

WINS NEWS

WE INSIST ON NATURAL SHAPES

A nonprofit organization dedicated to:

- educating children and adults about what normal, healthy, body shapes are and the dangers of eating disorders and excessive dieting; and
- changing physical images in the media and advertising to those that are natural and attainable with healthy lifestyles.

WINTER 2000

THIGH WOBBLE & OTHER ABSURDITIES

by Ann Gerhardt, MD

Aviva Jane Carlin, shown in the picture to the right, is fat. She is also white, from South Africa, a playwright and an actress. In addition, she is extremely articulate and brilliant in her attitude toward bodies. Her most recent play, "Jodie's Body," is a must-see at the Sacramento Theater company and in any other theater in the country to which she takes the play.

She appears in this one-woman play almost the entire time in the nude. You

see, she plays a nude model for an art class. So she poses for the class and passes the time talking: talking rather humorously about the vagaries of nude modeling; analyzing the students in the class and their attitude towards her as a model; discussing the whole notion of overweight models and why thigh wobble could really be that bad.

Please see *THIGH WOBBLE* on page 7.



Aviva Jane Carlin as "Jody"

CHILDREN & EATING DISORDER PREVENTION

Second Of Three Parts – Parenting

by Ann Gerhardt, MD

Believe it or not, eating disorders really have very little to do with food. How children, adolescents and adults use food (for sustenance vs. emotional needs) most commonly relates to psychological factors and self-esteem, with a little genetics thrown in. Self-esteem and psychological issues often directly relate to how a person was parented.

No one gives us a book on parenting as we leave the maternity ward with



our new family addition. We usually model our own parenting after the way we were parented, either to mimic it

or do the opposite of what was done to us. It is nice to have role models, but unfortunately, not all of those role models were positive.

Here are some recommendations from experts (see references at the end of this article) on how to parent a child in order to maximize self-esteem and minimize the likelihood of developing an eating disorder:

- 1) A child has a right to feel taken care of, secure and that the parents will always be there, but not smothered.
- 2) Do not comment on weight and looks. Make comments on capability, strengths, values as they relate to anything other than weight and appearance. Show you love him/her for who they are and value much more about him/her than appearance.

Please see *CHILDREN & EATING DISORDER* on page 4.

MEETING PLACE CHANGE

Kathleen Montgomery, of the Mercy Women's Center, has graciously allowed us to hold our Board meetings at the Center for many years. They have moved their location and, though we were invited to move with them, we have decided to change to a more central Sacramento location. We will now meet at Dr. Gerhardt's office at 5120 J Street, Suite G. We hope to see you there, at 6:30 PM each second Wednesday of the month. Thank you Kathleen and Mercy Hospital, for donating space!

See the map on page 6.



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PLEASE JOIN US

We exist only to carry out our mission and for our members. Donations are used entirely to get the message out. (There are no paid members or employees.) See back page for Membership Application.

BOARD MEETINGS are held the second Wednesday of each month. Everyone is invited to attend. See article in this newsletter for details.

WINS is a volunteer organization. We do not have a staff person to answer your calls and correspondence. As such, please be prepared for a possible delay in our volunteers' response.

WINS NEWS is published quarterly for members and friends. News items, community events, press releases, letters to the editor, commentaries, poetry, and/or other information which might be of interest to our members are welcomed and encouraged.

Visit the WINS WEBSITE at
www.winsnews.org
and send any suggestions
to us at
winsnews@aol.com

Our webmaster is now Mark Newell in Alaska, with help from one of our founders and board member, Kathryn Maffia. They are doing a wonderful job of making the site more informative and professional.

THE BODYWISE HANDBOOK

submitted by Sabrina Matoff

Over the last year and a half, the PHS Office on Women's Health Eating Disorders Steering committee, in conjunction with an independent contractor, has been working on an eating disorders prevention-oriented handbook targeting middle school personnel who interact with adolescent girls and boys.

The BodyWise Handbook is the result of this effort. It is now accessible on the National Women's Health Information Center website face page (www.4woman.gov).

BodyWise info will also be available on the Department's GirlPower! site at www.health.org/power/girlarea/bodywise/index.htm.

WEIGHT CONCERNS THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

Children

Many girls mistakenly think they are overweight because they are getting the wrong idea for the perfect body from fashion magazines. So concludes Alison Field, author of a Journal of Pediatrics study done at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital. She found that more than two-thirds of girls in grades five through 12 said magazine photos influenced their notion of the ultimate figure. 47% said they wanted to lose weight because of those pictures, but only 29% of the 548 girls were actually overweight.

Unhappy Teens

from USA Today, by Leanne Kozak

A recent survey conducted by *Seventeen* magazine found that 46% of teenage girls are unhappy with their bodies and as many as 35% would consider plastic surgery, including breast augmentation. Respondents to the same survey say that Jennifer Love Hewitt, the petite star of Fox's "Time of Your Life," is the celebrity who "best exemplifies healthy self esteem."

Adults

Over 50% of adult Americans are overweight (body mass index > 25) and 33% are clinically obese, but at least 85% of women are unhappy with their weight and/or body shape. These numbers are increasing, even while the average weight of Miss America contestants and Playboy centerfold models has declined to ~80% of normal weight for height, and weight of magazine models has declined to 60-70% of what would be a normal weight for their height. The number of diet and exercise-related articles in women's magazines has risen from ~1% in 1959 to over 5% now.

Old Age

Women dying in hospitals of cancer and other terrible disease state that they are happy that they are losing weight. A local dietitian reports that these elderly women tell her they will not drink the nutritional supplements or force themselves to eat for fear that the weight loss will stop.

MEN DON'T TALK ABOUT THEIR WEIGHT

subtitled "HELP!" by the editor

I can't get men to write articles about their weight concerns, even if they admit that they have concerns. This is a problem, since we decided we would include more articles about men and body image in *WINS NEWS*. I've failed at that goal, because men won't write the articles and I can't read their minds. I know they have concerns, because of a poll I did a few years ago, that found that more male than female runners weigh themselves regularly. In addition, statistics show a rising incidence of eating disorders in males. But they won't write.

According to Joe Martin, author of an article in the Oct. 7, 1999 *Sacramento News & Review*, men don't even talk about their weight. He says that men "live in a world where our love handles and beer guts don't seem to matter much, yet women put themselves through hell so they can look like some actress..." He doesn't compare himself to the hairless, washboard-stomached guys in underwear ads, and most of the men I know don't either, but they don't talk about it. I only know because I ask them, twice, or I really get pushy and ask three times. It takes that much insistence to get them to talk about it.

Mr. Martin knows he's not in the shape he was in 10 years ago, but he thinks of his body as he would a used car with some dings and dents that he wants to go another 30,000 miles. Half-way through the article he admits to working out a little, to feel good, stay in shape and ... horror of horrors, he admits it ... to look good.

Though he admits it, and he knows that there are men out there who "wonder whether their butt is too big or their penis is too small," he isn't quite sure how most other men feel. Perhaps men's reluctance to admit to insecurities about their size and shape is a reflection of society's pressure to always show strength and confidence. Or perhaps the fact that society places less emphasis on men's weight makes a man bashful about admitting that he cares.

For whatever reason, men just don't talk about it.



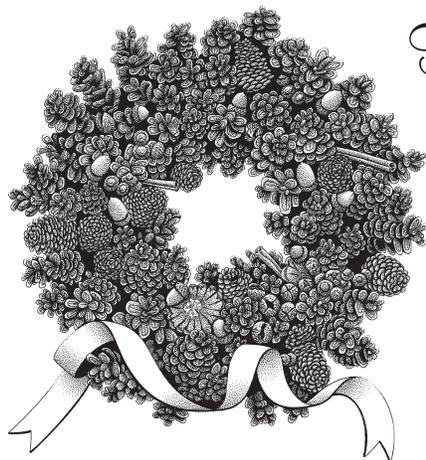
THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF HUNGER

submitted by Mary Jane Ray

Hunger ravishes the body in many ways, not the least of which is to slow the body down so that it burns fewer calories and needs less food. The body notices that the blood sugar level is low and calories are not coming in. It then breaks down muscle to amino acids, which the liver converts into sugar. Visible muscle loss is noticeable after several weeks. Arm and leg muscles are the first to go. The repeated initial loss of muscle with starve/eat cycles leads to very soft, marshmallowy bodies.

If you keep starving, the body eventually breaks down fat for energy. But the body doesn't want to waste away. It has an intense desire for self-preservation. It slows down everything, so that a person moves less, experiences fatigue to the point of always sleeping and feels cold because of less energy being burned for heat. Eventually the basic metabolic rate can drop to the point that even 1000 calories may be enough to gain weight. This is one reason why it is so easy to gain weight after a very restrictive diet.

Please see PHYSICAL EFFECTS on page 5.



The **WINS** Board and Volunteers
would like to wish you a Wonderful
Holiday Season and a Healthy &
Happy New Year!

The Beauty of a Woman

by Linda Burkhart
submitted by Cathie Simonsen

*The beauty of a woman
Is not in the clothes she wears,
The figure that she carries,
Or the way she combs her hair.*

*The beauty of a woman
Must be seen from in her eyes,
Because that is the doorway to
her heart,
The place where love resides.*

*The beauty of a woman
Is not in a facial mole,
But true beauty in a woman
Is reflected in her soul.*

*It is the caring that she
lovingly gives,
The passion that she shows,
And the beauty of a woman
With passing years – only
grows!*

READING LIST AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: WINS, P.O. Box 19938, Sacramento, CA 95819.

Also, GURZE EATING DISORDERS RESOURCE CATALOG has a huge number of valuable books, many of which are on the WINS reading list. Contact them for a free catalog at P.O. Box 2238, Carlsbad, CA 92018, or call (800) 756-7533, or visit their website at www.gurze.com.

CHILDREN & EATING DISORDER *continued from page 1*

- 3) The child is responsible for his/her behavior when it affects others.
Consequences of behavior should be realistic and enforceable.
Enforcement should be consistent.
Don't apologize or make excuses for the enforcement.
Don't hold a grudge: Once punished, the episode is over.
Change the plan as the child ages and/or changes.
- 4) Do not anticipate the child's intentions, thoughts, or feelings. To assume what would make a child happy, what a child wants to do next or what a child wants to eat teaches the child that his/her own thoughts, desires and feelings are inadequate, not to be trusted and lack authority. Statements like, "You couldn't possibly be hungry already!" or "You wouldn't like that movie (or class or friend or sport)" teach the child to doubt his/her own perceptions. Before pushing your assumptions onto the child, check them out. Ask!
- 5) Allow feelings. Do not put your own value judgement on whether something is worth being sad, angry, proud or happy about. It would be pathological for a child to always be cheerful. The way that feelings are expressed are a choice, usually of the person who is feeling them, but should not be allowed to cause harm to another individual.
- 6) If need be, establish household meetings to pave the way for open communication. Do not bring up every issue in your relationship that you are upset about. Stick to the one problem you are discussing.
- 7) Be willing to seriously consider others' gripes and to work toward a mutually satisfying agreement. Assume that you are human, too, and might be wrong.
- 8) If there is disagreement between parents and children, parents ultimately set the rules, but not without hearing their child's opinions.
- 9) Do not say "You always" or "You never." For a child who is constantly changing there is no always or never. Such a comment may cement the idea in the child's head that that is what is expected of him/her.

Siegel PhD, Michele, Judith Brisman PhD, & Margot Weinschel MSW. Surviving An Eating Disorder: Strategies For Family and Friends. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

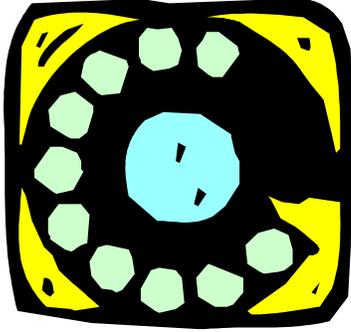
Hirschmann, Jane & Lela Zaphiropoulos. Preventing Childhood Eating Problems. California: Gurze Press, 1993.

Satter RD MS, Ellyn. How To Get Your Kid To Eat ... But Not Too Much. Palo Alto: Bull Publishing Co. 1987.

EVOLVING TOWARD NON-PHYSICAL BEINGS

by Bonnie Stein

Highland four, nine four, two six. That was how I recited my phone number when I was five years old. Back in the sixties the first two numbers of one's phone number were "said" with letters. I also remember the phone – just one for the whole house. It was black with a rotary dial (of course). It had a special place – a phone stand, with a little seat and a little slot to hold the one phone book – yellow pages and all.



Back then, no one ran or racewalked for fitness. We ate red meat five nights a week and plenty of high fat dairy products. Yet, Americans were significantly trimmer in those days. Back then, about 20% of the American population was considered significantly overweight. Today, even though there are an abundance of fitness centers and fat-free foods, obesity is at an all time high of 33%.

Your one black rotary phone may be part of the reason. Remember when the phone rang? The whole family would race from all over the house to see who was first to grab it. Today, not only do we have a phone in every room, but we carry our cordless phone around with us, even in the house. God forbid, we should have to take a few steps to answer it.

In my house, we three girls used to be the remote control for the TV. We'd be playing in our rooms when we'd hear from the living room recliner, "Girls, whose turn is it to change the channel?" We took turns at pretending that we didn't hear our father. Finally, one of us would run in, (mad as a six-year-old can be), change the channel and run back to continue our game. There's not a whole lot of running by kids anymore. There's much more sitting and watching. And much more obesity.

SPORTS BRAS & THE BODIES UNDER THEM

from an article in the *Sacramento Bee*, by Diana Griego Erwin

Brandi Chastain ripped off her shirt, revealing her black sports bra, immediately after the American women's soccer team beat China in the World Cup championship game. Given the excitement, discussion and debate over her act, one would think the population had never seen a sports bra. What's the big deal? Has no one noticed that women have worn sports tops in the Olympics and extremely revealing two-piece bathing suits for a long time now?

What should have amazed the TV viewing world was not the bra, but the body sporting it, strong and healthy, and the fact that she was totally unashamed of it. As Diana Griego Erwin of the *Sacramento Bee* says, "that's what's so cool about these women – in uniform, out, bearing sport bras or wearing nothing but their fit bodies. As body image goes, they extol the virtues of healthy, fit, athletic and muscular bodies over the anorexic, starving role models usually dished out to girls. If taking off her jersey ends up prompting a conversation on what constitutes a healthy feminine physique, Brandi, you go girl."

"You don't have anything forever except the choices you make
each day."
— Rita Deegan, WINS member

TV IMAGES OF WOMEN - REAL SHAPES OR UNREAL FIGURES

by Sabrina Mattoff

Television is one form of media that can be a particularly powerful influence on public and personal opinion. Do women on television represent the shape of women in the real world? If so, what does this tell us? If not, what can we do to advocate for change?

Women on television today are talk show hosts, leading actresses, and news anchors, and millions of us watch them. Their shows entertain and inform and give us different perspectives on what is happening in the world around us. Yet as "leading ladies" in a very visual field, they also invariably serve as role models of appearance — their hair, their clothes, their make-up, and their body shape. As times and trends change, so does the appearance of women on television, and our efforts to emulate some of these images may contribute to body image dissatisfaction.

Preliminary research (Silverstein et al.,

Please see TV IMAGES on page 7.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

continued from page 3

Hungry children, deprived of all nutrients, often grow slowly and have less well developed brains, bones and organs. They have problems learning and concentrating, and lack energy to play.

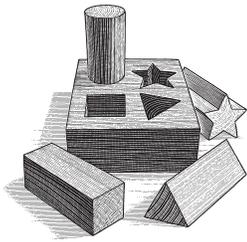
After several months of nutritional deprivation (as in African famines and America's very-low-calorie-liquid-diets) the body starts to break down. The hair thins and falls out, cuts won't heal, the skin bruises easily and dries out, teeth and gums recede, the heart muscle and valves degenerate, the liver accumulates fat and functions less well, joints and bones hurt, and there is shortness of breath. To name a few.

Excited about that New Year's Resolution diet?

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO & SCHOOL CURRICULUM

**HAPPY, HEALTHY SHAPES
IT'S NOT HOW YOU LOOK,
IT'S HOW YOU FEEL**

This educational video and curriculum deals with issues of societal pressure to be thin, psychological problems of adolescence that lead to disordered eating, medical consequences of eating disorders, healthy nutrition and exercise. To receive a copy, please send your request to WINS (address on back page) along with \$29 for both curriculum & video or \$8.99 for the video alone; include your name and address. Allow a few weeks for delivery. The intended audience is teens, but it is a good message for females of all ages. **Try to get the video shown at your local schools and organizations.**



WHAT IS A NATURAL SHAPE?



A natural shape is whatever shape your body assumes when you eat nutritionally balanced food per the Food Guide Pyramid (with a modest amount of fun foods) and physical activity is a regular, daily part of your life. A natural shape is very much determined by your genes.

It is not the wasted look of forever-dieting, nor is it obesity resulting from overeating and under exercising.



LETTERS TO WINS

Dear WINS,

The Web page looks great. I don't know if you intended this, but the words that WINS stands for is only on the very bottom of the page. You might consider putting "We insist on natural shapes" somewhere near the logo, since it helps describe your group. I liked the food pyramid link, too. We can use that with our children, for sure!

We really agree with not encouraging our daughters (or anyone else's) to look to fashion experts to determine their worth. I read magazines like Seventeen as a teen, and it certainly never helped me find any values that would help me have a lasting impact in the world! I think I got maybe one good hairstyle for long hair, but that was about it! With five daughters, that made a SMALL impact!

Take care, Debbie Klein

Hi, WINS,

I just wanted to share with you this incredible sculpture. The creator made an appearance at a concert I attended in San Diego. What a great display of "mature" womanhood!

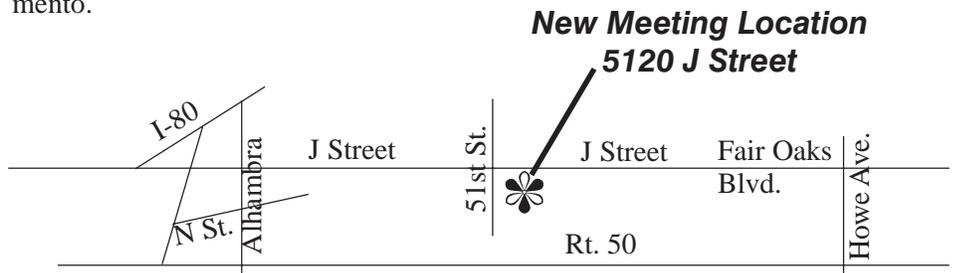
Liz Simmons



Real Women Sculpture by T. J. Dixon, for the Athena Foundation, PO Box 90669, San Diego, CA 92169

WINS MEETING TIME & PLACE

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. All are invited. The meeting is held at Dr. Gerhardt's office at 5120 J Street in Sacramento.



**To learn about upcoming meetings, speakers and events, call
1-800-600-WINS.**

All of that is just the intro — to get you warmed up and actually to the point that you don't even notice that she's buck naked in front of a room full of clothed patrons.

Then comes the meat. She reminisces about her mother and growing up during apartheid. She relates horrible episodes of police brutality toward blacks. She paints an image of absolute discrimination in the mindset of people just down the street. Her memories detail how lives were forever changed and ruined by apartheid's national bigotry.

Jodie's mother shines as the heroine of the story. Her mother is also fat, but it doesn't keep her from achieving intellectualism, honesty and a sense of what's right. 'Ma' saves her black servants from the police. She works in a university and also teaches her daughter that diets are stupid.

"As Ma puts it, "You are not your body. You only live in it." Wow. Maybe we should change the WINS mission statement to that one."

As Ma puts it, "You are not your body. You only live in it." Wow. Maybe we should change the WINS mission statement to that one.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could all believe it? That's what Aviva Jane Carlin thinks, too. She was amazingly comfortable with her own body. Why, she asks, can't the women of the world wake up and throw off their obsession with an ultra-thin body? After the show she said, "When you declare yourself free, you are free." If a whole nation set in the ways of something as heinous as apartheid can change its ways, certainly women should be able to do the same with waif tyranny. Shouldn't we?

The news here in Sacramento has given this play copious coverage, primarily because a fat, nude actress is something to talk about. I've heard many people discuss their impressions of it. The accolades are almost universal. Almost.

Two young, 20-something women heartily DIS-liked it. A pencil-thin, female intern accompanied the TV reporter who interviewed me about the play and WINS' philosophy about body image. She remained curiously silent as the rest of us (two men, and two very normal middle-aged women) bemoaned society's attitudes towards female bodies. Perhaps these women felt uncomfortable when their basic premises were being questioned. Perhaps they, like believers in apartheid felt threatened that they might be wrong. With what thoughts, attitudes and life focus would they replace their obsession?



Many companies will match your regular and holiday donations to qualified non-profit corporations, such as WINS. Con-

tact your company's benefits office for their requirements and paperwork. Forward it all to WINS, with your donation/renewal, and we will take care of the rest.

WINS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We need more than kind thoughts to exist. Please donate to and join WINS so that we can continue to produce this newsletter, provide education about body image and health to youth and adults and work to prevent eating disorders of all kinds.

TV IMAGES OF WOMEN

continued from page 5

1986) suggested that popular television shows with female roles have seen a change in the standard of bodily attractiveness for women, and that the trend toward the portrayal of a slimmer standard could be one of several factors associated with an unfavorable personal comparison.

The diversity of shapes on television is a good thing! The real world includes women that look like Della Reese, Rosie O'Donnell, Oprah, Roma Downey, Jenna Elfman, and Patricia Richardson, just to name a few, who work, have families, advocate for a better world, and do myriad other activities. And it is conceivable some women are "naturally" Calista Flockhart-types on this continuum. But as individuals, men and women alike, we look to the media as one source to frame our reference points. The danger lies in following and perpetuating reference points that are perfect "made-for-TV" images. As the viewing public, we have a responsibility to educate television casting directors and producers who select actresses and other spokespersons. Our support for the social and personal images we want to see can make a difference!

(Ref: Silverstein, B., Perdue, L., Peterson, B., & Kelly, E. (1986). The Role of the Mass Media in Promoting a Thin Standard of Bodily Attractiveness for Women. *Sex Roles*, 14(9/10): 519-532.)

*WINS is proud of our quarterly newsletter. However, WINS cannot survive without your support.
We urge you to join our organization by sending your donation today.*

WINS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

Send with your check or money order to WINS, PO Box 19938, Sacramento, CA 95819

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Email Address _____

How can you help? Telephone Education Publicity Newsletter Write Grants

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Who referred you? _____

Enclosed Donation — This is a: Renewal First Donation Gift

- \$25 Regular member \$8 Student
- \$35 Family Membership
- \$35 Member (You will receive a free gray T-shirt that says THIS IS A NATURAL SHAPE in blue.*)
- \$100 Member (You will receive a free white polo shirt embroidered with WINS logo.*)
- Other \$ _____ (The minimum to be a member and receive the newsletter for one year is \$8.)
- Curriculum & video @ \$29.00 for both. Number desired: _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____
- Video(s) @ \$8.99 each. Number desired: _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____
- Additional T-shirt (\$15) Additional polo shirt (\$30) See above for descriptions.
- A Gift from _____ (card will be sent).

* For T-shirt or polo shirt, specify size: small medium large extra large

We are truly a "grass roots" organization. Please help us keep track of what is happening in the "shape industry." Send us names of companies that use natural shapes and those that have forgotten what real women look like.

Comments: _____



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