

## 'People should do what's best for their bodies'

# Weight loss among fat-acceptance influencers a fraught topic

By Leanne Italie

Fashion and lifestyle blogger Maui Bigelow has always been curvy and built a social media presence by embracing every pound.

Until the worst happened. At nearly 380 pounds, her health took a dive. She was diagnosed with a blood cancer and multiple uterine fibroids that couldn't be treated due to her weight. That's when she decided to have bariatric surgery, a weight loss procedure.

She hadn't yearned to be thinner, but she wanted to live at least long enough for her two children, ages 20 and 16, to make her a grandmother.

"For months I talked to my counselor about how I would share my truth with you," Bigelow told her followers at Phatgirlfresh.com after the weight loss surgery last year. "I was concerned about how you would receive it. I feared the plus-size and body positive communities wouldn't understand or respect my choice."

Bigelow, a former teacher in Albany, Georgia, with 67,500 monthly unique visitors to her site and nearly 40,000 followers on Instagram, was pleased her fans were resoundingly positive. That's not a small thing in her corner of the internet.

Fat-acceptance and body positive influencers like Bigelow are on the rise on social media and as fashion models as they fight back against the

damaging pressures of idealized beauty peddled online and off. But what happens when, as in Bigelow's case, weight poses a serious health risk, or they decide to shed pounds for other reasons, turning their careers and social channels from fat acceptance to smaller sizes, dieting and fitness?

"The people who are having weight loss surgery in our community, they have the surgery, they go about their business and they shut up, for the most part. But it's important to share. There are women who are struggling with health issues who need this surgery," Bigelow said in an interview.

She's down to 240 pounds, but she's struggling to fully accept her future of fewer pounds, both personally and professionally.

"I was a bomb ... girl at almost 400 pounds," Bigelow said. "Some of these influencers, they talk about being fat and how they love their plus-size bodies and how they're so empowered in the space that they're in, and they have all of these women who support them, who are cheering them on. Then fast forward, they lose the weight and you see the before and after pictures: Oh, this is when I was 350 pounds. I was so depressed. I felt so ugly. And this is me now. I'm so happy. I'm so free. Wait a minute, girl. Didn't you say two years ago when you were 350 pounds that you loved your body and that you loved the size that you were? Me, I came

into womanhood as a fat woman. I'm not as confident as I was."

### Culture

Pia Schiavo-Campo, who posts from Los Angeles about style and culture on Instagram and blogs at Mixedfatchick.com, isn't a fan of dieting, before-and-after pictures or the lack of dialogue from fat-acceptance influencers about weight loss. As someone who has struggled with an eating disorder for the better part of 30 years, she's triggered by diet talk and conflicted about weight turnarounds, especially those not directly addressed.

It's the messaging, she said in an interview, especially when dieting or weight loss surgery transforms the online mission through photos and new collaborations focused on health and weight-loss products.

Schiavo-Campo's concerns are echoed by others in the anti-diet movement.

"Diet culture," she says, has been "basically imposed on us, mostly women. By the same token, I also believe that people should do what's best for their bodies."

JennyLee Molina in Miami did what's best for her body by losing 80 pounds in a year, trimming down to a size 8 after being told she was pre-diabetic. She did it without surgery, and lost one of her heroes, body-positive model Tess Holliday, in the



This undated image released by Howell Designs Studio, LLC shows fashion and lifestyle blogger Maui Bigelow. (AP)

process, after documenting her health and weight-loss journey on Instagram, where she has 11,900 followers.

Molina's feed includes before-and-after photos. She said she sought out Holliday through private messaging after realizing Holliday had unfollowed her. "Your weight loss posts are too triggering for me, I'm sure you understand," Holliday explained in a private reply earlier this year. "It's not personal."

A representative for Holliday did not respond to requests for comment.

Molina recalled how much she loved Holliday's take-no-prisoners approach to fat acceptance as she gained popularity with a groundbreaking modeling contract and her "effy-ourbeautystandards" movement on Instagram in 2013. Molina, who has a 9-year-old son, was thrilled when she had a chance to meet Holliday in 2015, at a time when Molina had

gained a significant amount of weight after knee surgery.

"She was a go-to for inspiration, someone I admired in terms of embracing your curves, embracing where you're at," Molina said. "The community is very divided between those who are more about fat pride, which is fine, and the ones who are all about wherever you're at, be comfortable in your own skin. That's where I feel like I am. I think everybody should embrace themselves at every step of the journey and we shouldn't shame people who decide to lose weight to feel better. There's nothing wrong with it."

Peggy Howell, vice chair and spokeswoman for the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, posts on Instagram as FatAcceptanceWarrior. Her organization was founded in 1969 and has a paid membership of more than 11,000.

Howell, who lives in Las Vegas, thinks the fat acceptance and body positive movements have become muddled, with dieting and weight loss as a constant hot button.

"It seems like hypocrisy," she said of fat-acceptance influencers who shed weight and attempt to hang on to lucrative careers. "A lot of people clap back within the community. A lot of people get upset. We support people making choices that will help them be healthier, but dieting is a losing battle." (AP)

### Books

## Author Lippman has 5-book deal

# Lippman's new stand-alone novel is superb



A colorful Kuwait City during twilight. (Mohammad Alhadhoud - KUNA)

By Oline H. Cogdill

"Lady in the Lake" by Laura Lippman (William Morrow) Everyone wants to feel that he or she has an impact on the world or to have just one other person believe — no, know — that what he or she does is important, which is featured heavily in Laura Lippman's new superb stand-alone novel, "Lady in the Lake".

Elegantly written, the novel moves with an eye to how people adapt to changes in culture, or maybe how an evolving culture causes shifts in people. "Lady in the Lake" works well on several levels — as a look at the mid-1960s and a view of racism, sexism and the intersection of ennu and ambition. It is also a paean to newspapers and the struggle of women reporters during that time.

Lippman has wisely chosen an unconventional mystery with "Lady in the Lake", focusing on the internal rage that drives many of its characters.

That internal rage certainly propels Madeline "Maddie" Schwartz, a 37-year-old Jewish housewife who leaves her well-to-do husband, Milton, and the couple's perfectly decorated Baltimore home. At one time, Maddie had goals that reached beyond marriage, mothering their only child, Seth and keeping a kosher home. But this is Baltimore during the 1960s and Maddie is forced to see how difficult the world can be. She moves into an apartment in a sketchy neighborhood and begins an affair with a black cop. But she hadn't planned this move carefully. She left behind most of her valuable possessions and relies on Milton for money.

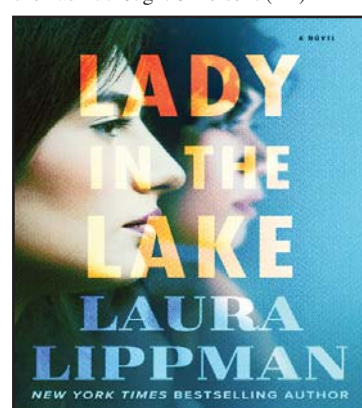
Eventually, she lands a low-level newspaper job but isn't taken seriously, even when she tries to investigate the murder of Cleo Sherwood, a young black woman whose body was found in the Druid Hill Park fountain. Her editors don't see the importance of the death of a black woman, whom Maddie calls the "lady in the lake". Nevertheless, Maddie persists.

While "Lady in the Lake" revolves around Maddie, Lippman also richly delves into the personas of those in Maddie's orbit — people she may never have thought about while living in that comfortable home. As part of her maturation, Maddie finds a link to each person and a deeper connection to Cleo. Maddie isn't always the most likable of characters, but Lippman makes readers care deeply about her. The author shows each character in the context of the era's culture that is on the cusp of change. Gender and racial roles are in flux, but the changes aren't coming quickly enough.

Lippman again proves she's a sharp observer of people, with an affinity for shaping complicated people in a refined plot.

### Also:

**NEW YORK:** Prize-winning crime novelist Laura Lippman has several new books planned, not all of them fiction. Lippman has reached a five-book deal with her current publisher, William Morrow. The deal, announced Thursday, includes three novels, a short story collection and a book of personal essays, her first-ever nonfiction release. Lippman said in a statement that her longtime editor, Carrie Feron, had seen "the potential" of an essay collection, something she hadn't thought of herself. (AP)



This cover image released by William Morrow shows 'Lady in the Lake', by Laura Lippman. (AP)

acquaintances or friends happen to have a story with the American Missionary hospital in Kuwait (Mustasha Lemraicani) during the years from 1914-1967, the official period of offering medical services in Kuwait?

Please share with us your story or your memory during those old days by writing the event and sending it to the following email address: Mystory@damuseum.org.kw

Notes: 1. Please send your story only to the above mentioned email. Story shared in Instagram, Facebook or Twitter will not be considered.

2. Please write your story or memory and sign it with your full name, and your contact number.

3. It will be great if you send us your personal photos or those of the place related to the story (optional).

Your story will be part of a new book to be published by DAL.

I am confident that your contributions will be an essential part of the history of Amricani. Share with us!

**NYF offers free yoga classes:** NYF Kuwait offers free yoga, breathing, meditation and reiki classes by a well-experienced female yoga teacher for all age groups. Classes are given on the basis of different health problems, stress and other problems by different techniques. Contact: 99315825.

### Leadership Excellence Course:

The Leadership Excellence Course (LEC) is a course modeled on the Seerah of Rasoolullah who is the best model of leadership for all mankind. The LEC focuses on the lessons that we can learn from the Seerah of Rasoolullah and see how we can apply them in our lives to become winners in this world and the next.

The objectives of the course are 1. Understand what leadership is from the Seerah of Rasoolullah and how to apply it in our lives today 2. Understand the purpose of our lives and learn to live that purpose with confidence 3. Understand the importance of connecting to Allah and learn how to do it 4. Understand how to leverage your strengths and overcome weaknesses 5. Understand how to articulate your life goal and create a road map to achieve it.

For more information please visit www.leckuwait.com or call 99514995 / 66363310.

**AWL registration:** If you would like to join the American Women's League (AWL), please call 99039723 or 94067999 or email: kuwaitawl@yahoo.com. All American women and wives of Americans are welcomed.

**Ugandans register with UIK:** Are you a Ugandan living and working in Kuwait? Would you like to get in touch

## المهرجان الثقافي كوريا الجنوبية

### CULTURAL FESTIVAL SOUTH KOREA

يشرف مركز الشيخ عبدالله السالم الثقافي بدعوتكم لحضور أول مهرجان ثقافي. يستضيف المركز هذا العام كوريا الجنوبية لتسليط الضوء على تراثها وتقاليدها وحرفها.

Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre cordially invites you to its first Cultural Festival. This year, the Centre is hosting South Korea to highlight its heritage, traditions and crafts.

الدخول من بوابة رقم 2، يوليو 24-25  
Entrance: Gate 2, July 24-25

معرض (التاريخ الكوري التقليدي) Hanbok Exhibition (Korean Traditional Costumes)	ورشة عمل صناعات الحرف Jewelry Making Workshop	أزياء "هانوك" الكورية Hanbok Korean Traditional Fashion Presentation
تاريخ الفن والتراث Transportation & Robots Hall 3:00pm-7:00pm	تاريخ الفن والتراث Transportation & Robots Hall 4:00pm, 5:00pm and 6:00pm	المسرح Theatre 7:30pm-9:30pm

الدخول من بوابة رقم 2، يوليو 29  
Entrance: Gate 2, July 29

مسابقة أولية لمهرجان "Changwon Festival of K-pop"  
Preliminary Competition for Changwon Festival of K-pop

المسرح  
Theatre  
7:30pm-9:30pm

الدخول من بوابة رقم 2، يوليو 31  
Entrance: Gate 2, July 31

العرض التقليدي الكوري من قبل  
International Youth Arts Group  
Traditional Korean Folk Dance

المسرح  
Theatre  
7:30pm-9:30pm

المهرجان الثقافي  
CULTURAL FESTIVAL

2019 CHANGWON

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

المركز الثقافي كوريا الجنوبية  
Korea Cultural Center Kuwait

A flyer of the event

with other Ugandans in Kuwait both socially and professionally? Then please get in touch with us. We would like to invite you to register with the Ugandans in Kuwait (UIK) association, an informal organization of Ugandans living and working in Kuwait. The purpose of this exercise is to get together as Ugandans and to consider taking the first steps to establishing a more formal organisation. This association is voluntary.

It is designed to create a forum for Ugandans in Kuwait to foster a sense of community, to communicate more effectively with each other and to encourage Ugandans out here to work together. We are also planning a celebration to mark 50 years of Ugandan's Independence this year. If you have any questions regarding this association or if you are interested in registering, then please send us an email at ugandansinkuwait@gmail.com. We hope to hear from you soon.

**Free drum music classes:** Free professional drum music classes are available at Salmiya for all age groups from beginners to advanced by a well experienced drum teacher. For more details: 94974295.

**Indian Embassy SPDC notice:** Attention of all Indian associations/Indian schools in Kuwait is once again drawn to Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) which was introduced by Government of India in the academic year 2006-2007 with the objective to make higher education in India accessible to the children of overseas Indians and promote India as a centre for higher studies.

Under the scheme, 100 PIO/NRI

students were awarded scholarship of up to US\$ 4,000 per annum for undergraduate courses in Engineering, Technology, Humanities, Liberal Arts, Commerce, Management, Journalism, Hotel Management, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and some other courses.

The scheme is open to NRIs/PIOs from over 40 countries (including Kuwait) having substantial Indian Diaspora population.

The Scheme was revamped and launched in July 2016. Under the revamped Scheme, number of scholarships has been enhanced from 100 to 150 with introduction of 50 scholarships for children of Indian workers employed in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. The Scheme is now applicable to four categories of applicants:

- (i) Persons of Indian Origin
  - (ii) Non-Resident Indians
  - (iii) Children of Indian workers working in ECR countries (including Kuwait).
  - (iv) Children of Indian workers in ECR countries — studying in India
- The institutions that are covered under this Scheme are:
- (i) NITs, IITs, Schools of Planning and Architecture
  - (ii) "A" Grade institutions accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and recognised by University Grants Commission (UGC).
  - (iii) Other institutions covered under Direct Admission of Students Abroad (DASA) scheme.

Income criteria will be applicable to all four categories. Applicants will seek scholarships after they obtain admission in the approved list of educational institutions.

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### General

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- Rules and Regulations:**
- Please arrive in time for your visit.
  - All visitors are kindly required to abide by the mosque's dress code. Male visitors should wear long pants. Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not allowed. Female visitors: should wear head cover and long loose clothing (available at the mosque).
  - Foods and drinks are not allowed inside the prayer halls.
  - For school visits, teachers are responsible for their students and are required to cooperate with the staff members of the Grand Mosque.
  - Photography is allowed inside the Grand Mosque (please note that disrespectful poses are strictly prohibited).
- If you would like to book a tour, please contact us:  
Tel: 22980813/ 22980815/ 22980812  
Email: gmvisits@gmail.com  
Fax: 22473708

**Share your story with Amricani:** Do you or any of your family members,