

# Bare Facts

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38° 58' 7" North; 95° 47' 56" West

## Annual Survey: What Are People Saying

We continue to analyze results from our year-end survey. This is the third installment in that project.

Overall, participants in this year's survey reported they are extremely pleased with the Lake Edun Foundation and our special place. This is consistent with results from prior years.

Our mission is valued and our leased facility is truly appreciated. "It has been great to find such a nice, quiet environment to relax and be ourselves in."

It seems to connect on some very primal level with nearly everyone. "I went for the first time ever in June and it was a wonderful experience. I felt very comfortable and never once did I feel judged."

Members appreciate the peaceful serenity it offers; they enjoy interacting with other like-minded people and most don't seem to be too concerned about our gender imbalance although they would like to see it improved.

We were surprised at the number who said they did not visit last year because time just seemed to get away from them. "I'm really looking forward to my first visit. Every time I plan to go, something else comes up." or "I love being able to go a natural in the great outdoors. I was so busy this summer that I could not get to the lake but I plan on going next year (2013). ..."

The experience for first-time visitors is extremely important to us. We are concerned about comments such as: "I have never visited because you have never made it easy for 'day' visitors. It's easier visiting a traditional nudist resort or park."

We asked several questions concerning making a "first visit" easier. Obviously, we must be sensitive. About half of the people who responded to the survey admitted they had never visited a co-ed clothing-optional beach or facility, and 23% admitted they were trying to overcome unbelievable shyness.

The board will attempt to recruit member-volunteers to escort first-time visitors around for all our open houses next year. If you are interested in assisting with this, please let us know.

In addition, we will look to improve our signage in the parking lot. Not so long ago, the barn was clearly visible from the parking lot. As our trees have grown, the barn has slowly slipped out of sight.

A number of respondents said it would be good for couples if we permitted one to remain clothed on their first visit. This is already a policy; we will make sure more know about it.

Finally, this comment: "I'm a 60-year-old gay male. I don't feel as though I fit in at Lake Edun (or really at any nudist group.) The gay groups are all about sex – which is not what I'm there for. I feel like a shunned pariah at the straight groups." We discriminate against no one, except jerks. If you are not a jerk, please give us a try.

## Volunteer – It's Important

Because of the stunning beauty of our special place and our busy program, it is easy to forget that we have no paid staff aside from our summer-time caretaker. All that we do and accomplish is done by volunteers. They make it happen; they keep our membership costs low; they are even our most generous contributors.

It is important that we constantly work to attract more volunteers. We have a broad program so there is a task that fits nearly any skill-set or interest

If you believe you would find it interesting to join the many others who volunteer to bring our educational mission to others in the region, please contact us. We suspect we can find something for you that you will find rewarding and will be a good way to give back.

## New Membership Policy Evokes Questions

Following our announcement last month of our new membership policy, we have had a number of questions and comments (see letter on page 2). Several have expressed concern about no longer having the option to get a membership on the pay-as-you-go plan.

We recognize this is a significant change that will impact some. Those who wish to pay for their membership over time can begin now. Anyone wishing to take advantage of this convenience may pay \$50/month beginning this month. Contact us, and we can help you make the arrangements.

## Don't Forget To Sauna

In the cold months of Winter, it is easy to forget that Spring is just around the corner. Saunas are a wonderful way to relax while the cold winds are blowing outside. We schedule them on various evenings and times.

In response to a request from one of our out-of-town members, we scheduled a sauna in the afternoon on Sunday, March 24. If there is a time or day particularly good for your schedule, just let us know. We'll try to work it in.

## DON'T FORGET

Feb 8; Fri; 8-10; Sauna  
Feb 10; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors  
Feb 13; Wed; 7-9; Sauna  
Feb 19; Tues; 7-9; Sauna  
Feb 24; Sun; 7-9; Sauna  
Mar 2; Sat; 8-10; Sauna  
Mar 6; Wed; 7-9; Sauna  
Mar 10; Sun; 7-9; Sauna  
Mar 17; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors  
Mar 19; Tues; 7-9; Sauna  
Mar 24; Sun; 4-6; Sauna

## From The Mail Bag

Dear Lake Edun,

Just got the latest newsletter...so we are down to 3 visits a year if not a member thanks to the new board.....what they are actually saying is “if you are not a member you are not welcome at lake edun”.....I think you should take it a step further and put armed guards at the entrance...when a non-member tries to get in after 3X you arrest him and haul him or her off to jail and fine them a thousand dollars + two weeks in jail for illegally entering private property or you shoot them on sight....where did you find this brain dead board? ....looks like I may never come back again...no more painting the barn for me!!!!!!!!!!!!

– Mike S.

Thank you for contacting us about our new policy, Mike. We are always anxious to hear from our supporters, even when they may not understand some of the policy changes we implement.

Typically new policies or changes to existing ones are met with resistance. Many of our prior supporters stopped visiting when we began charging. When we introduced memberships, some were angry. Every time we have raised membership prices, we have heard about it.

The reality is that we are an educational foundation supported by volunteers. We are changing our policy for two principle reasons: 1) Keeping track of each supporters' visits takes a great deal of time for our volunteers.

2) Over the years, our sense has been that our members strongly support our educational mission whereas those who choose to pay for each visit, view us more as a fine park or recreational area. This is confirmed by responses to our annual surveys.

As an educational foundation we will continue to encourage others to visit and learn about beneficial impact Naturism can have on both themselves and their family. Once they do, we hope they will join our foundation and become a long-term supporter.

We realize some of our supporters will probably find other venues for clothing-free recreation. We are happy for them and wish them well wherever they go. We will miss them.

## De-Sexualizing The Female Form

An art exhibition in Wellington, New Zealand titled, *The Lady Garden*, turns new ground. The question asked by the woman organizing a performance art show, Virginia Kennard is whether we can stop sexualizing the female form.

Virginia comes from a background as a life model. She experienced being naked in front of people drawing is not sexual at all. She added, “I really liked that boundary, that juxtaposition of a naked body, but not being sexualised.”

But now a performance exhibition in Wellington is hoping to change people's attitudes to nudity – by de-sexualising the female form.

*The Lady Garden* is a performance exhibition where everything is on show. Visitors insist they're not there to perve.

A male attending the exhibit commented, “I do respect women and it would be cool to see art that's like that as well – and see women in a natural, true form, and as a companion, not as an object.”

That's exactly the point of her exhibit, Virginia says. We do it so much – can you not do it? Can you stop it? It's about how common it is in the commercial realm, and how that feeds into our personal perspectives.”

The reporter observed that on opening night there was little embarrassment in the room. This report was aired on TV in New Zealand with no pixilation, bars, or blurring of the bare women's bodies. Pretty amazing!

“You look at a piece and you go, ‘Okay cool, I can see that’ and it didn't have to be weird. Obviously it's uncomfortable because it's a naked lady – but it wasn't arousing, so to say,” stated a male viewer.

I think we understand what Ms Kennard meant when she spoke of de-sexualizing the female form. However, a more accurate word that better describes her intention for the exhibit would be her desire to de-eroticize the female form. I don't think anyone wants to neuter either gender as the meaning of the word de-sexualize more readily implies.

Naturists have always aimed to differentiate simple nudity from the erotic – it's not about sex you know, etc. It's the obstinate thick headedness of the general population, aided by commercial exploitation that continues to prop up the naked = sex formula.

The show is on the right track and is “eye opening” for at least some who give the message in the art a chance. [Ed.]

You can judge for yourself [here](#).

## Body Shame A Part Of Media Culture

People who should know better, betray their prejudices and misinform us on a regular basis. I'm referring to the purveyors of news. The position journalism holds in our society is powerful and exerts major influence on the information and opinions the rest of us receive about the world.

As a consequence, journalists have a respected and important role to play in a free society. They are to be our eyes and ears and stand up for the interests of the people against all the forces that might harm the public good.

That's the theory. The practice often fails this test. In fact, as the writer of this essay suggests, they are complicit in supporting the societal prejudices toward the human body. This failing by too many in the press is nothing new to readers of *Bare Facts*. In fact, as we have often seen, it is pretty much the norm when reporting on naturism.

Naturists don't expect journalists to promote social nudity. Neither do we expect unprofessionalism and prejudice in their reporting. Demeaning naturists and the human body may mirror similar attitudes in society, but it also reinforces them. This creates another barrier to overcome when trying to educate and inform the public about naturism.

This essay is well written and powerful. [Ed.]

A new year has begun. Once again, the body-shaming, weight-loss parade is at work. Bookstores are laden with

every diet plan possible; dieters are beginning their journey down many of the promises they've made themselves year after year (promises, which generally function poorly when derived from shame and self-hatred); the television is abuzz with shiny deals on diet plans and gym memberships.

***Body-shaming season is in full force.***

But there's something more insidious going on. It's not just that we, as a society, as producers and consumers of media, and as networks of individuals, are shaming those bodies which are not perfectly toned and fabulously styled: we are waging war on ALL bodies. ***We are attempting to erase the body (the sensuous, moving, functioning, glorious body) from existence.***

Here's what I mean: No less than an hour ago, I flipped on the television and watch the noon news hour on *GlobalTV*.

The usual news headlines of January 2<sup>nd</sup> included the first babies born this year in our province, and coverage of the polar bear swims. In both cases joyful bodies! The former, new bodies, the tiny ones entering the world, the latter the brave ones celebrating the new year by leaping into the frigid waters for a moment of delight.

***AND THEN...a small montage of bodies – mostly older, male ones – wading into the waters at the clothing-optional beach near White Rock were shown.***

Responses from the three news anchors – two women and one man, all in their 30s or 40s, very attractive – were thus:

Amongst their giggles and awkwardness, the anchors made comments about the editing people having to suppress their “gag reflex”, about very “careful editing” having to be used. When one female anchor was, in jest, asked if she would participate in one of these events, she laughed awkwardly, shook her head, and another round of **collective laughter and disgust** ensued.

***I rarely get up in arms over bullshit comments on the news. But I'm very, very angry about this, for a number of reasons:***

- 1) There is a societal and cultural problem with the way that nudity is treated. Nudity is often seen as inherently sexualized, and public nudity is considered by many to be part and parcel of some sort of sexual deviance. (I should note that while it is not illegal for women to be topless in public here, that it is nevertheless monitored and discouraged by both law enforcement and the public at large).
- 2) There are demands (perceived or real) on public beaches which are mind-blowingly hostile. You've heard it before, the snarking about which girl looks fat in her bikini, or the friend that REFUSES to buy a bathing suit because she's terrified about being judged for her appearance.
- 3) There are pressures put on aging bodies to cover up, to be extremely modest, and not to reveal loose flesh and wrinkles to the world (especially not on a beach). (In fact, a recent photography project that used older women as pin-up models reveal, in some of the comments received, ongoing prejudice against the aesthetics of the aging body.)
- 4) There are pressures put on male bodies to conform to a series of aesthetic principles (muscles, little to no chest

hair, abs, etc), and these are increasing with each year. I know many men, of various ages, that struggle to feel as though their bodies have worth, as though they are lovely and perfect just as they are.

***And so, when three broadcasters make jokes and implicitly denigrate nude beaches and naturism – which, by the way, they (like the rest of the public) are in no way obligated to participate in or attend – it is symptomatic of a culture that has reduced the natural body, the sensuous-but-not-always-sexual body to an object of disgust.***

I've said it before: This has to change. We need to think seriously about our aversion towards certain bodies, and towards certain situations in which those bodies are in.

For many, being able to attend clothing-optional beaches has been a source of shedding (pardon the pun) the layers of shame and public humiliation that has long covered their bodies. I know many women for whom lounging in the sun and swimming in the gloriousness of their imperfectly perfect beautiful bodies has been life-changing. The specters of body image problems and sexual abuse/harassment can do GREAT damage to people's perceptions of their naked flesh, and while there may always be a gawker or two at clothing-optional beaches, the community that is built there (one which is implicitly based on trust and respect) is one that can facilitate healing, for men and women alike.

I know of no other venues in which male nudity is not seen as TOTALLY ALARMING AND EXPLICIT. I know of no other venue in which bodies can just BE BODIES, where people are not reduced solely to the visible markers of their gender or their sexual function.

I've only visited Wreck Beach a few times in all my years of living in Metro Vancouver, but I can say that those days were liberating beyond my wildest imaginations. No shame. No discomfort. No insidious, negative self-talk. Just BEING, as I came into this world, nakedly.

***Ultimately, here's the lesson to take away: if you don't have anything nice to say about others' naked bodies, or about those who choose to attend nude-beaches, keep your hateful comments to yourselves. If you're a news anchor, move to the next piece of news instead of making faces and talking about how people had to suppress their gag reflex. If you're someone who has concerns about “modesty” and “decency”, well, please keep your comments to yourselves, and don't go to a nude beach if it offends you – no one is forcing you to go. If you're someone who has issues with your own naked body, please don't take them out on perfect strangers by using their bodies (the old ones, the wrinkled ones, the fat ones, the too-thin ones) to make yourself feel better.***

We come into this world being both naked and vulnerable.

We should all aspire, regardless of our beliefs, our personal practices, and values, to respect the bodies of others, especially when they are simply just BEING.

Read more on this important subject [here](#).

# Violence vs. Nudity In Movies

Naturists have long complained about the absurdity of an American culture that has minimal problem with extreme and graphic violence in movies, video games and on TV. In the light of recent events, lots of people are questioning the easy acceptance of media violence.

Many years ago I questioned a friend who aspired to be a Hollywood screen writer about his views on screen violence vs. nudity or even sex being shown in a movie. His response was that the violence depicted was pretend, and therefore ok, while nudity and or sex was real and he was opposed to this being shown.

I hope we all are aware that sex scenes in mainline movies are also pretend; however the nudity is real for sure. I didn't get into an argument with him, but I was unsatisfied with his answer.

First, I believed some depictions of violence were both disgusting and highly disturbing. Second, while I wasn't a naturist back then, I couldn't believe that all nudity in the movies was somehow evil. For example, Charlton Heston's nudity in *The Planet of the Apes* was essential to the story. Another example is the scene of simple nudity in the movie *Walk About*. Many other examples could be given

As others over the years have noted, it's all in what you believe is obscene or harmful. The problem is there is no one size answer that fits all.

The fact is violence is very much a part of human history and there is no way to present history in a visual format without showing violence. It's equally true that human sexual behavior, both loving and violent, is also inescapably a part of our story. Can we logically show the former in slow motion graphic detail, and then ignore or only coyly allude to the latter?

Millions, including teens and pre teen's, flock to sadistic, brutal, meaningless horror movies like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, or *Friday the Thirteenth* to only name two of thousands. However, any nudity will be deemed inappropriate for the same age groups.

Killing people is apparently of no moral consequence – it's pretend you know, but the sight of bare flesh will arouse passions uncontrollably, driving audience members to what? Apparently it's believed those watching will have their moral code ripped from them and they will descend into depraved sexual behavior at the first opportunity.

It really says more about us than it does either violence or nudity depicted on screen. It is our heritage of discomfort with the body and sexuality that generates the condemnation of nudity or sex on screen. It's our heritage of personal and historic experience with violence as a part of life that is always going to be a part of the human condition that allows us to watch it with relative ease.

It is absurd to believe a person will become a mass murderer due to video games or movies, or become a rapist or

even cheat on his wife from seeing a breast or even simulated sex on screen.

Of one thing we can be certain, a movie called *The Texas Chainsaw Nudist Camp Massacre* would be A-Ok and sell a t bunch of tickets, but any movie set in a nudist camp depicting simple nudity would be a box office disaster.

The following is a further exploration of this contradiction in our culture. [Ed]

In the past thirty years we have become far more permissive of our teenagers seeing violence while natural bodies remain strictly forbidden. I recently saw *Skyfall*, rated PG13, and I left the theater scratching my head:

1. Breasts are off limits to a 13-year-old.
2. A man can shoot a tied down woman in cold blood and somehow that's okay for a 13-year-old.
3. You pictured a 13-year-old boy when you read the above two points because that is the demographic to which we aim violence and misogyny.

Now, I'm a huge James Bond fan but I've grown uncomfortable as these movies have become more grisly in the past few years. Take the movie *Beverly Hills Cop* from about 30 years ago and compare it to *Skyfall*. *Skyfall* had a higher body count, violence that was far more graphically depicted and hints of sex and earned a PG13 rating. *Beverly Hills Cop* was far less violent, it did have hints of sex, it was about as misogynistic as *Skyfall*, but it also had the briefest view of women's breasts and thus earned an R rating (Restricted to those over 17).

If you don't believe my thesis that we have become more permissive of violence, then think about how people reacted when Michael Keaton's first *Batman* movie earned a PG13 rating. Parents complained that their children could not see a movie, based upon kids' comics. Fast-forward about twenty years and no one batted an eye when Christian Bale's *Batman Begins* was far more violent than Keaton's. But the movie didn't show any breasts, so it was okay for 13-year-old's.

We are blatantly sending the message to teenagers that violence is more acceptable than the human form. I'm not saying violent movies should not be made nor am I saying that movies should have more nudity. Free speech and the market can decide that. I do think, however, that we need to reevaluate the standards as to what we guide adolescents toward and away from. In the end, this is left up to the parents. But I guarantee you, if I had a teenager, I would prefer them seeing *Beverly Hills Cop* over *Skyfall* despite some flash of the human form in the background.

Judge for yourself [here](#).

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*“Are we so narrow minded that we show war, murder, rape, etc. on TV, but we do not allow to show one of the most wonderful creations (the human body) in its natural form.” – Mario Roman*

# Beyond The Negatives

It's that time of year when in the midst of all our shopping and spending, we also are called to reflect on the year gone by and take stock. Through the Lake Edun Foundation, we naturists speak to society with a positive message promoting body acceptance. It is through our naturism that we speak and demonstrate we take our humanity seriously and uplift our bodies as good in all its parts and functions. We also ask the world to stop deprecating the body.

Too often there are those, and we know them all too well, who denigrate the body and condemn nudity as inherently wrong based on a terribly mistaken reading of the Bible. There are other notable religious leaders, Pope John Paul II, for example, who vigorously champion the body. Such a change in attitude sadly is slow to spread to the general public.

The following essay by my friend Howard, a fine art photographer in England, speaks to the significance and dignity of the body from the perspective of a committed Christian. Howard is very body positive and is this way because of his understanding of his faith.

His is an enlightened voice whose insight penetrates through the clutter and points to the transcendent quality of what it means to be human, gloriously displayed in the nude. In so doing, he critiques our cultural bias against the body. [Ed.]



*"Flesh does have positive meanings in Christian thought, notably as the temple of God. Indeed, the Incarnation of Jesus only makes theological sense if human embodiment is seen as worthy and meaningful".* Ruth Barcan – Nudity: A Cultural Anatomy.

*"God couldn't be God-with-us if he weren't flesh. The flesh of the baby is father to the flesh of the man. In his (Christ's) flesh, the spit of God mixed with the dirt of Galilee to make a healing paste. The naked baby must be flesh so that God can be stripped and seen again, trading his*

*'dusty garments' of distance for the immediacy of the splinters of the cross".* Mary Ellen Ashcroft – Gift-wrapping God.

As we approach Christmas, I thought I'd pen a few thoughts on what we perhaps, need to consider as we think about life, the body, and God's immediate 'connection' to it all....

It's tellingly easy to ill-define ourselves. Nowhere do we see this more than we when we come to the nude.

Definition, of course, plays a key part. One popular theological concordance defines 'nude' as almost entirely negative – to be uncovered, devoid of grace, heinously sinful, destitute, and so on.

There are clear reasons, in relation to the human condition, why these statements are made, but the concordance also speaks of another truth as well regarding being nude – "a state in which things are discovered, known and truly revealed". It's this aspect of nudity that faith, and in a smaller fashion, art, allows us to encounter and embrace for some essential reasons regarding both the nature of God and ourselves.

So, let's consider our own definitions for a moment.

C S Lewis, in his study *'The Four Loves'*, provided some useful pegging points on various views of the body.

These might be titled:

- The ascetic pagan or Christian who deprecates the body to a mere tomb (used and discarded at death).
- The 'neo pagan/nudist' who view the (*present*) body as presently glorious (but, again, of no eternal purpose or value).
- Those who view the current state as both a virtue and a vice ("*pathetically and absurdly beautiful*").

It's pretty clear that our own culture has a fairly splintered and often unproductive approach to the body - it's either idolized or hated, with very little tolerance for anything in-between. That's because, like the Greeks, we tend to 'deify' the immediate (what pleases or satisfies us now) and discard any thoughts of transcendence *within* the material, dislocating the spiritual and placing it in an entirely different orbit to the here and now.

The trouble is we know there's a problem here, because it's actually *amidst* the material world that we all encounter startling moments of truth, wonder and astonishment that make us tellingly aware of the spiritual *within* the material. Whether we are talking about discovering something deeper about ourselves or the nature of reality, it's these moments that truly impact upon us and transform us, so there clearly is something more going on here than merely a satisfying of the immediate – we yearn for something more, and the world, through numerous means, but often by faith and art, 'speaks' to that deep need.

The futility which often marks our lives steers us to look at beauty in general and the body in particular as ultimately, an uncomfortable irrelevance to our prevailing pain and strife – it’s all pointless or temporary, so we eschew any notion of permanence and wallow in the ugly despair so tellingly present, or just enjoy the moment while we can, for there isn’t anything, at least in the material sense, to really look forward to. The problem, of course is reality is deeper than this.

Whilst we cannot deny the reality of the ugly side of life, there’s clearly more going on here, and looking through the ‘window’ of an acknowledgment of this allows us to begin to engage with a far wider and more challenging understanding of both ourselves and the nature of our world.

As I’ve already noted, it’s easy for religion to be deemed negative about the matter of nudity. Like the Greeks of old (which is actually where a lot of the trouble started), Christianity has often taught a ‘general uptake of Aristotelian biology and ideas’, thereby deeming the body to be inherently ‘bad’ in and of itself and the nude, especially the female nude, to be something which quickly ‘communicates sin, sex and evil’ (Barcan, page 108), but again, reality is far more troubling and enriching.

During the recovery of the Biblical world-view in the 1500’s, artists transformed by this, such as Lucas Cranach, were free once again to genuinely paint and convey the beauty of the female form. This was because the very nature of God’s validation of the material, both in its creation and in its recovery through the Incarnation, become restored as an essential aspect of Christianity and then culture, showing us that there was a right ‘uncovering’ of both truth and ourselves that had to take place, and that is still true today.

It’s so very easy to let our thinking and approach to life to be eschewed by the temporary and immediate, but it is often when we look closer and deeper into the very nature of these things that we will be struck with what we might term an impinging grace that can change and transform, even amidst the mundane. Art, beauty and the enticing richness of seeing God in Christ lead us to this better realm – where life can properly be uncovered.

There are two links for this story: [here](#) and [here](#).

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# Support Naturism: Join The Naturist Society

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Lake Edun Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1982  
Topeka, KS 66601-1982

Membership Application  
Change of Address Form  
*Please Print*

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

All information provided is strictly confidential. If you are joining as a couple, include names for both people. If you are a couple not living together, make a copy of this form for the other individual. (NB: To promote gender diversity, a couple is defined as one male and one female.) Those willing to assist with upkeep a minimum of 10 hours

per year may deduct \$50. One subscription to our newsletter *Bare Facts* is included with membership. A subscription only to *Bare Facts* is available for \$20.00. New members will receive a Waiver and Release which must be completed before membership is finalized. Visitation restrictions apply to Associate Membership.

**Membership Fees:**

	Single	Couple	Amount
Lake Edun Foundation Membership	275.00	350.00	_____
Associate Member (Over 125 miles away)	175.00	250.00	_____
Working Membership (Discount)	(50.00)	(50.00)	_____
NUTs Membership (Must be under 30)	75.00		_____
Separate Mailing Address for members		12.00	_____
<i>No Sex, No Violence ... Only Nudity</i> First Naked Plays – DVD		25.00	_____
<i>Lake Edun Exposed</i> – DVD or video		45.00	_____
Naturist Society Membership		60.00	_____
Subscription to <i>Bare Facts</i> only		20.00	_____
Tax Deductible Donation - Improve our Educational Program			_____
Tax Deductible Donation - Legal Defense Fund			_____

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