

# FaTWatch

## Fat Oppression Kills Again- 12 Year Old Dies

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.)

## Fat Clothes, Fat Models?

Lane Bryant is starting a big advertising campaign featuring their version of 'real women'. Advertisements are appearing in mainstream women's magazines (like *Glamour*) as well as on television. The TV ad features Anna Nicole Smith and other women running on the beach. She proudly proclaims, "I am curvy everywhere."

## Sacks of Shit

"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.

## 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."

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 dif-

ferent 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 Lamb (*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  
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York, NY 10169

or email:  
ms@echonyc.com

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