

HUMOR

Weighty matters

More thoughts on living large

Since announcing I lost 60 pounds I've been deluged with people asking for weight-loss advice. Suddenly I'm more popular than a porn star at a game of strip poker.

But a large number of even larger people have accused me of being fatphobic. Some bears even growled at me during Gay Pride.

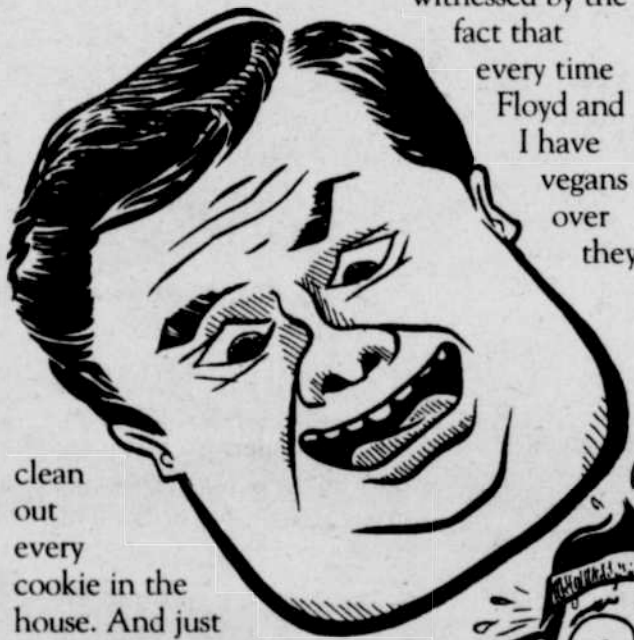
I understand that some people find it impossible to slim down, just as some people can eat a can of frosting every day for breakfast and still look like a concentration camp victim. But I am neither.

What I am is the kind of person who lies to himself. I may reside in Oregon, but I live in a state of denial. For instance, despite being 5-foot-9 since I was 14, it was only last year that I stopped justifying second helpings by saying, "It's OK, Marco, you're a growing boy." Yeah, width-wise perhaps.

Apparently I'm not alone. A 1992 study done at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital in New York showed via urine analysis that subjects underreported how much they'd eaten by half. That's right, half.

In a culture where it costs just pennies to Super Size your fast food, we've forgotten what constitutes a normal portion anymore. Even healthy eaters are susceptible to overeating, as

witnessed by the fact that every time Floyd and I have vegans over they



clean out every cookie in the house. And just try ordering a low-fat sandwich at Subway—the clerk will cheerfully offer you such well-known diet staples as cheese, mayonnaise, oil, olives and chips. A boy could gain a dress size.

What finally motivated me to take control of my weight was the "Who would play me in a movie?" game. While I sat trying to choose between Robert Downey Jr. and Matthew Broderick my friends came to a swift and unanimous conclusion: Nathan Lane.


I was on the treadmill the next morning at 6. "How did this happen?" I panted to Floyd. "I thought I was the slender wacky guy, not the pudgy one."

"Nah, you're more of a roly-poly type," he said. "Y'know, like Harvey Fierstein."

I narrowed my eyes at him. "You don't ever want to have sex again, do you?"

In my usual obsessive-compulsive way I researched the various diets and discovered you're better off eating the books than reading them. Basically they all say the same thing: Reduce calories. If you'd like to reduce them in an informed, sensible manner I recommend

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC
by Marc Acito



you read *A Business Plan for the Body*. I did, and I'm pleased to say that after 20 years of yo-yo dieting, it worked.

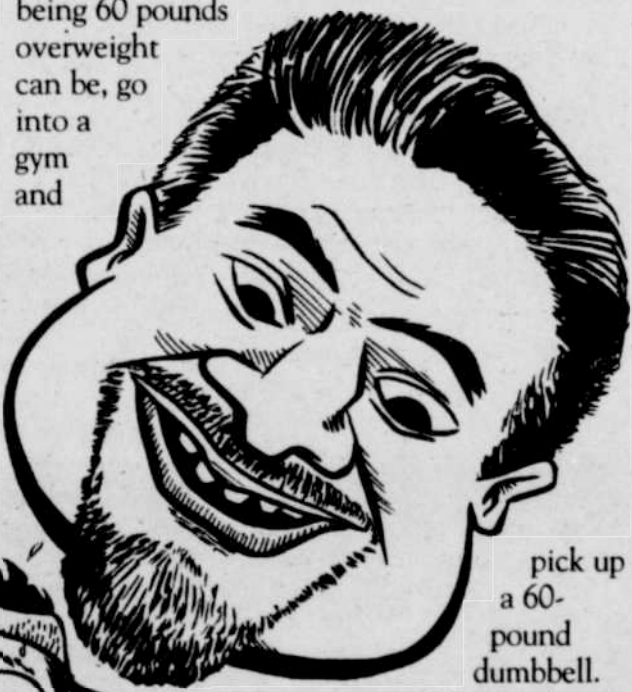
But then something else happened.

You see, while my motivation had been my pathetically fragile sense of ego, I started to notice I was feeling better. A lot better.

In the same way I had convinced myself that chocolate was a protein because it came from beans, I'd also convinced myself that chafing thighs were a normal consequence of taking a brisk walk.

What's alarming to me is that other people didn't think of me as overweight, partly, I'm sure, because I hadn't tucked my shirt in for five years, but also because we seem to have lost perspective as to what a normal weight is.

If you'd like to know how much of a strain being 60 pounds overweight can be, go into a gym and




pick up a 60-pound dumbbell.

Now bend over. Now stand up. Now call your chiropractor.

You growling bears and the like argue rightly that genetics play a part in determining weight. Of course. If your parents are naturally substantial in size, then Robert Downey Jr. or Matthew Broderick probably aren't going to play you in a movie. But that doesn't explain why Americans are more than 10 pounds heavier now than we were 20 years ago. And gaining.

Resisting that second portion is an enormously difficult challenge. I know—I was the pudgy, wacky guy. And if you're not ready to—or simply don't want to—I understand and respect that. But if, like me, you've grown thick and tired, I'm convinced you can make a lasting change.

If I can do it, anyone can.

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. 

MARC ACITO aspires to be the next Richard Simmons but with a better haircut. Write him at marcacito@atbi.com.

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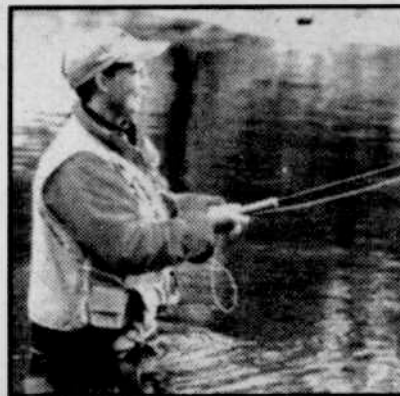
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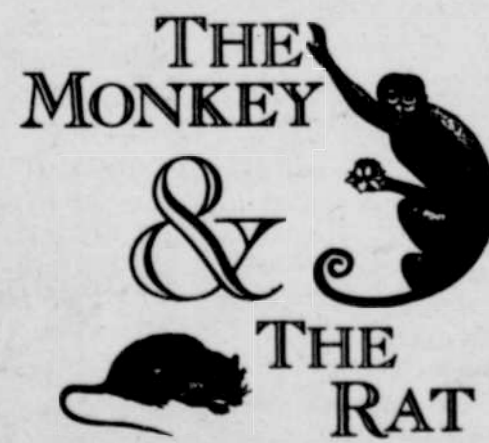
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