

Bare Facts

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President's Corner

By: Ernie Cooper

Winter has passed again, the trees have blossomed and the flowers have grown. Our special place looks really nice. By the end of May all of the normally used items will be back out for all to use!

I hope each of you will take a few minutes to walk over and view the progress on the road back to "Sunny Bares" and realize how much nicer it will be to walk from your car to the camp area! We still have finish up work to do on the road. Webb tells me that he has driven back on the dirt road and did not get stuck, though I am sure that if it rains the road will be too soft to handle any cars.

After long hours of discussion the board has implemented a price increase for members of the Lake Edun Foundation. This is the first price increase in many years. The price increase is in effect as you read this newsletter.

If we depended just on membership dues to Lake Edun Foundation to pay for our programs and activities the annual membership cost would need to be just over \$600/ person! If visitors and mail in donations are added into the mix the price drops to about \$465/ person.

The new prices reflect an increase more in line with economic growth of the past several years. The new single membership is \$275. The new couple's price is \$350. We will offer \$100 discount to those who are registered college students. We will also discount our associate members who live more than 125 miles away with the same discount of \$100. The offer to have the price reduced for volunteer labor at the lake still stands as it has been for the recent past with the maximum being \$50.

The remaining short fall between the current actual per person price of \$465 and the new prices comes from single source donations and other fund raisers. The more of our naturist friends who come to visit and make a donation or join LEF is also a big help.

I am also keenly aware of the increasing cost of fuel and several other daily commodities. It was not the intent of the board to cause anyone hardship. I know that for me to drive over from KC will now cost about \$12 round trip plus \$2 each way for the tolls. Michael, our newsletter editor, will have a round trip fuel charge of \$60 from his home in the North country.

Others of you face similar kinds of expenses. I hope that none of you feels that the board was trying to exclude you or compromise your ability to come and enjoy the warm Kansas sun. It is our desire to continue to provide a place for us to gather and enjoy each others friendship naturally. We have worked hard to hold the price of membership as low as we could while still providing the care our special place needs.

LEF Receives Challenge Grant

Can you help?

Many donated hours of labor and equipment use have been expended in clearing the trees and doing the initial grading of the new north road to "Sunny Bares". We have a temporary culvert carrying the drainage under the road. It has been covered with just enough dirt to allow a vehicle to drive over the creek!

That culvert actually needs to increase in size from the current 20" to about 36" in order carry the peak flow of the creek without washing the road out during he rainy part of the year. We had hoped that we would be able to raise the funds to accomplish that during the winter months. Unfortunately, we are still short.

We estimate that the cost of the larger culvert and enough rock on the road to keep it passable during rain will be about \$2000. One of our members has pledged that they will contribute \$1,000 if the foundation can raise \$1,000 from its membership by August 1. So in fact we only need to raise an additional \$1000 to reach our goal. Since the last board meeting when the challenge was announced, \$85 has been raised toward that \$1000.

If you have just a few dollars you can send we can reach our goal before the season at the lake is in full swing and access from "Sunny Bares" will be a reality! You can send donations in the mail to the Lake Edun Foundation PO Box or leave a donation when you come to the lake. We even take credit cards!

Items We Need

- Tops for trash cans
- Wheel Barrow
- Non-motorized boats
- Chipper/shredder we can use about once a month

DON'T FORGET

Activities designated HN are sponsored by Heartland Naturists

May 5-7; Weekend; End Of Cabin Fever Days

May 6; Sat; 6-8; Sauna

May 13; Sat; 10-12; Board of Directors

May 13; Sat; 12-4; Work Day

May 13; Sat; 6-8; Sauna

May 19; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

May 20; Sat; 12-3; Open House

May 20; Sat; 6-8; Sauna

May 27-29; Memorial Day Weekend

June 1; Mulberry season begins

June 3; Sat; 12-3; Open House

June 10; Sat; 10-12; Board of Directors

June 16; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

July 1; Sat; 10-12; Board of Directors

July 1-4; Clothing Independence Weekend

July 7-9; Closed for Private Party

From The Mail Bag

Dear Lake Edun -

Thank you for promoting the theme of body acceptance. It is a compelling and important concept in our modern culture that so often disconnects mind from body. I personally have found that my love of nature in all its forms has helped me develop positive body image and heal from a lifelong eating disorder. So I am a great proponent of people accepting their own bodies as part of spiritual awakening.

However, when I read that your organization promotes nudity within a family, I realized that you can't have spoken to people who grew up in sexually abusive homes, in which in which nudity was part of the constant threat to the sanctity of the victims' own mind and body.

Privacy is essential in maintaining healthy boundaries within a family. Even in families without blatant abuse, children exposed to adult naked bodies (particularly female children seeing their father naked and vice versa) when they are still at an age of confused sexual boundaries is apt to result at the least in a diminished respect for one's elders and at worse, fear of rape.

I realize you have the best of intentions in promoting this theme. I ask you only to respect the experiences of children who need strong, healthy boundaries while they learn to trust themselves and others.

Thank you and regards,

- A. S. Delmont

The reply sent to A. S. Delmont is as follows:

Ani-

Thank you for your support and your comments.

I am very interested in your comments concerning exposing children to adult non-sexual nudity. No doubt you are aware of some research that has been done on the subject that follows control groups and test groups and shows a negative outcome from such exposure?

I know of no such research that supports your assertions. In fact, the small amount of research that seems to have been conducted appears to support an opposite conclusion: that childhood exposure to adult non-sexual nudity is, in fact, beneficial to their development and self esteem.

Please share with me whatever research you know of, or have available implicating non-sexual parental nudity with harm to their children. If exposure to adult non-sexual nudity were actually harmful to children, why does this harm not seem to manifest itself in any of the European countries where family nudity is more commonplace than in the US? Likewise, I know of no such harmful effects being reported by anthropologists in studies of hundreds of tribal cultures that in the past had, or to this day continue to live a completely, or nearly completely naked lifestyle?

While we might scorn the French as sometimes strange; or the Italians as unable to keep a government for more than a year; or tribal cultures as lacking the comforts and material progress we take for granted, I know of no one who has criticized any of these cultures as being sexually confused or repressed. In fact, I believe they might make that accusation

against us. I believe our incidence of teen pregnancy, rape and sexually motivated crimes exceeds those of any of the above mentioned cultures, plus all of the Scandinavian countries.

Thank you once again for your comments. If you are a playwright, I hope you will submit something for the competition.

- Webb

[To both Ani and everyone else,

It should be abundantly clear from the pages of Bare Facts that The Lake Edun Foundation abhors child abuse in all its forms, sexual, emotional, physical, or neglect. There always has been and always will be zero tolerance of any behavior that harms a child.

The Lake Edun Foundation promotes family friendly NON-sexual nudity both when visiting Lake Edun and as a family lifestyle. Hence, when sexually predatory practices by anyone, including family members is mistakenly confused with, or are equated with what we stand for and are promoting, we must forcefully respond with the facts.

We further object to unsupported claims that the mere sight of nude adult bodies axiomatically is abuse. The experience of thousands of cultural groups over thousands of years around the world defies this assertion. This linkage of abuse or confusion of children at the mere sight of non-sexual nudity strikes us as unscientific and ethnocentric.

The boundaries that Ani rightly decries being crossed involve illicit and illegal motives plus objective, measurable behavior on the part of adults toward children. "Sexually abusive homes" is the operative term, and applies to actual coercive sexual behaviors toward children.

We know of no scientific evidence that demonstrates that where there is no sexually predatory motive by adults toward children that children are still harmed by the mere sight of nude adults. If this fear indeed were the case, logically all art museums should be child free zones. Even the Sistine Chapel should be off limits to children as should National Geographic Magazine, medical texts, health texts, and thousands of statues the world over, etc. It won't do to evade by saying that these are only representations of nude adults, not the real thing.

Finally, we believe that there is no scientific evidence that families that practice non-sexual family nudity – that is, do not sexually perpetrate on children, have confused sexual boundaries between parent and children. Neither do their children have confusion about appropriate sexual boundaries, lose respect for their parents, or fear being raped due to the mere sight of their parent's bodies. Ed.]

**Support the
Naturist Society
Our national Naturist voice**

Closed For Private Party

Eduners will notice from the calendar on page one that our special place will be closed the weekend of July 7-9 for a private party. The Libertarian Party of Kansas has asked to use Lake Edun for a political fundraiser that weekend.

The Lake Edun Foundation is prohibited from endorsing any political party and, thus, we make no endorsement or recommendation concerning attendance by Eduners. Since the Libertarian Party does not have experience planning an event of this nature, they have contracted with LEF to make the arrangements.

So far, two bands have committed to play on Saturday. Friday evening we expect to have a performance by some of the cast that appeared in the Topeka Civic Theater's recent performance of *Five Guys Named Moe* and a staged reading of some of the plays submitted in response to the LEF second annual one-act play contest. In addition, of course, there will be swimming, trails to hike and good times.

This is a new experience for the Libertarians. As a relatively new political force, they have not held many fundraisers. We wish them well.

While the property will be closed to Eduners, they may be able to contact the Libertarian Party directly about their event. If any Eduners do choose to support the Libertarians, we hope they will greet them and show them how wonderful our special place is. Early indications seem to suggest this could be an extremely well attended event!

Reflection on a Day at Edun

by John S.

Well, thanks to some help from Ernie the rock flower bed is about as it gets unless we get some better rocks and change it later.

After the work day last Saturday, I lined the bottom of the bed with plastic and dumped 55 quarts of potting soil in.

Well, guess what? That was only about half filled it. So I went and got another 55 quarts. (If anybody wants to donate some more potting soil I am sure we could use it after the soil settles). For now, I planted 25 day lilies in the bed and hope we get to enjoy some color soon.

I do what I can for Lake Edun so that it will be better for all

of us and am willing, (as are a few others) to help. The way my shoulder is going there might not be many more times I will be able to do the hard labor, but there is plenty to do that is a lot less back breaking.

The work days are not only work days, but can be fun days with laughter and sometimes food. The more people to help, the easier the task and of course the more food the more satisfied the belly.

I have seen several people out at the Lake now that the weather is warmer. Even though I was not brave enough to put more than my feet in the water, the sun felt very nice. So, come on out and sun yer buns! But don't forget the sunscreen, cause I already saw a baked bright red lobster laying around at North beach, and when ya come don't forget to invite a friend.

As a last statement, I would like to get any ideas on how to get more families involved. Well, in closing I hope you all are doing well and we'll see "Yall" real soon.

Websites Of Interest

The internet is a wondrous place. Well over a billion sites to choose from and growing all the time. Much of it is, shall we say, not deserving of any attention. Some of it is spectacular.

A fascinating website called, "Naked." is of particular interest. The address is http://120seconds.com/features/011207_naked/011207_naked.html.

"Naked" is a series of photographs of men and women, first seen clothed, but as you use the mouse, they progressively undress until they are, well...naked.

The website asks, "What's the big deal? We see naked bodies all the time. At least we see well crafted, smooth, airbrushed bodies all the time. The fascination with these images lies in the fact they are ordinary people who have decided to take off their clothes in front of the camera. They are not supermodels. They are not famous actors. They are not rock stars. They are you. They are me. They are us."

Indeed, they are us. Not a full cross section of humanity, but still, folks you might meet in daily life. Additionally, several of the participants made audio recordings of their reaction to being photographed. Well worth the listen. Check it out. Send a letter to Bare Facts with any comments you have about "Naked."

Children And Social Nudity: What Research Tells Us

By Mark Storey

Do friends or relatives tell you nudity and children don't mix? Read this – and tell them what it says

The author wrote this summary article for Naturisme Québec, by whose kind permission we reprint it here. It provides answers to several questions, including "What happens if my child sees her or his parents or other adults naked? What about children naked with each other at camps? Page references in parentheses are associated with items in the bibliography at the end of the article.

Nearly every mother will attest to her toddler's readiness to

scamper about the house and backyard naked. Children feel at ease nude until parents teach them that it's "wrong," "indecent," or "shameful." Children must also be taught that it is somehow inappropriate to see their family nude, for such ideas would not come to them naturally.

Popular authorities on child care from Benjamin Spock to advice columnists Ann Landers and Abigail van Buren have often warned of dangers to children should they see others naked. For Spock, this ill-formed message arises from his early reading of Sigmund Freud (Storey, 69–70). Syndicated

advice columnists read Spock's counsel in his *Baby and Child Care* (Spock, 420–21) and accepted his word as reputable.

Legislators have taken the claims at face value and, without checking to see what scholars have actually said, pressure North American parents to blinker children from ever viewing the human form. Bob Morton, Chair of The Naturist Society's Naturist Action Committee, points to a trend in North America for proposing legislation banning family social nudity on the basis that the "offending" adult may be "grooming" the child to be more receptive to sexual abuse in the home. According to Morton, the US National District Attorneys Association is now saying that a potential child molester can be identified as one who "aims to get the child comfortable seeing nudity" (Morton, 16–17).

The naked child

The fear that seeing naked people in some way harms children is not supported, however, by academic research. The small handful of studies on this topic in psychology and sociology has shown, instead, that children reared in an atmosphere containing family social nudity may benefit from the practice. If this is true, then proposed laws outlawing either social nudity in the home or children's participation at naturist settings are unjustified.

Naturist parents have long expressed the value of raising their children in a home environment in which optional non-sexualized nudity is casual, informal, and non-threatening. For five years, Dennis Craig Smith and William Sparks studied the effects of social nudity on children. Their book, *The Naked Child: Growing Up Without Shame*, is written in part from their personal experience with naturism, and remains a solid piece of descriptive self-reporting on the effects of social nudity on children. They conclude that "the viewing of the unclothed body, far from being destructive to the psyche, seems to be either benign and totally harmless or to actually provide positive benefits to the individuals involved" (Smith, 183).

Okami and others

Scholars publishing in academic journals have come to the same conclusion. In 1995, UCLA psychology professor Paul Okami published a review of existing clinical and empirical studies of childhood exposure to parental nudity. In his review, Okami expresses concern over an increasing number of behaviours being redefined in terms of childhood sexual abuse. More and more social scientists are referring to parental nudity in front of children, for instance, as a form of "subtle sexual abuse" (Okami 1995, 51–52). The problem as he sees it is that there is simply no clinical or empirical evidence to support this concern and the attendant desire to turn naked parents into outlaws.

Okami cites the three studies of Robin Lewis and Louis Janda, M. S. Oleinick et al., and Marilyn Story as the sum total of empirical research addressing the consequences of childhood exposure to parental nudity. Other writings in academia consist of "experts' relatively short commentaries nested in articles related to various other aspects of childhood development and experience" (Okami 1995, 54).

M. S. Oleinick et al. examined 160 psychiatric outpatient children and compared them to non-psychiatric hospital

inpatient children to determine if the two groups differed as to early socialization experiences. No significant difference was found between those children who had seen their parents naked and those who had not (Okami 1995, 55).

Marilyn Story hypothesized that early exposure to parental nudity would improve the body self-concept of preschool children. She examined 264 children and their parents or guardians, noting that some families were nudists while others were not. She found that the children from nudist households had a more positive body self-concept than the non-nudist children. She determined from her findings that coming from a nudist family played a more significant role in the children's positive self body-image than their race or gender, or the area of the country in which they lived.

Moreover, she found that those children whose families practiced social nudity at home and at naturist camps scored higher in terms of self body-image than those who practiced social nudity only at home (Story, 53). The causal relationship between family social nudity and high body self-image was thus also supported by concomitant variation.

Survey

Robin Lewis and Louis Janda surveyed 210 male and female undergraduate college students, in part to determine what effect childhood exposure to parental nudity had on them as young adults. The results of their study suggest that "childhood experiences with exposure to nudity and sleeping in the parental bed are not adversely related to adult sexual functioning and adjustment. In fact, there is modest support that these childhood experiences are positively related to indices of adjustment" (Lewis, 349). In their discussion, they conclude that "for boys, exposure to nudity in early childhood appears to be modestly related to greater comfort levels with regard to physical contact/affection" (Lewis, 357).

Paul Okami believes that clinicians, legislators, and social workers who automatically assume that parental nudity *per se* is harmful to children have little or no reason for their stand. "Surprisingly, then – especially considering the vehemence with which these behaviours have been condemned in much of the clinical literature – there is little evidence to support dire predictions [of harm to children]. In the case of exposure to parental nudity, the very scant available evidence points to generally neutral or perhaps even positive correlates, particularly for boys... No empirical evidence links such experiences with subsequent psychological harm" (Okami 1995, 59–60).

In 1998, Okami published the results of his own study on early childhood exposure to parental nudity. Working with Richard Olmstead, Paul Abramson, and Laura Pendleton, Okami's 18-year longitudinal study followed 200 male and female children from birth to age 17–18. His study was the first to use longitudinal design in examining the long-term effects of parental nudity on children. The research team hypothesized that given the paucity of empirical counter-evidence, children would experience no "deleterious main effects of early childhood exposure to either nudity or primal scenes" (Okami 1998, 365).

Results

The results of the study were clear: "Consistent with the cross-sectional retrospective literature (and with our expecta-

tions), no harmful main effects of these experiences were found at age 17–18” (Okami 1998, 376). Okami continued: “Exposure to parental nudity was associated with positive, rather than negative, sexual experiences in adolescence, but with reduced sexual experience overall. Boys exposed to parental nudity were less likely to have engaged in theft in adolescence or to have used various psychedelic drugs and marijuana... Thus, results of this study add weight to the views of those who have opposed alarmist characterizations of childhood exposure...to nudity” (Okami 1998, 377).

Okami gives voice to what many naturist parents ask. “Why is it so widely believed in the United States and certain European nations that these practices are uniformly detrimental to the mental health of children?... Such notions, certainly where exposure to parental nudity is concerned, are perhaps better conceptualized as *myths*. Whereas any of these behaviours of course may be experienced in an abusive context – and may also occasion harm under certain circumstances for certain individuals – their appearance *per se* does not appear to constitute cause for alarm” (Okami 1998, 379).

Okami’s study focuses on childhood exposure to parental nudity in the home. Given some American legislators’ reaction to the *New York Times* coverage in June 2003 of the “youth camps” hosted by the American Association for Nude Recreation, many opposed to childhood exposure to nudity may be more concerned with such exposure taking place outside the home. But scholars have provided even less insight on the effects of nudist camp experience on children than they have on mere exposure to at-home parental nudity.

From 1964

City College of New York professor Lawrence Casler, however, offered some interesting observations at the end of one of his studies on nudist camps. Casler wrote “Some Sociopsychological Observations in a Nudist Camp: A Preliminary Study” in 1964, when North America had more nudist camps than today. The study is based on interviews and questionnaires Casler conducted over six alternate weekends at a New York nudist club. The study was intended to provide a reliable quantified description of the ages, backgrounds, occupations, marital status, and motivations of adult nudists.

What makes Casler’s study of interest to the discussion of childhood experience is found at the conclusion of his article. In the process of interviewing the adults, he also encountered and talked with many children. Many of them, he reported, were members of “a children’s nudist camp, purportedly the only one in the United States, which was then located within the confines of Sunshine Village” (Casler’s fictitious name for the New York camp serving as the basis for his study) (Casler, 321). Since Casler was not himself a nudist, his description of the nudist youth camp and the reactions the children had to attending it should be of interest to those who are trying to ban all such activities for children.

The members of the camp – all children of Sunshine Village – would spend the entire three- or four-week session living in tents, swimming, doing arts and crafts, and performing other typical children’s-camp activities – except that the members usually did these things unclad. (Boys and girls slept in separate tents.) The age range was approximately 5 to 16. For the older chil-

dren, there were occasional lectures and discussion groups on the nudist way of life. When the children’s parents came to Sunshine Village on weekends, family activities partially supplanted camp activities, but the children still ate and slept in their own camp area.

I was able to interview several of these children, in addition to a number of older children who visited Sunshine Village with their parents but were not involved in the children’s camp. For the younger children, nudism chiefly meant nude swimming, having fun without getting one’s clothes dirty, being with friends, etc.

For the older children, nudism seemed also to have a more serious meaning. These adolescent boys and girls seemed unusually alert and aware of the impact nudism had on their lives. With only one exception, they stated that they would like to be nudists even if their parents were not. In addition to the usual ‘fun’ reasons, many of the teen-agers referred to the benefits in mental health and emotional stability.

Many of them recognized that nudism was giving them a more ‘realistic’ outlook towards sex than their non-nudist friends possessed. When with these friends, or out on dates, they could only feel sorry for people whose attitude towards the human body was not as healthy as their own. Unlike the responses of some adult camp members, these seemed completely genuine and spontaneous. Furthermore, the impression was inescapable that these children, taken as a group, were extraordinarily well-adjusted, happy, and thoughtful (Casler, 321–22).

Conclusion

What Casler wrote about childhood experience with naturism in 1964 applies just as well a mere forty years later. There is nothing harmful with appearing fully human. Children’s welfare must be safeguarded, but so too must they be given the chance to learn to respect their own bodies and those of others.

There is no evidence that children are harmed by non-sexualized social nudity, and there is good reason to believe they benefit from it. Proposals for laws forbidding children the innocent experience of being human, appearing human, and seeing others as such are unwarranted and unfounded, and have no scholarly basis.

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[We are grateful to Dr. Paul Rapoport, editor of *Going Natural*, the magazine of the Federation of Canadian Naturists, Vol. 19 No. 3 (Fall 2004), for granting permission to reprint this article. Ed.]

A Naked Russian Saint

Most of us know of St. Basil's Cathedral, the beautiful 16th-century church in Red Square, Moscow, with its cluster of colorful onion domes; but how many of us know that the Russian Orthodox saint who is buried there was a public nudist?

St. Basil the Blessed, (Vassily Blazhenny—1468-1557) was a Yurodivy (Holy Fool), a kind of Russian ascetic who feigned madness in order to speak and act freely without being held accountable. Basil was a much-beloved sage of Moscow who went constantly naked in even the harshest winter, weighted down with chains, preaching, prophesying, helping the poor, righting wrongs, and rebuking the powerful. He once upbraided Czar Ivan the Terrible for lack of attention in church, and Ivan accepted his rebuke. On another occasion, he is said to have come before the Czar to serve him meat. When Ivan protested that it was Lent, Basil told him that he might as well eat meat during Lent, since he was a murderer of men!

Basil's public nudity for a holy purpose is reminiscent of that sometimes practiced by Old Testament prophets (1 Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2-3; Micah 1:8).

There is a nude icon painting of St. Basil at <http://all-moscow.ru/ikona/vasblaz.en.html>

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