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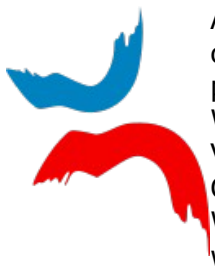
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Alexandria, Egypt.

Featured story

Obesity and the Fat Acceptance Movement: Kira Nerusskaya speaks

Wikinews interviewed Kira Nerusskaya, a leading voice in the Big Beautiful Woman



movement, about what it means to be a 'Fat Chick' in today's America.

Wikipedia Current Events

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns consumers not to eat Banquet pot pies or other pot pies made by ConAgra with a printed code ending in C9 due to possible links with a salmonella outbreak.

•Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority, spells out his conditions for a peace deal with Israel prior to a conference in Annapolis, Maryland next month.

•The United Automobile Workers reaches a tentative agreement with Chrysler shortly after workers commence strike action.

•The first Malaysian astronaut, Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, and the first female space station commander, Peggy Whitson, are launched towards the International Space Station on board Soyuz TMA-11.

•German scientist Gerhard Ertl is announced as the winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his work on chemical processes on solid surfaces.

•The International Monetary Fund warns of a slowdown of the global economy in 2008 as a result of financial turmoil on global markets.

•An earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale is recorded just south of Katanning, Western Australia, and felt as far away as Perth, Western Australia.

•A 14-year-old high school student goes on a shooting

Shootings in Cleveland high school leave five injured, gunman killed

A 14-year-old student opened fire in a Cleveland, Ohio high school today, leaving up to five injured. The gunman is dead, and a report indicates that he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Police were called to the scene at 1:15 p.m. EST, with reports of a gunman in the school. The gunman, described only as a 14-year-old freshman male, entered the school with a gun in each hand. Students were evacuated, with the gunman reportedly still in the building for some time afterward.

According to Cleveland mayor Frank Jackson, two adult males, ages 57 and 42, and two teenage males, ages 17 and 14, were wounded, and taken to local hospitals. A third teenager, a 14-year-old female, hurt her knee while leaving the school.

Jackson noted that all three teenagers were in stable condition, and that the condition of the adults was "slightly elevated" above that of the teens. A spokesperson for MetroHealth Center in Cleveland said that the 57-year-old was a teacher, and was in good condition.

Police did not say whether the adults were teachers or other personnel, but an earlier report suggested that the adults might have been teachers.

The gunman was reportedly upset about a recent suspension, after a fight that he was involved with. Reports were initially unclear of whether the gunman was killed by police, or whether he shot himself; the Associated Press has reported that authorities have confirmed that the suspect fatally shot himself.

According to one student interviewed by CNN, the gunman said he "worshipped the devil" and had mentioned committing a shooting at the school. Another student noted that the gunman often wore a trench coat and an empty pistol belt to class.

WKYC reported that the school's only security guard was on vacation, and that two additional full-time security guards had been laid off over the past few years. One parent interviewed by CNN said that there were no metal detectors in the building.

The school, SuccessTech Academy, is a non-traditional school within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, described on their web site as a "small, nontraditional high school that provides a learning environment in which all student believe in their ability to succeed." It opened five years ago.

SuccessTech is located on the third, fourth and fifth floors of a building in downtown Cleveland that also is home to some administrative offices.

The school owes its existence in part to a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which helped to fund the creation of the school.

Chinese student found dead in Perth suburb

Jiao Dan, A 22-year-old Chinese

student from Changsha, in Hunan province was found at about 6:00am on 9 October in the Perth, Western Australia suburb Innaloo by passers-by. The cause of death has not yet been confirmed but the woman, who is believed not to have returned home from her cleaning job in the city on Monday, was found naked below the waist and with 'facial injuries'. Miss Dan was recorded alighting from a train at Stirling train station at approximately 11pm, even though close friend Min Ding said she had warned the Edith Cowan University student to not use the train at night, as it was 'not safe'. Police have not yet charged anyone over the incident.

Wikimania jury chooses Alexandria for 2008 location

According to an official mailing list post from Wikimedia Volunteer Coordinator Cary Bass, Wikimania 2008 will be held in Alexandria, Egypt.

The location was chosen because it is "particularly strong in the areas of reflecting the Wikimedia Foundation's roots in geo-diversity and multi-lingualism".

The motto selected for Alexandria's bid is "Let The Knowledge Be Free Everywhere", Atlanta's was "A new day for the New South", and Cape Town's was "Wikimania 2008. The International Wikimania Conference".

According to the post, the Jury used 12 different categories including Accommodation, Funding, Internet Access, Press, Organizing Team, and Visas. Each member of the jury had 60 points to assign to the three proposed venues which included Alexandria, Atlanta, Georgia, and Cape Town, South Africa.

According to the final tally, Alexandria placed first in the Funding, Location, Organizing Team, Rotation, Cost, and Venue. Alexandria had 3026 points total.

In second place with 2419 points was Atlanta. They placed first in Accommodation, Internet Access, Local Laws, Press, and Social Areas.

Finally, Cape Town had 2003 points, placing first in Visas only.

Karlsruhe, London and Toronto submitted official bids, but later withdrew at various points throughout the process.

The decision has provoked some debate on the selection process, complaints have been raised about honour killings and gay rights within Egypt, with some asserting that the human rights record of the country should have factored more into the decision process. In reaction to this criticism Jimmy Wales has decided his talk at the conference will be entitled "Free knowledge and human rights".

Serie A hit with another scandal

Lazio and their coach Delio Rossi has been accused and charged with trying to influence the performance of Lecce in April 2006.

The Italian Football Federation said that Rossi attempted to ask Lazio president Claudio Lotito to contact Lecce officials and discuss their tactics ahead of the match and how their attempt was unsuccessful. Lazio won the match 1-0. Media reports say that the case started because of phone tap evidence.

Iraqi authorities demand that

U.S. sever all contracts with Blackwater

In an official report issued on Monday, Iraqi authorities demanded that the United States sever all contracts with Blackwater USA, the private military security firm hired by the U.S. State Department to protect its diplomats in Baghdad. The report accuses Blackwater employees of deliberately killing 17 civilians in an incident that took place on September 16 in Nisoor square in Baghdad, and demands that Blackwater pay \$8 million in compensation to the families of each of the 17 victims.

Iraq's demands were outlined in an official report issued on Monday in Arabic and then translated by news agencies worldwide. The report says that on September 16, four Blackwater vehicles and two helicopters opened fire without provocation in Nisoor square, following a car bombing near a meeting involving a USAID official under Blackwater protection. The report says that at least 14 Iraqi civilians were killed in Nisoor square, and that two or three more were killed at a nearby intersection.

The U.S. normally makes compensation payments to the families of civilians killed in battle, but at amounts far lower than the \$8 million per family demanded in the report. The report said the compensation was high "because Blackwater uses employees who disrespect the rights of Iraqi citizens even though they are guests in this country."

The report asks for the Blackwater employees involved in the incident to be handed over for possible trial in Iraqi courts. Under a law introduced in 2004, private security employees are immune

from prosecution in Iraq. However, the report argues that Blackwater's license to operate in Iraq expired in 2006, and thus it is no longer immune from prosecution under the 2004 law.

Although Blackwater has not yet responded to the Iraqi report, it has previously stated that its employees were acting in self-defense in the Nisoor square incident. At a congressional hearing last week, Blackwater USA founder Erik Prince told a congressional hearing that his men had come under fire and "returned fire at threatening targets."

Obesity and the Fat Acceptance Movement: Kira Nerusskaya speaks

Racism, sexism, homophobia, are all aspects of a person's fear and paranoia over his or her place in society, but opinions rooted in such feelings are unacceptable to express in public or in polite company. Michael Richards shouted down a black heckler by yelling, "Shut up!" followed by "He's a nigger!" and gave his already dormant career less of a chance of ever reviving. When Isiah Washington called a co-star on Grey's Anatomy a "fag," his contract was not renewed.

None of this would have happened to either actor if instead of racist or homophobic terminology they had said, "Shut up, fattie!" or "Fat ass!" It's not an easy time to be fat in America. A fat person is seen as weak-willed, as suffering from an addiction to food, as unhealthy and deserving of ridicule. It goes without saying that people who are overweight are, indeed, people with a full range of emotions and feelings that are as easily hurt as a thin person's.

David Shankbone met Kira

Nerusskaya, a documentary filmmaker, at this year's Tribeca Film Festival. Her film *The BBW World: Under the FAT!* is in production and post-production. She is a self-described Big Beautiful Woman (BBW) and she hosts the website *TheBBWWorld.com*; she is also one of the leading voices that has recently emerged for fat acceptance. In researching her film she has traveled to Russia, London, Paris, Ireland and all over the United States to interview fat women about their obesity and their place in their respective societies.

Below is an interview with Nerusskaya about the health, issues, public reactions to and sexuality of a BBW.

Fat Acceptance

David Shankbone: What is "BBW"?
Kira Nerusskaya: It's an acronym to describe large women that began in the late 1960's and early 1970's

DS: What is your website about?
KN: It was originally put up by my producer, Jonn Nubian. Jonn and I had a long, on-going conversation over five years. It was always my dream to do a documentary about this subculture that exists in America. It's a movement that exists.

DS: What is the movement?
KN: It overlaps in a few areas. Size acceptance, fat acceptance, BBW movement.

DS: What exactly does the movement want?
KN: For people to accept us at the size we are. I was fortunate enough to be born on January 15th, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. He felt nobody should be discriminated against because of

the color of their skin, and I extend that to nobody should be discriminated against because of the size of their skin. We are always looked at as sub-human or second-class citizens because of our size. Ironically enough, we outnumber everyone else. Over 60% of the population in America is overweight in some capacity. So there is more of us, and literally, there is more of us.

DS: How much do you weigh?
KN: 313 pounds and I'm 5'4.

DS: Do you have any desire to lose weight?

KN: Desire? It depends on the way it's put. I think I have an interest in being a little bit smaller, but I don't necessarily have an interest in being like Britney Spears. That's considered the ideal beauty in America, even though she's an unfit mother, God knows what else she does in her personal life, on top of the fact the woman has a hard time putting a sentence together beyond a fourth grade level.

DS: Her recent performance was widely criticized because she was seen as out-of-shape.

KN: Out of shape in the sense of not fit, or out of shape in the sense of not having a six pack?

DS: How are they different?

KN: Well, somebody can be fat and fit and somebody can be fat and misshapen.

DS: What do you think the Britney Spears MTV performance and comments about her physique sent out as a message?

KN: It was negative. It said you need to be rail thin in order to be considered beautiful and accepted. In order to be worthy. In order to be loved. Especially in America I find it ironic because we are the

melting pot, and there are people from all over the world, different shapes, heights, skin tones, races, religions...you would think we'd see diversity in beauty. And we lack that. Isn't it a crime that it took however many years for two African-American actors to win Academy Awards, and then it's suddenly "The Year of the Black Actor" and it's like, 'No, those were really good performances that year and that's who won.' I don't consider Britney Spears right, perfect and wonderful. I feel bad for her, but we should be celebrating everybody. It is and should be, to take a quote from a great interview I did with Carla Drew from FAT GIRLS!: The Musical...it's the "Everybody Matters Revolution." That's the underlying feeling in fat acceptance: everybody matters. And we are tired of being excluded. Part of that is combating the media that portrays us as terrible, rotten, evil, no good, lazy, slovenly, etc., when that might not be the case. The stigma attached to fat people is prevalent. It's hysterical: do you really think that's what we do, sit around and eat all day? I remember reading a post from a British news source where women were celebrated for their curves, and there was a woman who posted thinking that they legitimately did nothing else but sit and eat all day. Ignorance, as they say, is bliss, but only to those it serves.

DS: What is beautiful about being fat?

KN: The difference in the shape of the body. The curves. The softness. It's difference, which is the opposite of what you see in New York on a Saturday night with the 'Blond Gaggle': they all have straight blond hair, cut the same way, they are all wearing jeans with a little shirt and a little purse

over their shoulder. It's hysterical. They are all so similar that they are identical. When you look at fat women, it's so not standard, which is one of the difficulties in finding clothing. She can be a pear shape, where she carries her weight below the waist. She can be an apple shape where it's around the middle. She can be hourglassed where it's big on top, slender in the middle and bigger in the hips. There's so many different shapes, and when you look at a naked fat woman with the cellulite included, it looks like she was poured into a mold specifically in that shape, like that is the way she was created. Which is so different compared to straight Size 2 or Size 4.

Fat and health

DS: How do you respond to the argument that obesity is unhealthy?

KN: I can't say that is 100% wrong. The one thing that I say about the size acceptance movement is that it's as vast as we are. I'm a very practical, logical, reasonable person and this is what I say: The more weight on your body the harder your heart has to work, period, end of story. There are factors for heart disease, but you could be skinny and smoke three packs a day, which is just as unhealthy. There are many factors that come into the equation that determines whether something is unhealthy. There's definitely evidence, though. I'm not a medical expert and it's probably one of my weakest areas to talk about, because that's not what I'm here for. At the same time, I'm 313 pounds, I have excellent blood pressure and good cholesterol, and I could walk five flights without getting all huffy puffy so what do you say to that? You know what I mean?

There are those who believe that

you can be fat and that there's no conclusive evidence in any way, shape or form that was ever put on this Earth by any medical study showing that fat is negative. They'll tell you studies are not conclusive, and that fat is beautiful at any cost, in any extreme. They're kind of like Fat Nazis. And then you have people who are members of what Lynn McAfee calls the Obesity Mafia. They say we have to get those people thin, man, at any cost. Ironically, these diet places won't submit their findings on how people do on their diets. That's because diets are 98% ineffective so they don't want to put it in writing anywhere because people will see that. It depends on how you feel and where you are.

DS: What do you say to people who say you're a glutton? You're addicted to food?

KN: I would probably tend to disagree. There are a variety of reasons of why people are fat and I think that's also part of the stigma and the misconception. What did you eat for breakfast today, David?

DS: A bagel with bacon and cheddar and ice cream.

KN: And ice cream? Okay. I ate one piece of double fiber toast with Olivio, which is like fake butter -- good for you fake butter -- two egg whites, and a pear. So kind of different, right? You would say, 'Gee, here's this guy who's 6'0" or whatever and 165 pounds or something and wow, isn't a tables are turned kind of thing?' I think a lot of times that's what people think, that we are gluttons, but if they looked and analyzed my diet they would be pretty shocked.

DS: How do you keep your weight up then?

KN: Or maybe the question is how

do I keep my weight down, how do I keep from getting bigger?

DS: It's possible but...

KN: Right. I would say that there's a variety of reasons. I think the better question would be, "Well, then why are you fat, right?"

DS: Sure.

KN: There are a couple of things. One, genetics: one side of my family more than the other have struggled with the weight issue. I became fat probably when I was about 5, 6 or 7, somewhere in there. That's when my parents noticed my weight gain wasn't necessarily based on what I ate. I grew up in a household that only ate dessert if we had company. We had soda occasionally. We never had chips or sugar cereal. If we went to sleep over at a friend's house it was like, 'Sugar cereal, wow! this is so cool!'

I was always on a series of diets to some degree. I was always a fairly active child but perhaps not as active as I could have or should have been. Increased activity would have been better for me. I also suffer from something called PCOS, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, which is a documented disease that affects the way insulin is used in your body to store fat. Look it up on Wikipedia! Take a look at it. It's a pretty serious disease that has a broad spectrum of people suffering from it and it makes it difficult to lose weight. It affects the chemical reactions in your body.

Now, did I ever overeat in my life? Yes. But didn't you overeat at Thanksgiving last year? Probably.

Public reaction to a fat woman

"Somebody who I dated was like, 'Dating you is like dating a fucking celebrity because wherever we go people are turning their heads! A lot of times they're not necessarily

doing anything negative or they're complimenting you or they're coming up to talk to you and you have that energy that people are drawn to in whatever capacity.'" photo: David Shankbone

DS: What sorts of things are said to you on the street?

KN: A lot of times people will say things like, "Fat ass!" or "Hey fatty," or whatever.

DS: People will actually yell out to you, "Hey, fat ass!"

KN: Yeah. But there are also a lot of men that go, [makes kissing sound] "Mami!" or whistle or wink or whatever. It's a spectrum, and I think if you're confident in the way you're holding yourself, smiling, you look nice, that kind of a thing, then you're not buying into that. You're not feeding that negative stigma of fat people, and of fat women in particular.

DS: How do you feel if people stare at you?

KN: It doesn't bother me. I usually make eye contact with them, and then if it's negative, they stop. In such a variety of ways and a variety of places people will stare at me and people will turn their heads. Somebody who I dated was like, "Dating you is like dating a freaking celebrity because wherever we go people are turning their heads! A lot of times they're not necessarily doing anything negative or they're complimenting you or they're coming up to talk to you and you have that energy that people are drawn to in whatever capacity." And he's like, "I never met somebody so freaking exciting or been so excited to be out with somebody!'" We could be going out for coffee, we could be at a bar, just wherever we would be it would always happen and he just was so astounded about that, which is kind of an interesting

thing.

DS: I think people reading that would think that people are looking at you because they're disgusted that you're fat.

KN: Well, some could be.

DS: But that's not your experience? That's not what you're getting from it?

KN: Sometimes, but not always. I know what it's like to walk into a store and have people roll their eyes at me or have somebody look at me on the subway and smirk talk to their friend and burst out laughing. It's not because they're saying, "Ooh, that lipstick looks horrible." You know what it is. You know what it is. You've been fat long enough you know. It's not like it's some freaking secret.

DS: Do you ever confront people?

KN: Yes, I do and I've become more confrontational as times goes on.

DS: When you confront them what happens?

KN: It depends. Usually they shut the hell up.

DS: Do they apologize?

KN: Sometimes. Sometimes people are too scared to apologize because I'm calling them on it. They think you're supposed to be defenseless because you're fat. You're not supposed to defend yourself because you're fat. That's one thing that I've noticed in my work. In my life I did not always defend myself, even though it would have been right. I think I was the better person on more than one occasion, and more polite on other occasions, but in a way I feel like I am defending everyone here. That's one of the key components to my film: for us to defend ourselves. If something happens in the African-American

community that's discriminatory or racial, my friends Jesse Jackson and Reverend 911, which is my love name for Reverend Al Sharpton, will turn around and say, "This isn't right. We demand justice." But fat people don't have a voice. There's nobody coming to our aide when somebody says something negative. Or if they do, no one is hearing them, they aren't getting the media attention-- or maybe it isn't loud enough. There's nobody that's coming to our aide when we are treated poorly because we're fat. That we're not getting health insurance or companies are badgering fat employees because of health insurance. I can't tell you how many calls Lynn McAfee gets a day -- from the Council on Size Discrimination -- just because people are overweight. It's really sad.

One of the reasons why I'm doing this film is to stop the fat bashing. We're fat. We know it, okay? You don't need to tell us or point that out. It doesn't mean that we are less than you. We're equal. If God has given us inalienable rights according to the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, that all men are created equal here in the United States, well, you know what? We're created equal no matter what size we are.

On America's obesity epidemic

DS: When you read stories about an obesity epidemic in the United States what is your reaction to that?

KN: It's absolutely true.

DS: What do you think should be done about the obesity epidemic?

KN: And I don't like it. One piece of my film will talk about why we are the way we are. The great conveniences that have been bestowed on America are the things that are hurting us. When

you look at the amount of sugar in an average diet, when you look at the convenience food, when you look at fast food and its availability, when you look at the American lifestyle; we're rushing around all the time. We only have two weeks off to enjoy our life yet we have to work more, educate more, achieve a thinner body, a better relationship, a cooler car... we have to keep up with the Joneses and sometimes the Joneses are out of reach.

DS: How would you respond to somebody who said, "You're a hypocrite?" How could you have a problem with obesity...

KN: I'm not saying I have a problem with it, what I'm saying is that I see why it exists. That's my point. I see why it exists. It goes along with diet, with the same thing that we were talking about in regards to breakfast -- I don't drink soda, I don't eat sweets or sugar, but a lot of people would automatically think that based upon my size I must eat x, y and z or that I don't exercise...

DS: That you're just there shoveling fries down your face.

KN: Right. And that's inaccurate for me and that's inaccurate for a lot of people. But there are women who eat ice cream for breakfast and a donut for lunch and a bagel for dinner or whatever. That's part of their freedom; that's their right to do that and if that's what they want to do, that's great. But I would also say to those women: if you're going to turn around and complain about being fat, shut up or put up. You can be fat and healthy; at least, healthy to a certain degree. But no matter the fact that I do have good blood pressure and I do have good cholesterol, people are going to turn around and say, "But you're fat." And you know what? I am. I

can't take those 313 pounds away.

DS: So your problem with the obesity epidemic and why it corresponds with what you're saying is that there are large people who are just naturally large for a variety of reasons but the American lifestyle right now is creating obesity based upon reasons that are not particularly related to living slovenly?

KN: It's the choices that exist in America. Choices. Look, David, how many people drink soda in America? What the hell is soda? It's sugar water.

DS: It's the only thing that has been proven to be linked with weight gain that you can consume.

KN: Soda, in and of itself, is sugar; water is better for you than sugar water is, correct?

DS: Yes.

KN: So where does it come from? It comes from the media, and money. Money behind these companies to advertise to youth. When you look at school lunches, they're still heavily carb-based or poor nutrition. People want convenience. People are exhausted. They work hard, they come home, they want Hamburger Helper: boom! it's in a pan and done to feed their family of four. I understand that woman, but I think that if healthier choices are made available to Americans then I they might choose it. If there's nothing in the stores but healthy choices or organic choices then that's what people are going to buy

DS: A glass of orange juice every morning is said to put on about four pounds a year.

KN: Why? Based on sugar.

DS: Are there any heroes of the Fat Acceptance/BBW movement?

Like Camryn Manheim? Who are some of the people out there that larger people -- fat people -- look to as people who've been groundbreakers, if you will?

KN: I would look at Marilyn Won. I would look at Paul Campos. I would look at your average person who's out there doing it on a daily basis, walking around with a smile, you know. Anybody who makes it and who makes a difference.

DS: Like a Monique?

KN: Yes, to some degree. I think that anybody that's making a positive contribution is a positive contribution, simple as that. But many of the heroes I have within the movement are not known people.

Fat women and sexuality

DS: Is there a typical kind of person that is attracted to an overweight woman?

KN: We fat girls have it hard. The majority of the pool of men just reject us because we're large, and that's because they were taught fat is bad. Therefore, the person inside is also bad. Then we have a portion of men who are fetishists, in that they only receive heightened sexual pleasure from being with a fat girl. Then you have people who might be 'Feeders', they have an interest in making you bigger. Then you have the guys who want to make you smaller; that's their mission.

DS: Saviors?

KN: I don't know if they would be saviors so much as wanting to dominate you, belittle you, into making you smaller. It's a dominance thing.

DS: It's not, 'I'm going to help her be normal' but 'I want to have control over her and see a result of that'?

KN: It may be. You have to

distinguish between all these types of individuals to find somebody you have something in common with, who has similar morals or values, or whatever it is that you want to find in somebody, and it's really hard. You have some men who think it's going to be so odd and different, and they are interested in trying it. There are men who like a larger bosom, the larger bottom, and they want more of it. They see in a BBW that we have more of it, and they want to try it. They are interested to walk down that road just to see what it's like. Part fantasy, part interest, part curiosity. Maybe, to them, it's just the freak factor-- in their head we are freaks because we aren't thin. So going through the whole spectrum, it makes the pool increasing smaller to find somebody who appreciate you for just being you. Likes you as a person and accepts or likes the package it comes in. And at the same time, there always seems to be someone new popping their head in to find out who/what we are. Funny how that is. It could be that he is coming to terms with what he likes, and trying to find it.

DS: But doesn't objectify it...

KN: Well, who just accepts it. Who accepts that this is my friend, this is my girlfriend, this is my lover, this is my wife, as opposed to it being something that is only sexual. I can't even tell you how many I have met in my experience over the last fourteen years in the BBW world who have skinny girlfriends, wives, lovers, whatever but are out there chasing fat girls because they actually like it. They like it in bed, they like the curves, they like the softness.

DS: Is there something someone has asked you to do in bed that you find offensive?

KN: I am open-minded enough

that I don't really get offended, but you also find people in those broad categories that would say something like, "I want you to sit on me." There are people who like to be sqwooshed.

DS: What's your reaction?

KN: It depends! It depends on what kind of mood you are in, or who the person is, or what your relationship with them is, as to whether or not you would do it. I think it defines who they are or where they are coming from, certainly. It might be they have a wonderful relationship with that woman, and that one particular action excites them greatly, and whether you are open to exploring that with them. Some women might not feel comfortable because they would feel objectified. It depends on the individual. It's hard to say.

DS: Is it accepted when men fetishize fat women or is that seen as a negative?

KN: It depends. There are guys who are called an "FAs," which stands for Fat Admirer. He likes women who are big. That's what he likes. Amongst those you have to divide the line again, too. There are those FAs who find that that's just their preference. That's what they like for whatever reason. Why do some men date blondes? Why do some people like vanilla ice cream as opposed to chocolate? Not something you could maybe put in words exactly but you know you like it. Based on my research, it's the same thing for them, from what I understood.

Then there are those for whom it's kind of a -- it's a fetish. For example, one woman I know only wants men who are Fat Admirers because she feels that they accept or enjoy her body at another level than somebody else. But she's also dated or been with people in long-

term relationships who were not so-called FAs but we were with her for other reasons, and at the end of the relationship they told her they understood why men like the curves, like the softness or whatever the case might be.

DS: When you get messages on your MySpace or when you receive e-mails at the BBWworld.com that say, "I just love those big titties," or "I just want to be all over that big ass," you know, how do you feel when you read things like that?

KN: When I receive something like that I usually just delete it. I understand where they're coming from. They're not coming with an interest to date me. They have an interest to take me to bed, and that's not happening. You find a lot of that. If I had to add up -- I can't even tell you how many calls -- just last week I got a call from somebody who I dated three years ago. The good or bad part or or the interesting part is that I'm still single so it's not like, "Yeah, you know what? I'm married," click. Or, "I'm in a relationship," click. But they come back and you're wondering: why are they coming back? What's the interest? Is it for me personally or is it because...

DS: Do you ask?

KN: I do because I'm bold that way. Often it's based on personality and it's a 'I thought you were really cool, you were really nice to talk to, you know, it wasn't working out at the time and stuff.'

DS: Why do you feel the need to know why they come back?

KN: Probably more as a time saver for me. If I have to go and meet somebody when all they're interested in is just getting you in bed or whatever, that's just not where I am in my life. If that's a

five-minute phone call, then it's much better than a 20-minute coffee date.

DS: Do you think it's good to sometimes question motivations and not just let things happen?

KN: I think that ultimately we know in some ways. There are some people that you've met in your life who you thought you would be perfect for or perfect with, but for whatever reason timing is poor and maybe you change within that timeframe. You're a different person and so it doesn't work. It depends. A lot of times you know why somebody's calling. You know, but it depends.

DS: Is it more challenging for a larger woman to orgasm?

KN: No, it's quite the opposite and it's been scientifically proven.

DS: Why is that?

KN: From reading and talking to women across the globe, it is true that fat women have higher hormonal levels and a much stronger libido than our skinny counterparts. Our ability to achieve orgasm is much quicker and the ability to have multiple orgasms is generally always there. There have been some articles that have come out about that I've read across the years. Men have a pretty strong libido from what I understand and are just so shocked by that. Would you concur? [Shankbone nods!] According to my research, and that being the case, they're almost always shocked that they find a partner who matches them. According to the interviews I have done, if a man is more turned-on by somebody who is multi-orgasmic.

[What do fat people want to be called?](#)

DS: What do fat people prefer to

be called? In Spain if you're fat you're gordo or gorda. It's not 'pleasantly plump'. It's not 'carrying a few extra pounds'. We have so many euphemisms in this culture—

KN: —that we've created ourselves —

DS: —to get around saying that somebody is fat. Do you think that trying to come up with so many euphemisms in the end stigmatizes the actual natural state to be able to just say someone is fat much like someone -- gay people went through this, too -- oh, he's "light in the loafers," or, "he's funny," as opposed to being like, "He's gay." KN: And what are they trying to do? Are they trying to soften the blow for themselves or for the rest of America?

DS: It's not speaking a taboo, basically. To be fat is taboo and to say someone is fat...

KN: But it doesn't have to be taboo. We've created the taboo.

DS: Are you against these euphemisms?

KN: I don't know because it's one of those things. It's kind of like...

DS: People think it's polite.

KN: There's a lot of ways around polite. I know in Ireland and England people can't use the word "fat." That's extremely offensive. When I was in Russia interviewing people, they said, "Why do you have to call your movie Under the Fat? Why do you have to use the word 'fat'?" Fat was equal to something negative. I was like, all right, they haven't come full circle in the movement yet to understand that fat is just a descriptor. It's like, am I curvy? Yes, I am. Am I fat? Yes, I am. Am I plus size? Yes, I am. Am I a big, beautiful woman? Yes, I am.

DS: What do fat people prefer to be called generally?

KN: I think it depends on each individual.

DS: Generally?

KN: I don't know. A lot of people say, "I'm a fat chick." You know, "Are you fat?" "Yeah, I'm fat." Full-figured to me is someone of a certain weight. After full, then it becomes something else where there are terms like BBW, then we have Super-Sized BBW; it kind of all fits along that umbrella category of plus size. How people describe themselves depends upon where they are at with their own comfort, so it's difficult for me to say that it's one or the other.

DS: Is there a terminology that is definitely taboo? That you hear and it's not okay. Aside from the obvious, like you know, 'fatty' or something...

KN: Oops, Dave just blew that one out of the water! She shows Dave Shankbone her pin that says, "Fatty."

DS: Let me rephrase the question. For a person trying to be real but not wanting to be offensive, what advice would you give them when they're trying to use a descriptor or trying to talk about a person who might be large?

KN: What about a conversation like this: "Yeah, I know this chick." "Really?" "Yeah, I think you might be perfect for each other." "Oh, okay. Well, what does she look like?" "Well, she's a big girl. She's a large girl," you know. Voluptuous and shapely might not be cutting it unless she is voluptuous and shapely. "Well, she's a big girl. She's a fat girl but she's really pretty and she's really nice and she's this, that and the other." Do you know what I mean?

DS: Yeah.

KN: It depends. She might be offended at that because she's not at that place yet; it's one of those things. People say, "Well, is it wrong to be fat and proud?" I look at it this way: we are the size that we are for different reasons for different people, okay? We're not here for a long time. We're here for a good time but we're not here for a long time so what are we going to do in the meantime? Are we going to stay in the Stone Age and think that we should be chained to a bed and not go out and not have jobs and not have personalities and not have careers and not have boyfriends and not have lovers and not have marriage and all those kinds of things? I think it's terrible that people really feel like that, and that's part of what I'm here to try to change. And if I'm here to do nothing else I'm here to inspire other women: You are worthy of those things, my sister, whether or not you think it or whether or not you know it, it's true.

The film The BBW World: Under the FAT!

DS: What's going on with your film?

KN: We're still in production with some post-production on already filmed pieces.

DS: What is the idea behind the film?

KN: It's a documentary film to let people in the world know about the BBW World. First, it is to let people know that there is a community of larger people here to support each other. Secondly, will show people that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and there are some eyes that happen to find us beautiful. Third, it will address the negative stigma and fat bashing that exists, in America and, in some ways, worldwide. I've

been to different countries to interview fat women, and it's interesting that we are so similar. Even though we speak different languages and have a different culture, in some ways fat women are still different from the mass population of each one of those societies.

DS: You're in production now?
 KN: We've been in production since July 2, 2006. I'm in production and post-production at the same time. I'd like to have it completed by September 2008 so that it could be submitted for Sundance 2009 and the 2009 film festivals season. That's my plan.

Today in History

1852 – The University of Sydney, Australia's oldest university, was inaugurated in Sydney two years after the New South Wales Legislative Council established it with the passage of the University of Sydney Act.

1865 – The Morant Bay rebellion, led by Paul Bogle and George William Gordon, began in Jamaica, but it eventually was brutally suppressed by Governor Edward John Eyre.

1942 – World War II: At the Battle of Cape Esperance on the northwest coast of Guadalcanal, American ships intercepted and defeated a Japanese fleet on their way to reinforce troops on the island.

1954 – Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh took control of North Vietnam.

1962 – Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, the first Roman Catholic ecumenical council in 92 years.

October 11 is National Coming Out Day and General Pulaski Memorial Day in the United States.

Quote of the Day

The search for the truth is the

most important work in the whole world — and the most dangerous.
 ~ James Clavell

Word of the Day

jaded; adj

1. Worn out, wearied, or lacking enthusiasm; exhausted.
2. Cynically insensitive; made callous by experience.

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