

Fat Watch

The obesity gene

In early experiments researchers mingled the blood of thin and fat mice by surgically joining the mice. They found that the fat mice ate less and lost weight. (You might lose your appetite too, if you woke up surgically attached to another person, but I am just guessing.) The gene that was recently identified might be responsible for or affect a hormone which is carried in the blood that could potentially explain the mouse phenomenon. The gene generates the hormone-like protein which might travel to the brain, thereby indicating whether the fat stores are big or small, and would then be regulated by the brain accordingly. There are probably many additional undiscovered genes which also regulate weight in humans. NAAFA director Sally Smith worries that genetic identification will be used to support the argument that "obesity is a disease, a genetic mutation requiring correction."
—Sondra Solo

You mean I can't be a cheerleader?

"Cheerleading Judges Accused of Bias: Scoring allegedly rated appearance over talent" From *The Daily Cal* (4/18/95): "Citing racial and physical biases, several participants and observers of recent Cal cheerleading tryouts plan to file an official complaint today with the chancellor and athletic director...attesting that selections for the 1995-96 squad *were not chosen on talent alone.*

[Emphasis mine.] ...Opponents of the selection process say judges tried to choose women who would fit a certain "image" that unfairly excluded certain ethnic groups and physical appearances...Judges filled out scoring sheets for each competitor, on which one finalist was described as being 'large' and having 'big hips.'" SHOCKING! There go my career plans. What is this world coming to?—Candida

NEA: gotta hate 'em

The NEA is at it again. The Urban Bush Women were recently informed that they would NOT receive a renewal of their grant to produce a stage adaptation of Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* next year. According to local weeklies, Gomez said that renewal is the NEA's standard protocol, and their refusal to renew mid-grant is extremely rare. I don't suppose this had anything to do with the group's producing a piece about LESBIAN VAMPIRES OF COLOR? Gomez had already spent several months with the SF performance group working on the project, and the collaborative team is probably still looking for alternate funding sources. [By the way, to those who haven't had the pleasure of meeting JG or seeing her read her own work, let me toot her horn for a minute. She's not only an inspirational writer, but a formidable speaker. Definitely up there on the list of literary talents that make me glad to live in the Bay Area, and a fat dyke at that! Invite her to your hometown.]—Candida

Fat Girl Fantasy #66

by Sondra Solo



Police remain baffled this evening by the mysterious drowning death of C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General, and 'General' for the War on Fat...



Authorities have linked his death to that of Covert Bailey. An unidentified brown liquid was found in the lungs of both victims.

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." —Max

Sassy sells out

Remember how in FG #2, we sing the praises of a glossy teen-mag that makes good with their "10 reasons not to diet list" and a binder that said "If they call you a fat pig, say thanks"? Well, you can forget all that. They sold ownership, and it shows. Their April issue features such heart-warming material as "The truth about fat" (uh, right, and take one guess as to what that is), and a precious photo of a repulsed girl cowering near her salad at the sight of another girl (literally donning pig ears and a snout!) devouring a hamburger & fries. Junior Cosmo. —Candida

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. —Sondra Solo

24 pounds too fat to emigrate

Girl meets boy. Girl marries boy. Girl tries to move to Australia to be with boy, but she can't because she's too fat. Yup, that's the '90s version of the story. An Australian librarian, Robert Boot, and an American librarian, Charlene Boot, met and fell in love on the internet. He came to the United States and they were married. The trouble happened when she tried to join him in Australia as a permanent resident. She was told that she would have to lose 24 pounds before she could emigrate. An Australian Department of Immigration Spokesperson said their policy is not to comment on individual cases, but added that the Department was guided by the Department of Health if a potential resident had health problems. She added, "Unfortunately, until the health problem is treated, we can't proceed with immigration procedures." Charlene was recently diagnosed with diabetes. —Sondra Solo

Make the fundies pay: pick up the phone

You can call Capitol Hill to tell your CongressCreep or Senator what you think AND charge the religious right for your call. Far-right Traditional Values Coalition leader Rev. Lou Sheldon paid for a toll-free number so anti-gay supporters could call congressional members and express their political views. Well, anyone can use the same number and give whatever views they want directly to DC. Call 1-800-768-2221 and connect yourself directly to Capitol Hill.

And if you've got some extra bucks, call these TV stations and tell them what you think of their coverage: ABC: 212-456-1000, CBS: 212-975-4321, NBC: 212-664-4444, CNN: 202-898-7900, FOX: 212-452-5555. ★

Got some news? Something to get mad about?

Someone who deserves a prize?

We wanna know!!! Send Fat Watch items to:

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