

Fat Watch



TWISTED JUSTICE

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 Carnival celebration, died trying to lose weight. Carvalho entered a weight-loss clinic in Rio and died after losing 66 pounds in 30 days.

SPIT ON SPIN

From page 24 of SPIN's August '95 issue, regarding John Popper, the fat singer/harp player of the band Blues Traveller:

Hippies al Dente: A guide to those crunchy, hairy, hoary, H.O.R.D.E.-derived "noodler" bands.

BLUES TRAVELLER

Wank factor: Lots of really long solos by oversize harpist John Popper.

Useless personnel: About 400 pounds o' Popper.

Funny looking?: Figure it out.

Pearl of Wisdom: From the band's bio: "Some people think being in a band is like having a business, but I'd say it's like being pirates on a ship." Help, we're sinking. Somebody toss the harmonica player overboard!

Fun fact: Because of a broken leg, Popper once spent an entire summer touring in a custom-made wheelchair and specially built van. Just like Ironside!



by Max Airborne & Sondra Solo

SHUT 'EM DOWN!

The weight loss industry appears to be taking a plunge. Companies such as Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig and Nutri/System are in a slump because their customers, 90 percent of whom are women, are walking away. The industry, which neared \$2 billion last year is expected to see revenue dip by 15 percent by the end of 1994.

WE ARE EVERYWHERE

Fat dyke Cathie Dunsford's first novel *Cowrie* was nominated for the American Library Association's Gay and Lesbian Best Book of the Year award. It is also #1 on the Australian Feminist Bookstores Bestseller list.

FAT GIRLS ON TV

Cable watchers check out *All That*, a kids' show on Nickelodeon Sunday afternoons. What the hell for? Well, it seems that one of the teenage actors on the show is a fat girl, and one with attitude to boot! Check it out, and let us (and Nickelodeon) know what you think!

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?

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.

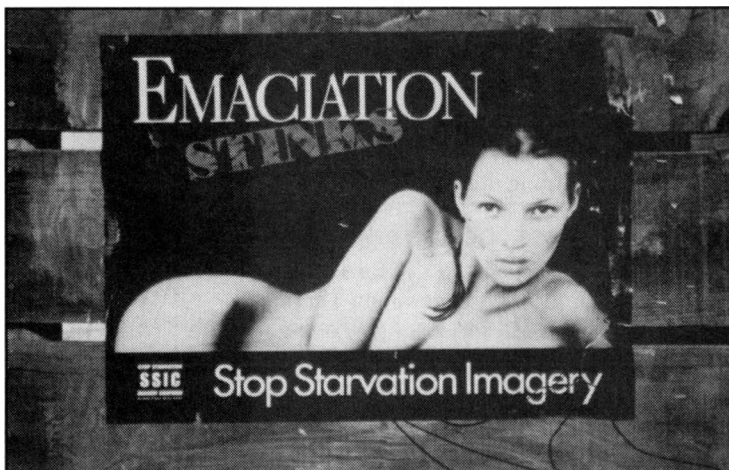
Whether Leptin will cause weight loss in people will probably be discovered in the human trials Amgen will start in 1996. It could be available on the market as early as 2-10 years later. So it remains to be seen whether Leptin, which would be injected daily or implanted under the skin of the patient, 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 TIDBIT 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."

SICK FATHER/DAUGHTER TIDBIT OF THE MONTH

Multibillionaire investor Warren Buffett used his love of money to control his weight. He would write a check to his daughter for \$10,000. The check would be payable on a specified date unless he lost weight. She would try to get him to eat and he would get to decide whether he preferred to eat and give Susie the money, or keep the money from her and be hungry (from *Buffett: The Making of an American Capitalist*).



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 fingerpoint 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 (limited supply). —*Barbarism*

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. ★

Got some news? Something to get mad about?

Someone who deserves a prize?

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

Fat Girl, 2215-R Market St. #193,
San Francisco, CA 94114.



Marilyn Kalman
Attorney At Law

45 Polk St., 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone (415) 824-3250 • Fax (415) 863-8596



for people who don't apologize for their size

Subscribe now!

Venus says:
Check it out!



You get:

- Roseanne sightings
- stories, poetry, art
- the incredible Oprah flipbook (Make her diet & get fat again!)
- Aunt Agony's advice & attitude
- Venus of Willendorf paper dolls
- interviews with famous fat folk
- photo essays: a body part each issue
- Or buy FAT!SO? t-shirts, butt posters & paper doll books

Just \$12 for 4 issues/year!
P.O. Box 423464 SF CA 94142