fit at the same time. The opposite is true, too: you can be skinny and "fat" (out of shape) at the same time.

It took a change in perspective to make this move towards fitness possible. I'm no longer concerned with my weight per se, and I know it's not the be-all end-all of either my health or my appearance. Someday, I may lose the weight. For now, I'm just happy to be both fat and fit at the same time.

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from a VB gym advert. 2





# FAT BASHING HEADLINES!

The time was the late 1940s through the 1950s, just when the anti-fat sentiment had risen in the wake of an uncomfortable Parisian fashion trend towards girdles. Soon women's magazines picked up on the new look, and so began the wave of pressure for women to belittle themselves -- in every sense of the word.

What was on the newstands of the day?

"What Do They Say about You?" (Woman's Home Companion, 1949), "Thin Rats Bury the Fat Rats" (Harper's, 1949), "No Fads for Fats!" (Newsweek, 1950), "Hypnosis for Hips" (American, 1951), "Lucy Learns to be Pretty" (Woman's Home Companion, 1951), "Talk Your Fat Away" (Coronet, 1951), "Hollywood's Favorite Sweat Shop" -- which predated Kathy Lee Gifford's place (Collier's, 1952), "How the Stars Stick to their Diets" (Woman's Home Companion, 1952), "I Want to Have Babies and My Figure Too!" (Ladies' Home Journal, 1953), "Overweight, Our Biggest Health Menace" (McCall's 1954), "Why Do People Eat Too Much?" (Mademoiselle, 1954), "I Was a Hopeless Fatty, Now I'm a Model" (Ladies' Home Journal, 1955), and they even let the kids in on the fun! A 1948 issue of Seventeen Magazine ran "The Fattest Girl in the Class," a cinderella story of a girl who only finds happiness after dieting; and the parents of these poor ostracized fat girls got to read such Ladies' Home Journal treats as "No Fatties in the Family," and "Don't Let Your Child Be a Fatty!"

## Good Girls. Bad Girls. Sex ~~is~~ Food.

I have a concern about thinness which I don't often see voiced. I may have overheard a musing of someone on women's denial of food & how it relates to their denial of their sexuality long ago, and it's eaten away at me ever since.

The figure which has been en vogue since Twiggy hit the modeling scene in the '60s is the ever-thinning woman -- the waif -- the twelve year old eunuch with artificial breasts, if any at all. Because starving oneself results in a lack of breasts. Eating disorders often start at adolescence, as girl children try to avoid their emerging women's bodies: by starving themselves, they reject the lush, full hips which come with adulthood, and thwart their menstruation, that symbolic coming of age, through denial of food. Purposefully, they stunt their growth in order to avoid becoming *women* -- those threatening, sexual women which the world has spurned since Christianity rewrote history & painted the hungry Eve a sinner. The image of womanhood is ever hungry, physically, sexually, in her thirst for knowledge -- symbolic of a lack of the faith which all forms of authority depend upon for maintenance of power. Woman is a threat unless she learns to repress the tendencies of hunger & sexuality which are essentially anarchic in nature. Those who don't repress are punished; in literature banished from heaven; on earth, ostracized and hated.

Repression of these evils, hunger & sex, are the same, because to suppress food intake is to cripple oneself, and oftentimes the crippling takes the form of extended childhood -- a fear of womanliness and the inherent sexuality & badness

of women's bodies. To starve, to *diet*, is to exhibit this terror.

When dieting & self-denial don't come easily, some grudging women resort to surgical measures to strip their bodies of this threatening maturity. Breast reduction surgery, like any surgery on the breast, can sever the nerves so that patients end up with deadened nipples & insensitive areolas. It's a feminine version of castration.

Likewise, anorexics have continually decreasing sexual drives. As they become preoccupied more and more with food and the body, there is no time for the luxury of sexual pleasure. Having been convinced of her own grossness, the anorexic woman can feel no desire, or even ability to delight in the body which is the cause of her sufferings.

It's too convenient that these things go so easily together. It is always the starving girls who are the "good girls" in every respect. Conversely, it is always the first girl to develop womanliness in her body -- full breasts, emerging hips -- who is demonized as the school slut. The girl who *does* it whether she really does or not. She is a slut because her womanly body has the power to *arouse*. She is a bad girl.

The denial of the sensual is key to the repression of the threat of womanhood. Food & sexuality become the same, to deny either is to deny self-fulfillment and renounce that which our culture hates: women's power, women's happiness, *womanhood*.

It seemed so much like a selfless sacrifice, to be a starving, sexless Good Girl. Instead, it's a trick we play on ourselves.

# Fat Resources.

I just re-read *I'm So Fucking Beautiful* #2, and realized what high standards I'm going to have to live up to in order to make this zine as worthwhile a resource. One thing that I've gotten a lot of in regards to fat lib stuff is requests for resources. There are books out there that I really want to get a hold of, that I've not been able to, and I'm including those titles in the hopes that someone out there can send 'em my way or refer me to a place where I can get those.

Of course, the obvious first pick would be *I'm So Fucking Beautiful* by Nomy Lamm. issue #1 is a mini-zine; 35 cents and one stamp. issue #2 is larger and has more factual stuff & submissions by others, send \$2 and a couple stamps. I've heard that #3 was the sex-trade issue, and I especially would like to see that one (for all too obvious reasons) but I can't find it anywhere. I've written to Nomy before, and still haven't heard back, so I'm not sure if she's still distro-ing her own stuff. 120 State NE/#1510/Olympia, WA 98501 if you can't get the stuff from her, beg and borrow until you come across it.

**Fat!So?** is fiesty. It's not a punk rock zine, and it's got a pretty high circulation amongst fat people all over. I think it's hilarious, and Hank's writing is so informative I can't even do it justice. You can get samples of it on the Fat!So? website at <http://www.fatso.com> The zine itself is a bit pricey at \$3.50 an issue, but it's well worth it. PO Box 423464/ San Francisco, CA 94142

**Fat Girl** has a dykier slant. It's the zine 'for fat dykes and the women who want them.' The writing is as funny as Fat!So?, but from what I've seen of the two, I like the writers who contribute to Fat Girl better. It's definitely more woman-centric, and they always provide some sexy porn spreads with the hottest fat dykes in the world. Oh, and they're B&D positive. can I get an "Amen!?" You can get to 'em online at <http://www.fatso.com/fatgirl/> or you can order a big fat copy of the zine for \$5 a pop to 2215-R Market #197/San Francisco, CA 94114

**Pear-shaped.** I had ordered this with high hopes of it being this great fat-lib manifesto, and was obviously misled by the title. It's not a bad zine, but I couldn't commit myself to any more impassioned response than a shrug and a "s'okay." The body-size issue theme is mainly carried in the term paper they reprinted on body-image of dancers. It's a term paper, it's dry academic writing. (Which I happen to like, mind you.) Like most term papers, it's informative, but for the most part it probably won't have you noddin' your head and shouting "YEAH!" while you read it. It's worth it to note that this is the second issue, and the first may have been more on theme than the one I have. write c/o Mia Ellis/645 62nd St/Oakland, CA 94609.

**Minding the Body.** Ed. Patricia Foster for Anchor Books. There's a review of this in my books section; and I highly highly recommend it. Sallie Tisdale's writing is marvelous and insightful, and the other authors in this anthology cover a wide spectrum of body issues. It'll wake you up.

**No Fat Chicks: How Big Business Profits by Making Women Hate Their Bodies -- And How to Fight Back.** Terry Poulton. Birch Lane Press. The book has some great info on the diet industry and you should read it for that. As a retired newspaper journalist, the author is quite obviously not used to writing anything over a couple pages -- it shows. still, if you can get past that, there's a good deal of information on the diet industry, it's scheming, and the social marginalization of fat people: how it came about and how we can stop it.

**The Obsession: The Tyranny of Slenderness.** Kim Chernin. Harper Perrenial. When I read this in high school, it changed my life. When I read ISFB, it changed my life to the point that I cannot consider the Obsession the be-all end-all to fat lib. Obsession is about a thin woman's eating disorder: Chernin got noticed in the early 80s for this book and that recognition drew national attention to the problem of eating disorders. For that reason, this book should be read in a historical perspective. It was ground breaking material, and it still offers a lot of insight into fat-hatred that mainstream culture still doesn't acknowledge. BUT, this was written by a thin person -- and that kind of makes me discredit it to an extent. Yes, the information is good, but isn't her problem a glamorization of what fat people suffer? because she couldn't have experienced the brunt of what fat people go through. ISFB brought up the point that thinner people in the size-acceptance movement are often the ones to make advances, because they experience less of the seriously bad shit that larger fat people experience, and therefore their voices get heard more often. That's something that should be taken into consideration when reading this: it's a thin person's book on fat-phobia. Not a fat person's book on fat-phobia. Why did it take a thin person's paranoia about *becoming* fat to send a wake-up call about what fat-hatred did to women. This is a lot more about the paralyzing fear of becoming fat than it is out of general sympathy for women who already *are* fat. Consider it a starting point, but don't read it without some questions in your mind.

**Fat is Not a Four-letter Word.** I checked this out of a library so I don't have a copy handy to reference. It was written by an older, thin male doctor who is married to a fat woman. With his wife in mind, he wrote a book about the detrimental effects of dieting and surgeries, the biological realities of fat -- ranging from the genetics of fat, and the pre-determination of body size, to actually telling about the different types of fat cells and their function in the human body. From a scientific aspect, it's really interesting and I'm glad I read it. However, his social 'analysis' of fatness is half-assed, to say the very least. I found a lot of his judgements on women to be really sexist, and sexist not in the

way that most culture is "oh that fat bitch" and the like, but really paternalistic and patronizing like he didn't realize what he was doing was patronizing. It made it hard for me to get through a lot of the book. If you read this book (get it from the library, don't buy it cuz the guy's a putz) be sure to read the stuff on liposuction & diet drugs. He does know his medicine, I'll give him that much.

**Fat is a Feminist Issue.** Susie Orbach. Galahad Books. Orbach missed the point completely. While the book makes some good points on how women are oppressed under the same systems as fat people are oppressed, and how those things work together to create a hierarchy of oppressions, her solution to this problem is NOT to do anything to fuckin' shake up the system, it's to teach women the "right" ways to lose weight! what the fuck!? I feel \*so\* let down that this woman calls herself a feminist and then offers diet tips in her book. *Would she tell a woman of color who was oppressed that she could lessen her oppression by bleaching her skin?* well, she might, but i'm sure she'd get her ass kicked for it. I don't see any difference between that and telling fat women that they can unburden themselves by making themselves thin. Feminist my ass!

**NAAFA:** also known as the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance. Man, this organization rocks. They are way under budget compared to the other groups out there who lobby for the rights of other oppressed groups, but they are still doing it. You can call 1-800-442-1214 to find out more about their latest projects, and also if you have any spare money how you can donate it to them. They've sued businesses for discriminating against fat people, I think they've been involved in suits against airlines for charging fat people for 2-seats when they fly. Basically they're working their butts off to make it easier for us to live on a day to day basis.

**stuff I don't have, but want:** These are some things which have been recommended to me, that I haven't been able to find. **Fat Girl Dances with Rocks.** I have no information on it, but I've seen it mentioned by other fat activists. Nomy constantly talks about the book **Shadow on a Tightrope**, and I don't think she's ever mentioned the author's name or the press it was published on. I can't find it in the library system or bookstores around here. I gather it's more specifically about fat-issues than it is general body-image subjects. Leslea Newman edited an anthology called **Eating Our Hearts Out**, and it's mostly on body image and eating disorders. I'm not sure how much it deals with fat lib issues, and I haven't found it yet to check that out. **Transforming Body Image** by Dr. Marcia Hutchinson was listed in Stifled 'zine as being a really good resource for body-image issues, and Jocelyn said it was helpful to her. When I find it, I'll be sure to let you know whether it gets my personal recommendation or not.



**"FAT IS PERCEIVED AS AN ACT  
RATHER THAN A THING. IT IS  
ANTISOCIAL, AND CURABLE  
THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF  
SOCIAL CONTROLS. EVEN THE  
FEMINIST REVISIONS OF DIETING,  
SO POWERFUL IN THEMSELVES,  
PICK UP THE THEME: THE  
HUNGRY, EMPTY HEART; THE  
WOMAN SEEKING RELEASE FROM  
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR THE MAN  
FROM THE LOSS OF THE MOTHER,  
THROUGH FOOD AND FAT. FAT IS  
NOW A SYMBOL NOT OF THE  
PERSONALITY BUT OF THE SOUL  
-- THE CLUTTERED, NEUROTIC,  
IMMATURE SOUL."**

I picked up the book **Fat is a Feminist Issue**, by Susie Orbach, thinking that it would help me in my research for this fat-lib section in cooties. I naïvely assumed, perhaps because of the inclusion of the words "fat" and "feminist" in the title, that this would be a text important to me. I was dead wrong.

Rather, this book should've been called "How to get Skinny in the Name of Feminism." The book is anti-fat in it's slant, saying that through the shortcomings of feminism, more accurately, in it's failure to reach everyone and not having permeated our entire culture, women over-eat to fill a void and to relieve their despair in a non-feminist world. While this may be true for a small percentage of fat women, it neglects the reality of being fat -- that it is a biological *fact* for some people, rather than a result of gluttony or laziness. Every woman has a set-point for size & weight, and dieting does not lower the set-point of anyone's body. It merely lowers their self esteem.

**FiaFI** was a great disappointment to me, because the idea behind the book was that if you are fat, *you* should change your body so that you don't put anyone out -- so that society doesn't have to deal with fat people. This is as outrageous to me as if someone implied that being dark-skinned was a result of the failure of another social movement, and that dark-skinned people should bleach their skin in order to avoid racial discrimination. The argument fails not only because it shifts the blame to the victim for failing to radically alter her/his body to please others, but it also hides behind a façade of concern in the name of "feminism." There is nothing feminist about telling women that they're fat because of a lack of feminism: just the implication of a feminist society where every woman is "free" to live up to, not her fullest potential, but to her skinniest -- her very *least*, represents a great failure in Orbach's logic. She has failed to understand the severity of this problem.

# fat activism ideas

partially brought to you from the Fat Girl website.

## international no diet day

May 6th of every year, draw attention to the fact that the diet industry preys off of people of all sizes, by making them fear fat with misleading & harmful propaganda which falsely states that fat is unhealthy, ugly, wrong, and results from gluttony, laziness & lack of moral character. It's a perfect excuse to raise a ruckus, and do some consciousness raising in the process!

## enfatten your friends

Sick and tired of having your family and friends shove their skinny values down your throat? Well, turn the fat tables on them! Send them a letter saying how concerned you are about their health. Rant on about the potentially fatal dangers of dieting. Encourage them. Goad them on. Remind them that if only they'd stop dieting, they'd get that job, that lover, that American Dream. Let them know help is available. (Body Image Task Force, PO Box 934, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, (408) 457-4838; or NAAFA, PO Box 188620, Sacramento, CA 95818, (916) 558-6880) And don't forget to tell them, "I'm doing this for your own good. But of course I love you just the way you are."

## boycott lane bryant!

It's disgusting that fat women have such an unbearably hard time shopping for clothes that don't look like polyester pup-tents. I was horrified to learn that one of the few places which does sell fashionable, well-made clothing in larger sizes uses slave labor to do it. It outrages me that there doesn't seem to be a market for the fat woman who's also concerned about human rights, and it seems that my clothing now is going to be getting a bit threadbare, unless I take to sewing everything I wear from scratch -- again.

As of late 1995, there was a boycott of Lane Bryant (and also Limited Stores, Victoria's Secret, Structures Menswear, Limited Too, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Cacique) to pressure them to agree not to buy products made with child labor, in sweatshop conditions or forced or prison labor.

"Nearly 70 Thai garment workers in El Monte Calif. were released from what agents called virtual slavery" (New York Times, August 4, 1995). Victoria's Secret, a subsidiary of the Limited was subpoenaed in that case. According to Carpenters Local 108, The Limited (of which Lane Bryant is a subsidiary) imports about \$1 billion of garments primarily from low wage, third world countries each year. The Limited imports from the Choloma Industrial Park Free Trade Zone in Honduras. Honduran zones run by private organization of businessmen, keep a nation-wide blacklist of union members; workers can be fired for something as minor as passing notes.

## ZAP! the diet industry!

Tie up the phone lines of those evil profiteers (yup, the diet industry rakes in about \$33 billion a year!) and make them pay for it, too! Call their 1-800 numbers and keep them on the line as long as you can. Let them babble on -- the longer you keep them on the phone, the more it costs them, both in phone charges and lost business. We don't want some unknowing person to get through the lines and actually sign up! Don't give them your name or address if they ask. They do have software to pick up your phone number whether you give it to 'em or not. So don't get yourself in trouble...

Ask them:

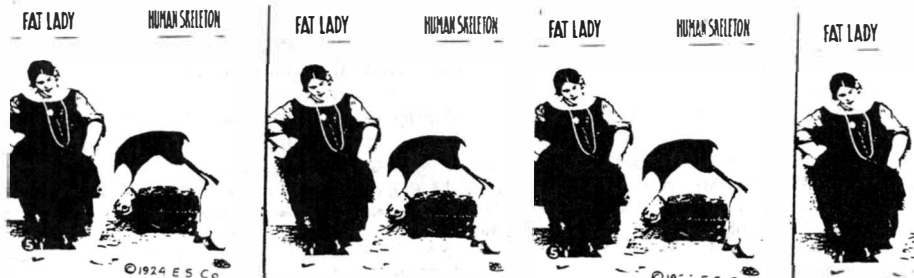
- *What's your name? (to put them on their best behavior)*
- *Can you tell me about your program?*
- *What is your success rate?*
- *Who conducted the study on your success rate?*
- *How long did you follow participants in your study?*
- *Is there really a study? Can I get a copy of the results?*
- *Have you personally tried this diet?*
- *Do you have a money-back guarantee? If not, why not?*
- *Are there any medical risks involved?*
- *Have there been any lawsuits against your company?*
- *Who owns this company? If it's a franchise, does the parent company monitor its children?*
- *Can you provide an explanation for the research that indicates that 95-98% of diets fail within three years?*
- *Can you explain the reasearch that indicates that dieting is the cause of many illnesses usually blamed on obesity?*
- *Is there any truth to the rumor that Jenny Craig recently gained 70 pounds?*

Keep 'em talking, they are not supposed to hang up! As long as you don't actually "harrass" them, they'll potentially stay on the line with you all day. (Hey, it could be the start of a beautiful relationship, and they might actually learn something.)

Be forewarned, however, that most companies which have 800 numbers also have caller ID, or other technology that will identify your number, even if you've had the presence of mind to put a trace-block on your phone. Use these tactics with caution, but have fun with 'em.

Here are some helpful numbers of fat-phobes who are in DIRE need of your help in enlightening them to their wrongful ideals. Let me apologize right here for using up so much zine space on them, but there are far too many companies preying off the fear of fat right now. These are just the predators in the United States! Kudos to the FAT GIRL website (<http://www.fatso.com/fatgirl/>) for supplying these diet-industry numbers. that's where I got 'em.

1-800-437-4946 A & Y Health Connection (Brooklyn NY) 1-800-528-9903 A Herbalife International Distributor (Needham MA) 1-800-774-5673 A Independent Herbalife Distributor (Waukegan IL) 1-800-782-9737 AAA Weight Management (Richmond VA) 1-800-842-9944 Achievement Unlimited (Avoncandle CO) 1-800-521-2373 Action Sales (Knoxville TN) 1-800-300-6573 Advocate Independent Distributor (Springhill LA) 1-800-622-6444 Ali S Akram MD (Port Huron MI) 1-800-260-2364 American-European Mktg Group (Manchester MA) 1-800-569-8793 Armcro Distributors (Placitas NM) 1-800-854-2497 Austin Beverly (Milton FL) 1-800-468-3438 Bariatrix Intl Inc (S Burlington VT) 1-800-468-6468 Behavior Modifiers (Valley Stream NY) 1-800-441-7546 Bioslim-Biotique-Medicus Formulas (Woodland Hills CA) 1-800-622-3885 Body Wise Weight Management System (El Dorado Hills CA) 1-800-233-4811 Body Wise Intl (Scottsdale AZ) 1-800-532-0244 Bonus Plan/Nancy Bonus The (Van Nuys CA) 1-800-496-6280 Bosywise Intl (Mineral Springs AR) 1-800-995-7458 Brodrick Inc - Ind. Herbalife Distributor (Denver CO) 1-800-932-4792 Bryant Ted & Darlene (Brooksville FL) 1-800-253-2000 California Diet (Newport Beach CA) 1-800-443-2584 Cambridge (Monterey CA) 1-800-872-2664 Cambridge Diet Sales (Mobile AL) 1-800-626-3396 Can Do (Copperhill TN) 1-800-352-1317 Carol Smith MD/Bariatric Medical Center (Ashville NC) 1-800-716-3396 D & K Diet Center (Leon IA) 1-800-688-3317 David P Michael (New Haven IN) 1-800-468-2226 D. & D. Stephenson, Distributors For EOLA (Ft Jones CA) 1-800-346-8446 Dial A Diet Inc (Upper Saddle River NJ) 1-800-247-8508 Diet Magic (Botler PA) 1-800-532-5268 Diet Magic (Mesquite TX) 1-800-343-8725 Diet Pals Intl (Westerville OH) 1-800-798-5677 Diet Plans-Herbalife (Knoxville IA) 1-800-743-0661 Diet Watchers (Canton OH) 1-800-428-1431 DJ's Slims (Albertville MN) 1-800-362-8446 Duke University Diet & Fitness Center (Durham NC) 1-800-447-0054 Dynamatrix (Wilson NC) 1-800-336-9678 Eaton Jeff (Burlingame CA) 1-800-524-4076 EML Ventures Weight Loss Center (Evans Mills NY) 1-800-669-3652 Eola Independent Distributor (Hazelwood MO) 1-800-523-5979 Evertrim (Westminster CO) 1-800-393-8746 Fit America (Port Charlotte FL) 1-800-564-3624 Fobi Medical Group (Inglewood CA) 1-800-338-9810 Herbal Life Distributor (Vero Beach FL) 1-800-753-3997 Herbalife (Davis CA) 1-800-233-4372 Herbalife A Distributor (Chicago IL) 1-800-322-3437 Herbalife All World Health Nutrition (Young Harris GA) 1-800-626-6848 Herbalife Distributor (Garland TX) 1-800-255-9761 Herbalife Distributor (Leander TX) 1-800-535-8946 Herbalife Distributor (Leander TX) 1-800-232-8438 Herbalife Distributor (Norco CA) 1-800-742-4372 Herbalife Distributor (St Louis MO) 1-800-861-7087 Herbalife Distributor Of Wisconsin (Beloit WI) 1-800-333-1175 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Boca Raton FL) 1-800-464-5673 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Needham MA) 1-800-949-4372 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Sacramento CA) 1-800-828-3512 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Silverton OR) 1-800-261-0334 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Waukegan IL) 1-800-828-3243 Herbalife Independent Distributor (Richardson TX) 1-800-831-1982 Hughes Patricia (Oregon MO) 1-800-854-2419 Interior Design Nutrition (Port St Lucie FL) 1-800-331-6638 J & J Health Enterprises (Hagerstown MD) 1-800-945-3669 Jenny Craig, M-F 8 am-8 pm, Sat. 8 am-1 pm 1-800-854-1633 Jeunique (Lake Elsinore CA) 1-800-822-7115 Jeunique One Day Diet (Anaheim CA) 1-800-348-5863 Jeunique One Day Diet (Clayton CA) 1-800-243-7398 Jeunique One Day Diet (San Jose CA) 1-800-875-2446 Kelly Bennett (Melbourne FL) 1-800-699-3438 Knowles F Wayne Co (Lake Havasu AZ) 1-800-985-9996 Kris T's Hair Treats (Great Falls MT) 1-800-382-8621 Life Unlimited (Mt Pleasant SC) 1-800-541-3121 Lifesup Physician Supervised Weight Loss (Baltimore MD) 1-800-257-9975 Light & Right 1-800-532-6454 Lindora (Costa Mesa CA) 1-800-548-3543 Lite Life Program (Los Angeles CA) 1-800-266-5005 Lite N Rite Distributor (Seatac WA) 1-800-533-6463 M I N D (Tucson AZ) 1-800-248-5673 Market Systems Ltd DBA Metabalance (Chicago IL) 1-800-572-6107 Matol Botanical Distr. -D. & B. Valencic (Wickenburg AZ) 1-800-218-1050 Matol Botanical-KM Distr.-G.L. Rasmussen (PENDELTON OR) 1-800-246-7546 Medicus Formulas Bioslim Inc (Calabasas CA) 1-800-638-7867 Medifast (Owings Mills MD) 1-800-253-1127 Metabalance National Dist (Boca Raton FL) 1-800-637-0854 Metabalance System (Boca Raton FL) 1-800-448-4820 Micro Diet (Lunenburg MA) 1-800-835-9392 Micro Diet Independent Advisor (Washougal WA) 1-800-235-1609 MNP Inc (Walnut Creek CA) 1-800-599-5085 Mozetta Youngers (Merkel TX) 1-800-892-5495 Nat'l Quick Weight Loss Inc (Kansas City MO) 1-800-286-0600 Natural Dietary Products (Monterey CA) 1-800-642-TRIM Natural Trim (Surgical Weight Loss) 1-800-432-4305 Next Step Strategies (Rough And Ready CA) 1-800-289-1700 Ninzu Inc (Baltimore MD) 1-800-242-2865 Nutrition For Life (Brooklyn NY) 1-800-638-8446 Nutritional Medical Systems (Monsey NY) 1-800-526-4387 NVE Enterprises (Newton NJ) 1-800-637-6494 Omnitrional Independent Distributor (Augusta GA) 1-800-662-5240 Optifast (St Louis Park MN) 1-800-635-9888 Physicians Weight Loss Centers (Rockledge FL) 1-800-404-8446 Power Trim (Alamogordo NJ) 1-800-638-4660 Power Trim (Calhan CO) 1-800-664-9999 Power Trim Weight Loss (Green River WY) 1-800-533-6437 Ray Dee And Associates (Spring Hill FL) 1-800-982-6236 Safley & Associates (Gretna LA) 1-800-443-0763 Santa Fe Silver Co (Redmond OR) 1-800-638-7690 Slice Of Life (Owings Mills MD) 1-800-395-8446 Slim For Life (Ft Lauderdale FL) 1-800-342-6057 Southeastern Gastric Bypass Assoc (Gainesville FL) 1-800-368-8446 Star Caps (Narberth PA) 1-800-772-6466 Stettner Clinic (Lubbock TX) 1-800-838-3438 Summertime One Day Diet (Lake Havasu AZ) 1-800-382-8446 Surgical Weight Control Clinic (Shelton WA) 1-800-323-8446 Surgical Weight Control, S Ross Fox MD (Tacoma WA) 1-800-532-4651 Synergy Wellness Centers Inc (Ovilia TX) 1-800-944-6479 Thermo Weight Loss Systems (San Francisco, CA) 1-800-323-3438 Topfast Diet Plan Independent Sales Dist (Seattle WA) 1-800-932-8677 Tops Club Inc (Milwaukee WI) 1-800-841-2422 Total Image By CT Enterprise (San Diego CA) 1-800-344-3570 Trim Fast (Hayward CA) 1-800-649-6888 Weight Control Medical Clinics 1-800-789-8446 Weight For Life (Irvine CA) 1-800-876-2121 Weight For Life (Irvine CA) 1-800-556-4747 Weight Loss (Mountain View AR) 1-800-231-1992 Weight Loss Center Of Texas (Arlington TX) 1-800-844-3340 Weight Loss Plus (Waukegan IL) 1-800-553-7489 Weight Management (Charleston SC) 1-800-473-3300 Weight Watchers San Francisco 8 am-7 pm 1-800-651-6000 Weight Watchers Nationwide (Jericho NY) 1-800-443-8001 Weight Watchers Of Alaska (Seattle WA) 1-800-359-3131 Weight Watchers Of South Texas (Houston TX) 1-800-927-0362 Why Weight (San Francisco CA) 1-800-206-0026 Wilkinson Mariangel Herbalife Distributor (San Ramon CA) 1-800-735-7239 Your Health Inc. (San Francisco CA)



**" it is not easy to become beautiful. it requires hard work, patience, and attention to detail. it also takes a certain firmness of purpose. beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and it may be necessary from time to time to give a stupid or misinformed beholder a black eye."**

**miss piggy**

Piggy's advice is exactly what I'd give to the fat-haters who belittled fat women in Carole Markin's book, *Bad Dates: Celebrities Reveal Their Worst Nights Out*.

Lyle Alzado, defensive end for Denver Broncos:

"Is she pretty?"

"She's great, you're gonna love her."

"Are you sure?"

"She's great, you're gonna love her."

I didn't love her when she opened the door. She scared me half to death. I mean, this girl was as big as me! She must have weighed 300 pounds.

All I could think of was, where's my teammate? I'm gonna chase him around the neighborhood for this one. But I didn't want to be rude to her because she was a friend of his girlfriend, so I said, "Let's talk for a few minutes in your place." What I really needed was some time to think of somewhere to take this girl for dinner where none of my friends would see us.

David Brown, producer & head of film production for 20th Century Fox & Warner Brothers:

At the appointed hour, I waited for my date outside the French restaurant I had chosen on West 55th Street. The moment I saw her coming, I panicked. She was twice my size, three times my width and much older than I was. "Wait, I just remembered something," I said to her. "This restaurant has been cited for giving its customers ptomaine poisoning. Let's go somewhere else."

I could ill afford it, but we got into a taxicab and I took her to a restaurant in the farthest reaches of Brooklyn, somewhere no one I knew would see me. I thought, *What am I doing here with this giant?*

Jake Steinfeld, host of *Body By Jake*:

I told her to meet me in front of Gucci's (you want to talk about schmuckiness on my part), 'cause I'm cool. I figure let me drive by first, check her out from a distance, because I'm expecting the most unbelievable lady in the universe.

Now, I'm no Robert Redford, okay, but when I drive by Gucci, I see this girl who, regretfully speaking, is nothing like the lady she said was on the phone. She was short. She was heavy. There was nothing about her that was attractive. Wish I could say she had gorgeous brown hair, but no. She had frizzy hair. I'm going to myself, "Get out of here now!" But I come from a Jewish family with a lot of Jewish guilt and the other side of me says, "You can't just leave this person hanging. That's rude. Not cool. Not mature. Park the car and meet her at Gucci."

We walk in the front door of La Famiglia and Joe, the guy who runs the place, greets me by name. We shake hands. "How ya doing, Joe? I got my... um... cc-cousin with me. I have to keep an eye on her tonight. (Wink, wink.) Can you just give me something by the door so we can just eat and cruise real fast?" He gives me this look like, I hope this is your cousin, because he's seen me with some really nice-looking, bright women. I love bright women! That's the thing that turns me on the most. And here I am with this -- what I thought was a woman, who turns out to be a twenty two year old girl -- and she's literally a monster.

## A Century of Fat Reduction.

1890s, Kellogg's introduces thyroid extract. It helps fashionable 19th century dieters to lose weight -- mostly from their heart muscle. Causes osteoporosis, palpitations, chest pain and sudden death.

1920s, laxatives gain popularity as a weight loss regimen. dieters' friends would admire their lovely new figures, but most of 'em never got past the out-house.

1930s, Dinitrophenol. Used in WWI explosives, insecticides & herbicides and now dieting. It worked, but was highly toxic. Users from the fever which came from the increased metabolism the drug caused.

1930s, Amphetamines. repeated use of the pills usually wouldn't cause anyone to lose more than two-ten pounds, but they would get increased heart rate & blood pressure, dry mouth, blurred vision, hallucinations, tremors, congestive heart failure, seizures, and sudden death.

1940s, Digitalis. (foxglove) it's a heart stimulant, with questionable effects on the body.

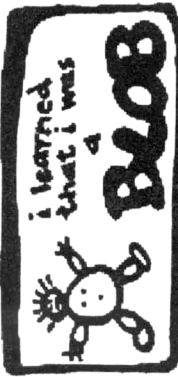
1970s, phenylpropanolamine (sold as Dexatrim, Accutrim, Dex-a-diet, and other over the counter names). Well, they worked when they were taken in addition to starvation diets, but they caused anxiety, disorientation, heart problems, headaches, hallucination, insomnia, nausea, high blood pressure, heart & kidney damage, strokes, psychosis and death. And when in withdrawal, the use of these drugs made dieters fatigued and hungry -- the perfect set up to regain all that weight.

1990s, Olestra. also known as Olean. Yum. Frito-Lay put this additive in junk foods which was supposedly a fat-substitute. It simultaneously prevented the snacker's body from absorbing any nutrients from any food consumed within a few hours of the Olestra-containing goody, tasted like shit, and gave snackers a real case of the shits. (or, in the immortal words of South Park: "the green apple splatters.")

1990s, Fenfluramine/Phentermine (Fen Phen). So long as dieter's stayed on the prescription, they could lose up to 10% of their body weight. Of course, there were hardly any concern on the manufacturer's or the FDA's part about the drug causing heart and lung damage, severe depression, schizophrenia and brain damage. Sounds worth while...

1990s, Dexfenfluramine (Redux). in '96, the FDA approved this for unlimited use, despite the fact that it causes pulmonary hypertension (a lethal ailment) and brain damage.

i was a fat kid

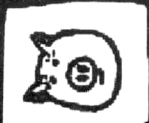


i learned that i was a

**BOB**




i became associated with other blobs



when i was 8, i reached my mother's ideal weight



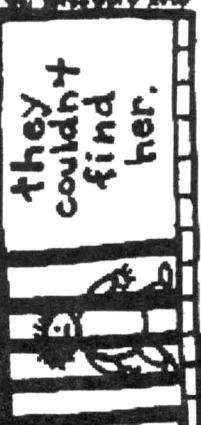
good dear! you'll be a ~~perfect~~ **perfect** never saw a **perfect!**

gee, i sure didn't feel...  **PERFECT**

They... i... tried to FREE the skinny girl inside me.



**BOB** SHAME



they couldn't find her.

i retreated inward



... i wanted to find her too



**SHE AINT SKINNY.**

Comic by Max Airborne. reproduced with her permission.

## A Few Last Minute Notes.

### Fat Lib.

On St Paddy's day, 1998, an unemployed, 700 lb Japanese man was arrested for sitting through three days worth of an All You Can Eat buffet in Tokyo. Seems he just took naps between courses, and since there were total staff changes every few hours, they didn't catch on for a while. He was arrested as he tried to sneak out during an argument between other customers.

### Sex Trade.

This ones' bizarre, but I don't have that much information about it. several months ago, there was a piece on the local news about a classy house of worship in NC. The Church of the Fuzzy Bunnies is a chapel and a strip club. The pervy pastor was working on getting a liquor license for the place, last I heard. If anyone knows where in North Carolina this is, you can count me in for half the gas when we road trip it down there. yeehaw & a hallelujah!

### Zines.

looking back over my intro, it sounds like i'm pretty down on trades. I'm really not. I love zines... which is why I get so totally exasperated when I get zines from people who obviously do not have the love for them that good zinesters do. Shortly after I got the lousy zines that inspired me to write that, I got one which gave me back a big ol' chunk of my faith in zines. Breathing Iced-Tea Mix (\$1 to Sean; 8420 Bridle Rd; Philadelphia, PA 19111) is an awesome arty kind o' personal zine. If you're really into good storytelling zines, this is one to go for. It's a little bitter, a little cynical, but in an endearing way... he writes about stuff that we've all felt some time or other, and wished we could put into words so well. There's also no shortage of cool, stylized cartoony illustrations. Get this zine.

