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February 2017

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Vol. 16, No. 8

INSIDE



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COURTESY PHOTO

Mary Jo Fay:
A true-life story
of a junk-food
junkie who ate
anything and
still lost 50
pounds.

See story on
page three



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Fay loses 50 pounds while eating her favorite junk food

By Kevin Groenhagen

Mary Jo Fay, Topeka, is a self-proclaimed junk-food junkie. She simply refuses to give up her Hostess cupcakes. Unfortunately, too much junk food can cause many of us to gain too many pounds. Fay herself struggled with weight issues for four decades. She first realized the connection between her junk-food habit and her weight gain when she ran into a former high-school classmate, Kathy, at a convenience store in 1975.

"I had headed into the 7-11 on a mission," Fay writes in her new book, *No Cheatin', Just Eatin': My Crazy, Successful Love Hate Relationship With Food*. "In reality, being the junk food junkie I already was, I was on a mission to get my next fix—which at that moment consisted of two Hostess Cupcakes and a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. Yea—all for me. And double yes—all for me right now."

As Fay headed towards the exit, "anticipating the first burst of flavor of the delectable goodie" on her tongue, she heard someone say, "My God,

Girl, have you gotten fat!"

For Fay, who had never considered herself fat, those words left her speechless. She drove home with tears in her eyes, realizing she had been in denial about her weight gain.

"I thank her now for being the only person willing to tell me the truth about my body, when no one else would," Fay writes. "I shudder to think if no one would have called me on my weight gain, and I had gained even more. Sadly enough, I still don't know if it's smart to tell your family member or friend that they have a weight problem. (Hopefully in a much nicer way than Kathy did.) But still, it's a tricky spot to be in. One usually assumes that a heavy person knows that they are heavy. But I truly believe in my situation, I was in major denial until her words came crushing down upon me. In my mind, I just didn't feel 'that bad.'"

Fay's weight would fluctuate greatly during the subsequent years. She managed to lose 30 pounds prior to her daughter's wedding in 2009, and then

COURTESY PHOTO



Mary Jo Fay (left) when she was near her heaviest weight. She recently wrote about book about her weight loss.

an additional 10 pounds during the months following the ceremony. However, health issues, including several back surgeries and being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, led to the

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Kevin L. Groenhagen
Editor and Publisher

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Mary Jo Fay

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

return of all the pounds she had lost plus a few more. She maxed out at 196 pounds.

“Now that was scary,” Fay writes. “That’s 40 pounds more than I should be. And seeing just how close the number 200 was each time I got on the scale left me terrified but with a boundary I MUST NOT BREAK!”

Fay did not break that 200-pound boundary. In fact, she lost 50 pounds and is now at the weight she was when she was on the track team in high school.

“I’m back to my high school weight,” she said. “It’s not all in the same places, but I’m okay with that.”

The way she lost all those pounds is a bit unconventional, but, obviously, effective. She wrote *No Cheatin’, Just Eatin’* to help others with dietary habits similar to hers.

Fay tried traditional weight-loss programs, which require dieters to eat many vegetables and other healthy food items. Such programs work for many seeking to lose weight, but they have no appeal to her since they would require her to give up her junk food. For those programs, eating junk food

is cheating.

“Let’s be honest,” she said. “How many people leave a doctor’s office after being told they need to lose weight saying, ‘Yay! I get to go home and have a salad!’”

Fay also has an issue with “diets” in general.

“‘Diet’ is a four-letter word,” she said. “The word ‘diet’ implies a starting and stopping point. People don’t consider it a lifestyle. A diet implies that you’ll be on a program for a while to lose some weight, and then you can go back to doing what you want to do, which obviously wasn’t working the first time, or any other time for that matter.”

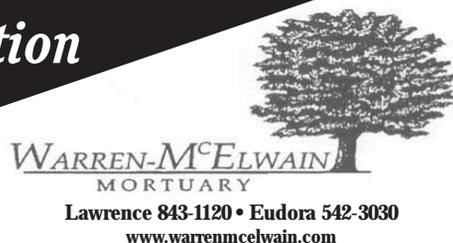
Fay’s program for fellow junk-food junkies is a lifestyle that entails three main components. The first is education.

“Most people have no idea what a portion is,” she said. “I love to eat at Panda Express. They tell you how many calories there are per serving. Then you watch them serve up that chow mein and it’s heaping on the plate like a volcano. That’s not a 360-calorie portion. That’s six portions!”

Fay educates readers about, among other things, “calories in, calories out,” how many calories you need during a

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Mary Jo Fay

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day, what a proper portion size is, and measuring how many calories you consume.

To me it's like your checking account. If there's \$1,500 in my checking account and I want to write a check for \$2,000, it's not going to work. There's a \$500 difference there. So, if I'm going to stay within the \$1,500 in my account, I have to be careful about how I'm going to spend my money so I don't bounce a check at the end of the day."

"People need to know they can eat anything ... just not *everything!*," Fay added. "You don't eat the whole pizza. You can have two pieces of pizza. Sure, you can have ice cream for breakfast, but you have to know how to count it in the day's overall calories. No doctor or nutritionist would advise eating this way. It is definitely not a healthy diet. However, things like gastric bypass surgery aren't healthy, either, yet nearly 200,000 people get the procedure each year, some with some not-so-great outcomes. I think I'd rather keep eating my junk food and lose weight than have my stomach stapled."

The second component of Fay's program is exercise.

"Exercise can be as simple as walking," she said. "With all the surgeries I've had, all they let me do is walk. I still manage to lose weight. But people have to know what exercise is required to look like. Going to the gym three times a week for half an hour ain't cutting it. Even if you exercise every day, you can't outrun the fork—it has two

more legs than you! In other words, you may think going to the gym three times a week is going to burn off all those extra milkshakes and French fries you had. But it takes an hour of exercise to burn off just one candy bar. But that doesn't mean that you have to become a gym rat or run marathons. You don't need a gym membership. You don't need to go to a fitness boot camp. I spent \$2,000 on a two-week fitness boot camp. It was really good and I really liked it. But, honestly, I lost one pound during the first week. That's \$1,000 per pound. You have to figure out how to move, whatever that means for you. You can walk in the mall or walk your dog. I walk my dog for an hour every day. She lost weight and I lost weight."

The third and final component of Fay's program is recording.

"Once you start looking at how many calories you ate, what you did for exercise, what your weight was each day, and track it every daily, it's very eye-opening," she explained. "And if you want to take it a step further, you can buddy up with someone. When you buddy up with someone and have to confess what you've been eating all day, you might cut back a bit. But the bottom line for me is I'm not going to get those people to give up their candy bars and ice cream. I won't give up mine, either. I'm a terrible eater. I'll have ice cream for breakfast, a candy bar for lunch, and pizza for dinner some days. But I know exactly how many calories I'm going to allow myself. And I try to find things that are smarter. For example, there's a new ice cream called Halo Top. It's fabulous. If

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN

THE U.S. AND THE GREAT WAR 100 YEARS LATER

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AMERICA'S ROAD TO WAR

Thursday, Feb. 2 - 7 p.m.

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, the U.S. stood on the sidelines as President Wilson asked his fellow citizens to remain neutral "in thought as well as in deed." Michael Neiberg, noted scholar and chair of war studies in the U.S. Army War College, introduces the 2017 Presidential Lecture Series, exploring the complex paths of politics, economics and cultural divisions that came together and brought America into the war in 1917.

A GIANT WITH FEET OF CLAY: THE AMERICAN MILITARY IN THE GREAT WAR

Thursday, Feb. 9 - 7 p.m.

The story of how the U.S. Army sought to transform itself over the course of 18 months into a comparable or superior military force to the European armies is grounded in irony. Richard Faulkner, professor with the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, lays out how the American Expeditionary Forces played a pivotal role in the brutal campaigns that led to Germany's defeat on the battlefield.

AMERICANS ALL: THE HOMEFRONT IN WORLD WAR I

Thursday, Feb. 16 - 7 p.m.

In America, World War I brought expanded involvement in global politics, the experience of modern warfare—and equally important domestic changes. Noted scholar from Chapman College Jennifer Keene will discuss the responses of Americans to the introduction of the draft, economic mobilization, the patriotism crusade and its effects and much more.

BOLDNESS AND FRAILTY: WOODROW WILSON'S FIGHT FOR THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Thursday, Feb. 23 - 7 p.m.

Acclaimed biographer of Woodrow Wilson and professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, John Milton Cooper closes the series by painting a portrait of Wilson and his transformative leadership. Wilson guided the nation through World War I and sought to bring about an international system to ensure lasting peace.



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Mary Jo Fay

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

you look at a pint of Ben & Jerry's ice cream, they're about 900 to 1,200 calories. Of course, they'll tell you calories per serving, but they expect you to get four servings out of that pint, which is ridiculous. A pint of Halo Top, which comes in 17 flavors, is between 240 and 360 calories."

Ironically, after losing 50 pounds, some look at Fay skeptically when she tells them about her program.

"When I tell people I have written this book about weight loss, they give me this look and say, 'Yeah, but you're thin,'" she said. "I think many have the belief that all people who are thin are naturally thin and can eat whatever they want. So I ask them, 'Would you rather learn about successful weight loss from an overweight person? Or a thin person who was an overweight person who learned how to take the weight off?'"

Fay does offer one important caveat concerning weight loss.

"When you decide to lose weight, it has to be for you," she said. "If you decide to lose for somebody else, it's never going to work."

Of course, there are exceptions to this caveat. For example, in the last chapter of *No Cheatin', Just Eatin'*, Fay writes about a friend who came up to her and said, 'Mary Jo, Mary Jo, how are you!' Fay didn't recognize her right away because she had lost 120 pounds since the last time she saw her. The friend's son had Down's Syndrome, and she wanted to make sure she was there for him as they both grew older. In that case she didn't lose the weight for herself, but for someone who needed her to be around for a long time to come.

Fay was raised in Whitewater, Wisconsin, and moved to Topeka from Denver last year.

"My daughter, Dr. Shaun Steeby,

took a position with Stormont Vail as an orthopedic trauma surgeon," she explained. "I came here so I could actually spend some time with my family."

Like her daughter, Fay has a clinical background, having earned a master's degree in nursing. She retired from nursing several years ago, and then, in 2003, launched Out of the Boxx, Inc., in which she serves as a relationships consultant.

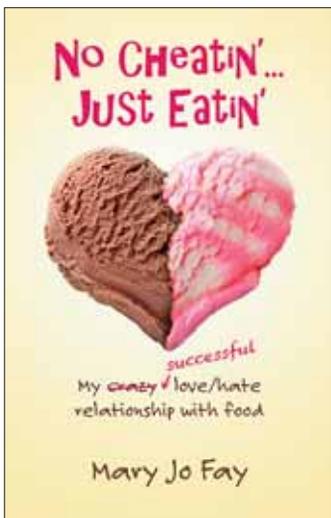
"I like to say that I now nurse relationships," she said.

No Cheatin', Just Eatin' is Fay's sixth book. Her other books include several non-fiction titles about relationships and *Blatant Deception*, a fiction novel that was a 2014 Beverly Hills Book Awards finalist.

Fay is also a coach and public speaker. She spoke at Midland Care in Topeka on January 11 as part of its Stories of Hope & Healing educational series. She is hoping to speak before additional groups in Topeka and beyond.

She's also starting her first group coaching weight-loss class during the first part of February. There is no fee for this four-week course, but participants do need to read the book first so everyone is on the same page.

For more information about Fay, her coaching class, or the book *No Cheatin', Just Eatin'*, please visit her website at maryjofay.com. You can buy *No Cheatin', Just Eatin'* on Amazon.com in both soft cover and e-book formats. If you live in Topeka, you can get a copy directly from Fay by calling 303-841-7691.



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