

WORD OF MOUTH

"I am sorry they divorced. I really am. Because she did without a lot of things to help Newty. She tutored him, she took care of the children,...and she didn't have nice furniture...But we often wonder, if she would have lost some weight, if it would have helped. She was quite heavy."

-Kit Gingrich, mother of the newt, demonstrating her own family values.

"There's too much hate in this world. 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

"A 400 pound woman carrying a key ring with a rape whistle on it is ridiculous. It is like putting the Club on a '73 Pinto."

-A 'comedian' on Comedy Central

"Genetic inheritance is much more important than people currently think. We have never found any twins in which one was extremely lean and one was extremely obese. It simply doesn't happen. No matter what they ate as children."

-Dr. Susan Roberts, Tufts University, studying the nature versus nurture debate through the examination of twins raised apart.

"I hope in 10 years they don't go, 'Oh! You've got a bad liver or heart.' But no, I don't believe a product that's being sold over the counter can do that much harm. Hopefully it's approved by the FDA."

-A peppy chromium picolinate (aka Fat Burner) user, confident that the product, developed by the US Department of Agriculture while studying pigs, will do him good. This despite the fact that a Dartmouth-based study found that "prolonged and excessive" use (defined as three times the safe amount) causes chromosomal damage in animal cells, which may mean cancer in humans. By the way, 'dietary supplements' need not have proven safety or benefit records to the FDA before being placed on the market.

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."

Lane Bryant Boycott

There's a boycott of Lane Bryant (as well as The Limited, Victoria's Secret, Structures, Limited Too, Abercrombie & Fitch and Cacique) to pressure them to stop purchasing products made with child labor, in sweatshop conditions or with forced or prison labor.

According to Carpenters Local 108, The Limited (Lane Bryant is a subsidiary) imports about \$1 billion of garments primarily from low wage, third world countries each each year. In addition to black-listing union members nationwide, the garment producing companies commit many other worker abuses against the largely female employees. Carmen Portillo, a Honduran worker describes the working conditions, "Workers are treated like animals. While we work, the supervisors yell 'Hurry up, hurry up!' and hit us on the forehead. If an operator is unable to complete a task quickly, a manager will grab her by the back of the head and smash her against the sewing machines."

There is a new arcade game out called "Feed Big Bertha." It consists of a

Sick Kid Tidbit of the Month

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.